

# Jissen 実戦

The FREE online Practical Martial Arts Magazine

Issue 5



**Reality Based Training: Who needs it?**

**Martial Arts Scepticism**

**Tradition & Reality**

**Chinto Kata**

**Self-Defence & The Law**

**Contact in Training**



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# EDITORIAL

## ISSUE 5

Welcome to the fifth issue of Jissen! We have over 80 pages of quality pragmatic information for you in this issue and I hope you find it all enjoyable, educational and thought provoking. Each issue is getting a massive amount of downloads and the feedback has been universally positive. Good to know you obviously feel we're hitting the mark!



I've received quite a few emails from readers stating how much they like the "themed" nature of previous issues. I have to confess that any common threads running through previous issues were entirely accidental! If the article is well written, information focussed, and pragmatically biased then we'll do our best to find space for it. However, whilst totally unintentional, I will claim any credit on offer for the fact that a number of this issue's articles discuss the relationship between traditional and modern self-protection systems! I hope you enjoy our contributors' thoughts on these issues as much as I did.

This issue also sees us include the first two of a series of interviews conducted by Michael Rosenbaum! All of the people interviewed are skilled and experienced practical martial artists. Michael's thoughtful questions allow the reader to learn from the experiences of interviewees and for them to share their hard-won knowledge. This month we kick things off with two superb pieces with Ed Francisco (USA) & Gary Chamberlain (UK). In the next issue we've got another great interview with leading realist Dave Turton, with yet more interviews to follow! I'm very grateful to Michael and all those who have been interviewed. These information heavy pieces are what interviews should be and you can be assured that no vacuous personality pieces will grace the pages of this publication.

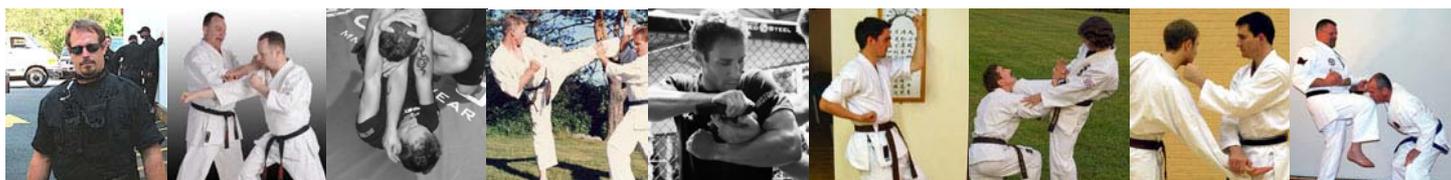
Right then, that's enough from me! Enjoy the magazine!

I - Abernethy 

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# Reality Based Training!

## What Is It & Who Really Needs It?

by Rev. Arthur Chenevey

Everywhere under the umbrella of the commercial martial arts we are able to observe the plethora of advertisements, seminars, dedicated web-sites, journal articles and books published, promoting reality-based training protocol as the great elixir for self-defense immortality.

Many of these training designs are often promoted by and/or created by former police officers, proclaimed military personnel, or private contractors reporting to have been trainers of and for the military and law enforcement agencies.

Within this particular environment of commercial martial arts, those promoting their brand of reality-based training protocols, there seems to be an implicit conveyance to the consuming public, that if the trainer and his or her training methods are associated with elite military and/or elite law enforcement aficionados and organizations, then this method must be good, legitimate, credible and applicable. This may be due to the implication that such bureaucracies attempt to engage in some form of tough, realistic training of its candidates. This may or may not be the case, depending on the specific organization or agency.

In all things, however, we must understand the importance of entertaining skepticism and being aware of the original source of the information being promoted. And since the martial arts arena is a playing field riddled with grandiose imitation and self-glorification, this individual scrutiny of any panacea must be vigilantly maintained.

What is *reality-based* or *scenario-based* training? How does one address the issues of preparing for and learning to manage hostile conflicts involving other human beings? Who actually needs to train in such a highly specific and dangerously realistic fashion?

First of all, let's define *combat* as our point of reference to be used throughout this article. *Combat* entails lethal force management/survival

between two or more opposing forces. The threat is real, not imagined, and the overall outcome means "I may be killed during this operation of struggling with an enemy (singular or multiple)." Herein is the key for designing training paradigms for learning how to manage and survive such horrific combat situations, we must learn how to deal with an enemy who possesses ability and opportunity to kill us. Not everyone needs to know how to operate in such venues.

Surviving and winning in warfare has always been the primary motivation behind the manipulation of scenario based battle inoculation. Reality based training grew out of the military's need to prepare men for combat—the harshest of all operational environments. To engage in war, those in power who are able to send young men and women to war, are somehow convinced in their ability to survive and win the war. To gain an edge over the enemy for victory, training is one of the methods used for creating this sharp edge required to procure victory.

During WWI, large volumes of research and first-hand documentation was developed on how to deal with battle stress—one of victory's greatest frictions. Ideas and methods were devised to treat its complications, and preventative measures ensued. This information was hard-earned and hard-won from every county's grueling experience while confronting these problems. Training—realistic training that mimicked battlefield conditions very closely—was found to be one of the most important variables in aiding combatants overcome and override the implications of battle stress.

When WWII ignited, most countries forgot those lessons—including the United States. Bureaucracies don't appear to possess memories beyond current interests. And we all had to learn these lessons over again. Some of the smarter individuals remembered and referred back to WWI's lessons.

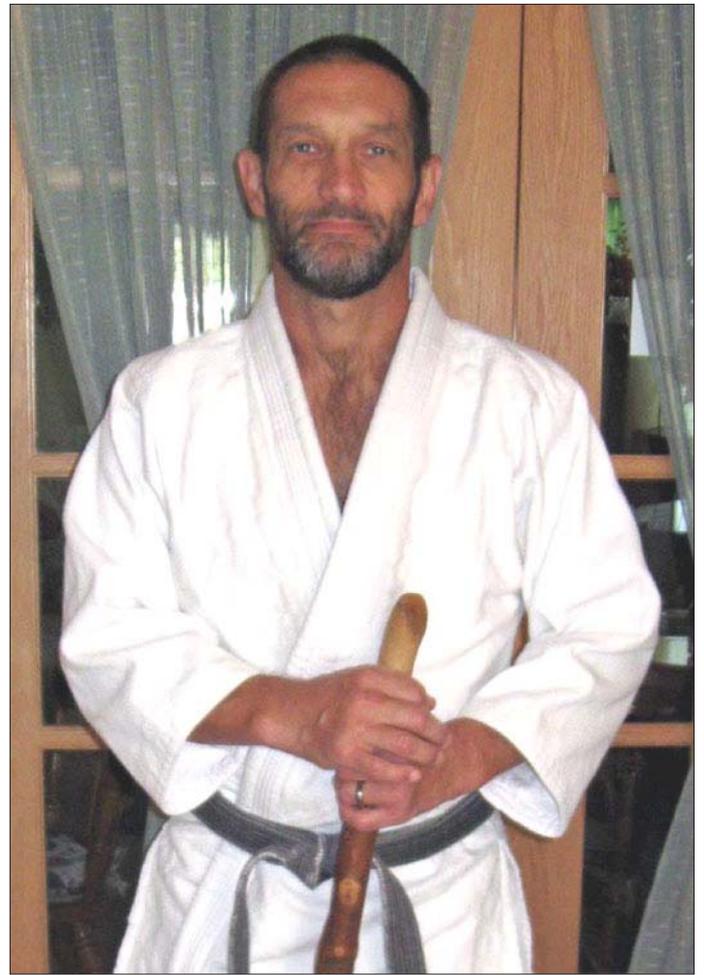
With each new war, it seemed the participants had to re-learn those hard-earned truths, and specific training paradigms were created to solve the specific operational problems at hand. Each war, each battle, every conflict poses its own set of highly specific problems. Is there, however, a common denominator in which humans can apply and reduce the problems impeding human functionality under the duress of life and death situations?

The bottom line with the military was, and is, to familiarize the human mind and body to the horrific nature of warfare and to physically toughen both to the endless hardships of war's hideous environment. Realism in training designs helped achieve this goal.

Preparing combatants for operational status in whatever war now looms certain, means that the training conditions must mimic, exactly, those conditions found in that particular war zone. The further away the training conditions move from the specificity of this war for which we are preparing, the less effective the training will be. And since we cannot intentionally try to kill the very people we need to train and condition, training will never prepare the participant for what one will experience in war. However, incredibly realistic training environments can be devised, and successfully familiarize the trainee as close as we can make it without intentionally killing said trainee.

Some of the chief impediments to realistic training in the military are money and time. It is very difficult to mimic a war-zone—safely—on a regular basis, and often this essential luxury of realistic training is reserved for those who will need it the most: fighter pilots, elite operational combat units, infantry and the operational combat units using armor, artillery and attack helicopters. The rest of the supporting units, which is most of the military—everyone else, gets by with basic training.

The military does understand the need for designing tough and dangerous training courses that mimic very closely real battle-field conditions, but often what the combatants need and what they get are two different entities, entirely. And once a ground war is off and grinding up human flesh, training becomes rushed and often very spotty. Likewise, when S3 (U.S. Military) begins



designing training methods for preparing the individual for warfare, what is needed and what actually becomes authorized and subsequently deployed are financial and time universes apart.

Realistic training is incredibly expensive and incredibly dangerous. Men are killed during real realistic training. The more “touchy-feely” and politically correct a military organization becomes, the less realistic (i.e., brutally effective) training protocol evolves. And I seriously doubt civilian organizations who tout to be teaching reality-based training for managing human violence involving lethal force issues, really are reality-based.

The litigation-rich environment of our current society's court systems will not allow reality-based training to exist in its true authenticity. Such training paradigms are too dangerous for civilian contractors to financial devise without serious modifications. And when such modifications create a litigation-safe environment, well, the realism is seriously dampened. Sorry, no manner of computer simulation will mimic the battlefield. We simply do not know enough about the neuroplasticity of

the brain in relationship to what occurs upstairs during lethal force killing or be killed scenarios to activate such assemblies via artificial electrodes. Until that day, training dangers must be real—not imagined—for reality based training to be reality based training.

High-end military organizations like Marine Force Recon, Delta and Navy SEALs are the only groups I know who have the funds and ability to engage in *true* realistic training needed to prevail without doubt, in the severe violence of lethal force encounters, i.e., war. Their training is extremely well-conducted, involving mind-boggling amounts of dangerous, daily, live fire exercises, all done within an acceptable safety zone, mainly due to the professionalism of the individual men.

As far as U.S. Police Departments—municipal, county and/or state—engaging in reality-based training, their actual ability to design and implement genuine, realistic training facilities and formats, is greatly limited due to financial restraints, limitations set through departmental politics, public image problems, time limitations and those in-charge simply not “getting it.” Yes, there is basic training in Police Academies, but this is the low-end of basic. Yes, SWAT and SRT

units may or may not receive extra training—how realistic the training is made to be remains a closed, departmental issue. This may explain why former officers attempt to rectify this diverse training problem by setting up private training facilities in order to address this lacking. After all, bureaucracies are not the place to aspire to individual actualization. The institute is of reigning importance—not the individual.

When we statistically look at the number of municipal police departments (as many incorporated areas existing in the 50 states—town, borough, city etc.), the number of county sheriff departments and the fifty state police organizations, we begin to see the number of working police officers: full-time, part-time and auxiliary personnel. While being an on duty police officer means that every day the potential for lethal force exists due to the fact the officer brings a gun along, the large majority of these men and women do not regularly engage in lethal force scenarios.

Federal law enforcement agencies such as FBI, DEA, BATF, Marshal Services, Border Patrol, Park Rangers etc., fair a little better—financially—than municipal and county departments, but again, politics, time constraints,



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manpower shortages, and financial issues always divert energies away from realistic training.

The biggest problem any program designer will have when attempting to design realistic training is managing the element of genuine danger. High risk, realistic training means real high risk of training deaths or serious injury. This is the reason war is so scary folks—we have to kill and be killed. Once the danger is dampened or removed, realism diminishes or disappears entirely. Danger must be real for training to be real. Implied and/or imagined danger eventually wears off and needs to be up-graded to real danger. Duress is a direct product of danger.

Yes, we can create additional stressors in training not related to the specific danger of death and injury. In shooting drills, for instance, by establishing a strict number of hits in a restricted kill-zone under a known—or worse—unknown time constraint, these strict limits and requirements can generate that rushed, stressful feeling that may or may not affect the shooter's concentration on target. The mind, however, can quickly learn to overcome the stress of time restraints, and new, enriched stressors must be formulated.

I have been alive long enough to hear many arguments for various training protocols that are designed to be realistic merely because they are promoted as methods which supposedly induce an adrenal response. Loud rock music at a concert induces the adrenal response. This ability to create an adrenal response during training activities is not the goal, and is far too simplistic to so wholeheartedly embrace as reality-based training maneuver. To believe and state that reality-based training is about simply engaging in Classical Conditioning (remember Psych 101 and Pavlov's Dogs) is to demonstrate that one does not fully grasp the complexities involved in designing true reality-based training paradigms. Methods or training programs pairing the stressors responsible for generating an adrenal-stimulation within the body with supposedly correct motor-skills needed to manage these stressors will create a conditioned response. This conditioned response is, however, not always correct to the situation at hand. Classical Conditioning creates generalized enslavement to training stimuli, and the whole

idea of reality-based training is learning and adapting to worst-case-scenarios in such a way that we spontaneously pro-act in a situationally correct fashion every time, meaning we use our heads too adequately, smoothly and quickly.

Conditioned responses are what happens when the ex-soldier dives under the table at lunch time after his nephew has slammed the screen door. The soldier learned that it was generally acceptable to hit the ground every time a rocket exploded near his bunker. Now, when a loud, sudden and surprising noise occurs, he finds himself embarrassed from his inappropriate response to a general stimulus. When a law enforcement officer accidentally shoots a child in the dark due to his reflexive response received through rote training using the adrenal-response mechanism, this is not what reality-based training does or is designed to achieve.

Reality-based training is the high-ending training designs that do NOT create robots and do NOT elicit generalized responses to operational stimuli. Such designs create highly cognizant, highly specific, highly discerning operators who are never slaves to their training design. Yes, we do default to a known process when under duress, which is all the more the reason to make sure that reality-based training protocols are truly reality based and not just reasonable facsimiles, thereof.

It's not enough to be training an individual's psychomotor responses while this person is under the influence of an artificially induced adrenal dump. I repeat: "This is far too simplistic to produce specific, situationally correct actions while under duress." What we desire through training realism is for the human subject, as a whole, to learn to control his or her internal and external bodily responses while developing the full range of cognitive processes needed to mindfully discern threat-problems with appropriate threat-management solutions via situationally correct actions.

This integration of fighting mind, body and spirit takes incredible amounts of time and energy to facilitate in such a way that the human being can swiftly discern what is a real life and death threat, what kind it is and then deal with it appropriately. Because of the intensity, the danger involved, and the enormous amounts of time, resources,

space, and energy expenditures needed for an operative to procure the highly specific results through realistic training paradigms, any degree of skimming off this intensity results in less than half measures.

Interestingly enough, the Japanese Samurai devised some of the most profound training paradigms known to civilized warfare. Read any of Thomas Cleary's translations, plus Takuan's *THE UNFETTERED MIND*, and works written about Hakuin and Ikkyu Sojoun. There is nothing esoteric about the material, it's just difficult reading on the difficult subject of training the warrior's mind, body and soul as an integrated whole.

The reality-based training I see being promoted in our current climate within the commercial martial arts is pretend fighting with pretend results with really scary measures of false security being created. I am not even sure who the audience is supposed to be, because, by and large, the majority of civilians who are interested in the commercial martial arts or self-defense really have no need for engaging in reality-based training paradigms. At least not unless the person is going to be dealing with lethal force issues on a daily basis; which is highly unlikely.

For the most part, residents who live in a modern, industrial free-world country will live a relatively safe life. Staunchly developed and keenly attuned awareness will be these peoples' best means of self-defense. And, yes, this must be trained and refreshed regularly, but reality based training is not required to develop keen awareness. Developing mindfulness is about being aware of our awareness, not learning to physical fight under an adrenal response.

So what can we do to train realistically, if that is what we want and we are not members of an elite forces/law enforcement group? Obviously, for most of us, that would mean we possess unlimited funds and want only limited exposure to the kind of danger associated with killing and be killed, and also free from the fear of litigation?

That last limit—the limit imposed by the fear of litigation—makes training realistically rough, to say the least. I am not sure what YOU can do about that. I make NO recommendations. I am only cautioning those who may wish to buy into the propaganda of reality-based training or

scenario based training commonly advertised in commercial martial arts periodicals.

I will recall with the readers of this article my old-school training, which I rarely see any more. I had a rather crazy *Sensei*, who served in the Marine Corps during World War Two. This gentleman, no longer alive, thought it was a lot of fun to actually beat up his students. Those who stayed in the school, well, we learned to take a beating. Plus he had us put on the boxing gloves, head gear and mouth-pieces to *box it up*. The goal was simply to see how long we could go before someone got knocked out—literally. Some times it was one-on-one; sometimes it was two or three on one. We would also engage in hard-smacking grappling (Judo) with full-bore *ne-waza*, or ground work. We really tried to hurt each other. It was up to our own skill level not to get hurt through our proper applications of covering up, warding off, fending, ducking, bobbing, weaving, falling, rolling, and shrimping away and out.

I also wrestled in high school during this time. This was done on the old canvas mats before the nice foam ones we have today became common place. Plenty of ring-worm, there. Often, we warmed up and finished off our regular practice (coach was in his office) with a hard-core free-for-all, last man standing drill. We called in *total annihilation King of the Mat*. We slammed and threw hard, and used all manner of illegal moves. I got my front teeth knocked out in that horseplay.

The boxing, wrestling and Judo as I had learned it really did help me during my military service. The rough and tumble of our *sports* conditioning—lots of weight work (Olympic Lifts) for strength; lots of running and wind-sprints for tenacity; lots of contact, high impact slamming for mental toughness—made for a specific kind of athleticism I personally do not see any more in our kinder, gentler, political correct world.

I believe that in the earlier days of the Dogs Brothers, while Eric Knaus was the Top Dog, there was demonstrated within this venue of expression some of the best realistic training in the martial arts arena to date. Going full-bore, outside on the grass, under the authorities radar, bashing each other with inch and quarter diameter rattan sticks, with very little body

armor—light fencing masks and batting gloves—was a perfect example of training realism. The danger was real. What I have seen lately of the current Dog Brothers Martial Arts organization is a mere watered down version of its former self. Mr. Denny will argue with my conclusion, but I stand by my perception until someone can clarify it for me.

In my years on this Earthwalk through the martial arts arenas, what I witness regularly is that the greater the commercial success a specific martial arts discipline experiences, the more diluted or watered down that particular *Art* becomes—whatever that might have been.

In regards to training aids and reality based training, well, I have heard of a new Canadian made reality based, adrenal inducing training aid called the “shock-knife.” This training tool induces fear via pain through touch-delivered electrical shock. This theoretically generates an emergency response in the recipient who is attempting to learn knife-fighting and defensive knife work. MAYBE!

As wild teens, we practiced-fought with serrated butter-knives (old kitchen knives), learning the skills needed to deliver explosive, in-tight cuts and thrusts, and what it was like to get cut and to be stabbed. We wore short-sleeve white T-shirts and shorts so that we would get cut and be able to see it and register the injury. We thumped one another hard so we could really learn. I still have tiny scars on my arms, hands and thighs from those nasty little things. And the stabs, they would leave some significant bruises on the ribs and back. Occasionally, we would target the neck and head, making marks there, as well. We didn’t use eye-protection and wrist guards or any kind of guards. One cannot train like this today in a commercially successful setting. Litigation will place the trainers in bankruptcy and in jail.

In the military, my basic and advanced infantry training was SOP—nothing unique or special. I didn’t learn what I really needed in either Basic or AIT to manage the brutal and cruel reality of combat. It wasn’t until I was *in country* that I learned, and much of what I learned there was on the job training. What was not on the job training—actual, formal military schooling—was still conducted in a real war zone, under real war

zone conditions with real war zone NCO’s. Final exam was a real war zone mission. Now that is realistic training. You learn or die; you survive or you don’t.

Carl Cestari once made a comparison of real training versus contrived training by using the analogy of snakes. Essentially, what he conveyed was that real training is like learning to handle cobras safely by handling cobras safely; contrived training is like handling black snakes safely, but pretending you are handling cobras. Using this analogy of snakes is a good way to measure someone’s reported method of realistic training.

Real training involves real blood being shed (broken noses, gashes and cuts needing stitched, cracked ribs, broken fingers and toes, knocked out teeth and unconsciousness). Real training means learning to endure and overcoming real pain. Real training means learning to deal with genuine danger calmly, coolly, collected and with control—NOT with conditioned responses like some robot, or through some pretend method we might use if we might get in this kind of *what if* situation.

We cannot learn to manage pain through pretending to endure pain. We cannot learn to deal with danger by handling make-believe danger in a contrived environment that negates real danger’s influence. It is not enough for us to beat on a padded assailant yelling obscenities at us, getting the adrenal response pumping through our veins. So much of what I see in the current flavors-of-the-martial-arts-month-club is: “My pretend fighting is better than your pretend fighting.”

For those who want to understand what it is like to get hit and still function, then you must get hit really hard and learn to keep fighting. A lot of mixed martial arts fighters and trainer get a bad wrap from traditional and non-traditional martial arts practitioners and grandmasters—people who say that these athletes’ skills are not real-deal skills. They fight in an arena with rules and the street has no rules.

Well, true enough, it’s not real in the sense of what happens when someone is about to shank you for the few dollars you have in your pocket you refuse to hand over. Sound awareness skills and common sense would have prevented that

scenario from ever happening. But the pain and the toughness practiced and learned in this rough and tumble arena is very real, indeed. It's a hard and painful career ripe with serious injuries and potential for permanent, crippling injury. Don't tell me that isn't real stuff and real hard training.

To get tough, I still believe we need to get hit hard and slammed hard to find out whether we have what it takes to (like the old Timex commercial always reported), "Take a licking and keep on ticking." I see too many so-called realistic training designs where the practitioner gets all dressed up like he or she is going off to battle and then they pretend fight in padded suits, be it shock-knives, paint balls, or overly padded sticks and fists.

A good example of safe, training realism, is when men and women who are able to train with simunition rounds—not paint balls. Simunitions create noise, generate severe pain, and they are much more expensive than paint balls, but much more effective.

Realistically (starting to get really tired of that word) NOT everyone needs to train utilizing scenario based or reality based training methodologies. Not everyone should. If you are a business man or woman who wants to be fit but wants to know how to tussle a little, learn to box and/or grapple full contact. Hit, be hit; fall; slam, get slammed; learn some submissions and escapes. But awareness will always remain as your primary defensive tool—not your fists and feet.

One of my biggest annoyances are those souls who worry so much about learning *realistic* knife-fighting. These poor fellows are the fellows who will never need such skills. The knife-fighting industry in the commercial martial arts is truly the greatest arena for misinformation, regardless of the discipline. Those who possess the real-deal skills achieved such knife skills the hard way, and usually the illegal way, through real-life assaults—such as the career criminals or those managing career criminals on a daily basis. And in the military, those who know the knife—really know the knife—they also know it's not about knife-fighting, it's about killing. I know so few men or women who have had to kill with a knife, or who have had to actually deal with some sort of knife assault, who are not in prison. Those

who are not in prison, and know knife, are even fewer and ALWAYS some sort of a professional.

Law enforcement personnel who desire realism in their training need to specifically become involved in their department's training programs. Depending on each officer's or agent's duty responsibilities, realistic training that is *realistic* becomes highly problematic and subject to serious scrutiny, should a training accident occur, or should an officer respond to a duty bound situation inappropriately.

How many civilians know that in the United States an officer cannot use his weapon offensively. It's against the Constitution, folks. A Police Officer can only use his side arm for defensive purposes, hence the constant harping on the term *defensive tactics*.

Police personnel are bound by duty to protect and serve, and are highly limited by constitutional constraints and departmental protocol. There are few civilian contractors who can successfully and realistically meet such restrictive demands. I have the greatest respect, admiration and sympathy for what law enforcement personnel must manage each and every day of their lives.

High-end private trainers who successfully train law enforcement personnel establish and execute well-defined training paradigms that verbally address realism, but who also work and work the basics of shooting marksmanship, movement, verbal de-escalation and fundamental physical restraints/controls. These are done safely, in controlled settings, addressing realism via verbal instruction coupled with as many variables as they are able to induce without adversely affecting over all safety of all the participants and trainers. It's reality based in the sense of being steeped in a litigation crazed terrain.

But such environments are far from truly mimicking the dangers of the harsh streets. Still, this kind of safe and controlled training is needed and those who toot their reality-based paradigms and say that this aforementioned training is less than adequate are selling snake oil.

