

## Meeting the Masters: Teruo Chinen (1941-2015) & Shigeru Kimura (1944-1995)

Over 50 years of training in budo, I have been lucky enough to meet or train under many notable martial artists. This year, I want to share my impressions, some deep set, some fleeting, about the men and women I met on the way.



CHINEN Teruo Sensei of Okinawan Goju, before his passing this year, taught in Spokane, WA. He was one of the last students of MIYAGI Chojun and had studied under Ei'ichi Miyazaki, and his sempai HIGAONNA Morio.

Since Goju was not my system, I was attending Master Chinen's seminars to broaden my martial arts knowledge and in hopes of writing an article for *Inside Karate*. In a way, he reminded me of the wrestling coach back in college — not in size or technique, but in attitude. The wrestling coach was fond of introducing himself as “a fanatic”. Chinen Sensei did not introduce himself (that was Sensei Domingo Llanas's job), but he was totally concentrated on his Goju, seemingly all the time. Not only did he grant two interviews during his lunch break (I don't know when he got to eat), but also, in the car when we changed venues, he talked to those who were sitting in the rear while he punched a hand-held *makiwara*.

He was personable and friendly outside the dojo, but severe, sometimes with a smile, in the dojo. After a long session of exercise and knuckle push-ups, he would get into the details of kata, having us repeat a movement until he was semi-satisfied with it and then, rather than go much further into the form, would show a potential application. Sometimes, to my astonishment, the interpretations began with the kata movement and then went outside the kata to the “implied bunkai”, for instance doing a sacrifice leg takedown as a follow up to the opening movements of Seienchin kata.

My article was published in *Inside Karate Magazine*. Thanks to Sensei Pam Glazer for introducing me.

KIMURA Shigeru Sensei passed away at only 54 years of age. His karate originated with TANI Chojiro's Shukokai for which he was the most prominent representative. The stances of this system are narrow and can seem uncomfortable, but no one can argue with the effectiveness of his technical modifications. He emphasized some of the things I had discovered in my own study (like Elbow Awareness and stance testing), so I was encouraged to pay close attention in order to glean more along the same lines.

However, by far the most impressive item that I learned from Sensei was the use of hips and angle to produce power. Kimura Sensei, although Japanese, was about average size for a Westerner; but, regardless how large was the holder of his specially made, triple-thick punching shield, Kimura Sensei would pop him back at least two feet and, within a few repetitions, the holder would be eager to hand the task to the next in line.

If Kimura's Sensei's power was due to correct angle of execution and correct use of hips (not just speed or bulk as was the case with some instructors), it meant that with practice, I could find methods by which I could emulate his power. I discussed this with Sensei Elmar Schmeisser during Sensei Chris Parsons's karate camp on Bear Island, NH.

Elmar, who also had taken brief training under Kimura, likewise advocated angle and hips to gain power, and we agreed that Kimura Sensei's method was helpful to both of us, although Kimura Sensei seemed to garner results so extreme that I was unsure whether it was his technical niceties or the man himself that deserved my plaudits. Perhaps both.