



Arcenio J. Advincula
Celebrating 50 Years in Isshin-ryu
December 1, 1958 – December 1, 2008

by

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We all know the history of Arcenio J. Advincula's (hereinafter referred to as Sensei) beginnings in the martial arts at the age of 8 when he began his training with Pilipino Scouts and the story of his first day of liberty on Okinawa when he began his study of Isshin-ryu with its founder Tatsuo Shimabuku. If you don't know that story, you can read it at <http://www.olemiss.edu/orgs/karate/forty.html>.

I would like to talk about how I believe "Isshin-ryu" and "Arcenio J. Advincula" is synonymous. To do this, I have to tell you a little of Isshin-ryu's founder. I think sometimes we forget what it means to be the founder. Shimabuku Sensei is the President, the Chairman of the Board, the CEO, and the Grand Master. Whatever word you chose to describe him, he is the top of the heap! He is the final word! Isshin-ryu is his. Shimabuku Sensei was a visionary. He was a man passionate about the martial arts and about Okinawa. I believe that he taught the Marines, not for the money, but because he wanted them to take Isshin-ryu and Okinawa to the United States. He saw this as a way for some of the rest of the world to learn about the culture of Okinawa. He promoted the Marines before they left Okinawa and asked them to wait the appropriate number of years before acknowledging the rank. He never figured he would see any of them again.

Well, one of them wouldn't go away! Sensei continued to study with him even after he left the Marine Corps and he studied with this man longer than any other American. Sensei paid attention. He learned about Shimabuku the man as well as Isshin-ryu. Sensei asked Shimabuku's permission to design a symbol of Isshin-ryu. Sensei thought about it and knew that Shimabuku Sensei had a vision from a goddess telling him that he was ready to start his own style. He used that goddess as the center point for his symbol and then used one of the most unusual aspects of Isshin-ryu, the vertical fist, as the shape of the symbol. Sensei designed the symbol of Isshin-ryu. Sensei is Isshin-ryu.

I remember him telling me that when they did basics in the dojo in Okinawa, there was no rhyme or reason to the order. He put them in 3's so it would be easier to remember. He taught the high, middle and low blocks together. He was right. It is much easier to remember the basics that way. He was authorized to think, he did and it made Isshin-ryu better. One more example of how Sensei is Isshin-ryu.

After Sensei retired from the Marine Corps, he opened a dojo. He taught as Shimabuku taught. He did not "Americanize" his dojo. He continued to follow his teacher and did not disrespect him by changing the way the dojo was run. If he did something different from Shimabuku Sensei, he would say, "This is how Advincula does it, not how Shimabuku did it." I've heard him say that many times.



He too was promoted by Shimabuku and asked not to accept the rank until he had studied for the appropriate number of years. He did exactly as he was asked. He was presented with Shimabuku's handmade bo cover by Ciso Shimabuku in April 1999. I was lucky enough to be there. I saw the pride in both their eyes.

Speaking of Okinawa. The following quote is an excerpt from the Okinawa Times.

OKINAWA TIMES, KARATE BOOM AMONG SOLDIERS, Saturday, April 30, 1960:

"Even if we cannot promote friendship between Okinawa and America through karate, my true hope is that if karate becomes popular in the U.S.A. and Hawaii, then Okinawa would also become more well understood." said Mr. Tatsuo Shimabuku.

Sensei knew that there was more to Shimabuku than just teaching karate. Shimabuku was so proud of Isshin-ryu and Okinawa. In 1994 Advincula took a group of his students to Okinawa on the first Okinawa Cultural Martial Arts Tours. He continues to take students to Okinawa. I was lucky enough to go to Okinawa with Sensei in 1999. It was an amazing three weeks and I would love to be able to



do it again. I should point out that Sensei sacrifices a great deal on these trips. He has family on Okinawa and with that comes family obligations. We sometimes forget that he makes these trips to Okinawa to visit with Mama-san, Yasue and her family and Masayuki and his family. He manages to get up early in the morning,



take us sightseeing and spend most of the day taking us to places he has seen hundreds of times. The very first place we always go is to Shimabuku Tatsuo's tomb to pay our respects.

