



THE MOTIVE OF PUBLICATION OF “WHAT IS SELF DEFENSE”

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“I, the author, founded and opened the self-defense club. But I was not satisfied. There was an ambition yet unrealized. There was a plan to find expression. I wanted to make my teaching available to everyone in the world.

It is not easy to trace every step in the growth of this idea. Perhaps it had its inception long ago. But of one thing I am certain: the major part of its origin can be traced to December 7, 1941, to be exact.

On December 7, 1941, as the world knows, Japanese planes attacked Pearl Harbor and war was declared between American and Japan. I was living in Honolulu at the time.

It was one of those rare moments in a person’s life when he stands face to face with destiny. When a problem, clear and plain in all its components parts, confronts him and cries aloud for solution. And on that morning I was obliged to sit down with the tangled skein of my affections, my childhood memories, my obligations and make a momentous decision.

For my position was different from that of most Americans. I had lived happily in America as an American citizen. I loved America and its institutions. I felt it was my duty to take up

arms for this country whose privileges had been generously extended to me. On the other hand, it was not as simple a decision it would be for most. I had spent the formative years of my life in Japan, and had some relatives still living in Japan to whom I was bound by every tie of blood and experiences shared in common.

So on that day when the sky was raining death, and bombs were ushering in a period of bloodshed and horror perhaps without parallel in history, I took stock of my position. I ran over in my mind the various factors in the problem. Then suddenly without effort, like tolling of a far bell that floats on the soft breeze to fall like a gentle benediction on the listening ear there wafted into my mind a memory of a story heard long ago, and that had been long forgotten, but that now came as vivid as when I had first heard it, to aid me in my honor of need.

One day a Kenpo master was lecturing his students. To the assembled students he asked this question.

“You are strong believers in Kenpo or Buddha. If the Kenpo founder, or Buddha came to attack and conquer your country with soldiers, what would you do? Would you take up arms to defend your country, or would you assist the Buddha in his design?”.

Some students answered the question by saying that since they believed in Kenpo or Buddha, they must give aid to the master. Others replied that even though they believed in Kenpo and Buddha, they must defend their native land against his conquest. Still others said since they loved their master Buddha, but also loved their country, they would remain neutral.

While the students were debating the question, the master suddenly decided to give them the proper answer. He held up his hand for silence.

“This is our country, so it is our duty to defend and protect it in the presence of God we are right” the master said.

“So naturally we must fight against the founder Buddha. We should take the invaders prisoner and make them realize the wrong they have attempted to do. This is the way of the true Kenpo man, and this is the Kenpo man’s duty.” After a pause, he added, “The Kenpo founder Buddha would appreciate this and sincerely praise you, for this action of yours would show that you had really mastered the art of Kenpo.”

After reflecting on this story, there remained not a vestige of doubt as to what course I should pursue. The following morning, December 8, 1941, I entered the Hawaii Territorial Guard. The preceding day, America had suffered the worst catastrophe in its history. The issue of war, at least as far as it concerned Hawaii was in doubt. An attempted invasion by Japanese forces seemed imminent. I was prepared to do all in my power to repel the invasion, to give my life if necessary, in defense of the islands; or to face the grim consequences that would almost certainly befall an American soldier of Japanese ancestry, if I fell captive to the enemy.

On entering the Hawaii Territorial Guard, I had expected that my national origin and background would prejudice my comrades against them. This expectation never materialized. The men in the ranks, also my superiors treated me with a kind understanding that exceeded anything that I felt I had the right to expect.

At first it was difficult for me to understand why I was accorded such kind treatment. Until I joined the Hawaii Territorial Guard, I was not convinced that such words as ‘democracy, freedom and equality’ were more than simple figures of speech. Now I found that these idealistic terms found actual expression in America. I found that Abraham Lincoln’s spirit still prevailed. I remembered the Great Emancipator’s Gettysburg Address, and the phrase,

“All men are created equal.” I found that the equality that Lincoln so eloquently expounded was really applied to my case. This touched me deeply. I was greatly enheartened to learn that it is a principle by which people here govern their lives and actions.

An air of cheerfulness and good fellowship pervaded the camp. The special company commander, and the other officers as well, seemed to be always joking, and to be jolly and friendly. Our spare time was spent in games and in outdoor sports. At those tense moments when the air raid siren sounded, the men performed their duties with perfect precision. But even at such critical times they did not lose their sense of humor, and they were still able to joke. There was no discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin. Since all were cooperative, I never felt a moment of uneasiness.

My company commander, Nolle R. Smith, Jr., who was formerly a University of Hawaii football captain and all the other members of the company were lovers of the sport. It came to me that the good fellowship and fine teamwork that prevailed found its source in the appreciation of sport that existed among the men. From this company commander I learned the value of teamwork.

After my honorable discharge from the Hawaii Territorial Guard, I volunteered for the Labor Battalion, which did such fine work on engineering projects, working under the direction of the army. I also donated blood to the blood plasma bank that was used to give transfusions to American wounded servicemen.

