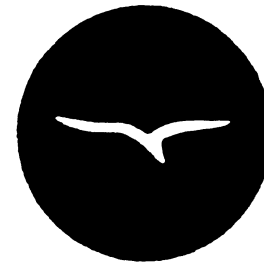




INTERNATIONAL KOJOSHO KARATE FEDERATION



Volume XXXI N2

IKKF Newsletter

Fall 2014

A KOJOSHO SYSTEM CONVERSATION IN THE CLOUD

1st responder: We had a conversation one time about how the system can be 'all things to all our people'. We must have room for those who derive pleasure from workouts without the "crazy" some expect. And then be able to provide the "crazy" for those interested. It occurred to me that perhaps a third-person form merely attempted is enough. Most people don't get joy from repeated failure nor do they choose to work in a cooperative group.

When we were shown these forms solo there was no language except motion. Assistance was ourselves (sorry, no sympathy for the outpost idea!). The "crazies" are in love with this method; most others need more entertainment. So maybe we need a method list - lots of ways to reach the greatest number of people.

Do people need to know the goal of their study or have a goal? For those that are interested, if we move the education for third person back to solo form and seek the essence/technique of each animal (oh yeah sure) then half the battle is solved. We are experimenting on a couple of students by teaching the solo form the way Mr. Absher showed us and then getting the actual animal to work with them.

I want to discover myself doing form as I walk down the hall at work, dreaming the form enough to see all 3 people and finding that instant when even I can be a bear. And you?

2nd responder: I think that there is a huge point to consider, that the Kojosho System goes beyond most people's abilities. It is clearly designed to push your abilities at each step - the next animal, the next 2-Man form, the next weapon, the 3rd-Man. Almost all people "hit the wall" at some point and may never get beyond a certain point. Tiger-Crane is high school; Snake-Hawk is college; Dragon-Deer is masters; jo and boken are PhD's; Leopard, post-doc; Monkey and Bear are what - Nobel Prize?

Maybe if one is stuck at the ability to do third-Man, a good exercise is to try to look at earlier animals at a deeper more sophisticated level. Tiger-Crane at the college level, or Snake-Hawk at the master's. The problem is - the Tiger-Crane has to be done at the post doc level, the Snake, Hawk, Dragon and Deer have to rise to at least post doc to even start 3rd-Man. Maybe time spent in 2-Man at the detail level of a higher degree, might allow others to access the skills needed to do 3-Man.

We have spent many years approaching the forms without "the right answer" from the person standing across from us. It's "the outpost dilemma" - but also "the outpost gift". Force others to do the same with what they already "know" and maybe they can do 3rd-Man.

3rd Responder: So, the third person problem—

Any input from the instructor's seminar? I'd be interested in hearing how that went from those of you who were there. Also, would love to hear how Mr. Absher taught you originally with respect to the solo form. It seems like we do have to determine what the goal is. Teaching the third man? Doing the third man? Teaching everyone to be able to do the form? Teaching everyone to be able to feel the essence of the animals? Just getting one step further than the student thought they could get to? What could the possible methods be for these different goals? Do we need to outline all the reasons we do Kojosho?

I agree that the system can be all things to all our people, of those things are the most difficult to get? Are there other issues that tie into the third-man problem that would help solve it? I don't even really know how the system looks on a day to day basis. Do classes split up into different groups? Is there a whole class only working on 3rd-Man? On only Monkey?

In my own practice: feeling the instants of "bear-ness" (and all the other animals) and finding the a-ha moments of how magical the form is and continuing to explore it all. The magical answer so far has always turned out to be, "just do the form". Could it be that simple? Of course, as many have said, "Simple doesn't mean easy."

