

Ouchi Gari– Major Inner Reap



GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The major inner reaping, *ouchi gari*, is part of the first *kyo* of the *Go Kyo No Waza*, and is therefore part of the requirements for *sankyū* and all higher ranks. *Ouchi* is an extremely important throw. It is one of the four effective rear throws in common use, one of the two effective inner reaping rear throws, and useful in many different combinations. It is an indispensable part of every *Judoman's* technique.

However, *ouchi gari* is a little understood throw, and much careful study is needed to master it. If you will study the sequence photos on this and the next three pages over and over again, reading the explanation several times, you'll understand just a few of the many important points about *ouchi gari*.

THE PLAYERS

Here we see two outstanding young *Judoists* performing *ouchi gari*. On the left is Renè Zeelenberg, of the AFJA at Travis AFB, California. Renè was five times youth champion of Holland before studying in Los Angeles, and he placed third in the 1965 National AAU Championships in the light middleweight (154) division. On the right is Tony Gonzales of Cleveland, Ohio; three times national age group and high school *Judo* champion, an outstanding middleweight, and overall champion of the Lake Erie AAU at age 17.

THE OFF-BALANCE (KUZUSHI)

Bill Paul, American *Judo* great and a superb

technician with *ouchi gari*, says that one of the major faults of those who try *ouchi gari* is failure to break the opponent's balance. We must therefore pay particular attention to the method of breaking balance in *ouchi gari*. In the left photo above, Renè is breaking Tony's balance by pulling and holding with the left hand and arm while the right hand drives down and back. The left arm is concealed behind Renè's body, but it is an extremely important part of the off balance. Holding him with your left hand prevents his stepping back with his right foot to defend and counter. The right hand pushes *down* for the most part, and only slightly back. Renè's right hand action is primarily down, especially in the right photo above. He does not want to drive Tony too far back, but just drive his weight down and back on his heels.

THE ENTRY

Now notice the tremendous reach Renè is getting with his right leg as he enters. Also notice that his toes are pointed and his right leg is almost straight. You must pay particular attention to the position of Renè's head and body as he enters. His body has dropped and is leaning forward slightly, his chin is pulled in and his head is down near the right side of Tony's chest, even though he is attacking Tony's left side with his leg. This prevents Renè from being countered because he is not slipping off to the left side of Tony's body.

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In the left photo above, Renè is completing the entry for ouchi gari by reaping his right leg widely to the right. His right leg is still almost straight, the toes still pointed. He is continuing to force the weight of his entire body down against Tony's chest and shoulder. In this left photo the entry (tsukuri) is actually complete and the kake or throw is in progress, but the two are all part of one continuous motion. Pay particular attention to the fact that Renè's left foot, supporting him throughout the throw, is quite a good distance from Tony, and that it never moves in. In the photos on the last page, you'll notice that Renè does not take any entry steps at all, making the throw very fast. To do this you must begin the throw in a position with the right leg forward and the left leg well back about in the middle between your opponent's legs. *Never* shift your feet close to your opponent, as this will lessen your drive and make it easy to counter your throw.

KEEPING THE PRESSURE ON.

Observe that in the photos on this page and the next, Renè's right arm never straightens out. This means that his body is driving forward as fast as Tony's is backward, and the two bodies are slanting down together. For this reason, Tony has no chance to shift his weight and escape. Of vital importance also is the fact that Renè's head is still on the right side of Tony's body, keeping his weight centered against Tony so he can't be slipped off and countered. Even in the last photo on the second page ahead; you'll see that Renè is still centered on Tony's body.

RIGHT LEG REAP

Professor Kotani, 9th Degree, always emphasizes in his teaching of ouchi gari that the opponent's leg must be driven *out*. You can see in the right photo above that Tony's left leg is straight and is being fully controlled by Renè's right leg. Of utmost importance is the fact that Renè's body is driving forward and down with Tony's. This enables him to keep his sweeping leg wrapped around Tony's left leg all through the throw. Try to imagine what would be happening if Renè had remained standing upright and had only hooked Tony's leg up as many beginners do. Then Tony could have escaped easily by simply lifting his leg over Renè's hooking leg; or worse still, he could have kept his balance and swept Renè's legs up from the rear in a counter. It is not until Tony's back hits the mat that Renè's right leg starts to lose control, and then the throw is over and Renè will be continuing into mat work.

If you'll study these photos carefully, you'll see that there is also a hard twist in Renè's attack. He starts (on the previous page) with his side presented to Tony, because he can enter his sweeping leg faster and more strongly in that position. He is also in a stronger beginning position because he can't be countered by Tony falling on his back early and countering with a circle throw (tomoe nage). But after the entry is complete and Renè's leg starts a big reaping action, his body twists around completely so that in the last photo he is chest to chest with Tony and ready to follow through into mat work with full control.

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FINISHING THE THROW

In the above photos all of the correct movements that Renè has made are paying off with a full point throw. The bodies are still glued together by Renè's forward and downward drive. Renè's right wrist is solidly over Tony's shoulder (left photo above), and Renè's right arm is still bent, allowing full body contact. The bent and hooked right arm exerts tremendous force downward on Tony's body, forcing him straight to the mat. Renè's left arm is still locking Tony's right arm forward and against him so that Tony can't slip out or dive out. Renè's right leg is still reaping outward in a wide circle with the leg straight and the toes pointed, in full control of Tony's left leg. This position will be maintained until Tony is flat on his back, and Renè is automatically shifted over Tony's right leg into a mat hold.

