Jissen 実戦

The FREE online Practical Martial Arts magazine Summer 2008

Karate Grappling

Knives: Face Facts or Run Away?

The Hierarchy of Training

Using the Forearms in Combat

Self-Defense Training & Disimilar Air Combat Tactics!

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The FREE online Practical Martial Arts magazine

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EDITORIAL

ISSUE 2 - Summer 2008

Welcome to the second edition of Jissen! I was absolutely delighted by the feedback and support that the first issue received. Thanks to everyone who kindly supported our fledgling publication and spread the word amongst their peers. All involved are very grateful.

It's great to know that we are not alone in feeling the martial arts need a publication like this. The main purpose of this magazine is to spread information among pragmatically minded martial artists (at no cost to the reader) and we hope it will become the central publication for our community. Everyone who has something to share is strongly encouraged to contribute. This magazine is also free to distribute, print off, and make available for download. So long as you're not charging people for it, we are totally happy for you to share this magazine however you see fit with whoever you want (see details to the right). It is great to see so many of you helping in this regard. With everyone's input and support this publication is sure to be of great benefit to contributors, distributors, readers and, perhaps most importantly, the martial arts themselves.

So what do we have in store for you in issue two? I'm delighted with the contents of this issue as we have some great articles on the true nature of the "traditional arts" and how to train for real situations. Please take a look at the contents page opposite and you'll see that we have plenty of information for you to read, ponder over and make use of in your training. I hope you enjoy what our contributors have to share with us all this month.

We've also already got plenty lined up for issue 3; which will be out in a few months' time. One bit of news that is sure to be of interest is that Michael Rosenbaum has provided us with an exclusive book on the history of karate! As with this magazine, the book will be entirely free of charge and we'll let you know as soon as it is available for download. I'm sure you'll all join me in thanking Michael for this incredibly generous contribution.

That's enough from me. I hope you enjoy issue 2 and, as always, your thoughts, feedback and suggestions will be warmly received. Please never hesitate to contact me at iain@iainabernethy.com.

Best Wishes,

Issue 2 Contents

Jamie Club cover photo taken by Sonia Audhali

Karate Grappling: Did it really exist?

by Iain Abernethy

In this article I'd like to ask if karate really does contain any grappling? This is a potentially controversial subject as I found out when I wrote my book on the subject in the year 2000. The passing of the years has done little to diminish that controversy. Certainly there is a now a solid interest in this area of study within parts of the traditional community. However, there are many martial artists, from both the traditional and modern fraternity, that believe that such methods have never existed within karate.

The traditionalists generally protest on the grounds that their sensei never taught them such methods and hence "karate grappling" is nothing more than modernist revisionism. Many modernists state that "karate grappling" is a direct response to the MMA boom and again believe that such methods never existed prior to the advent of the UFC in 1993. So what is the evidence for karate grappling? Did it ever exist before 1993 or is it truly just modern revisionism?

One of the first things we need to explore is what type of grappling we are talking about when referring to "karate grappling". In 1908 the purpose of traditional karate was clearly defined by the great Anko Itosu. In a letter to the Okinawan education authority outlining the nature of karate he wrote, "[Karate] is not intended to be used against a single opponent but instead as a way of avoiding injury by using the hands and feet should one by any chance be confronted by a villain or ruffian". What Itosu is telling us is that the original karate was not designed for dealing with a single skilled martial artist in a ring or in the dojo, but is instead a means of keeping ourselves safe in civilian self-protection situations. This is very important and we shall return to its significance shortly.

In the same letter Itosu also states, "Enter, counter, withdraw is the rule for torite." Torite is an old term for grappling and means "seizing hands". Itosu is therefore telling us that the karate way of dealing with civilian grappling is to get in there (enter), do some damage (counter) and then, once it is possible, flee (withdraw). As we shall see later, some of Itosu's students recorded examples of this strategy in their own works.

From Itosu's outline of karate we can see that the karate of the 1900s did not concern itself with outfighting a single skilled opponent, but instead focussed on the simple and direct methods needed to ensure safety in civilian situations. We can also see that the karate of that time did address grappling in that environment. However, karate did not contain the grappling methods for dealing with a skilled "single opponent". Therefore, those that state skilled MMA style grappling can be found in traditional kata are quite wrong. MMA grappling is of such a level to be able to deal with both a skilled "square go" and the civilian environment (when put into context and when the illegal methods are added back in). Traditional karate grappling does not address a consensual fight with a skilled opponent.

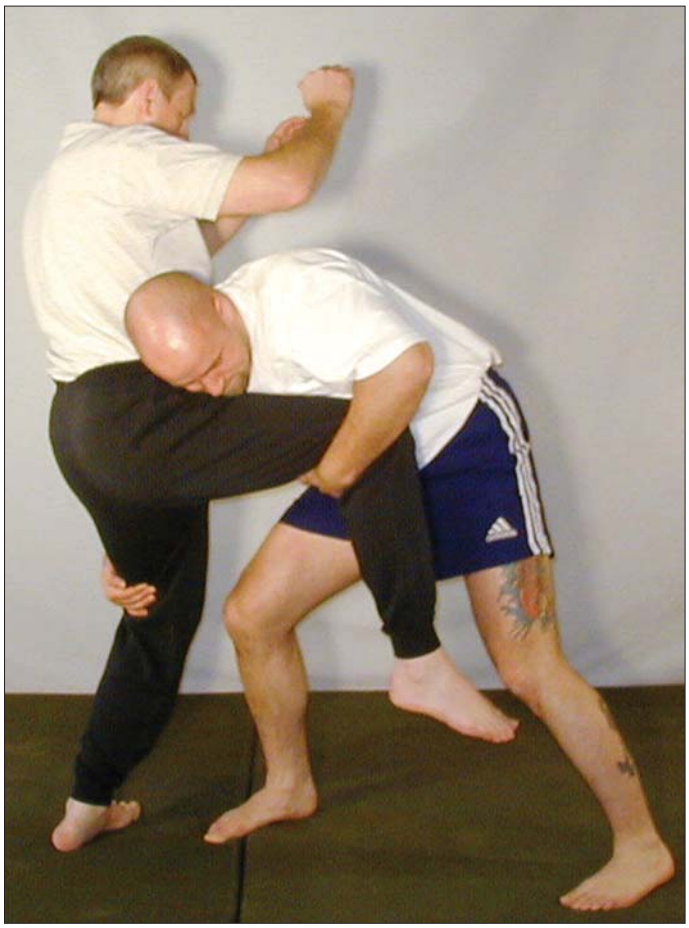
This is not to say karate is in any way deficient. It simply means it was designed for a certain set of circumstances and that we need to be clear on what kind of grappling we are discussing. If you think of the direct low-level methods that most martial artists would utilise in actual self-defence – as opposed to the methods martial artists use to outsmart each other – that is the karate of the 1900s and of the kata.

Having established the nature of the methods within karate, what further evidence is there that any kind of grappling existed within karate prior to the "grappling boom" of the 1990s and where did grappling fit in to old school karate?

In the 1935 book "Karate-Do Kyohan" Gichin Funakoshi – another student of Itosu and the founder of Shotokan karate – wrote "In karate, hitting, thrusting, and kicking are not the only methods, throwing techniques and pressure against joints are included … all these techniques should be studied referring to basic kata". So fifty-eight years prior to the launch of the UFC we

have one of the key architects of modern karate telling us that karate includes throws and locks and that these methods are found in kata. What is key for me is that in the same section he also writes "One must always keep in mind that since the essence of karate is found in a single thrust or kick, and one should never be grasped by or grapple with an opponent, one must be careful not to be defeated through concern with throwing an opponent or applying a joint punishment hold." This again reflects karate's civilian nature.

Willingly engaging in a grapple means you are in the fight for the long haul and escape becomes much more difficult. The primary method is therefore to hit hard and fast and then flee. It's perhaps a discussion for another article, but Funakoshi is quite clear that the key to self-protection is awareness and avoidance. If that fails, Funakoshi tells that we should deceive the assailant and then pre-emptively strike and flee. This method is exactly what today's leading self-protection experts also advise. Also in accordance with today's leading self-protection experts, Funakoshi is clear that grappling is a support system and that striking must always be given priority. We must never seek grappling in the first instance.



Ude-Wa (Arm-Ring Throw)

The original 1935 edition of "Karate-Do Kyohan" shows a number of locks and throws – occasionally referring to where these methods can be found in kata – using many photographs and detailed text. In the pictures accompanying this article you can see me demonstrating three of Funakoshi's throws: Kubi-Wa (Neck Ring Throw), Tani-Otoshi (Gorge-Drop Throw) and Ude-Wa (Arm-Ring Throw). Despite the fact that Funakoshi discusses and demonstrates many throws in his "master text", there are still many modern Shotokan practitioners who deny that throwing is part of their art.

Funakoshi also discusses tori-te methods in "Karate-Do Kyohan" and, in line with his teacher Anko Itosu's advice, shows numerous escapes from common civilian grappling positions, i.e. hair grabs, bear-hugs (front and back), single and double clothing grabs, seizing the neck etc. Funakoshi stresses the importance of such methods and recommends their regular practise.

So far we've seen that Funakoshi and Itosu describe grappling in karate as being simple methods that are there as a back up to the striking and to facilitate escape in self-defence situations. I'd now like to look at some other historical references to karate grappling.

One of the most important books in karate is a very old one called the Bubishi. The word "Bubishi" roughly translates as, "Martial arts training manual." As most martial artists are aware, karate is, broadly speaking, a fusion of indigenous Okinawan fighting methods and Chinese kenpo. The Bubishi deals with two kenpo styles that helped form the basis of karate (those styles being White-Crane and Monk Fist Boxing). Most of the past karate masters had a copy of this book and drew from it in their writings and teaching. The Bubishi contains an entire chapter on grappling and escapes. Although the grappling methods contained within the Bubishi are not very sophisticated, they are as effective as they are brutal. The Bubishi's twenty-ninth chapter also contains forty-eight self-defence diagrams; many of which include grappling techniques that can also be found within the traditional kata.

Kenwa Mabuni – founder of Shito-Ryu and yet another student of Itosu – was one of the first to express concern that the grappling side of karate was being neglected as the art made its move from Okinawa to mainland Japan. In his 1938 book "Karate-Do Nyumon" Mabuni said that the karate begin propagated on the mainland was an incomplete version of the art and that people were wrong to think that karate was devoid of grappling. He went on to say that those who did not practise karate in its entirety were learning a hollow version of the art. Aside from the grappling in karate, it is a little known fact that Mabuni also taught Shin-den Fudo-ryu Jujutsu to his students including Chojiro Tani: the founder of Shukokai karate. So not only did Mabuni train in the grappling side of karate, he also supplemented his grappling study with methods from other arts.

Another karateka to train in Jujutsu and make it part of their karate was Hironori Otsuka (founder of Wado-Ryu karate). Otsuka reached grandmaster level in Shindo Yoshin Ryu Jujutsu after many years of study under Tasusaburo Nakayama. In the two man drills of Wado we can see throws and locks, and even ground fighting techniques such as Juji-Gatame (cross lock).

From the examples of Mabuni and Otsuka we can see that cross-training, far from being the blasphemy many modern "traditionalists" would have it to be, is in fact traditional! Therefore the karateka that wishes to build on the basic grappling methods of karate should not be made to feel they are abandoning the art for doing so. I see my own study of dedicated grappling arts to be following in the footsteps of many of karate's key figures.

One grappling system that has a massive influence on karate is the Okinawan art of Tegumi. Some martial historians believe that karate is in fact a fusion of various styles of Chinese kenpo and Tegumi. It is has even been suggested that the name "karate" reflects this combination by using the character for "Chinese" (kara) – later substituted with the character for "empty" which is also pronounced "kara" – to reflect the influence of Chinese kenpo and the character for "hand" (te) to reflect the influence of the native grappling methods of Tegumi.

Tegumi, as an art in its own right, is best described by someone who engaged in it first hand. In his book "Karate-Do: My Way of Life", Gichin Funakoshi wrote "Okinawan wrestling has certain unique features. As with karate, its origins are unknown, and many Okinawans suppose that there must have been a relationship of sorts between the two … The Okinawan name for our style of wrestling is Tegumi, and should you write the word, you would use the same two Chinese characters that are used to write karate's Kumite, except that they are reversed … Tegumi is, of course, a far simpler and primitive sport than karate. In fact there are few rules … The bout begins, as sumo does, with the two opponents pushing against each other. Then, as it proceeds, grappling and throwing techniques are used. One that I recall well was very similar to the ebigatama (leg block and three quarter nelson) of today's professional wrestling. When I watch wrestling on television nowadays, I am often reminded of the Tegumi of my Okinawan youth … To stop the fight, all that any boy who felt he had had enough needed to do was pat his opponent's body. Some

Tani-Otoshi (Gorge Drop Throw)

boys, however, were so dauntless that they would go on fighting until they were knocked out. In such cases, it would be the duty of the referee to try to stop the bout before that happened. Like every other Okinawan boy, I spent many happy hours engaging in or watching Tegumi bouts, but it was after I had taken up karate seriously that I came to realise that Tegumi offers a unique opportunity for training …"

Here we have Gichin Funakoshi – who is frequently regarded as "the father of modern karate" – telling us of the crude "submission grappling" bouts of his youth and recommending such training methods for the karateka. He then goes on to explain how he and his friends would engage in Tegumi bouts against multiple opponents with the aim being to avoid being seized and taken down (which is in line with the self-defence nature of karate). Funakoshi states, "I seldom had any great difficulty thrusting back a single opponent, but my difficulties increased greatly as the number of my opponents increased. Then, if I attacked one opponent, the others would find an opening in which to attack me. It is hard to think of a better way than this to learn how to defend oneself against more than one opponent, and if this sounds like nothing more than a children's game, I can assure you that those of us who engaged in it took it very seriously." Funakoshi also describes bouts where people would attempt to hold him down as he attempted to regain his feet. Regaining an upright position is of course the key ground fighting skill required for self-defence.

For any skill to be of value it needs to be drilled live. In my dojo we use the phrase "if you have not done it live, you have not done it" to remind us of this vitally important fact. As part of our sparring we grapple to submission, practise live disengagement from grips, drill fleeing from multiple opponents (who can hold and strike) to a predetermined "safe zone", and start from a hold down and fight to get back to our feet. Although the practicality of such training methods is hopefully beyond question, some people from within the karate community lambaste them for being "not traditional" or even "not karate". However, the farther of modern karate himself engaged in such methods and felt they represented a "unique opportunity for training" for the karateka.

So where does all of this leave us? The fact is that there is a huge amount of historical references to karate grappling and in writing this article I was truly spoilt for choice. It was very difficult for me to choose which references to use and which ones to leave out. Interest in karate's grappling methods was certainly greatly amplified by the rise of the UFC and MMA. However, there is no escaping the fact that karate grappling was around for a very long time before 1993. The majority of the texts referenced in this article were published many decades prior to that date. However, we need to be 100% clear that the grappling of karate is not comparable to the highly skilled grappling exhibited by MMA practitioners. It is, by design, very crude by comparison and as I said in the year 2000 in my Karate's Grappling Methods book, "If your aim is to compete in sport grappling, or to posses the skills needed to out wrestle a trained grappler, then it would be prudent to take up a dedicated grappling art."

The modernists who state that karate grappling is a direct response to the MMA boom are wrong. We have seen that karate's grappling methods did exist long before the rise of MMA. However, interest in that side of the art certainly owes a great deal to MMA; which is just one more reason why I like MMA and think the martial arts world owes it a great deal. We have also seen that karate's grappling is not in the same league as MMA grappling and therefore those who say that MMA methods were in kata all along are also wrong.

The traditionalists that protest to karate grappling on the grounds that their sensei never taught them such methods need to explore their art in the depth it deserves. Most of the references quoted in this article are readily available and should be studied by all serious karateka. Whether your sensei taught you these methods or not, there is no doubt that the architects of modern karate practised grappling and regarded it as an essential part of the art. Certainly karate has generally neglected its grappling since the widespread growth of the art, but there have been many attempts to get people to reconsider this sin of omission.

Shigeru Egami, in his 1975 book "The Heart of Karate-do" wrote about the neglect of karate's grappling methods. Egami wrote, "There are also

throwing techniques in karate… Throwing techniques were practised in my day, and I recommend that you reconsider them". Another relatively recent book that makes reference to karate grappling and that urges us to include such methods in our training is H.D. Plee's 1967 book "Karate: Beginner to Black Belt". In the book, Plee – who was one of the pioneers of karate in Europe – wrote "One must not loose sight of the fact that karate is "all-in" fighting. Everything is allowed … This is why karate is based on blows delivered with the hand, the foot, the head or the knee. Equally permissible are strangulations, throwing techniques and locks."

