

Kozo Kuniba: **Budo Profile**

Hanshi James Herndon

Kaicho

Kuniba Kai International



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Kozo Kuniba

- Born June 8, 1960 in Osaka, Japan
- Second son of **Kosho Kuniba**, who was known to the martial arts world as Soke **Shogo Kuniba** (1935-1992)
- Grandson of the well known karate Sensei **Kosei Kokuba** (1901-1959), who founded Seishin Kan and Seishin Kai in the 1940s

Early Training

- Began karate training in 1965 under **Masao Tateishi** of Motobu-ha Shito-ryu
- Received Shodan in 1972 and Nidan in 1974, both through Seishin Kai
- Competed in Japan tournaments 1972-1973, retiring as a champion at age 14
- Recognized as Sandan by the Japan Karate Federation in 1978

Later Training

- Joined his father in the USA, receiving intense training and grooming to become the next Soke of Motobu-ha Shito-ryu
- Promoted to Yondan in 1989 at the USA Hombu Dojo
- Promoted to Godan and recognized as Shihan in 1991
- Aided in the development of Goshin Do

International Seishin Kai

- When Shogo Kuniba died in 1992, **Kunio Tatsuno** emerged as the new Seishin Kai Kaicho and assumed the role of Soke of Motobu-ha Shito-ryu Karate-do
- Kozo Kuniba was promoted to Rokudan in 1996 by Kunio Tatsuno
- Kozo Kuniba served as Director of the International Division of Seishin Kai

Nihon Karate-do Kuniba Kai

- Upon the death of Kunio Tatsuno in 1999, Kozo Kuniba and his older brother **Kosuke Kuniba** formed the Nihon Karate-do Kuniba Kai, which is JKF recognized
- Kozo Kuniba became Kaicho, Nanadan
- Seishin Kai was relinquished to the heirs of Kunio Tatsuno and the followers of the new Kaicho, **Sadatomu Harada**

Kuniba Kai International

- With a worldwide following, Kozo Kuniba has assumed the role of International Soke for Motobu-ha Shito-ryu Karate-do
- KKI boasts thousands of students in more than 20 countries, growing steadily
- Only KKI is recognized by JKF to issue Motobu-ha Shito-ryu Karate-do menjo

10 Years Strong

- The Nihon Karate-do Kuniba Kai celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2009.
- Soke Kozo Kuniba was promoted to Hachidan and took the title Sosai (Chairman).
- The position of International Kaicho was delegated to Hanshi **James Herndon**.

KKI and the Future

- A primary goal of KKI is to attract the followers of Soke Shogo Kuniba and Motobu-ha Shito-ryu Karate-do
- As the style continues to evolve under the recognized leadership of Soke Kozo Kuniba, the history of the past will form a solid foundation for the future