



PRACTICAL BUNKAI FOR THE SHOTOKAN KATA

JION

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the basic Kata applications for **Jion** in the context of Self-Protection (Bunkai). The coverage is concerned purely with the physical elements based on the premise that good Self-Protection through avoidance and awareness is a valid precursor to the Kata's physical interpretations. The scenarios deal with both in-fight tactics and pre-emptive attacking where the aim in both cases is to inflict no more damage to the opponent than needed to gain an effective means of escape.

The interpretations are my own and are based on my understanding developed during training with my peers, seniors and other like minded martial artists. Instructions on the Shotokan techniques for performance as an standalone Kata is out of the scope of this document.

Intended Audience

This document at this version is written specifically for the inspection of Iain Abernethy, 5th Dan and forms part submission for my 5th Dan Karate grading with the British Combat Association.

Kata Bunkai – Perspective

The market contains many, good texts on Kata Bunkai in which Kata techniques are applied to defend against Karate attacks. In these texts the technical form of the Kata is still preserved throughout the applications e.g. in the stances and posture. Although this approach is valid in developing the exponent's understanding of how the Kata can be performed, it has little or no use in a realistic combative situation.

This document focuses on the physical aspects of Self-Protection from a realistic perspective and provides an explanation of how Karate Kata techniques are applied beyond standalone Kata performance alone.

Principles and Guidelines

It is my belief, that Kata when originally created, were intended to capture the 'highlights' of the effective combative fighting system. The distillate of this system survived over the generations as it served as a memory aid for the practitioner to communicate to his incumbent generation. As a result of the balance needed between reliance on memory and the need to maintain the principles of Kata, an optimal number of movements exist. This has led to subjectivity in the interpretation of Kata but fortunately to the learned practitioner Kata has not degraded to just a pattern of techniques.

A consequence of the subjectivity is that there exists no single correct application of the Kata movements we practice today. However incorrect ones can be classed as those that are in-effective. The subjectivity also provides the advantage of innovation. My humble aim is to formulate an effective form of Shotokan Karate geared towards Self-Protection.

My first step has been to analyse the sequences of techniques within the Kata Jion and to evolve a rationale to adapt and modify a particular sequence for ultimate use in Self-Protection in non compliant training drills.

I list below the attributes of Kata that I have used in my analysis, with a brief explanation of their meaning:

- Stance

Stances are usually differentiated by how the body weight is distributed between the feet. If a Kata technique is executed in Zenkutsu Dachi (front stance) it is applied with more weight placed on the front foot than on the rear, usually driving forward.

- Angles

Specifying an angle at which a particular Kata technique is executed makes sense if applied to a referencing direction. For example, if a Kata technique is executed at 45° , then it must be 45° relative to a baseline. Usually this is the reference direction in the previous technique. Changes in direction in Kata technique are important and usually indicate that a technique is applied at an angle to the opponent.

- Rhythm, Timing and Grouping

When certain Kata techniques are grouped and given a rhythm, the Kata as a whole becomes more than just a set of consecutive movements performed in various directions. However, this rhythm and timing is not an invariant record of how the movements are then applied in combat. For example, when three techniques are grouped together in the standalone form, this does not necessarily mean that they always belong together in that functional form.

- Symmetry and Repetition

Identical techniques performed consecutively (usually in twos and threes) are common in Kata. For the purpose of this text, any repetition is acknowledged and is interpreted as showing that the techniques can be applied using both the left and right sides of the body. However, for those sets of combinations that are repeated on both sides of the centre line, two differing applications may be given to demonstrate alternatives and emphasis.

- Preparatory/Intermediate Movements

The preparatory and intermediate positions of the Kata technique when performed in an individual form are to facilitate correct technique and are usually performed as a passive movement i.e. during the “in” breath. When applying the technique in combat, the intermediate movement has a combative purpose and can be just as offensive as the remaining portion of the technique.

- Consistency

Whilst performing the Kata as an individual form, the practitioner must strive to standardise all like techniques. For example all Oi Zuki (step punch) are performed in a similar way throughout the Kata. However the application of Oi Zuki may differ depending on various factors: the scenario, the target, the position etc. Variation of emphasis in the application is a good way of ensuring that maximum benefit is gained from the Kata.

- Redundancy

No technique within the Kata is redundant, and within every technique, no component parts are redundant. Every technique has a combative function, which is designed to either finish the opponent or enable a finishing technique to be applied. It is often the case that a technique will be used to create, maintain and exploit a combative advantage over the opponent. For example, when performing Gyaku Zuki (reverse punch), the hikite (pulling hand) is used to control the opponent so that the actual punch can be effectively executed. This means that it does not matter where the rear hand actually finishes because its main function is to pull the opponent onto the punch or to grab the area behind the target e.g. the rear of the opponent’s neck.

