



The Canadian Isshinryu Way Everything Karate & Kobudo

Isshinryu Canada

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Team Work

It's easy to think of Karate as an individual activity. You can practice your kata for hours alone and get very good at them. But, the heart of Karate is the application and understanding that can only come from working with others.

The Dojo is the perfect atmosphere for that training, a diversity of people in body size and type as well as different backgrounds helps to understand the purpose of the techniques.

Many of the movements in Isshinryu, work well against people that know Isshinryu. But, most work against people with other skill sets. The movements of Karate were created and adapted to fight against foreigners to Okinawa, some may be great against Chinese martial arts, others for Samurai techniques.

When working with others, encourage them to think outside the box and

consider how others may want to move.

Most of all, appreciate the differences of your Dojo mates. Everyone there wants to train and improve by helping them all to grow in their understanding, and you are likely to grow in your own.

Keep Training!

Essential Isshinryu is available!

For more information on the first Canadian Isshinryu book, visit www.essentialissheinryu.com!

ATTENTION NEEDED!

Do you know of someone great in Isshinryu? If so, please e-mail Sensei@issheinryu.ca with the contact details to be profiled in future newsletters.

Upcoming Events

Seminars

January 17th, Thunder Bay, ON—Hanshi Mady Seminars

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Think, Think, Think, Then Think a little more



The Codes of Isshinryu

The Codes of Isshinryu are a key set of guiding principles that are largely shared across Okinawan Karate and other Asian martial arts.

I believe there is great value in understanding the principles and making a sincere attempt to apply them both in your Karate training and daily life.

In order to help you appreciate the values they present, this article will focus on the first two codes, while future articles will explain the importance of subsequent codes.

The fifth and sixth codes

To be clear, the codes as they exist in Isshinryu were introduced by Shimabuku Tatsuo Sensei and were modified slightly from their original versions to match his understanding of them.

These codes I find particular applicable to fighting, but can also be applied to all aspects of life.

The body should be able to change direction at any time.

This code is related very closely to the previous code. If a person is well balanced, then it is easy for them to change directions quickly and still remain balanced. Most top athletes exemplify this ideal. A pro basketball player must be able to move and change directions quickly, a football running back must be able to dodge and weave in order to get past the defenders. A karate-ka has to be prepared to deal with the unexpected, all the time keeping their balance and their senses. If one is thrown to the ground, it is important to be able to recognize your orientation and recover quickly.

As a societal application, one must be adaptive to change. It has been seen throughout history that those that do not adapt to new trends are often left by the wayside (try for example to get a job without having computer experience, very difficult in today's society). The more adaptable one is to new trends the more successful the person is likely to be. Similarly, a fighter that can adapt to different styles of fighting is more

likely to survive in a conflict than a rigid, by the book fighter. For this reason, it is also important for the karateka to venture outside of Isshinryu in order to sample some of the other methods of fighting (Grapplers, Muay Thai boxers and Tae Kwon Do fighters all have radically different methods of fighting).

The time to strike is when the opportunity presents itself

The remaining codes can very easily be literally applied to karate, while also having an educational value when applied to everyday life. In karate, the concept of striking when the opportunity presents itself may seem obvious, but is sometimes difficult to apply. Rather than waiting or setting up an opening in their opponent's defenses, the inexperienced fighter may mount an aggressive attack, which will present a more experienced opponent with ample striking targets. The beginning fighter may also be too defensive, which ironically may leave them open to many attacks. The good karateka will either wait for or set up an opportunity and take advantage of the chance.

In life, this situation also applies. There are times when an opportunity for advancement or change may present itself, but we may be too timid to take advantage of it, in which case the chance will be lost. It is also possible to lose the opportunity by being too aggressive, buying a stock without proper research for example. It is the wise person that will take proper advantage of a situation, without putting oneself in undue risk. As well it is the wise and experienced fighter that will take proper advantage of an opportunity to strike.

Think about your codes like training aids, they may not be easy to understand or apply, but doing so can be very significant in your Martial Arts training.



