



JUST FOR KICKS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF AMERICAN KARATE-DO SHOTOKAI



Message from the Administrative Group



Technology is not something we typically think of as useful to karate other than for kata. Right before the COVID-19 pandemic, we began holding VIP zoom sessions where we shared new practice exercises with each other. This helped us connect during the pandemic with weekly zoom sessions, in which we worked on improving our personal practices without in-person partners. One advantage of this was having others look at our practice and give feedback. Although in-person practice is superior, our rigorous zoom practices allowed us to keep in shape. Despite that, I was a bit nervous to attend our first in-person course only one month after resuming in-person practice. I was pleased to find that the zoom practices had kept me in shape to the point of being able to learn and grow quite a bit at course.

As part of our focus on technology this last year, we decided to redo the shotokai.org website. The site has changed a few times over the years, but never quite worked the way we envisioned. We have been limited by our inability to stay on top of technological changes. We decided to go with a full-service web host to get the full functionality we desired. The new site is meant to help instructors with their own clubs scattered across the US.

Kiyan, Rebekah, and I spent several months redesigning, reorganizing, and building the new site to contain features that will benefit everyone in AKDS:

Kata Videos

The most frequent use of our website is access to kata videos. They are now organized in the general order in which they are learned. Each kata page is assigned access by belt ranks. The advantage of this is that members can focus on kata appropriate for their skill level without being distracted by more advanced katas. As members grade, the higher kata videos become available.

AKDS Store

In the past, we have tried to maintain a store for all instructors and club members to order equipment with varying degrees of success. The new site has a fully functional discount gear store. This new ordering system is much easier for everyone and guarantees that everything has been paid for prior to orders being placed. It also notifies the administrator in charge of the store when orders have been placed and keeps track of which club they will be shipped to. Prior to this, instructors had to keep track of everything. Additionally, we have also been able to create a separate store for

blackbelts with an additional discount. For the first time, we have also included a digital store for digital items. We are also able to create store pages just for courses.

Events and Clubs

Course registration and information are all easy to access and manage through the events page.

Another new feature is a club page for each club managed by the club instructor so that you can find information about practices or contact the instructor.

Information about AKDS

The website is full of resources for members and instructors. Members can learn all the definitions for terms and techniques, belt grading standards, and the AKDS philosophy. Instructor resources include instructional videos, prior course videos, leadership documents, grading certificates, and recruiting tools (pamphlets, mission statement for printing, flyers, etc.).

We invite you to check out the redesigned site at www.shotokai.org. We are also working on expanding our social media posts. We have provided the links for Facebook and Instagram on the main page of the website. We are grateful for the tool of technology!

Sincerely,

Gina Cooley, 2nd Dan

Administrative Director, American KDS

Meditations



To use a bokuto correctly, it must become an extension of the body. If the focus is too inward, too narrow, or even too broad, you sacrifice the ability to truly understand and feel your connection to others around you. This is, in part, because poorly placed focus breaks the connections within yourself—from feet to legs to core to chest, and chaining to arms, hands, neck, and head. Properly placed focus and intent strengthens your internal connections and allows the bokuto to become an extension of your intent.

Conflict has been defined as a “struggling of the mind.” Much like we experience in finding properly placed focus and intent, our lives are a constant conflict between harmony and chaos, whether it be internal or external. Our choices will determine the end of that conflict. We can give in and be swallowed by the chaos, or we can properly place our focus and extend intent as we settle into our foundation and find harmony—even if it is only within ourselves.

We seek tranquility in the midst of conflict.

Martin Pardue, 1st Dan

News

After over a year without in-person practice due to nationwide COVID-19 restrictions, we were finally able to participate in a week-long course in person! More than 20 participants met in Orem, UT for over 25 hours of practice in 5 days. We welcomed

practitioners from California, Oregon, Texas, and Utah, and joined in David Gillis's youth club practice in Orem.

With a theme of utilizing bokuto as a tool to inform our karate practice, we gleaned insights from the sword to help us improve our moving, timing, blocking, and striking. We were very pleased to see how the practice level of those who participated faithfully over the past year in our Zoom practices was maintained at a higher level than those who did not join in virtual sessions. They also seemed to adapt to in-person contact much more quickly than those who did not practice with us online.

We are excited to announce some long-awaited belt gradings:

Gideon Foltz – 6th Kyu Red Belt (Youth)
 Deneb Burgoyne – 4th Kyu Red Belt
 Brooke Gillis – 4th Kyu Red Belt
 Kiyam Amadizadeh – 1st Kyu Brown Belt
 Jesse Huston – 1st Kyu Brown Belt
 Martin Pardue – 1st Dan Black Belt
 Gina Cooley – 2nd Dan Black Belt

We want to thank these karateka for their patience and wish them a hearty congratulations on their well-deserved advancements.

Thanks to everyone for the excellent efforts they gave to this demanding course. Welcome back to in-person practice—I'm proud of our organization and grateful to be a member of this very special karate family!

Sincerely,
 Jeremy Crook, 5th Dan
 President, American KDS

Upcoming Courses

Date*	Type	Location
Sat, Aug 28	VIP (Virtual Instructor Practice)	
Fri-Sat, Sep 17-18	Weekend	Oregon
Mon-Fri, Oct 11-15	Week	San Diego <i>AKDS Annual Leadership Meeting</i>
Sat, Nov 12-13	Weekend	Louisiana
Sat, Dec 11	VIP (Virtual Instructor Practice)	

*If in-person practice is not safe, in-person courses will be converted to single-day virtual courses.

**VIP sessions feature instructors who lead practices exploring teaching ideas. These sessions are for all instructors and assistant instructors of green belt rank and above; other kyu grades attend by invitation only.

Online Practice

We invite you to join our weekly virtual practices. Please contact the lead instructor with the email provided for the Zoom codes.

-Thurs. 6:00pm Pacific (AKDStechnical@shotokai.org)

-Sat. 8:00am Pacific (AKDSPresident@shotokai.org)

AKDS National Contact Information

Jeremy Crook: AKDSpresident@shotokai.org
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Questions or comments about the newsletter? Contact Rebekah Call (editor) at AKDSsecretary@shotokai.org

Quotes

“[A man], due to his reputation of being both indomitable and fearless, was able to terrify his opponent at the very start of the encounter and then come in quickly for the kill. However, Azato said, if the opponent refuses to be terrified, if he remains coolheaded, and if he searches for the inevitable gap in [his] defense, victory cannot be all that difficult.”

(Master Gichin Funakoshi, *Karate-Do—My Way of Life*, Chapter 1.)

“The word ‘*bu*’ of *budō* (martial arts) is written with the Chinese character for ‘stop’ within a character signifying two crossed halberds meaning to stop conflict. Since karate is a *budō*, this meaning should be deeply considered, and the fists should not be used heedlessly.”

(Master Gichin Funakoshi, *Karate-Do Kyohan*, p. 245.)

“When considering the dynamics of Karate training Harada thought speed, endurance and strength were the 3 factors involved; elements of these he considered important were correct form of posture, relaxation, concentration and natural movement.”

(“Karate Goes to South America,” in *Mitsusuke Harada Sensei MBE—50 Years of KDS*)