

The

Lion



*The official newsletter of the Chiltern Karate
September 2010*



"Tode" Sakugawa

Master "Tode" Sakugawa

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Cover picture:

Master “Tode” Sakugawa

Notices:

**Saturday 11th December CKA Annual
Dinner Dance awards Ceremony**

CKA Kumite and Partner Work DVD

All our CKA kumite sets on DVD.

An essential learning aid!

£15.00

See your club instructor

Fore Word.....

Searching for a cover picture for this issue I had a choice as to whether to come forwards in time to one of the pupils of Matsumura or go back further. My choice was to go back further to probably the first point where images are available, to Matsumura's teacher "Tode" Sakugawa.

Reliable information is scarce but we do know the Tode name was a nickname derived from his particular skill in Chinese Kempo (boxing but not as we know it). He is also credited for the development or introduction of the Bassai or Passai kata so all you struggling brown belts now know who to blame.

It is said that Sakugawa studied under the Okinawan monk Peichin Takahara and also Kusanku – originator of Kanku Dai and the person credited for importing Chinese martial arts to Okinawa.

Sadly I have a business commitment on this grading day so it remains for me to wish you all well with your various gradings but not trust to luck!

Robin Thwaites
Lion Editor
4th Dan

East Meets West

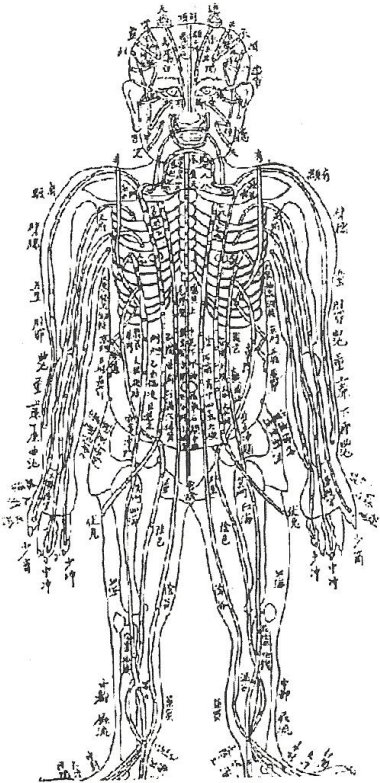
– Wisdom gleaned from the Qigong Seminar on 21st March

Definitions:

Karate Do: the Way of Karate

Qigong: (or *ch'i kung*) is an internal Chinese meditative practice that often uses slow graceful movements and controlled breathing techniques to promote the circulation of qi within the human body, and enhance a practitioner's overall health. There are also many forms of qigong that are done with little or no movement at all, in standing, sitting and supine positions; likewise, not all forms of qigong use breath control techniques.

In its simplest form, the Chinese character for qi, in qigong, can mean air, breath, or "life force". Gong means work, so qigong is therefore the practice of "working" with one's "life force".



Meridian Points – from old acupuncture charts

“Intermediate Shotokan Karate”, Ashley Croft 2009

I write this article for the Lion from a wet and windy Scotland. It is too cold and wet for golf and the small island Karate school is closed for the Easter break

after their Grading session last week. I have been meaning to put ‘pen to paper’ as it were, since the seminar and now have my perfect opportunity to reflect on what it meant to me and to share with you my own personal journey as a Student of CKA. Last year I set sail to try and find the meaning of ‘wisdom’ and to find a calmness of mind where the physical and cerebral complement each other. After an extensive internet search, I put several books on my Christmas ‘wish list’. I delved into books on East West Culture by the Dalia Lama and read two pivotal books by Masters in Aikido, one “Holding the Centre” by American Richard Strozzi-Heckler and the other “Ki in Daily Life” by Japanese 10th Dan Koichi Tokei. This research created more questions than answers and I even started to think that maybe a switch to Aikido would be more helpful to my inner journey. I was mindful however that I had dropped Karate in my early twenties and if I was going to make the switch, it had to be for

very good reasons. Time is finite and one can't do everything – whatever we chose to spend our time on has to really matter and make a difference.

Thankfully, I have just attained 3rd Kyu. At CKA, when you gain 3rd Kyu and have your brown belt, you can attend the 9-10pm classes at Amersham on a Thursday night. These are quite different from the normal training sessions and aim to develop not only the physical but the mental side of Karate Do (the Karate Way). At one of these sessions in December, I asked Sensei Croft about breathing and its relation to power generation. Sensei Croft's answer was two-fold; firstly for me to stop for a moment and to imagine that when I breathed the air came in and out through my feet and secondly that the club would be organising a Qigong training session in the New Year at which I could find out more.

I looked forward with eager anticipation to our special session on Qigong in March.

