

Interview with Dr. Kacem Zoughari, UK, september 2010

Martial arts magazine:

Hello Dr. Kacem Zoughari, thank you for accepting our invitation to answer our questions. A lot of people from various martial arts have send us different questions to ask you and we are very pleased that you agreed to answer them.

Dr.Kacem Zoughari:

I will try my best.

MAM:

First of all, could you explain what is a *Koryû* (古流) or what is known as *Koryû*?

It is a very good question. The main translation known and used for *Koryû* by a lot of martial arts's lovers and adepts, what ever the school or the style, is "old school", or "traditional school", "classical school", etc. At the origin of the *Koryû* there is a master-founder, mainly a warrior or bushi, who after a deep practice and various battlefield experiences, he found a deep understanding of using the body and the weapon (in other word, to kill faster, more efficient and how to stay alive). During the Meiji period, those master-founder will be name as *sôke* or *Iemoto* (宗家). In the *Koryû* the master use different modes of transmission such as *Shinden*, *Taiden*, *Kuden*, as well as different documents called *Mokuroku*, *Densho*, *Shuki*, *Hiden-sho*, *Kuden-sho*, *Hibun-sho* (or *Himon-sho*), etc.

In order that the master accept a disciple (who is also a bushi, a warrior) (there are also fee and present from the disciple attested by various records), the disciple must have a letter of recommendation (*suisen-jô*) from well known warriors or from the warriors known to the master, and write a oath call the *Kishômon* (起請文), in which the disciple swears to never betray the master and the secrets of the *Ryû*. After a certain time, practice and trust, the disciple received an attestation of transmission call the *Inka-jô* (印可状) which originally comes from the Buddhism esoteric (*Mikkyô*)'s transmission mode call *Injin Koka no ryaku* (印信許可之略). The *Inka-jô* was use in the Zen's transmission.

Most of the sources show that according to the nature of the relationship between the master and the disciple, the content of the *Inka-jô*, as well as the technique transmitted, change. According the period, the position of the master in the bushi's class, his reputation, his skill, his motivation, there are also many cases where the *Inka-jô* was sold. This presentation give the general aspects of what is a *Koryû*.

But to be honest, I don't really think that the translation « Classical school » or « Old school », really cover the deep meaning and all the different aspects (historical, philosophical, practical, ideological, sociological, as well as the human's side) included in the word *Koryû*.

In Japan, in both the academic world and martial arts world, most of the people, masters (sometimes very high rank instructors, *sôke*(宗家), *menkyo kaiden* (免許皆伝), practitioners, scholars, etc., often confuse actual facts with their own view, wishes, their own practice and experience, and can not really give a clear answer as well as explain exactly the word *Koryû*..

Even if there are many factors in this confusion, it is very important to know that there are different type of *Koryû*. According to different studies and research on various scrolls and chronicles, its easy to see that there are various *Koryû* created at different periods of Japan's history. Some were created before, during and after *sengoku* period ; other were created during the three parts of Edo period (*zenki, kôki and bakumatsu*) ; and finally, a scholar must also consider the different *Koryû* created during the beginning of Meiji restoration's period. Because of all those aspects I personally think that translated *Koryû* literally as "old or classical school" is not enough when someone claims is a scholar or a serious researcher on that field of studies.

I can also say that whatever the *Koryû* someone practice, he should be aware of the historical context, the reason of the creation, the different changes (technical, theoretical, ideological). Not being aware of all those aspects is, to my personal point of view, a kind of blaspheme or disrespectful attitude as well as ignorance toward the art and the various generation who created each technique.

But lets come back the to topic of *Koryû* and try to explain or give a different views. The word, *Koryû* (古流) is made of two kanji : 古 (ko) and 流(ryû). Any one can take a japanese dictionary or a kanji dictionary and see that the first kanji (can be read also : *furui*) mean : old, out of date, old fashioned, outdated, archaic, etc. same for the second one (can be read also : *nagare, nagareru, nagasu, nagashi*) mean : flow, run, rush, shed, flush, current, stream, etc.

Its is very interesting to notice, even eloquent, that the second *kanji* does not mean or refers to the english word « School », or even in french, « Ecole ». In Japan the word used for school is *gakkô* (学校), and the first mention we have about the use of the word *Gakkô* (学校), stretch back to the Ashikaga family, famous family of Shôgun from the Kamakura and Muromachi's periods. There are many theories about the creation of this school, the two main theories are, a school created by Ono no Tamura during the Heian period (11 century) or a school created by Ashikaga Yoshikane during the Kamakura. This school is considered as the most old of Japan, and she is located in Ashkaga city, Tochigi prefecture. She was establish to form and educated members of shogun family. High class monk used to teach mainly confucianism studies and *Yi jin*'s science, but military science and medicine were also thought, etc.

Don't need to be a PHD in japanese studies to see that there a big difference between the *kanji ryû* (流) of *Koryû* and (学校) from *Gakkô* ! So if already in Japan, the historical chronicles and diaries that mention the word school, *Gakkô* (学校), which refers to a place established and known where young boy from high class warriors family came to learn different disciplin's (nothing connecting to *Koryû*) under teachers(mainly monk), its easy to understand that there is a difference between *gakkô* and *koryû*..

I think that we can easily conclude that *Koryû* does not mean « old or classical school », because in the history of the first *Koryû* of Japan, there is no indication of such center, place established,

with name of *Ryû* outside the house or dôjô, administration, various teachers, fee, etc. We must wait for the Edo period and especially the middle of the second part of Edo period in order to see the settle down of place such as dôjô dedicated to the teaching of different type of *Koryû*.

Its important to search were come from the first mention of the word *Koryû* in order to have an idea of what it means and how its change, it's the same for words like *Heihô*, *Heigaku*, *Budô*, *Bujutsu*, etc. Since Meiji until nowadays, in most the cases, the use of the word *Koryû* is used to make the difference with the *Gendai budô* (Jûdô, Aikidô, Karate (what ever the different *ryû* of Karate) Kendô, etc.) created in the Meiji period.

Moreover, the first mention of the word *Koryû* can be found in different scrolls like in the *Kagemokuroku* (影目録), written in 1566 by Kamiizumi Ise no kami (1508-1582), founder of the *Shinkage-ryû* (新影流), as well in one of the oldest *densho* on *Heihô* or *Hyôhô* 兵法) written during the Muromachi period, the *Kinetsu-shû* (訓閲集). In both, we can find the following words, *Jôko-ryû* (上古流) and *Chûko-ryû* (中古流). These words are also used by Kamiizumi ise no kami in all of his writings.

Those two words refers to two kind *ryû* : the *Jôko-ryû* represent the primary *Ryû* of Japan, from the end of Heian period to Kamakura period. And *Chûko-ryû* represent the *Ryû* from the Muromachi period like *Nen-ryû*, *Katorishintô ryû*, *Kashimashintô ryû*, *Kashima shinkage-ryû*, *Kage-ryû*, *Chûjô-ryû*, *Shôsho-ryû*, certain Ninjutsu's *ryû*, etc.

According the explanation we find in those two scrolls, we can said that *Koryû* cannot be express by the word « School », but more by the word « circle » (like a private circle of transmission and practice), « a private flow of tactics, strategie and combat », « way or vision of life based on battle field and combat experience », « current of thought and use of the body », etc. This non describable flow of using all kind of weapon and apply any kind of technique to kill and survive, were created by professional warrior (killers, assassin, survivors, etc) who, for various reasons, dedicated their life to the art of combat.

In order to have access to those warriors, to meet with them, to received their knowledge, most of the record, show that they were not tied to a known place, like a fixed « school » where they teach and receive money. So in order to met with them must be introduce by someone, mainly a warrior (bushi) who have connections and relation, a kind of inner network exclusive to the art of *Heihô* (using weapon and body technic on battle field, leading troupes on the field, strategy, tactics, spying, etc.).

To be introduced, you needed a deep connection, and in order to have those connections, you must have a special position in the bushi's class. Its important to know that the one who had access to those master, professional killer and warrior, were already warrior themselves, which mean they already had fighting and battlefield experience. For certain reason most of those master did not, completely, accept to serve any kind of Lord or *Daimyô*. (certain chronicles and record mention that certain master who accepted to transmit or present their technique to few

Shogun, *Daimyô* and *Kuge*)

They were free, their way of practice was free, so they could not have any place known, established, because in the art of war, its important to never fix things, and this aspect is directly connecting with the Kanji *Ryû*, the flow, the art, the technic must never stop, always adapt itself to the situation and period where the master lived.

This is natural, because the vision and the art they cultivated and practice deeply was done everywhere, at any time, in daily life. Also its really important to know that they did not have any kind of methodology of teaching, transmission, etc, they just show, because its very difficult to cut the flow...very difficult...

As you can see, historically the first *Ryû* did not have a fixed location, of course there are famous temples, sanctuaries where the founder learned somethings, but nothing specific. *Heihô*, *Bujutsu*, were not taught in a public way. It was always private, deeply private. From that context it is very clear to understand the importance of different transmission's modes such as *Ishin den shin*, *jitsuden*, *jikiden*, *naiden*, *gaiden*, *shitsuden*, etc.

One important aspect to not forget about the word *Koryû* is that it will evolve and follow the time and the history. When the *dôjô* started to be established, the transmission become more open to the public, the creation of different level started, methodology of teaching changed, selling the rank, scrolls and *menkyo* started, technical development, weapons and tools evolved for the practice, etc...the flow (*Ryû*) of the art changed in order to satisfy the demand and needs of the period...Sometimes the flow (*Ryû*) will stop or crystalize...so we must wait a new generation, *Iemoto*, who can make the bridge between two period and explain what people, student, before could not understand.

But the main and crucial point is to always keep in mind that this is in a warrior's sphere, a bushi's world, where the only question is « who remains standing when the fight is over ? » « who have the capacity to fight, apply the technic and adapt against any kind of style, man and technique, what ever the situation and the context ? ».

By presented all these explanations, someone might think I did not answer the question directly: » what is a *Koryû* » ! First of all, I think its really important to give a large vision, some historical aspects about *Koryû*. The word *Koryû* can not be just translated as « classical or old school » Nowadays, There are masters that never challenged themselves and present themselves like a old tradition martial arts masters with real samurai spirit, that brainwash their student with movement and techniques that do not work at all just for money and self promotion.

Most of the time someone who practice deeply his art (*Koryû*, *gendai budô*, what ever the art or the discipline), he always looks through his master's eyes. If the master have a very stiff, limited, fixed vision and look other art as « shit », or under estimated other styles, well, you can be sure that the student will copy this, and even go deeper in this limited vision...

It's life, we need different kind of people, like there are different kind of *Koryû*.

