

Jissen 実戦

The FREE online Practical Martial Arts Magazine

Winter 2009

Forearm Training for Combat Tales of a Street Gang



The Myth of the Quick Kill
The Little Black Book of Violence

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EDITORIAL

ISSUE 4 - Winter 2009

Welcome to the fourth edition of Jissen! The main announcement is that **JissenMag.com** is now live! The magazine's large readership and ever growing profile means that Jissen now needs a dedicated website. On the new website you can download all the back issues and get your free subscription! By subscribing you'll automatically be sent an email as soon as the next issue is available for download from JissenMag.com and all the other websites that host the magazine. Please be sure to check out the website and let us know your thoughts.



In this issue you'll find the usual thought provoking mix of pragmatism, true traditionalism, questioning of "established facts" and cutting edge martial arts. The fact that we are totally independent of any group or governing body, and that we are not motivated by financial considerations, means that all contributors to Jissen are totally free to express their views. We will always give a platform to well written articles, regardless of how "controversial" or "out of step with the mainstream" they may be considered. With that in mind, I'd ask you to read through this issue's offerings and query if an article that questions what many see as the core philosophies of the martial arts would find a platform elsewhere? What about an article that graphically discuss the realities of knife wounds? What about an article that questions the emphasis martial artists place on traditional weaponry? What about an article that suggests we must use "bad language" in the dojo? And which other martial arts magazine would publish an article discussing in detail how a street gang operated?

Don't get me wrong, there are many other great magazines out there and they provide a superb service to the martial arts community. However, I think we can agree that most other magazines would feel very uncomfortable publishing this kind of material. And there is no doubt there is some wisdom in that as many readers don't really want the reality of violence. Nor do they want their views and what they have been taught called into question. That's not the readership we are catering for. The tens of thousands of downloads we are getting tells us that are many martial artists out there who want the "established wisdom" to be challenged and who also want uncensored and uncompromising information. And that's what we are committed to bringing you.

Thank you all for supporting this publication and helping it to grow. If you know of fellow martial artists who would also be interested in what we have to offer, please let them know about us! Be sure to checkout the new website, enjoy this issue, and we'll be back in the spring with more!

I - Abernethy



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Martial Arts Scepticism: Philosophy and Ancient Wisdom

by Jamie Clubb

"Prior to the end of the Qing Dynasty, Chinese martial arts had one goal, pure and simple: winning confrontations through intimidation, the use of weapons, or the use of one's fists... Chinese martial arts were considered to be a physical skill, a manual skill; they were not linked to any esoteric philosophy, nor were they viewed as a form of character development, religious practice, or spiritual development."
- "Chinese Martial Arts Training Manuals: A Historical Survey", Brian Kennedy and Elizabeth Guo

Philosophy and martial arts have been associated with each other since... well, not really as long as we would like to think. As much as we want to believe that all the great warriors of old were virtuous and wise sages, it seems highly unlikely. Systems of truly efficient combat are developed by, or derived from, the methods of those who are truly proficient at violence. It is as simple and straightforward as that. The martial artists who have made the biggest tremors in the martial arts community are those who have tested and applied their skills in real life violence or, at least, those who have trained under others who have this level of experience. The true roots of martial arts are found in fighters, be they soldiers, pugilists, street brawlers or people involved in security, who passed their knowledge onto others. The philosophy came later and the esoteric and "character building" stuff came much later.

If we look back further than the twentieth century it is difficult to find many texts that see philosophy as an integral part of physical martial arts training. There is nothing, at least on the surface, that proves that famous literature like Sun Tzu's "The Art of War" or Miyamoto Musashi's "The Book of Five Rings" is about anything else other than efficient combat strategy.

Tzu's work, as the title implies, is a treatise on waging war, perhaps the oldest in existence, where he states his most famous sentence, "All warfare is based on deception." That early line, which is the eighteenth paragraph of chapter one in most translations, should have been a dead giveaway: this is not a discussion on the virtues of love and peace.

Likewise the proof that Musashi was a great philosopher is not found in his most famous text,

"The Book of Five Rings". Like Tzu's work this treatise deals with combat in an efficient, pragmatic and, arguably, amoral manner. It is a book that describes the best strategies Musashi found worked in the practice of Kenjutsu, Japanese sword-fighting. Musashi apparently was also a keen calligrapher. So what? Hitler liked to paint and it didn't mean he was a peaceful or "spiritual" person. Musashi, it would appear, was anything but a peaceful person. From an early age he wanted to fight, and throughout his life he would use any means necessary to win, most of which involved outright deception. Some historians have regarded him more as a bully than the archetypal figure of samurai virtue. Before his death Musashi wrote "Dokkodo", which is perhaps the closest we have to his life philosophy. However, don't expect to find a text that speaks deeply about loving your fellow human beings or attaining spiritual enlightenment. The 21 precepts for self-discipline contained within the text are more in line with the selfish ideologies of Ayn Rand or Friedrich Nietzsche than an altruistic code of ethics.

It is fair to argue that the principles contained within both "The Art of War" and "The Book of



Five Rings” has stood the test of time, but there is always the danger of reading too deep into what has been written or, as is too often the case, twisting the meanings and principles in the text to correspond with one’s own beliefs and ideas. This is avoided when you keep in mind the clear reasons why both texts were written; their historical context and their target readership. In short: why, when and for whom. So, Musashi’s seventeenth century manual on Japanese sword fighting strategies for pupils of his samurai school might share some interesting parallels with the ruthless attitude taken by a 1980s yuppie when he attacked the stock market, but I don’t think it is the best text for advising an early twenty-first century suburbanite how to contribute towards a more caring community.

Readership, now that’s another point worth remembering when we consult ancient texts. Widespread literacy is a modern phenomenon and this brings us onto the reason why we have great historical philosophical martial arts writers. Philosophers were learned people. They could write. Therefore it is not surprising that their interpretations of the martial arts are the most numerous. They could leave a legacy where their illiterate contemporaries could not. It has only been since the early 1990s that the “True Crime” subgenre of factual books has spawned dozens of ghost-written autobiographies that detail the “philosophies” of real fighters. Such biographies vary from earlier works where violent men were seemingly repentant about their violent lives to those who see violence as a type of celebratory culture.

There are modern exceptions to the rule, perhaps even pioneers, like the realistic martial artist/doorman Geoff Thompson, who is also a legitimate writer and motivational philosopher. Geoff Thompson, in many ways, is a link to all these sides of the martial arts and gives us a glimpse of what the scholarly martial arts pioneers were like and how they developed in their respective journeys. He was a martial artist first who decided to test his skills in a real-life environment. He became a doorman, a person who would face the realities of fighting. The lessons he learnt were brought back to his martial arts classes. However, once the “fight outside of a chip shop” area was covered thoroughly and the physical limitations were established, it was



only natural for the great martial artist to pursue other attributes that had been developed as bi-products through his intensive training experiments. These attributes moved further away from the visceral area of last resort civilian self-defence and more into developing character. Although Geoff Thompson has maintained his roots in “hard skills” it also important to remember that he always had a literate soul. He wrote plays at home and he wrote his autobiography “sitting on the toilet” when he worked at a factory. He worked as a nightclub bouncer, but even in those “blood and snot” days, as he gradually went from a martial arts denier to martial arts sceptic, he couldn’t help but notice the poetry in the language of the door and the culture of the door. With this in mind, it is little surprising that as Geoff Thompson changed there were certain principles, deep within him, that were always going to emerge.

However, it is with an early twentieth century example of the fighting philosopher that historians like Brian Kennedy and Elizabeth Guo say that “for better or worse” our ideas relating to martial arts religious philosophy have been shaped.

Sun Lu Tang was both a highly respected martial arts fighter and an esteemed scholar. He was also a follower of Taoism and was able to synergise his knowledge of the three great schools of internal martial arts training with his religious and philosophical training. Sun had a thorough education in philosophy and taught it alongside the martial arts. His books made links between the martial arts and Taoist cosmology. Furthermore, as China entered a new more open and modern phase that would make martial arts more accessible to the general public, Sun



promoted the concept of practicing martial arts for health reasons rather than combat.

This gave birth to the modern idea of Tai Chi Chuan, Pakua and Hsing-I being the “new age” systems for wellbeing, often reinforced with pseudoscientific and superstitious ideas relating to the cultivation of mystical energy. There is no empirical historical evidence to prove that Tai Chi Chuan or any of the other internal arts have their roots in anything more mystical than straightforward combat efficiency.

There are many different reasons why the Asian martial arts became entwined with religion and philosophy, but a major factor has to be China and Japan's conscious decision to modernize. This modernization, representative of the Japanese change to “Do” from “Jutsu” in their martial arts, meant throwing off the old image of their feudalistic past. The arts' central message, one that would be embraced by the west throughout the twentieth century, would be about spirituality, health and other non-combat activities. Such areas were the zone of philosophy, and it was the philosophers who pushed it. Sun Lu Tang in China and Ueshiba Morihei, the founder of Aikido, in Japan, lead these efforts. It was no coincidence that Judo was founded by a man who had a high ranking career in the Japanese education system. Education was the way to ensure martial arts survival. If you could prove that martial arts would be helpful to motivate and discipline the subjects of a government then you could rely on the support instead of the oppression of that government. Martial academics led the way for better and for worse, for just as martial arts became more accessible, their objectives became obscure and it let mysticism,

showmanship and outright charlatanism through the backdoor.

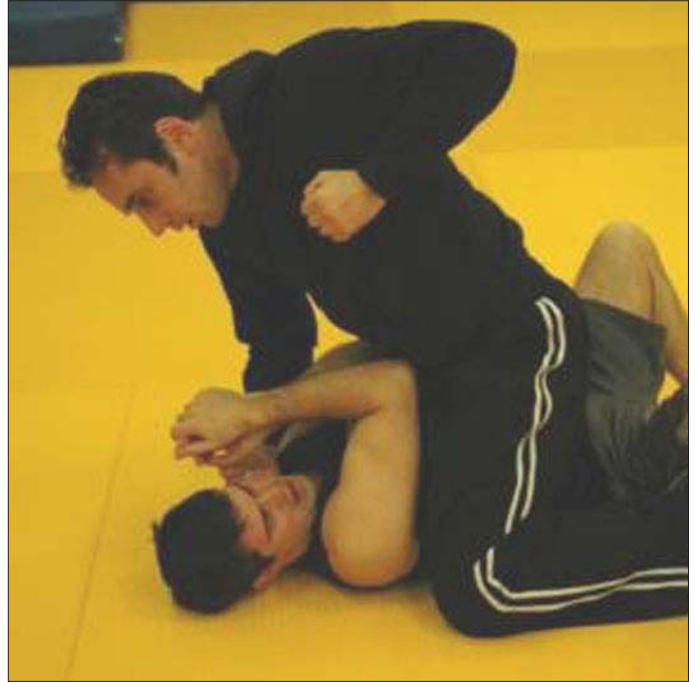
A point I have tried to make with this essay is that great martial arts masters weren't also great scholars and philosophers and vice versa, it just so happened that the most influential martial arts teachers in the last one hundred years or so were also scholars and philosophers. By way of a more modern comparison the most famous martial artists in the latter part of the twentieth century and today also happen to be actors. It is just as ludicrous to say that being a good actor is integral to being a proficient martial artist or fighter. In both examples we can see why the philosopher and actor have become successful martial artists. They are influential. They can appeal to a wider audience through their ability to articulate or perform. They might well be good martial artists, and this is in no way a slight on their technical ability, but what has helped keep them noticed is their ability to work another skill set.

Nevertheless, the philosophical martial artist belief persists to this day. This belief is at the root of something I have come to call the “By-Product Myth”. It is of no surprise that fictional martial arts media is the natural conveyor of this idea - after all it was a martial arts novel that started it all in the first place. Stanley E. Henning writes in his article “Politically Correct Treatment of Myths in Chinese Martial Arts” that the idea Chinese martial arts that descended from the Shaolin Temple came from a novel written between 1904 and 1907 entitled “Travels of Lao Can”. Henning remarks that “there is no indication that it was ever a part of an earlier oral tradition”. After the novel there came the book “Secrets of Shaolin Temple Boxing” written in 1915 by an unnamed author. This book is often cited as the main source for the pseudo-historic belief in the Shaolin Temple's high level of importance in pre-twentieth century Chinese martial arts. It didn't take long for this myth to be completely debunked by an outspoken native Chinese martial artist and historian called Tang Hao, but it still spread to the West and via popular media was repeated enough times for whole schools of martial arts to consider it a fact.

In conclusion, martial arts survived in the East due to the fact that they became recognised by those who taught and practiced them as a part of their cultural identity. This was also something

oppressive governments and occupying powers recognised and it is the reason why they suppressed them. They survived through adaption and taking advantage of the changing times. Those teachers who had skills outside of martial arts used these skills to ensure the survival of their arts, their legacy and, in many instances, their livelihood. This is an understandable reason why the philosophical martial artist became popular. However, there is something else more fundamental than this. In times of peace martial arts teachers realise the limitations inherent in violence. Furthermore, when their students don't have the short term of goal of having to face violence, as a soldier would, they become more preoccupied with other less tangible battles. Martial arts are then turned into a positive activity. And with positive activity comes a human desire to explore positive thinking. Philosophy is a natural strategy for those who fight intangible battles. With this in mind, I do not believe it is wrong for a martial arts teacher to not only teach philosophy as part of his methodology, but to also use martial arts analogies. After all it makes for good and intelligent writing. However, what is imperative

is to understand where the two might not co-exist and also where the analogies and metaphors end. Some argue "Why stay in the forge?" Why indeed, but when you have first looked to martial arts as a means for self-protection it is important to make sure you go through that forge in the first place.





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Clubb Chimera was founded by Jamie Clubb, regular martial arts magazine columnist and creator of the best-selling DVD series "Cross-Training in the Martial Arts".

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The Myth of the Quick Kill

by Rev. Arthur Chenevey

THE KNOWLEDGE OF SWORD TECHNIQUES...IS UNDESIRABLE IN THE MARTIAL ARTS.
THINKING OF THE VARIOUS WAYS OF CUTTING SOMEONE DOWN CONFUSES THE MIND. —

Miyamoto Musashi, "Wind Chapter," BOOK OF FIVE RINGS

(William Scott Wilson, Trans., Kodansha Intl., NY 2004)

**READER BEWARE! THIS ARTICLE IS NOT FOR THE FAINT AT HEART. MATERIAL IS GRAFFIC
AND FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY. THE AUTHOR AND PUBLISHERS ARE NOT
RESPONSIBLE FOR HOW ANYONE MAY USE OR INTERPRET THIS INFORMATION.**

Important Note: All readers are encouraged to be aware of all appropriate local and national laws relating to self-defense, reasonable force, and the use of weaponry. All readers are also encouraged to act in accordance with those laws.

If conflict is totally unavoidable, and we must enter into battle, we must do so with absolute resolve, holding back nothing. There is no defense. There is no attack. The two entities are not separate and distinct. On the contrary they become one thing—situationally correct proaction. As Kazuzo Kudo spoke: *Do not think of attack and defense as two separate things. An attack will be a defense, and a defense must be an attack.*

Within such a life and death confrontation, our mind must surrender itself solely to the task at hand, with no thoughts or considerations of death, pain, injury, litigation or any other consequence. Our focus is not on the knife—be it ours or the enemy's—or on what we plan on doing with the knife or against the knife. Our focus is to engage in the necessary process needed to negate or neutralize the threat by any and all means, knowing when we must stop, never relinquishing this focus until we are far out and away from this battle.

We must understand this before we can even approach this subject of knife and counter-knife work. Fundamentally, a knife is a simple tool—a lever combined with a wedge. Being a lever arm, it is a force magnifier and the fine wedge (two incline planes together) combined allows this tool to slide between molecules easily. It is, essentially, a lethal force tool.

We must understand all of the legal ramifications, responsibilities, and technical

essences of this lethal force tool. It's not a magical device. It is inanimate—not living—incapable of independent action. It is only as effective as the human wielding it makes it. We must completely understand the structure of the tool and how to maximize this structure's inherent use. By thoroughly understanding the tool we not only have a better idea about how to counter the tool, but also how best to apply the device.

So folks, buckle your seat belt and here we go. I pondered long and hard about whether to do this or not, but since there is so much misinformation, incorrect information, and make-believe information about knife *defense* and knife *offense*, I decided to offer clarity.

It's not pretty, fancy or complicated. Let's remember the simple version of Hick's Law as we proceed, which is about mastering a few things that work across the board, nothing extra or extraneous.

Mastering knife and counter-knife is not about being macho-bad or Billy-Bad, or some fantasy super-antihero with ice water running through our veins like *Wolverine* in a *Marvel* comic book. It's actually quite simple, direct, straightforward and as ugly as it gets. Killing up-close-and-personally with cold steel is as intimate as a human can get in battle.

An example of what I mean is copied directly from my personal favorite military "Combatives" manual: the U.S. Army's **FM 21-150** (DOD Document, Published: 30SEP1992).

7-4. PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Killing a sentry is completely different than killing an enemy soldier while engaged in a firefight. It is a cold and calculated attack on a specific target. After observing a sentry for hours, watching him eat or look at his wife's photo, an attachment is made between the stalker and the sentry. Nonetheless, the stalker must accomplish his task efficiently and brutally. At such close quarters, the soldier literally feels the sentry fight for his life. The sights, sounds, and smells of this act are imprinted in the soldier's mind; it is an intensely personal experience. A soldier who has removed a sentry should be observed for signs of unusual behavior for four to seven days after the act.

Addressing this issue of sentry removal with blade, while I don't quite agree with the practicality and feasibility of using this tool to dispatch an enemy sentry, I do agree with the ramifications a human soldier can potentially suffer from such an act up close.

Plainly, sentry removal with a blade is highly impractical and extremely difficult to pull off. But we see in the movies and on the television our hero quietly and quickly disposing of enemy guards and bad-guys with a swift slash to the throat, and the poor sap drops immediately, gurgling to a quick and easy death. Quick kills like this are reserved for the movies. If they occur at all they do so only as an exception, not as a norm. Let's learn why.

Addressing the difficulty of sentry removal with a knife, first of all, it's hard enough to breach a secured perimeter. Good security measures have sentries working in pairs, aided considerably by fixed positions as over-watch with electronic security devices (motion and sound detectors, trip wires to claymores and flairs etc.). Not only do we need to get in good position in relation to the sentry, close enough to grab, control and insert the blade, we must do it alone, quietly and swiftly, totally undetected by any and all means of security. If we manage to pull all of this off, now we must contend with our lone guard and his human anatomy and physiology.

Say we were so silent, swift and stealthy to get this close without the sentry being the least bit aware, once the assault is launched, the swift movement, alone, will now alert him to such an assault. Reflexively, he will turn to meet the attack. From there, the guard will resist violently, making a swift and silent kill highly improbable. We are now in an incredible struggle for life. This will alert other security personnel on duty. A struggle such as this will draw attention from other enemy personnel mulling about.

Elaborate silenced weapons systems have been devised for sentry removal or quiet quick kills needed in the military. These integrated silenced firearms are built for this purpose.

Dispatching an enemy up-close-and-personal with a blade is possible when the enemy stumbles into our hide and we are ready for his approach. Sometimes a shot may be heard, but the gurgling grunts and groans combined with



MY FAVORITE, ALL-PURPOSE KNIFE (IF I CAN CARRY ONLY ONE) ONTARIO KNIFE COMPANY'S BOLO, HIGH CARBON STEEL



THE FOLLOWING SCARS ARE FROM WOUNDS RECEIVED IN 1971, CLOSE QUARTERS BATTLE FROM A SINGLE ENEMY. THIS FIRST IS A DEEP GASH UPPER RIGHT PECTORAL THAT, IN SPITE OF ITS DEPTH—TO THE RIB—IT DID NOT BLEED.

thrashing around and violent dynamics of two humans fighting for life, will not.

We must first look at the common causes of death from the blade are: massive hemorrhaging (exsanguinations), air embolism from a puncture, suffocation caused by bleeding into the air-way, collapsed lung not immediately ventilated (pneumothorax) and infection. Punctures to the mid-brain or C-3/C-4 vertebrae are just not common. Quick kills with a knife are highly improbable.

Quick incapacitations are also difficult to facilitate against a dedicated combatant. If the brain stem and motor strips are not destroyed, there will not be a quick incapacitation from the knife. People have had a variety of things pierce their skull and become lodged in the cortex away from the mid-brain and have survived very well, with full recovery.

Looking at the common kinds of physical wounds we get from a blade up close, I will be using the kind of damage received from a seven inch double-edged wasp-shaped “dagger” as our “fighting” knife for this article. Such a weapon in skilled hands by its design, is incapable of generating a quick kill in a human being unless (as already mentioned) one can plunge it directly into the medulla oblongata (brain stem)—hilt deep or puncture into and destroy the brain’s motor strip (positioned inside the skull, near

where the ears are located for an external reference. The brain stem is partially exposed at the back of the head, at the base of the occipital plate. However, it’s a very small target, the head moves quite a bit and quickly, so it is not a viable target for which to aim.

Accessing human arterial tissue is also much more difficult than people imagine. Mother Nature built the human body quite well, actually. Arteries are deep, near bone, under lots of skin and muscle, and in young people and healthy people, flexible. Even in the neck, the carotids are not that easily reached and are not in the front, but along the sides of the neck. The Jugular vein, located somewhat in the front of the neck, is a vein, and it has a tendency to clot. A deep cut to this area creates a lot of damage and a lot of bleeding, but not a quick, silent death.

When an artery is completely severed by a nice clean blade, this fully severed artery still within the body will often automatically seal itself shut from surrounding visceral pressure. A full grown male subject does not bleed out as quickly as many imagine, especially from a single knife puncture from a sharp knife.

Surrounding internal pressure will seal around the blade, which actually keeps the wound from bleeding profusely. If the artery is nicked or punctured, and the knife withdrawn abruptly, this type of withdrawal can create additional damage



THIS IS A STAB FROM THE SAME “BAYONET” WIELDED BY THE LEFT HAND OF THE ENEMY. IT IS POSITIONED AT MY UPPER BACK, NEAR THE SCAPULA

to the surrounding tissue, and the wound will bleed profusely. It is difficult to withdraw a thin, sharp, metal blade out of a human torso, for example, without using its inherent affinity for cutting to cut out from the thrust, which will generate more tissue damage and subsequent bleeding.

Regardless, one will lose consciousness before we will bleed out completely

We see in the action movies a man being quickly dispatched from his throat being cut. Like I mentioned above, there is no quick kill from a knife unless the brain stem or motor strips are destroyed, which is highly improbable with a knife.

