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Hinonori Ohtsuka and Kyusho-Jutsu

I recently posted on Face Book some information my research had uncovered about the use of Vital Points in Wado-Ryu Karate. There seems little doubt that the progenitor of Wado-Ryu did indeed teach the use of Kyusho in the Kata and applications of the Kata. Much like with the case of Shotokan, however, it seems that the drive towards simplification and an acceptable 'sport' form of Karate led to the exclusion of these dangerous methods in favour of the more obvious and dramatic style relying primarily on punching and kicking, to the exclusion of most throwing, grappling, choking and so on.

Here follows an interesting article by Ireland Chief Instructor Gerry Smullen, who began his karate training in the Wado style.

The question was posed on social media recently as to whether Hironori Ohtsuka would have

known the bunkai of kata, there is very little doubt that he did, and that included the vital points of



the human body (Kyusho-Jutsu) in that bunkai. The bigger question is why don't all Wado-Ryu practitioners not also know this and practice this?

Hironori Ohtsuka started practicing jujitsu as a child and spent most of his life until his death studying martial arts, whose father was a medical doctor, who whilst studying Jujitsu, according to his own students learned a great deal about the body's "vital points" both for attacking and healing purposes, who also studied the art of "bone setting" and in 1925, left

a safe bank job, to set up a small Health Clinic, what we today would call a bone fracture & healing clinic. In Japan, bone setting was known as *ekkotsu* (**bonesetter**) a practitioner of joint manipulation.

Ohtsuka would later include 5 katsu methods, as mandatory grading requirements in Wado-Ryu from 1938-1950. (Traditional Japanese methods of resuscitation using striking and rubbing vital areas as therapy).

In 1917, he met Morihei Ueshiba Sensei, the founder of Aikido and began a influential friendship. Ohtsuka was awarded the highest degree of Shindo Yoshin Ryu Jujitsu, on 1st June 1920 made him successor to his master's posi-

tion as fourth Grand Master of that style. Ohtsuka in 1922 saw his first demonstration of to-de (Okinawa-te Karate) by Gichin Funakoshi. Funakoshi was "impressed" by Ohtsuka's enthusiasm and determination to understand Karate and agreed to teach him all he knew about Karate. Within the space of a year Ohtsuka Sensei had studied all the Katas that Funakoshi had brought from Okinawa, although he found certain movements and techniques difficult to implement and understand. This led Ohtsuka in his search for a deeper understanding of Karate and to practice Kata with (amongst others) two Okinawan's living in Japan, Kenwa Mabuni Sensei (the founder of Shito-Ryu Karate), and



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Motobu (Choki) which influenced his Naihanchi, which became Ohtsuka's (and was Motobu's) favourite kata.

Incidentally, it is also one of mine (sensei Vince).

By the year 1929 Ohtsuka was a registered member of the Japan Martial Arts Federation. At this time Funakoshi's Okinawan Karate in Japan only concentrated upon Kata, Ohtsuka thought that the full spirit of Budo, which concentrates both upon attack and defence, was missing and meanwhile had been developing Yakusoko Kumite (two-partner kumite-gata) to compensate for the lack of attacking techniques. He decided to leave Funakoshi Sensei to concentrate on developing his own system of Karate by 1934, which was officially registered with Dai Nippon Butoku Kai in 1938 under the name of "Shinshu Wadoryu Karate-Jujitsu."

To give a rough guide



Ohtsuka himself developed **118** partner kumite gata (count them **118** !) this total does not include the 8 Oyho gumite developed by Tatsuo Suzuki (with Ohtsuka's blessing) for inclusion within the syllabus. (It does unfortunately include many impractical tanto and katana based drills, that's another story)

The lack of bunkai related practice in any formal sense in Wado Ryu classes historically is directly related to the existence/presence of these pre arranged two person scenarios and Ohtsuka said that he was dissatisfied with the lack of combative opportunities in Funakoshi's training and wanted more time spent on the development of fighting skills; via two man kata and formal, semi formal and Ju and Ohyo kumite.

It can be assumed that Ohtsuka's original design/desire was to have a practical variation of Okinawa Te (Karate) combined with his own Jujitsu knowledge/style and that would rule bunkai in (not out).

In his book, 'Wado-Ryu Karate (1977) he states : "Martial arts progress from kata to kumite, kumite to combat and so on. Kata is a fundamental aspect of martial arts and hence is unyieldingly

important." Ohtsuka encouraged adaptations and experimentation within all kata techniques (whilst ensuring the principles remain constant) in that book Ohtsuka wrote, "It is obvious that kata must be trained and practised sufficiently, but one must not be 'stuck' in them. One must look from the outside at the kata to produce forms of training with no limits, otherwise it becomes useless. "It is important to alter the form of the trained kata without hesitation to produce countless other forms of training."

2nd & 3rd Generation student & instructors never learned kata bunkai (including vital points) from Ohtsuka 1st Generation students claim in recorded interviews that they actually did. It appears that the emphasises from 1950 on quickly became the studious learning, reproduction and teaching, of the outward appearance of the kata, the Basics, renraku-waza and the many two person kumite gata (as previously mentioned much more in Wado than any other style). As time goes by, its becomes more difficult to find Wado instructors, if any at all, that study or teach a syllabus similar to what Ohtsuka's first students experienced and knew.

