

[ULTIMATE CRUSH](#) - Preview

ULTIMATE CRUSH:

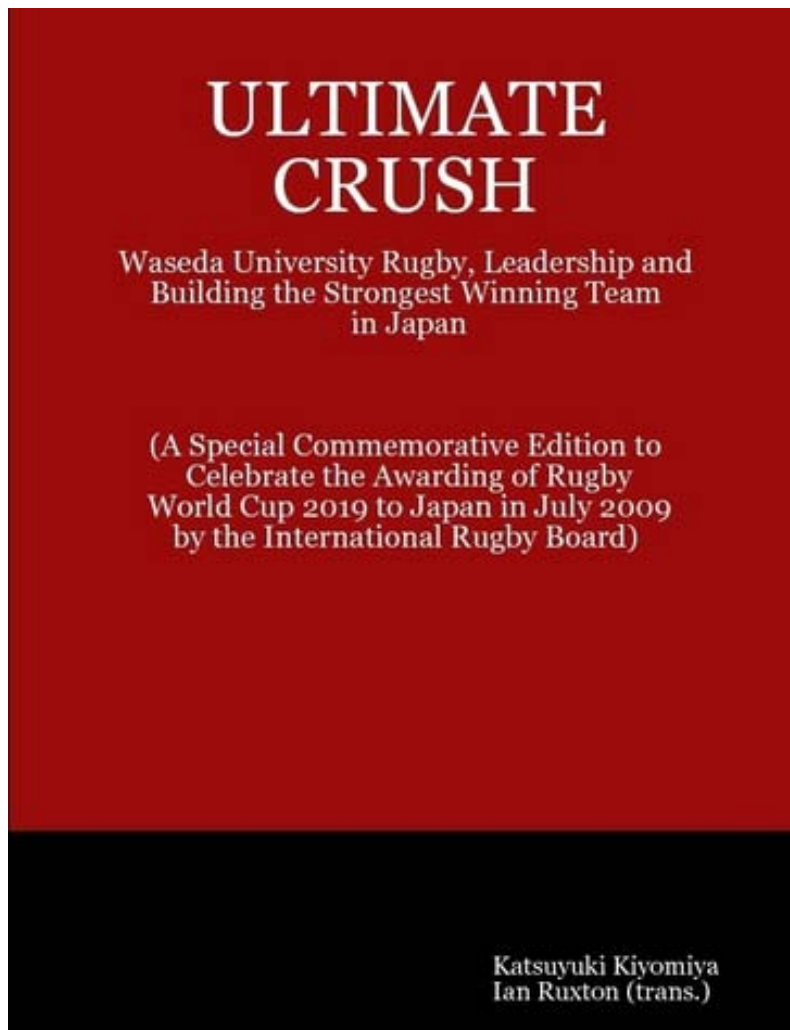
**Waseda University Rugby, Leadership and Building the
Strongest Winning Team in Japan**

