



CHINTO



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Original drawing by Sensei Jean-Noël Blanchette, 6th dan, renshi in Chito-Ryu

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A WORD FROM THE ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

Hello to one and all,

In the name of all of the directors of [Chito-Ryu Québec](#) as well as the members of the ACRTQ technical committee, I wish you a Happy New Year in 2007. May it be filled with joy, health, love and hard training.

I would like to take the opportunity in this last Chinto of the year to say a big thank you to Sensei Blais and all of his team for such a high quality Chinto on-line. A thank you also to Sensei Blanchette who helped to verify several important articles.

Thierry Debeur
Chinto Publisher
[President, Chito-Ryu Québec](#)

Translation by Paul MacKenzie

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A FEW WORDS FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The year 2006 is the 60th anniversary of the creation of Chito-Ryu karate by O'Sensei, Dr. Tsuyoshi Chitose. The celebration of a 60th anniversary is very significant in Japanese culture. Sensei Derek J. Ryan shows us how important even the festivities are in Japan as they commemorate this special event.

Mr. Benoit Bordeleau presents to us a brief account of the seminar with Sensei Higashi that took place in Québec on December 8, 9 and 10.

We regularly say or hear that people of any age can train in karate. Well, Sensei Eric Lefebvre honours one of his students for which this applies very well.

An article on “Mizu no Kokoro – Spirit Like Water” was submitted. This article was written by Mr. Mathieu Valotaire, a student of Sensei Eric Lefebvre. In this article, Mr. Valotaire expresses his point of view on this complex idea, which does not necessarily represent the opinion of the editor of Chinto. All the same, if you would like to react to this article with your own commentary, I invite you to submit an article for the next Chinto. The article should be constructive and significant. Mr. Valotaire was initiated to Tae Kwan Do by a friend in 1994 –1995; he then studied Aikibudo for 2 years. After a pause, he started again in 2003 to study Shotokan, and then in 2005 started Chito-Ryu karate with Sensei Lefebvre, a style in which he hopes to follow for a long time.

I would like to take the opportunity of this special time to wish you all a good year in 2007. Good training!

Noël Blais

Instructor [Chito-Ryu Longueuil - SportsPourTous](#)

Translation by Paul MacKenzie

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CHITO-RYU KARATE-DO 60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The 60th anniversary of the founding of Chito Ryu Karate-do by O' Sensei Dr. Tsuyoshi Chitose was celebrated this past August in Japan with a gathering of representatives and members from all the countries of the [International Chito Ryu Karate Federation](#) (ICRKF). Countries represented included Canada, Norway, Ireland, Hong Kong, Australia, Scotland and of course Japan. The Canadian contingent numbered more than 12 and represented most of the member provinces of the [Canadian Chito Kai](#). There were also many special Japanese guests from within and outside of the ICRKF who were present at the ceremonies and events. Ceremonies began in Kikuchi City where O'Sensei first began "Chito Ryu" and concluded in Kumamoto City, the current location of the Souhonbu.

This year 2006 is a very special time of celebration for Chito Ryu Karate-do and it is especially significant in the Japanese culture. There are special birthdays or anniversaries called "toshiiwai" (or "ga no iwai") which represent special rites of passage. The 60th year is one such special time. It is "kanreki", the celebration of rebirth or second infancy. The literal translations of the two Japanese kanji characters are "return" and "calendar". Based on the traditional Chinese lunar calendar, the cycle of life is organized in 60-year cycles. On the 60th year, one returns to the "beginning" and to the sign under which one was born. It is a time to invite friends and relatives to celebrate together. This time of rebirth is an occasion to pray for long life and to celebrate the successful first cycle of 60 years. The celebration colour is red. For example, a celebrant of the 60th birthday is given a "red hood" and "red vest". Red is usually associated with birth and babies and thus symbolizes the return to birth. It is believed to bring good health, vitality and long life.

August 25th, the first gathering of celebrants and guests, was at the Souhonbu dojo (Kumamoto) where greetings were exchanged, speeches made and photos taken to begin this commemoration of the 60th anniversary. From there all traveled by bus to Kikuchi City, less than 2 hours travel. Upon arrival there was a Chito Ryu clinic at the Kikuchi Sogo gymnasium.