Jion – Explicit Choices

Every Kata has a duality of theme, one for performing the Kata as a standalone form, the other for applying the techniques.

Regarding the first theme above, Jion as a standalone form contains big, bold techniques in the basic core stances: front, back and straddle. The format is similar to that of the Heian Kata with the prominent use of North-East-South-West directions (North to South directional techniques use 4 steps) and are almost symmetric. This may explain why it is a compulsory (*shite*) Kata at WKF Kata competitions, as it tests how well the competitors can form basic techniques within the realms of competitive Kata.

Regarding the second theme, Jion presents explicit choices in the application of the various techniques. For example consider the sequence of the three Age Uke (upper block) combinations leading up to the first Kiai. The first two in the sequence are performed with a Gyaku Zuki (reverse punch) as a follow up and the last precedes an Oi Zuki (stepping punch). This shows that the creator is aware of the choice between punching on the spot or moving with forward drive as the opponent reels back during the physical fight. These choices exist because, in a fight, things are not guaranteed to go to plan. The Kata will not provide every possible answer but assumes a certain instinctive response from the opponent.

Terminology

For simplicity, “text book” Shotokan Technique names are used to reference specific Kata movements. These may not reflect the actual purpose or function of the applied technique. For example the term Age Uke, means upper block, but Age Uke can be used to mean a forearm smash to the neck/jaw.

All the scenarios in the following Sections include two combatants, the exponent and the opponent. For convenience the exponent’s behaviour, actions etc. are described in the first person singular. The adversary is referred to as “the opponent”.

Jion – Section 1



The opening "Yoi" salutation is used to control the opponent's head in a close clinch at grappling range. From this clinch, my first movement is Kosa Uke (cross block). Although the clinch has secured the opponent, both my hands are 'busy' in maintaining the hold and no finishing technique is being applied. The Kata does not include any knee strikes from this position, but follow up strikes are relevant to this scenario.

The key is to take control of the opponent in the clinch before a follow up can be executed. Obvious choices afforded here include strikes with my head, feet and knees. However in addition to these core techniques, the Kata presents me with a way of controlling one of the opponent's arms with mine whilst controlling his head with the other.

The correct preparation of Kosa Uke (cross block) is by far the most important factor is ensuring the actual technique is executed effectively. The opponent is further controlled by gripping the back of his head or neck and is pulled down hard towards my chest. Once in control my grip is changed so that the opponent's leading arm is seized as I reach around and grab his face/nose. This forms the preparation for the Uchi Uke (inside block) portion of Kosa Uke (cross block). To aid this grabbing movement, I smash my forearm down onto the back of his neck. The seized arm is pushed away from me as I crank his head around to face away from me. Zenkutsu Dachi (front stance) is used to allow my weight to stay forward. Stepping back creates the necessary distance to twist the opponent's head around fully, whilst using his arm as a lever. The opponent's usual response is to turn his head as it is cranked, and I can drag him to the ground allowing my escape.



Kosa Uke (cross block) incorporates two distinct component blocks, both executed simultaneously. In the application, the Uchi Uke (inside block) component is used as the dominant controlling technique and the Gedan Barai (downward block) as a secondary aid. The roles can be reversed and the Gedan Barai (downward block) action be used to execute a strike generating an advantage with the Uchi Uke (inside block) motion.

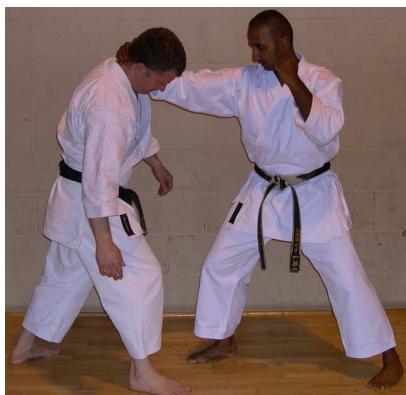
Jion – Section 2

The next Section of movements is Kakiwake Uke (wedge block), Mae Geri (front kick) followed by Sanbon Zuki (triple punch). This combination is executed at 45° to the front, first to the left, then to the right.



Kakiwake Uke (wedge block) is used to pre-emptively control the opponent's body to facilitate a rush forward. I seize his shoulders or lapel area to enable my first strike. My body is turned at a slight angle as I execute the front kick. In this case my knee is used as the distance is thereby closed rapidly.

