



**THIRTY YEARS** ago a young Okinawan man arrived on the shores of Alaska—then a territory of the United States of America. The following day, on September 15, 1962, Ansei Ueshiro set foot on the mainland of the USA for the first time. He was one of the first Oriental martial artists to bring karate to this country, and he went on to become one of the most influential karatemens in the world today.

At the request of his sensei, Grand Master Shoshin Nagamine, the founder of Matsubayashi Shorin-Ryu, the landmark decision to leave Okinawa was made and agreed upon by Master Ueshiro and his teachers and students. By special visa of the United States government, Master Ueshiro made the voyage in order to bring the art of Shorin-Ryu to America.

The special visa was obtained through the efforts of James Wax and his students here in the United States. On Okinawa, James Wax was the first American to earn a black belt in Shorin-Ryu under the tutelage of Master Ueshiro. On Sensei Wax's return to the U.S. from military service on Okinawa as a U.S. Marine, he opened a dojo in Dayton, Ohio.

James Wax, Robert Yarnall and many of the original American students in the U.S. helped Hanshi

Ueshiro establish himself in America. Nevertheless, there were many hardships and difficulties which he had to overcome. But Master Ueshiro was not unaccustomed to hardship. While he was a child, he suffered through the agonies of World War II on his homeland, Okinawa, one of the most violent battlefields of the war. He then endured the aftermath of the war, the rebuilding of Okinawa.

Master Ueshiro, who was physically disabled during the war, overcame this disability by becoming more proficient with his maimed hands than any other karate practitioner of his time. At first, after the injury, some people suggested he wear gloves to hide the disfigurement and scars. He refused and developed tremendous skill, dexterity and strength in his hands and body. He also became world renowned for his bojutsu.

Having overcome so much, he still sacrificed many things in relocating to the U.S. in order to propagate his martial art. The first few years were the most difficult, as he had left his family behind and had to wait several years to be reunited with them. The language barrier, earning a living in a foreign land, and finding a home were just a few of the obstacles he faced in his effort to bring Shorin-Ryu Karate

to America. Indeed, since traditional karate is not a lucrative financial enterprise, Master Ueshiro, in order to support his family, became a successful entrepreneur in the import/export field. He recently became a U.S. citizen and we are all honored by this.

Master Ueshiro's fortitude, strength of character, and karate training enabled him to survive and to succeed. Hanshi Ueshiro taught karate, opened many dojo in the East and Midwest, and successfully built the organization to what it is today. Presently there is a network of over 100 Shorin-Ryu Karate dojo in the U.S. which directly trace their roots and heritage to Hanshi Ueshiro or his students.

Hanshi Ueshiro is a direct blood descendant of the Okinawan "Bushi" class of warriors. His father, Anho Ueshiro, was his first teacher, along with Entasu Isaenta and Toguchi Seitoku. From these three main teachers, Master Ueshiro gained much of his karate knowledge, which formed the foundation of his skills. Later, he entered the dojo of Grand Master Shoshin Nagamine. And, even as a young man, Ansei Ueshiro brought much to the Okinawan dojo, eventually becoming Chief Instructor at the main dojo in Naha. There, until he left for the United States, he continued to train vigorously on a daily basis with many of today's most famous karatemens.

Since 1962, we in America are privileged to enjoy the art of Matsubayashi Karate under Master Ueshiro's guidance and expertise. We, the students of Shorin-Ryu, are the beneficiaries of his efforts and are proud of Shorin-Ryu Karate U.S.A., the original style, here in the United States.

Now, in 1992, we proudly celebrate the 30th anniversary of Hanshi Ueshiro's arrival on our shores. This commemorative journal is only one of many ways in which we say *Thank You* to Grand Master Ansei Ueshiro. ■

*Robert Scaglione*

## KARATE CROSSES THE PACIFIC OCEAN

September 9, 1962

*Mr. Ueshiro is invited to teach Karate for Five Year Contract*

### INVITED BY THE UNITED STATES

A young Karate Sensei left Okinawa by Northwest Airlines at 4:45PM on September 9, 1962. This person is Ansei Ueshiro, San-Dan, 30 years old. He is the representative of the Nagamine Dojo. He is going to teach the true meaning of Karate, not just the skill. He hand carried the roku-shaku bo, his gi, sai and tonfa onto the airplane with hope in his heart.

Sensei Ueshiro was invited by the Kodo-Kan Karate school located in Dayton, Ohio, USA under the direction of Phil Thompson. Mr. James Wax, promoted to Sho-Dan by Mr. Ueshiro, is the Sensei of the Karate school, and studied karate at the Nagamine Dojo while stationed in Okinawa as a U.S. Marine. Mr. Wax wrote a letter to Mr. Shoshin Nagamine, the Hanshi of Shorin Ryu, asking him to recommend a qualified instructor to teach karate in the United States. It took five years to get results.

