

ZANSHIN



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE YOSHUKAN KARATE ASSOCIATION

Winter 2012

**Special
Commemoration
Issue!**

NDG Dojo 45-Year Reunion!



Panoramic Photo of NDG Instructors over the past 45 years

Our Yoshukan Karate Association hosted a historic event in Montreal on November 3, 2012 – the 45-year anniversary of the NDG Karate Dojo. Founded by **Sensei Mike Litwinczuk** in 1968, the NDG Dojo is one of (if not the only!) longest-running dojos in the same location. Sensei Litwinczuk was stationed in

Montreal in 1968 with the RCMP Security Service and opened up the dojo at the NDG YMCA. The dojo was subsequently taken over by **Bill Simms** and then by **Earl Robertson**. 23 more instructors kept the dojo running over the following 30

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KANCHO CORNER

Maturity



I often reflect on how wrong I was 5 years ago. Every 5 years or so when I look back on my attitudes and perspectives I have a new viewpoint that is more centrist and less extreme. I suppose this is the natural way of life. We live, we learn and we adjust. The Asian cultures in particular, show great respect to their senior citizens and it reflects their realization that our aged have developed a maturity that allows them to see life in a more evolved way.

Our study of martial arts is equally impacted by our age and viewpoints. When we are young, we strive to prove ourselves and discover our capabilities. In middle age, we balance our work, family and other responsibilities and work on maintaining our health and diminish stress. At my age, I am re-discovering the joy of teaching and studying new ways to do old things.

In every situation, we can't manufacture maturity. What we can do is apply ourselves to the moment. There is no surprise that the study of Zen and Budo coincide. The martial artist has to live the 'moment' and can't delay their reactions

by 'thinking' instead of 'feeling'. In terms of our practice, we need to live our age and the moment to maximize the return.

And then...over many years...we just might gain some maturity in how we train and how we look at the world. Gambatte Kudasai!

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NDG Instructors with founding Sensei Mike Litwinczuk

NDG Dojo 45-Year Reunion

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years up to today with **Sensei Robert Kalinowicz**.

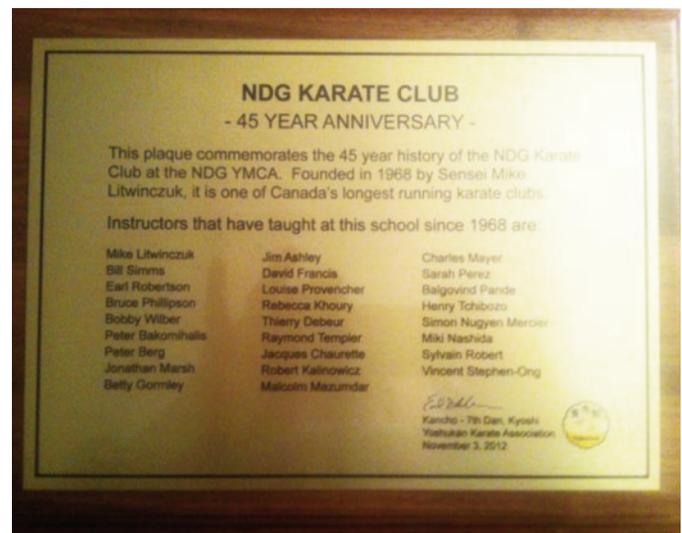
Over 10,000 students have been trained at this modest dojo in the heart of NDG over the past 45-years. Fewer than 50 Black Belts were produced in this little dojo but most have gone on to exceptional status including: **Sensei Bruce Phillipson** – kumite champion; **Sensei Bob Wilber** – Western Canada kumite champion; **Sensei Jonathon Marsh** – Founder of Hong Kong dojo; **Sensei Kristin Orn Torfason** – Founder of Iceland dojo; **Sensei Thierry Debeur** – Chito Ryu Quebec President; **Shihan Louise Provencher** – Soke Cup Champion; **Sensei Rebecca Khoury** – 5-time Canadian Champion and President of Karate Canada; **Sensei Peter Bakimohalis** – Senior Yoshukan Instructor; **Sensei Betty Gormley**; **Sensei Peter Berg**; and **Sensei Jim Ashley** – Yoshukan Karate Association President.

Also present at the reunion were NDG Dojo alumni: **Pat Fogarty**; **Marilyn Lalonde**; **Chuck Samuels**; **Mike Ferro**; **David Brault**; and **Bill Simms**. A plaque commemorating this historic occasion was presented to YMCA Director, **Mr. Jean Destin ** and will be affixed to the dojo wall in the Y. The NDG Dojo is led today by **Sensei Robert Kalinowicz** and supported by **Sempai Malcolm Mazumdar**; **Sempai Charles Mayer**; **Sempai Balgovind Pande** and **Sempai Sylvain Robert**.

