

Teachings of Shinto Muso Ryu

Nishioka Tsuneo

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Biographical Information

Jodojo

Summary

Nishioka Tsuneo started his training under Shimizu Takaji in 1938 at the age of 14. Nishioka studied constantly with Shimizu Takaji until Shimizu's death in 1978. Nishioka received Oku-iri in 1941, Shomokuroku in 1943 and Gomokuroku in 1966. In 1975 Nishioka received his Menkyo Kaiden or "license of full transmission" from Shimizu Takaji. During this time Nishioka started teaching and training with the Zen Nihon Kendo Renmei but has ceased to be involved with them.

Nishioka created the Sei Ryu Kai in honor of Shimizu Takaji after his death by using the kanji found in his name to form Sei 清 Ryu 隆 Kai 会, which could be interpreted as "Shimizu Takaji's" group. Nishioka actively teaches in Japan and hosts several students from around the world. He has traveled the globe several times through the years to teach Shinto Muso Ryu Jo and spread the art.

Nishioka Shishou – SMRJ Personal History

1924 Born in Tokyo

1938 Became student of Shimizu Takaji Katsuyasu Sensei, at Tenkoukai Dojo (Touyama, Shibuya-ku)

1941 Was given Oku-iri of SMRJ

1943 Was given Shomokuroku of SMRJ

1966 Was given Gomokuroku of SMRJ

1972 Was given Menkyo of SMRJ. During this time, Nishioka Sensei learnt the associated bujutsu: SMR kenjutsu, Ikkakuryu Jutte jutsu, Isshinryu Kusarigamajutsu, Uchidaryu Tanjo jutsu.

1975 In May Nishioka Sensei was taught the 5 'hidden' techniques by Shimizu Sensei and Otofujii Sensei, in Kyoto. He was given menkyo kaiden (certificate of full teaching authorisation)

1978 In May Shimizu Sensei gave Nishioka Sensei the authorization to use a kanji from his name. On 22nd June, Shimizu Sensei passed away, and Nishioka Sensei realized he was one of the successors of SMRJ.

1981 In December, Otofujii Sensei gave Nishioka Sensei the authorization to use a kanji from his name. In relation to SMRJ, Nishioka Sensei's name was then written as Nishioka Tsuneo Yasunori.

Jodo Teaching Resume

1966~1977 Assisted teaching for Shimizu Sensei at Setagaya Rembukan

1977 Shimizu Sensei sent Nishioka Sensei to teach at the Yoyogi Koubukan.

1980 Matsumura Sensei chose to learn from Otofujii Sensei, and Nishioka Sensei stopped teaching there. From February, Okumura Sensei asked Nishioka Sensei to teach at the Koganei Budoukan.

1981 From November Nishioka Sensei taught at the Kawagoe Dojo associated with Kobayashi Sensei.

1982 In September Nishioka Sensei was asked to teach full time at the Nakano Junseikan of Oba-kanchou.

1983 From January Nishioka Sensei decided to only teach at the Junseikan Dojo.

1990 In March Nishioka Sensei stopped teaching at the Junseikan (isshinjou no tsugou de). From June, Nishioka Sensei was learning kendo from Okubo Sensei at the Kokubunji Kanekogakuen. Previously, Nishioka Sensei started to learn kendo from Sanbonmatsu Sensei at the Junseikan.

1991 In March, Nishioka Sensei was asked to teach at the Setagaya Jobukan. From November, he started teaching jodo at Kanekogakuen, and made the Kokubunji Jodo Kai.

1993 Phillip Relnick approached Nishioka Sensei to become the Technical Advisor of the IJF. In August, Nishioka Sensei attended as Technical Advisor of the IJF International Gasshuku in Hawaii for the first time.

1995 Nishioka Sensei helped Mitsuyama Sensei build the Sekiunkan at Hino, and keiko started in January. In August, Nishioka Sensei helped Phil Relnick Sensei build his dojo in Seattle. In the same year, Nishioka Sensei helped Pascal Kreiger Sensei build his Keikoshokon Dojo in Switzerland.

1997 In April, Shikanai Sensei asked Nishioka Sensei to teach his Aikido students in Brazil.

2000 For the commemoration of the 400th year anniversary of the relation between Japan and Holland, Nishioka Sensei held a demonstration with Pascal Krieger's students in Amsterdam in April.

2001 In August, Nishioka Sensei assisted with the opening ceremony of Shikanai Sensei's dojo in Brazil.

2002 In June, Nishioka Sensei stopped teaching at Sekiunkan.

2002 From August, Nishioka Sensei started teaching at the Bunbunkan dojo, Asagaya.
2003 August. Nishioka Sensei leads the 9th Triennial IJF Gasshuku in Vesc, France.
2005 May. First Sei Ryu Kai Gasshuku in Iwai, Chiba.
2006 May. Second Sei Ryu Kai Gasshuku in Meiji Jingu, Tokyo.
2006 August. Nishioka Sensei leads the 10th Triennial IJF Gasshuku in Bel Horizonte, Brazil.
2007 May. Third Sei Ryu Kai Gasshuku in Ogose, Saitama.
2008 May. Fourth Sei Ryu Kai Gasshuku in Matsumoto, Nagano.
2008 August. Nishioka Sensei teaches at the EJF annual gasshuku in Madrid, Spain.
2009 February. Nishioka Sensei stopped teaching at Bunbukan.

All Japan Kendo Federation Resume

1958 Received Jodo 5th dan.
1961 Jodo Renshi certificate
1969 Jodo Kyoshi certificate
1971 Received Jodo 6th dan.
1976 Received Jodo 7th dan.
1978 Became the founding board chairman of the Tokyo Kendo Federation's Jodo Kai.
1980 Retired as board chairman, and became a member of the board.
1984 Retired as Head Secretary, and remained a board member.
1987 Received Jodo 8th dan
1991 Jodo Hanshi certificate

This personal history has been translated from the Japanese version published on Sensei's website.

Master Tsuneo Nishioka was born in 1924 in Tokyo. In his words, both his parents were very ordinary people, and none of his ancestors nor relatives practiced Budo. When master was 14 years old, he was introduced to Budo. He had just graduated from primary school and he started working and going to night school. One of his senior workers overheard young Nishioka saying "I want to learn Budo". So he took Nishioka to the Dojo of Shinto Muso Ryu Jojutsu run by the then Headmaster, Shimizu Takaji Sensei. "I recall that Shimizu-sensei was just over 40 years old. He looked like a kind uncle from the country side, and didn't have any scary image." Young Nishioka fell in love with Budo and he practiced morning and afternoon every day.

"The way Master Shimizu taught was the very traditional way, that one should learn by just watching him, so it was hard way. He demonstrated in front of his students and asked them to copy. Even if his student was missing the movement, he would never point out which part was wrong ... he just kept saying "Copy me, do as I do."

Master Nishioka says that Master Shimizu's movement had no habit or particular pattern so it was very hard to copy, but even so, he followed Master Shimizu as his life-teacher for the next 40 years.

The 2nd World War started and Master Nishioka's father passed away, so he quit night school and was working for a while. But he was soon drafted into the army and was being trained. Six months later, the war was finished. After that, he began working at a typewriter company for a while, and started working with computers. Today he owns and manages a software company.

At the same time, he has been practicing Jojutsu continuously and today teaches and leads his students in SMR Jodo.

extracted from an interview with David Dangerfield

Wikipedia

Nishioka Tsuneo (西岡常夫) (born 1924) - is a Japanese martial artist and the founder of the Shinto Muso-ryu Jōdō group Sei Ryu Kai (清隆会). As of 2012, Nishioka has retired from active teaching although several of his menkyo kaiden continue to transmit his teachings.

Nishioka Tsuneo started his training in Shinto Muso Ryu (神道夢想流) under Shimizu Takaji (清水隆次) in 1938 at the age of 14. Nishioka studied constantly with Shimizu Takaji until Shimizu's death in 1978. Nishioka received his first scroll of transmission (Oku-iri) in 1941, the second (Shomokuroku) in 1943 and (Gomokuroku) in 1966. In 1975 Nishioka received his Menkyo Kaiden or "license of full transmission" from Shimizu Takaji. During the above timeline Nishioka started teaching and training with the Zen Nihon Kendo Renmei but has ceased to be involved with them and has only returned to teach occasionally.

Nishioka created the Sei Ryu Kai in honor of Shimizu Takaji after his death by using the kanji found in his name to form Sei (or Shi) 清 ; Ryu 隆 –and Kai 会, which could be interpreted as “Shimizu Takaji's” group Within Sei Ryu Kai only Menkyo Kaiden issued by Nishioka Sensei are able to officially represent the ryu and authorized to transmit and teach as independent "licensed teachers". Lower levels of recognition such as Shomokuroku (lit.: Beginning Catalog) and Gomokuroku (Afterwards Catalog) are considered "Assistants" to an active Menkyo Kaiden or Shihan. According to Nishioka Sensei, a Shomokuroku isn't a qualification and is only an expression of the will of the predecessors to transmit "their hopes for the future", and it is still in the middle of the path.

Koryu.com

Nishioka Tsuneo began his training in Shinto Muso-ryu in 1938 under Shimizu Takaji, from whom he received menkyo kaiden, a license of complete transmission. He also holds the teaching license and grade of hanshi hachidan, awarded by the All-Japan Kendo Federation. He is the author of several books on the martial arts and heads the Seiryukai, a group devoted to preserving the teachings of Shimizu Sensei.

Interviews

The meaning of Budo from the perspective of a Koryu

What is Budo?

Our school is called Shinto Muso Ryu (SMR). It began about 400 years ago. I would like to build a large Honbu Dojo here.

Please tell us something about the SMR

This goes back to a person called Muso Gonnosuke Katsukishi, who was our first sensei. 400 years ago this master went to Kyushu, and now the SMR is spreading around the world. It has been passed down from master to master up to Shimizu Sensei, who has been here before me. He was the one who sent people out into the world. One of them was Pascal Krieger, who went to Europe. Philip Relnick went to America - and also in Brazil there is now SMR. Here is the center.

But there is the following problem: The art must be passed on from body to body and not from head to head, as it is now the common method to teach.

Abroad I cannot really talk to people, as for example to Brigitte Prasek from Vienna, because I speak only Japanese.

The origin and the Spirit of Budo (Sei Shin)?

The spirit of Bushido was passed down within the SMR by Muso Gonnosuke in the form of Kata. By studying these Kata, one understands the spirit of Bushido.

And this is the most difficult explanation. I have already written about this on my HP. (I gave this to Pascal in form of a CD. - *short Discussion about CD*. In French this is already available on the net, which is wonderful.)

There are many Kata in the SMR, but within them only 5 secrets (Uchikomi) are passed on - and no one can really understand them.

These 5 secrets are the nature of the SMR and of Budo. In Japan this is the case in all Ryu-Ha (= schools). Eg. in the Shin Kage Ryu. Usually there are three to five. The hard part is that you do not understand them. But the Uchikomi contain the nature of the secrets.

Aikido is very popular nowadays, but I'm not sure if anyone at all has inherited the spirit of O-Sensei Ueshiba. I even think he is understood less and less. Therefore, I am grateful for the interest in Jodo and find it important to spread SMR. Nitobe Inazu wrote his book "Bushido" - in my opinion - first in English in the Meiji period. I would also love to do that: write a book about Bushido.

The content should be that it is a brutal matter of life and death (Satsu - Batsu). The most important point is that it is about a serious battle (Shin Ken Shoubu) in which you want to take another's life - and then suddenly stop. Life is simply too important, and then you swap the roles (Kotai) . But unfortunately, people still kill.

I would most of all like to give a seminar (Jodo) to the Presidents of the various countries in order to make them understand this. It might sound like I'm crazy, but I mean that quite seriously.

After Meiji the Bushi were gone, and with them the katana, therefore it became more and more difficult to learn the art. Older people, who still know it, also disappear gradually, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to pass it on.

Budo is definitely not a sport. 60-80-year old people need to stay healthy and take care of themselves so that they can practice it as long as possible and pass it on. And that's why I rented this dojo and founded the Seiryukai. It is marvelous that specialists even come from Vienna, that they are interested in it.

Maybe all this seems absurd, but I think it makes sense and I am very grateful that I have learned this art. I have travelled a lot around the world. This year in Brazil a health incident occurred to me, and it's better that I do not go on trips any more, but instead pay more attention to my health.

But the others are still welcome to come to me. Not because of me but because of the art. Just as the people of Austria, France, and Scandinavia - they all visit me and I am very grateful.

When people visit me no more, I cannot pass on the art.

You said that Japan has changed a lot - how has it changed?

Because Japan is changing so much, some things should not change and something should remain. The most important thing has been lost: the true spirit of Bushido. Today, many misunderstand it. I have a hard time explaining this, I would prefer to do it in English or maybe in French - but I have to present it in Japanese.

The good thing is that what has been lost in Japan, is found again in other parts of the world. The most important has been transferred in the wrong way from generation to generation and therefore it has been misunderstood- especially in Budo - so Budo has turned into a sport. This has two reasons: firstly for bad explanations, on the other hand, a bad understanding of the listener.

There are many good books on Budo, but they are all just technical. Philosophical, there are very few, but those are more important. Each technique is based on a philosophy, and each country has its own philosophy. This ultimately gives identity. And everybody is looking for his identity. Today it is difficult to find ones identity.

Through Budo we find identity. Budo gives identity to the practitioner. At first glance, it's all about fighting and conflict (Shin Ken Sho). But life is unique and therefore too important, and you need the repetition (Kurigaeshi) to understand. In everyday life, everything is changing fast and for me it is not always comprehensible. With the children of my daughters I talk often, and then I'm not convincing for them.

The present generations understand things differently. But Transmission is important, and the same for every nation - it's almost like religion. Unlike my grandchildren, these people here in the dojo have chosen to do so, they had to decide to choose me. Because of such decisions Seiryukai exists at all. If I were arrogant, everyone would leave. Therefore I stay with the art and continue learning.

I am of the opinion that Bushido in today's era demands a new explanation. The essence has not changed - but the explanation. (Now we could go drink beer or tea, because we are grateful that you came from Vienna. - while Dojo Cho lays the table.)

In the SMR learning is done with the principle of Uchidachi and Shidachi. This principle is almost impossible to explain, but a summary can be read in Pascal's book. Today we think that sport is better.

(Unintelligible question)

Bushido and Budo are the same, but that leads to an extreme point of view. And therefore the new explanation, which is in line with the times...

Anywhere in the dojo you can find sayings on the walls that in their essence talk about the spirit of Budo. But they are long "dead" because the meaning is lost. We therefore need to bring them back to life differently.

Whether the spirit lives or dies depends on those who are now living. It is thought here that our people should adopt this. But those who come from far away, perhaps make the bigger effort. The essence of Budo isn't found in the term Budo, but in real life, and it's not a sport. Even if it is already outdated, we will practice it.

The world is changing faster and faster bringing us more and more into trouble, handing down is getting increasingly difficult. If you die at 30, you have not understood anything

yet, and it is not possible to pass something on. To do that it is required to grow 80 or 100 years old, and therefore one should not get hurt. This is precisely the task of the Sensei who holds the Ken (Uchidachi) - therefore it is also important that the Uchidachi lives long (lit.: not to kill him). The sword is always wielded by Oya (lit.: parents, also Uchidachi), and the other has the Jo. This is different in sports, there both are the same. I also have my Oya, which are now in the Kamiza, up to the highest deity. And that's really wonderful, there's always someone higher than yourself, and you can call him by clapping, with the meaning "come please and look, Sensei, this, as you have shown us, is it good this way?" Hence you have to be modest. But in Budo practitioners are often arrogant and put on airs ("ore ga ... ": "I!" in a selfish sense). But that is wrong. Above mankind there is one. The Japanese deities are the Oya in the Kamiza . The Japanese God is Oya . Therefore the training begins with a greeting (Ai Sazu): "Sensei kore kara keiko wo shimasu" - Sensei, so far so good, we train now, please look at us. This is a Embu no Ho (Ho no = votive offering, Embu = demonstration of Bu). The feeling that you are grateful that someone up there is watching.

This way I want to answer these questions, ...

Recorded by Manuela Zips and Univ. Dr. Werner Zips

Translated from the Japanese to German by Aikio Yokoyama and Bernhard Wardein - English Version with the help of ヘルガ

Blitz Magazine

Sensei, what do you believe are the crucial challenges facing Budo / Bujutsu in this century?

The standards of Bujutsu are slowly diminishing due to a lack of the appreciation of the aspect of Uchidachi (the receiver of the technique). Uchidachi must lead Shidachi.

"The biggest problem in Budo today is that there are no highly trained Uchidachi. Good Uchidachi is essential to draw out the potential within Shidachi (the performer of the technique). "

The role of Uchidachi is to lead Shidachi. "Yes, that way ... so you can cut me this way! ... Yes, this way", Uchidachi's role is critical. By practicing Kata, Uchidachi leads so as to be defeated. This is important. In Budo today, it often seems like there is no partner - even Iai is performed solo. This is not good. There should always be Uchidachi, and Shidachi must always think and research his role based on the impact of his actions upon Uchidachi.

Why do you believe this insight is being lost?

There is a tendency to concentrate on merely winning with the introduction of competition, as opposed to the emphasis in practicing Kata.

