

er

THE TATSUMI-RYU

by Liam Keeley

This report is based on the JMAS demonstration of the *Tatsumi-ryu bujutsu* (Tatsumi School of Martial Arts) which took place on September 18, 1988. However, a great deal of relevant additional information has been included. While every effort has been made to check the contents of this account for accuracy, any mistakes of fact are my responsibility alone. I would like to take this opportunity to thank both Kato Takashi Sensei and His son, Kato Hiroshi Sensei, for generously giving their time and assistance to me in compiling this report.

The Tatsumi-ryu was founded by Tatsumi Sankyo, who is said to have been born in the Eisho Period, which covers the years 1504 to 1520, in what is present day Ehime Prefecture, Shikoku. From an early age, Tatsumi Sankyo engaged in very hard training in the martial arts. As a result he was never defeated, either on the battlefield or in single combat. He himself, however, was not satisfied with mere technical proficiency, or even victory in combat, and he dedicated himself to the deity Tsumayama Daimyojin in an attempt to go beyond the superficial levels of purely physical achievement.

After arduous training he attained what in Zen terms is known as *satori*, that is, enlightenment arrived at in an intuitive flash of understanding. He then formulated Tatsumi-ryu as a result of his experiences.

The central weapon of the ryu is the sword, and it is the use of the sword in mortal combat which forms the largest part of the curriculum. *Tojutsu*, the use of the sword, may be divided into two main divisions, *iai-jutsu* (sword-drawing art) and *kenjutsu* (sword art). One of the hallmarks of Tatsumi-ryu is a very high degree of integration between the *iai* and the *kenjutsu* techniques. In fact, at times it is difficult to say whether *iai* or *kenjutsu* is being performed. There is also a large *yawara* (jujutsu) syllabus which covers a wide range of techniques and situations, including the use of a variety of weapons, *katsu* (resuscitation techniques) and *hojo-jutsu* (art of tying up one's opponent) as well as unarmed combat.

Secondary weapons taught are the short sword and the spear. The use of a number of other weapons is also taught, not as a speciality, but rather because these weapons are potential opponents to the sword. Weapons falling into this category are the *bo* (6 foot staff), *naginata* (halberd), and *hanbo* (4 foot staff). In *kata* (prearranged form in training) these weapons "lose" to the sword. The *jutte* (forked iron truncheon) is an exception to this. In the *kata*, the *jutte* "beats" the sword. Finally, there are a number of weapons for which there are no *kata*, but which are referred to in the *makimori* (scrolls). This category includes the *shuriken* (throwing blades), *tessen* (iron fan), and *manriki gusari* (weighted chain). The *makimono* also include a large number of "case studies" of various situations ranging from night fighting and climbing to esoteric charms and overall strategy.

The connection between the Tatsumi-ryu and Sakura City, in what is present day Chiba Prefecture, dates back to the 1670's, when the Tatsumi-ryu was recognized as the *otome-ryu* (official style) of the Sakura *han* (domain). This 115,000 *koku* (a unit of measurement used to calculate revenues) domain was ruled by the Hotta family from 1745 to the Meiji Restoration in 1868. At this time a number of famous swordsmen were members of the Tatsumi-ryu. These were Hanzawa Naritsune (the 18th Headmaster of the Tatsumi-ryu), Henmi Sosuke (first head of the *keishicho* [police department] *kenjutsu*), and Kanematsu Naokado. A number of techniques from



Henmi Sosuke, Tatsumi-ryu swordsman, 1834-94, First Head of post-feudal period Police Department

Tatsumi-ryu were adopted into the *keishicho* syllabus. For the record, these are the *makotoshi* from the *omote kenjutsu kata*, *shiho* from the *tachiai iaijutsu*, and *tsukagarami* from the *yawara* syllabus.