**By Katsuyuki Kiyomiya (Waseda University rugby coach,
2001-06)**

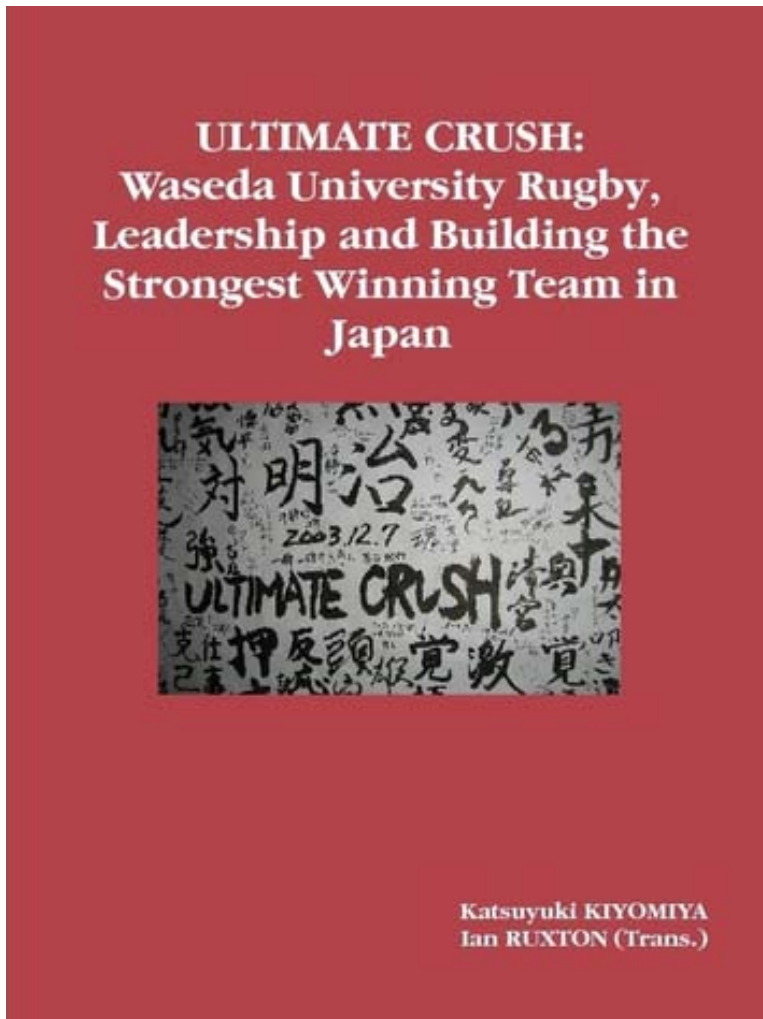
Translated by Ian C. Ruxton

**A Special Commemorative Edition to Celebrate the Awarding of Rugby World Cup
2019 to Japan in July 2009 by the International Rugby Board**

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Front Cover of the Paperback edition (updated July 30, 2009)



Front cover of the [Hardcover edition](#) (updated September 1, 2009)

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Rugby coach Katsuyuki Kiyomiya (left) and his Waseda University senior (*senpai*) Katsuhiko Oku in England, 2002: the inventor of the ULTIMATE CRUSH slogan and the tousle-haired “general” who adopted it and made it a reality.

[Note: Photographs in the book are reproduced in black and white.]

Translator's Foreword

The three main purposes of this translation are as follows: first, to give an insight into the exciting realities of the vibrant domestic Japanese Rugby scene, which have remained sadly and for far too long almost a closed book to the rest of the rugby world, mainly because of the formidable language barrier; secondly, to show that Rugby Union at the top level in Japanese universities is coached by serious and professionally-minded educators like Mr. Kiyomiya and his great rival Mr. Haruguchi, who have original ideas, and many notable and remarkable successes with them; and finally, to stimulate deeper thought and broader discussion about the nature of coaching and leadership, since the techniques introduced here can, it is felt, be effectively used not only in rugby outside Japan, but also in the wider world beyond Rugby Football, which is after all only one small, if significant, part of that great field of human activity and endeavour which we call Life.

Acknowledgments

This book was first published in Japanese by Kodansha Co. Ltd. in February 2006 as *Kyūkyoku no Shōri ULTIMATE CRUSH*. The English translation would of course not have been possible without the kind consent of that company and of the author, Mr. Katsuyuki Kiyomiya who has already written several books on similar subjects. I first approached him by a letter of self-introduction dated March 20, 2006 after I had obtained a copy of the book from my university's Co-op. I explained that I was researching Anglo-Japanese relations (especially the diplomat Sir Ernest Satow); that I was a long-term (18 years) resident of Japan and very fond of Japanese rugby; that I felt one of the reasons why the Japan R.F.U. had unfortunately failed in its bid to bring the Rugby World Cup 2011 to this country was a lack of knowledge throughout the world of Japanese Rugby from the inside; and that an English translation of his book might be a first step to remedying this. (How persuasive these arguments were I cannot say, but anyway I am very grateful for Kiyomiya-san's permission to undertake this project, and for

letting me ‘tackle’ it, with only words of encouragement and the answer to occasional queries directed at him.)

I also wish to thank Hikita-san, webmaster of the Waseda University R.F.C. home page for the photographs which are included in the text, and as always my wife Asako for her unfailing support.

Rugby in Japan: A Very Brief Outline

Many Japanese are justly proud of their excellent rugby traditions, and the fact that the number of players registered in Japan is the fourth highest in the world. Rugby Union, with its emphasis on teamwork, strategy and fighting spirit, is ideally suited to the culture of the land where the world-famous and noble *samurai* tradition was born.

