



# The Canadian Isshinryu Way Everything Karate & Kobudo

Isshinryu.ca

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## Summer Training

The summer is one of the most enjoyable times of the year for us Canadians. After being inside for so many months, it is refreshing to be able to enjoy the outdoors.

There's no reason why this can't extend to your Karate training. Outdoor practice is both a practical and enjoyable exercise. The martial arts are intended to be used in the real world. Old world masters did not exclusively apply their techniques inside of a Dojo. They used them where it was needed.

Until recently the concept of a dojo was not even an interior space, on Okinawa it was typically a backyard.

Take advantage of the nice weather. It can be by yourself, or with a group but training on uneven terrain or having to deal with other obstacles (trees) can expand your understanding of the techniques.

On top of that. I can be a lot of fun.

This is the last newsletter until September. Please keep up your training over the warm months and find your focus to keep improving.

I hope everyone has a great summer and gets in some great training!

### Essential Isshinryu has been Released!

For more information on the first Canadian Isshinryu book, visit [www.essentialissheinryu.com!](http://www.essentialissheinryu.com!)

### ATTENTION NEEDED!

**Do you know of someone great in Canadian Isshinryu?** If so, please e-mail [Sensei@issheinryu.ca](mailto:Sensei@issheinryu.ca) with the contact details to be profiled in future newsletters.

## Upcoming Events

### Seminars

**Hanshi Mady in Berlin, Germany—May 16th-21st**

### Tournaments

**33rd Annual Issheinryu Hall of Fame—July 27th and 28th—Chattanooga, TN**

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## Dedicate Yourself



# Taira Shinken

Understanding the history of Isshinryu and karate can provide the Isshinryu Karateka with a greater knowledge of the masters of Karate and their contributions to creating Isshinryu. Understanding the people involved leads the student and instructor alike to a deeper respect for the evolution of the art.

## Taira Shinken (June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1897- September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1970)

### Who he was

A Kobudo instructor of Shimabuku Tatsuo and largely responsible for the preservation of Okinawan Kobudo.

### Key Instructors

**Funakoshi Gichin**—Founder of Shotokan and mentor in Karate. Taira was Funakoshi's live in student for 8 years.

**Kenwa Mabuni**—Karate instructor as well as Bo and Sai, he helped to refine Taira's techniques, after his studies with Funakoshi.

**Yabiku Moden**—An expert in Okinawan Kobudo, and Taira's primary Kobudo instructor. It was his instruction that fueled Taira's passion to preserve Kobudo.

### Key Students

**Shimabuku Tatsuo** — The founder of Isshinryu learned all the advanced Kobudo of Isshinryu from Taira.

**Akamine Eisuke** — Taira's top student and successor to his lineage. He continued to teach on Okinawa and spread help spread Kobudo training worldwide.

### The Individual

Rather than outline the training and many details of his life, which exceeds the space allocated for this article, I will instead share a specific incident from his life.

On Okinawa he immediately began teaching Kobudo to anyone interested and at the same time founded his own organization Ryukyu Kobudo Hozon Shinko-Kai. The purpose of the organization was for the promotion and preservation of Kobudo in Naha. Though this organization was structured much like his Masters', Taira was able to systematize the grading procedures and forms taught to ensure they survived. During this period he also began an intended set of five books on Kobudo. Unfortunately he was only able to complete one book, Ryukyu Kobudo Taiken, prior to his health deteriorating.

While back on Okinawa, Taira worked hard to expand his knowledge of Kobudo and unite the various techniques. He studied with many Okinawan Karate masters of the time. The only one which we have a specific record of is a student of Miyagi Chojun's. Kamiya Jinsei (1894-1964) was a top student of Miyagi's and recognized as Miyagi's representative on the 1940 Okinawa Karate-Do Special Committee. He was also recognized as a master of local Kobudo traditions and instructed Taira in three important systems, the Soeishi, Choun, and Chatan traditions.

Taira Shinken will be remembered for many years as the man who brought Kobudo back to the forefront of Okinawan thought. He was recognized throughout Okinawa as the premier weapons instructor and became the vice president of Kokusai Karate-do Kobudo Renmei. He was also recognized as a master instructor by the All Japan Kobudo Federation

Taira knew an extensive repertoire of weapons kata, but today none of his students know all the kata he taught. The kata he developed all follow a basic floor pattern, usually with only one major unique technique to distinguish them. He taught kata slightly differently to various students to suit each individual. This tailoring caused great variance in the performance of the kata.