The following day, participants traveled to the Kikuchi Shrine. It was at this temple that O'Sensei started teaching his "Chito Ryu Karate-do". The group photo taken at this shrine includes many of the senior leaders of the international Chito Ryu community.

Among the events planned for this day, the most impressive were the Opening Ceremonies and Demonstrations at the 60th Anniversary Celebrations held in the Kikuchi Sogo gymnasium. Soke Sensei and other senior members offered words of inspiration on this auspicious occasion. As a Canadian, I was especially proud and touched by the sincerity and wisdom of the words offered by our own Sensei Shane Higashi. Particularly entertaining was the Taiko Drum presentation. The celebrations continued with demonstrations of karate prowess from the baseball and brick breaking techniques to the more familiar execution of kata and bunkai.

The evening of August 26, the 60th Anniversary Dinner and Presentations were held at the Sasanoya Hotel in Kikuchi City. Local Japanese governmental dignitaries spoke and offered congratulations. Other guests included some who were not affiliated with [ICRKF](#) and some others who were no longer affiliated. All were gracious in their praise and congratulations. It was a wonderful evening of good company, warm conversation and great food. Special presentations were made to a number of individuals. From Canada Mr. David Chung and Mr. John Grad were presented with their 5th dan certificates; Mr. Romualdo Ferri and Mr. Art Bellhouse received their renshi certificates. There was also a presentation made to Dr. David Smith. Canadians were particular delighted by the presentation

of the “Life Long Contribution to Chito Ryu” awards presented to Sensei Shane Higashi and other kyoshi. As well all were delighted with the presentation by Soke Sensei of 9th dan to Kyoshi Hidemichi Kugizaki. The spirit of friendship and camaraderie pervaded the whole evening. It was a wonderful experience.

On the following day the final event in Kikuchi City was the All Japan Chito Ryu Karate Tournament. It was well attended and very entertaining. There were a few Canadian-born competitors competing for their Japanese dojo. Mark Waterfield of Nova Scotia was among that number. Most visitors were unable to stay for the whole event because by afternoon it was time to take the return bus to Kumamoto City.

August 28 was the last official day of events. International leaders attended the [ICRKF](#) meeting while the others had the opportunity to visit a local active volcano, Mt. Aso. This was a fascinating tour of a volcano whose sulphuric fumes were known to be deadly. In fact, the direction of the wind on the day of the visit happened to be ideal for a close up look at the inside of the crater. Along the shuttle bus ride to the top, one had to note the concrete emergency bunkers equipped with gas masks in case of a surprise change in the direction of the wind. Being assured that it was safe that day, all enjoyed the tour. Following the visit to the volcano, the afternoon presented a rare opportunity for westerners to experience the Japanese public bath. Some said yes while others chose to decline this cultural practice. Those who tried it said that it was quite relaxing. The tour concluded with a return by evening to the Kumamoto hotel.

The evening and following day were filled with preparations to leave and with departures of most visitors to the 60th Anniversary. However, for 8 of the Canadian contingent it was the beginning of 7 more fascinating days of touring Japan from the southern region of the Kyushu island to the northern region of Honshu island. They were to travel south to north as well as east to west. They would visit small communities from the Sea of Japan to the Pacific Ocean. Samurai villages, Buddhist Temples, Shogun Palaces, Castles, fishing villages, mountains, waterfalls, cities small and large – all these in less than 9 days travel by train and passenger van. The wonders and delights of Japanese cuisine and culture were to be laid before them. Special Japanese friends such as Kugizaki Sensei, Nagata Sensei and Osada Sensei and Kato Sensei were to provide the finest of hospitality and service to the visiting Canadians. The details of this second part of the great visit to Japan would take quite a while to tell. These may be stories best saved for another time.

In closing, on behalf of the Canadians who visited, I extend the most heart-felt thanks to all our Japanese friends who treated us all so very well. Thank you to Soke Sensei and his family. Thank you Tanaka Sensei, Nanai Sensei and all the Japanese Chito Kai leaders and members who worked so hard to achieve this tremendously successful 60th Anniversary Celebration of Chito Ryu Karate-do.

Derek J. Ryan
Vice-President [Canadian Chito-Ryu Karate-do Association](#)
Chief instructor [Avalon Karate Club](#), Newfoundland

Aug.26, 2006: Photo – Kikuchi City Sogo gym– 60th Anniversary Celebrations. Front row centre Mrs. Chitose (mother of Soke), Soke Sensei with senior leaders and kyoshi on either side.



