

FUTURE OF KARATE EVOLVING WITH THE OLYMPICS

Nobuaki Konno

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FOREWORD

Former world karate champion, Nobuaki Konno's *Karate for Olympics* was originally intended as an appeal to influential Japanese legislators and IOC members. Konno, who once strove for his own personal success in karate, now tirelessly strives for the whole world to see karate competition in the Olympic Games. This extraordinary sensei of karate, living and teaching in the Netherlands over the past 40 years, is exceptional not only for his teaching career, during which his enlightened students have become a prominent force to develop and lead their local karate communities, but also because of his dreams to bring karate to the Olympic Games.

In the meantime, the world of karate has made remarkable progress in its path to come together, and has evolved into a greater power to attract and inspire athletes. The World Karate Federation (WKF), the only karate organization recognized by the IOC, is a prime example of such embodiments. Karate now has the WKF as the matrix and is advancing ever closer to become an Olympic event.

Every athlete would admit that winning an Olympic gold medal is one of the most profound experiences they could have. Its impact on one's life is inexpressible. Although this book was first distributed to those in political and administrative fields, readers will discover the gems that are hidden in the latter half of the book for all athletes. There, the physiological or mental attitude required for the true winning is described precisely and thoroughly. What a gift for karate practitioners and athletes of all sports that is wrought from Konno's own experience as both a former world champion and a lifelong practitioner. Since Konno draws the spiritual root of karate as a sport from *budo* and indicates the idea of a future *budo* Olympics, the book is especially compelling to the eyes of wise athletes.

As a reader, we can imagine the roaring sound of Japanese drums stirring up the brave spirits of karate athletes as they enter into the Olympic stadium. That day is near. It is already within us.

Mina Conneau

Translator

February, 2014

PREFACE

In 1970, the World Union of Karate-do Organizations (WUKO), the predecessor to the World Karate Federation (WKF), was formed with less than a hundred participating countries. Since then, karate associations in many different countries have joined the organization. Today, more than 180 member countries belong to WKF.^(*) It opened its doors to the world and spread its wings, whereby Japanese karate has grown into the world's karate.

Unfortunately, despite the fact that karate has about 50 million enthusiasts across the world, it has not yet been adopted as an official event at the greatest of all sports competitions, the Olympics. One of the major reasons is that the competition rules of WKF tournaments are regarded as insufficiently developed for use in the Olympic Games.

If we look at competition rules of the martial arts that are adopted as Olympic events, they all have three things in common: safety, fairness and clarity.

In order for karate to further develop and be adopted as an official event of the Olympic Games, the entire karate world needs to unify upon deliberate consideration and act decisively on the right direction. It is imperative to develop competition rules that correspond to the Olympics' concepts of safety, fairness and clarity.

Even non-practitioners who watch karate for the first time can hardly fail to feel moved by a competitor's powerful technique, which is a manifestation of extraordinarily sharpened inner strength. Now is the time to take action so that karate, a great global sport, will be performed at the Olympics. Yes, KARATE in the Olympics!

My encounters and friendships with prominent figures in various fields have given me a hope that karate will be adopted as an Olympic event.

Nobuaki Konno

June 23, 2010

Amsterdam

* The number of member countries exceeds 185 as of February 2014.





Chapter One

Nijmegen, 30 March 2010

Close to a quarter of a century ago I met the energetic and sports loving author of this book in Tokyo. At that time I stayed there as ambassador for the European Union to Japan. As such I spent my first duty visit to Yamagata Prefecture where, as I learned later on, my friend Konno-san came from.

Since Nobuaki Konno lives in Amsterdam, we meet each other from time to time in my home country. I am delighted to note that his Karate activities in the Netherlands do contribute substantially to bringing sports people of our countries closer to each other. He is really a kind of liaison officer.

This Karate book testifies to the great potential this spectacular and fascinating Japanese sport has for mankind.


Andreas van Agt

Former Prime Minister of the Netherlands

Vancouver, February 2010

Nobuaki Konno is one of my Japanese friends. He is a man who dreams deeply about the future of Karate.

Nobuaki Konno promotes Karate together with its safety, fairness & clearness.

Any Martial Arts Training and Championship which aims at developing the mind and the body is by its very nature a sport. Martial arts are rooted in tradition, but are now also developing into modern sports. Tradition and sports are not opposites, but can enforce each other.

