

The Black Belt Study Group

MASTERS SERIES

TEKKI



Students should be aware of the Law and how it pertains to "Use of Reasonable Force".

Black Belt Study Group

MASTERS SERIES

Kata remain one of the most misunderstood facets of the martial arts. Seen by many as being without use, sweeping statements are often made by accomplished martial artists:

“Learning kata just teaches you how to do kata.”

“Kata doesn’t teach you anything about combat.”

Some *realists* have even gone so far as to stop teaching kata, or have made up their own “fighting kata” to more accurately resemble combative situations as they perceive them.

In order to honestly teach a kata, one must have an understanding of where the kata comes from and it’s reason for being. Patrick McCarthy Hanshi often likens this to trying to learn a song in a foreign language. It may sound pretty but without it’s context it is ultimately meaningless.

I have made it my life’s study to investigate kata and disseminate the information to limit the amount of bad karate practice in the world. There is nothing wrong with learning a kata for competition and making it as pretty as you can, but to then go on and teach that method as the “right” way to perform it is, in my opinion incorrect.

The Cosmology of kata

The basic shape made by the kata reflects the horizontal stroke of a pen that indicates the number “1” in Japanese. Although travel occurs first to the right (unusual for kata), it also goes left, and then right again.

If kata were symbolic of Bhuddist monks’ practice methods then consider that the turns may have been to offer prayer in each direction, to be protected in each direction, to cast out imperfections in each direction, and to allow the state of mind of a practitioner to pass from their worldly thoughts due to complex stepping rituals. Consider that as a code of exercise the kata makes these turns habitual.

Tekki is a strange kata to analyse the turns in, because they all seem to be 180 degree turns. Closer inspection reveals some subtlety to do with which way the face looks compared to which way the torso or arms are aimed, but there is not so much to play with in terms of “meditational” or “prayer” kata.

Instead, it is more useful to look at Tekki as a game of sticking hands for the Shaolin monks, thus promoting awareness by touch and losing one’s self in the partner who guides you by performing the kata! This, of course, means that the kata is a 2-man exercise! A “flow drill”!
Every move takes you through multiple angles. There are no “linear movements”.

Kata as Meditation

As the *jutsu* forms became popularised as *do* forms the object of training theoretically trained. Funakoshi sensei’s idea was that Karate would be treated as *moving meditation* for the betterment of character. Yet the majority of those taking part could only see the older fighting method, and so the art became a split personality.

The idea that you can lose yourself in the performance of kata is laudable, and something that all practitioners should try. Some will argue that this method prevents fighting applications from being made part of the subconscious, but we would argue that it internalises the movements to the ultimate degree, leading the martial arts practitioner back to the idea of “becoming the movement” instead of “doing the movement”. Isn’t this one of Bruce Lee’s maxim’s—“*Don’t think, feel.*”?

Kata performed hard and fast become internalised as combative movements which flow together.

Kata performed slowly and with the *idea* of fostering greater *ki* become a form of what-the-Chinese call “*Chi-Gung*”. That is a life-enhancing exercise for healthy body and internal energy.

In today’s society, when we have so much to worry about, and so many things wrong with the world, there is very little that can totally absorb us. Distractions abound. Maybe, just maybe, you can lose yourself for a time training. It helps if that training has a pre-arranged form, something that you can just repeat, mindful of movement and betterment, yet slipping from being totally conscious. The Japanese have a word for the flash of inspiration and enlightenment that can be visited upon us at these times—SATORI.

There’s no better way to leave you than that.

The Tekki Family of Kata

This study guide is to remind practitioners of the Tekki family of kata, how they look, and how to get the best out of them.

The versions shown within herald from Shotokan, nominally the style of Funakoshi Gichin, credited by many as the father of modern karate-do. Certainly, many movements within Shotokan have become homogenised and made safe for practice by school children. This does not mean that the old, dangerous techniques are removed, they have merely been overlooked in favour of simplistic explanations favouring the aesthetic required for competition.

More important than which version is shown here are the principles espoused, which are universal.

Principles can be broken down into what is useful for performance (*embu*), what is important for health and exercise, and what is important for combat.

