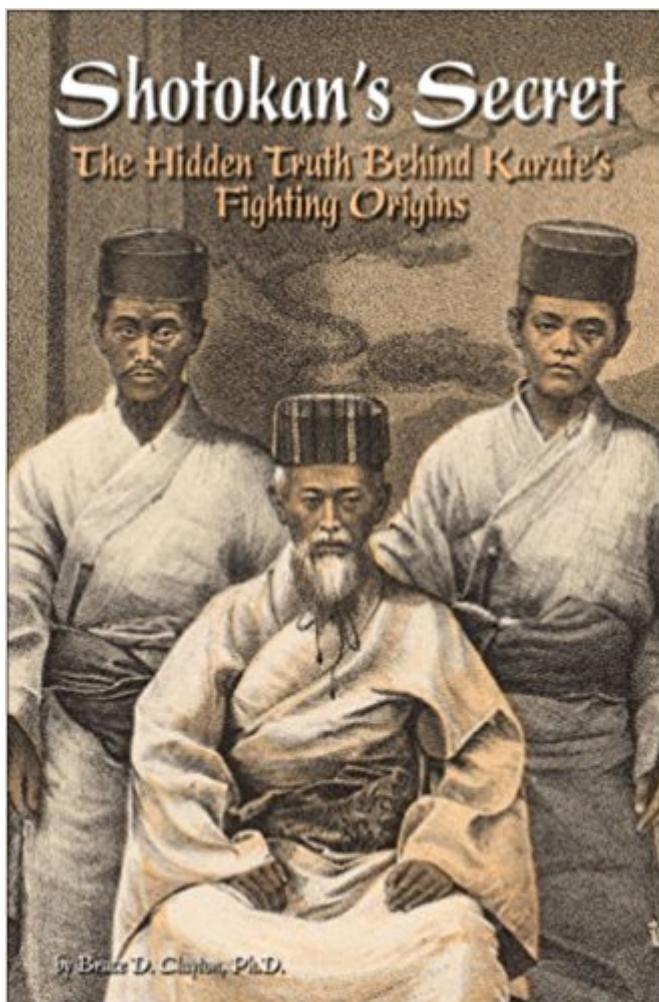


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Shotokan's Secret: The Hidden Truth Behind Karate's Fighting Origins



Synopsis

Learn how the hard-style karate that became shotokan took shape in 19th century Okinawa as an embattled king with an unarmed force of bodyguards faced an armed invasion from overseas. In this new 328-page book, author Bruce D. Clayton, Ph.D., uses rare sketches, footnoted historical research, archival lithographs, period photographs and contemporary technique demonstrations to reveal shotokan's deadly intent and propose modern practical applications of such knowledge. Achieve a new level of theoretical understanding and fighting ability by learning Shotokan's Secret for yourself!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Bruce D. Clayton, PhD, has studied the art of karate since 1973. He holds a seventh-degree black belt in Shotokan karate and he is the creator of Jein Do, a self-defense course for young women. He is the author of the Black Medicine series, Fallout Survival, Life After Doomsday, Life After Terrorism, and Thinking About Survival. He has appeared on 60 Minutes, the CBS Evening News, Today, and the Tomorrow Show. He lives in Yosemite, California.

Whether Dr. Clayton's assertion about the origins of Shotokan are accurate or not, they are extremely well thought out. I have trained with master Kanazawa master Okasaki and their sempai Osuma. None of them mentioned anything like what Clayton explains. This book delves especially into the creation of the Hein katas. It tell you exactly what the hell you are supposed to be doing, and as a Karateka for over 30 years, this was the best explanation I've ever come across. Spoiler

alert! This book is a great read, I'm about to reveal one of the biggest surprises so stop now if you'd rather read it in the book..Clayton theorizes that it was Admiral Perry's visit to Okinawa that lead to the development of Shotokan and the Hein Kata. Look at the picture on the cover. That is the emperor and the two men to each side are his body guards. The two men who will go on to teach a young boy martial arts. That young boy was Gichin Funokoshi. He explains in great detail how he comes to this conclusion. Of course, the same country that inspired Shotokan would later obliterate all traces of it's beginnings in the second world war, so much of this is guess work. But such masterful guesswork I have never seen.If you love karate get this book. Get your students to get this book. You will actually enjoy doing the Hein Katas again.Here are a few quick bits. What is the first move in Hein Nidan? Never satisfied with the pat answers? Neither was I. Imagine this. You are the unarmed bodyguard of the Okinawan King. Standing by are young brash Samurai. Their skill is the single stroke of their ancient blades. so powerful it would cut through a pelvis. The first move is dodging that one down stroke and knocking the flat part of the blade aside. Easy? Are you nuts? But you are unarmed against an expert with a Katana!Hein Sandan. What a bizarre kata. So much so an early instructor of mine refused to teach it. Clayton's interpretation is a policeman going into a saloon to arrest a bad guy, the bizarre movements with hands on hips are you carrying him as you fight your way out of the saloon. I cannot give Clayton's descriptions justice here, so please if you love karate, GET THIS BOOK.Is he correct? Even he states their is probably no way to know. Do any of the Japanese know? Have you ever questioned a master? Evasive is an understatement. I suspect however that they do not know. Karate, like all traditional Japanese arts is taught through repetitive copying. Asking question of your instruction was unthinkable. But great job Dr. Clayton, give us another!

