



Kangeiko, 2017: Back to the Beginning

By Michelle Randall

Winter training on January 14 and 15 brought things old and new, and the spirit of the new year was bright for Mid-America karateka. Sensei Vaughan and the Indiana ISKF hosted a weekend full of hard work, collegiality, and friendship. Two trainings were held at Sensei's dojo at Ben Davis High School on Saturday, while Sunday morning training was held at the Hoosier Gymnastics Training Center in Plainfield. The dominant theme all weekend was *shoshin ni kaeru*, or "return to (the) beginner's mind."

An honored guest led our initial warm-up; Dr. Jing Wang is the Director of Chinese Language and Culture Studies at the Confucius Institute at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. Eddy Vaughan (Indiana ISKF) assisted Dr. Wang. The warm up focused on breathing, expansion, and contraction through the careful, rhythmic control of both breath and limbs. Sensei Vaughan then focused on a review of the basics that included stance, body dynamics, punching, kicking, and blocking. In his morning training Sensei emphasized the relationship between *kihon* and the *Heian* katas. In the afternoon, Sensei taught *Meikyo* and *Wankan*, emphasizing *kihon* combinations in these more advanced kata.

Expanding our *budo* horizons, we trained on a more forgiving (matted) floor Sunday morning. The younger members of our Region were out on the floor early, practicing kicks, jumps, and challenging their acrobatic prowess. Chris Cody (Indiana ISKF) gave an introduction to simple Judo throws and Evan Kern (Indiana ISKF) demonstrated some simple Aikido moves. These demonstrations highlighted the origins of our own (seemingly) simple, and yet deeply complex, martial art, as some of the so-called 'hidden' movements in Shotokan have parallel moves in both Judo and Aikido. The entire weekend of training left us with a deeper understanding of the origins of our style.

Approaching these origins with a "beginners mind" allowed us to see even more clearly how much we have yet to learn.

Outside of the dojo, a cultural highlight of our *kangeiko* weekend saw Mid-America *karateka* enjoying fun, food, and fellowship at the Ginza Japanese restaurant on Saturday night. A special thanks goes to Sensei Vaughan and the entire Indiana ISKF club for hosting another memorable *kangeiko*.



*Mid-America students attend Kangeiko 2017
Photo courtesy of Sensei Kim Weber*

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My Karate Experience

By: Kat Brayshaw, 4B kyu (purple belt) at Anderson Karate, 11 years old

With introduction by Sensei Kim Weber

Anderson Karate has held the youth *shiai* annually since 2012. It began as practice for the ISKF National Tournament being held in 2013 in Cincinnati. Today it has become useful practice for judges, volunteers and competitors. But the main goal has always been the same...for the kids to have an enjoyable experience. We asked one of the competitors to tell us a little bit about her experience participating in the *shiai*.

I've been doing Shotokan karate for about three years now, and have gone to the Anderson *shiais* over the years. My name is Kat Brayshaw and I'm going to be telling you my experiences with both *shiais* and karate in general. I'm going to be setting this up question and answer style so let's get started!

Question #1: In what events have you competed?

I've competed in three Anderson youth *shiais* (my own dojo) and one regional *shiai* in Columbus. I love being able to compete with competitors from all over the region, it's a great time to make new friends!

Question #2: What has your experience with team kata been?

My experience with team kata has been really great! At first I wasn't sure about it, but now I love it. It's not any harder than finding a few good friends, finding a good kata, trying your best, and having fun!

Question #3: What do you like best about competing?

Well, what I like the most about competing is that you get to show what you've been learning for the past few months and put it into action. Besides the more serious parts, competing can also be a time to have fun, and even make some new friends!

Question #4: Why do you compete in *shiais*?

I compete in *shiais* for the fun of it. I think that it puts my karate to good use in a great way!

Question #5: Do you plan to compete in *shiais* in the future?

Yes, I certainly do plan to compete in the future. So far my experiences haven't been anything other than excellent!



Kat with her very proud mom after the Anderson Shiai

Photo courtesy of Anderson Karate

Question #6: What do you like about karate?

What I personally like about karate is the uniqueness of the sport and that it's set up so that you can go completely at your own pace.

I hope you enjoyed my article and found my experiences helpful in showing how participating in the Anderson *shiai* and karate has positively affected me. Also, this article can possibly give you an idea on what karate is all about and what to expect. Karate is a sport of true passion and has made a great impact on me as a person!

