



国際大山空手道連盟総本部

World Oyama Karate

Honbu Newsletter

Issue 30 - January, 2012

Take A Chance

By Founder Saiko Shihan Y. Oyama

BREAKING NEWS !!!

Uchi Deshi in America is finally going to be made into a motion picture. Filming is scheduled to begin in May. So all students need to read the book again and help spread the word! OSU!



Take A Chance !

NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE FROM SAIKO SHIHAN

2012 is your year! You're alive, that's lucky! You can move, see the sun, feel the rain—that's wonderful! While reflecting on last year from where you stand now, you also need look ahead and see what is in your future. 2011 was a great year in the World Oyama Karate Organization. We had the 35th Annual American Cup Knockdown Tournament in April (which ended up raising \$10,000 for the American Red Cross. The money was used to support relief efforts in Japan following the tsunami and here in Alabama following the tornados that hit on April 28th. In June, another great Fighters' Cup Knockdown Tournament was held in San Francisco and we had the 20th Annual Japan Cup on October 30th in Yokohama. We've had many exciting events in 2011 and I'm proud of our members and genuinely appreciate their efforts and contributions.

Recently, in the past couple years I've heard many people commenting on how time goes by so fast. I hear it from my friends, family, on TV, from my students and many other places. Time cannot be stopped. Time can be cruel and relentless. But in some cases, Time is also compassionate and forgiving. Sometimes I reflect on the immense span of Time. Millions and millions of years ago, dinosaurs tread on the Earth. Somehow, an infinite chain of events and Time led to this present moment we live in now, which

TAKE A CHANCE

is merely a spec on the vast continuum of past and future.

Somewhere along the line, humans created the concept of years and months and days to mark the passing of time. Part of that is the concept of a “New Year”. Having a new year gives us a chance to make a fresh start and renews our hope, courage and ambition. We can look back at the past year and see our mistakes (believe me, I have made too many to count) and learn from them, bounce back and surge forward. That’s part of being human. So, I’m thankful to have this time to reassess and set new goals.

I appreciate my health. I can still punch, kick and block; I can *okuri ashi, fumi ashi, kosa-ho...* That brings me joy and motivates me to think about what I need to do this year to build up the organization and bring hope and excitement to all our members. I feel that excitement with my total body, not just in my head. Sometimes it’s hard to control the intensity of my excitement. At my age, over-excitement creates problems in my joints. So, I feel excited like Shihan John, but try to control it like Shihan Ron. I’ve always told myself that I am not an ordinary 70 year-old man with a 70 year-old spirit and 70 year-old body. I’m still young and my soul is youthfully energetic. I still look up and say, “Wow! What a beautiful deep blue sky!” and, “This rain is so warm and fresh! Makes me want to skip through the puddles.”

I still feel like this because I am still training and sweating alongside all my students. Believe me, sometimes they give me such a headache, but overall it is exciting and wonderful. I want to be sure and pass on that feeling to you guys. I wrote earlier on the World Oyama Karate Facebook page that people used to say a person has three big chances in their lifetime; whether or not they take it is up to them. I also think that if you are alive, you have a chance every day.

NO ESCAPING!

Why is it that Time goes by so fast now? Compared to 30 years ago, the pace of life seems so much faster. Human beings are the same, but technology has developed exponentially. Thirty years ago, we didn’t use cell phones or send text messages. When you walked your dogs in the morning, you could focus on the nature

around you and appreciate the serenity of the sky, trees and flowers. But now, people are constantly interrupted by calls, emails and texts sent to their cell phones. Information chases them, and they have no time to relax and appreciate the moment.

Whenever you do something, if you put your spirit/chi into it, time passes quickly. If you train for one or two hours with intense focus and attention to what you are doing, it will be finished in a flash. However, if you don’t focus yourself and get into what you are doing, time will drag tortuously on and on and on... Because information constantly bombards us, we lose the ability to focus on what is important. Our brains are over-stimulated, but our bodies remain dormant. That is a problem. Too much convenience can make you lazy and create an imbalance between mind and body.

That’s why Karate training is so important. It is a time to stop thinking and talking and JUST SWEAT! Everyone can enrich their lives by doing that. Of course, people are busy with family, school and work obligations, but you still need to find a way to squeeze time for training. Training at the dojo, not on your own. Training by yourself allows too many whispers and excuses to creep into your mind. So you need to come to the dojo, see my sweet, sweet face as I hold a bamboo stick and scream at you to punch and kick harder push yourself further (I love my job!)

Human beings can be strong but are also susceptible to influence. People who are constantly bombarded with information and other people’s opinions soon become content to just go with the flow and not make decisions for themselves. New Year’s is a time to stop the bombardment and reflect on the past, the present and make decisions about the future. This is an important time make a fresh start and re-commit yourself. When I was growing up, adults used to tell me that if you start something new and can dedicate yourself to accomplishing your goal for more than 3 days, then that is good. Most people’s enthusiasm wanes after 3 days and they start making excuses:

“It’s a little rainy today. I better stay inside.”

