

WSKF Newsletter



Okinawa Special Edition

January, 2026

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Upcoming WSKF Events

2/20 – Black Belt Class – Troy, OH & Zoom

2/21 Kuro Obi Kai – Troy, OH & Zoom

3/20 – Black Belt Class – Troy, OH & Zoom

4/17 – Black Belt Class – Troy, OH & Zoom

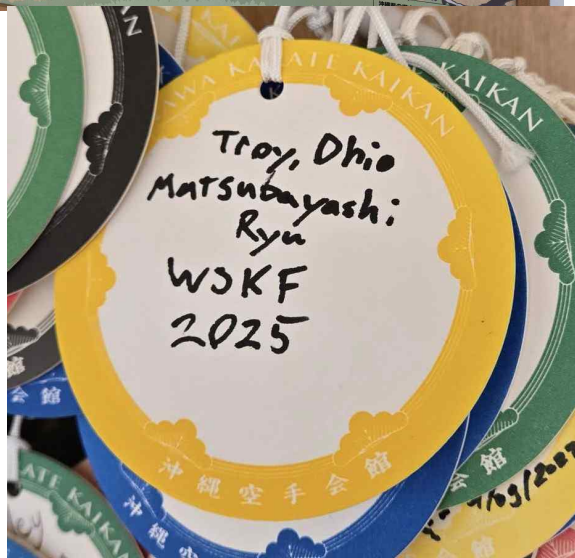


Above: The monument for Master Shoshin Nagamine – Shinyashiki Park, near the Tomari Port in Naha, Okinawa



Above: The Tree of Karate at the Karate Kaikan.

Left: A WSKF tag on the Tree of Karate in the Karate Kaikan in Tomigusuku, Okinawa.

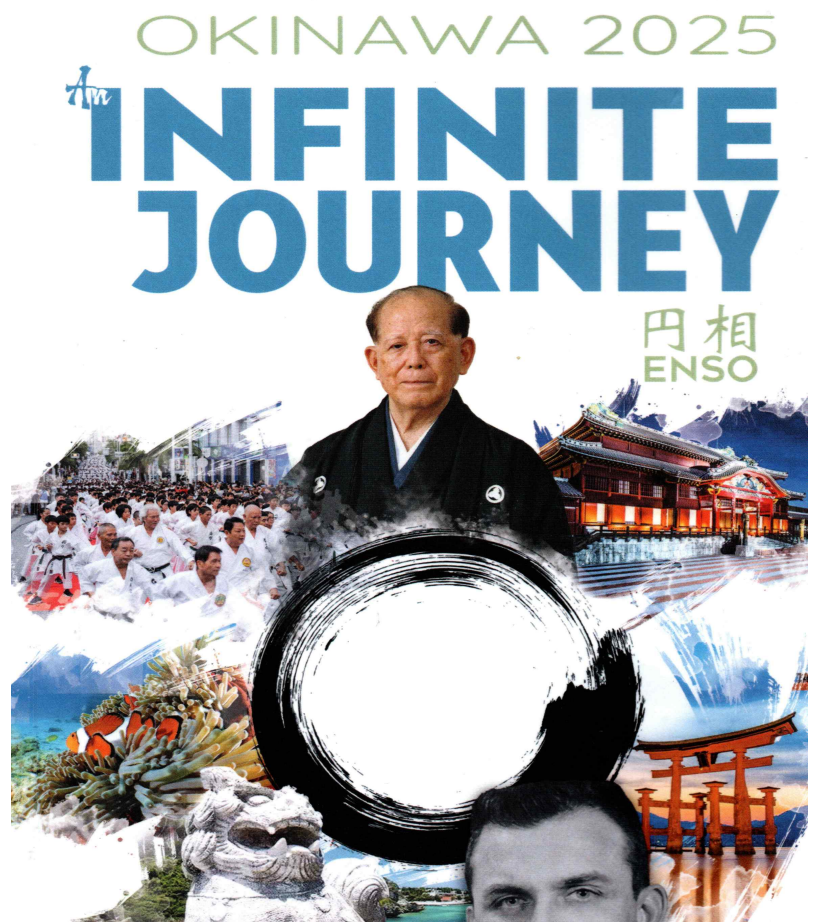


A Message from the WSKF Board of Directors

To our members and supporters, the WSKF Board of Directors wish you a Happy New Year. Thank you all for your hard work and dedication this past year. 2025 was a great year and we wish you all a 2026 filled with success, happiness, and new opportunities.

