

BUNKAI

The lost soul of Karate-Do

By

Graham Palmer

Contents

Introduction

Chapter 1 – What is Kata?

Chapter 2 – Bunkai: How was it lost? Where to find it?

Chapter 3 – Tegumi (grappling) explained

Chapter 4 – Examples of bunkai

Chapter 5 – Ground Fighting

Conclusion

Bibliography

Appendix 1 – Right/Left Handedness

Appendix 2 – Accompanying DVD

“Karate has no philosophy. Some people think that the tradition of karate came from Buddhism and karate has a connection with the absolute, space and universe, but I don’t believe in that. My philosophy is to knock my opponent out, due to the use of only one technique. One finishing blow!”¹

As far back as 1981, the beginning of my Martial Arts career, I could not have imagined how important the first ten years of my training would be to me. This nurturing decade of my training was to form a foundation of knowledge, from which I have learnt from, instructed from, and relied on (both inside and outside the dojo).

My journey into the Martial Arts began by me joining a local judo club at the age of 10. In 1985 I enrolled into a Ju-Jitsu dojo, and one year later began my introduction into Shotokan karate. From 1986 I was training 6 to 7 days a week (judo twice, ju-jitsu twice, and karate two to three times a week).

One may suggest that training in three different Martial Arts at the same time would hinder or confuse the student; I may even agree with that! However, I found they complimented each other very well. As my knowledge and skill grew in Shotokan karate, I found my attention started to wander from the other two arts. I left judo in 1987 and ju-jitsu in 1992.

As my study of Shotokan deepened, I still maintained an interest in the grappling arts, not as a separate system, but as a companion to my karate. It was my first karate Instructor, Sensei Mick Riddell, who encouraged me to incorporate what I had learnt into my Shotokan.

Sensei Riddell later explained to me that he had always felt “there was more to karate than just kick and punch”. He felt some of the moves in kata were not just a turn or a link move from one technique to another. It was not until he saw some of the grappling techniques I was using that he was able to see the possibilities of kata applications (bunkai).

I began to research and study the bunkai of Shotokan kata. In 1998 I began to train with Sensei Dave Hazard. Sensei Hazard’s approach to kata application and practical karate deepened my study of Shotokan. This research has had an educational and rewarding affect on my karate. The students, who have accompanied me on this journey, have also gained a deeper knowledge and understanding of a complete Martial Art.

The following work is a result of 15 years study of bunkai. Many of the findings have been largely due to my early training in the grappling arts. Without this knowledge I believe I would not have been able to make the discoveries I have.

I consider myself extremely fortunate to have gained this knowledge from an early age. I would like to present my findings in the following work.

¹ Sensei Yahara SKM issue 79 page 6.

In chapter 1 I look at what the word “kata” means and how they should be practised. How kata has become a “physical exercise”, far removed from its original purpose of killing or seriously injuring an opponent.

In chapter 2 I explore the reason why kata has changed, and why it has lost the most important aspect of its original design (bunkai). How, due to the “modernization” and growth of karate, bunkai has become a “casualty” of its development. I also share my concern that, if we as the next generation do not address this area now, bunkai may be lost forever.

I outline the methods used to explore bunkai; this will cover the basic elements needed to unlock the secrets of kata. I also include the grappling training drill I use with my own students, which has proven to be a productive element to their study of karate.

In chapter 3 I explain the little known skill of “Tegumi”, better known as grappling. This area of training is one many karate-ka fail to study, mainly because it has been neglected for so many years. My intension is to revive this forgotten art, and put it back into mainstream karate practice.

In chapter 4 I show practical examples of bunkai which I have discovered from my research. The applications will centre on the grappling aspect which exists in Shotokan kata. I hope to present an objective view which asks why grappling has been neglected and almost lost from the practice of Shotokan karate.

I have left out any striking applications, because these are already well documented in the many karate books available. May I stress here that the examples I demonstrate are only one possible explanation of bunkai, and remind the reader that “no one way is the correct way”.

Chapter 5 will cover Ne-waza, an almost “taboo” subject with regards to karate. My research has shown that many karate-ka do not consider fighting on the ground an option. Although this may be true in an ideal world, personal experience and studies from other likeminded Instructors have shown that a violent confrontation may end up on the floor. If this was to be the case, the karate-ka who neglects ground fighting will find himself (may I use the term) “like a fish out of water”!

Looking back on my development now, I am very grateful to Sensei Riddell for his early encouragement and guidance. It is with continuing efforts of Sensei Hazard that I was able to discover and unlock some of the wonderful secrets hidden within our kata.

I would like to thank both my parents, and my Sensei for their support and faith. I would also like to thank my wife Lorna for her relentless encouragement and patience. Without these people the following pages would not have been possible. For this I am forever in debt to them.

May 2004/Updated July 2011

Chapter 1

What is Kata?

The Japanese word “Kata” means form, although it is usually translated as “formal exercise”. Kata are sets of movements or techniques, performed in the same way every time, starting and finishing at the same spot. This is known as Embusen (the line or direction of kata). Kata are performed with varying speed, strength, and athleticism. Kata performed correctly are both physically and mentally demanding.

There are more than 50 kata which exist today, within the many styles of karate. Some are variations of the same kata. Certain kata within the Shotokan system (of which there are 26) originate from Chinese Hsing (“Hsing” is Chinese for kata).

However, with the development of karate, first by the Okinawans and then by the Japanese, today’s kata has its own Japanese identity and feeling, far removed from its original Chinese parents.

Kata has many different meanings to every Martial Artist. Almost all modern karate styles or schools use kata as part of their grading syllabus. Students are required to learn a different kata for each grading examination. Some students find it a challenge as to how **many** kata they can learn. Some use the kata for competition, winning trophies and sometimes even money. There are also some who say “kata is a waste of time”!!

I feel the term “formal exercise” does not give a true explanation of what kata really means, or what it has to offer. To refer to kata as merely an “exercise” would imply the only use would be to improve a person’s physical ability. It is true that training in kata does improve one’s fitness; however, it is not the main purpose of kata.

Kata must be practised with bunkai (applications); this is where the techniques performed in the kata are used against an opponent. Practicing the kata in this way will enable the karate-ka to use the kata for self defence. However, I have found when teaching bunkai to karate-ka many do not practise this and only concentrate on the performance or physical side of kata.

To use a metaphor, if kata were a gun the performance of kata would be the same as polishing and cleaning the gun. The bunkai would be the firing of the gun. We can clearly see that the “firing” of the gun is what it was “designed” for. The “cleaning” is to maintain its “working” condition; this is not dissimilar to the purpose behind kata.

Each kata is said to cover a complete combat system, which varies in content and appearance, according to the creator’s unique body set up.² The movements of the kata are performed in such a way to enable the karate-ka to remember and practice the techniques used to defend against the habitual acts of violence.

We can not accurately say when kata were created. There is little written evidence to show when kata were first used. What we do know is the early pioneering karate Instructors of the 1800s practised kata. They also regarded kata as the most important area of their karate study (kumite as we know it today, was not practised until the 1930s)³.

