

# On Kenkojuku



Booklet by Antonio Bustillo with the help of many through telephone conversations, emails, and meetings\* with the following listed below.

Stanley Booth (Memphis, Tenn. and Georgia) Akusawa student, early 1960s

John Egan (California) Okano and Akusawa

John Hinken (Tampa, Fl.) Akusawa student 1960s and 70s

\*Armando Camacho (Miami, Fl.) under Okano in Japan late 1950s early 60s, with Akusawa 1960s-70s

\*Dianne Camacho, Akusawa as well

Art McConnell (NY), his instructor was John Slocum, and trained in Japan with Okano early 1970s

Ted Conway (California) Kuriyama student

Toyotaro Miyazaki, when he visited Sugimoto's school early 1970s and gave special classes.

And much of the information included was based from my personal experience training in Kenkojuku under Akusawa and Sugimoto from the period of early 1971- 1982. We should take into account that, depending on the years, location, dojo and instructor, an individual's personal experience and perspective will vary. Even so, I cross-referenced details and my recollections with Hector Gomez, Dennis Zamudio and my brothers Ignacio and Pedro to relay things as accurate as possible.

This document is not to try and convince anyone that Kenkojuku is superior to other Shotokan group and other styles of karate. This is simply to 'document' some Kenkojuku history after having gathered and pieced information and specific details together.

## **Tomosaburo Okano (1922 – 2003)**

Okano started Shotokan karate in 1939 training with GI chin Funakoshi and Yoshitaka Funakoshi.



In 1942, with the permission of Funakoshi and with the assistance of Takagi Yoshitomo Suzuki Shinjo and Keneko Isamu, he started a 'research' group, the kenkokai. This was the beginning of the Kenkojuku branch of Gichin Funakoshi's Shotokan.

Many mistakenly believe all Shotokan is JKA or was JKA based. Okano's Kenkojuku Shotokan was never part of JKA and it never affiliated with it. Okano's school was founded many years prior to Nakayama's JKA group and Kenkojuku was not part of any group and organization. Yet Okano did not isolate himself from the karate and martial art world and had friends and associates from other styles. One of his close friends was the founder of Kenshokai goju ryu, Kancho Shojiro Jibiki. Jibiki spoke at Okano's funeral.

There are similarities among all the Shotokan groups, yet there are distinct differences as well. Some like to argue that all Shotokan are the same. Many things look similar, but Kenkojuku training varied differently from the mainstream JKA format. For one JKA was more tournament oriented, kenkojuku dojo fighting was not stop and go, but continuous. Naturally, in kenkojuku tournaments the rules changed to the standard rules and format of the time. Yet, for the most part, Kenkojuku was not tournament oriented. Okano was not against tournament completion, he just didn't revolve the training around tournament fighting.

Kenkojuku is not well- known like many of the other shotokai and Shotokan groups that sprang up after Funakoshi's death. In fact most have never heard of a Kenkojuku

Shotokan. Even in Harry Cook's "Precise History of Shotokan" there is but brief mention of Okano and Kenkojuku in one short paragraph on page 144.

For this reason, a brief explanation and overview.

Okano studied with Gichin Funakoshi, and with Yoshitaka. Yoshitaka and Okano became friends and much of Okano's kenkojuku is heavily influenced from Gigo's (Yoshitaka) ideas, teaching and training methods. This is one of the main reasons that sets Kenkojuku apart from other Shotokan schools.



Yoshitaka (Gigo) Funakoshi

After the war many who hadn't trained with Yoshitaka ignored and dismissed most of Gigo's innovations. For the most part, Yoshitaka's ideas and modifications have been practically forgotten and mainstream Shotokan expanded in other directions.

The majority of accounts, and according to Shigeru Egan and others, Yoshitaka trained diligently and studied other arts like judo, iaido and kendo to see what could be gained from their training methods. Furthermore, several of Gichin Funakoshi's senior's report that Yoshitaka's karate was at a very high level and he was known to experiment in sparring to test his ideas. It is said Yoshitaka advised Okano not to take a stance, but to spring forward not giving your opponent time to defend. He emphasized attacks and focused more, more than his father, toward practical fighting.

This 'springing forward attack' I witnessed performed numerous times by Takeshi Akusawa, student of Okano.