As we step into the new year, the Board of Directors want to remind you to carry the Enso theme into year 2026. Our martial arts training never ends; it is a continuous cycle of learning. Those that were able to make the Okinawan trip, carry the memories and training you experienced in Okinawa into the New Year as you attend classes and train on your own. Share your experiences with those who were not able to make the trip, so they too can experience our art as it was shared with us from the Hanshi's of Okinawa. Let's make 2026 another year of excellence and shared success.

May each and every one of you have good health, lots of happiness, and a great 2026.



My Okinawa Experience

Lori McPeek - Go-Dan, Martial Arts and Family Fitness Dojo-Centerburg, OH

I was excited to be able to go to Okinawa this past October as it is the birthplace of our style. I was thrilled to be able to meet and train under several masters of karate, two from our style. I don't feel that I had culture shock due to our traditions and culture that is imbued in our karate training. I was surprised by a few things though. There are no trashcans anywhere! If you have trash, it goes home with you. Remarkably there is not a trash problem in Okinawa. The Okinawan people have tremendous respect for their environment. Another surprise was the fact that there were drink vending machines on about every corner – tea, energy drinks, rehydration drinks, or flavored water. And the last thing was the amount of walking that one does! Luckily a monorail was very close to the hotel, so we could ride close to our destinations and then finish the trek with walking. It is no wonder the Okinawan people are in good shape!

We were there for eleven days and packed a lot into that time. I got a little taste of everything, training, sightseeing, training, shopping, training, Okinawan food. You get the idea, there was a lot of training which I enjoyed tremendously! The first full day we were there, we had a morning class with Sensei James Pankiewicz at his Asato Dojo. We all enjoyed the class very much. Sunday was the next day and a group of us went to visit Master Nagamine's memorial. We took the monorail and then a long walk to reach the memorial. At the memorial, we all did Fukugata Ichi for the Master. As we were finishing up at the memorial, it started raining. We welcomed the rain as it was a very warm day.

Monday and Tuesday were the WSKF International days. We had guest instructors both days. The first day we trained at the Okinawan Prefectural Budokan. The building is shaped like a samurai helmet. That was neat to see! Our guest teacher for the first day was the WMKA vice president, Arakaki Toshimitsu Hanshi. We had a knowledge filled training session which was enjoyed by all! The second day of training took place at The Okinawan Karate Kaikan. This building was also very interesting. Our guest instructor that day was the WMKA president, Taira Yoshitaka Hanshi. Once again, we had another knowledge filled training session which was enjoyed by all! Both Hanshis were very personable and very informative! On Tuesday afternoon we had four students who went up for a black belt rank. Congratulations to Chris Bosma, Kenny Zellner, Jeff Brooks, and Evan McPeek. They all did an excellent job!



The little dog was named Buddha.



My Okinawa Experience continued

Lori McPeck - Go-Dan, Martial Arts and Family Fitness Dojo-Centerburg, OH

On Wednesday, the group went on an excursion to the Churaumi Aquarium where we also had lunch. Everyone loved the aquarium. The second part of our excursion was to Ryukyu Mura which is a cultural theme park that recreates Okinawa's traditional landscape and historic Okinawa houses. We were able to see a traditional Okinawan folk dance and a performance of the big drums. In one display, we saw a piece of the huge rope that was used in one of the Okinawan tug of wars. The tug of war is part of the fall festival of Karate month every year of the celebration. I did not realize how big the rope really is. The actual rope used in the tug of war is 200-meters and weighs 43-tons.

Thursday morning, we had a class with Hokama Tetsuhiro Hanshi, who is a Goju Ryu Karate master. As we had a lot of students and his dojo was not very big, we split into two groups. Some people trained as others toured his museum and then we switched places. Master Hokama also made scrolls of calligraphy sayings for those who wanted one. He had Master Nagamine's karate Gi in the museum. It was amazing to see one of the master's Gis. Everyone enjoyed this experience! We had some free time in the afternoon. Some people went sightseeing or shopping while others went to the Sureido store to get a new custom fit Gi. Thursday night started our visits to the Matsubayashi-Ryu Hanshi's dojos. We had to split into three different groups to visit the dojos as they are fairly small and attached to the instructor's houses.

