



# Ko Ken Ryu Karate Jutsu 古拳流空手術

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Welcome all to the Ko Ken Ryu newsletter which has been itching to tell and inform you of the achievements / activities of the club over the past month. It has been a very busy time for everybody involved in the club, including those outside of England. This issue features reports from Ko Ken Ryu Japan and Zambia, all eager to tell the tales of their recent experiences.

All the best  
Editor and committee

## **KKR = Kicking Ass!**

Part of the reason it has been so hectic for coaches and students alike is that it is tournament season. From January many of our team and coaches embarked on the rigorous training regime which mentally and physically tests your abilities in Karate. Many of you have been involved during the past month so lets have a look at what has been happening:

### **AMA Yorkshire Open 2006**

The morning was morbid and depressing, bearing in mind this was before Phil had begun his repertoire of conversation gags and the team expected a long day. The boys arrived at the Richard Dunn Centre Bradford around twelve, welcomed with overcast skies and looming faces of animosity; an unpleasant environment.

As voices echoed around the stadium calling events, the team stayed composed for the afternoon despite not having the luxury of a full squad and coaches by their side, 'safety in numbers' was out! Whilst Freddy White preened his hair, checked his complexion and made sure he was the best looking competitor there, Phil Beecher and Dan Anvoner quietly brooded over their mat tactics which was an approach that paid off. With constant delays over fight categories prolonging the agony of competing, tired minds were evident amongst the ranks but not in Ko Ken Ryu! Although Phil was constantly tempted to run on the mat and show 'his stuff', Dan and Freddy managed to contain the young puppy into holding his fiery bustle for his category.

The events for our squad were scheduled for 2:30 in the afternoon but it was not until 6 to 6:30 at night before Ko Ken Ryu were allowed to dance their dance! Dan "the passion" Anvoner was on first with a fine focus for the fight and he did not disappoint. He progressed through his rounds with dedication and battle, taking heavy blows but his run was ended by undoubtedly one of the best fighters in the tournament, previously knocking out the England favourite by 8 points. A bronze medal for Dan was a great achievement.

The next category featured heavy weights Phil and Freddy White, a crowd pleaser if there ever was one! The competition was not as strong as

previous AMA's and both fighters capitalised on this with nothing complicated, solid basic combinations and a clear minded strategy. As competitors dropped it was a pure Ko Ken Ryu final with Freddy and Phil happily standing opposite each other. Fatigue had set in on both fighters and poor cardio led the fight to be scrappy and contrary to previous bouts. Despite Phil's 1 point lead and superior reach hampering Freddy's game plan, it was Freddy who stole the gold with 2 seconds to go (a kick to the mid section). Well done to the three fighters, walking away with 3 medals: Gold Silver Bronze is an incredible achievement!



### **AMA International 2007 25<sup>th</sup> Feb**

For those who are new to the world of competitions I hope the above article gives a good insight into the hardship and disorganisation which goes with such events. However the AMA Internationals is a different kettle of fish all together. It is one of the premier dates for some of the best fighters around, drawing competitors from as far as India and Iran, to European countries such as Denmark, Ukraine and Sweden all fighting.

Early on, it was evident that the tournament's standard was bearing

strength, honour and grit with no exception; it was going to be a long hard day. Ali Nyoni was up first with his infamous kata on the Sat. but was knocked out early on against a prestigious 4 time BUSA champion. The stakes were high and despite another opportunity to impress the judges, Ali was again out of the judges favour. It was undoubtedly a sharp kata but it wasn't to be, little did the judges know Ali would have his revenge.

