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Beyond Physical Training

***Discovering that which lies beyond the immediate results
of physical training in Karatedo (the way of karate)***

***Okinawa's civil self-defense heritage is, in many ways, a microcosm reflecting a diverse if not
enigmatic evolution. Its moral and spiritual values are so profound that the depth of its
magnitude has yet to be accurately measured or fully understood.***

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Introduction

It is often said that *Karatedo* is a deeply personal experience which affects each of us in different ways. Overshadowed by the competitive phenomenon and commercial exploitation in the Western World, its spiritual value is so profound that the depth of its magnitude has yet to be accurately measured or fully understood.

When deeply embraced *Karatedo* changes lives, or perhaps more specifically, changes lifestyles. Teaching one to transcend the barriers of ego-related distractions *Karatedo* (that is the way of *karate*), takes one on a journey without distance to a goal, which has never changed.

Describing the heritage of *Karatedo*, I must admit that it remains doubtful whether I will be able to truly impart any information which hasn't already been written, especially by others far more experienced than I. However, in that light, I can't help but recall the words of the American scientific personality Carl Sagan when he described intelligence as realizing how little we understand about what there is to know. Einstein once said that there were no new laws only undiscovered principles.

As such, I have taken the liberty for the benefit of those who may not have had the chance to explore such illuminating research, and compiled some of the most provocative testimony in the history of Japan's combative heritage. I sincerely hope that it might serve to bring you closer to discovering the inner-most value of *Karatedo*.

While the advantages of physical training remain perfectly obvious, it is my intention to let the testimony of *budo's* most eminent authorities illustrate what hidden value lies beyond the immediate results of physical training. And, more specifically, how that hidden value can be of enormous benefit outside of the *dojo*, in the individual world of our everyday lives.

Although a more detailed presentation might better illuminate the myriad of related phenomena surrounding modern *karate*, its sport format, history, philosophy and application, the purpose of this presentation is to address 'The way of *Karatedo*' through examining its non-utilitarian value.

Not really considering myself an expert in the Japanese combative traditions my preoccupation with them has however, progressively escalated since childhood. Notwithstanding, I do hope that my presentation might provide you with the necessary information with which to confirm and or re-evaluate your overall understanding of *Karatedo* while discovering its alternative purpose and innermost message.

And, for those of you who are not directly connected with the *karate* phenomenon, I would be delighted to learn that this information moved you in some way to regard the inner-most message of *Karatedo* as an alternative consideration for the purpose of enhancing your own individual preoccupation's.

Eastern Philosophy

Having first risen to prominence during China's *Ming* Dynasty (1368-1644) the growth and direction of the civil fighting traditions were profoundly affected by embracing the virtues, values and principles of spiritualism. Much in the same way that the wisdom of oriental philosophy had influenced the moral perspective and daily lifestyle of Japan's *Samurai Warrior*, Buddhism, Confucian thought and *Daoism*, are now, even centuries later, having a profound affect upon Western society.

Teaching us about the 'world within' and how its awesome power can control, and enhance, the 'world without', *Karatedo* embraces these ancient doctrines and is but one of the many vehicles through which its deeply important message is disseminated.

An ancient proverb tells us that while there may be many paths, which lead up a mountain, when its summit is achieved, only one moon can be seen. Enlightenment cares not how it is achieved and that one need never leave the dojo to discover it. The barriers of human achievement lie only in the mind. Surmounted through a journey without distance, the ultimate aim of *Karatedo* transcends the barriers of worldly delusion. Often described as an art form, in contrast to its practical application, the spiritual platform upon which *Karatedo* rests has, in the Western World, remained overshadowed, due in part to its competitive format and the dominant forces of commercial exploitation.

Cultural differences, which have traditionally divided the East from the West, have made the understanding of oriental philosophy appear somewhat bewildering if not totally confusing to the Western mind. However, now during an era when so many of us are seeking out ways to transcend the stress related sicknesses of today's fast moving society, the introspective traditions of the East, like *Karatedo*, offer deeply rewarding alternatives. Teaching us how to get back to nature, so to speak, *Karatedo* is 100% holistic.

The spiritual essence of this philosophy can be found in the writings of *Lao Tsu's Dao De Jhing*, *Tsun Tsu's Art of War*, *Muso Soseki's "ni sente nashi"* precept, *Tsukahara Bokuden's Spirit of the Immovable Mind*, *Yamamoto Tsunemoto's Hagakure*, *Takuan Soho's Unfettered Mind*, *Miyamoto Musashi's Book of the Five Rings*, and *Yamaoka Tesshu's Sword of no Sword*, to name a few of the more popular ones, now translated into English. Reading these works will help enthusiast better understand the Japanese mind and it affected the development of *Karatedo*.

Moreover, by understanding the Japanese mind it should become apparent how Western influence, commercial exploitation and the competitive phenomenon has overshadowed the true nature of the fighting traditions. In that one will come to understand the enigma which continues to undermine the ideology upon which *Karatedo* rests.

What is *Karatedo*

Based upon the remnants of an ancient *Okinawan* self-defense phenomenon, modern Japanese *Karatedo* is both a challenging competitive sport and a deep philosophical vehicle of introspection. As a social phenomenon it is also, in many ways, a microcosm reflecting the austere culture from whence it ascended.

A modest but respectable vocation *Karatedo* has yet to really gain the world wide regard that other art forms presently enjoy. Well known as an outstanding method of physical conditioning and self-defense, *Karatedo*, like other forms of Japanese *budo*, is, more importantly, a unique vehicle of introspection, through which immeasurable personal achievement is made possible.

Vigorously pursued for both its practical effectiveness and non-utilitarian value *Karatedo* is an excellent vehicle through which to improve one's health and character while learning the art of self-defense.

Karatedo is also a humble path through which to conquer human misery and worldly delusion, enhance personal integrity and gain a deeper understanding of oneself and of the world in which one dwells. The study of *Karatedo* (as an art form) is considered the balanced combination of uncompromising physical training, philosophical assimilation and genuinely embracing the moral values upon which the tradition rests while pursuing a modest lifestyle.

The heightened state of concentration and self-esteem cultivated through this "even balance" (known as *bun-bu-ryo-do* in Japanese) reinforces personal determination and the commitment to inner-growth and achievement, regardless of the individual endeavor. As such, *Karatedo* can, in addition to building an indomitable spirit, serve as the principal vehicle through which to magnify personal commitment and

dedication while enhancing individual physical performance. *Karatedo*, when studied deeply, enhances the value of each and every day of our lives and teaches us how to enjoy it more productively.

Those who are familiar with the power of combining rigorous physical training, asceticism and protracted meditation can readily testify to the self-conquests made possible through *Karatedo*. And yet, while *Karatedo* enjoys such world-wide popularity, rarely, if ever, do many ever get beyond the immediate results of physical training.

A Point of Interest

Although it is beyond the scope of this presentation, a much more penetrating study into those anthropological forces which have influenced the growth and direction of the civil fighting traditions would unquestionably unlock the doors to a more provocative understanding of *Karatedo*.

Notwithstanding, to grasp the entire magnitude of the *Karatedo* phenomenon it therefore becomes necessary for us to examine, at least in part, the historical circumstances through which it evolved. In doing so, we will discover what impact Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism had upon the moral and spiritual values of Chinese *gong* and its advent in the *Ryukyu* Kingdom. Why Chinese *gong* (called *Toudi* by the *Uchinanchu*) in the *Ryukyu* Kingdom, was pursued as means of domestic law-enforcement, and how *gong* was radically affected by military subjugation and political oppression. We will also discover why *gong*, in *Okinawa*, was passed on in an ironclad ritual of secrecy, and how, together with other local defensive disciplines, they formed a nucleus from which *Ryukyu kenpo karatejutsu* unfolded. We will also encounter the omnipotent forces of *Ninhonjinron* (Japaneseness) and the meaning of *Bushido*, what they represent and how together they revolutionized *Ryukyu kempo karatejutsu*.

The Spirit of the Samurai Warrior

The Samurai warrior of ancient Japan lived with a philosophy unique in annals of mankind. To pledge one's life for one's master was, for the samurai, the most glorious death. And, so they lived each day with the constant desire for beauty and perfection, while preparing to meet their destiny. That peculiar philosophy, known as *Bushido* was, 'the way of the warrior', and their austere but elegant code of conduct ultimately had a profound impact upon the lives of Japan's common people. It was through the spirit of Japan's feudal warrior that the combative traditions were handed down and live on to this very day.

Those who believe that this ancient fraternity had vanished with feudalism and the samurai warrior should be reminded of *Mishima Yukio* and his death, by self-disembowelment (*seppuku*), in 1970. *Mishima's* taking of his own life, with a sword, reminded us all that the 'ways of the warrior' are still very much a living phenomenon and carried on by those who perpetuate the spirit *bushido*.