Military operatives and Cops who get and stay in top physical condition and maintain a healthy life-style—good diet and avoidance of excessive alcohol/tobacco consumption are on the right

track. From this base of sound physical fitness, all operators who venture into harm's way regularly, need to learn, practice and maintain, solid firearms safety, basic marksmanship, shooting from cover, moving to cover, shooting and moving, shooting while moving three-dimensional targets, learn some basic boxing, learning to not get hit, what it is like to be hit hard, and how to hit hard; learn some basic ground grappling—mostly escapes and stand ups, rolls and falls; and then their departmentally approved controls and defensive tactics, along with the realities of edged weapons executed in a variety of positions, postures and surroundings.

Anyone engaged in high risk operations in high risk environments, need to at least be familiar with what it is like and what is needed and what's required to successfully maneuver through a variety of locations. Such training, or familiarization to diverse settings in which violence can and will be found becomes highly problematic, merely due to the risk of increased injury while training, which always means loss of work. But such personnel must at least possess a working understanding of what it is like to wrestle or box in full gear in an auto, in a hall way, in a metal stairwell; what if you are dealing with a blade in these arenas? What it is



like against multiple adversaries who managed to catch you off guard. The *what if* scenarios are so diverse and can be extremely novel, it is not time conducive to train for all possible scenarios, hence the need for a strong working relationship with the basics. The basics learned well assist the individual in generalizing and transferring this know-how into other scenarios, but only if the mind has been properly conditioned beyond mere rote and conditioned responses.

Reality based training is not needed by the majority of people entering the commercial martial arts arena, and when it appears that this training is needed while journeying through this arena, look deeply into the truth of this marketing ploy preying upon the fears harbored. Look first to your fears and see if they are even justified. Those who really do need real reality base training will not be able to find the real deal in a commercial martial arts facility. Such individuals are members of the military SPEC OPS community, have already survived selection, and are looking to be deployed into a hot war zone soon. Their training requirements are beyond what is needed in any commercial martial arts studio.

What lies between commercial martial arts and the military, in regards to reality-based training is the law enforcement community, whose members must train to meet the mean streets, but work well within the constraints of the Constitution, civil rights, money crunches and departmental politics. Here, learning the basics in all areas of constitutional law, defensive tactics (firearms to empty hands), anatomy, kinesiology, physiology, stress management, emergency medicine, verbal de-escalation, conflict resolution, neuroplasticity of the brain, human relationships are all essential.

The bottom line must always be “Do I really need reality based training?” If so, “why do I need it?” If you find that you really do need such harsh training due to your high risk operations in high risk environments, then, proceed with caution. Make an informed decision about where you go and to whom you choose to give your hard-earned money, but always learn the fundamentals in all the areas demanded to the highest level of continued proficiency.

# Traditional Values

by Tony Somers

What is happening in the world of Martial Arts? Is it my imagination or is a great divide opening up between the traditionalists and the mixed martial arts guys? And if so why? And what can we do about it?

I have said before that one system could not exist without the other, they fit together like a hand in a glove.

As someone who has a foot in both worlds I am surprised and disappointed at the rift that is so obviously present.

The UFC came about so that people from different arts could challenge each other in a controlled environment to see who was supposedly the best. Now we have a MMA system, which has spawned some great fighters but seems to have lost what the traditional systems were all about. Which is very sad when you think that in the early days the UFC was full of traditional martial artists pitting their skills against each other.

The strengths of the traditional systems used to be that not only do you learn the physical aspects of a particular art but you were also taught how to show respect, discipline and humility.

The Samurai were great and feared warriors but they were also pillars of the community, they lived by a code of honour and respect and they served the community as well as their masters.

What I see and hear now are high-ranking martial artists still on about how they would tear somebody's head off if they did something wrong to them and maybe that's where things have gone wrong. It's my opinion, and only my opinion, that the traditionalists should be setting an example of how true masters should live.

I remember with great fondness Michael Carradine in Kung Fu (what a programme) that programme was one of the things that attracted me into martial arts in the first place. The thought that one day I would be able to learn a martial art to such a high level and yet be so respectful

and humble that I would feel bad if I ever had to use it.

Miyamoto Musashi was one of the most famous and feared Samurais of all time but towards the end of his life he moved into calligraphy and painting. I am guessing this feared Samurai could still have a fight, but just didn't need to.

The point I am making here is that when I look around the MMA world I see people who want to have a tear up, which is perfectly fine. I also see a lot of people, by no means all, but a lot of people with bad attitudes no respect and certainly no humility.

Unfortunately this seems to be spilling over into the traditional side of things and it is not seen as cool to be humble or respectful any more. At a time in the world when great masters or role models are needed more than ever, what do the traditionalists do? It seems to me that what they do is get sucked into this belief that the more brutal something is the better it must be.

The martial arts world and indeed a much wider audience are desperate for those old traditional values and instead of seeing them as weak they should be seen as strengths to be shouted and proclaimed from the highest hilltops.

Look at people like Geoff Thompson or Iain Abernethy these people can have a fight but do they go round bragging about this fact? No they don't they are both very humble; they both embrace other systems and are respectful to everyone.

In the master class I run with Matty Evans we teach people the latest cutting edge self-protection techniques but these are laced with the fact that they should be nice humble people. We teach the art of fighting without fighting. We do a lot of personal development work so that people can learn self-sovereignty and feel better about themselves both physically and psychologically. This in turn allows them to feel confident enough not to want to have to fight because they have an inner confidence that not

only empowers them but also empowers those people that they come in to contact with.

There are good and bad people everywhere and it is not my intention to offend any one in this article. It's just that I believe MMA and the traditional systems have a lot to offer each other. The traditional artists have to be prepared to adapt, but that doesn't mean that they have to lose the true essence of what their arts are about. These traditional systems have been set up for hundreds of years and still have much to offer; not least their core values of self sovereignty, respect, humility and discipline. The MMA are forging new paths and as such should be applauded but I feel it would be a big mistake to disregard the ways of the traditional systems, together they are twice as strong.

As martial artists we have been given a platform, let us use it in a good way, set an example and like Samurais serve our fellow man.

For more information on Tony Somers go to; [www.tonysomers.com](http://www.tonysomers.com) or call 07708273376



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# Round Two: Self-Defence & The Law

by D. Cooper

*Important Note: All readers are encouraged to be aware of all appropriate local and national laws. This article is not intended as a substitute for advice from legal professionals. Readers are strongly encouraged to seek guidance and advice from such legal professionals when required.*

This article discusses the use of force while acting in self defence or otherwise using force against another person and the law regarding such issues as it stands in the UK.

It is a sad fact of the society that we live in today that certain members of our society seem to go out of their way to cause trouble and act violently and aggressively towards ordinary decent people going about their business.

As martial artists we all train for different reasons; be it the sporting aspect, studying the traditional side of an art, or self-defence. Whatever reason one may have for training in the martial arts it is prudent to prepare for that possible eventuality of when we may have to defend ourselves, our loved ones or our property. However it is one thing to go training regularly in order to be able to physically defend ourselves in such situations but there sometimes comes, after the physical encounter, another confrontation which can be far harder to deal with: this fight is with the law and the criminal justice system. For those unfamiliar with Police procedure and the way the criminal justice system and its various agencies work, this can be very stressful if handled wrongly.

The law in the UK provides the right for every person to be able to lawfully defendhim or herself. This is provided for under Common Law. What many people do not realise is that one does not have to wait for an assailant to make the first move to attack you. You can act first by pre-emptively attacking your aggressor. This is known as a pre-emptive self-defence. The basis of this is that if you HONESTLY BELIEVE that the aggressor was going to physically attack you, then you do not have to wait for them to do so. You may use REASONABLE FORCE against that person to stop them or dissuade them from attacking you or to enable you to avoid further confrontation.

## Honest belief

This aspect of law regards how you later justify your actions as reasonable. If your use of force to defend yourself is to be considered reasonable in the eyes of the law then it is necessary that you must have held an honest belief that your actions were no more than that which were required in order to negate the threat or perceived threat against you. It is vitally important that you cite your honestly held belief that your actions were reasonable in the circumstances.

## 'Reasonable Force'

Where a person acts in such a way that causes another person to fear becoming the victim of immediate violence, this constitutes an assault. Any intentional or reckless application of unlawful force to another person amounts to battery. The use of force may only be deemed to be lawful where; it is in the defence of oneself or another or to protect property. The lawful use of force in any circumstance includes the overriding principle that it must be reasonable and necessary. According to English Law the issue of reasonable force comes from two main sources.

### 1 - English common law which states that:

A person is permitted to use reasonable force in order to:

- Defend himself from attack
- Prevent an attack on another person
- Defend his property

### 2 - Section 3(1) of the Criminal Law Act 1967 provides a statutory defence) which states that:

Any person may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances in order to:

- Prevent a crime from being committed,

**OR**



- Make or assist in the lawful arrest of offenders or suspected offenders or of persons unlawfully at large.

In assessing the reasonableness of the force used, prosecutors should ask two questions:

- Was the use of force justified in the circumstances, i.e. was there a need for any force at all? and
- Was the force used excessive in the circumstances?

The courts have stated that both questions are to be answered on the basis of the facts as the accused honestly believed them to be at the time. To that extent it is a subjective test. There is, however, also an objective element to the test. The jury must then go on to ask themselves whether, on the basis of the facts as the accused believed them to be, a reasonable person would regard the force used as reasonable or excessive. This basically boils down to having to justify our own actions.

It is now worth looking at what could happen legally after you have acted in self-defense.

Consider the following scenario; you are out with friends in a bar one evening and some thug for no reason takes a dislike to you and decides they are going to cause trouble for you. This person approaches you at some point and becomes aggressive towards you. You

subsequently act lawfully in self-defense using reasonable force. However the police have been called and upon arriving at the scene receive an allegation of assault from the aggressor whose friends are backing up his story. The officers locate you and inform you that they are arresting you for assault. The following is what should happen next.

### Arrest

In being confronted with a situation like that described above before arresting the alleged suspect (this being you) they should be taking a detailed account or statement from the victim (your aggressor) outlining the allegation and what happened. They should also be obtaining accounts of what happened from all those persons present. When they approach you to effect an arrest they should state the outline of the allegation, what you are being arrested for, why an arrest is necessary and then caution you, something along the lines of;

*An allegation has been made that you have assaulted a person unlawfully and as a result you are being arrested for (insert offence). Your arrest is necessary in order secure and preserve evidence by way of questioning and to prevent the loss of evidence. You do not have to say anything but it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something you later rely on in court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence.*

Once you are identified as a suspect to officers they should not be asking you any questions other than to establish your identity. Once arrested you will then be taken to the nearest available police station with a custody suite. During this journey the officers are not allowed to discuss the allegation with you, this can make for one of two situations occurring during the journey;

- 1 - The officers will engage in general seemingly innocent conversation with you. But watch what you say!
- 2 - The journey will be conducted in silence or private conversation between the officers only.

They may be reluctant to talk to you, as they are under an obligation to write down and record everything you say!!!

## Custody

As soon as you arrive at the police station the officers should present you to the custody officer and give the grounds and circumstances of the arrest. The custody officer must then determine whether there are sufficient grounds to detain you in custody. The custody officer will then explain your legal rights while in police custody, these being among other things;

- Right to speak to a solicitor and have one present during interview.
- Right to a phone call to inform someone that you have been arrested.
- Right to be provided upon request with writing materials.

The custody officer must also determine whether you may need medical treatment, your fingerprints, DNA and photo will then be taken. These can be taken without your consent and by force if necessary. The police may also seize as evidence your clothing if it has blood or saliva on it or if it is an identification issue. In most cases a person arrested in such a manner can be kept in police custody for up to 24 hours.

## Interview

At some stage you will be interviewed by officers about the incident. This interview must be recorded. If you have asked for a solicitor the following process will take place. The solicitor arrives at the police station where they will then meet the officer dealing with the case, that officer will then tell the solicitor certain amount information about the case under investigation. This process is called disclosure. The solicitor will attempt to find out as much as they can about the strength of the police case against you.

The solicitor will then see you in a private consultation where they will give you appropriate legal advice. Such advice could take one of the following forms; to exercise your right to silence during interview (usually done when the police case is weak), formulate a written statement detailing your position in the case, or they may advise you to answer all questions unless they say otherwise during the interview.

## Advice

The above are the processes that should normally take place under such circumstances however police officers are human and like all of us prefer an easy life. This being the case there have been occasions when people who have acted lawfully in self-defence have been charged or cautioned with offences as a result of being unfamiliar with the Police and Criminal Justice System processes. These cases are most usually instances when the person who has acted in self-defence has said the wrong thing and not sought legal advice from a solicitor whilst in custody.

## Dealing with the Aftermath

Should you ever find yourself in a situation where you have acted in self-defence or had to use force against another for whatever reason, the following is good advice on how to prepare for dealing with any potential legal fallout after the physical engagement is over.

Firstly let's go back to the scenario mentioned above where you have acted in self-defence in a bar. In any situation where you have been the target of aggression and have acted in self-defence it is sound and good advice to leave the scene as soon as possible if this is safe to do so. It could also be advantageous to contact the police at the earliest instance and report the incident yourself. Something along the lines of;

*I have just been involved in an incident at the Kings Head where a person behaved aggressively and threateningly towards me causing me to be fearful that they were going to assault me. I have acted in self-defence and am reporting the incident so that police have a record of it and of my reporting it.*

Do not say anymore than this as this call is recorded and can be used as evidence later on. In response to any questions you may be asked by the operator simply give your contact details and say that you will be happy to assist police after seeking legal advice.

**WARNING No1: NEVER LET ONTO POLICE THAT YOU HAVE ANY SORT OF MARTIAL ARTS / SELF DEFENCE TRAINING**

Alternatively rather than contacting the police if there is someone at the establishment who can be trusted such as a manager or door staff you can give them your contact details to be passed onto the police should they receive a complaint from the aggressor and start making enquiries.

If police approach you and arrest you as described above take heed of the following advice;

1 - Say something along the lines of, *“Officers I would like you to record the following in your notebooks. I have acted in self-defence and I am willing to cooperate with police in any way I can but I will not discuss the incident without first speaking with a solicitor”*. Insist on them writing this down so that you can then sign it and then maintain your right to silence only answering those questions concerned with establishing your identity and welfare.

2 - During the journey to the police station try not to engage in any conversation with the officers, be polite but mind what you say and try to remember the details of any conversation for later recollection.

3 - When being booked into the custody suite at the police station the custody officer will ask you if you understand the reason for your arrest after the officers have told him the circumstances. At this point repeat what you told the officers originally as at point No1 above and ask that it be written on the custody record. Then simply answer the administrative and welfare questions put to you. Do not discuss the incident, as this process is also generally video and audio recorded.

4 - If you need to, make a phone call to someone to let them know where you are but do not discuss the incident at all.

5 - At the earliest opportunity ask to speak to a solicitor, this can be your own or the duty solicitor which is free, you will be able to speak to them by phone but this could be over heard by officers and custody staff so don't say too much.

6 - Whilst in a cell ask the custody staff for some writing material and tell them you wish to make some notes, which are covered by legal privilege and are for your solicitor. Ask the staff to ensure that this is noted on the custody record.



7 - It is advisable to make full notes as soon as possible after the event. The police also do this and are allowed to refer to those notes in court to refresh their memory. This is because the notes are contemporaneous which are made at the time or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter and not because police officers have a special status as witnesses. You have the same right to use notes. A delay in writing the notes of several hours or even a day or so may not prevent you from using the notes.

8 - When making notes:

- Write out a full and legible note of everything that happened in the correct sequence of events
- Write down everything that was said, word for word if possible, particularly any conversation you had with police officers
- Record the names and numbers, if you know them, of the police officers involved.
- Sign the notes at the bottom and put the time and date.
- If there are witnesses to the incident, take their names and addresses if possible and ask them to make notes.

- Ensure that you keep these notes with you at all times whilst in custody until you can give them to your solicitor. If police try to take them insist that they are subject to legal privilege and that they are committing an offence by taking them from you.

9 - If you have any injuries, for example, swelling / grazing on your knuckles, defensive wounds etc ensure that you insist on police:

- Taking photographs of such injuries.

### **AND**

- Ask to see the custody doctor or nurse so that your injuries are recorded.

The photographs and medical evidence may be of great value to you if you are charged with a criminal offence.

10 - Now comes the hard bit, sit back and wait to be interviewed and do not discuss the case with anyone. This could take some time and a police custody suite is not the most comfortable of environments when all you want to do is get out and resolve the issue. Remember the police can hold you for up to 24 hours without having to seek any judicial oversight such as warrants etc.

11 - Let us assume that you were arrested at the bar at say 23:00 hours, it is highly likely that you will not be interviewed until around midday the following day as the investigating officer who will be interviewing you will not start work until around 08:00 hours. They will then need time to read the case papers handed over to them, go out and get any statements and do any necessary enquiries and also to liaise with your solicitor.

### **WARNING No2: DO NOT LET YOURSELF BE TALKED INTO BEING INTERVIEWED EARLIER WITHOUT A SOLICITOR PRESENT.**

1 - It is not uncommon for officers to attend the custody suite and speak to a suspect at the cell purely to introduce themselves and give the suspect an indication of when they are likely to be ready to interview them. However once the suspect is told that they are likely to be some time it is quite common for the suspect to all of a sudden change their mind and decline to have a solicitor represent them, purely so that they can then be interviewed sooner and released from

custody, usually having been charged with offences and released on bail to attend court.

2 - When you have your private consultation with your solicitor prior to interview be sure to tell them that you train in Martial Arts / Self Defence but that to your knowledge the police are not aware of this fact. Your solicitor will after hearing your version of events then explain how the custody and interview process works and what the potential outcomes are. They will then advise you on how to proceed during the interview ie; remaining silent, giving a prepared statement or freely answer the questions put to you. You do not have to follow this advice and if you are unhappy with their advice you can ask for another solicitor.

3 - Once the officer has finished interviewing you they will they have to consult the Crown Prosecution Service who will review the evidence in the case. This could take place whilst you are still in custody or after you have been released on bail to return to the police station at a later date while a decision is made as to how to proceed with the case.

One of the most important points to bear in mind is that no matter what else is going on in your life at the time you are in custody none is as important as the the issue for which you have been arrested. Keep your mind on the issue at hand as if you deal with this properly as outlined above at this stage it could save you a lot more stress later on.

As mentioned above, in addition to using force in defence of oneself a person can also lawfully use force against another in order to defend a third party, protect their property from damage or theft, prevent a crime being committed or restrain and detain a person suspected of having committed an offence (commonly called a citizens arrest). The same principles as outlined above for acting in defence of yourself apply in each respect. However people have fallen foul of the legal system when acting under these provisions due to their having said the wrong thing at the wrong time to the police.

### **Self Defence Misconceptions**

**A person who is trained in Martial Arts etc is under an obligation to warn any aggressor before taking steps to defend themselves.**

This is a common misconception that a person who has received training in combat skills is under a duty to warn his attacker of this expertise prior to him taking any physical steps to defend himself. This is not the case. Such a person is treated the same as an untrained person although it is open to a jury to find that because of his training his actions may not have been reasonable.

### **The defender is under a duty to retreat from a threat.**

Another mistaken belief that is simply not the case. A person who is being threatened with violence is not under any such duty, however a jury may find it easier to find that a defence is reasonable if it was shown that the defender had tried to avoid any confrontation. This is not an absolute requirement though

The Court of Appeal found in the case of Bird - [1985] 1 WLR 816 that any action taken by the defender to avoid a confrontation could be viewed as good evidence that the defender acted reasonably but is no more than that and that a person may act in accordance with the law when acting in self defence without retreating. If however there is a realistic option of retreating or avoiding the confrontation then staying and engaging in a physical confrontation could risk being found as using unreasonable force

### **The law will not protect me if I have an intruder break into my home.**

As stated above, English Common Law gives you the right to protect your property from damage or theft. This means that if you find someone attempting to damage or steal your property or you find an intruder in your home and you believe they are gained entry in order to cause damage, steal or harm you or your

family you are allowed to use only that amount or force that is reasonable to be able to stop them.

### **What if I chase them as they run off?**

This situation is different, as you are no longer acting in self-defence. However if you are confronted with finding an intruder in your home or someone attempting to damage or steal your property, in addition to using force to protect your property you also have the right in law to use such force as is reasonable to prevent that person committing such a crime and also to restrain and detain them for the police to subsequently deal with. If however having caught the intruder you then decide to further hurt or kill them to punish them then this would amount to excessive use of force.

Consider the case of the farmer Tony Martin who was convicted of murder after shooting dead one of two burglars who broke into his home in the middle of the night. Factors in the Martin case that contributed to the court's decision were that, he kept a stock of illegally held weapons at his home and had previously stated his belief in a householder's right to use extreme methods to defend his property. The facts of the case suggested that, to some extent, Martin had been lying in wait for intruders. The intruder killed by Martin was sixteen years' old and was shot in the back whilst 12 feet away in the process of escaping. Whilst some might believe this to be natural justice with the intruder getting what he deserved, in the eyes of the law such action was unnecessary, unreasonable and excessive.

This article was written by D Cooper: a police officer of 8 years service 6 of which spent as a detective where he has investigated many cases of violence from Public Order situations and Commons Assault to more serious cases such as GBH, Rape and Murder.

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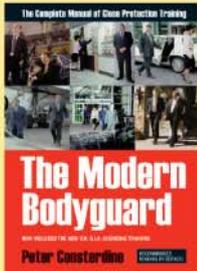
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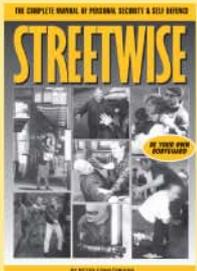
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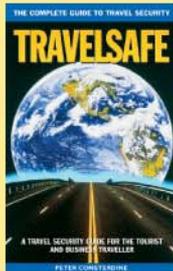
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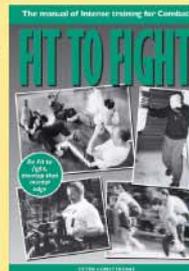
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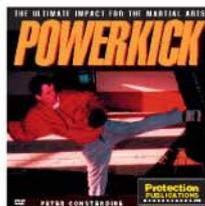
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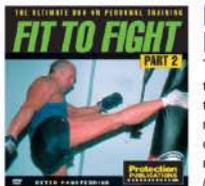
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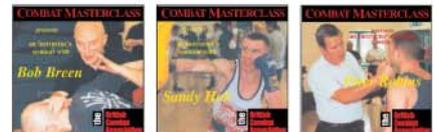


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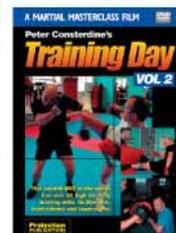
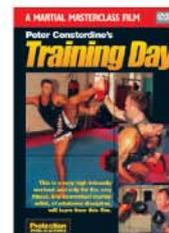
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# Chinto Kata: History & Application

by Iain Abernethy

Chinto kata has a fascinating history and it is necessary to have some understanding of that history if we are to understand the kata itself. The creator of the kata was Sokon “Bushi” Matsumura (1809—1902) who played a huge role in the development of karate and who was also the chief bodyguard to three Okinawan kings. Matsumura is believed to have studied under Tode Sakugawa, Iwah, Ason, Kushanku and, crucially for the purposes of this article, he also studied under a shipwrecked Chinese martial artist who went by the name Chinto.

Chinto became shipwrecked on Okinawa during the 1800s and, in need of shelter, he set up home in a cave. Finding himself stranded without resources, Chinto began to steal food and livestock from the locals at night in order to sustain himself. This unwelcome behaviour was reported to the Okinawan king who sent Matsumura to deal with the situation.

As you would expect from someone holding the position of bodyguard to the king, Matsumura was a very skilled fighter who normally defeated his enemies with ease. However, when Matsumura confronted Chinto he found the stranded sailor to be a very skilled fighter and the battle quickly reached a stalemate. Always keen to further enhance his formidable skills, Matsumura made a deal with Chinto: Matsumura offered to provide for Chinto and to help him return to China in exchange for instruction in Chinto’s fighting method. This is how Matsumura began his study under Chinto.

Upon Chinto’s return to China, Matsumura formulated a kata – named after the originator of the methods it contained – to ensure Chinto’s methods were recorded and passed on to future generations. Many years later when karate made its way to mainland Japan, Gichin Funakoshi changed the name of the kata to Gankaku (“Crane on a Rock” in reference to the crane stances found within the form) in order to give the kata a Japanese name. Funakoshi did this with all the kata to make karate more accessible to the Japanese. It is by this name that the kata is known in Shotokan today; with the other styles sticking with the original name of Chinto.



