

FRANK GRANT

Long Way to Excellence

By Jerry Figgiani

Hanshi Frank Grant was born the ninth of twelve children June 21, 1933 in Paris, Kentucky. When he was eight years old, he and his family moved to the east side of Dayton, Ohio. After high school, Grant was stationed in Japan for 18 months with the United States Marine Corps. He faithfully performed his duties as any other American serviceman, but in off-hours, he traveled the countryside, seeking out the Japanese artisans and observing as they performed their crafts. He became fascinated with Japanese culture and how it differed from his own heritage.

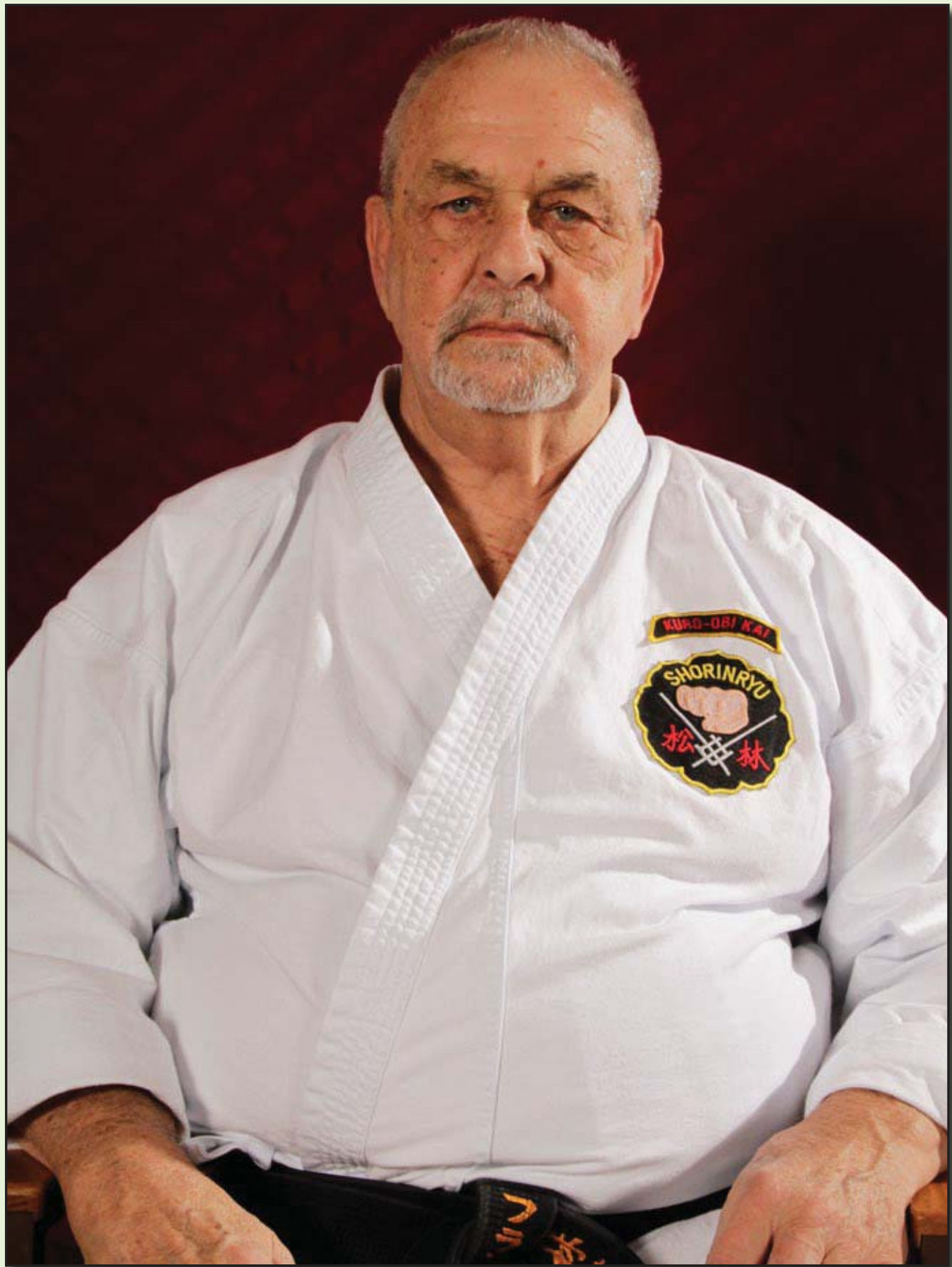
In 1954 he returned to the U.S. and was honorably discharged from service. It wasn't until 1959 that he began to study karate under Sensei James Wax. He knew Wax from his church. While stationed in Okinawa, Wax studied karate under Shoshin Nagamine and became the first American black belt in Shorin-ryu. Grant wanted to learn what Wax had to teach. It wasn't long before Grant found he liked the structure and the discipline inherent in karate.