Cutting the throat to kill the man requires that we completely sever through at least the entire one half of the man's neck to his spinal column to access and cut the carotid artery. And it will still be a bit before the man will lose consciousness. There is another carotid intact on the other side still directing blood to the brain. In the mean time, the assailed can manage to dispatch his assailant. Severely cutting into the front of throat may cause the subject to suck blood into his lungs from the slice in his airway, and panic. But the veins in the front of the throat bleed with much less pressure pushing the blood. Veins also are able to clot more quickly than arteries. Unconsciousness from such a knife wound to the throat will not come immediately without first some kind of a struggle.

In Washington DC, when I worked as a psych aid at one of the University Hospitals long ago, we had a man brought in alive, agitated, pacing around like a caged animal who had severed his own throat in the front quite substantially, severed his own wrists and still had use of both hands. He even severed his ankles and was still able to walk. The wounds were rather deep and the bleeding had been controlled with pressure bandages alone. His clothing was soaked in his blood, but he was still conscious and quite capable of running, had he made up his mind to do so. We had to transfer him to a county hospital for administration reasons. But for a man with so many deep, self-inflicted knife wounds at seemingly vital areas with visible significant blood loss, he was doing quite well—physically at least.

At this same hospital, we had a female attempt suicide in the hospital. She had obtained a



THIS IS ANOTHER STAB RECEIVED ON THE LOWER BACK, JUST LEFT OF THE SPINAL COLUMN NEAR: L-3, L-4. THE STAB IS THE HORIZONTAL SCAR THE VERTICAL IS FROM BACK SURGERY

scalpel, fixed herself a hot bath. While soaking in the warm tub, she stuck herself with the scalpel several times trying to cut the femoral artery. She managed to dig around in her leg a bit and did nick the artery. We found her unconscious—not dead—soaking in a tub of her own blood. She did need blood transfusions, but she did not die and her leg was not damaged too severely.

As a Safety Services Officer in the Mid-west US, we had a horrible bar fight (a woman was the cause) that resulted in a man being repeatedly stabbed in the right inner thigh. The femoral artery was clipped several times. The surrounding soft tissue was badly mangled, however, from the repeated stabbings from a rather large folder. Blood was every where, as the two rolled around fighting in it. By the time the two were separated, the man who had stabbed the other, ran and tried to dispose of the weapon. The wounded man was able to stand and walk around, momentarily.

The assailant was apprehended that night, and after a years worth of court, the assailant was convicted for aggravated, attempted murder, receiving 17 years in prison. Interestingly enough, the assailant was my neighbor. This identification made it easier for us to “catch” him.

The victim survived but he had a long mental and physical recovery. The knife's repetitive stabbing to the inner thigh caused serious

damage to his leg with chronic infections. But no one died.

The femoral and deep femoral arteries are located well within the leg structure near bone (femur bone)—not an easy access point. It takes work to get it, as the above stories reveal. Repetitive blows with a knife will cause significant soft tissue disruption, but not necessarily incapacitation or death.

Looking to other arteries of the body, working from top to bottom of the human subject, we have the subclavian artery located at the neck/shoulder junction. We have the brachiocephalic artery, which is near the “notch” of the throat/chest juncture. Then we have the axillary artery deep under the arm-pit, which becomes the brachial artery riding along the humerus bone of the upper arm.

The really big artery is the aorta, the main artery from which all others branch. As a child growing up on a farm in West Virginia, when we butchered pigs, we bled them not by cutting the throat, but by inserting a long thin fillet blade down their “chest notch” to cut the aortic arch.

Cutting a man’s throat, having him collapse quickly without a peep, is strictly television and movie occurrences. It doesn’t happen like that. How quickly a man will bleed out to unconsciousness, let alone completely, is dependent on the nature and severity of the wound and the biological uniqueness of the person. There is no set time table one may accurately follow saying that, if I sever artery “A” this subject, if still, will bleed out in 3 minutes.

Under duress of battle, a peripheral knife wound may actually bleed little if at all. Personally, I once received a deep laceration from a knife, horizontal along my upper right chest that cut to the rib, and it did not bleed until much later. There was no pain at all.

Accessing and destroying all of the essential tendons responsible for articulating the limbs mean the wrist/hand ankle/foot must almost be completely amputated.

A lot of theory has been written about this procedure of “defanging the snake.” When it actually comes to slashing types of knife applications to the human body, we must understand that the one receiving the cuts isn’t



IN ALL, I RECEIVED TWO STABS TO MY BACK, ONE TO THE INSIDE OF MY LEFT ARM EQUAL DISTANT FROM ELBOW AND WRIST, A DEEP GASH HORIZONTAL ACROSS MY RIGHT LOWER TRICEPS, THIS BARELY VISIBLE ONE TO MY LEFT UPPER FOREARM AND ANOTHER HORIZONTAL ACROSS THE LATERAL PORTION OF MY LEFT THIGH. THESE LAST APPEAR ONLY AS THIN WHITE LINES ON MY SKIN.

AS WE CAN SEE, SLASHES HEAL NICELY AND THE RESOLUTION ON OUR CAMERA DOESN'T ALLOW ME TO PICK UP THE SCARS WITH DISTINCTION BECAUSE OF HOW WELL THEY DID HEAL UP AFTER ALL THESE YEARS.

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THIS INCIDENT AFTER THE ENEMY WAS NEUTRALIZED, I ENGAGED ANOTHER ENEMY IN CQB WITH NO ILL EFFECTS FROM THE WOUNDS RECEIVED FROM THIS AFOREMENTIONED ENGAGEMENT. KNIFE WOUNDS ARE FAR MORE PSYCHOLOGICALLY DEBILITATING THAN PHYSICALLY. REMAINING COOL AND CALM, FOCUSED AT THE TASK AT HAND ARE WHAT ALLOWS ONE TO PREVAIL WITH A KNIFE AS WEAPON.

I DID NOT REALIZE I HAD BEEN WOUNDED TO THIS EXTENT UNTIL AFTER MEDICAL EVALUATION BACK AT BASE.

going to stand there and let Mr. Cutter proceed. If the receiver of the slashes has clothes on and accessories like a watch or jewelry, these objects provide a physical barrier to the cuts. Clothing may provide only a frail barrier, but it may provide a substantial barrier if the material is leather or heavy multiple layers.

In addition, power cuts are needed to create the kind of damage needed to the anterior wrist area. I don’t care how sharp a seven inch knife is or smaller, power must be behind the knife to cut deeply. And it takes a lot of practice to execute specific, accurate power cuts to a small, rapidly moving target under duress.

Precision, art-like executions of flowing knife slashes, accessing these anterior wrist targets,

specifically, are unrealistic and I am not sure of their utility. What do we think the enemy is doing while we try to access these targets? Possibly trying to do the same to us? I do know, the isn't going to stand there and let me try to cut his wrists with offering some kind of resistance.

In spite of what is spoken about the lethality of a sharp knife's edge, to succeed at cutting deep into flesh through any measure of clothing, we need to be power hacking, whacking and chopping, hard, at whatever is near or sticking out as we move to body and head. We cannot worry about hitting specific precision targets. A hand comes out we hack at it and keep hacking at it as we close hacking and whacking and chopping.

We must understand that the human skin and muscle are tough and pliable, actually resisting being cut under duress. Slashing movements with a knife must be power hacks and whacks and chops, otherwise known as gross motor skills. The execution of fine finesse movements will abandon us under duress, but the hacks will be there.

For one to lose the use of the entire hand, such that one can no longer hold a knife as a functional weapon, the inside of the wrist (anterior portion) must receive a deep wound, severing through all soft tissue, stopping only at the radial/ulna junctures. That's one heck of a cut.

If one has a machete or heavy blade, one may be able to accomplish this, or even better, amputate the entire hand.

Tendons are deep, and to incapacitate the hand from flexing (holding), no less than three major tendons must be completely severed to render that hand useless. If only two are severed, under duress, that hand is still capable of securing something in the hand. Theory and reality are the same in theory, but they differ quite a bit in reality.

When using a blade, offensively or counter-offensively, we hack and whack away at the hand/wrist/arm to gain access to deeper targets in the torso/head/neck regions. The snake is defanged when the head is gone, not from trying to pull its teeth.

As long as a man is capable of fighting, he can win the battle. Even when a single hand is

rendered useless, that arm is not, and the bleeding is insufficient to cause any impediment in immediate actions. The arm can still hit, over-hook and under-hook an adversary's arm, while the other hand can still flex and extend and do its nasty deeds with a new knife or the same knife, or secure the opposition's weapon with the one good hand.

I have witnessed men who had lost the complete use of the primary arm yet continue the good fight and kill many more enemies.

Moving on to thrusts to vital organs, a lot of fiction resides here, too—and arguments. "The thrust is better because it kills more quickly. Others argue the cut is better as it takes out the carotids swiftly.

This is not even an argument. Both arguments are exaggerations. Both applications of cuts and thrusts are needed and both have their limits and utilities. Offensively we need to master both equally; counter-offensively we must know both intimately. All arguing which is better: "Thrust or Cut," simply informs me those who make the argument know little of the truth of knife work. Theirs is a pretend ideal.

When a major organ is penetrated and severely damaged from a seven inch knife, this does not mean there is going to be a quick kill or



THIS IS MY FAVORITE EDGED WEAPON—SAMSON. THOUGH HE ONLY HAS THREE LEGS, THIS 90 LB. HARDENED VET HAS ALL OF HIS TEETH AND IS A MASTER AT USING THEM.

incapacitation. Unlike a bullet, a knife wound has no shock wave accompanying it to destroy soft tissue along its path. Humans have been stabbed in the head (missed the midbrain) and heart and have survived nicely, even remaining conscious and functional with the implement still impaled in the organ. Likewise, humans have survived being stabbed many times over again, all the thrusts missing major organs.

Abdominal knife wounds may be very painful or not. Pain is relative to the individual. Interestingly enough, even a small nick to the abdominal wall that severs through the perineum near the intestinal tract will allow portions of the intestines to rupture forth, due to the internal pressure of the human gut. This does not translate as immediate incapacitate nor create rapid blood loss. Depending upon the mindset of the recipient of such a wound, it may gross the recipient out enough he stops from panic and mental shock, or the recipient becomes so enraged he gets the knife and kills the wielder with his own weapon. Infection is the big killer here.

Penetrations to the delicate liver can be painful and cause severe internal bleeding leading to shock. Bile maybe released into the abdominal cavity, causing infection—but no quick kills, nor immediate incapacitation results from this. This is also true of the stomach, bladder, and small intestines punctured by our seven inch blade—there may be pain, or not. Infection is like as is internal bleeding, if not external bleeding and shock.

Other organs like the spleen and kidneys, if damaged by a blade, can cause much internal bleeding, and in the case of the kidneys, sepsis. These organs, however, are not easy targets. The kidneys are higher than most people believe, and not many even know where the spleen lies.

Knife thrusts to the chest mean that the blade must traverse the naturally protective rib-cage and sternum cartilage. If a knife manages to puncture a lung, creating a sucking chest wound, this can slow a man down quickly enough, but getting a substantial wound with a knife to this region is difficult.

Repetitive blows from a blade to the human torso are highly traumatic and extremely damaging—but do not cause immediate death



or incapacitation. The person may stop what he is doing, immediately, due to the psychological trauma of such an attack. But physiologically, human systems do not normal shut down immediately from knife wounds. There are exceptions, but as a rule, knife wounds do not cause a quick kill or a quick incapacitation. Whether the blows are slashing actions or stabbing actions, both up-close-and-person type attacks weigh heavily against the recipient's mental state more than upon the physical state.

When organs are punctured internal and external bleeding are possible, especially when the blade is ripped out or it cuts its way out. It's this bleeding that causes a drop in blood pressure, shock and unconsciousness. Regardless what people believe about the knife, the knife is a poor quick kill and immediate incapacitation weapon, but a powerful psychological tool.

A blade's effectiveness as a weapon against other humans has much to do with human psychology, than as an effective killing tool. As we can see, the blade actually is not all that

effective when wanting an immediate incapacitation or quick kill. Firearms in skilled cool, calm hands that put the bullets where they need to go (brain stem and motor strip) best facilitate such ends. Nevertheless, what makes the knife effective is that humans appear to possess an innate revulsion to blades slicing, dicing and impaling us as we do for snakes and spiders biting us. Surveys have been down addressing this revulsion, and the majority of participants designated that they would rather be killed with a bullet as opposed to human using a knife to the same end.

Now that we have a realistic view of wound-damage blades can cause and what these wounds may or may not accomplish, we must address the mindset of both the receiver of knife wounds and the executor of those knife wounds. The idea of cold steel slicing, dicing and stabbing may paralyze someone or enrage others, and others, somewhere in between. The person's mind-set, i.e., how he sees himself in the world and how he sees others, how he sees battle, how he sees life and survival, and how he perceives close quarters battle with edged weapons and other cold weapons, determines how he survives lethal force or not.

An important principle we must engrain within any personal protection scenarios involving life-and-death combat, we presume that enemy personnel (our adversaries) are capable, competent, well-trained, determined, motivated, well-armed with back up. Assessments that lead us to conclude an under-estimation of our adversaries leads us down a self-destructive path. This does not mean we cannot also be well-trained, competent, determined, motivated, well-armed with back up. We want to trust our own abilities and proficiencies, owning confidence in our training, preparation, equipment and competency to manage any challenge before us. We just don't want to over-estimate ours to under-estimating our foes'. It is only when we know our limits and abilities fully, and the enemy's limits and abilities fully do we have the best chance of prevailing.

Any weakness in our mind's ability to manage lethal force can and will be used against us by us. We defeat ourselves, and we defeat the enemy because the enemy allows us to defeat him. This is very important to understand. The same holds true for the other side. Mind-set means more than technique in this arena folks. Sorry, but it does.



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Getting To The Root Of It All

by Eric Parsons

Stances are the root of all martial techniques, the source from which their power is generated. As such, the training of stances should be a vital portion of any martial arts curriculum. This is something that the old masters certainly understood. For example, it is said that in the past, *Sanchin Kata*, an isometrically-performed *koryu* form comprised of seemingly basic techniques, was the only *kata* taught to *Goju-Ryu* students during the first several years of their training. Why? Because it was considered of fundamental importance to the style. And what makes it so fundamental? Many factors, but one of the most important is its instruction in the use of stance. Granted, only one stance is used in *Sanchin Kata* (*sanchin dachi* – hourglass stance). However, that one stance is drilled and practiced and tested until it is perfected and the *karateka* can use it to generate an enormous amount of power. (For those looking for more detailed information on this form, I recommend Kris Wilder's book *The Way of Sanchin Kata*.)

This leads to a second point about stances – stance training is about *much* more than foot placement. Proper stance training is concerned with body architecture in its entirety. It involves posture, body alignment, weight distribution, weight shifting, muscular tension, muscular relaxation, and numerous other concerns – all of which are vital to that most important concept, utility. Stance training should work to make the stances useful and practical in self defense situations.

So, does modern stance training meet this criterion? Does it lead to the practical application of stances in self-defense situations? To examine this question, let us consider two common ways that stances are practiced today and see how they stack up.

The first of these methods entails the instructor or a senior student demonstrating the stance, the junior students attempting to mimic the position, and then the instructor going around to correct the students as they hold the stance for some specified period of time. Then, a new



Sanchin Shime (Testing)

stance is introduced, and the process is repeated. Although a potentially good introduction to the stances of a given style, this method of instruction suffers from several problems – it is mostly inactive, quite boring, completely static, and does little to guide the student towards understanding overall body architecture as it pertains to their techniques. Granted, the first two of these flaws can perhaps be seen as relatively minor issues. However, the last two deficiencies are extremely important from a practical self-defense standpoint. This is due to the fact that, when stances are taught in this manner, students begin to think that stances are something to stand *in*, not something to move *through*. They become mired in one position, unable to dynamically react to the changing circumstances around them and incapable of adapting their stances to fit the needs of varying situations.

Of course, the second primary method of stance instruction is through the practice of formal *kata*, either solo or with a partner. This is an absolutely wonderful method for making stances dynamic and learning how the various stances and movements between them can be used to strengthen the applications found within the forms. However, as a method of stance training alone, *kata* practice suffers at the introductory levels because there is simply too much going on for the students to really focus on their bases. Students new to *kata* and the martial arts are not only learning how to move their hands, feet, and bodies in new and different ways, but they are also adjusting to new postures, breath control, and a host of other concerns. The result is information overload. Since they can't process everything, the students' focus has a tendency to move to the more intricate and visible upper body movements with good stances being one of the first things to go. Such degeneration can even be seen in more experienced practitioners, particularly during partner drills. As the pace of these drills becomes more and more frenetic, stances that were once solid will often lose all shape and structural integrity, leading to a degradation of overall technique.

Note that the situation described above illustrates one of the beauties of *Sanchin Kata*. Since the movements and techniques of the *kata* are so simple, it allows students the opportunity to focus almost solely on improving their stances/body architecture. In this context, the old-style curriculum makes perfect sense. The beginning

student was allowed several years to work on using his/her body to generate power uncomplicated by higher level techniques. Then, once this most important concept was mastered, other *kata* would be introduced, allowing the students to apply their finely honed power generation skills to a wide range of applications.

Now, most modern students would be unlikely to remain students if they were forced to learn only one *kata* for such an extended period of time, especially a *kata* like *Sanchin*. This is perhaps one reason why Master Seikichi Toguchi (founder of the *Sho-Rei-Kan*) created the more simplified *Hookiyu Kata* series. It allowed Western students the opportunity to develop a solid foundation (pun intended) before moving on to the more complex *koryu* forms.

Yet another way to deal with stance degeneration during *kata* practice is to remove everything but the stances from the form, having the students place their hands on their hips and focus solely on moving through the *kata* with the proper footwork and body structure. This is an excellent training method. However, it never hurts to have multiple weapons in the teaching arsenal. As such, the remainder of this article will explore several other drills and practice exercises that can be used to make stance work both more fun and more effective in the training hall.

The Push Game

This is a fun drill that is practiced in many schools but can also be adapted to enhance stance training.



Push Game - Shiko Dachi



Push Game - Sanchin Dachi

The typical way this drill is structured is for each set of partners to drop into horse stance (*shiko dachi*) while facing each other. Both partners then raise their hands in front of them to shoulder level. Once in position, the goal is push/slap the partner's hands, knocking him/her off-balance. A point is scored if one partner is forced to take a step backwards to maintain his/her balance, one partner is knocked to the ground, or an overaggressive attacker either takes an off-balance step forward or falls into his/her opponent. To keep things fair, the combatants should not be allowed to move their hands to the side to dodge incoming attacks, forcing them to simply cushion the blow through a soft recoil of their arms. Alternatively, after any sideways movement of the hands, the defender should be instructed to *immediately* return his/her hands to shoulder position.

Aside from enhancing balance, core flexibility and strength, and teaching the importance of softness in martial practice, stance work can be incorporated into this drill by simply changing from the traditional horse stance to any other stance used in a given style. Not only will this teach the students the stances, it will also teach them how to effectively *use* the stances, as each repositioning requires a different weight distribution, body structure, and strategy to be successful. Moreover, poor stances are quickly noted, as the offender finds him/herself repeatedly knocked off-balance. Two stances that are particularly challenging and useful to

incorporate into this drill are cat stance (*neko ashi dachi*) and hourglass stance (*sanchin dachi*).

The 360-Degree Drill

Another excellent drill for stance training is the 360-Degree Drill. As this drill was discussed in depth in Issue #2 of *Jissen* magazine, a full description of it will not be given here. However, to modify this practice for stance training, all that needs to be done is to slow the drill down, requiring the *torite* to attack, take a step back, and then come in with another strike. By slowing the drill down, the defender can then be instructed to get into a stance and maintain it, blocking/deflecting all of the attacks while remaining in the specified stance. In addition, although this can start as a stationary drill for the beginning practitioners, it can easily be made dynamic by instructing the defenders to move with every block/deflection, requiring that they finish each motion in the desired stance. In such a situation, the defender can focus on moving off-line and then positioning him/herself for a counter-attack.

The Random Stance Drill

This is an entertaining drill that really gets the students moving while forcing them to remember the names of the stances. In this drill, several people, possibly the instructor and a few of the senior students, are the stance "callers". Any of the callers are allowed to shout out any of a

specified number of stances in any order. When a stance is called, everyone must move into the stance as quickly as possible. To make the drill more challenging, the callers should change the cadence and pattern of the calls. Sometimes, a string of stances should be called one right after the other. Other times, the students should be forced to hold a stance for several seconds before the next one is called. Sometimes, a sequence should contain no two stances the same. Other times, the same stance can be called several times in a row. Moreover, the callers can also be allowed to specify a direction for the movement, such as “cat stance, backwards” or “horse stance, forwards”.

There are also several ways to make this drill more practical and interesting for middle- and upper-level students. One of the best is to require that all movements into the stances be done off-line, forcing the students to think about diagonal motion, blending with attacks, and incorporating their hips into their movements. Another variation is to allow the students to “press” one another with their stances. This can be done formally, with one partner assigned to try and control their partner’s movement through the positioning of their stances. Or, it can be allowed to happen organically with each student trying to press the others without getting boxed in and controlled him/herself. Such a free-flowing application of the drill has many advantages, as it forces the students to think about using body motion to take control of any given situation and applying the stances in an aggressive manner to neutralize the threat. It also forces students to learn how to transition from offense to defense, taking a bad situation and turning it to their advantage. Finally, it allows the callers the opportunity to explore what stances

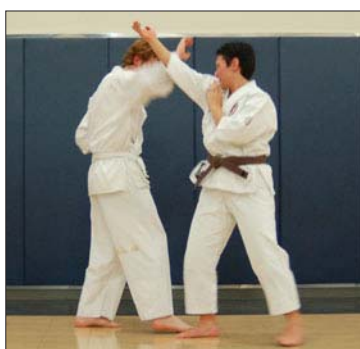
work best in which situations, as they can essentially call the stance they believe they need to redirect any given circumstance.



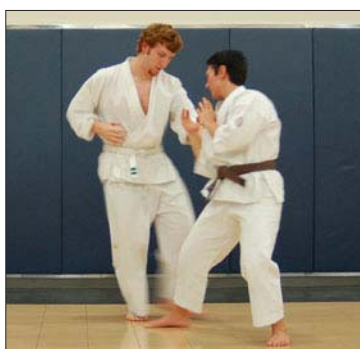
Attack



Defend



Attack



Defend

Metronome Sparring

This drill is one that has been borrowed from Shihan John Roseberry and Sensei David Ossian. Here, a metronome is set to a given rhythm and attacks are only allowed to be thrown on the beats, while in between beats, the participants should remain frozen, honoring their partners’ technique and not jumping back out of range. To begin, the partners should alternate attacks so that the beat pattern is attack-defend-attack etc. However, as the drill progresses, the number of attacks per turn are increased. For example, for a cycle of three, the beat pattern would be attack-attack-attack-defend-defend-defend.