Demonstrations were provided by **Sempai Alain Denis** (Sai); **Sempai Damian Klambauer** (Sai); **Sempai Nicole Wolfe** and **Sempai Peter Klambauer** (Tekko); **Sempai Max Krouguerski** and **Sensei Zeljko Violoni** (Hen Shu Ho); **Sempai Jake Robertson** and **Sempai Sanda Violoni** and **Vika Krouguerski** (Goshin Jitsu); **Sempai Ren e Robertson**

(To Shin); **Sempai Henri Tchibozo** (Shiai); **Sempai Simon Vinh** (kata); **Sensei Robert Kalinowicz & Sempai Sandra Coffey** (Bo); **Sempai Charles Mayer** (kata) and **Kancho** (Kake Te).

What many Yoshukan students don't realize is that many of the drills and practices of our association originated with Sensei Litwinczuk. Mike was an extremely practical teacher that focused his students on realistic, usable skills that transcended style. His focus was on partner drills that emphasized timing and distance. His Hull, Ottawa and RCMP experience kept him grounded and intent on producing students that could truly defend themselves. His philosophy has stayed with NDG dojo and our association and is still in practice today.



NDG Karate Dojo plaque



Group Yoshukan Photo from Montreal



Sensei Bakimohalis; Sensei Ashley and Sensei Khoury



Sensei Jim Ashley and Kancho



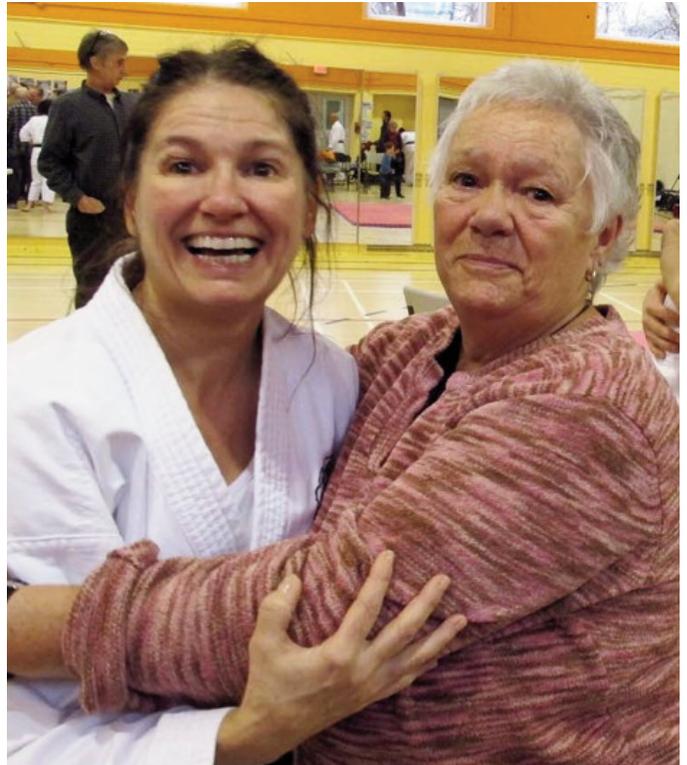
Jake, Sanda and Vika



Standing ovation for Sensei Mike Litwinczuk



Kancho and Mike Litwinczuk



Shihan Provencher and her mom, Mariette Houle-Provencher

UKEMI by Peter Klambauer

Sometimes things are fun because they are also frightening. This is certainly true in the practice of throwing and falling that we call Ukemi.

Yoshukan inherits many of its Ukemi practices from the best techniques found in Judo and Aikido. Practitioners of Yoshukan Karate-Do believe that Ukemi is a critical part of what it means to be a well-rounded martial artist, as it is about learning the use of the ground as well as all of the techniques that we perform on or above the ground.

One of the more elegant definitions of Ukemi calls it "Rebounding from the ground". This idea well describes the range of Ukemi, including throws, rolls and breakfalls, and it also hints at the key issue, which is how to do this SAFELY (AND hence to rebound, presumably for more).

Also notice the use of the term "Uke" in the word "Ukemi". The Uke is the person who receives the technique, in this case a throw or some other kind of takedown. Other than our Sensei, the Uke is probably one of the most important people with whom we learn martial arts. The correct execution of technique is revealed as a process of discovery through practice; in Ukemi, this requires both partners, the Uke (attacker) and the Tore (defender). In Judo and Aikido, Ukemi practice includes throwing, falling and rolling techniques that are taught early, and are used as a basis for conditioning.

Unlike many of our other Karate practices, Ukemi is not about bringing force or hitting power into one's physical

expression; in fact to do so may result in immediate injury. It is quite amazing to witness well-executed Ukemi techniques, as they exhibit both momentum and grace. To practice Ukemi, both as single rolling and falling exercises, as well as the partner work that they lead to, is a practice of harnessing momentum and, importantly, one's fear.

