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AN INTERVIEW WITH A LEGEND: THE WORLD RENOWNED KANAZAWA HIROKAZU

Perhaps the most interviewed martial artist of today, when it was arranged for me to speak with Kanazawa Hirokazu (known in the Shotokan circles as "Kancho") about his life experiences and Karate-Do, I did what every editor in his right mind would do - go out and test drive a Hummer!

Frankly speaking, here is a man who is a living legend, who has been featured on too many magazine covers to count, who has instructed seminars in nearly one hundred countries, and who has dedicated his life to the teaching and training of the art. He has risen to the very top of the Shotokan ladder as they say, yet has managed to keep his view unobstructed when it comes to helping others who have the desire to learn from him.

Although I have trained with Kancho several times, this was my first opportunity to spend an evening with his undivided attention. We started with his earlier years growing up in Omoto, Japan, the land where he was given life, and a few experiences during his enrollment at Takushoku University. He spoke of his home town with obvious affection, and I refer our readers to Kancho's life story, Karate - My Life (c2003) for a wonderful description of how he paints the landscape and the happy memories of his childhood. (I especially enjoy the games he and his friends would play on their walk to school - where every day was filled with discovery.)

I learned so much from Kancho as he shared openly about his love for nature and his great appreciation for the simple pleasures of life, commenting that we must be careful to respect the wonders of the universe, for there are consequences to those who take them for granted. I paused to reflect on some of my own travels overseas and began shaking my head in agreement. He hit it right on the mark, I thought to myself.

Kancho is an avid star gazer and has been interested in astronomy for some time. We took a break and stepped onto the balcony to observe the summer sky. He was quick to identify several of the constellations, and commented at how bright and clear it was this time of year. As we were looking toward Cassiopeia, the queen, a shooting star etched its way across the darkness and disappeared from view. "Oh! A good omen," he remarked. He could hardly contain his excitement. Again I marveled at how such a great man can display joy and wonderment at this simple heavenly phenomenon.

As we continued our conversation we spoke of Master Gichin Funakoshi and his influence during the time before karate became popular. Kancho acknowledges Funakoshi in so many ways and credits him as the driving force that spread the art (Karate) across the region and eventually to other countries. It was Master Funakoshi's determination to



Kancho behind the wheel of his dream vehicle.

promote the Shotokan system that makes Karate what it is today. I began to think how demanding a task this must have been - introducing something unusual to people from all walks of life and then convincing them of the spiritual and self-defense value. It is an accomplishment of such magnitude that leaves me feeling humbled.

During Kancho's enrollment at Takushoku University, there were monthly training sessions involving the other universities in the region (six schools altogether). Kancho was designated as Master Funakoshi's personal escort, picking him up by taxi and transporting him to and from the event. He describes Master Funakoshi as a true gentleman, good-natured, generous, and patient. "There was hardly a time when his face wasn't smiling," Kancho recalls. With such a cheerful disposition, it's no surprise that Funakoshi's character was able to win over the hearts of many people of important status who could advance Karate.



Kanazawa Hirokazu
A Living Legend

CONTINUED . . AN INTERVIEW WITH A LEGEND: THE WORLD RENOWNED KANAZAWA HIROKAZU

He then went on to tell me about one particular class session while training in kata Kanku-Dai. Kancho copied Funakoshi's every move the way he was doing it. Funakoshi said to him, "Kanazawa-san, spread your legs out further and drop your hips down." He did as he was told but thought to himself, "I was doing it exactly as sensei was." Then he got him again: "Kanazawa-san, you're still young. Young people should do young people's training and not copy old men."

Kancho was so serious about training that even after a full day of classes and workouts he would make his way to the dojo at midnight after all his classmates were asleep and practice in total darkness. He used this time to go over kihon and kata movements slowly, polishing each technique until it was perfect. When I asked him why he was so persistent in his training he answered, "Techniques are an expression of your mind. Your practice must be with true intentions and a proper mind in order for you to do them correctly."

We talked some more about the benefits of training and some tips he might be willing to share. This is what he had to say: "The warm-up should not be rushed; it is a time to prepare the body - and the mind - for what is to come. We often get anxious about starting the class and just go through the motions. Stretching is very important. You must learn to use *hara* breathing when you stretch for maximum results. If your mind wanders and you don't concentrate on the *hara*, it will take a long time before you make any progress. At the same time, you must know your limits and try not to do the impossible. Forging your body to perfection doesn't happen overnight. It takes years. In fact, it is an endless process. We should be constantly training our minds to think about Karate everyday. In all that you do and see, try to incorporate these experiences into your daily Karate training."

