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# Introduction

This article has been written as part of the biggest test in my life so far. It is part of an assessment that sums up eighteen years of dedication to the art of Karate-do and my instructor.

“It is the journey that is truly the reward”

After I caught the “martial art bug” I was eager to learn as much about it as I could. I enthusiastically went to my local library to find information on the art but to my disappointment there were only two books there that had any relevance – one on Judo and one on Karate. I cannot recall the titles or the authors of these books, but the above quote was written in one of the books and has stuck in my mind ever since. It has taken many hours to contemplate what to write in this assessment but this quote underlines my feelings towards taking my 4<sup>th</sup> Dan grading. The grade itself is not as significant to me as people consider it to be; I believe the true test and reward is the journey that I have undertaken to reach this point.

It should be noted that I do not consider myself a master of Karate as I believe someone is only worthy of the title if they dedicate their entire life to the discipline – emotionally and spiritually as well as physically. In my opinion a decade of consistent training is required for someone to even scratch the surface of Karate, and I believe a fundamental element to this training is to keep an open mind.

Through my experience I have felt that the original concept of Karate has been lost in the majority of clubs. In turn the image of Karate has changed too. Many practised instructors have chosen to give the general public what they want by basing their lessons on a modern sporting direction. It shows severe lack of knowledge and/or misinterpretation of the discipline when instructors choose this route. Instead of educating and inspiring students they choose to entertain and encourage students’ egos through public attention, which benefits both the student and the instructor. From a student’s point of view appearing in the local newspaper is extremely desirable, and for the instructor, having students in the paper promotes their club and therefore contributes towards its success. One of my most dedicated students described this as the “McDojo” process. In my mind, this expression is a very astute analysis of what is happening to the art of Karate. McDonalds is the most successful fast food provider in the world. It offers a convenient and simple fast food range available in major towns and cities across the world. The food is edible and serves its purpose but if someone were looking for a high quality meal they would not even consider the restaurant. The “McDojo” process is no different in comparison. Classes may be successful but is quality Karate being taught? It is very difficult for the people of a western country with a completely different culture to understand the true meaning of Karate. Everything about Karate is alien to the general public as there is nothing from an outside point of view that fits into any familiar British

category. What we wear, the language we use and the general movements are all unfamiliar. This is where I believe most floors in modern Karate stem from. Most people believe Karate is about kicking and punching which is encouraged through clubs promoting themselves through winning sport competition – it is no wonder, therefore, people do not give the art the respect it deserves.

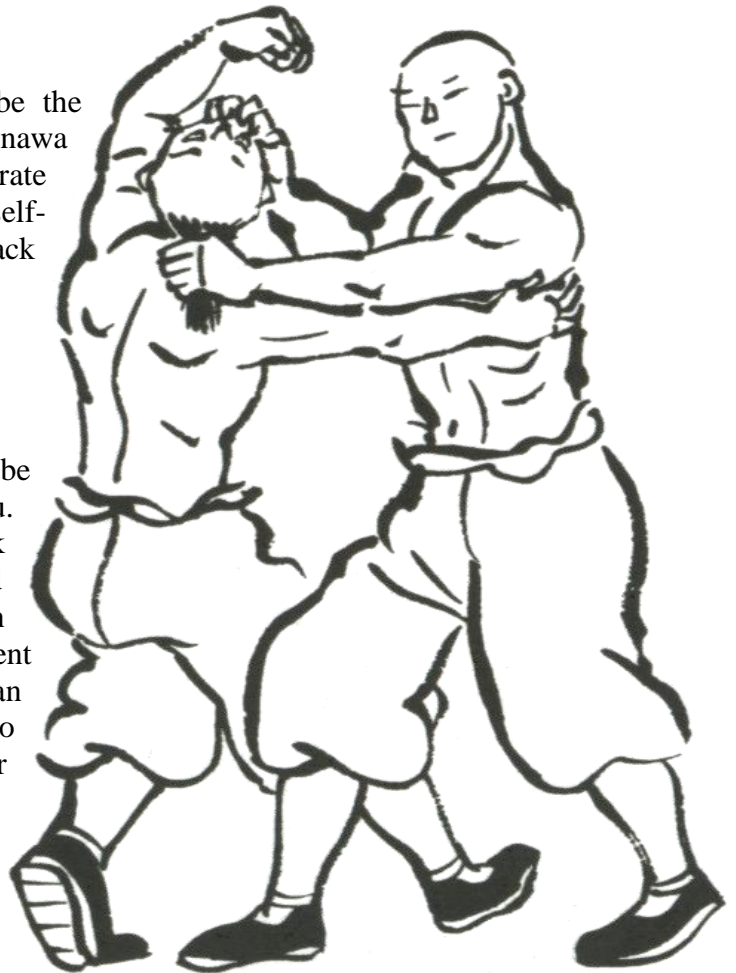
The main focus of this assessment is to evaluate and explain what the style Goshin is and its interpretation of traditional Karate-do. This is only possible by understanding its origin and influences. Through this assessment I intend to explain the true meaning and principles of the art that we practice. Starting with the history and lineage of Karate I hope to define the direction of Goshin Karate Association to date.

# Karate and its Origin

Karate-do, or '*the way of the empty hand*', is the term given to describe the group of martial arts that originate from Okinawa and Japan. From its ancient beginnings Karate has always had one main principle – self-defence. It is said that there is no initial attack in karate, which is true – all training is based on defence of oneself or defence of others. *Karate ni sente nashi* – 'there is no first attack in Karate'.

The historical origins of Karate-do can be traced back to China in the form of Kung-fu. According to legend, the Zen Buddhist monk Bodhidharma traveled to China around 500AD. He spent nine years at the Shaolin temple, where he taught the monks different breathing exercises, including the Luohan Form (18 step exercise). Bodhidharma also taught the monks how to develop their mental and physical strength, so that they could endure their very grueling meditation exercises. Kung-fu remained in this basic form for the next eight hundred years until an invasion from Manchuria, lead by the Ching

Family. This invasion and subsequent takeover ended China's 'Golden Era' and the removal of the Ming family from power. In 1647, the Honan temple of Shaolin was utterly destroyed by Ching loyal troops. Most monks stayed and were slaughtered. A few, however, escaped, and this marked the beginning of the transformation of Kung-fu into a more militaristic art. The Shaolin were supporters of the old dynasty of the Ming and wanted to see them return to power, which eventually led to the Boxer Rebellion in 1901. Over many years the Shaolin monks began to revise and strengthen their art, and even often studied the movements of animals for inspiration. During this evolutionary period of Kung-fu it was divided into two main styles: the Northern and Southern styles. The Northern styles were predominantly characterised by linear and hard techniques. They were more acrobatic than the styles of the South; this was due partly to the geography of the two regions. In the North, the ground was generally harder and flatter; therefore a lot of emphasis was often placed on kicking techniques. The Southern styles were often completely opposite of those in the North; the terrain in the South was more marshland and water, and the ground softer. More importance was given to hand



techniques, along with more circular and softer techniques, and there was more of a focus on chi (internal energy). These two main styles were broken down into a variety of subsystems and styles. One particular style was often a family style, which was taught to each member of the family, and all secrets were usually passed down to the oldest male child.

### **Chinese influence in Okinawa**

Exposure to Kung-fu in Okinawa dates as far back as 1372 when King Satto of the Ryûkyu Dynasty sent his brother Taiki as an envoy to China with tributes for the Chinese Emperor Chu Yuen Cheang of the Ming Dynasty. This marked the beginning of a cultural exchange between Okinawa and China. Every other year the Emperor sent envoys to Okinawa to promote a cultural exchange. These envoys continued to the year 1866.

