



"To win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the highest skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the highest skill." ~ Sun-Tsu ~The Art of War

NL SHOTOKAN KARATE

TSURUOKA SENSEI

O'Sensei Masami Tsuruoka

If Karate in NL were compared to a tree and you looked into its history, you would find that a significant part of its roots were grown from the teachings and insight of O'Sensei Tsuruoka.

OSSI, TSURUOKA SENSEI, TRADITIONAL KARATE-KA IN NL ARE FOREVER GRATEFUL...



"I have seen the best karate. All that really matters is what kind of human being you are." Masami Tsuruoka



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Mark your Calendars **May 23rd**
NKA Seminar and AGM

Details to follow...



Looking Like History

Jeff Hutchings (Shodan)

From time to time I wonder about Shotokan Karate in NL. I wonder if we have enough participants to ensure that the Art has a long and vibrant life. Given that there is some coming and going of karate-ka, will we survive amongst the flashier, more immediate-results-based martial arts?

We have a legacy that is second to none in our five Shotokan Sensei who have adopted, trained extensively, and taught Shotokan for decades. We have a long and colorful history and we have managed to keep to our traditional roots. We have managed to pass down the principles of Karate, keeping the three pillars - Kihon, Kata and Kumite—in all of our Dojos.

But what about the numbers?

Recently I was reading a book by Kenji Tokitsu called *Kata*. In it, Tokitsu brought an interesting idea to mind. Written some years back, he talked about the fact that Karate was losing so much of its authenticity because classes were large and dojo's were plentiful. He was alarmed that in many places he visited, Karate had become a social activity and had shaken off much of its essential qualities. He said that karate was being taught by other students who weren't well-trained enough themselves, nor prepared enough to teach. One-on-one time with Sensei was scarce.

...quality of the Art is continuing in its growth.

So, if big classes have their drawbacks, what of the smaller classes we now participate in? My take is this: we are now getting the very best instruction, from very well trained karate-ka, and we are looking more like history in the sense that we have a handful of Students, Sempai and Sensei.

In the days of old, when Karate was brought to Okinawa and assembled into the various fighting styles, the Masters would teach only a handful of students—oftentimes, in fact, only one. This may have happened for various reasons, including passing Karate on to a family member, or to a senior student who would continue its practice in a very strict, rigid fashion without altering its techniques or principles. Masters demonstrated, watched, analyzed, and corrected students and had them repeat techniques and Kata in perpetuity. In every class now we are getting one-on-one Sensei time. Compared to what karate looked like in early Okinawa days (prior to the training of large number of karate-ka to be castle guards, etc, of course), we are resembling the old structure.

We have the occasional newcomer, and in my Dojo there are always a good number of the future karate masters: juniors. But we consist primarily of dedicated, long-term practitioners who know plenty and yet yearn to know more. In addition, we seem to always have a newly-promoted Shodan or two who serve as rough iron for tempering and molding by Sempai. Teaching is intimate and intense, and due to the smaller numbers we have time to make karate very granular in analyzing it and endeavoring to understand it.

An analogy to this would be learning a foreign language in a large class. You are being taught by a teacher, but you will inevitably pick up accents, and language idiosyncrasies from the group itself. In Shotokan, although we are encouraged to learn from one another, the final word on karate is that from your Sempai or your Sensei. Fortunately, in the Dojo I train in, that final word comes from Sempai and Sensei with 30 and 40 years of training respectively.

