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RSKKR Newsletter

Ryukoku Seidokan Karate Kobudo Renmei

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17 March 2012

The Seminar is Coming!

By Sensei Ron Nix, Kyudan, RSKKR President, Honbu Dojo, Okinawa

The 2012 Ryukoku Seidokan Karate Kobudo Renmei Okinawa Conference is quickly approaching and it's full steam ahead preparing for the event. Nix Karate Dojo is very excited about sponsoring the up and coming RSKKR Okinawa event scheduled this July (2-6) 2012. The event is the first of its kind ever, with Seidokan members coming from around the world supporting the cause. I foresee a magnitude of sharing between Okinawa Sensei's and RSKKR members as never before. Since RSKKR was established in 2008 I'm honored to be able to offer this complete Okinawa cultural package for the members of RSKKR. I'm sure this will be a time to remember for all involved.

This conference is shaping up to be the Okinawa Karate experience of a lifetime, with the Seidokan Masters on Okinawa ready to spread their knowledge and expertise and also other Okinawa Karate Masters willing to step up

and provide in-depth knowledge of what they do best. This adventure will not only deal with training in Okinawa Martial Arts, but everyone will have a chance to experience Okinawa culture first hand. This 5-day event will include excellent living conditions at American village, training at the Koza Budokan and the world famous Naha Budokan, sight seeing the island, visiting two very special karate museums, and many other sights Okinawa has to offer. I believe the 2012 RSKKR Okinawa Conference will be one of the most exciting events of recent times and I am sure everyone will be talking about it for years to come.

Over the past 8 months the RSKKR Honbu Dojo staff has taken important steps to make sure this event will be as enjoyable as possible. My goal is to ensure everyone is comfortable and time is well spent while enjoying the pleasures of what Okinawa has to

offer, but prior to stepping on to an aircraft and coming to the Karate Home Land there are a few things that must be thought of before hand.

1. First, make sure you and your party all have valid PASSPORTS. There's nothing faster to stop your best-laid plans than to find out your PASSPORT is expired. If there's any doubt please seek expert advice.

2. Having some local currency on hand once you arrive in Okinawa is not a bad thing but there are quite a few ATMs in the area where you can withdraw Yen. The rate of exchange has seen better days (\$1.00=75-80 Yen) but there are also many places in Okinawa that do accept dollars.

3. Hotel reservations should be no problem since most people will be staying at the "SUNNY STAY PROGRAM" living area. But if you plan to stay longer than the week

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The Fighting Stance, Part II- By Donnie Hayhurst, Godan

Why were stances lengthened and deepened in our karate lineage? It is not without a purpose but by design. The early Karate forefathers saw a need to use our own body as a resistance tool to build muscles and fortify and challenge our balance points. It was not common for every practitioner to have their own gym and barbells (hojo undo training). To achieve strong legs and long muscle the forefathers designed our kata performance with deeper stances. We attribute this to our Nahate roots and Toma Sensei's first teacher, Sokichi Shinjato. Modern day Na-

hate has become divided into Goju Ryu and Ueichi Ryu. Sokichi Sensei was a Shimabuku Tatsuo and Chojin Miyagi disciple who worked the lower stance and trunkial twist transitions, greatly increasing the power in hand techniques. This was a major influence as Toma Sensei solidified his own system. Additionally, lower stances benefit the user when performing weight bearing techniques (to throw bearing someone else's weight along with our own, as in the Wansu fireman carry).

It is noted the higher positioned stanced martial arts have very few weight bearing techniques

while the styles working the lower stances have many. This is why Motobu Ryu does not have the fireman carry we see in Wansu kata but will focus mostly on wrist throwing (Tuite) that lower their weight through their opponent's balance point. This is all related to vertical positioning and transition.

Seidokanka please keep in mind we are a synthesis art of the three original Okinawa Te subscriptions (Shurite, Nahate, and Tomarite) and the only Okinawa Koryu system – Motobu Ryu. Being a blended art we have a wide range of norms

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...be the Sensei that inspires.

based on the origin of the techniques in our tool box. It makes us very versatile.