For starters, this is simply an excellent sparring drill in and of itself. It creates a rhythm and flow to the events, and as the number of offensive techniques per turn increases, it allows the participants to begin to see openings and ways to combine techniques that would otherwise be invisible to them. Moreover, when the metronome is set at a slow pace, the reduced speed of the attacks provides the opportunity for a broader palette of offensive techniques to be brought into play. For example, eye gouges, groin strikes, and other techniques that are almost always too dangerous to employ in practice can now be shown in a slow and controlled manner.

Plus, not only is this drill a wonderful addition to any sparring class, it can also become an effective tool for stance training. To adapt the drill for this purpose, all that is required is that the defender be instructed to always move into a specified stance in

response to any offensive technique. As a result, not only will the partners learn to evade and move off-line in the given stance, but they will also learn how to *counterattack* from the stance as the cycle shifts from defense to offense.

Cross-Training in Tai Chi

Some martial artists have a negative view of Tai Chi due to the fact that it has somewhat been co-opted by the New Age Movement. As a result, there is a tendency to disregard it as a source of martial knowledge. To do so, however, is a grave mistake. Much like *Sanchin Kata*, the slow nature of the movements in Tai Chi gives the practitioner the opportunity to focus intensely on proper body movement, proper body alignment, proper weight distribution, etc. In a very real way, Tai Chi and similar practices are low-tech versions of the high-end motion analysis computer systems that professional athletes use to zone in on and fix inefficiencies in their body motions. As such, they are an effective tool in stance training, even if the stances in the Tai Chi forms do not perfectly mimic those of a given style.

Moreover, *any* form can be practiced using the slow, fluid motions of Tai Chi, providing another excellent way to train one's *kata* with a focus on stance and body architecture. In addition, couple this type of practice with some knowledge of Tai Chi postures, and one is likely to discover previously unrecognized similarities between his or her style of choice and this ancient Chinese practice. For instance, of the *Goju-Ryu* forms, *Saifa Kata* in particular shows a strong resemblance to classic Tai Chi movements.

Conclusion

In the older days of *karate*, stance training was considered of such vital importance that beginning practitioners did little else for the first several years of their training. However, as modern students and older teaching methods don't always work well together, many schools today have de-emphasized this aspect of the curriculum. Fortunately, this situation can be remedied. As this article has hopefully demonstrated, there are many ways to liven up stance training while still keeping the overarching goal of practical self-defense in mind. Until next time, *Arigato gozaimasu*.

When most people think of the martial arts, they think of their use in fighting against a physical attack. However, in the African nation of Uganda, the martial arts are being used to fight against something bigger – HIV/AIDS. The Karate for Life Foundation is an organization dedicated to developing the life skills of Ugandan youth through the practice of the martial arts, giving them the qualities they need to resist the behaviors that lead to HIV's spread. For more info, visit www.karate4life.org.



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The Four Stages of Man

by Tony Somers

Recently I was listening to someone quoting Carl Jung a very famous psychotherapist. Jung said that there were four main stages of man the athlete, the warrior, the statesman and then the spiritual stage. This made me think of my journey through the martial arts, the ups the downs and some of the people I had met along the way.

After twenty odd years of training mainly under the tuition of Geoff Thompson; which included Animal days and all sorts of pressure training. I now spend most of my time teaching people how to avoid conflicts. I do this through various techniques, which include awareness, communication skills, diffusion skills and many more. I have heard this area described as soft skills but to me this is wrong, obviously it depends on your own personality type but I believe that most people struggle with these so called soft skills. As Sun-tzu said "To win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the highest skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the highest skill." For me to get into a physical confrontation is not that scary, I have been there and done it many times. I am not trying to say that I am a hard man or that I don't get scared its just a fear that I have faced many, many times and in that arena my fears have been greatly reduced, as Geoff Thompson would say it's difficult easy. A much harder arena is to let my ego go and talk to someone in a nice way even when I might think that they are behaving like an idiot. A few years ago I would never let anyone insult me or at times even look at me in what I would describe as the wrong way. Now I really don't care as I have been travelling through those early stages. I like the old Samurai saying "When man throws spear of insult at head, move head! Spear miss target, leave man empty handed, spear in wall not in you."

You see I have been through the athlete stage when all I cared about was my fitness and how good my body looked; I trained every day and showed people my biceps at every opportunity.

Then I moved to the warrior stage I did my animal days and pressure training I wanted to



Tony & Geoff Thompson

test myself at every opportunity my motto being bring them all on. I won some I lost some but I kept coming back for more.

All the time through these stages at a deeper level I felt very insecure, I thought once I got my black belt in Shotokan Karate I would be fine. Every one would respect me, look up to me; all of my problems would be answered. When I achieved this target I was both elated and disappointed. Elated because all of my hard work had paid off and I had a new shiny black belt around my waist. Disappointed because deep down inside I still felt insecure nothing had changed.

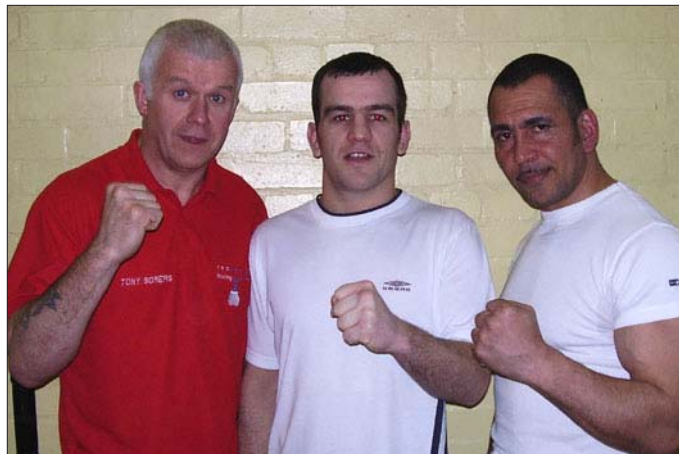
What I now understand is that I was travelling through the stages, I was shaping myself and I suppose I still am.

I see younger men in the gym posing in the mirrors, pushing their chests out and flexing their biceps (athletes) I see the boxers and grapplers tearing into each other (warriors) and I understand that its all natural, they are on their own personal journeys through the stages of man.

Obviously time is a big factor in this journey if we are on the correct path we will traverse all of these stages. I feel at my stage of life as though I am going through the statesman stage all though I am very aware that all of these stages overlap. At this stage I am very aware of other people's feelings, where are they coming from? Why are they doing what they are doing? What stage of development are they at? I can see both sides of a dispute and try to develop an out come (if possible) where both sides feel as though they have won. Having gone through the physical stages and still doing so to a certain extent I now spend my time helping people on their journeys, I work as a counsellor and life coach and get a tremendous feeling of reward for doing so and guess what? My insecurities have also virtually disappeared.

The spiritual stage is the enlightened state that all of the great masters achieved. There are many ways in life to reach this stage but for me what better way than through Martial Arts. Martial Arts are a great vehicle towards enlightenment but the journey definitely takes place in the mind.

One great and famous master whose life story truly captures all of these stages is Morihei Uyeshiba the man who invented Aikido and became enlightened as he walked through a beautiful Garden. In my own life I look at people like my great mentor and friend Geoff Thompson who has with out doubt done his forge training and travelled through the stages and now devotes his time to writing self-help books and film scripts about forgiveness.



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Kushanku Kata: History & Application

by Iain Abernethy

Kushanku kata (also known as 'Kanku-Dai' and 'Kosokun') is one of the most popular forms in modern karate. It is a physically demanding and visually impressive form (when performed correctly) and it is one of the most popular kata in modern competition. As well as being a popular form with kata competitors, it also has a great deal to offer the practically minded karateka. In this article we will briefly look at the history of the kata and examine some of the key concept relating to its application.

The kata is a record of the combative techniques and concepts formulated by a Chinese martial artist who went by the name of Kushanku. Some karate historians believe that 'Kushanku' was a military title rather than a personal name – a breakdown of the individual characters used to write Kushanku would seem to support that – nevertheless the kata is named after a specific martial artist from China.

Kushanku is said to have come from China to Okinawa in the 1750s with other military personal at the request of Okinawa's king. There is a document called 'Oshima Hikki' (Note of Oshima). This document details a ship running ashore in Oshima bay and includes interviews with the crew of that ship. In one of these interviews the captain of the ship tells of an extremely impressive grappling demonstration he witnessed that was given by Kushanku. The interview tells us that Kushanku was not a physically strong man and yet he defeated much stronger opponents with ease. We are also told that his methods involved placing one hand on the opponent whilst striking with the other hand. We are also told that Kushanku also made use of effective 'piercing' leg movements (#).

One person who became a student of Kushanku's during his time in Okinawa was Tode Sakugawa. Tode Sakugawa began studying the martial arts after his father, who had frequently been the victim of bullies, had encouraged him to do so (see 'The Weaponless Warriors' by Richard Kim).

Tode Sakugawa began his study of the martial arts under Peichin Takahara ('Peichin' being a

title as opposed to a name) and eventually became one of his best students. It was Takahara who said that Sakugawa should adopt the name 'Tode' (which was an old term for karate) in recognition of his outstanding fighting skill. Peichin Takahara is said to have seen Kushanku demonstrate his fighting prowess and was greatly impressed by him. Takahara then encouraged Sakugawa to seek out instruction from Kushanku.

Tode Sakugawa studied under Kushanku for a number of years and he eventually formulated Kushanku kata as a means to record the combative methods Kushanku had taught him. Tode Sakugawa was the first martial arts teacher of the legendary Soken Matsumura; who was the chief bodyguard to three Okinawan kings. Matsumura became Sakugawa's student whilst he was still a child. Matsumura was in turn one of the teachers of Anko Itosu. It was Itosu who is credited with creating the 'Sho' (lesser) version of Kushanku. Today, some karate styles practise both the lesser and greater versions of the form (Kushanku-Dai and Kushanku-Sho); whereas others only practise the main version. Itosu was also the creator of the five Pinan (Heian) kata, and it is obvious from their many similarities that Kushanku kata heavily influenced the development and the subject matter covered by the Pinan series.

Gichin Funakoshi (founder of Shotokan) – who was a student of Itosu's – gave both versions of Kushanku the Japanese name of 'Kanku' (meaning 'to view the sky') when karate was introduced to mainland Japan as part of his drive to make the art more accessible to the Japanese. Kushanku / Kanku-Dai was said to be Funakoshi's favourite form.

Kushanku is one of the longest forms and it contains a wide variety of techniques. There are no detailed written records of the techniques that Kushanku originally taught Sakugawa. We have the kata itself of course, but we have no definitive answer when we ask what the original applications of the form were. The applications of the form are therefore open to interpretation.

From the Oshima hikki we do know that Kushanku was a skilled grappler, that he used one hand to control the opponent whilst striking with the other hand, and that he used 'piercing leg movements'. We can therefore confidently say that the kata contains plenty of grappling. Certainly my own breakdown of the form includes many throws, takedowns and locks.

The use of one hand to control and locate the head whilst the other limb strikes it is most definitely a key methodology of old style karate. Essentially the non-striking arm has two jobs in kata. The first is to locate and control the head during the chaos of close range combat so that the accuracy of strikes is improved. This is a method I personally refer to as 'datum setting' and Oshima hikki suggests that this was a key part of Kushanku's methodology. The second use of the non-striking limb is to clear obstructions i.e. if the opponent's arms get in the way of the target, one hand will move them so that the target can continue to be struck by the other hand.

The final methodology referenced in Oshima hikki is 'piercing leg movements'. It is not clear to me if this refers to kicking or driving in with the legs to disrupt the opponent's balance and posture. Both methodologies can certainly be found within Kushanku kata.

We can therefore say with a good deal of certainty that the motions of the form should be applied in a way that includes grappling, datum setting, kicking and driving in with the legs to disrupt the opponent's balance and posture. Sadly, that is not how the kata is commonly interpreted in many of today's dojos. The most common interpretations of the form frequently have the 'combatants' using unrealistic techniques, in an unrealistic way, at an unrealistic distance. However, if we approach the kata armed with the historical information we have access to, and with realism and pragmatism there is no reason why we can't unlock the techniques and concepts that the form was originally meant to record. It is simply a case of analysing the kata from the correct perspective and in the correct way. Indeed, in many cases it is blindingly obvious how the motion of the kata is to be applied. And even where our interpretation may vary from the original then at least, if we approach the kata in the right way, we are ensuring we

stay true to the original intent which was practical fighting methods for use in a civilian environment.

Understanding the applications of the forms isn't particularly difficult if you have an understanding of the nature of combat and have a grasp of the 'language' of kata. Indeed the active study of the kata (as opposed to just practising them) is something that all karateka should engage in.

My own study of Kushanku has revealed strikes, traps, throws, takedowns, joint-locks, chokes, strangles, etc. Of particular interest to me was the way in which the 'opening salutation' records a flinch that you may instinctively employ during the opening stages a fight if taken by surprise. The opening part of the kata also examines how that flinch can be used to gain control of an opponent's limbs and create openings for strikes (see the 3rd DVD in my Bunkai-Jutsu series for more details). This flinch is presented in a very formal way in kata; as can be seen in the photograph of Gichin Funakoshi performing the opening motion of Kushanku kata (**Figure 1**). However, in combat the flinch will of course be instinctive and rough around the edges.

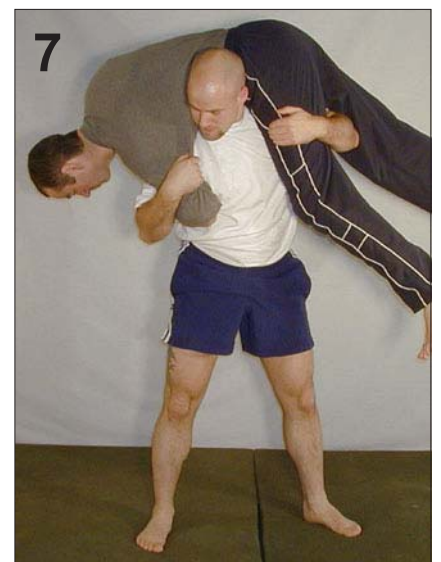
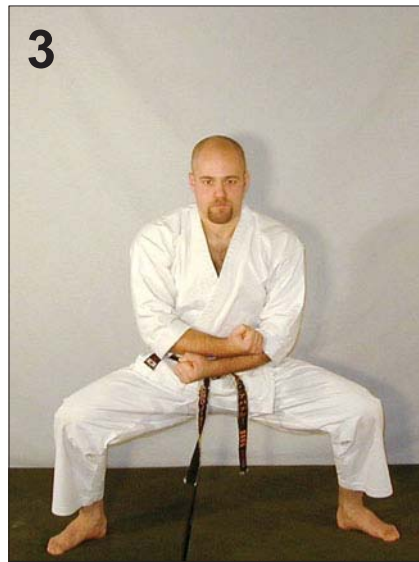


Figure 1

It should always be remembered that kata is a record of information and as such it can be compared to a collection of recipes. We need recipes to know how to cook good food ... but we don't eat recipes! Similarly, the kata gives us the information needed to fight and this information is presented in a formal way. However, we should never mistake the formal instructions for the actual fighting skills those instructions are supposed to develop. The kata is always formal and precise. The live application of the kata in the chaos of combat will be far from formal and precise! As Funakoshi himself wrote, 'Always perform the kata exactly; combat is another matter'. Kata tells us what methodologies we should drill and take into our live training. The solo kata should never be considered as an alternative to, or substitute for, that live practise. Sadly, that is a very common misunderstanding about the purpose and nature of kata.

It seems to me that the opening movements of Kushanku kata deals with the opening stages of the actual fight. The other movements toward the start of the form are also quite easy to apply. Could it be that the kata records Kushanku's 'syllabus' in the order it was taught to Sakugawa? Certainly my own interpretation has the more physically and technically demanding techniques (in actual application, not solo performance) towards the end of the kata, and the simplest and most immediate techniques towards the start.

The final technique of the form records a rather advanced throwing technique that requires good timing and a good degree of physical strength. Throughout the martial arts, it is common to teach the simplest techniques first, and teach the techniques that require a better understanding of the basics later on. Kushanku kata contains many throws and takedowns. The fact that the most demanding throw in the form



is the last technique recorded would again support the idea that the kata may record Kushanku's syllabus in the order it was taught. Again, we have no way of knowing for certain, but the idea is certainly worthy of consideration.

The last three moves of the form see the practitioner step around with their left leg (**Figure 2**), assume a low stance as the arms are pulled in (**Figure 3**), and then straighten the legs as the arms are brought upwards (**Figure 4**). The application of this sequence is as follows. Turn to the side and take your arm underneath the opponent's lead leg. Lift the opponent's arm just above your head as you step across (**Figure 5**). Pull the opponent's arm downward so that they are loaded onto your shoulders. At this point your legs should be bent, and your spine should be straight (**Figure 6**). Straighten your legs to lift the opponent into the air. You can then dump the opponent onto the floor in whatever direction is appropriate (**Figure 7**).

As motioned previously, there are numerous throws recorded in Kushanku kata (i.e. neck-ring, tackle, hip-wheel, etc.) but this throw is definitely the most advanced and its advanced nature is

very likely to be the reason why it is the last motion in the form. The kata starts by working with our instinctive reactions and steadily progresses through more technically demanding methodologies. It is my view that not only does the kata provide the syllabus of a holistic combative system, it also records the correct teaching / training order in which to develop competence in that system.

Kushanku (Kanku-Dai) is frequently said to be one of the most important forms practised within the various karate styles. History tells us that the kata is a record of the highly effective techniques that were designed by Kushanku and then subsequently recorded by Tode Sakugawa. It is a very important kata and as such it deserves to be studied deeply.

(#) – An in-depth discussion of Oshima hikki and its impact on our understanding of the development of karate is found in the book 'Motobu Choki and Ryukyu Karate' by Iwai Kohaku – Gavin Poffley provided the author of this article with an English translation of the section on Oshima Hikki).

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Geoff Thompson 7th Dan
co-chief instructor BCA
and WCA



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Whatever Happened to “Rock Kata”?

by Brian P. Struchtemeyer

Watching the ongoing renaissance in bunkai and karate applications is refreshing. I'd had all I could take of “point your toes just so” kata practice. To survive the test of time though the growing collection of bunkai applications will have to demonstrate themselves at least as useful as the methods currently used by select law enforcement and other such professionals. Be that as it may, the current bunkai efforts have given traditional karate a chance for renewed relevance in self-defense. What's been painfully lacking in these modern karate applications are weapons. It's a topic I've given some thought and would like to offer some points for people to ponder.

Because in the West we've grown up in a society where new typically means better and science equals solutions, people today over-focus on the technology aspect of weapons, but the influence of culture is pivotal. Let's first consider the traditional weapons of Okinawan and Japanese martial arts. What's most notable is that they weren't traditional. They were state-of-the-art for the time, place, and cultures they were found. Japanese swords and bows were the very best the artisans of Japan could make. The improvised weapons of Okinawa were overwhelmingly multitasked from farm tools, but even those agricultural implements were the most advanced available on the island. A truly traditional weapons would have been a rock.

Surely somewhere in unrecorded prehistory the karate cave-man used a woolly mammoth stance and saber-tooth cat slash in his famous and deadly rock kata. Through the generations this rock kata kept the tribe safe from cave-man muggers and marauding beasts. But then another cave man invented the fire-hardened wooden spear and the rock-kata cave man had to adapt. This game of weapons improvement has continued right up to the current day. Interestingly though it came to complete stop in Japanese and Okinawan karate. The perfectly contemporary pre-Meiji weapons were frozen in time and made critical to the curriculum of karate.

The reason appears to be completely cultural. The Meiji restoration in Japan not only changed key political elements, but changed almost every cultural element of the society as well. Having observed the Opium Wars (sometimes referred to as the Anglo-Chinese Wars) between China and Great Britain, the Japanese realized that to maintain their political and geographic sovereignty, Japan's military practices and the supporting economic, social, and industrial structures would have to mimic Western practices.

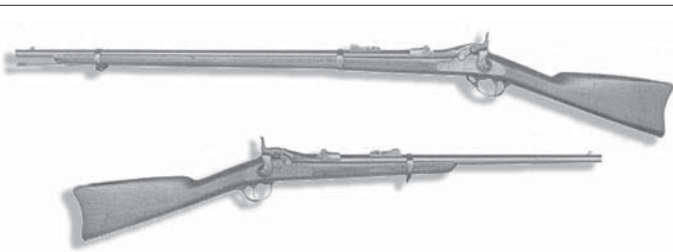
While the specific details are fascinating, in a nutshell the leadership of Japan found it necessary to fully integrate and master Western military practices but simultaneously had to address certain reactionary factions opposed to everything Western. As such, preserving while redefining a great many traditional practices maintained a sense of self-identity uniquely Japanese and conveniently facilitated nationalistic and jingoistic drives for the government. This appears to have been especially significant around the time of the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905).

The situation on Okinawa was that much more dire. Japan destroyed the system of dual subordination Okinawa had lived under since the early 17th century taking it from China and making it an official prefecture in 1879 by way of a rather impressive diplomatic slight-of-hand. Okinawan culture then openly faced the dual threats of Japanese and Western influences. For the Okinawans then, maintaining what parts of its culture it could was especially important. This was the principle reason creating the distinct schism in martial arts weapons training which remains with us to this day.

Lest it appear I'm picking on traditional martial arts, here are a few Western examples of the same fundamental human behavior. Much to the bewilderment of current sensibilities, military leaders steadfastly fought the introduction of repeating firearms including the machine gun for

several decades. In the United States, reliable repeating rifles along with early machine guns were available for the Civil War. Famously, Gen. James W. Ripley opposed efforts by President Lincoln himself to introduce both in the Union Army. The fear was that soldiers would waste ammunition and that the ability to lay down a volume of fire would destroy the culture of well-aimed fire.

