



# Mizu-Ryu Quarterly



Edition 2

Spring 2008

## Developing a Family Self-Defense Out-reach Program in Your Neighborhood Martial Arts Training Facility:

Most parents have NOT earned a black belt; even fewer are martial arts instructors. Parents still have an obligation to prepare their children to face the potential dangers that lurk outside of the home. Parents must know the basics of self defense and how to teach self-defense to children. As a martial arts instructor, you can develop a community out-reach program to educate your students' families on the basics of personal and family defense plans. First, make sure your children know their full name, address, phone number, and parent cell phone. Then, teach your kids the "red flags" that signify an inappropriate conversation or potentially dangerous encounter.

- Does your child know that adults never ask children for help?
- Does your child know how to make a scene?
- Have you assured your child that you will not get mad at him/her if he/she yells, "Get away from me!", if he/she feels threatened by a stranger?
- Is your child aware that other children can be predators?
- Does your child know to listen to their "inner voice"?
- If a family member or family friend touches your child inappropriately, does your child know that she should speak up and speak up loudly?
- Does your child know that you would rather have an embarrassing misunderstanding with an adult than have your child feel uncomfortable around that adult?
- If your child is separated from you, does she know to immediately latch on to the nearest mother with children and ask for help?
- Teach your child "street smarts," how to be alert and tuned-in to their surroundings.

## Be a Proactive Parent:

1. Visit <http://www.familywatchdog.us/> to learn about the people in your neighborhood.
2. Purchase a family self-defense kit. It is a way for the whole family to learn basic self-defense together.
3. Enroll your kids in a martial arts school to learn further survival skills and build self-confidence.
4. Establish an on-going dialogue with your children about safety.
5. Give your children a voice; let them practice yelling, "NO!"
6. Create an atmosphere of trust with your children.
7. Be your child's advocate, this means keeping your eyes and ears open to possible dangerous situations.
8. Face uncomfortable situations head-on, without shame and make sure to use clear language.

The message here is to not live in terror, worrying that every stranger is a predator and that danger lurks around every corner. Parents certainly do not want to rob their children of their innocence or give them free floating anxiety. The point is that by equipping the family with knowledge and teaching the skills necessary to assess and react appropriately to danger, families take back their power. Giving children a voice and some skills stacks the deck in their favor, and the knowledge that children are prepared, in turn, gives parents peace of mind.

By: Shihan Ginger Dunn

## The Importance of Bending Your Knees:

In an average class session, I direct my students to bend their knees time and time again. Most people bend at their waist instead of their knees, and a large part of my energy as an instructor goes toward correcting this mistake. Although, it seems very simple to do, most students find it to be very difficult.

Bending at the waist is dangerous for many reasons. First, it causes you to lead with your face when you are sparring, providing a prominent target for your opponent. Also, it increases the chances that you will pull (or tear) a muscle in your hamstrings or injure your back, because having poor posture puts unnecessary stress on those key areas. To prevent these problems, the answer is simple....bend your knees!

By bending your knees you accomplish several objectives that are beneficial to your training, combat, and every-day living. From a combat perspective, it allows you to get closer or farther away from your opponent more quickly and easily, making you a harder to hit target and allowing you to reach your goals with greater ease.

Have you ever seen a football player step up to the line standing straight legged? Have you ever seen a shot-put or javelin thrower launch their object by standing erect? Bending your knees allows you to refine your technique's mechanics by gaining explosive power.

Remembering to bend your knees also makes you more agile. You are able to move forward, backward, and side to side faster. You are able to jump higher, and duck faster if your knees are already flexed.

With all of these benefits, why don't students bend their knees more readily? Well, sometimes it is due to poor muscle development in their legs or weak joints in their knees, ankles, or hips. To overcome this disadvantage is time intensive but easy. Simply make an effort to exercise outside of the martial arts studio, focus on leg strengthening exercises such as squats, lunges, duck walks, standing jumps, etc.