Aug.26, 2006: Kikuchi Shrine – Soke Sensei (centre),
Right of Soke – Inazuka Sensei, Yamamoto Sensei, Sakaguchi Sensei, other senior sensei's.
Left of Soke – Kugizaki Sensei, Higashi Sensei, Imamura Sensei. 2nd row (right of Soke) – Tanaka Sensei.



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HOMAGE TO AN EXEMPLARY NEW STUDENT



Last April 2006, at the beginning of my spring session, I was surprised to receive a new and special student. It was Mr. Roméo Harvey, a man in his 70s who had signed up for my karate class. My surprise was short-lived, because the idea that immediately came to me was: “finally, after repeatedly telling everyone that people can start Chito-Ryu karate at any age, I have a chance to prove it!”

I knew little about Mr. Harvey. I can, however, confirm that he is one of the best students, if not the best student, that I have taught in Chito-Ryu karate. He practices what I teach him on a daily basis with much interest: this is unfortunately quite rare. He possesses the best qualities for success: patience, perseverance, and a strong desire to succeed. He often tells me something like “I practiced my katas every day this week”. When I tell him that it is rare to see a student practicing as much as him, he replies, “That’s normal. I have all the time in the world – I’m retired.” Yet, when he tells me about his life, this

retirement seems very busy indeed. A cabinet-maker by trade, he is still helping his daughter take down her old barn. He has been playing the guitar for five years. He bought a computer and started taking courses on how to use the Internet. He is a volunteer for St. Jean Ambulance. He trains several times per week. I am certain that he is involved in still more activities.

Despite having some foot surgery and some metal plates in one of his heels, he excels at karate. At the end of his first session, he earned his yellow belt. The end of his second session is approaching and an orange belt is almost within his grasp. He is very happy to do karate and has discovered some of its benefits: flexibility, balance, and coordination, as well as great joy.

If I am emphasizing today his presence in my karate class, it is to emphasize my pride. I am very proud of Mr. Roméo Harvey. I am also proud to be able to prove that one can start Chito-Ryu karate at any age. But I want to especially emphasize the fact that he is a good example of courage and perseverance for me or anyone else. Many young people (and some not so young) will see him evolve. And so, while he may have very good reasons to stay at home, Mr. Roméo Harvey comes to class every week, and through hard work, sweat and a lot of fun, learns Chito-Ryu karate.

I bow with great respect before you, Mr. Roméo Harvey, because you are to me a real karateka.

Eric Lefebvre, physical educator and chief instructor,
[École de karaté Chito-Ryu de Drummondville](#)

Translation by Paul MacKenzie

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YUDANSHA CLINIC DIRECTED BY SENSEI HIGASHI

On Friday, December 8th, instructors and assistant instructors took the opportunity to train with the Technical Committee of [Chito-Ryu Québec](#) as part of a clinic directed by Sensei Higashi. The first day of the seminar took place at the [Chito-Ryu de Longueuil](#) dojo, with everyone in unquestionably good spirits. Right away we all were inspected on our *dachi*. Emphasis was put on the precision of the positions. We got the impression that we were learning how to walk all over again, and Sensei Higashi said that it's normal to feel a certain frustration since we were learning new details. The afternoon was dedicated to the katas Rohai-sho, Rohai-dai, Bassai and Chinto. The day finished with training in Nage-no-kata. To sum it up, it was a full day!

The next day was reserved for brown and black belts at the [Chito-Ryu Montréal](#) dojo. The accent was again put on the positions and their proper application in the katas. One of the principal points made by Sensei Higashi, referring to the height of the positions, was that we should place our knees over the root of the big toe. This simple detail allows uniformity in a group, as if everyone came from the same mould. The two afternoon classes were dedicated to Te-hodoki-no-waza as well as Henshuho. Sensei Higashi demonstrated certain variations that could allow us to adapt to certain situations... and which we had the pleasure to test right afterwards!

On Sunday, December 10th, at the [Karaté Cama](#) dojo, the clinic continued. The positions were still the order of the day and some, who were now in their third day of training with Sensei Higashi, were really feeling the benefits in their leg muscles! We also had the opportunity, in the afternoon, to attend a course of Bo, with the focus mainly on the kihons. Sensei Higashi reminded us that it is necessary that the Bo not be simply a tool, but really an extension of our own bodies. It was with extreme patience and his own sense of humour that Sensei Higashi corrected our techniques.

