

“The Matayoshi Family and Kingai-ryu”

Fred Lohse explores the mysterious Kingai-ryu, guiding us through its history and shedding light on its relationship with other Okinawan martial arts.

- by Fred Lohse -

The “mysterious” Kingai-ryu is referenced in a variety of ways in the existing literature on the Okinawan martial arts. It has been treated as the progenitor of Goju-ryu, a sister system to Uechi-ryu, a Chinese crane system, and more commonly as the empty-hand system of the Matayoshi tradition. In reality, it is none of these things. While actual information on the system is rather scarce, this article is an attempt to dispel some of the myths about Kingai-ryu, and its connection to the Okinawan martial arts. It draws on written documents about the system published by the Kodokan dojo in Okinawa, the practice of the “unarmed” arts passed down in the Matayoshi tradition, and conversations and interviews with a number of people familiar with the system(s). While this article is not meant to be definitive, as much of the secrecy and “mystery” around the system remains (and is perhaps even less penetrable since the death of Shinpo Matayoshi), it is meant to shed more light on a virtually undocumented portion of Okinawa’s martial culture.

The most common understanding of Kingai-ryu is that it is the unarmed art passed down in the Matayoshi family, stemming from the instruction Shinko Matayoshi received from Roshi Kingai, his teacher in China. However, this initial assumption is incorrect. The Kingai-ryu as taught by Roshi Kingai is not a solely unarmed style; it includes the use of weaponry, such as the nunti, tinbe, suruchin, and shuriken. Additionally, there is more than one art with an unarmed element that the Matayoshi family preserved but did not commonly teach, making the Kingai-ryu only part of the “unarmed” portion of the

Matayoshi legacy. To further confuse matters, one way the family referred to their martial tradition is Kingai-ryu Matayoshi Kobudo, or Kingai system Matayoshi traditional weapon arts. This would mean that everything under the Matayoshi umbrella is Kingai-ryu, whether it came from Roshi Kingai or not. However, for this article I will treat the term Kingai-ryu as that element of the Matayoshi tradition that stems specifically from what Shinko Matayoshi learned from Roshi Kingai in Fuchow.

Kingai-ryu Tode Jutsu 金硬流唐手術 Shinko Matayoshi traveled to Fuchow on the recommendation of his friend Kenki Go, arriving sometime around 1907-08. In Fuchow, he took up residence with Koki Go, Kenki Go’s father. Koki Go soon introduced Shinko to a friend and fellow martial artist, Roshi Kingai. Kingai is said to have been a well known martial artist in the Fuchow area, and is supposed to have been a senior to the same Shu Shi Wa (Zhou Zeihe) that was Kanbun Uechi’s teacher in Fuchow.¹ Kingai referred to his system as Kingai-ryu, and referred to the characters comprising the name in the following manner: “Kin refers to supplely reacting to change, while Gai refers to a steel like hardness”. Together they refer to hard and soft as one.² The reading for Kin, which is usually translated as gold, money, or metal, is rather idiosyncratic, perhaps based on a personal understanding of the name. The system was also referred to as a Golden Bird style by Shinpo Matayoshi, connecting the Kin (gold) character to it in a different way.

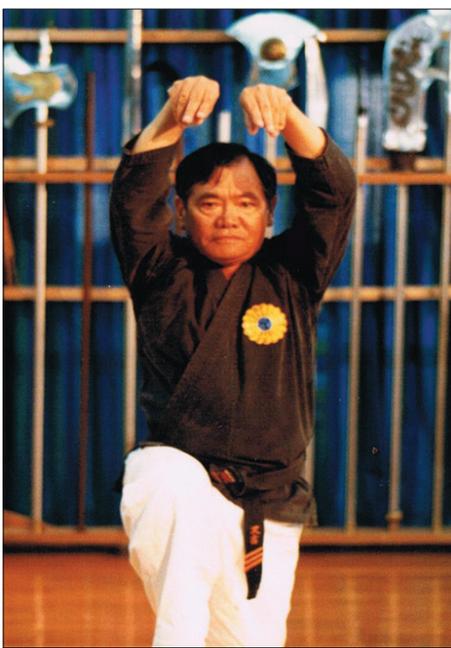
With some breaks, including travel to

Taiwan, some travel around China, trips back to Okinawa and Japan, and a period of around 10 years during which he lived back in Okinawa (from the early 1920’s), Shinko studied with Roshi Kingai from about 1909 or 1910 to 1935, when he finally returned to Okinawa for good. In addition to martial arts, he also studied Chinese herbal medicine, acupuncture, and moxabustion with Kingai. Before he finally left for Okinawa in 1935, Roshi Kingai presented him with two scrolls, the upper and lower, that detailed Kingai-ryu’s bushin (god of military arts or patron saint), Roshi Komyo Taigen (Guangming Da Yuanshuai, or Generalissimo Guangming).³ Roshi Komyo Taigen is seen as a Buddhist saint (bodhisattva). He symbolizes wisdom, a knowledge of the evil passions inherent in human nature, the imparting of the light of Buddhism’s virtue and the protection of the 18 arhats, as well as the need to stay true to these teachings. The family still holds Roshi Komyo Taigen’s