As a conclusion, what can I said about *Koryû* is in these two translation that represent what we can find nowadays in Japan among most of the master :

-« classical or old school, that teach a old way of using the body and weapon according a certain historical context and/or a famous warrior's knowledge. This knowledge or technic, can become fix and stiff with the time and completly not adapted for the real world anymore, but intersting for various reason. In many case the body motion and the technic are not good for the body's health and do not respect the bio mechanic. »

-« classical or old way of using the body and weapon that show a deep flow in order to evoluate and understand human's body and psychic through the experiences of various warriors (famous or not). Those experiences allows to keep an open heart and mind in order to always keep the flow (*Ryû*) running, for face any kind of situation, weapon, man, fighter, warrior, killers, style. »
Finally, for me, not being able to face any kind of style, man, weapon, situation, etc. with the technique and knowledge based on the flow (basic technic of the *Koryû* someone learns), is not a direct representation of the meaning of *Koryû* and also what the founder had in mind when he found the subtle techniques and ways of moving at the origin of the *Koryû*. In this way, the *Koryû* become a old style, stiff, fix, not real anymore. So not really good for the body's health in a certain way. But like in everything in life, everyone choose s what he wants.

MAM: Could you explain if Ninjutsu is considered as a *Koryû* or not?

Here again I think that there are a lot of confusion, mainly based on ignorance and lack of practice and study. It is crucial to be aware of the origin of the words and their meaning according the context and the history. We can apply the same idea for the nature of the technique and the use of the body through different period of the history. It is impossible, stupid and ignorant to say « *Ninjutsu* is a *Koryû* », in the same way if you said « *Kenjutsu* is a *Koryû* ». Or like some ignorant people who said that « *Ninjutsu* is or is not a martial art ».

The two kanji use for *Ninjutsu* express an idea, an attitude, action, etc its very general and wide, nothing very specific. It also change according the period and the way it was used. It's the same for the word *Kenjutsu*, *jôjutsu*, *iaijutsu*, *shuriken jutsu*, *jûjutsu*, *taijutsu*, etc. This is the reason why most of the master, instructor, etc, translate those word according their own practice and experience. Even if I respect private and personal idea or developments, I must always keep in mind that this does not reflect the deep meaning of the word, and even not the historical reality and facts.

Those words do not express how, when, where, etc.. For exemple, *Kenjutsu* means technique, method, art, of applying, use the *ken* (what kind of Ken, long, short, saber, sword, etc.). It do not give any information of the How to use the *Ken* and what type of Ken.

Its the same for *Ninjutsu*, which mean technic, way, art of applying, use, the « *nin* ». Even the Kanji « *Nin* » (忍) have different meanings and levels of understanding based on the practice, experience, etc. The *Koryû* express the way, the how to, the flow of using the main tool, weapon or art. It can be *Ninjutsu*, *Kenjutsu*, etc...

So its more logical and correct to say that there are *Koryû* which have *Ninjutsu* in their curriculum, and some *Koryû* which use *Ninjutsu* as main and exclusive Flow of using the body and the weapon.

MAM:Please could you tell us about how the practice of old weapons like, spear, naginata, sword (various length) are useful in learning bujutsu today? Sometimes people might think those weapons are not relevant, not useful anymore...?

Well, its true that all those weapons are now completely archaic and useless. This is what most people might think and even scholars. But its important to look at this according to a practical experience point of view. The use of the weapon as well as the weapon itself, teach you the correct form, the right distance and measure, the right angle, the control, the accuracy and precision, etc.. Because the use of weapon comes directly from battlefield experience, where every movement has to be precise and you cannot allow yourself to move the way you want or act stupidly. Because of this, it is easy to understand that one wrong movement, a wrong step, a wrong angle, a wrong form and you die or you loose a part of your body.

If someone practice very deep and correct the fighting with weapons, from both side of course (right and left in the same way in order to cultivate the right and ultimate balance requested in all the *Koryû*), without weapon he will know all the right angle, weakpoints, timing, distance, space, etc.. He will be able to move as sharp as a weapon. All those movements and technics will be deadly, precise and accurate.

By learning the use of the weapon we learn to become one with the weapon, in other word we can materialize one of the *Gokui* we find a different scrolls of *Koryû* : «the Form follow the Function ». In this way the body, the movement, become a weapon. This will also allow to find one of the ultimate level in *Koryû*, the economy of movement and not use of excessive physical strengh.

Its not easy, but this is the process concealed in the history of various masters and founders of *Koryû* (according the historical sources, most of the founders were known on the battlefield for the skills with long weapon and the number of heads they had cut). They started with long weapon, because on the battlefield, bow and arrow (are use from long distance), *naginata*, *yari* and *nodachi* are very long weapon and more accurate to kill and protect the body.

But once the distance or the long weapon is broken by the enemy's weapon, in this situation the we must be able to adapt and use what we have around the belt, or in the hand or what the field, the environment offers. From that experience, the disciple learns how to use any long weapon according different situation that include various factors, and if he loses the long weapon, he must be able to adapt and use shorter weapons or the body.

After all, the hand and the body are the engine that drive the tools and weapon, if the body is well forged and cultivated, one must be able to face anyone or any style, with or without weapon

with no exceptions. A lot of people say « the weapon is the extension of the arm », but who can really show it, apply it correctly and effectly ? Not many, very few...

Actually the art of weapon should be done, step by step, centimeter by centimeter, milimeter by milimeter, in order to grasp every subtle details, each aspect of the distance, the space between the weapon and the target aimed, the different timings, the different rythms, the differences in breathing, and the capacity to read the movement and measure all the aspects of the combat. With the deep and correct practice based on the flow and the image of the master, step by step the distance and everything become shorter and shorter, in order to become very close to the enemy in order to kill or control him. Here again we can see the materialisation of the Gokui, « the Form follow the Function ».

Its not easy to reach this high class way of using the body, like its not easy to reach the level where its possible to move like a living blade through the art of weapon. But the art of *bujutsu*, *heihō* from the *Koryū* are not easy, because its made by the life, blood, tears, sacrifice of many masters. Yes, its really not easy, because must be able to see and find deep inside the body the common point between the use the body and different weapons, for finally being able to face any kind of style and man. I am really sorry if my answer is a little short. Be aware that its possible to explain more and present more historical fact and examples about this topic. But I don't want to go to much further like I did for the explanation of *Koryū*.

MAM: During the various seminar you mentioned that Bōjutsu is especially good to practice, why bojutsu is so special ?

Its not the *Bōjutsu* who is special, but what it helps to practice and to cultivate. Its important to mention that the *Bōjutsu* is not a battlefield weapon, because it will be broken very easy and honestly only peasant would use it. On the battlefield, if you use a *bō*, must be in iron or steel, like a *testu-bō*, or with metal reinforcement, nails, hooks, etc., in order to face a blade and other hard weapons. We should not forget that even long weapon like Naginata, Yari could be broken during the fight, so the capacity of using the half of the weapon, what ever the length, is important in order to survive. From that situation, its easy to see that short weapon are deeply connected with the longer one.

The art of *Bōjutsu* is deeply connecting with art of Yari and Naginata. It help to cultivate a wide movement and see the technical application in a large way and scale. It teach how to be able to apply the technic from a long distance as well as to be very accurate and precise. Its also a weapon that help to reinforce and conditioning the body for having a more precise way of using the body and to find how the biomechanics of the movements work.

A very important point, perhaps the crucial one, is that art of *Bōjutsu* teach to used both side, right and left in the same way, in order to not have one side stronger than the other one. This is very important in a real fight, because if someone is stronger and accurate from only side, if he

get wounded or deeply hurt on his best side, he want be able to adapt accurately to the situation. Every *Koryû* teach right and left, and the balance between them. It is really sad to see that in many case, like the *kenjutsu*, *iajutsu*, *jûjutsu*, most of the people and even the master or the instructor practice and apply techniques from only one side, mainly the right side.

An other aspect we should not forget is at a certain high level, the art of *bôjutsu* helps to understand deeply the art of *jôjutsu*, *hanbô-jutsu*, *kenjutsu*, *iaijutsu*, *kodachi* and *jutte-jutsu* as well as other thing. But its not easy, really not easy to be able to make the bridge, only few master could do it, and in the past most of the founders of *Koryû* were known for the expertise on various weapon and especially the long weapon which are more accurate on the battlefield.

There is many *Koryû* that teach the *Bôjutsu* in their curriculum. In my humble opinion, they are all great to studies and to learn, it should be also part of the practice of any *Koryû* to study each other, like master of the past did. Here there are an other word in japanese, *Kôryû* (交流), that express the relationship, the exchange between two master. Whatever the nature of this exchange (great, bad, etc.)its good to see that *Koryû* (古流) = *Kôryû* (交流). After all, everything in life is about relationship, with people, animal, nature, life, death, religion (by the way the word religion come from the latin word *religere*, which mean to be link, to be connected, to be in relation with God or whatever someone believe).

Of course, if the technique of *Bôjutsu* does not allow you to be free, effective, to face any style, and leads to stiffness and limited vision and body.....Here again, everyone is free to choose. Like in everything in life its a matter of choices, master, art, women, drink, smoke, etc., but the choice have always a weight and a consequence for us and the people around. Must be very aware of that...its really not easy.

MAM: Is it important to practice a school in its correct progression?

« Correct progression ».....well if you go to school, there is different class, level and of course a progression. Same in university studies and education system. In the case of sport martial art, modern martial art, yes it is very important to practice in the right, and correct progression. Because it follows a schema of school education system. But in the *Koryû* its very different. We cannot apply a western way of thinking to a japanese classical martial. There are too many historical, sociological, ideological as well as cultural aspects and factors included. So the idea of « progression » is very different.

As with anything in life, there is an order for learning, receiving, understanding and realising things or an art. This order can be show in various way according the capacity of the master and the disciple. Above I explain that people who came to receive the transmission from a master of *Koryû*, were already confirmed and skillfull warriors, bushi. In this case, what is, or what means

« the correct progression »?

It is really important to think and keep in mind what the Flow (the *Ryû*) is and all his aspects. I think that the only progression is the process of practice and transmission itself. So in this case what is crucial is the capacity to copy and keep the image of the master alive in the heart. Its not a matter of days, month, years, but more a matter of life and heart's purpose through the continuity of the practice. To keep the heart and the intention clear all the way, not looking for the result or the pregression. Because the rightness and pureness of the art are always reflected by the form of the disciple. So if he fellows correctly the form and the image of the master, and become part of the Flow, this is what is the most important.

I think that its more important that a « correct progression », because even a « correct progression » as a « roof », a « end », a « limit ». But being part of a flow, never stop, there is no roof, no limit no end. Because the word transmission, the *Den* (伝) in japanese, does not include or express any limit or end, its a Flow (*Ryû*). (Sometimes the one who give the *Den*, can limit it, restrict it, transform it, etc, here again its depend of his heart and intention, in other words, the master, the man, can make the art great or worse, it's not anymore a matter of the nature of the *Koryû* but more of the one who show it).

