

Upcoming Events:

June:

2013 Ray Siniard
Vision Retreat



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SOKE'S CORNER

BY: KEVIN CALDWELL, SHIHAN, SOKE DAI

I am extremely excited and overjoyed with the progress made by our organization in 2012, and I am even more ecstatic as I look forward to 2013. The accomplishments of 2012 can be attributed to a variety of factors, including the decision to change business tactics within the organization.

Early last year, after Jim Shotwell expertly rebuilt the crashed AKKA database, Soke Ray Ferrell and I began to inquire about additional capabilities that Jim might be able to provide for the association. We quickly realized that he had far-reaching skills that our organization desperately needed. After much discussion, we asked Jim to accept a newly developed position known as the Vice President of Business Affairs. Unlike most of the other positions within our organization that relate to martial arts instruction, this new position focuses entirely on the management and business aspects of AKKA. Jim graciously accepted our offer, and has since begun to steer our organization onto the path of success. Jim is dedicated to business practices that support our students and instructors first and foremost.

Although the business changes have been instrumental, the success of our organization is due primarily to the hard work and dedication of each and every one of our students and instructors, described by a concept known as "giri" (see pg 3). Giri is what sets apart serious students from the weekly class participants, and is what makes the AKKA so fantastic. As we prepare for the exciting opportunities awaiting us this year, I ask that each of us give some thought as to how we can better demonstrate "giri" to make this organization better than it has ever been. Thank you for all that you do for our martial arts family!



JIM SHOTWELL: VICE PRESIDENT OF BUSINESS AFFAIRS

Soke Ferrell and Shihan Caldwell are proud to announce Jim Shotwell as the Vice President of Business Affairs for the American Kempo Karate Association (AKKA)*. This position was created in October 2012 to solve the inefficiencies that had plagued the business side of the organization for years.

Jim enrolled at the headquarters dojo in March of 2010. He took his training seriously and worked hard to achieve advancement in rank. Unbeknownst to AKKA leadership at the time, Jim brought to the organization some much needed expertise in the areas of business relations, communication, budgetary governance, and marketing. Jim's potential was initially recognized when he volunteered to rebuild the student and instructor database after it crashed. He ultimately rebuilt a customized database specifically tailored to the needs of our association, with new features that allow instructors to update the demographics and rank of their students in real time, have certificates issued immediately after testing, and make various payments through Paypal such as association, certificate, and seminar fees.

Over time, Jim became the primary driving force behind many of the positive changes being implemented. Jim single handedly redesigned the website, created an operating budget, and is currently working to solve communications issues amongst our affiliate dojos. The website, www.torakenryu.com, now has more capability than ever to serve our students and instructors. Students can now stream training videos, pay association dues, buy AKKA products, register for seminars, and much more from the new website. Additionally, a "members only" section is currently being developed that will enhance the student's ability to stay connected with their training and current on the organization.

In addition to being a dedicated student and member of AKKA, Jim has lived in the Charlotte area since 1996 and has 22 years of professional experience in technology and business. Jim has served in project and product management capacities requiring the skills necessary to market products and services internally and externally within fortune 100 companies. Jim is also a veteran of the United States Navy where he served honorably on fast attack submarines.

Jim continues to work tirelessly to improve our organization and being a student himself, has the best interest of every AKKA student in mind. We are extremely fortunate and grateful to have such a talented and dedicated member within our organization and AKKA family. We greatly appreciate his generosity and are extremely happy that he has graciously accepted the position of Vice President of Business Affairs for AKKA. It will be an exciting adventure for all of us as we await the next "Shotwell initiative".



Did you know?

