



**RANDOLPH
MARTIAL ARTS
ACADEMY**

ACHIEVE

The Official Newsletter of the Randolph Martial Arts Academy

Issue 6



Life Lessons in the Martial Arts

As a student, part of your training is an understanding of history as well as the life lessons it teaches. These are a few short martial arts stories for you to learn from as they all have a lesson within them.

Temper is so good a thing that you must never lose it.

A long time ago, a Samurai had travelled to Okinawa to visit a fisherman, who a year earlier had borrowed a sum of money from the Samurai, and it was now time to pay the debt. When the Samurai found the fisherman on the beach, the fisherman fell to his knees and bowed. The Samurai said, "It has been 1 year; your debt is due". The fisherman told him that it had been a bad year for him and he didn't have the money, and asked the Samurai for 1 more year. In anger, the Samurai raised his sword and said "Tell me why I shouldn't kill you now." The fisherman replied, "I am also a karateka and my teacher says you should never strike in anger." Having trained himself, the Samurai lowered his sword, and said "You are right. I'll give you one more year."

Upon returning home late at night, and as there were no lights on, the Samurai crept into his bedroom as to not wake his servants or his wife. Upon entering his bedroom, the Samurai saw 2 people in his bed, his wife and another person in full armor, another Samurai! Swiftly he drew his sword in anger preparing to slay them both. Just as he was about to strike, the fisherman's words came back to him, "never strike in anger". He lowered his sword and made a loud noise to wake everyone up. As his wife awoke, he said, "What is the meaning of this?" As she lit the candle, he came face to face, not only with his wife, but also with his mother who had dressed in one of his armored uniforms. His wife explained that since he was not home and it was nightfall, his mother agreed to stay with her and dress as him to ward off any potential intruders as they'd frightened off by the sight of a Samurai in the house. At that moment, the Samurai realized his anger and striking without thinking almost cost him his wife and mother at his own hand.

One year later he returned to the fisherman who proudly brought the Samurai his money plus interest. The fisherman said, "It has been a great year for me; here is your money. Thank you for the extra year." The Samurai replied, "Keep your money. You do not know it, but your debt was paid to me long ago."

If you raise your sword, lower your temper. And if you raise your temper, lower your sword.

Not Everyone is as They Seem

After the Pacific War, Chojun Miyagi moved back to Okinawa from Japan, and settled in Ishikawa. Because of the need for food, the entire village would go into the fields to harvest. Miyagi became a very quiet man, not speaking of himself or his karate. He was a huge man with great strength, but due to his humility, other men would ask him to make tea or do dishes while they labored in the fields. At the end of each day's harvest, several men would load the trucks so that the harvest could be delivered back to town. One day, the bales were larger than usual and these men had difficulty lifting them onto the truck. Miyagi told the men to move aside and he lifted the loads himself in one motion without strain. After that, word of his feats of strength spread all over Okinawa to many people, including karate experts, & they flocked to him for lessons.

A Lesson on Fighting Smarter

Master Yara was originally from Chatan village and had studied the martial arts both in Okinawa and for a long period of time in China. Upon returning to Okinawa he devoted himself to his art and particularly studied the bo and sai. During his rare moments of spare time, Yara would walk along the beaches near his village to appreciate their beauty and clear his mind. One day, a young man from Hamahiga island, Shiroma, found him walking and asked for lessons. Yara said he didn't know the man so he declined. The stranger was incensed as he had come a long way and that he had heard of Yara's skill from the headmaster's daughter. Yara told Shiroma to meet him back on the beach at daybreak and he would give him a lesson. Yara was sitting on the beach at daybreak the next day, meditating, when Shiroma found him. "Are you ready?", Yara said and Shiroma nodded and took a defensive position. Feeling that indeed Yara was a great master as he didn't even raise his guard and instead held his Sai at his sides, Shiroma circled Yara hoping the rising Sun would blind Yara and he could attack. In a flash, Shiroma attacked and in that moment Yara raised his Sai. The Sai acted as a mirror and reflected the Sun's light back to Shiroma's eyes, and that's the last thing Shiroma remembered until the next day waking in Yara's care. Shiroma stayed on to become Yara's student.

The Perspective of Luck

An old man and his son worked on a small farm, with only one horse to pull the plough. One day the horse ran away.

"How terrible," sympathized the neighbors "What bad luck."

"Maybe." the farmer replied.

A week later, the horse returned from the mountains leading five wild mares into the barn.

"What wonderful luck!" said the neighbors.

"Maybe."

The next day the son, trying to tame one of the horses, fell and broke his leg.

"How terrible, what bad luck!"

"Maybe."

Later that week, the army came to all the farms to take young men for war. During the battle that followed, many of the village men lost their lives. Because of his broken leg, the farmer's son was of no use to them so he was spared.

The Hidden Part of Training

A samurai had at one time come to Master Musashi and asked for training in the art of the sword. The master agreed to take him as a student. The Samurai spent all his time, as instructed by the master, carrying and chopping wood and fetching buckets of water from a distant spring. He did this every day for a month, two months, one year, three years. Today, any student would have run away after a week, or even a few hours, but the Samurai went on, and in the process, formed his body.