The Yin and Yang of Isshinryu

By JF Sauriol

In Chinese philosophy the concept of "yin and yang" is used to describe how opposite or contrary forces are interconnected and interdependent in the natural world how they give rise to each other as they interrelate to one another. The earliest reference to Yin and Yang is in the I Ching (Book of Changes) in approximately 1000-700 BC. Everything, everyone, every situation, exhibits Yin and Yang in different proportions that are constantly flowing. Around the same period, the Taoist theory of the 5 elements (Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water) emerged to provide further granularity to this energy flow in all existence and how human nature interacts with these energies. The Taoist observers of the world around them, who developed these concepts, along with the Buddhist precepts of non-attachment, propose that suffering in the human condition is generated by our resistance to this flow of energies.

It is in fact completely "human" to be attached to the moments of joy and happiness in our life (top of the wave) and to resist the inevitable flow into sorrow and grief (the bottom of the wave). In fact, the top of the wave cannot exist without the bottom of the wave. Day cannot exist without night, colder without hotter, north without south, etc. This simple concept can be understood quite readily at a rational level, but its more subtle representation in all aspects of existence can offer a lifetime of learning.

Resistance to this flow of energy does not have to always be seen as suffering but rather as a stifling of the opportunity that "flowing" could offer. I have, in fact, seen many such missed opportunities as my belief system and established personality have given me a more Yang-centric view of the world. Over the last decade (and especially the last 3 or 4 years), my spiritual quest has made me see that many choices in my past may have opened different doors had I been more aware of this preponderance. And paradoxically, the consequential exhaustion (mental and physical) of this striving-rich existence have made me paralyzed and stagnant surrounding personal situations where a great deal of courage and warrior-like action would have been required. This not regret over the past, but probably a flavour of grief over missed opportunities, and certainly a real dose of blatant truth in the mirror for vigilance over similar resistance to flow which has also been reflected in my martial arts life.

The third code of Isshinryu, "the manner of drinking

and spitting is either hard or soft" – borrowed from the classic Chinese writing, the Kenpo Hakku found in the Bubishi (in Chinese "Wubei Zhi" circa Ming Dynasty approx. 1600 AD) which translates as, "The way of inhaling and exhaling is hardness and softness," obviously relates to the flow between Yin and Yang. But the prevalence of the duality of existence in most martial arts is considerably deeper than this obvious reference. Heaven (Yang) and Earth (Yin) in the first code, Moon (Yin) and Sun (Yang) in the second code, the unbalance in the fourth code refers to the resistance to the Yin-Yang flow. The fifth, seventh and eight codes refer to changing, seeing and hearing in all directions which also refer to the ability to flow with what is without resistance.

Before we look at the sixth code, let's initially look at Yin and Yang in Isshinryu techniques. Take a simple block. You can start with Newton's third law of motion, "for every force applied there is an equal and opposite reactive force." We have soft blocks (Yin), which follow the opponent's momentum and may even foster his unbalancing, as opposed to a hard block (Yang) which requires considerably more force but could be part of an overall strategy of domination (Yang) of the opponent. One can advance in the face of an attack thereby "closing the gap" and stifling the opponent's power which could be considered a Yang (approach) and Yin (stifling his force). There is the fundamental relaxed muscles (Yin) which contract in the kime at the moment of impact (Yang). The crescent step is itself a technique which allows a karateka to advance and retreat and be ready to move in any direction in the flow of combat. In combining Yin and Yang, one can even trap an opponent with a Yin opening to attract an attack which is countered by a rapid explosive surprise attack (the kumae in Wansu followed by a rapid closing zenkutsu, body pivot and elbow to the throat as the opponent approaches). There are in fact countless examples of this flow between Yin and Yang in Isshinryu techniques and katas (and in its roots in Gojuryu, Shorinryu and Kobudo).

The sixth code offers a more subtle application of Yin and Yang, and is also one of the richest in learning, "The time to strike is when the opportunity presents itself". In order to recognize an opportunity (or even create it in your opponent – or in life), one must be calm of mind and body (Yin) and aware

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The Yin and Yang of Isshinryu

By JF Sauriol

of the subtlety of the flow (balance) of combat while being in possession of one's skills at the ready (Yin and/or Yang). At a more personal level, my growth (or frustration) as a karateka, and as a spiritual being, has been surprisingly linked to my understanding of this link between calmness of mind and body, awareness of the flow (or resistance) of what is and in the possession/sharpening of my abilities in all aspects of my personality and in my life.

