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11 March 2011

Ryukoku Seidokan Karate Kobudo Renmei

Volume III, Issue I

11 March 2011

RSKRR International Conference 2012

By Scott Bennett, Sandan

Next year's international RSKRR conference will be coming up faster than we know it--and there's no better time than now to start preparing for it. We realize this will be a major investment for those of you who choose to make the trip and we guarantee that the experience will be well worth your time and money. The Honbu dojo staff is dedicated to providing karateka visitors to Okinawa with a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The initial proposed agenda has been posted on the RSKRR website and we are actively planning to make this a truly unforgettable experience. The majority of training will take place at the brand new state of the art Koza Budokan. Both Sensei Toma and Sensei Tamae will be in attendance. In addition, we are recruiting other Okinawa Masters to teach and demonstrate their respective specialties.

Not only will the karate training be top notch, but we are also scheduling several cultural events during the one week conference. Opening ceremonies for the conference will include a taiko drumming perform-

ance by Nix Hamaya Taiko as well as a traditional Okinawa dance performance. There will be several trips to locations throughout the island, including Ryukyu Mura Folk Village, Shuri Castle, Shureido Karate Store, Naha Budokan and an Okinawa Kobudo Museum. Each night we will coordinate group dinners to local Okinawa restaurants that serve sushi, Okinawa soba, and various other Okinawan favorite dishes.

We would like to use the RSKRR Facebook group as our primary means of answering questions for the conference. In order to serve the group better we will keep a running tab of all questions and answers. Please post all question on the Facebook group under the 2012 Okinawa Conference tab. Or you may email me directly at smjbennett@mac.com with any questions and I'll post them on Facebook.

We cannot stress enough the importance of this valuable opportunity to visit Okinawa and train

with the RSKRR staff and Okinawa masters. We will do everything we can to make this a truly memorable experience. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns about the conference, international travel, or general questions about Okinawa. We eagerly await a mass turnout for this event and look forward to seeing old friends as well as making new ones.



Training on one of the beautiful beaches of Okinawa.

Growing New Seidokan Dojos -By Rodney Grantham, Godan

Although our unique situation in Colorado has possibly made it easier to establish satellite dojos, I believe we have been quite successful in spreading the knowledge and principles of Sensei Toma. First of all, we start our students from the beginning to train not only karate-ka, but also to develop teachers. Class sizes are small, so we normally combine older students of all ranks together rather than split them up. Students under the age of

10 are taught separately in a class we call Little Dragons.

All classes begin with traditional warm ups to prevent injury. Little Dragons follow warm-ups with Kihon Kata, while the older student do both Kihon Kata and Ananku. After that, the highest ranking student below Black Belt takes the beginning students to continue working on Kihon Kata and Ananku. We work through the kata in a similar fash-

ion, with the next ranking students below Black Belt taking aside groups working on Wansu and Seisan and Passai, until only the Black Belts are left to split among the different groups. This works well in training students of all ranks in teaching, with the teachers of small groups always having a Black Belt, including me, available to answer questions as needed.

How do you know if you're ready to start your own

Cont. on pg. 2

To Build on Shian Toma's legacy through dedication and discipline



...be the Sensei that inspires.



Sensei Rodney Grantham, Sensei Toma, and Sensei Ron Nix

dojo? By the time our Black Belts move away, they are ready to teach if they have the desire and will to continue training in Seidokan.

What is it like for a new Black Belt sensei to set up a dojo? Excitement, nervousness, and anxiety are a few words that come to mind. Probably the hardest part in setting up a dojo is finding the location to hold classes. I, myself, began by starting an after-school program in which an all-purpose room and insurance were provided to me. Students could enroll in this class for free if they were on the honor roll. To my surprise, my very first class contained 63 students! The only cost to students were their karate-gi, testing fees, and \$10 per month for students not on the honor roll. Adults who wished to join the

class paid me \$20 a month directly. I have taught in churches, community centers, and other public facilities. Most of these locations can be obtained at little or no cost if you sell the program as designed for kids. In most cases, the sponsor provides the insurance. When I first started teaching it was trial and error, although now we have a network in place so new teachers can learn from each other, as well as from my own past mistakes.

