



IOGKF

INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

IOGKF gives back

Report from UNDP on the
online charity gasshuku

Embracing the times

Bakkies Sensei's podcast -
sharing stories from a 50+
year journey

A true master of karate

Remembering Shuichi
Aragaki Sensei

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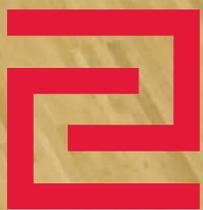




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Address from

IOGKF VICE CHIEF INSTRUCTOR

Sensei Ernie Molyneux

I would like to wish all IOGKF members good health for you and your families. I hope you will all read and make contributions to the forthcoming IOGKF magazine.

The idea of an international magazine or newsletter is not new, in fact when Higaonna Sensei was teaching at the famous Yoyogi dojo in Tokyo one of his students used to mail a newsletter to member countries. Since then we have come a long way with technology and the standard of the magazine now is very professional. Many of the senior senseis make contributions not only on technical matters but with some of their stories about their journey in Karate, making for very interesting reading.

I wish to congratulate Sensei David Lambert on an excellent job of starting up the newsletter again. He has worked tirelessly on this project. Sensei David or DJ as he is more commonly known is one of the senior instructors in Australia. He is a professional Karate instructor with a great future in IOGKF.

This past 20 months has made life very difficult for all of us but hopefully we will see an end to this pandemic soon. I look forward to the day when we can all train together again in person in Okinawa or in our respective countries.

Best wishes and good health,

Regards Ernie Molyneux

IOGKF INTERNATIONAL



BLACK BELT GASSHUKU

Online - Nov 6-7, 2021



**CONTACT YOUR CHIEF INSTRUCTOR
FOR REGISTRATION INFORMATION**



ADAPTED BY SITA GANESAN (CANADA)

IOGKF GIVES BACK

When the world was hit by the COVID-19, one of the first actions taken by Tetsuji Nakamura Sensei was to organize a worldwide online charity gasshuku to raise funds to fight the pandemic. Over thirty countries participated in six international online charity gasshuku over the course of 2020, raising a total of \$12,615.61 USD.

The funds raised were donated to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for a project with the specific objective to

assist particularly vulnerable populations to fight COVID-19 in Bangui, the Central African Republic. Sensei Natalie Boucly , the Resident Representative of the UNDP in the Central African Republic, coordinated the program setup.

Partnering with Ndara ti Beafrika, a local charity that aims to support Central African artisans through capacity and business development initiatives, the UNDP delivered a training course to local female entrepreneurs designed to enhance their business and leadership skills and provide them with the tools to create local jobs and a more resilient pandemic economy. The participants of this training all had limited formal schooling, something that is common in the Central African Republic where 76% of the female population is illiterate.

The training program covered leadership, budgeting and business plan creation, mathematics and literacy, sewing machine maintenance and machinery, clothing production, the production of bags and baskets from recycled plastic, and marketing. The participants were also taught embroidery skills by making face masks and hand-embroidering the IOGKF logo.

Through this project, IOGKF provided essential training for 18 people. On average, each participant directly supports twelve people through her craftsmanship, hence the skills learned through this training has the potential to positively affect a minimum of 216 people once the skills learned are applied to each individual woman’s business. We would like to thank everyone who participated in the charity gasshuku and made the support of this project possible. 🙏



CHARITY GASSHUKU 2020

May 2 - IOGKF Canada UN COVID-19 Fundraiser

May 15 - Australian UN Fundraiser

June 6 - IOGKF International Charity Fundraiser

June 27 - Spanish Language Charity Fundraiser

July 3 - IOGKF Israel Charity Fundraiser

August 21-23 - IOGKF-USA Charity Fundraiser

武道祭

WORLD
BUDO SAI
- OKINAWA



IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

Sensei Bakkies Laubscher embraces the times

INTERVIEW BY DAVID LAMBERT (AUSTRALIA)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROMAN BOLDYREV (CANADA)

The COVID pandemic has forced the consideration of many traditional methods and ways of teaching traditional Karate around the world. Many dojos are now closed with, sadly, no opening in sight. Many are teaching on platforms like Zoom, some are recording videos; the list goes on.

While many leaders who have not been innovative have seen their teachings come to a grinding halt throughout all the uncertainty, others like Sensei Bakkies Laubscher from South Africa have remained disciplined, focused, and driven to ensure traditional Okinawan Karate not only survives COVID, but continues on long after this is all behind us.

For those who do not know of Bakkies Sensei, he is the giant of South African Karate and an integral part of the global senior hierarchy of the International Okinawan Goju-ryu Karate-do Federation (IOGKF). Growing up in Africa had its challenges and a young Bakkies Sensei became interested in the fighting arts at a young age. This saw him lie about his age to enter his first Karate dojo, which was aimed mainly at university students. The legend had begun and a journey that would see him spend an extended



period training at the famous Yoyogi Dojo of Master Morio Higaonna from 1973, teach Karate in over 25 different countries, and go on to obtain the level of 9th Dan in the International Federation – its highest ever western exponent.