This concept of each soldier being an expert marksman is something of an American myth born in the revolution where groups of backwoods hunters armed with the famous Kentucky rifle could hit any target they wanted. This concept stayed with the US Army for a very, very long time. Even after the Civil War, the US Army refused repeating rifles and selected the Springfield model 1873 (a.k.a the “trapdoor”), a single shot breech loader for use. Gen. George Armstrong Custer and his 7th cavalry were armed with these at the Little Big Horn and over 130 years later the debate continues to rage whether repeating rifles would have saved them.



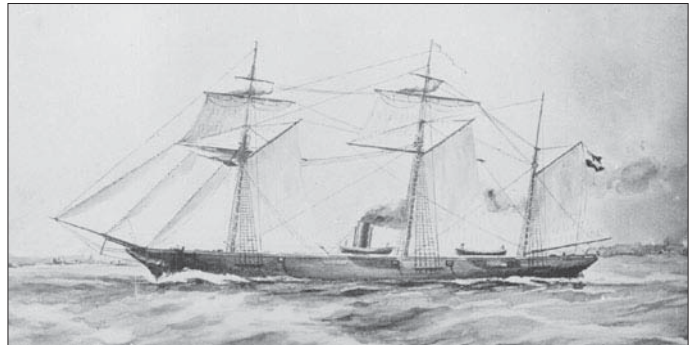
Springfield model 1873 (trapdoor) Very similar in design, performance and problems with case extraction as the British Martini-Henry that served well, and unfortunately failed from time to time during the Zulu wars, notably Isandhlwana.

It wasn't just us Yanks who were foolish about machine guns. The British cavalry officers fought machine guns literally to their bitter dying end. The aristocratic leanings of cavalry officers hated the thought of a military engagement being decided by a machine rather than the will and élan of the fighting man. Even after both the slaughter of British cavalry during the infamous “Charge of the Light Brigade” during the Crimean War and the extremely successful use of crew-served machine guns against cavalry in the

Russo-Japanese war, the British Cavalry Training Manual of 1907 continued to hold that the rifle could not replace the ‘effect produced by the speed of the horse, the magnetism of the charge, and the terror of cold steel.’ Yeah, right.

While the generals were engaged in their fight against machine guns, the admirals were fighting the a war against steam engines. Bizarrely, the fight in the navies wasn't about putting steam engines in ships, but rather about taking the masts and sails off. The British navy in particular had a number of reactionary elements holding on to “a considerable spread of canvas.” The reasons ranged from the economic argument that sails improved efficiency as it reduced the amount of coal needed. This argument was flawed as it didn't incorporate the energy needs to move the weight of the masts, sails, and sailors needed to operate them.

In a more cultural vein, it was feared that removing the sails would reduce the fighting-fitness and character of the British seaman. The American admiralty expressed the same fears about reducing the general level of seamanship, but much more candidly said they didn't like the noise and dirt the engines created.



CSS Alabama: A ship in the Confederates States Navy that had the dual propulsion of steam and sail - very famous ship sunk by the US Navy off the coast of France.

Even today cultural battles linked to weapon systems remain important. Right now the US Air Force is locked in a heated battle over who will “fly” UAVs (Unmanned aerial vehicles like the Predator). Historically, only officers have been pilots because when airplanes were first invented, only officers had access to a complete education and mathematically would-be pilots

have always greatly outnumbered actual aircraft. Thus, the requirement of being an officer acted as a useful selection filter. That math is changing with relatively cheap UAVs, automation, and a generation of 18-year-olds that can frequently fly the pants off of senior pilots in combat flight video games.

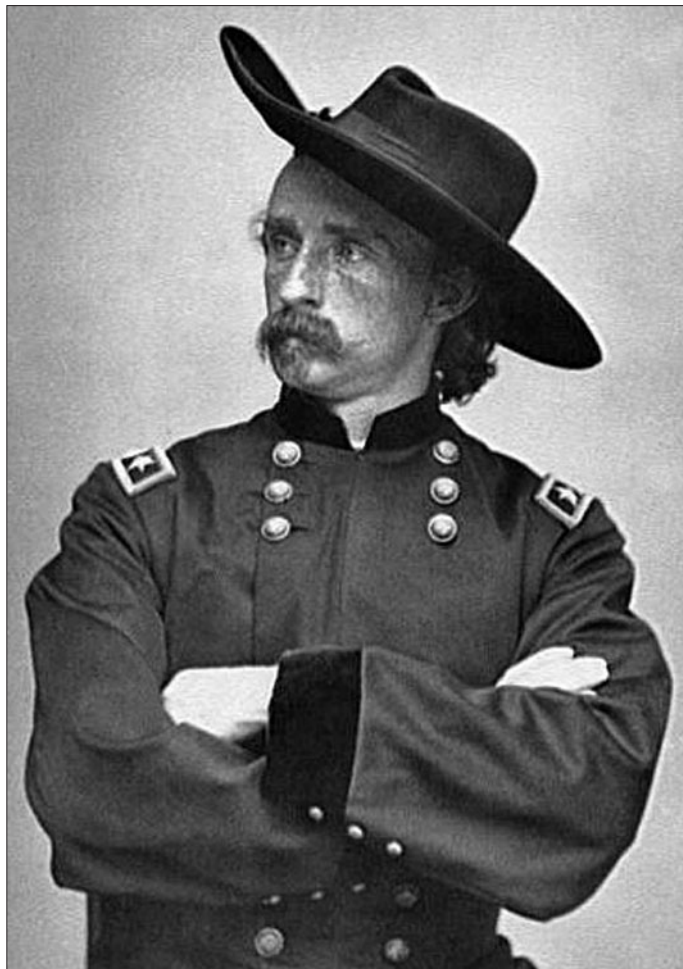
Returning to the topic of karate and self-defense, what is really unique about traditional weapons in karate is that not only did a group of people intentionally attempt to freeze them in time, but that the on-going weapon development in other cultures relieved those karate weapons from the burdens of reality. It didn't matter if nunchaku still worked because people could just grab a pistol. So where does that leave us? If you want to study traditional weapons for art and culture - great; go for it. You won't hurt my feelings.

If you're looking for practical self-defense and for traditional karate applications to remain relevant, at some point karate will have to successfully address contemporary weapons. If karate doesn't, it will face a limited role in a larger diversified self-defense curriculum. One suggestion that would appear to be consistent with the spirit of the Okinawans, would be to develop a new set of improvised weapons.

This is a common practice, especially in regions with restrictions on weapon ownership. For example many of the techniques developed for the combination of the sword and either a buckler (a very small round shield and also where we get the phrase swash-buckler) or a cloak were re-applied to the Victorian gentleman's walking stick and either a derby hat or overcoat. Another partial example is from French Savate. People today think of Savate as an unarmed method, primarily for sport. Originally, Savate was something of a weapon art. Footwear for the poor were carved wooden shoes. These were shaped to a decidedly vicious point and combined with precision kicks to create an improvised weapon of sorts.

A key goal of improvised weapons is to be based on objects common to almost everyone making them concealed despite being obviously present, so I guess if we truly kept up with the times in this manner we'd see cell-phone-ryu and iPod-jutsu. While I don't know exactly what to expect, I know weapons and counter-weapons have to be addressed in any modern self-defense

curriculum. I also know the solutions will be local. For instance where I live, if you pass a test and a background check, you can carry a concealed handgun. In places like Great Britain with such terribly draconian weapons laws, people may have to search for cave paintings revealing the long-lost secrets of rock kata. While the search for solutions continues, every time you look at a weapon I encourage you to consider the cultural trade-offs that allowed its development and the changes it then brought to the cultures that faced it.



George A. Custer of Little Big Horn infamy: Interestingly he had brought most of his immediate male relatives with him on his campaign. His two brothers, a nephew, and his brother-in-law all died with him. Perhaps most interestingly his brother Tom Custer had won the US Congressional Medal of Honor twice during the Civil War. That's equivalent to winning the Victoria Cross twice and living to tell about it!

Does a Broken Board Equal a Broken Nose?

Training to Achieve the Striking Force Proven to Stop an Attacker

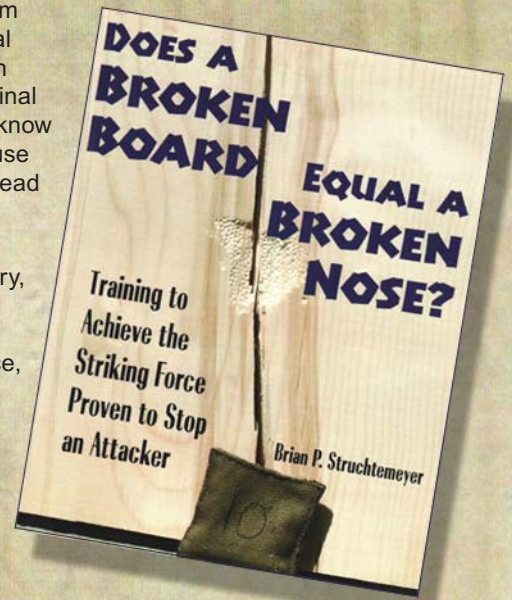
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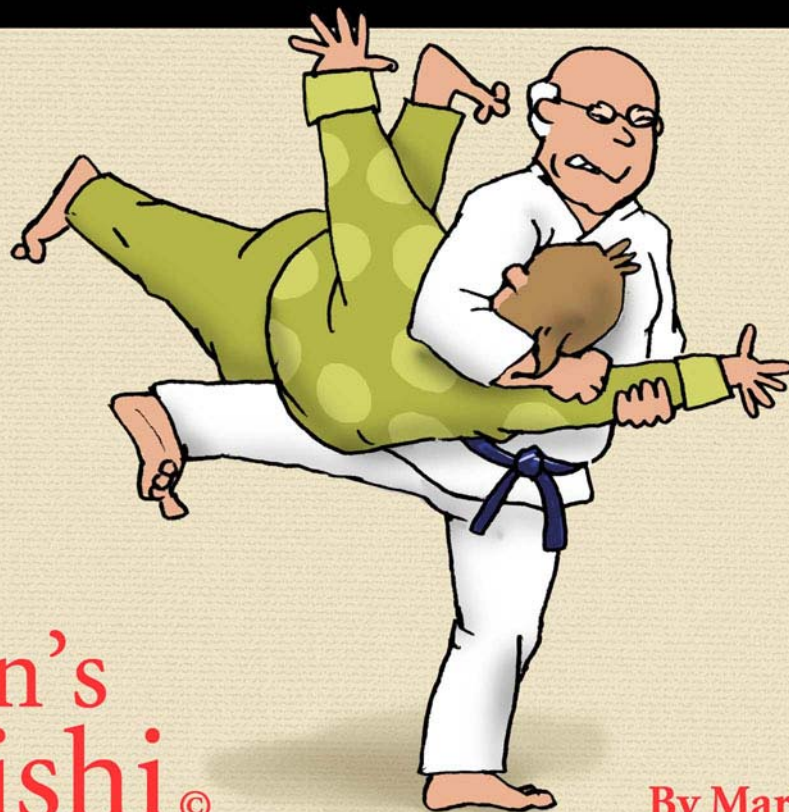
Struchtemeyer integrates the long sought-after answer to "How hard is hard enough?" with an engaging and often humorous cross-cultural study on the history, nature, and practical use of surrogate targets, including the heavy bag and Okinawan makiwara. Along the way he connects a diverse range of topics, including psychology, early American football, and the statistics of random chance, to the simple goal of effective stopping power in unarmed strikes.

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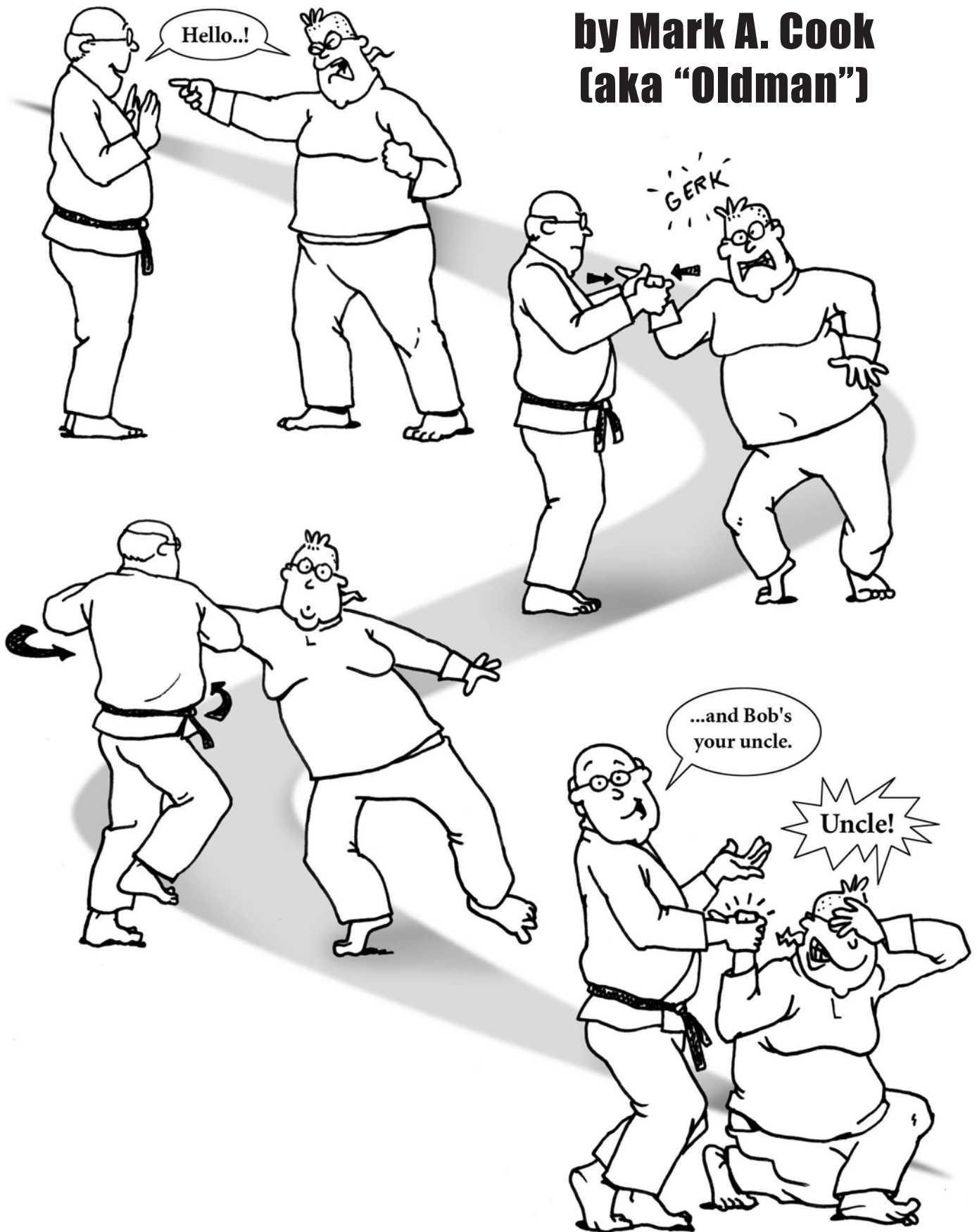
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They Called It “Going Out To Eat”: Tales of a Street Gang

by Keith Le Bihan

They called it ‘going out to eat’ and with a London underground tube map marked for its ‘value’ or ‘resistance’ or ‘too much police’. they used planning and tactics to commit 150 robberies on the London Underground system. By the use of ‘SASS’ Surprise, Aggression, Speed and Surrounding their victims they orchestrated a reign of terror on the London Underground. Each attack/robbery getting more violent than the last. All this Kensal Green (An area of North West London) Gang was really interested in was satisfying its addiction to unfettered violence and stealing other people’s property. The mob-handed “hoodies”, brought together by their fascination for rap’s largely anti-social lyrics, left scores of shattered lives in their wake. But the very nature of the group’s structure made the task of catching them all the more demanding. Theirs was a “loose-knit” association. Sometimes the thugs carried out solo “jobs”, while on other occasions they worked in pairs or small groups.

Up to 150 robberies were attributed to the gang during eight months from June 2005 to February 2006. Over the months the gang repeatedly rampaged through tube trains, stabbing some victims while pounding others into near insensibility with a mob-handed flurry of punches and kicks. Their victims were young, old, female or male.

This gang of armed “hoodies” were led by convicted murderers Donnel Carty and Delano Brown. The self styled ‘Kensal Green Gang’ compiled a sickening hunting guide scrawled on a map of the London underground. The London Tube map illustrated their sickening planning. Found in the bedroom of one of the robbers, an entry next to Notting Hill read “good eating but a bit hot” - a reference to what they saw as the relatively heavy police presence there. Neasden was also problematic. It was marked “fight back”, an acknowledgement that victims tended to resist. Colindale, however, appeared to be a clear

favourite. It boasted a glowing “++”. The most sickening of which ended with City lawyer Tom Ap Rhys Pryce being stabbed to death by the gang leaders Donnel Carty and Delano Brown. The gang were finally put behind bars thanks to a very methodical and painstaking investigation by the British Transport Police (BTP) called Operation Hurricane.

The spree begins: The Victim’s story

Weeks before the murder the rules of the game were well established and being put into practice. The first victim was in December 2005, when the gang spotted him and another passenger alone in a carriage.

The victim watched as the gang first attacked the other man and emptied his pockets before approaching him as he stood near the doors. The victim told the court ‘I had no intention of giving them anything. I was pushing them away.’ I saw one of them take a knife out and open it. ‘He plunged the knife into my left thigh. I was very frightened because a lot of blood was flowing from my leg. So they would let me go I didn’t do anything when they were taking the money from my hand. I think it was 40 or 50 pounds.’

Two hours later on another tube line the gang spotted another victim deep in concentration doing a Sudoku puzzle just after 11pm. The Five youths got on to the carriage and hit him over the head with a plastic Coca-Cola bottle. The victim said ‘I received other blows with people hitting me with their hands and feet. I was defending myself with my hands. I stood up and I got into a fight with them. I think I hit one with my pen. They were asking me for a wallet.’ One of the men then moved forward and stabbed him in the thigh. ‘I gave them my wallet,’ said the victim. Victims spoke of their “professionalism”, in that one of the robbers would first enter a tube carriage by the inter connecting doors on his own to “case it” and once confirming the “eating” was good he would signal the others to join in. Many

victims remarked on the gang's "efficiency" and the "calm quiet" way they "cased" each carriage and selected their prey. "They knew what they were doing and who to pick on," said one of the witnesses. Each victim witnessed an "increasing level of violence". Sometimes it started with threats to stab and progressed through physical violence to knives being produced and people actually being stabbed. These actions of the gang were to terrified people by their numbers and force. Some victims only knew they were being attacked when a punch smashed into their face as they dozed at the end of a hard day's work. One of them recalled his assailant warning: "I've got a knife ... I'm going to kill you." Seconds later he was stabbed in the neck. Despite blood pouring from his wound, he somehow found the strength and courage to chase the robber from the train. He even managed to catch hold of him at one stage but then lost his grip. The court heard police found a coat stained with blood matching the victim's at one of the robber's homes.

Another commuter travelling home late one evening when up to half a dozen gang members flooded his carriage. One saw him holding his phone, told him to hand it over and then punched him in the head. Two others pulled out knives. "When I saw them I thought 'I'm not going to make it' and gave my mobile to them,"

One man was pursued through the train until he was sent flying with a powerful drop kick and then robbed. Another was trying to protect his head as he was punched and kicked relentlessly before being stabbed for daring to fight back. A third who spoke of numerous blows, some from those who had to stand on seats to reach him over the others. Those who dared resist were subjected to particular brutality. Death threats were frequent. A victim in his 60s who tried to resist was then saved by a female Good Samaritan who bravely shielded him from further violence and even chased his attackers from the train.

In one instance the gang attacked a young couple. One of the gang first robbed the boyfriend at gunpoint, before turning the gun on the woman and announcing "I'm going to rape your girl". Fortunately, he snatched her handbag and ran.

The more terrifying rampages saw all nine robbers using interconnecting doors to "steam"

from carriage to carriage, swamping evening commuters with overwhelming viciousness. CCTV footage played to the Court made it clear that although some victims tried to fight back, no single individual, no matter how big or strong, could have stood against them. They pocketed property worth thousands of pounds. Anything of value, including iPods, mobile phones, watches and cash were snatched. Of those robberies almost half were committed on the London Underground during the final four weeks of their savagery either side of Christmas 2005/2006.

Murder

The gang's violence peaked when the gang leaders Carty and Brown murdered in cold blood a high-flying City lawyer called Tom Ap Rhys Pryce in January 2006 (a charity trust has been set up in his name). Although at this stage his murder had not been linked to the Kensal Green Gang's robbery spree. They were both jailed for life at the Old Bailey in 2006 for his murder. Earlier that night the pair had pulled up their hoods and mugged an Asian male for his phone on the platform of Kensal Green Tube Station. They ran from the station and were clearly unconcerned that the victim might have called the Police because minutes later they followed the lawyer from the Tube Station. Having trailed him from the station to a side street Carty and Brown first slashed him across the face and hand and then stabbed him in the thigh and twice in the chest. He was stabbed repeatedly as they robbed him of his mobile, Oyster travel card and £20 in his wallet. One wound pierced his heart. He died within seconds.

Carty had introduced Brown to his gang - who he hailed as the 'KG tribe' when rapping at parties. On the CD he bragged: 'Come round here, you will be bored. (Stabbed)' If it don't work out, draw your sword. We don't pet (worry) to do murder.' The murder of Tom ap Rhys Pryce was just part of a game for these teenagers who were destined to kill. Carty was a rapper and prophesised the lawyer's death in a chilling composition he recorded a year before the murder on a CD made as part of a youth employment programme. In the rap he bragged in heavy Jamaican patois: 'We're not afraid to kill.' He went on: 'I due for a shanking (stabbing). Your blokes will get poked.' The pair had both

been involved in a series of robberies which closely followed the rules of their mugging game. Each helpless victim was intimidated with knives and would be stabbed in the leg or 'juke'd' if he disrespected them by daring to resist.

The last part of the ritual was to call their girlfriends on the mobile phones they had taken. It was all part of the game which by then was spiralling out of control. Carty could not resist calling his girlfriend after the robbery of Mr Ap Rhys Pryce, even though he knew the victim had been stabbed in the chest and was probably fighting for his life if not already dead.