He, like Shimabuku, is passionate about Okinawa and wants us to appreciate our martial arts beginnings. He has introduced us to Kotaro Iha and Kensho Tokumura and we trained with both of them. He introduced us to Ciso Shimabuku and Joen Nakazato and we were able to interview them and in Nakazato's case, visit his amazing dojo and gardens. These people immediately became our friends. Not because of who we are, but because of who Sensei is. Without Sensei, we would not have the access to these Okinawan Martial Artists. I went to Okinawa without Sensei one time, and I was shown the same respect because I was Sensei's student.

On these Okinawan trips, the only time Sensei has with his family is when we are training with Iha Sensei or Tokumura Sensei. His family not only understands, but welcomes us to their homes, cooks for us and invites us to participate in very personal Okinawan traditions. While I was there, we participated in the Shimi (ceremonial visits to the family's ancestral tomb) at the tomb of Michie's family.



Sensei and Kensho Tokumura founded the Okinawa Karate Kobudo International Friendship Association (Okinawa Karate Kobudo Kokusai Tomo No Kai). Here is the Mission Statement.

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the purpose of this organization to encourage education and cultural exchange between the island of Okinawa and members of the OKINAWA KARATE KOBUDO KOKUSAI TOMO NO KAI. Since becoming a prefecture of Japan, Okinawa has been steadily losing its identity as a distinct and separate culture. Its fusion into Japanese

culture has been an area of concern to many Okinawans. To assist in the preservation of distinct Okinawan culture, the common bond of Okinawan Martial Arts will be used by the Association as a vehicle for knowledge, friendship, cooperation, and cultural exchange between its members and the island of Okinawa. The OKINAWA KARATE KOBUDO KOKUSAI TOMO NO KAI will conduct cultural tours, Okinawan Martial Arts seminars and use the various media forums at its disposal, to educate its members concerning true Okinawan Martial Arts and Okinawan culture. Whereas many martial arts organizations direct their energies towards obtaining rank, profit and personal power, the focus of the OKINAWA KARATE KOBUDO KOKUSAI TOMO NO KAI will be on international friendship, and educating its members to the "ways of Okinawa", as the basis for its existence.

In 1967 Sensei started doing seminars around the country/world. I know he's done seminars in the United States and Canada. I guess you can count Okinawa too since he is always teaching us while we are there. He did his first seminar for Bill Gardo in Jackson MS. He was passing through on his way to Advance Combat Engineer School in Camp Lejeune, NC. After that, while he was stationed in Parris Island, SC, from 1970-1975, he did many seminars for Bill Gardo, Harvey Kennedy, Bill Pogue, and Larry Dreher. While in the Marine Corps, he did all of these seminars free.

We've have been bringing Sensei to our dojo since 1988. Most years, we bring him twice. So let's do the numbers. 1988 to 2008 is 20 years x 2 seminars per year = approximately 40 seminars. That's just us! So let's just say that he has done countless seminars over the last 40+ years. Then there are the people who go to the Honbu dojo to train with him. So why hasn't he retired yet? Why hasn't he passed the torch to someone else? After all, he's been doing this for over 40 years. Who wouldn't want to retire after 40 years? Well, to hear him tell it, he would rather teach karate than move trees around the yard! I think it is because he can't stop. Sensei is Isshin-ryu. My personal opinion is I hope he never retires. What would we do without him?



Sensei was the only American invited to participate in the Okinawa Karate and Kobudo Exchange Symposium in January, 2005. This symposium was to educate and demonstrate the difference between Japanese and Okinawan karate. Guests have

been invited from several of the different prefectures in Japan, and one guest from each of the following countries Argentina, France, Germany, Iraq, and Sensei Advincula from the United States. Five people outside Okinawa and Japan were to be selected and he was one of them. What does this tell us? The “powers that be” in Okinawan Martial Arts invite OUR Sensei to be a part of this symposium. They respect him. In the Okinawan culture, this means everything.

