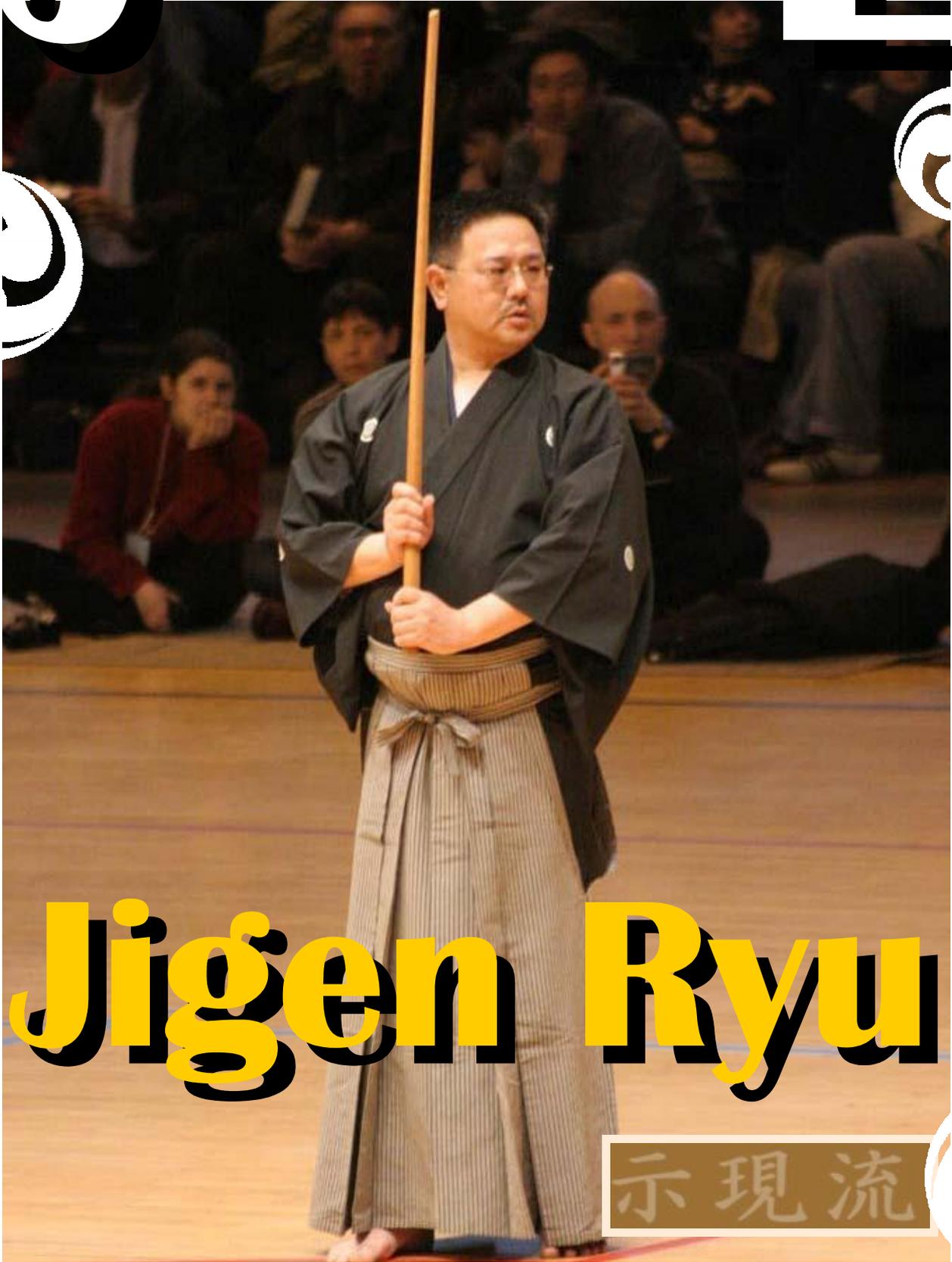


The International Ryukyu Karate Research Society's

JOURNAL

An informal publication for the progressive traditionalist

2nd Quarter 2006



Jigen Ryu

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Studying the Origins, Evolution & Application Practices of Karate

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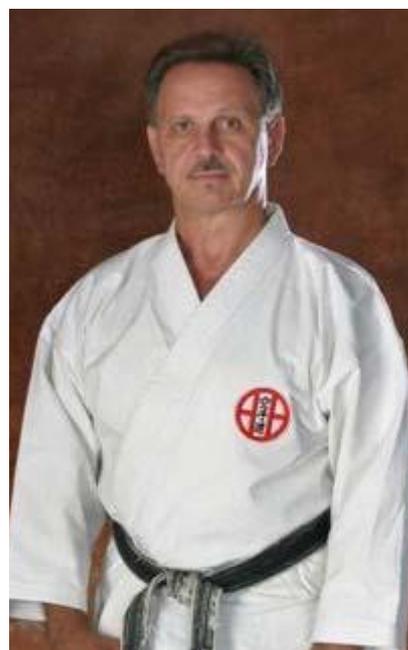
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IRKRS Journal

