

# FIIGHTERS

The Martial Arts Magazine

60p

**SAKAGAMI 6th DAN**

**WADO RYU'S DYNAMIC MAN OF PEACE**



**Stretching for Dynamite Kicking**



# KUNIAKE SAKAGAMI 6th DAN

*Wado Ryu's  
Dynamic Man  
of Peace*

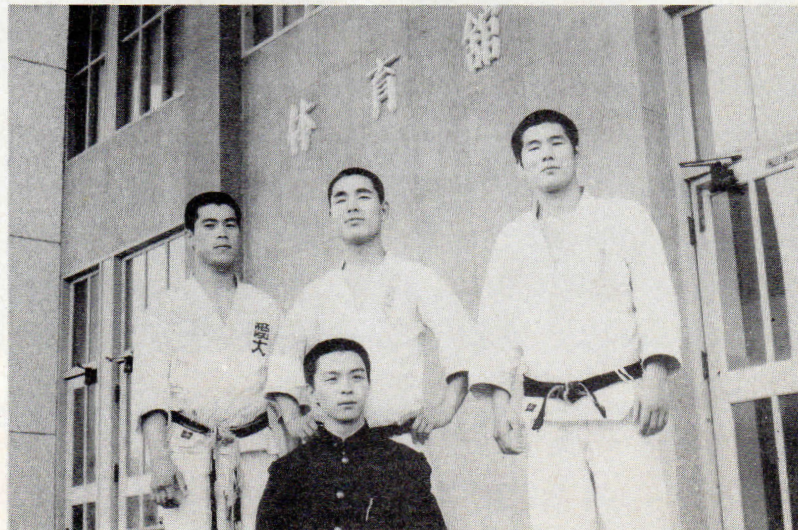


The "young" Sakagami in 1965 showing all the potential that the future years have proved.

WHEN you meet Sensei Sakagami for the first time you do not realise what a good karateka this quiet, polite, unassuming man is. Very popular with all his students and revered by many other martial artists, Sakagami must be a model for other martial artists to base themselves upon.

Sakagami trained in karate in 1959 when he was 14 years old. He first trained under a local black belt for two years and then trained under Sensei Tatsuo Suzuki. At this time karate was not nearly as fashionable as it is now, and clubs in Sensei Sakagami's home town were few and far between. In fact at this time karate was virtually unknown as a martial art in Japan. Originally Sensei Sakagami wanted to take up boxing, however as there were no boxing gym's where he lived so he

Sakagami (far left) outside the university with his friends after the 1966 championships.





decided to train in karate. At the first dojo in which Sensei Sakagami trained there were 25 to 30 regular students and Sensei Sakagami was one of the youngest.

We asked Sensei Sakagami the age he felt was the minimum for a child to take up karate, he replied: "It is a bit difficult to say as it depends upon the child. However in my opinion the minimum age should be about 12 years old. It is essential that a child is mentally able to cope with the training and is mature enough to understand it."

## Harder Training

Sensei Sakagami considers that his early karate training was much harder than the norm of today. He said: "It was much harder physically and especially mentally because dojo discipline and etiquette at that time was very strict. There was never a moment of let up, never a moment to relax in the slightest."

Sensei Sakagami gained his brown belt prior to starting his training with Sensei Suzuki. Sensei Suzuki was the karate instructor at the local Aichi University. While still at high school Sensei Sakagami went to the University during the daytime to train. In the evening he would train at the local private dojo. He trained in the private dojo three times per week and in the University he would train four times per week.

Sensei Sakagami eventually entered the University to study economics. He took part in many tournaments and championships and reached the quarter finals of the All-Japan University Championships. When we asked him what he thought about tournament fighting today he replied: "It is essential to have tournament fighting to popularise karate, however karate has really changed from a martial art to a sport."

We asked him if he thought that just concentrating on a couple of techniques for tournament fighting was a bad thing. He continued; "It is not a bad thing to concentrate on one technique if you think in terms of contest fighting. However if you think of your karate in terms of a martial art then you have to learn all aspects and perfect them."

We asked if Sensei Sakagami ever used boxing techniques? He replied: "Even now I love to watch boxing, some of the movements are really good. I think that karate can draw

from boxing movements especially some of the scientific movements that are included in boxing. When I watch boxing I not only enjoy the slugging but I watch carefully what sort of technique is used and I often wonder if I could take that boxing technique into karate."

Sensei Sakagami gained his first dan before he entered university. However at that time even if you were a black belt you had to wear a white belt when entering the university karate club. The training in the university karate club was very hard. There was usually an 80% drop-out rate within six months. The training was very simple at this time. It comprised running for half an hour, then basic techniques for one hour then kicks for one hour, kata for half an hour and freefighting for half an hour. This was the schedule every day.

During his training Sensei Sakagami cracked his ribs a couple of times, broke his nose once and sustained many cuts and bruises. We asked how essential Sensei Sakagami considered makiwara practice: "It is very important to do makiwara practice, it improves the hip movement and makes the wrists stronger. Of course you have to use the makiwara correctly and punch correctly."