The next newsletter will continue to provide Kobudo masters that helped to shape Isshinryu. Kobudo is an important part of Isshinryu Karate, and it's history and included aspects are important knowledge for student of Isshinryu.



## The Eight Codes

By Matthew Morin

What are the eight codes of Issin Ryu karate? Where did they come from? Why are they important? These questions must run through the minds of most Karateka who are told to memorize them and do their best to understand them. I know that for me, I have memorized them for written tests in order to progress into my next belt level, only to have my memory of them erode over time as my mind moves to other things. Upon doing some research into these cryptic codes, I was fascinated to learn about their history, origin, and why they are relevant enough to put the thought into interpreting them, implementing them into Karate-do, and applying them into everyday life.

### The Bubishi

The eight codes of Karate come from a old Okinawan text called the Bubishi. The name Bubishi is the Japanese translation of 'Wu Pei Chih'. The 'Wu Pei Chih' was a Chinese text dating back to 1621, containing Military science, martial arts and Army Accounts. It is important to note that the Okinawan Bubishi is not the same text as the original 'Wu Pei Chih'. The Okinawan bubishi may have been named after the 'Wu Pei Chih' because of the prestige of the Chinese text, or maybe to pay respect to the Chinese influence on origins of Okinawa Karate.

There is not a lot of fact surrounding the origin of the Okinawan text. No one knows for sure who wrote it, when it was written and where it came from; but there has been a fair amount of speculation and research. It is speculated that it was written by a group of Okinawan karate masters, who when researching the origins of Karate traveled to the South of China to train with a Chinese master of White Crane, Master Go Kenki. Others speculate that Master Go Kenki himself wrote the text. It is a known fact that on several occasions Master Go Kenki and Master Chojun Miyagi traveled together to Fukien, China to find useful books on martial arts and to study with significant masters of Quan fa. This supports the idea that the text was created between the Okinawan Karate masters and Master Go Kenki.

What is known is that is the Bubishi was written in Chinese. The book was kept in utmost secrecy and

those who wanted a copy, copied it by hand. Much of the book was written in symbolic and poetic language so it is hard to translate and understand. Also, much of it was written with the usage of old characters that are no longer in use. As an example of its cryptic nature, a technique may be referred to by its symbolic name "tiger rushing out of the cage" with no further explanation. Many of the images/diagrams were without description. The book can be divided into four sections: 1. Quan fa (kung-fu) origins, history and philosophy, 2. Traditional Chinese medicine, 3. Vital points, 4. Fighting techniques.

One thing that is very interesting about the Bubishi was its widespread influence on the Okinawan Karate Masters. Many masters knew about it including Chojun Miyagi (founder of Goju Ryu) and Gichin Funakoshi (founder of Shotokan and modern Japanese Karate). As example of its influence, master Miyagi named his style 'Goju Ryu' from line 3 of the "8 poems of the fist". It seems to me, that if one wanted to study the origins of Karate, to understand the philosophy and the intent behind its creation and study, they would have to look no further than the Bubishi. With this in mind, master Chojun Miyagi likely passed it down to Master Shimabuku. The 'Eight Codes' are Master Shimabuku's refined interpretation of chapter 13 of Bubishi, "Eight Poems of the Fist."

### Why are the 'Eight Codes of Karate' important?

In this day in age where Karate is widely thought of as a sport; where martial arts are now more associated with competition and tournaments (ie. UFC etc.), it is easy to get lost in this one dimensional point of view. Karate is much more than the study and application of military science. It is often said that Karate-do is a study that includes the Mind, Body and Spirit; not just the body. As illustrated by the Bubishi, Karate has a long history filled with philosophy, healing, military science, and spirituality. The inclusion of the Eight Codes as a part of the study of Karate brings us back to the roots of karate which allows for a better, more well - rounded understanding of what it is we are studying; a way of life.

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# The Eight Codes

By Matthew Morin

It is said that there is common agreement about what each code generally means. Also, depending on what angle or point of view the interpreter comes from there could be a lot of varying opinions especially in their application. In the following section, I will list each code, my dojo's interpretation and how it applies to me.

### The Eight Codes

#### **A persons heart is the same as heaven and Earth.**

Bubishi: The mind is one with Heaven and Earth

*"One can no more go against the prompting of one's true heart than the heaven and earth can disobey natural law. The power or energy of nature is much like man's power (the tremendous power of focused nature--like the waves in the karate crest-- is like the focused energy of a master karate-ka)."*

It is interesting to note that the words 'heart' and 'mind' are interchangeable from one translation to the other. I have read that in Chinese culture, the words 'heart' and 'mind' mean the same thing. When the heart and mind are one, there is nothing not known; we become aligned with everything in existence. When we align ourselves to a single point of focus we achieve our greatest potential.

