



The Canadian Isshinryu Way Everything Karate & Kobudo

Isshinryu Canada

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Train with a Focus

Focus is something that training in the martial is supposed to give a dedicated individual. While from the outside, that may appear to be true. Those who actually train understand it differently.

Training requires focus, and every time you train, you must focus and fight with yourself to maintain focus just as you may struggle with pushups, maintaining focus is hard.

This isn't unique to beginners or advanced, but to everyone. Focus takes work. If you've never seen a personal, or off topic conversation in your Dojo, you've probably never been there.

Focus must be trained, make no mistake. When you do your kata, you are probably focused most times, but you know when you aren't. And also that your kata suffers when that happens.

So, as you read this newsletter, and train diligently until the next, make sure that when you train, you put all of yourself in your training. All your focus, all your strength.

That applies not just to active training, but thinking. Plan what you want to develop and follow your plan.

It's possible to go somewhere stumbling haphazardly forward, but much more efficient to carefully consider your path and accept the guidance of others.

Make sure your training is focused on your goals. You are working hard and might as well accomplish them!

Essential Isshinryu has been Released!

For more information on the first Canadian Isshinryu book, visit www.essentialissheinryu.com!

ATTENTION NEEDED!

Do you know of someone great in Canadian Isshinryu? If so, please e-mail Sensei@issheinryu.ca with the contact details to be profiled in future newsletters.

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Upcoming Events

Seminars

Hanshi Mady in Thunder Bay—Spring

Ryukyu Kobudo Teshinkan Spring Training Camp with Kyoshi

Donald Shapland—April 29-May 1—Chilliwack, BC.

Tournaments

AOKA Championships—Chicago, IL

Other

Live for the moment!



Kyan Chotoku

Understanding the history of Isshinryu and karate can provide the Isshinryu Karateka with a greater knowledge of the masters of Karate and their contributions to creating Isshinryu. Understanding the people involved leads the student and instructor alike to a deeper respect for the evolution of the art.

Kyan Chotoku (1870-1945)

Who he was

A student of Matsumura Sokon, Itosu Anko, Matsumora Kosaku and other top instructors of his time. One of the top teachers of his era and renowned for his skill across Okinawa.

Key Instructors

Matsumura Sokon—The last “Bushi” and already profiled, you should read the previous newsletters!

Itosu Anko—Brought Karate into the school system and already profiled, you should read the previous newsletters.

Matsumora Kosaku—Top martial artist in Tomari, and already profiled, you should read the previous newsletters!

Key Students

Arakaki Ankichi / Shimabuku Taro—Two close friends and early students of Kyan. Initial instructors of Nagamine Shoshin.

Nagamine Shoshin— Founder of Matsubayashiryu and well known Martial Arts author.

Nakazato Joen—Founder of Shorinjiryu.

Shimabukuro Zenryo—Founder of Chubu Shorinryu.

Shimabuku Eizo —Younger brother of Shimabuku Tatsuo, the youngest Judan (10th Degree Black Belt) and current head of Kyan's Shorinryu lineage.

Shimabuku Tatsuo—Founder of Isshinryu Karate.

The Individual

Rather than outline the training and many details of his life, which exceeds the space allocated for this article, I will instead share a specific incident from his life.

Kyan Chotoku was both a great and a highly intellectual karateka, although many of the stories associated with him are of a less than wholesome nature. Much of the reason for this relates to the conditions in which he was forced to live. Life on Okinawa during Kyan's life was not easy, it was frequently a struggle to survive and many succumbed to depression and wasted away.

A story which exemplifies Kyan's intelligence as a martial artist occurred at a karate demonstration in Taiwan. In August of 1930, Kyan Chotoku, Kuwae Ryosei (student of Matsumura Sokon), and Kudaka Kori were in Taipei to give a karate demonstration. Prior to the demonstration, a large judoka named Ishida Shinzou approached the three and requested a fight in order to judge the effectiveness of karate. While his request was made with respect, the three realized it would be seen as a sign of weakness to refuse. Okinawa's honour was at stake.

Accepting the challenge, it was decided that Kyan would face the much larger opponent as Kuwae was too old, and Kudaka was too young. In preparation of the match, Kyan removed his good demonstration gi and stood, only in flimsy underwear, prepared to meet his opponent. Ishida was clearly intending on being aggressive in the battle, his mannerisms showing his power in comparison to the frail Kyan.

Kyan waited in his ready position for Ishida to attack. Ishida lunged in seeking to grab Kyan, only to find Kyan's thumb stuck in his mouth and felt incredible pain in his cheek. Kyan gripped Ishida's face tightly and pull on the cheek forcing Ishida to the ground. Kyan then executed a hammer fist towards Ishida's jaw stopping it mere millimeters from the intended target. Realizing he was bested, Ishida immediately submitted.

Kyan used an unexpected yet highly effective technique against the experienced Judoka. At the same time, by removing his uniform was able to severely limit the Judoka's technique.

(Continued on page 3)



Kyan Chotoku

Kyan named his art Shorinryu, which was a combination of the most effective techniques that he had encountered through his studies. From his initial teaching until the time he founded his art, Kyan's techniques remained relatively unchanged, though the kata were quite different. Kyan appreciated the need for each student to learn the kata in their own style, just as he had adapted the system to himself.