What support is needed for new teachers? New teachers world-wide now have a terrific system in place to answer questions and provide certificates through the RSKKR. I was lucky in that Sensei Nix and I never lost touch with each other over the years. Things were a little slower in the beginning as e-mail and Vonage phones were not available and everything had to be

done by snail-mail. As far as my own satellite dojos, my phone was always ringing, answering questions on how to handle certain students and questions on bunkai.

What is it like to serve as mentor to junior Black Belt senseis? It is quite gratifying to see them succeed in what they do. I now have three students who have started dojos of their own: Sensei Michael Farren in Dove Creek, CO; Sensei Victor Pilcher in Mancos, CO; Sensei Kaitlyn Farren in Elizabethtown, PA; and possibly soon, Sensei Sarah Stroup in Grand Junction, CO. Sensei Carrie Hope Fulmer had a dojo in Houston, TX but was forced to close when her full-time job moved to the Carolinas. I still field questions for them continuously on all aspects of the dojo, and am very proud of all of them!



"Nanadan Ricardo Emerson retired this year as reigning Kata Grand Champion of Puerto Rico, but he's pleased with his replacement—his student David Pinedo. Pinedo was named Puerto Rico's Grand Champion for 2011 in Kata and Kumite at a tournament in Catano, Puerto Rico on November 21, 2010. Eight other students from Sensei Emerson's Okinawan Seidokan Karate Kobudo Dojo of Puerto Rico participated, along with students from nine other dojos. Pinedo's execution of Gojushiho, pictured here, earned him top Kata honors."



Welcome to new RSKKR Member Dojos

Okinawan Seidokan Dojo, Puerto Rico
Sensei Ricardo Emerson
March 2010

Sensei Vince Shahan
April 2010

Wylie Seidokan Karate Dojo
Sensei Dennis Sukut
Nov 2010

Colorado Seidokan Karate Dojo
Sensei Rodney Grantham
Dec 2010

Dove Creek Seidokan Karate Club
Sensei Mike Farren
Dec 2010

Mancos Seidokan Karate Club
Sensei Victor Pilcher
Dec 2010

Seidokan Club of Elizabethtown, PA
Sensei Kaitlyn Farren
Dec 2010

Okinawa Karate Club of Harrisburg
Sensei Ben Rocuskie
Dec 2010

To Build On Shian Toma's legacy through dedication and discipline

Brown and Black Belt Promotions at Seidokan Dojos

Torii Dojo, Pennsylvania

Sensei Ed Duga

Kurt Sieber - Nanadan
Matt Kohler - Godan

Okinawan Seidokan Dojo, Puerto Rico

4 Oct 2010

Bernardo Alvarado - Nidan
Jesus Castro - Shodan
Nathan Castro - Shodan

Okinawan Seidokan Dojo, Puerto Rico

12 Jan 2011

Reynaldo Contreras - Shodan
Edgardo Rodriguez - Shodan

Okinawa Karate Club of Harrisburg

Sensei Ben Rocuskie

21 Dec 2010

Chris Sternbergh - Yondan
Toni Donchak - Sandan
Paul Farrell - Sandan
Brian Foster - Nidan

Colorado Seidokan Karate Sensei Rodney Grantham

Dec 2010/Jan 2011

Garyn Knuckles - Shodan
Heather Graham - Shodan
Jeffrey Sparks - Shodan
Michael Aman - 3rd Kyu

Honbu Dojo, Okinawa

Sensei Ron Nix

26 Feb 2011

Ian Wallace - 1st Kyu
Ayumi Sharp - 2nd Kyu
Courtland Boyd - 2nd Kyu
Alexian Jennings - 2nd Kyu
Kelly Aiello - 3rd Kyu
Cinda Doggett - 3rd Kyu
Keisuke Nagamine - Jr. Black Belt
Aira Okawa - Jr. Black Belt
Towa Yamashiro - Jr. Black Belt
Eren Yamashiro - Jr. Black Belt

