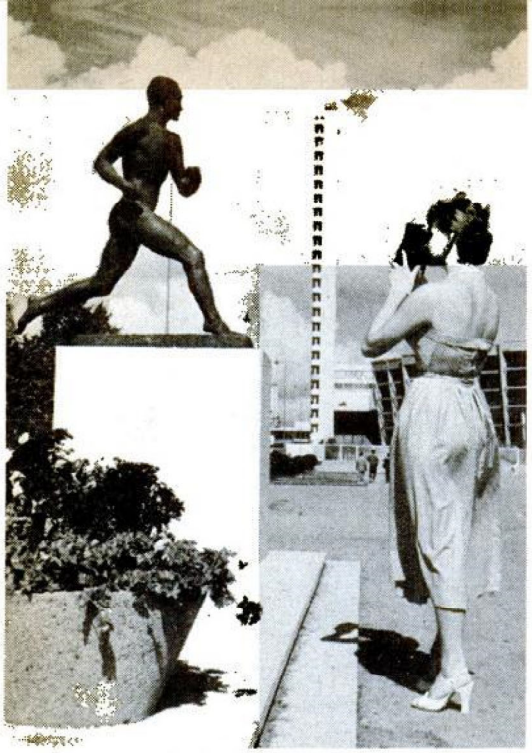
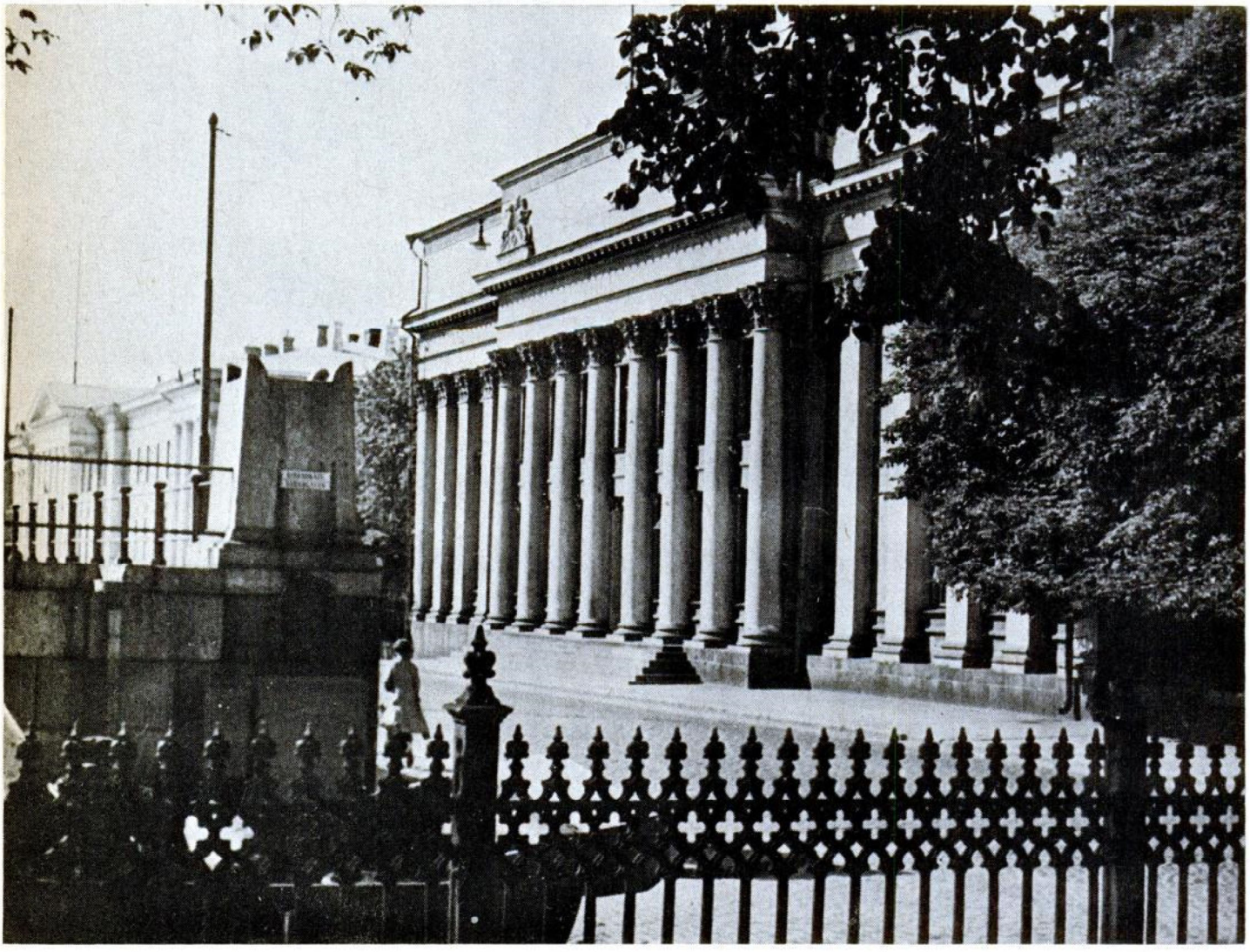


A lovely visitor photographs a statue in Helsinki commemorating the 1952 Olympic Games.