Rugby for adults in Japan is, like the Gaul (modern-day France) described in the great Roman general Julius Caesar’s *De Bello Gallico* (“About the Gallic Wars”), divided into three parts: company-based teams, university teams and club teams. The Top League, founded in 2003 with twelve teams, is the semi-professional pinnacle of the pyramid, and from the 2006 season has been expanded to comprise the following 14 teams: Coca Cola West Red Sparks, Fukuoka Sanix Blues, IBM Big Blue, Kobe Kobelco Steelers, Kubota Spears, NEC Green Rockets, Ricoh Black Rams, Sanyo Wild Knights, Secom Rugguts, Suntory Sungoliath (now coached by Mr. Kiyomiya), Toshiba Brave Lupus, Toyota Verblitz, World Fighting Bull and Yamaha Jubilo. Below the Top League there are company leagues in the main rugby areas of Japan: Kantō (Tokyo), Kansai (Ōsaka) and Kyushu island in west Japan.

The top university teams are almost all in the Kantō area. In alphabetical order they are: Hōsei, Kantō Gakuin, Keiō (where rugby was first introduced by two Cambridge graduates, E.B. Clarke and Ginnosuke Tanaka, in 1899), Meiji, Teikyō and Waseda. In the Kansai area Dōshisha is traditionally the strongest team, though Kyōto Sangyō, Ōsaka Taiiku (Physical Education) and Ritsumeikan have also been strong in recent years.

Kyushu has many of the best high school teams, and also the brilliantly innovative and unique Sanix World Rugby Youth Tournament since 2000 in

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which Japanese high schools take on schools from the rest of the world in a kind of mini-World Cup, but unfortunately for Kyushu most of the best players head for the top universities in or near Tokyo on graduation. This ingrained tradition seems unlikely to change in the near future. (In this context the painful but unavoidable expulsion of club members described in Chapter Five excites a mild twinge of regret mixed with envy, because if 16 members were expelled from my university's rugby club in Kyushu it would only have six or seven left! It can only be hoped that, even though they were not good enough to stay in the club, they were not all lost to rugby forever. As the author points out in the Postscript, Japan's rugby population overall is decreasing and he wants to help put a stop to that.)

On a brighter note, two Kyushu-based teams are in the Top League from 2006 for the first time: Fukuoka Sanix Blues and newcomer Coca-Cola West Red Sparks which under former Japan coach Shōgo Mukai has won promotion. The emblem of the Kyushu R.F.U. includes a smouldering volcano, mighty Mount Asō, and it may well erupt into life again soon. In times gone by Yahata Steel of Northern Kyushu (Kitakyushu since 1963) dominated the amateur company rugby scene in Japan, winning a record 12 championships between 1951 and 1966. The rugby scene here has been relatively quiet since then, but the red-hot molten streams are flowing again at last!

Rugby at Waseda

Waseda University Rugby Football Club (founded in 1918) is part of the elite, the *crème de la crème* of Japanese Rugby. Among its past coaches there are two outstanding men: Professor Tetsunosuke Ōnishi, (often described as the Japanese embodiment of the legendary Carwyn James) who as coach of the national team (1966-71) beat the Junior All Blacks in 1968 and so nearly defeated England 3-6 in Tokyo in 1971; and top banking official Hiroaki Shukuzawa who sadly passed away this year, but who created the Top League and as Japan's coach (1989-91) guided the country to its only Rugby World Cup victory so far, a convincing 52-8 win against Zimbabwe in Belfast in 1991.

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It is from this important school and rugby powerhouse that Mr. Kiyomiya hails, and there are many in Japan, including the translator, who earnestly hope and believe that he will one day follow his distinguished seniors (*senpai*) down the same road to coach the national team, the “Brave Blossoms”, to even greater glory. (As I write this, Japan is languishing at 20th place in the I.R.B. world rankings which is far below its potential, so the sooner the better!) He could certainly coach a professional team outside Japan also - if he wanted to.

The Importance of Slogans

In the course of preparing this book I discovered that the English word ‘slogan’ is in fact an import from the Gaelic language. In the 16th century the word *slogorn* was used to mean a battle cry or similar. The mental picture of Scottish highland clans preparing for battle and rallying their troops for the fray by shouting accepted phrases to represent their group is a powerful one, and the ULTIMATE CRUSH slogan (invented by a Waseda and Oxford man, but in the city of Cambridge!) has clearly attained its own momentum and high position in Waseda Rugby folklore, to say nothing of other Japanese sports.