Friday was various activities. Some of us went to our last dojo training session either in the morning or evening, while others went sight-seeing or shopping. Saturday was the 100 kata day challenge on Tsuji Beach. It was a warm day, but we completed 100 katas! Some of us went shopping at the Pottery district for the famous Okinawan pottery after that while others stayed and went swimming. That evening we had a group dinner at a hibachi steak restaurant on Kokusai Street. The food was fantastic!

On our last full day, Sunday, a group of us toured Shurijo Castle in the morning and then went to watch some of our fellow WSKF students perform kata during the Karate Day celebration on Kokusai Street. There were thousands of karate practitioners celebrating the birthplace of karate by performing their style katas. It was a cool that everyone, no matter what style they practiced, performed Fukugata Ichi kata. This was one of the best highlights of the trip! I can't wait to visit Okinawa again in the future!

In closing, I want to thank Hanshi Jeff Leistner and Sensei Chris Leistner for all their hard work in setting up the trip and all the behind the scenes work that was done during our Okinawa trip!



My Okinawa Experience

Kenny Zellmer – Shodan, Okinawan Shorin-Ryu Karate Dojo, Troy, OH

Sometimes a journey
Takes longer than expected
But makes it worth more

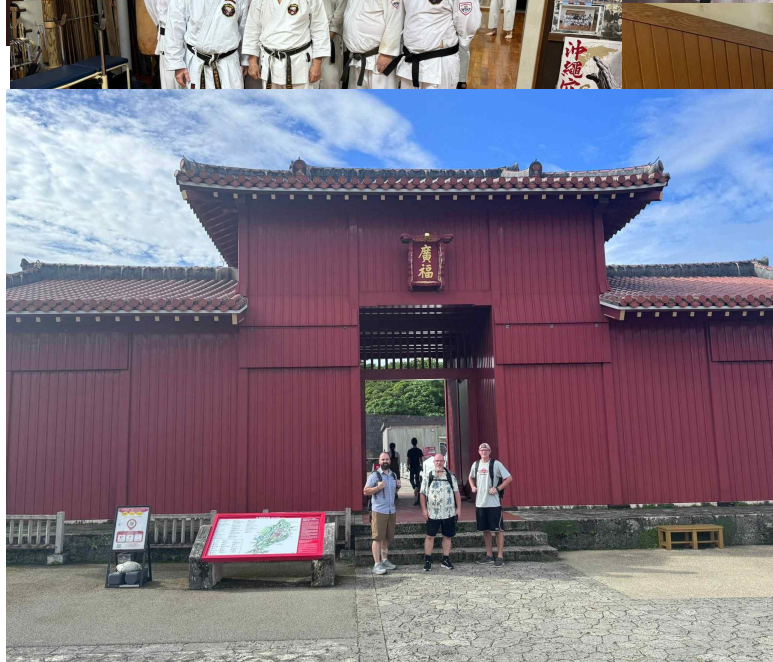
I remember the very first time I changed into a gi. I was barely tall enough to reach the stall latch to open the door in the blue tiled changing room. I don't remember the style or school, but I remember how it felt. That moment had a profound effect on me, and I remember it so vividly even now. Later, I was able to train with Sensei Liestner as a child in downtown Troy, Ohio. Then, as a teen in Tipp City, I moved on to training with Kyoshi Grant, Sensei Johnston, and Sensei Harris. Their mix of teaching styles and philosophies formed much of the foundation for my karate journey. I eventually stepped away for college, an injury leading to partial paralysis in my leg, careers, and eventually family, but Matsubayashi-Ryu never left my heart or mind. After relocating my family back to Troy, I was able to bring my son to the dojo with me, and after training for a while, Sensei Liestner asked me if I was ready to test for Shodan. There was just one question – test in Ohio or Okinawa? I said I needed to check, but my mind was already made up. The culmination of so many years in a gi throughout my life made it necessary to do it in the birthplace of karate.

