



# SKIF-USA NEWSLETTER

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## Message from the President

Greetings!

I am pleased to announce the Fall/Winter edition of SKIF-USA newsletter.

I would like to thank our committee members, editors and contributors that helped make the second edition possible.

We continue to hope for the growth and advancement of SKIF-USA by following Kanazawa Soke's precepts of harmony, continued training and development of the SKIF system, respect and open and friendly communications among all.

On behalf of the SKIF-USA Board of Directors, I would like to welcome in an exciting 2019 -2020 year. In the spring, we were fortunate to host Nobuaki Kanazawa Kancho's June tour of New Brighton, MN and Northridge, CA and look forward to Ryusho Suzuki and Hiyori Kanazawa Sensei's for the 2020 Gasshuku at the Shotokan Karate-Do Center in Houston Texas on February 29 - March 1, 2020. Additionally, Sensei Ruben Fung is teaching in New York City November 2-3 and Sensei Elpida Christodoula will be teaching in Hillsboro, Oregon November 23, 2019.

SKIF-USA continues to be a special organization made up of karateka who enjoy training and continued development, and are interested in spreading and promoting Kanazawa Soke's inspiring philosophy of harmony and unique system of Karate-do.

I would like to thank all of our instructors and members who have continued to support SKIF-USA and helped make our organization successful. We all look forward to meeting new friends and renewing old acquaintances.

Kind regards, Oss!  
James Shea

# 2019 SKIF Houston Spring Gasshuku

By **Jim McGovney**

Shotokan Karate-Do Center, Houston, Texas

The highlight of the training year at the Houston Shotokan Karate-Do Center is the annual Gasshaku led by Shihan Manabu Murakami, and the 2019 seminar was certainly an example.

During the course of the seminar Sensei referred to Miyamoto Musashi, author of "The Book of the Five Rings", a seminal text of the Martial Arts, which is built on the framework of five elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Emptiness. The Five Elements proved to be a wonderful framework to summarize my learning from the Gasshaku.

The Earth Element comprises foundational principles. We were reminded that kiba-dachi is the basic of basic stances, including within it nekoashi-dachi, kokutsu-dachi and zenkutsu-dachi. In the transformation from kiba-dachi to zenkutsu-dachi, although the weight distribution progressively changes, the position and angle of the rear knee do not change, but the angle of the ankle does change with stance.

We were reminded to be aware that it is your center-line that moves in a straight line, not necessarily the body. Awareness of your center-line starts with a properly organized and regular formation, with students aligned correctly front-to-back and side-to-side, highest ranks to the sensei's left. This relationship was demonstrated with Heian Sandan and Heian Yondan. Sensei Murakami stressed that proper stance was crucial for colored belts.

Discipline is also foundational. We were urged to make a proper formation quickly and to pay strict attention. Kiai must be at the appropriate point in a kihon drill, and not continuous in an overzealous display of spirit.

The Water Element exemplifies fluidity and movement. Sensei Murakami said that proper stance is crucial for colored belts but that for black belts movement between stances becomes crucial.



Sensei presented a wonderful tutorial on that most basic of kata, Heian Shodan, and showed that proper placement of the pivot foot and coordinated timing of rotation were power multipliers. And as always, we were reminded stamping the foot is a waste of time and energy.

The mind must be fluid too, responding to the reality, not what you think the situation may be. An aspect of this fluidity that struck me is that every block can be a strike and every strike a block, depending on circumstance.

The Fire Element connotes spirit. As always one of the most inspirational parts of the camp is the testing for progression through the Dan ranks. I have found, that in a sense, when some other karateka tests that I test too. I appreciate all the time, energy, commitment it took them to progress to test. Four karateka tested for Shodan, three for Nidan, and one for Sandan. One truly begins to appreciate that Karate is a 'do', a path that invites us forward.

The Air Element represents lightness. We were reminded of the importance of timing of the breath as an aid to control of the center of gravity's position in movement. Sensei said that we should "ask the kata what it wants to teach us": when does the kata want lightness, fluidity, spirit, or power?

The most subtle of the Elements is Emptiness. From the foundational point of view we were told that what you can not see is more important than what you can: hikite as opposed to tsukite, rear foot versus front, center of body versus limbs, spirit versus the externals. An example is the opening hand position of Bassai Dai: an open hand ("I come in peace") enclosing a fist ("But I am prepared to fight").