Courtesy of Mario McKenna

Kenki Go, seated right, and one of his students, seated left, with Chojun Miyagi, center.



Shinpo Matayoshi doing crane kata, Kodokan dojo, 1986.

scrolls, which represent Shinko's mastery of Kingai's system. Unfortunately the content of these scrolls has never been made public.

The system itself appears to be a Fujianese Tiger-Crane system. Sanchin is the base kata, and central to it. The entire list of kata, as published by the Kodokan and Matayoshi family after the death of Shinpo Matayoshi, can be seen in figure 1.

As can be seen from this list, a number of the kata are common to other systems in Okinawa, including Sanchin, Sesan, Gojushiho, and Wankan. How close these kata are to the other versions on Okinawa is somewhat unclear, however they are not identical. Bishop (1989, pp. 150) states that the Sesan in the system is identical to Uechi Ryu's, but having personally seen the Kingai Sesan, I disagree. There are some similarities in pattern and technique choice, particularly the extensive use of open hand attacks, but the kata is most assuredly not identical. As another example, the late Sensei Seikichi Odo taught a version of Gojushiho taught to him by Shinpo Matayoshi that he called Gojushiho Ichi. He also taught a Kyan lineage Gojushiho, as Gojushiho Ni.⁴ The Matayoshi Gojushiho has some similarities to the other versions on Okinawa, which stem from Sokon Matsumura, but is in most ways a very different kata. I do not know if there are any similarities between the

Kingai-ryu Wankan or Sanchin to the extant Okinawan forms, but given the similarities in the other kata, it may be safe to assume there are some. It is also safe to assume that these kata are not identical to the other Okinawan versions.

This leaves us with a variety of possibilities regarding the primogeniture of these kata: that there is actually an Okinawan source for them, that they were common Chinese kata that were imported into Okinawa, that these names for kata were common in Okinawa and/or Fujian, or of course something else entirely. The connection to a variety of Okinawan martial arts does seem obvious however. In any case, the system includes a variety of empty hand and armed kata, emphasizes open hand and knuckle strikes, and is not identical to any of Okinawa's extant karate systems. It also contains instruction on vital point striking (kyusho).

Shinko's training under Kingai is said to have been quite severe. However, Shinko treasured the opportunity to learn the art from such an accomplished master, and steeped himself in the training, as well as in the Chinese medicine he was studying. The art master Kingai taught was based on certain core teachings, including kata study and much work with the applications of the kata. One of the "secrets" of the system was "daninpo", a method for striking a person. This particular method of striking is related to human physiology. It starts with an under-



Shinpo Matayoshi doing crane kata, Kodokan dojo, 1986.

standing of the vital points of the vital points on the human body, and is considered a killing art, intended solely for actual combat.

Included in this method is "kida", a method of striking the opponent by utilizing his energy (ki). It is also called kokyu-daho, which means to strike the opponent in time with his breathing. The spots to strike are chosen according to specific circumstances, and are points related to acupuncture and moxabustion. According to the system, the appropriate attack for these points is usually with the fingertip or the point of a one knuckle strike.

It would appear that Roshi Kingai's instruction was not a simple pugilistic method, but also included medicine,

Figure 1 - Kingai Ryu Tode Jutsu 金硬流唐手術

<u>Kata</u>	<u>Phonetic</u>	<u>Translation</u>
三戰	Sanchin	Three Battles
王冠	Wankan	King's Crown
十三	Sesan	13
五十四	Gojushi (Useishi)	54
五十七	Gojunana (Useichi)	57
虎法	Tora ho	Tiger Method
虎鶴	Tora Tsuru	Tiger Crane
貫手術	Nunti jutsu	Hooked polearm
籐牌術	Tohai Jutsu (Tinbei)	Sword and shield
流星術	Ryusei Jutsu (Suruchin)	Weighted cord
手裏劍術	Shuriken Jutsu	Throwing weapons

Courtesy of David Naus.

Courtesy of David Naus.

