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## **The Self-Defence Scroll of Kyokushinkai Karate: Analysing the *Mokuroku* Ōyama Masutatsu Received from Daitō-ryū *Aikijūjutsu* Master Yoshida Kōtarō**

### **Abstract**

This paper aims to examine the self-defence techniques of the Kyokushinkai *karate* style, with a primary focus on one of its popular legends. According to the myth, the founder Ōyama Masutatsu had extensive training in the art of Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* (the ancestor art of modern *aikidō*) under a master called Yoshida Kōtarō and received the ‘license of full transmission’ (*menkyo kaiden*) scroll of the Daitō-ryū school.

The basis of this research is a high-resolution photocopy of the document (unfortunately due of copyright concerns, the picture of the scroll could not be featured in this paper; however a complete transcription and translation are included in the appendices). The paper dwells into the historical connections between the arts of Kyokushinkai, Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu*, and *aikidō* supported by circumstantial evidence and gives a brief technical comparison of the self-defence techniques of Kyokushinkai and the curricula of Daitō-ryū and *aikidō*. This is followed by a detailed analysis of the scroll itself, examining its structure and terminology and some techniques included in the scroll that are possibly featured in the Kyokushinkai curriculum, with special attention to stick and parasol techniques.

The research gives a full analysis of Kyokushinkai self-defence techniques, which can be found in the original and revised editions of *What is Karate?*, *This is Karate*, *Advanced Karate*, and *Mas Oyama's Essential Karate*, written by the founder of Ōyama Masutatsu himself, as well as *Kyokushin Karate Self-Defense Techniques* by high-ranking Kyokushinkai practitioner Bobby Lowe. The self-defence techniques found in the aforementioned texts show many similarities to the techniques published in various *jūdō*, *aikidō*, and *aikijūjutsu* books. Considering the historical facts (based on circumstantial evidence) that Ōyama Masutatsu trained in *jūdō* in the gym of Sone Kōzō, was a direct student of Daitō-ryū instructor Yoshida Kōtarō, and personally knew (allegedly even trained under) *aikidō* master Shioda Gōzō (founder of the Yōshinkan style of *aikidō*), it is highly likely that the parallels between the various self-defence techniques of Kyokushinkai *karate*, Kōdōkan *jūdō*, Yōshinkan *aikidō*, and Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* are not merely coincidence.

However, a thorough examination of the supposed Daitō-ryū scroll that Ōyama received from Yoshida Kōtarō revealed that the document itself is not a *menkyo kaiden* (license of full transmission) certificate. Furthermore, compared to the extant official scrolls of the Daitō-ryū tradition (*Hidden mokuroku*, *Hidden okugi no koto*), while the structure is similar, the scroll of Ōyama is cer-

tainly not a conventional transmission document of the Daitō-ryū school. The scroll that Yoshida granted to Ōyama is titled *Yoshida-shiki sutekki-parasoru goshinjutsu mokuroku* (Yoshida-style stick-parasol self-defence scroll), which (at the time of this research) appears to be a ‘one-of-a-kind’ transmission document on its own, officially signed by ‘The founder of Yoshida-style stick-parasol self-defence, Daitō-ryū *jūjutsu* representative instructor, Yoshida Kōtarō’. The techniques listed in the scroll are unique in their terminology, and since there is no further information about the execution of these techniques, there is only a limited, assumption-based possibility to compare these techniques to those of the Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* curriculum. For the same reason, it is also nearly impossible to certainly conclude whether the techniques from the scroll are featured as self-defence techniques in Ōyama’s *karate* books. Certain techniques found in the books could be matched with some technical names from the scroll; however, these connections cannot be stated with complete certainty.

The research concluded in this paper answers the questions of whether Ōyama Masutatsu received a ‘license of full transmission’ in the Daitō-ryū school and whether there is in fact a possible connection between the Kyokushinkai self-defence techniques and the Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* curriculum. While there are certainly Daitō-ryū techniques (among others) similar to those of the Kyokushinkai self-defence curriculum, and Ōyama without a doubt was a student of a Daitō-ryū representative instructor, he never received an official transmission license in the art of Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu*.

**Keywords:** Oyama Masutatsu, Yoshida Kotaro, Kyokushinkai, Daito-ryu, *karate*, *aikijujutsu*, *aikido*, *menkyo kaiden*, self-defence, scroll

## Introduction

Alongside the *karate* 空手 schools of Shōtōkan 松濤館, Gōjū-ryū 剛柔流, Shitō-ryū 糸東流, and Wadō-ryū 和道流—also known as ‘the major four schools’ (*daiyon ryūha* 大四流派)—the Kyokushinkai 極真会 is one of the most popular and influential style of Japanese *karate*. Founded by Ōyama Masutatsu 大山倍達—often referred by his title ‘president’ (*sōsai* 総裁) as the head of the organisation—the style is famous for its full-contact combat and self-defence-oriented approach. With such popularity, however, many myths and legends appear as well, some even hardly distinguishable from real facts.

This paper aims to once and for all clarify at least one of these myths, particularly about the self-defence curriculum of Kyokushinkai, which (at least according to the legend) is originated from the Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* 大東流合気柔術 school, the main basis of modern-day *aikidō* 合気道. While the founder Ōyama Masutatsu himself was well-versed in various combat forms (whether it be striking or grappling), and his published books are filled with photographs and explanations of various self-defence techniques similar to Japanese grappling arts, such as *jūdō* 柔道, *jūjutsu* 柔術, and *aikidō*, according to the popular legend, he received the license of full transmission (*menkyo kaiden* 免許皆伝) in Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* as well. The basis of this myth is a scroll that Ōyama

Masutatsu indeed received from a licensed Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* instructor, a certain Yoshida Kōtarō 吉田幸太郎. However, whether or not this scroll was a license of full transmission, making Ōyama a Daitō-ryū master is highly debatable, as if the claim that the self-defence curriculum of Kyokushinkai is influenced by Daitō-ryū techniques.

This paper accumulates years of research, starting with a simple black and white photograph about the alleged scroll. An in-depth analysis follows, not only of the said scroll itself but also of Kyokushinkai's primary sources (focusing on its self-defence techniques) and the Daitō-ryū curriculum. Moreover, circumstantial evidence is also examined in order to piece together the bigger picture about the self-defence techniques of Kyokushinkai and the Daitō-ryū scroll of Ōyama Masutatsu, deviating the facts from the fiction. As the author, I intend disprove some myths and answer some questions, to all who are interested about a lesser-known chapter in the history of modern *karate*.

### Acknowledgements

Usually, I tend to refrain from unnecessary acknowledgements. However, for this research I owe a debt of gratitude to the wonderful people who lent me their knowledge in fields of which I had less experience, or provided me with sources that I could have never accessed on my own. Despite being a common phrase, it is not an exaggeration here to say that this paper literally would not have been possible without the people I wish acknowledge below.

I want to express my gratitude for my colleagues at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), to Ms Angelika Pataki-Tóth and to Ms Krisztina Nguyen, who helped me with the proper romanisation of Korean words and the use of the Korean writing system, which was necessary when dealing with certain parts regarding the life of Ōyama Masutatsu. I am also indebted to Mr Janisz Horváth (calligraphy master and regular lecturer at the ELTE Confucius Institute), who lent me his life-long expertise to decipher certain parts of the scroll written in calligraphic style.

I cannot be thankful enough to Marc Trudel (Daitō-ryū practitioner, researcher, and author of the Daito-ryu blog), who provided me many useful sources (including the picture of the scroll, which is the backbone of this paper) and invaluable information during our conversations. I am particularly grateful for the fact that I could always rely on his knowledge and help, no matter how ridiculous my questions or requests were.

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I cannot thank enough *karate* master Hoosain Narker, who selflessly let me use the vast collection of his personal library full of Kyokushinkai-related books, granting me access to sources I could have never acquired on my own. Truly, without him, as well as without all the others cited above, the use of information and sources that I had, and the writing of this research paper, would have been impossible.

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### The founder of Kyokushinkai *karate*: Ōyama Masutatsu *sōsai*

#### Conflicting sources

As Ōyama Masutatsu is one of the most famous masters of *karate*, there is an abundance of reliable information available about his life and training history. Most of these sources come from anecdotes and biographies written by former students, as well as articles, interviews scattered around in different publications (e.g., *Black Belt Magazine*), and websites, which is both the reason and the result of the lack of proper research on the subject. Two significant biographies are available in English, written by two of Ōyama's *uchi deshi*:<sup>1</sup> Cameron Quinn and Howard Collins. Both Quinn's 1987,<sup>2</sup> and Collins' 1995 book,<sup>3</sup> contain a brief summary of Ōyama's life, with the mention of notable episodes in Kyokushinkai *karate* 極真会空手 history.

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<sup>1</sup> *Uchi deshi* 内弟子, which literally means 'inner student', is a general term used for 'live-in students', who were living in or near the training hall (*dōjō* 道場) and spent most of their time training and or maintaining the *dōjō* for either a short (from a few months to a year) or longer period. Usually, *uchi deshi* were the most intimate, closest students to the master and received the most intensive instruction.

<sup>2</sup> *The Budo Karate of Mas Oyama: Philosophical Foundations of Japan's Strongest Fighting Art* (Quinn 1987: 33–57).

<sup>3</sup> *The Absolute Karate* (Collins 1995: 31–49).

In Japanese, Yamaguchi Noboru 山口昇 published his book in 1995 titled *Ōyama Masutatsu to wa nani ka?* 大山倍達とは何か? (What is MAS OYAMA?) which is a compilation of various interviews conducted with Ōyama Masutatsu himself, as well as his students, relatives, and friends.<sup>4</sup> Also, a comprehensive biography was written in 2006 under the title *Ōyama Masutatsu seiden* 大山倍達正伝 (The True Story of Ōyama Masutatsu) by journalists Kojima Kazushi 小島一志 and Tsukamoto Yoshiko 塚本佳子. This work challenges many aspects of the so called ‘Ōyama Masutatsu legend’, which were presented as facts for most students—even if further investigations into the topic raises many questions about the veracity of these popular anecdotes.

While this paper might be the first attempt to give scientific research about certain aspects of the life of Ōyama Masutatsu and the history of Kyokushinkai, here only a cursory biography is referenced based on the biographies found in *The Budo Karate of Mas Oyama* and *The Absolute Karate*, supplemented with the contents of *Ōyama Masutatsu to wa nani ka?* and *Ōyama Masutatsu seiden*, using them primarily as reference points of the events related to the subject rather than as comprehensive research about the life of Ōyama Masutatsu.<sup>5</sup> As for online sources, the published biography found on the official website dedicated to Ōyama Masutatsu<sup>6</sup> was used, complemented with various independent articles and interviews, which provide circumstantial evidence.<sup>7</sup>

## Controversial early years

Ōyama Masutatsu was born on the 4 June 1921<sup>8</sup> as Ch’oe Yōngŭi 최영의 in Waryong-ri 와룡리 village,<sup>9</sup> close to the city of Gimje-si 김제시 in the south-

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<sup>4</sup> Yamaguchi 1995.

<sup>5</sup> See note: 7.

<sup>6</sup> See: IKO Kyokushinkaikan 2009: *History of Mas Oyama*.

<sup>7</sup> Due to limitations in space and content, this paper focuses solely on Ōyama Masutatsu’s training history, omitting other episodes from his life, such as his fights with bulls, isolated training periods in the mountains, and various encounters in street fights. Only those are mentioned that are directly connected to the subject of this research.

<sup>8</sup> There are several debates about Ōyama’s real date of birth. According to Tsukamoto Yoshiko, 27 July 1923 is recorded on his family certificate, which was made upon relocating to Japan. His original, Korean certificate indicates that he was born on 4 June 1922. However, Ōyama’s relatives in Korea confirmed that the Korean register is also wrong, because while the day and month are correct, the year of birth was in fact 1921 (Kojima –Tsukamoto 2006: 21–27).

<sup>9</sup> The name of the village Waryong-ri 와룡리 with Chinese characters (called *hanja* 한자 in Korean) is written as 臥龍里, which should be read as Garyū-ri in Japanese. Interestingly, the only form (*kata* 型) in Kyokushinkai *karate* known to be created by Ōyama Masutatsu himself, is called Garyū 臥龍.

ern part of Korea.<sup>10</sup> Actually, the early martial arts training of Ōyama is rather vague—it is even debatable when he received his *shodan* 初段 (first degree black belt) rank.

In 1938, Ch'oe Yōngŭi emigrated to Japan and entered the Yamanashi Youth Aviation Institute (Yamanashi kōkū gijutsu gakkō 山梨航空技術学校). He found accommodation in the outskirts of Tōkyō, with a family (also originated from Korea) that went by the Japanese name Ōyama 大山. Thus he later changed his name to Ōyama Masutatsu 大山倍達.<sup>11</sup> In the same year, Ōyama started to train in Shōtōkan *karate* 松濤館空手,<sup>12</sup> and at the age of 15, he reached *shodan*.<sup>13</sup> According to his autobiography, at the age of 18, Ōyama had already reached *nidan* 二段 (second degree black belt) in *karate*.<sup>14</sup> If his year of birth is 1923 as speculated (i.e., as it appears on his Japanese birth certificate), it is supposed to be around 1938 when he received *shodan*, and 1941 when he received *nidan*.<sup>15</sup> However, in the book *Ōyama Masutatsu to wa nani ka?* there is an interview with Ōyama and the famous Korean wrestler Rikidōzan 力道山, in which Ōyama states the following.

I started my karate training while I was enrolling to the Takudai (Takushoku University) in the 17th year of Shōwa (1942). [...] I was taught self-defence by Funakoshi Gikō sensei who is the son of the still living Funakoshi Gijin sensei. [...] Then either in 18th (1943) or the 19th (1944) year of Shōwa, I received my first *dan*.<sup>16</sup>

This is another example of the many controversies surrounding the history of Ōyama Masutatsu. Ōyama allegedly enrolled to Takushoku University 拓殖大学,<sup>17</sup> where he picked up boxing again (which he earlier trained in in Korea). He

<sup>10</sup> Collins 1995: 31; Quinn 1987: 33.

<sup>11</sup> Collins 1995: 33–34.

<sup>12</sup> This was supposedly a branch *dōjō* of the Shōtōkan style, not the famous school led by Funakoshi himself, since Ōyama only started to train with Funakoshi after he entered into Takushoku University a few years later.

<sup>13</sup> Oyama 1987: 9–10.

<sup>14</sup> Oyama 1987: 10.

<sup>15</sup> In Quinn's biography, Ōyama started to learn Shōtōkan *karate* at Takushoku University under Funakoshi Gichin in 1938, he received *nidan* at the age of 17, and he was already *yondan* 四段 (fourth degree black belt) by the age of 20 (Quinn 1987: 34).

<sup>16</sup> 昭和十七年に、拓大（拓殖大学）に入ってから、自分で唐手というものをやり始めたわけです。[...] それは、今生きてる船越義人先生の息子さんの義行先生から手ほどきを受けました。[...] そうして昭和十八年か九年に、私は初段をもらいました。（Yamaguchi 1995: 230.）

<sup>17</sup> Despite being 'common knowledge' among Kyokushinkai practitioners and being testified by famous Takushoku students and martial artists, including Kimura Masahiko and Shioda Gōzō

also started to train in Kōdōkan *jūdō* 講道館柔道 and befriended the legendary *jūdō* champion Kimura Masahiko 木村政彦.<sup>18</sup> Kimura Masahiko attended Takushoku University where he was classmates with Yōshinkan *aikidō* 養神館合気道 founder Shioda Gōzō 塩田剛三.<sup>19</sup> At Takushoku University, Ōyama continued his training in *karate* and joined the Shōtōkan *dōjō*, in Zōshigaya 雑司ヶ谷, Toshima ward 豊島区 of Tōkyō,<sup>20</sup> led by the legendary founder Funakoshi Gichin 船越義珍 and his third son Funakoshi Gigō 船越義豪, where Ōyama trained for two years.<sup>21</sup> Either during or after his two years of training at the Shōtōkan, around 1941–1942, Ōyama Masutatsu became affiliated with Korean master Sō Neichū 曹寧柱 (Cho Yōngchu 조영주 in Korean), who taught him Gōjū-ryū *karate* 剛柔流空手.<sup>22</sup>

### After the war

During and after the Second World War, the second half of the 1940s were turbulent years for Ōyama.<sup>23</sup> He continued his formal training in the beginning of the 1950s. Around this time, alongside training with Sō Neichū, Ōyama also started to learn from Sō's teacher, famous Gōjū-ryū master and founder of the Gōjūkai 剛柔会, Yamaguchi Gōgen 山口剛玄 in the Asakusa 浅草 district of Tōkyō, eventually reaching *rokudan* 六段 (sixth degree black belt) under Yamaguchi.<sup>24</sup> In 1951, Ōyama started training in Kōdōkan *jūdō* again at the *dōjō* of Sone

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(Li 2014b), in *Ōyama Masutatsu seiden*, Tsukamoto states that after extensive research, they were unable to find Ōyama Masutatsu's name (nor any of his possible aliases) in the student and alumni records of Takushoku University. This indicates that, while Ōyama may have trained at the various martial arts clubs and met with Kimura and Shioda at Takushoku University, he likely never was formally a student at the university (Kojima –Tsukamoto 2006: 115–116). Note that in Quinn's biography the author only states that Ōyama trained in Funakoshi Gichin's *dōjō* at Takushoku University, but he never mentioned that Ōyama enrolled at Takushoku as a student (Quinn 1987: 34).

