



SHOTOKAN RYU KASE HA INSTRUCTORS ACADEMY

SRKHI A Newsletter 12/04

Dear karateka ,

November has brought us great sadness. As we are all aware our sensei, master Kase Taiji has passed away two weeks ago. I know that each of us was stricken by his sudden departure. Kase sensei has been an inspiration for all of us who follow his way of karate. And I am sure he will continue to be so. He may not be physically among us to give his instruction, but certainly he will remain in our minds and hearts. His departure puts more responsibility on our shoulders, senior and junior members of our Academy. Kase sensei developed a certain and distinct way, his ha, of Shotokan karate and he gave it to us. Now Kase sensei has left but his legacy and spirit will remain alive. It is our duty to continue his way and to maintain his way and legend. It is – in Japanese terms – a giri, which none of us, Academy members, should decline.

We must never forget his most common expression “keep training”.

Oss sensei, we will do.

A message from the Shihankai on the death of KASE Taiji sensei

On the 24th Nov 2004 at the age of 75 our Master has past away.

At the funeral on 30th Nov at the cemetery of Père Lachaise the cremation took place, attended by about 350 family-members, friends and students.

All the members of the Shihankai gathered and we all were deeply impressed by the number of famous karatekas and instructors meditating and bringing a last salute.

Sensei Kasé is the pioneer of Shotokan Karate in Europe and the teacher of many instructors during almost 40 years.

The last 15 years of his life he created a revolutionary development and renovated Shotokan Ryu through the W.K.S.A. and later on the S.R.K.H.I.A.

This work is not finished, yet started.

The Shihankai members will take care of the further development through the courses, the gradings and the coming Gasshukus.

Now it is not a moment to yield but to collect the experience and continue the teaching inspired by our great Master.

To know the past is to understand the future.

In memory of our Sensei, let us look up to the future as a RISING SUN.

Oss Sensei

for the Shihankai
Dirk Heene

A few more information

We are all aware of the certain health problems that the sensei was facing since summer 2003. However, his situation was improving in a steadily manner. When he was talking to senior Academy and Shihankai members, even shortly before his passing away, he was full of plans. However karma was different. On Friday 19 November 2004, the sensei suffered a brain bleeding. He was transferred to the hospital, in a coma situation and he was put on intensive care. He did not recover from the coma while, being in the intensive care, he had certain heart problems. On Wednesday 24 November 2004, at 1725, Kase sensei left for his last journey.

On Sunday 28 and Monday 29 November, friends and students were able to pay a last visit to the sensei at his house in Paris.

His funeral and cremation took place on Tuesday 30 November 2004 at the cemetery of Père Lachaise, in Paris. 350 family members, deshi, students and friends were there to meditate, pray and say good bye to a great man.

On Sunday 5 December 2004 the sensei's family organized a lunch in his memory, in Paris, attended by approximately 100 family members, friends and his closest old and new students, by invitation.

Good bye sensei.

Coaching and Training Principles by Fedyk Michaylo 6dan, Shihankai member

Hello Once Again,

The last three articles were centred on the process of learning new skills and this was identified as an essential element of coach knowledge if a continuance of skill progression is to be achieved when coaching any student.

What I would like to do in this issue is move away from the science side of coaching. I would like to keep it fairly simple and have a look at what qualities a coach should have and will need to acquire over time if any coaching success is to be achieved. It is not an exhaustive list and I would be more than happy to discuss in the next issue readers input on this topic.

I have identified 5 key areas essential to quality coach development.

- Coach at work.
- Planning.
- Conducting.
- Evaluating.
- Responsibilities.

The headings highlight some of the requirements important to successful coaching. In this article we will consider The Coach at Work.

Coach at work

Three principles underpinning coaching.

- a. Welfare and development of the performer.
- b. Improving performance at all levels from novice to advanced.
- c. Setting challenging tasks to utilise knowledge, skill and attitude of performer.

Three factors that determine the role of a coach.

- a. Set tasks to accelerate skill learning and performance improvement.
- b. Responsibility for social, physical and emotional needs.
- c. Must be an instructor, motivator, friend, student, manager and guardian.

Three specific phases of the coaching process.

- a. Planning – programme of action to meet the needs of all performers and guide their development.
- b. Conducting – teach the session (know what to teach, set objectives). Check that training plan is completed in a safe environment.
- c. Evaluating – assessment of the training plan / objective. Adjust as required for the performer and the coach.

Components of effective communication. (Two-way process)

- a. Talking – sending the right message to the student both verbally and with body language.
- b. Listening – Be prepared to listen to student input and be able to pick up on relevant points that may be beneficial to both the coach and student.

Key areas of knowledge required by the coach.

- a. Know the sport coaching well, information on techniques used and the rules of the game are essential.
- b. Know what level the students are and plan according to their needs.
- c. Knowledge of influencing factors on performance i.e. fitness, injury, psychology, conditions, environment, equipment.
- d. Factors affecting coaching proficiency – methods, skills, styles, personality.

Coaching Philosophy

- a. A set of guidelines that governs a coaches action and behaviour.
- b. A development of own beliefs and views on key issues where sharing them with others is an important factor. Clarification of expectations can then be agreed.

Science of coaching

- a. Knowledge based on physiology, nutrition, psychology, biomechanics and medicine.
- b. The measurements of performance in the effort to attain maintain and enhance performance.

Art of coaching

- a. This is the interpretation by the coach of all the elements that contribute to the term sports science.
- b. Knowledge, experience, intuition and personal experience all contribute to coaching as an art.
- c. Authority, enthusiasm, opinion, judgement, prejudice are also factors that have influence on the art of coaching.

Summary

- ◆ Planning based on individual needs.
- ◆ Conducting sessions.
- ◆ Evaluating sessions, performers, performance and coaching effectiveness.

Conducting Coaching Sessions

Coaching Styles

Personality, knowledge and experience are important factors, which may influence the natural style of a coach.

The approach of most coaches will be based on a combination of telling, showing and asking questions, many coaches prefer not to use the question approach.

Coaches should be able to adapt their style of coaching in order to meet the needs of particular students / athletes.

Some methods / styles are explained below.

- ◆ Telling - this is based on instruction only from the coach who makes all the decisions and does not involve performers in the decision making process, the performers are told exactly what to do. This also allows the coach to have total control where advanced planning of session content and pace will take place. It could have a discouraging affect on performer centred athletes perhaps more so in team games where the decision making process is an important factor towards success.
- ◆ Selling - the coach still makes the decisions but also shows what is required and provides explanations, questions from performers are encouraged where a rationale for coach decisions can be explained.
- ◆ Share - involvement from all performers is encouraged, the coach may outline a situation and seeks the input of the athletes in order to make the best decision on suggestions given by the athletes. This approach allows the coach to use the questioning approach and also allows the athletes to have a decision making experience. The final decision still rests with the coach.
- ◆ Allow - the coach and athletes outline the problem together. The coach defines limits and the athletes explore the possibilities and start to make positive decisions. This style of coaching is beneficial to the performers welfare and the forming of positive group relationships, however it can be a very time consuming method but in the long term may be well worthwhile.
- ◆ Questioning - this style of coaching for some may not be easy but it is a proven and most valuable coaching skill that can.
 - i. Help performers / athletes to accept greater personal responsibility.
 - ii. Help performers to understand what they are doing.
 - iii. Use of own feedback during performance may take place.
 - iv. Awareness of what has and is happening during the performance.
 - v. Focus the performer's attention to the task.