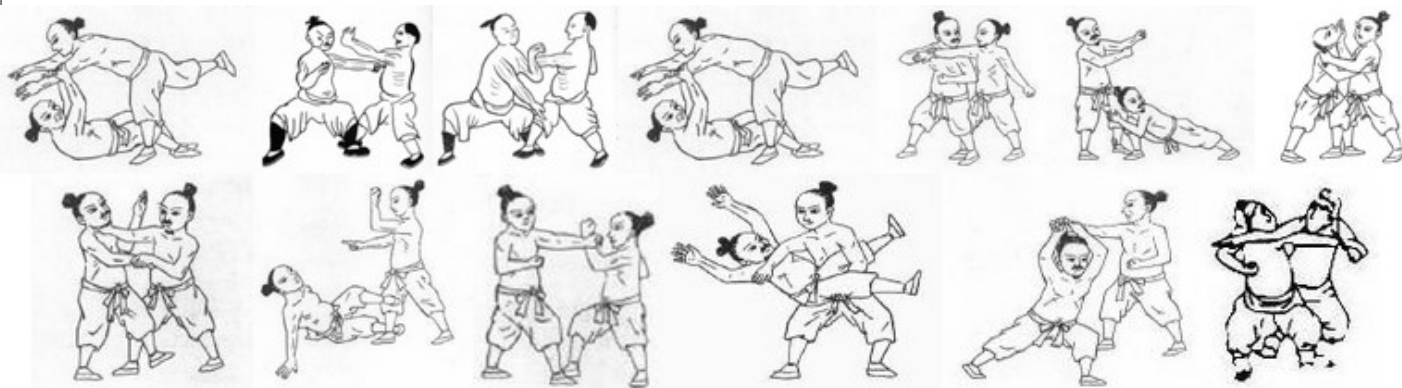
It is easy to look at our Shotokan classes and suggest that it is fading, or taking a backseat to the more in-your-face styles that offer faster rank promotions. I'd suggest that in reality Shotokan is currently on a portion of a continuum where smaller class sizes are resembling the days of old—and the quality of the Art is continuing in its growth.

A handful of dedicated Karateka can float the mighty ship that is Shotokan.



In this rare photo, we see Soken Matsumura teaching two students an advanced Sickle and Rope Kata. Here the idea wasn't to grow Karate, but rather to ensure that the techniques, principles—and perhaps even the secrets—were passed on to students

Bunkai in history...Pictured below are hand-to-hand combat diagrams shown in the *Bubishi*, a secret text passed from master to student in China and later in Okinawa. The *Bubishi* is said to be the original martial Arts written text. In looking at the diagrams, one can see the similarities to techniques in Shotokan Kata. Part of the reason that Kata were designed, after all, was to allow the passing of Karate techniques from generation to generation in a manner fairly easy to transmit.



Explosive Power:

If you've ever trained with Sempai Robert Howse, 5th Dan, you know two things for certain: he is deceptively powerful, and he preaches maximum rotation, compression and explosive expansion. If at any point in your training you question the effectiveness of Karate, you have to look no further than at the Karate of Sempai Howse or others with a similar level of adeptness. His teachings and those of Mikio Yahara are strikingly similar:

"Maximum rotation! Rotate the hip all the way back, without letting your front knee move or fall in, until you hit the point of maximum rotation. And then, as soon as you hit that point you release. Explode! Sending your energy right to the center, at your opponent. Hit with your body, not just the arm and fist." Sempai Howse

"How I generate power is formed around the idea of how much you can generate and squeeze out of your body, tap its hidden power. So how do I do it? My answer is that it is possible if you can combine Kaiten (rotation/ spinning) and Kusshin (compression and explosive expansion)" says Mikio Yahara.



Compression! Rotation! Torque!

Following Karate Blogs:

Newfoundland Shotokan Karate

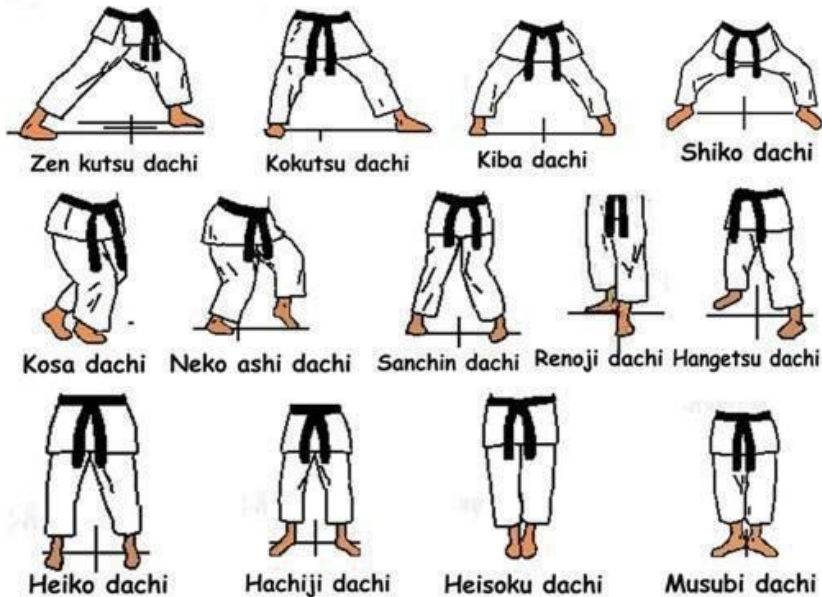
NLS Blog – Highlighting the deep-rooted tradition and enduring spirit of Shotokan Karate in NL

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SHOTOKAN MAGAZINE

NL Shotokan is being represented once again in Shotokan Magazine. Watch for the May Issue. Look for an article by Jeff Hutchings called *One student's look at karate: a vehicle for change, a mirror for life*

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It's All in the
Stance...

