



国際大山空手道連盟総本部

World Oyama Karate

Honbu Newsletter

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Facing My Rival

By Founder Saiko Shihan Y. Oyama



Time goes by so fast, so remember to *Just Sweat!*

ANOTHER GREAT SUMMER CAMP!

Time goes by so fast. Whenever the spring tournament finishes, I start looking forward to Summer Camp. This year's camp is already finished, but I can still see and feel the magnificent beauty of the ocean. The fine particles of snow white sand stretching out into the crystal blue waters. The waves gently rolling in and whispering softly as they hit the shore.

The first morning of camp, however, was totally different. Strong gusts of wind blew the heavy rains sideways while the sky burst with shots of thunder and lightning overhead. Everyone waited in the hotel lobby, wondering how long it would last. Then, as if by a miracle, it all stopped within half an hour. Sensei Dale and I went outside to evaluate the situation. In the east, the monstrous clouds had dissipated. The sky was slowly brightening, as if to say, "You can go ahead and train now. We just wanted to clean the beach for you."

We looked out across the horizon, at the edge of the ocean. Some dark, heavy clouds still lingered, rumbling with occasional shots of lightning. I turned to Sensei Dale and asked, "So, what do you think?"

"Mmm..." He just nodded his head slowly. His eyes looked as though they'd been opened too

Facing My Rival



On the beautiful summer beach, we could feel Mother Nature holding us—lucky to be alive and training in the ocean.

early that morning. He looked again at the sky, then turned back to me, with stronger, shining eyes, and said, “We can do it!”

“I think so too,” I answered. “Let’s line up!” We were still able to start before sunrise. The students all filed outside. The cool rain-cleansed sand felt refreshing to the bottoms of our feet. Some students were excited and some probably wished the storm had lasted longer...The first training session of camp brings out a mix of feelings. Students get up extra early to make sure they’re on time. They feel groggy and sleepy, but also tense with anticipation of the training to come.

This year’s camp was another great success. We had people attending from San Francisco, Florida, Atlanta, North Carolina, and Sensei Masa even came from Tokyo. I want you to know that camps and clinics are an important part of training. They provide an opportunity for you to experience ordinary training in a new environment and atmosphere. This serves to refresh you mentally and physically, giving you motivation to approach your training with new eyes. This is especially true when you train outside, in nature. This was true even in ancient times. Of course, sometimes family, career, or other conflicts arise that prevent you from attending Summer Camp. But we try to schedule these events far enough in advance that you can hopefully make arrangements to come. If you do, you won’t be disap-

pointed. I’m already looking forward to next year’s Summer Camp—hope to see you there!

AKKA TANN BO RETURNS

It’s hard to believe August is already here. A couple years ago, in newsletter #15, I wrote about how the appearance of the *Akka Tonn Bo* (dragonfly) symbolizes the coming of fall. This year, just like every other year, they’ve come to greet me at the dojo. The one I saw yesterday told me, “Osu, Saiko Shihan! Autumn is almost here. You better write the newsletter. I know you’re busy, but the members are waiting.” I just answered, “Osu!” I feel that we’re lucky to have four seasons, each one marking a fresh new start in life.

FIGHTING MY BROTHER

In the last issue, I started officially writing my Karate biography. Back in issue #15, I wrote a little bit about my first day of training in the dojo and first facing my rival, Haruyama. I mentioned before that the little training I’d done at home with my older brothers was completely different than training in the dojo. Mas Oyama and the Black Belts at his dojo exuded raw power in everything they did. Every part of training was harsh, even on a students’ first day. There was no taking it easy on you or giving you a chance to adjust. No one got a break. From day one, the senior Black Belts’ attitude to-

Facing My Rival



ward a student was, “Now you’re a gladiator. I’m a gladiator. We’re gonna beat each other up and become stronger.” I tried explaining that I wasn’t a gladiator, just a fifteen year-old kid, but no one listened.

As I mentioned before, Haruyama beat me up pretty good my first day. After our fight, I was light-headed and woozy. I had no power in my legs, but I had made it through. I wasn’t dead, I’d survived. I remember thinking that I wanted no further part of Karate. That my older brother, Soshu, had set me up. There was no way I’d ever devote my life to this—I wanted to be home and safe. I wanted my mama.