Surely there has never been a better time to return to the core of karate and practise the art as the holistic civilian combat system it originally was? Time will tell if we will embrace this opportunity or continue to deny what is in plain sight for anyone who cares to look. I really enjoy training in and studying the nature of original karate and it is my hope that this article will encourage others to explore this aspect of the art for themselves. It is, after all, loads of fun! Thanks for taking the time to read this article.

Kubi-Wa (Neck Ring)

Knives: Face Facts or Run Away?

by John Titchen

Is knife crime common? It seems that hardly a week goes by without the press informing us of a violent and fatal assault occurring somewhere in Britain. With the unfortunate victims of these crimes from different areas of our country on our newspaper front pages and on television for days at a time, it is easy to be struck more by horrific these incidents are rather than how rare they are. In addition to reporting many violent incidents the media has also raised awareness that there is an increased trend among young people to carry knives for self protection, and a MORI poll in 2003 indicated that 29% of secondary school students had carried knives for self protection at some point (1).

Our revulsion towards knife crime is natural. In his discussion on the killing at edged weapon range, Lieutenant Colonel Grossman drew on a number of sources to indicate the lengths that people will got to avoid being stabbed, even when death is inevitable: Tutsi victims in Rwanda purchased bullets for their own execution rather than be hacked to death; mutineers in the 1857 Sepoy uprising begged for the bullet rather than death by bayonet; despite the widespread use of bayonets at Waterloo and on the Somme very few bayonet wounds were inflicted (2). That fear of being penetrated by a blade shows too in the unwillingness of soldiers to stab with their bayonets, choosing to use their rifles as clubs – the bayonets serving predominantly as a psychological weapon to force the enemy to flee or surrender (3).

A study of the Home Office online reports and statistics and the various press reports available on the BBC (and in the newspapers) allow the subject to be studied in greater detail. These in fact give quite a different picture of knife crime. According to the information given to the BBC by the UK Trauma Audit and Research Network, there has been no change in the overall number of knife inflicted wounds since 2001 (4). That of course says both a great deal and nothing at all. Six percent of all violent crime is knife related; to put that in context in 2004/5 there were 1,184, 702 recorded violent incidents by police in England and Wales (5). So with this figure we can guess at 71,082 violent incidents involving knives, this means that it affected approximately 0.14% of the population, assuming of course that each incident involved different people (which is not necessarily the case) (6). Of those 1,184,702 recorded violent incidents there were 14, 425 more serious woundings (and that does not mean knife attacks, just more serous injuries). Look at that number again and we see that only 0.028% of the population were seriously injured in violent crime (again assuming a different individual each time). This is a tiny proportion of the population, terrible of course for those involved, but not so terrible that you should be expecting either knives or serious assaults at every turn in most neighbourhoods.

In fact, according to available statistics from 2002/3's British Crime Survey, 72% of violent incidents did not use a weapon at all (7). That still leaves 28% that did, quite a high figure, but it is a mistake to assume that that represents the proportion of knife crime. Glasses and bottles are the most frequently used weapons in the

night-time economy, which is where the majority of incidents occur. Glasses and bottles also cause the most disfiguring injuries (8). A snapshot of knife injuries can be seen in the Royal London Hospital data available through the BBC; they received 309 crime related knife injuries between July 2004 and June 2006 - of these chest wounds were the most common injury and 259 patients were admitted to hospital resulting in 184 operations and 8 fatalities (9) If we return to the 2004/5 statistics we can see that if there were 71,082 violent incidents in England and Wales involving knives and only 14,425 more serious injuries (not all of which came from knives but instead many from bodily blows, glass woundings, blunt objects and guns), then not all incidents involving knives result in injury. This shows that just because a knife is produced this does not necessarily mean that it is going to be used.

Are knives the most common weapons used on our streets?

Some readers may be surprised that they are statistically more likely to be hit with a bottle or a glass as a weapon (in England and Wales) than they are with a knife, but this percentage simply reflects the fact that the majority of attacks take place either in pubs/clubs or just outside the premises. These sorts of attacks tend to be confined to particular locales rather than be widespread across the entire night time economy and it is good to see a number of clubs that insist on knife searches and the use of plastic glasses (10) If you are being threatened with a knife then the purpose of it is to scare you into doing something (15% of muggings in 2002/3 used a knife), if the person intends from the start to stab you than they are less likely to display the weapon but will instead go straight for the attack. Fortunately the number of people in the general population who are psychologically able to stab another person is quite small, although the conditioning environment of computer games and modern films is causing this to change (11). The carrying of knives is more about the implication of strength and violence rather than the actual practise of it. The majority of people who carry knives for self protection would not have the time to draw a knife for use in a real violent assault, nor would they have the mental ability to bring themselves to use it (12).

The trick now is to work out how to incorporate this evidence into martial arts and self protection training. If 28% of all violent attacks involve weapons then perhaps martial artists should devote 25% of their time to weapons defences? This might be regarded by some as overkill, by others as not doing enough – after all an attack with a weapon might be more likely to lead to a severe injury. Fortunately there is a way in which your training methods can accommodate both schools of thought: since there are only so many ways that the human body can move, this means that most attacks with weapons are likely to follow similar trajectories to unarmed attacks, thus while training for one you can train for another – if you always imagine your opponent's hands as 'swords'. A further important measure is that the nature of violent attacks with weapons, particularly knives, mean that you are more likely to be threatened with a knife than actually cut with one, thus you may wish to ensure you have a pre-emptive repertoire. The phrase 'there is no first attack in Karate' should not be taken to imply you cannot attack first, merely that you should not initiate any conflict – there is a difference.

Should I learn knife defences?

Many of you may disagree with the concept of training against knife attacks, after all knives can be dangerous – should we be advising students to take them on? Shouldn't we just advise our students to run?

Knives can be dangerous – there is no doubt about that. Despite the low incidence rate shown in all the statistics given above – knives still have the potential to maim or kill you. A 3cm blade can penetrate the rib cage, increase that length to 4cm and you have a blade that can penetrate the heart. In the UK it is estimated that 80% of the blades faced by Police Officers on duty fall within the size range of 7.6cm – 30.4cm (13). Scalpels and Stanley knives, while not stabbing blades, can inflict horrific injuries in split seconds, and can easily cause fatal damage to surface blood vessels. Highlighting and isolating the risk of being cut or stabbed and using it as an argument for not teaching students to defend themselves indicates double standards. Every

martial arts student is shown methods to defend against punches and kicks, some against strangles and chokes, and all of these attacks can kill or ruin a life. Victims of violent crime die from the effects of falls and punches and kicks to the head as well as attacks from blades. Unarmed attacks are potentially as dangerous as armed attacks and thus to teach students to defend against the former but not include structured training for the latter on grounds of 'personal danger' is illogical.

There are a number of 'props' that some instructors advise can help you against a knife. The item of clothing wrapped around a hand, the nearby chair, broom, saucepan, trash can lid, keys, handbag, briefcase, stab proof vest, leather jacket, gun – all of these could possibly be used to help you – but how probable is it that you would have them to hand in time to use? You should train to use props by all means, and you should always adapt to your surroundings, but at the end of the day they may not be there – unlike you.

Should I run if faced with a knife?

Instructors do not, of course, have to teach their students to actively fight. In fact the most common advice given with regard to knives is "run". It is easy to tell people to run, but is running the best option? Knives aren't usually produced at a great distance. In the time it takes your average person to turn to flee, the attacker has had time to react and start to grab them – if they haven't done so on producing the knife. An attacker expects a victim to freeze or run - they don't expect them to fight back: very few predators choose prey that they think could be a danger to them. Freezing and flight are expected, they will therefore get the quickest response. The Tueller Drill showed in 1983 that the safe distance required to draw and fire a sidearm before an attacker with a knife could close distance and stab was 21 feet. An attacker can close 6 feet in 0.5 seconds and 12 feet in under 1 second. At the range that a knife is produced to threaten, very few people will have enough time to turn and get a good head start from someone who may already be facing in that direction. If an attack is already in progress, the attacker is already advancing towards you with intent to cut, the odds against getting a sufficient distance are greater. At that range turning your back on a knife may not be the best possible option. Without advance knowledge of how fast the other person can run, thrust, slash or throw, presenting an unprotected back is not really a good move.

In addition to this element of doubt over the efficacy of running there are environments where you cannot run. There are also medical factors that may limit the ability of your students to run (knee, ankle problems, asthma etc). So, if you say that you are teaching or learning self defense, you need to incorporate anti-knife strategies. By all means be aware that you may be able to escape unscathed by handing over items, but the situation may not always be such that this will solve the problem.

How can I safely test my knife defences?

This leaves the tricky question of formulating physical strategies for the 'last chance' option of physically attempting to defend against a blade. The only method you can employ with knife attacks is to take a logical systematic approach to the training. DART uses a ten stage process to evaluate knife defenses.

Donning the armor to put knife-defenses to the test!

Step One: Identify the probable ways you can be attacked (not the infamous Jim Carrey straight arm spoof) or threatened. Use police, forensic and A&E reports to help you identify the most common places people are stabbed.

Step Two: Slowly try with a partner all the possible ways your body can react against the threat. Once you have a selection of strategies that seem to work - cut out any that initially involve fine motor skills.

Step Three: Kit up both people in decent protective armor (14) and try the strategies you have produced with a rubber blade against a single identified probable attack/threat. Do this in a static (one step) attack with full speed and power. Automatically discard any responses that work less than 90% of the time – no matter how they cool they look. Looking cool is something that belongs in the movies, not in any real defense against knives, unfortunately cool moves tend to result in cool bodies.

Step four: Repeat step three but this time add pre-assault verbal threats and distractions to increase the pressure level. Again - discard movements that are affected by the greater pressure.

Step five: Try step four after either an aerobic workout or running round a stick to simulate an intensive stress reaction in your body.

Step six: Repeat step four but this time your attacker is allowed to keep going for you until they have been hit in such a way that they accept the fight would have been over (move from static to dynamic training). People do not generally stab just once: once the psychological gap involved has been crossed they will keep thrusting and they will panic if you get hold of the knife (their own self protection instinct). The majority of stabbings involve multiple penetrations.

Step seven: Repeat step six with the pre attack aerobic work.

Step eight: Move from dynamic to 'alive' training by giving the attacker choice of empty hand or any of the possible knife attacks you have identified, using pre-fight verbal and distractions.

Step nine: Add the pre-fight aerobic to step eight.

Step ten: Replace your rubber blade with a felt pen to get a clearer idea of possible scraping and slicing points and assess your survivability.

At any point in this ten stage drill you can return to an earlier stage to take account of information learned. The more your mind and body has to remember the more likely you are to fail. Keep it Simple.

There are many types of blades used on the street, but the only one that isn't is the only one I would ever train with: The rubber blade.

Use a rubber blade. If you always treat it with the respect you would reserve for the real item there should be no problem with this tool. I have seen a rubber blade snapped at the hilt due to the impact it made when a student panicked and thrust his hand at the knife in an instinctive protective motion, and that is why it is my favored tool: a wooden tanto or a blunt aluminum blade wouldn't have broken; they would have broken the student. The speed, aggression and suddenness of an attack combined with the psychological stress (and anticipation of being hit caused by wearing body armor) of verbal assault will give most normal people a sufficient adrenaline rush to come as close as reasonably possible to real life conditions in training. You do not need to use an aluminum, wooden or electrified blade. Let us not forget the purpose

of engaging in knife drills – to give experience of reliable effective responses for when there is no choice but to engage, not to injure the person training.

Training in this manner isn't an easy, but it is a worthwhile thing to do. You don't have to do it personally - but every knife drill you teach or learn should have gone through this kind of process. Knife drills should be as 'road-tested' as you can *safely* make them - if they are not, what is your level of integrity as a martial artist?

All violent crime is serious and knives are one of the least forgiving things you may ever have to face. If you practice defending against a knife with tried and tested drills that have the integrity that comes from pressure testing then you will always have more options, and options and experience are crucial parts of fear management. Ultimately, you will make the choice what to do if you ever have to face a knife and you will be the person who knows if you really did all you could to prepare yourself for that situation.

Coach John Titchen teaches *Defence Attack & Resolution Tactics* to students, education professionals and corporate clients and can be reached via his website www.d-a-r-t.org.uk, e mail jwt.dart@gmail.com. He is an accredited Coach with the National Federation for Personal Safety and a Personal Defence Readiness™ Coach with Blauer Tactical Systems and is available to teach both self-protection, use of force and the law, restraint and Karate Bunkai seminars. The author's new book, ***Heian Flow System - Effective Karate Kata Bunkai***, is available on Amazon and through all good bookshops.

Footnotes: 1 - This figure rising to 62% among pupils who had been excluded. **2** - D. Grossman, *On Killing: the psychological cost of learning to kill in War and Society*, (New York, 1995), pages 120 – 122. **3** - Grossman, pages 120- 128. **4** - BBC Website, report of 21 September 2006. **5** - S. Nicholas, D. Povey, A. Walker & C. Kershaw, *Crime in England and Wales 2004/2005*, (www.homeoffice.gov.uk), page 74. **6** - I have here estimated the population of England and Wales at 50 million. **7** - C. Smith & J. Allen, *Violent crime in England and Wales*, (www.homeoffice.gov.uk), page 13. **8** - A Finney, *Findings 214 Violence in the night time economy: key findings from research*, (www.homeoffice.gov.uk, 2004), page 3. **9** - BBC Website, report of 21 September 2006. **10** - Although the flip side to this is that it may mean that you are in fact in a club where violence is a regular occurrence. **11** - See D. Grossman, On Killing: the psychological cost of learning to kill in War and Society, (New York, 1995). **12** - See above. **13** - Data provided by the National Federation for Personal Safety (NFPS). **14** - Armour should protect the majority of the body from injury. This means that while pain may be acceptable the level of padding should be sufficient to prevent broken bones. In situations such as this the padding should also be thin enough to allow natural movement. Please note that padding can only ever reduce the impact force, it does not nullify it and as a result care should be taken when striking to areas such as the head or neck.

The 360 Degree Drill & Traditional Karate Practices

by Eric Parsons

Pick up any "popular" martial arts magazine and you are likely to find at least one article espousing the latest in "reality-based self-defense" and at least one article in support of the more "traditional" sides of the martial arts. In describing their viewpoints, the author of the former will typically denigrate the impracticality of the traditional martial arts while the author of the latter will seem to consider all reality-based proponents as something akin to heretics. Plus, if all this wasn't enough, there are likely to be numerous letters in the magazine's letter column arguing about previous articles on the same issue. Everyone has to have their say!

Personally, I have always found such arguments amusing. Both sides make valid points, but they tend to do so in such a manner that, even if the other side was willing to listen (which, most of the time, they are not), they would be turned off by the way in which the evidence is presented. One side wants to throw the baby out with the bathwater, while the other has such a dogmatic attachment to surface tradition that it fails to see where their practice has diverged from their style's original intent.

And, what was that intent? To be able to defend oneself as effectively as possible in the real world – plain and simple. That was the goal of the men who developed what are now known as the "traditional" martial arts. Of course, that is also the stated goal of the today's champions of reality. As these goals coincide and the anatomy of the human body has changed little for millennia (and, for that matter, neither has the nature hand-to-hand combat), it seems that the means used to reach those goals should also be similar. And, in truth, they are. To demonstrate this point, let us compare the 360-Degree drill, a common training tool used in Krav Maga, to two "traditional" martial arts practices – sticky hands and *ikukumi kumite* – and discuss how one can be used to link to and reinforce the other.

Figure 1

Figure 2

The 360-Degree Drill

Since some readers may not be familiar with this drill, I will begin with a brief description of how it is performed.

To start, students should be paired up with one partner designated the "attacker" and the other partner designated the "defender". Upon commencing the drill, the attacker is instructed to deliver open handed strikes at the defender. These attacks should be varied and should approach the defender from all possible angles – hence the name "360-Degree Drill". In Krav Maga, the attacks for this drill are typically delivered only from the outside-in (**Figure 1**), with the focus on practitioners developing their awareness of and reaction to peripheral attacks. However, direct-line attacks can also be incorporated (**Figure 2**) with positive results. Furthermore, the attacks should be delivered with varying speeds and rhythms, depending on the skill level of the defender.