“There is a *DRAMATIC* drop in temperature of *TWO DEGREES!!* I can’t work in these freezing conditions!”

TAKE A CHANCE



Sensei Masa vs. Kerry in Heavyweight Final of 2011 Japan Cup

“A black cat walked beside me today, so I better stay home and watch TV. Maybe *The Bachelor* or *The Biggest Loser*.”

People come up with all sorts of excuses. Suddenly their new goals are blown to bits as if a ton of dynamite had just exploded in the center of their target. I have a confession, though—I did the same thing so many times while I was growing up. When I came to the United States, however, I started to wake up. I became more dedicated to Karate and teaching. I developed a greater appreciation for Japan and its history, for *Budo* as a whole and the cultures and traditions surrounding it.

UCHI DESHI IN AMERICA

After I had been here for awhile, I started taking *Uchi Deshi*. Our dojo is the oldest Karate dojo in Alabama and I taught so many *Uchi Deshi*. Among other things, I

taught them how to set goals for themselves, and take the action necessary to reach them. As part of their training, they had to run every morning. But on Sundays, they had to run at least 8 miles. I would tell them, “Don’t think about ‘8 miles’ when you start. Look for some target that you can see from here, like a traffic light or pine tree or lamp post. Focus on reaching that point, and from there, find the next one.” If you run like this, you can run 8 miles.

I’ve learned from my own experience the importance of using smaller benchmarks to assist in reaching your final goal. If you say, “This year I’m going to study for 5 hours every day and do 500 push-ups and 500 sit-ups and 500 squats,” you probably won’t be successful. But if you start out by doing 50 push-ups, 50 sit-ups, 50 squats a day, then move on to 100 a day once you can do 50, and so on, then eventually you can meet or even exceed your target. I’ve written many essays and instructional

TAKE A CHANCE

books about Karate. But, one day, I decided to write a **NOVEL** based on true stories—**UCHI DESHI IN AMERICA**.

I've had many uchi deshi over the years. The majority of them would stay 3-5 years, although some came for shorter periods such as six months or one year. It was my responsibility to show them how to dedicate themselves wholeheartedly to training for the length of time they had committed to. This required them to not distract themselves with anything else so that they could focus on discovering and honing their talents, skills and abilities. One day, they would be able to share the experiences and knowledge they gained from their time as uchi deshi with the outside world. Hopefully, they would share it by becoming World Oyama Karate instructors.

I have had many wonderful experiences teaching uchi deshi, especially the last uchi deshi, Sensei Masa. But, as I've written before, it takes a tremendous amount of energy to train uchi deshi. Their training is not confined to the dojo, but is ongoing, 24 hours a day. I have to keep them on track push them to fight themselves and the numerous creative excuses they come up with to "take it easy". Focusing on them so intensely can be very draining, which is why I stopped taking uchi deshi after Sensei Masa.

I wanted to share these experiences with people and

motivate them in a positive way. That would require me to write something other than a technical Karate book. Readership of instructional books is mostly limited to people who are already training, but a novel could reach people beyond that. After reading my novel, they might feel that, "Maybe Karate isn't so bad after all. I think I could try that."

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

Everyone told me writing a novel was too difficult for me. And even if I did write it, probably no one would want to read it. But I didn't listen to them, and started writing my novel in a notebook, by hand. I didn't realize it at the time, but as I started writing, the size of the text would be normal, but as I started getting tired, I would write larger and larger, which would make the pages fill up faster. At one point, I decided to begin typing out what I had written. After typing out 8 pages from my notebook, I still didn't even have one page on the screen! The enormity of this project hit me, like I had only just realized I would be climbing Mount Everest. "My God!" I thought, "What have I gotten myself into?"

I looked my reflection in the mirror. Mirror, mirror on the wall... The queen in Snow White had such a nice mirror to talk to, but mine was mean. When I asked it what



20th Annual Japan Cup (2011)

TAKE A CHANCE

I should do it shouted back, “You’re the one who decided to do this! This is all your own doing!” For a couple days after that, I avoided looking at myself in the mirror anymore.

I kept working and made up my mind to write one page per day (of normal-sized text), whether I felt like it or not. And one day a week, I would give myself the day off. So I did. After I’d done it for about a month, I said, “Wow, I’ve got 28 pages written in my notebook. Did I really do that?” After 3 months, I had about 100 pages! (To be honest, though, sometimes I wrote really big or used lots of “...”).