Some of the changes attributed to Yoshitaka in Shotokan were things like lower and stronger stances, Yoshitaka's emphasis on fudo dachi and more thrust kicks. And unlike his father, Gigo found more importance in fighting.

There were already varying opinions and views on the teachings of Gichin and it was the same with Yoshitaka. His changes in certain techniques and his new focus and methods of training didn't agree with everyone. Many didn't go along with Yoshitaka's teachings and since he died so young his philosophy of karate didn't get a chance to spread further. Yet, even without Yoshitaka, disagreements continued between the

various group and that's why Shotokan, shotokai and JKA have different ways of doing things.

Tomosaburo Okano was one who continued with much of Yoshitaka's training.

This is not to say one Shotokan is better, or worse, that is not the argument. And this is not to downplay the many great karate men from the various Shotokan and Shotokai groups have produced. This is merely to make it clear that Kenkojuku is different, that it is not together and the same as JKA Shotokan as several have tried to tell me in the past.

Naturally, there are many things similar, and on the surface they are the same, but, there are differences. As Harry Cook wrote, "it is clear that kenkojuku is Shotokan, but equally clear it is not JKA Shotokan."

Most are somewhat familiar with JKA version of Shotokan so I will use them for comparison and give a few brief examples.

JKa vs Kenkojuku

Technique

JKA's Back stance (kokutsu dachi) is long, rear foot and knee points out to the side.

Kenkojuku's Back stance is shorter and the rear foot, and knee, is turned inward.

Shuto-uke, Knife hand block.

In Jka the lead arm is extended out, away from the body.

kenkojuku's shuto uke, knife hand block, the lead arm is tucked in close and the elbow positioned approximately one fist away from the ribs and the lead hand is level with the shoulder.

Rising block, jodan uke, is performed entirely different than JKA, and most other styles, the body is turned to the side and the forearm is tilted close to the forehead at an angle. In short, the kenkojuku blocks and parries are tighter, close to the body.

## Fudo dachi



T. Akusawa



Yoshitaka Funakoshi

Kenkojuku uses the fudo dachi for many drills, JKA doesn't. Yoshitaka Funakoshi favored the fudo dachi stance.

### Training method.

In general, the emphasis in Kenkojuku was not directed for point tournament fighting. For the most part, the fighting was continuous without the constant resetting to see who tagged who first. Foot sweeps were allowed, and encouraged. In one school I attended, a night did not go by without some type of tai-sabaki drills (not quite as elaborate as the style of "Ashihara karate" sabaki however) where you stood with your back close to the wall and the objective was to side-step when the attack came. And, it wasn't the cooperation partner training of some karate schools. If you didn't sidestep fast enough, you were hit, hard. Every so often there was circle fighting as well. One person in the center surrounded by six to eight opponents taking random turns to attack the person in the middle. The person in the center defended and countered while trying to remain as close to the center of the circle as possible in order to avoid being grabbed, hit and thrown for being careless and getting so close to those circled around you. And there were a few knees smashes thrown occasionally, not like Muay Thai style, yet still hurt.

Kata, for the most part they have the same moves but since some of the techniques and stances are performed differently, it is different.

The 'Ten-no kata' is a basic foundation kata not found in most Shotokan schools. The stance in Hangetsu differs from the majority of other Hangetsu and very different from the original Seisan.

In certain kata like Nijushi, or Nijushiho,-- originally nisheshi-- for example, the JKA and kenkojuku versions vary considerably.

When it comes to kobudo most Shotokan groups are removed from the Okinawan weapons training. Kenkojuku includes kobudo in their curriculum.

It's almost impossible to cover the entire variety of drills and exercises done in class yet I will list examples.

**kihon, exercises, kata, kumite**



Akusawa





Examples of basics in class.

Here many of the drills of walking forward and backward executing gedan barai and gyaku tsuki would be the same and the kokutsu dachi shuto-uke drills as well, but, as mentioned, the technique itself is different.

Many of the basic techniques were drilled in fudo dachi stance and shifting from front stance to fudo dachi. There was a lot of sliding forward and backward. By this I mean there was the take a full step forward punching drill but a good amount of not stepping but just sliding, like a shuffle –slide forward in the same stance.