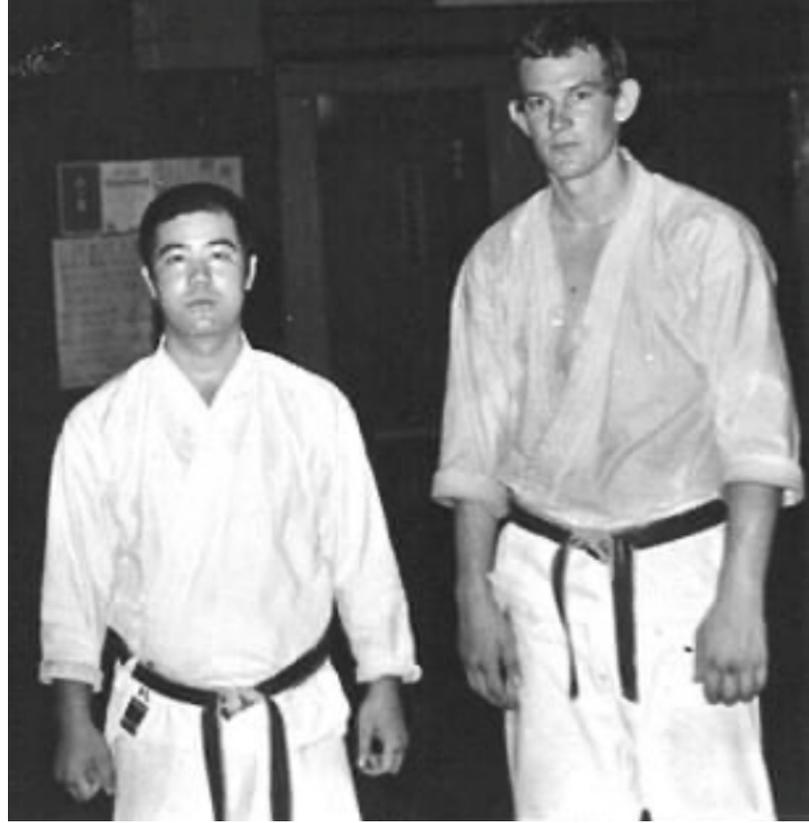
These are all impressive feats to say the least, but Bakkies Sensei's story is less about accolades and more about the pursuit - his pursuit of excellence. Always objective driven and well organised, Bakkies Sensei has used his time in lockdown wisely and for the first time is sharing the many stories,

lessons and experiences he has gained through 6 decades of continuously training in Okinawan Goju-ryu Karate-do. However, while many of us were probably expecting an autobiographical book, Bakkies Sensei has gone one better: embracing the technology of today to release an ongoing series of very well-produced and free podcasts.

These podcasts are essential listening for the serious Okinawan Karate-ka and are far more than 'in the old days' type stories. They are thought-provoking, inspiring, and educational accounts of the life of someone who has climbed to the top of their craft, all thrown in with some of Bakkies Sensei's trademark sense of humour. Along with this, Bakkies Sensei shares his thoughts on subjects such as mindset in Karate, his admiration and study of successful businesspeople, sport stars, and other experts and in their fields – all of which have helped contribute to his journey. These podcasts are a fantastic listen and to talk more about his latest efforts, Bakkies Sensei joins us for this special interview with iogkf.com.

Sensei thank you for joining us. For those who have not heard your introduction episode yet, can you please tell me why did you decide to go the way of the Podcast, rather than the traditional book that most put together to capture their careers?

I must start off with a quote I read a couple years ago: 'You cannot do Today's jobs with Yesterday's Tools and expect Tomorrow's results!'



To get back to your question - there are a couple of factors influencing my trend of thought regarding podcast vs. book:

Firstly, look at the explosion in the podcast scene - surely there must be something there, if big names from all spheres are doing it? Look at the success story of Kindle! Need I say more?

I have been an avid media reader all my life, but I cannot remember when last I bought a newspaper - for less than a third of the costs of one newspaper per month, I now have access to 28 publications on a daily basis.

Secondly, worldwide socio-economic changes. We are already entering an era where people's lifestyles, habits, needs and social behaviour is changing drastically, disregarding the present pandemic, although it has definitely given it a jump start. In the workplace, we are already experiencing two emerging scenarios: more and more people are working from home and secondly, those who are still going to continue commuting by automobile, bus, train, taxi to get to their workplace or do their work, are going to spend a lot more time commuting. Reading a tablet in a stop and start train or bus or taxi is not that much fun. This gives them time to listen on their phones via headsets to podcasts on any topic of their choice. You can listen to a podcast in a crowded bus with people right up close to you, but you cannot read a book.

Thirdly, one is dumb to ignore technology and the effect it has and is going to have



on people's behaviours and habits. I'm from the so-called 'Baby Boomer' generation - born between 1946 and 1964, and we since have Generation X, followed by the Millennials and the recent Generation Z. One of the main characteristic of the last three, is instant gratification - they do not want to wait for stuff, it has to happen with a click! So reading a book, and skimming over 50 pages to get to something worthwhile is not so cool.

Lastly - publishing a book is expensive! But from the transcripts, a book would be possible at a later stage.



What benefits do you think doing podcast over a book brings to storytelling?

People can actually hear your voice and pick up on the tone of your voice, establish and relate to your sincerity, honesty (or BS), which does bring the emotional element strong into the picture - maybe stronger than by reading a book?

What motivated you to want to tell the story of your journey and why do you think it is important for people of the younger generations to hear them and what you endured in your training?

Again, I need to start with the generation thing - my Baby Boomer generation grew up in the wake of WWII. Worldwide, people grew up with a lot less 'needs and demands' then. We were basically happy to have food and jobs, so it was a comfort zone within established parameters - you are honest, you work hard, you're loyal and you will survive - happiness was simple things.

