

## Can you see the circles?

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Shotokan karate is promoted as an extremely effective form of karate that is linear in its technical aspect. And that is true. But can you see the circles concealed within the straight lines?

From my Wu Shu training it is clearly evident to me how the circular is contained within all karate forms, you just need to look beyond the obvious. The circles are hidden in plain sight. Circular actions come from the Chinese fighting arts that were blended with Okinawan Te to produce karate.

If done correctly every single blocking technique contains a circular motion. It is this the circular component of the block that supplies the centrifugal force that produces a power effect far beyond the obvious physical capabilities of the person performing the block.

From an application effect, when using a block to be other than what it appears to be, we can merely restrain or severely damage an opponent depending on what circumstance requires.

In karate there are large circles which can be seen as throws



"Funakoshi Gichin showing that karate is more than kicking and punching"  
From Ryukyu Kenpo Toudi (1922)

And there are small circles which can be used in a simple wrist reversal that is applied to a cross wrist grab by an opponent



When applied correctly all these defensive actions are made more powerful and can put us in the superior position in a physical encounter by virtue of their circular action. Circular action creates reactionary power. When circular action is used in conjunction with changing your opponents force line, sometimes quickly in more than one direction, or when altering your positioning to use angles in the confrontation the end result can be very dramatic. That is dramatically good for you and conversely dramatically bad for your opponent.

For those with eyes to see these circular actions can clearly be seen in karate kihon and in techniques performed in the kata. Just stop and think for a minute about punches, hip rotation and grappling applications.

Always look to what makes up a technique, analyze it, and do not just look at the end result of the completed action.

For another completely different example let's take the physical action that is required to deliver gyaku tsuki (reverse punch). This physical action can just as easily be performed to throw an opponent to the ground. Again circular action is present in this throwing technique for those who can see it.

At times circular action is only alluded to and the student needs to be shown the possibilities that such techniques contain.

There is so much contained within karate on the physical, intellectual, and moral planes for those who spend the time to seek it out. Unfortunately too many who start out on the path stop training and never receive the rewards karate-do provides.

Giving up training is easy. Anyone can do that. Continuing in the art to receive all that it can give requires perseverance and a depth of longing for those rewards. The more you seek, the more you find. The better person you will become.