

KEINOSUKE ENOEDA 8th Dan J.K.A. THE 'TIGER' OF SHOTOKAN KARATE-Do

Interview By John Cheetham. (Photo's By Rod Butler).

Q. Firstly Sensei, many people would like to know how and when you came to be known as the 'Tiger' and who was it who first gave you this nickname?

K.E. I think it was Sensei Nakayama. After one of the J.K.A. championships, he said I fought like a 'Tiger' and the nickname stayed.

Q. How long had you been training in karate before you met Master Gichin Funakoshi? What were your impressions of him?

K.E. I first met Master Funakoshi just after I had started training at university. When I first saw him, he looked rather like an elderly gentleman, but once he put on his Gi, it was as if he changed. He became younger, upright and moved like

a man much younger in years. I was impressed with this.

Q. I believe you made a movie film with Master Funakoshi where you rescue a woman from an attempted assault. What are your memories of doing this and when was this?

K.E. The movie was made and directed by Sensei Nakayama. I'm not sure of the exact year but it was a film to promote karate as self-defence. (*I'm told by the karate historians that the year was 1955. Ed.*)

Q. In the old 8mm films we have seen of you from the late 1950's and early 1960's, you were very slim yet incredibly strong and powerful. How did you develop your power, because I

don't believe you used weight-training as modern athletes now do?

K.E. My objective is to train everyday whatever the weather or the condition I am in. I never neglect my daily training. I have never missed a day's training since my very young age. I believe my everyday effort, plus my Judo and Kendo practice when I was very young, helped to develop my strength, mentally and physically.

Q. It was said that you had one of the most powerful punches in Japan. How did you develop this and was it something you purposely wanted to achieve?

K.E. In those days the training was very intense. Every morning I would do 500 punches on the makiwara. It was not something I was particularly trying to achieve. It was a single minded attitude, to develop my karate power.

Q. I remember reading that Master Nakayama said that if people wanted to see the kata - Jitte, done well, then they should watch Mr. Enoeda perform this kata. Why do you think you have such an affinity with Jitte?

K.E. Sensei Nakayama suggested that I should practice the kata Jitte. Also I like this kata, so I practiced it a lot. Of course everyone has their favourite kata, which is usually the one that suits that particular person, but it is very important to practice ALL the kata with equal enthusiasm.

Q. Sensei, that move in Jitte where both arms are high in the air and you stamp down into kiba dachi. How can students improve this technique and get a good feeling for it, because it is very difficult to perform well?

K.E. It is important to use both the hips and the stomach. Some students turn the arms and hips too soon and lose power. The arms should move with the hips and focus the stomach.

Q. While we are on the subject of kata, could you please tell us how your own demonstration kata was devised and why you chose those particular various sections from different kata?

K.E. This was devised from various moves from different kata which show the true feeling of Karate-do. The music was written especially with this in mind and through the music and the kata, I try to show the special fighting spirit of the



Sensei Enoeda demonstrates shuto uchi (knife hand strike) at Rod Butler's Wanstead KUGB dojo.



Performing Gojushihō-shō at the Honbu dojo. Samurai warrior.

Q. Sensei, on your new video series you do one version of Tekki Sandan (in your books you did two). Is this (video) version the older version of the kata?

K.E. This is the new version.

Q. Sensei, can we discuss kumite now. There were some great fighters from your era, (late 1950's early 1960's) including yourself, Kanazawa Sensei, Shirai Sensei, Mikami Sensei etc. etc. In terms of competition fighting, how would they have fared against modern day fighters?

K.E. It is impossible to make these comparisons, as the karate is different today. Today it is more sport karate with emphasis on different things. It is the same with many sports. How would someone compare today with someone from an earlier period? These comparisons cannot really be made.

Q. Who first devised the rules of competition kumite and were the rules of Kendo an influence?

K.E. Sensei Nakayama, who also had a knowledge of Kendo.

Q. Do you feel that a certain amount of body contact should be allowed as in the old days?

K.E. Good karate-ka should have good control, so there is no need for excessive contact. If too much contact,

then there is the chance of injury if the technique is delivered properly with the correct amount of power. It is necessary to develop good control so that you can control the amount of body contact. The word is '**CONTROL**'. A person highly skilled in Kendo can cut through an object placed on a table without damage to the table...**Good Control**.

Q. How can students train to improve their 'timing' for instance with the principle of Deai?

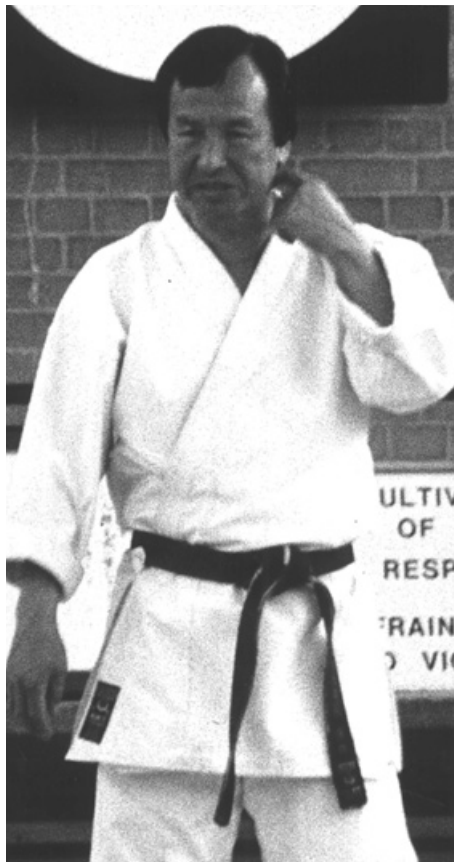
K.E. Reaction training. This means developing your timing or 'reaction' to your opponent's attack. Practice of Jiyu ippon kumite, (semi free) or Jiyu kumite reacting to your opponents attack with a counter, will help to develop your timing, reaction speed and reflex.

