



Jitsu Canada Newsletter

September 2006

Upcoming Events

8th - 10th Sept: Autumn Boot Camp
Sat 23rd Sept: Grading
Sun 24th Sept: Green & Above Course
Sat 14th Oct: Brown & Above Course
Sun 15th Oct: Green & Above Course
11th & 12th Nov: **Ontario Provincial Course**
Sun 26th Nov: Assistant Instructor & Instructor Courses
16th & 17th Dec: Club Instructor Course

Timetable and details
online at:
www.jitsucanada.com

Club courses

Senior instructors will be visiting all clubs to teach courses on regular training nights, at the usual session times. It is hoped this will make courses more accessible to students as these courses will not require travel and weekend time commitments. Courses will be held:

Peterborough YMCA	Oct 12 th	Chris Brooks Sensei
Trent University	Oct 13 th	Chris Brooks Sensei
Carleton University	Oct 16 th	Andy Dobie Sensei
Ottawa Gladstone	Oct 17 th	Andy Dobie Sensei
Toronto	Oct 20 th	Chris Brooks Sensei
Kingston YMCA	Oct 26 th	Andy Dobie Sensei
Queen's University	Oct 27 th	Andy Dobie Sensei
Calgary University	Dec 9 th	Andy Dobie Sensei

Grading Dates

Fri 24th Nov: Ottawa
Sat 25th Nov: Kingston
Sat 2nd Dec: Peterborough
Sat 2nd Dec: 1st Kyu
Mon 4th Dec: Toronto
Sun 10th Dec: Calgary

Jitsu Canada Gi Badges



Jitsu Canada badges are required to be worn on gi and are available from your club instructor.

Autumn Semester Start Dates

Peterborough YMCA: Starts Monday 11th September, 8pm to 10pm
Trent University: Starts Tuesday 26th September, 8.30pm to 10.30pm

This Past Summer's Events

Spring Boot Camp 2006



Chokushin / Shorinji Kan Course



Calgary "Camp of Combat Arts"



Friends of BudoSeek Seminar – Bowmanville ON

Chris Brooks, Sensei

On the weekend of August 26th & 27th, I had the opportunity to participate in the first ever Friends of BudoSeek seminar to be held in Canada. Nearly 30 participants (from white belt to black belt) were in attendance, including 6 guest instructors, with backgrounds spanning a wide range of martial arts disciplines, including *jiu jitsu*, *aikijujutsu*, *judo*, *aikido*, *hapkido*, *taiho-jutsu*, *wing chun* and tactical combat systems.



Day 1 began with an intense warm-up led by Ray Martin Sensei, a *jiu jitsu* instructor from the Toronto area. Martin Sensei then spent a couple of hours teaching ground grappling techniques. He examined specific key positions, including the mount and the guard, as well as transitions to, from, and in between these positions. He also spent some time examining locking and choking techniques such as *juji-gatame* and *sankaku-jime*. Martin Sensei's style of teaching was very energetic and highly motivating...an excellent way to kick off the weekend!

The next section featured Don Cunningham Sensei who had traveled all the way from Wisconsin to attend the workshop. Cunningham Sensei holds several black belt ranks, including a 4th dan in *jiu jitsu*, and through his exhaustive research he has also established himself as an authority on the history and use of traditional *jiu jitsu* and law enforcement weapons of feudal Japan. He has two published books to his credit on the subject. Through a series of lectures and participative demonstrations, Cunningham Sensei introduced us to a variety of classical implements and weapons used by feudal police to apprehend criminals. Examples included the *jutte* (a single-hooked metal truncheon) used for striking and disarming, the *yawara* (a small handheld stick) used for striking and locking, and the *torinawa* (a concealed rope) used for capturing and restraining. All participants were pleased to gain exposure to such an obscure discipline.



The last section of the day was taught by Cris Anderson Sensei, a *jiu jitsu* instructor from Ottawa. Anderson Sensei has over 20 years of martial arts experience, however, like Cunningham Sensei, he has devoted a significant amount of research and practice to a very specific combat system. Anderson Sensei is a leading authority on World War II Combatives and has been studying this system for the last 12 years. His expertise earned him a recent interview with the Discovery Channel for an upcoming program on Camp X.

