

**April 2010**  
**Monthly Communication**  
**Sensei Cline, NW Region Director**

The opponents that Sensei Okazaki speaks of in the 16<sup>th</sup> precept, “Be aware at all times that you have millions of opponents”, are the inner conflicts with which we all grapple. His analogy is very insightful, as each of us has some weakness, or weaknesses, that we struggle with throughout our life. Our personal struggles or conflicts may be with self-esteem, self-control, self-confidence, envy, greed, jealousy, a tendency to procrastinate, or a myriad of other issues that can hold us back, or prevent us from reaching our potential. As we train consistently, over time, we develop skills that at the beginning of our training seemed unattainable. As we achieve these skills and goals, we naturally add the quality of self-confidence and self-assuredness to our character, which then pushes away some of the less positive human tendencies.

Through constant training we begin to calm our mind and strengthen our resolve. When we experience a calm mind it is easier to identify our conflicts, and ultimately overcome those weaknesses. This precept asks us to identify, examine and then overcome the conflicts that can be barriers to our success. With a calm and open mind we are also able to identify and act upon opportunities that open up to us, usually when we least expect it. We can do this together, through dojo friendships and bonds that are formed. Be aware.

**Kata of the Month**

Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced: Heian Godan

Black Belt: Jitte, with a total of 24 movements and kiai points at movements 13 and 24.

**Technical Focus**

Rotation of the torso while maintaining stance, defense against stick attacks, correct use of hips to make power.

**Niju Kun**

The 16<sup>th</sup> Niju Kun is our focus for this month: “Be aware at all times that you have millions of potential opponents.”



**Instructor Spotlight: Joji Mercado, Godan**

**Where and when did you start training with ISKF?**

I joined ISKF between 1993 and 1994. At that time, the only ISKF events in our area were held in Santa Rosa. That is where I first met Sensei Yaguchi and other ISKF members.

**What were the reasons you started training?**

As a child, I was fascinated with the martial arts. I watched a lot of kung fu movies and TV shows so I wanted to study kung fu. The actors would imitate the movements of the animals and do acrobatic moves.

They would fly in the air while fighting (pre crouching tiger). My friends and I started imitating them.

Sometimes, we would spar after school. We jumped off ledges doing flying kicks. We would punch, kick and do sommersaults. Oftentimes, we would come home all bruised up. We were frustrated because we couldn't do it the way the

actors fought; they made it look easy. Then one day a good friend of mine introduced me to karate, it was Shotokan.

Who are the 2-3 people who have most influenced your martial arts training, and why?

Bruce Lee, a young Jackie Chan, and several Chinese kung fu actors. It was by watching them that I became interested in martial arts. I am grateful that I fell into Shotokan, and even more grateful that I have been presented with the opportunity to learn from our masters Yaguchi and Okazaki Sensei, the pioneers in this art. I have the privilege and honor to learn from them not only as excellent karate instructors, but outside the dojo as well.

Their humility and integrity are inspiring. They are like fathers who would advise and guide their children in the right path. Both masters embody the qualities of a true karate-ka.

What keeps you training and teaching – what inspires you, what do you most enjoy, what are you learning now?

Karate is part of my daily life. I teach six days a week and I'm excited every time I put on my gi. I look forward to teaching and I find great joy in having students who are eager to learn. Some students struggle in their athletic ability; however, if they are enthusiastic in wanting to learn, it can make all the difference. And I can only give back that same enthusiasm by trying to help them achieve their goals.

Through the years, as I continue to grow in Shotokan karate, I have had the privilege of training under a number of high ranking ISKF instructors. The wealth of knowledge and experience in the ISKF organization is incredible. Whenever I have the opportunity to train with them, I am like a white belt or a sponge trying to absorb as much as it can. And in turn, it enriches my ability to teach my students. I am truly fortunate to have great instructors from whom I can learn.

Anything else you'd like to add?

As the ISKF grows, we, the members, need to support one another and help Shotokan flourish. There are so many communities who can benefit from the teachings of Shotokan that we have yet to touch. It is not about competition but about collaboration. We should encourage each other. Further, it's our responsibility to encourage our students and ensure they have access to continued learning opportunities whenever possible. Camps, clinics and tournaments are great examples. Let's work to build up this organization we're so proud to be a part of.



The results of the Northwest Regional Eliminations, held in San Francisco, are:

**Women's Kata**

1st - Yvonne Clarabal  
2nd- Christina Valdes  
3rd - Karen Macdonald

**Women's Kumite**

1st - Yvonne Clarabal  
2nd- Christina Valdes  
3rd - Karen Macdonald

**Men's Kata**

1st - Jumbo Banaria  
2nd - Michael Granado  
3rd - Jay Banaria

**Upcoming Events**

See the annual calendar on our regional website which lists regional, national and international events. <http://iskfnw.org/default.htm>

**Men's Kumite**

1st - Jumbo Banaria  
2nd - Jay Banaria  
3rd - William Webster

**Women's Team Kata**

Dawn Flick  
Yvonne Clarabal  
Christina Valdes

**Men's Team Kata**

Jumbo Banaria  
Jay Banaria  
Michael Granado