An interesting historical sidelight is that Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901), the Meiji period educator and founder of what is today Kelo University, whose face also appears on the ¥10,000 note, trained in a branch of the Tatsumi-ryu. This was the Tatsumi Shin-ryu, which was located in the Okudaira *han* in Kyushu. Even at the age of 60, Fukuzawa is said to have practiced *iai*, performing a thousand draws on such occasions as the New Year. This seems to reflect the Tatsumi-ryu practice of *kazunuki*. On reaching a

certain level in the ryu, the trainee will be invited to participate in a special training session in which he will practice the two central techniques of the ryu, muko and marui, for a total of 3,000 times. Traditionally, this is done at night in the presence of the Headmaster, and takes approximately eight hours. It is felt that the essence of the Tatsumi-ryu as formulated by Tatsumi Sankyo, is contained in these two apparently simple techniques.

The Kamae

The most basic *kamae* is *shizentai*, that is, the natural standing position. This is also the most basic *kamae* with the sword. One simply stands with one's sword sheathed in *shizentai*. One should be perfectly centered when in this position. The next step is to walk in a natural, perfectly balanced way. As soon as one begins to move, the left hand is placed on the sheath of the sword, immediately behind the *tsuba* (swordguard), with the left index finger resting lightly on the guard. In other ryu, the thumb, or the thumb and index finger in combination, perform the same function. In the Tatsumi-ryu, the index finger alone is used, the reasoning behind this being that it is felt that the wrist is free to move in response to a variety of situations. One such situation was demonstrated in the presentation in which an opponent to one's rear suddenly grabs the end of one's *saya* (sword sheath). This is countered by a circular movement against the opponent's wrist to break the grip. The movement is similar to an aikido movement called *kote mawashi* or *nikkyo*.



Kato Takashi Sensei showing position of hands at the beginning of draw.

The Draw

Both hands work in unison, the left hand turning the sheath close to one's own body so that the blade faces diagonally downward toward the ground, while the right hand moves gently across the front of the body to take control of the hilt of the sword.

Both hands are kept as close to one's body as possible. This minimizes the target available to one's opponent. When beginning the draw, one should be absolutely centered, so much so that one feels that one is drawing the sword with one's stomach, rather than one's hands. In the past, the guard was sometimes tied to the *saya*, and it would take quite a strong tug to get the sword free. It is felt that this position, that is, with the blade angled down, is the best position from which to start the draw in that the swordsman has the option of attacking at a variety of angles.



Mr. Fujisaki Yoshinori doing muko.

Iai-jutsu: The Two Basic Techniques

As previously mentioned, two techniques, muko and marui, are at the heart of the Tatsumi-ryu. In muko, one's opponent attacks first, and the actual kata involves drawing one's sword, deflecting the attack, and delivering a powerful counter stroke directly downward before one's opponent can recover. Marui may be thought of as a pre-emptive attack. It begins with a vertical downward cut to one's opponent's sword arm, and follows up immediately with a powerful double handed strike downward. These two kata, with six variations, form the first set of eight kata from which all further variations are derived. The eight techniques comprising omote iai-jutsu are:

1. *muko*
2. *marui*
3. *go no muko* (muko done to the rear)
4. *go no marui* (marui done to the rear)
5. *zengo* (variation on marui with a 180 degree turn)
6. *hidari* (muko done to the left)
7. *miagi* (marui done to the right)
8. *shihō* (variation on marui covering four directions)

A point of interest is that zengo begins with a short run. One should use small quick steps as if one were running on a slippery, treacherous surface such as ice.

At this point it should be mentioned that although most styles of iai begin from *seiza* (seated kneeling position) or *iai-goshi* (a low, crouching position), Tatsumi-ryu, while it includes iai done from *seiza*, actually stresses iai done from a standing position. The basic set of eight draws may be done at three levels and from either *seiza* or *tachiai* (standing/walking). These levels are known as *jo*, *ha* and *kyu*.

The *jo*, *ha*, *kyu* division is sometimes compared to a similar classification in *shodo* (traditional calligraphy done with a brush), in which the three stages here are *daisho*, *gyosho* and *sosho*. At the *daisho* stage, the character is written in a very plain, basic way. Then, at the *gyosho* stage, the brush is used in a more natural and flowing manner. Finally, at the *sosho* stage, short cuts are taken leading to what may seem as an abstract representation of the character quite far removed from the basic *daisho*.

