



# The Canadian Isshinryu Way Everything Karate & Kobudo

**Isshinryu Canada**

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## Another New Year

With another year upon us, we have an opportunity to improve ourselves.

Every time you wake up in the morning you have the opportunity to make the most of the new day. At the end of one year, the beginning of the next, it is common for resolutions and re-dedications to training. You don't need a monumental moment for that. You can make the decision each and every day.

This doesn't have to apply to just your karate training, it can apply to everything you do. Each day when you wake up, you can decide that today is going to be the day to do great at school, work, skiing, karate, or whatever it is you are going to do that day.

The more often you wake up and make the decision to do well and succeed at your goals the easier it is. Soon you'll find that every day is a successful one. The happiest and most successful people are those that can motivate themselves to succeed.

Having that internal drive to do not what is easy but what is right is common among martial artists. It is a defining characteristic of those that excel.

Keep up your training, and enjoy the 8th year of the Canadian Isshinryu Newsletter, here's to many more!

Osu!

### Essential Isshinryu has been Released!

For more information on the first Canadian Isshinryu book, visit [www.essentialissheinryu.com!](http://www.essentialissheinryu.com!)

### ATTENTION NEEDED!

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

## Upcoming Events

### Seminars

**Hanshi Mady in Berlin, Germany—May 16th-21st**

### Inside this Issue:

**Yabiku Moden** 2

**Economy of Motion** 3

*By Jason Miller*

**Precepts of a Bujin** 5

*by Richard Ruberto*

**Happy Birthday Issheinryu** 5

**Comparison of Techniques, Chambered Kicks vs Sune Uke** 6

*by Simeon Ostap*

**The Challenges** 8

**The News** 8

**Happy New Year!**



## Yabiku Moden

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.

### Yabiku Moden (1878– 1941)

#### Who he was

An understated and quiet man who mastered Kobudo and promoted the art in both Okinawa and Japan.

#### Key Instructors

**Itosu Anko**—His Karate instructor, one of the more important instructors in Karate history. If you don't know who he is, look him up!

**Chinen Sanda**—A bo master and student of Karate Sakugawa.

**Ufuchiku Kanagusuku**—The police chief and reknown master of Kobudo, see the last newsletter to learn more about him.

#### Key Students

**Taira Shinken** — The man responsible for the revival of Kobudo on Okinawa. Personally learning many old kata and preserving them for the future. He was the Kobudo instructor of Shimabuku Tatsuo.

#### 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.

Yabiku Moden was a quiet man who became a school teacher. He didn't lead a boisterous life and as such doesn't have a fantastic tale to tell. Instead, here is the story of his Martial arts development.

Yabiku Moden was the oldest of four sons to Yabiku Mayo in Shuri. Growing up, Moden was a particularly frail and skinny boy. As a result, he was a regular target for bullies and trouble makers. Just as many other martial arts masters, he began his studies with Itosu Anko as a method to strengthen both his resolve and his body.



While on Okinawa he studied under Itosu for a number of years before his interests shifted to the weapon arts of Okinawa. His first taste of Kobudo came from Tawata nu Meigantu, a local Peichin and student of Matsumura Sokon. Tawata referred him to study with both Chinen Sanda and Ufuchiku Kanagusuku to refine his skills. Moden's extreme dedication to his studies quickly made him one of the most accomplished Kobudo masters on Okinawa.

During Moden's life he was known as a kind and pleasant individual. He refrained from speaking poorly of others and grew to be well respected within the community. Moden did not assume responsibility for either lineage, or found his own style, but his contributions and the prosperity of his top student would guarantee his place in history.

The next newsletter will continue to provide Kobudo masters that helped to shape Isshinryu. Kobudo is an important part of Isshinryu Karate, and it's history and included aspects are important knowledge for student of Isshinryu.



## Economy of Motion Part One

By Jason Miller

"What was that? Do that move again. There it is. Why are you dropping your hand before you strike?". This was recent feedback from my sensei while showing a particular section of my kata. He had identified a spot in the kata where I was retracting my punch before releasing it to the target. He then explained the reason behind this correction: because my errant movement ran counter to the concept of "economy of motion" and represented wasted energy. The action of retracting my hand before the punch was a wasted step, whereas by directing my punch straight to the target I am able to gain the advantage of surprise on my opponent and to conserve my energy for the next movement in the kata.

This idea, a desire to reduce the amount of wasted actions and energy appears throughout all aspects of our karate training: the basics, our kata, self-defence, and during sparring sessions. But it doesn't stop there: we can also correlate these ideas into everything else that we do in life: our workplace, our relationships and our general day-to-day activities.

