

Ukemi

'A Higher Understanding'



Part Two

Advanced Ukemi

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Introduction

This technical paper has been prepared by *Sensei Bronson Grayson* for Kyushin Ryu School of Jujitsu as part of the *ni dan* grading criteria.

The techniques described and demonstrated within this paper are specific to Jujitsu training in the modern era of martial arts. The techniques are rich in tradition and play a major role in the system of Jujitsu.

This paper should be read in conjunction with Part One, *Ukemi – The Art of Falling*. This will help the reader gain a more indepth knowledge of ukemi.

This paper will explain and demonstrate advanced breakfall techniques as practised by students and sensei, within the Kyushin Ryu School of Jujitsu. It will highlight the importance of self preservation incorporating *ukemi* and it will also give readers a more thorough understanding of its philosophy.

This paper provides the reader with a more interactive and more 'hands on' interpretation of *ukemi waza* techniques by demonstrating higher level breakfalls for the more advanced student. It will assist in building confidence in the student's journey within Jujitsu and life in general.

The techniques within this paper are for the more experienced and confident student. Due to the higher level of difficulty required for these breakfalls, there is a higher risk of injury if done incorrectly. It is advised that these breakfalls be supervised by an accredited Jujitsu coach.



アシスト身

Ashisuto Ukemi

(Assisted Breakfalls)

Assisted breakfalls are designed to aid in the confidence building process. By using a designated partner these movements are used to complement *uke's* breakfall. A designated assistant becomes a stepping stone in the path to *ukemi* greatness by helping *uke* perform specific breakfalls. It also helps *uke* overcome any fears or apprehension associated with falling. Once these breakfalls have been mastered *uke* can move on to unassisted, more advanced breakfalls.

Not only are these types of breakfalls helpful in student development, they are also useful for group warm ups/drills.

The following two assisted breakfalls are practised by all students within Kyushin Ryu School of Jujitsu. For any students wishing to challenge themselves or strive for a higher level of *ukemi*, it all starts here. Only the right side breakfalls will be depicted.



アシスト右横身

Ashisuto Yoko Ukemi

(Assisted Side Breakfall)

This side breakfall is fundamental in Jujitsu and is practised as an assisted method for various reasons. One is to build trust between *uke* and partner, the other to build confidence in *uke*. It also assists sensei in measuring a student's commitment and ability within *ukemi*.

The right side breakfall will be depicted only.

In this particular breakfall the partner stands side on to *uke*, approximately 3 metres apart. (1) The partner must extend the left arm (slightly bent) in such a way for *uke* to be able to link arms together. *Uke* must approach from the right side of the partner. A brisk walk or slow jog is encouraged for the approach. (1, 2)

As *uke* links arms with the partner (left to left), *uke* must throw both legs up and forward and prepare for *migi yoko ukemi*. The partner must prepare for the falling weight of *uke* and continue to link arms to assist the fall. In doing this, the partner must maintain a strong *jigotai* stance to maintain posture and balance. (3,4)

Kiai should be heard just prior to the impact of the breakfall, ensuring *uke's* right arm is 45 degrees to the body, palm facing down, and *uke's* right leg is to be straight and the left leg bent. (4)

Assisted *hidari yoko ukemi* (left side breakfall) is to be completed in the same manner except *uke* will advance from the left side of partner, right arms will be linked followed by a left side breakfall.

The emphasis on this technique is cooperation. This is a training tool and a great addition to a class warm up procedure.





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アシスト手型

Ashisuto Kata Kakou

(Assisted Kata Fall)

This breakfall has a reputation for being the most challenging for students. The thought of flipping sideways in the air and landing on the ground can be quite daunting for most. A partner assists in reducing any apprehension by guiding *uke* into the *kata ukemi*. *Uke* does this by grasping hold of the partner throughout the breakfall to reduce the impact upon landing.

Only *migi kata ukemi* will be demonstrated.

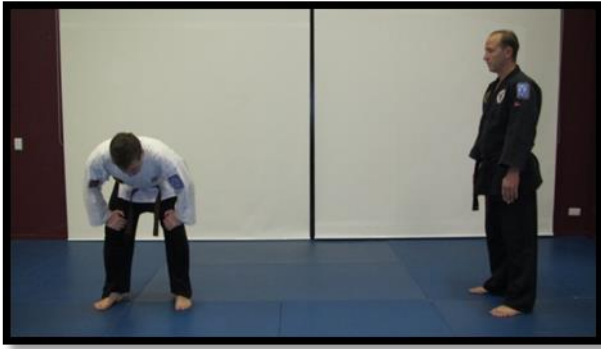
The partner must stand side on to *uke*, approximately 3 metres apart. The partner must bend forward, using the hands on top of the knees to reinforce a strong balanced posture. (1)

Uke approaches from the left side of the partner. A fast paced walk or jog is encouraged for the approach. As *uke* approaches the partner, *uke's* right arm reaches across and over the back of the partner and grasps the partner's *gi* on the right side. This process helps reduce the impact upon breakfalling and controls the momentum of the technique throughout *kata ukemi*. (2,3)