Okinawa Seidokan of Jacksonville, NC

Sensei Keith James

28 Oct 2010

Aira Mora - 1st Kyu
Jaden Scott - 2nd Kyu
Kristina Shepard - 2nd Kyu

Seidokan Martial Arts of Oklahoma

Sensei Adolph Pearson

4 Dec 2010

Paul Sinz - Shodan

Seidokan of NY Sensei Joe Diliberto 2010

Kevin Cannan - Sandan
Dan Cannan - Sandan
Philip Ewell - Sandan
George Bradt - Nidan
Stephen Scott - Nidan
Francois Auclair - Shodan
Robert Huber - Shodan
Peter Diliberto - 1st Kyu
Gerry Diliberto - 1st Kyu
Mike Masco - 2nd Kyu
Peter Berecz - 2nd Kyu
William Roth - 3rd Kyu
Nathan Anthony - 3rd Kyu
Chris Benton - 3rd Kyu



Kyudan Ed Duga promotes senior students Matt Kohler to Godan and Kurt Sieber to



Yama Bushi Seidokan Karate Team Blairsville GA

Attention: All Adult brown and black belt students of RSKKR member dojos please send your point of contact info to jdvecchio@ryukokuseidokan.com so you can be listed individually in our membership roster.

To Build On Shian Toma's legacy through dedication and discipline

Strikers and Grapplers - By Sensei Ron Nix 9th Dan

No doubt over the years when it comes to defending yourself, there have been many articles written on strikers and grapplers. Which style is superior? Is there a definite answer? I thought I would give my unbiased opinion on the subject as it pertains to Seidokan Karate. To understand where we are today we may need to go back to simpler times. In the early years of Okinawa Martial Arts there were only 3 basic styles of striking Karate: Shuri-te, Naha-Te and Tomari-Te, all from China and originally called Tou-Te (China Hand). These styles, collectively known as Okinawa-Te or Okinawan Karate, quickly spread to Japan, Korea and around the world mainly because foreigners were so amazed with the capabilities of Okinawan Karate and took the time to learn the art well enough to teach it.

As for the history of Western-style Boxing, Muay Thai Boxing, and Kick Boxing, these forms of defenses may be traced back for many centuries. These disciplines can be brutal and are a force to deal with because their ability to deliver and absorb a tremendous amount of punishment for many rounds forces fighters to be in the best shape possible. Because of its brutality, hundreds of participants have been killed in the ring. It wasn't until the mid 1800's that the Marquess of Queensberry Rules changed Boxing forever and governed how the fighters are to conduct themselves in the ring. The basis of these rules is still in use today.

As for the grappling side of the house, Motobu-ryu, Judo, Aikido, Jujutsu, wrestling and others were completely different forms of fighting compared to the striking fighters. Most of the grappling arts have also been around for centuries but it wasn't until Judo in the late 1800's that grapplers were on the map for the world to see. Other martial arts began to pop up and also spread like wild fire. With over a thousand martial arts practiced in the world today, sooner or later the question would come up-- which is BEST?

Needless to say, there were always matches between dojos. Challenges were issued through local tournaments on friendly terms, although some challenges were met in back alleys

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The Motobu-Ryu Influence on Seidokan Karate - By Julie Del Vecchio

One of Sensei Shian Toma's greatest martial arts influences was Sensei Seikichi Uehara, master of the Motobu-ryu style. It was from Motobu-ryu that Seidokan Karate has its repertoire of joint locks we know as Toide. Many of us think of Toide techniques as the great equalizer between opponents of disparate size.

According to an article in *Black Belt* magazine, published in June 1990, Motobu-ryu was considered such an effective martial art that it was kept very secret, even from other Okinawans. The story of how Seikichi Uehara learned this art confirms this idea. Choki Motobu, as a younger son, was not permitted to learn any Motobu-ryu

techniques. Even spying on his father teaching the moves to his older brother did not give Choki enough knowledge to be an effective fighter in the style. Finally, Choki sought his martial arts training elsewhere and was able to piece together most of his family's secret art. As an "outsider" who had learned the style, Choki did not mind teaching it to someone else, and Seikichi Uehara, around the year 1940, was the fortunate student. In 1961 Sensei Uehara began teaching Motobu-ryu to others, including Shian Toma.