In Japanese there are few words to express the idea, the action of « practice », such as *Shugyô* (修行), *Keiko* (稽古), *Tanren* (鍛錬), *Renshû* (練習), *Gakushû* (学習), *Narau* (習う), etc. The famous one which include all the aspects of the Flow (which are practice deeply, study, research, experiment, application, act, repeat, copy, polish, reinforce, conditioning, etc.) is *Shugyô*. With the second kanji (行) that refers to the way, the path, follow the path (the question will be what or who to follow ?), the way where you accumulate various experiences. This word come from the Religion of Japan and its very old. I honestly think this is really difficult and incomplete to translate *Shugyô* by « practice », « exercise », « training », etc.

Actually it is too much limited to use those translation. But like in everything, its depend s here again of the what you have in your mind and how deep do you consider your practice. In order to consider oneself as a *Shugyô-sha*, its not about going in the dôjô for practice, doing seminar, sell few dvd, rank people, promote oneself...its beyond that, even if those aspects I just mentioned are considered as good test to see if the one who claimed to devote to the *Shugyô* did not corrupt his heart...

The Idea behind the word *Shugyô*, its close to the way hermits, saint, religious men, devoted man, monk, ascetic, etc. practice and apply their faith and prays. Everyday, every minutes, actions, talks, silences, breathes, etc., are devoted, turn to God, Buddha, what ever they believe. So for the founder of *Koryû*, master or *sôke*, this the way they live their art, because in the *kanji Gyô* (行), which can be read *iku* or *yuku* (even *okonau*), there is also the idea of Flow, something we must walk with and become one with.

The other word included in *Shugyô* and crucial to every person who practice *Koryû*, its the word *Keiko* (稽古). Here again this two *Kanji* do not express the action of practice. Many scrolls use this word, but the one who use in a wide meaning is the scroll from the *Kitô-ryû jûjitsu*. This two *kanji* can be read as « *inishie wo kangaeru* », which can be translated as « *thinking about the past* », « *reflect about/on the past* », « *mediate on the past, in history* », « *Ponder about the history, the past* ». In other words, this means that the disciple must, think, search, research how masters of the past used to practice, used their body, the different reasons, aspects, factors concealed, hidden, behind each technique, each movement and *kanji* of the scroll.

What I wanted to present here is that the common aspect of the word « *practice* », is really more than just going to the *dôjô*, follow a logical order and repeat, over and over, the technique or movement without a deep purpose or High spirit attitude. If you consider that most of the people in the *Koryû*'s world look for what they want and see the way they want to see, what about the meaning of words like *Shugyô* and *Keiko* ?

Like in everything in life, there are degrees, levels. If someone is looking for the highest and deepest level of *Koryû*'s science and knowledge, if he wants to have a subtle movement and understanding of the deepest's aspect of the art and become one with his master and the Flow, well the contract is simple, you must be ready to offer more than what you expect and more that you think you will deserve. And the more interesting thing is that there is no guarantee that you'll be chosen or can even reach the highest level of the art. But at least, I honestly think that you can learn something incredible and priceless, the meaning of Patience and Humbleness, as well as the true Value of the Art, and this its already « *Gold* » on itself.

This is my point of view. Anyway, I understand the fact that someone who start to practice a *Koryû*, an art or sport, should start by the begining and try to keep his practice constantly on the right way. This can be call a « *correct progression* », don't you think so ?

MAM: During the lecture you gave at the university, you have mentioned to take care not to make a « *form from a form* » and that it's important to try to practice the form correctly but at the same time take care not to become too fixed on the form. Could you please tell us more what you mean by a form of form?

This is not really easy to explain in a few words, but I will try. In a way, it refers to a situation where the student, whatever his level or the years he had practice under a master, have the arrogance to do things in his own way because something be deeply believed he understood. The disciple is so confident about himself that he convinces himself that what he found or does is the form, the technic shown by the master he foellows. In the *Koryû* system, the main pillar is the master disciple relationship. This relationship is based on a deep trust. The master show something, a form, a technique, and sometimes he explains it.

The student listen and tries to copy. But the student or disciple cannot understand, because he doesn't have the same experience, curriculum as the master, even the same age. So the arrogance is that after a certain time of practice, the disciple think he already mastered the form or the technique and deeply believes in himself, that what he does is the same, but he forgets many mistakes and creates his own way, because most of the time he listens and tries to understand with his limited experience, his own education, religion, eyes, own vision, body experience, etc.. So what he saw is already « corrupted » and « contaminated » by different filters he has. Those filters's nature depend on many factors such as cultural, ideological, religious, education, value of life, etc. Plus one very important which is the nature itself of the disciple, his character, the way he is deep inside. This is the one which will allow him to follow the master or to create his own way and quit learning with the master as well as lose the flow (*Ryû*).

An other crucial aspect of the transmission is the real fact that the master does no tell him his mistakes or really corrects him. Because a disciple, which is an adult, should be able to correct himself and follow the right way without direct indication or explanation. Like I explain above for *Kôryû*, its not school with the typical education system, people who had access were already bushi, adult, with strong experience and back ground, its not a education system, you walk with the flow or you die. The master does not have the time to correct you. The capacity to correct yourself just by copy is deeply connected with the capacity of survive and evolve, which is one of the main point of the meaning of *Ryû* (the Flow) and all the art of combat, fighting methods, military science and strategy. Because if you can not adapt yourself, evolve with the Flow, you just stay attach to a fix, limited, dead form.

The master can even just praise and push the disciple's ego (which is a very good tactic to see the true nature of the student and his desires), by saying phrase like : « You are very good, you are better than your senior », « you are so good that you have the same level as me », « you can be my next successor », « everything you do is great », « you have no equal », etc. This kind of situation happens even now, human stay human, and when there are emotions involved, most of the time the disciple feel betray...But, what ever the reason or the situation, the disciple's true nature and intention comes out and finally he does just his own way, believing strongly that he is right. Nothing more.

Rather than being part of the Flow, he try to create things by himself. Never forget that the form represent a sequence of the Flow (*Ryû*). This Flow's sequence represent the image of the master (and the previous masters's knowledge) that the disciple should never stop to copy, to re-copy and copy again, deeper and deeper without try to analise and/ or understand in a intellectual way. This is the only way to become part of the Flow. Its very rare when someone can do this, most of the time, and if he have the right heart quality and the necessary capacity, he is the next one, the one who will be the successor of the *Iemoto*.

The disciple wants or think he can performe (whatever the reason behind) what request time and experience (i should say a practice and experience based on quality of time rather than a quantity of time), also he creates a Form from the Form he saw or believe he saw and understood. Its like

a baby who asked his parent to explain linguistic before learning how to repeat correctly the sound, because he think he knows all the sounds...this is impossible of course. There are rules in the practice and learning of *Koryû*'s science, if someone wants to cross over, well there are a price that will be payed one day...

When the master is older and the disciple is young this kind of situation are more clear to see, especially when the ego and the arrogance in the disciple are strong. But this is how it is and you can see this in many *Koryû*'s history and episode (not only in *Koryû*, but also in art, religion, family, etc.). This is the big difference between the one who is chosen to be the next *Iemoto* with the one chosen to be a *Shihan* (which is, by the way, not a old word in the *Koryû*'s history, first words were *Heihô-ka*, *Gunpai-sha*, *Shinan-yaku*).

Its important to mention that in the case of *Shihan* there are many kinds as well : stiff, stupid, great, leazy, cupid, crazy, clever, violent, arrogant, wise, gentle, fake, polite, over polite, etc...This is the reason why I use the word Flow (with a big F like always for me) which is by definition limitless, with no roof, unlimited...In a *Koryû*, in the master disciple's relationship context, creating a form from the Form, is creating his own roof or limit and loose the Flow. This is also connected with the word *Shihan-ke*, the « Shihan's house » or « the Shihan's speciality », « expertise », etc.

This aspect is also deeply connecting with the *Gokui* I mention earlier, « The Form follows the Function ». If the original « Form » learn from the master is the materialisation of the Function of the *Koryû*, the materialisation of the flow, well, if the student change the form because of lack of knowledge, lack of experience, or by arrogance, he might think he can do better and different (we all had this thought at least once !), the form he found will not be a expression of the Flow anymore and will not follow the function. He will create his own way, what is known in japanese as *jikoryû* (自己流). « Own style, way, flow ». When master says this about a student or disciple, its never a good thing. In this case, its easy to understand that the disciple did not at all apply the idea and history behind the word *Keiko* that I mentioned above. Or he just interpreted and understood in his own way, all the possibility are open.

In order to be more complete, there is one important aspect I should not forget. This aspect is call *Kôfu Tanren* (工夫鍛錬), that most of the existing records about *Koryû*, famous warriors and founder of *Koryû*, mention. This word refers to the capacity and the talent to go deeper in the Form, to practice day and night, and the result of that deep practice (*Tanren* means reinforce, train, discipline the body, forge the body like a weapon, in other words a constant deep practice) allow you to explore deeper dimension of using the body and the weapon.

The Logic in every combat science, military and strategy methods is to evaluate and to adapt to any kind of situation, weapon, enemy and of course, the period. Because the Form or the Flow created and practiced by the master is a reflection of this spirit and attitude of life, it is certain

that if the capacity and the heart of the disciple allow it, if he is the chosen one, he will be able to see how the Form he received have already everything conceal inside. There is nothing new, just what already exist that the next generation, *Iemoto*, dig more, explore more deeply, always deeper...its the same aspect between father and his son, its really human.

One thing more, because I don't want people to think about or misunderstood my words and comments about *Shihan*. Don't imagine for one second I don't respect the level or title of *Shihan*. The position as well as the role of *Shihan* is extremely important in a *Koryû* as well as in the transmission. In the best case, they are here to protect the next generation (*Iemoto*) and help him the best they can in order that the new Iemoto can follow the Flow from the previous Soke. For instance when the previous Soke dies before he has given full transmission the Shihan have to help the new Iemoto in order to protect the Flow. The Flow only goes from one Iemoto to another Iemoto, making the Iemoto The Flow. The Shihan have to help and serve the new Iemoto before they help themselves with out any kind of secret desire or agenda as they have received some of the Flow and it is their duty to protect it. That means they must not go and create their own way, school, system and they have to try to show the real way that the previous Iemoto has shown them, by their advice, their memory and their souvenirs of the past, of the master, etc. Its a great rôle and its not everyone who can do that too...the word *Shihan* is generally translated as, « master teacher » or « master instructor » (in other word not yet a master). But if you studies more deeply the two *kanji* of this word you can read as *Môhan wo shimesu*, which means « showing the model » or « showing the example », show the model, in other words, the one who show the model (to follow). Its a great responsibility to show what is correct, but then you must have what is correct first...

Great or worse, bad or good, violent or soft, weak or strong, what ever the character or the capacity of the *Iemoto*, *Shihan*, instructor, its all right. Because a Great master, a good master can not teach the wrong thing, because he is great and good by definition. What he does is correct. This why the disciple need also bad, violent, crazy, bizness type of *Iemoto* and *Shihan*, because they teach what a disciple should not do...The difficult things is to wake up, to open the eyes, to be aware, and this its not easy, because most of the time we look for what we want, rather than for what we really deserve...but this also its part of the practice too.