There were special kicking drills. One count without dropping your leg, you execute a front, side, back and then round kick.

From the "yoi" ready position. With right leg, round kick pivoting 180 degrees to your left, opposite side and bring the leg back to original position. Switch, the left leg kicks all the way around to your left.

Round kicks over a chair.

Yoko geri, side-kicks were done from all stances, just like most of the kicks were but more often from kiba dachi and stepping sideways. Akusawa was notorious for his drill of keeping the leg out, at head level, for several *long* seconds.

Cat stance, except for kata, not a major part of practice. Mainly used to make students suffer in the stance.

Sanchin dachi, never done.

Breathing exercises were often done, but it was normal slow in and slow exhale letting all your air out breathing without the hard, guttural sound.

Jumping drill. In one to two steps jump over a belt, land in a fighting stance and kick or punch.

Some body conditioning, toughening was done. Not to the extent of many Okinawan styles, but it was practiced. Mainly punches to the stomach, trunk region. Another drill was with arms held out to the sides of your head and facing a partner you'd smash forearms together.

Shins, although it was not done as part of regular practice in class, periodically, the sensei would instruct students to toughen their shins at home and explained how to toughen them with a wooden stick starting out lightly and building up to harder hits. Hands and knuckles, in certain classes, you knelt down on the floor, or a solid wall, and proceeded to bang, or tap, your first two knuckles repeatedly. With backfist, back of knuckles and knife-hand as well.

## **Exercises**

High leg swings to the front, side and rear.

Knuckle push-ups, sit-ups and leg lift,-- later it was crunches--

Hold leg together off the floor six inches.

Those are just basic exercises and there are too many to list and many are the same exercises seen in most dojo.

Yet there were some exercises not often seen nor done in the majority dojo that were a part of regular routine in kenkojuku schools.

Examples

One -arm push-ups, Chinese push-ups.

Knuckle push-up, slow holding the position one inch off the floor for several seconds.

'Incline Plane' on knuckles

Handstand push-ups, occasionally.

Abdominals. Supine on the floor, make large circles with the legs close to the floor around your body, at one point your legs would be behind your head going to the opposite side, 360 degree.

“L-sit lifts”

Legs

Duck walk and Rabbit jumping (which I later learned were terrible for the knees)

Hold a low kiba dachi for several minutes

One leg squats, support foot ‘flat’ on the floor. (some call it “pistol squats”)

As mentioned, Hold the leg out in middle mae geri, and as high as possible yoko geri. Make a circle everyone lowers hunched over and each take turns hopping over the entire class.

The class makes a large circle again, everyone drops to seiza but with head to the floor and everyone takes turns to, in one bounce, skip over.

Splits, front and sides splits. Plenty of straddle stretches.

Heron pose, lotus pose, sage pose, wind-mills stretch reach hand down behind the heel to the floor.

Akusawa could put his head between his legs and look up at the ceiling.

Modified, standing ‘gate pose ‘

Seated hurdle-round kicks not letting your kicking leg nor foot touch the floor

A special ‘Triangle push-up’, in a very narrow downward dog pose with hands on the floor touching in a triangle, keep heels completely flat and without letting them lift off the floor, bend your elbows and lower your head to floor, or as low as possible, trying to touch your nose between your hands. Aka, “Tiger push-ups, yet with hands no more than three to four hands lengths away from your feet. And without lifting your heels throughout the exercise.

### **Sparring and fighting drills**

Sumo wrestling

One attack, one defense

Two attacks, and three attacks

Here, at times it was a prearranged attack, but often it wasn’t and you had to defend random attacks, attacks with full intent to land the blow.

And as I had mentioned, tai-sabaki was a major theme in partner training.

The sabaki, stepping out to the sides and countering.

One person stands in shizentai, yoi ready stance, and a line forms in front of him or her One by one everyone takes their turn attacking. When everyone in the line had attacked at least once, the next person took his turn to face the line.

Sparring and fighting. It was not done in every class nor every week. But when done, it was continuous and hard contact made to the body, sides and back. Occasional face contact, usually by an advanced to lower rank who carelessly disregarded to protect and at least made attempts to block and parry controlled face shots.