During training, the mind is an all important element of martial arts. At the technical level, one must learn, train, and develop techniques (Yin and/or Yang) that are repeated so often that they become automatic. At the mental level, this process requires much effort (Yang) and would result in flipping the obvious karate Yin-Yang labels to Yang-mind and a relatively Yin-body. Once automatic, however, those techniques can be delivered by reflex instead of consciously so the mind would now be back in a Yin-state. From that point, new techniques can be learned and developed, repeating the cycle. This demonstrates the mutually supportive and transitional principles of Yin and Yang. For me, in combat (and in life), having a Yang-active mind (e.g. if he throws this type of punch then I will block in this fashion then counter with this kick and that punch, etc.) would render me fixed on one course of action and missing the opportunity presented if in Yin-mind and aware of the flow. If anything other than the expected first punch occurs (or if life presents another scenario than what my busy mind has conjectured), I first have to break my train of thought and then think of what to do, all the while probably getting hit for being too slow (or missing the life opportunity to "do" or "be"). Keeping a clear mind that can reflexively respond to the flow is the product of a very relaxed Yin-mind that came from the evolution resulting from the discipline of a Yang state of training.

An interesting representation of a personal rigidity (lack of flow) occurred to me recently as I was pondering the creed of Karate and reflecting on my own personal goal for Isshinryu in my life. It occurred to me that as I recite the last part of the creed, in my mind, it goes like this: "... , then here are my weapons, my empty hands. ... !**!" It occurred to me

then that there is certainly an assurance in the abilities and skill that I have achieved over the years but there is also a certain contempt for the opponent and an underlying hope that combat will ensue. Something like a "Bring it ... !**!"

And something came to mind that I had read a few months/years ago (can't find the reference!) that said basically that a successful martial artist can look back and bask in the glory of 200 fights won, but a mature martial artist will look back and be pleased with the 200 fights he has diffused and avoided. Presenting myself in balance between Yin and Yang allows me to have the option of diffusing a situation (Yin) but still be able to engage (Yang) if ultimately necessary.

Efforting through life (Yang) and believing that only those things I have achieved through my doing are valuable has been fruitful but depleting (and taking a toll on my body). Like the seasons associated to the 5 elements, the first 40-45 years of my life (my spring and summer) have preponderantly been Yang years. The spiritual quest that I embarked on in my late 30s has helped me bring awareness to this need for balance. As well, and more importantly for me, "letting go" and the fostering of a Yin approach in some aspects of my life has provided beautiful gifts of "being".

And as a karateka, breathing during my katas, relaxing during my sparring, understanding the relationship between mobile and stable joints in my body, resting in the assurance of my available strength, etc. have helped me walk a more balanced path in life. An awareness that is still burgeoning and a path that is sure to bring many more gifts and struggles.



6th Annual Kyu Fest and Promotions

By Hanshi Mitch Kobylanski

This year was our most successful event. We had 160 competitors (all Isshinryu) representing 18 dojos throughout North and South Carolina. This has become the premiere Isshinryu event in the Carolinas.

Master Black Belts in attendance:

Grand Master Lewis Lizotte, Grand Master Mitch Kobylanski, Grand Master Bill Salinardi, Master Tim Boykin, Master Tim Grismer, Master Tim Cunningham, Master HP Henry, Master Paul Lizotte, Master Butch McLaughlin, Master Pete Williams, Master TD Gribble, Master Dean Scott and Master Jim Longwith.

The tournament started on time at 11:00 AM and was completed by 2:00 PM. Credit for how smooth the divisions ran goes to the astute group of Black Belts that donated their time and talents to this event.

This was the first tournament that Grand Master Lizotte has attended since the 2006 AOKA tournament held in Canada. It was an honor to have Sensei and his wife attend our event.

Promotions;

Sensei Gene Sain 4th Dan

Master Pete Williams 7th Dan

Master Butch McLaughlin 7th Dan

Master Tim Grimer 8th Dan

Grand Master Bill Salinardi 10th Dan

Grand Master Mitch Kobylanski 10th Dan





Does Isshinryu use gamaku or chinkuchi?