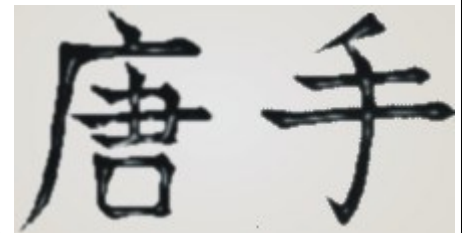
KARATE VS KARATE

Seen here is the Kanji for **Tang (China) Hand**, the symbols used for Karate prior to its changing around the early 1930s.

The first documented use of *kara* by replacing the Chinese character meaning "Tang Dynasty" with the character meaning "empty" took place in *Karate Kumite* written in August 1905 by Chōmo Hanashiro (1869–1945)

"Since there are no written records it is not known definitely whether the kara in karate was originally written with the character 唐 meaning China or the character 空 meaning empty. During the time when admiration for China and things Chinese was at its height in the Ryūkyūs it was the custom to use the former character when referring to things of fine quality. Influenced by this practice, in recent times karate has begun to be written with the character 唐 to give it a sense of class or elegance." - G Funakoshi

In 1933, the Okinawan art of karate was recognized as a Japanese martial art by the Japanese Martial Arts Committee known as the "Butoku Kai". Until 1935, "karate" was written as "唐手" (Chinese hand). But in 1935, the masters of the various styles of Okinawan karate conferred to decide a new name for their art. They decided to call their art "karate" written in Japanese characters as "空手" (empty hand)



WHAT IS TRADITIONAL KARATE- IAIN ABERNETHY 6TH DAN



Old-school karate was predominately based upon the application of the techniques within the kata.

The title of this article is ‘What is Traditional Karate?’ And that may seem like a strange question for a traditional karateka to ask! But it is my view that we often do not think what ‘traditional’ actually means, and how that impacts upon the art we practice. The dictionary definition of ‘traditional’ is, “adhering to a long established procedure.” To play devil’s advocate for a moment, I’d suggest that the majority of karate practised in this country today is not traditional! My reasoning is that much of today’s karate is not “adhering to a long established procedure” but is in fact only a few decades old.

There can be little doubt that karate does not have the same status it did in the past. To the wider martial arts community, Traditional Karate is often viewed as an out-dated relic and a wholly ineffective system. Karate is often criticised for its lack of realism, its lack of close-range techniques, its preoccupation with “looking good”, its omission of ground work, the unrealistic nature of its sparring, the impracticality of its techniques etc. And I have to admit that in many cases these criticisms are justified! However, it is not “Traditional Karate” that is at fault, but its modern interpretation. The confusing part of all this is that modern karate is often incorrectly labelled as “Traditional”! Just to be clear, it is in no way my intention to belittle modern karate, merely to point out that the modern version of karate is nowhere near as effective in real combat as the karate of old.

If we go back to the dictionary definition of ‘traditional’ we can conclude that the longer a particular ‘procedure’ has been adhered to then the more ‘traditional’ it is. So to determine exactly what traditional karate is, we should look at how the art was originally practised.

As you’ll be aware, the people of Okinawa formulated karate in order to protect themselves from assault in a civilian environment (which is why most people start practising the art today). If we examine the older karate texts – e.g. The Bubushi – we can see references to the various aspects of koryu (old school) karate. Also remember that in the past, kata would never be studied without its applications (which is the most common way that kata is practised today). A study of the applications of the katas – which are in effect the DNA of karate – also reveals many aspects of old style karate. The karate of old included the following combative methods in its curriculum; Atemi-Waza (striking techniques), Tegumi (Grappling), Kansetsu-waza (Joint Locks), Jintai Kyusho (Weak points of the human body), Shime-waza (Chokes & Strangles), Nage-waza (Throws & Takedowns) and Ne-Waza (Ground Fighting Techniques). I’d now like to briefly look at each of these aspects in turn. If the karate of today is based upon a “long established procedure” and is hence traditional, we should find that the art is the same today as it was when the first records (texts & katas) were made.