From this little bit of history we know that the kata is a record of the methods that the great warrior Matsumura learnt from Chinto. We also know Matsumura was interested in these methods because he thought them effective and because he had not seen them before. Essentially the kata is a record of the “unusual” methods in Chinto’s armoury. The kata’s bunkai (application) is therefore highly unlikely to be basic in nature.

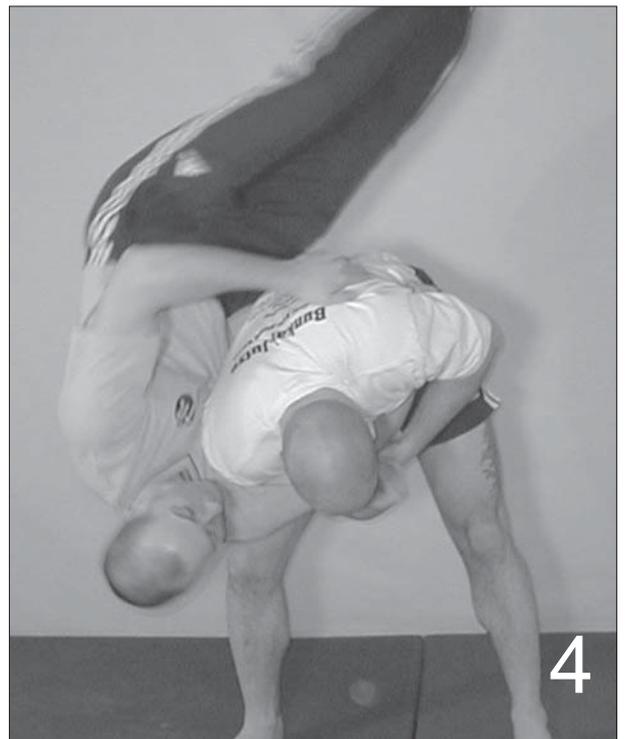
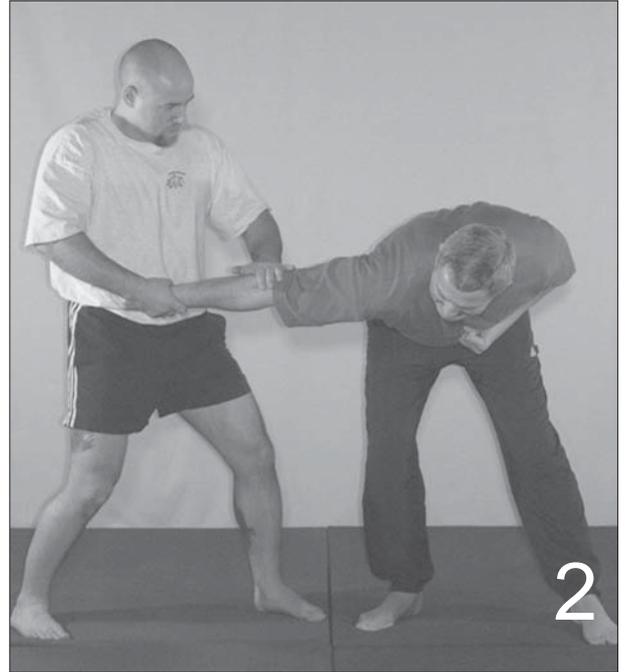
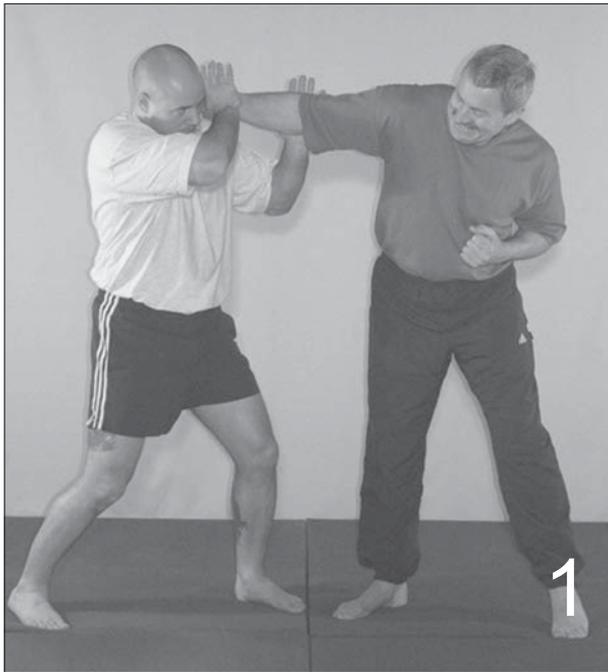
My study of bunkai shows that many kata start by showing basic skills and as the kata progresses so does the technical level of the skills shown. However, this is not the case with Chinto as it shows fairly advanced methods straight from the start. This is almost certainly due to the nature of its creation.

I like to think that at their first training session as teacher and pupil these former combatants broke down their fight as Matsumura learnt about the methods that had been applied upon him.

Perhaps Matsumura had hooked his hand around Chinto's neck during the fight only to have it wrenched off and then be punched for his trouble? That's certainly what the first part of the kata shows, so perhaps that was the first lesson Chinto gave Matsumura all those years ago? **Figure 1** shows the initial move of the kata which hyper-extends the enemy's elbow. **Figure 2** shows the second move of the kata which positions enemy for the following two punches.

Maybe Chinto then also showed how he could have thrown Matsumura from the same position?

Following the initial stripping of the grip – as an alternative to locking and punching – the kata instructs us to move our rear foot in while pulling the enemy towards us as is shown in **Figure 3**. The kata then instructs us to turn and pull around (the whole motion often labelled as a “turning gedan barai”). As shown in **Figure 4** this will pull the enemy over the hips and on to the floor. This is not a simple technique and yet it is found towards the start of the kata which would again emphasise Chinto kata's advanced nature.



Those who study bunkai on a regular basis will note that many of the techniques found in Chinto, including the two just discussed, are also found in Pinan Godan kata. The Pinan series of kata were created by Anko Itosu – who was a student of Sokon Matsumura’s – in order to be a summary of all the key methods practised in Shuri-te (the karate practised in the Shuri region of Okinawa at that time). Within the Pinan series we can see techniques and drills drawn from older kata including Bassai, Kushanku (Kanku-Dai) and Chinto. It is no coincidence that the techniques drawn from Chinto are all found in the most advanced form in the Pinan series. The most basic bunkai is found within Pinan Shodan (Heian Nidan) with each of the kata building on the last such that the Pinan series presents a structured training program in old style karate. The fact that the Chinto elements are found late in the fighting system that is the Pinan series again reflects the fact that Chinto is a record of the things the experienced warrior Matsumura had not come across prior to his fight with Chinto.

There are no “basics” to be found in Chinto kata. Indeed many of the drills within the form are longer and more intricate than are found elsewhere (see my DVD *Bunkai-Jutsu Volume 5: Chinto / Gankaku*). It would be difficult to describe these drills in detail in an article such as this, but I would like to briefly look at part of one of these drill in order to illustrate how the kata have changed over the years and how we need to be aware of those changes in order to make sense of the lessons contained within the kata.

Following the throw shown in Figure 4, the kata performs a jodan juki-uke (upper level cross receipt). This is a response to the enemy seizing your wrist in order to neutralise an attempted eye-gouge. Push the enemy away as you cross your arms and assume the position shown by the kata. Your free arm goes under your seized wrist and over your enemy’s wrist as is shown in **Figure 5**. By following the kata and pulling the arms in towards your centre the grip will either be stripped, or, if the enemy maintains their grip (which should be pretty strong considering you’ve just attacked their eyes with that limb) the wrist will become locked and they will bend at the waist as shown in **Figure 6**.



In most modern versions on the kata this motion is followed by a leaping double level kick (Nidan Geri), but this would not fit the position of the enemy. I maintain that the Nidan Geri is a modern “exaggeration” and that the kata originally instructed the practitioner to forcefully kick the lead leg twice in order to break balance and bring the head even further forward for the following techniques.

There is strong evidence that Nidan Geri was never in the kata originally. This evidence comes from a tale told by Gichin Funakoshi (who studied under Matsumura and his students Azato and Itosu). In his book *Karate-Do: My way of Life*, Funakoshi tells us that as well as being the chief bodyguard to the Okinawan king, Matsumura also taught the king martial arts. One day during a training session, the King and Matsumura were



sparring and the king attempted a Nidan Geri. Matsumura felt that the king needed reminding that combat was a matter of life and death and hence there was no place for such flamboyant methods. Especially when facing someone as skilled as Matsumura. He therefore countered the leaping kick and ultimately sent a baldy bruised king skidding across the floor of the dojo. A now very unhappy king sacked Matsumura on the spot!

Funakoshi goes on to tell how Matsumura got into a fight with a local engraver as a result and won through intimidation alone (being the main point Funakoshi wished to communicate by telling the story). He also tells us that Matsumura was ultimately reinstated. The key lesson for me, in relation to Chinto kata, is the obvious contempt with which Matsumura regarded Nidan Geri! He is therefore highly unlikely to have put such a technique in the kata he created – even if it has been part of Chino’s teaching, which I doubt it was – and hence we can be sure Nidan Geri is a

modern test of athleticism as opposed to the original combative method; which will almost certainly have been the two low kicks described earlier.

Although the kata gives us a record of Chino’s teachings to Matsumura, we must keep in mind that it is an imperfect record. In particular, students of bunkai must be sure to filter out what is for show and for athletic development; which is a pretty easy task if we understand the historical development of kata.

Following on from the two kicks to the shin, the kata then shows how to apply a strangle from that position. Should the strangle fail, the kata shows how to throw the enemy from a neck crank. Should the crank / throw fail, the kata shows how to re-secure an alternative strangle. And if that should fail, the kata shows how to keep control of the enemy such that strikes can be delivered to the neck and base of the skull. This long flow is typical of the methods found within Chinto kata. They are methods that should be studied after one has a solid grasp of the combative basics. They represent skilled alternatives that could be used if the enemy is managing to neutralise the more direct methods shown by the other kata. It is therefore right that these methods are taught late on in a student’s martial education; as the kata Chinto frequently is to this day.

I hope that this article has helped to convey a little about the history, nature and application of Chinto kata. I also hope it has encouraged you to explore the lessons of this intriguing kata in greater depth. Through Chinto kata we have a living link to the fascinating teachings of a bygone age.

In 1882 Matsumura – creator of Chinto kata – wrote down his seven virtues of “Bu” (martial skill). In this document he explains the need for the martial artist to study art, literature, ethics and he explains the various types of warrior. He also included the seven virtues of Bu which are as follows:

- Bu prohibits violence
- Bu maintains discipline
- Bu keeps order among the population
  - Bu spreads virtue
  - Bu gives a peaceful heart
  - Bu helps maintain the peace
- Bu makes a people and nation prosperous

# Practical Kata Application



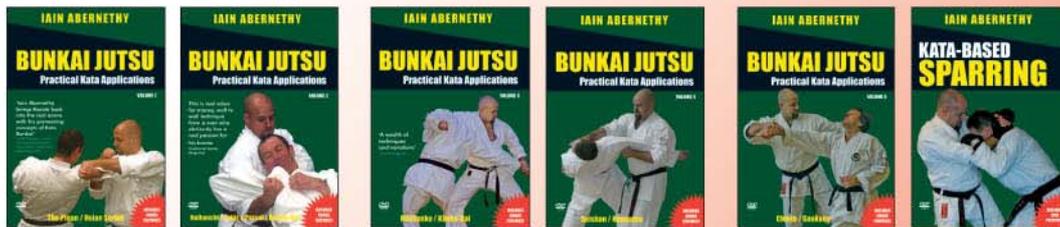
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# Ed Francisco Interview

by Michael Rosenbaum

**E**d Francisco is known as one of the South's leading poets. A two time Pulitzer nominee who lectured at Oxford and is the writer in residence at Pellissippi College, Francisco has numerous books, articles and plays to his credit. However, in spite of his literary accomplishments, Ed Francisco is also a fighting arts practitioner with almost five decades of experience. This interview was conducted in the winter of 2009 by Michael Rosenbaum.

## **1 - Ed, tell us about your martial arts background, why you started training and where?**

I would have to say it started in our family's kitchen when I was four. For whatever reason, my father laced me up in a pair of boxing mitts—ones he'd used in military boxing matches. My dad spent 44 months as an airman in Europe during WWII. Out of boredom, I suppose, he began arranging boxing matches for the servicemen. Not only did he box in these events, but he also trained fighters. It was only natural that he would want to train his son.

## **2 - You were once the southeastern silver gloves boxing champ. Could you tell us about your boxing career and how it influenced your martial arts training?**

As a child, I was small for my age, a fact for which I tried to compensate by intense physical activity. I was an obsessive exerciser. At age 10, I won the President's Youth Council National Fitness Award. You may recall that President Kennedy was a vigorous young president who embarked on a plan to make our nation's youth fit. I still remember what I did to win the prize: 132 sit-ups in two-minutes, 11 pull-ups, and 60 squat-thrusts in one minute. At ten, I also acquired my first set of weights and an Everlast hang bag. That's when I began boxing seriously. My father and a young Golden Gloves titan named Greg Sessions put me through the paces. I can still recall Greg saying, "Keep you left up," as he nonchalantly hammered my temple with right crosses. That sort of training-fighting older, larger opponents—practically guaranteed my status as



a Southeastern Silver Gloves champion. Later, I would compete nationally as a Golden Gloves contender.

## **3 - Initially you were involved in Okinawan Karate but switched to Burmese Bando. How did that come about?**

Before Isshinryu I studied Judo with a man named Robert Floyd who'd trained U.S. soldiers on Okinawa. I spent a short stint with Randy Webb, a fine Isshinryu practitioner and the South's leading fitness expert—even today at almost seventy. However, it was my cousin, Chuck Randolph, and his body-builder friend, John Taylor, who introduced me to their Bando instructor, Bob Hill. Bob Hill was, hands down, the best most terrifying fighter I've ever seen. Crippled in one leg by polio, Bob wasn't what you'd describe as imposing. He even appeared vulnerable owing to a discernable limp. Nevertheless, he used these "liabilities" to his advantage, psyching out opponents or encouraging a false sense of confidence that quickly evaporated the instant Bob unleashed his arsenal. My friend and former Kung-fu instructor, the late Allan Thompson, also a Bando practitioner, once paid me the ultimate compliment. He said, "I'd rather fight Bob Hill than you any day. I never know what you'll do. With

Bob it is predictable. He announces what he's going to do then kicks your ass, knowing you can't stop him." Obviously, Allan was paying Bob a compliment too. Allan was right. Anyone unfortunate enough to be on the other end of Bob's flying snap kick can attest to that. Fortunately, I was too young to be one of Bob's serious punching bags. Not so with my cousin Chuck, who taught me how to incorporate Bando tactics as part of my boxing arsenal. Boar-style elbows and subtle knee slides in the clinches can make an opponent wonder what just happened to him. So Bando training aided me in the ring, as well as in the street.

#### **4 - What differences did you notice between Bando and Okinawan Karate?**

Okinawan karate imparted discipline to me at an early age, especially with its emphasis on kata. However, kata, with its series of prescriptive movements, can hamstring a fighter by hardwiring his brain to believe that fighting is linear, predictable. As you've indicated in your fine book on kata, kata serves as a "grammar" that should provide a fighter with variations and combinations of movement indispensable to the well-rounded martial artist. Unfortunately, many instructors teach kata as a gospel of rigid, lock-step formulations. Bando, on the other hand, emphasized, circular movements, particularly stepping off the plane, enabling you to outflank your opponent, while attacking him on the "wings". In this way, your opponent's entire body becomes a target. There's no limit to what you can gouge, rip, tear, strike and knee. If Bando had rules, I never knew them. One of my favorite strategies is what I term "running the shirt." Here's how it works. You pin one of your opponent's feet under your foot. Then you start a series of clawing attacks on skin and clothing. Once you get hold of your opponent's shirt, you push it over his head, tying him up and simultaneously blinding him. (If I can grab a hank of hair, I'll do that too.) Then you unleash a flurry of knees and elbows. If he goes to the ground, that's the time to initiate a series of stomps. In short, fighting is by its very nature, an eclectic phenomenon. I've always tried to use what works.

#### **5 - Within your own training what do you concentrate on the most sport, self-defense, or character development?**

I don't give a damn about sport karate and care even less about mixed martial arts. At my age there is little I haven't seen in the fighting arena. Moreover, fads cycle and re-cycle through the Martial Arts as in other domains of culture. MMA is just that-a fad, albeit a highly touted and commercially profitable one. That's not to say there aren't some formidable athletes participating in these events. The problem comes when people begin to believe their own propaganda, when they think fighting is exclusively grappling or kickboxing or whatever mode of combat promoters deem acceptable in the ring. Then they find themselves in a pub or parking lot where people don't know or care about MMA fighters or their tactics. If, in such a situation, someone intends to hurt me, he'd better have enough room and time to take me down before I unholster my pistol. To my knowledge guns aren't permitted in MMA, matches. What I'm talking about is the over-confidence that comes from believing that one style of training or one system of combat is superior to others. That sort of hubris can prove to be a deadly liability. For me martial arts are a form of active meditation, a mirror of sorts, enabling me to see myself and my distortions, offering a means of correction and renewal. Writing is like that, too.

#### **6 - What do you consider a typical workout?**

A typical workout begins with stretching or Tai Chi. Then I move to floor exercises: planks, various types of push-ups, and crunches with a medicine ball. Next, I do a fast weight-lifting routine. I'll go to six stations, with light reps at each one, in 12 minutes. Lifting weights can be tedious at times, and people who stand around admiring themselves after a set are even more tiresome. Then I move to the heavy bag-the crux of my training. Three five-minute rounds are followed by a half hour of strategic combinations of strikes and kicks. I ordinarily wear a twenty pound weight vest while working out, as well. I always include an interval of weapons training in my workouts. My weapons of choice include the kukri, a double-bladed axe, a logging chain, and a blow gun. (I mix my own poisons for hunting.) If I'm working out solitary, I finish off with a mile run. If I'm working with a partner, we'll spar. I've never worn pads when sparring, owing to my Bando training and my days with Allan Thompson. If we got hurt sparring, we went to a

clinic down the street, got stitched up, and returned to class. If wouldn't have occurred to us to do otherwise.

## **7 - What concerns you most about self-protection, and how do you prepare for the street?**

What concerns me most is the delusional and dangerous behavior exhibited by people who believe they can fight without even having fought. They believe that because they've seen "The Matrix" or "Kill Bill", they're somehow capable of extra-ordinary martial feats. Thinking you're a martial artist apparently makes it so. A year or so ago, I was driving to the college where I teach, observing the speed limit, when I noticed a car in my rearview mirror. It was so close to my bumper that I could count the driver's teeth. He didn't offer to pass but would fall back, then accelerate inches from my car. It was a scare tactic-a species of sociopathic behavior and I regarded it as such. I signaled then, turned into a subdivision where I knew new homes were being built. The driver swung in after me, tailing, refusing to back off. Driving to the end of the subdivision where I recalled seeing a cul-de-sac, I eased into the curve where the driver cut in front of me. It was what I wanted him to do. Better to face my opponent than to have him behind me. He thought he'd trapped me. Ramped up on methamphetamines or experiencing a surge of testosterone a young man in his twenties bolted from the car raising both fists above his head, imitating some movie warrior he'd doubtless seen at the Cineplex. He was spoiling for a fight-full of piss and vinegar, as we say in this part of the country. He grinned at the prospect of victimizing me. That's when I opened the door, slid out of the seat, and stood, .357 Magnum at my side. When I cocked the hammer, the only piss was that streaming down his pants leg. He blanched. Rolling onto the balls of his feet, he skidded to a stop. Lifting the gun eye-level, I drew down on him. Not a soul was in sight. I could have killed him right there and driven off. "I suggest you get your punk ass back in the car," I said. The grin, a sickly version of it, returned to his face. "I don't fight no old man," he said. "It's a damn good thing, you don't Isn't it?" I said. He back peddled, arms overhead, but hands open now in supplication. "I'm a homeboy. Its okay," he sought to reassure me. "No, it's not okay. It'll be okay when you get

your punk ass back in the car and drive home to your mama, homeboy." His eyes came unfocused, giving the impression that he wanted to be anywhere else in the universe. He didn't know it at the time but the "old man" was letting him off the hook to the lasting benefit of us both. "I'm gone," he said. "Good riddance," I responded. All his bluster and mouthiness had vanished. He was a chastened individual, maybe for the first time in his life. I use this as an example to suggest the danger of posturing in a state like Tennessee where handgun carry permits are the rule rather than the exception and where half the automobiles you meet have a pistol under the seat. It makes for a chilly society, not to mention a different orientation to the martial arts from that held by sports practitioners.

## **8 - Do you feel that it's ethical to use firearms for self-defense?**

I have a picture someone gave me of a gun wreathed in a Rosary. I would say that image sums up my predicament as a martial artist. Each day I pray that I'll be spared the temptation to hurt someone; likewise, I hope that no one will be tempted to hurt me. But as the aforementioned example shows, not everyone shares my longing. Bully boys (and girls) abound in every conceivable incarnation: bully husbands, bully wives, bully co-workers. Most days we just tolerate them the best we can – grateful to avoid altercations, considering ourselves lucky if we escape abuse and manipulation relatively unharmed. But what do you do when you've exhausted every option of cooperation? More to the point, what do you do when some thug endangers an innocent person or some sociopath threatens you with bodily harm or death via fists or weapons? I can only hope those situations don't happen. But I have to prepare as if they will. In the gravest extreme, not fighting back is tantamount to suicide. Meeting force with force is an awful, gut-wrenching choice for a sane person. No sane person wants to have to use a gun for self-defense. Unfortunately, the person a sane person will have to face probably won't have those qualms.

## **9 - Assuming that you and your adversary aren't armed, do you automatically assume that the fight will go to the ground?**

Not at all. Again, that seems to be a self-fulfilling prophecy for grapplers in the MMA. If you think

all fights will go to the ground, they inevitably will. The Gracies and others have promulgated that statement as a truism. I read somewhere that 70% of all fights go to the ground! Who came up with that nutty statistic? How many fights outside the ring did the author of the article who made that statement observe in order to offer such an outlandish generalization. Let me frame the situation differently by stating that there's no evidence a street fight will go to the ground in a majority of cases. Now what will someone whose basic orientation is grappling do in that situation? In real fighting there are no rules. In an authentic fight, I will gouge out your eyes, chew off your earlobe, and lock onto your testicles like a vice. I will use anything at my disposal to distract you. If MMA fighters want to test their combat strategies, let them enter the ring with a psychopath and a six-inch hunting knife. The ring will no longer seem so user-friendly. You can't get locked into seeing only one way of fighting. You only expose your blind side by doing that. I'll give you an example. Fighters perpetually came to Bob Hill's dojo to challenge him. Bob was a shrewd man. He knew that most sports martial artist observed a series of prohibitive self-restrictions even when they didn't know they did. They would only go so far despite all the talk of "no-holds barred fighting." As an attorney, Bob had drawn up a contract absolving himself of any liability for "injury or death" to his opponent. Seeing that clause, sane people walked off, recognizing the trap Bob had set for them. For those who didn't, Bob had innumerable surprises awaiting. Every where he went Bob carried his "ju-ju" bag, a mysterious pipe tobacco pouch in which he kept an alchemist's odd assortments of irritants, stunners, and eye-openers. Bob simply reached into the pouch, coating his fingers with the way a pitcher fondles a resin bag. Allan Thompson later told me that Bob's pouch was a toxic brew of cayenne pepper, rotted eggs, rat poison, and Vaseline enmeshed with iron filings. A modern-day Ninja's bag of tricks in other words. Bob's philosophy, according to Allan, was that even if you defeated him he'd still exact revenge-days later, in some cases.

**10 - Do you feel that today's MMA practitioners are the same caliber of fighters like Sonny Liston, Mohammed Ali, or Mike Tyson?**

Liston, Ali, and Tyson came up in the street, all three destined for prison were it not for boxing. Of course, even that didn't prevent Liston and Tyson from having brushes with the law. What I'm saying is that they were fighters before they were boxers. One is inclined to call them brawlers. Remember when Tyson bit Evander Holyfield's ear off? Similarly, do you recall when Ali fought the Judo player in Tokyo in an exhibition match? The Judo player went to the ground where he spent most of the time pivoting on his back and hips in order to avoid Ali's punches. He was smarter than to go toe to toe with Ali. What I've noticed about many of the MMA matches I've seen is how deplorable the punching is. Some of those guys look like children flailing on the playground. In short punching seems to be a neglected aspect of their training. No, if most MMA fighters had to fight Liston or Ali, my advice to them would be go to the ground and stay there.