Kyan continued training and teaching in the northern portion of Okinawa until his death on September 20, 1945, at the age of seventy-six. As a result of the scarcity of food during World War II, Kyan felt it was more important that the available food go to the children. As a result of caring for those in need, he eventually succumbed to illness due to poor nutrition.

One favorite saying of Kyan was "A mastery of karate does not depend on the learner's physical constitution, but mainly on constant practice. Merely an excellent physical constitution cannot guarantee a mastery of karate-do."

I sincerely hope that you enjoyed reading this series of articles on the history of Isshinryu. For more information about this master and karate in general, please refer to Essential Isshinryu.

Up next in the Isshinryu history will be additional biographies of Okinawan Karate masters. If you have corrections or comments regarding this article or any future article, please feel free to contact me directly.

Hanshi Mady in Thunder Bay

By Jesse Hill

On January 15 and 16 Hanshi Albert Mady, Kudan from Windsor ON visited chilly Thunder Bay ON for an intensive weekend of training. Throughout the weekend representatives from every dojo in Thunder Bay came out to train. Nearly every kata in Isshinryu were practised with Hanshi Mady providing insight and perspective on each.

Friday night saw advanced kobudo kata polished up. Hanshi took us through Tokumine no kun, Urashi no kun, Kusanku no sai, Chatan Yara no sai, and Shi shi no kun. The evening was jam-packed with high level martial arts action and interesting discussion on the minutiae and subtleties of technique that accompany any gathering of dedicated karateka. As a nidan I have yet to learn Shi shi no kun but Hanshi Mady encouraged those of us unfamiliar with the kata to try and follow along. Let me say I enjoyed the opportunity and now have a deeper understanding of why this is one of the final katas you learn in Isshinryu if not an understanding of the kata itself.

Saturday was filled primarily with empty hand kata, beginning with Seisan and working through each kata up to Sunsu in great detail exploring some great bunkai while we were at it. As is typical of Hanshi Mady's technique every bunkai was direct and devastating. Students at all levels were able to adapt and apply each technique to make it work, which is the true testament of good bunkai. Some recurring themes that came up were the use of the arm bar/

arm lock as a take down and fast, powerful strikes to finish opponents.

The day ended with Tokumine no kun and Kusanku no sai for those karateka not included in the Friday night seminar. Hanshi also used this opportunity to introduce some partner drills for the weapons which allowed participants to gain a true feeling of using their bo and sai against a real opponent. It makes an enormous difference in your understanding of a weapon when you are facing a living person and striking a real weapon. I think every participant walked away with a greater respect for the power of the bo and sai and a better grip on how the weapons need to move in order to be effective.

All in all the weekend was a resounding success and I know I speak for everyone who attended when I sincerely thank Hanshi Mady for sharing his expertise with us.



Hanshi Mady gets a new Dojo!

Everyone at Isshinryu Canada would like to congratulate Hanshi Mady on his spectacular new Dojo. After many years at his previous location, it looks like the new one is tremendous.

I'm sure I'm not the only one is more than a little jealous at the setup!





Hanshi Mady gets a new Dojo!



Visualization By Richard Ruberto

How we visualize ourselves in the future is half the battle of achieving our goals. Hard training disciplines us but we must believe we can achieve a higher level. Once we have that proper mind set, we work hard towards that goal. In karate we use a rank system (standards within a system or dojo) to recognize a person's improvement. I like to think of it as a sensei seeing us reach our goals.

I tell my students to picture themselves as the rank they are working towards. For example. As a brown belt one should envision themselves as a black belt.

Not just any shodan, but a good one. Then the brown belt should work to look like that shodan. The sensei sees their students improvement and in the proper time gives that kyu rank their shodan. Just repeat this process over and over again.

Don't train in your current rank. Train like the rank or level you are working towards.

Richard Ruberto Sensei
Isshinryu of NY



The Challenges!

Karate

Basics. This is the easiest challenge we've ever had. Everyone should be able to succeed. All you need to do it your basics, every day, no exceptions.

Kobudo

The Kobudo challenge this newsletter is to focus on your timing. With weapons, more than any other aspect of the martial arts, a moment too soon or too late could equal a deadly mistake.

The combination of movement plus strike is the focus of this challenge. Pick a single strike and perfect the timing of a step, strike, recover. Make sure that your strike is powerful, focused and most importantly for this challenge well timed. The strike should complete mere milliseconds after your feet are planted. This will make it as fast as possible without sacrificing any power.

The challenge then becomes, do this 50 times in a row. All good. No exceptions, if on number 49 your timing is off. Your next count should be 1 (probably after a rest).

Don't expect to do this your first try, develop it, and aim to do it before the next newsletter. It'll take lots of work if you are doing it correct.

Training

Pushups are a weak area for many, they are a challenging exercise that requires a variety of strengths in order to accomplish them. That's precisely why they are so important to developing the core strengths required for Karate. In order to help everyone get better, I'm going to break-down the aspects of pushups and provide some suggestions for improving each.

