

Dear IKO members,

I hope all of you are maintaining your health and safety.

Coronavirus has spread rapidly around the world since the beginning of 2020, with nearly every country on earth affected. I would like to send my sincere condolences to the families of those who have passed away and wish all who are infected to get well quickly. My deep respect and gratitude go out to the medical professionals and first responders, who risk their lives 24/7 in this global battle.

The 2020 Tokyo Olympics has been postponed till 2021, and our International Karate Friendship along with many more IKO annual events around the world are either cancelled or postponed indefinitely. Though we cannot gather together as a global karate family and share our art and accomplishments, we should still continue to embody our founder, Sosai Mas Oyama's teachings, especially as we approach the 26th Memorial of his passing, on this April 26.

Sosai Oyama taught us to have strong determination and to be proactive to act positively. At this moment, with millions of people social distancing from one another, and people in virus hotspots isolating in their homes, stress and anxiety can dominate the mindset. We must maintain our good mental and physical health in order to fight the virus with a strong and positive attitude. Budo not only develops our physical strength, but in particular, our strength of character. Even after we have conquered this virus, we should continue to work hand in hand in good health and peace to help those around us and contribute to society. Please remember Sosai Oyama's saying, "Do good to others with filial piety".

I am reminded of Sosai Mas Oyama's legendary solitary mountain training. By purposely enduring self-isolation and hard physical training, Sosai was able to clear his mind, focus on training, and temper his body into steel. From his book, 'What is Karate', Sosai wrote that his master advised him to 'Withdraw from the world. Seek solace in nature. Retreat to some lone mountain hideout to train your mind and body. Temper the heated iron before it gets cold, so train yourself in self-discipline...if you wish to be a great man.' Sosai undertook that experience with trepidation but emerged having undergone something life changing.

I am encouraged to hear that many athletes around the world, including our IKO members are continuing their training on their own at home, or outdoors in nature, and many IKO Branches have begun teaching group classes to their members remotely to keep the communal spirit of the Dojo alive. It is imperative for all of us to continue our daily training any way we can, to maintain good physical and mental health, and keep our immune systems strong.

All IKO members, the IKO Kyokushinkaikan, and our entire community, as a big Kyokushin family, be safe and strong to overcome this unprecedented time in our lives. Let us fight together against this invisible virus with "Osu no Seishin", the

'Kyokushin Spirit' of 'Perseverance through Adversity'. We will emerge from this experience with greater wisdom, harmony and strength.

I am looking forward to seeing and training with you all soon.

Osu!

Kancho Shokei Matsui
President, IKO Kyokushinkaikan

April 20th, 2020