But I felt this was not sufficient to show my appreciation to my company commander, and to my country, nor my fellow members of the Hawaii Territorial Guard who had shown me so much kindness. There was another way in which I could serve, and in which I could attempt to discharge my debt.

Finally I was able to act upon this plan of which I had been dreaming. I founded and opened the Official Self-Defense Club.

In this club, I trained servicemen and civilians regardless of their race, color, creed or religion. I feel the younger generations are the future backbone of the nation. I wished to develop them and to give them the faith of these young people my specialty.

But, as I said, I was not satisfied. The idea that had been born on that unhappy day of December 7, 1941 had grown until it gave me no rest. It was my wish to do whatever was in my power to prevent such a catastrophe from happening again.

I wanted to teach everyone in the world the true meaning of self-defense. For I know that if everyone could know this meaning, there would cease to be racial trouble, and there would cease to be strife among nations. No matter what difficulty confronts them, people would be able to live in harmony and happiness. There would be mutual understanding, cooperation and friendship between America, the countries of Europe, and those of the Far East. There would be peaceful participation by all in religion, physical culture and sports.

Finally, through the writing and publication of this book, I have been able to achieve my ambition to carry my message to all who will listen. I hope that this book will be read by people in all parts of the world. I hope that the true meaning of self-defense, which this work expounds, will be understood by all who read.

Kenpo does not mean violence. If you were to ask me who, in American history, was the best master of Kenpo, I should say Abraham Lincoln. I should choose Lincoln because of his honesty and gentle disposition. He was gentle as a woman and his faith was that of a child. But to protect human rights, he fought wholeheartedly and with unwavering determination to win. Though the odds were overwhelming, he would still fight for the right. This is the mark of a true master of Kenpo.

Now this troubled world needs a second, a third, and a fourth Lincoln. Are there other Lincoln's somewhere in the world? I believe there are, especially in the younger generation. I have written this book in the humble belief that it may assist such persons in finding their proper mission, and the proper direction for their talents.

I write in a borrowed tongue and the composition of this book may fall short of perfection. I commend the reader to this work's intrinsic message. I beg for indulgence for unavoidable technical errors.



Ko means old

Sho means pine tree

Ryu means school

The old pine, it was strong, tall and majestic, which my ancestors loved above other trees that grew in the forest behind our house, symbolized great strength and health; With good health a man can be more useful to God, Buddha and his neighbor.

Ken = Puño

Po = Ley

So Kenpo means law of the fist; law is the divine commandment or a revelation of God's will, thus Kenpo must be practiced according to the commandments of God and the law of man and never take the law into one's own hands, so one must first try to through appropriate authority resolve a difference of opinion and then, only then, should the arts of Kenpo be used in defense of human rights. If in a case of self-defense you are forced to hit someone, it is your duty to notify the nearest doctor and the police, it is your duty as a citizen and as a human being.

One should detest the wrong deeds of a criminal, but not the man who caused them, it is not the question how bad a man can be, man was the creation of God, therefore harming or taking a life is contrary to the commandments of God.

Daruma was the founder of Shorinji ryu-kenpo and this art was slightly changed by the author's ancestors to a method appropriate to the Japanese people. After much meditation under the old pine tree, my first ancestor received the revelation of the secret of the art of Kenpo. which he called Kosho-Ryu-Kenpo.

The circle represents complementation, perfection, harmony, integrity, peace and everything that the circle contains is what we need to give substance to our lives.

1. Hiken.



“Hi” means to cover and “ken” means fist, the compound of which means “to cover the fist”. “Hiken” with the right hand held as a fist and the left hand covering the fist signifies that the fist is like a treasure in the pocket and should not be displayed in public. It also represents a potent force as atomic energy and should not be used except in the protection and promotion of happiness among one’s fellowmen.

2. Ogamite.



Translated into English it means “Praying to God for help when someone attacks me”. The true meaning is; “I want only peace and do not want to fight with anyone, so God please help me!”

3. Kaishu.



Translated into English it means “Open Hands”. The true meaning is; “I am not carrying any weapons in my hands or in my heart. I am open hearted”. Looking through the center

hole means “To see only the good part of man”. The ‘hand shape’ means “Mountain. My heart is like the mountain” This expresses the feeling one gets when looking at a tall majestic mountain.

4. Matsuba.



Translated into English it means “Pine needle”. The True meaning is; “The evergreens live long, young and healthy lives”. The Japanese people use pine needles for ornaments on Christmas and New Year.

5. Take.



Translated into English it means “Bamboo”. The true meaning is; “Man of Frank, the Honest”. I am not evil because when you cut inside of bamboo, it is empty.

6. Baika.



Translated into English it means “Plum Flower”. The true meaning is; “The Japanese plum flower stands for beauty, nobility and courage”. This is because the plum flower puts forth blossoms while the snow is still on the ground. The Japanese people love the plum fruit very much. They especially eat the plums when they are sick.