I resort to the natural action of holding my arms up high when rushing forward as I protect myself. This position also allows me to clear my opponent's arms if they obstruct the path to his head. The knee strike is used in conjunction with my arms. This allows my kick to be delivered from a stable base. It is vital that I return to having both feet grounded following the kick, so I aim to strike through the opponent's body and slam my foot to the floor whilst driving forward. To aid this, I seize my opponent's neck in a 'slap and wrap' fashion on landing and this forms the first punch with my leading arm. My leading arm sets a reference point for the second strike with the rear hand (second punch) to the jaw.



After the impact, my arm is retracted again like a piston (third consecutive alternating arm movement). This final arm movement is more than a retraction of the punching arm. I pull it back at the same time as I push my front arm that is acting as a reference point, away from me to maintain the punching range. My retracted arm is both ready to strike again if necessary and also acts a sensible cover of my head area.

Jion – Section 3

The Age Uke (Upper block) Gyaku/Oi Zuki (Reverse/Step Punch) sequence relates to the scenario where I use being grabbed by my opponent to my advantage. The Kata presents explicit choices for how the above punches are executed.



Effective space management has broken down and my opponent has seized my chest/shoulder area so that a strike can be executed with his rear hand. In reaction, I seize the opponent's grabbing arm with my rear hand and secure it in position. The pressure I apply to his hand further allows me to keep a hold of it should he decide to move it, for escape or for another grip.

I immediately step back into front stance utilising my body weight to smash down onto the top of my opponent's upper forearm using the blade of my own forearm. The resultant effect on the opponent allows me to execute Age Uke (upper block) as a strike. His body drops forward, preventing him from attacking and exposes his jaw area. The Age Uke (upper block) is executed as an upward smash and takes the reverse path of my initial forearm drop. To ensure overall effectiveness, the success of the second strike to the head relies on how well the first strike is applied as the first strike acts as a preparatory set up.



If I only use my front arm with little or no body weight behind it, it is unlikely to render the opponent incapable of delivering effective strikes. The hard and fast shifting of my weight backwards and downwards (even though into a front stance), gives me the mechanical advantage over my opponent required so that they bend at the knees with no ground from which to strike. From this position, I drive my body weight forwards as I thrust my front forearm upwards, smashing through his neck/jaw area.



The explicit choices introduced earlier relate to the follow up strikes available after the upward forearm smash (Age Uke). Immediately after striking, I take the opportunity to seize the rear of my opponent's neck, setting a reference point for an on the spot strike with the rear hand (gyaku zuki). A follow up punch can be executed whilst stepping towards the opponent, e.g. as he reels back or, through the sheer forward drive and aggression on my part.

Jion – Section 3 continued

The first two Age Uke (upper block) combinations in the sequence precedes a Gyaku Zuki (reverse punch), one on each side of the body. The third Age Uke (upper block) combination in the sequence, replaces the Gyaku Zuki (reverse punch) with an Oi Zuki (step punch) on one side of the body. The Kata need not include the Age Uke (upper block) and Oi Zuki (step punch) combination on both sides of the body since the Oi Zuki (step punch) is a sequel to the Gyaku Zuki (reverse punch) and therefore implies its application to both sides of the body.

Jion – Section 4

At this point, the Kata introduces combinations of techniques performed from different stances. This is important as it is the transition from one stance to the other that ensures the effectiveness of the techniques. This principle is prevalent in the middle Section of the Kata. The middle Section consists of two mirrored pairs of Manji Uke (angular block) combinations. In the first pair, Manji Uke (angular block) in Kokutsu Dachi (black stance) is followed by Kage Zuki (hook punch) in Kiba Dachi (straddle stance) and in the second pair, Manji Uke (angular block) is followed up by Jodan Morote Uchi Uke (upper level assisted inside block) in Heisoku Dachi (attention stance).



This is the next example of how the Kata Jion covers “what if” scenarios through the effective use of choices. In each of the pairs, alternative secondary techniques are applied based on the level of effectiveness of the initial Manji Uke (angular block).

The Manji Uke (angular block) is used as a control of the opponent’s head and given that they will react instinctively, implies that his response is narrowed down to one or two possibilities.

In the first case, Manji Uke (angular block) has been applied in a way such that the opponent has turned his head away from the direction in which his front arm is being pulled. This is an advantageous position for me as it allows a choke to be applied as a follow up finisher.

