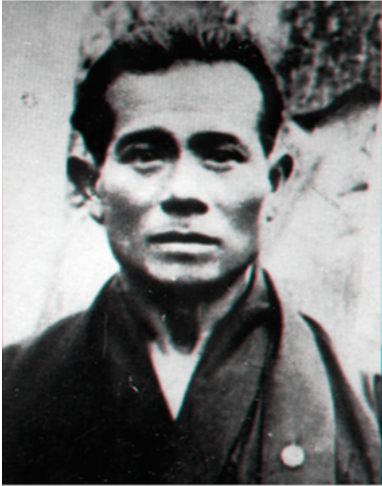


History of Uechi-Ryu



Grandmaster Kanbun Uechi

The known history of Uechi-Ryu begins with Kanbun Uechi (kan-boon way-chee.) Kanbun Uechi was born in Okinawa, Japan on May 5, 1877 and grew up in the mountain farming village of Izumi. Being of Samurai descent Mr. Uechi studied karate and weapons as a youth. In March of 1897, at the age of 19, he traveled to southern China with a small group to study Shaolin Kung Fu or martial arts.

It took ten days by sea for Kanbun to arrive at Fuzhou (foo-joe) city in the Fujian province. After searching for a suitable Kung Fu or Chinese Boxing instructor for a period there, Mr. Uechi found a Shaolin Monk known as Shushiwa from the Nanching Temple (south of Fuzhou.) Young Kanbun began to study Chinese medicine and a Kung Fu system called Pangainun (pon-guy-noon) under Master Shushiwa. As a test of his dedication and character, Kanbun was only allowed to practice the first form (Sanchin) for three years!



Map showing Fujian and Okinawa

Eventually, Kanbun Uechi was accepted as a full student and studied with Shushiwa for thirteen years, mastering Chinese medicine and Pangainun Kung Fu himself. Pan-gai-nun had only three katas or forms: Sanchin, Seisan, and Sanseiryu, but an intense regimen of strength and conditioning exercises. Master Kanbun sometimes referred to the system as “Min-chin-chu-ryu” meaning “speed-with-glare-way.”

To make a living during this time, Master Uechi sold herbal medicine as a street vender. Part of this job was demonstrating martial arts in the streets to attract a crowd to sell medicines to. He was challenged many times during his time in China due to his occupation, and racial tensions.

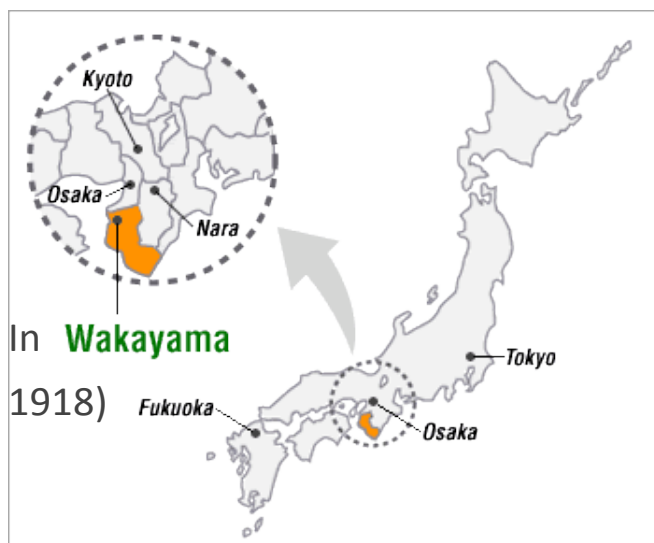
Uechi Sensei received his teaching certification from Shushiwa in 1904 and in 1906 he became the first known non-Chinese martial arts instructor in China, opening a school in the town of Nanching. In 1909 one of Master Uechi's students became involved in an altercation which resulted in his fatally injuring his opponent. Considered responsible for the student's actions, Kanbun closed his school and vowed to never teach again.