Among those sent were many masters of Kung-fu, and during their stay at Shuri and Naha, taught their art to members of the nobility and others of their class. During this time noblemen were also sent from Okinawa to mainland China. A number of these men remained in China while others returned home to Okinawa after extended stays.

When Japan invaded Okinawa in 1609 the ban on carrying weapons that was originally enforced by King Sho Shin in 1477 continued. In addition, the Japanese also banned the practice of martial arts. This act forced the Okinawans to continue their martial arts training in secrecy.

### **The 3 styles of Okinawa-te**

During the next three hundred years the Okinawan martial arts developed into its own unique entity and became referred to as 'Okinawa te'. It was split into three main styles – ***Shuri-te, Naha-te and Tomari-te*** – all named after the town in Okinawa in which they were developed. Shuri-te was influenced by the hard techniques of Kung-fu and characterised by an offensive attitude. Naha-te was influenced by the softer techniques of Kung-fu including breath control and chi. It was characterized by a more defensive attitude with grappling, throws, and blocking techniques. Tomari-te was influenced by both the hard and soft techniques of Kung-fu.

## The first styles of Karate-do

Okinawa-te eventually evolved into what we know today as Karate-dô (China Hand Way) and was split into three main styles, again, like with Kung-fu, along with many other styles and sub systems. These styles were Goju-ryû, Uechi-ryû, and Shorin-ryû.

### Goju-ryû

Goju-ryû (Hard Soft Style) evolved from Naha-te. This particular system of Naha-te can be traced back to a style of White Crane Kung-fu and may also have been influenced by the Dragon, Hawk, Mantis and Lion systems of Kung-fu. In November 1868/69, an Okinawan named Kanryo Higaonna traveled to Foochow in Southern China where he studied a system of White Crane Kung-fu for approximately 13-15 years under Master Ryû Ryûko. Higaonna brought this art back to Naha Okinawa, (the modern day capital of Okinawa) and he, along with his chosen disciple Chojun

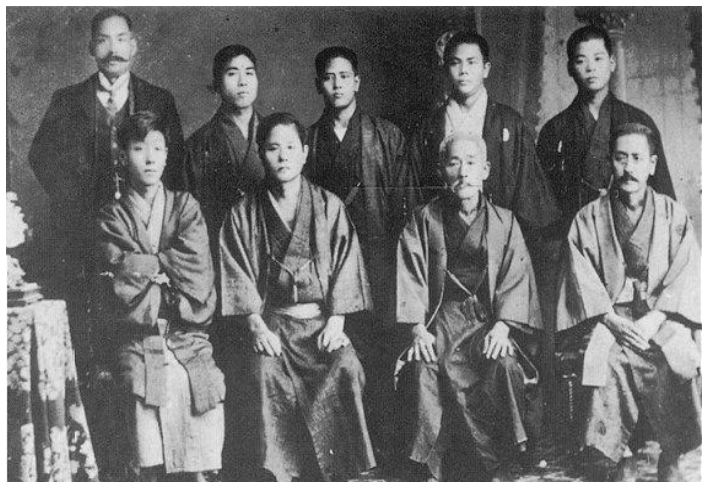
Miyagi, taught and adapted some of the techniques that were indigenous of the Okinawan martial arts to this Chinese martial art, creating an art that was unique but, in many ways, still very Chinese.

When Kanryo Higaonna died in 1916, Miyagi (one of his most senior students and disciples) was left in charge of the style and passing it on. After his teacher's death Miyagi traveled to China and trained with various Kung-fu masters. During Miyagi's travels and training is more than likely where the style (that was to become known as Goju-ryû) was

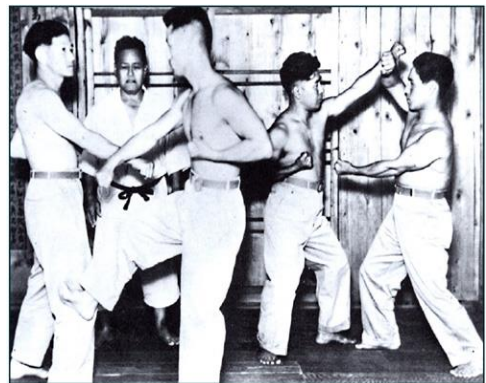
influenced by the Hawk, Mantis, Lion and Dragon. Miyagi changed the name of the art from Naha-te to



Founding members of "Karate-Do" association in 1937.  
(Front from right) Chojun Miyagi, Chomo Hanashiro, Kentsu Yabu,  
Chotoku Kyan(Back from right) Genwa Nakasone, Choshin Chibana,  
Choryo Maeshiro, Shinpan Shiroma



Kanryo Higaonna Sensei & Students



Training in the Miyagi Dojo



‘Goju-ryû,’ which was taken from the third precept of Kung-fu written in the Bubishi (manual of military preparation). Master Miyagi continued to develop his art and did many demonstrations in front of audiences and government officials not only in Okinawa but in Japan as well. This led to a major popularisation of the style. Thus, Kanryo Higaonna is known as the father of Goju-ryû Karate-dô and Chojun Miyagi as the founder of the style. Goju-ryû is still practiced today.

## Uechi-ryû

Uechi-ryû is basically a type of Chinese temple fighting. Uechi-ryû and Goju-ryû are often referred to as sister styles. To most of the world, it is referred to as a style of karate. In China, its formal name is Pangai-noon (half-hard, half-soft). Grand Master Kanbum Uechi, the founder of Uechi-ryû, is responsible for bringing this art to Okinawa and Japan from China. When Master Uechi was 20 years old he traveled to Southern China where



**Kanei Uechi Sensei**

he studied the art of Pangai-noon. He spent ten years studying under his teacher Chou-tzu-ho, a Buddhist priest who had received his training in the Shaolin temple. While in China he received permission to open a school in Nansou.

During this time one of his students became involved in a dispute over a land boundary. His opponent



**Kanbun Uechi Sensei**

attacked him and the student, who instinctively defended himself, accidentally killed the attacker. The villagers blamed Kanbum for his death since he taught the student. Master Uechi was deeply disheartened by this and vowed never to teach again. He closed his school and returned to Okinawa. Upon his return to Okinawa, Kanbum still initially refused to teach, but was eventually persuaded by a friend to teach again. Kanbum opened another school and continued to teach until his death in 1948. To honour their teacher, his students changed the name of the style from Pangai-noon to Uechi-ryû. Kanbun's son is now the head of the Uechi Family and continues to teach this most unique style of Karate.

## Shorin-ryû

Shorin-ryû (Young Forest Style) evolved from Shuri-te and Tomari-te. The style that is now Shorin-ryû was developed mainly in the ancient city of Shuri, the ancient capital of Okinawa, hence the name 'Shuri-te', its style of origin. Sokan Matsumura, chief martial arts instructor and bodyguard for the Okinawan King, was the individual most responsible for developing and refining the Shorin-ryû. The Shuri-te and Tomari-te systems that Shorin-ryû came from were developed from Northern Shaolin Kung-fu and ancient Okinawan arts – simply referred to as Okinawa-te. Shorin-ryû is truly a hybrid martial art combining both Chinese and Okinawan methods of training. Shorin-ryû is one of the more popular and traditional Okinawan styles and is taught all over the world.

It is from Shorin-ryu that we can show the origin of Goshin Karate.

### Anko Itosu Sensei – Goshin Karate's main foundation

Itosu was born in the Gibo section of Shuri (the capital city), Okinawa in 1831 and died on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1915. His first name was Anko (the Kanji for which may alternately be read in Japanese as Yasutsune and his last name Shishu read as Itosu). He is probably most commonly known by the name Anko Itosu. He was born to a prominent family and was well educated in the classics of Chinese literature.



