

Jissen 実戦

The FREE online practical martial arts magazine

issue 7

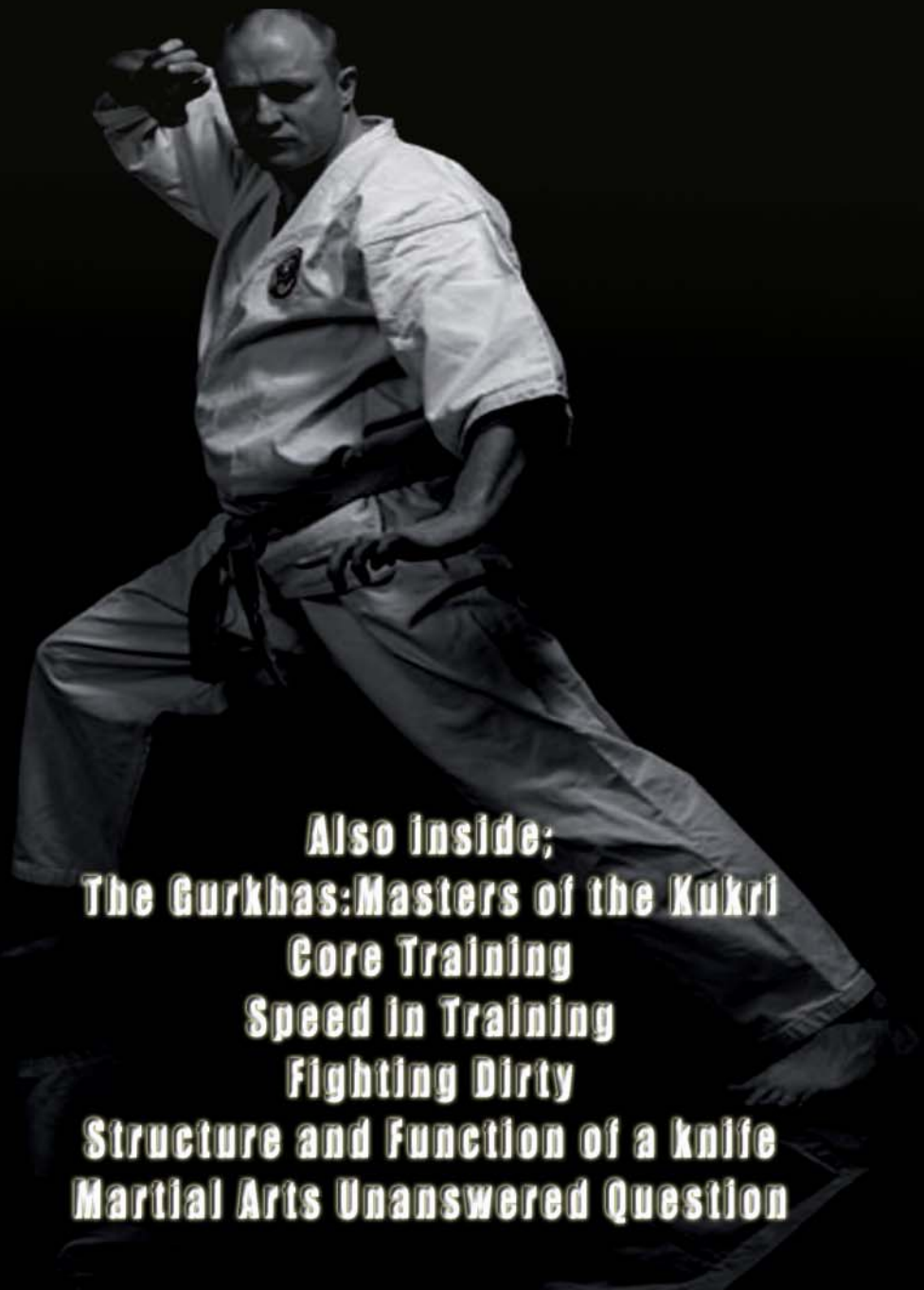


**Ben Hockman on
Urban Krav Maga**



**Kettle Bells for
Karate's Hojo Undo**

Gavin Mullholland Interview



Also inside;
The Gurkhas: Masters of the Kukri
Core Training
Speed in Training
Fighting Dirty
Structure and Function of a knife
Martial Arts Unanswered Question

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EDITORIAL

Hi All,

Welcome to the latest issue of Jissen!

Due to our high workload this issue is sadly overdue by several weeks.

Please accept our apologies for this.

Thankfully Helen once again put this entire issue together otherwise you'd still be waiting for me to find a gap in my hectic schedule!

It seems it is simply not realistic to promise a guaranteed publication date so, although we will still aim to get issues out on a quarterly basis, future editions will simply be "ready when they are ready".

As always though, subscribers to the dedicated Jissen newsletters and the Iain Abernethy.com newsletters will be informed as soon as the next issue is ready.

I'm certain you'll all find the content of this issue to be worth the extended wait! Thanks once again to all the authors for their pragmatic and insightful contributions and to the many readers who have ensured that all the back issues are still being downloaded in high numbers and for spreading the word to all new readers and subscribers.

We'll you've all waited long enough and I won't try your patience any further by extending this editorial any longer than needed! Enjoy Jissen 7!

All the best,

I - Abernethy 



Issue 7 Contents

The Gurkhas, Masters of the Kukri By Michael Rosenbaum	Page 4
Core Training and it's Relevance for Sport By Andrew Adams	Page 12
Functional Training with Kettlebells for Karate's Hojo-Undo By Chris Denwood	Page 16
Structure and Function of a Knife: Knife as Weapon Series By Rev Art Bodhi	Page 24
Gavin Mullholland Interview By Michael Rosenbaum	Page 30
Speed in Training By John Titchen	Page 40
Kyusho By Nikolaj Faerne Skarbye	Page 44
Ben Hockman Interview on Training in Urban Krav Maga	Page 47
It's Hard to Fight When You Can't See By Lawrence Kane	Page 52
How Many Martial Artists Does it Take to Screw in a Lightbulb By Eric Parsons	Page 55
Martial Arts Scepticism: How Factual is Martial Arts TV By Jamie Clubb	Page 60
Fighting Dirty: Karate/TKD/TSD's Most Commonly Used Technique By Charlie Wildish	Page 68
Dead or Alive By Kris Mansfield	Page 72
The Martial Art's Unanswered Question By Ron Briens	Page 75
The Roundhouse Kick: Karate's Best Kick or a Threat to Your Survival By Martin O'Malley	Page 79
Karate's History; Is It a Thing of The past? By Iain Abernethy	page 82

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The Gurkhas, Masters of the Kukri.

by Michael Rosenbaum

“But in violent and technically primitive societies, the facts of battle come as less of a shock to those who first face them, and leave presumably less of a scar, than they do in ordered technically developed states”.

