

**The connection between Shindo Yoshin Ryu and Wado Ryu
Wado and TSYR Seminar with Koichi Shimura (Japan) and Toby Threadgill (USA)
on February 21 and 22, 2026, in Berlin**

by Christina Gutz

This year we celebrated an anniversary: Our Wado and TSYR Seminar has been around for twenty years! It was led on February 21 and 22, 2026, in Berlin by Toby Threadgill (USA), Kaicho and Menkyo Kaiden Takamura Ha Shindo Yoshin Ryu, and Koichi Shimura (Japan), 8th Dan JKF Wado-Kai and JKF Wado-Kai 1st Instructor. The international significance of this traditional course is also illustrated by the total of 140 Wado Karateka and TSYR practitioners from 14 nations: Belgium, Germany, England, Finland, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, and the USA.

The historical connection between Shindo Yoshin Ryu and Wado Ryu

Shindo Yoshin Ryu is a koryu school founded in 1864 by Matsuoka Katsunosuke. An authorized branch, the Ohbata/Takamura line, is now led as Takamura Ha Shindo Yoshin Ryu (TSYR) by Toby Threadgill as Kaicho and Menkyo Kaiden.¹

Karate belongs to Gendai Budo, the martial arts developed in Japan after 1868. Hironori Otsuka (1892–1982) trained in Shindo Yoshin Ryu at the dojo of Tatsusaburo Nakayama (1870–1945) in two periods between 1907 and 1921.² In 1934, he founded Wado Ryu, which can thus be classified as Gendai Budo.³

The aim of this year's Wado and TSYR Seminar was to demonstrate and convey the connection between Shindo Yoshin Ryu and Wado Ryu using exemplary principles and movement patterns.

Everything starts with kihon and returns to kihon

Right at the beginning of the course, Threadgill and Shimura emphasized the great importance of kihon. Kihon means basic training. It is fundamental work that must be trained with dedication, precision, and patience. This basic training trains both body and mind. Even advanced practitioners return to kihon again and again to confirm their techniques, refine them, automate them, and develop further on this basis.

Kihon, kata, and their inherent principles

Threadgill based his teaching on taisabaki ("body management," usually referring to an evasive movement), which originated in Shindo Yoshin Ryu in the use of sharp weapons such as swords and

¹ Tobin Threadgill and Shingo Ohgami: Shindo Yoshin Ryu. History and Technique, Evergreen, Colorado 2019

² Tobin Threadgill and Shingo Ohgami: s.o., S. 101 f.

³ Hironori Otsuka gründete 1934 die Vorläuferorganisation des Wado-Kai Verbandes, den „Dai Nippon Karate Shinko Club“. Dies wird als ursprüngliche Gründung des Wado Ryu gesehen. In den 1950er Jahren konstituierte Hironori Otsuka die „Zen Nippon Karatedo Renmei“. Am 5. Juni 1967 wurde der Name Zen Nippon Karatedo Renmei zu Wado-Kai geändert. Mit der Gründung der Federation of All Japan Karedo Organization (FAJKO, später umbenannt zu JKF) Mitte der 1960er Jahre wurde die Bezeichnung Wado-Kai offiziell gebräuchlich.

Vgl.: <http://canadajkfwadokai.org/> und <https://www.jkfwadokaisohonbu.de/>

tanto. Shimura also emphasized the importance of taisabaki in his training, for example in nagashi zuki and kihon kumite. Threadgill used numerous other exercises to illustrate that in Shindo Yoshin Ryu, the development of paired kata with bare hands and their inherent principles also have their origins in the use of weapons. The participants were able to experience how these principles inherent in kata were adopted in Wado Ryu during Shimura's training, e.g., te gaeshi in kihon kumite 5.

In addition to training in kihon and kihon kumite, Shimura deepened his understanding of the principles inherent in Wado Ryu through kata kaisetsu (examination and explanation of kata). With kata kaisetsu, Otsuka drew on his many years of experience with the pedagogy of Shindo Yoshin Ryu. Shimura conveyed this through kaisetsu exercises of Pinan and some higher kata. In this way, he trained the participants' understanding of the study of body mechanics and the development of internal body connections and dynamics.

Threadgill and Shimura were able to successfully convey these challenging concepts and content because the participants shared a positive mindset and zanshin: relaxed collaborative learning and cooperative exchange took place in a focused and attentive atmosphere.

Win-win situation

This seminar – like many others over the last twenty years – showed that constructive exchange between Wado Ryu and TSYR and training together enables us to gain new experiences and insights and is fun and enjoyable. Toby Threadgill as Kaicho and Menkyo Kaiden of TSYR and Koichi Shimura as one of the highest representatives of the JKF Wa-do-Kai guarantee an excellent level of content for this cooperation at a high official level with the Wado and TSYR Seminar.