He may be unpopular among some Isshin-ryu groups. He is fiercely loyal to Shimabuku Sensei and wants to truth to be told. He is one of the few left that truly know the truth because he was there. He continues to try to get to the truth by interviewing Okinawans who were there when Shimabuku taught. He has their respect. When he makes a mistake about history, he corrects it and gives credit where credit is due.



In 1998, Sensei held his first Enbukai in Oceanside, California. He invited Kensho Tokumura. Except for 1999, he has held an Enbukai in Oceanside every year since. He tries to bring together first generation students of Tatsuo Shimabuku so we can talk to them and ask questions. Sensei is not afraid of us asking questions of others who were in Okinawa training with Shimabuku Sensei.

In 2000, on the 25th anniversary of Shimabuku Sensei’s death, Sensei held his second Enbukai. This was done specifically to honor his sensei. After the demonstrations were complete, Sensei did Sanchin. He did 25 strikes to show his respect for Shimabuku Sensei.

Sensei also continues to honor his sensei by performing the Purification Ceremony as Shimabuku Sensei used to do at the beginning of demonstrations.

Sensei is not only our martial arts teacher, but our friend, mentor, life teacher and sometimes Papa-san. He has said at our seminars many times, that we should take care of our health and save our money for the future. He said that the most important thing he learned from Tatsuo Shimabuku was not about the martial arts, but about life. Shimabuku taught him to have a reserve. He said that he bought his house with U.S. Savings Bonds he saved while in the Marine Corps. Sensei sets a good example of how to successfully live life. He has been married to Michie for 48 years. He lives and breathes *Semper Fidelis (Always Faithful)* Just ask him! He is honest, loyal, trustworthy, good looking, etc., etc. Well, he is a nice guy!

Here are a few examples of nice things he has done (That I am aware of. Most of what Sensei does for people usually is done when no one is looking).

He and Sherman Harrill did a benefit to raise money for Don Bohan who was suffering from cancer. He also did a benefit for Sherman Harrill. After Sherman Harrill died, he gave Linda Harrill the money it would have cost him to go to the funeral (airline cost, parking, hotel, meals, etc.) For both of these benefits, Sensei paid for his own airfare to Michigan.

Linde told me that when she had surgery for cancer, Claudia asked him for a sweatshirt for Linde. When Sensei found out it was for Linde, he refused to let Claudia pay for the sweatshirt.

He gave Carol Womack air miles to go to Okinawa.

Advincula is the complete package. Some of us might not be the best practitioner; some are not “into” the history or genealogy of Isshin-ryu. He knows Isshin-ryu inside and out, he knows the history of Okinawa, Isshin-ryu and the Martial Arts in general, and he is the best practitioner I have ever seen. Why do you think he invokes fear in every uki? None of us ever want to be on the end of one of his punches or kicks! Even when he’s just playing around, he’s stronger and faster than anyone I know! And he’s been doing this for 50 years! He is someone to look up to and try to emulate.

Here are some stories from some of Sensei’s students:

From Robert Carona

Being fortunate enough to have been associated and train with Sensei Advincula for 26 of his 50 years in Isshin Ryu, I can positively state that Isshin Ryu karate as taught by Tatsuo Shimabuku and its history has been his life’s vocation.

The thing that struck me the first time I walked into Sensei Advincula’s dojo was that it was different. There weren’t any trophies hanging all over the walls and there certainly wasn’t any high pressure sales pitch to get you to sign a contract. Instead there was a heavy bag hanging in the corner, makiwara and weapons hanging on the walls, the smell of sweat as in a well used gym, and in the center back wall, noticeable to anyone who walked in there was a shrine dedicated to Tatsuo Shimabuku and his teachers. Of course there was Sensei Advincula giving you the once over deciding whether or not he

would to let you train there or send you down the street to another dojo. So right off you understood this was a man of tradition and respect.

Foremost, when Sensei Advincula ran his dojo he always maintained respect for Tatsuo. He consistently taught Isshin Ryu techniques and traditions keeping Tatsuo as the focus.

