

**Christina Gutz**

**"Ten Chi Jin is the key to developing Nairiki, the key to unlocking the true depth of Japanese budo."  
Takamura Yukiyoshi – Takamura-ha Shindo Yoshin Ryu**

**Wado Course with Toby Threadgill (USA) and Bob Nash (USA) in Berlin from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2013**

150 students, among these numerous guests from Denmark, Finland, Portugal, Sweden, and Hungary, trained for two days under the instruction of **Toby Threadgill** (Menkyo Kaiden, Takamura-ha Shindo Yoshin Ryu Jujutsu) and **Bob Nash** (7<sup>th</sup> Dan JKF Wadokai) in Berlin. More than 20 blackbelts attended the train-the-trainer session conducted by Bob Nash on Monday evening. National and international contacts could again be established and intensified at this traditional Berlin Wado course. It was a great pleasure and honor to welcome **Shuzo Imai**, 8<sup>th</sup> Dan Wado Ryu, as a guest for the second time.

This Wado course was a special one because it placed the focus on an important aspect which is hardly ever taught in this way: The relationship between Ten Chi Jin and Nairiki in general and its meaning for Shindo Yoshin Ryu and Wado Ryu in particular.

**What is the meaning of the terms Ten Chi Jin and Nairiki?**

Toby Threadgill and Bob Nash explained the terms Ten Chi Jin and Nairiki and their historical background in their introductory presentations:

Ten Chi Jin literally means Heaven, Earth, Man. Toby Threadgill put it like this: In classical Japanese Budo, power is believed to derive from above and below, heaven and earth, with man as the conduit for creating unified power.

It is easy but inaccurate to simply categorize various schools of martial arts as either Nairiki (internal) or Gairiki (external) but the reality is that many so called Nairiki based schools have Gairiki and many Gairiki based schools have Nairiki. Nai means internal, riki means power, strength. Developing Nairiki is a long and arduous process which requires correct instruction. The problem is that competent Nairiki instructors are few and far between. What is more, Nairiki is historically transmitted by the sensei verbally (Kuden) to only a selected group of students. Not every sensei was competent or willing to convey these principles as they were usually considered secret (Gokui). As a result, knowledge was lost or misinterpreted.

**Ten Chi Jin and Nairiki – from China to Japan**

The notion of Ten Chi Jin originated in China. The symbol for Ying and Yang clearly depicts the notion of Heaven Earth Man with one side being Heaven, the other side being Earth and the line separating the two is Man. The Japanese creation myth with Izanagi and Izanami standing on the "floating bridge of heaven" and churning the sea with a diamond-studded spear, salt water dripping from the spear creating the initial Japanese land mass can be interpreted as an allegory or metaphor for Heaven Earth Man with the Gods in Heaven creating Earth below while standing on the Floating bridge of Heaven (Man).

The term "nèijǎ" (Chinese for Nairiki) is first mentioned in history by the Chinese political theorist, philosopher and martial artist Huang Zongxi in the "Epitaph for Wang Zhengnan" in 1669. Chinese Qi Gong Kung Fu developing

since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, for instance, may be classified under Nairiki, Shaolin Quanfa and Wing Tsun, however, under Gairiki.

Knowledge about Nairiki came to Japan in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by virtue of the traditional relationships between China and Japan. This was towards the latter period of extensive armed conflict in Japan. During the Warring States Era, fighting was not so much about embracing a specific martial art, but was rather a simple matter of life and death. Since many of the lower level samurai only had access to minor weapons they developed simple but practical tactics associated with close quarter battlefield conflict. As these tactics became codified they evolved into specific schools of jujutsu. Around 2,000 jujutsu schools existed in Japan in the 17<sup>th</sup> century which clearly illustrates the numerical explosion of these types of schools following the Warring States Era in Japanese history. This created a rich environment for the newly embraced skill of Nairiki. Numerous jujutsu schools embraced Nairiki training and among those was perhaps the most influential of all, the Yoshin ryu of Yoshitoki Akiyama.