As the attacker delivers these open-handed strikes, the defender's job is to keep them from reaching him or her. In Krav Maga, there are specific arm and hand positions that are designed to be used against the various angles of attack. However, when adapting this drill to a non-Krav style, one can simply modify the blocks already present in his/her style to meet the needs of the drill. For example, my preference is to avoid solid force-on-force blocks but instead use quick deflections (**Figure 3**) that leave fewer holes in my defense and also lend themselves to quick counter-attacks (**Figure 4**).Once the students have mastered this basic defensive stage, they then move onto the next level where the defender looks for openings in which to tap the attacker on the shoulder (**Figure 5**). This works to develop an active defense on one side and also shows the attacker when he or she is opening him or herself up to counter-attacks, leading to a tighter, more efficient offense.

After gaining competence at this level, the defender is then allowed to tap the attacker on either the shoulder or the knee (**Figure 6**), which adds high and low-line attacks into the counter-attacking strategy. Although this is often the limit of the drill in Krav Maga, further levels can be

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

added by allowing the attacker more offensive options (foot sweeps, takedowns, etc.), which will automatically force the defender to employ different defensive tactics and strategies, or by giving the defender a broader palette of counter-attacks with which he/she can respond. For example, instead of responding with a simple shoulder or knee tap, the defender could be instructed to look for openings to fit in for a throw (*uchi komi*) or to always initiate the counter by focusing on a specific target (eyes, throat, groin, etc.). In addition, the defender can be instructed to continually increase his/her reaction time, shortening the period between the block and the counter-attack. Such simultaneous block/strikes are called "bursting" in Krav terminology but are a concept that should be familiar to martial artists of all stripes.

The 360 Drill and Sticky Hands

The term "Sticky Hands" encompasses a wide variety of partner drills that are most commonly associated with the Chinese martial arts, although they are certainly present in the Okinawan and Japanese styles. In these drills, the two participants typically touch wrists, using one or both hands, and attempt to stick together through a series of flowing movements that can either be pre-arranged or free form, depending on the specifics of the drill. Often, if an opening presents itself to either partner, that partner is allowed to strike, throw, or press the other partner. The goal of such drills tend to be two-fold: 1 - They force both partners to soften up and be more flowing in their movements, as a sure way to "lose" in the drill is to become stiff and try to muscle your partner, and also 2 - To develop "listening Jin", the ability to anticipate your partner's moves based on the feel of his/her body movements. Clearly, both of these skills are of great value to a martial artist.

Furthermore, many martial arts styles expand upon the sticky hands routines, creating "sticky forearms" and "sticky elbows" drills that move the participants closer together. Closing the gap even further, pummeling drills can be seen as a form of "sticky biceps" training. In some classes,

the lower extremities are involved as well. For example, in my judo class, we practice a "sticky foot" technique where a person who attempts a failed sweep continues to stick his/her foot to the opponent's, hoping to keep them from establishing a firm base and leading to an eventual loss of balance.

Bringing this back to the subject at hand, the 360-Degree drill simply takes these same concepts but moves in the opposite direction. Instead of getting closer, the partners move (a small distance) further apart. The contact is no longer immediate from the beginning of the drill but must be initiated through a block/deflection that is then held/maintained to control the opponent.

This point is most clearly seen once the attacks are sped up and allowed to come from all angles, including direct-line attacks. If the defender remains truly defensive in such circumstances and only focuses his/her attention on deflecting the incoming strikes, an attacker with quick hands will inevitably win. Action beats reaction. However, if the defender becomes more proactive, maintaining contact after the deflections and employing sticky hands-style control concepts, he or she can remain relatively safe even from the quickest of attackers.

One way of maintaining this contact that is quite effective is for the defender to establish "elbow control". When the attacker strikes, the defender remains on the inside and then slides the blocking hand up to the attacker's elbow. (**Figures 7 & 8**) Once in position, the defender "sticks" the hand there and uses pressure to control the attacker's movements. By controlling the elbow, the defender effectively controls the entire arm and neutralizes attacks from that weapon.

Using control tactics like these also helps demonstrate the similarities between the 360-Degree drill and sticky hands, as they make it difficult for an observer to determine who the attacker is and who the defender is. The drill becomes a free flowing exchange in which the attacker is trying to break contact and strike, while the defender is doing his/her best to maintain contact and avoid being hit. In fact, such movement reinforces the basic tenets of sticky hands as the drill pertains to strikes: (1) When the force advances, deflect it, (2) When the force retreats, follow it, and (3) When the force breaks, strike.

Figure 7

Figure 8

The 360 Drill and Ikukumi Kumite

Another piece of the traditional karate curriculum that bears a striking resemblance to the 360-Degree drill is *ikukumi kumite*. In "The History and Evolution of Shorei-Kan Goju-Ryu Karate", Ichiro Naito and Scott Lenzi describe this practice as follows: "*This last component [of Miyagi's curriculum] involved real combat practice, but was set up in such a way that the students were not injured. The junior was allowed to attack with any technique to any part of the senior's body without restraining kicks and punches. The senior man could block or dodge, but was not allowed to initiate any counterattack. Finally, when he saw an opening, the senior student jumped in and pushed the junior back with the palm of his hand. The senior student accordingly had to master a tremendous number of techniques in order to use them instantaneously. Since scoring points was of no interest, the senior's counterattack had to be final and decisive. It generally took a minimum of ten years to reach this level.*" So, the essential nature of *ikukumi kumite* was a continual barrage of attacks by one (junior) student with the other (senior) student evading these attacks until a decisive counterstrike could be administered. Of course, this is quite similar to the 360-Degree drill with added counterattacks, particularly the shoulder slap and knee slap varieties, the primary difference being that the attacker is limited in the type and strength of the attacks allowed. Hence, the 360-Degree drill can be seen as an effective intermediate tool that students can use to prepare themselves for *ikukumi kumite* during that (seemingly) long 10+ years until they are ready for the real thing.

Conclusion

As is demonstrated by the above example, the primary difference between reality-based martial arts and those of a more traditional nature is largely one of semantics. If we define "reality" and "traditional" appropriately, with the realists conceding that the foundations of the traditional arts are sound and the traditionalists giving up lazy dogmatic approaches for the practical, effective self-defense that is truly the legacy of the old masters, we can then find a middle ground where not only are the ends the same, but the means are both similar and complementary.

Well, hopefully this article has given you some ideas to consider and perhaps a new drill or two to use in your training. Until next time – *Arigato gozaimasu*.

A Poor Craftsman Will Always Blame His Tools!

Ude: A brief look at utilising the forearms in combat

by Chris Denwood

The art of karate incorporates many methods in which to transfer your power into an opponent. By changing the shape of the weapons used to transmit energy, a whole host of resulting combat benefits can emerge. The common notion of striking with a closed fist is viewed by the traditional and more practical karate-ka as simply one of a vast amount of striking formations that are possible with the upper limbs. Almost every part of the hand can be accentuated for use as a striking weapon including the digits and thumb, fore-knuckles, wrist, the back of the hand and palm. Even the tips of the fingers can be used in an almost 'whip-like' fashion to attack the eyes etc. Each of these unsurprisingly comes with its own advantages, disadvantages and perhaps more critically, the most appropriate time for exploitation.

Likewise, the use of the forearms is an important consideration for those karate-ka who view their art as a practical means of self-protection. Simply carrying out a mere superficial glance through the traditional kata can reveal a whole host of ways in which the forearms can be used as effective striking tools and more. In this brief article, I'd like to focus on this particular aspect and hopefully expose how adaptable the forearms can be to aid overall effectiveness during close range altercations.

Before we look at the benefits and limitations to which the use of the forearm can offer in combat, I'd like to first devote a few words to its physical composition. The human forearm is generally defined as the area of the upper limbs between the wrist (*articulatio radiocarpea*) joint and elbow (*humeroulnar*) joint. It consists of two long bones, which are called the radius and ulna not surprisingly coming together to form the aptly named *radioulnar joint*. These bones are connected by a fibrous 'sheet' called the *interosseous membrane*. As far as musculature goes, the forearm carries numerous including the superficial muscles that control the motion of the hand at the wrist, the flexors/extensors of the fingers, the *brachioradialis* used to flex at the elbow joint and of course not overlooking the pronators/supinators, which are employed to twist the hand to face different directions (i.e. rotating palm up or palm down).

Collectively, the makeup of the forearm can be split up into two distinct sections or *fascial compartments*. The first being the *posterior compartment* that contains the extensors, which are supplied by the radial nerve. The other is the *anterior compartment* that contains the flexors, which is mainly supplied by the median nerve. In addition to these, there is also a third ulnar nerve that runs the length of the forearm. Blood is provided to the forearm primarily via the radial and ulna arteries or more specifically throughout their many branches.

Although the seemingly complex makeup of the human forearm can lead to a number of inherent weaknesses (examples of these include of course the fact that the arteries run very close to the skin or the easily accessible radial nerve below the elbow joint on the 'thumb side' of the forearm), a well conditioned limb can still prove to be a extremely versatile striking implement indeed. It must also be remembered that when the forearm is pronated (i.e. palm facing to the ground), the radius and ulna bones cross over to a point at which the palm will no longer turn any further. It is this occurrence that is usually exploited throughout the numerous wristlocks found in karate. Therefore in order to use the forearm effectively as a strong tool for transmitting energy, its innate limitations need to be understood somewhat, so that they can be either avoided or (as in some instances)

systematically strengthened by conditioning drills designed in such a way as to 'stress' the forearms in a controlled environment in order to bring about a positive adaptive response.

In almost all aspects of life, the human body has a fantastic ability to adapt and change according to the specific environment it's subjected to. If and when the conscious decision is made to step outside of our comfort zone to develop, the body will respond by changing to suit both the new challenge and the specific situation. For instance, if a weightlifter is used to pressing 100lbs and then makes the effort to press 110lbs, then an improvement will be required. The body will thus respond to this by becoming stronger. Conversely though, if the weightlifter then decided to instead attempt 200 or 300lbs, then a negative response would most likely occur, inevitably leading to injury. This fundamental principle of 'reasonable overload' is the key to almost every part of our martial training. Without it, we would never improve.

Throughout the traditional forearm conditioning methods found in karate, the same principle described above is applied. The idea is based upon the human body's restructuring of bone and surrounding tissue in proportion to a slow but consistent application of physical stress (i.e. reasonable overload). When receiving repetitive and controlled impact against the forearms, the tissue and bone can develop over some time, become more dense and strong, whilst simultaneously reducing the number of 'active' pain receptors. In short, the body will become more accustomed to the new challenge placed upon it and as a result, grow positively in response.

In karate there are many traditional methods in which to condition the forearms and these were originally deemed necessary because of the natural emphasis placed on these areas during close-range altercations - the range in which karate originally specialised. Since visual reaction can't be relied upon at distances breaching that of arms length, the most common subconscious reaction is to quickly raise the arms in order to defend the vital areas such as the throat or eyes and if skilled enough, to obtain a 'tactile reference' with the opponent. In these kinds of instances, one of the first parts of the body to clash will invariably be the forearm. Regrettably, the intention and word limit of this article doesn't offer me the space to digress any further into forearm conditioning – although perhaps this can be an interesting subject for a future piece?

On the surface, the more 'modern' methods of karate seem to have completely disregarded the combat usage of the forearms. Yet, its well worth pointing out the fact that all the basic so-called 'blocking' manoeuvres found in the art such as gedan barai, uchi uke, soto uke, age uke and otoshi uke etc, use the forearm exclusively as the primary means of contact. I personally believe that this is in no way a coincidence and that these movements cover all the fundamental directions of force or energy projection. The simple viewpoint of considering these techniques as strikes alone would certainly show the importance of the forearm within the combat philosophy of karate. Furthermore, taking these potential applications beyond the realms of just striking illustrates the clear malleability of such a weapon. In fact with this idea in mind, it would be reasonable to assume that in most cases and within more pragmatic combat ranges, the use of the forearm would probably even surpass the use of the much more commonly taught fist. This argument is also reinforced by the fact that many of the traditional shuri-te kata (even the modern Pinan kata of Anko Itosu) are literally rife with techniques that potentially employ the forearm – surely a sign of how valuable these were originally deemed.

Generally speaking, we can make contact with the opponent via the four regions of the forearm. We can use the 'palm side', the 'little finger side', the 'thumb side' or the 'back side'. Obviously, striking with the thumb or little finger side would involve the ulna and radius bones more, since the palm and back sides generally have more musculature mass. In some cases, having less muscular protection can prove disadvantageous. However, in respect to the practical application of karate movements, the bones of the forearm can still be utilised in variety ways to accentuate a particular technique or strategy. Examples of this could include the application of chokes or arm locking manoeuvres whereby extra pressure can be applied via a forceful twisting action of the forearm bones against the opponent's more vulnerable areas.

Unlike the fist or other similar hand techniques, a forearm strike is not limited by any weaker joint

i.e. the wrist. In addition, because most forearm strikes are generally angular in nature (as opposed to thrusts), less emphasis is required on making sure that the body is aligned in such a way as to cope with a large resulting energy. This is of course particularly important for thrusting strikes since at the extreme, effectiveness can always be lost due to the opposing force having a consequential adverse effect on the total power output. Like the elbow, which I suppose is really just another kind of forearm strike, a great deal of power can be generated, which makes the use of the forearm a serious consideration for anyone who wishes to make use of their upper limbs at close range.

Again, with respect to the modern interpretation of karate, it's clear (and unfortunate) that in the majority of cases, the applications associated with the use of the forearm have either been lost entirely or are seriously under-used. If it wasn't for the longstanding traditional kata, which concentrates solely on close range practical combat, the remainder of the more extended range karate strategies have simply no requirement for such techniques. Not that I'm advocating that there's anything wrong with this – it's just the product of our natural human nature to alter our training in order to serve a particular purpose. In karate competition for instance (to which most modern day practice is geared towards), as soon as two combatants obtain a fighting distance inside that of arms length, the contest is usually stopped via the referee and reset back at long range again. Therefore in this particular environment, there is no need to hone any skills at close range. This occurrence would obviously never occur in reality though and so with respect to this purpose in mind, the weapons and power development strategies that don't depend so much on distance or time have to very quickly become a priority in these more life threatening situations.

Using the centre line as a reference, we can strike with the forearm by either thrusting away from the body, pulling in towards the body, moving to the outside, moving back in towards the centre, raising upwards or sinking downwards. These six fundamental motions prescribe the gross body mechanics and as already stated above, seem to be intentionally dealt with a great deal via the basic 'blocking' techniques found in karate. Again, these movements do not only have to be applied to striking. The pictures found with this article give a number of examples as to how the forearms can be used and hopefully serve to provide some illustration as to the real potential behind these movements. For those who are interested, I would certainly urge you to spend a little time in studying this specific area and I guarantee that you'll be taken aback at the amount of adaptable combat applications, which can be extracted and incorporated into your combat arsenal from these seemingly basic techniques.

Photos (1) and (2) show the forearm being used as strikes by incorporating two of the fundamental motions as described above.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Photo (3) shows the thumb side of the forearm being used as an effective choke. In photo (4), a joint attack is being shown and in photo (5) another variation is demonstrated that utilises the twisting of the forearm to cause additional discomfort to the area just above the antagonists elbow. Finally, in photo's (6) and (7), the theme has been broadened slightly to include a very useful close range strike using the very end of the forearm towards the inside of the elbow joint. Although technically, this doesn't employ the forearm exclusively, it's such an effective movement that I figured it would be sacrilege not to include it here. It also serves as a means to show that during any form of adaptable analysis, your creative mind should not be held back by any limiting factors. As I always like to remind those in my dojo, *'karate means empty hand, so then by definition - everything goes!*

Figure 6

Figure 7

To conclude this short article I'd like to re-emphasise the universal fact that many of the combative strategies in traditional karate have inevitably been 'de-prioritised' due to the way in which the objectives of the art have changed to form the modern styles we see and practice today. If the primary aim of your practice is taken away from the need to excel in close range self-protection and instead placed in areas such as sport, self perfection, fitness, health, enlightenment or stress relief, then it clearly stands to reason that what was once deemed essential becomes naturally placed near the 'bottom of the pile'. Without doubt, karate (as it stands today) has many faces and each of us who practice enthusiastically has the right to take from it what they need or what they deem to be necessary. However, if one of your goals does happen to be in the area of self-protection then there's no need to worry. Everything concerning this aspect that was once prevalent in the art is still very much present – it's just that we may sometimes either have to look a little harder or increase our understanding in order to uncover it. I suppose, looking at the bigger picture then, the content of this article simply does nothing more than humbly represent a mere drop in the vast ocean that is of course karate.

Thanks for taking the time to read this article; I hope you found the content beneficial.

