



My dear friends,

Last year we lost our sensei. It didn't pass one single day, since I got that terrible news from my good friend George Schlauder, without thinking of sensei Sugiyama. He was my mentor, my Godfather, my Sensei...

He is very well known in the world of karate, but most of them know him thanks to the books he left behind. Some of us, who had the great opportunity to be his students knew the real man. And to be very honest, it was not an easy task to be sensei Sugiyama's student. He had a very special way to show his love and many weren't able to raise to the expectation, so they failed...

Life for many of us would have been much poorer if we haven't had met him.

**Sensei Shojiro Sugiyama** was born in Tokyo, Japan in 1929. In 1954, after training in Judo and Kendo, he began studying karate with the Japan Karate Association of Tokyo (Yotsuya). He was invited to move to Chicago, U.S.A. to teach karate in 1963. Through the late 60's and 70's, Sugiyama Sensei is credited with building and promoting Shotokan karate throughout the entire Midwest region. Many of his original students have gone on to create their own dojos in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin and later on in many different countries throughout world. In recent years, Sugiyama Sensei has increased his focus towards the use and development of ki (Chinese, Qi), in order to improve karate training and create a radar system for martial artists.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Notable Students:

J.B. Mirza<sup>[9]</sup>: National Chair, AAU Karate

President of the WUKF of the USA

Dr. George Schlauder<sup>[11]</sup>: Jiseki Shihan, JKA Chicago,

Chief Instructor of Kitof Karate of Chicago

President of the National Fudokan Federation of the USA

John DiPasquale<sup>[4]</sup>: Chief Instructor, Illinois Shotokan Karate Clubs

President of WKF of the USA

Joe Gonzalez<sup>[5]</sup>: Chief Instructor, JKA Rolling Meadows

Multiple National AAKF Champion and member of the USA National Team

Ted Hedlund<sup>[6]</sup>: Chief Instructor, JKA Sweden

Technical Director of the WSKA

Ed Kuras<sup>[7]</sup>: Chief Instructor, Western Illinois Shotokan Karatejitsu

Borden Plunkett<sup>[10]</sup>: Chief Instructor, of Kito Karate of The University of Iowa

C.M. Smaby<sup>[12]</sup>: Chief Instructor, JKA Iowa

Since the summer of 2004 Sensei Ilija Jorga became a regular guest of our Dojo at JKA Chicago. From the first time they met, it was very clear that they connected through karate. Sensei Sugiyama was amazed how somebody born in Europe was able to have such a natural call for a detailed understanding and ability to develop a martial art.

Sensei Sugiyama had a habit. Often he was giving, his favorite students and acquaintances, a nickname. So when I joined the JKA Chicago Sugiyama Dojo in 1991, after a while I became Shiro Kuma (The White Bear). When Sensei Ilija visited our dojo, he became Higashi Yama "The Mountain from the East". It was an incredible match of Sensei Ilija Jorga with his karate image. So after having a Nishi Yama (The Mountain from the West) and a Naka Yama (The Central Mountain) now we have our Mountain from the East. This is a great recognition not only for Sensei Ilija Jorga but for all the karate practitioners from this part of the world...

### **One of Sensei Sugiyama's favorite story:**

#### **A Hen's Story**

"When I was young, chickens were kept in the yard in Japan and were allowed to run around freely. Although the chickens enjoyed their freedom, they also faced danger. Sometimes alley cats would come into the yard and try to eat them for dinner. So whenever I heard the hens cry, I had to run out to chase the cats away. One day I was surprised to see a different situation. One of my hens was chasing after a big alley cat, and the cat was running away panicked with fear. Why did my cowardly hen become so tough? Because, the hen was a mother at that time and had little chicks to protect. The love of her babies made her overcome her fear and risk throwing her life away. From this self-sacrifice, she got the great power to strike back at the alley cat."

Isn't it interesting how the same hen, by changing its state of mind into a strong determination, suddenly is able to surpass its apparent "physical handicap" and become able to fight back and win against (in normal conditions) a much better fighter such as the alley cat?

From antiquity, Japanese sword masters have taught the principal of ken 3 - zen 7 (ken means sword; zen is the zen of Buddhism). This means that in order to achieve the victory, the proportion between techniques and state of mind is: 30% for techniques and 70% for the state of mind. This is the essence of todome waza.

Another favorite phrase of Sensei Sugiyama was that he has 2 types of students: customers and real students. Customers would be the ones who pay their dues and come to the dojo to get something in return. Real students would come to the dojo to study and deepen their knowledge and even have personal contribution the process of teaching. The greatest reward the real students had was that beside the fact that we had the opportunity to study martial arts under such a great teacher, all Sensei Sugiyama's books had under the author's name: Shojiro Sugiyama and his students. This was his way to say THANK YOU.

The good feeling I have being a member of our Fudokan family is that here, most of the Fudokan practitioners are real students, that we are a big and strong family.

I am very glad that in November 2014 on the occasion of his birthday I was able to visit Sensei Sugiyama, together with Sensei Vladimir Jorga. This turned out to be Sensei Sugiyama's last birthday party.

In July 2015 when together with Sensei Vladimir Jorga we attended the US AAU Karate Nationals in Raleigh NC and, the following week, my plan was to visit Sensei Sugiyama, the news I got from Mr. Schlauder and then from Kentaro Sugiyama, Sensei's son, was that he is no longer with us. He is now up there in the heaven and watching us. I can feel him, I still can hear him telling us: faster, stronger, fast exhale, strong fumi komi, messen, all synchronized... followed by the necessary adjustments with the shinai...

SENSEI WE MISS YOU!!!

*Mike Apan,*

白熊

*Black Belt 7<sup>th</sup> Dan*

*General Secretary of World Fudokan Federation*