



国際大山空手道連盟総本部

World Oyama Karate

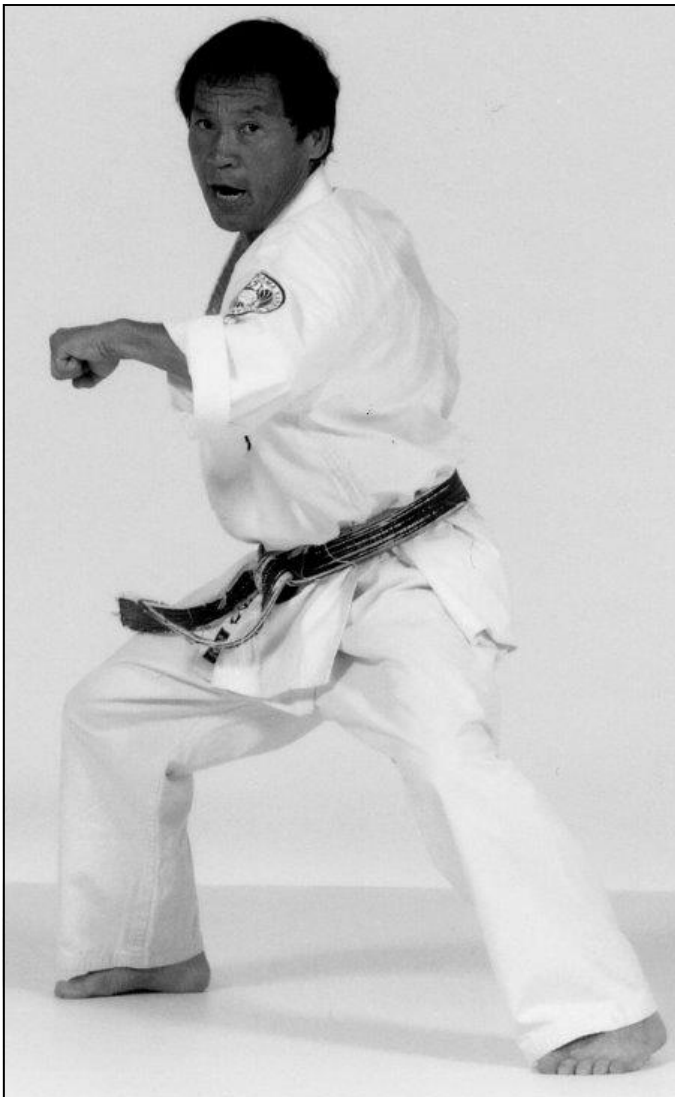
Honbu Newsletter

Issue 41 - October, 2015

KATA IS EVERYWHERE

By Founder Saiko Shihan Y. Oyama

People outside of the Martial Arts world hold many misconceptions as to what exactly Karate is. Some think it's primarily a spiritually based form of exercise. Others that it's just about fighting or breaking wood, cement or other materials in half with bare hands and feet. While there is some validity to these ideas, they miss the bigger picture.



**Strong Kihon makes strong Kata.
Strong Kata makes strong Kumite.**

Essentially, there are three main components of Karate training: **KIHON, KATA and KUMITE**. KIHON (Basic Techniques) refers to all of the hand, kick and block techniques and how to execute each one with correct form and use of the total body. Once a student learns basic techniques, they are ready to begin putting them together to form effective fighting strategies. These fighting strategies are KATA. KUMITE (Free Fight) involves using KIHON techniques and KATA strategies against an actual opponent. There are 2 types of KUMITE training: YAKUSOKU ("pre-arranged") KUMITE and JYU ("free") KUMITE.

The history of many Katas dates back thousands of years. They were passed down from one generation to the next. The majority of their movements, however, are very abstract. Ancient Katas are products of the time and circumstances in history in which they were created. A Karate master would construct a pattern of basic movements that had been successful in survival during combat. The pattern (Kata) was a product of and reflected the nature of the time in which it was created. Over the following hundreds and thousands of years the details of the Kata's original usage and meaning would become obscured. Lots of Japanese Karate styles still practice these ancient Katas. World Oyama Karate Black Belts also learn ancient Katas such as Saenchin, Kan-Ku, Ko Ryu Goju Shi Ho. Historians have many different opinions as to the purpose of the movements in these Katas (and as to whether or not some parts were meant to have weapons) and no one is 100% sure. However, Black Belts learn these Katas to preserve the history and tradition behind them. After all, culture is part of the study of Karate.



