




KAZOKU

Moving Forward

By Jerry Figgiani

With the recent closing of the Nagamine Honbu Dojo in Naha, Okinawa, there is concern amongst Matsubayashi practitioners throughout the world regarding the direction in which Matsubayashi is going. In my travels, I have come across practitioners who are even considering changing styles because the Honbu Dojo has closed. I believe differently: I believe that the practitioners of Matsubayashi Shorin Ryu should just “stay the course.” There are many groups that are still strong and still practice the lineage of Grandmaster Shoshin Nagamine. In one of my previous columns in “Masters Magazine”, I wrote about the first American Black Belt in Matsubayashi Shorin Ryu promoted by Grandmaster Shoshin Nagamine, James K. Wax. James K. Wax passed away June 6, 2010. In researching and speaking with students of James K. Wax, I had the opportunity to speak with the highest ranking Matsubayashi Shorin Ryu black belt currently in the United States, Hanshi Frank Grant who was a direct student of James K. Wax.

Hanshi Grant heads up the World Shorin Ryu Karate Federation. He also had a direct relationship with Grandmaster Shoshin Nagamine training di-

rectly underneath him in 1966 for a six-month period. Like many organizations in Karate, Matsubayashi has its share of break-off groups. When there are so many strong personalities involved, this is often the case. Regardless of the circumstances, I had the chance to ask Hanshi Grant some personal questions. The one thing that stood out was...that amongst all the break-ups and splinter groups, he is determined to just move in his mission to promote Matsubayashi Shorin Ryu. I thought to myself, “How great is that.” Just follow the philosophy of our own system to keep moving forward and to never back down. This is what Hanshi Grant is doing. In his new book, “My Promise to the Master”, Hanshi Grant talks about taking Shorin Ryu to the next level. This is what he promised Grandmaster Shoshin Nagamine. It is with this philosophy I believe we should all be doing our part to keep Matsubayashi Shorin Ryu strong. Instructors need to continue to promote Shorin Ryu, teach strong classes, pass down the knowledge and history from what our senseis taught us, and take the advice from Hanshi Grant to “just move forward.” 



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