



## Reishiki

By Jerry Figgiani

**T**hroughout my journey in the martial arts, one of the commonalities that is taught and preached about in most dojos is respect. Yet, it is funny how so many martial artists speak poorly of one another. Negative comments are exchanged through organizational gossip and social media. My philosophy in this matter has always been to try to take the high road. Although it is okay to disagree with someone, it is still a paramount principle within the martial arts to respect our peers for their differences and opinions. In 2009 after launching Shorin Ryu Karatedo International, one of my goals was to set a tone in this new organization which valued respect amongst its members and the differences in our approach to teaching the martial arts. I don't always agree with some of the philosophies and the approaches that some of our members take. However, at the same time, I won't disrespect them or their opinions.

Back in 2007, I had the opportunity to attend the seminar given by the late Okinawan Karate Master Kensei Taba. I had first met Taba Sensei in 1991 in Okinawa. Since that time, I, along with some of my students, had the opportunity to visit him in Okinawa. Our friendship was based on respect. What was important to me as a sensei was not only the respect which he gave to me, but the respect he extended to my students as well. Since his passing in 2012, members of Shorin Ryu Karatedo International and I, have remained in contact with the teachers and students which Taba Sensei helped develop. Our friendship and bonding was rooted in mutual respect for one another and our deep respect for Shorin Ryu Karate. Through the years, there has been continuous contact and exchange of ideas... phone calls, emails, numerous visits to Okinawa and social media.

In 2016 after organizing a trip to Ireland with Takeshi Tomaki Sensei and Masahiko Tokashiki Sensei, it was decided at a meeting to unite our organization with theirs. This joint venture with the International Sho-



gen Ryu Karatedo Kyokai has been a tremendous turning point for Shorin Ryu Karatedo International. The Okinawan senseis decided we should keep the name--- Shorin Ryu Karatedo International and pledge that both sides will continue their effort to expand and promote Okinawan Karatedo both internationally and domestically. With the chairman Takeshi Tomaki Sensei, a patch was approved and designed by Sadahiro Makino Sensei and Tsutomu Daiku San. The patch continues to represent an open approach to the promotional and expansion of values governed by respect. 2017 will mark a decade of both cooperation and collaboration between our two organizations now uniting as one. Holding the ideals of sharing Okinawan Karatedo with the greatest number of practitioners, this is not just a unification, but much more so a collaborative tribute to both Grandmaster Shoshin Nagamine and Kensei Taba Sensei. This formation represents an open and inclusive approach to the sharing of ideas and concepts between all Shorin Ryu karateka without regard to the political divisiveness which is all too often present. In the end, it was respect which created this accomplishment and the benefit is that people around the world have the opportunity for a direct connection to Okinawa. 🐉

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