Akemi Nix, born during the era of the "United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands," remembers that many of the old Karate masters--

aware of Okinawans' smaller stature-- were concerned about giving the physically larger Americans their knowledge of Toide and other secret techniques. In the 1940s-70s, many other Okinawan martial artists would teach foreigners only the Karate basics. Sensei Shian Toma, however, was one of the few on the island willing to teach Americans his full range of martial arts capabilities. We, through Sensei Toma, are also the fortunate students.

[Thank-you to RSKKR member Sensei Frank Eberhart for sending his copy of the 1990 *Black Belt* magazine and to Sensei Ron Nix and Sensei Akemi Nix for their additional information on the Motobu-ryu style.]



Sensei Uehara and Sensei Toma
Early 80s



From the 1970s, Sensei Uehara and Sensei Toma.

To Build On Shian Toma's legacy through dedication and discipline

Strikers and Grapplers, cont. from page 4

where serious injuries or even death could result. Even these matches usually didn't cross the line between strikers and grapplers. It wasn't until June 26, 1976, when the highly anticipated fight between Muhammad Ali (Boxing) versus Antonio Inoki (Wrestling) took place, that the walls between strikers and grapplers begin to fall. The match ended in a draw, leaving most people more confused than ever. Muhammad Ali threw very few punches because Antonio Inoki spent most of the time lying on his back, kicking Ali's legs. After the match, Muhammad Ali suffered blood clots in his legs because of the kicks.

After the Ali-Inoki match there were minor contests between strikers and grapplers, but it wasn't until 1993 when the first Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) opened their doors to a worldwide audience that Mixed Martial Artist (MMA) fighters from all disciplines came together to do battle. The UFC pitted fighters in a winner take all tournament--no weight class, almost no rules, and inside a caged ring. The initial UFC tournaments were dominated by a small-framed Martial Artist named Royce Gracie (Gracie Jiu-jitsu), proving size didn't matter. Grapplers seemed to have the upper hand once the match went to the ground, so it forced many fighters to re-evaluate their methods. Only the ones who evolved their technique were able to continue to win. Even the Gracie's soon found out that using only one style of fighting limited their victories. Learning how to kick, punch, and block properly were just as important as grappling.

Many people disapproved of this type of fighting and considered it too violent, banning the sport from many states. UFC was forced to change many rules over the years and slowly these fights gained momentum. Now the UFC has one of the largest fan base followings in sports.

Where does Seidokan Karate stand among the strikers and the grapplers? We are in a unique situation because Sensei Toma wasn't afraid of breaking boundaries decades before it became popular to do so. In many ways, Sensei Toma was able to see the future by stepping off the beaten path. I'm sure he was questioned numerous times by his peers because of his actions, but why just punch or kick or just grapple? To be an effective martial artist one must use all weapons equally. As a military man who spent over 20 years in the United States Air Force, I realize that strike aircraft is only one part of our defense. For the military to be effective it must incorporate all branches of the military into a cohesive force. I believe this was one reason Sensei Toma adapted the Motobu-ryu (Toide) style into his arsenal. He must have known that many encounters on the street starting at long range would quickly end up in a close quarter situation, which could find you and your opponent eventually on the ground. Initially in most situations we are not in control. Once the attack happens it's our defense and counter toward an attacker that puts us in control.

Sensei Toma gave us many tools over the years and it's up to us to

read between the lines and blend the styles together for a more effective fighting art. Okinawa Karate (a striking martial art) and Motobu-ryu/Toide (a grappling martial art) should not be like oil and water. These fighting arts should be intertwined to confuse and defeat the enemy as quickly as possible. We must find the right combination of long, intermediate, and close range weapons that will make Seidokan Karate the fighting Art it was meant to be. In my opinion, we should not be afraid of pushing our style to the limit. We need to step out of our routines sometimes and look at all possible angles, realizing that our students may sometimes have the answers the instructors are looking for. Let's be the best we can be for the sake of Seidokan Karate. Stay Strong.

