

Recognizing Kuzushi in Dach

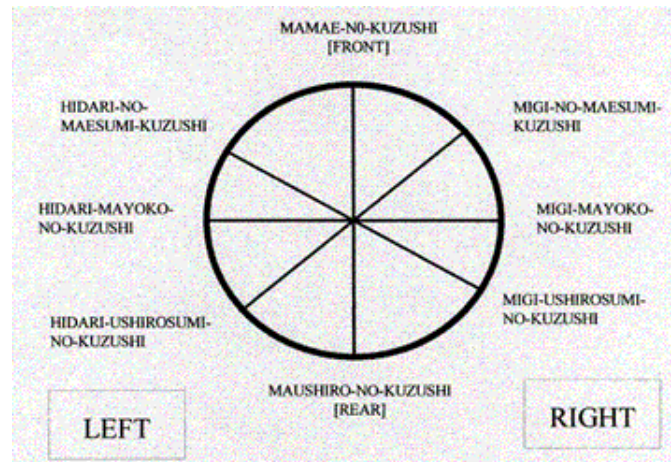
8-15-08

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: To recognize the Kuzushi that occurs in Karate Dach and use it to your advantage when formulating a defense or response to an attack.

The Karate Dach or “stance” is commonly practiced as the foundation on which you build your Karate training. Your foundation helps you to progress, and like a buildings foundation, balance is the key. Without proper balance in your foundation, everything on which you build on top of your foundation will topple.

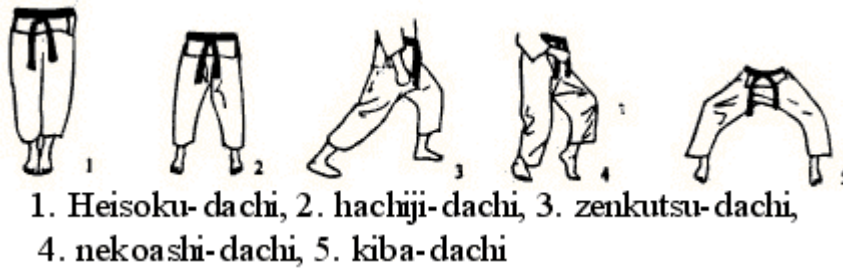
Karate Dach each have a practical application along with their Kata applications. Understanding those applications is part of building your Karate foundation. The part of the foundation that is commonly overlooked is the Kuzushi or “off balance” in each of the stances. Kuzushi is found in every “Tai Sabaki” or body movement and “Ashi Sabaki” or foot step. Recognizing the Kuzushi will help you to respond to an attack or formulate a counter attack based upon the Dach and Kuzushi of your opponent.

In Judo, the emphasis is placed on Kuzushi over the Dach. The common forms of Kuzushi are the “Happo No Kuzushi” or the eight directions of off balance. Hakko Ryu Ju-Jutsu is based off of these directions. This figure below shows the eight directions of off balance.

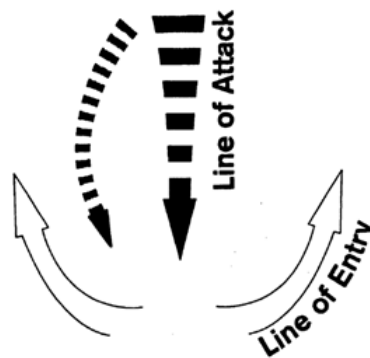


Having the honor of studying both Karate and Judo has given me an opportunity to examine both Dach and Kuzushi. When you are able to recognize the Kuzushi that exist in each Dach, Tai Sabaki, and Ashi Sabaki, the foundation of your Budo training can be reinforced with the knowledge of how they coexist and how you can recognize and use them to your advantage.

To understand how to recognize Kuzushi in Dachi, let's review some common Dachi and terminology. Below is a picture of common Karate Dachi and the Dachi names;

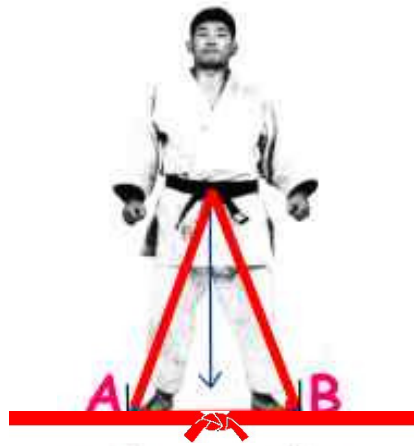


In most Martial Arts the “line of attack” is the direction your attacker is moving. The figure below shows the line of attack and the movements that bring you to the inside or outside of the attacker’s body.



The eight directions of off balance are a good base to start with, however when the attacks or counter attacks are already in motion, the recognition of Kuzushi must happen simultaneously with the attack or counter attack. Easier ways of recognizing Kuzushi are based off of the attacker’s foot placement. A visual aid of red lines and green lines may help with visualizing Kuzushi in motion. The red line is the line that connects between the balls of the attacker’s feet.

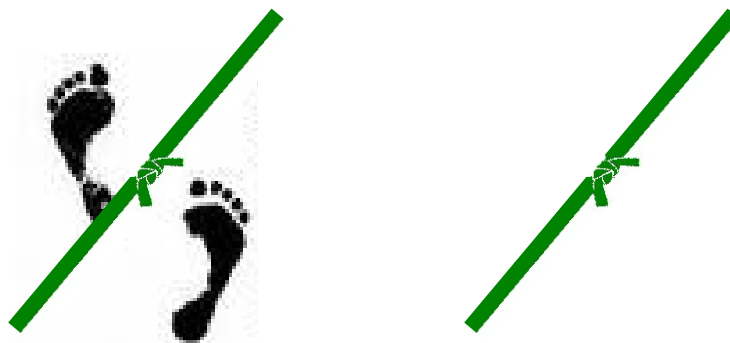
The line exists in every step or stance. See the figure below the red line is located between “A” and “B”.

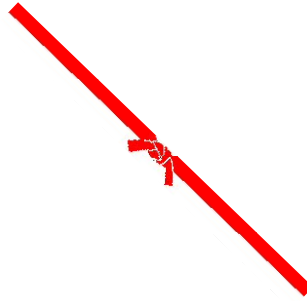


The figure above is very strong or balanced pushing and pulling him from “A” to “B” or side to side on the red line / red belt. The figure is very weak or off balanced pushing or pulling him from front to back or on the green line / green belt. The figure below shows the red line in a Dachi.



The Green line is found by splitting the red line down the middle. The figure below shows the direction of the green line in a Dachi. Placing a red line or red belt on the floor with a green line or green belt crossing the red line in an X pattern may help you to visualize the concept.





When the opponent steps forward or backward, the lines change colors from red to green and from green to red to adjust for the opponent's movement. Remember that all lines become green if the opponent is on one foot, because the opponents balance is weak in any direction when any foot leaves the ground.

Now think of all of the Karate Dachi you know. Practice moving inside and outside of the attacker's body and visualize the red line and green line that is always present. Now formulate the defense or response to an attack using the red and green line concept. You are now recognizing the Kuzushi or off balance that occurs in every Karate Dachi, Tai Sabaki and Ashi Sabaki. You can move the strongest mountain through Kuzushi. This is the very definition of the Judo principle, "maximum efficiency, minimum effort". This same concept can be used for any Martial Art such as Karate, Judo, Ju-Jitsu, or Aikido.

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