

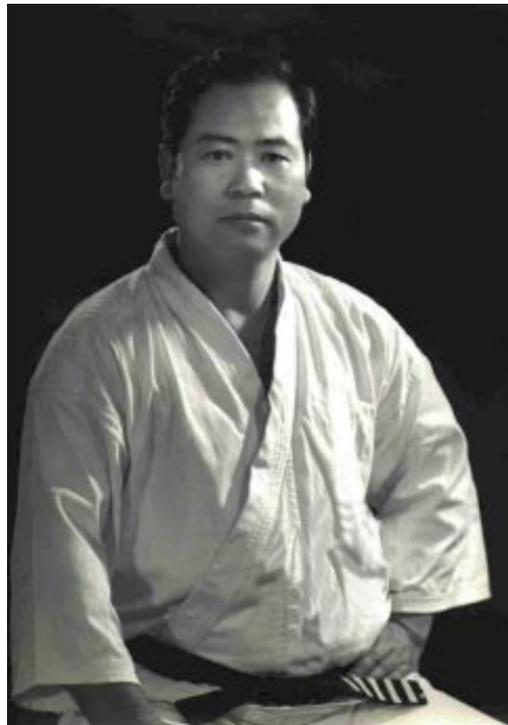


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## **HANSHI'S FIRST TRUE SENSEI, MASTER AKIRA TANIGUCHI & A HISTORY OF KARATE IN BRAZIL**

Written by Hanshi Richard



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Karate was introduced to Brazil by Japanese immigrants who originally settled in São Paulo.

For decades, the Art was taught in small secluded pockets, and it was only in 1956 that Professor Mitsusuke Harada organized the first proper Dojo in the street Quintino Bocaiuva, in central Sao Paulo. Following this example, was the black belt Akira Taniguchi, Director Technical Association of the Meibu-Kan Karate, developing Dojos in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Porto Alegre, Florianópolis and Curitiba.

It was in 1960 that Master Akamine founded the Brazilian Association of Karate in Sao Paulo, and following that the art began to grow in quality and numbers amongst the large Japanese community across the country.

The first steps of national integration began in 1965 when some of Bahia, moved to Sao Paulo in search of greater knowledge, and were received by the Master Akira Taniguchi. In 1965 Master Taniguchi was responsible for the First Inter-State Karate Tournament in Brazil. It listed its association as Wado Ryu under Akira Taniguchi of São Paulo, and it was the Bahia team which took the first place trophy.

Master Akamine left the Brazilian Karate Association (ABK) in 1964 and created his own dojo.

The ABK continued teaching Goju-ryu Karate under Sensei Akira Taniguchi and Shito-ryu Karate under the Sensei Masahide Nakayama, a senior student of Kosei Kokuba (Kuniba)

Richard Salmon started his Martial Arts career in the 1950s with training in Judo. As there were very few graded instructors in South Africa in those early days, he spent much of his time visiting Japanese, Okinawan and Korean ships that visited Durban harbor, looking for Martial Arts practitioners. He would then invite them home for a good meal and training. There were, of course, many diverse systems represented, however, through this, he was able to build up a wide knowledge of various Martial Arts.

As he found more and more practitioners of Karate visiting, he decided to move away from Judo and made Karate his main focus, and started to study this Art with more vigor.



*Hanshi Richard - Budokan Judo*

So it was from this early and unusual start, his Martial Arts career was launched.



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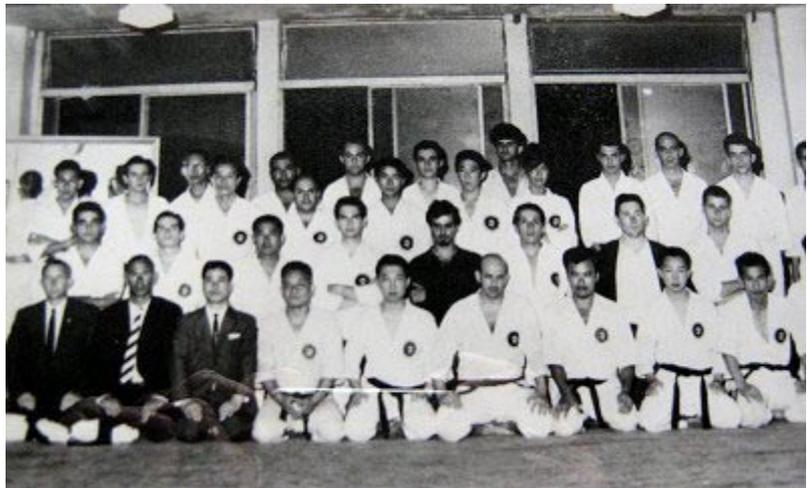
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The first true Karate Sensei he studied with was Sensei Aikiro Taniguchi, then a 5th Dan Goju- Ryu .



