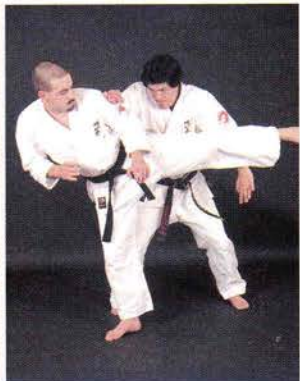
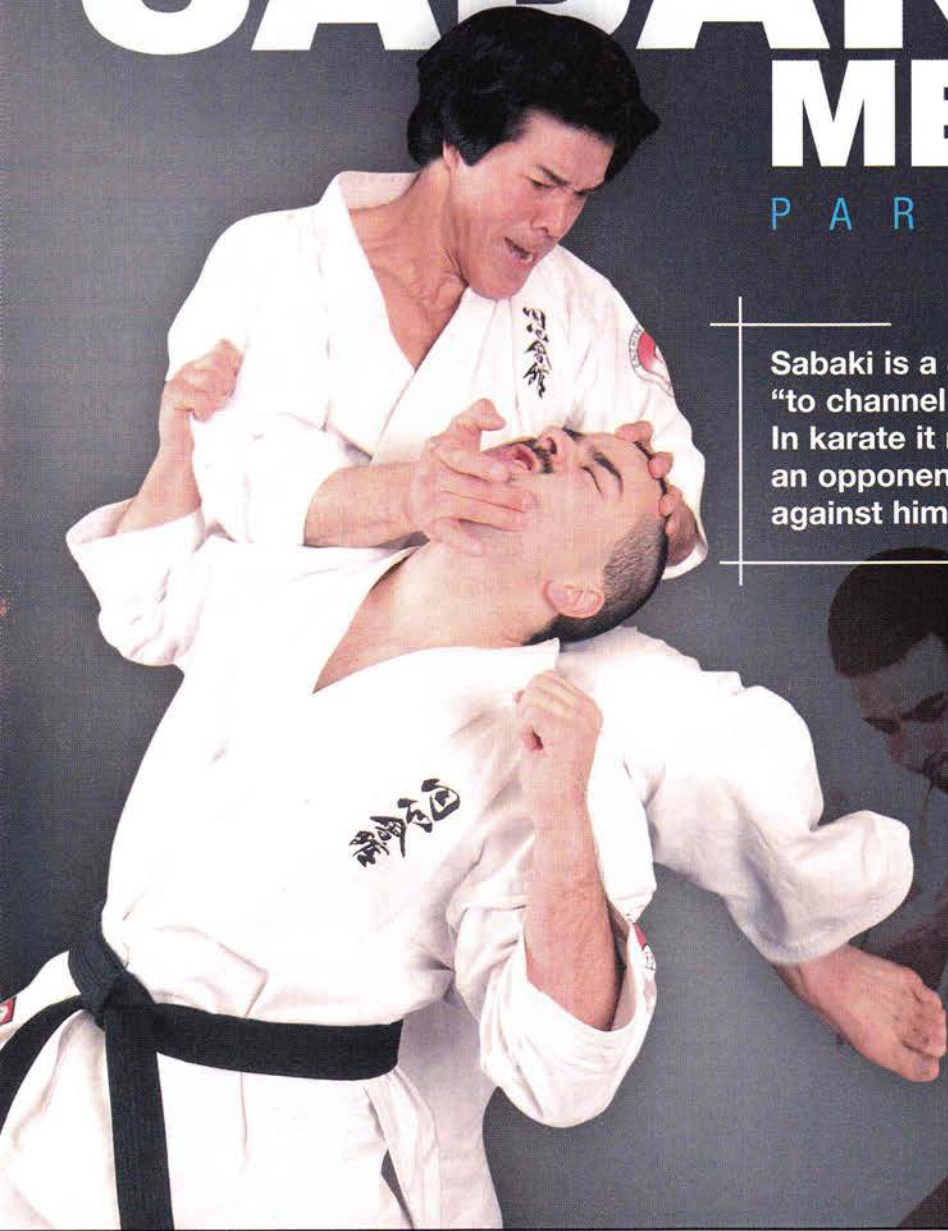