To give our readers an idea of Kancho's dedication to the pursuit of excellence,

here is an example of how he cares for his body: "As soon as I wake up I begin by meditating to settle my mind for the day. I do breathing training and focus mentally on my different body parts like my heart, lungs, and stomach. This is all before I even get out of bed. I also concentrate on movements with different muscle groups, contracting and stretching them so that it stimulates the base of the spine. All this takes about an hour for me to complete. Then I get up and prepare for the day."

I was hoping for a demonstration of some of his stretching and breathing secrets but due to time constraints, I was asked to be patient until our next visit. As Kancho is always so generous with his time and his knowledge, I agreed whole-heartedly without hesitation.

Since Kancho has been known to demonstrate amazing feats using his *ki* (internal energy), I asked if he would clarify the different types of

ki which manifest in the *tanden* (lower abdomen). He mentioned three types: "Tai-ki is the energy drawn from the atmosphere, chi-ki from the soil, and nai-ki lives inside the body. *Ki* flows throughout our spine and explodes out our fists. This one instant in time is called *kime* (focus) and is the essence of our training."

Kancho's examples of *ki* training are too numerous to mention, so I would like to refer our readers to [Karate-My Life](#) for a lot of interesting reading on this subject.

Of all the Masters I have met during my quest to understand the true Karate-do, I can say in earnest that Kancho is a fine example of the Karate spirit and an extraordinary teacher. His wisdom extends far beyond what any books can describe. It is no wonder that he has been so valuable to so many budo-ka and is known as "the authority" when it comes to technical ability. He is to be honored not only in the way he approaches karate, but in the way he approaches life.



PRACTICAL KARATE 2: DEFENSE AGAINST AN UNARMED ASSAILANT



Do you recognize the man on the right?

Situation:

An assailant has grasped your right sleeve or wrist with his left hand from the front and is threatening to use force against you. You have plenty of room to move about.

What would you do? Find out in the next issue.



Withrow Sensei takes a few moments with Kancho.



Kancho demonstrates proper breathing at a Dan seminar in Dublin, California, USA.

MASTERING KARATE: A LIFE'S WORK

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Kanazawa Hirokazu is considered to be the most technically gifted marital artist of all time. His technical excellence is only superseded by his personality. He is one of the very few Japanese Masters who has been able to bridge the gap between Western mind and the Japanese mind. He has now created a nine (9) volume set for all to learn from. The titles include:

TE WAZA—Hand techniques including strikes, blocks, and much more.

ASHI WAZA— Foot techniques including kicks, stances, hips and shifting.

KIHON IDO—Combinations of hands and feet together plush shifting and much more.

KYU KATA—Below Black Belt kata including the Heians, Tekkis plus others.

DAN KATA— Black Belt kata. Each kata including the form demonstrated at a slow speed and then at a normal tempo along with an explanation of bunkai (applications) of each move.

NI JU HACHI HO— White Crane form

performed in slow speed and then normal speed by Kanazawa Kancho including many explanation of movements.

KUMITE— In this DVD you will see why many consider the Shotokan practioners to be the best fighters in traditional Japanese karate as two SKIF champions to full out demonstrating ippon kumite, sanbon kumite, gohon kumite and jiju kumite. Mananbu Murakami and Nobuaki Kanazawa will show you what their teacher taught them.

INTERVIEW WITH KANCHO— This is a “tell all” interview that we have all been waiting for. Have you ever wondered how and why the JKA did what they did? Ever wonder why Kanazawa Kancho left the JKA or England? He also talks in depth about what he learned from Funakoshi, Nakayama, Okazaki, Nishiyama and the rest. Plus just so much more its amazing.



NIJU KUN

- *It will take your entire life to learn Karate; There is no limit.*
- *Do not think that you have to win, think rather that you do not have to lose.*
- *Karate is like boiling water. If you do not heat it constantly, it will cool.*
- *There is no first attack in Karate.*

Gichin Funakoshi

Founder of Shotokan Karate



KARATE GOES BEYOND THE DOJO¹

道場のみの空手と思ふな

The objective of Karate-do is to polish and nurture both the mind and body. The cultivation of one's spirit and mental attitude begun during practice in the dojo should not cease after the physical and mental exertions end for the day. Rather, this should continue outside the dojo, in our daily routine.

Conversely, the efforts of immoderate eating and drinking and other habits detrimental to one's health outside the dojo will soon carry over to practice in the dojo. They will lead to fatigue of both mind and body, making it impossible to ever realize the goal of one's training. Whether inside or outside the dojo, karate practitioners must always aim to develop and train both their minds and their bodies.

¹ Adapted from the book “The Twenty Guiding Principles of KARATE, The Spiritual Legacy of the Master Gichin Funakoshi,” translated for the first time in English by John Teramoto.



