

Midori Yama Budokai: *Hanshi's* Corner
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***Kumite* (“Sparring”)**

Kumite is to *karate* what *randori* is to *judo*. Like *randori* in *judo*, there are different types of *kumite* in *karate*. However, the following principles apply to all forms of *kumite* (as well as *randori*!).

Kumite is composed of the following elements:

Senjutsu are fighting strategies that include psychological factors as well as physical ones.

Waza, or technique, begins with creating opportunity through the use of *kuzushi waza*, or off-balancing techniques. This includes mental as well as physical off balancing.

The next three elements comprise the (setting-up) *tsukuri* of a technique.

Distance or *ma-ai*, of which there are three basic ones: close, intermediate and distant.

Timing or *hyoshi* should not be forced.

Reflexes are developed through constant practice.

The scoring technique is known as *kime waza*, and refers to an effective conclusion.

The final element is that of *engo waza* or follow-up technique/s, and should be based on the fact that the *kime waza* leads to another *kuzushi waza* and the *tsukuri* necessary for the follow-up to be effective.

There are three “attitudes” of *kumite*, and they are as follows:

An offensive technique counters a defensive attitude. One is constantly offensive and wins before the opponent can attack. This attitude is known as *shin*, and uses *kogeki no katachi*, or forms of attack.

The second attitude, *gyo*, refers to winning by counter-attack. It is sometimes referred to as the soft countering the hard, meaning that a good defense has countered a strong attack. This method used *bogeki no katachi*, or forms of defense.

Finally, there is *so*, a combination of *shin* and *gyo*. This attitude is that of adapting one’s own attitude to that of the opponent so that your rhythm and his or hers will be different. This refers to *kobo no ichi*, meaning attack and defense are the same.

Also to be studied are *Kumite Tai Sabaki* or Body Shifting in Sparring. This is composed of the following:

- *Mawai o Hakaru* or Simple Body Shifting for Body Adjustment. This may be from and to the same stance, or to a different stance.
- *Ido* or Moving Action composed of non-complex Body Shifting. This may be done with or without an accompanying technique.
- *Mawaru* or Turning composed of complex Body Shifting. This may be from and to the same stance, or to a different stance. Also, you may turn up to 360o pivoting on the front or rear leg.

All of these movements may be made in one of eight directions (*Happo Tai Sabaki*):

- *Mae* or forward.
- *Ushiro* or backward.
- *Migi yoko* or to the right side.
- *Hidari yoko* or to the left side.

- *Migi naname mae* or to the right diagonal (oblique) front.
- *Hidari naname mae* or to the left diagonal (oblique) front.
- *Migi naname ushiro* or to the right diagonal (oblique) rear.
- *Hidari naname ushiro* or to the left diagonal (oblique) rear.

The astute *budōka* will recognize these as the same eight directions for off balancing in *judo*.

Kumite Kata or Forms of Exchange of Hands (Engagement Hands).

A. *Yakusoku Kumite* or Prearranged *Kumite*.

1. *Ten no Kata Ura* or Reverse (Inner) Form of Heaven.
 - a. *ura shōdan*: *gedan barai* – *gedan zuki*.
 - b. *ura nidan*: *chūdan ude uke* – *chūdan zuki*.
 - c. *ura sandan*: *chūdan shuto uke* – *chūdan nukite*.
 - d. *ura yodan*: *jōdan shuto barai* – *jōdan zuki*.
 - e. *ura godan*: *jōdan age uke* – *chūdan zuki*.
 - f. *ura rokudan*: *jōdan uchikomi* – *chūdan zuki*.
2. *Tanshiki Kumite* or *Ippon Kumite*. Also called Simple *Kumite*. One attack and counter.
 - a. *uchi uke*: *hidari jōdan omote tekubi uke* – *migi gyaku zuki*.
 - b. *soto uke*: *migi jōdan ura tekubi age uke* – *hidari gyaku zuki*.
3. *Fukushiki Kumite* or Double *Kumite*. *Tori* and *Uke* exchange roles in attack and defense.
 - a. *nidan henka* or counter after two attacks.
 - b. *sandan henka* or counter after three attacks.
 - c. *yodan henka* or counter after four attacks.

