



# THE HARMONIZER

## THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SHINTANI WADO KAI KARATE FEDERATION

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2001



**Welcome** to this edition of the Harmonizer, the voice of the membership of the Shintani Wado Kai Karate Federation. We are now in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of this publication and we have had some real excellent articles submitted by various individuals from coast to coast over this period. Thank-you all for your contributions. I wish to extend the invitation of articles to the many members who have something to say, or an idea to convey, but they just haven't been sure if they should or not. Well, I assure you, you should.

Any individual regardless of rank, who is a member of the Shintani Karate Federation, may contribute to the Harmonizer. The only stipulations that the Harmonizer carries is that the articles are not derogatory to any individual or any particular style, since we all have our good points too!

Kyu belts are asked to submit their articles to their immediate instructors who can review the content and forward them along to:

Neil Prime  
10 Youngblut Avenue  
St.Catharines Ont., Canada  
L2N-1N1

For electronic data (preferred) email to:  
getyourkicks@wadokaikarate.com

Thanks again for making my job so much easier!!!

**Three Realms of Sparring:  
The Technical, the Tactical, the Mental**

**Seminar, Calgary Wado-Kai  
University of Calgary, October 2000**

**Blaine R Beemer (Godan)  
Vancouver Wado-Kai Karate Club**

Effective sparring requires a whole variety of interrelated skills. There are many ways to divide up the pie conceptually, but I have found that the above three factors are simple enough, memorable enough, and inclusive enough for most people to work with comfortably. They are in some ways separate skills: students come to karate with varying strengths in

these respective areas; good skills in one realm can improve performance in the other realms (and vice versa); and these skills can, to a certain extent, be taught as individual entities.

Sparring should be fun! It is one of the places we can "put it all together" and really challenge ourselves. Sadly, many people feel like a fish on a bicycle when it comes to this part of martial arts. Sparring for them is the martial arts equivalent of a trip to the dentist at best, or an outright phobia at worst. They believe that there are naturally good fighters - and they will never be one of them! This myth is sad. Anybody, with patience and understanding, can improve their sparring dramatically at any stage of their training, with immense benefits to their overall ability and enjoyment of the art.

These skills do not improve in lock-step with each other. That is why people find themselves at a frustrating, unexpected plateau in their training; it is also why people make unexpected welcome breakthroughs that reverberate throughout their whole training - and often, through their whole life.

The following are offered as a few thoughts of the nature of the three realms identified, some ways that they are interrelated, and some strategies for strengthening these key skill areas.

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## Realm #1: The Technical

This realm includes the most obvious and observable components of karate practice. It includes but is not limited to:

- smoothness, precision
- power and speed
- reaction time
- accuracy of footwork & mobility
- posture
- strength
- conditioning and stamina

Each of these factors is worthy of a seminar (or article) in itself, so I will not go into all of them in detail. I do want to observe, however, that many students often overvalue some of these factors and undervalue others; it is these factors I would like to concentrate on for the moment.

For example, many people figure that sparring is mostly about reaction time, speed and strength. However, reaction time is essentially irrelevant if the muscles are overly tight or if you put yourself in such an indefensible position that you are exposed and too close to your opponent.

Strength, in my experience, is another of the overvalued and overused technical abilities. This is a particular problem for men, in that they tend to substitute strength for accuracy. The most conspicuous overuse of this skill tends to be in middle-aged men who come to karate later in life. These warriors have the adult-male muscle rigidity (and the courage) to practice a certain kind of commitment to their attack, but substitute brute force for accuracy and discretion. Opponents can pick them off fairly easily if they stick around long enough to catch them coming in, but the warrior seem impervious to normal blows and continues on, chest forward like Godzilla, stomping on villagers as their forearms and knees



clobber everything in sight. The etiquette of point karate unfortunately precludes the only kind of feedback that would get their attention (virtual evisceration by a kick or a skull-shaking stopping punch). Eventually most of their opponents are backing up as soon as these guys start moving – which reinforces the value of this primitive technique, and creates a powerful disincentive to practising any refinement.

At the same time, I don't want to negate strength as a value. All things being equal, strong is better than not-strong, and strength training is now considered an indispensable part of high-level performance in many sports previously considered more technique-based than strength-based (notably tennis and golf). Strength buys you a bit of forgiveness if your block is just a little off; strength comes through athletic training, and that training improves stamina; and strength feels good, providing confidence. At elite competitive levels, even tiny advantages can be significant. Ironically, the people who would most benefit by upping their strength training are often loathe to do it; conversely, many people who are already pretty strong start strength and find that their training actually seems to go *backwards* for awhile (more on that under The Mental). My advice about strength enhancement:

1. do it
2. don't overdo it
3. don't expect it to solve all your problems



Conditioning is another technical skill that is undervalued, especially by beginners. We have all felt exhausted after sparring and noticed how hard it is to perform well; however, even small amounts of fatigue have been shown to significantly reduce performance in complex skills – and karate is a series

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Check back often for up-to-date information

of complex interrelated skills. I have seen a number of street fights, and unless there is an early decisive victor, both combatants are sucking wind within a few seconds, unable to do much more than clutch like drunken dancers (even the threats stop because they don't have enough air to utter them).

