

My Karate Journey, Part 27 -- From Promise to Mission!

My top priority has always been to stay fit and healthy. How else would I be able to help and take care of the people that I love and cherish — my OHANA! For almost 75 years I have delivered on this promise, although it definitely DOES get tougher with each passing year. Through the years, and thanks to HSK, my Ohana has grown immensely!!

When I first started HSK, my main goal was to teach Shotokan karate to the best of my ability. Shotokan karate had done wonders for me, opening up new physical, mental, and spiritual worlds that I could never have imagined existed! Through total dedication, I experienced an incredibly positive and uplifting change in myself, and I was committed to sharing this life-changing feeling with others. For those who HAVE put dedicated effort into their training, I believe that I have also delivered on THIS promise!!

In just a few months, HSK will be celebrating its 40th anniversary. Many of your Senpais have spent at least half their lives with HSK — Senpai Remy, maybe two-thirds of hers! Despite my warning that “This may be the hardest thing you will ever do in your life!” they have persisted and endured to become leaders and role models at HSK.

As you can see, there is no arm-twisting or threats employed here at HSK. Well, maybe just ONE! As you rise through the ranks, especially as a brown belt, you are EXPECTED to give back to Sensei and your Senpais for the many hours THEY have spent on YOUR training. No, not in terms of money, but in terms of time — time spent in the dojo helping others learn and grow — just as YOU have! In fact, spending time in the dojo

assisting the Senpais teach is a prerequisite for taking the dan exam for black belt!!

As your Senpais age, body aches and pain seem to be the norm. At nearly 75, I am definitely the SENIOR senior here at HSK. However, I know that the Senpais look up to me for leadership and direction, just as they have since they started training here as white belts. And because they, like you, are part of MY Ohana, I feel a strong responsibility to take care of them.

Our trainings have sometimes been hilarious, as we compare aches and pains that we are experiencing these days. When asked how I am doing, I usually respond with, "I ALWAYS have pain somewhere. So it's been a game for me trying to guess where the next one will appear!" Lesson: ACCEPT WHAT YOU CANNOT CHANGE, AND MAKE THE BEST OF THE SITUATION!

Fully aware of the hardships and pain that our Senpais are going through, I started a stretching routine that I lead before each training. It focuses on stretching, push-ups, and leg lunges. I have explained to the Senpais that they MUST keep their legs strong, as they are the key to mobility and independence. I have also modified some of our training, focusing on techniques that target areas that need strengthening, such as legs, balance, and movement. My goal is to help them continue to do what they love, and for us to be together for as long as possible!!

Keeping my HSK Ohana, especially our Senpais, healthy and fit — This is my NEW mission at HSK!!!

Alan Sekiguchi, December 10, 2022