

International Kwanmukan

Technical Congress Sessions

February 15, 2013



關武館

Kwanmukan Technical Congress

Friday February 16, 2013

Purpose of Session 1

The purpose of this session was to define karate and then extract from this definition what the Kwanmukan is as an organization and as a style. To do this, an understanding of the forces that affected the karate during its introduction and acceptance into the Japanese culture was needed. This period of karate prior to its acceptance in Japan was referred to as classical karate - that which was created in Okinawa. Modern karate was the term used to define that karate designed for introduction into the Japanese educational system. This session ended by learning how to gain an understanding of the meaning of kata using a Rosetta stone to translate. The Heian kata were used as they are the basic kata of our style.

Purpose of Session 2

This session dealt with the forces that affected karate in the period prior to its introduction in Japan and how these forces were used by Ankoh Itosu to impact the karate that was brought to Japan. It was explained that the Heian Kata were the fundamentals created by is such a way as to reduce the time period required to be proficient in karate. Those fundamentals progressed in the Heian kata series both through more advanced skill and through the design of the particular Heian kata to express a given idea. Underlying this was the concept that the physical development (practice of the kata) and the application of the kata are both important and both within the design of the kata. Practice and application are necessary to master the kata. This session also presented the application of Jion and Tekki Sho. These are more advanced kata and some of the applications expressed expand those learned from the Heian kata. A more expanded Rosetta stone was used to understand the application of these two kata.

Purpose of Session 3

This session dealt with Mythology and its relation to society as expressed within the Society of the Kwanmukan. It discussed the life of the practitioner, how the Kwanmukan exists as an organization, and the member's relationship within that existence. This session also presented the application of Gankaku (Wanshu, Amhoc, and Chinto) which is said to be a Tomari-Te style kata. The application of this kata is separate and distinct from that of the Heian Kata and the kata used to create the Heian kata. While there may be similarities, they are not intentional as Gankaku derives from a different perspective.

General Agenda

What is the Society of the Kwanmukan?

Hanshi Anderson often referred to the Society of the Kwanmukan. Some of you perhaps have certificates using the word society. As members of the Society of the Kwanmukan it is helpful to gain an understanding of what he meant.

Social Myth

The social myth of the Kwanmukan reconciles the individual, whether it is a student, practitioner, black belt, instructor, sensei, shihan or hanshi, to the social order of the organization in a positive manner.

This myth also allows the organization to have meaning (merit) to the individual and these two images prolong the life of the organization. Myths historically provided the function of telling how to live within the society in which you find yourself, thus providing a socially acceptable order that assures the on-going viability of that society - in this instance, the Kwanmukan.

Myth provides 4 functions – mystical, physical (scientific), sociological and psychological

1. Myth gives images that render a reason for being part of an organization – the mystical function – so you can experience being part of something more than yourself.
2. Myth provides a physical or scientific function in the sense of providing a structure in which to play your role within the Kwanmukan.
3. Myth validates and maintains the social system by defining proprieties and improprieties – the order and law that cannot be denied within the societal structure.
4. Myth provides the stages of life within the organization in accordance with a social structure or order that provides for the continued existence of the organization.

Organism Survival

For any organization to survive, it must provide to its members a clear direction and give the tools to participate fully in the interests and experiences of that organization. There must also be something that binds the group (society) together. Mythology suggests that a responsible individual must stay within the norm of society in order to keep that society healthy. The notion of responsibility is to accept the question of moral order without tolerance of deviation. In the Art of War by Sun Tzu it is said that if there are great penalties for small faults, there will be no great faults. The Kwanmukan is bound by a common mind (common aspersions [sic]) as Hanshi Anderson has said many times. The norms of the Kwanmukan provide direction and the structure the rules to participate fully.

Western verses Orient

Our American society is different than oriental society. In the oriental society the virtue of a student is the absolute faith in the teacher or guru – one whose authority is absolute. In the American society the goal is to develop a self-responsible individual who can act from their own sense of responsibility and not just go along docilely in the interests of the organizational organism. (Going from being the “I want” as an infant to the “thou shalt” of an adult.) This clash of Individuality with mythology presents the problem of being self-responsible as individuals (initiators of creative actions) without deviating from social norms required to keep an organization healthy (becoming a human individual and not simply a cell of an organization.) Conflict arises between being an individual cell which cannot deviate from the social norm of society and being individually self-responsible entity within that society not beholden to that society without becoming a cancer cell to that society.¹

¹ Mythology suggests how we relate to others. They provide the rules or direction to follow to be a part of the society that is driven by the myth. In the old societal myths the role of the individual was defined from dependency to responsibility to senility to death. That is, the myth defined the role in society so that man is carried from beyond infancy to adulthood to death. The goal of myth was not to be reasonable, responsible or true – just comfortable.

Mythology suggests how we relate to others for the survival of society and to give meaning or direction for our life. Myths also provide the rules or direction to follow to be a part of the society that is driven by the myth. In the old societal myths the role of the individual was defined from dependency to responsibility to senility to death. That is, the myth defined the role in society so that man is carried from beyond infancy to adulthood to death. The goal of myth was not to be reasonable, responsible or true – just comfortable.