This book offers some unique perspective but should not be utilized as a reliable resource for karate history. It suffers from the common mistake of starting with a desired conclusion, and then picking and choosing evidence to try and support it. Entire chunks of karate history that derail the main themes in the book (such as the circular, tuidi art of motobu udundi) are omitted. The author goes to great lengths to characterize certain individuals in karate history, either to boost their reputation or discredit them, often leaving the path of real research for supposition and guesses.The popularity of this book has, unfortunately, done more harm than good for karate history and practice.

I bought the 2004 version of Shotokan's Secret back in 2007 and thoroughly enjoyed reading the book. Dr. Bruce Clayton presented, what I thought, was a compelling case for the meaning of the

kata by using historical sources. When I ran across this updated version, I wondered whether or not it would be worthwhile to purchase. Was there really new material, and would that new material be worth purchasing the book again? Or, as is typical of many "new and improved" items, would this just be a marketing attempt to get me to part with my hard earned money for no real improvements at all? The answer is this: the new material makes it worth purchasing the book again. But do not just take my word for it. You make up your mind for yourself. To help you make that decision, here are some of the differences between the two versions. I cannot list them all, for they are too numerous, but here are some of the more important ones.

Chapter 1 has two new sections. The first is Section 1.6 and is an introduction to the Japanese sword fighter Mushashi who wrote The Book of the Five Rings. This becomes important later in the book. The second piece of additional material in Chapter 1 is Section 1.13 which deals with the Satsuma Rebellion.

Chapter 2 has much new material. The most important material is that Dr. Clayton deals a decisive blow to the three myths of martial arts. What he shows is that while martial arts are ancient, they are also constantly evolving.

Chapter 3 talks about Commodore Perry's arrival in Okinawa. Chapter 4 is nearly the same between the two versions. There is some new material here, but not much. By the time you have reached Chapter 4, you already have 15% more, new material. If you are thinking by this point in the review that there is not much new here, and it is not worth buying a new copy, then I would have to agree with you.

However, from this point onward, everything changes.

Chapter 6 in the 2004 version talks about the Shuri battle Plan. While it is pure fiction, this happens to be my favorite chapter to read. It is just pure fun. Too bad the action lasts on 30 seconds. Too bad that this fictional story does not appear in the 2010 version. Dr. Clayton alludes to what Matsumura might have done, in the 2010 version, but does not describe it in detail. Instead, Chapter 5 and 6 from the 2004 version are combined into Chapter 5 of the 2010 version.

From here on out, I will talk about the 2010 version only, since it is largely new material.

Chapter 6 talks about Bodyguard Bunkai. Dr. Clayton lays out his criteria for recovering what the original kata looked like, before all the recent changes were made. My second favorite is the dinglehopper criteria. My favorite is the Last Move Rule. Simply put, if there is no combative explanation for the last move of a kata, then we can ignore it. "Anyone who has tried to figure out the bunny hop moves at the end of chinte kata will be grateful for this rule." Bingo!

Chapter 7 talks about his research into Heian Nidan. Dr. Clayton believes this is a kata to be used for disarming a Samurai swordsman.

Chapter 8 talks about his research into Heian Shodan. Dr. Clayton believes this is a kata to be used for street fighting. In short, it is about increasing the force of your punch by using linear karate.

Chapter 9 talks about his research into Heian Sandan. Dr. Clayton believes this is a kata to be used for policing the waterfront, like in a bar where a wanted

criminal is hanging out. Your job as the policeman is to go into the bar, beat him and his friends into submission, and exit with the prisoner. Chapter 10 talks about his research into Heian Yondan. Dr. Clayton believes this is a kata to be used for attacking Samurai armor. Chapter 11 talks about his research into Heian Godan. Dr. Clayton believes this is a kata to be used for fighting against sabers and bayonets. Chapter 12 sums everything up with a Lesson's learned. What is missing from the 2010 version? Pretty much all of Chapter 8 through 12 of the old book. It is true that some parts survive, such as dinglehoppers, but not all of them. Is it worth buying the new book if you have the old? Yes! The 2010 version has about 50% new material, or about 175 pages. Is it worth buying the old book if you have the new? Well, given that at the time of this writing the 2004 version of the book is selling for \$1, then yes. It is not worth buying the 2004 version if you are paying full price. In my opinion the 2010 version is superior to the 2004 version. Dr. Clayton has done an excellent job in improving on his original work.

I love this book. I really don't believe that it's possible to understand shotokan, or many similar karate styles, without a thorough reading and re-reading of this amazing book. Many of the mysteries apparent in karate disappear when placed in the historical context of the Shuri Crucible. Once exposed however, it all tends to fall into place. Many kudos to Dr. Clayton and his fellow cohorts for their decades long diligence in pursuing the path wherever it lead. And they are still traveling and will likely expose more light in the future. Along with Peter Urban's "The Karate Dojo", and Jay Glick's "Zen Combat", this has become one of my all-time favorite martial arts books. The perfect combination of historical research, dedicated long-time practice, drama and mystery, in short, an absolute delight for the sophisticated martial arts enthusiast. A must read for anyone in shotokan or any similar school of karate and a great read for any history-minded martial artist of any background. Also, the lithographs are priceless!

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