



Jitsu Canada Newsletter

September 2007



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Special Events – 2008 & 2009

20th September 2008: 15th Year Anniversary Course and Ball

The first *Shorinji Kan Jiu Jitsu* session held in Canada was on Monday September 20th 1993. Exactly 15 years later to the day we will be holding a celebratory course, followed by a formal ball in the evening.

The course will be open to all members (from novice to black belt) and should feature some exciting training as we anticipate most (hopefully all!) of our instructors will be present. The ball will be a formal dinner and dance overlooking the Kingston Harbour.

This event will be an excellent opportunity for members of Jitsu Canada to get together and celebrate 15 years of growth and success. In addition to the dinner and dance, there will be a number of activities planned to commemorate the years, including speeches, awards, slideshows of the past 15 years, and more!

Jitsu

The Jitsu Foundation International *Shorinji Kan* Summer School 28th to 30th August 2009, Spartanburg, SC.

Every three years our UK based parent organization, The Jitsu Foundation, holds a weekend training event for members from all countries with *Shorinji Kan Jiu Jitsu* associations or clubs. Previous venues were: 2003 - Canada; 2006 - Holland.

It is hoped that students & instructors from all member countries will be present. Due to the proximity to Canada, we are hoping to have high numbers from Jitsu Canada for this event. We anticipate arranging group minivans from the various Ontario clubs, with hopefully some cost subsidy from our various clubs.

Upcoming Events

Green & Above Course

29th September, Peterborough ON.

These courses are designed to provide more focused training with specific themes, and to allow senior grades to train with their peers from other clubs. If you are green belt or above, please make every effort to attend this course.

Grades Only Course

20th October, Kingston ON.

Open to Yellow belts and above with guest instructor Glen Pitcher *Sensei*, 4th Dan, from *Musubi Dojo* in Bowmanville. Pitcher *Sensei* is a former Correctional Services Officer and currently teaches Defensive Tactics as part of his employment as a security officer for the Nuclear Industry. Pitcher *Sensei* will be teaching a use of force seminar for us – extremely useful legal information for any martial arts practitioner or instructor. He will also instruct some Pressure Point Control Tactics (the *jiu jitsu* based system widely used by Canadian law enforcement).

There will, of course, also be some 'regular' *jiu jitsu* training. A number of *Musubi Dojo* students will hopefully also be joining us for the day's training.

Ontario Provincial Course

10th & 11th November, Ottawa ON.

The provincial course is an opportunity for all members of Jitsu Canada clubs to meet for a weekend of training. This course provides students with the chance to train with many different people from the various clubs. The event is open to everyone, from beginner to black belt. Various senior Jitsu Canada instructors will be teaching.

Accommodation on the Saturday night is provided by members of the host club, and there is always a memorable social event on the Saturday night.

This year we are expecting some special guests, which will turn the event into a 'Nationals' rather than a 'Provincials'. Ben de Witt *Sensei* will be attending, together with some of his Calgary University club students making their first visit to an Ontario event.

We are pleased to announce that Kevin Lintott *Sensei*, president of the Alberta Jiu Jitsu Association (AJJA), will be attending as a guest instructor. A number of AJJA students and instructors from *Sensei* Lintott's style will also be making the journey to train with us. Quite a few Ontario members have previously traveled to Calgary and trained at AJJA events. Please join us in welcoming our friends from the AJJA to Ottawa. 100 percent attendance from our students from all our Ontario clubs would be appreciated, in light of the effort and expense the AJJA is incurring to make this visit happen.

Please mark your calendars early and help make this a great event.

Little Boy Blue...

Kenn Gibb Sensei

Once upon a time, there lived a young boy.

He was a quiet little boy, sweet and innocent – and very cute, I might add, who spent most of his time sitting alone.

He wasn't bothered by his solitude, mind you. He quite enjoyed his simple life. He would often sit for hours on end peacefully smiling to himself. Much like your favorite teddy bear does, he both offered comfort, and was comforted by simply being in the room. In fact, sometimes he felt as though he was a teddy bear.

Life carried on and continued like this until one day, he watched a movie.

