The Canadian Isshinryu Way
Everything Karate & Kobudo

Isshinryu.ca

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New Features and New Schedule

Congratulations on reading the third edition of the Canadian Isshinryu Newsletter! As announced on the website the newsletter will be taking a new release pattern to better correspond with when people are training as many clubs shut down over the summer.

Editions will be available at some point during the following months: September, November, Janurary, March, May.

Any submissions should be in before the 1st of the month. So if you want to submit something for the November issue (or next one) then you need to do it by October 31st. If it's not finished, it means no Halloween for you, just article writing!

Starting with this issue are two new and hopefully regular sections. The first is of Book Reviews, we had an absolutely great book review by Shane Hale last newsletter so now it's a regular.

This month the book is a work of fiction about a Martial Artist. Based on the review, the book sounds great, I know that I'm going to have to read it now.

Anyone can contribute a book review, if you read a good (martial arts) book either fiction, historical or instructional, share it. I know that I've got a lot of books and some are good while others aren't. Share the ones you like so others can learn and enjoy them as well.

The other new feature is the one mentioned on the cover of the last newsletter, Ask a Sensei.

This one is really simple, you can ask any questions you like, at any level and I try to get you the best possible answer.

Whether the best answer is something I can provide or something I have to ask others or research, you'll get it!

Start thinking up your questions, I expect a flood of them for the next newsletter.

Lastly, I'd like to remind everyone that for the first time in history, there will be an Isshinryu World Championships in Canada. Windsor, this year, will be hosting the AOKA championships. Regardless of whether you are a member of the AOKA please try to attend and show why Canadian Isshinryu Karateka are the best!

Upcoming Events

Seminars:

Peter Puna—Dim Mak 2— Date to be determined

Isshinryu Tournaments:

7th Annual Lennox Legacy Tournament. Nov 19, Akron, Ohio.

32nd Annual AOKA World Championships. Hosted for the first time in Canada by Shihan Albert Mady. July 8th, 2006, Windsor, ON.

Open Tournaments:

None Announced Yet.

Knockdown Tournaments:

USA-IFKK 15th Annual American International Karate Championships. Nov 5th, Rochester, NY.

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Third Edition of new Canadian Isshinryu Newsletter!

- Valuable training information
- Important historical articles
- Promotion & Tournament Results

Seiuchin - Part I

By Mike Fenton

Isshinryu Karate Kata Background Part 3

Understanding the history of the Isshinryu kata can provide the Isshinryu Karateka with a greater knowledge of the kata and the techniques it employs. The origins of a kata can guide us toward understanding both the application of the technique as a student and a deeper respect for the evolution of the art as an instructor.

The information within this article is a result of research done as part of a book in progress. It is to represent a comprehensive resource of data concerning the art for all Karateka. While every effort has been taken to ensure accuracy of the information, any corrections or additional details are welcome from one and all.

"Due to the intermixing of cultures in the formation of our current art of karate it is unclear which language and art the name truly originates from."

Seiuchin Kata 制引戦

The Name

Seiuchin has many interpretations associated with its name. Due to the intermixing of cultures in the formation of our current art of karate it is unclear which language and art the name truly originates from.

The accepted Okinawan name of Seiuchin as written in **Kanji** translates directly as "Control, pull, fight", while the esoteric translation of the kanji is often interpreted as "the calm within the storm" or "lull in the storm." Focusing on the more direct translation of the name it is clear to see the almost direct reference to the **Jujutsu** nature of the kata's application.

The name Seiuchin has been the accepted name for the kata on Okinawa for the last century when it first arrived on Okinawa. The form originated in Southern China where the original name would have been written in **Mandarin**. As such there are two suggested names for the original form.

Sui Yun Jin translated as "Follow, Move, Power" again a very similar translation to "Control, pull, fight" which makes reference to the flowing and balanced nature of grappling techniques.