Matches (competitions) are held when yourself and your partner are at the same (equal) level. Then you can compete. But in that case, one may be encouraged to think that winning is most important and one may never reach the higher level of spirit.

One should find that Kata practice is more important than competition. The person who performs better should be Uchidachi and, as Uchidachi, can then lead Shidachi. In that way improvement will be natural. (In SMR Jodo, all kihon are first learned un-partnered, then partnered. The 64 Kata which comprise the syllabus are all practiced partnered.)

So, in true Keiko (practice), usually the teacher should be Uchidachi - the one willing to be hit and thrown by his student. Being Teacher is not an easy job. A good teacher will give advice to his students even while he's being thrown and hit by the students.

If you don't want to have a partner, maybe you should start Zen. Zen doesn't require a partner.

In what ways can we return to this important understanding?

"What Budo needs is reason ... and all the reasons are found in Kata. We need to understand the purpose of Budo and the purpose of Kata. But these days, in many Budo, most people forget Kata. They might practice Kata a little and then only before grading tests." *(He has difficulty in hiding his grief over this matter.)*

"Their excuse is that you can't win the competition when you practice Kata"

Sensei, has this type of change also occurred in the world of Kobudo?

Throughout the period before and after war and up to today, I have been watching and feeling with my own body, how Budo was forced to change its style and the relationship with the society from time to time.

"After the war, police stations decided to teach Jodo to policemen, so Shimizu-sensei and I traveled to many police stations around Japan to teach, but it was never taught as Budo, because around that time, Japanese Budo was still banned by the American Occupation Forces.

Under the circumstances, Master Shimizu taught Jodo as "Pure way of using stick" demonstrating that policemen could use sticks to help them in their duty and service, but not as Budo. For example, it will make it easier if you use a long stick when you want to control a big crowd of people. Or even where there were huge traffic problems, if you use the long stick appropriately, traffic can be lead smoothly.

So, even today, if you visit police stations, you will always see sticks there. The merit of the stick is that one can control the other without hurting him. The Jo does not cut like a sword, does not stab like spear, and also it does not give the others unnecessary fear or pressure even if you are holding it. With those merits, the Jo was accepted as a useful tool to keep safety and was formally adopted by the Japanese Police Force.

Sensei, can you please share your ideas on the development of Budo?

(Nishioka Sensei has studied not only Jojutsu. From the age of 20, he has studied Kenjutsu, achieving master Dan level.)

"The Sword is the centre of Japanese Budo. All kinds of Japanese Budo have been developed from the view of how to compete against the sword. In other words, the technical styles of stick, spear, Japanese halberd etc.have been developed from the base of sword. When you talk about sword, the role of Uchidachi is the one to be focused upon. Also in Kenjutsu today, many masters do not take the role of Uchidachi. Instead they play the role of cutting their students."

Today Kendo is practiced just for the competition, and Kata practice is treated lightly. This influence is coming now to Jodo and in this way modern Jodo is being lead astray.

Sensei, how is this occurring?

Formally, Jodo is now practiced under the guidance of the All Japan Kendo League, so even though it uses a Jo, the core part of Jodo is adopting a similar format to Kendo. Shimizu Sensei originated today's popular style of Jodo based on Shinto-Muso Ryu Jojutsu, so the basic spirit is supposed to be the same, but I do not see the same spirit in today's Jodo. Perhaps most people wouldn't know but people who have been practicing properly would definitely notice it."

Sensei, what do you mean when you say "properly"?

This again comes back to the key point about understanding the true roles of giving and receiving technique. The level of Budo practitioners will always drop if there is no teacher

who knows the importance of Uchidachi, and can lead Shidachi so that Shidachi will learn with his body about timing and breath."

It seems there are many possible pitfalls when we start Budo training.

"This is true. When one starts practicing Jojutsu, one sometimes thinks 'I can compete and win against the sword.' No way. There are always those above us. Even when one makes huge progress, there is always higher level Uchidachi and it will never change as long as one practices Keiko. If we practice Keiko properly, we cannot help being humble all the time."

Sensei, from a technical point of view, what insights can you share with people seeking to develop their Budo practice?

In Japanese Bujutsu, when you match for life and death, the person who makes the first move will always lose. The technical reason is it becomes a battle of nerves and we need to know how to move the opponent first! This means to lead not just his body but his mind and spirit. Inviting the opponent ... leading the opponent so he has to move ... this kind of delicate technique is learnt only by practicing Kata with a true Uchidachi. Unfortunately much of today's Budo is just show and will not serve in life and death combat.

Secondly, in most Budo, and always in weapon based Budo, understanding the correct use of the inside of the hand (te no uchi) is essential. If you change inside of hand, your whole body approach also changes. This requires much training and cannot be explained easily in words.

Next is Hasuji (cutting line). Many Kenjutsu practitioners emphasise the importance of Hasuji. Of course, if Hasuji is not straight, you cannot cut things. This can sometimes lead to a false idea of the true value of Bujutsu. It can be misunderstood through false practice to lie in being able to cut things.

"Hasuji has to be straight and sharp, otherwise you can not cut the match. If Hasuji is not firm, it is no good. Left hand is the axis, and right hand is attached. Inside of the hands is very important. To check if Hasuji is straight and standing or not, you will never know unless you cut something like straw. Cutting the straw is for that purpose only. But today, it has become the performance of Budo. You cut the straw in front of people, and are applauded. This is merely a show. Cutting things is just Keiko, so you should not show it to people. It is different from the original style of how it was intended to be.

Sensei, to draw out your wisdom accumulated over 64 years of training is difficult. Please tell us if there are important matters we have failed to discuss.

I have written several books on Bujutsu so of course to condense this into a short article is very difficult. There are several points however we can mention.

In all our Budo practice, we must begin with Rei and end with Rei. In English, Rei is most closely translated as etiquette. Seek to understand the purpose of Rei.

Study Kata. In Jodo all Kata is paired. Many people understand Kata and free training as separate and feel they must choose between them or allocate percentages to their practice. In fact they are part of a continuum and through Kata only can you truly be free.

Study Kihon (basics). Perhaps these should be renamed to explain their importance. They should be better called "Essence".

Learn the meaning of "Shinken Shobu". This is the matter of Life and Death.

Seek to understand "Keiko Shokon". Searching for and mastering the essence is the training itself. If you think deeply about the essence of life, you must decide what to do now and actualize it.

Perhaps finally, is the formula for happiness. This is a simple matter. We have our desires and, when we achieve them, we have fulfillment. Usually our desires run far ahead of our

achievement so we strive always against this trend to achieve fulfillment and happiness. Of course our potential and our desires are very different. We can reach up to our potential, but it is much more achievable to lower our desires than it is to always seek to fulfill them.

True happiness is then attainable.

Interview with David Dangerfield (in Blitz Magazine, Volume 16, No 7), published on Jodojo January 2002, also published on World Wide Dojo and kenshin.com.au

Seiryukai / JoDoJo Interviews

What do you think training in the traditional Japanese martial arts/budo means in today's world?

Every person has various ideas about the meaning of budo, however, I have come to believe as follows. Budo is spirit, so the eye cannot see it. We can only see the form (kata), in which remains martial techniques (bujutsu). I think that techniques (jutsu) become 'a way' (michi or do), and this is the process of practice. Traditional Japanese budo contains important teachings common to all mankind. I think it is necessary for these teachings to be passed on to future generations, and that we make good use of those teachings. I think this is the meaning of "Keikoshokon".

What kind of attitude do you expect a person studying kobudo to have?

It is necessary to practice repeatedly with a humble heart, so you must choose a good teacher. When you are asked 'Who is your teacher?', your answer must be clear. It is important to keep having a sensei whom you can name, in the same way that you can name your parents. This is the way to know the basics of life. I think this is the meaning of "Shurikosei".

Jodojo, published September 2002

How does training in koryu differ to other, more widely available, martial arts such as karatedo, aikido or judo?

I think I can answer this question as follows:

In your question you asked about 'koryu', but I would like to replace 'koryu' with the art that I am involved in. That is Shimizu Sensei's style of Shinto Muso Ryu Jodo, Seiryukai Jodo. I would also like to replace the 'generally well known' martial arts with the more popular form of Jodo nowadays, ZKR Seiteigata Jodo. (*Jodojo: Even though both types of Jodo don't have the same popularity as other arts like aikido, the ZKR form of Jodo has greater following than Seiryukai Jodo.*)

The 'ko' in the Japanese word kobudo means 'old' or 'a long time ago', which contrasts with the word 'shin' which means 'new' or 'present day'. If we just say "old" or "new" it seems as natural consequences. However, with some thought, I think one will realise the meanings of tradition and/or patrimony.

Therefore, I think your question about 'koryu' and 'well known arts' is similar to the question:

How does training in Shimizu Sensei's Seiryukai form of Shinto Muso Ryu Jodo differ from the Zennihon Renmei Seiteigata Jodo?

So the thing which is clearly different about koryu is that the aim of training is to take over your teacher's form (kata) and spirit (Seishin). It is not simply a training course for becoming physically stronger. Consequently, if we liken it to the flow of a river, koryu has its forefathers as the river has its source. In koryu that source is called the 'ryu so'. It is always with 'ryu' in the name of koryu. Organization is a good way for the popularisation and diffusion of an art, but there is a fear to wander from the fundamental elements. When one chases the variety too strongly, these fundamentals can be forgotten.

Without the clear existence of a teacher, and without paying close attention to training personally, training in an abstract Dan or title system can damage the quality of your basics. In order to learn, I think it is important to maintain the attitude of 'chasing' the good basics. Naturally one wants to be stronger and more skillful, and this is important. But one must study kata diligently. Contained within kata are the elements left from Bujutsu, which carried the real risk of life and death. To decide what must be learnt from kata is a difficult issue.

Kata clearly does not teach how to bring down the opponent, or how to kill and wound. Instead, one should find the way to survive and protect oneself. That is, to find the true meaning of self defense. It is an important issue to be conscious of the differences between koryu and sports in which winning and losing are decided.

The characteristic feature of studying koryu is to keep 'looking for a teacher'. That is like saying that any person, not just one's own teacher, may impart an important lesson to you if you are looking and keep your mind open. This is like the saying, 'All for one and one for all'.

Jodojo, published October 2002

Kata are choreographed, in so far as both uchidachi and shidachi know the sequence of techniques. But kata is not dancing. What are the essential elements that make kata so different?

External form is the entrance. The main issue is how one will become aware of the difference between form and mental attitude. This is the same as recognising the difference between Jutsu (technique) and Michi or Do (way). When beginning, I don't think it matters if one cannot recognise the difference. However, one will naturally start to vaguely feel the difference between Gyo (study/practice) and Gyo (spiritual progress). After that you will find that you feel the need to choose the right words.

Once you start to recognise these 'invisible' ideas through the 'visible' techniques, you will understand the eternal truth in the variety. The eternal truth would be found in the basics. It is, however, impossible to understand these ideas directly. So kata (sequenced sets of movements) have rules and a sequence which makes it look choreographed... like dancing.

In the practice of kata (set movements), I think the purpose of following the sequence is to teach the correct mental attitude. To stretch this point, the mindset found within the movements teach the spirit which enables us to see how to protect oneself in an instant. I have come to this understanding. This is thanks to Shimizu Takaji Katsuyasu Sensei. Bujutsu is like that, and dancing/choreography is worlds apart.

In the Meiji Restoration, Bushi in the leading class of Japan set aside their swords, and up until today, even Japanese people abide by these rules but don't have a clear understanding of the complexity of the situation and events during that time. The word 'budo' still remains, but I think there is now some misunderstanding about 'bujutsu'. Koryu

bujutsu is continuing to crumble and pass away. However, this is only my feeling, and the fact is there are many people who don't realise this.

In this age of the 21st century, I feel I must pass on the 'kata geiko' (kata practice) and spirit of SMRJ. I think there is value in passing it on, so after the passing of Shimizu Sensei I made an independent organisation, Sei Ryu Kai. I think the 'kata geiko' of uchidachi and shidachi must remain, otherwise I think Japanese budo will disappear. I want to pass on the spiritual and practical aspects found within the spirit of kata geiko to the next generation. I have to make a few people come to understand and carry these things on to the next generation, and until that happens I can't say my work is finished.

So, has this reply answered your question? I'm not sure. So you've read this answer, but I expect you will ask me more questions to really understand these ideas.

In regards to our practice of SMRJ, we always train one on one. So it might be assumed that fighting / a battle is always going to be one on one. Why is this so? What is the opinion of SMRJ about fighting with multiple enemies at the same time?

On this topic I can only give my idea about being in a state of readiness, but I do so without real confidence. Training one on one is the only way one can come to understand the basics, and I think other applications can be found entirely in the basics. Even in the situation of confronting multiple opponents, it's likely that you will face one person at a time, isn't it?

"Do not turn the enemies behind you," "Always place your enemies in front of you." It has been said that one must always fight the enemy in front of you. To expand upon this idea, one might say "target the head of the enemy's group" or "destroy the enemy's headquarters."

Normally, learning consists of practicing basics. If one can't do the basics, then I feel that one cannot apply (any technique). Perhaps the important thing is the aim of learning. I am extremely annoyed that some people call me a Budoka, or a senior, without knowing why. Depending on the aim of each person, you will probably get a different answer. I have learnt SMRJ and am now in the position of teaching it. I think I can only say that training one on one is the only way of learning it. I would like to tell you that you will only face one enemy at a time. My feeling is that the ability to deal with a number of people simultaneously is a matter of dealing with one person at a time. When facing such a situation, there is not likely to be many solutions. Naturally, I think it would take one's whole power to deal with that situation.

Life has been called a battleground, and if life is the battleground – the place where living and dying occurs – we seek budo for the purpose of finding the way for self protection, to remain standing and for long life. That is to have a positive influence on people's lives, and is definitely not just about killing and wounding.

Keiko is to learn the important things about life from your parents, or your Sensei, or possibly your ancestors and seniors. The dojo is the place to learn it. I have been thinking about these things whilst making this answer, what do you think? As I expected, I lack real confidence in the answer that this become.

Jodojo, published October 2003

Sensei, how long have you been practicing Shinto Muso Ryu Jodo?

I've been practicing for almost 70 years (from when I was 14 years old).

In the past Budo was something that was taught for battle, but nowadays things have changed. What does Sensei think that Budo should be?

“Goshin tame ni” – for the purpose of self protection.

In the past these arts were called Bujutsu. Bujutsu wasn't learnt for killing, but for self defense. Budo practice now is no different.

In the 400 years history of SMR, and during Sensei's life, what have been the main changes that the system has undergone?

The introduction of Seiteigata. It was created to popularise jodo, but the essence changed. The style was changed because it could be dangerous. An example of this change can be seen in the technique “Kuritsuke”. The target used to be the hands, but now in Seiteigata the strike goes to the handle of the sword (Sensei recalls seeing his senior's practicing in this way). Sensei also notes that the SMR Jodo practiced in Kyushu uses low stances, but Sensei thinks that the stances should be more natural.

What's the strategy in SMR when confronting an opponent armed with a katana?

If you are in danger, escape. If there is no way to escape (that is, the situation becomes that of shinken shoubu – or a duel with live blades), then wait:

Kokoro – heart

Kamae – posture

Aiuchi – *(not enough space to adequately explain this concept here!)*

Let the sword attack first. Look at your opponent and his movement. If you understand your opponent's movement you will also understand when the opportunity is created (to enter/attack).

In kata there are no feints. If you can come to understand a real attack, you will see feint from real... by waiting until the last.

We need the kata for practice, in order to understand these things. If we test them in a real fight, and fail, there is no second chance. But in kata, if we get cut with a bokuto (wooden sword), then we can live and learn.

To reach this we must constantly practice the basics... the basics are the 'hidden' techniques.

What useful skills to protect ourselves can one develop whilst practicing jodo?

One can learn to understand the 'sense of distance' (as it changes between different weapons and different kamae's), and how to use this. In kata, we learn how to keep a natural posture, and how to walk lightly. We also learn how to relax, and not to rely upon strength. It is also important to breath correctly, by not showing when you inhale (this is the most dangerous moment). We must create the spirit necessary to wait in calm until the opponent attacks.

Is there a relation between Shintoism and SMR Jodo?

Yes there is. In Japan everything comes from the gods. When we bow, at the beginning and end of practice, we are praying to our ancestors.

The 'Shinto', of Shinto Muso Ryu, is related to the religion. This is the reason why I feel that SMR should be pronounced Shinto (and not Shindo, as it is sometimes called these days).

Japanese kenjutsu's first registered 'school' was founded by Iisaki Chouisaki some 500 years ago. He started Shinto Ryu Kenjutsu, and held the belief that swordsmanship came from the gods. (This school developed other schools, such as the well know Katori Shinto Ryu and Kashima Shinto Ryu.)

Sensei thinks Muso Gonnosuke might have been born into a Shinto family, and later in life he chose that name. Muso Gonnosuke received teaching license in the 9th generation of Shinto Ryu Kenjutsu, before devising the method of using the stick.

What have been the major challenges in your life as a budoka?

My biggest challenge is how to transmit correctly what I have learnt.

How have Sensei's techniques or ideas about SMR evolved after receiving Menkyo Kaiden?

I started to think about how to transmit SMR Jodo. I've been thinking about how to adapt and make SMR easier to teach. (Sensei then muses about the old and modern methods, and can't be sure which is better...).

