

# Teg

By Patrick McCarthy

Through years of painstaking study in Japan, China, and Southeast Asia, Patrick McCarthy was able to discover, reconstruct, and ultimately revive the practice of tegumi, which was nearly lost in Okinawan karate training. Now that tegumi is resurfacing, it is rapidly becoming the source of intense curiosity as the journey to better understand this ancient art continues to deepen.

## INTRODUCTION

The product of an ambiguous history, karate-do is a diverse yet interrelated tradition woven together by common defensive themes passed down both orally and kinesthetically from one generation to the next. Transmission of this knowledge was embodied in ironclad rituals of secrecy called kata. Consequently, kata has become the time capsule for karate-do's enigmatic heritage. In spite of the intense curiosity that now surrounds kata, few have been able to unravel its innermost secrets.

One of the principal reasons kata remains such a "riddle wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma" is that the original two-man training methods that linked basic technique to defensive application, tegumi, are no longer associated with the modern tradition.

Two-man training methods are still common in many Chinese and Southeast Asian defensive traditions. A common practice in Okinawa's Ryukyu Kingdom period, tegumi nearly disappeared from Okinawan martial arts curriculum. Following the modernization of toudijutsu<sup>2</sup> during the turn of this century, alternative Japanese training methods were developed in an effort to support the tradition's new recreational aims and rule-bound objectives. As modern karate's emphasis shifted to physical fitness, character development, and athletic competition, the older two-man training drills that were the foundations for the defensive themes and brutal applications originally inherent in toudijutsu became

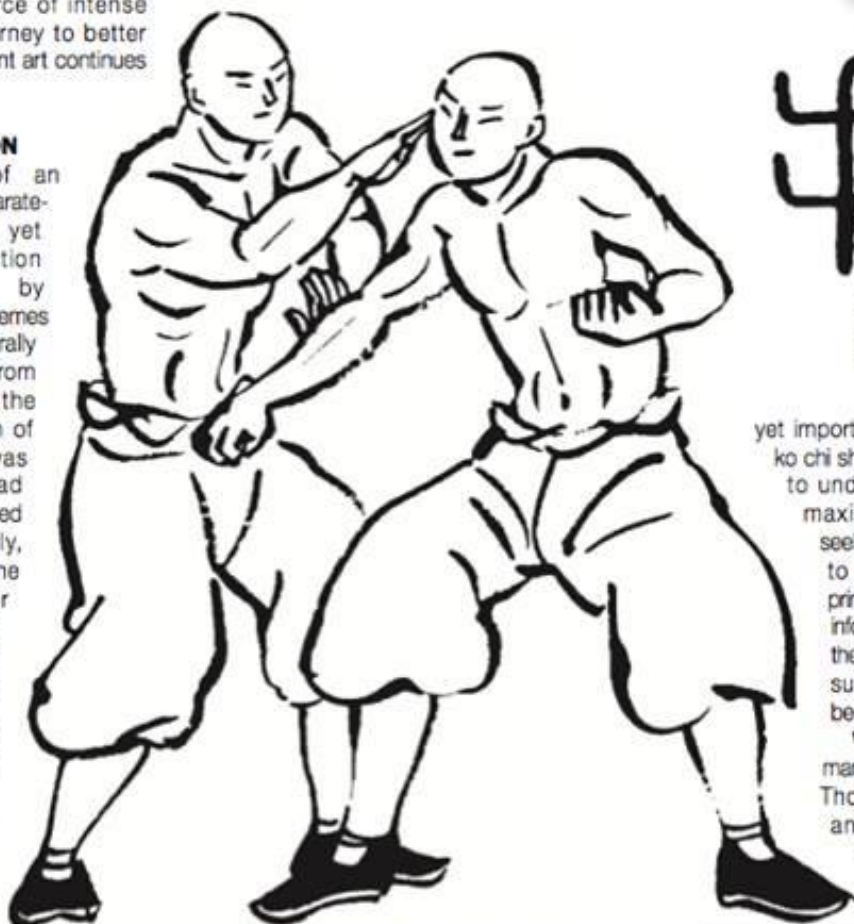


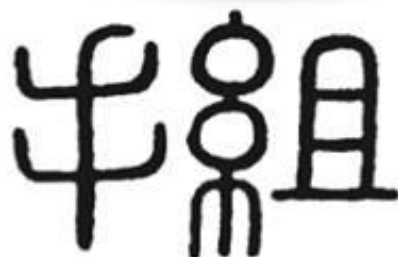
Illustration of Shaolin Bubishi arhats engaging in tegumi arm-trapping practice (illustration courtesy of author)

overshadowed and ultimately obscured by the development of the modern "tradition."

To completely understand the advent, development, and subsequent decline of this once inseparable practice, it is necessary to explore what forces shaped its evolution.

