

OYATA SHIN SHU HO RYU

by Seiyu Oyata

Instructions From the Founder Concerning the Arts of Life Protection

It was the 1940's when I first was allowed to receive instruction from two true ancient masters, who inherited their family arts, passed down through centuries, in the Ryukyu Kingdom. They were genuine warriors who passed on the true, traditional art of protection. At this time, I was only a youth with a strong and vigorous spirit, searching for the way of survival after a war. I devoted myself to learning the arts, at the risk of my life, for my family's protection and finding a pathway for my life. Both of the masters were over 90, and their lives were entirely devoted to developing their family arts. Their protection skills and their knowledge of their arts were extraordi-

nary. Because of their personal beliefs, they did not take any students, and I was the only exception, when they allowed me to study and eventually passed their arts on to me for future generations.

In daily life, they treated me as their own grandson, but their training method was a very strict and serious one. In detail, I'll explain how and why I was involved in this training, through my books, but any mistakes I made during training invariably led to painful results. They didn't allow me to make any mistakes for their training. They believed that mistakes in their arts meant serious injury or loss of life. In this way, they showed me the true essence of their

arts, and I could experience a glance into the depth of classic Okinawan arts. Luckily, I had this opportunity to see the true nature of these arts. They guided me to the right pathway of protection arts, both in philosophy and physical skills.

As time went by, the art of protection had been spread to the world as a combat sport, and called "kara te," thus, the nature of this art and the contents involved in the training has been changed a great deal. "Karate" and the art of life protection that I studied, are very different, both in philosophy and techniques. The majority of modern karate practitioners are business oriented, and teach karate as a sport; even when they claim

Technique #1 (Defense against the attack from front punch)



Fig. 1-1: The First Movement: Double cover (block) position.



Fig. 1-2: The Second Movement: The defense against left punch. This movement immediately follows after the first movement. It is a position to push his attacker's face away and to stop his movement.



Fig. 1-3: The Third Movement: The trapping motion.



Fig. 1-4: The Fourth Movement: The arm (bar) position.

to be complete protection arts, it seems to be only an imitation of the original arts. For example, in life-threatening situations, it isn't easy to protect oneself with bare hands, against vicious criminals who intend to kill or damage their victim. In order to deal with these kinds of human beings, one has to have a strong mind and extraordinary physical skills of protection. This sort of skill is never to be acquired by people who have a casual attitude toward the art, and practice them only for their leisure and fun.

In the modern world, the practice of business can be a necessity for those who teach the art for their livelihood, but, over-emphasis on the business part will lower the quality of the art and lose the essential value for the protection arts. That causes misrepresentation of the original art and the wrong image of the art will result. I am aware of this tendency throughout this country. I grieve the fact that the majority of practitioners are more involved with business, and the quality of the arts is declining. Also, the wrong idea about these arts has been spreading throughout the States. There are many business-karate practitioners who lack in serious training, and do not respect the art, culture, and the people that developed them in the past.

It might be the inevitable consequences of a free society, but, I believe it is

impossible to reach to the highest level of the art of protection, both physically and mentally, without understanding the origin of the art. If the wrong information about the art is given, throughout the country, it will also lower the national level for the understanding of the arts. This weakness also leads to the wrong use of the words related to martial arts. For instance, the words, "Go shin Jitsu" is simply translated as "self-defense." That only describes a portion of the true meaning, and it is not an accurate translation. "Go shin" means "to protect human lives." It doesn't limit this to oneself, but includes any human lives, regardless of self or others. To respect human lives and guide bad people to the right path, is the true nature of the protection arts. The aim of the training should be pointed toward the development of the humanistic qualities. It is easy to damage people, but hard to save people. The art of protection requires great skill. That is why the art becomes more valuable. I interpret "Go shin Jitsu" as life protection arts.

There is also the misinterpretation of the words "kara te" which are commonly used throughout the world. The origin of the words probably evolved from "To te" (Chinese hands), which was pronounced as "kara te" by people in mainland Japan. However, the character should be pronounced as "ku," instead of



Technique #2

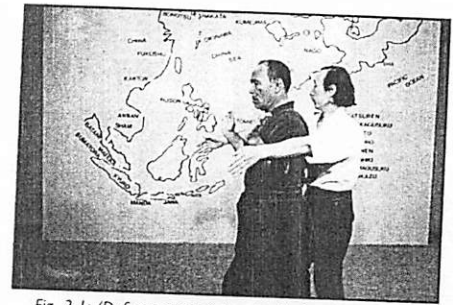


Fig. 2-1: (Defense against the attack from back) The First Movement: Spreading both hands to side to keep from being held from back. His hip and elbow are used in the process of this movement. This movement has to be done as soon as the attacker touches his body. The foot position is also important to escape from being held tight.