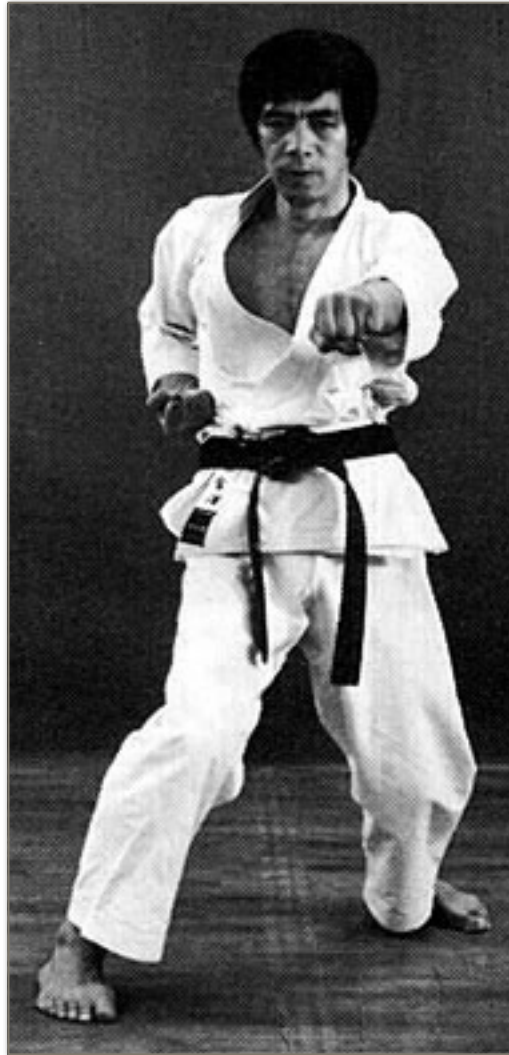
Overview of Hangetsu Kata

By Laura L. Graham

The kata *Hangetsu* consists of three main points: breathing, inward tension stance, and simultaneous movements of the upper and lower body. There are certainly other characteristics of this kata that can be studied, but these are three advanced aspects that can contribute significantly to our training as black belts.

Breathing is perhaps one of the most neglected aspects of karate. When considering the typical breathing patterns of kata, we can generalize and discover with most blocks there is inhalation and with most strikes/punches there is exhalation. In the *Best Karate* series, Master Nakayama states, "Breathing changes with changing situations but basically inhale when blocking, exhale when a finishing technique is executed, and inhale and exhale when executing successive techniques." The correct breathing pattern enhances your ability to relax during the movement and to tense at the end of each movement. *Hangetsu* teaches five types of breathing: slow inhale, slow exhale, quick inhale, quick exhale, and pause the breath (hold the breath). All five of these breathing methods show control and allow slow movements to be steady and controlled, fast movements to be quick and sharp, and for pausing the breath to be silent and light-footed.

The second aspect of the *Hangetsu* kata is stance. *Hangetsu* means half-moon and is an inward tension stance. Throughout this kata there are three stances; *hangetsu dachi*, back stance and cat stance. The majority of stances are the half-moon stances, with only one cat stance and three back stances. *Hangetsu dachi* is slightly shorter than front stance with the knees going towards each other as if holding a beach ball between the two. The weight distribution should be even on both feet; feet are flat against the floor. The pelvis should be tilted forward, engaging the lower abdominal and leg muscles. This stance is for close range, allowing fluidity in movement.



Master Hirokazu Kanazawa Demonstrates Hangetsu Dachi
Photo courtesy of nantanreikan.ca

Correct body timing is another important lesson of *Hangetsu*. It is demonstrated when the upper and lower body move in sync with each other. This simultaneous execution of technique hand and draw hand can be mastered using correlated breathing. Each quick movement is done with a fast inhale/exhale, and each slow movement is done with a slow inhale/exhale. At impact the body tenses and the breath naturally ceases which aids in the creation of good body timing; hands always finish together. *Hangetsu* offers slow movements in repetition; with continuous practice it can develop the synchronization of both upper and lower body.

Breathing, inward-tension stance, and body timing are significant points to help *dan* ranks advance in their training. The kata *Hangetsu* offers these advanced characteristics as an avenue to improve and sharpen our karate techniques.

Reconnecting With an Old Friend

By Marty Schrager

One of my favorite things to do is train in places other than my dojo. I enjoy travel with my family, karate sabbaticals with my brother from another mother, Dave Talley, as well as the occasional trip for my job. In just about every circumstance, the first thing I do before going, is look up ISKF clubs near my destination. If there are none, then I look for other Shotokan *karateka* with whom I can train.