As fatigue enters, technique can get sloppy; reactions get slower; stances either get too deep (to try to recreate stability) or too shallow (to straighten the knees and reduce fatigue on the thighs and calves), making it impossible to launch techniques with any measure of precision or accuracy.

Perhaps the most serious consequence of sparring fatigue is the dreaded "rock and reel". A

Since adding more emphasis to leg conditioning, we have noticed significant gains across all ranks. Students now hold their stances better, are both more stable and more mobile, and maintain their freshness and precision for a longer time and under more stress.

Stomach strength is especially important for our style of karate. Sensei Shintani rarely talked about muscular strength as a value, but he noted that the stomach muscles were very important because they connect the upper and lower body. Since Wado-Kai frequently utilises attacks that demand mixed sequences of hand and leg techniques, co-ordination of the two by strong stomach muscles is essential. Additionally, many moves, especially initiation of explosive blocks, require that the stomach work with the back to

Copies of the first **CD of Sensei Shintani** are still available. Sensei was very excited about these pictures being preserved and available to his students via this CD. It contains **Sensei's personal photographs** of himself doing movements from Pinan Shodan, Nidan, Sandan and Yodan. It also has sections of kicks and other movements all being performed by Sensei himself. Three video clips of **Sensei discussing kata and teaching karate** are included. Some clubs have provided pictures in a section showing the various clubs in the Shintani Wado Kai Karate Federation. This has links to their web pages and E-mail. There are over 120 pictures on the CD (over 100 MB of cd space!)

The cost is \$25 Canadian, \$18 US plus shipping.  
Proceeds from this project will be donated to charity in Sensei's name.

The second CD is 85% complete as well. Some clubs have expressed an interest in being included but did not submit material in time for the printing of the first CD. There is opportunity to have material included on the second.

To order please contact Sensei Peter Avino  
Email ([Avinop@localnet.com](mailto:Avinop@localnet.com)) or phone (716) 649-1468

fighter starts to bob back and forth in a slow, predictable rhythm like those cheesy liquid-filled plastic storks that sit on basement rec-room bars and dip their beak into a highball glass. For their opponents, these wobbly karateka are sitting...storks, easy to pick off at will, since that movement often renders the rock-and-reeler largely incapable of any significant defence or attack.

What to do? At our club, Sensei John Saremba recently made some timely observations that we were all being hampered by early fatigability. Two key areas were identified: the legs and the stomach.

stabilise the upper body. Try it yourself: most moves have a stomach-tension component at some stage of their execution.

Another highly underrated technical area is posture and footwork. It's astonishing, but many karateka put themselves in such weak positions that they are only able to do a fraction of what they're capable of. Weak footwork is a common cause; poor posture is the commonest result; lack of explosive mobility is the inevitable consequence.

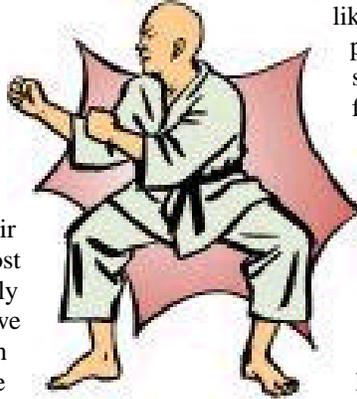
Here are some common basic footwork/posture problems: first of all, many students bury their back leg so far behind their front leg that the

entire non-dominant side is essentially out of action. They end up more-or-less “fencing” with the front side instead of fighting with their both sides, leaving them with only a one-step movement and an inability to take advantage of counter-attack opportunities. Second, some karateka are often so wide in their stance that it is impossible to defend themselves because they’re such an open target and their defences are so spread out. (It’s like the old joke that if the Americans invaded Canada in the morning they would be drinking Budweiser in Ottawa by noon.)

Another mistake frequently seen is footwork that is too slow. Many fighters can easily be tied into knots because they compensate with their feet too slowly, especially in response to their opponent’s lateral movement. Most of us don’t even realise how badly we are twisted up in the legs until we have to block or we try to launch an attack. We often blame our failure on poor range of motion, but our ability to stretch and twist usually has little to do with it.