It was a movie about love and companionship, of hopes and dreams. A movie of acceptance. It was a movie of four brothers trying to find peace within themselves, and within each other, while defending the world against prejudice, hate, and the evils of humanity.

It was a movie about turtles.

This boy was instantly thrown into a whirlwind fantasy of having a shell carrying, multi-weapon-mastery alter ego with an affinity for pizza and quirky one-liners. Not having many friends, he would often spend his time in the woods fighting imaginary enemies with make-shift *bo* and *katana*. Using the terrain to his advantage, he would duck, weave, and roll to avoid enemy attacks with grace enough to make – dare I say – even the seventh graders tremble with fear and awe.

Upon his enemies' defeat, or the life saving call of retreat (also known as "Dinner Time") he would return to his underground dwelling he called his sewer, for reflection and meditation known to all heroes as nap-time.

Sadly, however, as he grew through adolescence, this young boy was replaced by a much older, slightly taller boy....with a beard. His innocence and his dreams of saving the world were slowly forgotten as he left his sewer behind and started down the painful road towards independence, maturity, and the evil corruption known as adulthood.

He quickly found himself faced with the unwanted responsibilities that come with being a grown-up. Having to continuously cope with life's insurmountable obstacles was unbearable. Disappointment, betrayal, and failure upon failure made him long for the days gone past - the peaceful times where negative words and thoughts did not exist. He had made a few more friends along the way who thankfully served as distractions from his dreary daily routine, but his laughter was often a mere façade. More and more he found himself quietly sitting alone. Much like he had done as a child, only now, there were far fewer smiles.

It was only chance and circumstance that led him to a man that would introduce him to a place where life's oppression could not reach him. He was led into a room. There wasn't anything particularly special about this room. A cold tiled floor, a few bits of furniture, and the odd mirror. In fact, it was about what you'd expect to see in any old room, save for the few cushy bits on the floor. It wasn't the room itself that was special, but the introduction of ideas and energies that bounced about it.

He was introduced to *Jiu Jitsu*.

The smiles had returned. The long lost sweet and innocent – and very cute, I might add, little boy was, in fact, not lost at all. He was merely still in nap-time. He once again found himself fighting imaginary enemies and using his terrain to his advantage by ducking, weaving and rolling to avoid his enemies' attacks with grace enough to make – dare I say – even the seventh *kyu* tremble with fear and awe.

This is not to say that his life was all bubbles and sunshine. He was still coping with grown-up things. He had discovered, however, that, over the years, life's obstacles and responsibilities had become a little more bearable.

He realized that *Jiu Jitsu* is more than just recess. It had given him the skills to block life's punches, redirect its balance, and allow an opportunity for compromise – usually with the weight of the world crashing into the mats and no longer bearing on his shoulders.

He is no longer afraid of the world. He no longer fears life. Rather, he sits peacefully smiling to himself, much like his favorite teddy bear does, comforted by life simply being in the room.

Once upon a time, there lives a young boy...

1st Kyu to Shodan and the Spaces Between Part Two

Mark Yourkevich Sensei

I was sitting in the pub enjoying a pint and some pleasant company after a jiu jitsu session (shocking, I know), only what made this particular evening unique was that it was in Calgary. At this time, I'd been running a successful club at the YMCA for over a year and felt like I was really getting into the swing of instructorship. I had traveled the long distance to Alberta in support of all *Sensei* Dewitt's hard work in

establishing and maintaining our westernmost outpost and for the much-coveted opportunity to train with my fellow instructors. I had flown out with *Sensei* Thumper and *Sensei* Dobie to attend to the spring grading of *Sensei* Dewitt's club at the University of Calgary, and we were having some friendly pints with fellow practitioners from the AJJA.

Everything was going wonderfully. Interesting conversations were rising and falling amongst a group of likeminded peers over a well-earned meal and at that moment I remember feeling overwhelmingly content with everything related to jiu jitsu and my place therein. I swear it was like Thumper somehow perceived my inner-peace and chose that exact moment to pounce. To the best of my recollection the conversation went something like:

Thumper: I've been talking with Andy and I've been charged with informing you to make the necessary preparations for your *Dan* Verification in September.