Sometimes students don't bend their knees because they are being over aggressive in their attack. With time, practice, and patience it is important for these students to learn to control their aggression. They need to focus on keeping their spine straight, with their shoulders in-line with their hips. They need to focus their mental energy to slow down and control their breathing and basic thought processes. By learning to focus your energy, your technique will improve and your success rate will multiply.

In the end, it seems that bending at your waist is the easy way out...it takes less mental energy and physical training. But by bending at your waist, you are losing all of the advantages that bending your knees provides.

By: Soke Marty Ferrick

## Mizu-Ryu History:

In 1977, Master Moses Powell was visiting Ft. Lauderdale from New York. His trip was short, but during his visit he had the opportunity to teach me the kata that we now refer to as Yon Mizu. As students of Mizu-Ryu know, the first eight movements of the kata are VERY low. When he first started teaching me the form, it was lower than I was accustomed to being and I found it very difficult to perform the techniques as they were supposed to be done.

Master Powell showed me the form on a day when he didn't have a lot of time, so he said that if I had any questions he'd be available on another day to work with me again. When we met a couple of days later, he asked me to perform the kata. When I was finished, Master Powell basically laughed at me, "That isn't what I taught you! What I taught you was much lower."

For the remainder of the workout I did the first eight moves of that kata a million times (okay, probably only 8 or 10 times...but it felt like a million). During the practice, I was too high or off balance because my legs were weak and unaccustomed to this style of movement.

A month later, I saw Master Powell again. During that time I had been practicing the kata. Because of my practice, my legs were much stronger, and I was able to perform the moves with more proficiency.

In the beginning, I was bending at the waist. I couldn't get the power or fluidity that I needed until my legs were stronger. Many years later (about 1997), another one of my teachers, Mangisursuro Mike Inay, told us not to bend at the waist during a KDM class because it took away fluidity...it was ironic that two great teachers were stressing a similar skill. I then began to think back to when this concept first became apparent in my training, to look for more connections among my teachers. I realized that another one of my instructors, Grand Master V, also stressed this skill for fluidity reasons while throwing.

Over all, I have come to realize that good body mechanics creates good technique. Over the years I have struggled to maintain my low stances while over-coming a bad back, a torn Achilles tendon, and several knee surgeries. However, I realize that in spite of the trials, I need to continually rehabilitate my body to continue to move with good posture and bent knees. If I do not go through these rehabilitation periods, I would most likely cause new, more serious or permanent injury and create even more difficult obstacles to over-come.

By: Soke Marty Ferrick

## Accepting Articles:

A good news letter presents a variety of articles from numerous authors. I would like to invite all readers Mizu-Ryu's Newsletter to submit articles to our future editions.

Articles can consist of anything that you're are inspired to share, including but not limited to:

- memoirs of camps, seminars, or tournaments
- historical research
- writing assignments given by your instructors
- editorials or opinion articles

Please email your submission to [dunn@dotaorg.com](mailto:dunn@dotaorg.com) before **July 15, 2008**.

# To Speak to Where I Am:

An essay by Renee Howard

To speak to where I am as a Martial Artist, I first must speak to where I came from. I began my journey as a warrior long before I first stepped into a Dojo, as each day I struggled with dyslexia, a learning disability that affected not only my reading ability but my spatial and body awareness as well, as other children learned the alphabet I worked to tell my right from left, as they learned to put letters together to create words, I struggled to make the letters face the correct direction and come together to create simple sounds. I loved school and loved to learn yet felt stupid as I saw my classmates start to read while I still tried to copy the letters from the board in the correct order. When I was seven years old my parents put me in a Martial Arts class and my world of mental struggle began to change to one of physical struggle, as the other kids would move left, I would invariably move right and so on and so on, but my instructor far from being frustrated by this simply found a way to help me by putting a sock on one foot so I could easily tell the difference from one to the other. With this simple action he showed me how I could use tools to change my experience and the world around me, and gave me the knowledge and ability to look at things in different ways. I went from that first class in Kenpo Jujitsu to JuJitsu, Judo and Escrima, learning new tools along the way, and using my strongest weapon, my mind to make them work to my advantage.

