

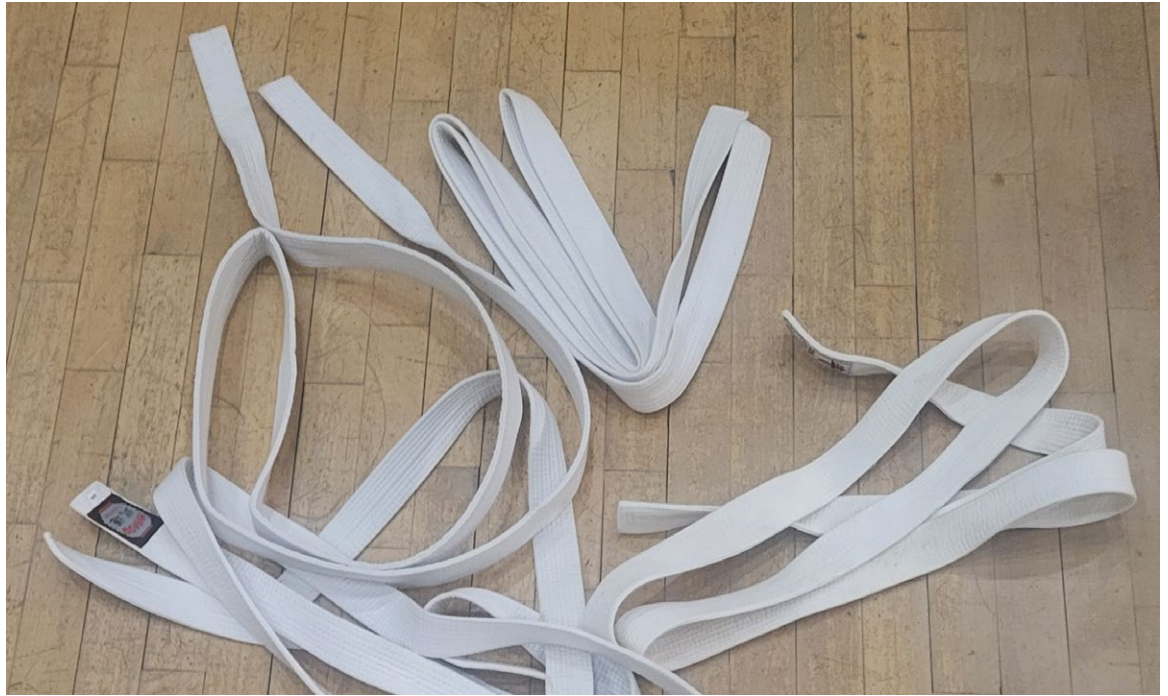


武道

09/01/24

NATSUOKA KARATE
COMMUNIQUE

WHITE BELT CLASS – 2024



We ring in the new year in the dojo every year by wearing our white belts to the first class. This year, Natsuoka Annex Dojo held its white belt class on January 3rd and the Natsuoka TMU Dojo held its white belt class on January 8th.

This is a beginning, much like the journey we start by setting foot into a dojo for the first time. Part of making our journey successful is to:

1. **Maintain an open mind.**
2. **Have the courage to admit that we do not know everything.**
3. **Invest ourselves in continuous improvement.**

In each white belt class, we focus on basic techniques and push ourselves to set the tone for the year by training hard and focusing on the simple elements that improve our techniques. The new year offers us an opportunity to revitalize our training, return to the dojo, and to start something new.

Karate fundamentals may not be as exciting as some advanced techniques, but they are an essential foundation on which everything else operates. We focus on these basic elements in this class, paying attention to the details that can help us to improve the base upon which we will build throughout the year.

The white belt class is also deeply important to our karate community as it is a time for us all together together and make our commitments, not only to ourselves, but to one another.

Everyone contributes to make our karate community healthy. Regardless of your belt colour we start each year together to help everyone achieve their own unique individual goals. Being there for one another transcends rank.



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SOSHIN THE BEGINNERS MIND

Soshin, is one of the many mindsets that are essential for understanding in the martial arts. It is best understood as “beginner’s mind”, an open mindset that allows us to embrace new ideas and is based on the idea that, as beginners, we can approach our study without preconceptions or bias.

As we learn, our own misconceptions and errors can interfere with our progress making it important to return to the mindset of a beginner from time to time to re-evaluate not only our objectives and goals, but also to refresh the elemental techniques that we believe we have embedded in our daily lives.

There is nothing more difficult than to unlearn a bad habit or step into a new environment where our previous experience may not contribute to the goal at hand. But these experiences can strengthen our own capacity for learning and growth.

It is particularly challenging for those with expertise to revisit a subject with Soshin. Our experience can “get in the way”. It takes a strong mind to reflect on the beginner’s experience and embrace it, taking time to question, “do I truly understand this technique, is my stance correct, am I truly moving with flow and hitting with power. It also should cause us to ask more philosophical questions, “am I spending my time on problems that are worthy of my attention”, “am I making a positive impact on the world”, and “how are the decisions I am making today having a positive impact.”