Investigation

The attacks spawned one of the most demanding investigations ever undertaken by BTP. The gang's activities on the London Tube were nothing less than a stand-alone crime wave that was largely responsible for sending month-on-month statistics soaring by an "extraordinary" 400%. In December 2004 there were just 19 robberies on that part of the system. The same month the following year (December 2005) saw a staggering 76. It was an extremely complex investigation into one of the most prolific robbery sprees London Underground had seen to date. As the attacks grew in number, police, quickly realised they were dealing with a single gang and launched Operation Hurricane. The inquiries were particularly complex as the gang were raiding across three tube lines, frequently moving between Tube Stations by bus and spreading their activities across nine different London boroughs. The gang were "CCTV aware". They knew where the station cameras were and would occasionally clamber over fences to avoid them. Other times they would travel between stations "hooded up". They also seemed familiar with operational procedures. However the gang were gradually identified by use of CCTV images compared with file photos, identifying distinct clothing worn by the attackers, forensic evidence and with the recovery of implements used during the attacks. BTP's Operation Hurricane involved a two-pronged attack to tackle the threat from the gang. First was high-visibility policing designed not only to deter robbers and stop suspects, but to gather intelligence as well. Portable metal detectors - used in Operation Shield's anti-knife campaign - were also deployed. There was also a covert aspect which

saw plain clothes officers travelling the system and another team poring over CCTV footage and establishing vital evidential "linkages". But while the images proved invaluable, the sheer amount to be trawled through was daunting, because the robbers were so careful to hide their features, the Officers used frequent "backtracking" exercises - examining film from previous stations down the line to find more revealing shots - only added to the workload. It was definitely one of the largest CCTV trawls BTP had ever had to conduct. Another problem was the language barrier with a fair number of foreign victims.

The gang had 'street names' a common trait of gangs which are used both to confuse Law Enforcement and rival gangs. One was called "Flips" another "Redrat" another "Icer". The gang leaders Carty was known as 'G-rock' or 'Armani' and Brown as 'Shy. Following the trial the prosecution detailed the previous convictions - covering offences of robbery, grievous bodily harm, possession of an offensive weapon, burglary and drugs when committing motoring offences.

Not one gang member showed the slightest emotion as the jury of five women and six men took just over nine hours to reject their defences of either "mistaken identity" or "present but not involved".

After the trial a BTP Detective said "Contrary to people's perceptions, London Underground is a relatively safe place, a low-crime environment. However, I understand the enclosed nature of the Tube can make victims feel more vulnerable, and amplify the intensity of their ordeals. Yet every day there are 3.5 million people using 375 stations. That works out at about 1 billion a year. Despite that there is, on average, less than one robbery a day on this part of the system. And that still means the average commuter would have to travel twice a day, five days a week for 4,000 years to become a robbery victim".

Summary

Although a 'street gang' they also operated in pairs and alone. They were armed and well motivated with each assault leading to a greater increase in violence culminating in murder. As a gang they were not deterred by fighting back in fact it is clear that some of the gang revelled in the resistance of the victims. However when one

victim confronted one of the gang on a one to one basis and fought back the gang member ran off. The gang's tactics were a whole spectrum from using verbal intimidation to just punching people who were sleeping.

Thoughts on Self Protection

I hope the reader has got a feel for the violence, intimidation and terror that took place in such confined spaces. The robbers were not immune to dishing out violence. In fact resistance positively encouraged the gang to get more violent (they seem to thrive when the victim fought back). Like all gangs the strength of the gang comes from the pack mentality. Part of gang mentality is not to 'show' weakness by backing down in front of the others. For example one victim who was assaulted by the gang saw some gang members standing on seats hitting him over the other gang members. Most assaults lasted little than 5-20 seconds (the time it takes to put your shoes on quickly), but must have seemed like a lifetime to the victims.

What type, if any Martial Arts training can help in these situations? I talk about Awareness, Assessment, Action. Awareness is what to look out for. A person can think they are aware, but not pick up the signs, signals or clues from the robber that their vulnerability/probability is being assessed. For example seeing someone cruising through the tube carriage may not seem much, but what clues are they giving off that they are looking for victims to rob or looking for a seat? Self defence experts talk about 'not looking like a victim'. But it's not that simple, the gang's victims in my view showed NO COMMON TRAITS as they were a broad spectrum of young, old, male and female. In fact I would argue that some victims were chosen because there was a perception by the gang that they would fight back. There is the usual advice like don't fall asleep on public transport or have your mobile on show etc and it is clear that some victims were possibly selected because they were perceived as having 'valuables'. A man in a suit will have a phone, ipod and maybe a nice watch etc. According to a Home Office study* 'Problem solving street Crime 2004' by N Tilley, over half of robberies on the London Underground and the railways occur on the train and between stops. How often do you train in a confined space? Or whilst sitting down? Can you generate knockdown power in that

confined space with out lining up? What about pressure points? If your awareness is spot on then your assessment will be quick promoting even quicker action.

Do you make your initial assessment before you get into a train carriage or do you just get into any one .What is your tactical appreciation of the platform and station you get on and off at? Before you get off do you give a quick peek out to see if a gang are waiting on the platform? Do you watch the station's platforms as you come into the stops in which case should be at the front of the train and not the rear? I don't want people to develop paranoia but you might only choose to adopt these tactics when travelling in the early evening or late at night

Maybe moving out of the carriage into another carriage and preventing them from climbing the carriage across but what are you going to do when it comes into a station? Do you jump out or stay on. Are you training in an environment that enables you to make split second decisions?

Do you know the level of assaults at your station (if any) and when they are likely to occur - it might not be when you think. What about the opponent(s) - are they armed? Will they be armed? Are they threateners or 'jukers' (gang talk for stabbers). Using a knife not necessarily to kill, but to stab you in the leg or slash you across the face, neither of which are life threatening but will induce pain and fear in you. Thus putting you off balance by being psychologically and mentally intimidated and maybe losing the will to either resist or fight back if that is a tactical option.

Acknowledgements and References

BTP Press Office L area, Broadway London.

*Problem-solving street crime: practical lessons from the Street Crime Initiative

Author: Nick Tilley, Jonathan Smith, Stephen Finer, Rosie Erol, Corrine Charles and John Dobby (Research Development and Statistics)

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Kata and the Transmission of Knowledge

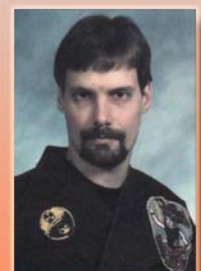
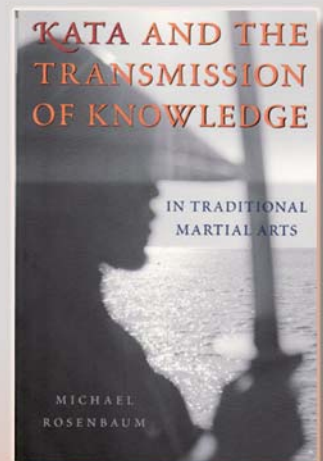
All too frequently, martial arts practitioners study their art without truly understanding where it comes from, how it was developed, and why it was created in the first place. Indeed, many don't care—and if you feel this way, you should put this book down. For the rest of us, who have taken our art beyond tournaments, it is reasonable to expect that we want to uncover the past. We want to understand the where, why, and how of martial art development. We are intellectually curious about our combative history.

To study the combative arts is to understand the circumstances of their development and to gain insights into the views and ethics of the societies that created them. As we travel back in time, we see consistent evidence of martial systems being influenced by those that came before and/or invaded. We also see the use of 'pre-arranged' fighting patterns (kata) to transmit proven techniques from one generation to the next.

It is this transmission of martial knowledge, through kata and other forms of communication, that this book will explore. The author will demonstrate that pre-arranged fighting techniques (katas) were used by ancient Greek, Egyptian, Asian, African, and European societies. And that Poetry, Dance, and Song were also significant methods of preserving and transmitting battle-tested fighting tactics through the ages.

The purpose of kata training is not to become bound by the form but to transcend the form itself—to evolve.

Michael Rosenbaum began his martial arts training at the age of five. Along with Isshin Ryu, which he has been practicing for 25 years, he has studied Bando, Judo, and Boxing. Michael is a former member of the elite 82nd Airborne Division of the U.S. Army, and has completed Infantry, Airborne, and Jungle Warfare Schools. He currently resides near Knoxville, TN.



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Adaptable Karate:

The three stages of kata analysis: Part 2

by Chris Denwood

When viewing a magnificent oak tree, don't simply flutter your eyes around every visually pleasing leaf. Instead, gently pull your gaze back and accept all parts of the tree together as one entity. You will then come to realise just how it could have grown from a single solitary acorn.

In the first part of this article (See Jissen 3 – Ed), I suggested that *kata* should be an open and continuous process of learning, rather than a progression of movements holding comparatively little value. I then began to explain the classical three-stage method of technically analysing the forms and described the first and second phases of *omote* and *henka*. In this second and final part, I intend to look at third stage of *ura* and discuss how we can proactively practice our forms as very potent learning aids that have virtually no limits.

The third stage: *Ura*

The last stage of technical analysis is called *ura*. It is the opposite of the first stage, *omote* and means, 'inside' or 'back'. *Ura* represents that which we cannot see unless expressed through physical movement. It represents the principles that surround the movements of the form and is based on the notion that I explained right at the beginning of this piece; that *kata* is a way of

recording the most effective fighting principles of a particular style, system, strategy or individual. *Ura* is also very dependent on the way in which you focus on the form i.e. not as a collection of shapes, but more as a series of transitions or motions. There will never be any potential in static or discrete postures/techniques. In other words, it's important to look at the journey, not the destination.

It is commonly understood that *kata* was originally practiced intensely for years at a time. For this to be so then the movements depicted in the form must represent something much more than just a handful of potential applications. A whole style couldn't possibly be recorded within something that only takes minutes to perform unless there is something else that we should be focusing upon. This, I believe, is one of the main stumbling blocks that *karate-ka* come up against when studying *bunkai*. They focus far too much on the actual techniques of the form (believing these to be the most critical part), rather than the lessons that those techniques are actually trying to impart.

Techniques are literally 'principles in action' and it is these principles that we should always be more focussed upon. Please consider the application shown in pictures 1 to 9. Now you





may initially think that it shows something completely different from the movements that we've been previously looking at in part 1, but I beg to differ. This is still very much an application from the start of *Pinan Godan kata*! If we go back for a moment to the *omote* application (which I've shown again in pictures 10 to 16) and extract the principles, then we can start to ask the question, 'what is this part of the *kata* teaching us?' In this particular instance it is my own personal view that even at a fundamental level, the form is trying to explain that when seized; you can escape and shift to the outside of your attacker (a safer option), use the seizing arm as a temporary barrier whilst countering and then finish by attacking the throat.

The form is thus teaching an effective strategy based on movement, timing, and distance, as well as gaining a fast initial and continuing advantage. The techniques used to express this within the form can and should then be appreciated as being a 'typical effective example' rather than 'the only way of achieving that particular objective'. If a movement in a *kata* is teaching us the principle of attacking the inherent weakness of the elbow joint for example, we should then be actively asking ourselves, how else can we exploit the antagonist's elbow joint in a similar fashion? As long as the principles of the form are followed, then the answers you'll find will in no way differ from what the *kata* is originally trying to portray.

If you consider the principles of movement, we can see that the application shown in pictures 1

to 9 are not in any way different from what the start of the *kata* is trying to teach us through the superficial analysis of *omote*. The exact same principles are being used; they're just being physically expressed in a different way – that is all. Once we appreciate the potential at this stage of *ura*, we can easily see how a single form could represent a complete system or strategy of fighting and why this was originally considered as so.

Now, some might say that the creators of the form may never have even considered many of the applications generated in this adaptable way and I have to admit that this argument more than likely holds elements of truth. But so what? As interesting as I may find this historic piece of information, I simply refuse to consider this as a barrier against the main objective for my study. Above all else, I am a martial artist first and a historian second. For the *kata* to mean anything it has to be both a direct learning tool, as well as being a method to promote and increase further understanding as time and experience progresses. I strongly believe that this is what the founding fathers of karate would have wanted for us.

Everyone by now should have aligned to the fact that in karate, many things are not what they first seem to be. I'm sure you'll have all heard that 'a punch is not just a punch' or 'a block is not only a block' – you may even be actively be practicing in that way now. In reality, everything that we accomplish in the art comes from the same source – just like the acorn. That source is



nothing 'alien' or for that matter, anything to do with karate. The art simply acts as a vehicle for the source to be expressed. That source of course, is you! The self-satisfaction you experience through your practice is proportional only to how honestly and thoughtfully you undertake each training session. *Kata* is exactly the same as this. If we can learn to view and train a form in an open and honest way without the restrictions of preferences, laurels, ideals or politics, its true potential will shine through and allow us to take what we need, when we're ready to understand it.

It is my view (and I hope you agree) that the original masters of karate would be totally dismayed to see their beloved *kata* being reduced to nothing more than a restricted and 'choked' pattern of very limited value, just for the sake of maintaining what may or may not have been a historic truth at the time. To release the true potential of *kata*, I believe that all traditional *karate-ka* have both the opportunity and a genuine duty to study in an unrestrictive and adaptable way. This will inevitably help towards maintaining the original perceived intent of karate as an effective civilian self-protection system and ensuring that the art remains constantly fresh and alive.

In a practical sense, learning by equating to the principles associated with the form is very favourable. Instead of collecting a million unrelated techniques to cater for a wide range

of attack scenarios, 'principle-based study' allows you to respond in a much more spontaneous way by limiting (to some extent) the mental 'log jam' that can occur when your brain is being forced (by yourself) to think or process precise information in a situation where your evolutionary instincts would ask it to switch off. Combat is extremely hard to begin with. Why would you even consider making it any harder through collecting what will inevitably become useless knowledge when depended upon?! I think that we should treat *kata* how it should be – as a vehicle to promote a greater understanding of the principles associated with combat and the art in which you diligently study and thoroughly enjoy.

If I was to give you one final piece of advice regarding the analysis of karate, it would be to think of using *kata* as your *sensei*. Try to appreciate what the form is trying to teach you and as with any kind of learning, don't forget to ask questions. You should find that as long as you face those questions honestly, then the *kata* will answer them for you and more. It will become possible then to reach a little closer towards those great masters that left us these timeless masterpieces to benefit from.

Thank you for taking the time to read my words. I sincerely hope that they've succeeded to crack open at least one more door to help your own personal exploration within this lifelong learning process of karate.



Chris Denwood is the Chief Instructor of the Eikoku Satori Karate-Do Kyokai and a senior instructor with the British Karate-Do Chojinkai. For more information about his particular approach to karate or to enquire about upcoming seminars etc, please contact the E.S.K.K on 07801 531 914 or visit www.eskk.co.uk where you can join their mailing list, read similar articles and download useful media.

The photographs in this article show applications for the opening sequence of Pinan Godan / Heian Godan Kata and follow on from the photographs in part 1 (see Jissen Issue 3).

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Chris Denwood 4th Dan is Chief Instructor of the E.S.K.K. With over 20 years experience in martial arts, he is a regular contributor to 'Traditional Karate' and 'Combat' Magazines, gaining very positive reviews. His enthusiastic approach to karate has been driven by a genuine urge to uncover the core principles surrounding the art and his work is fast becoming increasingly popular with men & women of all martial backgrounds.

The Way of Kata

The Principles for Understanding Kata are Largely Unknown – Until Now!

The ancient masters developed kata, or “formal exercises,” as fault-tolerant methods to preserve their unique, combat-proven fighting systems. Unfortunately, they deployed a two-track system of instruction where an ‘outer circle’ of students unknowingly received modified forms with critical details or important principles omitted. Only the select ‘inner circle’ that had gained a master’s trust and respect would be taught okuden waza, the powerful hidden applications of kata.

The theory of deciphering kata applications (kaisai no genri) was once a great mystery revealed only to trusted disciples of the ancient masters in order to protect the secrets of their systems. Even today, while the basic movements of kata are widely known, advanced practical applications and sophisticated techniques frequently remain hidden from the casual observer. The principles and rules for understanding kata are largely unknown.

This groundbreaking book by Kris Wilder & Lawrence Kane unveils these methods, not only teaching you how to analyze your kata to understand what it is trying to tell you, but also helping you to utilize your fighting techniques more effectively—both in self-defense and in tournament applications.

“This comprehensive book bridges the gap between form and application in a realistic, easy-to-read and easy-to-apply manner” –

Loren Christensen, 7th degree black belt

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The Way of Kata: Part 4

by Kris Wilder & Lawrence Kane

This is the forth 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.

Principles of deciphering kata

In previous articles we briefly discussed some of the rules of kaisai no genri, the theory of uncovering hidden techniques in kata, and have now shifted our focus to some of the principles that form the philosophical context within which valid kata applications can be identified. These principles apply to most any martial art form that uses kata, particularly striking arts such as karate. These principles differ from the rules previously discussed in that they apply broadly to all techniques rather than to deciphering an individual kata movement.

To put it another way, the aforementioned rules are tactical in nature, deciphering practical applications from the specific movements of any particular kata. The principles we'll delve into now, on the other hand, form a strategic context within which practitioners can identify what types of applications work and thus weed out invalid interpretations of bunkai (fighting applications) from any kata. In order to make full use the rules, one must understand the principles, the foundation upon which they are built.

This article covers the fourth and fifth of principles we will be examining throughout this series.

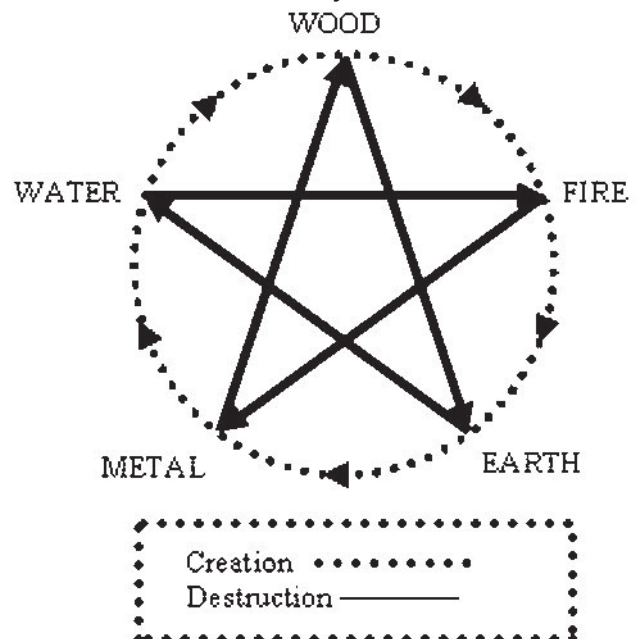
Principle 4 – Nerve strikes are “extra credit”

“When you attempt to execute a throw, joint lock, or some type of submission hold, size and strength can play a major role in its effectiveness. If prior to applying the technique you are able to strike or press a vital point, you can cause your opponent to lose the use of his limbs or become

unconscious. It would seem self-evident how valuable this would be in self-defense situations. Once you have been able to incorporate vital points into your particular martial art, you will be surprised how effective their addition will be.” – Rick Clark

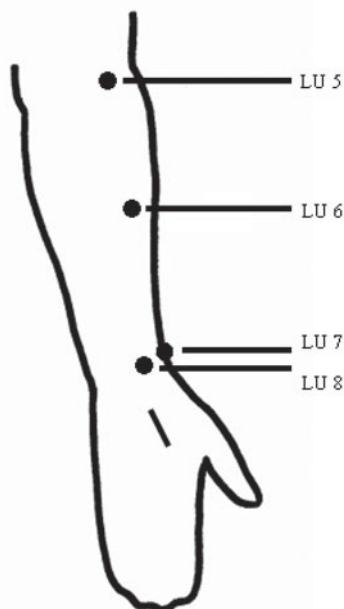
According to acupuncture theory, there is a definite flow of energy in the human body. The energy starts in the lung meridian and flows to the large intestine, stomach, spleen, heart, small intestine, bladder, kidney, pericardium, triple warmer, and gall bladder, ending with the liver. The process is then started again and continually makes this circuit through the body over a twenty-four-hour period. Techniques from various kata strike, rub, or press these points to help disable an opponent.

Traditional Chinese Medicine divides the world into five elements that interact with each other: wood (liver and gall bladder), fire (heart and small intestine), earth (stomach and spleen), metal (lung and large intestine), and water (bladder and kidney). Although acupuncture and acupressure work on the so-called “cycle of creation,” martial arts are more focused on the “cycle of destruction,” hence studying how to cause damage using these same principles. In the cycle of destruction wood destroys earth, earth destroys water, water destroys fire, fire destroys metal, and metal destroys wood.

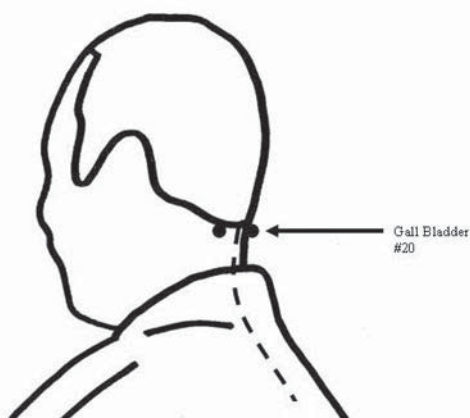


To elaborate further, wood destroys earth as a tree's roots burrow into the ground. Earth controls water as a clay pot can contain liquids. Water self-evidently extinguishes fire. Fire destroys metal as in a forge. Metal destroys wood as a saw cuts through a board.

Although atemi waza (pressure point techniques) do not work against everyone, practitioners can usually cause maximum damage using the least amount of force to an adversary using this method. For example, the lung meridian is considered metal, while the gall bladder meridian is considered wood. Since metal destroys wood, you would want to strike a metal point first, then a wood point. Grabbing Lung 8 (metal) on an opponent's wrist followed immediately by striking Gall bladder 20 (wood) at the side of the neck can result in a knockout. Crossing the sides of the body is especially powerful.



Lung Meridian



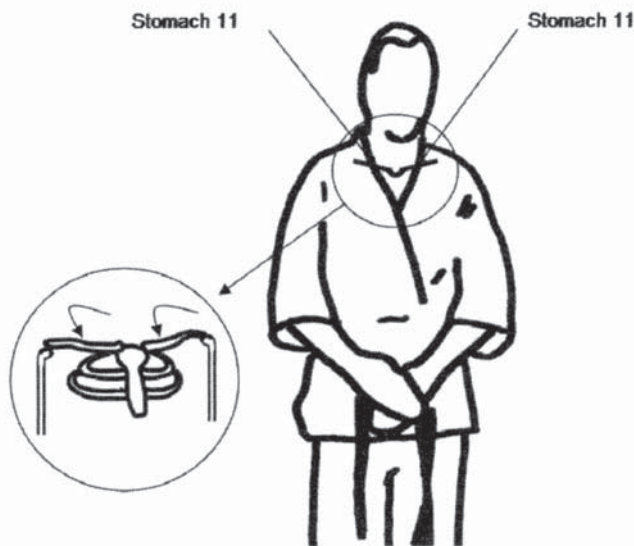
Gall Bladder 20

Pressure points are rarely manipulated with a straight motion. In most cases practitioners will attack pressure points at a 45-degree angle. As a general rule, the larger the person or the larger the bone, the larger the vital point will be. When done properly, most people (more than 80 percent) will react strongly to pressure point techniques. Some, perhaps 15 percent, will react to some, but not all pressure points. There are also a small number of individuals who do not respond to most points at all, so practitioners cannot rely solely on this method to stop an attacker. It is best to think of it as an extra bonus.