Self-Defence in a Civilian Environment

Old-style karate was for use in self-defence in a civilian environment. For karate to be ‘traditional’ it should also be practiced for self-defence in a civilian environment. However, the vast majority of today’s karate is practised in order to win tournaments in a sporting environment. I’ve written before about the differences between the sporting environment and real fights, and I don’t wish to repeat myself unnecessarily. For now it is sufficient to point out that if your training is predominately focused towards counters against vertical back-fists, hook-kicks etc. which are delivered from ten feet away, then you’re not practising traditional karate. The reason being that you are very unlikely to see those techniques being employed in a civilian self-defence scenario. If you are practising traditional karate then your training will be geared towards defending yourself from a violent and untrained attacker at close range.

Kata Applications

Old-school karate was predominately based upon the application of the techniques within the kata. Today, the applications of the katas are rarely practised and the emphasis is placed upon the kata being pleasing to the eye. And even when the applications are practised it is often in a non-traditional manner. Remember that old-school karate is about self-defence in a civilian environment. The great Choki Motobu – who was one of Okinawa’s most feared fighters – once said, “The techniques of the kata were never developed to be used against a professional fighter, in an arena or on a battlefield.” Hence, when you see bunkai (applications) that begin with the practitioners starting ten feet away from one another, and then attacking with an Oi-Zuki, or any other such ‘martial arts’ technique, you can be positive that the application in question is not traditional. True kata applications work best at close range against an opponent who is not another karateka (see my book “Bunkai-Jutsu” book for more details.)

Atemi-Waza (striking techniques)

Both old and modern karate includes striking techniques. Hence in this regard the karate of today could be thought of as traditional. However, closer examination shows that the striking techniques of the past and those of today are quite different. High kicking is practised today, whereas in the past all kicks were below the waist. In the past, the emphasis was on power, whereas today the emphasis is often placed upon control. In old-style karate all the strikes were aimed at weak points, however, today these weak points are ignored in favour of scoring areas. The skills associated with close range control & manipulating a predictable response (combative use of the 'withdrawal reflex') were considered to be a vital part of old-style striking, but today they are rarely taught. The biggest difference, however, has to be that of range. Old-style karate placed a heavy emphasis on close-range strikes, whereas modern karate places a heavy emphasis on long-range strikes. This is again down to the move away from effective combat skills (real fights are invariably close range affairs).

Grappling

Grappling skills are a must in real combat and they formed a large part of old-style karate. Practice would have included general grappling skills (Tegumi), Joint Locks (Kansetsu-waza), Chokes & Strangles (Shime-waza), Throws & Takedowns (Nage-waza) and Ground Fighting (Ne-Waza). All of which are now totally missing from modern practice. In the book 'Karate-Do Kyohan' Gichin Funakoshi (founder of Shotokan) wrote, "...in karate, hitting, thrusting, and kicking are not the only methods, throwing techniques and pressure against joints are included." A little later he writes, "all these techniques should be studied referring to basic kata." Grappling was still a regular part of some karate groups even as recently as the 1960's. In the 1967 book, 'Karate: Beginner to Black Belt,' H D Plee (who was one of the pioneers of karate in Europe) wrote, "One must not lose sight of the fact that Karate is "all-in" fighting. Everything is allowed ... This is why Karate is based on blows delivered with the hand, the foot, the head or the knee. Equally permissible are stragulations, throwing techniques and locks." I'd ask you to consider how "permissible" a head-butt, a blow with the knee, a strangle, a throw or a lock would be in the majority of today's dojo's? (My guess would be "not very!"). As an aside, it is vital to have an understanding of all of the various aspects of old-style karate if you are to understand your kata. This is because the katas are entirely based on old-style karate. If you do not understand throws, for example, you'll never see them in the kata. Anyhow, we can see that in the past, karate was a complete system of fighting, but today it is often limited to just long-range strikes. (See the KGM Book & Tapes for more details).

Jintai Kyusho (Weak points of the human body)

In the past, the weak areas of the body were regarded as a vital area of study. However, whilst most of today's karateka could probably tell you which areas they are prohibited from striking under the rules of modern competition, they would probably struggle to list the weak points of the body. Obviously, it is vital to know where the weak areas of the human body are if the karateka is to be more effective in a real situation (whilst always keeping in mind the fact that being accurate in the mess of a live fight is not as easy as some suggest).

By now it should be fairly apparent that whilst the modern interpretation of karate is found lacking in real situations, traditional karate is a highly effective system, that covers all aspects of fighting, and is very relevant to self-defence today. By studying your katas and practising the art in its entirety – just as they did in the past – you are ensuring that you develop the necessary skills to defend yourself in actual combat. And hence, by definition, you are a Traditional Karateka! So the next time someone tells you that Traditional Karate is an out-dated and ineffective art, ask them exactly what they mean by "Traditional"?

<http://www.iainabernethy.co.uk/>

VIDEO: OKINAWA, THE LAND OF KARATE

See the videos here:

<http://okkb.org/karateandkobudo/the-land-of-karate>



KARATE ROOTS

Sensei Kevin Price, *Nidan, Trinity Shotokan*

Karate today is taught and studied in almost countless styles and sub styles. Each style school emphasizes how their style is better than all the others. The word karate is so popular that many non-karate martial art systems refer to their system as karate. How confusing this must be for a person interested in studying a martial art. Take for example the movie *The Karate Kid*. Any karateka knows that the various martial arts depicted in this movie were all Chinese systems such as Kung Fu and Tai Chi. The movie was given this name simply because Karate is a highly recognized name. Getting back to style, I believe that style is dangerous. If we have a “style” we obviously have limitations, which in turn gives us weaknesses. The great samurai warrior Myomoto Musashi when asked of his style, simply said “the style of no style”. If we have a recognized style, all an opponent has to do is learn about our style and they can defeat us. It is therefore better to be familiar with all styles and then have “no style”



Most karateka realize that Karate, as we know it today has strong Okinawan roots and that Okinawan martial arts (Okinawate-Do) have strong Chinese roots. What many are not aware of are the major changes that happened to the Okinawate-Do after it reached the shores of Japan by such masters as Funakoshi. Japan in those days did not welcome outside influence, so to start with it was given the Japanese name of Karate-Do. It was quickly modified in many other ways to fit Japanese traditions and politics of the period to become the Karate we know today. Not to discredit the changes made in Japan, we should take a look at how the roots of Karate in Okinawa in the form of Okinawate, a deadly combat method developed by the Okinawa police when they were forced by the Japanese to police the island without weapons. I believe we could derive great enlightenment by deeply researching this topic and will find the so-called “traditional” styles of Japanese Karate are not so traditional after all.

This reminds me of form. Many instructors of the so-called traditional styles from Japan will strongly emphasize perfect form, especially in kata. The problem with this is that every person has a unique physiology and the perfect form for one person may actually be a bad form for another. Traditional Okinawan martial arts do not place as much emphasis on “perfect form” as is strictly emphasized in Japanese styles. I believe the main purpose of form is to optimize ones ability to defend themselves, and that is whatever works for the individual.



Sensei Price awards a Grading Certificate to one of his junior students

I have recently met a fine fellow during my travels and we have become close friends. He is from the UK and is an advanced practitioner/instructor of the famous Israeli military combat system called Krav Maga. He and I had wonderful long discussions, which we both found very enlightening. I realized during our discussions that the techniques and philosophy in the manner, which I am currently teaching, my students have a lot in common with his instruction of the Krav Maga system. I share his philosophy of “whatever works”.

It seems that much emphasis in most karate schools is placed on sport. The teaching philosophy is geared to winning tournaments in either Kata or Kumite, or quickly increasing the student’s kyu ranks. That is fine if the main reason for studying Karate is to win tournaments and earn kyu ranks. If the main reason though is NOT for self-defense, it is a terrible blunder, for the student will acquire a false sense of self-defense competency and probably end up as the loser in a real altercation. Maybe we should always consider this in how we train. Myomoto Musashi also said “you can only fight the way you train”.

Masami Tsuruoka: “Obligation and Humanity” Jan 1929 – Oct 2014

By Sensei Bruce Lee, 7th Dan

Tsuruoka Sensei started the first Karate Dojo in Canada in 1958 in Toronto. He is the founder of the National Karate Association now called Karate Canada and was the chief instructor of the Chito-ryu Karate Association for many years, and eventually of his own style of Karate “Tsuruoka Ryu.” Much has been written about the man including two biographical books of his teachings entitled, “The Spirit of Karate-Do” and “Spirit of Sensei” by Andrew Bowerbank. Tsuruoka in 1998 was appointed a member of the Order of Ontario. Tsuruoka Sensei was a 10th degree black belt and has a rich and varied history. If anybody wanted to know more about his life and teachings it’s all out there in a myriad of forms. What I want to do here is give a snapshot of the man as I knew him: my karate Sensei and friend.



