

Obata Sensei

The Obata family originally descended from the Heike clan. Of Samurai family lineage, Obata Toshishiro was born in Gunma Prefecture, Japan in 1948. Mr. Obata is a descendant of Obata Toramori, who served as a general and strategist (one of the famous 24 strategists) for the Takeda family during the civil war, Sengoku era. Toramori would become the lord of Kaizu Jo (castle) in Shin Shu (Nagano) province.

At the age of 18, Mr. Toshishiro Obata was accepted as an uchi deshi (live in student) at the Yoshinkan Aikido Headquarters in Tokyo under the direct instruction of the founder Master Gozo Shioda. For 7 years Mr. Obata served as an instructor at the Yoshinkan, several universities, the Metropolitan Riot Police and the Japanese Self Defense Army.

Looking to expand on the sword work taught in Aikido training, the young Obata cross trained in several other studies, including Yagyu Ryu Swordsmanship under the twenty first generation Soke Yagyu Nobuharu, and the study of Zen with the members of the Shiyukai. However, as an uchi deshi he was not able to pursue other arts seriously and as a result left the Yoshinkan in 1973.

After leaving the Yoshinkan, Mr. Obata joined the Tokyo Wakakoma (an elite group of martial artists, who serve as fight scene choreographers, actors and stuntmen for Japanese television and movies). Through the experience with the Tokyo Wakakoma and the martial arts connections made during this time, Mr. Obata was able to seriously study classical sword arts as well as other Budo (Japanese war arts) while concurrently developing skills as an action coordinator and actor. He was named Bushido Shihan of the Tate dojo (internal to the Wakakoma) and led instruction in Bajutsu (archery from horseback), Yoroi (the wearing of traditional clothing and armor), Yarijutsu (spear) and Naginata (Japanese halberd).

In 1980, Mr. Obata came to the USA to pursue the development of his career as an actor and stunt choreographer. After 10 years as the Soke (Chief Instructor) of the USA Toyama and Nakamura Ryu Battodo Federation, Mr. Obata redirected his efforts into developing the fundamentals of the sword art "Shinkendo" - a system based upon his vast experience, knowledge and historical research.

Today The International Shinkendo Federation is an organization dedicated to teaching the techniques and philosophy of true Japanese swordsmanship. In 1996, Mr. Obata went on to found the Aikibujutsu Tanren Kenkyukai, a research and practice organization of Bujutsu/Budo ranging from the earliest forms of Aikijutsu to modern Aikido and Taihojutsu (control & arresting arts that are tailored for use in the law enforcement and security fields). Both are organizations, which Mr. Obata formed in order to develop and emphasize traditional and effective technique, which with serious training imparts practical ability as well as a deep understanding of classical Japanese martial arts.

Mr. Obata's lifelong dedication to Japanese Budo (traditional martial arts) has made him an unrivaled authority in the techniques, history and philosophy of the ancient Samurai. In effort to share his knowledge and experience with others, Obata Kaiso often takes time away from the Hombu (headquarters) in Los Angeles, California to teach seminars at his branch schools in other parts of the world. The knowledge and training that he has been able to pass on to his students and instructors has allowed the organization to grow a strong foundation. Today over 60 international branches teach Shinkendo and Aikibuken.

When not instructing classes or on the road teaching seminars, Obata is busy in the film industry writing screenplays, working as an action/stunt choreographer and acting (appearing in movies such as Black Rain, Rage & Honor, Rising Sun, Demolition man, the Shadow, Showdown in Little Tokyo and the Hunted).

Mr. Obata has had the honor to receive instruction under renowned martial arts masters who were specialists in their respective fields. Including:

- Yoshinkan Aikido under master Gozo Shioda
- Yagyu Ryu Swordsmanship under the 21st generation headmaster Yagyu Nobuharu
- Ioriken Battojutsu under master Uchida Teshisai
- Toyama-ryu and Nakamura-ryu Battojutsu under Master Nakamura Taizaburo
- Kashima Shin-ryu under Master Tanaka Shigeo
- Ryukyu Kobudo under Mater Inoue Motokatsu
- Masaki Ryu Manrikigusari, Juttejutsu and Ninpo with master Nawa Yumio

Other credentials and experience include:

- Chief Instructor of USA Toyama Ryu Battodo Federation and Honbu
- Chief Instructor of USA Nakamura Ryu Battodo Federation Honbu
- Chief Instructor of USA Bugekikai Aikido
- USA Battodo Federation Honbu

- SoShihan, USA branch of Nippon Battodo So Renmei
- Record breaking but while performing traditional kabutowari
- 4 time champion at the Ioriken Battojutsu cutting competition
- 2 time champion at the all Japan Battodo cutting competition
- Shitoka (sword tester) for late swordsmith Kobayashi Yasuhiro
- Toyama Ryu All Japan Champion for 2 years
- Bujutsu Shihan (head instructor) of the Tate dojo
- Zen study under the Shiyukai group
- Tateshi (film choreographer) under Master Hayashi Kunishiro
- Curator for Japanese section of the W.M. Hawley private library
- Some of Mr. Obata's ranks include Menkyo Kaiden, Keisho Denju, Shihan, and a combined total of 75 Dan (black belt) rankings

In an effort to make his knowledge and experience available to others, Mr. Obata has written the following books:

- Shinkendo - Japanese Swordsmanship (1999 self-published)
- Heiho Okugisho - The Secret of High Strategy (1994, W.M. Hawley: translated by T. Obata)
- Samurai Aikijutsu (1987 Dragon Books)
- Kama (1987, Dragon Books)
- Crimson Steel (1987 Dragon Books)
- Naked Blade (1985 Dragon Books)

Throughout his film career in Japan and during the last 20 years that he has lived in the US, Mr. Obata has acted and directed choreography in the following films:

- The Hunted (Role: Ryuma; 1995)
- Blue Tiger (Role: Kunimatsu; 1994)
- aka Irezumi (1994; Japan)
- The Shadow (Role: Mongol; 1994)
- Red Sun Rising (Role: Oyabun; 1993)
- Demolition Man (Role: CryoCon; 1993)
- Rising Sun (Role: Guard at Imperial Arms; 1993)
- Rage and Honor (Role: Chan Lu; 1992)
- Ulterior Motives (Role: "Bull Neck" Yakuza; 1992)
- Showdown in Little Tokyo (Role: Sato; 1991)
- Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: The Secret of the Ooze (Role: Tatsu; 1991)
- Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (Role: Tatsu; 1990)
- Black Rain (Role: Mediator; 1989)
- Sword of Bushido (1989)