When my wife and I decided to get away for spring break (sans our children, who were at home with my parents), we deliberated heavily on where to go. We enjoy the relaxation of sitting on a beach and doing nothing as well as more stimulating cultural and sight-seeing activities. And, it needed to be someplace warm. We heard great things about Puerto Rico, but had never been there. So off we went. It just so happens that a very strong *karateka* and one of my great friends, Yarim Cross lives in a suburb of San Juan.

For those of you who don't know Yarim, he was a member of Mid-America ISKF from 2000 to 2006 and trained with Sensei Vaughan in Indianapolis. He is a great student of our art, a strong competitor, and a mentor to his own and others' students. He and I competed against one another many times and were sparring partners for our *Nidan* exams. He left the states to return to San Juan for work and to raise his family.

Yarim and I connected on the fifth night of our trip. Our hotel was in the tourist area near Old San Juan and Yarim has a small training facility about 20 minutes inland from there. After a long day of visiting El Yunque National Forest, one of the most beautiful places I've ever seen, I dropped off my wife at the hotel. While she lounged by the pool, off I went to see my old friend.

We met up at a local university by which his dojo is located. It is situated in a room of an old church with its own entrance and is dedicated solely for his use. His dojo is a train-car shaped room, with puzzle mats covering the floor, a very nice *makiwara*, and other strength and karate training aids. It is exactly the type of place that makes you want to train hard.

We started our session with Yarim demonstrating ideas that he has learned over many years, training with some of the best instructors in and out of our organization, as



Yarim and Marty share a smile and the same haircut after a hard training in San Juan, Puerto Rico

Photo courtesy of Marty Schrager

well as ideas he has developed through his own training. One of the main points of his training was efficiency of movement, activation of the smaller muscles in addition to the larger muscles to maximize power and speed, and some timing ideas. One of his most important points is the use of inward tension in training. We spent a great deal of time working on drills that utilize *kosa dachi* to help develop this inward tension idea.

We rounded out our session with some drills I developed for my own personal training that focus on speed, footwork, and dynamic movement for *kumite*.

After about two hours of training in blazing heat and what seemed like 100% humidity, it was time to hang up our *gis* and talk (i.e. drink beer and eat pizza). We spent another hour chatting about life, karate and our personal journeys, our karate heroes, and what is next in our respective chapters.

Karate aside, it was a wonderful experience to spend time with an old friend whom I wasn't sure I'd ever get to see again. I am so thankful I had the opportunity to do so.

March 2017 Regional Training

By Valerie McKay



Mid-America Karateka at the March Regional Training in West Milton, OH

Photo courtesy of Mid-America ISKF

At our March Regional training, Sensei Martin Vaughan continued his focus on basics from *kangeiko* trainings by deconstructing *oi-zuki*. He carried the same application of technique from basics to kata to sparring.

We began standing in natural stance with relaxed shoulders, soft knees, and rooted feet. We first punched with a single punch on a single count, then continued with three punches in succession. Then we did five punches, not shorting any punch with full draw hand, focus, and power. The body should remain square to the front using hip vibration to snap the hips and send the punch. Turning the draw hand fist early will keep the elbow tight to the body not allowing it to wing out away from the body. All movement stops at once.

Next we practiced *gyaku-zuki* which involves the natural body movement of stepping with one foot and punching with the opposite hand. Sensei Vaughan asked us to concentrate on effective use of the body during the second half of the punch. He had us take an intermediate stance just past mid-step, much like a cat stance. Then on the count we explosively launched forward from the support leg, landing in a strong front stance with the body square to the front. He reminded us that in basics our imaginary opponent is always at an optimum distance. We should not lean forward, but keep our hips under our shoulders. After practicing in line, we practiced with a partner. This was a prelude to sparring basics later in the training. Key points included establishing the correct distance, directing the triangle of power to the opponent, and relaxing the last dynamic execution of the technique. Again all movement stops at once.

