



*The **FONGline** is a Cyber Newsletter  
Published to Inform, Inspire and Instruct*

Spring 2007

## **Harmony by Karate**

Three months ago I had the privilege of conducting a seminar for Sensei John Mirrione at his Harmony by Karate Studio, located in Mid-Manhattan. The name

Harmony by Karate is unique. My first impression is one of curiosity. Why call a Karate Studio Harmony by Karate. After talking to Sensei Mirrione and working with his students and instructors; I now understand the essence of Harmony by Karate. Harmony by Karate not only is interested in developing fighting skill, but it is also deeply interested in developing character. There is so much discord in life that very few programs focus on developing harmony. Harmony by Karate may seem unusual for a karate studio; on the second thought it is very appropriate. Harmony is the key to effortless efficiency and peak performance. The essence of martial arts challenges us to be in harmony with ourselves, with our environment, with our fellow human beings and with our universe. The most effective approach to an attack by an adversary is to be in harmony with his attack. It is what Aikido founder Morihei Ueshiba called “blending.” When your opponent launches a powerful attack; you do not meet power with power but rather dissolve the attack by harmonizing with his movements. Muhammad Ali demonstrated the best example of this in his fight with George Foreman. Ali introduced to the boxing world his “rope a dope” response to punching power. To the layperson; “rope a dope” was just leaning on the ropes and letting Foreman pound him mercilessly. What I observed as I replayed the video tape of the fight repeatedly is that Ali did not take the full power of a single blow delivered by Foreman; Ali harmonized with Foreman’s punches by subtly turning slightly with each attack, going with the flow, dissolving Foreman’s power. Ali was putting Ueshiba’s theory of “blending” into practice. When Foreman tired himself out; Ali went into action and knocked Foreman out. Ali’s “rope a dope” against awesome power; is a great metaphor for living.

Harmony by Karate can also be Harmony by Living. Life has a tendency to throw some wicked “curves” at us. Our responses and reactions will determine whether we become bitter or better. Some people never recover from deep personal losses or hurts and pains, while some have used adversity as an advantage to success. Those who turn obstacles into opportunities are those who know the value of the word harmony. Again I quote Ueshiba, “If your opponent strikes with fire, counter with water, becoming completely fluid and free-flowing. Water, by its nature, never collides with or breaks against anything. On the contrary, it swallows up any attack harmlessly.” Water is a great example of harmony in action. Until next time “go with the flow.”

*Peace, Leo Fong*

## **GRATITUDE**

A special Thanks to Rev. Ken Fizer, pastor of the Otterbein United Methodist Church in Martinsburg, West Virginia. I had a great time teaching the seminar sponsored by the church. It is worth traveling over 3,000 miles when those who are in attendance are responsive and appreciative. Rev. Fizer is a pioneer in bringing martial arts to a church setting. Often the religious community does not understand the essence of Budo. Thank God for pioneers like Rev. Fizer who had the courage and foresight to introduce martial arts to the church program.

A special Thanks to Grandmaster Rob Castro on hosting a very successful seminar in San Francisco, last weekend. This seminar was special in that some special people were in attendance. It was especially special to see Great Grandmaster Al Novak. Although a terrible automobile accident inflicted serious injuries, it did not rob him of his upbeat spirit. It was great seeing Grandmaster Emil Bautista again. Grandmaster Bautista goes way back to the late 60's and the decade of the 70's when he was an active tournament fighter. It was great seeing him on the floor practicing with rest of the "younglings." Another special person in attendance with his lovely wife Vicki was Steven Dowd. I met Steve in the Philippines in 1974. About every 10 years we have a picture taken together. It was no different this last weekend as Vicki took our 33rd anniversary picture.

## **REVENGE OF THE GRANDMASTERS**

"Revenge of The Grandmasters" the movie is now in pre-production. Casting has begun; with Leo Fong, George Dillman and Tadashi Yamashita playing roles of "The Grandmasters." Karate Legend, Michele "Mouse" Krasnoo, will play the female lead. Other martial arts legend will include Grandmaster Gary Wasniewski, Master Dustin Seale and Anthony Paniccioli. Solara Key, 14-year-old tournament champion is also in the cast.

## **CARING ANGEL RESIDENTIAL ENTERPRISE**

C.A.R.E. is a full service residential care facility for the elderly. What makes this residential facility unique and special is the emphasis on health and wellness for the elderly. The board and care facility focuses on the Trinity of Health and Wellness: Nutrition, Exercise and Positive Affirmation. It is an ideal place for those who are 65 years and older who no longer wish to take care of their own home, but rather simplify their life by letting others do the cooking, the laundry and the driving. For further information contact Leo or Minnie Fong at (818) 884-7337 or email: [leotfong@aol.com](mailto:leotfong@aol.com).

## **THE SECRET**

We in the martial arts are always striving for the ultimate. Some seek the ultimate in styles and systems, while others go inward and many look for the ultimate in physical fitness and physical power. After over 70 years in the martial arts; I discovered the secret; it is the word RELAX. It is what I call RELAXED FOCUS. When you are relaxed, all the training and past experiences is at your disposal when you need it. However, if you are tense, tight, angry and anxious; in a crisis situation survival instinct will prevail.

Often that is not enough. Softness always prevails over hardness. Life is supple and soft; whereas the dead becomes hard and rigid.