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**Moledzki
Sensei**

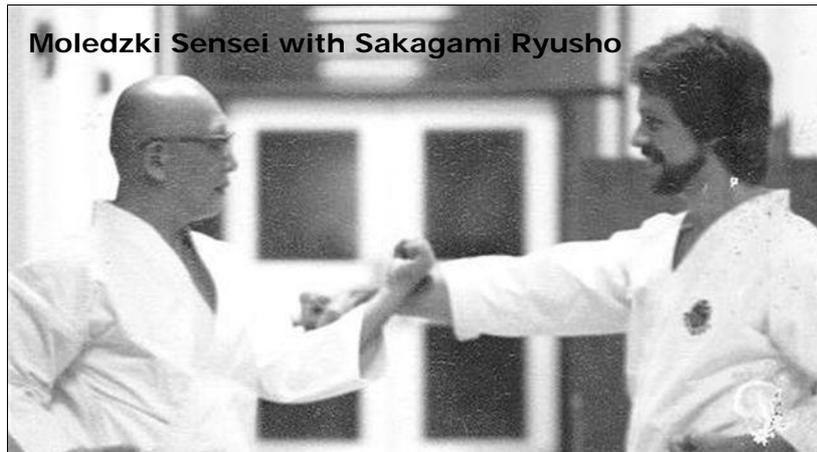
The Voice of Experience
by Brian Jarvis



Moledzki Sensei, you have been practicing martial arts for many years now. Can you tell us when and where you began your martial arts journey?

SM: Well, let me see now, if my memory serves me right, I was introduced to this fabulous world of martial arts back in 1967, in Toronto. It was approximately 9 years after the initial introduction, in 1958, of organized karate in Canada by the man who is referred to as, the Father of Canadian Karate, Masami Tsuruoka sensei.

A very close & good friend of mine named Bill Pinkerton, (Pinky) had asked me one day if I was interested in checking out a place where they were teaching some kind of mysterious Japanese fighting system. Something he had pronounced as "eye-key-due".



Moledzki Sensei with Sakagami Ryusho

I admitted that I'd never heard of it but, said "sure, why not, it might be something different and new to do." So, we were off to somewhere in the downtown Toronto area, to check out the place.

Unfortunately, after arriving downtown, we couldn't actually find the location so Pinky suggested we go to another place he knew for sure. It was the JAPANESE CANADIAN CULTURAL CENTRE located in the North East of Toronto called Don Mills.

He suggested the JCCC because he had recently played at a wedding reception there as a member of a band. Bill was an accomplished drummer.

We arrived at this very impressive, early 1960's marvel of modern architectural design by a local Japanese Canadian architect named Raymond Moriyama and, proceeded to walk right in the front doors unannounced.

At the reception area we boldly asked "Do you have eye-key-due here" and an older Japanese gentleman behind the counter replied something like "No, eye-key-due." Is called "Ai-ki-do"! And, we don't have.

He did indicate that "JUDO, KENDO and KARATEDO" was being taught there and we were instructed to return on Monday for Kendo and Tuesday for Judo & Karate do classes.

The following Tuesday evening I signed up for my first Karate class and, as you say, the journey began and I'm still enjoying it very much.

What style of karate did you initially learn and what was the training like back then?

