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Q: Sensei, when and where were you born?

A: I was born November 24, 1940 in a place called Kagoshima in Southern Japan.

Q: How old were you when you started karate?

A: I was fifteen years old

Q: When you entered university what was the training like?

A: The training was rough, very hard and very rough. We practiced about three to four hours, six days a week. We started about 3 o'clock and finished usually around 7 o'clock. I trained at the University for five years.

Q: How was kata practiced?

A: We practiced kata every day. We did basic kihon first, then makiwara training, tetsu geta (iron clog training), jogging for about five miles everyday, then back to the dojo to practice kata and kihon kumite, and

then free fighting.

Q: Did Ohtsuka Sensei the 1st visit the university often?

A: Yes, about once a week or once every two weeks.

Q: When Ohtsuka Sensei first came to the university what

were your first impressions of him and his teaching method?

A: My first impression was that I thought he was a real gentleman. I thought a karate master should look aggressive and have a strong approach, but he didn't. The first time I saw him I didn't listen

to him carefully but he mainly taught us taisabaki and nagashi tsuki.

Q: When you left Japan why did you choose to go to England?

A: I visited England because Suzuki Sensei was there. I was

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supposed to go to France, but Suzuki Sensei asked everybody to come and visit him first to practice and learn the same method of teaching. When I was there he was very busy and he asked me to stay till my visa expired. When my visa expired he asked me to go to France and stay there for a couple of days and

teach. So I went to France and stayed in Paris for about two years to teach. Then after that I went to Madagascar, while staying in France I didn't learn any french because there were so many Japanese living there. My apartment was also in a Japanese area. This was around 1969 and 1971.

A: The competitions we did was ippon sho bu, only up to one point. No fist pads, no shin pad and no "protection." They would say control but it was not very good control. I was there from the third All Japan Championships onward and the referee system was not established very well. I saw many accidents in competitions.

Karate as a sport and karate as a martial art should be like two wings and then you can fly. With only one sport wing, you can't fly ... they must work together.

Q: What do you remember most about the first few years in England?

A: I remember just teaching like the way we did at the university. But all round through rough fighting with no control, many students quit..

Q: Did you enter many competitions?

A: Yes, I did. In university winning competitions was very important. When the university won the school gave the dojo a grant. So if you won you got more money for that activity for the next year.

come back. After the third time, I was stopped by immigration and the president of our organization had to come and explain, but they said I needed to get a green card. So I applied for a work permit, was accepted, and stayed in England. After about five years I went to Spain but was kicked out and came back to England. When I returned there were a lot of younger instructors and there was no space for me to

Q: Karate was new to Europe at that time, did this make teaching difficult?

A: Yes and no, because it was new to European people and if we told them to "do it this way" they followed, that was the easy way. But the difficult way was that many people challenged us to fight. So I had to fight quite a lot.

Q: What were competitions like when you were younger?

Q: You are quite well known for your kicking technique. Did kicking come naturally?

A: No, it came from practice, I guess. One day I just automatically did a roundhouse kick to jodan and knocked the person down. Then I thought that I had a strong kick my confidence came and I practiced more kicking.

Q: University kumite

training was very vigorous do you remember any one person who was particularly difficult to fight?

A: Yes, when I took first dan and my opponent took second or third dan he was smaller than me. He was from another university. After dan grading we always challenged each other to fight. I fought with him he was small so I thought he would be easy to knock down with Mawashigeri Jodan. As soon as I kicked he kicked my groin at the same time. Every time I tried I received a groin kick. That was one of the hardest times I ever had. I could not go on the floor I had to patiently stay there. After, I asked him about my kicking, and he gave me some tips.

Q: Do you feel that there is too much emphasis place on karate as a sport?

A: Well, for example if one person has got very a fast yakuzuki he will be champion. He doesn't know any other technique but one. For me that is not a martial artist. It is O.K. to be champion but sport and martial art should be

like two wings and then you could fly. But only with one sport wing you can't fly or like wheels two wheels together not one wheel ahead and one behind the car won't move. They must work together and then I can accept sport karate.

Q: What is the best age to start karate?

A: In Japan, they'll start at six years old.

Q: What type of training should a karateka do on a daily basis?

A: Karateka should practice basics every day.

Q: What do you think about weight lifting for karateka?

A: It is good, if done correctly. Not heavy and slow action. Not to lift heavy weight for five times but lift lighter weight for twenty times.

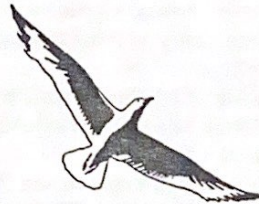
Q: How important is kata training in Wado-Ryu?

A: Kata training is important because it is the essence of fighting but you have to find out from original kata moves. This is very difficult. If you practice and practice and ask

why do we do this move? Then you can find the meaning for fighting.

Q: Do you feel that one person can train in several martial arts at one time?

A: Yes, if they have the time. Traditionally in Japan students learn in different martial arts for example,



Kendoka learn Aikido or Kyudo, it all depends on time. It is more difficult for kyu levels to learn but it is O.K. for advanced students. For example, when you try to eat new food, when you chew it if you don't like it you spit it out, if you like it you swallow. You can take what is good from every martial art that you try. Wado-Ryu is the same we try to practice all the same but we have different fighting style, my Wado-Ryu is

not the same as yours. for the mind and karate.

Q: What makes Wado-Ryu different from other karate styles?

A: Taisabaki and nagashitsuki are the main differences. When we block we must attack at the same time with our body out of the way.

Q: There have been many problems in Wado-Ryu's past, do you feel that these problems will one day be rectified?

A: No, As long as people are greedy, no. Some people take karate like business for power and politics. This is not like traditional martial artist. When a student feels they have passed their sensei they must ask permission to leave and start their own dojo. Then, after they must maintain good relations. It is like a family.

Q: When you are teaching what is the most important thing you try to tell students?

A: For beginners they must practice basics for black belts meditation. To sit down or kneel in seiza, breathe deeply and think of one thing or one problem like a Zen Buddhism Koan. This training is good

Q: Since your first time in Europe, how has your teaching style changed?

A: Yes, at first I taught alot of rough training, alot of fighting and then I asked myself why always just concentrating on fighting, it is not only important. Then I began teaching more of the other things. After I left Suzuki Sensei I started to use more explanation in my teaching method.

Q: What do you hope to see in Wado-Ryu's future?

A: I hope to see Wado-Ryu and Wado-Kai to come together but right now this is impossible.

Q: You have visited Canada for many years, is there anything you would like to say to Canadian students?

A: I have noticed a lot of improvement in Canada in the past two years. It is difficult to see your own improvement but it is there. What is important for all martial artists is to always continue training. ☯

Thank-you Sensei.

Domenic Capilongo

IPPON KUMITE