Performance Principles:

Funakoshi's Three Cardinal Points:

- i) Light and Heavy application of Strength.
- ii) Expansion and Contraction of the body.
- iii) Fast and Slow movements of the body.

1. Ikita Kata. Feeling and purpose. Alive.

2. Inen. Spirit.

3. Chikara no Kyojaku. Proper application of power. Technique can be strong or yielding, hard then soft.

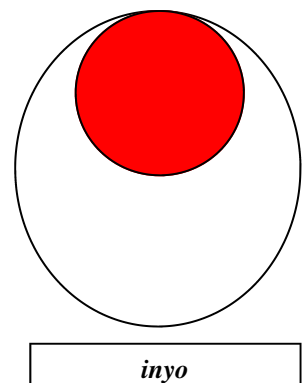
4. Waza no Kankyu. Variations in the timing of movement, sometimes fast, sometimes slow.

5. Kisoku no Donto. Rhythm of breathing, when to inhale and exhale.

6. Balance. Proper balance must be maintained in the performance of Kata.

Kanazawa's 10 rules:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| <i>Yoi no kisin</i> | The spirit of being ready. |
| <i>Inyo</i> | The contrast and transition of active and passive |
| <i>Chikara no kyojaku</i> | The degree of Power. Where you put your strength. |
| <i>Waza no kankyu</i> | The speed of the technique |
| <i>Tai no shinshuku</i> | The degree of expansion and contraction. |
| <i>Kokyu</i> | Breathing. |
| <i>Tyakugan</i> | The points to aim for. |
| <i>Kiai</i> | Spirit Shout. Everything together. |
| <i>Keitai no hoji</i> | The correct positioning. |
| <i>Zanshin</i> | Remaining awareness. |



Practitioners will note that even amongst those concerned with how a kata *looks*, it is important to understand what the moves are *for!*

BACKGROUND

The Tekki family of kata form a central theme running through the grades. In the **Shotokan** style of Karate-do, nominally the style of **Funakoshi Gichin** who is credited with introducing Karate to Japan in the 1920s; the first of the kata, **Tekki Shodan**, is a requirement for a student to obtain 3rd kyu (brown belt). **Tekki Nidan** is generally taught to Shodans as an option for the Nidan test, whilst **Tekki Sandan** is seemingly reserved for those attempting Yondan!

Tekki is very much a Shuri-te kata, and can be said to be Shorei, in nature.

This set of kata are very much neglected in Shotokan practice. The Heian family of kata (created for use in the school system) are practiced one-per-3 months. Bassai (a “real” kata) is practiced for well over a year, solidly. In the middle we are introduced to Tekki Shodan. The kata itself is performed fast on a single line embusen making use of only one stance. Tekki is seemingly simple. It is only practiced for 3 months or so and then you move on to the “big” kata.

One might ask “*what of it?*”, after-all, each of the Heians is only practiced for three months. The thing is, the Heians culminate a study that takes you through 15 months—a year and a quarter—to practice the set. One might argue that the kata is simple to learn and so only warrants 3 months. I would argue against that wholeheartedly. Tekki is being neglected.

You see, Funakoshi was taught the fore-runner to Tekki back when it was called Naihanchi. Master Funakoshi was said to have spent 9 years on it. Now, even if you took it that Naihanchi became 3 different Tekki kata, that’s still 3 years each!

Funakoshi’s great rival, the noble **Motobu Choki** was heard to say that “*Naihanchi is all one needs*” when questioned about kata and building up fighting prowess.

Outside of Shotokan, it is known that the Naha-te styles use **Sanchin** kata and Shuri-te styles use **Naihanchi** as their great basic kata; the core of the art.

Historian Joe Swift has the following to say:

So important was the Naifuanchi kata to old-style karate that **Kentsu Yabu**, the martial arts instructor at the Okinawa Prefectural Teacher’s School, often told his students “Kata wa Naifuanchi ni hajimari, Naifuanchi ni owaru” (Kata begins and ends with Naifuanchi) (Gima et al, 1986). Yabu often admonished his students that one must practice the kata 10,000 times in order to make it one’s own. Even Funakoshi recalled in his autobiography that he spent a total of ten years learning and practicing the three Naihanchi kata while studying under Itosu (Funakoshi, 1956).

