

warm smile and beckoned me come and sit alongside him. He spoke no English and I very little Japanese, but somehow we managed to communicate.

The following Saturday was to be a special day in the Japanese *Karate* calendar. An All-Styles Championship between East and West Japan was scheduled to take place at the *Budōkan*, and *Yamaguchi* was to be the guest of honour. He absolutely insisted that I should accompany him as *his* guest — I was dumbfounded!

At *Korakuen* I left the train, but not before initiating the deepest and most reverent bow I could muster, and with a promise to meet him the following Saturday at 7.00pm.

I arrived a little after six and waited outside the main entrance for ‘*The Master*’ to come. The *Budōkan* (Home of Martial Arts) was packed to capacity and I noticed many people being turned away. Precisely at 7.00pm he arrived. I felt nervous and wondered if he would even remember the chance meeting with the *Gaigin* (foreigner) days earlier on the *Chuo Line*.

To my absolute astonishment, he smiled broadly when he saw me and gestured that I should walk alongside him. Quite suddenly we were in the arena and I dropped back behind him as thousands of people rose to their feet to give him a standing ovation. Hours later, after a most memorable evening, I left the *Budokan* and walked home through the busy Tokyo streets. At times it all seemed like a dream, but I knew it wasn’t and I felt very honored indeed.

I had read so much about this man, who was born in *Kyushu* in 1909 and was one of ten children. It was a *Mr. Maruta*, a carpenter from Okinawa who first taught him the basics of *Karate* during his third year at primary school.

In 1931 at the age of twenty-two, *Gogen Yamaguchi* met *Chojun Miyagi* for the first time and began training with him. In the late 1930’s and early 1940’s, he worked for the Japanese Government as an administrator in Manchuria. With the ending of World War II in 1945, he was unfortunately captured by the Russians and detained in a labour camp. Two years later, in 1947, he was released and repatriated.

He became the most senior student of *Gōjū Ryu* in Japan and is