

Annual Summer Seminar Gi Yu Kyo Kai Dojos Dayton Ohio 2019

Submitted by Dr. Andreas Syllaba 07/19



I remember the excitement and enthusiasm I felt when participating in my first Gi Yu Dojo Annual Seminar a number of years ago. Having not trained in martial arts for quite some time, the quality of that experience was profound. At the time, this was just my first taste of the ancient KoRyu art lineages being taught at The Gi Yu Kyo Kai Dojos. Taught with the degree of precision that came from the true study of Budo from teacher to student over centuries. With each year I have a deeper appreciation for the exquisite gem we have in our community, a true appreciation of those individuals on the same path of learning. The appreciation comes not just from experiences on the mat, but with numerous conversations that contain lessons from the past and admonishments to be true to the KoRyu arts we study in the present to keep building towards the future.

For those who are relatively new to our form of martial training and our form of community, there is much to be discovered. It is imperative to develop an awareness of what our dojo community really offers. This comes from the focused, dedicated and selfless service of Sukh Sandhu Sensei and a number of upper level black belts and newer students that are helping with the CORDS kids program. These happenings are not always evident unless they are viewed by careful observation over time. To start in that journey of discovery, I would encourage the each student to examine the opening pages of the student manual they are given when they start training at The Gi Yu Dojo. They should give special attention in particular to "Beginning Training", "Etiquette for the Dojo" and "Seven Virtues of the Bushido Warrior" in that book.

We just completed our 12th Annual Seminar. WOW, awesome as predicted! We had the pleasure of being able to train with those who came in to town from other cities and even countries. WS Bumgarner Sensei form Georgia and Aman Brar Sensei from North Carolina along with our new Canadian contingent represented by Mridul Pathak.



As with most years, Sukh Sandhu Sensei started us with Thursday night “no gi” training. This is grappling without the use of a typical martial art uniform that would be easier to grab for techniques. Wearing just a shirt and shorts, we discovered ways to adapt in order to effectively deal with an opponent. Whether just pure grappling, grappling in response to a strike, on the ground or standing. Later in the weekend, we entered the arena of our grappling art wearing a Judo/ Jujutsu uniform. Sensei took us through the basics of the Gi Yu Dojo Suwari Gata to get us all on the same page. This was developed by Sensei after many years of diverse experience and training with grappling arts melded with the ancient KoRyu arts. This includes techniques starting from both standing and on the ground. In a later session, we were able to experience more advanced techniques with Suwari Gata including live Ne Waza Randori (partner to partner timed ground grappling with various pinning techniques and escapes).

Jinen Ryu Iaijutsu: the combat art of drawing a Japanese katana sword. This study requires moment to moment awareness. We went through a progression of etiquette using the sword, basics of holding and handling the sword, drawing, basic cuts, basic footwork with drawing, basics of re-sheathing (NoTo), then drawing and cutting, and then the whole process with a partner. The Iaijutsu we learned was from both the Jinen Ryu school from Manaka Sensei and techniques drawn from other schools and compiled by Sukh Sandhu Sensei.



We then had a session of using a “live” sharp katana blade to cut rolled bamboo tatami mats. This is very challenging as there is very little tolerance for any imperfections of the cut. If the cut is not angled correctly, or if there is too much arm and upper body strength applied, there will not be a clean cut. As with most of our techniques, the power comes from the hips and the control comes from correct structure and position of the whole body. The right hand (closer to the blade) acts like a pivot and helps

steer the blade, the left hand, which is more at the end of the handle, pulls to bring power to the cut. All these small things link correct and total body mechanics from the ground up. The shoulders must remain loose. We then had another and more advanced Iaijutsu session. Sensei told us to remember what the live blade cutting felt like, and from there, feel the power of the technique with Iai blades cutting “in the air”. With enough practice, the feeling of the Iaijutsu cuts should feel like they are going through solid material, not just air. That apparently comes from thousands of cuts done correctly.



In the end, the heightened awareness that comes from training, the physical and mental precision required melds with the group experience of learning. All this time together creates an end product of not just accomplishment, but the feeling of having participated in something that is elevated to a rare level of greatness. It then is no longer about the individual, but about the Dojo Kyo Kai and community accomplishment.