² Burgar “Five Years One Kata” pages 29/30.

³ Burgar “Five Years One Kata” page 30

Prior to the 1920s, the main emphasis of training was kata. A student would study a single kata for up to three years, before moving on to another. The student would not only learn the performance of the kata. He would also practise the “applications” of the kata with a training partner (this would be regarded as kumite).

Master Gichin Funakoshi (1868-1957) recalls this concept of training on Okinawa. “In the past, it was expected that about three years were required to learn a single kata, and it was usually that even an expert of considerable skill would only know three or at most five kata”.⁴

It is interesting to note that in today’s dojos, within 3 years of training a student would be either a brown belt or even a black belt. A student of this grade would have 7 to 9 kata under his belt. A further 3 to 5 years of training, and the student would know the entire Shotokan kata syllabus, all 26!

We can also see the importance of kata in other Martial Arts such as “Koryu Bujustu” (*old tradition Martial Arts*). Mr Hunter Armstrong explains the importance and purpose of kata within the old Japanese Martial Arts of the Bushi (*Japanese warrior*). “The kata were profound systems of integrated movements and behaviours. The purpose of kata designed for combative application was not to develop the individual’s ability to respond to any attack with a choice of a wide variety of techniques, but to train that individual to effectively utilize a select few proven techniques in response to a wide variety of attacks or combative situations”.⁵

It is interesting to note the wording of “a select few proven techniques”, as this is exactly what our karate kata are teaching us. We are not learning how to defend against “any” attack, with a “wide variety” of techniques (how could we?) The kata are teaching us to use the “proven techniques” chosen by the creator, against the most likely of attacks, the “habitual acts of violence”.

From this information we can safely say that kata were created with knowledge gained from “combat experience” for the sole purpose of either killing or seriously injuring an opponent. The kata were studied to prepare the warrior for the battlefield and the civilian for the attacker in the street.

⁴ Funakoshi “Karate-do Kyohan” page 38

⁵ Hunter “Koryu Bujutsu” page 23

Chapter 2

Finding Bunkai
“The lost soul of karate-do”

We know that kata was very important to the karate-ka of pre-1920. We also know that an important part of the kata was the study and use of bunkai.⁶ These two elements worked hand in hand, one did not exist without the other. So why has bunkai become a lost and neglected force from Shotokan karate?

Around the beginning of the 20th century, karate began to change and become “modernized”. This was a result of the Meiji (1868-1912) restoration, when Japan was in a state of reform and modernization. This reform also affected the Island of Okinawa.

Master Itosu (1832-1915), a very famous karate-ka of Okinawa, began to create a modern style of karate.⁷ Karate was accepted into the school curriculum at this time, and it was Master Itosu who was chosen to teach at these schools. Some of the movements of kata were changed, or new ones created so that school children could learn a “safe” and physical Art.⁸ Itosu is credited with creating the Pinan kata (later to be renamed as Heian), which were taught to school children as an introduction into karate.⁹

Master Chojun Miyagi (1888-1953) founder of Goju-Ryu karate-do wrote in his Outline of karate-do 1934, “In April 1901 karate became part of the physical educational curriculum. This was the first stone in the foundation of group teaching.” This comment from Master Miyagi shows a sense of uncertainty about the direction karate was taking, which was shared by other Okinawan karate Masters of this time. Large group training was not common practice on Okinawa.

Karate made its way to mainland Japan where it was introduced into the educational systems and accepted as a Japanese Martial Art. This was largely due to the efforts of Master Funakoshi, who is regarded as “The Father of modern day karate”.

Master Funakoshi`s intention was to promote and spread the Art of karate across Japan; this he achieved and much, much more! However, in doing so the concept of bunkai was left behind. Not intentionally, but by the time karate had been accepted and gained momentum, it was too late for Funakoshi to introduce the deeper meanings of kata i.e. bunkai.¹⁰

Master Funakoshi passed away in 1957, and by this time karate had evolved and been scientifically refined. The practice of karate had changed to the drilling of large groups, mainly in kihon and kata for form. The emphasis on kumite increased and competition fighting was commonplace. Also with a structured grading system, karate was ready to be spread across the world.

Shotokan karate reached Britain around 1956/57, due to the effort of Mr Vernon Bell (1922-2004). Mr Bell was the founder of the British Karate Federation (BKF), the first karate

⁶ Egami “The Heart of Karate-do” page 41

⁷ H Cook “Shotokan karate a precise history” page 24

⁸ Page 288 ibid.

⁹ Page 24 ibid.

¹⁰ Page 162 ibid.

organization in Britain.¹¹ From this time karate flourished and spread across the whole country, dojos opened in almost every town and the karate “craze” was adopted. Over 40 years later karate has become an extremely popular pastime for many people; for others it has become “a way of life”.

Training followed that of Japan, centered on kihon performed in lines, up and down the dojo. Kata was taught mainly for grading purposes, emphasis was placed on correct performance and form. Kumite was “fast & hard” and conducted from a mid to long range distance.

Such training areas as Bunkai, Makiwara, pad work and Hojo undo (Okinawan weight training) have all been lost to the past. Of course I am generalizing here, and I know of a few dojo which still maintain these training skills. However, this is not common practice for many Shotokan karate dojo across Britain, or the World!

I believe it was this change to “modernizing” karate which led to the loss of bunkai within Shotokan karate. Although, with everything which evolves, there has to be casualties. Bunkai is one such casualty of karate reaching a world-wide practice.

We as the next generation are responsible for recapturing this “lost soul” and putting it back into mainstream practice. Not just for posterity, but for a practical reason.

We must also be grateful to Master Funakoshi, because if it were not for his foresight of introducing karate to Japan when he did, I do not believe we in Britain would have received it as soon as we did. Just imagine if karate had not been introduced to Japan until, say, the 1940s; Britain might not have seen anything until the 1980s!

Where do we find bunkai?

The “karate book” was first published in the 1920s with notable classics from great Masters such as Funakoshi, Motobu, Miyagi, Mabuni, etc. The karate book made it possible for the karate-ka to enhance his practice and study away from the dojo.

Prior to this time the student had to rely on first-hand Instruction from his Sensei. If he was to practise at home, his memory was the only training aid available. The karate book played a very important role in the development of karate.

Many of the karate books available do have sections on bunkai. However, most of them only show a “selection” of bunkai and never seem to dedicate any depth to the subject. I find this quite strange, as we are repeatedly told that kata are so very important to karate,¹² but there does not seem to be any importance placed on bunkai.

I have read several books with “kata application” in the title, only to find inside the kata movement demonstrated all the way through, and you guessed it, a “selection” of bunkai. Now

¹¹ A detailed account of Mr Bell and British karate can be found in “Shotokan Dawn Vol.1&2” by C Layton.

¹² Funakoshi “Karate-do Kyohan” page 38.

some of these examples of bunkai do give the reader an idea as to what the movements may represent. Unfortunately, many of the examples of bunkai I find somewhat dubious or difficult to perform. Examples of these will be explained later.