I have now been training in Martial arts for over twenty years, I have had many extremely well known teachers, and other equally as excellent teachers who are not known as well, such as the orange belt who was able to point out a weakness in a technique I had not seen before, or the 210 pound girl I fought in Bakersfield who taught me that size while at times an advantage can also be a hindrance. A teacher who showed me that my art does not have to look like anyone else's for if it is to work for me it must be wholly mine. I have learned thousands of techniques, and at the same time had my art shifted by the simplest of concepts, Balance, so important when throwing an opponent, yet unworkable if you are not balanced within yourself, mind body and spirit, speed that must be tempered by precision, anger and aggressiveness that to be effective must be yoked to calm and centeredness. I am in a place now in my Martial Arts journey where I am treading a path made up equally by mental and physical challenges and triumphs. I am back to the place I was when I first started, wide eyed at the possibilities and perhaps a bit intimidated, not scared of how much I can learn but almost shy about using what I already know. I am in a place where I hold 3 black belts and the realization that only now am I beginning to get an idea of how big the iceberg beneath the water really is. Each day I learn something new, not a new motion or technique but a new way in which to apply the knowledge I have gained. I have been doing Escrima for almost seven years, and am still awed by the fact that there is something new each moment I train. Although physically my training continues on a certain level, building on my basics, incorporating new techniques, I am learning each day the motions, the drills, the techniques and ideas are not new things but rather things I have known for a long time and am just now realizing how to apply in so many different ways.

I have begun to flow while flow sparring, not because I have suddenly gained fluidity but because I am learning to listen to the fluidity that exists with me, in the flowing of my blood, the steady beat of my heart. When receiving lock and block I am beginning to see the attacks, not only because I have learned the motions of my opponents body and what they mean but because I can see with my energy what attack must follow. Of course this does not happen all the time, but the more I relax and accept what is to come, the more often what I see becomes what I know. I still have much to learn, each day brings new revelations as I learn to look within. In a year I see myself on this same path learning what I already know, but seeing it take shape in new ways. If I allow it (and this has been my struggle) it will come to the surface for me. I will be learning to get out of my own way, to stop interjecting my doubts into what I am doing. I will learn new techniques, and then will see that I already knew them. I will learn to center myself not just before a confrontation, but as a constant way of being. In this way I will begin to master not my art, but myself. As this path continues I know I will diverge from it at times. In the next year I will get in my own way again and again, but I will get out of the way as well, and each time I step back and allow myself to move, think and feel as one, I will gain a greater knowledge of who I am as a martial Artist and who I may choose to become. In five years I will be on a path that has no end and no beginning, I will travel it open to any and all teachers who come my way. And I will accept the fact that I to am a teacher. On this path I will walk with others at times, guiding and being guided, but I will walk alone as well. On a physical level I will continue on my way to becoming an Inayan Escrimador. I will learn new techniques, and I will make them my own. I will also become a better student because I will not stand in my own way. But what I will be working on the most will be myself as a teacher. I am just learning now how to get out of the way of my students learning, but still find the strong urge to step in often. In five years I will be able to step back when necessary, and I will know when a student needs me to step back in. I have always learned from those I am teaching, but in five years time I will be able to recognize when it is happening in the moment, and use the knowledge the student has imparted to me in a way that will help them as well. At times now I doubt myself when teaching, but this will change as I bring the disparate parts of myself together, I have been working hard to become one in mind body and spirit as a student and fighter, but I have recently realized that this is not enough when guiding others. I must endeavor to become one student, teacher, guided, and guide all at the same time. Balance does not refer only to a balanced body; it is the overwhelming ingredient for a successful Martial Artist. I was content to be a learner for a very long time, but I have learned that this has left me unbalanced, to be a true Warrior I must be willing to not only take from those who wish to give me knowledge, time, technique and patience, but also to not only give, but want to give to those who ask those things from me. In this way I begin to become a balanced and whole person, one who can see myself clearly in five years, ten, twenty and so on. My path may not always be straight, nor clear, but as long as I am willing to walk upon it with an open and giving mind body and spirit, I will never lose my way. I may take detours at times, but even from these will I learn.