

# The Shin-no-shinkage hyohō of Ogasawara Genshinsai

*Review of contemporary research on the formation & transmission of Jiki Shinkage-ryū.*

by Mark Raugas

## 真之心陰兵法

Shin-no-shinkage hyohō (真之心陰兵法) is the name Ogasawara Genshinsai used to describe his swordsmanship after his return from Beijing after the death of Tokugawa Ieyasu. Ogasawara's time spent in China during the beginning of the Edo period had a profound effect on his swordsmanship. I am similarly influenced by teachings from Taoist martial arts, so wanted to provide some notes below on readings of recent Japanese scholarship on Jiki Shinkage-ryū.

Two works survive by Ogasawara Genshinsai and can be found in the Odawara City Library collection. Regarding the rise of his tradition, Genshinsai wrote:

I am calm and composed. Although I have tried various streams, I have not yet reached the deepest level of the art. Because I have crossed the river differently, people are in harmony with each other, and they are diligent in their studies. I am thinking about it with a sincere heart. [2]

One explanation, from Karukome and Sakai, is as follows:

The content of this record roughly says that he has studied various schools since he was young but was unable to reach their profound meaning. However, by traveling overseas and learning from others, he reached the profound meaning, and after carefully thinking about these, he named it Shin-no-shinkage heihō.

The martial arts exchanges between China and Japan in the Ming Dynasty were certainly far more than the Kage-ryū crossing of the sea related to General Qi and the single-sword method related to Liu Yunfeng from Zhejiang. The example

here can be called the second Kage-ryū crossing of the sea in terms of the inheritance of Kage-ryū.<sup>1</sup>

The first crossing of Kage-ryū described above, influenced the development of the Chinese martial arts I study. It is only fitting that when I practice Japanese martial arts, I preserve content derived from the second. The Quanzhen School (全真: Quánzhēn, "All-True", Complete Perfection, Integrating Perfection or Complete Reality) of Taoism:

is one of the two dominant denominations of Daoism in China. One of its founders was master Wang Chongyang (1113–1170). When the Mongols invaded China the Quanzhen Taoists exerted great effort in keeping the peace, thus saving most Han Chinese lives. Qiu Chuji, a major disciple of Wang, founded the Dragon Gate lineage (龍門派 Lóngmén pài), along with the White Cloud Monastery in Beijing. This tradition remains one of the largest Taoist sects in China.<sup>2</sup>

I think it is no accident Ogasawara returned from China using the character 真 to describe his heihō, given the strong influence Taoist concepts of yin and yang complementarity and five element theory continue to have on the practice, even over four hundred years later. Quanzhen Taoism is also the type of Taoism associated to the formal lineage in Chinese internal martial arts I am part of, so I feel a special connection to the name Shin-no-shinkage.

Ogasawara taught spear techniques in late Ming China:

Genshinsai Ogasawara taught the descendants of Zhang Liang in the Ming Dynasty the art of the spear, the eight-sun enkyaku jaku.<sup>3</sup>

In Jiki Shinkage-ryū, the use of the term Kashima-shinden dates from 1765, over one hundred and fifty years after the founding of the art. Its use is due to the influence of Naganuma Shirōzaemon attributing the genesis of the art to Matsumoto Bizen no Kami, a retainer of Kashima shrine. His predecessors, Takahashi Danjozaemon and Yamada Heizaemon (Ippusai), regarded Kamiya Denshinsai as the originator of the art, and in writings by Heizaemon in 1708, no mention of Kashima-shinden is made

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<sup>1</sup> Karukome Yoshitaka, Sakai Toshinobu: An analysis of the formation of Jiki Shinkage-ryū in relation to its lineage and transmission. 武道学研究 47—3: 119—138, 2015. 原著.

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia.

<sup>3</sup><https://100ren.jimdoweb.com>

So, in my mind, the concept of Kashima-shinden is not associated to historical Jiki Shinkage-ryū at the time of early masters like Okuyama and Ogasawara. It is also much more likely that Matsumoto Bizen no Kami studied under Kamiizumi Ise no Kami, founder of Shinkage-ryū, than the other way around. The emphasis on Kashima-shinden was an Edo period innovation for that art and hides some of its earlier character – that change of emphasis has only increased in modern times with influences from state Shinto and militaristic Zen popular in the Meiji and Taisho periods.

Earlier writings on the art by Ogasawara instead cite several esoteric Buddhist guardian deities instead of Takemikazuchi-no-kami, the patron deity of Kashima, as providing protection to its adherents, including: Fudō-o (*Acalanatha*; 不動明王), the associated naga (divine serpent) Kurikara-ryū-o (俱利伽羅竜王) and Daitokuten (*Mahākāla*; 大黒天):

無想法身虚実同体 — 不動經 (*Musō-hō mi kyojitsu dōtai*) The oneness of reality and emptiness — the Acalanatha Sutra.<sup>4</sup>

The core Shinkage-ryū kata called *empi*, said to be the essence of Kamiizumi Ise no Kami's Shinkage-ryū, is present in Ogasawara's writing, using the homophone 圓飛 instead of 燕飛. Ogasawara's writing also mentions the *gokui* practice of *tengu-sho* 天狗抄. These kata, along with the set called *kuka*, are said to be the core of what Kamiizumi Ise no Kami received from Aisu Kage-ryū.<sup>5</sup> Sangakuen, in contrast, which bears a resemblance to Hōjō (most clearly in the names of several of the kata within the set), is said to have been derived from enpi no tachi as a set of explanatory or introductory practices — the name Hōjō literally means "foundational practices" — the relationship in that case seems clear, although Sangakuen and Hōjō looks quite different in contemporary surviving lines of Shinkage-ryū and Jiki Shinkage-ryū.

また、流儀を興した経緯について、源信斎は、「予 自リ レ若、雖モ レ試  
ルト ニ諸流ヲ、未ダレ至ラ ニ其奥儀ニ、異朝ニ渡ル故、人ニ相応ズ  
ル之旨叶ヒ、忝テ勤メレ之ヲ、情々思レ之ヲ以テ真之心陰ト云 26)」(送

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<sup>4</sup> Ishigaki, Y., 1992. Kashima Shinden Jiki Shinkage-ryū Gokui Denkai 鹿島神伝直心影流極意伝開. Shinjusha.

<sup>5</sup> This contrasts with other accounts, which claim that Kamiizumi collated or invented the set *empi* or reworked it from earlier Shintō-ryū material.

り仮名，返り点，読点筆者）と述べている。[...] しかし，国郷以前の伝書に「鹿島神伝」と記されることはなかったようである。<sup>6</sup>

Most lines of Jiki Shinkage-ryū no longer practice empi, kuka or tengu-sho. Ogasawara's practice and the earlier teachings of Kamiizumi Ise-no-kami are clearly connected in this manner, the latter which credits Aisu Kage-ryū as its inspiration, as quoted above.

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<sup>6</sup> Ishigaki, Y. 1992. (ibid)