Okinawan translation and kanji:

Seiunchin: 随運勁

Qing Ying Zhan translated as "Blue Hawk Fight". The name is based upon research indicating that the form originated from a Hawk style of Chinese Boxing. Following the Chinese traditions of naming forms based on the nature of animals the translation is less then informative to the application of the techniques.

Okinawan translation and kanji:

Chaiinchin: 青鷹戦

In many Goju Ryu circles the kata's Romanized name is spelt Seiunchin, Seienchin or Seiyenchin yet is pronounced identically. These variations exist as a result of the difficulty in translation from Kanji to the Roman alphabet. The form also appears in Shitoryu, Shoreiryu, Kyokushin, Shorinryu and Ryueiryu.

The Myths

Like the previously covered Seisan, Seiuchin is commonly referred to as being named for a great master of ancient with unbelievable skills. In the case of Seiuchin the common reference is to his existence in the 15th to 16th century and his ability to maim livestock with powerful finger thrusting techniques, unfortunately this myth has no cited references in available research and frequently fails to account for the appropriate livestock of the region.

The other two myths are directly associated with technique. The first is a rather simple one, that there are no kicks in the kata. While this is true in the traditional sense many understand the nature of many of the large focused steps in the kata as stomping techniques.

The second is in the basic reference to the ability of the originator of the kata. It is regularly taught as being an application of a very strong individual and

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Seiuchin - Part 1 Cont'd
By Mike Fenton

(Continued from page 2)

the techniques they would employ in combat. Again this is partially true, it can be very helpful in early education of the kata but the real understanding of the kata is both how to generate power and through it's deep stances the proper way to overcome someone of greater power.

Both these points, while minor can negatively affect ones true understanding of the techniques and their subtle lessons which greatly enhance the effectiveness of their application.

I sincerely hope that you enjoyed reading this. The next article will continue the background of Seiuchin with the bulk of the article primarily on the kata's origins focusing specifically on the path the kata took on it's way to Shimabuku Tatsuo and it's incorporation into Isshinryu Kata. If you have corrections or comments regarding this article or any future article, please feel free to contact me directly.

Mike Fenton

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This article represents part of an unfinished work by Trevor Warren and Mike Fenton. Nothing would have been possible without the many resources available both on the internet and via books currently available on Okinawan Karate. Additionally, special thanks must go out to Joe Swift, his research and willingness to share was an invaluable asset.

Book Review: Sensei
By Trevor Warren

Sensei by John Donohue

(aka Sensei: A Thriller)

There are of course many fictional works that in some way involve the martial arts, usually to either a disappointing or sensational degree. John Donohue manages to take the genre to a higher level bringing us a martial arts world that is both fantastic and realistic. Connor Burke is a martial artist/college professor who is called upon to authenticate a collection of swords brought in by a local art dealer. When the dealer brings in the collection a guard is found murdered and the word Ronin is found written on the wall of the museum. Ronin, we are told, is the name for a masterless Samurai warrior. It turns out there is a Ronin that is going across the States and killing martial arts masters. It is believed that one of the targets is Connor's sensei Yamashita. Together with his NYPD brother and his brother's partner, they endeavor to track down this mysterious Ronin in what promises to be a dangerous (if not suicidal) mission.

On first glance, I was a bit worried about reading this book (the title :A Thriller didn't exactly entice me). But this ended up being an excellent read. The description of the fighting is, for a work of fiction, quite realistic. The author is himself a martial artist (who has published several non-fiction titles including a dissertation on Kendo) which gives the book a sense of realism, at least as far as the martial arts is concerned. The story itself is quite entertaining, but for the martial artist the real appeal is the description of the fights. Most of the fight scenes in the book are described in exquisite and explicit detail. The fights last just seconds which also adds to the realism of the novel. As an added bonus, Donohue makes use of true martial arts lexicon and, for the Isshinryu practitioners, there is also liberal use of kobudo as a major part of the story.

This is probably the most readable martial arts-based novel that I have enjoyed. I recommend this book to all martial artists who enjoy the pace of true suspense.

"I recommend this book to all martial artists who enjoy the pace of true suspense."