Manji Uke (angular block) controls my opponent’s head through my lower most arm securing a grip on his wrist whilst pulling down and away from his head. Simultaneously, my higher arm is used to crank his head away from my other arm. I execute this in



Kokutsu Dachi (back stance) as the extra body weight on my back foot aids in securing my higher arm position and takes my opponent’s weight from being centered, to off balance. This dual action can only be sustained for a short period as his instinctive response is to grasp my higher arm and peel it away from his face. The advantage that I have gained is maintained by my transitioning to a centered position applying a choke with my higher arm. I release his wrist with my lowest arm and use it to assist my higher arm. Transitioning to straddle stance, allows me to place my chest flush with my opponent’s back and sink the blade of my choking arm under his chin, obstructing the air flow through his windpipe. My body positioning

and placement of the choking arm are the two most important success factors in applying an effective choke. In the picture, I have taken up the final stance with my legs almost straight. This is a transition position to allow me to attain correct preparation before applying the choke. In application, my body weight is dropped back by flexing my knees so that my opponent’s balance is broken and his downward weight adds to the upward pressure I apply in the choke.

Jion – Section 4 continued

Consider now the case where in reaction to Manji Uke (angular block), my opponent instinctively turns away from my higher arm in an attempt to oppose my emphasis, as pictured below. Here I cannot apply a choke effectively. However, this situation does present me with the opportunity to apply a different technique, a face bar. To gain this position, my higher forearm makes contact with his cheekbone area and my other arm is used to secure the hold and apply further pressure. This is the application of Jodan Morote Uchi Uke (upper level assisted inside block) performed in Heisoku Dachi (attention stance). I apply this whilst standing tall. My body weight is dropped by flexing my knees breaking my opponent's balance. His body weight, through downward pressure, augments the effectiveness of the upward pressure I apply in the face bar. The face bar, although extremely painful, is not a finishing technique in itself, but does provide me with a mechanical advantage in the application of the last technique in the sequence. Ryowan Gedan Barai (double downward block) is executed directly after the Jodan Morote Uchi Uke (upper level assisted inside block). To apply this, I seize his head or shoulder area and pull him off balance completely so that an escape can be made. The Kata Jion presents the completed technique in Heisoku Dachi (attention stance), so pictured below is the transition movement that forces my opponent onto the spike of my front knee before it is moved alongside my rear foot for escape.



Note that my lower arm that controls his wrist is used to secure the face bar. The same arm is swung in a hooking motion so that the crook of my elbow can be grasped by my other hand, as if applying a strangle. This preparatory movement appears in the Kata as a strong fast movement in preparation for the Jodan Morote Uchi Uke (upper level assisted inside block).

In summary, the above Section highlights that Kata Jion which includes two mirrored sets of Manji Uke (angular block) combinations allows opportunities for different follow up techniques to be applied based on the instinctive reactions of my opponent when Manji Uke (angular block) is applied as a controlling technique.

Jion – Section 5

As with Section 4, this Section describes further choices that the Kata Jion presents. This time, the principle opening up the choices differs from that previously covered. Previously the premise for these choices lay within the instinctive behaviour of my opponent in response to my seeking a combative advantage (Manji Uke). In this Section, the presented choices show how I can respond should my first technique not be applied effectively. Many factors contribute to the success of a technique, and it is assumed that the resultant effect is insufficient for escape/gaining an advantage, and a recovery is required. The use of this in the Kata Jion highlights with sufficient scope why choices occur in combat.

Of relevance here are the two sets of three identical techniques that succeed each separate Gedan Barai (downward block) present in the Kata. In the first instance, Gedan Barai (downward block) precedes three Taisho Uchi (palm heel strike) in Kiba Dachi (straddle stance). In the second instance, Gedan Barai precedes three Hiza Geri (knee kick), Otoshi Uke (falling block) combinations. Performed also is Kiba Dachi (straddle stance). In each case, the Gedan Barai (downward block) is executed in Zenkutsu Dachi (front stance).

The primary technique is Gedan Barai (downward block) and is sought to be applied as a way of creating and maintaining an advantage so that an effective follow up strike can be executed. The advantage is gained mechanically avoiding my strength relative to my opponent's strength becoming a limiting factor for success. In one version of the combinations, it is assumed that the Gedan Barai (downward block) has worked as intended and the finishing technique is applied. The other version of the combination includes an alternative but effective follow up to which was given in the first version. However I purposely disengage from applying Gedan Barai (downward block) at the point where I realise that it isn't working to my advantage.

