

The T.K.D. Flash

A Publication of the Association of Academies of Martial Arts

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Mr. VH anticipates being in Charlotte NC for Black Belt tests and a seminar the last week in June.

Tests were held on March 10 in Charlotte and March 11 in Mooresville. 47 students were promoted. Derwin Wagoner achieved Deacon.

The Eastern Sun Spring Tournament will be held in Fredonia on April 7. This is the BIG one!!!! (see enclosure)

The American TaeKwon-Do-Jujitsu Association's First Annual Tournament was held on March 10, 2001 at Maine East High School, DesPlaines. Participating in I.T.F.-style continuous freesparring, board breaking, and forms competition were students from Eastern Sun and the Grafton Academy of Martial Arts.

Mr. VH confirmed with Master Renee Sereff that Grand Master Charles E. Sereff will be in Wisconsin on December 8 for Black Belt tests and a major address to be given at an awards banquet that evening. This is a big step forward for Wisconsin U.S.T.F. and I.T.F. and for Region V. Since this is scheduled in early December, put aside that date now to avoid conflicts.

The following have tested for Second Dan: Mr. Gregg Thursten, Mr. Peter Spitz, and Mrs. Jacqueline Karpinsky. The following tested for First Dan, Mr. Dwight Drescher, Mr. Marc Mikkelson. Presiding: Mr. Tom Minesal, Mr. Mike Van Pietersom, Mr. Jason Cram, and Mr. VH. Ably working the Corners were Mr. Floyd Jones and Mr. Paul DuKatz. Results to follow.

Welcome to the world, Claire Josephine Milinski, 8lbs. 8 oz., 21 inches, born on March 2 2001! Congratulations to her parents, who embark on a great adventure.

Something just for fun! An Intramural Association Tournament will be held as a benefit for the Jackson School Reflection Fund--to buy mirrors, of course. The tourney will be held at the Grafton School on Sunday April 29. Price--free. Donations accepted. Round robins or double elimination so everybody gets more than one turn. "Content-based Forms Judging". Should be fun, informal, a great chance to get together and have fun.

The Grafton Academy of Martial Arts gave a demonstration at Saukville Elementary School High Interest Day on March 9. Special thanks to Mrs. Mary Lubner, Mr. Gregg Thursten, Miss Alice Soriano, Mitch Pals, Nathan Siudak, Harley Pals, Valerie Pals, Alex Knapp and Roy Wells. A lot of trees were killed.

A demonstration is planned again this year at Concordia College for Family Fun Night, June 8. Set the evening aside.

The Grafton Academy of Martial Arts did a demonstration for High Seas Career Day at Woodview School on March 23. In attendance were Mr. Rick Bauman, Mrs. Mary Lubner, Mr. Luke Mattias, Miss Alice Soriano, Mark Brudnak, Dane Bauman, Roc Bauman, Harley Pals, Valerie Pals, Austin Schopbach, and Mr. VH. Four sessions of busting wood proved that plywood in the middle brings about strange results.

Check out the new Association of Academies of Martial Arts website at <http://geocities.com/amatkdl>.

On March 29 a test was held in Grafton. Presiding were Mr. Van Pietersom, Mr. Bauman, Mrs. Lubner, Mr. Mattias and Mr. VH. Alice Soriano and Erin Graff cornered. A total of thirty-one students tested! In addition, Miss Soriano and Mrs. Graff were sworn in as Deacons. Their sponsors are, respectively, Mr. Peter Spitz and Mr. Gregg Thursten. Congratulations to Alice and Erin!

Three students tested in Sheboygan at Eastern Sun Martial Arts on March 31. Presiding were Mr. Floyd Jones and Mr. VH. Miss Caitlin Madden handled the Corner.

Upcoming test in Charlotte: May 20. Upcoming test in Mooresville: May 19.

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Zen in the Martial Arts: An Analysis and Review of the Book by Joe Hyams.

by Marc Mikkelson

[Part One of Two Parts]

In The Way of Zen, by Alan Watts, Zen Buddhism is described as holding a special place among the various schools of Buddhism because it has developed as a spiritual awakening that is quite natural and which may occur at any moment. Mr. Watts points out that "in other schools of Buddhism, awakening... seems remote and almost superhuman, something which can be reached only after many lives of patient effort", involving long periods of meditation and monastic living.² Because Zen Buddhism can be practiced by people in all walks of life, without an all-consuming commitment to meditation, there has been a great deal written about the application of Zen principles in various aspects of work, recreation and human interaction. Zen in the Martial Arts attempts to provide readers with an introductory level exposure to Zen principles in a discipline that has its roots in Eastern cultures. This is done through a collection of anecdotal incidents that the author describes to illustrate Zen concepts, as they apply to the practice of the martial arts.

In his opening chapter, Mr. Hyams describes how he came to begin his martial arts training and how he studied for many years before he came to realize how the martial arts served to develop personal spiritual growth. Perhaps this is because Mr. Hyams was starting his

² The Way of Zen, Alan W. Watts, p. 77

training in a time when the Asian arts and philosophies were relatively new to the people of the United States; perhaps it was because he needed to overcome personal beliefs and attitudes which differed significantly from those central to Buddhist dogma. While the reader is not given a great deal of information about the author's life or beliefs prior to his spiritual growth, the hostile nature and feelings of resentment that Mr. Hyams admits to exhibiting in his career in the days before he was introduced to martial arts are indicative of the competitive and material nature of American culture. Given his background, the author writes this book largely for an American audience with similar cultural experiences and, therefore, presents relatively basic principles as the revealing of age-old secrets. I suppose, for many who read this book, the ideas presented are in fact foreign concepts. Although I will say that the book didn't provide any great revelations to me, it touched on principles, which, though they are easy to understand, are difficult to master. In any case, I found it interesting to read about some of defining moments that helped to change Mr. Hyams' perception of life and learning. One of the basic precepts of Buddhism, including Zen Buddhism, is the concept of "no thought", in which one who has reached enlightenment acts without thought, since unrestricted actions are the purist. Many of the chapters in this book illustrate how exercises leading to this state of enlightenment are used by martial arts masters to enhance their skills in the martial arts. Opening one's mind to the teaching of new concepts or techniques, without

pre-judging their usefulness or imposing restrictions on your ability to perform them, allows a practitioner of the martial arts to learn as much as possible from several sources. In a conflict one must be able to react, without thought, to whatever threat exists, whether it is a physical confrontation in the dojang or on the street, or a mental confrontation in the workplace or against a verbal aggressor. Reacting instinctively, without fear and without anger, to redirect or subdue the aggression will minimize any harm that may be caused.

To say that there are "exercises" which lead to enlightenment or the ability to react without thought is, itself, a misrepresentation of the Zen philosophy. It is said that to seek enlightenment or nirvana, is to prevent it from occurring. This concept is illustrated in Mr. Hyams chapters about living in the present, which introduce many important concepts to the reader. He points out the importance of focusing on the process of practicing and learning, rather than the anticipated outcome or the attainment of rank; he illustrates that one should concentrate on the task at hand, rather than looking forward to what might be ahead, thereby allowing for greater concentration and efficiency; he highlights the importance of enjoying the time you spend on any task, even inactivity or leisure, but not wasting time.

[Editor's Note: Mr. Mikkelson submitted this review of Zen in the Martial Arts, by Joe Hyams, Bantam Books 1979, 1982 as a portion of his Black Belt Thesis. It will be continued in the next edition of The Flash.]