Sunday came and many of the boys were eager to release the beasts inside them. The chance came early on with the teams and it was good to see two KKR teams entering this year proving our talent is increasing with time. There was no mucking about with the first team as Freddy struck first with an electric stratagem, aptly followed by Dave Murphy's clinical finishing. A convincing first win to Freddy, Dave and Patrick picking up a 2-0 victory. Their second fight was against the AMA team which never showed (no surprise), some claimed it was due to Patrick Cronin's stare down other's Freddy White's stinking gi. The reign of terror was ended against a fast, agile team. The swaggering Ali Nyoni reluctantly rose to the occasion (he was substituted in for Dave Murphy) and not only managed to bust up someone's nose but also show the referee's that this was 'apparently' *his* dojo! A penalty was enforced against Ali for the blood leaving Patrick in a tight situation against a talented kicker who in turn scored highly against him. Close boys, next year!

On the adjacent mat was our second team featuring James Offer, Dan and Phil who really took their fight to the bare wire. After Dan's victory but Phil's loss, it was up to James to clinch it and despite an exceptional head kick to clinch it in

the final seconds the referee decided it was not to score thus losing it for the boys.

The familiar names of Phil and Freddy fought in the 4<sup>th</sup> kyu heavyweights category hoping to repeat their Yorkshire success. Phil Beecher had to retire injured after a strained foot injury and a broken nail, whilst Freddy continued through the perilous rounds. Despite Freddy claimed his feet were feeling heavy, the 'Roosen Regime' of cardio put him in good stead for what was essentially an iron man contest, fighting five fights in the day. The tough, leathered frame of Mr. White was weakened after a breach of rule 1.7a of the AMA manual: "thou shall not wear a jock strap on the outside of ones Gi" and after preaching that it wasn't a groin guard, he was just born like that, he finally consented to removing it. It eventually led him to a bronze medal showdown which he unfortunately lost but never the less, invaluable experience learnt.



The heavyweight categories featured Pat Cronin and Dave Murphy amongst the hardest and biggest fighters there. Patrick was ironically pitted against the man who beat him in the team but as usual Pat gave a look to his opponent which could send shivers down a penguins back! A tenacious and predictably physical performance couldn't stop history repeating itself and Pat sadly lost. Dave was fortunate enough to receive 2 bye's to the third round but not fortunate enough to meet a forgiving opponent. An all to

recognised and hungry Welsh international was waiting for him on the other side of the mat but Dave wore his honour on his sleeve. He took oppressive and cruel body blows and looked worn but this didn't stop Dave throwing his techniques and giving it back. Although a loss, both fighters showed a distinct colour of honour on the mat, especially under the pressure!

In the under 75kg category was Ali Nyoni and James Offer, which as far as light weight categories go, there were some suspicious bellies amongst competitors. Any how it was James up first with an unfortunate draw against a southpaw. No doubt his game plan was jiggered but remained calm throwing some solid scoring techniques but the awkwardness of the situation was too much and his opponent ran away with a close victory.

Mr Nyoni made it quite clear that it his fights were going to be a 'show' and they certainly were entertaining. He looked tense outside the mat but once the fight commenced he made his opponent look like a fish out of water; dead! It was only until his techniques were tested against the Ukrainian kick specialist, did Ali feel the medallion hunger. The European soon kicked Ali in the head which Ali only noticed until three seconds after. A loss which could have been avoided didn't unsettle the big man into receiving a well earned bronze!



Dan Anvoner was feeling prepared, putting in his usual solid mental preparation and it showed with recognisable tenacity but was stopped after the second round.

As for Arm 'the Armenian battle axe', Kelly Butler and Derek Chan it was an entirely new experience competing in the AMA's. It has to be said that Arm was incredibly calm for her first fight which is a hard thing to grasp without experience. Concentration and rocklike courage meant she was fighting in the quarter final where she lost against a formidably 'large' opponent who was accustomed to bare knuckle gypsy rules rather than WKF rules. She got a nice black eye though!

Finally Kelly and Derek were put against well versed competitors, which was a headache especially for Derek. His 'rubber head' was the only thing preventing his opponent from knocking him out with a barrage of head kicks. Kelly was under similar pressure but in the end both were knocked out.

