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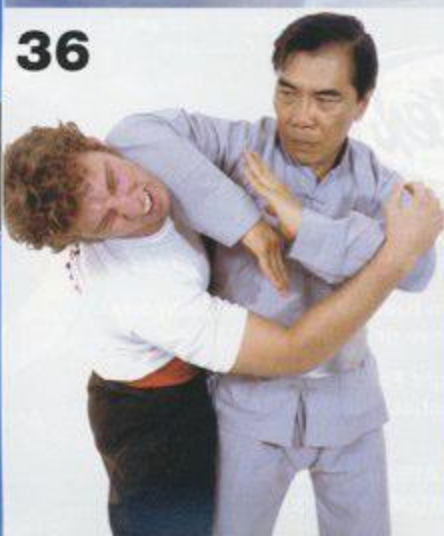
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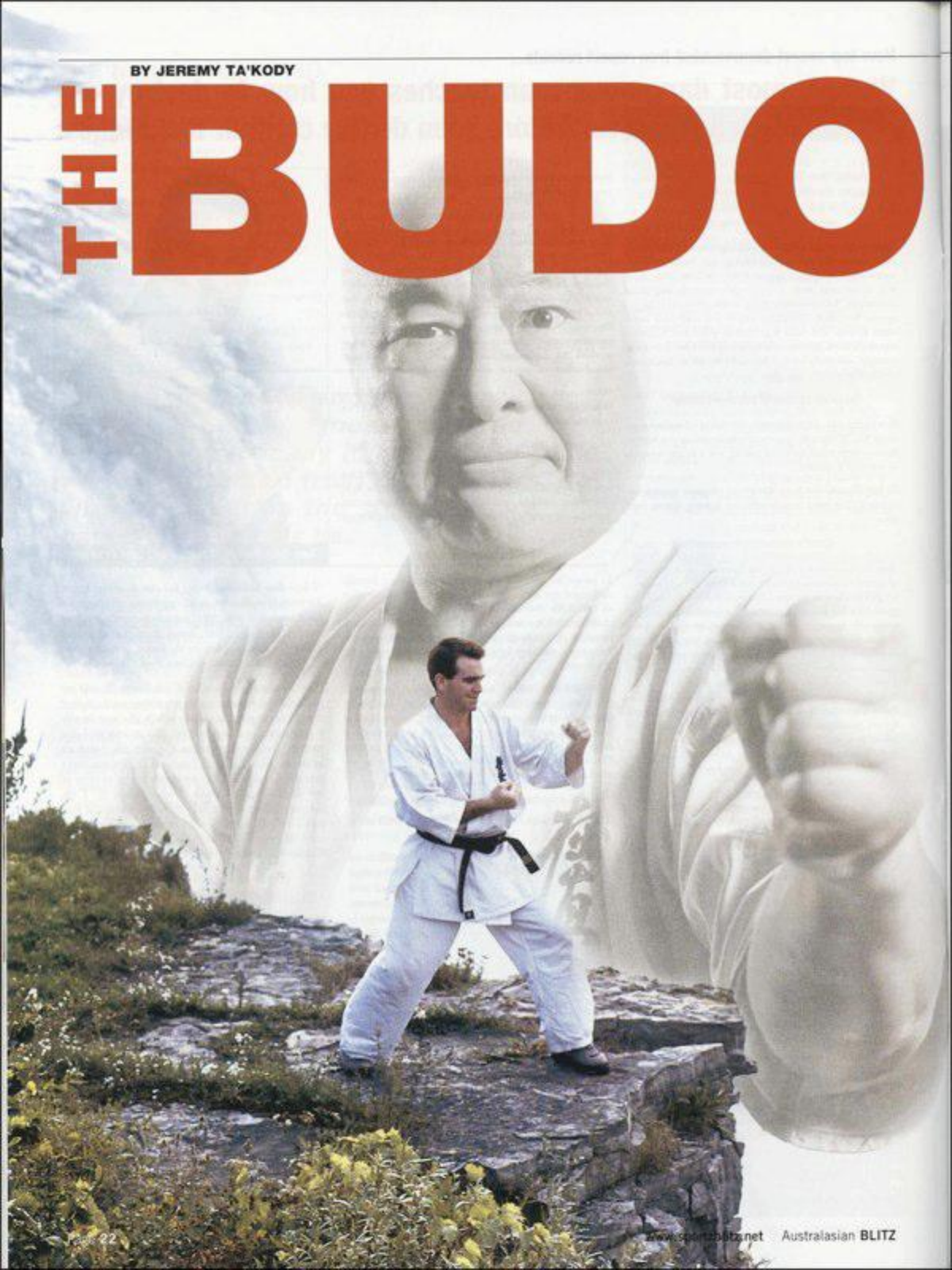
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BY JEREMY TA'KODY