Noted Okinawan karate historian Akio Kinjo relates his own experience in researching the roots of Naifuanchi. In the 1960s, he sought out Danchi Kaneko, who had studied a Taiwanese form of **White Crane** boxing known as Ban Qiu Ban Bai He Quan (lit. Half Hillock, Half White Crane Boxing). Kaneko, an acupuncturist who lived in Yonabaru, taught a form that would be pronounced **Neixi** (lit. Inside-Knee) in Mandarin Chinese, which includes the same sweeping action found in the Nami-gaeshi or returning wave technique of the Okinawan Naifuanchi kata. This technique is shown below, as demonstrated by Motobu in his 1926 book.

Kinjo also states that subsequent research in Fujian revealed to him that Neixi is pronounced “Nohanchi” in the Fuzhou dialect. From this, Kinjo feels that Neixi is the fore-runner of the modern Okinawan Naifuanchi kata. (Kinjo, 1999)

If all this is so, why is Tekki treated so poorly? The answer lies in the change of the nature of the art, from self defence system to sport. The look of Tekki is not conducive to kumite competition. The techniques within Tekki do not help competitors to win fights, they seem impractical for this purpose. So Tekki is, for the most part, left alone.

The truth is that Tekki is a wonderful system. The three kata that are taught today are descendants of the old Naihanchi kata. Legend tells that **Itosu** made up Tekki Nidan and Tekki Sandan as advanced versions of the basic Tekki Shodan. It seems more likely to me that he split one big kata up into learnable chunks. Certainly, when we look at the Wado ryu Naihanchi we find that the “complicated bit” is simpler—or is it just more similar to the movement found in Tekki Sandan which features in the same way? Other sources state that Motobu Naihanchi was all of Itosu’s ver-

sions of the kata added together. **Mabuni Kenwa** learned Naihanchi from **Matayoshi**, a student of **Matsumura**. When he showed his teacher, Itosu, the version he had learned Itosu remarked that it was an earlier version than his own, and that Mabuni should stick to the Matayoshi one.

It is unfortunate that there is no written record of the kanji originally used for Naihanchi. The only surviving Okinawan text by a

pre-war martial artist is **Nagamine Shoshin's** book, and in there Naihanchi is written with *katakana*. This means that the name is written phonetically; a habit that Japanese people have of writing *foreign* words so that they are pronounced properly (but without the image content of their kanji writing). This means that all modern usage of the term Naihanchi which use kanji are just the modern interpretation of the word. One researcher tells how he used a set of kanji which meant "Inside" "ground" and "paw" to make up the word Naifuanchi. His Chinese teacher said the term was meaningless and probably of Japanese origin—his Japanese teacher said the term was meaningless and probably of Chinese origin.

Hanshi **Patrick McCarthy** in his journeys and research in China found many kata that shared similar movements to Naihanchi, but could not isolate one that could be said to be its "root" form.

We can judge then, that the Naihanchi kata was probably of Chinese origin, but that its name has become too distorted to recognise.

There are three Tekki kata. The number **three** has a significance to oriental people as a fortunate number. Observe the number as a multiple of repeated movements, the Sanchin kata of Goju-Ryu, the three "Ji Family" style, and the oft repeated maxim of "Mind- Body- Spirit". Another reading might be "Mind-Breath-Body"; the Kempo maxim, or even "Past-Present-Future".

It is considered a lucky number in Japan, but also one that is common in nature. One only has to observe the triple leafed plants and phases of the day. Observe the number of times that three fits into the "number-named" kata, and you will usually find that the number it is multiplied by is usually a "lucky" number, too!

A commonly taught kata, the family has small variations in the way it is taught within Shotokan, WadoRyu, ShitoRyu, and as the Chul-gi Cho Dan Poomse in certain Taekwondo associations. As stated before, the principles are universal.

