

To: SBK students and persons concerned
From: Shizuo Imaizumi
Re: An article on Wade Ishimoto that appeared in a Japanese newspaper
Date: June 1, 2026

In late May, I translated an article written on Wade Ishimoto, which appeared in a Japanese newspaper named The Chūgoku Shinbun (published in Hiroshima, Japan). As Wade sent me the said portion of the original newspaper in early May, I emailed him indirectly through Ralph Bryan as follows: “After the completion of this translation for you, I would like to rewrite the article for sharing with SBK students, including a part of this private version and additional information I write later. Then I will send back the original copy of the newspaper.” The following is my rewritten version for sharing with SBK students and persons concerned.

Just before the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941, Wade Ishimoto was born in Hawaii where his grand parents had immigrated from Hiroshima and Yamaguchi Prefectures, Japan. He joined the U.S. army out of his financial necessity. He was recognized that he would possess his potential abilities as a member of the U.S. Special Forces. He is 84 years old, enters in the twilight years of his life with his wife Bobbi (Mi Hye), and continues living in Virginia near Washington D.C.

Before I proceed with his military life in details, I would like to mention Aikido-related records of Wade that have not appeared in the Japanese newspaper. In 1989, my first SBK Aikido seminar was held in ABK by the invitation of the first chief instructor Wade. In October of that year, Wade was promoted to nidan and became the first student who received the SBK dan-ranking certificate issued by me. In May of the year of 2009, Wade was promoted to rokudan, together with New York students Donna Carlson and Warren Wynshaw. Those promotions to rokudan as well as other dan-rankings were in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of my Aikido career starting in May of the year of 1959. Wade left Albuquerque for Virginia for starting his second military career as a senior adviser. The current ABQ SBK dojo is open under the leadership of the third chief instructor Ralph Bryan, who was promoted to rokudan in October of the year of 2022. I handed Ralph that certificate at NY SBK dojo where my retirement ceremony was held on October 1, 2022. Both Wade and Ralph maintain communication with each other. That is why Ralph’s name mentioned in the opening paragraph of this rewritten article. It is difficult to contact Wade directly because he seems to be a modern super ninja.

Now I return to the article on Wade that appeared in a Japanese newspaper named The Chūgoku Shinbun (published in Hiroshima, Japan) dating on February 8, 2026. I style headlines like an English newspaper from arranging a style of a Japanese one below.

A SERIES: PEOPLE’S STORY

WADE ISHIMOTO (JAPANESE AMERICAN)

TRANSMITTING EXPERIENCE IN U.S. SPECIAL FORCES

DEVOTING LIFE TO OTHERS WITH NO ANTICIPATION IN RETURN

I quote the lead of that newspaper from my original translation for Wade.

“He repeatedly fulfilled his high-level duties to the nation such as mission to rescue American hostages and Special Operations to protect the U.S. against terrorism. Even after his retirement from the army, he has continued his focus on cultivating new military personnel. In 2024, he published his autobiography titled “THE INTOKU CODE” Delta Force’s Intelligence Doing Good in Secret. As his root originated from a Japanese American, he reminisces about putting much value on the spirit of “INTOKU” implying the devotion to others in no expectation of being served in return.”

From here, I paraphrase his military activities in details from my original translation. In 1977, the elite Special Operations unit named the Delta Force was founded, and Wade became a founding member of Delta Force. In 1980, the secret mission to rescue American hostages at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, Iran was carried out, and Wade joined its mission. According to him, on that day, a great sandstorm hit Tehran, pounding the region with unimaginable sandstorm. Eight persons were dead because a helicopter and a transport aircraft collided on the way to that rescue mission. Sadly, the mission to rescue American hostages resulted in failure. “Although the luck is something inseparable for success or failure, trusting to luck is not a professional job.” When Wade talks like that, he might definitely take into account the secret rescue mission in Tehran he joined.

After returning from Tehran, Wade introspected that the accident that occurred during the rescue mission in Tehran had resulted from a man-made calamity. He personally analyzed that the cause of calamity had originated from the following two aspects:

- 1) Poor equipment forced to use in that mission
- 2) The serious flaw in the system of a command of that operation

Wade thought that the result of that rescue mission should be brought to bear on the policy from the past into the future. From 2004 to 2007, Wade completed his service as a Senior Adviser to the Under-Assistant Secretary of Defense. During his tenure, he put a lot of effort into the improvement in combatant’s skill.

Despite Wade talks softly, his strength of mind and body surfaces occasionally, which arises from an instinct characteristic of a martial artist holding Aikido rokudan himself. “In order to avoid reiterating a mistake, it is important to know history.” Even now, Wade extends his knowledge through making countless speeches in compliance with the military interests. Extremists like Islam terrorism continue taking their violent actions around the world. Therefore, Wade is convinced that many demands of the necessity of Special Operations remain unchanged. [This is the end of a story of a Japanese newspaper I translated last month.]

Before I conclude this article on Wade, I would like to write about a Japanese word “intoku” Wade used in his biography of “*THE INTOKU CODE*” by Wade Ishimoto, published by Casemate Publishers in 2024. The word “intoku” consists of two kanji characters: “in” implying “to hide or hidden” and “toku” meaning “virtue , moral or goodness.” Thus “intoku” means “doing good in secret.” O’Sensei mentioned the practice of the following “san’iku” meaning “three trainings”: “taiiku (physical training), “chiiku” (intellectual training), and “tokuiku” (moral training) when he appeared in early morning classes in 1960’s. As you guess, students seldom do “tokuiku” in their daily life. However, the word “toku” itself is often used in Japanese daily life. For example, “bitoku” (a virtue, goodness), “toku no takai hito” (a man of high moral character), “toku wo yashinau” (to cultivate moral character), “toku wo hodokosu” (to do good), etc. The proverb says: “Tokugyo wa sorejitai ga mukui dearu.” That means that “Virtue is its own reward.” Also Confucius taught the following words: “Toku wa ko narazu.” That literally means that “The good will not long remain lonely.”

Now I would like to let Wade have the credit for the explanation of “intoku” on behalf of me, appearing here with his book of “*THE INTOKU CODE*” carrying. H-e-r-e is Wade! (Applause!)

Intoku is a Japanese word that translates to “good done in secret.” The noted Aikido master Koichi Tohei wrote about *Intoku* in his book *Ki Sayings*. *Intoku* is what this book is about. You will find my recollection of good done in secret. What you won’t find any spy techniques despite my years in clandestine operations. Those techniques are best left truly secret to prevent evil oppressors from understanding how they can be demolished. / Good done in secret means being humble but at the same time being filled with a spirit of wanting to help others in both routine and highly stressful situations. It requires steadfast dedication. I make no claims about being perfect. I have certainly had my share of “bad” days where the reader could question my ability to live up to *Intoku*. Regardless, I trust you will enjoy my sojourn through life and profit from many of the lessons I have learned.

The above paragraph was quoted from “*THE INTOKU CODE*” by Wade Ishimoto, published by Casemate Publishers in 2024.

THE LAST WORD: In early 1970’s, Koichi Tohei told a young student to translate his “*Shokushū*” (a Collection of Recitation) into English. As a result, the English version of “*Shokushū*” was born under the title of “*Ki Sayings*.” A section of “Intoku” was included in that version. Master Tohei passed away in 2011. The original translator of “*Ki Sayings*” remains alive and well. He will be 88 years old in coming December. Most of you recognize him because that person was me.

Gassho!

陰徳 INTOKU

