

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT – ERRATA

PAGE 57

I PLACED AN INCORRECT TRANSLATION OF A PASSAGE FROM THE KOJIKI ON THIS PAGE. I DO NOT KNOW IF THAT WAS A FAILURE OF TRANSCRIPTION OF THE JAPANESE OR OF THE TRANSLATOR HIMSELF. I HAVE RECONCILED MY TEXT HERE, WITH A CORRECT TRANSLATION FROM THE KOJIKI: RECORDS OF ANCIENT MATTERS, TRANSLATED BY BASIL HALL CHAMBERLAIN, TUTTLE PUBLISHING, BOSTON, MA 1981 PP, 122-123

WHO'S COME TO MY COUNTRY MUTTERING SUCH THINGS? COME ON, WE'LL MATCH OUR STRENGTH--I'LL GRAB YOUR HAND FIRST." AS HE SAID THIS, HE FLUNG THE ROCK, AND THEN RAN UP AND TRIED TO GRAB ONE OF TAKEMIKAZUCHI'S HANDS.

THAT HAND, HOWEVER, SUDDENLY TURNED INTO A PILLAR OF ICE. EVEN AS TAKEMINAKATA'S MOUTH GAPED IN AMAZEMENT, THE HAND CHANGED AGAIN, THIS TIME TO THE BLADE OF A SWORD. THE THOROUGHLY FRIGHTENED MINAKATA SHRANK BACK.

"NOW IT'S MY TURN," MIKAZUCHI SAID, AND HE GRASPED MINAKATA'S WRIST QUICKLY AND FIRMLY. SUDDENLY HE CRUSHED THE WRIST, RIPPED OFF THE HAND, AND FLUNG IT OFF INTO THE DISTANCE.

MINAKATA TURNED PALE, AND RAN AWAY AS FAST AS HE COULD. MIKAZUCHI YELLED, "WAIT UP, YOU!" AND RAN AFTER HIM. FINALLY HE CORNERED HIM BESIDE LAKE SUWA IN SHINANO. MIKAZUCHI WAS ABOUT TO WRING HIS NECK WHEN THE TREMBLING TAKEMINAKATA THREW HIMSELF ON THE GROUND AND APOLOGIZED, SAYING, "I'M SORRY TO HAVE TROUBLED YOU SO. PLEASE SPARE MY LIFE, AT LEAST. I WILL NEVER SET FOOT OUTSIDE SHINANO AGAIN. AS MY FATHER AND BROTHER HAVE SAID, I BESTOW THIS LAND OF ASHIHARA ON THE DESCENDANTS OF THE GODS OF HEAVEN."¹

TOKIMUNE SUGGESTS THAT THIS MYTH IS A METAPHORICAL PORTRAYAL OF *TEGOI* – PRIMORDIAL GRAPPLING THAT DEVELOPED, NOT ONLY INTO *CHIKARA KURABE* (“POWER MEASURING,” ANOTHER NAME FOR THAT WHICH WE CONSIDER SUMO), BUT ALSO INTO *AIKI IN-YO HO* (LITERALLY, “THE METHOD OF YIN-YANG AIKI”), THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL POWER DEVELOPMENT AND SUBTLE TECHNIQUE THAT FORMS THE UNDERPINNING OF *DAITO-RYU*. INTERESTINGLY, THE ACCOUNT OF THIS BATTLE DOES NOT SOUND MUCH LIKE SUMO AT ALL, NOR LIKE *DAITO-RYU* EITHER. ONE CAN PERHAPS STRAIN METAPHORS, MAKING THE TRANSFORMATION OF MIKAZUCHI’S HAND INTO SOMETHING IMMOBILIZING AND THEN SHARP (ICE AND A BLADE). HOWEVER, ALL WE HAVE HERE IS A MYTHIC TRANSFORMATION, WHICH ENDS WITH THE PROTAGONIST SIMPLY RIPPING OFF HIS ENEMY’S HAND.