- Training videos are now on the website!!!
- AKKA has a Facebook page! Search: "American Kempo Karate Association"
- 2013 Ray Siniard Vision Retreat is **May 31 - June 2** at Catawba College!
- Questions? Email us: info@torakenryu.com

***The American Kempo Karate Association (AKKA) was established in 1980 by Dr. Ron Cherry, Shodai Soke of the Shorinji Toraken Ryu arts. The purpose of the AKKA is to govern and support the Shorinji Toraken Ryu curriculum. It is essentially the business aspect of the Shorinji Toraken Ryu arts and currently oversees seven schools that actively teach the Shorinji Toraken Ryu arts in the U.S. and Europe.**



2013 Ray Siniard Vision Retreat

May 31 - June 2, 2013 • Catawba College, Salisbury, NC

Open to Students & Instructors of ALL Systems & ALL Skill Levels!

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PAST TOPICS INCLUDED:

- Holds & Releases / Locks & Counters
- Sogo Kempo Jutsu
- Combat & Survival Stress Training
- Wing Chun & Jujutsu
- Toe-to-Toe Ground Fighting
- Kobudo and Weapons training
- Women's Self Defense & Rape Prevention
- Awareness & De-escalation Strategies
- Chi Kung & Tai Chi
- **PLUS MUCH MORE!!!**

Rate Information

- \$185 if registered by **May 15th**
- \$225 after **May 15th**
- Register online at www.torakenryu.com or cash at the door.

- For Camp facility info visit:
www.gocatawbaindians.com
- Click "Facilities" in left column

GIRI By Andrew Brooks, Nidan

We live in a transactional society. Once you pay for a service and that service has been completed, the transaction is over and everyone is satisfied. This behavior and mindset sweep into the dojo and quite often influence how a student will view the relationship between him or herself and the teacher. The relationship often starts this way because it is the only way most students know how to conduct business. But why would it be any different at a dojo? Deshi take note! If you are set on getting the most out of your training, it would be detrimental to view your training as just a business transaction.

As students progress in their training and understanding, hopefully they realize the added responsibility that comes with advancement in rank. This responsibility is part of a student's giri. Giri is a Japanese term that is defined or translated as a person's duty to fulfill their obligations. Achieving advancement in rank is not just about learning new techniques. There is a joint indebtedness that goes both ways between the student and the teacher. Giri speaks directly to anyone being involved in an organization, and the more you learn, the more involved you must become. The flip side is that your teacher also has an increased responsibility to you. So consider your training as developing a relationship between you and your teacher with obligations and commitments flowing both ways.

As you continue to train and the relationship between you and your teacher begins to bloom, you will see that the money you have paid is actually quite insignificant. Related to what we do as martial artists, there are more things your teacher passes on to you than can ever be repaid through monthly dues and testing fees. Your teacher knows this, and it is his or her obligation to continue to pass these things on to you as part of your training (that is, given you continue to uphold your end of the bargain).

Take it upon yourself to own your training and get involved with your school. Start fulfilling any obligations you feel you have to your teacher, because they will probably never ask. Take ownership of your training beyond what is taught at your weekly classes. Put the extra time into both your training and your school, pour your heart into it.

There are many ways to fulfill an obligation, but a really good way is by showing gratitude and appreciation. For example, something as simple and easy as emptying the trash cans after class, or showing up an hour early to answer phones or help with a class prior to yours would make any teacher happy. These are simple examples, and there is no limit and nothing is too small. It is whatever a student can give based upon their time, capabilities, and willingness to give back. Own your training, accept your giri, and show appreciation. That is all any teacher could ever ask from their students.



TENSHINSHO JIGEN RYU

By Kevin Caldwell, Shihan

From time to time, the leadership of the AKKA has the special privilege of training with a master of the sword arts whose skill is legendary. On the weekend of January 18-20, 2012, Shihan Robert Zingg hosted a seminar featuring Soke Kagenori Ueno, the 28th inheritor of the Tenshinsho Jigenryu system. That Friday morning, Soke Ferrell and I left the headquarters dojo and embraced the six-hour drive to West Virginia, mildly nervous about the snowy roadways we would encounter in the mountains along the way, but mostly excited about the training that we would receive.

