



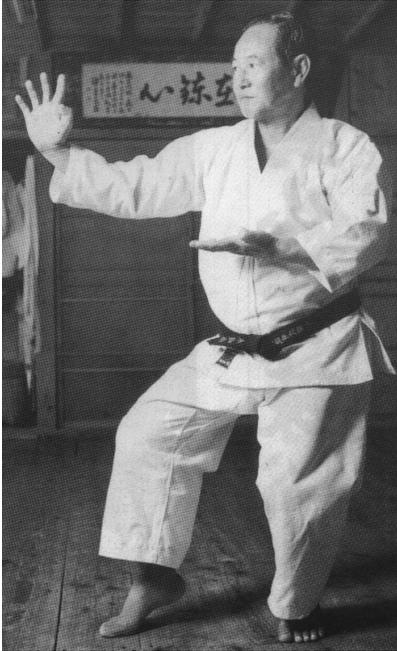
**ALL AMERICAN GOJU RYU MEBUKAN CANADIAN BRANCH  
SHIMBUN FEBRUARY 2003**

**OKU MYO ZAI REN SHIN**

*The are no secrets in Karate other than those revealed by having a good heart.  
(Meibukan Dojo Kun from the Brush of Dai Sensei Meitoku Yagi)*

**DAI SENSEI PASSES AWAY**

*It is with great sadness that we learnt that our Grand Master Yagi Meitoku passed away in Naha City Okinawa on Friday February 7<sup>th</sup> 2003 at the age of 90. It is a great loss to all of us Meibukan practitioners and to the Karate world. We send our heart felt condolences to the Yagi family and we renew our commitment to him and to his Karate. May he rest in peace. This newsletter is dedicated to him.*



*Dai Sensei Yagi Meitoku  
(1912-2003)*

**The History of Goju Part II:  
New Ideas on Goju-ryu's Direct  
Chinese Ancestor.  
By Matt Ravnignat**

Though, in the last Newsletter the editor had promised an article on which Chinese style of Kung-Fu was the direct ancestor of Goju-ryu Karate there have been some complications. But so that the reader does not think the editor has been lax in his responsibilities, here is a little report on his activities in this regard.

The article wound up being a 20 page essay with the above title which is currently being revised by Anthony Mirakian Sensei for inclusion in Sensei Lex Opdam's English translation of his book on Meibukan. For publication reasons it cannot be reproduced here. If it is not included in the book it will be published as an article on the website.

Also, because it became clear that there is a connection between Goju-ryu and White Crane Kung-Fu, Matt Ravnignat with the help of Sensei Chan and Alex Siedule are in the process of interviewing Sensei Chan's friend White Crane

Sifu Bob Kho on their connection and similarities. So stay for both of these!

**Myths in the Martial Arts Part II  
by Julee Moroz**

In one Okinawan myth, an artisan who foolishly challenged the great Bushi Matsumura found himself paralyzed helplessly under the gaze of the master. "Don't try to console me," he says, "I have lost all my strength only to feel your gaze transfix me." Replies the great Matsumura: "That's possible, but I believe the reason is the following. You were determined to win. I was quite determined to die if I lost" (Fauliot, 111). To be determined to win is the drive of the ego, and all the attachments that accompany it. The master, in accepting death, was no longer subject to the ego and so was not hindered by attachment.

Even Shakyamuni Buddha in India used myths describing the "four elemental temperaments" to direct warriors away from fear and battle and toward spirituality (Nagaboshi, 198). Whether in India, China, or Japan, "those engaged in battle . . . often experience[d] a heightened awareness of life and death [which] prompted teachers of Buddhism to include conflict as one of the

potential areas for spiritual development . . . " (Ibid, 199). The fear of death reveals the ego, posing one of the greatest obstacles for any warrior. The shedding of the ego and the preparation for death develops into a philosophical world view that gives the martial art its art. Richard Kim, a world-recognized karate master, wrote in his book on Okinawan martial arts myths that through the martial arts man can " rediscover his body as a tool of expression" (Kim, 58). The confrontation with death and the self is undoubtedly part of the philosophy of the esoteric teachings of traditional martial arts masters. Some myths refer to the true task as one of aiming one's arrow at one's own heart, echoing the Mundaka Upanishad (section 2.2.1). A maxim of kyudo (the art of archery) is based on this principle. One myth, (Fauliot, 103), refers to the master as a mountain guide to point out the path of the stages through which one must pass in order to aim at one's own heart.