In 1962, Master Nagamine sent Ansei Ueshiro to the United States under the sponsorship of Sensei Wax and both he and Grant began training under Sensei Ueshiro. In June of 1963, Sensei Ueshiro promoted Grant to Sho Dan. Under Ueshiro's guidance, Grant was promoted to Ni Dan in 1965 and in November of 1966, he traveled to Okinawa to train under the careful tutelage of Grand Master Shoshin Nagamine. For six months, he underwent intense physical and mental instruction for fourteen to sixteen hours every day. He returned a Yon Dan in the spring of 1967.

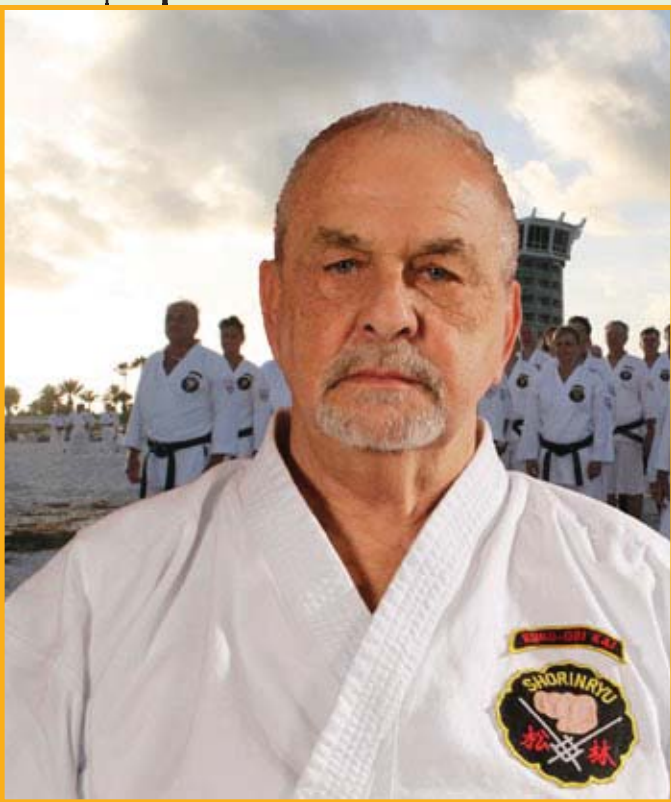
Since that time, Mr. Grant has spent his life much as he has always done, in the pursuit of knowledge and helping others along the way through teaching, training and example. He now retains the title of Hanshi as a tenth degree Master of the style.

How long have you been practicing the martial arts – Karate- and who was your teacher?

I began my karate training in 1959 under Sensei James Wax in Dayton, Ohio. Sensei Wax helped to bring Ansei Ueshiro to United States in the early 60's so my training took on a new level of intensity under Sensei Ueshiro. Thirsty for knowledge and understanding in 1966, as a young Ni-Dan, I traveled to Okinawa to train with the Master. From Master Nagamine my eyes were opened and a lot of questions were answered, and he took me to a level of understanding I did not think at the time existed. Prior to my first trip to Okinawa in 1966 I had many personal theories, hypotheses, beliefs about karate



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and how it interacts with nature and the universe, which I kept inside prior to my visit about training, were proven correct. After six months extensive training with Master Nagamine, he told me further develop myself, and my understanding of what I learned from him and apply it to Matsubayashi-ryu Karate-do. In 1966 I felt Master Nagamine was and is my true Sensei.

Would you tell us some interesting stories of your early days and the training?

In 1964 I ended up in the hospital for over one week with 3 broken ribs and a collapsed lung from kumite. Hearing of my injuries, when I was released from the hospital, Sensei Ansei Ueshiro moved back from New York. He stayed with me and my family and played an important role in my recovery. He even personally preparing special Okinawan recipes and basically helped nurse me back to health.

One other event comes to mind that happened while I was training in 1966 in Okinawa. I remember that during training one night in Okinawa I was in class and one of Sensei Nagamine's students was doing kicking training on the makiwara. On one kick, the student's foot did not retract. His big toe hit a nail and was stuck to the makiwara. Master Nagamine came out on the deck, looked at the student's foot attached to the makiwara and said "very strange" and walked back into his office. All the students stood and watched the poor guy, looking around at each other as if his foot was attached by some magical force. When it became clear they weren't going to do anything for him, I walked over and pulled the student's foot off the makiwara. The student bandaged his foot and

continued training. Several times during the kick in Pinan Yondan, the bandage came off. Finally the instructor asked the student to "do something about the bandage." The student got off the deck and put a very colorful sock on his bandage and then continued training. During my training in Okinawa I had kicked the same makiwara many times, but never had the misfortune of finding the nail.

Were you 'natural' at karate – did the movements come easily to you?