The last three generations face a much more uncertain future with major changes in the socioeconomic situation already materializing. With these changes, there is a big onslaught on the core values of my generation (there were also many crooks, make no mistake!), values such as respect, loyalty, and honesty - Higaonna Sensei's core values. These values are being 'blurred' and 'adapted' by anyone from corporate rulers to egoistic politicians - at the expense of 'the people'. One thing the last three generations are not, is stupid. They see what is happening and it leads to disillusionment and distrust all around. Maybe hearing firsthand from a time when things were less complicated

and purer, can motivate and inspire them to aim for the top - but boxing smartly - and help to understand the road that Higaonna Sensei and Bakkies Laubscher travelled before standing in front of them at a Gasshuku.

Being a humble master, have you shared many of these stories publicly before or is much of the content from your podcast accounts of your journey that you have never spoke of before?

No, I have not shared many of the stories before - even my wife was surprised when she heard some of it, as it was the first time she heard then after 43 years of marriage!

I am an introvert - believe it or not - and I have also been (and still am) disappointed by so many people in and outside Karate, people I trusted, that I unintentionally closed up like a clam.

Also, when you try to tell a story in conversation, especially with some strong 'Alpha' Karate-ka around you, nobody wants to listen - everybody wants to talk their talk!

There is a saying in my language that, "People listen to you speaking, but they don't hear what you are saying!" So, I conserve my energy to spend on someone who is actually sincerely interested in what ticks inside me - if I never find that someone, so be it - many Karate teachers have taken things and knowledge with them to the grave for the same reasons.

But I feel that I have some very loyal students worldwide who deserve to know more about where I came from and, to conclude, now that the road ahead of me is considerably shorter than the one behind me, I feel that some of the experiences and the values it installed in me, should be there for a sincere someone who wants to know about it!



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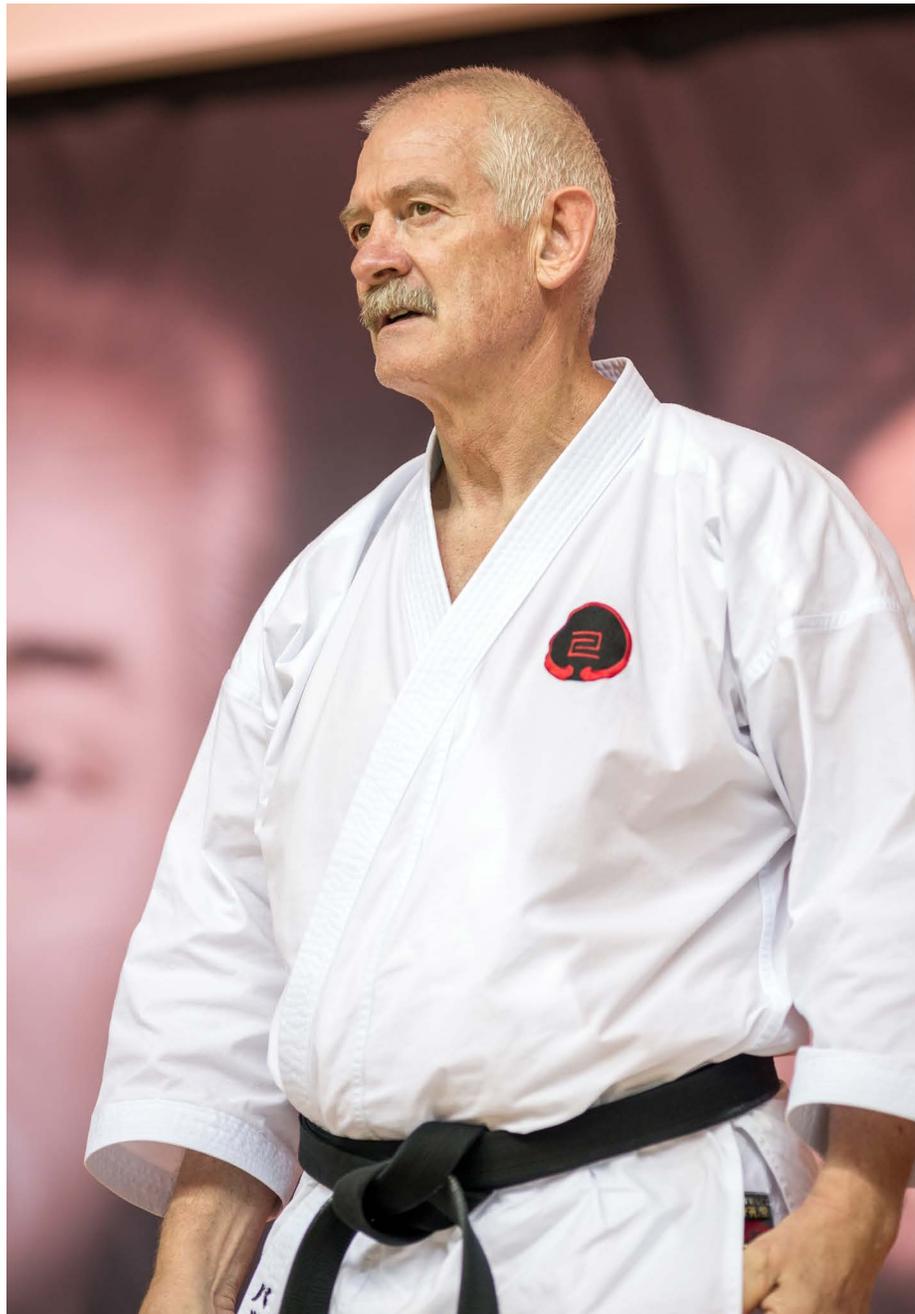
YOU CANNOT DO TODAY'S JOBS WITH YESTERDAY'S TOOLS AND EXPECT TOMORROW'S RESULTS!