SECRETS OF ENSHIN'S SABAKI METHOD

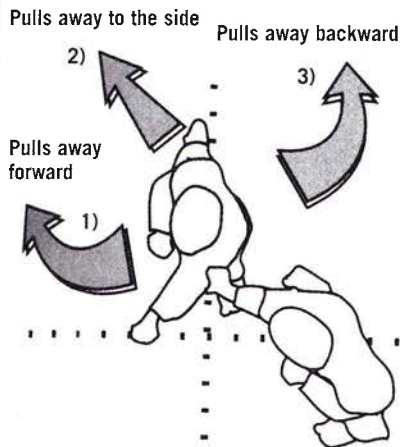
PART TWO

Sabaki is a Japanese word meaning "to channel power efficiently". In karate it means the natural way to use an opponent's power and momentum against him, regardless of size.





YOUR OPPONENT'S ESCAPE ROUTES FROM ONE-HANDED GRAB



KYUSHU – ABSORBING THE OPPONENT'S POWER

The act of moving with your opponent's attack in order to absorb their power and draw the momentum without sustaining any physical contact is known as Kyushu. Moving with your opponent's attack will enable you to create openings and gain fight control. Kyushu is very effective because it forces the opponent to over-extend the attacking stroke, thus exhausting all power from the opponent's attack and breaking their balance. The principle of Kyushu is not unlike the action of a spring: As the attacker extends or releases his power, you compress yours, releasing it at the end of your opponent's attacking stroke.

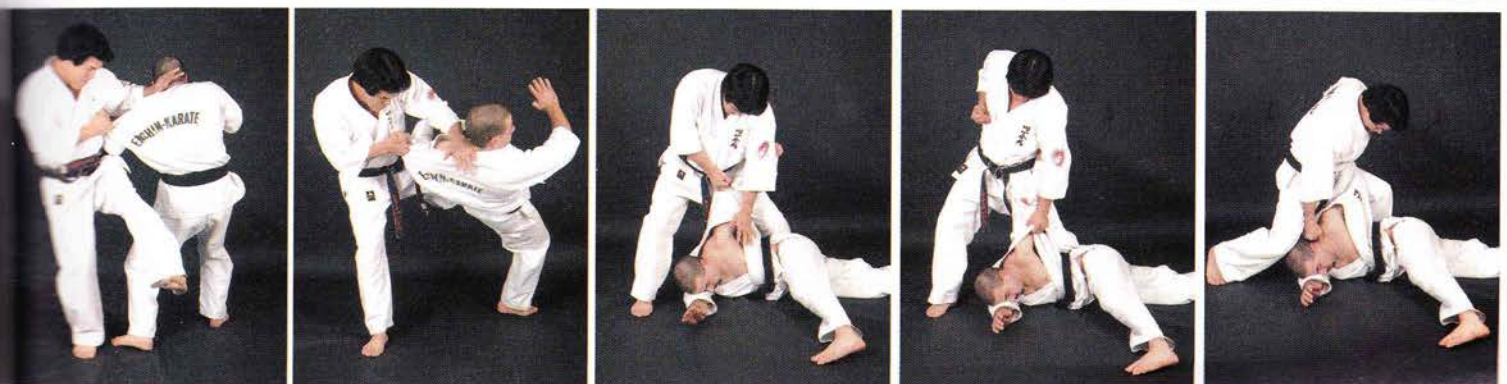
Kyushu can be applied by simply moving your head or torso slightly out of range. Against a more extended attack, you may need to move your feet as well. Kyushu can be used against low, middle or high attacks and against straight or roundhouse attacks. It is very