After four years Sensei Sakagami left university having gained his third dan. He continued training in Japan under his senior grades with Sensei Ohtijuka visiting the dojo every three months. At this time Sensei Tatsuo Suzuki had already left Japan to come over to England and it was about eight months after he left university that Sensei Sakagami was asked if he would like to teach in England.

He first went to teach in West Germany in 1967 and was very impressed with the keenness shown by the students at that time in both West Germany and Great Britain. Sensei

Sakagami's favourite techniques are left counter-punch and left mawashi-geri and right front kick.

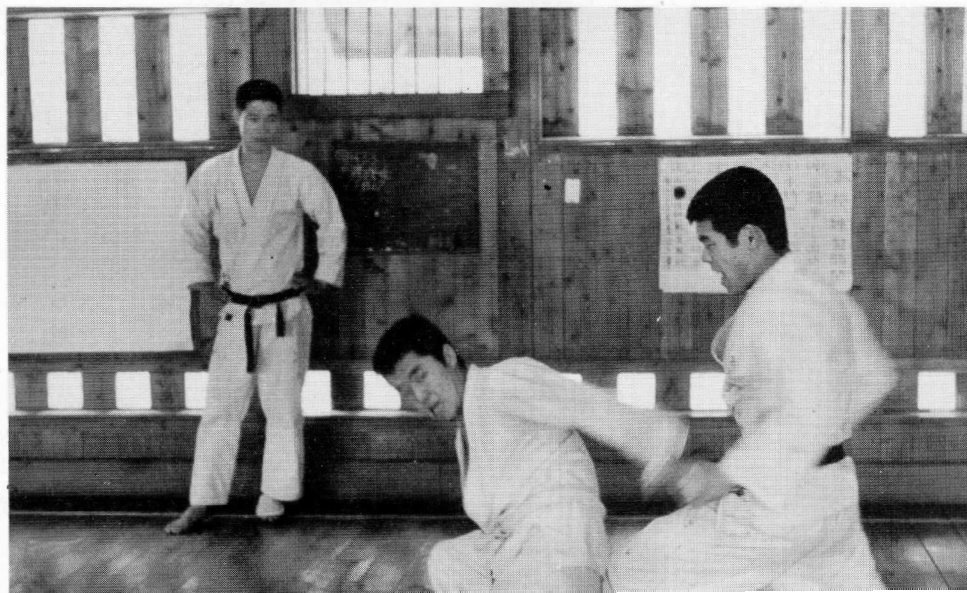
We asked Sensei Sakagami if he had ever been attacked in the street. He stated: "Not in England but in Japan yes, several times! When I was about 20 years old I had plenty of confidence and got involved in a few street fights. If it happened to me now I would rather avoid getting involved, but at that time I was short tempered and eager to fight. I think that I have now matured!"

Sensei Sakagami now trains every day and concentrates on physical fitness. He maintains that running is one of the most important parts of physical fitness.

## Full contact karate

We asked Sensei Sakagami about his thoughts on full contact karate. He replied: "It's really a sport like boxing. Frankly if I was entering someone into full contact I would prefer to put an ex-boxer into a contest! I would like to train someone for full contact. If I had a student who would like to take part in full contact and I was to teach him then I would have to change the whole system of the training. You would put him in a boxing gym concentrating on heavy bags and then there would be the martial arts side of training. The importance is to have someone as a basis who is talented and has natural ability."

The last request that Sensei Sakagami made in our interview was that the politics in karate be sorted out as quickly as possible and that instructors be left to do the job they enjoy doing without any interference from the martial arts politicians! We at *FIGHTERS* echo that sentiment completely!



# A SELECTION OF SENSEI SAKAGAMI'S FAVOURITE COMBINATION TECHNIQUES

## *1st Sequence*



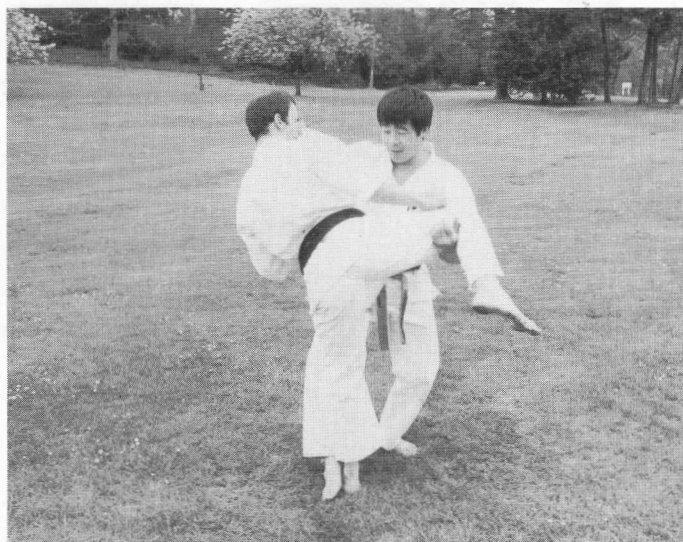
Attacker and defender in fighting stance.