The basic level of Tatsumi-ryu iai-jutsu is *jo*. At this level the beginner works slowly and carefully to learn the correct technique and to familiarize himself with the use of the sword. The *ha* level is an intermediate level. The trainee learns to use the sword at speed, and movement in general is smoother than at the *jo* level. However, certain movements are exaggerated, primarily with the object of teaching the trainee to work with his sword and not against it. At the third level, *kyu*, these movements disappear. The large circular movements of the *ha* level are replaced by fast direct cuts and all extraneous movement is stripped away. This is how the sword should work in combat. At this level the *osame* (the return of the sword to the sheath) is done in a different and technically more difficult way.

The *kage* techniques are variations on the basic set of eight techniques which make up the *omote* kata of the iai syllabus. At the *kage* level, *muko* begins with an attack instead of a deflection. The movement of drawing the sword continues smoothly into *gyaku kesa* (a diagonal upward cut) which has as its primary target one's opponent's forearm as he begins his draw. As in the *omote* kata, this is followed by a powerful double-handed cut downward. *Marui* begins with a horizontal cut to one's opponent's sword arm at the base of the deltoid muscle. Again, this is followed up immediately with a powerful double-handed strike downward. There are two levels of *kage*. The basic level is known as *shoden* and the more advanced level is called *honden*.

The *kage* level introduces the *kesa* (diagonal downward cut) as well as the *gyaku kesa*, already mentioned. The *kage* techniques can be practiced from either a *seiza* position, in which case they are known as *igumi*, or from a standing/walking position, in which case they are known as *tachiai*.

The *omote* and *kage* levels together with their variations make up the major portion of the iai-jutsu syllabus. There are, however, two other groups of iai



Kato Hiroshi Sensei doing *marui* from *igumi*.

techniques. The first is comprised of a number of techniques which are traditionally done *zengo sayu*, that is to say, the technique is practiced to the front, rear, left, and right. Examples of this group are *ni-no-tachi* and its variations, as well as *zansetsu* and *gassha*. These techniques were not shown during the actual demonstration due to lack of time. A further group of techniques consists of case studies of special situations. For example, the *makimono* advise how to deal with a situation in which you are suddenly thrown up against a wall. Advanced students will sometimes recreate these situations and practice various responses, but the techniques in this group are not considered to be true *kata*. The Tatsumi-ryu has always tried to keep the number of core *kata* relatively small, as it firmly believes that mastery of a few key movements is infinitely preferable to spreading oneself too thinly in an effort to find a response to every hypothetical situation.

Kenjutsu

This insistence on a relatively small number of techniques which are applicable in a wide variety of situations is clearly shown in the *kenjutsu* syllabus. The three levels are *omote*, *kage*, and *gogo*. The *omote* *kenjutsu* techniques are as follows:

1. *muko*
2. *marui*
3. *maeja*
4. *hari*
5. *maki otoshi*
6. *tatsha*

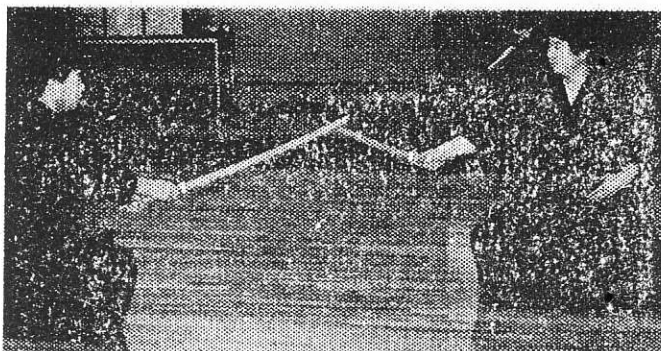
The *omote* techniques pit long sword against long sword. The *omote* level is primarily concerned with responding to one's opponent's attack. The general pattern is deflect and counter. The techniques can be done with either *fukuro shinai* (mock sword covered with leather or cloth) or *bokken* (wooden sword). The techniques can also be done at different levels. These levels, like iai-jutsu, are known as *jo*, *ha* and *kyu*.

