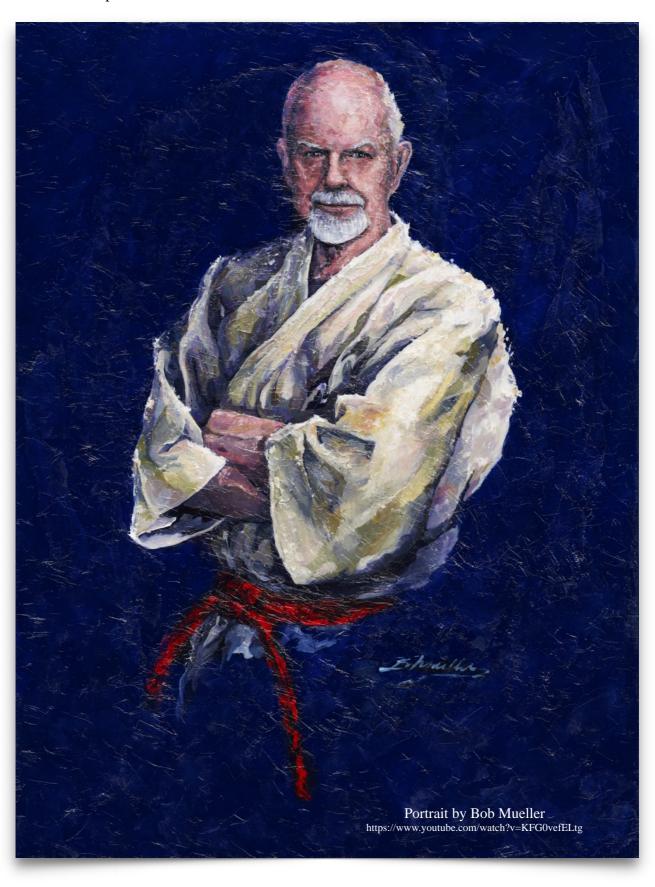
Sometimes You Don't Know How to Fit In ... Until You Break Out

By Patrick McCarthy © 2005, Revised & Expanded 2025



Preface

More than 20 years ago, during a time that predates AI technology, I needed help presenting my research and insights on the functional applications of kata, developed through decades of study and teaching. To that end, I enlisted a then-enthusiastic student of mine, a PhD candidate, and only too eager to assist me, by compiling my notes into a readable format. Not so long thereafter, we parted ways due to professional differences. Following that, he thought it best to align himself with individuals who have sought [and continue] to undermine my reputation and character. Given this, I feel it is inappropriate to associate his name with my work. This 2025 revision and expansion, which I have undertaken myself, is a comprehensive update of the original article, entirely based on my research, concepts, and experiences. It reflects my lifelong dedication to understanding and sharing the essence of Okinawan karate, further enriched by new insights and practical applications developed over the past two decades.

Introduction



As a fifth-generation learner of Uchinadi, with a lineage tracing through my teacher Kinjo Hiroshi to Hanashiro Chōmo, Itosu Ankō, and Matsumura Sōkon, historically the tradition's most visible pioneer—I have dedicated my life to unraveling many of the ambiguities that have shrouded the history and functional application of karate. Since Okinawa reclaimed its heritage as the birthplace of karate, a point contested by mainland Japan, its cultural

landscape has spurred new questions about long-held beliefs. Never before has there been such a focus on examining the origins and practical applications of kata.

The International Ryukyu Karate Research Society (IRKRS), which I founded in 1988, has led this movement, offering progressive learners a network to explore pragmatic explanations for a tradition often shrouded in complexity.



A glimpse into a lifetime of learning: This collage captures just a smattering of the many remarkable authorities and senior practitioners I've had the privilege of meeting, training with, and learning from through decades of travel, research, cross-training, and comparative study. Each encounter—whether fleeting or foundational—played a role in shaping my understanding of the martial arts beyond borders, styles, and dogma.