Finaly, I would like to finish by saying that the Form and Function are not fix and must adapt themselves to the time, the period, the people, the weapon. Nothing is fix or granted, this why its crucial to not create a form from the Form...

MAM: What does it mean to practice deeply? Practice the same thing over and over? Or by changing different attacks, weapons, etc., when exploring the Kata to understand more why is it so important to take care about introducing our own ideas?

Well my english is not very good, and I apologize for the mistakes I did in my previous answer as well as my previous interviews. Moreover, I think that everyone have his own understanding or interpretation of what means « practice » and the word « deeply ». I already talk about the word «Practice » I think, so lets see the word «Deep ». First for me, if its « deep », this means

that no one can reach it. For me, only God knows the depth of anything. There is not limit, otherwise its not deep !

For exemple in many occasion I met people who tells me : « I have finish to learn all the technic of the *Okuden* (奥伝) from that *Koryû* », or « in the *Okuden* part of that *Koryû* there is just this number of technic ». I always answer to them that what they did, reach, count and practice, was not the *Okuden*, but the idea they think it was, which mean, for them, just a technical level in a curriculum of a *Koryû*.

Okuden (奥伝), means the deepest transmission, if you reach the end of what took one life, many generations, tears, sacrifice, wounds, tragedy, etc., to create, well I am sorry to me that is not the same as just a technical level., You have to see, studie, research, practice and respect the art as well to see what the word « deep » means. And beyond that the meaning of « Practice » as well. Anyway if its « deep », the definition is that it takes time, a lot of time, Patience and Endurance, and there is no guarantee that there is a end or a limit (even that you reach something you « deeply » aim), because the word *Okuden* does not specify if there is a end or not. This is also connecting with the wors *Koryû* and its nature as well as the word *Kôfû Tanren*.

How can we limit or fix the science and knowledge of a *Koryû* just to a certain number of technic and some different level ? Honestly, I don't think that what took many lives, generations, etc., to create can be limited and restricted to just a number of techniques.

Like I explain earlier, the Form of the Flow, and the flow itself offer everything, and everything is concealed inside. One the very important aspect of *Koryû* is *Kako genzai mirai no jutsu* (過去現在未来之術). We can find this mention in the *Nen-ryû Seihô Heihô Mirai-ki Mokuroku* (念流正法兵法未来記目録) *makimono* of the *Nen-ryû* (念流), one of the most old *Koryû* of Japan, written in 1596. Its also use in different *Koryû*, even in *ninjutsu* as well. This words refers to the deep nature of the techniques that represent the soul of the Flow, the base where the *Koryû* was created.

Kako means the past. *Genzai* means the present and *Mirai* means the future. The meaning of three kanji together express that in the techniques created by the founder and polished by the next generations of *Iemoto*, there is all the aspect of combat, strategy of the past that help you to face and adapt to the present situation or moment, in order to live and practice as well as pass down the knowledge to the future generation.

In this case the words « practice deeply » means to consider all the aspects, various factors that allows a technic, a way of using the body to evaluate and adapt to the time, people, situation, etc., Its also connecting with the idea of *Keiko*, isn't it ?

There is no reason to add our own idea, only if someone is part of the Flow and is a *Iemoto* or *Sôke*. Everything is already in the art, in the techniques, we must practice with a deep and true humbleness and not have the pride and the arrogance to think that « I can change the technique in order to make it better », or « before it was not good or correct, i have change d this or this »...

In order to judge the technique and say it is wrong or uncorrect, uneffective, unaccurate, etc., someone must know deeply the technique in his bones, flesh, soul. He must also remember the work and background of the previous generation and all the aspects and factors that push them to practice and interpretate the technique in the way they did. It's always with great respect and a deep humbleness that a Iemoto change or add things, its always for the good of the Flow.

(By the way I mean the same for level like *Shoden* (初伝) and *Chûden* (中伝), they are not really fix, for me I consider deeply the phrase that Toda sensei said to Takamatsu sensei, and Takamatsu sensei to Hatsumi sensei : « *shoden is okuden, okuden is shoden* »... Its written by Takamatsu sensei in his autobiography and in some of the *densho* of the nine schools of Hatsumi sensei. But we can find something similar in other *Koryû*).

To answer more directly to your question, the meaning of « practice deeply depend mainly of the purpose of the practice, the love for the art and the master as well as the relationship between them, the devotion, etc., of the one who practice. And all those aspects should be seen through the continuity, because the Time is the ultimate Test, in everything in life... Why, what for, for who and how someone practice ?

The answer to those questions will explain the meaning of « practice deeply ». The movement and form reflect the practice, as well as who is the disciple deeply inside. Every high class *Iemoto* can read this in anyone, some are more skill and deeper in this way of reading disciple.

Now about practice over and over the same thing, exploring the *Kata*, the own idea, etc....this also depend of the disciple and the different question and conditions I mention above. But what I can say here is that its very important to not be blind, to not be satisfied, to always go deeper and higher. The Practice on itself its already exploring. In the word « exploring » you can find « ex », of « exterior », « experiment », « exercice », « exterminator » and also ex- like ex-girl-friend, or ex-wife, and finally experience (by the way, my knowledge of english is very limited, but its interesting that I never heard words such as that ex-friend, ex-master, ex jack ass....).

Its easy to understand that a disciple must experiment, try outside the ryu with different people, crazy, strong, effective, different style, weapon, body, etc...in order to see if the technique or the kata works, must apply against any kind of style, weapon, man, situation, not only one time, over and over, and its never over. If it's over, well its not Deep...

If the technique learned does not work, there are few possibilities : first one, the way the disciple learned was wrong or incorrect. So this means that what the master show was uncorrect and did not work, by extension, what the master learn is wrong. (But if the disciple can not do the technique even if he saw the master apply the same technique to different kind of man, face any

situation, the disciple should blame himself). Second, if the way the disciple practice, studies, see and apply the technique is wrong, incorrect. Is it the fault of the Master ? Well we like to blame the teacher, the parents, the friends, the government, etc... this the moment where most of the time the disciple create their own way.

In many case, during talk with various masters, scholar, etc., I always try to point that between what the master show, do, etc. and what the disciple, (student, client) saw, thinks he saw, understood, and what he ll do, there are some filters, which will « corrupt » the capacity to copy the master. The first and main one is the arrogance to try to understand with the brain something that should be copied perfectly by the bones, flesh, shape, senses, etc. and this, as long as he is not the chosen one or a genius, it will take a lot of time.

This why in most of the history of *Koryû*, religion, mystic, when a disciple met with a master, the first thing he learns is to forget himself in order to be empty and ready to receive. To learn how and what to unlearn... Here I am pretty sure that everyone will understand the reason of words from esoteric buddhism and Zen like *Munen musô*, *Musô no ken*, *Kokû*, *Mushin*, *Môshin*, *Bôshin*, *Muga*, *Yûga*, *Yûgen*, etc... Those words express a state of mind, an sincere and true attitude of humbleness and emptiness in the front of the Transmission (*Den*), the Flow (*Ryû*), the Master, and life in general.

About the fact of take care of introducing our own idea, well this is connecting with the question about not creating a « form from the Form », *Keiko*, *Kôfû Tanren* and the *Kako-genzai-mirai no jutsu* I already discussed. But after all, every one chooses the way he wants, practices the way he wants and believes. Its really free, like free to be stupid, stiff, limited, etc., its open to everyone. When someone choose to do something, to change, to follow someone, he does it because of his intentions, desires and emotions, but he should never forget that there are consequences...always.

Anyway, people who really want to go deep in the practice of *Koryû*, should never forget that, ultimatly, the art is about being able to face any kind of situation, man (especially strong ones, professional killers, dangerous guys, warriors, soldiers, no just the friend and the « slave-blind-over-sincere-student », etc.), style, weapons. Always keep your feet planted in reality, live with/in reality. Not practice in a kind of closed place, closed heart, closed and limited vision, with the people you know or that are like you. If what you practice, your best techniques do not work or its not effective against someone stronger than you, more skilled than you, faster than you, well question yourself and what you have learned, how you learned it and how it was taught to you. Or you can become the student of the one who knocked you down, this is how it happened in the past, and still happen again nowadays. « To learn from the enemy » is a pretty well known advice isn't it ?

At the same time you should question yourself about the relation with the one you choose as master or instructor. Who are you for him ? A client, a student, a disciple, a slave, or a Client-

slave-student who think he is close and his disciple ? How does he treat you and why ? Does he take care of your mental and physical's health ? Etc. All those questions will bring answers or the answer based on facts. You must be ready to accept and face them, because like I already said, everyone see what he wants to see, never the reality. The reality and the facts are always direct, brutal and with no compromise.

MAM: From the form there is also henka, could you please tell us about the different kinds of henka, ones that are written down and ones just that appear in the right moment? How is different from just creating something yourself or because you cannot do the basic form correctly?

Here again its not really easy to explain, but who said the practice of *Koryû* was easy ? First in my case, I do not create techniques, or my « own *Henka* », its overestimating oneself to think in that way and very far away from what *Koryû*'s practice or whatever the art is about. I my opinion it is also disrespectful toward the master and the art or *Ryû*. But everyone have his own definition of the word « respect and how to give it. I must said also that everyone study, practice, lean the way he wants and feel it. Being able to recognize that is already a big step i think. I mean do not mix and confuse our own desire with the Rules of *Koryû* and the master's transmission.

In my case being able to copy perfectly what have been show to me, its already a gift and enough for me, I am deeply thankfull, yes deeply thankfull. I love and prefer stay in the art of copy the master, his Flow. I do not have the pretention or the arrogance to create my own style, my own school, etc., because I am deeply aware that it took years and century as well as many lives for create one *Koryû*. I need to tell you that first.

In order to do a technique, something, or try a technique, anything, you must see it first. After it depend of your capacity to copy and to polish the Form in order that your movement and technic reflect deeply the image of the Master. For me the word *Henka* goes only in that way. If you think that Mozart wake up when he was young and could play music and write incredible song without had someone who inspired him first, who touch his soul with something, well, you need to study more and open your eyes!

Henka is very interesting word and every *Koryû* use it in is technical lexical (even in all the art as well). This word can express something correct, great, good, or worse and bad, something against the main current, idea, form, ect. Especially in a society like Japan where everything should be fix and formated, the *Henka* is not something always well received or welcome in a group, organization, company, school, office, where everyone must fellow the same idea, clothes, logic, work, hours, etc. You find this also in all the martial arts organization, *Koryû* or not.

First of all, we must understand what means *Henka* and his logical application according the context of combat, battlefield's situation, weapon and body use, as well as the historical context and the *Koryû*'s rules. Most of the people translate the word *Henka* (変化) as variation, or different (the meaning of *henka* according the situation is, change, variation, transformation, shift, turn, variety, diversification, etc.). Its too simple to my point of view, or too general.