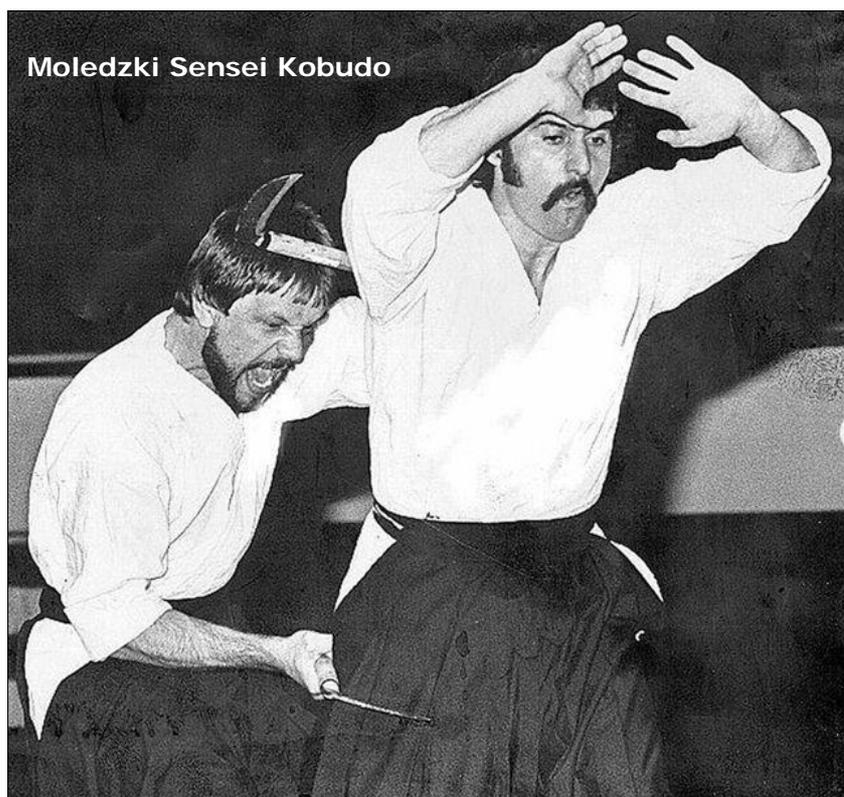
SM: The karate being taught all across Canada at that

time was a system called CHITO-RYU. Please, picture this if you will. My very first karate class that Tuesday evening was, to say the least, very impressive.

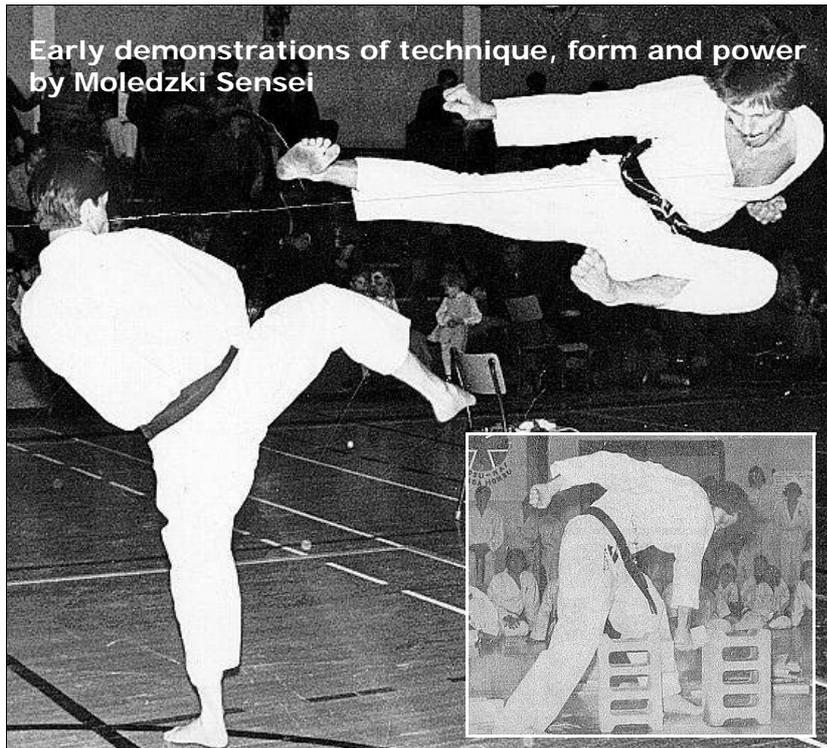
Upon opening the double doors & entering the training area, there, before me were approximately 100 students in their pajama looking outfits, punching & kicking and yelling at the top of their lungs.

I thought, WOW, this is something I can really get into. I believe I'm going to enjoy giving this a go & trying it out! The rest, as the saying goes, is history!

I recall the training sessions were a full two hours. They included a light 10 minute easy stretching warm up, followed by a two mile run outside in bare feet, (Spring, Summer & Fall,) & (shoes in the Winter) then, more basic calisthenics of jumping jacks, toe touching, splits, leg lifts etc. including the usual 50-100 push ups on the palms,



Moledzki Sensei Kobudo



knuckles, backs of the hands, finger tips etc. and sit ups with basic blocking techniques, and so on, for the first hour.

FYI, water bottles were never permitted at all during the work outs.

After a 2-3 minute break, we would line up usually 10 across and 10 deep and begin the second hour.

Was there particular focus on kihon, kata or kumite and were you encouraged to compete outside your dojo?

SM: Yes, the norm back then was 3-K (kihon, kata, (kumite), as it was in most dojo across the country. Kihon was first.

