

Sogo-Goshin-Do

WKDA Kai *Fall* Newsletter Issue 6, Vol. 5

New Black Belts

We currently have had two recent black belt promotions (shodan) and an additional 2nd dan promotion (Nidan) within our system. Marsh Elliot tested for his black belt on August 13th followed by David Thompson on August 20th. Both did exceptionally well and are congratulated for their efforts, which culminated in this great honor.

Marshall Morehead was also recently promoted and is now sporting a 2nd degree black belt. This promotion has been granted for excellence in his martial arts abilities, not to mention a reflection of his community leadership.

Remember that receiving your black belt is in recognition of your time and effort. The belt does not make you a good martial artist, the good martial artist makes the belt.

Following the Code

By Shihan Sean

Is there still a code of honor amongst martial artists? Amongst black belts? Many martial artists believe there still exists a code of

honor that martial artists should live by even today. While there are even books available referring to this topic there is no true code that all martial artists adhere to today. This is because the martial arts community has grown so large and diverse that no one group has any type of political control over all systems or practitioners. However, martial arts has never really been about systems as much as it has been about the individual. Personal excellence is the key in most dojos. Following a code really comes down to personal choice just as it does with religion or politics. So what does this mean for you as an individual martial artist? Well we should all know by now that our fighting skills are not taught to us to start a fight, but rather to protect ourselves and our families. This is part of the code. Beyond that it really comes down to what you believe is right and true.

The *samurai* lived by a very strict code of honor and while they engaged in combat that often had dire results, most still lived to a very high standard and had the respect of those in their community. Even those that did not know them had high expectations of them in terms of what it meant to be a samurai.

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As martial artists we share this lineage with our distant martial cousins.

There is an even older and somewhat fictionalized history of the *shaolin*-monks that trained in China as depicted in the 1970s TV series Kung-Fu with David Carradine. While this is just a TV show there is some basis in reality to the idea of intense training and then the expectations for the new Monk (or Sensei in our setting). The idea that one is now ready to begin doing good things as a role-model at some level is commonplace in these stories.

Helping teach classes and assisting new students both young and old is one way to start down that path. But being a good person should not stop there. Try to think of things you can do to make an impact on the world around you. These can be small things like helping someone in need or larger life changing events like joining the police force or the military. Perhaps a career in medicine or some other area that helps others is in your future. Again the small things are possibly the most important because they are things we can all do every day. Simply having a good peaceful attitude can affect people around you in a positive way.

Remember that being a martial artist takes strength and courage not to mention great character. Once you reach black belt this should be evident to everyone around you and the expectation of what you can accomplish long term and day-to-day should be more. Take this to heart and consider what you can do to make your world better and how this fits into your personal martial code.

Monthly Training Calendar

Don't forget about monthly training. If you can't make it check with your instructor because Shihan Will is usually at hombu dojo every Saturday. Brown & Black Belt training is set for:

October 15th, 2005

November 19th, 2005

December 17th, 2005

Quarterly News

The newsletter will be changing to a quarterly format instead of monthly. Please be sure to send me any news if you have any, such as promotions, tournaments, etc.

If you would like to write an article e-mail it to Shihan Sean at shihansean@sogogogoshindo.org