The forerunner of Karate called Tode, Toide, or Okinawa Ti/Di did not have deep stances for close combat, nor did it take a foot forward fighting stance. Still the only Okinawan Koryu system (classical martial art), Motobu Ryu Undun Di practices this way. They would assume a neutral stance that was very unassuming; heels slightly raised off of the ground, lower their center, bend their knees a little, and sink their breath into their abdomen. To the observing attacker this would appear the victim was showing weakness and fear. It bears a psychological advantage as well as a tactical. Attackers would attack with confidence and underestimate their victim. This neutral stance, and most all stances in Classical Tode and Karatejutsu systems, kept the feet no wider than shoulder width apart. This is even reflected in our Shorin Ryu kata in the yoi stance. 'Yoi' means 'ready'. This ready stance begins each kata after the bow and has the practitioner stand with the feet taken to shoulder width, toes pointed straight forward or slightly in, heels like a sheet of paper between them and the floor (not grounded), and the breath coming out to center the body for an attack resolution. Then we begin the kata, which is all a series of countering movements and taking the fight to

multiple opponents. We normally make fists in modern karate but the Toide of old would bear hands open and 45 degrees off of the thighs. This totally centered and central position can go in any direction and is unlimited in what weapons to bear, once the opponent launches his attack. This and any stance where the base is under the shoulders and the heels not grounded was considered a 'live stance' or a 'fighting stance'.

To define 'fighting stance' according to the context of old, it would be a non-grounded stance of readiness from a neutral position in which the practitioner can travel in any direction as efficiently as possible.

From this neutral position the defender would read the opponent's attack and flow to the best option and control the fight, capitalizing on what the opponent exposed. It is one-half a step to being offensive whereas our modern concept of a fighting stance, with one foot forward and one foot back, is very defensive by nature and requires longer reaction time because of the increased distance it incurs.

There is also the fact that resistance makes us slower. To tighten all of the muscles and brace for impact is a waste of energy. We commonly see the Karate fighter with his feet forward and back fighting stance, tensed up and muscles

Fighting Stance, cont. from page 1

tightened. While expending more energy than what is necessary, antagonistic muscles mutually tensed are working against one another. Tamae Sensei would tell me to relax everything and tense only upon contact and then relax again on retraction. It has taken me years to begin to learn this lesson, but applying this technique to the neutral fighting stance and remaining relaxed in the face of danger allows our chosen counteraction to be almost effortless in its execution. It is the epitome of efficiency.

This article does not suggest practitioners reading this article change anything they do. It was written to understand on a deeper level what we are doing and realize the usefulness in our methods as well as the validation through historical context. I hope only to challenge us all to be the forever student, peeling the layers back and asking "why" questions. It is good to take apart what you are doing and put it back together, now knowing how it works. The only drawback is each answer brings more questions and it never ends. Enjoy your journey.

(This article is Part 2 of a 2 part series from Sensei Donnie Hayhurst.)



Sensei Toma (left) and Sensei Tamae (right) 1990s



Black Belt Promotions at RSKKR Dojos

Note: Black Belt promotion certificates signed by Sensei Toma are listed here.

Honbu Dojo, Okinawa Sensei Ron Nix 25 Feb 2012

Adam Teriault	San-Dan
Julie Del Vecchio	San-Dan
Ian Wallace	Sho-Dan
Dede Henderson	Sho-Dan
Chloe Henderson	Sho-Dan
Brianna Wallace	Jr. Sho-Dan
Nanami Kudaka	Jr. Sho-Dan

Okinawan Karate Academy of Harrisburg Sensei Benjamin Rocuskie 10 Nov 2011

Brian Jacobeen Sho-Dan

Wylie Karate Dojo Sensei Dennis Sukut 14 Nov 2011

Nick Servello Ni-Dan

Seidokan Martial Arts Academy of Oklahoma Sensei Adolph Pearson III 17 Feb 2012

Randy Heavin San-Dan

Colorado Seidokan Karate Club Sensei Rodney Grantham 31 Dec 2011

Holly Knuckles Sho-Dan

Congratulations to newly certified RSKKR Member Dojos

Risner Gym Ryukoku Seidokan
Sensei Scott Bennett
February 2012



Ryukyu Dance - by Karen Wallace, Shodan

There are three basic genres of Ryukyu dance: Court dance, Zo dance, and Folk dance.

The Court, Classical, dances were developed during the Ryukyu Kingdom era. These dances were performed for visiting Chinese and Japanese dignitaries. Even though the dances portray young women, during this time they were really performed by the young sons of the royal or military leaders' families. Generally the movements are slow in tempo, with dancers keeping their feet on or close to the floor at all times. The costumes are colorful clothing made out of Ryukyu bingata.



The Zo dances were developed in local theaters after the Ryukyu Kingdom era ended. Zo dancers dress in casual kimono and the movements are more energetic and faster in tempo.