Sensei Ron Nix 9th Dan
Honbu Dojo, Okinawa



Grappling (top) and Striking (bottom) Seidokan style



Training at Honbu Dojo



To Build On Shian Toma's legacy through dedication and discipline

Ryukoku Seidokan Karate Kobudo Renmei

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Thank You to Chris and Maureen Benway for their outstanding service as the outgoing editors of this newsletter.



Recollections of Sensei Shian Toma - By Frank Eberhart

Sensei Frank Eberhart of The Okinawan Institute of Karate-Do in New Jersey trained in Sensei Shian Toma's dojo in the early 1970s. Here are some of his recollections:

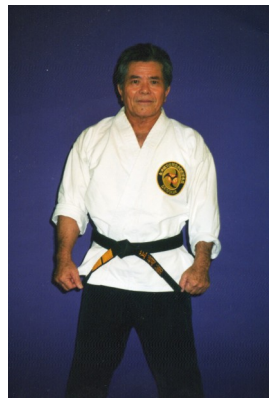
Of Sensei Shian Toma: Sensei Toma had a double-edged knife he once wrapped around his hand with rope and rammed straight through a piece of wood. After unwrapping the rope we saw there was not a scratch on his hand. One day I was walking with another student, Tom Thomas, when we saw Sensei Toma and waved to him. He looked over and waved, but when he looked back there was a car about three feet directly in front of him. In a flash he jumped up in the air and came down after the car passed. Another day we broke wine bottles and placed them face up with their

jagged edges. [Comment: This would have to go into the category of "do not try this at home"] Sensei Toma laid down, shirtless, with his back on the glass, and then we piled 100 pounds of concrete blocks on his chest. He had us break the blocks apart with a sledgehammer and when he got up he did not even have any indentations on his back.

Of Sensei Seiko Higa*, one of Sensei Toma's Goju-ryu teachers who sometimes taught at Sensei Toma's dojo: At a demonstration in Japan I had to attack Master Higa--that was the fastest I ever hit a floor and tapped out! I believe it was Master Higa I once saw pick up a filled water cooler on its side with one hand.

[Comment--*This is a story said to have come from Sensei Seiko Higa, told to a Naha Technical High School teacher, Kiyohiko Higa. Kiyohiko Higa recorded the story in an article entitled "Sometimes I Play Karate Like the Okinawan Dance *Hanachidori*: Karate and Okinawan Dance is the Same," published in *Aoi Umi* ("Blue Sea") magazine, February 1978.

One day Sensei Seiko Higa went with his sensei, Chojun Miyagi (founder of the Goju-ryu style) and another student, Jin-an Shinzato, to visit a man rumored to be a Karate master, Matsu Kinjo of Itoman village. Sensei Miyagi asked the elderly Kinjo Sensei to show them his best fighting kata. Kinjo Sensei put on a hachimaki headband and began to dance. Miyagi Sensei tried to better explain himself, thinking the old man misunderstood; Higa-san thought the old man was simply crazy. As the man continued to dance, Shinzato-san lost his patience and moved in to spar with Kinjo Sensei. With Shinzato-san's first move, however, Kinjo Sensei used the bunkai of his dance to throw Shinzato-san hard on the ground. Embarrassed and not knowing what else to do, Miyagi Sensei, Higa-san, and Shinzato-san bowed to Kinjo Sensei and left.]

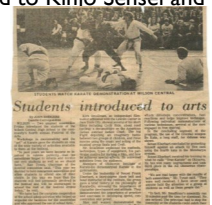


Above:
Sensei Toma, early 1990s

Right:
Training at Sensei Toma's Gate 2 Dojo in the late 80s



Back Lt. to Rt.
Morito, Jimmy Mcvanage (passed away) S. Africa, Don Hayhurst
Front Lt. to Rt.
Sensei Mimoun Boulahfa (Spain), Sensei Toma, Ron Nix



This photo is of Sensei Frank Eberhart in 1973, giving local high school students a demonstration of Okinawan Seidokan Karate by fighting five people with Passai bunkai.

Renmei Officers and Staff

Shian Toma, Judan: Senior Advisor
Shigemitsu Tamae, Kyudan: Senior Advisor
Ron Nix, Kyudan: President
Akemi Nix, Godan: Vice President
Donnie Hayhurst, Godan: USA Liaison/
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