Shimizu devised 12 basic techniques for the transmission of his style, and not just for the purpose of Seiteigata.

I would like to find a way to make SMR useful in modern times. The situation and weapons are always different, but the spirit is always the same. I think that technique and spirit mix together, to form your basics. It is necessary to find the way to teach both technique and spirit correctly.

What's the purpose for which Sensei teaches SMRJ?

I want to create a better world. If I don't pass on the techniques and correct spirit, SMR Jodo will degenerate. The mentality is of waiting. We must respond with the purpose of defending ourselves, not with the intention of attacking first.

(When talking about not moving first, Sensei then mentions that the roles of Uchidachi and Shidachi are reversed in modern Aikido. In Jodo, the teacher is always the person attacking, and letting the student 'win'. But in Aikido the student is the one who attacks, and the teacher is always the 'winner'. Sensei believes the correct spirit of a teacher is to attack in a manner which will let the student 'grow up'.)

During the interview, Sensei made many other comments. These comments are related to Budo and Jodo, but are difficult to include as a response to any of the above questions:

- * Budo is for everyone, not only for the strong. If it can help, it is good.
- * Shimizu Sensei didn't allow the use of real swords in Jodo practice, and notes that in the past practice may have often been done with shinken (live blades).
- * Using heavy swords for practice is of no use. If you can execute a perfect cutting line with a bokuto (wooden sword), then that is the most important point. One should use a heavy sword 'lightly', and a light sword 'heavily'.
- * When we reach our 50's we start to lose muscular strength, and notice it. After this, only the right technique would save us.
- * There were groups in Kyushu, Tokyo and Yamaguchi ken. Two main styles emerged – Otofuji and Shimizu. Sensei chose to follow Shimizu's way.
- * All human beings are naturally good... "No baby thinks about poison in their milk." Everyone deserves an opportunity. If we don't think that way, we can't start teaching.

Jodojo published September 2004, titled February 2004

Can you explain about the concept of Kiri-otoshi? Is the concept of Kiri-otoshi wider than the technique of cutting / pushing down the attacking sword? Is there any relation between Kiri-otoshi and Aiuchi?

Everyone has their own understanding and interpretation about the concept of Kiri-otoshi. I think the name of this technique probably comes from the name of the technique of Hiki-otoshi. In SMR Jo, Hiki-otoshi is one of the hidden techniques, and when I first came to understand it I felt that Kiri-otoshi of kenjutsu is also a 'hidden' technique.

Aiuchi is the situation of both people being injured simultaneously. Kiri-otoshi looks like Aiuchi, but Kiri-otoshi is the best technique for staying alive. I learnt this in SMR kenjutsu. To understand and apply this requires much spiritual forging. The only way to learn this is kata geiko (kata practice).

Therefore I think there is no relation between Kiri-otoshi and Aiuchi... actually, you should perceive that these techniques come from different dimensions.

Do you think that applications to techniques should be taught at the same time? Or should applications be taught or realised later? What is your opinion as to teaching of techniques and applications? Is the knowledge of applications strictly controlled within the transmission of SMR? (by possibly waiting until the Okuden / Hiden sets?)

I think the answer to many of the questions you are asking now... could be found by asking the following questions: What is kata geiko? Why do we need it? What is Kihon? What is the difference between knowledge and experience? What is the difference between understanding with the mind and understanding with the body? What is relation between mastering a technique and teaching it? What is the relation between Omote (surface) and Ura (reverse side) or Kage (shadow)? What is the relation between Honte and Gyakute? This can all come down to the famous chicken and egg problem...

For example, it doesn't matter how much I teach various reasons behind techniques, I still have doubts about whether the student could use it or not. It is better to know the reasons behind techniques than not. Also, there is the situation of knowing and not being able to do... which of course will become nothing.

It is necessary for people to talk about the differences between bujutsu and budo. Nevertheless, from a position of understanding you will determine the way you live and then live it. If you don't act upon your own understanding then your knowledge is useless. Without continuing to reflect upon the concepts of Keikoshokon and Shurikosei, the understanding of the spirit of Uchidachi and Shidachi will be lost. Please think about how your practice of SMR Jo can become useful in your life.

In reply to questions about the control of teaching within SMR... even if I wanted to control the teaching of this knowledge, I couldn't. If you think of a way to control this, then please let me know.

Do you see the development of personal interpretation of the techniques as dangerous or a natural process in the ongoing development of the art?

I think it is dangerous, because you can rationalise any interpretation that you make. Even if you receive explanation from masters or skillful people, I think you will not be able to understand these things quickly. Also, your understanding of any explanation will correspond with your current level of understanding. Accordingly, this depends on the process of constant hard practice. Please think about the words Hyakuren-jitoku (hyakuren – 'being forged 100 times'; jitoku – 'self acquisition'. So this could translate to something like 'constantly reforging one's technique/ideas/anything for the improvement of the self.)

What do you think about Tameshi-giri?

I think that Tameshi-giri (test cutting) is useful for determining the sharpness of a blade. So if you are asking whether it is necessary to test your blade or not, I say 'Yes'.

However, if you ask my opinion on the Tameshi-giri in Iaijutsu, then I have much difficulty in giving an answer. As I will always give an answer from the position of understanding SMR Jo, then I'm not sure if I will be able to reply. I feel difficulty in answering, but strangely your questions fill me with a mix of responsibility, delight and gratitude.

My opinion is that the actual testing of a blade's edge is not as important as the proper handling method of a bladed tool such as a katana. One must practice with the aim of determining one's own ability to maintain an upright blade as it cuts through the hasuji (correct cutting line). I think suburi (solo practice of cutting) is enough. When the blade is upright, a sound will be made as you cut the air. The point is to constantly practice this with the aim of perfecting your Tenouchi (refers to how the inside of the hand makes contact with the sword). For various cutting actions we are able to confirm whether or not the blade is upright and maintaining hasuji (correct cutting line), at the chosen target point.

But correctly applying these things is not as easy as one expects.

Jodojo, published November 2004

Proper Writings

From Sensei's Homepage

Happiness Formula

Human beings like to be happy and strive to be so. Happiness may be defined as the fulfillment of one's desires. In mathematical terms, the function can be expressed as:

$$\text{Happiness} = \text{Fulfillment} / \text{Desire}$$

As you can see, when the denominator and numerator are equal the formula equal "1". All desires are fulfilled and complete happiness is attained. Why then are few people really happy? Let's look at the problem from the angle of this equation.

When the numerator (Fulfillment) is less than the denominator (Desires), people attempt to increase the amount of fulfillment to become happier. However, trying to completely fulfill one's desires seldom achieves its purpose and is ultimately destructive. It is seldom achieved because as the equation approaches "1" "Desires" usually increase and therefore "Fulfillment" must again be increased to attain a perfect "1".

And so it goes, an endless cycle of striving to fulfill one's desires only to find that one is never really satisfied. It is destructive because one becomes increasingly consumed with appeasing the ever increasing desires to the exclusion of all else. Greater and greater consumption will only have negative impacts on other (the environment and future generations) and, depending on the means of attainment (ie. crime), will make others unhappy.

Is there any way out of this paradox?. I think there is a better way to achieve more happiness decrease the amount of desires.

By lowering one's desires instead of increasing fulfillment, the equation also approaches "1" (complete happiness). The beauty of this method is that it lies completely within oneself, both in terms of not being dependent on others and in not affecting others. Unlike trying to increase fulfillment, there is no upward creep in desires nor the accompanying ever increasing drive to fulfill them.

By reducing desires rather than increasing fulfillment, true happiness becomes a much more attainable aspiration.

The Japanese have a saying (actually taken from a 19th century Irishman who immigrated to Japan): Soboku, Zenryo, Kan-i (Simple, Good, Plain). How applicable for many situations!

Translated by Roger Lloyd

Begin with Rei, End with Rei.

I am honored that I am permitted to attend this seminar (gasshyuku) held by the International Jodo Federation and to reside as a technical advisor. It is also with heart-felt

appreciation that I am able to participate with those of the same spirit who regularly train with me in Japan.

At the beginning of training, I bow twice, clap my hands twice, and bow once more, all facing in one direction. To whom and for what purpose is this done? In Japan, these bows are usually given toward one's parents. This is because one's existence is owed to one's parents. This is the plain and simple reason and is a truth that is universal to all human beings. On a technical and spiritual level, these bows are done toward one's mentor or teacher - toward those who raised one technically and mentally. This present gathering is a gassiyuku for researching and learning the techniques and spirit of Shinto Muso-ryu Jojutsu. Therefore, I bow toward my mentor and teacher Shimizu Takaji sensei. Though we bow together in the same way, one may do so with one's own purpose and meaning.

Therefore, think of your own teacher while we bow together. Specific people that one bows toward may be different, but the purpose remains the same-bowing toward one's parents to express appreciation and toward one's teacher with a desire for future guidance and blessing. So I do not impose my interpretation of rei on you.

In my case, my bow is extended toward the founder of Shinto Muso-ryu Jo, Muso Gonnosuke, through my own teacher Shimizu Takaji sensei. Through my parents and my teacher, who are both tangible figures to me, I believe my thoughts and prayers will be able to reach ancestors of long ago. The movement of two bows, two claps, and then one bow is the traditional manner Japanese use to show their awareness of souls of people and things they profoundly love and respect. Japanese call the souls of such people "kami"(deity or god). This is not "God" in the Western sense (though one might simply translate it as such)

Please just recognize that this is how Japanese perceive kami. In addition, those souls, i.e. Japanese "kami sama" (honorable kami [sama is an honorific way to call someone]) can come to exist in front of me whenever I desire to call upon them. This is way we Japanese say that kami sama will come down from the heavens. Unless one understands this feeling, Japanese Budo cannot be understood. It is these souls for which we show appreciation, pray to, and for which we revere the will of our ancestors and pledge to fulfill that will. I think the content of each individual's prayers may vary, but that also is all right. What I have described is part of the customary life of Japanese. It is within this framework that budo has been preserved and, therefore, budo regards this concept as very precious and important.

Throughout the four hundred years of time that the "kata" (prearranged form) of Shinto Muso-ryu have been handed down, what is it that Shinto Muso-ryu jojutsu wishes to convey through them? Questing for the answers and to make use of them in our daily lives must have been the prayer of Shimizu Takaji sensei, which in turn had its origination in the quest began by the founder, Muso Gonnosuke.

The predecessors and teachers who sought and reached the understanding of the founder's quest, or the essence, left the answers latent in the form of bujutsu kata, not in descriptive words of explanation. Because of this, the kata that have survived must be properly internalized with an understanding of the essence.

There is a need to seek and to research, without any mistakes, the latent essence in the kata. It is my understanding that the training and research at this gassiyuku are for this purpose. With the precious opportunity that this gassiyuku offers, I would like to pass on as

much as possible the level of techniques and essence of Shinto Muso-ryu Jo that I have attained. If you have any questions or want to clarify some point that you cannot understand, please ask me. I am here to study with you.

One does not learn Japanese budo in order to acquire the most efficient method to injure or kill others. Budo leads one to a higher level of morality where, in a life and death situation, not only can one stay alive, but the enemy can also be left to live. Therein is the fulfillment of an ideology-attainment of the highest level of humanity. This is the reason why Japanese kata-budo have demonstrations which are offered to the sacred kami, the founder, and ancestors. Therefore, as a greeting, I am presenting my understanding of the concept that budo "begins and ends with rei."

What does it mean that Japanese Shinto does not have any Sutra(written theology)? Japanese Shinto has purification and "rei" rituals, but it does not have the equivalent of the Buddhism Sutra, the Christian Bible, nor the Islam Koran.

I think this may be what others mean when they say that Japanese Shinto has no written theology. Although the content of one's prayers vary with each individual, ultimately people who live together desire the same fundamental things for each other: safety of the family, no illnesses, no natural disasters, prosperity, a stable food supply, and continuation of one's lineage (descendants).

In short, it all goes back to prayers and desires for a peaceful life. I think such fundamental prayers are universal to all human beings. However, in Shinto there is no imposition from written words that stifle the teaching, nor from chanting. There is nothing other than heartfelt desires and prayers for a peaceful life, and those are freely expressed in the words of each individual. I believe this to be the foundation of Japanese Shinto.

No matter where one is, one was born a child of parents, and grows to be either a man or woman. The next generation is freely created when a group of people, composed of both sexes, grows up. This cycle serves as a solid axis for development of a culture as children inherit the peaceful life established by their parents. I think it is everyone's desire to live in peace without imposition from others and without imposing oneself on others. I feel that this is the universal foundation of all human beings.

At the present, there is a need to reflect calmly on the fact that all religions, other than Shinto, are mutually exclusive. Shinto, as are other religions, is enthusiastic about praying for peace and justice, but it does not have a missionary purpose. It does not force others to join, nor does it denounce other religions. It is totally different in nature from the aggressive religions that are usually resolute to conquer others.

The Japanese budo spirit, which has been nurtured in this type of historical background, should go beyond being just the bujutsu that includes the universal trait of killing others. We should endeavor to learn and obtain, without any mistakes, the prayer the founder has embodied in the kata that have remained with us as bujutsu. Once a text is written, one is limited by the words or the teachings. Furthermore, words necessitate other words in order to provide further explanation. Therefore, written theology produces another theology.

My interpretation of Shinto is that it must have been intentional that Shinto did not create a written theology because, as long as the foundation is understood, Shinto expects the free expression (manifestation) of one's mind to emerge.

Shimizu Takaji sensei valued physical training for the purpose of going back to the basics, i.e., the principles. When Nakajima Asakichi and Kaminoda Tsunemori published the Shinto Muso-ryu Jodo Kyouhan with words and photographs in July of 1976 as being "Shinto Muso-ryu Jodo," Shimizu sensei was very angry because they completed the text without receiving his permission. But, I would like everyone to know that he finally changed his mind and even wrote an epilogue to the book because he felt the demands of modern times made it inevitable.

I also find that this same serious problem is bearing down heavily on myself. The reason is because the essence of certain things cannot be expressed in writing. It is much more subtle and, unless one understands the essence, anything learned is not with a true understanding. On the contrary, the existence of written theology may harm one's attempt to fathom the correct interpretation by obstructing the natural and straightforward development of the mind.

Again, I cannot help but think that there must have been some profound reason why Shinto did not create written theology. Shinto left us the kata (purification and rei rituals) rather than written theology. What is the essence latent in these Shinto Muso-ryu kata that are still with us today? Searching for and mastering the essence is the training itself. I am convinced that in the old saying, "keiko shokon" 稽古照今 (meaning of "keiko shokon": If you think deeply about the essence of life, you should decide what to do now, and actualize it.), the shokon part means to make use of the full understanding of the essence in today's living.

These four kanji (Chinese characters) are all together and, without the shokon part, the saying would be just half complete. If so, then one is required to reflect back on oneself.

What is Kata ?

What is the meaning of bujutsu (shinken shobu - combat to the death) that is latent in kata?

Uchi-dachi and shi-dachi in kata bujutsu

I would like to share my interpretation of the above points that I have attained through many years of studying Shinto Muso-ryu Jojutsu. I would be grateful if all can learn afresh with the recognition of the above points and by researching these points through this gassiyuku's training. The training begins with the kihon (basic movements of Shinto Muso-ryu Jojutsu) and proceeds to omote, chudan, ran-ai kage, samidare, gohon no midare, oku-siaiguchi and on through the accompanying tachi of Shinto-ryu Kenjutsu; then to training in Uchida-ryu Tanjo-jutsu, Ikkaku-ryu Jitte-jutsu, and Issin-ryu Kusarigama-jutsu. The word "kata" is written in two ways in Japanese : 形 (form) and 型 (pattern).

I wonder what the real difference is? I think the difference between bujutsu and budo is the difference between technique and spirituality. This is a difference of dimension.

How are the words "seishin" or "kokoro" (spirituality, heart) expressed in other languages? In Japanese, "kokoro" also means a way of thinking.

The "shinken shobu" quality of bujutsu is a matter of life or death. For human beings, life or death is the ultimate matter of concern for religions.

Therefore, the "Shinto" portion in the name of the ryu (tradition) "Shinto Muso-ryu Jojutsu" must be considered when one does Shinto Muso-ryu Jojutsu. When one trains in Shinto Muso-ryu Jojutsu, one is also training in Shinto. And I hope one is doing so by researching budo through training in bujutsu that is very much a part of the Japanese culture. The problem I have is whether or not I have the ability expected from everyone to provide an adequate job of teaching. Since it is your judgement whether or not I meet your expectations during this gassiyuku, please do not hesitate but take the opportunity to train with me. I will teach, through my demonstrations and explanations, the things I have inherited from Shimizu Takaji sensei until you are satisfied on both the technical and spiritual levels. But if, due to my inability, I cannot satisfy you, I still intend to take it as my responsibility for being here to fulfill your expectation of me by at least giving you suggestions to use as a guide to lead you in the right direction.

I understand kata to be the manifestation of kihon and the starting point. Bujutsu is combat to the death and, because it is impossible to express that essence of bujutsu with photographs and explanations, we attain it with one's body through kata training. When I thought about these important points, I published the book with the "Budo Way of Thinking: Uchi-dachi and Shi-dachi".

I would like everyone to read it, although it is only available in Japanese. It is my wish that someday the book will be translated.