In his article Pressure Points, acupuncturist/martial artist Bruce Everett Miller wrote, "While the medical effects of acupuncture are very real, they are not usually of such magnitude that a single point can stop a person who is attacking. The proof of this is not only in the observed effects but also by the fact that professional practitioners of acupuncture use a combination of points to create a healing effect. In almost all cases, a series of 3 to 5 points or more are used and the points have to be stimulated for 3 to 30 minutes to obtain the desired effects. So, if professional practitioners of acupuncture need several points and sometimes several treatments at these points to cause their effects, how do you expect to stop an attacking person with a single (or even a couple) of acupuncture point strikes?"

For example, there is an excellent nerve bundle (Stomach 11) under the collarbone that causes extreme pain and buckles the knees of most people. To access this point, curl your fingers around the clavicle so that your fingertips dig in behind it. For even greater effect, you can dig your thumb into the end of the collarbone where it meets the suprasternal notch at the base of your opponent's throat. While this point is generally not used in combat, it makes an excellent demonstration example. When discussing nerve techniques in class, we typically show this particular application since it is easy to perform, gets an extreme reaction on almost everyone, and can easily (and almost always safely) be emulated by our students.

Over the years, this technique has always worked successfully on every student in our kid's class without exception. Not so with the adults. We have one student named John for whom



Stomach 11

perhaps one in eight nerve techniques are ever effective. Perhaps it is a high threshold of pain or perhaps he was simply born with less sensitivity than other people, but although a few techniques really light him up the vast majority do absolutely nothing. This particular example does not work on him at all. Another student, Jason, seems to have had his nerves surgically removed. On him, literally nothing works.

As you can see, nerve strikes simply do not work on everyone. They also become much less effective if the recipient has trained to “seal up” certain points, has certain mental disorders, or is in an altered state of consciousness due to drugs and/or alcohol.

This is not just theoretical, however. Here is a real life example: Kane recalls an instance where an out of control football fan was arrested, broke a pair of handcuffs trying to escape, and was subsequently re-subdued by no less than ten police officers. “It was the only time I’ve seen a group of officers resort to using their batons at the stadium. That’s just not something you want to do where it can be overseen by thousands of witnesses and might even be captured by one of the many television crews working the game. For the most part they applied extra mechanical leverage rather than striking the guy to bring him back in line but it was no easy task. He simply felt no pain no matter what they did—pretty clear evidence that in certain situations you can only obtain control through mechanical force.”

In acupuncture you have to find an exact spot to place your needle to properly affect a nerve.

In acupressure, your fingertips have a slightly larger area to work with. As stated earlier, hit a general area hard enough with a karate strike and you will have a good chance of affecting the surrounding nerves, assuming that your opponent has some propensity to react to pressure point techniques, of course. Regardless, as previously mentioned, you simply cannot count on getting the reaction you desire every time solely from the pressure point.

Some nerves are manipulated via strikes. Others take a rubbing or grinding movement. Others still, take pressure to stimulate. Regardless, these techniques require a lot of study and research to fully understand. Pressure point techniques are an excellent addition to your martial repertoire, but you should not rely on them alone.

Principle 5 – Work with the adrenaline rush, not against it

“As someone who has worked with thousands of soldiers, I venture to say I am the only man on earth who was given a paratroop brigade to train single-handedly, I have come to the firm conclusion that a rule I live by called the principle of uniformity is valid and critical for survival in conflict. I am convinced it can only help you under the stress of conflict; it certainly cannot get you killed. The principle of uniformity is actually only a practical off-shoot of the time-honored concept that, ‘what you train is what you do under stress.’ Under stress, we tend to do what we have been trained to do.” – Eugene Sockut

Once a confrontation escalates into combat, adrenaline rushes through your system. This dramatically increases your pain tolerance and helps you survive in fighting mode. This “fight or flight” reaction instantly supercharges your body for a short period of time, increasing pulse rate and blood pressure, while making you faster, meaner, and more impervious to pain than ever before. On the upside, embracing your fear in a fight can help you survive, channeling your adrenaline rush into productive energy.

On the downside, the adrenaline rush severely limits your fine motor skills and higher thought processes. It also supercharges your opponent who will have an equal adrenaline rush! The techniques you employ in real combat, therefore, must be straightforward and simple to execute—

requiring neither fine coordination nor complicated thought. They also must cause incapacitating physiological damage to stop a determined aggressor who is hyped up on the natural stimulant of adrenaline.

Proper techniques must take advantage of natural physiological reactions such as the flinch. Imagine a time when you were driving down the highway and a rock hit your windshield, or, if you do not drive, a time when a hornet buzzed past your ear. That natural flinch reaction sends your hands racing toward the threat while your body tries to get smaller or get out of the way. As we have previously noted: hands rise, body drops.

This natural response is triggered in the lowest level of the brain. The primitive “lizard brain,” or (to be more scientific-like) the archipallium, is the center of self-preservation and aggression. When a person feels threatened, the archipallium takes over. If it could talk, the lizard brain would articulate its function with this simple statement: “Stay out of the way, I’ll handle this!” At this point you become a non-thinking reptile. You no longer think; you simply act.

While the ancient masters may not have understood brain chemistry as well as scientists do today, they were certainly very familiar with the effects of adrenaline. None of their kata had applications that relied on fine motor skills to work properly. Further, they trained realistically and repeatedly such that high-level cognition was no longer necessary. They reacted instinctively, utilizing preprogrammed techniques in a strategic and systematic manner.

For example, as most practitioners know, there are a lot of grabs and pulls in karate kata. Most do not require (nor do they show) wrapping the practitioner’s thumb around an opponent’s limb as a conventional grip might imply. Not only can it be difficult to get a solid grip in the heat of battle that way, but your fingers may not find adequate purchase on a fast moving, sweaty or bloody limb. Latching on high up on the arm (toward the elbow) then sliding your hand forcefully along it toward the opponent’s wrist while progressively tightening your hold is a reasonably good way to secure a grip. Even so, it does not always work.

Rather than grabbing with the fingers, we often use a hooking technique with the whole hand or execute a similar pressing technique with the

palm. Either way this controls the opponent through downward pressure called muchimi or “sticky” hands. By pressing against an attacker’s limb and simultaneously dropping your body weight, you can drive an opponent toward the ground whether or not you wrap your fingers around his or her arm. This type of pull is generally much more effective than a traditional grabbing technique that requires a successful wrap with your thumb.

Applications like muchimi work with the adrenaline rush, enhancing its benefits and minimizing its detractors. Trying to grab an opponent’s little finger to perform a lock in the heat of battle, on the other hand, would be just plain silly. Simple, straightforward techniques that can be executed using gross motor movements with minimal thought are ideal. A great example would be cutting down a punch with muchimi to temporarily post an opponent’s weight while simultaneously blowing out his or her knee with a joint kick. Shift/block/strike/incapacitate—it really is as simple as that.



Kris Wilder Teaching Bunkai in the UK

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. If you’d like to obtain a copy of *The Way of Kata* book the easiest way is to order it from Amazon.uk. Lawrence can be contacted via e-mail at lakane@ix.netcom.com. Kris can be contacted via e-mail at kwilder@quidnunc.net.

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Forearmed for Combat:

Strengthening and Hardening the Forearms for Martial Arts

by Robert T. Tuohey

The majority of karate and kung fu systems depend heavily, offensively and defensively, upon arm-based techniques. In fact, some Okinawan and southern kung fu styles lean as much as 70% in this direction (i.e. punching and striking, as well as trapping, parrying, and blocking with the arms). Herein, however, an important point is concealed: these arm-based techniques all depend on strong and hard forearms.

For example, if you execute a punch or open-hand strike you must maintain the hand position when contacting the target; if the hand formation crumbles you only wind up damaging yourself (e.g. sprained or broken wrist, fingers, etc.). Again, trapping techniques, as used in Wing Chun or 7-Star Mantis, demand forearm power (Bruce Lee didn't develop those baseball bat forearms for the fun of it). To give an obvious example, the "hard" blocking techniques used in many Japanese karate systems are all but useless without the conditioning to back them up.

Thus, training the forearms for martial arts is somewhat specialized. Certainly, such standard exercises as wrist curls with barbells are useful, but more than this is needed. In this article I will outline a series of ten forearm exercises especially designed for martial arts improvement.

Exercises

As with all muscle groups, the forearms require a variety of exercise types for optimal results. The following program includes isometric, isotonic, and impact (i.e. hardening) exercises.

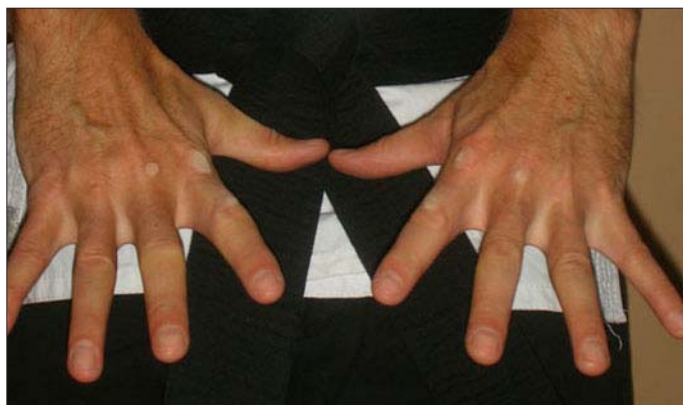
Part I: Isometrics

Isometric exercises are particularly useful for martial arts forearm training in that not only is strength developed but short-range snap is enhanced as well.

The general procedure for these isometrics is as follows: breathe deeply into the diaphragm, relaxing; then, breathing out, gradually exert

increasing pressure for 10 seconds, reaching maximum tension at the last moment. Finally, relax, shaking the hands loosely for two or three seconds, then repeat the exercise.

Spider-Web: As shown spread the fingers of both hands as widely as possible, using building dynamic tension for ten seconds.



Goose-Neck: With the elbows parallel to the ribcage, bend the wrists down toward the inner side of the forearm, as if trying to touch the fore knuckles to the inner wrist.



Leopard: The Leopard works the forearms in the opposite direction of the Goose-Neck. As shown, forms the hands into the leopard's paws position, pulling the hands back toward the outer forearms.



Crush: Utilize a sturdy staff. Grip it palms down, forearms parallel to the waist. With increasing strength, try to crush the wood in your grip.



Part II: Isotonics

Isotonics are, simply, resistance exercises. The only equipment needed for this section will be, again, a good staff, and a red-brick.

Tiger Claw Curl: Seat yourself, placing both elbows on knees with palms up; grip a common red-brick with the tips of the fingers, in tiger-claw fashion. The correct grip is very important: do not use the palms or the lower section of the fingers, but only the finger tips. Slowly, from the position shown in photo A, curl the block up to the position shown in photo B. Only the wrists move.



Tiger Claw Start



Tiger Claw Complete

Palm Up Claw Curl: Again using a common red brick, balance the elbow on the knee with the forearm and hand in palm up position; again, the grip uses the finger tips only. With wrist action alone, curl the block as shown.



Palm Up Claw Curl Start



Palm Up Claw Curl Complete

Staff-Walk: Stand, holding the staff at arm's length from the body; the grip is with the pads of the fingers only. Using the thumb and fingers in a spider-like action, crawl the staff up through your grasp, until you reach the end. Flip the staff over and repeat.



Butterfly: With the arms extended at waist level, the goal of this exercise is simply to open and close the hands as rapidly as possible for the duration of one minute. The action should be light and quick: count the reps – you should manage about three per second, which will give you about 180 per minute. It is important that the hands be fully opened and fully closed during each rep.



Butterfly Hand Positions

Part III: Impact Training

As remarked, a martial artist's forearms need toughness as well as strength. In short, this means being able to bear the brunt of repeated impacts.

The best known drill for hardening the forearms is simply performing strong blocking actions against a partner's attacks. For this, however, not only is a partner required, but also the attacks demand a certain amount of speed in order to carry any force (i.e. if the speed is reduced so too is the impact). Thus, very often, what started as a forearm conditioning drill turns into a technique drill. With these considerations in mind, I offer the two following exercises which can be performed alone.

Cross-Hit: The hands are to the front, roughly two feet apart, the top hand at 11 o'clock, bottom hand at 4 o'clock. With a sharp, snapping action, hit the edges of the forearms together, Reverse the position of the arms and repeat.



Cross-Hit Start



Cross-Hit Finish

Forearm Striking: Standing to the side of the makiwara, with an action similar to an inside-outside block, hit the board with the inside-edge of the forearm. Be sure to use kime (focus). Re-cock to the starting position, then strike the board with the outside-edge of the forearm. This is one rep.



Inside-Edge Strike



Outside-Edge Strike

Suggested Training Schedule

First, it should be understood, that a high-level of forearm development will take years of training. The exercises given above, and the schedules outlined below, are thus meant as a foundation upon which to build.

According to classical exercise theory, certain key areas of the body (e.g. heart, abdominals) should be trained five days per week for best results. Due to their natural resiliency, the forearms are included in this “daily group”. The beginner, however, should not adopt this routine until at least six months of three days per week (e.g. Monday, Wednesday, Friday) has been accomplished.

Basic Forearms Training Program

For at least six months, on three alternate days per week, follow the training schedule below. Forearm exercises are done after your other

strength exercises are finished.

Isometrics: Perform the isometrics in the order given: Spider-web, Leopard’s paws, Goose-neck, and Crush. One Cycle is one set. Perform three sets.

Isotonics: The Tiger Claw and Vertical curls should be done for three sets of six, gradually building up to 12. The Staff-Walk should be done for one set of two reps, building up to five. The Butterfly is done for one set of one minute.

Impact: Cross-Hit Two sets of 50, increasing to 1x100. Forearm Strike Two sets of 15, increasing to 4x25

Important: Readers are strongly encouraged to seek out the advice of a physical health professional before engaging in this or any other exercise program. All activities are undertaken entirely at your own risk.

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Creating Kata: Historical Precedents

by Dave Nielsen

Karate as we know it today is not as old as one would think. The meeting of the Okinawan Karate masters was held in Naha, Okinawa on October 25th, 1936 at the town's meeting hall. Its purpose was to figure out how to keep the karate tradition from Okinawa pure as some were teaching and learning Karate incorrectly on mainland Japan. Gichen Funakoshi was in Japan from the early 1920's trying to promote karate and had already written at least two books on the subject. It was a meeting on how to best preserve the Okinawan tradition of Toudi Jutsu in pre war Japan.

At this time, modern styles were being named by some of the Masters who studied under what you and I would call "true" masters today. For example, Motobu Choki, Miyagi Chojun, Hanashiro Chomo, Kyan Chotoku, Chinbana Chosin, and Kiyoda Juhatsu were all at this meeting and many of them were taught by the great masters. For instance Kiyoda Juhatsu and Miyagi Chojun were both taught by Higashionna Kanryo and founded the styles of Toon Ryu and Goju Ryu respectively. Chibana Chosin was taught by Itosu Anko and first termed the phrase Shorin Ryu. Hanashiro Chomo and Kyan Chotoku were both disciples of the legendary Bushi Matsumara and were extremely prominent masters in their own right. Additionally, Motobu Choki, the most controversial and notorious Karateka of his time learned from whichever master would teach him and eventually founded the style known today as Motobu Ryu. (1)

Modern styles were just starting to develop in order to teach a larger number of students at one time. Karate was becoming a group dynamic instead of just an individual's fighting system. Students were learning more than one kata (or fighting system) for preservation purposes and the modern masters who named and developed their own styles were creating their own kata for them.

You read that last statement correctly. It's worth repeating again. Students were learning more than one kata (fighting system) for preservation purposes and the modern masters who named

and developed their own styles were creating their own kata for them. Miyagi created the kata Geki Sai Dai Ichi and Geki Sai Dai Ni as well as Tensho. Nagamini Shoshin (founder of Matsubayashi Shorin Ryu), developed Fukyu Kata Ichi. True, the Geki Sai and Fukyu kata were simpler and for training students to become more familiar with the art, but the kata Tensho is a master breathing kata. Additionally, Mabuni Kenwa created at least eight to ten kata of his own for his new style of Shito Ryu. A couple of these are named Matsukazi and Shihokosukun. These kata are not for beginners. Other kata from the new styles were split in two sections, an easier and harder version. For instance, two such kata are Bassai Sho and Bassai Dai.

A quick review shows us that we still have 34 years to go before modern karate and named styles reaches the ripe old age of 100 or 24 years if you take the time Funakoshi went to Japan into consideration. We can also see that some of our most famous traditional masters during this time created some kata. Keeping this in mind we must realize that people like Miyagi and Mabuni must have learned how to create traditional kata from their teachers. Mabuni is still said to be a kata genius. They either learned the formula or figured it out on their own in order to create their kata for each of their styles.

I submit to you, the reader, that it is possible to effectively put together your own fighting system (kata) in the traditional manner. By studying how





reverse engineering works and what the Rules of Kasai are, we can create our own kata today.

Now, I'm not talking about fancy forms done to music with splits and summersaults that we see in sport karate competitions today. I'm speaking about the real traditional style of piecing your own fighting system together to be an effective traditional kata to remember your own fighting system that you developed. There is a formula to do this, and based on the creation of several kata for their styles of Shito Ryu and Goju Ryu, Mabuni and Miyagi are just two of the masters who knew how to do it.

Nowhere in the study of karate has any researcher found any written records on just how to form or create a kata. However, as mentioned above, there are hints to show us that some of the modern masters knew how to do this. Why their methods were not handed down to us will probably always remain a mystery, but one could make some educated guesses as to why.

First, there are overwhelming amounts of kata that have been handed down to us and are available to learn. Each is its own fighting system and can take many years to learn given that we have no concrete way of knowing the original creator's uses for the techniques that we take out of it. Second, we are so busy reverse engineering the known kata to discover the fighting techniques in them that we don't need to worry about our own. I disagree with both of these points although they are both solid and valid.

Creating kata in a traditional manner can be effectively done. One must focus on the word traditional and realize that somewhere something had to be passed down in order to keep the tradition alive. After all, this was a big part of the "Meeting of the Karate Masters" spoken about above.

In his book "Goju Ryu II, Advanced Techniques of Shorei Kan Karate", the late Goju Ryu Master Seikichi Toguchi revealed that his instructor Miyagi Chojun had passed down the Rules of Kasai to him. He then goes on to explain the first three or main rules in the book but silently keeps the other nine to himself. Toguchi Sensei states that these rules are used for pulling out the many and varied techniques from the kata. This is the first time any where in print that we have a revealed source to the mystery of traditional kata. And they come from Miyagi himself. Toguchi sensei didn't live long enough to publish the other nine rules of Kasai but two of his indirect students did. In their book "The Way of Kata" both Lawrence Kane and Kris Wilder published the complete twelve Rules of Kasai and explain each one in great detail. By studying these rules of reverse engineering to discover techniques within any traditional kata, one can see a pattern start to develop on how to create your own kata. This quite simply was the starting point for my research which led me to write the book Creating Kata (published by Lulu media and available at www.Lulu.com).

I do not count myself as any kind of equal with the great past masters by creating my own kata. What I do offer though is a well researched



formula for us to create our own today. Creating a kata does not mean that it is brilliant or that it will stand the test of time. Only future generations can decide that. Creating kata does give us a framework or blue print though on how it most probably was done.

If one decides to take a look at my research and tries to create their own fighting system (kata) there can only be benefits to it. Five of them are listed here.

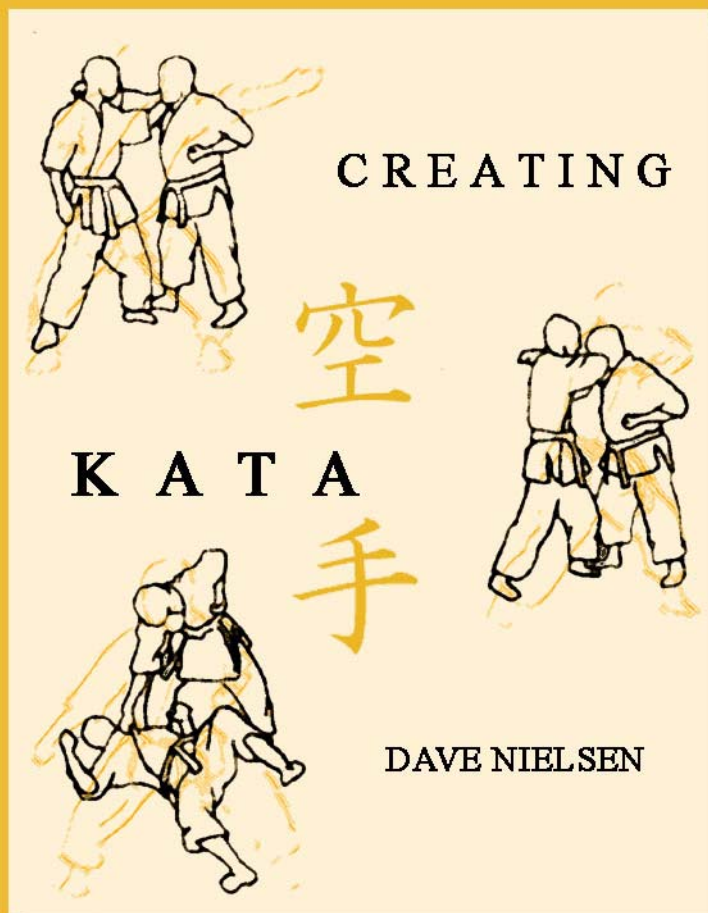
- 1 - Knowledge is power.
- 2 - Reaching the goal is superior to the goal itself.
- 3 - Properly creating your own kata in the ancient way continues the correct tradition.
- 4 - It motivates you to learn more kata.
- 5 - Your overall karate ability will improve.