Leading up to the trip, my preparation was less about packing and itineraries and more about additional training and studying. I had read several books by the old masters, including those by Hanshi Grant, Funokoshi, and others. The stories of teachers, villages, and folklore helped instill a sense of purpose in me during my 0400 AM training sessions and during my NaiHanchi training in hotels while traveling for work (sorry to anyone below me!). Workouts had taken on a different tone; each session felt like a kinetic meditation on the practice itself. Additional workouts with my peers and seniors before and after class and attending the black belt classes, also provided not only tutelage on techniques but training the mind and spirit for more advanced practice.

When you arrive at a place that you had read about in countless books and had visualized so often it could feel real in your mind, it feels a lot less like a vacation destination. For me, it felt like a place I had been before, but stepped away from. The Okinawans' welcoming nature definitely helped in that regard. On the first full day there, my fellow travelers and I had the opportunity for some morning training. We performed weapons kata on a beach, the sun coming over a Shinto shrine, casting its shadow on us, a rainbow behind us, while a group of women played Ukulele and sang nearby. Heavenly is the only apt word to describe it.

Exploring ancient sites and temples with my fellow karateka, and shrines and parks in the dead of night, with the giant fruit bats fluttering and chatting overhead, was a magical experience. Okinawa did not change my karate overnight, but it did help to clarify how I internalize it. I can't thank the people enough who helped me on my karate journey over the years and with this trip. Even though I had wanted to attain the rank of Shodan as long as I could remember, I felt like this achievement might have been the least important part of the adventure.

The island taught me that training is a journey without a finishing line, guided by respect for tradition and the responsibility to continue forward. I think about the islands every day, and look forward to experiencing them again with a new understanding of myself and karate. Despite how amazing and magical the trip was, the preparation both in mind and body for it mattered just as much as the trip itself, and shouldn't that be the case for most endless journeys?



My Okinawa Experience

Chris Bridges – Shodan, Okinawan Shorin-Ryu Karate Dojo, Troy, OH

Stepping off the plane in Naha was a moment I dreamed about since it was announced that we would be making the pilgrimage. Over a year of planning, countless set backs, and the excitement of the unknown that now stood in front of me. A brief moment ushered away by the reality that the plane was 30 minutes late due to a storm we had to fly around, which caused me to miss the last hotel shuttle of the day. After spending the better part of an hour trying to figure out how to talk to drivers and getting no where I decided that the mono-rail was going to have to do.... The only bad part about that was the fact that the closest rail station to the hotel still left me with two miles.

From the time I left Columbus things had not gone according to plan... New Jersey was... New Jersey. The flight from Jersey to Tokyo was spent mostly listening to two young parents with a six month old baby crying for 10 out of the 16 hours. The hardest part about that was actually watching the mother of the baby have a breakdown mid-flight... If you are a parent, you know what I mean.

Landing in Tokyo was an awesome experience, but getting through customs and making it to the terminal I needed to get to was an adventure in itself that almost left me missing the flight to Naha. At one point I was standing in foggy rain in the middle of an airplane parking lot.

Needless to say, I was tired, stressed, and hungry... All the ways you don't want to be when you are on the other side of the planet in a city you don't know with nothing more than a sense of humor and a bottle of water. All of the people who had tried to help me up to this point, however, were extremely helpful in their capacity, which really helped to round the edges of what had already been a sharp experience.

There I was though, figuring out the ticketing system at the Yui Rail Airport station, about to set off solo into the depths of Naha at night trying not to stand out. Still seeing through the lens of the American Mind thinking about all the ways this was an exceptionally bad idea. Needless to say, I was nervous to even get on the train. Let alone face the walk I was about to take, but for now, all I had to do was make it nine stops.

Getting off the train I thought I had seen the worst of it... Nope... All the streets I had to walk down were dark and looked exactly like all the places you would never want to be in America. Every person, every car, every anything had me on edge. At this point I was just paranoid. Looking back at it now, It's kind of funny how scared I was, within 48 hours none of it would bother me at all. In that moment however, in my mind I was walking through a dangerous ghetto and around every corner was a gang of unfriendliness that wanted to introduce themselves to the obvious foreigner who has no idea where he is at. The mind has a very interesting way of expressing its inner workings.

