



September 1997, Volume III, Issue I

Shimbun Internet Editors: [Jose Tigani](#) & Brian Berenbach

Shimbun Print Editor: [Brian Berenbach](#)

Topics

- [Letter From The President](#): by Myron Lubitsch
- [Promotions](#):
- [Shorinjiryu: My Way of Life](#): by John Mirrione, Shihan
- [Fate or Coincidence](#): by Tony Diaz, Shihan
- [Milestones](#): by Tom Carmelengo, Shihan
- [How to Chose a Martial Arts School](#): by PeterM. Hiltz
- [Article Submissions](#)

Letter from the President

Dear Shinzen Association Members,

The past year was incredible for the Kyokai. Wecelebrated the Fiftieth Anniversary of Shorinjiryu as created by ShinanKori Hisataka and the Tenth Shinzen Shiai. All those in presence were witnesseto an incredible display of Shorinjiryu Karatedo at its best. But, moresignificantly was the feeling of coming home and the warmth of true friendship.The banquet, which followed, was indeed an event to remember-and, with theblessing of Providence we may host an even more resplendent one on the occasionof the seventy-fifth.

This year Shindo Budo Kwai and Kenryukan\Kudakar,yujoined forces to host their own "gathering of the Shorinjiryu family".As expected, the event was well run and the competition was top notched.Congratulations to Renshi Gilles LaBelle, Renshi Tom Bellazzi and SenseiPaul Bussiere on a job well done.

We are pleased to announce that Shihan Michel Laurinformally joined his Shindo Budo Kwa with the Kyokai in October of 1996.Shihan Laurin is a most accomplished instructor and student of Shorinjiryu.He has supported the Kyokai for many years and, on a personal side, is agood friend. Welcome.

We would also like to announce that Hanshi BrianAarons, Hanshi Doug Roberts, and Renshi Tom Bellazzi and the ShorinjiryuKenryukan\Kudaryu have formally

joined the Kyokai. For how many years have you known Hanshi Brian Aarons and Hanshi Doug Roberts? Probably more years than most of the current students of Shorinjiryu have been alive. Welcome. Renshi Tom's support and belief in the Kyokai has been instrumental in the advancement of the Kyokai.

At the time of this printing we are extremely pleased to announce that Sensei Peter M. Hiltz of Shorinjiryu Ake No Mojo Budo has joined the association. Sensei Peter is a long time student of Shorinjiryu under the tutelage of the now retired Nelson Knode. Sensei Pete also comes to us with a background in Aikido. His school is located in Sykesville, Maryland. We wish him well. Thank you and welcome!

On behalf of the Kyokai, we wish everyone a great year.

Kyoshi Myron M. Lubitsch

[Return To Topics](#)

Promotions

Congratulations-During 1996 and 1997 a number of our members received advanced ratings...

| | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| 8th dan | Kyoshi Myron M. Lubitsch | |
| 7th dan | Shihan John A. Mirrione, Sr. Shihan Michel Laurin | |
| 6th dan | Shihan Tom Carmelengo | |
| 5th dan | Renshi Atul Joshi Renshi-Dan Hayes Renshi Carlos Figueroa Renshi Charles Cable | |
| 4th dan | Tashi Brian Berenbach Tashi Janet Bayer Tashi John P. Mirrione, Jr | |
| 3rd dan | Sensei Alberdeston Gonzalez Sensei Dennis Dorn Sensei Warren Better | |
| 2nd dan | Jose Tigani Tanja Kuzman Coady | |

| | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| 1st dan | Edwin Arenas Rene Rosaly, Jr James Dee Paul Alba Peter McGough Frederick Carl Eric Norberg Mahesh Bhusari Ritesh Chopra Neeja Joseph Chenna K. Vikas Kasurde | Machindra B. Kharade Neeraj Kumar Shubhangi Kubar Ashish Mehta Meher Minbattiwalla Rajesh Patel Rajesh Patel E.P. Pradeep Lt. N. Ramchandran Ritesh Shah Rajkumar Sinkar Anil Vanve |
| Junior | Rugved Damle Bhairav Patel | |

[Return To Topics](#)

Shorinjiryu: My Way of Life

by
John Mirrione, Shihan

Challenges

On occasion we would have an "unwelcome" visitor who would watch the class and then decide to leave when Sensei Morita demonstrated his lightning fast techniques. Style rivalry was commonplace and dojo challenges did occur. However, having one of the most talented karate instructors in the area spared us any ugly incidents.

