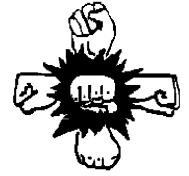




# Kawara ban



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Legacy Shorin Ryu Karate Jutsu

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## Matsumura & Itosu

### The Perfect Combination

(This story can also be found on our website at [www.shorinryu.ca](http://www.shorinryu.ca). The summer 1999 Kawara ban included artwork depicting the Uehara fight.)

"Bushi" Sokon Matsumura and "Anko" Itosu Yasutsune both played major roles in the development and promotion of Shorin Ryu Karate. However, their roles were quite different. To use an analogy, Matsumura built the car and Itosu drove it.

Matsumura is the founder of Shorin Ryu, and his family style of "White Crane". He was taught very little kata, possibly only four, and the rest he developed himself. He learned from many sources. Sakugawa, Iwah, Ason, Kusanku, Chinto and Yanomine Chiru are just a few. Matsumura's main interest was to learn and develop a style.

Matsumura was a working man. He was the bodyguard to the King. As the Kings body guard, he had to train the guards and owned the unofficial title as the most feared Okinawan of his time. Being the representative of the King he had to uphold this reputation constantly. Matsumura also faced the possibility of termination of his employment if he, or

his actions, reflected poorly on the King.

The "Bushi" had great presence of mind. He developed this state so well because he balanced his mental, physical and spiritual training at all times.

The balance of his body, mind and spirit is shown by the story of his altercation with Uehara the Master and pipe engraver.

Uehara challenged Matsumura, therefore, it was Matsumura who would set the time and place. Know your enemy and know thyself, must have been his thinking, as he chose a graveyard in the early morning hours. This site was chosen because Matsumura made it his business to know the main weaknesses of all knowledgeable Masters on the Island. Uehara's was that he feared ghosts, very common in that era of Okinawan history.

Uehara arrived early, planning to examine the terrain, only to find Matsumura already there. Sokon was a great strategist. Placing his back to the rising sun and engulfed in the early morning fog, Matsumura bellowed the words, UEHARA, ARE YOU READY? As the startled pipe engraver spun around too quickly to maintain his balance, he stumbles, finally regaining his footing faces Matsumura. His eyes bulged widely at the horrifying sight before him. Visions of battling the gods and demons raced through the terrified Uehara, his mind froze. Uehara fell before the Master crying in fear and begged his forgiveness. Not only did the Great Matsumura forgive his challenger, he also agreed to teach him the true way.

Matsumura won the battle without a single punch thrown. Defeating the enemy in their own minds is the ultimate mastery of the art. This shows how the 'Founders' body, mind and spirit were dominant while working together and

why he was so feared that he needn't even need throw a punch to defeat his enemy.

In the early years, many doubted that he could defeat Yanomine Chiru, his wife to be, in a real match. He was about to show all who were interested that he would not be beat by a girl.

One day the young warrior followed Yanomine while on route in her daily routines. Suddenly, he leapt out at her with full force. The result was instant. He woke tied to a tree and partially naked. An astonished passer-by recognized the warrior's predicament and freed him never uttering as much as a peep and left quietly.

Matsumura returned home, humiliated.

The next day he sought the advice of his Sensei and asked Sakugawa about his problem of not having to resort to deadly blows simply to prove a point. Besides it was obvious that these participants were fated for marriage. The advice given turned out to be the correct strategy for this particular event. The next time Matsumura and Yanomine were matched in a Shiai, he used his teachers advice that "women will go to great lengths to protect the breasts as they are a highly endangered area and very sensitive". At the proper moment, Matsumura fired a deadly blow towards Yanomine's breasts. She had no choice but to react. When she covered up, Matsumura wrapped his arms around her and threw her to the ground. Breathless, Yanomine recovered. At home she congratulated him on learning from his past mistakes. A challenger is a challenger not from where it comes. They are all equally dangerous.

Nomura challenged Matsumura, however a date was not set. Nomura hoped as time passed by that Matsumura would forget about it and he could use the element of surprise to his advantage. After some

time, Nomura invited Matsumura over to play the Samisen (a stringed musical instrument), both were accomplished musicians. At this point he put Matsumura in a compromising position and after a time attacked him. Matsumura evaded his blow and countered with a shot that would have killed Nomura. This will show the presence of mind once more even when it appears his guard is down.