-John Keegan

In contemporary Martial Arts the lore of bladed combat has become very popular. During the past quarter century the practice of Filipino, Indonesian and Burmese forms of knife fighting has spread throughout Europe and the United States.

While this upswing in popularity has increased public awareness of knife techniques, it has overlooked environmental demands that contribute as much, if not more, to the warrior's prowess than any formal instruction received.

Long before its mainstream appeal, the kukri had been used in close quarters combat by Gurkha soldiers, warriors whose knife skills were developed not through formal training but by a harsh and unforgiving lifestyle, one which imbued the Gurkha with a fierce martial prowess and ultimately propelled them to international fame.

Field-Marshal Lord Slim, the hero of Burma, once said that “The almighty created in the Gurkha an ideal infantryman, indeed an ideal Rifleman, brave tough, patient, adaptable, skilled in field craft, intensely proud of his military record and unswerving loyalty” (Farwell, 1984, p.15). In addition to being the ideal infantryman, the Gurkha's ability to wage combat with his kukri has become legendary.

Yet, when one considers that the Gurkhas have been able to do so on battlefields dominated by firearms, then the question of how they accomplished this feat of arms arises. To understand the answer to this question requires examining not only the Gurkha's martial prowess, but also the country from which they come: its history and the Gurkha lifestyle.



Nepal

Although one may find all of the modern world's comforts in Katmandu today, life in the outlying regions of Nepal is still very rugged. Farming is a mainstay of life for many Nepalese with the major crops being buckwheat, millet, potatoes, rice, sugarcane, tobacco, barley and peppers. Much of the farming is performed by hand, and yoked animals often plough the fields, although as recently as 1965, teams of men were known to do it (Fuer-Haaimendorf, p.8, 1964).

Despite the fact that tourism is a major industry in Nepal today, the country had remained isolated from the modern world until the late 1940's. This was due to the Nepalese government's restrictions on foreigners entering the country and Britain's own policies, during its rule of India, which were in deference to the Nepalese government. For instance, E.D. Smith writes that “The exclusion of Europeans was not only insisted upon by the Gurkha state but also by the British Government of India, in deference to Nepalese feelings and in order that the country should not suffer prematurely from contact with ‘modern civilization’ (Smith, 1998, p.11)

Lying alongside the Himalayas' southern slopes between India and Tibet, Nepal exceeds not more than 150 miles in width and is slightly over 500 miles in length. The country can be divided into four basic regions: the Terai, which consists of open fields and forests and is located at the northernmost portion of the Indo-Gangetic plain; the valley of Nepal, which is largely the heart of the country due to its fertile land; the main Himalayan range, which is comprised of seven mountains over 26,000 feet in height; and finally, the foothills of the Himalayan range, which are inhabited up to an elevation of 8000 feet and can be grazed by livestock up to 13,000 feet during winter months. Travel in this district is often restricted to footpaths given the rugged terrain. It is here that the Gurkhas originated.

The idea of Nepal as a unified country is a new one since much of its existence has been rife with warring tribes and petty kingdoms. Obtaining a clear picture of the country's early history is sometimes hard due to the region's sparsely inhabited countryside and tribal-based society, one in which the recording of events is often accomplished through oral transmission and mythology. For instance, according to Nepalese Myth, the country's valley was originally a lake until it was drained by a sword's cut. Hindus give credit for this supernatural origin to Krishna, while Buddhists believe the act was performed by Manjusri, a bodhisattva of the Mahayana tradition, who is portrayed with the sword of wisdom in one hand and a book in the other.

Although early Nepal enjoyed periods of stability, such as the Licchavis dynasty, from the 4th to 10th centuries, a large majority of Nepalese history is filled with armed conflict between petty chieftains, warring tribes and displaced persons seeking exile from Muslim armies who, by the 12th century A.D, had overrun much of Northern India. Much of this strife was accentuated by Nepal's rugged terrain, making it virtually impossible for any form of centralized government to operate effectively. Therefore, isolated tribes, such as the Gurungs, Magars, Limbus, Rais, Tamangs, Sunwars and others, were free to reign as they wished in their own remote living area until another tribe seeking land, or bounty invaded them. The 14th

century saw the Malla Dynasty in control of the valley region; however, by the turn of the 18th century the valley was once again divided, this time between three rival kingdoms, one of which was located in Katmandu, one in Patan and another in Bhatgaon.

The Gurkhas

Kaphar hune bhanda morne ramo, - "It is better to die than be a coward."

The motto of the Gurkha soldier:

The original translation of the word "Gurkha" does not refer to any one particular tribe of Nepalese people but instead to the hill settlement of Gorkha located northwest of Kathmandu. It was here that a small group of Rajput immigrants, who had fled the Muslim occupation of Northern India, established a hill dynasty in the mid-sixteenth century. In doing so, these Indo-Aryans imposed their Hindu caste upon the Tibeto-Burmans who already occupied the region, and in time, through relationships and marriages, the offspring of the