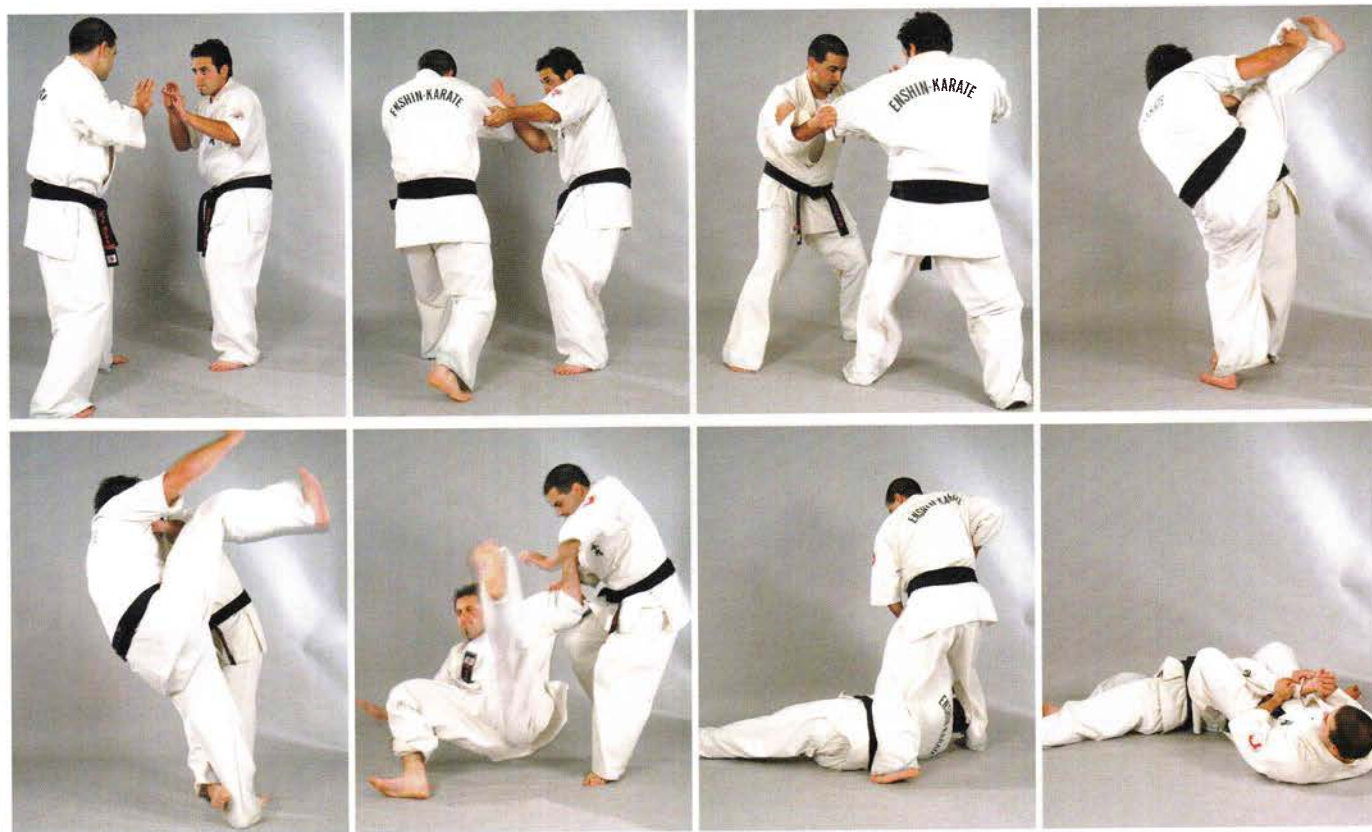
important to stay as close as possible to your opponent in-order to counter attack the instant the opponent has exhausted their power and take full advantage of their vulnerability.

RHYTHM

Enshin's Sabaki strategy relies greatly on good timing and imposing your rhythm on your opponent to gain control, even if your opponent has a physical advantage. The fighter who successfully imposes his rhythm on the fight will usually win. The best points at which to disrupt your opponent's rhythm are at the very beginning or at the end of the opponent's attacking stroke.

