

“Thoughts On My First Seminar and Rank Test”

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“Today is victory over yourself of yesterday”. This was on one of the shirts made for the 10th annual seminar. The quote resonated with me and really summed up my experience with my first rank test and seminar. I have a fear of failure. To admit that is a big step for me. However, to do something about it, well, that’s a leap.

I remember observing my first class and Sukh Sensei asking me why I was interested in Kobudo martial arts. I told him I did not have prior experience with martial arts but I have always been interested in it. I just wanted to be better, improve my mind, body and spirit. Fortunately, I was allowed to train with this group of individuals. What I found is a hidden gem. The Gi Yu Dojo has far exceeded my expectations on so many levels. Sukh Sensei is a leader by example. He has gathered an amazing group of people of high character, giving of their time, who conduct themselves with honor, strength and courage. People who do not seem afraid to admit their weaknesses and strive to improve them. This was certainly evident at the 10th annual seminar.

As for the San Kyu rank test, I really did not know what to expect. I had been told some of what to expect with testing, but I believe the only way to know something is to actually do it. So there were certainly feelings of nervousness, but primarily excitement. I worked hard and felt prepared. I wanted to show effort. Once the test began, I felt I demonstrated that I knew the required techniques, but there is certainly a lot of room for improvement. I appreciate the written feedback from the testing panel. That alone is worth more than “passing” one of The Gi Yu Dojo’s rank tests.

Then came the Randori. I was able to watch Mary Ellen go through it and was impressed. I thought she did a great job! I knew that all her hard work paid off and was proud of her. When it was my turn I felt only confidence and determination. I felt I was so close. I would not fail. While trying to evade and gain distance, I twisted my ankle and heard a snap. With the pain that followed, I knew it was significant. The first thing that came to my mind was that there was no way I was going to quit. (Well, actually the first words that came to my mind should probably not be repeated in this forum). But I did my best to continue. It didn’t take long before I heard “Matte” and Dojo-cho WS Sensei would not let me continue. I felt I had failed the test. What was really interesting is what I felt next. I guess I was expecting to feel angry or frustrated or worried. But instead all I could think about was that I just let Jaye Sempai, Chris Sempai and Will Sempai down. They had given so much of their time from their own training every Sunday for the last several months to help me, and I let them down. It was at that moment that I realized just how much the Gi Yu Dojo means to me.

Mary Ellen passed and fortunately the panel saw enough of my movement, that I did as well! I tend to be very goal oriented. What I have realized is that even if I had not passed the test...I did not fail. That test, not the color of the belt, was victory over myself of yesterday. I look forward to continued training and growth.