Jion – Section 5 continued



Gedan Barai (downward block) is applied from an initial clash of arms during the altercation. My first priority is to grab his wrist with the clashing arm and drive my other forearm up and onto the back of his arm above his elbow joint. I do this whilst stepping around, to his blind side with my back foot, simultaneously pulling his seized arm to my rear hip. My forearm makes a downward arc whilst I twist my pulling hand so that his elbow faces upwards. Applied correctly, my opponent will find it difficult to defend against this technique because of the continually changing angle of pressure I place on his arm. Ideally he will end up doubled over so that I can apply the finishing strike. However, if at the point of

my moving his arms into position I feel that the mechanical advantage is not sufficient for effective control, I can disengage from the technique. Suddenly opposing the direction of my initial movement, and thus moving in a direction that they apply pressure, I step towards my opponent into Kiba Dachi (straddle stance) and deliver the Taisho Uchi (palm heel strike) as a slap to his jaw. As I begin to disengage from the downward motion, I use my lead arm to trap his against my body and release my grip on his wrist to deliver the strike.



Consider the optimal case where Gedan Barai (downward block) is effectively applied and my opponent is doubled over, I secure him in position using my nearest hand and use the Hiza Geri (knee kick) to his face and Otoshi Uke (falling block) as the finishing strikes. The Otoshi Uke (falling block) is executed with the blade of my forearm to the back of his neck. This may also force his head downwards onto the grounded knee used in the kick.



Jion – Section 5 continued

In summary, this Section included the same principles as outlined in the previous Section in that the Kata takes two identical controlling techniques (downward block) and gives two different follow up finishes based on the outcome of the controlling technique.

In Section 4, the Manji Uke (angular block) is the control and the two alternative follow ups differ based on how the Manji Uke (angular block) is applied. In this Section, however, the alternative follow ups vary based on the initial Gedan Barai (downward block) control simply working or not. In this case, a new advantage is gained after Gedan Barai (downward block) is aborted.

Jion – Section 6

The next Section of the Kata is a four technique combination performed along the North - South line of the embusen (Kata format) with no repetition. However, within the combination, explicit choices are presented.

The first technique in the combination is Hiza Geri (knee kick) with both hands chambered on my hips, which precedes a Gedan Juji Uke (lower cross arm block) in Kosa Dachi (reverse cat stance/cross stance). From here Kosa Dachi is transformed into Zenkutsu Dachi (front stance) by stepping back and executing Ryowan Gedan Barai (double downward block). Next I step forward into Zenkutsu Dachi (front stance) again and execute Ryowan Uchi Uke (double inside block). As a standalone Kata, the first three techniques in the combination are grouped together and are performed in quick succession. After a brief pause, the fourth technique is performed. When applied, both the step backwards into the double Gedan Barai and the step forwards into double Uchi Uke are executed from the Gedan Juji Uke in Kosa Dachi. The fact that the Kata does not repeat Gedan Juji Uke is irrelevant, as this would be overstating the point and not in conformance with the concept of how Kata records combative principles.

My interpretation of this part of the Kata, again revolves around the notion that my opponent will make instinctive responses when under pressure of my attack, the attack being Hiza Geri (knee kick) and Gedan Juji Uke (lower cross hand block).



Hiza Geri (knee kick) is executed at close quarters with my opponent. I'm using both my hands to seize his lower or upper arms as I sink my knee into his groin area. This works particularly well when hand striking range rapidly degenerates to knee and elbow range and the momentum of his body shift can be utilised (by the pulling of him) to aid the knee kick. Techniques executed at this range will usually regress into grappling range as both bodies clash. Here the Kata Jion explicitly shows us that an advantageous position can still be achieved. By dropping my body weight forward and down, similar to a tackle used in Rugby Football, I can take control of my opponent by clasping my hands together (one hand seizing the wrist of my other arm) behind his back and under his arms – the Juji Uke (lower cross arm block).

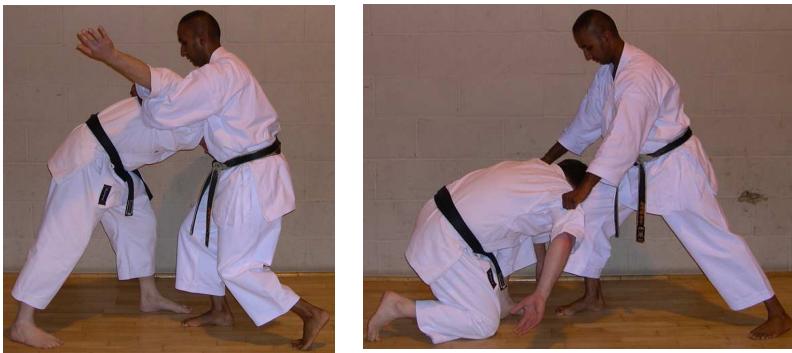
My grounding is secured by using Kosa Dachi (reverse cat stance/cross stance) as this not only provides stability but also allows me to easily move my body weight in either a forward or backward direction.