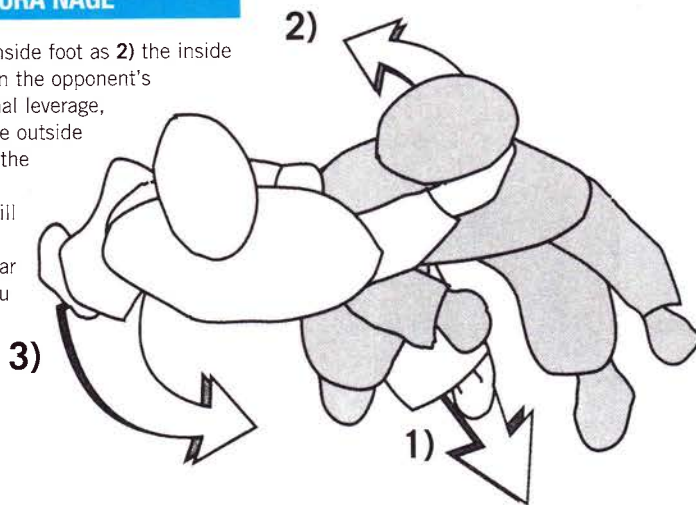
To be able to effectively impose your rhythm, you must first accurately gauge your opponent's rhythm, and then disrupt that rhythm by drawing the opponent off balance in any direction. If you can successfully impose your rhythm on your opponent you will have them second-guessing allowing you to dominate the situation.





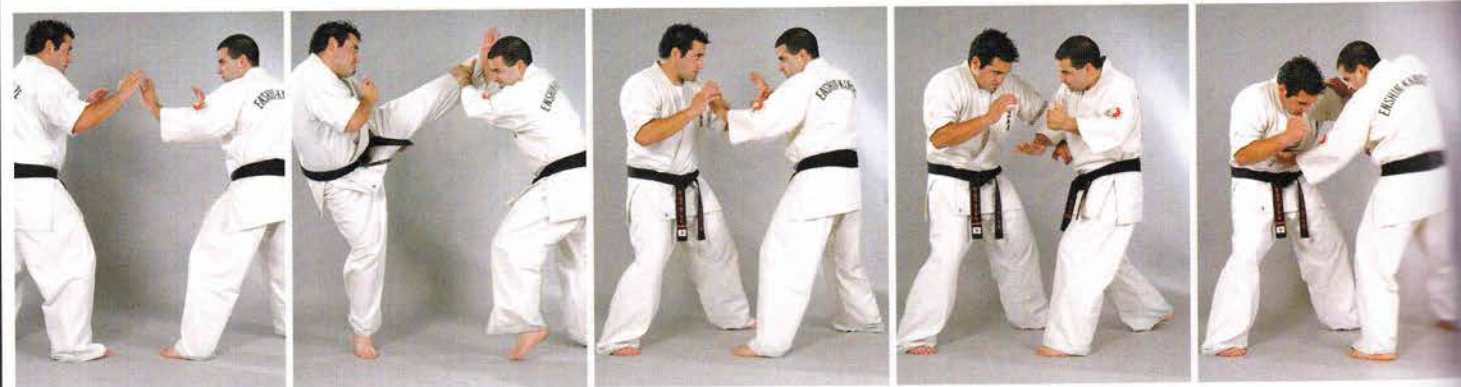
BACK THROW / URA NAGE

1) Drive back your inside foot as 2) the inside hand pushes back on the opponent's chin. 3) For additional leverage, swing an arc with the outside foot as you pivot on the ball of the inside-hooking foot. This will take down your opponent in a circular motion and allow you to stay in control.



Try to break your opponent's foundation by attacking the lower parts of their body with low kicks, Uchi Momo Geri (inside thigh kick), or an Ashi Bari (foot sweep). If you are not successful in taking your opponent to the ground, try to gain blind-side position to take the advantage.