By Richard Ruberto based on notes from Advincula Sensei

In Isshinryu we use both gamaku and chinkuchi. *Gamaku* is waist so when doing Naihanchi kata we do use *gamaku* but emphasize *chinkuchi* when punching or striking. Sanchin teaches *chinkuchi* or tension (*kime*) at the last moment upon impact we focus into the target. Some branches of Shorinryu use no *kime* or tension at moment of impact saying that *gamaku* or the whipping action is sufficient for generating power. When standing and facing full front in Sanchin stance there is very little chance to use *gamaku* so our power is generated using *chinkuchi* or tensing the muscles on impact (*kime*). While in Naihanchi stance we use *gamaku* but on impact contract our muscles using *chinkuchi*. So we use both. Shimabuku stressed *chinkuchi* because it generates power from a short distance without posting on the hip.

Shotokan emphasis's *koshi* or hip action with *kime* at point of impact which is closer to what we do in Isshinryu than those branches of Shorin-ryu that depend on the use of *gamaku* without tensing at point of impacting a target.

This is much easier to demonstrate then explain. While *gamaku* is used when we are in Naihanchi dachi striking to the sides or left and right front, or using a diagonal Seisan dachi it is very limited when front facing standing in Sanchin dachi or full Seisan dachi.

Both Shorinryu and Shotokan primary stance is zenkutsu dachi. While traditional Okinawan Shorinryu stands in a higher zenkutsu dachi which is suitable for *gamaku*, Shotokan uses a deeper zenkutsu dachi which allows the greater use of *koshi* or hip movement. ** I believe the center and not hips is key. I was told by a Shorinryu sensei that hips are expressed to beginners and it's really the center (*hara*) that matters most. It's just way easier to see the hips move.

Shimabuku never used the word *gamaku* only *chinkuchi*. As stated, depending on the stance in relation to target, *gamaku* may be used but *chinkuchi* the tensing of muscles is our "primary" base for generating power, while some branches of Shorinryu base it on *gamaku* without tensing at point of impact. Then some branches of Shorinryu do use *kime* without tensing the lower stance as we do in both Naihanchi and Sanchin. Note that we use both in-

ward tension in both Naihanchi and sanchin. This inward tension locks and tightens our body to the surface of the ground at the point of impact .

First we must look at a systems predominate stance to see if it is suited for the use of *gameku* or *chinkuchi*. Isshinryu uses Seisan dachi as the primary stance with toe on line with the heel so *chinkuchi* is our primary mode of power base since our primary stance does not allow the use of the waist. Okinawan Shorinryu's primary stance is a much higher zenkutsu stance then Shotokan's which allows the use of *gamaku* while Shotokan's deeper zenkutsu dachi allows greater use of the hips.

If we look and understand the symbol of Yin and Yang (cosmic dual forces), you will understand that within each Yin and Yang is Yang and Yin.

The meaning of Yin-Yang

This Symbol (Yin-Yang) represents the ancient Chinese understanding of how things work. The outer circle represents "everything", while the **black** and **white** shapes within the circle represent the interaction of two energies, called "yin" (black) and "yang" (white), which cause everything to happen. **They are not completely black or white**, just as things in life are not completely black or white, and they cannot exist without each other.

While "yin" would be soft, dark, passive, downward, cold, contracting, and weak, "yang" would be hard, bright, active, upward, hot, expanding, and strong. The shape of the yin and yang sections of the symbol, actually gives you a sense of the continual movement of these two energies, yin to yang and yang to yin, causing everything to happen: just as things expand and contract, and temperature changes from hot to cold.

Naihanchi *Gamaku* (waist) would be "yin" soft, supple, limber, while "yang" would Sanchin and *chinkuchi* hard, expanding, rigid and strong. The shape of the two sections of the yin and yang symbol, actually gives you a sense of the continual movement of these two energies, yin to yang and yang to yin, causing everything to happen: just as in Naihanchi we use the soft supple movement of the waist (*gamaku*) to spin either left or right we also

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Does Isshinryu use gamaku or chinkuchi?

By Richard Ruberto based on notes from Advincula Sensei

use Sanchin's hard *chinkuchi* to penetrate the target things.

The manner of drinking and spitting is either hard or soft.