Anything I do I seem to put my whole being into, that is the way I've always been and the way I trained. With my karate I was hungry for knowledge and understanding so I trained all the time. When I wasn't in the dojo training I trained on my own. To some it may have seemed I learned quickly, but really my advancement came from hard consistent training and a deep rooted resolve to never give up. So the short answer to your question is, "no." The only real natural talent I had was I was stubborn, driven to excel and willing to make the necessary sacrifices it took to advance in my chosen art.

How has your personal expression of karate developed over the years?

In the beginning it was all physical. For myself and in my teachings I worked hard at developing techniques and bodies that would produce ultimate power and ultimate speed. Beginning in 1966 in Okinawa, I learned from Sensei Nagamine that it wasn't about either one of those; rather, it's all in understanding and performing correct technique. From the development of this understanding over the years, I've coined a saying: "Where there is strength there is weakness." Meaning, "muscling" your techniques only slows you down. You also tend to over extend yourself, giving up control. Muscling creates many opportu-

nities for an opponent to attack, making your defense or offensive techniques vulnerable and weak. Misinformed people also over train or improperly train their muscles in efforts to develop speed, but little do they know it's all about being relaxed. Having power and speed can make a difference, but only if applied properly and through proper technique.

What are the most important points in your teaching methods?

I focus a lot of transitional positions that take you from one technique to the next which also the focus of my book. Master Nagamine's book provides us a pictorial representation of the specific sequence of moves in our kata in his book. But, the next step was to take what he taught me in person in Okinawa about the details of what's "between the pictures." Of course this is more advanced which is why I don't allow my instructors to share this knowledge with their students until they are ready to test for their Shodan.

One teaching approach I do encourage for lower belts is certain transition moves. For example, when moving from a right front bent leg stance (zenkutsu-dachi) to a left front bent leg stance, I have my students transition through, what I call, "L-no-ji." This is done by placing your left (front) foot and knee facing forward. Your right (back) foot is placed at a 90 degree angle to the right with your knee pointing in the same direction. The heels of both feet are on the same line, both knees are bent and your weight is equally distributed on both feet which are placed just like the letter "L". Then from the "L" position, pivot the right (back) foot on the ball, driving the heel back and locking in the back leg as you snap the hips forward. L-no-ji is not a stance since you don't execute technique from it, but it's one of several transition positions designed to teach proper hip snap and foot placement in the stance. As the students improve, the L-no-ji becomes less noticeable but its effect is still there. I use a number of such techniques to help explain to my students how to get more energy and speed with less effort. Once I started incorporating this approach to my teaching methods I found that the students picked up the proper technique much faster.

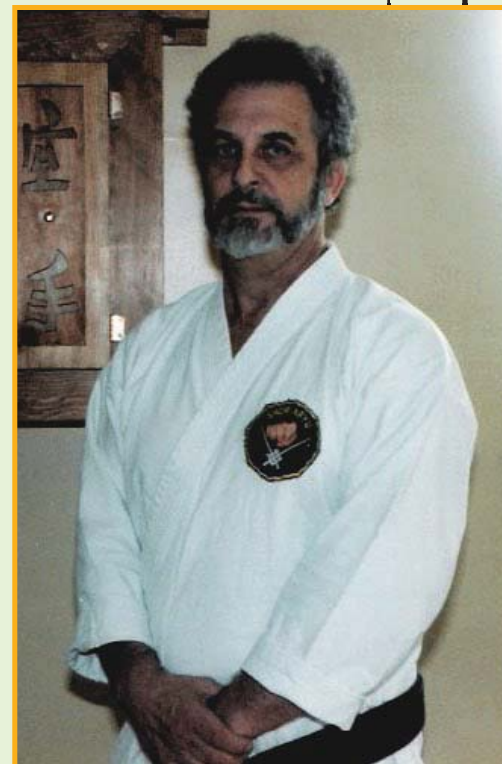
With all the technical changes during the last decades, do you think there are still 'pure' styles of karate?

Well, I can only speak to Matsubayashi-Ryu, which is Master Shoshin Nagamine's brand of Shorin-ryu. The "purity" of karate, I think, resides in the philosophy, culture and traditions which we adhere to very strongly. The technical enhancements can only help in making the techniques more effective which has always been Master Shoshin Nagamine's goal from the beginning. He always placed a great deal of emphasis on science and with science there are always new discoveries. We keep it pure by never changing our kata which is part of the "promise" I made to The Master when he asked me to share his vision. However we make it dynamic, relevant and current by constantly learning new adaptations of technique or series of techniques through bunkai.

Do you think different 'styles' are truly important in the art of karate? Why?