The Folk dances of the Ryukyus date back to the 600s. These dances are generally high energy and celebratory. Folk dances often incorporate the use of Eisa drums, sometimes Shisa costumes, dancers, and clowns. Many festivals throughout Okinawa utilize these dances. In fact there are two festivals dedicated to this type of dance: The 10,000 Eisa Parade in August, and the Okinawa Eisa Festival in September.



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Ryukoku Seidokan Karate Kobudo Renmei News from Member Dojos

DVD from the Senior Seidokan Seminar is now available!

Sensei Caggiano hosted a great seminar which covered Jutsu & Kyusho, TCM Theory and Silat. Featured is Sensei Matt Kohler, Shihan lecturing on 5 Element theory and Kyusho principles, and then applying these Koryu principles & theory to the bunkai found within Pinan Godan. Also presented was Silat taught by Guru Phil Matedne. His drills were great for proximity training when dealing with hand, blade & stick attacks.

This DVD is the exclusive culmination of the instructors' presentations, which covers 2 ½ hrs, edited down from 8 hrs total seminar time.

Cost is \$15 per DVD for seminar attendees and \$25 for those who did not attend. S&H is \$3 per DVD (USPS). Please e-mail Sensei Kurt Seiber at "sieber@somavp.com" with your full name & address, the quantity requested and who the DVD's are for if ordering multiples (each DVD is personalized).



Masaya Kudaka appointed as new RSKKR International Liaison officer and will work with Scott Bennett.



Ayako Kurio and Dave Plattsmier were appointed as RSKKR Public Affairs Officers.



Sensei Ricardo Emerson, Hachidan, was inducted into the Latin-American Martial Arts Society Hall of Fame on December 18, 2011 in Comerio, Puerto Rico. Sensei Emerson was also presented the Society's Yin & Yang World Budo Award.



Matt Kohler was appointed as Technical Advisor to the RSKKR.

Dance, cont. from page 3

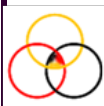
How does all this relate to us, the karateka? I'm sure most of you have heard of the ban the Japanese placed on the practice of martial arts on Okinawa and how this led to the techniques being "hidden" in dance. This would be in the Zo dances. There are also some Ryukyu dances that are openly about Karate, like Hamachidori. Additionally, the fundamental basis of a kata is similar to a dance. It

requires practice, fluid movements, and technique.

During the July Conference, attendees will experience all the genres of Ryukyu dance. There will be performances of Court dance, Zo dance, and Folk dance. We will have a demonstration of Hamachidori and its application to Karate. Hopefully all attendees will gain

an appreciation of how these two seemingly dissimilar activities are really so alike.

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Three Approaches to Bunkai, Part II

By Shihan Kurt Sieber - NanaDan Seidokan / Renshi, YonDan Kenpo Kobudo / Okuiri, Ni Dan Aiki Jujutsu



As in Jujutsu, Aiki-Jujutsu, Toide, Tuite, etc. "Jutsu" as it relates to Kata-bunkai, is not always obvious. So what is it? It can be simple and is usually elegant, but is based on complex and typically unnatural movements. It is better explained via experience than with words. It is often circular with a tangential component – (Think of it as a sling throwing a stone. You spin the sling in a circle with the stone in the pouch, which causes the stone to pick-up energy. When you release the sling, the stone now proceeds lineally, transferring all that energy upon impact – The release point is the tangent of the circle.) This circular movement is typically generated by incorporating painful joint-locking techniques to achieve the desired results, which can be as varied as a simple submission, all the way to killing your opponent. Why so many references? (Jujutsu, Aiki-Jujutsu, Toide, Tuite, etc.) Well every culture has some type of joint-locking methods – In Japan it would be Jujutsu – In Okinawa it would be Tuite. I prefer the simpler "Te". Regardless, it is joint locking that either ends with the lock itself or motivates the Uke to become a puppet, with the Nage as the "Puppet-Master". Jutsu or Te should not be taught to children. Jutsu or Te should not be taught to children. (This is not a typo). Very, very few children have the awareness of how damaging it can be to another child, and they, being children, will go overboard during training. It is just too risky – So now you know why it was not taught in the Okinawa school sys-

tem. Only private instruction or those fortunate enough to be the son of a Tuite master learned the art at an early age. Most Jutsu instruction began during or after the teenage years, and only if a knowledgeable instructor accepted the student. Jutsu is counter-intuitive, but with time and a Sensei's guidance, the veil will become transparent; however, not everyone is capable of learning Jutsu. Its complex nature easily confounds students to the point of giving-up. It is also involves a very painful training regimen and is best learned early while the body can heal quickly.

The bunkai of Karate-Jutsu can be as simple as it is complex. (Simple: The rei at the beginning of kata is a kote gaeshi or wrist technique; Complex: The last several movements of Seisan, which by the way is not catching a sidekick – that is Aka-chan bunkai). The movements should be shown to the student as to how the actual movements relate back to the Kata (and not the other way around). Typically this is shown via Honto-Kata or single application demonstration where the instructor performs the technique and then shows where it is within the Kata. Unfortunately, most of what we are doing today is the other way around – We are taking the Kata and attempting to apply Jutsu techniques based on experience, common sense and an in-depth knowledge of Jutsu. No matter how good you think you may be at Karate-Do, you will never bridge the gap to Karate-Jutsu unless someone enlightens you. To decode the Kata-Jutsu aspect, one must learn how to apply Jutsu techniques while maintaining the intent of the Kata – This is where art approach begins and science ap-

proach declines. The direction, motion and technique often become counter to how the Kata is performed (but not its intent!) so the student must be carefully guided or they will be off the path very, very quickly. You will probably get it right once in every 20 decoding approaches. You need to know what to keep but more importantly what to dismiss. Blocks are now combined as both block & strike (Meoto-di and Mai no te) which then move into captures. This is very important because Jutsu relies on capturing an appendage in order to be able to manipulate it. Thus initial or basic bunkai involves a grab as the attack, but will progress to the more difficult punch or kick as ability develops. (Picking a punch out of the air and applying a kote gaeshi takes a great deal of training.)

***Re-acting becomes less and acting becomes prevalent** – This means you will stop waiting for the attack and act on the Uke's intentions. Bottom line - to learn bunkai Karate-Jutsu, you will either need to be shown the techniques or be well versed in Jujutsu and have a Sensei at the Shihan level to mentor you.

Aka Chan – Child-mind, child like, adolescent learning, basic

Honto Kata – "true Form" – (Each move once)

Meoto-di - (Mefu-Tode) "Husband and Wife Hand" – Coordinated use of both hands.

Mai No Te - "Dancer's Hand" – Timing & rhythm method preserved by female dancers. Hand & body position in Mai no Te hold the keys to many old applications.

(This is Part 2 of a 3-part series on Bunkai by Sensei Kurt Sieber.)



Above and to the right:
Sensei Toma's dojo
Mid - 1990s



First RSKKR Conference, Colorado 2009

Back Row: Jaun Carbajal, Don Hayhurst,
Chris Caggiano, Ron Nix, and Kurt Sieber
Front Row: Rod Grantham and Ricardo
Emerson

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Ryukoku Seidokan Karate Kobudo Renmei

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of the conference, you will need to plan additional arrangements. For an example: Some people plan to come earlier or stay later than the conference. I can help you set up your reservations, just let me know. The prices will vary but most are in the \$50.00/night and up category.

4. Contact phone numbers and emails will be important before and while you travel. Please ensure you have all phone numbers you may need prior to traveling. I will be putting important phone numbers on the web site for all travelers.

5. As for packing, Okinawa is hot and humid so pack accordingly. There are hundreds of stores on Okinawa with very affordable prices for anyone who is willing to take advantage of the shopping opportunities the island has to offer.

Lastly, We need to ask

ourselves, what does it mean to be a member of the Ryukoku Seidokan Karate Kobudo Renmei? I'm sure there are as many different answers as there are members but the common denominator that links us all is The Head Master of Seidokan Karate, Sensei Shian Toma. Our sensei is 81 years old and has been like a father to most of us. This is a chance for everyone in this Renmei to support ZOSKKTR and RSKKR in making the biggest possible difference. Let's show Sensei Toma that we are making the difference not only for the present but also for the future of Seidokan Karate. This is what an organization does...we come together and share our knowledge with each other. There's no better time than now to show your support to Sensei Toma. No matter how small or large a conference is, the RSKKR

Conference, cont. from page 1
must work together to ensure we accomplish what we all have set out to do. Let's take advantage of this unique opportunity to come together in the Karate Homeland of Okinawa and make RSKKR the best it can be. I look forward to seeing everyone and I stand ready to support the members of this Renmei. Stay Strong!

Sensei Ron Nix 9th Dan
President, RSKKR



Renmei Officers and Staff

American Village in Chatan, near the Sunny-Stay Hotel
Photos courtesy of Megan Vlaming

Shian Toma, Judan: Senior Advisor
Shigemitsu Tamae, Kyudan: Senior Advisor
Ron Nix, Kyudan: President
Akemi Nix, Godan: Vice President
Donnie Hayhurst, Godan: USA Liaison/
Web Designer
Ayako Kurio, Sandan and David Plattsmier,
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