Q. Sensei, you have watched and refereed many kumite and kata championships over the years. Who have you 'enjoyed' watching the most, both in kumite and kata?

K.E. This is another difficult question to answer. There have been many and each one has something 'Special' so, it would be impossible to only name one or two.

Q. After studying and practicing Shotokan for all these years now, what is it that is so appealing to you and why?

K.E. I come from a Traditional



Behind Enoeda's hard, sometimes ferocious exterior, lies a great sense of humour.



One of the most powerful punches in Japan.

background. Shotokan is a traditional karate. It is in my nature. Karate teaches you discipline and with discipline you can continue your karate practice for many years. Also, there is always something more to learn, that is the great thing about studying a traditional martial art. You have to practice each technique many, many times to improve, but it's the total mastering of 'mind' and 'body' through these techniques, that is the true aim of Karate-do.

Q. Are there any technical or philosophical points you would like to share with readers and students, that maybe you feel are not stressed enough?

K.E. Technical points are not enough on their own. It is important to understand the philosophy behind it. This however takes a great deal of time to fully understand and develop. It is difficult to make any one point as it might be misunderstood. I think though, that you should always maintain a good attitude not only in the dojo but also outside in your everyday life.

Q. Sensei, I always remember you saying in training, in no uncertain terms, "Push stomach forward, keep back straight." Do you think that maybe in the early days people didn't quite fully understand what you meant?

K.E. The point I was trying to make is



Enoeda Sensei says, "Practice 'ALL' kata with equal enthusiasm."

that many students had good upper body power when they made a punch, but only by using their shoulders, which was easier. This makes for perhaps 70% of the body's power. When used with 'hara' this same punch makes 100% power. All power comes from the stomach which requires a straight back.

Q. Have you changed your own personal training as you've got older? I remember reading that 'running' was very important to you. Is this still the case?

K.E. Of course as you get older your body changes and so does the emphasis. When you are younger there is more emphasis on the physical aspect. When you get older there's more emphasis on mind.

This could be explained like this. When you are younger it is easier to go to the dojo and train for a couple of hours. As you get older this desire gets less and you have more commitments, so you have to use your mind and 'push' yourself into going to the dojo. I still run when I get the chance, only maybe not as far.

Q. Do you think it's necessary to change one's training as one gets older?

K.E. Regular training will help to keep your body younger. It is important to listen to your body. One point you have to remember is that as you get older, any injuries which you have, may take a longer time to recover from.

Q. Sensei, would the J.K.A. (Japan Karate Association) still be 'one' group if Master Nakayama was still alive?

K.E. There have been changes in Karate and in the J.K.A. as there are within any organisation. These changes were perhaps inevitable. However, what is important is the original aim of the J.K.A. and Sensei Nakayama, and in that respect the original J.K.A. will never change.

Q. Finally Sensei, could you please tell us your own feelings about Traditional karate-do and the way you see it progressing in the future?

K.E. Now we have 'sport karate' which I understand is to help maintain the interest in karate. Traditional Karate-do is a 'martial art' which requires both physical

and mental training for the whole mind and body. There are many benefits which can be gained with practice, by both young and old throughout your whole life. If you want these benefits then you should practice in the Traditional way. If too much emphasis is placed on sport karate, you are in danger of missing the whole point of karate training.

Sensei, thank you very much for kindly giving your time for the interview.

I know readers and shotokan karateka from all over the world will want to hear the words of Enoeda Sensei. Also, a special thanks to Jim Lewis and Rod Butler for all their kind help and work with the interview conducted at Enoeda Sensei's London Honbu dojo.

(Footnote)

Sensei Keinosuke Enoeda 8th Dan JKA graduated from Takushoku University where his main instructor was Master Nakayama, and later graduated from the JKA Instructors Class. Enoeda Sensei has mastered 'ALL' karate techniques through his total dedication to the art, but even more importantly has captured and fully understood the philosophy and spirit of Karate-do as laid down by Master Gichin Funakoshi. A former All Japan Champion and one of the most famous and respected Shotokan Sensei's in the world. Resident in the United Kingdom since 1966 and the Chief Instructor to the Karate Union of Great Britain, one of the most prestigious Shotokan organisations in Europe and worldwide. Sensei Enoeda teaches regularly at his famous London dojo (Marshall Street) and also travels all over the world teaching his own unique brand of 'Dynamic' Shotokan Karate-Do. **Keinosuke Enoeda is still, 'THE TIGER'.**



"Good Control is of the utmost importance, there is no need for excessive contact," says Enoeda.