騎馬立ち

Tekki Shodan is taught in Kiba dachi.
The Kanji for this stance are made up of 4 parts
Ki = horse Ba = Riding and the last two make up Tachi = Stance or "to stand".

鉄騎初段

Tekki Shodan
Tetsuo = iron, ki = horse/equestrian
Sho = First, Dan = level

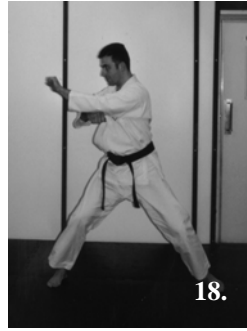
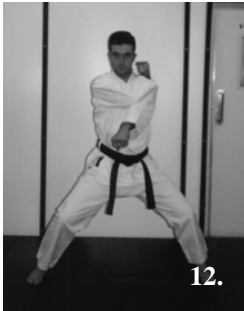
二段

Nidan = two level

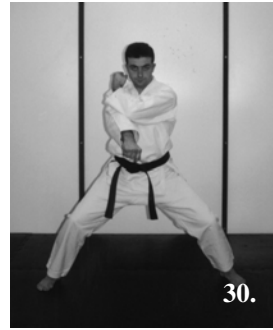
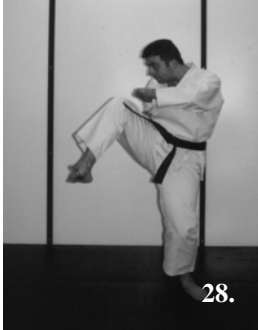
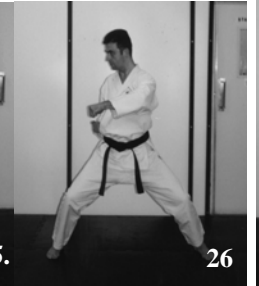
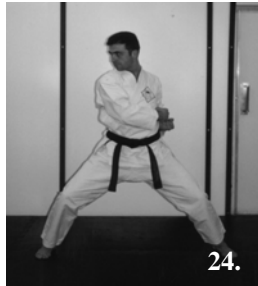
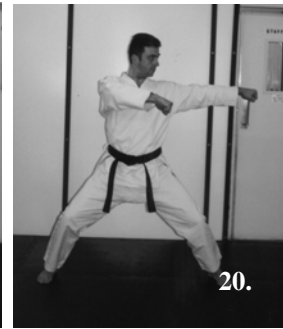
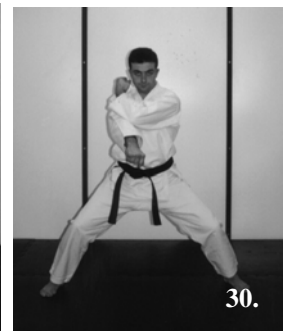
三段

