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Starting with the Basics Part 3

This third and final article focuses on the basic techniques of Sports Aikido and covers two sections of basic techniques, the Tekubi or wrist techniques comprising four applications and the final section of three techniques making up the Uke or floating section.

The main purpose of the techniques developed by Kenji Tomiki was to promote freeplay application and competition, the system has developed a range of practice to act as a step change between learning techniques in kata (sequence form) to ultimately performing in full contact Randori.

Kakarigeiko is the first level of randori training and emphasizes the principle of Go-no-Sen. This is performed without resistance by Uke who performs a meaningful attack but then allows Tori to execute technique. The techniques are executed in a random fashion, with Tori (thrower) selecting the most appropriate response to the attack. Kakarigieko should be performed with high intensity and dynamic movement. Remembering that Go-no-Sen is a concept where defender takes the initiative away from an opponent after they have attacked. This is the opposite of Sen-no-Sen where Tori takes the initiative away from the opponent prior to the attack.

Hikitegeiko is the second level of randori training and utilizes both combinations and counters during an interchange of techniques. Amounts of resistance between Tori and their opponent can be variable. This means that the identified roles of Tori and Uke are no longer valid. That the roles are interchangeable, with both players defending and attacking at random. This type of practice should also be fast moving and dynamic, it is a learning exercise rather than a form of full contact.

Randori is practised to higher grade. This is almost full contact with both practitioners attempting to use their skill to overcome their opponent. As the grade level increases, practitioners will be expected to show a greater range of combination and counter techniques, practised with increasing levels of resistance. To keep within the overall philosophy of Aikido the focus will be to use avoiding action to promote movement.

Shiai or full competitive contest randori is the ultimate test of throwing ability. The opponent uses everything at their disposal to overcome the opponent. There is still an emphasis on movement and avoidance with the promotion of open more flowing technical applications whilst applying Go-no-Sen and Sen-no-Sen.

As part of standard practice Kakarigieko, Hikitegieko and light randori are usually practised within club settings, Shiai remains the preserve of competition.

The basic kata is the starting point for the development of effective freeplay, where usually younger players are able to apply their skills in a competitive forum.



The 2013 British Mens “A” Randori Team ready to test their skills against Japan “A” in the World Championship Final

From left to right Doyne Ogunbiyi, Phil Hargreaves, Jermain Liburd, Dan Ramsden and Paul Carr. Unfortunately in a tight, well-fought final, it was a draw; the British receiving the silver medal on points difference.

Basic techniques 11 to 14 (Kote Hineri to Shiho Nage)

Kote Hineri (Wrist Turn)



Fig 1(a)



Fig 1(b)



Fig 1 (c)

As the opponent attacks with Shomen Ate (open handed upper cut) avoid back left and take the forearm with both hands ensuring the opponent is pinned on the lead right foot. (Fig 1a) Tori allows their right-hand slip down and take the hand and fingers. (Fig 1b) Using a rotational movement break the opponent's balance. Place the left hand on the elbow and drive to the floor. Make sure the wristlock is maintained at all times. (Fig 1c)

Kote Gaeshi (Wrist twist)



Fig 2 (a)



Fig 2 (b)

As in the previous technique, absorb the attack by moving back and to your left, catching the forearm and pinning the opponent on the front foot. (Fig 2a)
Take the arm downward and step to the right breaking the opponent's balance across their weak line (Fig 2b)



Fig 2 (c)



Fig 2 (d)

Change your handgrip by placing your thumbs on the back of your opponent's hand. (Fig 2c) Rotate the hand anti clockwise whilst maintaining the hold at belt height (Fig 2d)



Fig 2 (e)

Use the twisting wrist and body movement to execute the throw (Fig 2e)



Adrian Tipling 5th Dan performing Kote Gaeshi in the 2003 World Championships.

Tenkai Kote Hineri (Rotational wrist turn)



Fig 3(a)



Fig 3(b)



Fig 3(c)



Fig 3(d)

Avoid the initial attack by moving to the left taking the opponent's forearm as in (Fig 3a). Ensure Uke is off balance and their right leg is pinned. Maintain posture and go under opponent arm turning anticlockwise and applying wristlock as in figures (Fig 3b) and (Fig 3c). Using the lock make a cutting action driving the elbow downward. Once opponents balance is fully compromised return to front as in (Fig 3d). Apply wristlock and pressure to opponent's elbow until they are secured on the ground.