Translated by Miho Lloyd, July 28, 1994

My Thoughts on Honte and Gyakute

In a writing by Professor Eishi Matsuoka of Tokyo Gakugei University, there is a small section dealing with Honte and Gyakute, the name of which is "Japanese and Chinese Kanji" (Kanji are the ideograms that are of Chinese origin). I read this with deep interest. However, I found that in regards to the practice of SMR Jodo there was a lack of explanation.

This writing describes the terms "Junte" and "Gyakute", and in Iaido the corresponding terms are "Juntou" and "Sakatou". In Jodo we have "Honte" which corresponds to "Kirite" in Kendo. These words are different for each art. There are 3 ways to take Kamae (or stance) with the hips: front on, side on, and in between. These stances naturally have their own names as well.

Particularly in Jodo, there are two ways to grip things - Honte and Gyakute. To understand Honte and Gyakute, one must perfectly explain these things, internalise these techniques, and put them into practice. So even if you understand these words, it is a different matter to be able to perform them properly or not. Matsuoka Sensei wrote in his book that even when one looks up these terms in the dictionary it is still difficult to understand. Since the time I came to comprehend SMR Jodo, I realised the carelessness about these issues (both of my myself and others). Therefore, I would like to explain my style.

1. Nishioka Sensei demonstrates Honte.



2. Nishioka Sensei demonstrates Gyakute.



In the video of Kihon-dousa, you will notice that I explain many times the points that I think are important.

In everyday life, if you review the ways of picking up and gripping things, you will understand more about the things that you were previously doing unconsciously. Of course, unconscious actions will not be properly understood by your body. The awareness of Honte and Gyakute of SMR Jodo is exactly the same. I was thinking about these issues in my 50's and 60's, but I don't think I really understood the importance of the grip in Honte and Gyakute stances until I was in my 70's.

When using tools, I think we should try to think about how we hold and use them. If you watch closely the grip that people use when practicing kendo or iaido, you will see subtle differences in the form of the grip. I also found the names they use for these grips differ. In Bujutsu this is called "Tenouchi", and I think this is one of the least understood principles. One of the reasons for this is that the hands very rarely take the same shape when gripping things... in fact, they are constantly changing.

When holding things you have an aim, and you should change your grip to match the task you wish to perform. I think there must be countless ways to hold any object. In Bujutsu there is sword, jo, bo, spear, naginata, rifle, pistol and various other weapons. In golf, tennis, baseball, gymnastics, weightlifting, badminton and other sports there are an endless number of implements.

Honte is also known as “Kirite” (cutting hand), and Gyakute is also known as “Uchite” (hitting hand). Both grips are used in jodo, and usually only Honte is used for sword.

The Kanji (Chinese ideogram) used for Gyakute can also be pronounced as “Sakate”. However, I have only come to realise the difference of Gyakute and Sakate recently. This is actually quite an embarrassing confession to make. It took me many years of practice to understand these small things. In the basic techniques of Jodo there is a technique called Gyakute Tsuki (Tsuki means thrust). I think this technique would be better named Sakate Tsuki (rather than Gyakute Tsuki) because of the grip used. There is the normal Honte way of holding (a jo or sword), and in the case of Sakate the method of gripping is the same (as Honte). These differences are kind of puzzling, so I would like everyone to take the time to think about it.

3. Nishioka Sensei demonstrates Sakate.



4. Maybe it is hard to understand Sakate from the explanation in this article... The Tenouchi of Sakate is the same as Honte, but the difference is that the object (jo, knife... whatever you are holding) is reversed. The most obvious example of this is in Gyakute-tsuki. You will see in the above picture (right) Sensei demonstrating the correct grip of Gyakute-tsuki (or Sakate-tsuki). In the picture on the left, we see the kamae for the start of the kata 'Hissage'... another example of Sakate.

So, what is the Tenouchi of Honte? (Or... how do I grip in Honte?) And what is the Tenouchi of Gyakute? When gripping in Honte, the object you are gripping runs along the life line of the palm, at an angle from the base of the index finger. When gripping in Gyakute, the object is held in a line across the palm. For Honte the wrist is bent back, and for Gyakute the wrist is straight (or flat). Please experiment with this.

Usually, people are not paying attention to the difference of Honte and Gyakute in their everyday activities. There are two main ways of holding things, and these ways have different advantages which people are not aware of. How do you hold your chopsticks? Or

brush? Knife, fork, spoon, hammer, saw? There are a limitless number of objects, so the object you use will depend on the intended purpose. There is probably a correct way to use each of these objects, and it is doubtful whether people really understand the correct way.

How do drummers hold drumsticks? How does the shamisen player hold the pick? I would like to ask a specialist in these areas. I wonder if they are teaching two ways of holding things. Maybe after a lot of practice such specialists may have found these things by themselves.

Only recently I have realised these things, and I think that there are many people who don't clearly see the difference between the Tenouchi (gripping method) of Honte and Gyakute. For example, when taking Gyakute seigan kamae (a stance with the jo pointing to the eyes, being held in Gyakute grip) I have seen people who have the front hand in Gyakute, but are holding the jo in Honte with their rear or main hand. Even highly ranked and very experienced people are doing this. Also, in the case of Honte-uchi and Hikiotoshi-uchi there are many people who have the front hand correctly in Honte, but it surprises me that their rear or main hand slips into Gyakute. For Hikiotoshi-uchi, at the first moment of gripping the hand is in Gyakute, and at the final moment of hitting or cutting the hand should probably be in Honte.

Since I realised about Honte and Gyakute, I see that the Honte grip of people who use the jo is not perfect. It astonishes me that the Honte grip, even of experienced practitioners of kendo or iaido, looks like it is not determined. It surprises me that many people are cutting with a sword using Gyakute grip.

In conclusion, I think there are basically two methods of gripping (Honte and Gyakute), and there are no other ways to grip. In Japanese language, the characters used for Gyakute and Sakate are the same, but in actuality they are completely different so we need to be careful. We must also be very clear about the position of the wrist in these grips. The practical differences of Honte and Gyakute can be found from the experience of swinging, hitting, pulling, pushing or cutting... your body can only come to understand these things through Keiko (practice). Even if you can do it one or ten times that is not enough. You need to put in great effort to be able to do a technique with the same result every time. However, one can never say one's basics are perfect... there is a reason that it is said that one has to practice for their whole life.

I repeat, in SMR Jodo the first three basics are Honte-uchi, Gyakute-uchi and Hikiotoshi-uchi. The usefulness of this knowledge is not limited to SMR Jodo, but can be applied to all other things.

This discussion was prepared for selling with the Kihon video produced by Nishioka Sensei, and is the first time it has appeared as an English version. Published on Jodojo April 2004.

'Maruki o motte, suigetsu o shire' - Knowing the 'suigetsu' by the round stick.

I have heard that according to legend, these words come from the enlightenment of Muso Gonnosuke's (the founder of SMR) pursuit of the warrior path. I think that there is meaning to the formation of this legend (for SMR practitioners).

'Maruki', meaning round stick, is easy to recognize in the shape of the jo that we practice with.

The word 'suigetsu' has the following definitions in the Koujien (a famous Japanese dictionary):

1. water and moon
2. Moonlight reflected in the water; or other phenomenon which have no substance (e.g. the moon we can see reflected in the water is not actually the moon. That is, it is a phenomenon without substance).
3. The situation during mutual approach, of glaring at your opponent.

Another meaning is that of the solar plexus (the part of the body in centre front, just below the sternum). The solar plexus is often explained (in Japanese) as 'suigetsu', because it is a vital spot which is exploited in many forms of unarmed fighting systems. This is a well known weak spot of the human body.

The meaning of the word 'shire' (pronounce shi-re) is to 'know', but the meaning of it in this context is difficult to understand. If you interpret 'suigetsu' as a weak point of the body, 'shire' might then be thought of as hitting/attacking the weak point. There are people who think the use of the word 'shire' is a mistake, and the word for hit/attack should have been used.

But, for 'shire', I think a deeper meaning can be taken for the 'shinken-shoubu' (or life and death duel). Therefore, I think the meaning of 'suigetsu' becomes less a part of the body, but has more of a substance-less or spiritual meaning. This becomes a matter of the heart, which has been passed down from our ancestors. The structure of these words is heavily influenced by the Manyo (Manyo is one of the original styles, and is a large anthology, of Japanese poetry dating back approximately 1200 years ago), and I think that the love of the beauties of nature also had an effect on bujutsu.

Based on the writings in the Shomokuroku scroll, I understand the words 'suigetsu o shire' to mean the following:

To understand or pre-empt the movements of your opponent, one has to polish one's own heart as a mirror. Furthermore, if the water's surface is not flat and calm, you won't be able to understand your opponent. The water and the moon have 'no mind', and that's why the water can reflect the moon as it is.

I think the essence of bujutsu, the highest understanding of training, is to understand your opponent's movements with a calm and quiet mind.

Jodojo, published February 2004

Jōdō – Self Reflection (Jōdō Jikai)

Chapter - About the transmission of Jō : What Shintōmusōryū jō teaches

What I have learnt from Bujutsu "Jō" is that life is a battle against the aging of each person. Ultimately it is a battle against yourself. The serious style (shinkengata) is the seishin side of the life or death battle (Shinkenshōbu). In other words, we must be serious when doing

Katageiko. The more serious you are, the clearer it becomes that there is only Katageiko in the form of Keiko.

It is something that can develop in the process of learning to prepare the mindset (kokorogamae) and techniques (waza), when the weak encounters the strong in an unavoidable circumstance. Ultimately the weaker learns to understand so that he prepares himself to face a simultaneous strike/death (aiuchi), fights at his best, with such spirit that he can seek life in death. When one understands this, it becomes clear that the existing kata do not need to change at all, and all he needs to do is to train hard and study. Pray hard and hope you don't make a mistake. By doing that, naturally one learns to have his own convictions.

There is no benefit in commenting on details of kata. The important thing is what we learn from kata, as well as learning by copying the kata. This important thing is something we learn from a type of kata, in other words, it is good enough for kata to exist, but what we acquire and learn from the kata depends on one's intentions (kokorogake), eagerness to study, and the amount of practice (keiko) that one puts into it.

The next point is that kata should be accurately learnt and must be repeatedly practiced. Shall I say, 'practice 100 times, then the meaning will come to you'. If we deeply understand this relationship, then we know that we should just practice repeatedly until we can use the tool correctly, without wasting the time looking at details.

When you get confused, listen to the 'Jō' and the 'body' – I recall the words of the master (shihan).

I am sure that different people get different feelings from what Jō can teach, but I believe that the ultimate thing it teaches is 'Shinkenshōbu'. Then what is 'Shinkenshōbu'? It says that Bu is inevitable in order to actualise justice, and even if the reason one starts doing it was to compete against the bad, when facing the situation where the strong is being violent, one should show the existence of such justice by confronting the violence so one can die with dignity. Without this, one will not understand the meaning of justice.

What do you call 'justice'? It is hard to explain, but the mind of justice does not allow inhumanity, denies the idea that the strong is right and better, denies the idea that larger or more things are better than smaller or less things, and denies the idea of violence. Overall the mind of justice works by denying the haughtiness of those things. Therefore we must learn to acquire courage to confront anything that call themselves power.

Oka sensei said that the basis (kihon) of the mind of justice is anger against merciless things. It looks to me that he was saying before we talk about what justice is, we must first learn and acquire the mind of justice, and let each one of us to go out and find what justice is.

Thus, as I have said time after time, Shintōmusōryū jō continues to question what 'Shinkenshōbu' is. The only way to search and understand 'Shinkenshōbu' is to pursue Katageiko. That kata does not teach the kata that guarantees Jō to win, but only teaches to strive to improve oneself through continuous hard work (sessatakuma) between Jō and sword.

Through keiko we both experience an opportunity that separates life and death in a split second, and that warns us not to relax ourselves even a second. It really teaches the

intentions (kokorogake) and minds (kokorogamae) of the juniors who confront their seniors, by placing the seniors as tachi.

In the extreme sense, it teaches you to wait until you are cut, to carefully watch your opponent's movements, to train yourself to throw/commit the body/oneself (sutemi), to acquire strength of spirit (kihaku) to sustain fear, to wait, and in the end, it teaches to abandon oneself (sutemi) and go and do 'aiuchi'.

In other words, it teaches us to be prepared to die and confront if necessary, and it is a challenge and training for those who always confront the opponents whom they don't have a chance to beat. If I use another term, it is 'to die with dignity', and I feel that it might be teaching how we should die. What I am certain of, is that it is not teaching to win. This is the idea of what bu is, that we can learn and acquire through keiko.

The meaning of being strong is that you become strong so that you can sustain fear, and it does not mean the strength required for you to win over your opponents. You must always have self-awareness that your opponents are stronger than you. I think it teaches that. Apart from that, you must acquire the technical strength, which is needed when doing aiuchi, through day-to-day training. We do keiko for that purpose. Because of that, we don't necessary need many numbers of kata. Ultimately we only need one. I feel that no matter what weapon one has, everyone is the same. I can't help but thinking that Musōryū Jō is teaching such.

Chapter - About the transmission of Jō : What to Acquire?

What must we acquire through Katageiko? Perhaps it has no answer but what we have acquired while practicing in Katageiko is an important question. Probably everybody will have his or her own answer. To merely remember the order and then perform the movements well and without mistake is really to have achieved nothing. Approaching Katageiko in this way you have done no more than remember a pattern. And this is much like falling into the pitfall of deluding yourself that one who knows 13 Kata is better than one who knows 12 Kata.

Even though, through the process of becoming able to use the waza and weapons freely by practicing in keiko, one might presume they know what they've acquired but by questioning what was in fact acquired one might realise that they have not understood. More than anything, whether one has given thought to it or not in a serious manner needs to be reflected upon.

There are things that I have come to understand: the existence of waza that is included but is not presented in the outward form; the existence of variations that one becomes aware of while experimenting from fast to slow, to late in the current forms; starting to realise that in areas not manifested in the current forms there are very important "formless kata". Something that one begins to understand would differ from person to person according to the depth and weight of their keiko. But this is what I'm beginning to feel at this moment.

My teacher said, "Shintōmusōryū is one form of 64 forms". And not only Shintōmusōryū, I think all Kata in Budo are like this. We arrive at one form. Within one form exist forms of tens of thousands of variations. Perhaps keiko is where you discover that one form.

Chapter - About the transmission of Jō : Learning the objects without shapes (mukei)

In order to learn a thing which has no shape, people have no choice but to learn it through something with an actual shape. By doing that, we will understand that what we pursue, in the end, is the Seishin which does not have any shape. ...

... That Seishin is what I really want to transmit by teaching the Kata. However, one must be fully aware that there is absolutely no other way but to learn and acquire this by oneself. Comprehension is the only way, and nothing else. One must also then realise that there is an infinite deepness in comprehension and will finally understand, after reaching comprehension, the importance of the cultivation of kokoro.

Loyalty and thought both appear in the form (kata) of sincerity (magokoro), but if you try to adhere to the actual form itself, you will then fail to grasp the essence of it. One must know that what he or she should ultimately achieve out of all the kata that are learnt is only one thing. How one understands that one thing is up to his or her intentions and it can not be taught. No matter how hard I try to teach this, I feel that I simply can't. Once this is understood, one will know that the kata can change in thousand different ways and can continue to change infinitely.

When it comes to the concept of rei, the same thing can be said. If you learn the form (kata) of rei but don't understand the seishin of it, then you fail to understand the true meaning of rei. That is because the true rei has no shape. ...

When one starts off doing physical katageiko, at some point in time he or she realises that what is pursued is seishin and that it is the Japanese Seishin. Then one becomes capable of looking at the katageiko from that new perspective, and eventually starts understanding how one can interpret the kata and can make the kata his or her own.

I have realised that the person who truly made me understand the Seishin of Bu was, after all, Shimizu-sensei, and I also realised that Otofujii-sensei understood that. Because of this, I became confident in saying that Shimizu-sensei's Jō and that of Otofujii-sensei are not different at all. ...

Chapter - About the waza of Jō : The things you should note while practicing Jōdō

Let's re-visit the words that Shimizu sensei told us a long time ago. The words were "You should not learn Otofujii sensei's jō". Not only were these words so easily misunderstood, but also I have come to realise acutely just how often people end up not fully understanding the real meaning of these words.

Shimizu sensei had come to understand that his way of using jō and sword was different from that of Otofujii sensei. I suspect that the reason behind Shimizu sensei's words was his fear and concerns on the possibility that some inexperienced students who learn the two different ways, become confused, and start doubting that one of the ways must be wrong. I also suspect that he had concerns on the very common mistakes that are made by students, who do not follow one teacher. This is a serious and unavoidable problem when a multiple number of transmitters (denschō-sha) or master teachers (shihan) exist.

I presume that the Sōke system, which attempts to limit number of their kata transmitters to one, and also the Isshi Sōden system, came about to prevent the serious problem

mentioned above. However, this problem is something that we, the students, continue to encounter, and is not something that we can rely upon one particular system to resolve. The only way is to wait for our students' intentions (kokorogake) and mindset/mental attitude (kokorogamae) to mature.

Students' self-expressions and self-revelations that result from their enthusiasm towards their training become more apparent as their skills improve. Particularly those who establish their own dōjō at a young age, have their own students, and have become a 'Sensei', fall into this difficult issue without knowing that is happening to them. Especially the systems that allow anyone who are above dan level to become 'teachers' is a harmful influence on the budō world.