How was it for you piecing together this series? I know you are very organised and objective driven, but was the content very clear cut from the beginning or were there things coming back to you as you took a walk down memory lane?

No, it's pretty much random and the podcasts will not be broadcasted in a chronological way - I will pop in different stuff all the time - some purely Karate, some non-Karate - all which had an influence on my 'pursuit of excellence'. I included some actual interviews with people from inside and outside of Karate, who have been instrumental to my being.

How often do you release episodes of the podcast and what can listeners expect to hear about in the future in addition to your early days and time at the legendary Yoyogi Dojo?

The podcasts will appear bi-monthly. Listeners can expect to hear stuff such as my first visit to Okinawa in 1973, the time I needed Karate to stay alive and save a life, some of my



memories from two World Tournaments in perspective to traditional Karate, people who had a direct effect on my Karate development, interesting people I met through the years, etc.

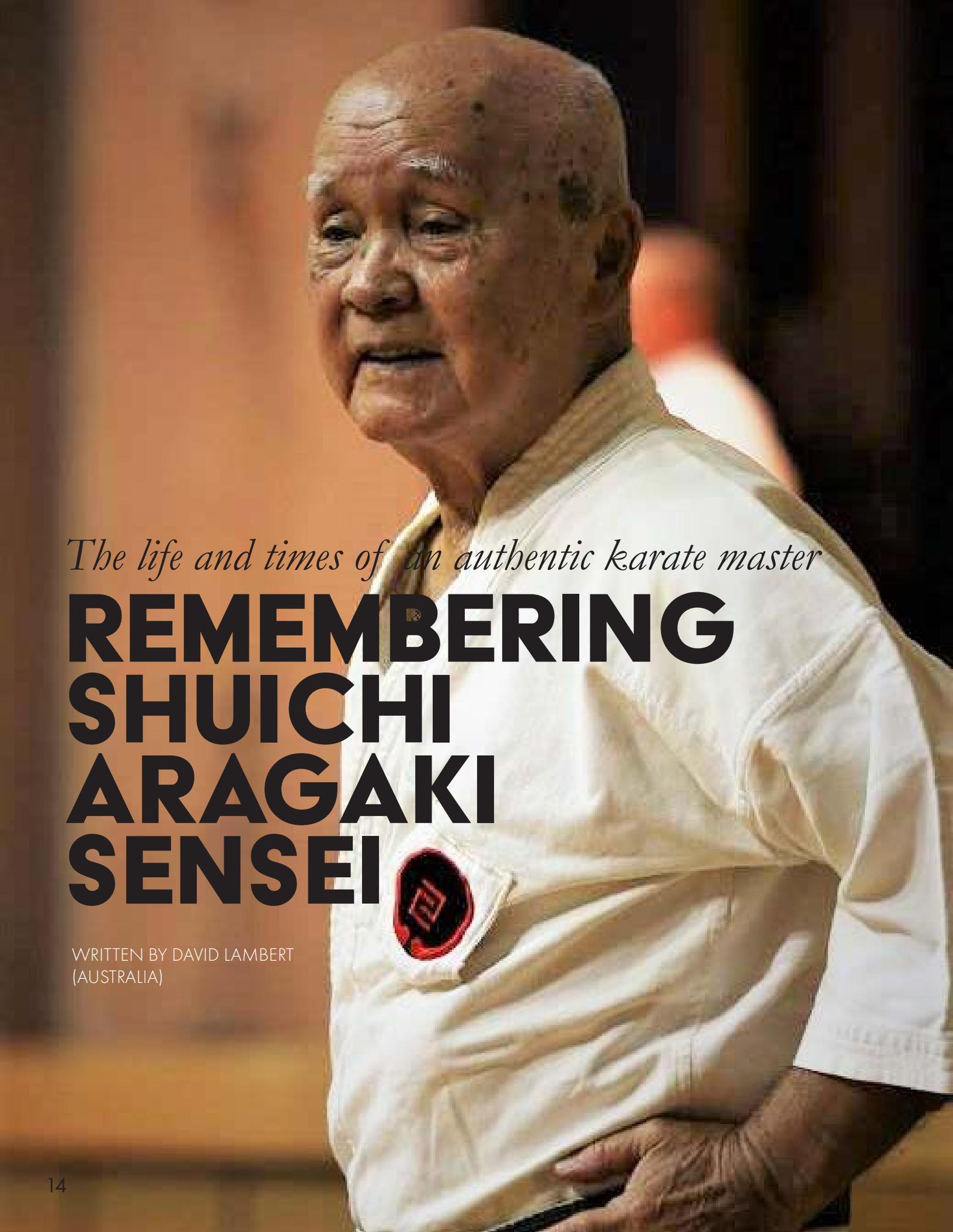
In 100 years' time and beyond, many of your recounts will no doubt play an important part in the history of Goju-ryu and in particular IOGKF. Do you feel this way as you are producing these episodes?