Coaches should be.

- ◆ Friendly - happy - patient - understanding and have a sense of humour.
- ◆ Have credibility in the sport coaching.
- ◆ Firm but fair.
- ◆ Provide encouragement when required.
- ◆ Well organised.
- ◆ Able to help in the development of skills specific to the task.

Coaches should not.

- ◆ Shout to get things done.
- ◆ Give constant praise saying well done irrespective of effort or skill demonstrated.
- ◆ Not appear indecisive.

If you have any particular questions related to coaching / training principles please send them in and as each newsletter is produced I will try to answer your questions.

Budo Themes:

You will find attached a summary of all relevant articles in 2004.

Membership status:

The procedure for the renewal of annual memberships, as well as the acceptance of new members has started.

The annual membership fee this is 60 Euro or 36 British pounds. Payments may be done, either by bank transfer to our accounts or by a bank cheque:

If you choose bank transfer, here are the details of our accounts:

STERLING ACCOUNT TRANSFER ONLY STERLING (GB POUNDS) TO THIS ACCOUNT

Bank: Natwest Bank Ltd. Cheltenham Branch, 31 Promenade, GL50 1LK
Account Name: Shotokan Ryu Kase Ha Instructor Academy
Account No: 16412087
Sort Code: 60-50-16
IBAN No: GB33NWBK60051616412087
SWIFT CODE: NWB KGB 2L

EURO ACCOUNT TRANSFER ONLY EURO TO THIS ACCOUNT

Bank: Natwest Bank Ltd. Cheltenham Branch, 31 Promenade, GL50 1LK
Account Name: Shotokan Ryu Kase Ha Instructor Academy
Account No: 550/00/08791120
Sort Code: 60-50-16
IBAN No: GB69NWBK 60720308791120
SWIFT CODE: NWB KGB 2L

If you choose a bank cheque or international money order, made them payable to Shotokan Ryu Kase Ha Instructors Academy and post them to our Treasurer, Alan Armstrong, 19 Jubilee Drive, Bredon, Tewkesbury, GL20 7QJ, England, preferably by registered mail (attention, cheques could be either 36 British pounds or 60 euros, whichever is more convenient to members).

In any case you must not forget to mention the name(s) and the year. Renewal of membership should be completed by 28th February 2005.

New applications for membership should reach SRKHIA Secretariat, namely myself, by 31st December 2004. They will be consequently forwarded to Shihankai for approval, by 31st January so new members will have the appropriate time to fulfil their financial obligations before 1st March 2005.

Please keep in mind that delays to the fulfilment of the above obligations, which in turn create frictions, cannot justify dedication and commitment to a common course we all have voluntarily accepted.

SRKHIA News

Reports

For one more time there are no reports from seminar or other activities.

Recommended Courses:

If you want to stay informed about courses in different countries by any or a particular instructor you must visit www.kamikazeweb.com and then follow the links for events. Our colleague Frank Schubert has a quite updated data base. In any case you may want to pay attention to the following information.

On 11 & 12 December Dick Fieret will organize a seminar with Dirk Heene 7dan and Julian Mead 6dan on karate and kobujutsu. For more information Dick Fieret 0031 115 696383 or 695072, e-mail dfieret@zeelandnet.nl .

Mark your calendar with an important date; June 3, 4 and 5, 2005. The Academy's annual Gasshuku will take place in Athens Greece. In particular it will take place in the Sport Camp Loutraki, www.sportcamp.gr , 75 km from Athens. Accomodation will be provided in the Campus as well as the training. Full information will be provided in the next Newsletter.

Last but not least; if you want to train with Dirk Heene sensei, at Honbu Dojo Limburg, throughout the year, you are welcome to stay in the dojo (sleeping bag is necessary). Price per day: 7 euro including: 2x training a day; use of showers, sanitary, kitchen. Buffet-restaurant is 5 minutes away.

Keep in mind, www.shotokan-ryu-kase-ha.de , Pascal Petrella's dojo site on SRKHIA. The site includes many useful Academy information, including SRKHIA Newsletters as well.

Before closing I would like once more to invite you to contribute to this Newsletter by providing, not only information on upcoming courses, but articles, seminar reports etc. Be reminded that this is our Newsletter, so we all are obliged to contribute to its contents.

The next Newsletter will be edited in the first week in January 2005. I wish all of you all the best for Christmas and the New Year 2005. Stay strong, train hard and enjoy life.

Oss

Spiros G. Drossoulakis

Budo Themes Collection 2004

Oshohogatsu and Kagami Biraki

In every country and culture, the arrival of the New Year is associated with different customs and traditions to celebrate this significant event. All parts of society are influenced by these customs, so is the budo world. And it is more than obvious that budo traditions have been influenced by those of the Japanese society. Which are they? To which extent do they kept alive in the today's globalized world of fast everything?

Oshogatsu is the Japanese New Year. Literally it means "first moon". In the orient for centuries the lunar calendar was followed, so the first moon of the year was the beginning of it. Obviously the first moon was the beginning of the lunar year, or Chinese year as it is better known, which happens somewhere in the middle of January. Japan adopted the solar calendar in 1873 and since then the New Year celebration starts on January 1. However, in rural Japan, villagers continue to follow the lunar calendar and Oshogatsu is the Lunar New Year.

Oshogatsu is by far the biggest celebration of the year in Japan. It is a time for peace and resolution and its celebration lasts for five to six days. Everything associated with the New Year is symbolic of "firsts" of the New Year. Thus, the New Year gives a sense of renewal. In this context for martial arts practitioners a special training, keiko, is considered essential to renew the spirit. In many dojo oshogatsu training starts at 11pm on 31st December. It stops at midnight to welcome the New Year and continues till 1 or 2 am, followed by a party for dojo members and guests. Iaido practitioners may meet at 7am on 1st January, for the Hatsunuki (first draw of the year), outside a Shinto shrine (obviously in Japan), or at the dojo or at a park to perform their kata, at dawn, in the direction of the rising sun, thus renewing the spirit. These are some examples, certainly there are more.