A Summary of Karate History

Miyagi Chojun (1888-1953) the founder of *Gojuryu* wrote, in March of 1934, just a month before he set off for Hawaii, that regardless of where or when the civil fighting traditions first unfolded we can only assume that they must have ascended along side mankind from ancient times due to the animosity inherent in human nature.

Putting a Myth to Rest

Supposition would have us believe that *Okinawa's* civil fighting legacy ascended from the subjugated huts of the 'Pre-*Meiji* peasant class.' Described as tyrannized by their overlords, the peasants, in an effort to break free the chains of 'oppression'¹ had allegedly conceived an omnipotent fighting art. Despite their

¹ Yazaki Takeo 'Social Changes and the City of Japan' (Tokyo, Japan Publications, 1968) page 251 lists 1,240 peasant revolts on Japan's mainland during the 268 years from 1599 to the end of the Edo Period in 1867. Hence, it is not without reason that those misinformed might consider that a similar phenomenon took place in *Okinawa's* history. However, *Okinawa*, not without its own

uncultivated skills, it has always been hypothesized that the incomparable principles of combat had 'somehow' been applied to the implements used in their daily life. Furthermore, that during the cover of total darkness, for fear of reprisal if caught, the peasant not only established this cultural phenomenon but also succeeded in handing it down for generations, unbeknownst to local authorities.

Supported by mere threads of historically inaccurate testimony one discovers that the theory surrounding the 'Pre-*Meiji* Peasant Class Supposition' is no longer able to support the weight of serious consideration. Nonetheless, the peasant has been erroneously credited with the development of both Okinawa's weapon and empty-handed combative traditions. However, a more devoted study of the *Ryukyu* Kingdom reveals findings, which suggest a more plausible explanation.

"An Island of no Weapons"

When describing the military might of the *Ryukyu* Kingdom to Napoleon, Basil Chamberland Hall characterized *Okinawa* as an island without weapons. Actually, the *Ryukyu* Kingdom had been an island thoroughly familiar with the ways of war. Including armies of soldiers versed in the sword, the spear, archery and horsemanship², the use of the hands and the feet, elementary grappling and escape maneuvers had, from before recorded history, prepared a warrior to subdue his adversary even when disarmed.

Folklore tells of fierce battles during the time of *Shunten* (the son of *Minamoto Tametomo*, 1166-1237) when *Okinawan* warriors, employed an effective method of grappling in lieu of being disarmed on the battlefield. Originating in China the history of its introduction to the *Ryukyu*'s remains the subject of intense curiosity. Referred to as *tegumi* (*kumite* reversed) its remnants served as the basis from which 'te' an indigenous civil defensive tradition unfolded.

Middle Kingdom Liaison

Okinawa's symbiotic liaison with China was the impetus from which the tiny island kingdom first rose to prominence. In fact, their liaison with China and the commodities of its silk-road provided an incredibly prosperous commerce with Korea, Japan, Thailand and Southeast Asia. From the late 14th until the beginning of the 17th century the *Ryukyu* Kingdom became so prosperous as a re-shipping seaport that it became known as 'Treasure Island'.

Although *Okinawa*'s initial contact with China can be traced back to the *Tang* period (618-907), it wasn't until 1372, some four years after the Mongols fell to the powerful forces of the *Ming* Dynasty (1368-1644), that *Yuan*, the first *Sapposhi* (special representative of the Ming Emperor) to *Chuzan*, the most powerful of *Okinawa*'s three rival kingdoms. Landing at *Makiminato* (port *Maki*) during the reign of *Sattoh* (1320-1350-1395), the imperial emissary outlined China's unification and omnipotence and suggested great value in establishing a strong liaison and supporting the new Emperor. Regarding themselves as the very center of the world, the *Ming* representative demanded *Chuzan* to become a tributary colony.

Having previously enjoyed a limited, but un-sanctioned, commerce with *Fuzhou*, *Sattoh* recognized the gravity of this opportunity and welcomed their demands. Together with *Sattoh*'s tribute, *Taiki*, the brother of the king and special emissary, traveled to China where the liaison was ratified and a new era of Chinese influence began.

problems, has no history of such uprisings, a significant historical point corroborated by Takara Kurayoshi, curator of the Urazoe Municipal Library and regarded as an eminent authority in *Ryukyu* history.

² *Ryukyu O-Choshi* [*Ryukyu Kingdom History*] published by Soko Publishing Company, Okinawa, 1992. Edited by Professor Inoue Hideo, of Okinawa Prefectural Art University.

The Thirty-Six Family Story

By 1392 a Chinese mission was established in *Naha's Kuninda* (Kume village), now referred to as the 'thirty-six family' anecdote. This is historically significant as it is regarded the earliest source from which Chinese cultural traditions were first systematically transmitted to the *Ryukyu* Kingdom.

Sharing their political, educational and occupational proficiency with the *Uchinanchu* (Okinawans), the more sophisticated Chinese had a profound impact upon many aspects of island culture. Having a penetrating affect upon their religious conviction Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism also served to deeply influence those moral precepts that governed the civil fighting disciplines.

First published in June of 1896, the '*Takanoya Account*' (pg. 38, footnote #6 of the English translation, Tuttle Publication, 1969.) provides an illuminating description of this record. "*The leading city and capital of Okinawa, Naha has absorbed various villages as well as the one-time Royal capital of Shuri. Kume village has played a unique role in Okinawa's history. It was settled in 1393 AD by immigrants of China (the traditional "36 Families") and provided a place where Chinese diplomats resided and where Okinawan nobles could learn the language and manners of China. Formal relations with China dated from 1372 until the last tribute mission was sent to China in 1873. Young Okinawans learned to speak, read and write Chinese in Kume; Those who did were accepted for study at China's capital and received scholarships from the government of China. The enrichment of Okinawan culture via Kume was incalculable. Here men not only learned how to write Chinese and acquire literary arts, but on occasion technicians also taught ship-building, various crafts and the practicing arts.*

This is of great historical significance as it provides an actual time in which Chinese culture was systematically disseminated and a time when the Chinese fighting traditions were first officially introduced and studied.

Studying in China

Sent out to receive an education, contingents of *Uchinanchu 'ryugakusei'* (official foreign students) made extended pilgrimages to various parts of China (especially *Beijing*, *Nanjing* and *Fuzhou*) and gained a deeper understanding of the Middle Kingdom and all her wonders.

Similar to Japan's '*kentoshi*' (special envoys of the Emperor, bearing tribute in exchange for cultural wisdom) who from 630 to 894, together with sizable entourages, made 16 pilgrimages to China, seeking knowledge and technology to enhance their own culture, so too did the *Uchinanchu ryugakusei* bring back valuable learning.

The Sapposhi

The principal source from which the *Ryukyu* Kingdom received its most profound cultural influence came by way of the *Sapposhi*. Special envoys of the Chinese Emperor, the *Sapposhi* [Japanese but also pronounced *Suppushi* or *Sakuhoshi*] traveled to the outer most reaches of his lord's domain carrying important dispatches, transporting colonial administrators and then returning with situational reports.

Requested by *Okinawa's* king, the *Sapposhi* were sent to the *Ryukyu* Kingdom more than twenty times over a period of roughly five hundred years; approximately once for every new king that came into power from the time of *Bunei-O* in 1404 (see *Okinawan Dynasties* diagram).

Rarely staying longer than six months, the *Sapposhi* were usually accompanied by an entourage of 400 to 500 people. They included occupational specialists, tradesmen and security experts. This is of historical significant as it serves to explain the source from which the Chinese fighting traditions (*Toudi*) were formally introduced and then cultivated in the *Ryukyu* Kingdom.

Chinese self-defense principles introduced to the Ryukyu Kingdom through the *Ming Sapposhi*, were, for the most part, pursued as a means of domestic law enforcement by *Pechin* class officials, after king *Sho-Shin* brought feudalism to an end in 1507.

Okinawa's Class Rank & Structure

The *Takanoya Account* (pg. 42-44) describes the class and rank of the *Ryukyu* Kingdom: The people are divided into eleven classes, namely; *anji*, *oyakata*, *pechin*, *satunushi-pechin*, *chikudoun-pechin*, *satunushi-pechin*, *chikudoun*, *chikudoun-zashiki* and *niya*.

Princes are the King's brothers and uncles. *Anji* are (but not always) sons of the King's uncles and brothers; hence, during the *Satsuma* period *anji* were not included in the *shizoku* (military samurai). The Japanese have interpreted the *anji* as *daimyo*. *Oyakata* were upper *samurai*, *pechin* and *satunushi-pechin* were middle *samurai*. The other classes are sons and brothers of upper and middle *shizoku*. The *niya* are commoners.

Okinawan Dynasties

Island folklore maintains that the *Tensonshi* (lit. "the grandchildren from heaven") were legendary rulers who governed the *Ryukyu* archipelago for the 25 generations before *Shunten*. *Tametomo* (1139-70), the eighth son of *Tameyoshi* and a subordinate of Japan's once powerful *Minamoto* clan, was exiled to *Izu-Oshima* but escaped and ultimately made his way to the *Ryukyu* Islands. There he married and had a son, *Shunten*, who in 1186 defeated *Riyu* (the last ruler of the *Tenson*) and became the island's first king. The *Shunten* Dynasty lasted from 1186-1253 and had three rulers: *Shunten* (1166-1237), *Shumma-junki* (1238-48), and *Gihon* (1249-59). The *Eiso* Dynasty lasted from 1260-1349 and had five rulers: *Eiso* (1260-99), *Taisei* (1300-08), *Eiji* (1309-13), *Tamagusuku* (1314-36), and *Seiji* (1337-49). The *Sattoh* Dynasty lasted from 1349-1407 and had two rulers: *Sattoh* (1350-1395) and *Bunei* (1396-1405).

The first *Sho* Dynasty lasted from 1407-69 and had seven rulers: *Sho Shiso* (1406-21), *Sho Hashi* (1422-39), *Sho Chu* (1440-44), *Sho Shitatsu* (1445-49), *Sho Kinfuku* (1450-53), *Sho Taikyū* (1454-60), and *Sho Toku* (1461-68). The second *Sho* Dynasty lasted from 1470-1879 and had 19 rulers: *Sho En* (1470-76), *Sho Seni* (1477), *Sho Shin* (1477-1526), *Sho Sei* (1527-55), *Sho Gen* (1556-72), *Sho Ei* (1573-88), *Sho Nei* (1589-1620), *Sho Ho* (1621-40), *Sho Ken* (1641-47), *Sho Shitsu* (1648-68), *Sho Tei* (1669-1709), *Sho Eki* (1710-12), *Sho Kei* (1713-51), *Sho Boku* (1752-94), *Sho On* (1795-1802), *Sho Sei* (1803), *Sho Ko* (1804-34), *Sho Iku* (1835-47), and *Sho Tai* (1848-79).

There were nine ranks of *shizoku*³. Each had its distinctive apparel and accessories. Sometimes however, lower *samurai* were selected for promotion, even to the position of 'Sanshikan' (Top three ministers). Outstanding ministers were awarded full first rank or semi-first-rank. All other ranks were determined according to circumstances. A commoner who for a number of years had served as *jito* (administrator of a fief), or who had served with a consistently good record in the office of a *magiri* (*majiri*) (originally the territory controlled by an *anji*) or *mura* (village), was able to be appointed to *chikudoun* status. If exceptionally competent he might be elevated to *chikudoun-pechin* rank, although he could not become a *samurai* or wear a *haori* coat or *tabi*.

³ *Shizoku* is actually a Meiji-Period Japanese term describing the former samurai class. *Shizoku* is not an Okinawan term as the *Uchinanchu* did not refer to themselves as *Shizoku*.

The Pechin

The *Pechin* were mid-level ranked subordinates of the *Ryukyuan* King. They served from 1509 until the dynasty was finally abolished in 1879. According to the Okinawa Cultural Research Center at Japan's Hosei University the *Pechin* were largely responsible for, but not limited to, varying degrees of civil administration, domestic law enforcement and related matters. There is surviving testimony surrounding the *Sapposhi*, a few of the experts that accompanied them and many of those *Pechin* who were most influenced by their teachings (see the publication entitled 'Legend of the Fist'.)

Responsible for guarding the king and keeping the peace along with other related matters of district security, the *Pechin* class drew heavily upon their liaison with the Middle Kingdom and especially *Fuzhou*. Analyzing the principles of China's fighting disciplines the *Pechin* sought to enhance their understanding of the domestic self-defense phenomenon.

According to *Takara Kurayoshi* (see footnote #1) there were two separate divisions of *Pechin* (also pronounced *Peikumi* or *Uyakumui*) responsible for domestic law enforcement and related matters: *Satunushi* and *Chikudoun*. These divisions were even further divided into ten sub-categories based upon seniority, according to *Hosei University's Okinawa Cultural Research Center*.

Administrative aspects of 'law and order' were governed by elder officials at the '*Okumiza*' bureau, which incorporated a police department, prosecutors and a court system. The '*Hirasho*' (*hirajo*) (that era's version of a city hall) located within *Shuri* castle, had two specific functions. One was the family register system which kept the records of all births and deaths and so on, the other was to investigate peasant corruption. Outlying districts had smaller bureaus called *Kogumiza* and often served as territorial or self-governing *hirajo*.

The *Ryukyu* Kingdom's judiciary system engaged the services of 'bailiffs' whose responsibility it was to serve writs and summonses, make arrests, take custody of prisoners and ensure that the sentences of the court were carried out. The '*chiku-saji*' *pechin*, or 'street-cops' so to speak, enforced the law while the '*shiki*', (garrison guard) provided military defense, guarded the castle, and protected the king. These officers and this system were responsible for perpetuating civil law enforcement and self-defense disciplines.

In 1507 during the 30th year of his administration, *Sho-Shin-O* (1464-1477-1526) [the third ruler of the second *Sho* Dynasty] finally brought an end to feudalism in the *Ryukyu* Kingdom and ratified the 'Act of Eleven Distinctions'; This decree, in addition to prohibiting the private ownership and stockpiling of weapons also required powerful district chieftains outside the capital city to withdraw from their own strongholds and take up residence within the castle district of *Shuri*. This is historically significant because it provides the grounds for cultivating an alternative means of domestic law enforcement.

Something to Consider

A hundred years before a similar decree was even contemplated on Japan's mainland, *Sho-Shin-O* prohibited the private ownership and stockpiling of swords and other weapons of war. One hundred and fifty years before *Tokugawa Ieyasu* (Japan's first *Shogun*) ever compelled his own *daimyo* (feudal lords) to come to *Edo* [Tokyo], *Sho-Shin-O* commanded his *Aji* (district chieftains) to withdraw from their fortresses and reside at his side in the castle district of *Shuri*, hence strengthening his control over them.

Nearly a century before the *Edo-Kasatsu* (policemen of the *Tokugawa* Period 1603-1868) ever established the civil restraint practice of using the *rokushaku-bo* (six foot cudgel) and the *jutte* (iron truncheon), the *Ryukyu pechin* class officials already cultivated an indistinguishable self-defense method of effectively employing nothing more than domestic implements used in everyday life.

The study of the fighting traditions served well to develop a strong and healthy body, an indomitable spirit and an honorable character. As such, the Chinese civil fighting disciplines were pursued by, but not limited to, those young male subordinates in and around the castle district of *Shuri* and the *Fujian* community of *Kuninda*.

Subjugated by the *Satsuma Samurai* at the beginning of the 17th century *Okinawa* was radically affected by a myriad Japanese anthropological forces but manage to sustain its contact with China. Evolving in an ironclad ritual of secrecy the *Okinawan/* Chinese fighting traditions publicly surfaced again during Japan's *Meiji* Period (1868-1912).

Modern History

With the abolition of the *Tokugawa Bakufu* (military government which ruled Japan from 1603-1868) the *Meiji* Restoration delivered Japan from feudalism into 'democracy.' Hence, the class structure and the wearing of swords, like the *samurai* warrior, their yearly stipend and the proverbial *chongmage* (top-knot hairstyle), faded into the annals of history, as did much of the other social phenomena representing the dictatorial forces of feudalism.

However unable to abruptly escape their powerful strain of masculinity (under which Japan had evolved) and fearful of losing their homogeneous identity in the wake of foreign influence, much of modern Japan's central tenets reflected its feudal-based ideologies. Perpetuating old traditions while encouraging the development of many new social pastimes and cultural recreations, *bugei* (martial arts) became an instrumental force in shaping modern Japanese history. Based upon ancient customs, inflexible ideologies and profound religious conviction, Japan's modern *budo* phenomenon was more than just a cultural recreation. In its new socio-cultural setting, *budo* served, in many ways, as yet another channel through which to funnel *Kokutai*⁴ (National Polity in English), introduce the precepts of *Shushin* and perpetuate *Nihonjinron* or Japaneseness.

Based upon sport and recreation, the modern *budo* phenomena fostered a deep respect for those virtues, values and principles revered in feudal *Bushido*: 'the way of the warrior'; which, in addition to other things, fostered the willingness to fight to the death or even to execute oneself if necessary. Both the hybrids of *kendo* and *judo* encouraged *shugyo* (austerity) and won widespread popularity during an age of escalating militarism.

Supported by the '*Mombusho*' (Ministry of Education) modern *budo* flourished in Japan's school system. Embraced by an aggressive campaign of militarism, modern *budo* was often glamorized as the way in which 'common men built uncommon bravery.' Be that as it may, *kendo* and *judo*, during the post-Edo pre-WWII interval, served well to produce strong able bodies and dauntless fighting spirits for Japan's escalating war-machine.

Ryukyu Kenpo Karatejutsu

With the draft invoked and *Okinawa* an independent prefecture of Japan, the military vigorously campaigned for local recruits. Two of the first young experts recognized for their exemplary physical conditioning due to training in *Ryukyu Kempo karatejutsu*⁵ (during their enlistment Army medical examination in 1891) were *Hanashiro Chomo* (1869-1945) and *Yabu Kentsu* (1866-1937).