MJ: Verification?

Thumper: Yes. It's to assess your eligibility for the *Dan* grading in December

MJ: A pre-grading?

Thumper: There's a little more to it than a pre-grading. Basically, it's a grading-like scenario to give you an indication of where you're at in terms of preparation for *Dan*.

MJ: Right. So where do I start? How do I prepare? September's only 4 months off.

Thumper: Start by reconciling all your injuries. Put self-preservation at the forefront of your thinking and train in and outside the *dojo* with that in mind.

MJ: Right. Can I say 'No'?

Thumper: You can say what you like, but the verification's in September and we're expecting you there.

Contentment is a truly a fleeting and fragile emotion. Mine immediately and irrevocably abandoned me at that moment. The two-year period between Brown and *Dan* had seemed massive at the conclusion of my 1st *Kyu* grading but now I was left feeling as if my days were numbered. Anyone who's graded more than once in *Shorinji-Kan* knows the feeling. You want to grade, but you know also know it's going to be an ordeal and the sense of impending, inescapable fate increases with every passing day from the moment your *Sensei* gives you the green light to grade. I don't think this ever goes away. The time between gradings increases, allowing even more time to stew about it, but it's the same every time. A small splinter in the mind, a knot in your gut, an internal *kyu* clock counting down to zero. I heard the rumble of the train of inevitability as it careened down the tracks toward me, filled by throng of keen-to-kill, punch-happy *Dan* grades and driven by *Sensei* Dobie. Needless to say, I had more than a little motivation to get ready.

Persistence, Patience, Resiliency don't fail me now.

The first order of business was the reconciliation of injuries. I'd suffered a few in the course of my jiu jitsu career but my time as a Brown belt had allowed me sufficient months to knit most all of my little strains and tweaks. The foremost problem though was one that had plagued me off and on for over a decade. It was a laxity and recurring pain/instability in my right knee. I had injured it twice while I was a teenager and it had been a perpetual bother ever-since. I'd always presumed there was nothing to be done about it and assumed eventually it would give out and would require some kind of surgery

to correct it. My doctor wasn't terribly helpful in this regard, acknowledging there was a problem, but not offering any real advice other than to prescribe painkillers. I decided to look elsewhere for advice and spoke to a registered massage/physio therapist who I'd been seeing sporadically for a few months. Among other things, we covered my *Dan* grading deadline, the initial injury, the fact that I'd never properly taken the time to heal from it and finally the fact that I'd been training steadily in *jiu jitsu* for 5+ years without more than a few weeks off at a time. The provision of symptomatic information, MRIs, and X-Rays along with my history provided a complete picture of my condition and led her to one conclusion. Having become well-acquainted with my musculature over the course of multiple treatments, my therapist explained that my right adductor muscle was like a "a piece of knotted rope," and that this was a result of the fact that I had never given myself time to heal from the original injury. I had plowed on, full steam ahead and my body had developed an imbalance in the musculature of my legs and knees as a result of years of assuming bad-postures to compensate for the problem.

It just made sense. Looking back I wish I had just decided to use the damn crutches. Years of pain pills had gotten me nowhere, but with a clear picture of the root and pathology of the issue I could now finally do something about it. My RMT put together a list of muscle groups that would require attention if I wanted to be sorted in time for the grading and I took them to my friend Big Sam Kim who was then working as a Personal Trainer. I immediately got onto a 3 day per week exercise routine above and beyond *jiu jitsu* at Queen's

and teaching at the Y. The positive results were almost immediately tangible and even now I maintain a much more informed understanding of my body and it's dietary and exercise needs. Extremely useful information that I had never before considered.