Those who do not understand the meaning of 'shi (mentor)' and who only have an understanding towards 'sensei (teacher)' tend to compare their skills with their teacher's, and moreover, go to the extent of competing with their teacher. This way of teaching is not teaching the essence of budō and is merely a bad influence that relies on power.

As a result, the more people's skills improve, the more apparent their self-overestimation and haughtiness become, and the less humble they become. Those are the type of Budōka that I dislike the most.

I feel that this phenomenon is the biggest trap that people fall into when they fail to make an effort in improving the spirit side whilst their technical skills improve.

Shimizu sensei always said to me that "You must practice with me", and took the role of motodachi and became a practice board. He never relaxed his seriousness even with beginners, needless to say he was far from being haughty and overbearing. From this seriousness while practicing, I feel that I have learned the most crucial thing that the katabudō teaches. This is such a hard thing to accomplish and is rarely seen not only in the context of jōdō but also in other circumstances. I have only seen this in Shimizu sensei and also in Otofujii sensei. They are totally opposite from those who are in the senior or motodachi position, and treat their opponents without respect, or those who show off their skills to their juniors.

There are also many people, who are in the role of shidachi, misunderstand the act by their seniors or motodachi, and try to show off and prove the level of their skills by treating their motodachi as their own practice board. Such behaviour is out of their boundary. This is not merely a problem in the method of practice, but it is a single biggest obstacle that a human being can face. Not limited to Jōdō, the difference in people's mindset/mental attitude and intentions when they practice with their seniors, and when they are in the senior position and practice with their junior students, is such an important concept and needs to be understood by all students.

However, I am not yet confident enough to fully explain this to others. It is not a matter of whether one can make people understand this concept, but it is a hard question that each one of us must ask and find an answer ourselves. The quality of senior students also matters in this concept. In terms of Katageiko, this is an issue when teaching mindset/mental attitude and intentions of senior and junior students. It is the single most important idea of kokoro which Katageiko can teach, however, I believe that it can not be taught in places where practice involves any concept of power, even a slightest amount of it.

The difference between those who have the mindset/mental attitude and intentions but have not yet achieved the greatness, and those who have no intentions whatsoever, becomes apparent in day-to-day practice and movements. It is a scary thought that people who have an ability to observe can immediately spot this difference.

I deeply regret, for the sake of succeeding students, the fact that it took me so many years to truly understand the difference of roles and positions between uchidachi and shidachi. I feel that this concept also leads to the mindset/mental attitude and intentions of motodachi and the one whom engages them in the context of Kendō.

There still remains some wonderfulness within the Jō. It is not just about skills or techniques (waza). However if it is taught in a wrong way, or is misunderstood or misinterpreted, it will be such a nuisance to students. Even worse some people have the wrong idea of 'Shintōmusōryū Jōdō', and still call it that, teaching nothing of the true Jōdō. This type of practice can be seen here and there amongst the students who have some experience. When this happens, the true path is not followed and in fact it creates a path that is totally opposite to what it is meant to be.

In the true path, the better one's skills become, the more humble the person becomes, whereas in the wrong path, the better one's skills become, the more haughty and arrogant the person becomes. This wrong path is nothing but a harmful influence on Bujutsu. When this happens, one must question himself as to what he did wrong in his teaching.

We must pay attention to the fact that haughtiness and arrogance can, without doubt, come across in people's various behaviours and also in the words that people use. We have known that "correcting kokoro" (heart/mind/spirit and also a way of thinking) is the idea, which we must remember at all time. At some point in time, when people forget about this idea, the haughtiness and arrogance become apparent as a result, and this scares me.

The seishin of Jō does not expect nor allow people to have that type of mind and behaviour. While the mindset/mental attitude and intentions when following a mentor (shi) is such an important idea and is definitely required in today's society, the task of keeping this idea alive and providing opportunities for people to be exposed to the idea is not as easy to do as it was in the old days.

I feel that it is my duty to re-visit the roles of uchidachi, shidachi and motodachi, and pass my thoughts on that to others.

Chapter - About the waza of Jō : Seishin and Technique

In Japan, we have the words 'Katsujin-ken' and 'Satsujin-ken'. I believe that those words describe different results from the two different scenarios – when the techniques that centre around seishin are pursued and when only techniques are pursued without seishin. In my opinion, it emphasises the idea that, now that you decide to learn sword, you must become a 'Katsujin-ken' and not a 'Satsujin-ken'.

Especially when it comes to budō, seishin must be the main thing rather than techniques. It is different from when only bujutsu is described. For budō, it means that we must not let natural development take its course and to prevent that we must continue to improve level of the seishin in which we exist, and never allow the level of the seishin to go below the level of our techniques even an inch.

In other words, we must break away from the world of winning and losing no matter what. It teaches us to show the belief with our own bodies even if we lose, are broken and die. Pursuing techniques should follow such seishin. I believe until one understands this logic himself, it will not be possible for him to explain it to others.

Even in the time when we had 'jutsu' and nothing was called 'dō', I firmly believe that our ancestors in Japan knew and understood this idea.

Until recently I had thought that seishin and techniques had some sort of relationship with each other, however, I have now come to understand that there is no relationship whatsoever between them and that they exist in different dimensions. In other words, I had thought that as techniques improve, seishin improves and vice versa, but now understand that there is no such relation between them and they must be looked at separately.

It means that the better the techniques become, even more effort is needed in order to improve seishin, however this is not an easy task and on many occasions the level of seishin stops improving and stays below the level of techniques. When it comes to science technology, they can co-exist and accumulate. However, when it comes to human beings, only those exceptional individuals who have polished their techniques and seishin to such a level, and the fact that an individual's existence definitely needs to be succeeded, have the potential but seishin and techniques still can't co-exist and accumulate.

Then one may ask what is seishin. It is "a way of thinking" and "intention". What is the Japanese seishin? It means "a way of thinking and intention as Japanese", and it is something that can be trained and nurtured with an effort.

What I mean by intention is to try to utilise the techniques that you have acquired, and not to destroy or kill by using the techniques. Therefore we must try, not just to win, but to keep in mind the succession of seishin that can be utilised. In order to do that, we must make an effort to transmit this succession of seishin, from a parent to a child, and from a mentor (Shishō) to a student (Deshi).

Chapter - About the transmission of Jō : The things I have started to consider when issuing the shomokuroku

When it comes to Keiko, I believe that I have said nothing but "kokorogake" (intentions) ever since I was in my middle age until now. It has been the same thing for Waza. ...

When a person dies, unfortunately many things tend to perish with that person. However, it is fortunate that Shintōmusōryū jō has clearly been transmitted from a real person to a real person until today, and even now continues to live and possesses something very special that impresses all of us.

This can never be transmitted if it is left unattended. People [Menkyo-sha] must have a very strong and specific intention and will to transmit it. ... However, we should all know that it [a mokuroku] has the strong and passionate hopes of all the predecessors. ... I have come to realise that issuing it has nothing to do with whether that person has achieved a certain level of qualification or not. Please do not misunderstand this important point.

It is an expression of the will of the predecessor to convey "their hopes for the future", and it is still in the middle of the path and we all need to help each other and strengthen and

deepen the notion along the way. As I noted previously, we are not issuing a type of qualification to the receiver, therefore, having it does not have any impact on anyone whatsoever. The receivers will not be distinguished from others because of it. It does not have any capacity to restrict the receivers either. This is how I have come to understand it.

I know well that when it comes to the mokuroku, there have always been some people who attempt to associate ability with it. However, I firmly believe that it [the mokuroku] is not originally a representation of ability. It is just easier for ordinary people to be convinced that it is a symbol of ability/power (力).

Chapter - About the transmission of Jō : What is Shintōmusōryū jō?

I am not sure about the other Ryū, but when it comes to Shintōmusōryū jō, I have my own interpretation and the following idea of what it is – it is the Jō and Sword that are transmitted from a master teacher (Shihan) who is personally responsible for his student (Deshi), and it can't exist without the Menkyo.

... It is my understanding that Shintōmusōryū jō has absolutely nothing to do with the level of dan or titles. Whether you are good at it or not so good at it does not matter. Even for those who have gomokuroku, it is my understanding that if they do not have a Menkyo as their opponent, then they are not allowed to do any Enbu in the name of Shintōmusōryū jō.

It is a little harsh to say it in this way, but I believe this is the way it is. In other words this is the view that the Shintōmusōryū jō can't exist without Menkyo.

This is the way it is for the things which are transmitted over time [from person to person]. That is why once it becomes extinct, there is no way to recover it. It does not matter how many people are training, as the number of people doing Keiko has nothing to do with the transmission [of the Ryū]. Therefore the duty of Menkyo comes down to one thing, that is no matter what happens Menkyo must transmit the Waza and Seishin that he learnt from his predecessor to the next generation [of Menkyo]. This idea has become my belief.

There are some Ryūha that use the system of Isshi Sōden, however, there are other systems that involve more than one Shihan. My opinion is that it all comes down to the idea of Menkyo transmitting and as long as that is done properly, it does not matter how it is done.

Therefore those who can't become Menkyo, can start their own Ryū and become the founder of his or her own Ryū. Though I do suggest to those to not use any existing name of a Ryū.

Looking at the current situation for Shintōmusōryū jō, apart from the successors of Otofujisensei, only the following schools exist: Shintōmusō Shimizuryū Kurodahajō, Shintōmusō Shimizuryū Yonenohajō, Shintōmusō Shimizuryū Hiroihajō, Shintōmusō Shimizuryū Kaminodahajō, Shintōmusō Shimizuryū Nishiokahajō and Shintōmusō Shimizuryū Hamajihajō.

Then in the future those will continue and the next generation [Menkyo-sha] will be called Shintōmusō Nishiokaryū 'such and such' jō. As far as I am concerned, those are the only ones that can be called Shintōmusōryū jō, and nothing else. This applies to the successors of Otofujisensei.

Jōdō Jikai by Nishioka Tsuneo (selected excerpts)

ISBN-88218-011-1 C0075 Published in 1989

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Uchidachi & Shidachi

打太刀

Uchidachi, "striking sword"

仕太刀

Shidachi, "doing sword"

The heart of bujutsu is rei. The responsibility of a teacher is to communicate this to students. If this communication fails, students can develop incorrect attitudes and the true meaning of training is lost. Unfortunately, there is a great deal of abuse of power in Japanese budo today. In my opinion few teachers are teaching the principles of budo correctly. Rei in budo has become very artificial, resembling the old-style Japanese military hierarchy. The true meaning of rei is no longer expressed. We seem to be preserving only the worst parts of Japanese traditions and culture, and we need to consider ways to change this situation.

Bujutsu leads to rei. The instructor ideally behaves as an exemplar to lead students toward something higher. Rei is an expression of humility towards that higher existence. But some people, as they develop their skills and achieve higher rank, dismiss what they ought to have learned about rei. Those who fail to work as diligently to improve the spirit as they do to improve their techniques are likely to forget the proper humility of true rei. They are apt to become overconfident, proud, and patronizing. Spiritual development and technical development are entirely different things and there is not necessarily any relationship between them.

Training in jojutsu, for example, has a wonderful quality because it can result in both sorts of development; spiritual growth leads to technical growth and vice versa. Development is not merely a matter of technique. However, if physical techniques are taught improperly or superficially, students will become confused. There will be even greater misunderstanding if the focus is only on the process of polishing techniques. We must never lose sight of the intent to "correct and improve the spirit." The only way to ensure this is to study under a master teacher.

In general, people misunderstand what a master teacher is. They can become confused, equating the idea of a master with that of an instructor or a senior. Unfortunately, as one's skill level increases, so, often, does the size of one's ego. Too frequently, younger people who are of high rank or who have received a license or scroll assume that they are qualified to be a teacher just because they have instructor certification, own a dojo, or have students. It is a grave error to believe that a person is a master teacher just because of a high rank or license.

Once, my teacher, Shimizu Takaji Sensei (1896-1978), told me not to copy the jo practiced by his junior fellow student Otofujii Ichizo Sensei. Unless one carefully reflects on what Shimizu Sensei really meant, this statement can be easily misunderstood. He knew that there were some differences between his way of using jo and tachi, and the way in which Otofujii Sensei used these weapons. Even in kata bujutsu,* it is very natural for there to be differences in the form. That's because different people have different levels of technical understanding and different mindsets. This leads them to make movements in slightly different ways and they pass on these individual characteristics in their teaching. Shimizu Sensei was afraid that young students would notice these differences, get confused or suspicious, and think that one way or the other was wrong. He seemed to have been concerned about the inevitable errors that result when a student is unable or unwilling to follow just one teacher. He urged me to follow a single teacher, to the greatest extent possible, and to avoid confusing myself unnecessarily by looking around at other teachers.

Having more than one teacher can create serious problems in your training. On the other hand, insisting that students blindly "follow one and only one teacher" can result in separatist cliques and prevent students of different teachers from being able to practice together. This distasteful situation still occurs in the Japanese martial arts world. The only solution is to wait for the spiritual growth of both the teacher and the disciple; then students can train under a single teacher and still benefit from interacting with students from other groups.

This is why an understanding of rei is so essential to the process of spiritual growth in bujutsu. One of the most profound expressions of rei lies in the interaction between uchidachi, the one who receives the technique, and shidachi, the one who does the technique. Unfortunately, even teachers often misunderstand the subtleties of uchidachi and shidachi in kata training. They fail to pass on to their students the difference in intent inherent in these two roles. Particularly in the classical traditions, the roles of uchidachi and shidachi are quite distinctive. Each has its own unique psychological viewpoint. It is essential that this distinct quality always be maintained. I believe that the difference in these two roles is the defining characteristic of kata training. Recently, I've come to the realization that it is not even worth training unless both partners properly understand this.

When an outsider watches kata, it appears that uchidachi loses and shidachi wins. This is intentional. But there's much more to it than that. Uchidachi must have the spirit of a nurturing parent. Uchidachi leads shidachi by providing a true attack; this allows shidachi to learn correct body displacement, combative distancing, proper spirit, and the perception of opportunity. A humble spirit is as necessary as correct technique for uchidachi. Deceit, arrogance, and a patronizing attitude must never be allowed in practice. Uchidachi's mission is vital. In the past, this role was only performed by senior practitioners who were capable of performing accurate technique and who possessed the right spirit and understanding of the role. Uchidachi must provide an example of clean, precise cutting lines and correct targeting, and must also convey focused intensity and an air of authority.

If uchidachi is the parent or teacher, then shidachi is the child or disciple. The goal is to acquire the skills presented by uchidachi's technique. Unfortunately, students often act as though they want to test their skills against those of the higher-ranked uchidachi. They consider this competition to be their practice. In fact, this leads to neither better technique, nor greater spiritual development, because the correct relationship between uchidachi and shidachi has been obscured. It is the repetition of the techniques in this parent/child or senior/junior relationship that allows for the growth of the spirit through the practice of technique.

The roles of uchidachi as senior and shidachi as junior are preserved regardless of the actual respective experience levels of the pair. Kata must be practiced so that trainees learn both to give and to receive. This is what makes technical improvement and spiritual development possible. Unfortunately, in jo practice, people sometimes think that they practice both roles merely to memorize the sequential movements of the two different weapons, tachi and jo. There are even some instructors who teach that the aim of Shinto Muso-ryu jojutsu is to learn how to defeat a sword with a stick. This is an error. If it continues, kata bujutsu may die out, because both the technique and the spirit of uchidachi will not improve.

These days there are fewer people who can perform the role of uchidachi correctly. I believe that bujutsu evolved into budo only by maintaining the idea of uchidachi and shidachi. This idea is a fundamental characteristic of the classical bujutsu. Although the Japanese arts, such as kenjutsu, iaijutsu, and jojutsu, have been transformed from "jutsu" into "do," if the proper roles in training are not preserved, the "do" arts will veer off in the wrong direction. Obviously, there is a difference between attempting to preserve the proper distinction between uchidachi and shidachi yet not achieving perfection, and a complete lack of effort or understanding about the distinction. The existence of the intent or the quality of the intent is manifested in daily practice and actions. Those who have the eyes and experience to see can tell the difference.

However, my concern is that these days fewer people understand this concept. In the future there will be fewer still. People seem no longer to recognize that the existence of uchidachi and shidachi is the essence of budo training.

All things considered, I am convinced that the most important things I have learned from Shinto Muso-ryu and Shimizu Takaji Sensei are the roles of uchidachi and shidachi in kata. There is no way to transmit the kata of the Japanese classical traditions without a proper understanding of this spirit of giving and receiving. It is not right for seniors in the uchidachi role to mistreat, bully, or torment their juniors. On the contrary, their job is to guide and educate. In the same sense, it is also terrible to see shidachi assume an attitude that is essentially patricidal, and attempt to destroy the uchidachi. I can only say that such a spirit should never exist.

Shimizu Sensei always said, "You must train with me" [i.e. directly with your own teacher]. He constantly took the role of uchidachi. Even with beginners, he never relaxed his attention. He was always serious with everyone. He was never arrogant and never lorded it over another person. I believe that this attitude is the most important teaching of kata bujutsu, and Shimizu Sensei's training was a wonderful example. This spirit is difficult to nurture, not only in jojutsu but in other situations as well. It is entirely different from a senior student or teacher showing off his skills to his juniors by treating them with arrogance and condescension. It is so easy to become trapped in a cycle of interaction that causes shidachi to react by attempting to compete with uchidachi. The guidance of a master teacher is absolutely essential to avoid this situation.