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IN THESE PAGES, I DESCRIBE THE MYSTERY OF THE SHINKAGE-RYU MENKYO THAT UESHIBA MORIHEI RECEIVED FROM TAKEDA SOKAKU. BASED ON THE INFORMATION I HAD AT HAND, I BELIEVED THAT THIS WAS A GENERIC MENKYO GIVEN BY TAKEDA TO UESHIBA TO SYMBOLIZE THE SPECIAL NATURE OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP. IN FACT, AS YAGYU SHINKAGE-RYU PRACTITIONER, JOSH REYER POINTS OUT, IT IS A CLASSIC YAGYU SHINKAGE-RYU MOKUROKU. THIS IS RATHER ODD BECAUSE NEITHER TAKEDA (EVER) OR UESHIBA (AT THAT TIME) WERE KNOWN TO HAVE ANY KNOWLEDGE OF THIS RYU. NOTE: I AM INDEBTED TO MR. REYER FOR THE INFORMATION ABOUT SHINKAGE-RYU IN THE FOLLOWING DISCUSSION:

ACCORDING TO REYER, THE SHINKAGE-RYU MENKYO GIVEN TO UESHIBA IS A COPY OF THE *SHINRIKYO* (SHOE-OFFERING BRIDGE) SCROLL, THE FIRST PART OF YAGYU MUNENORI'S FAMOUS *HEIHO KADENSHO*. THE USE OF THIS PARTICULAR SCROLL MAKES THINGS EVEN MORE MYSTERIOUS.²

SHINKAGE-RYU WAS FOUNDED BY KAMIIZUMI HIDETSUNA, AND TAUGHT TO YAGYU MUNETOSHI. MUNETOSHI'S FIFTH SON, MUNENORI, WENT ON TO SERVE TOKUGAWA IEYASU AS A KENJUTSU INSTRUCTOR, GAINING INFLUENCE AS HE ALSO SERVED IEYASU'S SON AND GRANDSON. EVENTUALLY HE BECAME A DAIMYO. HIS SON, MITSUTOSHI, AKA JUBEI, IS ALSO FAMED AS A SWORDSMAN. MUNENORI'S LINE OF THE YAGYU FAMILY IS KNOWN AS THE EDO YAGYU.

THE MAINLINE OF YAGYU SHINKAGE-RYU, HOWEVER, WAS ACTUALLY PASSED ON TO MUNETOSHI'S GRANDSON TOSHITOSHI, AKA HYOGONOSUKE. HYOGONOSUKE EVENTUALLY SERVED THE LORDS OF OWARI AS A KENJUTSU INSTRUCTOR, IN WHAT IS MODERN DAY NAGOYA. HIS LINE OF THE FAMILY CAME TO BE KNOWN AS THE OWARI YAGYU, AND IT IS THIS LINE THAT MAINTAINS YAGYU SHINKAGE-RYU TO THIS DAY. (NOTE: THERE ARE REPORTS OF AN EXTANT EDO YAGYU SHINKAGE-RYU LINE THAT IS POSSIBLY A TRUE LINEAGE).

THIS HISTORY IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE THE *SHINRIKYO* IS AN EDO YAGYU DOCUMENT. IT WAS NOT USED BY THE OWARI YAGYU OR THEIR STUDENTS. IT WAS NOT A MENKYO IN THE SENSE OF LICENSE, OR EVEN AS A CERTIFICATION OF ATTAINMENT. IT WAS WRITTEN BY MUNENORI INDICATING AFFILIATION, IN ORDER TO TO RECOGNIZE SOMEONE AS A MEMBER OF THE RYU.

THIS POINT IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE GEJO KOSABURO, ORIGINALLY A STUDENT OF TAKEDA SOKAKU AND LATER AFFILIATED WITH UESHIBA MORIHEI, WAS A DISCIPLE OF THE OWARI YAGYU, NOT THE EDO YAGYU LINE. EVEN IF, BY ANY CHANCE, TAKEDA HAD LEARNED ANY YAGYU SHINKAGE-RYU FROM GEJO (AN EXTREMELY UNLIKELY POSSIBILITY), WHY WOULD TAKEDA WOULD HAVE LATER GIVEN UESHIBA THIS EDO YAGYU DOCUMENT. LEST THE QUESTION ARISE, THIS DOCUMENT IS NOT RELATED TO JIKISHINKAGE-RYU, SINCE YAGYU SHINKAGE-RYU AND JIKISHINKAGE-RYU BRANCHED AWAY FROM EACH OTHER IN THE FOUNDER'S GENERATION.

