
THE OKU TECHNIQUE

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE OKINAWAN KARATE-DO UNION

“Not the biggest but the best.”



Ruth Irene Wheeler
“The mother of the OKU”

September 22, 1923 - December 22, 2012



Memories are Stitched with Love

Ruth Hunter Wheeler like most of us, was known by different names: Ruthie to her beloved Allen, Mother to Carolyn and Neil, Nanny to her 25 grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and Mrs. Wheeler to the rest of us. I was blessed to have met her 24 years ago when my husband and I began training at Wheeler's School of Karate. Back in that day, Mrs. Wheeler worked side by side with Mr. Wheeler everyday, but as the years passed I saw her less and less. Then Mr. Wheeler got sick and later passed away and I didn't see her at all for a while. But I believe with all of my heart that God puts people into our lives for a reason, and He definitely had a plan when He placed her in mine.



My Thursday night visits with Mrs. Wheeler were a highlight of my week and they were sacred. They were an opportunity for me to

slow down for a few hours, have a sandwich, and just relax. Sometimes we watched TV or movies; sometimes we cooked or shared recipes; sometimes we crocheted (which she taught me to do). I shared stories of my fifth graders and my karate students, and of family and friends. We discussed world and national news and agonized over the Braves. She even saved me articles from the newspaper about my favorite football player, Peyton Manning. We would eagerly search each new edition of the magazine, Reminisce, for Aunt Hattie's hat pin so we could find it before Neil did. We shared new jokes and laughed and sometimes we cried, but the best times were when she told me stories.



She told me stories of her childhood- growing up in a big family, walking everywhere, games that she and her sisters played. She told me how she met Mr. Wheeler and knew he was the one for her, and how they secretly married when she was only 15 and him 18. She talked about how afraid she was raising 3 little children while Mr. Wheeler was overseas in World War II. and the Great Depression was still raging. She loved to talk about how they lived on a little farm for a while.....how she had to learn to milk a cow, pluck and boil chickens, and make sausage. She shared stories about her kids....how small June was as a baby that she could almost fit in your hand! How Carolyn was a New Year's baby but almost died when she was little. How Benny

joined the Navy and she worried that he would get an ugly tattoo, or how Neil hitchhiked to Florida with a friend for a week and scared them all to death. Of course she talked about her grandchildren. She showed me pictures of them from infancy to adulthood, including their weddings and their many accomplishments. She was constantly amazed by her great-grandchildren's intelligence and talents. "I just can't believe all the stuff these kids can do!" she would say. She still talked about your summer visits Bennett....she was so excited about your karate. And Allison.....she was so proud of you- for all you have become and what you will become. She loved all of you so much! She told me that over and over again.

She loved her karate family too. I asked her questions all the time about people I met or saw at tournaments. Sometimes she would pull out old pictures and tell me about the people in them like Scott and Ruth Shamblin, Bill Wright, and Don and Jan Roberts. She had great memories of special times with a special group of people. She had a special place in her heart for so many of you, but she always asked me each week to share about Mark, Chuck, and Danny. She loved her karate people!

There is no doubt that Ruth Wheeler was a special person to all of us here. I know that the things she taught me can never be replicated. She was a special joy in my life; an awesome gift from God! And, while we are all sad for our loss we must all rejoice for her gain of eternal life with her Savior. Let me close by sharing with you a dream she had a few years ago that she shared with me one Thursday night.

In her dream, Mrs. Wheeler decided to walk home from the karate school about 10 o'clock. Some of the men were still working out and talking, but she was ready to go so she went

on. Somehow though as she walked the familiar road home, she got lost and couldn't find her house. Finally, after what seemed like forever, she saw the karate school again but it was all dark now. Everyone was gone. She sat down on a bench by the old depot and started to cry, but then she heard Mr. Wheeler call her name. He said, "Ruthie, what are you doing down here?" She said, "Oh Allen, I'm lost! I just can't find my way home." He said, "That's okay Ruthie. I'll take you home."

Thank you Father for bringing Mrs. Wheeler home. 

Editor's Note: Jami Schmid delivered this moving eulogy at Mrs. Wheeler's funeral. Thank you Jami for allowing us to share it with our members.

SPECIAL INTEREST

Individual membership	\$12.00/yr
Foreign membership	\$30.00/yr
Lifetime membership	\$150.00
Dojo membership	\$20.00/yr
Dojo Listing (for member dojos only)	\$10.00/yr
Kyu Promotion Certificates	\$5.00

Please mail news or articles to Jan Roberts, 610 Waterboy Rd., Fairburn, GA 30213. Please send to: Gambatteisshin@aol.com. Deadline for June newsletter is May 1, 2013.



