



Osu!

Issue 1, Number 4

Bulletin of the International Shotokan Karate Federation of Canada

Fall 2007

In This Issue

- Instructor Profile - Sensei Maureen Woon-A-Tai
- Training with Asthma
- Precision in Karate
- Tips for Returning to Training
- Points on Kata
- 2006 Canadian Nationals Results

Instructor Profile

Sensei Maureen Woon-A-Tai, 7th dan

by Janice Pyke, 5th dan

Editors Note: In the previous editions of Osu, we have profiled Okazaki Sensei, Yaguchi Sensei and Woon-A-Tai Sensei. These individuals have dedicated their lives full-time to the Art of Karate but there are many other karateka that have obtained Senior ranks. We plan on profiling each of these individuals in this and future editions.

As she performs the simple yet dynamic moves of Jion, one can see the results of many years of training. Her quiet demeanor and gentle mannerisms seem a contradiction to the fact that she is one of three in the world ranked 7th Dan.

Sensei Maureen Woon-A-Tai has achieved what many of us only dream of. She has balanced her home, her family, and her career and yet found time to follow the path of Shotokan Karate for over three and a half decades.

Born in 1954 in Guyana, South America, Sensei Maureen was the baby sister to her four brothers. Her introduction to Karate was through her brother Keith, who would come from karate class and practice at home. He taught her some techniques that piqued her interest to join at the age of 16 in June of 1970. Originally the motivation was self-defense but as she moved up the ranks, it changed:

"I was a green belt preparing to test for 5th Kyu, a group of us were training together and when the examination results were given, several of my friends got a double-pass and I hadn't. From that point on, I became very determined and committed to JKA Karate. I trained very hard and succeeded in being promoted to Shodan in February of 1974. Around that time, we were doing a lot of demonstrations in Guyana. Whenever martial arts movies previewed, we would do demonstrations at the theatre just prior to the show. We had a lot of fun and really got into the demonstration sequences. I remember one night when I had to defend myself against multiple attackers, I used a front thrust kick against one of the guys, after the demo was over, he showed me my footprint was still imbedded on his chest."



1974 was a busy year for Sensei Maureen, as well as being one of the first three Shodans of her Sensei, in June of that year she was united in marriage to her sweetheart Sensei Frank Woon-A-Tai. A memorable part of the ceremonies was the customized Guard of Honor comprising of the many karateka performing jodan-zuki (face punches). And where should a newly-wed karateka couple go on their honeymoon.....Master Camp of course!

Osu!

Our Staff...

Frank Woon-A-Tai
Editor-in-Chief

Paul Smith
Editor

Janice Pyke
Editor

Ron Doucet
Translator

Send submissions to

psmith@crrstv.net

Her marriage to a full-time karate instructor took her to Jamaica in 1976 where they spent five years and where their eldest daughter was born. Then in 1980, the Woon-A-Tai family came to Canada and set up their headquarters in Toronto. Currently their family of five hold ranks of two 7th Dans, one 3rd Dan (Diandra), one 2nd Dan (Michelle) and one 1st Dan (Ken Teruyuki).



Not a stranger to the competition ring, Sensei Maureen has had much Tournament experience. In 1974 she competed in the World Tournament in Los Angeles where she placed sixth in Kata. In those days, women were not allowed to compete in kumite. She competed again at the 1981 Canadian Nationals and more recently was a member of the Canadian Team that competed at the Pan-American Championships in Barbados in 1999. It was at this Caribbean location that she was also promoted to 6th Dan.

In 2000 she moved into the role of Coach when she attended the Shoto-Cup in Japan where the Canadian Men's Team Kata placed 3rd, a first time on the podium for Canada. She again coached the Canadian Team in 2001 at the Pan-American Championships held in Philadelphia where the Team returned with 22 medals.

Sensei Maureen was featured in the videos "Eclipse of Life" and "Soul of Kata" where she demonstrates the street application of the techniques used in Heian Shodan and Heian Nidan. In this she exemplifies the masterful skill that she has acquired over her many years pursuing Karate-do.

In 2006 she was invited to test for 7th Dan at Master Camp. I was lucky enough to be in attendance and witnessed her performance and resulting promotion. She also completed the Kenshusei program and has earned her Graduate Instructor status. She is the first Canadian Woman to obtain this achievement.