## SEARCHING FOR THE OLD TO UNDERSTAND THE NEW

With no single formula for success, karateka all over the world continue to search for deeper meanings surrounding the mystery that shrouds the defensive themes intertwined within kata. In doing so, there seems to be no end to analyzing the value of cross training and eclectic borrowing from other traditions. Illustrated here is an ancient



Chinese ideograms meaning tegumi (composed by author)

yet important Japanese maxim, "On ko chi shin" ("To search for the old is to understand the new"). This maxim shows us that if one seeks out, studies, and comes to understand the original principles upon which a body of information rests, i.e. karate-do, then comprehending any of its subsequent interpretations becomes purely academic.

When discussing the rituals of man in his book, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, American anthropologist Joseph Campbell told us:

*Every generation*



Master Izumigawa Kanki applying an omote take down from two-man Tegumi practice (photo courtesy of Kinjo Hiroshi)



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A set of three photos showing Konishi Yasuhiro (l) practicing nyumon tegumi with Motobu Choki (r) (photos courtesy of Konishi Takehiro)



produces innovators who, in an effort to keep their ritualized practices a living experience for the people they serve, reinterpret the common principles upon which they rest. By doing so, it is not necessarily new rituals created as it is more innovative ways of imparting the same principle.

My field research took me directly into the culture from whence karate evolved and brought me into contact with many of the martial art's most prominent authorities. The most impressive of these people spoke not of how powerful their ryu-ha was, or of the faults of others, but rather about historical study, common principles, and the inward journey: "What lies behind or before us is nothing compared to what lies within us."

## INDISCRIMINATE LEARNING

It has been said, "kata is karate"; and, moreover, that kata is the only reason karate was ever handed down to this very day. If this is true, and I believe it is, then I can't help but ponder the words of the late Matsubayashi-ryu founder, Nagamine Shoshin, when he asked, "Where is the kata in kumite?" (1990). Kumite is a modern development and a highly demanding athletic practice supported by training methods that reflect its rule-bound aims and competitive objectives. However, by the very nature of its practice, it does not support the defensive themes interwoven throughout kata.

## OBEDIENCE, SEPARATION, DIVERGENCE

In the art of karate, we are taught that for us

to master the tradition it is necessary to first pass through levels of learning. While there are no clearly defined time requirements, old-school training addresses one's physical, philosophical, and spiritual development in a way that corresponds with youth, adulthood, and maturity. Shuhari, a Japanese term that characterizes such a process, maintains that a karateka first learn from tradition before breaking the chains of tradition, to finally transcend the tradition. By doing so, it becomes possible to complete

the circle of learning and arrive back at the doorstep of the tradition to realize its unabridged value. T.S. Eliot wrote: something that reflects this idea perfectly:

*We shall not cease exploration, but at the end of all exploring, we will arrive back at the place from which we started and know it for the very first time" (1934).*

However, some things, such as Shuhari, should only be taught by those who have already made the journey. What is most ironic about this inseparable phenomenon is just how few "qualified" teachers have even heard of it!

A virtual institution in today's embroiled karate community, can indiscriminate learning possibly be the principal source from which such widespread misunderstanding has surfaced? If so, is it limited to just the West or does it exist everywhere, even Okinawa? French philosopher and mathematician Henri Poincaré could have been writing about karate when he wrote in his 1905 work, *The Hypothesis of Mathematics*:

*Science is built upon facts, much in the same way that a house is constructed of brick, but the mere collection of facts is no more a science than a pile of bricks is a house.*

Cannot the same be said of karatedo? What difference does it make what someone is, their length of time in practice, race or nationality, how many trophies they have won, how rough and tough they are, who their teacher is or was, or how many kata they know?

If there is no understanding of the principles upon which karate rests, isn't the



Uechi Kanei demonstrating two-man Tegumi style seizing and kneeling drill (photo courtesy of Uechi Kanei, Shitoryu Kenpo)



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cycle of misunderstanding perpetuated as history repeats itself?

**IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY WAYS YOU TRAIN A ST. BERNARD TO RUN, IT WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO PERFORM LIKE A GREYHOUND.**

— Wally Jay, founder of Small Circle Jujutsu

How many times have you learned a kata but remained unaware of the defensive themes intertwined within its technical myriad? Without its supporting practices (i.e., tegumi), kata has been likened to learning a song in a foreign language: melodic, but its meaning will remain a mystery unless one understands the language in which it is sung.

### RECOGNIZING COMMON PRINCIPLES

During the early years of my martial arts training, I compared and contrasted many of the ritualized practices utilized by a great number of Asian empty-handed defensive traditions. I discovered a shared commonality in technique and defensive application across all of these arts. Challenged by such symmetry, and during a time void of published research surrounding this phenomenon, I redoubled my efforts to better understand how and why numerous techniques and defensive applications could be virtually identical even when the methods through which they were transmitted (kata, jurus, quan, pyongs, sayaws, etc.) remained considerably different.

After deeply studying the works of Donn F. Draeger and Joseph Campbell, I realized what enormous influence anthropological forces have in determining the evolution of man's rituals and traditions. The realization that a defensive tradition was literally a microcosm of the culture from whence it came enabled me to see how diverse factors, like varying customs, language, costume, climate, social ideology, and spiritual conviction, influenced the growth and direction of ritualized practices. These factors were especially influential in the development and perpetuation of the defensive traditions and their respective exercises.