4th responder: I think it takes an extended period of development before a student can be introduced to the 3rd man forms. That being said, the actual measured time depends on the hours spent developing the skills necessary to begin assimilating the lessons of 3rd-Man. The 3rd-Man cannot be taught in the traditional way because the concepts do not lend themselves to rote methods. The 3rd-Man student must have the skills to analyze each of the three animals in the form being worked, must be able to find coherent replies to defined threat within the motion learned from one-Man, and must have the patience to fail and accept criticism from peers. This applies to all three animals in the 3 forms, not just the student in the middle. Cooperation among the participants is paramount especially during the early stages of development. The learning experience then takes on a more open format where true discussion about the martial principles involved can be enjoyed. This is generally not possible with the intermediate or even beginning advanced student. Finally, I think that older students are more amenable to this process because they have ultimately stripped away many of the misconceptions

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國際古城松空手道連盟

THE IKKF BOARD OF REGENTS

Art Minser	Monkey	Richard Levin	Leopard
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Editor : Gary Vaughn
Opinions expressed here-in are those of the authors.

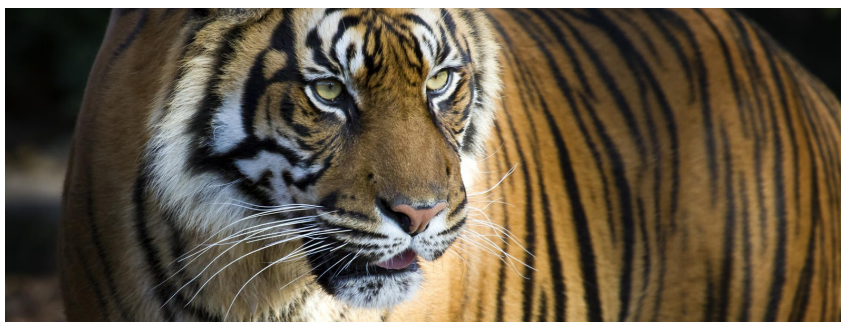
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A Secret, Solitary Beast



Tigers are the forest's hidden meaning, connected to every leaf and sound. The tiger is a universal image of wildness, but they evolved in Asian forest. There are no tigers in Africa. Lions are savannah and social; tigers secrecy and solitude. Their lives depend on not being seen. In forest they keep cubs safe; they hide to catch food.

Tigers evolved in the Pleistocene, when deer and wild cattle species spread into the forests, creating a niche for a large predator. They need three things: a forest, prey and water. Each tiger tries to maintain a territory with enough of all three. The size and value of a territory depends on what it holds. In Ranthambhore (India), the best territories are those with lake frontage, so tigers can drink, swim and cool off in summer; tigers love water.

Ten years ago, 5,000 tigers were believed to live wild in ten Asian countries including India, Nepal, Russia, China, Korea, Thailand and Indonesia. It is 3,000 now. They are poached for their skins, for bones in Chinese medicine; they lose their home to logging and agriculture; they starve when men poach deer.

The tiger is Asia's soul. *"Let the tiger guard the forest, the forest protect its tigers,"* said the Mahabharata in 400 BC.

When you do encounter this solitary forest guardian, you feel you have glimpsed the meaning not just of a forest but of life.

from *The Economist* 9/27/2014

KOJOSHO - The Philosophy of a Kempo Karate System by Soon Fook-Leong

The first Kojosho edition of this Kojosho System book was published in 1982. It has been reprinted several times since then. The latest revised edition is now available which reflects newly discovered historical information as well as documents the "heritage" katas *Hakutsuru*, *Hako*, and *Hakuryu*. To order send a check or money order for \$20.00 US to:

IKKF PO Box 688 Tijeras, NM USA 87059

This is the 30th consecutive year of publication of the IKKF Newsletter.

If you would like to have your article, book or movie review, or personal experience regarding the IKKF, the Kojosho Shinkokai, or any other traditional Martial Art considered for publication please send a copy of your manuscript to the Newsletter Editor at the address below.

