



## Ki and the Way of the Martial Arts

**Author:** Kenji Tokitsu  
**Genre:** Aikido and Other Martial Arts  
**Publisher:** Boston: Shambhala, 2002  
**ISBN:** 1-57062-998-6  
**RRP:** £10.99 (+£2.80 p&p)

*Ki... an interesting concept. Here we have a book that explores Ki's relevance in all the Japanese martial arts, as well as in the wider national psyche itself.*

Ki, Chi, Karma... (or even 'the force'). 'It' has many names; an intangible energy or life force that many people, particularly in the Far East, believe to be the secret to a healthy life and even the essence of life itself. Ultimately, it is thought that those who can balance this power and harness it properly, will outmatch their less capable (or less enlightened) opponents in life, martial artists in particular. This text goes further than most in explaining all this to the outsider.

Comprised of 15 chapters spread over about 100 pages, the first thing to strike the reader will be the broad front the book's author pursues in its writing. Instead of focussing on the history of one particular art and tracing its history back through the centuries of Samurai rule and so on, Kenji Tokitsu instead looks at Budo, and the relationship that Ki has with it on a very broad scale, addressing three important areas in the process. Probably the most important of these is approached in the first three chapters, where Budo as a concept is discussed, and its effect on the Japanese as a people as well as the problems that foreign students often have in understanding it. The author then proceeds to talk about Ki itself in detail. He begins by examining the philosophical side of things, including sections on special awareness and the specific Japanese take on Ki, before the final third of the book concentrates almost exclusively on combat and how the concepts of the martial way Ki are inextricably linked.

Overall, then, I think this book is geared more towards the thinker than the doer, or of course towards a doer who also thinks. It provides a cultural insight into a mythical and almost undefinable source of energy, something that properly controlled can (we hope) make us a better martial artist, and indeed a better person.

RW Apr 2014

8 sausages out of 10