

Reflections on Spring Gashuku 2010

By

Kyle Barbeau, Hombu Dojo



Although a 6AM wake-up call is not necessarily my preferred start to a Saturday morning, my thoughts regarding a day of beach training were of anticipation and excitement. I always look forward to our semi-annual gatherings which provide a chance to reconnect with old friends and to meet and train with new karateka as well. The beautiful beaches of Sandy Hook, New Jersey provide a perfect location to do so, calling to mind the opening sequence of the film *Chariots of Fire*, as our skilled athletes moved along the sand with determination and grace.

Due to our tardy arrival, our training session was slightly abbreviated, but what we may have lost in time was more than made up for by the effort put forth by all of our members—yudansha and kohai alike. With the majestic skyline of New York City visible in the distance and the unexpected blessing of unseasonably warm and fair weather, we came together to train. Standing in the sand with the sun shining, waves crashing, and in the shadow of the metropolis, the spirit of OSU became increasingly tangible as together we worked through our exercises, beginning with basics and moving on to more advanced self-defense techniques, take-downs, and kumite. Posture, athletic movement, and self-defense were each given great emphasis, and stressed as the principles behind the lessons of the day.

Beach training is an intensely spiritual experience. There is the connection to nature, following the principles of karate and the teachings of Mas Oyama, and most important of all the gathering together of our excellent organization, for it is this bond shared between people that encapsulates the spirit of OSU. Coming together and training as an association is what I most enjoy about a Gashuku; it's a wonderful opportunity to see some familiar faces and get to know others. Our members travel from distances near and far to join together, whether from mere miles away or flying in all the way from California. The Phoenix Association is world-class, second to none, and its members are what make it so.

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