Sandan = three level

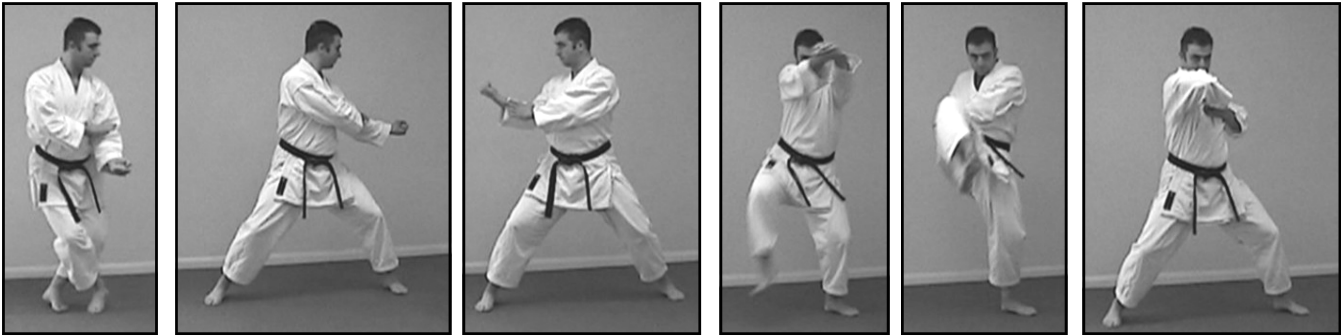
Tekki Shodan Kata Pictorial Reminder



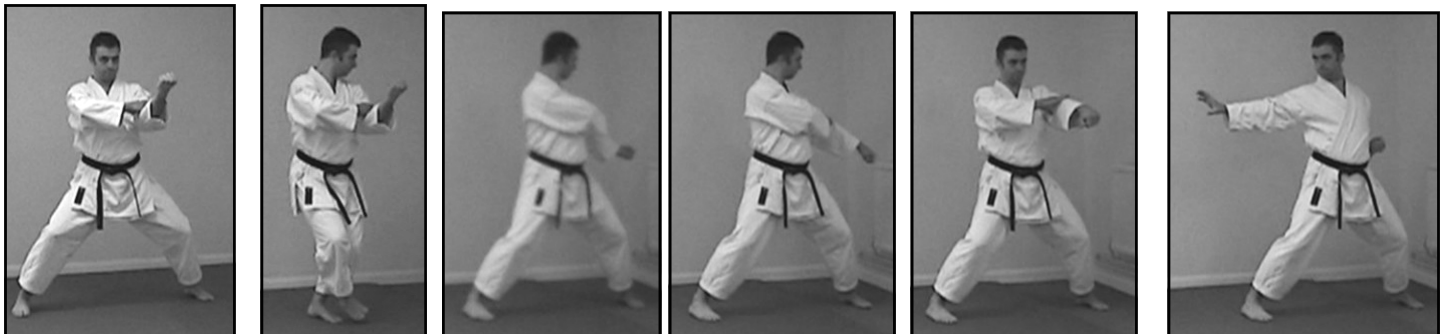
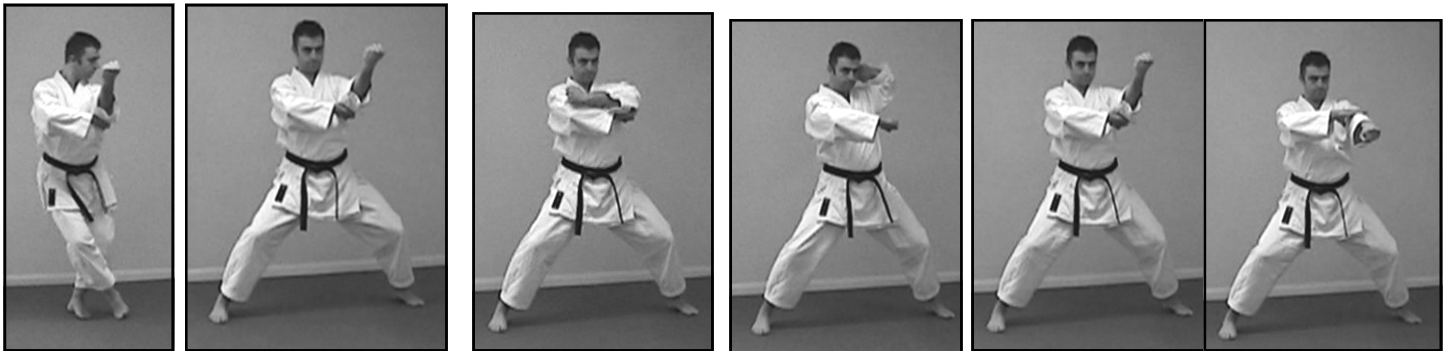
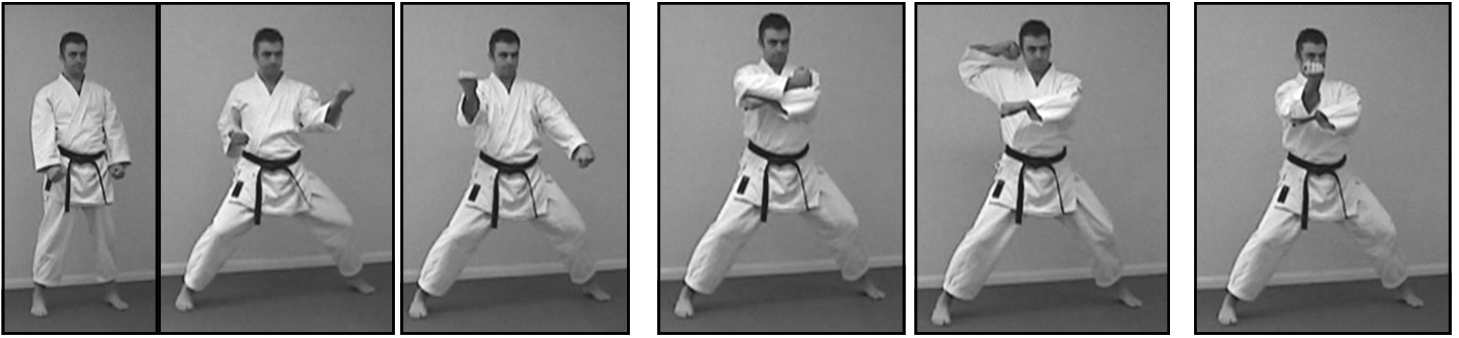
Tekki Shodan Kata Pictorial Reminder