### ECONOMY OF MOTION IN LIFE

"To spend time is to pass it in a specified manner. To waste time is to expend it thoughtlessly or carelessly. We all have time to spend or waste, and it is our decision what to do with it. But once passed, it is gone forever." - Bruce Lee

We have all heard that old adage: "Life is short, therefore live life to the fullest". Eight years ago that reality hit home for me in a big way when my father passed away at the ripe age of 56. It made me take stock of my life and changed the way that I see and do things. It is actually one of the multitude of reasons that I re-joined the martial arts: to invest more in my own health and to experience life to the fullest by trying as many new things as I possibly could. Its why I get involved in so many things (various sports, community involvement through volunteering, organizing group events, and generally spending time with friends and family) and why I seemingly never take a break. It all boils down to a simple idea: no wasted time.

It is interesting too to see the parallels in the workplace. I am part of a software development team where any wasted effort is costly to what we do. Any time we need to re-do the work that we've done or project requirements change late in the cycle, it has

huge impacts on schedule, timelines and the overall morale of the team. These costs cascade - downstream projects in the schedule are impacted, and the cycle continues. I recently took a course on LEAN process improvements which concentrates on identifying the wasted steps in processes/procedures and finds unique ways to reduce or remove those steps - and thus the wasted energy, thus allowing the company to focus its efforts on the steps and activities that produce the greater results.

### SCIENCE, PHYSICS & ECONOMY OF MOTION APPLIED TO MARTIAL ARTS

This concept - economy of motion appears throughout our martial arts practice as a methodology to ensure that we do not add any extraneous, wasted movements in our technique and application. By reducing these wasted movements, we subsequently reduce the amount of work and energy necessary to complete the technique.

Not surprisingly, this idea of economy of motion is rooted in some of the most fundamental concepts from science and physics.

There are several factors and scientific concepts that affecting performance in sports:

- Exercise physiology and human anatomy (genetic factors like muscle build, bone structure, body functions)
- Biomechanics (study/principle of the human body during performance - applying mechanical principles to biological functions)
- Physics (natural laws of motion)
- Psychology

We have all heard of one of the greatest and most influential scientists, philosophers, and mathematicians to have ever lived, Sir Isaac Newton though we may not realize just how much his philosophies impact our day-to-day lives, particularly when it comes to sports and martial arts. And yet it does. Perhaps the most influential aspect of all are Newton's three

(Continued on page 4)



## Economy of Motion Part One Continued

By Jason Miller

laws of motion:

**Newton's First Law:** Objects at rest remain at rest. Objects in motion remain in motion.

**Newton's Second Law:** Force equals mass times acceleration [ $F = ma$ ]

**Newton's Third Law:** For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.

Our practice and training teaches us how to use our muscular strength in order to overcome those natural forces of everyday physics (gravity, momentum, inertia) and thus reduce wasted motion.

There are two types of energy: static (where the system is in a state of constant motion, whether at rest or set a constant velocity) and dynamic (where the system in motion is affected by acceleration). In sports and martial arts training, we tend to focus more on dynamic energy. Which leads us to two further scientific studies that impact us in our training:

- Kinematics is the study of the motion of the body with respect to time, displacement, velocity and speed of movement in a straight line or rotary direction.

Kinetics is the study of forces associated with motion: both those that cause motion and those resulting from motion.

Examples of these fundamental scientific principles apply directly to all elements of sports: in the equipment that we use and in the practice and training that we do; conservation of momentum demonstrated in the efficiency of a golf swing, skis and skates designed to overcome frictional forces, and the rubber soles of cross-training shoes providing the right amount of force necessary to stop our momentum in order to change direction quicker.

We also see these examples of science behind our martial arts training:

- Newton's First Law: When an opponent throws a punch, it takes less force/strength to parry the punch than to stop it with force-on-force.

- Newton's Second Law: It takes more energy to move a heavier opponent when grappling.

- Newton's Third Law: When striking or blocking, you experience an equal force against the striking or blocking weapon.

- 

**Kinetic Energy:** Kinetic energy is calculated as  $1/2$  mass times velocity squared [ $KE = 1/2 m * v^2$ ]. Thus we can show that lightweight fighters will have more kinetic energy than that of heavy weights.