I think there is value in having different styles. I recognize that there can be a number of different ways to achieving the same goal and each of these different ways have something unique and special to offer. When Master Nagamine was selecting the 18 kata that formed the basis of Matsubayashi-Ryu, for example, he chose one that was created by Chojun Miyagi, the founder of Goju-Ryu. (Fukyugata Ni). Sensei recognized the value of this kata and as a result of adapting one from another style, our style and our students benefited. To think that there is only one way to achieve high levels proficiency in karate is arrogant and ultimately an impediment to your overall success in karate, regardless of your style. That said, I feel you should whatever style you chose to study, you should stick to it.

How different from other karate styles do you see the principles and concepts of the karate Shorin Ryu that you practice?



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The Matsubayashi style of Shorin-Ryu places a great deal of focus on the “snap” of the technique, as if you’re using a whip. We avoid all wasted movement in the technique and place a lot of emphasis on the efficiency of the technique. I often tell my students to “let the technique do its job.” We practice without power and without speed till the technique is perfect. Then we begin to gradually add in more speed and more power, but never at the expense of sacrificing the technique. In my monthly black belt class it’s not uncommon to spend the majority of the two hours on just one or two techniques from one kata, because the process of learning that one or two techniques properly also applies to everything else they’ll do. I don’t want to see a kata being performed that is fast, strong and sloppy. That does you no good. I’d much rather have the student slow it down and pause between moves so he or she can demonstrate that they really understand what is going on with each specific move or series of moves. The speed and power is the easy part. Good effective waza (technique) is the challenge.

Do you think that karate in the West has ‘caught up’ with the technical level in Okinawa?

Without a doubt. And in some respects I think it’s surpassed it. Many of the top people, both within WSKF (WORLD SHORIN-RYU KARATE-DO FEDERATION) and other organizations have trained in Okinawa since the 60s. The generation following has grown up with this training as well. They’ve spent their entire life training in traditional Okinawan karate. Now combine that with the West’s advancement in nutrition, medicine, science and even communications the West has the best of both worlds. The old training methods were pretty much follow-the-leader. Perhaps there was a minor correction here and there. When I started to suggest some more effective teaching techniques Master Nagamine got very excited and encouraged me to continue. He saw that our willingness to look for improved ways to help our students learn faster and better as a leap forward. He kept telling me, “You do Mr. Frank. You do!” So, it’s the perfect balance of honoring the traditions combined with innovations that I think helps us be the best we can be.

Karate is nowadays often referred to as a sport... would you agree with this definition?

Not at all. You can certainly compete at tournaments but karate is not a sport. It wasn’t designed as a sport. At one time we used to do a lot of free style Kumite. But I noticed that my students’ technique started getting sloppy as a result, so we cut it way back. Just because you can score a point on an opponent in a glorified game of tag doesn’t mean you can protect yourself or a loved one should that need occur. Too much focus on the sport element of karate keeps you from really understanding the true value of what karate has to offer. So, if you want to participate in a tournament, that’s fine. You bring home a trophy or two, congrats. But you still have to focus on the basics and the technique to really grow in the art. Don’t get me wrong. When I was younger I loved to spar. It’s fun. But it’s such a minor part of karate-do. Don’t let it take over your training or you’ll miss out on so much more.

Do you feel that you still have further to go in your studies of the art?

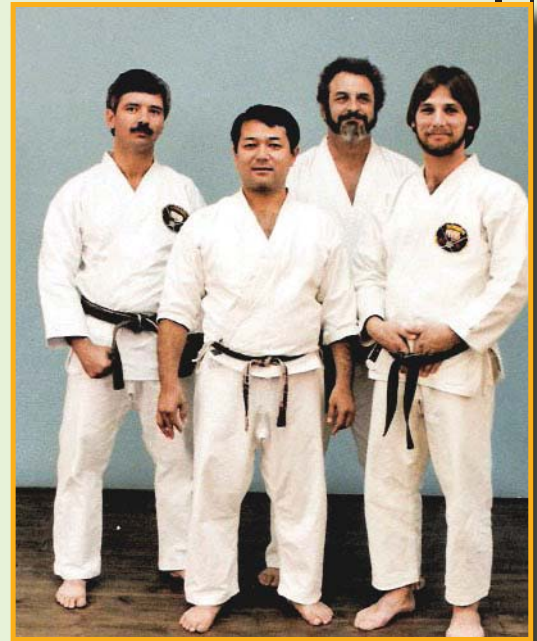
I remember asking Master Nagamine that exact question toward the end



of my six month training program back in 1966. I asked, "When do you learn it all?" His response to me was, "How long is infinity?" His point was that you never know it all. The more you train the more you realize there is always a way to do something just a little better, quicker, stronger. Even teaching methods can constantly be improved to help our students make their growth more effective.

When The Master took me under his wing I remember sharing with him a certain way I got my younger students to learn how to execute certain blocks with better technique, faster by rubbing their arms slightly together during practice. I asked him if this was okay with him. I could see in his eyes that he was very excited. He said in his broken English, "You do, Mista Frank. You do." Sensei Nagamine encouraged me to build on his foundations while remaining true to the system he created for us.