Against a larger or more aggressive opponent, keep moving to avoid direct hits. You must move within your opponent's rhythm and try to anticipate their attack. Draw your opponent off balance by moving with their attack; forcing the opponent to over extend his attacking stroke (Kyushu), there you can initiate your attack. Move your body in such a way that the opponent is continually made to adjust his stance, make sure to vary your distance. This strategy will make it very hard for the opponent to set up an effective offensive attack. Remember an opponent cannot deliver a power attack unless they are balanced.





TIMING

Timing is crucial. Having good timing will enable a fighter to exploit the opponent at their most vulnerable point, while the opponent is attacking. Kancho Joko Ninomiya has identified four different timing zones where an advantage can be gained during an opponent's attacking stroke. I will briefly explain Kancho Joko Ninomiya's four timing zones, in relation to a punch, although these four timing zones can be applied to all techniques.

Timing 1 – The very beginning of the punch, when the opponent's body is starting to rotate. You can neutralise your opponent's momentum and power very quickly using a foot stomping technique to the hip.

Timing 2 – Your opponent's punch is extended halfway and this is the point when the opponent's front knee naturally starts to

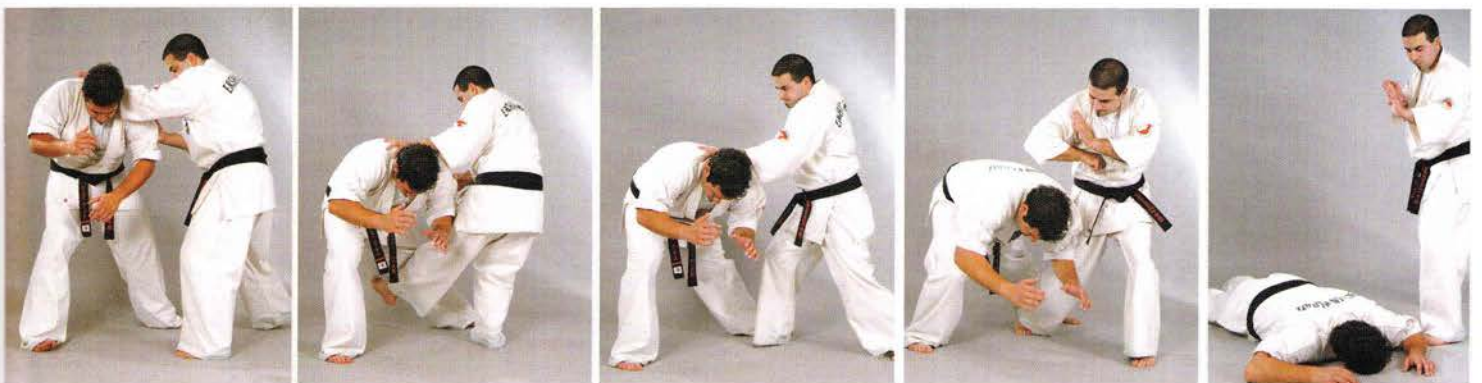
open. The opponent cannot punch with as much power and accuracy unless he opens his stance (ie turning of the hip and knee). When your opponent's stance starts to open, you now have the opportunity to target the opponent's front inside thigh with an Ashi-dome (foot stomping). The use of the Dome-dome (foot stop) will neutralise the opponent's forward momentum, thus disabling most of the power in their punch. This defence will give you enough time to move into a position where you can apply Sabaki, by moving in to the blind spot to take the advantage.