Courtesy of Fred Lotse.

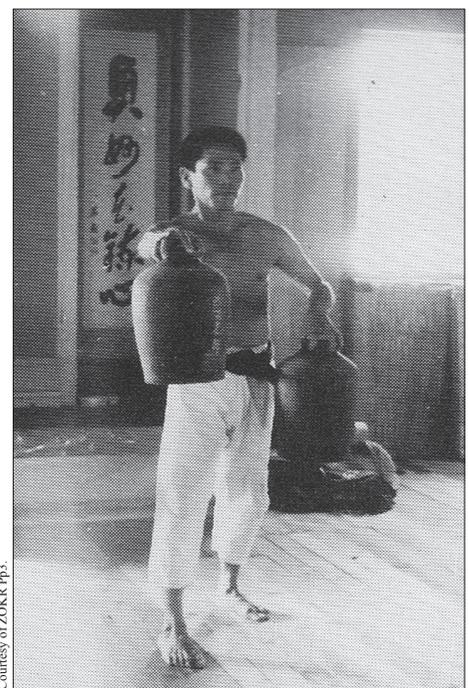
written elements, and of course the armed and unarmed skills of the system. Along with the physical instruction, the secrets of this method were transmitted to Shinko through the use of three-ideogram poems. In many ways, this type of instruction is very different from that of the more tightly focused systems, systems which often cover empty handed combat alone, that are common to Okinawa today.

It is, not surprisingly, unclear where this system came from. If, for instance, Kingai was a senior to Shiwa Shu, why is the system so different from what Kanbun Uechi was taught? Who were both Kingai and Shu students of? Was the system created by Kingai? If so, that would explain the name, as well as possibly explain the variant explanation of the characters. But what did he study before he founded his own system? It seems to be based in Fujianese Tiger-Crane boxing, but what lineage? How is it connected to other Okinawan systems? To other Chinese roots of Okinawan systems? The kata imply that there is a connection to both Nafadi and Suidi, but again it is unclear what that connection is. Unfortunately, these and other questions are likely to remain unanswered, as with the death of Shinpo Matayoshi the transmission of the complete system has likely been lost.

Kingai-ryu's historical connections to Okinawa's martial heritage seem extensive, if somewhat vague. On a more modern level, the expression of Roshi Kingai's teachings in the Matayoshi Kobudo is a core element of the system, even if the empty hand kata were not taught as part of it. Therefore, through the impact the Matayoshi kobudo has had on the Okinawan martial arts and the large number of Okinawan martial artists familiar with it, there is also a deep influence on modern Okinawan karate coming from the Kingai-ryu. But in looking at the Kingai-ryu, it is also important not to elide it with other elements of the Matayoshi tradition. While not taught publicly, the Matayoshi family also maintained another martial tradition, one that had a huge influence on the development of Okinawan karate in the 20th century, and one that was separate from the Kingai-ryu.

Shorin Ha Tsuru Ken, Kenki Go Lineage 少林派鶴拳 (吳賢貴伝来)

As a young man, Shinko Matayoshi began his studies of Chinese martial arts under his friend, Kenki Go (1887-1940), Wu Hein Kui in Chinese. Go was a Fujianese man who possibly moved to Okinawa in 1912, at the age of 26.⁵ He was working for an Okinawan named Masatada Gima at his tea-



Courtesy of ZOKR Pp.3

Shinpo Matayoshi using sanchin kami, Shodokan dojo, early 1960s.

shop, the Senshun Kai, in Naha's Higashi Machi district, but in 1913 he opened his own shop, the Eiko Tea Company.

Go took the Japanese name Sakaki Yoshikawa and married an Okinawan woman, Makato Yoshikawa; they had a daughter named Toyo Yoshikawa. Go was also a teacher of Southern Shaolin Crane Boxing.

Shinko's trip to China was in part inspired by Kenki Go's stories of the martial arts there. As noted above, the family history relates that Go encouraged him to travel, and gave him both a recommendation and an address to go to in Fuchow. There, after a long journey, Shinko ended up at the Go family home, which was in Suibukanmae machi, Minami-dai, Fuchow city, in Fujian province. There he was taken in by Koki Go, Kenki Go's father. Koki Go was also a teacher of Fujian Crane fist, and began teaching the young Shinko. This relationship would eventually lead to Shinko's introduction to Kingai-roshi, a friend of Koki Go's. Shinko trained with Koki Go until he started training with Kingai, and maintained his practice of the Go family white crane throughout his life.