Conversely, some technical difficulties arise not as a result of too little footwork but because of too much. Many karateka, especially upper-level coloured belts, are very fast, but they leap away so drastically that they have to take a bus to get back in the gym. They are out of position to counter-attack and can only cuff you as they pass by – which is probably lucky for them because if they had to actually hit, they would likely fall down. Sometimes all that is required for effective blocking, for instance, is to make small adjustments of the upper body over a stable lower body; of course, the feet have to be in the right place for those subtle moves to work, which brings us again to posture and footwork. (Sensei Danny McCoy in Edmonton is excellent at this small parry.)

Finally, there are all those purely technical



considerations. Can you punch to an exposed spot in your opponent’s guard without looking at the spot beforehand? Can your kick penetrate a vertical target or does it flop up and down at the end with no focus? If you can’t do these things, you will have to lower your expectations for the time being – and work on it.

Before moving on to The Tactical, a few words about skill consolidation. At the risk of oversimplification, there are two types of learning: learning and overlearning. Learning is like when you know a kata and you can perform it – as long as you can go as slow as you like, you are facing your favourite cardinal direction, and nobody calls your name while you’re at it. Overlearning is bomb-proof skills acquisition: you can stop and start in any part of the sequence, you can do it even if your goldfish died that day, and you can change the timing at will without looking over your shoulder to look at somebody else. Overlearning requires frequent successful repetition of an acquired skill. Many karateka say they’ve “got it” when it’s just that they “did it”, and a skill is not truly yours until it holds up under the stress of a worthy opponent, a little fatigue, and a day when you don’t have your A-game (to borrow a hideous expression). Once you’ve learned it, overlearn it through active, conscious repetition.

## Realm #2: The Tactical

This realm includes, but is not limited to, all the approaches, plans, strategies, and compensations that can be made to increase your winning edge. Some of these involve relearning the basics to provide tactical advantage, or sometimes customising a basic move to solve a generic or specific problem with an opponent. Much of this realm involves ways of optimising the success of your technical skills beyond making the specific technique faster, stronger, more extended, et cetera. That is, much of tactics are designed to

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Western Canada: Sensei Bruce Dunning at (204) 748-3547

Eastern Canada: Sensei June Lebrun at (705) 268-3702

United States: Sensei Bob Graham at (716) 646-3663

answer the question of what you do with a specific opponent. Here are some components of The Tactical:

- body architecture and covering up
- “specialised” techniques
- timing
- distancing
- location
- positioning your opponent
- point “maximisation” for judges and playing by (and close to) the rules
- taking advantage of opponents’ emotions

Most people don’t think of their body architecture as a tactical factor, but the degree to which you can remain covered up while you punch, kick and block by angle, posture and height will determine a lot about the vulnerabilities you offer your opponents. The late Sensei Pete Ciolfi talked about “staying behind your weapons”, and his student Sensei Ron Mattie has really contributed greatly to the effectiveness and safety of techniques by showing how we can punch with power, speed and extension while minimising the target we present to our opponents. These advances do not receive much credit, largely because their value is in what *doesn’t* happen to you (you don’t get hit!). Many of our newer students to karate don’t realise how radical this concept is for a classic karate style, but it is one of the features that makes our approach to karate special.



Another tactical effort is the act of slightly modifying the basic techniques to achieve an end. Sometimes a kick is turned a little inward or outward to find a flat spot on the opponent’s body; sometimes a fist is turned up or down to make it more difficult for the opponent to block the technique from *their* particular angle. Sometimes little changes change everything.

As long as the move is done with power and realism, why not?

Of all the tactical skills, I think timing is the most important. The competitor with superior timing almost always prevails. A competitor can have everything in place: technique, good attitude, strength – but without a good idea of the “when”, it can all largely go to waste.

One manifestation of timing I call entrainment. Watch people walking together: they almost always fall into step with each other. This happens all the time in kumite, and the one who recognises this repetitive pattern and does something about it first usually gets a score.

Another timing phenomenon which is common is the “one-two-three-go”. Many people set up an unconscious internal count while they spar, and won’t go until they reach their own magic number. Problem is, no rule says their opponent has to wait! In kumite, you don’t have the luxury of waiting until you’re ready – you have to be ready *almost every moment*.

I like to think that there are four levels of timing:

1. reactive (this is the brainstem, hand-on-the-hot-stove motion)
2. responsive (they move then you move)
3. anticipatory (you sense where they’re going, and get there first or at the same time)
4. control (you move them around and set them up by controlling their speed; if you’re moving in response to them, it’s because you know you are moving with them, and because you have a plan)

Ask yourself what level you generally find yourself performing at. If you are spending most of your time in #1 and #2 zone, you’re likely to feel like somebody thrown overboard who can’t swim. Spending more time experiencing the other two levels is way more fun; you owe it to yourself to improve your timing sufficiently that this happens. (Some of the skills that will allow you to improve faster are mentioned briefly in The Mental.)