At 81 I am still excited to learn more. But now my priority is to hand down this knowledge to my top students we can continue to honor the work of O-Sensei Nagamine. He asked me to take it to the next level and I hope I've done that. That's why I'm so excited about the release of my book. My challenge to my students is do the same. Karate is a living, breathing thing and is always growing. So, when you ask me if I a further to go in karate, I say "definitely yes." The minute you think you've gone as far as you can go, you lose your edge.



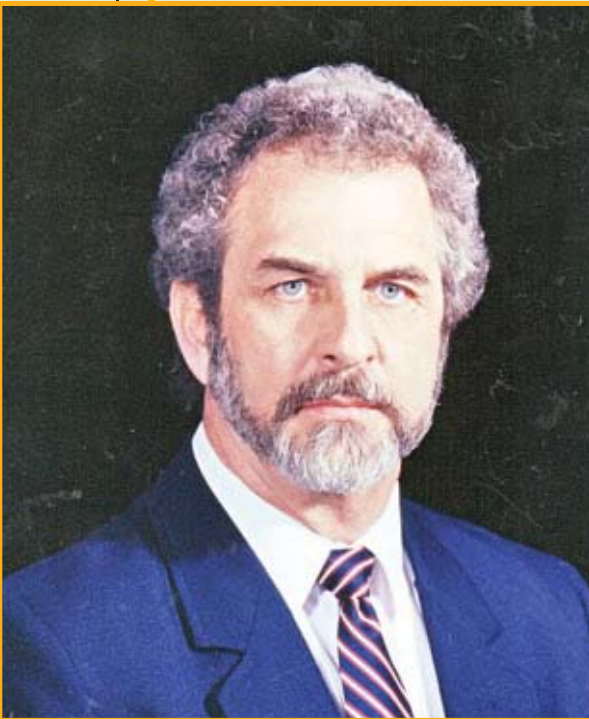
When teaching the art of karate – what is the most important element; self defense, health or tradition?

I don't think you can separate those things out. I would go as far as to say that there's a four important element and that is the mental or spiritual aspect of it. The Master told me that the reason he started training was to improve his health because he was sick as a child. Health is a wonderful byproduct of training. To train we must work on flexibility, strength, conditioning and relaxation. The Master set up a regimen for me that included makiwara training to develop strong technique while at the same time increasing bone density and strong hands and elbows. We do arm training with each other so that when we block we have enough energy to break the attacker's weapon without even throwing a counter. And we practice zazen meditation to help us learn how to relax so that when we execute technique, we don't allow ourselves to overpower or "muscle" the moves, rather by staying relaxed and using perfect technique we are much more effective with much less physical effort. At even higher levels it helps us generate more internal energy; developing the ki. And when you get to be my age, that's a real benefit! When the Master was in his late 70s I remember of a training trip over to Okinawa where he demonstrated that exact point. I was probably twice his size and half his age at the time and with barely any motion at all he did one simple technique that forced me across the dojo right on my butt. I couldn't believe it. That was when I first began to realize the importance of learning "movement without motion." It was a real eye opener.

Do you have any general advice you would care to pass on the practitioners in general?

One of my pet peeves is people that do kata just because they have to. They don't really understand its true purpose of value in the training. To really take your art to the next level, I suggest you truly analyze your kata. Dig deep. Do the bunkai and try to get into the mind of the person who created it. What are the lessons to be learned? How can you apply it to actual combat? What variations might it apply to? What possible hidden moves could it represent? Kata, without Analysis is just a dance. Through the study and practice of kata one can learn the hidden secrets of what makes karate so special and powerful. There's no magic even though it may seem magical when you the types of things a Master can do. Know the science behind the technique. I've gone so far as to commis-

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sion physicists to explain to me scientifically why a certain move works. Then, once I understand the science how can I use the science to improve on it. Master Nagamine was big on science and he passed that curiosity on to me.

Some people think going to Okinawa or Japan to train is highly necessary, do you share this point of view?

You know, that might have been perhaps a generation ago. It was for me when I was a Shodan back in the 60's. All my top students were required to test for Godan directly under The Master and his son, Takayoshi Nagamine in Okinawa. But now we have people who have trained in Karate all of their lives. Many of my fellow karate leaders in a number of different styles have had the unique advantage of learning it in the traditions of The Masters but also with the special edge one gets when merging the "can-do" elements you get in the West. I hope I don't come off arrogant when I say that traditional karate in America is every bit as good as it is in Asia or anywhere in the world for that matter. I'm proud of what we've done here and while karate's roots are in the East, its trunk and branches are for the entire world which is what Master Shoshin Nagamine wanted for us. Of course there are too many dojos that unfortunately fall short in my opinion because they strayed too far from the traditions and culture that form the foundation of what makes karate so special, way beyond simple self defense. I fear we suffer from a kind of "black belt inflation" where too many people are more concerned about what's on the waist instead of what's in their hands, feet, and heart.

