

World Union of Martial Arts Federation (WUMAF)
Submitted by Sensei Peter Ruch.

In October, Sensei Ron Yamanaka, head instructor of the Yudansha Kobujitsu Karate Federation in conjunction with WUMAF, held the 7th Annual Martial Arts Symposium at the Markham Golf Dome, Markham Ontario. This was a 3 day event starting on Friday October 18th and ending with a Karat Tournament on Sunday October 20th 1996. Sensei Masaru Shintani is a foundig Director and presently President of WUMAF which is an International gathering of Martial Arts organizations. During the Symposium Sensei Shintani was joined by Sensei Lawrence Blakemore, Sensei Ed Paluch, Sensei Denis Labbe, Sensei Jack Gingras, and myself Sensei Peter Ruch. Sensei Shintani and I attended the Friday evening WUMAF meeting at which Sensei Spartaco Bertolotti, 8th Dan Ju-jitsu, 7th Dan Karate, and President of the World Ju-jitsu Kobudo Organization, informed the persons present that he had made overtures to the Olympic Organizing Committee concerning signing a protocol which hopefully would lead to the establishment of Karate as an Olympic event. He stated that we were a long distance off that mark, but progress was being made.

The opening ceremonies of the Symposium were very impressive. Students of Yamanaka Sensei performed a Bo Kata to the National Anthem and at the same time unfurled the Canadian flag, which were attached to their Bo. During the tew days, our members attended several seminars conducted by the Karae Masters present. I had the opportunity to take instruction from George Alexander, th Dan Hanshi, Shorin Ryu Karate and President of the International Shorin Ryu Karate Kobudo Federation from Florida. Sensei George Parulski 7th Dan Shihan Aiki Ju-Jitsu and Karate, President Tenshin Shin Yo Ryu Aiki Ju-jitsu Federation. Sensei Rudy Crosswell, 7th Dan Shihan Tenshi Shito Ryu Karate and 7th Dan Okinawa Kobudo and President of the International Shito Ry Karatedo Kubudo Federation. Sensei Ron Raciot, 6th Dan Renshi, YKKF International Vice-Presidenta and President of YJJF Canada. I must tell you, these people were very impressive and were only too willing to assist and give detailed instructions. I wasn't able to attend all the seminars but hopefully next year I will get another chance.

When the information comes available for the 1997 Symposium I would encourage all Black and Kyu Belts to make an effort to attend this event.

Many thanks go to Sensei Ron Yamanaka and his associates for organizing such a wonderful event.

Why Kata?

Submitted by Sensei Neil Prime

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In some styles of Martial arts, kata is the first and foremost of importance. As a matter of fact, some styles only practice kata without any sparring as they feel that if you seriously work your sequences in the true meaning of kata, then you should obviously be proficient when the time comes to defend yourself. Other styles feel this is completely ridiculous and practice no kata what so ever.

There are as many different reasons for doing or not doing kata, as there are styles of martial arts. Although there is certain bunkai (applications) to guide us through the kata, these forms can be (and should be) a personal expression of what that individual believes the real reasons behind each movement of the kata hold.

In Wado Kai Karate there are very few katas as compared with some other styles (especially kung fu or tai chi). The reason for this small number of katas is the founder of our style, Mr. Hirihoni Otsuka, felt that if you were going to perform kata, you should do it to perfection. He felt that learning too many katas would limit your ability to perform these katas the way they should be.

All your techniques in kata should be executed with the same explosiveness and determination, as you would show if you were actually sparring. This not only makes it more challenging upon yourself physically, but mentally you are training your thought process to react in harmony with your physical movement thus simulating a sparring situation thus creating your habits, both good and bad.

Tradition kata should be differentiated from some of the newer forms of "so called kata". I say this not to be closed minded, but if you have seen some of the newer or homemade forms that are being performed at open tournaments you will understand why I feel that a gymnastics routine, although may be physically trying, really has nothing to do with real sparring.

Even when you look at traditional kata you should analyze what you are doing. Let's face it, some of the technical applications are obsolete as far as today's' fighting methods have changed and improved. This is also true in the way we spar. You will spar in a point tournament differently than you will if you were defending yourself on the street.

This does not necessarily mean that what you are doing is wrong. Katas are a compilation of the basic techniques of the style and by repeating them over and over again you are forcing your body to remember the desired sequences and body movement that you want to further develop into actual sparring techniques.

All in all, kata is a very important part of the traditional karate systems. If nothing else, it shows that there is a thought process involved in what we do and there is some kind of regimental order in which we operate because karate builds character, and that is why we do what we do.