It is a difficult balancing act that she excels at. Days are full, from rising early to prepare the children for school and herself in her career with the Royal Bank International Division. Then home again just in time to teach evening classes in the Dojo located on the main floor below their apartment, followed by meal preparation, supervise homework and catch up on the days happenings. Then it is off to the Dojo office to work for a few hours to deal with the Dojo and National paperwork that continues to accumulate before she catches some sleep in preparation for the next day as it begins again. It is not an easy lifestyle but it is one that she embraces and conquers with quiet determination.

The saying goes that behind every good man is a great woman and Sensei Maureen Woon-A-Tai is just that. She is a valued member of her family, of our organization and our lives.

Training with Asthma

by Clive Hinds, 5th dan

I grew up in Jamaica as a very frail and sickly child. I was diagnosed with a plaguing breathing problem at the age of four. Playing any kind of sport was a problem. Running or any kind of exertion caused severe tightness in my chest. If I got over excited about competition of any kind I would have a problem. I carried this pressing disorder for thirty years believing that the only hope for comfort would be some type of miracle drug.

When I went to a triathlon to support a friend, it became a turning point in my life. There were men in their 50's and 60's who entered the five mile swim, fifty-six mile bike ride and ten mile run, that actually finished the entire feat. I met a police officer from my own town who portrayed bullish strength and determination in participating in the event. I later found out that this man suffered as a chronic asthmatic. We became friends and I was then determined to be physically active.

I began by doing stretching which was designed for me as well as stride jumps, pushups and sit-ups. I even played tennis and bicycled. But I needed something more fulfilling. The thought of a martial art came to mind because earlier in my teens I had tried Kung Fu but did not pursue it for long.

To my astonishment I was told that my friend the police officer had trained in four different martial arts and had learned the basics. These were karate, kung fu, aikido and judo.

In my mind there was still grave concern and doubt as to whether my body could withstand any vigorous training. My immediate question was in fact which of these martial arts was the one for me.

Without a doubt, karate-do was suggested and the Japan Karate Association was contacted. My first visit to karate school was with fear and amazement. As I stood at the visitor's desk signing the registration documents, the loud shouting of kias was heard after a series of kicking and punching techniques. This set not only my adrenaline flowing from wanting to participate, but a heavy feeling of discomfort at the thought of performing any physical movements which could risk having an attack and becoming embarrassed.

I found karate to be exciting and tricky, especially the performing of a kata. The knowledge I received from reading some of the karate books was in itself a great inspiration and comfort. I found out that Master Funokoshi was also an asthmatic. He designed most of the techniques to help with breathing disorders.

My personal goal for the next two years was to learn to breathe properly. In karate it is a noted fact that if breathing is not synchronized with your technique, a weak and un-focused motion is performed. For most beginners as it was for me, there was a tendency to hold my breath while performing two or three techniques. This would leave me gasping for air. The simple motion of breathing out while punching or kicking and inhaling while blocking seems an easy enough task, but takes time and repetition in order to master the motion. I have found out that kicking and punching or performing complex techniques can easily be done provided the person looks deep within oneself (seek perfection of character) and understands the body through diligent training.

Karate training has helped me control my asthma warming up my lungs properly before training. The same as you would warm up your muscles. It has been many years since I joined karate. I now instruct others on how to breathe properly when training in karate.

Karate training is beneficial for people suffering from Asthma.



DID YOU KNOW?

The ring for karate sport sparring was originally conceived of as a circle, like the circular Sumo ring. When the inventors tried it, however, they couldn't figure out how to define where the judges would be positioned, so they changed it to a square and put a judge on each corner.

Mizu no kokoro means "a mind like water" and it means that the karate-do student should develop a mind like the water on the surface of a clear undisturbed pond. As the clear, calm surface reflects everything around it perfectly, so should your mind.

Precision in Karate

by Paul A. Smith, 5th dan

In a martial art that emphasizes the philosophy of “one blow, one opponent” as much as Shotokan does, the need for precision of technique is of utmost importance if this philosophy is to be realized. When we start as eager white belts, the emphasis is placed on learning coarse movements. We need to train our brain and body to accept the unorthodox placements of hands and feet that, up till this point in our lives, we have had no need to execute. Once we have become reasonably comfortable with these new movements, an emphasis is placed on where on the body to execute these blows. Unfortunately, most karateka do not see the extreme importance of precision when delivering these finishing blows. As a result, most kicks and strikes are delivered in the general vicinity of a vital point and rarely, directly on target. In most cases, especially if your opponent is much larger than you, this has the effect of further angering your assailant rather than taking him down where he is no longer a threat to you. Vital points are, for the most part, very small in surface area and a miss of just a few centimeters on either side will not result in the desired finishing blow the defender is expecting.