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The Hierarchy of Training: Martial Arts Time Managemnet

by Jamie Clubb

Years ago I read an online martial arts discussion regarding limited training times. A martial arts student had written in with a problem. He only had an hour a day to train and wanted to make the best use of his time. The responses came in thick and fast. However, to my astonishment all of the programmes suggested consisted of mainly doing long callisthenic exercises and stretching before a small amount of time was dedicated to doing actual martial arts movements whether it was against a bag or shadow boxing or forms. This intrigued me and over time I began to notice this preoccupation with weight training, callisthenics and general conditioning in discussions where forum members compared their regular "martial arts" training regimes.

Many considered their formal classes to be enough to sharpen their skills and their home training was dedicated to improving flexibility, strength and cardiovascular capacity. Furthermore, when details were shared on what exactly the exercises were they often had a very abstract relation to their martial arts activity. In essence, they just simply believed it was important to keep fit in some shape or form and gave little thought to how exactly their exercises might contribute towards their martial arts training. Oddly enough the solution for someone who felt his stamina was letting him down in sparring was not to simply do more sparring or, if this was not possible, do more work on the punch/kick bag or shadow sparring, but to go for a run.

Yet, it is in this belief that martial artists seem to be pretty much alone. No other physical activity devotes so little time to actually training the specific activity. Swimmers swim, tennis players play tennis, yogis practice yoga and climbers climb. Even writers are advised to write every day. Whereas martial artists… well, they stretch, they run, they lift weights and sometimes they practice martial arts, if time permit of course.

Those who feel that their formal lessons are enough might have a vague point if these lessons did concentrate one hundred per cent on training martial arts. However, this is often not the case. A typical martial arts lesson begins with a run around the gym followed by press-ups, sit-ups and so on. This is then followed by a lengthy period of stretches. Other classes just begin with stretching. Some of these warm-ups can take up to thirty minutes, mind you I have known classes that spend even longer and back in 1999 one instructor proudly stated in a public interview that he did not allocate more than ten minutes to actual martial arts activity. With children's classes we have an even worse situation, as instructors not only have the lengthy warm-ups, but also have sandwich the actual martial arts training with abstract bribery games to "keep the children's interest". Yet martial arts are discussed as being "a way of life" and the practice of them supposedly trains instinctive responses that can be applied under pressure. The mind boggles as to how either of these statements can ever be true with the lack of importance this subculture often places on the practical training.

A key problem I have found is that martial arts, more so than most other forms of physical activity, are rarely taught with a clearly defined goal for the lesson. This is little surprising with the wishy-washy way martial arts are promoted or written about. Are they for self-defence? Sport? Spiritual enlightenment? Health? All of the above? In modern times there has often been much talk about martial arts being about a journey. However, without a clearly defined destination, how can anyone make a worthwhile journey?

The way the martial arts world get around this is through something I call the "by-product myth". This is the assumption that very important skills can be acquired without the student realizing it. Although this can happen to a small degree, it makes sense that the most productive results

are going to be when a student completely embraces the full purpose of their training. Therefore what I propose is that serious students of martial arts adopt a strict time management policy with their training. This should involve obeying robust principles that are in line with modern coaching methods. At CCMA (Clubb Chimera Martial Arts) we call this "The Hierarchy of Training".

All training programmes should be done with the end in mind. This idea is reflected in all three groups I have listed in The Hierarchy of Training, but it is more evident in the most obvious in the first group: Specific Training. This is the specialist area where you concentrate your attention on achieving a clear goal. It is where you work on one tactic or even an individual technique in isolation and then test it under different conditions and ranges. Often at CCMA we try to bring out individual techniques by beginning with a form of pressure test, where the students will find naturally efficient methods they instinctively use to pre-empt or counter-attack an aggressor. Then we isolate these effective tactics and techniques and use different methods to improve the body mechanics, the reaction speed, timing, execution and the overall delivery.

A way to train a striking method, for example, might be to first restrict a student to striking in a pressure test situation either as a pre-emptive drill or as a defence against a grappling attacker. Then take the strikes that served the student best into a pad drill, where he will work to hit the pad as hard as possible. Other pad drills can be used to simulate a realistic or sparring environment with the pad-coach feeding the student with attacks. This gives the student the opportunity to replay the resistance-based situation, but this time he takes a more empowered role and is actively prompted to take advantage of openings. With an idea of what improves the strikes confirmed in the student's head, the stage might be to shadow the strikes he has used both against a fellow student and also the pads. Shadowing is a great way to record data and then be used as a type of physical reference book or diary. My belief, at the time of writing, is that this was the original purpose behind the kata, forms, patterns and solo drills of traditional martial arts. To keep a progressive training circle going, a student can then do another form of

pressure-testing or resistance based partner work to assess improvements, building up to specific sparring.

Specific Training has a natural place in grappling. I have never seen its practice more prevalent than in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Submission Grappling and Wrestling, where students will spend up to a month completely absorbing all aspects of a certain position or even a single technique. Like other areas of training, at CCMA, a student first derives his basic grappling methods from "live" encounters with other students. Because we naturally grapple from an early age, as a means to assert dominance over another individual without seriously harming them, "Primal Grappling" is pretty easy to initiate. From Primal Grappling we find natural positions that work efficiently and then isolate them with some compliant training drills. The pressure then can be increased back up to specific sparring. They then can be integrated back into different conditions, bringing in striking, weapons and multiple aggressors.

Other examples of Specific Training include role-play and escape drills. In fact, if we are to take this type of training into the realm of realistic self-defence these elements are pretty vital fundamental components in our drills. This means that realistic dialogue that incorporate verbal aggression and distractions should be implemented to create the right atmosphere and inherent social disadvantages found in a real-life situation. Equally escape is the number one priority in the majority of self-defence situations and fundamental Specific Training drills that are geared towards self-defence should have this as the clearly defined goal of the student being coached.

Photos in this article taken by Sonia Audhali

Attribute Training is a term I first heard from the World Combat Arts founder, Mo Teague. He used it to describe valid areas of training that are not immediately relevant to realistic self-defence. This is not to say that it is not a worthwhile area of training for someone interested in self-defence, but that its purpose is not as well defined as Specific Training. I define Attribute Training as being combat methods that are more geared towards developing will than specific self-defence tactics like pre-emptive striking and escape. Therefore most forms of full contact sparring, where the object is to "win" rather than "survive", falls into this category of training. When you Attribute Train you are effectively stepping off a self-defence path and into the wilderness of combat research, where you condition yourself to adapt and then return with new knowledge back to the severe restrictions imposed by self-defence training. This is where intelligent cross training comes into the plan.

If you have a clearly defined goal in mind, you will learn the rules in a mind to break them. You will learn Western Boxing to gain the experience of working with your hands in an environment that specializes in hand-striking. In the grappling arts you will learn how to position yourself and become familiar with fully resistant people who will be using restraining methods against you in a manner that is not far removed from an unarmed abductor's tactics. In Muay Thai and Mixed Martial Arts you will get the feel of grabbing in conjunction with striking from several ranges, which harks back to fighting at its most primal. It is this familiarization with these areas and the hardiness that consistent training in them cultivates that we are after when undertake Attribute Training. An intelligent cross trainer will look past the complex shapes that the individual arts and styles take and will look to the universal principles that underlie the most efficient tactics. He will then sceptically dissect even the highest percentage methods and investigate their origin in the fight and, crucially, what their flaws are when he brings the tactics back to the self-defence path.

Functional Fitness is the title I have given to the third type of training. This area deals primarily, but not necessarily, with solo training methods that are bit more abstract from the other two groups of combat training. They vary from heavy bag training to weight training. Methods should be geared towards developing the muscle memory and muscle groups involved in your martial art. As a general rule, martial arts Functional Fitness training should involve compound and combination exercises, including super-sets and shock training. Martial artists need both stamina training, to handle the tiring stress the body can experience when feeling the effects of adrenaline, and explosive training to deal with the rapid delivery of heavy force in a short length of time. Compound exercises involve big body movements and bring in the use of more than one muscle group by moving the body through more than one joint movement. A lot of free standing exercises, such as squats are good examples of compound exercises. I define combination exercises as exercises that work two muscle groups in the same rep. Press and clean are brilliant combination exercises, roughly combining dead-lifts with squats and the military press. Super-sets are two or more different exercises done immediately after each other without a rest in-between to make up a single set. Shock training – or shocking the system – is the practice of training one area of the body so that the blood rushes there and then switching to another part to ensure it receives more stress. Apparatus worth looking into include resistance bands and versatile crossover cable machines for more specific Functional Fitness, that drill striking and throwing applications, unbalanced weights, secure yet unstable equipment such as trapeze bars or roman rings, kettle-bells for free movement and awkward shaped weights such as tyres.

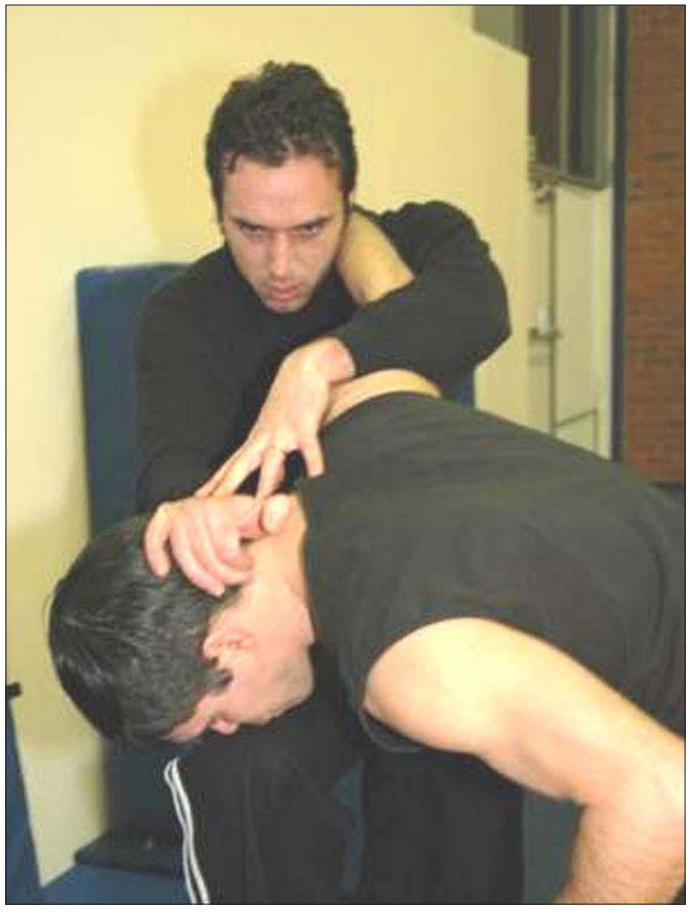
In conclusion, I advise that in order to get better at something, train that particular something. Then investigate intelligently into what methods best support the skills you need the most and develop your attitude to be adaptable yet resilient under stress and tiredness. Finally develop your body, in addition to your spirit, in a manner that will best serve you in your chosen activity.

Condition your mind to be creative yet sceptical. If you are training for real-life self-preservation then ensure that your Specific Training reflects this. For example do you routinely drill running from an attacker that draws a weapon? Okay, do you then continue drilling the running when

you are forced to engage and subdue the threat or do you get seduced by the lure of the physical fight? In Attribute Training are you looking towards the robust fully restrictive combat sports that are transparently interested in developing efficiency or are you drawn towards those that reward low percentage flashy techniques and offer "quick fix" mysticism? Do you then look for principle links between the robust sports/arts and are you brave enough to question their limitations? In Functional Fitness, do you look for exercises that will test your whole being in a short length of time or are you more interested in cultivating your biceps and going through the motions as if it were a chore? When you do work an exercise geared toward combat efficiency do you then look at how the body mechanics directly relate to the execution of high percentage techniques and how you can improve this particular exercise to enrich the integrity of the technique?

These are all questions worth considering if one hopes to continually progress in a productive and relevant fashion. A final note on "The Hierarchy of Training": many martial arts speak of a "higher art". In fact, I went through many schools and spoke to many martial artists, many who fancied themselves as scholars, who looked at me as if I were some sort of philistine if I dared to discuss the subject of combat efficiency. Well, so far my historical research has led me to the current conclusion that virtually all of the world's most established forms of martial art were originally created for this purpose. They weren't even invented with the philosophical notion that you train to fight so that you don't have to fight. No, they were originally designed for self-preservation or the domination of the enemy, and many were designed to kill. Such revelations – to my shame - made me become disparaging of the "white suit" arts that preached about peaceful and spiritual martial arts training, especially when too much of it seemed to a) be represented by bogus claims and outright mystical charlatanism and b) be taught by bullying hypocrites that took advantage of other's insecurities. Yet, somewhere in my consciousness I knew this disparaging attitude was also a type of cop-out on the reality of the situation. Luckily I was able to meet, read about and train with real traditionalists that helped me understand that all aspects of training could not simply be divided up into white suit bad, no suit good.

Civilians should not dismiss all notions of becoming a better person and influencing a positive environment. In fact, I would encourage this strongly even if this is just for selfish reasons to reduce the chances that you and your loved ones will be victims of assault. However, my theory is – and this appears to be routinely backed up by most people who train hard and intelligently in the combat arts – that a better appreciation of life and other people comes from pushing yourself to your physical limit, facing fear and continually getting to your feet after each defeat. It wasn't long before I found that those people I considered to be at the top of the realistic self-defence ladder or who excelled at the full-contact sports, were often very peaceful and good natured people who, having been "through the forge" were now working on "holistic self-defence" or, as my good friend Geoff Thompson likes to say, "defence from the self". When your body is forged through heavy forms of resistance, be it from a training partner or a dead weight, your mind is tested too and so is your character. You just seem to value everything more, making you become more philosophical and this is where you develop your own personal higher art.



Photos in this article taken by Sonia Audhali

The Street

by Michael Rosenbaum

It was 3:00A.M. the end of a very long night for me. My shift at the bar where I worked as a bouncer had begun 12 hours earlier, but it seemed as if an eternity had passed since then. During the course of my time on duty I along with my partner had broken up several altercations between drunken customers, thwarted the attempts of numerous minors to enter the bars premise on fake ID's and had even helped a police officer arrest a very belligerent young man who was selling cocaine in the bathroom. As we placed him in the back of the squad car he screamed police brutality; a charge with no shred of evidence to it what so ever. Fully realizing this, the young man began slamming his face into the back of the drivers seat in an attempt to create his own evidence. The arresting officer and I just stood there shaking our heads as we waited for the paddy wagon to come take our psychotic friend downtown. We both agreed a rubber room would be to his liking. Later as I stood at the bars front door watching our patrons stumble out into the cold morning air, the thing I wanted most was to just get home and climb into bed. I was tired from the long hours, sore from having been slammed into a wall by some drunken Rambo want-a-be, and just in an over all bad mood due to our cliental, who were a mixture of middle- aged men out cheating on their wives, drug dealers conducting business as usual, college kids whose sole ambition was to get blind drunk, and a group of bikers who regularly dropped by to grab a beer and a bite to eat. Ironically it was the bikers who proved to be the most- well behaved of the lot.

Standing beside me was Brian, one of the bartenders, a tall lanky kid whose expression barely hid his contempt for those whom he had served that night. His apron was covered with ketchup and grease stains and his boots were soaked from all the soapy water that was used to disinfect the kitchen floor each night. Like me, he too had, had a long night and just as the last customer was exiting the door Brian, shouted; "Fight, Mike there's a fight out there." Without delay I rushed through the bars big oaken doors and sure enough right in front of me were two middle aged men, both filled with whiskey, fighting over the company of a young lady who stood nearby. She was very delighted that her presence would warrant such drama. Sizing up the situation I circled around the man standing on the lower end of the sloped sidewalk and quickly steered him away from the other combatant. However by doing so I became the focus of his anger, which was soon turned upon me along with a barrage of punches. He was not a trained fighter but that didn't matter because with his powerful hay-makers it would only take for one to land and then I would be in trouble. In an awkward manner I blocked some of the incoming blows and ducked others each one sounding like a dump truck had passed by my head. Finally an opening came, and I lunged forward pushing hard into his stomach with both my hands, causing him to double over and fall backwards. After hitting the sidewalk the desire to fight left him, as did much of his dinner. He tried to get up but could only manage to roll over on all fours and vomit. Seeing this I quickly turned about, and there- stood the other sport coat clad assailant who was drawing way back with his right hand to hit me.

In the exact moment that he drew back his fist everything went into slow motion, and as if in a vision I knew where, when and how his punch would be thrown. The mans eyes were filled with anger when he lashed out at me but the second before his fist crashed into my face I ever so slightly stepped to one side of him. One moment I was there and the next I was not. It was one of the most beautiful slipping actions you have ever seen. Earl Flynn could have not done any better and my opponent's punch thundered by me out into empty space. "On guard" I felt like shouting but at that precise instant the rule of Murphy and his dastardly law came into play.