Then we practiced *oi-zuki* which involves the relatively unnatural movement of the arm and leg on the same side moving forward. Again we assumed an intermediate stance just past mid-step much like a cat stance, and stepped in to punch, always keeping the body square with an emphasis on drive from the rear leg. We further practiced this technique with partners. Next, Sensei had us work on front snap kick, beginning with the feet together. Then we kicked, catching our knee with our hands before setting the foot down. He emphasized balance and the rootedness of the support leg. He reminded us that it is the snapback of the kick that sets up the next technique. Keep the body square without shifting the support leg or foot under. He again reminded us that the opponent is at the optimum distance from us – we should keep our shoulders and hips square, maintaining the triangle of power directly toward the opponent. Turning the hips to reach with the kick, or turning the support leg turns the triangle away from our opponent.

This deconstruction of punching, kicking, and stepping in was a prelude to sparring practice. Sensei reminded us that “anyone can hit someone,” but hitting with proper form and dynamics is our goal. When practicing karate we pay attention to distance and timing so that we can focus and complete a technique at maximum power without hurting our partner. By practicing this way, when it comes time to actually defend ourselves, we will have all the power and focus we need, even in sub-optimal conditions.

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March 2017 Regional Training

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Kumite practice began, keeping in mind the points from the basics practice that we had just completed – strong techniques using power from the back leg, snapping the hips, dynamic power, and focusing the triangle of power toward the opponent. Defenders were equally responsible for maintaining focus on strong techniques and effective blocks with well-timed counterattacks. After practicing three-step, we moved to one-step. Defenders were encouraged to move at angles, but still had to maintain correct distance and proper execution of block and counter. Timing becomes even more important for both the attacker and the defender. The defender can make a chance with the proper timing and execution of a block, throwing off the attacker's technique and timing. The attacker and the defender must make dynamic use of their bodies. Finally, we moved to semi-free sparring, where both sides can adjust for distance. Here we concentrated on getting to the correct distance for an attack. We began by facing

each other outside attack distance. Then the attacker moved into range. Once in range the attack must commence immediately. Again proper execution of *oi-zuki* is expected. The defender should not retreat too far out of range, but sets up their own distance for the block and counter. Again, the defender can take control of the encounter by a sharp block and counter with correct distance.

Finally, we took our basics into kata practice. There are no throw away moves in kata. Every move requires focus on body control for proper execution of techniques. *Heian Shodan*, which has 7 step-in punches, gives practice with that technique. *Heian Nidan* emphasizes kicking snapback.

Thoughtful practice of basics is imperative for building the proper execution of kata and success in *kumite*. Sensei Vaughan provided just that instruction in the March Regional training.



Students attend training hosted by the Dayton Shotokan Karate Club

Image courtesy of Sensei Jerry Baker



ISKF Leadership

It is with great honor that we announce our own Sensei Martin Vaughan was nominated to be Vice President of ISKF by the Chairman and Chief Instructor, Hiroyoshi Okazaki. This was approved by the ISKF Board of Directors on March 27, 2017. Congratulations Sensei!!!

40 Years? Who's Counting?

Brown County Shotokan Karate will be celebrating its 40th anniversary (WOOOOOO!) on June 2, 2017 @ 6:00pm
Please RSVP to Sensei James Oberschlake by May 26.
e-mail: joberschlake@hotmail.com or call (513) 312-7040.

Congratulations and thank you to Sensei Jim for his many years of developing Mid-America *Karateka*

Mid-America Custom Gi

Mid-America ISKF is working to develop its own custom high-quality, low-cost *gi*. Samples will be available at Spring Camp. Please take a few minutes to check them out.



Chief Instructor, ISKF Mid-America Region

Sensei Martin Vaughan trained under Sensei Golden and Master Okazaki for over 40 years and is our Regional Director. He is also the Chief Instructor of Indiana ISKF and Vice President of ISKF.



President and Assistant Instructor, ISKF Mid-America Region

Sensei James Oberschlake trained under Sensei Golden and Master Okazaki starting in 1974. He is also the Chief Instructor of Brown County Shotokan Karate Club.



Instructor Emeritus, ISKF Mid-America Region

Sensei Greer Golden graduated from the Instructor Trainee Program in 1969 and was sent to Ohio University in Athens to begin sharing his knowledge with Mid-America karate students.

Calendar

April 22-23 - Spring Camp and Collegiate Regional Tournament

Hosted by The Ohio State University Karate Club

May 6 - Adult and Youth Regional Tournament and Regional Board of Director's Meeting

Hosted by The Ohio State University Karate Club

June 9-16 - ISKF Master Camp

Camp Green Lane, PA

Contributors

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Associate Editor

MICHELLE RANDALL

Ms. Randall, 2nd *dan*, is a senior student at the Indiana ISKF club in Indianapolis, IN.