Attacker completes mawashigeri to defender who sidesteps, blocks and completes punch to face.



Defender then grabs shoulder of opponent.

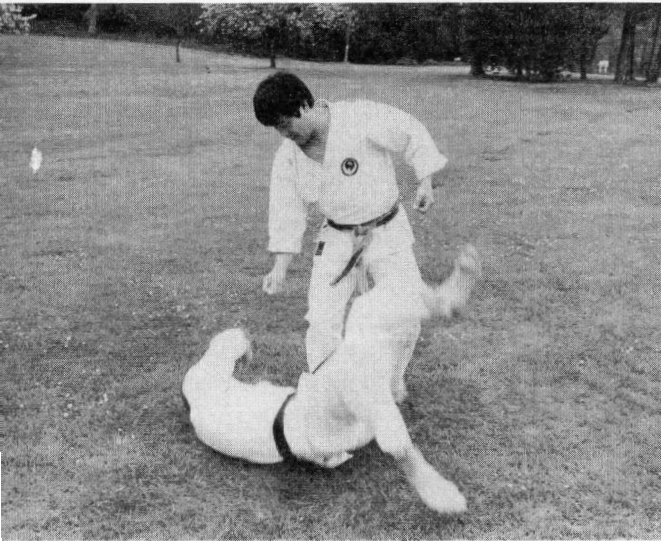


And then under right knee joint.

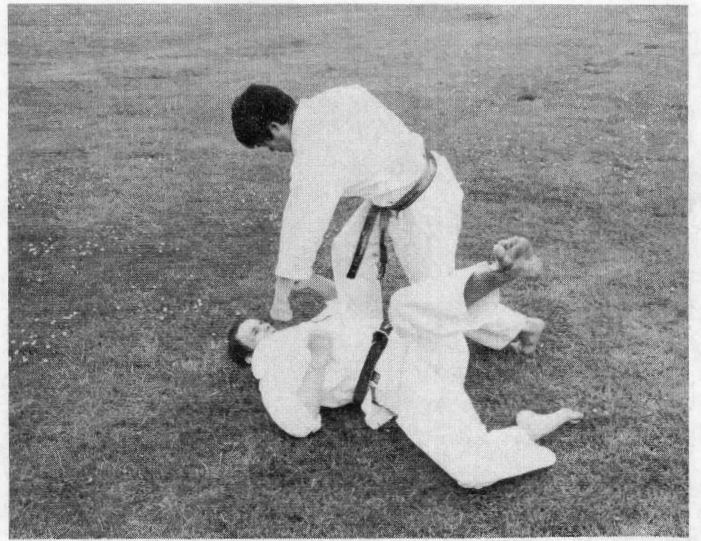




And throws opponent.

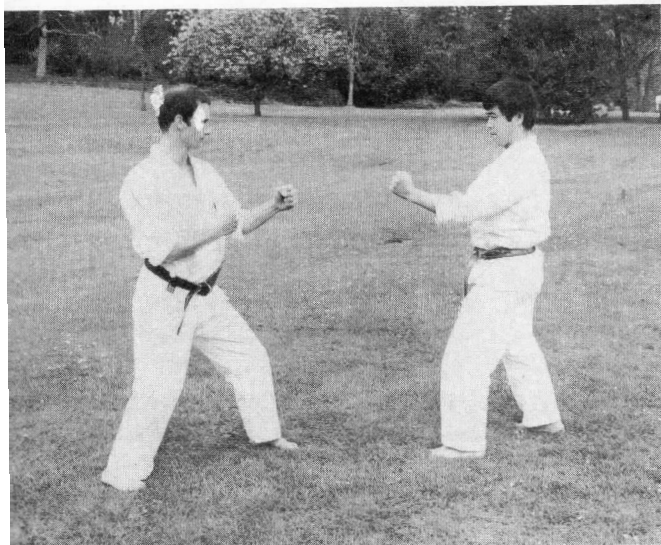


Ready to finish off opponent.

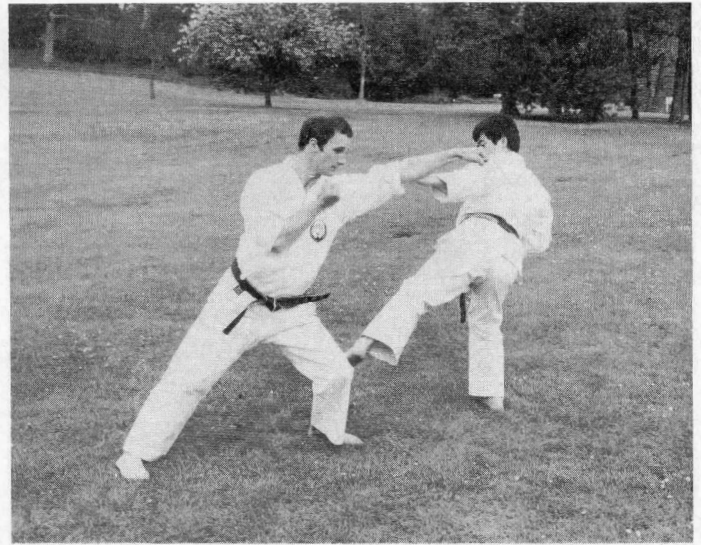


Now final punch to face.