This consisted of simply lining up 10 people deep. We would then take turns counting to 10 while, punching & kicking in usually a zenkutsu dachi stance. I distinctly recall that when someone messed up the count, we'd have to start right back at the beginning of the row you

were in, and repeat the techniques.

Everything was usually done with a very loud & strong Kiai. I remember on more than one occasion, during a normal class, we'd only complete the techniques on the right side of the body because someone would continually mess up the count and we'd never get to exercise the opposite side, for lack of time before we'd move on to the next part of the scheduled class.

Kata was practiced by separating into belt colour groupings. I remember very little applications were shown, let alone actually taught for kata then. But, some of us were curious why we had to perform something a certain way and would ask sensei Kei Tsumura privately, and he would usually show us some form of application that would satisfy us enough to continue practicing the kata.

Generally though, we mostly repeated the kata patterns over & over again to commit

to memory in preparation for a belt testing down the road.

Jiyu kumite was what we most wanted to practice and it was practiced usually during the last 20-30 minutes of each class. We would change partners (usually 1 ½-2 minutes per match) with any belt level, including black belt, as many times as possible to gain more experience against different caliber, size & types of fighters.

BTW, all sparring was bare knuckle without mouth guards or even groin protectors and, NO weight distinction either.

Recently, I was asked by a couple of young black belts from one of my affiliate dojo, what it was like to spar back then in the old days.

They had heard all kinds of stories of how tough & brutal it was then, and were curious to know.

By nature, I am not a person who indulges in fanciful, made up stories of the present or past. I simply relate them to the best of my personally experienced memories and, I honestly do distinctly remember my very first sparring match in the dojo, after about only 3 weeks of lessons. (6 classes)

I recall during that time, I still couldn't afford the training fees and the training uniform together so, I was still in shorts and a T-shirt for my first actual kumite match.

The first match was against a very tall & lanky 6 foot student in a nice clean white gi and white belt. I was 5'8" and around 148 lbs. When the match began, I remember sort of shuffling around with my left arm down in a



Moledzki Sensei [3rd from right] with Sakagami Ryusho

low blocking position and my right hand against my right side around the top of my hip level feeling very awkward for a little while. When he finally came too close to me, I reacted by continuously punching him as many times as I could until he fell back into a stack of chairs and scattered them everywhere. He ended up on the ground in agony, with a really surprised look on his face.

Because of all the commotion and noise of the falling



Mabuni Kenwa meets Funakoshi Gichin at Osaka train station with Sakagami Ryusho in background in glasses and hat

chairs, a few moments later, we were instructed to change partners.

I was then instructed by the chief instructor, sensei Tsumura, to spar with this mean looking yellow belt, with a few scars on his face & wearing a not so clean and well worn yellow belt.

I recall clearly thinking I have to stay away from this guy because he's about my size and, I hated fighting people of my own size. I figured he's a yellow belt and already has more ability than me in karate so, I needed to be cautious. A few moments later he committed a major error when he executed a beautiful side kick at my body and left it out there a little too long admiring it. I quickly grabbed it and countered immediately with a front kick to his groin.

Well, needless to say, he instantly dropped and I thought, boy am I in real trouble now. First the white

belt, then, this yellow belt that ended up both on the hardwood floor rolling around in shock and a little bit in pain.

Tsumura sensei was right there again and, this time he matched me up with a green belt, who was a couple of inches taller than me and about 25 lbs heavier.

One look at this guy & I knew I was definitely in serious trouble. I recall thinking that I have to hit this guy first before I get clobbered so, I did just that. Within a couple of seconds, I positioned myself close enough to punch him in the head and, when I connected, to my great surprise, he didn't fall to the ground but, simply staggered back a bit. He then immediately recovered and proceeded to kick me in the head with a terrific flying side kick.

Wow, what a surprise that was I can tell you. I never experienced anything like



that kick before. It prepared me for the future to expect the unexpected and be ready for anything.

In almost 15 years at the JCCC, we were never encouraged to visit other style's dojo to train at, nor were we ever encouraged to enter competitions outside of our own organization.

Truth be known, I personally did both. I entered a couple of eclectic (Open circuit) non-sanctioned tournaments, on a few occasions at different times and really gained valuable experience. Usually, I would end up in the dog house for a little while, when Tsumura sensei found out about it.

Over the years, we were always encouraged to enter only sanctioned tournaments.

When was your introduction to the Shito-ryu system, who was your Sensei and how did it differ from your previous system?

SM: Actually, my first introduction to the Shito ryu system was in the summer of 1969, in Detroit, Michigan, USA.

Let me explain here a little if you will.