Kata is Everywhere

To understand what it means to define Kata as a "fighting strategy", it's important to first understand what elements are contained in a fight. There are millions of ways to look at the act of fighting, but for the sake of simplicity, we can say that human beings instinctively will attack with their strong/dominant hand or foot in a combat situation. It makes sense that when attacking, a person would intrinsically rely on their strong side when delivering a strike or kick. This is how most beginners approach fighting. Right-handed people, for example, will rely almost completely on their right hand reverse punch. Under the pressure of a fighting situation, they use whatever technique they can count on and feels most comfortable. An experienced opponent can easily read the beginner's strategy (or lack thereof) and thus easily defeat them.

I had a funny conversation with a Karate master from a different style. He has a very respectable training background, knowledge and skill. About 15 years ago, he brought some of his students to compete in one of our tournaments. At that time, our tournaments only had Kumite (semi-knockdown and knockdown) and no Kata divisions. Before the tournament started he asked me, "Saiko Shihan are you ever going to have a Kata division in your tournaments?"

"I think maybe," I answered, "I've been thinking about it." He went on to tell me that whenever he attends other styles' Kata competition, it seems obvious that in order to win, a student needs a gymnastics background.

"Traditional Katas don't appeal to the judges," he said. "So everyone does a lot of flipping around, jumping and spinning. They even use hip-hop music in the background."

"Interesting..." I answered. We both started laughing. "So before we start having Kata competitions, I need to learn how to dance hip hop. You need to teach me," I said. He is much younger than me.

"No, no," he shook his head. "But, Saiko Shihan, you have good movement and coordination—you should be able to learn quickly."

"Well, I am tone-deaf," I confessed. "Maybe I could dance, but nobody would like my music." We both start-

ed laughing. The point is that in most Karate Kata competitions, the judges expect students to show a bunch of dramatic and flashy movements to get a good score. It's disgusting!

It's looking about 99% sure that Karate will be an event in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. There is lots of discussion now about what the Kumite rules should be—no contact, light contact, full contact. Also whether or not to have a Kata division. I strongly believe that if there is a Kata division, most competitors will be chosen from gymnasts or ballet dancers. They already have the ability to flip and jump and hold their legs in the air. They will just add a few Karate techniques onto a dance or floor routine and be sent off to compete. But now back to fighting strategy...

A good fighter needs not only to have strong techniques (and more than just one or two), but also needs to know how to execute them from different angles, and change up the speed, power and tempo (Hyoshi). Executing some techniques with full power and others with less power confuses an opponent. In addition, changing the speed with which techniques are delivered makes it difficult for the opponent to catch the timing and anticipate what will happen next. Lastly, a good fighter has combinations that they use to set up their favorite strong techniques (Tokui Waza).

These four main elements—Technique, Power, Speed, Rhythm—are the cornerstones of KATA. Soshu and I created the Katas Kihon Sono 1 – 8 with the intention of helping students develop their fighting strategies as they progressed through each rank. Over time, through repetition, a student develops his or her own fighting style. This can be seen in any sport, such as boxing, Sumo, Judo, wrestling, fencing and even in team sports such as soccer, football, basketball and baseball. Usually, the most successful athletes/teams are those with a well-developed individual fighting or playing style. For example, the majority of heavyweight boxers before Muhammad Ali relied on heavy punches and close-distance fighting. But Ali used footwork and lead hand to keep his opponents off balance and constantly guessing what was coming next, which allowed him to make his meteoric rise to heavyweight champion.



