



IN LOVING MEMORY OF YAMADA SENSEI

Senta Yamada sensei passed away on Sunday, August 8th, 2010 at Hara Doi Hospital in Fukuoka, Kyushu, Japan after a prolonged illness.



Yamada sensei will perhaps be best remembered for his efforts to spread the teachings of Kano sensei, Ueshiba sensei, and Tomiki sensei throughout the world. His legacy is



the hundreds of people who have studied with him or who have studied Judo or Aikido under one of his many students. His spirit and philosophy of both martial arts and life in general are things that those who have had the privilege to meet him and train with him will carry with them for the remainder of their lives.



Yamada sensei was born in Fukuoka on the 1st of March 1924. He began practicing Judo at the age of ten while still in middle school. At age 16 he received the grade of 1st dan in Judo. While studying under Judo's founder, Dr. Jigaro Kano, Yamada sensei enjoyed an outstanding career as a competitive judoka. He eventually reached the rank of 6th Dan in Judo.

After graduating from the Marine University in Kobe, Yamada sensei went to Wakayama Ken to become a student of Professor Uyeshiba. He studied Aikido with Professor Uyeshiba for three months, then spent another six months travelling around Japan with him. Following this study, Yamada sensei returned to Tokyo and took up teaching Judo in his own dojo.

It was at this time that he first met Professor Kenji Tomiki who, as a young man, had been personally instructed in Judo at the Kodokan by Dr. Jigoro Kano. Professor Tomiki had also studied Aikido under Professor Uyeshiba and had become one of his most successful pupils. Professor Tomiki developed a teaching method for Aikido that merged the organizational philosophies of Dr. Kano with the techniques and practices of Professor Uyeshiba. Yamada sensei adopted this teaching strategy because he felt it was an organized way to present Aikido to students.



Photos top left - Shrine in Yamada sensei's daughter, Tomoko's Home. Top right - Yamada sensei's Funeral
Left - Yamada sensei, George Chew, Alex Macintosh, John Waite and Eric Domoni,
Right - Yamada sensei, Archie Bush, Rex Benlow, John Gay and John Waite
Bottom Right - Mr Tomiki and Yamada sensei at the Seki-Ryu-Kan



In 1959, Yamada sensei went to England to teach Judo and Aikido at the London Judo Society. He then set up his own dojo in North London. It was there in the early



1960s that he decided to form the Kikusui Kai. This badge, or Mon, is recognized all over the world and is worn with great pride by all associated with the Kikusui Kai.



Yamada sensei's main passion in life was helping the less-fortunate people around the world. He did this not only by sharing his martial arts with his students, but also by organizing a variety of self-help projects.

Yamada sensei travelled all over England, Europe, Australasia, and America teaching both Aikido and Judo, while at the same time developing people's awareness of the needs of those less-fortunate in the third world. In addition, he travelled to many third world countries. One of these was Bangladesh, where he personally transported medical supplies to enable three of his students to provide free medical treatment for the less-fortunate in their area.

He also travelled to Sri Lanka where, in addition to setting up a dojo and teaching Aikido, he helped people to study and develop organic farming -- a project which is still carrying on to this day. His many contacts throughout the world enabled him to carry on this work. I am sure his influence will continue for many, many years to come.



I first met Yamada sensei when he arrived at our club, the London Judo Society, on a Saturday morning in early September of 1959. He came and sat in the dojo while waiting for Mr. Chew, the founder of our club, to collect him. I was teaching my junior class at the time.

It was later that week on a Wednesday evening that he came to give his first lesson. Again, I was fortunate to be the person he used to demonstrate during that Judo lesson. From that day I became a firm student of his style of martial arts. It was only natural that when he decided to introduce the Tomiki style of Aikido into the dojo I began to study this art.



Some time later he asked me to assist him in a demonstration of Judo and Aikido at the club's annual demonstration at the Royal Albert Hall in London. That was a 20-minute demonstration of Judo and Aikido techniques, during which I served as the uki, or person Yamada sensei threw around the mat. I can still remember the commentator saying about me, "There goes a very tired man."

Top Left photo Mr and Mrs Yamada, Shizuko and Makoto
Top Right First Aikido class at the London Judo Society
Yamada sensei in Shri-Lanka

Bottom Left Yamda sensei and John Waite
Royal Albert Hall
Bottom Right Yamada sensei and John

Thus began our life-long relationship. I was moving from being his student to becoming his life-long friend and assistant.

It was a sad day in 1965 when Yamada sensei decided to return to Japan. We've kept in touch by letter and telephone over the years.



In 1983 Pepi and I managed to visit Japan and meet with him again.

In 1984, we persuaded him to come to England for a visit. That was the beginning of his regular visits to England and our visits to Japan, which were to occur every 18 months to two years for the rest of his life.



Pepi and I immigrated to New Zealand in 2002. Yamada sensei continued to make regular visits to keep up our relationship. Throughout our 52-year relationship, there has always been a strong bond of love and affection – something I will treasure for the rest of my life. I will endeavour to teach my students with this same spirit.



Top Left Pepi and John Waite, Yamada sensei and Tomoko Yamada sensei's Youngest Daughter
Middle Photo Kikusui Kai group Tooting Leisure Centre London
Bottom Photo Kikusui Kai group Auckland New Zealand