**Anko Itosu Sensei**

Student of Bushi Matsumura  
Sensei of Gichin Funakoshi  
Sensei of Kanken Toyama

Descriptions of him vary, and there are no known photographs. He was short by modern standards, but in Okinawa at the time his approximate height of five feet eight was average. Some sources describe him as stocky, barrel chested and very strong. He also had immense discipline.

After taking and passing civil service exams, he became a clerk for the Ryukyu government. At least one source shows he was a secretary to the last King of the Ryukyus (the island chain of which Okinawa was the capital), Sho Tai (the monarchy was ended in 1879 when the islands officially

became part of Japan).

It was through the assistance of his good friend Anko Azato that he rose to a position of prominence in Ryukyu governmental administration. This was a bond of friendship that existed throughout their lives, and they are often described together by Gichin Funakoshi, who studied under both of these masters. He was built strongly, and there are many tales of his incredible punching ability.

The early training of this martial art legend is shrouded in mystery. Many martial art historians refer to Itosu as having been a disciple of the Great Sokon "Bushi" Matsumura. He was the most influential martial artist of his time who helped bring karate into the modern era as an exponent of Shuri-te. It was Matsumura who was a student of Tode



Sakagawa (1733-1815) who in turn studied under Kusanku -- after which the famous kata is named (Konku).

It has been extremely hard to know if Itosu is a true interpreter of Matsumura's karate. After more investigation this appears to be incorrect, or at least overstated. Itosu Sensei was a pupil of Matsumura Sensei, but he was disliked by his teacher for he was very slow in his speed of movement. Although Itosu Sensei was dedicated in his practice his teacher did not care about him so he left and went to Nagahama Sensei. While Nagahama Sensei was quite well known and very diligent, his method or idea of teaching was entirely different from master Matsumura. Nagahama focused solely on the building of the body. Apparently Itosu adjusted well and trained hard and Nagahama referred to Itosu as his disciple and "right hand man." It must have been a shock when Nagahama told Itosu on his deathbed that he had actually only taught him strength building and had never once given thought to actual combat. In other words, his method lacked the idea of liberty in motion and alertness in action, and therefore wanted him to go back to master Matsumura.



**Bushi Sokan  
Matsumura**

Okinawan Master - Shuri-te

Itosu had learned much from Nagahama. It is likely that through his instruction many of the seeds were planted for using tode (an early name for Karate) as a method of physical and mental strengthening. These seeds combined with Itosu's unique perspective and experience came to fruition in the Okinawan school system as a method of developing the youth of Okinawa.

Itosu likely realised, as Nagahama suggested, that he needed further training in combative principles. It would have been highly unlikely for Itosu to return to the Matsumura since he had previously left him. Anko Itosu then became a disciple of Gusukuma of Tomari. This would explain the inclusion of the kata Rohai and Wanshu within the Itosu curriculum as Sokon Matsumura was not known to have taught or passed on these forms.

### **Itosu's Legacy**

It is through the efforts of this 'Father of Modern Okinawan Karate' that many basic exercises and forms were simplified and organised into a curriculum suitable for the mass instruction of students. In addition to placing importance on basics, Itosu took the Channan forms he had previously devised (or had been taught to him, according to historians), altered them slightly and renamed them Pinan, which he thought would be more appealing to students. Let it never be said that Itosu lacked enthusiasm, for he didn't stop at the Pinans. He went on to supplement Naihanchi by the creation of a Nidan and Sandan and possibly Kusanku Sho and Passai Sho as well.

Even though questions persist about Itosu's lineage, there is no doubt about the profound and universal impact he had on the development of Karate in Okinawa.

It was Itosu who brought Karate from the shadows into the light of public study. In 1901 he began instructing karate at many Shuri schools.

It is perhaps one of the greatest testaments to the skill of this Karate-ka that he developed such a group of superb students, who in turn promoted his art. The Karate that descended from Itosu represents one of the great Okinawan Karate heritages known as Shorin-Ryu. His students have been the most influential masters of today's existing karate.



In October of 1908 Itosu realised it was time for Karate to reach beyond the shores of Okinawa to the heart of Japan itself. It was to this end that he wrote his famous letter of Ten Precepts (Tode Jukun) to draw the attention of both the Ministry of Education as well as the Ministry of War. After demonstrations were held for several naval vessels, the most important of which was the 1912 visit of Admiral Dewa, Karate emerged as an attractive vehicle for developing young fighting men for the imperialistic Japanese government of the period.

On 26<sup>th</sup> January 1915 a great light in the martial world was extinguished when Anko Itosu drew his last breath at the age of eighty five. It is a shame that he did not live to see the art he so vigorously propagated to achieve its world-wide popularity, and to see his crusade vigorously pursued on the mainland by his student Gichin Funakoshi.

Karate-do in Japan took on a somewhat different shape. One of Japanese Karate's differences was the meaning of Karate-do; it was changed from 'China Hand Way' to 'Empty Hand Way'. Other differences in Okinawan Karate and Japanese Karate were due to the often combining of Okinawan styles, varying curricula, and no organised standards of grading proficiency, thus seemingly very unorganised to the Japanese mind. In addition, the Okinawan teachers were very often resentful toward the Japanese for the treatment of Okinawans in general and thus did not reveal certain teachings.

Japanese Karate thereby evolved and developed from its Okinawan Karate-do roots into its own unique form. Japanese Karate-do includes many styles; the three main ones are Kyokushin, Wado-ryû and Shotokan.

## The birth of Japanese Karate – The 3 Main Styles

### Shotokan

Gichin Funakoshi was a student of Anko Itosu Sensei and the founder of Shotokan after his teacher's death in 1915; he brought together two Okinawan styles of Karate, Shorin-ryû and Shorei-ryû. Funakoshi standardised and blended the two styles, by lengthening the stances, modifying the katas, and even changing the names of the katas to Japanese names (Pinan – Heian, Passai – Bassai etc). This “Japanesing” of Okinawan Karate was imperative in order to make it more acceptable to the Japanese philosophical and aesthetic ideals. Gichin Funakoshi is largely responsible for spreading Karate through out Japan.

In 1917, Funakoshi was asked to perform his martial art in Japan, and was invited back in 1922 and then a third time several years later. In 1949, the Japan Karate Association (JKA) was formed, of which Funakoshi

became the chief instructor. Gichin Funakoshi passed away in 1957 at the age of 88. Shotokan Karate is one of the most widely practiced and popular styles of karate in the world but even though it has travelled far from its original principles it is still greatly supported by its practitioners.



**Gichin Funakoshi Sensei**

Student of Anko Itosu Sensei  
Sensei of Mitsusuke Harada Sensei

### Kyokushin

Masutatsu Oyama, most often called Mas Oyama, was the founder of Kyokushin Karate-do. Mas Oyama studied many arts which contributed to the formation of his style including Chabee (Korean version of Sumo), Shotokan Karate, and Japanese Goju-ryû. Mas Oyama's training was almost fanatical; his various Karate exercises lasted twelve hours every day. To prove the power of his Karate, Oyama even battled bulls, which was awe-inspiring because he could take off a bull's horn with a single knife hand strike, or even kill one with a single blow and by 1928 he was assistant instructor to Master Funakoshi.

In 1953 Mas Oyama opened a dojo in Meijiro, Japan. By 1957 membership grew to more than 700 students. Oyama eventually adopted the name Kyokushin, which means 'The Ultimate Truth'. Today, there are schools in 100



**Mas Oyama Sensei or**

Assistant instructor to Gichin  
Funakoshi

countries and the total membership is said to be around twelve million. Master Oyama died in 1995 of lung cancer and left behind a Karate legacy.

