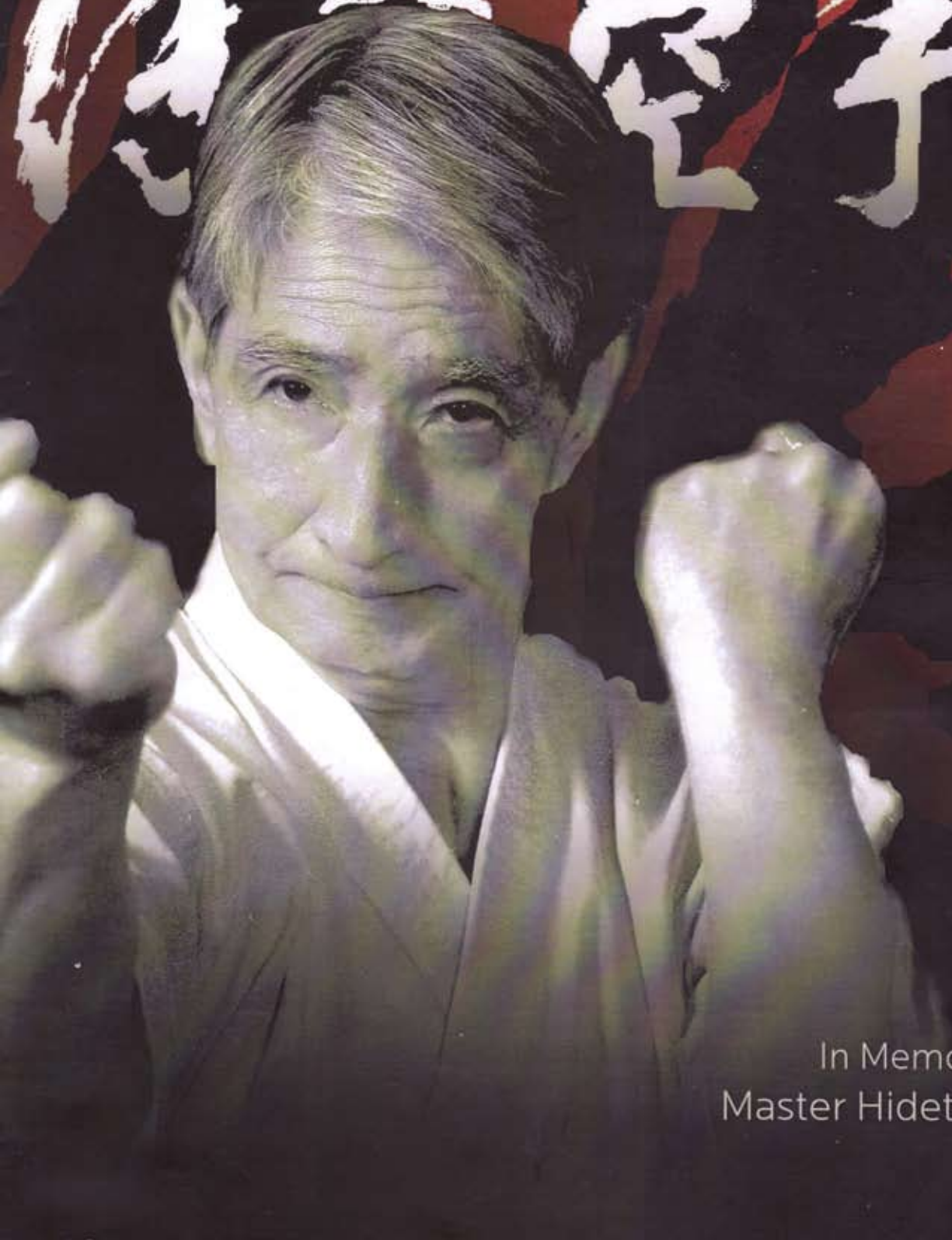


納空手道



In Memory and Honor of
Master Hidetaka Nishiyama
(1928-2008)

48th AAKF National Traditional
Karate Championships

Minneapolis, Minnesota June 27, 2009





This Program is Dedicated in Honor of
Sensei Hidetaka Nishiyama (1928-2008)

"I am happy to have completed this lifelong project and I have confidence that we can pass on the true Art of Traditional Karate to future generations. Now it is *your* time to meet the new challenges and accept the opportunities offered by this body of knowledge so that Traditional Karate may continue to grow and develop for the benefit of all that strive for higher levels of understanding . . . both mind and body."

- Sensei Nishiyama, 2005

Tributes to Sensei Nishiyama



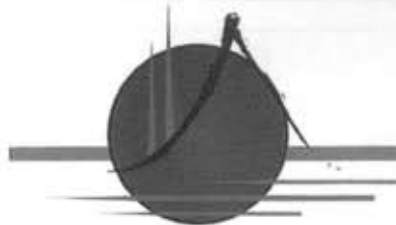
Orange County Japan Karate Association

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Some of the words that have been used to describe Sensei Hidetaka Nishiyama are, pioneer, technician, mentor, instructor, leader, and visionary. These are some of the attributes that have made Sensei Nishiyama world renown, and a recipient of numerous accolades from various countries for his contribution to the art of traditional karate. Without a doubt he will be remembered as the man who exemplified excellence as a karate instructor.

As I reflect over the years, I came to recognize and admire additional qualities about Sensei Nishiyama that makes him more than just a great karate instructor. He was the embodiment of a gentle, humble, patient, and intelligent human being, tempered with the strong spirit of a samurai. His gentle nature always came through whenever he lectured to young students, taking care to ensure his points were understood. One effective method he would use quite often is his sense of humor. By making funny gestures with his body he would make everyone laugh to get his point across. He also possessed vast knowledge on many different subject matters not related to karate, of which I had the pleasure of discussing and learning from him on many occasions. Even with the status of being the highest ranking karate-ka in the world, he would never boast of his prowess in public. It is this character as a man, along with his remarkable achievements that defines him as the Sensei amongst Senseis. Sensei Nishiyama personified the true essence of a karate person – a man of great character.

Albert Cheah, AAKF Western Regional Director



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The Sensei's Sensei

On NOVEMBER 7, 2008, THE KARATE WORLD lost one of its greatest Masters, Hidetaka Nishiyama. This is a brief reflection of my observations of the man, the teacher and the mentor over 40 plus years of contact with and learning from this great man.

What were the talents that made H. Nishiyama the Master's Master, mentor of mentors and a quite special person? Though the whole is clearly greater than the sum of its parts, some exploration of his particular attributes as a tribute to this great Sensei may be of value. For myself, perhaps, it may be a token of repayment for what he has given to me for the more than forty years I knew and learned from him.

ROOTS Hidetaka Nishiyama was born October 10, 1928 into a Samurai family, steeped in this culture and forged in pre-war Japan. His Martial Arts study began at age five in kendo under the tutelage of his father and later others and only ended with his death. Many great Japanese Senseis were hardened in the rubble of a nearly destroyed post-war Japan. Such a time and culture will never be replicated and men such as H. Nishiyama and others of his generation will never again be seen. His timing was perfect, both in birth and in life.

ATHLETIC TALENT - Mr. Nishiyama was a world-class athlete and for those of us fortunate to have trained with him when he was young remember his phenomenal talent. I shall not forget the occasion in Portland, Oregon on a visit circa age forty, when he "tested" our makiwara. With gyaku zuki he broke two makiwari off at the base, commenting quietly, "A little weak." The third did not break (perhaps he was kinder than we realized) and he commented, "This one ok".

We preserved those splintered boards in their places in the dojo for a number of years to remind us of the presence of his spirit within us.

VISION - There are few who know their journey in life and have the dedication to follow the path to the end. Occasionally, such people know how to carry others with them on this path. Our Sensei was such a man. His vision was not myopic, but adjustable, modifiable and always was "true Karate". Perhaps that is why, when he entered a large gymnasium in his declining health, the hundreds of followers present stood and bowed to this legendary figure as if it were a true privilege to do so. Now we all feel deeply that it was.

Continued...

Tributes to Sensei Nishiyama

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INTELLIGENCE, CURIOSITY - Sensei was an exceptionally bright man with a lifelong childlike curiosity. With a masters degree in international economics, extensive travel and exposure to innumerable cultures and peoples, he was a true wealth of insight beyond the martial arts. Conversation with him always seemed to open new doors to me, outside the karate world. His understanding of international affairs was daunting. His willingness to learn from his students and other teachers, from his own body and especially to embrace science and medicine was exceptional.

His explanations and demonstrations of the physical principles, anatomical awareness and openness to learn more in these areas never fearing that such knowledge would somehow contaminate our martial art was and is truly admirable. His questions to me were always deeply insightful and thoughtful as he tried to comprehend some of the anatomical facts that underscore our art. My answers somehow seemed to fall short of where I had hoped they would be.

PERSONALITY & HUMOR - Anyone who trained with this giant knows how funny he could be. His childlike observations, imitations and ability to shed the light of humor on his own efforts defined a side of him that was truly endearing. His laugh was contagious, his distortions of technique, even walking, were a burlesque delight.

ENERGY - Boundless, even as we could see his health declining and begged him to "slow down" he literally ran along the martial path. "Time is short now" he began to say years before his death. There was always so much he wanted to give. As his Karate evolved with age and grew with depth, he seemed possessed with a mission to sow his seeds among so many. Such devotion coupled with boundless energy is seldom seen.

LEADERSHIP AND HUMILITY - Sensei understood to the core of his being that there is no real leadership without true humility, the accepting one's self as is. Acknowledging the good, accepting the bad and struggling to improve. This is called Eldership. The acceptance of his position, in fact, acknowledging the need for his vaulted position was always tempered by the deep recognition that it was never about him. It was only about the art. Such is leadership bathed in true humility.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE - Mr. Nishiyama had an uncanny ability to look deep into a person's soul. He seemed to grasp when integrity was present and to withdraw in its absence. This quality allowed him to recognize talent where others failed to notice, to enrich the less athletic and less competitive, enhancing and supporting their other skills. For me, he saw in me what I could never see in myself, he supported what I did not even know was present, allowed me to grow under his tutelage. This can never be repaid except in giving to others what he gave to us.

DIGNITY - Even as Sensei Nishiyama neared death, his body weakened by disease, he was an uncompromisingly dignified and polite man. With assistance he walked to me to bow, shake hands and say goodbye for what I knew would be our last visit. His dignity was not external though one could certainly see and feel it. It emanated from a spirit of our karate culture and a genuineness of purpose that is rarely witnessed. I have been blessed to see it.

CONCLUSION - From the rubble of burned Tokyo from whence he sprang to the spirit that lives on in each of us, Hidetaka Nishiyama was a teacher's teacher, a sensei's sensei, and a man for all times. Those of us who have seen his hard side and have been touched by his soft side will not soon forget the man and true legacy he left for us to pass on to others. Our burden is great but his spirit will be our guide. Thank you for all you gave to us, Sensei.

Respectfully,

Tim Haulan, MD

Reflections of Nishiyama Sensei

It has been my good fortune and honor to know and train under the guidance of Nishiyama Sensei for over 40 years. From him, I learned the true art of Shotokan Karate, but I also learned so much more. I would watch Sensei's actions off the floor as well. His posture was always proper. His language was always proper (even in his broken English.) I never heard sensei speak improperly against anyone; even those who would criticize him. He would just say that they don't understand then give his famous hardy laugh. There was only one way to perform and that was the "correct way" with no compromise. Yes, he was a master of Karate, but he was very much a man of honor. Not only was he well respected, but he knew how to show respect with honesty and dignity. Sensei was an example of how a man should live his life. Honor, respect, dignity, honesty, and a great sense of humor . . . that was Nishiyama Sensei. He was a gentlemen and a true 20th Century Warrior.

Respectfully,

Christopher M. Smaby, 7th Dan, Nishiyama Shotokan

Tributes to Sensei Nishiyama

A Tribute from the AAKF South Central Region

I began studying Traditional Karate as a child in Kentucky and always heard stories about Sensei Nishiyama's teaching. When I relocated to Los Angeles in 2004 at the age of 19 I had the opportunity to begin my training with Sensei; it was a dream come true.

His communication of the Budo principles and how it should translate into other aspects of ones life rang true for me. It went beyond the basics of just "kicking and punching" to recognizing how well I'd be served by striving for more and trying to better myself each day. Just as I knew each day I'd be met with new challenges at the Dojo, I understood how it would help me meet the struggles of every day life. His unwavering standards both technically and politically in the Karate-world taught me how to be purposeful in my life and endeavors.

As I grew within the AAKF to become a Regional Director, I gained a new insight and my respect for Sensei grew immensely. I had the pleasure, if you will, of seeing him under extreme pressure and in heated moments of debate. During these moments he demonstrated the same calm and stable emotions he showed on the Dojo floor. Sometimes I would be so worked up and speaking so fast that he couldn't even understand me!! As always Sensei maintained his calm and gave that very direct answer that you could always count on from him.

Whether on the floor, in a meeting or just walking down the street...Sensei always had class. His ideals of holding yourself and your technique to the highest standard are things I'll strive for for the rest of my life and hope to pass on to my students.

I consider it one of the greatest honors in my life to be able to call him my Sensei and welcome the responsibility to continue his Karate.

Zachary D. Stewart, Director AAKF South-Central

Japanese Shotokan Karate Association International

June 5, 2009

Farewell Sensei Nishiyama

Sensei, I have been taught by numerous masters; all great in their own way but none with such an influence on my karate life as you have had. You had such a love for and devotion to karate that it took priority over family, friends, money and even fame.

I would like to thank you for many things:

For all your efforts in showing me the correct path of Karate-Do;

For all the deep discussions about world politics;

For all the stories about your experiences in WWII;

For your sense of humor;

For showing me how to be a kid at heart while still standing for my principles;

For teaching me to do what I believe in, even though I would be going against the mainstream;

and for allowing me to order you linguine with clam sauce, chocolate cake, and coffee!

There are not enough words to describe my gratitude for your timeless efforts in safeguarding and promoting the art of Traditional Karate. I promise you that I will strive to continue your path of teaching karate to the next generation.

Farewell,

Mahmoud Tabassi, Director of Mid-Atlantic Region

In Memory of Hidetaka Nishiyama Sensei: A Tribute to My Teachers' Teacher

Much has been written about Nishiyama Sensei. Most recognize Sensei's standing as the authority in traditional *karate-do*. While a politically-inclined few are less complimentary, none questioned Nishiyama Sensei's tremendous depth of knowledge, his passion and understanding for the technical and philosophical aspects of *karate*, and his resolve for maintaining the very high standards of traditional *karate-do* training.

I first met Nishiyama Sensei as my teacher's teacher, while I was training with Senseis Robert Graves and Art Cherry in the Pacific Northwest in the 1970s. Sensei was a "godlike" figure who nonetheless was not unapproachable, as I found out in the few instances that I had gathered enough courage to seek training pointers from him. His words were spare, never condescending, and always addressed the core of the problem. After I moved to the Southwest and had the benefit of his direct instructions, I became even more appreciative of his teachings, and began to understand how Nishiyama Sensei commanded the tremendous respect from my *Senseis* and other *karate-do* legends like Shirai Sensei, Enoeda Sensei, Fusaro Sensei, to name a few.

Nishiyama Sensei must be the most optimistic teacher that I've ever met. Year after year, Sensei came and gave his training seminars. While the training methods varied from year to year, the traditional *karate* principles that he instilled remain much the same. To paraphrase Toru Shimoji Sensei, Nishiyama Sensei has devoted his life to uncovering the very core of traditional karate, which he distilled and offered to us without reservations. It often amused me that some of us, me in particular, would have to be reminded of the same ideas year after year before I truly appreciate their significance. Thanks to Sensei's patience and persistence, "even the stubborn boulder bows its head (understands)", as the ancient Chinese saying goes.

The most profound thing that I learned from Sensei was how *karate-do*, or for that matter, all martial arts techniques, can be demystified and mastered if given due diligence or practice, hence allowing the martial artist to grasp the underlying principles. Sensei was never satisfied with students who performed karate by rote. He expected all his students, and in particular his instructors, to develop not only the physical and mental discipline, but also the analytical skills that are critical for expanding the horizon of one's training.

Throughout history, few are in a position to profoundly influence the lives of others. Nishiyama Sensei was one of the gifted few. By conducting himself according to the principles of *Budo*, he exemplified the martial arts maxims of character, sincerity, effort, etiquette, and self-control. As Sensei often pointed out, the role of the teacher was to serve as *shi-nan* (compass). As we go through our life's journey, I, like thousands of other AAKF members over several generations, have benefited from Nishiyama Sensei's teachings and influence, as time after time his unwaveringly principles guide us towards the true meaning of being a martial artist.

It was with profound sadness when I learned of Sensei's passing in November of 2008. He has indeed left a legacy of profound lessons that apply not only to the practice of *karate-do*, but also reflect the true meaning of *budo* that remains relevant at this time and age, specifically where the practice of duty, honor, and devotion to one's belief should permeate one's daily life. Through my decades of interaction of Nishiyama Sensei, I understand him to be an aficionado of the Chinese culture. In proper deference, the martial arts teacher is often referred to as "*si-fu*" in the Chinese language. *Si-fu* literally translates as master/teacher and father. To the many of us who has had the privilege of Nishiyama Sensei's tutelage, he truly embodied the meaning of *Si-fu*.

Sincerely,
Alex Tong, AAKF Southwestern Regional Director