I have no ulterior intentions with the podcasts except to tell it like it was in my memory. Of course, the IOGKF is my home and being a member of one of the founding countries of the IOGKF and being there in Poole 1979 and Okinawa 1981 helping to establish and systemise the organisation, it would be a feather in my cap and I would be most honoured if my knowledge will help to enhance the organisation for future generations. 🇬🇧

"In Pursuit of Excellence" can be downloaded for free through Apple Podcasts or iTunes or through the Android Store.

Bakkies Sensei has also since created a virtual dojo website where his best selling DVD series and new releases such as his Yakusoku Kumite and Self Defence series can be found. Visit www.traditionalschoolofkarate.com





The life and times of an authentic karate master

REMEMBERING SHUICHI ARAGAKI SENSEI

WRITTEN BY DAVID LAMBERT
(AUSTRALIA)

On August 28th, 2021 a gaping hole was left in the heart of the IOGKF when Shuichi Aragaki Sensei ate his dinner, went to bed, and peacefully passed away at the age of 92.

Fit as fiddle, with an iron will yet gentle nature which both served him until his final day, Aragaki Sensei's role in protecting traditional Okinawan Goju-Ryu Karate, establishing IOGKF, and giving us its current World Chief Instructor has left an everlasting legacy.



Baby Aragaki Sensei

Shuichi Aragaki was born in Taiwan in 1929. The Aragaki family had moved there from Okinawa in early 1900 as there was much industry and opportunity in the foreign country. However, as WWII came to an end, hostilities towards Japanese people began to grow in the country. Aragaki Sensei recalled living in a Japanese village in Taiwan while growing up. The hostilities reached breaking point toward the end of WWII. One day, a group of angry anti-Japanese protesters arrived at the village with the intention of killing everyone.

With the Japanese village in grave danger, Shuichi Aragaki Sensei recalls how his grandfather, Ryuko Aragaki, told everyone to wait inside, grabbed a *bo* (staff) and went out to face the angry crowd. Ryuko Aragaki told the crowd if they wanted to get to the Japanese villagers, they must first get past him. The crowd didn't see this to be a problem, until Ryuko Aragaki Sensei began practicing kata with his weapon. It was clear from the beginning of his 'demonstration' that he was a master of the martial arts. His ferocious power, his experience in street fighting, and his powerful *kiai* left the angry mob in shock. They decided that maybe this wasn't their day and quickly retreated. Ryuko Aragaki saved the lives of many Okinawan and Japanese people that day.

RYUKO ARAGAKI

Aragaki Sensei's grandfather, Ryuko Aragaki, was a martial artist and was the first Karate instructor of the Goju-Ryu founder, Chojun Miyagi. It was Ryuko Aragaki that took the young Chojun Sensei to study under the legendary Kanryo Higaonna. Ryuko Aragaki saw great potential in Chojun Miyagi, who was just a teenager at the time, and saw that he needed a strict master to help him reach this potential. At the time, nobody had any idea that this act would set in course a chain of events for generations to come.

This event left a lasting impression on Shuichi Aragaki Sensei who was both inspired by his grandfather's skill and courage and was eager to learn. The Aragaki family concluded that Taiwan was now too dangerous for them to remain. They packed up and returned to their homeland of Okinawa.

Once settled back into their island home, Shuichi Aragaki, now 22 years old, showed his interest in learning Karate to his grandfather. Ryuko Aragaki decided that there was only one man he would entrust to teach his grandson.

One day, Ryuko Aragaki took his grandson to Chojun Miyagi Sensei's house. Chojun Sensei, not recognising his original teacher at first, explained that he was not accepting any students at this time. Once Ryuko Aragaki made his identity clear, (he called Chojun Sensei by his old nickname 'Machu'), it is said that Chojun Sensei become overwhelmed with emotion at seeing his old Sensei. So grateful for the fact that Ryuko Aragaki had brought him to Kanryo Higaonna, Chojun Sensei accepted young Shuichi Aragaki as a student on the spot. Chojun Sensei even gave up his own seat for Ryuko Aragaki and stood to the side of him, showing respect to his old instructor and considering him his senior. This is how Shuichi Aragaki became a private disciple (*uchi deshi*) of the founder of Goju-Ryu.

During WWII, Chojun Sensei lost his top student, Jin'an Shinzato, whom Chojun Sensei expected to be the successor for the next generation. When Ryuko Aragaki took his grandson to the Garden Dojo, Chojun Sensei was focusing on teaching the entire Goju-Ryu system to young An'ichi Miyagi, who was there every day. Chojun Sensei was not taking any *uchi deshi* at the time. It was only because of the request from his original karate teacher that Chojun Sensei accepted Shuichi Aragaki as an *uchi deshi*.

Training was tough and very physical. Aragaki Sensei would often explain how he returned home after training with lumpy forearms and legs, bruises from conditioning and hojo undo training. During all of his time at the Garden Dojo, he saw nobody else there except An'ichi Miyagi Sensei training under Chojun Sensei. He saw



Aragaki Sensei age 22

firsthand that Chojun Miyagi Sensei taught all the kata and bunkai to An'ichi Miyagi and his story never changed from that time to his passing in August 2021. He believed with one hundred percent certainty that An'ichi Miyagi Sensei was the most knowledgeable student of Chojun Miyagi Sensei.

Both An'ichi Miyagi and Aragaki Sensei really loved their sensei. They arrived early to do chores at the garden dojo - pull weeds, fetch water from the well, chop firewood, etc. Their sensei charged them no fees to train and they did everything they could to show their appreciation in return.

