



SPIRIT ROUNDHOUSE REPORT



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March 2009

UPCOMING EVENTS

3rd – Monthly S.T.A.R. meeting – everyone is welcome to attend

8th – Daylight Saving Time begins – Spring your clock forward!

20th – Promotion Test starts @ 6 pm – Gym open @ 5:30

Forms and payment must be in by Thursday March 19th

28th – Alberta Junior and Senior Team Trial and Color Belt Championships @ Calgary
Deadline for registration is March 20th

30th to April 3rd – Spring Break Camp

T-Shirt Clearance

In order to make room for our 2009 t-shirts, last year's t-shirts are being cleared out for only \$5 each.

Sizes are limited so grab yours today!

Spirit Taekwondo t-shirts can be worn during class but not at promotion tests.

Only last year's shirts and current designs can be worn in class.

Have you been hearing and/or reading a lot about S.T.A.R. but don't know who we are?

S.T.A.R. (Spirit Taekwondo Athletic Rewards Foundation) is a non-profit, provincial charitable organization. Founded in 2000, S.T.A.R.'s mandate is to assist Taekwondo students in their continuing development within the sport; whether it is to participate in tournaments, attend courses, purchase new equipment or help in attaining black belt status S.T.A.R., is there to support its members.

How do you become a member of S.T.A.R.?

Every member enrolled at Spirit Taekwondo along with parents, automatically becomes a S.T.A.R. member. There are no membership costs or annual fees associated with joining S.T.A.R. As a member, however, you are expected to assist in our fundraising efforts. Much of our resources are a direct result of our fundraisers. We also occasionally receive government grants to support our non-profit organization.

Every member is entitled to funding. Time and effort spent in helping S.T.A.R., whether it is through purchasing raffle tickets, participating in Events, Break-a-thons or donating your time to S.T.A.R. activities, is what ultimately determines your eligibility in receiving funding.

Application forms for funding are available at the office. Because of our limited resources, funding is usually restricted to 50% of the actual costs up to a maximum of \$250. Applications are also limited to 2 per year/member.

Become involved TODAY!! We are YOUR non-profit organization

SPRING BREAK DAY CAMP

No need to worry what to do with your kids during spring break, they can be with us at the gym learning and playing!

We will have a week long camp for kids 6 and up! You can choose which day your kids attend for \$35 per day or register your child for the entire week for only \$135. A \$50 non-refundable deposit will ensure a spot for the camp.

Space is limited and we would like to keep registration to our members, therefore we will only be accepting registration from Spirit members only until March 20th, if we have not sold out then will be opening up registration to outside members.

Camp will run from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
(Note: Camp must have minimum 15 campers to proceed)

Promotion Test

20th – Promotion Test starts @ 6 pm – Gym open @ 5:30

Forms and payment must be in by Thursday March 19th

School Jackets

The designs are in the works and will be available for order soon. Our team tracksuits have always been the envy of all the other schools and this year's will not disappoint. We are debating on either getting jackets or hoodies, if you have a preference to either one; please let Debbie or Master Le know. Jackets will be available in all sizes for both kids and adults. Parents are welcome to purchase jackets also. Cost will be determined after we have finalized the design. We are trying to keep you cost below \$75.

The Origin of the Dobok

Extracted from a discussion between Mr. Earl Weiss and Mr. Damian LaVoice

The rationale behind the plain white dobok of Japanese Karate and of Traditional Taekwondo has its roots in martial tradition. One of the goals of martial arts training is to come to terms with the rather unpleasant aspect that all humans face, death. And in another sense to aid in the understanding of suffering (not that we can shed ourselves of suffering but rather to come to grips with an understanding of how our attachment to the body or "I", the universal "I", can be better understood). This is accomplished in part by attempting to abandon the ego through martial training. Freud said, "The ego is a body". And to quote martial arts author Peter Payne, "The nature of the ego, the ordinary sense of "I", is intimately bound up with the physical body".

We have a difficult time as humans extending past the egotism of the body and feeling a greater connection to the universe around us. This is evident in virtually every aspect of our lives. One of these ways is through the clothes we wear (which is, in reality, a mere extension of the body. We have physical contact with our outer garments and therefore much interconnectedness). When we put on a plain white dobok, bereft of superfluous piping and trim, we are creating an outward sign of our humility, or should I say, "attempted humility". It is one very small way that brings us closer to the never obtainable perfection that is the journey in Martial Arts. As Master Hee Il Cho said, "One can go on forever developing perfection within the framework of the Martial Arts".

Noted Ninjutsu expert Stephen Hays tells of seeing a Gi / Dobok in a Japanese museum. He attempted a joke by saying people in olden times must have been much shorter because the uniform had shorter sleeves and pant legs. If you get a pre-World War 2 martial arts book you will see this is the norm. Apparently longer sleeves and pant lengths were due to later Western influences. Anyway the host was not amused and explained that what he was seeing was really underwear, what was worn under the silk kimonos.

Apparently, the Samurai, when practicing removed the nice silken outer garments and stripped to their underwear for practice. This may have been the origins of our uniforms with the white color a natural result of heavily cleaned undergarments that had no need for colors that would also not stand up to harsh washing. This also gives an insight into training without shoes, since shoes were not worn indoors, and the slippers would have been difficult to train in.

The short-sleeved kimono or "armour robe," of the samurai, was both symbolic and highly functional. According to Edwin Reischauer, former professor of Japanese history at Harvard and U.S. Ambassador to Japan from 1961 to 1966, in his book "Japan, the story of a Nation", tells us the under garment worn by the samurai was multi-purpose. On a symbolic level, the white kimono symbolized "purity and beauty in death." But the silk under garment was also a vast technological improvement over medieval western European armour.

The first stage of armour for the samurai was this silk under garment. A vast majority of fatal wounds received in battle were not from sword blows but rather from the "artillery" that was the archers. As anyone who has ever

seen an arrowhead knows, the end of the arrow head is flared outward with two points. The reason for this is that when the wounded party attempts to remove the arrow from their body, it literal "rips" at the surrounding flesh and organs. So the major damage from an arrow comes not from the initial piercing but from the subsequent removal.

When wearing silk, if one were to be pierced by an arrowhead, it would become entangled in the tiny threads of the under garment and that would help in "dulling" the points of the arrow during removal. Thus the removal wasn't as harsh to the body.

On a side note to the rest of the armour, Japanese armour was in fact, a great advancement over western European armour. As we are aware the samurai, while engaged in very rigorous training, based their combat methods on "gentleness". The technique was similar to that of modern jujitsu (literally, the gentle art), in which flexibility of movement wins over brute strength.

The same applied to the samurai armour, which protected its wearer with flexibility and give rather than "rigid bulk". To quote Jonathan Norton Leonard, another author of Japanese history, "Unlike European armour, with its massive steel plates, Japanese armour consisted of tiny scales of lacquered iron, or lamellae, laced together in rows with silk cords. The result was a metallic fabric, as pliable as European chain mail, but considerable tougher and lighter". An entire suit of armour for a samurai weighed around 25 pounds. This is in stark contrast to the western European armour where sometimes the wearer needs the assistance of a derrick to get him on his horse.