Just like the other man, who was now on his hands and knees dry heaving, the fellow whose punch I had side stepped was not a trained fighter. Therefore when his fist went sailing out

into nowhere the force behind it made him loose his balance. And because this happened on a sloping sidewalk, one covered in ice and snow he fell right on top of me. I tried desperately to get out of his way but it proved impossible due to the snow and ice beneath me. There was a crash, a curse, and then we both went rolling down the sidewalk locked in one another's arms. During our decent my opponent made several attempts to gouge me in the eyes and gab hold of my hair. I on the other hand was praying; "please Jesus don't let him have neither gun nor knife".

Finally our long protracted roll ended at the curbside, and we found ourselves still entangled with one another sprawled out in the snow, ice and slush. My attacker had ended up on top of me with the better position. However, as he tried to get up I punched him hard on the jaw and then managed to roll over on to his chest in what is known today as the "mount position". Here I was finally able to choke him by using the lapels of his coat. Yet, before I could render him unconscious, a crushing weight fell upon my back and from somewhere behind me I heard the bar manager screaming: "break it up, break it up". It was during all the confusion of my "encounter" that the manager, a big man who weighed close to 300lbs ran out and sat astride my back. Beneath me lay my drunken opponent who not only had to contend with me but the managers extra 300 pounds as well. He gasped for breath, groaned, and then finally screamed aloud "Oh God get them off me". Except, for my pride and dirty clothes I was uninjured, but my opponent was taken to the hospital for several fractured ribs, thanks in part to the managers decision to squash the affair instead of letting it play out. What had begun for me as a very chaotic event, one, which I'd gained some control over, quickly ended up as a scene right out of the keystone cops.

Whenever a martial artist asks me about street fighting and what may or may not be the best tactics I always tell them this story because throughout the years it's served as a good example of just how chaotic and uncontrollable a street altercation can be. A street fight/self-defense situation never turns out to be how you expect or want them too be. Yet this often is over looked at times in our training.

Since the terrorist attacks of 9-11 I've noticed that many instructors are emphasizing the self-defense aspects of the fighting arts more than they have in times past. And while this is good, what often is not addressed in teaching self-defense is the nature of the beast. By that I mean the chaos and violence that are an integral part of a street confrontation. Far to often when it comes to teaching combative aspects, especially by an instructor who has a lack of experience in this area, there is a tendency to "gloss it over" with quick fix approaches. Many of which are not based on sound judgment, nor first hand experience. The following explores some of these areas.

The Illusion of Ease: One common belief often put forth is that for a trained fighter it is an easy process to meet and defeat an assailant. This even includes an unarmed practitioner pitted against an armed one. The latest phase in this "illusion of ease" is the one I saw while browsing in a local Borders. As I sipped my coffee I came across a martial arts book that showed various means to defend against attackers who were armed in a manner of different ways. Some of the explanations were well founded but one in particular that caught my interest was the segment on how to disarm an opponent armed with a hand grenade. It involved a long intricate process that showed how you grabbed the grenade from your opponent's hand, threw them to the ground and then placed the grenade beneath them all the while you dove to safety. Having myself been in the military and had the pleasure or shall I say displeasure of throwing a hand grenade, several questions came to my mine about this. One of them being is that most grenades have a 3 second time delayed fuse on them. This is done so that you have time to throw the grenade but your opponent doesn't have time to pick it up and throw it back at you. In my opinion grappling with your opponent then throwing them on the ground and then placing the grenade beneath them would take more than three seconds. Unless of course your, Rambo, John Wayne, Walker Texas Ranger or any of the other action hero's who we see on the silver screen. There is another factor to be considered here and that is the kill radius of an exploding hand grenade. Most have a 50 -yard kill zone, which means that anything more or less with in a 50 -

Could you disarm an armed opponent against the clock?: 3, 2, 1 ...

yard circumference will be either killed or wounded by the grenades explosion. This can become even more complicated when you consider that some grenades are fragmentation types, which throw out pieces of metal while others may be incendiary models that use phosphorous to burn their victims to death. In this presentation of grenade defense running away was never considered as an option, which by the way would have been my first choice.

This illusion of ease is also given with many who teach the ever- popular "pressure point" attacks these days. While this can prove to be a very valid aspect of the martial artists training what many forget is if your opponent is drunk, mad, on drugs or are all three combined, then their threshold for pain has risen greatly! A simple touch, tap or grab is not going to achieve the desired results. A strong uppercut to the jaw, or a stomp to the knee, yes, but a finger lightly placed upon the temple or wrist will not. Fighting is a very physically demanding endeavor one where time is measured in split seconds not minutes. When it comes to street fighting and street self defense there is no illusion, it's tough, demanding and at times down right dangerous stuff.

Weapons: In keeping with our hand grenade scenario the issue of confronting an armed opponent should always be kept in mind. If you can defend against an armed opponent then more than likely your chances against an unarmed one will be good. However what we often fail to understand is that; whenever a weapon is used, then your chances for survival diminish as much as 90 percent depending upon the skill at which the attacker can use their weapon. Should a knife be used your chances may decrease as much as 50 to 70 percent. If it is a firearm and your opponent is at a range of say 10 to 15 feet then your chances for survival may decrease as much as 80 to 90 percent. These are depressing facts but they need to be kept in mind if your object is to plan an effective strategy against an armed opponent. All factors need to be considered because you may have only one opportunity to exploit an opening in your assailants plan. Weapons are not something to be taken lightly. You can take a punch to the face or stomach, but when it comes to a gunshot or stab wound the effects can be fatal. Also in teaching weapons defense we sometimes forget that running is a very valid and effective option. Even the most skilled warriors in times past knew when and when not to engage in battle. The call of retreat has been heard more than once in the fighting arts long history. This is a lesson we should not overlook especially in this day and age of automatic firearms.

Your training has to fit the fight: Far too often you will see the practitioner trying to make the fight fit their training instead of vice a versa. This is very common- place with many practitioners who often, spend- much time trying to figure out just how kata/form movements can be applied to an engagement. The movement or movements will be viewed from all angles most of which are beneficial to the defender. What can be lost in this analysis is that the opponent used during the exercise is often a very willing one who wants the definition to work just as much as the defender does. There fore the chaotic reality of a combative situation can and is overlooked. In actuality most fights/self defense situations occur at the most inconvenient times and places. More often than not you won't execute those predetermined responses found within your form or kata just as you have practiced them so often

in the dojo. Instead you may be forced to utilize catch as catch can techniques, which may or may not resemble those you have practiced. In addition to this is the fact that your own surge of adrenaline will hinder your motor skills leaving you with being able to execute only the most elementary of techniques. This is why many combative systems like military bayonet training utilize techniques that are based on a KISS system. Keep It Simple Stupid. They realize that in the heat of battle anything beyond a simple thrusting, chopping, or kicking action may be out of the question.

All fights are different: Experience can play a big role in how you perform in a street altercation. However all fights are different, no two are alike. If you find yourself defending against the attack of a seasoned rapist or mugger then the nature or the engagement will be of a life or death nature. One in which your intent will be to seriously injure or maybe even kill your attacker. Yet, on the other had if your involved in a dispute with your drunken uncle over a football game then breaking his knee may not be the proper response. A come along wrist twist or submission hold yes, but breaking his leg over who did or didn't score a touch down is a bit much. This leads us to the legality of self-defense. The nature of your attackers threat will determine to a large degree how you respond. For instance if a pickpocket takes your wallet; should you chase them down and then break their back, you may end up spending more time in jail for attempted murder than they do for stealing your wallet. Remember the dynamics of each situation will determine how you respond to it.

Conclusion: Can today's martial arts training, be of value in dealing with self-defense scenarios? The answer is yes it can, provided that we stop to analyze our training and take time to understand what we may or may not encounter on the street. Probably two of the greatest weapons the study of a fighting art provides us with are a developed sense of awareness that teaches us to be not only in tune, with ourselves but also our surroundings and the ability to develop physical responses to dangerous situations. Both of, which can help us greatly in dealing with potentially dangerous situations should we be forced too. However when I consider some of my past "street experiences"; even with all the knowledge made available today and with all the instructors out there teaching great self-defense, I'm still a firm believer in: The fight you can walk away from is the best one of all.

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The Way of Kata: Part 2

by Kris Wilder & Lawrence Kane

This is the second of several articles exploring the hidden meaning of karate *kata*. This material is an excerpt of various sections from the book "*The Way of Kata: A Comprehensive Guide to Deciphering Martial Applications"* by Lawrence Kane and Kris Wilder. The purpose of these articles is to unveil some of the methods of analyzing and understanding *kata* applications to make them relevant and meaningful for modern *karateka*—both in self-defense and in tournament conditions.

What is the theory of deciphering *kata*?

In the previous articles we discussed that *kata* applications are rarely obvious and that the work to uncover hidden techniques in *kata* is called *kaisai*. Since it offers guidelines for unlocking the secrets of each *kata*, *kaisai no genri* (the theory of *kaisai*) was once a great mystery revealed only to trusted disciples of the ancient masters in order to protect the secrets of their systems. Using the rules of *kaisai no genri* practitioners can decipher the original intent of *kata* techniques by logically analyzing each specific technique to find their hidden meanings. The 12 rules of *kaisai no genri* are split into the *shuyo san gensoko* (three main or basic rules) and the *hosoku joko* (nine supplementary or advanced rules).

The next rule of *kaisai* to discuss is, "Every movement in every *kata* has martial significance."

Every movement in every *kata* has martial significance

"*Once a form has been learned, it must be practiced repeatedly until it can be applied in an emergency, for knowledge of just the sequence of a form in karate is useless.*" – Gichin Funakoshi

Every movement of every *kata* has at least one application that can successfully be used in a real fight. The ancient masters did not waste effort on pretty; they were concerned with functional. There were no *kata* tournaments or sparring competitions where they could win fancy trophies to line their *dojo* windows. There were only life and death struggles to survive. Not only were they concerned about random violence from robbers, extortionists, murderers and other thugs, but also about *kakidameshi* (dueling), the tradition where *budoka* (martial artists) routinely tested each other's fighting skills in actual combat.

Remember, too, that they did not have the benefit of modern medicine. Even minor injuries could become life threatening. A broken jaw might cause a person to starve to death. A broken arm or foot might preclude his ability to earn a living. And since there was no welfare in feudal times and most folks lived in agrarian society, not having work could be life threatening as well. Even a minor infection could be fatal. Antibiotics had not been invented yet. Consequently *kata* were developed to crush the life out of an attacker as efficiently and ruthlessly as possible.

Kris Wilder teaching in the UK (2008)

Even *yoi* (which means "prepare"), the very first preparatory movement in *kata*, has martial meaning. Gogen Yamaguchi wrote, "When the leader calls *yoi*, you have to cross both hands in front of your body while you breathe in; and then, while you are breathing out, bring both fists to your sides as if you are tightening your belt, then tighten both armpits like you are pushing at the floor with your fists and put power in your whole body. The reason you cross both hands in front of your body is to cover the groin area from a sudden attack; at the same time, you show the opponent that you will not attack suddenly. As in the etiquette of the *samurai* in which they take off a *katana* (sword) from the waist and change it to the right hand showing that no cowardly act, such as slashing the opponent without notice, will occur. From that meaning, the inside of the hand that is crossed has to be your dominant arm."

Yoi - The 1st movement in kata

When examining *kata* for applications, practitioners cannot discount any movement. In the old days when most *kata* were developed, each contained a fully integrated fighting system. Nothing was superfluous. Every technique had to have real-world offensive or defensive applications, usually more than one. For example, another interpretation of the *yoi* movement at the beginning of a *kata* could be a neck crank takedown, while the similar movement at the end of a *kata* might represent a double clavicle strike (e.g., as defense against a tackle). It can also be used deceptively to bait an opponent's attack, leaving the practitioner's head exposed to more accurately predict and counter the adversary's initial blow. As with any other *kata* movement, applications for *yoi* are only bound by a practitioner's creativity and imagination.

Creativity is required in other areas too. For example there are many *kata* in which techniques appear to be shown more than once, perhaps to the left side followed by the right or vice versa (e.g., *yoi* at the beginning and ending of each *kata*). Most times such applications are not truly mirror images; they are actually asymmetrical. In other words, they are not simply showing the same thing from two directions but are actually describing two similar-looking yet functionally different techniques.

For example, in *gekisai kata dai ni*, there are two *mawashe uke* (wheel or circular blocks) shown in *neko ashi dachi* (cat stance), one at 45 degrees to the right of your starting position and one at 45 degrees to the left. While they look nearly the same, one demonstrates a closing technique while the other shows an opening technique. Even in this basic *kata* there is much more going on than the untrained eye can perceive.

The only exception to this rule is found in the *kihon* (basic) forms. On occasion a diagonal step called *yanjigo* (literally "forty five," as in a 45 degree angle) is required to re-center practitioners back to the *kiten* (origination) point from which their performance originated. This is technically not part of the *kata* hence it has no application. Similarly if *kata* performance ends facing any direction other than *shomen* (front) there will be a realigning shift or turn at the finish. Again, this movement is purely to ensure that

practitioners finish their *kata* in an aesthetically pleasing manner, ending in a location from which they may repeat the sequence or start another *kata* without any additional superfluous movements.

Another rule of *kaisai* we'll be discussing in this article is, "Utilize the shortest distance to your opponent."

Utilize the shortest distance to your opponent

"*In attacking techniques such as oi tsuki (lunge punch) or choko tsuki (straight punch), the movements must be straight and quick, so as to take the most direct path to the opponent*." – Morio Higaonna

In geometry, the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. In business, the shortest distance between two points is integrity. In friendship, the shortest distance between two points is trust. In martial arts, the shortest distance between two points is where you strike.

To have the greatest opportunity for success, practitioners must strike or defend with their closest body part. Defensive techniques must cut off the attacker's blow before it gains too much speed and power, catching it as close to the opponent's body as possible. Offensive techniques must afford the adversary as little reaction time as possible. The shorter the distance, the faster you get there.

Karate punches, for example, shoot straight out from chamber (usually at the practitioner's side). With rare exceptions, such as *furi uchi* (swing strike), there is no curve involved in a punch. Traveling at equal speed, the John Wayne-style haymaker commonly seen in barroom brawls takes a lot longer to land than a traditional karate punch because its curved path covers more distance to reach the opponent. Remember, however, that linear punches are more effective when they come in at an off angle as opposed to directly into the opponent's *enbusen* (line of movement).

This concept is corollary to the principle of not using two steps. The essential point is that extra movements take extra time. In a real fight, speed kills. You must both be fast and efficient. Utilize your closest weapon (nearest limb to the attacker) and keep striking until he or she is no longer a threat. A simple tandem drill helps demonstrate how:

Work with a partner. One person will be the attacker (*tori*) and one the defender (*uke*), trading roles after each set. Initially work at half speed using a scale of 4:1 (four responses to one attack). Utilize your closest weapon (limb) for each attack and defense. Your partner must only defend against your last technique; then it becomes his or her turn to employ three unimpeded techniques followed by a fourth one which you get to block.

Here's how it works: After the initial attack (e.g., punch, kick, whatever you agree upon), *uke* gets four moves before *tori* gets to move again. The emphasis is on technique, so you do not have to go fast. Be sure to strike lightly so no one gets hurt while they are unable to defend themselves. Each technique (e.g., punch, kick) a person employs counts as one move. Movement such as a shift or step performed simultaneously with a technique is not counted as a separate "move." If your defense involves a technique (e.g., block) that counts as one of your four moves. An example of how this might go follows:

You attack with a chest punch. I block (1), shift and punch (2), elbow strike (3), and backfist (4). You absorb the first three attacks, and then block the backfist (1), perform a knee strike (2), thrust kick (3), then shift and lunge punch (4). I block the lunge punch and the cycle repeats. Any combination of techniques may be used. Each partner honors the other's techniques, responding as if they were actually struck forcefully. The goals of this drill include establishing flow, targeting your opponent with your closest weapon, and practicing the principle of continuous attack.

After you perform this drill a few times and get it running smoothly, change the scale to two to one, then finally to 1:1. As long as each practitioner gets at least two movements per turn, it's pretty easy to trade techniques back and forth, blocking then counterstriking. As soon as the scale gets to one to one, you should notice a big difference. Conjunctions have been removed. You can no longer block and then strike because your turn ends with the block.