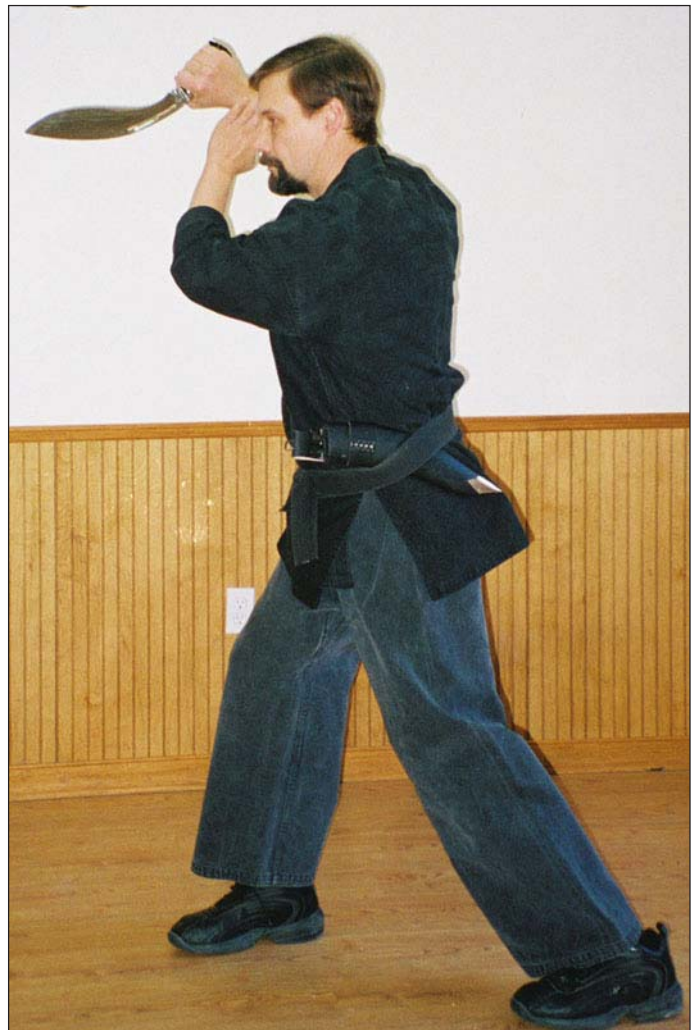


Indo-Aryan men and the Tibeto-Burman women were elevated to the Kshatryia or warrior class. Thus the original use of the word "Gurkha" did not refer to the Magar and Gurung tribesmen whose martial prowess would gain renowned fame in later centuries, but instead designated the early Indo-Aryan rulers of Gorkha and their warrior class.

For much of their early existence, the Gurkhas, depending on shifting alliances, allied themselves with one of the valley kingdoms because they had not the weaponry, nor manpower to defeat all three simultaneously. However, this was soon to change under the leadership of Prithvi Narayan (1723-1774). Upon ascending the Gorkha throne in 1742 Narayan began preparations for conquering the three valley kingdoms and achieving the eventual unification of Nepal. It was while forming his army that Narayan disregarded traditional caste rules and recruited tribesmen like the Khas, Magars and Grungs into his ranks, thus making warriors out of what was the peasant class. He also introduced the use of firearms to the Gurkhas', a practice uncommon to Nepalese warfare at this time. Prithvi Narayan would spend 25 years of his life expanding the Gurkha's territory, as well as unifying a large part of Nepal. Unfortunately, his dream of conquering all of the country would not be realized given his death in 1774. Afterwards, Narayan's successors finally unified the entire country whose borders in 1810 ran from Kashmir in the west to Sikkim in the east. These same borders also lay adjacent to land claimed by the East India Company, a large conglomerate of merchants colonizing India for the British Empire.

After unifying Nepal, the Gurkhas began launching raids into the land claimed by the East India Company. This led the British to declare war, and in 1814 an army 22,000 strong invaded Nepal with intentions of a quick conquest. The British, however, were soon to discover that the Gurkhas were not amateurs in the art of war and it would be two years before the fighting was over. A peace treaty was finally signed between England and Nepal in 1816, with one of its provisions that Nepal would furnish Gurkhas to England for service in the British

Army. This was partially due to the respect the British had developed for the Gurkhas' martial prowess, and also because of England's need for colonial troops to help police its empire. Initially, the Nepalese government stringently honored this provision, and it was not until the late 19th century, when the trade in military manpower began to profit a succession of maharajahs who in turn obtained a guarantee of Nepalese sovereignty from Britain, that the British were allowed to freely recruit for their Gurkha Brigades. From that time on, Gurkha Brigades would fight side by side with British troops. They would serve in two world wars, help quell communist uprisings in Borneo and Malaysia, (1948-65) and because of their fierce reputation, scare Argentine troops into surrendering during the Falklands war. Most recently, the Gurkhas have served as peacekeepers in Bosnia and have also campaigned against terrorist forces in Afghanistan. In every conflict the Gurkhas have fought, their reputation as tenacious fighters has always been upheld and even to this day they carry their kukris into combat.



Close Quarters Combat

The early Gurkhas went into combat well armed. Their weapons included swords, shields, bow and arrow, body armor, daggers, short swords and, beginning in the 18th century, firearms. With Nepal being in such close proximity to Northern India, the weapons and fighting arts of their neighbor heavily influenced the weapons and fighting arts of Nepal. P.S. Rawson acknowledges the Indian influences upon the Nepalese, observing that, "Apart from these iconographic records, there is no direct evidence whatever for the history of the sword in Nepal until recent times, when surviving weapons serve as testimony. It is, however, most probable that throughout the middle ages, Nepal, under her Rajput rulers, shared in the sword traditions of the rest of Northern India, and that after the Islamic invasions and during the period of Islamic dominion in Northern India the isolation of the country ensured the continuation of Hindu traditions of swordcraft, as of the other arts. It has been said of Nepal that she represents in the modern world an image of the culture of medieval India. This applies with particular force in the sphere of arms." (Rawson, 1968, p.52). Upon inspection of Nepalese arms, Rawson's statement rings ever so true because many of those used by Nepalese are similar if not identical to those found within Northern India. However, even after the introduction of matchlocks and then later flintlocks into the Nepalese arsenal, the Gurkhas still relied heavily upon the use of traditional shock weaponry. In part, this was due to the single shot nature of the firearms and the time it took to reload them, but it was also due to the Gurkhas' tribal ethos, which placed much importance on the warrior's individual skill of arms. Therefore, often was the case when the Gurkhas would discharge their firearms then rush to close quarter's distance, a range where their individual fighting skills and shock weaponry could be put to much use. In his book, *Indian And Oriental Arms And Armour* first published in 1880, Lord Egerton describes the Gurkhas method of fighting: "The Nepalese at the stockade at Tamta defeated the native troops brought against them with heavy loss, using their heavy semi-circular ended swords with great effect, and "like the Highlanders of