**Did you know that when you show up at a Black Belt Grading  
You must hand in your SWKKF handbook?  
Make sure you keep it up to date!!!**

A skill that is almost as important is distancing. People tend to concentrate on their power and motor skills in performance and don't pay enough attention to distance factors when they spar – and without effective distance control, any technique is a waste. I'll give a few examples:

Have you ever had somebody kind of start an attack, then stop, then consider something else, then stop, then get a kind of blank look on their face? What are they doing? THEY'RE THINKING. And for some reason, they're doing it right in front of you, and they expect not to be disturbed. Well, I like to disturb them. Your opponent is never more vulnerable than at this moment, and it is your Zen martial arts duty to reach out and touch them with your fist or foot to bring them back to the here and now. The lesson is, do not do your thinking when you are in range: step back with alertness, then think if you must. Don't expect other people to patiently wait while you contemplate ways to clobber them.

Finally, there are factors that pertain specifically to judged, competitive kumite (which is not the central focus of this seminar). To be very brief, there are advantages and disadvantages created by every competitive rule structure. In some tournaments, any way you can touch your opponent results in a point, even if the shot wouldn't knock over a hamster; in some tournaments, you can crack your opponent's ribs just to say "howarya!" and never lose a point; in some tournaments you can't get points for face punches that don't hit the face – but you can get points for face-shots that break the skin – even though that's not legal! (Or my favourite: in some tournaments you can't *punch* your opponent in the face – but you can *kick* them in the face!) Go figure. The bottom line is, know the rules - and ignore them at your own peril. When competing, you have to make peace with your own karate values and decide

what you're there for, and accept the consequences of that decision. Then, act without ambivalence.



### Realm #3: The Mental

This is the subtlest and most fascinating area of martial arts. Elite athletes in most sports say that the mental edge is the decisive factor most of the time. And there is nothing like an opponent launching missiles at your body to test your sense of composure.

This is an amorphous category but some of the skills that make up the mental game are:

- calm and relaxation
- collection
- outward attention
- collecting feedback
- indominability
- feeling the aesthetic

Calm is a tricky skill to develop, but it is one of the central goals of martial arts. Sparring is one of the sternest tests of calm available – which is precisely why it is so valuable. If you can develop calm while sparring – when you can fight “within the eye of the hurricane” - you can call on that feeling in stressful situations in your everyday life. Calm lets you enjoy the richness of the moment. Calm is an end in itself.

*Calm is a tricky skill to develop, but it is one of the central goals of martial arts*

I think of calm as the mental state of having a quiet mind, and relaxation as a state of relatively low muscle tension that takes very little effort to maintain. The mental and physical are deeply interrelated: you can reduce the mental tension by quieting out the physical noise, and you can encourage efficient, easy movement by working on keeping the mental chatter to a minimum.

**Do you have something to say?  
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In general, true calm is a late-developing skill, which is a shame, since lack of calm interferes with acquisition of other skills, and proper performance of skills already acquired. Most students (especially males) have a phase of their career where they start to overuse their muscles to try to get the job done, and start to associate muscle tension with punching and kicking power, and get more tense, not less. (You can tell: the veins pop out of their forehead and they appear to be at risk of a cardiovascular accident.) Unfortunately, all that extra energy expenditure just makes for bad technique, easy fatigability, and turns them into an easy-to-read opponent. So, they tense up even more, grind their muscles harder, get slower and more tired – well, you get the picture.

How does one develop calm and relaxation? While sparring, try shaking your limbs periodically so that they can hang in alignment from your body. Check especially the legs, chest and shoulders for residual tension: find out what level of tension constitutes the minimum you need to maintain stance and effective movement, and practice getting there.

Try fighting continuously for an hour or two, with only little breaks, until you are so tired you have to relax – then remember the feeling. Try over-tightening all you muscles for a moment, then let go. Spar sometimes with the intent to cause the opponent to throw a particular technique – then practice remaining calm while you let them score. If you can do the last exercise, then you are really starting to master calm.

When not sparring, try to bring calm to your other karate activities, where the stakes seem apparently lower. Do randori (slow-motion sparring) with a silent mind, letting your body move intuitively to the opportunities that happen – and above all resist the urge to speed up to avoid getting scored on (getting scored on in randori is *good*, not bad). When doing kata, float through, rather than grinding your muscles against each other. When doing basic techniques, finish the move and then survey your body for residual tension. Even when stretching and doing callisthenics, check your whole body for tension, especially your breathing. Don't turn your warm-up into one enormous isometric whole-body contraction – you're too likely to do the same thing when you fight.

Finally, work towards calm attitude in your daily life. Experience calm that is deeper than the everyday variety by meditating, hot baths, great literature – whatever does it for you. Try everyday movements (getting up from a chair, for instance) using the most economical effort possible. Find your areas of habitual body tension and breathe into them. Learn how you wear yourself out mentally (we all do it), and take steps.