Depending on the amount of students in class that particular night, sometimes you only fought once for approximately three minutes,-- I hardly remember an instructor with a timer—or you fought two or three of your fellow students, sometimes back-to-back. Grabs, foot-sweeps were prevalent. Practically any attacks were allowed.

#### Kata

It was drilled regularly in most classes. Students were expected to learn them thoroughly and execute the kata with smooth form, fast and powerful, and slow and not rushed in the segments where it called for it.

You had to know the applications when tested, it was a must.

## **The Kenkojuku instructors sent to the U.S.**

During the late 1950s and early 1960s

John Slocum, Jim Arwood, Armando Camacho and John Egan trained in Japan with Okano and they later taught in U.S.

Japanese instructors were in demand as well and Okano sent some of his best to represent his school.

### **Takeshi Akusawa** (born 1939 -- 2013, age 75)



Akusawa started karate at age thirteen.

His brother was the famous actor Yosuke Netsuke.

Armando Camacho and Akusawa became friends while Camacho was stationed in Japan and trained in Okano's dojo. Akusawa would invite Camacho to his house for dinners. At first Akusawa's father was not particularly friendly toward Camacho. But one evening Akusawa's father invited Camacho into a locked room. Only the father had the key to the room and he did not permit anyone inside. When Camacho entered he saw a room full of samurai swords, armor, bows and arrows. Akusawa told Camacho his father occasionally let museums display items from his collection.

Akusawa was Okano's top student and number one man in the dojo and he was the first Japanese kenkojuku instructor sent to teach in the United States. He arrived in the U.S in 1961. (Some remember early 1962) He opened a school in Memphis, Tennessee. During this time he apparently assisted other schools who didn't have fully qualified instructors. In the October 1965 issue of Black Belt magazine, a Marvin Word from Jackson, Mississippi wrote to Black Belt magazine's section "Letters" stating how Mr. Akusawa, 4<sup>th</sup> Dan, had 'helped their dojo "tremendously."

Akusawa later relocated Coral Gables, Florida.

I joined his Coral Gables dojo in 1971. It was a small dojo with a smooth wooden floor, yet no air conditioner and no windows, you'd sweat profusely due to how hot it was inside.

Akusawa was 33 years old at the time and 4<sup>th</sup> Dan. He was extremely limber and agile. He would get into deep stances, painfully low stances, front, kokutsu dachi and fudo dachi and he was able to move and strike in any direction with ease.



He was exceptionally fast and his technique was immaculate. Akusawa's dojo wasn't large and it was simple, dark wooden floor, white walls. I vaguely remember there may have been a makiwara in the backroom or just outside at one time but not on the dojo floor. He had a small office with desk and chair and I noticed he had a homemade wooden stand with a candle on top. I asked if it was for practicing putting it out with punches, and he stated it was.

By the standards of the day, and even more so by today's, he was definitely not commercial. His classes ran from 7- 9:30 pm Mon. Wed. Friday.

He had several Black Belts, Armando Camacho, Jim Andrews, Charlie Parker, John Hinkin, Larry Pamillio and a few others.

To describe Akusawa's class... there was lots of exercises, lots of basics, and lots of partner sparring drills.

In the exercise segment, he had special yoga/ gymnastics type stretches and postures few could do to the full extent and there was strenuous conditioning of various slow push-ups, on knuckles, one arm and others, and abdominals, and there was no shortage of work for the legs and thighs.



In basics, he stressed both snap and thrusts kicks.

Sparing drills with partner, the reader can again underline, tai-sabaki drills.

Fighting was not done every week, but when there was kumite, it was hard, no pulling punches and full-contact to the body and non-stop. If you were swept, you continued but the opponent didn't go down to grapple.

Little details.....

Whether from pain, muscle-burn or enthusiasm he didn't like people to grimace. It was expected to keep a straight-face, show no emotion and he'd knock on your head, "don't make faces." And no matter how tired, in class, you could not bend over and put your hands on your knees.

Akusawa always emphasized "awareness."

In circle fighting for example, you had to be aware of where you were standing and where you moved to in relations to the opponents surrounding you because if you came within their reach you were grabbed, punched, kneed and thrown.

And he often said that in everyday life, to be aware of your surroundings as well.