At the *jo* level, movement is accompanied by breath control exercises and strong technique is developed through repetition of basic movements. At this level

the fukuro shinai is always used.

The ha level is the one which receives the most emphasis. At present, this level is generally practiced using the bokken, but in the past, the fukuro shinai was more commonly used.

The kyu level is like the ha level, but the kata begin with the two trainees running toward each other. Obviously it calls for excellent timing and distancing and so it is only done by fairly advanced students. The run up is done in the same fashion as in the omote iai kata, as if running on an icy surface.



Mr. Saito Masaru (l) and Mr. Kashimura Northisa (r) doing kage kenjutsu in sonkyo.

The kage level teaches the use of the kodachi (short sword) against the odachi (long sword). There are three techniques. Kage is mainly concerned with the problem of gaining entry to be able to use the short sword effectively. The three kage techniques are:

1. *mitai irimi*
2. *hidari irimi*
3. *uten saten*

The gogo level consists of five techniques. These techniques represent a distillation of a number of principles of combat and psychological attributes pertaining to combat. The first four techniques are performed with the long sword and the last one with the short sword. The opponent is armed with the long sword in all five techniques.

The first technique represents the *tatsabaki* (body movement) principle. One avoids one's opponent's attack by moving aside and simultaneously countering. The second technique blends deflection and attack into one movement. The third technique, sometimes called *niot* (smell), is concerned with anticipating one's opponent's attack; to beat him to the punch, as it were. The fourth technique is concerned with dominating one's opponent psychologically. One "sets him up", and then takes advantage of the opponent's *suki*, or opening. The fifth technique is also concerned with dominating one's opponent. Superficially, the technique appears to be on the omote level, but in fact, the feeling is quite different.

These three levels, then, form the major portion of the kenjutsu syllabus. However, since the primary weapon of Tatsumi-ryu is the sword, and the sword "wins" the kata when facing the bo, hanbo and naginata, it could well be argued that the use of the

sword against these weapons actually forms part of the kenjutsu syllabus.

There are also a collection of techniques known as *tetto*, which form a kind of bridge between kenjutsu and iai-jutsu. The techniques are performed with live blades or metal replicas, and generally begin from a sheathed position. The gogo level, too, is also practiced in an iai-jutsu fashion, that is, with live blades and starting from a position in which the swords are sheathed. This is known as *gogo tsumiai*.

Finally, there are "case studies" of specific situations in the makimono, which include such techniques as the use of the long sword and short sword in combination (*ryoto*).

Thus, to summarize, we have the following syllabus:

1. *omote*, 6 techniques (jo, ha, kyu)
2. *kage*, 3 techniques
3. *gogo*, 5 techniques
4. *tachi* versus *bo* (sword versus staff)
(5 techniques)
5. *tachi* versus *hanbo* (sword versus short staff)
(5 techniques)
6. *tachi* versus *naginata* (sword versus halberd)
(5 techniques)
7. *tachi* versus *yari* (sword versus spear)
(4 techniques)
8. *tetto*
9. case studies from the *makimono* (hand scroll)/
densho (transmission)

Sojutsu (Spear Art)

The length of the spear used by the Tatsumi-ryu is *kyu shaku* (that is, approximately 9 feet long). The techniques may be divided into three categories.

1. *yari awase* (spear versus spear)
(6 techniques)
2. *tachi awase* (spear versus long sword)
(4 techniques)
3. *kodachi awase* (spear versus short sword)
(4 techniques)

1. Spear versus Spear

Once again the basic techniques are known as *muko* and *marui*, and the remaining techniques take the same names as in the omote kenjutsu (*maeja*, *hari*, *maki otoshi* and *taisha*). The spear is gripped in two ways, a grip at the butt end for long range, and a grip halfway along the shaft for shorter range. The techniques are relatively simple but extremely practical and effective. An interesting point is that the techniques are very similar to those used by foil and epee in Western fencing.