The shrine he constructed contained pictures of the Megami, Choto Kyan, Choki Motobu and Tatsuo Shimabuku. Tatsuo's picture was in the position of honor located in the center. Sensei Advincula not only paid respect to Tatsuo through this shrine but also would use it to teach the history of Isshin Ryu. Sensei would use the shrine as the center piece to teach about such things as the symbolisms of the Megami, the history of the masters, their styles and their influences on Tatsuo and Isshin Ryu. Sensei Advincula maintained this shrine as not only a sign of respect but also made it a living working part of Isshin Ryu.

Sensei Advincula would teach Isshin Ryu traditions using stories about Tatsuo. Many of these stories were about his personal experiences or his training partners experiences while training on Okinawa. Over the years I had the opportunity to meet many of the original students who were in these stories and they all backed what Sensei Advincula said. During training, if there were more than one way of doing a technique he would say, this is how Tatsuo would do it. As many of you who have attended the Enbukai know, Sensei Advincula always starts with the training with Tatsuo's ceremony of spreading salt, clapping hands and a Kiai to clear out the evil spirits.

Today he continues to do the same through his seminars, Isshinkai, Tomonokai, each year hosting the Embukai, and conducting Okinawan cultural tours. According to Sensei Advincula, it was very important to Master Shimabuku that Americans learn about Okinawan culture. Sensei began conducting the Okinawan cultural tours in 1994 with the last trip being in August this year. I made the tour in 2007 and for me the trip put a lot of the pieces together. Isshin Ryu history had been sort of a puzzle to me with all the pieces scattered about. Walking the streets of Ageo with Sensei Advincula as he pointed out the location of the original dojo, were Angi Uezu's house with the overflow dojo was

located, the gi, sai and makiwara maker's shops, really did bring it together.

We had great training sessions with Kotora Iha Sensei and Tokomura Sensei. Some of us on the tour, with our gung ho spirit, wanted do more training but Sensei Advincula stated there will always be time to train. We are here to learn about Okinawan culture.

Tatsuo thought it was important for Americans and that's why we are here. To Sensei Advincula, it was an absolute must that we visit and burn incense at Master Shimabuku's Tomb. No trip would be complete to him unless you paid proper respects to Master Shimabuku.



It was never about Advincula. It is always about Tatsuo. If I did hear anything about Advincula it was always from the original Marines who trained on Okinawa telling of his relationship with Tatsuo. Tokumura Sensei told me Tatsuo said, Advincula number-one. Tokumura Sensei also said others in Isshin Ryu talk about themselves. Isshinkai talks about Tatsuo.

Cherry asked me for some comments about Sensei Advincula's dedication to Master Shimabuku. What can I say? To understand how complete and total his dedication is, you need only look at the man. Every aspect of his life has to do with Isshin Ryu karate and keeping alive the memory of Tatsuo Shimabuku. He has no other job or hobbies. His vacations are spent on Okinawa leading martial arts cultural tours. He spends most of his days on the internet answering e-mails and questions about Isshin Ryu. I don't think I have seen Sensei Advincula or Michie, except on one or two occasions, dressed in anything else other than an Isshin Ryu t-shirt or sweat shirt. He has spent countless hours interviewing for posterity, those involved in Isshin Ryu since the very beginning, researching their stories and organizing Isshin Ryu history. (Now if we could only get him to write that book.) His life consists totally of Isshin Ryu karate.

Everything I have discussed above has been outward signs of Sensei Advincula's dedication to Master Shimabuku. You can only get a true

understanding for how deep this dedication is rooted in his soul by watching his body language while he speaks of Tatsuo. The only time I have ever seen Sensei Advincula get all choked up and unable to speak was when he related a story about him and Tatsuo. It is my personal opinion that Tatsuo was a father figure to Sensei Advincula and that he pays his respects back as a loyal son.

Many people have differing opinions about Sensei Advincula. Some may disagree with him on how to do certain things and his enemies may condemn him but I can assure you, you will not find a more loyal and true follower of the spirit of Tatsuo Shimabuku than Jim Advincula.