**11 - Your most recent book "The Alchemy of Words" has been described as a book of Zen koans for the western reader, why is that?**

"Alchemy" is a book of oblique meditations, little parables, in essence, on our relationship to language. We humans are the sum total of our stories, our sign exchanges with ourselves and others. Naming is a complex process, but I believe we have a responsibility to use words precisely – in the service of truth. For me, my pen is like a bokken with which I attempt to penetrate verbiage and slash away half-truths. As I tell my students, whose modes of communication are almost exclusively cell phone and text messaging, they need to be quitter, think longer. We tolerate too many distractions, and our sloppy use of language shows it. Anyone who thinks e-mail, cell phones, and texts are simply the next stage in the evolution of communication doesn't know much about language or the way corporations have convinced people that these electronic gadgets are indispensable if we are to stay in touch. I'm afraid that what people are doing is mistaking convenience for connection. "Alchemy" was my effort to restore some authenticity to our exchanges.

**12 - In addition to being a poet, playwright and author, you're also a semiotician. Do you**

## see any correlation between semiotics, literature and martial arts?

Absolutely. A little while ago, I alluded to your notion that kata is a grammar in the same way that a language is a rule-governed system with potentially infinite variations. Semiotics is, of course, the study of how we use signs and symbols-how and what they signify. On a literal level, kata signifies a series of prescriptive movements used for training. A more complex semiotic reading of kata would see it as a metaphor—a continuum of variations, limited only by a fighter's imagination. Just as language is an expression of a writer's mind, movement is the actualization of a fighter's imagination, his ability to see the meaning in what he's doing. African – American poet Ishmael Reed immediately saw this connection when he titled one of his books "Writin' is Fightin'". Likewise, the poet-warrior has been an important archetype since the dawn of civilization. Consider the likes of King Arthur, Sir Phillip Sydney, and Basho. All recognized the symbolic significance of their expanding roles. Anyone can be a soldier-

following orders and mimicking lockstep movements, but a warrior rises above the fray, fighting for larger, more enduring causes, realizing that the lost causes are the only ones worth ultimately fighting for.

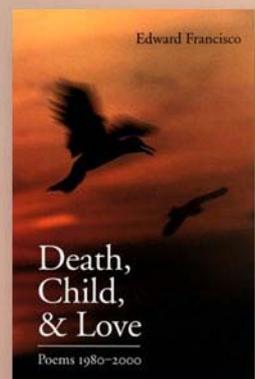
## 13 - One last question. With almost five decades of martial arts training to your credit, how has your martial arts changed over the years and what are your future goals?

I've worked hard to cultivate the warrior spirit in everything I do. Warriors, I believe, fight to preserve authentic human possibilities. In my youth, I was preoccupied with winning in every arena of my life. I'm now interested in larger victories of the human heart and spirit including us all. Each day I try to deepen my devotion to enduring ideas: faith, hope, charity, fortitude, patience, and magnanimity, or generosity of spirit. It's a lifetime's work for which martial arts have helped prepare me.

**Thank you, Mr. Francisco, for your time and insights.**

# Ed Francisco Books

*Death, Child and Love: Poems, 1980-2000* is the odyssey of a poet journeying from darkness to light. Chronicling a long and harrowing series of deaths and personal disappointments, the early poems in this volume serve as an antidote to despair, expounding the difficulties of life and giving articulation to the many people who suffer. Yet, it is Francisco's focus on children in the later poems that provides healing, redemption, and arrival at a juncture where love is finally possible. Displaying a wide range of styles, the poems are, by turn, lyrical, narrative, and meditative.



**Alchemy of Words:** In the tradition of the alchemists of the Middle Ages, this poet searches for the precise words that will transmute common experience into golden language that will shed light on why we live the way we do. He achieves this goal by casting his keen eye and ear over a broad palette – from literature to religion, philosophy, education and, of course, to magic, which is so essential to the “art” and, yes, the science of alchemy. His poems flow across the landscape of thought: from the terrifying kudzu vine to John the Baptist waiting for Christ to sitting in the gaze of the Man of Tao. Without coming off as scholarly, the poet manages to face the vital issues of language bravely.

**All Ed Francisco available online at Amazon**

# Martial Arts Scepticism: Martial Appeals

by Jamie Clubb

The world of martial arts is full of arguments based on irrelevant appeals. From advertising campaigns that argue their style of martial art is the best because it is practiced by a certain country's elite military to teaching techniques a certain way because this is the way they have been taught for centuries. They are arguments that do not provide evidence to support their claims, but instead use information designed to make you feel inadequate in your questioning. I shall now take you through some examples of the way appeals arguments, "Martial Appeals" if you like, are used as a method of one-upmanship from one martial arts stylist to another, as a form of persuasive marketing or to simply keep control of the way a student thinks.

## Appeals to Antiquity or Tradition

The age and durability of an idea is not always an accurate indicator of its value. However, it is very common for a martial artist to somehow connect the antiquity of their system or style with practical efficiency. The reasoning goes something like this: if these moves or practices didn't work then they wouldn't have survived. This is nonsense. There are plenty of reasons why impractical and illogical practices are still being carried out today. Many people cling to rituals out of a sense of national or cultural pride. Traditions are often kept so that people feel they have a link to the past. Some people even have their own personal rituals and in extreme cases these can be strong indications of different types of mental and neurodevelopmental disorders. People also fear change, as it presents the prospect of the unknown. Tradition and the illusion of not changing make us feel safe.

An example I once saw was the historical evidence that martial arts have often been linked to magic. This is not surprising, studies have shown that the closer people come to the presence of death the more superstitious they become. In this particular example, the argument was made that even the most sceptical person

must concede that there must be something practical in this connection since there is such a long tradition of it happening. This is a classic example of a jump from one set of information - valid historical evidence linking the belief in magic with martial arts practices - to another - therefore it is possible that magic is a part of martial arts. The first set of information does not provide evidence for the latter. There are very long traditions of the belief in monsters found in most cultures, and fairly often different and completely unrelated cultures come up with very similar monsters. This is not evidence that the monsters existed, but probably has more to do with the limitations of human imagination and common innate fears and the superstitions we create around those fears.

The age of a martial arts system is often held in disproportionately high regard despite the obvious advancements made in combat technology. We know old ideas are not always good ideas otherwise we wouldn't have any progress. In a relatively short amount of time there have been major advancements in what we know about human anatomy, the way the human brain functions, human behaviour and human potential. We also have the hindsight of history to determine how an old idea might not work. It is far more productive and sensible to question why an old idea has persisted than to make positive assumptions about its validity.

## Appeals to Authority

As one would expect those who often use the appeal to antiquity or tradition are those in positions of authority. However, often a person of authority is presented as the actual justification for an argument: Hanshi so-and-so said this is the deadliest of all martial arts therefore this must be true. Like the appeal to antiquity or tradition argument, if we just took the words of experts as gospel we would make no progress. Science constantly questions and advances the work of its great innovators understanding that their work



needs updating. It is also worth keeping in mind that someone might have more knowledge on a certain subject than their critic, but their method for applying that knowledge might be deeply flawed.

The other issue regarding appeals to authority is when the authority is not an authority on the topic of the argument. For a long period it was common for most martial arts schools to specialize and, even with the advent of more liberal and open dojos, dojangs, kwoons and gyms most schools still do. However, I recall seeing a journalist asking a boxing coach's "expert" opinion on a mixed martial arts bout. Unsurprisingly the coach's response was negative and despite the bout being regulated by strict rules, clearly watched over by an experienced referee and a medical team on hand, the boxing coach compared it to a street-fight. Nevertheless, this authority was a respected and qualified boxing coach running a high performing boxing club. His validity for teaching his sport is not in question, however, his opinion on something that he had little knowledge on had about as much relevance as an ice skating coach discussing the form of a champion skier. Now, if the person being consulted on the mixed martial arts bout was an

experienced doorman who had seen thousands of street-brawls and made the same comparison that would have been a different matter.

### **Appeal to Popularity**

By the time the 1980s started the "Kung Fu Boom" was over, however, martial arts had clearly taken root in the public consciousness and a corporate side slowly began to emerge. As this spread and more organizations and governing bodies began to pop up all over Europe and the USA, the marketing machines picked up pace. This was more than a few clubs being affiliated to a foreign authority now; whole associations broke away in the western world and grew into their own entities. It wasn't long before this corporate image was used as part of the advertising gimmick and, as always, size mattered. Clubs, instructors and individual students were encouraged to join the association with the most members. Popularity has a strong appeal. In military and political thinking we can see an obvious advantage of being on the side with the biggest numbers. Popularity is also at the heart of fashion and retail. However, just because an idea is popular it doesn't mean it is right.

Popular opinion can, and often is, swayed by charismatic and persuasive personalities. History has certainly told us this many times. In martial arts we have seen many trends promising much and often delivering little. Talk to any long term martial arts magazine editor and they will tell you plenty about the various phases and sub-phases of martial arts. In hindsight a craze in a certain martial art often had little to do with the art's efficiency, but rather the way it was being sold to the general public.

### **Appeal to Novelty**

The opposite of the appeal to antiquity or tradition is the appeal to novelty. The newness of an idea does not automatically make it the superior of what has gone before. There are many new martial arts systems springing up all the time. Not everyone likes to cling to tradition or popular systems, many like the idea of being up-to-date or being different.

One argument here is that this martial art is new therefore it will provide me with information more applicable to the modern world. Just

because the system is new it doesn't make it better suited for the modern world. It could endorse pseudoscience or have no proper basis on efficient training methods whatsoever. There are plenty of new bogus martial arts popping up all over the place, often promoted by the technology that is synonymous with our era: the internet.

Another argument is that a certain martial art is different and therefore better than more conventional martial arts. A key appeal of the oriental martial arts in the western world was their sheer exoticness. Therefore it should be no surprise that within the martial arts world there is always a strong attraction towards more unusual martial arts. However, many previously unheard of martial arts have little historical evidence to back up their lineage or even their validity. There are some societies that are unashamedly resurrecting extinct martial arts and honestly doing their best to interpret these old training methods out of historical interest. There is nothing wrong with these practices. However, there are still others that exploit the gullibility of enthusiastic martial arts tourists and

those members of martial arts subculture who have a natural disposition towards learning something that is marketed as being "forbidden" or "forgotten" or simply out of the mainstream.

There is no rational basis in arguing that just because something is new or different that it is any better than what is old or commonplace. In fact, in all rational fact-finding disciplines from science to history the burden of proof is always placed squarely on the shoulders of the new or unusual idea.

In conclusion, if we are to get the best out of the martial arts we can do better than appeal to irrelevant information. By recognizing these types of arguments not only in others but also in ourselves we can focus more on addressing a problem or question than trying to win a debate or live in denial.

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# Extract from “Waking Dragons”: The Field of Truth

by Goran Powel

It's one of those perfect English summer days: hazy sunshine, lush green trees and soft grass underfoot. We're gathered in a scouts' camp in the glorious countryside outside Portishead, just south of Bristol. In any other circumstances, we'd be kicking back and relaxing, throwing a frisbee or cracking open a few beers. But there's work to be done, and it isn't tying knots or collecting firewood. This is a karate camp.

The instructors have told everyone to meet on the small field near the entrance. They have taken to calling it the Field of Truth. They have a mean sense of humour.

No one knows why we're here, except Carl and me. I was told in confidence several weeks ago, and I managed to keep my mouth shut, which wasn't easy. Carl's been thinking of little else for the past few weeks. Or more likely months. He's about to attempt the Thirty Man Kumite.

He'll fight 30 people, one after another. They'll be the highest ranked fighters in our association. Every fight will be 'full contact'. It will last one minute. No gloves. No shin pads. No headguards. Full-power punches to the body are allowed, plus sweeps, throws, and kicks to the legs, body and head. No face punching. No strikes to the joints or groin. Carl will get a two-minute break after ten fights and another one after 20. If he's knocked out, or knocked down and can't continue, he will fail his test.

There's a small huddle of spectators on the Field of Truth. They are looking on curiously as 30 fighters line up along the far side of the field. Carl is warming up in the middle, alone with his thoughts, steeling himself for what lies ahead.

Nobody really knows what to expect. Many fighters in the line-up have not met Carl before. He's been away for a while. To the uninitiated, it looks like a massacre is about to occur. But I'm not so sure. I know Carl from the old days. I remember him winning medals at knockdown

tournaments (heavyweight division). I remember him training with the British squad. I know what he's capable of with his kicks. As I take my place at the foot of the line-up, I'm glad he'll be fighting 29 people before me.

The instructors call the proceedings to order. There's no great ceremony. We take a simple bow and the first fighter is called out. They begin. After a few seconds, Carl catches him with a head kick. It's perfectly controlled, because this is a grading, not a tournament. If it had been a tournament, the guy would be out cold. Instead, he collapses to his knees, badly dazed. After a short break the instructors get him on his feet, but for the rest of the fight, he stays well away from Carl.

The second fighter comes up and is promptly knocked down too. A pattern is beginning to form, and the line-up doesn't like what it's seeing. Carl is making it look very easy to take someone's head off. Some of the less experienced fighters are starting to look decidedly nervous, wishing they were back in their tents, or better still, back home with the Sunday papers like every other normal human being.

Carl's plan is working nicely for him, and I begin to wonder whether he'll be troubled at all during his line-up. But even the best-laid plans can go astray.





Carl has already been training hard for two days, and the afternoon heat is intense. The sweating is causing his body to lose salt, which can bring on cramps. As early as the third fight, he begins to clutch at his hamstrings in pain. It looks like he's pulled a muscle.

The instructors stop the fight for a few seconds and give him the chance to stretch his legs. Then he's forced to continue. Meanwhile, the fighters in the line-up are taking no chances. They're badly spooked by what they saw earlier, and they're all going in hard to avoid getting picked off. This is bad news for Carl, and his real test is just beginning.

Kicking high is too painful now, so he's forced to trade punches and low kicks instead. By the time he reaches his first break, after ten fights, he's looking tired and dazed. He sits in the shade of tree, sipping water and stretching his hamstrings, trying to get them back into play.

It's no use. As the fighting begins again, it's clear he's going to have to do things the hard way... toe-to-toe. Soon he's struck by cramps again, and things begin to look ominous.

The instructors call a halt. They lay him on his front and massage the backs of his legs. He gets up, slowly, painfully, and forces himself to continue. As each fight goes on, he is climbing up the grades, facing stronger and stronger fighters. They're still mindful of his opening performance, and going in very hard.

The sun beats down on him unmercifully, and the tiredness is taking its toll, but the crowd refused to let him stop, or even slow down. They urge him on, shouting and screaming at him to

hit back, throw punches and low kicks, to fight harder.

After 20 fights, Carl gets another short break. He takes some more water and stretches out his legs. Then the fighting begins again. Pretty soon, Carl is in a seriously bad way. Cramps strike him again and this time, he seems genuinely unable to continue. I watch as he sits forlornly in the shade of a tree, sipping water and massaging his legs. The instructors are clearly concerned, and talk to him quietly. For a moment, no one's quite sure what to do. They can't allow him a long break now. It would negate the test.

I begin to wonder if they are going to pull him out? Sensei Gavin is kneeling beside him. He looks around, scanning the horizon, as if searching for a solution. There isn't one. After a few seconds, he simply stands up and calls out the next fighter. There's a moment of stillness. Then Carl gets to his feet, in a trance, and squares up. The fighting resumes and he continues his battles through gritted teeth.

Now he is among the strongest, most powerful black belts. They put him under incredible pressure. One after another smashes away at his body and legs, dropping their body weight onto his battered thighs with the hard bones of their shins. There are no pads. This is just muscle and bone. Carl refuses to give in to the pressure, and hits back, but each new fighter is fresh, while Carl is at the edge of exhaustion.

He is close to the end of the line-up, and things are getting ugly. Mark launches a blistering attack on Carl, stalking him and then smashing away



at his body and legs with massive, lightning-fast combinations. Steve smashes Carl's chest and ribs with huge, thudding punches and then switches to low kicks on the legs. Carl is taking massive punishment, but refuses to go down. His pride will not allow him to give in. He hits back as best he can.

Eventually his spirit takes him through 29 full-contact bouts. It is time for one final fight. I jog out to face him. He looked tired and shaken and I know his left leg is badly damaged. It has taken a terrible battering. Now, some people are cruel, and they would target this leg unmercifully, but I like to consider myself a gentleman, and prefer to attack other areas – the places that can still take a bit more punishment.

The fight begins and I test Carl with a few body shots. He wobbles slightly and throws a couple of slow punches. I avoid them easily and slam a couple of low kicks onto his 'good' leg. I can pick him off at will. I don't really want to knock him over on his last fight, but equally, I don't want it to be too easy. After all, this is his grand finale.

Suddenly, the same fact seems to register with Carl. It's his last fight. He shouts loudly, to encourage himself, and surges forward, throwing hard punches. He's summoning every last drop of energy. I notice the change immediately, and get up on my toes to avoid getting caught. Now we are fighting.

He throws a thunderous left, right combination. I back away to avoid the shots and ram a hard front kick into his gut. I hear a loud thud, and feel the air go out of him, but he's hyped up now and keeps coming.

He leans forward and grabs my shoulders, hoping to pull me onto a knee strike. Oi, Carl, man, I wasn't born yesterday! Before he can smash me, I hook a big right uppercut into his belly, just where the kick landed moments earlier. Nothing. Carl is unstoppable now. The crowd is yelling furiously, willing him on for one last, tremendous effort.

We trade punches and kicks, and Carl fights hard for one last, furious minute. Then it's all over. The timekeeper shouts 'Time!' and the instructors call 'Stop!' but we don't hear a thing. In the end, they step between us and wave their arms. We break.

Carl has done it. He's the first student in our association to complete the Thirty Man Kumite. Everyone is in awe of his achievement. No one has ever seen anything quite like it.

That evening we go to the local swimming baths, and Carl comes along to relax his tired muscles. His body is battered and bruised all over, but he's in good spirits. Some of the guys goof around in the pool. Carl relaxes in the hot tub, chatting to some of the younger members, basking in the glory of what he'd done earlier in the day.

Later, back at the camp, we prepare our evening meals over a kerosene stove. Carl's tent is pitched next to mine and Sensei Gavin's and Sensei Dan's. After eating his pasta, he tells us he's going to lie down 'just for half an hour'. He assures us he'll meet us later by the campfire.

We didn't see him again until late the next morning, and who could blame him?



# Waking Dragons: a martial artist faces his ultimate test

**“I looked at the huge line of fighters still to come. It coiled around three sides of the mat like some great white dragon waiting to devour me, and suddenly the task ahead seemed impossible.”**

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## Kata and the Transmission of Knowledge

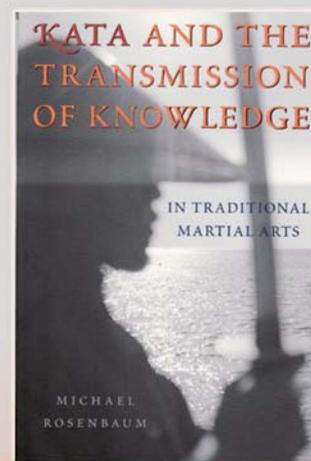
All too frequently, martial arts practitioners study their art without truly understanding where it comes from, how it was developed, and why it was created in the first place. Indeed, many don't care—and if you feel this way, you should put this book down. For the rest of us, who have taken our art 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.



**Available from Amazon.com, Amazon.co.uk & ymaa.com**

# Tradition & Reality

by Ben Hockman & Stewart McGill

There seems to be an unspoken assumption that the various Reality-Based Self Defence Systems (RBSDS) bare little resemblance to the traditional martial arts styles (TMAs), and that they have a wholly different philosophy and set of techniques.

I've been training in reality systems since the early 2000s now, the last few of which have seen me help in developing Urban Krav Maga (UKM); to be frank, the more I train with the founders of UKM, the more I realise our debt to our traditional background and how crucial it continues to be to the system.

If you went to a karate, aikido or traditional jiu jitsu class and then subsequently attended one of our sessions, your first impression would be that these aren't different sides of the same coin but actually separate currencies. If you attended on a more frequent and regular basis however, you would probably start to see the unity beneath the diversity.



We focus on situations – what to do if somebody grabs you and tries to head butt or knee you, how to act pre-emptively to avoid a fight, how to read situations and body language to avoid conflict, how to defend yourself and get up quickly if you're on the ground, what you do if your attacker has a knife etc. For everything that we do, the *Ashi-sabaki* (footwork) and *Tai-sabaki* (body movement) are both crucial. We incorporate sparring and groundfighting drills into the system and, of course, in these areas of our training, the fundamentals are heavily informed by the traditional arts of boxing, muay thai, jiu jitsu and BJJ.

As we are also aware, many of the traditional systems have developed into combat-sport based systems such as freestyle karate and kickboxing, particularly since the latter part of the last century. Once again the footwork, body sponsorship, conditioning and the self-control that one develops in a competition/sparring-based context in these combat sports will prove hugely valuable in improving both ones ability to learn and teach a RBSDS.

It always struck me that the better instructors and students in Reality-Based systems had a strong traditional background-and by that I would include the tradition-derivative combat sports mentioned above. A certain school of thought says that the “archaic’ movements and responses of traditional arts can negatively influence your muscle memory thereby slowing down your adaptation to the Reality systems.





This can initially be the case but generally speaking traditional martial artists pick things up significantly quicker and can 'make things work better'. This is basically because (i.) in stand up situations they are used to moving their feet in concert with their body in order to secure and maintain a strong, stable position – all that Kata does have a purpose. (ii.) they understand the importance of balance, (if the other guy is not stable and you are, then you have a major advantage) and (iii) those with a traditional background in ground fighting understand that it's all about the hips – whether you're grappling to submit or just get the hell up as quickly as possible you need to understand the *tai sabaki* to get your hips in an optimum position *vis a vis* your opponent.

The better TMA and RBSDS instructors will have this understanding ingrained into them and their students will benefit accordingly.

A crucial element in confronting real situations is often that of controlling ones attacker in some way, be it through balance, your environment, pre-emption, or getting hands. When it comes to controlling an attacker's arm that is wielding a blade for example, I have seen a few responses from Reality Systems which basically involve grabbing the knife-wielding wrist and hitting the carrier. Even if you've got a powerful close-in punch and the attacker isn't much bigger than you, your attacker still has a good chance of regaining control of the weapon and stabbing you just by stepping back and/or pulling the weapon back strongly from you grip. You can mitigate this risk by moving into a 'traditional' grip in which, say the opponent has the blade in his right hand, you grab his wrist with the left hand, loop your arm over so your left elbow is on his sternum, squeeze your armpit tightly into your side and

step back with your right leg so you're facing almost the same way as your attacker exerting great pressure on his elbow joint with your ribcage; from this position - which is actually far simpler to engage than one might think and that a complex written explanation will allow - you can rip the blade out of the attacker's hand if he's still holding it. This technique is strength and size-neutral and is based on sound traditional principles. This has been by far the most successful technique that we've pressure-tested against an aggressive knife threat and we couldn't have put it together without our traditional background. Learning techniques based around underlying principles, which more often than not are "traditional", also helps to remove the requirement to learn a number of complex techniques for a wide variety of unpredictable reality-based situations. Instead, our system relies heavily on certain common principles that can be applied to any situation. Of course, technique plays a part-it always does-but if technique goes to pot, which it may well do, and you are left with nothing but solid principles of movement, power, balance etc. you still stand an excellent chance of getting away safely.

In summary, there are some great moves, techniques and principals in TMA which RBSDS



practitioners ignore at their real peril. In TMA the moves are sometimes misunderstood and the paths into the techniques can become somewhat obscure, but they can save your life.

For example: The *age uke* (rising block with the forearm) is actually a great strike from a variety of close-quarter situations and one which lends itself to good short-term control setting your opponent up for a head butt and/or knee in the groin. It's often taught in TMA as a block to a strike in the face – for reasons of distance and reaction time, it's not great for that purpose as I can vouchsafe from painful experience.

Conclusions: I would simply recommend that if you're considering training in a reality based system, check out the background of the system and of the instructor. There are some excellent instructors out there with good practical experience but who have never trained in any other area of martial arts or combat. On the other hand, regardless of practical experience, which is of course always hugely beneficial from an instructional perspective, in my view there are few substitutes for the foundation afforded by the Traditional Styles.



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# Contact in Training: Part 1 Making Contact: A Rationale

by J. W. Titchen

With this article being written for Jissen, it is likely that the core readership already make physical contact in training on a regular basis. By contact in training I refer to the actual act of striking something or someone in training. In this issue I will be discussing the rationale for making contact/hitting things, in the companion article I will be looking at the rationale for receiving contact in training.