Being a student of a Japanese Sensei had its disadvantages. Students of American instructors felt the need to satisfy their curiosity as far as our skill was concerned.

I was once invited to a party, which was attended by martial arts students from various schools. Shortly after I arrived, I was cornered and asked to demonstrate kata. As a green belt I thought this was a simple request, but quickly I found out the real intent. Two black belts wanted to spar with me in what was supposed to be friendly exchange of techniques. While one black belt Sensei acted as judge, the other quickly started his attack. Although he was quick with his hands and feet my full contact training caused him to quit in pain. As he looked up at the "judge" who was his Sensei he was quick to complain that I did not fight fair for I did not pull my punches or my kicks. I guess it is fair to say that the party was over.

The following week Sensei Morita's school had several new students who had been in attendance at the party.

When I retold the story to Shodan Walter Gekelman he explained that these people were there testing me to see how good an instructor Sensei Morita was. He told me that I should not demonstrate my karate outside of our school. I later found out that

these black belts wererenegades who had broken away from their Sensei to form their own organization.

The North American Shorinjiryu Tournaments

In 1968, I had the privilege in participating inthe First North American Shorinjiryu Tournament in Hempstead, N.Y. Amongthose in attendance were the following Shorinjiryu black belt Sensei: Hisanobu

Yamazaki, Fugio Monjiyama, Minoru Morita, and Yashirolshigami. Walter Gekelman served as emcee. Among the competitors were SamReese, Gil Berzen,,Ronnie.Weiss,,and Russell Harter.

Soon after our contest numbers were pinned on ourgis, we lined up in anticipation of the arrival of Shihan Masayuki Hisataka.I was overcome by an eerie feeling at the complete silence that had descendedupon the arena as Shihan entered. At that time, I felt that the level ofblack belt was very impressive and now I found myself in the presence ofa master donning a red and white belt.

Walter Gekelman introduced Shihan Hisataka whosaid a few words before the tournament officially began. We were treatedto a Judo demonstration by Sensei Shina and Sensei Ozaki.

Towards the end of the tournament the finals beganwith brown belt shiai. Sam Reese was the center of controversy when hisshiai match was stopped due to an unorthodox kick with which he repeatedly scored. This front kick turned crescent was ruled legal by tournament chiefand arbitrator Shihan Hisataka. Sam went on to win first place at this event.

At the Second North American Shorinjiryu Tournamentthe following year, Sam did not win first place and the coveted prize ofa trip to Japan went to Ken Warfield. I could see the disappointment onSam's face that he was unable to recapture first place as he had done theprevious year. Correspondents from Black Belt Magazine were busy at worktaking pictures and conducting interviews. Several months later Black BeltMagazine published a short and somewhat unkind article on the events ofthe day. They described Shorinjiryu as "power" karate, utilizingstrangle holds, punches, kicks and whatever else it took to take one's opponentdown.

I was proud to be a member of Sensei Morita's schoolfor we all held our own in both shiai and kata competition. I could see this pride duplicated on Sensei Morita's face for there was a gleam in his eye and a smile on his face.

My First Shorinjiryu Clinic

In the late 1 960's (1967'68), I was privilegedenough to participate in a clinic given by Shihan Masayuki Hisataka in ourBrooklyn Dojo on Bay Parkway. I remember sitting on the floor looking upat this giant figure of a man whose stature was both intimidating and commanding.He shouted out commands in Japanese and each black belt Sensei present respondedimmediately and without hesitation. Shihan then went on to demonstrate kicksand punches that seem to cause the floor to vibrate. I

knew then that he had to be the toughest man alive. His mere presence at this clinic seemed to serve as a tremendous learning experience to me and those present. I learned that no matter how good I thought my Sensei was and no matter how good I thought the other high ranking Sensei were, here before me stood someone even better. All I could think of was that if he is this good, his teacher, who is his father, must be phenomenal.

[Return To Topics](#)

Fate or Coincidence

by

Tony Diaz, Shihan

Osu! I am honored to have been asked by Tashi Brian Berenbach to write this article.