The Matayoshi connection to Kenki Go's crane kempo would not stop with Shinko however. Shinko began instructing his son, Shinpo, in the sys-



Courtesy of Hokama, 1984, pp. 345.

Seiko Higa and students.

tem when he was very young. Later, in 1935, after Shinko had returned to Okinawa for good, he introduced his son to his old friend Kenki Go, and Shinpo studied with him until Kenki Go's death in 1940.

In the years since Shinko had first studied with him, Go had been moving in the highest circles of Okinawan karate, participating in the famous Kenkyukai Tode with Chojun Miyagi, Juhatsu Kyoda, Kenwa Mabuni, and other notable karate teachers. In part through this group Go had a huge impact on the Okinawan karate of his day. Versions of the kata he taught there are preserved in a number of Okinawan systems. Additionally, while there are no direct Kenki Go kata in Goju-ryu Go was also said to have had a deep effect on Chojun Miyagi's martial arts. The two were good friends (Miyagi was also a friend of Shinko's), and among other things traveled together to China, to research martial arts there.

Just what Crane lineage Kenki Go's system was is unclear. Neither Kenki Go or his father left a written lineage, or described their teachers. Neither the Matayoshi family or other students of Go's, like Shojo Itoman, Kenwa Mabuni, or Juhatsu Kyoda, have any records of who Go's teachers were. According to the Liu family, who teach Feeding Crane in Taiwan, the Kakuho form resembles Flying Crane, but this is only a guess based on the form.⁶



Kenki Go in a crane posture.
Kenwa Mabuni is to the rear left.

Figure 2 - Shorin Ha Tsuru Ken (Gokenki lineage) 少林派鶴拳 (吳賢貴伝来)

<u>Kata</u>	<u>Phonetic</u>	<u>Translation</u>
八歩連	Happoren	8 Continuous Steps
二十八	Nepai	28
鶴法	Kaku ho	Crane Method
白鶴兵法初段之事	Haku Tsuru Heiho Shodan no koto	White Crane Introductory Combat Tactics
白鶴兵法貳段之事	Haku Tsuru Heiho Nidan no koto	White Crane Intermediate Combat Tactics
白鶴兵法參段之事	Haku Tsuru Heiho Sandan no koto	White Crane Advanced Combat Tactics
白鶴先師之事	Haku Tsuru Senshi no koto	White Crane Instructor Experience
白鶴双刀	Haku Tsuru Soto	White Crane Double Blades

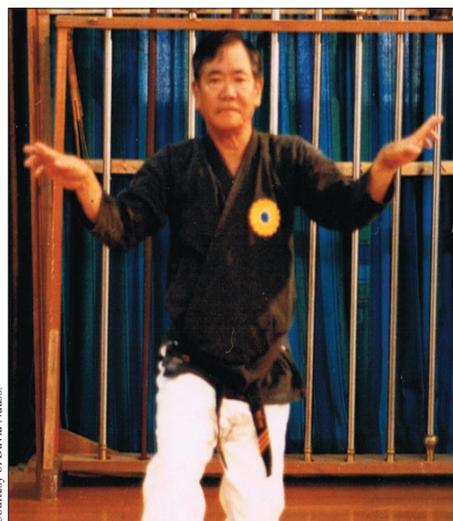
Courtesy of Fred Lobsenz.

Tokashiki (1995) considers it possible the Go family learned Singing Crane from its founder Xie Zongxian.⁷ It has also been suggested that Go learned Crane boxing from Shu Shiwa, who taught Kanbun Uechi. Shu supposedly knew Crane boxing as well as the Tiger boxing he taught Uechi. (See Wei et. al, 1998, pp. 221.) The techniques and kata of Uechi-ryu and Kenki Go's kempo seem to have very limited technical similarity however.⁸

Indeed, the system, despite similarities in kata names and some base technique, does not seem to be identical to any extant Crane system in China, at least to my knowledge. Nor is it similar to any extant Okinawan system. It is perhaps loosely connected to the Kingai-ryu, as Koki Go was a friend of Roshi Kingai and it seems likely his son knew him as well, but the systems do not share any kata. It has recent connections to many modern Okinawan karate styles, through Go's participation in the kenkyukai. It may also have deeper historical connections to a number of Okinawan martial arts, through the connections between Go, Shu, Uechi, and Matayoshi (and possibly Ko Ryu-ryu and Higashionna). It

can safely be assumed the Go family knew Shu, as he and their friend Kingai had trained together, and taught in the same town. It is also said that Kanbun Uechi and Kenki Go referred students to each other in Okinawa, and had known each other in China. (See McKenna, 2001, and Yagi Takami, 1977, pp.439.) However, what the actual connection was, and how it related to their training, is unknown.

