

Christina Gutz

Wado Course with Bob Nash (US), 7th Dan JFK Wadokai, and Toby Threadgill (US), Menkyo Kaiden, Takamura-Ha Shindo Yoshin Ryu Jujutsu, in Berlin from 9th to 11th February, 2008

The Connection between Shindo Yoshin Ryu Jujutsu and Wado Ryu Became Seizable

150 students, among these guests from Sweden, Hungary and the Netherlands, trained under Bob Nash's and Toby Threadgill's guidance for two days in Berlin. During the instructors' session with a large attendance of 35 blackbelts on Monday evening, Bob Nash demonstrated and taught the principles of Wado Ryu using Pinan Godan and Kihon Kumite 1 – 3 as examples.

The course enabled the participants to directly compare Shindo Yoshin ryu jujutsu and Wado Ryu karate.

Toby Threadgill heads one of the two legitimate branches of Shindo Yoshin ryu jujutsu worldwide. Shindo Yoshin ryu is a development of Yoshin Ryu founded by Yoshitioki Akiyama in the mid-16th century. The tradition of Shindo Yoshin Ryu jujutsu goes back to Matsuoka Katsunosuke (1836 – 1898) in the late Edo period.

Ohtsuka Hironori began to learn Shindo Yoshin ryu jujutsu at the age of 13 in 1905 in Nakayama Tatsusaburo's dojo. He received Menkyo Kaiden in Shindo Yoshin Ryu from Nakayama in 1921. Only in 1922, did he meet Funakoshi Gichin and, later, Kenwa Mabuni and trained with them. Ohtsuka Hironori realised that many of the ancient principles and techniques of Shindo Yoshin ryu jujutsu were applicable to Okinawan karate. For this reason he integrated them into the karate style Wado Ryu which he had founded. So there is an original connection between Shindo Yoshin Ryu jujutsu and Wado Ryu.

This connection could be directly experienced thanks to Toby Threadgill's and Bob Nash's well-coordinated training sessions.

Toby Threadgill showed the origins, common points and fundamental principles of Wado Ryu and Shindo Yoshin ryu jujutsu using numerous techniques performed with a partner from the fields of *Tehodoki/Kuzushi no kata*, *Tanto tori* and *Idori*.

The immediacy of defense and attack

He underlined that defense and attack must be immediate both in Shindo Yoshin ryu jujutsu and Wado Ryu. In the best case, a sort of harmony (*wa*) comes about between the partners during practice. The partners connect their energies and with one another, thereby merging to form a unit. The partner is led into the intended direction by being touched. Upon advancing, pressure and control are exerted. The partner must be able to directly feel the effect of a technique. The defender transmits his energy to the attacker, thereby establishing a union with the latter which allows him to control him. If a harmony is created between the partners the attacker can be defeated.

Fundamental principles in Idori kata

Idori kata is form. It contains the fundamental principles which must be understood. Ohtsuka Hironori, for instance, changed some dangerous, lethal techniques to less dangerous ones. The principles, however, are still the same. On the basis of these fundamental principles, effective, lethal techniques may be applied should this be necessary in an emergency. There are different levels when learning idori kata: The student will first learn the basic kata. At the

next level, he will learn the higher kata and the dangerous, lethal techniques of the basic kata hidden in the former. This will again be the same at the next levels. In this way Idori kata fulfils its purpose in the connection between technical perfection and mental progress.

Bob Nash conveyed his detailed knowledge about both individual techniques and selected kata. He also emphasized that Naihanchi is the most important kata of Wado Ryu from which a great deal can be derived.

Above all in the instructors' session Bob Nash elaborated on important fundamental principles of Wado Ryu using Kihon kumite, such as *zanshin*, attention, the correct and best distance (*maai*) between opponents, the agile character of Wado Ryu, reflected in its stances and techniques, and in particular:

Karate ni sentenashi: Sente nashi means *no sente*. *Sente* means to take the initiative. In Japanese martial arts we always take the first initiative. How you display this initiative varies with the situation and may at times look to an outside like a 'reaction' to the opponent's initiative but this is not the case. So in Wado we always attack. We never just block. If there is a block then the block is always used in combination with an attack. The best is to attack the opponent before they move. The next best is to attack the opponent as they start to move either mentally or physically.

This closed the circle of Bob Nash's and Toby Threadgill's training sessions.

Toby Threadgill and Bob Nash will be back in Berlin from **7th to 9th February, 2009**.

You are all cordially invited to attend this course.

Translation: Peter Meuren