



On Saturday October 14 and Sunday October 15, 2017 I attended in Florence the international memorial event dedicated to my Master, Tetsuji Murakami Sensei for the 90th year since his birth, 60th year since his arrival in Europe and 30th year since his death. The wonderful organization of the event allowed all of us, historical students and many other younger practitioners, to spend pleasant moments together in the memory of a great Master. He has marked the hearts of many, who have followed him on the way of KarateDo when he was alive and then continued, each with his commitment to divulge his teachings. The premature disappearance of Murakami Sensei, left us all in a great void. Personally the Master was for me as a father: when I met the Master I had already lost my father several years earlier. As Mrs Nieves Murakami said in her nice speech, over the past 30 years, each one of us has had to adapt in his own way to his absence and for everyone it has been difficult and painful, but we have succeeded in the most important thing: to continue.

Murakami Sensei during the event was described by some as "excessively severe". Frankly, I never perceived the Master as overly rigorous. In my opinion he was fairly strict, with the necessary and indispensable rigor to introduce and accompany his students through a "hard" journey: the way of life, which offers no one a discount and where an error can mean paying a high price. His rigor, for me, was always accompanied by a deep feeling of paternal affection and his severity was necessary and indispensable to lead his students towards an inner change, one of the most difficult to undertake.

I have always participated with great joy and enthusiasm with my students in all the stages with the Master in Italy, as well as some stages in Paris and Serignan. After each stage I have always come home more enriched and more motivated than before and brought with me many new tasks to be done: new techniques, techniques to correct and refine, new combinations, new kata, new visions and many other things to dedicate myself to together with my students. I think that the perception of "excessive severity" of the Master by someone could have arisen from misunderstandings. The Master usually spoke little, and he usually said only what was necessary, and probably some did not give the right weight and the right consideration to the words of the Master.

I remember as if it were yesterday, during a stage in Prato in March 1982, when the Master told us that to improve our technique it was also necessary to investigate within us and for that reason it was necessary to practice the "seiza mokuso" and reach an hour per session. When I heard these words I was already eager to start this experience. At that time I already practiced a little meditation, but at most 10/15 minutes per session, and not every day. Back at home with those words carved in my mind, I immediately started working daily with enthusiasm at the project, involving my students as well.

It was an amazing experience that changed my life and to stay sit for one-hour in "seiza mokuso", I had needed about 10 months of daily sessions. It was an inner journey that introduced me into a new world, improved my inner state and for this I will be eternally grateful to the Master. It has been a tough journey, but it has allowed me to get closer to myself, relieve my inner tensions and improve my state of calm and in the years to come, I also improved relationships with others.

A year later, exactly on Saturday, May 14, 1983, always in Prato (I have a detailed diary of all the stages with the Master), at the stage with the Master, at one point of the lesson he asked us to stay sit in "seiza mokuso" for about 40/45 minutes. For me and for my students, who I had involved in this project, it

was a very positive experience and we were able to demonstrate to the Master that we had collected his indications and that we had exercised seiza mokuso with great commitment and determination, as he had asked us.

During this 40/45 minute session, with great amazement, I heard around me many who were having great difficulty and some who complained about the "excessive severity" of the Master. Probably a part of them had not been present at the previous year's training when the Master had instructed and invited to train at the "seiza mokuso", or some were there but had not understood the importance of the Master's message.

I believe that the reason, for which some persons perceived as "excessive" the severity of the Master's method in those years, has often been due to misunderstandings similar to those described above.

I wish to thank Mauro Ferrini and Claudio Vacchi for the fantastic organization of the not easy event and for having given us interesting historical documentation, and for letting us meet old companions of kihon, and above all for having given us the opportunity to remember all together Murakami Sensei. I wish to thank Mrs Nieves Murakami (Sensei's wife), who gave a wonderful speech and who is always a great pleasure for me to meet. I also wish to thank for their presence Carlos Hiroshi Murakami and Walter Murakami (son and grandson of the Master).

October 2017, Enzo Cellini