



Souke

Dr. Kiyohisa Hirano, Ph.D.

- Over 50 years of experience in karate
- Hachidan (8th degree black belt) in karate
- Nidan (2nd degree black belt) in judo
- 1960 All-Japan National Karate Champion in Kumite (sparring)

Born on January 16, 1938, in Yokohama, Japan, Kiyohisa Hirano began his life in the martial arts at the age of 12, studying karate under Sensei Yoshio Kawaguchi, and later, Sensei Hironori Otsuka, the founder of the Wado system of karate. With rigorous daily training, young Hirano attained the rank of Shodan, or first degree black belt, by the age of 16, and later began traveling across Japan with Master Otsuka, promoting karate through demonstrations and exhibitions.

In 1957, Kiyohisa Hirano was the first person ever to receive a karate scholarship to Nihon University. This unprecedented honor bestowed upon him was due largely to the efforts of Mr. Takaichi Mano, late Vice President of the Japan Karate Federation (JKF), and Secretary-General of the World Karate Federation (WKF). Mr. Mano saw great potential in the young man from Yokohama, and he would soon be proven correct. Kiyohisa Hirano went on to become the 1960 All-Japan Karate Champion, and during his senior year he captained his Nihon University team to first place in Japan.

It was on a fateful day in 1962 that Kiyohisa Hirano arrived in Hawaii on one of his many demonstration tours to promote karate. However, this demonstration was different from the others, because after this one was over, Kiyohisa Hirano had become so taken with Hawaii that he made the decision to stay. On July 1 of that year, he founded the All-Japan Karate Federation Wado Kai Hawaii Branch, and later incorporated the Japan International Karate Center.

Over the next several years Shihan Hirano would instruct many promising students who would go on to become great teachers in their own right. With help from these instructors, Japan International membership increased over the late 1970's and early 1980's to over 3,000 students in Hawaii alone, with an additional 4,000 students in the U.S. mainland and Japan.

After a sudden illness during the height of Japan International's growth in 1988, Hirano was inspired to begin his successful career in alternative and traditional Oriental medicine, and thanks to its benefits, he soon resumed his active role in the day-to-day teaching of karate. The lessons and philosophies he encountered in his studies had a positive impact on his karate and Japan International experienced a new period of growth and development as his students brought new recognition to Japan International karate through national and international competition.

Today, at the dawn of a new millennium full of hope and potential, Hirano guides students still, with words of encouragement and support, wisdom, and daily lessons which remind us that learning is truly life-long, and that we will always be full-time students of life. His karate is world-renowned, his compassion is empowering, and his experience is a treasure that sets Japan International apart from any other martial arts institution. Dr. Hirano is now Souke (founder) of Heiwado, his style of traditional karate taught to the public through Japan International karate schools across the world.

Japan International celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2002. Japan International instructors and students have come to recognize their long and proud history.