By the time I made it to the hotel and got a shower I was feeling a little better, I managed to build up the courage to find a place to get some noodles.

Out front of the Hotel there was a little grassy area that had some tables and benches so I sat down to eat. While I was sitting there the reality of the endeavor hit me differently. Not a single thing had gone the way I expected since leaving the US... Now I am completely solo, on the other side of the planet, several days away from any familiar face, with no plan, and no clue on how to do anything... What was I doing? Why was I here? This has to be the stupidest thing I have ever done.... All the bad thoughts running wild in my head... I was scared, full of doubt, and all I wanted to do was to go back home. I did, however, already pay for the room, I had been up for over 36 hours at this point... So I should probably go get some sleep first.

My Okinawa Experience

Chris Bridges – Shodan, Okinawan Shorin-Ryu Karate Dojo, Troy, OH

Once I finally figured out how to work the air conditioner, I laid down in bed and watched a movie. I woke up the next morning around 3:30 am. So, I guess it was really just a nap, but I was awake and there was nothing for it, so I got up and took a shower. At this point I needed something to relax my mind, so I decided to head to the beach... It was only a block away. According to the internet it is a safe place to hang out, so lets give it a try.

Tsuji beach is not quite the glamorous tropical paradise one would expect, but I already knew that. There was a highway over pass that goes right through the middle of the place, but still, its a beach... Don't complain. When I arrived at the place though it freaked me out a bit. In the middle of the night it looks like a place drug addicts go to hide and over-dose... I saw a few homeless people, but even in the states they aren't scary. Group of kids sneaking beers off in a corner, best not to mess with them. So I walked until I got to a nice spot and sat for a little bit. There was a nice breeze coming off the East China Sea. After a while I thought it would be cool to do a sun rise session right there on the beach. After all... That is what I came to do... How can you pass on an opportunity to practice kata on a beach in Naha?

Now I was very self-conscious about the whole thing, but its Okinawa... So warm up and kata it is. That was an awesome feeling. As I was working on Nihanchi the area around me started to get light, the world was starting to wake up. As the sun started to cast rays on the water I turned around to take my first real look at Naha. Up until now it was dark so I really didn't get a feel for anything.

As I turned around I realized that there was a large cliff face behind me, but on top of it, right where the sun was starting to shine through the early morning mist... There was a Buddhist temple. The way the sun was highlighting it, making it almost glow, but still leaving room for the silhouette was mystifying... The sound of birds waking up... The way the sun was illuminating the fog.. It was something out of a dream... All apprehension, all tension and doubt were instantly gone. Of all the moments that have or ever will be, the universe gifted me with this unimaginably beautiful moment.

After jumping in the sea for a quick cool down I decided to head back to the hotel for a shower and to get ready for breakfast. After breakfast I wanted to explore. The goal for the day was to find Chinan's Cave, Nagamini's Memorial, and what I call "Nagamine's Parking lot" (the site of his dojo).

Chanan's cave was only about 4 miles from where I was, and there were all kinds of parks and sights to see along the way. While I was adventuring my phone rang it was my family on a face time. That was a much needed confidence boost. So I walked the side streets of Naha, a lot of times just pacing, but I eventually got to where I was hoping to go. Which was really just a small gap between two buildings that lead to what most Americans would call a grave yard, but I found it.

I was sitting inside the mouth of Chinan's cave. The degenerate from Ohio, all the way in Naha, sitting at what some consider the birthplace of Martial Arts in Okinawa. I sat there and just let the moment take me. The little kid in me was overjoyed. It was like being in a dream.

The Nagamine Memorial was not that far away from the cave, and as irony would have it.. I actually had already walked by the site several times while I was on the phone with my family. Now I was standing in front of Nagamine's Memorial, lost for words... I no longer cared how ridiculous I looked. It's kata time.