Finland *Welcomes* Karateman

text: Dean Nelson



The University of Helsinki.

Tekijänoikeuksin suojattu materia

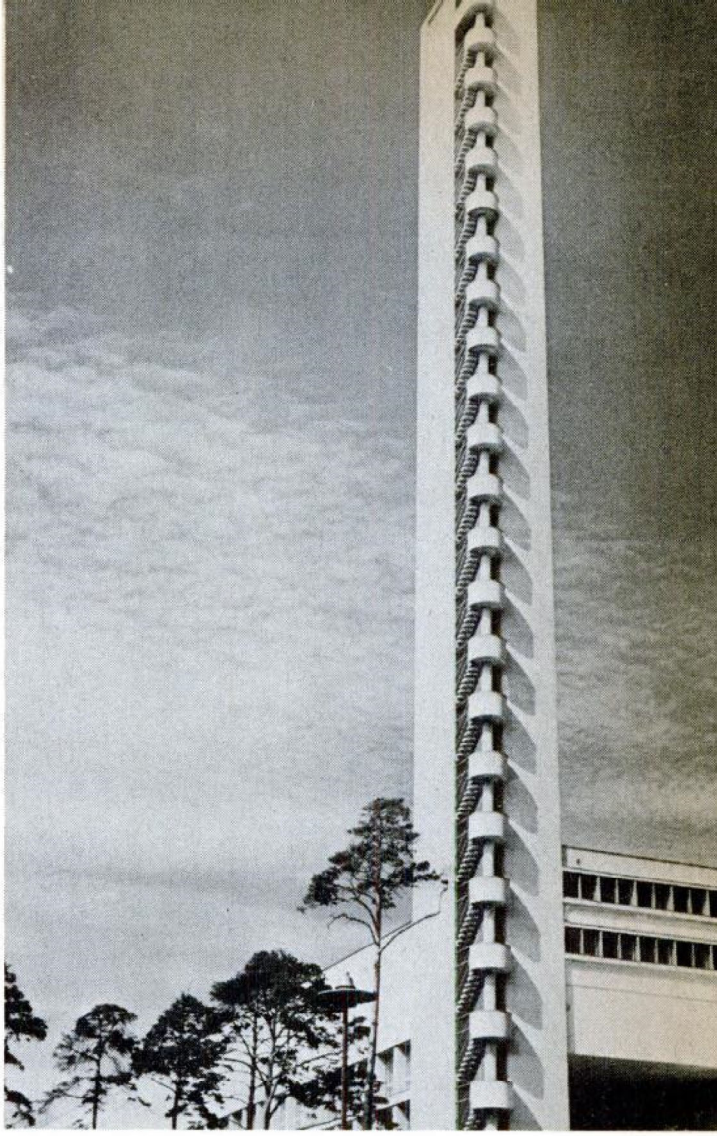
All Martial Arts men are brothers, or should be. Quite recently this was proven to me when my work brought me to Helsinki, Finland.

I was to be there for over two weeks; and because a hotel room affords a rather awkward place of practice, I went looking for a dojo. Finally after hearing rumors of dojos from various citizens I turned to the equivalent of Helsinki's Yellow Pages. There I found listed, under Meido-Kan, the name of one Kare K. Käyhkö. I called him.

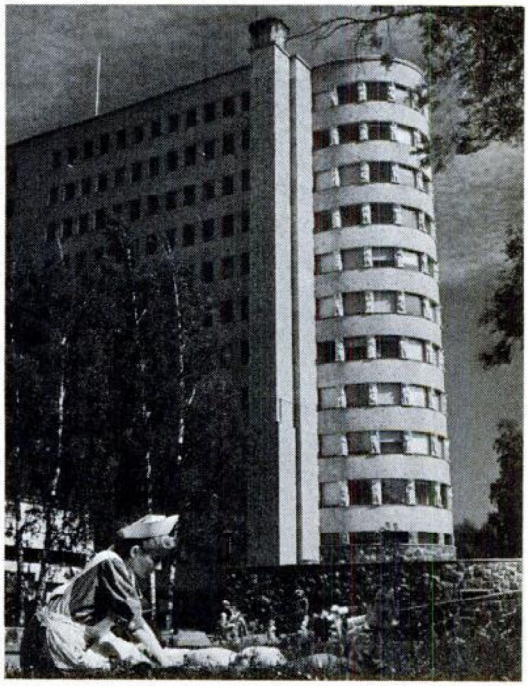
When I explained to him that what I was looking for was just a place to practice, he welcomed me at once by immediately inviting me to his dojo; and also to his home for the use of his private sauna and to meet his family. Never had I been made to feel so welcome so far away from home, and now I was thousands of miles from home in a land I knew little of, except that its people were quite wonderful.