Although it was the fighters who were the focus of the day, it was only possible with the help, experience and knowledge of our Sensei Andy. On many occasions our fighters would not have won if Andy's coaching had been absent. Also he has the land speed record for fastest 'mat to mat coaching' and shortest lunch break, finishing a sandwich of in 3 gulps! Both credible achievements Andy, well done.

Further support came from Ian Staples, Abby, Lucy, Andy and Camille which was much appreciated by everyone; it's nice to have someone shouting your name. Well done to all those who fought and as our club captain Patrick said 'the gaps getting smaller and we'll have our day'. I agree ☺

## Quest for a Social



Our most recent social to the Laser Quest was a resounding success and a big thanks goes to Dan our beloved social secretary for his precise organisation and also to everyone who came to make it so much fun.

Spitting, biting, charging and name calling all featured during the 20 min battle, with specific reference to the artful Ian Staples who raised the bar to new levels in the world of stealth. Although Dan Anvoner advertised his 'expertise' in Laser Quest it was followed by an appalling performance, likening him to a wounded pig searching for his dignity. Freddy White stole the gold first time round (to no-one's surprise) but a determined Ian took it the next round ☹

## KKR International: JAPAN, the story so far...

Now to hear from our new sensei Tom, in Japan who has kindly compiled a treat of information for us to read.

Hi Everyone,

This is Thomas Unwin at

the Japan dojo. We thought that it might be a nice idea to let everyone know a little about the club. With that in mind we've put some things together- a short introduction about what we're doing in Japan in the first place, a tourists guide to Nagano Prefecture (where we all live) and a piece about the club, training, grading, photos and various members' impressions of training since they started 5 months ago. I've also written a piece trying to convey some of my own impressions on teaching karate to date and how I think it (teaching) can be of real benefit to anyone wishing to further their own karate.

Yours  
Tom

## Who are we?

Firstly let me explain about our membership and what we are doing in Japan. We are all out in Japan teaching English on temporary (up to 3 years) contracts. I myself have been out here for just under a year and a half.

I arrived in Tokyo on July 31<sup>st</sup> 2005 – accompanied by, amongst others, Declan, Gisela and Tom H. The realisation soon dawned on us that 1) We couldn't speak a word of Japanese, 2) We'd never been to Japan before and 3) We didn't know anyone here – the perfect set of reasons to move to the other side of the world!

Some of us teach at high schools and others teach at middle schools and elementary schools. Obviously everyone wants to carve out their own Japanese experience so as to make the most of their time – I suspect that this is part of the reason why many of our members began training.

## Where are we? About Nagano:

A few days after arriving we were slapped on a bus out of Tokyo to our respective prefectures and our new lives.

Our prefecture is **Nagano Prefecture** – west of Tokyo in the centre of Japan. It is known as – Nihon no yane – “The roof of Japan”. The reason is due to the fact that Nagano is filled to bursting point with mountains that made it the ideal choice for the 1998 Winter Olympics. Indeed, at this time of year, many of us spend the week working (and of course Karate-ing) and the weekend skiing/ snowboarding. We can't complain really! Alex and Laurence are the lucky ones who live closer than most to the slopes.

Nagano is famous for many things, for example the ‘Zenkoji’ Temple in Nagano City. This is like a Mecca for Buddhists as it is believed to house the first Buddhist relic brought to Japan. Once every seven years a replica of the relic is paraded in a huge festival.

**Shibu Onsen**, to the east of Nagano City, is perhaps the only known place in the world where monkeys bathe in onsen (natural hot springs) – they do it all year round, including the middle of winter!! They became world famous during the 1998 Winter Olympics when hordes of tourists flocked to watch them chilling in the water – bemused at all the attention they were getting!

Closer to the dojo we are very lucky to have **Matsumoto Castle**. The castle is Japan's oldest castle still in its original form and is one of only 4 castles declared a ‘National Treasure’. It is also known as the ‘Crow's Castle’ because of its black façade. Most people consider the magnificent

Himeji Castle to be Japan's most beautiful castle, but ask any true Nagano resident or connoisseur and they'll tell you Matsumoto!! Two of our members, Luis and Erin, live in Matsumoto.



