
My Method of Self-Defence

Minosuke Kawaishi

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

MIKONOSUKE KAWAISHI, 7th Dan, Technical Director of the French Federation of Judo, will already be known to countless English judoka through his standard work entitled *My Method of Judo*, the original French text of which I was privileged to translate and edit some time ago. Now in another valuable work entitled *My Method of Self-Defence* the same author has placed under a great obligation not only judoka but members of the general public of both sexes, to acquire a repertoire of self-defensive tactics calculated to serve them in good stead in the unfortunate but by no means unlikely event of their being exposed to savage assault by the thugs and plug-uglies who in this lawless and predatory age adhere to the simple plan, that "they should take who have the power and they should keep who can." On the other hand, with the spread among the law-abiding public of knowledge of Mr. Kawaishi's system of self-defence we may hope to witness a steady decrease in the number of these street incidents. Moreover the citizen's greater ability to defend himself against some sudden onslaught would discourage the criminal elements from risking their own carcasses in such hazardous attacks.

In my version of the author's original text I have been at special pains to select what seem to me to be the most effective and practical defences and counter-attacks under the various heads which go to make up the system as a whole. And in this connexion I would call the reader's special attention to the second and last part of the book which deals with the so-called *Atemi-waza* or methods of attacking vulnerable points, often vital spots (*kyusho*) in the human body with the hand, elbow, head and foot respectively. In my opinion it is hardly too much to say that in many ways Mr. Kawaishi's exposition of this dangerous branch of the arts of *ju-jitsu* and *judo* is the most comprehensive so far available in any European language. Visually the preliminary diagrams of the human body and separately of hands and feet enormously facilitate the reader's task of understanding and learning to apply the subsequent techniques in all their deadly efficacy. And since *atemi* blows with head, hand, elbow, knees and feet (heels and toes) form an integral part of many of the self-defensive

l, I would impress upon the reader that
be made to master this branch of the art,
may not have enough leisure to undergo
in judo upon whose principles Mr.
of self-defence is largely based. His ability
ete the appropriate defence with an atemi
essary, give the assailant his quietus "for
not but strengthen his self-confidence. And
well advised to heed the author's warning
e defences, counter holds and atemi are
y be mortal, yet should the malevolence
attack leave him with scant time for nice
his choice of riposte, he will be morally
duly worrying himself over the issue of
ave great pleasure in commending Mr.
nt book to future readers.

E.J.H.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

In his Foreword the author emphasizes the point that he elaborated his *Method of Self-Defence* with the constant that he has maintained close contact with judo. It is therefore our view that the student's progress in both these arts will be wonderfully stimulated by their concurrent practice. Nevertheless this inter-dependence does not imply that it is nevertheless for him to practise judo in order to benefit from the obligatory study of his system of self-defence. On the contrary, a unilateral account has been so devised that it constitutes an entirely original system which women, children and the aged can on its own and utilize in an emergency. To train in a judo dissimilate therefore absolutely indispensable, but it is essential that each movement in its successive phases such as entry to study and disequilibrium. Your aim should be to cultivate contact speed of execution to a pitch where it converges at the automatism of the reflexes. Exercise also to execute them on auto-defences equally well to left and right.

Special attention is drawn to the second and last part of this little volume, viz., that dealing with atemi or part of dealt on vital and sensitive spots in the body. The combats of this most valuable section attests the author's compilation of the old jujutsu and above all of the legendary knowledge of the deadly method of Japanese boxing in which the karateka's hand have been made as tough as iron by the pounding on boards and bricks. In many cases a baby's middle finger has been sharpened to razor keenness on hammer blows. Knees, feet and head are used as weapons. A swinging blow with a karateka's sabre-like lethal could easily break the neck of the party at the receiving hands. Mr. Kawaishi's treatment of atemi methods does not only call for experience in karate to ensure their efficacy, but for the younger and more ambitious pupils, apprized of the terrible potency of this art, will be encouraged to train their hands along similar lines to render them hard and doubly sure.

Do not forget that quasi-mechanical repetition of self-defence methods should be accompanied by what is called *taisabaki*, or the art of managing the body for the purpose of eluding attack and defending yourself. This rotation of posture must

be made with the entire body ("tai") starting from the hips. The taisabaki enables you to preserve perfect balance and to counter with an atemi method with the maximum of decontraction, speed, precision and efficacy. The potency of an atemi technique is the function of the "moment" when it is delivered. It should reach the adversary when he is relaxed and off balance. The blow ought to be dealt with all its strength and density only at the instant of impact. This is a condition essential to its success. And the difficult art of defence, once acquired, should be resorted to only in cases of extreme urgency.