My Okinawa Experience

Chris Bridges – Shodan, Okinawan Shorin-Ryu Karate Dojo, Troy, OH

So there I was, flying solo on the other side of the planet days away from any familiar faces, in a place I know very little about that has a language I don't know, and I'm doing Kata... In front of Grand Master Shoshin Nagamine's Memorial In Tomari... After going through the kata, shadow boxing the kumite, and doing basics, I realized that in my mind, I was actually doing a demonstration for Nagamine. Still don't really know why, I didn't have a reason, I was just in the exact right now, doing whatever felt like the right thing to do. I did end up finding Nagamine's Parking lot, but I'll save that story for another time.

A few days later the familiar faces started showing up, and by this time I pretty much knew my way around Naha, I could get from Tsuji Beach to Kokusai-Dori without a map, I had eaten at all kinds of little local places. Met some really great people, and just felt right at home. The first real big outing we went on was to the Asato Dojo. The Dojo wasn't really all that far from Nagamine's Dojo (My definition of not far) and Shureido Head Quarters was along the path. A hand full of people said they would like it if I were to take them out there.

No way I was going to miss out on taking a group of like minded people over to Nagamine's Memorial. So we laced up the shoes and got to walking. Along the way we saw new things, showed everyone some stuff I had already found. It was just an awesome experience. Sharing Naha with the Karate Family... No words, just awesome.

When we got to Nagamine's it was another one of those moments that I still can't find words for... It was powerful. We did a couple of kata after which I just took a few steps back and watched everyone. I was overrun with sensations. Most of which I don't have words to describe. The universe was communicating with me in a language I was just starting to realize. The only thing I can say with any certainty, is that I had the overwhelming sensation that I was doing exactly what I was supposed to be doing, exactly when I was supposed to do it.

Before arriving in Okinawa, I thought that it was just something I just didn't want to miss, but in that moment, knowing where we are and what it means... I realized that I didn't come to Okinawa to learn something I didn't already know, I didn't go just to spend time with Karate people doing karate things in the Karate homeland. It wasn't just a vacation. I had just found the the starting point of a journey that has since become the cornerstone of my every day.... How can I take part in the next step if I haven't even found the first one? I need to find the footsteps of the masters before I can walk in them. So I started at the Nagamine Memorial, and haven't stoped walking since.

There is more to Culture then just knowing how to enter a dojo (which 99% of Students I've seen do incorrectly). There is more to tradition then the ceremony. Immersing myself into the fabric of Okinawa I was able to witness the breath of daily life while watching a symphony of human interaction unfold. Unfiltered, no adds, no motives, I witnessed the foundations of our basics, the formula of our Kata resonating in all aspects of Okinawan life. From the city workers trimming trees to the workers at the pizza shop meticulously packaging my pepperoni pizza. Nothing is ever too basic, no part should ever overlooked. No one thing is better than another, when all parts are a piece of the same whole. The server in the restaurant is just as important as the person eating there, and they both are just as important as the person who owns the building.

"Without each other, there is no being, so be together and be, that better then no being" — Coffee shop guy at Rokkan Coffee Creators in Higawa, Naha.

Culture shows us how to be as one when we are many. Tradition defines our practice by honoring the journey that brought us here. Science applied to the art of perfecting all aspects of life enables the precision of technique to cultivate intention without resistance. But only through continuous effort is the experience acquired to make the actual proof possible.



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My Okinawa Experience

Chris Bosma – Shodan, Okinawan Shorin-Ryu Karate Dojo, Troy, OH

I think the biggest thing I took away from the trip to Okinawa was the opportunity to test for and receive- my black belt! I mean how many people have the honor of testing for Sho Dan in the ancestral homeland of karate during National Karate Month?? And the fact that I was able to share this experience with my father and son, who joined me on the journey, made it that much more special! The three of us created memories that we'll carry with us for the rest of our lives.

I think the trip also brought the members of the federation closer! We lived together...ate together...trained together...and explored the island together. We might've learned more about each another in one week than we have in the last 5 years!

I'm looking forward to going back there for sure in 2 or 3 years (when Aiden tests for Sho Dan) and, hopefully, on a regular basis after that!



