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World Oyama Karate

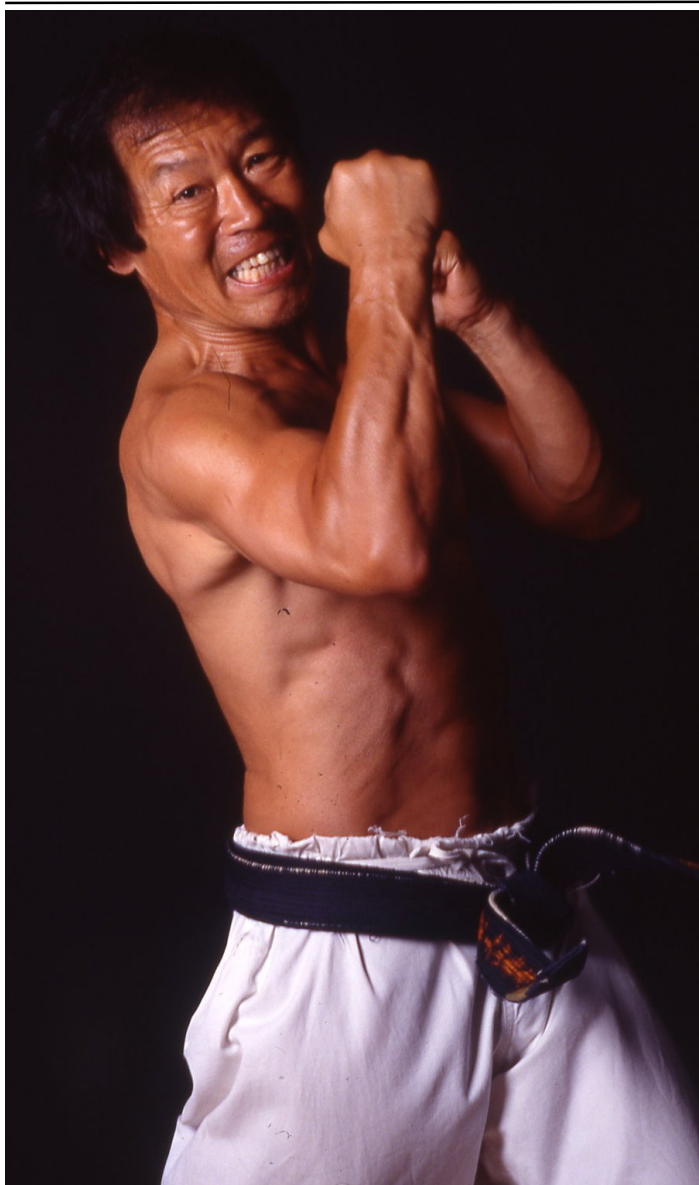
Honbu Newsletter

Issue 17 - Winter, 2008

By Saiko Shihan Y. Oyama

アメリカの夢

AMERICAN DREAM



In Japan we have a saying: "Time travels faster than an arrow." It's hard to believe that 2008 is already upon us. I can still feel the excitement from the recent Japan Cup tournament this past November, and the Ultimate Challenge tournament here in Birmingham this past December. My family and I celebrated a wonderful Christmas and New Year's. Now all that's past, and, like many of you I'm sure, I find myself looking at my check book and credit card statements while heaving a heavy sigh of desperation.

Anyway, 2008 is going to be another great year. We have a lot of exciting tournaments, clinics, and training camps to look forward to. Make sure to check the yearly schedule on the website so that you don't miss out on anything. I hope everyone is able to stay healthy in the coming year. Good health makes everything possible. We are lucky to have Karate to help us build a healthy lifestyle.

Recently the Writer's Strike looks like it will finally come to an end. I'm happy to hear about it, because my daughter, Erica, and son-in-law are both writers in L.A. They're not in the top tier as of yet, but they have steady work, so the strike has really effected them.