At the end of three years he had had enough, however, and asked his master, "What kind of training are you giving me? I have not touched a sword since I got here. I spend all my time chopping wood and carrying water. When are you going to initiate me?"

"All right, all right," the master replied. "Since you desire it, I shall now teach you the true technique."

He ordered him to go to the dojo and there, every day from morning to evening, the student had to walk around the outside edge of the tatami, step by step around the hall without ever missing a foot.

After a while, the Samurai was frustrated in these teachings and said "When are you going to teach me what you know of the sword. I am a Samurai and already have knowledge and your teaching isn't helping me. I still haven't even picked up a sword since I've been here."

The teacher said "Very well" and took him to a great ravine with a fallen tree trunk as its only bridge. He told the Samurai to cross, but upon looking at the chasm, the Samurai became fearful and wouldn't do it. Just then, a blind man with a cane simply walked past and crossed the bridge. The samurai's teacher said, "Everything you learn helps you. You walked around the Dojo for a year on a surface much smaller than that tree." The Samurai understood and easily crossed the bridge himself.

The Samurai had built up strength, balance, and concentration even if it was in unconventional means, and came to understand that all training is important.

Words of Wisdom

"Beware the fury of a patient man."

-John Dryden

Save the Date:

Dojo Picnic for our 7th Anniversary

This year, we will be bringing back the tradition of having our Dojo picnic in celebration of the Dojo's 7th anniversary!

When: Sunday, September 19th, 2021, 1:00- 4:00pm

Signups will be open to all Randolph Martial Arts Academy students & their families

Detailed information is coming very soon...

We hope to have a great event celebrating our Dojo and allowing everyone to come together, especially after a very difficult past year and a half. It also allows us a reason to have another Kanpai event and help us end our summer strong!

Dojo News and Achievements

Congratulations- to Eric Hopley Jr., Orange Belt, for being a two-time Student of the Month for online learning in the 2020-2021 school year.

Charity Event- On Saturday, June 5, 2021, the Dojo hosted it's annual Concert & Art Show benefiting St. Jude Children's Hospital. While the safety concerns due to the pandemic made us have it online again, we still managed to have an excellent event, get many wonderful student as well as professional musicians, dancers, and artists, and even an Amazing magician, and raise over \$2,000 for St. Jude. Special thanks to Douglas DaSilva, Shodan, music director, Estefania Borrero, Ikkyu, Art Director & artist, Jason DaSilva, Shodan, Audio/Visual director, and Sophia Keoskey, Junior Black Belt, who gave an inspirational speech halfway through about why St. Jude is important to her family and why we do this every year as well as participated on her cello with her friend, violinist Niya Bretin. Also, special thanks to everyone who participated & helped make the event what it is, including the Amazing Magnifico, singer Eric Hopley Jr., artist Ava Hopley, dancer Ethan Lafazan, artist Noah Kim, artist Jonathan Kim, guitarist Shane DaSilva & drummer Neal DaSilva, artist Stan Li, Olivia Wald on ukulele, pianist Aarav Verma, artist Aleksey Keoskey, artist & composer Armand Tesla, pianist Sara Bong, artist Suzanne Gulick, singer Kristen Mather de Andrade, guitarist Cesar Garabini, hichiriki & clarinetist Thomas Piercy, pianist Shoichiro Tanaka, Bassist (and Shichidan) Mark Wade, Oboist Robert Botti, Violinist Tzu-en Lee, Flautist, Lish Lindsay, composer & flautist Todd Groves, and Pianist, Stephen Porter! We look forward to having this even bigger next year with the possibility of being both online and in person.

Congratulations- to Ava Hopley, Sankyu, who was selected in her school as the top reader in her class for the 2nd year in a row, and is reading at the Z level which is far beyond her grade level.

College Bound- Congratulations to Estefania Borrero, Ikkyu, who will be attending Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) in the fall. Good Luck Estefania!

Congratulations- to two of our students, James Allison, Orange Belt, and Genevieve Bunge, Blue Belt, who participated in Seaton Hackney Stables' spring school show on April 25, 2021. Both competed in walk-trot classes that were judged on equitation, their ability to communicate with the horse, and their execution of directions from the judges. James earned a first place and two fifth places, and Genevieve scored a third place and two fourth places in their respective divisions.

Dojo Summer Day Camp Event- In August of 2020, after the heart breaking news that due to the pandemic that the Kai wouldn't be able to have it's traditional summer karate camp, we put together a special 4-day summer day camp where we had 2 classes per day as well as a host of fun day & night activities. The last 2 days, we were joined by our sister school, Family Martial Arts Center, for an all day camp day experience, which hosted over 50 students, and included an evening talent show, that Saturday, and a very special outdoor Shiai and Kanpai that Sunday. An excellent event that was another example of us as a team adjusting and overcoming things beyond our control. A big thank you to everyone who helped make this event possible.

