

JKS England Autumn Course 2025-Yamaguchi Sensei

The JKS England Autumn Course took place in Nottingham on Sunday 19th October where a very busy dojo warmly welcomed Yamaguchi Sensei-7th Dan, Head of the JKS International Department. After an introduction by Alan Campbell Sensei-8th Dan, Head of JKS England, Alan Sensei proceeded to thank Yamaguchi Sensei for his visit and explained the importance of Yamaguchi Sensei's standing within the JKS and the characteristics of his karate which make him such a special instructor. The class would soon witness this and many for the very first time.

Following a warm-up Yamaguchi Sensei demonstrated how to loosen the shoulders with a targeted drill. Utilising the whole body and rotation in both directions, students would maintain a focal point on their shoulder joint whilst whipping their arm to each side. Leading with the elbow snapping to the front



as the initial contraction, the arm then trailed dynamically behind. Students would build speed as they became accustomed to the exercise and as their joints loosened and as their hip began to co-ordinate with the movement of the arms. Yamaguchi Sensei encouraged a full range of motion with the shoulder blades either squeezing together or rounding apart to achieve the extremes of their position. With this mobility students found they were able to maximise the power and speed generated through the body action. Whilst attempting to match Yamaguchi Sensei's increasingly frequent count, students would be encouraged to ensure that their technique was not shortening or becoming tense at any point.

Yamaguchi Sensei would then move to looking at how the students' connection to the floor could support the previous exercise. Students were guided through an understanding of how power is produced by the legs, with a driving action into the floor propelling the body both upwards and forwards to create an attacking opportunity. Yamaguchi Sensei explored a different timing for kumite that many found difficult to grasp at first. Students concentrated on propelling themselves with a sharp and strong leg action first before a snapping double punch was delivered. The timing here was that the strikes were to be executed as the students thrust their body into the air. Yamaguchi Sensei demonstrated clearly differing options for timing depending on the distance to the opponent and why being able to punch at any part of the stance transition is vital in kumite. Freeing the timing of the hands from the feet gave students a fluid sensation and helped to improve their understanding of not only how to engage an opponent with various attacking timings but also how to respond in defence with the same idea. Students would again build speed in pairs to practice both the attacking and



defensive permutations. The airborne body position which had been focused on in the first part of the session was something that many students had their mind opened to as it reflected a deep and insightful understanding of how the whole body can be used without delay to prevent students from missing any chances which may present in a sparring situation.

Following on from a short water break Yamaguchi Sensei would then cover two non-syllabus (koten) kata. Firstly, Kakuyoku Nidan and then later Joko Issei. Both katas had many teaching points which Yamaguchi Sensei addressed. Answering many questions and exploring the aspects of these kata which are less common in others meant students were exposed to many



new ideas and themes of wrist position, elbow action and movements which are not as prevalent in some other katas.

Yamaguchi Sensei covered many aspects of the bunkai of these kata as well, ensuring that student maintained an awareness of the feeling which they were trying to emulate during the performing of them. The session flew by with Yamaguchi Sensei commanding student's

attention with both detailed content and humour in a manner which allowed them to work hard but also enjoy the exposure to new concepts in how to use their body for maximum impact. Yamaguchi Sensei always delivers thought-provoking and perceptive seminars which JKS England greatly benefits from.

After the course a dan grading followed with some students also taking instructor qualifications. Congratulations to those successful and with the Christmas Course fast approaching, more excellent tuition is just around the corner.