Well, let me share with you a real American Dream. A true Cinderella Story (but this story isn't finished quite yet). We are now making tangible progress in getting *Uchi Deshi in America* turned into a movie. Recently, Senpai Karl and I have been working really hard on the 2nd draft of the screenplay. We already sent copies of the 1st draft to some producers and directors in Japan, as well as to my daughter, Erica, who is a professional screen-

Don't sit and wait for your dream. You must sweat and chase it!



American Dream

writer.

While I was in Japan for the November tournament, I ate dinner with a movie director I met through a friend. He had read the book and script and was surprised that a Karate man had written the story. I told him that this kind of story had to be written from experience. I wanted to capture the real spirit of ordinary people discovering themselves through Karate. (By the way, when I was in junior and senior high school, I *barely* passed my composition and literature classes. My teachers are all probably rolling in their graves at the thought of me writing a novel or screenplay).

The director liked the story. I also think he was being nice. He explained to me how writing a script takes a different approach than writing a book. In a script, the main character needs more complications and obstacles. Overall, he was very positive. He believed that the story would make a great movie if I polished up the screenplay.

So that was the feedback I got for the Japanese version. However, I want the movie to be made in English, so I gave a copy of the English version to my daughter, Erica. She already has a lot of screenwriting credits to her name, so I was excited to hear her opinion. My wife and I met her and her husband at their house out in Los Angeles. We were out there to see my first grandchild, who was born this past June. Erica turned to me one morning, “Dad...”

“Yes?” I sat up straight, ready to hear how great she thought the script was.

“Dad...”

“Yes, what? Tell me!” I could hardly contain myself. My son-in-law paused from his dishwashing in the kitchen. My wife looked up from the magazine she was reading.

Erica just looked at me for a moment. “Dad...What do you think about it?”

“What do you mean? I think it’s gonna be a great movie!”

“Dad—”

“Yes?”

“I think you’re out of your mind.”

“What!?”

She turned to my wife. “Mom, promise me you won’t let him sell the house or something crazy like that to try and fund this movie.”

I couldn’t believe it. My son-in-law quickly turned back to his dishwashing. I tried to plead my case. “What’re you talking about? Lots of people like my story.”

“Who? All your students?”

“Yeah, uh, well, not just my students. Some students’ friends, and family, and friends of friends.”

“But they’re all connected to Karate.”

“OK, but we also sold the book on Amazon.com.”

“How many?”

“Well, at first just a couple...”

“Mhm.”

“Then, gradually, we sold a few more, and now we’ve sold close to fifty.”

“Well, dad, that’s great.”

I sat back in my chair and steadied my *Kamae*, ready for the beating of my daughter’s comments. I took a deep breath. “OK...so, explain it to me.”

“Well, first of all there’s a *huge* difference between a book and a script. A book is meant to be read. Its purpose is to build up the reader’s imagination with words. But a script has to be visual. It uses strong images, not words, to tell the story. Your first draft doesn’t have enough conflict. The characters are good, but the main girl, for example, doesn’t appear for a long time, and she doesn’t do much of anything to drive the story.”

American Dream

This was only the beginning. She continued on, analyzing and picking apart every piece of my script and telling me why it needed to be redone. Each comment was like a sharp knee kick to my ribs or roundhouse kick to the face. When it was all over, I caught my breath. “Well, Erica, will you help me or not?”

“Of course I’ll help you, dad.”

This was towards the end of last year. After that, she sent me her suggestions for a summary outline of the script, and screenwriting software to help Karl and I start work on the second draft. Honestly, at first, I didn’t want to listen to Erica’s or anyone else’s opinion. They don’t know anything about Karate. I do. So why should I take their advice? But my wife took me aside and said, “We sent Erica to college, right?”

“Right.”

“We paid for her to study in California for four years. We paid for school, rent, food, everything, because she had the passion to become a writer. You understand?”

“Yeah, OK...”

“So she spent four years learning from top instructors how to write scripts. Where did you learn how to write scripts?”

“Uh, well, I...I’ve seen lots of movies. OK, OK, I’ll listen to her advice. But I make the final decision.”

“That’s fine. You have a good story. Just don’t be so stubborn.”