*Sensei Aikiro Taniguchi 5th Dan Goju- Ryu & Taniguchi at the Budokan Dojo in Pinetown, SA*

He met and studied with him first in South Africa in 1960 during a visit by the Sensei, and he then travelled to Brazil to take part in a few months of concentrated training for the first time, in one system only, with this Sensei at his new Headquarters, the Academy-Mei Bukan in the Japanese community in Sao Paulo, and in the mountains of Curitiba .



*(L) Hanshi, Des Botes and Taniguchi at Sao Paulo Dojo*



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*Hanshi (R) and Des Botes giving demonstration at Sao Paulo Dojo*

To be able to afford the trip to Brazil, which he did accompanied by his good friend Des Botes, they travelled 3rd class on a Japanese immigrant ship, living down in the hold, sharing toilets and shower facilities, Men and women together, with the bunks lined up side by side. The immigrants were moving to Brazil looking for a new way of life. The conditions and food on the ship were horrific, with the highlight being a "Whale meat" stew with cabbage and, by the end of the 3 week voyage, they had both lost a fair amount of weight.



The one benefit of the trip, however, was a Japanese Shotokan Instructor by the name of Tanaka amongst the immigrants, so they were able to train with him 5 to 6 hours a day, thus preparing them for the rigorous training ahead. Tanaka was traveling to Brazil to teach Shotokan Karate in Rio de Janeiro.

*Richard Salmon and Tanaka*

Salmon's first Black Belt, a 1st Dan, was awarded in 1960 by Sensei Taniguchi, during his visit to South Africa and was numbered "**Africa No. 1**". The first Japanese graded Goju-Ryu Dan grade awarded in Africa.

At the end of his training in Brazil, he received the rank of 2nd Dan Black Belt from Taniguchi Sensei in the Goju Ryu style.



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### In Memoriam to the Master Akira Taniguchi, Diploma of Merit



Master AKIRA TANIGUCHI, a Senior Disciple of Sumihiko Funatsu, was responsible for the deployment of Goju-Ryu in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. He died on February 12, 2009 in Japan, according to information provided by Ms. Anna Taniguchi, full of nostalgia to his disciples.

Akira Taniguchi moved to Brazil to work and teach martial arts. His very effective style was based on Okinawan Karate, Gojuryu, and, combined with training and teaching other Martial Arts, including Kenjutsu, he became a legend, and his life story was eventually published in the magazine "KungFu" in the 1980s, shortly before he returned to Japan. He later became known for promoting cultural and sports exchanges between Brazil and Japan, and the success of this initiative become recognized worldwide, with the result that in 1992 his name was recorded in the Sports History Records of both Japan and Brazil and he was honored by being awarded the "Joao Saldanha" Medal from the State Government of Brazil for the sharing of his technical knowledge, his attitude to life and giving value to human effort, work and discipline, developed through Karate training, leading to a better way of life.



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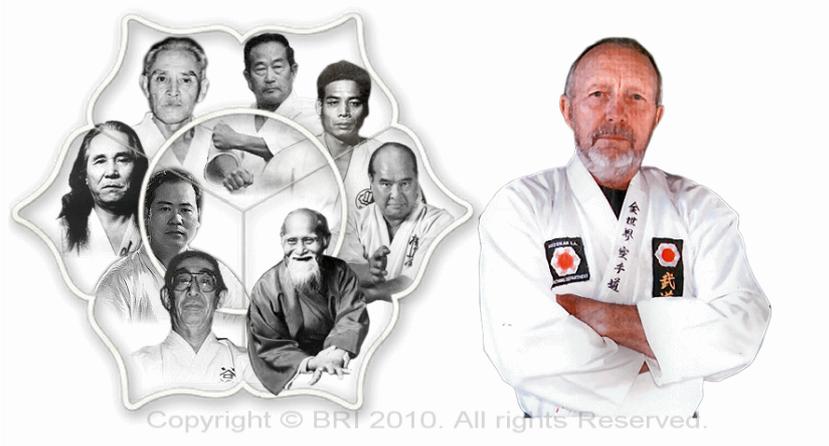
© Most of the material was collected and translated from the internet during 2008, 2009 and 2010 before nearly all the pieces of the puzzle made sense. Hanshi added the last piece by telling his story.

We wish to thank the author of HISTORIA DO KARATE NA BAHIA and ALDERMAN THIAGO DUARTE for writing his 'Concede "in memoriam" ao Mestre Akira Taniguchi o Diploma de Honra ao Mérito'

FOR FUTHER READING

[KARATE IN BRAZIL](#)

[http://ejmas.com/jcs/jcsart\\_alcantara1\\_1200.htm](http://ejmas.com/jcs/jcsart_alcantara1_1200.htm)



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