My work profession was, and still is as a draughtsman. (Only difference today is, everything is drawn using

computer software) I was then employed by a consulting engineering firm that had a contract with Allied Steel and Conveyors in Detroit.

They sent me on my first foreign assignment. It was a 3 month contract to work on the 1970, Ford model changes. During that time, I lived at the YMCA and used to work out in the gym there.

Sometime around the 3rd week there I believe, I met a young fellow (unfortunately, I don't recall his name) who asked me what system of karate I was practicing. I explained Chito ryu and he then extended an invitation to work out at his club with him. He told me he had just received his yellow belt, and saw that I was a *brown* belt.

The following evening I think, we went to his club and I was introduced to his sensei. He (sorry, but I've forgotten his name also) asked many questions about the system of Chito-ryu and then explained that his system was Shito Ryu Itosu Kai and he was supposedly, a 4th dan student of Fumio Demura sensei.

Demura sensei had introduced Shito ryu Itosu kai into the USA in 1965.

I trained there for only one more session and never did return again.

Back in Toronto, it was during the later part of 1968, that sensei Kei Tsumura, was increasingly becoming dissatisfied with the whole Chito ryu experience in Canada and had decided to investigate other karate systems.

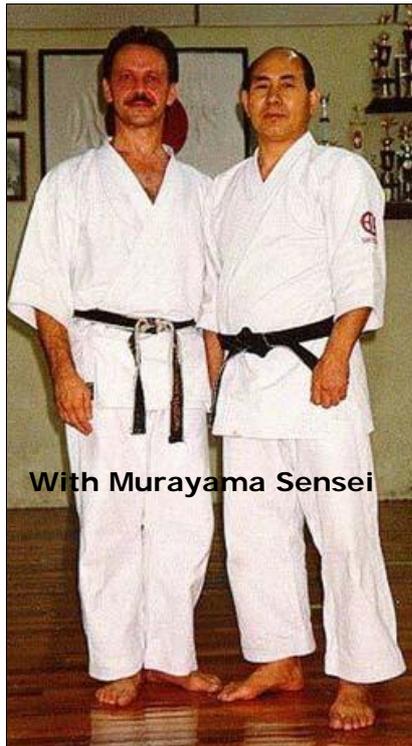
After briefly training privately with a visiting Japanese Shito ryu Itosu Kai stylist throughout the early part of 1968, Tsumura sensei had made arrangements to travel to Japan and begin intensive training in the Shito ryu system.

Of course, we as students were not aware of any problems occurring at the time and, were only aware that Tsumura sensei was going to Japan for approximately a year.

He was met at the Haneda (Tokyo) airport by a Seiko Suzuki sensei, a senior instructor of Itosu kai and, immediately taken directly to the Shito ryu Itosu kai headquarters of its founder, Ryu-sho Sakagami sensei, 9th dan, in the small town of Tsurumi. The town was located along a commuter train line between Kawasaki and Yokohama stations.

Tsumura sensei returned to Canada at the end of 1969. He received his 5th dan in Karate & 5th dan in Kobudo directly from Sakagami sensei and, officially introduced the Shito ryu Itosu Kai system to Canada, as an affiliate branch organization of Sakagami sensei.

Over the next few months, we were told to forget everything we had learned to date about Chito ryu, and were directed to concentrate on learning this new Shito Ryu system.



With Murayama Sensei

kobudo and the weapons you practice?

SM: My first taste of Kobudo actually was when I was a blue belt in 1969 and had an opportunity to play around, informally, with a pair of SAI that Tsumura sensei had. He had shown me some fundamentals.

The students who wished to learn the KOBUDO system of Itosu kai were instructed in special classes only after they received their 1st dan level in Karate.

My official instruction in the 5 basic weapons of Sakagami sensei's Kobudo (Bo, Sai, Tonfa, Nunchaku and Kama) began in early 1970 and, was taught directly by Tsumura sensei.

Later, whenever I did traveled to the Honbu dojo in Tsurumi, Japan, (1971, 1976, and 1980) I had the special privilege of also receiving direct instruction from Sakagami Ryusho sensei in Kendo, Jodo and Iaido as well as Karatedo which, was arranged for me by Tsumura sensei.

By 1980, I had received my 5th dan in Shito ryu karate, 3rd dan in Ryukyu Kobudo and 1st dan in Muso Jiki den Eishin ryu Iaido.

It should be noted that in February 12, 1981, I personally chose to leave the Shito ryu Itosu kai Karate and Kobudo Association of Canada to further my own personal knowledge of the martial arts, independently.

You have studied under Kunio Murayama Sensei for over 15 years now. How did you meet and what made you decide that Murayama Sensei and the Shito-Kai was for you?

SM: Please allow me to explain it this way if I may.