The Suntory Sungoliath slogan for the 2006 season is ALIVE, which also holds out exciting possibilities and is a strong pointer to the players about how they should play. Other team slogans include: Once again to the Pinnacle [Restart] (Toshiba Brave Lupus); We can change (NEC Green Rockets); Support & Communication (World Fighting Bull); Seize the Day (Secom Rugguts); LINE PRIDE (Yamaha); FIGHT ON (Kubota Sparks); Always Attack & Aggressive (Coca Cola West Red Sparks); TAFU i.e. Team, Aggression, Faith, Unity (Ricoh Black Rams); Adaptability (Sanyo Wild Knights); Keep on running! (Fukuoka Sanix Blues), Reach Higher (IBM Big Blue); Beat Toshiba! (Kobelco Steelers).

The Top League will be keenly contested again this year, as these slogans suggest!

Learning from Mistakes

It is a fundamental axiom of education that people can, and should, learn from their mistakes. And a good teacher should indicate, preferably in a gentle way, what those mistakes are and how to correct them. Watching Waseda play on television over the years I can say that they make few mistakes in their games, and their rapid recovery when errors do occur is a sign of their overall strength. Good teams will test their opponents in various ways, creating pressure to force errors, and Waseda also has the capability to do this.

Mr. Kiyomiya's coaching record over the past five years (2001-6) is outstanding, with very few defeats: Played 70, Won 62, Drawn 1, Lost 7. (See Appendix One for details.) His notable 'scalps' include Oxford, Cambridge and New Zealand Universities. He won the best-of-five championships contest with the Kantō Gakuin coach Mr. Haruguchi 3-2, and restored pride and passion to Waseda Rugby and hope to its supporters who had endured a long slump. In his final season as coach all twelve games up to and including the university championship final were won. Then on February 12, 2006 Waseda defeated Toyota Verblitz in the All-Japan championship 28-24, avenging the defeat of the year before. This was a historic triumph because it was the first time that a university team had beaten a Top League team. The current All Black Troy Flavell was on the losing side that day, and in August 2005 Toyota had beaten Newcastle Falcons. This gives some idea of its strength and of Waseda's marvellous achievement. (This victory came only two days before the Japanese book was published, and so was not included.)

Comparisons between rugby and warfare may be exaggerated, but there are many common elements and similar attributes are demanded of rugby players and soldiers: e.g. courage, skill, loyalty, determination, endurance, discipline, fitness, strength, quick reactions and cool heads in the heat of battle. Kiyomiya-san reveals in this book that he knows this, and the values encouraged in his teams seem to be inherited directly from the *samurai* tradition: tough, noble and, in western terms, Spartan!

It is clear that Kiyomiya-san likes his opponents to present tough challenges, both physical and mental, and is disappointed when they do not. In a sense he

is wearing two hats: as a rugby coach of course he wants to win (though not too easily!), while as a rugby fan he feels that the harder and more exciting the game, the better. He is absolutely right to suggest that the next decade is critical for Rugby in Japan, and without exciting games it cannot thrive or regain any of the popularity lost to rivals such as football in recent times.

Paucity of Literature in English on Japanese Rugby

Despite the large and ever-growing corpus of books in Japanese about Japanese Rugby by such excellent and well-informed writers as Dai Fujishima, Shinrokurō Kobayashi, Manabu Matsuse and Kōichi Murakami, there is a lamentable dearth of books in English on the subject, no doubt because of the language barrier already mentioned. In the comprehensive 344-page bibliography *A Rugby Compendium: An Authoritative Guide to the Literature of Rugby Union* (compiled by John M. Jenkins, published by the British Library, 1998) there is just one Master's thesis included ('The development of rugby football in Japan, 1874-1996' by Alison Nish, University of Sheffield, 1996, 52 pp.) and two very short pamphlets about Japanese tours to the United Kingdom. And the thesis only just scraped into the book before the final whistle, as the cut-off date for inclusion was December 1997!

