



*Koinobori, Utagawa Kunisada (1786 - 1865)*

## Events Schedule

<b>March 9,10</b>	<i>Mizu Hi Tai Kai</i>
Yuma, Arizona	
<b>March 11</b>	<i>Sekiguchi Testing</i>
Yuma, Shugo Shin Taka Dojo	
<b>April 13,14</b>	<i>MSR / Seitei Seminar</i>
Tucson, Arizona	
<b>August 31</b>	<i>West Coast Tai Kai</i>
Costa Mesa, CA, Hilton Hotel	

## Kagami Biraki

The *Yamakawa Dojo* celebrated the annual start of the New Year with a gathering at Dr. Gettings house and *Dojo*. The potluck dinner featured many Japanese and American favorites as well as a taste of *Mochi* for everyone present. Mr. Wintin led the ceremonial portion of the evening under a floating cloud of pine boughs and *Origami*. This was followed by a "mini-lecture" from Dr. Gettings on the true meaning of *Budo* complete with visual aids.

The New Year has also brought a change of venue for our Monday practices. Our old location at Grant Road was not renewed after negotiation with the owner. Therefore the *Dojo* floor was removed and put into storage.

We now meet regularly at the Stone Avenue *Dojo* where "the ceilings are high, parking is plentiful and the temperature is above average."

## Sekiguchi Testing

This year the testing for rank in the *Shin Shin Sekiguchi Ryu* was held in Yuma, Arizona. *Yamada Soke* traveled from his home in *Takayama*, Japan to personally officiate the testing and to serve as head judge of the *Mizu Hi Tai Kai*. Among the students to be elevated in rank this year from the *Yamakawa Dojo* are;



Patrick Haley (*Nidan*)

David Wallis (*Nidan*)

Three of our local instructors also earned advanced rank in the *Sekiguchi Ryu* this year.

Mark Gettings (*Okuden*)

Mark Gettings (*Hanshi*)

Dan Keupp (*Renshi*)

Ken Wintin (*Renshi*)

We are fortunate to have so many highly qualified instructors in the Tucson region.

## Mizu Hi Tai Kai

The annual *Mizu Hi Tai Kai* was held this year in Yuma, Arizona. Students from many *Dojo* of the West were in attendance as well as several from the Midwest and East. Once again competition was at a very high level in all areas. Our own **Patrick Haley** took first place in the *Shodan / Nidan Batto Kata*. Patrick also proved to be formidable in the early rounds many other events. **Dave Wallis** pulled a new surprise out of his *Obi*, this *Tai Kai*. He managed to win the open class, *Iai Tameshigiri* match against a perennial winner, Robin Ramirez. This match and several other placings helped Dave win the overall *Shodan / Nidan* Class. Other local

friends had similar success. **Dan Keupp** won many matches and was second overall for the *Tai Kai*. Likewise, "**Doc**" **Schim** bested the field in *Tameshigiri*, *Shodan / Nidan*.

## Tango no Sekku

**Boy's Day** is celebrated all over Japan on **May 5th** (Fifth day of the Fifth Month). Also now called *Kodomo no Hi* (Children's Day), this festival is most often symbolized by displays of *Koinobori* across the rooftops in every city. It is traditional for a family to display a *Koi* wind flag for each son in their household and also to display symbols of Japanese warriors in the house like swords, bows and arrows. The oldest son has the honor of being represented by the largest flag and some displays are quite extravagant with spinners and streamers. Young boys are reminded of their place in Japanese society by participating in special events in the clothing of traditional warriors. They are also encouraged to honor their parents and siblings on this day. The carp is meant to symbolize the struggles of a boy's upbringing as *Koi* are often seen thrashing the water when it becomes shallow. In Japan this fish embodies the spirit of determined effort



A similar festival for girls is held on **March 3rd** (Third day of the Third Month). *Hinamatsuri* or Girl's Day, is a festival celebrating the health and beauty of Japan's girls and young women. It is celebrated in the home to ensure a daughter's future happiness. Special platforms of *Hina* (Princess) dolls are on display until March 4th. The public portion of this festival includes the preparation of paper dolls that will be set adrift in a wooden boat. This is believed to have its roots in a purification ritual where people prepared paper dolls to take away their "ills". Peach blossoms are also an important decoration during this time. The peach blossom is said to represent a happy marriage as well as serving as a symbol of gentility, composure and tranquility.



## Muso Shinden Ryu

The members of *Yamakawa Dojo* are invited to a seminar in *Muso Shinden Ryu Iai* and “*Seitei Iai*” **April 13th and 14th**. **George Zanmiller** of Minneapolis will be in town Friday and Saturday to instruct our members on the *ZNKR Seitei Kata* and some groundwork in *MSR*. *Sensei Zanmiller* is from the *Muto Kai, Muso Shinden Ryu* of Minnesota (*Shimomura Ha*). Both he and his teacher, **Dr. Dale Schwertfeger** are well respected practitioners in the central United States and have been active since the mid-seventies.

It is important to mention one of the core principals of the *Mizu Hi Kobukai* is that the study of other styles will give us insight into our “home” styles. *Muso Shinden Ryu* is in fact, one of the major sources for the *AJKF Seitei Kata*. It also has much in common with *Mizu Hi Shinto Ryu Iai*. Above all you may notice a quiet attention to detail that can lead to a strong foundation for all of your sword study.

We are honored and fortunate to have *Sensei Zanmiller*’s help over the coming weekend. Please keep that weekend open and let Dr. Gettings know if you can attend. There is a nominal fee for the seminar.

## Eye on the Prize

After the last round of testing, a few areas were pointed out for general improvement by all members. Number one on the list is eye placement, watching the target as you perform a *Kata* and visualizing your opponent. Some students are looking too much to the floor while others are looking around the room. To this end we are instructed to do more *Kumitachi* practice to develop a better sense of targets and distance (*Ma ai*).

Another point made by *Soke Yamada* during his seminar involves *Furikaburi*. He demonstrated that the sword does not go past “level” when reaching above your head. Likewise, it does go back further than *Jodan*. This is an important moment during a *Kata* for your *Zanshin*. Your elbows should be out of the way and you should be prepared to respond to the circumstances.

## Yamakawa Dojo

As the weather warms up in Arizona, students are reminded to be vigilant when walking down the path to Dr. Gettings’ home *Dojo*. We all live in the desert and are responsible for our interactions with desert wildlife, big and small. Spiders, snakes and scorpions are a fact of life in our climate so please watch your step.



## Annual Dues

The *Yamakawa Dojo* is officially affiliated with the *Shin Shin Sekiguchi Ryu, Nakamura Ryu* and the *Mizu Hi Kobukai*. Individual membership is required if you wish to be eligible for rank testing or participate in *Kobukai* events. The annual dues are;

<b>Mizu Hi Kobukai</b>	<b>\$ 20.00</b>
<b>Sekiguchi Ryu</b>	<b>\$ 30.00</b>

Dues to the *Nakamura Ryu* may be collected at a later date after further guidance from Yuma.

<b>Nakamura Ryu</b>	<b>\$ 30.00</b>
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