



ZenQuest Martial Arts Center

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An Okinawa Karatedo Association, Demian Mata Jiu-jitsu Network and Sityodtong Boston Affiliate

NEWSLETTER March 2025

Living Samurai

From April 2016

In ancient times, warriors known as the Samurai protected the ruling nobles in Japan. These warriors dedicated their entire lives to developing the skills that would keep them alive in battle. Since the most advanced weapons of their time were swords, spears and arrows, their lives depended on great skill. Just as important was the ability to stay calm and focused even under tremendous pressure. A warrior could possess amazing physical skills, but crumble the first time they face an opponent with a three foot sword that is as sharp as a razor, where just one mistake meant certain death. So, in addition to physical skills, the Samurai trained to develop their minds and control their "spirit" or emotions to have the best chance of survival on the battlefield. This included three important principles of mental and emotional development known as Mushin, Zanshin, and Fudoshin.

Mushin means clear or "empty" mind. This is not to be confused with an absent mind. Rather, it means to eliminate useless thoughts, noise and confusion in our mind, so that it can be very clear and open. Mushin allows the martial artist to be clear minded in their technical training, demonstrative performances and real time applications of their material.

Zanshin is awareness and alertness. This includes awareness of our surroundings, of ourselves, of social situations, and of our actions and behavior. Long term development of Zanshin can also increase our "big picture" awareness in our lives and of the world around us. It can also help with seeing how our choices will likely affect future situations. Zanshin is awareness on a very clear and instinctive level, not consciously thinking our way through our environment. Having a heightened sense of awareness allowed the warrior to recognize attacks and react quickly.

Fudoshin is calmness and emotional stability. This is the ability to remain calm and stable under pressure. It is minimizing feelings of fear, anger, impulsiveness, revenge, hopelessness, and even anxiety or depression. Calmness and stability allows a martial artist to maximize their efforts regardless of the circumstances. This can take years to master, but may be the most important and valuable trait for a warrior to acquire.

These principles all depend on one another to reach their full potential. Each is important in their own way but, when combined together, they will bring the warrior or martial artist to new heights in their training and performance when it

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Checking In

As of mid January, there may be times when the front desk is unattended. Unfortunately, this means that students may need to check themselves in more frequently. As you probably know, there is an attendance sheet available on the desk for students to do that. Parents of younger students will probably have to check them in at times. The head instructors will check the attendance sheets at the end of the day, but taking an active role in helping with this will be greatly appreciated.

In cases where someone is not at the desk and help is needed with tuition or equipment, a button is available on the right side of the front desk that will ring a bell when pressed. This will notify the instructors that assistance is needed and they will be there to help before long. In a worst case scenario, a short trip down the hallway to flag down an instructor in the training rooms will do the trick. We do have a camera in the front room, but are unable to monitor it while busy in the training rooms, etc. We appreciate your understanding and support in this matter, and apologize for any inconvenience.



AC Training

The next round of 'Advanced Concepts' clinics at ZenQuest are being scheduled. These are slated as follows:

- Demian Maia Jiu-jitsu -- Saturday, March 29 (Blue Belt and up)
- Sityodtong Muay Thai -- Saturday, May 3 (2-Stripe Prajiet and up)
- Uechi-Ryu Karate -- Saturday, June 7 (Brown Belt/Nikyu and up)

These will all begin at 1:15 PM and last about 90 minutes. Students ranked appropriately are encouraged to attend if possible. ZenQuest's Advanced Concepts clinics are a great opportunity for eligible students to learn and practice advanced techniques and strategies in their respective art. ZenQuest's AC clinics are provided to enrolled students at no extra cost. So, join us if you can!

(Continued from page 1) Keys To Success
matters most.

Although some martial arts put more emphasis on these concepts than others, most will provide them over time if the student is open to learning them. These ideas take time to understand and develop and should be included in every advanced student's practice. A basic understanding and ability should be achieved by the time the student has achieved advanced rank, too. This is why awarding advanced rank, such as the black belt, should only happen after a number of years of a student's training. Promotions to advanced rank without a general understanding of these principles is a failure on the part of the student, and the teacher.

These principles ARE all important in the dojo/gym or in real time application....but they can all be applied in our everyday lives, too. Each can benefit us tremendously in work, school, sports, activities, home projects, socially, the inevitable crisis that pop-up, and even in our personal relationships. For example, learning to focus and eliminate distractions can help us to give our full attention to projects, tests, or just listening to a friend. Being more aware can help us fully evaluate situations and avoid problems in self-defense, in driving, or in a golf game. Staying calm and stable helps us to minimize making decisions based on emotional noise (like anger, jealousy, or bitterness), leading to intelligent solutions and management of our lives....even under intense pressure.

In the modern day if we learn and adopt the principles of clarity...Mushin, awareness...Zanshin, and calmness...Fudoshin, we can greatly improve the quality of our lives and the lives of those around us. In weaving these abilities into our lives we can use the principles that kept the Samurai alive on the battlefield to live more intelligently, make good decisions, and minimize unnecessary drama and stress. We can be healthy and happy living Samurai!



IMPORTANT DATES

NAGA Springfield- Sat, 4/19
 Karate Sparring Week - 3/17 thru 3/22
 Advanced Concepts Jiu-Jitsu - Sat, 3/29
 Possible Kyu Test - Sun, 4/27
 Advanced Concepts Muay Thai - Sat, 5/3
 DOJO CLEANING DAY - Sun, 5/18
 Advanced Concepts Uechi - Sat, 6/7

RECENT PROMOTIONS

TIGERS:

5kyu - Andrew Arce
 7kyu - Cillian Ardouin
 8kyu - Irish Cullinane, Aldo Rosen
 9kyu - Sophie Nainal, Kal-El Arango, Olli Flaherty

DRAGONS:

9kyu - Hari St. Pierre

COBRAS:

UECHI:

7kyu - Warwick Laing
 9kyu - Juan Cabrera

PYTHONS:

JIU-JITSU:

2-stripe white - Ashton Brennan

MUAY THAI:

3-stripe brown - Chris Kupernik
 1-stripe blue - Kelsey Koldys

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Erik Carlsen
 Christina Curinga
 Mary Hannah Parkman
 Carlo Petrucci
 Noah Faravaag
 Sawyer Moore
 Leo Earl
 Logan Renderer
 Justin Mullett
 William Truskowski
 Silas Sheffer
 Dominic (Nico) Dort
 Johnson Green
 Syrus Bynack
 Camille Desrosiers
 James Polk
 Noah Schrag
 Elijah Schrag
 Cole Sawyer
 Athena Pereira
 Maya Murray
 Kiran St. Pierre
 Caleb Pinsonneault

NEW STUDENTS!

Welcome: Sawyer Moore, Jackson Bleier, Matthew Ahern, Keven Rheume, Erik Carlsen

Welcome Back: Meredith Bleier

Terminology

Warrior

Japanese: Senshi
 Brazilian: Guerreiro
 Thai: Nakrawb

**“Best Martial Arts Studio”
 ZenQuest Martial Arts**



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 ‘Best of the Berkshires’
 EIGHT years
 running!*