Sanchin Kata and the Art of Italian Cooking

By Trevor Warren

As some of my colleagues in the martial arts community are undoubtedly aware, I am married to a wonderful, smart, beautiful, strong woman. She also happens to be Italian. Not being one myself (Fin, Irish mutt who has adopted some Okinawan mannerisms) I am continuously surprised by the passion, love, superstition and practicality of the People from the Boot. Sometimes these characteristics come together. The result is pasta sauce.

As I do on a (I am sad to say FAR too) regular basis, I was sitting back and thinking about food. Mmmmm, fooooood (think Homer Simpson). At the same time as I was sitting back thinking about food (in particular, what to consume that evening at the ritualistic time we call "supper") thoughts of karate were dancing in the back of my head. (Mmmmm, puuunnnching). Through some unfathomable leap of logic the two thoughts became mixed together. They also narrowed. My thoughts on food turned to pasta sauce (the Queen of all Sauces) whereas my thoughts on karate came to Sanchin, the King of Kata (just a thought, should the pronunciation be sanSHIN as in isSHIN, three spirits instead of one?). I start drawing these weird logic parallels when I am either

"I was sitting back and thinking about food. Mmmmm, fooooood (think Homer Simpson)."

A) Hungry

B) Healed enough to take another beating.

I realized that a very interesting parallel could be drawn between the two. This I will share with you… in a moment.

You must possess two characteristics in order to understand this parallel. First, you must love karate (this is probably a given, seeing that you are reading this article). Second, you have to like (or at least tried) pasta with tomato sauce. It doesn't matter if it's home made or that RAGU stuff you buy at the supermarket (which, by the way, is NOT even CLOSE to Italian). Now let us begin.

Let us assume that for some reason you have never tried pasta sauce before. You go to the supermarket, buy a bottle of the stuff you recognize from TV, boil it up, dump it over some noodles and eat. *Not bad* you think *not GREAT, but not bad.* Now I ask you, does this not sound very similar to what you thought the first time you saw Sanchin? Something to the effect of *hmm, that's an interesting thing, not the MOST interesting thing I've seen, but kind of neat.* At this point, you may or may not try pasta sauce again for a while, but it was probably likeable enough to keep you interested.

Now say you have a friend (Sensei) that says "I've got a great recipe for tomato sauce, I'll give it to you." You think *well, I'm not much of a cook (I'm a low kyu) but, hey why not.* You get the recipe and think ***Holy da Vinci!*** *I can't make this, look how complicated it is (Holy* ***Shimabuku!*** *How can I master this, I have to keep everything tight, focus on the right steps, breathing AND have some goof with a black belt smacking me around)*! And the first or second time you do it, it just isn't right. So now maybe you're discouraged and think, I can get through life without knowing how to make sauce, sure… why not (Sanchin isn't REALLY an important part of karate, it's ok if mine's not that great). It's all good… no worries.

Until your friend (Sensei) invites you over to his house (Dojo) and makes some of the old marinara FOR you (shows you how to do the kata RIGHT). You take your first bite, your second, and suddenly, all gone! Where did it go? It was FREAKING DELICIOUS!!! (You watch your Sensei and note the power, the grace, the focus, the 2x2s smashing against his arms, stomach and legs, WOW). So you say to your friend "This was amazing, what recipe did you use?" Your friend, of course, says "It's the same one I gave you, bud."

This has convinced you to try it again, and again, and again. You WILL get it right. Sometimes maybe you'll burn the onions, sometimes put too much oregano or not enough salt. But you are cooking it more and more, making the sauce your own. You may not realize it, but at some point you have stopped following a recipe and are going purely by your own feelings and experience. More than this, you start to enjoy making the sauce. Even MORE importantly, you start to like EATING the sauce.

Then one day, you invite your friends over for some pasta. After one taste they are BLOWN AWAY! Through practice and without thinking about it (too much) your pasta sauce has not only become edible, but superb. That is something to be proud of, something you can do well, and something you love doing!

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Sanchin Kata and the Art of Italian Cooking Cont'd
By Trevor Warren

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But then, you taste your friend's MOTHER'S sauce. You realize there is still a long way to go. At least along the way you'll get to eat a whole bunch of great sauce.

By the way, the fact that marinara happens to be the colour of blood is NOT the reason I like it so much… that's just a happy coincidence.

Black Belt Level Promotions

"Start thinking about your questions. Ask a Sensei needs your help!"

Each newsletter, we will attempt to recognize all Black Belt level promotions that have occurred since the previous newsletter.

Again like everything else in this newsletter, no guarantee of absolute completeness. If you know of one I missed, please let me know and I will include it for the next one.

Completed Promotions

Don't stop training now! There's always more to learn and improve upon.

April 9th—Kenora, ON

Joe Rigato—Sandan

Dale Radford—Nidan

Donna Adams—Shodan

James Stewart—Shodan

May 15th—Thunder Bay, ON

Susan Baldassi—Godan

Janet Fuchek—Godan

Trevor Warren—Yondan

Dinah Jung—Yondan

Cody Ward—Shodan

Jeff Long—Shodan

Last but certainly not least. The newsletters first Shihan level promotion

Charles Boyd—Rokudan (Calgary, AB)

Promoted by A.J. Advincula.

Ask a Sensei

Question: How do I ask a question?

Answer: That's really simple, just e-mail your question to the newsletter and I'll find the best person to answer it and get an answer.

Question: So what's the e-mail?

Answer: It's newsletter(@)isshinryu.ca or mike(@)isshinryu.ca, Hint: It's also on the last page!

Question: So where are the questions?

Answer: There were no question submitted, but I'm sure there will be some next time!

Proper arm position for Jodan Tsuki

Improve your karate– Jodan Tsuki (Uppercut)

The Isshinryu basics contain all the fundamentals needed to successfully defend yourself in a variety of situations.

Jodan Uchi (uppercut) is one of only two punches in the Isshinryu basics. The two punches are excellent with both showing a very solid understanding of the mechanics of the human body when done correctly. The key to understanding the uppercut is to understand that it is the only method in Isshinryu to punch to the head.

In order to maintain proper body mechanics and the physics behind the punch, all Isshinryu punches move upwards. When doing a straight punch or uppercut focusing on the upward path is key to generating power. Physics states that any action has an equal and opposite reaction. With our strike moving on an upwards path, the opposite reaction is to push downwards. The earth can support a punch of any strength you throw. Punching straight forward on the other hand, relies on air to support you, which should make it clear that the rising strike will prove more effective for you.

"Physics states that any action has an equal and opposite reaction"

Technique: I will assume you know the basic technique has I do in all these articles and instead go over key points that people frequently could use help with.

1) The wrist – Just like all strikes with the fist, it is crucial that the wrist be straight. This will prevent your wrist from rolling and keeps your elbow behind your strike maintaining power.
2) Angle of attack – Move forward. The punch does not go straight up. It moves away from the body and is a forward strike, your target should be a similar distance to that of a straight punch. Focus on striking at that distance without stretching your arm.
3) Hips – connecting with the point above. To avoid the stretch of the arm, use your hips correctly. On an uppercut the hips should shift forward and rise slightly. Without proper hip movements your strikes will lack the majority of their potential power. This is perhaps the most important skill to develop.

Practice:

Step 1: Start slow, The first step is to get the technique down. Don't use any power or speed. Just follow the path and make sure everything feels right.

Step 2: Put some power behind it. Once you have the technique solid, start putting it together. The timing of the hips and strike is important so it will take time to get the two in sync.

Step 3: Hit something: Find a heavy bag and strike it. Start lightly. By striking the bag you will quickly be able to determine if your wrist is straight (it's going to hurt if it isn't) and use the reaction of the bag to determine whether you are generating power or just slapping the bag.

The uppercut is a strike that is deceptive and very powerful. Develop it, and use it. Even if it doesn't become your favorite strike the added variety of your technique will benefit you.