The training at the Chesham Dojo was very well attended by a cross section of the club and the combination of classroom and practical application through exercises seemed to go down really well. The cerebral and the practical really complimented one another – everyone was engaged. For me it was symbolic that a strong light beam shone into the dojo on what was a clear Spring Day, when the winter thawed. Everyone listened intensively when Sensei Croft explained about the Eastern Philosophy of Meridians (Rivers of Energy, see figure) circulating around our bodies and how one could tap into these energy sources. I could not do justice to what Sensei Croft described to us that day. However, I wanted to write this article for Lion to add my own personal perspective to contribute to the energy of general discussion that followed the training. I also very much enjoy reading the articles in Lion so thought I should make a contribution.

To give you a flavour of the seminar, Sensei Croft taught us a few breathing exercises which aimed to show us how managing ones air flows, abdomen and thoughts, helps to create and control energy. It was very powerful. At a subsequent Tuesday night late training Sensei Thwaites shared that when she and her training partner practiced one of the exercises they both felt the energy force and a warm tingling in their arms. Unfortunately, I could not find the energy flow with my partner on that day but did not feel discouraged as Sensei Croft said that this was part of a journey and on some occasions to master Qigong it can take upwards of 15 years.

“15 Years! Gulp, thought I..... well the longest journey starts with the first step. Now we have been shown the path and we have some help to guide us along the way; there is hope”.

In addition to breathing, Sensei Croft described to us why the abdomen can be referred to as ‘the second

brain’; when one thinks about it, I suppose there is logic in this as this is where food is converted into fuel. The real skill therefore is to combine our understanding of the energy flows, the abdomen, the breathing and the mind to start to unlock the real strength of our body. I would liken it to an ice-berg; many think the strength and beauty lie above the surface – but the real strength and power lie in the vast berg below.

As a 5 foot 2” middle aged female who has greying hair, this gives me great inspiration; as it should an 8-14 year old teenager, or a pensioner, or in fact anyone who is in awe of a larger, seemingly stronger opponent – if you can master your breathing and focus your mind, couple this with good technique and timing, then you can take on the bigger opponent. Also in daily life you will be given a powerful tool to control your emotions and focus your mind when one is faced by a challenge. At the close, the whole class practiced Taikyoku Shodan to count and the experience

was something quite different. It all came together - the power and the energy. Having now experienced how it felt and being able to identify it, I can aim to try and replicate it.

As to the other question, I now have answered whether I should stick with Karate, move to Aikido or try somehow to do both. The answer came when a fellow student asked if we should start Tai Chi classes or another martial art. In response Sensei Croft said that "if you chase too many rabbits you catch none." How true is that! And not just in Karate but a saying that can be really helpful in daily life. Our Karate "Do" now has greater meaning and compliments daily life. I now know that if I continue with my Karate training and build in learning from Qigong, the latter will really compliment and support my development.

There are many mountain streams that feed into the river. I am very appreciative of the Qigong training. The

timing for me could not have been better.

Regarding my journey to find the meaning of wisdom I would like to leave you with two quotes:

Confucius said "if I have an easy conscience, I dare to face a thousand men";

And for those of us who enjoyed Kung Fu Panda, "yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift that is why it is called the present".

Tess White

Sponsorship Plea

As some of you may be aware, over recent years, I have represented the UK in karate at several World Fire Fighter Games across the globe. In August 2011, over 20,000 fire fighters and police officers will compete in over 70 sports at the World Police and Fire Fighter Games in New York . This event will also coincide with special ceremonies to mark the tenth anniversary of 9/11. Thousands of people are

expected to watch the events over the ten days.

I am hoping to compete in karate as well as indoor rowing and possibly football. As you can imagine, the financial costs of such a trip will be huge. Therefore I am interested to hear from any CKA members who feel that they may be able to offer some assistance in the form of sponsorship. This could be on an individual basis for myself, or for the whole London Fire Brigade contingent. Such sponsorship could come from a business, and may take the form of assistance with team clothing for example, or help with the cost of flights. I appreciate how difficult this may be in the current economic climate, so any form of assistance, no matter how small, really would be welcomed.

Please contact my email address:
noble69@hotmail.com to discuss any ideas, or catch me at training!

Laura Noble

Visit to Washington DC Karate Club in the Spring of 2010

During my Spring break I went to stay with friends in Washington DC. One of the many highlights of the visit was joining in the training session of the Washington DC Shotokan Karate Club. I wanted to share my experience with you to show how easy it is to go and train with similar like-minded clubs such as our own.

