



国際大山空手道連盟総本部

**World Oyama Karate**

**Honbu Newsletter**

Issue 16 - Winter, 2007

**By Saiko Shihan Y. Oyama**

**2007**

**YEAR IN REVIEW**

### Last Days of '07



This year has gone by so fast. It's hard to believe that 2007 is nearly over. In the past decade, a technological revolution has completely changed our society. When I was growing up, people always communicated face-to-face. We looked each other in the eyes when we spoke; we read each other's facial expressions and body language. In some cases, we had to endure the other person's body odor during the conversation. Time seemed to move slower. People paid closer attention to nature, the changing of the seasons, the subtle shifts in the wind and color of the sky.

Now, we are bombarded with information every second. Our minds are never at rest, we are always on alert. New technology has pushed the pace of life to a breakneck speed...that's my theory, anyway.

It's important to stop every once in a while and reflect on recent events and try to look to the future with fresh eyes. This has been a busy year in the World Oyama Karate Organization. There's not enough time to reflect on *everything* that has happened, but I want to share some of the highlights with you.

Learning from the past to make a glorious future !



# 2007 Year In Review



Sensei Takahashi and his top samurais

## January, 2007—New Atlanta Dojo

This coming January will mark the 1 year anniversary of Sensei Takahashi's new dojo in Atlanta. Sensei Takahashi has been teaching in Atlanta for a little over 20 years, but during that time they were operating out of a fitness center. This January, he and his samurai opened their own dojo in a new location. I feel like this branch is getting stronger all the time, thanks to its champion fighters Senpai Alonzo Jackson, Senpai Brent Smart, and Sue Kaminaka. Other students, namely Steve Geng, Tomi Isobe, and Isaac Wilcox, have done a great job of building up this branch. I think 2008 will see this dojo become even more successful.

## 2007 Year In Review

### April 21, 2007—American Cup

This year's American Cup Knockdown Tournament here in Birmingham was a great success—everyone did a great job. As I've mentioned before, a tournament is an exciting goal not only for the fighters, but also for the organization as a whole. Having a tournament to look forward to helps students focus their training on a concrete goal.

Tournaments are also the starting points for new journeys in a student's training. Sometimes a fighter's match only lasts a split second before they get knocked out. Flat on their back, their mind drifts far away, maybe to the ocean, where they swim with the dolphins. Or high up to the edge of a cloud where they sit and talk with the eagles:

“Hi. How'd you get up here without wings?”

“I'm not sure. I think I just got knocked out...Yep, there I am, way down there on the mat.”

“Well, I hope you wake up soon. Better luck next time. I'm gonna fly away now.”

“OK, bye.”

Then again, they might win first place. Whatever the outcome, fighting in a tournament opens a student's eyes. They can look back at their training leading up to the fight and see what was good and what was bad. They can see more clearly what they need to work on to build up their Karate in the future. Even people who just watch can feel the spirit of the fighters' efforts. This helps motivate them in their own lives.

So, this year's tournament was very successful. By the way, next year's American Cup will be on **APRIL 26, 2008**. I think everyone should try to compete at least



Sensei Takahashi and his champions—Senpai Alonzo (L) and Senpai Brent (R)



## 2007 Year In Review



All participants enjoyed a successful 2007 American Cup

once. I understand that most students aren't planning on making a career out of training and competing. But the point is, are you going to step inside the room, or just keep looking from outside the door? Once you enter, you'll discover a whole new world—but you've got to take the first step. When you make up your mind to fight in a tournament, your training will be more focused. You'll have to fight yourself and build up your spirit. You'll have to fight against the temptation to look for an easy way out, but life is like that—great rewards require great effort.

### June 10, 2007—Fighter's Cup-San Francisco, CA

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Fighter's Cup Knockdown Tournament was held in San Francisco this past June. Sensei Saito and Sensei Yoko have really done a great job in building up this tournament. Shihans John and Mary Lehner from San Jose have also made a lot of contributions to this event with their support and cooperation. This year's tournament really reminded me of the fact that before you fight your opponent, you first have to fight yourself.

The final match in the heavyweight division was between Senpai Brent Smart from Atlanta and CJ Blackman from another style. Brent is about 5'7", CJ is 6'2". Brent weighed in at 170 lbs, CJ was about 215. CJ had a lot of sharp techniques, but he wasn't able to connect solidly with Brent. They fought 3 minutes, then two 2-minute overtimes. For the majority of the fight, they were pretty evenly matched, but in the end, CJ didn't have enough stamina. Brent won by decision after the second overtime. Brent won first place, but he was also stubborn in his fighting. His coaches kept telling him to low kick, but in seven minutes of fighting, he only low kicked a couple times.