In 1973 after some persuasion by my instructor Joe Gillies and some checking out by Shane Hagashi, Tsuruoka’s senior student at the time, we finally convinced Tsuruoka to conduct a seminar in Newfoundland. It was the start of a long friendship with a group of Newfoundlander s that were eager to learn all they could about Karate-do. Tsuruoka was just what we needed to develop the strong foundation that, to this day, holds up the legacy of traditional karate in Newfoundland. In retrospect, Tsuruoka must have said to himself *what a bunch of disconnected, fun-loving characters I got to work with here*. Right from the start he took a liking to us and I believe because he too was a fun-loving character ...but certainly not disconnected.

I remember him saying that we had things in common like we were all Islanders. Japan, his birth place, Vancouver where he grew up, and Newfoundland are islands, of course. He felt this gave us a clear sense of place and who we were and what made us united. More than that, we were hungry for knowledge and eager to learn, and he recognized that in us most of all. When we started training under Sensei Tsuruoka, classes were two hours long and he used every minute. Resonating in my karate soul will always be the words...*More Low and Set Block, Set Block Punch*. Tsuruoka knew full well what we needed: strong basics, low stances, core strength and of course, connection. He preached for many years that we were disconnected and it took me 10 years to truly understand that what he was saying was true.



Sensei Tsuruoka was a very tough, physical instructor and he was the hardest on those students that trained the hardest. Tsuruoka was indeed a highly motivated instructor that demanded the utmost from his students, but more than that he was a very kind man. Not only did he drive everyone to the brink of exhaustion - we welcomed it. He was the kind of man you wanted to work hard for. He inspired something in all of us that is hard to explain.

It was a desire to learn through sweat, bruises and blisters and, oh yeah, “One more time!” “Again! One more time.” I recall with clarity on one occasion when Sensei was moving through the ranks using his voice with such volume and power it would make your hair stick straight out from your neck; you couldn’t help but respond to his commands.

We were all in Kiba-dachi stance and as usual the command “More low” was being issued. Tsuruoka stopped in front of me and I knew I was in trouble. He slowly with his vice grip fingers took hold of the soft skin on the inside of my upper leg and began to pinch. I couldn’t help myself and out of my mouth came the Lords name in vain: “Jesus!!!” I cried, everybody looked with surprise and shock but Sensei Tsuruoka never skipped a beat and responded “O Brucey, I’m not that good yet.” Everybody laughed and he moved on to the next victim.

All my fellow karate-ka would agree that those early years of training with Tsuruoka were the best. Beads of sweat as big as raindrops would drop from our brows, and dare you look at the clock for fear of another ten minutes of training added on if you were caught. Every year for 15 years Sensei Tsuruoka would conduct a three-day summer camp in St. John’s. There are countless great memories associated with these camps. November 30th 1978 I received my Black Belt diploma from Sensei Masami Tsuruoka. It was a special day. I was so very proud to have attained such an honored recognition from such a renowned karate master. He told us at the time that we were now beginners and that a life time of study and training had just begun. He gave us an analogy: if the ocean around us represented all we could learn in Karate we had now penetrated an inch of that ocean. To me that was indeed a profound and daunting concept. I could hardly wait to get back in the dojo to pursue it further.

Tsuruoka was a great teacher, he inspired me and many of my fellow karate-ka to pursue a lifetime of passion for knowledge through the study of karate and martial arts. To this very day I still feel that I am a beginner and that I have so much more to learn.

I was one of many students the day of my black belt grading with five years of experience under my belt. I felt proud and excited to be learning the empty hand way and to be guided along its path by one of the best Japanese Karate instructors in the world: *Ichii, Ni, San, Shiagain...one more...one more... one more time...from the floor...lower...legs, lots of legs...driving power...No Connection—you have no connection!!*

Those days were punctuated with blisters, laughter, and vomit and they were some of the best days of my life. Training hard is what we did, and results are what we got. Over a period of ten years with coaching from our Newfoundland instructors and the technical direction of Tsuruoka Sensei we became one of the strongest provinces in Canadian Karate. It was often suggested on the National scene that for a small group of people from a small province we were really tough and technically superb; no province wanted to be matched against us in the beginning rounds of the National Black Belt championships for fear of being eliminated by us.