As technology developed, the video recorder was widely available to everyone. With this came the introduction of the “karate video”. This marvellous new training aid helped considerably in the education and development of the karate student.

The general trend of contents for the karate video is again the perfection of movement in kihon, kumite and of course kata. There are once again examples of kata bunkai to accompany the kata, but I am afraid no great depth is shown. Although, in recent years there are a few videos available solely dedicated to kata bunkai, this is not the norm.¹³

The “karate course” is another additional training device. This is where the karate student travels to different parts of the country to train with various instructors, obtaining knowledge and skill from the best instructors in the country.

Once again there is only a handful of karate instructors who choose to teach kata bunkai. I have found if one trains with instructors such as Sensei Hazard, Trimble, Oliver and Carroll, one will gain a very good insight into kata bunkai. However, many karate students do not, or cannot travel to these courses.

So if the books only have a very limited “selection” to offer, the videos are becoming more available (but not extensive), and the courses are not always practical for everyone to attend. Where do we find the bunkai to our kata?

We find it ourselves! Before I outline the methods I use to discover bunkai, I feel an explanation of what the word “Bunkai” actually means is necessary.

The word bunkai is a term widely used to describe the applications of kata. However, bunkai on its own does not cover all aspect of kata application. We can split the concept of kata application into three areas:

1. **Bunkai** – “analysis” of technique.

Bunkai is the first stage of the process. At this stage we analyse the techniques of the kata. We figure out what the techniques may mean and what they could be used for and how they may be applied in a self-defence situation. We give ourselves an idea of what the kata is telling us. We try and understand in what way the creator used the kata.

2. **Oyo** – “application” of technique.

¹³ Simon Oliver has a complete series dedicated to bunkai.

Oyo is the result of bunkai. Here we take what we have learnt from the analysis of the kata, and apply it with a partner. We try out the ideas we have come up with, and through trial and error we discover a practical solution to the technique. There may be several oyo to one technique. This is where we move onto Henka.

3. **Henka** – “variation” of application.

Henka is a development of oyo. Once we have discovered what the technique means and how to apply it, we can develop variations to that technique. The henka may not look identical to that found in the kata. However, the variation must have the same principle found in the kata and displayed in the bunkai and oyo.

For example, the choke found in Tekki Shodan¹⁴ can be applied as a leg take-down.¹⁵ Same arm, same leg forward, forearm pushes and the other hand pulls, are exactly the same in both applications, the only difference being, one is applied to the throat, the other applied to the leg. Many of the applications found in kata can be used both standing or on the ground, examples of which will be shown later.

Methods used to discover bunkai:

1. **Research:** Use as many research areas as possible, for example: Read a good variety of books on the Martial Arts; do not limit oneself to books only on Shotokan karate. Much of my bunkai research has come from learning about different karate styles and Chinese systems.

Try to find an older version of a kata; this will show how the kata was performed prior to any changes. This should provide a clearer explanation of the technique used. This is evident in the kata Unsu, where the two mawashi-geri performed from the ground were originally ushiro-geri.¹⁶ Or in Nijushiho where the two yoko-geri kekomi were originally knee lifts.¹⁷ Videos and the internet are both very good areas to explore; however as I have already explained there are not many videos specifically dedicated to bunkai.

2. **Analyse each movement:** Look at each technique and find several reasons for its use. Make sure that you give each technique more than one reason or application. The greater variety of reasons you give each technique, the wider and deeper the application will be.

3. **Keep it simple:** Try to keep the applications as simple as possible. Remember these techniques must be used while under pressure. Adrenalin or fear WILL be an important part of defending yourself in a real confrontation. Avoid complicated combinations or strikes which require extreme accuracy.

¹⁴ See example 5 page 27

¹⁵ See example 9 page 30

¹⁶ Kenei Mabuni “Shito-Ryu Karate-do” page 102

¹⁷ S Langley “Shotokan karate magazine” No.72 page14.

4. **Think laterally:** Things are not always what they may seem. Just because we are looking forward in the kata, does not mean the technique is applied in that direction. Many times the application is applied to the rear, although the technique is performed forward. For example we can see this applied in the kata Unsu.¹⁸

Blocks can also be used as strikes, disengages, locks, strangles or holds, examples of which will be explained in chapter 4.

Jumps found in kata usually represent a throw being used. The effort used to lift oneself from the ground can be seen as the same physical effort used to throw a person. This is demonstrated clearly in the kata Heian Godan, Empi, Unsu and Kanku-Sho.¹⁹

Changing direction in kata is usually seen as facing another opponent. This of course can be true. However, if we look at some of the turns with the accompanying foot and hand actions, we can clearly see examples of throws being used. A prime example is the turn from yama-zuki into zenkutsu-dachi / sukui-uke, found in Bassai-Dai.²⁰

5. **Habitual Acts of Violence** is a term used to describe a collection of actions and behaviour which one can expect to find when dealing with a violent confrontation. The list below shows a good selection of common actions one would expect to encounter:

- Round punch
- Straight punch
- Upper-cut
- Lapel grab – single/double
- Pushes – single/double hand
- Throat grab
- Grabs from behind
- Finger pointing
- Football style kick
- Head butt
- Head chancery – front/reverse
- Bear hug – front/behind (over & under arms)
- Rugby tackle²¹

Of course this list can be added to; these are just examples. When analysing the technique of the kata, one must use the habitual acts of violence to help find their possible meaning. It is a good idea NOT to use karate style techniques to defend against, because these are not used by the average attacker in the street. The HAOV also tells us that the majority of people are right-

¹⁸ See example 10 page 31.

¹⁹ See example 7 page 28.

²⁰ See example 8 page 29.

²¹ B Burgar “Five years one kata” page 55.

handed²² and of an average height.²³ With this in mind the application must address these facts, and one must practise the appropriate defences.

6. **Partner work:** This is a very important part of the whole bunkai analysis. The results of the analysis are practised with a training partner, and through “trial and error” a working application of the kata is found. Do not be afraid to throw away applications which do not satisfy one’s own beliefs - kata bunkai is a personal study. Some applications will be universal and work for most karate-ka. There will be other applications which will only suit a particular individual; this is because of our unique body set up, which means we are all different.

7. **Tegumi (grappling):** Knowledge of grappling is essential as a “back-up” system, when it is not possible to strike. The pre-emptive strikes of karate must be our first line of defence however, this is not always possible. Once the “fighting distance” is closed and a grapple has begun, knowledge in this field will pay dividends in the street. A basic understanding of grappling methods will help unlock kata bunkai.

The following is a training drill I use with my students. This is a perfect way of educating them with a good understanding of essential grappling skill, which combined with their striking skills, sets them up to address the complex study of kata bunkai.

I have found within only a few months of practice, students of all grades become competent with the grappling techniques used here. Once the drill is learnt correctly, it can be practised as a whole or broken down into sections. I have found once learnt the drill only requires 5 to 10 minutes of regular practice to keep it “fresh” in the students mind.

Tegumi training drill Vol. 1

Group 1: Arm locks



Arm Bar (inside)



Back hammer



²² See Appendix 1.