Many karateka train hard every class, yet still punch and kick off-center, have weak stances and place blocks in a physically weak position. To the untrained eye, all of this looks very impressive but to those who know the difference, it is obvious that in a life and death situation, such delivery of technique would be relatively ineffective and may result in the karateka getting seriously hurt by their attacker. In Karate, nerve centers or pressure points are used to disable and to defeat our opponents. It is ironic that the same points are used in acupuncture and acupressure to heal the body and to restore balance to the body's systems. To the acupuncturist, a pressure point is a gate through which the body's healthful energies flow. By manipulating the gate, the flow of energy can be increased or decreased as required to restore the health and well-being of the patient. To the martial artist, these same points provide a means by which the body's flow of energy can be disrupted to quickly incapacitate an attacker. Anyone who has ever received acupuncture treatments knows the need for precision, as placing the needle in the wrong place can be ineffective in aiding the healing process. Just as the acupunc-

turist must be precise so must the karateka be precise if their intent of temporarily disrupting the energy flow with a strike is to be effective. Vital points are generally only the size of the tip of a ball-point pen - the effective area surrounding it may be the size of a quarter. In the excitement of an attack, vital points can be difficult to locate... precision and the practice of precision is as vital as the vital points themselves.

Without, attention to detail... without attention to precision we are merely fooling ourselves into thinking that we are developing into martial artists capable of defending ourselves. We have to do away with the old adage that “Practice makes Perfect”, in fact it should be “Precision makes Perfect” or “The Practice of Precision makes Perfect”. In actuality, if a karateka is not constantly self-correcting his or her technique in pursuit of precision, he or she is missing one of the most important points of training. Constantly practicing bad form simply ingrains itself into muscle memory and makes it much more difficult to correct as years go by. As Okazaki Sensei has said many times, Shodan means literally, “first step”. All the training one does as a colored belt is in preparation for the training that is yet to come. Once one has achieved the rank of black belt, you have taken the first step toward true training of the body and mind. All too often, Shodan is viewed as the target, the goal, the ultimate achievement. While there is a great deal of satisfaction to be had by receiving the rank of black belt, one has to shift one's mind set from the idea that you have arrived at a destination, to the idea that you have now begun a journey, a journey towards perfecting precision of technique that one has been given a basis for during the previous years of training. However, without the self-correcting mind set one needs as a colored belt, it is a distinct possibility that one may never achieve the rank of black belt in the first place.

DID YOU KNOW?

Kime means “focus”. It is the pinpoint concentration of the mind and body together, for an instant, to deliver force to the target.

Soji means “chores”. It is the word to describe the chore of cleaning the dojo floor after class, by hand with wet rags. The importance of cleaning the dojo floor reminds us of humility and mental clarity.



Tips for Returning to Training

by Kelsey Cameron, 4th Dan

Many times the articles in *OSU!* focus on the instructors who have been training for many years. Those pieces are full of insight and add much depth to those people who we often only see at the front of the class. I've also read in past editions about students who are just taking up the art of karate.

It is most interesting to read their words and remember the time when it was as much of a challenge to put your gi on correctly as it was to do Heian Shodan. Besides the persons who bite the bullet and attend every class, I must draw your attention to the population who is slightly underrepresented. These are the people who are returning to karate after an absence. Most people, at some point, take some time away from the dojo, whether it's the week around Christmas, because their club closes for the summer or a student leaves to go away from school. Whatever the reason that takes people away, many of these people try to make that comeback at one time or another. From experience, I know that it's not until one attempts to make the comeback that they appreciate just how fit karate had made them in the past. In order to help these people, I offer a few tips on returning to training.

1. Get into the dojo a while before class as your joints will need the extra time to loosen up and your muscles will need to be reminded how to do their job.
2. Stay for a few minutes after class and stretch. This will help get some of the lactic acid out of your muscles and you may not be as sore in the morning.
3. Make arrangements with another karateka to go over some katas and techniques outside of class time to help save yourself some embarrassment.
4. Start slowly! You're not going to be able to come back with the same speed and flexibility that you left with. It's frustrating, but it is also a testament to how beneficial training is.
5. Recognize that some parameters of your life may have changed. You may not be able to train six nights a week like you have before. Training isn't an all or nothing endeavor. You will still feel the benefits of training twice a week.