<sup>18</sup> Collins 1995: 34.

<sup>19</sup> Li 2014b: *Aikido and Judo – Interview with Gozo Shioda and Masahiko Kimura*

<sup>20</sup> Likely, this was the famous *dōjō* Funakoshi Gichin, first opened in 1935, after which the Shōtōkan style was eventually named (Funakoshi 1975: 83–85.)

<sup>21</sup> Collins 1995: 34.

<sup>22</sup> There is a possibility that Kimura Masahiko introduced Ōyama, since Sō Neichū was Kimura's teacher in Gōjū-ryū (Collins 1995: 34–35).

<sup>23</sup> Including getting into constant street fights with the occupational forces, which ended in an arrest and six months of custody in jail, entering Waseda University to study in its Physical Education Department, killing an armed assailant in self-defence, and two isolated training periods in the mountains, first at Mt Minobu 身延山 and then at Mt Kiyosumi 清澄山 (Collins 1995: 36–41; Quinn 1987: 35–45; IKO Kyokushinkaikan 2009).

<sup>24</sup> Noble 2008: *An Interview with Goshi Yamaguchi*.

Kōzō 曾根幸蔵 in Tōkyō.<sup>25</sup> Supposedly, he trained under Sone for four years, eventually reaching *yondan* 四段 (fourth degree black belt) in Kōdōkan *jūdō*.<sup>26</sup> In 1952, Ōyama went on a teaching trip to the United States, Canada, and Mexico, and he only returned to Japan after 10 months. In 1954, he opened his own school, the Ōyama *dōjō* 大山道場, first outdoors in a park of the Mejiro 目白 district of Tōkyō, then in 1956 in the Ikeburuo 池袋 district. Around this time, Ōyama also toured East and Southeast Asia to learn martial arts, especially in Okinawa 沖縄 the birthplace of *karate*, Hong Kong, and Thailand.<sup>27</sup> In 1958, Ōyama published his first book under the title *What is Karate?* with collaboration of his friends, including Richard Kim,<sup>28</sup> who also appeared in some of the pictures in the book.<sup>29</sup>

In 1964, the new headquarters (*honbu dōjō* 本部道場) was opened in Ikebukuro, where the International Karate Federation (IKO) was also formed. This can be seen as the official birth of the Kyokushinkai *karate* style.<sup>30</sup> In 1965, Ōyama's second book (followed by many) was published under the title *This is Karate*, which showed a more advanced material of the Kyokushinkai syllabus.<sup>31</sup> Also, this is the book in which Yoshida Kōtarō was mentioned by Ōyama himself. From the 1960s, Ōyama Masutatsu focused on teaching both in Japan and abroad and wrote more books about Kyokushinkai *karate*. He was the leader of his school, never stopped training and teaching until his death on 26 April 1994.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> IKO Kyokushinkaikan 2009.

<sup>26</sup> Collins 1995: 41; Quinn 1987: 35.

<sup>27</sup> Collins 1995: 42–44; Quinn 1987: 46–51; IKO Kyokushinkaikan 2009

<sup>28</sup> Richard Kim, another famous (and also controversial) master of martial arts, was born in Hawaii in 1919, where he first started to learn boxing, *jūdō*, and *karate* in his youth. He moved to Japan in 1939, where he continued his study in martial arts. Between 1945 and 1952, he studied Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* under Yoshida Kōtarō. Around the same time, he also started to train with Yamaguchi Gōgen and Ōyama Masutatsu (it is likely that Richard Kim introduced Ōyama to Yoshida Kōtarō). In 1959, Richard Kim relocated to San Francisco and remained there until his death in 2001 (Collins 1995: 46; Gold 2011: *Aikido Journal Encyclopedia – Richard Kim*).

<sup>29</sup> See note: 141 (Oyama 1959: 74–75).

<sup>30</sup> Collins 1995: 46–47, Quinn 1987: 54.

<sup>31</sup> Collins 1995: 47–48.

<sup>32</sup> Collins 1995: 47–49.



## An outline on Daitō-ryū aikijūjutsu

### Short history

The art of Daitō-ryū aikijūjutsu 大東流合気柔術 is one of the most popular traditional jūjutsu 柔術 schools still practiced in Japan and worldwide, mainly because of its historical connection to the modern art of aikidō 合気道.

Takeda Sōkaku 武田惣角—who is likely the founder of the school—was born in Aizu 会津 domain in 1859.<sup>33</sup> His father, Takeda Sōkichi 武田惣吉, was a country samurai (*gōshi* 郷士) with a small plot of land to cultivate. Sōkichi founded a public school for children (*terakoya* 寺子屋) at the local temple,<sup>34</sup> and he also was a master in *bōjutsu* 棒術 (staff), *kenjutsu* 剣術 (swordsmanship), and *sumō* 相撲 wrestling.<sup>35</sup> Sōkaku's maternal grandfather was allegedly

<sup>33</sup> The lineage of the Daitō-ryū aikijūjutsu school traces back its own roots to the Heian-period 平安時代 (794–1185), appointing Shinra Saburō Minamoto no Yoshimitsu 新羅三郎源義光 (1045–1127) as the founder (Pranin 1996: 42). According to the official Daitō-ryū history, the descendants of Minamoto no Yoshimitsu, the Takeda-clan 武田氏 (which also includes famous warlord Takeda Shingen 武田信玄), eventually settled in Aizu domain 会津藩 (today's Fukushima prefecture 福島県) and transmitted the secret techniques of Daitō-ryū through generations (Pranin 1996: 10–20, 42–43). Apparently, the earliest documentation of Daitō-ryū started with famous martial artist Takeda Sōkaku (1859–1943). In the Daitō-ryū lineage, Takeda Sōkaku is officially called the 'reviver of the school' (*chūkō no so* 中興の祖) instead of the 'founder' (*ryūso* 流祖). However, since contemporary research has thus far failed to find evidence on the existence of Daitō-ryū prior to Takeda Sōkaku, it is logical to conclude that Takeda himself is most likely the actual founder of Daitō-ryū (Pranin 1996: 9–11, 22–23). Therefore, this paper refers to Takeda Sōkaku as the founder of Daitō-ryū.

<sup>34</sup> Sōkichi tried to give his son a formal education in the school. However, the young Sōkaku, due to constantly misbehaving, was expelled and never taught formally how to write—therefore Sōkaku was considered to be illiterate for most of his life (Pranin 1996: 12–13). According to Kondō Katsuyuki, however, Sōkaku could actually read and even write some characters himself (Pranin 1996: 154). In his book *Hidden In Plain Sight*, the author Ellis Amdur raises the theory that Takeda Sōkaku may have been left-handed (Amdur 2018: 218), which makes learning calligraphy difficult, as it traditionally must be done with the right hand. Amdur's theory is further supported by the accounts of Sagawa Yukiyoshi (direct student of Sōkaku), who stated that Sōkaku excelled in one-handed sword strikes, even being able to switch hands with ease (Kimura 2017: 47) between cuts. According to this, Takeda Sōkaku was either born or trained to be ambidextrous.

<sup>35</sup> Takeda Sōkichi held the rank *ōzeki* 大関, which was the highest rank in *sumō* at the time (today it is only second to the rank *yokozuna* 横綱). The young Sōkaku was a talented wrestler, and in his teenage years he would often participate in local tournaments. The influence of *sumō* on Daitō-ryū can be seen clearly, since certain Daitō-ryū techniques are identical to, or at least have strong resemblance to *sumō* techniques (cf. Kondo 2000: 89–93, 127–130, 213–223; Ishibashi 2015: 166, 196, 226, 234, 294, 307–308, 324–325; Kimura 2005: 31–32, 41–42; Newton-Toff 2000: 89–96).

a certain Kurokouchi Dengorō 黒河内伝五郎, a master of *kenjutsu*, *sōjutsu* 槍術 (spearsmanship), *jūjutsu*, and other martial arts.<sup>36</sup>

Takeda Sōkaku in his youth learnt spear techniques of the Takada-ha Hōzōin-ryū *sōjutsu* 高田派宝蔵院流槍術 school and *sumō* (likely also *jūjutsu*) from his father and grandfather. He also became the student of Ono-ha Ittō-ryū *kenjutsu* 小野派一刀流劍術 under Shibuya Tōma 渋谷東馬 in Aizu.<sup>37</sup> In his teens, he was sent to Tōkyō to learn Kashima Shinden Jikishinkage-ryū *kenjutsu* 鹿島神傳直心影流劍術 from Sakakibara Kenkichi 榊原健吉,<sup>38</sup> and later he also became the student of Momoi Shunzō 桃井春蔵, master of the Kyōshin Meichi-ryū *kenjutsu* 鏡新明知流劍術 school.<sup>39</sup> There is little information known about Takeda by the end of the century, but it is certain that Takeda taught Daitō-ryū publicly already in 1898. From that point, Takeda's teaching history is well documented in his enrolment books (*eimeiroku* 英名録), where he appears under the title of Daitō-ryū *jūjutsu honbuchō* 本部長 (director of the headquarters).<sup>40</sup> From 1910, Takeda mainly resided in Hokkaidō 北海道 for the next 20 years. The majority of his most influential students were taught here in the 1910s, including Sagawa Yuki-yoshi 佐川幸義, Horikawa Kōdō 堀川幸道, Matsuda Toshimi 松田敏美, and Yoshida Kōtarō. In 1915, Takeda Sōkaku held a seminar in the town of Engaru 遠軽 in Hokkaidō, where Yoshida Kōtarō brought Ueshiba Morihei 植芝盛平 to participate and introduced him to Takeda.<sup>41</sup> Ueshiba later became Takeda's most famous student, as the founder of *aikidō*.

Between 1921 and 1922, Takeda travelled to the Tōhoku and Kyōto areas 京都府, and he spent approximately half a year in Ayabe 綾部 at Ueshiba Morihei's residence, located at the headquarters of the Ōmoto-kyō 大本教 *shintō* 神道 sect. During this time, Takeda taught the Ōmoto-believers and also gave private instruction to Ueshiba. In 1922, before he left, Takeda granted an instructor license to Ueshiba, making him officially a representative instructor (*kyōju dairi* 教授代理) of Daitō-ryū. It is important to note that 1922 was also the starting point, when Takeda began to call his art *aikijūjutsu* 合気柔術 instead of *jūjutsu* 柔術.<sup>42</sup> From the beginning of the 1930s, Takeda made frequent visits to Ueshiba

<sup>36</sup> Pranin 1996: 12–13; Ishibashi 2015: 36–37.

<sup>37</sup> Pranin 1996: 14–15; Ishibashi 2015: 36.

<sup>38</sup> Pranin 1996: 15; Ishibashi 2015: 36.

<sup>39</sup> Pranin 1996: 17; Ishibashi 2015: 37.

<sup>40</sup> Note that at that time, Daitō-ryū was still simply called *jūjutsu*, not *aikijūjutsu* as it is known today. Also, despite named as the leader of the headquarters, Takeda Sōkaku himself never established one: he was constantly travelling around, conducting 10-day seminars, mainly in the Tōhoku 東北 area of Japan until 1910 (Pranin 1996: 23; Kimura 2017: 135).

<sup>41</sup> Pranin 1996: 24; Kondo 2000: 23–25.

<sup>42</sup> The term *aiki* 合気 itself evidently had already been used by Takeda for over a decade at that point: in the notes to Sagawa Yuki-yoshi's father Sagawa Nenokichi 佐川子之吉, Takeda gave

Morihei in Tōkyō.<sup>43</sup> Therefore many of Ueshiba's early students (Shioda Gōzō, Mochizuki Minoru 望月稔, Yonekawa Shigemi 米川成美, etc.) had personally met Takeda Sōkaku.<sup>44</sup>

In 1933, Ueshiba started to teach a group at the *Asahi Shinbun* 朝日新聞 newspaper headquarters in Ōsaka, led by former *sumō* wrestler Hisa Takuma 久琢磨, who was the director of General Affairs at the time. In 1936, Takeda appeared at the Asahi headquarters<sup>45</sup> and took over the teaching of the group from Ueshiba.<sup>46</sup> Takeda taught at the Asahi headquarters until 1939, when he gave the license of full transmission (*menkyo kaiden*) to Hisa Takuma—this was the only occasion when Takeda Sōkaku himself provided *menkyo kaiden* certification to anyone.<sup>47</sup> Takeda Sōkaku died in 1943, during one of his teaching trips in Aomori 青森.<sup>48</sup> His Daitō-ryū school lived on in the form of different branches founded by his students.

### Lineages and their legacy

There are many larger and smaller branches formulated based on the teachings of Takeda Sōkaku. Hereby, only a brief outline will be given about the most

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instructions such as 'apply *aiki*' (*aiki o kake* 合気をかけ) as early as 1913. The term 'apply *aiki*' also indicates that the term *aiki* 合気 itself was referred to as a concrete skill or technique by Takeda Sōkaku that one can 'apply', rather than any sort of mysterious, esoteric phenomena (Pranin 1996: 24–28, 81–82; Pranin 2010: 331; Kondo 2000: 24–25; Kimura 2017: 81–83; Kimura 1995: 59–60).

<sup>43</sup> Pranin 1996: 27; Kondo 2000: 27–28.

<sup>44</sup> See: Pranin 2010.

<sup>45</sup> There are conflicting sources on whether Takeda appeared on his own or was invited by the newspaper (Pranin 1996: 118). It is interesting to note that a reporter, Osaka Yoichi 尾坂興市 from the Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun, had travelled to Hokkaidō and conducted an interview with Takeda Sōkaku in his home a few years earlier. The article was published in 1930 under the title 'Ima Bokuden' 今卜伝, referring to famous swordsman Tsukahara Bokuden 塚原卜伝 (translated into English by Stanley Pranin, as 'Modern-day Bokuden'; Pranin 1996: 35–39). Therefore, the Asahi newspaper had been aware of the existence of Takeda Sōkaku long before they started to employ Takeda's student, Ueshiba Morihei, to teach martial arts.

<sup>46</sup> Upon hearing about the arrival of his teacher, Ueshiba suddenly left Ōsaka without meeting Takeda, and the relationship between the two ended permanently. Ueshiba then independently started to work on his own style, which eventually became the art of *aikidō*.

<sup>47</sup> There are many individuals who claim to hold *menkyo kaiden* in Daitō-ryū. However, most students of Takeda Sōkaku were given 'representative instructor' (*kyōju dairi* 教授代理) certificates, which were far from the full transmission of the system. Such a certificate did not qualify them to give away such titles. Therefore, any *menkyo kaiden* certificate that was not issued by Takeda Sōkaku or his successors should be considered with certain doubts (for further information see: Dobróka 2022).

<sup>48</sup> Pranin 1996: 27; Kondo 2000: 27–28.

prominent traditions, to put the current position of the Daitō-ryū transmission into proper context, upon which its relationship with Ōyama Masutatsu and Kyokushinkai history could be evaluated.

Takeda Tokimune 武田時宗 (1916–1993) was the third son of Takeda Sōkaku—more precisely, the first son from Sōkaku’s second wife—and started training with his father as a child in 1925, in order to be his designated successor. After Sōkaku’s death, he became the head (*sōke* 宗家) of the Takeda family and continued to develop Daitō-ryū as the head of the school as well. After the war, he moved to Abashiri 網走 in Hokkaidō and opened his own *dōjō*, the Daitōkan 大東館, in 1953.<sup>49</sup> Tokimune organised the basic techniques into a standardised set of 118 forms (*kata* 形) under the name of *Hiden mokuroku* 秘伝目録 (Scroll of secret transmission),<sup>50</sup> and created the curriculum’s nomenclature.<sup>51</sup> After the death Takeda Tokimune, his successor became Kondō Katsuyuki 近藤勝之, who received the *menkyo kaiden* certificate and the representative of the headmaster (*sōke dairi* 宗家代理) title from Tokimune.<sup>52</sup> Because of his inheritance and after the name of his *dōjō*, the line of Tokimune Takeda is also called the ‘mainline’ or the ‘Daitōkan-line’, which is also one of the biggest, most influential Daitō-ryū branches to this day.<sup>53</sup>

Hisa Takuma (1895–1980), after receiving *menkyo kaiden* in Daitō-ryū, kept teaching the art in the Kansai 関西 area, but in his last years he moved to Tōkyō. His students left in Ōsaka established the Takumakai 琢磨会 branch in 1975, to pass on the teachings of Hisa Takuma.<sup>54</sup> When Ueshiba Morihei (then later Takeda Sōkaku) taught at the Asahi headquarters, after the classes (when the teachers left), the students took pictures of the techniques that they had learnt as a memory aid. These pictures (along with technical notes) were organised into 11 volumes called the *Sōden* 総伝.<sup>55</sup> The *Sōden*, as a technical manual, was the basis of the curriculum taught at the Takumakai—parts of the *Sōden* were

<sup>49</sup> Kondo 2000: 27–31.