It was under the sign of hard work (as much physical as mental), as well as enjoyment, that this weekend with Sensei Higashi took place. We thank him heartily! Also, a special thank you to Sensei Noël Blais, Sensei Thierry Debeur and Sensei Germain Bisson who welcomed us in their dojos!

Benoit Bordeleau
Student, Dojo Fudoshin

Translation by Paul MacKenzie

Friday morning class at the [Chito-Ryu Longueuil - SportsPourTous](#) dojo



Saturday morning class at the [Chito-Ryu Montréal](#) dojo



Karate class at the [Karaté Cama](#) dojo



Bo class at the [Karaté Cama](#) dojo



In the following article, M. Valotaire expresses his point of view on the notion «Mizu no Kokoro ».It does not necessarily represent the opinion of the editor of Chinto.

MIZU NO KOKORO : “ SPIRIT LIKE WATER ”

Some history

In Japanese, *bu* signifies war and *dō* the way. Many expressions are common to diverse forms of budo, and even though they are often misunderstood, they contain an unparalleled richness for those who look for it. The techniques that we now practice were initially secret and were taught in secret, often at night for fear of being discovered. With that in mind, spirituality is an equivalent way to encode technical descriptions to make them incomprehensible for the uninitiated. However, there are metaphors mixed in with the spirituality.

Today, we will learn one of them: “ Mizu No Kokoro ”

水の心

Kokoro: spirit or heart; *Mizu*: Water

Therefore, the spirit or heart is like water. The heart and the spirit are in fact two concepts that refer to the same thing to better describe a Japanese term that does not really have an equivalent in Western languages.

Kokoro, heart or spirit?

Let us first differentiate between these terms. The concept of heart is very different from one culture to another (East vs. West). In the West, the heart refers to love or other emotions. *To have a heart of stone* is a good example of an expression indicating that these qualities are missing, and *my heart is with him/her* corresponds to the presence of these qualities. The heart also refers to the source of something; for example, *go to the heart of the matter*. In martial arts (East), to have a heart refers to the qualities of courage and perseverance and is considered as being dignified and honourable.

Note that the other Japanese word for heart (shin and kokoro are the same kanji) is

心

which has the same duality. The ambiguity tied up in these two words is cultural... How to define the intangible? Here are some translations that show this well:

- Karaté Isshin-Ryu¹: “Style of the heart unique to the empty hand” representing the union of the karate styles of Goju-Ryu and Shorin-Ryu.
- Zanshin: “the alert spirit”
- Mushin: “the uninterested spirit”

For these reasons, the significance of heart was abandoned. And so comes the literal translation: spirit like water. As it is, the oriental model of the heart or the spirit creates a fascinating contrast with the Western model that could be explored in a future article. This is not the aspect about which we are thinking here, even if the concept can be applied *ad libitum*.

The Spirit Like Water

The spirit refers to the intangible portion of being, i.e. consciousness. Intent is mixed with spirit in this concept and that is where the phrase finds its sense because we are talking about intent and spirit. We can refer to the following dualities:

- emptiness
- non-response and programmed response

The phrase represents a state of the spirit or the intent where the state like water is to be found. All of this starts with:

Emptiness²

The concept of empty, or emptiness, is simple by nature and at the same time, practically incomprehensible in our society. If we imagine that our spirit is a lake, removing all distractions and ideas, we find a peaceful lake where the calm surface reflects that which stands before it, like a mirror. On this lake, even a fly can create a ripple that will be immediately evident. With a spirit like water, we must be able to feel the intentions of our opponents clearly and ignore the feints and other distractions that can be disguised by a flood of thoughts coming from our own spirit, and therefore, misinterpreted.

Non-response and programmed response

This expression tells us to keep the calm spirit of water and keep our body in a state of alertness, ready to respond to signals that our calm spirit sends to our body. It is a duality between the following concepts:

- thinking and non-thinking
- action and non-action
- being and non-being

One direct application of this state of spirit is the instinctive response. Too often, we enter into a combat or a combat exercise with a predetermined strategy only to realize that the strategy does not correspond to the situation. Instinct cannot work if a mind is actively trying to analyse or predict what might happen. Thinking and non-thinking.