From Pim Barnett

I first met Sensei Advincula in 1971 at a seminar he did for Harvey Kennedy in Bossier City, La. Sensei was "high and tight", with wash board abs. His warm up exercises ran at least 45 minutes. For years we called this an "Okinawan work out". Only later did I learn that this was an "Advincula work out", not an Okinawan work out. After the warm up, people were worn out and ready to puke. Then the teaching started. Sensei did Sanchin kata. It was amazing to watch him do Sanchin. We worked on Kihon and Kata. At sometime during the day, I saw Sensei doing Escrima. I had never seen anyone move sticks that fast. He seemed to make the sticks pop like a whip. Sensei didn't speak a lot. It was more observe, participate and try to keep up.

During Sensei's first Okinawan Cultural and Martial Arts Tour, in



1994, I learned to appreciate his sense of humor. Listening to Sensei tell stories of his experiences on Okinawa was a wonderful opportunity. Everywhere we went, he had a story or an experience to share with this lucky group. All of the

stories he had told us about, he could verify on Okinawa. We had the honor of meeting his Hindiandi teacher's number one son. The respect

shown to Sensei Advincula by all the Okinawan's we met reinforced the high opinion held by his students.

From Heather Zeigler

On my first day in the dojo, Sensei handed me a packet of information, including the Kenpo Kokui and Code of Courtesy. He told me to read it before class started, and that I needed to agree to it in order to join the dojo. He was serious, and I remember he did this with each new student that I saw wishing to join the dojo. So for Sensei's students in the dojo, on our very first lesson, the Kenpo Gokui was introduced - that's where our Isshin-ryu started.

In the dojo, Isshin-ryu classes were held on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and free practice for all on Saturdays. The class warm-up lasted about 45 minutes. The senior student called the class to line up, and we would bow in, in the same way that the bow in was done in Master Shimabuku's dojo. yasume, kyotsuke, face megami, rei, face forward, rei. It always consisted of 10 repetitions on each side of charts 1 and 2, kotekitae, 2 minutes of situps, 2 repetitions of Sanchin kata. Sensei would add other exercises into the workout, but these were always consistent. After the warmup was free practice. We'd work in small groups, individually, or all together. Sensei would help everyone. At the end of class we'd line up to bow out in the same way it was done in Master Shimabuku's dojo. yasume, kyotsuke, rei, face megami, rei, face forward, rei.

I remember when a new student started in the dojo, we all knew to prepare for an extra tough workout. Sensei wanted to make sure people were serious about wanting to learn. He often didn't learn a person's name until they'd been steadily coming to the dojo for about a year. He did however show extreme patience with everyone. We learned quickly, if Sensei was yelling at us, paying attention to us, giving us a hard time - that meant he was teaching us. If he ignored us, we knew we'd done something wrong.... and with some diligent practice, Sensei was soon paying attention to us again.

The dojo was in a pretty bad part of town. We had plenty of crazy people come through, and also people down on their luck. Sensei never

harassed people to pay tuition to the dojo. I suspect that some never paid. Also, Sensei took in all sorts who were down on their luck - there was an elderly homeless man in a wheelchair living in the alley behind the dojo. Sensei took him in and cared for him. He set up a bed in his office for the man to sleep on, and let him live in the dojo. He also fed an alley cat (named Tom) and let him live in the dojo. In Okinawa, I saw Sensei and Michie several times take a 'doggie' bag of leftover food from a restaurant to feed a hungry animal outside in the street. To this day, Sensei never boasts about these acts of kindness, he does these things often when no one is looking. He's one of the most compassionate men I've ever met.

Throughout our training in the dojo, we'd hear stories about Master Shimabuku and Okinawan culture. Sensei teaches by example. He lives Isshin-ryu in all aspects of his life.