Often times at the last minute the opponent will twist out at the moment shown in the above photos, or he will throw his right arm over and dive out on his face. If the thrower keeps the downward drive strong, however, it is impossible for the opponent to escape.

The best players in the country who use this technique, Paul Maruyama, Dick Walters and Bill Paul, score many points with this continuing drive. Maruyama won his first two contests in the 1964 Olympics with ouchi gari. He is now in the AFJA at Travis AFB, California. Dick Walters has used ouchi gari in both national and international competition with great success.

Not only is ouchi gari used as a primary throw, but it is also used in combination with other techniques.

For instance, to name two world class middleweights, Jim Bregman of the U.S. And Jan Snidjers of Holland, both use it in combination with their favorite techniques: Bregman with uchimata and Snidjers with taiotoshi. When the going gets tough and the tough get going, or during the last minutes or even seconds of important contests, it is often ouchi gari that works. Dick Walters has proved this on the international level with his beautiful ouchi gari victory over Hermann of Germany during the 1965 World Championships in Rio. Another good example of the use of ouchi gari in difficult situations is Tosh Seino's victories over the best lightweights in Europe during the 1964 European tour of the US Team. In those situations when his opponents were going completely defensive to escape his uchimata, Tosh scored several times with ouchi gari.

OUCHI GARI WITH SPEED

One of the reasons ouchi gari is so valuable to all Judomen is its speed. If you'll make experiments with how many repetitions of various techniques you can make in ten seconds, you'll find that with many throws you'll be hard put to get in more than ten repetitions in ten seconds. However, it is possible to attack 15 or even 17 times in ten seconds with ouchi gari. This is because almost all contest men use it without taking any steps at all, just shooting it in from where they stand. If you will make timed attacks with ouchi gari, trying for 12 in ten seconds, you'll build up a very effective throw. Don't try for speed, however, until you are satisfied that you are making each attack properly.

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USING FOLLOW-THROUGH

On the right you'll see the final photo in this sequence. One important thing to note is that Renè has not stopped driving, insuring that Tony lands firmly on his back for a full point. Many ouchi gari attempts are unsuccessful because there is not follow through. In fact, you'll hardly ever be able to lay a man out completely flat as in this sequence of the ideal throw. What will happen is that your opponent will twist or dive out to some degree, or will jack-knife his body so that he sits down rather than falling flat. If you remain standing and let it go at that, he will get away without any score at all on your part, or at best a half point. But if you continue to drive, even if he lands sitting down and you have to unroll him like a rug with the force of your upper body drive, you'll often get a full point, especially if you use a kiai (explosive shout).

In this regard, it's good to remember that the kiai is always needed. The masters say that the kiai has at least four uses. (1) It gives you maximum abdominal power, (2) It makes you feel strong and confident, (3) It scares your opponent, and (4) It lets the referee know that you had presence of mind and actually intended to deliver maximum power at the instant of the kiai. Cultivate the kiai by using it in throwing practice of all kinds. You'll also find that kids like to practice better if they can do a little yelling when they throw, so the kiai is a good way to let them blow off steam.

CONTINUING INTO MAT WORK

Perhaps the most important point about this last photo is the fact that it shows Renè in a fine position, centered on Tony's body. Don't miss the fact that Renè's head is still over on the right side of Tony's body, making it impossible for Tony to roll over to his own left side, even at the last minute. This balanced position also enables Renè to quickly switch his legs to either side over Tony's right or left leg and get into a hold down instantly. Look at the photo and you'll see that Renè's right leg has finished its reap and is continuing around and up in the air, while his left leg is only lightly lying on the mat. From this position he can throw his legs high and over either of Tony's legs for a hold down. The fact that all of his weight is on Tony's upper body makes it easy for him to shift his legs quickly.

After right ouchi gari (as is demonstrated in this sequence) in most cases the thrower will throw his legs up and over his opponent's right leg and come down



at his right side in kesa gatame (scarf lock). Or, if the thrower rolls over on his belly as he throws his legs around, he can come up with yokoshiho gatame or kamishiho gatame.

There is an instant when you throw your opponent, just as he hits, whether you score a full point, half point, or nothing at all; when he is often momentarily stunned and not exactly sure where he is. If you take this instant to get around his legs, you'll often be in a mat hold before he knows what has happened. One thing about this must be emphasized. You won't get into the habit of holding as you throw unless you work on it. The Russians are unbelievable at this. It doesn't matter how they get down to the mat, they always continue into matwork instantly. Practice throwing again and again and clamping on a mat hold immediately when your opponent hits. If you'll build up this habit in practice, it will come to your rescue in competition, because your contesting, for the most part, sloppy or good; will be just like your practice.

GENERAL SUMMARY

There are several important points to remember when practicing ouchi gari. (1) Pull and hold with your left arm to keep your opponent from stepping back with his right foot. (2) Drive down with your right arm, and keep it bent. Driving back will make him step before you get your leg in to reap him. (3) Stand well back from your opponent so that your body will slant against him. (4) Reach in deeply with the right leg straight and the toes pointed so that you'll wrap your entire leg around his as much as possible, depending upon the separation between your bodies. With a really stiff-armed man, you might only be able to get your heel tendon against his, but that will do the trick if his balance is broken (this is Bill Paul's method, and that of Isao Inokuma, the World Champion). (5) Keep your head over against his right chest so you can stay centered on him as you drive. (6) Keep your right arm bent and hang down on him with your whole body as you throw, reaping his leg out to the side rather than picking it up. (7) Follow through into mat work after you land chest to chest with your opponent.