That is almost all there is in English, apart from the articles by the sports writer Rich Freeman, previously in the *Japan Times* and now in the *Daily Yomiuri*, which offer useful insight and information on a regular basis, both in the printed newspapers and online. Additional information is provided in the J.R.F.U. English web pages, by Ian McDonnell's e-newsletter (contact him at ianmcdo@hotmail.com) and the English wikipedia. As a concerned observer, the translator has also provided an intermittent 'blog' with news and views of Japanese rugby since August 19, 1996 at <http://www.dhs.kyutech.ac.jp/~ruxton/jprugby.html>

Concluding Remarks: On Rugby and Life

I have been privileged to learn a great deal in the process of translating this book, not only thanks to the opportunity for discovering new and unfamiliar words and phrases in the Japanese language, but also about rugby coaching, man management and, in a wider sense, how to live and contribute positively to the global society which has become an increasingly dominant reality in so many of our lives, due chiefly to the internet and cheaper air travel.

As John Gaustad, founder of the now defunct Sportspages bookshop of Charing Cross Road in London allegedly said: “The best sports books are as much about life as about sport.” Mr. Kiyomiya’s book undoubtedly passes this test with flying colours.

The inexplicable and callous murder of the Japanese diplomats Katsuhiko Oku (1958-2003) and Masamori Inoue (1973-2003) and their Iraqi driver is the shocking and deeply distressing event with which this compelling story begins. It has been turned to great benefit in the long term by the creation of the “Oku-Inoue Fund for the Children of Iraq”, an initiative spearheaded by Mr. Kiyomiya, who already before that had shown the leadership and drive necessary to create the NPO called WASEDA CLUB to encourage children in Tokyo to take up various sports (see Chapter Four).

There are echoes of U.S. President John F. Kennedy’s great exhortation, itself a rousing slogan, at his 1961 inaugural address (“Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country!”) in these pages. It should also be remembered that the Peace Corps was created by Kennedy, and in the longer term the underutilized ‘soft power’ approach it symbolizes may well be a far more effective tool in the struggle (I much prefer this word to ‘war’) with the worldwide disaffection which is conveniently but not always appropriately labelled ‘terrorism’ than all or any of the Pentagon’s armed forces.

Japan has no long tradition of international charities, or of charitable foundations in the sense that have existed in Britain at least since the Charitable Uses Act of 1601, and in other western countries. The international dimension was of course impossible throughout the Edo era (1600-1868)

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when the country was completely isolated from the rest of the world. The Meiji era (1868-1912) saw the founding in 1877 of Japan's first charity, the *Hakuaisha*, by Count Tsunetami Sano (1822-1902) of the Saga clan in Kyushu. It was the forerunner of the Japan Red Cross Society, created in 1886 when the Japanese government signed the Geneva Convention. The former organization's purpose was to care for the dead and wounded on both sides of the Satsuma Rebellion (the *Seinan Sensō* of 1877), and it enjoyed the support of the imperial family from its inception.

Historically, the nature of Japanese religions may have played a part in not encouraging the development of more charities. The indigenous Shintō religion began as a form of animism, and while it stresses purity it is not essentially an ethics-based religion. Buddhism imported from India via China preaches compassion and self-denial, but generally expects financial support from believers and does not have the missionary spirit associated with western Christianity, based on which many organised charities have flourished at home and overseas. (Another factor might be the lack of tax incentives for charities, such as are often provided in western countries, but I claim no expertise in this area!)

The Oku-Inoue Fund is in any case a major step forward. It encouragingly signals a new willingness of private individuals and Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) in Japan in the 21st century to engage with, befriend and provide assistance to the less fortunate in other countries, and it is an admirable initiative deserving of international support. It also shows the kind of originality of which Katsuhiko "Katsu" Oku (posthumously promoted to the rank of ambassador by the Japanese Foreign Ministry) would surely have approved, as it is carrying on the work of outreach which he himself began. Continuity is a vital ingredient in Life, as in Rugby.

It was Ambassador Oku, his character and ideals shaped profoundly by the game of Rugby, who wrote so movingly in one of his letters in Japanese from Iraq (*Iraku dayori*) which are preserved on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

There is Hope; we can find it in the brightly shining eyes of the children...