From a spiritual point of view we learned that the opening meditation of 'mokuso!' is crucial: that short time of quiet reflection is to empty the mind of other concerns, ill-will, and ego, the better to learn and to support your fellow karateka as we progress on the karate-do.

OSS!

# Kanazawa Kancho 2019 Tour to Minnesota

By **Chris Johnson**

Peak Performance Shotokan Karate-Do, Minnesota

After teaching in Canada, Kanazawa Kancho made a mid-week stop in New Brighton, Minnesota on his SKIF-USA 2019 Summer Tour. As always, Kancho gave a great seminar with lots of ideas to work on.

Usually, these tour recap articles tend to give a detailed description of the techniques taught, drills done, or activities attended. However, this time, I would like to describe the fantastic camaraderie generated by Kancho at this event.

Traditional Shotokan karate is strong in this area of the Midwest. We have practitioners from JKA, ISKF, ITKF, and other groups. Although we typically tend to train apart, when we gather for a seminar, we have a great outpouring of fellowship and we come together to train with great karate spirit. Our dojo here in New Brighton, Minnesota is not much larger than an airmail postage stamp. So, things get very close and personal real fast. Within a few short drills, we were all sweating profusely and doing

a mighty two-step not to run into each other. But somehow no one seemed to be pushed out or stepped on. It always amazes me how Kancho can direct such an energized flow of traffic.

Despite our diverse training backgrounds, Kancho's dynamic teaching style pulls us together – we are all laser-focused on his message. This time the focus was on details. All karate is created from the strict observation of the details, and those details do not change whether we are doing Kihon, Kumite, or Kata. Those details are the same, whether we are competing or doing karate for Budo. Kancho very directly challenged each one of us to open our eyes and pay attention to what we are doing. To pay attention to what we are teaching our students.

I think one of the most telling points of Kancho's commitment to teaching came when he called for water breaks and the students naturally grouped together to discuss the



But of course, we did have several non-training opportunities to socialize. On a previous visit, Kancho asked about Japanese restaurants in Minneapolis/St. Paul, so we selected a couple of places and took a chance. Kancho seemed pleased with both the food and lively conversation. Not bad for a land-locked state

A photograph of two men standing on a baseball field next to a bronze statue of a player in a batting stance. The man on the left is wearing a plaid shirt, sunglasses, and a baseball cap. The man on the right is wearing a white jacket and glasses. In the background, the Target Field stadium is visible under a clear blue sky.



# What is “Oss” and “Osu”?

By **Robert Nouchi**

SKIF Chojen-Ji Dojo, Hawaii

The following thoughts on “Oss” and “Osu” are based on my early upbringing in Tokyo Japan, personal experiences, and opinions from other sources. The seemingly simple expression and word are really very complex. Although we will explore many ideas, I will conclude at the end that, as a member of SKIF, I must follow Soke Kanazawa’s interpretation and reasoning regarding “Oss” and “Osu”.

It is said that in the 20th century Imperial Japanese Navy, the young officers greeted each other with the expression, “Oss”. This I believe came from the shortened version of Ohayou Gozaimasu (Good Morning), or Onegaishimasu (difficult to translate this but roughly, I am under your care, please assist). Perhaps, Ohayou Gozaimasu became Ohayo-su... Oha-su... Oss, similarly with Onegaishimasu. You will commonly hear versions of this greeting in Japan. “Oss” is a very informal, macho, and not so polite expression used among male athletes, usually equal in status. Women, to some extent, may use this expression in certain circles. I understand some Japanese baseball players greet each other this way... Oss! A Sumo wrestler was heard saying this to his comrade on TV, just the other night.

Similarly, in the American military command of “Attention”, often is said as “Atten-Hut”. Some words or commands tend to be more from the abdomen, making the sounds more shortened and commanding. I was recently informed that the U.S. Marines will answer as “Huah” similar to “Oss” when greeted good morning... “Huah”, are you okay... “Huah”, do you understand... “Huah”, etc. This I’m told is a more recent phenomenon.