Note: Attacks may be done with stepping. For *Nihon Kumite*, *uke* would attack twice, taking two steps; on the second step, *tori* would counter after receiving the attack.

Sambon Kumite would have *uke* attack by taking three steps and *tori* would counter on the third step. *Gohon Kumite* is comprised of five steps, with the receipt of the attack and counter on the fifth. I have used the standard *tori/uke* nomenclature. However, in traditional *karate*, the attacker is known as *semete* and the receiver (the one who “wins”) is known as *ukete*.

B. *Randori Kumite* or Free Play Exchange of Hands.

1. *Yakusoku Randori Kumite* or the application of *bunkai*.
2. *Jiyū Kumite*, also known as *Shiai Kumite* and *Shinken Kumite*.
 - a. *jiyū ippon kumite (ohyo kumite)* or free style limited to one attack.
 - b. *jiyū randori kumite* or free style with unlimited attacks (usually with *bogu*, or protective armor).
3. *Shobu Kumite* or Contest *Kumite*.
4. *Shiai Kumite* or Tournament *Kumite*.
5. *Shinken (Shiai no Shobu) Kumite* or a fight to the death.

Jiyū Kumite is comprised of seven components, which are given below.

- *Tachi Kata* or Stances for *kumite*. In general, these tend to be narrow versions of traditional stances, with the weight more or less evenly distributed. In some, such as the “T” and “L” stances, the *kumite* versions are slightly wider. These stances would include, but not be limited to, *renoji kumite dachi*, or sparring “L” stance, *teiji kumite dachi*, or sparring “T” stance, *zenkutsu kumite dachi* (*sho zenkutsu dachi*), or sparring front stance, *kokutsu kumite dachi*, or sparring back stance, *kiba kumite dachi*, or sparring horse stance, *fudo kumite dachi*, or sparring diagonal rooted stance, *neko ashi kumite dachi*, or sparring cat foot stance, and *sanchin* or *hangetsu kumite* stance, or three battles or crescent moon sparring stances.
- *Mamori* or the guarding posture, also know as *kamae*. This is composed of two parts: defensive, in which the body is protected and covered by the hands and positional, which is the starting position for offensive arm techniques.
- *Ma-ai* or distance. In *kumite* this may refer to vertical distance, which is defined as the distance from the *budoka*’s belt to the belt level of the opponent. This would include kicks from the mat (one is below the opponent) or jumping kicks (one is above the opponent). *Kusshin*, also called *otoshi mi*, (bobbing) and (*yoko furimi*) (weaving) are also included in this definition. Other movements include *kaishin*, also called *hiraki mi*, or a step-dodge (refer to the eight directions), *hiza otoshi* or dropping to one knee, *sorimi* or moving the upper body backwards without moving the feet, *hikimi* or pulling the waist back as with *neko ashi dachi* and *tobi sagari*, also known as *tobi mi*, or leaping retreat (with or without a turn).
- *Tai no Idō* or body shifting, aka *Tai Sabaki*.
- *Shizen no Ugoki* or doing techniques until they become automatic. This is the integration of motor skills, through constant repetition of the technique, until the point is reached that it can be executed without thought (*mushin*).
- *Oyo Dosa* or application of techniques in an actual situation.
- *Henka Waza ho Yuko-sei* or testing the modification of a technique to see if it works.

