



Tora Shotokan Karate Do Kase Ha
Report of Sensei Pascal Lecourt Seminars
Hobart October 31st to November 1st 2009

In October and November 2009 Tora Shotokan Karate Do Kase Ha was once again privileged to have Sensei Pascal Lecourt conduct seminars at its Honbu dojo in Hobart in Tasmania, Australia. This is Sensei Lecourt's fourth visit to Tora and the students of Sensei Stephen Xepapas (founder and chief instructor of Tora) were greatly enriched through their contact with this extraordinary karate-ka and teacher.

Building on the techniques and concepts he introduced on his previous visits, Sensei Lecourt continued to explore the central elements of Kase ha karate and the teachings of the late Sensei Kase. In particular, he demonstrated the importance of a thorough understanding of bunkai for genuine performance of kata. To this end Sensei Lecourt worked with Tora students through bunkai applications for a selected group of kata.

Notwithstanding the benefit of learning some actual bunkai the deep message and elusive lesson to be learned from this experience was to develop thought and imagination in analysing the kata. This became quite evident as Sensei Lecourt performed variation after variation of bunkai from his vast resource of knowledge and experience.

The necessity of imagination and thought in advanced karate training is central to Sensei Xepapas' teaching and Sensei Lecourt's seminars reinforced this with great clarity: It is not enough to learn a bunkai as if it is just another kata; a karate-ka must strive to invent and improvise on his or her own.

In addition to this central aspect of the Kase ha concept of kata, Sensei Lecourt worked through some Kase ha kihon as well. These included the eight closed and open hand techniques as well as additional training in refining kicking technique.

Since Sensei Lecourt's first visit, Tora Shotokan has become deeply immersed in Kase ha. The kihon described above have become part of Tora's everyday training regimen and kata classes regularly consist of exploring and practicing bunkai as well as performing kata in the go, ura and go ura directions introduced to Tora by Sensei Lecourt.

Sensei Lecourt's earlier seminars with Tora were very well attended but this latest one exceeded even those. The relationship Tora has developed with Sensei Lecourt and Kase ha is a very special one and is greatly valued by Sensei Xepapas and his students who are looking forward to Sensei Lecourt's next visit with great anticipation.