THE BUDO



BY JEREMY TA'KODY

THE BUDO



KARATE

O F C A M E R O N Q U I N N

P A R T 1

Able to travel the world on a regular basis, Cameron Quinn has spent the good part of a lifetime dedicated to the rigours of martial arts. As Jeremy Ta'kody discovers, Cameron has mixed blood sweat and tears with some of the world's most talented martial artists.

Blitz: First of all Cameron, Thanks for taking the time to talk to us. To begin with, you are one of the few people fortunate enough to have trained with the legendary founder of Kyokushin Karate, Masutatsu Oyama. Can you describe your thoughts on this great master and explain the circumstances which led to you living and training in Japan?

CQ: Actually, plenty of Aussies over the years had the opportunity to train with Mas Oyama, some a lot longer than I. Maybe I'm just a little higher profile because of the book and the interpreting I did for him and so on.

My own reasons for going there to train were fairly simple; I had read about Mas Oyama and had all his books, so I wanted to meet him, as well as go and train at the source of my own Kyokushin Karate.

When I think about it, there are a couple of things I recall about the initial visit. Firstly, at that time, 1976, Kyokushin training in Australia was not very sophisticated. Maybe half a dozen people had been to Japan to train. Very few people in Australia had really seen a thick kick. Muay Thai was years away; kickboxing was without leg kicks if it existed at all. So the training at the Tokyo Honbu back then was quite an eye opener compared to training at home.

Secondly, I was 17, not especially strong, and quite young and inexperienced in every respect of the word. So training was a bit of a shock to the system mentally and physically. It was, however, proof of the adage that you don't really need to understand what is going on, just as long as you do the training. Because it made a huge difference to me: my attitude towards training, my skills, strength and so on.

I developed a wonderful relationship with Mas Oyama very quickly, perhaps because of the naivety I brought with me. I trained hard enough for him to accept me. I bounced up every time I got whacked down, like the proverbial Daruma doll. And I made a huge effort to learn Japanese. When I first arrived I couldn't speak a word. I didn't speak to Sosai again for six months, by which time I was actually getting my tongue around it quite well. I think this might have

surprised and pleased him. I ended up doing my first interpreting for him at the 8th All-Japan Championships in October '76. That was where I first met Shihan Bobby Lowe, Jacques Sandulescu from New York, Sensei Hideyuki Ashihara who later started Ashihara Karate, the Oyama brothers from New York, Shihans Peter Chong, Look Hollander, Ivan Zavetchanos and many other leading names in the martial arts.

Blitz: What inspired you to begin training in Kyokushin? What are some of your most cherished memories of martial arts training?

CQ: I think I started because I was small and wanted to get stronger, nothing sophisticated. Mum took my sisters along for self defense and I was the only one who stayed. Back then, there were only two martial arts schools on the Gold Coast.

It was my good fortune that the school I walked into was one of the best Kyokushin dojos around. Frank Everett, my first instructor, was a well-known and very successful amateur boxer from his childhood. He trained in Goju under Tino Ceberano at the same time as Bob Jones, and then trained with Shigeo Kato, a famous Kyokushin instructor who came to Australia in about 1968. Kato was also Shokei Matsui's instructor. I believe Matsui to be one of the greatest martial arts technicians and tacticians of the modern era. Absolutely brilliant.

Anyway, Frank Everett had a wonderful way of inspiring people to train hard. Guys you thought didn't have what it took to last a week stayed for years. It was a real family atmosphere and the training was hard. When the Bruce Lee boom started in about 1972-73, numbers went through the roof and it was not unusual to have a hundred students on the floor at a time.

