

Dear Houston Dojo Members:

First and foremost, I would like to thank your senior Mr. Alex Shurin for inviting me into your dojo to lead your practice on 12/29/13.

I also want to thank Mr. George Canjar for helping me to lead the class. You have excellent leadership with both of these seniors.

### Practicing Kata

Please strive to practice Kata exactly as described in Karate-Dō Kyohan and taught by your seniors. Remember, Kata is not real fighting. Kata is done with precise techniques following the described embusen.

### Application of Techniques contained in Kata

I quoted Master Ohshima in my book as saying; “Kata hold crystals of Knowledge which are passed down from senior to junior”. In light of this profound statement, I offer some small insights for your Kata practice. These tips will be a sort of follow-up or summary of our practice session. Please understand that I am a traditionalist in Shotokan-Ohshima Karate for over 38 years. I practice Kata the way they are designed to be practiced. But I also practice Kata with the sense of developing realistic combat techniques for real-time encounters. I take seriously what Master Ohshima says about the crystals of knowledge and looking at what Master Funakoshi stated about Kata practice. (Our Kata practice has to be done with purpose.)

Kata practice can and should be divided into separate parts; (1) actual forms, using exact moves (2) freedom of application, using techniques from the form. I will offer some beginning tips in practicing Kata. These are but a few, there are many more.

### General Characteristics

First and foremost, please start slowly. Start with the most obvious and basic understanding of the techniques in the Kata. Also understand, that these forms contain many different types of techniques, that we probably wouldn't consider Karate techniques. (That is why practicing and understanding Kata encompasses many years of steady and unremitting training – No short cuts.)

Kata actually have many types and forms of combat. Those who understand, these forms should have an understanding of the entire spectrum of fighting techniques (i.e. striking, kicking, blocking, grappling, throwing, vital areas, pressure points, arm and wrist locks and the whole myriad of self-defense including defending against weapons.

Again stay within your own level of understanding. Don't try to reach for an understanding beyond your own level.

### Beginning Tips / Concepts

- Think of Kata as a catalogue of techniques and movements (not a sequential pattern of movements that go from one opponent to the next).
- Think close or medium close range.
- Think of engaging only 1 opponent.
- Kata works on angles against your opponent.
- Always use both hands – self-defense employs the use of both hands.
- Pivots, turns, jumps usually indicate that your opponent is being thrown by you.
- Hands; held together, they are controlling the opponent, augmented or double blocks, the opponent is grasped and attacked. Pulling hand, grabbing, pulling-in or turning opponent. Open Hands – block, grab, attack eyes, palm heel strike, open hand to throat.
- Kata will always face you in the position that you should be in when engaging an opponent. In other words, don't be caught in trying to practice application from the actual embusen.
- The application of techniques, usually flow in groups of 3 or 4. Look for those groupings in your Kata.
- Remember in realistic Kata application, a block is a lock is a throw is a blow. In other words we have to be free in our thinking and make the technique realistic.

Again thank you for inviting me to practice with you. I will continue this discussion of Kata / combat applications later this year.

Sincerely,  
+ Michael Mantz  
Corpus Christi Shotokan