Martial Arts Knowledge

By Roger Overholt

Display strength through your calmness. Your goal should be to maintain your composure, even in adverse conditions. Individuals, who display calmness and self-control in difficult situations, will be seen as someone with inner strength.

Your attitude is displayed through your expressions, tone of voice, choice of words, and physical actions.

You have the ability to control your attitude towards others and the way your attitude is expressed.

“Protect yourself through the use of avoidance.”

Discourtesy is a sign of disrespect. Courtesy to others increases a person’s worth to those he encounters and to himself. You should strive to show courtesy to others in both casual and professional contacts.

It is your responsibility to protect yourself through the use of avoidance. The application of good sense is used to determine where you should be and how you should act. You should

not replace it with an I can protect myself attitude, no matter what the situation.

You must understand the legal bounds of self-defense, and be aware of the limitations set by state and federal laws. Know the difference between being a warrior and being an assailant.

You should be a positive representative of the Martial Arts. You should apply yourself to the study of the arts, in both technical knowledge and principles. If the Martial Arts are to be honored, it must first be honored by those who study it.

“Your attitude is displayed through your expressions.”

When you are known as a student of the Martial Arts, bad conduct and disrespect taints the perception of you, your instructor, and your system. You must conduct yourself in a manner consistent with the principles and theories of the ones who have shared their knowledge with you. You should use your skills in a manner which will minimize the possibility that you will have to harm someone else.

“You should be a positive representative of the Martial Arts.”

Train to be your best and have the skills needed to fight, if you must do so. Have the skills not to fight and know when to apply which skill set. Study of the Martial Arts eliminates fear, fear not. 

—————
You should acquire the habit of visualizing not only your opponent’s ability, but also the conditions which have led to this confrontation.

From Seisan Kata by Steve Armstrong



The Magic of Kata

By Don Roberts

Webster's New World Dictionary defines "magic" as, "Any mysterious power." How, I suspect some of you are asking yourselves, can something so seemingly prosaic as practicing kata, be either mysterious, of powerful?

"It is no longer just something to memorize."

First, it is important to understand that the study of kata is a process. Initially kata seems to be just something the student is required to memorize for promotion. You know, just prearranged moves, not "real fighting." Everyone knows that "real fighting" is like the Mixed Martial Arts competitions on television, or to a lesser extent, kumite on the dojo floor. After all, how can something prearranged possibly deal with something as unpredictable as fighting?

"Funakoshi's study was one kata, three years."

To answer this question, one must follow the process. The process set by Anko Itosu for

Gishin Funakoshi's study was "one kata, three years". While this amount of repetition may appear extreme, one should remember the more one practices the less thinking is required to perform. In fact you might argue that kata eventually becomes instinctive, with very little thinking involved. This "instinctiveness", or natural and efficient transitioning from one event to the next, is a necessary component when it comes to dealing with the unpredictably of combat.

"The study of kata is a process."

Next in the process is the study of bunkai. This attempt to understand the true nature of the kata requires the use of a partner. It requires experimentation to find out directly what works, and what doesn't. Here is where the magic begins. When one becomes aware of bunkai, the practice of kata begins to change. It is no longer just something to memorize, but rather something interesting in and of itself. Since there is no conscious effort to master specific moves, the mind becomes free to roam unconsciously, occasionally "solving" a particular technique or series of techniques. This "light bulb" moment (which can be very exciting) can then be put to the test with your uke.



Much like the memory of a computer, this information: the kata movements, the bunkai,

the “light bulb” moments, the experimentation with a partner is stored for further use at a later time. Now, this is when the real martial magic and power start to come into play. It is not logical to assume that any kata, no matter how long or intricate, could contain all the answers to every situation that might occur in a “real fight.” Nevertheless, it seems that this is exactly what happens. Choki Motobu, the kumite expert, arguably the best Okinawan fighter of his generation, asserted that the short repetitive Naihanchi kata contained everything one would need to face any combat situation. In a hundred street fights, Motobu claimed, he was never once struck in the face. Having cracked Naihanchi’s coded message, Motobu “became the kata”, and his mind was thus freed to apply the lessons of the exercise to any and all situations.

“This is when the real martial magic.”

And now, it is time for the ultimate expression of magic and power. I have been asked (usually by non-trained people) how I am able to decide what technique to use if I were attacked. Wouldn’t I be confused, given all the responses I had to choose from? The answer is that if I were thinking about what to do, yes I would probably be confused, and also probably on the floor trying to figure out what had just happened to me.

“Somehow, the mind can sort through an amazing array of scenarios.”