It is from this position that the Kata Jion gives me the two choices.



Jion – Section 6 continued

When driving forward to achieve this controlling position, it is usual for my opponent to oppose my momentum and try to force me backwards. I turn this to my advantage by using his force to aid in pulling him onto the spike of my front stance. The Ryowan Gedan Barai (double downward block) motion is used in seizing my opponent's arms directly from the Gedan Juji Uke (lower cross arm block) position.



Conversely, if when the Gedan Juji Uke (lower cross arm block) is applied with forward drive and aggression, I find myself receiving minimal resistance from my opponent. Then I continue to capitalise on this advantage by continuing the drive forward and performing the Ryowan Uchi Uke (double inside block). This takes the form of another controlling technique at grappling range. However this position does allow me to trap my opponent's head under one of my arms and apply a neck crank, forcing his chin hard onto his chest (see reverse angle pictured below). The control is achieved by hooking my arms underneath his upper arms so that the bend in my elbows are pinning his arms from returning to a position of control. The front stance helps in executing the forward drive required to secure and maintain the position. Again, although this position is not a finisher, effective strikes are enabled through my advantage. Prime candidates in this situation are knee kicks with the rear leg as originally intended in the preceding attack.



Jion – Section 7

From a Kata performance perspective this Section leads on from the last in that the techniques are executed by stepping forward again after the last Ryowan Uchi Uke (double inside block). The technique itself is Jodan Juji Uke (upper cross arm block) followed by three arm techniques, where no stepping or stance change is made. In each of the three cases, both my arms are moving to new positions and are executed in front stance (for simplicity, it is assumed the left is the rear arm and the right is the front arm):

- Age Uke (upper block) with the rear arm and Tate Ura Zuki (vertical close punch) with the front arm.
- Gyaku Zuki (reverse punch) with the rear arm and Nagashi Uke (sweeping block) with the front arm.
- Tate Ura Zuki (vertical close punch) with front arm and supported with the rear hand.

Again, the Kata Jion here presents me with explicit choices in that each of the above three technique positions is executed from the initial Jodan Juji Uke (upper cross arm block). Keeping in mind that Kata records and demonstrates combative principles through a series of techniques, it goes against the grain to assume that each of the above techniques is executed as a series of consecutive, chaotic attacks. Another important factor is the fact that each of the three techniques requires differing emphasis and together implies that they are to be executed as separate attacks and not in succession.

The Jodan Juji Uke (upper cross arm block) is used as a starting point from which to execute any of the above three techniques and specifically deals with its use from within a clinch. The clinch in this case differs from that of Section 1 in that this clinch is not close enough to reach grappling range . Rather, being at striking range allows hand techniques to be executed at arms length. A common scenario that occurs at this range of fighting is depicted by my opponent seizing my collar or clothing in an attempt to pin me at this range (stiff arming as it's sometimes known). An advantage is gained by either breaking this range (in which case another technique is still required) or delivering effective strikes at the current range. Among the three techniques above, these success factors are addressed explicitly and separately.

The initial Jodan Juji Uke (upper cross arm block) is used in the clinch as reciprocal control to manage the distance between myself and my opponent. My front hand is used to seize my opponent's clothing or neck and the wrist of my other hand is placed firmly against my front forearm forming an "X" shape. Keeping my arms in this position allows me to use my front arm as a control and reference point for my rear hand to strike (as pictured) and aid in the control where necessary.



Jion – Section 7 continued

The first of the three aforementioned techniques is executed in the case where I break the stalemate between my opponent and myself, and manage to seize his right arm and peel it away from me and upwards allowing a follow up Ura Zuki (upper cut) strike with my front hand. Both my arm movements in this combination are executed as all out explosive movements. Ura Zuki (upper cut) cannot be effectively executed whilst both my opponent's arms obstruct the path to his chin. My initial movement is to rip off his right hand from my body - away and upwards. This will only really be achieved if the move is executed like a strike itself, rather than resorting to brute strength. The element of surprise through my explosiveness and aggression contributes massively to breaking the deadlock. As shown below from both oblique angles.



Note that the initial arms length fighting range is broken during the seizing of his arm so that the follow up strike is executed at a closer range. This is the range the technique requires for effectiveness.