For a better understanding of the following pages it should be noted that the various phases of the movements are explained separately by paragraphs. TORI executes the defence and UKE submits. UKE is the aggressor and TORI the demonstrator of every self-defence method. For the sake of clarity TORI is always depicted with black hair and wearing a black belt, whereas UKE is always depicted with light hair and wearing a white belt. Every phase of the defences forms the subject of a drawing and the whole reads normally from left to right and from top to bottom. In all the figures the movements and contacts are indicated by arrows. In each series the parries follow as far as possible an analogous progression: attacks effected from a distance, then from short range, holds most customary or least dangerous at first and in case of need attacks from the front, side and back. Lastly, these numerous parries are complementary and interchangeable in the sense that they are valid against various attacks. It will then be appropriate to master at the outset the holds in the order indicated, but it will soon be realized that the range of parries is infinitely wider still, above all when combined with the atemi described in the second and last part of this work which for that reason must never be lost sight of, as in many cases they form an integral part or element of the given method of defence.

PART ONE

I

BASIC SELF-DEFENSIVE POSITIONS

THESE defensive positions are not designed to constitute a definite guard as in boxing or fencing. They are rather a style of holding oneself, a series of attitudes which naturally link up with one another and enable the defender with



Fig. 1

maximum facility to pivot, retreat and advance in order to foil the attack, to block it, then to counter it or even to forestall it. They are above all studied and practised in that part of jujutsu which is called karate or Japanese boxing. The essential principle of this Self-Defence may be summed up as follows:



Fig. 2

1. Atemi.
2. Parry and counter-attack.
3. Atemi.

The first atemi is a preliminary counter which affords an opening for successfully applying the counter, e.g. a lock,

strangulation or throw. The second atemi permits the defender to finish off his opponent, if necessary.

The practice of the Defensive Positions trains you not to be taken off your guard in the face of an attack and instantaneously to place yourself in the best position for defence and counter.

Much as in judo the execution of the kata or pre-arranged forms displays the degree of your knowledge and assimilation of techniques, so here in self-defence the manner in which you adopt these positions reflects your comprehension and your mastery of the whole.

WHAT COMBAT TACTICS TO ADOPT

At first NEVER ADVANCE on your opponent. According to the principle of judo yield to the adverse force in order better to conquer it and in retreating pivot in such wise as not to lose ground.

The knees are slightly bent; they form as it were springs or shock absorbers which you must accustom yourself to flex with suppleness and speed. The upper part of your body is kept upright, without stiffness, the right flank in front, but it is well to train yourself to pivot equally well to right and left.

Step: The feet are placed flush with the ground, without dragging, without taking too big paces, above all without skipping. Accustom yourself to pivot by crossing one foot laterally far behind the other. The general equilibrium emanates from the abdomen and the hips. Advance freely only for the counter-attack, after the preliminary atemi which has created the opportunity.

Rôle of the Arms: As in boxing and the French *savate*, the position and the action of the arms are closely linked with those of the legs and feet. You should exercise in the contacts and the blocking atemi with your forearms at a right-angle one to the other in the different possible positions or parallel the one against the other, their cubital surfaces more or less close together and the elbows more or less near to the body. (The cubital surface is the side of the forearms containing the ulna or larger of the two bones of the forearm. In simpler language it is the little finger edge of the forearm.)

DEFENCES AGAINST FRONTAL ATTACKS

PARRY TO DOUBLE-HAND STRANGULATION: (*Fig. 3*).

UKE faces TORI, grasps his neck, his thumbs on the wind-pipe, fingers placed on both sides against the carotid arteries. TORI draws in his chin, contracts the maxillaries and



Fig. 3

muscles of the neck, slightly turns his head and body to the left which move compels UKE when following this action to disjoin his thumbs a little; with his right hand seizes the base of UKE's left thumb; then symmetrically with his left hand the edges of UKE's left hand in the region of the muscles occupying the medial side of the little finger.



Fig. 4

TORI turns to his right and twists UKE's left hand forward from his (TORI's) left shoulder. UKE's hand is now turned downwards. TORI completes this torsion of UKE's left hand with a flexion at right-angles to UKE's wrist.

During this combined movement of twisting and bending

the bases of TORI's thumbs must be kept in close contact.

Remark: While executing this wrist-lock TORI should not remain immobile but shift so that his whole body participates in the movement and helps to unbalance UKE. This remark, true in judo, is equally valid for all these self-defensive movements.



Fig. 5

PARRY TO STRANGULATION WITH ONE HAND: (*Fig. 4*).

With his right hand held downwards UKE grasps TORI's neck.

TORI pivots slightly to his left, as in the preceding movement, then with his right hand seizes the edge of UKE's hand and with his left hand UKE's wrist.