### TEGUMI: HISTORY

Tegumi is a native Okinawan (Hogen) term



A 19th century portrait of Nomino & Taima struggling for grip and position in Tegumi-style grappling (portrait courtesy of Takagaki Ryoze)



A ancient parchment scroll showing two old-school Muay Thai fighters practicing tegumi-style drills (illustration courtesy of Panya Kraitus & Dr. Pitisuk Kraitus)

once used for the plebian form of grappling, allegedly handed down from the combative vestiges of Minamoto Tametomo's (1139-70)' exploits in 12th-century Okinawa. The term is comprised of two Chinese characters (kanji): 1. te ("hand[s]," but also an old local term referring to martial arts), and 2. kumi (an ideogram with several meanings, this one referring to grappling).

Legend maintains that this plebian form of fighting was part of early island society, and ultimately evolved into a ritualized practice dedicated to the gods of heaven and earth for abundant harvests and bountiful catches, much like mainland Japanese sumo. The sheer nature of its brutal practice conjures up images of tegumi as a cultural rite of passage as young men approaching manhood in early Uchina (Hogen for Okinawa) history vigorously embraced it as a test of courage.

Originally, few rules applied to what is now called Okinawan sumo. It employed fierce



Taisho Tegumi grapplers (illustration courtesy of Nagamine Shoshin)

hand and foot exchanges, strangulation techniques, twisting joints, and groundwork. In an effort to make the sport safer, rules were ultimately introduced and, in 1956, those pre-war rules were amended to establish a standard by which the sport continues today.

For generations, Naminoue, Makishiugan, Obon, Kensha, and Shokon festivals at Onoyama Park drew thousands of anxious spectators to watch young athletes brutally compete for top honors in tegumi. Tegumi remained a popular tradition in Okinawa up until the Taisho Period (1911-25). Among the local karateka who actively partook in tegumi were Yabu Kentsu (1863-1937), Hanashiro Chomo (1869-1945), Kyan Chotoku (1870-1945), and Aragaki Ankichi (1899-1929) (Nagamine, 1991).

Tegumi also found its way into the local interpretations of Chinese gongfu (toudijutsu) vigorously embraced during Okinawa's old Ryukyu Kingdom. As difficult as it may be to imagine nowadays, 19th-century Uchinadi, or karate without styles, represented a process by which defensive principles were ultimately realized, rather than the rule-bound or signature practices so common in modern karate-do. The trapping, bumping, grabbing, and deflecting drills once used to establish grip and position in old-style tegumi became a fashionable practice among young 19th-century Uchinadi disciples who sought to better their skills in kakedamashi challenges. Synthesized with existing two-man Uchinadi practices and continually enhanced by corresponding drills introduced from Fujian Province, China, and Southeast Asia, tegumi renzokugeiko ("flow drills") became an indispensable link in the perpetual chain of learning to apply that which was taught through kata.



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*Likeness of two Shaolin Arhats practicing typical Tegumi-style arm conditioning drills (illustration courtesy of Liang Yiquan)*

Imminent karate historian and master instructor Kinjo Hiroshi<sup>1</sup> noted that such drills were virtually unknown within the sport aspect of modern Japanese karate-do, and that only fragments of them were handed down in a handful of modern Okinawan schools. Among the very few Okinawan trailblazers of karate to excel in tegumi was Motobu Choki (1871-1944). While working on the translation of Nagamine Shoshin's book, *The Biographies of Okinawan Karate Masters*, Nagamine Sensei said that Motobu practiced very few kata, not because no one would teach him, but simply because it was not necessary, unlike today's popular but pointless accumulation of many kata

(Nagamine, 1990). Iwae Tsukuo<sup>2</sup> noted that "Motobu believed that when fundamental defensive principles were understood, all one needed were tegumi drills to support their application" (1989). A number of old-time Okinawan martial artists noted that even during Motobu Choki's day, tegumi was slowly fading away. Choki would wonder aloud about his contemporaries: "If they don't understand tegumi, how can they possibly understand kata?" Motobu was called many things in his life, but a poor fighter was never one them; and his record for quickly dispatching many opponents in full-on confrontations clearly speaks for itself.

Kinjo Hiroshi taught me several tegumi drills that Motobu favored. Motobu maintained that men like Kojo Taite (1837-1917), Aragaki Seisho (1840-1920), Xie Zhongxiang (1852-1930; aka, Ryu Ru Ko), Zhou Zhihe (1874-1926), Miao Xing (1881-1939), Wu Xianhui (1886-1940; aka, Gokenki), Tang Daiji (1887-1937), Higashionna Kanryo (1853-1917), Kiyoda Juhatsu (1886-1967), and Uechi Kambun (1877-1948) taught the inseparable hooking, pushing, bumping, trapping, and deflecting two-man drills that make up tegumi. Moreover, he also described such drills as an integral part of a larger whole, painful to practice, often resulting in superficial injury,

and closely guarded secrets overlooked by modern karate.

