



TETSUZAN

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Ninja and Sports -Talking with Takamatsu Sensei

There are now only two journalists who have ever been to Takamatsu Sensei's house in Nara: the author of *Ryutaro Koyama*, and Shizuo Koizumi, at the time, a writer for the "Tokyo Sports" newspaper. It has been a long time since I met Koizumi, in fact since he invited me to his wedding. I wonder how he is, how many years ago might it be? I really feel like hearing his account of when he interviewed Takamatsu Sensei. I think it would be nice to get in touch sometime soon. While thinking that over I look for the record of that time.

I wonder if my thoughts worked like Kuji? I get a phone call from Koizumi, whom I haven't met in over 20 years. During the conversation, there are signs that he would like to come and visit me sometime soon, and indeed three days later he appears, tall and slim, and holding some sake in one hand and some sweets in the other.

Hatsumi: Hi! It's been a long time ... you haven't changed a bit!

Kuji: Neither have you, Sensei!

Hatsumi: Oh, I wonder about that. Incidentally, today I was thinking of interviewing you! (*Instead of being interviewed by Kuji.*)

Kuji: Oh really? That must be about Takamatsu Sensei, then. (Pulling out the article he wrote at the time). As you can see, I visited his house at the age of 24!

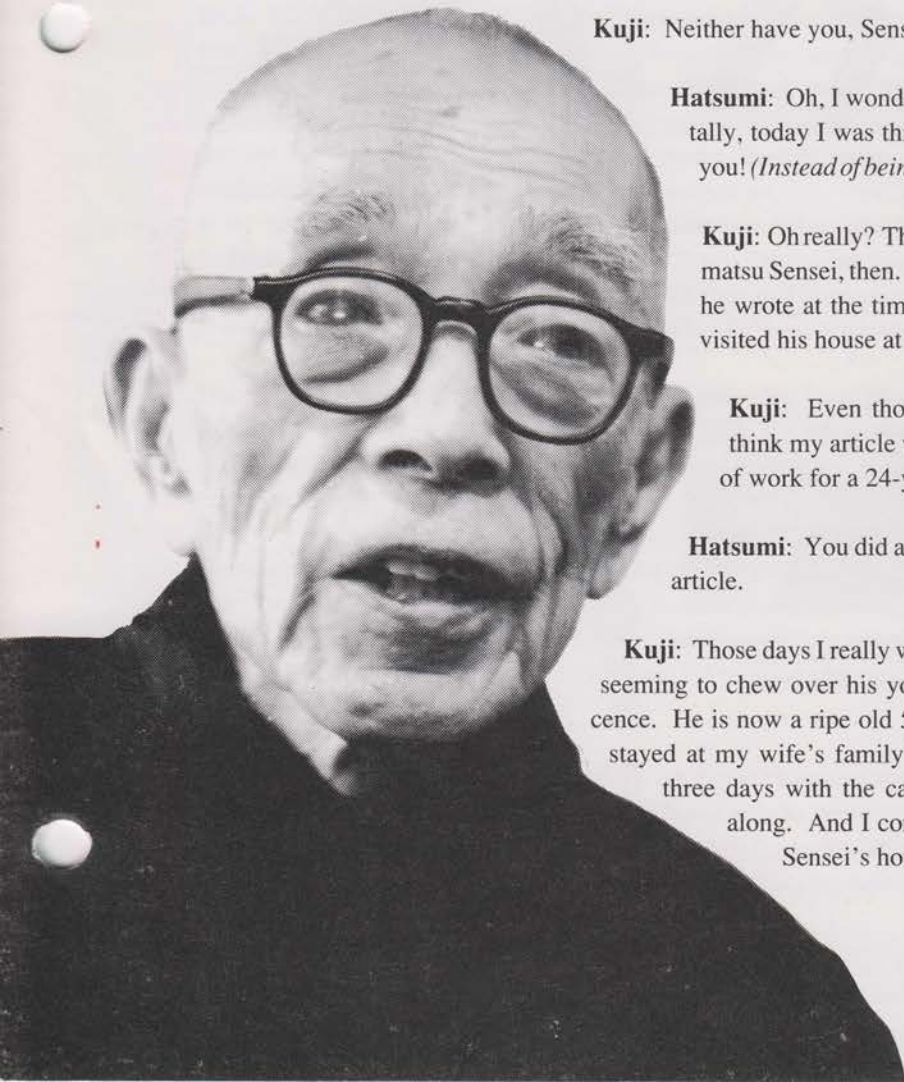
Kuji: Even though I say it myself, I think my article was quite a good piece of work for a 24-year old!