Evolution of Karate

Dewite Daryl Avery, Yondan, Matsubayashi-ryu

I started Matsubayashi-ryu karate, with the World Shorin-ryu Karate-do Federation (WSKF), in 1973. It was very intense training. The plywood floor of the dojo would get slick from all the sweat. We learned to do what I called the box step. When the spot we were standing on became too slick from sweat, we would take a big step forward to a drier spot on the deck. When that spot got slick, we took a big step to the right. When that spot got too slick, we would take a big step back. The last step would be to the left putting us back to the original spot which the floor had soaked in most of the original sweat so was not as slick. This continued throughout the class. During warm weather, we would often run barefoot to the local park, about a mile and a half away; train there and then run back. When Sensei told you to do something, you just did it, no questions, no complaining. I used to think it couldn't get any tougher training until I heard the stories of how they trained in the 60s. A regular 20-mile run (with shoes) as well as intense (in dojo) training was normal. If you ever wondered how the Hanshi(s) got to be so good and knowledgeable, this is why. Of course, every individual had to put in the effort to excel. Karate has evolved since those days, you can still get a good workout and learn, but the training workouts are much different. In the old days, you didn't ask any questions during class. You watched and you learned. I can tell you that during over 21 years of teaching I tried several times to bring back the old ways of training, which usually resulted in losing most students. So, these days, I try to make up for it by explaining more to students and helping them find the purpose in what they are learning. It can be a slower process, but it can still work.

One of the ideas taught was that after training for many years, karate would eventually become more personal. Everyone is an individual, what I'm good at or things I understand will be different for someone else. This also applies to each person's experience. I grew up fighting. Some students might have been police officers, bodyguards or bouncers. Some may have military training in combat, or some students may have never been in a fight. Each experience shapes how you might view karate and what lessons are the most meaningful to you. This is why, if or when you visit a different dojo, there will be differences in what is taught. These differences may be very slight or great, but they are there. And they probably feel they have a good reason for each variation.



Evolution of Karate

Dewite Daryl Avery, Yondan, Matsubayashi-Ryu

Grand master Nagamine had several teachers acknowledged in his book, but he also lived in Okinawa and had access to a great number of knowledgeable individuals. Being on the police force probably gave him some practical experience. We know he also taught judo. Grand Master Nagamine evolved the karate he was taught into his own style of karate and named it Matsubayashi-Ryu. He used scientific principles and natural movements to create his version of Shorin-Ryu. He incorporated the Naihanchi katas originally taught in schools, Fukyugata-ichi that he developed for the school systems along with the kata from Goju-Ryu developed for the school systems (Fukugata-ni). He also used the Pinan katas developed by Master Itosu and eight advanced katas chosen by him from the many advanced katas being taught in Okinawa. To make these katas usable for teaching Matsubayashi-Ryu, they had to be modified to some degree. He was not the only one in those times refining their knowledge of karate to create different versions of Shorin-Ryu. If you watch videos of Matsubayashi-Ryu from other dojos, you might notice a few differences. If you watch the kata by the same name from a different style of karate, you may barely recognize it. If you watch basics from a different style, you will see differences. Their basics should match the way they perform their katas, as ours matches how we perform our katas. Besides basics being different, kata also gets modified slightly by what the teacher believes the realistic bunkai to be. Most modifications are made because whatever the change is, it makes more sense to the teacher to do it that way.

I will tell you that a student, or young teacher, training on their own without regular guidance from their seniors might find some of their techniques changing without even realizing it. This can partially explain why you can go to two different dojos claiming the same style and find the experience completely different. For example, while I was in the Air Force, I tried Tung Su Do at two different bases. In Texas, we spent most of the class doing sparring related practice. In Mississippi, the class was traditional with katas. In the WSKF we have the benefit from being able to gather regularly with fellow black belts and compare thoughts and ideas to gain a deeper understanding of what we do.

There are other organizations of Matsubayashi-Ryu in the world. Some organizations like the idea of trying to keep all techniques and movements exactly as it was taught by Grand Master Nagamine at the time they were taught it. On the surface, this seems like a noble idea; but there are two problems with this idea. After teaching over twenty years, I can tell you that what I taught at year twenty was much different than what I taught at year two. As the teacher gains knowledge, the teaching will advance and change. This is the first problem of trying to keep things exactly as you remember them to be. The second problem is that we have been told that karate, over time, will become personal, since each of us is different. If we insist on never changing anything then we also will never be able to make karate ours. If Grand Master Nagamine had taught everything the same as his teachers, then Matsubayashi-Ryu would have no reason to exist.