In addition to providing an in-depth history on WWII Combatives and its originator, Major William E. Fairbairn, Anderson Sensei led the class through a number of drills and exercises to illustrate the

principles of this very simple and effective combat system. The basic premise of the system is to use simple, straightforward and often brutal techniques to dispatch the opponent. It also strives to utilize skills that the learner already possesses (rather than trying to reinvent the wheel).

That evening, Chris Luttrell *Sensei* (from the Bowmanville club and the organizer of the weekend) invited participants back to his place for a barbecue and social. (This is another article unto itself! ;)

Day 2 opened with Paul Fox *Sensei*, head of *Chokushin Aikijujutsu* (who many of us have had the opportunity to train with in the past). Fox *Sensei* began with a variety of movement drills which introduced participants to many of the concepts of *aiki*: relaxation, fluid motion, redirection of force, connection and breathing. From these drills he incorporated locking and throwing techniques that quickly raised the intensity and enthusiasm of the morning.



Extending on the themes and tempo set by Fox *Sensei*, John Foster *Sensei* led the second section, introducing participants to the *bong-sul*, the Korean 3-foot staff. A 3rd *dan* in both *hapkido* and *aikido*, Foster *Sensei* (who hails from East York) offered insight into the application of *aiki* principles in the context of using a weapon as an extension of the body. A mixture of locks, strikes and throws were practiced (and enjoyed!) by all.

The last section of the weekend was taught by Glen Pitcher *Sensei*, head instructor of the Bowmanville club (another name many of you will recognize). Pitcher *Sensei* has an extensive martial arts background and is a former Defensive Tactics instructor for the Ministry of Correctional Services. Pitcher *Sensei* began with a lecture on "use of force" legislation for law enforcement and civilians in the Province of Ontario. This was a very useful and important discussion that I would encourage all instructors to learn more about. To wrap things up, Pitcher *Sensei*, with the assistance of Luttrell *Sensei*, led participants through pressure point control tactics which involved a selection of locks, takedowns and a whole lot of shouting. It was a great way to close the weekend's events!



Overall, this weekend seminar was a huge success! I had a blast and learned more than I could possibly relate in a single newsletter article. Just like Boot Camp, this event gave martial artists from different clubs and different styles the opportunity to share a wealth of knowledge and perspectives on the martial arts as well as the opportunity to meet and socialize with new people. I'd strongly encourage all members of Jitsu Canada to make an effort to attend the next Friends of BudoSeek seminar as I can assure you it's a very worthwhile experience.



BudoSeek! Martial Arts Community™ is an online martial arts discussion forum that enables martial artists everywhere to share information, engage in online discussions, and coordinate gatherings for the purposes of sharing and learning. (Check it out at www.budoseek.net)

Upcoming Events This Semester

Autumn Boot Camp 2006

8th to 10th September, Kinmount ON.

This weekend course provides an opportunity for students of all styles to train and socialize together in a co-operative and non-competitive manner. Training is mostly in two styles of *jiu jitsu* (*Chokushin* and *Shorinji Kan*) although a variety of other martial arts are also often taught. Training outdoors, often on uneven ground, adds a valuable new perspective to training. There are also a number of other activities - rock & tree climbing, knife throwing, and of course, swimming in the lake.

Participants are welcome to show up on the Friday evening to set up camp. After breakfast at a local restaurant, training starts at 10am on Saturday. Lunch, evening meal, and breakfast and lunch on Sunday are provided. BYOB for the Saturday evening camp-fire. Cost for the weekend including meals is only \$40.

Please register with your instructor if you will be participating. This is a really enjoyable weekend event which shouldn't be missed.