I do hope Nobuaki Konno will continue to meet friends of karate who will help him to realize his dream. I am sure this book will contribute to the positive development of Karate and Martial Arts.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anton J. Geesink', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Anton J. Geesink

Member of the International Olympic Committee

In memoriam:

To our great regret Mr. Anton J. Geesink passed away on 27 August 2010.



Judo open category final at Tokyo 1964 Olympics



Amstelveen, April 2010

I have the pleasure to present you this beautiful book on karate and the activities of Nobuaki Konno, who is not only a former World Karate Champion but also a KLM employee and 'Sports Ambassador' in KLM. Nobuaki started with KLM in 1986 and in 1987 he established the KLM karate Club to promote his favourite sport.

Next to his work at KLM, Nobuaki has also been very active within Dutch Olympic and Paralympics teams as KLM Sports Ambassador in 2007 and 2008. He also worked as a liaison officer for the NOC*NSF and his activities are highly appreciated by many Dutch athletes.

I am convinced that this book will attract the attention of many karate enthusiasts.

And I do hope that you enjoy reading it as much as I did.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Hartman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Peter. F. Hartman

President & CEO

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines



What will happen when karate becomes an Olympic event

- All karate practitioners will learn the rules adopted by the Olympics and train in accordance with such Olympic rules.
- All karate dojos and tournaments throughout the world will start using "Olympic Karate rules."
- All karate practitioners and friends in the world will enjoy watching karate events during the Olympics.
- Every "karate kid" in the world can dream about the Olympics.
- Increasing numbers of beginners will register at dojos that adopt Olympic rules.
- The number of karate practitioners in the world will dramatically increase.
- People involved in karate across the world will be taking a closer look at the Olympic rules.
- People involved in karate across the world will start constructive discussions in search of rule improvements.
- *Shin-Gi-Tai* (Spirit, Technique and Physical Fitness) of the great Japanese martial art will begin to be rightly understood in the world.
- Smooth diplomatic communications will start developing between Japan and karate enthusiasts found in more than 180 countries.

The reasons karate should be included as an Olympic event

- Karate's development as a sport is perfectly aligned with the fundamental principles described in the Olympic Charter, which states: "Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles."
- The World Karate Federation (WKF) has over 180 member countries and regions. It would be the ninth largest number among the summer Olympic events, which includes judo.
- The number of karate practitioners is about 50 million. That makes it the tenth most popular sport by number of practitioners in the world.
- The cost of hosting a WKF World Karate Championship is about 50 million yen (approx. US\$500,000). Compared to the costs of holding global competition of other sports that are Olympic events, karate is one of the ten least expensive sports in the world to host a tournament.
- The equipment (*karate-gi* or *dogi*, and safety gear) that practitioners use during the Karate World Championships hosted by the WKF cost considerably less than that of other Olympic events.
- Karate originated in Japan and now is known worldwide, even to children in small villages in remote parts of the world.

The predawn to today, and the future of karate

【The predawn of karate】

Karate's history goes back to the periods where policies of banning weapons were implemented twice in the Ryukyu Kingdom (today's Okinawa Island in Japan) in the 14th and 16th centuries. In order to prevent revolts, the Kingdom prohibited the possession or use of any weapon. Those who wished to learn karate as a martial art had no choice but to practice with their bare hands. That is why the martial art is called the way of the empty (*kara*) hand (*te*). As a method of practicing such an art effectively, *kata* were developed. *Kata* were used to train by oneself by practicing set sequences of offence and defense techniques. The original form of karate was gradually developed through this process.

【Today's Karate】

Karate spread from Okinawa around the 1920s and then was introduced to the Japanese mainland. Local dojos sprang up across the country, while many universities also founded their own karate clubs.

Numerous styles and groups began to evolve around the late 1950s. As each of them started to host tournaments, karate quickly gained popularity in the general public, leading to its expansion today.

【Future of karate】

Almost half a century has passed since the establishment of the World Karate Federation. In the early history of karate, practitioners needed to transform their body into a weapon and protect themselves, sometimes even defeat enemies. Karate has since rapidly evolved into a sporting event as well. This history of karate's development coincided with Japan's development into a nation with a law-abiding society. The need to defeat opponents, which was a prevalent idea during the early era, has gradually faded in today's karate. In order for karate to evolve into a sport event, it became necessary to slowly eliminate certain techniques that put practitioners in danger. As karate from Japan has spread to the world, attracting many children and women, especially in the West, it holds the potential to further expand its numbers of practitioners.