As part of my research I went onto the club web site and satisfied myself that I would be in safe hands. The website greeted me with two impressions a) it was welcoming and friendly and b) it was diverse and did not discriminate at any level. I wrote to the Club President and Secretary to ask permission to attend and was delighted to have an almost immediate response welcoming me. All I had to do was to take my last grading certificate with me and sign a waiver form saying that I would not hold

the club responsible if anything happened to me. The training took place in a Dojo near Georgetown University at the Jelleff Boys and Girls Club. After introductions, we practiced Heian Godan with the Black belts lined in front of us so that we could watch their form. I was really pleased that I could take part and, although I was on the other side of the Atlantic, it felt like home. There were however three major differences that stick in my mind - the recital of the Dojo Kun by everyone at the end of the class, the competition sparring where I needed to borrow a pair of hand pads and speed up my reactions!!, and the heat... I will never worry about the heat in the Amersham Dojo ever again. Our Shotokan friends in Washington train in a hall in a heat of 100+ degrees – they manage to do it without any bother. Either it was jetlag, the mid life change... or just getting used to different climates which made it hard. Apart from that, I am glad I went and experienced the wider

Shotokan Karate Family. We are lucky to be in a club which encourages us to train and experience different Dojos! .. wherever they are. Thank you Washinton DC Karate Club, and to Linda and Paul, whom I promised to send a copy of this article, and a copy of The Lion.



Picture: Tess standing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial where the “I have a dream” speech was made by Martin Luther King Jr.

Tess White

**CHILTERN
KARATE
ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL
CHRISTMAS
DINNER DANCE
AND AWARDS
CEREMONY**

We are returning to De Vere Hotel, Latimer on **December 11th 2010** for our annual Christmas dinner and dance and awards evening.

The cost is £31.05 per person which covers a three course meal, table entertainer and disco

Places are limited
Look out for payment information soon!!

The Path to Shodan

I'd been eager to learn Martial Arts for quite a few years before I actually signed up for the CKA beginners course in Amersham in mid 2005. My Dad had me watching Martial Arts films since I was about 8 so I guess taking it up was almost inevitable! During my very first lesson the realization hit me – It's not like in the movies!! So, resigned to the fact that I wasn't going to be the next Jackie Chan, I decided to see it through the beginners course and by the time I got my blue belt I was well and truly hooked!

Within about a year I had gone from Training solely in Amersham on Thursdays, to Holmer Green on Mondays, Chesham on Tuesdays, the now much missed BCUC on Wednesdays and any grading training sessions at the weekend just for that little bit extra... I think I might have gone to classes on Friday and Saturday too if they'd been any!

When I reached 1st Kyu in March 2009, I remember breathing a sigh of relief – No gradings for a year! Until, that is, the realisation dawned on me that my next grading would be for black belt and as you can probably imagine, that year felt like it went by in just a couple of months!!

I stepped up my training outside of the dojo, my gym membership finally became a sensible investment! My advice to anybody preparing for their Shodan grading is you can't be over prepared in regards to fitness; it really is up there as one of the most physically draining things I've ever done! (Although it goes without saying that you should be sensible about it, and avoidable injury before grading is the last thing you want!)

About 3 months before my grading date, it became the 1st thing on my mind when I woke up and the last thing on my mind before I went to sleep, I had regular dreams about it (a few nightmares

too!) I wrote all the Japanese to English terminology onto index cards and would randomly test myself throughout the day and would start talking myself through kata patterns whenever I had a spare minute, I think a lot of my friends and family thought I'd gone nuts!

I had a lot of help with preparation in those last few months, My thanks especially go to Mr Warner who spent many hours drilling sets with me (especially for enduring the many many attempts it took me to get the hang of the Jiyu Ippon set 4 kekome defence!!) Also Mr Thornton, Mr Warren and Mr Bantick for Sunday afternoon's extra curricular training! And everybody else who volunteered to be test subjects for my set 5, I probably should have warned you beforehand that it was a work in progress!

I woke up bright and early on the morning of grading and felt surprisingly calm. I knew

I wouldn't be going in until mid afternoon, but the time flew by and before I knew it, it was time to go in - I think the adrenaline must have kicked in then, because I hardly remember the actual grading, I just remember that everything I was asked to do I tried to do my best and give it my all and that it was very tough!! About an hour and a half later it was all over and I felt completely drained, physically and emotionally. But then when we were called back in to the hall and told that we'd passed all the exhaustion disappeared, I felt like I could do it all over again then and there, although I'm quite glad I didn't have too!!

I think the reason I enjoy doing karate so much and why I hope I continue to do it for many years to come is that there's always something new to learn. Even now, I've attended hundreds of lessons and gotten my Shodan, yet I can't recall a single lesson where I haven't learnt something new. It can be anything from

new kata, to just feeling a technique in way that out of nowhere suddenly makes it just all come together. This is all achieved from the help and advice given by CKA's instructors and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the instructors I have trained with. Each one of you has taught me invaluable lessons on a weekly basis and I am really grateful for how you've shared your karate with me and made it something that I can't imagine my life without.