#### **The blood circulating is similar to the sun and moon.**

Bubishi: The circulatory rhythm of the body is similar in rhythm to the cycle of the Sun and the Moon.

*"Human nature, given the right aspirations, is as reliable as the daily round of sun & moon. It (human nature) is something to be trusted. Sensei trusted his own nature, let go, dreamt, and found the soul of his art."*

To me this means that everything goes in cycles from our internal systems to the outside world. It becomes important to be in touch with inner and

outer cycles, as the blood flow to and from the heart, and the sun sets and the moon rises.

#### **The manner of drinking and spitting is either hard or soft**

Bubishi: The way of breathing is hard and soft.

*"There is often more than a single way to accomplishing the same goal (or even the same move)."*

Sometimes it is best to act with little force. Other times it is best to act with much force. The key is to be aware enough to know which one to apply.

#### **A person's unbalance is the same as a weight.**

*Not directly from Bubishi*

*"A divided self accomplishes little, because it is unbalanced, weighted down with unnecessary knowledge. A properly weighted self, a balanced, unified self, however directs single-minded energy to achieving a single-minded goal."*

Unbalance in any area creates resistance. Sometimes it is the weight that we feel that lets us know that we are unbalanced in some way. Once we can recognize that, it just becomes a matter of finding balance once again.

#### **The body should be able to change direction at anytime.**

*Not directly from Bubishi*

*"1) should be able to alter the position of one's body swiftly & naturally at any moment; this is essential for good fighting technique .*

*2) more broadly, one should adapt to circumstance, in life as well as kumite; only by being supremely flexible can one master Karate & life. "*

Attachment leads to suffering. This applies all are-



## The Eight Codes

By Matthew Morin

as of life. One can be committed to an idea without being too ridged about how to get there or what it will look like once achieved. Be the person standing for the idea and then let go and let it happen.

### The time to strike is when the opportunity presents itself

Bubishi: Act in inevitable accordance with time and change.

*"..in life, as in battle."*

Much like the last code, this code is about being flexible. If we stay in the moment we will be able to see the opportunity and seize it.

### The eyes must see all sides.

Bubishi: The eyes do not miss even the slightest change.

*In a fight you have to be aware of your surroundings because an attack could come from some-*

*where you don't expect. In regular life this means that you should be able to evaluate all sides of a situation before taking action.*

Be aware of everything around you. More you are able to see, the more effective you will be.

### The ears must listen in all directions.

Bubishi: The ears listen well in all eight directions.

*This one's similar to 7. In a fight, you don't need to only use your eyes. You might be able to hear an opponent approaching from behind. In regular life this might mean that you listen to all sides of a debate before making your decision.*

We rely very much on the sense of sight. As an example, sometimes people must SEE something in order to believe it. This code reminds us that we have other senses always at work giving us information. Sometimes the heart speaks and we must also listen to that. So the "ears" must listen to all of information being provided to us internally as well as externally.

## The Significance of the Master-Student Relationship

By Kevin Harman

Unlike most other sports that I am familiar with, there is something unique about the master-student relationship in Karate. After studying the history of Isshinryu karate I began to see more clearly the significance of this special relationship as well as the benefits to both karate masters and their students. This new awareness will have a strong and lasting effect on how I approach my training and participation in the dojo.

From the distant past of Chinese martial arts, and the early days of Okinawan Karate, masters of their art took a position of strong moral responsibility for their skills. There was a very real sense that these skills were to be used to make them better individu-

als as well as to better serve in their societies. This is seen in many examples of early karate masters achieving high regard and respect for their capabilities and then using that respect in ways that positively served their communities. For example, Matsumora Kosaku risked everything when he used his skills and stood up to an armed Satsuma official who was threatening and abusing locals.

As an extension of this social responsibility, early masters would choose who they would accept as students based on their assessment of whether that person would be likely to use their new martial arts skills for good purposes. They felt that part of their

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## The Significance of the Master-Student Relationship

By Kevin Harman

obligation to their past masters was to ensure that the skills were passed on in such a way that their art was seen as a positive thing to society. In this way, they continued to honour their past masters. One example of this selectivity is the difficulty that Master Motobu Choki had at an early age to convince masters such as Matsumora Kosaku to train him. Until he could clearly demonstrate over an extended time that he was worthy of the training and would not use it in a negative way, he would not be given instruction.

