

# Markham Meibukai – Research Document – December 5, 2002

This is a collaborative work authored by Sensei Ryusuke Juge and Sensei Sean Wong. The original Japanese documents that were used for this translation were found in two publications authored by modern masters of Traditional Goju-Ryu Karate-do.

The Life and Drama of the Man, Meitoku by Yagi, Meitoku  
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## What is Karate-do - by Miyagi Chojun,

Dai Nihon Butokukai Okinawaken Shibu Jogiin (All Japan Butokukai Okinawa Prefecture Branch Member)

These notes are a summary of the lecture given at SakaiSuji, Meiji Shoten Gym (4th floor), on January 28, 1936.

### 1/ Hajimeni (Introduction)

What is Karate - you ask me. On an ordinary day, you train your body and keep healthy, but carry no weapons. However, in case of an attack you will want to protect your body. Namely, it is a matter of principle to use one's body for a fight and knock down the enemy. Depending on the situation, there may be a possibility of using some objects, as a weapon to protect oneself. There is a great many misleading notions of Karate, such as breaking apart a thick board or crashing a pile of roof tiles with bare fists, etc.; these are not the essence of Karate. The above are only a part of the methods for our training. The way of Karate had a common thread in a general understanding with Budo, that is "Kyoge Betsuden Furyumonji" (teaching man to man, verbally and without written instructions) in strict secrecy in order to make one understand and initiate one into the mysteries of Karate-do. In the following, I shall describe an epitome of Karate and a glimpse into the methodology of guidance.

### 2/ Kenpo Toraini Tsuitei (Introduction of Kenpo to Ryukyu)

The name Karate is distinctive to Ryukyu. We can trace back its origin as far as China when it was called 'Kenpo.' However, there is a limited written reference to its origin and location. China Kenpo mostly influenced Karate. The commencement of Karate is rather difficult to predict; one source mentions it started at the dawn of civilization within an ancient culture in

Central Asia and spread to Indochina. There was another source that said otherwise. It suggests that China Kenpo's appearance goes back some 5000 years ago, in the Yellow River valley where a brilliant culture from the period of an Emperor of the Hwang Ho had emerged. It is not hard to imagine that its beginnings could have come from ancient peoples of a combative nature as well as a sense of rivalry. For example, China Kenpo in Koryu (an old style school) was in fact based on 'Shoju no Soto' (fight between a bird and an animal) which imitated the movements. And the Ryuhomei school from that period proved its ancient origin by such names as: hiyopo (tiger), shishipo (lion), enpo (monkey), kenpo (dog) and tsupo (crane) etc., obviously further supporting the origin.

In the following generations, China Kenpo was divided into North and South schools. Furthermore, the school was subdivided into Inside Kenpo vs. Outside Kenpo, respectively. Characteristic of inside is soft and awaits the opponent's attack. One representation of this is Buto Kenpo. The characteristic of outside is mainly hard and direct. Shorinji Kenpo is an example of Outside Kenpo. Subsequently, in the periods of Tang<sup>1</sup> and Sung<sup>2</sup> a great number of Budoka was born and China Kenpo flourished during these periods.

<sup>1</sup> Tang-Chinese dynasty A.D. 618-906, a period during which China expanded and her art and science flourished.

<sup>2</sup> Sung-A.D. 960~1127 active in literature, philosophy, and art.

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So based on the above, an introduction of Kenpo into Ryukyu had no fixed historical facts concerning exactly when it reached our islands. There are, however, three important views!

i) An opinion of 36 sei Yunyu, ii) an opinion of Ohshima Hitsuki, and iii) an opinion of Keicho go Yunyu.

(i) A version of 36 sei (a surname) Yunyu (imported), in 1392 by Binjin (an ancient China native who lived in the southeastern region) into the Ryukyu islands.

(ii) A version of Ohshima Hitsuki (handwriting); in 1762 a cargo-vessel carrying a gift to Satsuma from Ryukyu, shipwrecked and drifted ashore in Ohshima, Tosa. There was an able officer in charge by the name of Mr. Shotaira Pehchin Morinari, an erudite who spoke smoothly. A record was kept by the local scholar Mr. Otohe of his writing and named "Ohshima Hitsuki." In his third volume, of their conversations "Kenpo Jozu" had been noted. "Koso kun from China brought along a few of his pupils to the islands." At that time, they did not say 'Karate' it was referred to as "Ai Jutsu" (grappling); P.S. In a note, this was the most definite reference existing for Karate.

(iii) Keicho import version; in 1585 (Keicho 14nen) [There are 2 theories to this version.]

1) This version takes place after the occupation of the Ryukyu Islands by Mr. Shimazu. Because of the Satsuma's ruthless, "no arms" policy enforcement, some say that naturally and almost spontaneously Karate-Jutsu was created.