Green & above courses

Two green belt & above courses will be held this semester. These courses are designed to provide more focused training with specific themes, and to allow senior grades to train with their peers from other clubs. Details are:

Sun September 24th in Peterborough: *Randori*

Sun October 15th in Peterborough: *Atemi-waza*

If you are green belt or above, please make every effort to attend these courses.

Ontario Provincial Course

This is the one 'on the mat' event this semester which is open to all members of Jitsu Canada. Two days of training with what will surely be a memorable social event in the evening.

November 11th & 12th 2006 - Ottawa

Autumn 2005 was our biggest and best provincial course ever, let's try and beat that with this one!

Assistant Instructor & Instructor Courses

Sunday 26th November, Kingston YMCA

Learning to teach is an integral part of the study of *jiu jitsu*. Although both being taught and practicing *jiu jitsu* are essential, you will find when you begin teaching or helping to teach, your depth of understanding of the principles behind the techniques improves vastly. This is fundamental to progression in the art, so much so that completion of these courses is a requirement before progressing to advanced student grades. Please ask your instructor for details of these courses.

Finding Meaning in Jiu Jitsu Training

Ben DeWitt, Sensei, University of Calgary

Martial arts offer a system of study in the issues of fear, personal control, identity, and reflection upon movement. Indeed, martial arts are a very powerful drama that affects practitioners on a number of levels. Integral to this study is an understanding of training methods. Without this appreciation, it is difficult for practitioners to do more than merely 'scratch the surface'. As a logical prerequisite to excellence of technique, training methods must be thoroughly studied, understood, and applied.

There are a wide variety of perspectives to consider when studying and understanding training methods in the martial arts. If one could have the benefit of time and money to be exposed to a handful of different styles within the broad spectrum of the martial arts, it is possible they will discover that training methods recognized in certain systems will conflict with training methods in other systems. In the same way it is possible to execute the same throw from an infinite number of scenarios and circumstances, it follows that there are as many ways to understand 'The Way'. Students looking to improve their methods of training should not be frustrated when coming to the understanding that martial arts are not simply elegant physical systems, or effective means of self-defense. This should come as some comfort because although martial arts are graceful and brutally effective, they are something more.

The original intent of this article was to categorically compile and describe some of the training methods that have been used in Judo and Jiu Jitsu, and to outline and combine other methods outside this realm with the view toward perfecting the anatomy of training and increasing student proficiency by scientific methods. However, the study required to fully examine the physics of such training methods would require many years of careful, thorough research. Training methods vary from style to style, and from person to person. This variety stems, in part, from the complexity of the martial arts – some are classified as fighting systems, some as cultural vehicles, some spiritual disciplines, and some encompass these characteristics all at once.

It can be argued that to find meaning in martial arts, one must examine their attitude towards their training. Like most studies in Eastern philosophy, this journey is quite arduous and elusive. *Budo Mind and Body* by Nicklaus Suino is a literary work that addresses this subject in great detail. Largely, this book focuses on the philosophical and historical basis common to all martial arts, and going beyond mere physical skills to a life-long study of the philosophy of Budo. However, Suino also describes in his book the basics of training – concepts that include how to develop technical skills, how to determine the principles behind techniques, how to develop physical strength, technical strength, and strength of character. But more importantly, Suino maintains that "martial arts are about recognizing that training is a path to self-discovery. It is a means of positively modifying your personality to make yourself healthier, more well-balanced, and more efficient."

To further qualify, the “methods of training are not as important as application of positive qualities” learned through training to living more meaningful and productive lives. Through many years of training in martial arts, one is exposed to many beneficial ideas that provide a positive influence. They include politeness, sincerity, loyalty, honor, and courage. Such qualities are more necessary than great fighting ability.

Perhaps the most powerful message Suino leaves with his readers is that the study of martial arts is demanding physically, but significantly more demanding mentally and spiritually. On this journey we must continually learn and develop our technical repertoire, help fellow students improve, and understand that the way we learn and train can change but its evolution has no end point. It is a difficult road to travel, and quite easy to become preoccupied with badges, belts, hakama, and one’s own image. The burden of recognizing these disenchantments does not rest with our martial arts teachers, but within ourselves. We must constantly monitor ourselves to ensure our goals are appropriate and sincere. We should all take pleasure in intense martial arts training, but we should always question its meaning and explore our motives for doing so.