How, then, does economy of motion fit into our martial arts training? It turns out that it forms an integral part of what our the masters designed into their various styles. There are many examples of where economy of motion can be applied to our karate training. Lets concentrate on a couple of key concepts:

### 1) Movement

In order to move from one position to another, whether in kata or sparring, one has to expend energy. The muscles are engaged in order to maintain stability and balance during these movements. Simplified footwork in our forms ensures minimal movement, thus allowing for quicker movements. To ensure that our movements flow naturally and conserve as much energy as possible, requires accurate timing. Cutting the movement short (under-estimating) results in an early loss of momentum. It weakens the movement and subsequently requires us to re-engage the muscles in order to complete the move. Alternatively over-extending or over-estimating the movement results in an excess use of additional muscles required to halt the movement. Both cases represent excellent examples of wasted effort. Our movements should be done with the greatest of ease while also remaining compact and fluid. The less effort required, the less amount of energy that will be expended.

For the next four concepts, you'll need to check back in at the next newsletter for the continuation of this article.



## Precepts of a Bujin

### By Richard Ruberto

(edited from it's source)

There are three ways of the martial arts. One such way is referred to as "budo no bugei" the true martial arts. A person who truly follows this way never relaxes spiritually. They are masters of their hearts. They strive to reach a higher level of understanding. They won't panic when a serious threat comes to them. They stand their ground like a tiger and prevail.

Another way of the martial arts is to promote peace, live in harmony, render service to others and allow others to flourish.

These two ways are one. Achieve maturity (a higher level) and cope with all things accordingly. Train and keep such knowledge in mind.

## Happy Birthday Isshinryu

January 15th was the 56th anniversary of Shimabuku Tatsuo naming Isshinryu.

To commemorate the occasion Advincula Sensei posted on his listserver (Isshinkai) some video's of the Isshinryu Kata.

I personally enjoyed watching them immensely and thought everyone else would as well. As one of the original and longest training students of Shimabuku Sensei, he truly understand what "Isshinryu" is.

Message From Advincula Sensei follows

1-15-1956 ~1-15-2012

January 15, 2012 will be the 56th anniversary of the naming Isshin-ryu.

The Isshinkai and its members will be celebrating this occasion. To celebrate, we are now posting video's on the Isshinkai Home web site.

<http://www.isshinkai.net/misc03-videos.html>

Posted, are the Isshin-ryu kata, Seisan, Seiunchin, naihanchi, Wansu, Chinto, Kusanku and Sunsu. In the kata demonstrated, look for:

Focus, stance, posture, foot work, speed, power, and fluidity of movement and proper techniques. In all these kata, with the exception of Naihanchi kata, I begin and end in the same spot. In the kata posted, I am doing them at a fast tempo to demonstrate speed and power.

As a rule, traditional Okinawan karate kata are not performed fast, as demonstrated by me. Still, it gives an idea of speed and power. Snap, crackle, pop and kiai!

Other videos will be posted at a later date. I want to thank the following people for posting, videos on the Isshinkai. Rich Flora and his two students, Wyatt and Rick Lyons. Also instrumental was Duane Bellotti, a student of John Kiskiel. Duane Bellotti is also the web master for my Isshinkai web page. I notified Rich Flora Saturday and asked his tech crew to post the videos. All three worked hard and fast and responded like champs when called upon.

The truth is, they had been working for months and had it ready a couple of months ago, but I wanted a prosperous day to post them. What better day then when our founder, Shimabuku Tatsuo Sensei named his new style, Isshin-ryu.

To all members and guests, a kanpai to our founder, Shimabuku Tatsuo Sensei.

Kanpai! AJA





## Comparison Between Techniques Chambered Kicks and Sune uke By Simeon Ostap

Self-defense techniques are ideally judged by both how effective and pragmatic they are in practice. Across and within styles and schools throughout the martial arts community particular techniques can be shared or distinct. In the process of learning fundamental techniques students' proficiency depends upon not only their repetition of the proper techniques, but also their eventual ability to utilize them spontaneously in the appropriate situation. Sometimes independent techniques include similar movements or components, and while increased repetition of a complete technique contributes to the effortless manner in which one performs them in some cases the emergence of the 'shared piece' of these techniques in isolation can present an opening for an adept opponent. In Isshinryu karate training a combination of chambering kicks and an emphasis on low kicks which has possibly lead to the styles adoption of a shin block a kin to that commonly seen in Muay Thai, and referred to as Mae Sune Uke in Kyokoshin, might represent such a situation.