Uchidachi teaches shidachi by sacrificing himself, training as if he were going to be killed at any moment; this self-sacrifice embodies the spirit of teachers and parents. Kata training is of no use without understanding this. It is this spirit that allows shidachi to grow and polish his or her own spirit. Kata bujutsu teaches neither victory nor defeat, but rather how to nurture others and pull them to a higher level. That is budo.

I earnestly hope that everyone, particularly those who practice jojutsu, remember this axiom: "Do not be jubilant in victory; do not become servile in defeat. Lose with dignity." This is the spirit we must emulate.

Remarks by Diane Skoss:

The [following] text has as its core a translation of a chapter in Nishioka Tsuneo's book Budo-teki na Mono no Kangaekata: Shu, Ha, Ri (Budo Way of Thinking: Shu, Ha, Ri). Direct translations from the Japanese are frequently problematic because of the ambiguity inherent in the traditional Japanese style of essay writing. In order to clarify the author's ideas and best present his thoughts in English, we have supplemented the original text with a series of personal conversations. (Special thanks to Phil ReInick, Larry Bieri, Meik Skoss, Joe Cieslik, Dave Lowry, Roger and Miho Lloyd, Dan Soares, Derek Steel, and Steve Duncan. The original translation is by Yoko Sato; Diane Skoss provided the footnotes and introduction.) The result thus intentionally suggests the flavor of teachings passed down from master to disciple.

Please note that in this essay, the suffixes -do (way) and -jutsu (skill or technique) are used in the Japanese fashion--that is to say, without making a precise distinction between them. The author believes that they are not two distinct entities, but different facets of a single whole. It is this whole to which he refers, sometimes as budo, sometimes as bujutsu. In places he uses terminology typical of a classical art, while at other times he uses terms usually applied when discussing modern budo. His comments are intended to cover both.

The essay begins with reference to the Japanese concept of rei. This word presents unique difficulties in translation. Although rei translates as etiquette, decorum, propriety, politeness, or courtesy, none of these terms are quite equivalent to the Japanese, so in this essay we will not provide an English substitute. Think of it as the proper essence or quality of relationships between individuals.

** This term is Japanese shorthand for old-style martial arts that are practiced using kata as the primary teaching tool. Unlike karate kata, in which moves are practiced solo, kata bujutsu consists of kata practiced in pairs, one attacking (shidachi) and one receiving (uchidachi). This can be done with the same weapons (i.e. tachi versus tachi) or different ones (jo versus tachi, naginata versus kusarigama, etc.). The classical Japanese arts tend to focus almost exclusively on kata-style training, while many of the modern budo incorporate kata as only one component of a larger curriculum.*

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This article first appeared in Sword & Spirit, Koryu Books, 1999.
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Others Writing about Nishioka Sensei and his Jo

Nishioka Tsuneo and the Pure Flow of the Jo

What does Nishioka Tsuneo Yasunori sensei want to pass on to the select group of American students who study the art of jojutsu (staff methods)?

The head of the Seiryukai organization, who spent most of his life in jo forging his techniques, says that, it's "Not waza (techniques) alone. You have to go beyond waza, to seishin (spirit)."

Nishioka was at the tail end of a cross-country tour of the United States, where he visited various jo clubs, including those located in Atlanta and Baltimore, and passed on advanced techniques. This interview was conducted over an informal dinner at a Korean restaurant and at a practice session with the members of the Hawaii Shinto Muso-ryu jo group led by Quintin Chambers.

The 70-year-old Nishioka began his budo training over 56 years ago at the age of 14, quite by accident. In prewar Japan, most physical education departments in public schools offered mandatory classes in judo or kendo, but the Yakan Gakko Middle School was so small it didn't have phys. ed. classes. Seeking some kind of budo training, an older student introduced him to Shimizu Takaji, who headed the Shinto Muso-ryu system in Tokyo. "He was Japan's number one teacher," Nishioka recalls.

Nishioka took to Shimizu and jo practice like a fish to water. He trained in the morning, then went to school or (later, after graduating,) work, and then returned to Shimizu sensei's dojo at 5 p.m., training until 10 at night. He followed this regime religiously for five years.

"I didn't think it was any hardship at all," Nishioka says, a quick smile coming to his face as he recalls his youthful years. "Shimizu sensei was a good teacher, so it was a time of happiness.

"Most people quit training after school. I didn't. I married, changed companies, but still I studied (every day) with Shimizu sensei for five years, then I cut back to three times a week."

In between, Nishioka was called up by the draft to enter the Imperial Army in February 1945. He considers it a blessing that the war ended soon after, in August of that year. He returned home unscathed.

"Over half of my friends and students who went to war before me never came back, they died," Nishioka says. "I was lucky."

At the end of the war, most budo practice was banned by the Occupation forces.* Jo, however, was allowed. Shimizu sensei was allowed to teach staff methods to the Tokyo police, and a number of kendo teachers joined the classes in order to continue some kind of budo practice.

"Training before and after the war was about the same," Nishioka notes. "But society changed, so the intent of practice changed. Budo practitioners my age and older treated budo as a life and death situation. It's not like nowadays."

Nishioka, who continued his studies with Shimizu and Otofujii sensei, eventually received his menkyo kaiden master's license from Shimizu and began the Seiryukai. The name is a

tribute to his teacher. Sei-, which means "clear and pure," is also the first Chinese character used in Shimizu sensei's name (which is pronounced shi-). -Ryu- denotes flow or origins, and -kai is organization. Thus, Seiryukai can mean the "organization of the style derived from Shimizu sensei" as well as the "pure style organization."

The jo that the Seiryukai practices, therefore, is the Shinto Muso-ryu jo, Shimizu-ha (the Shinto Muso-ryu staff art of the Shimizu style). Nishioka teaches at various rented and borrowed locations in Greater Tokyo, but he has no central dojo specifically for Seiryukai jo.

"The land prices in Tokyo are just unbelievable, they're ridiculous!" he comments. "I couldn't afford a dojo with those prices being what they are!"

Nishioka has some interesting ideas about jo and budo in general, and he interspersed his practice with Hawaii jo students with many tidbits of information:

Nishioka's Thoughts

"It's harder to start budo after twenty years of age. The mind and body hardens. You can do it, but it's harder for the technique to enter your body. Past twenty, the techniques have to enter the mind first. It's best if your body learns without too much mind. Then the body remembers (karada de motte). It's the same for learning piano, and so on. So middle school to college are the most important years, the best time for learning."

Over and over again, Nishioka sensei stressed that jo "Is not a military art. It is a martial art." There's a big difference, he says. Quintin Chambers sensei adds that a martial art is concerned with a "sense of chivalry."

Every student has to study the techniques of the jo for himself, and not just blindly imitate his teacher. "Shimizu sensei was a very short person," Nishioka says. "Sometimes in some stances, his jo would hit the floor (because he was so short), for example." Some students later on blindly imitated Shimizu sensei, not knowing that they were doing things inappropriate for their own height.

Many Americans are very interested in budo, Nishioka noted happily, but he also observed that some Americans had very strange ideas about budo. "(Some) think it's something like ninjitsu, or something or they think it's something to defeat other people. That's a mistake."

Modern jo, because it is incorporated in the All-Japan Kendo Federation's jodo section, is heavily influenced by kendo, a sportive budo. That is good and bad, Nishioka says. "You have to be aware of the old techniques and actual meanings," he admonishes his students. For example, according to Nishioka, jodan (a stance in which the sword is held right over the head), straight men (overhead, direct cuts to the top of the opponent's head) and the high-standing positions are modern kendo influences. In the old days, when samurai wore armor, a lot of the attacks were kesa (angular) and the kamae was often hasso (in which the sword is held upright close to the chest). The jodo practiced in Kyushu, the former Kuroda clan domain, still retains a lot of the old flavor. "But you must study both," he concludes.

An actual battle, in the classical sense, began before swords are even crossed. If you were good enough, you could sense malicious intent and avoid it or plan how to defeat it before the attack even started. That is the ability of being able to sense an opponent's sakki ("killing spirit"). You should also be able to realistically gauge your own strength and your opponent's abilities."

In practice, your partner doesn't generate sakki, because it's only practice. But if it was a real life-and-death situation, you would sense sakki easily if you were trained by years of budo practice. "If it were a shinken shobu (duel with real weapons to the conclusion), the sakki would duel first (before the swords)."

"If you know you can't defeat a challenger, you could just say, 'Gee, you're really too good for me,' and avoid the match," Nishioka laughs. "That's strategy, too. That's avoiding defeat, after all."

Weapons are to be held lightly but firmly in the hands. Too light a grip and it falls out. Too tight a grip and the dogu (tool) becomes "dead." That is why in iaido the initial grasping of the sword handle is very light. "You need to be able to use the snap in your wrist when you cut," Nishioka says.

Coming to America

Nishioka first traveled to America because he worked as hard in business as he did in budo. In a rather individualistic manner for a Japanese of his generation, he ventured out of the pack to develop word processing machines in Japan long before other big corporations moved into the wa-puro business. Thirty years ago, Nishioka ventured to Phoenix, Arizona, to cement a deal with an American software company that led to one of the first Japanese language word processors. His open-mindedness to new technologies continues to this day. One of his fondest memories of his recent trips to America was a tour of a lab at Apple Computers that showcased computer innovations and prototypes. He was like a kid in a candy factory.

Nishioka's company was the first to get in on Japanese word processing. It endured the hard knocks of overcoming consumer reluctance at typing on a keyboard, built up the market... "Then Toshiba and others got into the business," he laughs, noting how the profits slowed after the big boys got involved.

Even now, semi-retired, Nishioka goes to his family-run business in a building by Kokubunji, near Tachikawa, in Greater Tokyo, just to oversee operations. It's easy to see that Nishioka enjoys business, perhaps as much as he enjoys budo training. His eyes constantly gleam when discussing high tech or budo techniques.

Nishioka sensei notes that not much is really known about the founder of the ryu, Muso Gonnosuke. All that is really verifiable is that Gonnosuke was born, he lived, he meditated at Mount Homan, he dueled with Miyamoto Musashi and he died somewhere. Everything else, Nishioka says, is probably conjecture. Gonnosuke's colorful character was a later colorization of a shadowy historical personage. "That part was probably made up," Nishioka says.

At the end of the military shogunate, in the late 1800s, Hirano Kichizo Noei was appointed a lineal master (soke) of the ryu and became very famous within the Kuroda clan. His son, Kumiomi, also studied jojutsu but according to Nishioka he didn't attain a menkyo license. Kumiomi, at the age of 31, wrote *Jobo Kojitsu*, (The Ancient Customs of the Jo and the Bo).** Kumiomi first created the tales of an extravagant, boastful Gonnosuke. "Those stories may have been fantastic, exaggerated," Nishioka believes.

Nishioka's recent trips to the States gave him an overview of jojutsu practiced outside of Japan. Nishioka has visited the United States three times in the past two years. From what he saw, he concludes that those non-native Japanese who studied directly with Shimizu sensei, such as Quintin Chambers and Phil Relnick, are very, very good. And there is no lack of enthusiasm and good effort.

His escalating attempts at spreading jo outside of Japan by giving seminars began after his semi-retirement. "As much as possible, I want to pass on Shimizu sensei's methods and spirit."

As part of that agenda, Nishioka planned to return to Hawaii in August of this year to participate in the International Jodo Federation's training camp with members of his Seiryukai. This is the first time that any Japanese group is officially participating in the IJF's activities. "I consider anyone who's trained with Shimizu sensei like a family member, not like a student-teacher relationship," Nishioka concludes.

". . . I want to pass on the pure methods of Shimizu sensei, including the *gijutsu* (methods), *densho* (tradition) and *seishin* (spirit)."

* *GHQ, the Occupation forces led by the American military under General Douglas MacArthur*

** *Bugei Ryuha Daijiten, by Watatani Kiyoshi and Yamada Tadashi, Tokyo Koppo Shuppan edition, 1980, p. 426.*

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This article first appeared in *Furyu: The Budo Journal*, vol. 1, no. 2. For more information on this magazine, check out *Furyu Online*.

Last modified on February 19, 2007

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Ishida Hiroaki: Speaking on the Jo of Nishioka Tsuneo-Shihan

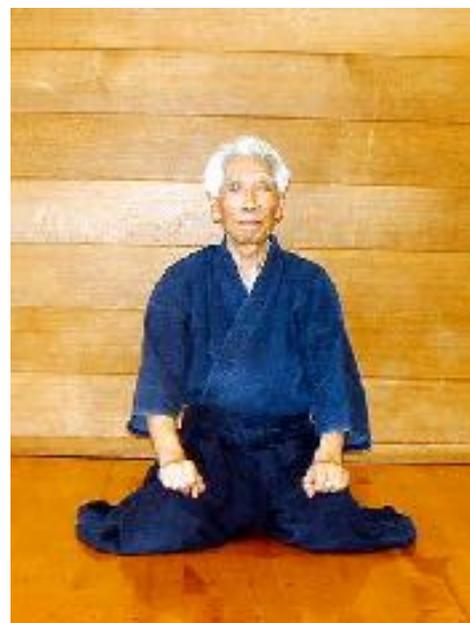
Before Shimizu Takaji-senshi passed away, Nishioka Tsuneo-shihan was told these words, "Left as things are I will have produced mere stick-swingers**", "The Jo is living", "I want you to do all you can to pass on the living Jo." With this, he went on to form the Seiryukai and even now in his 80th year he is still working to guide the next generation. In this article I would like to be allowed to express a few of my impressions regarding Nishioka sensei, his character, and his Jo.

* *The implication is that they have only acquired the technical side of Jodo and are lacking the spiritual side; or have not acquired the "Bu no Seishin" inherent in Jodo.*

1. First of all

On the 9th May 1985 Hamaji Kouichi-shihan passed away. During his lifetime he said to me many times, "Should anything happen to me, go to Nishioka", [...]

After his death, I considering Hamaji senshi's words. I decided to seek out the advice of his son Hamaji Mitsuo-shihan, a the person to whom my teacher would see fit to entrust his affairs and therefore by definition be a worthy and a person of fine character. After talking with him and seeking his advice and approval, I set out to make Nishioka Tsuneo-shihan my teacher from that point on. This was in keeping with Hamaji Kouichi-senshi's last wishes and it is my firm belief that there was no other way.



But it was not take long before I began hearing many things about Nishioka Tsuneo-shihan in the Jodo community. One very large problem was the misunderstanding surrounding Nishioka-shihan's training, certification and a great amount of unwarranted slander directed at him, such as: "Nishioka does not hold a Menkyo"; "Shimizu-sensei did not give out a Menkyo to Nishioka"; "Nishioka has not learnt the Gomuso, therefore he is not a Menkyo Kaiden"; "There is a blank in Nishioka's Jo history"; "You wouldn't pass for an 8th dan if you're learning from Nishioka!" are just some examples.

Despite this, I have remained silent and have simply gone day by day doing nothing other than to continue to learn and master the Jo and philosophy. I refuse to believe that the one spoken of so highly of and chosen by Hamaji-shihan could be such a person.

Fortunately in 1994, I received a Menkyo from Hamaji Mitsuo-shihan and received another Menkyo and initiation into the Gomuso from Nishioka-shihan, taking on the responsibilities as the most junior Menkyo Kaiden.

Recently I spoke frankly to Nishioka-shihan regarding the above-mentioned problems and received clear answers to many questions on a wide variety of topics. First of all, I would like to dispel the misunderstanding and slander that have spread throughout the jo community about Nishioka-shihan and reveal them as absurd and then confirm the truth.

“Nishioka Tsuneo-shihan has not received a Menkyo from Shimizu Takaji-sensei.”

Regarding this statement, I have actually seen and held **Nishioka-shihan's Menkyo certificate given to him by Shimizu-shihan**. There is no mistake, it is authentic, and was issued to Nishioka Tsuneo-shihan by Shimizu Takaji-shihan in April of 1972.



Nishioka-shihan's Menkyo certificate

“Nishioka Tsuneo-shihan is not a Menkyo Kaiden. He has not learned the Gomuso.”

Nishioka-shihan is **an official Menkyo Kaiden**, his history reading, “In May of 1975 Nishioka-shihan was initiated in the Hiden, the five techniques of the Gomuso, and was acknowledged as Menkyo Kaiden by Shimizu Takaji Katsuyasu-sensei and Otofujii Ichizo Katsunori-sensei.” Apparently there are those who make claims like “Nishioka was just there. He didn't receive any initiation.” Generally though, in the martial arts world and especially in respect to a school's ultimate techniques, it is commonly held that “To show is to teach.” Thus I think that “just being there” becomes “being taught”.

Furthremore, it goes without saying that if Shihans allow those who received a Menkyo to be present while performing the Hiden, those shihans have initiated them. I have been allowed to see the complete correspondence between Otofujii Ichizou-shihan and Nishioka Tsuneo-shihan and Otofujii-sensei does indeed acknowledges Nishioka-shihan's achievement and initiation.



Photograph taken to commemorate Nishioka-shihan's initiation in the Gomuso by Shimizu Takaji-shihan and Otofujii Ichizou-shihan.