How many times after a combat do we look back at missed opportunities? We could not take advantage of them, because our mind was too full. By keeping a quiet spirit, when opportunities present themselves we are able to act on them. Action and non-action. At the right time.

This concept is of crucial importance in karate where an error in judgement or perception can mean an injury from an opponent's confident and powerful attack. With empty hands, it's the body that takes the hit, not a sword or a stick used to block. One of the fundamental elements of combat is to act according to events (in "harmony with the universe"), and for that, it is not necessary to know *a priori* what will happen, but instead be open and — non-thinking, non-action and non-being.

A little exercise on Mizu No Kokoro³

First time: stand up straight facing someone and put the palm of your hand on his shoulder, without locking your elbow. Ask the person to bend your arm. Try to resist. Before someone of equal strength, your arm will bend without much difficulty. This is the programmed response and the first that comes to us.

Second time: same position for both people. This time, before doing the experiment, empty your mind. Imagine your arm is an iron bar. Think of nothing except this iron bar that cannot bend. Take a good position (e.g. uchi-hachiji-dachi) and contract your abdominals. Do not lose the iron bar in your spirit. Close your eyes if you need to. Ask again the person to bend your arm and compare the result. The arm does not bend. Detach your spirit from your arm. If you respond to the impulse to push against, your arm bends. (Small note here: do not be oblivious of the limits of your arm; if the arm cannot bend, it may break – know your limits.)

Of course, the phrase “Mizu No Kokoro” means much more than using one’s arm as an iron bar, but it is a direct application of a concept that is a bit fuzzy or obscure in budo. What is important is to know that it exists and equally that there also exists the possibility of experimenting with the effects of a spirit as calm as a lake in our training.

Zen and Emptiness

In his treatise called “Fudochi Shinmyo Floku⁴”, the zen priest Takuan gave to Yagyu Munenori something that went on to influence the ideological side of the martial path in Japan. In this treatise, Takuan says:

“If you concentrate on a place, your spirit is then absorbed by this place, and, in fact, useless. If you worry where to put your spirit, it is absorbed by this worry. Emptiness (Ku) must get rid of worry and reason. Let your spirit go into your entire body and never fix it to a place. Then your spirit can adequately serve the needs of each part of your body.”

Being and not being, still. Emptiness is a central theme in the Zen religion.

Then how do we imagine this? When we drive a car, we do not put all of our attention on every single gesture we make. Yet, when we are first learning to drive, every gesture is done with almost obsessive care. After several years, we can drive a car while listening to the radio, talking and without worrying too much about this or that part of our body is doing. The spirit (or consciousness) spreads across the entire body. Each part of the body knows what to do and when to do it. Imagine the same thing in a combat. Of course, we are not in constant danger in a car and we enjoy a certain level of security. However, the same state can be obtained if our spirit is in a state to show, like a lake, the reflection of the nighttime moon.

Another point of view

From many diverse discussions, there is also the more or less valid opinion in which we can say that the ancient masters found their students too noisy and just used this little trick to make them shut up. When we think of nothing, we do not speak. I can easily imagine someone yelling “SPIRIT LIKE

WATER” at me to make me shut up while I try to understand why he yelled this at me. Each time I imagine a Sensei yelling this phrase at me, I can barely stop myself from smiling.

In summary, it is up to us to use these little pieces of wisdom passed down from old traditions and hundreds of years that have stood the test of time and to really transform our training from simple repetition of techniques to an exercise that stimulates the mind, body, spirit and heart. Imagine each opportunity seized and each strike and block made with an iron bar. That fills the spirit... and here's me talking about emptiness.

For my part, I am, it would seem, still at the basics...

Most respectfully,
Mathieu Valotaire,
[Dojo Chito-Ryu Drummondville](#)

Translation by Paul MacKenzie

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NEWS IN BRIEF

- You can consult the ACRTQ **calendar** at the association's web site: <http://www.debeur.com/chito-ryu-quebec.html>.
- For all **comments** or **suggestions**, send a short email message to blaisbenoit@hotmail.com.
- To subscribe to Chinto, send an email request to Sensei Thierry Debeur at chinto@debeur.com.
- **Next publication** of Chinto: **March 2007**. Email your text to blaisbenoit@hotmail.com.

Noël Blais

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