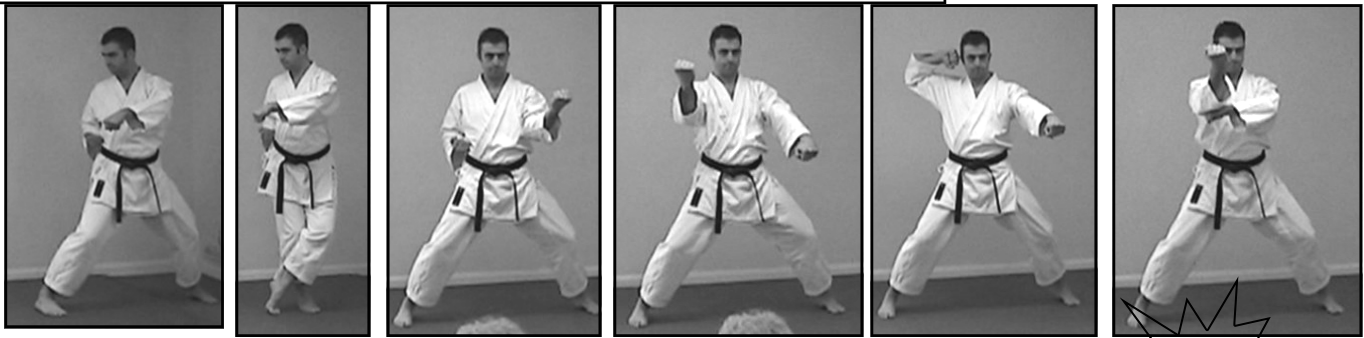
Tekki Nidan Kata Pictorial Reminder



Tekki Sandan Kata Pictorial Reminder



Tekki Sandan Kata Pictorial Reminder



PRINCIPLES

Remember:

- **If you can avoid the confrontation, do.**
- **If you can talk your way out of it before it gets messy, do.**
- **If you can hit then escape, pre-emptively or otherwise, do.**
- **If you hit an attacker and it doesn't finish it then use the time you buy yourself to use your technique. An aggressor will be more compliant if you have already hit him.**
- **If one technique does not fulfill your requirements use another. Don't stop. Carry on until you are safe. Kata applications show a snap shot of action, not the whole fight.**
- **If you can, move to a position of relative safety/strength (off-line rather than directly in front of his "other" fist).**
- **Safety first. Practice the moves with speed, power, and visualisation only on a bag or thin air, not on a partner. This is what kata are for. When practicing on empty air don't lock out joints, use your muscles to stop the movement.**

Awareness. Be aware of your situation. Your surroundings, potential threats. *During* a confrontation— as soon as contact is made you can find any other part of the assailant.

Pre-Emption If possible, and morally/legally correct, always advisable. Action beats reaction.