I tried to sit down in the corner, but one of the senior Black Belts, Sensei Yasuda, told me, “No, no, no. Don’t sit down. You’re not finished yet.” Haruyama was among a line of 3 Black Belts at the front of the class. After fighting Haruyama, I was supposed to move down the line to fight the next one, my brother, Soshu. I looked at Soshu, and he was just smiling. Why was he smiling? It wasn’t a happy smile, but a dark and sinister one. A smile that said, “Come on over here. I’m gonna get you. I’m gonna really show you now.”

Still smiling, he just said, “C’mon. Over here.” I stood in front of him, and we both said, “Osu!”

Sensei Yasuda commanded, “*Kamaete!*”

I just stood there, looking in my brother’s eyes. “Just like a street fight,” he whispered. I put my hands up to cover my face.

“*Hajime!*” shouted Sensei Yasuda. Suddenly, Soshu was right in front of me. He struck me with a *shotei* (palm heel) to the back of my chin, below my ear, and sent me crumpling to the floor. He picked me up by the back of my dogi. “C’mon, c’mon”. Next, he punched me in the solar plexus and swept both feet out from under me—again I was on the floor. As you probably know, whenever you take a solid shot to the liver or solar plexus, your breathing stops and gets short. While I was gasping for air, willing myself not to die, Sensei Yasuda revived me by hitting my back just above the belt. Air shot into my lungs. Sweat and blood mixed with my tears, and dripped into a puddle on the floor as I heaved and screamed.

“Stand up!” Soshu commanded, still smiling. Eventually I got up. He told me to move around, but whenever I moved left, his face would appear in front of me. The same if I moved right or back—he just followed me like a shadow. His blows would produce a “*Pow-pow*” sound when they hit my body. My body would produce a “*Don-don*” sound when it hit the floor. So, the next couple minutes sounded something like “*Pow-pow, don-don, pow-pow-pow-don-don...pow-don, powpowpow...pow-pow, don-don.*”

Eventually, I couldn’t stand up anymore. Soshu tried picking me up, but I couldn’t move. With Sensei Yasuda’s help he finally got me on my feet. Sensei Yasuda yelled, “*Yame!*” I was finally finished. I could sit down at last.

After fighting Haruyama, I felt like I didn’t want to do Karate anymore. But my feelings after fighting my brother had a much deeper and sharper sting. Why had he beaten me like that? I could understand Haruyama. We didn’t know each other, we weren’t related; he just fought me as he would’ve any other

Facing My Rival



Everyone survived the hard training, and we're looking forward to next year

student. But Soshu was my own brother. Yet he just kept smiling while beating me silly, torturing me. I could never forgive him.

I felt like Clint Eastwood in the movie, *The Unforgiven*. Focused on revenge at the exclusion of everything else. I felt that even though I was a little bit of a bad kid and had gotten into trouble, my brother still had no right to beat me up like that. In order to get me into the dojo, he had told me things like, "You're really strong and have great coordination. Karate would be easy for you. You could probably set a record for getting a Black Belt in the fastest time." All his words came back to me, and I saw them for what they were—tricks and lies to stroke my ego and lure me into this place. Whose idea had it really been? My mother's? My oldest brother, Hiroshi's? Or maybe all three of them working together? I felt betrayed and mortified, angry that they could even think of treating me this way.

After class, my brother and I rode the train together

back to my mother and I's apartment. He looked at me, and asked if I was OK. But he was still smiling. I just answered, "I'm fine". I couldn't open my mouth very wide because of the cuts my teeth had made to the insides of my cheeks. We didn't wear mouthpieces or anything back then. My whole body throbbed in pain, and I felt chills, as if I'd had a fever. I just wanted to be home. I couldn't understand why my brother seemed so happy. Every so often he'd ask if I was OK, and I'd just tell him I was fine.

When we got home, my mother opened the door. She saw me and gasped, "My son, my son! Oh, no, what happened?"

"I'm fine," I muttered.