In the early sixties, I remember watching movies starring a young male actor and singer, Kayama Yuzo and his young gang of college students commonly saying “Oss” to greet each other. It was a “cool” and macho way of greeting each other, similar to “Yoh” or “Howzit”. I believed then, that it didn’t

have any deep meaning; it was an expression, simply a casual greeting used by college age kids.

“Osu”, on the other hand is a word. There are several “Osu” words, pronounced the same way with the “SU” sound. These words may mean push, male animal, or even vinegar. These “Osu” words have different characters with completely different meanings but pronounced the same.

To complicate matters, in some circles, many of these words that end with “U” are pronounced with the “U” silent. As an example, “Ohayou Gozaimasu” (good morning), the sound “U” in “Ohayou” is silent when you say it. Even the word “Gozaimasu”, is pronounced for some without the “U”. But all three “OSU” words mentioned earlier are pronounced with the “SU”, as in “O-SU”. In case of vinegar...just “SU” or more politely, “OSU”.

Dialects in different parts of Japan also play a major role in how words are pronounced. In the Kansai dialect, the "U" at the end of certain words are pronounced heavily. Commonly used word like "Gozaimasu" would be pronounced with the emphasis on the "SU". In other parts of Japan, "Gozaimasu" may be pronounced without the "U".

Similarly, some words that are pronounced with an "I" at the end, for example are more commonly being used without pronouncing the "I". Initially, to be trendy or perhaps fashionable, words like "Moshi-Moshi" (hello-hello) when answering a telephone is to many "Mosh-Mosh". The "I" is not pronounced.

In the early 70's, "Oss" was not a verbal expression used regularly as it is used today among the Martial Arts world. "Oss" today is now a required expression in some of the dojos. Soke Kanazawa in one of his video interviews mentions, the origin of the word, he thinks stems from Naval Officers' usage of "Oss". (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2aFUKWvW4Y>)

Soke Kanazawa explains that the word "Osu" is pronounced as "Oss", because the word should be expressed from the lower abdomen. He explains the "O" as push and effort; "SU" as endure, and together, they mean to achieve success. This explanation fits well into the Budo concept. But did this explanation come before or after the initial use of "Oss", nobody really knows. But, many dojos in fact use this word to promote the meaning of "Osu". Besides SKIF, Kyokushin style of Mas Oyama also follows the same explanation. Detailed thoughts by Soke Kanazawa of "OSS" are given on page 24 of the Karate-Fighting Techniques-The Complete Kumite, Copyright ©2004, 2013.

Yet, another perspective on "Oss" comes from Mitsusuke Harada, who studied under Gichin Funakoshi, Egami, Gigo Funakoshi and Genshin

Hironishi, has this to say from an interview comments from the Shotokan Karate Magazine Issue 87, April 2006: "To me this is the sort of attitude (in reference to loud kiai) I associate with the "Ous" salutation which is no more than a low class yakuza way of greeting people which no self respecting educated Japanese would think of using. It is supposed to give the person who utters such greeting a more awesome presence. It is all a question of appearance."

Obviously, Harada Sensei's view of "Oss" is that it is an expression and not stemming from the word "Osu". His view is that "Oss" is a very rough expression only used by ruffians. Words are living things in any culture and meanings change over time. What a word may have meant at one time may have a different meaning today, or it may no longer be used in today's society. New words and expressions are created constantly. The Japanese have adopted as common usage, many foreign vocabularies. English words are routinely intermingled with their own language, especially in the cities, businesses and with the youth.

More complications...I will try my best to clarify this: In the Japanese language, when you write out the verbal expression "Oss" (not the word "Osu"), because of their language structure, it is written as "Osu". Other similar examples are the word, "Boss", would be written and pronounced as "Bosu". Taxi is pronounced "Takushee", or McDonalds is pronounced "Makudonarudo". My name Robert is "Robaato". Even Japanese words like "dojo" would be written as "Dou Jou" in Japanese. We however, do not write it out as such in the Western world, "Dou Jou" pronounced "Dojo" is written as "Dojo".

It is very appropriate for a foreigner to pronounce English words as the Japanese do while in Japan. However, it would be silly for an English-speaking person to use Japanese pronunciations of English words in English

speaking countries. As an example, you would never say I am going to catch a Takushee or say let's go to Makudonarudo for lunch.