Much like the Kingai-ryu, Go's kempo is usually considered an unarmed system, however this is also incorrect, as it is a complete martial system, containing armed techniques as well. The content of the system, as published by the Matayoshi family, is listed in Figure 2.⁹ A number of these forms are still preserved in different Okinawan systems. Nepai is part of Juhatsu Kyoda's Tou'on-ryu, and in its current performance maintains a strong similarity to the crane kata the Matayoshi family taught.¹⁰ As Nipaipo it is also preserved in Shito-ryu, though its presentation is



Courtesy of David Naves.

Shinpo Matayoshi in a crane posture.
Kodokan dojo, 1986.



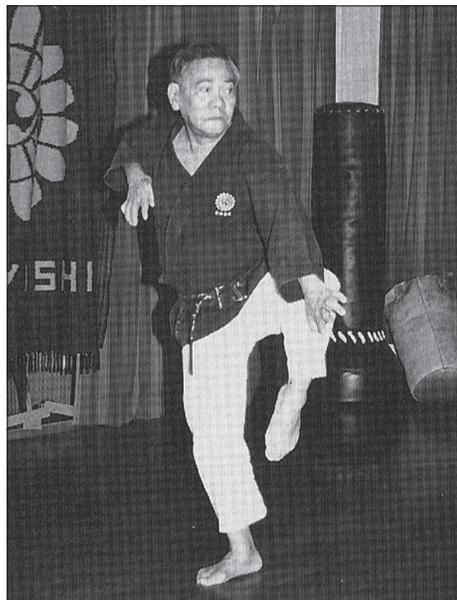
Courtesy of Mario McKenna.

Shigekazu Kanzaki, headmaster of Tou'on-ryu,
in a crane posture from Kenki Go's Nepai.

much different. Happoren is also preserved in some Shito-ryu lineages.

Tsuruho, or crane method, has been passed on in a number of variations, under various names. It can be seen in Ryuei-ryu (Paiho), some Shito-ryu (Hakaku, Hakutsuru), Goju Kensha (Kakufa), possibly the Ryusan passed down by Chomo Hanashiro, and as an adjunct form in various other systems. The characters for the form can be read Kakuho or Tsuruho, but it has been referred to in a variety of ways, including Hakutsuru, Hakaku, Hakucho, Kakufa, Okaku, and so on. The content of the kata also varies. The base pattern is usually visible, but with a large number of possible variations.

This variation may not be as unusual as it initially seems. Some have theorized that Go was experimenting with or creating the form when he was teaching it in the Kenkyukai, leading to the differences in different people's kata.¹¹ However, my instruction in the form also included a number of possible "alterations"- places where techniques could be added or modified while performing the kata. In looking at the methodology implied by the syllabus, the various White Crane Heiho forms imply a system based more on concept than overly didactic form. This is a different approach to kata than that normally seen nowadays, one emphasizing a certain creativity with the material, as well as a practice approach that emphasizes concept over form. This in turn would tie into both the variations possible in



Shinpo Matayoshi doing crane kata, Kodokan dojo, 1990s.

the kata and the variations seen in different people's performance of it. Instead of experiments or mistakes, the variations may instead be different iterations of the same principals.

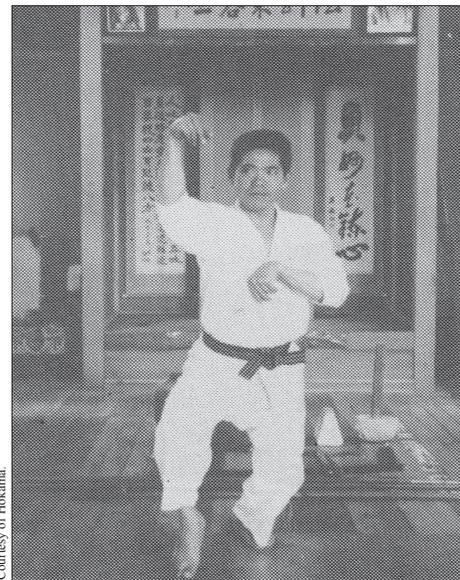
This kata in particular seems to have grabbed the imagination of Okinawan karate practitioners, and their Western students. It is the form that Shinpo Matayoshi taught a number of his senior students, and has been demonstrated and taught by a number of them, in different iterations. It is also the empty-hand form Shinpo Matayoshi most often demonstrated.¹² Since it comes from the Matayoshi family, it has also been referred to as Kingai-ryu Hakutsuru. This is in some ways a semantic issue, as depending on how you are referring to the Matayoshi family martial arts, they can all be considered Kingai-ryu, and therefore this is Kingai-ryu as well. However, the form originates in the Shorin Ha Tsuru Ken, Kenki Ko's lineage.