When looked at more closely the five points listed above can be applied to many different things. That's why they are good points to make. These five points are the motivational points. In order to effectively create your own kata though,

you must begin as always with your basics and utilizing them to create your own self defense techniques. After all, kata is the form that brings your self-defence techniques together. The techniques themselves protect and keep you alive. This is the starting point to effective kata creation.

1 - Although this was his original family style that he was not able to learn because of his second born status, he did pass his karate to his sons and they in turn have put a video out by Tsunami Videos entitled "Motobu Ryu", and Choki Motobu himself wrote a book entitled Okinawan Kempo published in English in 1995 by Masters Publications which includes his kata Naihanchi and his self defense techniques.

For more information on how to create a traditional kata, feel free to visit my site at www.usatka.com. My book "Creating Kata" can be purchased at any major book seller or direct from the publisher at www.lulu.com. I look forward to your thoughts and ideas as well as comments through my web site or newsletter. A special thanks as always to Mr. Iain Abernethy for the foreword to my book, and to Lawrence Kane and Kris Wilder for their permission to utilize some of their material from their book "The Way of Kata"



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Words

by J. W. Titchen

Sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me. Whoever came up with that particular saying would be shocked by how false it seems in the modern world. I'm sure that every coach/instructor/teacher or businessman/woman reading that phrase is only too aware of how damaging words can be. Of course, in theory reputations can be salvaged through litigation, but as has also been observed; a word once uttered flies away beyond recall.

My opening phrase is not about litigation though. It is the adage that verbal abuse cannot harm compared with physical abuse. In this day and age of psychological study we can see the fiction in this as well as the truth, and those of us that work in coaching are keenly aware that verbal bullying can be as great a problem as physical bullying. What may remain a closed book to a number of instructors is that suffering verbal abuse can lead to an increased risk of physical harm.

I'm not talking about psychological trauma and self-harming here, but the damage that verbal abuse can do to our immediate physical state in a self defence situation. Like any instructor that reads this magazine I train my students to make appropriate physical responses to attacks, and this method of training is most likely the experience of every student who reads this publication too. I also teach my students pre-emptive striking techniques based upon their assessment of the probability of violence – in other words if they are unable to make a retreat and sense that their attempts to verbally de-escalate the situation are failing, and it is their honest belief that they are about to be hit, I train them to hit first. In this approach I may fall into a smaller group of instructors. In addition to this I have my students verbally abuse one another in role play simulations prior to the physical drill – and here I imagine I fall into a tiny minority.

So, why add in a verbal element to physical practise? This comes down to your training rationale. If you are training in a martial art for the love of the competitive element involved, then you would naturally spend the majority of your



time learning to fight or perform within the rule set of your chosen competition – drilling and sparring in attacks, defences and tactics used there. If however you are training in your chosen art for the purpose of self defence you are likely to want to spend your time drilling and defending against habitual acts of violence (haov). That is a logical step to take. But the majority of fights do not start with a push, a haymaker, a grab or a headbutt – they start with an argument, a misinterpreted glance or jostle, a demand or a con tactic.

As an example I used to do an Empi based drill where a person was pinned against a wall by their throat and threatened by an attacker's fist. Students quickly became able to break out of this position using a combination of high and

low movements. When the exercise speed was increased, and their attacker protected with body armour so as to take full physical contact, they continued to be able to do it. Then I had the attacker put their face only a hand's length away from their 'victim' and shout "What the f*** are you f***** looking at, you f***** piece of s***. I'm going to f***** smash your f***** face in!" Suddenly the drill fell apart, the victim froze and the technique was executed after a delay and with less conviction – if at all. The impact of the verbal abuse reduced the ability of the victim to access the gross motor skills they had previously been employing and left them vulnerable to physical attack.

Some people might note the over-use of the F word in the above phrase and I should stress that students chose their own language. We have become used to this and other words and probably use them ourselves under our breath or out loud, but rarely up close. We see and hear aggressive language in television drama and it doesn't really affect us. Up close it is a different story. I suspect that the F word in particular is powerful up close because of the contortion it gives to the face, exposing the teeth in an unaccustomed way and shortening the nose. The combination of the volume of the shout and the primal (almost gorilla like) visual display gives it power and its aggressive use can sap confidence, awareness and conviction.

Gradually my students became accustomed to the verbal posturing. After they experienced it about five times on the trot they were back to about 50% effectiveness, a percentage that gradually increased with more exposure. But imagine what might happen to you if you never trained this scenario. What if you only did your techniques in a sterile environment? How certain are you that you would cope, that you wouldn't 'shut down', that you would remain calm? The impact of words on our mental state should not be under-estimated.

What became clear from the performance of these drills was that although the majority of students had a low level of adrenaline running through their system during class, and had experienced high rushes of adrenaline in other activities, they were simply not prepared for the impact such intense verbal pressure had on their physiology. In this and in other drills many were

caught out by the fact that their unconscious reaction was to step backwards and away from the noise, others by the difficulty they had trying to speak whilst their digestive system had temporarily shut down. As with normal physical drills, repeated exposure brought acceptance, confidence, and an increased ability to maintain dialogue – a key factor in trying to avoid conflict.

The Kiai used in paired kumite incorporates an aspect of this verbal assault, but I would stress that its effect at close range is insignificant compared to personal insults and threats. Some instructors might feel that they can't do such things, even if they would like, because of the youth element of their classes. You will find that it is possible to work these scenarios without using 'swear words' per se; "Get back to where you came from!" is an unpleasant thing to say with the proper inflection, as is the challenge "what are you looking at?" I would actually advocate the use of such drills with classes involving children, simply because although we might try and pretend it doesn't exist, verbal bullying of this kind does occur and can frighten young people. Preparing young people for it can help prevent problems and fights (at that age).

Whether you incorporate drills of this kind alongside your physical practise boils down to a simple question – do you want to teach something that is useful for self defence? Our physical skills are of no use for self defence if they cannot be accessed under pressure, and that pressure can come as much from having to process the visual and aural stimuli of a sustained verbal assault as any physical assault.

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 is available to teach seminars in self protection, use of force and the law, restraint and Karate Bunkai. The author's book, ***Heian Flow System - Effective Karate Kata Bunkai***, is available on Amazon and from all good bookshops.

HEIAN FLOW SYSTEM: effective karate kata bunkai

As a student the author enjoyed the power and grace of kata but was frustrated by the lack of intelligent explanation available for the use of the techniques. The bunkai that resembled the kata was awkward and implausible while the bunkai that seemed effective looked nothing like the actual movements in the kata. Convinced that the movements must have had some form of combat effectiveness originally, he decided to study, cross train and look out of the box himself to find an answer, an answer that led to the drills in this book.

This book takes the 5 Heian Kata and breaks them down into progressively dynamic training and sparring drills to teach students how to effectively counter the habitual acts of street violence. The drills all initiate from movements that simulate the body's natural primal and protective flinch responses to attacks, and teach students how to close and create distance while moving freely between ballistic and grappling techniques incorporating close range striking, trapping, throwing, unbalancing and locking movements that mirror the forms. Each drill is clearly illustrated with photos and explanatory text. The drills interlink so that students quickly find themselves able to move freely from one Kata to another mid attack and defence to respond to the scenario created by their partner. The book also contains a detailed analysis of technique effectiveness, an outline of the history of the forms and a discussion of the nature of violent crime and its implications for martial arts practice.

This book shows how to change kata from a sterile solo exercise into a dynamic form that belongs at the heart of your training. Whether you are interested in competition fighting or want to learn effective self defence, the drills in this book will improve your understanding of kata, timing, distance and repertoire. Heian Flow System will not only change the way you perceive these 'training' forms, but also the way you approach all kata.

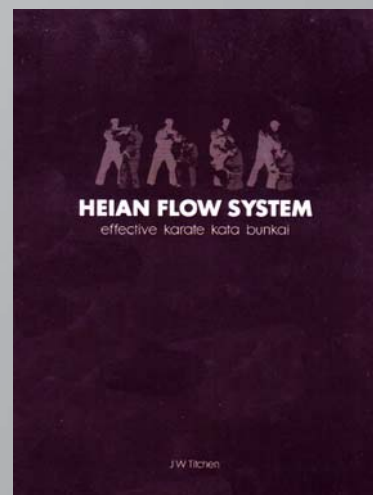
The author has trained in several martial arts and presently holds instructor grades in four separate systems. In addition to martial arts classes he has taught in secondary education, university and the military. His research training as a Doctor of History has always focused his approach to Karate; searching for effective answers to the question of bunkai. He is known for his practical approach to Karate training through his regular column in Traditional Karate Magazine and has taught seminars across the UK and in the USA. In addition to his writing and research he works as a senior officer in the Royal Air Force Voluntary Reserve Training Branch and teaches seminars across the UK between running two dedicated Personal Safety clubs in Buckinghamshire, England

"I recommend the careful study of this work" - Bill Burgar

"Dr. Tichen's current work adds to the body of knowledge of the martial arts and in particular to those who study the Heian Kata" - Rick Clark

"The books that I enjoy are the ones that I feel genuinely add something to the discussion and come at things from previously unexplored angles. This is one of those books." - Iain Abernethy

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Mike Liptrot is one of the UK's premier grappling coaches. A full time international judo coach, Mike started training in Judo at the age of six. Thanks to the massive influence of legendary Judoka Tony Macconnell, Mike had a successful competition career, competing in his first International at sixteen years old. Presently the Chief Coach at the Kendal Judo Centre (an official Olympic facility to be used by international players in preparation for the 2012 games), In addition to his role as a top Judo coach, Mike also coaches MMA fighters, traditional martial artists, and self-protection practitioners who wish to develop their grappling skills. Mike is available for seminars and private instruction.

The Bunkai of Basics: Part Two

by Matthew Miller

In the first part of this series (see Jissen 1 – Ed), I tried to provide some justification for deriving applications for basic techniques, and then moved on to present a series of possible applications for the head block.

In this part, I will present further examples for a basic technique – the down block. Firstly, however, there is another area with basics that is worthy of examination.

As I stated in the first part of this series, I believe that the kata and hence the basics are used to communicate principles rather than just techniques. This is what allows the relatively short form of a Kata containing an entire fighting system, and naturally leads to the conclusion that each movement can have a variety of derived applications.

This makes sense, but how can this variety of applications be unlocked? It can be difficult to look beyond the surface of the technique, or the description often applied to it, but there are a number of approaches that can help this process, some of which are presented here.



Unlocking the Applications

When approaching a particular technique, if you are struggling to find additional applications, consider the following:-

1 - What is the opponent doing?

This is probably the most common approach to changing the application of a technique, and often yields very successful results and can be applied fairly systematically. Simply consider the use of the technique against a list of common offensive techniques. The basic techniques will very often have useful applications against many if not all of these.

2 - Where is the opponent?

Consider the effect of moving the opponent, both in terms of distancing and orientation. The same technique can appear to have very different applications if the opponent is moved from directly in front, one metre away to behind and grabbing you. What appear to be striking techniques develop grappling applications if the opponent is moved much closer in.

Figure 1 – The first moves of Pinan Nidan provide a good example of both of these two points. A strike from the front yields one application for this move – an interception followed by a wrist lock. The punch that follows in the kata would continue this to a throw or wrist break.

Move the opponent to the rear, grabbing over the shoulders, and a completely different one is revealed. The defender raises the arms and lowers the body to release the grip. The left arm is then used to control the attacker's left arm, and the right elbow strikes the solar plexus



3 - What body movement is associated with the technique?

It is easy to get fixated on the small movements of a technique – what the hand form is, where the arm is directed, for example. Insight can often be gained by concentrating more on the overall body movement, since this determines the direction and nature of the force generated. Consider which direction the body moves in, whether the final and intermediate positions shift the body weight forwards or backwards, whether there is a turn associated with the movement. These aspects can change a technique with the same name into one with a totally different application.



Figure 2 – Many punches in the kata are carried out from the front hand complete with a full step through. Whilst this can be interpreted straightforwardly as a punch, the body movement also allows the use of this technique as a very effective arm bar takedown.

4 - What happens before (and after)?

While this article is concerned with applications for single techniques, when examining them in the context of kata, the previous and subsequent movements often give an insight into the application. This can then be used to inform the application for the movement in isolation too.



Figure 3 – The signature sequence of five moves from Wanshu illustrates this perfectly, providing two differing applications for the downblock that can be found by considering what happens before and after. The first downblock is followed by a head punch. This suggests that the downblock is a groin strike, opening up the opponent's head for this technique. At the end of the sequence, a downblock follows from an unusual cross-legged punch. Looked at in this context, the downblock can be interpreted as a throw following this groin strike.

5 - What is the weapon?

Since most karateka train predominantly in ballistic techniques using the fist, this tends to be what they see first in all techniques. By changing the weapon being considered, this can dramatically alter the application. In many cases this can be as simple as moving the point of contact from the fist to the arm, turning a strike into a throw or lock, but also consider whether the hand form can be altered – from a fist to a palm, for example. Also consider the other parts

of the body that can be used in the technique. The front knee in a forward stance provides a very useful striking surface if the head or spine is driven into it by a technique!



Figure 4 – The outer block seen in kata such as Passai and Kushanku can be re-interpreted by considering the use of the elbow, rather than the forearm or hand of this technique.

6 - What else am I doing?

Again, in most techniques, the focus tends to be upon one limb, as is usually indicated by the name of the technique – front punch, rear leg kick. It is rare, however, that this is the only part of the body moving. Consider what the other limbs are doing at the same time, and whether this implies a different application. A common example of this is the pulling hand, or hikite, used in most hand strikes. This has enormous utility as a means of control, clearing obstructions and positioning the opponent for follow up strikes.

These are by no means all the aspects to consider, but do provide a start point for deriving applications – for more detail, Bunkai Jutsu by Iain Abernethy provides a much more thorough analysis of this approach.

Below, applications derived using this sort of approach are presented for the downblock. This is a very fundamental movement used frequently throughout karate. As with the section above, however, this is only intended as a basic introduction to the applications for this technique. Rick Clarks excellent “75 down blocks” does exactly what it says and presents 75 applications for this movement, and so for a more thorough and detailed analysis of this particular technique, I would highly recommend this book.



Down Block – The basic technique

The basic technique is performed in a front stance. The front knee is bent and the foot straight forward, whilst the back leg is straight with the back foot angled out at 45°. The feet are shoulder width apart.

The rear hand is held in a fist, palm upwards, against the hip. The front arm is held straight, with the first rotated palm downwards and slightly outside the front thigh. The angle of the front arm should be the same as the front thigh..

When stepping, the back hand is first raised directly to the opposite shoulder, with the palm facing the cheek. The back foot moves directly forward whilst the hips and front foot are kept straight forward. This causes the heel of the front foot to progressively rise as it transitions into the back foot.

At the completion of the step, the hips are twisted and the heel dropped so the foot points at 45°. The arm raised to the shoulder is rotated downwards to the position described above, whilst the extended arm is drawn directly backwards, rotating so that the hand returns to the hip with the palm upwards.

Bunkai

As with the head block described in the first part of this series, the first application is both simple and effective. The downward arm is driven into the groin of the opponent, accelerated by the step forward and hip twist. When applied as a pre-emptive strike, the large preparatory movement of the hand to the shoulder can be shortened allowing less telegraphing of the technique.



Groin Strike

As a pre-emptive strike this has a number of virtues. The groin is obviously a very sensitive area, and an effective strike here may well end the fight. The movement does not require a high degree of skill to perform, and so can quickly be assimilated.

An obvious counter to this is the natural instinct that most people, particularly men, have to protect the groin. Instinctively, many people will flinch to cover the groin, and possibly attempt to grab the striking limb. However, this predictable response can be utilised, as is often seen in kata sequences. The flinch reaction generally brings the head forwards and lowers the hands, presenting an un-impeded path to striking. The sequence from Wanshu detailed above is an example of this, but similar sequences can be seen further into Wanshu (where a down block is used as a 'softening' strike prior to moving in for a throw), and in Pinan Shodan (where a down block strike to the groin is followed by a head block strike to the face (neatly tying together the two first parts of this article!)).

This first application makes use of the body movement, as point one above suggests – and looks at the techniques after as point four suggests. If we now move the opponent in distance and orientation, we have another series of techniques, mainly based around unbalancing and throws.



Break Balance

If the opponent is much closer, then the direct stepping downblock can be used to throw. The front leg steps behind the opponents legs, blocking a step back, and the arm drives from the shoulder across the neck and throat. This arches the back and throws the opponent to the floor – or alternatively onto the front knee, giving a strike to the spine.



Spine attack using knee

Moving yet closer in, so that the opponent is almost directly alongside, the preparatory movement for the block travels around the back of the opponent's neck, grasping the chin and throwing using a neck twisting movement.



A further variation of this particular technique makes use of the turning downlock often seen in kata – the preparatory movement is made with the back hand, rising to grasp the back of the collar or around the neck of the opponent. The body is then rotated and the block completed to throw.

By moving the striking surface of the downblock (point five above), another application of this technique is unearthed. When the wrist is grasped in a cross hand manner (left to right, right to left), angle off to forty five degrees (as often seen with downblock in kata), and rotate the grabbed hand to hikite, reversing the grab and controlling the opponents arm. The forearm of the downblocking arm then rolls down and around the opponents elbow joint around the triceps tendon, driving the opponent downward allowing either a follow up strike or a throw:-



An alternative approach is to use this same technique as a method of stripping the grab, and then transferring the grasp to the other hand. In this case, the hikite is performed more aggressively to remove the grab, and then the downblock carries the limb across and controls it in position. This allows the follow up strike:-



These are examples of some of the applications for this technique, and hopefully illustrate the use of the points listed above in uncovering alternative approaches to the same basic movement. As I have said before, however, these are not the correct, the best or the complete applications by any means, and a great deal can be learnt about the techniques by working on applications of your own.

I hope you enjoyed this article – I will be continuing the series, "Bunkai for Basics" soon.

Fighting Forms



Matthew Miller

Fighting Forms

By Matthew Miller

Kata has always been at the centre of karate. However, during much of the modern era the tendency has been to perform kata as a solo form only.

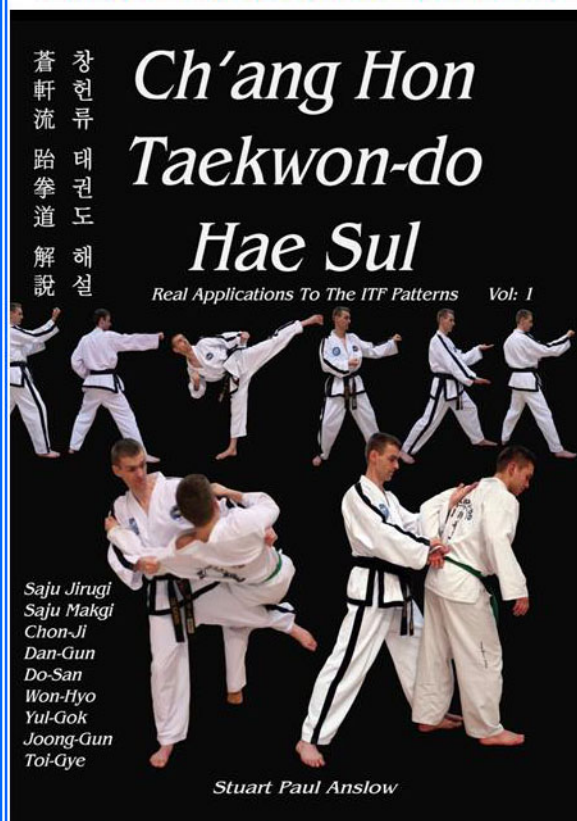
Fighting Forms presents a method for performing an entire kata with a partner, using realistic and practical applications – thus returning kata to the heart of Karate.

"This book is well written, easy to follow and has a great deal to offer the pragmatically minded karateka. It makes a great addition to the collective knowledge base, it will be a valuable addition to your library and, most importantly of all, it could add a whole new dimension to your kata training."

Iain Abernethy 5th Dan - Author of Bunkai-Jutsu: The Practical Application of Karate Kata.

To read excerpts, articles and view video clips please visit www.fightingforms.net
Order online from www.iainabernethy.com or www.fightingforms.net

Available from Amazon.co.uk, Amazon.com and other online book stores



Reading through the pages of this book makes it abundantly clear just how much thought, time and effort Stuart Anslow has put into examining the ITF patterns.

Not only does this book detail applications for the motions within these patterns, it also explores the background to each form and, perhaps most importantly, it also details the thought process that gave rise to the applications shown.

Stuart has a clear and engaging writing style and the book is beautifully presented. I feel certain that this book will have Taekwon-do practitioners looking at their patterns from a new angle and with renewed enthusiasm.

Ch'ang Hon Taekwon-do Hae Sul should be in the library of all practitioners of ITF Taekwon-do. Read on, learn and enjoy!

- Iain Abernethy 2006 5th Dan Karate (British Combat Association and Karate England).



"The most important book published on TKD since the encyclopaedia."

- John Dowding, 3rd degree, ITF

Taekwon-do's Black Hole

by Stuart Anslow

Applications, above and beyond the standard punch, kick, block variety with regards to the patterns of Taekwon-do are still in its infancy with regards to learning and teaching them. Though still only taught as standard in a few schools, this is changing and the movement for more realistic interpretations is growing rapidly.

However, some still choose to stick to the stance that if General Choi didn't say it was so, then there cannot be more to the patterns than has already been taught or what is listed in the manuals. This is either their firm belief or a resistance to it as it would mean having to admit there is more to Taekwon-do patterns than they know or can currently teach!

Either way, this doesn't change what I'm about to say, as Taekwon-do is like an onion, the more layers you peel away, the more in-depth and interesting it becomes.

This article refers to applications that can be found within the Taekwon-do patterns and not Taekwon-do as a whole as there are things that influenced Taekwon-do the art (as a whole) and there are things that purely influenced the patterns. For Taekwon-do the art, there are any number of influences, this is clear from my own research of the Ch'ang hon system and though Taekwon-do is by and large influenced by Shotokan, it also has influence in varying degrees and guises from Judo, Hapkido, Taek Kwon and other arts.

However, the patterns of Ch'ang Hon are, by and large, influenced by Shotokan (with WTF patterns being influenced by Ch'ang Hon and thus by design, also Shotokan) and not other arts. They have the Korean twist on them, but they are still following the same template of Shotokan and it is this area and this area alone that we are talking about here.

The black hole referred to in the title is also a black hole in Karates history, which in turn has had a major effect on Taekwon-do and this is in regards to Karate Kata, and kata applications. It isn't just a belief, but fact backed up by lots of research and evidence, both by myself and well established Karate researchers.