²³ B Burgar “Five years one kata” page 49

Group 2: Strangles/Chokes

1. Bar Choke



2. Guillotine



3. Rear Choke



4. Rear Strangle



Group 3: Wrist locks

1. 'S' Lock (radius/ulna twist)



2. Two hand wrist lock



3. Chicken Wing



4. Wrist/shoulder lock



Group 4: Forward throws

1. Hip Throw



2. Shoulder Throw



3. Sweeping hip throw



4. Body drop throw



Group 5: Backward Throws

1. Outside reaping throw



2. Inside reaping throw



3. Leg throw



4. Double leg throw



Group 6: Securing & locking on the ground

1. Straight arm Lock



2. Wrap-up Lock



3. Cricket Bat



4. Wrist Lock into Turn Over



Chapter 3

Tegumi explained

I have learnt from my experience of teaching grappling techniques to karate-ka that many have little if any knowledge of grappling. This shows clearly that grappling is an area many karate dojos fail to practice.

The longer I explore kata the more I am convinced that grappling plays an important part to the application (bunkai) of it. We know that grappling was used in the early 1900s and many of the kata were changed, with the grappling techniques removed to make karate ready for the introduction to the school curriculum.²⁴ As a result karate has developed and left the grappling aspect behind; if we do not pay attention to it now it may be lost forever.

I feel it is important at this stage to explain the principles of the grappling techniques used in the following examples. This will give those karate-ka with no knowledge of grappling a brief introduction into this complex art. I will explain the principles of locks, strangles/chokes and throws. Please remember whenever training with locks, strangles or chokes you MUST adhere to the “tap” safety system.

This is most commonly used in Judo dojos, where a student would “tap” his partner (usually twice) to indicate submission. This tapping tells the person applying the technique that it is working. As soon as you feel, see or hear your partner tapping you must STOP any further pressure.

Locks: How do they work?

This generally refers to joint manipulation. Where you find a joint you should be able to “lock it!” Commonly locks are applied to the elbows, shoulders, wrists and fingers. Legs, knees and toes are also possibilities. However, upper body limbs are more available, certainly from a grappling situation in the street.

An elbow, for example, can be ‘locked’ by extending the arm to the point where it will not straighten any more. By providing a fulcrum just above the elbow, and applying pressure so the arm hyperextend past its natural point, will cause extreme pain and if enough pressure is used, the elbow/arm will break. The fulcrum can be a forearm, knee, stomach or even the back of the neck. It really depends on the situation with the attacker and oneself.

This principle of providing a fulcrum at the joint and applying pressure is the same for almost all joints, and is not uncommon to everyone! Just think of how you would break a pencil or stick.

For a pencil you would hold it at either “end” and place your thumb/thumbs in the “middle”. By applying pressure forward with your thumbs and backwards with your hands, the pencil will bend and if continued pressure is applied, the pencil will break. If a larger stick were to be broken, you may need to use your knee as a fulcrum.

²⁴ A Trimble “Karate kata and applications 4” page 20.

Consider where you would place your thumbs or knee in both examples; they would be in the middle. If placed closer to the ends, the break becomes more difficult. One would assume this to be an obvious statement. However, when asked to apply this theory to someone's joint or limb, there seems to be a loss of logical thinking by many karate-ka.

You will also come across the odd “rubber man” - the person who has naturally supple joints. Locks will not always be effective on these people. Also if a person is rather strong in his upper body, you may find arm locks not effective either. Fingers are a far better option!

So what happens if a lock does not work? Well it is the same as if a punch did not work, if you missed the target or it just was not effective. You follow up with another or something different, you use a combination. An example of this can be seen in the kata Sepai. Where a straight arm lock is applied and failed, the body is turned, the testicles are struck and a figure four arm lock is applied to the rear.

I must state here that when practicing the locks, at first concentrate on applying the lock and making it work. You must remember that striking is going to be applied along with the application of the lock. By striking the face or groin, you will take the attention away from the joint being locked. This should make the lock easier to apply.

Strangles & Chokes: What is the difference?

When I ask karate-ka “do you know the difference between a strangle and a choke?” I usually receive a blank look! Many do not even realize there is a difference. To be honest, the most important thing is “does it work?”

Although, for those who are interested I will briefly explain the difference. Both are applied to the neck. Where they differ is in how they affect the body mechanics. A strangle effects the blood supply to the brain, and a choke effects the air supply to the body. Of course some are a combination of both (blood & air supply effected).

Strangles

Blood provides oxygen to the brain, without this oxygen the body will shut down and the brain will stop. This is what starts to happen in cases of fainting. The blood is drawn from the brain to other parts of the body and we collapse. This is the body's natural way of getting the blood back to the brain. That is the reason why you should elevate the legs of a fainted casualty, to encourage the blood flow to the brain.

So if we apply pressure to either side of the neck, this will stop or slow down the blood flow to the brain (starving it of oxygen), causing the body to collapse into unconsciousness. Once the pressure is released, the blood flow will travel back to the brain and restore consciousness. Be very careful when applying any type of strangle or choke. If applied correctly your partner will reach unconsciousness very quickly, within 3 to 4 seconds! You should NEVER take your partner to this point. Remember to “tap out” before you “pass out”!!

Chokes

Chokes are generally quicker to apply and have a faster effect on the body. If the air supply is stopped, the body is affected almost immediately. This will become very obvious when you begin applying chokes to your training partner. You **MUST** remember to apply both slowly and gently in practice, and of course fast and hard in a real situation.

Chokes are concentrated on the windpipe. Although covering the nose and mouth will also work, there is a danger of your finger/hand being bitten. The principle of a choke is the same as a water hose. If you squeeze the hose together the water will stop. If you then release the pressure the water will continue. This is exactly what happens to the air in the windpipe. Remember once your partner “taps” you must release immediately. If the pressure is maintained, your partner will become unconscious. You should **NEVER** choke to this point with your partner.

Because of the effectiveness of correctly applied strangles and chokes, I feel they are an essential part of our karate training. All these strangles and chokes can be found in our Shotokan kata, examples of which will be explained in chapter 4.

Nage Waza (throwing)

The idea of throwing in karate is a very interesting subject. From the hundreds of books written on karate, many of them approach the subject of throwing. For example in “Karate-do Kyohan”, Master Funakoshi writes “Thus in karate, hitting, thrusting, and kicking are not the only methods; throwing techniques (nage waza) and pressure against joints are also included.”²⁵

He also goes on to say, “One must always keep in mind that since the essence of karate is found in a single thrust or kick, and one should never be grasped by or grapple with an opponent, one must be very careful not to be defeated through concern with throwing an opponent or applying a joint punishment hold.”

Master Funakoshi is clearly stating that a well delivered strike to finish a violent confrontation is the best policy. However, if this is not possible for whatever reason, then throwing and pressure against joints may also be employed.

With this in mind, one can observe in many karate dojos that throwing is used. However, the throws used are most commonly a collection of foot sweeps and leg sweeps. The sweeps generally used in karate (or essentially kumite), show very little “body contact”, mainly because if you get too close to your opponent you will receive a whack! This may result in you losing the match!!

