

Kata Combat Article – A Kata Evolution

Once we have learnt the various techniques and motions within a Kata we can begin to learn to perform the Kata as a solo form. Having gained an overall understanding of the Kata, we can then start to study the Kata competencies in more depth thereby adding a new layer to our understanding of the Kata. We can study facets such as, the number of techniques and repetition, the Kata Embusen (floor plan), type of stances and angles as well as the general feel and ethos of the kata. Patterns start to emerge and kata's themes and characteristics become evident.

If we follow this process for a number of Kata, we can progress to discover inter-Kata relationships. Comparing one kata with another promotes an enhanced understanding of each of the kata as independent entities, especially where the Kata are similar, or make up a Kata series. Only by studying kata from a competence perspective do the patterns and cross overs become evident.

The Kata, Jion and Jiin are separate kata on the Kata syllabus but are known for being very similar in structure, and in relative terms are almost twins. Although Jion is longer and contains twice the number of steps over Jiin in the north-south directions of the Kata Embusen, in terms of similarities in technique Jiin inherits all but two of its techniques from Jion.

From the perspective Kata performance, Jion and Jiin though similar, differ based on combination expansion and abbreviation. Jiin contains the same technique groupings and combinations as Jion, albeit as either abbreviated or expanded forms. This must have a bearing on the combative function of these techniques. When analysed in detail, a distinctive theme emerges.

From a Kata Combat perspective, Jiin is an evolved form of Jion.

Furthermore from a Combat perspective, Jiin is built on the principles already mapped out in Jion. Specifically, Jiin uses the already established choices that Jion presents and covertly inherits the knowledge and learnings of the principles contained in Jion.

Consider Jiin in the context of combination abbreviation. At the start of the Jiin Kata two single Manji Uke (Angular blocks) are performed consecutively without any following up techniques. In Jion, Manji Uke (Angular Block) is present in two separate places and in both instances, precedes a separate follow up. Jion explicitly maps out the choices available to the practitioner, to the opponents' instinctive responses.

This knowledge is subsumed within the principles contained in Jiin.

The next example concerns the Age Uke (Upper Block) combinations. In Jion, Age Uke (Upper Block) is presented with firstly a Gyaku Zuki (Reverse Punch) on the spot followed by an Oi Zuki (Stepping Punch). This shows that the creator is aware of the choice between punching on the spot or moving with forward drive when the opponent reels back during the physical fight. Ideally the forward drive option should always be sought as this is the key to a successful attack. Only in Jiin is this ideal recorded with Age Uke (Upper Block) and Oi Zuki (Stepping Punch) featuring in two pairs.

Consider now the kata Jion and Jiin in the context of combination expansion. In the first and second half of the Kata respectively, Kakiwake Uke (Wedge Block) is followed by Mae Geri (Front Kick), Oi Zuki (Stepping Punch) and Gyaku Zuki (Reverse Punch) in both these katas. Jiin however includes an additional Kosa Uke (Cross Block). For this, the combative function remains the same, the Kosa Uke (Cross Block) is recorded as an extra movement to highlight the need to further follow up on the already executed punches should the need arise. Kosa Uke (Cross Block) is very versatile in application, and various options for its use must be considered in this case. For example, if after executing the punches and the fighting range degrades to an upright clinch, then Kosa Uke (Cross Block) should be practiced with the same function as applied in the first move of both Kata.

Where Jiin contains techniques and motions not included in Jion, new principles are introduced instead. Tessui Uchi (Bottom fist Strike) and Tate Shuto Uke (Vertical Knife hand Block) are the two techniques present in Jiin but not in Jion. Jiin, as the successor to Jion contains instead techniques that represent further choices and follow ups available to the practitioner. The principles on which these techniques are based, show a progression within the structured levels of fighting. Tessui Uchi (Bottom fist Strike) features in Jiin in two separate ways; whilst stepping and turn stepping. This shows that the movement can be applied in two cases, both being throws. The stepping Tessui Uchi (Bottom fist Strike) is a throw using the inside or front of the leg against the opponent. The turn step Tessui Uchi (Bottom fist Strike) uses the outside or rear of the leg against the opponent. Both throws are executed from different ranges and therefore, can be used as initial attacks or integrated within other motions in the Kata.

Finally, consider movement number one of each Kata. Both Kata start with Kosa Uke (Cross Block) except the left and right arm positions featured in Jiin are swapped. Jiin simply starts as Jion does showing explicitly that the first movement can be applied on the other side of the body whilst still maintaining the practitioner's dominant stance. This sets the scene for what Jiin uses in the kata, based on Jion.

With all these cases in mind, every motion and combination in Jiin must be viewed as either assumed learning or as further presentation of choice and progression set out in Jion. Jion and Jiin in tandem form a coherent fighting system with sound combat principles.

For a complete illustrated breakdown of both Jion and Jiin, refer to my e-Books on www.Rakesh-Patel.com.

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