In 1970, Oshima, Okazaki, Mikami, Akusawa and Nishiyama were the board members who selected the USA team for the World Tournament.

Akusawa selected Bob Brehmer, an Isshin ryu stylist from Florida.

The author Stan Booth studied with Akusawa in Memphis. Booth wrote a book on musicians titled, *Rhythm Oil*. In a telephone conversation he said that although he hadn't identified Akusawa by name, yet that it was Akusawa he was referring to when he compared him to Phineas Newborn. He wrote that 'the karate master' and Newborn were alike, "phenomenal."

John Hinkin, an Akusawa Black Belt, stated,

"I have seen so many karateka over the years, all over the world from many different countries and I have as of yet seen no one that could be comparable."

The renowned Ryobukai's Kiyoshi Yamazaki remarked—told me in person--  
'Akusawa is a *very* good karateka.'

And even those outside of Japanese karate could appreciate Akusawa's skill. Kung fu man Jerry Li was rated in the top 10 in kata by Professional Karate magazine in 1974 (p. 100, The complete Martial Arts Catalogue John Corcoran and Emil Farkas). Jerry Li would watch Akusawa's Coral Gables classes during the early 1970s. Li was a young teenager, already studying King fu at the time, and he'd would often sit in to watch Akusawa's class.

Over forty years later, 2015, Jerry Li commented.

"Akusawa's focus and precision was amazing."

"In slow- motion he could plant a high kick to a student's head snapping hard at the instant an inch away."

"He was like a finely tuned Swiss watch."

Akusawa's school karate gi patch--"Tokyo karate Do Association"

**Kazuo Kuriyama** (born June 1<sup>st</sup> 1942-1973)



In 1971, I had heard of an instructor, Kuriyama, in California yet I always found it strange he had been merely mentioned briefly and not talked about more. Most on the East Coast knew little about him. It wasn't until years later that I came across a couple of old, early 1970s, magazines articles about Kuriyama competing. From the article it was obvious he was rather well-known on the West Coast. The following is from one of his direct students.

**On Kazuo Kuriyama**

(By Ted Conway)

Jim Arwood trained at the honbu in the 1950s while in the air force. He returned to Memphis after his service and started teaching Kenkojuku karate. He was a bit of an entrepreneur and propositioned Okano Sensei to send over a Japanese instructor to help him set up dojos. Okano Sensei sent over Akusawa Sensei. It is pretty well known that this did not ultimately turn out well for either of them. This is connected to Kuriyama Sensei because Roger Warner, who was one of Arwood's students, came to California and decided to start a dojo. His idea was to get some beginners and teach them to be teachers...just knowing enough to be ahead of the ones they were teaching. Bobby Dulay Sensei, who ultimately promoted me to shodan, answered his newspaper ad and began his karate journey. Roger Warner sent video to Okano Sensei asking for a Japanese instructor, Okano Sensei was horrified at the "karate" and quickly sent Kuriyama Sensei to straighten out their waza. This is the early 60's prior to Miyazaki Sensei (1967), Takahashi Sensei (1971), Sugimoto Sensei (1970), or Horie Sensei coming to the states. Kuriyama first opened a dojo in Fresno CA. Similar to the Akasawa/Arwood

relationship, he was very dependent on his American sponsor, Roger Warner. I believe he was college educated as an attorney, but he barely spoke English and certainly didn't understand the American ways. He only taught karate as a living while in the States. Roger Warner was a bit of a "shyster"...he did not have Kuriyama Sensei and karate-do's best interests at heart. He eventually fled with all of the money leaving Kuriyama Sensei abandoned. A father and two sons that trained, the Haddon's - who were house painters by trade, took Kuriyama Sensei to Oregon with them while they did some work. He was eventually influenced by some of the remaining California students to return, which he did prior to Miyazaki Sensei coming to the states. Miyazaki Sensei came to the California dojo as his first stop in the States. As Miyazaki Sensei told me, "there were not enough students for two instructors so I went to New York". Kuriyama had several dojos at the time of his accident. There was the Visalia, Fresno, Delano and Atwater dojo.... probably 150 students between all. In fact, he was traveling to Atwater when a drunk driver crossed the freeway and hit him head on killing him and his girlfriend on March 5<sup>th</sup> 1973. Kazuo Kuriyama, like the other Japanese instructors of the time to come out of the Kenkojuku honbu dojo like Akasawa, Miyazaki, and Takahashi and Horie, was a fantastic karateka. He competed and won many tournaments and was known on the west coast as a fierce kumite competitor. Kuriyama Sensei was a talented kata competitor as well. Like the other Kenkojuku dojo of the time...Slocumb's, Miyazaki's...the training was very tough. Kuriyama probably promoted a handful of students to shodan, the training was very hard and most could not handle it. However, through his legacy there are around 50 Kuriyama legacy yudansha.