Nearly a decade of field research in Japan, China, and Southeast Asia have allowed me to experience a myriad of two-man drills and practices, all of which facilitate the development and understanding of the applications of defensive technique. Based upon the results of this comparative research, and combined with the lack of corresponding Okinawan practices, I formulated several important deductions as to why there had been a gradual decline in the practice of tegumi as part of karatedo. I believe tegumi practice declined primarily because of:

- 1- The transition from private instruction to teaching en masse,
- 2- The advent of growing militarism in Japan, and
- 3- The foundation developed for a "modern art" for a new generation.

#### ITOSU ANKOH

Prior to the advent of Itosu Ankoh's (1832-1915) campaign to modernize karate practice to support Japan's escalating war machine, toudijutsu,





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like its progenitor styles in China, vigorously employed two-man training practices that linked the fundamental tools of impact and varying methods of transferring kinetic energy to its defensive applications. However, after Itosu modernized toudijutsu, such practices were no longer practiced as training aims and objectives had radically changed.

Prior to Itosu's time, toudijutsu was customarily taught in private, with most masters usually having only a few students, often only one, and sometimes none. The later accounts for why some secrets were taken to the grave. One-on-one instruction provided the time and personal attention necessary to completely understand kata and the two-man drills associated with it. Such a luxury was unavailable during the large group training sessions Itosu cultivated in the school system. Rather, kata became the principal source of learning by which large groups of school children could follow a single teacher at one time. Quantity compromised quality, but made training available to the masses, which, in turn, popularized the new practice.

### MILITARY AGENDA

Toudijutsu's transformation from an obscure art of self-defense, the reshaping of its practice and purpose, and its

Two principal disciples of Higashionna Kanryo, Miyagi Chojun & Kiyoda Juhatsu, demonstrate typical Tegumi-style positions (photo courtesy of Kanzaki Shigekazu)

introduction into the mainstream of Okinawa's public school system produced yet another focus for its use. Training in "modern" toudijutsu, which emphasized physical fitness and character development, became a means of preparing young men for their mandatory two-year military obligation.

If there is any doubt as to why Itosu modernized toudijutsu practice, one need only read his October 1908 address to the Education Ministry and War Department. In that address, among other things, he wrote:

*Don't forget what the Duke of Wellington said after defeating Emperor Napoleon, "Today's victory was first achieved from the discipline attained on the play-grounds of*



*our elementary schools..." (Karate could be disseminated throughout the entire nation and not only benefit people in general but also serve as a [sic] enormous asset to our military forces. (Itosu, 1908))*

Supported by government bureaus, Dai Nippon Butokukai propaganda from the pre-war era maintained that budo (of which karate-do became a part of in December 1933) was "the Way" through which common men built uncommon bravery.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE

<sup>1</sup> Sir Winston Churchill, when describing Russia in an October 1, 1939 radio broadcast.

<sup>2</sup> Toudijutsu: Comprised of three ideograms: 1. Tou (Lit. Tang, i.e., Tang Dynasty, but also being the old way in which Japanese and Uchinanchu [Okinawans] referred to China or things Chinese), 2. Te (Lit. hand[s], but also a way in which Uchinanchu once described fighting disciplines), and 3. Jutsu (Technique, art, magic, etc.). The term is almost always translated as "China Hand," which means Chinese martial arts.

<sup>3</sup> One should note that "kumite," made up of the kanji "kumi" and "te," is actually "tegumi" backwards. The "k" sound changes to a "g" when preceded by another syllable.

<sup>4</sup> The eighth son of warlord Minamoto Tameyoshi (1096-1156), Tametomo is described in the "Hogen Monogatari" ("Tales of the Hogen War") as a powerful fighter, famous for his remarkable archery skill. In 1156, Taira Kiyomori defeated Tameyoshi and had him held captive on Izu, Oshima Island. Tametomo escaped to Kyushu and then, reportedly, to the Ryukyu Archipelago. Arriving in Unten, Okinawa, he made contact with Ozato Anji, lord of Urazoe Castle. After he married Ozato's daughter, Tametomo became lord of Urazoe and had a son named Shunten. In 1186, Shunten defeated Riu (the last ruler of the Tenson Dynasty) and became the island's king. The Shunten Dynasty (1186-1253) reportedly perpetuated the combative traditions Tametomo and his bushi introduced.

<sup>5</sup> The progenitor of modern karate, Uchinadi, or "Okinawa Hand," is a Hogen term that more aptly describes the pre-twentieth century native interpretations of Chinese gongfu in Okinawa.

<sup>6</sup> Denoting a test, challenge match, or exchange of techniques between two opponents, similar to the pushing-hands of taijiquan, sticky-hands of Wing Chun, hubud/dumog of kali, or sambut of silat, kakedamashi ("the spirit of entangling one's hands") was a popular practice among Uchinadi practitioners.