⁴ Basically, *Kokutai* and *Shushin* represented diligence, regimentalism, conformism, the commitment to mass productivity, strict adherence to seniority, Emperor worship and lifetime loyalty to one's organization or business.

⁵ The generic term once used to describe no less than a hand full of eclectic Ryukyu/Chinese fighting traditions in *Okinawa*.

Hence, the mere possibility that this little known plebeian *Okinawan/Chinese* fighting phenomenon might better serve to enhance Japanese military effectiveness, like that of *kendo* and *judo*, a closer study into its potential value was prompted.

A campaign established, during the turn of the 20th century, to introduce *Ryukyu kempo karatejutsu*, as a form of physical exercise, in *Okinawa's* school system compelled administrators to fundamentally revise its purpose. Removing much of what was then considered too dangerous for school children the emphasis shifted from self-defense to physical fitness and underscored the value of *kata* practice, but neglected its application. In doing so, by not teaching the hidden secrets of self-defense, the actual intentions of the *kata* became obscured to where a new tradition ascended.

Karate research historians now conclude that this radical period of transition represented the termination of a secret art of self-defense and the birth of a unique recreational phenomenon. The recreational phenomenon was introduced to the mainland of Japan where it ultimately conformed to the forces of Japaneseness and blossomed into remarkable competitive discipline.

Karatedo: A Microcosm of Japanese Culture

Konishi Yasuhiro (1893-1983) an expert of *jujutsu* and a prominent teacher of *kendo* had studied *Ryukyu kempo karatejutsu* before it was even formerly introduced to the mainland of Japan. Together, with *Ohtsuka Hironori* (the founder of *Wadoryu jujutsu kempo*) *Konishi* was largely responsible for initiating the modernization movement that revolutionized *Ryukyu kempo karatejutsu*. Studying directly under *Funakoshi Gichin*, *Motobu Choki*, *Mabuni Kenwa* and *Miyagi Chojun*, *Konishi sensei* described *karatejutsu*, when compared to *judo* and *kendo*, as an incomplete discipline.

Konishi told us quite frankly that modern *karate* was forged in exactly the same image as *kendo* and *judo*. The combative ethos of the ancient samurai warrior, fundamentally the various schools of *kenjutsu* and *jujutsu*, provided the very infrastructure upon which the modern *budo* phenomenon ascended. Using the fundamental concepts of *kenjutsu's* most eminent schools *kendo* was established, while *jujutsu's* most profound principles served as the very basis upon which *judo* unfolded.

An old Japanese *kotowaza* (proverb) aptly describes how things or people that are 'different' (i.e. not in balance with the 'wa' principle) ultimately conform or are methodically thwarted by the Japan's omnipotent cultural forces; '*deru kugi wah utareru*', implies that a protruding nail ultimately gets hammered down.

Cultural Forces

When compared to *kendo* and *judo*, the humble discipline of *Ryukyu Kempo karatejutsu*, unique as it was, remained, by Japanese standards, uncultivated and without suitable organization or 'oneness.' In short, it did not embrace the indigenous principles of 'wa' and therefore was not Japanese.

In contrast to *kendo* and *judo*, the *karatejutsu* movement lacked a formal practice uniform of their own and had no competitive format. Their teaching curricula varied from personality to personality and there was no organized standard for accurately evaluating the varying grades of proficiency. *Ryukyu kempo karatejutsu* was, as one might imagine, subject to the criticism of rival and xenophobic opposition, during that early and unsettled time of transition when it was being introduced from *Okinawa* to the mainland.

The Criteria

The period of transition was not immediate nor was it without opposition. It included a justification phase, a time when animosities were ventilated and the winds of dissension carried the seeds of reorganization. It was a time in which foreign customs (*Okinawans* were openly discriminated against and anti-Chinese sentiment was rampant) were methodically faded out and more homogeneous convictions introduced.

Proposing that a standard practice uniform be adopted, the *Butokukai* (Japan's national governing body for the combative traditions) called for a unified teaching curriculum to be developed and implemented. A consistent standard for accurately evaluating the various grades of proficiency, like that of *kendo* and *judo*, combined as well as the use of the *dan-kyu* system [established by *Kano Jigoro*.]

A safe competitive format also had to be developed and introduced through which participants could test their skills and spirits, like *kendo* and *judo*. In fact *Ryukyu Kenpo karatejutsu* was, as *Konishi Yasuhiro*⁶ told us, fashioned in the image of *kendo* and *judo*. Just as twelve inches always equals one foot; the plan was to establish a universal set of standards like *judo* and *kendo*.

No less demanding were the powerful forces of nationalism combined with an anti-Chinese sentiment. Together they propelled the *karatejutsu* movement to reconsider a more appropriate prefix to represent their discipline rather than the ideogram, which symbolized China. In making the transition the *Ryukyu Kenpo karatejutsu* movement would also abandoned the *'jutsu'* suffix and replaced it with the modern term *'do'*, like *judo* and *kendo*.

The "Kara" of "Karatedo"

A homonymic ideogram which can be either pronounced *'tou'* or *'kara'*, *Kinjo Hiroshi*⁷ assured us that up until around WWII the *Uchinanchu* (Okinawan) *karate* masters generally referred to *karate* as *Toudi*. First used by *Kinjo's teacher, Hanashiro Chomo* (1869-1945) in his 1905 publication entitled *'karate kumite'*, this unique ideogram characterized an art of self-defense using nothing more than one's *'empty'* hands to subjugate an adversary.

The new prefix, *'kara'*, representing *'empty'* (as in empty hands), on a deeper plane also embraced the ancient Buddhist doctrine surrounding spiritual emancipation and the world-within, as did the suffix *'do'*. As such it said that *Okinawa's* plebeian discipline of *karatejutsu* transcended the physical boundaries of common brutality and became a modern *budo* after embracing that which was Japanese. Like other Japanese cultural disciplines *Karatedo* became another vehicle through which the Japanese principle of *'wa'*⁸ was funneled. Hence, the innovative term *Karatedo* (the way of *karate*) succeeded the term *Toudijutsu* (the art of *Toudi*).

⁶ The founder of the Ryobukan, *Konishi Yasuhiro* (1893-1983) studied *Ryukyu Kenpo karatejutsu* before it was formerly introduced on the mainland of Japan. *Konishi* studied directly under *Funakoshi Gichin*, *Motobu Choki*, *Mabuni Kenwa* and *Miyagi Chojun*. In addition to *karate* *Konishi* was also an expert of *jujutsu*, a prominent *kendo* teacher and a man of considerable wealth and position. Together with *Ohtsuka Hironori* (founder of *Wadoryu Jujutsu kenpo*), *Konishi* was largely responsible for the transformation, which engulfed *Ryukyu kenpo karatejutsu*.

⁷ Born in *Shuri* (Okinawa) and having trained directly under *Hanashiro Chomo*, *Kinjo Sensei* was a principal authority responsible for the post war revival of *karate* within the *Dai Nippon Butokukai* and is presently regarded as one of the traditions most eminent masters and historians.

⁸ *Karel van Wolferen*, in his book *'The Enigma of Japanese Power'* (Macmillan London Ltd. 1989), describes the Japanese principle of *'wa'* as the uninterrupted display of a readiness to sacrifice one's personal interests for the sake of communal tranquility.

Funakoshi Gichin, concerning the "kara" of *Karatedo*, wrote "Just as a valley can carry a resounding voice, so must the person who follows *Karatedo* make themselves void or empty by transcending self-centeredness and greed. Make yourself empty within, but upright without. This is the real meaning of the "kara".

While the new term *Karatedo*, using the two novel ideograms (*kara* & *do*), was not officially recognized in Okinawa until 1936⁹, the Dai Nippon Butokukai ratified it in December of 1933 when *Karatedo* was finally recognized as a modern Japanese budo. Today most historians conclude that the *Ryukyu kenpo karatejutsu*, as introduced to the mainland in those early days, was at best an effective, but unorganized plebeian method of self-defense.

The *Butokukai* concluded that these improvements would bring about a single coalition under their auspices like that of *judo* and *kendo*. However, the development of *Karatedo* was overshadowed by the widespread adversity of WWII. So much so that a universal set of standards, like that of *kendo* and *judo*, failed to materialize.

Many believe that when the *Butokukai*, and other organizations considered the roots of militarism, were brought to an end in 1945 after Japan unconditionally surrendered to the Allied Forces, the development of *Karatedo*, as a solitary discipline, like *judo* and *kendo*, was abandoned. However, *Karatedo*, like *judo* and *kendo*, did come to enjoy an untold popularity, through the sport format which was born in the school system.

In spite of its popularity, differences of opinion, personal animosities and fierce rivalry clearly illustrated that *Karatedo* was destined to maintain its individuality. While myriad of eclectic interpretations unfolded, sharing corresponding similarities, *Karatedo* was never successfully brought together to form a single tradition, like *judo* and *kendo*. A phenomenon, which, for better or worse, continues to this day.

Kata

The classical *kata* of *Karatedo* are the means by which the ancient masters had transmitted their knowledge and secrets down through the generations. These remarkable paradigms are the very reason that the philosophical way of *Karatedo* still exists today.

To a beginner of *Karatedo*, *kata* is the vehicle through which the central principles of self-defense are learned. If there is any thing else to be discovered beyond that, it is only something, which manifests itself after intense study and thousands upon thousands of repetitions; a practice which compels one to turn their attention inward.

On a physical plane, the *kata* is pregnant with a myriad of self-defense applications, which need to be studied deeply in an effort to fully understand their actual use. A practice which has not been handed down within the competitive and one which is forcing the international community of *Karatedo* to re-evaluate its understanding of the tradition.

However, it should help to know that these hidden applications, called *bunkai*, were not originally contrived to be used against other enthusiasts, but rather, developed to be vigorously employed against the

⁹ At a special gathering held in October of 1936 at the Showa Kaikan in Naha, sponsored by Ota Chofu editor of the Ryukyu Shimpo Sha (newspaper co.), senior authorities like Kyan Chotoku, Hanashiro Chomo, Motobu Choki, Yabu Kentsu, and Miyagi Chojun etc. agreed that the new generic term *Karatedo* (the way of karate), using the new prefix and suffix, would be accepted and used.

anatomical weak points of an unsuspecting attacker. In fact, even to this day the effectiveness of *Karatedo* as a practical form of self-defense, at least in part, depends entirely upon the attackers ignorance of the methods being used against him.

This was also another reason why the fighting traditions were usually taught in privacy and then only to those who were considered trustworthy. Group instruction, as we know it today, did not surface until the introduction of *karatejutsu* in the school system of Okinawa.

On a spiritual plane, *Uechi Kanbum* (1877-1948) the founder of the *Uechi Ryu* tradition and a man who had learned his discipline in China, said "that only through the relentless study of *Karatedo* could one achieve the highest standards of inner beauty and strength. The fusing of the body and mind through *Karatedo* is indescribably beautiful and spiritual. When totally absorbed in *kata* one is brought into complete contact with the central core of their being. It is there that the essence of *Karatedo* is to be discovered."¹⁰

Correctly studied the *kata* reveals both the physical and metaphysical precepts of *Karatedo*. Best described through the abstract tenets of '*shuhari*' and principles of '*sen*', *Kinjo Hiroshi*, a man characterized by *Richard Kim* as a walking encyclopedia of *karate* wisdom, maintains that *kata* is the bible of *Karatedo*.

The Precepts of Shuhari

Shuhari can be described as the three phases of transition from beginner to master. With the *sensei* (referring to a teacher, but meaning one who has come before) and *senpai* (one's seniors) as role models, infinite repetitions of *kihon waza* (basic training) and *kata* ultimately forge a body of steel as an indomitable spirit improves inner-dialogue and strengthens one's character.

The term '*shu*' literally means to protect or maintain and represents 'learning from tradition.' This is the way the chain of tradition is perpetuated and passed on. This initial stage of training is an indispensable step on the infinite ladder of growth and development in *Karatedo*. There are no time limits for each of the three stages, and transition from one level to the next is neither simple nor immediate. Rather, levels tend to overlap each other in the transition phase, which allows for a gradual withdrawal from one level and a subtle entry into to the next plane.

Secondary conditioning takes one beyond the boundaries of physical training and away from the tyranny of worldly delusion, the preoccupation of materialism and other ego-related distractions. '*Ha*' literally means 'to detach' and refers to breaking free the chains of tradition. However, often misunderstood, it does not mean to depart from that which has given us strength. Rather, '*ha*' represents a transitional phase from which a person emerges strengthened through the power of introspection. Described as exploring the 'world within', the *kata* and protracted meditation become the focal points through which the supreme power of one's mind is first realized. Having a profound affect upon every aspect of one's life, and understanding of *Karatedo*, daily training, and life itself, takes on a completely new meaning as one continues a relentless pursuit to the next phase of mastery.

'*Ri*' is the final stage of transition and literally means to go beyond or transcend. This is what is commonly referred to as enlightenment or spiritual emancipation. Provoked by relentless austere conditioning, philosophical assimilation and protracted meditation, the intermittent flashes of penetrating wisdom become more frequent as one ascends to the portal. Passing through the portal of the 'world within' one is absorbed into its abyss, and emerges reborn. Those who fail to enter remain forever unfamiliar with the

¹⁰ "The Essence of Okinawan Karatedo," Nagamine Shoshin, Charles E. Tuttle, Rutland, Tokyo: p171.

true essence of *Karatedo* and mastery of the 'world without'.

This denotes the doctrine of '*shuhari*', which, in *Zen*, is often referred to as completing the circle or attaining a primordial state. Although its symbol is an empty circle, it is not void of meaning for those who stand within it. It is filled with life, peace, happiness and fulfillment. The *shuhari* precept knows no time barriers.

When the teacher becomes the student, the master a beginner, and the end a beginning, the beginning will be void of delusion and human misery. What did T.S. Eliot possibly know when he wrote, in '*Four Quartets*', that "we shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all of our exploring, will be to arrive where we first started and know that place for the first time."

It is said that there can be no limit placed upon *kata* training. Consumed in and by the *kata*, impermeable layers of silence shield one from both external and internal distractions. Inner-confusion gradually dissolves into where it no longer exist at all. Regulating the flow of air from within the body and synchronizing it with the execution of each physical contraction the *Kata* becomes a powerful vehicle of introspection through which external performance and internal thought correspond harmoniously.

Into a muffled roar both external and internal disturbances fade away until they are no longer any more disturbing than the distant sound of rolling thunder. Gradually building up an immunity to life's trivial distractions, detachment from illusion becomes easier and quicker in time. In this light, *Kata* is often described as moving *Zen*. Beyond exhaustion, despite aching muscles, we have all experienced peacefulness flowing quietly within the brutality of *Karatedo*. And, it is through this tranquility that our pursuit of fulfillment is realized.

If we were to consider the myriad of related phenomena to which a single *kata* applies, we would understand why *kata* is, in itself, an entire tradition. We might also come to understand why so many pioneers of *Karatedo* advocated the mastery of only one *kata* rather than the pointless accumulation of many *kata*.

Up until the turn of this century, in *Okinawa* most, if not all, schools or traditions revolved around a single *kata*. It was during *Itosu's* era that this tradition found new direction due, in large part, to the popularity of *karatejutsu* in the school system. Later, when *karatejutsu* was taken to the mainland (of Japan) the competitive format completely revolutionized the practice of *kata* and *Karatedo*.

The Magnitude of *Kata*

If we were to consider the myriad of self-defense related phenomena to which a single *kata* applies, it would become readily apparent why *kata* is in itself an entire tradition. That is also why old masters of orthodox *Karatedo* once advocated the mastery of only one or two *kata* rather than the pointless, but popular, accumulation of many *kata*.

In addition to the seizing, holding, grappling, throws, joint locks and techniques of dislocation, strangles, and traumatizing of anatomically vulnerable locations present in the *kata*, let us also consider some of the other principles with which the *kata* is concerned: *Yoi no Kisin*: mental preparation, *Inyo* (yin/yang): understanding the magnitude of defense and offense, *Go no sen*: defensive initiative, and *Sen no Sen* and *Sen*: the two levels of combative initiative, *Maai*: understanding engagement distance and how to utilize *Ma*: the space established through body change *Tai sabaki*: the principles of balance and leading control,

Tai no Shinshuku: expanding and contracting, gyration of the hips, body mechanics, and the summation of total joint forces, *Chikara no Kyojaku*: the proper amount of power for each technique, *Kiai*jutsu (building and releasing intense qi), *Waza no Kankyu*: the speed and rhythm of technique, *Ju no ri*: the principle of

resiliency and the willingness to bend in the wind of adversity, *Kokyu*: synchronizing the breath with the expansion and contraction of muscular activity, *Bunkaijutsu*: understanding the application of each technique, *Zanshin*: mental alertness and continued domination before and after the fact, *Seishi o choetsu*: transcending the thoughts of life and death.

Understanding the magnitude of *kata*, especially when it is combined with the philosophy of "*do*" (*Daoism*), it becomes perfectly clear how a single paradigm can represent an entire fighting tradition. Once a student comes to grips with the gravity to which each *kata* represents, their personal training will take on new direction and more meaningful dimensions. Moreover, by genuinely embracing the precepts upon which *Karatedo* rest one is assured that its social ramifications will permeate the character of its user, hence, the value and direction of one's life in general is profoundly enhanced.

The Precepts of the Ancient Masters

It remains obvious that as a catalyst for magnifying individual fitness, *Karatedo* is not only an incredible practice but also a deeply rewarding vehicle. Beyond the boundaries of its physical value inner-discovery provides the spiritual basis upon which the daily living of life itself is enhanced. And if there is any truth to the expression that exercise adds years to one's life, then it is true that *Karatedo* adds life to those years.