My cherished memories are the friendships I made. Guys I haven't seen for years are still good mates. The friendships cross all boundaries of art, style or affiliation. There is also the respect you feel between guys who have trained hard. You know they have trained hard because they have it in their eye; they have it in their sinews, in their carriage. And you can't pretend. So these days especially, with the arts all mixed and cross

training far more common than it used to be, you meet guys from every background and the only thing that counts is the willingness to train hard, to try something new, to be the student again. I've had world champion wrestlers come up with genuine humility and ask "How do you check a leg kick your way?" And I am quietly in awe of what they have achieved! And they are more than happy to show you what they are best at.

This humility among champions is one of the most refreshing aspects amongst real martial artists. Guys like Benny 'The Jet' Gene LeBell, 'Superfoot' Wallace, Rico Chiapparelli, Randy Couture and so many others: they have been there for years and done it all, but they are so humble. In fact I believe there is a very strong tie between humility and the martial artist. Without humility, you don't have the right to call yourself a martial artist. You might train, you might be tough, you might even be good. But without humility, you aren't a martial artist, you aren't a warrior.

This was one of Mas Oyama's greatest qualities. He was who he was, yet he was so humble, so friendly, so much like a loving father figure to his students. I remember when I was living in as an uchi-deshi at Honbu in 1984. Often, Sosai would call for me and ask me to just sit in his office. For hours. People would come and go for meetings and look at me questioningly and Sosai would just introduce me and tell me to just sit and listen because it will all be of value some day. I think this humility and familial sense of love is one of the main things missing in Kyokushin these days; hence the political turmoil it is now in. Everyone wants to be in charge.

But when you say cherished memories, it sounds so, well, past. Martial arts training is as important to me now as it ever was. I still continue to set goals and reach them and set more. So the memory banks are still being filled and I have no doubt the next ten years will bring many rewards and memories of their own.

Blitz: Besides Mas Oyama, who else has influenced you and how?

CQ: I took a great interest in Eastern cultures and religions from very early. My interests and reading led me to the yoga teachings of

anything done in university laboratories around the world.

Especially in India, these matters have been researched in detail way beyond anywhere else. They have made religion scientific by developing systems of spiritual pursuit such as yoga where research evidence shows that if you follow a prescribed path, a definite result follows. Meditate using a particular technique and you will get results. It's not hit and miss. It is science.

Some things just can't be captured in test tubes and brought to boil over a bunsen burner, but it doesn't make them less true. So in terms of being able to record the presence of the subtle spinal centres in a scientific experiment, then no, science probably has no proof.

But 500 years ago the best scientists around believed the earth was the centre of the universe. 150 years ago, the concept of the atom was all speculation and totally without empirical proof. It didn't matter; atoms were still there. If science can't yet record these things then it is because the instruments used are not yet sophisticated enough to do so.

Capture love in a test tube. Freeze hate. You can't, yet we have all felt love and hate and intuitively know they exist. The scientist may well try to describe love and hate as nothing more than hormones and chemicals in the brain, but we know there is more to it than that. As Shakespeare said, "There is more to this world Horatio, than is seen in your philosophy."

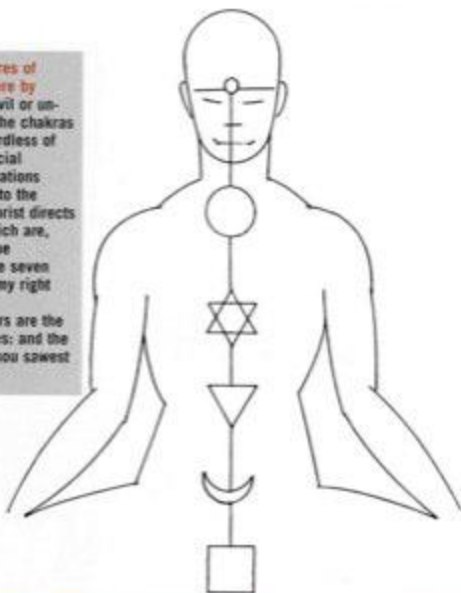
Blitz: What should a martial artist do when he faces the question of "Who Am I," and "Why am I here?"

CQ: I guess the martial artist should do what anyone should do: search for the answers. As they say in India: "The flower falls when the fruit appears." Keep the search going. Keep asking questions. Don't rest until you have the answers. And even then, keep asking, because you may get even deeper answers.