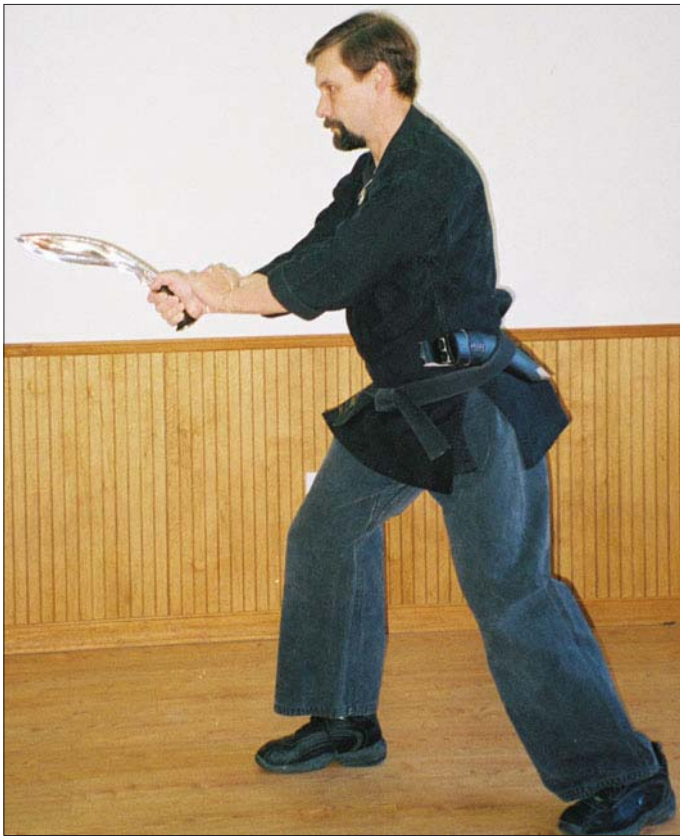
old, after discharging "their matchlocks, rushed in fierce through disorderly masses upon their opponents." (Egerton, 1880, p.38). The sword to which Lord Egerton refers is in all probability the Kora, a forward curving blade, sharpened on the inside with a massive tip at the blade's end. Much of the Gurkhas' military success has been attributed to their possession of this sword. Of all their weapons, however, the one that came to be most closely associated with the Gurkha is the Kukri.

The Kukri

The forward curving, inside cutting, Kopis style blade of the Kukri is one long known in the annals of warfare, in particular to those ancient societies of western civilization. Sir Richard Burton attributes the blade's origin to the early Egyptians, and it was also used by the ancient Greeks who referred to it as the Kopis. Hoplites often carried the weapon in a sheath beneath their left arm, from where it could be drawn easily and then used in a powerful chopping motion. On the battlefield the kopis was considered a secondary weapon to the spear, but at close quarters it proved to be very effective. Many scholars, such as the late Ewart Oakeshott, attribute the blade's presence in India to the Greeks and Alexander's invasion of northwest India during the 4th century B.C. It was from Northern India, that the Kopis blade was first introduced to Nepal.

The kukri's evolution is due to the influence of the kopis style blade, although ascertaining just exactly when the first kukri was made is hard to pinpoint. Some historians believe that it is a modern knife whose history dates back no more than 500 years, while others believe that it may have been developed during the Licchavis dynasty, if not before. Manufacturing of the kukri was, and still is, done by smiths in hill villages, with styles differing due to personal tastes and tribal preferences. The guidelines for purchasing kukris in the pre-1947 Indian Army were well regulated, yet it was not until World War I that the kukri would be mass-produced in a standardized designed, a process that would increase dramatically during the Second World War.

Although a very effective weapon, the kukri's



primary function in Nepalese society was and is one of a utilitarian nature. In Nepal, the knife is used for chopping wood, clearing undergrowth, harvesting crops, slaughtering livestock and numerous other jobs associated with agrarian lifestyles. This is in addition to the yearly religious festival of Dashain, when thousands of animal sacrifices are made to the goddess Durga, many of which are performed with the kukri. The kukri's inclusion as part of the Gurkhas' weaponry resulted from the knife's size, its effectiveness as a weapon, and its usefulness as a tool. The combative/utilitarian roles of the kukri are complementary and are, in fact, what makes the Gurkhas so proficient with this knife. When one designs a weapon, he also gives birth to a weapons system; such is the case with the kukri. It is designed for the specific purpose of allowing its user to express one of the most instinctive physical actions known to mankind, the act of chopping. And though it is likely that Northern Indian sword systems held influence, the Gurkha's kukri skills were developed more through work than formal instruction. Since it is common for a Nepalese boy to have his own kukri, the knife is used on almost a daily basis in performing tasks closely associated with the Gurkhas lifestyles. The downward chop used in splitting wood is also used for cleaving a head. The crosswise slash,

used for cutting maize, proves very effective for delivering a horizontal cut to an enemy's midsection, leg or neck. Angular slashing methods used for cutting through dense underbrush are employed for slicing an opponent from shoulder to hip. Moreover, the constant use of the kukri on broken terrain instills in the Gurkhas a sense of balance, one that makes the warrior surefooted while fighting at close quarters.

This process of learning is one known by few modern day martial arts practitioners. However, this unstructured agrarian method is "traditional martial arts" for the Gurkha, and it is through constant use of the kukri in a utilitarian role that fighters develop their skills. Although the Gurkhas' method of developing their kukri skills may seem overly simplistic, one must remember that the techniques of most mortal based combat systems are based on simplicity and, in this respect, the kukri is no different. In fact, it is the simplicity of its techniques that makes the weapon so lethal. The kukri's chopping and slashing actions can be executed successively in a short amount of time, and when done at close range, there is little or no room for missing one's target.

Unlike martial artists who train for competition and place high value on aesthetics, this is not the case with the Gurkhas. Their employment of the kukri is one based on lethal intent and the execution of their attack is done with explosive power, speed, and a primal form of aggression found only in mortal combat. A case example of this being Jemadar Dewan Sing Basnet, of the 1/9 Gurkha Rifles, who during the battle for North Africa found himself confronted by five Germans in a trench and at night. Decapitating one of his attackers outright and immediately afterwards cut down three others in quick succession, the brave Gurkha recounted his actions later stating "I was challenged in a foreign language. I felt it was not the British language or I would have recognized it. To make quite sure I crept up and found myself looking into the face of a German. I recognized him by his helmet. He was fumbling with his weapon, so I cut off his head with my kukri. Another appeared from a slit trench and I cut him down also. I was able

to do the same to two others, but one made a great deal of noise, which raised the alarm. I had cut a fifth, but I am afraid I only wounded him. Yet perhaps the wound was severe, for I struck him between the neck and shoulder” (Gould, 1999, p.248). Neither the length of the engagement, the space it was fought in, nor the equipment worn by Dewan Sing would have allowed the execution of anything but the most natural techniques with his kukri. Likewise, his is one of many recorded instances, which illustrate that simplicity of technique and aggressive execution are the keystones to close quarter’s combat, particularly when fought hand-to-hand.