Chapter Two

Shigeo Suzuki – President, Seiunkai of Karate Club at Saitama University

“Karate as an Olympic event”

This slogan carries the idea that Mr. Konno, who once learned karate with the Karate Club at Saitama University, has been persistently advocating. He moved to the Netherlands over 30 years ago, and kept training to participate in many competitions and achieve numerous victories. He has also taught and trained many students as a coach. At the same time, he built strong network with many karate practitioners and other athletes, while strengthening ties with people in various fields including politicians, dignitaries and intellectuals in Japan and other countries. Through such experience, he grew enthusiastic about promoting the karate he learned in his life, and his wish to create world peace through karate became even stronger.

Currently, many different styles of karate are adopted both in Japan and other countries in the world through which many players learn the skills. Today, the population of people who practice karate is said to have reached 50 million. The Japanese karate that originated in Okinawa is now evolving into the karate of the world. Despite that, it is unfortunate that karate has yet to be included as an Olympic event. Karate was born as a martial art, but at the same time, it has an aspect of high-level sport activity. Mr. Konno has been promoting karate in various ways in hopes of making it an Olympic event. This book carries his passion. I am sure the readers will know that this book is not a mere karate manual. I wholeheartedly recommend his book as a completely new type of karate document.

Saitama-city
April 2010

Shigeo Suzuki

President

Seiunkai of Karate Club at Saitama University

Follow the breakthrough of judo

In 1964, the Summer Olympics were held in Tokyo, Japan. For the first time in Olympics history, judo was adopted as an official event. The events took place at the Nippon Budokan, an indoor arena built to promote Japanese traditional martial arts and provide a grand dojo to train the minds and bodies of martial artists. Many readers surely recall the moment when Anton J. Geesink won the gold medal in the open-weight category of judo at the Tokyo Olympics.

Ever since its adoption as an Olympic event, judo has been evolving from a strictly Japanese martial art to a sport loved worldwide. Its development has been extraordinary. Judo has also established a crowning status in Japan. It is not a mere style of martial arts but a Japanese specialty that people can proudly present to the world. Its popularity is unmatched. The Japanese top judo practitioner tends to be regarded as a national hero, and all the people in Japan know such a judo athlete's name.

In contrast, one cannot say that karate is gaining in national popularity, despite the fact that it is an equally great martial art as judo. Most people do not even know the names of top karate practitioners.

Even though karate and judo are both martial arts, a huge gap has emerged since one became an Olympic event. Karate has a lot to learn from the past course of judo. In order for karate to be adopted as an Olympic event, it is extremely important to learn from our predecessors, while bringing on outstanding practitioners and star athletes.

Modern karate has different styles including *sun-dome*, semi-contact, full contact, traditional, *jissen* and *budo*. The differences among these styles are based on nuances of rules, use/non-use of protective equipment and so on, but essentially, there is no big difference. Every karate match is conducted under certain rules. Even if it is a small rule, any karate that is played with rules is a sport, and cannot be considered *jissen* (actual combat) in its literal sense.

"Learn from judo" means that we should recognize the significance of judo's achievements. Judo promotes propriety, trains mind and body, and aims to help personal growth. It became appreciated in countries worldwide and spread further, drawing more and more people's attention to Japan. By renewing our awareness of judo's history, we can successfully create the path for karate to further prosper. Learning from judo is not against tradition, nor does it go beyond tradition.

Judo grew popular, and now karate can follow and grow popular in the world as well. This means that the Japanese spirit becomes widely known to the world. Both judo and karate enthusiasts are interested in Japan. Consequently, more and more people will become fans of Japan and gain understanding of the Japanese way of thinking.

Scientific karate and philosophical karate

From time to time, progress in science can be achieved by questioning the things that are commonly accepted as true, or by constantly seeking a solution. It is the same for karate. It is necessary to continuously shed the light of science on all the techniques of karate, including basic stances and positions, without becoming a captive of tradition or one's own experience.

Apart from the scientific aspects of karate, however, the mental factor of a practitioner has a large influence during practice and competitions. There are also philosophical factors in the minds of practitioners, such as the determination to get stronger and win, overcoming anxiety and nervousness, and a spirit which does not fear risking everything.