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Finally I wish to renew my thanks to Kiyomiya-san, and as a rugby fan I greatly look forward to watching all of his teams in action, in both the near and the distant future. I also wish him every success in his chosen endeavours, both the revival of the fortunes of Japanese Rugby and international charity work. These are massive tasks, but he deserves to continue to succeed in them, because like his much-loved and sorely missed senior Oku-san he puts everything he has – his heart, soul, passion and boundless energy – into all that he undertakes. He has indeed learned a great deal from his senior (*senpai*) as he states in this book, and he clearly loves Rugby and his work, leading a large staff and, as a good coach-manager (leader-commander) should, getting the best from them and his players. It is not hard to see why Kiyomiya-san is the focus of so much of the sports media's attention in Japan, and there is no point in his light being hidden any longer under a bushel as far as the international rugby media is concerned.

Now the game has just begun, and the clock on the scoreboard is ticking the seconds away. It promises to be an exciting encounter, tough, fast and furious. Kiyomiya has received the ball from Oku and is charging forward, holding it firmly with both hands. There may well be a few setbacks for the team as well as joyful moments. But at the end there is indeed Hope - of nothing less than an overwhelming Victory. The famous slogan rings out loud and clear across the field, and surges through the waves of passionate supporters waiting quietly in the packed stands for some extraordinary, thrilling events to unfold:

ULTIMATE CRUSH!!

Ian Ruxton
Kitakyushu
August 2006

Supplementary Remarks on the Awarding of Rugby World Cup 2019 to Japan

On July 28, 2009 in Dublin the 26-man Council of the International Rugby Board (I.R.B.) voted on a recommendation by Rugby World Cup Limited headed by I.R.B. Chairman Monsieur Bernard Lapasset that the 2015 World Cup should be awarded to England and the 2019 World Cup be awarded to Japan. The recommendation was accepted by 16 votes to 10, which was announced by Lapasset at 3.30 p.m. – at an event witnessed live throughout the world thanks to the internet.

The announcement of the decision was greeted with great joy throughout Asia. The current Japan national coach John Kirwan, borrowing from the Apollo 11 astronaut Neil Armstrong, described it as “one small vote for the IRB, one giant step for rugby.” The *Daily Yomiuri* article of July 30th quoted the Guam R.F.U. President Stephen Grantham as saying that “Rugby World Cup 2019 in Japan will bring together the greatest game on earth, the commercial savvy and resources of the Japanese business community and Japan’s excellent infrastructure to provide a platform to spur the growth of rugby in Asia.”

Japan plans to hold the tournament from September 6th to October 20th in the following nine stadia: Sapporo Dome, Yurtec Stadium Sendai, Chichibunomiya and the National Stadium (Tokyo), Nissan Stadium in Yokohama, Toyota Stadium in Aichi prefecture, Nagai Stadium (Osaka), Home’s Stadium (Kobe) and Level-5 (Fukuoka). Hong Kong may also host some games, subject to I.R.B. approval.

As host Japan will automatically play in the tournament, which should allow one more Asian country (probably South Korea, Hong Kong or Kazakhstan) to qualify as the representative of the continent of Asia.

This is indeed a tremendously positive step for the game of Rugby. At last it seems that the game really is going global. It is, after all, too great a game not to be shared and enjoyed throughout the world.

Ian Ruxton
July 30, 2009

Notes

- 1) Footnotes, none of which were in the original Japanese work, have been added by the translator. These are mainly intended to give explanations of Japanese cultural matters.
- 2) Japanese names in the text are given in the Western style, family names second.
- 3) The Oku-Inoue Fund for Empowering Children is explained in detail in English at <http://www.oku-inoue-fund.com/eng/introduction/>
(Donations great and small are welcomed and gratefully received.)

Other Books by the Translator

- 1) Translation from Japanese
Japanese Students at Cambridge University in the Meiji Era (1868-1912): Pioneers for the Modernization of Japan by Noboru Koyama, translated into English by Ian Ruxton (Lulu Press Inc., 2004)
- 2) The translator's other books about the life and letters of the distinguished diplomat Sir Ernest Satow (1843-1929) can be found on amazon.com, amazon.co.uk, amazon.co.jp and the other amazon websites (search for "Ian Ruxton") and also at <http://www.lulu.com/ianruxton>

Katsuyuki Kiyomiya – Profile

Born in Ōsaka prefecture in 1967, he began to play rugby at Ōsaka Prefectural Matta High School (Motto: *Kensan Renma* “Devoted Study and Training”). He was a regular from his first year, and played at number eight from his second. In his third year the team appeared in the national high school tournament at Hanazono (Ōsaka) and reached the third round. He was also selected to play for the Japan High Schools XV and captained the team.