“OK.”

So, anyway, Karl and I started work on the second draft. We’d stare at each other everyday. Sometimes, I’d look at Karl and ask, “You have an idea?”

“Osu!” But I could tell Karl was thinking about what he was going to eat for lunch, not about what parts of the story needed re-writes. If I tried to talk with Karl after class, I could see his brain was fixed only on going next door and drinking an icy golden glass of Foster’s. Actually, that’s usually what I would be thinking about too.

Sometimes, it’s hard to get any writing done in the dojo. There’s always some distraction, something going on. I suggested to Karl that we get away for a weekend and just concentrate on writing. When I was trying to think of a place we could go, I remembered that one of my top black belts, Senpai Jean Johnson, had a condo in Orange Beach, where we have summer camp every year. She said the condo was available for that weekend, and we were welcome to stay.

Early Saturday morning, Karl and I were like two school kids going on a field trip. We loaded the car with everything we’d need—a rice machine, soy sauce, beer, miso, food.

It was a beautiful day for travel. Recently, it had been pretty cold, but that day was clear and sunny. More like early spring than winter. Before getting out of Birmingham, we stopped at McDonald’s on Greenspring Avenue (I like McDonald’s coffee the best of any coffee anywhere). We had hotcakes and sausage at McDonald’s, and I got a senior coffee. For some reason, breakfast tasted especially good that morning. Karl eats fast, so I had to guard the rest of mine after he finished. I knew he was waiting to steal my food, but he never got the chance. After all, I know Karate. And not just any Karate, *Oyama Karate*, so my hotcakes were safe.

As we drove, Karl took a lot of notes. We discussed Erica’s points and made a lot of progress. We made good time, getting to the condo just after twelve o’clock.

The moment we stepped into the condo, our jaws dropped to the floor. It was a penthouse suite right on the beach. A stone tile floor and majestic iron furniture greeted our eyes from the door. The plush cushioning on the chairs and sofas created a perfect balance of comfort and elegance. We had stepped into some sort of palace, a room that easily surpassed anything the Ritz Carlton had to offer.

From the balcony, we had a 180 degree view of the ocean. The air was crisp and invigorating. On the surface of the waves, sunbeams danced like tiny ballerinas. Usually, the ocean is rough and choppy in the winter, but the shimmering blue water rolled smoothly across the sand like a velvet carpet. During summer camp, the

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The ocean, the heart of Mother Earth, gave us strength and inspiration for a great script.

beach is crowded with seagulls, but only a few scampered on the beach that day. Before we stepped back inside, a pelican glided past at eye level. We marveled at its huge beak and tiny little body, soaring in perfect balance with its powerful wings. Karl and I stood in awe for awhile, looking at each other, to the ocean, back to each other. We didn't speak, but just basked in the beauty around us, feeling lucky to be alive.

With the magnificent view surrounding us, I felt like I could write a blockbuster script in this place. I looked at Karl. I could tell he was thinking about something. He probably felt the same way I did. After a moment, Karl looked at me. "Saiko Shihan..."

"Yes?"

"Osu..."

"What?" I thought maybe he'd had a brilliant idea for our story.

"Osu, are you thirsty?"

"Yeah, let's have a beer." We sat down outside with our beer, ready to be inspired by the moment. "So, what you think, Karl?"

"Osu!"

"This place is beautiful."

"Osu!"

"Except for you." We sat in silence, the bright sun wrapping around us like a soft blanket. Suddenly, I heard a noise: *Grrooroog...Groog-ngun...* "Karl, what's that?"

"Osu, my stomach. Saiko Shihan, you want something to eat?"

Karl can't function on an empty stomach, so we got something to eat. And another beer.

"Yeah, Karl, we're gonna write a great script."

"Osu."

"Better than *Rocky*."

"Osu!"

"Better than anything with Sylvester Stallone."

"Osu!"

"This story will be better than *Dances With Wolves*. Better than Kevin Costner."

"Osu!"

"Better than *Gladiator* and that guy, what's his name?"

"Osu, ah..."