Aragaki Sensei was often invited by Chojun Sensei to join him and An'ichi Sensei for dinner after training. Chojun Sensei would talk endlessly, sometimes until midnight. Chojun Sensei would talk about the history of Karate, the importance of good character, and how a martial artist should live. All these lessons became an important aspect of who Shuichi Aragaki would become.

In 1953, Aragaki Sensei decided to move to Tokyo to further his education. He was already working as a substitute teacher in Okinawan elementary schools, but Tokyo presented more opportunities for the young man. Chojun Sensei supported the move, and charged his student with one task: Kei Miyagi, Chojun Sensei's eldest son, had moved to Tokyo after fighting in the war. He was a sickly child and had some health issues from his military service. Chojun Sensei worried about his son, after having already lost family and students during the war. He gave Shuichi Aragaki the address of his son in Tokyo and to check on him and deliver him some medicine. Aragaki Sensei of course agreed to his teacher's wishes.



Aragaki Sensei worked as a substitute teacher

Upon arriving in Toyko, Aragaki Sensei made it a priority to find Kei. At the time, many mainland Japanese had strong prejudices against Okinawans as the US still occupied the island. Aragaki Sensei had to deal with racism daily. Once beginning work at a school, Aragaki Sensei felt those around him looked down upon him because he was Okinawan. The constant taunts angered him to the point he threw a strong punch

into a wall and chopped the edge of his desk off with his bare hands. Those harassing Aragaki Sensei did not harass him after this. Aragaki Sensei was always disappointed in himself for losing his temper and showing his skills this way.

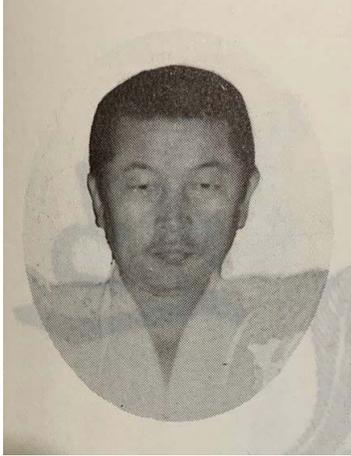
Before long, Aragaki Sensei tracked down Chojun Sensei's son Kei and he was happy to see him. The two kept a friendship in Tokyo. Suddenly news came through that Chojun Sensei had passed away in October of 1953. The pair were devastated. Aragaki Sensei could not return for the funeral on such short notice. With Okinawa still under US control, special travel documents were required to return to Okinawa and the only available travel method took days by boat. Kei Miyagi also did not attend his father's funeral.

As soon as Aragaki Sensei was able to, he returned to Okinawa in early 1954 to pay his respects to his Sensei and his family. He stayed in Okinawa for more than a year. After Chojun Sensei's death, a group of his students started training in his backyard. Eiichi Miyazato Sensei was the head of the group, but he was busy at the time with his work as policeman, along with his training as one of the top judo practitioners in Okinawa prefecture. It was An'ichi Miyagi Sensei who was leading the daily group training at the Garden Dojo. Aragaki Sensei returned to the Garden Dojo and was very happy to train together with An'ichi Miyagi along with some new students.

Upon returning Tokyo to continue his education, Kei Miyagi shared his plan to open dojo with Aragaki Sensei. Kei asked Shuichi Aragaki for help. He also later wrote a book and again asked Aragaki Sensei for help. In 1963, *How to Enjoy Karate* was published. Aragaki Sensei contributed to the book and is featured in it in several images.

As discrimination began to subside in the mainland, the mystery surrounding Karate did not. It was almost viewed as a mystical Okinawan art. One of Aragaki Sensei's colleagues, Masanori Uemura, came to him and asked him to teach him Karate. He told Aragaki Sensei he was already a second degree black belt and had experience. Aragaki Sensei agreed to teach Uemura. Uemura was shocked when Aragaki Sensei showed up to train in a white belt. Despite his mastery of the art, at this point in his life Aragaki Sensei had never been awarded a grade by anyone.

Masanori Uemura studied under Aragaki Sensei for some time before moving away to Kagawa prefecture, while Aragaki Sensei returned to Okinawa. Once in Kagawa, Uemura Sensei decided to start his own Karate organisation called "Koryu Karate-do Goju". It was a popular organisation and many university Karate clubs became affiliated, including Kagawa University. In 1984, a young white belt student joined the



Masanori Uemura Sensei

Kagawa University Dojo. His name was Tetsuji Nakamura.

Toward the end of his university studies, Tetsuji Nakamura decided to go on a university seminar graduation trip with friends and a professor to Okinawa. He told his then Sensei, Masanori Uemura, about his plans. Uemura Sensei asked Tetsuji Nakamura to do something for him. He gave a piece of paper with a phone number to the young Nakamura Sensei and he was asked to call his instructor's teacher once he arrived in Okinawa to offer his regards. Nakamura Sensei of course agreed.

Being a loyal student, but also believing in his heart that after university he would probably stop Karate training as he began a career, Tetsuji Nakamura picked up the telephone and called the number given to him. Shuichi Aragaki Sensei answered the phone. Calling only with the intention of saying a quick hello, Nakamura Sensei found himself going to Aragaki Sensei's house for dinner. During the dinner, Aragaki Sensei told many stories about his training under Sensei Chojun Miyagi and what Goju-Ryu is. Aragaki Sensei's stories stuck in Nakamura Sensei's head. Upon returning to the mainland, Nakamura Sensei decided to go back to Okinawa, this time alone, to learn from Aragaki Sensei. Aragaki Sensei was kind enough to take this young stranger to Uehara Dojo to give him some private lessons. After watching all the kata that Nakamura Sensei knew at the time, Aragaki Sensei said, "What is that? That is not Goju-Ryu kata!" Then he asked Nakamura Sensei to attack him.

Aragaki Sensei stood in front of Nakamura Sensei. "Attack me," said Aragaki Sensei. Nakamura Sensei threw a slow punch as Aragaki Sensei was now an older man. Aragaki Sensei said, "What is this? Attack me strong!" And so, it began. Nakamura Sensei threw his best at Aragaki Sensei and every time ended up on the floor, with several precise pressure point attacks and vital area strikes on the way down.

"I felt as if he could have killed me if he chose to," Nakamura Sensei recalls.

The two said farewell to each other as Nakamura Sensei returned to Kagawa University or his final studies. But it wasn't as simple as that. Nakamura Sensei couldn't believe what had just happened. He was bested by someone over forty years his senior. It all

happened so fast, and he couldn't explain it. It was clear that Aragaki Sensei was something else, an authentic master of Karate.

A lot of soul searching followed, and despite the potential and drive to have a good career along with all of his university friends, Nakamura Sensei made the decision to abandon this path and to return to Okinawa. To say his mother was not impressed would be an understatement. Nakamura Sensei called Shuichi Aragaki and told him he would be returning to Okinawa, but didn't go into any further detail.

Upon arriving in the birthplace of Karate, Nakamura Sensei went to Aragaki Sensei, determined to become his student. Aragaki Sensei had to explain to Nakamura Sensei that due to his personal commitments, he couldn't teach Nakamura Sensei and instead introduced him to a legendary dojo.

It was on this day that Nakamura Sensei first entered the world of the IOGKF. Aragaki Sensei took Nakamura Sensei to the famous Higaonna Karate Dojo in Makishi, Okinawa. It was there that Aragaki Sensei showed Nakamura Sensei Sanchin and how to use all the hojo undo equipment. Aragaki Sensei instructed Nakamura Sensei to practice these exercises every day, without exception, until he returned for him. At this time, Higaonna Sensei was still living in the United States. Sensei Yoshinori Yonezato and Sensei Takeshi Kamimura were teaching at Higaonna Dojo twice a week. Nakamura Sensei attended these classes along with personal training at the dojo every day.

So, while training hard, Nakamura Sensei expected to see Aragaki Sensei return after a day or two. But soon days turned into weeks and weeks turned into a month. Still Nakamura Sensei kept up his training routine as instructed. A month turned into a season and a season became seasons.



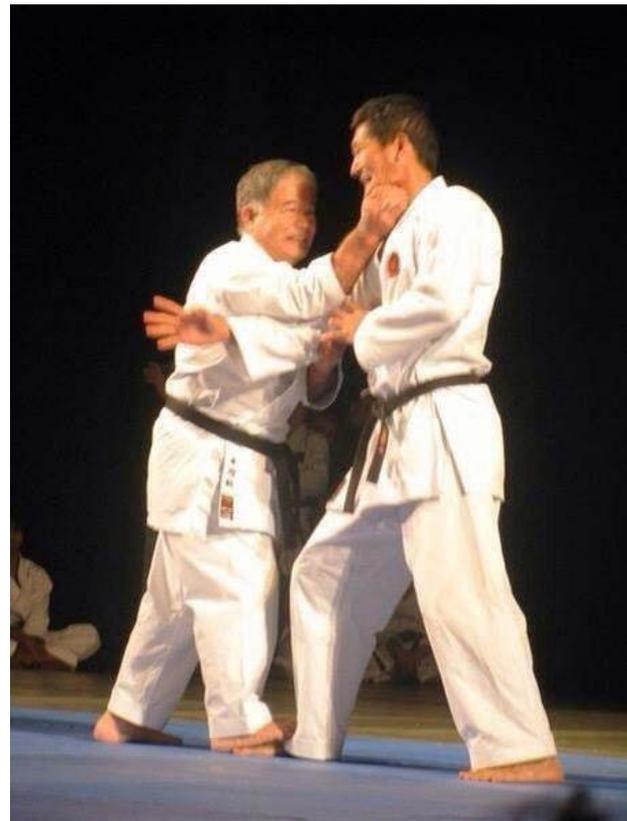
Eventually, after six long months, Aragaki Sensei returned to the Dojo. He asked Nakamura Sensei to show him all the hojo undo exercises. Aragaki Sensei was very pleased and commented, "You have trained yourself well." Just like the olden days of Chojun Miyagi's Garden Dojo, where new students would have to endure six months of strenuous strength training before learning anything. Nakamura Sensei is probably the last person to ever experience this type of introduction to Goju-Ryu.



Happy to progress, Aragaki Sensei then began to teach Nakamura Sensei regularly and started by teaching him Sesan kata. Many who know Nakamura Sensei will recall this was his favourite kata of choice for many years before becoming World Chief Instructor.



As 1991 ticked over, Master Morio Higaonna returned to Okinawa for the IOGKF World Budosai event and tournament. It was here that Nakamura Sensei caught the eye of the world-renowned master when he won the IOGKF World Middleweight Irikumi Go championship. Higaonna Sensei was impressed with Nakamura Sensei's commitment and skill level and invited him to move to San Marcos, USA after the event.