### **Preserving the knowledge about Nairiki in Shindo Yoshin Ryu and Wado Ryu**

The historic precursors of Shindo Yoshin Ryu were influenced by Chinese martial arts. Two schools should be mentioned in this context: Nakamura Yoshin Koryu, established by Nakamura Yoshikuni in Nagasaki in 1610 and later called Miura Ryu or Miura Yoshin Ryu, and Akiyama Yoshin Ryu Jujutsu, established by Akiyama Yoshitoki in 1632, also in Nagasaki. Both Nakamura and Akiyama were cognizant of Nairiki. Matuoka Katsunosuke merged these two lines to form Shindo Yoshin Ryu in 1864. Ohbata – later Takamura-ha – Shindo Yoshin Ryu is a direct successor to Matuoka Katsunosuke's Shindo Yoshin Ryu. The knowledge of Nairiki has been preserved here for generations.<sup>1</sup> Toby Threadgill, in his capacity as Menkyo Kaiden and Joden Gokui Mokuroku, continues to preserve this knowledge and legacy.

Hironori Otsuka (1892 - 1982), the founder of Wado Ryu, was also familiar with Nairiki. He was highly trained in both Yoshin Koryu and Shindo Yoshin ryu. He registered Wado Ryu in the Butokuden in Kyoto in 1938. In the registration form, he noted that the originator of his Japanese style of karate was Akiyama Yoshitoki, the founder of Akiyama Yoshin Ryu Jujitsu<sup>2</sup>. So Otsuka sensei transferred the knowledge of the Koryu schools, and thereby also the knowledge about Nairiki, to Wado Ryu<sup>3</sup>. Hideho Takagi, 8<sup>th</sup> Dan JKF Wadokai, was one of Otsuka sensei's students. Bob Nash, in turn, is a close student of Tagaki sensei's. Consequently, Bob Nash is also cognizant of Nairiki.

### **The Course in Berlin: Ten Chi Jin and Nairiki in Shindo Yoshin Ryu and Wado Ryu**

Toby Threadgill and Bob Nash had thoroughly prepared this Berlin Wado course. Both had prepared not only presentations, but also exercises and explanations with respect to Nairiki and Ten Chi Jin specifically for this course to provide the participants with some insights into this knowledge and these skills.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, please refer to <http://shinyokai.com>

<sup>2</sup> "When Otsuka Sensei registered Wadoryu for the very first time at the national festival hosted by the Butokuden in Kyoto (1938) he wrote on the registration form that the originator of his style, the first Japanese style of karate was Yoshitoki Akiyama. There is a lot in that declaration. Wado was formally registered for the first time as a karate style in 1938.

Otsuka makes a distinction between Okinawan Karate and his (Japanese) karate.

He wrote down that the originator of his Japanese karate was Yoshitoki Akiyama. Akiyama is the founder of the most well known line of Yoshin ryu Jujitsu. It was founded in 1632 in Nagasaki, Japan ..."

Bob Nash: History of Shindo Yoshin Ryu for Dummies. No year and place cited

<sup>3</sup>See: Christina Gutz: Wado 2012 Whitsun course in Berlin. „Koryu lives a little bit in Wado. Shindo Yoshin Ryu and Wado are like cousins.” (Toby Threadgill) In: <http://www.wado-karate.de>

The following discussion will summarize what Ten Chi Jin and Nairiki mean at the physical and mental levels. Describing the methods used and the exercises would go beyond the scope of this article. It should, however, be mentioned that Toby Threadgill and Bob Nash matched their exercises so that the students could gain an idea both of the general context of Nairiki and Ten Chi Jin and the historically evolved relationship between TSYR and Wado Ryu.