You see, *jiu jitsu* teaches you to tap your inner strength and channel it externally to persist, to prevail, to fight and to win. Sometimes though (particularly in adrenaline addicted individuals) that necessary hardness can lead you to overlook your bodily health for the love of the Art, for the sake of the rush. Take a lesson from the recently repaired, new and improved Markbus, and understand that if *jiu jitsu* is something you want to commit to long-term you will need to make concessions, take time to heal, and take full responsibility for your own well being as those *Kyu* are counting down to *Dan*. If you haven't already done so, I advise looking at ways to keep fit outside of the *dojo*, especially as your teaching role expands. Go into any exterior training with the same consideration for persistence, patience, and resiliency that you accept and embrace when you *rei* onto the mats and you will succeed. Guaranteed.

If you've gotten this far injury free, then I recommend you buy a lottery ticket, seriously. There is inherent risk in martial arts and you are beating the odds if you've never had some kind of injury set you back. In my opinion, true victory should be sought in prevailing over injuries, rather than pushing through them.

Another challenge you must face and ultimately prevail over on the road from Brown to *Dan* is the inherent difficulty of being a teacher and training. I can

honestly say that the act of teaching has improved my understanding of *kuzushi* and my *jiu jitsu* overall quite dramatically and you should expect the same, however opportunities for the intense training that defines our style can get overlooked if you don't make a conscious effort as an instructor to involve yourself as you teach. To this end, I'd like to offer some strategies that I've found helpful in overcoming the relative dearth of formal Brown/*Dan* training sessions that you will face.

Most importantly, remember that as a Brown-belt club instructor you ostensibly call your own shots and that part of the struggle/challenge is in using that teaching time (especially in the light summer months) to expand on your understanding in regular sessions. I'm not going to lie, the summer leading up to my Verification was difficult and frustrating, but as the adage goes, "anything worth having is never easy." It was my initial inability to reconcile my frustrations that led me to an epiphany that has shaped my approach to *jiu jitsu* ever since. I realized that training opportunities as a Brown belt instructor are only as limited as you decide them to be. Mind you, I had to get very creative for my pre-verification summer until Queen's started up and I could mix it up with Thumper and the Gang. I had use the executive power I was granted as an instructor to make my own way and cater to my own agenda while attending to the needs of my students. My advice is twofold:

- 1) Participate as much as possible, stay active when teaching and mix-it-up by handing things off to seniors (preferably, though not necessarily, with a little notice) so you can train with your students. Not only will you

reap the rewards of training, but you'll also get some 'hands-on' insight into their needs. Until I heard I was grading, I was used to basing classes primarily on the needs of the students, but when the *Dan* grading became imminent I had to start casting everything in a light that would also benefit me. Not only is it possible, but it is fundamentally necessary to your growth and progression as an instructor and *jiu jitsuka* to hone the ability to learn AND teach simultaneously.

- 2) Create your own opportunities to train. Command seniors to make time at the end of sessions and/or schedule extra training with them so you can use them appropriately. They'll appreciate the attention and you'll benefit from it. It will almost certainly be case-specific, but remember to use your *jiu jitsu*-granted authority to derive what you need or what you perceive you need in preparation for your *Dan*. A large part of the Brown to *Dan* challenge (and it is surely that) is taking the reigns with the authority you are granted and making it happen for yourself by molding the classes and the *jiu jitsu* to suit you.

It's certainly not an easy road, but it's one you won't regret taking. Like with the *hakama*, there are both implied and attributed meanings that become woven into the belts you wear and strive to acquire which (as I think I'm proving with these segments) are worth thousands of words.

Gokouun o inorimasu,

Mark

Friends of BudoSeek Seminar – Bowmanville ON – Aug 11-12 / 07

Chris Brooks Sensei

This was the second annual BudoSeek seminar held in Canada and I was fortunate enough to be able to attend again this year...only this time I wasn't alone. Michael "Mount" Murphy and Clare Mak accompanied me from Kingston to the workshop and Andy Dobie Sensei journeyed down from Peterborough to train and teach at the event. Though numbers were down from the previous year, the event still yielded nearly 20 participants in total including 6 guest instructors with backgrounds in *jiu jitsu*, *aikijujutsu*, *Muay Thai*, *kung fu*, *karate* and military combatives.



Glen Pitcher Sensei, one of the hosts of the event, led participants through a thorough warm-up and then first up to teach was Tony Urena Sensei, a *Shorin ryu Karate* instructor from New York. Urena Sensei kicked things off (no pun intended) with a less common approach to kicking that he referred to as "toe kicking".