First the word *Henka* is constituted of two *kanji*, the first one *hen* (変) can be read *kawaru*, *kaeru*, and means « change », « turn », « alter », « vary », « strange », « peculiar », « odd », « unusual », « eccentric », and it is used for many situations and actions, not only in the *Koryû*'s world. The second one, *Ka* (化) can be read *bakasu*, *bakesu*, *kawaru* and means « bewitch », « enchant ». When you add the two *kanji*'s meaning together, of course in a general point of view it means « variation » or « change, but its more deep, like always with *Koryû*'s science and knowledge. Its also important to underline the fact that the meaning of the *Henka* should be understood in its historical context and not use the first definition found in the regular dictionary, its too easy in this way, don't you think so ? If research and understanding is just about open the first japanese dictionary, well everyone is a PHD or a high class researcher !

The studies and researches on various records, *Densho*, *Denki*, *Shuki*, *Shiki*, about *Koryû* and its founders shows that its always during a moment, an crucial time in the combat, where the question is about live or die, that something happen and the founder or master who was in a very bad position, did an unexpected technique which surprised his enemy.

Its not about a special form, its how to adapt and transform the technique that do no work on something more accurate and deeper that come suddenly from nowhere. Sometimes the master can remember what he did and tries to work on it more. The main problem is when the disciple who learn the *Henka*, create a form from that or a *Kata*, and thinks, « this is the real form ! ».

An other very good exemple of *Henka*, its in the art, knowledge and technic of apply the *kyusho* (weakpoint). The *kyusho* or weakpoint work differently with different people. The pain, the pressure, the strike, as well as the pain can work on some, not on other, also some are less sensitive than other, etc. In this case, during a fight that deals with life and death, when it does not work, you must be able to adapt and attack an other weakpoints, this means to be able to become one with the distance, the breathing, the space, the Form, the Flow, to be able to read the movement and body structure of the enemy, etc. Its become even more dangerous and deeper when there are weapons involved.

The *Henka* is the kind of technic that are impossible to see, to understand, to read, to expect. In the case of *Ninjutsu*'s practice (and its the same in other *Koryû*'s science), I always say to people when the technique is performed, if they can see it, or understand it, well its not *Ninjutsu*. Its the same in the *Koryû* at the very high level of practice. Its not a question of speed or strength

(physical aspects that will be gone one day with the age), its beyond that.

A real fight, a fight for life, battlefield, everything, details, movements, technics, strikes, attacks, weapons, angles, world, enemys, etc., that deals with life and death are unexpected and unknown. The heart of this unknown and unexpected things is called the *Henka*. What ever the *Koryû*, the military science, the fighting method someone follow or practices, even if he is a soldier and he studies at the military acadamy, same for the police, once he is on the field, in a real situation, its never like it was shown, taught at the class. This is *Henka*.

Its also very important to notice that even in most of the *Densho* and such writings, the enemy is never identified, the enemy's attack is always general, never specific. This mean that the one who read the techniques in the *Densho* must be able to do it against any type of man, enemy, attack, style, weapon, etc. This is also why its always written « *Kuden* », after some explanation or after some technique name. One of the reason of that transmission method is that the one who received the *Densho* should have seen, experieanced and have practiced with the master first.

He need to have seen the master apply those technic many times against various men and on different situations. From that, if is able to copy and that his form deeply reflect the image and movement of the master, he can, if he has the capacity, apply and understand what is writing by the master in the *Densho*. I have heard many master, Iemoto, said to their student, top student or not : « if you don't practice, you won't understand me and even less the *Densho* !! ».

Of course the master or *Iemoto* does not say what kind of practice, what to practice, how to practice. But in the lifetime of a master you can be sure that phrases or order like : « Copy what I do ! », « Watch carefully what and how I do !! », « Listen carefully to what I say ! », « Do you see !! », « Don't create your own style ! », « Practice correctly the form like me », « Study deeply and cultivate your body and mind, its very important », etc. Here again, I think that everyone will interpretate those phrases like he wants. The master do not really give instruction, because He Is the Model, the Form, to copy and to fit. Its hard to be like him, really hard, only one can do it...this is also the meaning of *Ryû*.

I should not forget that some master said also phrases like : « You are good ! », « you are very good ! », « Great technique !! », « Don't push to much, you might hurt yourself or someone », « Do what you want, what you feel », « Express what you want to do and how you understand », etc. Here also the master give you an invitation to see if you prefer being on stage and show how great you are, because you show your own things, your interpretation Its better to take his words like test of your ego. Better to keep practicing in the shadow, to not listen to awarding, beautiful words that praise your ego. The only sound should be the sound of the Flow, the *Ryû*. There are many case like that, in any *Koryû*.

The master talks, shows, and the disciple or student, listen and try. The master is responsible for the way he does, how he apply it and how he treat the student. But about the understanding, the

correctness, the rightness, the accuracy, the effectiveness of what he says and shows, but if the student does not understand and can not make it, well its not really the masters fault. (Its really important to tell to everyone who ll read this interview, is that by Master, or Shihan, I mean high class (with a big M or S), the highest and deepest level reach by few man, not everyone.

Its not because someone have high rank or whatever, in Japan or outside, that he is really what he claim. I don't believe in rank and diploma, I believe in one capacity and knowledge based on alive practice, life experience.) In this case its also clear that to create ones own style, ones own Henka, is very easy. Its always easy to express what we want, to create and do our interpretation from something we saw and we believe we understand. But copy correctly the master, his Flow, etc. this is not easy, no at all !

Its the same aspect for the *Densho*. This make me remember that some people, even some *shihan*, think that *Densho* are written for kids, or have no meaning. This is really a proof of their lack of knowledge, practice, and in a certain way its disrespecfull toward the art and the master. Its really stupid, how its possible to not respect the value and the work of previous masters ?

The *Henka* always come from the original technique, *waza* or the original Form which is the source of the *Ryû* or Flow of combat founded by the Founder after a deep and intense practice, battlefield experiences, etc. The *Henka* appears naturally from the practice and his accuracy as well as rightness. The quality of the *Henka* depend on many factors, of course the rightness of the practice and the Form, but also it depend on the heart, intentions and purpose of the disciple. Its not easy and its really not about doing things like during a technique with a student, walking/turning around him for a few minutes, take all the time to apply something that obviously do not work in real life and is not accurate, like we can see in certain *dôjô*.

In many cases, its not the art or the *Koryû* that should be blame or the master, but just the student, the disciple who does things like he wants too. And this is the Point, because the *Henka* does not come from an intention, desire, envy, but more from the subconsciousness which was cultivtated to respond naturally through the deep practice of the techniques of the *Ryû*.

There is an other word, *Henkei* (変形). Here the second *Kanji*, *kei* (形), means « shape », « mold », « form », « structure ». *Henkei* means that the technic, a strike, a lock, a way to use or hold the weapon, a direction of the feet, angle of strike or apply the technique, etc. changes according a situation where the previous technique applied could not work for many reasons (body wounded, slide, rain, snow, psychological problems, clothes, eat to much, stronger enemy, etc.). But the application of the *Henkei* is also part of the *Henka*, its more about the form of the technic, the body, etc.

The *Henka* is and was considered as *Gokui* or *Kyukoku Ôgi*, or *Ogi*, which means the highest and deepest state of apply a technic and read he enemies movement. When the master could remember it, after try to refind the state of body and mind he had when the *Henka* happened,

those *Henka* as well as the *Henkei* were written down in order to be practiced. But the problem is that many students, disciples took this as a *Kata* sometimes and forget to practice what was the more important, which is what lead to the *Henka*.

Each *Koryû* have his own *Henka*. Some have them written in a *Densho*, some not. Being able to face the *Henka* of the enemy, to adapt and transform, its also part of the *Henka*, in certain *Koryû* they call this *Shirabe-waza* (or *kata*), *Hakari-goto*, etc.

There is no difference between the written one and the one who appears at the right time, because they both proceed from the same Flow, the same respect of the art and the deep culture of precise Form. Chance and opportunity, catch the moment, find the right time, spot, etc. its also very important, not easy at all. Not easy at all.

MAM: Talking about henka and changing technique-there are many students with quite serious injuries from road accidents, sports and work injuries, etc.- is it possible to adapt the technique for this? And is it possible to stop it becoming different? (in old times I guess many warriors carried injuries and had to accommodate for that?)

There are Chronicles, *Memoires*, Diarys, etc., which tells that some masters, get hurt or wounded in the battlefield, in combat, etc. Some of them could find a way to recover and their technic become better, deeper, because they apply constantly the idea of *Keiko* (ponder, reflect, think, mediate about/on the past/history) that I already mention. Some did not question themselves, and keep the same practice, and one day one disciple more bright or who observe, practice and listen more carefully to the master, will find what was done incorrectly and for what reason. Here again its important to study deeply (again deeply) the context and the historical reason for certain movement. But whatever the period, the time, a body, the anatomy, etc, is pretty much the same, it works the same way and suffer the same way.

Student who had accident, injuries, from previous things before they practice or while they practice a *Koryû* (or anything else) need to know the reasons of the accident and how they can use their body from that situation. Its obvious that they need to be more careful and must study deeply how the biomechanics work and all the influences on other parts of the body (organs, mind, etc.) before start anything. Second they need to be aware of what they want to practice and with whom. This is really important. Its always a matter of choice, isn't it ?

In order to adapt a technique, first, must know all the aspects of the technique (history, transmission, biomechanica, sociology, mind, shape, form, how and why it works, etc.) and this its not easy. And after that it is possible to adapt, when, why, how, etc. for how long ? Because in *Kôryû* practice everything is about long term, not short term. Same as life, its a Flow (*Ryû*) conceal in Way, the *Gyô* of *Shugyô*.

Here again the word « adapt » brings us back to the *Henka*. You adapt when you know the nature and where is the pain, how it happens, etc. Warriors carry injury, its a fact. But some of them could live a long time and reach 70 years old and kept on practicing and could put down young warriors. How could they that ? Did they warn the next generation about certain kind of movement ? of course, because the goal is the long term...and a real Master always take care of the disciple, normally...

Some chronicles talk about incredible flexibility of some *kenjutsu* master, like in the Yagyû family, etc. The question is how they could stay flexible and took care of their body during periods of war ? Like always, the student needs to find by himself, to see and study by himself, for that he have many things around him like the example of Master and the *Shihan* etc.

There are cases also when the student had his injuries from previous practice, or from a violent shihan or master. Here again, the student must face his choices, and realise what was wrong, how, why, etc. From that, after he can recognize the pain, injuries, etc, he can find a way to practice and see what can be correct, healthy for his body. Its not easy, but its not *easy-jutsu*.

MAM: Please could you tell us what is meant by “fudôshin” (不動心)?

