

Kawashi Waza vs. Kuzushi Waza

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Introduction

Kawashi Waza and Kuzushi Waza are techniques for positioning you and your opponent's body such that you have an advantage in the application of your offensive technique.

Kuzushi Waza are techniques that apply force to your opponent to make him move in a certain way to put him off balance and create an advantage for executing an offensive technique. Kuzushi can be a subtle push or pull that the opponent may not even feel or a large force (such as a Shotei Jodan Uchi strike to the chin) that takes him right out of his sneakers. Application of Kuzushi Waza is necessary before application of an offensive technique but can be applied before an opponent moves or attacks.

Kawashi Waza are techniques that redirect or deflect your opponent's attack force while putting you in superior position for your offensive technique. The oblique step deflection can be used to illustrate Kawashi Waza. Oblique [1] is an adjective defined as having a slanting position or direction; indirect or evasive. A complete explanation of oblique escape and deflection movement from a Biological Anthropology perspective can be found in reference [2].

Example of Kuzushi Waza

Unless you are fighting a trained opponent, most attackers will off balance themselves with the motion of their attack. For many of the beginning Ju-Jitsu defenses against attacks, the defender blocks the attack to avoid getting hit, but that blocking action has a good chance of giving the attacker his balance back.

A beginning defense against a right roundhouse attack can be used to demonstrate the application of Kuzushi Waza. The attacker steps forward slightly with the right foot during the punch, off balancing themselves to the forward and attack side. The defender steps slightly forward (left foot), executing Shuto Uchi Uke to block the punch. The block will absorb some amount of the force generated by the attack and has the chance of giving the attacker back his balance. The defender must now apply force to the attacker to insure the attacker is off-balance for the defender's offensive move. The defender grabs the attacking arm, executes a Shotei Jodan Uchi strike to off-balance attacker to his right-rear and throws attacker with a rear Ashi Waza.

Example of Kawashi Waza

The right roundhouse attack can also be used to demonstrate the application of Kawashi Waza. The attacker steps forward slightly with the right foot during the punch, off balancing themselves to the forward and attack side. Rather than stepping forward with the left foot and blocking the punch, the defender steps obliquely inside (forward with right foot) and turns hips and shoulders to avoid attack, deflects and grabs the attacker's arm with the left hand (continues and amplifies attacker's forward motion) and strikes attacker in the neck with Shuto Sakotsu Uchi. While continuing attacker's forward motion, defender pivots into Tai Otoshi or other forward throw.

Another good example of the application of Kawashi Waza is standing Tsukkake in the Kime-no-Kata.

Conclusion

Kawashi Waza utilize Tai Sabaki (body movement) to evade an attack and redirect it in order to further off-balance the opponent in the direction of the attack. Kuzushi Waza involves applying a direct force to the opponent to move him into position for an offensive technique, whether or not the opponent has moved or attacked. In an attack situation, the advanced Jujitsuka will always choose Kawashi Waza as it is more efficient and leads to a faster, more powerful entry into the offensive technique.

References

[1] Webster's New World College Dictionary, 1999: Page 995

[2] Lewis, John J. The Technology Of Self-Defense Short Course Manual, Northwestern University Ju-jutsu Program. 1988.