THE *SHINRIKYO* LISTS THE FIRST TWO KATA OF THE OMOTE NO TACHI (THE FIRST SECTION OF YAGYU SHINKAGE-RYU). IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS RYU, HOWEVER, THE WORD KATA REQUIRES SOME EXPLICATION. THE KATA IN MOST RYU ARE QUITE BRIEF: ONE, TWO OR PERHAPS THREE TECHNIQUES LINKED TOGETHER. THE KATA OF SOME RYU, LIKE TENSHIN SHODEN KATORI SHINTO-RYU, ARE QUITE LONG, A NUMBER OF TECHNIQUES THAT ARE LINKED TOGETHER LIKE A BRAIDED CHAIN, THE 'LINKS' TWINING TOGETHER SO THAT EACH TECHNIQUE SMOOTHLY TRANSITIONS INTO ANOTHER.

THE FIRST KATA IN OMOTE NO TACHI, SANGAKUEN, IS COMPRISED OF FIVE 'SUB-KATA,' DISCRETE SECTIONS WHICH ARE USUALLY PRACTICED IN SEQUENCE, BUT WHICH DO NOT COMPLETELY BRAID TOGETHER. EACH SUB-KATA IS NAMED, AND COULD

CONCEIVABLY BE PRACTICED IN ISOLATION. IN SOME OF THEM, THE TRAINING PARTNERS SEPARATE AND REINITIATE; IN OTHERS, THEY FLOW TOGETHER ('TSUZUKETE TSUKAU'). SIMILARLY, THE SECOND KATA, KUKA NO TACHI, IS COMPRISED OF NINE SUB-KATA, SOME OF WHICH FLOW TOGETHER, ONE INTO THE OTHER, WHEREAS SOME ALSO FEATURE SEPARATIONS BETWEEN THEM. THERE IS A THIRD KATA, EMPI, IN THE OMOTE NO TACHI, COMPRISED OF SIX PARTS THAT FLOW IN ONE SEQUENCE. IT IS NOT, HOWEVER, INCLUDED IN THE SHINRIKYO, FOR REASONS LOST TO HISTORY.

UESHIBA'S DOCUMENT, ITSELF, IS CURIOUS. THE LINEAGE PRECEDING TAKEDA'S SIGNATURE RUNS:

KAMIIZUMI MUSASHI-NO-KAMI FUJIWARA HIDETSUNA

YAGYU TAJIMA-NO-KAMI TAIRA MUNETOSHI

YAGYU TAJIMA-NO-KAMI TAIRA MUNENORI

OVER TEN GENERATIONS IN OLD AIZU DOMAIN

TAKEDA SOKAKU MINAMOTO MASAYOSHI

THIS IS QUITE BIZARRE. BEYOND THIS DOCUMENT, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER THAT TAKEDA STUDIED YAGYU SHINKAGE-RYU, AND TAKEDA ESSENTIALLY LINKS HIMSELF TO MUNENORI THROUGH GENERATIONS OF ANONYMOUS AIZU BUSHI. GIVEN THAT TAKEDA WAS NEARLY ILLITERATE, ONE COULD EASILY ASSUME THAT HE HAD IT COPIED OUT OF A BOOK THAT PUBLISHED THE *SHINRIKYO*, OR AN EXTANT COPY HE FOUND SOMEWHERE, PERHAPS AT AYABE, ELIMINATING THE EXTANT LINEAGE, AND INSERTING HIS OWN NAME AFTER A CRYPTIC PSEUDO-LINEAGE. WERE HE ACTUALLY TO HAVE STUDIED YAGYU SHINKAGE-RYU, IT IS HIGHLY SUSPECT THAT HE DIDN'T EVEN INCLUDE THE NAME OF HIS DIRECT TEACHER.