The code says **either** hard or soft and Shimabuku Tatsuo preferred the **Goju hard** (chinkuchi) over *ju* soft when punching or thrusting at a target. One of the reasons bullets are made from hard materials.

The U.I.K.A. (United Isshinryu Karate Association) in Canada

By Dave Shultz

The U.I.K.A. has been in Canada since the late 1980s, mainly in the Dryden area. A brief history of the Association and its founder is therefore in order. Sensei Harold Mitchum, as a U.S. marine, was stationed in Okinawa, and while there studied Isshinryu Karate under Tatsuo Shimabuku for seven and a half years. Through his efforts and dedication, he was elected the first president of the American Okinawan Karate Association. He was also the first American to be promoted to 8th Dan by Master Shimabuku. His certificate, Number 1, was dated November 1964. On June 5, 1988, the late Masufumi Suzuki, head of the All Japan Budo Federation, promoted Sensei Mitchum to 9th Dan.

After the death of Master Shimabuku in 1975, the style splintered into many different factions. Sensei Mitchum formed the U.I.K.A. He was not one to seek wide recognition or fame. His idea was to have an association made up of Isshinryu adherence, which had a sincere interest in practicing Karate, as taught to him by Tatsuo Shimabuku.

Sensei John Ingram mentions that he first met Sensei Mitchum in Cartersville Georgia in 1986. There was a contingent of Canadians also working out there with Sensei Mitchum. I believe it was probably Sensei Richard Hodgkinson, because for a while there, Sensei Mitchum would suddenly appear

in Dryden for a brief visit with Sensei Richard. As a result of the Cartersville encounter, the first Seminar was held in Dryden on June 25, 1988. That started what was to become a series of seminars in Dryden, usually including fishing, and great suppers. All Isshinryu in the region were invited, plus members from Arizona, Montana, Detroit, and Florida. April 1991, April 1993 (hosted by the then U.I.K.A. president Denis Fink out of New York), March 1996 with Senseis John and Cindy Ingram also in attendance, September 2000 and 2002 were some of the other years. In addition to the Dryden seminars, there were and still are, seminars hosted by other clubs each year, mainly in Florida or Montana where everyone is treated to the grace and skill of the U.I.K.A. instructors and a chance to talk with and learn from Sensei Mitchum about the origins and history of the association. The Canadian U.I.K.A. representatives included Jim Sapay (the first) followed by Dave Schultz, and the now present representative, Rick McGogy. For more on Sensei Harold and the U.I.K.A, check out the U.I.K.A. web site.



The Challenges!

The focus of the challenges is going to be questioning. Instead of accepting what you know or think you see, taking the time to question others and yourself to create a deeper understanding of your Karate.

Always be challenging with your questions (ask hard ones) but be open to the answers. Frequently we think of an answer before hearing it and have a hard time seeing other points of view. Keeping an open mind is very important.

Karate

Ask three hard questions, they can be focused on how to do something, or the why. Both are great.

Question #1—Upper Body Basics—How deeply do you understand them? Is there another layer? Are there any that aren't optimal in your practice or application?

Question #2—Kicks—Same as above, plus, can your balance be improved, do you really understand the forces applied to make it strong?

Question #3—Kata—Same as above, but the most important question here is the Why. Why are you doing the move? What is the purpose of it?

Kobudo

Just like the Karate questions (read those first if you haven't already) the focus should be on each weapon you train. Step back from the movements you already know to ask the how and why.

Why do we use the weapon the way we do. How do we move more efficiently?

As it's hardest for practical experience with the weapons, it's even more important that we ask ourselves hard questions and analyze them. Otherwise, we could easily practice for years, doing techniques that are incorrect and ineffective.

Training

Are you training enough?

Are you putting your effort into the training you do?

Do you favor things you are good at over things you need more work on?

Can you do more?

Are you doing too much?

Think about each question and be honest with yourself. Everyone's answer will be different and will change as life changes, but hopefully you can find a good balance.



Contributors



Editor & Author—Chitora Dojo

Mike Fenton—Thunder Bay, Ontario

Mike lives with his wife Kyla and has been training in Isshinryu karate for almost 30 years, and has been an instructor for over 25 years. He is currently head instructor of Chitora Dojo in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Author—Chitora Dojo

Trevor Warren—Thunder Bay, Ontario

Trevor lives in Thunder Bay with his wife Maria. He has dedicated a great deal of his time to teaching and his own training with the realization that hard work is the key to success.