In February 1910, at the age of 32, Kanbun Uechi returned to Okinawa. Legend has it that part of the reason he had left Okinawa when he did was to avoid being drafted into the Japanese military. This was not uncommon at the time due to poor relations between the Okinawan people and the Japanese controlled government. Master Uechi wanted to avoid being jailed for evading military draft years earlier, so he continued with a Chinese appearance and lifestyle upon re-entry into his homeland. Once back in Izumi, Mr. Uechi pursued a life of farming and starting a family. In May 1910, Kanbun Uechi married Gozei Toyama and their first son, Kanei was born the following year. Master Uechi assumed the life of a farmer for years avoiding the embarrassment of the incident in China and problems with the local authorities.



Major Cities in Okinawa



Over time, rumors of Master Uechi's status as a great kung fu Master spread and the Okinawans began to pressure him to demonstrate and teach his knowledge, but he resisted. the years following World War I (which ended in the world suffered economic depression and Okinawa was gripped with poverty. In 1924 Master

Uechi moved to Wakayama in southern Japan for employment at a spinning-mill, and to escape the pressure he was experiencing in Okinawa. There he befriended a young man named Ryuyu Tomoyose who liked to “scuffle” with others. Suspecting that Mr. Uechi was experienced in the martial arts, Mr. Tomoyose would describe an altercation to the Master, who could not resist advising him on his tactics. Before long, it was obvious that Kanbun Uechi was a very skilled Master.



Ryuyu Tomoyose and Kanbun Uechi

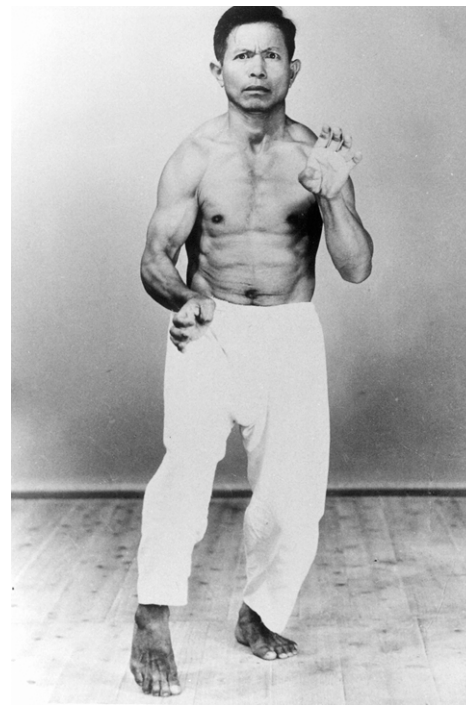
Mr. Tomoyose eventually convinced him to share his skills with others and in April 1926 Master Uechi resumed teaching in Japan. At nearly 49, Kanbun opened the “Shataku Dojo” with a small number of students, led by Ryuyu Tomoyose. The dojo was actually a small house owned by the spinning-mill, but Kanbun had strict requirements to join. By April 1932 Master Uechi had several students and the Pangainun-Ryu Karate-Jutsu Institute was established. Kanbun and his students then opened a larger facility called the “Tebira dojo” in Wakayama where a more open door policy was adopted and students were more readily accepted. Also at that time Kanbun Uechi, resigned from the spinning-mill and opened a small general store where he sold medicines and other Chinese merchandise.

In 1940 Kanbun Uechi’s students created the Uechi-Ryu Karate-Jutsu Association to honor the Grandmaster. Mr. Uechi continued to teach his art until his death in 1948 in Ie Jima, Okinawa. The Tebira dojo was later moved to a nearby location, but still operates today.



Members of the Shataku dojo in Wakayama

Kanei Uechi – Kanbun Uechi’s son, Kanei, was born on June 26, 1911 in Izumi. Kanei was a sickly child, but at the age of 16 (1927) he moved to Wakayama to study Pangainun and be with his father. There, young Kanei worked in the daytime at the Hiromaru Industry Joint Stock Company and in the evening, he trained with strict guidance from his father Kanbun. Practice centered around Kata (forms), Kote Kitae (conditioning drills), and Jiyu Kumite (sparring.)