Kagami Biraki literally means "Mirror Opening" (also known as the "Rice Cutting Ceremony"). It marks the end of the New Year's holiday season. It is said, that the tradition of Kagami Biraki began in the 15th century AD. It developed as a folk Shinto observation with a particular class (samurai) bent, without being a Shrine Shinto or Imperial Shinto, ceremony or tradition. It may be classified as "*nenchu gyoji*" "traditional observances repeated as a matter of custom in the same manner and style at the same point in the annual calendar" according to the Dictionary of Japanese Ethnography. It notes that these observances are usually undertaken by families, hamlets, ethnic bodies or social groups, which give them the force of obligation, and often appear at intersections of the agricultural calendar.

According to tradition, before the New Year, Kagami Mochi or rice cakes, were placed in front of the armory to honor and purify their weapons and armor. Women in samurai households also placed Kagami Mochi, or rice cakes, in front of the family Shinto shrine, with a central element being a small round mirror made of polished silver, iron, bronze or nickel. On the day of Kagami Biraki the men of Samurai households would gather to clean, shine and polish their weapons and armor. The rice cakes were broken apart and consumed by the family members.

What is the symbolism behind these?

The symbolism of armor and weapons was so powerful that even today links to these feudal images remain. Japanese households and martial arts dojos often display family armor (family kami), helmets or swords, or modern replica, displayed in the kamiza, the place of honor. In front of these relics, sticks of incense are burned to show honor and acknowledge heritage.

The symbolism of the mirror (along with the sword and the jewel) dates back to the original trilogy myth of the creation of Japan. The mirror enables people to see things as they are (good or bad) and thus represents fairness or justice. The mirror was also a symbol of the Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess, a fierce spirit (the light face of god). For the members of Japanese feudal society, it also represented the soul or conscience, therefore it was considered important to keep mirrors clean because they reflected back on the viewer his own thoughts. Lastly it was thought to embody the spirits of departed ancestors (so strong was this belief that when a beloved family member was near death, a small metal mirror was often pressed close to the person's nostrils to capture their spirit. The mirror was then wrapped in silk and placed in a box inscribed with the name of the ancestor and they were held in high respect and honor).

The polishing of weapons and armor on Kagami Biraki was symbolic (from mirror polishing); a method to clarify thought and strengthen dedication to samurai's obligations and duty in the coming year. Thus Kagami Biraki is also known to some as "Armor Day." This concept continues even today. When a karate, judo or aikido sensei talks of self-polishing, of working on and perfecting the self and to reduce ego, the concept goes back to the ancient concept of mirror polishing to keep the mind and resolve clear.

The rice used for the rice cakes (and consumed of course) had also a symbolic meaning for the Samurai. Farmers considered that rice had breath (actually breathing in the ground), thus introducing the concept of rice being "alive," (breathing in the field) and thus associated with a living deity (kami). On another level rice represented the very economic backbone of the samurai society. It was given to the samurai as a stipend in return for service and allegiance to his lord (or alternatively given control over land and peasants who produced rice). Note that in the feudal Japan wealth and power were not based on currency, but on control of land which produced agriculture. The round rice cakes, as the shape of mirrors, were used as an offering, in gratitude to the deities in the hope of receiving divine blessing and also as an offering to family spirits (and deceased family heroes).

For martial arts practitioners today the celebration of Kagami Biraki has no religious significance. It does, however, continue the old samurai tradition of kicking off the New Year. This old tradition was adopted into modern martial arts, since 1884 when Jigoro Kano (the founder of judo) instituted the custom at the Kodokan. Since then other Japanese arts, martial or not, have adopted the celebration that officially kicks off the New Year, a tradition of renewal, rededication and spirit. Kagami Biraki officially falls on January 11 but is held usually on the second Saturday or Sunday of January, as a date most convenient for all dojo participants. In Japan a big demonstration of traditional koryu is held at Budokan on that day.

Kagami biraki is a time when participants engage in a common endeavour and rededicate their spirit, effort and discipline toward goals, such as training. Celebration

is very different in the various dojo. In most traditional dojos preparation for the New Year's season begins towards the end of the year, when dojo are cleaned, repairs made, mirrors shined and everything made tidy. In many dojo in Japan, Kagami Baraki starts with a long morning session of zazen (kneeling meditation), and includes visits to the dojo throughout the day by well-wishers, ex-students, and local celebrities. A special training, usually a tough one, is held at the end of which everyone demonstrates his kata. For non-local students this is usually the only opportunity in the year to receive a promotion. In some Okinawan Karate-do dojo, Kagami Biraki is highlighted by a special *"Two Year Training"* which composed by four to five hours of intense training, the length and severity symbolically representing the two year time span. The day ends with a long party attended by dojo members and honour guests from the community.

In recent years the *"Mirror Opening Ceremony"* has been reinterpreted from a different viewpoint, Zen. In an esoteric explanation, the mirror contains an old image, what one sees in the mirror is seen with old eyes. You see what you expect to see, something that conforms to your own self-image based on what you remember of yourself, thus connecting people with their past through the way they see their own image, which creates a false continual. Instead every moment holds potential for newness, another possibility for breaking with the old pattern, the pattern being just a mental restraint, something that binds us to the false self people call "me." By breaking the mirror one breaks the self-image that binds people to the past, so as to experience the now, the present.

Many dojos, particularly in Japan, retain the tradition of a purification ceremony (misogi). Salt is thrown throughout the dojo, as salt is a traditional symbol of purity, goodness and virtue (remember sumo) and then brushed away with pine boughs. This purification ritual is designed symbolically to drive out evil spirits so the match will be fair and honourable. Decorations are then frequently placed around the dojo. In old Japan they had great symbolism, but today most people just think of them as traditional holiday decorations. Certain koryu schools have special kata for that purpose, which are performed on that day, or other occasions as well.

Budo means tradition; so to keep with tradition is important to budo practice and transmission.

A dojo guide; general arrangements.

Every newcomer in a city looks for a city map or a city guide, which will allow him to move easily and understandably from one place to another. It will also inform him about important places monuments etc, their history and other useful information. The same applies when someone visits a museum, a big exhibition or other similar places. Have you ever think of such a requirement for a dojo, a dojo guide per se? Does it sound reasonable?

It is beyond doubt that every budoka knows what the **dojo** is; however what it is not quite certain if he is aware of the exact meaning of the word. The cultural model of the dojo adopted today, by the most contemporary budo practitioners, is that of the gym. This sounds logical because, at the surface, budo practice represents a physical activity. However this is not but the surface of a very complicated matter. On a deeper level budo is mainly concerned with the spirit. **Dojo** literally means a "place

to study the way,” or in a broader meaning a “place of searching for enlightenment”. A detailed study of the kanji used for dojo, indicates a link of a long philosophical heritage, as it comes from the Sanskrit term *bodhimandala*; *bodhi* means enlightenment and *mandala* is a graphic symbol of the universe, used as an object of focus in seeking the enlightenment state. Thus the place in which serious spiritual search takes place becomes the vehicle for *bodhi*. In other words a dojo is a special place for those seeking higher consciousness. Certainly it is a training hall; but thinking only in terms of the physical activity, is a limited understanding of the concept.

