

## PERSONAL THOUGHTS AFTER 100 LESSONS

11.7.97

In November 1997 I achieved 100 lessons at the Honbu-dojō. It's hard to describe in words what I have learned during this time but it has certainly made a lasting impression on my karate, not just in the improvement of my technique but also in the development of my mental understanding, attitude, and character. There are times when I feel that I am only touching the surface, when I can only see the tip of the iceberg and other times when inspiration strikes and I reach a deeper level of understanding about a particular technique, kata or concept. I think the phrase "the more you learn, the less you know" describes the situation very well because if you think you know everything then you are most certainly missing the wider picture. This realization has come to me on several occasions, for example, the time when I discovered I was making a fundamental mistake in the basic lunge punch, or knowing that I still can't do Heian Shodan properly. Kanazawa-sensei once said to me that there are nearly 100 kata in karate and that he only knows twelve. When somebody of his experience and knowledge says something like that then I think it's about time we all started training harder and concentrate on learning how to walk instead of trying to fly.

Karate is not about having perfect technique, or about knowing every kata, or about winning competitions or even about gaining the next rank. It is ultimately about improving yourself as a person in both your character and your health and gaining enjoyment from this at the same time. With this in mind, I'm ready to go for the next 100 lessons and with a lot of effort, a bit of luck and a few backhanders, maybe I'll even get my next grade!!