However, with sincere, correct, and continuous practice, magic happens. Somehow, with a speed faster than the fastest computer, the mind can sort through an amazing array of scenarios

to come up with a near perfect solution. This has happened to many, and has even happened to me. On one occasion (and I won’t bore you with the details) an angry young person raised a heavy chair, intending to smash it down on my skull. I have a hard head, but not that hard.

“Naihanchi kata contained everything one would need.”

With no apparent thought, my “solution” was to assume an ishi monji no kamae, basically a back stance with both hands raised. Apparently, this posture was so strange that it caused the attacker to slowly lower the chair and back out of the room. This was exactly what I wanted, and no blood was spilled (especially mine). I’m sure that many reading this have had similar experiences. Was it luck that the right solution was instantly picked to fit the attack? Of course not. It was magic. 🙌



Tigikai

**Theories and Analyses of Isshin-ryu
Karate Do Kata
by Don Roberts**

Seisan, Seiuchin, Naihanchi,
Wansu, Chinto, Kusanku, Sunsu,
Sanchin, and Tokomeni

**We are able to send copies of the above books
at a greatly reduced price in Adobe format.
Please contact Jan Roberts,
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The President's Corner

Recently I have become more upbeat and confident about the future of our association, the OKU. The reason is simple. More and more of our members are pitching in to make us the best that we can be. I would like to recognize a few who have helped us recently. First, thank you Jami Schmid for the wonderful eulogy you delivered at Mrs. Wheeler's funeral, and for the quality time you were able to spend with her.

Thanks Roger Overholt and John Dritt for the articles you contributed for this issue of **The OKU Technique**. They were informative and interesting and really helped us to get the issue ready on time.

"More and more members are pitching in."

Thanks to Keith Lowry for being my uke and allowing me to beat on him with my APS (all-purpose stick) while we made our Youtube videos (accessed at OKU Newsletter Article 3 (The Don Bomb), 4 (and out takes), and 5. These videos will also be appearing on our web

page (OKU family.com), and on our facebook page Okinawan Karate Do Union. Thanks again Kirk Harding and Steven Croft, for all your "network." You guys are really making a great contribution to the organization.

Thanks Jim LaRocco for being my friend and allowing me to pick your brain (which was very interesting). Although I can't thank everyone, please know that your many contributions are much appreciated.

As most of you know, the OKU Summer Seminar is our big event of the year, a time when we can catch up with old friends, make new ones and share the vast wealth of knowledge of our friends and members. It is always held the second Friday and Saturday in July (this year the 12th and 13th). Please mark your calendar and make every effort to be there. As always it will be an "ego free" learning adventure.

March 16, there will be a board meeting where (hopefully) we can iron out all the details for our July get together. The seminar will be at the same location as last year in Spring City, TN. In March we plan to send out flyers to our members with pertinent information on the seminar. Right now it is shaping up nicely. We will have a large selection of dynamic teachers and classes (including one on Shinkendo, Japanese Sword combat).

"The OKU Summer Seminar is our big event of the year."

After the board meeting Jan and I will be heading up to the Kingsport, TN area to visit friends and students. Would you believe it, four of our old students are now ordained ministers. They are: Matt Ford, Chuck Griffin, David Tully, and Doug Brooks. One of our retirement

goals is to hear all these gentlemen preach. Matt Ford was the first, and he did a fine job, and we are looking forward to catching up with the other three. Jan and I are very proud of them all.



Late May, or early June Jan and I will heading back out to San Francisco, thanks to our friend and student Kirk Harding. We are looking forward to seeing Annie, Kirk's wife, and the great students in the class Kirk attends. We are really excited about this trip.

Finally, happy 82nd birthday to the legendary, Hall of Fame Tar Heel basketball coach, Dean Smith. Coach Smith is living proof that you can play by the rules, do things the right way, and still be hugely successful. 🤝

Using your imagination, visualize your desired results in detail.

True strength is concealed in softness, and softness in firmness.

First learn defense, for offense is included in a good defense.

From Seisan Kata by Steve Armstrong



A limited number of t-shirts are now available. Please contact Jan Roberts via email. Jan has medium, large, x-large and xx-large. Price is \$22. This includes shipping. Contact gambatteisshin@aol.com

DOJO NEWS



Overholt Karate Studio Morrison, Tenn.

The Kingswood Overholt (KO) Karate Dojo in Bean Station, Tennessee received a donation from the One Heart Dojo in Athens Tennessee. The Kingswood School is a faith-based, non-profit Children's Home. The One Heart Dojo donated several kicking shields, striking shields and a heavy bag to the KO Dojo. The One Heart Dojo is known for their involvement in working with underprivileged and at risk youth.