## End Sequence

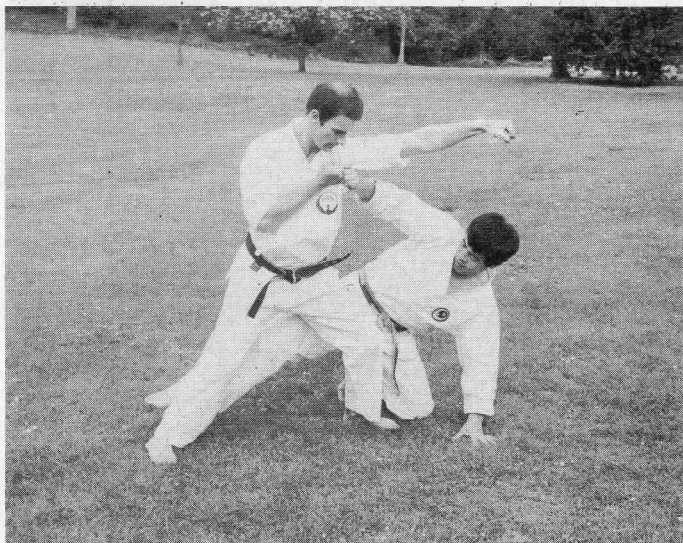


Attacker and defender in fighting stance.



Attacker completes lunge punch to defender's face. Defender blocks and completes side kick to attacker's left knee joint.





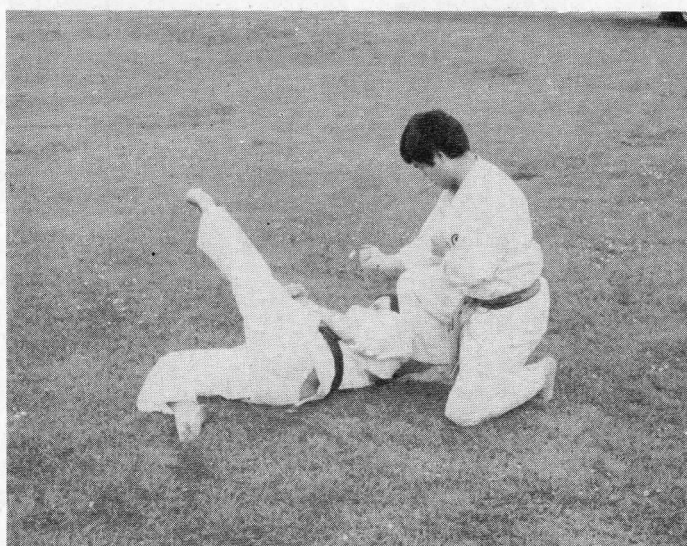
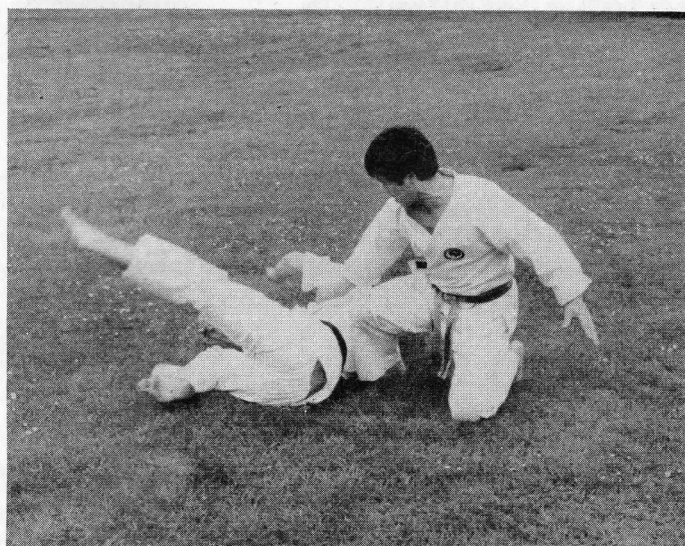
Then moves in under opponent grabbing him by the chest with right hand.



With a circular movement he throws him.



Throw is completed.



Defender completes back fist to opponent's face.