One day the King learned of a sailor shipwrecked on the island. The sailor was stealing food and clothing from the villagers. The King ordered Matsumura to kill the vagrant. Matsumura was unable to catch the man. He returned to the village and told the King that he had taken care of the matter and to worry not. Matsumura later went back to the shore where he had last seen the stranger and made friends with him after giving him food and clothing for his own. He declared his name as "Chinto" later to be known as an icon of the martial arts world. He agreed to teach Matsumura and that is how the world renowned Chinto Kata was born. This also shows that Matsumura's drive to learn and develop a style even took precedence over orders from the King.

Matsumura did not have to defeat all of his opponents as demonstrated in these examples. Not only could this be because of the fear of losing his job, but also Matsumura "was" Shorin Ryu and he didn't feel he had to prove its worthiness. He seemed much more interested in learning not in what others were thinking. Shorin Ryu was the Island Art on the surface, however, we now know that the "true" Okinawan Art as it was called was, 'The White Crane'. The White Crane of Matsumura's was forbidden to be shown to outsiders. This was a strictly kept secret. Giving it up could mean one's death at family hands, or even worse, having to face Matsumura himself.

Itosu was wealthy. He did not have to work as a result, he could train all the time. This he did faithfully. He also did not have to deal with any repercussions of his altercations as Matsumura did. Itosu felt it was his duty to defend Shorin Ryu. Unlike Matsumura who was feared

and who founded the style, Itosu felt he had to prove Shorin Ryu worked. It was not only Matsumura that people feared.

When Itosu was young, his father would tie him to a tree and would poke him with a stick until his son became enraged. At that time he would encourage his son by simply stopping the taunt. This was done to develop fighting spirit. Itosu was brought to Matsumura by his father, who felt he would be his son's best mentor. Itosu became Matsumura's best student. He was the most loyal and turned out to be the best teacher in Shorin Ryu, producing many Masters.

Itosu fought all the time. It was his duty and role to defend and prove the Shorin style. It was Itosu who provided Shorin Ryu legitimacy in the eyes of the people. Everyone feared Matsumura the "Man". They did not fear Shorin until Itosu came along and proved it. It is Itosu who made Matsumura what he is. Without the legitimacy provided by Itosu, Matsumura would have been revered in history as a "thug" or "tough".

Itosu heard rumours that in Naha people were discrediting him and Shorin Ryu. Itosu left immediately for Naha, strode up to the 'Ude Kake She' or challenge rock, one only need to lean on the rock in the centre of town to signify the will to challenge the local champion, and slapped it. Merchants began to close up shop and all the towns' people gathered around to form the makeshift arena. The scene was set. The match was cut short as Itosu snapped the champion's arm with a crashing shuto to the forearm. All fell silent, this could not be. The great Tomoyose had been defeated by a man from Shuri. Offering a further challenge to anyone from Naha who thought Shorin Ryu was not worthy, he faced many takers and defeated them all. Thinkers of the time began the recognition of Shorin as the "Deadly Beast" as opposed to Matsumura merely being tough.

Itosu was once jumped by three bandits, one with a Bo, one with a Sai and one unarmed. He remembered Matsumura's lesson ... you must first dispose of the weapon that can be thrown. Taking advantage of the overcast night, Itosu

leaped up into a tree just as the clouds darkened the area and the bandit with the Sai became confused. Itosu came down on him with full force and rendered the assailant unconscious and without any remorse broke the attacker's neck with a sudden twist. Turning quickly he fired the Sai right on target and it was deeply embedded into the Bo wielder's chest, he died instantly. The third seeing that three trained in the art of war could not defeat Itosu alone, and unarmed, fled for his life and lived, unlike the others, to tell the tale. This historic tale has undoubtedly added to the credibility of the "prowess" of Shorin.

Itosu was responsible for the spreading of Shorin Ryu. He brought it into the elementary school systems of Okinawa in 1902-07 as a formal exercise. He took it out of the back rooms and removed the shroud of secrecy around it. Itosu began to accept students on a formal basis. This meant that he could teach the general public if they so desired, the student no longer had to be brought to the Sensei in a formal manner.