In this manner, once you get behind, it is almost impossible to do anything other than defend yourself—just like a real fight. Remember, he who controls the momentum ultimately wins the fight

almost every time. The objective of this drill, of course, is ultimately to find ways to simultaneously defend and attack. It might go something like this:

You attack with a head punch (1). I drop to *shiko dachi* (*sumo* stance) ducking below your strike and punch your ribs (1). You pivot, elbow striking my side, which simultaneously deflects my punch and counterattacks (1). I pivot out of the way and spin kick (1). You shift inside my range and straight punch (1), I straight punch back to your solar plexus inside your strike (1). Because I'm on the inside, my blow lands while yours glances off my shoulder. Since I connected with an un-deflected blow to a vital area (the solar plexus), the round ends. We begin the drill again.

Any combination of techniques can be employed. Go slow enough that you are able to use proper stances, adhere to your style's strategy, and employ its tactics in a safe and controlled manner. In this fashion we learn the value of stance, position and angle in approaching an opponent. We learn that there is no time in a real fight for two steps when one will do. Ultimately, the only way you can win is by firing again and again with your closest weapon until you break through your opponent's defenses and disable him.

Now that you understand the principle, look for ways in which your *kata* utilize the shortest distance to an opponent in demonstrating *bunkai* (fighting applications). This rule is not only good advice in a fight, but also a great indicator of the intended target and angle of attack portrayed by any given *kata* movement. Look for the shortest distance to your opponent for both offensive and defensive techniques.

About the authors: Lawrence Kane is the author of Martial Arts Instruction (2004) and Surviving Armed Assaults (September, 2006). Kris Wilder is the author of Lessons from the Dojo Floor (2003). The two collaborated on The Way of Kata (2005), the book from which this information was summarized, as well as The Way to Black Belt (2007), and The Little Black Book of Violence (2009). If you'd like to obtain a copy of The Way of Kata book the easiest way is to order it from Amazon.com. Lawrence can be contacted via e-mail at lakane@ix.netcom.com. Kris can be contacted via e-mail at kwilder@quidnunc.net.

Self-Defense Training & Dissimilar Air Combat Tactics:

What martial artists can learn from the air war in Vietnam

by Brian P. Struchtemeyer

Whenever I speak to a group of martial artists and bring up the topic of dissimilar air combat tactics (DACT), the response is swift and consistent: How can aerial combat possibly relate to martial arts and self-defense? Simply put, modern American DACT was born from the fatal consequences of two mistakes martial artists and defensive tactics instructors frequently commit. The first is having gaps in your doctrine, or the big picture outline of what you think works in self-defense. The second is training to defend yourself against the wrong adversary. To understand how these elements relate to aerial combat and benefit self-defense training we need to travel back to the start of the Cold War and its effects on America's air war in Vietnam.

Planning for Nuclear War

Prior to Vietnam, American pilots enjoyed an outstanding track record of success in dogfighting (this is the vernacular term for aerial combat. The technical term is Air Combat Maneuver or ACM). In World War II American pilots had a "kill ratio" as high as 20 enemy aircraft shot down for every American plane shot down. In the Korean conflict this number remained impressive averaging around 14 to 1. This story of phenomenal success came to a crashing halt early in Vietnam when the American ACM kill ratio fell to less than 2.5 to 1. The reasons for this staggering drop in performance were born in the late 1940s and early 1950s when U.S. air power doctrine shifted in response to nuclear weapons.

Following the end of the Second World War and the nuclear detonations over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, military planners were reasonably confident any future large-scale conflict would involve nuclear weapons. Prior to the introduction of intercontinental ballistic missiles in the very late 1950s, nuclear weapons could only be delivered by fleets of heavy bombers flying over the enemy's cities and naval formations. As such, the emphasis of those in military air power and aircraft design was not ACM, but developing planes and tactics for intercepting enemy bombers and shooting them down as far away from their targets as possible.

All new American "fighters" were designed to climb to altitude extremely quickly, then fly blazing fast in a straight line, and finally fire long range air-to-air missiles – presumably at slow, ungainly bombers. Additionally, these new planes were built without guns as no one thought pilots would engage in a turning style dogfight when supersonic aircraft and beyond-visual-range (BVR) missiles were available.

The F-4 Phantom

One aircraft resulting from these design requirements was the F-4 Phantom II, which was used by the Navy, Marine Corp, and Air Force. It was a beefy jet with a take-off weight of 60,000 lbs. Well-suited as an interceptor it broke several world records for its rate of climb and linear speed. But because of its size and design, it had

a large turn radius, lost massive amounts of energy when maneuvering, and burnt fuel too fast to stay in a dogfight for very long. This is the point where doctrine influenced design also impacted pilot training.

Because of the interceptor assumption, pilots stopped training in ACM. This was so much the case that pilots were actually forbidden to engage in practice aerial combat – officially it was considered an excessive safety risk. This of course was regularly ignored by pilots who would call one another to arrange a date, time, location, and altitude to meet and mix it up in the sky, but, and this is an important but, they almost always flew against pilots flying the same kind of planes. In other words, F-4s would "spar" other F-4s and so on. Because both pilots were flying the same plane and had similar backgrounds the result was almost always a turning duel where the pilot who could tolerate higher G forces and avoid stalling their aircraft at low speed won. It was not so much a test of realistic strategy and tactics as it was of physical strength and fundamental flight control. In many respects this was identical to martial artists sparing each other.

Assumptions versus Reality in Vietnam

So with all this in mind, America enters the Vietnam War overloaded with hefty fighter/interceptors and pilots having next to no training or experience at aerial combat. As a result, interceptor pilots flying F-4s had to provide air cover for other aircraft and close air support for ground troops. Against them, the North Vietnamese flew Soviet built MiG-19s and MiG-21s. The Soviet built MiGs were plain and rudimentary by American standards, but they were fast, exceptionally maneuverable, and well armed with both large guns and powerful cannons. Against these jets U.S. planes at a minimum had to ditch all of their bombs and external fuel tanks in order to fight effectively, or at worst were shot down. U.S. pilots also learned quickly that the fancy air-to-air missiles they had didn't work well against the nimble Soviet fighters. Remember the design requirements for the original air-to-air missiles envisioned shooting down large, slow-moving bombers, not a small fighter zigzagging through the sky. The upshot was American pilots put up their worst ACM performance ever.

Eventually the Navy got sick and tired of watching pilots get shot out of the sky and ordered Cmd. Frank Ault to examine the situation and determine what needing fixing. The result was a 1969 report titled *Air Warfare Missile Systems Capability Review*. More commonly called the *Ault Report*, it outlined a host of changes including the design of air-to-air missiles, the best use of those missiles, adding old-fashioned guns to all U.S. fighter aircraft, essential changes in the performance requirements of future fighter aircraft, and finally a host of recommendations for pilot ACM training.

A Return to Glory

New planes take years to design, but the Ault Report's training suggestions were implemented quickly. The training suggestions placed a strong emphasis on pilots learning the relative strengths and weaknesses of different aircraft and how to use the strengths of American aircraft to exploit the weaknesses of enemy aircraft. Specifically, this meant training in dissimilar air combat tactics where students flew standard American aircraft but the instructors flew jets that mimicked the performance of contemporary Soviet aircraft. Equally important, the instructors were taught to imitate flight maneuvers and tactics used by the enemy in the skies over Vietnam. The net result was the opening of a training unit in 1970 best known by its informal name, Top Gun.

Early Top Gun instructors taught Navy pilots to avoid turning duels against MiGs and instead exploit the powerful engines of the F-4 to transform the engagement into a vertical fight. The interceptor qualities of the F-4 allowed it to out climb the MiGs and gain a superior position above the MiGs, then dive down in a manner that gave the Americans an advantage. This along with other changes in tactics designed to improve the performance of early air-to-air missiles, the North Vietnamese pilots themselves, and simple bolt-on gun pods made a decisive difference in the air war. With the birth of Top Gun, the Navy's kill ratio climbed from 2.25 to 1 back up to 13 to 1. The Air Force on the other hand was slower to change and saw its kill ratio fall further from 2.42 to 1 to an all time low of 1.92 to 1. Clearly, selecting tactics and dissimilar training methods for the correct adversary made a huge difference for U.S. pilots.

Implications for Self-Defense

While this interesting historical story may not seem relevant to personal self-defense in today's world, it is ripe with valuable lessons. First, we need to consider our fighting doctrine and make sure it isn't unbalanced or missing an important area. Well-worn examples of this are an excessive emphasis on high-kicks or ground fighting. Both concepts have their place and their strengths, but there are places and situations where they can cause more problems than they solve. If you doubt this, try to grapple in a parking lot sandwiched between cars – there's no room to roll. Likewise, high-kicks in rain and ice present some unfortunate complications.

Second, when was the last time you fought against a criminal or someone who could imitate how criminals fight? I suspect the answer is never. The simple answer is that martial artists spar against other martial artists, usually just in their own school or system. This is just like the F-4 pilots who would informally train against other F-4 pilots. It didn't really matter who was good in those aerial duels as it didn't reflect the nature of the enemy they would eventually fight against.

Vietnam was a nasty war that extracted a horrible price for pilots. Along with the possibility of ending life as a brief fireball in the sky, American pilots also faced being captured by the North Vietnamese. Many of those men who were captured in the mid 1960s were not released until the Paris Accords ended the war in 1973. Some are still missing, and captured American pilots suffered some of the worst recorded torture in modern history. One of the best ways we can honor the sacrifices of those men is to learn from their experience and avoid the mistakes that cost them so dearly.

So far we have discussed how the U.S. fell victim to narrow assumptions in its air power doctrine following the end of World War II and over pursued an emphasis on intercepting bombers to the detriment of basic aerial combat. Additionally, pilots generally lacked good training in air combat maneuver (ACM) and what informal training they did have only pitted similar pilots in identical planes against one another, which represented an unrealistic scenario of who they would actually have to fight. The net result was an abysmal performance by U.S. pilots during the first part of the Vietnam War. The Navy adjusted by creating Top Gun, instituting a more flexible plan for air power, and specifically training their pilots to fight enemy aircraft rather than their own. Here is a brief look at how martial artists can apply the knowledge learned from those past mistakes.

Gaps and Bad Assumptions in Doctrine

The pivotal lesson of doctrine from the Vietnam air war is not to pursue one element so far it leaves gaps in other areas. Enemy aircraft interception has its uses. The failing was pursuing it to the exclusion of traditional aerial combat. Likewise, most martial arts training excessively assumes a planned and prepared fight. Consider, all sparring in schools is announced, students are given a chance to know who their adversary or adversaries are, a neutral third party ensures everyone is properly prepared and only then, does the sparring actually begin.

This basic assumption of an "honorable" fight is terribly flawed with respect to authentic criminal behavior. Thugs thrive on surprise and ambush tactics. While this reality is rarely if ever practiced in modern self-defense schools it was recognized in the past and the best solution was encapsulated in the Japanese term "zanshin," or awareness. As with so many elements of Asian martial arts this has been allowed to morph into some form of psychic superpower. In a sensible vein however, it simply represents situational awareness or taking time to look, listen, and stay aware of your surroundings. From a training standpoint it simply means creating scenarios where your external awareness must be maintained while doing other things and allowing ambush sparring.

Additionally, the excessive emphasis on unarmed fighting has created another gap in the self-defense skills of the vast majority of martial artists. Humans prefer to use tools. This is equally true for a hammer and a nail, a remote control and a TV, or a weapon and a physical threat. FBI statistics clearly show a strong preference for weapons by criminals. Just consider a simple thought experiment: If a criminal has gone to the trouble of planning out the when, the where, and the how of mugging someone, isn't it fair to assume they'd remember to bring their favorite shank? Of course they will. Hopefully no one

doubts weapons are easy to obtain or assumes gun control laws will protect them.

Because of its emphasis on unarmed fighting, Asian martial art systems consistently under emphasize if not simply ignore realistic counter-weapon training. Some self-defense methods have recognized this and are starting to make progress. Good examples include Russian Systema and Israel's Krav Maga. Keep in mind these examples only represent a start in critically examining the typical doctrine found in martial arts, I hope you recognize the danger of having gaps in your self-defense doctrine and take time to review yours and make adjustments as needed.

Learning to Fight Like a Thug

Sun-Tzu among other great strategic thinkers made it clear that it's vital to understand your adversary. Tragically in martial arts and self-defense training in general, this guidance is all too often overlooked. If you had to commit a crime today or imitate a raw, "uneducated" street fighter could you do it? I suspect you'd have a few basic ideas, but you've never given it any specific thought and certainly haven't practiced it. This is unfortunate, as we learned with U.S. air power, dissimilar training was the key to renewed success. Here's a short list of "techniques" (or perhaps more appropriately the lack thereof) commonly used by "uneducated" fighters.

The two-handed shove: Ah, the two-handed shove, the mere thought triggers nostalgia. If you are not familiar with the two-handed shove and its common appearance at the start of a fight, you're either an alien escaped from Roswell or you've been living under a rock. This simple technique has a surprising number of strong points, which accounts for its survival from the school yard playground through adulthood: it is quick, easily disguised, successfully puts your adversary off-balance, and permits very fast follow up with other offensive techniques. Because the shove-er uses their whole body with the technique but also recoils their arms, it's tough to "block." The best way to deal with it is to utilize superior range control prior to the first strike (e.g. stay just out of range) or if hit with it, go with the flow and reposition yourself outside of follow-up range or better yet off-angle then counter.

The John Wayne Haymaker: This is another technique everybody is familiar with. A haymaker is the great big looping punch where the arm follows a path similar to throwing a pitch in baseball. Generally speaking circular strikes like the haymaker are far more common among thugs, criminals, etc. The linear strikes found in boxing and most systems of martial arts require a lot of training. I'm reminded of this frequently at the local boxing gym. The young boxers look crisp and have excellent linear jabs and crosses when working on the heavy bag. Once sparring begins, linear strikes are harder to find and looping hooks and haymakers show up – all the more so in late rounds when people are tired.

Another element to watch for in the haymaker is the side headlock. Escaping from the side headlock tends to be one of the first self-defense techniques taught in martial arts, but rarely are you shown how people wind up in the side headlock in the first place. Most people seem stunned someone would actually try it. However, if you watch boxing you'll see a looping hook that misses but wraps around the opponent's head leading to a tie-up, which the referee is helpful enough to break-up. In a street fight however, that situation of a big arcing punch wrapping around the adversary's head is what leads to the side headlock. It's just a simple matter of rotating to the side of your haymaker and locking in with your arms. No, it still doesn't make much sense to use, but people, especially uneducated fighters do this, so you need to understand it and be able to accurately simulate it for your training partners.

The hold and hit: As with so many techniques commonly found among criminals and other uneducated fighters, you simply need to look at the rules of boxing and other combative sports and work backwards from what the rules specifically prohibit. A good example of this truth is holding and hitting. In boxing like in most martial art sparring it is illegal to hold with one hand while you hit with the other. Not being bound by rules, criminals are still fond of doing this. Why? Because it works! Holding on reduces your adversary's mobility keeping you close enough to strike repeatedly and can even increase the striking energy transferred to the target. Practice it so you too can imitate a thug.

Basic holds and grabs: Closely related to the hold and hit are the basic holds, chokes, and grabs for which you were probably shown simple defense moves against as a white belt. The classics are bear hugs, lapel grabs or chokes, etc. In both my research and experience, I've found that these tend to be used due to a lack of better ideas. When you pick a fight, you have to have a plan for what to do when your adversary hits back.

Just as boxers clinch when in trouble, street fighters will also grab on when in trouble, if for no other reason than to smother your arms and prevent you from punching. It doesn't do them much good unless they have a friend to hit for them, but these hugs, grabs, and chokes are commonly seen in muggings and real fights.

"*Almost all self-defense schools and systems do not place enough emphasis on counter-weapon training*"

Additional complications

Those four techniques represent the core techniques I've seen used in street fights and non-weapon muggings. A few others are deserving of quick mention starting with weapons. Like I said earlier, almost all self-defense schools and systems do not place enough emphasis on counter-weapon training. If you have any doubt about how common weapons are in violent crime look up the National Institute of Justice statistics. If a criminal attacks you without a weapon you've gotten very, very lucky. Additionally most criminals have accomplices. Just as wild dogs run in packs, so do thugs. Multiple opponents represent a whole host of new complications. You have to consider where everyone is positioned and where you are free to move with respect to them and the environment. You also have to incapacitate your adversaries much faster because while you're working on one, the others are positioning themselves to thrash you. Both of these realities are easy enough to simulate in dissimilar training scenarios.

Learning an art versus applying it

A martial art is just that – an art, and there is a difference between learning the art (e.g. memorizing the movements and developing the basic skills) and applying that art. Developing a doctrine that recognizes the strengths and weaknesses of the art is the starting point of application. Remaining flexible, comprehensive, and simple are keys to good doctrine. Dissimilar combat training is the venue where doctrine is tested and you learn to execute your art against realistic threats. In the case of personal self-defense, that requires someone to fight like a thug and most martial art schools never do this. Just as revising its doctrine and creating dissimilar air combat tactics was pivotal for the U.S. in the skies over Vietnam, I encourage you to consider the same in your self-defense training.