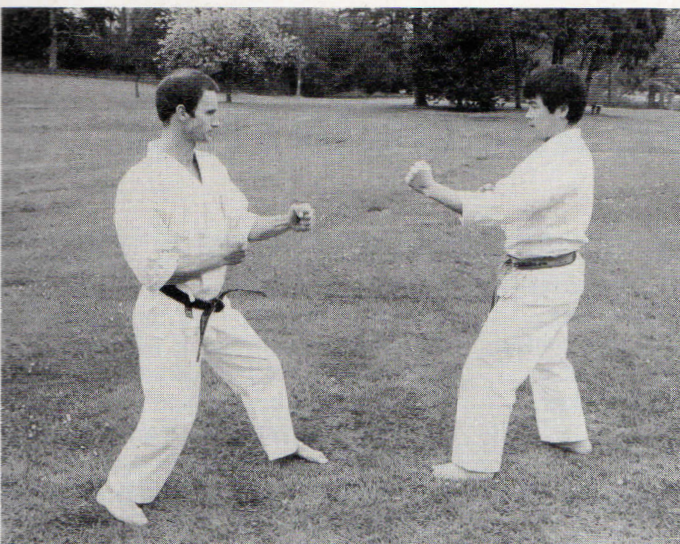
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**THIS EXCITING AND  
OF SENSEI KUN  
FAVOURITE  
TECHNIQUES WILL  
IN FUTURE**

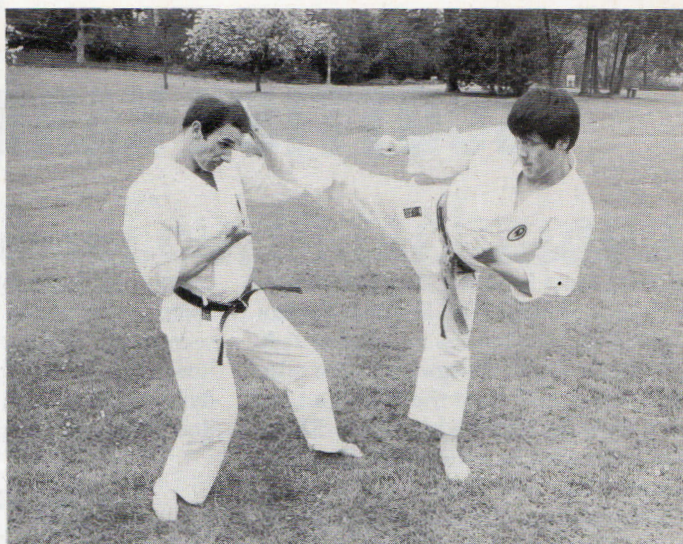
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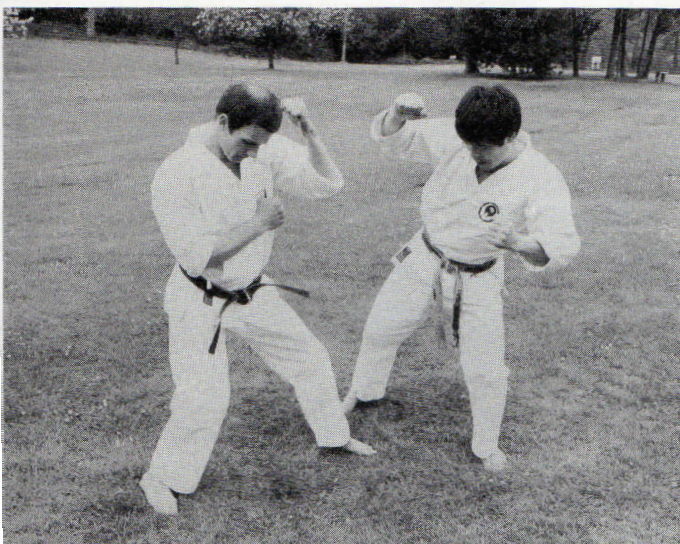
# 3rd Sequence



Attacker and defender in fighting stance.



Attacker completes mawashigeri with right leg, defender protects face with block.

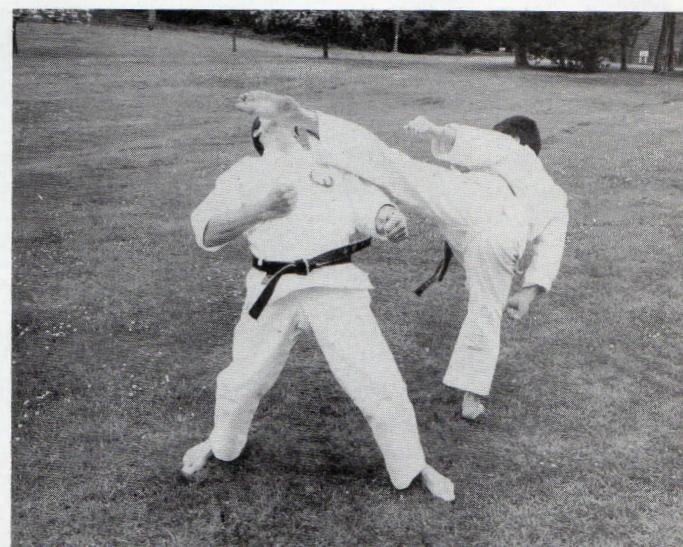


Attacker moves in to complete Ashibarai.



Then completing left Mawashigeri finishing off opponent.

**EXCLUSIVE SERIES**  
**THE SAKAGAMI'S**  
**COMBINATION**  
**CONTINUED**  
**ISSUES**



Knocking opponent off balance.