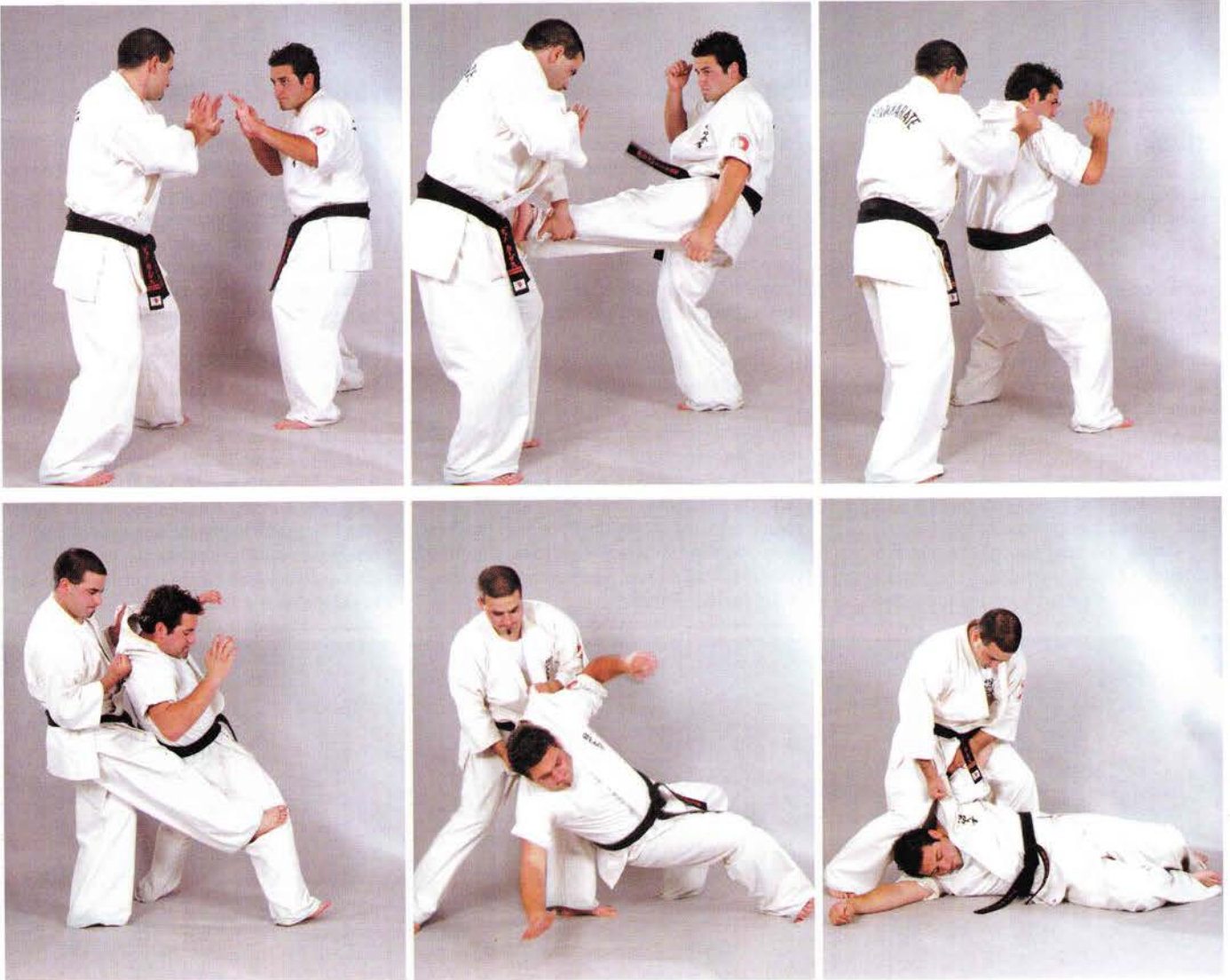
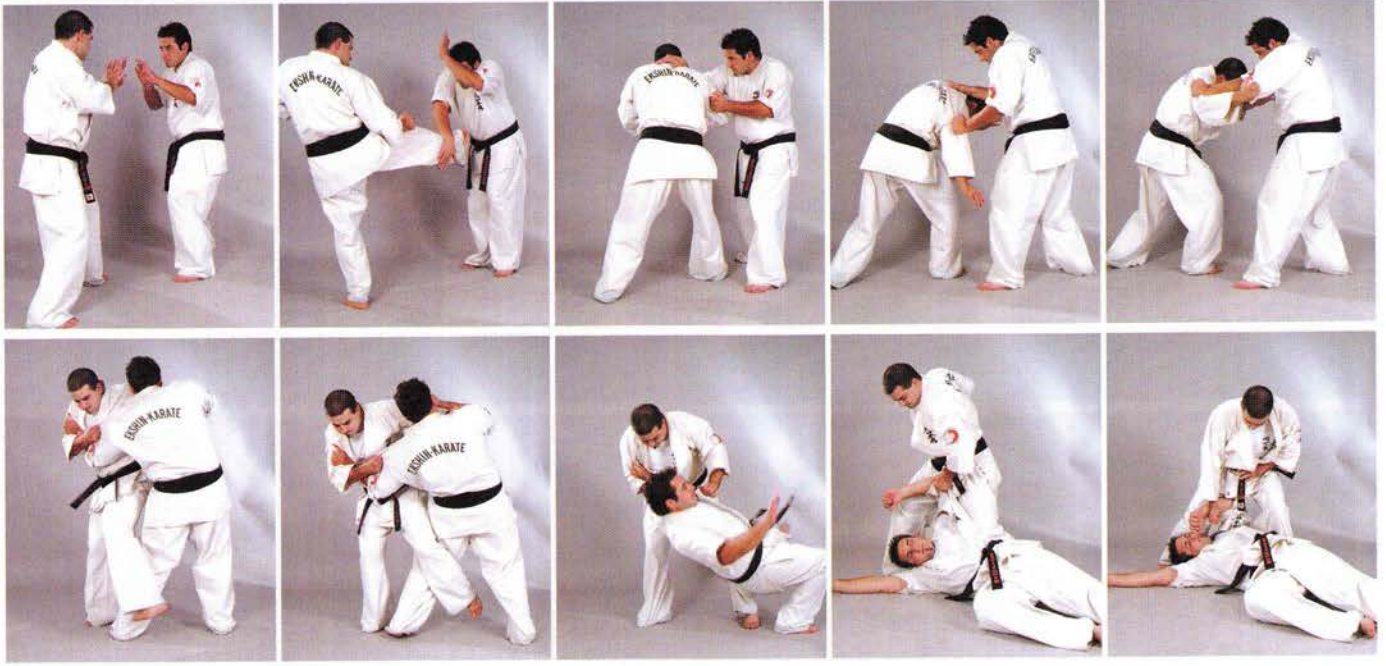
Timing 3 – The punch is fully extended and this is where most people apply their block or parry. When the opponent reaches this point in the attacking stroke, step to the outside or blind spot position and launch your counter attack.

