

## IN MEMORY OF A GRAND MASTER: TAIJI KASE (1929-2004)

This past 24th of November, 2004, the Grand Master of Karate-Do Taiji Kase, passed away at 75 years of age. All of us were aware of the health problems that plagued the Sensei. It all began when in May of 1999 he suffered a heart-attack and, after some months of recovery, took up his activities again. Later, in mid-September of 2003, he had a serious infectious problem with complications that affected the spinal medulla, his capacity to move, and, once again, his heart. However, he was improving and found himself stable; in fact, a little before his death he was working on a project with senior members of his organization, the "Shotokan Ryu Kase Ha Instructor Academy". But, his karma was different. On November 19, 2004, the Sensei had a cerebral accident. He was transported to the hospital in a coma and admitted to the ICU (Intensive Care Unit). He never recovered from the coma and his situation worsened by his suffering cardiac complications. Five days later, on November 24th, Sensei Kase left on his final journey; it was 5:25 PM.

On Sunday the 28th, and Monday the 29th, his friends and students paid a final visit to the Sensei in his home in Paris.

His burial and cremation took place on November 30th in the Parisian cemetery of Pere Lachaise. Three-hundred and fifty people among family, students and friends, meditated, prayed and said good-bye to a great man.

This past December 5th, the family of the Sensei organized a lunch in his memory in Paris, to which 100 people attended among family, friends, and his closest students, from the oldest to the youngest.

Lamentably, the Sensei has left us physically, although, spiritually he will always be with us, encouraging us to give a little more than what we believe we are able to. His work and mark will endure in those who have followed him with sincerity and they will speak about him with the same passion that he did about his Masters and of all those who impressed him throughout his life.

Good-bye Master! You have shown us the correct path that we must take. When we have doubts or fall discouraged, we only have to remember your example to keep going forward.

His students, friends, and the management of the magazine pay their sincerest condolences to the family of the Master. Rest in Peace.

## BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF TAIJI KASE

Taiji Kase was born in Chiba, Japan on February 9, 1929 and died in Paris on November 24, 2004 at 75. At only six, he was already practicing Judo, obtaining 2nd degree black belt in 1944. That same year, he began to practice Karate-Do in the Shotokan-Dojo with Sensei Ginchin Funakoshi. But, apart from that, he attended Karate classes at the University of Senshu under the guidance of instructors like: Yoshitaka, Hironish, Kamata, Okuyama, Hayashi, Uemura, Kubota, among others. At the end of March in 1945, at only sixteen, he enlisted in the Navy, specifically in the Special Corps of Kamikazes. However, the war ended in August of that same year, before his turn arrived.

At the end of the war, the Shotokan-Dojo was in ruins, for which he resumed his practice of Judo, until Gichin Funakoshi reunited the Shotokan group again. In 1946 he obtained the Shodan of Karate-Do and in 1949 the Sandan, becoming the captain of his university, Senshu, where he also graduated with a degree in economics in 1951. He joined the JKA (Japan Karate Association) in order to become professional, though he

also kept his ties with the NKS (Nihon Karate-Do Shotokai). Due to his technical skills and combative spirit, he became the Kumite instructor of the instructors of the JKA, among whom were found Enoeda, Ochi, and Shirai. In 1964 he left Japan as a Karate ambassador of the JKA to give classes in a multitude of countries, until in 1967 he arrived in France and settled definitively in Paris, becoming the Chief Instructor of the JKA in Europe.

The karatekas of the time were fascinated by his Ushiro Geri and Kaiten Geri, his open hand techniques, his rapid and precise movements, his Kamaes, and the oyo-bunkai, another one of his specialties. But, in the global sense, what most impressed us was his naturalness, his efficiency and the way he knew how to transmit the most subtle aspects of Budo.

In 2001, he founded the “Shotokan Ruy Kase Ha Instructor Academy” with the objective of training his students and followers from all over the world and consolidating his legacy for posterity.

He always spoke to us about three stages in the evolution of Karate: that of Okinawa, the Japanese, and the stage of Yoshitaka. And though he never would have said it (out of modesty), his students and anyone that has known his Karate would add one more stage, that of Sensei Kase (Kase Ha). But, before all else, Sensei Kase was a simple, pleasant person who radiated human warmth and unfathomable knowledge of Budo that very few ever come to reach.