In conclusion, the simple expression and word "Oss" and "Osu" is very complex and no one really knows the origin of the expression "Oss" as it is used today. The usage and meanings are changing. "Oss" and "Osu" are used in certain circles and are not a nationally used expression. It may be used in few circles in the birthplace of Karate (Okinawa), but it certainly did not originate in Okinawa.

Many Japanese culturally specific idiosyncrasies are difficult to learn. Some cultural nuances are learned from birth. Foreign scholars studying Japanese culture, I suspect, have difficulty trying to decipher some of the cultural uniqueness of Japan. Some things will always be not quite authentic, in the process of interpretation and translation of a language into another language.

Japanese words and expressions in karate are adopted by dojos around the world. If a karate organization insists on using "Oss" or "Osu" in the dojo, that is the culture of the dojo that has adopted its meaning and usage. But we should take caution not to be using it casually outside of the martial arts and certain other related groups. Women in particular may want to refrain from usage outside of this related circle, as many people in Japan may still feel the usage as ruffian.

Whether we decide to spell "Oss" or "Osu" when writing it out in English is a matter of preference and depends on what you think is the origin and meaning. Is it a word or a verbal expression? It is important to know the background.

Here is the bottom line for me, as a SKIF member... Since Soke Kanazawa outlined his beliefs on the matter, as a student of SKIF, I follow his interpretation. He also specifically

writes in Japanese on page 23 of "Karate Kyohan" that when written in English, "Osu" should be written as "Oss" because of its strong vocalization from the abdomen. On page 24 of the "Complete Kumite", he writes his thoughts on "OSS". Soke Kanazawa writes:

*"Oss is not a word to be used casually or indiscriminately. I would like everyone who uses it to do so paying special attention to proper attitude, state of mind, and vocalization. With the chin drawn in and the back straight, "Oss" is said while bowing once. The motion, breathing, and vocalization involved contribute to the concentration of spirit and strength in the lower abdomen."*

# Upper Midwest Gasshuku

By **Chris Johnson**

Peak Performance Shotokan Karate-Do, Minnesota

With high expectations, karateka from the upper Midwest area of SKIF-USA gathered for our first Gasshuku in May, 2019. The three day event was held at the American Tiger Karate Academy in Elk Grove Village, Illinois. Instructors and students participated from Mankato and New Brighton, Minnesota, Madison, Wisconsin and the Chicago, Illinois area.



The first session was plyometric training on Friday night. Under the sharp instruction of Senpai Kenji Horibe, a fine sweat was worked up by all. Even the older participants found a way to adapt the exercises to accommodate the aging body.



Saturday was jam-packed with Kihon, Kumite, and Kata. We examined Okuri Kumite, which was received well by all. We also explored the kata Niju Hachi.



An outstanding section of the training was the introduction of Soke's Bo Kata by Senpai Amy Blackwell (Shodan in Kobudo), Senpai Kenji Horibe, Senpai, Chris Szewczyk, and Senpai Michael Meyer. For many of us, keeping the Bo in our hands was a great accomplishment.

The afternoon finished with a session on bunkai lead by Sensei Pat Pusateri and Sensei Greg Sullivan. Both have a wealth of knowledge in the body's structure and where best to apply pressure. After such a full and exhausting day, we were happy to meet over dinner and drinks for some stimulating conversation.



A special thank you to Sensei Pat Pusateri and her staff for hosting this first-time event.



Sunday morning's session was devoted to discussing testing standards and kata review. By Sunday afternoon, we were all driving back to our respective homes and dojos, tired but full of information to digest and practice for the next time we meet.



# Breathing Routine With a Purpose (Part II)

By **Robert Nouchi**

SKIF Chojen-Ji Dojo, Hawaii

The author of "Shotokan Legends" (Empire Books, 2015, Jose M. Fraguas), spent more than 35 years, interviewing great modern masters of Shotokan, "one-on-one, face-to face". One of the masters he interviewed was Soke Hirokazu Kanazawa. The following is an excerpt from one of Jose M. Fraguas' questions:

Q: Jose M. Fraguas: During training, and especially after doing a series of kihon techniques or a kata, you practice and teach your students to do a special breathing exercise with their arms. How did you develop this breathing exercise and what is its purpose?