These philosophical parts of karate have considerable influence in a match with no rules, which is actual combat or a martial fight, as well as in a competition under common rules among top level practitioners.

There are different practice phases in each stage of the practitioner's progress. At some stages, the philosophical and scientific elements must be separated. Other times they need to be combined for a practitioner to fully exploit the true meaning of both elements.

In any sport competition where a top athlete's performance deeply moves the hearts of spectators, both the scientific and philosophical elements are manifested as one.

Body parts (the tools used in a modern karate match)

Body parts of karate are the prominent tools employed in each technique.

1) The parts that are often used during a match

Seiken: Te-waza (hand technique). Make a fist and strike to attack upper body (jodan and chudan)

Koshi: Ashi-waza (foot and leg technique). Raise toes and kick frontward to attack areas such as chest and stomach.

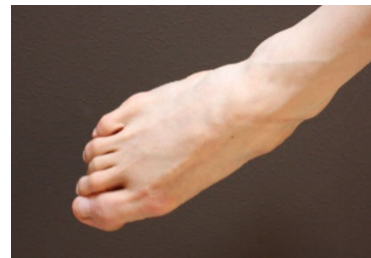
Haisoku: Ashi-waza (foot and leg technique). Top of the foot is used in roundhouse kick to attack areas such as head, chest and stomach.



Seiken



Koshi



Haisoku

2) The parts that are rarely used, or prohibited to use in a modern match

Uraiken: Te-waza. Use the back of hand for maximizing whipping effect to attack areas such as face, side of body and back.

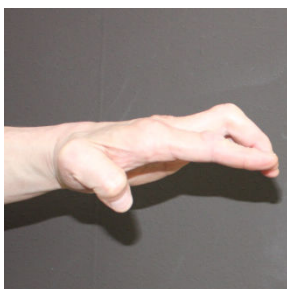
Shoutei: Te-waza. Strike with the bottom of palm. Used both in attack and defense.

Syutou: Te-waza. Sweep off with outer side of the hand to attack areas such as neck and head.

Nukite: Te-waza. Strike with the stretched fingers to attack areas such as eyes and throat.

Empi: Ude-waza. Hit with elbow to attack areas such as head, chest and stomach.

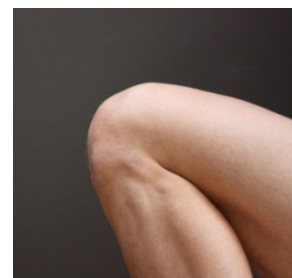
Hiza: Ashi-waza. Hit with knee to attack areas such as head, chest and stomach.



Nukite



Empi



Hiza

There are many other parts such as *oniken*, *kouken*, *suiken* and *kumade*. These are mainly observed in various *koryugata* and current *kata* events.

Great karate techniques to preserve, and proposed concept of competition rules

In order for any sport competition to form as a viable event, it needs equipment and rules to draw a line between winning and losing. Let's compare karate competition to some familiar sport events such as a ball game or shooting. Body parts of karate competitors are like many different sizes of balls used for ball game events. In the ball games, when a ball is shot into a certain goal, it is recorded as a score and points are added. In a shooting event, the competition rule is to count hits of bullet to a certain part of the target. In the case of judo event, when an opponent receives *nage-waza* (throwing technique) and the whole or a part of the athlete's body wildly hit *tatami*, the safety mat, it scores as *ippon* (full point). As such, the competition rules are easily understood by the general audience, and that is also the case for soccer or basketball. This is one of the major reasons why these sports such as judo have grown popular in many countries and regions.

In the sport of karate, the opponent's body parts such as *jodan* (upper body) or *chudan* (middle body) are equivalent to a goal post or target in other sports. Suppose that a ball (equal to offense technique in karate) has gone into the goal (equal to the body area such as *jodan* and *chudan* of the karate practitioner), a competition rule would allow judges to decide how many points the ball or bullet is worth. On the other hand, there are some styles of karate competition in which points are given regardless of how the ball entered the goal post, or regardless of the destructive hit to the target.