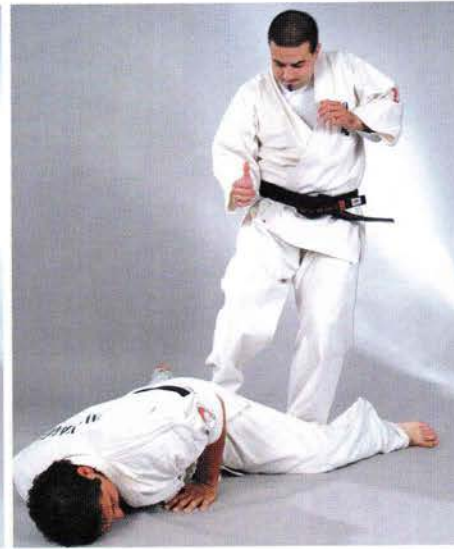
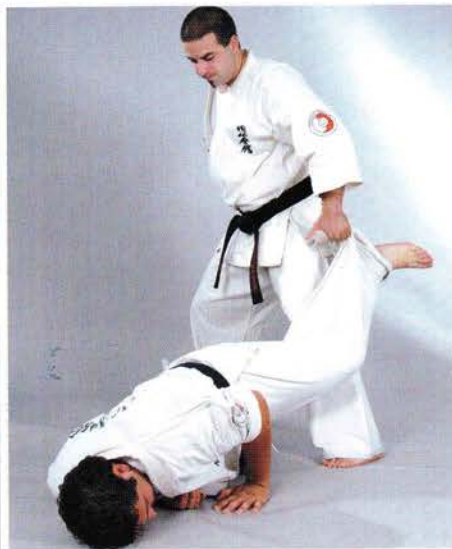
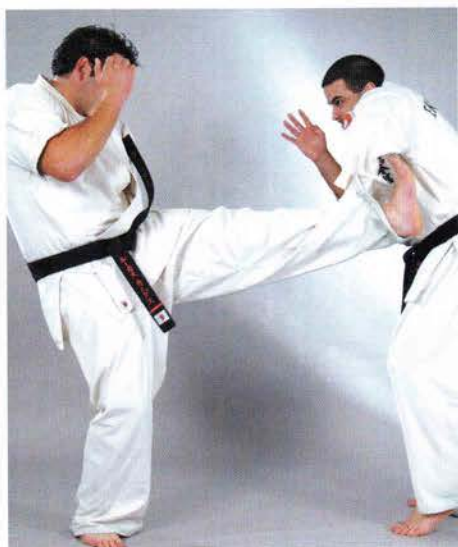
Timing 4 – This is where most fighters will give up, but you have one more chance. You can use Timing 4 when the opponent retracts his punching arm, the opposite shoulder will automatically come forward, move outside this shoulder, grab the opponent with either Hiki Kuzushi (one-handed grab) or Hiki Mawashi (two-handed grab) and take the opponent off balance.