Why this should amaze me is because I am a Goju Karateka and I was talking to a Judoka in a land that has not been blessed with the *"virtues"* of karate as yet, so I did not know if they would understand. I simply needed a place to work out. What I found was complete understanding and sincere hospitality. All pretense of the pros and cons of Judo and Karate were never mentioned. Never were there to be any long winded talks of who's art was the best. All of a sudden I was to realize how close the brotherhood of man, that politicians and "do-gooders" rave about, can actually be through the Martial Arts.

After being away from my training for over two weeks at home and abroad, it was good to see a dojo again and men working vigorously in their gis. As I worked at my own Goju Katas I found there was an interested audience of Judokas in Finland. They had never seen Karate Kata performed and were eager to learn the meaning of the various forms. I was only too happy to demonstrate. Some of the students professed a keen desire to learn more of karate and someday have their own Karate dojo in Helsinki.

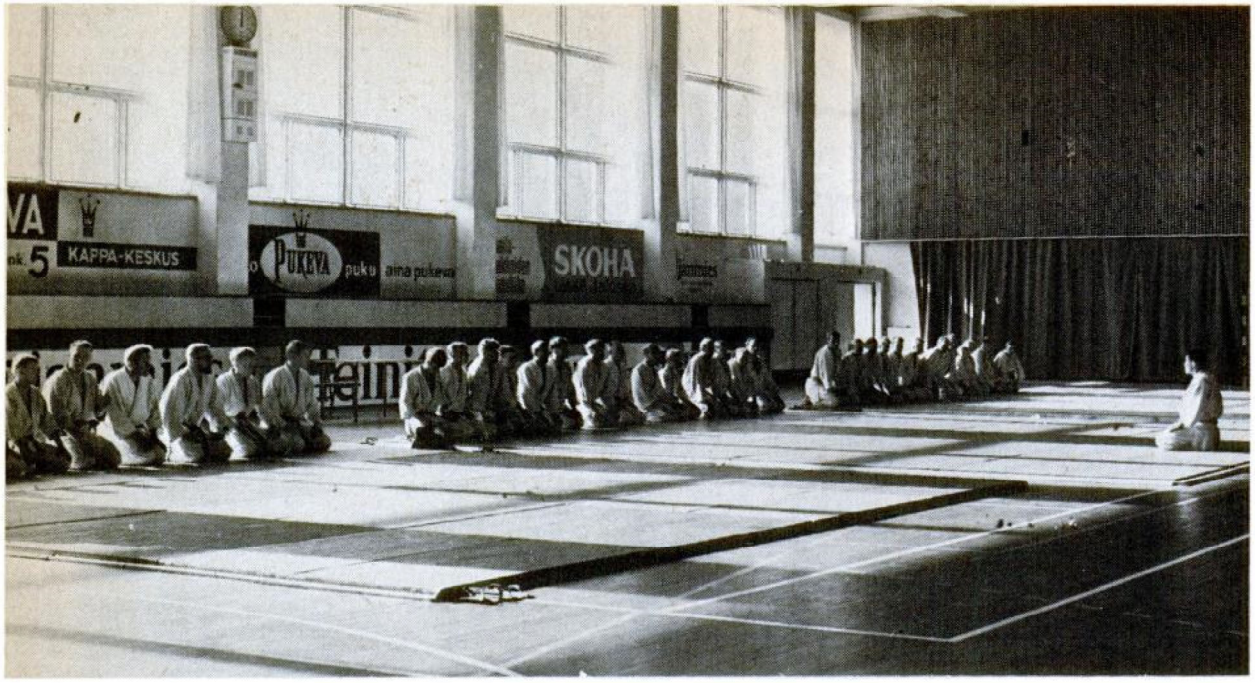


Helsinki Stadium.