Hatsumi: You did a great job. It was a fine article.

Kuji: Those days I really went for it. (He pauses, seeming to chew over his young days and adolescence. He is now a ripe old 51.) As I remember, I stayed at my wife's family's house in Kyoto for three days with the cameraman I'd brought along. And I commuted to Takamatsu Sensei's house from there.



Above: Masaaki Hatsumi;
Below left: Takamatsu Sensei.



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Uragyaku-dori

(Tetsuji Ishizuka and Bo Munthe)

1) The opponent grabs the left side of my chest with his right hand. I rest my left hand against his right hand.



1)

2) I grab the opponent's right wrist with my right hand. Then...



2)

3) I move the opponent's hand into *Uragyaku-dori* -against my chest. (If I put pressure on the hand in this position it becomes *Hongyaku-dori*.)



3)

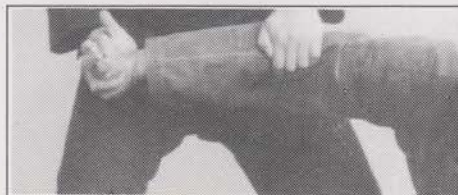
4-a) I hold down the opponent's hand in *Uragyaku*, and wait for the opponent's reactive movements. (Pay particular attention to the position of my knees.)



4)



4-b) A close-up view.



5) If the opponent moves I take the *Hoshi* nerve spot on his right elbow and tighten the *Uragyaku*.



6) The opponent cannot bear it and falls backward. It is important not to move away from the opponent, but always move your body to stay with his movement.

Practice on both the right and the left.

Hatsumi: Is that so?

Kuji: Takamatsu Sensei told me that you wouldn't come.

Hatsumi: At the time, Japan was just experiencing its first postwar Ninja boom. I only got about 3 hours sleep a night. I was thinking of going with you for the interview, but time was so precious then, what with having to instruct the TV and film crews.

Kuji: At the time you said interview Takamatsu Sensei first, which is why I went.

Hatsumi: I did? Well yes, I did want Takamatsu Sensei to be interviewed first. You put the interview with me in afterwards, didn't you?

Kuji: That's right. You really did think a lot of Takamatsu Sensei, didn't you?

Hatsumi: Of course I did! Sensei always comes first. But seeing as I lived in Kanto (East Japan) and Takamatsu Sensei was in Kansai (West Japan), the Tokyo mass media always got by with people near Tokyo and so I was always the one featured. But I was still a novice then, and make many mistakes. Sensei always looked upon me very kindly and said that it was his fault for not teaching me well enough!

Kuji: Yes, Takamatsu Sensei said something like that. When I heard that I felt that this man was totally different from any other martial artist I had met. He was truly a splendid gentleman.

Hatsumi: That is exactly right. What was your first impression of Takamatsu Sensei?

Kuji: Well, I was young, and so eager to get an interview that I knew no fear. But, on the second day I think it was, Takamatsu Sensei said let's go outside for the photography, so we went out. Then Takamatsu Sensei stood in front of this large tree, and his face, the whole energy and appearance of his body changed. It was terrifying! At the time there was no such thing as a motor drive for a camera, but we used the best camera available to try and capture Sensei's fast movements on film. Then, with a kiai, he thrust at the tree-trunk with his fingers and opened up five holes. His fingernails were not fingernails, they were more like iron plating! When Takamatsu Sensei stuck his fingers into that tree, I was truly amazed! And it was then that Takamatsu Sensei, seeing my surprise, laughed at me saying, "You seem to finally have believed me."