You may contact any IKKF affiliated school or individual in any country through the IKKF World Headquarters. Enclose your correspondence to the school or individual you wish to contact in an envelope addressed to:
(name of School or Individual); C/O IKKF Headquarters; PO BOX 688; TIJERAS, NM USA 87059

THE INTERNATIONAL KOJOSHO KARATE FEDERATION
in on the World Wide WEB at
<http://www.kojosho.com>

BLACK & BROWN BELT PROMOTIONS

The annual summer Kojosho Black & Brown Belt Testing was held on Saturday, July 5, 2014 at the Kojosho Headquarters Dojo at Apple Valley Ranch, New Mexico. Mr. Absher conducted the event, assisted by the Kojosho Board of Regents. The day-long test covered basics, hard-line forms, Kojosho Forms, self defense, and sparring. Mr. Absher announced these promotions at the traditional awards banquet that evening:

SHODAN

First Degree Black Belt
Rush Robinett IV
Brandon Hill Hines

First Kyu Brown Belt
Hanna Perry

Second Kyu Brown Belt
Logan Robinett
Bonnie Mount

Congratulations from the Kojosho Board of Regents

**(but don't get over-confident
 & open your door to strangers)**



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Shane Absher has been inducted into the USA International Black Belt Hall of Fame for his distinguished history of participation in & organization of international karate tournaments. The Induction Ceremony will be held in Pittsburgh, PA in Nov 2014.

The International Kojosho Karate Federation will host the **2014 Fall Invitational Karate Tournament** at the National Guard Armory in Albuquerque, NM on Saturday November 8, 2014. See the printed flyers and/or call 505 228-5592 for more details.

It's 2014, so this must be the 39th annual Kojosho Fall Camp! No wonder there are so many grey-haired Black Belts lining up on the beach!

Annual Black Belt dues are a part of the responsibility of being a Black Belt in all traditional systems. All Kojosho System Black Belts share this tradition. Kojosho Black Belt dues are quite modest compared to the amounts required in most other organizations. In recent years the income from these annual dues has been used to fund improvements at the IKKF World Headquarters, and to help support System tournaments and special classes.

All Black Belts please note that annual Black Belt dues for 2014 are now due.

Dues can be sent to:

Mr. John Braly
4 Vista Montana Place
Placitas, NM 87043

GARY PURDUE

Gary Purdue, among the first to study karate in a club at UNM, and later the chief instructor for more than 4 decades, died October 6. He was 67.

After he graduated from Highland HS in 1965, Purdue traveled to Australia and did a 9-month "walkabout" from Sydney on the east coast to Alice Springs in the Outback interior. "He said he wanted to live like Tarzan and hunt alligators," said his wife.

After he returned to Albuquerque he graduated from UNM with degree in geology. It was at UNM in 1967 that Purdue discovered Japanese Shotokan karate.

"Gary was one of my first black belt students", said his former instructor Steve Clapper. "He was a natural and a perfectionist about learning technique, especially learning and performing Kata".

When Clapper left in 1971, Purdue took over the UNM karate club. UNM soon asked Purdue to teach karate classes as part of the university's physical education program. Over the years, Purdue taught more than 10,000 people, including police and military personnel, and promoted hundreds of them to Black Belt.

Purdue became a nationally ranked competitor in fighting, forms and weapons, winning or placing in more than 200 tournaments. He was inducted into the USKA Trias International Society, the US Karate Alliance Hall of Fame, and the Hawkes International Society. Shortly before his death, the US Association of Martial Artists promoted Purdue to 9th degree Black Belt.

from the Abq Tribune 10/9/14

cont from pg 1

about what they are really doing. In the end the art is the important thing here and we are all tasked with lending it the best of whatever we ultimately possess. That is to say we return what we have gained to its roots by doing the form the best we can.

3rd responder: I agree with your assessment of the lessons in 3rd-Man. Are there more we can define? It seems that not only must we find the coherent replies to each threat, we must find the reply that is true to the nature of the animal. (Perhaps that's what coherent means in this context?) As far as cooperation is considered: we talked about the negative animal being the one to stand back a bit or be a place holder in the 3rd-Man forms while the other 2 animals worked things through first. Any thoughts there? Is it in the nature of the negative animal to do that? There are so many different aspects to the 3rd-Man forms we can consider. Professor types - is there a pedagogical method to approach this kind of multi-level problem and further, to teaching in non-traditional ways that don't utilize "rote methods"? Must we find a way to remove the "delusions" first?