### **Wado-ryû**

Wado-ryû (Way of Peace style) was founded by the late Grand Master Hironori Ohtsuka. Ohtsuka studied the art of Jujutsu (Shindo Yoshin- ryû) for many years and combined it with Okinawan Karate. By the time Master Ohtsuka became interested in Karate in 1922, he was already a master in Jujutsu. Ohtsuka started his study of Karate under Gichin Funakoshi and by 1928 he was also assistant instructor to Master Funakoshi. In 1931 Ohtsuka founded the Wado-ryû style of Karate. In 1972 Ohtsuka Sensei was awarded the title Shodai Karate-do meijin Judan from the Imperial Japanese family which means first generation Karate master of the 10th Dan

(highest level possible). Ohtsuka was also to be the first non-Okinawan to make a style of Karate in the form of a Japanese martial art, thus making it a true Japanese martial art. Master Ohtsuka died in 1982, a highly respected and enlightened master. Wado-ryû is taught all over in the world and is also very popular among its followers.



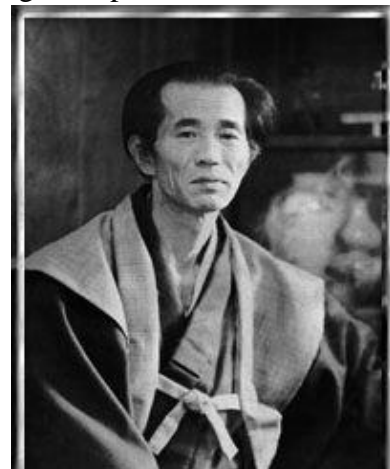
**Hironori Ohtsuka Sensei**

Assistant instructor to  
Gichin Funakoshi

### **The Shotokai and their loyalty to Gichin Funakoshi**

The name "Shotokai" means Shoto's group (Shoto being the pen name of Gichin Funakoshi). The Shotokai were officially formed by the Funakoshi family in order to take care of Gichin Funakoshi's funeral arrangements. It contained his closest and most senior students, to whom he trusted the continual development of his Shotokan Karate. As a result of political and personal disputes after the passing of Gichin Funakoshi, the Shotokai remained as a group that taught and developed Karate-do, as he had intended. As a result, Shotokai has not embraced the sport or competition developments that have occurred in recent decades. Instead they have remained true to the original teachings of Karate-do, as Gichin Funakoshi wished.

Notable founding members of the Shotokai were seniors Shigeru Egami, chief instructor at the Shotokan Dojo, and Genshin Hironishi, president of the Shotokai. At this time Master Harada was pioneering Shotokan Karate in Brazil. Due to close links with all



**Shigeru Egami Sensei**

Student of Gichin Funakoshi



**Shigeru Egami Sensei  
& Master Harada**

Students of Gichin Funakoshi

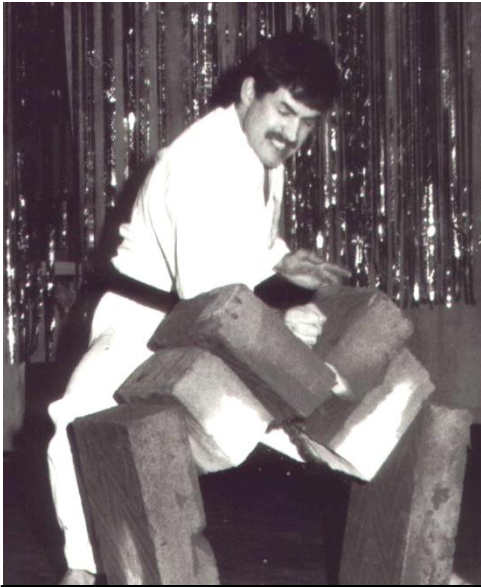
three of the aforementioned Masters he therefore, naturally, became a member of the Shotokai from this time forth. In 1965 Master Harada formed the Karate-do Shotokai (KDS) in order to teach orthodox Shotokan Karate as he had developed it, without political or technical influence from other groups. In today's KDS Organisation, Master Harada teaches his students body language and perception through the variety of exercises that his research has produced. Constant practices of movement, keeping the correct distance and

finely tuning the students' body reactions in regard to an opponent's movements. Correct structure and form within movement is adhered to, whilst relaxation is paramount to a mobile body condition. From this natural and relaxed state, Master Harada can produce

dynamic speed and power; even now in his late seventies he still seems to be pushing his own boundaries back with every practice. He is a true testament to his own research and life's work. "Age and size should be no barrier in Karate."

Indeed, at long last, Master Harada had the opportunity to show the product of his life's work at the Shotokan in October 1998. After many years of resistance to his developments from the home of Karate, Master Harada received an invitation from Nihon Karate-do Shotokai, to demonstrate at the famous dojo. The celebration, to commemorate 60 years since the concept of the Shotokan, and the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gichin Funakoshi's birth, would allow for an international meeting to take place in Tokyo. Master Harada took a select group of his KDS students and made "a huge impact" at the display attended by all of the Japanese groups and visiting parties from Europe and South America. Master Harada had come full circle after beginning his Karate training at the Shotokan back in 1943; he was now back with his own group the KDS, being wholly accepted as being an undisputed Master of Karate by his peers and mentors some 60 years on.

## **Brendan Simmons Sensei - My Sensei and mentor**



**Brendan Simmons**

Student of Master Harada  
Student of Grandmaster Chew

Simmons Sensei was greatly influenced by reading books and listening to experiences from the far east which were brought back to this country by friends of the family who were in the merchant navy and peacekeeping forces at that time. His interest in Kung Fu training techniques and conditioning soon saw him training using those methods illustrated twice a day at the age of eight. He was drawn to the martial art of Karate as his first choice for actual classes as it provided him with the more physical side of martial arts needed growing up in a fairly rough environment. From nine years of age to the present Simmons Sensei has studied various forms of Karate, his first being Kyokushinkai for a short period until he found Shotokai.

He trained under Master Harada for the following eleven years. During this time he was encouraged to also participate in Aikido and Judo by his sensei.

I remember many stories Sensei has told me about Master Harada. He would talk about the perfect

fluid movement that Master Harada possessed along with his unrivaled knowledge. Sensei trained with Master Harada along with other Shotokai instructors while also boxing. His father taught him to box as he was a very respected amateur boxing coach at the time. Sensei would spend most of his week training but always put martial arts to the top of his priorities. Over the years Sensei became a well-rounded and passionate Karate Ka. He was passionate in the way of Shotokai and also knew that the art was not to be practiced as a sport. When Simmons Sensei reached the stage where he was believed to be competent he was invited to stay behind after sessions to fight bare knuckle with the more experienced members. His belief in his art was undeniable. Often he would attend other classes to gain more fighting experience and eventually was invited to the prestigious International Knockdown competition 1980. Shotokan and Kyokushin Karate were the most popular styles in this period. Both styles were very hard in technique in comparison to Shotokai and Simmons Sensei believed that Karate was being misinterpreted because of this. This event was publicised by the media and had great attention within the martial art world. His misguided passion had taken him in a direction that would cause him to leave the Shotokai dojo. Participating in competition was prohibited to all Shotokai practitioners as it went against everything Gichin Funakoshi Sensei believed in. In 1981 Brendan Simmons Sensei was asked to leave the style.

Thereafter he tried a number of other clubs until a friend introduced him to a fairly new form of Karate from Malaysia called Karate Budokan International. This club was under



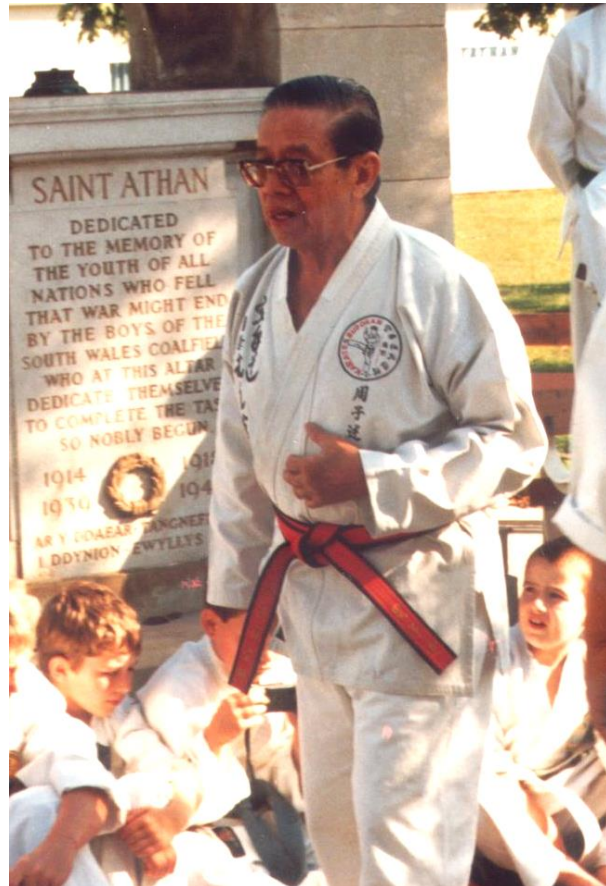
the leadership of Master Chew Chew Soot who graded him for his 1st Dan black belt (Shodan) in the Budokan style.

### **Karate Budokan International**

Mr. Chew Choo Soot was born on 7th February 1922 in Alor Star, a Northern State of Peninsula, Malaysia. Mr. Chew Choo Soot lost his father when he was still an infant and was brought up under the strict discipline of his grandfather and elderly Confucius scholar of the old school of China. He was not given any encouragement to partake in any branch of physical culture, as his grandfather believed in books and education and not in martial arts.

However, at the age of fifteen, Mr. Chew Choo Soot enrolled for weight-lifting training at one of the small body-building clubs in Epoh, where he grew up during his school days. Due to his keen interest in the training he progressed rapidly and eventually became the national weight-lifting champion in both the feather-weight and the light-weight classes in 1939, 1941 and 1942. During those years he also acquired an interest in martial arts and took up judo, jujitsu and wrestling. It was not until at the age of twenty that he was introduced to the art of Karate-do.

In early 1942 when the country was under Japanese military occupation Mr. Chew Choo Soot was sought out by a Japanese Army Officer, who requested that he taught him weight-lifting. He had come to know of Mr. Chew Choo Soot from the health and strength magazine that had frequently published his photographs. When it became known to Mr. Chew that the Japanese Army officer (Nishihara Butai 3rd Dan from Kyoto) was a high-ranking Karate expert he requested the officer to teach him Karate in return. They then agreed to exchange tuition and for more than two years they spent the evenings training together in karate, jujitsu, judo and weight-lifting until the Japanese Army officer left for Okinawa in 1945.



**Mr Chew Choo Soot**

Student of Kanken Toyama Sensei  
Sensei of Brendan Simmons Sensei  
Founder / Grandmaster of K.B.I



As a result of these years of training, Mr Chew went on to open Malaysia's first Judo Club, along with co-instructor Mr. Khor Ghoon Hoe.

After the end of the Second World War, Mr. Chew went to Japan and Okinawa to further his Karate training. He also made several trips to Taiwan to learn Kung-fu and oriental weapons from a number of old Kung-fu Masters of China.

In 1966 at the request of his friends, Mr. Chew then decided to start a dojo at Petaling Jaya with just a handful of students. The interest shown by the people who wanted to learn Karate was so great that he found it impossible to cope with the classes without seeking assistant instructors. As there were no other Karate instructors in Malaysia at that time, he made further trips to Tokyo and Osaka and employed seven Japanese instructors to assist him in conducting the Karate classes, which spread the art to the North and South of the Peninsula over the next two years. In 1982 the Japanese instructors returned to their own countries; by this time Malaysia had sufficient qualified instructors of high standard under the guidance of Mr. Chew Choo Soot to cope with the national and international needs of Karate Budokan International (KBI).

It was not the original intention of Mr. Chew to start branches and affiliated centres of KBI in overseas countries, but it seemed that the fame of KBI went beyond the shores of Malaysia and over four decades about 4,000 Karate centres have sprung up throughout the world.

Mr Chew fell ill by a paralytic attack on 4th February 1995 and died on 18th July 1997 at the age of 76 years in Malaysia.



### **The foundation of Karate Budokan students**

The original students of Karate Budokan studied a number of martial arts including Chinese Kung-fu, Taekwondo, and several styles of Karate-do including Shito-ryu, Shotokan and Keishinkan. Keishinkan is a minor style of the Shuri-Te strain and is not widely known even in its country of birth. From the mid-1980s, there was a trend back towards the Shotokan style in terms of the kata development. Budokan katas were generally based on those within the Shotokan style.

### **A rarely heard of student of Anko Itosu Sensei**

Kanken Toyama, a great martial arts grandmaster, was born in Shuri, Okinawa the 21st year of Meiji on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1888. His given name was Kanken Oyadamari and he was born into a noble family.



**Kanken Toyama**

Student of Anko Itosu Sensei  
Sensei of Grandmaster Chew

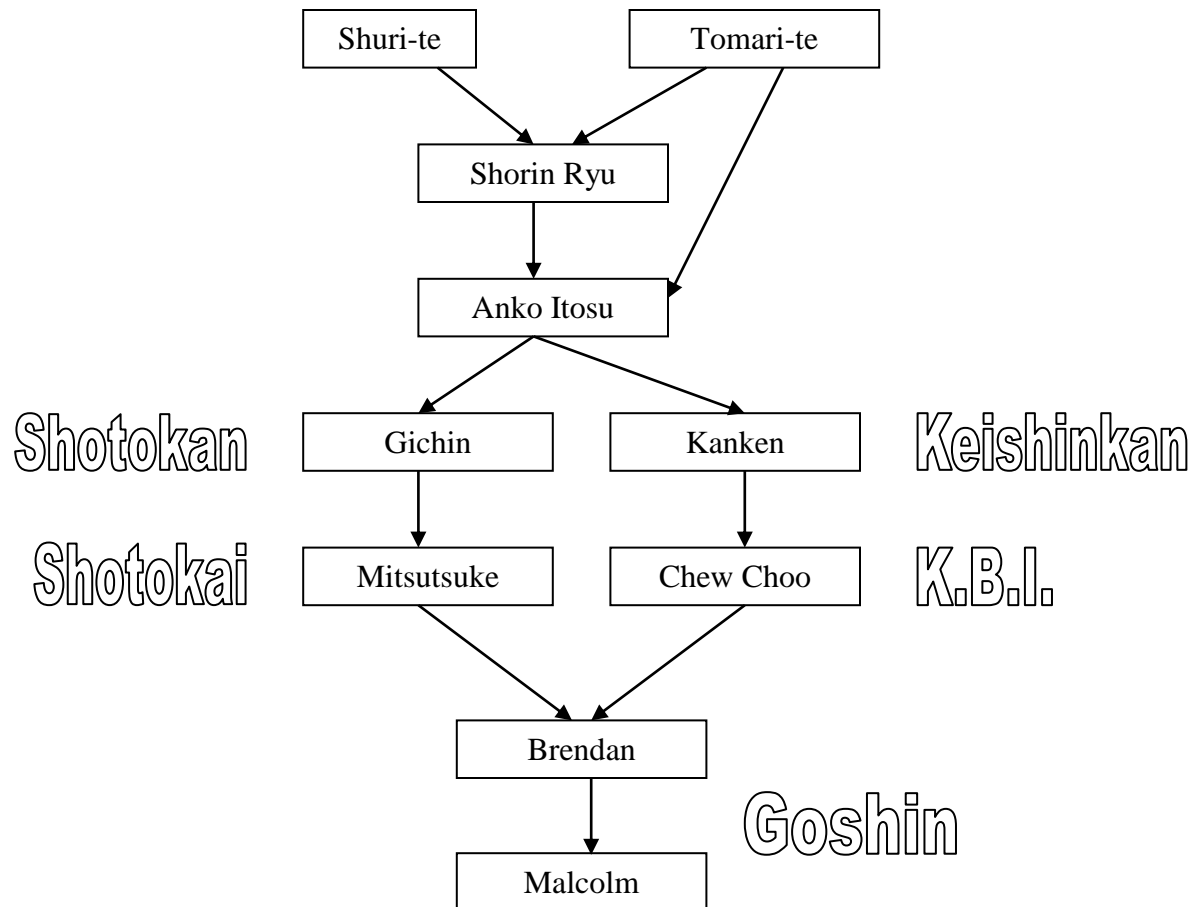
Kanken Toyama began his formal training in Karate-do under Master Itarashiki in 1897. Later, he apprenticed himself to Anko Itosu, who then became his primary teacher and inspirational guide. He continued studying under Itosu until the master's death in 1915.

In 1930, Kanken Toyama returned from Taiwan and opened his first dojo – the SHU DO KAN. He later opened a second dojo – the KEI SHIN KAN.

During Grandmaster Chew's travels to Taiwan, he was taught, and greatly influenced, by Kanken Toyama, which subsequently formed a basis for

Karate Budokan International.

## Summary of Goshin Karate history



# My influences, motivation and experiences

My first experience of Martial Arts was at the age of seven when my brother and I were taken by my father to join a Judo class. I stayed at the class until 1985 when I decided to try Shotokan Karate. I thought Karate might be more beneficial as I was getting bullied at school and in the streets due to the visible appearance of the skin condition I was suffering from. However I was naively disappointed as I thought that the basic techniques being taught did not appear as though they would help me deal with my problems. Discouraged, I quit the club and gave up on martial arts altogether. However, that changed in 1987 when I was invited by a friend to join his Budokan Karate Club. I was initially sceptical, but I attended a trial session. From the very first lesson I was impressed. The instructor was inspiring.



From my very first session of Karate I felt the odds were stacked against me physically due to my severe asthma and eczema. I had suffered from both conditions from a young age and spent the first seven years of my life in and out of hospital. The asthma greatly restricted me in my sport participation and my eczema made me extremely prone to sweat rashes from fluctuations in my body temperature. Any physical contact with anyone else extremely distressing due to my skin condition - something I still have difficulty with today. The difference now is that I am generally a much more confident person.

In one of my earlier lessons sensei commented that I had potential. It was this comment that made me feel like I had a chance to change my image from being a sickly boy who couldn't do anything physically impressive to a child who could at least participate in such an admired discipline. In so many sessions I would be wheezing intensely and itching so badly I would make myself bleed. I would always try my best but I could see that sensei was not overly impressed with my efforts. He did, however, acknowledge my disabilities and suggest that I sat out for a while, which although at the time I thought it tough to be isolated in this way, I now know that he was right to treat me in such a way. I was a child with physical disabilities and I had depended on being able to hide behind them when I could not achieve something. My hatred for the image I had at this time gave me the motivation to keep participating. The benefits of training gradually became more apparent as my lung capacity improved and I was able to last longer without my inhaler. Watching sensei perform short breathing exercises further encouraged me to try and take control of the regular use of my inhaler. I also began taking more interest in fighting during the sessions and slowly began to improve. Sensei noticed my dedication and entered me for a competition that I lost in the first round. This did not matter to me at all as I had actually been deemed good enough to be entered by my sensei. This had a massive influence in my success in many competitions after. My asthma is now non-existent and my eczema has improved.

With my physical disabilities dealt with and my new confidence from competitions I became a total different person. Sensei's belief in me had made me extremely confident, although perhaps too confident. Many other factors contributed to this complacency – my living environment, social influences and a real fixation on my new image. I was not the most talented person within the class at this time but I was always dedicated. Sensei could see the type of person I was becoming outside of the dojo even though I have still never worked out how. He encouraged me to attend extra classes in Cardiff, which, looking back, I think was an effort to divide me from my social life. I would often show an interest in teaching within the class but sensei clearly stated to me one day that I was not a good role model for the younger students. This hit home hard, as I hadn't realised what a "chav" I had become. I took his advice and chose training over my friends. Leaving this circle of friends was extremely hard at the time but when I look back it was one of the most important direction changes in my life. In return I believe this was the point sensei became my mentor and greatest role model.

With time, as students came and went within the dojo, I found myself isolated as the only male in his late teens left in the class. From thereon every class became more personal to my needs. Sensei would give me so much to think about that I would often leave the class with my head in a spin. Competition was losing its appeal with every day that went past even though I seemed to be at my most successful at this stage. I had realised that I was nowhere near as advanced at Karate as I had previously considered myself to be. At best I had a catalogue of techniques that were not realistic enough in self-defence application. About this time I was assaulted quite brutally, which reinforced my self-doubt in training. This was no reflection on what I was being taught, but the way I was interpreting my training. I was confident in my ability to spar but it didn't help me when I was attacked. During the assault my attacker hit me from behind, pushed and grabbed me. My only defence to my attacker was to headbutt him a response that I had not planned or practiced during sessions. I came to realise that I hadn't fully understood fundamental aspects Karate. Until this point I hadn't given any regard to actual applications of individual techniques, but considered Karate to be more about sparring, as I thought it would have more use in every-day life. My ability in sparring had reached national standard but I would find myself being disqualified from the majority of competitions. I knew that the reality of sparring or competition fighting wasn't as frightening as a real conflict and I have come to realise that I was getting disqualified for excessive contact in competitions because I was trying to make the whole scenario more real.

Shortly after my attack I found myself training with a different view on the meaning of Karate. Nothing had changed in the lessons but what I was learning had become much more advanced and realistic simply because of the change in my mental attitude. It was as though I had had blinkers on for numerous years and now I could finally see the real purpose of my training. Sensei had been making the same statements to me week after week but it was only now that I fully understood what he had been saying. He often explained how techniques could have many applications or interpretations. Movements from kata were always referenced in explanations. I had entered a more cognitive approach to my training.

Kata training had never really interested me before, as I had no understanding of the movements. The more I looked at the movements in kata, the more I noticed that they contained more than just punches, blocks and kicks. All the motor-skill development for locks, throws and chokes were contained in kata. It was obvious that the movements in kata were there as a reference for all Karate techniques – a Karate manual so to speak. It was also obvious that the techniques were not designed for the practice of one step sparring, they were designed for real combat. I felt enlightened by the original concept of traditional Karate and I was desperate for others to follow the same route of discovery.

My new passion for Karate had made me many friends within other martial arts. I was enthusiastic to explain the benefits and differences of the style of Karate I was studying. With the support of my sensei I went to many other classes. I loved the feeling of being tested. Every style believed it was the best form of combat and would feel threatened by any outsider. Lessons would change from their normal structure and be more about a lesson to me individually. I found the only way to benefit from training with other styles was to act like a novice.

From the time I had trained with different martial artists I had learned that you must keep an open mind when attempting to understand unfamiliar techniques. The power of belief can allow students to perform some amazing feats. Every style has something to offer and should not be ignored. Any judgements made should be based on whether a technique would work for real and not just in a competitive arena.

