

“2017, another year passes, a lifetime of knowledge, a bright future”

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Several Gi Yu training members have already written articles speaking to the “what” in regards to our 10th annual seminar held in 2017. Specifically, they discussed the “how” of the “what” that made the seminar so phenomenal, so I won’t labor on the “what.” I highly recommend reading those articles; their perspectives are invaluable. Here is a quick recap of the “what,” (are you ready for this?!?!):



- Thursday night:
 - Before the seminar even began, Sukh Sensei taught a 3-hour class on gi-less grappling
 - 6 Deshi tested, and passed, for their DAN ranks
 - James Sutton tested for his Yon Dan
 - Don Baker and Brittney Mooney tested for their San Dan
 - Andreas Syllaba, Chris Zapata, and Will Grilliot tested for their Sho Dan
- Friday through Sunday:
 - Sukh Sensei taught a kata from every scroll taught at The Gi Yu Dojo Kyo Kai that best exemplified the lineages:
 - Over 20 techniques were taught from 9 different lineages.

- Each kata represented the character and the power of their respective lineage
 - We used weapons ranging from a kusari fundo (a small chained weapon which fits in your hand) to a bisento (a heavy pole with a blade attached to the end), and everything in between.
 - Sword techniques from 3 different lineages were taught; blades ranging from the shorter blade of Togakure Ryu, Jinen Ryu standard to the longer and heavier Kukinshin Ryu katana.
- Aman Brar also tested and was awarded his Roku Dan. I was fortunate to bear witness to this test, as well as serve as his uke. Aman's execution of the katas was impressive. Head Dojo-Cho, W.S. Bumgarner, led Kyu-Level testing.
 - Mary Ellen Smith tested and was awarded her Ni Kyu
 - Mike Elrod tested and was awarded his San Kyu even *after* he broke his foot during sparring with the black belts. Mike firmly requested to finish his sparring session.
 - Saturday morning, over a hundred rolls of tatami were sliced, diced, and shredded (Unfortunately for some, more shredding occurred than slicing or dicing).

Now that I've given you the "rundown" of our incredible weekend, I want to share my insights into the "why" and the "who" that made this event so meaningful. See, no matter how much top-level training we can slam into a weekend, it is all for not if there is not a benefit to our heritage and our community.

So, let's begin with the "why." Why did we host a 10th annual anniversary seminar? Why did we train for 72 hours, on 20-some techniques? Why all the late nights and early mornings? Why all the blood, sweat, and tears spilled? It's actually a very simple answer— because of the dojo, *our dojo*, makes a difference worth celebrating.



Since separating from the Jinenkan almost 11 years ago, we continue to grow in numbers, spirit, technique, and dedication. Our continued growth in Budo has led us to grow as leaders in our communities. We have

participated in countless outreaches for inner city schools, fundraisers for various causes, and supported each other through hard times. *These things are worth celebrating.*

All of these accomplishments are possible because of the “who”. Through the tutelage of Sukh Sensei, the Gi Yu Dojo and it’s affiliates through the Kyo Kai, has attracted a diverse and dedicated group of Deshi. We have school-age students, college students, teachers/principals, students of physics and mathematics, stay-at-home parents, doctors (of both rockets *and* of people), auditors, bankers, gourmet chefs, soldiers, seaman, marines, airmen, civil servants, firemen, policemen, volunteers... let me catch my breath... ah hell, you get the point. Now, this diversity is merely in the realm of vocation. Impressive? Maybe, maybe not... you may be able to walk into any gym and find the same level of diversity and some sense of collaboration. Maybe.

However, our diversity also exists within the realm of politics and faith. We have Deshi representing many political views. Some are die-hard political advocates, and some don’t give politics a second thought. Some of us are die-hard conservatives, and some are liberals. We are made up of devout Christians, Catholics, Sikh’s, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, atheists, skeptics, and mystics. My favorite part of our diverse faiths and political ideologies is that, through our common goal, “the betterment of the community through strengthening self,” we listen to each other and we respect one another. We learn from each other. See, when the battle horn sounds, we rally, in arms, shoulder to shoulder, hand in hand. We defend one another from harm, guide each other through crisis, and help each other with the day-to-day. *This is beautiful. This is worth celebrating.*

As I see it, the Gi Yu Kyo Kai Dojos is a phenomenal KoRyu school. We have an amazing heritage, a great Kancho, and dedicated Deshi. *This dojo is not a gym, this dojo is a community, making a difference in lives of its members and surrounding communities.* So, there is no doubt about it, our dojo is extraordinary, and the 2017 annual seminar highlighted this exponentially. I am sure, the Gi Yu Dojo will continue to flourish and the next seminar will be even greater, I just hope to see you there!

It was 10 years ago that the Gi Yu Kyo Kai Dojos, under the tutelage of Sukh Kancho/Sensei, separated from the Jinenkan. The decision to lead the dojo in a different direction from the Jinenkan was difficult for Sukh Sensei and the Kyo Kai, but it was necessary in order to continue our growth in Budo, and in our communities. *This is worth celebrating.*

I highly recommend reading Sukh Sensei’s perspective on the decision to separate (see “An Interview with Sensei Sukh S. Sandhu, Kancho of The GiYu Kyo Kai Dojos” [GiYu Dojo Training Articles](#)).

To help celebrate the Gi Yu Dojo's independence... the power of the lineage and aptly, the theme of this year's seminar was, "*Keizoku wa chikara nariwas or, "To continue is power."*

What a bold way to celebrate our independence.

Our dojo is worth celebrating, as I may have mentioned. The Gi Yu Dojo is a phenomenal school, not only because of our amazing heritage, and not just because of the bold teacher; but also because of our Deshi – our students – *you*. The students at the Gi Yu Kyo Kai Dojos come from all walks of life, and we work towards the same mission... "*strength in self IS strength in those around you*".