



INTERNATIONAL KOJOSHO KARATE FEDERATION



Volume XXX N1

IKKF Newsletter

Spring 2013

KATA HISTORY

Kata, as with martial arts in general, has a lineage from China. It doesn't really matter whether the transfer of knowledge was through Okinawan martial artists traveling to China and studying kung-fu or by Chinese masters visiting Okinawa. There is strong evidence that many kata were in existence in China prior to the 1600's. One of the few written accounts of kata brought from China is in the text *Bubishi*. The *Bubishi*, meaning "Martial Art Spirit", recorded the Fukien style of kempo. Several of the early Okinawan kata are discussed in *Bubishi* including Gojushiho and Hakutsura (white crane form). The *Bubishi* may have been introduced to Okinawa through any one of many routes. It certainly supported the development of early Okinawan kata.

Kata development in Okinawa included those kata taken from the Chinese and those developed by Okinawan masters themselves. Since no written records were kept, kata served as a perfect way for transferring the knowledge from generation to generation. This is much the same way ancient people used rhymes & songs to remember things. In most cases, the teaching would be based on a family tradition of martial arts skills and be taught by the head of the family or village elder. This was a form of "village karate" as opposed to "dojo karate" as we know it today.

Around the mid-1700's, three key individuals seemed to form a critical mass which led to the birth of modern karate kata: Shinjo Choken, Karate Sakugawa (1733-1815), and Chatan Yara (c. 1750). Choken was one of the earliest practitioners of Shuri-Te. Both Sakugawa and Yara traveled to Fukien Province in China and probably studied martial arts and weaponry while there. Both studied under the Chinese envoy, Kusanku, either in China or while Kusanku was in Okinawa. Kusanku was reported to be an expert in the martial arts and had learned his skills from a Shaolin monk. From this combination of individuals in the mid-1700's, modern karate kata began to take shape.

The original Okinawan karate forms were developed during the 19th century under two major divisions of styles: Shuri-Te (Shuri Hands) and Naha-Te (Naha Hands). Though they were both derived from similar Chinese forms, each developed differently based on the location and social position of the developers. The Shuri-Te was practiced in and around the city of Shuri where the king and members of the nobility lived. Naha-Te was practiced in and around the coastal city of Naha which was a large trade center. Another style, Tomari-Te, which is closely related to Shuri-Te, was also developed. Tomari-Te was practiced in the Tomari village populated by farmers and fisherman. The three styles have differences which can be traced back to the social-economic position of the practitioners. At the bottom, was the worker class studying Tomari-Te. The middle level was merchant class students studying Naha-Te. The upper class noblemen were studying Shuri-Te in and around the capital.

J. Paranto

CHINTO (Gankaku) & the HIDDEN ELEMENTS

The Chinto kata was created by Bushi Matsumura (1797-1884) and was based on the techniques he learned from a Chinese sailor named Chinto who became shipwrecked on the **Ryuku Islands**. After drifting ashore, Chinto taught the inhabitants of the Tomari villages of Matsumura, Kosunku, and Oyadomari. Though the exact meaning of "chinto" is uncertain, one translation of the name means, "fighting to the east" while another is "fighting in a city". The form was probably named after its originator.