There was one last challenge for Shorin Ryu, this time from all of Japan as they questioned, what is the better, their beloved Judo or the crude Shorin Ryu Karate of the quaint little island in the Ryu Kyus. The anxious crowd was loud and enthusiastic. As the pride of all the Japanese there were sure this event was going to be a mere demonstration of how good Japanese Judo was by defeating the Okinawan's Karate. They questioned the significance of the encounter because of the Okinawan representative's advanced age of 75. Had it not been for Itosu's tremendous reputation the challenge may not have been pushed forward. The young Judoka tried to downplay the age of the old Master by faking attacks and clowning around, suddenly the young Japanese lunged at Itosu looking to make short work of it. Kiaiii filled the air. There was a gasp from the mainland multitudes. A silence fell. When the dust settled the young champion policeman lay on the floor gasping for life giving air.

Itosu had executed a perfect front punch into the solar plexus of their fallen hero. Leaning down he applied Shiatsu and returned the Judoka to normal breathing.



us all to become a walking encyclopedia of knowledge, stories and experiences.

If there were a king today as there was in Matsumura' s time, he would have chosen the name Machimura for our Sensei. Matsumura' s Legacy lives on in Shihan. His goal is to fulfil Matsumura' s dream.

How does he keep us all together? By saying to himself, "is this to better the art? If the answer is no, the answer has been given. Hierarchy and etiquette are standards that are never jeopardized. We have a great appreciation for Sensei Harold Warden who showed you a path, for Sensei Benny Allen who showed you focus and how to punch, for Sensei Richard Kim who showed you how to train the body, mind and spirit, as well as the importance of etiquette and for Sensei Anthony Sandoval who showed you a complete system. A special thanks to the Pioneers of North American Martial Arts who shared the love of their art as well as their friendships.

In return, we give special thanks to Shihan. Eventhough your Martial Arts are very personal to you, you have never stopped sharing your knowledge with us. You have always wanted us to be the "Best that we can be."

Your stew is different every time, yet it is always as good as the first. How beautiful for me to have something so intricate to share with someone not only in the dojo, but in all of our awakening moments.

Without you I would not flower. How easy you have made it for me. You are "My Angel" who has given me a gift of a Martial Arts Life!

You are leaving impressions  
unforgettable,  
And when I view our Moon  
Your image surfaces  
And that Love seems forever.

One Love  
Your Love  
Our Love

Mokurai is who you are and I am proud  
to be "Your Mokurai Warrior"!!

Shihan Michelle Legacy

## Upcoming Events

**Ongoing until 2003** – Collection of A&P receipts for amateur sports donation to help raise funds for 2003 Americas Cup World Championships in Mexico.  
See your sensei or Shihan Legacy.



## Letters to the Editor and Submissions

As was mentioned in the prior editions of the Kawara ban, this section is for your letters, questions or comments. Below is one of the first letters to the editor that we have received in a long while.

Dear Zena,

Thanks for sending a great issue of the Kawara Ban ! You noted that you had not yet received any "letters to the editor", so perhaps this will be the first one.

In the "Martial Arts Library" section you mention movies. Readers of Kawara Ban might be interested to know that the London Public Library system loans videos and the collection includes many which would be of interest to karateka. For example, my husband came across the first of the Miyamoto Musashi films at the library and got it out for me. I found that the entire set (Samurai I, II, and III) was available from the Central library. I also found the book on which the films were based in my local branch library.

The library has the advantages of many "foreign" films and free loans (one just needs a library card). Most videos are loaned out for seven days. We have watched everything from the Seven Samurai through almost all of Kurosawa' s works to JohWoo' s "Hard Boiled" (Hong Kong police action - violent, but amazing action scenes).

I hope that this information will be useful to others,

Anne Barnfield.

If you have any comments, questions or additions for future editions of the kawara ban, please send them to: [znurse@golden.net](mailto:znurse@golden.net) or the old fashioned way via Canada Post to Zena Nurse at 74 Edward St, London, ON, N6C 3H4. You must include your name and dojo in order to get published or answered.

Submissions for the next issue of the kawara ban should be submitted by, **February 15, 2003**. Show off your writing skills, poetry or artwork and take part in the passing of the knowledge of the martial arts to others karateka.



## Martial Arts History

Below is some brief martial arts history that you may find interest. The information is just to give you an awareness of some aspects of our style and others' history in order to prompt you to do more research if you want to find out more details.

