

Taka Nakajima

- Taka first visited Tasmania in 1972, on tour with a Sydney judo club, having earlier lived in NZ for a year as the house guest of the late John Bonniface, who met Taka at Kokushikan University in Tokyo.
- Taka made an impression on that first visit to Tasmania and the then President of the State judo body, Maurice Appleyard, took the initiative and instigated arrangements to have Taka come back and spend the last 6 months of his two-year's leave from Kokushikan, in Tasmania.
- He was happy with that arrangement and arrived back in Hobart in October 1972.
- In order to satisfy certain 'self-supporting' Immigration Dept. rules, the State judo organisation found employment for Taka at the Devon Nursery at Austins Ferry and were thus able to guarantee Taka a self-supporting income.
- With pleasant nursery surroundings and kind colleagues, Taka considered that working and lunching at the Devon Nursery made "*every day picnic!*"
- Whilst Taka enjoyed his time at the nursery, and tackled all tasks with enthusiasm, he confessed he had a morbid fear of earthworms! He simply could not bring himself to handle them, which was somewhat of a handicap for a nurseryman. His colleagues chided him about being a *tough martial-arts expert but afraid of a little worm!* Doubtless he found himself confronted with the animals in all sorts of circumstances – shoes, lunch-box, gloves.....
- Taka quickly made friends and fell in love with our island State, so much so that he asked if he could move here 'permanently' and work here!
- It was agreed by all, that every effort should be made to keep him here, or at least get him back. He was highly regarded, and his judo teaching was of a very high order.
- Robert Wedd and Tim Waters, duly arranged a number of meetings with senior police officers and government officials, as well as the Police Minister Bill Nielsen MHA, and Police Commissioner Eric Knowles. Taka gave demonstrations of his self-defence and personnel-control techniques for police work. Several 'how' and 'what-if' questions were put and answered, either by description or - more effectively – by demonstration.
- Superintendent Keith Viney, (who was Acting Assistant Commissioner at the time), was particularly impressed by the quiet and un-fussy approach demonstrated by Taka. Clearly, one did not have to be big in stature to bring about effective control or defusing of a confrontational situation.
- Commissioner Knowles was keen to have his officers learn 'situation control' techniques that did not rely on force or violence and although he was doubtful about a "martial art" being the answer, Taka's demonstrations, (in which he showed his basic aim was to 'defuse' rather than antagonise), put his mind at rest. Supt. Viney was convinced that this was the way training should go, and Taka was the man and he said so in his report to the Commissioner.

- Taka's approach to situation-control sat very well with the expressed views of Commissioner Knowles
- After 6 months, Taka returned to Japan in April 1973, leaving behind many friends and a judo and aikido fraternity keen to see him return on a long-term basis.
- He sailed out of Hobart on board the *Empress of Australia* to Sydney then by air for the remainder of the return journey. It was an emotional time for him, and in the hours before departure he 'sank a few' with friends, such that by departure time, he was in a vocal mood and climbed up on the boat's safety rail, singing in a loud voice and waving heartily as the boat pulled away. Everyone had no doubt that he would fall overboard – but luck was with him.
- With the Minister and Commissioner now on side, it remained only to go through the recruitment process.
- Eventually, applications were called in October 1974 for the position of *Physical Education Training Instructor – Rokeby Police Academy*
- Three applications were received and after due consideration, it was clear that Taka was the man, and he was duly appointed on the 4th of November 1974, and took up his position with Tasmania Police, as the Academy's *Physical Education Training Instructor* in January 1975 with the following duties:
 - To play a major role in the formulation of self-defence training within the Tasmania Police Force
 - To prepare training curriculum material
 - To liaise with PE staff in relation to self-defence training
 - To undertake self-defence training of police officers, primarily at the Academy, and
 - To assist in giving supplementary instruction and coaching in gymnastics, team sports, track and field and swimming.
- Taka's appointment was seen as an innovation for police training and it was important that the members of the force – and public – be given the opportunity to not just meet the new man, but to be shown what he could do and how his skills would enhance the training of police officers. To this end, Taka was taken around the State accompanied by Gerald Freeman (who did the introductions) and Robert Wedd, (who would act as Taka's "attacker" in the demonstrations).
- All went well until they got to Queenstown where, at question time, a rather large police officer rose from his seat and lumbered down to where Taka was standing and, without saying anything, made a rushing grab at him. The next thing he knew he was on the floor, unharmed and looking up at Taka's broad grin. He got to his feet and as he made his way back to his seat, he was heard to mutter 'well, I guess that answers my question'.
- Shortly before his move back to Tasmania to take up his position, Taka married Aiko Okada (a former judo student) and they sailed out to Tasmania as a honeymoon couple, departing Japan 10th December 1974.