The spiritual teachings of the ancient masters live on in the legacy of *Karatedo* and are cultivated in patience and humility. Humility, builds strength from weakness, and is the product of austerity, which is called '*Shugyo*' in Japanese. And it is through patience and humility that *karate's* innermost value is attained. It is also in patience and humility that the rewards of *Karatedo* are best enjoyed.

Karatedo teaches one that the source of delusion is internal and not external. Hence, the journey for freedom must be inward not outward: a journey without distance to a goal, which has always existed in a world without beginning or end. A resolve, which often ascends from the blazing abyss of personal adversity, the spirit of introspection, is the point of embarkation.

Mastery of *karate* is not to be found in anything as shallow as physical prowess, race, orthodoxy of style, or even the lineage of one's instructors for that matter. Rather, it is in the sincere acceptance and genuine application of those virtues, values and principles upon which *karate/kobudo* rest, that mastery without delusion emerges. This message has made a significant impact upon the pioneers of this ancient fraternity. And, it is this message, which has been perpetuated.

In an effort to better grasp the magnitude of *Karatedo*, regardless of its diversity, let's now turn our attention to the testimony of *karate's* most important historical figures. In doing so we can better observe its philosophical precepts as well as what is described as the mind of *Bushido*. I have collected a myriad of the most provocative precepts left to us by those early authorities most responsible for perpetuating the moral and spiritual foundation upon which *Karatedo* rests.

As *Karatedo* has been so spiritually influenced by *Zen* it only seems fair that I begin by quoting the man most responsible for having introduced *Zen* Buddhism to the Western World. In 1953 the eminent *Zen* scholar *Suzuki Daisetsu* in describing the correlation between *Zen* and the Japanese fighting traditions wrote, that *budo*, as it is studied in Japan, is not pursued for its utilitarian purposes nor purely for its aesthetic enjoyment either, but is meant to train the mind; indeed, to bring the mind into contact with the ultimate reality.

Funakoshi Gichin (1868-1957), generally regarded as 'the father of modern day *Karatedo*', unequivocally told us that the ultimate aim of *Karatedo* lay neither in victory or defeat, but rather in the perfection of one's moral character.

Motobu Choki, (1871-1944) a principal authority of *Toudijutsu*, unquestionably one of the traditions most controversial figures and perhaps its most celebrated fighter as well, wrote in 1927, that in seeking to understand the essence of *karate* we must search beyond the immediate results of physical training and not place too emphasis upon competition or record breaking but rather to seek wisdom through self knowledge and humility.

Mabuni Kenwa (1889-1952), the founder of *Shitoryu* and a staunch advocate of the moral values, originally established to govern the behavior of *Karatedo*, concluded that understanding the deepest meaning of *Karatedo* first meant transcending ego-related distractions and finding inner-peace. Explained in an abstract poem, *Mabuni Sensei* wrote that when the spirit of *Karatedo* (*Bu*) is deeply embraced it becomes the vehicle (described as a boat) in which one is ferried across the great void to the 'world within' (described as 'bu'-island).

However, *Chibana Choshin* (1887-1969), maintained that transcending ego-related distractions was very difficult especially during a generation so preoccupied with greed and dominated by materialism. *Chibana Sensei* often described the gravity of genuine humility and how *Shugyo* (austerity) fostered its development.

Relying upon *Karatedo* to make a living can also affect one's motivation said *Konishi Yasuhiro* (1893-1983), a principal architect of modern *Karatedo*. Even the noblest of aims can often cause men to twist the facts in an effort to serve their own theories he concluded.

Itosu Ankoh (1831-1915) one of the most influential pioneers of modern *Karatedo* said, "*karate* strives to build character, improve human behavior and encourage modesty. It cannot, however, guarantee it."

'*Bushi*' *Matsumura Chikudun pechin Sokon* (c 1809-1901), the *Miyamoto Musashi* of the *Ryukyu* Kingdom, and responsible for introducing the teaching principles of *Jigenryu kenjutsu* to the Chinese *gong-fu* discipline that he was an expert of. Regarded in *karate* history as the principal authority of the self-defense traditions that ascended in the castle district of *Shuri*, he once wrote; "*to all those whose progress remains hampered by ego-related distractions let humility, the spiritual cornerstone upon which the fighting traditions rest, serve to remind you to place virtue ahead of vice, values ahead of vanity and principles ahead of personalities.*"

Matsumora Chikudun pechin Kosaku, the prominent authority of that fighting tradition which once flourished in and the district of *Tomari* maintained that: the mastery of *karatejutsu* was never made possible without first illuminating the 'world within'.

'*Toudi*' *Sakugawa Chikudun pechin Kanga*, the teacher of *Bushi Matsumura* and a principal force in the early development of *Okinawa's* civil fighting traditions maintained that "one need never leave the dojo to discover that which one seeks."

There can be no end to learning said *Hanashiro Chomo* (1869-1945), the man first responsible for using the modern prefix '*kara*' in his 1905 publication entitled '*Karate Kumite*'. Characterizing an art of self-defense using nothing more than one's 'empty' hands to subjugate an adversary his unique innovation embraced the ancient Buddhist doctrine surrounding spiritual emancipation and the world-within, as did the suffix '*do*', like other modern Japanese combative traditions.

Akamine Eisuke (b. 1925) president of the *Ryukyu Kobudo Hozon Shinko Kai*, maintains that there is a limit to how much one can grow through the sport *karate* phenomenon but that there is no limit of personal growth for those pursuing *Karatedo*; the way of *karate*.

Nagamine Shoshin (born 1907) wrote, concerning the spiritual decline of the fighting traditions that "it's too bad that most students of 'Bu' refuse to see it, hear it and know it Using 'Bushin' *Matsumura* and *Itosu sensei* as role models he ardently believed that these were men who, in their long lives, never forgot that they were personal examples of what 'Bu' and *karate* truly represented. In fact, their transcribed convictions - 'The 7 Principles of Bu' by *Matsumura* and *Itosu's* 'Ten Lessons'- have provided the very infrastructure upon which the modern tradition of *Karatedo* unfolded.

Shimabukuro Ezio, master of the *Shobayashi* school of *Shorinryu*, always maintained that people who truly master *karate* are never rude and place peace and harmony at the top of their list of personal priorities.

Gichin Funakoshi, often described *Karatedo* as an intangible vehicle through which an inner discovery provoked a deeper understanding of life and the very world in which one dwelt.

"When one loses the spirit of repetition training becomes difficult and even, dull." *Miyamoto Musashi*, one of feudal Japan's most celebrated samurai warriors, when speaking of training once said, "one thousand days to forge the spirit, ten thousand days to polish it."

Samurai Stories

Suzuki Daisetsu in 1938 wrote (in his book *Zen Buddhism and its Influence on Japanese Culture*, pp.7,8) that the Japanese fencing master often employs the Zen method of training. I have compiled four short stories to best illustrate the principles of how bushido and the mind of the *samurai* warrior has affected the development of *Karatedo*.

To set the mood let me quote the *Tokugawa* Period swordsman from the *Jikishin Kageryu*, *Shimada Toranosuke*: "The sword is the mind, if the mind is not correct then the sword will not be correct. If one wishes to study the sword he should first study the mind."

Once, in ancient Japan an eager disciple went to a master to be disciplined in the noble art of swordsmanship. The master, who was in retirement in his mountain hut, agreed to undertake the task. From the beginning the student was made to help fetch firewood for kindling, draw water from the nearby spring, split wood and make the fires, cook rice, sweep the rooms, tend the garden and look after the masters household affairs in general. There were never any regular lessons and no technical instruction at all.

After some time the young man became very dissatisfied, for he had not come to work as a servant for the retired gentleman but rather to learn the art of swordsmanship. One day he approached the master and demanded to be taught. The master agreed but eventually concluded that the young man was unable to do any piece of work with any feeling of safety. When he began to cook rice early in the morning, the master would appear and strike him from behind with a stick. When he was in the midst of sweeping the floor, he would feel the same blow from another direction. He had no peace of mind and had to always be on guard against attack.

Some years had passed before he could successfully avoid a blow regardless from which source it came. But the master was not quite satisfied with him yet. One day the master was found cooking some vegetables over an open fire. Seeing this, the disciple quickly decided to take advantage of the opportunity. Taking up his big stick, he let it fall down on the head of the master, who was then stooping over the cooking pan stirring its contents. But the master with the cover of the cooking pan caught the disciple's stick.

This opened up the disciples mind to the secrets of the art, which had, up until this time, been kept from him. He then for the first time truly appreciated the skill of preparation and awareness.

Others tell the story slightly different. The most popular version refers to *Yagyu Mutajuro* as the young samurai seeking instruction and the retired *samurai* warrior named *Banzo*. In that version it was *Yagyu* who was cooking over the fire when the master attempted to strike him. *Yagyu* blocked the attack by using the cover of the pot and *Banzo* rewarded him with a *menkyo* without ever having taught him a single sword technique.