Having reached the point that a dojo is not simply a gym hall, the question comes; which are these special elements that provide the special atmosphere of a place where enlightenment is looked for? And how is this atmosphere created? There are certain environmental features which distinguish the traditional dojo from a training hall or studio; elements which collectively set the stage for the training of body and mind and send a clear message to practitioners about the pathway to be followed. These features will be attempted to be described herein. Though not all-inclusive, the features presented reflect a strong traditional scent in a facility dedicated to budo training and practice.

The first that attracts the attention as someone stands at the door of a traditional dojo is the **floor**, which comprises the training surface under foot. In the case of karate, kendo or iaido, the ideal surface is a hardwood floor. Special care must be taken in the construction of this floor, so it has the necessary springiness. Regular maintenance falls under the category of *soji*, keeping the training floor neat and clean. Traditionally this is done by towel-mopping the floor with water, after each strenuous workout. In this context, practice takes on a spiritual symbolic quality of cleansing the soul. In certain dojo it has become a tradition following the first training of the year, usually a tough one.

The hardwood floor is a very strong indicator of the seriousness of the dojo and of the commitment behind the training. Next to a wood surface, a tatami floor is also considered traditional for martial arts practice; however, tatami is more suitable for aikido and judo.

Concrete, tile, or carpet, by no means provide a proper training surface for a traditional dojo. Firstly they do not provide the springiness and support required and can result in injury to feet and ankles and should never be used. Modern technology provides special floors, as those used in many big training halls; however hardwood floor and tatami are connected with budo tradition.

Soon after someone joins a dojo, he will realize that it is arranged along the lines of a building aimed for spiritual exercises, thus it is arranged geometrically into a complex matrix.

When you enter the dojo, the entrance should ideally be directly opposite the **joza**, or the “upper seat”. Opposite is the **shimoza**, “lower seat”, where the dojo entrance is located. To the right is the **joseki**, the “upper side wall”; to the left is the **shimoseki**, “lower side wall”. The floor space itself, where the actual training is taking place, is referred as **embujo** or **taijo**. If a competition is held there, with appropriate lines marked out for contests, the area is known as **shiaijo**.

The **joza** is also called **kamiza**, “deity’s seat” or **shomen**, “the front”. It is immediately distinguished by a shrine or an alcove or a display of certain kind. In a very traditional dojo you may find a **shinden**, an elevated place against the kamiza wall, a place largely symbolic, reserved only for the founder of the **ryu** or an imperial family member.

The small shrine or alcove at the *joza*, contains a variety of objects of Shinto or Buddhist origins (a more detailed description of the kamiza will follow later). Also at the *joza*, the photograph of the headmaster or founder of the art practiced in that dojo, as well as the **hata** (banner) of the dojo, may be found. In Japan at some very old dojo, especially ones where the current headmaster of a **ryu** may train himself, carved wooden effigies of the **ryu** founder may be found sitting at the kamiza. In addition you may see, a **tokonoma** (recessed alcove), where a flower arrangement or **kakemono** (hanging calligraphic scroll) are displayed. In few words, arrangements are differing in various dojo, however the general idea is to show that **joza** and its associated **kamiza** must be considered as the spiritual centre of the room.

When you are standing facing the **joza**, to your back is the **shimoza**. This is the place where practitioners line up prior to and after training. The **shimoza** wall is the most appropriate place for the **nafuda kake**, a rack with wooden tags identifying the ranks of dojo members (although it may be found on either of the side walls). In a small dojo, the shimoza side may have pegs for hanging clothes and training gear (remember some old pictures from Funakoshi sensei early dojo in Japan, when his very first dojo in was only eight tatami).

Now face the **joza** and you will find, to your right the **joseki** (*seki* is another way of saying “seat” or “one’s place”) and to your left the **shimoseki**. Along either of these walls **dogu kake**, racks for weapons or other training devices, can be found. In a karate dojo **makiwara** (striking posts) are mounted here; or in kendo dojo an **uchikomi-ningyo**, a kind of armed and armored scarecrow that serves as striking dummy.

At this point the question comes to mind; “is all that architecture important to our practice? What purpose it serves?”. Of course this is not an easy answer but I will try to explain.

Traditionally, dojo architecture is closely associated with **reishiki** (etiquette). Every member of the dojo or visitor should bow towards the *kamiza*, upon entering or leaving the dojo, since it is considered as the spiritual centre of the dojo. The instructors of the dojo will seat themselves at the *joza* at the opening and closing of practices. When practice begins, dojo members align themselves in order of seniority from *joseki* to *shimoseki*. In a traditional dojo, senior practitioners will stay nearer the *joseki*, when training; juniors train on the *shimoseki* side. To make it more complex **reishiki** also specifies details such as, which is the appropriate foot to begin with when approaching or leaving the kamiza and in which direction to turn first in moving around the training area. When stepping into the *taijo*, it must be done with the foot away from the *kamiza*, the *shimoashi*, while stepping away from the *kamiza*, the foot nearest the kamiza, *kamiashi*, should move first (of course the foot nearest or away from the kamiza will differ, from right to left, depending upon which side of the dojo one is standing).

OK then but still what purpose do these formalities serve? In the past, dojo architecture and the associated **reishiki** (etiquette) had at least three functions: Firstly, the placement of the sensei at the front, seniors on the right, and juniors on the left provided the teacher maximum protection from an intruder (remember that the main weapon of the **bugeisha** (warrior) was the sword, which was carried on the left side and used with the right hand leading); secondly, the arrangement shielded the teacher's instruction from unauthorized observers (remember instruction was provided only to selected and authorized members); third, it reflected certain Buddhist worship rituals. If you believe in tradition all these have some relevance even today.

A dojo guide; Elements of a Traditional Dojo

As we have become aware of the general arrangement in a dojo, certain elements which are found in a dojo will be further examined and discussed.

The Kamidana

It is a small shelf, on which items of significance to the dojo are placed, situated at the *joza*. In Japan, the **kamidana**, has Shinto overtones and found also in every house. In other countries, the absence of Shinto beliefs does not necessarily require the omission of the *kamidana*, however it is a delicate matter; it may serve as a reminder of the deep meanings behind the pursuit of the Way - Do. A dojo carries forward a certain tradition (*ryu* or *ha*) and the kamidana contains objects and/or symbols pertinent to this particular tradition.

When members bow to the *joza*, at the beginning and the end of *keiko* (training), they are displaying respect to the heritage of their art. It is possible that westerners may have difficulties with the idea of bowing, especially to objects or inanimate things. However, to follow a traditional Way requires an attitude of openmindedness. Bowing to the *joza* and its associated *kamidana*, is not a sign of religious significance or submission; it is a reminder of an obligation voluntarily being taken over.

Alternatively, instead of the *kamidana* you find pictures of *ryu* founder or its current head master, to whom practitioners bow in respect of their contribution to the art.