Kancho loves to teach children. He says, “They are the future”.

“SUPERSIZE ME”: HOW THE BLOOD TYPE DIET CAN ENHANCE YOUR TRAINING



EDITOR'S COLUMN

We all talk about health and understand it's importance. Health affects each one of us – every day, every way. It seems we can't turn on the television or open a magazine without seeing an ad for the latest weight-loss product or exercise plan. If you're like most people, you have even tried a few of these diets or products and didn't find real or lasting results.

Most of us know to be skeptical when we hear of a health program that promotes a “one size fits all” approach. With such a generalized view of health, these programs lose sight of the individual – **you!** It's no wonder so many diets don't seem to work. That's because they promise success by looking at only one factor, like reducing calories or counting carbohydrates. Following the narrow guidelines of these programs shifts our focus from what really matters – your overall wellness.

Have you ever wondered why the same diet and exercise plan that helps one person doesn't have the same effect for someone else? The answer is that different **blood types** respond to foods and exercise in different ways. Knowing your blood type is the key to health and wellness. The “blood type diet” was not designed for weight loss, it was designed for *optimum performance*. Losing weight is just one of the natural benefits of eating foods that are right for your blood type.

Can you name the four blood types? If you answered A, B, AB, and O you are correct. But most people don't have a clue what their individual blood type is. Do you?

Throughout a century of research, scientists have explored the blood cell and how it reacts to food particles. They discovered that the absorption of foods and nutrients can greatly impact your health. For example, if you are blood type A and you eat tomatoes (a food which is not good for this particular blood), your body suffers because the tomato cannot be properly digested and has an adverse reaction to the lining of the stomach. A regular diet of the wrong foods (those that are incompatible with the blood) will eventually lead to prolonged illnesses and even cancer. The hard truth is: making a lifestyle change like this isn't easy. It takes discipline and willpower. Can you commit to this type of health change?

When I began to incorporate the “blood type diet” into my health and wellness regimen, I noticed in about two weeks a marked improvement in my sleep, my digestion, and my elimination. My body is functioning the way it was made to function because I am eating the right foods and exercising the right way.

The “blood type diet” is organized into 14 food groups:

- Meats and Poultry
- Seafood
- Fruits
- Juices and Fluids
- Eggs and Dairy
- Spices
- Oils and Fats
- Condiments

- Nuts and Seeds
- Beans and Legumes
- Herbs and Herbal Tea
- Misc. Beverages
- Grains, Breads and Pasta
- Vegetables

Within each group, food is divided into three (3) categories: Highly Beneficial, Neutral and Avoid. Think of the categories this way:

“Highly Beneficial” is a food that acts like *medicine*

“Avoid” is a food that acts like *poison*

“Neutral” is a food that acts like *food*

The list of foods for all four blood types is extensive and beyond the scope of this newsletter. My role as the messenger is to get you excited about wanting to change for the better. If I have accomplished that much, please let me hear from you. Books about the “blood type diet” are available at your local library or any retail book store. I would be happy to introduce these to you.

Until next time, stay healthy and strive for perfection!

The editor makes no claim or attempt to render professional advice or services to the reader. The ideas, suggestions, and products mentioned in this article are not intended as a substitute from consulting with your personal physician. All matters regarding your health require medical supervision. The editor shall not be liable or responsible for any loss, injury, or damage allegedly arising from any information or suggestion in this article.

¹Eat Right 4 Your Type. Dr. Peter D'Adamo



Kancho performs kata Bassai-Dai to children at Summer Camp 2005.

“Harmony has a very wide meaning. In my opinion, karate-do is harmony. First I am training for harmony with myself. By myself. Yesterday I spoke about technique harmony, movement/breathing harmony, hara and technique harmony. They at last all come together at the same time. This is harmony.” (Interview with Kancho 6-21-03 by Sensei James Milton)



Kancho demonstrates a go-no-sen application with Kwok Hanshi.

THE SHOTOKAN TIGER



When Master Gichin Funakoshi created our system of martial arts, he chose the tiger as the animal symbol to represent Shotokan. He chose it because it signified strength, power, and tenacity.

In those days Japan was full of artisans and craftsmen. He could very easily have the tiger drawn to show it as a fierce, entire animal. However, he had it drawn with a series of lines, reminiscent of the tiger's stripes, with no body outline.

If these lines were to be stretched out, they would hardly be recognized as representing an animal, but by compressing these lines, we see the outline of the tiger. He did it this way to show that our system is comprised of many parts and that all these parts must come together to complete the entire system. These parts are comprised of stances, strikes, thrusts, kicks, joint locks, pressure points, blocks, and throwing and controlling techniques. By combining parts of all these techniques, we have the four main components of Shotokan: *Kihon* (basics), *Kata* (forms), *Bunkai* (self-defense), and *Kumite* (Sparring).