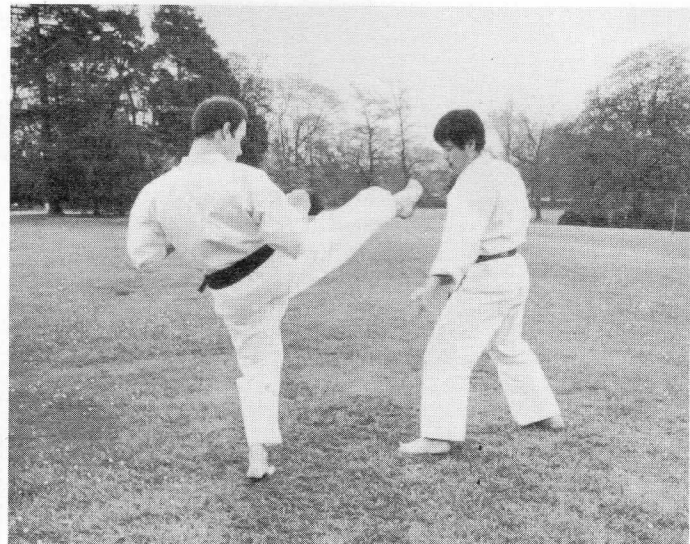


# A FURTHER SELECTION OF SENSEI SAKAGAMI'S FAVOURITE COMBINATION TECHNIQUES

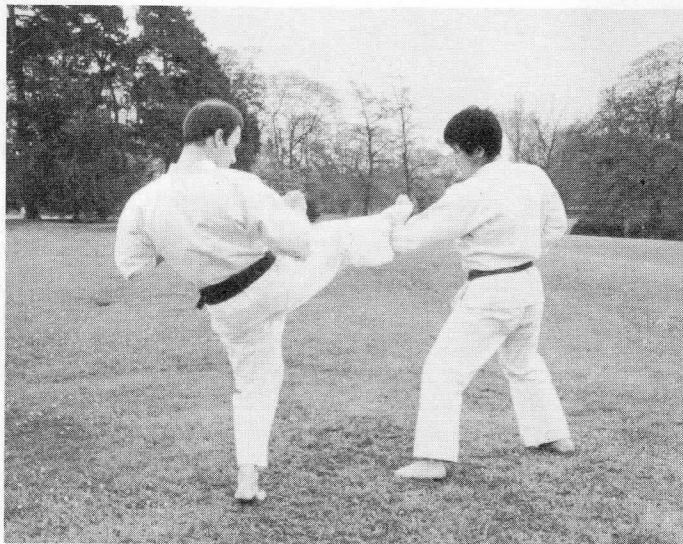
## 4th Sequence



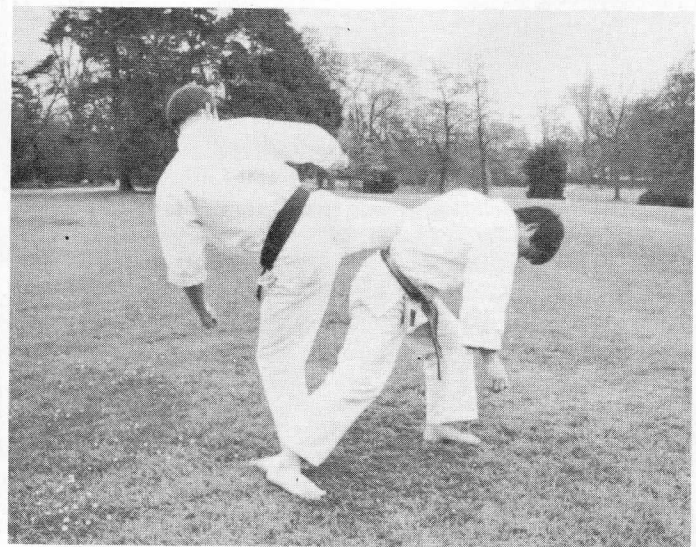
Attacker and defender in fighting stance.



Attacker completes front kick which defender blocks and deflects.



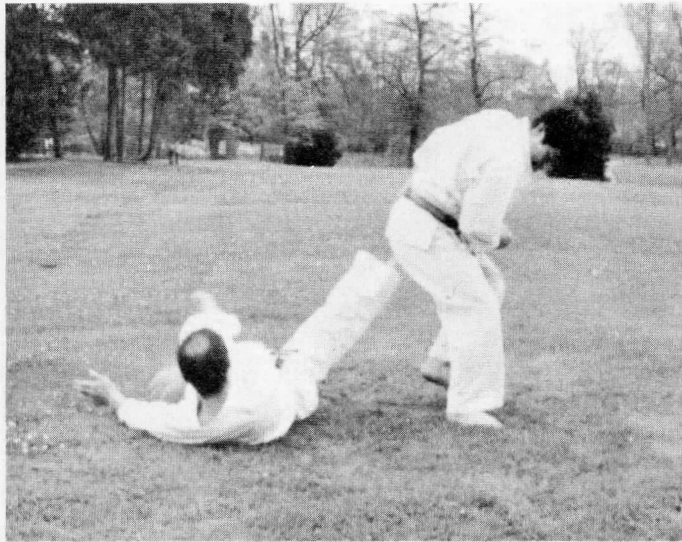
Defender turns to position right leg ready to sweep.