Mid-1980s: A quiet moment of reflection before retiring from competition. Taken at my Vancouver Karate Centre, this photo captures the close of a deeply rewarding chapter—15 years of passionate engagement on the tournament floor. The trophies behind me tell their own story, but for me, this image marked the end of one era and the beginning of another, as I prepared to leave Canada and start a new life in Japan

The Quest for Understanding Kata

My journey to understand kata's defensive applications began in frustration and evolved into a global movement. By the mid-1980s, after more than 15 years of competition and training under esteemed instructors, I grew disillusioned with traditional karate's rigid, rule-bound practices and cultural ambiguities. My discontent arose not from rejecting the art or its rituals but from the impracticality of conventional kata interpretations, often centered on compliant "attackers" using reverse punch and/or other incongruous scenarios. I sought a teacher or system that could teach kata's original, functional combative applications in a rational, coherent manner. Specifically, I wanted someone who could:

1. Apply Realistic Scenarios: Use authentic acts of physical violence, not compliant, rule-bound attacks, as the basis for karate techniques, reflecting the true nature of conflict.

- 2. Reveal Historical Practices: Demonstrate the prescribed applications handed down by karate's pioneers, clarifying how and why these were transformed into mnemonic rituals. By spearheading highly functional 2-person practices, KU seminars set a new precedent within the international traditional karate community—fundamentally transforming how kata was understood and applied.
- 3. Clarify Kata's Structure: Show how kata's mnemonic templates encapsulate fighting lessons and, when choreographed into solo routines, create a whole greater than its parts.
- 4. Explain Universal Mechanics: Demonstrate the mechanics and principles of these practices, universally applicable due to shared human anatomy.



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Finding no such teachings in Japan or Okinawa, I cross-trained in Chinese, Southeast Asian, and Western martial arts, as well as modern eclectic systems. Guided by Basho's wisdom—"not blindly following in the footsteps of the old masters but rather seeking what they sought"—I developed the Habitual Acts of Physical Violence (HAPV) theory and two-person drill concepts. These rediscovered dormant practices from the 19th century, when firearms diminished the need for such skills. Drawing on my competitive career, extensive cross-training, and mentorship under Grandmaster Kinjo Hiroshi, I systematized these insights into Koryu Uchinadi Kenpo-jutsu.

Pioneering the HAPV Theory

From 1993 to 2023, I shared my HAPV theory and corresponding scenario-driven 2-person practices, under the name "Koryu Uchinadi," through over 1,000 seminars across North and South America, Europe, Russia, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. This section outlines the research and its practical applications.

A Blinding Flash of the Obvious (BFO)

While studying swordsmanship under Meijin Sugino Yoshio at the Sugino honbu dojo in Kawasaki, Japan (Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto Ryu), I was struck by the effectiveness of its functional 2-person drills. Karate's ipponkumite practices, by contrast, seemed incongruous, failing to connect kata's abstract movements to real-world violence. This realization sparked a deeper investigation into kata's origins.

Analyzing Historical Contexts

I studied 19th- and early 20th-century acts of physical violence, drawing from my ju-jutsu training with Professor Wally Jay and others[^1], Chinese and Southeast Asian martial arts[^2], the Bubishi[^3], Katori Shinto Ryu[^4], and Shaolin scenarios[^5]. Mentors like Kinjo Hiroshi Hanshi, Sayama Satoru (Shoot-fighting), and Nobuhiko Takada (UWFI/Pride) informed my work. I categorized classical attack scenarios[^6] into:

- 1. Seizing: Clinch, grabbing, and holding techniques
- 2. Impacting: Strikes and percussive techniques
- 3. Combination: Scenarios blending seizing and impacting.

The Human Body as a Constant

The human body's anatomy and vulnerabilities were central to my research. Understanding how kinetic energy disrupts motor function shifted my focus from athletic prowess to biomechanical principles, guided by the five ancient machines (lever, wedge, pulley, screw, wheel/axle)[^7].

Reverse Engineering Kata

I recreated HAPVs in a safe environment, developing two-person drills (oyo-waza) where the uke (attacker) simulates the HAPV and the tori (defender) applies prescribed responses. Ritualizing these into mnemonic templates mirrored kata's composites, expressed as 型 (model) and 形

(shape). This approach enhanced physical, mental, and spiritual conditioning, creating a holistic learning experience.