Toe kicking is basically identical to normal kicking only the big toe is used as the striking point rather than the more typical ball of the foot. Many participants found this approach quite unnatural considering most of us have been told repeatedly in our training to "keep our toes back!!!" Urena Sensei did explain that toe kicking requires a significant amount of conditioning in order to be able to be executed safely and effectively and that this type of kick is best delivered against soft targets and nerve clusters. (He landed quite a nice one on Dobie Sensei! ;) He recalled one tale of an instructor who was capable of kicking his big toe through a metal gas can! Urena Sensei closed his session with a series of lectures and demonstrations on various strategies for effective striking.





After a short break, *Ray Martin Sensei*, a *jiu jitsu* instructor from Toronto who had taught the previous year, took over the mat. As is typical of *Martin Sensei's* style, the energy and intensity of the mat rose quickly as he led participants through a series of grappling maneuvers. He began with standing defense from the half clinch position. (A half clinch is when your opponent has taken hold of you face-on, one arm controlling your head around the neck and the other gripping your armpit and shoulder.) *Martin Sensei* demonstrated a few escapes and control tactics from this position.

Next he moved things to the ground. Participants enjoyed the opportunity to explore several techniques (a couple of them quite elaborate) from the guard position. At the end of *Martin Sensei's* segment, everyone got the chance to put their skills to the test with some free practice *ne-waza* (ground fighting). At last, it seemed, "Mount" Murphy had found his match in the equally formidably sized *Chris Luttrell Sensei!* (It would have been a judge's decision I think.)



The last session of day 1 featured another returning instructor, *Cris Anderson Sensei*, a *jiu jitsu* teacher from Ottawa who possesses an in-depth knowledge of World War II Combatives. This year, *Anderson Sensei* introduced us all to the combat system developed by *Moshé Feldenkrais*, a Ukrainian born former member of the British Admiralty. *Anderson Sensei* explained the history of *Moshé Feldenkrais*: that he had studied *jiu jitsu* as a young man and in 1933 met *judo's* founder, *Jigoro Kano Sensei*, who encouraged him to practice *judo*; that in the years to come, he developed a simplified system of combat to be used by military soldiers; and that he authored three books on the topic of combat and self-defense entitled "Practical Unarmed Combat", "*Judo: The Art of Defense and Attack*" and "*Higher Judo (Groundwork)*".

Anderson *Sensei* then went on to demonstrate the Feldenkrais system which was essentially centered on a single technique... the rear naked choke. His particular style of choke involved applying pressure directly against the windpipe with the bicep braced against the back of the opponent's neck and then levering your entire body against it from a bending position. Participants learned rapidly the devastating power of this very simple technique as



they explored entries from various attack scenarios. Like the combat system of the previous year, Anderson *Sensei* explained that the key to its success was in teaching a simple but brutal technique that could be used in almost any scenario and that required very little knowledge to execute. The fewer options you have in a confrontation, the more likely you will react quickly and effectively. This was an extremely important principle when training soldiers who were only given a few weeks to learn how to defend themselves.

That evening a barbecue dinner was held at Luttrell *Sensei's* house (many thanks to our generous host for putting together such a great feast!) Believe it or not, the Kingston contingent turned in early that night (...yes, I must be getting old!)



Day 2 began with Jeff Burger *Sensei*, a highly trained instructor of *Shito ryu Karate*, *Muay Thai* and *kung fu*, who had come all the way from Boston to attend the event. Burger *Sensei* began by examining specific stages of striking engagement which offered participants some perspective on combative strategy. Concepts of initiative and interception were explored through a series of kicking and striking drills that taught participants how to simultaneously parry and strike from any position. Burger *Sensei* expanded on the content by introducing throwing and locking options into the equation

which provided an excellent segue into Dobie *Sensei's* segment! Perhaps the most memorable moment was when Burger *Sensei* pointed out to Dobie *Sensei* and I one of the most awesome versions of *Ippon-seoi-nage* I've ever seen. (I regret to inform you all that you'll have to wait until the next senior grade course to find out what it is ;)