There are several black belts that were able to train directly under Grand Master Nagamine for a time, and yet many have different ideas of how things should be done. I suspect Grand Master Nagamine taught things a little differently as the years passed and as his knowledge grew. I would expect the same from any of his blackbelts. If you get the opportunity to train at other dojos, you will see at least small differences. Don't complain or tell them they are doing it wrong. Wrong for you may not be wrong for them. Politely ask about the differences, whether you like the answer or not, you will learn something. And isn't that what it is all about?

ON TRICKSTERS, FRIENDS, AND BEING GLAD

Jim Sage - San-Dan

Remember the classes we spent together when we concentrated so on our training, on having a good workout, a good class, not really socializing as such, but being so busy in our efforts. Then, when the class was over and we ambled off the deck, there was a feeling of closeness, a feeling of kinship, however brief, but as real as the training. This is friendship we feel, and it is of the highest quality.

We like to think we are, so to speak, plodding down a path, hiking a trail, cruising down a river (pick your mode of travel), but in truth we are also carried, and the unseen forces of the universe that bring us to where we find ourselves, make no mistakes.

Our entire tenure in the halls of training was no accident or coincidence. Yet at the same time we were being carried, the unseen powers were changing us, bit by bit, replacing the smoothness of our skin with lines and wrinkles; bringing our supple, sturdy limbs to a faltering phase; perhaps tricking our memory; and maybe even trying to alter our efforts and determination to continue our learning, our unfolding.

We all know our training, in all of its aspects, has great meaning, importance, and even sacredness. Yet there is a component we need to bring to the fore and cultivate more as a part of our Matsubayashi-Ryu culture, part of our sense of family. I'm speaking of friendship.

Who hasn't experienced meeting an old friend after years of absence and finding the friendship picks up afresh as if no time has passed. The bonds we forge remain, and they remain even after the trickster time has transformed our outward appearances, our abilities, our energy. We may find ourselves fallen prey of old trickster but it doesn't mean he has taken all of the good things we have become over the years. Remember our talks of ikigai, of having purpose. Just coming to the dojo when we can no longer train is a purpose, and one that may lead to good things: continued learning; socializing; being energized by energy put off by the students training; socializing; finding some way to be of help; reliving beautiful memories; socializing, and who knows what the unseen powers may materialize.

I personally can't wait for our society to mature beyond its present mentality of idolizing youth, regretting old age, and fearing death. I feel I am with a group – my budo friends, my budo family – that has appreciation, respect and love for all ages and stages of life, and believes what our masters have taught about our learning never ending. That learning is always reciprocal.

If you have been away from your budo fold, for whatever reason, just remember the times you really didn't want to go to class and train, but you did anyway, and afterwards you were glad you went. Come back around, and be glad.

Training Seminars



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100 Kata Challenge



Dojo Visits



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Banquet at the Mercure Hotel



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Karate Day Kokusai Dori Street



They Go Back and Forth

Jim Sage, San-Dan

THEY GO BACK AND FORTH, TIME AFTER TIME, ALMOST LIKE BREATHING. NIGHT TO DAY. DAY TO NIGHT. EACH BOWS TO THE OTHER, AND IN SELF SACRIFICE GIVES UP TO THE OTHER. AND EACH RECEIVES, WHILE HUMILITY REIGNS SUPREME. TRANSFORMATION IS THE NATURAL ORDER...RESURRECTION, REBIRTH, AGAIN AND AGAIN.

I LOVE THESE SPECIAL TIMES OF DAY. THEY GIVE ME THE PLEASURE OF SEEING THE MIST RISING FROM THE WATERS, THE FIELDS; THE DEW OR THE FROST STILL CLINGING; THE DAY CRITTERS AND THE NIGHT CRITTERS COMING AND GOING; THE SHADOW'S PLAYING IN THE CHANGING LIGHT.

AND THEY GIVE ME SUBTLE LESSONS THAT GENERATE UNDERSTANDING AND DEEPEN MY LONGING FOR YOU, FATHER, MOTHER, SOURCE, SUSTAINER.