The use of the kukri on the battlefield was done during the regular course of infantry combat, particularly during those times when fire and maneuver tactics brought the Gurkha to close quarters with their enemy, leaving no option but



to resort to hand-to-hand combat. This usually occurred in one of three ways: during the infiltration of a trench line or fortification, in which a sentry had to be killed quickly and quietly; one-on-one encounters, when two combatants came face to face and were forced to fight hand-to-hand; and melee combat during which the use of firearms is not possible for fear of hitting friendly forces, thus leaving combatants with no option but to resort to their knives and bayonets.

Although the Gurkhas are imbued early in life with a proficient means for fighting with the kukri, their “taste” for close quarters combat stems from a tribal-based martial ethos, one reinforced by a very long and distinguished military heritage. This in turn leads the Gurkhas to place a high value on the individual’s martial prowess. Noted Anthropologist Lawrence H. Keely suggests some of the advantages the tribal warrior holds over a soldier of an industrialized society: “In some respects, of course, tribal warriors were much better trained for war than their civilized counterparts. Their preparation usually spanned their whole childhood instead of the few weeks or months that civilized warriors’ train before facing combat. From an early age, warriors constantly practiced wielding real weapons and dodging missiles, receiving criticism and advice from experienced warriors, and being inured to deprivation and pain by means of various ordeals and rites of passage. Yet such training focuses entirely on the individual, not on the group or teamwork” (Keeley, 1996, p.43). Even though the modern Gurkha may not have been subjected to the same rigors as their ancestors of earlier times, their use of the kukri on an almost daily basis, the harshness of their environment, and their longstanding martial ethos all combine for making a very formidable opponent, especially when encountered at close quarters.

Although the kukri’s use in combat today may not be as common as it once was, the Gurkhas’ martial prowess is legendary. They have reached the skill of arms to which Sir Richard Burton alluded when he wrote “excellent in the use of weapons, and still train them to act naturally and habitually in concert.” (Burton,

2004, p.178) This they have achieved through sacrifice, courage, honor and their native lifestyles.

Endnotes

The kukri is also celebrated in dance, as many tourists have witnessed while visiting Nepal. However, the dancers kukri skills are usually developed independently of the dance. A modern fighting arts correlation of skills development through kata practice does not apply here.

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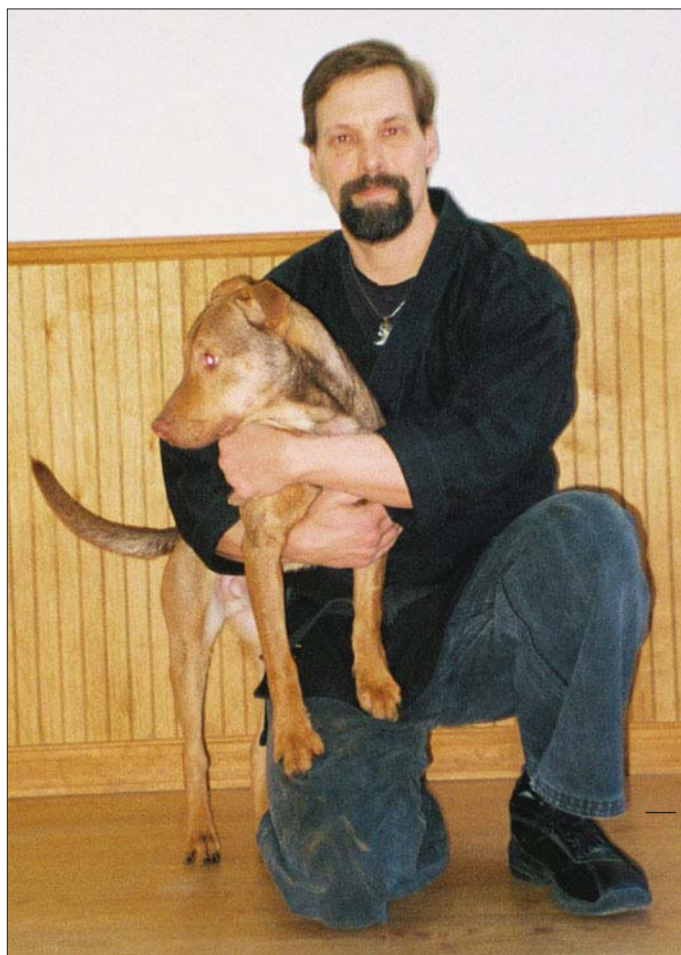
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Michael Rosenbaum is a former paratrooper and has been training in the martial arts since 1976. He is the Author of "Kata and the Transmission of Knowledge in Traditional Martial Arts."



Kata and the Transmission of Knowledge

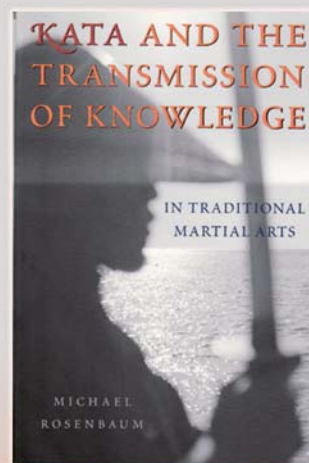
All too frequently, martial arts practitioners study their art without truly understanding where it comes from, how it was developed, and why it was created in the first place. Indeed, many don't care—and if you feel this way, you should put this book down. For the rest of us, who have taken our art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

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

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

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

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



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Does a Broken Board Equal a Broken Nose?