²⁵ Funakoshi “Karate-do Kyohan” page 227.

For this very good reason a safe distance is kept. Although, if we look at the concept of throwing in a self defence situation and not competition, we will find that a much closer distance must be adopted.²⁶

The reason we are throwing in the first place is because our initial pre-emptive strike did not work. We may have missed with our first strike, which means we have lost the advantage and will be following up with a counter, but so will the person attacking us. A confrontation which is prolonged for more than a few seconds will soon develop into a clinch, wrestle or go to ground. Anyone with experience of real street confrontations will tell you that “fighting distance” is “closed down” very quickly. It usually begins at arm’s length and gets closer very quickly!²⁷

What is a Throw?

Throws can be divided into three main categories:

1. Sweeps - using minimum body contact.
2. Throws & takedowns using leverage.
3. Throws taking attacker’s body weight.

1. Sweeps as we have discussed, are the most common throw found in karate dojos. They are fast, used at a distance and relatively easy to learn. They are used very effectively in Jiyu Kumite and given the right circumstances can also be used in a real situation. The most well known sweep in karate has to be Deashi-barrai (advancing foot sweep). This is where your opponent steps forward. Just before he puts his weight onto the front foot, you sweep it away. If executed correctly, this technique requires very little strength and timing is the most important factor for success.

2. Throws & takedowns using leverage are where a leg is placed across the opponent’s feet/legs and then pushed or pulled over the leg. This can be seen at the end of Heian Godan, where the groin or leg is grabbed with one hand. The other will then pull the shoulder or head in opposite direction to take the opponent down. Another example of a leverage throw would be the takedown in Empi kata. Following the strike to the chin (age-zuki) and knee to the head, push at the hip joint of the leading leg and with your other hand pull the ankle.²⁸

3. Throws which require taking the opponent’s body weight and lifting it from the floor take more effort. This is why it is essential to learn the throws correctly and use the correct principles of throwing. I have witnessed many karate-ka (some of a high grade) use throwing techniques. Many I feel use a size or strength advantage to execute their throw and do not show the principles of body mechanics.

²⁶ This view is shared by ex-Legionnaire, karate-ka and bodyguard, Nick Huges “Fighting Arts International” No.69 page 54

²⁷ G Thompson “The Pavement Arena” video part 1

²⁸ See example 9 page 30

A typical throw of this kind would be O-goshi (hip throw) or Seoi-nage (shoulder throw), both found in Shotokan kata.²⁹ These throws use the body weight of the opponent to lift and throw from a height. It is essential to use good foot and hand positioning and important to take the opponent below the centre of gravity.

Throwing to end the fight?

These types of throws are not unique to the Japanese fighting arts. There is written evidence of these very same techniques being used in medieval combat of the 15th century.

There are a few dedicated followers of “Renaissance Martial Arts” who have provided valuable information into the study and practice of this almost forgotten Art! One of the most comprehensive works on Renaissance Martial Arts is “The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe” by Professor Sydney Anglo 2002. Prof. Anglo provides an extremely detailed report into the fighting system of the medieval warrior. Many of the techniques used are exactly the same as those found in many Asian Martial Arts.

Another valuable source of information regarding grappling used in actual combat is “Medieval hand-to-hand combat” by Keith Myers 2002. Mr Myers tells us “While knowledge of proper falling techniques such as those taught within Asian martial arts like Judo is helpful when practicing these throws, we will not go into such techniques here. Keep in mind as well, that modifying certain of these Kampfringen³⁰ throwing methods in order to allow a training partner to execute these falling or rolling techniques will detract from their combative intent. I prefer a two-stage approach to learning the more “high amplitude” throwing techniques that are dangerous to practice with a partner. First, with your partner practice the set up and follow through just to the point where he would be airborne. Second, practice the same technique with a life size, stuffed training dummy and execute the same technique focusing on throwing the dummy onto its head or in an otherwise disabling manner”.³¹

It is clear that great importance was placed on throwing the opponent onto his head. If achieved this would no doubt end the fight or give you an advantage to do so. Taking this approach (not only with throwing but with all techniques) one must decide whether one regards karate as an effective form of self defence, or just a sport.

²⁹ See example 7 page 28 for seoi-nage. O-goshi is present in Heian Sandan.

³⁰ “Kampfringen” is a German word which refers to combative grappling on the battlefield. “Medieval hand to hand combat” page 2.

³¹ Myers “Medieval hand to hand combat” page 57.

Chapter 4

Examples of bunkai

As mentioned earlier, these are only ONE explanation of many variations to the same technique. However, there are some “classical” examples of kata bunkai which can be found in Shotokan text books or taught on courses around the world, which I find very hard to accept as practical applications.

The bunkai will be grouped into Locks, Strangles/Chokes, Throws and Ground fighting. The appropriate kata will be named where possible. Also remember we are only looking at individual techniques. Strikes and kicks would always accompany any grappling technique.

Example 1 Bassai-Dai / Sho

Bassai-Dai and Bassai-Sho both show examples of this technique, and they differ only very slightly. From Shuto-uke, the right hand is moved forward in a smooth circular action. The hand starts fast and high, coming to rest slowly with strength at chest height. Notice how in Dai the finger tips of the left hand are just touching the base of the wrist.³² In Sho the left hand is clearly grasping the right forearm. We can see this as the same wrist lock, applied in two ways. Let us assume our right wrist is grabbed. We immediately clamp our left hand on top of the attacker’s hand, stopping it from releasing.

The right hand circles clockwise and comes to rest on top of the attackers forearm, downward pressure is applied with both arms. This tension is very obvious when performing the kata. Applied correctly the attacker should drop in front of you. This is an ideal position to follow up with Hiza-geri or Yoko-geri. In Dai the application of the lock can be seen slightly differently.



³² I have seen Sensei Kawasoe demonstrate this by not actually touching the wrist.

Example 2 Empi

The opening move to Empi is very interesting. I have always been shown the application as dropping down and blocking a kick.³³ This I find both dangerous and difficult to achieve. A far simpler explanation would be to use the dropping action as an arm lock.

Our left wrist is grabbed, circle the hand anti-clockwise twisting the attackers arm over. Our right arm (tricep) is placed on top of the attackers elbow joint. Keeping the left hand secure, drop down onto one knee, applying pressure to the elbow. This must be done fast, and with body weight. (Start by applying the lock slowly.) With your attacker down, we can now follow up with a strike to the face (gedan-barrai). Reach down and grab the back of his head, with the other hand holding his chin, stand up. Push and pull with the hands and you will apply a neck twist. **USE EXTREME CARE!**



Example 3 Bassai-Dai

Some senior kata such as Bassai, Empi, Jion, Chinte, etc. have a particular hand position. This can be seen as either a starting position, a salute of some kind or as a possible application.