Improve your Kobudo Chudan Uke (Sai)

The closed block with the sai is the most common error during sai handling.

Not having the sai tight to the arm will cause the block to be ineffective and cause damage to the arm. Many times this error of technique is only found while practicing **Bunkai**. It is important to remember that just like empty hand techniques, Kobudo techniques are designed for fighting. If you think you understand a movement, try it out. It may hurt a little, but is an important lesson in the understanding of the weapon.

"It is important to remember that just like empty hand techniques, Kobudo techniques are designed for fighting"

There is a single key factor in having a good closed block with the sai, and that is that the Sai must be fully supported by the arm. Typically this is taught by having the sai against the arm. While this is helps greatly, the focus should be higher up. The key to having the sai tight to the arm is in the wrist. As long as it tight to the wrist even if the sai is slightly away from your forearm, the block will be solid.

Technique: Holding the sai closed. Rotate your wrist out so the sai is outside the arm. Turn your wrist down so the sai is tight to your wrist. You are

Improve your Kobudo Chudan Uke (Sai)

(Continued from page 6)

now ready to block, just remember to use the sai to block!

Notes:

The angle your wrist should be at should be at about forty five degrees turned out. But keep your wrist as flat as possible. Try not to curl it up or down as it will push the end of your sai up or down from the plane of your arm.

Practice Notes:

The only way to develop a strong block and be sure you have one is to block. Find a partner and practice blocking from a variety of angles. While this article was supposed to be on the Chudan Uke or Middle block, everything applies to ALL types of closed sai blocks. Rotate through Age Uke, **Jodan** Uke, Chudan Uke, and Gedan Uke. Once you feel comfortable, have your partner try a little random. But remember, start slow and if it feels off stop. Some days your technique will just not feel right, these are not the days to have someone attempting to hit you in the head with a bo.

Training Tips

A great quote is that every great accomplishment in life is 10% Inspiration and 90% perspiration. That should be every **Karateka's** motto.

Training, and training hard is a prerequisite for all great martial artists. No one has ever become a great fighting sitting on a couch watching TV.

No matter how busy, you are, or think you are, you must make time to train. It's all up to you how good you can be.

The entire upper body can be trained solely doing pushups. While the standard pushup focuses primarily on the pectoral muscles (Chest) used for pushing varying the positioning of the hands can change the muscles being exercised.

I will now provide a series of pushup variations which allow you to involve all the muscles.

Type: Standard Pushups
Muscle: Pectoral (Chest)
Standard pushups work all the main muscles involved in pushing. These muscles are useful for punching and blocking.

Type: Close Grip
Muscle: Forearms & Triceps (Back of Arms)
Technique: Make a triangle with your hands putting your thumbs and index fingers matching.
These very challenging pushups strengthen your wrists, also the muscles which straighten your arms. Developing these muscles help protect your wrist from rolling when you punch as well as give you more power in your Backfist.

Type: Wide Grip
Muscle: Rear/Side Deltoids (back of Shoulder)
Technique: Place your hands about double shoulder width with your fingers pointed away from your body.
These pushups are great for working the shoulders which are involved in any hand techniques. Strong shoulders help to provide snap to your punches.

Type: Military Pushups
Muscle: Front Deltoids / Upper Pectorals
Technique: Just like standard pushups but with your feet raised up (chairs work great!)
Very difficult pushups but provide an excellent workout.

Type: Inverted Hands
Muscle: Biceps / Back
Technique: For a full workout this must be done on both halves of the body. One hand is turned to point towards your feet with your elbow close to your side.
These pushups force most of your weight onto the lower hand and will work most of your back muscles. The muscles in your back and your biceps are used for any pulling movement. They are very important in grappling and working with the bo.

When planning your workout, try to include all types. Start with a small number of each and work your way up. A good idea is to take a short break between types, but decide on the break before you start and stick to it. If you decide to rest for 15 seconds make sure you only rest for 15 seconds no matter how tired you are, don't be afraid to push yourself, you gain more from doing 3 when they are hard, than doing 50 when they are easy.