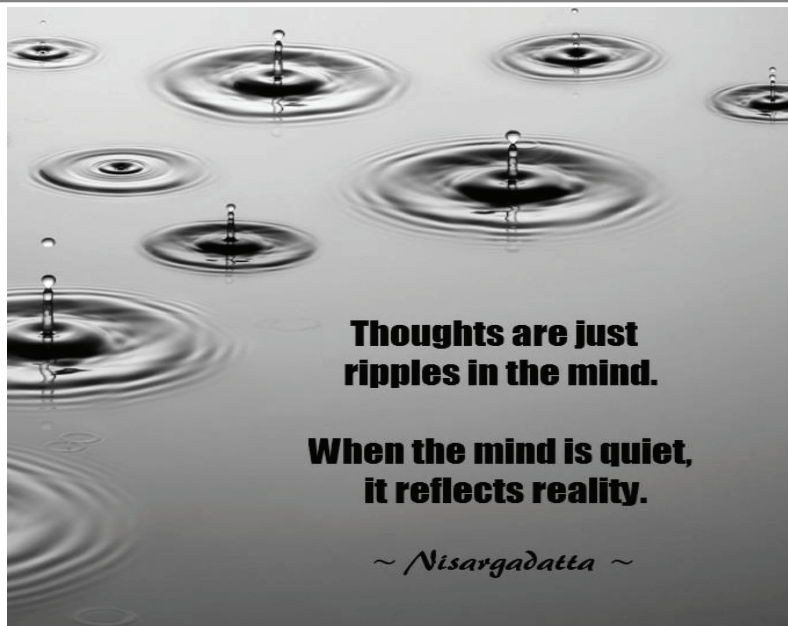
Matsumura studied with the famous Karate Sakugawa who spent significant time studying martial arts in China. It was Sakugawa who brought many kata to Okinawa, and initiated many kata such as Kusanku. He is also credited with introducing the dojo concept. Matsumura is credited with integrating the Chinese Chuan Fa with the Okinawan Te creating Tode (1750) which evolved into Shuri-Te (1830) which evolved into Shorin-Ryu (1870). Gichin Funakoshi (1868-1957) took Chinto and 15 other forms to Japan in 1922.

The Chinto form was most likely introduced through Tomari, but was adopted into the Shuri-Te system. There are more than five versions of Chinto. The Tomari-Te version has a Chinese flair to it. The Shuri-Te version is more streamlined. The Chinto form follows a straight line of movement and should be executed with powerful techniques. Characteristic of this form is the one-legged stance occurring repeatedly, which resembles the splendid sight of a crane poised on a rock and about to strike down upon its victim. Chinto also uses various flying kicks which distinguishes it from other katas.

Are the Elements "hidden" in Chinto kata? Yes—don't you "see" them? Perhaps you should take another look.

F. Absher

國際古城松空手道連盟



**Thoughts are just
ripples in the mind.**

**When the mind is quiet,
it reflects reality.**

~ Nisargadatta ~

*Thoughts are just ripples in the mind.
When the mind is quiet, it reflects reality.
When it is motionless through and through,
it dissolves, and only reality remains.*

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This theme - often described as like the calm surface of a lake perfectly reflecting an image of the moon - is common in Zen writings. This calmness would seem to have nothing in common with the chaos of war, but where the Zen monk saw ultimate reality, the Samurai saw a **hidden element** - a state of mind that would allow an accurate perception of the battlefield situation - which would give him a critical advantage. "No-mind" or "being in the zone" thus becomes a sought-after skill for a warrior—or an athlete—or a business person—or any other Human Being just like you.

Could this theme have any possible connection with "White Crane Stands in the Lake" ??? Don't you see—that just must be—a coincidence?

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.

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

BLACK & BROWN BELT PROMOTIONS

The annual winter Kojosho Black & Brown Belt Testing was held on Saturday, January 5, 2013 at the Kojosho Moon School Dojo in Albuquerque. 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:

ROKUDAN

Sixth Degree Black Belt
Art Minser

GODAN

Fifth Degree Black Belt
Victor Velarde

GODAN

Fifth Degree Black Belt
Brandon Rodarte

SANDAN

Third Degree Black Belt
David Biswell

SHODAN

First Degree Black Belt
Arnica Pham

First Kyu Brown Belt
Grant Roberts
Chris Reddington

Second Kyu Brown Belt
Fay Tamashiro
Peter Renna
Trenton Cammack
Hannah Perry
Brandon Hill Haines

Congratulations and a Free Haircut
from the Kojosho Board of Regents

KUDOS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

* The theme for this year's Kojosho study is:

"The Hidden Elements" (yes, that's an "s").