Hatsumi: Really? I always tell my students, that truly great people always adapt to the partner's conversation the first time they meet. Then the partner tends to become vain and get impolite. And as a result they can't meet them again. For the 15 years that I was learning from Takamatsu Sensei, he never showed any signs of taking any other students.

Countless people from all around heard of Takamatsu Sensei's reputation and came to ask him to accept them into the dojo, but he always said, "If you want to learn, learn from Hatsumi, because I'm teaching him. Become a student of Hatsumi." In effect, he rejected them. And so I trained those martial artists who said that I'd be good enough. And Takamatsu Sensei seemed to be happy as he saw this.

Koizumi interviewed Takamatsu Sensei on the theme "Ninjutsu and Sports." Kado, one of Koizumi's senior writers and at the time a fifth dan in Judo, came to interview me and I said, "Now is the time to make a clear distinction between Budo that have become sportified and true Budo." This comment prompted Koizumi, accompanying Kado as a junior, to interview me.



Takamatsu Sensei.

When I spoke with Koizumi, I stressed that whether 26 years ago or now, sportified Budo, dramatified Budo, and real-life Budo are in exactly the same situation, every moment foolish and lifeless. I felt the topics discussed in the Budo world were I recalled a quote from Chaplin. One day, Charles Chaplin, who had left countless masterpieces behind for the film world, was asked at a press conference "Which of your masterpieces do you think is the best?" and he replied, "The next one!."

The article Koizumi wrote 26 years ago about Takamatsu Sensei is a masterpiece for a 24-year-old.

Shizuo Koizumi compared to human memory. Printed words and numbers are easy to get wrong. Human memory means, as opposed to printed words or numbers, taking the image in one's eyes, imprinting it onto one's heart, and seeing it there.

When pursuing memories of a past time, using one's sense of smell may work well to find them. It is said that salmon find their way back home by means of smell. When I look at this newspaper cutting of twenty-odd years in front of me and I still get pulled in by the smell of the holy sanctuary of Kashiwara City. 忍

Muso-dori

1) We grab each other with the right hand on the left chest and the left hand on the right elbow.



1)

2) I move my right leg half a step diagonally forward, and insert my right hand underneath my opponent's left armpit. It is important that my right hand taking my opponent's left elbow is accomplished by making his left hand the fulcrum for my legs. I take my opponent into the lock with the movement of my legs.



2)

3) I take out any strength from my right hand under my opponent's left elbow, and quickly move into the lock. At the same time I change my right leg into the *kamae*.



3)

4) My opponent's left hand is by my right hand, and so I pull my left leg back diagonally. (Carrying this technique through properly means getting the balance between the hand and the leg movements correct.)



4)



5) I watch the opponent's movements and put the lock on his elbow to a sufficient degree.

Zanshin is important.

Practice on both the right and the left.

Musha-dori



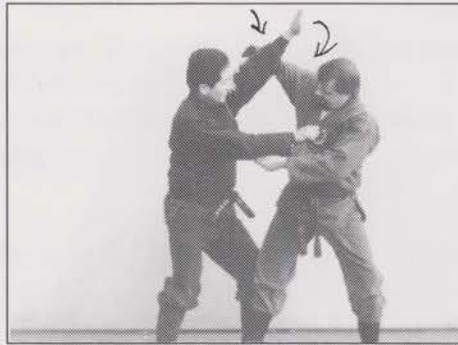
1)



2)



3)



4)