In the back row from the left are Hiroi Tsunetsugu-shihan, Yoneno Koutarou-shihan, and Nishioka Tsuneo-shihan.

Although it is presumptuous of me to say so, I was initiated in the Gomuso by Nishioka-shihan and feel that it is the genuine article. I think that one must understand this particular handling of the jo and tachi in this Gomuso to become capable of illustrating the correct Uchidachi and Shijo of Shinto Muso-ryu Jo.

“There is a blank of a little over a decade in Nishioka's training record.”

Nishioka-shihan was made a pupil by Shimizu Takaji-shihan in 1938 and from the very beginning of his training he only trained under Shimizu-shihan. It is believed that this a rumour started because he was not directly involved in the establishment of ZKR Jodo (then called Zenkenren Seiteigata). As concerns Shinto Muso-ryu Jo training there is most definitely no “blank areas”.

In other words, those claiming there is a blank of more than a decade are referring to his involvement with the Zen Nippon Kendo Renmei Jodo. As far as I'm concerned the ZKR Jodo claims are not applicable to the Koryu Bujutsu school of Shinto Muso-ryu Jo.

Conversely, this “blank” from the ZKR Jodo actually becomes proof that Nishioka-shihan was not influenced by the ZKR, but instead purely Shinto Muso-ryu Denshousha.

Moreover, while he has been conferred the rank of Hanshi Hachidan in ZKR Jodo, he made the choice to leave the ZKR Jodo due to his concerns about the changes that the

ZKR Jodo has made to the school as they see fit and his strong desire to pass on the teachings Shimizu-shihan's Jo.

Furthermore, more important than alleged “blanks” and so forth in regards to Nishioka sensei’s training history, there is the problem regarding unfounded opinions and conjectures about the proficiency of Nishioka-shihan's skill with the Jo and Ken. These problems are, I think, cases of “confused prejudice”. Surely before one criticises what they think they are seeing, it is necessary to humbly study Nishioka shihan's techniques. I strongly believe that in doing that, one “removes the veil from over one's eyes” and meets with the true essence of Jodo.

Next, I will convey some of my thoughts on Nishioka-shihan's Shinto Muso-ryu Jodo.

2. Regarding Nishioka Tsuneo-shihan's Jo

1.Regarding Hikiotoshi-uchi

Nishioka-shihan often says, “I am constantly asking myself, how was Shimizu-sensei's Jo? I desire only to communicate and teach how he used the jo.” And yet, in today's Jodo community, the jo as Nishioka-shihan demonstrates and employs it is seen as being unique and even unorthodox. However, I believe its existence can be said to be an extremely important treasure not only for the Jodo community but also for the whole Budo community.

I believe this because I see that the uchisuji of his Jo and the tachisuji of his Tachi communicate superbly the tachisuji Shinto-ryu Kenjutsu. It is possible to think that perhaps tachisuji has been completely forgotten by the present-day Budo community, yet in Nishioka-shihan’s waza it is embodied and enlivened in the form of Shinto-ryu Kenjutsu and through Shinto Muso-ryu Jo.

A prime example is Hikiotoshi-uchi.

In Shinto Muso-ryu Jo, there are numerous kata ending with swordsman leveling his sword in front of the jo-wielder, who then hits the sword. After doing this or seeing this, one then contemplates the true meaning behind this technique and asks “why?”

In my early days of training I thought that it was simply hitting the sword with all your might to make it fly out of the way; or to bend the sword, making it useless. While it may be possible to hit the sword like this if the swordsman is inexperienced, it only takes a short amount of time for the swordsman to realize that the jo is easily avoided through simply moving the sword a little.

In my 20's I too experienced missing the sword with the jo, and I was evaded countless times by one Kendo teacher, all the while he told me that “any strike directed at the sword should be evaded, like this!” After this, I asked Hamaji-senshi about the problem I was having, and I received the following reply, “It is because you hit the tachi that your strike is evaded.” At that time, I was still extremely young and my jo practice had not matured, so I could not comprehend the true meaning of his answer. I continued with my training, although still holding some doubts in my mind as to being able to strike the sword, all the while thinking “It'll be alright if I can just hit the tachi at the moment it stops dead center in front of me.”

Nishioka-shihan's solution was superb.

“It is not a case of hitting the sword when it is in the center position. Hikiotoshi uchi illustrates winning by cutting down on Uchidachi's tachi as it is cutting down,” he answered. “This is called Kiriotoshi in Itto-ryu and Gasshi-uchi in Shinkage-ryu.”

This was consistent with something I had heard of the old Shinto Muso-ryu Jo kata. At the end Uchidachi and Shijo would finish in mid-cut at the upper level. When practicing kata using a shinken or a habiki, instead of a bokuto specially designed for use in keiko, coming together like this makes sense.

In present times, we strike the bokuto directed in seigan as a form of kiriotoshi practice, much akin to practicing tameshigiri with a shinken. Thus, in the kata we practice using a bokuto we are training to cut down on the tachi that has come to cut us. I cannot resist in saying that Nishioka-shihan's “solution” was very simple and convincing and the question that I had held onto for many years and the perplexing answer Hamaji-senshi had given me had finally been solved.

Certainly this strike is the ultimate technique. For Itto-ryu, for Shinkage-ryu, for Shinto-ryu, and indeed for every ryugi, I expect that training in this principle has been made the most important of all. Accordingly, I suggest that this strike is something which all present day Jodo practitioners ought to learn thoroughly as, without it, I believe the “living Jo” will never be, nor will it be possible to attain the Jo of Shimizu Takaji-shihan.

However, a terrible amount of practice is required before one masters this strike. I myself received the benefit of countless corrections from Nishioka-shihan and after 20 years of revision, reassessment, and reconfirmation I am at last at a level where I get the feeling that I have finally acquired it.

But this strike is not just in Hikiotoshi uchi. It's also in both Honte uchi and Gyakute uchi as the same strike is employed.*

Whatever the case, Nishioka-shihan's technique faithfully transmits and aims to communicate the intentions of Shimizu Takaji-senshi, more accurately it passes on the tachisuji of Shinto-ryu. Without this, I feel that Shinto Muso-ryu Jo will die out. Regarding this, I wonder what others may think?

Next, let us consider the Uchi no Suji (cutting angle) of Nishioka-shihan.

2. Regarding the uchi no suji.

“What kind of angle should the sword take (tachisuji) when cutting in Shinto-ryu?”

I think that one can answer this question by looking carefully at the tachisuji of the Shinto-ryu being taught today. Additionally, I have also made personal studies of Shinkage-ryu (Yagyu Gensho-den), Kukishin-ryu, and Houten-ryu and have been exposed to the sword techniques of other Koryu such as Tenshinsho-den Katori Shinto-ryu, Maniwa nen-ryu, and Jikishinkage-ryu.

I have come to understand that the answer exists in the concept of “Always shield yourself behind the sword and perform the technique.” In coming to this understanding this concept, I have keenly felt the techniques within ryugi whose line has been interrupted and

then later revived, have losing this basic technique, and felt it within many ryugi which are thought to no longer teach this method.

This “Always shield yourself behind the sword and perform the technique.” is, I think, absolutely vital to a real battle, one in which life is at stake. It would be too dangerous to perform techniques without it.

Today, Shinto-ryu kenjutsu, even though it is a subordinate to Shinto Muso-ryu Jo, it goes without saying that this principle directly applies. Yet for most practitioners, at least within the realm of my own limited experience, I have yet to see anyone outside of Nishioka shihans wield a sword in such a proper way.

Shinto-ryu kenjutsu, the source of Shinto Muso Ryu Jo, is moving further and further from its original form; and it follows that Shinto Muso-ryu is also in a similar state.

After considering the original tachisuji angle of the sword, it then follows to explore the angle that the jo takes.

In Shinto Muso-ryu Jo there are three strikes, Honte-uchi, Gyakute-uchi, and Hikiotoshi-uchi, which all follow the same angle of attack, although there are some differences in “Tenouchi” (I’ll get to that later).

As an example, I will explain Nishioka-shihan's movements in Hikiotoshi-uchi.



Hikiotoshi no kamae



Upon raising the Jo from Hikiotoshi no kamae. The body is squared and the left hand is direct center of the chest (along the natural horizontal line from armpit to armpit).

The Jo is raised at a 45 degrees angle to the body; the most important point. If one holds the Jo upright here the action becomes a mere hit and it will not be possible to “shield with the Jo and strike.”

From here, leave everything as it is and strike through, cutting down at 45 degrees.



It is important to make sure that the tip of the Jo passes by the tip of the opponent's nose.

The body is turned 45 degrees to the left (“hanmi”) and the Jo is at the opponent's face at a 30 degree angle. At this point, the tip of the Jo is threatening the Seigan (“between the eyebrows”) while the body is shielded behind the Jo.

It is then possible to sweep the opponent's sword, break the opponent's posture, and shatter their intent, all the while protecting oneself with the Jo. This is called “Sankujiki” a point when all three are broken simultaneously and where the perfection of the Jo lies.

This same strategy is found in Shinkage-ryu's Gasshi-uchi and in Itto-ryu's Ichimoji no uchi.

At this point the opponent's “ki” (spirit), “ken”(sword), and “tai” (body) have been completely broken.



Without changing anything cut down in a continuation of the above movement.



Afterwards, step out with the right foot, return the Jo back along the line it has just travelled in order to assume Migihonte no kamae.

What do you think?

Both Honte-uchi and gyakute-uchi pass along the same line.

At first glance it appears to be a simple strike, but outside of Nishioka-shihan and those who have received training from him, there is no one to be found doing this.

Nishioka-shihan has always said that *this* is the strike Shimizu-senshi wanted to pass on.

The influence of modern day Kendo (a competitive sport using Shinai) upon the catholically practiced ZKR Jodo is by no means small (in comparison, it is quite large), the hasuji or “blade angle” of Jojutsu of practitioners who have studied ZKR Jodo is quite different, even though they perform the same patterns of Shinto Muso-ryu kata.

In fact, I was once told by a Koryu kenjutsu practitioner that he had tried to learn Shinto muso-ryu Jo but there was nothing of interest in it. When I asked why, they told me that “...only a sequence of the movements were taught. The reasoning and strategy (such as Aishiuchi or Ichimoji no uchi), the most important aspect of Koryu kenjutsu, is completely lost”.

Nishioka-shihan is always saying that Honte-uchi, Gyakute-uchi, and Hikiotoshi-uchi are the most important techniques, this meeting with the sword strike and then overcoming it the Gokui of the jo, that and “Always shield yourself behind the sword and perform the technique.” I agree with this wholeheartedly.

Nishioka-shihan embodies the execution of this strike superbly. With all unnecessary strength left out, and no strain anywhere, this masterful movement, performed simply and effortlessly, is without a doubt such that it caused one American practitioner to proclaim Nishioka-shihan a “jo-saint”.

If one looks hard at Nishioka-shihan’s technique and demonstrations, one sees him using a movement that involves the opening and closing of the scapulae and pectoral muscles in a very natural, inconspicuous manner.

This is embodied in the 64th kata of Shinto Muso-ryu, which is called “Aun”.

It is said the name “Aun” comes from “A” as in “opening” and “Un” as in “closing”. This is represented in all of Nishioka-shihan's movement. It is not restricted only to simple strikes but applies to all the actions of his Jo. Even in the other kihon waza, Kaeshi-tsuki, Gyakute-tsuki, Makiotoshi, Kuritsuke, Kurihanashi, Taiatari, Tsukihazushi-uchi, Taihazushi-uchi, Nishioka-shihan performs this opening and closing of the scapulae and pectoral muscles naturally within in all of the kihon waza. This ability to perform the waza without any force or strain is the result of nearly 70 uninterrupted years of constant training and is admirable.

Regardless of what others say, Nishioka-Shihan he is the oldest living Shihan in the Jodo world today. To anyone with a sensibility extending to Jodo, I recommend seeing the movement of Nishioka-shihan personally at least once and accepting his teaching with proper modesty.

3. Regarding Tenouchi (how to hold Jo)

Nishioka Shihan asserts that students of Shinto Muso Ryu Jo should understand the difference between *honte* (“true hand” or forward grip) and *gyakute* (“reverse hand” or grip). Perceiving the difference between these two grips is essential to all martial arts which use weaponry but regrettably only a few people can distinguish between the two and demonstrate them correctly.

Shinto-muso-ryu’s *jojutsu* (stick method) originated in Shinto-ryu Kenjutsu and therefore, the jo (stick) is viewed to have a blade. Furthermore, I believe that students should use jo as if it had a blade although it is merely round stick and many practitioners today ignore this. I am afraid most practitioners are unaware of the theory of the “blade” that the jo has. For example, many students mistakenly believe that the difference between *honte* and *gyakute* is merely the distinction of the right hand’s grip when in reality the difference is in the grip of *both* hands. Furthermore, if you grip the jo incorrectly you are unable to use the jo to its full potential.

Look at the picture below.



This is *honte* grip.

The jo follows the “life line” of the palm while being gripped (see the palm picture chart below), just as a cook grips *hocho* or a chef’s knife.

With the *honte* grip, you can use the jo softly, freely, and flexibly.



This is *gyakute* grip. Both hands grip Jo along the brain line and emotion line of your palm just as a gymnast grips a horizontal bar. With this grip one can utilize the weight of the jo freely with force and power.



In technique of *kuritsuke*, your front hand is in *honte* and braced on the forehead while the back hand free and in *gyakute*. This transmits strength to the front of the jo. While being held in this way, the whole body is in control of the jo. Nishioka Shihan once said Shimizu Takaji Shihan had taught proper *kuritsuke* over and over again yet today, the correct grip form of

kuritsuke is not observed.

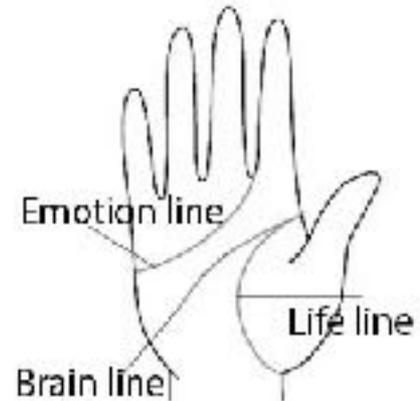
(I will refer to *kuritsuke*, *kurihanashi*, and *tai-atari* later.)

In summary, *honte* is used as a cook grips the handle of a chef's knife or as a carpenter grips a hammer, flexibly.

Gyakute is used like a gymnast grips a horizontal bar or when a weight lifter picks up a heavy dumbbell, powerfully.

When the jo is gripped in *honte*, the thumb and middle finger form a "ring"; When the jo is gripped in *gyakute*, the thumb and index finger form a "ring".

Furthermore, both of these hand/finger positions are found in Asian meditation practices and illustrated in art and statues. For example, representing wielding and gentleness is *honte*, made with the thumb and middle finger. For strength vigor one finds *gyakute*, made with the thumb and index finger.**



In this way, the teachings of Tsuneo Nishioka Shihan are masterful as he is always guiding us to correct techniques.

4. Regarding Kuritsuke, Kurihanashi, and Taiatri

One distinguishing characteristic of Nishioka Shihan's Shinto Muso Ryu is his particular way of gripping the jo. He learned this grip directly from Takaji Shimizu Shihan. I do not know anyone else who grips Jo in this way.

When I first learned this grip from him more than 25 years ago, it felt awkward because it was different from what I had learned before.



I said to Nishioka Shihan, "Isn't your way of holding Jo different from the way it's generally practiced?" He answered, "I learned this gripping style from Shimizu Shihan. If you fix your forward hand on your forehead, your forehead plays a role of a fulcrum point and you can move Jo like a lever. No Jo practitioner that I know holds Jo in this way, but it is effective. So, learn it well."

I believed what Nishioka Shihan said and after spending some time imitating and practicing this way, I realized that his method is logical.

It is regrettable that this method of holding the jo had not spread among other of Shimizu sensei's students and I came to my own interpretation as to why this is. When I thought about the cause of the jo being held affixed to the head (as Nishioka shihan does) and the gap between the head and hand (as most others do) I came to the conclusion that when Shimizu Shihan was practicing with someone taller, it was difficult for him to fix his hand on his forehead. Therefore he probably changed his technique, because he was shorter than

most of his students, to accommodate the height difference. Ultimately, he held the jo above his head to demonstrate and perform the technique.

Of course you can use your foreword hand as a fulcrum point without fixing it to your forehead to perform the technique. However if you fix your hand on your forehead and use it as a fulcrum, it is a powerful way to perform Kuritsuke.

This technique is difficult to master and there are only a few among Nishioka Shihan's students who can do it. This is perhaps another reason that most Shinto Muso Ryu practitioners perform Kuritsuke with their hands above their heads.

This method is the essential for all the three of the yawara techniques: Kuritsuke, Kurihanashi, and Taiatari and throughout the entire school of Shinto Muso Ryu jo. Kuritsuke is found in the Omote set (Tachiotoshi, Tsubawari, Hissage, Kasumi), the Chudan set (Ichiriki, Oshizume, Taisha, Shinshin, Yokogiri-dome), the two kata of Ran-ai, Kage set (Tsukizue, Hissake, Kasanoshita) and the Samidare set (Ichimonji, Jyumonji); Kurihanashi is used in Ran-ai and Gohon-no-ran; Taiatari is used in Omote, Chudan, and Oku.