Some of Ohtsuka's 2nd generation students such as Tatsuo Suzuki in his books and videos specifically mention in the context of kihon kumite for example, that you must attack with ippon ken or nakadaka ken to the points in the armpit or the

points in the ribs, front and back etc. but very few instructors taught by him have learned, taught or pointed out where these are located but never in a kata context, some adventurous souls may have used simple trial and error. Many just never bothered, as knowledge of various hand strikes or point locations are neither useful nor relevant when they are banned from competition and you wear mitts.

The very few explanations of kata applications in their books and videos, show no interpretation of bunkai waza beyond block, strike, block, strike (which of course ignores Ohtsuka's own martial heritage in Shindo Yoshin Ryu Jujitsu, To-de (Karate) & written recommendations quoted above and elsewhere).

Some examples of point usage from Wado-ryu Kihon Kumite, some of these are endangered due to the dreaded term: "standardisation", by one governing body or another, for example the photos below of Ohtsuka, Suzuki and Fukazawa sensei's showing nakadaka ken to the heart point in the armpit has been standardised recently by JKF WadoKai as a generic tate-zuki chudan.





Kihon Gumite No. 8

This is how some Wado kai practioners demonstrate what is a strike following on from a high block/ parry downwards into the top inside of the opponents leg. With the standard instruction that its too dangerous to aim for the actual target you must aim to miss powerfully to the outside. The strike was traditionally classically performed in a shorter stance and with the striking arm bent in a circular downward trajectory.

Some sensei say this is an attack ippon ken (or nakadaka ken) to the groin/or to the pelvic point/or to the testicles/or to the top inside crease of the right leg. now as in the example shown above you will see Wado practitioners punch "fresh air" well to the "outside of the leg" with the remark that it is too dangerous to aim for the "correct" target. as time goes by the correct target will be forgotten. Circa 20 years ago, I stood in as a replacement uke for one of my students when he was undertaking a Kyu grading and he accidentally didn't pull his classically

performed technique and "didn't miss" the target to an audible ouch, groan and wince by the grading panel and everyone else in the dojo, at the time on my behalf.

As time goes on it will become more and more difficult to find Wado clubs that study a common syllabus or even a syllabus similar to Ohtsuka's vision. A quick web search of Wado will bring you hundreds of videos of sport kumite at which many Wado stylists excel, but unfortunately nothing that reflects the depth of

knowledge which must have been available to Ohtsuka's first students. lost before 1960 which is being further and further diluted by passing time.

This brief article is denotes just a few of the many reasons I sought out answers that bought Kyusho Jutsu, Vince Morris and Kissaki Kai to my attention.

I joined Kissaki Kai in 2006, graded 4th Dan in Wado Ryu in 2007 signed up my club to Kissaki Kai in 2008 while remaining Chairperson of a Wado organisation until I resigned and severed ties in 2010, that organisation has since split into three.

Do contact me on Face Book for any information about Kissaki-Kai in Ireland.

Gerry Smullen 5th Dan.

Yet another insight into why, with all the emphasis on defensive Karate in Okinawa, there is little or no evidence of the regular transference of Bunkai as a

matter of form, in the teaching and practice of Kata as Karate was introduced into Japan.

There is no doubt about the importance just about every early karate master, including Master Funakoshi among others, placed upon the teaching of Kata. What is missing - practically in every case - is the accompanying teaching of precisely what the techniques in the Kata actually were for - what they were.

Of course, we know that there was a high degree of secrecy involved, with teachers not wishing the secrets of their defences to become known by just anyone: but there is more to it than that! Watch this space for the results of my research... Sensei Vince.

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We look forward to meeting all our old friends as well as many new people at the courses. Don't be afraid to take the plunge: Everyone is welcome! Please also remember that it is easy to hold a seminar at your dojo. Please contact vincemorris@kissaki-kai.com if you are interested.

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30th January at Venlo, Maashoflaan 5, [5927 PV Venlo. NL](http://www.venlo.nl) For more information e-mail guy.janssens2@gmail.com

Västervik, Sweden, 30th January with Johannes Regel

Our Swedish representative, Sensei Joahnnes Regell will teach this seminar. This is a chance to see what Kissaki is about and to gain some insight in to realistic karate! for more details, please e-mail: kissakikaisweden@outlook.com

February 27th, Västervik, Sweden with Don Came

Don't miss this opportunity to train with Sensei Don Came, a 7th Dan Kissaki instructor UK Chief Instructor! For details contact : <https://www.facebook.com/events/765441723585114/>

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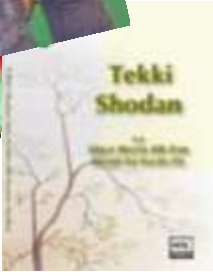
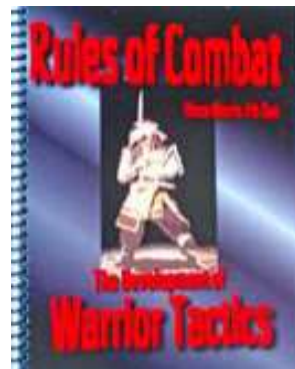
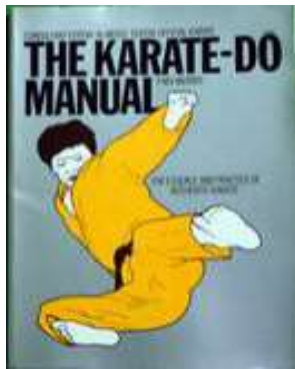
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