"When planning your workout, remember that with everything in Karate, and life, more is not better. "

Contributors

Editor & Author—Chitora Dojo

Mike Fenton—Thunder Bay, Ontario

Mike lives with his wife Kyla and has been in Isshinryu karate for almost 20 years, and has been an instructor for the past 15 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.

Author

Requested—Anywhere in Canada

Someone willing to contribute their time to helping other Isshinryu karateka with their training or understanding.

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

Karate Terms in this Newsletter

Bunkai—Application of Move

Chitora—Essence of the Tiger

Chudan—Middle Body

Dachi—Stance

Dojo—School

Geri—Kick

Gojuryu—Hard / Soft Way

Isshinryu—One Heart Way

Kanji—Japanese Writing

Karate—Empty Hands

Karateka—A person who trains in karate

Kata—Prearranged training techniques

Kobudo—Ancient Martial Way

Jodan—Upper Body

Jujutsu– Grappling Art

Mandarin—Chinese Language

Okinawa—Japanese Island where all karate began

Shimabuku Tatsuo— Okinawan Master who created Isshinryu. Extra Note: Japanese names are written Family Name, Given Name. We use this format when mentioning Okinawan Master out of respect for their traditions.

Sandan—3rd Level (Black Belt) Sensei Level. This rank denotes instructor level as such the title Sensei becomes the appropriate title for the individual at this rank.

Shodan—1st Level (Black Belt)

Uchi—Strike

Uke—Hard Block

Everything in your City

Recent Promotions

None Submitted for your city

Continue training and practicing at home to improve your standings and to help ready yourself for promotion.

News

No news submitted for your city.

Contact us at lsshinryu.ca to contribute for your city.

Upcoming Events

No events available for your city.

Isshinryu.ca

Visit Isshinryu.ca for an archive of our newsletters and must more information about Isshinryu.

Photography by : Kyla Bass

Story Submission

Stories 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 stories 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 (newsletter (at) Isshinryu.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 www.isshinryu.ca We are getting too many to list here.

Affiliate Cities!

Calgary, AB
Contact: Charles Boyd
Cookstown, ON
Contact: Harri T. Makivirta
Kenora, ON
Contact: Steve Davis
Ottawa, ON
Contact: Tim Leonard
Thunder Bay, ON
Contact: Mike Fenton & Trevor Warren
Windsor, ON
Contact: Albert Mady

Quick Tips

This section is reserved for quick little tips aimed at each belt rank. Adding the skill to your training can only improve your skills as a **Karateka**.

Black Belts:

Striking with the Hips—The hips are the key to movement. When you want to strike, think about your hips and make sure they move correctly to help generate power efficiently.

Brown Belts(Ikkyu & Nikyu):

Learn to teach! Watch your instructors. Look at what details they teach each rank and consider it.

Purple Belts(Sankyu):

Mae Geri—Chinto and Kusanku are filled with Mae Geri. Take the time to develop the kick into a powerful weapon. Focus on the upward path it takes and the force it can generate.

Green Belts(Yonkyu):

Distance—Start to think about the distance you are from your partner when you fight. Try to move closer or back up to gain an advantage. Learn where you need to be to fight best.

Orange Belts(Gokyu):

Sanchin—Now that you've known Sanchin for awhile. It's time to start developing your strength. First step, stomach. Everytime you do Sanchin make your first focus on your belly. Keep it tight anytime you aren't stepping. Your core is most important!

Yellow Belts(Rokukyu):

Seisan—As you work on your kata's it is very important to look before you turn. Take your time and make a noticeable look before each turn.

Beginners & Yellow Stripe:

Relax—When working on your basics it is important to relax. If you can stay relax your techniques will be faster and more powerful.

Kobudo

Practice—To understand the weapons you need to use them. Find a partner and start slow, but use your techniques. Get the feel for actually using the weapon and you will be better off.

Little Dragons:

Patience is important. Take your time and your skills improve quickly.

Samurai's:

Stance is where all power comes from. A poor stance means a poor punch.