When you are in the middle of a fight, sometimes it's hard to see the big picture. But a coach can see everything more objectively. That's why it's very important for a fighter to be able to listen to his coach's direction. Even Tiger Woods sometimes listens to his caddy. Of course a caddy isn't the same as a coach, but he isn't emotionally involved in the game. He can sometimes see the bigger picture more clearly.

I remember a couple years ago I taught a fighter from another style. He was from Japan. He was planning on fighting in his style's tournament in New York, so he wanted to train with me for about a month beforehand. I agreed to teach him at the request of my best friend. He was a little shorter than me, but was about 20 lbs. heavier. His body was solid and muscular, and he had great spirit; he didn't mind hard training.

He had been doing Karate for about 10 years. When he first started training with me, I told him to try and forget everything he had done in the past. Try to open his eyes to what was new in order to build up his fighting ability. If he didn't do that, he wouldn't gain anything from the time he spent training here. At first, I evaluated his size, speed, power, flexibility, etc. From there, I focused his training on what he needed to work on to take his fighting ability to the next level.

The organizers of the tournament were old friends of mine. They invited me to attend as a guest. I watched the tournament with them. When it came time for this guy to fight, he reverted back to his old style. He didn't do any of what I had worked with him on. His opponent was a lot bigger than him. He fought hard, but ended up losing. Afterward, we talked. I told him that if he wanted to advance, he had to challenge himself,

## 2007 Year In Review

fight against the impulse to just do what was comfortable and familiar. Maybe one month wasn't enough.

The point is, when you fight in a tournament, you can see clearly what you need to do to build yourself up in the future. That's why it's such a great experience. If you never challenge yourself in this way, you'll always be stuck at the same level in your training. Next year's **Fighter's Cup** will be on **June 14, 2008**.

### June 23-24, 2007—Japan Branch Chief Clinic

Every June, we hold a 2-day clinic for Japan Branch Chiefs. Sometimes, they don't train enough, so I need to go over there and sweat with them. It's good for me too, because I have to push myself before I can teach them. We train good, sweat, and get back to basics.

### July 19-22, 2007—Summer Camp

Whenever you train outside of the dojo, at the beach, the mountains, somewhere like that, you become refreshed, and can appreciate all kinds of things. At Summer Camp, we start training before sunrise, just as the



**Battle in the water, or making plans for breakfast ?**

last bit of night is fading away. We jog a couple miles, then sit and meditate in front of the waves. The sun slowly begins to rise, and students close their eyes, focusing on the ocean breeze and sound of rolling water against the sand. I watch the students as they meditate. Some of them look like they're about to snore. Others keep waving away insects flying in front of them. Still others look like they're really into it, really meditating, but I can read their thoughts: "Some eggs, bacon, and hot coffee would be so good right now." I can see their mouths twitch, trying to taste the images in their minds.



**Another great turn out for 2007 Fighter's Cup**



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Training in the ocean is great, and students really enjoy it. At Summer Camp, I try to approach weapon and Kihon training from different angles. In the water, we can really focus on takedown techniques. Everyone starts out with great energy. But after ten or twenty minutes, some “seasoned fighters” start to slow down. They face each other, wrestle into the ocean, and lay there, looking up at the sky, bobbing with the waves. After a moment, they slowly rise and chat awhile about what to eat for breakfast. Then eventually, they say, “Ahh...OK, let’s go again.”



Kai Cho Izumi

These students are a little younger than me, but I can relate to that feeling. So I just tell them, “Good job, good job!” We spend the morning to early evening training; it’s a hard schedule, but I enjoy it. Hopefully, we can keep doing it another three or four years...maybe six or seven...maybe nine or ten, who knows?

So, get ready for next year! We’ve already scheduled Summer Camp for **July 17-20**.

November 23, 2007—Japan Cup



Saiko Shiha with Black Belts in Summer Camp



## 2007 Year In Review



ni, Saiko Shihan, and Japan Cup Champions

This year, I sent S. Karl Julian to Japan a few weeks before the tournament to train and compete. He did a good job, and came in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. I think he discovered a lot about himself, being in a different country, training

with different people. But what sticks out in my mind most is the crowd of children that chanted his name whenever he fought. These were kids that he had trained with during his stay. At that moment, I felt strongly how World Oyama Karate is for *everyone*. Young, old, men, women—everyone can gain something from training. I hope you all can make it to Japan next year. The **2008 Japan Cup** will be held on **November 16, 2008**.



