



一生剣命

打ち込み十徳・受け八徳

UCHIKOMI JUTTOKU

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打ち込み十徳・受け八徳 *Uchikomi Juttoku Uke Hattoku*

It is said that *Shusaku Chiba* (one of the great kenjutsu master) listed these advantages of *Uchikomi* and *uke* (receiving) in his writings. *Uchikomi* here means *kirikaeshi*. Some dojos still use the term *Uchikomi kirikaeshi*.

Let me tell you a bit about the word, “*komi*”. *Komi* is a noun form of a verb, *komu*. However, it is often used as a combination with another verb, in this case, *utsu* (to strike).

What does it tell us when two verbs get together and make a new verb form?

Uchikomi is "to strike" + "*komu*". It tells us that the strike is not just a strike. It is a strike with all you have. You devote everything you have into your strike.

"*Fumikomi*" is another example. As you can read in the article of *fumikomi*, it has a sense of commitment. It is because of the word "*komu*". English as well there is a kind of difference between "to step" and "to step into", right?

Thus, when you do "*Uchikomi*", you do not just strike, but you devote yourself into your strikes. Otherwise, you are not doing any "*Uchikomi*".

Now about *juttoku*. It means ten advantages or 10 effective points.

Uchikomi Juttoku

1. Your techniques become faster and stronger.

Once you attack, you do not want to stop until you defeat your opponent. You can acquire the speed and power to do so by doing *kirikaeshi*.

2. Your strikes become stronger.

Your strikes should have the right strength. If your strike is too weak, it is not seen as a cut but if your strike is too hard you hurt your training partner. You must know the right strength you need in kendo.

3. You can come to exhale longer.

"Exhale long and inhale short" is an ideal way of breathing. The time a person inhales is often seen as a chance to attack in a battle because when we are inhaling it is hard for us to react. That is why we want to keep inhaling short.

Often it is said that *kirikaeshi* should be done with one breath. You can acquire an ideal way of breathing through *kirikaeshi*.

4. Your arm movements become smoother.

The most important thing is to lift your swords up above your head. The movement of cutting down is not as important as bringing your sword up. In old days, if we did not bring our sword above our head in *kirikaeshi*, we could not learn anything else. That is because if you can do big strikes, you can do small strikes.

In addition, bigger strikes make us so tired that we cannot bring our sword up. So we have to learn how to relax our shoulders, arms and wrists so that we can keep going. This is only why to learn how to relax. Smooth strikes are only acquired after a lot of *kirikaeshi* with big cuts.

5. Your movements become smoother.

Normally we tend to have unnecessary strengths; in our arms and every part of our body. But when you get really tired and no longer have unnecessary strengths in our body, our strike gets much better. That is because we are striking with our mental strength not the physical strength.

In order for us to learn such beautiful strikes without unnecessary strengths, we have to strike a lot and make ourselves tired quickly.

6. It makes us to use a longer sword at will

Probably in the old days, they needed to use a long sword as well. And *kirikaeshi* was effective for such purpose.

7. You can gain a good balance.

Now in order for you to gain a good balance by *kirikaeshi*, you must make sure that your body movement is stable. You should not go up and down as you move forwards and backwards. And of course you are shouting from the stomach so that trains to increase your kiai level. That is very good for maintain a good balance.

8. You will be able to see clearly

By doing a lot of *kirikaeshi*, you should be able to learn a good distance for you. The original Japanese is "Me Akirakani Narukoto". The kanji for "me (eye)" here is a bit different from what we use for eye balls. So it could be "mind eyes" that enable us to "read" our opponent's movements. However we usually interpret this, "we can learn distance to strike properly".

9. You can learn a good distance

In old days, motodachi was in charge of *kirikaeshi*. What that man is as motodachi changed the distance kakarite had to adjust his distance to strike. This made kakarite think about his distance and adjust his distance so he could strike with monouchi (the sharpest part of the sword).

10. *Tenouchi* will become light and sharp.

Tenouchi literally means “the inside hand” so the palms. In general, it is translated as “grip” but it is a bit more than a grip. It is hard to explain so I will introduce you to a video.

Uke Hattoku

1. Your mind becomes calm

You are also learning how to receive or block strikes. That gives you more confidence to receive and counterattack your opponent.

2. You will be able to see clearly

Explanation of this is the same as above.

3. You will be able to see your opponent’s sword better

By receiving, you will be able to see the course of your opponent’s strikes.

4. Your movements become smoother.

Same as above.

5. You will become fit and solid.

In old days, as you can imagine, training was very hard. Especially taiatari (body check or crush into your opponent) was harder back then. By receiving such *kirikaeshi* all the time, your body could become solid like a rock and immobile like a tree.

6. Your *tenouchi* becomes firm and better.

You need a good *tenouchi* to receive properly.

7. Your receiving (defense) skills improve.

If you do it properly, the way you receive become a part of “counterattack” motion.

8. Your arms become stronger.

Uchikomi Kirikaeshi

In my dojo in Japan, kirikaeshi is used to be called Uchikomi kirikaeshi. And I didn't know why we called it like that and other dojo didn't it as we did. And then I found this website (in Japanese) that explains what it means. So I would like to share that with you and also I will share a video that explains what Uchikomi kirikaeshi means in action.

Uchikomi: this is a noun form of a verb, uchikomu that means “ to step in to strike” or "strike forward". And with commitment.

So when you do kirikaeshi, when you strike foreword, you should have a feeling of chasing your opponent and strike at the same time.

Kirikaeshi: this is a “going backwards” part of kirikaeshi. Kirikaeshi is a noun form of a verb, “Kirikaesu” that means “to turn a course of what you have just executed”. In the kirikaeshi, after getting blocked by your partner, you will turn your shinai around and change the course of your shinai and strike the other side. That action is “kirikaeshi”.

So in Uchikomi Kirikaeshi, we strike forward with vigorous kiai with a sense of chasing your opponent, and when going backwards you must have a sense of changing the course of your shinai because your strike is blocked.

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