References & Footnotes:

¹ Nicklaus Suino practices and teaches iaido, and is an accomplished swordsman. His writing focuses mainly on the technical and spiritual aspects of Budo, and how it applies in the context of modern martial arts training.

² N. Suino (2006) Budo Mind and Body: Training Secrets of the Japanese Martial Arts, Weatherhill Publishing, 144 pages.

³ Ibid, (2006)

Koshi-guruma and o-goshi – a closer look

Chris Brooks, Sensei, Queen's University

As their names suggest, *koshi-guruma*, meaning "hip wheel", and *o-goshi*, meaning "major hip", are two throwing techniques that employ the use of the hip to unbalance the attacker. Situated in the 7th *kyu* (yellow belt) syllabus, they are among the first few throws that a student will begin learning in *Shorinji Kan Jiu Jitsu*. Hip throws are a lot of fun to learn and to perform, but there are a lot of key points to keep in mind when practicing them. This article will outline many of these key points (the do's and the don'ts) and offer some suggestions for developing a deeper understanding of *koshi-guruma* and *o-goshi* at the more advanced levels. One thing to remember: mastering hip throws takes years of study. I have been practicing these throws for over a decade and I still have a lot to learn...but I can assure you, the hard work does pay off!

The basics

Blocking and moving:

Koshi-guruma and *o-goshi* can be performed in response to many different attacks, but to keep things simple, let's look at an orthodox punch. The most common entry against a punch is to step towards *uke* (the attacker) while executing a block, ensuring that you move to the inside of the punch, just slightly off the line of the attack. Your lead foot should land to the inside of *uke's* feet.

For greater stability, make sure you use a positive block and focus on keeping your hips aligned toward the direction you are moving in. A common mistake, especially against a roundhouse attack, is to turn your hips toward the incoming punch rather than towards your attacker. Keeping your knees bent and your body low and relaxed will also help increase your stability.

In order to be able to execute any throw or technique correctly, you must begin by ensuring that you are at the right distance from your *uke*. As you block and step, make sure that your lead foot ends up close to *uke's* lead foot. This is very important to ensure that you are close enough to comfortably affect *uke's* balance. Having your foot too far away could result in having to take another step, which would expend unnecessary time and energy. (See photos below.)



Incorrect – lead foot is outside *uke's* foot



Incorrect – lead foot is too far away from *uke*



Correct – lead foot is close to *uke* and inside *uke's* foot

***Kuzushi* (unbalancing *uke*):**

The process of unbalancing *uke* should begin as soon as you make contact with his/her attacking arm.

As your blocking arm connects with *uke's* attacking arm, take control of the arm by grasping it between the elbow and the shoulder. It will be difficult to take control of *uke* if you grab beneath the elbow or too high on the shoulder as he/she will have greater strength to resist you. Once you've grasped the arm, settle slightly into your hips and legs while drawing with your blocking arm; this action should begin to pull *uke* off balance onto one leg, in the direction of his/her punch. (See photo right.)



This is an important (and often neglected) step because it moves *uke* into an awkward position, making it difficult for him/her to resist or retaliate with a second punch.



The next stage of balance breaking involves the positioning of your free arm. It is here that the two throws are distinguished from each other. *Koshi-guruma* is characterized by wrapping your free arm securely around *uke's* neck. It is important to take a tight hold around the neck to maintain close contact with *uke's* body and also to prevent *uke* from slipping out of your grasp. (See photo left.)

O-goshi, on the other hand, is characterized by extending your free arm underneath *uke's* armpit (the one furthest from you) and then around his/her back to the shoulder blade nearest you. Placing your free hand on *uke's* shoulder blade is a deterrent to *uke* countering the throw. The incorrect position for the arm is to extend it straight up in the air from underneath *uke's* armpit. While this position may seem to offer more leverage, *uke* simply has to lift his/her arm up towards the ear and your levering arm will slip right out of position. (See photos below.)