Off-line It is best to have your centre-line aimed at the opponent and to have theirs aimed away from you! This makes it harder for them to aim any of their "weapons" at you.

Shock (BAR) Dealing with the "adrenaline dump", and causing the shock to occur others. All tactics take place after BAR (Body Alarm Reaction) has been caused.

Mind, Breath, Body. In that order. Intention, energy, then the physical movement.

Focus on the "One Point" All power comes from the dantien/tanden/belly.

All force directed to the centre. Aim everything you have towards the centre of the opponent for depth of penetration.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| All limbs in motion/active | Always strike with more than one limb. Your feet are a part of the technique, even if they don't appear to be. |
| Leave No Gap | Any space between your limb and the opponent will present a weakness. |
| Controlled Pliability | Tension prevents movement, so we remain able to move, but without becoming flaccid. We need to control where and when we are pliable. |
| Heavy Hand | Always penetrate, never bounce off. |
| Waveform | The motion of any strike is a figure of 8/infinity loop. |
| Quadrant Theory | Yin-yang taken three-dimensionally. |
| Pressure Points | The last 5% of any given technique. |
| Five-Phase Theory | To get the best out of T.O.M., you should follow the Law of 5 Elements. |
| Small Circle Big Result | Centrifugal force, and the ability to use the smallest lever to move the biggest object. |
| Give a Little to Get a Little | Direct force often needs to be slightly absorbed before it can be resisted. |
| Complex torque | The human body can resist one directional force, but 3? |
| Stances | are the application of bodyweight to finish a technique. The stance is the last part of any technique, not the first. |

Methods

Impact, seizing, controlling

Blood, Nerves, Airways, Concussive force, Joint manipulation (levers, hinges), tearing

Location, Tool, Angle, Direction, Intensity,

The moves of the kata reflect retaliations conducted on an attacker. The movements do not exist to block an attack, but rather to leave the defender in a better position (preferably with the attacker unable to continue).

Application Principles

We don't just want you to learn what we have to say; we seek to empower learners to discover applications for themselves. In this way we return to Funakoshi sensei's maxim that one doesn't need to know many kata; just to know a few really well. It is perfectly possible to take the principles and apply them to any kata, regardless of style, for workable applications.

We don't know the original applications—no-one alive today does. The arts have not been handed down complete but as methods of movement. Anyone who claims to have the original applications is actually showing *their* interpretation and understanding of their kata.

All kata applications today are "*reverse engineered*" - i.e.: the movement has been analysed (*bunkai*) until its method of use (*oyo*) has been revealed. Those who are teaching applications that were passed down to them have only repeated someone else's bunkai-oyo jutsu.

Just because the kata consists of fists does not limit the application.

The kata movement is what happens *after* the initial engagement.

There are *no blocks* in kata. All kicks make contact *below* the belt.

All chudan punches are to the *head*. We do not begin in a stance or "on guard", merely aware.

The responses are to attacks that commonly occur, at a distance where there is a real danger (unlike so many sparring practices where the distance is only applicable to a touch).

The kata does not reflect directions to face opponents, but directions to displace opponents.

The end point is the dead point, the action occurs in the middle.

The weapon is not always the end of the limb.

Kata applications have surface (*omote*) and hidden (*ura*) applications.

Seminars with John Burke sensei are available internationally to cover

*Traditional Karate,
Kata Bunkai,
Oyo,
and Pressure Points.*



For more information contact **01626 360 999**

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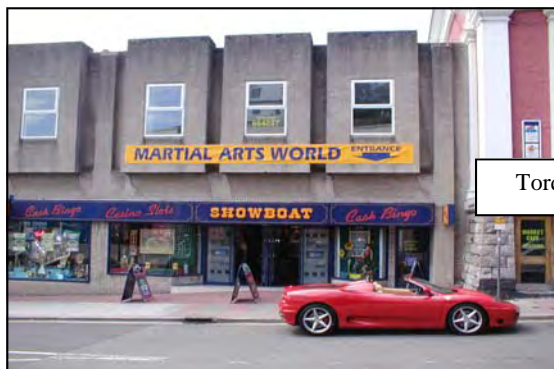


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