Contact in training is useful for the following reasons:

- Prevention of joint injury
- Development of correct distancing
- Development of power and stability while executing a technique
- Conditioning of striking surfaces in order to be able to execute a technique in reality if necessary
- Psychological Conditioning

## Prevention of joint injury

Executing techniques at speed against thin air, particularly in the early stages of martial arts training, can lead to the hyper-extension of joints. The knees and elbows are particularly vulnerable to this. Similarly incorrect alignment of the ankle and wrist joints (so that they would buckle and result in strains, sprains or even broken bones) can be grooved into the memory when training against thin air, or continuously pulling techniques. Progressive contact along a force continuum eliminates alignment problems at an early stage and the act of making contact significantly lowers the risk of hyper-extension.

## Development of correct distancing

By striking against pads (and people in body armour) students gain a completely accurate picture, both visual and tactile, as to how close they need to be to a person to execute a technique in order to get the desired result. By using a pad, shield/bag you get immediate feedback on just how close you need to be to a

static object to get the desired amount of penetration on each type of strike used. There is no doubt that point contact sparring works many useful skills, but it does neglect two fundamental principles of combat:

1 - When you hit a real person, as opposed to just make no contact or light contact (about 1 inch penetration), they move, and this movement affects the nature of any follow-throughs that you may or may not have to do.

2 - You get good at what you train for. There are many point sparrers who would have no difficulty in transferring their skills to a contact arena at the drop of a hat. The majority of these have probably had to hit somebody for real at some point in time while growing up and have a practical knowledge of the difference between training, competing and reality based upon experience. There will be a large proportion however who, without necessarily intending to do so, will execute beautiful techniques in real life that fall just short of their target, or fail to



connect with sufficient power, because that is what long hours of training have programmed them to do.

### **Development of power and stability while executing a technique**

By striking against pads (and people in armour) students quickly learn if their technique isn't working. Impact exposes flaws in body alignment, stances, and general biomechanics directly to the student. A good instructor can spot flaws in the practise of techniques against air, and attempt to explain the correct positioning. Through impact a student can feel that something isn't working, and also feel the difference when it is. This form of direct feedback adds an entirely different dimension to the efficacy of the coaching process. When making impact students can start to quantify the power of their strikes to a greater degree. They receive tactile and visual feedback of improvement in a manner that is not gained by striking the air. Touch contact training, or no contact training can help develop speed, and increases in speed and accuracy can be observed, but speed does not necessarily equate to power, stability, or penetration – in those key areas contact does not lie.

Impact training does take on a different dimension with regard to stability when a student switches from striking a static target to hitting a moving target such as a person in body armour. Unless training solely for a fight that begins and ends with a sucker strike to a static victim, in a real fight (or competitive fight) the targets can be expected to be in motion. This movement will again have implications for the platform stability or otherwise required to land an effective strike.



### **Physical Conditioning**

Most people have been hit at some point in their lives, whether accidentally or deliberately, sometimes indirectly by objects and sometimes directly by other people. We tend therefore to have an idea in our minds that being hit hurts although we may not have a full appreciation of just how much different strikes hurt and how much damage they can do (of which more in the next issue). Fewer people though have a realistic appreciation of the fact that hitting something hard can often hurt. Depending upon whether you are training for competitions or training for self defence, you may be training to hit using just your fists to any part of the body, and you may need to prepare to use anything from full padding across your striking surfaces to no protective equipment at all. Here in making contact in practice we are looking to desensitise the striking surfaces of the body slightly so that pain is either minimized, or at least not shock and recoil inducing on the part of the striker. There is a significant difference between striking



a target with the fist while wearing wrist wraps and 16oz gloves, and performing the same strike with the bare hand. It is easy to forget how the aforementioned tools can be slightly more forgiving of imprecise hand and wrist alignment than the bare flesh can tolerate.

### Psychological Conditioning

There is a difference between striking the air, striking pads and striking a real person. Many people do have difficulty with the latter, and I have actually known people to have difficulty in hitting pads knowing that they are training to hit a real person. The vast majority of people, unless supported by a group, or overly practiced through group absolution and upbringing in the infliction of physical violence, are more inclined to gesture, posture and shout in an attempt to 'win' without fighting rather than engage in physical violence. Although there are factors that are conditioning increasing numbers of young people to be more comfortable with the execution of violence, which combined in some societies (particularly the UK) with increased availability of alcohol and social indifference to drunkenness make an unpleasant mix, many people have a natural aversion to hitting things. Just as the genetic impulse for adventure, risk taking, danger and fighting in some has led to some of mankind's greatest discoveries and advances, the genetic impulse to avoid danger and hide has been responsible for the survival of the species as a whole.

Training to hit pads develops the factors listed above, all of which are required for practical application. But all of this is to no avail if the student cannot actually bring themselves to hit a real person. While physical practice on its own is not an absolute cure for this situation, training to hit a suitably padded person can begin to break down any barriers that a student may have in their mind.

The above points all illustrate the many advantages to making contact in training, the weaknesses they can help eliminate, and the injuries that they can help avoid. Unsupervised and untrained use of pads and body armour can however result in the very injuries that their use is designed to prevent 'thin air strikers' from receiving when first encountering resistance. The golden rule to reduce injury is, as always, start training slowly, strike lightly in a static fashion

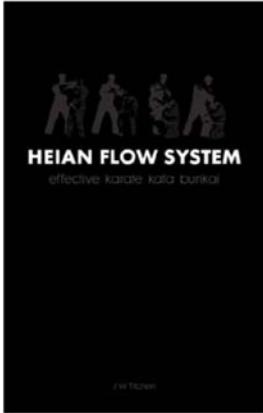
before increasing contact, and when first transferring to mobile targets, again start slowly with a progressive force continuum. If a professional boxer such as Mike Tyson can break his hand through throwing an unprotected punch hard at a hard target when not wearing gloves or wraps, then there is every possibility that you or I could do the same. Train safely.

*The Body Armour shown in the accompanying pictures is High Gear™ and is available from Blauer Tactical Systems.*



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](http://www.d-a-r-t.org.uk), e mail [jwt.dart@gmail.com](mailto: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.

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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.

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# Gary Chamberlain Interview

by Michael Rosenbaum

**G**ary Chamberlain began training in Kyokushinkai in 1971. In 2000 Gary joined Enshin and is now the branch chief of Enshin UK. Gary has proved his skills both as a competitor – he is a former British and International Open Light Heavyweight Knockdown Champion – and during his time as a doorman. In this fascinating interview Gary discusses his views on the martial arts and self-protection.

**1. Gary; tell us about your martial arts background, when you started training, who with, where and what styles of fighting you've trained in. Also could you tell us why you like Enshin karate so much?**

I started training in 1971 at the Leicester Karate Kyokushinkai under Ted Smith and Pete Kisby. I was 15 and it's fair to say I found it very tough going!

I trained hard and achieved 1<sup>st</sup> Dan just over three years later, eventually reaching 4<sup>th</sup> Dan in 1992. During that time I competed in Knockdown from 1976 – 1982, winning the British and International Open Championships (light-heavyweight) in 1981. Following the death of Mas Oyama, the British Karate Kyokushinkai instituted some changes I couldn't support, so I resigned in 1998. I then taught independently for eighteen months and during that time looked around at other groups and styles.

I found that the ethos and 'feel' of Enshin was exactly what I was seeking, and after a trial period

at Honbu under the direct instruction of Kancho Joko Ninomiya I was accepted as a Branch Chief in 2000. I have since tested to 4<sup>th</sup> Dan in Enshin, which was a challenge I really enjoyed. Enshin has a really good balance. Tradition for those that like the more 'self-discovery' side, a very hard fighting system for those that want to challenge themselves, and practical techniques that are directly applicable for self-protection.

**2. What do you stress in your training the most: self-defence, sport, or character development? Do you believe these areas overlap in one's training or are they separate? Please feel free to elaborate.**

Personally, I love the challenge of learning and polishing skills and yes, self-protection is important. People come to my dojo for all manner of reasons, including those above. The prescription is always the same! *"Focussed repetition with intensity over time"* I believe this way of training improves fitness, skill and spirit the most effectively and these attributes can then be applied and directed as the student wishes, whether they want competition, self protection or just challenge for its own sake.

**3. What is one of your typical dojo training sessions like?**

(Laughs) I think my students might see things differently from me, but in general we start with a good loosen-up, followed by kihon (basics) in which the techniques are practised slowly with tension and then at full speed.

Numbers vary according to what I plan for the main part, but there's little of the mindless numbers I was made to do in the past. Maybe twenty of each - at full power - rather than hundreds just hanging on waiting for the torture to end. We then move on to kata, which in Enshin are composed of sabaki combinations. For the main part of the class we concentrate on getting good impact from whatever combinations of techniques we may be working on.

Sparring is done probably every third session, with an emphasis on applying the skills rather than just knocking lumps out of each other. A



session finishes with some pretty intense conditioning work, which is designed to test the mind, body and spirit!

I would stress that this is a general outline, and I try to repeat the essentials enough to make them ingrained while keeping a few surprises in store so that each session is different enough to remove familiarity and routine.

**4. Describe your physical conditioning program and do you feel free weights help or hurt the karate-ka and why. (Also please list the specific exercises you engage in where strength and conditioning are concerned and your workout routine.)**

I strongly believe that dojo training should be supplemented by extra work to fill in the gaps. If training is hard enough, people will soon find what they need to improve. For example, if competition sparring is the objective, lack of wind or being pulled about will indicate more direct stamina or strength work is required. For self-protection, maybe drills to improve reaction times and explosiveness. For myself, I like my kettlebells. I don't believe all the advertising hype, but in all honesty find training with them has helped no end.

As to routines, I have tried lots of different ways. I think there's a lot of rubbish talked about the 'best' way for martial artists. If you're motivated to improve it matters little if you choose 3 sets of 8 or 5 sets of 5. What matters is you get sweaty, push yourself and monitor results.

For the last few years I have based my personal training on the routines in 'Infinite Intensity' by Ross Enamait. Years ago I made the classic mistake of thinking I was superman in a Gi and training too hard and too often without giving myself enough time to recover. A spell in hospital resulted and I then started to educate myself better about how to arrange sessions and training plans. I no longer flog myself into the ground and now feel great – sharp and powerful without being exhausted.

**5. What are your concerns about self protection and how do you prepare for the street?**

In the early years I trained with a variety of Instructors, some of whom hadn't a clue. Don't misunderstand me, they were very tough people and could spar really hard, but were often unable to translate the dojo work into the real stuff.

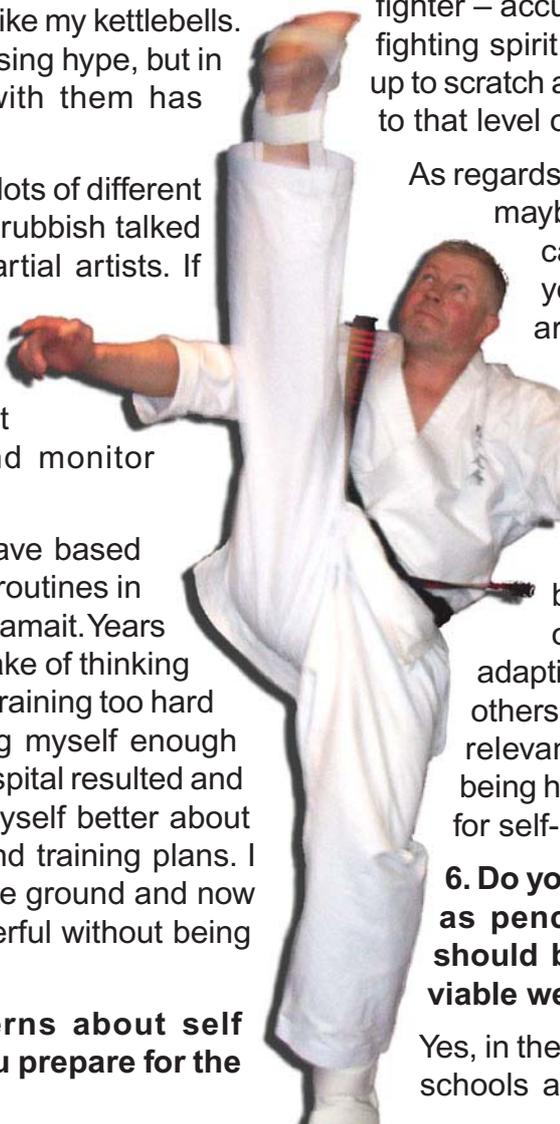
'Self-defence' work usually involved breaking free from wrist grabs and such like. It was always assumed that in a real situation we would have ample time to take a stance and have room to move. If only that was true! I have since had some great influences in my self-protection training. People like Geoff Thompson opened my eyes, and I was impressed enough to immediately start applying his ideas into my own training and teaching. Pre-emptive striking was a huge addition to my former skills, as was selecting a few reliable and trusted tools rather than trying to learn how to apply everything to the same level.

People who tell me karate doesn't work today are misguided. Kancho Ninomiya is very traditional in some ways but still a complete fighter – accurate and powerful with an intense fighting spirit. I have met few who would come up to scratch against him and if I could get nearer to that level of ability I'd be very happy!

As regards the reality of 'street combat' – well maybe I'm getting a bit grumpy, but I can never remember a time in my youth when gangs of kids roamed around kicking people to death in broad daylight. Sure, the skinhead era saw people putting the boot in, but the scumbags today seem to be getting crueller than ever. I want what I do to work, and also what I teach to be realistic and readily applied. For outside the dojo, this may mean adapting certain techniques and ignoring others, but if I ask myself regularly "Is this relevant?" and can't say "Yes!" I'm not being honest with people who come to me for self-protection training.

**6. Do you believe common objects such as pencils, pens, walking canes etc. should be presented to the student as viable weapons for self protection?**

Yes, in the right context. I teach SP to private schools and specialist groups and include





advice on improvised weapons. I do not teach this to kids in the dojo. The thought of a seven year old jamming a pencil into another child's eye is a step too far, in my opinion.

#### **7. Do you believe using firearms for self-defence is ethical?**

Absolutely! In the UK we don't have the "make my day" laws, but in dire circumstances I'd do whatever was necessary to protect my family. A few years ago I kept a WW2 pistol and a shotgun that had been left to me by relatives, but since the gun laws changed here have reluctantly handed them in to the police. Has that made the world safer? Of course not! I had no intention of ever using them, and it just means any predator that breaks into my house now will be facing me in my boxer shorts with my seax (a traditional Saxon weapon) in one hand and a fireman's axe in the other. That will hurt more than a gunshot wound as they might take a few lumps off before they drop them. My point is; I believe deadly force – by whatever means – is justified in defence of your loved ones.

#### **8. Do you have any experience with firearms and if so what kind and how does your firearms training apply to your martial arts training?**

Having grown up in a farming community using .22 rifles and shotguns to control vermin was the

norm, but I've had no formal training. As mentioned above though I have no access to firearms now.

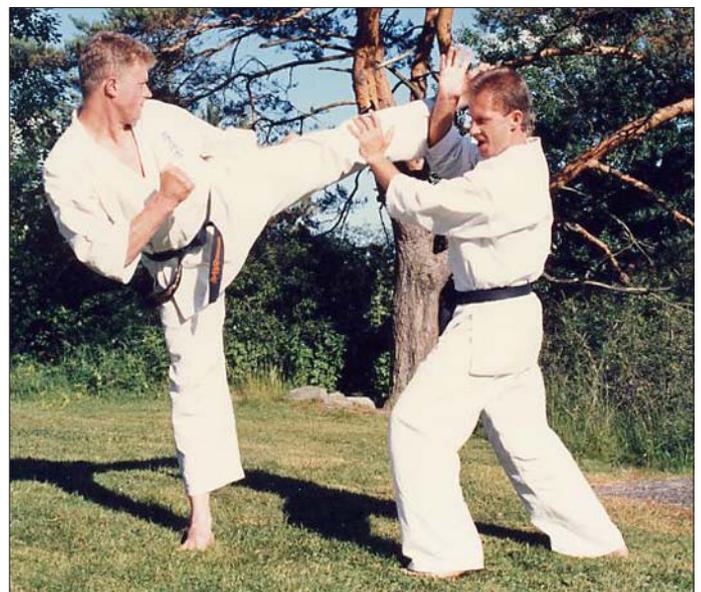
#### **9. How much time do you spend practicing kata, how many kata do you know and which ones are your favourites?**

Enshin has six kata, one for each belt level and progressively more complex.

I prefer the black belt kata as the combinations are attack based rather than countering. We practise them as a part of most sessions, except if we have students preparing for high grade tests and then I build dedicated kata classes into the weekly schedule.

#### **10. Do you feel kata training is essential for the karate-ka? If so why? If not then please tell us why.**

The Enshin kata are tremendous tools to help balance and positioning and a real link between basics and sparring. I think Kancho Ninomiya got the emphasis just right. In my time in Kyokushin I never really enjoyed the traditional kata. We did them, and we did them well, but I remember thinking in my youth that they were just time wasted that we should spend doing more practical stuff. The main problem was we just did them without real thought to the applications. It was a bit like kids at school (in my day) being able to chant their 'times tables' but not understanding their connection to general arithmetic. Occasionally an instructor would try to explain the bunkai but looking back it was often just their own interpretations and usually bordered on fantasy. To get back to the question,



I think if the traditional kata are taught properly and explained realistically they may be useful. Essential, though? No!

### **11. Can kata be applied to realistic self-defence?**

It depends how you define self-defence. As I mentioned before, I am of the opinion that for self-protection a few tools sharpened and kept to hand are worth hundreds kept in a box. I simply don't buy into the idea that you need hundreds of complex moves each with multiple applications. Of course learning more in the dojo is both challenging and rewarding. We all love the feeling of competency that making skills smooth and powerful provides, and of course hard sparring is great fun. I do believe though that a more predatory mindset and a few reliable skills, a next level if you prefer, should also be built in for the rough stuff. In some ways knowing too much can trip you up outside; it's depth of knowledge and instant application of skills that I've found most useful for self-protection, not breadth of knowledge. In real life speed and weight of attack trumps fancy stuff every time for me.

### **12. Do you believe in cross training and if so why?**

I've always believed in filling in the gaps. I did a little door work and was horrified to find the skills I'd worked so hard to obtain up to that point were almost useless in a crowded club. This provided the ultimate incentive to improve my in-fighting and head cover (I was always a far better kicker than puncher in the dojo)

### **13. What kind of cross training have you done and how has it benefited you?**

Long before I tried martial arts I was taught military unarmed combat by my father, who was ex – RM. Had I had the balls to use it at that age I'd probably never have walked into a dojo and definitely not have undertaken the long years of soreness and bruising! The hard karate training though enhanced my stubborn streak and gave me the confidence and aggression I needed to fight and win. I've since found his simple and brutal methods very helpful in really awkward situations and I've never forgotten them. I've also tried a little boxing (painful) judo (exhausting) and aikido (far too mystical for me) I eventually came

back to preferring to do a few things extremely well rather than trying to be good at everything. I have been privileged recently to mix with several members of the military. Despite not doing any practical training together, their insights into combat mentality have been .... educational!

### **14. Do you believe that all fights go to the ground? If so why, if not why.**

No. I can only quote my own experience here but that has not been the case.

On the door I was told on day one never to go to the ground, and watching a fellow doorman get pelted with glasses as he grappled on the floor underlined that in a way I've remembered ever since. Maybe I've been very lucky, but I've always been able to strike hard and fast enough to get a good effect in real encounters.

Returning to pre-emptive striking; it does the attacker a favour if you consider the logic. I've never given anyone a good hiding in my life unless they really deserved it so I don't want to come over as a thug, but in fights I had years ago I thought I was being 'nice' by not hitting people in the face. This then meant kicking their legs to bits and body punching them until they



fell over. I was quite fast and powerful so I got away with it. I dread to think how they felt the next day – probably like they'd been run over. Since working on line-ups, (It helps that I can be a devious bastard!) and accurate pre-emptive strikes I've so far been able to hit less and escape quicker, always a good thing.

This is not an easy option. You need to spend hour after hour getting these skills ingrained to the level where they are fast and accurate, along with learning how to set the attacker up - all this while keeping the other tools reliable as a back up.

### **15. Do you believe full contact fighting should be included in the karate-ka's training?**

Only if they want to test themselves in that environment. The trouble is rules and referees mean that no matter how savage the system it's simply not 'real', so we must keep it all in perspective. I have lost in Tournaments but never (so far) in a real encounter. I don't say that to be arrogant, far from it, just to illustrate that being good at one way of fighting doesn't mean you'll automatically be good at the other. I prefer the way I did it! Losing in Tournaments was never nice, but losing outside would be far worse so I'll live with that. I know one champion who got cut badly thinking he could take on the world. Despite knocking over huge men on the mat he was nearly killed by a 16 year old with a 3" knife! Tournaments are great, but they are not the finished article.

### **16. Do you believe traditional fighting arts like karate are viable today? If not what do you feel needs to be done to keep them viable?**

I think we've got to keep up with modern society. It's all too easy to enjoy a form of escapism in the dojo, rather than keeping things relevant. However, I do think good etiquette is still essential, certainly for those seeking something more spiritual in their training. I know lots of martial artists really get into the whole Japanese thing and if that works for them that's fine. It's not for me though; I'm a proud Englishman who trains in Martial Arts, not a samurai wannabe so I've never tried to change my basic character. I respect my Japanese instructors though and can understand completely why they feel that maintaining tradition is essential. Sadly though, today's playstation generation rarely understand

that years of hard training is just what they're looking for, so iron discipline just stops them joining.

I have adapted my teaching style a little to give people a more gradual start, unlike in the 70's where it was full-on from day one and nobody cared if you stayed or left! I also think focussing on developing mental skills alongside the physical should be incorporated into training, rather than just training until you drop and expecting to get mentally strong at the same time. If the training is too overwhelming it encourages people to just do the minimum and survive rather than taking responsibility for pushing themselves and building their fighting spirit. It's worth remembering that all the skill in the world means nothing if you can't switch on the ferocity when required.

### **17. One last question. You're a retired fire fighter. What did you learn about fear management through your career and how has it helped you in the martial arts?**

I've often wondered what came first. Whether my martial arts training helped me face danger in my job, or the knowledge that I'd faced real danger at work helped me handle my nerves in tests and Tournaments. In truth the culture is different. In the Fire Service the team ethic is very strong, and you are very aware that in a professional set-up doing your task and holding your nerve is essential. Fire-fighting is inherently dangerous, yet strangely I've been more nervous before Tournaments than I ever was at work. It took a while to understand all that!

Whichever way it worked I have been severely tested and got through it. I have the scars and medals to prove it and happily there are people alive today because of it. If hard karate training helped me get in there and drag people out it's all been worthwhile – regardless of any belts, trophies or titles picked up along the way.

In closing I would like to thank all my instructors – even the ones I disagreed with at the time, as they forced me to question what I was doing, get out of my comfort zone and step up to the challenge. I'm not done yet and still enjoying my training.

I wish you all well.

**Osu!**

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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.

# Feeling Fear & Practicing Kata

by Martin O'Malley

*'You Must Deal With Your Own Mind Well And Wait For Others To Fall Apart Mentally' –*

**Sokon Matsumura**

**F**ear is natural for any individual to feel when faced with danger. The body's chemical response to fear is something which has ensured the survival of the human race over the millennia.

When we first identify the threat, our self preservation mechanism kicks into action, neurotransmitters signal to the Amygdala to begin the process of preparing to deal with the threat. The Amygdala in turn signals the release of several chemicals: adrenalin and noradrenalin which increase our speed and power; cortisol which increases our ability to re-stabilise when struck; and endorphins which increase our pain threshold.

During this time, there is an ongoing process of blood thickening to reduce bleeding if cut, the heart beating faster as it works to send more blood to the organs which need it most. At this critical stage they are the muscles, lungs, and heart itself, etc. There is a concurrent decrease in blood supply to the non-vital organs such as those of the digestive system and the neocortex (this is the modern part of the brain responsible for language).

In response to this increase in heart rate we become less capable at performing both fine and complex motor movements, however, with this elevation in heart BPM, comes an instinctive ability to perform better at gross motor tasks.

Simultaneously, the neurotransmitters suppress activity in the front of the brain

(neocortex) which deals with short term memory, concentration and rational thought, this hinders the ability to perform complex intellectual tasks or actions. This causes a decreased ability to give or receive complex commands or perform complex actions.

we develop tunnel vision as our eyes hone in on the threat. Our hearing focuses on the threat alone, making us unable to 'listen to reason'. We experience time distortion, with reports of time appearing to slow down being common.

Essentially, we can say that we have no control of our mind, or we have attained Mushin.

When searching for various explanations of Mushin the most common one I found was the learned ability to be free from anger, fear and ego during combat. Unfortunately, if you are involved in conflict, all these things are highly likely, and unfortunately, despite our supposed advancement from the time of the cave man, we are still unable to change our engineered instincts to react to threats though the mechanisms outlined above.