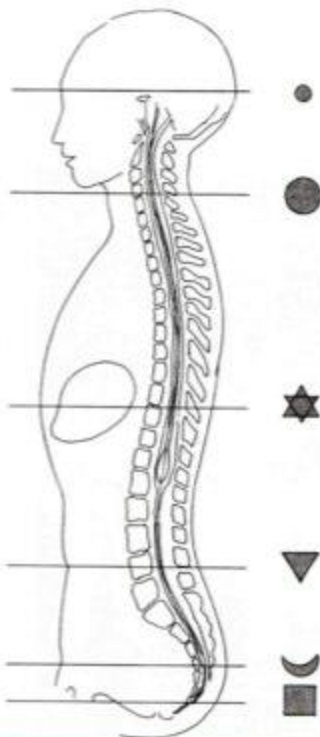
These are the questions that differentiate man from other species. Only we have the ability to ask these questions, so it stands to reason that we should be asking them. And when the flower falls, when the desire to know the answers is strong enough, the fruit of truth appears.

The most important thing is not to let it all get you down. Like the Bible says, "When you are making the effort, don't 'disfigure your face' like a hypocrite: don't make a big thing out of it, or a show of it. Smile, for crying out loud. This is, after all, why we are here, so we are all in the same boat. After all, if someone had all the answers, they wouldn't be here. **BLITZ**

The chakras, or spinal centres of intelligence, represented here by symbols. There is nothing evil or un-Christian in the science of the chakras - they are in everyone regardless of religious inclination and social standing. The book of Revelations makes numerous reference to the chakras. In Rev. 1:19-20, Christ directs John: Write these things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.



The spinal centres. Hindu scriptures describe the human body as being composed of two parts, the gross (material) and subtle (spiritual). The spinal centres are part of the subtle body and therefore cannot be seen with the physical eyes, but only when man dives deep into his spirit. The centres are within the shushumna nadi, the spinal energy meridian.



NB: Diagrams courtesy of The Budo Karate of Mas Oyama, by Cameron Quinn, Coconut Productions, 1987

KARATE

OF CAMERON QUINN

PART 2

Renowned author, father and dedicated Karateka, Cameron Quinn has crossed paths with many revered masters and journeyed to the four corners of the earth. In part two of this in depth interview, Jeremy Ta'kody discovers Cameron's never ending search of rare qualities found both without and within.

Blitz: Camerone, thanks for joining us again. Mas Oyama the Founder of Kyokushin was renowned for so many things. Having spent a significant amount of time with Oyama, what impressed you the most about this man?

CQ: The most impressive thing about Mas Oyama was his warmth, his humanity, his ability to make everyone from children to the elderly feel welcome and important. For me, the easiest way to describe Oyama was that he lived by the warrior principle of being demanding and hard on the self but gentle and kind to others. Sure, he had a barrow to push—he believed in the effectiveness of his art and knew it was a good thing, so he pushed it forever.

Blitz: Can he ever be replaced? Will there ever be anyone like him again?

CQ: Mas Oyama the individual had many wonderful qualities not often seen. That to me is a sign of greatness. Anyone can put up a public front, whether it is of strength or holiness or kindness. But it's what goes on privately that is the true indicator of greatness. There is an old poem:

*Fame cannot tempt the bard,
Who's famous with his God;
Nor laurel him reward
Who hath his Maker's nod*

Oyama was comfortable with himself and was genuine with others and this only became obvious in the quiet moments. I don't think he will ever be replaced; nor does he need to be. He came for a brief lifetime and influenced millions of people to make the effort to improve themselves. In that respect alone, I think he has done humanity a great service.

Basically, all of the full-contact karate

styles came from his students. The first kickboxers in the world were his students. The first to go to Thailand and fight and beat the Thais at their own game were his students. The first to actually look at the Thais from the outside and say "These guys really have something," and introduce their style of leg kicking and shin kicking outside

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of Thailand was Oyama. He was doing this in the '60s. All the Dutch kickboxers are strongly influenced by him because guys like Johann Voss of the Voss Gym and Tom Harrinck of Chakuriki Gym who coached them trained in Kyokushin and had strong ties with Kyokushin in their youth. I have even heard it said that the famous kickboxing coach Kenji 'Devil' Kurosaki coined the actual word kickboxing. Kurosaki is in all of Oyama's books and was a long-time student of Mas Oyama. He also lived and taught Kyokushin in Holland for a

couple of years in the sixties, hence the strong Dutch kickboxing presence.