Black Belt Promotions

Congratulations to the following students who were promoted in January 2021 at a special Shiai and promotion ceremony:

Sophia Keoskey- Junior Black Belt

Douglas DaSilva- Shodan

Jason DaSilva- Shodan

Stan Li- Shodan

Great job by all. Excellent persistence and hard work over the years & extra effort in a challenging year to earn their rank. Kanpai!



Grace Gentle started studying Karate at American Budo Kai in 2010 at the age of 9 under Mr. Hopler Sr. at the Kenvil Karate Academy with her brother, Isaac. When the Randolph Martial Arts Academy opened in 2014, they followed him there and continued their studies. Miss Gentle earned her Shodan (1st degree Black Belt) at Karate Camp 2018. Miss Gentle has always been a very intelligent and hard working young woman and is currently attending Villanova University.

Here's what she has to say:

There have been very few times in my life in which I have really wanted to give up on something. I've always been one to finish what I've started. When I began my journey as a karateka, I knew I was in it for the long haul. I idolized the Black Belt and longed for the day in which I could join them in line. I started Goshin ryu and could tell I had a passion for karate but was not exactly sure if this particular style was right for me. My best friend Michelle (Miss Acosta) invited me to a class at her dojo during "Bring a Friend" month, and almost immediately my mom signed my brother and me up. I knew I had found not just the right style for me, but a second home. I longed for Friday night classes with Mr. Hopler and Saturday mornings with Mr. Toscano. As heartbreaking as the Kenvil Dojo closing was for many of us, I knew it wasn't the location that mattered, but the people and the art. I remember the exact moment Mr. Hopler Sr. walked into Rockaway Dojo at the end of class and racing Miss Acosta to give him a big hug once we bowed out. When he told us he would be opening his own dojo, Randolph Martial Arts Academy, I could not wait to make this dojo my new home.

Moving into high school, it became harder to balance my academic goals with my karate ones. As I took on more extracurriculars and harder classes in high school, karate began to feel like an afterthought at times, like I could go if I had time, but school came first. I became obsessive about academics and heartbroken over small setbacks. I couldn't understand why I was spending more time and focus, yet was underachieving within my own standards. As I grew closer to the rank (ik kyu) where I could earn the opportunity to test for my black belt, I took for granted the timeline in which I expected this opportunity would present itself. I was not attending classes regularly, and clearly was not demonstrating the commitment and dedication required to earn such a rank. At the December Shiai that year, I didn't get promoted, and I left without congratulating my peers, without taking pictures, and without saying goodbye to my instructors. I was angry; I couldn't understand why it felt like I was failing at everything I had put so much hard work and passion towards. That day, I wanted nothing more than for that Shiai to be my last. I could go on with my life, try harder in school, get my college applications in, and forget it ever happened.

I remember Mr. Hopler sending my mom a text asking her to encourage me to attend class next week. I thought back to the days where I would beg my mom to drive me to an extra class, no matter how busy we were. I wasn't ready to give up; I wanted to use that anger & frustration as motivation to prove to

myself and everyone else in the Kai that I did have what it takes to join the other side of the line, and that I belonged amongst the other black belts. Mr. Hopler had taught us time management ever since I was in the junior class at Kenvil dojo, so after speaking to him at that first class back after the Shiai, I went home and wrote down the times and dates of all of my extracurriculars, scheduled in time to do my schoolwork, and from there figured out week by week how I could attend at least two classes a week, and scheduled makeup classes whenever I had a busier week at school. As pleasant and simple as it looked on paper, there were weeks where I truly struggled to fit everything into the day. I would come home exhausted from a full schedule of AP classes, play practice, and have time for but a quick bite to eat before running off to karate class. There were plenty of times that I waited in the car before class started and prayed we'd turn around, but it felt more like running away from home than ever before. I had to make tough choices such as taking a season off of marching band in order to go to karate camp, and not auditioning for state choirs because the practice schedule interfered with my karate class schedule. I remember one week, I attended every single class offered in the dojo in order to make up for a previous week and store a makeup class for a week to come. I felt like it may have been easier to have slept on one of those green mats, but the feeling when I finished that week of Mr. Hopler giving a simple "well done" (a complement of rarity when an Ik kyu) was reward enough to make every second of it worth it.

As busy as I may have been, even on the nights where I begged my mom to turn the car around, these were the classes in which I learned the most, and I needed the Dojo the most. The Dojo became a safe haven to leave the rest of the world: my biology lab, upcoming choir concert, student council meeting, behind the line, bow onto the dojo floor, and simply be a karateka. Every tear, skipped dinner, late night doing homework into the sunrise, every single challenge was worth it when I held that black belt in my hand. I would do it all over again just to hear Mr. Hopler say "you aced every test and assignment I threw at you" at that camp Shiai once again. As much as I have learned throughout the ranks and in order to earn my Black Belt, the time management, diligence, and patience I learned through this experience are skills I could not have gained having not gone through the process the way that I did. I see now that I haven't yet finished what I've started, really, and may never. The journey of a karateka does not end when you earn your Black Belt; it is merely only the beginning.

Kanpai,

Grace Gentle, #6-703