All our well practiced techniques and tactics fall apart as our thought process is interrupted and our ability to perform fine and complex motor movements diminishes. As Matsumura so aptly stated, we *'fall apart mentally'*.

Mushin, therefore, is not a trained mind set, but rather a natural response to a perceived threat. I would propose that anyone who is training themselves to achieve it would do something which frightens the shi...life out of them. Then they will know Mushin.

The above situation appears dire when we consider the amount of time spent practicing various techniques and tactics within Martial Arts classes, however, all is not lost. While all of the above responses are taking place, the neurotransmitters perform one more vital task; they send a message to the Hippocampus to begin recording information about what is happening.

The Hippocampus is the part of the brain which deals with long term memory. In a conflict situation, it records information about the threat, and our actions or reactions, how we dealt with and ultimately survived this threat.

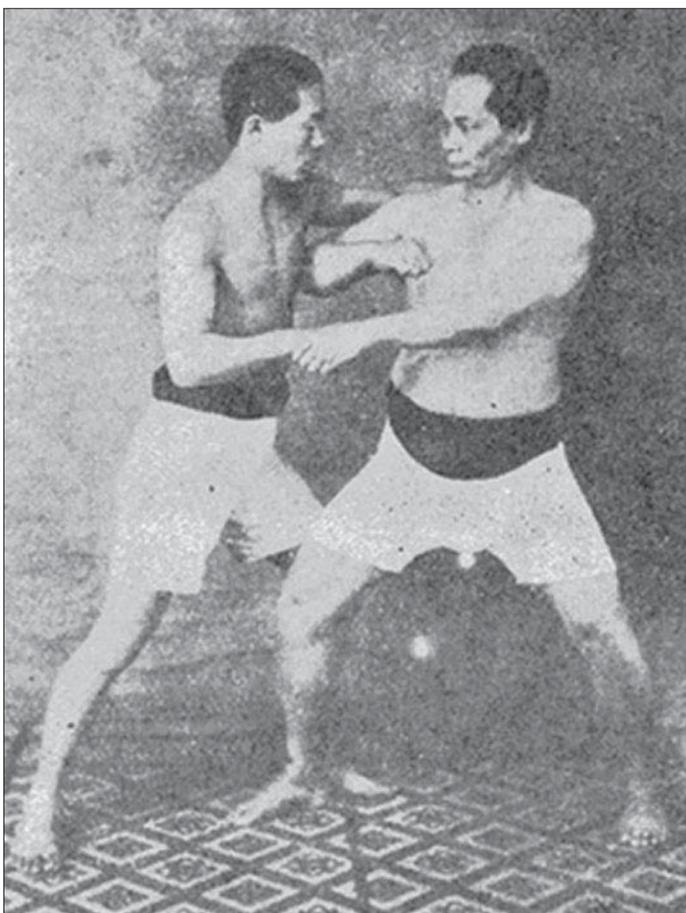
When recorded in the Hippocampus, this information is ready for use again should we ever face the same or similar threat. For example, if someone throws a punch at us, and we put our hands up to defend ourselves, the Hippocampus records this information and next time any object is coming towards our head, we will repeat the same hands up position. Why? We do this

because the brain says 'this stopped us getting hit last time, so we're going to do it again'. This is the basis of training for Zanshin, or remaining mind.

When searching the net for explanations on Zanshin I found things like total awareness; watching the opponent after performing the technique while holding our posture; physical and mental alertness during the conflict.

Each of these takes conscious effort, and as explained earlier, we are not capable of complex thoughts or actions when under the duress of a conflict situation. Unfortunately, we cannot override the natural responses of the human being, and therefore, Mushin is the inevitable state. What we can do is train to reduce the effect it has on us.

By undergoing 'pressure learning', we can record the appropriate responses to various threats in the Hippocampus, and we can teach ourselves to react appropriately in situations of conflict. We need the experience of these situations. Obviously, we cannot encourage people to actively engage in combat nightly as this would be a dangerous activity, and equally as obvious, we cannot re-create with 100% accuracy the situations people could possibly



be in and stay within the realms of safety in training.

*(NOTE: Choki Motobu apparently regularly visited the 'entertainment' district and challenged others while there in an effort to improve his skill. According to most sources, he was a very capable fighter using what he learned from these experiences)*

There is however one thing which can help us overcome this problem and that is that the human brain does not differentiate between real and imagined threats. The proof of this is readily available to anyone who has ever woken up in the middle of the night sweating and with their heart racing after a terrible nightmare.

We can literally self induce the state of Mushin in ourselves, recreating the body's response to threats, even though a physical threat does not exist. This concept also forms the basis of visualisation techniques in sports psychology.

When I first attended lectures on sports psychology, there was a comment from one of the lecturers which went along the lines of 'never send your body, where your mind has not already been'. We were encouraged to literally image our way to success in our chosen field. Visualisation of the situation helps us to understand the situation and remain calmer in the situation through two components.

Firstly, when the visualisation technique is done correctly it induces a Mushin or Mushin like reaction, the Hippocampus records how we deal with the perceived threat. It is recording the techniques which we use to deal with the situation and how we act/react to the threat to ensure our survival should we ever be faced with the same or similar threat again.

Secondly, by being exposed to the chemicals associated with the Mushin state, just as with any other chemical, we are dulling its effects.  $C_2H_5OH$  (alcohol) is a perfect example when we consider that on our first night out drinking, we managed 5 drinks, and after a few nights out, we could manage 8 or 10 before feeling the same effects. We became accustomed to its properties and our body learned how to manage these effects better.

Similarly, when the chemicals associated with duress are released into the body on a regular

basis, we become accustomed to their presence and require higher levels of chemicals to produce the same results (the Mushin state). We can lessen the effects on ourselves, and more importantly, we can lessen the effects on our higher functions. We can keep our heads, or, we have achieved Zanshin.

As Budoka, we can enhance this through a mixture of physical techniques and visualisation, or kata. As Funakoshi said, in training, *'the opponent must always be in your mind'*, and by literally having the opponent in mind, we can deal with the situation, record it in the hippocampus and store that information for future use while simultaneously dulling the effect it has on us.

According to Choki Motobu *'it is interesting, but when I just think about performing a Kata, when I'm seated, I break a sweat'*. Assuming that he was not that out of shape, I feel that he too is referring to this visualised practice, while Anko Itosu felt that *'During practise you should **imagine** you are on the battle field. When blocking and striking make the eyes glare, drop the shoulders and harden the body. Now block the enemy's punch and strike! Always practise with this spirit so that, when on the **real** battlefield, you will naturally be prepared'*. I believe that all three of these masters are advocating visualisation in Kata training.

When we wish to recreate the Mushin state, we must have a quality visualisation, and this takes time to perfect. The quality of the visualisation is dependant on our view of reality and our understanding of the nature of conflict and violent situations. We must be aware of the places conflict situations are likely to arise, and the context in which they will take place. Our visualisation is also very much dependant on our understanding of kata and its uses. In this way, supplementary training and various kinds of kumite are important to our development of realism.

Visualisation however contains a key element which kumite cannot bring. Visualisation, by its nature, is unconditional. There are no pulled punches, banned techniques, abbreviated techniques, no tap outs, no alternative to eye gouges, but no one is injured. Visualised kata training can be done anywhere, at any time, it requires no equipment, little space and time, it

costs nothing and I believe that it is effective.

Reality training is important, kumite and has its place, but reality is just visualisation with a partner, props and safety rules, so reality training is limited in this regard. Visualisation is limited only by your imagination (not an encouragement to visualise ineffective techniques), and augmented by your knowledge.

Does this fit with what the past masters taught? Examining it, I believe it does because it places kata at the centre of training, while using kumite as a supplementary training method, along side, but not instead of kata. According to what I have read of the written word left to us by past teachers, this is the correct order of training.

Does it work? For me, it has had a major influence on my own training. Kata has become alive whether I am performing with a partner or in my solo training. I feel that it is of benefit to me, though it was something which I had to work hard to develop. Sometimes I still have to slow down to get the image right first, and then build in speed, particularly if I'm working on a new situation or application. Overall however, I have found it to work for me, and I'm really happy with the results.

It has brought kata practise back into the centre of my personal training with partner applications supplementing and augmenting it, and I'm not getting injured from accidental fingers in the eye or clashes of shins. I can travel for months on end without equipment or a training partner, and still benefit from training by myself. Others may have their own way of achieving the same aims, but I have found that this works for me, and fits my Karate perfectly.

If it works so well, why do we need kumite? One of my teachers once said to me, 'There is nothing better to ensure humility as a good smack in the mouth'. We need to interact with other people, compliant or not, so that we can keep our visualisation realistic, and to ensure that we don't go off fantasising about skill which we don't have. There is little point in visualising kicking the opponent in the head if we're as flexible as an iron bar, so if head kicks are that important to us, our visualisation must include knocking the opponent down first. Kumite helps us to keep everything in proportion.



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BACK TO THE ROOTS Matthew Sylvester



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**MATTHEW SYLVESTER**, 3rd Dan, has been studying taekwondo since 1991. In 1995 he hosted pressure points pioneer Prof. Rick Clark. Since then, Matthew has dedicated his training to making taekwondo as practical as possible, gaining black belts in Jung Shin Mudo (taekwondo) Ao Denkou Jitsu, Jim Wagner's Reality Based Personal Protection, Family Awareness Safety Training, and Aikoushin Kobujutsu. He is also an SIA qualified doorman, who uses pressure points and some of the techniques within the book on a frontline basis.

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# Transitional Aspects in Karate: Part 1

## Are you appreciating only a small portion of your technique?

by Chris Denwood

I was in the dojo talking with one of my students the other day about a recent grade examination that he'd challenged and he asked whether I could give him a little feedback on his overall performance, since he thought that he himself came across as being very 'robotic'. When I asked him to elaborate some more, he explained to me that he was finding it very hard to group movements together successfully without feeling a severe lack of smoothness throughout the whole sequence. After our short discussion I began to think a little more about his issue of 'smoothness' and during the next session, I gave my student some advice that I'm happy to say has helped him greatly.

Therefore, in the spirit of sharing, I thought that I'd spend some time writing this rather concise two-part article on the subject of transitional movements.

Like a lot of concepts in karate, I've always found that the greatest improvements made come from those times during training, in which you come to accept a different approach to what you may already have been accustomed to. Sometimes, when you begin to see something in a completely different light, then not only can a whole host of burning questions be answered in a very short space of time, but a positive physical change can occur without even trying; i.e. the mind directs the body.

A good way to think about the concept surrounding this article is to consider one of those popular 'magic eye' visual puzzles that set a huge craze back in the 1990's. Come on - you know the ones I'm talking about! Thinking back to my

school days, I can remember people staring at these things for ages until, all of a sudden a picture of someone's face, a dog, a famous building, a tree or the like would magically reveal itself. Come to think of it, in those days I myself may have even succumbed to the attraction of one or two of those magic eye puzzles!

The process of solving a magic eye puzzle is a good analogy to use because in many ways the traditional kata of karate can be compared to these addictive kinds of challenges. This is because they can be viewed in completely different ways, which can alter almost completely what we tend to 'see' as the end product. Furthermore, I think that this is where the whole attraction and addiction comes from in the first place – the fact that there's something there, just under the surface, waiting to be revealed. In respect to these puzzles, it's dependent on how our eyes see the patterns on the page. We view the page in different ways until our brain recognises and joins up the key shapes that are critical to gaining a visual appreciation of the final 'hidden' image. In contrast, how we view the principles contained in kata can be dependent almost entirely on what we're ready to see as a result of our own unique understanding of the art. We then develop to see more and more, as and when our accumulative experience allows.

In very basic terms, a form in karate could be simply defined as a series of techniques joined together. If we limit our definition to this for now, we can then visually represent our kata as in Fig.1.

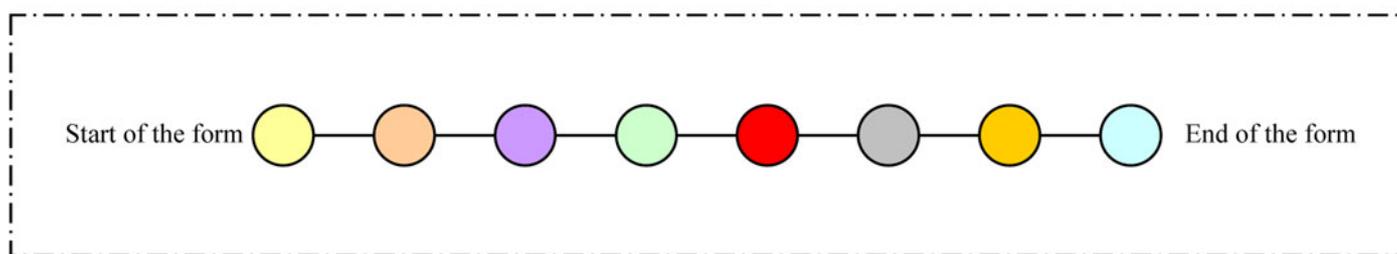


Fig.1: A basic visual definition of kata

In this very basic example, we have a start point, an end point and a discrete number of techniques (represented by the coloured circles) along the way. The lines simply represent the fact that these techniques are to be joined together in order to make the form.

At this point, we are able to add a little more complexity to our example, because as we all know, some kata are not performed in a straight line. They all have a unique *embusen*, which in many ways is critical to the meaning of the form. Furthermore, a kata is never performed as a simple 1-2-3-4 series etc, but possesses a

specific rhythm and cadence that again complements to some degree, its meaning. To alter the rhythm as shown in the diagram, we need to change the time that elapses between each series of movements in order to create combinations. Lastly for the sake of this article, each technique within the kata is different, so each of these also needs to be distinguished in some way. By combining all of these varying elements, we can then construct a new diagram that more comprehensively resembles a traditional form. Fig.2 shows a simple diagrammatical representation from a section of kata, based on those discussions above.

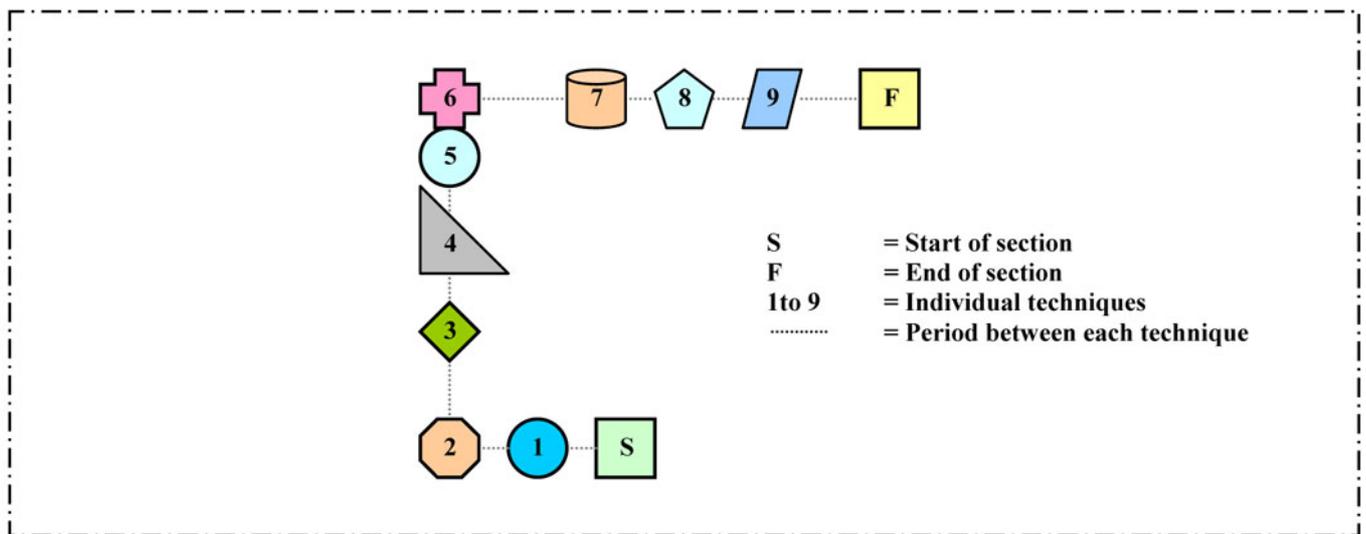


Fig.2: Diagrammatical representation of a kata section

The first thing you'll notice about this second diagram (apart from the fact that my drawing skills leave a lot to be desired) is that each technique is given a different shape and colour. This is to represent the individuality of the technique through its physical form rather than its particular name. As you may or may not know, the modern day labels given to many of widespread karate techniques can be very misleading indeed when it comes to trying to understand the more practical nature of such movements. So I figured that using different shapes (instead of writing the actual names of the techniques) would be a good way to reflect this issue in the diagram and emphasise the outside visual differences between the techniques.

Secondly, you'll notice that the faint dotted lines that join each shape together are different lengths. This indicates to us the combination

pattern, sequence and rhythm within that particular section of the kata. For instance (and for the sake of this article), technique numbers 1 and 2 could represent a 'down block & punch' combination that can of course be found in a variety of forms, one of these being Pinan Nidan (Heian Shodan). Techniques 5 and 6 show no line at all between and signifies a more fluid combination such as the flowing 'outer block & punch' that can be found within the first half of Seishan Kata. Finally, technique numbers 7, 8 and 9 show the very typical three technique combination, which is prevalent in many kata, especially again, the Pinan forms.

Ok then; so how does this all relate to those magic eye pictures and (I can hear you all shouting) what the hell has all this got to do with pragmatic karate? Well, to begin with, I've tried to show Fig.2 as I believe a great deal of karate-

ka tend to view their performance of kata. I've made the techniques (coloured shapes) purposefully bold and vibrant, with the adjoining lines comparatively faint and dull. When you (or we in general) look at someone performing a particular form, the eyes will naturally be directed straight away to the shape of each technique at the strongest (most visible) point – this being of course the end focus, or 'kime' point. Even when practicing a form, it becomes quite pleasing to repeatedly focus our own attention towards trying to master the more vivid or bold techniques.

We can also think of the idea above in another way. If you were to perform kata in front of someone that was completely new to karate and asked them to remember as much as they could and then try to recreate the performance after you had finished, then you'd probably find that this person would be much more likely to remember the more distinctive technique shapes first (i.e. the signature movements of the kata) and in almost all cases, the timing and direction (embusen) will be quickly forgotten or in some cases repeated completely differently to what was originally performed. It's certainly not hard to come to terms with the fact that the more distinctive visual stimuli will have a much greater chance of being retained longer in the mind. If

anyone reading this article has any experience in teaching karate young children for instance, then you'll know exactly what I mean. Most youngsters are very capable at absorbing information, but it's always the larger and most appealing movements that are retained first and for much longer periods of time.

What I am trying to say is that in order to gain a much more detailed appreciation of our kata, we need to first stop looking at our forms as if we are still novice in the art. We all know that *Shoshin*, or 'beginner's mind' describes the ideal attitude you should hold whilst training. However, it does not in anyway represent the requirement to be in any way naive. For a time during our practice, we should try to take our attention away from the large (visually pleasing) techniques of the kata and start to focus more on that, which is not always initially seen or fully experienced. I am of course talking about those dull, faint lines, which connect each technique together. When we look at kata from this different perspective, we can then begin to see the seemingly infinite amount of potential to which they hold. What happens in your mind when instead of looking at kata as you usually do, you now see it in a completely different light? Consider the revised diagram shown in Fig.3

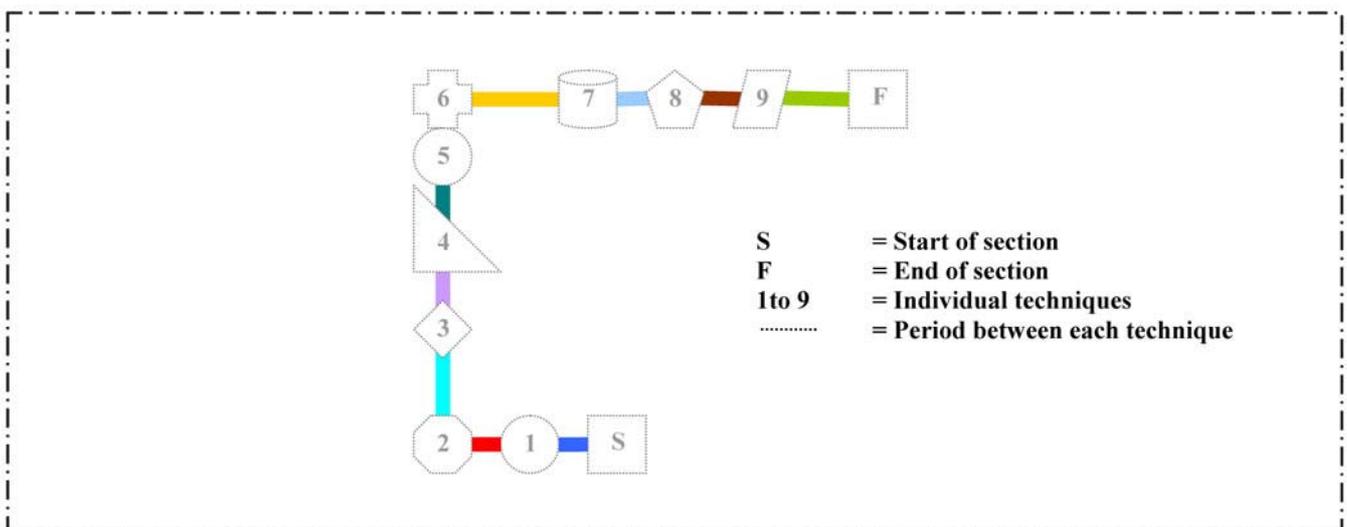


Fig.3: Alternative view of a kata section

If you look at both Fig.2 and Fig.3 together, you'll see that the pictures are structurally identical, but your eyes will naturally focus on different areas depending on which is more easily seen. In Fig. 2 for instance, it is much more likely that your eyes will make out the shapes and

colours of the actual techniques. By comparison, in Fig.3, your eyes will naturally pick up the large coloured lines first. In a 'magic eye' puzzle, the solution is hidden and camouflaged by using bold, colourful shapes and patterns that have been designed to impede the mind from putting



**Fig.4:**  
The origin

**Fig.5:**  
The transition (a)

**Fig.6:**  
The transition (b)

**Fig.7:**  
The transition (c)

**Fig.8:**  
The termination

together the outline of the desired picture. It is only when we look with a 'different view' that the puzzle actually begins to take shape.

So why is this idea so important in respect to kata? Well... that, which is the most important, isn't very often the most vibrant. Let me explain further. If you take a single movement from any form, it will always consist of the following three elements:

- 1 - A start posture/position (the origin): Fig. 4
- 2 - An end posture/position (the termination): Fig. 5 to Fig. 7
- 3 - A transitional movement between (1) and (2): Fig. 8

Going back to Fig.2 again, we are focussed almost entirely on the origin and termination of each technique. Fig.3 suggests that by thinking a little differently and placing less importance on the end point of the techniques, we can begin to see the much more critical transitional elements between those movements. These transitions are deemed important simply because they contain almost all the potential and potency of the form itself. To give an example; considering only the origin and termination of each technique could be compared to spending a large amount of time contemplating over a beautiful painting of a grand piano – it is (and will be) only a representation of a single moment in time. Equating more to the transitional elements over and above the origins and terminations would be like mindfully turning away from that enchanting painting hung up on the wall, sitting down in front of a real grand piano and obtaining hands-on experience in playing it!

The difference is that one option is for want of a better word, 'inanimate', while the other (by comparison) is much more 'alive and kicking'.

Indeed, it is during the transition from one movement to the next that the real potential occurs, since this is the portion of the technique that is in actual physical motion. The origin and termination are simply 'snap shots' showing the results of the preceding motion(s). What we need to do as karate-ka in order to squeeze as much as we can from the form, considering this argument, is twofold. Firstly, we should strive to ensure that the transitional motion is performed as efficiently and dynamically (or smoothly) as possible in order to increase our proficiency for practical encounters. Secondly, we need to analyse each transitional movement for potential applications that under normal circumstances, just as the magic eye pictures, would simply not be seen (as with fig.2). When you start to appreciate the importance of each transitional movement, you'll find that the actual end point for each technique takes a somewhat back seat in priority.

To make progress in your development of transitional movements within kata, it becomes necessary to train kata as you've now learned to 'see' it. Try the following exercise when next in the dojo and are practicing your favourite kata. Start from yoi dachi and without moving a muscle; consider the first technique of the form in your mind. At this point you are already at the origin of the first movement (yoi), so think intensely about getting to the termination (the first technique's kime point) as quickly and dynamically as possible. Run this through your mind a few times and then when ready, unleash the technique.