These masters have in turn been designated heroes and mythologized to pass on their teachings (see Richard Kim's *The Weaponless Warriors*). One of these myths tells of Itosu Yasutsune, a 24-year-old martial artist who had been taught by Matsumura. When a bull, mad and loose in Naha city, charged Itosu, he merely sidestepped the bull while grabbing it by the horns. Itosu ran alongside the bull, pulling its head back until it lost its balance. The bull then fell exhausted (Kim, 51). The tying together of martial arts myth and esoteric philosophy is described by Peter Payne: "Both aspects of the mythic path, the hero's journey, are revealed in the martial arts: the fearless facing and overcoming of the monster, and the willingness to be undone, dismembered, to die before death, in order to gain a fuller life" (Payne, 33). Payne's description details an unquestionable description of the symbolism of the initiation ritual.

There is a disparity in the role of the martial arts between the initiated and the uninitiated, similar to the idea of the manifest function and the latent function respectively. For beginners, martial arts can be seen as a means to winning fights and gaining strength; for the initiated, that is to say those whom the esoteric philosophies have affected, martial arts presents a means of harmonizing the body, mind and spirit, of "power in repose" (Niobe, 55). Today these two

functions can be interpreted as representing the martial sports schools training for competition and tournaments, and the traditional martial arts school, seeking to perpetuate a particular philosophy and way of life.

Qualified teachers are highly valued in transmitting the esoteric teachings, just as they are in the Upanishads; "For the sake of this knowledge let him go, fuel in hand, to a spiritual teacher who is learned in the scriptures and established on Brahma" (Mundaka Upanishads, 1.2.13). Traditionally, young students were sent to live with and serve their gurus. The teachers were not paid for their teachings because that would presume a measurable value on what they gave, which was deemed immeasurable. "When character, and not intelligence, when the soul and not the head, is chosen by a teacher for the material to work upon and to develop, his vocation partakes of a sacred character" (Nitobe, 100). The teacher's worth is often measured by his students, and so the master guards his secrets closely to make sure only the most deserving of students may learn them. This theme is also taken up in many Japanese, Okinawan and Chinese myths, in which tales of servants or monks spying on the master's training results in the spy becoming a student. Some stories present this in part as showing the great degree of motivation of the student, and some masters wanting to control in what ways their arts are spread after them.

This is one of the reasons that written, technical information is lacking in the traditional martial art forms, perhaps contributing to the teaching myths. "This was due, no doubt, to the fact that this information was not intended for the general public, but only for those pupils who had proved themselves worthy of the techniques, skills, and tradition of that particular school or style" (Soo, 13). A master's art was closely guarded and handed down often only within a family, from generation to generation, as more of an oral and ritual tradition. Myth would have been part of that tradition, as illustrated with the Taoist art of Feng Shou, or 'Hand of the Wind' kung fu, which traces its genealogy through the school's uniform, to Chinese mythology thousands of years old (Soo, 25-26). An old man with a flowing white beard, dressed in a yellow cloak and a red and blue hat, stands on the pinnacle of the heavens, holding open a cotton sack with which he directs the wind. When he moves slowly, so does the wind, but if he is angered or startled, then he

turns very vast and thus unleashes the devastation of a tornado on the universe. The myth ends "So don't upset him by becoming aggressive for the one thing he really hates is violence" (Ibid). This is one of the most common themes in the martial arts.

Perhaps one of the most simple and effective myths describes the development of Chinese Tai chi ch'uan. A Taoist immortal named Chang San-feng was a recluse in the Wu-tang mountains of the Hupeh Province in the twelfth century. It is said that he witnessed a fight between a snake and a crane, wherein the snake evaded the crane by virtue of its twisting movements in avoiding the crane's sharp stabbing motions with its beak. Lao-tzu's teaching came to mind, which said that the most yielding of things in the universe overcome the most hard (Tao Te Ching, verse 43). This inspiration was the basis for the inception of Tai chi ch'uan (Cook, 29). The style was passed down for generations within the family, as likely was the myth, claimed to have captured the essence of the art.

There are multiple martial arts which have not been touched on in this examination, just as there are many more myths. The aim here has been to demonstrate functionally that the martial arts is a traditional form of enculturation possessing of symbolic tools such as myth. Indeed, myth is one of the ways in which transformation of one's self and one's worldly boundaries can be intimated, presenting the possibility of the inner changes which must precede any radical world change (Payne, 32). The symbols used are instrumental in unlocking a philosophy by those continuing the tradition.