Who would you like to have trained with that you have not?

If I could have picked one person to train under it would probably be Choki Motobu. Master Shoshin Nagamine recognizes three instructors who helped him move forward in his karate training and Master Motobu was defiantly the most colorful. When he was younger he would go to the parts of the town that were rough and practice his technique in real fights. He was able mold his technique from the theoretical to the practical in this way. Of course that's a little more difficult to do in this day and age, but we are certainly the beneficiaries of the knowledge and skills he gained by that approach. Later in life he became more philosophical which must have been a fascinating transition to experience. But it was his quest for the practical and proven that I think was a major influence on Master Nagamine when he was formulating his Matsubayashi approach to Shorin-Ryu.

That said, I would also have loved to be trained by Miyamoto Musashi, the most renowned Samurai that ever lived. I've read everything you can read about him and The Book of Five Rings is recommended reading for my students. I would have given my right arm to be trained by him. Then again, it probably would have cost my right arm.

What would you say to someone who is interested in starting to learn karate?

Take up golf. It's less frustrating. Karate is a lifelong pursuit. It's not something you just do a couple times a week for an hour here or an hour there. It will be one of the most rewarding endeavors you can even do but it's not a good hobby and a mediocre sport at best. And for some that may be enough. But to really get the true benefits of learning karate, you must give it a level of commitment and passion. You will be reward many times over if you stick with it.

First find a dojo and a sensei that can help you with that journey. There are some re-

ally good instructors out there in a number of different styles and there are a lot of pretty bad ones too. Do your due diligence before making that commitment. In my opinion the style is less important than the quality and commitment of the Sensei. Avoid the “belt factories.” If you stick to traditional approaches you’re more likely to get benefits in the long term.

What is it that keeps you motivated after all these years?

Two things: The students and the “promise.” I have students who have been with me for over 40 years. I sit on the promotion board for their students who also attend special classes with me. Knowing that we are getting these karateka moving in the right direction is my motivation. That’s what I promised Grand Master Nagamine I would do. He gave me all this knowledge and sharing this with all our WSKF (WORLD SHORIN-RYU KARATE-DO FEDERATION) members never gets old. But it goes beyond our own people. I do clinics around the country for other styles and when I see their excitement on their faces when they discover that they can apply the basic principles to their kata and their kumite, I continue to get motivated. Last year I was working with a 6th Degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do which is about a different style as you can have from ours. Yet, he instantly saw the improvement and advantage of the principles and we became fast friends. I have tremendous respect for someone of that advanced rank and ability seeking me out to consider ways to improve his art. That took real guts.

Five years ago we were approached by a dojo in Montreal, Canada. They studied a different style and were part of an organization that wasn’t giving them the support they thought they should have. My top ranks and I put together a program to help them convert their style to ours. We send a team each year to Montreal for training and they’re dojo visits us a couple times a year for special training. Can you imagine the guts it took to commit to such a major change? When you meet people like that who are willing to make such a sacrifice and not let ego get in the way, you can’t help but be motivated.

What is your philosophical basis for your karate training?

To strive for perfection of technique in training so when the time comes to use it in self defense, in the heat of battle, the training takes over automatically. A real fight is not going to be pretty, not like it is on TV or in the movies. The quality of your technique and timing will drop a notch or two in a real combat situation. So, you want it to drop from as close to perfection as possible. The goal is to have your “average” performance to be better than your attacker’s best performance.

We achieve this first by practicing basics. When I trained in Okinawa, Master Nagamine taught basics in every single class and did them right along with us. When I brought him over to America he again started with basics in each class he taught. He made it clear that one’s kata can only be as good as one’s basics and one’s combat ability can only be as good as one’s kata. The Master laid out 11 specific basics consisting of a combination of strikes, punches, kicks, blocks and stances. From these, nearly everything else is an extension of that in some way. The simplicity by which he developed this allows us to really focus on what is truly important in developing your karate. They are so important, in fact, that I devote an entire chapter in my book of the advanced execution of those same 11 basics.

Could I ask you what you consider to be the most important qualities of a successful karate practitioner?

Longevity. Sticking with it year after year. It’s the proverbial “tortoise and the hare” scenario. I’ve seen students with tremendous natural ability pick things up



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very quickly and have the ability to be superstars, but if they drop out, game over. On the other hand, there are students who start without any natural athletic ability. It takes them many more repetition to learn a move. But they're stubborn and don't quit. They stick with it day in and day out. Then after a number of years they find that have abilities and talents they never dreamed possible. These are the type of students who become the really successful karate practitioners.

What advice would you give to students on the question of supplementary training?