<sup>50</sup> Originally, in the *Hiden mokuroku* (Scroll of secret transmission), was the name of the first scroll given by Takeda Sōkaku. However, the original scroll did not contain names, only the number of articles and short descriptions of the techniques. Also, it is important to note that the *Hiden mokuroku* originally counted articles and not techniques themselves. Therefore, while the scroll is said to contain 118 articles, this does not mean the actual number of techniques. While Tokimune Takeda called his basic set *Hiden mokuroku* as well, its contents are different from the original, starting with the number of actual techniques and their names within the scroll (see the chapter: ‘What is a traditional Daitō-ryū scroll?’).

<sup>51</sup> Ishibashi 2015: 46.

<sup>52</sup> Pranin 1996: 31; Kondo 2000: 27–39.

<sup>53</sup> The current head of the ‘mainline’ is Kondō Katsuyuki’s younger brother, Kondō Masayuki 近藤昌之, who was appointed as the headmaster in 2020.

<sup>54</sup> Pranin 1996: 121.

<sup>55</sup> Pranin 1996: 108–110, 120.

published by Hisa Takuma in 1940 under the title *Kannagara no Budō* 惟神の武道 (The Heavenly Way of Martial Arts).<sup>56</sup> The Takumakai, however, stayed on good terms with Takeda Tokimune and recognised him as the headmaster of Daitō-ryū. Therefore, many of its students went to train under Tokimune at the Daitōkan—the Takumakai even adopted the *Hiden mokuroku* curriculum of the Daitōkan as the basics of their teaching.<sup>57</sup>

Sagawa Yuki Yoshi (1902–1998) was regarded as one of the most skilled students of Takeda Sōkaku.<sup>58</sup> Sagawa opened a small *dōjō* in Tōkyō and organised the Daitō-ryū curriculum into 10 different levels (*gen* 元) with about 200 techniques each.<sup>59</sup> After the death of Sagawa Yuki Yoshi, the successor of the Sagawa-line (Sagawa-ha 佐川派) became Kimura Tatsuo 木村達雄, a mathematics professor of Tsukuba University 筑波大学,<sup>60</sup> who published multiple books about the life and teachings of Sagawa.<sup>61</sup>

Kōdō Horikawa 幸道堀川 (1894–1980) founded his own organisation, the Kōdōkai 幸道会, in 1950. It was the first Daitō-ryū school that had set established branch schools abroad, mainly in the United States, Canada, and Europe. After the death of Horikawa Kōdō, his successor became Inoue Yūsuke 井上祐助. However, multiple branches were born as the students became independent. One of the most notable of these is the Roppōkai 六方会 organisation, founded by Okamoto Seigō 岡本正剛 (1925–2015), who was a direct student of Kōdō.<sup>62</sup> It is important to note that *nanadan* 七段 (seventh degree black belt) Kyokushinkai master Nishida Yukio 西田幸夫, a direct student of Ōyama Masutatsu, also learnt Daitō-ryū under Okamoto Seigō and became *godan* 五段 (fifth degree black belt) in the Roppōkai organisation.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> See: Hisa 1940.

<sup>57</sup> Pratin 1996: 31–32, 122–123.

<sup>58</sup> In fact, when Takeda Tokimune was called into military service during the Second World War, he left all of his belongings to Sagawa, in case he would not come back from the war. Later, in 1956, Takeda Munekiyo 武田宗清 (first son of Sōkaku) and Takeda Tokimune appointed Sagawa as the ‘head instructor’ (*sōhan* 宗範) of Daitō-ryū (Kondo 2000: 31; Kimura 2017: 40).

<sup>59</sup> Pratin 1996: 33; Kimura 2017: 141–142.

<sup>60</sup> Kondo 2000: 39–40.

<sup>61</sup> See: Kimura 1995; Kimura 2005; Kimura 2017.

<sup>62</sup> Pratin 1996: 32–33; Kondo 2000: 38–39.

<sup>63</sup> Nishida founded his own independent organisation called Kyokushin Karate Seibukai 極真空手清武会 in 1999, incorporating the elements of Kyokushinkai and Gōjū-ryū *karate*, Chinese martial arts, and Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* (Nishida 2019: 211).

## Technical influences

It is widely believed that Daitō-ryū (and by that extension *aikidō* as well) is a traditional *jūjutsu* style, whose movements are based on Japanese sword fighting (*kenjutsu* 剣術), and many techniques are actually derived from grappling with short swords (*kogusoku* 小具足) on the battlefield.<sup>64</sup> While to some extent this might be true, there are other disciplines that had a great influence on the techniques of Daitō-ryū. One of these is apparently *sumō*, since Takeda Sōkichi was a professional *sumō* wrestler, and his son Sōkaku also received *sumō* training.<sup>65</sup> Takeda Tokimune also claimed that the roots of Daitō-ryū lie in an ancient martial art called *tegoi* 手乞, which is the ancestor of *sumō*.<sup>66</sup>

It is not surprising that there are a lot of Daitō-ryū techniques that are similar to, or sometimes even identical to *sumō* moves. In the curriculum organised by Takeda Tokimune,<sup>67</sup> some of the terminology is based on *sumō* as well. Techniques like *kirikaeshi* 切返, *izori* 居反, *suso dori* 裾捕, *suso barai* 裾拂, *tsuki daoshi* 突倒, and *shumoku* 撞木 are identical (or at least similar) to *sumō* in both name and execution.<sup>68</sup> There are also many that may bear a different name but have a strong resemblance to *sumō* techniques, such as *hijigaeshi* 肘返 (Daitō-ryū) and *amiuchi* 網打 (*sumō*),<sup>69</sup> *iri chigai* 入違 (Daitō-ryū), and *tottari* (*sumō*).<sup>70</sup> The technique *ura otoshi* 裏落 is similar to the *soto musō* 外無双 technique of *sumō*,<sup>71</sup> and in the Sagawa-line of Daitō-ryū, this technique is in fact called as *soto musō*,<sup>72</sup> directly taken from *sumō*.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, *sumō* terms and techniques are quite common between the different Daitō-ryū lineages and an integral part of the technical legacy of the tradition.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Pranin 1996: 48–49, 52–53.

<sup>65</sup> See note: 35.

<sup>66</sup> Pranin 1996: 41–42.

<sup>67</sup> See notes: 50, 51.

<sup>68</sup> cf. Kondo 2000: 89–93, 213–223; Ishibashi 2015: 166, 181, 196–197, 226, 234, 242, 307, 324–325; Newton–Toff 2000: 89–94.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Kondo 2000: 127–130; Ishibashi 2015: 166; Newton–Toff 2000: 94–95.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Ishibashi 2015: 305; Newton–Toff 2000: 92–93).

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Kondo 2000: 77–81, 213–216; Ishibashi 2015: 180, 192–193, 308–309; Newton–Toff 2000: 94–95.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Kimura 2005: 31–32, 41–42; Newton–Toff 2000: 95.

<sup>73</sup> However, what Tokimune identifies as *shumoku* 撞木, Sagawa Yuki Yoshi refers to it as *katsugi waza* 担技 (Kimura 2017: 137). This further demonstrates the lack of unified terminology between the different Daitō-ryū lineages.

<sup>74</sup> The influence of *sumō* wrestling is not unique to the Daitō-ryū school and not uncommon in classic *jūjutsu* either. In ancient Japan, before the emergence of close-combat, which can be identified today as *jūjutsu* (Szabó 2015: 199–204), the samurai practiced *sumō* as the basis of their wrestling training (Shinohara 2004: 13). This is apparent in Kamakura period 鎌倉時代 (1185–1333) war-chronicles (*gunki monogatari* 軍記物語). In *The Tale of the Soga Brothers*

### The forgotten Daitō-ryū master: Yoshida Kōtarō

Yoshida Kōtarō 吉田幸太郎 (1886–1966) is a lesser known, albeit important individual in the history of contemporary *budō*. Information on him is scattered in various sources,<sup>75</sup> including the research of the late Stanley Pranin (1945–2017), the biography of Sagawa Yuki Yoshi compiled by Kimura Tatsuo in the book *Transparent Power (Tōmei no chikara 透明の力)*, and a three-part interview with former student of Yoshida, Hidemine Jibiki 地曳秀峰, published by Christopher Li on the *Aikidō Sangenkai* website.<sup>76</sup> Yoshida graduated from Waseda University 早稲田大学 and had a long career in journalism. At a time he was the editor of the Hokkaidō newspaper (*Hokkaidō shinbun* 北海道新聞). Apart from martial arts, he was famous for being a right-wing activist, as a member of such organisations as the Dark Ocean Society (Gen'yōsha 玄洋社) and the Black Dragon Society (Kokuryūkai 黒龍会).<sup>77</sup> He may also have attended an American university and was fluent in English.<sup>78</sup>

Yoshida started training in Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* in the early 1910s under the founder Takeda Sōkaku in Hokkaidō, and eventually he was awarded the *kyōju dairi* (representative instructor) title by Takeda,<sup>79</sup> which licenced him to officially teach Daitō-ryū.<sup>80</sup> As Takeda's student, Yoshida often accompanied him on his journeys to teach across Hokkaidō as an assistant among other famous practitioners, such as Sagawa Yuki Yoshi (founder of the Sagawa-ha Daitō-ryū line) or Matsuda Toshimi (instructor of Okuyama Ryūhō 奥山龍峰, who later

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(*Soga monogatari* 曾我物語), there are descriptions of *sumō* matches between the warrior nobility (Cogan 1987: 26–34, 336). Therefore, there are scholars who theorise that *sumō* might be the ancestor of most *jūjutsu* schools (Yamamoto 1994: 67; Yamamoto–Shinohara 2001: 19–20; Shinohara 2004: 13; Shinohara 2005: 36).

<sup>75</sup> There is an individual chapter about Yoshida Kōtarō in Christopher M. Clarke's book titled *Budo Meijin* (see: Clarke 2015), which primarily uses the same sources cited here. However, though Clarke did a fine job doing his research on three lesser known martial artists (Yoshida Kōtarō 吉田幸太郎, Konishi Yasuhiro 小西康裕, and Mochizuki Minoru 望月稔) in his book, on many occasions his sources are far from reliable (for example, using posts from internet forums as citations, without further backup or circumstantial evidence). Therefore, while it certainly has great value as a starting point for those interested, it should be only considered as an informative work, rather than a proper source based on scientific research.

<sup>76</sup> See: Pranin: 1991, Pranin: 1996; Kimura 2017; Li 2014a: *Hidemine Jibiki – Hakko-ryu, Daito-ryu Aiki-Budo, and 'The Road to Softness', Part 2*.

<sup>77</sup> Pranin 1991: 142.

<sup>78</sup> Pranin 1991: 142, Li 2014a.

<sup>79</sup> Note that the founder of *aikidō* Ueshiba Morihei was awarded the same certification by Takeda in 1922 (Pranin 1991: 69, 142).

<sup>80</sup> The *kyōju dairi* was the highest license in Daitō-ryū, until in 1939 when Hisa Takuma received *menkyo kaiden* (license of full transmission) from Takeda Sōkaku himself at the Asahi News headquarters in Ōsaka (Pranin 1991: 73, Pranin 1996: 70–71, 117, 158).

founded Hakkō-ryū *jūjutsu* 八光流柔術).<sup>81</sup> In his memoirs written in *Transparent Power*,<sup>82</sup> Sagawa Yukiyoši gives some further insight into Yoshida's relationship with Takeda Sōkaku:

Kotaro Yoshida took special care of Takeda Sensei, and did things like giving his child piggy back rides, so Sensei gave him special attention and advice. But Takeda Sensei's normal teaching style was difficult or impossible to understand. He would never offer advice or correct mistakes.<sup>83</sup> [...] Takeda Sensei never indicated to his students whether or not they were doing well. He might give you some pointers if you did him favors like Yoshida Kotaro, but otherwise, he kept quiet.<sup>84</sup>

Also, according to Sagawa, during Takeda's travels, Yoshida Kōtarō was truly successful in recruiting participants for the seminars, and therefore he was entrusted with the task.<sup>85</sup> Because of his abilities in networking, Yoshida is mainly known for the fact that he also introduced Ueshiba Morihei to Takeda Sōkaku in 1915 at the Hisada Inn of Engaru in Hokkaidō.<sup>86</sup> From that point, Ueshiba started to train diligently under Takeda and became an official Daitō-ryū instructor, until he founded the modern martial art *aikidō*. Since he introduced the two legendary martial artists to each other, it is fair to state that Yoshida Kōtarō had a crucial yet unrecognised role in the creation of *aikidō*.

However, this is not Yoshida Kōtarō's only important achievement in relation to Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu*. Yoshida reportedly had an instrumental role in the name of the tradition itself: according to a story told by Takeda Tokimune, up until the end of the Meiji era, Takeda Sōkaku (who was considered to be illiterate)<sup>87</sup> called his school 'Yamatō-ryū' and taught it in the Tōhoku-area under that name. In 1915, when Yoshida Kōtarō (the editor of a newspaper, thus an educated man himself) started to learn the art, he pointed out to Takeda that the

<sup>81</sup> In the book *Transparent Power*, Sagawa Yukiyoši recalls an entertaining story about how one time (in 1940 or 1941) Yoshida approached him, asking for help to 'teach a lesson' to a certain Okuyama Ryūhō, who was teaching Daitō-ryū under the name of Hakkō-ryū. Later, a fellow Daitō-ryū instructor Matsuda Toshimi showed up, clarifying that Okuyama was in fact his own student and not some kind of fraud as Yoshida had initially thought him to be (Kimura 2017: 54–57).

<sup>82</sup> Interestingly, in the biography of Sagawa Yukiyoši, when Yoshida Kōtarō is first mentioned, it is also stated that he 'taught Daito-ryu to the founder of Kyokushin Karate, Masutatsu Oyama' (Kimura 2017: 45).

<sup>83</sup> Kimura 2017: 125.

<sup>84</sup> Kimura 2017: 135.

<sup>85</sup> Kimura 2017: 57

<sup>86</sup> Kimura 2017: 45; Pranin 1991: 142.

<sup>87</sup> See note: 34.



Chinese characters of the school's name (大東流) should be read as 'Daitō-ryū' instead of 'Yamatō-ryū'—therefore Takeda Sōkaku thereafter started to refer to his school as 'Daitō-ryū'.<sup>88</sup>

In an interview conducted by Stanley Pranin, the founder of Takamura-ha Shindō Yōshin-ryū 高村派新道楊心流,<sup>89</sup> Takamura Yuki-yoshi 高村雪義 recalls the connection of his grandfather, Obata Shigeta 小幡茂太 (who had been *menkyo kaiden* in Shindō Yōshin-ryū and also learnt from Takeda Sōkaku),<sup>90</sup> with Yoshida Kōtarō. This can give further insight into Yoshida's education, teaching, and character:

My grandfather worked for a Tokyo newspaper as a reporter and traveled often. He had many friends in government and politics. He met Kotaro Yoshida while traveling. Yoshida Sensei and my grandfather discovered they had much in common so he introduced my grandfather to Takeda Sensei. I know my grandfather met Takeda Sensei several times but I am not sure when or where. [...] I know my grandfather was very impressed with Yoshida Sensei's technique and regarded him as a martial artist of phenomenal ability. Yoshida Sensei was instrumental in Morihei Ueshiba being introduced to Sokaku Takeda. He is also well known for instructing Mas Oyama, the founder of Kyokushinkai karate, and Richard Kim. My grandfather adopted several concepts and techniques from Yoshida Sensei and taught them in the dojo. We still do these forms as part of the Takamura school.

I know Yoshida Sensei and my grandfather still traveled together sometimes after 1930. Yoshida Sensei visited my father's house with my grandfather on several occasions when I was a small boy. I remember being scared of Yoshida Sensei. He dressed funny and occasionally played mean tricks on me.<sup>91</sup>

Besides introducing Ueshiba and Takeda to each other, Yoshida Kōtarō perhaps is mostly known for the fact that he taught Ōyama Masutatsu, the founder of

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<sup>88</sup> This statement should be treated with some suspicion, however, as it is more likely that this story was a later addition to the lore of Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* (Ishibashi 2015: 13).