All Isshinryu kicks are 'chambered' referring to the leg being raised into position before extension of the leg and execution of the strike. Advantages of this approach are said to include improved speed and power as well as a movement which veils the nature of the coming attack (Fenton & Warren, 2009). Other styles also claim the chambered kick as a preferential technique. TKD Tutor (2012) argues that a high chamber allows power from not just from the leg but the entire body to be directed into the technique, gives opponents less opportunity to react, and that re-chambering the leg allows for kicks to be executed in fast succession with almost as much power as the initial strike. With in Isshinryu, where the majority of kicks are designed to strike targets on the lower body (Fenton & Warren, 2009) it is interesting to note that blocking with ones legs is not included within the fundamental techniques of the style. While the basic 15 upper-body techniques cover a range of blocks and counters the lower body fundamentals include only strikes. The lowest block that is cannon within this system, Gedan Barai, if one is executing it properly provides defense against strikes to the lower abdomen and groin, but cannot be used to stop strikes to ones knees and the majority of their lower limbs. Additionally even a large amount of ones thighs remain open when a Gedan Barai is used and often when one recognizes that the technique demands dropping one hand

down below the waist many practitioners criticize its use for leg techniques stating it makes vulnerable ones upper body to follow-up attacks.

After mastering their basic techniques, and just before they begin sparring, students are often introduced to what in Isshinryu is a nameless but heavily relied upon technique. Like the chamber of the kicks themselves this block primarily consists of raising ones leg at the knee with the shin and foot hanging down below them. This technique is present in other styles with their own variations but most commonly recognizable in Muay Thai this technique is part of a defensive 'wall' and is said to be a defensive technique for roundhouse kicks directed at the hips, upper body or neck (Flashmavi, 2005). Use of shin blocks in issheinryu are in contrast intended only for kicks that would otherwise strike the thigh, knee or waist, or debatably ones waist to as high as the top of their hips. Higher kicks in contrast are more likely to be dealt with using the arms, and throwing ones leg up at the same time a move with the arms is being used to defend against such a kick are usually seen as an unnecessary movement unless it is in fact really a1 chamber being followed by a counter-kick. In using ones shin to block a kick there are a wide number of variations including the use of the bone or muscle or the position in which a person keeps their foot (Kyuokoshin4life, 2006). In Isshinryu training convention is that such a technique is in principle a 'spring' of sorts, where the lower half of the leg is kept loose and is able to move in towards the body as it comes in contact with the kick, reducing the power behind it, before stopping and pushing the leg back away as the foot doing the kick returns to the floor as a solid fighting stance. In fact, holding ones leg in this loose manner is in some ways akin to how all strikes, not just kicks, are taught within Isshinryu. Students are informed that tensing ones muscles slows them down and will hinder the speed with which they execute attacks. Often when it comes to punching students are taught to relax their entire arm so they can throw their strike out as quickly as possible, with the idea being to tighten ones muscles at the point of impact for maximal effect. In kicking one similar come to let their shin hang loose while in the chambered position with the foot snapping out in a particular direction. In doing so ones techniques are not only faster but making sure ones body is relaxed

(Continued on page 7)



## Comparison Between Techniques Chambered Kicks and Sune uke

By Simeon Ostap

in executing these techniques allows them to reserve their energy and to fight longer.

So, clearly the chambered kick and the Mae Sune Uke are similar, though admittedly not identical, in a number of ways. Also both techniques have clear and easily defensible practical applications; their presence in so many styles is not rooted in aesthetics. What's interesting however is that despite this motions routine use, it is not uncommon for both novice and accomplished fighters to either misapply the technique or to move in this manner reflexively when another technique would provide a better response? These reflexive applications manifest themselves in a few common ways which represent neither a block nor a chamber, may limit the mobility of the individual executing it, and at times may even represent a weakness in their technique.

Inside sparring whether the forum is a class, a tournament, or a testing, a common misapplication of the chamber/shinblock occurs when the motion occurs when there is neither a kick to block nor a kick emerging from it. A student will often perhaps believe an opponent is attempting to execute a thigh round house kick and will execute the Mae Sune Uke erroneously, often when such a habit becomes apparent to ones opponent they may begin feigning leg kicks in order to cause the response and to reduce the mobility of their opponent to a move that will immediately follow the misdirection. Frequently one must react very quickly to lower strikes. One interesting occurrence is that individuals will often use the shin block to stop a strike coming to the opposite side of the body. Although this does not make the block itself ineffectual it can compromise ones ability to defend against a follow-up strikes or take-downs seeking to capitalize on the reduced balance and slower speed of recovery from a cross body shin block.

