

Be Your Best

Newsletter of the Excellence Karate Academy 2012 – Dec Tribute Supplement

Passing of a great Master



I would like to post my heartfelt tribute to the late Ohtsuka Tadahiko Hanshi, founder of the Gojukensha and my most special teacher.

Whilst I still have a number of great teachers none can ever replace him.

Ohtsuka Hanshi passed away on Tuesday, 27 November at the far too young age of 72.

A lawyer by education, Ohtsuka sensei was probably the first of the modern Japanese instructors to look outside the box in order to better understand and improve what he was teaching.

He investigated and trained in a number of other Chinese and Japanese martial arts including the legendary internal martial arts of Wang Shu Chin in Taiwan. He also had a lifetime of interest in Tai Chi fired up by the wonderful Yang Ming Shi, affectionately known as Yo Meiji. He also studied Chinese white crane martial arts intensively as these were a major forerunner of Goju Ryu karate tradition.

He published numerous books to document his research and knowledge including his seminal book on Goju Ryu karate from his perspective. This book had been out of print for many years. Fortunately not long before his passing he updated it for republishing and it is now available online.

For most of his adult martial arts life he had been a devoted disciple of the late master Higa Yuchoku who himself had been taught by 4 of the great original masters. As part of his effort to keep Higa sensei's teaching alive he released a DVD of Higa sensei's kata and drills as part of that rerelease.

Of course he also published the Bubishi ('bible' of karate) in modern Japanese in a number of editions. At one stage in his effort to interpret the very old Chinese dialect the original Bubishi was written in he recounted how he had 4 interpreters from very different but complimentary backgrounds working together to try and make best sense of the old Chinese characters.



Personally his teaching and inspiration both as a teacher and human being kept me fired up for 40 years years. His dynamism, fairness, open-mindedness and desire to find humour wherever he could will stay with and inspire me forever.

His legacy lives on in many ways including in our group where so much of what we learn and practice can be attributed directly to him.

His funeral was held at the Kyobashi kaikan just around the corner from where he lived and taught all his life and where he conducted numerous events including hosting groups of visiting Gaijin (foreign students) whom he always accommodated in the most thoughtful manner.

Vale Ohtsuka Sensei. So many of us are so sad and will always miss you.

George Ciechanowicz