<sup>89</sup> Shindō Yōshin-ryū 新道楊心流 (alternatively Shintō Yōshin-ryū 神道楊心流) is a 19th century *jūjutsu* school originated from the Tenjin Shin'yō-ryū 天神真楊流 and Yōshin Koryū 楊心古流 (also known as Totsuka-ha Yōshin-ryū 戸塚派楊心流) *jūjutsu* schools. The most famous master of the school is Ōtsuka Hironori 大塚博紀, who (after mastering *jūjutsu*) became a direct student of Shōtōkan founder Funakoshi Gichin. Ōtsuka later combined the teachings of Shindō Yōshin-ryū *jūjutsu* and Shōtōkan *karate*, thus creating his unique Japanese style of *karate* called Wadō-ryū 和道流 (Mol 2001: 214–215).

<sup>90</sup> Threadgill – Ohbata 2019: 106–107; Amdur 2018: 181–182.

<sup>91</sup> Pranin – Ruiz – Maynard 1999: 25–26.

the Kyokushinkai *karate* style. Apart from the legends,<sup>92</sup> there is a crucial testimony supporting the relationship between Yoshida and Ōyama given by Kondō Katsuyuki,<sup>93</sup> who also learnt under Yoshida around 1963.<sup>94</sup> In an interview conducted by Stanley Pranin, Kondō stated the following.

There were many names written in Yoshida Sensei's enrollment books. For example, the name of Masutatsu Oyama Sensei of Kyokushin karate appears. However, it is not certain whether Oyama Sensei actually studied with him, or just talked to him. Yoshida Sensei had been awarded another scroll that was not from the Daito-ryu school. Among his personal techniques were the *tessenjutsu* (iron-fan techniques). Daito-ryu also includes *tessenjutsu* in the *emonodori* techniques, but they are not separate techniques. I believe the fact that Yoshida Sensei had his own *tessenjutsu* scroll was proof that he conducted thorough research into the use of this weapon after having studied with Sokaku Sensei.<sup>95</sup>

Here, Kondō raises his doubts not only about whether Ōyama actually got instruction from Yoshida but also about the statement that Yoshida taught Daitō-ryū to him, by inserting that Yoshida possessed teaching materials independent from the school of Takeda Sōkaku. With the transmission scroll becoming available (perhaps later than the interview was conducted), it verifies Ōyama as a student of Yoshida, but it is indeed debatable whether or not this instruction consisted of Daitō-ryū techniques.

However, it can be certainly stated that Yoshida was the teacher of Ōyama Masutatsu at one point, since it is mentioned not only by fellow Daitō-ryū practitioners but also by Ōyama himself, in his book titled *This is Karate*, first published in 1965.<sup>96</sup> In the introduction of the 12th chapter titled 'Special Drills', Ōyama writes the following.

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<sup>92</sup> See the chapter: 'Fantastic Claims and Where to Disprove Them'.

<sup>93</sup> See the chapter: 'Lineages and their legacy'.

<sup>94</sup> Pranin 1996: 161–163.

<sup>95</sup> 吉田先生の英名録には相当な方のお名前が書かれていました。例えば空手の極真会館の大山倍達先生など..でも英名録に載っているからといって大山先生が習われたのか、大東流の噂を聞いて吉田先生とお話ただけなのか、定かではありません。それから大東流の巻物としては伝承されていない巻物も吉田先生はもっていました。その代表的なものに鉄扇術というのがあります。大東流には獲物取りの中で鉄扇術というのがありますが、鉄扇術という独立したものはないのです。鉄扇術としての巻物を持っているという事は、恐らく先生が惣角先生に習われて、また独自に相当に研究されて一つ分野を切開いていったのだと思います。(Pranin 1988: 9–10; Pranin 1996: 162.)

<sup>96</sup> Oyama 1973: 209–210.

At this point, I should like to say a few words about my teacher, Kotaro Yoshida, who mastered unbelievable techniques through special drills. Despite the fact that he is the finest teacher of martial arts in the Takeda school, and is, in addition, the greatest authority on those arts, all of his life has been sad. He was unrivalled in the fields of Japanese *aikido*, sword fighting, judo and knife throwing. On the other hand, he's completely eccentric. He always wears a kimono and carries an iron-rib fan. [...] Today, as he approaches ninety years of age, even though he has many followers and though many of his pupils are now the teachers of other schools, he continues to lead a pitiable life of exposure to the elements.

When Yoshida was young, he never lost a match for reverse-hand techniques, sword fighting or judo. [...] As an example of just how really excellent this man's technique is, I will cite his ability to catch a fly in flight with a pair of chopsticks.<sup>97</sup>

Here, Yoshida is described as the teacher of Ōyama and as a master of 'the Takeda school', which without a doubt is a reference to Daitō-ryū, founded by Takeda Sōkaku.

### **Kyokushinkai and the *aiki* arts: facts and fictions**

#### **Fantastic Claims and Where to Disprove Them**

Like many things, Ōyama Masutatsu's training and proficiency in Daitō-ryū are also intertwined with various claims, myths, half-baked truths, and misconceptions. In order to unfold the facts, it may be worthwhile to first explore and disprove the fiction. Throughout the various *karate* websites writing about the history of Kyokushinkai and achievements of Ōyama *sōsai*, the most common version (if it is mentioned at all) about his training in Daitō-ryū is usually cited as the following:

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<sup>97</sup> It may be interesting to note that Yoshida's feat of catching 'a fly in flight with a pair of chopsticks' was recreated in a scene in the famous 1984 Hollywood movie *The Karate Kid* (starring Noriyuki 'Pat' Morita as the character Mr Miyagi, based on the founder of the Gō-jū-ryū school, Miyagi Chōjun 宮城長順). Interestingly, in the movie, the protagonist Daniel LaRusso (played by Ralph Macchio) can be seen trying to learn *karate* on his own, using one of Ōyama's books *What is Karate?* or *Mastering Karate* (which is a reprinted edition of *What is Karate?*), as certain pages from the book (Oyama 1966: 58–59; Oyama 1981: 58–59) can be seen in one of the scenes. If the creators of the movie were familiar with the Kyokushinkai literature, it is possible that the 'fly catching' scene was directly inspired by Ōyama's testament in the book *This is Karate*.

Oyama also trained under Yoshida Kotaro, a famous Daito-ryu Aiki-jujutsu/ Yanagi-ryu Aiki-jujutsu master, from whom he received his *menkyo kaiden* – an older form of grade, a scroll signifying mastery. This scroll is still on display at the honbu (headquarters) dojo in Tokyo.<sup>98</sup>

This paragraph seems to be the foundation of most claims about Ōyama's connection with Daitō-ryū. Yoshida Kōtarō, however, was a representative instructor (*kyōju dairi*). Therefore he did not possess a *menkyo kaiden*, nor was he in the position give one to anyone.<sup>99</sup> While the scroll itself was indeed displayed at the Kyokushinkai *honbu dōjō*,<sup>100</sup> a closer examination of its contents quickly reveals that it is clearly not a *menkyo kaiden* certificate.<sup>101</sup>

A much more detailed (and correspondingly more controversial) history of Ōyama's Daitō-ryū training is written in the book of Edward 'Bobby' Lowe, titled *Kyokushin Karate Self-Defense Techniques*.<sup>102</sup> In his book Lowe states that:

Of special mention and who was of great consequence and influence to Sosai Oyama was Kotaro Yoshida of Daito-Ryu-Aiki-Jitsu. It is from this martial art discipline that a majority of Sosai Oyama's self-defense movements and techniques were derived and developed from. [...] From 1943 to 1945 Sosai Oyama served in the Imperial Japanese Military. Given that he was a yondan in both *Kodokan Judo* and *Shotokan Karate*, he was assigned to the Dai-Nippon-Butoku-Kai Kiho-kai section, for training of military service in Manchukuo (Manchuria, northwest China) at the Daito-Kan. [...] It was young Masutatsu Oyama who was assigned to Tokimune Takeda, the Soke and chief instructor of the Daito-Kan. [...] Mas Oyama's direct instructor was Kotaro Yoshida, a student of Sokaku Takeda, and an accomplished martial artist in his own right. In the Daito-kan 'eimeiroku' (registry of students), Takeda conferred 'kyoju dairi' (instructor certification) status on Yoshida to teach *daito-ryu*, and Yoshida was said to be Takeda's secretary for book-keeping and correspondence,

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<sup>98</sup> Siliguri Kyokushin Karate Academy 2013

<sup>99</sup> See note: 47.

<sup>100</sup> Budo videos website 2022

<sup>101</sup> Further see the chapter: 'Did Ōyama receive a Daitō-ryū transmission scroll?'

<sup>102</sup> Edward 'Bobby' Lowe (1929–2011), a Hawaiian-born martial artist, started his Kyokushinkai in 1952 when Ōyama Masutatsu gave a public demonstration in Hawaii, and eventually he became the first foreign *uchi deshi* (see note: 1) of the Kyokushinkai *honbu* in Tōkyō. Later, in 1957, in Hawaii he opened the first branch *dōjō* outside of Japan. Throughout his life, Bobby Lowe gave annual seminars focused on the self-defence techniques of Kyokushinkai. In 1994, he produced a training video titled *Kyokushin Karate Self-Defense Techniques* and published a book in 1999 under the same title (see: Lowe 1999).

as Takeda was proud of the fact that he was illiterate. [...] Sensei Yoshida was in his 70's when Sosai Oyama was his student. At the time Yoshida was famous for his abilities, a martial artist of formidable prowess, and was known as an eccentric ascetic. [...] It is a fact that Masutatsu Oyama and Kotaro Yoshida were associated during the years of 1943 thorough 1945, yet there is speculation that they also had a post-war relationship. After WWII, Yoshida moved to Tokyo and opened a daito-ryu dojo in Toshima-ku, near to where the present IKO Honbu stands today. It is considered that Sosai Oyama trained there immediately after the war for a period of time, as his name is found in Sensei Yoshida's student registry of the time.<sup>103</sup>

There are many inaccuracies and much controversial information packed into the text. First of all, while Ōyama possibly served in the Japanese Imperial Army, the research of this paper failed to find any further evidence for the existence of the so-called 'Kiho-kai' organisation that was claimed to be a 'division of Korean nationals being trained in espionage, hand-to-hand warfare, and guerilla tactics for wartime use',<sup>104</sup> especially within the Dai Nippon Butokukai 大日本武徳會 organisation.

The other main controversy is the connection portrayed between Ōyama and Takeda Tokimune. While Bobby Lowe states that Ōyama was learning under Tokimune at the Daitōkan in Manchuria, the Daitōkan *dōjō* was established by Tokimune not in Manchuria but in Abashiri, Hokkaidō, after the war in 1953. Therefore, it is impossible for Ōyama to have been a student of Daitōkan during the war.<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, while it is certain that Ōyama at some point was affiliated with Yoshida Kōtarō, apart from Lowe's claim, there is no confirmed connection between Ōyama and Takeda Tokimune at all. While Ōyama refers to Yoshida as his master in his book *This is Karate*, there is no mention of Tokimune. It is only logical that if Ōyama indeed was the student of the headmaster of 'martial arts in the Takeda school', Takeda Tokimune himself, he would not have forgotten to mention that, especially if it had occurred before his studies with 'the finest teacher' Yoshida Kōtarō.<sup>106</sup> Circumstantial evidence also fails to support that, especially since Kondō Katsuyuki, a direct student of both Yoshida Kōtarō and Takeda Tokimune, certainly would have known about this—yet he never mentioned anything close (despite confirming Ōyama's connection with Yoshida).<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Lowe 1999: 4–6.

<sup>104</sup> Lowe 1999: 5.

<sup>105</sup> See the chapter: 'Lineages and their legacy'.

<sup>106</sup> Oyama 1973: 209.

<sup>107</sup> See the chapter: 'The forgotten Daitō-ryū master: Yoshida Kōtarō'.

Finally, Lowe states major contradictions within the same few pages on Yoshida. First, he states as a ‘fact that Ōyama and Yoshida were associated during the years of 1943 thorough 1945’.<sup>108</sup> However just a page earlier Lowe claims that Ōyama from 1943 to 1945 was assigned under Takeda Tokimune.<sup>109</sup> Also, while Lowe treats Yoshida’s association with Ōyama between 1943 and 1945 as ‘a fact’, he considers it as mere ‘speculation that they also had a post-war relationship’. Then, the next paragraph admits that Ōyama was affiliated with Yoshida after the war ‘as his name is found in Sensei Yoshida’s student registry of the time’.<sup>110</sup> This latter information is in fact backed up with the statement of Kondō Katsuyuki.<sup>111</sup> Nevertheless, there is no evidence of the connection between Ōyama and Tokimune, nor Yoshida during the war—and in the absence of circumstantial evidence, most likely it never occurred.

### Are there Daitō-ryū techniques in Kyokushinkai?

Taking a deeper insight into the self-defence techniques published in the books of Ōyama,<sup>112</sup> there are numerous techniques which are similar (if not identical) to the techniques of Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu*.<sup>113</sup> Basic techniques such as *ippon dori* 一本捕 and *gyaku udedori* 逆腕捕<sup>114</sup>; *shuto zume* 手刀詰 and *kote zume* 小手詰<sup>115</sup>; *waki zume* 脇詰; *maki zume* 巻詰; and *tsuri otoshi* 釣落<sup>116</sup> are all present,<sup>117</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Lowe 1999: 6.

<sup>109</sup> Lowe 1999: 5.

<sup>110</sup> Lowe 1999: 6.

<sup>111</sup> Pranin 1996: 162.

<sup>112</sup> See: Oyama 1959, 1966, 1973, 1977, 1978. It is important to note, however, that that some of the techniques listed below do not exclusively belong to the self-defence chapters of the books: many of them can be found in the chapters on ‘one-step practice fighting’, known as *ippon kumite* 一本組手 (see: Oyama 1973: 168–179; Oyama 1978: 146–147); ‘free-style practice fighting’, known as *jiyū kumite* 自由組手 (see: Oyama 1977: 47–133); and applications of *karate*-forms known as *kata bunkai* 型分解 (see: Oyama 1977: 146–190).

<sup>113</sup> In this paper, the techniques use the terminology of the 118 *Hiden mokuroku* curriculum of Takeda Tokimune (see notes: 50, 51). For the detailed curriculum see: Kondo 2000; Ishibashi 2015.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Oyama 1966: 154–155, 160; Oyama 1973: 168; Oyama 1977: 47, 57, 107, 110, 128; Oyama 1978: 173; Kondo 2000: 47–51, 59–64; Ishibashi 2015: 184–185, 188–189.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Oyama 1966: 154–155, 156; Oyama 1973: 176–177, 258; Oyama 1978: 176–177; Ishibashi 2015: 214, 218, 236.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Oyama 1966: 150–151; Oyama 1973: 262–263, 295; Oyama 1977: 116–117, 129; Ishibashi 2015: 274–275, 277–278.

<sup>117</sup> These techniques are also known in *aikidō* as *ikkyō* (or *ikkajō*), *nikyō* (or *nikkajō*), and *sankyō* (or *sankajō*); see note: 155.

as well as *kote gaeshi* 小手返 and *kobushi gaeshi* 拳返<sup>118</sup>; *ippon katsugi* 一本担<sup>119</sup>; *gyaku gote* 逆小手<sup>120</sup>; and *hiji gaeshi* 肘返.<sup>121</sup> There are also techniques in Ōyama's books that may be slightly altered in form but in principle are also recognisable in the Daitō-ryū curriculum as *suso dori* 裾捕,<sup>122</sup> *tsuki daoshi* 突倒,<sup>123</sup> *ura otoshi* 裏落,<sup>124</sup> *kubiwa* 首輪,<sup>125</sup> or *kubi nage* 首投.<sup>126</sup> Some techniques in the books, while they could be recognised as Daitō-ryū techniques, can be also found in the curriculum in Kōdōkan *jūdō*, such as *izori* 居反,<sup>127</sup> *kata guruma* 肩車,<sup>128</sup> *koshi guruma* 腰車,<sup>129</sup> *kuruma daoshi* 車倒,<sup>130</sup> and *seoi nage* 背負投,<sup>131</sup> as well as joint-locking techniques such as *waki gatame* 脇固,<sup>132</sup> *ude gatame* 腕固,<sup>133</sup> and *ude garami* 腕絡,<sup>134</sup> which cannot be explicitly stated if Ōyama learnt it during his Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* or Kōdōkan *jūdō* studies. It should be noted, however, that many techniques in Ōyama's books are likely Kōdōkan *jūdō* tech-

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Oyama 1966: 148–149; Oyama 1973: 176, 299; Oyama 1977: 108, 132–133; Oyama 1978: 183; Kondo 2000: 95–102; Ishibashi 2015: 198–199, 220, 237, 256.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. Oyama 1966: 142–143, 146–147, 162; Oyama 1973: 262; Oyama 1978: 181, 185; Ishibashi 2015: 285.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Oyama 1973: 264; Oyama 1978: 167, 182; Ishibashi 2015: 223, 246.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Oyama 1973: 299; Kondo 2000: 127–130; Ishibashi 2015: 166.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Oyama 1973: 179; Oyama 1977: 81, 83, 113; Oyama 1978: 147; Ishibashi 2015: 226.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Oyama 1973: 258; Ishibashi 2015: 242–243.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. Oyama 1966: 161; Oyama 1978: 188; Kondo 2000: 77–81, 213–216; Ishibashi 2015: 180, 192–193, 308.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Oyama 1959: 100–101, Oyama 1966: 148–149; Ishibashi 2015: 282.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Oyama 1977: 189–190; Ishibashi 2015: 247.