2. Spear versus Long Sword

This is done at two levels. At the first level, the sword "loses"; at the second level, the sword "wins". The movements of the sword against the spear are very much the same as the movements against the sword, in keeping with the practical and utilitarian nature of the ryu.

3. Spear versus Short Sword

Here the superior reach of the spear is contrasted with the superior mobility of the short sword. In the kata, the short sword "wins".

Yawara

The Tatsumi-ryu yawara consists of a total of 45 techniques which are broken up into three main groups.

1. *igumi* (6 techniques)
2. *tachi-ai* (23 techniques)
3. *kumi-ai* (16 techniques)

As mentioned previously, the yawara covers a wide range of situations and techniques, and includes the use of a variety of weapons, resuscitation techniques, and methods of tying up one's opponents. The unarmed portion of the syllabus includes joint locks, throws, hold downs, strangles and chokes, kicks, punches and strikes.

1. *igumi*

These six techniques are the first to be learned. They are performed from *seiza*, but can also be applied from a standing position.

The techniques may vary depending on such factors as *ma-ai* (combat engagement distance) and the angle and type of attack. Thus, for example, the exact hand position of the elbow and wrist lock in *ui* (the first technique of the *igumi* set), will vary depending on the original distance between the two people. More-over, the same basic technique can be practiced as a response to a number of different attacks. For example, the attack might be a grab, a punch, a strike, or with a knife or sword. And as previously mentioned, the techniques applied can be sitting or standing. So there are a lot of variations one can work on. The first six techniques are:

- 1) *ui*
- 2) *shui*
- 3) *kyoi*
- 4) *yorikabe*
- 5) *jiko*
- 6) *kakuto*

2. *Tachi-ai*

These techniques are done from a standing position. An example is *hotoke-daoshi*. This technique is similar to Kodokan Judo's *osoto gari*, but its effect is enhanced by a palm heel strike to one's opponent's chin, with the fingers of the same hand simultaneously attacking the eyes, as one performs the throw. In fact, Tatsumi-ryu yawara contains equivalents to almost all common judo throws. A few examples would be:

utsubozuke: *seoinage*
ushiro daoshi: *ouchi gari*
hotoke daoshi: *osoto gari*
inazuma gaeshi: *tomoenage*

It should also be noted that while certain techniques are very roughly equivalent to judo throws, they are not limited to one particular throw. Thus, the technique known as *ushiro daoshi*, while its central technique is similar to the judo *ouchi gari*, includes *atemi* (strikes to vital points), and also a variety of variations and backup techniques, including several other throws, based on one's opponent's response to one's attack.

3. *Kumi-ai*

This includes advanced techniques, combinations and grappling in armor.

To summarize then, the Tatsumi-ryu is an extremely functional and practical school of combat swordsmanship which originated in the crucible of the *Sengoku-jidai* (period of civil war from the close of the 15th to the close of the 16th century). As such, it is one of only a handful of ryu which have survived to the present, truly a unique link with the past and a priceless cultural heritage for modern Japan. In a day and age when individuals with only a few years of training and no experience of mortal combat whatsoever go on to found their own styles, schools such as the Tatsumi-ryu, whose techniques have been tested in mortal combat for generations, are few and far between.

Questions and Answers

There was a question and answer session at this point of the demonstration.

Question:

Would you please ask Kato Sensei to explain how a downward cut is received and deflected in the Tatsumi-ryu kata?

Answer:

This technique is known as *tsuritagae* in kendo terminology. It first occurs in the *omote kata* in *maeja*, the third technique. The same technique is also practiced as the *muko* movement at the *kyu* level of the *omote tai*. As you raise your sword, you simultaneously deflect your opponent's sword to the side before you cut down.

Question:

On the subject of etiquette, I noticed it was very simple. Is that standard or was the etiquette today abbreviated?