In order to remedy the reactionary manner in which students often throw, in an ineffective way, this technique certain drills may be useful. Students often hesitate to throw kicks to certain targets or to change the technique they are doing in the midst of executing it even if it would make it highly effective. A possible solution to this might be to highlight the similarities between the chamber and shin block as has been done in this article. In becoming more aware of the skills and limitations to their techniques students can be encouraged to not restrict themselves to the completion of a technique once they have begun. Instead with careful training even if one is nervous and shin blocks when there is no approaching kick, or does it in response to the feinting of such a kick by an opponent, they might still be able to assess the outcome quickly enough to transform the erroneous block into the chamber for a fight ending kick of their own.

Techniques are again, supposed to be practical and effective. Conditioning our nerves to refrain from throwing techniques at inappropriate moments can be difficult, and when the body has executed a particular motion multiple times in similar situations that motion can become an almost conditioned response. This is good when the stimulus generating the technique is a kick that can be shin blocked, or an opening to strike ones opponent. However, overreliance has the opposite effect and results in a fighting style that is stereotyped and vulnerable to an observant opponent that is willing to capitalize on their opponents habits.



## The Challenges!

### Karate

It's a new year and it's time to get back to fundamentals. I'd really like EVERYONE to take part so I'm going to make the challenges a little more attainable this time, but leave it a little open for those that want to go farther.

The karate challenge is to practice every day. Pick something simple, a basic, or two, a Kata, and commit to doing it every day. No matter what you pick, do it as well as you are able and try to reflect a little bit about went well, and what could be improved. Being aware of what you can improve is the key to actually improving.

You can do it as many times as you like, but I recommend limiting the count, doing it only a couple of times (in the case of a kata) keeps the practice fresh and is enough to keep it on your mind and thoughts to be developing in your subconscious.

Lastly, don't forget to think why you practice, it's not dance, visualize what you are blocking or striking.

### Kobudo

Unsurprisingly, the Kobudo challenge is the exact same as the Karate challenge. Only, pick a weapon technique to develop and improve.

Keep it nice and simple, it doesn't even have to be a full kata, it could be a section you want to improve. The key is to commit to working on it every day (even without the weapon, stances and timing can be practiced).

### Training

Sticking with the fundamentals concept, pushups and sit ups are the focus for this challenge. Do a little workout every day, either push ups or sit ups with the goal of increasing the number a little every day. If you want a little more variety you can add legs lifts.

This won't take much time, but you will be amazed at the improvemetns you can make. Doing 2 minutes of push ups is a LOT of pushups. So for less than two minutes every other day, you'll improve your ability to do pushups greatly and get much stronger as a result.

If one day, you can't do quite as many as the day before, don't get discouraged, it happens, just keep working on it and you'll end up doing many more.

## Promotions

None Reported





## 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.



### Jeff Long—Assistant Editor

Jeff Long—Thunder Bay, ON

Jeff is a Sandan and Sensei at the Chitora Dojo. He's also an English major who's been helping to reduce the spelling & grammar mistakes in the newsletter.



### Author—Toshikai Dojo

Jason D. Miller—Ottawa, Ontario

Jason is a student of Tim Leonard's in Ottawa, ON and recently earned his Shodan.



### Author—Any Dojo

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

## Karate Terms in this Newsletter

**Chudan**—Middle Level

**Do**—Way

**Dojo**—School

**Furi**—Swing

**Gusan**—Okinawan Jo

**Jo**—Short Staff

**Jutsu**—Technique

**Ka**—Person / Practitioner

**Kama**—Sickle(s)

**Kami**—Divine Spirit

**Kanetsu**—Joint

**Keri**—Kick

**Kihon**—Exercises

**Kime**—Focus

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

**Kumite**—Free Fight

**Mae**—Front

**Makiwara**—Striking Board

**Mushin**—No Mind

**Naha**—Port city on Okinawa

**Rokushaku**—Six Foot

**Sama**—Honorific suffix applied to a name, denotes respect

**Shiko Dachi**—Horse Stance

**Shozenkutsu / Seisan Dachi**—Small forward stance

**Shuri**—Capital City on Okinawa

**Tatsu**—Dragon

**Tatsuo**—Dragon Man

**Tetko**—Brass Knuckles

**Tonfa/Tuifa**—Baton with Handle

**Uchi**—Strike

**Uchi Hachi Dachi**—Inner Eight stance

**Ude**—Forearm

**Uke**—Hard block

**Yubi**—Finger

**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

### Article Submission

Articles 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 articles 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 (sensei (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](http://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

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Contact: Brian Smout

##### **Sioux Lookout**

Contact: Jim Sapay

##### **Thunder Bay, ON**

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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



Did you know that Canadian Isshinryu Sensei Jesse Hill is currently living and teach in China?

I hear he looks a little different than this when he practices now though.