Expectation of the Society of the Kwanmukan

The Kwanmukan cannot and does not define how you exist within your daily living. It hopes to have a positive impact on your life outside the Kwanmukan. Within its structure, the Kwanmukan allows for growth in the martial arts passing from the infant student through latency (the beginner) to developing an ego or sense of I (self) by the attainment of the black belt. At black belt level you enter into the phase of understanding the reality of karate where you learn to have a discriminating mind and make correct judgments, thereby becoming mature practitioners. This process normally takes about 3-4 years to reach black belt and 10 to 12 years after that to reach the maturity of the higher level 4th-5th black belts. It is at this time that the black belt in America, as opposed to the oriental, reaches the point at which he can be a responsible initiator of action with no need to seek affirmation from an instructor.

The Promotional Assembly

In the Kwanmukan, black belt ranks are recognized in a promotional ceremony that serves as a “rite of passage” into the Kwanmukan shaping one to be a part of the organization. Through our assembly the black belt is asked to voluntarily accept the obligation of our organization so that our organization can remain knit and healthy. In return the individual receives the affirmation of the society – acceptance into the society as a contributing organism to society the symbol of which is the black belt. When individuals are recognized at higher black belt levels or at the organizational sensei level, they receive affirmation of their ability to act of their own initiative in the interests of the organization. They in turn, accept the rules of the society and agree to operate within those rules as far as the Kwanmukan is concerned. The individual, thus of their own accord, agrees to behave in a manner consistent with the expectations of the group to insure its continued existence. For those higher black belt ranks and senior sensei and shihan, those who have passed the age of maturity into seniority, the Kwanmukan provides a place where these senior individuals have a defined role for continued contributions to the legacy of the Society of the Kwanmukan, and are in turn, respected for the guidance and experience that they provide.

The rational man has no myth to uphold. Maslow gives us values: personal survival, security, personal relationships, prestige, and self-development. These are not mythological values. The myth provides the reason for living such that society is predominant. Maslow's values are what you live for when you have nothing to live for. Myth's reasons for staying within the societal order are a common aspiration, such as providing for the survival of the organism, and the terror of not doing so. In American culture, the reality or scientific becomes the predominating development of the individual. That is, within our educational system we teach a scientific method. This is at a disaccord with myth. Becoming a mature responsible individual still requires an understanding of how to fit within the world in which we live. This is provided by our commitment to our institutions and not directed by society as a whole. This is some sense is the freedom of living in our society and for which our American culture is founded. Accepting those myths/beliefs that allow you to be a productive member of society, or not.

Gankaku

Gankaku (Wanshu, Amhoc, and Chinto) is said to be a Tomari Te style kata. The Japanese character for Manji is pronounced as wan in Chinese suggesting Chinese roots (卍 character). However, wan is also reflective of the Manji Kamae found within this form that is repeated in a number of actions in the kata. Funakoshi called this kata Gankaku, meaning “crane on a rock.” This is reminiscent of a crane standing one-legged. The original name Chinto was probably the name of a Chinese martial artist who designed the kata, and the name may have been changed by Funakoshi to remove the Chinese element as China was in disfavor in Japan following the war Japan had with China. The name “crane on a rock” (Gankaku) may be more descriptive of its posture of standing on one leg than a fighting style based on the movements of a crane.

Gankaku Style

In the last few technical sessions the Heian Forms and Tekki Shodan were reviewed. These kata are different from Gankaku and Gankaku was not used in the design of the Heian kata. So the interpretation of the Gankaku kata is its own and not dependent on other kata. Thus, similar circumstances are handled in a different manner. Gankaku performance has been affected tremendously by style. For example, the side kick is a Shotokan style variant as the kicks were originally front kicks. The moves of this kata can be broken out and combined in various ways within the context of the application of Gankaku. While one may be inclined to also combine movements of Gankaku with other kata moves, this is not the understanding of Gankaku but the application of your individual training which are two different phenomena. Neither is inherently wrong. Just be aware of what is Gankaku if you wish to be an expert of the Gankaku kata. From a development basis, standing on just one leg, the forward pivoting action, and the sidekicks define the characteristics of this kata. These features help develop balance and the ability to pivot smoothly on one foot and provide the difficulty of performing this kata in a correct manner.

Reading Gankaku

What are the important aspects of Gankaku?

1. The hand change after the cross block in first sequence leading to a throw
2. Applying a lock without grabbing
3. Study of Manji Kamae - Three Consecutive Manji are a throw
4. Shaking loose from a hold from the rear
5. Study of Manji Kamae - Reversing Body Direction
6. What is a Kamae - posture
7. What is Manji Kamae (What is Manji)

What are the important things to understand to correctly interpret Gankaku?

1. Only one opponent to the front, except when behind
2. Block with both hands
3. Grabbing hand is pulling hand
4. Immobilize the opponent before striking
5. Kick while holding the opponent
6. Break balance to tip of triangle

7. Shifts of body direction signify throws
8. Manji Kamae - Front hand is attacking hand
9. Changing the grip
10. Names of techniques are disguised
11. Nothing ends with a block
12. Movements shown as two counts are often performed as one count
13. Combine parts of the kata in different ways for various stratagems

The next time we get together we will review the aspects of grappling within the various karate kata.