Training to Achieve the Striking Force Proven to Stop an Attacker

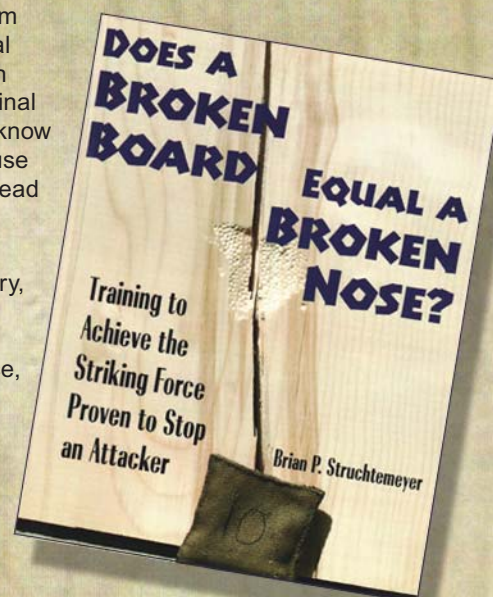
Precisely how hard do you have to hit to stop an attacker? And how do you train to develop that level of force?

This groundbreaking training guide tackles a vital but overlooked aspect of practicing the martial arts: How do you know your strikes are powerful enough and accurate enough to stop an attacker? How do you measure the strength of your strikes? Has your training accurately simulated a hostile encounter?

Author Brian Struchtemeyer details the exact level of impact force found in modern "less-than-lethal" weapons used by law enforcement to physically subdue criminal suspects and shows you how to attain this level of force with your punches. When officers use LTL tools, they are able to reliably stop more than 90 percent of criminal suspects—and that's when they are only aiming at the thighs or abdomen. They know they must be careful because the impact force delivered by these tools could cause severe injury or even death if aimed at more vulnerable body parts such as the head and neck.

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

Finally, these varied topics are synthesized into a set of training drills using surrogate targets that allow you to measure the force of your blows so you know when you are hitting with the same level of impact force proven by law enforcement officers to stop a violent opponent in his tracks.



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Core training and its relevance for sport

By Andrew Adams

In this article, we will attempt to educate the reader about the fundamentals of Core and body control and its relevance to athletic performance.

In recent years, a great deal has been written about Core training but many athletes that I work with still seem to struggle to see the importance of fully integrating Core training into their weekly training routine. If an athlete's daily training is being strictly overseen by a club or Strength and Conditioning professional, the individual is often "made" to do these sessions, however reluctant they may be. Often you will find that an athlete that has previously been injured will have a totally different approach to Core training as they know only too well the risks for neglecting such a vital component of the overall training package.

When I work with an athlete, I always explain what I am asking the person to do and more importantly, WHY! It is vital that the athlete understands why he or she is being asked to perform a task if they are to "buy into" the training. It is also this educating of the athlete that will promote adherence to the training program and any subsequent success.

In order to understand how movement is achieved and regulated by the body we first need to take a look at the Nervous System.

The Nervous system is one of the three elements that make up the kinetic chain and also its controlling element. Not only does it allow us to learn and store movement patterns, it also monitors our environment and our reaction to it whilst regulating and monitoring the functioning of the body.

The Nervous system does much more than simply allowing us to learn movements and make improvisations to suit the task at hand. It is the body's "control centre" and as such is constantly assessing data through the senses and nerves in order to control the body and react

accordingly to internal and external stimuli.

A simple example of this is that if we went out into the snow in a T-shirt, our body would assess that we were cold through our temperature receptors known as, "Thermo receptors". This information would be relayed back, assessed and the correct response activated, e.g. we would start to shiver and then seek extra warmth.

Sportspeople rely heavily on sensory feedback to tell us if we are in pain, if our muscles are being stretched too far or how fast/powerful a movement should be performed.

Structure of the nervous system

The Nervous system can be thought of as:

- 1, The central nervous system (CNS)
- 2, The brain and the Spinal cord

The brain is made up of two main hemispheres which are the Cerebrum and Cerebellum. It is the Cerebellum that controls the skeletal muscle; stores learnt skills and controls balance.

The Hypothalamus is a part of the brain that regulates the pituitary gland and in turn, this regulates and controls the Endocrine system.

The spinal cord is the communication link to and from the brain. It acts on commands from the brain to achieve movement and also receives and responds to information from the Peripheral Nervous system.

The Spinal cord is rather like a Platoon of troops. Whilst it is ultimately controlled by the General, it can also react to threats effectively without first seeking orders.

Peripheral nervous system (PNS)

Whilst the functions of the PNS are vast, as sportspeople we are primarily interested with the elements that enable us to learn and perform our techniques, movements and apply

them as necessary. We are therefore chiefly concerned about coordinating our muscles whilst receiving feedback from our sensory receptors to allow adjustments to be made.

In the interest of simplicity, we will concentrate on the motor and sensory nerves that are employed to achieve or regulate movement.

Sensory receptors are located all over the body and are constantly sending feedback to the spinal cord and brain via the dorsal or posterior horn. When practicing movement, the receptors could be telling us if we are experiencing pain/pressure, if we are hot/cold, if our joints are experiencing dangerous force or if our muscles are being stretched too far or fast.

Motor nerves exit the anterior or front portion of the spinal cord and transmit commands from the CNS to various structures in order to participate movement.

As previously mentioned, if an immediate threat is detected e.g. a scold, the spinal cord can by-pass the brain to facilitate movement.

Movement and Movement patterns

In my role as a Strength and Conditioning Coach I often tell athletes that I prefer to see myself as a “Movement Specialist”. There is movement in all sports and it is efficiency of movement that ultimately wins medals! As a sports person your chief concern should be performing movement with the strictest of discipline anything less will dictate that you are performing in an inefficient way where the consequences could range from an individual poor performance to eventual injury. It is also important to remember that it takes around 500 repetitions for the body to learn a movement, if however this movement is learnt incorrectly, it takes around 5000 repetitions to unlearn the movement and learn it correctly.

