

END SHOWKARATE*
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In this business one sees a lot of kata. In my opinion, a lot of kata is very bad. The poor quality of the kata is caused by a lack of attention to the fundamentals. While the term *kihon* means basic as in the blocks, kicks, strikes and thrusts are termed basic, the fact is that these "basics" consist of many isolatable movements or sub-movements and mindsets that are de-emphasized or, through ignorance, arrogance or laziness are ignored.

My bet is that many have sought to learn advanced kata for the wrong reasons. Perhaps learning something "advanced" is thought to be better than learning something "basic." Maybe the purpose of learning advanced kata was winning tournaments, or reducing the time spent in pursuit of a given rank, possibly believing that a brown belt holder working an advanced kata will receive a higher score or a more rapid promotion than a brown belt holder who works a brown belt level kata. If this manner of thinking enters in to it, the point of kata is lost [see below]. Perhaps one learned some advanced kata from a high ranking dan in a seminar. If so, it is a good bet that the seminar time was spent learning to apply movements that the teacher assumed the students already knew. One does not spend seminar money and time learning how to breathe, walk, move one's hips, use pullback, or deliver power.

Somewhere in Phil's Notes [Shihan Phil Perales compiled an extensive set of notes from O-Sensei's Saturday Review classes. Happily for posterity, he made several copies of them.] there is a list of "Things to Look For in Good Kata" that our sensei taught us in 1961. Among that list are such categories as pullback, belt level, rhythm, focus, attitude, hand position, breath and... the list is quite extensive. From what I have seen of kata in the Trias tradition in the last few years, much of the original art has been lost.

One way to learn the basics is to first to list and correctly demonstrate them, and then structure classes to teach them. As a brief example, this evening we stressed correct belt level. Different dan holders worked kata and those observing only watched for the transitions among stances - did the belt level remain even [good] or go up and down in an inefficient manner [bad]? After each student's kata, the other students described the quality of the body shifting they witnessed. Using the same format, we worked on the consistency of one's *hikite* [pullback hand].

Kata [*J.form*] presents an opportunity for the karateka to go to war. Between the opening and closing bows, for that period in the history of your life, you are free to unleash your warrior self. Kata that is worked with this intensity is rarely seen in public. I challenge you to perform Shorei-ryu kata this manner!

**Showkarate is a pejorative Japanese/English pun used to describe karate made to impress or show off people who are not martial artists.*