1) Knuckle / Wrist Strength

If you find your knuckles hurt or your wrists want to give out, these are related problems. Your conditioning isn't sufficient for pushups, a good way to develop this is either on the Makiwara (punching will use the exact same muscles & develop your knuckles) or you can just hold yourself in push up position for longer and longer getting used to the feeling, while also building strength in your wrists.

2) Sore Back / Sagging Stomach

A sore back or inability to hold yourself up is a trade mark problem for those with weak core muscles. Not having strong stomach and back muscles will hold you back in all aspects of karate training. It's important to do equal combinations of crunches, leg lifts and back raises, but it can also be help to practice in push up position or trunk position (forearms on the ground) holding yourself for as long as possible straight. This static exercise will force you to use your core muscles in balance.

3) Arms / Chest Tired

By this point if you've eliminated the first two steps there is only one left. Get stronger. Luckily this is the perfect task for pushups. The best way to develop this strength if you've overcame problems 1 and 2 is to do more pushups. Remember, only good pushups matter, if you need to cheat, stop. Build up slowly, if you only do one extra pushup each time, by the next newsletter even if you can only do one pushup now. By being dedicated and trying everyday you'll be at the black belt grading requirement of fifty!



Contributors



Editor & Author—Chitora Dojo

Mike Fenton—Thunder Bay, Ontario

Mike lives with his wife Kyla and has been training in Isshinryu karate for over 25 years, and has been an instructor for over 20 years. He is currently head instructor of Chitora Dojo in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Author—Chitora Dojo

Trevor Warren—Thunder Bay, Ontario

Trevor lives in Thunder Bay with his wife Maria. He has dedicated a great deal of his time to teaching and his own training with the realization that hard work is the key to success.



Author—Chitora Dojo

Jesse Hill—Thunder Bay, Ontario

Jesse is a both a dedicated student and a skilled instructor understanding the importance of helping others grow.

Author—Any Dojo

Authors are always wanted! Consider taking the time to submit something to the newsletter.

Karate Terms in this Newsletter

Bunkai—Taking to Pieces, commonly interpreted as the application of technique.

Bushi—Warrior

Chinkuchi—Bone, Sinew and Energy

Chudan—Middle Level

Dojo—School

Furi—Swing

Hanshi—Master Instructor

Kama—Sickle(s)

Kihon—Exercises

Kime—Focus

Kobudo—Ancient Martial Way, the term used to describe all the weapons in Isshinryu and Karate.

Kokan—Heel

Kote—Wrist

Kyu—Student rank level, counting down towards 0, being the first rank of Black Belt.

Makiwara—Striking Board

Mon—Head

Mushin—No Mind

Naha—Port city on Okinawa

Shiko Dachi—Horse Stance

Shozenkutsu / Seisan Dachi—Small forward stance

Shuri—Capital City on Okinawa

Tonfa/Tuifa—Baton with Handle

Tsuisaki—Toes

Uchi—Strike

Uchi Hachi Dachi—Inner Eight stance

Uke—Hard block

Yudansha—Black Belt

Zenkutsu Dachi—Forward Stance

It is important to familiarize yourself with commonly used Japanese words. Try to memorize all the words each time and you will soon have a large "karate" vocabulary.



Submissions

Story Submission

Stories are welcome from anyone and everyone. They can be about anything related to the Martial Arts, a technique you think is just great; A better way to do a technique; History of a Karate Master; a tournament trick that works well; ANYTHING!

All stories are appreciated as e-mail. You can send it to your instructor to proof read and send in, or directly to me. (Mike (at) Isshinryu.ca) or (newsletter (at) Isshinryu.ca)

You can even include pictures if it helps your article!

Dojo Directory:

Any student is welcome at anytime to visit any dojo. Before class, always introduce yourself to the Sensei of the dojo and tell them who your current Sensei is.

For a full dojo list visit Isshinryu.ca We are getting too many to list here.

Affiliate Cities!

Abbotsford, BC

Contact: Mike O'Leary

Brandon, MB

Contact: Richard Wharf

Contact: Buzz Cox

Calgary, AB

Contact: Charles Boyd

Cookstown, ON

Contact: Harri T. Makivirta

Dryden, ON

Contact: Rick McGogy

Hope, BC

Contact: Norm Losier

Kenora, ON

Contact: Steve Davis

Contact: David White

Ottawa, ON

Contact: Tim Leonard

Quebec

Contact: Pierre Parenteau

Saskatchewan

Contact: Brian Smout

Sioux Lookout

Contact: Jim Sapay

Thunder Bay, ON

Contact: Mike Fenton

Contact: Trevor Warren

Vancouver, BC

Contact: Rachel McGovern

Windsor, ON

Contact: Albert Mady

Winnipeg, MB

Contact: Brent Horton

Canadian Isshinryu Abroad

Berlin, Germany

Contact: Ryan Boesche

Stow, Ohio

Contact: Albert Pecoraro



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HOME of Essential Isshinryu

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Essential Isshinryu Released!

Essential Isshinryu, the definitive book on Isshinryu by Mike Fenton and Trevor Warren is now available!

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