Mr. James Wax returned to Okinawa in April 1961 to formally propose to Miss Ayako Toyoshima, an Okinawan. At that time he visited the Nagamine dojo to arrange further details for inviting an instructor to the United States. A meeting was then held at the Nagamine dojo among the principal sensei and senior students. It was decided unanimously that Mr. Ueshiro was the most qualified, and should be the one sent to introduce and develop Okinawan Karate in the United States. The Nagamine Dojo notified Mr. Thomson that they would send Mr. Ueshiro to teach karate in the U.S. for five years.

Mr. Ueshiro was formerly an employee of the Naha City municipal office. He has been studying karate at the Nagamine dojo for 11 years, ever since the dojo was established. During those 11 years he has not missed a single day of practice, and was known as the "dedicated deshi" by his colleagues. Mr. Ueshiro said he is not able to speak English very well, but by working with American soldiers at the dojo he has learned enough English to teach karate.

Since this is the first time a karate sensei will go to the United States from Okinawa, many people were at the airport to see Mr. Ueshiro off. At the airport Mr. Nagamine said, "We are so pleased to have the opportunity to send our representative to the United States to introduce and develop karate. It has been our long-term dream to do so. It is vitally important that we protect the traditional values of our ancestors, and develop the dojo character as more than a sport outside of Japan. Therefore we are really counting on Mr. Ueshiro's ability and skill for doing the best job in the United States." Mr. Nagamine patted Mr. Ueshiro on the back as he offered these words of encouragement.

The Kodo-Kan Karate school in Dayton, Ohio is said to be the only karate school in the United States, and has many students learning karate. Director Phil Thompson is enthusiastic about offering American students the essence of karate through Ueshiro Sensei's knowledge and expertise. Mr. Ueshiro left by himself to go to the United States. His wife Hiro Ueshiro and three children hope to join him later on.

Mr. Ueshiro said at the airport, "As long as I'm invited by the United States to teach Okinawan karate, I am going to commit myself as much as I can." He added, "I am always thinking about what I was told by Nagamine Sensei and the other instructors, and I am going to teach karate to the American people the way it was taught to me." ■



Mr. Ueshiro on his way to the United States

# 太平洋を渡る空手

1962. 9. 9.

## 米国から招かれて

### 宇江城さん、五年契約で指導

九日後四時四十五分那覇港発のノースウエスト機で、若い空手の先生が米国の空手学校から招かれ渡米した。この贈迎の人は、松林流奥道館長道場の門弟、宇江城安徳(段三)那覇市宿宮二八番地。「空手道の真髄を普及させます」と熱意に胸を打つ。またその若い空手の先生は、同手に尺種やけいこ黄、サイ、トンプラーなど空手のけいこ道具を、その機材のタラップをふむ



宇江城さん、その機材のタラップをふむ

宇江城さんを招いたのは米国のオハイオ州レイントン市にある贈迎館・空手学校「フィルトムン校」であり、いまは同校の空手の先生である。兵として沖縄駐在の中、那覇市奥道館にある松林流道場の門をくぐって修行したシニア・ムス・ウラトさん(初段)から、その本流の指導者であった。その指導が、松林流道館長長崎博司氏のところに響いた。五年がかりで、特別なものでした。

六二年四月、レイントン市は沖縄県豊見市と姉妹都市提携を結ぶ。その時、その提携の一環として、その提携の具体的な招きを取り決めた。

長嶺道場ではたまたま幹部会を開いて「沖縄空手の発展のために」と全会一致で宇江城さんの渡米を承認、フィルトムン校長に連絡、五力年の契約で宇江城さんが空手の代表選手として送り込まれることになった。宇江城さんは那覇市役所車庫管理所に勤めていた真面目な職人で、長嶺道場創立以来十一年間、空手修行専心、けいこ熱心で一日も休むことなく道場仲間からは「古のムシ」と呼ばれているほどだった。「空手はあまりでまかせん」といふ人から、顔を合わせるはず宇江城さんは道場を訪れる米兵を指導している間、いざいざ空手の指導をするだけの時をさそった。宇江城さんは米国の空手の訓練が行われるのは初めてで、空手には奥深い技が押しつけられていたが、長嶺道場の「空手道」の指導が、リカに空手の指導で、いざいざか米国の本場の空手を指導する機会をつくりたいと願っていた。たまたま、われわれの代表の選抜がなされた。その選抜は、宇江城さんではない。先組が残してくれた空手財を守り、これを育てて、海外に本として海外にも指導する

ことは教養深いことだ。そう言う意味で宇江城さんのアメリカでの活躍には大きな責任期待がかかっている」と宇江城さんの肩をたたいて激励していた。

米国で唯一の空手学校といわれるレイントン市の贈迎館・空手学校には、いま千八百人の生徒がい

て、本場原真のチームをみせているという。フィルトムン校長は五力年契約という規模の契約を結び、米国の若い人たちに空手道の精神をたけいけいひのたを習気込んでいるという。宇江城さんは単身出発したが、彼の弟子さんには、いま千八百人の生徒がい

Photo Caption: This is Ueshiro Sensei boarding the airplane.

This is a reproduction of a newspaper article from Okinawa, Japan, 1962.