Incorrect – arm is extended upward which could allow *uke* to slip his/her arm free



Correct – arm is correctly secured along *uke's* back with hand against the shoulder blade

The next two sections of this article will examine how the position of your body, as well as your body movement, will complete the process of breaking *uke's* balance.

Pivoting, position and posture (the three P's):

As you begin to take hold with your free hand, you need to reposition yourself relative to *uke*. Using your lead foot as the pivot point, bring your rear foot in close to your lead foot (almost heel to heel) as you turn your body so that your hip comes into contact with *uke's* hip. A common mistake made by practitioners is to bring the rear foot up and then step the lead foot across *uke's* leg in an attempt to gain more stability. This may feel comfortable at first, but as you attempt to execute the throw you'll find that a lot more strength is needed to lift *uke* off the ground. This is why the first P (pivoting) is so important.

The second P is position. A key component to *koshi-guruma* and *o-goshi* is maintaining close contact with *uke*. As you bring your hip into position, make sure that *uke's* body comes into contact with yours so that no space exists between you. If you allow any space to occur, the throw will instantly require more effort to perform and *uke* will be in a better position to counter you.

Another crucial component is to ensure that your center of gravity is lower than *uke's*. Bend your knees so that your hip comes just beneath *uke's* hips; your hip should be pronounced slightly off to one side and extended just past *uke's* hip so that you can effectively trap *uke*, preventing him/her from escaping around your body.

The third P is posture. Keeping an upright posture throughout the throw helps to preserve your own balance; keeps you aware of your surroundings; and facilitates all of the other key points that have been mentioned so far. Avoid bending forwards at the waist or looking down at the ground. (See photos below for an illustration of the three P's.)



Incorrect – legs are too far apart, knees are locked straight and posture is hunched over. The throw will require considerable effort to execute in this case



Correct – feet are close together, knees are bent (placing hips beneath *uke's* center of gravity) and posture is upright. The throw should be effortless in this case

Executing the throw:

With *uke* off balance and your body in the optimal position, continue sinking into your knees and let your body turn away from the hip that *uke* is resting against. At the same time, continue to draw *uke's* arm with your blocking arm. This motion of drawing, sinking and turning will eventually break *uke's* balance completely, resulting in him/her being thrown.

In fact, you'll observe that the direction of *uke's* balance changes during this process, from diagonal along the line of his/her punch, to straight forward in most cases.

A few more tips to consider. Whether performing *koshi-guruma* or *o-goshi*, as you turn your body, ensure that your free arm (the arm around *uke's* neck or under *uke's* armpit) remains ahead of your shoulder rather than behind it. This often occurs because you have turned your body without adequately unbalancing *uke* and/or your body is not low enough. This will cost you more effort and expose you to potential counters.

Staying low until the throw is completed and turning the body are the other crucial components of a successful execution. Adhering to these principles will encourage a smooth and effortless throw while preserving your own balance throughout. One final reminder...finish off! (Refer to photo sequences below.)



Incorrect – legs are straight, arm is trailing the shoulder and *uke* is still on balance; posture is hunched over and body is lifting rather than turning; unable to finish *uke* as balance and posture are compromised



Correct – knees are bent, arm is ahead of the shoulder and *uke* is on one leg; body stays low and turning motion brings *uke* over the hip; balance and posture remain in tact for delivery of a finishing strike

There is a saying, that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts". Please bear in mind that *koshi-guruma* and *o-goshi* each represent a continuous, rather than step-by-step, process. Never should the throw be seen as an end result. The throw begins as soon as you make contact with *uke* and ends once *uke* is on the ground. The process that unfolds between these two events will determine the quality of the technique.

Considerations for advanced practice

Some new "old" terms:

The term *kuzushi* ("points of unbalance") is a well known concept to most practitioners of *jiu jitsu* and *judo*. It refers to the act of breaking *uke's* balance. However, to help reinforce the key points discussed throughout this article I'd like to present a couple more terms that many practitioners may not be aware of.