So go ahead and start looking for them! There will be a special prize for the Kojosho student who finds the most hidden elements.

* The "special theme" for the Kojosho Instructor's Seminar last February was **"No Elements, No Animals"**. An extra-special prize will go to the first student who discovers either one of those.

* **Nancy Moller**, a not-so-hidden Kojosho student, is a master seamstress. She did a superb restoration job on one of Fred Absher's heirloom Black Belts. Keep Nancy in mind for all of your sewing challenges.

* 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 2013 are now due.

Dues can be sent to:

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

The White Crane Stands in the Lake

"The crane is so strongly identified with the idea of stillness that the modern Chinese form of the word also means "contemplation".

The crane masterfully combines vigilance and movement. All too often we confuse vigilance with passivity. Vigilance is not a matter of mere waiting. It's a matter of the correct timing. We aren't just standing still—we are moving no faster and no slower than required by the situation."

from *Everyday Tao* by Deng Min-Dao



THE FIRST LADY OF JUDO

Keiko Fukuda, the Japanese-born granddaughter of a samurai, who learned judo from its founder, and who became the highest ranked woman in that martial art, died in San Francisco, where she had taught judo since 1970, on February 9, 2013 at the age of 99.

Fukuda was born in Tokyo in 1913 into an upper-class family. Her grandfather was a samurai master of jujitsu who taught the art to Jigoro Kano, who went on to create judo. When Fukuda was 21, Kano invited her to join a women's division at the Kodokan. She hit a "glass ceiling" at 5th Dan.

Fukuda was 4 foot 10 inches tall and barely weighed 100 pounds, but she proved to be an unstoppable — and exceptionally disciplined — force throughout her lifetime.

Her motto was "Be strong, Be Gentle, Be Beautiful" - a way of thinking and living that she shared with her many students over the decades. Fukuda said that the crux of judo—which translates literally as the "gentle way" - is *the flexibility to move with the energy of the moment*.

It took years of effort, but over time, Fukuda's judo students and women's rights activists helped spread the word about her frozen rank. Finally, in 2011, Fukuda's status changed. She became the first woman and the first U.S. resident ever to achieve a 10th-degree black belt. Only three other people — all men living in Japan — have the same rank.

Did Fukuda Sensei embody a **Hidden Element**? Obviously.



KARATE

*This excerpt is from **Ryukyu Islands** "The Postal Bell", Vol XIII #5, Sept-Oct 1964. It was written by Minoru Sera, a black belt in Shorin-ryu.*

People in all parts of the world have improvised some sort of self defense in order to protect themselves. Here in Okinawa, a method of self defense without the use of weapons has been developed. In the past this has been called "te" ("hands" in the dialect of Okinawa), and is now called karate or "empty-hand."

About 500 years ago, a great sovereign named Sho ha Shi united the **Ryukyu Islands** into one kingdom. He prohibited the carrying of and the use of arms. Again about 200 years back, when Okinawa was ruled by Satsuma Province of Japan, an even firmer restriction was clamped on the use of weapons. As a result of these bans against weapons and their possession, there was an upsurge in the art of Karate.

Karate can be practiced by old or young, men or women, alone or with a team, and without great limitation of space. It is adaptable for self defense as well as conditioning for physical fitness.

In the past, there were two schools of Karate: one called the "Shorin-ryu", centered around the castle of Ryukyus near Shuri and Tomari, while the other call "Shorei-ryu" was prevalent in Naha. In feudal times, practices were held secretly and the art was not taught to outsiders. In time, this hidden art was gradually shown to others then the warrior class and came to be considered as a cultural form and a form of sports.

Since the training of karate forms are confined to the individual, it is apt to end in idealistic rehearsals of physical form. In order to gain knowledge of the fascinating aspects of karate, and to learn the meaning of the actions and positions of defense and offense it is common for the students of karate to practice by simulating the combat situation, taking turns in attacking one another with the prescribed series of blows. Each blow is stopped several inches away from the opponent.