In the past, there have been two major kinds of *kumite* (sparring) in karate; *sundome* (non-contact) and knockout (full-contact) system. The former style constantly requires the sophisticated and superior judgment of an expert judge. However, a certain offense technique and hit can be declared a foul, and the match can be won or lost without consideration of whether a great traditional technique of karate was demonstrated in the attempted offensive move or not. The latter style tends to focus more on simply scoring a hit, rather than playing based on employing the great traditional technique.

Just as there are valid standards for the shape, size and materials of balls or bullets used in other competitions and games, karate needs to firmly define traditional techniques and implement better competition rules for further evolvement as a magnificent sport .

Varieties of protective elements and their necessity

【Varieties of protective elements used in karate competition】

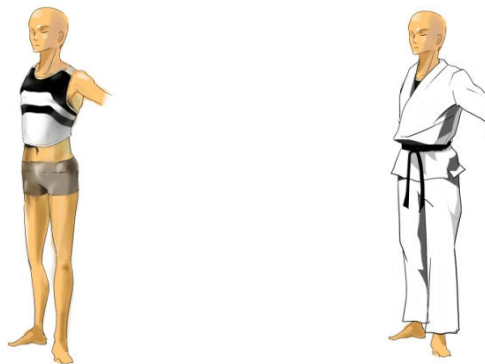
- Mouth piece, gloves, head gear, chest guard, shin pads
- *Dogi* (uniform), *obi* belt, *tatami* or mat
- Competition duration, the number of judges, competition rules, and so on

【Why are they necessary?】

- To preserve the great karate techniques and develop them into further sophistication
- To maintain accuracy of the technique and refine it into remarkable technique
- To avoid causing injury to the opponent, while fully demonstrating the superior karate technique
- To display great karate techniques to the judge and audience more clearly

Safer competition rules may be regarded as a kind of protector. Varieties of protective elements enable the use of great karate techniques, while helping to promote the competitor's safety. These elements will bring about clearer competition details to the eyes of not only a skilled and experienced judge but also the general audience. At the same time, they will contribute to the development of karate into a further sophisticated sport.

The great techniques of karate need to be safe, fair and clear. It is also important for them to be uncomplicated and easy to judge from the standpoint of the audience. We may soon see the modern technologies such as sensors and airbags that can be installed into the gloves, head gear, chest guard and *dogi*, making a scoring hit virtually indisputable.



Chapter Three

Anna Paulowna, August 2010

I am very happy to have the chance to contribute some personal words to this book written by Mr. Konno. I hope this book will add to the understanding amongst Karate-do practitioners that the spirit of Karate should be in the Olympic family.

The Olympic motto is *Citius, Altius, Fortius*, which is latin for "Faster, Higher, Stronger". Three words to express one idea, strive to improve yourself. In this book Sensei Konno explains why it is important for Karate to join the Olympic movement, having the chance to show wonderful techniques of Karate.

By his Karate lesson Sensei Konno let me experience the importance to train and strive for a better and stronger Karate technique and gain the correct mindset to go to the Karate Competition with good and strong Karate. As a young student I admired my Karate-do teacher for his strong Karate technique. As an older student I admire him because of his strong mentality and his perseverance.

Sensei Konno is promoting Karate for the Olympics for many decades. I am sure many people will admire sensei Konno the same way I do for the tremendous efforts he made by writing this book and all the effort he made for our beautiful Karate-do.

Sensei Konno,
Thank you very much.

OSU,



David Roovers
President
Dutch Karate-do Federation



Basic Practice

It is often said that a firm foundation is the key of mastery. Karate is no exception. If one desires to learn the great karate technique, *kihon* (basics) practice is imperative.

Kihon practice can be perceived to be monotonous and tiresome, but application of ingenuity could transform it into various stimulating trainings. By practicing the *kihon* for a long time and in repetition, one's fundamental technique will be enhanced in depth and quality. When one learns mental requirements for the *kihon* technique at each level, it will develop into an impressive, seemingly instinctive *kihon* technique.

Kihon of karate forms the core element and consists of offense, defense, *tachikata* (stance), *kamae* (posture) and so on. Great *kihon* technique has unbreakable and sophisticated form, speed, power and *kime* (keen focus). At the same time, the spirit of determination, courage, confidence, unwavering faith and *kiai* (mental energy) is inherent in all.

The one who obtains a great *kihon* through persistent training with enthusiasm and determination is able to demonstrate the unbreakable technique and spirit during a match against any opponents in ever changing conditions under any circumstances. There is no short cut for obtaining such mastery.