Would it help to find some kind of outline to address these issues individually or are they too interconnected? I'm beginning to get some of the "out standing in the field" feeling I've gotten while learning dragon, and deer, and monkey, and...bear (so far)...

4th responder: My thoughts are that the motion of each animal is defined in its respective form. Learning the true nature of the animal comes from studying the motion and letting the form do the teaching. The old saying about emptying the mind is something we could all benefit from. A couple of other items come to mind. There is no getting around the fact that we have to fail in order to succeed, that is a given. We must scratch around in the dark to learn these forms. What good otherwise? And as far as cooperation goes, any animal be they positive or negative can learn the traits of the other animals to some degree. What is needed by each and every one of us is humility, that's where the part about accepting peer criticism and cooperating come in handy. And finally, we can't learn anything unless we are on the mat. I agree that there are many dimensions to explore and that's what makes all of this so great but the only way to get there is to experiment and study on the mat. And more finally as far as outlines and etcetera we already have an outline; it's called the Animals and Elements! We are never standing out in a field as long as we have them because then we are connected to every other form and we have the master text from which to work. A person could be on another planet for ten years and come back and converse on the mat with any Kojosho student because he or she had the Animals and Elements to work with. All of that being said; there is no outline because we are pushing on the technical boundaries of the system with 3rd-Man. We might be able to come up with a teaching method or plan for those who come behind us but everyone who is working on these forms at this time in space is stuck with figuring it out and that takes mat time pure and simple. Ain't it great? We never had it so good. If we succeed, future generations will see our footprints in the forms.....

2nd responder: Recently, I was studying bear on the playground. I was once asked to figure out how to teach others to be a bear. I think that the secret to Kojosho is the biofeedback of the 2 and 3 man forms. But, sometimes, if you do not have proper partners or lack the basic feel of an animal, other opportunities may give the feedback needed. (or may be easier to relate to because it doesn't require another person and all the ego that might accompany that) Two major bear exercises: 1. Put two children in swings next to each other. Push them at opposite times such that they are in a perfectly opposite oscillation pattern. Stand between the two swings and push each one alternating and swinging your bear circle back and forth. Focus on the power of the center, the hips and the circle. Continue until children cry..... 2. The second may require you to visit what I call the "new playground" Turns out that in order to save all of us from the right of passage we all had of a bruised tailbone at the teeter totter (see saw) has been eliminated by the new see saw that has car suspension springs attached. Put two little children on and they don't have enough mass to move the toy. Stand in the center and push the see saw down, not with your arm but with your bear center motion.

5th responder: Just a quick hello to my friends and apologies for not diving in sooner; but this now seems to be a great distraction, so...

I'm a novice when it comes to three person Kojosho forms — heck, I barely learned 2 person and a bit of weapon before I left Albuquerque. But the dangerous thing is that I learned a lot by teaching. Hard to do that with three person! That line about everything I needed to learn was in kindergarten still applies to me: tiger and crane, tiger and crane. Then I ended up publishing all this wacky stuff about paradox...where the hell did that come from, I wonder...

A senior student passing thru patiently led me through the new kata, we played awhile at 2/3 man, and otherwise I continue to ponder how my Kojosho education changed so much when I left Albuquerque. It's been about 20 years of mostly working out alone (1/3 man??). But that's right about the animals and elements: no matter what planet we end up on, it's great to get back to the Albuquerque planet once in a while and realize we can all still line up and work out together.

Someday soon our child will grow a bit bigger, and he'll start teaching a class and I'll line up and help students with forward leaning stance or whatever, and before you know it there will be another star in the Kojosho constellation! In the meantime there's this monument that calls me up to the top of the nearby hill every morning, where I wonder if the way I'm doing monkey will be even barely comprehensible when I'm next in spring camp, and somehow it all works out...I mean, no one has thrown me out of the system yet.

6th responder: I fall into the "too crazy" category ... so wanted to say hi and say that I love to read these threads. Speaking of crazy ... That's crazy cold! ... at least for southern NM/California boy here; The Minnesotan twins ... are saying that's the temperature when u consider putting on more than a t-shirt.