A: Soke Hirokazu Kanazawa: I developed this exercise after studying Tai Chi Chuan.

The purpose is to develop and invigorate the brain, the chest, and the Hara. First, you breathe in and have the feeling of the air coming to your head and brain. This improves intelligence. Second, you push the air out and down and contract the Hara and lower abdominal muscles. This develops your power and fighting spirit. Finally, you straighten up and let your chest come back to a natural and relaxed position with good posture. This develops good character and a feeling of kindness toward others. The words for these are "Ten", "Chi", "Jin", meaning head, Hara, Chest or "sky", "ground", and "human".



*Soke Hirokazu Kanazawa practicing a form of Tai Chi Chuan.*

# Zendankai SKIF NYC Gasshuku

By **Ricardo Neves**

Zendankai Shotokan Karate-Do, New York

This past November 2-3 we were honored to host the first Zendankai SKIF seminar, led by sensei Rubén Fung (SKIF Godan, Houston Shotokan Center).

The event took place in our humble dojo, in the heart of the Manhattan, just a few blocks away from Times Square.

Although we are a young and small dojo in a big city, we work very hard to represent SKIF Karate at the highest quality level, and having Sensei Rubén teaching at our dojo was a great opportunity to show the work we have been developing here on behalf of SKIF-USA, and foster the development of the group.

In the good spirit of a Gasshuku (although there was no camping or outdoor activities), the purpose of the seminar was beyond just training. It was also to: see old friends and make new ones; building collaboration and



*Sensei Rubén Fung*

relationships in and out of the organizations and clubs; having instructors practicing along their students; and having an opportunity to revitalize one's Karate spirit.

We were thrilled having a few guests participating in our event, including sensei and



*Group on day one of the seminar.*



students from Mt. Vernon Shotokan Karate-Do (NY), Rochester Shotokan Karate Dojo (NH), as well as Sensei Joseph Suozzi, a special guest and personal friend from JKS Connecticut.

There were two sessions over the weekend: one on Saturday afternoon, and another on Sunday morning. The ranks ranged from eighth kyu to fifth dan, and in the exercises that followed, sensei Rubén delivered something for everyone.

On Saturday, the dojo was at capacity with students, most of them attending a Karate seminar for the first time. It was great seeing that everyone made a special effort to attend. The exercises sensei Rubén gave were highly efficient for restricted spaces.

After the warm-up exercises, we did some choku-zuki combination in place, followed by kicking and stance combinations in different directions. As for the partner work, we did multiple one-step combinations changing attacker and the defense drill on each step. We ended the day practicing the Heian Kata in detail, and for some we used different stepping patterns – again, a creative way of using space!

After training, we went out for dinner at a local restaurant where everyone got to socialize a bit with sensei, and talk Karate.

On Sunday, the attendance was a bit more reduced, which made a whole different type of exercises possible to execute. Although it started with the basic fundamental kihon-ido, it built-up as we practiced combinations from jiyu-kamae. This was a more upbeat session and there was a lot of huffing and puffing at the end!

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to sensei Rubén for supporting our group and providing us with excellent training, and to all participants who came to spend their weekend with us.

We hope this was the first of many events to come, and please drop by if you are in town!



*Group on day two of the seminar.*

# Motivation

By **Jim McGovney**

Shotokan Karate-Do Center, Houston, Texas

It has been my privilege to participate for eight years in the annual Gasshaku led by Sensei Murakami at the Houston Karate-do Center.

Sensei's impact on my motivation and training have been far out of proportion to the frequency of our contact. Below are my most memorable and influential encounters with Sensei Murakami.

## **SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 2012 (I was 8<sup>th</sup> Kyu)**

Sensei Murakami saw two white belts at the back of the gym who did not know how to do what the rest of the karateka were being taught.

Sensei stopped the class training and said 'white belts need help; someone go show them what to do'; and another sensei took the white belts to another room to practice. Sensei Murakami then said to the class:

***"NO SHAME IN NOT KNOWING. IN THE BEGINNING NONE OF US KNEW. THE SHAME IS IN NOT TRYING!"***

This single and simple statement kept me motivated and on track throughout my training and positively influenced other areas of my life, like dance.