This is the challenge to those of you reading this article that know of fellow karateka who are talking about coming back to class. Please help ensure this little push reaches those who need to read it.

Award Recipients

Funakoshi Hall of Honour Inductees

Teruyuki Okazaki
Yutaka Yaguchi
Frank Woon-A-Tai
David Jones
Larry Loreth
Tony Tam
Daniel Tam

Nakayama Award Recipients

Joe Dixon
Maureen Woon-A-Tai
Guy Bourgon
David Pyke
Ed Leung

Bryan Mattias
Clive Hinds
Gilles Periard

Okazaki Award Recipients

Emil Pavaliu
Laurie Jones
Bernice Hughes
Marcel Lussier
Paul Smith
Keith DaCosta
Joseph Woon-A-Tai
Claude Deschenes
Denis Houde
Janice Pyke

Ron Porath
Deborah Hinds
Carmen Bernleithner

Yaguchi Award Recipients

Todd Hardy
Frank Saville

Points on Kata



1. Good kata must be developed around these six points:

EYES: Look before you move to a new direction and do it with intensity.

BREATHING: Inhale and exhale in the proper places.

KIAI: The Kiai, or yell, must be done with feeling.

FOCUS: The expansion and contraction must be used in the proper places.

PACE: Like good music, good kata has rhythm.

TECHNIQUE: Without proper techniques, it isn't a kata.

2. The first and last moves of a kata are the most important. This sets the trend for the rest of the kata and sets the attitude that you leave with.

3. When doing a kata your opponent is you. You make or break the form. You are in control, unlike a kumite match.

4. When doing kata you must visualize the attackers. Imagining isn't enough - visualize.

5. Kata is the means by which a martial artist practices self-improvement.

6. Try to perfect one or two katas, three at most. Remember quality is better than quantity.

7. Before doing each kata, take the opportunity during the **mokuso** to talk to yourself convincing yourself this will be the best form you have ever done.

8. There are four steps to mastering a kata:

- a) Learn the schematics of the kata.
- b) Learn the rhythm of the kata
- c) Realize attackers and opponents while doing the kata.
- d) Become one with the kata.

26th JKA-WF OF CANADA NATIONAL KARATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

OCTOBER 7-8, 2006



WOMEN'S BLACK BELT KATA

- 1 Michelle Novak - AB (36.7/36.6)
- 2 Lisa Findlay - ON (36.7/36.1)
- 3 Tanya Hendriks - ON (36.1)
- 4 Isabelle Bordage - NB (36.0)
- 5 Kimchi Nguyen - AB (35.9)
- 6 Crystal Burke - AB (35.8)
- 7 Anh Thu Do - QC (35.5)
- 8 Stacey Leung - ON (35.4)

WOMEN'S BLACK BELT KUMITE

- 1 Crystal Burke - AB
- 2 Carole Haddad - QC
- 3 Joela Pillay - QC
- 4 Tanya Hendriks - ON
- Valerie Gravel - QC
- Sarah Jones - AB
- Kimchi Nguyen - AB
- Lanchi Nguyen - AB

WOMEN'S TEAM KATA

- 1 Ontario (36.7)
- 2 Alberta (36.5)
- 3 Quebec (35.8/36.3)
- 4 Manitoba (35.8/35.8)
- 5 New Brunswick (35.4)
- 6 Nova Scotia (35.1)

WOMEN'S TEAM KUMITE

- 1 Quebec
- 2 Ontario
- 3 Alberta
- 4 Manitoba
- 5 British Columbia
- 6 Nova Scotia

MEN'S BLACK BELT KATA

- 1 Ray Tio - ON (37.4)
- 2 Stan Tio - ON (36.7)
- 3 Kenji Doshida - AB (36.5/36.8)
- 4 Colin Chin - AB (36.5/36.5)
- 5 Denis Houde - QC (36.4)
- 6 Thomas Cote - QC (36.0)
- 7 Eric Leung - ON (35.9)
- 8 Ignacio Gamsawen - ON

MEN'S BLACK BELT KUMITE

- 1 Christian LeDuc - QC
- 2 Jeff Murphy - ON
- 3 Marco Coulombe - QC
- Moustapha Sougou - MB
- 4 Ray Tio - ON
- Joseph Safar - QC
- Mathieu Goyer - QC
- Stan Tio - ON