The second combination of the three, encompasses the same principle of having to engineer a suitable position through a primary technique so that I can deliver the secondary finishing strike. The arms that are used for primary and secondary techniques are reversed. In order to set up a Gyaku Zuki (reverse punch) my front arm is used to sweep my opponent's left arm away from me. My resultant sweeping arm position not only allows me to deliver the left strike effectively (pictured as a palm heel strike) but also acts as a valuable cover of the side of my head and body should he try and grab/strike again.



Note that this particular combination engineers a position where my follow up strike is delivered from arms length. The primary technique allows me to exploit that range and leaves me in a good position to deliver further strikes if necessary or to disengage altogether for an escape.

Jion – Section 7 continued

The third and final technique in this section uses a different way to break the range stalemate and close it rapidly again with a primary arm movement allowing a secondary strike. The primary arm movement is a hard flat downward motion using my rear arm. The blade of my forearm is used to smash both my opponent's arms just below each elbow joint. Executed with the appropriate emphasis and power, not only will it break down the arms length range, but in doing so will throw my opponent's shoulders and head forward towards me, exposing his chin which is then the target for my front arm follow up Ura Zuki (upper cut).



Note the closeness of the range at which my finishing strike is executed. Since my opponent's arms are trapped under my rear arm, after the strike is delivered my striking arm can be used to seize the back of his head or neck allowing me to execute further strikes. I can also ground him however, by pushing hard downwards with both my arms.

In this and the previous section, the Kata Jion provides a means of applying different attacking techniques from a single referencing technique. However, the Kata is not over engineered as to repeat that referencing technique before every alternative. The Kata includes the referencing technique once and follows onto the various alternatives as consecutive techniques that naturally flow.

Jion – Section 8

This Section focuses on the third set of paired techniques executed at right angles to the main North – South direction in the Kata embusen (as in the Manji Uke combinations). Here the two techniques are Uchi Uke (inside block) followed by Oi Zuki (step punch). As with Manji Uke (angular block) combinations in Section 4, it was important to execute techniques at the angle in which they appear in the Kata. In order to gain a functional advantage, the Manji Uke (angular block) was executed by turning almost behind my opponent. In the Kata Jion, the Uchi Uke (inside block) is best delivered when I am at an angle to my opponent. The Kata repeats the same two techniques on the other side of the centre line showing not only that it can be applied to both sides of the body, but also showing the wide scope of the technique's function and principles. In the case of Uchi Uke (inside block) Oi Zuki (step punch), many effective bunkai can be interpreted. However, in keeping with the ethos and character that the Kata Jion exudes, I'll show two different applications, using similar principles captured in the rest of the Kata.



The first Uchi Uke (inside block) combination is executed using the same principles as the Age Uke (upper block), Oi Zuki (step punch) as detailed in Section 3 in that the preparation of the block is used as a set up for the actual finishing technique. In response to my opponent seizing my lapel, my rear hand secures his grabbing hand. The preparatory forearm smash is used to unbalance my opponent and bring his chin down and forward exposing his neck area where I smash him again with the same forearm across and onto the neck keeping my elbow pointing downwards and my fist upwards. The same arm is easily moved to grab the back of his head and set a reference point for my driving rear hand step punch to the jaw.



This is not to be seen as merely repeating a previous interpretation and just changing the actual block. It is important to note that the Uchi Uke (inside block) combination appears in the Kata to highlight that there are other ways and choices on how to apply the same principle and that they need not be complicated.

The Kata shows these Uchi Uke (inside block) combinations late on in the Kata as a follow up to the Age Uke (upper block) combination to show the progression in the underlying principles. This can be seen by the fact that the Uchi Uke (inside block) is followed up by only a Oi Zuki (step punch) and does not explicitly show it paired with a Gyaku Zuki (reverse punch) since that point about choices has been covered previously in the Age Uke (upper block) combination.

Jion – Section 8 continued



The second Uchi Uke (inside block) combination is executed using principles similar to that of the Kosa Uke (cross block) detailed in Section 1. In that Section, the Uchi Uke (inside block) component of the Kosa Uke (cross block) was used as the striking technique and the Gedan Barai (downward block) portion used as a control/aid.

In this Section, Uchi Uke (inside block) is executed in a similar way except that the controlling arm is the one that is usually chambered with the hand on the rear hip. I've seized my opponent's arm and secured it around my side pulling as I approach with the other arm around the back of his head, grabbing his nose/face. To execute the actual Uchi Uke (inside block) I drive the elbow of my preparatory arm down hard onto his neck area whilst cranking his head around so my hand finishes at a higher point than my elbow.