COULD UESHIBA HAVE STUDIED YAGYU SHINKAGE-RYU FIRST FROM TAKEDA AND THEN LATER FROM GEJO. IN HIS BOOK *AIKIDO KYOSHITSU*, RESEARCHER FUMIAKI SHISHIDA, APPARENTLY RELYING ON AN ACCOUNT FROM TOMIKI KENJI, STATES THAT UESHIBA HAD NEVER SEEN A FUKURO-SHINAI UNTIL HE CAME TO TOKYO (AND AFFILIATED WITH GEJO) AND THAT, WHEN VISITING THE KOBUKAN ONE DAY, TAKEDA CAME ACROSS SUCH A TRAINING IMPLEMENT AND WENT BALLISTIC. IN OTHER WORDS, IF TAKEDA PASSED ON ANYTHING, IT WAS NOT CLASSICAL YAGYU SHINKAGE-RYU, AS THE FUKURO-SHINAI IS THE MOST ESSENTIAL TRAINING WEAPON, EMPHASIZED EVEN MORE THAN A WOODEN SWORD.

WHY THEN WOULD TAKEDA GIVE UESHIBA SUCH A DOCUMENT. PERHAPS TAKEDA DID STUDY, FOR SOME TIME, WITH A FORMER AIZU-HAN PRACTITIONER OF YAGYU SHINKAGE-RYU, LONG ENOUGH, AT LEAST, TO RECEIVE A SCROLL INDICATING MEMBERSHIP, BUT NOT LONG ENOUGH TO REALLY TAKE MUCH FROM IT BEFORE MOVING ON TO ONO-HA ITTO-RYU AND JIKISHINKAGE-RYU. PERHAPS HE FOUND IT LYING AROUND IN AYABE, A GATHERING PLACE FOR ALL SORTS OF INDIVIDUALS, AND DECIDED THAT IT WOULD MAKE A GOOD SYMBOLIC GESTURE OF UESHIBA'S IMPORTANCE TO HIM.

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NOTE: I'VE ADDED SOME INFORMATION TO THIS PASSAGE, BASED ON THE INFORMATION FROM JOSH REYER, AS DISCUSSED ABOVE

WHAT THIS SUGGESTS IS THAT UESHIBA SELECTED PEOPLE AS SPECIFICALLY SUITABLE BOTH FOR HIS OWN PRACTICE AND FOR THEIRS AS WELL. SOME MAY OBJECT THAT TOMIKI WAS EMBELLISHING HIS OWN HISTORY A BIT—PERHAPS GEJO SHOWED A FEW

THINGS TO UESHIBA IN HIS PRESENCE, BUT THIS DID NOT CONSTITUTE REAL TRAINING. HOWEVER, THERE IS CLEAR EVIDENCE THAT UESHIBA LEARNED YAGYU SHINKAGE-RYU WITH SOME DEGREE OF DEPTH. THIS PROOF LIES IN THE SWORD METHOD OF HIKITSUCHI MICHIO. HIKITSUCHI TAUGHT THREE SWORD FORMS, CALLED SHO (MATSU—PINE), CHIKU (TAKE—BAMBOO), AND BAI (UME—PLUM). ACCORDING TO MEIK SKOSS, WHO TRAINED UNDER HIKITSUCHI AND IS ALSO A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE YAGYU SHINKAGE-RYU, SHO EMBODIES IRIMI—THE TRIANGLE; CHIKU EMBODIES TENKAN—THE CIRCLE; AND BAI EMBODIES OSAE—THE SQUARE. FASCINATINGLY, THESE THREE KUMITACHI FORMS ARE MODIFICATIONS OF FORMS FROM YAGYU SHINKAGE-RYU: “SHO” IS KABOKU, THE FOURTH KATA FROM KUKA NO TACHI; “CHIKU” IS ZANTEI-SETTETSU, THE SECOND KATA FROM SANGAKUEN NO TACHI; AND “BAI” IS OZUME, THE SEVENTH KATA FROM KUKA NO TACHI.