***Katame Waza* or Restraining Techniques**

- I. *Osaе Waza* or “Hold Downs”
 - A. *Kesa Gatame Gei* or System of Scarf Holding
 - B. *Shiho Gatame Gei* or System of Holding Down Four Corners
 1. *Yoko shihō gei* or Four Corners Hold Down from the Side
 2. *Kami shihō gei* or Upper Hold Down of Four Corners
 3. *Tate shihō gei* or Vertical Hold Down of Four Corners
 - C. *Uki Gatame Gei* or System of “Floating” Hold Down

Note: *Uki gatame* may be made into a *kenyohō* (combination) technique as a form of *shime waza*.

- II. *Shime Waza*: Chokes or Strangulations
 - A. *Shimeai* or Face-to-face Strangulations
 1. *Kubi jime* or Squeezing of the Neck.
 2. *Dō jime* or Squeezing of the Body
 3. *Shimete* or Squeezing with the Hand/Fingers

- B. *Ushiro jime* or Strangulations from the Rear
 1. *Kubi jime* or Squeezing of the neck
 2. *Do jime* or Squeezing of the body
 3. *Shimete* or Squeezing with the hand/fingers
- III. *Kansetsu Waza* or Joint-lock Techniques
 - A. *Ude Kansetsu Waza* or Joint-lock Techniques against the Arm
 1. *Yubi kansetsu waza* or Joint-locks against the fingers
 2. *Tekubi kansetsu waza* or Joint-locks against the Wrists
 - a. *jun tekubi kansetsu waza* or joint-locks in the natural direction of the joint
 - b. *gyaku tekubi kansetsu waza* or joint-locks against the natural direction of the joint
 3. *Hiji kansetsu waza* or Joint-locks against the Elbow
 - a. *ude hishigi* or arm crush (locks against a straight arm)
 - b. *ude garami* or arm entanglement (locks against a bent arm)
 4. *Kata kansetsu waza* or Joint-locks against the Shoulder
 - B. *Ashi Kansetsu Waza* or Joint-lock techniques against the Leg
 1. *Ashi yubi kansetsu waza* or Joint-locks against the toes
 2. *Ashikubi kansetsu waza* or Joint-locks against the ankles
 3. *Hiza kansetsu waza* or Joint-locks against the knees
 4. *Koshi kansetsu waza* or Joint-locks against the hips
 - C. *Sekizui Waza* or Spine Locks
 1. *Kubi waza* or Spine Locks against the neck
 2. *Koshi waza* or Spine Locks against the lower back

Note: All three major divisions (I, II and III) may be sub-divided into *Tachi Waza*, or standing techniques, and *Ne Waza*, or “ground” techniques. Many of the techniques are not allowed in contest (*shiai*), but are still studied for self-defense purposes.

From: *An Encyclopedia of Judo* by Ron Rogers, 9th Dan, *Judo*

2.3.1.1 ***Kuzushi*** or breaking the balance. *Kuzushi* is considered 75% of the throw. If *kuzushi* is good, and *tsukuri* and *kake* bad, the throw may succeed by impetus alone. It will rarely succeed if *kuzushi* is bad. *Kuzushi* is turning the opponent’s attacking force against him or her (*sen no sen*). This is done with *hazumi*. When one uses one’s own force to achieve this it is *go no sen*. This is done with *ikioi*. *Ken no sen* is taking the initiative during the launching of an attack. Contrary to popular belief there are not **only** “eight directions of off-balance,” although these are used for demonstration purposes. *Kuzushi* may be considered from the point of theory, which has eight or fourteen directions of off-balance. It may be considered from the point of *randori* or *shiai*, which is generally taught to have six directions of off-balance. Not commonly taught is the off-balance of self-defense (*goshin jutsu*), which has ten directions of off-balance. A sub-division using *uke*’s reactionary movements, uses off-balancing in two or more directions consecutively. This method uses the directions of off-balance given above. Balance is always broken toward *uke*’s weak direction (“third point”). I will confine my explanations to *migi shizentai no kumi kata*. For throws to *uke*’s left

reverse the descriptions and for *kenka yotsu* substitute the fighting grip for the standard in regard to *hikite* (pulling hand) and *tsurite* (lifting hand). “When your opponent’s balance is disturbed, the fact of your judgment and penetration is a function of the mind. After he is unbalanced, the execution of the throw is a function of the spirit. The execution of the technique, in obedience to that spirit, is a function of strength For the union of these principles the application of momentum is indispensable.” *Kuzushi* is based on three principles:

- *Kuzureta Shisei* – destruction of the stance’s equilibrium.
- *Tai Kuzushi* – Off balancing of the body (not to be confused with stance).
- *Ikioi* – impetus.