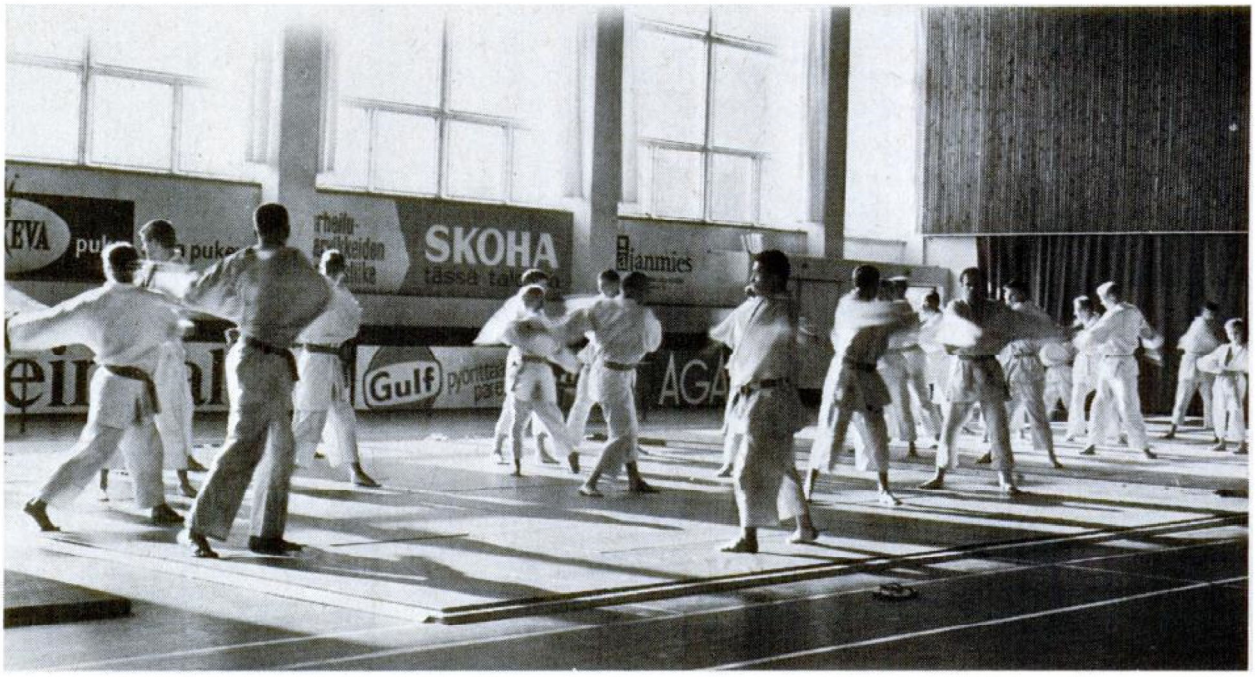


photos: Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS)

Tekijänoikeuksin suojattu materia



Mr. Ichiro-Abe, European representative of the Kodokan, leads the opening of a judo practice.



Mr. Ichiro-Abe's class performs warming up exercises.

Tekijänoikeuksin suojattu materia



Mr. Ichiro-Abe.



Two judomen work out at the Meido-Kan dojo in Helsinki.

Judo has already come to this extraordinary country in an odd way in that the Judo Federation of Finland was founded *before* any clubs or dojos existed. Administrator Torsten Muren established the Federation in 1958 and his contribution to the development of Finland's judo is extremely large.

The second judo club of Finland was formed in Turku in 1962. About 1964 when the Judo Federation became a real central federation of the state it finished its function as a club in Helsinki. This is when the members of The Federation founded three clubs in Helsinki.

At present there are about 1000 active judokas and about 12 clubs in all of Finland. All of the dan degrees which have been earned in Finland are acknowledged by the Kodokan in Japan. Work on the degrees has either been carried out in Japan or the graduation has been accepted by Mr. Ichiro Abe, 7th-Dan, who acts as official judo trainer of Belgium and is representative of the Kodokan in Europe. Mr. Abe has held three separate courses in Finland which have lasted about two weeks each and he will come again during the summer of 1965 for another course.

To date there are 17 black belts in Finland, one of which is a woman. The breakdown is as follows: one 3rd-Dan, two 2nd-Dans and 14 1st-Dans.

The greatest difficulty for the development of Finland's judo has been the shortage of instructors and trainers; otherwise they feel there would be a greater show of black belts and clubs.

These people of Finland are nature's own athletes as has been proven many times in the past. They are a people who just naturally love good sport. Finland's judo sets a very high example in the Martial Arts when one considers the circumstances.

In closing, I can only advise that when in Helsinki, no matter what your particular medium in the Martial Arts, visit Kare Käyhkö and make some good friends at their dojo.

Mr. NELSON is a staff Lighting Director at CBS-TV, married with two sons. He has been studying Goju Karate with the Sensei Peter Urban of New York City for the past 18 months and has attained his brown belt.

Tekijänoikeuksin suojattu materia