MEN'S TEAM KATA

- 1 Ontario (37.5)
- 2 Alberta (36.9)
- 3 Quebec (36.4)
- 4 Manitoba (35.5)

MEN'S TEAM KUMITE

- 1 Ontario
- 2 Quebec
- 3 Alberta
- 4 Manitoba
- 5 Nova Scotia
- British Columbia

WOMEN'S BROWN BELT KATA

- 1 Kimberly Ding - AB (18.5)
- 2 Helen Johnson - QC (18.4)
- 3 Kayla Wexler - NS (18.1)
- 4 Nicole McVarish - NS (17.9)

WOMEN'S BROWN BELT KUMITE

- 1 Helen Johnson - QC
- 2 Kimberly Ding - AB
- 3 Kayla Wexler - NS
- Nicole McVarish - NS

WOMEN'S SENIOR KATA

- 1 Marie Leung - ON (18.8)
- 2 Eve McGrath - BC (18.5)
- 3 Gail Gouchie - NB (18.1)
- 4 Carol Gould - NB (17.7)

MEN'S BROWN BELT KATA

- 1 Marc Brissette - QC (18.6)
- 2 Brad Kiselbach - MB (18.3)
- 3 Jody Nidosky - SK (18.0)
- 4 Hank LeBlanc - SK (17.7)

MEN'S BROWN BELT KUMITE

- 1 Brad Kiselbach - MB
- 2 Marc Brissette - QC
- 3 Mark Smytaniuk - SK
- Hank LeBlanc - SK

GIRL'S KATA (9-11)

- 1 Alexa Villanueva - AB (18.6)
- 2 Laurence Bordage - NB (17.9/18.2)
- 3 Rhianna-Lynn Holter-Ferguson - MB (17.9/18.0)
- 4 Robyn Trischuk - SK (17.5)

GIRL'S KUMITE (9-11)

- 1 Alexa Villanueva - AB
- 2 Laurence Bordage - NB
- 3 Rhianna-Lynn Holter-Ferguson-MB
- Robyn Trischuk - SK

GIRL'S KATA (12-14)

- 1 Leah Villanueva - AB (18.9)
- 2 Valery Mattias - QC (18.5)
- 3 Katherine Ferland - QC (18.4)
- 4 Rebecca Mitchell - SK (18.3)

GIRL'S KUMITE (12-14)

- 1 Leah Villanueva - AB
- 2 Valery Mattias - QC
- 3 Katherine Ferland - QC
- Jana Dao - AB

GIRL'S KATA (15-17)

- 1 Kimmy Nguyen - AB (18.6)
- 2 Chloe Jones - AB (18.3/18.5/18.4)
- 3 Melissa Dumas - QC (18.3/18.5/18.3)
- 4 Emilie Fournier - QC (17.9)

GIRL'S KUMITE (15-17)

- 1 Spice Hart - BC
- 2 Melissa Dumas - QC
- 3 Kimmy Nguyen - AB
- Courteney Chin - BC

BOY'S KATA (9-11)

- 1 Jeffrey Soucy - NB (18.7)
- 2 Alex Dan - AB (18.3)
- 3 Zachary Krulicki - MB (18.0)
- 4 Mathew Pilot - MB (17.4)

BOY'S KUMITE (9-11)

- 1 Jeffrey Soucy - NB
- 2 Riley Kaita - MB
- 3 Sanders Belliveau - MB

BOY'S KATA (12-14)

- 1 Thomas Chin - AB (19.0)
- 2 Cat-Minh Nguyen - QC (18.9)
- 3 Nathan McCartney - AB (18.7)
- 4 Joseph Atallah - QC (18.3)

BOY'S KUMITE (12-14)

- 1 Cat-Minh Nguyen - QC
- 2 Vincent Atallah - QC
- 3 Joseph Atallah - QC
- Bradley Boutin - SK

BOY'S KATA (15-17)

- 1 Brian Nguyen - AB (18.9)
- 2 Maxime Lebrun - QC (18.4)
- 3 Wesley Hodgson - SK (18.2)
- 4 Joey Morneau - NB (17.8)

BOY'S KUMITE (15-17)

- 1 Brian Nguyen - AB
- 2 Takahiro Ouchi - AB
- 3 Philip Boutin - SK
- Maxime Lebrun - QC

MALE GRAND CHAMPION
Ray Tio - Ontario
FEMALE GRAND CHAMPION
Crystal Burke - Alberta