The fact that Kyokushin today has really lost its way in many respects is an indication of how effective Mas Oyama was as a leader of men. He was an extremely important figure in the pantheon of martial arts masters. In Japan, his influence extended to people in every walk of life. There, he was referred to as the Musashi of the 20th Century. His influence went far beyond the borders of Kyokushin. I meet people all the time from countless styles and arts who tell me what a big influence Mas Oyama was in their lives. He was a true warrior in every sense of the word.

Blitz: What are some of your favourite quotes from Oyama's teachings?

CQ: Three quotes immediately come to mind:

1. "Your opponent isn't a god; if you are tired, so is he."

2. "The only secret is sweat." Sosai was being interviewed by Madison Square Gardens TV in New York in 1993 and I was interpreting. The interviewer asked him, "Are there any secrets in the martial arts?"

Oyama smiled and replied, "Yes."

The interviewer's eyes lit up. He had a scoop and was going to be the one to reveal it to the modern martial artists' world. "And what is it?"

Oyama leaned over the table as if he was about to let go with the secret of the century. Everyone else in the room listened intently.

You could hear a pin drop. Oyama smiled again and said simply, "Sweat."

It wasn't quite what the interviewer had expected, but it sunk in. Oyama went on. "The only secret is the sweat you put into hard training; the effort you make to improve every day. Train harder today than you did yesterday. Leave no stone unturned

Calcutta. I was doing kata in a park in Africa once and the security guards started mimicking the movements. Turns out they were all Kyokushin Karate students. The thing that stands out most is the brotherhood. The martial arts world is large but most people in it are good people: warm, friendly and welcoming. The ones that aren't you don't need.

The other thing I have found is that quality training is not dependant on a flashy dojo. The best training I have ever done has been in dingy little rented halls, tiny basements or muddy ovals.

— JT: And what about the Kyokushin situation? They have had some changes since Mas Oyama died.

CQ: Kyokushin today is going through difficult times. The students just train and many little groups are doing their own thing and they are happy. That's great. In Japan there are perhaps five main Kyokushin groups.

Recent events in Japan, however, are very significant. The government is in a position now to step in and stop groups such as the Matsui group and the Midori group from using the name Kyokushin and the trademarks and so on. They are not recognised by the government. They have no rights to the name, the kanku (logo) mark and so on.

The only organisation recognised by the Japanese government is what is known as the Kyokushin Shogakukai Foundation. This non-profit body was temporarily suspended around the time of Mas Oyama's passing. It has been sleeping ever since. In the Master's Will, the very first clause requested that this Foundation be re-awakened, so to speak, to protect Kyokushin Karate for all time.

This has finally been done, by the man Sosai willed to be in charge of all matters to do with Kyokushin Karate, the former President of the Kyokushin Shogakukai Foundation, Dr Yoshiharu Umeda. This is very significant and no doubt will cause some gnashing of teeth. The upside is that Hatsuoyama, the Chairman of the Foundation, intends to invite all the groups to reunite under the Foundation's banner. If the leaders of the groups can put their personal differences and agendas aside, this could act as a strong catalyst to unity once again. Time will tell.

— JT: In light of such turmoil, what obstacles do martial arts in general face over the next decade?

CQ: I would say if the martial artist wants to make something happen, no obstacle can stand in the way. Difficulties are common to all righteous pursuits; you just have to deal with them.

For some reason, some martial artists spend a lot of energy trying to bring others down. They

The last decade was a profound one for the martial arts. The martial arts world owes it to the Gracies for bringing home a lot of truth about the weaknesses in many arts.

From my perspective, the '60s saw the seeds of the martial arts sown throughout the world. The '70s was a time of growth and consolidation, especially for full-contact. We owe Bruce Lee a debt of gratitude here for bringing the excitement of the martial arts to the whole world.

The '80s was a big decade for kickboxing and Muay Thai, and the '90s was where the grapplers stole the limelight. Perhaps the next 10 years will see a continued eclecticism. Every decade seems to be determined by the individuals who strike out and lead the pack. History is a series of the breaking down of obstacles and I don't see the martial arts as being any different.

— JT: Do traditional teachings still have a place in today's society?

CQ: Certainly. Different strokes for different folks. One art or approach or concept will never satisfy everyone or answer every circumstance. What a boring old world it would be.