“Collection” that sensation when it feels like all your limbs are balanced and ready for immediate use. Boxers talk about “being set”. One dramatic difference I have noticed among great fighters is that they are collected almost constantly. There is very little “down time” – at least not at a moment when there is risk of a legitimate attack from their opponents. Great fighters are like a

### **Worth a surf!!!**

#### **The websites of the members of the Shintani Karate Federation**

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Clarington.....	<a href="http://members.home.net/budo/clubs/clarington.html">http://members.home.net/budo/clubs/clarington.html</a>
Courtice.....	<a href="http://members.home.net/budo/clubs/courtice.html">http://members.home.net/budo/clubs/courtice.html</a>
Hagersville.....	<a href="http://www.geocities.com/wado_hage">http://www.geocities.com/wado_hage</a>
Michipicoton.....	<a href="http://www.onlink.net/~duanemar/index.html">http://www.onlink.net/~duanemar/index.html</a>
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Oshawa.....	<a href="http://www.OshawaWado-kai.com">http://www.OshawaWado-kai.com</a>
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bomb ready to go off in your face. Technically, they enhance their collectedness by keeping balanced; tactically they enhance their collectedness by having a sense of their centre of mass and where it is in relation to their opponent; mentally, they are attending to their opponent and preparing for an instant of sloppy motion on the part of their opponent.



The athlete with the strongest mental ability I have ever seen is the tennis star Steffi Graf. She had great technical skills, but she had definite weaknesses; this she overcame by being strong in what she did well. Tactically she was crafty, but there were many players with more imagination. Where she dominated, though, was mentally. She beat younger, stronger players in the twilight of her career by never giving up, staying focussed, waiting for the opening. More often than not, her opponents didn't lose, they collapsed, because Steffi's will was stronger. Her opponents knew it, and if one carefully watches all kinds of competitive matches, we can see key moments where the pendulum swings from one competitor to another.

The good news is that you don't have to dominate an opponent to win. While most times you can influence the attitude of your opponent, it is ultimately outside your control, and you should not count on an opponent weakening mentally in order for you to succeed.

Really, what you *can* realistically set out to do is to cultivate an attitude of indominability. It is a sense of presence that says, "I'm not going to beat myself. I am completely confident in a good outcome for me (win or lose!). I'm ready for anything. You're not getting anything for free. You better have your best stuff, at the right time, all the time, or it won't be enough. Lets see if you have enough, because I do." Psychologists call this developing an internal locus of control.

"So," I hear the critics chorus, "what do I do if I don't feel that way?" Simple: YOU PRETEND. Think of indominability as a pair of new shoes:

*... push your opponent back with your eyes – or, more precisely, with the spirit...*

you like the look of them, but they pinch in places and feel awkward. You are convinced that everybody can tell you are wearing new, cruel shoes that make you feel uncomfortable (they usually can't tell). Then over time those shoes begin to fit, start to feel part of your feet, and will take you almost everywhere.

Pretend. Try it during basic walking and blocking – instead of turning mechanically, turn with real intent. Try it while doing kata – cut through that imaginary opponent like butter with your down-block; sense his henchmen scattering in disarray at the power of your defence. Try it while sparring: push your opponent back with your eyes – or, more precisely, with the spirit and intent that you manifest behind your eyes. Of course you will not be able to sustain this presence for long at first, so watch what happens when you are not manifesting indominability: your opponent gets faster and braver, you feel slow to get off the mark, you spend a lot of time moving backwards worrying about what your opponent will do next. There is no ki in your kata; your basics look purposeless and preoccupied. In short, you are out of it. I think you will soon realise that a pose of indominability is a key part of your overall martial arts skills.



I want to re-emphasise that cultivating indominability has nothing to do with putting down your opponent

psychologically, or being mean, or thinking you are intrinsically better than the next person. All you are doing, in essence, is getting out of your own way so that the best you have can flow forth.

I have had students come to me and say, "I'm non-competitive. I really don't care what happens when I spar. In fact, I am certainly the most non-competitive person here!" Actually, those people almost always secretly really really hate to lose, and they are ambivalent about winning at the same time. They tend to be

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Shintani Memorial Wado Kai Championships**  
Saturday May 26<sup>th</sup> 2001 at Brock University, St.Catharines, Ontario  
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preoccupied with what they believe kumite means about *them*; taking that preoccupation out there on the floor, they usually do poorly, which confirms their original fears. And heaven help them if they actually do better than their opponent, since maybe that other person might not like them as much or will resent losing, or whatever. I think that almost as many people are afraid of success as they are of failure, and negative mental attitude can block your overall progress and rob you of enjoyment.

