

# *Hirokazu Kanazawa*

## *10th Dan*

**M**uch has been written over the years about *Hirokazu Kanazawa*, one of the last remaining students of the ‘father of modern-day *Karate*’, *Gichin Funakoshi*. To suggest he has become a legend in his own lifetime would be no exaggeration, and as he approaches his eighty-sixth birthday, his schedule of world-wide travel has finally come to an end.

He was born on 3rd May 1931 the sixth of eight children in the tiny village of *Moshi*. It lies close to the town of *Omoto* in *Iwate Prefecture*, northern *Honshu*. Tragedy struck the *Kanazawa* household in 1947 when *Hirokazu*’s father, *Kanbei*, died suddenly of a massive heart-attack. His mother, *Masue*, was understandingly heart broken. Responsibility for the family fell to *Tatsuo*, *Hirokazu*’s elder brother.

Five years later, in 1952, whilst attending *Takushoku University*, he joined the *Takushoku (Takudai) Karate Club*. His instructors were those celebrated *Karateka*, *Teruyuki Okazaki* and *Hidetaka Nishiyama*.

Towards the end of 1953 he took his *Shodan* under an illustrious board of examiners, headed by none other than *Gichin Funakoshi*. Also present that day were *Isao Obata* from *Keio University*, *Toshio Kamata* and *Hiroshi Noguchi* representing *Waseda University*, and of course, *Masatoshi Nakayama*. On that occasion his *Tokui Kata* was *Bassai-Dai* which he performed in exemplary fashion, and he was awarded his Black-Belt.

In 1954, he advanced to *Nidan*, taking the examination at the *Waseda Dōjō*. He chose *Kanku-Dai* for his *Tokui Kata*, a good choice considering his height and physique. It wasn’t until April in