

“Stay Ignited, Stay Frosty”

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This year's Seminar marked the ten year anniversary of The Gi Yu Dojo Kyo Kai. For us, as an association, this is a huge mile stone. On a more personal level this year, I tested for and achieved my San Dan (3rd Degree Black Belt) rank. Sukh Sensei has spoken of this rank as a huge milestone rank. It is at this point in a person's training that they are able to get 2 recommendations and then apply for a full Instructor's License. Being entrusted by Sukh Sensei to teach others the techniques, standards, and methodology of The Gi Yu Dojo is quite an honor. I say methodology because simply going through the motion is only a small part of what makes a technique effective. Things like your intensity and being ignited internally. Having a “fire in your belly” for something important as Sukh Sensei always says is very important to stay motivated in life. To be able to say to yourself that you will not be defeated, no matter what challenge presents itself to you, is very important in budo and in life. I have struggled to truly harness this “fire” and be able to “ignite” at will over most of my life. It hasn't been until this past year while training for San Dan that I feel I have begun to grasp this idea and power. For San Dan you are required to perform not only unarmed techniques from five different lineages but multiple techniques utilizing the 6 foot, 4 foot and 3 foot staff. All of the techniques are performed against an opponent who is wielding either a short or long sword, often viewed as a “stronger” weapon. If you don't have a fire in your belly, strength in your confidence, you will lose. If you are not “ignited” you will not be able to manipulate your opponent in a way that is necessary to defeat them. I found there is another key methodology that is imperative for all of the staff techniques and that is the idea of “Mu”. Mu is a state of emptiness or empty mind. A thoughtless place in your psyche, that only knows efficient and effective action. It sounds contradictory to be empty with a fire burning inside. On the day of my test, all of these ideas clicked. The ability to harness a controlled fury inside that was waiting to be unleashed while not holding on to anything else was very intense. The mindset of “my opponent wants to kill me” and being able to let it go was liberating. It is hard to put into words and truly understand this feeling. I think it is even harder to accomplish. On a miniscule level I think of it as not letting the way your uke attacks or receives affect what you have to do. Your goal is to accomplish your technique, even when your training partner changes what they are supposed to do in their kata, By being in a state of Mu you won't let their “mistake” disrupt your technique. We have all heard of kaki-heki in reference to the Shidachi and Uchidachi working together. It goes further than that. You must have kaki-heki within yourself. Training for San Dan I realized this need for inner kaki-heki. Focusing on this idea when training the Kihon Happon for example, has showed me ways to become more effective in my movements and opened my eyes to things I had never noticed in my training over the past 5-6 years. I am nowhere near to having mastered this, but it is a path I have stumbled upon in my pursuit of Budo.

***“Give and Take, Ferocious and Calm, Hard and Soft
Ignited and Frosty”***