The three kata of Pan-gai-nun taught by Master Kanbun: Sanchin, Seisan, and Sanseiryu are the nucleus of the present day Uechi-Ryu.

Kanei Uechi proved to be a talented and driven student, earning the nickname “Practice Demon.” In April 1937 he received a teaching certificate and began teaching at a branch dojo in Osaka, Japan. The Osaka dojo only experienced moderate success. This probably due to Kanei being quite young at 26 years old, and that it was in an area where new students were primarily Japanese (who did not understand the value of Karate training at that time.)

In October 1939 Kanei married Shige Nahahara in Osaka, a marriage which eventually produced seven children. In early 1940, Kanei and Shige moved to Hyogo, Japan where he established a dojo in his home. In 1941, Kanei Uechi was promoted by his father to Master level. In 1942, Kanei, with his wife and family, returned to his mother’s new home in the village of Miyazato (near

Futenma Dojo

Nago, Okinawa.) Kanei Uechi became the second Grandmaster of Uechi-Ryu Karatedo in 1948 with his father’s death.

He and his associates including Ryuko Tomoyose (Ryuyu’s son) expanded his father’s original curriculum by creating and



standardizing additional kata. The most significant additions were the katas Kanshiwa, Kanshu, Seichin, Seiriu, Konchin and Yakusoku Kumite sparring drills. Grandmaster Kanei Uechi is considered by many to be a martial arts genius in his own right based on just these contributions to the style. Master Kanei Uechi taught at his dojo in Futenma, Okinawa (then the

Ryuko Tomoyose

headquarters of the style) from 1949 until becoming ill in 1988.

The Okinawa Karatedo Association – With Grandmaster Kanei Uechi becoming ill in 1988 a political shake up rocked the Uechi-Ryu Karatedo Association (UKA.) At that time the organization was run by his most senior students (who had become Masters themselves by that time.) But with Kanei Sensei incapacitated, his oldest son Kanmei began to forcibly assume control of the association based on an old tradition.

Many of the senior Masters regarded Kanmei as unfit to assume such a role at that time and advised him to be

patient and work towards the goal of leadership. Kanmei disagreed and, as a result, many of the Senior Masters and officers of the UKA were either asked to leave, or made the difficult decision to leave the organization.

Tsutomu Nakahodo

In April of 1989 the bulk of the Okinawan Masters from the UKA formed the

Okinawa Karatedo Kyokai (or Association.) Included in this group were Senior Masters Ryuko Tomoyose (Ryuyu's son), Tsutomu Nakahodo, Hiroshi Inada, Shintoku Takara, Kosuke Yonamine, Nobuhide Asato, Shigeru Takamiyagi, and Toshio Higa. The new name (abbreviate as Okikukai)



was chosen in part to accommodate the international growth of the organization. Consequently, the OKK formed a large international following with many affiliated dojos around the world. With this, both Okinawan and International Masters of the OKK rededicated themselves



Hiroshi Inada

to preserving and further developing the system that they had spent most of their lives mastering, and to the growing interest in that style.

In 1995 the headquarters building (or Kenshu-Kaikan) for the new organization was constructed in the Kitame section of the town of Chatan, Okinawa. The Kenshu-Kaikan is the site of training, rank testing, special activities, and celebrations for the