Compare these with the three principles of *tsukuri*.

2.3.1.1.1 ***Roppo no kuzushi***, also known as ***randori no kuzushi***, *happo no kuzushi* and *jushihō no kuzushi*. *Roppo no kuzushi* are the six directions of off-balance and excludes throws to the direct right and left sides. An asterisk will precede these. *Happo no kuzushi* are the standard, theoretical directions of off-balance and will be indicated in **bold letters**. *Jushihō no kuzushi* are the relatively modern fourteen directions of off-balance which Kudo Kazuo, *Kudan*, gave to the world of *judo*. These may be further sub-divided into *zempo no kuzushi*, or *kuzushi* to the front and front corners, *kohō no kuzushi*, or *kuzushi* to the rear and rear corners and *sokuhō no kuzushi*, or *kuzushi* to the direct sides.

2.3.1.1.1.1 *Zempo no kuzushi* or balance breaking (off balancing) to the front.

2.3.1.1.1.1.1 ****Ma mae no kuzushi*** or balance breaking to the direct front with *uke*’s center of gravity (*chushin*) tilted to the front with the body weight on the balls and toes of both feet. With modifications of *uke*’s upper or lower body, this includes the two off-balancing positions of self-defense. First is *ue no kuzushi* in which *uke* is brought onto the toes, but lifted so that his or her center of gravity is taken upward. Second is *shita no kuzushi* in which *uke* is brought onto the toes but with the knees bent so that s/he is pinned in place.

2.3.1.1.1.1.2 ****Migi mae sumi no kuzushi*** or balance breaking to right front corner. Kudo *sensei* further divided *migi mae sumi no kuzushi* into three parts as given below.

2.3.1.1.1.1.2.1 *Migi soto mae sumi no kuzushi* or balance breaking to right outside front corner. *Uke*’s center of gravity is tilted to the diagonal right front with most of the body weight on the third and fourth (little) toes of the right foot.

2.3.1.1.1.1.2.2 *Migi naka mae sumi no kuzushi* or balance breaking to the right middle front corner. *Uke*’s center of gravity is tilted to the right front corner with most of the body weight on the ball of the right foot and the middle two toes.

2.3.1.1.1.1.2.3 *Migi uchi mae sumi no kuzushi* or balance breaking to the right inside front corner. *Uke*’s center of gravity is tilted to the diagonal right front with the body weight over the great (“big”) toe and the first toe of the left foot.

2.3.1.1.1.1.3 ****Hidari mae sumi no kuzushi*** or balance breaking to the left front corner. This is also divided into three parts.