<sup>127</sup> While *izori* is a Daitō-ryū technique originated from *sumō* (see the chapter: ‘Technical influences’), in his book *Kodokan Judo: Throwing techniques*, the author Daigo Toshirō 醍醐敏郎 presents *izori* as a variation of the *kata guruma* throw (cf. Oyama 1977: 124–125; Kondo 2000: 219–222; Ishibashi 2015: 181, 307; Daigo 2005: 35–36).

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Oyama 1959: 77, Oyama 1977: 146–147; Ishibashi 2015: 238; Daigo 2005: 32–37.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. Oyama 1977: 120; Kondo 2000: 65–69; Ishibashi 2015: 190; Daigo 2005: 111–114.

<sup>130</sup> Identified as *ō-soto gari* 大外刈 or *ō-soto otoshi* 大外落 in Kōdōkan *jūdō* (cf. Oyama 1973: 177; Oyama 1977: 106–107; Kondo 2000: 53–57; Ishibashi 2015: 186–187; Daigo 2005: 163–171).

<sup>131</sup> Also identified as *kata otoshi* 肩落 in Daitō-ryū and *ippon seoi nage* 一本背負投 or *seoi otoshi* 背負落 in Kōdōkan *jūdō* (cf. Oyama 1959: 108; Oyama 1966: 163; Oyama 1977: 74–75, 127, 180–181; Oyama 1978: 187; Kondo 2000: 201–205; Ishibashi 2015: 212, 235; Daigo 2005: 12–26).

<sup>132</sup> Identified as *waki kujiki* 脇挫 in Daitō-ryū (cf. Oyama 1966: 142–143; Oyama 1978: 187–188; Ishibashi 2015: 272; Kano 2013: 127, 174, 179, 183, 188–189, 199).

<sup>133</sup> Identified as *hiji kujiki* 肘挫 or *kakae kujiki* 抱挫 in Daitō-ryū (cf. Oyama 1966: 144; Oyama 1977: 60–61, 111, 118, 127, 132–133; Ishibashi 2015: 226–227, 258, 269; Kano 2013: 129, 170, 195).

<sup>134</sup> Identified as *uchi ude gaeshi* 内腕返 and *kiritha* 切羽 in Daitō-ryū (cf. Oyama 1973: 169, 296; Oyama 1977: 109; Oyama 1978: 146; Ishibashi 2015: 262–265, 283, 293; Kano 2013: 125, 169).

niques, recognised as *kuchiki taoshi* 朽木倒,<sup>135</sup> *teguruma* 手車,<sup>136</sup> and *morote gari* 双手刈.<sup>137</sup> Not surprisingly, Ōyama amalgamated every combat technique he had ever learnt into his ‘ultimate’ fighting form, Kyokushinkai *karate*.

### When could Ōyama learn Daitō-ryū?

Since most biographies written about the *sōsai* completely omit his studies in Daitō-ryū under Yoshida, it is only possible to approximately guess the period (given on circumstantial evidence) when such training could have happened. While Lowe suggests a relationship during the Second World War, only a post-war relationship can be surely verified. Interestingly, Lowe himself (although unintentionally) supports the latter: Lowe states that ‘Yoshida was in his 70’s when *sōsai* Ōyama was his student’.<sup>138</sup> Given that Yoshida Kōtarō was born in 1886, he was in his 70s between the years 1956 and 1965, which is actually the most likely period when Ōyama might have learnt from him.<sup>139</sup>

Ōyama himself mentions his training under Yoshida in his second book, *This is Karate*, which was first published in 1965.<sup>140</sup> The name of Yoshida Kōtarō cannot be found prior, not even in the revised edition of his first book *What is Karate?* published in 1966.<sup>141</sup> Kondō Katsuyuki claims that he had seen the name of Ōyama Masutatsu in Yoshida’s enrolment book while studying under him in 1963. Furthermore, another interview with Kondō Katsuyuki, conducted by Kent Moyer for *Black Belt Magazine* further clarifies the exact dates and ages concerning Yoshida, Kondō, and Ōyama:

Yoshida lived in Namekawa in Hitachi city in Ibaraki prefecture. A trip to Yoshida’s dojo was two and a half hours to three hours by train. Yoshida lived there with his wife. He was 82. I was 18. [...] When I signed the new-student

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Oyama 1977: 65; Daigo 2005: 59–64.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. Oyama 1973: 174; Oyama 1977: 68–39, 112, 130–131; Mifune 1958: 220–221.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Oyama 1959: 78–79, Oyama 1977: 74, 130–131; Oyama 1978: 170; Daigo 2005: 55–59.

<sup>138</sup> Lowe 1999: 6.

<sup>139</sup> Interestingly, in his book *This is Karate*, Ōyama claims that Yoshida ‘approaches ninety years of age’ (Oyama 1973: 209). However, this must be a mistake: Yoshida was born in 1886 and passed away in 1966. Therefore, he did not live into his 90s. In fact, he was approaching his 80s when Ōyama published his writing about him.

<sup>140</sup> See the chapter: ‘The forgotten Daitō-ryū master: Yoshida Kōtarō’ (Oyama 1973: 209–210).

<sup>141</sup> In the first edition of *What is karate?*, there are pictures showing Ōyama Masutatsu training together with Richard Kim (Oyama 1959: 74–75). Interestingly, the revised edition of *What is Karate?* (which reshot all the pictures, as well as included new techniques and removed some, only to be later re-introduced in the book *Mas Oyama’s Essential karate*) omitted all pictures featuring Richard Kim.



ledger, the name above me was karate master Mas Oyama. I never met Oyama or knew how long he trained under Yoshida. Oyama signed his name about five or six years before I did. I trained under Yoshida for three years.<sup>142</sup>

The probability is high that Richard Kim introduced Ōyama to Yoshida, as Kim himself allegedly was a long-time student of the latter.<sup>143</sup> Kim contributed to the first version of *What is Karate?*, published in 1958,<sup>144</sup> and also appeared in some of the pictures showing grappling techniques, assisting Ōyama.<sup>145</sup> Since *What is Karate?* already contained self-defence techniques,<sup>146</sup> it is not impossible that Ōyama may have learnt the basic techniques from Richard Kim in the 1950s, and later, as he gained some proficiency in the art, Kim introduced him to his own master, Yoshida Kōtarō, for more advanced training, around 1958.<sup>147</sup>

Finally, more information could be extracted by looking at the scroll Ōyama received from Yoshida. Albeit the hand-written calligraphy makes it hard to read the exact date, it is likely that the date itself is the 37<sup>th</sup> year of Shōwa 昭和第三十七年,<sup>148</sup> which is equal to 1962. The period Shōwa 昭和 (1926–1989) and the year 7 七年 are clearly seen on the scroll; there could be speculation about the decade, however, depending on which character stands before 七 on the scroll. While it would be not impossible that the scroll dates the 27<sup>th</sup> year of Shōwa 昭和二十七年, which is 1952, during this time Ōyama had been on a teaching tour abroad (especially in the United States) starting from April<sup>149</sup> for 10 months,<sup>150</sup>

<sup>142</sup> Moyer 2006: 85.

<sup>143</sup> Gold 2011.

<sup>144</sup> Collins 1995: 46.

<sup>145</sup> Oyama 1959: 74–75.

<sup>146</sup> Although it should be noted that some of these techniques show (both in execution and terminology) the influence of Funakoshi Gichin's (Ōyama's former teacher) legendary book *Karate-dō kyōhan* 空手道教範 (The Master Text), some techniques, such as *udewa* 腕環, *yaridama* 槍玉, and *kubiwa* 首輪 might have directly been taken from Funakoshi's book (cf. Oyama 1959: 78–79, 100–101, 109; Funakoshi 1935: 224, 227–229, 254).

<sup>147</sup> It is important to note, however, that according to Kondō Katsuyuki, when he trained under Yoshida Kōtarō in 1963, Yoshida was already paralysed on his left side and could mostly only give oral instruction. Therefore, Kondō brought a fellow student to train with him under the guidance of Yoshida (Pranin 1996: 161). While it is unclear when Yoshida became paralysed, it is possible that Ōyama faced the same problem during his training. If that is the case, then it is reasonable to think that he probably practiced together with Richard Kim (who may have already introduced him to the basic techniques), based on the oral instructions received from Yoshida—this is just mere speculation though.

<sup>148</sup> Note that the irregular character 卅 is a classical variation of 三十 indicating the number 30.

<sup>149</sup> On the scroll, the 'fifth month' 五月 is written, which was May both in the Gregorian and Chinese lunar calendars in 1952. At that time, Ōyama was on a teaching tour in the United States.

<sup>150</sup> Collins 1995: 42; Quinn 1987: 46.

which would have made it difficult to learn under Yoshida extensively. Also, in 1951, Ōyama started to learn *jūdō* at the Sone *dōjō* for four years.<sup>151</sup> Based on the claims made by Lowe, the 17<sup>th</sup> year of Shōwa (1942) could be possible. However, there is no variation of the character for number 10 (十, 什, or 拾) that resembles the character written on the scroll. Finally, the 47<sup>th</sup> year of Shōwa (1972) or any higher number is impossible, since Yoshida Kōtarō passed away in 1966. The circumstantial evidence (supported by both Kondō's testimony and Ōyama's own book) indicates that the affiliation between Ōyama and Yoshida occurred in the early 1960s (or possibly late 1950s). Therefore, it is most likely that the date written on the scroll is indeed 1962, and Ōyama trained under Yoshida up until that point, perhaps starting from around 1958.<sup>152</sup>

### Did Ōyama train in *aikidō*?

While some Kyokushinkai self-defence techniques are undoubtedly similar to the basic techniques of Daitō-ryū, there are others that could be recognised as *aikidō* techniques, such as *kaiten nage* 回転投<sup>153</sup> or *sokumen irimi nage* 側面入身投,<sup>154</sup> with the latter being a sample technique of the Yōshinkan 養神館 style of *aikidō*, founded by Shioda Gōzō. While it is true that the majority of *aikidō* techniques come from Daitō-ryū,<sup>155</sup> considering the possibility that maybe Ōyama was only taught a few specified techniques from Yoshida (and maybe

<sup>151</sup> Collins 1995: 41; Quinn 1987: 35.

<sup>152</sup> What also supports this theory is that certain techniques that could potentially have originated from the teaching of Yoshida Kōtarō already could be found in Ōyama's first book *What is Karate?*, which was first published in 1958 (see the chapter: 'Use of the parasol in Daitō-ryū and in Kyokushinkai').

<sup>153</sup> Cf. Oyama 1977: 109; Shioda 1996: 184–185; Ueshiba 2005: 74–77, 130–131.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. Oyama 1977: 112, 126; Shioda 1996: 135–143.

<sup>155</sup> The technical overlaps are obvious, especially at the basic level: the first *ippon dori* technique of Daitō-ryū is known as *ikkyō* (Aikikai) or *ikkajō* (Yōshinkan) in *aikidō*; Daitō-ryū's *kote zume* and *shutō zume* are both recognised as *nikkyō* (Aikikai) or *nikkajō* (Yōshinkan); Daitō-ryū's *tsuri otoshi*, *maki zume*, and *waki zume* techniques are similar to *aikidō*'s *sankyō* (Aikikai) or *sankajō* (Yōshinkan); and Daitō-ryū's *ura gote* is identical to the *yonkyō* (Aikikai) or *yonkajō* (Yōshinkan) of *aikidō* (cf. Kondo 2000: 47–51; Ishibashi 2015: 184–185, 214, 218, 274–275, 278–279, 296–297; Ueshiba 2005: 78–113; Shioda 1996: 82–123). Techniques such as *kote gaeshi* or *shihō nage* are identical in both styles, while some higher Daitō-ryū techniques are classified in *aikidō* under the umbrella term *kokyū nage* and other sample *aikidō* techniques (Pranin 1996: 52). For a detailed study about the correlation of basic Daitō-ryū and *aikidō* techniques see: Driscoll 2017: *Reflections on the Origin of Ueshiba Morihei's Koshinage & The Relationship of Daito-ryu and Aikido Waza*, as well as Dobrčka 2023c: *A Thorough Look Into the Secret Scrolls of Daito-ryu Part 3: The Evolution of Basic Daito-ryu and Aikido Curriculum*.

practiced the basic techniques with Richard Kim),<sup>156</sup> it is not impossible to think that Ōyama may have also learnt Daitō-ryū techniques through its successor, *aikidō*. In the book *Ōyama Masutatsu seiden* (The True Story of Ōyama Masutatsu), author Kojima Kazushi recalls a certain claim of both Yōshinkan *aikidō* founder Shioda Gōzō and Ōyama himself about the latter's experience in *aikidō*:

At that time,<sup>157</sup> Ōyama was trained in Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* by the famed Yoshida Kōtarō, who according to the famous anecdote, also awarded him a scroll. [...] After learning Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu*, Ōyama also received personal instruction from Shioda at the Yōshinkan. In 1989 I met with Shioda, as I gathered materials for the *Gekkan budō karate* journal. After that, I have often visited Shioda. Despite what I have written about this previously already, Shioda was honestly a genuine martial artist. His technique reached the most inner secrets of *aikidō*, polishing it to an artistic level. During my research, Shioda told me the following about Ōyama on one occasion: 'Ōyama-kun was my junior at the Takudai [Takushoku University] and I knew his name as a *karateka*.<sup>158</sup> My first thought of him was just what kind of a man goes around and slaying bulls? But he was a truly sincere man. Later I frequently taught Ōyama-kun to *aikidō*, however... at that time he relied on his strength, and it was quite difficult for him, but he was a man of keen perception'.

On the other hand, in his later years Ōyama told me the following about Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* and *aikidō*: 'Learning *aikidō* from Shioda *sensei* was a great thing. However, these are martial arts (*bujutsu*) but not combat techniques (*kakutōgi*)... This is just my personal conclusion regarding Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* and *aikidō*'.<sup>159</sup>

<sup>156</sup> See note: 147.

<sup>157</sup> The book here refers to the second half of the 1950s (一九五〇年代後半).

<sup>158</sup> Note the suffix *-kun* ~君 after Ōyama's name. This is a formal name suffix indicating that the person called by it is either equal or a junior to the speaker (often used for referring to younger males). In this context, Shioda may have implied a master-pupil relationship between himself and Ōyama, or he could have just simply claimed his seniority, as Ōyama was allegedly (see note: 17) his junior at Takushoku University.

<sup>159</sup> 大山が当時達人と謳われた吉田幸太郎のもとで大東流合気柔術を修行し目録を許されたことは有名な逸話である。[...] 大山は大東流合気柔術を学んだ後、養神館でも塩田から直接指導を受けている。一九八九年、私は『月刊武道空手』の取材で塩田に会った。以後、私は塩田のもとを幾度も訪ねることになる。過去の私の著書のなかでも度々書いているが、塩田は真正正銘の武道家だった。彼の技術は合気道の奥義をきわめ、芸術的なレベルまで洗練されていた。塩田は取材の折に大山について語った。「大山君は拓大の後輩で、名の知れた空手家ですが、牛を殺したなんていうのでどんな男かと思ったら実に誠実な人物でした。それから、度々私は大山君に合気道を指導しましたが.....、彼は力に頼ってしまうところがありまして、なかなか苦労したものです。でも、勘が鋭い男でした。」一方、晩年の大山は大東流合気柔術と合気道について次のように私に話した。「塩

Since the current research had been unable to find other sources of these claims, inquiries were made both to the Yōshinkan *honbu* and to the Shioda International Aikido Federation (SIAF), the latter being led by the descendants of Shioda Gōzō, his son Shioda Yasuhisa 塩田泰久 and his grandson Shioda Masahiro 塩田将大. The question of the inquiry was whether the Yōshinkan *honbu* or the Shioda family had any materials (photographs, enrolment documents, personal letters, etc.) that could support Kojima's quotes about Ōyama's training in *aikidō*.