Soke Ferrell and Shihan Zingg have been training with Soke Ueno for several years, and have found his Iaido expertise to be

yet detailed; fast, and overwhelmingly effective). For this reason, and because of the incredible willingness of Ueno Soke to directly teach his art to our students, the decision was made to follow the Jigenryu system of Iaido.

Upon arriving at Shihan Zingg's dojo in West Virginia, Soke Ferrell and I received the usual warm greeting from Shihan Zingg and the AKKA students who train there. We were equally embraced by Soke Ueno, as well as his son, one of his Shihan Dai, and of course the other Jigenryu students. From the time we walked through the door, it was immediately obvious that Shihan Zingg had done an excellent job of promoting this event.

more than 30 students wielding swords, many of whom were performing advanced moving kata, was one that was awe inspiring and instilled in me a slight feeling of uneasiness. I could only hope that any disaster in the form of a missing limb would be averted.

Initial fears aside, Friday night was filled with fantastic training, much of which revolved around the basics of Jigenryu. After the customary procedures, and many repetitions of "bato/noto" or drawing / resheathing, Soke Ferrell was asked to instruct some of the beginner students while those of us who had trained more extensively in Jigenryu practiced some of the basic forms of the system. Training continued until 9pm.

The Saturday seminar began at



unparalleled. Prior to transitioning to the Jigenryu system, Soke Ferrell, Shihan Zingg, and I had trained for years in another sword art called Mugai Ryu under the direction of Sensei Tony Alvarez. Mugai Ryu is a fantastic combative sword art, however the style of Jigenryu was much more in line with the Shorinji Toraken Ryu fighting methodologies (simple,

For those of you who have not traveled to his dojo, Shihan Zingg boasts of a space adorned by obnoxious red carpet, yet rich in historical martial arts décor and memorabilia. The workout floor is roughly 30 feet across, and perhaps 100 feet in length surrounded by weapons, bags, and workout gear that run the perimeter of the floor.

I must admit that the sight of

9:30 AM and lasted into the early evening. In addition to hands-on sword training, Ueno Soke spoke extensively on many of the organizational topics surrounding Jigen Ryu, including ceremonial etiquette, hierarchy and inheritance, as well as many of the details of the system's forms and techniques. Students were divided into three groups ... (cont. pg 6)



VIRTUAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES BY: KEVIN CALDWELL, SHIHAN

AKKA has always faced issues with instructing our art at affiliate schools that do not have geographical access to the headquarters dojo. The concepts and techniques of our system are complex and intricate, and therefore require vigilant training with proper oversight. This problem is compounded for students and instructors at affiliate schools. What was intended to be a standardized curriculum of instruction quickly became difficult to manage as the techniques evolved independently at each dojo. In years past, the only way to combat this growing issue was to host periodic seminars in an attempt to “stem the bleeding” and update students on proper technique. This strategy was both time consuming, expensive, and inefficient. With the new initiatives being undertaken by the organization, it was time to take action and give our students and instructors the tools for success that they need and deserve.

After much thought, two methods of information delivery were chosen to best serve our students and instructors. The first option we have implemented is video streaming and the second option is interactive live virtual training using Skype and video conferencing technology.

The first method, video streaming over the internet, was chosen to replace the outdated VHS videos that were produced in the late '90s. The content on the VHS tapes was outdated, filmed from only one angle, and had a grainy video quality. Additionally, we want our students and instructors to have instant access to the

most up to date content available on a variety of devices such as tablets, PCs, and smart phones. Therefore, video streaming was chosen as the first method of delivery to satisfy all of these criteria.

We decided not to allow the option to download these videos for three main reasons. First, our art is constantly evolving and techniques change. A student who downloads a video will possess outdated information when that information changes. A streaming video will allow AKKA to update the content on each video so students can be assured they are watching the most up to date information available. Secondly, we are able to provide many more groupings for specific instructional topics using streaming video. For example, a student will not only be able to rent specific rank requirement videos (eg. Adv. White Belt), but they will also have the option of renting specifically what they need such as self defense techniques, kata, or traditional one steps. Third, we feel it is in the best interest of all AKKA members to protect this information from unauthorized distribution in order to maintain the integrity and quality of our Shorinji Toraken Ryu martial arts system.