Master Nagamine provided us a very specific supplemental training program that includes:

- a. Makiwara - Punching, knife hand, elbows, and kicks. We have our people build themselves up to where they can do a few hundred techniques a day to where you get the point that you can punch full power with hip snap. Start with 25 reps on each hand for each technique and work your way up to a couple hundred of each.
- b. Weights – Low weight, high reps to build strength but not bulk that might slow you down.
- c. Zazen Meditation – 15 minutes a day.
- d. Arm training – build strength and power in the blocks, increase bone density and resistance to pain.
- e. Complementary Martial Arts -- Also we train in other disciplines to reinforce our karate training. The Master was a black belt in judo, aikido and kendo. (He was into "mixed martial arts" before it was cool!) When we analysis our kata and work on the bunkai, we often see where these other disciplines come into play. Even the practice of Kobudo, though an art onto itself, goes a long way to help us do better karate. We have boxers and wrestlers that train with us. It's all beneficial.

What do you see as the most important attributes of a student?

Dedication.

Why is it, in your opinion, that a lot of students start falling away after two-three years of training?

Impatience and frustration. After a couple of years they're starting to pick a few physical skills and can begin to see some basic results of their efforts. They may even be able to handle themselves in a minor scuffle pretty good. But then they have that "ah ha" moment and realize that it's going to take many years, decades even, before they reach the level of competency to really know the art. It's frustrating to be sure. The more you train and the better you get the more you realize just how much you don't know! In the WSKF for example, it would take the average student about five years to make Shodan (1st degree black belt), provided they attend a couple classes a week and practice enough on their own. While that may be a goal for some, once one reaches Shodan they have just enough knowledge and ability to really learn the important stuff. Think of a professional baseball player as an analogy. A typical brown belt (the level just before black in our system) may be the equivalent of an AAA ball player and an AA player maybe a first or second degree black belt. In my mind, you're a Sandan (3rd Degree) before you're play-



ing in the big leagues. That's when we certify our instructors, they can open their own dojo and they are invited to attend our special quarterly Kuri-Obi Kai training program. But even though you've made it to the big leagues it doesn't mean you're starting or even getting off the bench. You still have a long way to go.

Have there been times when you felt fear in your karate training?

Fear? Absolutely. As a matter of fact, I wrote about it in the first Chapter of my book. Let me read you a little bit of it; kind of a sneak preview for the readers: "It was as I was walking down the stairs from the airplane in Okinawa after a very long flight. Truth be told, I have never been scared in my life, but here I am half way around the world. No one knew I was coming. I didn't speak the language (except for kick and punch and counting to ten). I knew that wouldn't get me too far! I just knew for certain I had to be there. I knew I had to train with Grand Master Nagamine. I felt I had gone as far as I could with my instructors in the States. So to advance, I had to study directly with the Man himself."

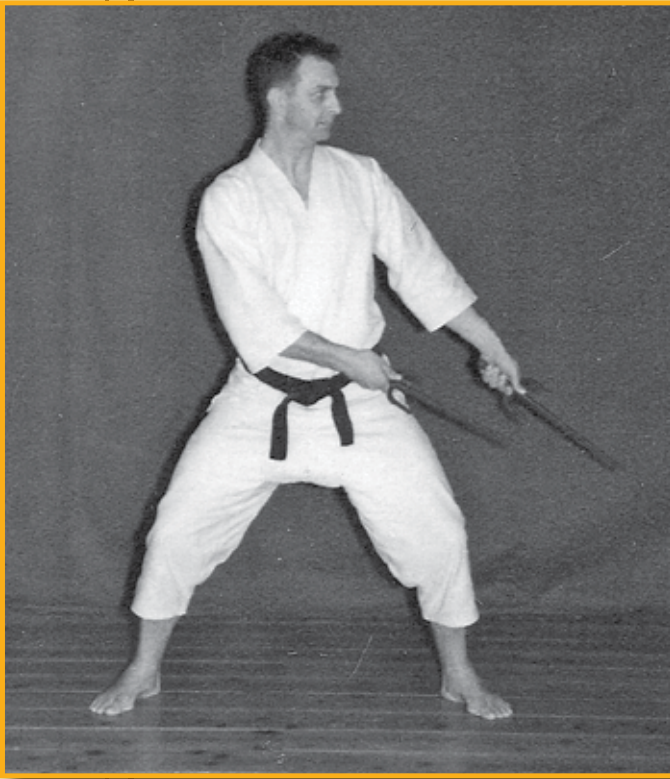
"Two weeks prior, I sat up in bed in the middle of the night and said to myself, "I have to go to Okinawa." I told my wife I was going to Okinawa in two weeks. Of course, she thought I was out of my mind. She said, "You have no money, no passport and a dojo to run. How are you going to do it?" I told her within two weeks, I'll have what I need. I arranged for a six month leave of absence from my job as a journeyman lithographer and put my wife and top student, Tommie Harris, in charge of the dojo. My students helped me raise the money for the airplane ticket. The next thing I knew, I was walking down the steps from the airplane to the tarmac. It was extremely hot! It hit me like a blast furnace. I'm starting to think that maybe my wife was right. I am out of my mind! Then again, that never stopped me before. Not knowing where the dojo was located, I hailed a taxi driver and asked if he knew the location of Nagamine's dojo. He looked at me like he thought I was crazy. I tried again. "Nagamine Karate Dojo." Then he perked up and responded, "Oh yeah, yeah, I know. I take you." He dropped me off in front of the dojo and I placed my bags inside the entrance. I entered, scared to death. I didn't know what was going to happen. I understood he had a dossier on me, but we had never met or even corresponded. I just sat on a bench for fifteen or twenty minutes and then he entered, Grand Master Shoshin Nagamine, the Master of our style and inventor of Matsubayashi-Ryu. He glanced over at me, so I stood and bowed. He looked at me briefly as if he had been warned by both the taxi driver and my wife. He came over and asked me what I wanted. I said, "I came here to train."