The Yōshinkan *honbu* stated: 'Unfortunately we are not in possession of such material proof as photo or documents you request, if they ever existed. Their relationship was private, and we assume such was the training too'.<sup>160</sup>

Multiple e-mail exchanges with the SIAF provided the following information:

Shioda Masahiro asked Saegusa Ryūsei 三枝龍生 *sensei* [former *uchideshi* of Shioda Gōzō] about Ōyama Masutatsu. According to Saegusa *sensei*, Ōyama *sensei* came to the Yōshinkan *dōjō*. It was a courtesy visit to greet Shioda Gōzō *sensei* and he didn't learn any techniques of *aikidō* during that time.<sup>161</sup>

The training itself may not have taken place, but at least it was confirmed that Shioda Gōzō and Ōyama Masutatsu had personally known each other.

Interestingly, there are other claims that indicate that Ōyama personally knew not only Shioda Gōzō but also the founder of *aikidō*, Ueshiba Morihei, as well. In an interview with *aikidō* master Kuroiwa Yoshio 黒岩洋志雄, conducted by the *Gekkan Hiden* 月刊秘伝 martial arts magazine in 2006, Kuroiwa recalls that in the 1950s, Ōyama Masutatsu, together with Sawai Ken'ichi 澤井健一 (founder of the martial art Taiki shisei *kenpō* 太氣至誠拳法 or Taikiken 太氣拳 for short), often visited *aikidō* demonstrations.<sup>162</sup> In this interview Kuroiwa also stated:

I often spoke to those two.<sup>163</sup> I also went to visit their dojos in Meiji Jingu and Ikebukuro. [...] The two of them sometimes also came to the Aikikai dojo.

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田先生の合気道は学ぶところが大にあった。ただ、あれは武術ではあるが格闘技ではない。これが大東流合気柔術と合気道に対する私の結論だよ」(Kojima – Tsukamoto 2006: 496–497).

<sup>160</sup> Personal e-mail communication with Ikegami Midori 池上みどり of Yōshinkan Foreign Affairs (18–20. 05.2022).

<sup>161</sup> Personal e-mail communication with Shioda Masahiro and Dobróka Mihály (05–30.09.2022).

<sup>162</sup> Translated to English by Christopher Li, published on the Aikidō Sangenkai website (Li 2015: *Interview with Aikido Shihan Yoshio Kuroiwa – Part 2*).

<sup>163</sup> Here, Kuroiwa refers to Ōyama Masutatsu and Sawai Ken'ichi.

Especially to visit O-Sensei. [...] I heard that Oyama Sensei said ‘Aikido will disappear when O-Sensei dies’. I think that’s so.<sup>164</sup>

If the testament of Kuroiwa can be trusted, it is another interesting aspect of the untold story about the connection between Kyokushinkai *karate* and *aikidō*.

### Rotating palms or harmonising energy?

While Ōyama in the book *This is Karate* mentions Yoshida as his master, in the same book, however, he attempts (despite the obvious technical similarities)<sup>165</sup> to emphasise that the self-defence moves of Kyokushinkai in fact originate from *karate* itself,<sup>166</sup> especially the formal exercise (*kata* 型) called Tenshō:

The methods of covering and seizing the opponent’s hand are based on *judo* and *aikido* techniques. Readers who have already read the chapter on Formal Exercises will know that the covering and seizing techniques evolved from the *tensho*. [...] This means in turn, that you must master the *tensho* from which these techniques grew.<sup>167</sup> [...]

It is commonly believed that karate techniques are built exclusively about striking and kicking, and that such methods as the parrying of hand holds are the property of judo or *aikido*. This, however, is a mistake. [...] Techniques for turning a hand hold to advantage belong to the original *taijutsu* and are, therefore, the common property of not only judo and *aikido*, but of karate as well. [...] The techniques introduced below are karate techniques, rather than judo or *aikido* techniques. They are intimately related to the *tensho* techniques, which are described in Chapter Eight.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Li 2015.

<sup>165</sup> See the chapter: ‘Are there Daitō-ryū techniques in Kyokushinkai?’

<sup>166</sup> It is not unique, however, that certain schools try to interpret their history as being a genuinely original discipline, rather than an amalgamation of the various schools that the founder of the style had previously trained in. For example, according to Stanley Pranin, during a lecture in 1985, Ueshiba Kisshōmaru 植芝吉祥丸 (son and heir of *aikidō* founder Ueshiba Morihei) claimed that ‘The Founder [Ueshiba Morihei] only studied Daito-ryu for three weeks or so.’ This statement is obviously false, trying to disown the Daitō-ryū school’s undisputable role in the creation of modern *aikidō* (Li 2017: *Ueshiba-ha Daito-ryu Aiki-jujutsu*).

<sup>167</sup> Oyama 1973: 204.

<sup>168</sup> Oyama 1973: 257.

Tenshō 転掌 (which literally means ‘rotating palms’) is a unique *kata* of the Gōjū-ryū style of *karate*,<sup>169</sup> which was created by the founder of the school, Miyagi Chōjun 宮城長順. It is believed that the form was based on the ‘Six Hand Techniques’ (*Rokkishu* 六氣手 or 六機手)<sup>170</sup> chapter of the classical Chinese martial art manual titled *Bubishi* 武備志.<sup>171</sup> Miyagi revived the movements based on the illustrations and descriptions of the hand postures and combined them with the basic stance of the Sanchin 三戦 *kata* (using it as a blueprint), thus reviving the techniques handed down in the *Bubishi* in an organised form.<sup>172</sup> Given the origin, it is also widely thought that while the *kata* Sanchin represents the ‘hard’ (*yang* 陽) principles of Gōjū-ryū, the *kata* Tenshō, as its counterpart, represents the ‘soft’ (*yin* 陰) aspect of the same practice.<sup>173</sup>

Despite Ōyama’s attempt to differentiate the movements of Tenshō from the techniques of *jūdō* and *aikidō*, masters like Nishida Yukio<sup>174</sup> or Izumikawa Katsuya 泉川勝也,<sup>175</sup> who trained both in Gojū-ryū *karate* and Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu*, remark that the circular movements (*en’undō* 円運動) of Tenshō *kata* have much in common with the circular hand movements used in Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu*.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Which Ōyama learnt from Sō Neichū and Yamaguchi Gōgen (see the chapter: ‘After the war’).

<sup>170</sup> Mabuni 1934: 84–91.

<sup>171</sup> The *Bubishi* is a compilation of various articles about the Fujian White Crane-fist (Fujian Baihe-*quan* 福建白鶴拳) and the Monk Fist (Luohan-*quan* 羅漢拳) schools of southern style *gong fu* 功夫 that were written during the Qing dynasty 清朝 (1644–1912). The exact date of creation and the original author are both unknown, still the book has been treasured and widely cited among all the pioneers of modern *karate*, including Funakoshi Gichin, Miyagi Chōjun, and Mabuni Kenwa. In fact, Miyagi Chōjun named his school Gōjū-ryū based on the maxim ‘The way of inhaling and exhaling is hardness and softness’ (*Hō gōjū donto* 法剛柔吞吐) from the ‘The eight precepts of the fist’ (*Ken no daiyō hakku* 拳之大要八句) chapter of the *Bubishi* (Gottner 2022: 91–93).

<sup>172</sup> Mabuni – Nakasone 1938: 74; Izumikawa 2018: 88; Nishida 2019: 80–82; Bishop 1999: 27.

<sup>173</sup> Lowe 1999: 9; Izumikawa 2018: 88; Nishida 2019: 82.

<sup>174</sup> See note: 63.

<sup>175</sup> Izumikawa Katsuya is the third-generation headmaster of the Senbukai 線武会 Gōjū-ryū organisation (not to be confused with Nishida Yukio’s Seibukai 清武会 Kyokushin organisation). Izumikawa learnt Okinawan Gōjū-ryū from his father and later became the disciple of Yoshimaru Keisetsu 吉丸慶雪 (direct student of Sagawa Yukiyoishi) in Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* (Izumikawa 2018: 24–32).

<sup>176</sup> Izumikawa 2018: 88–102, 112–121; Nishida 2019: 90–106.

## The *mokuroku* of Ōyama Masutatsu

### What is a traditional Daitō-ryū scroll?

Undoubtedly, the most controversial aspect of the myth about Ōyama Masutatsu's training in Daitō-ryū is his *menkyo kaiden* certificate. It is even questionable whether the scroll Ōyama received from Yoshida was an official document of the Daitō-ryū tradition or something else. A comparison of Ōyama's scroll with the conventional Daitō-ryū scrolls could easily answer this question.

While the curriculum and transmission scrolls are in fact confidential materials within the Daitō-ryū school (as with most traditional Japanese martial arts), there are still some fragments of the content of these scrolls that have been published, which could reveal the cardinal characteristics of the Daitō-ryū transmission documents. A picture of the beginning of the *Hiden mokuroku* 秘傳目録 (Scroll of secret transmission), the first transmission scroll of the Daitō-ryū school,<sup>177</sup> can be found in Stanley Pranin's book *The Aiki News Encyclopedia of Aikido*.<sup>178</sup> Also, Ueshiba Kisshōmaru transcribed and published the contents of the *Hiden okugi no koto* 秘伝奥儀之事 (Secret transmission of the innermost mysteries) transmission scroll<sup>179</sup> of Daitō-ryū,<sup>180</sup> which Ueshiba Morihei received from Takeda Sōkaku.<sup>181</sup> Also, there are photocopies available online of certain parts of these scrolls in various articles.<sup>182</sup>

The contents of both *Hiden mokuroku* and *Hiden okugi no koto* have a structure that lists contents into two lines: an upper and a lower one. Both lines are organised into columns, which are counted as articles (*kajō* ヶ条). Usually, the columns on the top line have the same number as those on the bottom, indicating that the two lines are connected in each column. The articles contain short descriptions. In most cases the upper article describes the way of attack, and the

<sup>177</sup> For a basic analysis on the structure and key contents of a *Hiden mokuroku* scroll see: Trudel 2021: *Analysis: Meiji-era Hiden mokuroku*, and Dobróka 2023a: *A Thorough Look At the Secret Scrolls of Daito-ryu Part 1: Technical Contents*.

<sup>178</sup> Pranin 1991: 39

<sup>179</sup> Note that there is a *Hiden okugi no koto densho* 伝書 (transmission scroll) that contains techniques in the same manner as *Hiden mokuroku* (further see: Oimatsu–Ueshiba 1982: 549–555; Dobróka 2023d: *A Thorough Look Into the Secret Scrolls of Daito-ryu Part 4: Hiden Okugi No Koto*), and there is a *Hiden okugi no koto menjō* 免状 (license) that is essentially a certificate, listing the curricula that the student learnt up until that point in Daitō-ryū (Oimatsu–Ueshiba 1982: 557). In this paper, the name *Hiden okugi no koto* refers to the technical *densho*.

<sup>180</sup> For a comparative study of the various scrolls and certificates in the Daitō-ryū tradition see: Dobróka 2022: *Menkyo Kaiden and The Evolution of Daito-ryu Certificates*.

<sup>181</sup> Oimatsu–Ueshiba 1982: 549–555.

<sup>182</sup> See: Li 2017; Dobróka 2022; Dobróka 2023 a–d.

lower, same-numbered article describes the technique as the defence against the attack written above.<sup>183</sup>

Two key elements should be noted about the contents of the scrolls. The first one is the fact that the scrolls do not contain the names of the techniques; only the numbers of the articles and the short descriptions are given for the techniques. Terms such as *shihō nage*, *kote gaeshi*, *aiki nage*, etc., while they might have been used during training,<sup>184</sup> are usually not written in the scrolls. The second important thing to note is that the scrolls actually count the articles and not the techniques themselves. This is apparent in the *Hiden okugi no koto* list, where the columns are counted up until ‘article no. 18’ (*dai jūhakkajō* 第十八条), but at the end of the scroll the contents are listed as ‘36 articles altogether’ (*kei sanjūrokkajō* 計三拾六ヶ条). This concludes that the columns (as articles on the top and the bottom) are counted separately, counting 18 articles both in the upper and the lower columns, which adds up to 36 articles.<sup>185</sup> This means that while the scrolls list a certain number of articles, they do not correspond to the number of techniques actually listed in the scrolls. This is further supported by Sagawa Yukiyoshi, who noted:

Takeda Sensei’s scrolls had names like ‘*Hyaku-juhakkajo*’ (‘118 pinning techniques’), or ‘84 techniques’, or ‘36 techniques’ because he believed that 118, 84, and 36 were lucky numbers. I don’t think the names corresponded with the actual number of techniques.<sup>186</sup>

At the end of both scrolls the same general afterword text is written:

大東流柔術熱心不淺稽古無懈怠勝利之働依有之、今般本目錄相伝候。不疑心切磋琢磨之上必勝之術可被相叶候。依如件。<sup>187</sup>

*Daitō-ryū jūjutsu* must be practiced eagerly, never frivolously. Never be lazy; success depends on hard work. Hereby I grant you this scroll. Without a doubt, through diligent polishing of oneself, can the techniques of certain victory be obtained, thus as stated.

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<sup>183</sup> It should be noted, however, that there are instances in which not the same but consecutive article numbers follow each other above and below within one column, only describing defence techniques, without specifying the attack (Pranin 1991: 39; Oimatsu–Ueshiba 1982: 549–555; Li 2017; Trudel 2021; Dobróka 2023a).

<sup>184</sup> Pranin 1996: 52.

<sup>185</sup> Oimatsu–Ueshiba 1982: 554; Dobróka 2023d.

<sup>186</sup> Kimura 2017: 136.

<sup>187</sup> Oimatsu–Ueshiba 1982: 555; Li 2017; Trudel 2021; Dobróka 2023d.



This is followed by the lineage of the Takeda-clan, ending with Takeda Sōkaku Minamoto no Masayoshi 武田惣角源正義, the date of issue, and the name of the recipient.<sup>188</sup>

### Did Ōyama receive a Daitō-ryū transmission scroll?

After getting familiar with the sample Daitō-ryū scrolls, it is time for a detailed analysis of the structure and content of the scroll Ōyama received from Daitō-ryū master Yoshida Kōtarō<sup>189</sup> and a comparison of it with the former.

The first significant difference is in the title of the scroll itself: while the aforementioned Daitō-ryū scrolls were titled as *Daitō-ryū jūjutsu Hiden mokuroku* 大東流柔術秘傳目録 and *Hiden okugi no koto* 秘傳奥儀之事, the scroll of Ōyama Masutatu bears the title *Yoshida-shiki sutekki-parasoru goshinjutsu mokuroku* 吉田式ステッキ・パラソル護身術目録, which can be translated as ‘Yoshida-style stick-parasol self-defence scroll’. While Yoshida-shiki is an obvious reference to the name of Yoshida Kōtarō, it should be noted that the title of the scroll does not show any resemblance to the conventional Daitō-ryū scroll titles, nor does the title of the scroll itself contain the name Daitō-ryū. It is interesting to note that instead of the Japanese words for ‘stick’ (*jō* 杖) and ‘parasol’ (*kasa* 傘, which is also used to refer to an ‘umbrella’), the terms *sutekki* ステッキ and *parasoru* パラソル are present, as loan-words (*gairaigō* 外来語) written in the *katakana* 片仮名 syllabic writing system, representing the pronunciation of the original English words ‘stick’ and ‘parasol’. It is debatable whether this was written as an attempt to appeal to an international fashion or rather to intentionally detach the practice from the classical Japanese martial disciplines.

The core content itself is a list of techniques, which is the main characteristic of the *mokuroku* 目録 type of scrolls.<sup>190</sup> The scroll lists 22 items from ‘article no. 1’ (*dai ikkajō* 第一条) to ‘article no. 22’ (*dai nijūnikajō* 第二十二條), organised into three columns, with the upper part indicating the number of the article, the middle part the attack, and the lower part the defence, which resembles the basic structure of the Daitō-ryū scrolls discussed above. However, while in Daitō-ryū both the attack in the upper part and the defence in the lower part are counted as separate articles, in the Yoshida-style scroll, one article contains

<sup>188</sup> Oimatsu-Ueshiba 1982: 555; Pratin 1996: 20; Trudel 2021; Dobróka 2023b: *A Thorough Look At the Secret Scrolls of Daito-ryu Part 2: Lineage and Daito-ryu Mythology*; Trudel 2022: *From the North: Hirosaki, Matsumae, Ezo, and the road to Hokkaido*.

<sup>189</sup> For the transcription and translation of the full scroll see: Appendices 1 and 2.

<sup>190</sup> Szabó 2013: 104.

both the attack and the defence within the same three-part column. In other words, each separate 22 column contains the number of the given article and the attacking and defending techniques in the same single column. Therefore, the number of articles (unlike in Daitō-ryū scrolls) corresponds to the actual number of techniques within the scroll.

Another key difference between the listing of the Yoshida-style scroll and that of the conventional Daitō-ryū scrolls is that the Yoshida-style scroll contains unique names for both the attacking and defending techniques, however without any written description of their execution. Therefore, while the exact names of the techniques on the scroll are given, there are no descriptions about how the techniques should be executed. Given that an exact nomenclature (at least recorded in the scrolls) is non-existent in the Daitō-ryū curriculum, it is highly likely that Yoshida Kōtarō created these technical names himself.