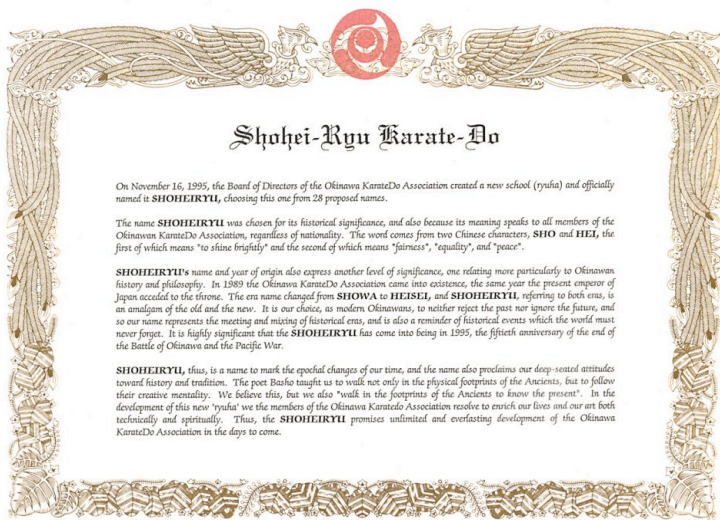
OKK. The facility is also has rooms for visitor lodging and an office for the organizations administrative activities.

Kenshu Kaikan Building

Over the years the Okinawa Karatedo Kyokai (Association) has had fragments break away from the original group, but the core group of Masters (including most of Kanei Uechi's most Senior students) still head the association. A large contingent of international affiliates also remain connected to the OKK including schools around the United States, South America, and Europe.



Shohei-Ryu Karatedo – Around the same time as the formation of the new organization, the officers of the Okinawa Karatedo Kyokai began to contemplate a new name for the style or school of karate (Ryuha.) After consideration of several different possibilities the name “Shohei-Ryu



KarateDo" was chosen and officially adopted in November of 1995. The word Shohei (show-hay) consist of two parts meaning "shining peace." This name has historical significance and special meaning related to the situation which caused it's creation. The name also has significance to people of Japanese heritage, symbolizing a

combination of old and new eras of existence. It represents an attitude of remembering the past while, making the best of the present, and preparing for the future!

Pangainun and It's Origins – Legend tells us that about three thousand years ago a Buddhist Priest or monk from India named Bodhidharma traveled to China to teach Buddhism. He also taught these students, or Shaolin Monks, a

Zheng Bu Su, believed to be Shushiwa's teacher.

series of exercises to maintain their health and teach them self-defense. These monks of ancient China needed these skills to deal with their often lawless and hostile environment. Many people believe that these exercises were actually from martial arts developed in India based, in part, on ancient Greek fighting arts.

Over time these exercises were developed further by combining influences

from pre-existing Chinese martial arts. Many of these

"Kung Fu" styles were refined to include influences from movements of animals like the tiger, leopard, crane, monkey, snake, dragon...or even insects like the Praying Mantis.

The Pangainun system was derived from three of these styles from the Shaolin temple in Fujow City in the Fukien Province of southern China. These styles were the Tiger, Dragon, and Crane and were each based on the movements and behaviors of those



animals. The word Pangainun translates to “hard and soft” style indicating that it is a blend of both yeilding strategies which require little strength, and those more direct and powerful. It combines the influences of the three animal-based styles to balance power techniques (utilizing strength) and finesse techniques (utilizing precision and grace.) It



also utilizes a balance of strength and relaxation of the body and mind.

The Tiger (Tora in Japanese) style influence is characterized by strength, daring, quickness, confidence, agility, and overwhelming force.

Physically, Tiger techniques are grasping, tearing, palm and fist strikes, circular blocks and the penetrating eye. The Crane (Tsulu in Japanese) style

influence is characterized by grace, balance, precision, evasion, and relentlessness.

Crane techniques include direct kicks, one-legged stances, finger strikes, attacks to vital areas, and deflecting blocks. The Dragon (Dio in Japanese) style

Shoalin Temple in Fujian, China

influence is characterized by cunning, wisdom, deception, stealth, and spirit.

Dragon techniques involve attacks to the limbs, circular kicking, sweeping and tripping, and open hand strikes. Advanced practitioners of Pangainoon or Shoen-Ryu Karatedo will understand these influences while mastering their harmonization.