Brian P. Struchtemeyer (author)

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Are Turns Really Turns?

by Matthew Sylvester

In this article I want to look further at how patterns can be studied and interpreted in new ways, and in ways that don't necessarily follow the set course of the pattern. Most people look at you strangely when you ask if a turn in a pattern is really a turn. Visually, of course it is. Take the ITF TKD pattern called Dan Gun for example. We shall look at the very opening of the pattern. As with any pattern, the technique starts in Chunbi. You then turn 90 degrees to the left and go into L-stance, knife hand guarding block. The next move is then a stepping forward obverse punch.

Judging a book by its cover, this looks very simple. But are you really turning 90 to the left, or is this indicating that you should be 90 to the left of your opponent? The latter makes sense, especially if you consider that by moving to this position you're not only on their outside, you've trapped their left hand and neutralised their right hand (because they can't punch you easily).

If you have a punch bag or (even better) a BOB-XL try this from the fence. In this situation, you're initiating the fight, not being passive and letting them attack you. When your right hand is coming back to your hip, go through the motions of 'trapping their arm' and returning it to your hip. It makes much more sense to do this.

As you can see in the sequence above, I'm facing BOB with my fence up. As I start to move, I chamber the knife hand guarding block the 'karate' or WTF/Kukkiwon way, i.e., my right hand goes out low whilst your left hand is chambered palm up on your right shoulder. As you can see, I make sure that the right hand actually strikes the target around the diaphragm. As I'm doing this, I step my right leg out to the right. You're now 90 degrees to their left (or should be), and their neck is nice and open for the left knife hand to strike into. This does not actually have to be a knife hand however, as a forearm will suffice just as well and will still reflect the form of the pattern.

As soon as my left hand has struck, I blitz forward with my right leg and hand, striking to the jaw area. You can punch, palm, or elbow depending on the circumstances and the environment. Either way you will get a lot of force behind your strike and you are on your way to leaving the scene.

How to Spar for the Street: Part Two

by Iain Abernethy

In this series of articles we are discussing how to make your sparring relevant to real situations. The sparring in most dojos is based on the rules of modern competition and therefore has little in common with real situations. To be clear, I'm not for a second saying there is anything fundamentally wrong with competitive sparring. If you want to win tournaments, that's how you need to spar. The problem occurs when people mistakenly believe that training for competition also develops the skills needed for the street. It doesn't.

In part one, we briefly discussed the nature of real situations and covered two of the keys to making your sparring relevant to the street. In this second part, we'll be expand our discussion and cover four more of these keys.

Start without warning

Some situations will start without any warning, i.e., if your awareness wasn't what it should be or if you are the victim of a well-executed ambush. It can therefore be good training to also have your sparring start without warning.

Seeing as the sparring can start at anytime, all participants need to wear their protective equipment throughout the entire session. The students will then engage in normal training (fitness work, drilling techniques, hitting the pads, etc.). Whenever the leader of the training feels like it, they will shout out the command, "Fight!" At that instant all students should begin sparring with the person or people nearest to them.

The great thing about this type of sparring is that you are never sure what situation will develop or when. You may quickly respond to the command and attack a class mate, only for someone else to attack you from the rear. One second you thought you had the advantage, the next you're frantically doing your best against two opponents. After a certain amount of time, the person leading the training will shout, "Stop!" and the students return to whatever they were doing previously.

It's important that the person giving out the commands does their best to ensure that the sparring is unexpected. I'm partial to shouting "Fight!" during water breaks, in the middle of drills, straight after a previous bout of sparring, whilst they are performing push-ups, and immediately after I've told them the surprise sparring is over (my personal favourite!). The students quickly begin to expect the unexpected and start to fight well regardless of the situation and position they find themselves in.

If you are training as part of a small group, another way to have sparring start without warning is agree that anyone can attack anyone else at any point during the session (you may want to make some exceptions in the name of safety: i.e., agree that you can't be attacked when handling weights, etc). The lack of the command to start makes the sparring all the more unexpected. It also ensures that all training done between the sparring is done with the correct attitude. If you start doing things in a half-hearted fashion, your partners may very well decide it's a good time to attack you!

Surprise sparring is a great training method that can get you used to having to fight without warning. It is also a great way to give a training session that added edge.

Keep the combat up close and personal

Most exchanges between skilled martial artists take place at a greatly exaggerated distance when compared to what happens on the street. The vast majority of real fights start close, and they stay close. In the street there is rarely a gap to be closed and there is rarely any back and forth. This obviously has a significant effect on how we structure our sparring for the street.

As we've established, real situations will begin with dialogue or without warning. The distance

Photo 1

that the there is no back and forth. In the street, people don't back off, move around for a bit while looking for an opening, before closing the gap again. All of this means that when training for the street we need to exchange techniques at close range (the exception being when we flee, which we will look at later).

When you start your street sparring, you should be within arms length of your partner and you should stay at that distance. With practise you'll get used to fighting at this distance. However, to begin with you may need to force the distance; here are two ways to do this.

- One of the best ways is to limit the floor space. The students who aren't sparring form a circle around those who are so that there simply isn't the space to exaggerate the distance.

- Another way was introduced to me by Shihan Chris Rowen. Chris simply used a karate belt to tie the students together! It's a simple method but it works incredibly well. The students can't exaggerate the distance and hence it forces them to spar at a realistic range. The only downside with this is that the students can't practise escaping. That said, as a way to isolate close-range skills it's superb.

When you keep your sparring close there are a few things you will learn. One of the key things is that blocking becomes almost impossible. There simply isn't the time or room to react. This is a really useful learning experience as it brings home the importance of being pre-emptive and proactive in the street.

at which words are exchanged is typically the same as punching distance **(Photo 1)**. So in the case of dialogue, the distance has already been closed when the situation gets physical (people don't try to intimidate you from 10 feet away!). If a situation begins without warning, then the distance has already been closed.

When two martial artists fight in the dojo or competitive environment, they typically begin the fight from outside kicking distance **(Photo 2)**. This means that a key part of martial arts sparring is to effectively close that gap. These skills are essentially an irrelevance for the street. Compare the distances shown in photos 1 and 2 and you'll see that in the street fights are much closer.

Another big difference between the street and a dojo exchange between two martial artists is

Photo 2

Another characteristic of close-range fighting is that it becomes very important to keep both hands active. Both hands should be either attacking the opponent or setting them up so they can be attacked i.e. setting datums, removing obstructions, etc. As a brief aside, it is for this reason why you don't see hands held in 'guard positions' in kata but you do see both hands constantly working.

Keeping the sparring close is a great way to learn about what is required for the street. So to make your sparring realistic it's important to start close and stay close.

Don't bring trained responses into the mix

One of the most important things for martial artists to appreciate is that when training for the street trained responses are not a factor. As martial artists we get trained to respond in certain ways to specific stimuli, i.e. when the opponent does motion A; you are trained to respond with motion B. When two martial artists meet these trained responses are invariably exploited: martial artist 1 will move in such a way that it looks to martial artist 2 as if he is attacking with motion A. Martial artist 2 counters with motion B, just as martial artist 1 hoped he would. By responding with motion B, martial artist 2 makes himself vulnerable to motion C; which was martial artists 1's true intention. He attacked with motion A to illicit a response which would set things up for motion C.

In a street fight, you can't use trained responses in the same way; hence you need to do your best to eliminate such practises from your street sparring. Trained responses aren't relevant in the street for two key reasons.

- Your opponent is highly unlikely to be trained in the same martial discipline as you are and hence won't react as predicted. But what if he is a martial artist, I hear you cry.

- The street is so very different that even if your attacker is a trained martial artist he won't fight like he does in the dojo or competitive environment. Street fights are far faster, emotional and chaotic than martial bouts.

Observe two world-standard martial artists fight and count the average number of techniques thrown in a 15-second period. You'll notice that most of the time is spent moving around and playing for position. The overall rate of exchange is actually pretty low. Certainly they are likely to be some blindingly fast exchanges, but they are often very short in duration. The ones that last that little bit longer are the ones when a combatant becomes injured or disorientated and the other moves in for a win.

A street fight is consistently frantic. It starts fast, stays fast and finishes fast. There is no time for trained reposes. Indeed there is no time for responses of any sort.

In addition to being faster, a street fight is also more emotional. The intense nature of a street situation means that neither you nor your opponent will be best placed to process the information that exploiting trained responses demands. So in the unlikely event that you do meet another martial artist in a street situation, it still won't be like a dojo or competitive situation.

A good illustration of this is the fight that broke out at the Tyson / Lewis press conference in the run up to their long awaited bout. There we had the two best heavyweight boxers at the time, but when it kicked off for real the resulting exchange was nothing like a boxing match. It was a "street fight," and was hence faster, more chaotic and more emotional.

Trained responses aren't a part of a street fight and hence they shouldn't be part of your street sparring. The difficulty of course is that you will be training with other martial artists so it initially takes some discipline not to engage in "game play." The instant you do start trying to illicit trained responses, you're no longer sparring realistically. In a real fight you need to keep things simple and direct. Practise keeping it simple and direct in your sparring.

Escape: Don't stay and fight!

In part 1 of this series we established that a fight is what happens when self-protection goes bad. Real fights are thoroughly unpleasant affairs that can have severe medical, emotional and legal consequences. If you therefore get the opportunity to stop fighting and run you should take it without hesitation. Many a wannabe tough guy will frown on the idea of fleeing a fight, but the smart and experienced people who have "been there" will always advise flight over fight. The true warrior doesn't risk his life and liberty over his ego. He always does the smart thing.

I recently had the opportunity to talk to a martial artist who a few days previously had been approached by two men armed with knives. He quickly assessed the situation and ran away. He told me that he was disappointed with himself because all he could think to do was run. He asked what techniques he could have applied in that situation. My advice was that he shouldn't feel bad as he had dealt with the situation perfectly. His awareness was such that he had spotted the situation early enough to allow escape and he had the presence of mind to act in what was undoubtedly the right way.

Fight two armed men and at best you're going to need some serious stitching back together. Because he had run away, he didn't even get scratched! I'm certain that anyone who understands the street would advise nothing but running in that situation. Putting distance between yourself and a dangerous situation keeps you safe and ensures you're able to spend your time on the fun things in life. So for your sparring to be street smart, you need to practise running away.

Fleeing a fight is not as straight forward as just turning tail and running. If there is a sufficient gap between you and any would be assailant, you can do just that (again, this emphasises the importance of awareness). If, however, the assailant is close enough to strike you, or the situation has degenerated into a fight, you need confusion and distance. If you don't have confusion and distance when you begin running, you will be giving the opponent your back. Bad things can occur when if you do that!

If you have managed to incapacitate the opponent, even for a moment, then in that moment of confusion and disorientation you should flee. Because the opponent won't be able to immediately react, you have the chance to generate sufficient distance to allow a successful escape. When a gap appears in the street, your self-protection training should have conditioned you to make it bigger. Much bigger! You should not be thinking of closing the gap and continuing the fight.

A great way to practise fleeing in training is to make part of your dojo a "safe zone." Your aim is to reach this safe zone while your partner (or partners) prevent you from doing so. The full range of martial techniques are allowed, but if a gap is created (they rarely appear on their own) the aim is to extend it and make it to the safe zone.

Another good way to practise escaping is to have two people at either end of the dojo, while the person practising fleeing is in the middle. The person in the middle will run towards the first person and they start sparring (using both grappling and striking). As soon as the fighting begins, the person who started in the middle must break contact and create a gap. He then runs to the other end and repeats the process. This drill is a great way to develop the skills needed to create a gap, and engrain the habit of running when you have. It's also one hell of a work out!

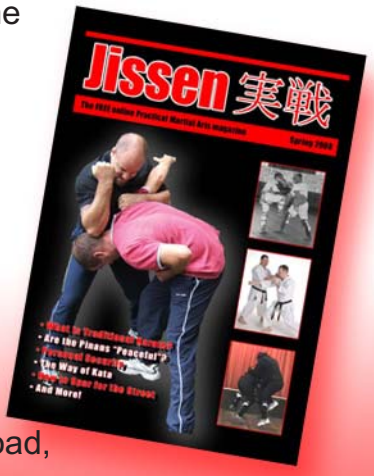
Running away is the smart and practical thing to do whenever possible. Hence, you need to ensure fleeing is included in your sparring.

That's it for part two. The next issue of Jissen sees the final part of this series where we will cover the final four ways to ensure your sparring is relevant to the street. I hope you enjoyed this article and I'd like to thank you for taking the time to read it.

Missed Issue One?

If you missed the first issue of Jissen you can download it from any of the websites listed in the back of this magazine (page 54). Issue one contained the following articles:

- Tradition & Karate
- There is nothing "peaceful" about the Pinans
- Kiai: the fading cry of the martial artist
- The Way of Kata: Part 1
- On-Ko-Chi-Shin
- Taekwon-do Patterns & Self-Defence
- Personal Security
- The bunkai of basics
- How to spar for the street: Part1



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In Defense of Nukite

by Lowell Hein

Some young enthusiasts of karate believe that it can be learned only from instructors in a dojo, but such men are mere technicians, not true karateka. There is a Buddhist saying that "any place can be a dojo," and that is saying that anyone who wants to follow the way of karate must never forget.

*- **Master Gichin Funakoshi***

When men and women first fought, it was unquestionably with empty hands. As the millennia passed, through bloody trial and error, we refined our empty hands into effective weapons for our own defense. More than just clubs, our hands have fingers, giving us the ability to strike precisely. This maximizes the impact of our strikes in the same way the point of a spear differs from the end of a baseball bat. This is the origin of the weapon martial artists now refer to as the "Spearhand".

Whether called Nukite, Bil-Ji (shooting fingers), "Dart", poke, or finger-jab; whether using the full 4 fingers, 1 finger or 2; Spearhand techniques, though an integral part of nearly all advanced forms in the Asian fighting arts, seem to be rarely used in self defense situations.

Why is this? After all, these techniques were the bread and butter of many of our martial arts ancestors. Gichin Funakoshi, Mas Oyama, James Mitose, Yip Man and others, all considered Nukite or Bil Ji to be an important weapon in their combat arsenals.

The Moral Dilemma

One reason may be that Nukite and Bil-Ji are surgically precise attacks, usually to vital areas or nerve centers. They were (and are) intended to be used to kill or disable, and therefore seem to be "overkill" to many practitioners.

This seems to have made many teachers (understandably, perhaps) reluctant to emphasize the detailed practice and application of this type of technique.

While the aversion to teaching such strikes may be understood, their effectiveness is such that no student of unarmed combat should ignore them.

It is true that Nukite can be very dangerous to practice; and when used in a physical confrontation, can easily result in the death or serious injury of the person being struck. Keeping this in mind at all times while training (and instilling it in the minds of those you are teaching) is critical.

Combat versus Sport

Another major cause of the disappearance of Nukite from common usage was the advent of martial arts as a sport.

With the rise of Tournament Karate and Kumite in the 1960s and 1970s, American/European Kickboxing in the 1980s, and recently the explosion in popularity of the myriad variations on the "Mixed Martial Arts", it has become all too common for many of us to partner train or "spar" wearing gloves of some kind. This often results in a fighter using Western boxing hand techniques to the exclusion of all others.

By effectively eliminating the practice of throat and eye strikes (as well as fingertip to torso attacks), these sports have created a culture in which such strikes are rarely practiced in a freestyle scenario.

Kumite, Tae Kwon Do, Kickboxing, MMA, and their offspring (no matter how effective they may be against an untrained fighter "on the street"), have rules, regulations and referees involved.

These types of training can be effective for learning to defend oneself, and certainly have value for teaching how to withstand contact, physical conditioning, perfecting one's timing, etc. On the downside, they are extremely limiting when it comes to allowing a fighter to practice (and defend against) the brutally effective open hand strikes of Chuan Fa and Karate.

Mental Conditioning

Science has proven beyond all doubt that, in the absence of time to consider, reflex takes over.

Since what we do repetitively in the Dojo, Kwoon or Dojang (or the garage, for that matter) determines how we will respond when attacked. Frequent training with gloves on, even the open handed type, creates a subconscious mind-set in which the closed-fist punch becomes a fighter's "default" move. Because of this mind-set - though we may "know" the Spearhand - it is literally not available for our use when an instantaneous response is required.

