

“My thoughts of the 2017 Gi Yu Seminar”

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Wow, what a weekend!!! First and foremost I want to thank Sukh Sensei and the Dojo-chos for all the effort, time and dedication they put in to make the 10 year anniversary of the Gi Yu Kyo Kai Dojos a great success. The detail and effort that Sukh Sensei put into all the techniques is truly inspiring. We as students should really think about what Sensei is giving us and it should make you more determined than ever to show up to class and contribute to the community.

I was a firefighter and paramedic for many years and those folks were my brothers and sisters. However, when I compare them to the brothers and sisters I have through budo, the first group never gave of themselves the way Sensei and all the Black Belts give of themselves to makes us better in all aspects of our lives. I consider everyone at the Dojo a part of my family.

I also want to specifically thank Jaye Sempai for his selflessness by taking time away from his family to help us kyu students train. I learned so much in the past 10 months not only about myself but of our martial art. The ability to break down and look at the fine detail of every movement was taught to me by him. Yes it does take time and hard work, but I learned so much about my movement and truly letting my self be a “student”. It was amazing to see how much patience Jaye Sempai had with me, I am sure I frustrated him on more than one occasion, but he never let it show. I also want to thank my fellow budoka, Will, for showing up early on Sundays and staying late after night classes so we could train on our test material. To all the Black Belts who gave me advice and ideas of how to make my techniques better, I am great full and say Thank You.

I know as a Black Belt now, I can now start to harness what I learned physically, mentally and spiritually. Hopefully continuing as a student and learning how to teach our future kohai students. There were so many great things this weekend, one thing that stood out to me was being on the other side of the testing. Don't get me wrong I enjoyed all the training we did but this was different for me. I was now the “aggressor”. All the techniques I learned to this point, I now could see why things are done the way they are. Before testing of the Kyu ranks Sensei made it very clear that safety of the those testing is a high priority. I have always wondered what he was talking about when the Black Belts gathered around him before the randori part of the exams. I can say with out a doubt that there is a genuine care and safety for all students.

Now it was my turn to score the Kyu ranks and to start to look at all the details while they were testing. This was good for them, but I think, even better for me to learn from. Watching the Kyu rank test was very interesting, I had to watch every detail they performed and be able to score on how they did immediately. That included movement, intent, flow, power, kamae, stability and hip position. It was interesting to see everything that I have been through over the years from this perspective. Remembering every technique and the small little details as the Kyu ranks tested was a true sign of how important it is to pay attention to what we are taught.

When it came to randori, I now see how important it is to be able to control your own power when performing the attacks. I was sitting their waiting for my turn wondering how hard I should kick or how hard I should punch. Once it was my turn I found myself coming at them hard but when I went to kick and punch I found myself in very much control of my hits as to not overly hurt anyone. My training took over and without even thinking I applied hits that were hard but not as to injure anyone. I just took in to account what Sensei had said and performed my attacks according to *their* skill level. Mike and Mary Ellen did a wonderful job on their testing and performed their techniques very well.

All the hard work this year did get noticed and I am very humbled that I was chosen as Kyu student of the year. I was completely in shock that I was chosen by all the Black Belts. This meant more to me than I can ever convey. For as much as everyone has done for me and my family this was truly a weekend I will never forget.

Now that I am a Black Belt, I have a lot of expectations of me and I am excited about being able to showcase what I have learned up to this point. I am and will always be a student no matter what belt I am. Once again thanks to everyone who has helped me get better these past four years. I will always be great full for the time and dedication that everyone has given me to be a better budoka and even better human being.