After listing the 22 *kajō* with both the names of attacks and defences, the scroll ends with an afterword text written about the granting of the scroll: ‘The articles [techniques] listed above were successfully learnt. Therefore, I grant you this scroll, thus as stated.’<sup>191</sup>

While certain uses of words in the text are similar, the mention of Daitō-ryū *jūjutsu* is completely omitted. Moreover, the text itself is a significantly shorter, simplified version of the general afterword written in conventional Daitō-ryū documents.<sup>192</sup> The afterword is followed by the date,<sup>193</sup> which is most likely the 37<sup>th</sup> year of Emperor Shōwa (Shōwa *dai sanjū-shichinen* 昭和第卅七年),<sup>194</sup> which is equivalent to the year 1962, the fifth month (*gogatsu* 五月), and likely the ninth day (*kokonoka* 九日).

On a structural level, the dating also differs from that of the conventional Daitō-ryū transmission documents, where the date usually comes after the genealogy of the Takeda-family—normally, Yoshida’s name should appear at the end of the lineage, as the student of Takeda Sōkaku, issuing the document as ‘representative instructor’ (*kyōju dairi* 教授代理)—which comes between the afterword and the date. However, the Yoshida-style scroll omits the genealogy entirely, offering something quite interesting instead.

The title of the issuer is written as *Yoshida-shiki sutekki-parasoru goshin-jutsu sōshisha* 吉田式ステッキ・パラソル護身術創始者, which translates to ‘The founder of Yoshida-style stick-parasol self-defence’. Since currently there are no other known copies of this type of Yoshida-style self-defence scroll, it

<sup>191</sup> 右條々習得勝利可有之目錄授與依如件

<sup>192</sup> cf. notes 187 and 191.

<sup>193</sup> For a detailed explanation of the possible date on the scroll, see the chapter: ‘When could Ōyama learn Daitō-ryū?’

<sup>194</sup> For the character 卅 see note: 148.

is questionable whether this was Yoshida Kōtarō's attempt to establish his own lineage, or whether it was done in order to alienate the teachings that Ōyama received from the official Daitō-ryū transmission documents.<sup>195</sup> The second column describing the issuer refers to the title Daitō-ryū *jūjutsu dairi kyōju* 大東流柔術代理教授, which is identical to Yoshida's official title as *kyōju dairi* 教授代理, meaning 'representative instructor of the Daitō-ryū tradition'.<sup>196</sup> Interestingly enough, this is the only instance in which Daitō-ryū *jūjutsu* is mentioned in the scroll. After the titles, the name of the issuer, Yoshida Kōtarō 吉田幸太郎, appears,<sup>197</sup> followed by the name of the recipient as Ōyama Masutatsu-*dono* 大山倍達殿.<sup>198</sup>

While some elements in a limited amount, such as the basic structure and the usage of articles (*kajō* ケ条) for the listing of techniques, indeed show some resemblance to a conventional Daitō-ryū scroll, all the main differences listed above (i.e., title of the scroll, inner structure of the articles, names of techniques instead of short descriptions, different afterword, place of the date, omitted lineage, and the issuer's title as founder) indicate that the scroll that Ōyama Masutatsu received from Yoshida Kōtarō was certainly not a traditional Daitō-ryū scroll, certificate, or anything akin to a *menkyo kaiden* title. Rather, it was a transmission scroll unique on its own. This should disprove any claims of Ōyama Masutatsu's *menkyo kaiden* in Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* once and for all.

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<sup>195</sup> Given that after Ōyama received his scroll, Kondō Katsuyuki was also formally instructed by Yoshida in Daitō-ryū (Pranin 1996: 161–163) and considering that Ōyama refrained from mentioning Daitō-ryū in his published book, the latter should be considered. Most likely it could have been a decision to avoid conflict within the Daitō-ryū tradition: since Ōyama likely did not receive instruction in the full curriculum of the school (rather just a compilation of techniques), it would be controversial to grant him an official Daitō-ryū document. Therefore, Yoshida could have given Ōyama this unique scroll establishing an individual curriculum that does not collide with the existing tradition.

<sup>196</sup> See the chapter: 'The forgotten Daitō-ryū master: Yoshida Kōtarō'.

<sup>197</sup> Considering the calligraphy style used here is starkly different from that of the rest of the scroll, it is likely that this was Yoshida's own handwritten signature. It is not uncommon in traditional martial arts that the recipient prepares the scroll, which the teacher only validates with the seal and occasionally with a signature (the quality of the available pictures do not make it visible; however, at high resolution the contour of two seals can be seen next to the handwritten name of Yoshida).

<sup>198</sup> The term *dono* 殿 is a classic honorific name suffix (similarly to *sama* 様) expressing courtesy. It is quite common in traditional certificates, as the title of the recipient.

### The structure and contents of the scroll given by Yoshida

The inner structure of the techniques was organised around types of attacks: the first two *kajō* likely deal with fighting positions as suggested by terms such as ‘overhand’ (*junte* 順手) and ‘reverse-hand’ (*gyakute* 逆手) as well as ‘back-posture and front-posture’ (*ushiro kamae* 後構 and *mae gamae* 前構), followed in the next four *kajō*, which deal with ‘strikes’ (*dageki* 打撃) and ‘thrusts’ (*totsugeki* 突撃) as well as ‘defending’ (*bōgyo* 防禦) against ‘strike’, both ‘downward’ (*uchioroshi* 打下) and ‘horizontal’ (*yokouchi* 横打).

From the seventh to the 14th *kajō*, various grabbing attacks are listed, which are categorised by grabbing the chest or lapel (*munedori* 胸取); the sleeve (*sodedori* 袖取); one hand (*katate* 片手) or both hands (*ryōte* 両手) with either one-handed (*katate* 片手) or two-handed (*ryōte* 両手) grabs; and both hands (*ryōte* 両手) grabbing either the left (*hidaridori* 左取) or the right (*migidori* 右取) hand or side.

From the 15th to the 20th *kajō*, seizing attacks can be found, such as ‘front bearhugs’ over and under the arm (*mae kami kakae* 前上抱 and *mae shita kakae* 前下抱), a ‘one-handed rear collar grab’ (*katate ushiro eridori* 片手後襟取), a ‘two-handed grab to the shoulders’ (*ryōte ryōkatadori* 両手両肩取), and ‘rear bearhugs’ again both over and under the arms (*ushiro kami kakae* 後上抱 and *ushiro shita kakae* 後下抱). The last two *kajō* also deal with bearhugs—both over and under the arms—but in the case when an ‘open parasol’ (*kaisan* 開傘) is carried.<sup>199</sup>

### Techniques from the scroll: speculations based on the nomenclature and other sources

Upon the examination of the techniques listed in the scroll, two main questions arise. The first concerns whether these techniques can be found in Ōyama’s books, and the second concerns whether they can be recognised as Daitō-ryū techniques specifically. The Yoshida-style scroll (contrary to conventional Daitō-ryū materials) only contains the names of the techniques without any further explanation. Therefore, there is no way to know for sure how these techniques were supposed to be executed. Since the scroll is titled ‘Yoshida-style stick-parasol self-defence’, it is not even certain whether these techniques used the stick and parasol against an armed or unarmed assailant or taught unarmed

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<sup>199</sup> Further see the chapter: ‘Use of the parasol in Daitō-ryū and in Kyokushinkai’.

self-defence against said weapons (or a mixture of methods both armed and unarmed).<sup>200</sup>

Only speculation (or guesswork) could be done by matching the unique names of techniques listed in the scroll and the moves illustrated throughout the various books written by Ōyama. While it is true that correlation does not necessarily indicate causation, since Ōyama himself did not give the source nor the names of these techniques,<sup>201</sup> it is impossible to determine whether or not certain techniques are listed in the scroll. Speculating based on meticulous analysis is the closest one could get to any sort of conclusion.

In his book,<sup>202</sup> Christopher M. Clarke states that ‘Yoshida passed along to Oyama techniques for defending oneself with an umbrella or parasol. These techniques are featured in Oyama’s book, *This is Karate* (1966)’.<sup>203</sup> It is likely, however, that some of these techniques were already included in Ōyama’s first book *What is Karate?*<sup>204</sup> However, certain technical names indeed could refer to the walking-stick basic techniques demonstrated in *This is Karate*.<sup>205</sup> The first techniques, such as ‘back- and front-posture’ (*ushiro kamae* 後前 and *mae gamae* 前構) against the ‘overhand and reverse-hand’ attacks,<sup>206</sup> could refer to escaping techniques from a wrist grab (*te hodoki* 手解) or, alternatively, basic stances including the way of holding a stick either with a pronated (*junte* 順手) or a supinated (*gyakute* 逆手) grip, as these grip variations are shown in the book.<sup>207</sup> The ‘up and down’ (*jōge* 上下) listed in the scroll at ‘strikes’ (*dageki* 打撃) and the ‘front and rear’ (*zengo* 前後) listed at ‘thrusts’ (*totsugeki* 突撃) could also indicate basic striking and thrusting movements with a stick.<sup>208</sup>

The techniques ‘horizontal’ (*suihei* 水平) ‘defending a downward strike’ (*uchioroshi bōgyo* 打下防禦) and ‘vertical’ (*suichoku* 水直)<sup>209</sup> ‘defending

<sup>200</sup> Given the possible speculations described below, the author of this paper theorises the last one to be true of these options.

<sup>201</sup> Except for a few techniques, where Ōyama possibly borrowed the techniques and names from Funakoshi Gichin’s *Karate-dō kyōhan* (see note: 146), although he never cited their source.

<sup>202</sup> See note: 75.

<sup>203</sup> Clarke 2015: 34.

<sup>204</sup> See notes: 141, 147, 152. It is also important to note that despite Clarke’s statement, while walking stick techniques are indeed shown in *This is Karate*, it does not contain any of the parasol techniques. Instead, those are included in the original and revised editions of *What is Karate?* as well as in *Mas Oyama’s Essential Karate*.

<sup>205</sup> Oyama 1973: 278–286.

<sup>206</sup> See the chapter: ‘The structure and contents of the scroll given by Yoshida’.

<sup>207</sup> Oyama 1973: 278.

<sup>208</sup> Oyama 1973: 282.

<sup>209</sup> Interestingly, there is an error that can be discovered in the scroll: while the standard Japanese term for ‘vertical’, (*suichoku*) is correctly written as 垂直, in the scroll the word *sui* is written with the character 水, which is the same character that can be found in the Japanese term for ‘horizontal’ (*suihei* 水平). Therefore, instead of *suihei* 水平 and *suichoku* 垂直, the scroll uses *sui* 水 for the writing of both words ‘horizontal’ 水平 and ‘vertical’ 水直.

a horizontal strike' (*yokouchi bōgyo* 横打防禦) can also mean blocking with a stick, as they are shown in exactly this manner in *This is Karate*.<sup>210</sup> Other techniques listed in the scroll are not this obvious, however, as they could refer to techniques done with either a stick or a parasol, or in other cases, they could indicate unarmed self-defence techniques. The 'strike to the face and reverse sweep' (*menuchi gyakubarai* 面打逆拂) against a 'single-hand lapel hold' (*katate munedori* 片手胸取) can be done with a stick, as shown in *This is Karate*,<sup>211</sup> or with a parasol, as is shown in *Mas Oyama's Essential Karate*,<sup>212</sup> or it could refer to any other techniques as well, that utilise a strike to the face and possibly a leg-sweeping (*ashi barai* 足拂) technique. Similarly, there is no clear reference to what techniques 'two-handed strangle' (*ryōte jime* 両手締),<sup>213</sup> 'up and down thrust attack' (*jōge totsugeki* 上下突撃), 'kicking upward' (*keage* 蹴上),<sup>214</sup> and 'diving thrust' (*sentotsu* 潜突) could actually refer.

Some techniques with generic names could also have multiple interpretations: 'attacking the throat' (*inkō seme* 咽喉攻) could refer to the empty-handed technique known as *kubiwa* 首輪 both in Takeda Tokimune's *Daitō-ryū* curriculum and in Funakoshi Gichin's throwing techniques in the book *Karate-dō kyōhan* (The Master Text)<sup>215</sup>; a front strike to the throat with a stick, as shown in *This is Karate*,<sup>216</sup> or a thrust to the throat with a parasol, as shown in the revised edition of *What is Karate?*<sup>217</sup> Such a generic term as 'thrust to the torso' (*dō tsuki* 胴突) could also mean any kind of punching technique aimed at the torso, as well as a thrust between the ribs using either a walking stick, as shown in *This is Karate*,<sup>218</sup> or using a parasol in the same manner, shown both in the original *What is Karate?* and *Mas Oyama's Essential Karate*.<sup>219</sup>

In other cases, it is almost certain that the name indicates an unarmed technique, but it is not clear exactly which one. Also, these instances raise a second question of whether the techniques listed in the scroll could be identified as *Daitō-ryū* techniques. Since the original *Daitō-ryū* documents did not contain names for the techniques, it is likely that the names on the scroll were created

<sup>210</sup> Oyama 1973: 279–280.

<sup>211</sup> Oyama 1973: 283.

<sup>212</sup> Oyama 1978: 178.

<sup>213</sup> A possible example could be found in *What is Karate?* and *This is Karate* as unarmed techniques (cf. Oyama 1959: 113; Oyama 1973: 265).

<sup>214</sup> Could also indicate 'kick to the groin', in which case a possible example can be found in *This is Karate* (Oyama 1973: 263).

<sup>215</sup> cf. Ishibashi 2015: 282; Funakoshi 1935: 224; Oyama 1959: 100–101; Oyama 1966: 148–149.

<sup>216</sup> Oyama 1973: 285–286.

<sup>217</sup> Oyama 1966: 158.

<sup>218</sup> Oyama 1973: 285–286.

<sup>219</sup> cf. Oyama 1959: 115; Oyama 1978: 178.

by Yoshida himself,<sup>220</sup> which could refer to actual Daitō-ryū techniques that he taught.<sup>221</sup> The technique called *katagoshi nage* 肩越投 literally means ‘throw over the shoulder’, which could refer to the *seoi nage* 背負投 or *kata guruma* 肩車 techniques of both *jūdō* and Daitō-ryū.<sup>222</sup> Alternatively, it could also refer to the Daitō-ryū technique *kata otoshi* 肩落 (which is also known as *seoi otoshi* 背負落 in *jūdō*)<sup>223</sup> or *izori* 居反, which can be found both in Daitō-ryū and *sumō*.<sup>224</sup> Since Daitō-ryū borrowed many techniques from *sumō*,<sup>225</sup> it is not surprising that Yoshida may also have used *sumō*-related terms for some of the techniques on the scroll. One is *kata sukashi* 肩賺,<sup>226</sup> which is really similar to the *kaiten nage* 回転投 technique<sup>227</sup> of *aikidō*.<sup>228</sup>

Another technique is called as *ryo-teppō* 弩鐵砲, which in itself (based solely on the name) embodies a really interesting concept. The word *teppō* 鐵砲 in this context means ‘wooden pillar’,<sup>229</sup> referring to a *sumō* training drill of the same name, where the wrestler thrusts or slaps a wooden pillar over and over again (sometimes even a thousand times in a day, in a fashion similar to punching the straw-wrapped striking-post called *makiwara* 巻藁 in *karate*) in order to improve strength, stamina, and thrusting technique.<sup>230</sup> The term *ryo* 弩 written on the scroll, however, literally means ‘backbone’ or ‘spinal column’. While there are no references to the execution of this technique, the name itself could give an implication of treating the enemy’s spine as a wooden pillar used for

<sup>220</sup> See the chapter: ‘Did Ōyama receive a Daitō-ryū transmission scroll?’.

<sup>221</sup> The techniques cited here (with a few exceptions) are based on the nomenclature created by Takeda Tokimune (see notes: 50, 51).

<sup>222</sup> cf. Daigo 2005: 12–22, 32–37; Ishibashi 2015: 235, 238; Oyama 1959: 77; Oyama 1977: 74–75, 127, 146–147, 180–181.

<sup>223</sup> cf. Kondo 2000: 201–205; Ishibashi 2015: 212; Daigo 2005: 22–26; Oyama 1959: 108; Oyama 1966: 163; Oyama 1978: 187.

<sup>224</sup> cf. Kondo 2000: 219–222; Ishibashi 2015: 181, 307; Newton–Toff 2000: 92; Oyama 1977: 124–125.

<sup>225</sup> See the chapter: ‘Technical influences’.

<sup>226</sup> It is important to note, however, that the *kata sukashi* technique of *sumō* is written with the characters 肩透 instead of 肩賺, as it can be found in Yoshida’s scroll. However, this could be again a simple mistake or intended alternation of the character, as it was seen earlier (see note: 209).

