

To AJKA-International  
AJKA-I of PA  
Instructor Trainee's Report #18

**Subject: "Striking Techniques"**

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Striking techniques or uchi waza operate with an action similar to the snap of a whip. As oppose to thrusting techniques where the elbow and upper arm punches or thrusts the fist towards the target, striking techniques uses the shoulder and elbow as pivot points of circular whipping motions. Shoulder rotation in combination with the bending and straightening action of the elbow joint is used to make weapons of the various parts of the karate-ka's fist and hand. Striking techniques can be used for attacks, as well as, blocking.

Some of the most common strikes are:



### URAKEN - (Back fist)

Uraken-uchi is the most basic of the strikes. From a tightly bent arm the fist is quickly lashed outward and after making contact with the opponent it is snapped back to its original bent position. Uraken is formed in the same way as Seiken the striking area being the back of the hand and the tops of the knuckles of the index and middle fingers. The strike is performed by snapping the forearm out from the elbow, either horizontally from the chest, or up and striking downwards. This technique is used in many Kata's including

Heian Sandan, Kanku-Dai and Sochin, also it is widely used in Kumite. It is a versatile technique that can be used to strike to the body or head, or to block an incoming punch as in Heian Nidan.

Uraken-uchi can be applied when confronted with an attack from the side. For example if the attack was coming from the karate-ka's or defenders left side the defender would draw their left fist to their chest pointing the elbow to the target, because where the elbow points the hand hits! The defender strikes the attacker's face with the back part of the fist.

### **TETTSUI - (Hammer fist)**

Tettsui is formed in the same way as Seiken, but the striking area is the soft pad at the bottom of the fist. The attack is made by snapping the forearm from the elbow, either up and over or from the chest in an arc parallel to the ground. Found in a great many Shotokan Kata's including, Heian Shodan, Heian Sandan and Bassai Dai it is a powerful strike which can be directed to any part of the body. It can be used singly as in Heian Shodan, or with both hands as in Bassai Dassai Dai where the hands attack from either side with the palms up, this is called Tettsui Hasami uchi.

## **OPEN HAND TECHNIQUES - KAISHO**

### **SHUTO -KNIFE HAND**

Probably the most famous of all Karate strikes, commonly known as the "Karate Chop". Shuto is formed by holding the hand open with the fingers held tightly together, the thumb bent at the joint and pressed against the side of the palm. The striking area used in this technique is the soft pad below the little finger, the hand coming from the opposite shoulder area, the non blocking hand covering the solar plexus with the palm facing up. (Shuto uke). Shuto can be used to block (UKE) or strike (UCHI) in many ways.

### **SHUTO UCHI - (Knife hand strike)**

Shuto uchi has several variations:

#### **MAWASHI SHUTO UCHI - (Circular knife hand strike)**

This technique can be performed from the outside inwards with the palm facing upwards (Shuto soto Mawashi-uchi) or from the inside outwards with the palm facing down (Shuto Uchi Mawashi-Uchi). The technique comes from head height, traveling parallel to the ground to the target, normally the side of the neck or temple.

#### **HAITO - (Ridge hand)**

Haito can be used as a block (UKE) or a strike (UCHI) in much the same way as Shuto, except that the striking area on the hand is on the opposite side from Shuto. The striking

area extends from slightly below the base of the index finger to the first joint of the thumb. Haito Uchi striking the attackers face, neck and other soft tissue areas. Haito is not found in the lower grade Kata's, but makes its appearances in Kata's such as "Jitte" and "Unsu"

### **HAISHU - (Back Hand)**

Haishu is formed the same as Shuto except that the striking area is the entire back of the hand. This technique is found in the Kata's "Heian Godan, Tekki Shodan and Nijushiho". Although rarely used in Kihon or Kumite, Haishu is used mainly for Blocking, but can be used as a strike to the solar plexus or behind the ear.

### **NUKITE - (Spear Hand)**

There are three types of Nukite, the first is the most common "Shihon Nukite" which utilizes four fingers. In this technique the tips of the first three fingers form a fairly level surface, necessitating a slight bend in the middle finger. The hand is held with the thumb at the top, it is then used to strike targets such as the solar plexus, the armpit and the throat. This technique appears in Heian Nidan, Heian Sandan and Kanku Dai and it should be noted that in Sochin it is used with the hand palm up.

### **NIHON NUKITE - (Two finger spear hand)**

Nihon Nukite uses the tips of two fingers as the striking area, usually the middle and index fingers are used. The fingers are spread apart in a "V" shape, in the Kata "Chinte" this hand shape is first used in conjunction with an Uchi Uke (inside block) and then used as a strike to the eyes.

### **IPPON NUKITE - (One finger spear hand)**

Ippon Nukite is formed by having the index finger only pointing forward, supported by the rest of the fingers. This technique is found in the Kata's "Unsu" and "Gojushiho Sho" and is used to attack the eyes and throat.

Other strikes are:

### **WASHIDE - EAGLE HAND**

This hand is formed by bringing the fingers and the thumb together to form a point, so that it resembles a birds beak. It can be used to block an incoming punch, Jodan or Chudan or to strike to such areas as the eyes, throat and other vital points.

### **SEIRYUTO - (Ox-jaw hand)**

Seiryuto is formed by bending the hand sideways at the wrist so that the edge of the hand and it's extension into the wrist form a curve. The edge of the hand is forced forward to

keep this position. Seiryuto can be used to block or strike against the leg or forearm or attacking the face, collarbone etc.

### **KEITO - (chicken head wrist)**

Keito is formed by pushing the hand down from the wrist, the palm facing inward, flex the fingers and the thumb slightly inward. The striking area is the base and the first knuckle of the thumb. This technique can be used to block the opponents arm or attack the armpit with a snapping motion of the forearm. Keito is found in “Unsu”.

### **TEISHO - PALM HEEL**

Teisho is an open handed technique (Keisho) using the base of the palm to either block or strike. The fingers are bent over and both these and the thumb are kept clear of the palm. This technique is very powerful and is used a lot in Kumite and Kata (Jitte and Jion). With Teisho it is possible to strike and block to either soft or hard areas of the opponents body, it can also be used using both hands (Teisho awase uke) utilized in Hangetsu.

A common mistake of performing strikes is the failure to use your hips. For example, there are two hip movements with performing Uraken-uchi. The first is into the target and the second is away from the target. Usually if the karate-ka understands the concept of hip vibration (see Report #13) they can apply it to uraken-uchi and the mistake is avoided.

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