From Bob Nance:

What stands out for me is Sensei's hospitality and generosity shown the first time I visited him in Oceanside in the early 80's. I was in Monterrey, California speaking at a Healthcare IT seminar and asked Sensei if I could come down and spend my two week's vacation in Oceanside after the seminar. He would not hear of me staying in a hotel. He let me have his spare bedroom and treated me as part of the family, so I enjoyed the interaction between him and his "boss", seeing "Rolling-Pin-Do" in action. It was my first introduction to Okinawan culture. As far as the training, I attended every workout with him and his level of intensity was amazing - another tribute to Master Shimabuku. He had many "suggestions" for me on basics, stances, katas, bunkai, weapons, self-defense, breathing, etc. I felt like a beginner (compared to him I was, and still am). And yet, when we went to participate in the opening ceremonies of Rod Midlin's new Uechi-ryu dojo, he told me to demonstrate Sunsu! No pressure. When I finished, he said one word, "Outstanding." And yet, I had not yet made many of his changes. As a Sensei, this one interchange taught me many things: patience, tolerance, challenging your students, and, of course, it doesn't have to be perfect to be outstanding. As you know, learning from Sensei is on many levels just like drinking from a fire hydrant. Yet, not only does he workout hard, he practices balance and

knows how to relax and enjoy life. He knew how much I could absorb and, as a gracious host, he even helped to restore my mind and body by taking me to the San Diego Zoo and to see the Mission near his house!

So, in summary, I think he honors Master Shimabuku's teachings by applying his principles to all of life. Also, I think to visit him is to visit Okinawa. I came back to Mississippi with a book of notes and a passion to pass along everything I had learned to my students as well as several of the Black Belts in the Greenville dojo. So, thinking back, the learning on that vacation cannot be exceeded... it was an Advincula-quality product.

From Claudia Whiteley

In August of 2008 we joined Sensei in Okinawa. We had to join him the second week he was over there and he had already taken a group to see Master Shimabuku's tomb. One morning he knocked (and by that I mean banged) on our door early, before the others in the group got up, and he took us to see the Master Shimabuku's tomb. He took pictures from all different angles and directions. He spent a lot of time talking to us about history. The history of Okinawa and burial rituals, the history of Isshinryu and the history of the Shimabukus. Then he drove us to the original dojo where the Shimabuku's house was and again, even though he had done this earlier the week before, he took a lot of time and walked with us around the dojo, explained how the house used to fit, and showed us the wall that is in the photo where he is wearing the original patch and his hand is in his gi. (The Napoleon shot). He went to the street and walked off the paces to show us where the entrance was, and he knew exactly how many steps it was from the wall to the street. He talked about seeing the notice on Shimabuku's door and knowing something bad had happened; that his Sensei passed away. He gave us so much of himself, his time and of Isshinryu history - even though he had already done this for the group the week before. He was tireless in sharing these stories with us.

The first time we had Sensei in, I went to pick him up at the airport. I was waiting at the gate, I looked and looked for him but didn't see him coming down the long hallway from the plane to the waiting area we were allowed to wait in. I DID see a very tall man walking toward me, and when he was just about to pass me, Sensei jumped out from behind him! He snuck up on me like a Ninja. It makes me laugh even now thinking of him crouching behind this stranger and jumping out at me. There is no one like Sensei Advincula. He has a great sense of humor. A HUGE laugh. He is incredibly well read and serious about

education, but he has a fantastic humor. He IS yin yang. He is the essential Martial Artist.

In 2002 we went to a seminar in Syracuse NY. Sensei was teaching escrima and knife techniques. He showed us the Flesheater knife he designed and how it was designed. He was talking about how you can grab the blade of a knife sometimes and as he demonstrated this I noticed that there was blood dripping down his hand. I mentioned to Sensei that he was bleeding. Without hesitation he said he knew that and he was just demonstrating that HIS knife was designed so it COULDN'T be grabbed by the blade!

Sensei has kept alive the purification ritual that Shimabuku did. I don't think that everyone saw this, I am not sure everyone remembers this if they did see it and I don't think many do it now. It is a very special and important ritual that Shimabuku did and I am grateful that Sensei saw it, remembered it and has kept it alive. I am grateful that he has performed it in our dojo, and I always feel good when he opens the Enbukai with it.

The first time Sensei came to our home, he stayed up with me until 5:30 am. Literally. We had a class at 9 AM and a seminar at 5:30 that night. A seminar all day the next day and still he stayed up with me. He talked about the Codes of karate, and made me THINK and go deep into their meaning. It was a long night and it was hard but I will never for get how patient he was with me and pushed and



led me to an understanding that is hard to put into words, but it is something I feel every day now. Along with Isshinryu lessons, he taught me about the American flag. And, he taught me about honoring the past. He talked about his teacher, Isshinryu, Okinawa and the Marines. He honors them all. He doesn't talk the talk, he walks the walk.

