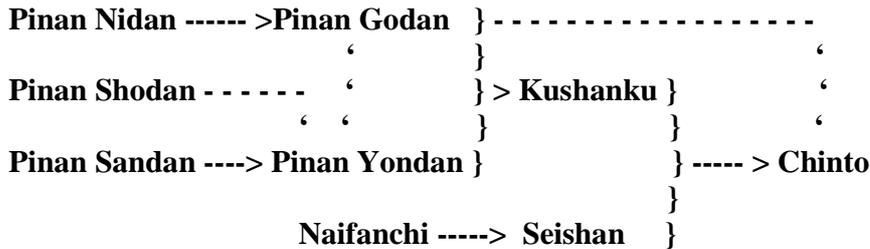


Midori Yama Budokai: *Hanshi's Corner*
 Written by Ron Rogers *Hanshi Meiyo Kyoju*

June 2011

Ichi go, ichi e: One life, one meeting

Wado-ryu Kata Schematic



Wado-ryu, as *Isshin-ryu*, uses a minimum of *kata*. The only original system with fewer *kata*, was *Uechi-ryu*, with *Sanchin*, *Seisan* and *Sanseiru*. Others have been added, bringing the total of *Uechi-ryu kata* to nine. *Wado-ryu* uses only nine, with relationships among them being taught.

Wado-ryu teaches that *Pinan Nidan* and *Pinan Godan* are directly related, as are *Pinan Shodan* and *Pinan Sandan* with *Pinan Yondan*. *Pinan Godan* and *Pinan Yondan* are directly related to *Kushanku*. *Naifanchi* is directly related to *Seishan*, and the two of them, with *Kushanku* are directly related to *Chinto*. In addition, *Pinan Sandan* and *Pinan Godan* are indirectly related, as are *Pinan Godan* and *Pinan Yondan*. Also, *Pinan Godan* is indirectly related to *Chinto*.

Pinan kata, in *Wado-ryu*, are combined in *Kushanku*. The second series, *Naifanchi* to *Seishan*, then combine with *Kushanku* to form *Chinto*.

This means that the movements and principles of the first directly related *kata* facilitate the execution of the one/s following it. It should be noted that *Wado-ryu* only uses *Naifanchi Shodan*. The *Nidan* and *Sandan* variations are omitted. Otsuka Hironori, *Wado-ryu's* founder, makes the following statement about *Naifanchi* [note the slight variation in *Romaji*]: "I personally favour *Naihanchi*. It is not interesting to the eye, but it is extremely difficult to use. *Naihanchi* increases in difficulty with more time spent practicing it; however there is something "deep" about it. It is fundamental to any movement that requires reaction...I, however, prefer this over all else and hence I incorporate it into my movement. This has three *katas*, *Shodan*, *Ni-dan* and *San-dan*, but the last two are almost useless." Note that three *karateka* indicated *Naihanchi (Shodan)* as the most important *kata*: Funakoshi Gichin, Motobu Choki and Otsuka Hironori (who studied with both Funakoshi and Motobu). This seems to be the only thing upon which Funakoshi and Motobu did agree. Likewise, only *Kushanku Dai* is used, the *Sho* form being omitted.

The major difference between *Wado-ryu* and other *Shotokan/Shotokai* Schools is the inclusion of Japanese *jujutsu*. Japanese *jujutsu* is specified because *tuite* (grappling inherent in the *kata*) was already known to the Okinawan *karateka*. In addition, the *Wado-ryu* is considered as a branch of *Shindo Yoshin Ryu Jujutsu*, which has received

strong influences from Okinawan *Karate*. *Tuite* was the Okinawan version of Chinese Chin-na and *kyusho* was the Okinawan version of dim mak.

Many years (actually, decades!) ago, your *hanshi meiyo kyōju* visited and worked out with a *Wado-ryū* group. One of the unique aspects of this group was that every stance was “double-weighted.” That is, except when kicking, both feet were in contact with the ground. In *Chinto*, for example, the kicking foot was not “chambered” behind or beside the opposite knee, prior to kicking. The kicking foot was brought beside the opposite foot, and then raised to kick.

***Karate-do*, the Way of the Empty Hand**

Kara, meaning empty, is believed to have originated from the Sanskrit term for the ancient metaphysical concept of emptiness or nothingness. *Kara* may also be rendered *ku*, or void. This is similar in concept to, “the earth was without form and void...” Funakoshi Gichin, who advocated the use of *kara* (empty) over *kara* (*Tō*, or Tang) wrote: “As a mirror’s polished surface reflects whatever stands before it, and a quiet valley carries even small sounds, so must the student of *Karate-do* render their mind empty of selfishness, and wickedness in an effort to react appropriately toward anything they might encounter. This is the meaning of the *kara* (empty) of *Karate-do*.” One of the reasons for the change of character was the attempt to change *karate* to a Japanese art. In addition to the change in name, Funakoshi also changed the names of the Okinawan *kata* to give them a more Japanese flavor.