Tradition serves a lot of purpose. Even traditional arts continue to grow and change, discarding ideas which don't work and adopting ones that do.

Above all, tradition gives foundation. Don't discard traditional training ideas because you don't understand them. The makiwara is a perfect example. Some people have never done it, will never do it, think it is a waste of time. For others, it is the heart and soul of their training. Each to his own. In India, you have traditions and arts that are older than Christian history. There are always people who find value in traditional teachings.

— JT: What are your thoughts on Kata? Do you have a favourite pattern?

CQ: Kata are an integral part of martial arts training. Even wrestling has its kata in the form of drills and two man training exercises. The martial arts of the East just formalised them and stylised them more than anyone else.

It is more a reflection of the society. Mas Oyama advocated the value of kata. His kata was immensely powerful. But he was quick to point out two things. Firstly, they had to be practiced with full concentration; 100 percent concentration; nothing less, or it becomes, as he used to say, dance karate. Secondly, they had to be done over and over, hundreds, thousands of times, if they are to be of true value.

I have no favourite kata that comes to mind immediately. I enjoy Bassai-dai and Naihanchin, which haven't really been in the Kyokushin syllabus for a long time but are being re-



— JT: How does martial arts prepare you for the ups and downs that life inevitably delivers?

CQ: The martial arts philosophy of never giving up is important. You have to be tough. The world does not suffer fools and weaklings lightly. It is our responsibility to live life as a warrior and that means fighting the battles that life throws up one at a time, tirelessly, without 'disfiguring the face', without complaint. As the Aussie truism goes, there is no point complaining because no one wants to listen.

We all have our challenges. Life's ups and downs are mostly mental and spiritual. So we have to address those levels. The saddest thing in the world for me is suicide. I can't imagine the despair that would drive someone to take their own life. It may seem that everyone has abandoned you, everything is going against you and nothing matters anymore. But there is

in your pursuit to improve."

I was at lunch with Sosai once in 1985. If you have ever seen his autograph or signature, he writes a scribble after his name that is virtually unreadable but resembles a flower. So I asked him what it meant. He took a place mat (which I still have...) and wrote the characters for lion. He then wrote the same characters three more times, each progressively stylised and flowing, until they looked like the flower-like characters he writes after his name. Then he said, (3) "My own personal philosophy in life is this: Be as strong as a lion when it comes to self-discipline and as gentle as a flower when it comes to others." I was quite struck by this because Yogananda describes in his famous *Autobiography of a Yogi* the definition of a true man according to the Vedas: Softer than a flower where kindness is concerned; stronger than the thunder where principles are at stake.

Another quote which is a favourite of mine is actually from Gene LeBell. He once asked, "How do you beat Mike Tyson?" I smiled and asked how. "Anyway you want; just don't box him."

Blitz: Who are the spiritual leaders of karate in the world today?

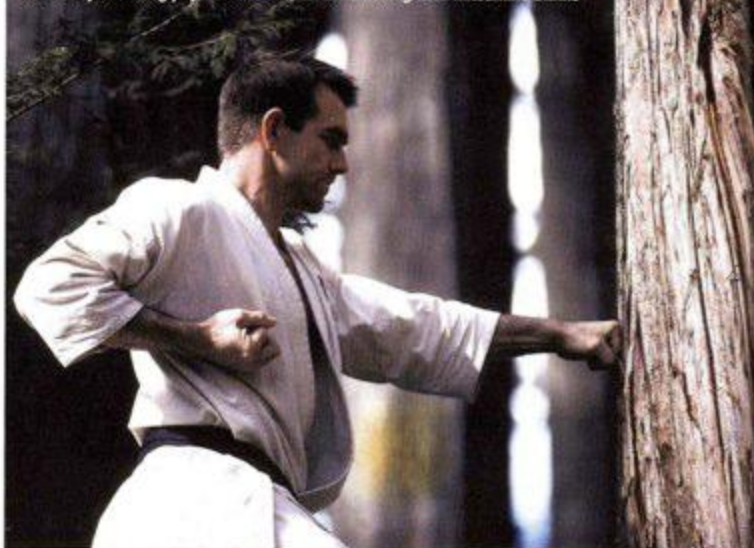
CQ: That's a pretty far-reaching question. If karate has spiritual leaders today, then the suggestion is that the teachings of karate are profound enough to develop one into a spiritual leader. And as much as I love karate, I have my doubts about this. Certainly it will develop its followers on every level: physically, mentally and spiritually.