Both versions clearly illustrate the importance placed upon preparation, awareness (*zanshin*) and patience.

Determination `The Power Within'

There is an old story often told by *Otake Raisuke Sensei* [master of the *Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto Ryu*, the oldest verified school of Japanese martial arts], which illustrates an interesting point.

A long time ago there was a young *samurai* and his fiancée who were deeply in love. One day his fiancée was walking through the forest when she was attacked and seriously mauled by a man-eating tiger. No matter what the young *samurai* did nothing could save her and she died.

From the depths of his sorrow he vowed to revenge his beloved by seeking out the tiger and killing it. So he took his bow and arrow and sought out into the forest, day after day in search of the man-eating beast. Searching daily in the forest the *samurai* finally saw a sleeping tiger in the distance and concluded that this must be the tiger responsible for the death of his lover. He drew his bow, took careful aim and released the arrow, which found its mark and pierced the tiger's body deeply. Drawing and mounting another arrow he slowly approached the motionless creature to confirm the kill only to find his arrow stuck deeply into a striped colored stone, which happened to resemble that of a sleeping tiger.

After this everyone began to talk about how strong he was because he could pierce a stone with his arrow and people became determined to test him. However, regardless of how many times he attempted to repeat the undertaking his arrows kept bouncing off the rock. This was because he now realized that his target was only a stone. In the past his resolve had been so profound that he was actually able to pierce a stone with his arrow. However, now under different circumstances, he was unable to repeat the same feat.

This story forms the basis for understanding how 'a strong will can even pierce stone' but more importantly clearly demonstrates how resolve can serve as a powerful vehicle.

Yagyu Tajima no Kami

The following anecdote appears in the *Hagakure* which dates back to mid-seventeenth century feudal Japan. *Yagyu Tajima no Kami* was a great swordsman and a teacher in the art to *Tokugawa Iemitsu*, the *Shogun* during that time. One day a personal guard of *Iemitsu's* visited *Yagyu Sensei* seeking instruction in the art of swordsmanship. Master *Yagyu* said "as I observe, you seem to already be a master of swordsmanship; pray tell me to which school you belong, before we enter into a relationship as teacher and student." The guardsman said, "I am ashamed to say that I have never really learned the art."

Master *Yagyu* replied by saying "are you trying to trick me? I am teacher to the honorable *Shogun* himself, and I know that my judging eyes never fail me." I am sorry to defy your honor, but I really know nothing replied the guardsman.

This resolute denial on the part of the visitor made the swordsman think for a while, and when he finally said, "if you say so, then it must be so; but still I am sure that you are a master of something, though I know not what."

"If you insist, I will tell you this. There is one thing of which I can say that I am a complete master. When I was a boy, it appeared to me that as a *Samurai* I should never be afraid of death regardless of the circumstances. I had grappled with this obstacle for some years but finally overcame it. Death ceases to worry me and perhaps this is what you sense." "Exactly!" Exclaimed *Yagyu sensei*. "That is what I mean. I am glad that I made no error in my judgment. For the ultimate secrets of swordsmanship also lie in being released the preoccupation of death. I have trained ever so many hundreds of my disciples along this line, but so far none of them really deserve the final certificate for swordsmanship. You need no technical training, you are already a master."

Chiba Shusaku's Shortest Lesson

Chiba Shusaku was a prominent swordsman and teacher who lived in old Japan during the end of the *Edo* period. One day in 1854 a young samurai visited him. The samurai implored him to reveal a way in which he could die honorably. When *Chiba Sensei* asked him to provide a reason for wanting to die in the first place the young samurai explained his story.

In the service of his lord he had been petitioned to transport a dispatch of some importance on this day. While *en route* he encountered a *Tsujigiri*; a sword-slinger highwayman who kills either for profit, to perfect his technique or even just to test the worth of a new sword.

The young *samurai* could quickly tell that the *Tsujigiri* was indeed an experienced and formidable sword fighter, and so he said to him "since I am presently on an important errand for my lord I cannot take the chance of being killed by you here and now. However, I shall return here and engage you after I have concluded my assignment", and withdrew pledging to reappear later that afternoon.

However, after completing his task he realized that he had no confidence and was no match for the *Tsujigiri* and was afraid that he would die a cowardly death. However, he was not as concerned about the loss of his own life as he was with the honor of his lord, and so he visited the famous Master *Chiba* for advice. In replying to the young *samurai's* request master *Chiba* said I will teach you the ultimate technique of swordsmanship. "When you engage your opponent first hold the sword up over your head in the *jodan no kamae* close your eyes and wait.

When you are about to be killed you will feel a cold chill somewhere in your body. At that moment, and without hesitation, just swing your sword down and imagine that you are already in the other world and you will die very honorably."

The young *samurai* graciously thanked the great master and quickly returned to meet the *Tsujigiri*. As the showdown began the *Tsujigiri* drew his sword and fearlessly assumed a *chudan no kamae* pointing the tip of his blade towards the throat of the young *Samurai*. The young man following the instruction of the great sword master confidently raised his sword above his head and closed his eyes. No where was the thought of fear or survival, his mind was already in the other world.

The *Tsujigiri*, an exceptionally experienced sword-slinger, knew that he could easily kill the young *samurai*. However, at the same time, because he was so experienced, he also realized that at the moment he administered the lethal blow he too might be killed by the young man's unique positioning. After the two held the position for about thirty minutes, the *Tsujigiri* finally jumped back and bellowed out

"EXCELLENT!" and left as quickly as he had come.

Master *Chiba* had secretly sent one of his students to observe the encounter. When he was apprised of the outcome he said; "the young samurai had already come to terms with life and death and in a moment was able to reach the state of mind that martial artists spend their entire lives trying to reach."

The Value of Karatedo in Modern Times

To be the very best one can ever be, regardless of whether or not it is fighting, sports, business, or just in life, requires indescribable resolve and inner strength. Transcending the barriers of the ordinary such indomitable fortitude is never made possible without first making enormous personal sacrifices. A prerequisite that any combat veteran, athletic champion or successful businessperson can attest to.

Through the virtues of *Karatedo* one comes face to face with one's weaknesses. And it is through these virtues that weaknesses are turned into strengths and strengths into even greater strengths, hence the tradition fulfills its purpose. Indomitable fortitude insulates us against the evil forces of immoral temptation and irresponsible actions while providing the resilience to withstand personal failure.

A mind tempered in the tradition of *Karatedo* will remain impervious to worldly delusion and illuminate the darkness of selfishness and ignorance. As with the *samurai* warrior undaunted in the face of fear preparation, patience and humility is 90% of fighting, winning and living. With greater control over our mind, or the 'world within' we can have greater control over our body, lives and the 'world without.' And, it is by putting this power and knowledge to work everyday that our lives are enriched and fulfilled in ways we never thought possible.

The Puzzle of Commercial Exploitation

Rarely addressed and almost always considered second in nature to pursuits of more practical value, commercial exploitation, has long over-glamorized the so-called 'martial arts.' Described as a necessary evil, the vices of commercial exploitation, while concurrently serving to generate untold popularity, have tragically reduced the standing of this most venerable tradition. Veteran teachers of *Karatedo* can easily testify to how one sided *Karatedo* seems to be these days. And, it is now, that the traditional values of *Karatedo* are in greater need than ever before.

Ego, ignorance, greed and animosity, along with the financial rewards of commercial exploitation, have necessitated no less than a myriad of eclectic interpretations, of Japan's ancient fighting traditions. Yet, somewhere in wake of commercial exploitation the moral values upon which *Karatedo* first ascended (albeit never completely culminated), endure but remain overshadowed by a more aggressive set of standards.

As such, *Karatedo* is suffering a terrible imbalance between its physical, mental and spiritual principles. So much so, at least in the Western World, that a myriad of radical and eclectic traditions have unfolded with little regard and no understanding for traditional values whatsoever. In essence, there really are no new practices, only the fusion of older ideas in modern circumstances.

Henri Poincare (1854-1912) once wrote, "*Science is built upon facts much in the same way that a house is erected from bricks, but that the mere collection of facts was no more a science than a pile of bricks a house.*" The correlation between his metaphor and that imbalance which presently engulfs the modern fighting traditions is ironically comparable.

Generally speaking, *Karatedo*, in the Western World, has been regarded as a mere sport and or seemingly a brutal means of self-defense. Subject to the cultural forces of Western society *Karatedo*, and other kinds of Japanese *budo* for that matter, do not presently enjoy the same regard as they do in Japan.

As a sport, *Karatedo* is often perceived as a sophisticated method of physical brutality, and, like its business counterpart it is punctuated by political animosity and commercial exploitation.

As a means of self-defense, *Karatedo* has also been pursued by those who's immoral behavior and irresponsible actions have done little to enhance the philosophical or spiritual doctrines upon which the art form rests. Pursued as a vehicle of introspection, the non-utilitarian value of *Karatedo*, as practiced in Japan, has yet to be fully discovered in the West.