Laura Graham
Shodan

The Long and Winding Road to Shodan

I started karate in 1993 in my mid twenties. I saw a poster up where I worked, and found myself tentatively entering a dojo for the first time. The instructor was a psychiatric nurse who taught a small but devoted and cohesive class of students who were all below brown belt. I had no aspirations of attaining brown, let alone attempting black belt at that

time. I enjoyed the classes and attended each week, making progress but recognising that I was not naturally gifted. I was introduced to freestyle sparring (“put your pads on”) and started to wrestle with Taikyoku Shodan. I found learning kata hard, but with practice on a helpfully concealed stretch of grass nearby my accommodation block, gradually got to grips with it. Our social events were rather less sophisticated than CKAs, and I can recall a group performance of the newly learnt Taikyoku Shodan to the beat of “Kung Fu Fighting.”

My subsequent training was rather patchy as a result of regular moves around the country and the demands of work. Although it was interesting to train in a variety of clubs, I could only make limited progress, reaching 8th kyu in one style, and passing two gradings in another.

Having moved to Buckinghamshire and after a gap from training of over 6 years, I came across a leaflet urging its readers to “start 2002 on a positive note” and “learn the fascinating art of Shotokan Karate.” I telephoned Sensei Jones and enrolled on the beginners’ course at the Newland Park Campus of BCUC in Chalfont St Giles. I was delighted to discover that the training lived up to the expectations raised by the leaflet! Senseis Jones and Lockwood were able to simultaneously inspire, challenge and nurture their students. In addition to covering Shotokan Karate techniques, the training extended in all sorts of other directions, and was spiced up with humour... and stress positions. The BCUC dojo was an aging sports hall with ivy growing outside and in, and Siberian temperatures in winter. Over time, I also started training at other CKA dojos. I found that the teaching was of a high quality throughout the organisation, and that each

dojo had its own ethos. Eventually the BCUC dojo came to be bulldozed, but those of us that trained there remain hopeful that a successor will rise again...

Over the last couple of years, I have been gradually learning the syllabus for Shodan at the Amersham and Chesham dojos. Several of my contemporaries had achieved black belt during that time, but I was never sure that I would actually take the grading myself until, at the start of this year, Sensei Croft invited me to try. My biggest challenge was to improve my basics – in particular moving from slow, robotic techniques to more powerful ones performed with coordination of the hips, shoulders, arms, legs and breathing. I am very grateful in particular to Senseis Croft, Thwaites and Warner for patiently identifying the many improvements I needed to make. Meanwhile, outside the dojo, I stepped up my practice at home, and, in the run up to grading, worked on

my kumite with Mr Warren and Miss Graham on Sunday afternoons. I passed my Shodan grading on the second attempt, having benefitted from valuable feedback after the first. I can confirm what everyone already knows about the grading – it is extremely demanding and exhausting, and requires focus and determination. Nearly three months after passing the grading, it is gradually sinking in that, after all the years of training, I have finally achieved a black belt. I have also realised that it carries with it the responsibility of aspiring to the high standards set by the other black belts in CKA. I can see that, as with other gradings, it is not an end in itself, but a staging post during the karate journey, and that, as one peak is reached, others unfold in the distance.

In terms of what has helped me in my journey to black belt, the most important thing has been motivation and perseverance. As Woody Allen said, "Eighty percent of

success is showing up." In karate, that means turning up for training despite feeling drained after work (and I discovered that training actually restores my energy).

I have also found it helpful just to focus on the next grading, so breaking down the mountain of black belt into small, manageable (and enjoyable) stages. We students at CKA are very lucky to train within an organisation that provides excellent teaching and high standards, along with values of discipline, respect for others and humour. My only regret is that I cannot make it to more of the CKA dojos for training (and also that my "football kick" keeps re-emerging, but that's another story).

Alex Bantick
Shodan

CKA Calendar 2010

Sunday	05-Sep	Grading	Chesham Dojo	10.00 start
Sunday	12-Sep	Demo Day	Chesham Park	
Week Commencing	13-Sep	Beginners Courses	All Dojos	
Sunday	26-Sep	Grading Training	Chesham Dojo	10.00 - 12.00
Sunday	17-Oct	Grading Training	Chesham Dojo	10.00 - 12.00
Sunday	14-Nov	CKA Competition	Chesham Dojo	10.00 start
Sunday	05-Dec	Grading	Chesham Dojo	10.00 start
Saturday	11-Dec	Annual Christmas Dinner Dance	Latimer House	TBA

If you have any material that you would like to be considered for publication in The Lion please contact Robin Thwaites at robin_thwaites@yahoo.com.

Material published may not necessarily represent the views of either the editor, the club instructors or CKA committee.