Two real warriors... and mom

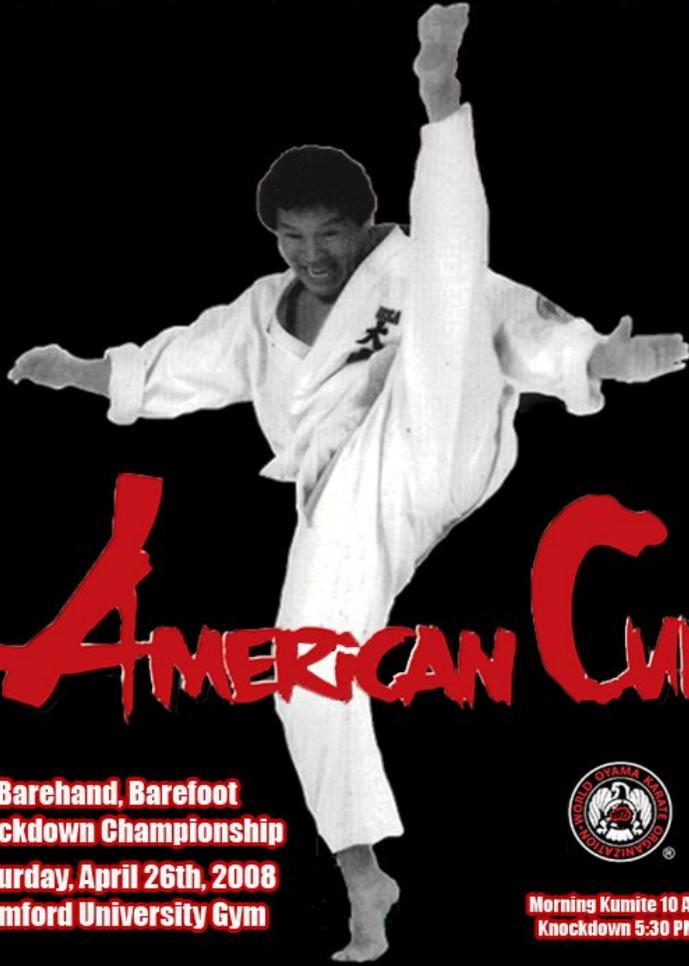
### The Future is Wide Open

So, as you look back on your own experiences this past year, I hope you'll discover what you need to do to build yourself up in the coming year. 2008 is going to be another exciting year. Set your goals high and sweat hard!

**OSU!**



**WORLD OYAMA KARATE**  
presents  
**ULTIMATE CHALLENGE**



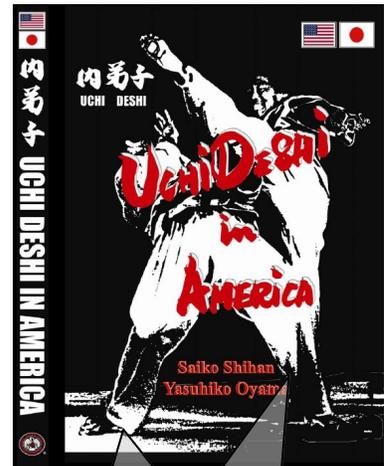
**AMERICAN CUP**

**Barehand, Barefoot  
Knockdown Championship  
Saturday, April 26th, 2008  
Samford University Gym**



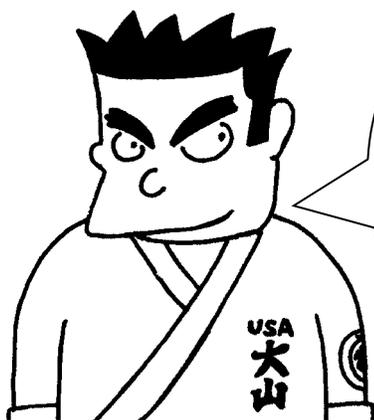
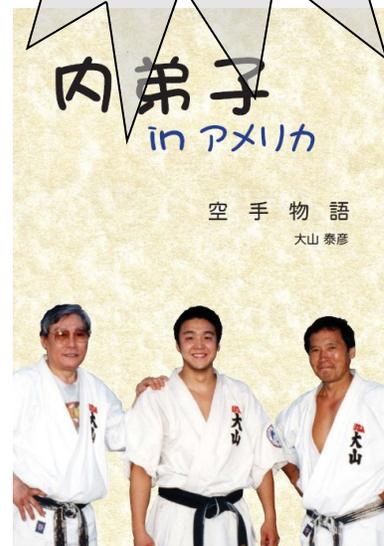
**Morning Kumite 10 AM  
Knockdown 5:30 PM**

**WORLD OYAMA KARATE FOUNDER & DIRECTOR: SAIKO SHIHAN YASUHIKO OYAMA**



English and Japanese ver-  
sions are now available.

Get a copy before it is too  
late.



"2008  
American  
Cup"

DON'T  
MISS IT !!!

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