# A new direction



After achieving shodan (First Dan), my training took a different direction. I was always taught by my sensei that your first dan was only the completion of the basics. My interest in the application of techniques bloomed and many questions arose from this. I had experienced prejudice from the chief instructor for a long time for being Simmons Sensei's student but it became more apparent why. Every instructor has to take a position from which to lead from, but after a longer period of time the amount of knowledge possessed by that instructor is revealed. I now know that the prejudice was due the fact that my mentor had more knowledge and better foresight than the chief instructor. Shortly after attaining Nidan (Second Dan) I had no faith left in the association that I

was training within. It was impossible to watch my sensei, mentor and only role model be destroyed by the exact thing that he had dedicated his life to, Karate. When a Karate association has become a dictatorship it is open to corruption. It was not Karate that was destroying Simmons Sensei, it was the direction and bias of the association from which he was governed by.

In the late 90s the newly appointed Grandmaster Richard Chew visited Wales. I remember standing in a line of Dan grades while the Grandmaster made us go through each individual basic technique. There were only two people within the line who were not criticised, Simmons Sensei and myself. At the end of the Grandmaster's visit we were confirmed at the grades we held at the time. When the Grandmaster left Sensei Tan continued his lessons in the same way as he had conducted them prior to the Grandmaster's visit. Realising Sensei Tan had no respect for Grandmaster Chew's direction I suggested to Simmons Sensei that we leave the association, although I knew that this would never happen as he had a very deep loyalty to the ethics of traditional Karate.

In order to preserve and build upon the art I had learnt, I reluctantly left Karate Budokan International after 13 years in 1999. I could not face my sensei and tell him I was leaving, since I was not leaving him but only the chief instructor of the style. I wrote him a letter thanking him for everything that he had done for me and urged him to keep in contact with me. This was probably one of the hardest moments of my life as sensei had always been the biggest motivation in my life. On delivery of the letter I did not hear from him.

After this huge decision I was left with a difficult dilemma – where was I going to train? Every Karate class I went to was so different. They might have worn a Karate gi and were practicing Karate movements, but they all had one aim in mind – competition. The whole mentality was different; there were no individuals within the classes and



information was learned in parrot fashion. Some students looked impressive but it was evident that there was no meaning, no true understanding in their training.

I had a huge problem as my mentor had taught me two styles – the grading syllabus and Chinese influence of Karate Budokan, but also a fluid traditional style of Shotokai. I discovered rapidly that it was almost impossible for me to fit in anywhere. To get every element of how I was training meant that I would have to cross train by attending several different styles. It suddenly dawned on me that I was no longer within the dictatorship known as KBI Wales. I now had the chance to teach everything that I had been taught along with my own outside experiences. At the time I had a handful of students who wanted to continue training with me so I had to make a decision for the future.

Prior to this I had always labeled people that had left their style as “cowboys”, as I assumed they had missed the point of the art and wanted an easier option. This greatly concerned me so I ensured that my small class was fully insured and recognised by a national martial arts association. I was asked to write a base syllabus and give a name to the style from which we were practicing. I wrote to the grandmaster of Karate Budokan International requesting his permission to keep training under their name but this was denied. I thought long and hard about a relevant name. I sat in front of the newly written syllabus and considered all my previous training. I wanted to give the style a name that covered every part of the syllabus. Sensei had always put an emphasis on the reality of every technique practiced. The new syllabus actually contained nothing new at all; it was now a set of assessment criteria that ranged from the basic KBI grading material to the high expectations of what sensei had expected of the students in class. Prior to any grading sensei would ensure we were ready by putting us through a highly intense set of self-defence challenges. Group attacks, weapon defences and takedowns were all part of the assessment. None of these assessments would take place during a normal grading but it was necessary to prove yourself during these lessons to be able to attend on the grading day. My new syllabus contained both a traditional platform and the extra assessment criteria that sensei used to put students through.



The information and views passed onto me by sensei over the years had been crucial in all stages of my decision-making. The blend of styles that sensei had taught me covered every area of self-defence. In honour of the teachings from my sensei I called the style “Goshin” or “Self-Defence”.

The following year was spent developing the club and its image in the local community.

# A united approach



Sensei Simmons trained and taught within Karate Budokan International for the following fourteen months. He trained under Mike Tan Sensei who was the Welsh representative for KBI. Over many years KBI Wales had become a dictatorship much like many of its rivals. The Karate style became diluted as most of its unique elements were not being practiced.

After being awarded Godan (5<sup>th</sup> Dan) by Grandmaster Richard Chew, Tan Sensei ignored the direction of the style and made no contact with the association thereafter. Tan Sensei would often put pressure on Simmons Sensei to teach him his knowledge from his previous style as he lacked the knowledge himself.

After many years of dedication, but also prejudice, Sensei Simmons left KBI in 2001 to join myself in the pursuit of his original goal, to practice traditional and realistic Karate. This was an amazing but difficult time. It was a dream come true as I was finally reunited with my mentor.

Since that day I have not looked back. I had my sensei back in place and an unrestricted format from which to practice from.

I have learnt so much from him in and out of the dojo environment. I have found it impossible to stop learning from sensei. As I mature, so does he. I know that I will always have an inspirational guide and unquestioned support regardless of which way I progress within karate. I feel that I am one of a privileged few that I have had an insight into Brendan Simmons Sensei's personal interpretation of Karate.

# The underpinning knowledge behind Goshin

## **The journey of a student - How a student's perception of Karate changes**

There are many reasons why people join a Karate club but I can guarantee that if you take the art seriously it becomes more a journey of self-discovery than just a quick-fix self-defence system.

### *Beginner*

A person's initial respect when starting in class does not last long as the first experience of Karate can be delusional or based on fantasy. Students' concepts of Karate can change when it becomes clear that basic techniques need to be practiced repeatedly before any progression. At this point students may believe that it is just a matter of learning a list of techniques or a certain number of kata. In my opinion it is at this point that students either quit or begin to envisage that becoming a blackbelt is an achievable possibility. Students then embark on a journey to learn as many techniques and kata possible. This may satisfy the student both mentally and physically, at least for the moment. After time the student then comes to realise that what they are learning is only measurable by a grading examination.

The belt and Kyu grading system was originally invented by the founder of Judo and adopted by other martial arts in 1895. Gichin Funakoshi implemented this grading format into traditional Karate as a way of distinguishing between beginner and advanced students. The black belt or 1<sup>st</sup> Dan (First Level) was originally put in place to signify that the student had learnt the basics of karate. A brown belt was brought into place to show that the student had nearly completed their basic training.

### *Intermediate level*

When a student manages to achieve an intermediate grade they feel that they need a more measurable test of their new skill. This is usually the point where they choose to enter kumite (Sparring competition). Within the sporting arena the student is able to judge their personal ability and sometimes have quite a shock. Whether the student is satisfied with the outcome or not, the original goal is floored. Karate techniques were never designed to be used in a sparring arena. They were always intended for the use in an everyday conflict situation and against techniques like head butts, hooks and grabs. Even though the platform of sparring is good for co-ordination, speed, fitness and confidence in confrontation, it should never be classed as a realistic situation.

### *Black belt*

There may have been a range of influences that have contributed to a student getting to the shodan level, but the underpinning goal has been achieved. The black belt is an internationally recognised qualification of self-defence.

Many students believe obtaining a black belt is the end of their training. This is one of the main principles that I have always tried to destroy and is reflected in the structure of the Goshin class. A few years ago I read an article about the original grading system. This article, I believe, is a good reflection of the humility of the martial artist. It stated that when a student obtains the 1<sup>st</sup> Dan the student should climb to the top of their house and declare their rank to the whole town. Upon reaching 2<sup>nd</sup> Dan they should climb the biggest mountain and proclaim their status to the whole world. Upon achieving 3<sup>rd</sup> Dan they go home.