Think entirely about the transition. Once at the termination of the movement, forget about what's just occurred because you are now also at the origin of the next movement. In your mind's eye, think about the second technique of the kata and again consider getting to this point as fast and effectively as possible. Only when you feel ready should you begin the dynamic movement towards the next kime point. Repeat for the rest of the form.

If you spend time practicing kata in the way described above, you'll find that it can take while to complete the whole form. However, during this time you have been able to successfully isolate and focus on the transitional part of every movement as opposed to simply the origin and termination points, as how most people would usually practice kata. Training in this new way will give you a practical appreciation of the visual diagram shown in fig. 3, i.e. it would be just like trying to solve a 'magic eye' puzzle with your body! Instead of looking at the pictures, you are experiencing what your mind is trying to solve. A more advanced way of practicing the exercise described above would be to consider the actual combinations of the particular kata and focus on a series of techniques rather than each discrete

movement. In either way, you are essentially changing the way in which you look, perform and prioritise the movements of the kata. Now even at this first stage (performance), before even looking at any applications, you are beginning to 'study' the form at a level that's far over and above the superficial.

So far in this article we've considered the performance aspects of kata and suggested that there may be more than one way to look at them. We've also highlighted the way in which your attention is usually drawn to the most vibrant or visual aspects of a particular form, whereas categorically, the real 'meat' of the movements is found within the frequently subtle transitional motions between each 'snap shot' posture. Furthermore, we've discussed ways in which you can practice kata in the dojo by isolating each of these transitional movements. Obviously, this kind of attentive training is of no use if we can't in some way use what we find in a positive or practical way towards our goals. So in part two of this piece, I'd like to explore the ways in which studying the transitional movements of kata can help towards the universal goal, to develop more pragmatism within in our traditional arts.

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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.

# Okinawan Karate: An Eclectic Arsenal

by Matthew Apsokardu

*“To search for the old is to understand the new. The old, the new, this is a matter of time. In all things man must have a clear mind. The Way: Who will pass it on straight and well?” –*

**Funakoshi Gichin**

**E**clectic and traditional martial arts are often seen as polar opposites. Stereotypically, traditional styles are portrayed as dusty clumps of kata repetition while eclectic styles are viewed as loose collections of trendy techniques. But rarely discussed are the historical, technical, and philosophical connections between the two.

Eclectic combat is known for its all-inclusive nature. We see it developing on television as mixed martial artists fight using Brazilian jujitsu, kickboxing, western wrestling, and so on. Other methods, such as Jeet Kune Do, stress the importance of taking whatever works in a live fight, be it punching, grappling, or even biting. Surprisingly, the original Okinawan karate masters utilized the exact same mindset.

## In the Old Days...

Imagine the lifestyle of the old karateka during the 17<sup>th</sup> century – fisherman by day, father and husband by night. One day, while bringing home the morning’s catch, the karateka encounters two bandits tearing through his village, stealing rice and accosting women. What could be done? There were no emergency police personnel to call; instead, the karate exponent had to dispatch the bandits as quickly and effectively as possible. William Hayes, 7<sup>th</sup> Dan Shobayashi Shorin Ryu, describes this as life protection, rather than self-defense. In life protection encounters, there is no room for points or referees. If the karateka fails, the village is at the bandit’s mercy. With those kind of stakes, the Okinawans had little time to worry about technical snobbery.

Since Okinawa is a small, seemingly isolated island off the coast of Japan, it’s easy to believe that karate developed in a vacuum. This is not so. Okinawa was a bustling seaport and functioned as a stop off in-between some of the larger kingdoms. It was common for traders from

China (The Great Ming), Japan, Malaysia, Java, Thailand, and Korea to visit Okinawan shores. During that time it was not just goods being traded. Envoys from other countries brought unique martial disciplines, and occasionally stayed on the island and propagated that knowledge. The Okinawans readily integrated effective techniques into their own indigenous style, then known as Tode. In fact, some of the karate kata practiced today are supposedly named after these original bearers of knowledge (Chinto and Kusanku, just to name two).

Karate was not just a matter of waiting for new knowledge to arrive – the Okinawans actively sought it out. Warriors from antiquity would travel to other countries in order to refine their skills. Men like Chatan Yara and Sakugawa traveled to China and went on to have great influence on the development of both karate and kobudo (the study of weapons).



**Famous Gathering of Old Okinawan Karateka, including Chotoku Kyan and Chojun Miyagi**

## In Modern Times...

Sharing knowledge in karate is not unique to the “old days.” In fact, we see prime examples of it throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and even into the 21<sup>st</sup>. Consider the great master Funakoshi Gichin (1868-1957). He was a man who studied the old ways, and yet lived only a few short decades

ago. While his primary instructors were Azato Yasutsune and Itosu Yasutsune, Funakoshi also benefited from a long list of other notable teachers, as he explains in *Karate-do: My Way of Life*:

*“I continued assiduously with my karate, training under a number of teachers: Master Kiyuna, who with his bare hands could strip the bark from a living tree in a matter of moments; Master Toonno of Naka, one of the island’s best Confucian scholars; Master Niigaki, whose great common sense impressed me most deeply, and Master Matsumura, one of the greatest karateka.”*

Funakoshi goes on to explain:

*“Both Azato and his good friend Itosu shared at least one quality of greatness: they suffered from no petty jealousy of other masters. They would present me to the teachers of their acquaintance, urging me to learn from each the technique at which he excelled.”*

Funakoshi Sensei benefited from the wisdom of many credible masters, regardless of what particular lineage they came from. What mattered was the effectiveness and education they could provide.

Another fine example involves Kanazawa Hirokazu Hanshi (10<sup>th</sup> dan, Shotokan). Kanazawa Sensei is the current head of the Shotokan International Karate-do Federation and would have every justification for being a “Shotokan purist.” But throughout his martial arts career he studied judo, kendo, tai chi, and aikido. When asked why he studied other martial arts, he responded: “because if I don’t know other [styles], then [there is] only shotokan. Then maybe I am thinking I am strong, but cannot win against other styles because... I have to know all styles. [I] have to know other martial arts. Then I can learn more about shotokan karate.”

Kanazawa Sensei echoes the thoughts of Funakoshi. In order to make his art stronger and more complete, he opens his mind to new ideas.

While this sort of mindset is definitely on the decline in modern karate, some Sensei in Okinawa and the United States strive to keep it alive. C. Bruce Heilman Hanshi is the head of

the International Karate Kobudo Federation and holds the rank of 9<sup>th</sup> dan, Okinawa Kenpo, and 3<sup>rd</sup> dan, jujitsu. At Heilman Sensei’s annual training camps, it is not uncommon to see seven or eight different karate styles represented, along with practitioners of jujitsu, aikijujitsu, kenjutsu, taekwondo and other arts. The hope is that students will encounter different ideas and avoid getting trapped inside of any particular dogma.

### **Techniques of a Karateka**

One of the largest complaints eclectic stylists have with modern karate is the increasing point-sparring emphasis. Points can be scored to the headgear and to the body, but most other techniques are forbidden. Reality-based fighting must contend with a variety of fighting distances and situations. This is a legitimate complaint, and it’s likely the old karateka would have voiced the same concerns. Classical karate, when practiced fully, is a sophisticated combination of percussive strikes, tuite, tegumi, and kyusho (all of which require a bit of explanation).

**Percussive striking** has brought karate a certain amount of fame. Often we see breaking demonstrations by masters such as Kiyohide Shinjo (8<sup>th</sup> dan, Uechi-Ryu). These masters crash through inches of wood or layers of brick without hesitation. Breaking is the result of years of hojo undo training. Hojo undo involves rigorous methods of hardening the body such as repeatedly striking a makiwara (a wooden plank wrapped in rope). These methods seem grueling but the results are unquestionably impressive.

**In addition to percussive striking, karateka utilize tuite.** Tuite refers to joint manipulation or locking. We see similar approaches in jujitsu, Brazilian jujitsu, and aikido. Tuite is often a natural progression after the use of strikes. Through the use of tuite, a practitioner can restrain an opponent, tear ligaments, and open up vital targets on the body. This also helps explain why we rarely see high kicking from old karateka; tuite allowed them to bring whatever target they needed down to waist level.

**Tegumi is a sister concept to tuite.** William Hayes explains that in early tegumi “there were compressions of the body, pushes against nerve plexus, pinches, anything to distract the person mentally in order to unbalance them physically...footwork, tripping, and trapping were

integrated into the system, which was then followed by percussive striking.” This is very similar to “clinch fighting” in today’s modern arts, only without rules. Eyes, throat, groin, and other sensitive areas are all fair game. A practitioner of tegumi is fully capable of continuing a fight once it clinches and goes to the ground.

**The final concept is also the most mysterious – kyusho.** Kyusho means “vital point striking” and has become a topic of great debate. Some practitioners flaunt kyusho as a magic bullet, able to kill/disable opponents with a mere touch (or sometimes, no touch at all). Other martial artists write it off as classical nonsense perpetuated by generations of mythology. In actuality, real kyusho is a very logical, scientific approach to striking vital nerve plexus in the body. Kyusho strikes are pinpoint accurate and delivered with percussive power, jolting the nervous system and causing disruptions in the body.

It is important to realize that kyusho should not be considered an independent art. A violent, aggressive attacker may be too erratic for immediate kyusho striking. Furthermore, if the assailant is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, their reaction to the technique could be severely lessened. Also, some techniques simply don’t work on certain people. Without other tools, kyusho is limited. But when combined with the rest of *karate*, it becomes extraordinarily effective.

When all of these combat elements come together you get a fighter who is prepared to engage at any distance and utilize any advantage. This ideal may sound familiar; eclectic fighters strive for the same thing when they collect kickboxing strikes, jujitsu grappling, and other techniques.



A common attack – grab and punch.



The defender shifts to the outside of the punching attack and performs percussive strikes to vital kyusho locations.



The defender utilizes a tuite joint locking technique.



The defender finishes with a strong percussive strike.

### Controversial Kata

Even if karateka and eclectic fighters both endeavor toward versatile effectiveness, there always seems to be controversy when it comes to kata. Kata is the lifeblood of a classical stylist and the bane of an eclectic fighter.

Kata, from an eclectic point of view, is often represented by what is seen at tournaments. Tournament kata involves a lot of fancy uniforms, flashy weapons, and screaming kiai. The movements are quick and numerous. Even traditional kata seems to fall into the same pattern

of preorganizing responses to simple attacks. Do traditional practitioners really expect fights to unfold in such an organized fashion?

It’s a good argument. How similar does kata look compared to kumite? How about compared to self-defense tactics?

The truth is kata is supposed to encompass both kumite and self-defense, plus much more. Before modern day training equipment was developed, karateka had only hojo undo and other students to train with. Since karateka were the guardians of their families and villages, they

couldn't afford to injure each other seriously, and with techniques as severe as kyusho and tuite, they needed to discover a better way of transmitting knowledge. As if matters weren't difficult enough, they also wanted to teach a warrior mindset. The end result was kata. Kata was not designed to be a sixty move series where twelve different opponents attack from eight different angles, all falling victim to a prearranged series of defenses. Instead, kata taught how to make kyusho, tuite, tegumi, etc. cohesive and effective. In order to teach these theories in a logical fashion, they were combined into longer

series of events that had proven combat effectiveness.

Kata was not just teaching where to hit and when to hit, it was also developing keenness of mind. Consider this quote from Bruce Lee: "Be like water making its way through cracks. Do not be assertive, but adjust to the object, and you shall find a way round or through it. If nothing within you stays rigid, outward things will disclose themselves." Sounds like the exact opposite of kata (at least the kata we are used to seeing), but there is much more flowing beneath the surface.



A common technique found in kata (x block down) that is not apparently useful in modern street fighting.



The x-block used against a common attack – the leg shoot. Both hands strike down hard against the attackers exposed neck.



The defender wraps the opponent's neck utilizing tegumi strategy of off balancing.



The defender locks in a rear choke as the attacker's weight falls backward.

## The Warrior's Mind

During kata training, classical karateka utilized a concept known as shuhari (shu-ha-ri). Shu refers to the very beginning levels of understanding. This is the level in which we see most kata. It is a physical form that explains the basics of proper moving. Shu teaches good punches, good kicks, and certain strategies for reacting to attack. At this level we do not see the freedom of thought and movement that eclectic fighters crave.

Ha is the next step and refers to "transcending" the basics. Technique becomes integrated into the practitioner and mental clutter is lessened. The exponent no longer needs to think "move A leads to move B, which goes into C." Instead, the concepts are internalized and effective.

Ri is the highest level and the least discussed. Ri means "breaking away," but actually amounts

to a full integration of karate technique. This results in a clear mind, free from the earlier learning devices that kata supplied. In essence, the training wheels have been removed and the practitioner can ride wherever he/she pleases.

Imagine a mindset free from constraint and limitation. One that flows like water around an opponent, but at the same time, can fully utilize devastating techniques that take decades to master.

Imagine a martial artist free from the delusions of magic-bullet techniques; one who maintains proper fitness, all the while keeping an open mind to new ideas.

This is a wonderful ideal that we can all strive toward, whether we come from traditional backgrounds, eclectic backgrounds, or somewhere in-between.

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## 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.

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

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# The Bunkai of Basics 3: Hikite

by Matthew Miller

If your Karate is “traditional” in the sense often meant – that is, based around the three k’s (kihon, kata and kumite), then the title of this article may surprise you. Hikite, the pulling hand, is rarely thought of as a basic technique, but rather as a component of other basics. In this role, it is almost ubiquitous – there are few basic techniques where the returning hand is not pulled sharply back to the waist as the opposite hand extends.

Relegating the pulling hand to the status of a subsidiary or secondary movement, however, can lead to it being neglected when studying. This is a great shame – the sheer extent to which it appears throughout karate basics and kata makes it the most commonly performed technique, if it is viewed that way, and it has a great value when applied that befits this frequency.

Very often, the explanation that accompanies this technique when it is first taught is that the pulling action assists in accelerating the hand performing the technique, and that returning the hand to the hip prepares it for the next technique. By others, this is deprecated, the argument being that returning the hand to the waist is unnecessary, and exposes the head to easy attack.

This latter argument would seem valid, if the only use of the pulling hand was to return it to the waist – however, this is not the case.

Gichin Funakoshi, in his early book “Karate Jutsu”, classifies Hikite alongside all other hand techniques. His definition is one which provides a good insight into the usefulness of this technique.

“...the meaning of hikite, or pulling hand, is to grab the opponent’s attacking hand and pull it in while twisting it as much as possible so that his body is forced to lean against the defender”

This provides a clear use for this method, and a reason to draw the hand back sharply – it is grasping the opponent. It is this view of the hikite that I will expand upon in this article.

## Hikite – The basic technique

There are two forms of hikite commonly seen in basic techniques, depending upon whether it is performed in a front stance or long cat stance. However, both share the same basic method of performance.

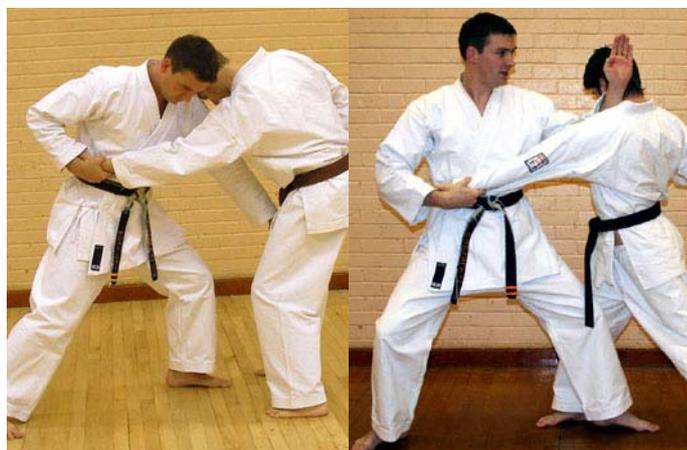
The hand that is to perform hikite begins the technique in an extended position, with the palm of the hand down. The hand is then rotated during the first part of its withdrawal, until the palm faces upwards. The hand continues to withdraw. In the case of a front stance, it finishes at the hip, whilst in the case of the cat stance, it tends to complete near the solar plexus.

Examples of each method are shown below – for the basic down block and knife hand block.



1a. Hikite in front stance      1b. Hikite in long cat stance

These two techniques appear different to some extent, but are seen to be identical when the hikite is used to grasp the opponent:-



2a. Hikite in front stance      2b. Hikite in long cat stance

In both cases, the opponent is grasped by the wrist, and the arm drawn into the performer's centre; in the case of the front stance, the hips are square to the front and it is possible to draw the arm to the side of the hip. In the case of the cat stance, however, the hips and body are turned sideways, so the arm is drawn across the front of the body rather than to the side. The hikite action is exactly the same – it is the position of the body and hips relative to this that alter.

### Bunkai

Unlike the earlier articles in this series, this one will not present multiple differing applications for a single technique – rather, it will concentrate upon the various ways in which the method espoused by Funakoshi can be developed to make this particular technique into a potent tool in the fighters armoury.

The most basic method for hikite relies upon the performer gaining contact with the opponents wrist with the outer side (little finger side) of the forearm. It is this touch contact to which the performer reacts, rapidly wrapping the hand around the wrist, pulling and twisting.

Depending upon which side of the wrist is contacted, then the result will be one of the following:-



3a. Outside to outside contact...

3b. The arm is locked straight by hikite



4a. Outside to inside contact...

4b. The arm is rotated, overbalancing the opponent

In either case, however, the principles and benefits of the technique are the same, and reflected in Funakoshi's definition:-

1 - The action of wrapping and twisting the wrist causes the opponent to be overbalanced. In the case of outside / outside contact, the opponent is caused to bend forward, whilst with inside / outside contact, the twist causes the opponents back to arch. Unbalancing is a valuable technique in preventing the opponent from initiating or continuing an attack. It also prevents effective defense.

2 - The drawing in of the arm accelerates the opponent towards the performer, or restrains them from moving away from any incoming strike. In both cases, this magnifies the effectiveness of the strike.

3 - Maintaining contact with the opponent allows the performer to easily locate the areas to be targeted

The first stage in developing the skill of hikite is to isolate this skill and develop sensitivity to contact on the outside of the forearm. This can be practised from a basic shiko-dachi stance. The proponents face each other at a relatively close distance; one then initiates contact with the outside of the other's forearm, and an attempt is made to react as quickly as possible to this by pulling and twisting the arm, to the point where unbalancing occurs. The arms are then returned to the start position and the drill repeated.

By varying which arm is touched, and whether the contact by the opponent is with the outside or inside of the forearm, then a degree of spontaneity and sensitivity can be developed that is useful as the drill develops.

Once this can be performed with some fluidity, the next stage can be added to the drill. The first stage is based upon contact only with the outside of the performer's wrist; however, it is equally possible that contact is made with the inside. In this case, the hand that is contacted transfers the opponents arm across, the opposite hand wrapping underneath and around to perform hikite. This can be viewed as an application of the cross block – the two hands perform this move as the opponents arm is passed from one to the other. It is important that contact is maintained with the opponent at all times.

As with the outside contact, there are two ways in which this can be performed, shown on the next page :-



5a. Inside to outside contact...

5b. transfer to the opposite side

5c. and pull to hikite



6a. Inside to inside contact...

6b. transfer to the opposite side

6c. and pull to hikite

Again, to drill this, return to the shikodachi stance and alternate contacts. Initially, only inside forearm contact should be made to develop this method, as shown in photo series 5 and 6 above. As experience is gained, then both inner and outer contact can be used freely (photo series 3 to 6). This will allow the performer to develop the tactile sense necessary to react instinctively and decisively to the touch that is felt.

Up to this point, we have a total of four options for each of the performers arms – contact can be made with either the inside or outside, with either the inside or outside of the opponents arms. However, there is a further level of sophistication to this drill that doubles the number of options again.

To this point, no real consideration has been given to the direction of force that is being applied whilst performing these techniques. To gain contact, a force must be exerted – however, in each of the four contacts described above, this can be initiated by either the performer or opponent, providing a

differing direction of force. If this is considered, all of the four described so far rely upon initiation of force by the performer. The motion of the hikite is in the direction dictated by this.

If the opponent initiates the contact, however, the force moves in an opposite direction, and the performer has to directly oppose this force to perform the hikite. In many cases, this will be a small level of force because the contact is incidental rather than conscious, but a higher skill level would require that the performer blends with this force rather than opposing it directly. It is this that the next four options address.

The two outside contact options are a small modification of the methods performed so far. As the force is felt on the outside of the performers arm, the arm is folded away from this force, directing it across the body. The opponent's arm is then transferred to the opposite arm and hikite performed:-



7a. Outside to outside contact...

7b. transfer to the opposite side

7c. and pull to hikite



8a. Outside to inside contact...

8b. transfer to the opposite side

8c. and pull to hikite

In the case of inside contact, a different approach is required. Here, the arm is allowed to travel outwards from the body – however, the

opposite arm follows this and pins the opponents arm down across the body, freeing the contacted arm for a counter:-



9a. Inside to outside contact...

9b. Drop the right arm across to pin the contacting arm

10a. Inside to inside contact...

10b. Drop the right arm across to pin the contacting arm

This completes the set of eight responses to contact for a single arm, providing sixteen responses if both arms are included.

The final stage of the isolation drill for hikite is therefore to incorporate all sixteen into a fluid drill. Again, work from isolation of particular sets of the drill through to all sixteen elements, until the spontaneous reaction to contact is correct, based both upon the type of contact and the direction of the force.

Up to this point, the hikite technique has been completely isolated from anything else. Such isolation drills have a great value in developing the technique, but its real use is to facilitate an attack by the performer. It is in this context that it is seen throughout the basic techniques, where it is performed simultaneously with the hikite – this creates a rapid attack and provides the benefit of accelerating the opponent towards the technique, increasing its effectiveness.

Examples of this use of the hikite have been shown in previous parts of this series, but practising these in a drill can be difficult – in many cases these techniques are against delicate areas such as the neck or chin, and rapid execution of them could lead to injury.

For this reason, I prefer to use a method derived from (though lacking the depth and subtlety!) of the Kihon Kumite of Wado Ryu. These were developed by Hironori Ohtsuka, the founder of Wado Ryu, based upon the principles of Shindo Yoshin Ryu, the form of Jiu Jitsu that he studied and mastered prior to Karate.

In many of the Kihons, body movement is used to accelerate an attack into the body of the opponent, whilst a simultaneous defence is performed with the opposite hand. By modifying this so that the opposite hand performs hikite, the drill described above can be performed complete with attack.

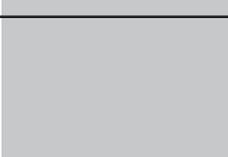
In most cases, the attack is directed to the body using an ura-tsuki punch – either to the solar plexus or the kidneys, depending upon which is exposed. These relatively safe targets allow the drill to be practised with fluidity, without great risk of injury. Clearly, in an applied situation, the attack could be altered to the head or neck – however, the potential for disabling the opponent with the body attack exists if it is performed with sufficient force.

Where the alternative hikite is used, dropping the arm across the front of the body, then the strike is performed to the exposed head.

The most important point to remember for this is that the hikite action and the strike are performed simultaneously. This draws the attacker onto the incoming strike, which when

combined with the body movement driving into the attacker, greatly increases its effectiveness.

The combined responses to each of the eight contacts on one arm are shown below:-

	Contact	Action		
Force Direction: From Defender (right hand side)	Outside to Outside			 Reverse View
	Outside to Inside			 Reverse View
	Inside to Outside			
	Inside to Inside			
Force Direction: From Attacker (left hand side)	Outside to Outside			
	Outside to Inside			
	Inside to Outside			
	Inside to Inside			

This represents the final stage of this drill, combining the action of the hikite with a simultaneous strike, as is the case in the vast majority of the basic karate techniques.

The totality of the drill described above provides a method for developing from the simple reaction to a touch on the outside of the arm, through to developing sensitivity for the direction of the force applied, and finally to combining this with a simultaneous strike. These are valuable skills that are at the heart of applied karate, and practising

them will undoubtedly improve your skill in this area.

At the same time, it is important to view this drill in context. It is intentionally artificial – it allows the practitioners to repeatedly utilise the skills in a cooperative manner, allowing development in a short period of time. However, the real benefit is found when this skill is transferred into spontaneous action – when hikite becomes an integral part of your free practise and fighting, it truly becomes useful.