In 1964 as a young teenager, I had the opportunity to visit the New York World's Fair at Flushing Meadows. While there I visited the Pavilion where a group of Japanese dancers were performing traditional dance. At the end of these dances a group of men varying in ages came out in white pajama looking clothing and started demonstrating what later I would learn was Karate. I was in awe at what I saw, as I had never seen anything like it before. I was from a very rural area during a time when Karate was fairly new to the US.

Later that year, my uncle who was in the Air Force came home from a year stationed on Okinawa. He started talking of his experiences while there and mentioned that he had taken Karate off base during his spare time. During the conversation I told him of what I saw at the Fair. He began showing me some of the "moves" that he had learned (Some of which, I still perform today). I guess you could say that I was then hooked into the Martial Arts.

The only problem with being hooked into the Martial Arts back then where I lived was that there was no school, within easy traveling distance from where I live, and I was too young to drive. This left me with quite the dilemma. This feeling of want I had would have to stay dormant until such a time that an opportunity would arise.

Little did I know that when I graduated from High school that I would then join the U.S. Marine Corps and be stationed on Okinawa, just like my uncle. Was this just plain coincidence?

While on Okinawa I had the long awaited opportunity to study Karate. Then the next problem occurred. The language barrier. I didn't know any Japanese and my instructor at the time didn't speak any English. My training consisted of a "monkey see monkey do" way of doing things. I would watch and then try to mimic him the best I could.

After a year on Okinawa I returned to my hometown. Again there was no school to take lessons anywhere within reach. I was left with Karate in my mind, again dormant until another opportunity would come along. Was this again coincidence that I was

left alone with my desire to learn Karate?

A few years later an acquaintance of mine happened to mention that he was taking Ju-Jitsu classes in a nearby town. My adrenaline flowed. Was this going to be my chance or was I going to be let down once again? I signed up for the classes in Hakko-Ryu Ju-Jitsu under the guidance of a Air Force Sergeant by the Name of Joe Miller. Air Force? Was this again coincidence or was it fate?

I studied for a few years with Shihan Miller when one day he took us all aside and told us the bad news. He was to be stationed back in Japan, and would be leaving in a week. Being a Ikkyu was I then going to be left alone? Luckily Shihan Miller's only black belt student was to be promoted to Nidan prior to his leaving for Japan. My training would then continue. The closest Hakko-Ryu school would have been in New Jersey more than a hundred miles away. This time it seemed that I'd not be let down. I studied with my friend and instructor Sensei Craig Osmer for the next few years reaching the Rank of Nidan.

During this time I attended several tournaments on Long Island and met a Black Belt by the name of Myron Lubitsch. We would always meet at tournaments and have long winded conversations (when we weren't busy judging) about the martial arts. I was always bad at remembering people's names so I gave him the nickname "Paco". He would always wonder why I called him Paco. He never found out until a year or so ago just why.

Through the years with the help, guidance and confidence of Kyoshi Lubitsch I reached the level of Rokudan in the Aiki-Kempo Ju-Jitsu system. During this time we started discussing possibilities of cross training in each other's systems. For the past four or five years we have been cross training and have both reached the level of Shodan. During our training we have come across numerous similarities (Yin and Yang) unique to our systems. The footwork in Sankakutobi is one of the major similarities. The only difference being that we retreat in the move where Shorinjiryu charges inward. Just a coincidence?

Although Aiki-Kempo Ju-Jitsu is my main system I will continue to train and to teach my students what I learn in Shorinjiryu Karate-Do. Oh by the way, I didn't learn until after I became a Shodan in Shorinjiryu that the man on the stage at the World's Fair was none other than Shihan Masayuki Hisataka demonstrating his art of Shorinjiryu Karate-Do.

Do you believe in Fate?

[Return To Topics](#)

Milestones

by
Tom Carmelengo, Shihan

1997 marked my 20'th year practicing Shorinjiryu. Also, I was honored with the title and rank of Shihan. Still, a mere child in comparison to those around me. When I got

home after the promotion and tournament, I relaxed and immediately watched the videotape of what had transpired that day. I didn't watch to see myself being promoted; that had not sunk in yet, I watched to examine how the students, all students from all the dojos in attendance, carried themselves and performed. I observed with deep interest, not judging, but smiling at how far Shorinjiryu has come. I flashed back, remembering myself as a young yellow belt. It was an in-house tournament with one 8'x8' ring and about 60 people piled on top of each other. I did Nijushio kata under the ever-watchful, expressionless face of then-Sensei Myron Lubitsch. I won first place and received a certificate with 'karate' spelled wrong. And then I thought of how I felt and how I looked up to my Shihan and Sensei, as I received that grammatically challenged certificate, it hit me, that I too, was now Shihan. For the old-timers in the Kenryukan and Kenkokai, Renshi Char and I are familiar faces. For others, we are strangers from the strange land of Staten Island who just seem to pop up now and then. I feel, now

that the Shinzen Kyokai has brought so many of us together, that it's fun and informative to get some history of those who came before. For you old-timers, you can do the crossword or read the next article...you already know.