- ***Tsukuri*** - the process of setting up the circumstances for the throw to unfold. Perhaps *tsukuri* can best be described as the act of preserving *uke's* vulnerable position while aligning yourself to take full advantage of his/her loss of balance. *Kuzushi* focuses on breaking *uke's* balance; *tsukuri* is much more about exploring one's own balance and position.
- ***Kake*** - the application / execution of the throw. In order to successfully achieve *kake*, all key conditions must flow together. An important aspect of *kake* is to follow through with the motion of your body as well as with the intention of your mind. A common mistake among practitioners is to be preoccupied with *kake*; to overlook the process of facilitating the throw by focusing exclusively on the "end result".

Next steps:

For simplicity's sake, this article examined *koshi-guruma* and *o-goshi* from the perspective of an orthodox punch. However, it is important to explore these throws from a variety of attack scenarios in order to develop the ability to adapt the key principles to changing circumstances. Unorthodox punches, attacks with weapons, and the *judo* grip are examples. Experimenting with different entries to the throws is another way to broaden your understanding. For example, stepping in with the opposite leg and executing a cross block will require you to vary the angles of your body relative to *uke* as you position yourself for the throw.

If your attempt to position yourself for *koshi-guruma* and *o-goshi* is unsuccessful, there exist within the *Shorinji Kan* syllabus other throws to fall back on. Two such throws are *ashi-guruma* ("foot wheel") and *harai-goshi* ("sweeping hip"). Both of these throws can be used in instances where you have adequately drawn *uke* onto one leg, but have not lowered or turned your body sufficiently enough to get your hip in the optimal position. In place of sliding *uke* completely over your hip, these throws utilize your leg to remove *uke's* balancing leg.

Once you have become proficient at *koshi-guruma* and *o-goshi*, begin looking at transitioning from the throw into a ground hold. Because of the distinct hand positions for both of these throws, there is a specific ground hold that is best suited to each. *Kesa-gatame* ("scarf hold") is the natural position to end in at the completion of *koshi-guruma* because the arm is tight around *uke's* neck. For *o-goshi*, *kuzure-kesa-gatame* ("broken scarf hold") is the obvious choice since the arm is conveniently positioned under *uke's* armpit and around his/her back.

Counter throws:

As with any throw, there are a number of counter throws to *koshi-guruma* and *o-goshi*. Bear in mind that no technique is fool-proof and that no matter how well you adhere to all of the key principles discussed above, *uke* may still succeed in evading you. Following is a list of the more common counter throws:

- *kosoto-gake* – “minor outer hook”
- *ushiro-goshi* – “back hip”
- *utsuri-goshi* – “shifting hip”
- *tani-otoshi* – “valley drop”
- *ura-nage* – “rear throw” (*judo* variation)

Naturally, a whole other range of counter throws opens up if *tori* (the person performing the throw) fails to observe any of the key points outlined in this article. (For example, if *tori*'s feet are wide apart while executing the throw, then *yoko-guruma* becomes a superb counter throw). The practice of counter throws and *randori* (“free practice”) particularly, opens up a wealth of insight into how throws work; how they don't work; and how to change subtle aspects of each throw when the situation calls for it.

Review:

Remember the key points: start to affect *uke*'s balance as soon as you block and ensure that you step in close and to the inside of *uke*'s foot; correctly take control of *uke* with your free arm, making sure to pivot on the lead foot, bringing your feet together, knees bent, and hip placed just past (and beneath) *uke*'s hip; continue to sink while turning your body, ensuring that your free arm stays ahead of your shoulder and your posture is upright; follow through as you execute the throw and be sure to finish off.

There is a lot to remember when practicing *koshi-guruma* and *o-goshi* – in fact, whole books have been written on the subject! Hopefully this article has provided some insight into the finer points of both of these throws and I encourage you to put these principles into practice with help from your instructor. Remember, it's the journey not the destination that counts, and what you learn on one journey will carry with you to the next.