I remained independent of any international federation over the next 10 years (1981-1991) by choice, and then, had the great fortune of meeting Kunio Murayama sensei 7th dan, Japan Karatedo Shito Kai from Mexico, during our 1991 Canadian National Black Belt Karate Championships in Vancouver, British Columbia.

At the time, I was a senior Canadian referee and also had one of my junior students competing at the nationals.

Murayama sensei was a special guest instructor conducting a Shito ryu seminar on shitei kata.

I must clarify at this point that I had previously heard of Murayama sensei and thought this was a great opportunity to train with him as another senior member from the Japan Shito kai Federation.

In 1989, I had previously been introduced to the Shito Kai system when I attended a Masters Kata Seminar in Akron, Ohio at Sensei George Anderson's dojo.

The masters conducting the 2 day seminar included Sensei Soma (Goju-kai); Sensei Arakawa (Wado-kai); Sensei Hisatomi (Shito-kai); Sensei Kawakami (Shoto-kan). In attendance also was Luciano Valero (Mexico Shito-kai Federation), a direct student of Murayama sensei & President of the Mexican Karate Federation.

The seminar with Murayama sensei was excellent because it also included the kata applications for Bassai Dai and

During this phase, the dojo actually lost a few members who refused to make the change over but, those of us who stayed, eventually learned the new Shito ryu Itosu Kai system.

The transition wasn't too difficult as I remember, just very intense. Besides making adjustments to how we executed certain basics, we had to learn 20 new basic kata + 20 new basic ippon kumite, 5 Pinan kata and 3 Niafanchin, before we could test for our black belts.

I recall training Tuesdays and Thursdays at the JCCC and special classes on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at Tsumura sensei's other dojo location, regularly, over the next 3 months, to prepare for my first black belt test in this new system. I successfully received my 1st dan on January 10, 1970.

You also have an extensive knowledge of both Japanese and Okinawan weaponry, can you tell us about your introduction to

Seienchin which were really well received.

During our nationals my student, Roland Chan, became the first ever junior to win both his Kata and Kumite divisions at the Canadian Nationals. Murayama sensei, a head table guest, had come directly over to congratulate us on the win. He then extended a personal invitation to us to come to Mexico.

I took this opportunity to put Murayama to a little test and asked him directly if I came to Mexico would he teach me the Kata NIPAIPO. I explained to him that I had never learned the kata in Shito Ryu Itosu kai.

Now, from my personal experiences, the most typical reply from a Japanese master would be something like: Mmmm, No! This kata very high, high level and not for Gaijin; or, Not possible! - Must be member long, long, long time etc.

Murayama sensei's instant reply was YES! Come to Mexico and I'll teach you personally.

Later that year at the North American Cup in Monterrey, Mexico, I attended as a Canadian referee and Roland Chan competed and finished 2nd in his Kata division, 2nd in his Kumite division as well as 3rd in Open Weight Kumite division.

During that week & after a couple of extensive personal

interviews and training sessions with Murayama sensei, I had the great fortune of being accepted as his direct student.

Murayama Sensei is known for his knowledge of 'Nanban Satto-ryu Kempo'. Can you explain a little about this system,



its origins and how Murayama Sensei came to study it?

SM: Well, Nanban Satto-ryu Kenpo Jutsu is different types of techniques taught by Seiko Fujita sensei, 14th generation master of Koga Ryu Ninjutsu to the founder of Shito Ryu Karate, Kenwa Mabuni.

Mabuni sensei introduced some of the techniques to one of his top students Manzo Iwata and realized that Iwata sensei became very proficient quickly so, Mabuni sensei asked Fujita

sensei to teach him directly.

Manzo Iwata sensei received a Menkyo Kaiden from Fujita sensei & became the 4th Soke of Nanban Satto-ryu Kenpo Jutsu upon his death. Iwata sensei taught a few people including his son Genzo.

Murayama sensei was a student at TOYO University and a member of the karate club there instructed by Iwata sensei. After graduating, Murayama sensei became an Uchi Deshi student of Manzo Iwata sensei. He lived and trained directly at Iwata sensei's home and learned the Nanban Satto-ryu Kenpo Jutsu there, over an approximate 3 year period.

Upon the death of Manzo Iwata sensei in 1993, Genzo sensei became the 5th Soke of Nanban Satto-ryu Kenpo Jutsu.

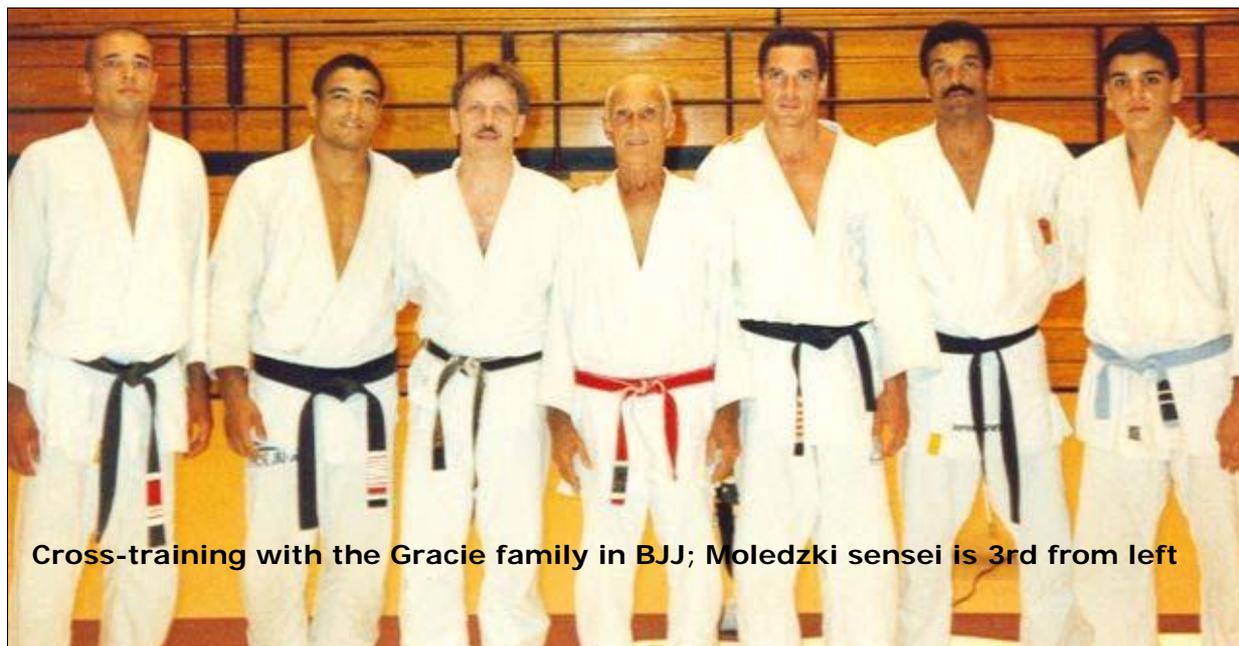
Your quest for knowledge has taken you too

many places over the past 4 decades, can you tell us about some of the masters you have trained with?

SM: Sure, o.k. where do I begin?

Let me see now. Four decades is a lot to try and remember but, I will try and recall to the best of my memory.

I believe my first exposure to other karate systems and instructors was already mentioned earlier starting back in 1969 in Detroit, with instruction in the Shito Ryu Itosu Kai system.



Cross-training with the Gracie family in BJJ; Moledzki sensei is 3rd from left

I do remember being instructed for a brief time by a visiting Japan Goju Kai sensei in the early 70's at the JCCC, named Watanabe sensei I think.

Later of course, in Japan, during the 70's and early 80's, I received karate instruction from Sakagami Ryusho sensei and Sadaaki Sakagami sensei and participated in seminars in Iaido with Yamatsuda sensei & Ishido sensei of the Muso Shinden Ryu system, Yamaguchi sensei and Sakagami Ryusho sensei, of the Jikiden Eishin Ryu Iaido system.

While in Japan, O' Sensei Sakagami personally introduced me to Nakayama Matayoshi sensei (Shotokan), Yamaguchi Gogen sensei (Japanese Goju Ryu) and Hironori Ohtsuka (founder of Wado Ryu karate) between 1971 and 1976, I believe.

I first met Hayashi Teruo sensei in 1972 at the 2nd WUKO World Karate Championships in Paris, France where I was captain of the Canadian team and received instruction briefly from him many years later.

During 1975, at the 3rd WUKO World Karate Championships in Long Beach California, I was co-captain of the Canadian team and was very privileged to attend a private meeting as a guest of Sakagami sensei, aboard the docked cruise ship/hotel Queen Mary.

There, on the Queen Mary, I was given the great honour of meeting, for the first time Kinjo Hiroshi sensei [Patrick McCarthy's teacher], Mabuni Kenei & Manzo Iwata sensei (Japan Shito-kai), Kenzo Uchiage (Japan Goju Kai), and Hayashi Teruo sensei again. I recall that it was quite an eye opener to say the least, to be in the same room with all these famous masters and absorbing the energy & feeling in the room. With my limited knowledge of the Japanese language I was instructed by Sakagami sensei to be very quiet and listen closely.

In Canada, USA, Mexico and the Caribbean, over the last 4 decades, I've also had the distinct privilege to meet & train under some very famous masters.

They've included Mabuni Kenei sensei, Iwata Manzo sensei, Sakio Ken sensei, Hisatomi Tokio sensei, Iwata Genzo sensei, Masami Tsuruoka sensei, Tatsuo Suzuki sensei, Kai Kuniyoshi sensei, Nishiyama Hidetaka sensei, Higaonna Morio sensei, Nishimura Seiji sensei, Ohtsuka Jjiro sensei, Shiomitsu sensei.

Plus, Seiko Suzuki sensei, Yamazaki sensei, Demura Fumio sensei, Miki Minobu sensei, Heilo & Roiron Gracie sensei, as well as Ticky Donovan sensei, and more recently from 2000 to 2005, Nishikawa sensei, Hasegawa Yukimitsu and Patrick McCarthy sensei among others.

During your youth you competed many times both nationally and internationally. Can you pin point any highlights for us?

SM: I believe I previously mentioned representing my country at two WUKO World Karate Championships (1972 & 1975).

These for sure I considered way up there!



Many karate-ka quit training once their competition days are over, what has kept you motivated all these years?

SM: I'm certain it's the continuing thirst for the never ending knowledge found within the martial arts I guess, and simply trying to better understand this marvelous art. I began my journey back in 1967, and I'm still excited about learning more and more from various leaders in the martial arts. It truly is a never ending journey.

Also, in 1970, I won the North American Karate Championships kumite title and, in 1971 in Tokyo, Japan, I won the East Japan Kanto District kumite title and was presented the title trophy and certificate by grand master Ryusho Sakagami sensei.

I would have to say also, finishing second in Kata, to the great American Goju Ryu stylist, sensei Chuck Merriman, and, second in kumite to another great American martial artist, Sensei Joe Hayes in the early 1970's.

In 1973, I won first place in Kumite at the 8th International Karate Championships in Canada, with Nishiyama sensei awarding me the Championship trophy, after refereeing the finals.

And finally, I'd say winning a third place finish at the 1976 Canadian Nationals, when KATA was first included. First place was taken by Tak Samashima and second by Kim Wong, if I'm not mistaken.

These would definitely have to be some of my more memorable karate competitions.

My quest to understand our budo/sport system lead me into three other fields after my competitive days came to an end in 1981.

As a way to give back something to an art/sport that pretty much took me off the wrong path and virtually save my life, I decided I'd give back to it as much of myself as humanly possible. I became interested in the officiating aspect of our sport after being the victim of poor officiating on many an occasions. I pursued that side to the extent that I spent the better part of 15 years as a Provincial, National, and Pan-American and WSKF world licensed referee.

Approximately 12 of those years were directly paid for out of my own pocket. Only after becoming a member of the Canadian Referee Council did I actually have things partially funded.

I also served as President of the Karate Ontario Association, the province's sports governing body for karate in the province, as well as 1st Vice-President of the National Karate Association of Canada for 2 year terms each.

Since 1991, I've also been a member of our provincial coaching staff.

Can you tell us a little about your organisation in Canada and its affiliation to Murayama Sensei and the WSKF?

SM: Well, as mentioned earlier, I officially became a direct student of Murayama sensei in 1991. Since then, I have more or less traveled to Monterrey, Mexico or brought Murayama sensei to Canada to continue my training on an annual basis.

As an official member of Murayama sensei's organization, all my previous Canadian students and affiliate dojo were also accepted. My association in Canada became eligible to compete at the 1st World Shito Ryu Karate do Federation Championships in Tokyo, Japan in 1993.

At the competition, the Canadian team members competed well and one of my own top female students, Christine Kay, won a world bronze medal in her kumite division.

The WSKF officially recognizes only one organization per country. My Shito kai Canada Association received recognition and official documentation at the 2nd World Shito Ryu Karate do Federation Championships in 1996 in Puebla, Mexico.

In October 2005, Shito Kai Canada will be competing at the 35th Copa Murayama Karatedo Championships.

We are also preparing perspective members for the Canadian team selection that will be competing at the 5th World Shito Ryu Karate do Federation Championships in September 2006, in Japan.

You have achieved so much during your career, do you have any further goals or ambitions?

SM: Yes, to stay healthy enough to see my new 8 month old grandson Joshua, receive his black belt in Shito Kai karate do.

Thank you very much!

For more general information on Karatedo Shitokai Canada or Sam Moledzki, see the following websites:

www.shitoryu.org
www.shitokaimurayama.com/
www.karatedo.co.jp/shitokai/wskf/index.html
<http://fujitaseiko.tripod.com/>