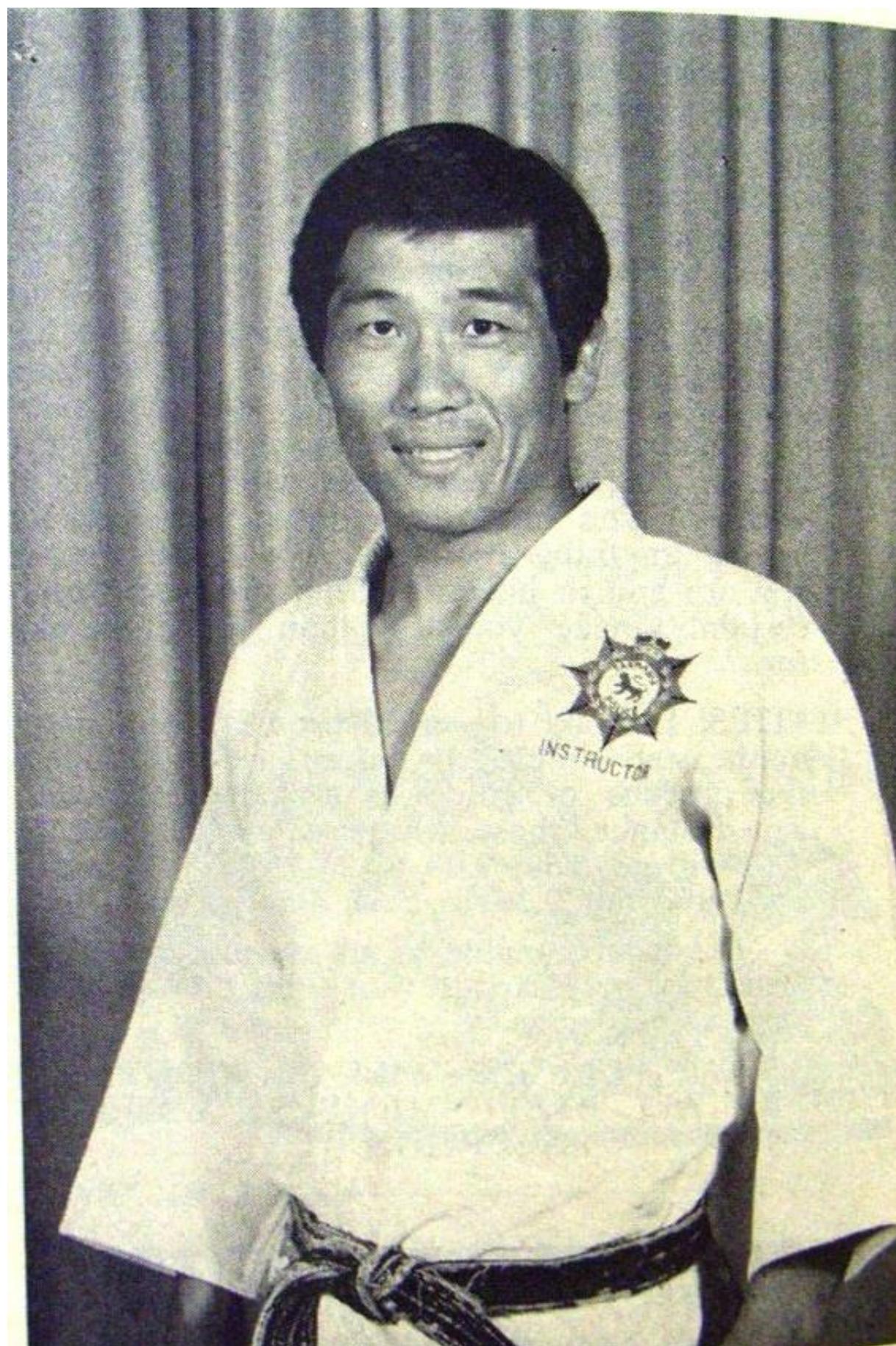
- Robert and Bronwen Wedd who, by now were well known to Taka, having looked after him during his initial six months sojourn, had prepared a small flat under their Rose Bay home for the Nakajima newlyweds
- A move to a police house at Rokeby was some way off, besides, the Academy was still in the old building in Argyle St., and remained there until the move to the new complex at Rokeby in late 1975.
- After some 22 months at the Wedd's flat, Taka and Aiko eventually moved to House No. 3 at the Academy campus.
- Their son Goshu was born whilst living at the Rose Bay flat. Their two girls Tomoko and Kei were born whilst living at Rokeby.
- Whilst Taka's initial work was to provide PE and self-defence training for cadets and junior officers, his abilities were quickly recognised and he became involved in self-defence training for the *Armed Offenders Squad* (which became the *Special Weapons and Operations Squad* and then the *Special Operations Group*).
- After the Academy moved to Rokeby, things really got moving and Taka became an integral part of the police training system and by mid-1976 his training embraced all persons attending the Academy.
- In December 1976, Taka was granted approval to return to Japan for a two-week 'study tour' accompanied by Aiko and their infant son Goshu. He sought to up-date his knowledge and skills, grade to 6th. Dan judo and see his family. Costs were subsidised and he left late January 1977. He achieved all objectives. Taka now holds the high judo rank of 7th. Dan.
- Taka undertook his police work very seriously. His influence is regarded as being very "positive" and his motivation of cadets was real and this resulted in their gaining confidence in being able to look after themselves in a physical conflict. He inspired those around him *to be the best they could be*.
- His basic approach to PE teaching was to ensure the student was brought up to a good general level of fitness and he introduced a structured testing and monitoring regime for fitness assessment and curriculum refinement.
- Within a few months of taking up his position, the *Academy Judo Club* was established with the support of Supt. Col. Fogarty and others, and it went from strength to strength. It not only attracted police officers, but many of Tasmania's best judo players who went on to win State and National championships.
- The establishment of the Club, led to its hosting what was to become the legendary "Easter Judo Camps", which lasted effectively until 1984, when they transferred to Melbourne.
- In 2014 Taka returned to Hobart, leading a special anniversary Easter Judo Camp and renewing old friendships.