Strenuous exercises, study of the various forms and positions, simulated combat with an opponent, toughening of knuckles, fingers, edges of the hand and feet by striking them against resilient wooden posts are practices that must be continued to master karate. The breaking of tiles, the splitting of boards does not in any way prove the actual skill of an individual, but are only the results of constant practice on strengthening the muscles of the body. Karate experts, in general, frown on such showmanship.

Death Claims Minoru Sera *from the Dec 1, 1964 edition of the Okinawa Morning Standard*

Minoru Sera, whose *Ryukyus Handbook*, published in 1962, provided collectors with an authoritative source of information on the postal history, stamps and postal markings of the **Ryukyu Islands**, died Nov 29 at this home near Naha in Okinawa.

*The **hidden element** in these excerpts is that Minoru Sera's daughter is a Kojosho student here in New Mexico. Who is she?*

NEW MEXICO KOJOSHO CLASS SCHEDULES

ALBUQ Heights Moon NE—1 Blk N of Indian School 505-228-5592	MWF MWF	5:00 - 6:00 6:00 - 7:00	Juniors Mixed Adults	Fred Absher & Staff
	T TH T TH	5:00 - 6:00 6:00 - 8:00	Juniors Mixed Adults	Shane Absher
Cedar Crest	W W Sat Sat	6:45 - 7:45 7:45 - 8:45 11:00 - 12:00 12:00 - 1:00	Juniors Adults Juniors Adults	Shane Absher
Apple Valley Ranch 505-281-5294	T TH T TH	5:00 - 6:00 6:00 - 7:00	Juniors Adults	Fred Absher
Deer Mountain Training Club 3821 Hawkins NE 505 710-2500	T TH	6:00 - 8:00	Mixed	Peter Renna & Jack Renna
Las Cruces NMSU	MW MW	7:00 - 8:00 8:00 - 9:00	Mixed Advanced	Jack Diehl Howard Cothorn David Barnhart
Cuba H.S. Kojosho	Schedule Varies			Victor Velarde
Roswell H.S. Kojosho 500 W Hobbs	M T W TH F M W	7:15 - 8:00 AM 6:00 - 7:00 PM		Mike Kakuska
Clayton Kojosho 14 South 2nd 505-374-2168	T TH T TH T TH Sat	5:30 - 6:30 6:30 - 7:30 7:30 - 8:30 7:30 - 8:30 AM	Juniors Begin Advanced Open	Tim Hodo
Alamogordo Kojosho Powerhouse Gym	T TH T TH	6:45 - 7:30 7:30 - 8:30	Juniors Adults	Rick Guidry
Durango Kojosho Durango High School	M T W TH F	7:00—8:00 AM		Greg Spradling

KOJOSHO SYSTEM CALENDAR

2013		2014	
May 25—27	Spring Camp at Apple Valley	January 4	Black & Brown Best Testing
June 7	Colored Belt Testing (Abq)	February (TBA)	Costa Rica Tournament
July 6	Black / Brown Belt Testing	February 22	Instructor's Seminar
September 14	Instructor's Seminar	March 7	Colored Belt Testing (Abq)
October 26-27	Fall Camp	April 5	Tournament
November 2	Tournament		
November 22	Colored Belt Testing (Abq)		

