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**This document is only for information on the work of
the Wado-Ryu Karateka Jan Houblon!**

<http://www.silver-swallow.be/>

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Overview of Techniques

In the chapter on [the Founder](#), one might have already read in very brief about the founding history of Wado Ryu karate and its close relationship with the early Shindo Yoshin Ryu Jiu Jitsu.

While the original Okinawa-te (later called karate = empty hand) was nearly a pure striking-art, jiu jitsu was mainly based on grappling, throws and joint locks, with - on a more advanced level - also some atemi (which are actually strikes with different parts of the naked hand).

So, very simply stated, Wado Ryu Karate is the synthesis of Shindo Yoshin Ryu and Karate, which resulted in a striking art with at his most advanced level quite some grappling, throws and joint locks.

As a major result of this synthesis one of the hallmarks of Wado Ryu karate (compared to other styles like Shotokan, Shito Ryu, Go Ju etc), is its search for fluency in movement. Wado's movements should not have the image of being chopped up. One movement should melt into the other smooth and quick. There is no real blocking in the defensive attitude, rather the Wado karateka will use deflective action, and the same moment his defence might alter in an attack or vice versa. In the same manner, but at a more advanced level the strike or the deflection might become a joint lock (given the speed and velocity of an incoming blow, one shall understand the technical difficulties of such a stage).

So in view of all this one shall understand why the prerequisites explained in the chapter [Our Goals](#) are so important in Wado Ryu Karate.

The basic principles of Wado-Ryu Karate

The late grandmaster Ohtsuka, during his conception of Wado Ryu drew lavishly from his knowledge of Koryu Bujutsu, the translation for the armed art of the samurai. From this art comes the principle San I Ittai. This principle defines the tactics of movement, and it consists of 3 parts:

Ten I:

the change of body position

Ten Tai:

shifting the body, e.g., shifting the body weight, or replace the feet.

Ten Gi:

changing of technique, e.g., as already stated before, a strike that becomes a deflection etc.

Other obvious characterizations of movement in traditional Wado Ryu are:

Noru:

"riding" or moving with the attacking movement, without giving much resistance and whilst keeping in touch with the attacking limb. Often after this evasive action the body turns back to its initial position, thus regenerating the power for a counter attack.

Inasu:

to change the direction of the opponents attack by parry or deflection, wherewith the defender comes in an advantageous position for a counter technique. Often, the defence becomes attack even before the initial attack becomes accomplished. (In this last case we can speak about sen-no-sen, an advanced technique)

Nagasu:

means to evade, to float away (with the attack)

Irimi:

to enter the opponents vulnerable centre

All these principles are lavishly practised in 10 Kihon kumite which are the core exercises for the advanced Wado Ryu karateka.

Kata

One might write a volume about the sense of practising kata in traditional karate. Most of the Do-disciplines have kata in their training system and kata thus form the most important instrument for solitary training. In the Budo system solitary training is essential and has the general aim for deepening the techniques in a spirit of the highest concentration, doing so through continuously repeated exercise.

To quote that kata are actually sequences of imaginary combat, is a slightly stereotypical explanation which does these valuable exercises injustice.

With the development of Wado Ryu at the back of the mind, one will find that in this style of karate kata never have been defined in terms of immediate applicability. Hironori Ohtsuka for example did never ever link a system of Bunkai (=the systematical study of movement in terms of practical application) to the Wado kata. Rather he considered the totality of all Wado kata as an important instrument for the study and refinement of general movement and stability.

In this respect it is important to notice that in each kata several difficulties are embedded in view of dynamics, balance between strain and relaxation, speed, stability and rhythm. It should be the aim of the karateka to fight himself through these technical and mental challenges which will capable him to discover deeper layers of martial knowledge.

In descending (and limited) order these might be:

Memorizing motions demonstrated by others and convert them in an deliberate action of the own body (the ability of observation followed by imitation)

Becoming aware of tenseness versus the relaxation of the body

The economics of use- and the physical training of the appropriate muscle groups

Managing the available body energy

To create contentment with the refinement of movement and details of movement

To arouse the right martial attitude of mind, MUGA (= absence of mental activity in course of action) and the self-induced sharpness through intense visualization of imagined combat.

