

A man in a white Taekwondo gi with a black belt is captured in a high kick, his right leg extended horizontally. He is barefoot and has a focused expression. The background features a traditional Korean temple (Jongmyo) with a multi-tiered, ornate roof, partially obscured by mist or smoke. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of a sunset or sunrise, with silhouettes of trees visible in the corners.

# **BREAKING THROUGH**

*The Book Club Kit*

## Welcome Letter

**Dear Reader,**

Thank you for picking up this Book Club Kit — and for joining me on the journey.

Two decades ago, I had what you might call a martial arts existential crisis. Instead of buying a red sports car, I threw myself into analyzing kata. My students endured years of me pulling apart *Bassai Dai*, again and again. Some stayed, some ran for the hills, but those who stuck around helped crack open a way of training that felt both modern and deeply traditional.

“We cracked the code that eluded us for years.”

We discovered that hard style repetition wasn't just about drilling techniques — it was a way to prepare for the blitzing that can gain you advantage in a real fight. That insight shifted how we trained, how we taught, and eventually, how I wrote.

*Breaking Through: The Secrets of Bassai Dai Kata* grew out of that journey. It's not just a karate book — it's about uncovering hidden principles, testing them, and finding joy in the struggle. This kit is here to spark conversations in your book club or dojo. Use the questions, debate the answers, share your own insights, and maybe even argue with mine.

Most of all — enjoy the discovery.

Warm regards,

**Colin Wee**

Author

## About the Author

Colin Wee is a martial artist, teacher, and award-winning author whose four-decade journey spans three continents. He is the Chief Instructor of Joong Do Kwan in Perth, Western Australia, and founder of Joong Do Kwan International in New York.

A 7th dan in Traditional Taekwondo, Colin has been inducted into the Australasian Martial Arts Hall of Fame (2020) and has received numerous teaching and leadership honours. In a past life, he represented Singapore as a national archer and served as Assistant National Coach.

Colin's debut book, *Breaking Through: The Secrets of Bassai Dai Kata*, won the 2023 Best Indie Book Award (Non-Fiction: Martial Arts) and was a finalist in the International Book Awards (Sports). His current project is a historical fiction novel set in 19th-century Ryūkyū, blending martial arts, history, and storytelling with a touch of humour.



1 Colin Wee

When not teaching or writing, Colin can be found overthinking kata, laughing at his own bad jokes, or imagining how Sokon Matsumura would respond to modern martial arts seminars. Colin is based in Perth, Western Australia, and travels between Singapore, Dallas, and New York.

## About the Book

### What is Bassai Dai?

*Bassai Dai* is a kata practiced across Okinawan, Japanese, Chinese, and Korean martial arts. Also known as *Passai*, *Pal Che*, *Palsek*, and other variants, it offers practitioners a way to engage with centuries-old tactical wisdom.

### Why This Book?

In *Breaking Through*, Colin plumbs the depths of *Bassai Dai*, not just to showcase techniques, but to reveal principles that can apply across styles. The book moves beyond rote bunkai and one-step sparring to explore how kata teaches us to deal with a fluid, resisting opponent.

### Why It Matters

The lessons hidden in kata are not museum pieces. They are living strategies — ways to think, move, and adapt. This book invites readers to rediscover kata as a practical, dynamic, and endlessly relevant training tool.

## Back Cover Copy

Bassai Dai is a *kata*, or pattern, practiced across Okinawan, Japanese, Chinese and Korean martial arts. Also known as Passai, Bassahee, Bal Se, Pal Che, Palsek, Bal Sae, Ba Sa Hee, or Bal Sak, depending upon the martial art or lineage, Bassai offers the opportunity to commune with Sokean Matsumura, its presumed author, and learn the secrets locked within the *kata*.

## BASSAI DAI INSPIRED TRAINING

In *Breaking Through: The Secrets of Bassai Dai Kata*, Master Colin Wee plumbs the depths of Bassai Dai after returning to it for inspiration time and time again during nearly 40 years of training. Master Wee deconstructs Bassai Dai and extracts its true lessons — lessons which when tested and trained become an effective series of defenses against the most common — and likely — attacks and counter-attacks.

*Breaking Through* reveals twelve applications intended to prepare the martial artist to successfully face unscripted and dynamic situations.

He wondered: What would drive a person like Matsumura to create a mnemonic aid like this? What kind of situations did he face or anticipate? What knowledge did he want to transmit with this lone *kata*?

Colin Wee (right) began martial arts training as a youth in the 1980s. He has trained primarily with instructors of the American Karate and Tae Kwon Do Organization (AKATO) in American karate, traditional taekwon do, kobudo and aikido since 1991. He immigrated to Australia in 2000, where he founded his school, the Joong Do-Kwan, or "School of the Middle Way." At the same time, he began to study the *jingzhen*, or essence, of his art and to develop the JDR Method. Colin was named 2016 Instructor of the Year by the American Karate and Tae Kwon Do Organization, inducted into the Australasian Martial Arts Hall of Fame in 2020, and promoted to 7th Dan by taekwon do legend and Grandmaster Keith Yates in late 2021. Colin lives and teaches in Perth, Australia, with his amazing wife and their two children.



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Mulvane, Kansas 67110  
United States of America  
[www.MoosulPublishing.com](http://www.MoosulPublishing.com)



## Book Club Discussion Questions

### History & Lineage

1. What value is created when a martial art is linked to a centuries-old lineage?
2. Kata are said to belong to an oral transmission culture. In today's world, what kind of environment do we need to make that tradition work for us?

### Training & Tactics

3. Why would a hard-style practitioner benefit from training in soft-style arts?
4. Why do martial arts demos — even from striking systems — so often include takedowns?
5. Why might it be important to learn to throw opponents in multiple directions?
6. Switching directions and circling are tactically advantageous — how would you encode this in a kata?

### The Modern Martial Artist

7. Colin believes knowing which applications his students preferred was key to understanding his group. Why might this matter in teaching?
8. If you were creating a kata today, what skills or lessons would you include?
9. What relevance does martial art training have for the modern practitioner?
10. Why is it important to include both lethal and non-lethal skills in a repertoire?

## Further Reading/Resources

### **Crossing Boundaries: A Taekwondo Instructor's Journey into the Secrets of Karate's Origins**

Published in Totally Taekwondo Magazine July 2023 Issue 173

Available online at: <https://breakingthrough.world/crossing-boundaries-a-taekwondo-instructors-journey-into-the-secrets-of-karates-origins/>

### **Shotokan's Secret: The Hidden Truth Behind Karate's Fighting Origins**

Bruce D Clayton, Black Belt Communications

### **Musashi**

Eiji Yoshikawa, Kodansha USA

## Author Q&A



Want Colin to Zoom into your book club for 15 minutes?  
Send email to [author@breakingthrough.world](mailto:author@breakingthrough.world) to organise  
(subject to timezone and availability).

## Closing Note

“The pioneers of kata wanted to tell us something. And we’ve been trying to find out what exactly that is by studying their worldview, using kata as a lens.”

— *Colin Wee, Breaking Through: The Secrets of Bassai Dai Kata*

Thank you for reading, sharing, and keeping the conversation alive!