<sup>7</sup> Kinjo (Kanagusuku) Hiroshi (b. 1919; Shuri, Okinawa) began his training as a primary school student. Among others, he studied directly under Hanashiro Chomo (1869-1945) and Oshiro Choyo (1889-1930.)

<sup>8</sup> A native of Tomioka, Gunma Prefecture, Japan, Iwae Tsukuo is a highly regarded budo historian, author, and disciple of Motobu Choki's Uchinadi.

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This article is an excerpt from Patrick McCarthy's forthcoming book, "Legend of the Fist." Videotapes on tegumi, koryu Uchinadi, and kobudo are now available in Canada, the USA, Europe, and Australia. Interested parties can contact the Society at: International Ryukyu Karate Research Society, PO Box 420, Virginia Delivery Centre, Brisbane, Australia, 4014. Email: bujin@bigpond.com. Worldwide Web site: <http://www.society.webcentral.com.au>



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## Part 2

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### A Modern Art for a New Generation

Tosu's eclectic brainchild represented the foundation upon which a new generation of karate experts surfaced. During its early introduction to mainland Japan, toudijutsu underwent yet another metamorphosis. Introduced during an era of radical military escalation, karatejutsu, as the reinterpreted tradition became known, was profoundly influenced by kendo and judo. In retrospect, it is widely acknowledged that adopting the shobu ippon-kumite<sup>9</sup> phenomenon revolutionized both the practice and purpose of karate. The one-point scoring system was vigorously cultivated in post-Edo Japan in kendo and judo as a means of judging matches. Preserved and promoted in post-war Japan, shobu ippon-kumite and its subsequent corresponding practices were maintained and improved upon. Vigorously pursued as a competitive activity within the bukatsu (sports clubs) of major universities in the central regions of Kanto and Kansai, karate became immensely popular.

In spite of some clearly defined physical and social idiosyncrasies (representing signature practices and cultural milieu), most modern Okinawan styles reflect the inescapable influence of Japanese karate-do. Typical training practices and bunkaijutsu (analysis of kata applications) echo the rule-bound aims and competitive objectives commonly found on the mainland. The collective efforts to promote karate as a sport subsequently paved the way for developing universal training methods to support its competitive goals. Moreover, the establishment of national standards subsequently made it easier to promote the tradition as a sport, which resulted in bringing the various factions together in an effort to test both their technique and spirit in the competitive arena.

Supported by training methods that reflect its rule-bound aims and competitive



*Ancient Chinese bronze figurines depicting exercises identical to tegumi-style two-man drills (courtesy of the British Museum, London.)*

objectives, modern karate (now commonly, and erroneously, referred to as "traditional karate") has never adequately addressed the defensive themes interwoven within its original kata. Why learn to traumatize a limb, gouge an eye, twist a joint, or even squeeze the air out of someone if the sole purpose of your efforts is to win by a full point or to get into better physical shape? By the same token, why teach someone a rule-bound technique if its ultimate purpose is to be used in an arena without rules?

Kinjo Hiroshi has said that when Japan was dragged out of feudalism, a new and modern society had little need for the plebian goal karate once fostered (1989). Understandably, practices that cultivated such brutality became obsolete in the wake of a modern cultural recreation that fostered physical fitness, character development, and social harmony.

#### RECOGNIZING COMMON PRINCIPLES

There is a shared commonality in technique and defensive application among

Chinese (vertical)  
ideograms meaning  
tegumi (composed by  
author)



the plethora of Asian empty-handed defensive traditions. How and why could technique and defensive application be virtually identical across the region when the methods through which they were channeled (i.e., kata) were considerably different?

Anthropological forces greatly influenced the evolution of man's rituals and traditions. The varying customs, languages, costumes, climates, social ideologies, and spiritual convictions all influenced the growth and direction of ritualized practices such as self-defense traditions.

China, Japan, and Korea profoundly influenced Okinawa. An inscription on a bell<sup>10</sup> cast for Shuri Castle in 1485 reads, "The Ryukyu Kingdom is a place of great beauty in the Southern Ocean. Gathered here are the treasures of three countries: Korea, the Great Ming, and Japan. Its ships ply between ten thousand countries, and it is filled with wondrous things that are to be seen everywhere." Okinawa's unique geographical proximity to China, Japan, and Korea, as well as Southeast Asia, and its history of commerce and diplomatic relations with those nations, provided its people, the Uchinachu, with the opportunity for active cultural interaction. There can be no question that such communication between these cultures enhanced the "local" defensive traditions. Such interaction would tend to explain the constant flow of new ways of doing the same things.

However, there are certain universal truths in defensive application, irrespective of style or politics: a strike is a strike, a kick is a kick, a person's joint only bends one way, without air a person can be rendered unconscious, and pain never discriminates. Throughout history, and in every culture, the human structure and function have always determined what corresponding empty-



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handed self-defense techniques best impeded physical performance. After all, impeding an attacker's ability to attack has always been the dispassionate aim of self-defense.