These email threads and your excitement about the New Year Day class, camps, and working out in general are truly inspiring. To be equally or more excited and ready to learn about something you have

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NEW MEXICO KOJOSHO CLASS SCHEDULES

ALBUQ Heights Moon NE—1 Blk N of Indian School 505-228-5592	MWF	5:00 - 6:00	Juniors	Fred Absher & Staff
	MWF	6:00 - 7:00	Mixed Adults	
Cedar Crest	T TH	5:00 - 6:00	Juniors	Shane Absher
	T TH	6:00 - 8:00	Mixed Adults	
	W	6:45 - 7:45	Juniors	Shane Absher
	W	7:45 - 8:45	Adults	
Apple Valley Ranch 505-281-5294	Sat	11:00 - 12:00	Juniors	Fred Absher
	Sat	12:00 - 1:00	Adults	
Las Cruces	T TH	5:00 - 6:00	Juniors	Fred Absher
	T TH	6:00 - 7:00	Adults	
Cuba H.S. Kojosho	MW	7:00 - 8:00	Mixed	Jack Diehl Howard Cothorn
	MW	8:00 - 9:00	Advanced	
Roswell H.S. Kojosho 500 W Hobbs	Schedule Varies			Victor Velarde
Clayton Kojosho 14 South 2nd 505-374-2168	M T W TH F	7:15 - 8:00 AM		Mike Kakuska
	M W	6:00 - 7:00 PM		
	T TH	5:30 - 6:30	Juniors	Tim Hodo
	T TH	6:30 - 7:30	Begin	
Alamogordo Kojosho Powerhouse Gym	T TH	7:30 - 8:30	Advanced	Rick Guidry
	Sat	7:30 - 8:30 AM	Open	
Durango Kojosho Durango High School	T TH	6:45 - 7:30	Juniors	Greg Spradling
	T TH	7:30 - 8:30	Adults	
	M T W TH F	7:00—8:00 AM		

KOJOSHO SYSTEM CALENDAR

2014		2015	
May 24—26	Spring Camp at Apple Valley	January 3	Black & Brown Best Testing
July 5	Black /Brown Belt Testing	February (TBA)	Costa Rica Tournament
September 13	Instructor's Seminar	February 21	Instructor's Seminar
October 25 - 26	Fall Camp @ Elephant Butte	May 23—25	Spring Camp at Apple Valley
November 8	IKKF Fall Tournament Abq	July 11	Black /Brown Belt Testing

cont from pg 4

trained at for over 40 years is amazing to me ... Your cup is truly empty ... And it's a testament to Mr. Absher and the System that it has something that can enrich us and excite us for our entire life!

May we all continue to be enriched and excited by Kojosho and make new discoveries to continue to inspire ourselves and others. Happy New Year!

7th responder: I've been thinking a lot about 3-person and agree it would be useful to have some easily understood remarks to present by way of simple prolegomena.

I think to some extent we make 3P (my annoying abbreviation for 3-Person) harder than we need to. God knows, doing it is extremely difficult (at least for me), but I think we can shush out the theories behind it. I think we (and by we, I mean, for the most part, me) sometimes get caught up in the more abstract philosophizing about what a Tiger is or a Deer, what the nature of their character might be, or attitude towards life, and can forget that we are really just talking about how a human being can move. And that we are not talking about nine separate animals, but just one animal that can show itself with different faces. Sort of like the Hindu idea of God that can present itself as Ram or as Vishnu or as Kali, depending.

Okay, enough with the pretentious crap. With the first three positive animals and the first three negative animals we have a discussion of how to move forwards or back depending on where the weight is. Tiger pushes it all forward with its twist stance becoming its forward leaning stance, Snake keeps to the center, and Dragon has a forward leaning stance with the center of weight behind it, at the spine. And Crane retreats with its weight back. Hawk, like Snake, is mostly centered so it can go forward as easily as back; Deer with a forward leaning stance but with the heel of the back foot always off the ground so it can move backwards easily.

All right, this is stuff we all know. And we know how it affects how the animals can turn and how they can get past one another. But it means that the motion of the third animal has to be complementary to that of the equivalent animals. I see Leopard as basically a horizontal ellipse, moving back with Tiger's strong forward line, push Crane, then sling-shot past (I'm thinking in just geometric abstracts, rather than specific techniques in any form). Snake and Hawk I see as pretty much vertical and able to move back and forth with equal ease, but pivoting vertically when they pass each other (one of the hardest things for students, I've found, is for them to turn as Tiger or Snake and not have that brief fraction of time where they have to reposition their balance--I think Earth and Fire are a key to teaching them how to do this). Monkey I see as a not-quite vertical ellipse, maybe tilted as much as 45°. For me, nothing in Monkey feels so much like a Monkey as the point where Snake, in solo form, would be turning from Retreating Punching to Advancing Kicking, and Monkey, facing Snake, steps back with the right foot and pivots, dropping his right hand to counter Snake's right punch to the ribs, and continues the pivot, raising both hands (Offering the Fruit, was that the name?). Or when the Monkey does something very similar at the end, in Circular Fists.

Bear seems like a circle, but a horizontal one, swirling among and through the mad Spirograph of the circling Dragon and bisecting Deer. Or perhaps it also could be seen as an ellipse, but a horizontal one going from Bear's left to right, instead of the forward and back one of the Leopard.

Of course, actually getting any of these forms to work is certainly hard, but if we keep in mind the motion to which we are responding, that should help figure things out and keep us from going too far down the wrong road. Kojosho is all about the study of motion, but also of the appropriate complementary action. There's a reason we don't put a Tiger in front of a Deer. It might make for a nice, gory fight with much gouging of eyes and tearing of flesh, but it would not teach us much about motion.

So, we're back to our templates--the postures and the forms. As always, if we return to them we'll have a chance to figure things out. And maybe keeping these abstract lines and ellipses in mind might help a little bit, too. Anyway, these are just the sort of things going through my head these days.

3rd responder: For what it's worth from my side: I'm still working on feeling how the animal can move, identifying what is natural/possible for each animal, trying to really get that feel identified. Monkey is so unnatural for me, I have almost no idea. (I hope that's where the "too crazy" inputs will be helpful.) With Bear, I have had more time working with a natural Bear, so a little more insight there. (Tried the playground applications with some success. It seems like Bear almost wants to sit on its tail, finds the tail is too short to reach the ground, decides it's OK with that and moves on.) Applying the mathematical model described has been beyond my sleep deprived brain so far, but I have hopes for the near future.

As for the next generation? I think some have an unfair advantage, what with there being that 3D movie on "How to Train your Dragon" and all...

Any insights from the first class of the year in Albuquerque? Different focus or resolution for Kojosho this year? Also, on a different note: does anyone know what the original animal postures Hua-T'o developed are? Is it even known? I've gotten some acupuncture treatments over the last couple weeks and have had some Hua-T'o points needed. Just curious if that knowledge is out there. Coincidentally (or not) the therapeutics associated with most of the areas I've been having acupuncture on: Monkey/Mountain and Bear/Void.

The Adventure Continues!

This extraordinary "conversation" was "compiled" by D. Absher

THE KOJO TRADITION DEVELOPS IN NAHA

Abridged from *Unante: The Secrets of Karate* by John Sells

submitted by G. Comber

The story of this amazing martial arts family is seldom told and not widely known. While records of these past events are scanty and incomplete, the modern Kojo have been able to piece together a record of their family's illustrious past. Though much was destroyed in World War II, what we are left with still captures a powerful martial legacy.