Based on: *The Shotokan Karate Bible: Beginner to Black Belt* by Ashley P. Martin

Motobu Ryū* (*Nihon Denryū Heihō Motobu Kenpō* or *Japan’s Traditional Tactics, Motobu Kempō*): *Motobu Chōki

There has been much misinformation concerning Motobu Chōki. One of the most prevalent is his size. He has been touted at anywhere from six feet to seven feet tall and from 200 to 300 pounds. The implication being that anyone that size with just minimal skills would be a formidable fighter. The truth is, Motobu was between 5’3” and 5’4” tall, weighing approximately 170 pounds, and he was well trained in *Ryūkyū Kenpō*.

The second myth is that he was illiterate. We know from his handwriting he was not illiterate. His hand is strong and polished suggesting a powerful mind polished by an extensive education in the liberal arts as befitted a person of his rank. Many of his writings have survived and they indicate a well-educated individual. In 1926, he authored a book, *Ryūkyū Kempō Karatejutsu Kumite* (*The Okinawan Boxing Art of Karatejutsu*). In 1932, he wrote a second book, *Watashi no Karate-jutsu* (*My Method Karate*). He seems to have been a straightforward, intelligent, but uncomplicated type of person. He did lack Funakoshi’s education and knowledge of Japanese culture and etiquette, and did not speak mainland Japanese (*Yamatoguchi*) very well. The Okinawans had their own dialect, (*Uchinaaguchi*) which was often incomprehensible to the Japanese. Therefore, it is true that he was not well educated in Japanese customs and language, as he spoke the Okinawan dialect, but he was well educated in the customs and language of his country. In fact, he was polite and very rigid in good manners not only for himself but also for his disciples.

There was bitterness between Motobu and Funakoshi, but this had as much to do with class as with ability. Motobu was born into a high-ranking family, two classes above that of Funakoshi. A Japanese *karate* teacher named Fujiwara has pointed out that in the rigid

social ranking system of Okinawa, this made it impossible for Motobu to regard Funakoshi as his superior in any way. In reality he was a member of a prominent aristocratic family of such status that Funakoshi would not normally have come into social contact with him, let alone been regarded his equal. Motobu Chōki was born on April 5, 1870. His father Chōshin was a descendent of the sixth son of the Okinawan King, Shō Shitsu, namely Prince Shō Ko, also known as Motobu Chōhei. Due to this lineage, the male members of the family were permitted to retain the "Chō" character in their given names. Probably more to the point was the two men were of incompatible personalities. Motobu never rated Funakoshi very highly as a *karateka*. According to Motobu, Funakoshi had only been a minor figure on the Okinawan *karate* scene. The truly bad feeling began in Japan, when three of Funakoshi's senior students (Ohtsuka, Konishi, and Kuniba Kose) had grown disappointed with Funakoshi's teaching and began studying with Motobu. They found Motobu's *karate* much more logical and effective. In addition, when Motobu, at age fifty, defeated a European boxer, the newspaper ran the story with a picture of Funakoshi. The implication being that Funakoshi was the person who beat the boxer. This made Motobu "super angry," though it was not Funakoshi's fault. Ohtsuka Hironori, Funakoshi's former student and founder of *Wado-ryu*, agrees with the view of Konishi Yasuhiro. Konishi was quite close to Motobu for several years and never once saw him in an actual fight. Konishi felt that, although Motobu was obviously an exceptional fighter, he would never provoke trouble and was actually a very quiet person and quite a solitary man.

From a very early age, Motobu loved *karate*, watching his half-brother, Chōyu, and copying his techniques. In addition, a relative visited and worked with the young Chōki. Kanagusuku Sanda, Chōki's mentor, was an *ufuchiku* (police superintendent), and a student of Bushi Matsumura. Due to his position in the Okinawan class system, any *karate* master would have been obligated to teach Motobu if asked. Motobu worked with Itotsu Ankoh, Matsumura Sokon (*Shurite*), Matsumura Kosaku and Tokumine Shitsunen. Chōsei states that he asked his father, Chōki, who was the greatest martial artist he had known. Chōki immediately replied that it was Matsumura Sokon. Motobu Chōki stated that Matsumura was unsurpassed in *kata* application and the ability to read the opponent's intentions.