All Wado kata are almost all adaptations of the earlier Okinawa Te kata, in which Hironori Ohtsuka -with his broad knowledge of Japanese martial arts- introduced several modifications. The nine kata which he considered to be the core kata of Wado and which practice can bestow the karate with the typical Wado movement are the five PINAN (the so-called "basic" kata), KU SHAN KU, NAIFANCHI, SEICHAN and CHINTO (the so-called "advanced" kata). Optional BASSAI, JITTE, JIHON, ROHAI, WANSHU and NISHEISHI are also practised.

However, one should be careful with the use of terms "basic" and "advanced" kata. The really advanced practitioner appreciates for example; the wealth of technical challenges hidden in these basic forms and regardless of his level he will never neglect their practice and combine them with the difficulties and challenges found in the advanced kata.

Kihon (Basic techniques)

In this branch of exercises, we train the basic movements and stances in an isolated way or in combination with each other. These movements include forward and backward movement, while delivering different punches and kicks, blocking or deflecting techniques. We are mostly training kihon solitary and deliver punches and kicks in the void. We should train this range of techniques unceasingly in order to perfect the techniques and to let the body adapt the movement without interference of thought. Simply stated, the movements should become spontaneous.

Kihon is an unceasingly practised part in the career of a karateka despite his/her degree of advancement. Again, while training training kihon more and concentrated, one discovers new layers of martial knowledge and skill.

Renraku Waza

Is a more advanced level of kihon in which one is training the established series of more complicated actions, this solitary or with a partner

Kumite (combat applications with partner).

While the Wado Ryu kata emphasize mostly the study of body dynamics, in kumite we study the application of the limbs (also in function of body dynamics). There are so many kinds of Wado kumite that an average practitioner can simply not study them all, because of lack of time!

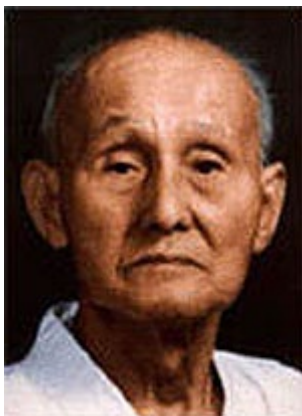
Therefore, we mention only those types of kumite we train in our school:

Yakosoku kumite (prearranged fighting): we practise mostly nihon-kumite, which is two attacks, followed by two defences.

On a more advanced level, we study the **10 Kihon Kumite** which mastering brings the Wado karateka to his highest levels of skill.

We have the **idori** (kneeling attack and defence) and occasionally the **tanto dori** (defence against knife).

At last, we have different types of **jiu kumite** in which the practitioner can try his skills with swiftness, spirit and inspiration in a free form.



The Founder

The Founder of Wado Ryu Karate is **Hironori Ohtsuka (1892-1982)**.

He was one of those rare geniuses who dedicated his entire life to- and reached complete fulfillment in the martial arts. He still is the shining beacon for many of his followers today. On occasion of his 66th birthday, the present Grandmaster, Hironori "Jiro" Ohtsuka II, also an outstanding martial artist, quoted " that he now believed to have achieved 50% of his fathers knowledge." And this speaks volumes!

Hironori Ohtsuka developed Wado Ryu Karate as the first Japanese karate style, as karate originally was an Okinawa unarmed combat system.

O-sensei set his first steps in martial arts at the early age of 4 years. At 13 years of age, he became a pupil of Tatsusaburo Nakayama and studied Shindo Yoshin Ryu Ju Jitsu. In this art, he became extremely proficient and his special interest in atemi (strikes) brought him inevitably in touch with Gichin Funakoshi whom by that time introduced Okinawan Karate (shorin-ryu) in Japan. The fruitful marriage between Japanese Jiu Jitsu and swordsmanship (Yagiu Ryu and Toda Ryu ken-jitsu), and an Okinawan unarmed combat got performed.



Genesis of Wado Ryu

To elucidate the principles or the philosophies covering the name Wa Do Ryu in a single line is quite difficult, as these three kanji stand for different layers of concept. Therefore, I shall try to explain these concepts in short without, I hope, doing them too much injustice through conciseness.

Literally translated **WA** means "harmony". This should not be interpreted as the sense of inner contentment which is experienced by the individual. No, it should be interpreted according to the Japanese notion which represents the capacity to go along with others and to sublimate the self for a greater cohesion with the larger social network. In verbal interaction WA represents civilization, courtesy and tactfulness.