I put a post on the Katagwakai site asking for stories about Sensei. I also sent out a few personal e-mails asking for stories. The only editing I did was maybe some spelling corrections. I wanted to let people tell their stories in their own words. I included all the responses I received. I have not shown anyone the stories I have

received. You should notice a theme running through all the stories. Sensei is all about loyalty, respect, honor, Semper Fidelis (*Always Faithful*), and humor.

Here are some more quotes and clips I found.

Sensei Advincula was a black belt when I started in July 1959. One night shortly after I began training, I was over in a corner practicing my front snap kick, when he approached me and said, "throw that kick at me and try to hit me" I threw the kick, he brought up his knee and I thought my toes were broken, with that he said "work on curling your toes" I've never had that problem since. Usually, if there was night of organized class, Sensei Advincula was the man teaching." ~ Tom Lewis student of Sensei Tatsuo Shimabuku (1959-1960, Ref: posted on sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/issinkaiKarate Sun Sep 24, 2006 1:39 pm, Message #23293

"Jim (Advincula) is the expert on the patch, he is the one who created it, devised it. And if I remember correctly he went down to, by the Kadena Gate 2 and had the original prototype made, and they brought it out. He's the one that was the motivating factor and of course made the patch no matter what anyone says." Bill Blond a student of Sensei Tatsuo Shimabuku (1959-1967) in an Interview with George Trimm 7-01-1989 at Fort Dix, NJ

"Tatsuo tell me, watch Gancho. He number-one kata." ~ Kensho Tokumura a student of Sensei Tatsuo Shimabuku (1958-1961) later explained that Tatsuo Shimabuku used to call Advincula Sensei Gancho which means glasses in Okinawan language and explained that Master Tatsuo Shimabuku called Sensei Advincula, Katagwa, meaning Kata-man, because he was excellent in kata and gwa meaning small in size compared to other Americans.

"Jim Advincula - We both were stationed at Camp Hansen, I was in 3rd Tank Battalion, and Jim Advincula was in 3rd Engineer Battalion, so we worked out at Hamada (Dojo) together. He was instrumental in developing me in my first year. You could always count on Sensei Advincula to participate in the demonstrations we put on for the Marines and on special occasions." ~ John Bartusevics, Ref: Bohans-family.com/sensei-speaks

"I met Sensei Advincula in 1964 at the Kin (Hamada) Dojo, everyone had already heard of him on base doing demos in the NCO clubs he was a legend already then. My very first day of class I came in the dojo and on the right of me near the entrance was Sensei (Advincula) and a red haired guy (Dave Zazlow) both Black belts practicing punching and blocking. All I heard the red haired guy say that Sensei was blocking too hard and it hurts he didn't really want to punch Sensei anymore. The week I started Sensei Shimabuku

was in the USA I believe at the (Steve) Armstrongs Dojo, we watched a film 16mm of him from one of his USA visits, then we started running around the dojo for our exercise.” ~ Peter Cooper (Roemer) Sgt. USMC, Ref: sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/isshinkaiKarate, Message Number 23438, Jul 24, 2008 8:36 am

“Master Shimabuku had a few American assistant instructors. They were Bill Blond, Ni-dan; and John Bartusevics, Ni-dan; and occasionally A.J. Advincula, San-dan. Usually, Sensei Bartusevics taught basics, but he was known for his enthusiasm and superb ability at kumite. Sensei Blond usually conducted the warm-ups. On special occasions, such as demonstrations of bunkai or kumite, Sensei A.J. Advincula would participate by request of Master Shimabuku. According to Mister Safreed, Master Shimabuku referred to Sensei Advincula as his number one student because of his depth of understanding of bunkai. This was demonstrated by the fact that Sensei Advincula would easily and victoriously end kumite in about 10 seconds.” ~ Robert Safreed, student of Sensei Tatsuo Shimabuku at both the Hamada and Agena dojo (1963), Ref: <http://www.olemiss.edu/orgs/karate/safreedbygriffiths.html>