Look at it this way. If you are really, truly non-competitive, you will employ kumite as just another tool to master your art. If you are truly non-competitive, you will accept the unspoken agreement of kumite that we will both give our utmost in every way so that each of us can develop to the utmost. If you are truly non-competitive you can really congratulate your opponent – and yourself – for a job well done, even while you fiendishly plot how you will get them next time. Even if you are convinced that you will always be useless at sparring, and you hate it, et cetera, et cetera, you owe it to yourself and your partner to give them the best you can.

Try this. If you really feel you're terrible at kumite, spar every class – and spar with the most skilful people in your dojo: they have the least to prove, they likely enjoy sparring with anybody, and they model the best skills. Then set realistic goals – which, depending on the rank difference, may only be that you back them up a couple of times, or out-position them for a moment, or you just surprise them a little once or twice. Skill development, including mental skill development, usually comes in small steps, so be calm, patient and realistic.

It helps to keep in mind that all end-points in your karate career – belt gradings, tournament wins, et cetera - are just mental inventions. Learning karate is a process, a journey. Less effort focussing on end destinations and more time cherishing the journey lightens the load.

Finally, just as there is an aesthetic to well-performed kata, there is an aesthetic to great kumite. It often takes depth of experience to feel it, but many people who make martial arts a lifelong practice sustain themselves through the setbacks and the injuries and the inevitable technical plateaux because they are drawn to a sense of this aesthetic. In fact, it is often largely *because* of this sense of purity and beauty underneath that many of us keep at it. After all, karate *is* an art.

### **Conclusion**

Kumite is a powerful part of a true martial art. By having an opponent who doesn't act in a predictable manner, we call on all our skills in three key realms: technical, the tactical, and the mental. Developing sparring skills provides one of the key components of martial arts that make it uniquely useful as a health practice, as a sport, as a self-defence system, and (dare I say it?) as an aesthetic/spiritual practice.

Many karateka think that good fighters are "naturals", but this is wrong. Kumite is a skill-set. These skills are interrelated, in that improving one realm improves all the rest; they are discrete in the sense that they can be cultivated individually. Striving to develop all of these skills simultaneously is the best strategy for getting the most out of your experience on the dojo floor.

Thank you and good luck!

**Thunder Bay Black Belt Invitational Grading**  
**Submitted by Sensei Duane Wenmann, Nidan**  
**Wawa Wado Kai, Ontario.**

Sensei Rick Leveille and the North West Wado Kai Association hosted an Invitational Black Belt grading in Thunder Bay Ontario on Saturday September 9th, 2000. The event was held at the West Thunder Community Centre in the west end of the beautiful and scenic northern city of Thunder Bay. Karateka and Sensei traveled up to several hours to attend the grading.

Coming from communities including Hearst, Wawa, White River, Ft.Frances, Manitouwadge, and Thunder Bay the competitors experienced some very beautiful fall colours that this part of the north is most noted for.

The Juseki Board members were comprised of the following Sensei: Sensei Richard Leveille (6), Sensei Roger Deschamps (5), Sensei Randy Quarrell (4), Sensei Larry Laforge (4), Sensei Raymond O'Connor (4).

Approximately 12 persons took part in the grading on Saturday. Following standard SWKKF grading format, the grading commenced at approximately 10 a.m. and ended later that day with one (1) applicant receiving his Black Belt and the remaining five (5) applicants being promoted to their next Dan level. Afterwards, participants celebrated their accomplishments with dinner, drink, and stories at a local eatery. It was a perfect end to a great workout. We also shared a few good jokes and gathered together to sing Happy Birthday to Sensei Rick whom in fact had reached "forty something" only one day prior to the grading.

On Sunday, Sensei Leveille conducted a 4-hour workshop, which was attended by approximately 20 Black and Brown belts. Sensei spent some time going through Seisan kata. This was extremely helpful for some of the participants whom had not previously worked on the bunkai of this kata. As it turned out it was a beautiful day following the workshop and the scenic drive home made the weekend a perfect experience. Sensei Rick has expressed interest in holding this grading/workshop each year around the same time. Participants felt this was a great idea as it gives Northern Ontario black belts another avenue to meet and exchange thoughts and techniques.



The results of the grading are as follows:

Lew Kempf - Shodan (Fort Frances),  
 Tim Radul - Nidan (Thunder Bay), Michel Beaulieu - Nidan (Thunder Bay), Ross Keeler - Nidan (Fort Frances WK), Claude Boucher - Nidan (Fort Frances WK), Jon Laroche - Sandan (Thunder Bay)

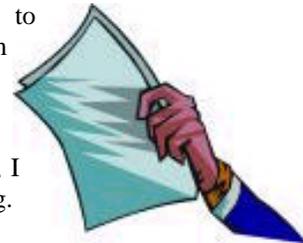
For Sensei Rick and the Juseki Board members, congratulations from the NWWK Association to all participants for a job well done. Special thanks to Sensei Roger Deschamps, Sensei Rachel Deschamps and the Hearst WK karateka who attended to offer their assistance at this event.