2) However it is safe to say that there is stronger evidence to indicate that the

importation of Karate combined with Ryukyu's indigenous "Te" progressed remarkably to become an effective method.

Obviously, there were 2 to 3 more opinions about these facts, however, none had been verified. Notwithstanding, Karate by virtue of many generations training in this discipline reached today's status.

3/ Kakoni okeru Karatekai (History of the Karate World)

The origin of the use of the Karate name in Ryukyu, is also not known. However, it was clear that it came about quite recently. In older times, generally it was named "TE"(hand). At that time, training in Karate, ie."TE" was done in great secrecy. Above all, the various "Kata" (style) was only taught to the student who demonstrated a superior talent in martial art. If there were no capable candidates, no Kata was passed on and would end and disappear in one generation. As a result of this many styles did not survive.

By the time of the middle of the Meiji (1868~1912) in order to comply with the new movement of younger generations, the method of training and guidance was changed. The old policy of secrecy was discarded, and an open door policy was implemented to meet the needs of the new society. After the rapid progress in cultural advancement, Karate had been recognized for its value in physical training, as well as educational value in the school curriculum. Thus, for the first time ever in history, Karate (China Hand) achieved total social recognition.

I would like to point out the following:

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\*Meiji 34. April, at Shuri Elementary School, partake Physical education in Karate subject. This was the beginning of teaching in groups.

\*Meiji 38. April, Okinawa Kenritsu (Prefectural) Daiichi Chugaku, Naha Shiritsu Shogyo Gatsuko and Okinawa Ken Shihan Gakko, all founded Karatebu. Also, Kenritsu Norin Gatsuko, Kenritsu Kogyo Gatsuko, and Kenritsu Suisan Gatsuko followed the same.

\*Taisho 11. Okinawa Prefectural Police Academy commenced to teach Karate.

\*Showa 8. (in 1933) April, Karate was added to a regular curriculum as Judo and Kendo.

\*Taisho 15. March, Okinawa Karate Club was opened.

\*Showa 5. (in 1930) Nov. 21, Okinawa Kenritsu Taiyuku Kyokai opened and merged with Okinawa Karate Club.

\*Meiji 35, May. Karate was recognized as Shibu by the Dai Nippon Butokukai Board.

\*(Showa 8.12.26.) Okinawa was granted the Hombu for Karate in all Japan and at the same time was accepted by Butokukai Headquarter in Japan as an official subject of Japan's Budo curriculum.

Around Taisho 13 Outside of Okinawa you will find these schools in the Tokyo area:

Keio Gijuku Taiikukai Karatebu  
Tokyo Teikoku Daigaku Karatebu  
Daiichi Koto Gatsuko Karatebu  
Waseda Daigaku Gakuyukai Karatebu  
Nihon Daigaku Karate Kenkyukai

Takushoku Daigaku Karatebu  
Shoin Jogatsuko  
Nihon Daigaku Ika Karate Kenkyukai

In the Osaka area:  
Showa 5. 5. Kansei Daigaku, Karatebu were founded.

5.12. Kansei Daigaku Senmonbu, Karatebu also started.  
Osaka Koto Yakugaku Senmon Gatsuko and Osaka Koto Igaku Senmon Gatsuko set up Karatebu.

In the Kyoto area:  
Showa 2. 12 KyotoTeikoku Daigaku Judobu, invited a Karate instructor and a workshop was conducted.

Showa 10.12.21 Ritsumeikan Daigaku, established a Karate Kenpobu.

Taisho 10, 3.10, Emperor Siejo Hieka on the way to Europe went to Okinawa and watched a demonstration of Karate at Kenritsi Shihan Gakko.

Taisho 14, May, Chichinomya Denka on his way to England also visited Okinawa to view a demonstration.

4/ Genzai no Karate Shido Jokyo (A Recent Karate Guidance)

An old Karate guidance indicated that "Karate ni Sente Nashi!"(No first move by Karate) as its motto. Nowadays, we follow "Kenzen Itsuchi no Shinshu Taiju"(hand meditation in harmony to follow with the spirit of the centre body) as the principle and struggle on the aims of Budo principles.

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Instructors currently teaching Karate are:

In Okinawa prefecture:

Kentsu Yabu, Chomo Hanashiro, Chotoku Kyan, Anbun Tokuda, Juhatsu Kyoda, Choshin Chibana, Jinsei Kamiya, Shinpan Shiroma, Seiko Higa, Kamado Nakasone, Jinan Shinzato, Chojun Miyagi

Outside Okinawa prefecture:

Gichin Funakoshi, Choki Motobu, Kenwa Mabuni, Masaru Sawayama, Sanyu Sakai, Moden Yabiku, Jizaburo Miki, Yasuhiro Konishi, Shinji Sato, Mizuine Mutsu, Kamesuke Higaonna, Shinjun Otsuka, Shin Taira, Koki Shiroma, Kanbun Uechi

5/ Karate no Ryuha ni Tsuite (About Karate Schools)

There were many stories about Karate schools in Ryukyu, but none, in my opinion had particular sources. However, in general, Shorinryu and Shoreiryu are fairly recognized. The former was better suited for a strong physical constitution, corpulence, large bone structured person and the latter for a small bone structure, unimposing looking man, a slender figure like a willow tree. After searching other related information and examination affirm before the world that the above categorization was definitely false. One thing is definite, in Bunsei 11<sup>3</sup> (1828), Goju Ryu Karate Kenpo was formed and is the only unflinching school descending from the China Fukenha that has continued after years of hard study. This group is still in existence in Okinawa.

