

LETTERS

SKEPTICS ON CHURCH

I would like to comment on the statement made by Albert Church, Jr., in your November issue: "Shihan Baillargeon on the other hand, was appointed through my personal efforts in Japan as the United States representative for the Nippon Karate Do Seishin Kai." This statement should have read, Quote: "Shihan Baillargeon was authorized to issue higher grades in the art of karate through my personal efforts, while I was assigned in Japan."

Two years before Mr. Church was to personally meet Master Kuniba for the first time, I issued him a sandan certificate at Charleston, South Carolina, as the representative for Master Kuniba, Seishin-Kai, need I say more?

This was a minor reason for writing your magazine. Some of the articles that I have read recently in several martial arts magazines are upsetting and dishonest. The instructors discussed in them claim to have studied directly under Master Siyogo Kuniba, 8th Dan and worldwide head of the Seishin-Kai Karate Union. Their claims are false.

I studied under Master Kuniba in Japan. In 1964, I was personally appointed by him to be the sole official director of the Seishin-Kai Karate Union in the United States. I served in that position until 1974. As the official USA representative of the SKKU, I had complete access to all the records of promotions granted in that organization to persons here in America. I still have those records.

There are also persons who erroneously suggest they have studied with Master Kuniba in Japan. Only three Americans above sandan grade studied directly under the master in Osaka during the period in question. Many of the instructors claiming rank under Master Kuniba, are Jujitsu instructors.

There was never a Seishin Kai Jujitsu program until 1975. Between 1964 and 1975, Master Kuniba did not issue a certificate of rank in seishin-kai jujitsu to anyone the USA. I personally issued jujitsu certificates under the National Jujitsu Union, but that federation was not directly associated with seishin-kai on seishin-kan.

It is bad enough that we live in a time when instructors frequently abandon

their master, create their own styles and instantly promote themselves to high dan grades. Such "grade inflation" is unseemly. It degrades martial arts. But it is still worse when these claims of high rank attempt to justify themselves by creating a false pedigree that abuses the reputation of the world's great masters of martial arts.

It is to defend the reputation of Master Kuniba that I have written this letter. I have the documents to support my case. If any individual or organization wishes to challenge me on what I have written here, contact me. These are the facts.

Let us hope that more persons speak out against false claims of rank. Let us keep the honor in martial arts.

Richard P. Baillargeon
Director National Karate
and Jujitsu Union Valdosta, GA

Regarding the recent letter submitted by Mr. Albert C. Church, Jr., president of the NKR in Charleston, South Carolina, pertaining to his public statement of non support of my jukoryu sokeship (head foundership), I would like to state the following:

Mr. Church is but one of numerous sokes and major associations who formally certify and sponsor juko-ryu international. Since it only takes one soke to sponsor and recognize another, then of course Mr. Church's lack of sponsorship in no way affects myself or this federation. He is not, nor never has been the major certification sponsor of this organization.

For the record, and supported by documented certification, I am the official 2nd generation successor to the late and internationally renowned martial arts grandmaster, Professor H. Olsen, of Denmark. Professor Olsen, who taught in this country at the world-famous Hermann's gymnasium in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was personally decorated by the King of Denmark for his martial arts accomplishments. During his years of teaching, he taught such persons as the late and renowned Colonel Biddle, U.S. Army bayonet and self-defense master. In 1973, following seven years of personal association and studies,

Professor Olsen officially declared my appointment as the official successor to his famous systems just three months prior to his death.

Lastly, it has been stated that I am the student of Albert C. Church, which is totally incorrect. I have never received actual training from Mr. Church, only to study 20 of his jujitsu techniques in 1970 from one of his instructors, a Mr. Brandon and Phillips. My relationship with Mr. Church was strictly business, and we both served as partners in several martial arts ventures. In 1971 I briefly taught at Mr. Church's school. But I taught jukoryu jujitsu and kempo.

Dr. R. Sacharnoski, Soke, President
Juko-Kai International, U.S. Honbu,
Elkhart, IN

ARNIS REQUIRES HARD WORK

I have been reading BLACK BELT and KARATE ILLUSTRATED since the first issue. I still feel they are the two best magazines of their kind on the market. The last few issues have been exceptionally good. I stress the need to my students to keep up with all aspects of the martial arts so they will be more rounded in the background as future instructors. Also, it will prevent them from being conned by some of the phonies in our business. Some of the articles have been a little on the sensational side, but maybe that is needed to a degree.

I read with great interest the article on arnis. I have been studying arnis for over a year now with a Filipino expert. Arnis is a very practical and effective method of self-defense. However, calling arnis a 36-hour martial art might be a little deceiving.

I have had 15 years' training in tae kwon do as well as exposure to other arts. Most of the members of my arnis class are black belts of other arts. The classes range in size from two to a maximum of six. So not only are the people capable and dedicated, but the instructor-student ratio couldn't be better.

With over 90 hours of instruction, I feel I have only scratched the surface. I do not feel arnis is easier than any of the other arts I have been exposed to. I

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