And there are doubtless many, many highly developed souls amongst the ranks of the world's karate-ka. But whether its teachings are as profound as paths whose primary objective is spiritual is another question. We shouldn't forget that first and foremost, karate is a fighting art, not a religion.

There are some very special karate masters in the world, there is no doubt. But I often wonder if their spiritual profundity comes from other sources besides karate. There are many great leaders in the karate world, but few if any great spiritual leaders. Two great men whom I would consider to be extraordinary are Shotokan's Tsutomu Ohshima, the model for the kata in Funakoshi's Karate-do Kyohan, and Hideo Nakamura, the master of the powerful karate style little known outside of Japan called Kendo-kai. Both these men I consider to be quite profound precisely because they don't try and beat up their spiritual-ness. They are humble. There is also no doubting their karate.

The ones that try to play up the spiritual side are usually conscious of some serious shortcomings they don't want others to see. They lack the spiritual qualities of humility, self-acceptance and love. Which of course means it is even harder for them to achieve

Cameron performing physical and mental conditioning near Mitsumine Shrine



the spiritual greatness they desire because they have closed of the receptivity.

So Nei Chu, Oyama's most profound karate influence who passed away only a few years ago, was by all accounts a truly spiritual man. He was a strict follower of the deeper practices of Buddhism. The fact that you hear so little of these men, despite their great qualities, is a testimony to the magnitude of their spirit. There may well be others.

The ones that try to play up the spiritual side are usually conscious of some serious shortcomings they don't want others to see. They lack the spiritual qualities of humility, self-acceptance and love.

Blitz: Is there anyone alive today that has the understanding or inclination to understand the universe like Oyama?

CQ: I have no doubt. Oyama's understanding of the universe was profound. It was probably more profound than most and nowhere near as profound as many. But the fact that he was here, despite his greatness, means that he was still searching

like the rest of us.

Isn't that the very reason why we are here? Isn't a spiritual pursuit the one thing that differentiates man from every other creature? Animals eat; they sleep, make babies and fight to protect their territory. The nature of animals is that they eat, sleep, mate and defend. So unless man is doing something more than this, he is nothing more than a glorified animal. Just another species. And I am not talking about a difference of degree but a difference of kind.

In other words, no matter how sophisticated someone's job is—even the job of CEO of the biggest company in the world—it is nothing more than a well-dressed way of eating well and sleeping comfortably. Instead of biting and scratching out the eyes of marauders like a lion defending its territory, we use lawyers and writs to defend our territory. Same thing, only more sophisticated.

Unless we are actively pursuing a higher purpose, a spiritual purpose, then I don't believe we are fulfilling our potential and reason for living as a human being. Did Oyama do this? Yes, I believe he was conscious of it all the time and understood that it was the purpose of life. Whether he achieved it or not, I don't know. That's between him and his maker.

As far as there being anyone with the inclination to understand the universe goes, well, I think we all have that inclination deep down. We all are pursuing happiness, we all want to be free from pain and want. So we are all on a spiritual journey of sorts.

Paramahansa Yogananda, whom I quoted in my book numerous times. It was actually a Zendokai friend named Shane Klease who first told me about him in 1978.

I consider the yoga teachings of Yogananda to be amongst the most complete and profound in the world today. They have influenced my life like no other, including karate. Through Yogananda, I learned many things, but especially the universality of different teachings, that whilst some paths might be more complete or more profound than others, they all have something to offer the people involved. We need to concentrate on the similarities between our various paths, not the differences.

The martial arts are the same. No art has all the answers, despite what some zealous followers will tell you. But by learning to respect others and their arts, you can learn the darndest things from the most unexpected places. Ten years ago you would have had trouble finding a strong, hard stand-up fighter who would accept that a grappler could take them down and choke them out in the twinkling of an eye. Yet the Gracies put that argument well and truly to rest.

Now, everyone—boxers, traditional karate fighters, wing chun teachers—is learning jiu-jitsu and how to incorporate it into their art.