Bassai-Dai can be used as an example. We are faced with a verbally aggressive person, waiting to get “physical”. He is giving you plenty of verbal and good old finger pointing or prodding. Take his finger and make a fist, your other hand can secure the grip. By sharply pulling downwards you will lock his finger very quickly. His head should fall nicely onto your knee!



Example 4 Nijushiho / Heian Godan

The example of this arm lock can be found in several Shotokan kata, although it is not always



³³ Best karate Vol.7 page 138.

easy to recognize. If we take a look at Sepai which is a Goju-Ryu kata, we can see the same arm lock applied more clearly. Take the opponent's wrist and twist it so the palm is upper most. Wrap your arm around the straightened arm (just above the elbow) and by pushing down on the wrist, the lock will be applied. In Nijushiho and Heian Godan the arm is not wrapped over, but applied from underneath. The principles shown in both kata are the same. From a low stance, raise upward moving one hand low and the other high, they are both performed slowly, this is a sign of strength or tension being used.

There are many moves in kata where we use hands or arms together, at the same time. Some Instructors explain these as double blocks, or block and strike. We can also see these double hand movements as strangles and chokes. The following are examples of this idea. Remember when applying strangles/chokes: NEVER take your partner to unconsciousness, always use the "tap system".

Example 5 Tekki Shodan

This application uses a choke and a throw. It is the part of the kata when we use Nami-gaeshi (returning wave kick) and block with supporting hand. I have seen examples of this technique, where you are defending against a kicked to the groin. You block the kick using "Nami-gashi", and then you block a punch.³⁴ Now as I said before, any application is possible, however some are more plausible than others.



Strike the throat with shuto, then feed your thumb into the clothing and secure a hold (the thumb must be deep). With your other hand hold the opposite lapel and apply pressure against the windpipe with your forearm. At the same time pull down on the lapel. Your attacker should react by lifting up onto tip toes, trying to relieve the choke. This is an ideal position to throw him using Kouchi-gari (inner reaping) because his centre of gravity is lifted. Notice how Kiba-dachi is used to support and control, this is an excellent stance for controlling a fallen attacker.



Example 6 Nijushiho / Heian Yondan

In both of these kata we can see the technique Kakiwake-uke (wedge block). It is usually used to part arms which have grabbed us by the lapels, or used as a double block. It can also be used very effectively as Juji-jime (scissor strangles). In both kata the arms are crossed, before



³⁴ Trimble & Morris "Karate kata applications" page 87.

they are then uncrossed to perform the wedge block. This crossing action of the hands can be seen as entering the neck area and holding the collar. The opening of the arms would imply the application of strangle. In both kata the techniques are performed slowly, with strength when opening out, this is the same feeling when applying the scissor strangle.

The following examples will demonstrate different throwing techniques found in our Shotokan kata. I believe these examples demonstrate simple but effective applications. Many of these applications are usually shown as strikes or just turning to face another opponent. Neither one nor the other is the correct way, both are possible.

Example 7 Heian Godan

This is another particular favorite of mine. We are led to believe the application of this technique is “Jumping over a bo and blocking a kick”.³⁵ This is a very popular explanation of this technique; however, I do not believe this to be the most practical application.

When we look at the principles of how the technique is performed:

1. Kosa-dachi (feet crossed, body low)
2. Morote uke (two hands working together)
3. Lifting with the legs, arms working together with legs
4. Jump up into the air. (Which takes a lot of effort?)



³⁵ J.V. Weenen Beginners guide to Shotokan karate page 199.

With a basic understanding of nage-waza and to use the principles of this, it is clear to see this application as a throw. It is a perfect example of Seo-nage (Shoulder throw), when we land in Kosa-dachi and apply Juji-uke, this can be seen as controlling your opponent with the knees and locking the arm. This application I find far more practical than “jumping over a bo!”



Example 8 Bassai-Dai / Heian Shodan

When teaching this particular throw to karate-ka I find they have most difficulty with feet positioning. I try to associate the throw or footwork with something they are already familiar with; Bassai-Dai and Heian Shodan are both perfect examples. Again, looking at the principles of the technique, we can see how the throw works.



From right foot forward step wide with the left foot into Zenkutsu-dachi, note how the feet are in one line, this is very important to enable the throw to be effective. With Bassai the left arm is drawn across the body from high to low, the right hand performs a large movement. Starting low, lifting high and coming to rest low again. With the arms and legs working together in this way, this is a perfect example of tai-otoshi (body drop).



This same throw can also be seen in Heian Shodan, from the first kiai (age-uke) turning into gedan-barrai. A popular explanation of this application is to turn to face a new opponent and block a kick. I believe it can also be used as tai-otoshi.

Example 9 Empi / Kururunfa

This application first came to me whilst watching a video of a Tai Chi Master performing a form. Part of the form required him to “swoop” from a standing position low to the ground and reach out with one hand; the move was very smooth and elegant. The Master then went on to demonstrate the application. From attacking high and then swooping low he placed his hand behind the opponent’s ankle, by drawing the hand back his opponent was thrown to the floor.

This concept of “attacking high” and “swooping low” reminded me of Empi. In the kata we attack high to the face with age-zuki (rising punch). We then “swoop” down to the leading leg, attack the hip with your forearm and grasp the ankle with the other hand. This should be done hard enough to knock the hips back and take weight off the lead leg. By pushing with the forearm and pulling with the hand, the opponent will be thrown to the ground. The same principle can also be found in the Goju-Ryu kata Kururunfa.

Leg throw from Kururunfa

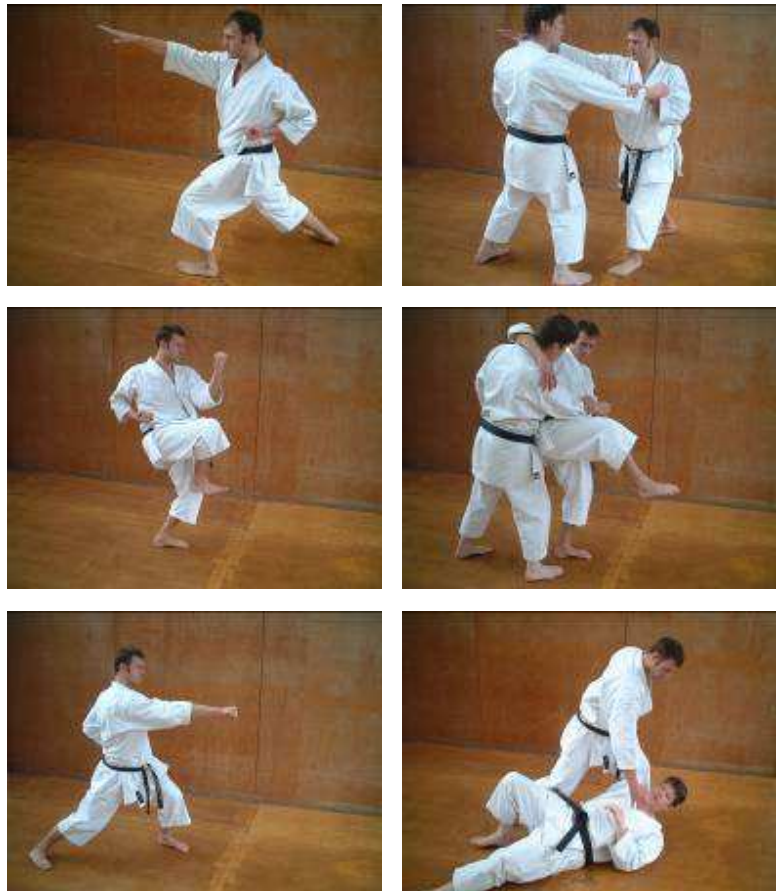


To me this throw demonstrates the meaning of Empi (flight of a swallow). I wonder what Master Funakoshi was thinking of when he renamed this kata from Wanshu to Empi?