Takamura Yuki Yoshi refers to the manifestation of Ten Chi Jin and Nairiki as the "Budo Body". The aspects described in the following are not isolated from one another, but are related to and interact with one another:

- The Tanden is the center of Ki (and is slightly below the navel). The Tanden provides the link between earth and heaven. Energy concentrates in the Tanden and is also released from here, causing motion. Earth and Heaven being metaphors for down and up. We pull from our tanden down to the ground. We pull from our tanden up to heaven.
- The body is structured and aligned by the skeleton and muscles. Only if the skeleton is properly aligned can the muscles efficiently cause the movements. Reference may also be made, inter alia, to "cross connections" where the fasciae as an enveloping and connecting tension network of the body make an important contribution. In zenkutsu dachi, for instance, there is a "cross connection" from the right rear foot via the back and the tanden to the left front fist. Toby Threadgill demonstrated impressively with Nairiki No Gyo yoitsuki that there is indeed also a change between connected and non-connected movements.<sup>4</sup>
- The imagination of a general eccentric expansion of the entire body structure in all directions emanating from the tanden supports, on the one hand, stabilization and, on the other hand, helps develop the required dynamism and power of a technique. Bob Nash referred to six fundamental directions: up, down, left, right, front, back.
- Internal awareness: This refers to the sensitivity which permeates the body, which increases proprioception and, thereby, enables a better control of the body structure and muscles.
- Intent: Only with intent can a correct, effective movement be performed: Intent leads ki, ki leads body.<sup>5</sup> But also when practicing drills with a partner, fighting intent is very important: "It starts in the mind, the mind leads ki, ki leads the body."<sup>6</sup> In an example that illustrates mental preparation using Kihon Kumite 10: The attacker's second tsuki is anticipated even before he punches, i.e., the defender sees and feels the attacker's intent and starts his movement as soon as the attacker begins to punch. Toby Threadgill underlined that developing this mental awareness is essential, and that without it you would be defeated – in the battles of old you would simply have been killed: "An active and perceptive mind was cultivated in the life or death environment of conflict with bladed weapons."<sup>7</sup>
- Nairiki is soft and powerful at the same time. Toby Threadgill and Bob Nash compared it with silk: "It's like pulling silk."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> „There is a change between to be connected and to be unconnected“, Toby Threadgill: Wado course in Berlin, 24<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2013

<sup>5</sup> Bob Nash: Wado course in Berlin, 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb., 2013

<sup>6</sup> Toby Threadgill: Wado course in Berlin, 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb., 2013

<sup>7</sup> Toby Threadgill: Wado course in Berlin, 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb., 2013

<sup>8</sup> Toby Threadgill and Bob Nash: Wado course in Berlin, 24<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2013

In addition to many exercises from kihon, partner drills and kata, Toby Threadgill focused on the TSYR Nairiki No Gyo, the “eight divinely inspired teachings of internal strength”<sup>9</sup>, and Bob Nash on Naihanchi which Otsuka considered to be the Nairiki of Wado Ryu.<sup>10</sup>

Both underlined that a correct basis, good kihon, are the pre-requisites for understanding and applying Ten Chi Jin and Nairiki. Learning these skills is a long process that requires patience, perseverance, accepting failure, and thinking about and correcting same – in brief, it’s a life-long quest.

### **Ten Chi Jin and the One-in-All and All-in-One**

This course was unique because it conveyed Ten Chi Jin and Nairiki on the physical and mental levels, thereby providing important input to the participants for their further development.

Ten Chi Jin was also explained as a diverse concept which goes beyond the physical and mental realms: Man as the link between heaven and earth, in the midst of the universe and part of the universe. So, eventually, everything is connected with everything. We should not only find our own center, but develop and use Nairiki in such a manner that Harmony/Wa becomes possible in things great and small.

We thank Toby Threadgill and Bob Nash very much indeed for this unique course.

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<sup>9</sup> Toby Threadgill: Wado course in Berlin, 24<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2013

<sup>10</sup> Bob Nash: Wado course in Berlin, 24<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2013