"He's alright," Soshu told her.

I told her I wanted to go to bed and to just leave me alone. Our apartment was tiny, with just one room, but I tried to put as much distance as I could be-

Facing My Rival



tween myself and my mother and brother. “Don’t you want anything to eat?” she asked.

“No I just want to sleep.” I went and laid down on my futon.

I could hear Soshu and my mother arguing by the door. “What did you do to him? He needs to see a doctor,” she scolded.

“You heard him, he’s fine. Just a little bruised up. He’ll be OK.” They talked awhile longer before my brother left. Eventually, my mother went to bed.

I cried into my pillow, trying to keep it quiet. I was felt so angry and betrayed. I decided then that I would keep doing Karate so I could get revenge against Haruyama and my brother as soon as possible. I wanted nothing more than to beat them up and make them sorry for what they’d done to me. My decision to train in Karate had nothing to do with wanting to discover or challenge myself. I didn’t do

it to become a better man, or to build up myself physically and mentally. All the positive reasons people start training had nothing to do with my decision. I wanted revenge. That was it. I would train hard every day so I would be able to beat them to a pulp.

OUT FOR VENGEANCE

Until then, although I had caused trouble in the neighborhood and at school, my fifteen year-old heart was still mostly pure. But that night, the desire for revenge was like a cold chisel, transforming it into something that would never be the same again.

So, my desire to beat Haruyama and Soshu motivated me to continue training after that first day. I was on the school soccer team then, so I’d go straight to the dojo after practice every day. I didn’t have time to hang out in the street or get into trouble. Karate kept me busy all the time, which eventu-

Facing My Rival

ally made my mother happy. The only problem was that I almost didn't have any time to study, either. I also had trouble staying awake in class after lunch.

I was at a private all-boys school. Somehow my class was full of athletes, guys on the baseball team, soccer team, judo club. We all had the same problem of dozing off after lunch. We'd open our books on our desks and try to hide behind them and sleep, but you can't hide your entire head behind a book. The teachers back then were tough. Many times, whenever I dozed off, they'd hit me in the head with their knuckles, just like *sekien gedan zuki*. The teacher would hit my head, and my head would hit the desk, waking me up.

"Where are we now?" the teacher would ask, pointing at my textbook.

"Uh, I don't know," I'd answer. *KONK!* The teacher would hit me again. "Sorry, teacher, I was just trying to meditate and lost the place."

"What!? Meditate!?" *KONK!* Another hit.

"No, sorry, I was sleeping." But that was as bad as it got now. I was guilty of being hungry and sleeping in class, but I wasn't running around in the streets and getting into trouble like before.

After doing Karate for about three months, I started to really understand some of the basic techniques. They started fitting my body, which was exciting. My brother had set me up to get me in the dojo, but I had always enjoyed sports and physical activity. I wasn't much for science or math or other academics, but P.E. was my time to shine. That's where I could showcase myself and my abilities.

So, whenever the techniques such as *seiken*, *mae geri*, *mawashi geri*, *ushiro geri*, started to fit, I'd imagine using them against someone. I began to see how to apply them in a real fight. But I needed real guts to go in the dojo each day. Whenever I started thinking about the free fighting (*Kumite*) at the end

of class, I'd get butterflies. I'd wonder if maybe Haruyama would beat me up again, or my brother, or one of the other Senpais.

Each class would last 4 hours. Sometimes we'd practice the same techniques over and over and over again. While the constant repetition could be boring, I felt each technique seeping into my bone and muscle. I could feel myself improving, which was really exciting. I imagine my brother was watching me and could also see my improvement.

One cold winter night after training, we stopped by a noodle shop on the way home. I was always hungry, so I was glad to stop. We sat down and each ordered *kake soba*. This was a bowl of hot noodle soup with noodles only. No eggs, meat, chicken, beef—just noodles. The cheapest one. But we could put as much scallions and red chili pepper in it as we wanted.

Our soup came, and I started eating. But my brother just sat there. "Listen," he said.

"What?" I asked with my bowl raised to my lips.

"I want you to listen good."

"I'm listening."