<sup>227</sup> The technique *kaiten nage* also can be found in Daitō-ryū as one of the *aiki nage* 合気投 techniques (Driscoll 2017).

<sup>228</sup> cf. Shioda 1996: 184–185; Ueshiba 2005: 74–77, 130–131; Newton–Toff 2000: 94–95; Oyama 1977: 109.

<sup>229</sup> It should be noted that the term *teppō* 鐵砲 by itself literally means ‘iron pipe’, which traditionally refers to the 16th century Japanese muzzle-loading matchlock guns (also known as *hinawajū* 火繩銃) that first appeared on the island of Tanegashima 種子島. In the *sumō* context, however, usage of the same characters refers to a pole (usually made from wood) that is used for specific drilling and conditioning exercises called by the same name.

<sup>230</sup> Newton–Toff 2000: 111, 136.

*sumō* training, which would certainly end with a devastating result of crippling or even killing an adversary.<sup>231</sup>

Lastly, there is another unique technique listed in the scroll referred to as *senaka awase* 背中合, which means ‘back-to-back’ defending a two-handed grab with both hands (*ryōte ryōdori* 両手両取). In *This is Karate*, Ōyama demonstrates a technique implied by the name in the ‘walking stick’ techniques.<sup>232</sup> While this technique is not included in the 118 basic Daitō-ryū techniques compiled by Takeda Tokimune, a higher-level Daitō-ryū technique resembling ‘back-to-back’ was publicly demonstrated by the Takumakai group, as one of the *Sōden* techniques,<sup>233</sup> as part of the *kakete* 掛手 moves,<sup>234</sup> also referred to as *sodedori segatame* 袖捕背固.<sup>235</sup>

Obviously (as well as in all the other cases) it cannot be undeniably stated that the *senaka awase* technique on the scroll, the technique demonstrated by Ōyama, and the technique found in Daitō-ryū are certainly the same. It is interesting, however, to see the potential overlaps between these sources. It should be also noted that only a small portion of the potential Daitō-ryū and *aikidō* techniques found in the various books of Ōyama were possibly recorded in the scroll given by Yoshida Kōtarō. This could raise more questions of what Ōyama learnt (or did not learn) from Yoshida and from other masters, questions which likely will never be certainly answered.

## Use of the parasol in Daitō-ryū and in Kyokushinkai

Parasol (or umbrella) techniques are one of the specialities of the Daitō-ryū curriculum, called *kasadori* 傘取, which could be translated as techniques ‘while holding (or grabbing) a parasol’.<sup>236</sup> In the original *Hiden mokuroku* scroll,<sup>237</sup> there is one parasol technique described:

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<sup>231</sup> It should be noted that this interpretation is solely based on the personal understanding of the author of this paper. The technique *ryo-teppō* could refer to an entirely different technique or concept as well.

<sup>232</sup> Oyama 1973: 284.

<sup>233</sup> See the chapter: ‘Lineages and their legacy’.

<sup>234</sup> Hisa 1940: 86.

<sup>235</sup> Mori 2018: 169.

<sup>236</sup> Since the word *kasa* 傘 can both refer to ‘umbrella’ and ‘parasol’, for the sake of simplicity, in this paper the word is consequently translated as ‘parasol’ in the texts. Please note that other sources and traditions, however, may find the translation ‘umbrella’ more appropriate for the Japanese word *kasa* 傘 and refer to it as such.

<sup>237</sup> See the chapter: ‘What is a traditional Daitō-ryū scroll?’ and note: 50.



## 傘取之叟

## 第一條

一、指シタル傘ヲ敵ニ攔マルトキ及指シタル手ノ上下ヲ攔マルトキ  
 一、傘ノ外ヨリ右手ニテ敵ノ手ヲ攔ミ及右手ナラバ左ノ足ヲ敵ノ左ニ入  
 レ頭上ヲ越シテ投ル<sup>238</sup>

## Grab the parasol

## Article no. 1

When the enemy grabs the parasol you are holding, as well as when the enemy grabs your hand from above and below.

From the outer side of the parasol, seize the hand of the enemy with your right hand, and if it is his right hand, enter to the enemy's left with your left leg, and throw him over the head.

There is also one parasol technique described in the *Hiden okugi no koto* scroll:

## 第十二条

一、敵ノ傘ヲ上ヨリ下ニ手ヲ掛ケ押ヘル  
 一、敵ノ右手首ヲ右手ニテ傘ノ手ノ外ヨリ内ノ方ヲ攔ミ、傘ノ両手ニテ上  
 ゲ、臂ヲ張りテ左ノ足ヲ敵ノ右ノ方ヨリ左ニ入、肩ノ上ヲ越シテ投ル<sup>239</sup>

## Article no. 12

– Dealing with the hand of the enemy which pushes the parasol downwards from above.

– From the outside of the parasol holding hand, seize the right wrist of the enemy with your right hand towards the inside direction, raise the parasol with both hands, as you stretch out the elbows, with your left leg enter to the enemy's left from the right side, and throw him over the shoulder.

However, there are even more *kasadori* techniques practiced in the different Daitō-ryū groups: just in the Daitōkan alone, Takeda Tokimune included multiple variations for *kasadori* in the 118-technique *Hiden mokuroku* curriculum, and several different *kasadori* techniques are practiced among the different Daitō-ryū lineages.<sup>240</sup>

<sup>238</sup> Transcribed and translated from the source: Li 2017. Some theorise that in the *Hiden mokuroku* scroll, the instruction 'throw him over the head' 頭上ヲ越シテ投ル possibly refers to the *shihō nage* 四方投 technique (Dobróka 2023a).

<sup>239</sup> Translated from Oimatsu-Ueshiba 1982: 550, 553. Some theorise that the instruction 'throw him over the shoulder' 肩ノ上ヲ越シテ投ル possibly refers to the *udekime nage* 腕極投 technique, also known as *tenbin nage* 天秤投 in certain *aikidō* lineages or *iri chigai* 入違 in the Daitōkan nomenclature (see note: 113) of Daitō-ryū (Dobróka 2023d).

<sup>240</sup> See the chapter: 'Lineages and their legacy' (cf. Ishibashi 2015: 350–354; Okamoto 1985:

Self-defence techniques using a parasol first appeared in *What is Karate?*, the first book of Ōyama.<sup>241</sup> Therefore, they have been part of the Kyokushinkai self-defence curriculum since the very beginning, as early as 1958.<sup>242</sup> In the chapter ‘Self-defense with Parasol’ of *What is Karate?*, Ōyama explicitly states: ‘There are twenty-three ways of utilizing the parasol for self-defense. Shown here are five of them, easy and practical’.<sup>243</sup> Interestingly, there are 22 techniques listed in the scroll Ōyama received from Yoshida, although only the last two articles specifically mention an ‘open parasol’ (*kaisan* 開傘).<sup>244</sup> Out of the alleged 23, there are in fact seven different parasol self-defence techniques shown in Ōyama’s books.<sup>245</sup>

The scroll mentions two techniques containing the word ‘parasol’ (*kasa* 傘 in Japanese, which could also mean ‘umbrella’), used to describe the attacks as bearhugs over and under the arms while carrying an ‘open parasol’ (*kaisan kami kakae* 開傘上抱 and *kaisan shita kakae* 開傘下抱). Interestingly, against the first attack, ‘bearhug over the arm’ (*kaisan kami kakae* 開傘上抱), the defending technique in the scroll is called as *seoi nage* 背負投 (a common technique in *jūdō* also known as shoulder-throw), and in Ōyama’s books there is one technique that is demonstrated exactly as the name suggests in the scroll.<sup>246</sup>

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172–173; Mori 2018: 傘取りを練習する著者 [illustration on the 6<sup>th</sup> unnumbered page of the book]).

<sup>241</sup> Oyama 1959: 114–115.

<sup>242</sup> Given that Ōyama received his scroll from Yoshida Kōtarō (where parasol techniques were specifically mentioned) in 1962, but techniques using the parasol were already shown in his 1958 book, really support the idea that Ōyama either started to train under Yoshida from the second half of the 1950s (see the chapter: *When could Ōyama learn Daitō-ryū?*) or that he was already familiar with the Daitō-ryū *kasadori* techniques (possibly by Richard Kim, see note: 147) before he started his formal training under Yoshida.

<sup>243</sup> Oyama 1959: 114.

<sup>244</sup> Although there are multiple parasol techniques practiced in Daitō-ryū, the exact number is not public. It is not known, therefore, what is the basis of Ōyama’s exact statement about the 23 techniques, whether he was told by either Yoshida Kōtarō or Richard Kim, and whether or not this refers to the number of *kasadori* techniques in the Daitō-ryū curriculum.

<sup>245</sup> In the 1958 original *What is Karate?*, there are five parasol techniques published. In the 1966 revised new edition, two techniques can be found: one is identical to the 1958 edition (although with a reshot photo, cf. Oyama 1959: 114; Oyama 1966: 157), while the other one is a new addition (Oyama 1966: 158). Finally, in *Mas Oyama’s Essential Karate*, there are five techniques: four of them are in the original 1958 *What is Karate?* (with reshot photos, cf. Oyama 1959: 114–115; Oyama 1978: 178–180), and one technique is a new addition (Oyama 1978: 178). Therefore, in total seven parasol techniques can be found in Ōyama’s books, five in the 1958 original *What is Karate?*, one additional in the 1966 revised edition, and another in *Mas Oyama’s Essential Karate* (cf. Oyama 1959: 114–115; Oyama 1966: 157–158; Oyama 1978: 178–180). Note that the books *This is Karate* and *Advanced Karate* do not contain any self-defence techniques using a parasol.

<sup>246</sup> Cf. Oyama 1959: 115; Oyama 1978: 180.

For the second attack, ‘bearhug under the arm’ (*kaisan shita kakae* 開傘下抱), the defending technique is simply called as *kote zuki* 小手突, meaning ‘forearm thrust’. While there is no such technique demonstrated in the books, there is a technique against a grab from the rear, thrusting the parasol to the throat of the enemy (which could also refer to the technique *inkō seme*)<sup>247</sup> and another thrusting technique from a wrist grab aimed to the ribs (which could also refer to the technique *dō tsuki*).<sup>248</sup> There are also a few wrist locking techniques done with the parasol that can be found in the books as well (although those are not thrusting and do not defend against a bearhug).<sup>249</sup> Therefore, while the first ‘open parasol’ technique from the scroll likely can be found in Ōyama’s books, there is only speculation about what the second one could have been.

### Conclusion

Ōyama Masutatsu *sōsai*, the founder of Kyokushinkai, is a legendary figure in the world of martial arts, and as such, his life is surrounded by various myths, controversies, misconceptions, and half-baked truths. This paper aimed to clarify one of them. The alleged self-defence curriculum of Kyokushinkai *karate* is believed to have its roots in the art of Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu*, claiming that Ōyama himself possessed a *menkyo kaiden* (‘license of full transmission’) scroll in the art, granted by Yoshida Kōtarō.

The research concluded that there are indeed technical overlaps between the self-defence techniques published by Ōyama in his books and the known techniques of Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* as well as others that could be recognised as *aikidō* techniques. It is verified that Ōyama had personal connections with Yōshinkan *aikidō* founder Shioda Gōzō.<sup>250</sup> There are also claims that Ōyama personally visited the founder of *aikidō*, Ueshiba Morihei multiple times.

It is a fact, supported by multiple sources and other evidence, that at some point (most likely from the second half of the 1950s up until the early 1960s) Ōyama was the student of a representative instructor (*kyōju dairi*) of Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* Yoshida Kōtarō, who also granted Ōyama a unique transmission document titled ‘Yoshida-style stick–parasol self-defence scroll’, containing 22 different techniques, officially dated in 1962, on the ninth day of the fifth month.

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<sup>247</sup> See the chapter: ‘Techniques from the scroll: speculations based on the nomenclature and other sources’ (Oyama 1966: 158).

<sup>248</sup> Cf. Oyama 1959: 115; Oyama 1978: 178.

<sup>249</sup> Cf. Oyama 1959: 114; Oyama 1966: 157; Oyama 1978: 178–179.

<sup>250</sup> However, at this point it cannot officially be stated that Ōyama learnt *aikidō* from Shioda.

This is, however, certainly not a conventional Daitō-ryū transmission scroll. Therefore (until contrary evidence is found), Ōyama Masutatsu should not be considered as an official disciple of the Daitō-ryū *aikijūjutsu* tradition (albeit he was likely taught Daitō-ryū techniques), and the document he received from Yoshida was definitely not a Daitō-ryū *menkyo kaiden* certificate by any means. The exact technical content of the 22 techniques in the scroll given to Ōyama is not known (since the scroll only contains a list of techniques by name). However, the terminology shows some possible overlaps with the techniques demonstrated in the various books written by Ōyama. Therefore, it can be theorised that the contents of the scroll were at least partially published in these works.

The research concluded in this paper hopefully cleared up at least some of the misconceptions prevailed in the history of Kyokushinkai, bringing it closer to the factually based, ‘ultimate truth’.

### Appendix 1.

The transcription of the scroll Yoshida Kōtarō gave to Ōyama Masutatsu:

大山倍達殿 大東流柔術代理教授 吉田式ステッキ・バラソル護身術創始者 吉田幸太郎	昭和第卅七年 五月 九日 右條々習得勝利可有之目錄授與依如件	第一條 順手 第二條 逆手 第三條 打撃 第四條 突撃 第五條 打下防禦 第六條 橫打防禦 第七條 片手胸取 第八條 両手胸取 第九條 片手袖取 第十條 両手袖取 第十一條 片手片取 第十二條 両手片取 第十三條 両手左取 第十四條 両手右取 第十五條 前上抱 第十六條 前下抱 第十七條 片手後襟取 第十八條 両手兩肩取 第十九條 後上抱 第二十條 後下抱 第二十一條 開傘上抱 第二十二條 開傘下抱	吉田式ステッキ・バラソル護身術目錄 後構 前構 上下 前後 水平 水直 面打逆拂 両手絞 上下突撃 蹴上 潜突 背中合 胸突 肩越投 釣鐘突 咽喉攻 臂鐵砲 肩賺 後突 面突 背負投 小手突
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## Appendix 2.

The English translation of the scroll Yoshida Kōtarō gave to Ōyama Masutatsu:  
Yoshida-style stick-parasol self-defence scroll

Item no.		Upper line (attacks)		Lower line (defences)	
Japanese	English	Japanese	English	Japanese	English
第一條	No. 1.	順手	Overhand	後構	Rear stance
第二條	No. 2.	逆手	Reverse hand	前構	Front Stance
第三條	No. 3.	打撃	Strike attack	上下	Up and down
第四條	No. 4.	突撃	Thrust attack	前後	Front and rear
第五條	No. 5.	打下防禦	Downward strike defence	水平	Horizontal
第六條	No. 6.	橫打防禦	Side blow defence	水直	Vertical
第七條	No. 7.	片手胸取	Single-handed lapel hold	面打逆拂	Strike to the face and reverse sweep
第八條	No. 8.	両手胸取	Two-handed lapel hold	両手絞	Two-handed strangle
第九條	No. 9.	片手袖取	Single-handed sleeve grab	上下突撃	Up and down thrust attack
第十條	No. 10.	両手両袖取	Two-handed double-sleeve grab	蹴上	Kick upward
第十一條	No. 11.	片手片取	Single-handed one-hand grab	潜突	Diving thrust/punch
第十二條	No. 12.	両手両取	Two-handed double-hand grab	背中合	Back-to-back
第十三條	No. 13.	両手左取	Two-handed left-hand grab	胴突	Thrust/punch to the torso
第十四條	No. 14.	両手右取	Two-handed right-hand grab	肩越投	Over the shoulder throw
第十五條	No. 15.	前上抱	Front upper bear hug	釣鐘突	Testicle thrust/punch
第十六條	No. 16.	前下抱	Front lower bear hug	咽喉攻	Throat attack
第十七條	No. 17.	片手後襟取	Single-handed collar hold from behind	脊鐵砲	Backbone pole strike
第十八條	No. 18.	両手両肩取	Two-handed double-shoulder grab	肩賺	Under-shoulder swing down
第十九條	No. 19.	後上抱	Rear upper bear hug	後突	Rear thrust/punch
第二十條	No. 20.	後下抱	Rear lower bear hug	面突	Front thrust/punch
第二十一條	No. 21.	開傘上抱	Open umbrella upper bear hug	背負投	Shoulder throw
第二十二條	No. 22.	開傘下抱	Open umbrella lower bear hug	小手突	Forearm thrust/punch

The articles [techniques] listed above were successfully learnt. Therefore, I grant you this scroll, thus as stated.

The 37<sup>th</sup> year of Emperor Shōwa [1962], the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month.

The founder of Yoshida-style stick-parasol self-defence, Daitō-ryū *jūjutsu* representative instructor: Yoshida Kōtarō

To: Ōyama Masutatsu-dono

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