Kuriyama was known for his gyaku zuki, and foot sweeps. In fact, it is legendary that when he wrapped his hachimaki around his front hand fist, you were in trouble...no protective gear...only a few wraps of hachimaki to protect his knuckles. To this day, it is common to see Kuriyama lineage students wear hachimaki...its connection to our beloved sensei.

After Kuriyama was killed, his senior student, Doug Ables took over the dojo. Ables was assisted by Bob Dulay. It was Ables Sensei who was the Chief Instructor during Okano Sensei's visit in '75 when the KI article was written. Ables Sensei ran the dojo for a few years but never felt that he could fill Kuriyama Sensei's shoes and ultimately retired. He has over the last 3 decades continued to support the training and is present on our shodan examination boards.

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Kuriyama's school karate gi patch  
"Fighting Dogs" patch

## Toyotaro Miyazaki



Born in Tokyo, 1944

He started karate in 1959, age 15, with Okano in Kenkojuku Shotokan.

Arrived in the U.S 1967, first to California but Kuriyama was already established there and Miyazaki went to New York. He wasted little time entering tournaments and made a name for himself in the circuit. In one magazine article it states he had fought in 19 tournaments before he got to fight the big names. The article states that many judges and referees ignored calling points when he scored and Miyazaki had to overwork, law of averages, to get points in matches. Yet, he gained their respect soon enough and was known as one of the best technicians in fighting and kata.

Miyazaki made the cover of several magazines and was featured in articles. He was the most well-known of the kenkojuku instructors due to exposure and success at events. He fought practically all the big names of the time, Hayes, Chuck Norris, Louis Delgado. Miyazaki fought lightweight but often for grand champion against heavyweights. Chuck Norris named David Moon, Skipper Mullins, Joe Lewis, Toyotaro Miyazaki and Mitch Bobrow as his toughest opponents.

(p. 39 Al Weiss Official History of karate -Red book)

Miyazaki competition career spanned from the 1960s, 70s and the 1980s.

In 1973 Official Karate rated the top kata competitors, Miyazaki was named along with Eric Lee, Byong yu, Al Dacasco and Mike Stone.

Miyazaki competed and placed in weapons as well.

School's Karate gi patch (before he formed his organization)

"Kenkojuku Association"

**Koji Sugimoto** (Born 1947) Started karate at 14.



October 1970 Sugimoto, 2<sup>nd</sup> Dan, arrived in the U.S. He was one of the Black belt assistants at Akusawa's Coral Gables dojo for over a year, before they spit ties.

Sugimoto taught at the Hialeah YMCA Saturday mornings. At first he had few students. I joined his class at the Y in March 1971. Sugimoto's English was not great,--to put it mildly-- but luckily for some reason I was able understand him *most* of the time. He later taught twice week at the Ida Fisher High School basketball gym on Miami Beach, and for a time at Jack Williams judo school on NE 125<sup>th</sup> street in North Miami. He had taught at Gardner Malloy as well. And at a ballet school for a short spell.

Sugimoto initially competed in a few tournaments, but was not heavily involved, after a couple of years he started running his own events. When he competed Sugimoto had some hard-hitting bouts, brawls actually, against Herbie Thompson of Nisei Goju ryu a couple of times but they became friends later on. Sugimoto had an out of the ring bad argument that turned into a mad fight with Harold Roth (later Harold Diamond) on one occasion... I do not believe they ever shook hands and made friends.