Another myth is that he only knew *Naihanchi Shōdan*. He also knew, at least, *Passai* and *Useishi* (*Gojūshihō*). These would be today's *Bassai Dai* and *Gojūshihō Dai*. Some sources contend that the *Passai* of Motobu was different enough to be called *Motobu Passai*. Other *kata* passed to students by Motobu were *Naihanchi Nidan*, *Channan* (the predecessor of the *Pinan*), *Wanshu*, *Wankan*, *Chinto*, *Kushanku* and *Chinte*. Motobu had been taught that one must spend at least one year on a *kata* before learning another. As *Naihanchi Shōdan* was his favorite, he would begin with this one. Most of the persons studying with him never stayed past a year; consequently, they only learned this one *kata*, and perpetuated the myth that this was the only *kata* Motobu knew. Motobu was said not to like *kata*, but the truth is he wanted them to relate to actual fighting – at least in his thinking. He apparently developed his own *kata*, *Shiro Kuma* (White Bear). For Motobu, the important points of *Naihanchi* were the stance and the use of the hips to generate power in a very close position to the opponent. His *karate* stressed practicality, alertness and sharpness. One of the major differences was in the use of the *hikite*. Motobu did not pull the non-striking arm back to the side or hip, but kept it in front of the body for

immediate use. He referred to this as *meotode* or husband and wife hand, as they should work together. He also – long before Bruce Lee – advocated punching with the lead hand, as it was faster, being closer to the opponent. Another of his innovations was to protect his center line and attack the center line of the opponent. With this was the admonition to always enter (*irimi*) and never step back. Motobu also stressed that *neko ashi dachi* (cat stance) should never be taken. He believed this was a defensive stance and to assume it was to admit to the opponent you were losing. He was renowned for *keikoken* (one-knuckle fist), and struck the *tachi makiwara* at full force with this natural weapon. He used kicks sparingly, and believed they should never be used as the primary attack. His belief was to use them only if you were superior in strength to your opponent, or had already weakened him with punches.

Today two schools teach *Motobu Ryu*. Motobu Chōsei, Motobu Chōki's youngest son, now teaches *Motobu-ryu* as his father taught it to him. In addition, there is *Motobu Ryu Udundi*, which is the family art of Motobu Chōyu, Motobu Chōki's half brother.

Self-defense and Martial Arts

Although used interchangeably, the two are quite different, with some similarities. Self-defense is the defense of oneself or of one's rights, beliefs or actions. By definition, "martial" arts were techniques designed for the battlefield. With the first, a person may legally only use necessary force to stop the attack. Once the attack is stopped, anything else becomes excessive. The key is "necessary" force. This is usually interpreted to mean a complimentary level of force. For instance, if a person grabs your wrist, a release or restraint match the attack. In most situations, shooting the person because he or she grabbed your wrist would be considered excessive. Abduction (kidnapping) – if the intent could be proven – may possibly be an exception. Martial implies that any means of dealing with the foe (as in war) is acceptable, as in war the opponent is presumed to be ready and willing to use deadly force. The above, of course, is over-simplistic. "Martial arts," as they are usually taught today, are more concerned with the "art," than the "martial." Facets of each "martial art" may, in any given situation, be the force necessary. A by-product of studying any of the martial arts is self-confidence, and confidence is the single most important aspect of self-defense. Certain crimes (robbery, mugging, etc) are based on the criminal choosing a person that will be presumed "weak," or "easy." Consequently, most career criminals will not choose a person whom they perceive as "strong," confident and willing to fight back. Gang attacks and kidnapping do not fall within these parameters and must be dealt with differently. In addition, some states have a "back-to-the-wall" law, which means you must have no possible means of escape before a defense may be mounted. Each instructor should know the state laws concerning self-defense in his or her particular state, and be prepared to teach accordingly.

Sean Connery and the Martial Arts

Sir Sean Connery was taking martial arts lessons during the filming of *Never Say Never Again*. During this time, he angered the instructor who in turn broke Connery's wrist. Connery stayed with the wrist broken for a number of years, thinking it was only a minor pain. The instructor was Steven Seagal. In an earlier James Bond Movie, *You Only Live Twice*, Oyama Masutatsu *Sosai* awarded an honorary *Shōdan* in *Kyokushinkai* to Sir Sean Connery. Some sources claim *Sandan* and *Black Belt Magazine* got it completely

wrong by stating it was an actual – not honorary – *Godan*. As an aside, Donn F. Draeger, martial arts and hopology expert, was the stunt double for Connery during the filming of *You Only Live Twice*.