Neil Ohlenkamp has written a splendid short essay that can be referenced online, entitled "The Study of Falling: I've Fallen and I Can Get Up". In this he opens with a presentation of the first and fundamental reaction we all have to falling, which is that of fear. On the matter of getting over that fear, Neal quotes a humorous acronym for FEAR as meaning "False Evidence Appearing Real". Neal also quotes Jigoro Kano, the founder of Judo, to say the following: "...if one hates to be thrown, one cannot expect to become a master of the art. By taking throws time after time, one must learn how to take falls and overcome the fear of being thrown. Then one will become unafraid of being attacked and be able to take the initiative in attack. Only by following this manner of training can one learn true Judo technique."

It's clear from Master Kano's words, the conditioning that Judo teaches is not just physical, it is a conditioning against fear. There is a saying that Ukemi is the key to Judo, because when students overcome the fear of falling, they can find the confidence to attempt more sophisticated techniques. So how

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Ukemi

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does one overcome that fear? As with so much in the martial arts it happens with practice, practice and more practice. While practicing keep alert to "False Evidence Appearing Real", as you learn the difference between a fall and a roll. There is good reason to fear falling; it hurts, and can lead to injuries. A roll will transfer your momentum to the floor in the process of your motion, in an elegant glide.

Think of what this means. In an uncontrolled fall, momentum passes through the body and accumulates, coming to a hard stop at the point of impact; it will also transfer back through the body through its members and its rigid connections. Imagine standing as rigidly as possible, with all muscles tightly clenched, and stamping one's foot on the ground. The shock of the stamp will travel right through the whole body, felt everywhere even as far as one's neck. It's not hard to imagine therefore, how a tense or otherwise clenched body can be damaged during a fall, as it hits the floor in an unpredictable way. It's literally a chain reaction of damage that will occur, and it is avoided when we discover how to transfer or communicate our momentum to the floor in the way that we are using our body.

The key to avoiding injury or damage is to discover how the fall is controlled. In order to do so, the carriage of the body must be non-rigid and elastic, so that forces can flow through the joints, not stressing at hard junctures. This is taught as a

state of "relaxed readiness".

We can use an understanding of how we get hurt to therefore deal with our fear. First, we can recognize that fear, like pain, is a good thing, as it helps us learn boundaries and limits. In the case of Ukemi, we are learning how to address and extend boundaries, as we learn new ways to encounter the floor. It's also important to remember the sensation of fear, that it is a visceral experience of flinching or clenching up. If we can associate that sensation with "False Evidence Appearing Real", and instead control our reaction with "Relaxed Readiness", then a whole new opportunity for a whole new range of motion will open itself to us.

Let's not kid ourselves however. It's about training the body as well as the mind. The Aikido roll is a very basic technique, and is more of a test of mental focus than it is of physical ability. The more advanced floor techniques do require specific physical training, as is the case with Yoshukan's Nage No Kata and our varied Bunkai that include takedowns, rolls and throws. All of these require flexibility of the core including one's abdomen, back and neck. When developing one's Ukemi, it is especially important to bring additional focus on lower back strength and flexibility, and to develop this steadily.

Never forget however, that all Ukemi techniques have the same fundamental principle of controlling one's momentum to the floor; and that when mastered, there is nothing left to be afraid of.

Wakarimasu ka? Hai? Hajime!

More photos from the NDG Dojo 45-Year Reunion





JAPAN TOUR

Summer, 2013

JOURNEYS of
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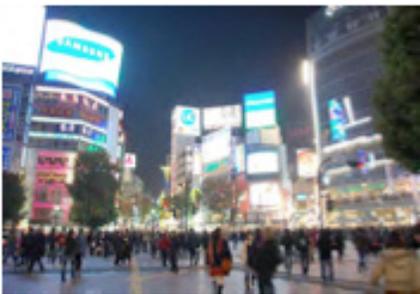
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YOSHUKAN KARATE

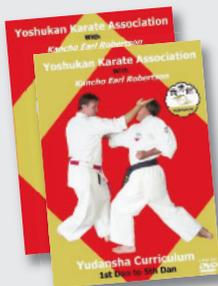
Japan Itinerary

- **Inomoto-Dojo:** 4 days of training at Honbu Dojo
- **Kumamoto-Tour:** Musashi Cave; Kumamoto Castle; Shuizenji Gardens; 3,333 Steps
- **Fukuoka:** Temangu Temple; Fukuoka Festival
- **Hiroshima:** Bomb Museum
- **Miyajima:** Ferry to island; Ryokan Hotel (Traditional Japanese); Miyajima market
- **Kyoto:** Golden Pavillion; Kyoto Market
- **Tokyo:** Ginza District; Budokan; Emperor's Home









Yoshukan DVDs – White Belt to 5th Dan

All Kata; Bunkai; Kumite; Ukemi; Kobudo and Goshin Jutsu demonstrated by Kancho Robertson from beginner to 5th Degree Black Belt in the Yoshukan System.

\$29.95 each or both for \$49.95. Please add \$15 for shipping & handling charges. Payments can be made by credit card or check at the Mississauga dojo.

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