Ten minutes south of Matsumoto lies Shiojiri – home to four members and of course Ko Ken Ryu Japan's dojo. Shiojiri is not a breathtaking city but it is famous for its 'wine'. We say 'wine' in the very loose sense of the word because the only time you'd consider drinking it would be during a serious bender and only then as part of a dare. Look at those lovely grapes! (see pic!) Tom H's high school actually have a wine making club – which is testament to the crapness of this wine - they get high school kids to make it! Shiojiri is also home of Japan's biggest Halloween party- this year organised by our very own Luke!

South-east of Shiojiri lies Suwa lake. Why is this famous? Well, we want to try and say something good about everyone's home town so please bear with... Suwa Lake is home of **o-miwatari** – the crossing of the gods– a cool natural phenomenon. About once or twice a decade, the entire volume of the lake freezes, causing the surface to be cracked and pushed up by the pressure of the expanding ice. Locals say that the ridges that appear are due to gods crossing the lake, travelling between Suwa's various shrines.

Finally, the Kiso Vally, home

of Dec and Rhea, is one of the most remote areas in Japan. In olden times it was the main route between Tokyo and Kyoto. It has some fantastic old buildings, traditional shops, festivals and beautiful scenery. There is a picture on the yahoo group of the Fukushima festival in which everyone watches as a group of blokes get lashed up and then try and smash up a 500kg shrine. People do occasionally die!

Nagano is a beautiful place and we're all very lucky to live here. We hope this snippet gives you a very small idea of where we live and train.

### Taking a class: Some thoughts on how teaching can benefit your karate.

Think of how you act when you are asked by Andy or one of the other sensei to lead the class in some way – for example, something as simple as being asked to move into a visible place so that others can use you as a guide during the kata. How do you conduct yourself? I'm sure that you feel that extra level of concentration and desire to do even better when the pressure is on – much like in a grading.



Therein surely, lies the essence of the benefit of teaching anything. You have nowhere to hide suddenly. You have to make sure that you know your

stuff and you have to do your absolute best every time you demonstrate in front of a class full of curious students. When you answer their questions, your answers, like the techniques you perform, must have substance.

I don't pretend to be an expert. I've only been seriously teaching for about 5 months, 3 times a week – however, even in such a short space of time I've noticed differences in my own practice and approach. The following is a quick overview of *some* thoughts I've had to date, ask me again in another 6 months and perhaps I'll have different ideas! Ask Andy, Moodlee, or any of the other sensei who've been teaching much (MUCH!) longer than I and I'm sure they'll have far more developed and coherent ideas. But, for now, this is how and why I think teaching can be of benefit – perhaps it will be of some small interest...

Teaching karate well requires you to really break down every technique into its component parts – where is the body positioned at certain stages during the execution of a technique? You already know applications and the reasons for performing the whole technique, but you now find yourself analysing it in greater detail – what is the reason for a specific part of this or that technique – how does it contribute to the whole?

Let's take a simple example which you are probably all familiar with - a basic choku tsuki punching sequence.

Think about firing a punch...

...are you thinking of the punch as a whole or are you aware of the many aspects that make up the punch? - the generation of power from the legs and hip, the transfer of

that power up the sides of your body and through the shoulders, arms and ultimately into the point of contact, the rotation of the fist as it travels forwards and backwards (why do you think we practice punches in this way?), the importance placed on pulling the non punching arm back to the hip and using that power to supplement that generated by the rest of your body to augment the punch. At the same time this pull back might be thought of as an elbow to someone behind – it is just as important as the punching hand. How about the solid line that runs from the striking knuckles straight up your arm?



Most probably, everything I've just said seems obvious to you – however, I'd hazard a guess that many who are reading this haven't ever spelled it out in this way – you've never had to because you've never had to explain it to someone else – you just do it naturally without thinking about it.