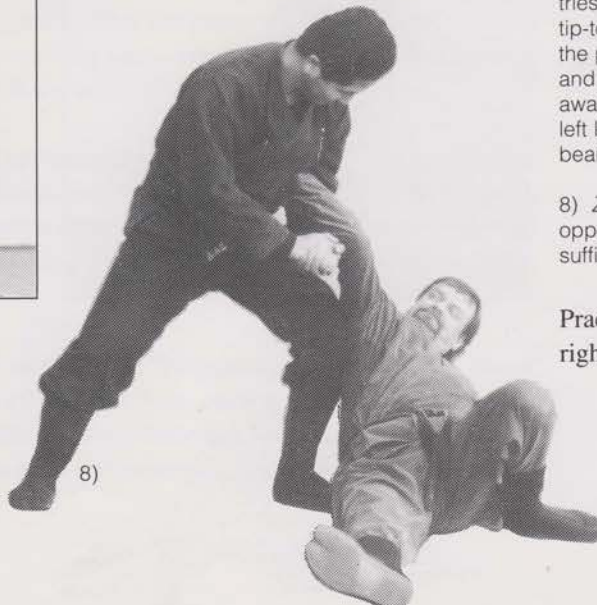
5)



6)



7)



8)

1) We grab each other with the right hand on the left chest and the left hand on the right elbow.

2) I pull my left leg diagonally backward and destroy my opponent's balance. He tries either to pull back or to move forward. Do not overlook this chance.

3) I insert my left hand inside my opponent's right hand. At this stage I am already pulling the opponent's left elbow.

4) I raise my left hand and move my left leg forward. My opponent loses his freedom of movement, and provided I use my left elbow skillfully enough, his right elbow bends.

5) I wrap up my opponent's right elbow from above. At the same time it is important to change the right leg round into the kamae.

6) I grasp my right hand with my left hand as if shaking hands, and raise them up to chest height.

7) When my opponent tries to rise up on tip-toes because of the pain in the elbow and shoulder, I sweep away his leg with my left leg. He cannot bear it and falls down.

8) *Zanshin*, with my opponent's arm still sufficiently in the lock.

Practice on both the right and left.

Ganseki-nage

1) We grab each other with the right hand on the left chest and the left hand on the right sleeve.



1)

2) I pull my left leg back diagonally with my upper body just as it is, and my opponent loses balance naturally. Rather than pulling with the hand, you accomplish the change with the right leg and right side of the body.



2)

3) I use my right hand just as it is to raise slightly my opponent's left hand. This is *Kyo* (deception).



3)

4) I insert my left hand around my opponent's right elbow.



4)

5) My inserted left hand should be protruding above my opponent's arm with the fingers extended, and my elbow should be at around 90 degrees.



5)

6) My right hand is resting on my opponent's left hand, there is no need to grab. When I twist my body, he cannot bear it and falls down.



6)

7) In real *Ganseki-nage* my opponent will fall on his head or face, so in training always do it so that he can do *ukemi* (roll) as shown in the photograph.



7)

Omote-oni-kudaki



1)



2)



3)

1) We grab each other with the right hand on the left chest and the left hand on the right sleeve. I insert my left hand inside my opponent's right hand.

2) I move my right leg forward and grab my own left hand from beneath my opponent's right elbow as if shaking hands. Watch your opponent's movement. Do not take your eyes off them.

3) I pull my right leg back and my opponent's elbow is locked. I do not let the locked elbow move away from my body.

4) When I move forward with my right leg, my opponent cannot bear the pain and falls down.

Practice on both the right and the left.



Fundo (weighted chain) Koshi-guruma

1) Have the *Kusari-fundo* concealed in your right hand. . .

2) . . . and bring one of the weights from your opponent's left armpit, across his back to his right armpit.

3) Take that weight with your left hand, and throw the opponent down using the same knack as in *Koshi-guruma*.

4) My opponent falls to the ground.



1)



2)



3)



4)

5) Next, with both hands still holding on to the weights, strike into *Butsumetsu*.

6) *Koshi-guruma* can also be done with a *Shinobi-zue*, (a hollow staff with a chain concealed inside). Wrap the weight around the opponent's body. This is an oral tradition.



5)



6)

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