### Other Martial Arts Styles:

#### General Choi Hong Hi (1918 - 2002)

Creator and founder of Taekwon-Do. Master Choi was born November 18, in 1918 in Korea. At 12, his father sent him to learn calligraphy in Korea after being expelled from school for agitating the Japanese authorities who were in control of Korea. The teacher, Mr. Han II Dong, was also a famous teacher of Taek Kyon, the ancient Korean art of foot fighting. In 1945, Master Choi was a young Korean officer who was just released from a Japanese prison. He began teaching his new art to a few soldiers. He spent the next 10 years developing his art. In 1955 he worked with historians, prominent citizens and other Korean teachers to introduce the art as Taekwon-Do. The name means: Tae for foot, Kwon for fist and Do for the way or art. This name describes best the art best known for use extensive use of kicking techniques.

Master Choi passed away June 15, 2002. Official website: <http://www.itf-generalchoi.com/>

### Muay Thai Boxing:

Muay Thai boxing is a martial art that originated before the 1400s to the ancient kingdom of Siam, now Thailand.

It is considered probably the toughest sport in the martial arts due to its lethal techniques. Fighters typically fight in the boxing ring with boxing gloves and kick with their shins instead of their feet.

Originally, fighting was with hemp rope boxing gloves that were soaked in glue and was very violent, but in 1930, rules, regulations, weight divisions and fighting in boxing rings was incorporated to make the fight safer. Early twentieth century fights frequently had deaths even with government regulations intended to reduce or eliminated the deaths, brain damage and serious injuries, with little success.

Many years ago, women were thought to bring bad luck to the sport so were not allowed to climb the steps to the ring but like most things that woman were prohibited from years ago, this sport is becoming increasingly popular with women with women's fights being promoted in Bangkok.



### Martial Arts Library

Often, requests arise for suggestions on where to find information in order to complete resumes. Besides asking Shihan or your Sensei, some have found the following resources helpful, informative and just plain interesting.

Previous additions of the kawara ban included suggestions for your martial arts library collection of books. Here are some additions for your hardcopy library as well some online resources with brief descriptions of each, costs and where to find.

#### Internet sites/mailling lists:

Bushido school of Shotokan Karate Do out of Ohio.

<http://www.geocities.com/ohiokarate/>

This is a great site that has video of the Shotokan katas. The katas are very similar to ours with mainly very subtle differences and the kata names are the Japanese version. For example, heian instead of pinan, tekki instead of naihanchi, bassai instead of patsai/passai,

etc.

World Martial Arts Information Centre  
<http://www.martialinfo.com/MartialMainFrame.htm>

Martial arts hall of fame.

Karate Tournament Central

<http://www.karatetournaments.com/>  
This website, out of North Carolina, is great for finding out about upcoming karate tournaments. It includes U.S., Canada and other Countries. You can even list an event on the site for free.

**Mind like water - mizo no kokuro** was term that Shihan Legacy used one time to explain how we should strive to fight. I found an article on the net that describes this concept well.

<http://www.shotokanforeveryone.com/wa/termind.htm>

**Shotokai Encyclopedia Karate-do and Martial Arts** is a great website that is "the most complete site on Shotokai Karate-do and Japanese Martial Arts, more than 100 megabytes of information. Interviews, philosophy, essays, hundreds of historical and technical photos, history, technique, video, etc." Lots of interesting and relevant information since the style is a "linear derivative" of Shotokan.

<http://www.shotokai.com/ingles/indice2.html>

### Dojo Terms

Most of these terms can be found on the Legacy Shorin Ryu website under Misc documents. Pronunciations can also be found for most terms on the website.

| <u>Term</u>           | <u>Meaning</u>   |
|-----------------------|--|
| barraki               | grading  |
| damashii              | fighting spirit  |
| hara                  | centre of body   |
| karate                | empty hand   |
| karate-do             | the way of karate  |
| kiai                  | energy transfer  |
| kime                  | focus  |
| Kihon                 | Kata footwork pattern                                    |
| Kyubo Sotei Shuto Uke | Double knife hand strikes in Patsai (Passai) at the end. |

|                 |                              |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| mizo no kokuro  | mind like water              |
| mushin          | empty mind                   |
| shiai           | tournament                   |
| Shorin Damashii |                              |
| ji              | spirit of the Shaolin Temple |
| Shorin Ryu      | way of the Shaolin Temple    |
| Ude Kake She    | challenge rock               |



**Martial Art-work**

Below is artwork submitted by Derek Lattimer of Damashii Dojo depicting Miyamoto Musashi, the great swordsman. Musashi was also the subject of the story by Shihan Chaki in the Fall

2001 issue of the kawara ban, as well, he' s mentioned above in the letter to the Editor.



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