Now, let me explain about the basic form of Kuritsuke.

(1) Kuritsuke (basic movement)



Font View



Side View

Stand in Tsuneno kamae (a natural standing posture). Next, move left by stepping to the left side with the left foot. Move the jo in front of your thighs by flicking it forward and to the left, catching and holding the tip with your left hand. (This is an ancient and characteristic movement in Shinto-muso-ryu; One first avoids the opponent's sword and then strikes the back of their hand simultaneously. This movement is not necessarily practiced in all branches of Shinto Muso Ryu, but Nishioka Shihan said this was the correct movement of Kuritsuke).



After striking the back of your opponent's hand, immediately aim the end of Jo at their eyes.



Figures 5 and 6 show the areas which the jo should strike. After striking the opponent's hands, one must immediately point the end of Jo at the eyes to threaten him.



Years ago, I asked Ichizo Otofujii Shihan about the difference between Zenkenren Jodo and Shinto Muso Ryu, he said, "There are no big differences, but (1) Shidachi does not strike the back of the opponent's hand but instead the Nakatsuka (middle of the sword handle). (2) Shidachi does not aim the jo at Uchidachi's eyes. These were the two items

that Shimizu Shihan proposed and were agreed when Zenkenren Jodo rules were made. At the time, the rest of the techniques were the same.”



Next, move your left elbow to the left side of your chest and press down tightly to the side. Then, trying to hide your body behind the jo, move the jo as if to draw a conical shape with the left end of the jo at the fulcrum point. In this way your opponent fails to gain any opportunity to cut you.

Immediately after kuritsuke, Shidachi strikes to Uchidachi's face by moving the end of the jo upward. This technique is not performed to avoid the injury to the Uchidachi.



Next, stand in gyakute position.



Release your right hand from the Jo and hold Jo in honte grip.

Bring your feet together, stepping with your left foot so that it rests beside your right foot. Stand in the normal tsuneno kamae.



As previously mentioned, when one performs Kuritsuke, one must follow the basic principle of Shinto-muso-ryu Jo: always hide the body behind the jo. Nishioka Shihan performs Kuritsuke without using any power in the hands or arms, but moves the jo as if drawing “a cone shape” in the air with his shoulder and elbow. He does not give the Shidachi a chance to cut him because as he performs Kuritsuke, he destroys Shidachi’s spirit, sword, and body.

This is a Yawara (origin of Jujutsu) technique. If one uses too much force while handling the jo, Shidachi will certainly resist your force and your technique won’t be effective.

It is said that flexible movement is more efficient than rigid movement. Always keep your body flexible, soft, and ready to respond flexibly to the way Shidachi attacks you. One does not try to resist or react rigidly or one will lose the battle because of a rigid response.

Kuritsuke, Kurihanashi, and Taiatari are all based on this Yawara technique. Since one holds the jo, it is difficult to exercise flexible movement.

The basic Kuritsuke techniques I mentioned above are performed not only in Omote, but also in Chudan, Kage, and Samidare. The skill of Kuritsuke is within: (1) always hiding the body behind the jo, and (2) drawing a cone shape in the air with the end of the jo so that the opponent has no chance to attack you.

Nishioka Shihan explains the differences of Kuritsuke in Ichiriki and Oshizume and in Shinshin in Chudan.



After you are in kuritsuke position, the movement of the kuritsuke in Ichiriki and oshizume is different from that in ran-ai and shinshin.



When one is in Kuritsuke position and is touching the sword handle from underneath, one slides the jo to the left side by moving the body until the end 10 centimeters of the jo meets the handle.

According to Nishioka Shihan, Shimizu Shihan required Nishioka Shihan to practice this again and again, from a very young age because it was important.



Then, while turning the body to face Uchidachi, the jo is pressed down to the Uchidachi's abdomen, passing through the center of Uchidachi's body. I have never seen this kuritsuke other than Nishioka Shihan's. When I asked Nishioka Shihan about it, he said that other students failed to learn the correct kuritsuke.

The kuritsuke found in *shinshin* and *ran-ai* does not twist the body to the left, but instead the body stays in place, and Kuritsuke is performed by softly gaining control over Tachi's arms until the jo touches Uchidachi's lower abdomen.

Nishioka Shihan always says that Uchidachi must step back by moving the farthest leg from Shidachi first in order to avoid Shidachi's attack to the face with the end of the jo.

(2) Kurihanashi

Next I would like to talk about Kurihanashi.

Kurihanashi is in Chudan and Ran-ai kata and is one of the "yawara" (grappling) techniques. First you strike the back of Uchidachi's hands with the jo from underneath, then immediately aim the end of Jo at his eyes; then you unbalance them and at a 45 degree angle to their rear.

Many students simply throw Uchidachi backward, however more than 40 years ago Koichi Hamaji Shihan taught me to throw Uchidachi back at a 45 degree angle.



These pictures show Shidachi's stance just after Kuritsuke position and before performing Kurihanashi



Press the lower arm down tightly into the ribs while lowering the elbow. Move the top hand up and to the front to throw Uchidachi away from you. Shorten the distance between the hands as you throw them. Do not lower the end of Jo below Uchidachi's head level.



Over the course of time Shidachi began to throw Uchidachi and this technique has become popular.

I myself was not an exception. Nishioka Shihan said to me that throwing Uchidachi at a 45 degree angle is the orthodox way of doing Kurihanashi. I used to throw Uchidachi backward, but when Nishioka Shihan taught me the orthodox method of doing Kurihanashi again I remembered how Hamaji Shihan had taught me Kurihanashi for the first time all those years ago.

If you think about Kurihanashi rationally, to throw Uchidachi backward is against the natural movement. To throw them at a 45 degree angle to the rear agrees to the principles of yawara and is reasonable.

I don't know why throwing to the rear in Kurihanashi has become popular but my guess is that when many students were practicing Kurihanashi in a narrow Dojo space, Shidachi would throw Uchidachi backwards to avoid colliding with other students practicing nearby.

Of course, in the case of Kurihanashi in Gohon-no-ran, Shidachi throws Uchidachi backward, but this is different from Kurihanashi in Chudan and Ran-ai. It is rather similar to Tai-atari.

(3) Taiatari



The initial posture is identical to Kuritsuke and Kurihanashi.



Unbalance the Uchidachi by driving the tachi upward. Shidachi's lower hand is placed at Uchidachi's solar plexus while the upper hand is in front of the face. Neither of the hands are touching the body at this time.



Stepping forward with the right foot, strike Uchidachi's solar plexus with the lower hand.



Next, push the upper hand into Uchidachi's face and drive them away and back.

Both hands are now gripping the jo in gyakute.



Step forward and stand in tsunenokamae posture.

This is Nishioka Shihan's taiatari. It is important to strike Uchidachi in precession with each hand after Shidachi drives the tachi upward; this is because it's easier to defend against one strike but harder to defend against two.

Therefore, there is a lot more to taiatari than one thinks. In traditional Japanese taijutsu (body technique-Jujutsu) the double strike is retained as atemi (the art of striking vital points of the body to immobilize an opponent). In taiatari you are practicing atemi using the Jo.

So far Nishioka Shihan's kuritsuke, kurihanashi, and taiatari have been explained. These techniques should be studied thoroughly so that Nishioka Shihan's Jo can be handed down to the next generation.

5. Regarding Kaeshizuki

Another characteristic of Nishioka Shihan's Jo lies in the footwork of Kaeshizuki. He asserts that it's one of the crucial techniques of Shinto-muso-ryu Jo.



This is the stance immediately following the *honte* stance.

The body is turned facing sideways. Stand on the blade of both feet.



Close-up. Notice the blades of the feet.

Crossing the feet allows them to move flexibly like a car-jack.



nt originates *Taijutsu* (body technique- Jujutsu). Furthermore, I have never seen anyone practicing this technique within Jo except for Nishioka Shihan.

It's a pity that many Jo practitioners tend to overlook these tiny but important traditional techniques. I fear for the future of these techniques and believe they may disappear, but it is still possible to preserve and hand down to the next generation.

With this spirit Nishioka Shihan expects the Seiryu-kai to cherish and hand down the techniques he has learned from Takaji Shimizu Shihan to as many Jo students as possible.

6. Regarding Gonosen

Last but not least, I would like to write about Nishioka Shihan's words: "Gonosen is the essential technique of Shinto-muso-ryu Jo."

Taking the first move in a battle is a poor tactic because it will lead to your defeat. You should move only after your opponent moves.

This is the spirit of Japanese martial arts called "Yosei Shinbu," which stresses on the importance of persuasion and not force. Before resorting to arms, you should first talk to your opponent sincerely. If that fails you have no choice but to use divine force to punish an evil opponent. However, when you resort to force, you should pay honor before fighting. This is why Japanese warriors (samurai) introduced their names and places of origin to their opponents on the battleground.

When you are fighting an opponent, you are the architect of divine will, filled with love and affection. You should use force not in order to destroy your opponent but to correct his wrong behavior.

"Shinbu (Divine Force) does not mean resorting to violence to fulfill your desire. It means using force to elevate your morality, bringing peace to your family, and to contributing to society.

The spirit of Shinto-muso-ryu Jo lies in the words: There is nothing other than the Jo to teach a person without causing injury.

Therefore, when you practice Jo, you should not strike first, but wait until your opponent moves first.

Nishioka Shihan says, "The essence of Shinto-muso-ryu Jo lies in three points: watch your opponent carefully; be patient to the last moment when your opponent moves to kill you; and never strike first, only move after your opponent moves."

Take Hikiotoshi-uchi for example. Watch Uchidachi's initial movement carefully.



Shidachi moves only after Uchidachi begins to strike with the sword.

This is very difficult as people tend to move first.

If Shidachi moves first, Uchidachi will have a chance to position his sword on the Jo.



Just before the sword reaches Shidachi, move the Jo so that it will ride on top of the sword.



Immediately after Shidachi's Jo slides down Uchidachi's sword, Shidachi points the end of the Jo at Uchidachi's eyes to keep control. At this instant, Uchidachi's sword is pointed away and to the left of Shidachi. This technique is identical in Shinkage-ryu's "Gasshi-uchi" and Itto-ryu's "Kiriotoshi".

(Note: In the picture above, the distance between is wider than normal so that Gonosen can be understood.)

Gonosen is one of the most important techniques of the Shinto-muso-ryu Jo. It is applied in Honte-uchi, Gyakute-uchi, Hikiotoshi-uchi, Kuritsuke, Kurihanashi, and Taiatari.

The spirit of Gonosen is to be patient and watch the opponent carefully. Move only after they move. Practice makes perfect.

Gonosen techniques can be applied to many types of Japanese martial arts as well. If one masters Gonosen, one can gain an unswerving mind. Such a mind is a benefit one gets from practicing Japanese martial arts. With this benefit you can contribute to society and your country.

Nishioka Shihan says, "Uchidachi is the parent and Shidachi is the child. Uchidachi should treat Shidachi with the tenderness of a parent. If you wield the sword only to boast skill, it becomes a murderous sword. If Uchidachi behaves like a parent who guides a child, the sword becomes a parental one. This is the core of Shito-muso-ryu Jo.

Of course, it is only natural that Uchidachi and Shidachi practice goes hand in hand, but if one knows the parental relationship between Uchidachi and Shidachi, you can acquire a samurai moral.

Thus, Nishioka Shihan shows the basic principle of Japanese martial arts. His spirit of Shito-muso-ryu Jo is, I believe, comparable to that of a national treasure.

3. In Conclusion

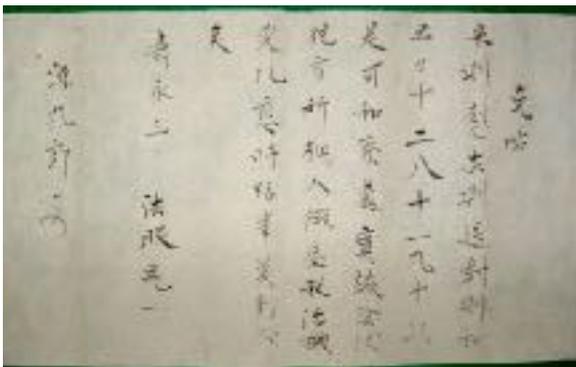
I have delineated my thoughts about Nishioka Shihan's Jo. His existence is precious to the world of Japanese martial arts and his Jo techniques are incomparable.

Therefore, I think it important for Jo students to learn as much as possible from Nishioka Shihan. I am determined to continue to practice Jo keeping in mind his Jo spirit as well as Koichi Hamaji Shihan's last words: never tarnish the traditions of Shinto-muso-ryu Jo.

I sincerely hope for your understanding of and assistance for Nishioka Shihan's Shinto-muso-ryu Jo. Thank you.

** The Kuden of Kashima Jingu, "Ikkon Juu Man En", which is passed on at the same time as the "Ryuuko Nikan", the Hiden contained within the records of the military family, also teaches this. Moreover, this can also be said to be the "Bujutsu extension" of the "secret key" to Japanese Shinto, the "Futomani-no-mitama"*

It is said that a founder of Shinto-ryu, Iizasa Chousai Ienao, would challenge the martial artists of Kurama-han travelling on their pilgrimage between Katori and Kashima shrines, waiting for the appearance amongst them of the return home of a master whom he could look up to as teacher, one in which he could acquire more knowledge. At the end of this most arduous training, he was enlightened and created a new ryu. It is believed that the origin of his technique was in fact the strategy of the Kurama Shinden as handed down by the master martial artists of the Kurama region.



It is said that Kiichi Hogan transmitted the military strategy of Kurama Shinden onto Minamoto Kuro Yoshitsune, who was at that time called Ushiwakamaru and that this strategy is the embodiment of the "Hiden" of Japanese Shinto teachings, which is called "Tenshinshoden", "Tenshin-den" and "Tenshin Hyoho".

This is mentioned in the book I have written, "Honcho Budo Ron" and I will explain the above in further detail later on.

Certificate scroll bestowed upon Minamoto Kuro Yoshitsune by Kiichi Hogan (Author's personal collection).

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Since ancient times Shinto and Mikkyo (esoteric Buddhism) have both believed that your state of mind changes according to how you join your fingers. The methods of joining fingers are called "koritekumi" or "mitewaza" in Shinto, and "shuin" in Mikkyo and in both religions the joining of the fingers represents important elements of the mind. Accordingly, Shinto-muso-ryu students are joining fingers in similar ways when they grip the jo. As in religion where the mindset is changed with the finger position, the Shinto-muso-

ryu student does likewise in a soft honte way or in a hard gyakute way. The techniques of Shinto Muso Ryu Jo are closely connected with these states of mind.

Moreover, The significance in understanding the secret of honte and gyakute manifests in Buddhist statues. In the spring of 2009 I went to Horyuji Temple in Nara and saw the Shaka triad there. The Shaka triad at Horyuji was made in the first year of the Joei era (1232 CE) during the Kamakura Period. Amida sits in the center, to the right stands Kannon Bosatsu (Buddhist deity of mercy), and to the left stands Seishi Bosatsu (Buddhist deity of wisdom). The appearance of Kannon Bosatsu and Seishi Bosatsu along with Amida signifies their help with his aspiration of salvation through mercy (Kannon), and wisdom (Seishi). When looking at their hands, I was surprised because Kan-non is joining his thumb and middle finger, and Shisei is joining his thumb and index finger.

I find the display of honte and gyakute as the foundation for all the states of mind, spirit and body in Buddhist statues and scripture amazing. In the martial art of Hiryu (one closely related to esoteric Tendai Buddhism) it is taught that controlling breath, oneself and others is achieved through joining the fingers.

Kan-non bestows mercy upon people with freedom, and Shisei bestows wisdom upon people with belief. The idea of mercy and wisdom is similar to the fundamental spirit of Jo: "Do not hurt others, but correct and punish them. Is there any other martial art that teaches such a lesson?" In this perspective, the proper use of honte and gyakute influences not only technique but also the human spirit, ignoring their importance is a rudimentary mistake.

When one thinks of the meaning of Shinto Muso Ryu in same spirit as the founder did (Muso Gonnosuke Katsuyoshi), then one will pay the utmost attention to the differences and the practice of honte and gyakute. When you practice in this way, you will finally realize the secret of Tenshin sho (Heavenly Spirit Teachings) as shown in the Secret of Gomuso and one will understand that Shinto Muso Ryu is not limited to techniques. This is similar to the Japanese mythology of two Shinto gods, Izanagi and Izanami, who created the Japanese archipelago with Amano-nuhoko spear.

(According to a Japanese Shinto myth, the gods Izanagi and Izanami thrust Amano-nuhoko spear into the chaos of the universe and stirred it. When they pulled it out, the drips from the spear formed the Japanese archipelago.)

published February 7, 2010; (also July 1, 2009; January, 2010; February, 2010)

"Foreword" and "Regarding the Uchi no Suji" - Translation by Arun Roberts and edited by Greg Clarke, representative, Sumera Budo-juku, Australia Branch.

"Regarding Te no Uchi" - Translation by Hiroshi Matsuoka and edited by Russ Ebert, Aichi, Japan

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Credentials

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About

Collection & minor corrections: ヘルガ

A big “thank you” goes to all those people who have provided the material. I am thankful for their work, their thoughts and words, their questions and the publishing.

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