Acknowledging that there is a presence of the mythic symbol and an esoteric philosophy, teaching is the means for mediating this access. The symbol provides an objective and advanced view of the structure of the training, which can support the sometimes intricate patterns of consciousness involved, aiding the actualization of the individual. The teacher is central to the guiding and development of the martial arts student's full potential. In a guiding role, myth continues to be an integral component of the perpetuation of martial arts tradition and philosophy today.

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## **Organizational Structure of the All American Meibukan-Canada**

*So that our relatively new structure is clear to all. I have included this information for all teachers and students of the All American Meibukan Canadian Headquarters. (ed)*

### **International Okinawa Goju Ryu Karate Do Meibukan Academy:**

#### **America: All American Okinawa Goju Ryu Karate Do Meibukan Academy:**

**Director/President:** Anthony Mirakian, Hanshi 9<sup>th</sup> Dan, Sensei

**Hombu Dojo:** Watertown, Massachusetts

**National: All American Okinawa Goju Ryu Karate Do Meibukan Academy-- Canadian Headquarters. (Abbreviation all American Meibukan-Canada)**

**Director:** Hing Poon Chan Sensei, Appointed Representative of Hanshi Anthony Mirakian.

*The All American Meibukan--Canada issues all Dan (black belt and above) certificates for all associated Dojo.*

*All associated dojo may issue Kyu (below black belt level) ranks but must follow the curriculum of the All American Okinawa Goju Ryu Karate Do Meibukan- Canadian Headquarters.*

**Local: Associated Dojo:**

**Hombu Dojo of the Canadian Headquarters:**

**Gloucester Traditional Karate Association**

Hing Poon Chan, Director of the All American Okinawa Goju Ryu Karate Do Meibukan Academy Canadian Headquarters

**Other Dojo:**

**Ottawa Traditional Karate Association**

Instructor: John Notley

**Comox Traditional Karate Association**

Instructor: to be determined at this time outgoing Patrick Penley

**NEW: Calgary Traditional Karate Association**

Instructor: Alex Siedule

## **Reports**

### **New Dojo: Calgary Traditional Karate Association**

Alex Siedule one of Sensei Chan's senior students has been able to open up a new club called the Calgary Traditional Karate Association with the generous help of Sifu Bob Kho. Congratulations Alex!

## **New Certificates**

We are finally issuing new certificates which are currently at the printers. They will replace all current Dan (black belt level) grades given directly to you by the GTKA. Please hand over your certificates saying GTKA so that you can be issued new and much improved ones saying All American Meibukan-Canada on them. The original date will appear on your certificates. Dan grades from other organizations will not be changed. Thank you.

## **Commemoration Booklet Dai Sensei**

At Sensei Chan's request Matt Ravignat editor of this Shimbun and one of Sensei Chan's senior students has compiled a commemorative booklet with all the information he could find on Yagi Meitoku Dai Sensei to honor him for his passing. It includes a forward about our own Meibukan history. Cost for professionally printing a copy for you is 9\$. Also, the All American Meibukan-Canada has picked up the taxes for you to lower the cost.

## **Pins and T-Shirts**

We have new **T-Shirts**. They have the name of our organizations, the All American Meibukan-Canada, the Meibukan logo, a small Canadian maple leaf above and the Chinese characters for Goju on them. Only 15\$

The **pins** are small professional looking lapel pins with a gold Meibukan symbol on black, they will be a half an inch wide. 5\$

## **Grading October 2002**

### **Dan level**

Julee Moroz, Nidan

### **Kyu Level GTKA**

#### **1 kyu**

Alkarim Pirani

Lucas Bloess

Matthew Polan

Mark Polan

#### **2 kyu**

Mark Bloess

#### **5 kyu**

Bill Carman

Jessica Carman

Paul Roberts

**6 kyu**

Isaac Bédard  
Virginie Bédard  
Véonique Métivier  
David Taylor

**8 kyu**

Jia-Fa Wu

**Lex's Baby Girl**

Sensei Lex Opdam and wife, Senpai Léontine from Nijmegen, Netherlands have since November, 2002, a new addition to their family, a baby girl. Her name is Sterre (which means star in English). Congratulations to the proud new parents!

**Websites for Buying Traditional Okinawan Training Equipment****[www.karateshorinkan.com](http://www.karateshorinkan.com)**

Supplier of Shureido Equipment and Makiwaras, including traditional posts as well the wall hanging ones. US\$

**[www.Bushifitness.com](http://www.Bushifitness.com)**

Maker of Chishi (power stones), Geta (iron clogs), Nirigame (gripping jars), etc.US\$