The respect and formal acknowledgement of past masters of karate that exists to this day creates a sense of belonging to something greater than one's self. This linkage to history and tradition is similar to that which I experienced while serving in the military, however on a slightly more personal note. Rather than the primary identity coming from one's fighting unit (ie. Squadron, regiment, ship) it is drawn directly from a karateka's sensei and then from his sensei's past masters. This is formalized and practiced regularly through the bowing process to both the past master and the sensei. Also, the display and study of each sensei's lineage demonstrates the importance placed on the connection to past masters.

While many sports are instructed in small groups or one on one, martial arts generally has a much more personal connection between sensei and students. This may be explained by the fact that martial arts such as karate involve the passing on of life skills beyond fighting techniques. Concepts such as self-discipline, focus, honour, even spirituality are included in the knowledge passed from sensei to students. This requires a solid familiarity of students in order to understand how each will grasp such lessons. As a result of such encompassing sharing within the dojo, strong bonds are built between sensei and students. This has been demonstrated time after time through the loyalty shown by students to their masters. As an example Shimabuku first called his new style of karate Chan Migwa Te after his former master's nickname (Kyan Chotoku). Also, one of the meanings of the stars in the Isshinryu crest signifies his three masters as his homage to them.

In earlier days of martial arts (and perhaps even today in certain dojos), students would spend many hours a day under the instruction of their sensei. In some cases, such as when Shimabuku trained under Motobu Choki, students would stay with their sensei for years while under training. In such cases, the time spent under the influence of their masters rivalled that spent with families or (if they had one) their jobs. It stands to reason that this degree of time spent together resulted in a tremendous influence on a karateka's life. Such an influence must not have been taken lightly by such masters and explains the loyalty of the students.

While most karateka these days have external pressures of careers, family and other demands on their time and attention, I am sure that an aspect of this unique relationship still exists. If we consider that in our present society that the use of aggression, whether controlled or not, is considered unacceptable in most workplaces or relationships. Particularly with men, there is no means to develop one's natural warrior spirit in a positive way. The side effect is that this energy manifests in very negative ways in some people, and other people are left feeling as if part of themselves is missing. Today martial arts such as Karate help develop this energy in a positive and responsible way just as it has for many years. This influence and development still represents a significant responsibility of sensei's and the basis for a strong bond between them and their students.

While I may have been intuitively aware of some of the points above, my studies have opened a far greater appreciation of the unique master student relationship. I feel that this understanding will greatly enhance my ability to fully benefit from my karate training. On the one hand, it will keep me more present in my commitment to learn from my sensei. On the other hand, I will stay mindful of the knowledge and dedication that past masters have passed down to my present day sensei. I will also stay mindful of the privilege and honour to be part of this continuum of wisdom.



## Promotions at Chitora Dojo—Thunder Bay

On April 26th, The Chitora Dojo held an outstanding grading which saw the following promotions after a long night and many, many hard fights, bruises and vomiting.

### Sankyu—Purple Belt

Derek Lambert  
Adrianna Tikka  
Greg Iwanonkiw

### Yonkyu—Green Belt

Nicholas Titan  
Sarah Williams

### Gokyu—Orange Belt

Colin Nagy

### Rokyu—Yellow Belt

Sierra Long  
Madison Roeck  
Alyssa Lahti  
Hannah Dahl  
Douglas Deschenes

**Congratulations to everyone!**

## Team Mady Grapplers

### TEAM MADY GRAPPLERS

Event: Elite Federation of Grapplers Date: Saturday  
March 24, 2012

Location: MRCC Banquet & Conference Center-  
23401, Mound Rd. Warren, MI 48091

T.j Laramie, 14 years old, Teen no-gi 130-149.9 lbs,  
1st place, TJ won his first match by rear naked  
choke, his second match by guillotine, and his final  
match by armbar.

Tony Laramie 12 years old, Teen no-gi 129.9lbs and  
under, 1st place, Tony won his first match by arm  
bar and his second match by guillotine, and his final  
match by decision.

Eric Montgomery, Mens, no gi, 150-159.9lbs 1st  
place  
Eric also won the absolute division, no-gi first place.  
Eric won his first division by armbar and toe hold.  
He won his first absolute match on points, his se-  
cond match by ankle lock, and in the absolute finals  
he won by armbar.