Whenever I really got into what I was writing, my pen seemed to move by itself. I had a magic pen! But sometimes my magic pen didn’t move at all. I would scream at it and shake it and sing the “A-B-C’s” to it, but nothing helped. Other times, it would fly across the page and I had to hold on tight to keep it from flying across the room.

Well, guess what... I finally finished the story! The initial version was in Japanese and I approached the CEO of Asahi Press, Mr. Masahisa Hara, about publishing it. Asahi Press is a pretty well-established mid-size publishing company in Japan. They had previously published my instructional books, *Perfect Karate* and all 4 volumes

of the *Kyoten* books.

DISCERNING EYE

Before going any further, I want to give you a little background on how I met Mr. Hara and the beginnings of our relationship. In February, 1984, Asahi Press published a book about Mas Oyama and Kyokushin Karate entitled, *The World of Ultimate Truth*. (By the way, copies of this book are extremely hard to find now and as a result, sell for very high prices on eBay). I met Mr. Hara in Japan two years before the book was printed. At that time we were still part of the Kyokushin organization. Every year, my brother Soshu, Shihan Miura, Shihan Goda and I would travel back to Japan for the All-Japan Tournament.

The Kyokushin Headquarters committee said that Mr. Hara wanted to see the four of us for help on this book he was working on. So we met with him in a large room along with seven or eight other people that were working on this book, such as the director, photographer, coordinator, project manager, etc.

The project manager began telling us about the book they were working on. It was a coffee table-type book with lots of artistic shots of nature that exemplified the five elements of Musashi’s *A Book of Five Rings* (Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Void). The nature shots would be put alongside shots of Mas Oyama and people training, fighting, etc. They said the budget for this book was a **couple million dollars**.

I kept quiet, but I couldn’t believe it. Neither Soshu, Shihan Goda or Shihan Miura said anything. I nodded my head as the project manager talked and said, “Mhm... Wow...” Up to that point, I had a lot of experience ghost writing articles for the Kyokushin magazine and correspondence course textbook as well as directing various camera shots for Mas Oyama’s books. When he had finished explaining the concept, the project manager asked the four of us to help guide them in their approach so that they could make a truly magnificent and fantastic book. They wanted shots that would display the fierceness of Mother Nature (such as lions, tigers, eagles, water buffalo) to go along comparable shots of Karate training and fighting.

I didn’t say anything; I first wanted to hear what Soshu,



TAKE A CHANCE

Shihan Miura and Shihan Goda had to say. The project manager turned to Soshu and asked, "Don't you think that's a great idea?"

"Um... hm... yeah, that sounds exciting," Soshu replied tentatively as he looked down the table to me. But I just kept quiet. Shihan Miura answered the same way, "Yeah... that's great..." and then looked at me. I still kept quiet. Shihan Goda just answered, "Wow..." and looked at me. I was sitting next to Shihan Goda, the last one down the line, so it was my turn.

I folded my arms and nodded slowly. The only reason the other three had said it was a great idea was because they had already invested a couple million dollars in the book and all the head people working on the book were in the room. A couple million dollars... sounded more like a movie budget than a book budget.

At last the project manager asked what I thought. Before answering, I looked at Soshu and asked him, "You really think it's great?"

Soshu just kind of shrugged, "Uh, yeah..."

I asked Shihan Miura and Shihan Goda the same thing and they gave the same response. I turned to Mr. Hara.

"Do you really want my opinion?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied.

"Well," I began at last, "it's not gonna work. It's a dumb idea and you're going to lose money."

"Huh!?" he said, a little taken aback. The other people working on the project were stunned.

"Have you already signed a contract?" I asked Mr. Hara.

"Yes. We cannot get the money back or cancel the contract."

"Well," I said, "that's too bad." Everyone paused for a bit to really let what I had just said sink in. "By the way," I said, breaking the silence, "I have an idea for a book."

"What is it?" asked Mr. Hara. He and the other staff members started to regain some of the light in their eyes. "A book about Mas Oyama?"

"No, it's my book." That is not at all what they had expected to hear. I said the name of my book was *Perfect Karate* and told Mr. Hara that if it didn't sell 10,000 cop-



ies in the first week, he wouldn't need to pay me any royalties. However, if it did, he would have to pay me 10% royalties. Mr. Hara agreed. And guess what! I was right. *Perfect Karate* was a hot seller.

In the end, Asahi Press went on to publish *The World of Ultimate Truth* anyway. As I said, it came out in February, 1984. It was a complete flop and stacks and stacks of the book just sat in a warehouse and were never sold. Eventually, the unsold books were shredded, which is why they are so hard to find now. I do actually have a copy because Soshu, Shihan Goda, Shihan Miura and I helped out a little bit and are in a couple of the pictures.

The reason that book didn't hit was because it was too abstract and philosophical. At that point in time, Karate was in a boom and people wanted more concrete/technical books instead of artistic portrayals of Karate.

