

November 2010
Monthly Communication
Sensei Cline, NW Region Director

As karate-ka, we are expected to practice and support the way of justice. This is true not only inside the dojo, but outside as well. Rules are bent or broken time and time again as individuals in power, or people with influence, make exceptions. Frustration occurs when clear cut issues become murky. From the perspective of a martial artist, right and wrong is pretty clear cut, even black and white. So, what can a martial artist do if the rules are bent and justice is not served. The answer is to ensure that justice and the rules are upheld whenever you hold the power to do, thus setting an example. If breaking the rules has become a habit, work to break that habit. It may not be popular initially, but over time, justice will triumph. The more difficult the battle to effect change; the greater the victory, and longlasting the results.

Niju Kun

Karate wa gi no taske: "One who practices karate must follow the way of justice."

Kata of the Month

Jion: 47 movements, with kiais at movements 17 and 47.

Sochin: 40 movements, with kiais at movements 28 and 40.

Technical Focus

In Jion, defending gedan, chudan and jodan targets while advancing; turning and effective foot movements. In sochin, sochin dachi, keeping the bottoms of the feet in touch with the floor and the knees bent in the same direction as the toes.

Instructor Spotlight: Emil Valdes, Yondan



with the Master". I researched ISKF and explored ASK of Santa Rosa by contacting Mr. Callahan. He invited me to his May tournament where I met most of the ISKF members and for the first time saw Sensei Yaguchi. A few weeks later I inquired on how to be a member. I was given the information and the rest is history and I never regretted it.

Where and when did you start training with ISKF?

After I left my Sensei in the Philippines and settled in California, I searched out for an organization in the West Coast to properly guide my Shotokan Karate progress and the only authentic Shotokan organization I found was that of the late Mr. Nishiyama but I was never comfortable anywhere training with them. In 1987 I learned about ISKF when I got hold of a book entitled "Conversations

What were the reasons you started training?

I liked ISKF initially for the sincerity, honesty and integrity of the organization's "Top Brass" and their attention to detail in their instructions.

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

When I was very young, in 1965, my father was a member of the secret police who served directly under the president of the Philippines. His friend, who was also in the service, the late Mr. Latino Gonzales ran an Okinawan style karate dojo located in an abandoned building in the heart of Manila. At age 11, my father enrolled me to his school. Training back then was very different compared to today. Our fanatical instructors never had to worry about liabilities and things of that sort. We didn't use gloves, mouth guards nor groin protectors during kumite. Excuses such as pulled muscles, sprains and fractures were non-existent. The only compassionate comment we heard was "Suck it up or die! You're in the military arts now!" Every class was a life and death situation as far as I remembered. That's how we learned self-defense and survival very quickly. I dreaded going to class because of the possibility that every time I walked into that dojo, could've been my last.

My dad let me walk about a mile and a half from his office to the dojo. He really believed that I enjoyed my karate classes because I would always leave a half hour earlier to go to my classes. What I never told him was that along the way to class, I would always drop by the church and prayed my heart out so God will allow me to survive another horrifying karate class. My only choices were to survive the classes or answer to my dad at home and I'd rather "suck it up!"

This went on for about 3 years until I began high school where I started Shotokan karate. I met Sensei Kunio Sasaki, who I learned just a decade ago happened to be Sensei Yaguchi's student, in a competition held by the Philippine Karate Association. I was not allowed to go to his dojo by my parents because it was located in the worst neighborhood in the country. Even the Manila Police did not dare go in that neighborhood. Although the police were armed with 45 caliber pistols, some of them were killed by arrows, spears and machetes.

Being a teenager, nothing stopped me and a few other crazy high school teenagers, from venturing to go to Sensei Sasaki's dojo. We would cut classes and went to his dojo. Sometimes we would just watch his classes and at times he would allow us to train. Looking back to those times, I believe that just surviving those streets was hard core training enough. Thank God, I'm still here.

Sensei Cline: Fast-forward 3 decades. I was a new probationary member of ISKF, when I attended a Regional Tournament in Santa Rosa they called, "Friendship Tournament".

I was not familiar with ISKF rules then, so I decided to try to get out of judging. I looked for the most approachable highest ranked instructor I could approach. I slowly inched my way towards Sensei Cathy Cline and when she turned towards me, I smiled and asked her, "Sensei, I think you have enough judges, do you still need me?". She then gave me a smile that could change the world and said, "We will always need you, Emil!". Her very warm and comforting response stunned me like a deer frozen in front of a pair of headlights. She got me at "We". I quickly collected my composure and asked, "Where do you want me, Sensei?". She gave me a few tips and I proceeded to learn how to judge real fast! Sensei Cline had been a close friend since then.

Sensei Yaguchi: During the first couple of years of my membership with ISKF I would had contact with Sensei Yaguchi through Mr. Callahan since he hosted Sensei Yaguchi twice per year in Northern California. I was invited to join the dinners after Dan examinations with Sensei Yaguchi, Mr. Callahan and other instructors. At one dinner occasion, I found myself sitting next to Sensei Yaguchi. That was a very memorable fun night! After dinner and a good dose of sake, Sensei Yaguchi, Mr. Mercado and I stood in front of the restaurant waiting for Mr. Callahan to get his car. I was standing in attention straight as an arrow in the presence of my high ranking Sensei when out of nowhere, I felt Sensei

Yaguchi's foot buried into my gut from a well delivered "mawashi-geri". I was struggling to hold my composure, when Mr. Mercado whispered to me, "Don't be rude. Say thank you. It's his way of expressing his approval!" With muffled clenched teeth, I said, "Say what?" Sensei Yaguchi then asked, "Are you alright, Emil? So sorry." As he snickered, I replied, "Osu, Sensei!"

The more I spent time with Sensei Yaguchi, the more I got to know him and discovered that underneath the professional master who has touched so many lives worldwide is someone who is humble enough to be just like us. This humility commanded more respect than any other traits from other great leaders. He certainly earned mine hence true friendship followed throughout these years.

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

In spite of the disability caused by my stroke in 2006, I continue to be engaged in karatedo because of a variety of personal reasons. Some of which are health, social, cultural and a passion to teach and help others through this

wonderful art. When a new student approaches me and asks to be taught, I see a blank canvas and envision the finished artwork when the student achieves black belt level. I am inspired by the achievements of my students and rejoice in the fact that somehow I was part of someone's quest for success. Using my experience and what I've learned from my instructors, I continue to learn adaptability in all aspects of living. I may be struggling from a paralysis on my left side but I could very well possess a very effective, very lethal and very strong right arm. I still spar occasionally with my students. Years ago we used to train kumite with one arm tied behind our belts. Our ability to adapt and survive is not just an instinct but also a gift. It is true that when we choose not to give up, the worst situation can bring out the best from within.

Anything else you'd like to add? To quote Sensei Yaguchi, "Never give up!"
Osu!

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



ISKF Nationals, NW Region Results: (Adults)

- Women's Kata Team – 1st
- Men's Kata Team – 2nd
- Men's Kumite Team – 2nd
- Women's Kumite Team – 2nd
- Women's Indiv Kata – 2nd Yvonne Clarabal, 3rd Chelsie Smith, 4th Christina Hinchberger
- Men's Indiv Kata – 1st Jumbo Banaria
- Men's Indiv Kumite – 1st Jumbo, 3rd Mike Granado
- Men's Grand Champion – Jumbo Banaria

ISKF Nationals, NW Region Results: (Youth)

7-9 Advanced Kata

- 1st - JT Reyes
- 2nd - Matthew Tom
- 3rd - Joseph Blinder

Kumite

- 1st - Joseph Blinder
- 2nd - JT Reyes
- 3rd - Matthew Tom

10-11 Advanced

- 3rd place in kata and kumite - Caleb Yabut

12-13 Girls Advanced Kumite

- 2nd place – Meera Desai

14-15 Boys Advanced Kumite

- 3rd place - Igor Davidovich

16-17 Girls Advanced Kumite

- 1st place - Anmichaelle Yabut

16-17 Boys Advanced

- 1st place in kata and kumite - Tohma Judge