



# Wado International Karate-Do Federation

## DOJO CONNECTION

December 2005

### Suzuki Sensei

Most of you are probably aware of the problems Sensei ran into following his bypass surgery last month. For awhile it was touch and go but he seems to now be out of danger and on the road to recovery. Probably most people his age would not have survived.

I am a firm believer that his physical condition prior to the surgery and his strong spirit made the difference. I understand that his first words were, "I love all of my students." I think I can safely say that his students love him as well.

"People and their managers are working so hard to be sure things are done right, that they hardly have time to decide if they are doing the right things." (Stephen Covey)

Doing things right and doing the right things is a balancing act. Half the solution is to determine what the right things are. Sensei has shown us what the right things are through the curriculum he has given us. He has shown us how to do the right things right through his direct instruction and his videos. Every senior member of WIKF USA has been personally graded by Sensei. Because of the way Sensei has taught us we are different from other Wado groups. We teach Wado exactly the way Sensei taught us. We value quality over quantity. Arturo Girona, 6<sup>th</sup> Dan from Miami, said it this way, "I'll tell you what makes us different. His teachings live in all of us his students. We as a group not only practice better Wado than anyone else but the group as a whole is impressive in terms of technical skills and knowledge."

While it will probably be some time before we can receive instruction from Sensei again we can look forward to that day with a renewed sense of thanks for what he has already taught us.

### CHI: A New Area in Acrobatics

I went to see a Chinese acrobat company perform a breathtaking fusion of acrobatics and martial arts entitled Chi: A New Area in Acrobatics. I have never before seen such an awesome display of flexibility, balance, strength, and focus at the same time. The astounding acrobatic feats I saw are derived from the acts of labor, craftsmanship and religious ceremonies of the past. Many years of training allow these acrobats to hone their skills and achieve the excellence demanded by this ancient art form. It was almost impossible to believe that they could actually do some of the things they did.

Chi draws its name from the principles of Taoist philosophy. Literally translated, "chi" means "energy" or "breath," but the true meaning of the word is much more profound. A pillar of Taoist philosophy is the careful interplay between yin and yang. Yin and yang can be described as two poles of existence that are opposite but complementary, poles present in everything. In this acrobatic presentation there was a peaceful and poised act coupled with a powerful and unrestrained performance. If the Chinese martial artists that Sensei saw on his trip to China were anything like these performers in terms of balance, power, flexibility and focus it is easy to understand why Sensei was so impressed. It made me feel that I need to work harder to improve myself.

### DOJO NEWS

**Mike Bevins** has opened a WIKF USA karate dojo in Greeley, Colorado. He has officially named it, "**Ichiban Karate Club.**" Mike has also started a web page that is still under construction but that can be found at [www.ichibankarateclub.com](http://www.ichibankarateclub.com)

**Andrea Knoll** from the **Newnan Karate Center** in Newnan Georgia won the silver medal in the women brown belt division at the recent Georgia Karate League Bushido Invitational Tournament. Andrea is a blue belt who has consistently fought up in division and continues to do well.

## The Suzuki I Knew When I Was Young

Doug Jepperson

I know everyone today looks up to Suzuki Sensei but I want you to know that twenty-five years ago we considered him a “karate god” of sorts. The first time I saw him was in Japan, and we didn’t think we could even approach him. He seemed huge, larger than life. Every where he walked, heads turned. He seemed so intimidating and powerful. Not one of us dared to speak to him, and I think most of the Japanese were the same. We were attending a tournament at the time and watched as Sensei cut a swath through the top karate people in the world. He would go off in a corner and practice with some young stud, and we all stopped watching the tournament and started watching him. Once I almost missed my own fight because I was watching him slap around some young Japanese college boy who was very good in his own right when he wasn’t in front of Sensei.

In 1980, my teacher Toshio Osaka, had been teaching in Salt Lake City for ten years and we wanted to make a big celebration for our tenth anniversary. So Osaka Sensei invited Suzuki Sensei, “the best man in Wado.” We also sponsored a tournament but we were more excited to see Suzuki Sensei than we were to compete in the tournament. I remember clearly each day he was here. The first day there was a television camera and an interview with Sensei. Suzuki Sensei then did a demonstration in which he defended himself from an attacker with a sword. Toshio Takahashi, one of Sensei Osakas assistants, was the poor fellow with the sword, and the unarmed man, Suzuki Sensei, almost killed him. He also did his kata in traditional hakama. Then he did what some of you have only heard stories about. He had us light candles and he went around punching at the flame with such speed that the vacuum in the air behind the punch sucked out the flame.

The next day we had training at the University of Utah. After we bowed in Sensei took us outside and said, “Ok, now we jog.” This was an amazing understatement for what we did. Sensei began running at a pace that we thought was sprinting. After one mile many students began dropping out. After two miles Sensei finally stopped and said, “Ok, calisthenics.” He found a hill so we could place ourselves facing down hill to do push ups. After about one gazillion pushups he started doing one arm push ups. We were in our early twenties and Sensei was fifty-two and we couldn’t keep up with him. I think I was personally able to do three before I had to

stop and just watch him. After what seemed like two years he finally started training as he ran us through basics, kata, and free sparring with each other and with him. It was amazing that he was as old as our fathers and still kicked all our butts.

The next year Sensei came back and conducted our first Dan Grading. Sensei Osaka had black belt students who had not been graded for nearly ten years because he was waiting for Suzuki Sensei to do it with him.

### More (Tom Kosslow)

I can attest to this same type of training that Doug speaks of at the hands of Suzuki Sensei. I first saw him in Nashville and I have never been so sore in my life after the training which lasted four nights. I think Doug under estimates the number of sit ups and push ups not to mention kicks and punches when he says a gazillion. I dropped my car keys after the last night and could not even bend down to pick them up. I just stared at them until someone else was kind enough to pick them up for me. In private training with him he just laughed at me. There was no way I could keep up with him punching or kicking and he was twenty years older than me and I was in good shape at the time. I cannot even begin to recount the number of times I have been bounced off of the walls or floor. I actually blocked one of his kicks in kumite and had a black and blue arm from my elbow to my wrist for a week.

Arturo Girona reports that in private training with Sensei he made him run Chinto for three hours. He figured after three hours he either got it right or Sensei just gave up. He still doesn’t know which it was. He made me run Ku Shan Kyu the same way. In my case I know he just gave up.

Maybe some of you who haven’t had the opportunity to train with Sensei when he was younger will get the point.

### Metacognition in Training

Metacognition is the conscious monitoring of how and why you are doing something., and regulating or choosing to do something or deciding to make changes of your thought processes. Good students monitor their thinking about training regularly and automatically. They recognize when they are stuck or when they do not fully understand something. Students who learn to monitor and regulate their own training show improvement. A simple formula that can help you learn metacognitive habits with your training consists of three questions: What are you doing? Why are you doing it? How does it help you?