“My father said to give this bo cover to Steve Armstrong, Arcenio Advincula or Don Nagle. It is good for your collection. It is Okinawan custom, Shihan-dai (senior instructor), when the sensei passes away, he passes (the gift, bo cover) on to the number-one student. My father (Tatsuo Shimabuku) had the bo cover under his pillow (on his death bed) and said to pass it on to the number-one student who teaches. Sensei (Tatsuo Sensei) normally watches (monitors the dojo classes) and the senior student teaches (the dojo classes). So it is the Okinawan custom to give (the bo cover) to the Shihan.”~ Shinsho Shimabuku, April 15, 1999, Kinaka, Gushikawa City, Okinawa, presenting his father bo cover to Sensei Advincula

In early 1973 I attended a seminar at Dixie National Karate Dojo in Bossier City, La. I was a green belt at the time & had been training there about a year. I was the only non-black belt in attendance. I was alone in the dressing room & I heard what I thought was a gunshot in the workout area. I momentarily froze. I heard it 10 or 12 more times. Then all of a sudden it was like someone ripping a cloth or a sheet. Only it was loud....real loud. It was so fast I couldn't distinguish one shot from another. It had to be a machine gun! After a few seconds, I eased to the doorway & peeked through the curtain to see what was going on. To my amazement, I saw this little man standing in front of the mirror. He had really short hair & was wearing black rimmed glasses held on by an elastic strap. I noticed that the sleeves on his new looking gi were frayed. He placed his fists on his hips & started punching.

That was the sound I heard....his sleeves snapping as he punched. That was my very first experience with Sensei Advincula. He made quite an impression on me. What I witnessed that day motivated me to continue my training for 30 years & counting! Kindest Regards, Clyde Stanley, Ref:

sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/issinkaiKarate Message #4871, Sat

Dec 29, 2001 2:47 pm

“Former Marines like retired gunnery sergeant, Bill Miller, and retired master sergeant, Jim Advincula, who both received a "Black Belt Emeritus" award recently for their pioneering efforts in martial arts. They first breathed life into the program by incorporating their lessons according to the needs of the Marine Corps.” ~ Story by Sgt. Joe A. Figueroa Ref:

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Guru's teaching inspired Commandant's martial arts program “On behalf of the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program, I am honored to bestow on you this honor, the Black Belt Emeritus. As long as Marines train in martial arts - and this will occur as long as there is a Corps of Marines - your place will remain. Simply put, we do today because of what you have done.” ~ G. H. Bristol, Director, Marine Corps Martial Arts Program, June 14, 2001, Ref: Isshinkai - Marine Combat

While doing the research for this article, I began to realize what a truly dedicated man Sensei is. I learned just how lucky I am to have him to teach me about Isshin-ryu and Okinawa. I tell people who talk to me about taking karate lessons, that if they learn from me they are only two steps away from the founder of Isshin-ryu. How many people in the martial arts can say that? How many people in Isshin-ryu can say that? Ok, now I'm at a loss for words

Let me summarize: Arcenio James Advincula aka Katagwa has been studying Isshin-ryu for 50 years. He designed the only approved symbol of Isshin-ryu, he continues to train, study and teach Isshin-ryu and continues to honor his Sensei by hosting the Okinawan Cultural Tours, continuing with the Purification Ceremony, hosting the Enbukai, continuing to travel to do seminars, and training at the honbu dojo. When he writes or talks about Isshin-ryu, he talks about Shimabuku Tatsuo not about himself. How many of us honor our Sensei as he honors his?

I am blessed to be able to call him Sensei. I only wish that I could be more like him. Thank you Sensei for all you do and Happy Anniversary.

I would like to thank Linde for calling me and giving me a lot of helpful information. Thank you to Robert Carona, Pim Barnett, Heather Zeigler, Bob Nance and Claudia Whiteley for responding to my request for their stories (and some photos) of Sensei. They are very much appreciated.