Again, both the material and its presentation leave a number of questions. Shinpo Matayoshi did not teach the system publicly, and to my knowledge did not pass it down in its entirety to anyone. It seems none of Go's other students did either. Just how Kenki Go taught, what training methods are included in the system, and so on is rather unclear.¹³ Unfortunately, with the death of Shinpo Matayoshi these questions are likely to remain unanswered. While Sensei Matayoshi seems to have taught more of this system, sharing Kakuho in particular with many of his senior students over the years, the system in its entirety does not seem to have been passed down. Indeed, many portions of it, like the double swords, seem to be unknown on Okinawa today.

Other Material

Interestingly enough, an examination of the Kingai-ryu and Kenki Go's Hakutsuru Kempo does not immediately cover the entirety of the Matayoshi unarmed tradition. Among the forms that Shinpo Matayoshi was famous for demonstrating were Monkey, Mantis, and Drunken forms.¹⁴ Given the syllabi listed in figures 1 & 2, where do these forms fit? Shinpo Matayoshi was never

clear on this, at least not to me or my teachers. They could be part of Kenki Go's White Crane Heiho forms, teaching certain elements of movement and technique included at different levels of instruction. They do not seem to fit in the Kingai-ryu syllabus anywhere, though they were referred to as Kingai-ryu at times by Shinpo Matayoshi (the nomenclature issues discussed above may hold true here as well). However Kingai's junior Shu is known to have also practiced Monkey boxing, among



Shinpo Matayoshi in a crane kamae, Shodokan dojo, early 1960s.

other styles, and so these forms may have been passed down from their mutual teacher, as an adjunct to the Kingai-ryu, or as something Shinko picked up around Kingai's students. Shinko Matayoshi also studied some form of Chinese Boxing in Shanghai for a time, and it is possible they come from whatever art he practiced there. They may also stem from the Matayoshi family kempo Shinko Matayoshi learned as a young man from his father and paternal grandfather, but again there is no record of what this kempo consisted of.

These forms, like so much of the unarmed material passed on in the Matayoshi family, remain somewhat of a mystery. They also do not seem to have been passed down to any of Shinpo Matayoshi's students in any systematic manner.

Connections to Okinawan Karate

The various connections between these

Kata and application from the kata Kakuho.



1A: Sweeping upper block. This movement can also be done very close to the body, and called "Lady Brushing Her Hair".

1B: The block moves in a circle, keeping contact with the attack, and pulling it in.

2A: Grab, trap, and attack as the body weight shifts in and down onto the front foot. In kata, the attack is with the fingertips

2B: The block continues into a grab and trap, using the body weight to take the attacker's balance, while the attack goes to a vital point in the neck. The attack can use the fingertips (nukite), knife edge of the hand (shuto), palm (shote), or thumb knuckle (boshiken), depending on what target is open.

3A: Crane stance, crane beak downward sweep. This is usually interpreted as a lower block from crane stance.

3B: The striking hand wraps around the neck and as the body rises into the crane stance the attacker's head is pulled into the rising knee by the crane "block".

systems -Kingai-ryu and Kenki Go's kempo- and other Okinawan systems raise a number of questions about the Chinese progenitors of some Okinawan karate. Kenki Go's family home is said to have been close to the Ryukyukan, where many Okinawan karate pioneers, people like Kanryo Higashionna and Kanbun Uechi, first stayed in Fuchow. Both Higashionna and Uechi are said to have trained at the Kojo dojo, at the Ryukyukan, but it is unclear just what system that dojo taught, or how it was connected to other local martial arts. It seems unlikely there would be martial artists in the same neighborhood who did not know each other, but both the Go family's and Shiwa Shu's connection to the Ryukyukan or the Kojo dojo (if any) is unclear, as is Roshi Kingai's.

Going back further, to the 1830s or so, Sokon Matsumura is also said to have learned martial arts in Fuchow. What he studied is unknown, but he passed on the kata Gojushiho, Sesan, and supposedly a crane form. Given that he was an expatriate Okinawan, it seems possible he also had a connection to the Ryukyukan, and through it to the surrounding community. Certainly he practiced some form of martial arts in Fujian.