Kata is Everywhere

Not only do successful athletes/teams have a recognizable style, but they also have the ability to alter them when they sense the opposition is reading them. For example, if the offense of a college football team relies heavily on their running game to win, they may suddenly do a few passing plays in quick succession, then back to running, and so on to keep the other team uncertain of what to expect. The same is true for a baseball pitcher. A good pitcher has one or two favorite pitches. But he also knows how to manipulate the speed, angle and position over the plate of his other pitches to keep a batter uncertain of what to expect. This is Kata.

By the way, at Honbu Dojo there are two students who especially love practicing and honing their Katas—Shay Allen and Sensei David Sorrells. I know that when they read this article, they will be thrilled and motivated to practice Kata even harder!

Participants in any sport or competitive event have a Kata, including chess players or those that play the Chinese game Igo or Japanese game of Shogi. Even ordinary people have their own Kata when it comes to taking actions to accomplish goals and objectives.

There's a proverb that says, "First enter the Kata, then move beyond the Kata". When you first learn basic techniques, you practice executing one technique per one breath. For Kata, it's one movement sequence per one breath. That is the way to begin learning (enter the Kata). After that, you need to vary the speed, power, and timing. You should also practice while facing different directions and angles. All these things help you, with repeated practice, to make the Kata your own, to learn it with your body and make the movements instinctual. When doing so, you need to imagine an actual oppo-



Train hard to make each Kata fit you and become your own

nent.

The World Oyama Karate teaching system, **Kyoten Books** and basic Katas (Kihon Sono Ichi through Hachi) are designed to help students develop a strong foundation of basic techniques and fighting strategies as they progress from White to Black Belt. The first two Katas contain only attack techniques. This reflects our style's philosophy of first learning to attack. Once students know how to attack, they can better understand how to block. For that they learn Kihon Sono San. Part of this Kata is understanding how to block with the total body movement, not just the arms and to follow blocks with a counter attack. In Kihon Sono Yon, students add sideways movement to their strategy, and so on until Kihon Sono Hachi. By the time they reach green belt, a student should have knowledge of all the techniques contained in **Kyoten Book vols. 1 – 4**. By Brown Belt, they should begin to master them. They should also begin using different elements from Kihon Katas 1 – 8 to develop their own fighting style. That is the point at which they "move beyond the Kata".

I want you to remember that Kata is an essential link between Kihon techniques and Kumite. Kata is everywhere around us, not just in the dojo!



KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY, SEIBERT GYMNASIUM

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15th, 2015



REGISTRATION

BEGINS

AT

1:00 p.m.

COMPETITION

BEGINS

AT

1:30 p.m.

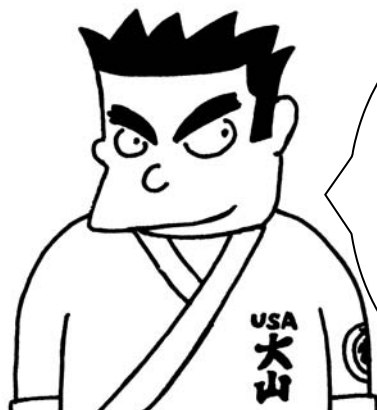
WORLD OYAMA PRESENTS

Tickets Available
World Oyama Karate Schools
 1004 29th Avenue South, Homewood, AL Phone: (205) 879-4841
 10530 Old Hwy. 200, Chelsea, AL Phone: (205) 678-0433
All Day Pass \$15

SPONSOR:
World Oyama Karate
DIRECTOR:
Saiko Shihan Y. Oyama

New Kata DVD Volume II is Coming Soon !!

It includes Kihon Kata #5 - #8 and Weapon Technique



New DVD
 to improve
 my Kata
 technique.

Issue 41 - October, 2015

Editor-in-Chief: Saiko Shihan Y. Oyama
 Editors: Sensei Karl Julian
 Graphic Artist: Sensei Masa Takahashi
 Technical Assistant: Senpai Tony Ching

World Oyama Karate Honbu Dojo
1804 29th Avenue South, Homewood, AL 35209
 Phone: (205) 879-4841 Fax: (205) 879-4849
www.worldoyama.com

Copyright © 2015 World Oyama Karate. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited.