



Katsu-Mi Kai Shotokan Karate

December 2012

NEWSLETTER

KATSU-MI KAI JION KATA COURSE

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Senseis at the Jion Kata Course (L to R): Steve Manning, Glen Hall, Mark Carroll & Brett Halliday.

ON 25th November 2012 60 Shotokan Karateka from the Katsu-Mi Kai group of karate clubs and the Irish Shotokan Academy met at Matravers School in Westbury to spend a day studying the Kata Jion under the tutelage of three eminent sensei: Sensei Glen Hall 6th Dan (2x British kata champion), Sensei Brett Halliday 6th Dan (an international kumite champion) and Sensei Mark Carroll 6th Dan (a renowned Bunkai coach and the chief instructor of the Katsu-Mi Kai group of karate clubs). It is not often that you can study with three 6th Dan instructors in one period and I for one was looking forward to a full day of kata, kumite and street orientated bunkai.

The day began with Sensei Glen Hall taking us through a technical revision of the kata, as a non-Shotokan karateka (my original style was Shukokai/Shito-ryu) this was an especially challenging and rewarding period. Sensei Glen was out-

standing at teaching the kata in a focused and systematic way. His emphasis was on correct kihon and combinations, correct stances and, most impressively for me, weight transition - flowing through stance changes in order to advance kime and power.

Sensei Glen helped me understand the kata in its technical detail and by doing this he laid the foundations for the rest of the day's instruction. This course was very much a 'traditional' karate event taught with etiquette and respect but Sensei Glen set the instructional tone by being approachable, open and humorous. By the end of his period I had a much more rounded understanding of the kata, as did the lower grades who had come to the kata for the first time.

Sensei Glen was followed by Sensei Brett Halliday who took Jion and applied it within a traditional

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karate structure to ippon kumite and jiyu ippon kumite. Sensei Brett's technique, timing and distancing are truly exceptional and he stretched the students with dynamic and fluid interpretations of the katas attacks. Sensei Brett began by questioning the class on what makes Shotokan karate 'Shotokan karate', what in their view was its uniqueness? We suggested that it was the search for the 'ippon' - Ikken Hissatsu 'to annihilate at one blow' and from this point on we began to understand Sensei Brett's approach.

He emphasised timing, accuracy (picking a target and hitting it) and fluidity. Shotokan Karate is often criticised for being rigid, but Sensei Brett was far from rigid as he took us through scissors take-downs, kicking, throwing and trapping techniques all applied directly from the Kata Jion, both moving forward and back. My senpai, Sensei Martin Chapman was Sensei Brett's favoured opponent and all I can say is I'm glad it wasn't me! Sensei Brett was completely controlled but the total focus of his techniques was breath-taking. I think at this point that the senior grades on the course began to understand the continuum of the day, we had studied the Shotokan triumvirate of kihon, kata and kumite expressed within Jion and all that was left now was to take Jion out of the dojo and onto the street.

Sensei Mark Carroll moved on with the session by building on what had gone before. Sensei Mark understands that self-defence techniques need to be instinctive; in the seconds it takes for a situation to deteriorate you cannot waste time attempting to recall half remembered and half understood techniques. To a Shotokan karateka kata is instinctive

so it makes sense to base our self defence system on kata. Sensei Mark took Jion and applied it in street situations; He explained to the class the need to take kata bunkai and drill it against realistic street attacks (Habitual Acts of Violence HAOV) only in this way can you develop an instinctive and effective self defence system based on Kata.

Sensei Mark ran the class through his 'Street Kata' always directed against realistic opponents and drilled on pads and bags, his approach is full on and first person and I got the impression that some students were not prepared for the intensity of the session. Sensei Mark emphasised that the karateka must see their personal bunkai in kata in order to own their self defence system. Take me for example I am an aggressive striker, my bunkai will be very different from a woman half my size, I will defend myself in a different way. Sensei Mark's session helped us understand this.

It struck me at the end of the day that studying kata in this manner is not a linear activity it's a circular one, we don't move from kihon, to kata, to kumite and on to bunkai, they are all informing elements of the same study. If you want to see how this works look at Sensei Steve Manning, an outstanding all-round Shotokan karateka with strong self-defence techniques which I am sure he visualises throughout his kata and kihon.

In sum, a fantastic day, I recommend it to karateka of any style. This is grown-up karate for the serious student but taught by people who value their students and have fun. All the instructors taught outstanding individual lessons which fed into each other to give a much more rounded product.

I can't wait for the next one.

Joe Howe

NEW WEBSITE

Please check out Katsu-Mi Kai's new website featuring information about its clubs, instructor profiles, forthcoming events and Sensei Carroll's Bunkai DVD sales.
<http://www.katsumikai.co.uk/>

LICENCES

Please make sure your licence is up to date. You should not be training and cannot grade or compete without an up-to-date licence. Ask your instructor for application forms.

MORE SUPPORT NEEDED

SENSEI Carroll has said that, although many enthusiastic Katsu-Mi Kai members supported the St Ives Course, much more support is needed if it is to continue.

The date of the next St Ives Course is October 11th, 12th & 13th 2013, giving almost a year's notice to plan towards it. If this is badly attended it will then be dropped from Katsu-Mi Kai's calendar.

KATSU-MI KAI COURSES & COMPETITIONS 2013

- 19th January: Course & Grading, Christie Miller Sports Centre, Melksham 12-5 pm*
- 23rd February: 1 Day Kata Course, Christie Miller Sports Centre, Melksham
- 9th March: 13th Legend Open Championships, Bracknell Leisure Centre
- 20th April: Course & Grading, Christie Miller Sports Centre, Melksham 12-5 pm*
- 20th July: Course & Grading, Christie Miller Sports Centre, Melksham 12-5 pm*
- 11th, 12th & 13th October: St Ives Course
- 23rd November: Westbury Competition, Matravers School, Westbury
- 24th November: 1 Day Kata Course at Matravers School, Westbury



* MELKSHAM COURSES & GRADINGS – 19th Jan; 20th Apr; 20th July

Training will take place between 12.00 and 5.00 p.m. and will be split into several sessions. Junior and adult kyu grades train from 12.00 to 1.30 p.m. with Sensei Carroll or Sensei Howe. This group can then take a break, resuming training from 3.00 p.m. to 4 p.m. with Sensei Wheeler. Alternatively the higher grades within this group can go straight into the training session of Sensei Carroll from 1.30 to 4.00 p.m. if they wish.

All black and brown belts train with Sensei Carroll from 1.30 to 4.00 p.m.

The grading follows after 4.00 p.m.

The above arrangements do not apply to the 1 Day Kata Courses or the St Ives Course.