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“I think he’s from Australia. He’s not that good looking, but lots women love him. Must be the accent. American women love British and Australian accents, but not Japanese ones.”

“Oh, osu, Russell Crowe.”

“Yeah, him, better than all those people.”

“Osu, maybe we can show the movie at Sundance, and Robert Redford will give us an award.”

“Yeah, why not? We might even win an Oscar.”

“Osu, we’d have to give a speech. Maybe we should write our acceptance speech first.”

“Hm...” We finished the second beer and started the third. As we finished the third, Karl looked at me.

“Osu, Saiko Shihan...”

“Yes?”

“Osu...”

“What? Are you ready?”

“Osu, ready, osu...”

“What?”

“Osu, should we maybe take a nap first?”

Karl had read my mind. I hoped we’d have good dreams. Maybe about a student winning the lottery, hitting the jackpot. They’d give me ten million and say, “Here Saiko Shihan, this is for your movie. I don’t need it.”

Once we got started though, we made some great progress. Here are some excerpts from the 2nd Draft. I hope you like them:

SCENE 1 – INTERIOR. DOJO – MORNING

(This is our idea for the opening).

The dojo is separated into two training halves. The main area is closest to the Plexiglas windows that form the outside wall. Its white canvas mat is heavily patched with duct tape. Simple linen curtains are now drawn across the window. Tiny rays of sunlight filter in through holes in the fabric.

The other half is thinly carpeted. Rows of mirrors line the front walls of both halves. A wrought iron staircase runs up the middle to the second floor. Beneath the staircase hang two sandbags, both over 6 feet tall. One is leather, originally blue. The color has faded around the middle. The other bag is made of off-white canvas wrapped in layers of duct tape. It’s twice as thick as the blue one. It looks like a museum piece, like it was made the same day Karate originated.

A large weight machine and rows of dumbbells line the wall of the carpeted area. There are also shelves of arm-guards and a row of black canvas chest guards on the main training floor. All the equipment is well-worn, patched together with duct tape. The dojo exudes a sense of history.

Suddenly, the back door flies open. The 5 UCHI DESHI enter, shouting “Osu!” as they step inside.

On the mat, 2 Uchi Deshi draw back the curtains. The sun bursts inside and fills the room. Close shot of legs and feet of all 5 men in dogi pants on the white mat shadow/image training. They breathe in short silent bursts, with powerful *kiai* (shouting).

In the center of the carpeted area is a support beam with a makiwara. Sounds of “*ish-ish-ish-AH! ish-ish-ish-AH!*” as a *seiken* (fist) strikes the board. It is MORI, but only his hand is in clear focus. Same thing as he kicks and makes contact with his *chusoku* (ball of his foot).

On the white mat, TOTANI is wearing a chest guard and holding kick pads for KUDO. MASATARO is doing the same for SAWAYANAGI. As they train, they *kiai* in rhythm. Only parts of them are in clear focus as they make contact.

Training finishes. All 5 Uchi Deshi are sitting in *seiza* on the white mat with eyes closed. They are drenched in sweat, with hearts pounding. All are still except for Masataro, who struggles to catch his breath and fidgets



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back and forth.

SCENE 2 – GYMNASIUM – DAY

(We want the tournament scenes to be just like an ordinary tournament; nothing fake or flashy.)

Tournament day. Large crowd of spectators. There are 3 mats on the gym floor, each with a small crowd of fighters and coaches gathered around. On the two mats farthest from the entrance, competition is already underway, spectators cheering, etc.

MASATARO and OPPONENT stand on opposite sides of the near mat. They are in the white/blue belt division. FOUR CORNER JUDGES are seated with red and white flags and whistles in their mouths. KUDO grabs the front of MASATARO’S dogi and pulls him close.

KUDO

Just one more fight, and you’re in the final!

You can do it, c’mon!

MASATARO

OSU!

SENSEI TAKAHASHI is the chief referee.

TAKAHASHI

OK, let’s go!

Masataro and Opponent walk to the center. Takahashi ties a red ribbon at the back of Masataro’s belt. He gives Masataro a hard stare, then addresses both fighters.

TAKAHASHI

No face punches! Don’t kick the groin!

OPPONENT/MASATARO

Osu!

TAKAHASHI

Also no biting, and no scratching!

Takahashi laughs.

TAKAHASHI

Fighters face me! Osu!

Masataro and Opponent bow to Takahashi.

TAKAHASHI

Face each other! Osu!

They face each other and bow.

TAKAHASHI

Judges ready! Timekeeper ready!

Kamaete! Hajime!

Fight begins. Both fighters’ techniques are at a beginner’s level. Masataro lands a solid left-right punch/right foot low kick combination. Opponent tries to punch, but backs up to edge of mat.

KUDO

Push in Masataro! Go!

Takahashi steps between them and brings both fighters back to center.

TAKAHASHI

Hajime!

Opponent throws a couple punches and kicks. Masataro backs up as he blocks.

KUDO

Don’t back up! One, two, low! One, two, low!

Opponent is breathing heavy, his mouthpiece almost falling out. Masataro is also breathing heavy, but appears to be in a little better shape. Masataro tries to attack, but misses the timing. Opponent throws a reverse punch, Masataro blocks, Opponent loses balance, swinging his fist wildly at Masataro’s head. Masataro blocks as crowd gasps. Fight resumes in center. Opponent is visibly exhausted. His kicks are slow. Masataro lands another 1-2 punch, low kick combination. Opponent stumbles off the edge into his own coach.

COACH



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C'mon, Ted, you can do it! Push it! Just thirty seconds!

He smacks Opponent's back.

OPPONENT

(Shouts)

KUDO

Masataro, kiai!

MASATARO

(Shouts)

Takahashi stifles a laugh as he brings both fighters back to the center.

TAKAHASHI

Hajime!

Opponent throws a right hand punch. At the same time, Masataro does a left hand punch. Masataro continues with a right punch and right low kick, which spins opponent around. Off balance, Opponent thrusts his right

foot back at Masataro. Crowd gasps and cringes. Opponent turns around, surprised to see Masataro rolling on the ground. Opponent assumes a powerful fighting stance.

Takahashi moves Opponent back.

TAKAHASHI

You kicked the groin. (To Timekeeper) How much time left?

TIMEKEEPER

Ten seconds.

Kudo come and kneels beside Masataro. Masataro is groaning, and rolling in pain.

TAKAHASHI (to OPPONENT)

I know it wasn't on purpose, but that's one warning!

Takahashi motions for Opponent to go to his Coach, facing away from Masataro. Takahashi and Kudo kneel beside Masataro to see if he is OK. Masataro continues groaning and rolling.



Soshu, Sensei Masa, and Saiko Shihan



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SCENE 15 - STARBUCKS - DAY

(Traditionally, uchi deshi don't have any free time. When they're not training, they have to stay close to the dojo; their movements are very limited. Usually, they sleep in their spare time. In the dojo, everyone has their own napping spot. Sometimes they may try to read, but usually fall asleep within 3 pages).

The coffee shop is somewhat crowded. A few people in business suits, but the majority are college students studying. CYNTHIA is sitting at a table near the counter. She is early 20's, with a nice figure, blond hair, and piercing blue eyes. There are various papers, a laptop, notebooks, and textbooks on her table. Masataro orders a cappuccino and sits at the adjacent table. One of Cynthia's papers falls to the floor. She doesn't notice. Masataro picks it up.

MASATARO

Excuse me, is this yours?

CYNTHIA

Oh, yes. Thank you so much.

MASATARO

You're welcome. That's a nice computer.

CYNTHIA

Thanks. My parents gave it to me for Christmas. I still have no idea how to work it.

MASATARO

Are you a college student?

CYNTHIA

Yeah, I go to Samford University.

MASATARO

Samford? In Birmingham?

CYNTHIA

(Laughs). Yeah, you must not be from around here.

MASATARO

I'm from Tokyo.

CYNTHIA

Oh, OK. Are you just visiting?

MASATARO

No, I'm a karate fighter. I'm training to be world champion soon.

CYNTHIA

Really? Wow! Where's your dojo?

MASATARO

It's called Oyama Karate. It's over there.

CYNTHIA

OK, yeah, I know where that is.

MASATARO

You should come and take a lesson sometime.

CYNTHIA

Thank you. Maybe I will.

Masataro looks at the clock.

MASATARO

Oh, I have to go back now.

He stands.

MASATARO

It was nice to meet you.

CYNTHIA

You too. Maybe I'll see at the dojo.

MASATARO

Yes, OK, bye.

CYNTHIA

Bye.



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SCENE 16 - DOJO – DAY

MORI is reading at the counter. The other 3 UCHI DESHI are sleeping on arm guards. MASATARO enters.

MASATARO

Osu.

Mori nods. Masataro approaches the counter.

MORI

How was coffee? Same as Starbucks in Japan?

MASATARO

Osu, it tasted about the same. Sensei--

MORI

Osu...

MASATARO

I met a beautiful girl.

MORI

Oh, yeah?

MASATARO

Osu, she's a college student. I told her she should study Karate.

MORI

Well that's good. But Masataro, I didn't tell you yet, but uchi deshi can't date until they get black belt.

MASATARO

Huh?

MORI

That's the rule. But you can still drink coffee. There's rule against drinking coffee and talking to people in a coffee shop. That's not a date. You understand?

MASATARO

Osu.

AFTERNOON TRAINING MONTAGE.

SCENE 17 - DOJO – NIGHT

The UCHI DESHI are stretching, warming up, etc. before class. CYNTHIA enters carrying a dogi bag.

CYNTHIA

OSU!

She stops at the stairs.

MORI

Osu Cynthia! How you doing?

CYNTHIA

Osu, great. (To Masataro) Osu!

MASATARO

O-osu...

She goes upstairs. Other STUDENTS come in, etc. Cynthia comes downstairs wearing a brown belt. Masataro's is white.

MORI

Cynthia, this is the new uchi deshi, Masataro.

CYNTHIA

Osu. Nice to meet you.

She goes over to him and fixes his incorrectly tied belt.

CYNTHIA

So, you gonna teach me champ?

Mori looks at them and shakes his head.

* * *

So, Karl and I are working hard. Buy your lottery tickets now so this American dream will have a happy ending.

Discover Yourself. Challenge Yourself.

American Cup--April 26th, 2008.

Training for a tournament starts in the body, not in the mind. I've always said that if you push yourself physically, your spirit will build up as a result. Don't just talk or think about it—do it! First you need action, you need to sweat. If you do that, you'll discover a whole new world, regardless of the outcome. Trust me, I know.

Training and fighting in a tournament will open your eyes to the *real* you. You will see the good and the bad. After the experience, you'll be able to see where you need work in your conditioning or techniques.

The important point is this: Are you gonna step up or turn away? Only you can make that decision. I want all students to try to compete at least once. Not just the actual fight, but the preparation and challenges you face along the way will transform you into a better person if you have the courage to see it through to the end. Everyone has the potential to become champion, but most students don't believe in themselves to try.

Everybody's experience is unique. Some people can hardly eat for the few days right before a tournament; others have no problem. Some people can't sleep; others sleep soundly, dreaming of holding the 1st place trophy. On tournament day, as they line up for the first round, some students can't feel their hands or feet. Others can't wait for their turn to fight. Whatever your experience, you will be glad you went through it.

Fighting in the dojo is much different than a tournament. You might fight for only a minute, or four or five minutes. There isn't so much pres-

sure to do well when you fight in the dojo; there aren't really any spectators. But in a tournament, boyfriends, girlfriends, husbands, wives, parents, friends, co-workers, all kinds of people come out to watch *you*. This kind of pressure is unlike anything you've faced before. How are you going to handle it?

As you know, we have a big tournament coming up here in Birmingham on April 26th. I want to give you some tips to help you in your training as you get ready to compete.

First of all, you need to be ready to train hard. Many students start out OK, but when tournament day gets closer, they begin hearing whispers. "I wish I had one more month. I don't think I'm ready yet. Maybe I should wait until next year." *Nobody* is ever 100% ready, that's human nature. I'm sure you all remember when you were studying for exams in school, how you'd want "just one more day" to *really* be ready. Anyone



Next time might never come. You gotta give it a shot now!

Discover Yourself. Challenge Yourself.

who sets out on an ambitious goal, like fighting in a tournament, will hear these whispers. The point is that you need to kiai and say, “I’ve trained hard and come this far—I’m going to give it my best shot.”

Another point is that you need at least one strong hand/kick technique that you can rely on. Once you identify your strongest technique(s), you need to work on how to set them up with other techniques to form your fighting strategy. This is just like the Katas **Kihon Sono 1 – 8**.

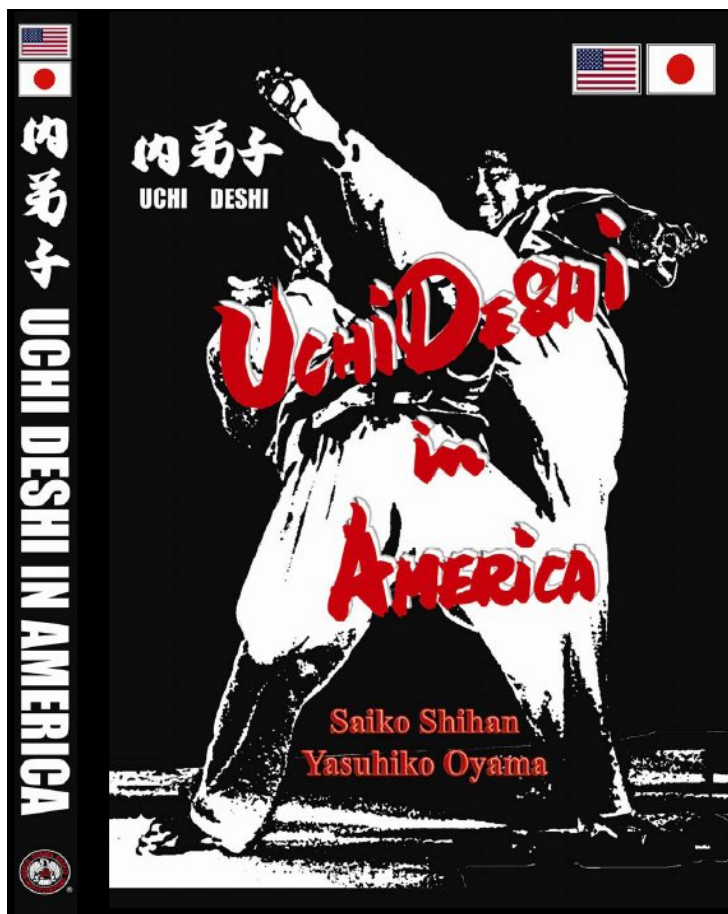
You also need to think about how to use your time effectively when you fight. Go back and review Newsletter Issue 14, *Tai Kai*, Spring 2007. Lots of people think about finishing their opponent with one shot. But in reality, often your opponent will hit you with *two* or *three* techniques for every *one* that you execute. So, how you control the time is extremely important.

If you feel unsure of yourself when fighting, kiai! Be-

lieve in yourself, trust your training. When you feel unsure of yourself, your opponent is probably feeling the same way. They’re only human, after all. They have two legs, you have two legs. They have two hands, you have two hands. You’re not fighting some monster or a ghost. So believe in yourself, give it your best shot.

If you hang in there and do your best, afterward, you’ll say, “Wow, that was great!” Or you might say, “Wow, that really hurt, but it was still great!” As you get ready to compete, listen to your Shihan, Sensei, and Senpai. Once you set your goal, you’ll have to fight yourself long before you fight any opponent. Your goal will dictate how you eat, drink, and sleep. Fighting in a tournament is not about your opponent. It’s about pushing yourself and finding the courage to hang in there when things get tough. If you can stick it out, there are glorious discoveries waiting for you on the other side. You can do it, just sweat!

Osu!



**Hopefully all
students over
13 have this
book.**

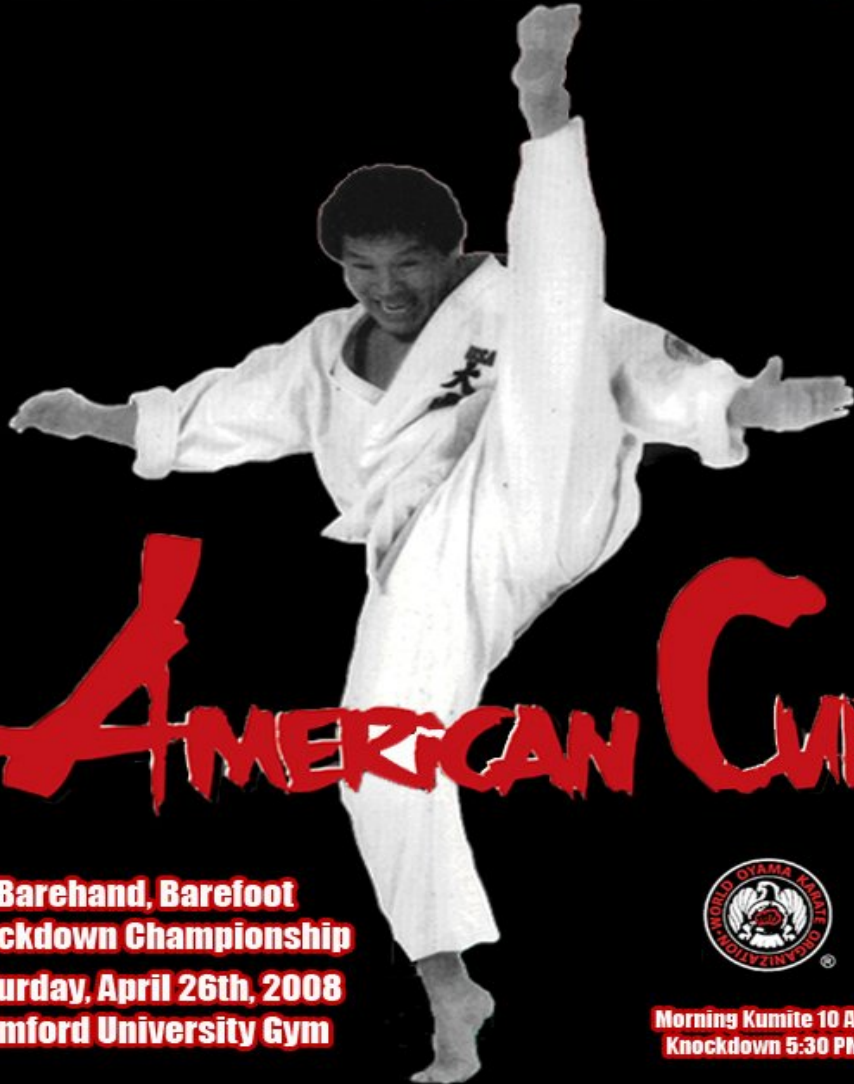
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hear your
feedback.**



WORLD OYAMA KARATE

presents

ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

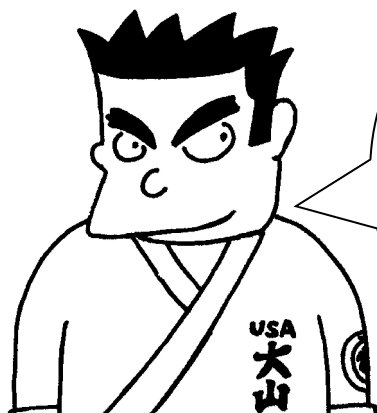


AMERICAN CUP

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



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



"2008
American
Cup"

DON'T
MISS IT !!!

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