The second method, live virtual training, was chosen because students and instructors need a platform that allows interactive training where corrections can be made in real time regardless of geographic separation. Given the improvements in video conferencing technologies, the choice was made

to use a Skype web-cam at the headquarters dojo in Charlotte, NC for our interactive virtual training. The headquarters dojo purchased both a 32” LED TV and a Logitech HD Skype web-cam. These new devices will allow us to administer live virtual training to all students regardless of location.

We intend to use video-conferencing technologies such as Skype for conducting whole school virtual seminars, individual instructor training, private student training, to virtually attend regular classes at affiliate dojos, and to observe long-distance belt testing.

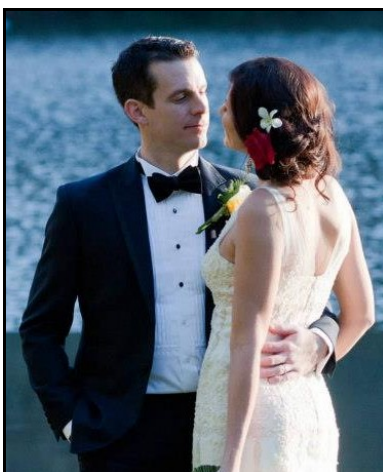
As a reminder, these training methods are not intended to replace face-to-face training and cannot wholly substitute for the personal interaction between Soke Ferrell and our students and instructors. These methods are a solution that will hopefully increase student competence with the basic concepts and methods of our system. They will allow face-to-face training to be more productive because time can be spent on more advanced topics of instruction rather than reviewing the basics.

I have already utilized this technology once to view a headquarters brown belt test remotely, and found it to be superior in quality. We will notify students and instructors via email, the Facebook page, and the website when all testing has been completed and we are ready to move forward with virtual training. Until then, I hope that each of you finds the online streaming to be beneficial to your training, and I hope to train with you very soon!

YUDANSHA PROMOTIONS

• Congratulations to John Kashino for earning the rank of Nidan in Kempo-Karate! After an incredible test on January 12, 2013, Soke Ferrell and Shihan Caldwell proudly promoted John to Nidan. Nidan is a very difficult rank to achieve and more technical in nature than shodan. Nidan requires a higher level of understanding of kempo-karate and an incredible amount of dedication. Soke Ferrell and Shihan Caldwell are extremely proud of John's accomplishment. Congratulations for all of your hard work John!

• Congratulations to Joe Mertes who recently got married! Joe is a shodan at HQ dojo in Charlotte and has been training for many years. We want to congratulate him on this huge milestone and wish him and his wife a long and happy life together! Congrats!



JIGEN RYU (CONT. FROM PG 4)

...based on their level of expertise in Jigenryu. Ueno Soke worked on a variety of advanced sword topics with the students who already held dan level ranks in Jigenryu. The intermediate group was comprised of students who had trained fairly extensively in Jigenryu or in another sword art, but did not hold a dan rank in Jigenryu. This group focused on training the finer details of the first 10 kata. The third group encompassed the remainder of the students who had little or no experience with Jigenryu but just as well were eager to learn. This group was focused on getting comfortable with bato/noto, as well as some of the initial Jigenryu forms. The night concluded with a small party held at the dojo, where students brought a variety of food, drink, and stories to share.

Sunday was the final day of training and began at 9:30 AM. The topic was tamishigiri, or tatami mat cutting. Due to travel constraints, Soke Ferrell and I left at noon and were unable to participate in much of Sunday's training.

Overall, the trip was fun, informative, and filled with great training and camaraderie. It is a privilege to train with a teacher who has mastered the sword in the way that Ueno Soke has achieved. It is my sincere hope that more AKKA students will have the opportunity to meet and train with this master during his next visit from Japan.