With a hip twist the sweep is complete.



Finishing opponent with a punch to the solar plexus.

## 5th Sequence



Attacker and defender in fighting stance.

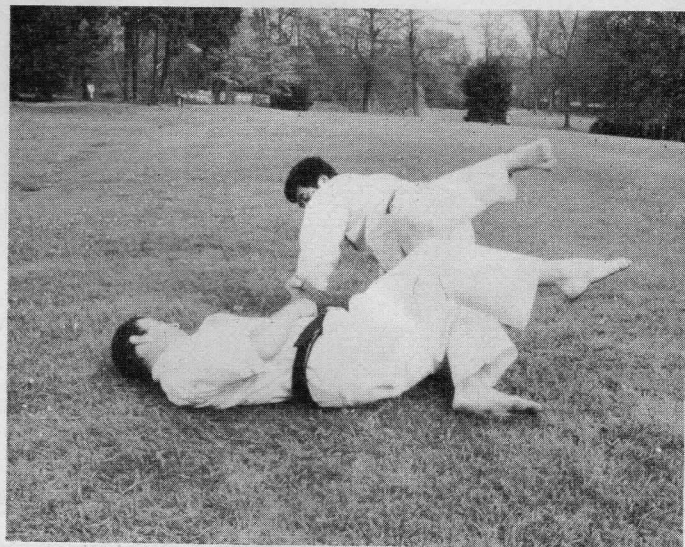
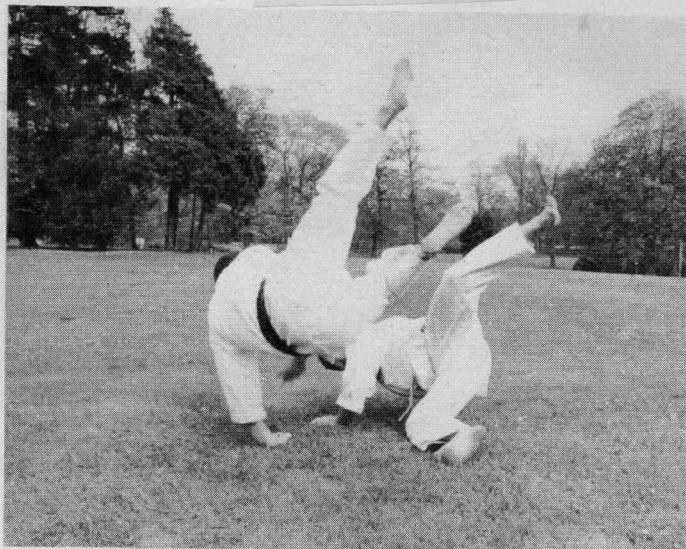


Attacker completes Mawashien to defender who moves on the ground, positioning his left foot behind attacker's left foot.

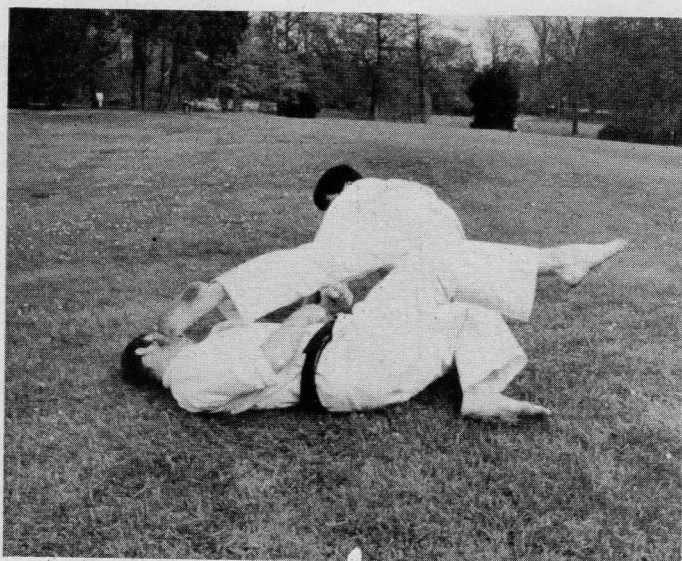




Defender's leg is moved back in sweep to throw attacker off balance.



Defender then brings left foot back to complete Mawashien to face to finish opponent.