“To be ignorant of motion is to be ignorant of nature” :- Aristotle

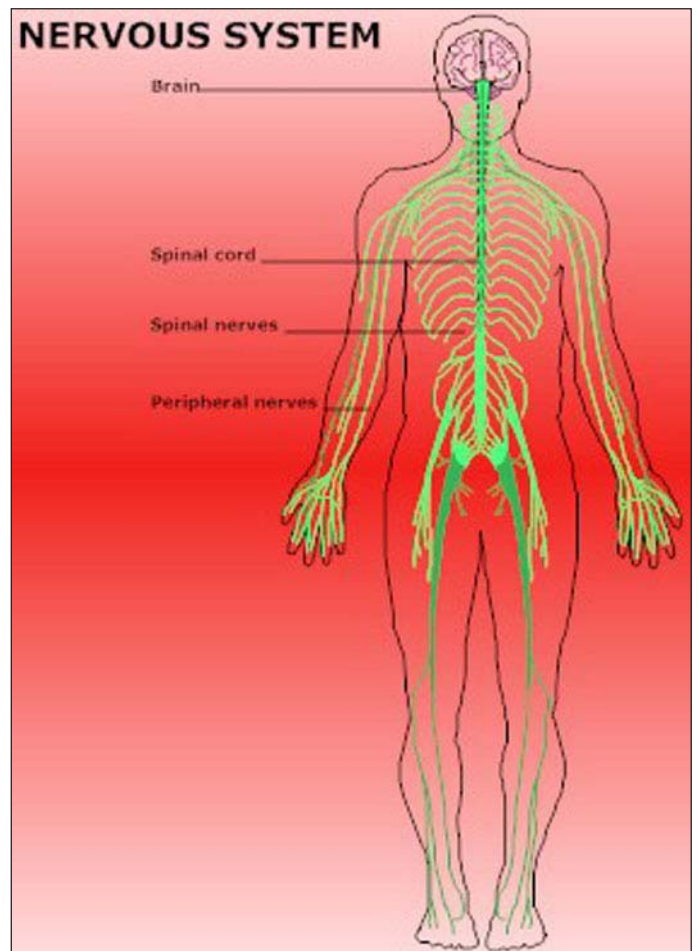
Our Brains’ start to learn and store movement patterns from our earliest days. As we grow and require our body to perform more complicated movements, our Brain draws out a movement pattern that is similar to the required task and

then sets about customizing it through repetition and Neural feedback. It is at the point that attention to detail is critical to avoid learning an incorrect or incomplete movement pattern.

An example of this might be learning the squat. We have been getting in and out of chairs from an early age so our body understands the Squat pattern well. However, when we perform the Back Squat, we have to resist an external force in the form of a Barbell. This in turn could potentially force our body into a compromised position by altering our centre of gravity. We therefore need to make small adjustments to the pattern to perform the task in hand.

Other factors also limit our ability to perform a movement efficiently, but the two I frequently come across are poor or reduced flexibility whether as a result of an injury or as a result of poor posture and “adaptive shortening”.

We have already seen how our body is continually taking feedback from our environment and the stresses that we place upon ourselves and it is therefore important that we “feed” our CNS with good quality movement



in order to become efficient. The first thing that we can do for ourselves here is to ensure that we maintain a good posture and continually assess ourselves to ensure that we are achieving it. I often to ask my athletes to check their posture every time they send a text message to a friend, It does not matter what our trigger is as long as we do it frequently.

If we do a job that requires us to spend long hours sat at a desk or driving a car it becomes

more important to give our bodies positive neural feedback in the form of stretching and or quality movement whenever the chance presents itself. Our body is always trying to attain a level of homeostasis and therefore it will only become efficient in the movements that you require it to do. The body will seek to adapt to the stresses that is being asked of it, nothing more nothing less. It is therefore probable to assume that if you spend the bulk of your week in a seated position, your muscles will adapt to



Fig 1: Good posture

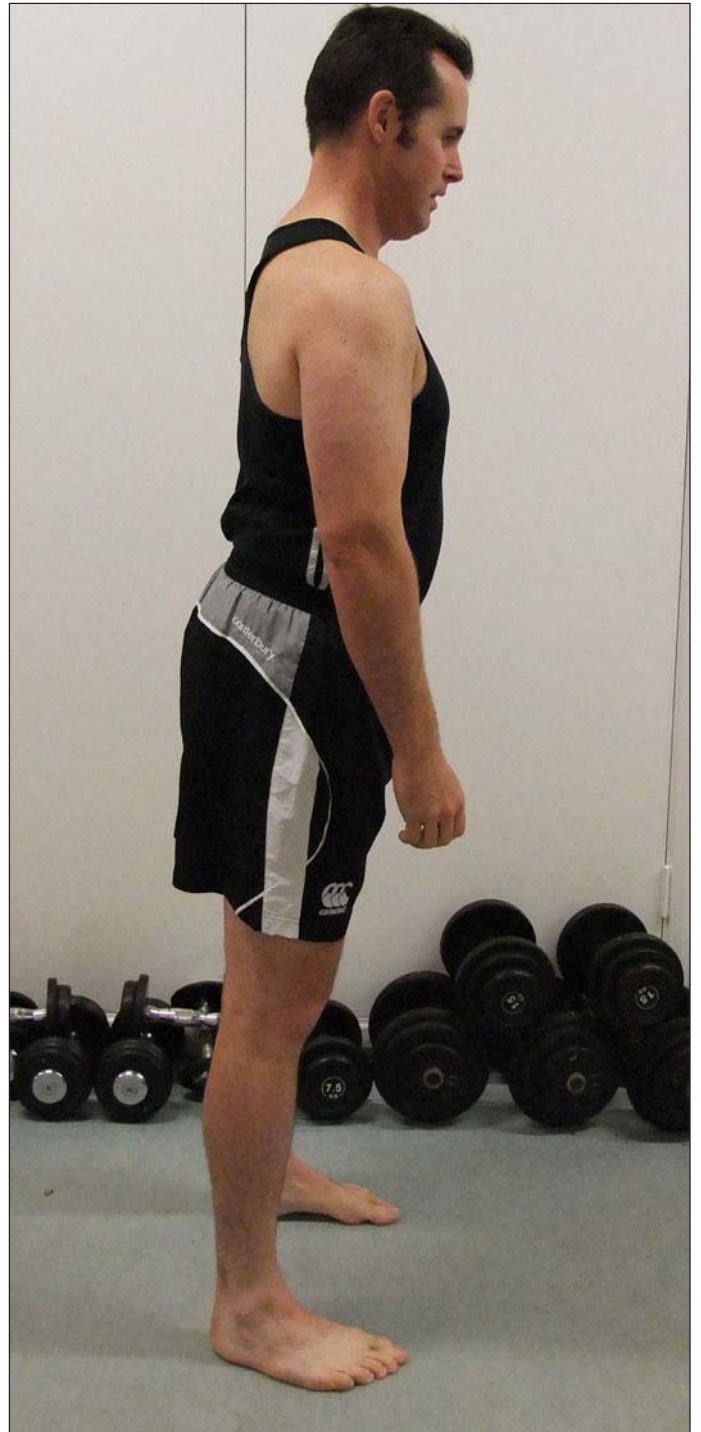


Fig 2: Poor posture

that position and ultimately shorten accordingly. This will obviously have implications should this same person then attempt to throw a javelin or perform a triple jump!