Example 10 Unsu

This example shows how lateral thinking can be applied to kata bunkai. In the kata Unsu, haito uchi followed by mae-geri is performed facing forward. After the mae-geri the body is turned 180 degrees to face directly behind (a new opponent?) Soto-uke gyaku-zuki is performed while stepping backwards into stance.³⁶

Many Instructors explain this movement as defending against two different opponents, one in front and one behind. This application is very plausible; however, my main concern is with blocking the second opponent and then stepping “backwards” to deliver a finishing blow “forward”.



I see this application against only one opponent in front. When I analyse the movement of the hands and feet, I see a perfect example of a forward throw such as harai-goshi being used. The haito uchi can be used as a strike and to grasp the head (ready to throw). The mae-geri can be used as a kick or as a “wind up” for harai-goshi. When performing this throw the leg can be swung forward to gain momentum and speed. The body is then turned 180 degrees the leg continues travelling backwards, the hands pull and push forward to complete the throw. The movement and force of the leg travelling backwards and the hands thrusting forward is the same feeling as performed in the kata.

³⁶ “Best karate” Vol.10 page 38.

Chapter 5

Ground Fighting

Ne-waza (fighting on the ground) is an area many karate-ka do not even consider relevant to their training. In an ideal world, it is an area no one should need to consider. However, in a real confrontation we may have to.

I must stress here that the subject of fighting on the ground is a very complex one. I will give a brief but informative explanation of what I feel is important in ground fighting. I have found to become an effective grappler for self defence, one only needs to gain a basic knowledge of ne-waza, because the average attacker in the street will be untrained in this field.

I am in the process of completing a structured ne-waza training drill, similar to that of the standing drill shown earlier. This drill will cover the basic areas of grappling on the ground. My intention is for my students to train in this simple and easy to learn ne-waza drill, which will enable them to gain an effective knowledge of ground fighting.

Bridging

This is one of the most important techniques one can learn from Ne-waza. I have observed competition fights and real fights in the street which have ended up on the ground. In both situations, I believe the “loser” could have given himself a far better chance of “surviving” if he had known how to bridge. This would have enabled him to escape from the hold he was in and continue to fight.



To form a bridge you need to bring both feet up to your bottom (you must secure one of his arms to prevent him from stopping the throw), then using your legs push your feet into the ground and thrust your hips upwards to the corner of the trapped arm. This will throw your opponent off.



When we are pushing into the ground with our feet and thrusting with our hips, it is the same principle associated with our regular stance work. This is one example of using our standing work on the ground!

Holding

I use the word “holding” as a general term for both holding and controlling an opponent. Unlike in sport grappling such as Judo, we are not required to hold an opponent down for a specific time. Our objective is to gain or maintain control of our opponent, so we can deliver a finishing technique i.e. striking, kicking, locking, strangling etc.

Controlling an opponent can begin from a standing position. I prefer to use my knees to control a fallen opponent; they are natural weapons just like elbows. We can see examples of this concept

in Heian Godan³⁷ and Gankaku kata. Mr Gary Spires (an extremely “practical” karate-ka) also stresses how effective this technique can be in an interview in Fighting Arts International.³⁸

There are 4 basic hold downs: Kesa-gatame (scarf hold); Kata-gatame (shoulder hold); Yokoshiho-gatame (side hold) and Tate-shiho-gatame (straddle hold). It is the straddle hold which is probably the most common of holds. It is from this hold that one can finish an opponent very “effectively”. Equally one can also be finished off “effectively” if you do not know how to get out!

Striking is always our main priority; however, while grappling this is not always easy to do. Gouging and biting are very effective in a grappling situation. We can see evidence of gouging within our kata. Chinte has Nihon-nukite (two finger strike), and there are numerous examples of nukite (spear hand) in kata. All these techniques can be used standing or on the ground. From all the above holds, we must follow with strikes, locks and strangles. Remember holding an opponent uses vast amounts of energy so, “finish it quick!”

Although mentioned at the end of this section, “getting to your feet” must be our main intention if we go to ground. Training in ne-waza uses an extremely large amount of energy, and so at the first opportunity we must get to our feet.

³⁷ See example 7 page 28

³⁸ G Spires “Fighting Arts International” No.40 page 30

Conclusion

I would like to think my findings have brought consideration to a subject which I believe is declining in today's modern approach to karate. It is my intention, along with other likeminded people who choose to address this subject, to educate and spread the word to as many willing and "open minded" students of karate-do as possible.

I have explained the meaning of kata and the way it should be used, how it has changed over the years and the real purpose of kata - almost lost to "modernization". Of course the world evolves and so does karate. Bunkai can and should be developed in the same way; "evolution" should not be used as an excuse to leave behind the true meaning of kata.

Through my explanation of tegumi and the examples shown, I hope to give an educational introduction into the study of bunkai. I would like to encourage others to follow the methods I use for discovering bunkai, researching for themselves into the deeper meaning of kata.

For those Martial Artists who choose to neglect this depth of knowledge, I would hope this work has given them an insight into other possibilities to kata, which lay sleeping beneath the surface of their performance. Even for those who can not see the connection between grappling and karate, I put it to them: at least consider grappling as a separate art and use it as a "back up" system to their karate.

In writing this work I have passed through several stages of opinion. I began with a very biased view towards ne-waza (due to my early training in the grappling arts). I gave it a great deal of priority and would argue its importance to other instructors. However, I have found from speaking to several instructors who have a realistic view on karate, my "obsession" with fighting on the ground has lessened.

I still believe ne-waza is an essential skill to have in a self defence situation; this is why I continue to teach this skill in my dojo. However, I believe it should only be used as a "last resort". My attention lately has focused more on grappling from a standing position, accompanied by the striking skills of karate.

This work has given me a chance to study bunkai to a greater depth and as a result I have been able to develop a structured grappling drill which I have introduced into my regular dojo training. I have found this has had a direct impression on my students' abilities to recognize and perform the grappling applications found within our Shotokan kata.

I conclude that kata has far more to offer than many modern karate-ka give it credit. I believe this is mainly due to the modernization of karate, and its development into the competition arena. Ironically, this development of karate may have caused the demise of bunkai within karate, but it is no doubt the very reason many of us are able to practise karate today.