So that is how my relationship with Asahi Press CEO, Mr. Hara, began. We published *Perfect Karate* and later *Kyoten Volumes 1, 2, 3 and 4*. After that, I told Mr. Hara that I wanted to write a novel, and he is the one that said no one would read it. I told him that the World Oyama Karate Organization had lots of students and the novel could be required reading and if they honestly didn't like it, we would give their money back. But Mr. Hara still was not convinced.



TAKE A CHANCE



Annual Black Belt Clinic—December, 2011

But I wrote it anyway, and guess what... it wasn't a huge success, but it also didn't lose money. After finishing the Japanese version, I told Sensei Karl that we needed to write a translation of the book in English. So, every day we would write a couple pages until we finished it at last and published the English version in 2007. We are continuing to sell copies and regularly receive orders for copies from Amazon.com.

GOING TO HOLLYWOOD

After the novel came out, I told Mr. Hara that I wanted to make it into a movie. But he said, "Please, Mr. Oyama. That's enough." I told him, "You've got plenty of money. Just put up one million." But he wouldn't do it. We started working on the screenplay anyway. **And now, 5 years and countless drafts later, guess what! Arrangements of been finalized and documents signed and we will begin shooting the movie this year!**

I don't think there is anything especially wrong with the way Hollywood movies typically portray Martial Arts, but the depictions are not grounded in reality. None of the movies show the beauty and power of ordinary training, but instead show people using all sorts of flashy and acrobatic techniques and flipping around and jumping from building to building or gliding across the water.

Martial Arts is relegated to the realm of fantasy and seems inaccessible to the average audience member. I wanted to make a movie that showed people the benefits and wonderful qualities of Karate training and motivate them to try it or return to the dojo and punch, kick and sweat. Of course, I also want to showcase World Oyama Karate, but beyond that I want to reach out to people and give them something positive in their lives.

So, now I am really excited about the coming year. I don't know for sure what it has in store, but I'm training right, teaching right and working right, so I feel that this movie is going to be successful. The title we chose is *Take a Chance*. Everyone get ready!

So, my message to you is that whenever you want to accomplish an ambitious goal, you have to break it down into manageable increments. If you want to get a Black Belt, you first have to read Kyoten Volume I and learn Kihon Sono Ichi kata to develop your Driving Kumite strategy and do the promotion test for blue belt. Then from there, focus on getting yellow belt, and so on. After awhile, you can look back and see how much progress you've made.

You are alive and that means you have a chance! Set goals for yourself take the steps needed to reach them.

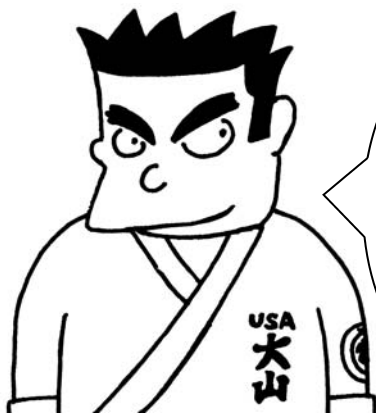
OSU!



Up-Coming World Oyama Karate 2012 Events

Mar. 3	Sat.	Brown/Black Belt Promotion	10:30 a.m.
Mar. 17	Sat.	Japan Clinic / Black Belt Promotion (Himeji, Japan)	
Mar. 18	Sun.	Japan Clinic / Black Belt Promotion (Tokyo, Japan)	
May 5	Sat.	American Cup Knockdown Tournament (Birmingham, AL)	
June 3	Sun.	Fighter's Cup Knockdown Tournament (San Francisco, CA)	
June 3	Sun.	Japan Challenge Cup	
June 23, 24	Sat./Sun.	Japan Branch Chief / Instructor Clinic (Kanagawa, Japan)	
July 19-22	Thurs.- Sun.	Summer Camp (Gulf Shores, AL)	
Nov. TBA	TBA	Japan Cup Knockdown Tournament	
Dec. 1	Sat.	Brown/Black Belt Promotion	10:30 a.m.
Dec. 2	Sun.	Ultimate Challenge Knockdown Tournament (Birmingham, AL)	

****Some dates are preliminary, and are subject to change. We will give advance notice for date changes.*



For the 1st time, Perfect Karate in DVD. Don't miss this opportunity to get your copy.

Issue 30 - January, 2012

Editor-in-Chief: Saiko Shihan Y. Oyama
Editors: Sensei Karl Julian
Graphic Artist: Sensei Masa Takahashi
Technical Assistant: Senpai Tony Ching

World Oyama Karate Honbu Dojo
1804 29th Avenue South, Homewood, AL 35209
Phone: (205) 879-4841 Fax: (205) 879-4849
www.worldoyama.com

Copyright © 2012 World Oyama Karate. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited.