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Wado Pentecost Seminar 2015 in Berlin

Tradition and Competition

130 participants from Austria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Pakistan, Sweden and Switzerland attended the traditional Wado Pentecost Seminar in Berlin. The instructors were Shuzo Imai, 8th Dan Wado ryu, Takamasa Arakawa, 6th Dan JKF Wado-Kai, Bernd Alscher, 6th Dan Wado ryu and Christina Gutz, 6th Dan Wado ryu.

The number of participants of the Berlin Wado Pentecost Seminars, which has been consistently large for many years, is proof of the great national and international response and popularity. The dan gradings of the JKF Wado-Kai and of the German Karate Association DKV reflect the high quality of the seminar, of the instructors and of the grading panels.

The Training

Each training session of the three-day seminar started and ended with joint units. In the main sessions, the participants trained in smaller and bigger groups according to their dan or kyu grades. It was, thus, possible for the instructors to focus on the specific requirements and skill levels of the members of the individual groups. The excellent planning and structure of the seminar allowed the four instructors to modify the group sizes flexibly. Because the instructors took turns according to a schedule, the participants enjoyed training under the guidance of all instructors with a high degree of motivation and concentration.

Tradition and Competition in Wado Ryu

Is there a difference between tradition and competition in Wado ryu? Takamasa Arakawa answered this question right at the beginning: Tradition and competition belong together in Wado ryu. This was reflected in the structure of the entire seminar and in relationships between the individual sessions, because the latter and their contents were not only related to one another, but they were all based on the core principle of tradition and competition being one in Wado ryu.

Both Shuzo Imai and Takamasa Arakawa emphasized the precise execution of Kihon which is the basis for understanding, feeling and the application of important budo principles, such as Chushin Tadasu, Tai Otoshi, Irimi and Kuzushi. Shuzo Imai conveyed this using the kata Wanshu and Rohai, as well as in a talk which he combined with related exercises for the participants: As a matter of principle, a distinction is

made between the upper, middle and lower Tanden.¹ In the ideal case, when all elements are ultimately inter-connected and coordinated and energy is, thus, generated, they result, together with a strong fighting spirit, in an effective technique.

Takamasa Arakawa's sessions and explanations matched those of Shuzo Imai's. He put this across using, inter alia, Niseishi and Seishan, Kihon Kumite and Randori. Takamasa Arakawa considers Randori and competition as good exercises for obtaining a good structure (Chushin Tadasu), for developing speed, agility and coordination. Furthermore, the stress which the fighter feels in a competitive situation is a good preparation for a real defence situation. As in the prior years, Takamasa Arakawa greatly impressed the participants with his methodological approach to teaching and his broad range of exercises. What was also remarkable was how he presented simple, but effective self-defence exercises in a single session so that everybody be it a blackbelt or a yellowbelt, could do them. He explained the basic rules of the World Karate Federation WKF in a thought-through manner and with exercises in which these rules were applied and combined with various aspects such as Zanshin, correct timing, feinting, footwork, flexibility and correct Maai after the final counter-attack,

It became clear in the training sessions of Shuzo Imai, Takamasa Arakawa, Bernd Alscher and Christina Gutz about the traditional partner exercises Kihon Kumite, Tanto Dori and Idori that these are important elements of the legacy of Wado ryu which need to be preserved. Only if the principles of Wado ryu are fully internalised will good and precise techniques become possible. But they will be successful only with a pronounced and strong fighting spirit. The circle, thus, closes: Tradition and competition are but one. Tradition and competition teach us how to deal with ourselves, the opponent or partner and the environment. This is, eventually, not only a good exercise in the dojo, but also in our daily lives.

Wado Pentecost Seminars 2016 and 2017

Toby Threadgill, Menkyo Kaiden Takamura ha Shindo Yoshin ryu, und Shuzo Imai, 8th Dan Wado ryu, will be the instructors at the 2016 Wado and TSYR Pentecost Seminar, and at the 2017 Wado Pentecost Seminar the instructors will be Shuzo Imai and Takamasa Arakawa.

We would like to cordially invite all budoka to join us in Berlin to train with us!

¹ Above all, the lower Tanden is important for karate and budo. Inner Ki (energy) is located here. It is the basis for a good and "earthed" stance and proper breathing and supports the control of the mind and of emotions.