Kyoshi Myron and Shihan John Mirrione Sr. have roots in the same dojos as Renshi Char and myself. Shihan John had left just before we started, but Sensei Myron was one of my main instructors up to my green belt. It was Shorinjiryu Nanzenkai under Shihan Toman Kashimoto. A small and extremely isolated dojo on Staten Island. Kyoshi Myron Lubitsch was a young, relentless Sensei whose class was always full of surprises, rough, but ever caring that his students comprehended what he was demonstrating. Then, one day, Sensei Myron

vanished - we weren't allowed to ask why or where. Shihan Kashimoto; back then, had a 'don't ask' policy that could cost you your training privileges forever if broken. We learned ~elf-discipline very fast.

As brown belts, we sneaked out to a tournament (we were not allowed to compete in outside tournaments) and behold, Shihan Myron was upon us after he recognized our rendition of Nihanchin kata. We learned of his dojo and the larger world of Shorinjiryu, which was quite fractionalized at that point. It wasn't until I received my 3rd dan that I went out on a mission to locate Shihan.

I found myself sitting in front of class at the 12 towns YMCA watching a world of Shorinjiryu I never knew existed...wow, there is more than 3kata! I was in awe. Sitting with Shihan and Renshi Rick Mills, I told my story of leaving the Nanzenkai and needing to belong, to continue in Shorinjiryu. The stern-faced, but well-loved Sensei I knew from years ago opened his heart and arms. I was now Kenryukan and in the process of opening a dojo of my own. But logistics soon proved to be a problem and I became the Kenzenkai. Soon after, the greatest thing to happen to Shorinjiryu was in the making. The Shorinjiryu Shinzen Kyokai.

You will not find this type of organization in any other style of martial art. I will say it is mandatory that all students of Shorinjiryu read the history and learn just how unique the style really is. Learn where your instructors come from, and follow the

pyramid back to Shinan Kori Hisataka.

The years of 'duck walks'; being slammed onto a hardwood floor; taking blow after blow to an unprotected body, and other 'exercises' designed merely for enduring pain are behind me now. The side kicks don't go as high anymore and the occasional snap, crackle, pop coming from abused joints are becoming more than occasional. But, from those early years of discipline, and guidance from those dedicated instructors who are now Kyoshi, and Shihans, we still train and compete well into our 40's.

Now, I am Shihan, running a dojo along with lifetime friend and practitioner, Renshi Char Cable, watching video, keeping a close eye on our students, still seeking knowledge from those above us. The training is different now; you the students have the benefits of our past injuries. The proud traditions and forms of Shorinjiryu, as laid out by Shinan Kori Hisataka are intact, but through modern exercise routines and the best safety armor ever designed, your bodies will not have to take the punishment as ours did. As we move to the next century, it will be yours, you are the next Sensei, Renshi, and Shihans. And what I seen in the video proves it.

In closing, my sincere thanks goes out to the many friends I've made since the 12 Towns YMCA days through, present day...and the list keeps growing.

[Return To Topics](#)

How to Choose a Martial Arts School

by
Peter M. Hiltz

Anyone who has ever journeyed into the martial arts has faced the challenge of picking a good school and instructor.

We take college courses with some confidence that the material will be as promised in the catalog, but martial arts classes do not come with the same guarantee. As beginners, we don't know the difference between styles. Is one school's punch better than another's? Will I walk around bruised and battered? While some would consider the child's karate an activity like gymnastics, the adult student looks at the choices from a different viewpoint. The first questions I would ask are 'Why are you going to study the martial arts?' and 'What do you want to learn?'