With a working knowledge of the human anatomy, one becomes better equipped to understand how cause and effect generate predetermined responses. Such responses are vital to the process of defending oneself. They serve to set up anatomical weaknesses for the purpose of physical exploitation prior to determining what subsequent defensive principles are deemed appropriate at the time of application. Circumstances always dictate the means. However, without recognizing the original premise upon which the art of self-defense unfolded, its corresponding application principles cannot be wholly understood or appreciated.

Contrary to popular belief, the empty-handed defensive methods cultivated within the spiritual confines of China's monastic sanctuaries<sup>11</sup> were never meant to be used against professional fighters in an arena or warriors on a battlefield. Such an assertion has never precluded their use in hand-to-hand confrontation or battlefield combat, but supports my hypothesis that such methods



*Shaolin Arhats performing two-man exercises identical to Tegumi-style drills (courtesy of Liang Yiquan.)*

were originally developed to address the random acts of physical violence that plagued Chinese society and were most effective against those who possessed little or no understanding of such defensive tactics.

Imagine being grabbed by someone. In the very moment after being seized, you quickly spit in the person's face (providing a momentary distraction) and then flick your fingers into the attacker's testicles (bending him forward in direct proportion to the energy transferred). Following the set-up, you immediately impact the radial artery on the thumb side of the attacker's wrist, knowing that each artery has its own neuro-vascular bundle that, when stimulated in the correct direction, angle, and intensity, induces pain and a predetermined reaction. The predetermined reaction creates corresponding anatomical weaknesses. By attacking the above-mentioned target, one of the weaknesses created is the momentary weakening of the attacker's grip. Knowing this would happen ahead of time would permit one to make a bridge by seizing the opponent's wrist and follow up by attacking the triceps. Knowing that the triceps have a complex set of neurological structures including stretch and pain receptors, one could stimulate this anatomical zone in an effort to impede the opponent's continued assault. Such knowledge is vital to learning karate-do. One need only evaluate the content of the *Bubishi*<sup>12</sup> to discover what

enormous emphasis early pioneers placed upon such learning.

Through generations of empirical observation, Shaolin<sup>13</sup> spiritual recluses reasoned that if man's ego could be harnessed, physical violence could be reduced to pure chance. As such, a body of moral philosophy, which governed the behavior of those who mastered these arts' brutal applications, was developed to strengthen their commitment to uphold the moral values of training. Training was further fortified by introspective practices so that one could discover and conquer the source of human weakness. This is what is commonly referred to as the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of karate-do.

## WHY TWO-MAN EXERCISES?

To help eliminate cultural stereotyping and establish a common ground upon which to consider my hypothesis, I would like to substitute the word "kata" (and other native labels wherever possible) with the term "defensive paradigm." I hope this will draw the reader's attention away from any prejudice that might crop up when using cultural terminology, and serve to focus upon the purpose and associated practices that support defensive paradigms.

Used by nearly all Asian martial arts, defensive paradigms are universal rituals through which random acts of physical violence can be safely addressed.<sup>14</sup> Bringing together the fundamental tools of impact with their corresponding methods of transferring kinetic energy, footwork and body movement promote the mobility necessary to negotiate physical confrontation and enter critical engagement zones. Defensive themes interwoven within such paradigms address twisting bones, separating tendons from bones, joint-locks, take-downs, strangulations, counters, throws, grappling, groundwork, and traumatizing or impacting anatomically vulnerable zones as well as digging or gouging into body cavities unprotected by the skeletal structure. By virtue of human anatomy and the way in which it functions, defensive themes can be divided into four categories:

1- restraint techniques (i.e. methods aimed at impeding movement to prevent a continued attack), 2- neurological shutdown (i.e. attacking nerves to render an attacker temporarily immobile), 3- respiratory assault (i.e. rendering an attacker unconscious by preventing the flow of air), and 4- trauma impact (i.e., impeding an attacker by temporarily paralyzing motor performance).

Oriental and Southeast Asian defensive traditions customarily use a myriad of two-man training drills when developing fundamental physical and cognitive



*Five Ancestor Fist Kung Fu arm-drills illustrated here by Shifu Alex Co & pupil are virtually identical to Tegumi two-man drills (photo courtesy of Mark Wiley)*



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response skills. Drills of this nature must have originally developed from duplicating the various acts of physical violence that plagued the people.

In spite of the similarities to other Oriental and Southeast Asian martial arts practices, Buddhist and Daoist defensive traditions are widely recognized as the original sources from which such drills first came. During a 1992 visit to the Shaolin Monastery with Li Yiduan, deputy secretary general (retired) of the Fuzhou Martial Arts Association, I spoke with Liang Yiquan, a retired Shaolin monk then in charge of its historical research department, who provided me with some valuable insights.