It was Sensei Tsuruoka's dogged determination to build strong, fundamental principles into our technique that gave us the edge. It was the Japanese traditional way of teaching karate that we were exposed to: hard work, determination and respect in an atmosphere of camaraderie and fun that Tsuruoka insisted on in his dojo. Even though Tsuruoka's physical demeanor was small compared to the average Canadian student, his projection of energy, his confidence, and his sense of timing were impeccable, and when he postured in a fighting stance you felt the power and intimidation of a big, capable man.

Often, when teaching large numbers of students, Tsuruoka had a way of being personal to individuals in the class. It seemed like everyone had a story and could quote something that Tsuruoka had said or did to them during a busy and full class. While trumpeting out instruction and drill commands he would often whisper something personal that had special meaning to the student. Things like, *you must listen to your heart, there is nothing new, it's all been done before, breath from your belly, relax have fun.* These are simple things but when said to you up-close and personal they took on a more special meaning. I was no exception. One day while training outdoors at the Torbay Recreation Centre Sensei Tsuruoka was correcting my posture and he implanted a message that I never forgot. From out of nowhere I felt Sensei Tsuruoka's presence, he put his arms around my chest and gently pulled my shoulders back and whispered in my ear, *"you're going to die anyway Brucey, you might as well die proud."* Interestingly enough at the same time a friend of mine captured the moment in a photo.

One time I decided to visit Tsuruoka's dojo in Toronto for two weeks of training. At the time I was not a senior student and didn't assume I would get preferential treatment. My intention was to keep a low profile, stay at the YMCA and train every night Tsuruoka had classes (that was five nights per week). I believe I was a Nidan at the time - no big deal, just another one of the hundreds of Nidans Tsuruoka had graded. I entered the downstairs dojo on Young and Eglinton on a normal Tuesday night at 7 o'clock. Senior class was preparing to start with maybe forty students, thirty of more black belts. As low a profile as I could I made my way to Tsuruoka's office to pay my respects and then take my place at the back of the class...that was my plan.

When Sensei saw me he lit right up. I really didn't expect him to respond as warmly as he did. He asked me how long I was staying and when I said *two weeks*, he said sit down. I said *"Sensei the class is about to start and that I should get ready."* We could see through his office window that one of Tsuruoka's senior instructors, Schultz he was called, was about to start class. He was a drill master and he was of German descent hence his nick name. *"Tonight we talk tomorrow we train,"* he said then he put a full bottle of whiskey on his desk and said *"have a drink. Ok"* I said to myself, *is this a test?* *"No Sensei, I should go join the others,"* I said. *"No, have a drink,"* he said, *"tomorrow we train"* and he put another bottle of Japanese Sake on the desk.

Hesitantly I had a sip of whiskey, then another and another. He asked a few questions and I started to talk. That was his intention, to loosen me up and get me to spill my guts and I did. With six or seven sips of *truth serum* the two hours of class time flew by and we went to meet the group. What happened next will always be one of the fondest memories of my life. In front of Tsuruoka's senior class with his arm tightly wrapped around my waist he introduced me: *"This is my friend Bruce Lee from Newfoundland. He will be with us for two weeks and I want you guys to take special care of him while he is here."*



When I was introduced this way, little did I realize at the time that this was more than a request, it was an order. Tsuruoka also informed me that he and I would be doing two hours of private training every day except Sunday from 11:00 to 1:00 in his dojo.

Besides the personal training each day he also took me to lunch somewhere different every day. At the end of his regular adult classes in the nighttime he would encourage all the students to go somewhere after class and have a drink. Not necessarily to drink alcohol but to help develop dojo *Esprit de corps*. On the insistence of the Dojo-mates we had to visit every Newfoundland night club in Toronto and there were seven that we hit. Train hard and play hard - that is what we did, and with as much insistence as I could muster, not once could I pay for anything...not once. Tsuruoka's students took care of me with gusto. I shall never forget their hospitality. I did his kind of trip to Tsuruoka's Toronto dojo on a number of occasions, and each time I was shown the same endearing hospitality.

On another occasion, my brother Jerry and I attended Tsuruoka's *Camp Kamikaze* - five days of intense karate training in Northern Ontario. This is an annual event that takes place in a beautiful setting deep in the Ontario country side. A three-story log mansion is the centerpiece where the senior people stay and all the rest camp on the surrounding grounds. Jerry and I arrived at Toronto Pearson airport to be greeted by Tsuruoka himself, not a student or representatives. Off we went in Tsuruoka's Mercedes on a mission to pick up groceries for the camp. When we arrived at the camp location he insisted that we both stay in the log mansion with the VIP's. Not only that, but he put me in the only single room in the building on the third floor overlooking a beautiful lake. This was a dry camp, no alcohol and three two hour classes per day. Hot, humid and ever so many mosquitos wanting to drink our boiling blood. Tsuruoka attended every class, and even when we had guest instructors like Suzuki Sensei, Tsuruoka would be watching... never far away.