I took a survey in the school where I teach karate asking the students why they were studying. The answers were surprising: the men wanted to learn to fight, the kids wanted to get black belts, and the women wanted to learn self-defense and get some exercise. Wanting to learn self-defense is very different from wanting to learn to fight or get a black belt.

This first question is important because it reveals how much time and energy you are willing to invest. If you want to learn self-defense, signing a three-year contract to learn a physically challenging style at the age of 45 might not be the best choice. However, if you are 20 and want to get a black-belt and participate in a big

tournament, then the three-year contract might be just right for you. Tai Chi might be perfect for a beginner at age 45, but not fit the requirements of a 20 year old. Different styles fit different goals.

After many years of karate do study and enjoyment I still get a lot of satisfaction and enjoyment from it. As a self-defense system, it is what I would instinctively fall back on. However, 4 years of Aikido training have expanded my horizons regarding self-defense and I believe Aikido is easier to learn for this. An additional benefit is that with Aikido, I can say 'Officer, I never hit him.' The REASON you want to study the martial arts can have a big impact on what you study, and how enjoyable and profitable you find it. Another important question is, 'Is it a good style for me?' If you want to learn solid basic self-defense, then one style might be better than if you want to develop a high level of physical prowess. A good style for you is one that fits your body, your fitness level (current or desired), and your learning goals, schedule, and pocketbook. If you cannot do jumping high side kicks and that is the mainstay of the style, you will have great difficulty learning the skills. If the style requires you to be a star athlete from the first lesson and you are not, then you will probably end up frustrated and possibly injured (or at least perpetually sore.) If they concentrate on self-defense and you want to become a tournament fighter you will not reach your goals. And, very importantly, if you cannot fit practice into your busy schedule or budget, you will not learn the skills you want to learn.

The next question often asked is, 'Is the teacher a good teacher?' A good teacher is one who will guide the class and you toward the agreed upon goal. A good teacher should never condemn or insult. A good teacher should be encouraging and aware of the limits of his or her students. A good teacher seeks balance in the training and practice opportunities they provide. A good teacher guides you in the philosophy needed to support the very real and dangerous skills you are learning. The proper philosophy taught hand in hand with the physical skills, turns a fighter into warrior. A warrior's skills go beyond mere self-defense. They include self control, self-confidence, and humility. Now we know what our goals are and have a school all picked out. What next?

Go inside! Watch the class. Do you like what you see? Does the instructor seem like a good one? Talk to a few of the students. Do they like studying there? Do they like the teachers and curriculum? Will you have the same teacher? Talk to the teacher. Can you take a sample class? Do you need a uniform right away? I'd suggest waiting before buying a uniform or a lot of equipment. You might not like the style and be stuck with a lot of unwanted stuff.

Do you need to sign a contract? If so, for how long? Most martial arts schools are businesses and exist to make money. My experience has been that the martial arts have a high turn over rate among new students, in spite of the enthusiasm of the first class. I have heard many horror stories of people signing multi-year contracts and then learning after three weeks that the martial arts or style is not for them. They are still bound to honor the contract and continue to pay for lessons. Think before you sign! Be wary of high pressure sales tactics and guarantees of rank. No one can know how far you should go in the style until you get there. Most schools charge for testing but be wary of too much testing or exorbitant fees. If it doesn't feel right for

you, it probably isn't.

Shopping for a martial arts school is just like shopping for anything else. Know what you want, shop around, and compare. Pick the best value for your dollar. If you are not comfortable with your choice, look around some more. Remember, you may be obligated financially for a long time. Local Recreation Councils offer martial arts courses for very small fees. After you've taken a few lessons, bought the uniform, signed a contract (if you have to), the only other thing you need to do to get the most from your study is practice. Everyone, and I mean everyone, only gets out of the martial arts what they put in.

[Return To Topics](#)

Article Submissions

The submission of articles, news-worthy events and letters is encouraged. Address all correspondence to:

**The Shimbun Editor
Shorinjiryu Shinzen Association.
P.O. Box 210160
Woodhaven, NY 11421**

Or e-mail to: WWW.Shorinjiryu@AOL.ORG

Unless otherwise stated, all articles in this document reflect the author's opinion. Inclusion in the Shinzen Shimbun does not necessarily constitute endorsement by the Shinzen Association or any of its affiliates.

The Shinzen Shimbun is a quarterly publication of the Shorinjiryu Shinzen Association.

[Return To Topics](#)