I think that by being forced to break down things as you teach them you become more aware of inconsistencies in your own karate. You think (for example), "I've just told them to look before every move in a kata, but do I do that myself?" or, "I tell them to remain at one height when performing oi-tsuki, but do I do the same for the techniques I should be?"

More importantly though is that you seek a reason for what you are teaching – You can't just tell someone to do something without knowing why they should be doing it.

“WHY should they remain at the same height when performing oi-tsuki?” Perhaps it is to ensure that the power from the technique is transferred forward into the target as opposed to being lost into the ground as might happen if you rise up and sink at the end of the movement – (to give just one example).

The next step is infusing that principle into your own techniques and teaching – you can make sure that you practice what you preach! In the above example, you’d be more aware of power transition – when does the above ‘equal height’ principle apply and when does it not apply?

I’ve heard martial arts learning described in stages. The first is the learning of all the techniques, combinations etc – the raw materials of your karate. The second is the stripping down of everything you’ve learned into its bare components – attempting to understand what you are doing. The final stage is evolving and developing in your own way.

The final stage might explain why there are so many different stylistic nuances, even in one martial art, as various people move on to manifest ideas into their own styles.

Teaching would seem to be one way of inducing the first tentative steps into the **second** stage. I don’t know all the techniques and kata that exist in the Ko Ken Ryu syllabus but that doesn’t mean that I can’t begin trying to understand more deeply the material that I do know. In addition, won’t a more complete understanding of what I already know allow me to pick up and learn new techniques faster than otherwise?

I could go on and on, but I hope that the above plants a few ideas in your head. Being asked to take a part of the class is of course an honour

and a sign of your sensei’s trust in your skill - you want to justify your sensei’s faith in you, right? Even more though, it is your sensei giving you an opportunity. It’s an opportunity to analyse yourself in a way that perhaps you haven’t done before or, might not do again for some time. ☹

## Zambia



Continuing the cosmopolitan ambience of this newsletter, it is long overdue to share and congratulate our Ko Ken Ryu family in Zambia, led by Sensei Moodlee Chola. The Karate has been extremely fruitful for Moodlee and his students and i'm sure it will continue throughout. Despite a quiet time at the moment in Africa, there has been some astounding results to report from past months.

On December 2nd 2006 a Karate Championship was held in Long Acres, Lusaka hosted by The Karate Centre. The event entailed the usual events of kata and kumite but was said to be a "gruelling 3 hour event". However, this didn't perturb Micheal Kanyatta who claimed the prestigious title of senior kumite champ, with Reagan Sichone coming in a close second. Charles Phiri of the Green Buffaloes Karate club, not only came second in senior male kata and third in the kumite but was voted karateka of the championships, a great achievement!



(Above: Khushal and Kris sparring at karate centre on 04th November 2006)

Written by  
Paul (about 10 yrs)  
1st kyu, Karate Centre, Zambia

Hopefully we will have more to put In this section next issue, whether its funny, poignant or inspiring just keep it coming!

It has to be said that the Green Buffalos and The Karate centre teams were extremely successful, having many of their students in medal positions. Well done to all who competed and I'm sure Moodlee will be chuffed with such success, I know we are!

See the rest of the event winners below:

Martin Muswema- Senior male kata  
Kanza Kamanga - Junior male kata  
Paulina Ngulube- Female kata  
Paul Wamulume- Junior male kumite

## **Karate Quote**

It has come to my attention that karate is important for many different reasons but these reasons vary amongst different people. Reading a quote from Paul in Zambia made a real inspirational impact on me as an individual but also spoke volumes for his tenacity and fortitude inspire me as much as himself:

“Karate begins when you feel like you have lost hope or when you are tired. They say never give up. You have got to not give up until you have reached your goal. At one time I felt like I lost hope, but because of General Lungu, I made it this far. I was inspired by him”