Reflected upon eastern martial arts, and especially the DO disciplines, it teaches the martial artist how individuals interact with those around him, thus leading him to real harmony- inner harmony as well as harmony with others.

At last, it is interesting to know that Japanese people often designate their country as "the land of Wa."

DO means "the way" or "the path." Not a physical path, but a journey of mind and spirit. Not the ultimate goal but the unceasing travelling of the path itself is important.

RYU might best be translated as a tradition or a school of traditional thought.

To conclude this chapter I would add an adaptation of an open letter by Hironori Ohtsuka to all his Wado students, about 2 years before his death. The adaptation is from Mr Tyrone Pardue sensei from Ireland. (With my sincere thanks- JH Webmaster)

At the age of five years old, I was in very poor health. I was ten when I began my training in Jujitsu at the school of my uncle, Sensei Chojiro Ehashi, the official martial arts instructor of the Tsuchiuara Clan. Since this time I have trained continuously until my present age of 88 years. For this, I can heartily thank the traditional Samurai education which was both gentle and strict. I also thank and pray for my dear mother without whom I

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could never have succeeded in my deepest aims; I thank her sincerely for always being near. On my thirtieth birthday, Master Nakayama, the third Grandmaster of Shinto Yoshin-ryu Jujitsu, allowed me to learn the deepest and most secret doctrines of our school. It was then that I succeeded him as the fourth Grandmaster.

Karate was becoming increasingly popular around this time, and I began to study its techniques from several eminent Okinawan masters who had begun to teach in Tokyo. It occurred to me that there were many fine attributes in the Okinawan systems, and so decided to blend these with the finest elements of Shinto Yoshin-ryu Jujitsu to create a genuine and original Japanese martial art. Through this process I developed KUMITE, GYUAKUNAGE, IDORI, TACHIAI, TANKEN-IJORI, and SHINKEN-SHIRAI-IJORI.

Every year, for purposes of promoting the Japanese martial-arts, the Butokuden in Kyoto held a national festival. In 1938, the festival focused on the originators of each martial-art, however, no originator of Japanese karate had been identified. I named the originator of the first true Japanese style of Karate-Do as Shiro-Yoshiloki Akiyama (the founder of Shinto Yoshin-ryu Jujitsu) and named this new style of Karate-Do, 'Wado-Ryu' meaning:

'Japanese-way school' or also 'Peaceful-way school' since the kanji lettering for 'Wa' can mean both.

The fundamental meaning and original aims of martial arts is the promotion of Peace. To bring peace to society and to guard against its loss so that human beings can enjoy a happy life. We must strive for peace in a world where it is increasingly difficult to achieve. We must not simply rely on God's mercy to achieve it but must strive as individuals, with all our will, to attain it. Immense spiritual and physical power is required so we will not surrender to the difficulties and barriers which lie before us on this journey. The hard training in martial-arts aims to foster this dauntless, indefatigable strength which is why the beauty of martial-arts training is beyond the vicissitudes of mundane affairs.



Jan Houblon - instructor

About us...

The instructor

The club instructor is Jan Houblon. He is born at Leuven, Belgium, 1951. Being a gymnast from his 12 year on, he started aikido in 1975 just for a short time, as back and joint problems did prevent him from practising this martial art, thus starting Wado Ryu karate in 1976.

From the beginning on he had the great luck to start under Yoshikazu Kamigaito sensei, 7th dan Wado Ryu and a veteran too in Nippon Kempo whom by that time resided in Brussels, Belgium. This modest, but eminently capable master, took the patience, to educate quite some black belts under which J.H. and succeeded in passing on the true sense of Budo, which results in the fact that a lot of them today are still practising and sometimes teaching in a right traditional manner.

JH took about ten years of training under Kamigaito sensei whom awarded him 2nd dan. Unfortunately, in 1990 the master retreated to his homeland where he till to day, takes care for his deeply aged mother. Most of his former pupils continued exercising in the old circle which Kamigaito sensei had set up. In 1999 JH left this circle, as he felt he must discover new horizons. He started up his own Silver Swallow Karate School in the year 2000 when he became also a member of the Wado Academy.