IT IS INCONCEIVABLE, HOWEVER, THAT GEJO WOULD HAVE TAUGHT UESHIBA JUST THESE PARTICULAR SUB-KATA OF KUKA NO TACHI AND SANGAKUEN NO TACHI. ACCORDING TO REYER, THERE IS NO PARTICULAR COMMON THREAD, FROM A YAGYU SHINKAGE-RYU PERSPECTIVE THAT WOULD LINK THESE THREE FORMS IN PARTICULAR AS, FOR EXAMPLE, CONVEYING THE ESSENCE OF THE RYU. IT IS FAR MORE REASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT UESHIBA SHOWED GEJO THE DOCUMENT HE RECEIVED AND ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT IT. GEJO TAUGHT HIM THE SANGAKUEN NO TACHI AND KUKA NO TACHI. (NOTE: THE *SHINRIKYO* DOES INCLUDE KATA THAT WERE NOT MEANT TO BE SHOWN TO OUTSIDERS, AS WELL AS THE OGI NO TACHI, KATA THAT ARE ONLY TAUGHT WHEN A STUDENT RECEIVES *INKA*, THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF CERTIFICATION). BUT AGAIN, UESHIBA DID NOT TEACH NOR DISPLAY ANY OF THESE KATA. FURTHERMORE, AN EXAMINATION OF THE 1935 FILM OF UESHIBA MORIHEI, TAKEN AT THE ASAHI NEWSPAPER SHOWS HIM DOING SWORD TECHNIQUES WITH A BOKKEN THAT CATEGORICALLY HAVE NO RELATIONSHIP TO YAGYU SHINKAGE-RYU WHATSOEVER.

IT IS, THEREFORE, QUITE REASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT GEJO SHOWED UESHIBA ONLY THE TWO OMOTE NO TACHI LISTED ON SHINRIKYO, A SCROLL THAT WAS PRESENTED TO UESHIBA BY TAKEDA SOKAKU (SEE ABOVE), KATA THAT TAKEDA NEVER ACTUALLY TAUGHT. IT WOULD BE PERMISSIBLE TO SHOW THESE KATA TO AN OUTSIDER. GIVEN THE WAY UESHIBA WIELDED A SWORD, IT IS CLEAR THAT GEJO DID NOT TEACH HIM IN DEPTH—OR IF HE DID, UESHIBA DID NOT LEARN IN ANY DEPTH. UESHIBA SUBSEQUENTLY, SELECTED THREE SUB-KATA AS THE EMBODIMENT OF HIS THREE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF HIS ART. FURTHERMORE, HE CREATED A CURRICULUM, USING THESE FORMS AS “CONTAINERS,” SPECIFICALLY TAILORED TO HIKITSUCHI MICHIO.

¹ DAVE LOWRY WRITES TO ME, “THE TRANSLATION YOU’RE USING, WITH THE LATTER BEGGING FOR HIS LIFE, IS MARGINALLY DIFFERENT FROM OTHERS IN THAT TAKEMINAKATA DOES NOT OVERTLY BEG FOR HIS LIFE. INSTEAD, HE FEELS “GRACIOUSLY AWFUL” ABOUT THE CONFLICT AND RESOLVES TO END IT BY WITHDRAWING TO THE SHORES OF LAKE SUWA, WHERE HE CONFINES HIMSELF.

IN YAGYU SHINKAGE-RYU, AT LEAST OUR LINEAGE AND I BELIEVE OTHERS, HAVE TAKEMINAKATA AS A PATRON OF SORTS BECAUSE HE WITHDRAWS FROM THE FIGHT IN ORDER TO BRING PEACE TO THE LAND. HE SEES A FUTURE OF STRUGGLE AND DESTRUCTION AND AVOIDS IT, NOT BY SUBMISSION BUT BY WITHDRAWING.”

² [HTTP://KOKYUHOU.EXBLOG.JP/8369245/](http://kokyuhou.exblog.jp/8369245/)