Well the word *Fudôshin* (不動心) come from Buddhism, where most of the time it refers to a certain state of mind called « immovable spirit, state of mind, heart or emotions ». Historically, the first founders founded their *Ryû* after a long, intense, deep practice in a temple or sanctuary, while practicing, they were also praying and fasting at the same time in order to receive the most pure transmission from the temple of the sanctuary’s divinity. All the *Koryû*’s foundation are deeply connected with Sanctuary and Temple where spiritual practice and ascetic training was done by monk. Because they were looking for the most pure technique, they practiced in that way.

Master-founder who created their *Ryû* did not have yet the technical lexical to express, name their *Ryû* and the technique they discovered, so they used various lexical elements that already existed, like the one from Buddhism (*Mikkyô and Zen*), *Shintô*, *Nô*, etc. When they reach a certain high level based on a very intense situation connected to art of combat and deep practice, they used the word that expressed closely what they felt. The word they use come from the religion, the ethic they followed and believed. It can be Buddhism, *Zen* or *Mikkyô* or various school of Buddhism, *Shintô*, or from their knowledge about the chinese classical treatises on strategies, war, Confucianism, *Taoism*, *Fusui*, etc.

In the *Koryû*’s history the word *Fudôshin* is use by many masters and founders in order to express the highest state of mind and body in the practice and application of combat technique. This word was introduced by Zen monk Takuan (1573-1645) who influenced various masters and wrote the famous *Fudôchi shinmyôroku* also called the *Shinmyôroku*. Two of the most

important masters he deeply influenced were, Yagyû Munenori from the *Yagyû Shinkage-ryû* (call also the Edo-yagyû) and Onojiro Tadaaki from the *Ittô-ryû*.

But it seems that the relationship with Yagyû was deeper according the various letters, correspondence and chronicles. Yagyû Munenori in his writing, mainly the *Heihô kaden-sho*, mentioned Takuan, and use different kind of word all connected more or less with the idea of *Fudôshin*. There 4 copy of the *Heihô Kaden-sho*, Muneori wrote only 3 from his hand, and on those *Densho* he used the word *Fudôshin* as well as other words which are connecting to it.

(The fourth copy of the *Heihô kaden-sho* was done by a disciple of Munenori, one of the best one, named Nabeshima who came to visit Munenori when he was close to die. One disciple of Nabeshima who was familiar with the *Shinkage-ryû*'s technique and methodology was present and wrote what Munenori was saying, and when they finished, Nabeshima took the hand of Muneori to help him to write his signature or *Kaô*. This is the main version used by most the researchers, unfortunately.)

The word *Fudôshin* is not only connected to the application of the technique or too keep an immovable spirit during the fight. It express also a state of mind to have during hard times, turmoil in life, etc. For example a master can badmouthing one of his beloved disciples in order to see how deep he can Endure and cultivate the Patience to go beyond that heart pain without have any kind of anger. This is also part of *Fudôshin* and it represent the highest and deepest aspect of the *Fudôshin*, because in this situation what ever the problem or the psychological pain, you must be able to endure it for a long time. Its not something which will finished in few second like in combat. In this case, the culture of *Fudôshin*'s state is deeply connected with *Shugyô*.

The word *Fudôshin* includes many other aspects connected to the practice and application of the knowledge and science of *Koryû*. Words like *Heijô-shin*, *Bôshin*, *Mushin*, *Honshin* are also deeply connect with the level, state of mind of *Fudôshin*. In the practice of the *Koryû*, they are the highest reflection of the Flow which are concealed in different states of mind and body that *Sôke* or the high class *Shihan* should have.

Each words (*Heijô-shin*, *Bôshin*, *Mushin*, *Honshin*) express mainly the psychology and spiritual state of mind, and of course the body is the reflection of those states. For example, how to control the emotions, to remind calm and quiet, flexible and fluid, to know how to adapt and to keep a state of mind calm, state of mind clear and open, highest level of Endurance, Perseverance and culture of Patience, keep the same state of mind in the front of an offense or an award, not being touch by people's bad mouthing, etc.

Some believe that someone only need to practice in meditation, to pray, in order to reach that state of mind. In an other hand, some believe that they could have that state of mind just by practice *Koryû*'s technique. Well in both side there is a key word : « Practice ». Now what kind of practice, what to practice, and when in life ? After what kind of situation or accident? Etc.

Here again, the answer of those question depends of the disciple's journey, experience based of living the practice, relationship with the master and other people, etc.

MAM: Hatsumi sensei was a bonesetter (seikotsu in) and knows other kinds of traditional medicine; do you practice or have much knowledge of this kind of thing? Could you say something about the relationship between studying bujutsu and studying how to care of the body?

Hatsumi sensei is a bonesetter (He does not have his own clinic now since a few years), he also studied pharmacy and moxabution. I have seen his diploma from various university and also medical school. He received from Takamatsu sensei a lot knowledge and science on the human body, how to heal certain injuries, the art of *sakkatsu-jutsu* (art of killing and reanimating (healing)), etc. The art of *Sakkatsu-jutsu*, known as well as *Kassatsu-jizai*, is deeply connected with *Koryû*'s science and knowledge. Most of the *Koryû* have this art in their curriculum. After according the level of the *sôke* and also his job, if he is or was a medical doctor, therapist, etc. the knowledge of the body and the movement could be deeper.

In Japan there are a lot of master and *sôke* that were bonesetter or still practice it and help people. Lets mention Shimazu sensei from the *Yagyû shingan-ryû*, Kuroda Tetsuzan *sôke* of 5 *Koryû*, Higuchi sensei who is a medical doctor, *sôke* of the *Maniwa nen-ryû*, etc. In jûdô practice also there are a lot of people that studied bone setting . Lets mention also various therapies and discipline like *Seitai*, *Shiatsu* and other kind of chiropractics, physiotherapies that are studied and applied by various masters and instructors as well as *sôke*.

The practice of the techniquw of combat include always the aspect of *kyusho*, weak point, art of healing and massage. Some master, *sôke*, goes very deep in those field of studies and become very accurate and effective, but there is no solution to heal cancer here. Its more like taking care of the body and be able to see the injuries, bone pain, tendons and muscles wounded in ourself and after that in anyone and of course to find and apply the right treatment as well.

Battlefield's experience, combat, knowledge of wapons, deep and intense practice push the master, the disciple, to face a certain level of pain, injuries, wound, more or less dangerous. There is no doubt that the science of *Koryû* includes the aspect of regenerator movement, healing the body, massage, etc. It depends of the one who practice, the age, what he is aiming (goal and purpose), what is his job, etc. Most of the *Koryû*, especially the jûjutsu *Koryû*'s master were known, back in Edo period, to be able to heal, fix, bones and other problem.

The *Akiyama yoshin-ryû* is very famous for teaching the technic of *jûjutsu* as well as healing method, as well as all the *Yôshin-ryû* various currents, the *Tenshin-ryû*, the *Kitô-ryû*, etc. The *kenjutsu* and other *bujutsu*'s *Koryû* propose, at a certain level, the same knowledge. If you can kill, you can heal, help, that was the logical of the combat. In this way, the relation between both

are very deep and intimate. To my point of view there are like the right and left arm, they need each other for the balance. Its also the perfect balance in the *Koryû*. Some of them lost part of this science, other focus only on the healing and massage therapy and forget the base of this knowledge, the combat. Other keep both but can not express it clearly.

In my case, I have and still study the method call *Hichi buko goshinjutsu*, I received scrolls of that, and I practice it many times. First one me only, and after that I tried to help people who want or need it. I did many times and sofa no one died !!! Yet !!!! I'am not effective in that way !! But yes, I practice this method and help people who want or need it, not for money, because the scrolls says, « never help for money, but for the sake of the human », « do not trade or sell this art for money, its for help only». This is really important. Its not like being a medical doctor or a specialist who work in hospital or private office.

It is an ultimate test to see if the understanding of the movement, to read someone's body and movement, understand the pain and the weak point to press, the application of the techniquw, the skeleton and muscles's knowledge are right. Practice and studies everything that allow to become better, deeper, more accurate and effective and make the Master Proud, its for me essential.

MAM: How did Hatsumi sensei teach when he first started teaching the Japanese shihan?

Honestly, I don't really know because I was not in Japan in that time, and I don't think that I have the age for that kind of question, I was more focus with my brothers, toys and with my parents. But right now, I have met enough japanese *Shihan* and stayed very close with some of them, I met other people who were involve with Hatsumi sensei and knew him and the *shihan* very well. I talk with them, question them very politely and compare each other's souvenirs and the things they said in order to see how accurate are their souvenirs about that time. Of course I stay mainly around Hatsumi sensei, listen to him, watch him and I think this is enough to have a clear image of how it was.

I must mention Ishizuka sensei who, to my point of view, knows a lot about that time, the ambiance, how it was, the techniques, the kihon, etc. He used to write down all the things he learn, Hatsumi sensei's phrases and words, various meetings (with the late Nawa sensei, Fujita Seiko, Don Dreager, etc.) and what happended at that time. He let me see, read and study all his writing. I am talking about hundred of small booklet, and really I am deeply thankful to him, because I could see how the man was involved in the practice of the 9 *ryû-ha* of Hatsumi sensei. Its also possible to measure and appreciate the devotion and the dedication as well. This give me more respect about how the practice should be done.

He even wrote clearly everything about the encounter with Takamatsu sensei with many pictures of that time (with the 6 other *shihan* who were there). What is more interesting its that he even

wrote the date of each class, *menkyo shiki*, event, *henka*, *dôjô kaishiki*, important moments under Hatsumi sensei's guidance. Its great source to understand how it was and see the situation through the eyes of Ishizuka sensei who met Hatsumi sensei when he was 16-17years old. I dont know if other shihan did the same as Ishizuka sensei. I have asked *Oguri shihan*, *Seno shihan*, *Kobayashi shihan*, and it seems that they did not do it, and if they did it, they, according their own words probably lost most of their writing. And they told me that the one who had everything was Ishizuka sensei. Maybe Manaka Shihan and Tanemura Shihan did write, or not, I did not ask to them.

I never met Tanemura Shihan, I just saw pictures and tapes. I know a lot of people who knew him back in the days, like the *shihan* I mentioned above, and I think its enough right now. I have met Manaka Shihan twice, when he was member of the Bujinkan, but I was just a shodan, no one, in order to become close with him. So here also I did not ask. But for both of them, and with all the respect toward *shihan/sempai* and seniors, I have, the way they move, acted, their form, words, behavior, etc. gives enough examples and information to see or choose if someone wants to learn or be with them or not, and more important, if they are same as their first master, Hatsumi sensei.

So I think its pretty easy to have a good and clear image of how was the practice at that time. Even if I'am deeply thankfull and respectful to Ishizuka sensei for everything, the main and deeply accurate source remains Hatsumi sensei. No doubt on that in my heart. Because after all, at the end, after everything that happened between them, who still the *sôke* of the nine *ryû ha* ? Hatsumi sensei.