Apart from his devotion to Wado Ryu karate, JH has a vivid interest in the Chinese Internal Martial Arts(Neijia) Ba Gua Zhang (eight trigram palms) and I Quan (mind-intent boxing) in which he believes, that they are covering much knowledge which can ameliorate his martial and energetic abilities in general.



Yoshikazu Kamigaito sensei

Our Goals

The aim of our school is accompanying the individual at its (hopefully) lifelong quest on the martial path through Wado Ryu karate. The martial path, Budo, is in the first place a martial moving art. Through corporal techniques, we aim for the right mental development which should help the individual with coping with the many hardships of (modern) society.

In contrast to the ancient martial arts which were based on fear, brutality and survival, the martial arts of today, Budo, emphasize fearlessness without unnecessary force and a general sense for harmony and spiritual depth. This is in very short the spirit we try to maintain in our school.

Some basic mental features for commending Wado Ryu Karate and Budo in general are:

- relaxation:

Relaxation is an absolute must for optimal neuromuscular activity. Relaxation is the mother of the fastest action. A state of extreme awareness combined with relaxation of body and mind is the superior state of a good Budoka.

In precarious situations, in which the bodily security comes in danger, the body has, under the influence of a number of hormones (among which adrenalin), the inclination of arousing all unwanted muscle groups. Because of this effect, the muscular system tenses up and often becomes slow, wherefore the correct action can no longer be undertaken.

In Budo and in Wado Ryu karate we are training ourselves, to achieve this virtue in the most difficult circumstances, which means in circumstances of slightly artificial combat, sometimes even with risk of minor corporal harm.

In course of time and after continuous repetition of the correct exercises these form of relaxation stretches it selves to daily living, the result being a raised competence to cope with stress control and the ability to put into perspective things of live. The positive consequences for general health speak of course for them self.

For a good understanding: This type of relaxation is watchful. All senses are woken up, and the body can come into action, one moment on the other.

- Attention and awareness

Just as important as a relaxed body is a sharp attention and its superlative, awareness. Almost all basic exercises of the traditional karate contain elements which improve on it.

Certainly, every practitioner has his own degree of awareness which is mostly genetically determined . But indeed, one can also improve this ability by disciplined and sustained exercise.

One can for instance, to learn watching better and sharper for important details in his immediate surroundings, one can get a better feeling for distance and one can even have its emotional intelligence tightened up, as awareness is the buiding stone for (self) consciousness, which on his turn is the pre-requisite for refined social interaction . All that providing off course, that one carries out his exercises with the largest possible attention for detail.

- Junior training

We allow juniors from ten years on. Their training needs special consideration. Indeed, we want to form true blooded budoka whom will have their prime time at adult age. So it is important to establish the right foundation for later performance, without letting go out of mind the special requirements for juvenile performance.

Neuromuscular development is a very important item at this age, so there will be put a little more stress on quantity of movement than on quality of it.

Many short-term goals must be put forward. Kata and junior-shiai (= regulated fight) combined with grading contests on due times, arouse enthusiasm and motivation.

Keeping this in mind, one will off course understand that winning a contest is not a goal on its self.

- Health

Preserving and improving health conditions is always part of the makeup of our exercises.

The eastern martial arts and traditional medicine have often formed a unity. Especially martial arts of Taoist origins where pervaded with the idea of maximal energetic condition which of course was also the secret of maximal performance. So those arts had besides their actual fighting techniques, also a range of health techniques which included breathing techniques, feeding, qi gong (Japanese = kiko) (exercises for improving life energy) etc. Also these techniques we try to incorporate in our training system.

Links

(All links will open in a new window)

Wado-Ryu Karate

[Wado Academy](#)

[Shikukai GB](#)

[Wadoworld](#)

[Wado Ryu Karate Do Association](#)

[Wado Ryu Renmei Japan](#)

[Shikukai Chelmsford](#)

[Shikukai Olympiad](#)

[Kiryoku Zoetermeer](#)

[Wado-ryu Karate - Amicale Balam](#)

[Unofficial Wado Academy Forum](#)

Miscellaneous

[Chinese Internal Arts](#)

[Yi Quan](#)

[Aikikai RakTenJuku aikido](#)

[Vlaamse Vechtsport Associatie](#)

[Yang's Martial Arts Association België vzw](#)

[karate.2link.be](#)