Fig. 2-2: The Second Movement: The right hand down from the first movement and turn his body, and push the attacker's arm away. The footwork is important as he turns his body. Be aware of his left hand attack. Notice the position of his left hand, this is the position to prepare for the next movement or a resulting position after completing one hidden technique.



Fig. 2-3: The Third Movement: The same motion as in Technique #1.



Fig. 2-4: The Final Movement: The same motion as in Technique #1.

"kara," to match with the nature of this protection art. "Kara" means "empty" such as an empty can, which has nothing in it. Therefore, "empty hands" do not have lives or spirit in them. Human hands are not empty inside. They consist of blood, nerves, bone and flesh, etc. The hands should be alive, as we are alive. If the character is used, it should be pronounced as "Ku te," or "Ku shu," which means "air" or "vastness" such as open sky. The contents of the art of protection is so broad and deep, that ordinary people can't grasp the entire picture. We only see part of it. Human minds are also expressed through our hands. When we are angry, we make a fist to hit someone with, while hands are open when our minds are relaxed and peaceful. Therefore, it is more appropriate to translate the words as "open hands" or "vastness of hands," rather than "empty hands."

In ancient Okinawa, the art was called "Ryu Kyu (chu) No Te" which means Ryukyu people's hands, which was compared to To te (Chinese hands). Then it changed to Okinawa No Te (Okinawan hands). Okinawan people used their hands to protect their family and country, so that it was described as such.

Hands are very important parts of our bodies. As mentioned before, human hands are usually open when people's minds are peaceful. They protect human

lives, when they are used correctly, but destroy human lives when used in any wrong way. Okinawan people have been aware of the power of human hands for centuries, and passed on the idea to each new generation with the hope that people in good spirits will find happiness and peace from within themselves through this training. Thus, the arts of protection became the way of life for those who chose them.

The art of protection is not the art of combat, but the art which brings life to human beings, and secures their lives. The essence of the art is to give true living spirit to human beings with the right minds and wisdom. The true nature of the art cannot be described by words, but will be naturally developed through sincere efforts, perseverance and the right attitude towards the arts.

Oyata Shin Shu Ho Ryu practitioners will be required to understand the importance of the spirit of the hands and the right use of hands. The purpose of their training is to understand themselves and to cultivate their good, humanistic qualities for themselves and others and to become useful individuals for the construction of a peaceful society.

One of the main reasons I came to the States and engaged in teaching the art is to introduce the true nature of the original arts and share the depth of the



art, to be beneficial for the people and the country. I believe there will be no differences among varied systems, on the pathway of human lives. My door is open to any practitioners who are sincerely interested in the true art of protection.

The contents of techniques involved in Oyata Shin Shu Ho Ryu are based on the ideas mentioned previously. Techniques are used on the arms and legs, to avoid fatal damage, and minimize injury to the human body. The purpose of techniques is to take away the weapons (which are the arms and legs, in this case) from the attacker. When the arms and legs are temporarily damaged, the attack will possibly stop. That is enough for defense. It is not necessary to take their life away.

Since it is the art of protection, it should match with the word "protection." Therefore, all defensive motions are focused on their own body, rather than the attacker's body. With a clear mind and without thinking about the attacker, the motion should concentrate on the protection of themselves. It is important to cover the entire body with your hands and legs, with efficiency. There shouldn't be any wasted motion. Strong defensive motion will be blended with offensive motion simultaneously, which

immediately stops the attacker's motion. The motion itself is based on natural movement and proper use of the body weight, so that there is no extra strength necessary. Techniques can be used regardless of size and age.

The sharpness of techniques is extremely keen. The techniques will be over instantly, whenever the attacker touches your body.

The usage of techniques is very efficient. The same techniques can be used from right, left, back, and front.

The defensive position remains natural. Techniques will be executed from a natural stance, which is with both arms down, and hands open. In this position, the mind and spirit stay calm and relaxed. In this way, all physical techniques match with the idea of protection.

