



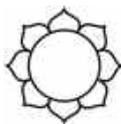
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(THE WAY OF THE WARRIOR)

&

THE SEVEN VIRTUES OF BUSHIDŌ
[WAY/DO 道 MEANS PATH OR ROAD]



リベラ 道場

リベラ 道場 RIVERA DŌJŌ

国際 極真会館 空手道 連合

INTERNATIONAL KYOKUSHINKAI KAN KARATEDŌ UNION 型 KATA (FORMS)

型 Kata means forms or Fōmu フォーム, which in Kata refers to a series of formal movements demonstrated by one, or a Karateka 空手家 or practitioner; it is represented via imaginary fighting/kumite 組手, i.e., one being attacked by fictional opponents, and subsequently, fending away or thwarting one's attackers. Needless to say, in virtually all styles of Karate 空手 or other venerable forms of Martial Arts, kata is composed of Kihon 基本, which are basic movements or forms executed in combinations of techniques 技 Wazas.

Overall, most katas are a representation of kicks-geris 蹴, punches-tsukis 突き, blocks-ukes 受け, and strikes 当 with stances-dachis 立 or tachis 立ち along with yells-kiats 気合 and breathing-ibuki 息吹 from one's 丹田 Tanden in more "advanced" katas, which also start-Kamaete 構えて or begin-Hajime 始め and end or stop-Yamei 止め with mokusō 黙想 (to mediate or 冥想 meditation) in either the posture-Kamae 構え of 用意 立 Yoi Dachi (Ready Stance) or Musubi Dachi 結び立 (Open-Toed Stance).

Besides one moving to one's right 右 Migi or left 左 Hidari or outside 外 Soto or inside 内 Uchi or switching 交差 Kosa feet or backwards 後方 Kōhō or forwards 前, one needs to demonstrate Ashi Sabaki 足さばき or Ashi no Hakobi (footwork) and Te Sabaki (handwork) 手さばき while eyes are fixed directly ahead 目先 Me Sen of one.

However, the overall purpose of Kata is not just to show or display movements with loud blood-curtailing yells and flashy moves, which some Katas portray, and there is nothing wrong with that, but one aspect of Kata that is largely overlooked or not taught are the meditational aspects or meditational fundamentals of it. In other words, Kata is about oneself becoming one with one's surroundings as well as aforesaid self. Hence, one needs to get lost within the Kata itself and thus practice many Buddhist tenets (Buddhism 仏教) or derivatives of Bushidō 武士道, such as one's demonstration of 内心平静

Inner Peace, 内心的宁静 Peace of Mind, 無心 Mushin or Mind of No Mind, 水の心 Mizu No Kokoro or Mind Like Water, 月の心 Tsuki No Kokoro or Mind Like Moon, 不動心 Fudōshin or Immovable Mind, which all share affinities, but more imperatively, transcends one's kata and Karatedo as the Ensō 円相, which is the Zen Brush Circle. signifying No Beginning, No End.

息 Breathing and 楽章 Movement (Gakushou)

One therefore has to breathe (a type of ibuki or emote) throughout one's kata, and have proper footwork, balance, fluidity, focus, intent, posture, and non-thinking, which is different from "not-thinking," which is when one thinks of not thinking, juxtaposed to one who is "non-thinking" or in the moment (zen 禅). And that is truly demonstrating the aforementioned tenets of Buddhism and Bushidō without trying, which is then one just doing; also known as Shikan 只管. And by one practicing in this manner, one becomes "stronger" spiritual, which in turn makes more "powerful" physically. Remember, Karate is 90% mental; it is not about brute over-powering strength or physical domination over another; that is one aspect of Karate 空手 and an end result when one is fighting or protecting oneself or another sentient being.

Typically Katas have at least twenty movements and can have as many as fifty or six or more steps. The number of one-hundred eight signifies or represents Buddhism as the Malas (beaded necklace) worn around Buddhist's necks are that many beads, which can be used for prostrations or chants or simply as a reminder of one's practice of Buddhism and Zazen.