Kamae

The kamae (posture) of karate is the source of offence and defense. It consists of two aspects: physical *kamae* and mental *kamae*. We will take a look at body parts divided into *jobu*, *chubu* and *kabu*.

【Jobu (upper body)】

Head: In order to stay alert and ready to quickly respond, the cervical region needs to be relaxed. Chin is lightly tucked and kept in the correct and natural position.

Eyes: When watching only parts of the body such as hands and feet, the mind will be caught there and lose sight of other movements. Keep in mind to watch the overall body movement to avoid getting confused by a single body part's motion. Paradoxically stated, in order to see all, it is sometimes necessary to not try to see everything.

Shoulders: It is said "when you look at the shoulders, they will reveal whether the practitioner's skill is good or poor." Tense shoulders impede natural and free movements. Relax your shoulders as much as possible and release them to the natural and lowered position.

【Chubu (middle body)】

Arms: Keep your arms closer to the center of your body. Try not to position them wide and away from the body both before and after offense or defense. It is important to maintain the *kamae* with both arms in well balanced position, and stand ready to deal with any movement in any circumstances.

Abdomen: Vigorous energy concentrates in the abdomen. A moment of decision on whether to perform an offensive or defensive maneuver springs from the power in the abdomen. Keep your stomach tight to form *kamae*.

Lower Back: Lower back is the connecting point between upper and lower body. It plays an important role to achieve a superior move of offense or defense. The state of mind also affects the overall body, with its energy spreading from the area of the abdomen and lower back.

【Kabu (lower body)】

Legs: Legs are positioned forward and back, and their stance has to be suited for defense or offense. They also need to facilitate superior mobility and stability. It calls for creativity when practicing to develop this skill and stance.

Knees: Knees play an important role in applying the above mentioned mobility and stability of legs. They need to be able to hold your balance in a firm yet relaxed manner.

【Summary of kamae】

Kamae of karate can be compared to a fighter jet or castle, since no matter how brilliant the fighter jet or castle is, it cannot complete a mission without the human mind in it. What moves a *kamae* effectively is the human, or the "mind of karate." There is infinite variety in a karate match that depends on opponents and also on each other's state of mind that changes moment by

moment. Therefore, there is not a single *kamae* that is absolutely perfect. Ultimately, it comes down to the conclusion “*kamae* is not about appearance, but about what is inside.”

Importance of competition and mental preparation

【The importance of competition】

A match is a practice method that engages full force effort between two practitioners to win, and is carried out under certain rules. There are a lot of hidden lessons in a match that are never obtainable from just a daily practice.

A karate match provides a good opportunity to try out all you have at the moment. It also gives you an opportunity to objectively review your progress and the way you employ techniques. Whether you win or lose, it reveals many challenges that contribute to your future progress, including especially the issues of mental aspects. Do not get overly nervous. Do not get distracted by haphazardness.

Take advantage of small matches in the beginning as the opportunity presents itself to you, and gradually participate in matches of higher levels. Mental concentration and a tenacious pursuit of victory are imperative for a karate competitor's progress.

【Mental preparation for competition】

1) Self-control

Daily preparation towards a competition match includes methodically planned practice, as well as the day-to-day conditioning of the body based on carefully selected diet and nutrition. Exercise initiative and self-control, while leading one's every activity with scrupulous care during every minute of your time until the match. This will also help develop the necessary skill of eliminating distraction from the mind in preparation for a match.

2) Attentiveness to equipment

Mental preparedness towards a match includes a careful attention to the karate-gi and equipment. If there is any defective condition in the karate-gi or equipment, the movement could be unexpectedly hampered and one's competing capability would be decreased. It is important to maintain a well-tended karate-gi and all commonly accepted equipment such as mouth piece, knee supporter and gloves in advance of a match, so that you are used to them and no extra worry is required. It is important to wear the equipment that helps you get into the state of mind and says "yes, this is it." There is a risk that a defective karate-gi and equipment could injure not only yourself but also the opponent. Attention needs to be paid to this point as a manner of respectfulness toward the opponent. This kind of thorough consideration will add to one's own power to compete.