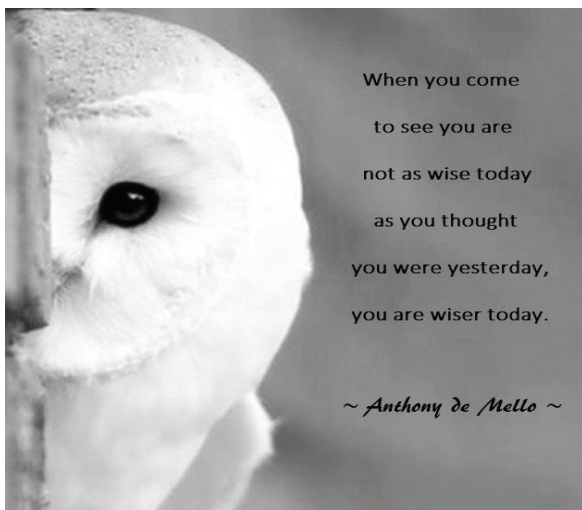
THE HIDDEN ELEMENTS

force you to re-examine every one of your assumptions, perhaps revealing that a few of them are not entirely wrong



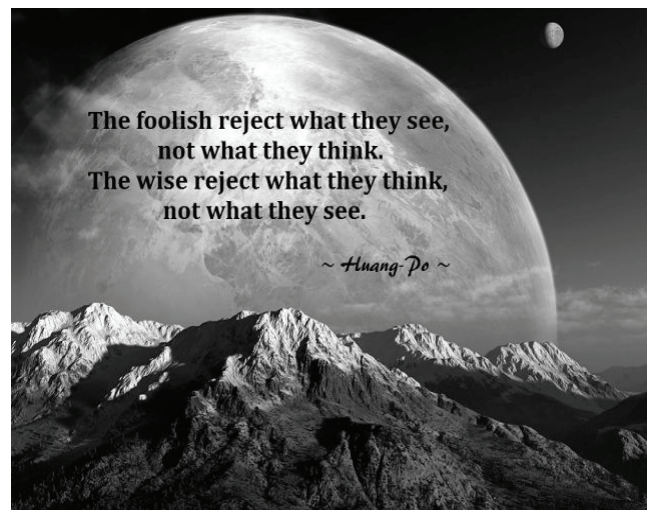
When we learn to tap into the power of Tao inside ourselves, we will feel a vitality as strong as a tiger's. That is pure energy. It is very important to direct that power positively. In the legends of Tao are tales of tigresses who rescued children, giving them their own milk and raising them in the wild. We who follow Tao and gain access to its power must be like the tigresses—combining ferocity with nurturing. **Once we awaken to Tao, the force of our own spirit will be as strong as a tiger's.**

from *Everyday Tao* by Deng Ming-Dao



When you come
to see you are
not as wise today
as you thought
you were yesterday,
you are wiser today.

~ Anthony de Mello ~



The foolish reject what they see,
not what they think.
The wise reject what they think,
not what they see.

~ Huang-Po ~

THE HIDDEN ELEMENT

When Kojosho students study the Kojosho Animals, they have a library of reference material encoded in the *Animals* kata along with one-person, two-person and three-person animal kata performed with & without a variety of weapons. The Kojosho Animals may seem well defined and “structured”, but the advanced student soon realizes that there is a lot more depth & sophistication there than she had anticipated. The Kojosho Elements, on the other hand, are celebrated in only one Kojosho kata—the *Elements*, and in the seldom-taught Kojosho *Therapeutics*. The Elements, by their very nature, are more abstract, less accessible and harder to relate to than the Animals. And the last of those Elements, called the “hidden” Element or “spirit” or the “void” or the “Tao” is the most mysterious “Element” of all.

Old timers remember when the Kojosho kata *Snake & Hawk* was called “*the Nine Maneuvers & the Hidden Element*”. Does that mean that the Hidden Element and the Hawk are really exactly the same thing? No!

If you are paying attention when you page thru the Kojosho book you will find “alternative” names for the Kojosho two-person and three-person forms: **Tiger explores the Earth; Crane stands in the Lake; Snake avoids the Fire; Hawk seizes Lightning; Dragon inherits the Wind; Deer enters Heaven; Leopard Plays with the Wave; Monkey Embraces the Mountain; Bear Finds the Tao.** These alternative names tie each animal to its element counterpart, and then the two & three person combinations mix them in a cosmic dance. There’s a pretty good chance that these pairings & combinations are highly significant, don’t you think? There seems to be an Element hidden in plain sight closely associated with each Animal.