This subconscious tendency to punch (what I call the John Wayne Syndrome) effectively removes an important array of targets (the eyes, the hollow of the throat, the larynx and solar plexus, for example) from the defender's options. These targets, attacked decisively and accurately with the finger-tips, can instantly change the complexion of a fight in your favor, and are especially useful when facing multiple attackers or those with weapons.

If used correctly, the Spearhand can be as quick as a boxing jab, (but with slightly more range), and the shock of its impact is physically unavoidable, giving your following attack a greater chance of success. While an enemy may have an "iron-jaw" (and many do), not many can cultivate an "iron-eyeball" or "iron-throat". The involuntary reflexive reactions to this contact can "open the gates" for your entry, making Nukite extremely effective as a set-up for elbow strikes, head butts and throws.

The good news is that, with time and diligence, our mental conditioning to rely on punching can be overcome. A few simple additions to your training regimen can train your mind and body to "remember" this weapon, thereby increasing your defensive options.

Finger Conditioning

Unlike many of the ancient (and some modern) masters, I respectfully disagree with the idea that a fighter's hands must be turned into callused, rock-hard, armor-piercing appendages. I know from personal experience that there is much damage done to the hands by this type of training (often unnoticed for many years). I feel it is an anachronism better left behind. Your own body is your best teacher. Listen to it.

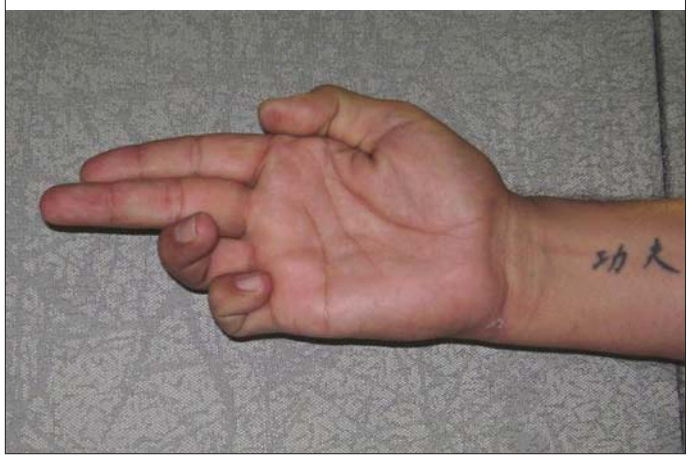
Done properly, the bag and partner work shown below (combined with common sense), will allow you to teach yourself exactly:

1 - What position your hands, fingers and wrists should be in when making contact.

2 - How hard to strike without damaging yourself, while maximizing impact to your chosen target.

Solo Accuracy Training

On a hanging bag, mark several areas one inch to two inches in diameter. Go all the way around your bag, making the marks at varying heights between four, five, and six feet. If you don't want to mark-up your bag, attach some duct tape and draw on it instead. **Remind yourself: Accuracy is the point of this exercise.**



Nukite for kata and nukite for contact must differ slightly. The "classics" shown here are broken fingers waiting to happen.

a) Stand in whatever way you prefer, keeping in mind that since the shortest distance between your finger-tips and your enemy's eyes/throat is a straight line, your lead hand is probably your best bet as primary weapon in many cases. Of course, do not limit yourself to this: when you

feel the rear hand is appropriate to the situation, use it.

Avoid hooking or curving motions. These strikes can be very effective from a boxing-type stance, with the traditional lead jabbing hand being your weapon of choice.

b) Using slow motion at first, strike the marked points, visualizing them clearly as an opponent's eye, eyes, solar plexus or throat.

Tense your weapon only at the moment of impact, *seeing* it crushing the target. (If your fingers are not curled slightly, you will jam or break them.) Slowly increasing your speed on the target will enable you to find the perfect finger position for you.

Always alternate hands while practicing, and (as your speed and accuracy increase) concentrate on snapping your strike, instantly retracting your hand to prevent its being seized by your opponent.

c) Feel your body's alignment change as you strike. You will feel your center of gravity shift. Flow with it. Strike while stepping back, forward and to the sides. Visualize your opponent attacking you as you move. See the chin and arms blocking you.

The purpose of the slow-speed practice is to allow your body to naturally self-correct as your limbs, torso and feet change position.

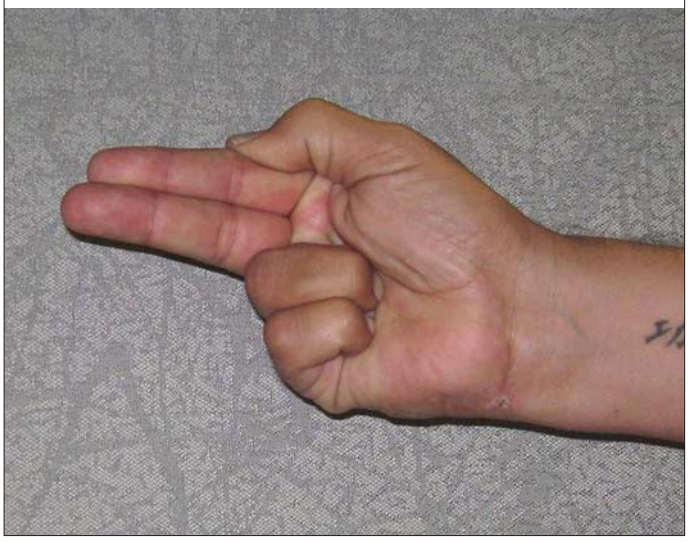
d) Circle the bag, always being aware of your arm extension. Reaching too far to strike is a common mistake, and can lead to your sudden defeat when facing a skilled fighter. Shuffle or slide in and out to achieve whatever distance feels the most comfortable.

Note: When visualizing attacking the eyes, strike the points you have marked with Ippon (Single-finger) and Nihon (2-finger) Nukite only.

When working the throat, neck and solar plexus areas, these two, all well as the Yonhon, or 4-finger variation, should be used, using either the Palm-up variation (very useful in defeating the "lowered-chin" defense), or the Vertical; which can be used to deliver a more powerful strike.

Gradually (over days and weeks) increase your speed, motion and finally, your amount of impact. Whenever you reach a point where you see your accuracy is slipping: slow down.

It will feel strange at first, but bracing the fingers with the thumb at the second knuckle is critical for contact. It maximizes finger rigidity, greatly increasing the quality of impact, as well as minimizing the possibility of injuring yourself.



There's no hurry. Every time you train correctly, your accuracy and speed improve.

Another excellent way to work on accuracy is to hang some glasses with the lenses removed around your home. As you walk by them, shoot your finger(s) through the openings. Do not touch the frames. Your speed and accuracy will soon increase dramatically.

Partner Training

Caution should be used when practicing Nukite with a partner. Always start slow, and concentrate on accuracy rather than power.

REMEMBER: These are potentially fatal strikes, and that fact should always be kept in mind while training.

For eye strike practice, pick up some tight-fitting safety goggles: **NOT** ordinary safety glasses. This will prevent the attacker's fingers from sliding under the glasses and possibly damaging the eyes.

For throat work, a hard plastic cervical collar with padding inside (available from most medical suppliers) should be worn. If this seems like excessive caution, stop reading for a moment and very gently tap the back of your knuckles into your own throat (carefully, now). See what I mean?

Some decent impact must be made if your training is to be effective, and the collar will help you achieve that. As with the bag, it is very important to mark *specific* locations on the collar to attack. *Pinpoint accuracy will only come if you practice aiming for a very small area.*

Use caution when training!

Severe injury or death can easily result from heavy contact to the front or sides of the trachea (or windpipe) area, even through a protective device.

All the methods and principles used on the bag can and should be applied to your partner work.

Start slowly. Have your partner attack you with a wide range of methods and combinations. For training geared towards "the street" to be effective, it must be as realistic as possible.

Nukite is most effective as a first strike defense. This does not mean you should strike first, but rather catch your attacker coming in, and as he opens himself up (as any attacker must), exploit this opening to your advantage.

As your opponent attacks, use the vital areas mentioned above as your targets, following up with elbows, punches, kicks or takedowns, as you prefer. A major key to combat success is to overwhelm your attacker with combinations. Traditional *ikken hissatsu* proponents may disagree, but the more times you strike your opponent, the less chance of his counterattacking.

The key here is to increase your number of available weapons, not to give one up to use the other. We should always remember to be martial artists; in the true sense of the word.

Switch off with your partner, and you will immediately learn valuable lessons in how to defend against these strikes. You may find that a slight movement is often more effective than a block or parry.

In Conclusion

Remember, these strikes are simple to learn, but their application difficult to perfect. This is our art. There is no hurry. There is no need to let ego take over.

Making a commitment to yourself to work these training tips into your practice can make you a more complete fighter, offensively and defensively. No matter our skill level, "style", gender or physical size, all can benefit from this type of training.

If you are just learning these strikes, you are bringing an incredibly empowering weapon to your arsenal. If you have previously learned Nukite or Bil-Ji, but have left it in the background of your martial practice, it may take some time to overcome your neglect. No worries.

Eventually, with proper practice, your Spearhand strikes will be landing with power, pinpoint accuracy, and will be literally too fast for your opponent's eyes to follow. Give it time.

***Warning:* the methods discussed in this article should never be practised unless you are under the direct supervision of an experienced and qualified martial arts instructor.**

About the author: Mr. Hein was first exposed the Asian fighting arts in the form of Shotokan Karate at age 12. He later became a student of Kenpo, Chuan Fa, and Kali. In more recent years he has studied, taught and exchanged ideas with open-minded martial artists (of all styles) in backyards and garages whenever the opportunity presents itself.

He resides in Miami Beach, Florida, and is currently working on his first book. Please feel free to contact him with your comments (pro, con, or otherwise), at lowell_hein@fpl.com or bd822@hotmail.com

Victory Over Myself

by Dan Redmond

I had awakened at 4.15am. The date was Sunday 9th March 2008. I looked around my hotel room and then it hit me like a bolt of lightning: the big day had finally arrived! Realising that I would not get back to a peaceful sleep, I decided to get up, dress and make a pot of strong coffee. When the coffee was ready, I turned on the television and tried very hard to concentrate on the news of the day. I couldn't believe how nervous I felt and I reflected on how I had got here.

Last march 2007 I had been visiting a good friend in England and had previously read about a kata championships that was organised by United Martial Alliance (UMA) at Burton upon Trent and was in progression at that time. I had made a detour to investigate. The thing that had impressed me, apart from the high competitor standards, was the fairness of the judging demonstrated throughout the day. Before I left for home, I searched out the organiser Mr. Jim Mc.Sherry and gave him my business card.

Then in January 2008 a set of entry forms for the 2008 kata championships arrived at my home. I placed them along with a pile of other paperwork that I had promised myself to clear up. Later when working on the papers I came across the kata entry forms and the idea occurred to me, that maybe I should enter the championships, even though I had not competed at any level for 25 years. I selected three categories, "male over 40 years", "mixed male and female over 40 years" and the "coaches" and posted off the entry forms.

I promised myself to partake in a regular training programme to help sharpen up on my kata performance. I was thrilled at the thought of taking part in the championships and began to adopt the positive attitude that I was going there; not only take part, but to also win. Leading up to the event I practiced the kata faithfully each day. I had selected the two kata that I felt best suited me: Wanshu and Jion. I then booked my flights and a hotel. Now I was ready!

Now here I was in my hotel room, nervous as a little kitten and full of self-doubt. The previous evening I had found a quiet area behind the hotel, where I could do some practice and found myself making lots of mistakes, this then started off a lot of nagging, doubting questions: What if I forget the kata tomorrow?; What if I let myself down by doing everything wrong?; What if I just freeze on the spot?

My wife Maureen had asked me why I was doing this. I had told her that she wouldn't understand. Now, at this late stage, I also didn't understand why I was doing it. I had trouble getting to sleep the night before; now I was a nervous wreck. I couldn't understand this change in my attitude since I left home. Now I was not thinking about winning: I was just hoping to remember the kata! Here I was at 4.15am wide awake in my hotel room and just contemplating my escape on the earliest flight home to Northern Ireland.

I went down for breakfast at 7am. I really couldn't eat much. I had too many butterflies in my gut. I tried some more coffee, trying to get rid of the negative thoughts that I was having.

I tried to visualise myself doing each of my kata really well. It worked and I began to get back the old self-belief. My taxi arrived at 10am and I was on my way. The venue was packed with members of various clubs who had travelled from all over England to compete. From time to time I found myself in conversation with other people and for some reason I found myself informing these people that, I had travelled all the way from Northern Ireland, that I would be 66 years old in June 2008 and that this was my first competition for 25 years. Looking back I think maybe I was probably paving the way in case I had a bad performance, or messed up the kata. At least these people would know I had some very good reasons for my failure. It was a long wait. I checked the timetable and discovered that my first event was scheduled for 3pm. I watched other performers in early events and became more nervous. I left the hall often and outside I tried to take my mind off the situation making many visits to the toilet. Once again I attempted to banish the negative thoughts in reminding myself that I was chief instructor of the Chujo Karate Association,

that I had many years of experience behind me, that I had been a former Northern Ireland kumite international and that I had faithfully practised my kata.

After what seemed like a lifetime my first event was called. I lined up beside the other competitors. Now I realised how the little children felt before CKA gradings and competitions. If only they could see me now. I felt like a complete beginner stepping onto the dojo floor for my first karate lesson and to make matters worst I was the first to be called. I don't remember much else after that. I do recall walking to the mark on the floor and announcing Wanshu kata.

After the first few moves my mind went blank and only my dedicated training carried me through. My body just continued without the use of my mind, finished on the embusen and awaited my scores. Then to my surprise, I received a thunderous round of applause. The word had circulated around about this old guy who had not competed for 25 years. The audience had gotten behind me and it was sweet music to my ears. The other competitors performed their kata and I was placed 4th. I felt very relieved. I had done it! I had taken on my demons and I had beaten them.

Thirty minutes later I took part in my next event. This time choose Jion kata. I felt more relaxed and again I finished in 4th place. In my third event, the "Coaches" category I finished in 7th place.

Then it all started. During the remainder of the day I was approached by well-wishers, mostly congratulating me on taking part after so many years out and also on my kata performance. Some men in their forties and fifties told me that I had inspired them to take part next year.

Due to the nervous tension, the whole experience had left me exhausted, but I also felt elated. I had given myself a challenge and had succeeded. I didn't finish in the medals; but I had achieved a victory over myself. I had done something that I didn't need to do and had moved outside my comfort zone and it felt so good. I consoled myself by realising that not only had I "talked the talk" but I had also "walked the walk". I am looking forward to taking part again next year. The competitive spirit has been revived and I want to do it all over again.

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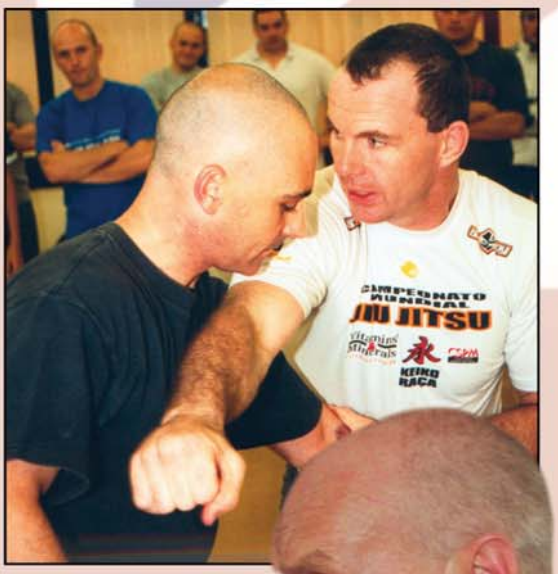
BRITISH COMBAT ASSOCIATION RESIDENTIAL COURSE

NOVEMBER 2008



Celebrating 15 years at the very top of the U.K. martial arts scene, the BCA will this year be holding a residential course in November, showcasing the very best exponents of not only practical personal combat, but of traditional systems and how they can be made to work in many spheres of life.

To be held at Lilleshall National Sports Centre, there will be not only training sessions, but a full programme of lectures and discussion groups, open to non BCA members and spearheaded by the Association's Chief Instructors, Geoff Thompson and Peter Consterdine. There will be a line-up of some of the foremost Instructors with Rick Young, 'Mo' Teague, John Skillen, Iain Abernethy, Russell Stutely and many others.

Whether you want to learn how to impact like a train, grapple for competition or combat, understand the psychology of close quarter combat, or how to develop explosive speed in punching and kicking, this course will have it all. This is an opportunity not to miss, to train and mix with some of the U.K's top practitioners.

The course will be held from Thursday 27th November to Sunday 30th November and the cost will include all training, accommodation and meals. Lilleshall is one of the finest sports training venues in the U.K.

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