- 2.3.1.1.1.3.1 *Hidari soto mae sumi no kuzushi* or balance breaking to the left outside front corner. *Uke's* center of gravity is tilted to the diagonal left front with the body weight over the third and fourth (little) toe of the left foot.
- 2.3.1.1.1.3.2 *Hidari naka mae sumi no kuzushi* or balance breaking to the left middle front corner. *Uke's* center of gravity is tilted to the diagonal left front with the body weight over the ball of the foot and the middle (toes two and three) two toes.
- 2.3.1.1.1.3.3 *Hidari uchi mae sumi no kuzushi* or balance breaking to the left inside front corner. *Uke's* center of gravity is tilted to the diagonal left front with the body weight on the great (“big”) toe and the first toe of the left foot.
- 2.3.1.1.1.2 *Kohō no kuzushi* or balance breaking to the rear.
- 2.3.1.1.1.2.1 **Ma ushiro no kuzushi* or balance breaking to the direct rear. *Uke's* center of gravity is tilted to the direct rear with the body weight on both heels.
- 2.3.1.1.1.2.2 **Migi ushiro sumi no kuzushi* or balance breaking to the right rear corner. *Kudo sensei* divided this into two separate directions of off-balance.
- 2.3.1.1.1.2.2.1 *Migi (hon) ushiro sumi no kuzushi* or balance breaking to the right (basic) rear corner. *Uke's* center of gravity is tilted to the diagonal right rear with the body weight on the outside edge of the right heel.
- 2.3.1.1.1.2.2.2 *Migi yoko ushiro sumi no kuzushi* or balance breaking to the right side rear corner. *Uke's* center of gravity is tilted to *uke's* diagonal right rear with the weight on the outer edge of the sole, from the heel to the fourth (little) toe of the right foot. The trunk of the body is twisted toward the side.
- 2.3.1.1.1.2.3 **Hidari ushiro sumi no kuzushi* or balance breaking to the left rear corner. This is the standard direction now divided into two separate directions of off-balance.
- 2.3.1.1.1.2.3.1 *Hidari (hon) ushiro sumi no kuzushi* or balance breaking to the left (basic) rear corner. *Uke's* center of gravity is tilted to the diagonal left rear with the weight on the outside edge of the left heel.
- 2.3.1.1.1.2.3.2 *Hidari yoko ushiro sumi no kuzushi* or balance breaking to the left side rear corner. *Uke's* center of gravity is tilted to the left diagonal rear with the body weight on the outer edge of the sole from the heel to the fourth (little) toe of the left foot. The trunk of the body is twisted toward the side.
- 2.3.1.1.1.3 *Sokuhō no kuzushi* or balance breaking to the direct sides. These are **not** included in *randori (roppō) no kuzushi*.
- 2.3.1.1.1.3.1 **Migi ma yoko no kuzushi* or balance breaking to the direct right side. *Uke's* center of gravity is tilted to the right side with the body weight on the outer edge of the right foot from the heel to the fourth (little) toe. The trunk of the body is **not** twisted, but remains upright and straight.
- 2.3.1.1.1.3.2 **Hidari ma yoko no kuzushi* or balance breaking to the direct left side. *Uke's* center of gravity is tilted to the left side with the body weight on the outer edge of the left foot from the heel to the fourth (little) toe. The trunk of the body is **not** twisted, but remains upright and straight.

