

## The Martial Way – Yondan Essay

One of the things about life is that it affords us is the ability to look back with time and measure the choices we have made and the things we have accomplished with ourselves, our community and society as a whole. As a result of our experiences both positive and negative we hopefully achieve a deeper understanding of life and grow as enlightened beings.

Sixteen years ago I began training in the art of Hakko Denshin Ryu Ju Jutsu and I can say with conviction that I am a better person for it. I am proud to be a part of the Hakko Denshin Ryu Ju Jutsu family and a member of Shining Mountain Dojo Canada under the instruction and guidance of my Sensei, Menkyo Kaiden Shihan Sandai Kichu Ken Hoggart. I am grateful for the many teachings and lessons over the years that Sensei has shared with me and for his passion and dedication to the martial arts and the teachings of the founder of Hakko Denshin Ryu Ju Jutsu, Soke Michael J. LaMonica.

As I prepare to test for Yondan I keep the above in mind. That, and one of my favorite adages, “it’s not about the destination, it’s about the journey”. I recognize that as I continue with my practice I come to enjoy an even deeper understanding of the art and the interconnectedness of the Waza and various Dans. Like reading a good book, with every chapter, every page and every line you become more involved and want to delve deeper into the story. The story begins to take shape and the plot unfolds revealing just enough to keep you turning the pages. Once started you are hooked and don’t want to stop until you have the read the last chapter. I look forward to the next chapter of the story and I am eager to continue my practice with a new set of Waza and teachings.

The journey to reach this point in my practice and achieve the understanding I have, although not complete, has not come without effort and dedication to the art. It has been both challenging and rewarding. There have been many hours spent away from family and friends training on the tatami, attending seminars and trips abroad and on the road. There have been bumps and bruises along the way and even a few strained tendons. Sometimes the pain is so unbearable that you don’t

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know whether to laugh or to cry. These sacrifices however are small compared to the rewards.

Along the way I have gained a second family in Hakko Denshin Ryu Ju Jutsu I call my own, training partners that are my brothers and sisters and a place where I can go and not worry about the world and what is going on for a few hours at a time. Looking ahead, I know that the journey will by no means get any easier. The commitment and dedication required will be even more demanding. The higher one goes in rank the more the level of responsibility and dedication to training and the art that is required. This I am prepared for and embrace openly and without hesitation.

Beyond Yondan, and with my Sensei's blessing, I wish to continue to practice Hakko Denshin Ryu Jujutsu and be invited for Shihan training. I understand the dedication and commitment that is required to receive the teachings of Shihan and the expectations that are placed upon a rank of such honorable distinction. As I am being considered for Shihan in Hakko Denshin Ryu Ju Jutsu I feel that my experience as a successful businessman and security professional will positively contribute to my development as an instructor and the growth of the art and the organization as a whole. I have been a student of the art long enough to know and witness the hard work and dedication that is required to build and maintain a Ryu. I feel that I can be a strong leader to promote the art.

Whether the task is to assist with teaching, help to organize a Taikai or inspire students on the mat, as a senior student and sempai I feel that I have a responsibility to my Sensei and the art to assist in whatever way is needed of me to see Hakko Denshin Ryu Ju Jutsu flourish and grow. Hakko Denshin Ryu Jujutsu to me is more than just a martial art. As my Sensei once noted, "it is a lifestyle...", a way to condition the mind, body and spirit and bring balance and harmony to the way one lives.

As a lifestyle I hope that Hakko Denshin Ryu Jujutsu is one that I will be fortunate enough to maintain well into the winter of my years and my eventual retirement from professional career. There is no better way that I can imagine spending my golden years than on the tatami in a dojo of my own spreading the art

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of Hakko Denshin Ryu Ju Jutsu and sharing what has been shared with me – *BUDO*  
(*the martial way*).

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a long horizontal line that tapers to the right.

Sempai Barry Wilding

Sandan

June 1, 2016