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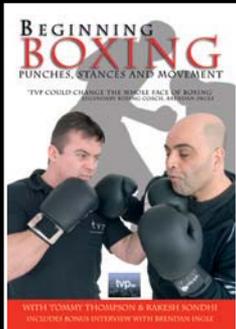
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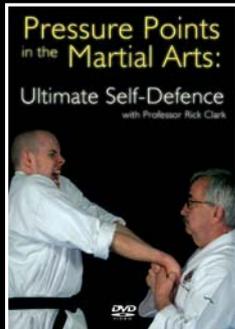
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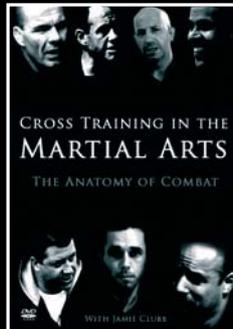
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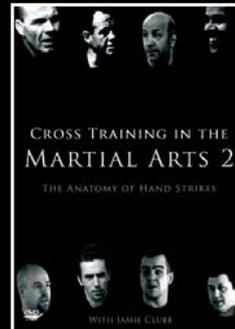
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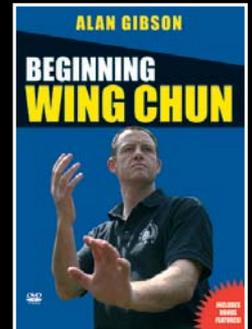
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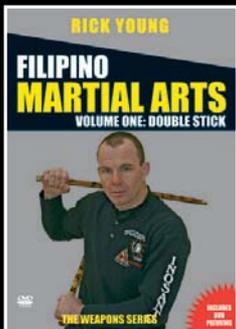
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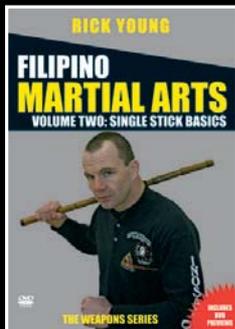
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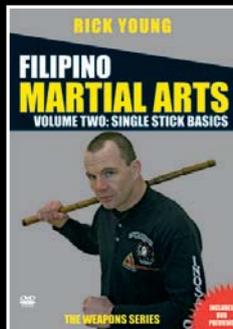
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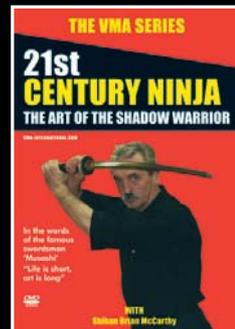
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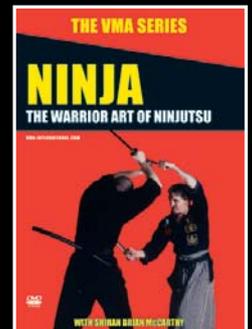
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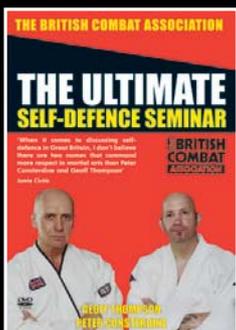
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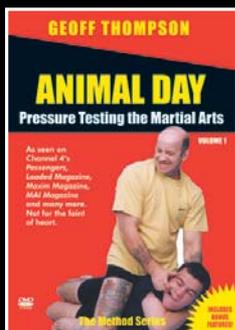
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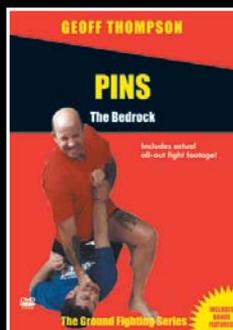
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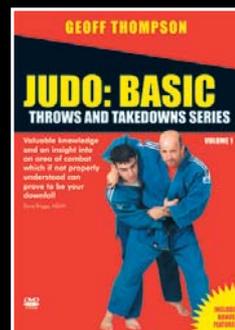
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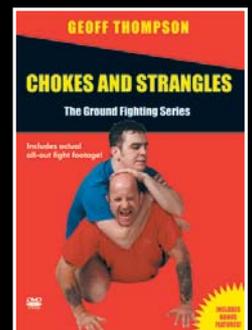
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# The Little Black Book of Violence

Foreword by Sergeant Rory Miller

An excerpt from the book by Kris Wilder & Lawrence Kane

Sergeant Rory Miller is the author of *Meditations on Violence: A Comparison of Martial Arts Training and Real World Violence*. He has studied martial arts since 1981. He has received college varsities in judo and fencing, and holds mokuroku (teaching certificate) in Sosuishitsu-ryu jujutsu. He is a corrections officer and tactical team leader who teaches and designs courses in defensive tactics, close quarters combat and Use of Force policy and application for law enforcement and corrections officers. A veteran of hundreds of violent confrontations he lectures on realism and training for martial artists and writers.



Sergeant Rory Miller

## Foreword by Sergeant Rory Miller

Kris and Lawrence are nice guys. They're tough guys, and they have the skill to put a hurtin' on you. They've both spilled blood and smelled it. But they're nice and intelligent and a little naïve—because they think they can convince you that violence is something you want to avoid just using facts.

There are tons of facts in here. Facts and stories, and really good advice. Whatever you paid in money for the book, someone else paid in blood for the lessons. All that advice came at a price. All of Lawrence's statistics were originally written in some poor bastard's blood on some sidewalk.

Lawrence and Kris think that they can get this through your head with facts and words. I don't think you're that smart.

When they write how hard it will be looking in the mirror every morning knowing that you have killed someone, they know this is true—because every non-sociopath they have talked to tells them how hard it is. Just words. In your adolescent fantasy (and even in your fifties, many of your fantasies are purely adolescent) being a 'killer' seems pretty cool.

Let me lay it out as these two fine men tried to lay it out in this Little Black Book; there are tons of things that are cool to think about that suck to do. Some suck so badly that the memory becomes a pain separate from the thing you are remembering.

You will read about heroes in here. Your little eyes will get all shiny and you will think, "I could do that!" And it's a good feeling because in your little Hollywood-influenced world, the hero gets the acclaim of people and the love of a beautiful stranger. In the world of this book, the same hero gets months of physical therapy, torturous surgeries and "it" (the arm, the knee, the hand, the eye, the back) never, ever works the same way again. Never.

Or maybe it goes another way. Maybe the relatives of the guy who attacked you, though they have been afraid of him for years, come out of the woodwork and get a small army of attorneys and start remembering how he was "a good boy, very caring" or he "was turning his life around." That small army of attorneys will have a mission—to take money from you to give to the family of the person you injured or to the person himself. If a home invasion robber can

sue, and win for “loss of earnings,” there’s very little hope that good intentions will protect you. What seems worse, to me, is that you wind up giving your earnings, your money, and your assets to someone you don’t even like, possibly someone with a long history of crime; certainly to someone who doesn’t deserve it.

That’s the good option, because the boys in blue may show up. You may find some special stainless steel bling ratcheted over your wrists and get a nice ride to the big building with the laminated Lexan windows and sometimes real bars for doors. When you hear and feel that cold electronic lock slam shut behind you, you will know that your life has changed forever. Then you might meet me or someone very like me. If you decided to sip twice at the well of violence, it will be my job to stop you, and I will stop you cold. It will hurt quite a lot.



*“When you hear and feel that cold electronic lock slam shut behind you, you will know that your life has changed forever. Then you might meet me or someone very like me. If you decided to sip twice at the well of violence, it will be my job to stop you, and I will stop you cold. It will hurt quite a lot.”*

They tell good stories about fights and killings that don’t happen. A strategist takes the lesson and they hope, in their naïve and sincere way that the reader (that’s you) wants to be a strategist. I know better. You’ll skim those stories and get to the bloody ones, imagining what a knife can do in vivid Technicolor, just like at the movies. But the movies never get the screams

quite right and sometimes the real memories that stay with you are the smells: rotten sh\*t and fresh blood and decomposition and the soapy, meaty smell of fresh brains.

Kris and Lawrence are so careful to go over the complexity of the subject. Violence isn’t just violence. It happens in a social context, a legal context, and a medical context and they all play off of each other. They put it in your face that you may lose your home, your career, your family, your sight... to save a wallet with fourteen dollars or so that some strangers won’t think bad thoughts about you. Is it enough for them to put it in your face? Will you read it?

I don’t think you’re that smart. I don’t think you can see past your own ego. I think that you will risk your own life and piss away good information to protect your daydreams.

Maybe not. Prove me wrong. Read the book, read it carefully. Follow the advice, avoid the risks, and become a strategist. Prove to me that you are smarter than I think you are.

I won’t hold my breath.

**Sgt. Rory Miller**

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# The Little Black Book of

# VIOLENCE

## What *Every* Young Man Needs to Know About *Fighting*

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by Lawrence A. Kane & Kris Wilder

## 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.

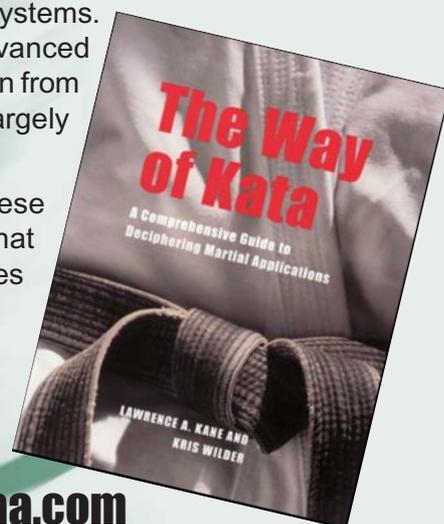
The theory of deciphering kata applications (kaisai no genri) was once a great mystery revealed only to trusted disciples of the ancient masters in order to protect the secrets of their systems. Even today, while the basic movements of kata are widely known, advanced practical applications and sophisticated 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” –*

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# The Way of Kata: Part 5

by Kris Wilder & Lawrence Kane

This is the final part of a series of 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 final two principles we will be examining in this series. For a thorough in-depth look at these principles, please refer to our book, *"The Way of Kata."*

## Principle 6 – Full speed and power

*"Hopefully we can build techniques that are fault tolerant and allow for some margin of error. Kata does take this into account by the use of multiple attacks or continuation of attacks to*

*your opponent. While it is nice to think in terms of 'one strike, one kill,' the reality of self-defense is that we may be forced to use multiple techniques to achieve our goal."* – Rick Clark

Kata practice is about perfection. Applications are often broken down into multiple parts so that practitioners can understand each component and get it just right. We practice our forms over and over again striving for perfection. Why? Because in the fury of battle things get sloppy. The better trained we are, the better we will be able to perform at full speed and power in the midst of an adrenaline rush. Under such conditions much of our control vanishes. Our perfect kata form degrades markedly. With proper training, it can be fully effective nevertheless.

There is an old television clip of a running back on an NFL football team looking into the camera and saying, "Just give me eighteen inches of daylight." For those of you without a working knowledge of American football, what he meant was that if his linemen (blockers) could give him a small opening to run through, he could accomplish great things—he had enough foot speed that once he broke clear, the pursuing players had little chance of catching him. As a martial arts practitioner, you need only change the size of the opening, but not the philosophy. We only need a few inches of "daylight" through which to execute a technique.

Real fights are sloppy affairs. Everything happens at full speed and power. They are fast, sweaty, bloody, and brutal. There is no time for perfection. All that matters is survival. If your technique did not work exactly the way you meant it to, you cannot stop the action and redo it. It has to be good enough, timed well enough, and have just enough space to work the first time.

If it is ugly yet effective, that's just fine. Nothing more is required. Unlike *kumite* (sparring) in the dojo (training hall), there is no "time out" or "redo" in mortal combat. Self-defense is about ending aggression quickly. That changes everything. We have all heard the phrase, "The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry." Similarly, a

military general might say, “No plan survives contact with the enemy.” That’s okay. Do not look for perfection; just get the job done.

Recalling an incident where a martial arts instructor was in the wrong part of town at the wrong time, Wilder related the following. “I didn’t see the fight, but I did see the results after the guy got beat down pretty good. It shook his dojo and the majority of the students’ foundation. In fact it took great effort to prevent their organization from flying apart. Knowing this guy’s method of practice and ideas regarding fighting, I believe that he sought perfection in the situation when it called instead for whatever it took to get the job done. You just can’t do that and expect to prevail.”

Heed this lesson: In kata practice, your form might call for eighteen inches of daylight, but all that you are going to get, and maybe all that you really need in a real fight, is one inch. Take your techniques and test them with this in mind, “Can I do this with far less perfection than what the dojo calls for?” Ask yourself, “Can I do this with only one inch and one eighth of a second, rather than eighteen inches and a full second to react?”

One way to safely approximate real fighting in dojo practice is to go full speed and power with proper padding and protective gear. The problem is that such equipment takes away many of your weapons. For example, you cannot grab successfully with padded gloves nor can you apply most pressure point techniques. Further, some techniques are simply too dangerous to apply even with padding. Examples may include eye gouges or rakes, ear slaps, and joint strikes.

Rather than training full speed and power with a partner where someone might get seriously hurt, we recommend that you practice your kata in combat-like conditions instead. Wait until the end of a particularly hard training session or simply go out and run hill sprints to near exhaustion before working your favorite form. Then do it as fast and powerfully as you can. Imagine a real opponent receiving every blow. Try to show every technique, but change the pacing where necessary to remove pauses shown solely for emphasis. Unlike normal kata practice, it is okay to get a little sloppy, to lose a little control. Strive for as good as you can do, but do not be concerned if you do not achieve

perfection. In fact, if you are doing it perfectly, you are definitely not tired enough.

Although Kane has had hundreds of punches thrown his way and has even had knives pulled on him a couple of times, in most dangerous situations he has had a radio to quickly summon backup or law enforcement support. He recalls, “It’s really not all that hard to outsmart a drunken football fan when you’re stone cold sober and relatively crafty. Very few precarious affairs escalated into real fights. I was able to talk, laugh, or threaten my aggressors into submission, staying out of harm’s way until help arrived. A few times, however, I was not so lucky. Not only have I had to fight my way out of ugly situations, but I have had to intervene to stop others from seriously hurting each other as well.”

In almost all of the fights Kane has seen, both participants went all out—full speed and full power. By the time things escalated to violence, very little if anything was held back. The first blow, for example, virtually always went toward the face. Just about any blow to the head can cause serious damage to the victim.

Untrained individuals often have a propensity for hurting themselves as much as they do their opponents; however, in the heat of battle they do not notice the pulled muscles, strained joints, and other hazards. Kane recalls, “One guy accidentally broke his own hand punching a metal stair rail, and then proceeded to pummel his opponent without regard to his injury. He didn’t even notice that he was bleeding until after the handcuffs were snapped into place.” Even in short conflicts, combatants generally emerge exhausted, shaky, and hurting once the adrenaline wears off.

It is hard to recreate such conditions in training without injuring yourself, but it is important to come as close as you can. Doing kata when you are totally exhausted and buzzing with adrenaline is a very good approximation of a real fight. You can mentally force yourself to perform even while your body is screaming at you to quit. It is very good training, so long as you do not overdo it to the point of serious injury. This ought to be a once a week activity at most. We feel that it is definitely worth pulling a few muscles in practice if it helps you survive during a real fight.

The bottom line is that practitioners need to know what is necessary for success and not let perfection become the enemy of the good enough. In a real fight at full speed and power, good enough is plenty.

### **Principle 7 – It must work on an “unwilling” partner**

*“Not to be the bearer of bad tidings, but the reason someone uses a weapon on another human being is to stack the deck in their favor. People don’t use weapons to fight, they use weapons to win. The absolute last thing any attacker wants to do is to fight you with equal weapons. If he was looking for a fight he wouldn’t have attacked you with a weapon in the first place. And if he knows you have a knife, he is going to attack you with a bigger and better weapon to keep you from winning. You pull a knife and he gets a club. You pull a club and he pulls a gun. There is no fighting involved, you use the superior weapon to disable your opponent. And you do it before he does it to you.”*

– **Marc MacYoung**

Let’s face it, only “bad guys” begin confrontations. They only do so when they are pretty sure that they are going to win. Your attacker is not interested in a fair fight, if he or she can get an assassination instead. Sneak attacks, ambushes, and dirty tricks are tools of the trade. As the old saying goes, “all’s fair in war.”



**Gekisai oyo (tandem application drill):**  
Sweep block to re-direct the kick.

If you are going to train well, you must perform realistically. Even though opponents in a real fight will be as uncooperative as possible, in dojo practice many practitioners have a tendency to “help” their training partners too much. For example, in tandem sparring drills, many junior practitioners do not really aim their blows. They just put out a punch or kick near their partner who easily blocks it.

Punches work against an opponent’s force while throws work with it. If there is no force, you cannot really tell whether or not the technique would have been effective. Further, when practicing sweeps or throws some practitioners tend to drop easily, never really making their partners struggle to perform the techniques properly. In reality, such practice can be very detrimental. There is a big difference between “honoring” your partner’s technique and simply letting him do what he wants unhindered. A little pain in practice goes a long way to avoiding real hurt in a fight.

When Kane first began training in karate, he was frequently matched up with another practitioner named Mike. They took their training very seriously, often practicing after class and/or on weekends. Working toward their green belt tests, they frequently performed gekisai kata dai ichi bunkai oyo, a prearranged tandem drill using techniques from gekisai kata. One of the sequences calls for a mae geri (front kick) from one partner, while the other partner turns his body and sweeps aside the kick with his arm. Lawrence and Mike soon reached a point where they could perform this oyo swiftly and well.



**Gekisai oyo (tandem application drill):**  
Follow-on pivot/elbow block. Defender is on the left.

One day in class, they had the opportunity to perform this drill with Scott, a visiting yudansha (black belt). The first time Scott threw the mae geri, Lawrence took a solid blow to the groin, a very painful and quite embarrassing situation. Nevertheless, it was also a very good learning experience.

During their friendly practice sessions, Lawrence and Mike had subconsciously aimed their kicks away from each other's private parts, eliminating the need to seriously block the attacks. Turning their bodies a little was all it took to avoid getting hit by the un-aimed blows. Since the blocks were relatively unnecessary, they had not been training realistically, although they were not aware of it. The first properly aimed, full-speed blow clearly pointed out that shortcoming, however. Fortunately it happened on the practice floor rather than in real combat.

Similarly, at the end of one version of the saifa kata bunkai oyo, there is a foot sweep takedown followed by a strike. If a practitioner leaves too much space between himself and his opponent and/or fails to break the opponent's balance, he sets himself up for an easy counter throw. Once again, when Lawrence and Mike worked together, one partner just fell down whenever the sweep was applied. Scott, on the other hand, threw a vicious counter throw the first time Lawrence tried the technique improperly, giving Scott enough space to turn in. Fortunately, Lawrence knew how to fall properly, an essential skill if you are unexpectedly slammed onto a hardwood floor.

Honoring a partner's technique means behaving as if the movement had been performed at full speed and power. It should never imply letting a partner get away with sloppy or ineffective technique. The attacking partner learns best when the receiver makes progressive, but realistic, resistance in proper proportion to skill level. In this fashion, a practitioner can identify and correct weaknesses in technique or interpretation thereof in the relative safety of the dojo.

When deciphering kata applications, you cannot rely on unpredictable movements by an attacker. In other words, assuming that the opponent will attack or respond with a specific technique (e.g., uppercut, elbow strike) is simply



not realistic. There are far too many possibilities to account for every one. Even if you could plan for every tactical contingency in advance, you should not count on having the emotional wherewithal in the heat of battle to logically pick responses off a mental list. You must train your body to react without conscious thought.

On the other hand, your applications should anticipate predictable responses by your opponent. Examples of predictable responses include a second punch from the opponent, your strike to the groin strike bending the opponent over, or your arm whip causing his head to snap up and back. Training, therefore, must work similarly. It is essential that the applications you practice have a very good chance of being effective in a real fight.

To help your training partners figure out where that may be the case, you must honor their techniques with predictable and realistic responses as appropriate. You must not, on the other hand, reinforce bad behavior and unrealistic technique. It benefits no one to do so.

# The Gearbox Concept

by Mark Campbell

When working your bunkai consider the “Gearbox Concept”. Think of a gearbox with a multitude of moving parts (multiple gears, shafts, etc.) and other principles (hydraulic pressures, centrifugal forces, gravity, etc.) all working together at the same time or a specific sequence to accomplish a task or series of tasks. If any one of the moving parts or principles is not functioning correctly, then the gearbox won’t work. Or, if the internal parts are not working in sync, the intended result may be different. Just like an orchestra, if all of the instruments are not playing together and at just the right time, the concert might be considered a failure or at least the music may not sound the same as was originally planned.

At a very basic level bunkai consists of a linear set of actions, step, block, then punch, etc. These

may be three unrelated techniques (stance, block, punch). A more advanced level incorporates all of these actions (stepping into a stance, blocking, punching, etc.) into a more complex application. It is highly possible that all of the techniques work together to become one application allowing you to control the attacker during the entire sequence. Also, the tempo of the kata, in certain series, may be different than you once thought. Consider all the moving parts (feet, hips, hands, etc.) of the defender and attacker along with other principles (balance, timing, leverage, etc.) of both parties to find more advanced applications in your kata. Keep in mind, the sum of the whole can be worth more than the sum of the individual parts.

In the example, we teach the Gekisai kata in steps:



1: Starting position

2: Step and pivot into our stance

3: Execute a high block

4: Step forward into a stance and execute a high punch

5: Step back into a stance and execute a low block

At a basic level, the actions work in a linear format as separate or individual techniques. Separately, these techniques don’t allow you to control the attacker. As individual techniques there are gaps in-between to allow the attacker an opportunity to take over and control you. But, if we were to execute these moves together, while using balance, leverage and timing to our advantage, we can turn the same set of

techniques into more effective fighting application to control the attacker during the entire sequence.

Now, let’s look at the same series of techniques flowing together using the principles of balance, leverage and timing to our advantage. Also, keep in mind that we want both arms and legs working in sync to defend and control the attacker throughout the entire sequence:



1: As soon as you feel threatened by the attacker, execute a pre-emptive strike to the side of the attacker's neck as you step into him with your entire body, inflicting pain and off-balancing him

2: Keep the attacker off-balance by hooking your blocking hand around his neck and pull

3: As you pull his head (chambering your arm), pivot your hips (working your whole body in sync) to help off balance the attacker and control him

4: Step (using the momentum of your whole body) while you strike the exposed temple or other vulnerable areas on the side of the attacker's head

5: Grab the attacker's arm as you step back (again, using your whole body) to stretch out the attacker's limb for a joint lock

Throughout the whole sequence never allow the attacker to regain their balance as you maintain total control of him.. In the next sequence of Gekisai, we see:



1: Step into a basic stance and execute a middle block

2: Execute a front kick

3: Land into a forward stance and execute a rising elbow

4: Back fist

5: Low block

6: And, reverse punch

Again at a basic level, the techniques are performed in a linear format where each technique is considered a separate technique, allowing gaps in-between for an attacker to take control of the fight. When we incorporate our techniques together with other principles, the series of techniques take on a whole new meaning allowing us to defend ourselves and control the attacker the entire sequence.

When we add an attacker to this sequence, we see:



1: The attacker grabs or pushes us

2: Grab the attacker's hand with your right chambering hand

3: The left middle block actually strikes the inside of the attacker's extended arm

4: At the same time, you execute a wrist lock as you chamber your right hand



5: As the attacker bends over from the pain of the wristlock, execute a right knee to his face

6: Continue by raising your elbow over the attacker's back and strike down on the attacker's spine as you maintain control of the attacker's arm with your left hand

7: Strike the attacker's ribs with a right hammer fist

8: Finish the attacker with a reverse punch to the same area of the ribcage

We can see the use of both hands working together to create a wrist lock from a middle block. The wrist lock is much more effective with the help of the other hand. The lock would not be as effective without it. The knee and/or kick is a natural follow-up technique to the attacker's reaction as he jerks his head down to relieve the pain of the lock. Again, the knee wouldn't be nearly as effective if it wasn't executed with the correct timing e.g. as the attacker jerks his head down from the reaction to the pain. Now, what looks like a rising elbow and back fist technique is actually an effective downward elbow strike to the exposed spine or back of the head. The low block turns into an effective hammer fist strike to the unprotected ribs, along with a finishing

reverse punch to the same location on the ribcage.

As you work your katas, I challenge you to try many different situations to find as many applications as possible. Try to incorporate other principles (balance, timing, leverage, etc.) to build better techniques for your personal arsenal. Also, work your arms, legs and body together to maximize your power and create more effective interpretations to your bunkai. Learn how your opponent reacts to different techniques and take advantage of them. Hopefully, the gearbox concept will help you in this quest. These applications can take what is perceived as a basic school kata and turn it into a more advanced learning tool.

# Comprehensive Karate: from beginner to black-belt

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

**Michael J. Rosenbaum**

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- Chapter 2: The Rise of Okinawan Civil Fighting Arts
- Chapter 3: Tode: Forefather of Modern Karate
- Chapter 4: The Empty Hand Art
- Chapter 5: One Fighting Art Divided by Personal Tastes
- Chapter 6: Lost in Translation: the Post War Styles
- Chapter 7: The Soul of Karate: Kata
- Chapter 8: Transcendence of Kata
- Chapter 9: Okinawan Kobudo: From Swords to Boat Oars
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