## Passing of Takayoshi Nagamine

It has been announced with deep regret that Soke  
Takayoshi Nagamine 10th Dan Hanshisei  
head of Matsubayashi-ryu and son of Shosin  
Nagamine has passed away on April 27th, 2012

Shosin Nagamine was the founder of Matsubayashi-  
ryu and a contemporary of Shimabuku Tatsuo.

<http://www.matsubayashi-ryu.com/content/wmka->



## The Challenges!

This newsletters challenges were written by guest challenger Trevor Warren. If you have some challenges you'd like to pose, send them in!

As summer approaches most of us Canadians like to head to the great outdoors. Up here in Northern Ontario we always get some great karate training fighting the ninja death squads of mosquitos (that are by the way the size of small birds with harpoon like proboscis) that descend upon us from now until November. But for those of you that are not lucky enough to have the benefit of these small assassins, here are some tips to keep you busy over the summer.

### Karate

One of the things that I love best about summer is outdoor practice. Find a park or a field and start going through the kata that you know. I usually like to practice bare foot, but if the terrain doesn't agree I'll wear a pair of runners. If you haven't done this before you'll notice subtle differences in the ground (compared to the dojo floor) that may make it more difficult to have a steady/strong stance. Play with different types of terrain (beach sand, grass, rock, stony ground) as well as slopes (uphill, downhill) and you'll find a whole new dimension to your kata.

### Kobudo

It may not be the best idea to practice kobudo outside. Mike and I once had a police officer almost pull his gun on us for practicing Kusanku sai in a public area. Oh well, live and learn (the police officer learned that a sai is not a prohibited or restricted weapon).  
One thing that I have never tried but might this summer is to make your own bo. You will need knowledge of wood, a small saw, a sharp knife and sandpaper. Give it a try and send in some pictures of the outcome. We would LOVE to see some pictures of home-made weapons.

### Training

There are two training exercises that are especially nice (and suck horribly) in summer. Trail running or obstacle running is a great way to break the monotony of track or road running. Having to navigate a narrow trail (cross country ski trails are great for this) which may include fallen trees, bogs (wear old shoes) or other obstacles is great fun, but make sure you run with a buddy.  
There is nothing better for endurance training then hills. Find a large hill or small mountain and get to the top. Then go back down. Then to the top again. This will build fighting stamina and improve your cardio 10 fold.  
Enjoy the summer, stay safe and keep training.





## Contributors



### Editor & Author—Chitora Dojo

Mike Fenton—Thunder Bay, Ontario

Mike lives with his wife Kyla and has been training in Isshinryu karate for over 25 years, and has been an instructor for over 20 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 (Ottawa)

Kevin Harman—Thunder Bay, ON

Kevin recently earned his Gokyu, and a nice bruise at the same time.



### Author—Any Dojo

Authors are always wanted! Consider taking the time to submit something to the newsletter.

## Karate Terms in this Newsletter

**Chudan**—Middle Level

**Do**—Way

**Dojo**—School

**Furi**—Swing

**Gusan**—Okinawan Jo

**Jo**—Short Staff

**Jutsu**—Technique

**Ka**—Person / Practitioner

**Kama**—Sickle(s)

**Kami**—Divine Spirit

**Kanetsu**—Joint

**Keri**—Kick

**Kihon**—Exercises

**Kime**—Focus

**Kobudo**—Ancient Martial Way, the term used to describe all the weapons in Isshinryu and Karate.

**Kumite**—Free Fight

**Mae**—Front

**Makiwara**—Striking Board

**Mushin**—No Mind

**Naha**—Port city on Okinawa

**Rokushaku**—Six Foot

**Sama**—Honorific suffix applied to a name, denotes respect

**Shiko Dachi**—Horse Stance

**Shozenkutsu / Seisan Dachi**—Small forward stance

**Shuri**—Capital City on Okinawa

**Tatsu**—Dragon

**Tatsuo**—Dragon Man

**Tetko**—Brass Knuckles

**Tonfa/Tuifa**—Baton with Handle

**Uchi**—Strike

**Uchi Hachi Dachi**—Inner Eight stance

**Ude**—Forearm

**Uke**—Hard block

**Yubi**—Finger

**Yudansha**—Black Belt

**Zenkutsu Dachi**—Forward Stance

*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) lsshinryu.ca) or (sensei (at) lsshinryu.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 lsshinryu.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

#### **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 lsshinryu Abroad

#### **Berlin, Germany**

Contact: Ryan Boesche

#### **Stow, Ohio**

Contact: Albert Pecoraro



## The Chitora Dojo

I warned you... If you miss the picture, you don't exist