Jeff Long—Assistant Editor

Jeff Long—Thunder Bay, ON

Jeff is a Sandan and Sensei at the Chitora Dojo. He's also an English major who's been helping to reduce the spelling & grammar mistakes in the newsletter.

Author—Toshikai Dojo

JF Sauriol—Ottawa, ON

JF is an interesting character and a skilled Karateka having earned his Nidan at the Isshinryu Expo in 2014

Author—Wanted

Authors are always wanted, why not contribute your opinions or insights? Anyone can offer something of value, regardless of rank or experience.

Karate Terms in this Newsletter

Ashi foot	Kokan heel	Taisuko sole of foot
Atemi vital points of the body	Kosomi ball of foot	Te hand
Empi, hiji elbow	Kote wrist	Tsuisaki toes
haishu back hand	Men head	Ude forearm
Haito ridge hand	Migi gawa right side	Ushiro back
Hara belly, lower abdomen, concept of spiritual center	Munc chest	Yoko side
Hidari gawa left side	Naisoku instep	Yubi finger
Hiza knee	Nesan girl	
Kansetsu joint	Nisan boy	
Ken fist	Sakotsu collar bone	
Kinteki groin	Shotei palm heel	
	Sokuto blade of foot	

It is important to familiarize yourself with commonly used Japanese words. Try to memorize all the words each time and you will soon have a large "karate" vocabulary.



Submissions

Article Submission

Articles are welcome from anyone and everyone. They can be about anything related to the Martial Arts, a technique you think is just great; A better way to do a technique; History of a Karate Master; a tournament trick that works well; ANYTHING!

All articles are appreciated as e-mail. You can send it to your instructor to proof read and send in, or directly to me. (Mike (at) Isshinryu.ca) or (sensei@issheinryu.ca)

You can even include pictures if it helps your article!

Dojo Directory:

Any student is welcome at anytime to visit any dojo. Before class, always introduce yourself to the Sensei of the dojo and tell them who your current Sensei is.

For a full dojo list visit Isshinryu.ca We are getting too many to list here.

Affiliate Cities!

Abbotsford, BC

Contact: Mike O'Leary

Brandon, MB

Contact: Richard Wharf

Contact: Buzz Cox

Calgary, AB

Contact: Charles Boyd

Chilliwack, BC

Contact: Ryan Bird

Cookstown, ON

Contact: Harri T. Makivirta

Dryden, ON

Contact: Rick McGogy

Hope, BC

Contact: Norm Losier

Kenora, ON

Contact: Steve Davis

Contact: David White

Ottawa, ON

Contact: Tim Leonard

Quebec

Contact: Pierre Parenteau

Saskatchewan

Contact: Brian Smout

Sioux Lookout

Contact: Jim Sapay

Thunder Bay, ON

Contact: Mike Fenton

Contact: Trevor Warren

Vancouver, BC

Contact: Rachel McGovern

Windsor, ON

Contact: Albert Mady

Winnipeg, MB

Contact: Brent Horton

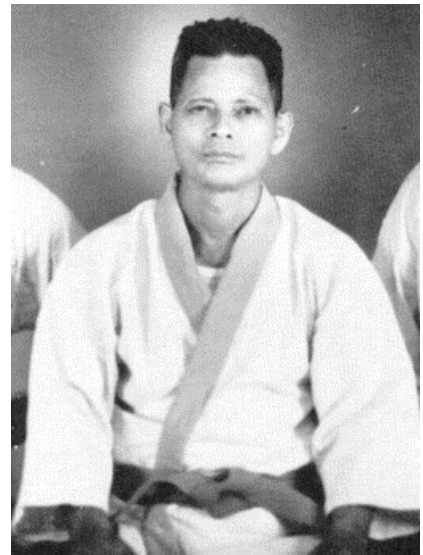
Canadian Isshinryu Abroad

Berlin, Germany

Contact: Ryan Boesche

Stow, Ohio

Contact: Albert Pecoraro



What is Isshinryu?