The various iterations of Sesan across Okinawa imply, in their similarities, a connection between them. In particular the Goju, Tou'on, and Uechi versions are very similar in pattern, as are the Sanchin of the three systems. That these forms are also seen, in a recognizably similar form, in Kingai-ryu, a system that on the surface has no contact

with other Okinawan systems, points towards a common root, probably based in Fuchow. That an earlier visitor to the area, Matsumura, passed on a Sesan that also demonstrates a clear connection to these forms, as well as other kata that share names and some technical similarities with kata in the Kingai-ryu, points at least to the possibility that a local art or arts, practiced in or near the Ryukyukan, is a common thread between the various Okinawan systems. This in turn may even suggest a native Okinawan origin for these arts, one that influenced local Chinese arts, as opposed to the other way around. However, while some single progenitor art is a tidy concept, even more likely is an ongoing relationship between native Chinese martial artists and visiting Okinawans, and a local training community that partook of elements of both traditions. Using a similar community in Okinawa as a better documented example, when expatriate Fujianese (Go and To Daiki) came to Okinawa, they got involved in, and influenced, local training communities like the kenkyukai. Their expatriate status perhaps lent them a certain social status in this group, as did their previous martial training. They became part of a community that shared information and practice in a way that is perhaps less common today. They also became part of a community that people moved around in, studying with multiple teachers and sharing knowledge with friends. Taking this as an example in Okinawa, it does not seem so far fetched for Okinawans in Fujian to participate in a similar community, particularly since there is a good deal of evidence to support the idea. This in turn can muddy the more simple, and therefore in some ways more appealing, concept that some of Okinawa's karate pioneers learned from just one main teacher, and then passed that art on. So while it seems nice to believe that the Okinawan arts came from Fujian, it is equally possible that Okinawan practice helped in the development of a local training community in Fuchow based around the Ryukyukan, one connected by frequent contact with Okinawa, and one that possibly formed one base for

much of today's Okinawan karate. While technically Kenki Go's system, unlike the Kingai-ryu, seems to have no direct connection to any extant Okinawan system, the social connections around his practice seem more relevant to the development of the Okinawan arts. He, and his family, seem to have known both the Shiwa Shu that taught Kanbun Uechi, and Roshi Kingai, Shinko Matayoshi's teacher. The system that Shu taught bears a strong resemblance to the karate of Higashionna, who studied under someone in Fuchow, possibly Xie Zongxian, who in turn may have also known the Go family. That the Go family knew expatriate Okinawans is clear, as Kenki Go met his first employeer, an Okinawan, in Fuchow, he is said to have known Uechi in China, and later Shinko Matayoshi stayed in their home. They also lived near the Ryukyukan, and were engaged at some level in commerce with Okinawa. As an expatriate, Go later lived in Okinawa, and trained with most of the greatest karate men of his generation.

In some ways, the Go family, Roshi Kingai, and Shinko Matayoshi may be an example of the social network around the martial arts in Okinawa and Fuchow. Go was an international traveler and expatriate, living, working, and training in both Okinawa and Fuchow, as well as traveling around China. His training was connected in various ways to that of a number of Okinawan luminaries such as Uechi, Matayoshi, and possibly Higashionna. He lived and practiced near the Kojo dojo, a pivotal environment for a number of Okinawan practitioners, and was associated with a number of important local teachers, including Zhou and Kingai at the very least. He was also friendly with other expatriate Fujianese in Okinawa like To Daiki (Tang Daiji; see Fujiwara and Gima, 1986, pp.74). Taking his experience as an example, we have a demonstration of the fluidity of the connections between the Fujianese community in the area around the Ryukyukan, the expatriate Okinawan community in that area, expatriate Fujianese in Okinawa, and the local Okinawan martial arts community.

As a whole, this set of relationships points to information and people moving back and forth, sharing knowledge and influencing each other, rather than a straight one way transmission of knowledge. This is shown clearly in the traditions the Matayoshi family passed down. They did not simply teach a pure Okinawan or Chinese art. Instead, the Matayoshi family taught a blend of the things they took from both sources, their Okinawan training influenced by Shinko's time in China, the Chinese elements blended with the native Okinawan training he had at a number of points in his life. Just what influence Shinko may have had on his Chinese teachers, the Go family and Kingai, is unknown, but if they were open minded it is unlikely they would have taken a student with a strong background and not at least been interested in what he had to show. However this, like most investigation into the connections between current Okinawan and past Chinese martial arts, is primarily speculation.