The forward stepping motion of this Uchi Uke (inside block) enables this. All the time I keep a securing hold of his seized arm. I aim to not only unbalance him but also to ensure that he is not able to use his "free" hand to strike. The resultant Uchi Uke (inside block) arm is ideally placed to set a reference point for the follow up Oi Zuki (step punch) as seen previously.

Note that this Uchi Uke (inside block) combination is an alternative version of the Uchi Uke (inside block) shown at the start of the Kata. In that Section, the Uchi Uke (inside block) was shown as a component movement within a technique where the primary focus was escape. In this Section, Uchi Uke (inside block) was used solely so that a follow up finishing strike can be applied. That finishing strike was a basic step punch that forms the basis of Karate as an effective combat system.

Jion – Section 9

In this final Section, I address the final set of mirrored techniques, executed at right angles to the main centre line in the Kata embusen (as previously seen). However, only one technique is executed in each direction. Yumi Zuki (lateral punch) is executed at a relatively slowed pace under dynamic tension.

Slow techniques appear in Kata for reasons relevant to combat. They serve as a reminder that when applied, the extra resistance received from the opponent will mean that the technique will be invariably executed at a slower pace than the usual fast strikes. Slow techniques are not soft and weak techniques. The technique still require power and aggression as with any combative attack. For example, many throws and locks are commonly executed as slow techniques in Kata but require speed, aggression and a degree of strength to execute them effectively.

The Yumi Zuki (lateral punch) is executed at 90° to its previous technique signifying that I apply it at 90° to my opponent. The Kata repeats the same technique on the other side of the Kata showing not only that it can be applied to both sides of the body, but also highlights the wide functional scope of the technique.

Note that with Yumi Zuki (lateral punch), the rear pulling hand (*hikite*) is prescriptively held at shoulder height. This is important since most punches and techniques are performed with the pulling hand chambered on the rear hip, and when we apply these techniques we loosely define the function of that hand as a way of controlling the opponent in order to deliver the strike. Usually our hand will not reach our hip in application but it in most cases, will be tending towards the hip. In other cases it is quite likely that our rear hand will stay at shoulder height. With this in mind, when applying Yumi Zuki (lateral punch) the rear hand must always tend towards the shoulder area, otherwise why would it appear that way in the Kata? We will see in the following two applications of Yumi Zuki (lateral punch) that it is the positioning of the rear hand on the shoulder that forms the key to ensuring that it is applied effectively.

Jion – Section 9 continued

In the first case, I've managed to seize my opponent's leading wrist with my rear hand so that I can step around to his blind side, away from his striking range. As I do so, turning sideways, I shoot my leading arm under his and secure a tight hold of the back of his neck.



My intention is to apply a lock at his head and shoulder, using my seizing arm as the lever. As soon as his neck has been secured I apply the lock by pushing his head away from me. The lock is applied by straightening my leading arm, and applying downward pressure on his head.



I try to obtain as much distance between us as I straighten my arm and at the same time keep his seized wrist high and level with his shoulder. Lowering his wrist has a detrimental mechanical effect on the lock. I gain the distance as I step back away from my opponent with my rear elbow up high as an Archer draws back his arrow in an abbreviated Kiba Dachi (straddle stance). Once the lock is applied I can use a full length Kiba Dachi (straddle stance) as the way of delivering a knee strike to his front leg.

In the second application of Yumi Zuki (lateral punch) I use a similar approach, in that his lead wrist is seized with my rear hand. This time I shoot my leading arm above his and



drive my forearm under his chin forcing his head backwards. His seized arm is barred against my chest, since my body is positioned side ways on to him. Again to ensure effectiveness I keep his seized wrist up high, level with his shoulder.

Kiba Dachi (straddle stance) adds to the effectiveness of this technique, serving as a trip wire as I lever his head backwards and force him over my leading leg, all the time applying the arm bar across my chest.

In summary, the above locks are applied with a steady but progressive force and requires me to lock the position of my body in order to generate required force. These are not explosive movements, as they will be met by a similar resistance from the opponent. Only if a mechanical advantage is sought over my opponent, can the lock be expected to work effectively. This advantage is maintained by securing his seized wrist at shoulder height.

Conclusion

To conclude, the above Sections show how the Kata Jion, through the analysis of the techniques and principles therein provide realistic applications to combat. The need to adapt techniques during combat is addressed within the Kata.

Understanding the principles upon which the techniques contained in the Kata Jion are based, is the first step in deriving benefit from practicing Kata.

In terms of progression, the next step is to practice the above techniques within a training scenario to enable the techniques to be exercised under increasing pressure. Live drills can be used to test the exponent with minimal compliance from the opponent.

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