In 1986 he was admitted to Waseda University, and was a regular member of the team from his freshman year. In his second year the team defeated Toshiba Fuchū (forerunner of Toshiba Brave Lupus) to become All Japan champions. In January 1990 he became the team captain, and the team won the university championship. On graduation he entered the Suntory beverage company and played flanker.

In 2001 he retired from playing and was appointed coach of Waseda University R.F.C. on secondment from Suntory. In December of that year he led the team to its first Kantō Universities League championship for 11 years, and was unbeaten in the league. In January 2003 his team achieved Waseda’s first university championship in 13 years. In 2005 they achieved the historic first of five successive unbeaten years as Kantō Universities League champion. In 2005 and 2006 they won back-to-back university championships.

His excellent theories of rugby and charismatic leadership caused him to be appointed Waseda’s coach for five years which was an unprecedentedly long time, and many fans wanted him to continue even longer in that role. He represents the Oku-Inoue Fund for the Children of Iraq and is a senior director of the WASEDA CLUB, both of which he founded. He also wrote the bestseller *Araburu Fukkatsu* published in 2002 by Kodansha.

In March 2006 a new chapter began when he left the Suntory company to become the full-time professional coach of Suntory Sungoliath in the Top League, and led them in his first season as coach to the finals of the Microsoft Cup where they were defeated in extra time by Toshiba Brave Lupus, 14-13.

The story continues...

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Preface: The Slogan left by Katsuhiko Oku

On November 29, 2003 at 6 am the phone rang at my house. It was a call from a Waseda University junior of mine working for a media organization.

“Hey, what’s up? This is pretty early...”

“...It hasn’t been confirmed yet, but Mr. Oku has apparently died in Iraq.”

“What did you say?!?”

I switched on the TV right away, and was stunned by what I saw and heard. It was reported that in the Tikrit region of Northern Iraq a four wheel drive vehicle belonging to the Japanese embassy in Iraq had been attacked, and Katsuhiko Oku, councillor of the Embassy of Japan in the United Kingdom, and Masamori Inoue, third secretary of the Embassy of Japan in Iraq, had died.

According to local police reports, the embassy vehicle had been travelling in the right side lane of a two-lane highway when the perpetrator’s vehicle approached it in the left side lane and 25 shots were fired from an automatic rifle. The embassy vehicle rolled over into a field by the roadside and stopped, and the vehicle of the attackers sped away.

My wife turned pale and rushed out of the bedroom.

“What on earth is going on?” she yelled.

My three year old son also got up. “Daddy, why are you crying?” he asked, clinging firmly to my legs.

Tormented by the sensation of losing power from my entire body, the only thing I could do was to rouse my spirits.

After that I got in touch with the relevant people and arrived at Waseda University’s Kamiigusa ground at about 11 am. There was already a TV camera waiting there and an interview was conducted with me on the spot.

Katsuhiko Oku was like an elder brother to me. He was a former member (“OB” in Japanese, short for Old Boy) of Waseda Rugby Club, one of only four or five people who figured large in my private life. He was one of those important people in my life.

That is what I said to the television interviewer.

The newspaper reports on the next day all described Oku as having been a

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“former Waseda University rugby player” despite his official title, which was councillor of the Japanese Embassy in Britain.

Before beginning the rugby practice, I had all the 100 players of the club assemble in a room on the second floor of the gymnasium next to the training ground. About ten of them had met Oku when they had toured England and knew him personally. Also the fourth year students had attended a lecture given by him at Waseda’s Higashi Fushimi ground when they were freshmen. They too seemed to be in deep shock at the news.

“I think all of you know this already, but today we lost an important person...”

Then as I dissolved into tears in front of the players, I began to explain the origin of the slogan ULTIMATE CRUSH.

Oku-san’s death was a great loss to the world of Japanese Rugby. But the slogan he left us has become the flesh and blood, and even the spirit and life itself, of Waseda Rugby. By using the slogan we have made it our own.