The Kojo family martial art had been first formalized by Kojo Peichin (Lord Kojo). Kojo Peichin had in his turn, combined Kojo "Kumiuchi" ("fighting techniques"~a term somewhat similar to kenpo) with Chinese Tode and formally created the "Kojo-ryu Bujutsu" (Kojo-style martial art). Kojo Peichin was a well-known martial artist in his day, but much of his Kojo-ryu was supposedly restricted to family members. It also appears that Kojo Peichin was known in his time as Matsu Higa, one of Shuri Castle's chief guards (which was evidently a Kojo family tradition). As such it is not surprising that he was a student of Sakugawa who did much to bring a power-oriented Te style into Okinawa's mainstream martial arts. Several weapon's kata attributed to Matsu Higa were preserved in Shurite and were obviously not subject to the Kojo family secrecy surrounding their personal martial system.

The next generation of Kojo-ryu, is represented by Kojo Sai Shoei (1816-1906). He was an expert in weapons. In fact, Sai Shoei was not even interested in Tode until later in life. He was the originator of Kojo-ryu Bojutsu. Sai Shoei later developed excellent Tode skills.

Sai Shoei's son, Kojo Ise (or Isho) (1832-1891) followed in his father's footsteps as a martial artist. At age 16, Ise accompanied his father to China where they studied under Iwah. In China, Ise studied both Confucianism and martial arts. He became skillful with the Chinese spear and expert in archery. Kojo Ise did not return to Okinawa until he was 36 years old. But he is remembered as a meijin or master.

The next and 4th generation brings us back to Kojo Kaho and Iwah. It seems that Kaho left Okinawa with Iwah and eventually established a martial arts school in China in 1874. The Kojo Fouzhou Dojo became a center for many Okinawans passing through Fouzhou especially after the upheavals of the Meiji Restoration sent many Okinawans abroad. It was also known as the "Cai" dojo after the Chinese pronunciation of Kojo. Its owner, Kojo Kaho was one of the few people from Okinawa ever to become teacher to the Chinese. Probably one of the most famous of the Kojo's, Kaho was also a translator for the Ryukyuan government as well as an expert calligrapher.

Up to this time the Kojo family martial art (Bujutsu or Heiho) was handed down from one family member to the next. It was supposedly not taught to others outside the family. But to consider the Kojo isolated would be inaccurate. Within the martial arts community, they were well known. Some people must have been exposed to their teachings as they interacted with others on the island. Eventually, as shall be seen, the Kojo-ryu would be opened officially to others.

In a note significant to Kojosho Students, it is recorded in *Karate-Do: History and Philosophy*, that three friends went to Fouzhou to study martial arts at the Cai dojo. They were Kanbun Uechi (founder of Uechi Ryu), Aragaki Makadeunchu and Tokusaburo Matsuda, thought to also be known as Kosaburo Matsu.

ROHAI NOTES

"Rohai" is usually translated as "Visions of a Crane (or Heron)". However, according to Kinjo Akio and Tokashiki Iken, the name is an Okinawan pronunciation of the Chinese Monk-Fist style, "Lohan", from which they say it was derived. This is the same term we sometimes use for the Animals and Elements; "Shi Pa Lohan Sho".

Rohai is said to be one of three surviving original, traditional kata from Tomari village in Okinawa. It was originally designed, or formalized, by Matsumora Kosaku. Matsumora was known as a leader in Tomari-te, a style of Okinawan To-de or karate originating in Tomari village. The outstanding features of this kata are a sweep and break, a middle height crescent kick and the repeated quick jump back into a one legged stance (Crane) to avoid an attack at the legs. It is reputed to be a surprisingly hard kata to perform, having a great many subtleties to master.

Sometime after 1873, Itosu Anko, a leading practitioner of Shuri-te, decided to break it into three separate kata. Shotokan has a kata, called Meikyo, which is said to be developed from Itosu's Rohai 2 and 3. There are many kata called Rohai taught by the various karate styles. Some are very different from what we have. The version we have is closest to the Shito-Ryu or Shorin-Ryu versions. All told, it seems to be a kata which is valued by traditional schools as an advanced kata.

Why learn and study Rohai? There are a number of older, more traditional kata, usually having animal names, which contain postures and motion akin to our Animals and Elements. Chinto, introduced last year at Spring Camp, is an example. These kata give us a different view of, or take on, "motion" - which can help us to explore our own forms.

G. Comber

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