Who is the one who spend more time under Takamatsu sensei (15 years until Takamatsu sensei die) ? Hatsumi sensei.

Who is the one who have more information, scroll, Essai, Memoires, Takamatsu sensei'biographie, weapons, pictures, old films (there are many not only one), densho, etc. ? Hatsumi sensei.

Who is the one who always mention with a deep respect Takamatsu sensei even now at 80 years old ? Hatsumi sensei.

Who is the one who never broke the line, always respect Takamatsu sensei's transmission and still cultivate a deep respect toward him ? Hatsumi sensei.

Who is the one who never trade the 9 *Ryû-ha* he received for create his own *ryû-ha* organization, federation, buy various certification and add new *ryû-ha* to his *koryû*'s curriculum ? Again Hatsumi sensei.

Who is the one who can really pretend to know the true and deep meaning of being a disciple ? Hatsumi sensei.

Who is the one who always stick to Takamatsu sensei's transmission, always mention him, always live with him in his heart and soul, always practice and talk with him with a deep respect, who has more than 500 letters from Takamatsu sensei, who have tears when he read them, who always talk with deep and great respect about Takamatsu sensei ? Hatsumi sensei. (I might repeat myself, but I was witness of that many times, yes about the tears...)

And just for finish, who have the skills and the charisma that no one of his so call disciple have what ever how long they practice under him ? Again Hatsumi sensei. And there are many question again and again, the answer will be the same.

Back to the question, so how it was ? Well its simple and clear to my eyes. What and how was the practice between Hatsumi sensei and the first generation of shihan is pretty much the same thing and situation in many *Koryû's dôjô*. There are common point. First lets see the facts.

One very important fact, the crucial one, is to have in mind the difference between the age and the background of Hatsumi sensei with age the young japanese who started under him (background close to zero, may be a bit of jûdô practice, their age was between 16 to 18 years old, some among them will said that they learn from their father or grand father, what ever its fine, they knew nothing when they came in Hatsumi sensei's *dôjô* which was not really a *dôjô* but a room of his home changed into a *dôjô* when it was the day of practice).

Its important to mention that the gap is huge between them and I don't really think that student from various *Shihan* (whatever the *shihan* or organization), are really aware of how deep and huge the gape was and is between them (but like I said previous, student or disciple are the reflection of their master so in that case its not a problem, because if already the master do not recognize it, their is no reason the disciple recognize it as well).

Hatsumi sensei was high ranked in many *gendai budô*, many times champion of jûdô where he hold the 5 dan, he was deeply involved in the practice of the gendai budô and in close relation with many top practitioner and master of that that time. He also have great relationship with *Koryû* master such as the late Nawa Yumio sensei. (I had the great honour to met Nawa sensei twice before he died. I received also letters from him where he highly mention Hatsumi sensei and other things to take care of during research on *Koryû*. I keep those letters as treasoure and I show them only once). He received many *menkyo kaiden* from *Ueno Takashi shihan* (he never hide it and still keep everything, *densho*, *menkyo*, that he received from Ueno *Shihan*).

Finally he was already receiving a big part of the transmission from Takamatsu sensei, before the future Japanese shihan start to practice under him and they were not aware of the difference between *Koryû* and *gendai budô*. This is a very important fact. If you skip this, well...the conclusion is obvious : Hatsumi sensei was deeply aware of the meaning, the true nature, the state of mind and heart of what means to be a « disciple », and the difference between client, student, and disciple.

One other fact, is that Hatsumi sensei did not have time to teach many times in the week, according what I have heard and few source of that time, it was one time per week so this let enough to people to develop their own habit, way and form (they could meet more, but that was not the fixed frequency. Among them some had the chance to spend more time under Hatsumi sensei in private. But have the chance its not enough, being able to use it wisely its more important).

One of the main proof of this self developpement of their own form and way, are the old videos and pictures where anyone can see each *Shihan*'s kamae, forms and movements, as well as their attitude. A very good expert on behavior's science, can even say that most of their movement and form expresses a lot of interesting character information. Those information will for sure give intel about whom they will become in the future.

Because if you look carefully and deeply the way they were, its pretty much the same shape and form that they have now, just the age brings his influence (stiffness, back and shoulder, flexibility-less, less hair, etc.), but in the movement they did not really change. Its not a question of being worse or better, skills or not (this is not the what I look for here), just individual form they have over the years are the same.

The question is, how and why didn't those Japanese *shihan* (at that time) and don't (even now) they have the same form as Hatsumi sensei ? They were young, which means not yet fixed and formatted in their mind and body (even if they are Japanese ?), they could copy easy and clearly isn't it?

But instead of Copy the Master, they develop their own way and form, sometimes own view and even pretend, later, much later, that they knows better than Hatsumi sensei himself, the one they could not copy, never copy. Why ? Its very simple and natural process we can find in all the *Koryû*, group, school, organization, family, friendship, etc. In the lifetime of everybody, everyone thinks one day that he knows better than his father, teacher, old friend, that his time is over, etc. so why not them ?

When you know that they were around 4 to 7 young teenager, no yet a man (I'am talking about the one who start before Takamatsu sensei died in 1972, so this do not include the *shihan* who came after), in Hatsumi sensei's class, quite private class isn't it ? So they were present at the

moment where Hatsumi sensei received every week-end the transmission directly from Takamatsu sensei. They have seen the same technique from different *Koryû*, listen the same stories and history, ideology, some have seen different kind of weapons, scrolls, technical application, etc. But the result is clear not one has the same form, technique, control, flexibility, charisma as Hatsumi sensei.

No one has the same form and attitude as Hatsumi sensei. Especially nowadays...(According to Ishizuka sensei, they never saw the *densho* of Takamatsu sensei. Just some paintings, draws, calligraphys, may be some letters, but never the *densho*. They never had the chance to read them, to open them. They have only the chance to copy notes of notes of *densho*. In this case, I let you imagine the mistakes, confusion, misunderstanding of kanji, language structure, lack of history knowledge, meaning of the technique and technical words, etc. that can happen when a young man copy a writing that he can not understand.)

Lets add the fact that Hatsumi sensei changed the form for them because they could not make it, (this stretch back to « create a form from the Form ») and that he did not really teach, but show the technique. Why ? Well, the reason is simple : Whatever and how many times he explained it to them, they could not understand how to do it, because « the art choose the disciple », and it is part of the Transmission and Practice process's Immovable Rule.

Its also important to mention that Hatsumi sensei was involved in various TV shows, public demonstrations, lectures, action star teaching, etc. so for the demonstration he created forms, movement, technics, that satisfy the audience and fit the camera's angle. He was (and still is)very good at this because he did studies on that, same goes for Nawa sensei. So he taught them those kind of forms, kihons, basic, technic, for demonstration and they practice and make those form as the real Form. But the only one who knows what and how was the Form, was the *Sôke*, Hatsumi sensei. Moreover, they had the chance to attend to the class where Hatsumi sensei was doing in the front of them the techniques, they had the notes of the *densho*. For what reason i don't really know, it seems that their form could not allow them to have the essence that goes with. Because in art of *Koryû*, *ninjutsu*, whatever, the Essence and the Form are the same entity. Its impossible to have one without the other.

Lets mention the fact that Hatsumi sensei could not explain what he was trying to achieve deeply through his body and that requires time to master. This is a logical process of practice, you understand this after have practice, practice, copy, copy, re-copy and copy again the image and the form of the master, in this case Takamatsu sensei. So what someone thinks he learned and understood, at one moment of his life, will be different, even incorrect after a certain time of practice. In the art of ninjutsu, *Koryû*, in everything, the true knowledge is based on live practice experiences. In other words, you know only what you really and deeply practice, and this is always a matter of time, or should I say, a matter of Life.

Do you really think that Hatsumi sensei, who was deeply involved in the crucial process of being the successor of Takamatsu sensei, could teach and explain the same way Takamatsu sensei was doing toward him? Do you really think that they could understand what Hatsumi sensei was showing to them ? The difference between *Koryû*, the art of difference weapons, the *ninjutsu*, the master disciple relationship, etc. ? So do you really think that they could copy him ?

Another important aspect and fact is the emotions and the relationship between them. All the pictures we can find are also a proof. Hatsumi sensei as a human being, started to attach himself to those young teenagers, they were like his sons, a second family, a *Koryû* family, and this in a master's heart, has a special position, taste, its deep. So of course, even if they could not make it, could not copy him, or could not understand it, Hatsumi sensei just encourage them for every kind of effort they did, even if it was not on the right direction. He push them and let them grow in their own way and form, it was only positive for them.

From his relation with Takamatsu sensei and everything he learn from him and kept on practicing, Hatsumi sensei was aware of one thing : in *Koryû* the only rule, is « only one disciple, the next one ». Its history, its life. But He open his heart to them, he open for them a world, a dimension, that they never expected in their life. Hatsumi sensei was for them the God father, Yoda, Zorro, James bond, Spiderman and Batman (of course I should choose japanese hero for them, but i think that everyone will understand the meaning here) everything a teenager wishes to have, to meet one day.

Its obvious that they wanted to be like him and did everything for that, but one things they could not change, is their Ego, and the form, is the reflection of the ego... this is very important to never forget. Hatsumi sensei, who was the chosen one by Takamatsu sensei, knows deeply the sacrifice of the practice, the devotion and dedication to the practice and how deep the art and the practice is, its clear to understand that Hatsumi sensei knew deeply in his heart, no matter what was his sentiment or relationship with each of them, who was practicing correctly and who was doing his own things...

Because the master knows his student, he is the one who show, knows what he shows, how and why he show it. To whom, with which words, etc. But more important, like I mentioned before, Hatsumi sensei, as Takamatsu sensei's next and unique successor, knew the deep meaning of being the chosen one and also the meaning of being a disciple.

Its clear that a master, whatever the *Koryû*, the time and period of history, knows his art by heart and body, and it is obvious for him that he have the capacity to recognize himself in his disciple, he can see if the one in the front of him will be the one. And obviously, no one of them was that one, even if he push them to practice, to learn different langage as English, Chinese, read and study old japanese, study various things and always go deeper in the study, at university, etc. Did Hatsumi sensei fail ? I don't think so.

Because when we see the way he stands, how he moves, how he is, the knowledge he has and the fact that he is not attached to it, etc. its enough details, signs, images and examples to say that the man is still blessed by Takamatsu sensei and the various soke of the 9 *ryû-ha*. No one can reach this state without the right model, master, direction, blessing, duty, mission and right form and practice, because its always global, because this is the Flow, the *Ryû*.

If we look the other *shihan*, well with two who created their own style and organization. They did years after, when they reach the middle of 30ies (more or less) or 40 years old, at the moment of life where everyone struggle for various reasons, when you need to change, when you want to believe that what you do is better, more accurate, more true, more real, more traditional, more « everything » than what is doing the one they thought they could copy but never copy after all. Lets also add the important fact that deals with power, control, money and fame as well, because this is also important, there is always a question, more or less, of power, control, money, fame, etc.