Front Row L-R: Ross Keeler (Nidan), Jon Laroche (Sandan), and Tim Radul (Nidan)  
 Back Row L-R: Claude Boucher (Nidan), Lew Kempf (Shodan), and Michel Beaulieu (Nidan)

**Senate Report**  
**Submitted by Sensei Peter Ruch, Rokudan**  
**Secretary General of the SWKKF**

I have been asked to submit a report from the SWKKF Senate. With Sensei Denis Labbe's permission, I submit the following.



The year 2000 will be a year we should not forget. Sensei Masaru Shintani passed away on Sunday May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2000. We have lost a great leader but Sensei had the foresight to organize. Sensei Shintani selected members from within his organization, who under his benevolent guidance worked diligently to formulate the present Constitution and By-laws, which govern the Corporation of the Shintani Wado Kai Karate Federation.

When Sensei died, the constitution and Corporate Governance's came into play and Sensei Denis Labbe humbly accepted the position of President as requested by Sensei

Shintani. Keeping in mind the messages produced on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2000 and June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2000, the SWKKF is moving forward in the memory of Sensei Shintani.

As you can well imagine, there were many matters that need immediate attention. The Senate would like to thank all the members for their support and guidance during this most difficult time. We are a family of Karate people and we will remain a family. During the months that followed Senate members were kept busy through the use of the Internet and snail mail.

The Senate met as a board on Friday October 20<sup>th</sup>, and Saturday October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2000 in Welland, Ontario.

Sensei Denis spoke about his meeting with Sensei Paul Leonard, a very close friend of Sensei Shintani. Sensei Shintani had wanted Sensei Leonard to be a special advisor to the Shintani Wado Kai Karate Federation and this will be carried forward. Sensei Denis was going to meet more of the members of the Federation and would be doing more travelling.

Sensei Denis spoke about the direction of the organization and appointed Sensei Peter Ruch as the Secretary General of the SWKKF, and his successor as President of the organization.

Members of the Senate spoke about their final meetings with Sensei Shintani and the impact that he had had on their lives. As a result of the discussions a list of new items was added to the agenda for Saturday's session.

On Saturday, the Senate reviewed the financial position of the SWKKF, including the current accounts and the National Team accounts. The Senate agreed that they should be updated on a regular basis.

We discussed the team participation in selected tournaments such as traditional U.S. Open tournaments. Sensei Ron Mattie was to select a future traditional tournament, which will co-inside with the Pam-Am games.

Sensei Ron Mattie, grading committee chair, presented the new grading booklet. Upgraded the joseki board ranking, updated the pre-requisite for shodan and the grading questionnaire.

The role of the Chief Instructor was discussed. Shintani Sensei held both Position of President and Supreme Instructor. The SWKKF is a national Organization with enormous responsibilities, keeping that in mind, the Senate decided to split the two positions.

### The Shintani Wado Kai Karate Federation Senate

From left to right, Senseis Danny McCoy, Lawrence Blakemore, Rick Leveille, Peter Ruch, Denis Labbe, Bruce Perkins, Ron Mattie, Willie Lebrun, Brad Cosby.



A position of Chief Instructor was established. The Chief Instructor shall be accountable to the Senate to administer all technical matters within the mandate of the Federation. The Chief Instructor would form a technical advisory board as per Shintani Sensei's wishes. The advisory board made up by Sensei Ron Mattie, Sensei

Bruce Perkins, Sensei Dan McCoy, Sensei Lawrence Blakemore, Sensei Brad Cosby and Sensei Denis Labbé. Sensei Ron Mattie be appointed Chief Instructor

Sensei Bruce Perkins presented the Standard and Ethics Committee reports. An amended version will be distributed to the Senate members and the Provincial Representatives.

Sensei Bruce Perkins, Kata Committee Chair, reported that funding would be required for the production of the black belt kata tape. Sensei Denis Labbé would obtain a second estimate for

production of the kata tape. We will be moving forward with this project.

There were discussions concerning Club Charters, New Black Belt Certificates, New Kyu Belt Certificate, and Teaching Certificates. Sensei Denis Labbé and Sensei Peter Ruch would be looking into production of these documents.

Sensei Dave Manara and Sensei Paul Leonard were recognized for their past relationship with Shintani Sensei, and were extended lifetime honorary affiliation with the Shintani Wado Kai Karate Federation.

The matter of better communications was discussed. Sensei Denis Labbé will set up a system to send by e-mail, for those with accessibility, and by postal mail, for those who have no computer or Internet accessibility.