Functional Applications in Seminars

My seminars, compatible with mainstream styles (e.g., Heian/Pinan, Naihanchi, Bassai) and unique Okinawan kata (e.g., Happoren, Nepai), attract diverse practitioners. Key practices include:

- * *Tegumi* and *Muchimi-di*: Clinch-like grappling, and heavy-hand drills from Okinawan and Fujian quanfa traditions[^8].
- * *Kansetsu-waza/Tuite-jutsu*: Joint manipulation, limb entanglement, and cavity pressing, using five principles: location, tool, angle, direction, intensity [^7] and five ancient machines [wedge, pulley, screw, lever(s), fixed axle & wheel].
- * *Shime-waza*: Blood & air deprivation; 36 techniques from classical kata, taught in 2-person drills[^9].
- * *Yamane-ryū Kobudo:* Enriched by studies with Kinjo Hiroshi, Sugino Yoshio, Inoue Motokatsu[^10] and others.
- * *Bubishi* and *Motobu Chōki Kumite* Drills: Exploring the Bubishi's 48 postures and Motobu Choki's fighting practices, based on my research and translations[^11].

* Junbi/Seri & Hojo-undo: Warm-up, cool-down, and training with apparatus like makiwara and chi-ishi[^12].

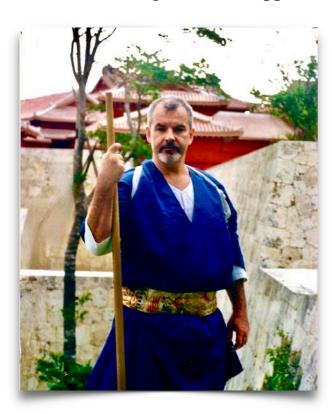
KU seminars, praised for their student-friendly approach[^13], offer practical insights into kata application.

Formalizing Kata's Evolution

Kata were never created to teach anything; rather, to culminate lessons already learned through 2-person drills. This changed during the decline of Okinawa's Ryūkyū Kingdom and into the 20th century, when Itosu Ankō simplified kata for schoolyard drills to promote physical fitness and social conformity, transforming them into calisthenics[^14]. Modern karate's kata practices, perpetuated by the senpai-kohai system, reflect this shift, rendering kata an enigma.

Conclusion

Using critical thinking and eclecticism, I challenged myths and rituals to decipher kata's enigma, advancing understanding where classical sources fell short. My seminars, taught worldwide, share these functional applications with progressive learners. As Funakoshi Gichin said, "All traditional karate is one—Karatedo"[^15]. I remain honoured to lead this movement and grateful to supporters globally.



Okinawa 1993: McCarthy at Shuri Castle

Endnotes

- 1. Principal ju-jutsu instructor: Professor Wally Jay, with training under Richard Kim (Daito Ryu Aiki-jujutsu), Ron Forrester, Sugino Yoshio (Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto Ryu Heiho-jutsu).
- 2. 2-person drills from Silat, Arnis, Wing Chun, and Taiji, etc.
- 3. McCarthy, Patrick. The Bible of Karate: Bubishi. Tuttle Publishing, 1995. Covers 48 2-person postures and sections on escapes and grappling
- 4. Katori Shinto Ryu emphasizes 2-person drills with tori recreating attack scenarios and uke enacting responses.
- 5. 1992 interview with Liang Yiquan (b. 1931, Dengfeng County), Shaolin Temple Historical Research Society, on 36 empty-handed acts of physical violence.
- 6. Attack scenarios include straight and angular kicks, punches, strikes, head-butts, chokes, grabs, and ground-based attacks.
- 7. Application techniques (strangulation, joint manipulation, balance displacement) use five ancient machines: lever, wedge, pulley, screw, wheel/axle. Percussive impact addresses timing, distance, kinetic energy transfer (http://www.tpub.com/content/engine/14037/).
- 8. Muchimi-di (sticky-hand drills) and Tegumi (grappling drills) from Okinawan and Fujian quanfa, including Southern Praying Mantis and White Crane.
- 9. Shime-waza includes 36 choking practices from classical kata, taught as two-person drills.
- 10. Yamaneryu Kobudo, studied under Kinjo Hiroshi, enriched by Sugino Yoshio and Inoue Motokatsu.
- 11. Translations of Bubishi and Motobu Choki's Watashi no Karate-jutsu (1932), including Naihanchi/Bassai-based kumite drills.
- 12. Hojo undo tools: makiwara, chi-ishi, nigiri-game, tetsuarei, kongoken, etc.
- 13. Testimonials from William Dometrich and Chuck Merriman, in Fraguas, Jose M. Karate Masters. Unique Publications, 2001, pp. 84, 291.
- 14. Itosu Ankoh, "Ten Items" (1908), on karate's physical, moral, and social benefits.
- 15. Funakoshi Gichin, quoted in Fraguas, Karate Masters (2001), p. 291.