6/ Karate no Tokucho (Characteristics of Karate)

The followings are noteworthy advantages of Karate:

(1) There is no necessity for a large place for training.

(2) A single or group training can be conducted.

(3) Training does not require a lot of time

(4) There is no need to separate man from woman, old from young pupil, in other words because of their physical constitution, because a suitable 'kata' can be fashioned to suite either strong or delicate person to meet their needs in training.

(5) There is no need for a great initial capital as only a simple tool can be utilized for Karate training to be achieved.

(6) Karate is an effective way to keep physically fit. A remarkable number of Karate Kenpo practitioners enjoy robust health in reaching an advanced age is a proof of training success.

(7) Training one's body and mind will result in a tireless spirit and the building up of one's character.

7/ Karate-do no Shorai (The Prospective of Karate-do)

(A period when the confidentiality or secrecy bestowed upon Karate-jutsu ceased to exist)

Now, we are facing a new age of practicing an art of Karate-do and pledging to be open to the public. Taking this opportunity, we must emerge from a small "hole" called 'Ryukyu' where we have been promoting our Karate as if it were a secret. We must present Karate as a public commitment even though receiving all Budo practitioners' criticism, but also their research and a long-awaited search of fulfillment of 'Bogu' must emerge. Consequently, we can pioneer the way to contest with other Bujutsu in future tournaments. I firmly believe that this route is going to be the best way to meet with the spirit of Nihon Budo in general.

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<sup>3</sup> (1818 – 1830) Qing or Ching dynasty in China

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Currently, there is a keen interest existing in Karate-do all over Japan. In addition, there was a Tokyo 'X' college graduate who went abroad to Europe where he taught and promoted Karate-do. In May of 1934, I was invited to attend a workshop of Karate-do in Hawaii, USA. His activities were sponsored by Japanese citizens living in Hawaii and assisted by a Newspaper publisher in the islands of Hawaii. Karate-do now seems to be getting attention as well as acceptance worldwide.

### 8/ Karate Shidoho (Karate Guidance)

Every person depending upon their stage in life has different interests as well as tastes. Likewise their use of muscles differs and the development of muscles stays at different stages. Consequently, in Karate we start with a warm-up exercise, in due time to influence the build up of muscles as to be able to perform basic Kata, support movement, Kaishu Kata, and Kumite renshu, etc. The following is a summary with explanations:

#### (1) Yobi Undo (Introductory Exercises)

A warm-up exercise of movement of each body part (explanation omitted) to soften muscle, and build up its toughness and stamina, as well as self-rationalization of Karate, but not Kihon Kata that was Sanchin and Tensho for Naifanshi. After taking part in various Kata drills Sanchin and Tensho are resumed again, followed by "control of muscles" which along with breathing exercises is modified to culminate in a quiet rest up period.

#### (2) Kihon Kata

Sanchin and Tensho or Naifanshi are basic kata. Their purpose is to maintain a fixed body posture while with one's breathing an attempt is made to control the balance of one's power while

harmonizing with one's character to demonstrate one's own spirit of Budo.

#### (3) Hojo Undo

This drill helps to teach Kaishu Kata movement. Movement using all parts of the body (explanation omitted) enriches general capabilities, as well as elemental capability in utilizing apparatus of various kinds to improve kinetic locomotion.

#### (4) Kaishu Kata

This exercise has 20 ~ 30 different types and its name differs by the originator (name omitted). Naturally, each Kata has various techniques of offence and defense combined, yet linking to draw an exercise line for physical movements. This technique of the movements meets the purpose of 'Shinki to Tairyoku' (spirit, mind and physical stamina) application and diversion. Its focus is an acquirement of the principles of 'set free and close' routine.

#### (5) Kumite Renshu

All kata consists of various offense and defense techniques that are to be analyzed and used for Kumite training. The main objective is to exercise freely with vigor and full spirit.

In summary, by utilizing basic Kata for Sanchin and Tensho, or Naifanshi one should initiate a unity between the action of the mind and body. Furthermore the practice of Kaishu Kata and Kumite Renshu, applying the essence of offence and defense, will lead to full reasoning and establishing true Bushido Seishin (spirit).

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