If it were not for Master Funakoshi, Master Nakayama and the JKA, karate may not have been available to the west as early as it was. As mentioned earlier I believe bunkai was a casualty of this movement. It is our responsibility as the next generation to revive the study of bunkai and place this "lost soul" back into mainstream karate practice.

“See first with your mind, then with your eyes, and finally with your body.”³⁹

“A superficial understanding of many kata [is] of little use. Although the doorway is small, go deeply inward.”⁴⁰

³⁹ Y.Munenori (1571-1646) Living the Martial way page 88.

⁴⁰ Master Funakoshi (1868-1957) Karate Do Kyohan page 38.

Bibliography

Books

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Abernethy I | 'Bunkai-Jutsu' (2002) | Neth Publishing, UK. |
| Abernethy I | 'Karate's Grappling Methods' | Neth, Cockermouth, UK. |
| Anglo S | 'The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe' (2000) | C.S. Graphics, Singapore. |
| Burgar B | 'Five Years one Kata' (2003) | Martial Arts Publishing Ltd, UK. |
| Cook H | 'Shotokan Karate A Precise History' (2001) | Page Bros, UK. |
| Draeger D F | 'The Martial Arts and Ways of Japan' Vol. 1-3 (1973/74) | Weatherhill, USA. |
| Egami S | 'The Heart of Karate-Do' (1986) | Kodansha, USA. |
| Funakoshi G | 'Karate-Do Kyohan' (1973) | Kodansha, USA. |
| Funakoshi G | 'Karate-Do Nyumon' (1988) | Kodansha, USA. |
| Gray H | 'Gray's Anatomy' (1993) | Magpie books, UK. |
| Higaonna M | 'The History of Karate' (1996) | Dragon books, UK. |
| Higaonna M | 'Traditional Karate-do' Vol. 3 (1989) | Kodansha, USA. |
| Kano J | 'Kodokan Judo' (1986) | Kodansha, Japan. |
| Layton/Randall/Nursey | 'A Shotokan Karate Book of Facts Vol 1' (1997) | Shoto pub, UK |
| Layton C | 'Shotokan Dawn' Vol. 1&2 (2002) | Springlands, UK. |
| Mabuni K | 'Shito-Ryu Karate-do' (1997) | Dominie Press, Australia. |
| Morris D | 'The Naked Ape' (1994) | Vintage books, UK. |
| McCarthy P | 'Classical Kata of Okinawan Karate' (1987) | Ohara, USA. |
| McCarthy P | 'Bubishi' (1995) | C.E.Tuttle, Japan. |
| Morgan F | 'Living the Martial way' (1992) | Barricade books, USA. |
| Myers K | 'Medieval hand to hand combat' (2002) | USA. |
| Nagamine S | 'The Essence of Okinawan Karate-Do' (1976) | C.E.Tuttle, Japan. |
| Nakayama M | 'Best Karate' Vol. 1-11 (1979) | Kodansha, Japan. |
| Nakayama M | 'Dynamic Karate' (1967) | Kodansha, Japan. |
| Skoss D | 'Koryu Bujutsu' (1997) | Koryu books, USA. |
| Trimble A & Morris V | 'Karate Kata Applications' (1990) | Stanley Paul, UK. |
| Trimble A & Morris V | 'Karate Kata & Applications' Vol. 4 (1991) | S.P, UK. |
| Van Weenen J | 'Beginners guide to Shotokan karate' (1984) | P Hooley, UK |
| Yang Jwing-Ming | 'Shaolin Chin Na' (1982) | Unique Pub, USA. |
| Yang Jwing-Ming | 'Analysis of Shaolin Chin Na' (1987) | Unique Pub, USA. |
| Yang Jwing-Ming | 'Comprehensive applications of Shaolin Chin Na' (1995) | YMAA, USA. |

Magazines

- | | | |
|------------|-------------------------------|------|
| Chambers D | 'Classical Fighting Arts' | USA. |
| Cheetham J | 'Shotokan Karate Magazine' | UK. |
| O'Neill T | 'Fighting Arts International' | UK. |

Video

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Cook H | 'Shotokan Karate' Vol. 1-4 (2003) | Dragon Ass, USA. |
| Oliver S | 'Shotokan Oyo' Vol. 1&2 (1995) | Budo Promotions, UK. |
| Thompson G & Consterdine | 'Pavement Arena' (1993) Vol. 1-4 BCA | UK. |
| Yang Jwing-Ming | 'Shaolin Chin Na' Budostore | USA. |

Internet

- | | |
|--|--|
| www.anything-left-handed.com | www.shaolininstitute.com |
| www.geoffthompson.com | www.martialartsplanet.com |
| www.geoffthompson.com/guest_writers/IanAbernethy | www.thehaca.com |
| www.gutterfighting.org | |
| www.karateconnection.com | |
| www.society.webcentral.com.au | |
| www.wuweidao.com | |

Appendix 1

Karate usually stresses the importance of using both sides of the body equally. I believe training should encourage equal use of both left and right sides, to develop a strong body of equal proportion. However, research has shown that Shotokan kata does not train both sides of the body equally. These results clearly show the right side being used more than the left.⁴¹

Perhaps kata are designed this way because the human race is not equal on both sides. Studies have shown that the majority of humans are right-handed. In a recent study one Prof. Chris McManus has concluded that “13% of the population is currently left handed”.⁴²

I have conducted my own research into the percentage of right- and left-handedness. My findings were as follows: 114 men and women completed my questionnaire. 93 were right-handed and 21 were left-handed. This equates to 82% being right-handed and 18% being left-handed.

From these findings it would not be unreasonable to assume that if we were to encounter 100 real confrontations, only 13 to 18 of these would be made by a left-handed attacker. We can also assume they will be of ‘average height’. There is data to show that the average height of an adult is 1.6-1.9m.⁴³ We can use this information to support our defensive strategies and train in the appropriate way.

⁴¹ Layton, Randall, Nursey “A Shotokan Karate Book of Facts Vol. 1” pages 110-111

⁴² Prof. C McManus, www.anything-left-handed.com/ALHSite/information/FAQ

⁴³ B Burgar, “Five Years One Kata”, page 41

Appendix 2

I have included a DVD to accompany this work. This is to provide a clearer explanation of the examples shown, and a demonstration of the Tegumi grappling drill. I have found when using still photography that some of the explanation of technique can be lost. This is the only reason for the DVD to be included.

DVD Contents

Title/menu	Chapters can be accessed directly from the DVD menu.
Example 1	Bassai Dai
Example 2	Empi
Example 3	Bassai Dai
Example 4	Sepai
Example 5	Nijushiho
Example 6	Heian Godan
Example 7	Tekki Shodan
Example 8	Heian Yondan
Example 9	Heian Godan
Example 10	Bassai Dai
Example 11	Heian Shodan
Example 12	Empi
Example 13	Unsu
Training Drill (pt 1 & 2)	Arm Locks & Chokes/Strangles
Training Drill (pt 3)	Wrist Locks
Training Drill (pt 4)	Throws
Training Drill (pt 5)	Control Techniques
Training Drill (pt 6)	Ground Holds