In the summer of 1973 he had a small dojo on NW 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. It was during this time when he started running his own tournaments and was often taking his students to perform demonstrations to promote his school. In '73, Ken Ogawa, a top Morio Higaonna goju man was a regular in our classes. Sugimoto and Ogawa had known each other in Japan. Ogawa had taught in Orlando for a couple of years but then relocated to Miami and just suddenly became another sensei in our classes. Sugimoto was open-minded enough--during that time-- and had Ogawa teach some classes and Ogawa performed in many of our demonstrations as well. Ogawa's segment of the demos were sensational and in essence Ogawa unselfishly helped promote kenkokuju in the Miami area during that year. Sugimoto did the finale at these demonstrations, a ten brick forehead break.

Toward the end of the 1970s, Sugimoto's class format changed somewhat and more class time was dedicated to point fighting. He was taking students to major tournaments, the AAU Nationals in Ohio one year, and to New York the following year.

The continuous fighting was not abandoned completely however, and for belt test that is what everyone did. Even so, Sugimoto's change in emphasis proved productive and several of his students competed successfully in major events, and at the Nationals. Several made the U.S. AAU Team. Within several years Sugimoto was known as top AAU official.

During the 1970s era some of Sugimoto's early students and Black Belts were Antonio Bustillo, Roberto Marcelo, Hector Gomez, Alejandro Perez who later moved to Guatemala, Ignacio Bustillo, Luis Fors and his cousin by the same name, Luis Fors, Manny Sicre, the Tegzes brothers, Humberto Fontana, Bruce Dailey, Joe Black and Dennis Zamudio. In the mid1970s, Dennis travelled to Japan and stayed at Okano's home and trained at the honbu. Sugimoto later had a dojo off SW 72<sup>nd</sup> Street and 117<sup>th</sup> Ave that thrived for many years.

School's karate gi patch  
"Kenkojuku Association"

## Masakazu Takahashi



Started karate in 1961 and arrived in the states in 1971.  
He doesn't advertise much and he is rather low key.

He had assisted Miyazaki for a time and he even visited Miami with Miyazaki to teach special sessions at several of Sugimoto's locations. Miyazaki was the senior kenkojuku representative at the time.

Takahashi then opened his own dojo and has a high quality of Black Belts.

He is a strong and powerful karateka. Sugimoto said they had nicknamed him the 'iron horse'. Takahashi was known for kicking the heavy bag and smashing into it so hard that the bag would bend in two.

School's Karate gi patch  
"Kenkojuku Association"

## Minoru Horie



Arrived in the U.S. during the mid 1970s where he assisted teaching with Sugimoto. At one point he was in charge of the week day class at the Hialeah YMCA while Sugimoto taught the Saturday morning class. However, Horie became so popular that many preferred his class over Sugimoto's and would not attend Saturday's but only when Horie taught.

Horie was easy-going, and had a kind-hearted nature. He was an excellent teacher and very well-liked by the students in South Florida yet he eventually relocated to New York area.

Although he didn't compete much, and not widely known, he moved well and his techniques were crisp and sharp.

Karate gi patch  
"Kenkojuku Association"

## **Kobudo**

As mentioned, most Shotokan groups don't include kobudo training, yet it is part Kenkojuku's curriculum

Tomosaburo Okano practiced iaido, and all the major kobudo weapons of bo, sai, nunchaku, tonfa and their kata.

While practically all the instructors could handle the nunchaku, they specialized in some weapons more than others. The following list is what they are primarily known for yet they practiced other weapons as well.

Akusawa	Practiced iaido. He knew the basics of handling most of the kobudo weapons but did bother with their kata. He was not into Kobudo and did not teach it.
Kuriyama	Bo and sai
Sugimoto	Tonfa
Takahashi	Proficient with Bo and sai
Miyazaki	Iaido. Bo, sai He often won in weapons competitions. See magazine article
Horie	Kama. He was an expert with the sickles. At a demonstration once, he accidentally cut his back and blood could be seen on the back of his gi. Yet, he did not flinch nor interrupt his performance and he finished the demo before taking care of the wound.

Antonio Bustillo (Gasshuku, 2014, Columbus, Georgia)



Ignacio Bustillo (South America)



Hector Gomez, Flavio, Jose Fundora  
Shapiro Jibiki(Okano's friend, founder of Kenshokai Goju ryu ) and sons



Hector Gomez, competing in Japan(Tokyo Budokan)