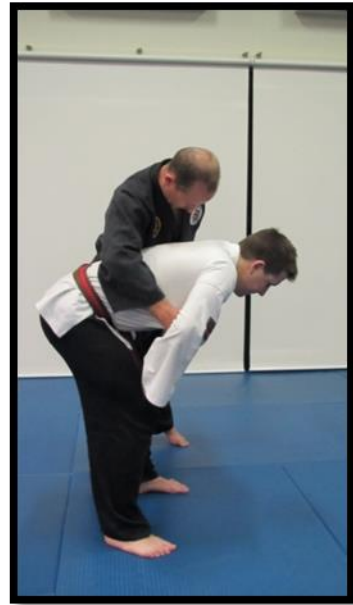
The body should then be projected over partner whilst maintaining a grasp of the *gi*. As both feet leave the ground the head of *uke* must be tucked in, chin to chest, to assist in a safe fall. (4,5) Upon impact, the left leg and the left arm of *uke* must be straight, with the arm being at a 45 degree angle to the body. *Uke's* right leg must be bent, with the foot impacting flat with the mat to form part of the breakfall. A *kiai* must be produced upon impact. (6)

The whole emphasis on this technique is to get used to the feeling of flipping over, whilst having a partner as a guide and saviour. Using a partner, *uke* can slow down the process and practise in a safer more reassuring manner.

This breakfall is practised by all students within Kyushin Ryu School of Jujitsu. It is not only challenging, but rewarding when accomplished.



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単独で高度な身

Tandoku de Kodona Ukemi

(Unassisted Advanced Breakfalls)

During unassisted breakfalls *Uke* is unassisted and is to complete the breakfall without a partner. Within assisted breakfall techniques the partner is utilised by controlling the fall and lessening the impact. After practice within assisted techniques, a higher level of confidence and skill will be obtained; therefore the next level of unassisted techniques may be implemented with less apprehension.

The following advanced *ukemi* must only be performed under the guidance and assurance of an accredited Jujitsu coach. The physical demand placed on the body during these techniques is quite high. Students must be physically fit and conditioned to meet these demands. These techniques are never going to be completely painless or easy for most, but rest assured they can reduce the possibility of injury and in more extreme cases, save a life.

Learning how to breakfall correctly and confidently by ensuring self preservation are the main principles of *ukemi*. It is to reduce the extent of injury, minimise the risk and reduce the harm.

Within Kyushin Ryu School of Jujitsu advanced breakfalls are practised generally by a blue belt level and/or above, or by students where a higher level of ability has been recognised.



高度な前飛び受け身

Kodona Mae Tobi Ukemi

(Advanced Forward Dive Breakfall)

This technique is previously mentioned in the first part of this paper, however the level of commitment needed to comply with advanced *ukemi* is much higher. The higher ranked students are expected to perform this breakfall from a standing position. In addition to this, jumping into the air to add height is encouraged and only restricted, by individual student ability.

To initiate this breakfall stand with feet shoulder width apart. (1)

After the body leaves the ground by jumping, the body must be flattened out as horizontal as possible. This same position achieved in midfall should be the same as the finish position. (2,3,4)

Using the forearms, elbows to fingertips as shock absorbers the force of impact is dispersed throughout the body upon landing. The feet utilise all toes as springs to support the lower half of the body. The head must be turned 90 degrees to avoid any chance of injury to the face. The use of *kiai* is a must. (5)

A fall from heights is never going to be completely painless, but self belief and good technique will give students confidence to continue to challenge themselves.





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前方のフリップち身

Zenpo no furippu Ura Ukemi

(Forward Flip Into Back Breakfall)

In part one, *Ukemi - the Art of Falling*, this breakfall is described as a handstand back breakfall. For the novice it can be performed from a headstand, and for advanced students, a full front flip in the air is required. This breakfall is only to be attempted by students who have shown good technique up to this stage of learning. The risk of injury is greatly increased, if inadequate height and rotation is not achieved. Due to this, the breakfall requires a high level of commitment and concentration. *Kiai* is integral for this technique.

To start, students must visualise what they are setting out to achieve, which in the beginning is a forward flip. Take off can be either from one foot or both which ever is preferred. At this stage sufficient height needs to be in mind to achieve full rotation. The arms are used to help with rotation by swinging them downward and beyond the hips in unison. This assists the momentum required to rotate the whole body forward. (1,2)

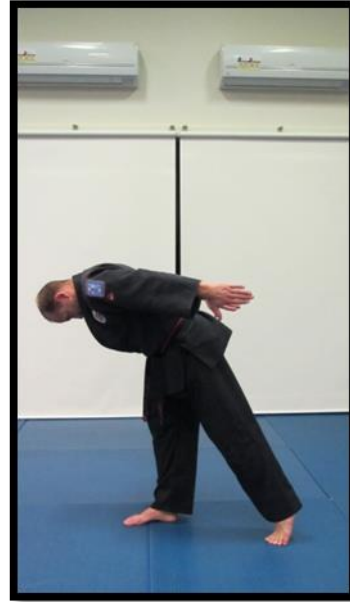
The head must be in a forward position with the chin on the chest. As the body rotates, *uke* prepares for the landing with both the arms positioned at 45 degree angle to the body, impacting the mat in unison with palms facing down, and *uke's* shoulders remaining on the mat. (3,4)