One Heart Master Instructor Sensei Dennis Thomas, Sensei Tony Hester, Sensei Scott Franklin, and Junior Sensei Zach Thomas visited the Kingswood Dojo on Saturday, February 9, 2013. During their visit, Master Instructor Dennis Thomas led the class through a traditional style workout. Each of the black belts worked with the students on their basic punches, blocks and kicks. Students were very complimentary and appreciative of the efforts made by the One Heart Dojo. Instructors of the One Heart Dojo have invited the Kingswood students to come to their school this spring for a training session.



Sensei Overholt and students of the Overholt Karate Studio appreciate the support they have received from the One Heart Dojo, Dragon Cobra Te and the Walters State Karate Club in assisting with the continuing training program, at the Kingswood School.

DOJO NEWS



One Heart Dojo Athens, Tenn.

On February 16th, One Heart Dojo hosted a “sparring day”. Many top fighters and world champions from around the country traveled to Athens to take part. There was a lot of great fighting, learning, and fun!

Josh Hall placed 1st in man’s black belt kata, 2nd in men’s black belt kumite and competed in the grand championship at the Crossroad’s Karate Games in Knoxville, TN on February 23rd, 2013.

Tim Taylor was promoted to green belt and David Frady was promoted to orange belt on February 28th, 2013.

Member, Tony Hester has announced a change to the name of the October (and now - Athens’ only) tournament from Isshinryu Invitational to the Athens Elk’s Martial Arts Tournament. More details about new divisions/dates/time/new location will be given in the coming months.



Healing in Karate

By John Dritt

Iwould like to share some information about healing. I find healing work very interesting because it is related to karate. The same basic method of energy development and projection are used in healing and hurting. I have been doing healing work for many years. I found that there are several principles that are necessary for anyone who wants to do healing work. I have come to this understanding over many years of practical application and success in healing work.

*“You must have a heart
for helping others.”*

The first is that you need to know how to develop and project energy. I learned this by studying Traditional Chinese Medicine and pressure points with Master Wheeler and Qi Gong with Rich Mooney as well as reading and learning everything I could get my hands on. I use the term energy for lack of a better term. Engineers have a definition of energy that does not exactly fit what I am talking about. I call it bio-chemical-electromagnetic energy. It is electromagnetic energy created from chemical reactions in the body. That is the closest explanation I have found for chi. By

studying breathing exercises, mental exercises and physical exercises one can develop the ability to build energy. After you learn to build energy you need to learn to project it. One of the great things about developing this ability is that it is directly applicable to Isshinryu karate technique. The study of healing energy work will help greatly in your karate technique.

“God will put people in your path.”

It is recommended that you find a qualified instructor. Like anything else a good teacher can get you started on the correct path. You can contact several OKU instructors or myself for help in finding someone. Learn as much as possible, read, attend seminars, and study with a good instructor. Over time you will begin to develop the ability to help others. Which leads me to my next principle.

“That you need to know how to develop and project energy.”

Develop your own way. Everyone is different and will develop a unique method that fits for them. I am a Methodist Pastor so my faith is an important component of my method. I use a combination of energy projection with intensive prayer. I tap into the energy from God so that I am not using my own energy. I have developed my own way over 20 years of practice. If you study and learn you will find your way.

“Enjoy the learning process.”

The next principle is that you must have a heart for helping others. You must truly desire to help. This is not some great parlor trick to impress people, if you do not have pure intent, forget it don't even bother. The energy is

guided by your intent and that must be pure love and care for the person you desire to help. The martial application is a little different but that is another article.

The next principle is to enjoy the learning process and practice, practice, practice. Get your hands on people and start working. It is a joyfull thing to see how people are helped. I have seen brain tumors disappear, fractured bones healed, burns healed, and the side effects of cancer treatment abated. I am currently working on a man who has brain cancer. He suffers from terrible headaches. After we started working on him he reports that his headaches have gone away. He is very excited to see his doctors to check on his condition. I am also working on a man who has narcolepsy, a disorder where a person can fall asleep at any time. He must take heavy medication. He reports after our work with him, that he has reduced his medication by 2/3 and some days does not need it at all. I am working on a man with severe burns. He reports that the pain has gone away. I can go on and on with examples of great results. God will put people in your path for you to work on as you are ready. It may not be cancer or tumors at first it may be a sprain or bruise. That is a very good place to start.

“Everyone is different.”

Nothing is more rewarding than this work. It is very easy to hurt someone, especially if you are a trained Isshinryu Karateka, but to heal someone, that is what takes real skill. People call me after we work on them and the conversation from them begins with, “You're not going to believe this...” Well, yes I will believe it; I have seen it so many times it is now what I expect. Get started and see how much good you can do. 

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