What will be very interesting to see about those two Shihan, Mr Manaka and Mr Tanemura, its how their (hi)-story will keep on going on or end. Because the way they acted, practiced, teach as well how they acted toward the one they call master (and wanted deeply to be like), will be reflected at the end. Its really interesting as a scholar and historian to be witness of that, because there are already example in *Koryû*'s history and in the History in general. Never forget that in the word « history », there is the word « Story ». Everything start by a story, isnt it ?

What I can said at least is that those *Shihan* who created their own organization or company (its pretty much the same especially if you income depends on), had the courage to do it when the master was alive and not dead. They did their own way (it was already like that when they were young) with courage and faced one day, similar problem that Hatsumi sensei faced as well, but at a very different level. Hatsumi sensei is the successor choose by Takamatsu sensei, not them. They choose their way, their mind, and they have the people they deserved. If they are happy and their student too, its enough and good for everyone, isn't it ?

For the other *Shihan* its very different, maybe they did not have the ego enough strong, or just follow without asking any questions, like a social club where its cool and fun to go, or just by duty. Same for the different *Shihan* who will come to join the « club » after. Some are waiting for Hatsumi sensei to die (whatever he choose a successor or not) in order to create their own « club-kan-bank » by saying : « I was the one closest too Sensei ! », « He taught me everything ! », « I was always with him ! », « He said to me that I have the best technique ! », « My technique is same as Hatsumi senses technique », etc. And, they will find believer, student, people, who will « bite », « drink », believe, blindly anything that they will, or might say...The history always repeat itself. They will even change and modify the history in order to create their place, and make their position more high, more real, more close to the master...

When there is emotions, feelings involved in the art, in the relationship, rather than be based only on the practice itself and the sake of the art and the transmission, its always difficult to see, talk, practice in a objective way, in other words, in a effective and accurate way. Hatsumi sensei experienced this deeply in his heart. But all of us need to experience that aspect at a certain level and degree and that depends on our capacity, talent, position, character, stupidity, etc.

But what is funny, is where is the art, the Flow, the *Ryû*, here ? Well, for someone who respect and practice deeply, as well as study the history of every *Koryû* and respect them, he will understand that the Form, the Movement, the Technic, the Knowledge, the Capacity and the Talent are the only Proof chosen by a *Sôke*, what ever the *Koryû*. Its not a matter of how long someone stay around a master, because some have been *uke* for more than 20 years of Hatsumi sensei and do not move like him, no flexibility, its even worse each year, and Hatsumi is the opposite, each year is deeper, higher...

If you stay close someone like Mozart, Elvis, Steve Job, etc, during a certain number of time, years and you don't learn nothing like how to lead, how to create, how and what to see and recognize talent, etc. well its better to stop seeing great and wise people. Most of the time, people are like insect, they are attract by light, some of them are completely consumed and some used that light in order to back up their own desires and wishes for fame and celebrity, money, etc. The Art is very deep and not easy...

Finally, in order to finish my answer to you, because I could argue more and present many other facts. Everything I already present in this interview, all the words, *Kanji* and explanations, even if they are general, incomplete, unpleasant to read, they all present all the different aspects that the japanese *shihan* who started under Hatsumi sensei, experienced in their own way, flow, etc. Some of them did the way they wanted and were deeply convince dthat what they do is the right way, and what Hatsumi sensei told them, tell to them, practice, show, was wrong or not accurate anymore.

They developed their own way, *Shugyô*, *Keiko*, *Kôfû Tanren*, *Henka*, *Henkei*, *Koryû* and finally created their own form. We can find this in the history of different *Koryû*. I'am not here to jugde and i cannot tell if its correct or not, bad or good, etc. not at all. Everything in life is a matter of choice, definition of value and quality, taste, wish and character. The only thing I can say is the Time stays the best Test of Truth in order to see who was right and who was not.

They were all young and experienced something different, with different kind of pain, techniques, views, wishes, desires, etc. with a real *Sôke*, someone who deeply loved and sacrificed his life for a master, Takamatsu sensei. Someone who deeply experienced the love of the master, the love of the art. What you see when you are young do not have the same value, size, quality, than when you grow up. Every period, time have his difficulties, pain, goods, etc. I think that all of them had a wonderful chance and time, a unique chance to be close, witness of a master, a *sôke*, to see Takamatsu sensei, to be in, involved, inside the art, to see the process of

transmission and practice, etc. Did they really and deeply understand that ? (Even now ?)

How many of us now would love to be in their place at that time where everyone still think that was the best time, the real time? Me the first ! But this is stupid, because I must live with my time, my struggles and life. And I am sure that, may be, I will do like some of them, but this only God Knows and time will tell me. What is important is what we ll do with that knowledge, now and tomorrow. Not what we could do in the past.

They were too young to see and understand, and I'am not sure that even now they realize it, because its when you are close to die that you realize, when you get older that all the souvenirs come back. But if you forget and still keep a stiff mind, and still think that you are the « one », whitout being chosen, well, what can I say ? Good luck ? Vaya con Dios ? Here again, The Future will tell.

In conclusion, what can I affirm is that they did not have the same form at the beginning when it was easy and simple for them, so its logical that right now they do not have the same form and movement. Their form reflect the degree and depth of their practice, devotion, knowledge, etc.

I did not answer more specific, and honestly I don't think its really important, because if the message is not understood why going in the detail of the practice ? Because in the Koryû as well as in ninjutsu, between the master and the disciple, everything is about Form and Message. They go together. Like always, I prefered to give different kind of information about the context, the history, the relationship, and the one who reads this and practices will interpretate the way he wants, wish, desire. According his own filters.

MAM : And could tell us how was your lessons with Hatsumi sensei and Ishizuka sensei?

Interesting question. To tell you the truth I'm too young to explain with enough objectiveness and rightness the relation, if there is one with both of them. Because I need to practice more, studies more, go more, even more, deeper and higher, never stop, in order to honor what they allow me to watch, observe, see, witness, read, feel, experience, gave me, etc. Why talk about lesson, talk, etc. that I can not clearly apply, practice and understand ? If they are lesson, I keep it for me, its private. I don't have to talk about that, especially with someone like Hatsumi sensei which all his life, actions, movements, words, etc. are piece of Transmission to my eyes...I'am nothing in the Bujinkan, no high rank. The only thing I can really do is to practice deeper, study deeper, read, copy, re-copy what I think I have copy, and copy again !!! In order to honor them, and this takes time, there is no end in the fact to honor someone, like to honor the parents.

The souvenir of young man about his parents is different when he is old, I mean the way he talk about them, because like in everything there is cycle, a process to learn, to see, to live. Right now I have nothing to say, just to practice. Copy, copy and copy again. What and how to copy them and what they does, honor them, nothing more, nothing less. But if you really want to know if

there are any relationship or lessons with them, well the best is to go in Japan, in Noda, and to ask them politely and you will know. I'm not different than other lower rank in the Bujinkan.

In the Bujinkan, some have been in Japan before me, like Mark O'brien, Mark Lighthow, Andrew Young, for the more older, and they lived in Noda, they met Hatsumi sensei many times, went with him in many occasions, heard him, talk with him, saw him, have been ranked by him, etc. Other, foreigners, some who host Hatsumi sensei, came from different country, stay months, or weeks, or few days (some will even lie about the time they really stayed and the relation they have or believe they have), some come between 2 to 3 times per year, they had their time with sensei, restaurant, talks (with translator most of the time, and they still said « Hatsumi sensei told me », in which language ? I believe in the language from the heart, but...) , etc, everyone is treated according his knowledge, what he brings in the organization (all the high rank received the same rank and title), and everyone is treated with respect and the same way by Hatsumi sensei who always invite everyone in the restaurant and pay for everyone. (I wonder if all who claimed to be like Hatsumi sensei copy also this aspect of him, or if they let the student pay, because this never happen with Hatsumi sensei and Ishizuka sensei, I have heard also the same attitude with most of the japanese *shihan*). Anyway, what is important is what each of them do with this Gift.

But like always at end, in the Koryû's world, the form, the practice, the knowlege, the movement, the character, are the proof, the only proof of the degree of relation as well as the nature of the relation someone has with Hatsumi sensei or other any *shihan*. And I have to said that in the Bujinkan, the form and movement, as well as the knowledge of everyone, Foreigner or Japanese, High rank or low rank, speak and reflect everything.

MAM: Finally, we can see that a lot of people (from different organization especially in the Bujinkan)bad mouthing you. With all you have studies, research, various masters you met, the way you practice and move, etc., why don't you answer back to them?

Sincerly I have nothing to say about that. I think that what I have already said during this interview is enough, don't you think ? You don't seems happy ? Ok, i ll answer to you. What can i say...really nothing, i know that people are badmouthing me, but it's ok, i know some of them, some even shake my hand and say hello in front of me... its life. The only thing I can say is that I am aware of who is who, who does and say what, its very easy. But its really sad, because this do not help anyone to move better. Because if bad mouthing will help somebody to move better, well the Bujinkan, the Genbukan, the Jinenkan, and all other organisations, group, will have great warriors and high class fighter, but its not the case...

I think that people forget what *Koryû* practice, *Koryû*'s essence and ideology is about : Combat and survive. Fight and combat a strong and skillful master, fighter, crazy guy, etc and knock them down. After, if they can become your student this is a great things. If anyone have something to say to me, wants to open his mouth, well, he should come in the front of me, and

ask me directly, tell me directly what he wants or believes. This will be more in connections with Koryû's practice and even sports practice. This is one of the reason why I prefer hang out with MMA fighter, Muay Thai, Boxers, because with them its direct. I like directness and sharpness like a weapon.

If someone wants to argue with me on any subject, I'm open too. But at the university and please prepare your argumentation based on japanese, solid sources that you could read in japanese with a certain degree, otherwise stay at home plays with GI Joe's toy, its better. Because argument is for university and in *Koryû* the only argue is the combat.

Now if anyone wants to try me, or think what I do is not effective, well, here again, you are welcome to try me, I am open too !!! I don't practice in order to write behind a screen !! This is the reason i don't have any group, web site, etc. Iam OPEN to everyone who wants to see me. And I think that *Koryû*, whatever the practice, is about the encounter and to meet the reality. When you want to know someone, to be sure of who is who, who he is it, if what people say about someone or me is true, go to see them, go meet with him or me, and you make up your own mind. But most of the time, no one comes. And it's ok because life goes on, and while they talking behind me, I'am still practicing, studying...because i love the art, nothing more and I don't have time to spend on what is not connected with the practice of the art and too honor the masters I follow. The Flow does not wait...

MAM. Thank you very much for your time and generosity, do you have anything to said for finish ?

Its my pleasure !!! I think I have talk too much don't you think ? or you make me talk too much with your questions ! Anyway, i hope that my words did not offend anyone, because this was not my purpose. And if I hurt anyone, well be sure that it was not my purpose. Thank you