

March 27, 2009

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Dosa Nim,

It has finally happened. We have built and opened our very own dojang in Japan. The planning, construction, and final preparations took months of work and thousands of dollars, but it is finally finished! I can hardly explain just how wonderful and special it feels to build and open your very own dojang. I have looked forward to this for such a long time, and after some initial advertising, we opened for classes earlier this month.

All of the family was nervous about our opening, as it is unusual to have a foreigner like me teaching karate in Japan (especially in English). I told my wife that my goal was just to have three people sign on as students with us at our opening.....What happened?....A family of three signed up as students with us right away. Such a small thing, but it was the "magic" number I was looking for and it has given me hope for the future of Japan Chayon Ryu.

Since opening day, I have offered several trial lessons and we have enrolled more students. The students are very nice and they are following my instructions well, even though some have never really studied English before. My wife has been a tremendous help, taking on most of the business responsibilities while helping me during classes as well. Even my wife's family is helping, by handing out flyers and passing the word to their friends and other contacts. This is truly a family effort!

I have never created a website before, but I decided it was about time so I did my best to piece one together (with special thanks to Syd Moen for the helpful advice). We have worked to make the website bilingual (English/Japanese) and we are starting to get some pictures and testimonials posted (in relation to our karate program and our other English-based activities). Our website can be found at [www.blackbeltenglish.info](http://www.blackbeltenglish.info) and the English navigation menu will take folks to the English pages. The last button on there should allow you to see some photos, and I hope to add more in the near future.

Grandmaster Kim, I cannot thank you enough for your guidance and support. This is a very challenging time, but it is an exciting time as well since sharing your teachings with the good people of Japan has been a dream of mine for many years. I look forward with great anticipation to each day, and I feel a great sense of peace in my heart knowing I am now following the path I felt like I was meant to take.

Will our school grow? Will we be successful? Will our school be here years from now? I do not have the answers to these questions, but we are determined to give this endeavor our best efforts. We shall keep trying...training...learning...and teaching. Whether successful or not, I am proud of our progress so far and I feel very hopeful about the future.

Our school - Black Belt English - is now officially open for business!!

My best wishes to you and the family and to all CYR students and teachers.

With great respect,  
Robert Knott