Uke's feet both breakfall in unison, flat on the mat, both legs bent at the knees and the lower back must be arched and not in contact with the mat, with the hips in the air. The end or finish position is the same as in the previous mentioned hand stand back breakfall. *Kiai* must be used to avoid winding and to assist in a safe fall. (5)





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高度な手型

Kodona Kata Kakou

(Advanced Kata Fall)

This breakfall is well known for its visual entertainment. It is spectacular and confronting. This particular breakfall is practised for the use in *Kyushin Jitsu Kata* and is an essential technique within Kyushin Ryu School of Jujitsu. Students are encouraged to start practising this breakfall as soon as possible.

Students must have the ability to perform *Kyushin Jitsu Kata* to a required level in order to receive rank promotion. The right *kata* ukemi only, will be described to avoid confusion.

Standing with *uke's* feet shoulder width apart, *uke* steps forward on the right foot and positions the arms to replicate a circle, with the right elbow pointing forward and fingertips facing each other. (1) *Uke's* arms need to swing in a way to create momentum. The left elbow should swing backwards and up, and the right elbow should be forward and swing down across the left side of the body. As the hands pass the left hip, project the body forward using the head, by tucking *uke's* chin to the chest while *uke* looks down the left arm. The head remains in this position until the end of the breakfall. (2)

As the body is projected into the air, the body rotates in a circular motion with *uke's* left leg and left arm preparing to break the fall of the body. The finish position for this breakfall is *uke's* left leg straight and left arm straight at 45 degrees to the body with palm down on the mat. The right leg is to be bent with the foot planted firmly on the mat and right hand placed on the chest. *Kiai* should be heard just prior to impact. (3,4,5)



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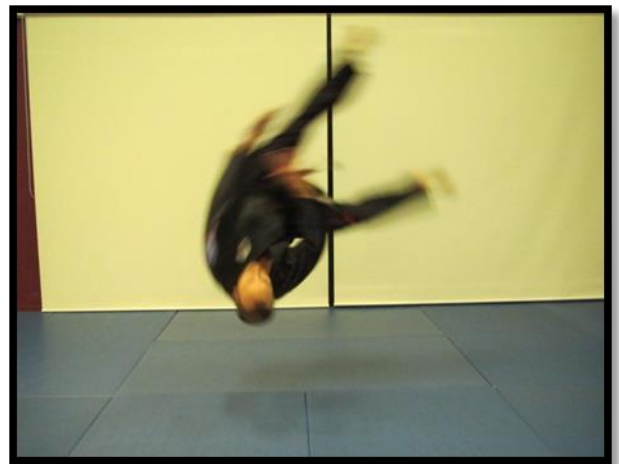


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反転生涯

Hanten Shogai

(Rolling Over Obstacles)

The use of right or left hand forward rolls to avoid an obstacle is practised within Kyushin Ryu School of Jujitsu. The principle of this practice is to avoid contact with an obstacle in the path of a roll. Depending on the obstacles' sizes or distance between them, this technique must be adjusted accordingly to avoid the obstacle and any injury.

The projection of the body for distance and height are encouraged to assist students in gaining a higher skill level. On the mat an exercise ball or a delegated student is used as the obstacle; however, in real life situations, the obstacle could range from broken glass right up to a motor vehicle.

After many years of training in Jujitsu, rolling becomes second nature and is very beneficial for self preservation. Again the actual principle of the technique remains unchanged as described in Part 1; however, the level of commitment required in advanced Ukemi is much higher. Only individual ability is the limit to which this breakfall can be applied. Self belief and confidence are big influences here. The obstacle is merely an instrument used to break down any psychological barriers in students.

Please see diagrams on page 17. Each diagram represents a different example of height and distance gained by avoiding obstacles.





Ukemi For Life

All breakfalls that have been demonstrated in this paper are practised within Kyushin Ryu School of Jujitsu. The breakfalls not only assist students in building confidence and gaining skills within Jujitsu, but also help prepare for any real life situations that may threaten lives.

The situations and applications where *ukemi* can be applied outside the dojo are endless. *Ukemi* could be used from something as simple as tripping over on a footpath to more extreme cases like avoiding an oncoming vehicle.

Ukemi benefits all.... female, male, elderly and young.

Elderly people can be prone to falls, some quite bad. A bruise on the arm is a better result than a possible fractured hip.

Unfortunately in today's society there are more frequent assaults on women. It has been proven that this is less likely to occur when the victim is more aware and alert of their surroundings. Confidence and body awareness are all associated within *ukemi*.

The earlier *ukemi* is practised the better. It should become second nature to students and sensei through diligent practice and a disciplined approach to the study of Jujitsu.

Jujitsu has a broad range of techniques and *ukemi waza* is just a small part of this. As with all techniques slight variations in entry, execution and application are to be expected.

It is the Jujitsu way to adapt, blend into combat, be fluent, yet decisive and always look after self first.



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Sensei Meladee Stackpoole
4th Dan

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