Answer:

You've raised a very interesting question. This is a ryu for high ranking *bushu* (warriors) so one might expect the *rei* (etiquette) to be very complex. But in fact, it is not. It is very simple. There's no *shinden* (shrine) here, so we have omitted the bow we would normally make to the *shinden*. Otherwise our *rei* is as you have seen it, very simple. On a few points we differ from modern *iai*. When we kneel to bow, for example, we bend both knees at the same time, instead of in two stages, left, then right; Also in modern *iai-do*, when you bow from *seiza*, you put your left hand down first, then your right. We put both hands forward at the same time. Kato Takashi Sensei mentioned that he had consulted Ogasawara Sensei, head of the Ogasawara school of etiquette, about this. In Ogasawara Sensei's opinion, moving both hands at the same time was the older form. Perhaps the main point to stress is that one should always look poised. Graceful movement reflects physical and mental balance. The Tatsumi-ryu stresses that whatever you do, no matter how difficult it is, you should try to make it look easy.

Question:

You mentioned that a Tatsumi-ryu yawara technique was adopted by the *keishicho*. Could you demonstrate and explain this technique?

Answer:

The technique adopted was *tsuka garami*, a variation on *ui*, one of the *igumi* techniques. (*Ui* is essentially an elbow lock, although one also has control of the wrist and shoulder. If one is carrying a sword, the sword's sheath can be used to help lock the opponent's elbow.) In *tsuka garami*, one's opponent grabs one's sword hilt. The opponent's hand is immediately trapped and then his wrist is locked using the hilt.

Question:

I noticed you use *fukuro shinaï*. Do you ever have *jtyu keiko* (free practice) with or without *bogu* (kendo armor)?

Answer:



Kato Takashi Sensei demonstrates the first step of a *tsuka garami* on Kato Hiroshi Sensei.

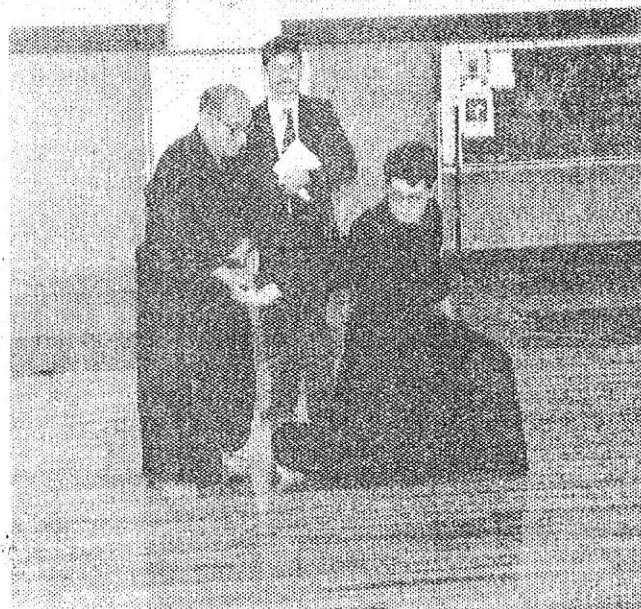
We have something similar to judo *randori* (freestyle practice). In *yawara*, we call this *midare-ai* and in using *fukuro shinaï*, we call it *midare-uchi*. We also have a kind of semi-free training in which we use *bokken*. For example, we could practice the *tsuriage* technique you asked about, in this form.

Question:

What is the order in which you learn the different weapons?

Answer:

The *ryu* is very small, so there is a lot of individual attention. Everyone starts with *iai-jutsu* and then goes on to *kenjutsu*. Then it would really depend on the Headmaster, Kato sensei. After all, he is the boss!



Kato Takashi Sensei demonstrates the final step of a *tsuka garami* on Kato Hiroshi Sensei.

KATO TAKASHI SENSEI 21ST HEADMASTER, TATSUMI-RYU

by Liam Keeley



Kato Takashi Sensei performing kenjutsu demonstration at Budokan.

Kato Takashi Sensei was born on July 25, 1913, the second year of the Taisho period, making him 75 years old. He was born in Sakura City, Chiba Prefecture, and went to school there, before going to Kokushikan University. He trained in both ken and Tatsumi-ryu from a very early age, under the eye of his father, who was a kendo teacher as well as being the 19th Headmaster of the Tatsumi-ryu. Apart from this lifelong training in both Tatsumi-ryu and kendo, Kato Sensei also practiced judo and *juken-jutsu* (bayonet fighting) as a young man.

