

Sensei Jeff Perkins  
Okinawa BudoKai Dojo  
33606 Seven Mile Road  
Livonia, Michigan 48152

17 October 2009

Dear Sensei Perkins:

This pair of sai, originally owned and used by Sensei Taira Shinken of Okinawa, is a gift to the community of Isshinryu Karate.

I purchased this pair of sai from Sensei Tatsuo Shimabuku at Agena Dojo on Okinawa on 29 February 1960. Sensei Shinken offered them for sale the previous day for the price of \$3.00!

In my view the proper and primary residence of these historical hand weapons should be the Okinawa BudoKai Dojo in Livonia, Michigan.

I do firmly entrust this pair of Shinken sai into your care and control for display, use or any beneficial purpose you consider to be appropriate.

As Director of the Isshinryu Preservation Society the future disposition of these sai is also to be your decision.

With Joy and Respect,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jake Eckenrode". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jake Eckenrode  
408 Shoemith Road  
Haslett, Michigan 48840

17 October 2009

Jake Eckenrode

## A PAIR OF TAIRA SHINKEN'S SAI: ACQUISITION, LOSS AND RETURN TO ISSHINRYU KARATE

“A man named Taira Shinken originated the sai and the techniques for using them. He travels all over Okinawa and sometimes to Japan to teach karate instructors the techniques of using the sai. He has been teaching Popasan this past week. Well, Sensei Shinken was at the dojo yesterday and he put a pair of his own sai up for sale for the price of \$3.00 to anyone who would want to buy them. First thing this morning I rounded up some money and bought them from Popasan. Boy, am I happy about having them” [portion of a letter written to my parents dated 29 Feb. 1960].

I trained and performed demonstrations with these sai for a few years after being discharged from the U. S. Marine in 1961. Then, I tucked them away in the attic.

During the Christmas season of 2006, I gave this pair of Shinken sai to a friend who is a black belt student in Shorinryu karate. Approximately one year later I was welcomed back from a self-imposed absence into the Isshinryu community by Sensei's Wayne Wayland and Jeff Perkins. Their distraught, based upon a strong traditional view of Isshinryu, made me quickly realize that my gift-giving was the loss of a historical and meaningful Isshinryu artifact. As time passed my anguish increased and I was forced to cope only in the knowledge that a gift once given has no strings attached to it.

Recently, my friend returned the Shinken sai in exchange for a WWII British infantry rifle. His gesture was most

commendable in that he was gracious and willing to have the sai returned to the Isshinryu community - he understood with some subtle battering on my part that Isshinryu karate is deeply entrenched in history and tradition.

It is with great joy that this pair of Shinken sai is returned to its proper place.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jake", written in a cursive style.