3) Venue check

Today's competition organizers provide mostly standardized design for a competition site anywhere in the world, and it may not be necessary as in the past to visit and check the details of the competition site in advance. However, any site has a certain amount of differences from other venues. We need to watch for places where one's own competition skill could be adversely affected. Although you will become able to quickly feel the

characteristics of the site after experiencing more competition matches, you need to pay especially close attention to floors and mats. Avoid getting on the competition mat without checking with your own feet before the event and getting the feel of it by moving around on it. This is also an essential preparation for securing the victory.

4) Confidence

It is important in anything to stay confident when taking action. If confidence is lost, the human mind would create adverse emotions such as fear, haste, anxiety or hesitation that need to be avoided at all cost. Such states of mind block the road to victory.

It is easier said than done to “have confidence.” Getting enough practice is the only way to draw confidence from within. As a practitioner participates in various competitions and keeps practicing in many different mental states, real confidence will eventually be built. The first mental step to victory is to “have confidence.”

5) The risk-all mindset

It is not limited to karate competition where letting go of oneself is sometimes critical. By leaving one’s physical existence completely behind, one could create an adequate movement in return. Nonetheless, it doesn’t mean to waste the physical movement without one’s mind put into it. When you sense the moment of chance, shut out all the fear, anxiety or hesitation and go all out against the opponent. This is the risk-all mindset that leads to victory.

6) Mind of offense

It is often said “a good offense is the best defense.” This is a valuable saying which describes how important it is to have an aggressive mentality. However, it does not commend the act of ignoring the opponent and exerting a self-centered offense. At the same time, defense during a match is not a goal, but a mere method to lead to the victory. Although it is important to practice defensive moves, it is never recommended to practice only the defensive mindset to bring to a match. Anyone who remains in a defensive stance is sure to be defeated. Maintaining the drive and determination that says “I’m going to attack” is the cardinal rule and mentality which leads to victory.

7) Mind’s eye

In a match, it is imperative to be able to see the opponent well. A change of the opponent’s *kamae* can confuse or surprise a competitor and cause an astute move to be constrained. This could happen even after the competitor went through a vast amount of training. One needs to train their eyes to avoid getting caught by the appearances of the opponent and see what’s really behind it. Such a capability will be attained through extensive experience in facing an opponent in actual matches. The more experience one gains with practice and matches, the more intuitively one can see and understand the things hidden behind the outer appearance. The mind’s eye that can lead to victory is like precision radar which reveals the true movement of the opponent.

8) Zanshin (unchanged mind)

Zanshin literally means to keep one's state of mind unchanged. It describes the way of holding the state of mind the same as moments before, when offense or defense is executed. It does not mean dwelling on mistakes with regret or any degree of complacency.

When one skillfully deals with the opponent's attack, one may feel "that went well" and allow some relaxed feeling to be induced. When one fails in offense, it tends to cause a moment of disappointment and some remarks such as "damn."

Even though these two words describe different feelings, both complacency and disappointment immobilize the mind, and therefore impede a critical move that should follow. A competition match is a duel and its utmost goal is to win. Never break concentration during a match until you arrive at the destination called victory. A match that could have been won is often lost only because the spirit of *Zanshin* was forgotten. In a competition match, the mind that persists in *Zanshin* will reach the victory.

9) Fudoshin (immovable mind)

The points explained above are some of the characteristics of the state of mind to be held before and during a match. Through the quality and quantity of practice, one will fully take advantage of what was learned in a match, gaining more experience in repeated challenges against many different opponents. As the continued experiences gradually bring improvement in one's skill, disturbance in mind will be dissipated and the mind that is as immovable as a mountain will be developed. Daily strenuous training and learning through numerous competition matches are the key to naturally acquire such a state of mind. With this state of mind, nothing can ever cause the mind to sway. This mental state is the *fudoshin*, the goal of karate training.

What it takes to win

Reaching victory depends on one's ability to fully utilize the effective execution of a technique, while engaging the well developed physical tool to transmit one's mind into an acceptable technique within competition rules. What separates the winner from the loser is the higher rate of successful application of such techniques and tactics than the opponent during the karate competition.

There is a saying "Do your best and leave the rest to providence." It does not mean that a practitioner merely waits for the divine act of providence. Before a competition, 99% of preparation needs to be done with all your might in specific and sufficient training toward every imaginable situation that could arise during a match. One should hold a reinforced confidence which comes from a vast amount of training that gives a sense that you have devoted even 120% of your capacity. All that's missing in the match is the 1% that is left to divine providence, and you are to keep your faith and stand tenacious until the very end.