Did somebody say throw???. Next to take charge of the mat was our very own Andy Dobie *Sensei* and take charge he did. After a brief introduction to our style, he led the group straight into *tai-otoshi*. Once again the energy level in the room rose as the constant sound of break-falling could be heard from end to end. Dobie *Sensei* explored *tai-otoshi* from a variety of attacks and entries, including punches, grabs, kicks and also as a counter technique. He centered the theme on just one technique which illustrated the importance of understanding not only how the technique works, but also how the technique can move seamlessly from one situation to another. This perspective paralleled very closely the principle espoused by the Feldenkrais approach from the day earlier. A few of the instructors present, who had spent 20 or more years studying *tai-otoshi*, were quite surprised to discover some new ways of performing it.



The last session of the weekend was taught by Chris Luttrell *Sensei*, who was the co-founder of the Bowmanville *dojo* alongside Pitcher *Sensei*. Luttrell *Sensei* brought his own blend of fun to the workshop with a combination of headlock escapes, bar room extractions, and defenses from being shoved up against a wall. This was a great opportunity for some role-playing and believe me, role-play we did!

After a few escape scenarios, Luttrell *Sensei* then set the stage for some bar table extractions. I was quite impressed by how talented Clare was at ramming my face into the imaginary table as an encourager to get me to my feet! Though, the tables were turned during the wall defense segment when, out of the blue, Andy Dobie *Sensei* grabbed an unsuspecting Clare by the collar and threw her against the wall. Clare, without breaking a smile, dished out a healthy weakener and sent him crashing happily into the wall beside her. A job well done Clare!

Overall it was another enjoyable weekend and our hosts expressed a sincere interest in coordinating a 3rd event next summer. Dobie *Sensei* and I would like to encourage more members of Jitsu Canada to attend next year's event as the learning doesn't stop with our style...there is so much to be gained from the knowledge of other martial arts experts, especially when it is so freely offered!



BudoSeek! Martial Arts Community™ is an online martial arts discussion forum that enables martial artists everywhere to share information, engage in online discussions, and coordinate gatherings for the purposes of sharing and learning. (Check it out at www.budoseek.net)

Jitsu Canada Club Directory

Peterborough, ON:

Trent University: Tuesday 8.30pm to 10.30pm & Friday 5pm to 7pm.

Peterborough Y: Monday 8.00pm to 10.00pm & Thursday 8.30pm to 10pm.

Ottawa, ON

Carleton Uni: Monday & Wednesday 7.30pm – 9.30pm

Gladstone: Tuesday & Thursday 8.30pm to 10.30pm

Kingston, ON:

Queen's Uni: Wednesday & Friday 7.00pm to 9.00pm

Kingston Y: Tuesday & Thursday 8.30pm to 10.00pm

Toronto:

West Central: Monday 7.30pm to 9.30pm & Friday 8.00pm to 10.00pm

Calgary:

Calgary Uni: Tuesday & Thursday 9.00pm to 10.30pm &
Sunday 4.00pm to 6.00pm

Useful Links

Jitsu Canada official website: www.jitsucanada.com

Jitsu Canada regional websites: www.jitsuottawa.com

The Jitsu Foundation (UK): www.jitsufoundation.org

Canadian Jiu Jitsu Council: www.jiujitsucouncil.ca

Alberta Jiu Jitsu Association: www.albertajja.com

Jiu Jitsu British Columbia: www.jjbc.ca

Chokushin Aikijujutsu: www.aiki-ju-jutsu.com

Contributions needed!

Grateful thanks to the contributors to this and previous issues. The next issue will be January 2008; deadline for submission is 31st December 2007. Contributions are welcome and encouraged from all members. These can be about anything relevant to the martial arts. Contributions can be sent electronically to newsletter@jitsucanada.com

Automatic Receipt

Receive the newsletter direct to your inbox. Simply e-mail newsletter@jitsucanada.com with "subscribe" in the subject line to have the newsletter automatically e-mailed to you, rather than via your club instructor.