According to author and Shotokan historian Bruce Clayton, he offers a theory that pre-Shotokan Karate (Okinawa-te) was the art practiced only by the palace guards for defence of the King of Okinawa and as such it was top secret. The king died in 1879 and thus the 'official secrecy' sworn by all who studied was dissolved. Reading Claytons work seems to offer that most of those working in the palace had normal jobs, but, in times of defence of the king, sprung into action as body guards and protectors. Matsumura was a palace body guard, his student Itsou worked in the palace also (as a scribe and thus perhaps had a similar role in times of trouble) and Gichen

Funakoshi (the man responsible for introducing Karate to mainland Japan) was a student of Itsou. The way I read it seemed to imply that Funakoshi was a body guard in training, but was not a full bodyguard and as such had not learnt the full body guarding system, and when the king died, his training was not completed as it was no longer required in its initial role. So its possible that Funakoshi had learnt Itsou's kata , but not the fine details, which were only filled in when a body guard was to take it up as an official duty/job and then sworn to the same secrecy of the others. So Funakoshi didn't learn the finer details of the patterns, just the shell of punch, kick and block!

Another point to consider is that following the Kings death, it is known that Master Itsou set



about redesigning the Karate system for the Okinawan schools, giving it a less lethal approach by utilizing blocks rather than grab/break techniques. Many karate-ka feel this is the main reason for losing the lethal bunkai, due to its solid historical grounding. Funakoshi then took Karate to Japan in the same mode as Itosu's "school system", thus in-depth/dangerous applications didn't travel across from Itosu to Funakoshi, Itosu to the schools or Okinawa to Japan. The buck stopped with Itosu and started again with Funakoshi in a different guise.

Not all Karate-ka are happy with this reasoning and offer plausible alternatives, which do not change the facts, just the reasons. Some feel that Funakoshi did indeed learn the more deadly applications but perhaps the oppressed (Okinawans) didn't want to teach the oppressors their system, so again, gave them the "school system" or that when it came to Japan, the younger men wanted to test themselves by fighting and Funakoshi deplored that and thus ensured the most deadliest of applications remained hidden from (in the words of one Karate historian) these "hot blooded young males" as they wanted to test themselves via fighting and thus the sport side developed and the more martial side declined. Funakoshi himself was also promoting the 'Do' side of martial arts, as a way of bettering oneself first and foremost; hence other side of the art was relegated lower down the league (so to speak).

There is also evidence to support that it's only since 1901 that kata/patterns were used as a mass training system for large groups. Originally, before Itosu introduced them to the schools of Okinawa, kata were a more personal thing. One instructor would teach one or two students his kata, they would then amend and change the kata to suit their own fighting style and so on. Uniformed group practice is another area that has travelled

across from country to country, when in fact, this wasn't the original intention, but again, as most were unaware of this it continued in this vein as the 'correct way' when in fact it may not have been meant to be this way at all.



Gichen Funakoshi (above) in the ready posture for Kasanku (Kanku) kata, with General Choi below in a similar position for some of Taekwon-do black belt patterns, such as Kwang-Gae tul!



Karate (and thus Taekwon-do) borrowed/stole a lot of ideas from Judo. Judo was already a popular martial art in Japan and when Karate came across the instructors noticed its popularity and over time, borrowed heavily from it; a uniform for all students, making them equal was borrowed, known as the 'gi' or in Taekwon-do's case, the 'Dobok', the ranking system was borrowed, making everything more defined and less personable, as a level and criteria for each grade was now required and this became more formalised as time passed, long kata were split, time between ranks was lessened and removed the old ideas of training one kata for many years, competition formats were borrowed from Judo (such as idea of ippon (full point) and wazari (half point) scoring for kumite). Kata as a competitive field came a little later as kumite focus became popular and a decline in the practice of kata was noticed, so it too was introduced in a competitive format in order to give an incentive to students to keep practicing their kata alongside the kumite side. To do so meant a level playing field was needed in order to judge them, so for patterns/kata this was simply the shell of patterns, the aesthetic side of them, which is how they are mostly performed today. However, the biggest ideal borrowed from Judo shifted the balance

considerably, from training as a means of defence to training as a means to character development, the 'Jutsu' became the 'Do' and that is another item carried forward onto Taekwon-Do, with General Choi emphasizing the 'Do' aspect even further still. Jutsu (musul in Korean) means technique method or skill, Do on the other hand

refers to the 'way' or the journey through the art and how it affects the student (for the better).

Whatever version of events in modern Karate's formative years you chose to go with, they do not change how it affected Taekwon-do and why there's a black hole within it! Karate may have travelled from Okinawa to Japan and then to Korea and that is what Taekwon-do was based upon originally, however, the finer details of kata, for one reason or another, were not transmitted across as only the basic building blocks of kata were. These were remodeled by many Karate systems and of course Taekwon-do itself, however, they were still used/modeled with the same outlook as Funakoshi had (or gave) and thus the punch/kick/block variety of kata/patterns continued in various forms and guises, all the while carry within them the building blocks for a deeper understanding of the techniques they contain, with most not even realising it.

Anyone who was instrumental in forming kata from 1901 to 1998 (give or take) used the Funakoshi Shotokan model (I'm referring to Taekwon-do & Karate here), therefore, they were all based on the punch/kick/block mentality, but all carried with them the building blocks to make them more than the sum of their parts - if they had veered away from this, it wouldn't have been possible in the same way, but they didn't and so here we are today, but know armed with the tools, knowledge and understanding to utilize them as they were originally designed to be used.

So when I discuss masters not knowing the deeper applications to patterns, I am not referring to a single master, but to all that fall into the time period above. Like it or not, as patterns were carried forward, whether consciously or not, certain attributes were carried along with them... and its these attributes that allow people like myself to either unlock them, or make them more than they previously were by peeling back the

onion layers. It's not a slight on the masters that didn't know or realise or their martial knowledge. For example, the Ch'ang Hon system of Taekwon-do teaches many throwing techniques, there are sections in Gen Choi's manuals on them, but on the surface, these are not in the

patterns; not as standard applications put forth by the instructors that created them, though when digging a little deeper they are there, many Jiu-Jitsu guys easily recognise them! So the martial knowledge was there, just not with regards to applying it in the patterns.

It doesn't mean individuals didn't utilize them in a more pragmatic manner prior to now, I'm sure certain karate instructors did, I know Taekwon-do drill instructors did, George Dillman and others did, but the issue was that due to communication at the time, these were relatively small instances compared to the wave of punch/kick/block kata/patterns going around. It's only now, with modern technology, that insights, theories, research, evidence etc. can be shared and discussed openly that the relevance of it all becomes more of a force to be reckoned with and of course we need those that are willing to question and go against the doctrines of the last 100 years. In essence, Karate and Taekwon-do have come full circle and I (and others) feel it's time to embrace that and throw away the shackles of the past in order to gain a better future for the art we love!

It reminds me of a TV advert I saw recently: Say I was a caveman and aliens felt it would be good for us to have the wheel and they dropped some stone circles with holes in them and in one they put an axel, thinking it's quite simple to make the leap from stone circle to cart. However, having never seen a wheel, or a cart, plus the wheel was lying flat with a pole sticking out the centre I associated it with what I know already. Great I thought, it must be a new washing line



Gichen Funakoshi - notice the reaction hand!

Below - Marek demonstrates a similar application - taught at the Academy before I came across the picture above!



(as that's what I have seen already) - so I connected the pole with vine and hung my loin cloths out to dry! The point is, it would take almost a 'vision' for someone to realize in the 1950s to 1970s, that patterns evolved with more than punch/kick/block until modern technology, openness and sharing, walls and barriers came down and of course history allowed the odd light bulb moment and insights. All this has allowed instructors and students to gather evidence to the contrary of what has been taught so far, to the point when they finally went "A-ha!... I wonder"

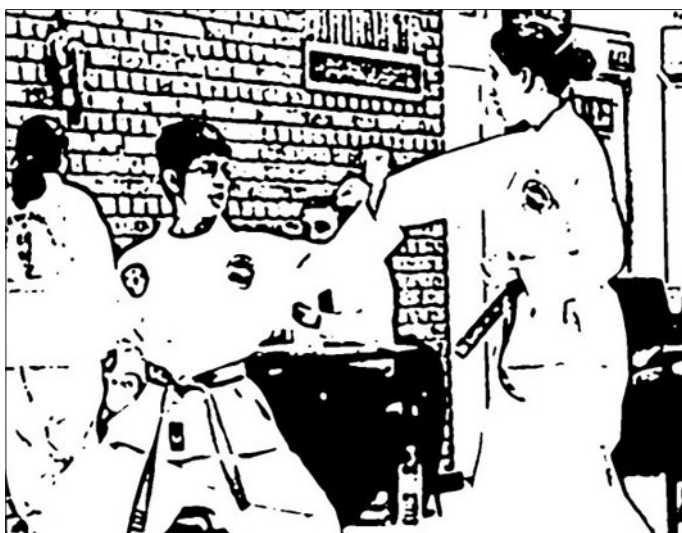
That's my take on things, why I wrote my book and why I argue against certain issues. I don't want anyone to think I am disrespecting Taekwon-do, General Choi or any martial arts founders, because I hold the pioneers and masters in great respect, I just see things differently, as 'our time' allows me to do so.

I see this journey as one of furthering Taekwon-do and its development and taking it into the future. Even if an instructor or student chooses to categorically ignore the evidence that there is more to patterns than meets the eye, the simple fact that there are alternative and often better applications still make a worthwhile addition to those that practice Taekwondo patterns simply because they add to the art... and anyone who would dismiss that isn't doing the art a disservice, but themselves and their students, as martial artists should grow and mature and even General Choi stated that he left the development of Taekwon-do in the hands of the instructors! If we kept to the doctrines of the past simply on the premise that they are from a higher authority and thus know better, we would still believe the earth was flat and that babies should sleep on

their fronts to avoid cot deaths (an old and new example of why it is good to question!).

Finally, I'd like to leave you with a passage that might prove interesting. I noted it particularly as it mentions "rising block"... it's part of a piece written by Iain Abernethy (renowned kata bunkai exponent) from a piece titled "A Brief History of Kata"

"Itsou's modifications resulted in huge changes in the way the art was taught. The emphasis was now placed firmly upon the development of physical fitness through the group practice of kata. The children would receive no instruction in the combative applications associated with the katas and deliberately misleading labels were adopted for the various techniques. Today, it is Itsou's terminology that is most commonly used throughout the world and it is vital to understand why this terminology developed. When studying the combative applications of the katas remember that many of the names given to various movements have no link with the movement's fighting application. Terms such as "Rising-block" or "Outer-block" stem from the watered down karate taught to Okinawan school children, and not the highly potent fighting art taught to the adults. When studying bunkai be sure that the label does not mislead you. Itsou's changes also resulted in the teaching of kata without its applications. The traditional practice had been to learn the kata and then the applications would then be taught. However, it now became the norm to teach the kata for its own sake and the applications may never be taught (as is sadly still the case in the majority of karate schools today)." Full article: http://www.iainabernethy.com/articles/article_19.asp)



Both 'Kaunde An Palmok Makgi', but which is a better combative application of the technique?

The Little Black Book of Violence

An excerpt from the forthcoming book

by Kris Wilder & Lawrence Kane

When I felt the knife blade grate across my teeth, I knew I was in trouble, and then my lower lip fell open like overcooked chicken dropping from the bone.

At eighteen, I found myself outside an all-ages pool hall in Redmond, Washington. If Redmond sounds familiar to you, it should; it is the home of Microsoft corporate headquarters, the home of programmers, computer geeks, and ninety-eight pound nerds. I was standing in the heart of suburbia bleeding badly from my face. The three men who jumped me outside the pool hall started hitting me hard, driving me onto the ground that was more dirt than gravel. I tried to fight but they had got the first strike in, a slash with a knife that was designed to shock, disfigure, and terrify me. It worked.

What brought me some thirty miles from my home to fight in the parking lot of a pool hall? My buddy's name was on the line. He was losing face so I decided that I needed to defend him. It was a matter of friendship, of honor. So, in my senior year of high school, five close friends and I cut the deal for a fight—five on five at the appointed pool hall—and just to add drama, we were going to do it at midnight.

I got there early to hang out with my buddies and amp ourselves up for the confrontation. It was maybe a quarter to midnight when I stepped outside for a smoke. One of the three guys hanging around near the door gave me a hard look and then spat out, "Wadda you looking at?" "Nothing," I replied and turned to go back inside. I heard one of them move and looked back to see what was going on when I was met by a knife slash across my face, striking my teeth and making my mouth an "X" instead of the nice, straight line my momma gave me. When I felt that blade grate across my teeth, I knew I was in trouble, and then my lower lip fell open like overcooked chicken dropping from the bone.

This wasn't the glorious battle I'd imagined. It was pain and blood and terror. What would the victor get from this fight? Absolutely nothing! No turf, no money, nothing, save perhaps a little

pride. And the loser? I wound up with eighty stitches and a missing tooth. It cost me a day in the hospital, a big medical bill, and this scar you are looking at right now.



Preface

"Both the victor and the vanquished are but drops of dew, but bolts of lightning—thus should we view the world" – Ouchi Yoshitaka (1507–1551)

This book is about violence. It is about running into something that you have probably never encountered in your life, but that will change your whole world if you do. We're not talking about a schoolyard brawl or a fistfight between buddies here, but rather the deeper, darker kind of altercations, the ones where oftentimes someone doesn't walk away and win or lose you may very well be scarred for life.

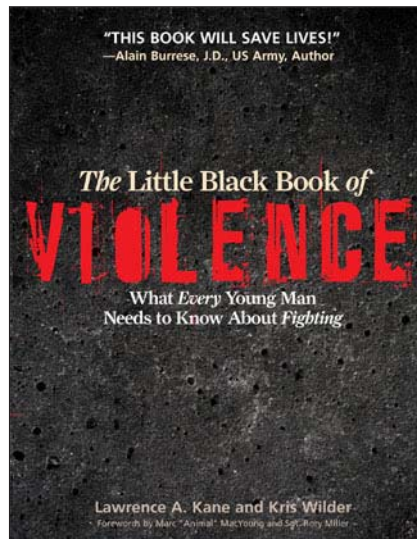


If you picked up this book because you are interested in self-defense and want to give yourself the best chance of surviving a violent encounter, you've come to the right place. If, instead, you've just had a run-in with the dark side, are trying to make sense of what occurred, and are looking for strategies to ensure that it will not happen again, well, you've come to the right place for that too.

We will introduce you to a world of hatred, anger, fear, and lies where you will come to understand sociopaths, career criminals, thieves, cheats, bullies, misogynists, and various other twisted personalities that you might one day run across in real life. We hope that you will never experience the violence wrought by such people. Yet, if you do, and most will at one point or another in their lives, we will prepare you to better understand and more likely survive the experience.

We have taken a no-nonsense approach in reflecting the world of violence. Consequently, you may well be offended by some of what you read. You might even disagree with certain things we have written in this book. If you find the contents provocative, or even shocking, then we have succeeded in making you think. That's what this book is about, opening your mind. And, of course, filling it with practical, sensible knowledge and tools to protect yourself from violence.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, men commit about 80 percent of all violent crimes in the United States, serious stuff like homicides, rapes, robberies, and assaults. Men are twice as likely as women to become victims of those same violent crimes, except for rape. Furthermore, males are more likely to be victimized by a stranger, whereas females are more likely to be victimized by a friend, acquaintance, or intimate. (Although when women engage in violence, they are more likely to assault someone physically they know than a stranger—which still leaves you in the



The goal of this book is to help you understand and avoid behavior that will get you involved in violence by giving you a roadmap to a conscious decision-making process that takes the non-thinking response out of your behavior. You need to ask yourself, "Is this really worth fighting over?" While in some instances, the response could legitimately be "Yes," more often than not, it ought to be "No."

crosshairs). Consequently, while bad things can happen to anyone, males are the ones who really need to understand aggression and be prepared for sudden encounters with violence. That is why this book was written especially for you. Let us make it clear; although we may present situations or vignettes from one gender's perspective, violence is an equal opportunity employer that knows no gender.

When it comes to violence, all the statistics confirm that younger people are far more inclined toward aggressive behavior than older people are. For example, many bars and most nightclubs are populated by younger people. Take an emotionally charged atmosphere, stir in a generous dose of alcohol and/or drugs, and you've got a good recipe for conflict and violence.

Young males tend to have a long list of things to prove, whether they are conscious of them or not. Often their motives are unconscious because they are based on biological patterns of the human species. You probably don't realize how much of what you think and feel is based in these patterns—and this especially applies to territoriality and status.



Young men typically do not truly understand or fully appreciate the physical, psychological, and legal costs of violence. They often feel immortal, never considering the possibility of becoming maimed, crippled, or even killed in a confrontation. Consequently, young men will fight for any number of reasons—affiliations, self esteem, social status, not to be considered a wimp, the clothes they wear, revenge for some perceived slight, to impress a cute girlfriend, or just to blow off a little steam, to name a few.

So, what do the participants of violence look like? Well, they look like you, the reader. You might simply find yourself in the wrong place at the right time. Perhaps some seemingly harmless behavior on your part will be the spark that sets things off or you may be minding your own business and fail to notice impending danger until you walk into it unaware. Either way, it's a precarious place to be.

The goal of this book is to help you understand and avoid behavior that will get you involved in violence by giving you a roadmap to a conscious decision-making process that takes the non-thinking response out of your behavior. We will enable you to reach up into your head and flick the switch on the violence control panel from "react" to "respond." You need to ask yourself, "Is this really worth fighting over?" While in some instances, the response could legitimately be "Yes," more often than not, it ought to be "No."

Simply put, some yahoo spewing insults about your favorite sports team is worlds apart from a drug-crazed lunatic coming at you with a knife in a parking lot. There is a large gray area between those two extremes where hard and fast rules don't always apply. This is where wisdom, oftentimes hard-earned wisdom, is the difference between a good decision and a bad one. It's not always a life or death decision, yet a bad choice could have serious consequences, the kind of stuff that can change a life completely for the worse.

Recognize that every time you engage in violence, no matter how small and trivial, it has the potential of escalating into something that has life-long consequences. What is really worth fighting for when you might end up spending the rest of your life behind bars with a sociopathic roommate, dreading the moment you might

accidentally drop the soap in the shower, confined to a wheelchair peeing through a catheter and sh*tting into a colostomy bag, or declaring bankruptcy under the crushing weight of a massive civil lawsuit?



Is it really worth fighting over a comment that hurts your feelings or makes you feel less than a man? Is it really worth fighting with the mugger over your wallet? Is it really worth fighting the other driver who flipped you the bird in traffic? Is it worth fighting over a threat to your child? Is it worth fighting someone who bumped into you at a party and refused to apologize for spilling your drink? Is it worth fighting someone trying to break into your car? Is it worth fighting a drunk who copped a feel on your girlfriend?

What if it's not just one guy who's messing with you but rather a gang of thugs? What about fighting to protect a pregnant woman or disabled friend who cannot get away from a hostile individual? What if he's got a knife or a gun? What if it's your intoxicated brother or your drugged-up best friend pointing the weapon at

you with malevolence in his eyes? These are all situational; they are decisions that without forethought could, and most likely will, be poorly made.

We hope to give you a strategic view of what is happening, a view that is more practical than emotional. It is then up to you to establish a goal and to adhere to tactics that serve that goal. An example of establishing these goals comes from a police officer friend of ours. Long before encountering violence, he had already built an internal list of things he simply will not allow in his world. An example is, "I will not allow myself to be tied up." He knows from experience and training that being tied up is a precursor to being moved to a secondary crime scene or killed outright. For him, physical restraint by a criminal means certain death. In his mind, it is far better to fight now and have some chance of survival than to comply and face near certain slaughter later on.



How would you respond to that type of scenario? It is not only useful, but also critical, to determine what you are willing to do, or have done to you, during a violent encounter, in advance of such incidents occurring. That way, during the heat of the moment, you can act without hesitation.

Here's your chance to really think about it. At the end of the book in Appendix A is a checklist titled "How Far Am I Willing to Go." To use this checklist properly, stop reading this book now, flip to the back, and fill in your answers. Once you have finished reading the book, go back and do it again. There is no answer key. There is no right or wrong when it comes to responding to

these questions. The answers that you put will be whatever is right for you at the time. Once filled out, this list will be composed of your limits and thresholds, the ones you will use as a guide. This exercise will help you understand how you will operate in the world and especially in the world of violence.

Once you have read this book you will recognize behaviors from people around you and, more importantly, you will recognize your own. If you can recognize such behaviors, especially those within yourself, then you are halfway toward winning any conflict. As you begin to understand these behaviors and situations, it will help you make the right choices for success in terms of conflict resolution. Ultimately, what you have learned will help you live a longer and more peaceful life as a result. Be smart, be informed, and be safe.

"Kane and Wilder's book will save lives. It will keep others out of prison. As an attorney, a self-defense instructor, and someone who has experienced violence, I was most impressed with the practical and realistic information." — **Alain Burrese**

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An Introduction to the History, Kata & Practice of Traditional Karate-Do

Michael J. Rosenbaum

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rivervalley martial arts.com - Traditional Okinawan karate for children, teens, and adults

imacusa.com - IMAC is a professional martial arts organization and sponsors the US MA Hall of Fame

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blueriver martial arts.org - Website of the BRMAC (Okinawan Goju-Ryu)

scottishkaishinwadokai.co.uk - Home of Scottish Wado on the West Coast

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rsk.co.uk - Teaching traditional shotokan karate in the Royston area for over 20 years

kalkwarf.com - Assorted karate resources

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nagashi-shukokai-karate.co.uk - The website of Nagashi Shukokai Karate based in Manchester

redsunkarate.org.uk - Red Sun Karate club teaches traditional Shotokan Karate

practical-martial-arts.co.uk - Matthew Sylvester's Practical Martial Arts school. Traditional values, modern methods

guinnmartialarts.com - The gateway to details on GMA's Applied Karate and Aikijutsu classes

donwell-karate.org - Donwell SKC is a Shotokan Karate club in Donwell, Washington, Tyne and Wear

eskk.co.uk - Chris Denwood's website featuring articles, free newsletter and details of his group

samuraikaratecornwall.co.uk - The homepage of Samurai Karate Cornwall (Shukokai-based Karate)

sanchinryukarate.co.uk - Details of recognised instructors, black belts, history and grading syllabus/criteria.

fightingforms.net - Realistic and practical applications – returning kata to the heart of karate

northwoodtkd.com - More than just your regular Taekwondo club!

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