- 2.3.1.1.2 **Roppo no kuzushi** or **randori no kuzushi**. Balance breaking in six directions or balance breaking for free play. These include front and rear directions (of the standard eight) but not the direct sides. Although singled out in the previous section, they are listed here for completeness' sake.
- 2.3.1.1.2.1 **Zempo no kuzushi** or balance breaking to the front.
- 2.3.1.3.2.1.1. **Ma mae no kuzushi** or balance breaking to the direct front.
- 2.3.1.3.2.1.2. **Migi mae sumi no kuzushi** or balance breaking to the right front corner.
- 2.3.1.3.2.1.3. **Hidari mae sumi no kuzushi** or balance breaking to the left front corner.
- 2.3.1.1.2.2 **Koho no kuzushi** or balance breaking to the rear.
- 2.3.1.1.2.2.1 **Ma ushiro no kuzushi** or balance breaking to the direct rear.
- 2.3.1.1.2.2.2 **Migi ushiro sumi no kuzushi** or **migi ato sumi no kuzushi**. Balance breaking to the right rear corner.
- 2.3.1.1.2.2.3 **Hidari ushiro sumi no kuzushi** or **hidari ato sumi no kuzushi**. Balance breaking to the left rear corner.
- 2.3.1.1.3 **Juhō no kuzushi** or **goshin jutsu no kuzushi**. Balance breaking in ten directions or balance breaking for self-defense. This includes the original eight directions plus two additional ones.
- 2.3.1.1.3.1 **Zempo no kuzushi** or balance breaking to the front.
- 2.3.1.1.3.1.1 **Ma mae no kuzushi** or balance breaking to the direct front.
- 2.3.1.1.3.1.2 **Migi mae sumi no kuzushi** or balance breaking to the right front corner.
- 2.3.1.1.3.1.3 **Hidari mae sumi no kuzushi** or balance breaking to the left front corner.
- 2.3.1.1.3.2 **Koho no kuzushi** or balance breaking to the rear.
- 2.3.1.1.3.2.1 **Ma ushiro no kuzushi** or balance to the direct rear.
- 2.3.1.1.3.2.2 **Migi ushiro sumi no kuzushi** or **migi ato sumi no kuzushi**. Balance breaking to the right rear corner.
- 2.3.1.1.3.2.3 **Hidari ushiro sumi no kuzushi** or **hidari ato sumi no kuzushi**. Balance breaking to the left rear corner.
- 2.3.1.1.3.3 **Sokuhō no kuzushi** or balance breaking to the direct sides.
- 2.3.1.1.3.3.1 **Migi ma yoko no kuzushi** or balance breaking to the direct right side.
- 2.3.1.1.3.3.2 **Hidari ma yoko no kuzushi** or balance breaking to the direct left side.
- 2.3.1.1.3.4 **Joge no kuzushi** or balance breaking upward and downward. It should be noted that these could be considered variations of *ma mae no kuzushi*.
- 2.3.1.1.3.4.1 **Ue no kuzushi** or balance breaking upward (*jō*). *Uke*'s center of gravity is lifted upward with the body stretched and the body weight on the toes of both feet.
- 2.3.1.1.3.4.2 **Shita no kuzushi** or balance breaking downward (*ge*). *Uke*'s center of gravity is pressed downward, pinning the toes and balls of the feet in a position similar to *chugoshi*. Alternatively, *uke* may be pinned in the intermediate kneeling position on both knees with the body erect or bent slightly forward.

NOTE: **Tsurikomi** is the method by which *kuzushi* is achieved. *Tsurikomi*, meaning "lift-pull," is further divided into *tsurite*, or lifting hand, and *hikite*, or pulling hand. From the viewpoint of *migi shizentai no kumi kata*, *tori*'s right hand would be the *tsurite* and the left hand would be the *hikite*. This would be true for *migi tai otoshi* or *hidari ashi de ashi barai*. As mentioned before, *tsurikomi* is the method by which you disturb your

opponent's balance. *Kuzushi* is the continuation of *tsurikomi* to a point where your opponent must fall. *Tsukuri* is the fusion of *tsurikomi* and *kuzushi*, or the actual preparatory movement to the throw (*kake*).

Hando no kuzushi is reactionary balance breaking. This method of balance breaking is based on *uke*'s reaction to the initial technique. That is, if *uke* avoids a throw to the front s/he will be susceptible to a throw to the rear. If *uke* dodges to the right, s/he may be thrown to the left, etc. Actual directions are those of *roppō no kuzushi*, *happō no kuzushi* or *jūshihō no kuzushi* but used in combinations or continuations.

Kuzushi is also an integral part of other martial arts. In the percussive arts (*karate*, taekwondo, boxing, etc.) it is much easier to counter-attack (or attack) if you can get the opponent to overextend him-, or herself. In the grappling arts (*judo*, *jujutsu*, wrestling, etc) it is much easier to pin, choke or lock someone who is off-balance and cannot resist. Conversely, it is easier to escape their pin, choke or lock if they are off-balance. *Kuzushi* is very pronounced in *judo* and *aikido*, as well as T'ai Ch'i Ch'uan.

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