On Sunday January 8, 2006 in the National Stadium (*Kokuritsu Kyōgijō*) Waseda defeated Kantō Gakuin University in the final of the university championships, thus achieving for the first time in 31 years the longed-for goal of two successive (back-to-back) championships. The score was 41-5. It was probably the first genuine example of ULTIMATE CRUSH (i.e. an overwhelming victory) in my five years as coach.

When the team captain Takamichi Sasaki began a solo rendition of the Waseda school song reserved for championship victories called “Araburu” I sang along without once opening my eyes. In fact it would probably be correct to say that I could not open them. The tears which welled up to the point of overflowing in my eyes were probably caused by my decision to finish my time as Waseda Rugby’s coach in 2006.

At that time I had still not announced my decision, but a lot of people seem to have sensed it when they saw my tears.

After singing “Araburu” I ran up into the stand and thanked all the supporters in a short speech. Family, friends and many colleagues warmly blessed Waseda’s championship win. Among them I spotted the face of

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Yasuaki Sakyō who had been the captain when I was first appointed coach.

As I shook him by the hand I said to him: “It all started with you.”

If I were asked to sum up Sakyō’s team of my first year as coach in one word or phrase, that word would be “spirited”.

At first they rejected my appointment. When I was made coach all the management methods changed, which must have been extremely bewildering for them. But without this challenge it would be impossible to speak of Waseda’s success. Throughout the first year we continued to win, and reached the end of the season without once looking back. It was certainly no cause for satisfaction, but our results were enough to make us runners-up in the university championships.

In my second year as coach the captain was “real skipper” Daigo Yamashita and the team motto was “run at top speed with energy” (*ikioi de tsuppashiru*).

In addition to developing the team, I invited the world’s number one coach Graham Henry, organised the move from Higashi Fushimi to the new ground at Kamiigusa, signed a deal with Adidas and so on. There was no end to the energy, and I was never once beaten by the students in this regard.

I believe this energy (*ikioi*) was the principal reason why we became university champions that year for the first time in 13 years.

In my third year as coach (2003) the group led by Ōtao unfortunately did not get the desired results, but without their efforts I am convinced that we could not have achieved the second successive championship on January 8, 2006. This is because it was precisely during this year that I really began to understand my coaching role.

There were several reasons why the team that year was unsuccessful. These included unexpected losses, injuries to key players, a mid-season tour, changes of team strategy and so on. Despite these difficulties I myself learned a great deal about how to build a team that could compete superbly. It was a year in which I studied what was essential to creating a team.

The team captain in my fourth year was Seigo Morooka. I had the impression that they used the vexations of the previous year as a springboard, and that they were a mature, united and confident team.

In this year the fourth year students led the team by example, and embodied

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all that Waseda Rugby Football Club should be. But behind the scenes there were various differences of opinion and conflicts among the players, arguments over who should be appointed captain, club members advised to leave and so on. It was a year in which I realised once again how hard it can be to lead an organisation and keep it focussed on winning.

Sasaki's team was my fifth and final one as coach, as I had already decided. The process of that year leading to the singing of the victory song "Araburu" was indeed the compilation of the fruits of those five years. About half of the previous year's regular team members had graduated, and it was a team of unknown potential in many areas, but it underwent a glorious transformation into the "Strongest Team Ever" in the history of Waseda Rugby.

In the final of the previous year I had not even sent the reserve members to the field. In the post-match interview I commented severely that there was "a great difference in ability between the fifteen men on the field and the reserves". This comment served to motivate the players who grew up a lot.

From the viewpoint of their individuality it was a team which had much greater potential than that of the year before, and this potential blossomed into a championship win.

In this book ULTIMATE CRUSH ("Thoroughly and ruthlessly overwhelming and defeating an opponent") I have tried to record as faithfully as possible in my own words, as a summary of my experiences as coach of Waseda University Rugby Football Club for the last five years, what I felt and learned, and the most important things about educating people, drawing out their abilities and the skills needed for the process of building a team. I have also attempted to trace the growth of Waseda Rugby Club, to which this slogan has given both life and soul. I want people to read about this team, for so long in the doldrums, which has now revived and breathed new life, and the process by which it has acquired an organizational strength second to none. And in the end, if readers become aware of the limitless potential of human beings, this writer can have no greater pleasure.

Katsuyuki Kiyomiya

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Thanks for your time!

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