Although it is necessary to have your own favorite technique to win, overdependence on one's specialty could give an opponent a chance to turn it around against you. A truly strong technique would only become effective in the moment of a favorable situation that the practitioner creates for oneself, while quickly responding to the ever changing and never predictable flow of the match.

The world of competition is merciless. It is not guaranteed that the persistence, serious commitment and earnest effort will surely reach the victory. Nevertheless, a winner is born. That victory is achieved by the one who has acquired the essential skill and quality for winning the match.

The winning factor is not held by the opponent. It is found within one's mind. Therefore, you should not be caught in a single method such as overly depending on your great techniques, overwhelming the opponent by threatening, or merely trying to calm one's own mind. The quality of a winner is acquired when one achieves the mindset that enables them to freely demonstrate the true potential in the reality of a competition match that keeps changing moment by moment.

CONCLUSION

Compared to Western countries, there was little development of weapons in Japan between the 15th and 19th centuries. During that time, Japanese *bujutsu* (martial arts) evolved into *budo* (martial way). Each discipline or sport of Japanese *budo* has a potential to be revered around the world. Western countries also have their martial arts and art of self-defense, but unlike Japanese *budo*, the modern weapons and arms of the Western world have overwhelmed the existence of their martial arts.

The great influence of national isolation on development of *bujutsu* and *budo* can be found nowhere else but in Japan. Such development does not seem to exist in other parts of the world. *Budo* was purely domestically established by the Japanese people during the 400 years of national isolation. In order to present each sport of *budo* to the world and preserve and further develop, Nippon Budokan, the incorporated public interest foundation was launched in 1960.

The introduction of artificial snow to the Olympics took place at the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin. It is used again in massive amounts during the Winter Olympics in Vancouver, generating serious discussions on environmental issues at the Olympics. There is also another issue raised from the fatal accident during the luge training run. These issues could imply that the Olympic motto, "Faster, Higher, Stronger," may be facing a turning point where it is required to change with the times.

In the Ancient Olympic Games, safety of the athletes was often neglected. Boxers wrapped their fists with rivet embedded leather to give greater damage to opponents. Neither wrestling nor boxing had time limit to matches. Athletes were to continue fighting until either one admits defeat.

Olympics in the modern day need to stay away from doping which sacrifices the athlete's health and safety. It also has to avoid competition rules that make a game backslide into the dangerous ancient Olympics.

The sporting world needs to thoroughly consider the safety, fairness and clarity of the Olympics. While aiming to establish more objective methods, it has to evolve not only for new records, but as an advocate for humanity.

The traditional martial arts that are currently included in the Olympics are shooting, archery, boxing, judo, wrestling, fencing and taekwondo. When we think of the bright future for both Japan and the world environment, the world of karate can band together to promote karate for the Olympics. This will potentially create the genuine martial arts (*budo*) Olympics. The world could even bring about a *budo* renaissance. Karate can be counted as a form of Japanese cultural diplomacy and should be proudly promoted to the world. Furthermore, Japan needs to walk hand in hand with the countries that show deep understanding for its mission. It needs to keep searching for more friends all over the globe. I hope to see a flame like the Olympic torch start lighting in the hearts of many global leaders and karate supporters around the world.

Nobuaki Konno

February 2010

Vancouver



WORLD KARATE FEDERATION

Recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC)
Member of the General Association
of International Sports Federations (GAISF) and
the International World Games Association (IWGA)

Athens, May 2010

Karate is a wonderful sport which is now practiced in 180 countries. In the 1960s and 1970s, many Japanese Karate teachers have travelled from Japan to promote Karate all over the world. Konno-san was one of them.

I met him several places also in Singapore where the 117th IOC session was held in 2005. Since then, we met many times in different places and discussed many things about the future of Karate, especially about its "Safety" and "Karate to Olympic".

This Karate book is published in Japan with Japanese words because he would like to let Japanese people have a new understanding about the value of Karate which is not only for Japanese interest.

I am sure that he will get warm support from Japanese government and Japanese Karate friends to realize his dream which is the same as our WKF's dream

Antonio Espinós

President

World Karate Federation (WKF)





“Dream” - The dream that must come true.

Japanese calligraphy by Teruhiko Mashiko

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