Among the many authorities with whom this research has brought me into contact with I remain most influenced by those who spoke of transcending ego-related distractions, discovering that which lay beyond the immediate results of physical training. Their genuine regard to perpetuate the moral, philosophical and spiritual foundation, upon which this unique legacy rests, has profoundly affected the way in which I embrace *Karatedo*. I remain most offended by those who erroneously consider themselves the only authority, fostering protectionism, dissension, and arrogance.

The competitive phenomenon has revolutionized the study of *Ryukyu karate* and commercial exploitation has necessitated a myriad of hybrid interpretations. Yet, misplaced in the 'progress' has been *karate's* central most values-values upon which this cultural phenomenon first rose to prominence and values which without reduce *Karatedo* to nothing more than a sophisticated method of common brutality. It is critically important that the ultimate aim of *Karatedo* not be overshadowed by those ignorant of its value or those whom remain imperious to its precepts.

As enthusiasts of this ancient fraternity, we are all, to a greater or lesser degree, responsible for cultivating the growth and direction of *Karatedo*; A responsibility, which extends beyond the *dojo* and into society as a whole.

Like the *karate* enthusiasts who have walked before us, we too need to establish a symbiosis with *Karatedo* so that our lives are just as much a product of the art as is the art a product of our lives.

It is sad that so many come and go with out ever learning that there is so much more to *Karatedo* than the immediate results of physical training. Whether one is a new student, a veteran teacher or just casually involved, sooner or later, if one ever expects to attain true self mastery, one must first understand how to utilize the 'world within.' It is never to late to begin.

Exercising The Mind

Although an entire dissertation might better illuminate the power of 'thinking', I believe that most people accustom to the rigorous physical discipline of *Karatedo* can easily visualize the magnitude of mind control. In fact, it would be no understatement to imply that the source of all power begins in thought. And, that it is in the actual application of our thoughts that the conditions conducive to growth and harmony are created; attitude.

It is only through cultivating our spiritual nature, that faith, courage, and enthusiasm, brings forth the rewards of accomplishment. Our spiritual nature can only be cultivated by "doing"; "we can only get as much as we give", "only reap that which we sow", in fact, the law of growth depends entirely upon reciprocal action: we receive only as we give. Cultivating our spiritual nature begins with mastering a ritual of introspection, and physical stillness, long before its benefits can be put into practice.

With our attention drawn inward, thoughts are focused upon, until the mind attracts the conditions necessary for their fulfillment. Concentration must become so intense that you become so identified with the object of your thought, that you are conscious of nothing else. Ultimately, thought is transmuted into character (we are what we think), and character is the magnet, which creates the environment of the individual. Through developing our powers of perception, wisdom, intuition, and sagacity, our

concentration intensifies. We need only to recognize the omnipotence of our spiritual nature and the desire to become the recipient of its beneficial effects.

However, in order to plan courageously, and execute fearlessly, one must understand the law of cause and effect; causation depends entirely upon polarity: a circuit must be formed, the universe is the positive side of the battery of life; the individual is the negative, and thought forms the circuit.

The knowledge of this power provides the courage to dare and the faith to accomplish. The degree of success with which anyone will ever meet, depends entirely upon the extent of which one realizes that the infinite cannot be changed but must be cooperated with. A change of thoughts means a change in conditions. The results of a harmonious mental attitude (the ultimate aim of Karatedo) bring forth harmonious conditions in life. Selfish thoughts contain the germs of contamination.

One's ability to appropriate that which one requires for growth from each experience determines the degree of harmony, which we will attain. Obstacles are necessary for one's wisdom and spiritual growth. Focus upon the rewards of success rather than the penalties of failure, get interested in the race rather than only the goal; in the pursuit rather than the possession. Our ability to think is the ability to act and bring what we think into manifestation for the benefit of others and ourselves. What we do depends upon what we are, and what we are depends upon what we think.

Success or failure is determined more or less by one's lifestyle. One's lifestyle is dominated by one's attitude. One's attitude depends entirely upon one's thoughts; underscore by the expression "we are nothing more than the sum total of our daily thoughts and decisions." Therefore a person is what a person thinks. How a person speaks and behaves is, in essence, what that person thinks. Subsequently thinking is crucial to being. This is true because one must "be" before one can "do", and one can "do" only to the extent that one "is", and what one is depends entirely upon what one "thinks." One cannot express powers that one does not possess. One must discover the power within and learn how to use that power to strengthen and enhance the world without.

How much we experience, but how little we truly learn. We understand many things but realize practically nothing. We hold many facts and opinions but in essence know little about ourselves. Pretending will never change anything. How can anyone ever plan an escape without first realizing that they are imprisoned? One must pound and polish the human spirit until it is as strong and vibrant as a samurai sword. Let us not focus on the penalties of failure but rather upon the rewards of success. The secret of change is not to fight the old but rather to focus upon building the new.

Although the process is protracted it is also quite unique and can no doubt change one's life and lifestyle if one so desires. There is an entire system to be learned which entails a series of mental exercises to be performed in methodical order. Let me introduce you to the preliminary technique through the following brief outline. I hope that you will optimistically embrace its value and continue to seek out its wisdom.

Each day before, after or during your *kata* training, find a place where you can sit comfortably and undisturbed for up to thirty minutes at a time. The cardinal point is to be comfortable and to be undisturbed....remember, you must be undisturbed and you must have about thirty minutes to yourself.

Introductory preparation consists of sitting up comfortably in a perpendicular posture (a chair will do nicely), but relaxed, with your hands resting together on your lap and eyes closed. You need not worry about what to think or if there is some exotic mantra to chant. Simply let your mind digress freely. It may seem to be a rather simple request but many of you will no doubt have great difficulty finding the patience to perform even such a fundamental exercise.

However, be sure that the benefits will undoubtedly manifest themselves within a few short weeks of embarking upon regular practice. Points to remember are that regular exercise and mental training must work in harmony with each other in preparation for the next step. Patience is a virtue and I would encourage you to balance your physical and mental training with philosophical assimilation through the ancient documents previously mentioned.

Conclusion

Through studying the past we are brought that much closer to understanding the present. By analyzing both the past and the present we are able to gain an even deeper insight into *Karatedo*, along with what its non-utilitarian value truly represents. Just as living in the past is as foolish as believing one can travel to the future, happiness can only be enjoyed in the here and now. Research of this nature is critically important if we are ever to get beyond the immediate results of physical training.

Two thousand years ago *Tsun Tsu*, the great Chinese military strategist wrote in 'The Art of War' that victory without contention is the greatest accomplishment of a warrior. This is underscored by the Japanese maxim "*tatakawa zushite katsu*", winning without fighting by overcoming the enemy within.

The Buddhist monk *Takuan Soho* wrote, in his address to sword master *Yagyu*, that "ignorance means the absence of enlightenment, which is delusion." We must transcend delusion to understand the essence of *Karatedo*.

Tokugawa Ieyasu wrote of the *samurai* that its plumage, a tiger by his claws, knows a peacock but it is the demonstration of a warrior's character that exemplifies his understanding of the world within. A Confucian tenet, (Analects 7:8) describes the master saying he will not enlighten those who are not enthusiastic or educate those who are not anxious to learn. He will not repeat himself to those who, when he raises one corner, do not return having raised the other three corners. We must maintain our enthusiasm and willingness to seek out the deepest meaning of *Karatedo*.

Forgotten but not lost is the wisdom of *Teijunsoku Uekata* a 17th century high ranking official of the *Ryukyu* Kingdom from *Okinawa's Nago* district "...no matter how you may excel in the fighting traditions and scholastic endeavors, nothing is more meaningful than your behavior and your humanity as practiced in daily life."

Rather than gaining or acquiring excess baggage in life, *Karatedo* teaches us to remove useless and ego-related distractions. Instead of always striving to acquire more happiness can come from learning to appreciate less. Rather than only taking from *Karatedo*, we must also consider putting back into that which has given us strength and power. Remember that all power and success has to do with putting knowledge into action through mastering the world within.

How much we experience, but how little we truly learn. We understand many things but realize practically nothing. We hold many facts and opinions but in essence know little about ourselves. Pretending will never change anything. How can anyone ever plan an escape without first realizing that they are imprisoned? One must pound and polish the human spirit until it is as strong and vibrant as a samurai sword. Let us not focus on the penalties of failure but rather upon the rewards of success. The secret of change is not to fight the old but rather to focus upon building the new.

In discovering that which lies beyond the immediate results of physical training we have learned how to truly benefit from *Karatedo*. However, a provocative question remaining unanswered, invites each of us to seriously consider not only what one can get by continually taking from this humble tradition, but rather as responsible enthusiasts concerned with its future direction, what can one put back into *Karatedo*...the art and way of *karate*?

Thank you for supporting this lecture.

Patrick McCarthy



Patrick McCarthy

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