

Line of movement

The pattern described on the floor during the performance of a particular kata is called the line of movement (*embu sen*). The lines of movement of all the kata may be grouped roughly into five types illustrated below.

These five types are approximate, and deviations from them will be pointed out as they occur. In preparing to do a particular kata, one should first of all note its line of movement and take the starting point accordingly. For example, in forms whose line of movement is the straight line, one might need room either to the sides, as in the Tekki forms, or in front and behind, as in Gankaku. In particular, performance of a kata in an exhibition may be awkward if this point is not kept in mind.

“Whatever goes must come back” : in karate, the points at which one starts and completes must coincide, and failure in this indicates either that an incorrect step has been taken or that variation in lengths of stride has caused deviation from the correct positions. Since karate depends in a very real way on the stability of the hips and not just the use of the arms, length of stride and positions of the feet must be practiced with particular thoroughness. Whatever goes will return: it is in order to facilitate the assimilation of this rule that in each figure referring to the kata the position of the corresponding step is indicated relative to the line of movement, and one must adhere strictly to these diagrams in practice.