Shiho Nage (Four direction throw)



Fig 4(a)



Fig 4(b)



Fig 4(c)



Fig 4(d)

From a Shomen Ate attack avoid to the right maintaining right posture. Catch opponent's forearm as in (Fig 4a) and rotate the arm breaking balance as in (Fig 4b). Ensure rotation on the wrist and elbow as in (Fig 4c) keeping opponent's wrist in your centre. Step forward with left leg, whilst keeping hands at belt height step under opponents arm. Once under, rotate body clockwise and drive opponent's arm over their shoulder as in (Fig 4d). Slide forward maintaining right posture and throw opponent to the mat.

Basic techniques 15 to 17 (Mae Otoshi to Uke Otoshi)

Mae Otoshi (Forward drop)



Fig 5 (a)



Fig 5 (b)



Fig 5 (c)

The initial entry for Mae Otoshi is as last technique, avoiding to right (Fig 5a) and breaking opponent's balance (Fig 5b). Rotate arm using the wrist and maintain control.

At this point step forward with left leg and drive body weight forward applying pressure and rotation to the elbow. Continue movement until opponent performs a forward break fall. (Fig 5c)

Sumi Otoshi (Corner drop)



Fig 6 (a)



Fig 6 (b)



Fig 6 (c)

Avoid attack to the left whilst stepping into right posture. Catch attacking arm with right hand above left (Fig 6a). Drive forwards with left leg pushing opponent's arm to their back left corner (Fig 6b), breaking balance and causing the opponent to break fall (Fig 6c)



Dan Ramsden 3rd Dan GB National Team attempting Sumi Otoshi in randori competition.



Shaun Hoddy 6th Dan demonstrating the same technique (Sumi Otoshi) using a wooden staff (Jo)

Uke Otoshi (Pulling Drop)



Fig 7 (a)



Fig 7 (b)



Fig 7 (c)

Uke Otoshi is similar to the first technique of Judo's Nage-no-Kata. The opponent attacks with open handed uppercut Shomen Ate. Avoid to the right and catch the attacking arm at wrist and elbow as in (Fig 7a). Pull to break opponent's balance to the front using rotation on the arm at the elbow to enhance the technique (Fig 7b). Drop your weight to the rear and throw, opponent making a break fall for safety (fig 7c)



Garrett Baxter 4th Dan throwing Phil Hargreaves with Uke Otoshi, Laura Beardsmore (current British Team Co- Manager) and Dan Ramsden looking on.

Counters - Tenkai Kote Hineri with Waki Gatame



Fig 8 (a)



Fig 8 (b)



Fig 8 (c)



Fig 8 (d)

Opponent makes Tenkai Kote Hineri (Fig 8a) and (Fig 8b). As they turn under arm to apply lock, step round and strike Shomen Ate with left arm to halt progress of the technique. (Fig8c). Take opponent's left arm and applying Waki Gatame. There is a rather unusually locking method with right hand pulling toward opponent and left arm pushing away locking wrist as in (Fig 8e).



Fig 8 (e)

Combinations - Kote Gaeshi into Shomen Ate



Fig 9 (a)



Fig 9 (b)



Fig 9 (c)

Begin by applying Kote Gaeshi (already described). (Fig 9a) and (Fig 9b) When the point of execution or Kake is reached there is resistance by the opponent when they attempt to pull away. Work with the movement and whilst still applying a wristlock strike the head and apply Shomen Ate (Fig9c). Continue to push until opponent falls backwards onto the mat.

Basics are the building blocks of all martial arts practice; they should be used to instil accurate technique. If the basics are sound then the opportunity to build effective and efficient technique and skilful performance is unlimited. If this becomes second nature and embedded into everyday practice then high quality should follow. Good basics means good application means good practice means good Aikido.

Photographs by Geoff Allen and Mark Cheevers

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