After a few decades, a serious Kojosho student begins to realize that there’s a lot more to this Animal study than just repeating a mechanical pattern over and over exactly like it was taught. And he begins to suspect that the same thing may hold true for the Elements. Then he ponders the merging of Animal & Element—before he seriously considers throwing two or three hybrid Animal/Element entities into a battle with one another. After that, he gets to step back and do it all over again with weapons.

In the Kojosho System there are 8 elements plus the “hidden” one(s). “Element” can refer to a specific natural phenomena such as the traditional 4 “elements” of eastern philosophy—earth, air, fire and water. It can also refer to an essential, though often not obvious, part of a whole. “Hidden” can mean out of sight or even invisible, but it can also refer to something that you just haven’t thought of or realized or recognized yet. “Hidden” may describe something hidden from us, or something that we have hidden from ourselves due to confusion, ignorance, lack of attention or sheer stubbornness. “Hidden” applies to almost everything in the universe. Hmmmm.

Ah yes, the universe. As we drift from what is hidden in plain sight, into the land of the “void” or of the “Tao”, we find ourselves in the realm of philosophers and mystics who talk in riddles and koan and tall tales because there are no words for what they’re trying to teach us. “He will flow like Tao—wordless and unseen”. No Elements, No Animals—just endless fields of red & green chile. I’ll meet you there.

G. Vaughn

*At first, form is needed.
Then doubt and inhibition must be dispelled.
Eventually, form is celebrated with joy,
and expression becomes formless.*

In all fields of endeavor, one must start out with certain structures, procedures, and forms. Even though one admires the seemingly effortless virtuosity of the masters, the reality is that it will take some time before one can reach that level.

The novice student must drill constantly on the basics, isolating each step and movement with meticulous attention. Although the emphasis on structure may add to the beginner’s inhibition, it must be done. Eventually, the student will learn to let go. The steps will have become a natural part of movement. Then the “dance” can be celebrated joyously. Our now mature student may even “dance” in a way that seems so spontaneous, so magical, that it will seem formless—or more precisely, the form will emerge with fluidity, grace, originality, and beauty.

At first, all the restrictions and practices seem quite constricting. Eventually, you reach a stage where things flow quite spontaneously. Every practice session is new, fresh, and full of wonderful insights. This is true form-less-ness.

from 365 Tao by Deng Ming-Dao

Yamaoka Tesshu is often called the last of the great Japanese swordsmen. Tesshu was born into a samurai family in 1836. He became a student of a famous swordsman, Chiba Shusaku, who taught him the Hokushin Itto Ryu. Tesshu was representative of a generation of Japanese masters who were able to spread formerly exclusive systems to non-samurai practitioners without losing their true meaning and martial spirit.

Tesshu said that swordsmanship “should lead directly to the heart of things where one can directly confront life and death. Swordsmanship has become a mere pastime with no bearing on matters of importance”. The method Tesshu devised was extraordinarily demanding, pushing his students to the limits of their endurance. For Tesshu, the true function of the martial arts was to develop the **spirit**.

In 1864, when Tesshu was 28, he faced Asari Gimei in a match. Asari was a master of the Nakanishi-ha Itto Ryu style, and although Tesshu attacked with all his strength, he was unable to make any impression on Asari. Tesshu became Asari’s student.

Determined to find a way to defeat his teacher, Tesshu sought the help of the Abbot of Tenruji, who gave him a koan: “When two flashing swords meet there is no place to escape. Move on coolly, like a lotus flower blooming in the midst of a roaring fire, and forcefully pierce the Heavens!”. At the age of 45, Tesshu finally grasped the meaning of the koan. He put his insight to the test against Asari Gimei. As soon as they crossed swords, Asari let his own blade drop and exclaimed: “You have arrived”!

from *Samurai—the Story of a Warrior Tradition*

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