The legendary melting pot in which a myriad of esoteric practices was perpetually synthesized, the Shaolin order had vigorously analyzed the random acts of physical violence over the generations. The monks had developed no less than seventy-two different responses, with as many as thirty-six variations, for a total of one hundred and eight defensive applications. Transmitted through the original Shaolin defensive tradition of Luohan quanfa (Monk boxing; Rakkan kenpo in



Master Li, demonstrates typical two-man drills from Fujian White Crane that are identical to Tegumi-style drills (photo courtesy of Li Zhe)

Japanese), the one-hundred and eight defensive applications fell into seven categories, taught in eighteen unique defensive paradigms: defenses against habitual techniques, defenses against linear attacks, defenses against alternative hand attacks,

defenses against kicking techniques, reactions to being seized or grabbed, dealing with special circumstances, and defending against combinations.

The eighteen defensive paradigms included six that specialized in striking anatomically vulnerable zones with the fists; two for using the palms; one that specialized in using the elbows, shoulders, head, and knees; four utilizing foot and leg maneuvers; and five for grappling.

From this legacy evolved an infinite repertoire of brilliant two-man exercises linking defensive strategy to its corresponding act of physical violence. In doing so, two-man flow drills brought a learner into direct contact with physical violence under controlled circumstances so that each scenario could be played out to its fullest variation and studied in relative safety. Two-man drills were continually improved upon over many generations so that one might be better prepared to respond in the likely event that a desired effect was not completely achieved, or an injury prevented an application before an opponent was completely dispatched. In many cases, these two-man drills became a highly sought after practice, as were those experts capable of teaching them. Ultimately, these Shaolin-developed two-man drills provided the basis for tegumi's development.

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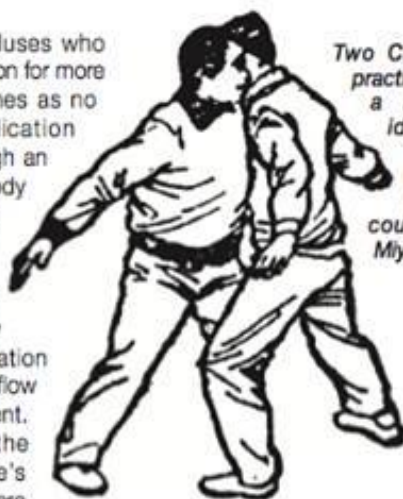
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The product of spiritual recluses who delved deeply into esoteric tradition for more than a thousand years, it comes as no surprise that defensive application principles were enhanced through an understanding of the human body based on the Yin/Yang-Five Element Theory of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Direction, angle, and intensity of transferring kinetic energy helped forge defensive application into a precise art, and two-man flow drills facilitated this development. Understanding one without the other would reduce one's defensive capabilities to little more than chance.



Two Chen style Taiji practitioners illustrate a bumping drill identical to Tegumi-style bumping drills (illustration courtesy of Yuriko Miyahara)

### TEGUMI RENZOKUGEIKO

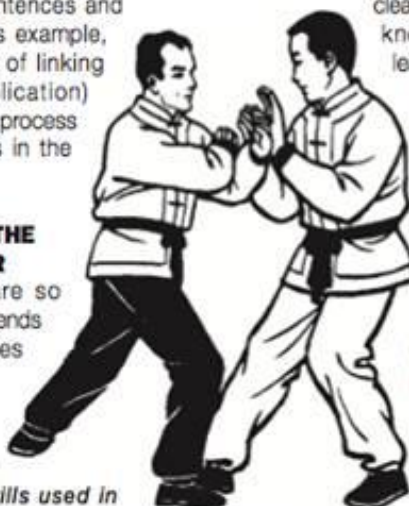
In koryu (ancient traditions) Uchinadi, defensive principles are incrementally imparted using tegumi drills to reenact the corresponding acts of violence addressed in kata. Fundamental applications of kihon waza ("basic techniques") are taught prior to learning the supporting variations of how to enter and follow-up. In bunkaijutsu, this is referred to as omote, "surface." It is a necessary requisite before ura ("back" or "behind"; referring to that which is beyond the surface) can be learned. This study is culminated in oyo (practical interpretation), a process that can never be wholly understood or completely appreciated without first mastering its predecessors, omote and ura. Imagine a primary school student attempting to compose a high school essay without first having learned the essential grammatical principles necessary to write the project. It simply would not be possible.

Continuing this language analogy: If kihon waza (the building blocks of the tradition) was compared to the ABC's, then kata (made up of kihon waza) represent grammatical structures. Extending the metaphor, bunkaijutsu portrays the meanings of its sentences and paragraphs. In this example, tegumi (a process of linking basics to application) represents the vital process of changing tenses in the language.

### DON'T SHOOT THE MESSENGER

Too often we are so preoccupied by the ends to which our choices

The pushing hands of Taiji is virtually identical to the two-man drills used in old-style tegumi.



would be a means that we rarely, if ever, give any attention to the causes for which those choices are effected. When the goal becomes more important than the effort, we lose sight of the process, the moment. The pursuit is as important, if not more so, than the possession; it's the race, not just the goal. Irrespective of its distinguishing labels, cultural origins, or signature identities, tegumi is an inseparable practice connecting fundamental technique to defensive application. And, while it may have little value in the competitive arena, its practice is symbiotically connected to the application principles of kata.

