

five minutes with Kazuo Ishitobi



MARTIAL MINDS

Karate Traveller

Born in Kobe, Japan, in 1948, Shihan Kazuo Ishitobi is today one of the most senior instructors of the World Shito-ryu Shukokai Union. Now 8th Dan, Ishitobi was a student of the late Shukokai founder Chojiro Tani Soke, himself a student of Shito-ryu's originator, Kenwa Mabuni. Shihan Ishitobi travels every year to Australia to teach local Shukokai karate students, and on his most recent visit he gave *Blitz* a little insight into his approach to karate.

Shihan, when and why did you begin training in karate?

My cousin knew Tani Soke and I had thought about learning karate for some time, so one day, as a 16-year-old, Sensei Tani invited me to train with him.

When did you begin teaching karate?

I started at 25 years of age at Sensei Tani's *honbu* [headquarters] dojo and soon after that I started my own dojo.

Does anyone in your family train in karate?

My brother started not long

after myself and over the years of much training, we are now 8th Dan together. My son-in-law teaches for me at the dojo and it has now gone third-generation as my grandchildren have begun karate too.

How does Shito-ryu karate differ from other styles?

I prefer Shito-ryu as you move quickly and the techniques flow from one to another. However, through running my own dojos as well as my referee duties with the Japanese Karate Federation, I have a great appreciation for all styles and the katas they practise.

How often do you train?

I teach and train five days a week within my own dojos. I have Saturday off and most Sundays are filled with running and refereeing tournaments or conducting referee seminars.

How is training today different from when you started training?

My personal training has not differed, as Sensei Tani always loved doing *kihon* [fundamental technique] and *kata* with a deep understanding of *bunkai* [the combative application of kata technique]. However, my own teaching has

Ishitobi enjoying a laugh



Ishitobi Shihan leading a class Down Under

changed as many students in Japan now compete in sport karate, so therefore I have had to adapt and teach for this need, as well as continue the Shukokai spirit in the *kihon*.

Do you have a favourite karate technique or kata?

Unshu, Bassai Sho... All kata!

Do you have many children among your students?

Yes, the women in my dojo train for health, and karate for children makes a good heart, developing their characters and budo spirit.

What do you think of sports karate?

Traditional karate is good for building budo spirit, sport karate is good for health.

Is it possible to train



Teaching Aussie kids

"Like karate, with good technique you can have good golf, and with bad technique you can have bad golf!"
– Ishitobi Shihan

effectively in both traditional karate and sport karate?

Yes, as traditional karate gives you good heart, and with good budo spirit it can lead to good sport karate, because with strong character and strong technique you can be successful. But I don't think sport karate alone, without budo spirit, can make strong karate.

How has sport karate affected kata, and is this a good or bad thing?

The player who performs many sports kata looks like a dancer if the student doesn't understand bunkai, however, sports kata can help the student develop good technique.

What are the most

important points of teaching karate?

Always love karate and have a strong spirit.

Finally, Sensei, what do you do in your spare time?

My hobby is karate and I love karate, but golf is good [smiling]. I like golf because you have to concentrate – [in that sense] golf and karate can be the same. Like karate, with good technique you can have good golf, and with bad technique you can have bad golf!

*Interview conducted on behalf of Blitz by Sensei Stephen Kelly, 6th Dan, chief instructor of Shita-ryu Shukokai Union Oceania and national kata coach for the Australian Karate Federation. **BLITZ***

billbuddy

Customer Payment Solutions



Master John Iwanov performing Flying side kick

Bill Buddy have kicked costs to the kerb

For a limited time

- Free Martial Arts Management Success Package to the value of **\$180.00** for every school owner that opens an account with Bill Buddy.

- Receive wholesale rates to the worlds largest MMA and Martial Arts Supplier when you open an account with Bill Buddy.



Spend more time training Less time chasing fees!

Contact Bill Buddy's new National Business Manager, David Wilken.

David brings with him over **20 years** Martial Arts and Fitness industry knowledge.

Skilled in sales and business coaching he has worked with the industry leaders to grow their business through direct debit

**Phone 1300 30 32 78 or
 www.billbuddy.com.au**