We would train so hard that we would run out of sweat and spit. After two days or so you would start to get used to the physical pace. We must have impressed some of our fellow karate-ka because they suggested on a number of occasions that we must have trained in Japan because we were so proficient at our craft. That was one reason why Tsuruoka liked Newfoundlanders so much; we tried to implement what we were being taught. Some of Tsuruoka's students wanted to be instructed by this famous master but refused to commit to his physical demands in training. If you wanted results in your development, you had to train with commitment and have faith in the instructor. Tsuruoka would always gravitate to the persons that were training the hardest, no matter what rank they were. He was motivated by motivation and sometimes his senior students would get upset with him because he would be spending all his time with the lower rank belts. These were the people that hadn't given up on the level of commitment that he demanded.

No matter how hard we trained we would always find something to laugh about. More often than not, Sensei himself would be the instigator. It never failed that at the end of each day, when people gathered to socialize, he would insist that someone sing a song, tell a story, do a dance, or if you were to shy for that kind of thing he would make you do something. Even if it were push-ups, you had to do something when you were called out. Again, this is another reason why he loved Newfoundlanders, entertaining seemed to come easy to us.

I have many fond memories of Sensei Tsuruoka in the dojo and outside. One time during a dinner he talked about his early years of teaching karate in the United States. He talked about this lady student in California and how beautiful she was, her name is Priscilla Presley. I questioned him about whether he had taught Elvis also. He said yes but he focused on Priscilla and not on Elvis. Another time we were talking and he said that he had seven letters that the movie star, Bruce Lee, had written him. I never asked him about the content of the letters, however I remember him saying that he should give me one of the letters because my name was Bruce Lee too. I said "*yes Sensei you should. Sure, Sensei I'm better than him, I'm still alive and kickin.*" He smiled and agreed. I wish I had questioned him further on the details.

Masami Tsuruoka was a great Karate Master in very sense. He will always live on in my heart and in my teaching. He has ingrained his place not only in the annals of karate history, but in the hearts and minds of all the students that had the pleasure to train under him.

I will end with the words of Tsuruoka himself: *Giri to ninjo* which means *Obligation and Humanity*.

A true sensei who lives for his/her art, does not have an easy path through life. They sincerely devote themselves to the values found in tradition, believing without fail that this is a better course through life, a path worth persevering no matter how difficult.

Have you seen Sensei Wayne Lee's New Website? Have a look here:

<http://southernshorekarate.stjohnsdojos.net/>

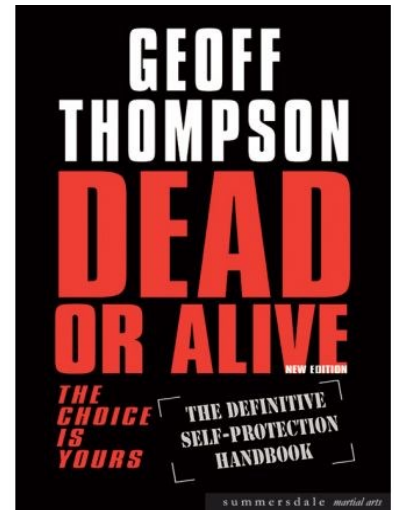
Southern Shore Shotokan

Traditional Karate In Newfoundland



Reading: Dead or Alive Geoff Thompson

The updated edition of Geoff Thompson's classic guide to self-defence. This book teaches simple precautionary measures that everyone can take to make themselves less vulnerable to attack, and explains what victims should do when confronted by an assailant. Geoff Thompson interviews murderers, rapists and muggers who reveal why they target certain people. Don't risk being unprepared when a violent predator gets you in his sights. Geoff Thompson is one of the UK's most respected martial artists. He is the author of over 25 books on martial arts and self-defence.



“The way of karate we pursue is a bare-handed martial art which we practice with an unwavering heart in a state of emptiness; it is a way of developing the personality.”

M. Nakayama

Please note, the opinions and views expressed in this document are not necessarily those of any particular Dojo or organization, nor of any particular individual.

If you would like to contribute to the NLS Newsletter, please send your submission to

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