Unsure of what to do, Nakamura Sensei asked Aragaki Sensei's advice and his words were clear: "Morio Higaonna is the best martial artist on the planet. You should learn from him." Just as his grandfather had encouraged him to learn from Chojun Miyagi, the best master of that time, Aragaki Sensei followed in his grandfather's footsteps, paying it forward, and sending his own student to the best master of our time.

Aragaki Sensei continued to practice Karate for his own health. He would make regular appearances at IOGKF World events in Okinawa and even taught as far abroad as Sweden and America. Aragaki Sensei's strong will and determination saw him take on the 'Shikoku pilgrimage', which is an island hike with 88 temples to visit on the way. It is physically demanding, can take months to complete, and is a pilgrimage of the soul and self-reflection. Some people do not finish. Aragaki Sensei completed the full pilgrimage... three times... once as an older man. He encouraged everyone to try it.

Throughout their lives, Shuichi Aragaki Sensei and An'ichi Miyagi Sensei maintained a close friendship. In September 2007, the two arrived at the Higaonna Dojo in Okinawa, where they officially presented Higaonna Sensei with his 10th Dan and a certificate of lineage, right back to the Goju-Ryu founder, their own teacher, Chojun Miyagi.

The two also appeared together at the IOGKF World Budosai of 2008, where they shared stories of their time with Chojun Miyagi and where they were both presented with certificates of appreciation for their contributions to protecting traditional Karate.

Sadly, a few months after this, An'ichi Miyagi Sensei passed away. Shuichi Aragaki Sensei attended the funeral of his lifelong friend. They were like brothers.

In his later years Aragaki Sensei continued to live with his family and, despite his advancing age, managed to maintain his independence. In 2019, he appeared at the IOGKF World Gishiki event in Okinawa. He sat with a big smile on his face as he watched Nakamura Sensei demonstrate Sesan kata and bunkai against four attackers. It was obvious to see he felt his job of passing Karate on to the next generation had been achieved.

What was equally as inspiring was seeing Nakamura Sensei taking care of Aragaki Sensei. Accompanying him everywhere, translating for him, and even tying his old master's shoelaces. The display of *giri* (feeling of obligation and gratefulness) Nakamura Sensei showed for what Aragaki Sensei had done for his life and IOGKF was crystal clear.

The Karate world is a little smaller now without a giant like Shuchi Aragaki Sensei, but his spirit persists. He lives on through Nakamura Sensei and his contributions not just to IOGKF but traditional Karate all over Okinawa, Japan, and the world. His legacy will be felt for many generations to come. 🍷



HUMILITY

WRITTEN BY MORIO
HIGAONNA SENSEI

First published in the IOGKF Newsletter of October 1995, Higaonna Sensei shares his thoughts on an essential characteristic for every Karate-ka: humility. Now some 26 years after its initial publication, the words of Higaonna Sensei still ring true and offer something for the next generation of aspiring martial artists.

From the archives



Chojun Sensei would always speak to his students: people who do Karate, they train everyday, build stamina, physical strength and technical skill. Little by little their spirit also grows strong. As his students developed these skills and attributes he would always speak to them about the importance of the quality of humility. He would say “JU (10) no chikara dekitata, GO (5) nisaginasai”. What he meant by

this is, as your power and technical abilities grow stronger to the level of 10, your confidence will also increase and so you need only to display your abilities to the level of 5. He said that as you develop your Karate skills, the quality of humility should be developed as well; and with this feeling of humility and modesty, your training should become even more intense, constantly challenging yourself to go a little harder or a little longer, even when you are tired and want to quit.

You must never lose the feeling of appreciation for your instructor, as well as the appreciation for your family, for their love and support of your efforts. Some Karate-ka, when they feel they have achieved a high level of technical ability and/or dojo success, will develop an attitude that their success is due to their efforts alone and develop an ego out of control. They may mouth the words of “thank you” to their instructor or to others, but in their hearts they feel that their achievements are theirs and theirs alone. This is not the case, however, and no Karate-ka should ever forget or lose the feeling, no matter how successful they become, that their success is a group effort of all of those around them who have helped them reach the level they have.

For my own feelings, I am so grateful to Miyagi An'ichi Sensei for his teachings, wisdom and guidance; treasures that no amount of money could buy. He has taught me more than just technique, and the knowledge he has passed on to me has made me truly believe that the power and benefits of Goju-Ryu Karate are so omnipotent that I feel I must pass these benefits on for the good of human society; for the benefits of Goju-Ryu do not stop with technique, but they are also powerful tools in helping people to become better human beings.

In order to achieve this higher goal, however, Karate-ka must truly train with an open mind and heart, and not for power or control. You must allow Karate to develop your spirit and not use it to develop your own selfish objectives.

I love Karate. When I was twenty I loved practicing kata, and now that I am in my 50's, my passion for kata has become consuming. I also love teaching, for when I see students training their hardest and pushing themselves to their limits, I become inspired by their efforts and it makes me want to try harder and do better.

On occasion it has happened, however, that a student develops ego instead of humility, and I feel that it must be due to my inability to get my message across to that student that this happens and he/she takes a wrong turn. This only inspires me more, and I accept the challenge and focus on the truly dedicated students with me to help them understand the importance of their training and to keep them focused on the true objectives of Karate.

The goal is to allow Karate to develop harmony of spirit and mind. Every day I remember Miyagi An'ichi Sensei's words to me: "You must constantly research and develop your technique and character by challenging yourself everyday; pushing yourself harder and harder, with the ultimate goal of humility." 