"Now his English was about as good as my Japanese, but we could communicate enough for him to inform me to get a hotel and to come back later that very same night as he would have an interpreter there. That night, I met Grand Master Nagamine back at the dojo. Together in a taxi, we went to Sensei Chotoku Omine's house. Once there, we sat down and conversed. He asked me, through Omine, why I was in Okinawa. I answered that I came to learn karate from the Master. He asked me what was going on in the United States. I explained that there were 25 dojos and Ansei Ueshiro had control of all of them. However, I felt there was a lot missing in my training. I had been training hard and was in great physical shape, but I told him I felt there was a piece missing. I was particularly looking for more of the mental aspect in my training. I already had a lot of the physical aspect, but knew there was much more that I just couldn't get in the United States.

He asked me again, "But why did you come?" I took a long breath and responded, "Master, I need your help. Help me learn so I can go back and teach the people in the United States. Please help me." He then told me that had I not asked for "help," I would have



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gone back like everybody else, empty handed. He went on to say, "Help. H.E.L.P. Hope, Eternal, Love, Patience." We then talked about some of the philosophical aspects of karate. I told him what I knew about philosophy up to that point. He said, "No, only people in Asia understand these things." I responded respectfully, "I'm sorry but we have some very smart people in the United States." He then told me that he wanted me to forget my way and learn his way. "Then at the end you go back home and put your way together with my way and take it to the Next Step. Then you understand." When I realized that I was now going to train with The Master, my fear finally subsided and the hard work just began."

What are your thoughts on the future of the art?

The future of the art is what I've dedicated my life to and the basis for the title of the book, *My Promise To The Master*. That promise was to take it to the "next level" and share The Master's teachings and philosophy. That's why I'm extremely grateful to *Masters Magazine* for giving me this opportunity to share my story with your readers. When I see just how much we've taken what we were taught by Grand Master Nagazine and enhanced it while remaining true to his ideals and traditions, I'm extremely excited for the future. I see it continuing to grow and improve, not by leaps and bounds so much, but by tiny revelations and inspirations that continue the art forward into the 21st Century. I see it being as relevant and valuable in the next 50 years as it has been in the past 50 years. As long as we have dedicated karateka who are willing to train, learn, analyze, teach and motivate the karate will be forever be a part of martial arts

landscape and transcend fads and false "experts" who haven't put the time, talent and tenacity into really understanding the essence of the art. As I tell my students, "I teach karate and I teach karate-do." Anyone can learn to kick and punch, but it's that higher level of understanding that melds the physical, philosophical, and psychological into a art that has a life of its own and available to anyone who is willing to make the effort to give to it what it's ready to give to back to them.

Since you're Chairman Emeritus of The World Shorin-Ryu Karate-Do Federation (WSKF) can you tell us what the organization does for its members?

Sure. WSKF was the first organization given a charter by Grand Master Shoshin Nagamine outside of Okinawa. We started in 1970 and our mission is to honor the Master's vision for Matsubayashi-Ryu with a focus on continued high technical standards while remaining true to the traditions that form its foundation. As part of that commitment we, of course, provide promotion boards for advanced students, high level training, instructor certification, business direction for the dojos, conduct monthly and quarterly training programs for our advanced students and dojo owners. We also recognize those who have made contributions both on and off the deck to karate. Additionally we have created several scholarship programs. Lastly, we sponsor the WSKF Internationals every summer where karate students and guests, Shorin-ryu and other styles, attend and learn and network with each other. I see WSKF at a major part of my legacy and, in addition to the book, a way to honor my promise to Master Nagamine and I'm very proud of my Board of Directors who work tirelessly on behalf of all our members. 