The Hata

The **hata** is the banner of the style or association represented at the dojo. Or simply the banner of that particular dojo. The idea should be that a clear identification with one's art, style, association, or country. If you get the message that you've entered a United Nations waiting room, you have probably entered a wrong place for budo practice. It should be found hanging at the *joza*, below or aside the *kamidana*.

The Dojo Kun

The **Dojo kun** comprises the motto or slogan of the dojo and its members. It may found hanging in a *kakemono* form, at a prominent place in the *joza*, usually above or aside the *kamidana*. It is composed by a list of precepts or principles, of which every member should be aware and follow (remember the well known dojo kun of the JKA, found at the *joza* of its Honbu dojo in Tokyo). Another examples of the dojo kun may be "Vigor and Honor" or "Endeavor, Patience, Courtecy" or "mind, technique, body-one set" or other set by the founder of the *ryu* or its chief instructor or the Dojocho (Dojo Chief instructor), representing a reminder for the practitioner, of the etiquette required when one trains in any form of budo .

The Nafuda kake

Usually in the shimoza, one finds **nafuda kake**, a display of wooden name plates, which indicate member's rank and dojo status. It is not uncommon to have separate kyu and dan *nafuda* boards. This method of member tracking serves as a source of motivation and creates as well a strong sense of bond among members.

Nafuda are usually constructed out of light wood such as fir or pine. They may remain natural without any form of stain or finish. A special brush is used to write names on the *nafuda*, adding authenticity and beauty to them. In many cases on the back side of the *nafuda* plates, information concerning training and promotion of the respective member are recorded. This allows for quick review of members training history. *Nafuda* plates can be re-used, when a student drops out, simply by sanding the wooden name plate, however dan holders *nafuda*, should be generally kept since attainment of black belt is of permanent status.

It takes time and attention to maintain the *nafuda* display. But this effort is an investment in creating an air of traditional seriousness and purpose. A dojo is nothing more but its members.

Other Less-Tangible Features

Inside the dojo, someone can see and touch (?) the *floor*, the *hata*, the *kamidana*, the *dojo kun*, the *nafuda kake*. But are all these the only elements you find in a dojo? Certainly there is something more, which cannot be touched, but be felt; the theme of **sabi** and **wabi**.

Japanese artists use the word **sabi** to describe a situation when an artless unschooled dignity is merged with a certain uncultured antiqueness or the chimera of this age-old attribute. In a literal sense, *sabi* is "solitariness" or even "lonesomeness". *Sabi* embraces solitariness, it is an acceptance of it, a relaxed and peaceful satisfaction in heavy solitary. **Wabi**, actually implies "poverty". Its implied meaning is not negative despite what an English rendering might suggest. *Wabi* hints at the elementary serenity of a gentle springtime rain tapping the roof of a rustic lodge. It transforms intellectual entanglement as well as all forms of self regard and affectation, to unearth the unadorned truth of nature, which underlies the variety of relative phenomenon. Since nature is asymmetric, spasmodic, even "imperfect", *wabi* is the purity of natural imperfection.

Are you still there? If the above explanation seems too complicated, the late Donn Draeger, in an excerpt from his book "The Martial Arts and Ways of Japan (Vol. II)" describes them in a simpler but not least way:

"The dojo is austere, a humble place of natural and quiet dignity. It may be a specially constructed, spacious hall or simply a small but suitable indoor area. Always cleanliness and order predominate. Inasmuch as the dojo links the spiritual and physical elements of classical budo, the basis of its construction must not conflict with that relationship. Sabi and wabi-naturalness, simplicity, rusticity (but not without an element of design) are its keynote."

To capture this feeling requires attention to detail. The dojo must exude a scent of nature, in respect to its design and construction. Wood paneling is preferred over

concrete block or painted dry wall. This adds psychological “warmth.” Painted surfaces should be in earth tones rather than in bright or “loud” colors. The effect desired is to tone down the emotions rather than excite them. Calm spirit must pervade the dojo.

One of the hardest to explain features is the apparent lack of heating and cooling equipment. By our standards, this may seem crude. But, under the conception that a dojo is a health spa, then you come to terms with the philosophy of training in the elements of nature. In winter, heat should come from body activity; On the other hand, in summer, sweating is allowed to have its effect on the body, a natural cooling effect. To many this is cruel, but it should never be forgotten that too much pampering of the body weakens the spirit. The notion of austere training (*shugyo*) is essential to forging an indomitable spirit (*fudoshin*), the aim of training in budo.

The dojo is representative of the struggles of life. To overcome adversity requires strength of character forged by training of mind as well as body. A dojo cannot avoid testing the spirit. There is no argument that modern science and technology have made tremendous contributions to our understanding of mind/body fitness. Many old methods of training have been improved and newly developed equipments, thus enhancing training effectiveness. But a dojo, above all, is a “place of enlightenment.” Enlightenment is a journey which takes place in the mind; and the mind cannot be fooled with frills. The most direct route to self realization is through self-confrontation. A dojo, a traditional dojo, is the place where the journey is played out. The elements of a traditional dojo remind us constantly of that journey.

The Dojo guide; the Kamiza and its meaning

In this part I would like to talk a little for the **Kamiza** (lit. Deity’s Seat), since, as we have seen, it comprises the spiritual center of the dojo. The *Kamiza*, like most things Japanese, seems to be alien to both Western society and thought. The reason to that are, potentially, some obvious spiritual difficulties to overcome, mainly due to its religious significance in Shinto religion. However similar features are certainly found in every religion.

The **Kamiza** or **Kami Dana** is found also in people’s homes; is considered as a way of connecting or maintaining ‘the spiritual connectedness’ in every day life. Of course, something similar, although to a lesser extent, happens in Western homes as well.

It would not be unrealistic to say that almost every dojo in Japan has a *kamiza*. Some are quite elaborate whilst others are simple. Shinto is a simple way, thus its *Jinja* or shrines, although elaborate in design, are not overly ornate in content. The dojo *kamiza* is a reflection of its life size counterpart.

The *Kamiza* houses **the focal point of Shinto** or more accurately the **Shin Kyo (sacred object)**, which in the majority of cases, is **the mirror or Kagami**. It is worthy to notice that the *Kagami* (mirror), the *Ken* (sword) and the *Hoseki* (jewellery) comprise, according to Japanese mythology, the three treasures of Japan. The significance of *Kagami* (mirror) is very important. Its first reference may be found in the *Nihon Kojiki* (Record of Ancient Matters). The main point for us to understand is that the mirror reflects ‘everything as it is’. It cuts through all thoughts and labels that

have been placed upon us, by us and others, to show us as how we truly are. Equally, if not more importantly, it represents the 'pure heart and mind of that which we call God'. In essence "you may fool yourself, but you cannot fool God".