I feel that this clearly states the mentality of a black belt. When you achieve Shodan you have begun your journey of self-discovery.

### **The importance of the instructor**

At black belt the student has the option to open a class of his/her own, and in most clubs this is highly recommended. This may be a very good direction for a newly qualified blackbelt as it can be a profound learning experience. Many factors should be acknowledged before embarking on such a journey.

As in any part of life the key is knowledge and the ability to learn. Having a good teacher therefore is paramount. In a traditional Karate class respect is expected as part of the strict disciplined regime. I believe this type of respect is short-lived for a number of reasons and the longevity of learning is due to the passion of the teacher or sensei.

I learnt this lesson as the sensei I have trained under for so long believes in giving a very thorough, technical lesson that makes every student push themselves to the limit. His belief in the techniques that he teaches is inspirational but personally the most important part of this process was the supportive comments that he gave after the sessions.

In one of my earlier lessons sensei commented that I had “potential”. This was after I had been put in a situation in the class that I felt completely unprepared for. I found myself in a queue of students who had been set the task of attacking a very capable intermediate grade around the same age as myself. Three students each tried to attack the fighter, and each one failed in their attempt. When it came to my turn I approached the student nervously. I did not have a clue what I should do but, thinking I should concentrate on keeping a safe distance away from him, I attempted a kick, which the brown belt easily blocked. I immediately ran to the back of the queue, embarrassed of my pathetic attempt, and it was at this point that sensei approached me and said that I had potential. He then continued to watch the other students in the group and I’m sure he never gave this comment a second thought, but it is something I have never forgotten. It is comments like this that go a long way in encouraging students to believe in themselves – something I think any potential instructor should bear in mind when communicating with their students.

## **The learning process of an instructor**

Every instructor teaches in his or her own way or style. They have their own ideas about what the important elements are within the art that they teach. They have been through all the stages mentioned in the 'Journey of a student' section. A student who reaches the grade of blackbelt with little guidance may choose one of these avenues:

### *Repressed / Over Eager Student*

A newly 'crowned' blackbelt may be ego-led and want to change everything that they've been taught. This may be due to the fact that they have been held back for a long period of time without a decent explanation from their instructor. The blackbelt may want to teach only the techniques that they believe in, which then subsequently reduces the syllabus and totally changes the direction of the style. This fatal decision is sometimes based on maybe only six years of experience. By the time the blackbelt realises their mistake the students have already suffered.

### *'McDojo' Student*

Again I use the word 'crowned' as the term used for the prestigious promotion of a student to black belt. In this case though the student has been totally brainwashed to believe what they have been taught is a whole system. The difference between the repressed/over eager student and the McDojo student is that the McDojo student has been taught from the first day they walked into the class to be an instructor. This would therefore only benefit the style by expanding the volume of students. The McDojo student must not understand the benefits of traditional training otherwise they may not teach at all. In turn this would break the chain and the style would be exposed for what it is.

### *The 'individual'*

Students that have had space to grow and develop will have a good foundation in Karate. They would have all the attributes and knowledge to become a great instructor. This is where it sometimes all goes wrong, although not intentionally. The 'individual' has learned how to apply Karate from a personal interpretation. This is what learning Karate is all about, but when that interpretation is the only concept being taught the style can also take a different direction. This might seem similar to the 'repressed/over eager' direction but the individual's student is not lost but just misguided.

To be a good instructor you first need to be a good student. To be a good student you must be able to understand your instructor's guidance. In turn your instructor had to be a good student...and so on. This is only possible with a high level of interaction between instructor and student.

Having a class full of students shouting "Oss" at all your commands does not make you a good instructor!

# The Goshin Karate Style

## **The Karate style of Goshin and its focus**

Goshin Karate reflects all elements experienced by both student and instructor. I will categorise these training methods and explain their roots below.

### *The two methods of learning Karate*

#### **The warrior definition**

*'The warrior will give 100% effort without question. They will have total trust in what they are being taught. True samurai spirit is present in the student when performing new and old techniques. A warrior will not give up in battle and should show great spirit'*

The Goshin style has a solid foundation of strength and fitness. Padwork, sparring and general exercise help to contribute to this. The practice of Karate basics for lengthy amounts of time attribute about 70% of most lessons. This high physical demand is kept alive within the passion of Sensei Simmons's teaching.

I believe that this strong belief in physical ability came directly from Nagahama Sensei and his instruction of Anko Itosu Sensei. During this period of his training Anko Itosu was not training Karate with any combative methods in mind. Karate was being taught to him only as physical training method. Anko Itosu was known for his ability to knock a person out with one strike. His physical prowess was unrivaled. After the passing away of Nagahama, Anko Itosu's training took a very different path. This point of his life explains the passion within many of the harder styles of Karate, for example Kyokushin.

#### **The scholar definition**

*'The scholar will watch, listen and practice hard in an attempt to understand techniques. In pursuit of excellence the scholar will be patient with the practice of techniques. The scholar will analyse technique in order for it to have practical combative use'*

Goshin Karate embraces personal growth and personal direction by giving broader boundaries. The boundaries are only in place to keep the student progressing in a positive direction. The main syllabus material sets the standard for all basic techniques but students are encouraged to develop technique making them more suitable for their own use. Within classes individual techniques and their functions are explained in detail. Kata movements such as arm locks, chokes, strikes and throws are referenced on a regular basis. From Kata training many combative methods are explained and real conflict situations become apparent. Pressure and striking points are referenced in all practice.

In my opinion Anko Itosu Sensei is yet again the biggest influence in this way of learning. After the death of his sensei, Itosu Sensei studied only combative methods from Kata. He soon realised that Kata movements were extremely brutal. It was obvious that this knowledge was not appropriate for children. Itosu Sensei then developed the Heian Kata's in order to make self defence applications easy to learn by his students. He began to teach these Kata within schools to children in the same format from which he learned from Nagayama (No applications) In effect this form of training was more "Warrior" training rather than a "scholar". He continued to teach his adult students in both ways but it was his teachings to the children that have stood the test of time. In my opinion Goshin Karate teaches its students in the way Itosu Sensei would have taught his adult students. Self-defence applications are taught as 'age specific' so as to be more useful to the student.

Successful Goshin students will be both a 'Warrior' and a 'Scholar'.

### **Movement evolved from Goshin Karate history.**

Movement in Goshin Karate in the most part is fluid and evasional. This influence is credited to Egami Sensei and his outstanding work within the Shotokai. This was passed on to Harada Sensei and then Simmons Sensei.

Blocking movements are deflective and relaxed. This is typically a Chinese concept of intercepting and is credited to the late Master Chew. The principle of adopting a multi-style method of training is based firmly in the origins of the Budokan. Goshin Karate also contains a basic but comprehensive knowledge of weapons also accredited to Master Chew.

### **A strong black belt ethic**

A Goshin Karate blackbelt should have a deep respect for the origins of their Karate. The main objective of their training should be the dedication to the practice of realistic self-defence and the understanding of oneself.

The Karate student should evolve but the art remain the same. A humble outlook and open mind will allow their growth. Students and instructors alike should realise that Karate is a journey and guidance is needed at all stages.

Even great students lose direction or focus at times but it is the art and the people within it that get them back on track. The great Sokon Matsumura once said to Itosu Sensei, "With your strong punch you can knock anything down, but you can't so much as touch me." This clearly showed that Itosu Sensei was in his 'warrior' phase of his training and hadn't fully understood the principles of Karate.

I hope in this assessment I have clearly explained the history of Goshin Karate Association and its direction from my perspective. After nearly twenty years of training I now believe the biggest part of my development is in front of me not behind me.