

## **Karate as Martial Art**

### **Of the five attitudes of the mind in real combat**

**By Yoshikazu Kamigaito Sensei.**

It is often said that the WADO-RYU style appears less powerful than that of other more aggressive schools. This characteristic does not always play against WADO-RYU, if one considers the strategy side in martial arts. On the other hand, there is a serious problem if the WADO-RYU practitioner himself feels it in his own interior.

One reason for this characteristic of WADO-RYU is that, from the beginning of the initiation, dodging techniques are studied, instead of taking advantage of strength and physical fitness. This does not mean that we have nothing to do with aggression: on the contrary, all martial arts must be exercised by positive or aggressive attitude: even in training, and even in real fights.

I would like to present to you here five attitudes of combat mentality, in Karate. Don't think that this or that attitude is better or worse; The choice of one of the five attitudes depends on the relationship between you and your opponent, or your character.

#### **(1) IWAO (Rock)**

Imagine a large, solid rock that appears on the surface of the sea and vigorously repels the furious waves. This attitude may be the most suitable for Karate fighters in the first place. We stand in contempt of all enemy attacks, either by fists or by kicking, blocking them with confidence. On the other hand, we look for the slightest opportunity to counter-attack by taking advantage of the smallest imbalance of position in the opponent.

You release a threatening energy by looking at your opponent from above, stretching the muscles of all four limbs and maintaining a very stable position.

During a competition or duel where the fight is previously mandatory and for which you do not need to know the intention of your antagonist, this attitude becomes more mobile from the beginning. You attack it like the rocks that fall in avalanche from the top of the mountain. You crush everything that tries to move you. This attitude is also that of WADO-RYU.

#### **(2) AOYAGI (The Green Willow)**

Imagine yourself here as a weeping willow whose falling twigs stir in the slightest wind. Do not resist at all the enemy attacks: step back if the opponent pushes you, remove the lower abdomen if he kicks you, turn the chest he tries to punch. You avoid all the attackers' hard

and chain shots either by swinging the head or by tilting the bust forward or backward, left or right, staying more or less in your original position. You can keep your dear opponent always within effective reach of your counterattacks.

Assimilate wind or running water is very effective. Imagine the suggestion: "I am the wind, I am the draft, etc... ", while dodging the opposing blows. It is the attitude of a weak man who recognizes the superiority of his opponent's physical power. If you work, the attitude of the weak to the end, the situation will suddenly reverse: the weakest becomes the most powerful, even invincible!

### **(3) SHINODAKE (The Mountain Bamboo)**

This is the resistance of bamboo that grows wild in the mountains. This grass never gives in to the full under the difficulties of circumstances. It straightens from below the clumps of the avalanche or landslide thanks to its elasticity.

In Karate, you pretend to be half-pushed by the opponent's attack, but the next moment you put him in an unfavorable position by taking advantage of your quasi-defeated attitude. You then use the spring ability of your rear-bent bust or your rear leg folded in the position of NEKO-ASHI-DACHI. You usually stick your hand (which has parsed the opponent's blow) against the opponent's arm with low resistance. You could say that this attitude lies between IWAO and AOYAGI: you give in half to the opponent while insisting for the other half towards your counterattack.

### **(4) KOCHO (The Butterfly)**

CHO translates into English as "butterfly," KO moves closer to the adjective "exotic." The term "tropical butterfly" will better reflect the brilliant and fascinating impression. You adopt this attitude when you make smooth trips, without stopping near your opponent.

Qualifying good boxers, they say "who fly like butterflies and sting like bees". The "footwork" of boxing ranks in this category; however, in Karate, most trips are done in SURI-ASHI (foot slide) to counter-attack by kicking.

This attitude differs from AOYAGI in its many trips; In addition, for the counter-attack, you also have to move. If your opponent's movements are slow because of his morphology or his muscles contracted, then your mobility will often be very effective to the point of fascinate him or even make him dizzy. You could then exert real hegemony on him throughout the fight.

Be careful, however, if you are fighting on questionable terrain (such asperity or surface inequality).

### **(5) KIGISU (The Pheasant)**

The pheasant is the national bird in Japan; it is therefore somewhat symbolic and surrounds itself with many legends. On the other hand it is the symbol of motherhood because, it is said, rather than run away he prefers to die with his young during fires in the fields.

In martial arts, he is the symbol of the counterattack: when he fights against a snake, he first lets himself be ensered by the reptile and then suddenly he flaps his wings and toss him to pieces. In martial arts, you let the opponent attack as he pleases, and then you reverse this situation in your favor. In Judo, you take advantage of your very unbalanced position to throw the opponent over you while falling backwards voluntarily (e.g. TOMOE-NAGE).

In Karate, I will limit myself to only one example: the KAISHIN movement (readers can refer to our WADO-RYU manual number 5 on YAKUSOKU-KUMITE).

In this dodge move, you let the attacker take the initiative in battle, but just as he launches his shot, you suddenly turn the body followed by the limbs, both for your dodge and to hit your counterattack that will benefit from your jerky movement. You can take advantage of the opponent's advance movement to increase the efficiency of your move.

At the end of this article I will add an important notion. During a fight, do not focus preferentially on one of the five attitudes. On the contrary, change your fighting spirit attitude at every moment, depending on the evolution of it: it can be shocking for your opponent if you first probe his technical level in KOCHO or AOYAGI, then suddenly you move on to the IWAO attitude to start attacking. In many groups in Europe, it is often a question of teaching students only one of these attitudes (very frequently that of IWAO).

In fact each teacher must lead his students towards these five fighting attitudes, depending on their degree of progress.

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