Apart from the *Shin Kyo* other things, connected with human life are found in the Kamiza. On a lower shelf *daily offering of rice, salt & water* are placed. **Salt** is a natural purifier and should retain its natural energy, thus the kind of typical daily table salt is not used. **Rice** is the largest, naturally grown, food product in Japan, carrying people through the Autumn, Winter and Spring months. *Rice represents strength and forms the central part of the Kanji for Ki*. In many cases, rice was given as payment for work or service. A Samurai for example, received measurements called *Koku* depending upon his status, at the ending of each year. **Water**, a natural, powerful element is used not only to preserve life, but to purify it. Many Shinto ceremonies involve purification in cold water, called *Misogi*. Other foods and fruits are also offered seasonally.

The presence of greenery in the form of evergreen sprigs, called **Sakaki**, is common in the Kamiza. The *Sakaki* coming from nature reminds us that life is an on going process, always evolving, ever new. Pine is another acceptable form of green. The *Sakaki* is placed on the shelf, in bottles, below the main part of the altar which houses the *Shin Kyo*. *Sakaki* are sold in prepared bunches in Japan. Only the best are chosen and any dead leaves or parts are removed.

Another part of *Kamiza* regalia, would be in the form of **weapon**, especially in a budo dojo. Either a **sword**, a sacred gift from the Kami, or a **spear**, with which Izanagi O'Mikoto stirred the waters below the Floating Bridge of Heaven (the Milky Way), the droplets from which formed the islands of Japan. Or in some cases a **bow and humming arrow**. The bow (Floating Bridge) - the humming arrow dispelling negative energies - Yaaaaaa!!!

Additionally in the Kamiza you may see carved wooden statues or effigies of the Deity patron of the dojo or the ryu.

A further important characteristic in Shinto are the **Gohei** or **jagged strips of white paper**. The Gohei, originally made of white silk, mark or show the entrances to sacred places or objects and may be found either placed on the *Sakaki* or on the **straw rope (Shimenawa)** marking the entrance to a Jinja.

It is obvious that Kamiza has a strong relationship with Shinto and as that may become the source of many misunderstandings; therefore its absence from dojo found in Western countries is quite understandable. However its presence in such a dojo, in a much simpler built, may remind us of the origin of our practiced art and become the link to tradition; after all "*to understand the new, you must know and always remember the past*".

A dojo guide; the Dojo Kun

Every karateka around the world, especially the ones who at a certain time had a relationship with the JKA family, is familiar with the Dojo kun, the five precepts or instructions for practitioners of karate. It is found hanging in calligraphic forms in many dojo. Remember pictures from the JKA Honbu in Tokyo with the calligraphy of

Dojo kun hanging in the Kamiza. In many dojo karateka are "chanting" the Dojo kun, during reiho, at the beginning and end of the training. But, are we sure that we know its meaning, origin and history?

The origin of the Dojo Kun is largely unknown; to my knowledge there is no clear evidence of the origin of the document at all. Many people consider Gichin Funakoshi as the "father" of Dojo Kun but probably this is not correct.

This is based to the fact that Funakoshi was famous for his calligraphy work; calligraphy was a common activity among scholars, as Funakoshi, and warriors as well. Every caligrafic work was signed by its creator. Funakoshi's calligraphic work, including his Nijukun, may found in many books but no calligraphic works of the Dojo Kun, signed by Funakoshi, has been found anywhere. Why would a man who created the Dojo Kun not write it down using his favorite activity of putting brush and ink to paper? I think because he did not write it. The Nijukun was his dojo kun but not the one we are talking about.

It is worthy to notethat there is no evidence of Dojo Kun existence before World War II. The Japanese writings of Funakoshi, in four different hard-bound publications about karate, contain absolutely no mention of the Dojo Kun. Even his autobiography does not mention it. Surely, if you had authored the central tenets of karate training as the founder of a style, would you not mention them either in one of your many books or your own life story as you told it?

That brings us to the conclusion that the five point document is a creation of the Japan Karate Association. All copies found are brushed by Nakayama, Okazaki, Enoeda and other JKA senior instructors. None created by instructors of the Shoto-Kai or Funakoshi himself is available. Probably Nakayama and some other colleagues of him created the Dojo kun in order to convince the Allied Occupational Authorities to allow them to continue practicing karate despite the ban on martial arts in Japan. (Editor's note: I am preparing an article on that case, the Budo ban in Japan 1945-1949) but never took credit for it, so people would just assume it came from somewhere prestigious or ancien. By never commenting on the creation of the Dojo Kun, it "just appeared" and histories seem to have been invented in the information vacuum.

Let's now have a look in the substance of the Dojo Kun, which is shown on the picture beside. Its **Japanese Pronunciation** stands for:

- Jinkaku kansei ni tsutomuru koto
- Makoto no michi wo mamoru koto
- Doryoku no Seishin wo yashinai koto
- Reigi wo omonzuru koto
- Kekki no yu wo imashimuru koto

A typical English Translation is:

- Seek perfection of character
- Be faithful
- Endeavor

訓
一人格完成に努むること
一誠の道を守ること
一努力の精神を養うこと
一礼儀を重んずること
一血気の勇を戒むこと

- Respect Others
- Refrain from violent behaviour

Although this is the common translation, this is a bad one. So allow me to attempt to introduce you to the proper one, by using my poor Japanese language skills.

Firstly some remarks in reading the dokument. Read the words from from right to left and from top down. The most right character says "**Kun.**" Every line begins with a counter **hitotsu** that means "one." Every line ends with the word **koto**, which literally means "thing." This is generally interpreted to mean "*Here's a rule, here's another rule...*"

Following that the best English translation is

- **Strive for completion of character**
- **Protect the way of the truth**
- **Cultivate the spirit of effort**
- **Respect the principles of etiquette**
- **Guard against impetuous courage**

If you compare the two translations the difference is evident. Although someone may argue that there is no substantial difference, a closer view proves the opposite. Just a few examples: The common translation asks for loyalty, the literal one mentions honesty. One asks for courtesy, the other for respect. Respect and Courtesy are two different things. Courtesy is mere politeness, respect is something different, in my opinion. Lastly, the common usage directs to avoid violence, the literal one asks you to be careful of poor judgement – quite a difference.

To many all these may seem irrelevant. However to those living budo on a daily basis, in every moment or action, I think a deeper understanding is absolutely necessary. And allow me to express another point. The Dojo kun, in general not referring to this specific one, works as the motto of the dojo, the "unifier" of members. This particular "Dojo kun" has been spread among Shotokan karateka by JKA; but any dojo may select its own. As an example the dojo kun of my laido dojo in Athens is "Vigor and Honor" – "Yuki to Meiyō". Every dojo-cho may select a kun for his dojo, which will reflect particular dojo values. In addition it enhances the bond among the members of the dojo. If you find it worthy, try the idea.

The book of the Void, from Miyamoto Mushashi's Go Rin No Sho

According to oriental way of thinking life is a circle. There are many examples to that, the closer to us being that of our karate obi, belt. It starts white, signifying innocence, as progress through training is achieved, it becomes darker and darker to become black. As practice continues the obi, traditionally not being replaced as it is the case with the karategi, is frayed and becomes again white thus closing the circle, however reaching another dimension of white that of emptiness of the mind. The mind of a beginner is full of thoughts, that of a master is empty; empty your mind, a common phrase in martial arts.

Emptiness or Void is described in the fifth chapter of Miyamoto Musashi's Gorin no sho, a classical martial arts book. The entire text of this chapter, translated by Victor Harris (The Overlook Press, Woodstock, New York), is provided below:

THE BOOK OF THE VOID

The Ni To Ichi Way of strategy is recorded in this Book of the Void.

What is called the spirit of the Void is where there is nothing. It is not included in man's knowledge. Of course the Void is nothingness. By knowing things that exist, you can know that which not exist. That is the Void.

In the Way of Strategy, also, those who study as warriors think whatever they cannot understand in their craft is the Void. This is not the true void.

To attain the Way of strategy as warrior you must study fully other martial arts and not deviate even a little from the Way of the Warrior. With your spirit settled, accumulate practice day by day, and hour by hour. Polish the twofold spirit heart and mind, and sharpen the twofold gaze perception and sight. When your spirit is not in the least clouded, when the clouds of bewilderment clear away, there is the true void.

Until you realise the true Way, whether in Buddhism or in common sense, you may think that things are correct and in order. However if we look at things objectively, from the viewpoint of laws of the world, we see various doctrines departing from the true Way. Know well this spirit, and with forthrightness as the foundation and the true spirit as the Way. Enact strategy broadly, correctly and openly.

Then you will come to think of things in a wide sense and, taking the void as the Way, you will see the Way as void.

In the void is virtue, and no evil. Wisdom has existence, principle has existence, the Way has existence, spirit is nothingness.

Twelfth day of the fifth month, second year of the Soho (1645)
SHINMEN MUSHASHI

Menkyo Kaiden

Do you know that one of the major innovations Jigoro Kano has introduced to judo and it was spread then to the whole spectrum of gendai (modern) budo arts, is the dan ranking system? As strange as it sounds the koryu (old) budo system did not had such a hierarchical ranking system. Why? For many I would say reasons. Keep in mind that in koryu teaching was much more restricted in terms of students, as well as to who was eligible to accept instruction. Therefore instead of the dan ranking system, the menkyo kaiden system was used.

"What is a menkyo kaiden?" A menkyo kaiden is a document handed down by a sensei to a single student, which the sensei believes is most capable of carrying on the teacher's art. Of course there are questions related to the subject, such as, what are the actual responsibilities of the person that holds his sensei menkyo kaiden? are there multiple menkyo kaiden, which meaning an instructor may have awarded menkyo kaiden to many students? does each student create one if the didn't receive one? These as well as other relevant questions I will try to explain today.

The menkyo-kaiden as described by Richard Kim sensei, a well known martial artist and author, in his book "Weaponless Warriors" (page 25) is **"a certificate of full proficiency in an art, usually given to a student deemed most suited to carry on**

the art of his sensei. A master customarily issued only one menkyo-kaiden in his lifetime."

From a linguistic point of view, the word *menkyo* means "license", while *kaiden* means "initiation in all the mysteries and secrets of an art." In past times a master or soke of a particular ryu ha, kept his art or at least certain parts of it in secret. The master would reveal some or all of his secrets, before he died, to one or quite a few individuals, his son or more rarely daughter, or a few senior students. To prove the veracity of such a transfer of knowledge, as well as the fact that this knowledge has been absorbed, the master issued a menkyo-kaiden, proving that the secrets of the art had been passed to the named person.

It was customary for a master or soke to pass only one menkyo-kaiden. Of course if you consider the meaning of the menkyo kaiden, "*licence for initiation in all the mysteries and secrets of an art*", it is possible and had happened, that a sensei could do this to more than one student, however tradition dictates that the sensei pass on only one menkyo kaiden of his own. The issue of more than one menkyo kaiden has become the case of splits in the lineage of koryu schools, every part claiming the authenticity of succession.

The person who received the *menkyo-kaiden* held the privilege and responsibility of carrying on the art. Other contenders for the master's art were to respect the follower and holder of the *menkyo-kaiden*, in the context that it was their sensei wish. In a certain way, the *menkyo-kaiden* is a means of assuring the correct passing of information from one generation to the next; the master decided which individual would carry on his art, and that individual was given the privilege and responsibility of continuing the tradition of the art onward to the future. In many times students, for their own reasons, have split off of their sensei line, to start their own lineage in martial arts, because they did not receive the menkyo-kaiden, which in their opinion they deserve (any similarity with today world is a coincidence or a proof that history repeats itself, as you prefer it).

There have been also cases that a master has received the *menkyo-kaiden* of more than one master. In this case he customarily passes all these plus his own to one individual who appears to be the greatest hope to carry on the tradition. On the other hand, the oriental culture, being as secretive as it is, often causes a master to choose to die with his "secrets", thus depriving the future generations of the glorious past. In such cases the *menkyo-kaiden* ends with the master who did not pass it onwards

While menkyo kaiden was traditionally passed to only one as it has been mentioned, another honor, called the *mokuroku-sensei*, was passed on more frequently. It was verification by the master, that the student has learned all what was necessary in the curriculum of the art and was certified as capable of representing the master's art in just about any circumstance. The difference is that the *menkyo-kaiden* is the master's foremost hope for his art and the *mokuroku-sensei*, although very accomplished, may not be the master's foremost hope for his art.

The way a master handed down his menkyo kaiden was not a standardized one and varied among the various ryuha. In general each master creates the menkyo-kaiden and passes it on to the student of his choosing in a manner which the master feels is best. A celebration may be the tradition in one dojo but not in another. It may be hand

delivered to the student or it may be rolled and handed to the student with the instruction not to open the scroll until after the death of the master.

Today the menkyo kaiden system is used by very few ryuha in Japan, since the vast majority has adopted the dan ranking system. In a certain way, with the current expansion of the martial arts worldwide, it could be almost impossible to maintain this system. However in certain old schools, with a lineage dated back for 200, 300 or even 400 hundred years, although they have adopted today the dan ranking system, they maintain a menkyo system through which the sokeship is passed from one generation to the other.

Kiaijutsu

To many, even martial arts practitioners, a kiai is a loud shout used mainly by karateka and kendoka to emphasize their action, testifying also that they are not mere boxers or wrestlers but trained experts in an Oriental discipline. But to real experts this is a very simplistic or even "naïve" approach. Kiai, an art in itself, the kiai jutsu, can be an effective tool for amplifying strength and power, capable of having physical effects on an adversary.

Kiaijutsu can be defined in two ways. Firstly, signifies the art of harmonizing with the universal force. Kiaijutsu, like Aikijutsu (Aiki and Kiai use the same kanji characters in opposite order), is a way of harmonizing oneself with another person in order to make them do what you want. Kiaijutsu can be used to find out another's intent, deceive others about your intent or to manipulate an opponent's strong points in order to gain the advantage in both sport and real combat. It may be considered that kiai jutsu is a psychophysical method to organize one's own energy and will and at the same time, a method of affecting another's inner world. Second is the art of using the shout as a weapon. Kiai can add power to your strikes and kicks, help you overcome fear and pain, and, timed properly, assist you to sustain a blow with less or no injury.

Let's look in more details. Kiai has nothing to do with what someone sees in tournaments; karateka who scream out a senseless "ki-yah!" or other sorts of odd shouts. Kiai is different from kakegoe. A kakegoe is a simple shout, kiai is something deeper. The "ki" in kiai refers to energy, (chi or qi in Chinese) believed to be an essential force behind health and vitality, but more so, something able to be nurtured, built and stored within the body for use. "Ai" means to meet, harmonize, join or fuse. Kiai is the expression of our energy, ki, through a shout, with the intent to "meet" (-ai) "other's spiritual energy" (ki-), thus having an effect on him.

In koryu, ancient schools of martial arts, only specific sounds, such as "ei," "toh," "yah," with certain martial meanings in esoteric mikkyo, were used as kiai. Each ryu had special kiai, for the use of spiritual energy's expression in a vocal explosion. Kiai were like secret mantras; special words of power that should not be used lightly. With a kiai, you attack directly your opponent's spirit with words of power that would literally shock him into defeat. For example, the kiai "yah" resembles the sound and ultimately the force of a released arrow (in Japanese: ya). With this kiai you penetrate, like an arrow, the opponent's spirit.

To perform a proper kiai, one must act like the bow and arrow. Start by inhaling as one would normally do in meditation, expand the stomach and draw Ki into the the hara (or Lower Dan Tien in Chinese). This action is similar to that of an archer drawing back the bow, preparing to fire the arrow. Feel the air in the lower part of the abdomen and then exhale, by tightening the abdominal area and let the air flow out with a "Ha!" sound, in a way similar to that of releasing the arrow. It is important to note that by tightening the abdominal area, the sound comes from the hara and is not forced out of the throat. In this way, the kiai is expression of energy and as such makes strikes and kicks stronger, assists in overcoming fear and pain and sustaining blows without injury. It is important to keep in mind that kiai is strong mental and physical power that can be discharged with a brief explosive exhalation. The intensity of kiai is determined by the degree of tension in the respiratory muscles, so everything depends on the tension in the tanden.

In koryu, different kiai may be found, however the four more commonly found kiai are presented below. Note that there is no particular word meaning behind the sound used for kiai:

Attacking Kiai: Is a fierce explosion of Ki, through a loud shout, used specifically for making the opponent drop his/her guard for a very short moment in order to open a window of opportunity, suki, for attack. The shout originates in the hara (lower Dan Tien in Chinese) and resonates through the torso with the intent of bewildering, terrifying, and overwhelming the opponent. The low, drawn-out, almost growling sound of "ehy!" would normally be used.

Reacting Kiai: This sound is very heavy, intense, and is used to create a sense of disappointment in the opponent just following a succesful defence against his or her technique. This sound hisses up through the body from the tightened hara section. The sound "Toh!" is the most commonly used.

Victorious Kiai: A very triumphant and energetic sound used upon a succesful attack to bewilder and discourage the opponent from fighting any further. The sounds "Yah!" and "Yoh!" are commonly used.

"Shadow" Kiai: This is the most powerful Kiai; at the same time the most quiet one. In fact, the Shadow Kiai is silent, meant to transform your state of mind by simultaneously and spontaneously combining the aspects of the three previous Kiai and bringing one to the highest level of involvement in the fight. In this state-of-mind one is in touch with opponent's Ki, therefore there is no suprise to react to. In this mind-set, the options of winning, losing, past and future are removed and the concept of action in the present is all that exists. The only sound is your breath rhythm to the events. If any sound were to be used, it would be an almost-silent "uhmm" that some use when exhaling while practicing Ki Breathing.

Other types of Kiai may be also found in different koryu.

Considering that Kiaijutsu involves harmony with another's Ki, other skills come about from the practice of this art, such as sensing another's intent before physical action takes place. In a confronting situation someone may feel sakki, or "force of the killer", from an adversary. Sakki is the Ki that is projected outward when one has intent to harm or destroy someone or something. All living, when determined to act violently, naturally project this. If such a force is strong, even average people with no Ki training can feel it. If someone is properly trained, may sense this hostile intent even before the adversary acts. On the other hand, that is why one must be determined to win when enters a sport or real combat engagement. Your strong sakki, appeared very fierce to the opponent, will push him even be to the point that he backs down.

With such intent being put to use with a Kiai, you can appear so demonic that you could win with pure intentions alone.

In the past kiai jutsu was a highly esoteric and secret discipline often taught to professional warriors, or senior students of martial arts. However seems that over the last century, as martial arts became popularized, practiced by non-warriors, and turned from warrior arts to philosophical disciplines, a lot of esoteric knowledge as well as technique were lost. Kiaijutsu suffered this fate as well. Now, if the art is taught at all, it is taught only to senior students in a few ryu, which maintain esoteric teachings. This teaching must not be confused with the practice the kiai, in a basic or simplified form, in many other martial arts and styles or its most common use in competition.

As it has been said the source of kiai is one's hara. To develop your hara and to learn how to use it properly requires special exercise, to include standing and sitting meditation. Since proper execution of these exercises requires good knowledge of energy channels inside the body, this will follow a future series of articles. However it is important to remember that, when you Kiai you are sending out your intent. If you Kiai with the intent of looking cool, you you'll look cool but it is questionable if you will knock your opponent backwards. If you Kiai with the intent of knocking someone back, the outcome could be different. Its all about intent.

There are many stories about Kiaijutsu and the use of Kiai as a weapon. The teachings of Kiaijutsu say that masters of the art are actually able to freeze multiple opponents or knock people backwards or even knock people over with this skill. Many legends speak of people who could kill small birds from a distance with this shout. Donn Draeger, well known martial artist and author, has also described his experiences. He was highly ranked in many disciplines including katori shinto ryu kenjutsu, a classical school of swordsmanship with probably the oldest historical tradition in Japan. During one of his trainings with Otake Ritsuo, soke of the Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto ryu, in one high level paired kata he noticed that at one point the two swordsmen were too far apart to have any contact. Nevertheless he practiced as prescribed until one day he felt compelled to ask Otake Soke the meaning of this odd long distance. Although a student is not supposed to question, Draeger told Otake Soke that he didn't understand what was happening. Otake replied, "Get real swords." They began the kata and when that point of distance was reached Otake emitted a thundering shout, at which point Draeger said he was literally thrown backward onto his back. Otake Soke explained, "that part of kata is for 'ki'".

How true or authentic these stories are, is not quite certain. However the existence of ki is quite certain and its development and use requires sincere, persistent and longtime practice, provided you believe in it.