進退 Shintai (Course of action, advance or retreat)

In Katas, blocking can be done moving forward and backwards, but it is usually more practical, per se, to use blocks as one moves back. But, having stated that, neither is wrong, i.e., that one is more justified than the other. It relates to Tai Sabaki 体捌き, which relates to one's body movement, e.g., stepping back or repositioning or avoiding an attack and ending up in an advantageous position, which relates to Ashi no Hakobi 足の also known as

Ashi Sabaki 足捌き (footwork) as well as and Te Sabaki 手捌き(handwork).

Sabaki is best demonstrated in the backward movements or the repositioning of one's body and thus, one's attacker in the kata, in which the defensive Wazas 技 or techniques are followed by offensive Wazas also known as Awase Waza 捨 技 or counter techniques, which implies multiple techniques or Wazas given back in one's offense that manifests from one's defense.

By performing Sabaki (relating to movement and control of an attacker), limits one's exposure to attacks coming from the front, as well as creating a so-called blind-spot in one's imaginary attacker. And once a blind-spot is developed one can exploit it or use it to one's advantage. However, this is only achieved via Ashi no Hakobi or Ashi Sabaki (footwork) and thus, putting oneself in a prime or "perfect" position to counter the attacker or for Kata a fictitious one.

武士道 Bushidō (The Way of the Warrior) & the Seven Virtues of Bushidō

[Way/Do 道 means Path or Road]

This is the spiritual or internal aspect of Kata and what one desires to achieve in practicing one's Kata. And one can achieve this via The Seven Virtues of Bushidō, which are 智 Wisdom, 因果 Cause and Effect, 静穩 Serenity/ Tranquility, 勇 Rectitude, 勇 or 仁 Courage, 礼 Benevolence, 誠 Respect, 名誉 Honesty, 忠義 Honor, 忠義 Loyalty. I.e., by knowing or more importantly demonstrating these virtues, one can truly be one within oneself and perform Kata as it was meant to be: a form of meditation. So, by performing these movements with this frame of mind, where one does not think or ruminate, where one does not act in a preconceived manner, nor does one move robotically or mechanically in predetermined movements or in a rigid fashion, one will Shikan 只管 or Just Do it.

Of course one learns the movements first in a rigid manner, but this is not the way one is to practice Kata. One has to learn in a numerical or mechanized system via a logically brains, but as one furthers oneself in Karatedo 空手道 as a Karateka 空手家, one learns to let go of Ego, Abstract

thought or delusion and practice in the moment as one with everything. This means one transcends oneself in the moment of Zen 禪, which is short for Zazen 坐禪 or meditation (e.g., sitting in Lotus position). So, by using the Seven Virtues of Bushidō as well as the aforementioned Buddhist's tenets, one can be in a place of tranquility and thus, flow through one's movements, techniques and forms. And this is the essence of Kata. That is why many, if not all, Shodansha 初段者 (first dan) and 有段者 Yūdansha Katas (one with dan or dans) begin and end with Mokusō. It also signifies/represents the Ensō from Buddhism as well.

Moreover, many Shodansha and Yūdansha Katas also begin with Ibuki, which forces one, per se, to manifest deep breathing from the beginning of the Kata, which compounds and reinforces the already deep and slowed breathing from the prior meditation (Mokusō). But, in regard to Kyū 級 Katas, this is where one begins to learn how to let go or Open the Hand of thought, i.e., allow oneself to flow and be fluid, like water without using the logical mind, which is what mediation is for; i.e., it is the practice of non-activity. So, when one does Kata, one should be in this frame of mind and just do it or Shikan. And this is the purpose of Kata; to be a part of something universal, which goes beyond the self or Jiko 自己. It is within this practice that one profoundly transcends oneself via Interconnectedness and Universality with being in the moment or Zen. In Buddhism that is referred to as Jijuyu Zanmai 自受用, which means the Self receiving the Self or Self-fulfilling or Self-enjoyment or Self-joyous Samādhi समाधि, which is the state of consciousness induced by complete meditation as well as non-dualistic state of consciousness in which the consciousness of the experiencing subject becomes one with the experienced object, and in which the mind becomes still, one-pointed or concentrated while the person remains conscious [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samadhi>].

リベラ 先生 Rivera Sensei

リベラ 開帳 Rivera Kaichō