

16th Generation - FOUNDER

TAKAGI Oriemon Sigetoshi was founder of Hontai Yoshin Ryu. He was born in 1635, The 12th year of Kannei, as a second son of INATOBI (or INATOMI) Family, who served KATAKURA Kojuro, the Lord of the Shiroishi castle in Mutsu-no-Kuni.

Takagi Oriemon's juvenile name was Umon. Later he called himself Yoshin Ryu Takagi Oriemon, because his father once disciplined his son with the teaching "Yoboku (Willow tree) may bend in the wind, but Takagi (the high tree) can be broken by it." (Ori or Oru means 'to snap' or 'to break'.)

Takagi Oriemon was well known for his great physical strength, still legendary in the area of the former Shiroishi territory. In the fifth year of Heisei (1993 A.D.), INOUE Tsuyoshi Munetoshi, the 18th Soke, and his students studied the grave located in former Shiroishi territory and confirmed that the tomb belonged to Oriemon. They performed a training drill at the spot in commemoration of the founder.

TAKAGI Umanosuke Shigesada was the successor of Oriemon. It is told that he was near 7 feet tall and as strong as Oriemon. At the his young era, Umanosuke was taught all the secrets of the martial arts from his master and got a permission to have his own apprentices. Thus he succeeded Oriemon.

But he admitted his skill was not complete. And he learned the Takeuchi Ryu which was able to master and permitted to teach. In this way Umanosuke refined the technique and came up with the new skills that will not be affected by individual body strength or body size. Through his relentless effort, he finally established and claimed Hontai Yoshin Ryu Takagi Ryu.

The third successor was TAKAGI Gennoshin Hideshige, a son of Umanosuke. He had served the Himeji-han in Harima-no-kuni and was paid five hundred koku. we can understand his treatment by historical material. For a bugei expert, receiving the status of 500 koku is unusually high. From this fact, we can see how Gennoshin was deeply appreciated by Himeji han.

The 4th master OKUNI Kihei Shigenobu originally was a master of Tendo Ryu Naginata Jutsu. One day he went to pay respect to his Uji-gami, the ancestor's spirit, and saw the vision of nine Oni (Japanese ogre) attacking him and breaking blade of his Naginata. He was able to attack back with the handle portion of his naginata until he chased off the nine oni. From this spiritual vision, he developed the technique of bojutsu and called it Kukishin Ryu Bojutsu.

The meaning of kuki is 'nine ogres'. When Kihei competed with Takagi Gennoshin, he realized Takagi's skill was as strong and technically proficient as his. Later Kihei was asked by Gennoshin to be the forth successor of Hontai Yoshin Ryu Takagi Ryu, which he accepted with honor. After this, Hontai Yoshin Ryu Takagi Ryu was taught along with the skills of Kukishin Ryu Bojutsu. Due to the fact that Kihei served the Ako-han, Hontai Yoshin Ryu Takagi Ryu (with Kukishin Ryu) was inherited by the OKUNI Family or NAKAYAMA Family all the way down to the twentieth generation within the Ako-han. Starting from Takagi Oriemon, Hontai Yoshin Ryu Takagi Ryu branched off many schools, e.g., sojutsu of Takagi Ryu (a.k.a. Mukan Ryu or Kakugai Ryu), while the skills and techniques were spread outside the Himeji-han and Ako-han, reaching Owari-no-kuni, Obama, or even to Tosa-no-kuni and other regions in Japan.

The 12th master YAGI Ikugoro Hisayoshi lost his position in the Ako-han and become a 'ronin'. He opened a public dojo and started educating apprentices. One of them was ISHIYA Takeo Masatsugu, who later became the 14th master of the school. Ishiya Takeo opened up schools in several regions and taught the skills and compiled and organized the teachings of the school by combining his own developed skill called Ishiyaden.

The son of Ishiya Takeo is ISHIYA Matsutaro Masaharu, the 15th master of the school. Maybe the 16th master, KAKUNO Happeita(Hachiheita), actually was taught by the 14th master Ishiya Takeo. And Matsutaro is considered to have left his house at an early age.

Kakuno Happeita Masayoshi, the 16th master of the school, opened a dojo in Nagata-ku, Kobe city. There he educated many apprentices and at the same time came up with the Kakuno style technique. He taught his style separately from the main stream Hontai Yoshin Ryu Takagi Ryu. He is also one of the masters who contributed to developing and evolving the skills and techniques of the school

17th MASTER - MINAKI SABURO MASANORI (A.K.A: KOSYU)

Year of the Meiji Era (1906 A.D.). He entered Hontai Yoshin Ryu Takagi Ryu and taught by the 16th master Kakuno Happeita in the 11th year of the Taisho Era (1922 A.D.). He permitted MENKYO-KAIDEN (completing mastery in the school and permitted to be independent) in the 8th year of the Showa era (1933 A.D.). He is considered to be one of the most distinguished student of the school. Many episodes are told of him pursuing tough training, such as demonstrating the destruction of a stone into pieces by his bare hand.

Minaki opened a dojo in Ushigome, Tokyo, and dedicated himself to developing many apprentices. With his master Kakuno Happeita, he visited all over Japan and demonstrated the school's technique. He was very active in introducing his school to the public.

In the 14th year of Showa (1939 A.D.), when his teacher Kakuno passed away, Minaki went back to Kobe and stayed for a while. Then Minaki entrusted Kakuno's school with TSUTSUI Tomotaro Yoshinao. And Minaki went out on a journey to pursue further training. On returning to Kobe, he entered Fumon no Taki, a waterfall in MAYA Mountain, as part of his training to achieve the finest spirit for activating technique. During this period, Tsutsui Tomotaro had declared as a successor of Takagi Ryu and Minaki had claimed the school of Hontai Yoshin Ryu. These schools then made great progress.

The 16th master Kakuno Happeita had been planning to organize the various techniques and skills that had been developed over the years. Minaki succeeded in actualizing the will of Kakuno. He selected the most important and crucial skills of Hontai Yoshin Ryu Takagi Ryu and dedicated his time to organize these waza.

After the war, he engaged in developing his students. Minaki bestowed the master status on INOUE Munetoshi as the 18th successor of mainstream Hontai Yoshin Ryu in the 57th year of Showa (1982 A.D.). Minaki had been teaching that Budo without the spirit of Buddha is a heresy(which means a heart of mercy is the way to achieve the true budo, otherwise, one will fall into an evil path.) Also he taught his students that the development of budo requires creativity. This principle was inherited by Inoue Tsuyoshi Munetoshi, the 18th master of the school, and is still alive and maintained.

18TH MASTER - INOUE TSUYOSHI MUNETOSHI

He was born in the 14th year of Taisho (1925 A.D.) with a weak constitution. Frustrated at his condition, he decided to pursue budo, and started training in Kodokan Judo.

After returning from the Second World War, he was heart broken to see the depressed people with their hope crushed. He established the Imazu Juyu-kai in the 23rd year of Showa (1948 A.D.) to encourage and train the youth of Imazu district in Nishinomiya city. After the establishment of the Imazu Juyu-kai, he enjoyed support from the local people, which led him to unite different budo schools that agree with his principles. Thus the Imazu Budo-kai was formed, and is still active to this day.

Inoue also completed the budo of Kendo, Jukendo and other modern budo. He was especially skilled at the Jukendo, winning as a member of the best team in the Japan National Tournament and also achieving second place in national-level individual competition twice. Inoue's interest is not limited within the modern budo, besides Hontai Yoshin Ryu, he has also mastered several styles laido, and other Kobudo.

Inoue also was a direct student of KANAZAWA Ichizo. Kanazawa was one of the most distinguished apprentices of the 16th master Kakuno Hachiheita, was assigned to become a substitute sensei of Kakuno dojo. Kanazawa recognized the difference and prominent ability of Inoue whom he later sent to train directly with Minaki Saburo. Inoue received full permission to teach and become independent in the year 46 Showa (1971). It was several years after that that Inoue was chosen as a successor to Minaki. In the year 57 Showa (1982), Inoue officially was designated Soke by Minaki with representatives from many different schools and authorized personnel from Nippon Budokan as guests.

In this ceremony, Inoue received an old sword. This sword has been regarded as the school treasure, as the sword has been handed down for a long time by our school. And, the 13th master, Yagi Ikugoro, always carried the sword. The record of the ceremony is kept and maintained in our school. Master Minaki has passed away but the new successor Inoue vigorously continues to dedicate spreading the budo and constantly developing and evolving the techniques of the school. His activity is not limited in Japan but also includes active teaching overseas.

19th MASTER - INOUE KYOICHI MUNENORI INOUE

INOUE Kyoichi was born in the 24th year of Showa (1949 A.D.) as the eldest son of the 18th master , INOUE Tsuyoshi Munetoshi. He started training in Kodokan Judo in his infancy. Then he became the instruction member of Imazu Juyu-kai which his father established. And he encourage and train many youth till present.

He trained not only modern budo ,judo kendo jukend karate and so on but also kobudo receiving advice of his father. He also was a direct student of Kanazawa Ichizo and Minaki Saburo like his father. Since he had exercised for a long time, his skill improved very much. Some think his skill is catching up with his teachers , his father , Kanazawa Ichizo and Minaki Saburo .

He inherited the SOKE's status from his father in 17 th years in Hesei(2005 A.D.) In addition, he has been working for the global spread of Hontai Yoshin Ryu together with the 18th Soke and other leading disciples, and currently he teaches several times a year outside Japan. Although he has a small build, his excellent ability at teaching against the big men abroad is well-established. He has followed in the 18th Soke's footsteps, and is now dedicating himself to the global spread of Hontai yoshin ryu and also to passing down the correct spirit of the Kobudo together with his leading disciples with his father.