- By 1981, Taka's son Goshu was approaching school age and the decision was taken to return to Japan for his primary-school education. (His high school years were later spent at Melbourne Grammar, which was arranged by Arthur and Suzie Moorshead who were leading judo identities and who had earlier become friends of Taka and Aiko).
- Taka and Aiko returned to Japan with their children, at the end of September 1981.
- His police-training legacy is acknowledged as:

Having made a real and tangible contribution to police training generally
 The setting of fitness standards
 The establishment of a fitness-monitoring and sports-training regime
 The technical training of officers in matters relating to self-defence and personnel-control
 Inspiring cadets and other officers, to be the best they can be
 Instilling an awareness for personal discipline and self-control when under pressure, and
 Being an outstanding representative for the Rokeby Academy.

- Taka was succeeded by Toshi Takemura and then later, by Yoshi Matsunaga, who was the last international to the post.
- Whilst the technical training of police cadets and adult recruits has undergone significant changes since Taka's time, elements of what he developed and put in place, especially his training objectives and philosophy, remain.
- As the principal instructor of the Academy Judo Club and State judo coach, Taka made a huge contribution to the skills and achievements of Tasmanian judo players, with many of his protégés achieving major championships.
- His contribution to the study of traditional aikido has also been outstanding, with the consolidation of technical directions and the establishment of a formal training syllabus and an internationally-recognised grading system. His twice-yearly, away-from-home aikido training weekends became legendary and were continued for many years after his return to Japan
- Since his return to Japan in 1981 and re-joining the staff at Kokushikan University, Taka has gone on to achieve many honours and hold several important positions, including:
 - Prof. of Budo Studies at Kokushikan
 - Director of the All-Japan Universities Judo Federation
 - Director of the Japanese Academy of Budo
 - Executive Member of the International Association for Budo for the Disabled
- Taka has also presented several well-received papers at international conferences on judo coaching, sports science and judo research, and he lectured at the World Seminar of the Budo Movement for Peace in Greece in 2004.

- In recent years, he has contributed greatly to the better understanding of the problems of the disabled and how they can safely take part in the study and practice of martial arts.
- Forty five-plus years on, Taka's legacy remains primarily in the hearts of those whose instructor he was; be it police training, judo or aikido. Many of those he taught have moved away or taken a new direction in life. Indeed, very few of his original students are still actively engaged in judo or aikido. A few senior police officers remember him well, but most of the current generation have never met him.
- During the 2014 return to Hobart, Taka was the guest of honour at a special dinner hosted by Commissioner Darren Hine at the Rokeby Police Academy. At the conclusion of his welcome speech, Commissioner Hine said – *“I note with satisfaction, that many of Taka's police colleagues and friends are with us tonight at this dinner to welcome him back for the celebration the 40th. Anniversary of his appointment to the staff of Tasmania Police. I served as a cadet under Taka during his final year at the Academy and I can only say that Tasmania Police was indeed fortunate to be able to secure his services for the seven-plus years he was with us”*.
- *“Welcome home Taka!”*



Taka October 1975



Taka and Inspector Dave Chambers in Japan 1999.