Karate can be many things to many people. Whatever other purposes karate-do can serve, it is certainly no less than: 1. an alternative to Western conventional exercise; 2. a challenging, rule-bound competitive activity; 3. a brilliant form of self-protection; 4. an art punctuated by the unique culture from whence it comes, 5. a hobby; and, 6. an occupation. Removing the quagmire of half-truths, minefields of protectionism, and labyrinths of misunderstanding that have obscured karate's history, moral philosophy, and original application principles, we are able to resolve its protracted ambiguity and clearly determine its value. Such knowledge is vital to the learning process, especially if more harmonious teaching standards are ever to be established.

### CONCLUSION

In this article, I have described karate-do as an interrelated tradition woven together by common defensive themes passed down orally from one generation to another in an iron-clad ritual of secrecy called kata. I have introduced the theory and practice of



# Tegumi

## Part 2

tegumi while making known my personal research surrounding its discovery and systematization. Short of describing each of the drills individually, I have also addressed the value of such a neglected practice while emphasizing the need to re-establish it as a common practice linking method to application. However, politics, power struggles, and personal agendas have long plagued karate's history. What little historical testimony remains seems to be hampered by suspect oral testimony in terms of authenticity and accuracy. Too often so-called leaders have manipulated historical fact to serve their own personal agendas.

What is a karate style if not one person's individual understanding of universal defensive principles appropriated from one



Chinese (horizontal)  
ideograms meaning  
On Ko Chi Shin (To  
search for the old is  
to understand the  
new. Composed by  
author)

or more sources, continually assimilated and reinterpreted, and finally structured into a system of learning? How each person internalizes new knowledge across the spectrum of their life remains as much a product of their art as their art is a product of their life. In karate, styles are referred to as ryu-ha, and, by definition, each ryu-ha has a soke (founder). Therefore, if we know that soke's history and from what source(s) his schooling came, the cultural context in which his interpretation was forged, and the aspired purpose of his efforts, it becomes possible to understand the training methods used to achieve its goals. In the same way that a mathematician extrapolates, so too

can a primary researcher<sup>11</sup> work backwards in a logical manner to understand the evolution of modern karate-do and those associated practices that support their application.

In addition to how anthropological forces affected the development of karate practice, we must not ignore what affect ego, politics, and intolerance have had upon the growth and direction of each ryu-ha and the curricula through which its purposes are imparted. Can you imagine what a ryu-ha would be like if its soke did not completely understand the history of the art, its corresponding philosophy, or associated defensive principles? ❧

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This article is an excerpt from Patrick McCarthy's forthcoming book, "Legend of the Fist." Videotapes on tegumi, koryu Uchinadi, and kobudo are now available in Canada, the USA, Europe, and Australia. Interested parties can contact the Society at:

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# BUGEISHA IN SPAIN & PORTUGAL

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<sup>9</sup> Lit. "Victory/Defeat One-Point Contest," shobu ippon kumite is based upon the feudal battlefield concept of "one strike, one kill." The group most responsible for cultivating and perpetuating shobu ippon-kumite at that time was the Japan Karate Association, although Ohtsuka Hironori (1892-1982) and Konishi Yasuhiro (1893-1983) are recognized as the trailblazers of ippon-kumite. In addition to Wado-ryu, Shindo Jinen-ryu, and Shotokan, other pioneer mainland groups that supported the new standard were Shito-ryu, Goju-ryu, Kushin-ryu, and Kenyu-ryu.

<sup>10</sup> The bell can still be seen at the Naha Central Museum.

<sup>11</sup> Daoist and Buddhist spiritual sanctuaries have long been recognized as sources from whence China's empty-handed self-defense traditions evolved. This is important to know as Chinese culture, including martial arts, had a profound impact upon the evolution of its neighboring societies and their self-defense traditions, such as in Okinawa.

<sup>12</sup> Commonly referred to as the "Bible of karate-do," the Bubishi is an anthology in 32 chapters containing the essence of karate-do.

<sup>13</sup> It is widely accepted that the history of karate is connected to Shaolin gongfu traditions introduced to the Ryukyu Kingdom from Fujian Province, China.

<sup>14</sup> Obviously, with the movement of the limbs, muscular expansion and contraction, and regulated breathing practice, defensive paradigms have holistic and therapeutic qualities in addition to their principal defensive purpose.

<sup>15</sup> There are two types of budo researchers: primary and secondary. Primary researchers conduct hands-on research at the source, usually in that culture's native language, under local cultural conditions, with the most senior living authorities of the tradition, and remain in the field for extended periods of time. Their published analyses are usually meticulous, include bibliographies and indexes, and always cite sources. Secondary researchers study the published work of others in their own language, i.e. seek out and collect, analyze, categorize, and sometimes even publish the results of their observations. Secondary researchers, better referred to as chroniclers, rarely experience the cultural ambience (and if so, rarely for more than a brief tourist visit) or ever come into direct comprehensive verbal contact with the most senior authorities at the source(s) because of language difficulties.