Conclusion

All told, the various elements of the Matayoshi tradition add up to an enormous amount of material. The best known, of course, is the Matayoshi kobudo, now taught world-wide. Shinpo Matayoshi was also famous for his White Crane, the Kenki Go lineage crane kempo, which he demonstrated frequently over the years. Together with the various elements of the Kingai-ryu, the rest of Kenki Go's system, Shinpo Matayoshi's expertise in both Sensei Kyan's Shorin-ryu and in Goju-ryu, and whatever other elements of training the Matayoshi family passed on, the sheer volume of material is enormous. That a large portion of it was not passed down is not surprising; passing down the bulk of the kobudo taught by Shinpo Matayoshi was in itself a large undertaking.

Just why Shinpo Matayoshi decided to focus his instruction on the pieces of his family heritage he did is unknown. He may have decided that the core elements of Kingai's system incorporated into the kobudo was a full expression of the Kingai-ryu, and therefore teaching more was unnec-

essary. He may have seen that there were many karate systems flourishing in Okinawa, and decided that instead of adding another he would focus on the armed elements of the tradition, particularly as he felt that much of the island's armed heritage was being neglected. He may simply not have had the time to try to teach everything, and so started with the weapon arts, and stayed there. Certainly in selecting his material he elected to focus on native Okinawan elements; perhaps for that reason alone he decided to limit the amount of time he would spend on the primarily Chinese systems of Kingai-ryu and Kenki Go's crane kempo. In any case, it is unfortunate that these systems have essentially died out. While a number of Shinpo Matayoshi's senior students teach a small piece of, most often, Gokenki's kempo, these systems have not, to my knowledge, been passed down in their entirety to anyone. They formed a link between the martial past of both Okinawa and Fujian and Okinawan martial arts of today. They also were a living snapshot of a developing practice, one that is continually changing. The elements of these arts that are not as heavily emphasized today -armed technique, traditional medicine, vital point striking, written mnemonics- are elements of training that, without being preserved, may eventually be lost completely. However, while these systems have not been passed down in their entirety, they do continue.¹⁵ The Go family kempo has become a part of Okinawan karate. Pieces of it are practiced in a number of systems, and in some ways it has become an Okinawan ideal, the "secret" white crane. The Kingai-ryu has, through its presence in the Matayoshi kobudo, influenced generations of Okinawan martial artists, and will continue to do so as long as this tradition is practiced. Perhaps in that way the "unarmed" elements of the Matayoshi tradition will be maintained into the future, a part of the continually growing and changing spectrum of the Okinawan martial tradition.

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Notes

1. There is no record of Matayoshi having any contact with either Zhou or Uechi, however. Uechi left Fuchow around 1904, and Matayoshi arrived no earlier than 1907.

2. This quote, and much of this information is taken from ZOKR (1999).

3. This Guangming Da Yuanshuai may have been a historical figure in China.

4. Thanks to Julian "Butch" Spain sensei for information on the content and lineage of the kata taught by Sensei Seikichi Odo.

5. There is a discrepancy in the dates here. Most sources give Go's arrival in Okinawa as around 1912, but the Matayoshi family tradition states that Shinko Matayoshi knew him before he left Okinawa in 1905.

6. Conversation with Liu Chang'I and Kimo Wall.

7. In turn he posits Xie as Kanryo Higashion-

na's teacher, Ko Ryu Ryu.

8. See McKenna, 2001, for more information on the Go family.

9. Interestingly enough, this list differs from one given by another student of Go Kenki's. See McKenna, 2001.

10. Thanks to Mario McKenna for insights into Tou'on-ryu's Nepai.

11. Thanks to Fernando Camera for sharing theories on Kenki Go's participation in the Kenkyukai.

12. Perhaps as an extension of the variations in the kata, Shinpo Matayoshi rarely performed this kata the same way twice. I saw him do it a good number of times, and have seen video of him doing it for various events, and each time it was a little different. Additionally, he referred to it publicly as Kakuho, Hakutsuru, Okaku, and Hakaku. One added element of this variation in public, he told me, was that then people could not "steal" his kata. I was present for one situation in which an American student demonstrated a version of the form, and when asked where he learned it told Sensei Matayoshi a friend taught it to him, but would not say who. Matayoshi replied that that was unlikely, as the only time he had done the form that way was at a certain demonstration, and therefore the student must have copied it from video. Matayoshi then kindly went on to correct the student's performance.

13. Some more detailed information on Go's teaching is included in McKenna, 2001.

14. Versions of these were demonstrated on a video the Kodokan dojo published in the mid 1990s. According to students from the 60s, these forms were also a little more "open" in content and presentation.

15. This may not be the case. I have been told that recently some members of the Zen Okinawa Kobudo Remei are gathering at the Kodokan dojo to practice Kingai Ryu. I do not know who is teaching, or what the actual content of this class is.

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