"Don't you like Karate now? You enjoy it?"

At the bottom of my heart, I still wanted revenge against my brother and Haruyama. But I was also enjoying training and feeling myself improve. I was fascinated by Karate. But I didn't want to let him know, so I just answered with a cool, "Yeah, it's good."

I think after most students take Karate for 2 or 3 months, they start getting excited. They can feel their progress and are able to discover something new about themselves. The first couple months are a great eye-opening experience. It was the same for me. They can feel the techniques coming to them,

Facing My Rival

fitting their body. They execute a roundhouse kick and say to themselves, “Hey, I can do it! I can kick someone’s head or body. I can punch them and knock them out.” But most people never imagine that their opponent is thinking the same thing about them. I guess everyone’s got a little bit of an ego. But after training a few months, I could feel myself getting stronger, and more importantly getting closer to beating Haruyama and my brother.

My brother repeated his question. “You like Karate? You really like it?”

Again, I tried to hide my excitement. “Yeah, it’s... it’s alright.”

“You wanna be strong?” he answered. There was something different about him that night. He was more serious and intense than usual.

I didn’t understand what he was getting at. I just kept eating and shrugged my shoulders. “Of course.”

“Stop eating and listen good,” he commanded. I didn’t want to stop, but I put my bowl down. “You want to really be strong? Really?”

The answer in my head was *Yeah, I wanna be strong so I can beat you*. But I didn’t say anything for a moment. His seriousness and intensity started making me feel self-conscious. What was he getting at? “Yeah...you know...”

“You know Haruyama’s very strong, right?” he went on.

“Yeah, he’s strong.”

“You wanna be stronger than Haruyama?”

I couldn’t tell him that was the whole reason I started training. Whenever I faced Haruyama, I still needed real guts. I wanted to beat him, but I knew it was still a ways off. I just tried to keep my answer

vague, telling my brother, “Yeah, well...but, I don’t know...”

“You want to beat Haruyama, don’t you?”

Yeah, and you too! was what I thought, but I didn’t say it. If I told my brother I wanted to beat Haruyama, he might go tell Haruyama, “Hey my brother says he wants to beat you up.” That would bring a lot of trouble. My brother had already tricked me once; I didn’t want to fall for anything again. So, I just shrugged my shoulders and said, “Ah...um, yeah. You know...in a fight I’d like to win...”

“So, you need to watch Haruyama all the time. If he does 100 kicks, you do 200. If he punches 100 times, you punch 200 times. If he trains for 1 hour, you train for 2 hours. You watch him constantly and think about Haruyama all the time. How he moves, punches, kicks, blocks—everything he does, you watch him.” My brother’s eyes were burning with intensity. I felt a surge of electricity in my body from what he said and the expression on his face as he talked. “You understand?”

“Yes, I understand.”

“OK, that’s good. Now we can eat.” We started eating and I could feel so much power coming to me from that simple bowl of noodles.

After that day, whenever I woke up, was at school, or went to bed, I’d always be thinking to myself, *Haruyama did this or that. Haruyama blocked and counter like this, he moves like that*. I’d think the same things about my brother too. Everything would come to me when I lay in bed at night. Sometimes my body would start moving as I thought. I could feel inside me that Haruyama was my rival, a big, big rival that I needed to catch somehow. I’d remind myself what my brother had said whenever I saw him. He punches 100 times, I’ll do twice that, however long he trains, I need to double it. He was always at the front of my mind. The thought of beating him was a tremendous source of motivation and excitement in my training.



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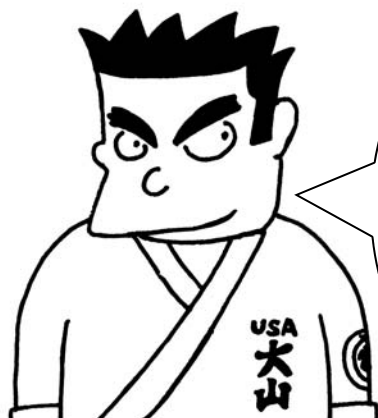
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Don't Miss This Once In A Life Time Opportunity to Train in Japan.

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