## **SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 2013 (7<sup>th</sup> Kyu)**

Sensei Murakami was teaching Heian Nidan and I was struggling. He came next to me, corrected my form, and said:

***"ALL FOR ONE, ONE FOR ALL!"***

I really felt like one of the team, and saw that all karateka were a team!

## **SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 2014 (4<sup>th</sup> Kyu)**

Sensei Murakami and Sensei Ruben joined me at a lunch table between sessions. Sensei Ruben asked me to tell Sensei Murakami how old I was. I answered "I am 63". Sensei Murakami said:

***"BIG IMPROVEMENT SINCE LAST YEAR"***

I walked away thinking "Wow! It doesn't get any better than that! I am on the right path and making progress!"

## **SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 2018 (1<sup>st</sup> Kyu)**

But it did get a lot better:

SHODAN!

Key contacts and comments from Sensei Murakami helped me achieve the goal of a lifetime!

# Hillsboro Shotokan Karate - SKIF Oregon

## Dojo Spotlight

Glad you decided to visit us in the beautiful Oregon. Let me be your guide and explore what it is like to be a part of the Hillsboro Shotokan Karate (HSK) family. I am Stephanie Cunha, a karateka for 3 years and the karate club secretary.

Training starts at 6 pm, but don't be fooled, your entire day will be practice. You know something has changed when these come to your mind during your day:

"What is the first move in Meikyo?" (Do you know what it is?). "Did I drink enough water today? (Basics first...) "I've got my carbs, proteins and fat in, I am good for the 2.5 hours of training tonight". "Someone is walking behind me; How would I react if that person was attacking me?"

Which leads me to tell you one side effect of training at HSK: drastic increase of awareness. So be prepared to stay in the present with a sharp mind ready for any event that life throws at you. If you joined HSK with the idea to be able to defend yourself or the ones you love, you are in the right place.

The dojo offers self-defense classes for women every quarter. In a cheerful environment, they learn how to stay aware and focused in any situation, trusting their instinct and not being afraid to defend their life or those of their loved ones.

I will be driving you tonight. The dojo is not far, just near the Hillsboro airport. We are located



*Women's self-defense class at HSK.*

off the beaten path, you will find the dojo behind all buildings in a business park. You start to wonder if you can trust me. Be patient you will understand in a minute. Sensei and students arrive and will welcome you, you start to feel excitement. Time to train! We line up,



*Sensei Dionne in action.*



*Sensei Gasparakis in action.*

shoulder to shoulder and follow the commands of senpai for seiza.

We then warm-up to prepare the body for training and to prevent injury.

In the beginner/intermediate classes we have an amazing group of kids. We are fortunate to see them grow and progressing over the years. We also have the Little Tigers class where children from 5-7 years old train for half an hour focusing in physical exercises and just a little bit of karate basics (blocks, punches kicks stances) that will prepare them for when they are ready to go through the kyu ranks.

Parents are core in the HSK family, they support the kids and the dojo, participate in every event we organize, share the traditional cake that Sensei's wife, Yanna makes every New Year and get involve in our community.

Training is composed of kihon, kata, kumite, working on our basics, improving our kicks with training on the wall, training with partners, with several pad-targets, making combinations, with speed, sharper, more precise, better

stance... Sensei sees everything... There are three beginner/intermediate classes followed by advanced classes during the week and a mixed class on Saturday mornings. Students have a very diverse base, they vary from 5 years old to over 40s or 50s, and some have origins from China, some from Taiwan, France, Greece, Russia, India, and Philippines.

I still remember like yesterday sensei Gasparakis' first class when he took over the dojo. It was in August 2017. We were holding an L-stance (renoji-dachi) with the leading arm straight in front of us and at his count we will move in zenkutsu-dachi, bringing the leading



*Training in the park*

hand to hikite. Working on hips dynamic, hikite, connection and speed. At the end of the class, my knees were burning and I kept repeating in my mind the two sentences he told us that day:



*SKIF Open Tournament (Houston, TX, 2018).*

Two years later, these are following me everywhere... And he added so much more! Sensei Gasparakis is pushing all of us to reach a better version of ourselves. He constantly observes the dynamism of his students, making sure everyone is on the right track.