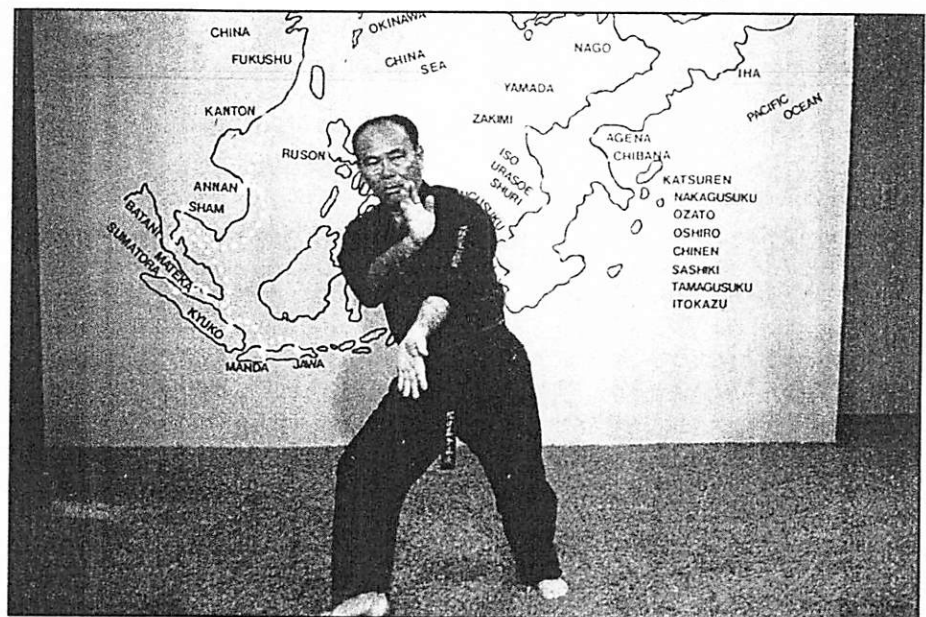
However, the depth of this art can't be explained with words. The difficulty of explanation is the same as the explanation of the spirit, or God. The contents of the arts are possibly explained in words by those who can clearly describe the face of God.

My message with this article is to wish that the people in the State seek for the truth of original life protection arts.

For more information, please write to: Ryukyu Kempo, Oyata Shin Shu Ho, 19105 E.. 30th St, Independence, MD 64057.

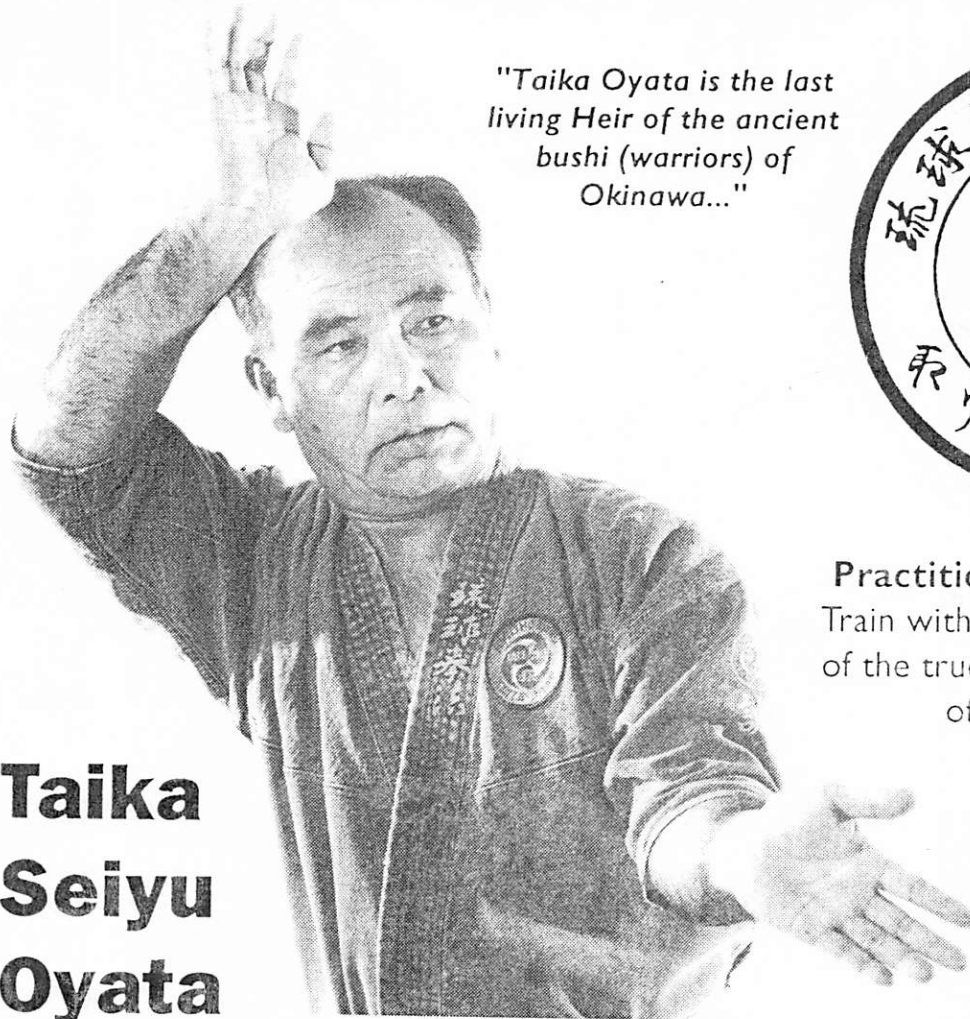


Fig. 4-1 to 4-4:
Oyata Shin Shu Ho Ryu
Shi Ho Happono Te



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