You even get some guys who do a few months or a few sessions on the quiet at a jiu-jitsu school, then say, "Well, our art is a thousand years old and it has always had grappling and this is what we do against a grappler." In the meantime a jiu-jitsu blue belt tears them to pieces on the mat. "Yeah, well we bite, we eye gouge and fish hook, and I could have if I wanted to. That stuff wouldn't've worked if I did." Well, in the words of Gene LeBell: "He who controls, bites." It's hard to eye gouge someone when they are cranking your neck off the top of your spine. Benny the Jet said "Seeing isn't believing, feeling is." If your secret, ancient grappling techniques are that profound, jump in the ring with Dan Henderson or Tito Ortiz and win a couple of years salary in a couple of minutes. Get on the mat with someone like John Donehue or even one of his blue belts and teach them something. I can tell you now, it will not happen. I have watched good purple belts tap out from nothing more than John Donehue's side control. Purple belts, not newbies from some other art. The pressure! The only ones who still think they have

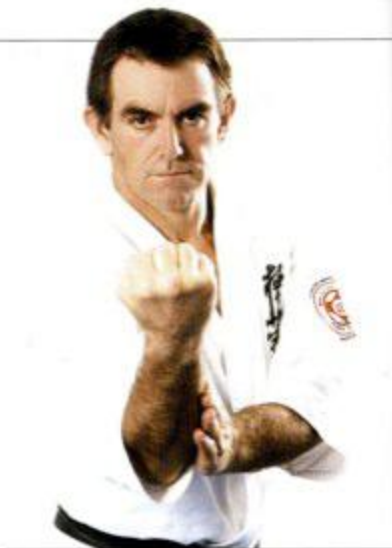
the answers for dealing with a good grappler are the ones who have never felt their pressure.

No one likes to admit their weaknesses. It is the saddest thing in the martial arts and the cause of so much friction, so much negativity. No one likes to be humble. They think it is a sign of weakness. But that is the most important secret of the martial arts: in Japanese *Shoshin o waurezu*. "Never forget what it felt like to be a beginner." That means to be humble enough to accept that everyone around you is better and that everyone has something to teach. That is how you open yourself up to learning.

We have two big calligraphies hanging in the dojo: one is "Osu"—persevere, no matter what. The other is "Everyone is my teacher". Why can't people be humble enough to accept that their art is not anywhere near as complete as they think, or want you to think? Mas Oyama saw that his training was incomplete, so he went off and trained judo until 4th dan. He didn't go to the Kodokan; I am fairly sure he rarely if ever trained there. Instead he went to where his friend Yasuhiko Kimura—the greatest judo-ka of them all—suggested. He went to the Sone Dojo, a specialist groundwork judo dojo which had produced a number of great champions. He went and got choked out, mercilessly, in the first randori session, then left there, ignored. They probably thought they would get rid of this tough looking karate guy. But he went back again. He got choked out again, too. And again. He got choked out four days in a row. Then, I read in an account from his judo teacher, no one at the school could ever choke him out again. He became quite good. But he wouldn't have been half the martial artist if he didn't have the humility to realise that he had to learn from someone else.

As they say these days: you've got to leave your ego at the door. That is the quickest route to getting better. I have spoken to a number of guys who trained with Rico Chiapparelli at Iowa who say that he got taken down quite often in training, but in competition he was unbeatable. He left the ego at the edge of the mat and deliberately put himself in compromising positions so that when it happened in competition, he had been there and was comfortable.

There are hundreds of influences in my martial arts training. I have always tried to be open and as a result I have been blessed with some wonderful



opportunities. I could write a book on them. John Donehue's approach to jiu-jitsu has been very influential in my training. In Kyokushin, Mas Oyama of course. Shokei Matsui has also been a strong influence. He was my main instructor in Japan in 1984 and I invited out to my dojo for a month in 1988. His technique is sublime. He also has an incredible mind. His bouts in the 1987 World Championships remain to me some of the greatest I have ever seen.

But really, at the end of the day, I have been influenced in small ways and large by just about anyone who trains hard and is humble. In fact, in the same way, the smart-arse half-baked wannabe's I read about or meet from time to time are just as influential. It's a bit like watching a swimmer ignore the lifesaver's advice and go swimming outside the flags. And when they get dragged out unconscious from a dangerous rip, you think "Well, I won't be swimming there." You don't have to think what an idiot he was; just learn from the experience and remember not to swim where he was swimming.

BLITZ: What are some of your career highlights?

CQ: My experience as an uchi-deshi in Tokyo was very influential and important for me. I got so much out of the training in many ways. I kept