Sensei Dr. Robert Graham  
President of the Shintani  
Karate Federation, USA

Before his death, Sensei Shintani formed a separate organization in the United States. The USA-SWKKF is under the direction of Bob Graham with his own Senate members, Sensei Mark Flaherty, Sensei Peter Avino and Sensei Thomas Pinckney. Sensei Bob Graham will be President and Chief Instructor of the United States Shintani Wado Kai. We

congratulate Sensei Bob and are looking forward in meeting and working with them.

**If you think you don't make a difference... you do.**

**Submitted by Sensei Ron Mattie, Sichidan**  
**Chief Instructor of the SWKKF**

I want to make mention of an issue that Sensei Shintani used to talk to us about every once in a while. It has to do with instructors who aren't well known or who have very few students. If

you are one of these, then let me address you. You are an important part of the organization and we do value your efforts. I remember Sensei Peter Ciolfi having only 2 to 3 regular students for over a year.



He still drove through bad weather to teach his class. Even if only one person showed up, he would find a way of getting there to teach. Those few students are all black belts today. Even if they hadn't reached that rank, just think of the impact that was made on their lives. You can't ask for anything greater. We have the Eddy Poulin's, the Gord Deriis, the Tom Fosters, Santiago Lau-as the Shelley McGregors and many more. I want you all to know that every time you put your gi on to help out one student, Sensei Shintani was very proud of you. I just need you to know that.

In Sensei Shintani's and Sensei Ciolfi's memory.

**My friend, Kyla**  
**Submitted by Sensei Ron Mattie, Sichidan**  
**Chief Instructor of the SWKKF**

I think most of you remember Kyla Gould from Manitoba. Kyla is a sandan and was on the Shintani team in 1998-1999. She has since move to Reading England 2 years ago to live with her fiancé and will be married in Aug of 2001. Kyla, Darren Humphies and I have kept close contact through emails and phone calls in the last year. She is working out with a Wado club in England at present time.

Well... on Thursday, Dec. 14, Kyla called me up to tell me that her flight from London to Toronto was delayed therefor missing her connecting flight to Manitoba to spend the holidays with her family. This meant an over night stay in Ontario then depart the following day from Toronto to Manitoba. She was all hysterical about being able to spend the night in Welland. I picked her

up at 8 p.m. in Toronto and we went to the dojo for 945 p.m. till 2 am Friday morning. That was followed by gift exchanged, and looking at karate pictures. Some of those pictures included some bad ones of Darren Humphries in Japan. We went to bed at 4 a.m. and got up at 630 am to return Miss Gould in Toronto by 10 am to catch her flight to Manitoba.



During the training with Kyla that night, I was at awe at how good she really is. Her basics are so solid that anything I suggested, she tried and got it right away. She is amazing. Her katas are sharp, explosive and great spirit. Her sparring, well, I have this big black bruise in my ribs. Need I say more? Kyla is definitely and inspiration to all karatekas she meets. On behalf of the Shintani Wado-Kai Karate Federation, we wish you happiness in your journey.

In peace by way of harmony;  
Your friend, Ron Mattie

**Upcoming Tournaments:**

**Saturday February 24<sup>th</sup>**

Hamilton Ontario

Ontario Provincial Championships  
(This is an all styles tournament)

Contact Armie Rizzo  
(905) 560-4011 or 664-2948

**Saturday February 24<sup>th</sup>**

Virdin, Manitoba

Contact Bruce Dunning:  
bdunning@mb.sympatico.ca

**Saturday March 10<sup>th</sup>**

Welland, Ontario

Contact: Denis Labbe  
dlabbe@attcanada.net or (905) 734-4119

**Saturday March 10<sup>th</sup>**

Calgary Alberta

Contact: Heather Fidyk  
fid@home.com or (403) 257-4638

**Saturday, March 24<sup>th</sup>**

Hearst, Ontario

Contact: Rachel and Roger Deschamps  
Hearstwadokai@hotmail.com

**Saturday April 7<sup>th</sup>**

Stony Plain, Alberta

Contact:  
Norman Volk (780) 460-1437  
volkfolks@home.com  
Danny McCoy (780) 962-8292  
mccoy@weyehaeuser.com

**Saturday, May 26<sup>th</sup>**

Shintani Memorial Championships

St.Catharines, Ontario

Contact: Denis Labbe  
dlabbe@attcanada.net

**June 1<sup>st</sup> (tentatively)**

Vancouver, British Columbia

Contact: Blaine Beemer  
brbeemer@portal.ca

Local/Regional workout schedules and advanced clinics should be available from your Regional Representative.

**Get listed on the official email list of the Shintani Karate Federation**

*Black Belts*, if you are a current member you can add your name to the email listing to get first hand information directly from SWKKF headquarters. You may also add your name to the Shintani website, or keep it confidential (unlisted).

Email your request to [getyourkicks@wadokaikarate.com](mailto:getyourkicks@wadokaikarate.com)