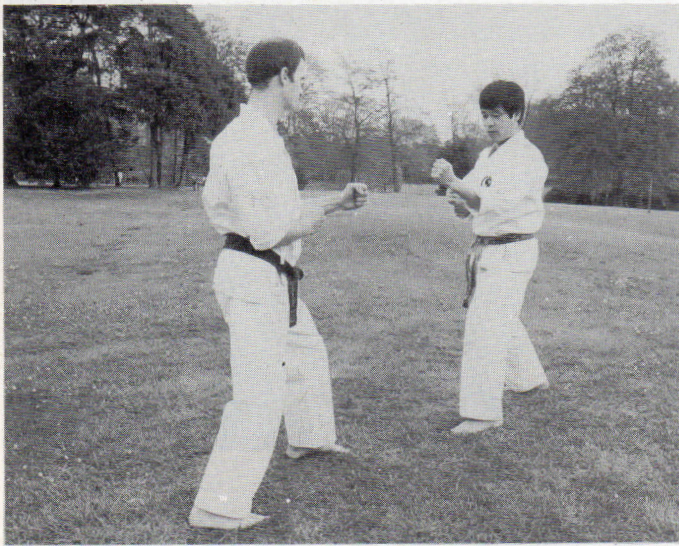


**This exclusive series  
will be continued  
in next months  
issue.**

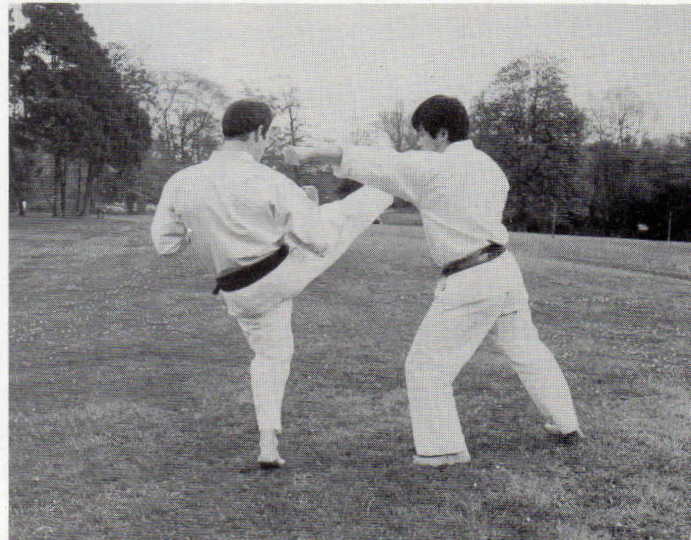


# THE FINAL SELECTION OF **SENSEI SAKAGAMI'S** FAVOURITE COMBINATION TECHNIQUES

## 6th sequence



Attacker and defender in fighting stance.



Attacker completes front kick; defender side steps and completes punch to face.



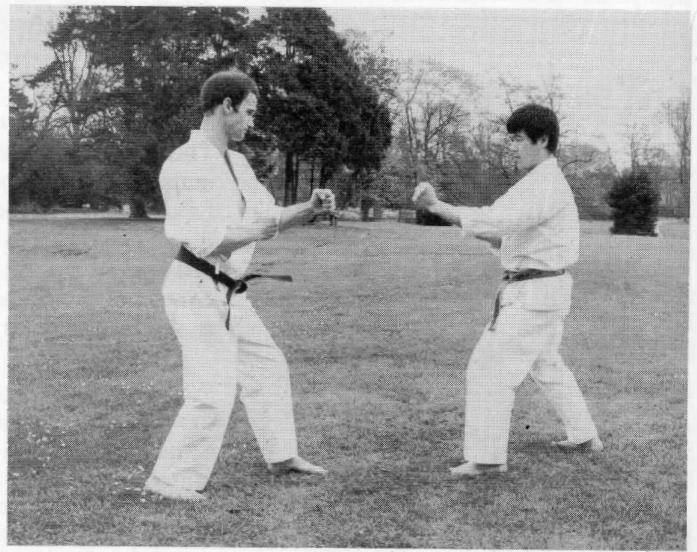
Defender then redistributes his balance . . .



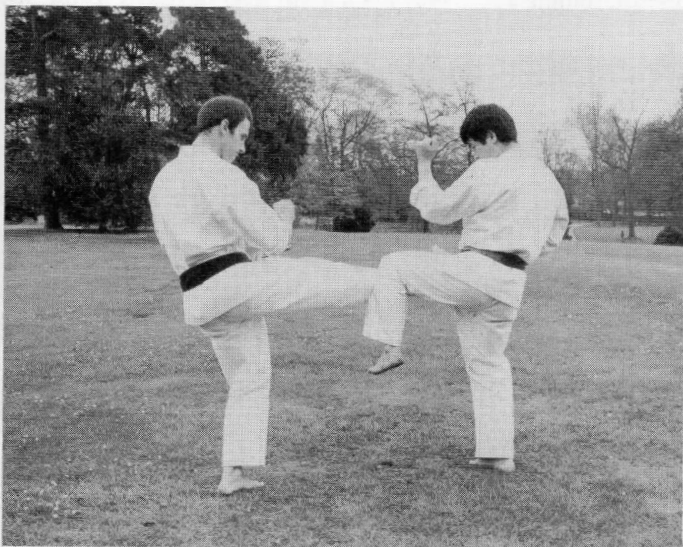
. . . and completes Mawashigeri to opponent.



## 7th sequence



Attacker and defender in fighting stance.



Attacker completes front kick, defender blocks with left leg.



Defender then shifts his body weight



to allow reverse roundhouse kick to opponent.

