

Mr. Oyata's instructor, Mr. Uhugusiku died in 1949, at the age of 99. Three days prior to his death, Mr. Uhugusiku called Mr. Oyata to him to make a last request. As was his custom, Mr. Uhugusiku called Mr. Oyata grandson, a term of endearment that he reserved for him because of the strong bond of love and respect between them. Mr. Uhugusiku asked Mr. Oyata not to use karate as a business while he lived on Okinawa. Mr. Oyata, of course, gave his instructor his word that he would not. Mr. Uhugusiku also took this opportunity to counsel Mr. Oyata and give him the benefit of his wisdom. He advised Mr. Oyata that the best thing he could do in life was to help other people. Mr. Oyata thought about this and concurred with his instructor's sagacity. He told Mr. Uhugusiku that he would help people as a way of life. Thus was born Mr. Oyata's dream.

At this time Mr. Oyata had a family and the wages of his employment were scarcely sufficient for their health and welfare. This distressed Mr. Oyata because he could not adequately implement his promises although he did provide five years of volunteer service to the Ryukyu government both as a trainer to law enforcement agencies and as a counselor to Okinawian juveniles.

When Mr. Oyata arrived in the United States in 1977, he had no job awaiting him so he started a small karate business. He began to plan how he would fulfill his instructor's request and his dream. He has worked up to a point now, that he can begin to give something back to the community.

To honor his instructor's request and fulfill his dream, Mr. Oyata will work in concert with the Harvester's and Independence Food pantries to collect canned goods to feed the hungry. Every month, Mr. Oyata will take profits from his school to buy canned goods and donate them to the Harvesters and to the Independence Food groups. His students will also bring cans for this purpose. His eight metro schools will also have drop boxes so that those students can also bring canned goods. These will be contributed along with Mr. Oyata's food stuffs.

Mr. Oyata wishes to help the hungry in Independence first. He will then move to help the hungry in the Kansas City metro area. Lastly, Mr. Oyata will request that his 50 association schools located throughout the United States follow his lead and do the same in their respective communities.

Mr. Oyata knows that what he is contributing is not much and in fact, he feels embarrassment in his heart because it is so little but, it is a beginning.

Mr. Oyata's observation when he came to the United States of the status of the martial arts, was one of concern and shock. He began to understand why there was so little respect for karate from the general public. Many karate students were verbally abusive, egotistical and often proved their karate prowess through confrontive physical means. Mr. Oyata states that this

is not how true karate students act. True karate students are humble and help their fellow man---not ridicule and maim them.

In olden days, on Okinawa, karate was used to protect king and country, not for personal self-angrandizment. Even today, Okinawan karate men are looked up and respected because of their humility and willingness to help those in need.

Although karate is growing in popularity, people in the United States still think that karate means only self defense. It does not. Karate means open hand. This can have two meanings. The first and most obvious, is self defense with your hands. The second, and not so obvious, is to extend your hands and offer help. Mr. Oyata feels that the second meaning is the true essence of karate. He teaches that to help an elderly person across the street is to practice good karate.

In conclusion, Mr. Oyata feels that too much animosity exists between karate students and that the true meaning of karate is being lost because of this. It is however, not too late to regain it.