

Profile

BC Tour
March 23rd - April 1st 2007

4 Time Kata
World Champion



Atsuko Wakai

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Introduction

It is my pleasure to introduce Sensei Atsuko Wakai, Four Time Kata World Champion. This is a wonderful opportunity for all of us to train with one of the most famous Karate competitors in the world.

I first met Wakai Sensei in the United States in 2001, where she attended a local tournament as a special guest. The US National Kumite Coach, Sensei Igaki introduced me and asked me to bring her to Canada some day. I agreed and have tried to bring her here ever since.

In fact, I have met with her several times, including at the All Japan Championships, held every year at the Budokan in Tokyo. She has a very busy schedule in Japan, but she agreed to come to Canada in the Spring 2007.

She is young and still in top form! I hope you can take advantage of this opportunity to train with one of the best in the world. Please encourage yourself and others to take as many classes as you can. I have requested a large number of kata, so that people can choose according to their level and ability.

I know that you will find her to be a wonderful instructor, but also a person of great heart and respect for others.

You can contact us any time by telephone or fax at 604.321.1815

Or

Specialprojects@shitoryu.net

Yours in Karate-do,



Yoshiaki Sato, Shihan
Shito-ryu Seiko-kai Karate-do



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Who is Atsuko Wakai?

PERSONAL

Date of Birth	September 12, 1971
Home Town	Gifu-city, Gifu-prefecture
Hobby	Appreciation of Theatre
Grade	4th degree black belt (All Japan Karate Federation)
Qualifications	Certified Exercise Instructor

EDUCATION

March 1984	Graduated from Kyomachi Elementary school in Gifu-city
March 1987	Graduated from Inaba Junior High school in Gifu-city
March 1990	Graduated from Gifu Dai-ichi Girls Senior High School
March 1992	Graduated from Kin-ki University/College of Bus. and Economy

COMPETITION RESULTS

International

World Karate Fed.	Gold Medals (1997, 2000, 2002, 2004) 4 straight wins (1st time in history)
World Games	Gold Medals (1997, 2001, 2005) 3 straight wins (1st time in its history)
World Cup	Gold Medal (1997)
Open de Paris	Gold Medal (2003)
Asian Games	Gold Medals (1997 ~ 2004) 8 straight wins
Asian Karate Champs.	Gold Medals (1997, 1999, 2001, 2004) 4 straight wins

Japan

All Japan Champs.	Gold Medals (1997 ~ 2004) 8 straight wins
Nat. Athletic Meet	Gold Medals (1997, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002)
Workers Association.	Gold Medals (1993, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001)

AWARDS

Award of Excellence, Japan Olympic Committee	2006
Honor of Merit and Distinguished Service, Japan Ministry of Sport	2005

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Bio

Just as the world of Martial Arts is largely dominated by men, Sensei Atsuko Wakai can be identified as the grand exception. For the last ten years, she has certainly been one of the brightest stars in international Karate competition.

The 2004 World Championships held in Mexico marked her fourth consecutive world title – an unprecedented record for any kata athlete, man or woman. As inspiring as this record might be, it is the woman behind the record and her personal story that gives young athletes the inspiration to strive for the very top.

Atsuko Wakai started her career in Karate at a very young age, but not at all with competition in mind. At the age of seven she was severely injured in a car accident, and there was some question of whether she would fully recover.

While she did recover from her injuries to some degree, she was enrolled in a karate class in Japan in order to further re-habilitate her body. Her family hoped not only that she would recover physically, but also that Karate would give her the strength of mind to persevere and work through the difficulties her injuries presented.

In fact, it was her first instructor, a woman, who encouraged her to continue with her training. She quickly progressed in her recovery, so much so that she could enjoy competition with her fellow students. In fact, she was to become a natural leader by the time she entered high school in her home town of Gifu, opening her own club when there was none in the area.

By the time she graduated in 1990, she was winning consistently in her local community prefecture. She continued with her training at Kin-ki University, doing more and more free sparring (*kumite*) as well as forms (*kata*). It was there that she began to compete in earnest.

Very quickly, Wakai Sensei rose to become one of the most prominent competitors at the Japan Karate Federation (JKF), the governing body for karate in Japan. In fact, for several years she placed second at the All Japan Karate Championships, arguably the most difficult kata competition in the world. Yet, to compete at the World Championships, she had to place first overall. After several failed attempts, she was ready to give up her quest to compete internationally.

Profile

Atsuko Wakai

Upon graduation from University in 1992, she entered the working world and seriously considered giving up Karate altogether. In Japan, most competitors retire from competition after school, for the simple reason that they have no time to train.

Yet she was unhappy with her results; she had ambitions of international competition. With new dedication and encouragement from fellow competitors and coaches, she doubled her efforts and managed to win a gold medal at the Tokyo Women's Karate Tournament. After that breakthrough, Wakai began to see more success.

With the help of her coach, she was able to finally win the All Japan Championships in 1997 and make it onto the Japanese National Squad. As the best female kata competitor in Japan, her job was now to represent the country that founded Karate at the world championships. That was the real 'breakthrough'.

Ever since making the Japanese Team, Wakai Sensei has been an international sensation. Not only has she won the All Japan Championships an unprecedented 8 times, but she has placed first at the Asian Games 8 times and **won the WKF World Champion title an unbelievable 4 times, in 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004**. As a late bloomer, who would never give up on her dreams, she has gained a great deal of sympathy and admiration from her fans the world over.

With 4 consecutive world titles under her belt, Wakai Sensei has decided to retire from competition and devote her time to bring Karate to all levels and ages. She has worked hard to foster new talent in Japan, while at the same time teaching seminars to children and senior citizens. She has even produced a CD to encourage senior citizens to enjoy the positive mental and physical benefits of Karate training. This brand of *Encouraging Karate* has become her trademark in Japan.

This tour marks Wakai Sensei's international debut as a seminar instructor. She has tremendous experience as a competitor in many countries throughout the world, and we are privileged to announce that she will be in British Columbia from the 23rd of March until the 1st of April 2007.

Please contact us for any further information

Tel/Fax: **604.321.1815**

or

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