But Gichin Funakoshi didn't stop there. He had the tiger symbol drawn within a circle in order to show that the power of the tiger, much like the power of Shotokan, is contained. It indicates that we should never use this power on a whim. The power is only unleashed, or broken from the circle, in order to defend ourselves or others who can't defend themselves from a violent attack.

When the average person thinks of the word "tiger", a variety of images come to mind. When the student of karate hears the term "Shotokan tiger", only one image comes to mind: the image formulated by Master Gichin Funakoshi.

Master Funakoshi was a scholar and writer and he wrote under the pen name "Shoto" which literally means "Pine Waves". Today, Gichin Funakoshi is synonymous with the tiger symbol and Shotokan Karate-do. Few people, however, understand the relationship of "Shoto" to what is commonly known as the Shotokan tiger.

When Gichin Funakoshi was a young man, he enjoyed walking in solitude among the pine trees which surrounded his home town of Shuri. After a hard day of

teaching in the local school and several more hours of strenuous karate practice, he would often walk up Mt. Torao and meditate among the pine trees, under the stars and bright moon. Mt. Torao is a very narrow, heavily wooded mountain which, when viewed from a distance, the road going up the mountain resembles a tiger's tail. In fact, the name "Torao" means "Tiger's tail."

In later life, Funakoshi explained that the cool breeze which blew among the pines on Mt. Torao made the trees whisper like waves breaking on the shore. Because he gained his greatest poetic inspirations while walking among the gently blowing pines trees, he chose the pen name of Shoto or "Pine Waves".

The tiger outlines, used to represent Shotokan karate is a traditional Chinese design that implies "the tiger never sleeps." It symbolizes, therefore, the keen alertness of the wakeful tiger and serenity of the peaceful mind that Gichin Funakoshi experienced while listening to the pines waves on "Tiger's Tail Mountain."



The symbol for Shotokan Karate is a traditional Chinese design which implies that "the tiger never sleeps".

DOJO KUN

(Japanese Version)

Hitotsu. Jinkaku kansei ni
tsutomuru koto

Hitotsu. Makoto no michi wo
mamoru koto

Hitotsu. Doryoku no Seishin wo
yashinai koto

Hitotsu. Reigi wo omonzuru koto
Hitotsu. Kekki no yu wo

imashimuru koto

Translation

First. Seek perfection of character

First. Protect the way of the truth

First. Foster the spirit of effort

First. Respect the principles of
etiquette and respect others

First. Guard against impetuous
courage and refrain from violent
behavior

ESSENTIALS IN ETIQUETTE



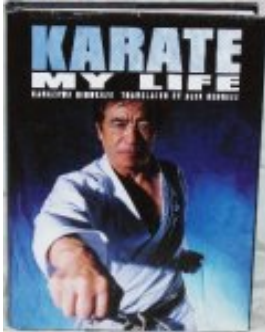
Promptness (arriving at the dojo early) is a courtesy every sensei appreciates. If, on occasion, you do arrive late,

mokusō off the training floor and wait to be acknowledged before joining the class.



Kancho enjoys a toast from Withrow Sensei after a hard day of training during a recent Master Seminar.

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DOJO KUN



SKIF DOJO KUN

- STRIVE FOR PERFECTION OF CHARACTER
- DEFEND THE PATHS OF TRUTH

- FOSTER THE SPIRIT OF EFFORT
- GUARD AGAINST IMPETUOUS COURAGE
- HONOR THE PRINCIPLES OF ETIQUETTE

The Dojo Kun is a verbal affirmation that is recited by all students at the end of each training session. The purpose of the Dojo Kun is to remind all students in the dojo, regardless of rank, that the

physical, mental and spiritual growth that they enjoy as a by-product of their karate training must extend beyond the dojo walls. By this is meant, in order to derive the true benefits of Shotokan Karate-Do, each student must take the underlying principles of this art form and make them a part of their daily life.



TRAINING TIP

Remember to focus your eyes and arm vector on a spot at infinity whenever you punch. Continue trying to reach a spot at infinity with your hands and never feel that you stop. This feeling is known as "extending ki." Look beyond your target (thinking that you already touched there) and notice how much stronger your technique becomes. By this you will understand the power generated by the will (spirit) and eye concentration (mesen).

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- Suzuki Sensei visits Northern California, USA October 27,28, 29, 2005
- February-2006 Murakami Sensei visits Northern California, USA.
- National Championships – Dates TBA
- Selection of members for the 2006 World Championships
- 9th SKIF World Championship - Tokyo, Japan. Week of October 30, 2006

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