

“My ShoDan Test and Impression of the 2019 Kyo Kai Seminar”

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On June 20th, 2019 I kicked off the Annual Gi Yu Kyo Kai seminar by challenging the Shodan (1st degree black belt) testing criteria and passed! A very exciting and meaningful moment to me. Several months ago, I asked my family to be patient with me as I spent a lot of time in the dojo and away from them to prepare for this challenge. I owe them an enormous thank you, because without their support my guilt level for feeling like a selfish mom and wife would probably have stopped me from achieving my goals. During this time and as usual at our dojo, there were and are many people in the dojo that gave/give their personal time and energy to help myself and others prepare and I will always be eternally grateful to them. I would like to highlight a few of those outstanding members of the Gi Yu Dojo; Obviously Sukh Sensei for taking time to go over our testing material during regular classes and providing invaluable feedback, Jordan my uke who met up with me as much as possible to go over our collective test material, Jaye Sempai and Chris Sempai who spent time on Sunday mornings helping many students prepare for their exams, and Chuck Sensei who spent Saturday mornings helping us get ready.



This is the first Budo test I have had, where I felt strongly that all the Kyu level preparation work and movements that we go through are very well planned out. The Shodan test material combines many of these movements and forces you to have a deeper understanding of your center, timing and distancing. It is a very exhilarating test. The Randori (sparring) part was also fun because your body starts reacting to all the feedback through the accumulated training you have gone through to get to this point over all the years. A wise person once said to me that you “rise to the level of your training and fall to the level of your thinking”. The more you train the better you become; it is your mind that can hold you back, if you let it.



I am honored to be part of the Gi Yu Kyo Kai Dojo Black Belt student body and one of only 4 women to achieve Shodan in this association. There is a definite fire in my gut to continue my training and give back to those who want to learn. I will always look back at June 20th, 2019 with happiness, pride and a sense of purpose.

The rest of the Seminar was equally fantastic of course. We reviewed katas from the Gi Yu dojo Suwari Gata which focused on many practical ground fighting techniques and then we worked with our Iaito blades and practiced drawing and cutting with the Japanese sword. One of the most challenging events was cutting Tatami (bamboo straw). It is definitely harder than it looks. However, it is also a wonderful teaching tool, showing you all the imperfections of your movements so you can improve upon. I look forward to next time I get to practice this skill. Until next time, I raise my tea cup and wish you tranquility.