DEFENCE AGAINST SABAKI

To have an effective offence you must first understand defence. Within the Enshin system, Kancho Joko Ninomiya also teaches how to neutralise Sabaki. That is what makes Enshin's Sabaki Method practical and effective, producing a more complete and skillful fighter. When facing an opponent who uses Sabaki techniques Kancho stresses the need to anticipate the grab before it occurs, or be able to escape once it is initiated.







Defence against Hiki Kuzushi (one-handed grab): as your opponent grabs your sleeve you should simultaneously swing your arm under your opponent's, thus grabbing the outside to their sleeve and moving with your opponent's momentum. This will neutralise your opponent's intended blindside advantage; from here you can re-gain the advantage by using various sweeping or throwing techniques.

Defence against Hiki Mawashi (two-handed grab): When your opponent is applying the two-handed grabbing technique (Hiki Mawashi) they use circular momentum at close range to force your head down. It is important not to resist, instead flow with your opponent's motion. As the opponent applies downward pressure to your head while he is pulling you in a circular motion around his body, duck your head through and square up to your opponent. This will neutralise your opponent's intended blindside position. You can continue the opponent's momentum against them, thus enabling you to regain the tactical advantage

CONCLUSION

Over the past two issue of *Blitz*, I have outlined the basic principles of Kancho Joko Ninomiya's Sabaki Method. I would like to stress that Kancho Joko Ninomiya's Enshin Karate is much deeper than a physical act.

The Enshin Karate Style is a reflection of Kancho's spirit and devotion to the Martial way. Kancho Joko Ninomiya is a true inspiration to all his students around the world and a true master of his craft. I find it fitting to end this article with some of Kancho Joko Ninomiya's own words from his Kancho book *My journey in Karate*.

"Enshin literally means 'inner circle,' and just as the techniques of Enshin are based on circular movement to the outside of an attack, so the inner meaning of Enshin is built on the image of a circle.

"In training, as in life, the effort we bring to a given challenge often carries us full circle to a new beginning. With each

beginning – each trip to the dojo, each new belt, each punch or kick – our understanding of that circle deepens and carries us further into the mystery of that challenge. Over time, training in karate builds a sense of spirit that can carry you through the hardest challenges. Its discipline becomes part of the fabric of your life. Its spirit enlarges the character.

"This is the meaning of the Enshin symbol. An outer circle of technique, an inner circle of spirit – both linked by effort to an ever-expanding sense of one's place in the moment." **BLITZ**

REFERENCES

My Journey in karate, The Sabaki Way, Kancho Joko Ninomiya with Ed Zorensky, Frog LTD 1998.

Diagrams courtesy: *Sabaki Method, Karate in the Inner Circle, Kancho Joko Ninomiya with Ed Zorensky, Frog LTD. 2000*