We participate in seminars, invite other dojos to train with us, we participate to the development of our community by inviting other instructors to give seminars in the region, we started to offer a bo class one month ago with the great initiative and we participate to tournaments with a very good track record (last year for example we accumulated more than 10 medals participating in various events in two karate tournaments that we participate, the SKIF Open being one of them and Yoshida Cup being the other).

"Karate requires transition from zero to one hundred miles per hour within a split second."

"You should feel the muscles burning after training".



*After last grading in September 2019*

"I've trained karate for a few decades" says sensei Richard Dionne, 3rd Dan and second in command in HSK. "It fills my lungs, it colors my sight, and energizes my senses.

I've trained with many Hanshi and Shihan, but Hillsboro Shotokan is where I call home. After a life of 500,000+ punches, sensei Joseph says "one more time" we all say "OSU!" It is a good day when your obi is wet from training, but we still have the energy to laugh and enjoy each other's company afterwards. Learning the SKIF curriculum keeps my karate fresh, and being able share my experience has deepened my knowledge. We've begun learning Kanazawa no bo which adds an entire new element to our training. I see a great future for this dojo. I'm happy to be a part of it."

Our Chief Instructor, sensei Joseph Gasparakis (4th Dan SKIF) has a sense of detail, precision, perfection. He has started training under sensei Keyvan Ghazi (7th Dan and SKIF Chief Instructor of Greece) in the 1980s, but when he moved to UK to study for his bachelor's and master's degrees in engineering, sensei Gasparakis was training in the infamous Red Triangle in Liverpool with sensei Andy Sherry, Bob Pointon and Frank Brennan and later in London, in Budokwai with sensei Enoda and Ohta. He also became a certified instructor and judge in the Karate Union of Great Britain (KUGB). When Guido Fischer, the founder of Hillsboro Shotokan Karate club decided to retire in Florida and sensei Joseph took over the dojo he enrolled it under SKIF-USA and he made us all feel that we are now part of a big and international organization, with all the benefits and responsibilities that this includes. Lisa Lucchesi, one of the senpai in HSK says: "I began my training with Sensei Guido Fisher alongside my daughter. After reaching 4th KYU she stopped training and I continued on to earn my black belt. When Sensei Guido retired,

I continued train with Sensei Joseph. Sensei Joseph has taken much care and thoughtfulness into building upon the existing dojo and taking it to another level. I am continuing to grow and develop my karate. I am currently training hard to prepare for my Ni Dan test. I am proud to be part of this dojo as I continue my karate journey."

The Hillsboro Shotokan Karate dojo is evolving constantly. I was honored to share our story with you. Please come visit anytime. This is your family too.

# Upcoming Events

**February 29 - March 1, 2020**

## **2020 Shotokan Karate-Do Center Annual Open SKIF Gasshuku, Houston, TX**

The Shotokan Karate-do Center are pleased to extend an invitation to you and your students to participate in the 20th Annual Open SKIF Gasshuku which will be held in Houston Texas on February 29 and March 1 of 2020, at the Trotter Family YMCA, 1331 Augusta Drive, Houston Texas 77057.

Providing the highest levels of traditional karate training, friendship, and a wonderful learning experience, this event is open to all adults, teen and youth karateka from any traditional style or affiliation.

This year our guest instructor is Ryusho Suzuki, Sensei. (7th Dan) and Hiyori Kanazawa, Sensei. (3rd Dan). Both Instructors of the Shotokan

Karate International Federation (S.K.I.F) Japan Headquarters.

We are certain that you and your students will enjoy the positive atmosphere that is exhibited at this event and we would love for you to join us in the spirit of true Karate-do.

If you should have any question, please do not hesitate to contact Rubén Fung at the phone number 832-513-0058 or email [shotokankaratedocenter@gmail.com](mailto:shotokankaratedocenter@gmail.com)

We look forward to seeing you and your students soon



## **| Closing Remarks**

We hope you enjoyed the Fall/Winter newsletter. We are looking forward to creating a Spring/Summer 2020 issue and would appreciate any contributions from our members. Please continue sending articles, photos and seminar/tournament recaps to our email, or reach us on our social media channels.

We would like to thank all of the contributors for their insightful articles and assistance with the creation of this newsletter.

Happy Holidays!

Oss!

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