His thorough grounding in martial arts and his strong personal ability led him to be promoted extremely rapidly and within a couple of years he was awarded 4th dan in judo and 5th dan in *juken-jutsu*.

He was fortunate enough to have had some excellent teachers; Yamashita Yoshiaki Sensei and Kudo Ichizo Sensei for judo, and Oshima Jikita Sensei for bayonet fighting. He received his rank in judo from the former and his rank in *juken-jutsu* from the latter. When he can be persuaded to reminisce, he is a fund of information of legendary budo figures from the past. He still tells the story about himself about how, after winning a particularly tough judo match, he was called over by Yamashita Sensei. He ran over eagerly and made his bow, expecting to be praised but was cut down by Yamashita Sensei saying, "Kato, you're strong, but you've got no finesse!"

Kato sensei and the Tatsumi-ryu are recognized as *mukei bunkazai* (intangible cultural assets) by Chiba Prefecture. He is in great demand as a highly respected and widely experienced teacher of kendo and *iai*. He is currently Vice President of the *Nippon Kobudo Shinkokai* (Association for the Promotion of Traditional Japanese Martial Ways). He also serves as an adviser to the Board of Physical Education of Sakura City and is a member of the Board of Examiners of the Chiba Prefecture Kendo Renmei. For most of his life, Kato Sensei has been a school teacher. His subject is classical Japanese language. This has been of great value to him in his personal study of the Tatsumi-ryu *makimono* (the scrolls containing information about the ryu which are passed down from generation to generation). He still teaches on a part-time basis at Bunka Joshi High School in Chiba City.

KATO HISASHI SENSEI 19TH HEADMASTER, 1885 - 1948

by Liam Keeley

Kato Hisashi Sensei learned Tatsumi-ryu from the age of 14 from Hanzawa Naritsune Sensei (1836-1916), the 18th headmaster of the ryu. According to the oral traditions of the ryu, Hanzawa Sensei was engaged in a number of *shinken shobu* (duels to the death) while in Kyoto in 1863 when the then shogun was forced to visit the court there.

Kato Sensei was the kendo instructor at Chiba Kenritsu Sakura Chugakko (present day Sakura High-school), and kenjutsu *shihan* (teacher) of the 57th Sakura Infantry Regiment. He also studied a number of other ryu and was promoted to *menkyo kaiden* (licensed teacher) by Takano Sasaburo Sensei of the Ono-ha Iito-ryu. One of the ryu he studied was a Mugai-ryu in Sakura. This ryu specialized in swimming in armor and in using weapons while swimming. To test his ability, he is said to have swum the Inbanuma wearing full armor while it was in flood. He also studied a number of ryu which specialized in jujutsu. However, his main training and interest was, of course, in the Tatsumi-ryu. He is the only person in the history of the ryu to have performed 30,000

kazunuki (repetitions of the two basic techniques) over a period of several days as *shugyo* (austere discipline). Among other posts, he was *shihan* of the Chiba Prefecture *shibu* (branch) of the *Butokukai* (Martial Arts Association), and a *joninriji* (Senior Board Member) of the Kobudo Shinkokai.

He was a highly respected member of his community, and was known as *Yatomi no seijin* (the saint of Yatomi). An incident which illustrates his moral courage and humanity is recorded on his memorial. In the hysterical atmosphere which prevailed immediately after the Great Kanto Earthquake on September 1, 1923, there were some very ugly massacres of Korean residents in Japan, who were somehow thought to be responsible for the disaster. When the mob threatened some Korean residents of Sakura, Kato Hisashi Sensei intervened and was able to lead them to safety. He was later presented with an award by the Japanese Foreign Ministry for his humanitarian conduct. An excellent example of *katsujin-ken* (the life-giving sword) as opposed to the *satsujin-ken* (the death-dealing sword).



Kato Hisashi Sensei,
19th Headmaster, (1885-1948)



Kato Hisashi Sensei performing
tameshi-giri (test cutting)