In instances where people have a limited range of movement for whatever reason, the body will seek to compensate for a lack of range in one area by jeopardising the strength and integrity of another in order to achieve the required task. Left uncorrected, the likelihood of injury increases over time. Perhaps the most important point to consider is that if you have shortened or weakened muscles and a reduced range of motion, you will not be able to generate as much force in movement as you are capable of. This is obviously a big concern to sports that rely on explosive movements.

Posture and Core control should therefore be seen as one of the single most important

factors of an athletes training. The Core transfers generated power from one area of the body to the other and therefore if you cannot control it, you cannot harness it. As Vern Gambetta 2007 states: *“Rooted in the feet, powered by the core, reflected by the arms, manifested in the hands.”*

To put it quite simply, if you cannot control your core, you are leaking power and your performance will suffer as a result. As a coach, I would never ask someone to perform complicated lifting exercises until they can stabilise and move their body efficiently. To do anything other would be to compromise the athlete’s future ability in the same way as “painting over rust.” All performance must be built on a foundation of efficient and strong movement.

In the second article of this series, we will take a look at the anatomy of the core, followed by an introduction to Core training in part three.



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Functional Training with Kettlebells for Karate's Hojo Undo

By Chris Denwood



Traditional karate can be broken down into three main components. Firstly there is kata or 'form', which represents the solo perfection of technique and the assimilation of correct body mechanics and muscle memory due to constant repetition. Next there is bunkai or 'analysis', which stands for the study of application, covers what each movement means and includes pragmatic drilling and sparring etc to develop the lessons learned in kata for use in civilian self-protection strategies. Lastly, there is hojo undo or 'auxiliary training', which acts almost like a large umbrella, serving to accentuate and enhance the attributes employed in the physical, mental and spiritual expressions of the art.

Nowadays, after the work of so many pragmatic minded karate-ka, the pragmatic components of kata and bunkai are now understood much better. However, hojo undo is still often disregarded by so many in the dojo and quite

often; the relationship has still to be made in the minds of those oblivious to its value in enriching the art as a whole. Fundamentally speaking, if kata teaches how to correctly execute a strike and bunkai explains how the strike can be used, then 'physical' hojo undo augments and enhances the skills required to perform that strike well and with increased functionality. Ideally, none of these components should be disregarded or their objectives distorted.

How can you possibly be expected to perform practically to a level when your body is just not geared up to do so? It's kind of like asking a marathon runner to dead lift 500lbs or else you'll take all his medals away. Our chief aim as traditional pragmatists (among others) is to be competent in self-protection and no matter what anyone tries to tell you, being functionally fit and healthy in line with this goal is always going to give you a much better positional advantage from the onset. Physical fitness is in many ways the single most important facet of pragmatic martial arts.

It stands to reason that if you hit hard, then you'll stand a greater chance of surviving than if you're just throwing around 'wet paper towels'. For some people it's a natural gift. For others (usually those who study karate to begin with), functional ability needs to be developed – and supplementary training helps to fill that missing jigsaw piece. Like everything else in karate, hojo undo represents another link in the chain, where each link must be strong and durable, but supple enough to adapt according to individual circumstance or aspirations.

Functional training

Hojo undo training in karate often instils the idea of physical training alone, but this is not always the case. It comprises of exercises (with or without equipment) that are performed with

the prime intention of enhancing your physical, mental or even spiritual ability in the art. Functional training (for which supplementary training should consist of) is a term to describe the way in which this training correlates to its application. For instance, functional strength training comprises of working against a resistance in such a way that the gains made directly enhance the movements for which the training supports. In general, functional training tends to look at the body as a whole unit and movement as a series of actions that work together in unison, rather than being made up of single isolated motions.

During the applications of karate, the body is manipulated in all sorts of different ways that are in some cases quite unlike how we tend to move around in everyday life. But even through normal existence we may walk, run, jump, lift, push, pull, bend, twist and turn with a degree of variance. All of these human actions do not only depend on single muscle groups, but are made up of many sophisticated compound relationships between both the muscular and nervous systems.

It is the brain that controls muscular movement, so we must also engage this in the correct way when undertaking functional supplementary training. For instance, we know from science that the brain thinks of whole motions, rather than isolated muscles, therefore when we train singular joint actions as in many common gym exercises found today, we are not simulating what would be challenged in reality. Functional supplementary training should prioritise in training movements, not muscles. Muscles are stimulated for development only because of the 'support function' they provide to the overall movement, i.e. they're responsible for driving the structure of the body to result in physical motion.

Functional training exercises should have what is referred to as a high 'transfer effect'. This means that the movement can easily cause positive adaptations, which can be transferred into the actual motions that require the supplementation in the first place. For this transfer effect to be at its highest, a number of aspects of the 'real' motion have to be considered and simulated as closely as possible during the performance of the hojo undo

exercise. These aspects include such things as the types of muscular contraction (i.e. isotonic, isometric, concentric or eccentric), range and speed of motion, specific coordination and of course for martial artists, the stresses associated with performing this type of motion against an incompressible antagonist. The obvious truth here is that the closer you can simulate, the more beneficial the exercise due to the inherent high transfer effect.

Auxiliary training in karate

For karate-ka partaking in supplementary training, it becomes obvious from the very start that there are numerous attributes that may require development. We don't have the luxury to concentrate on just one attribute and may have to work on numerous such as flexibility, strength, speed, power, aerobic fitness, anaerobic fitness, structural integrity and of course, general conditioning. Our aims will always dictate our process of development, but from a traditional point of view (that is, pragmatic self-protection) we can't really lose sight of any attribute that could provide us with the edge needed to increase our chances of coming out on top. Nor can we forget that we should always consider ourselves martial artists first and not for example, weightlifters or runners who also happen to practice karate! As the name suggests, supplementary training should be there to help 'supplement'.

Because we have so much to cover in our auxiliary training regime, most of the traditional tools used, although clearly emphasising certain qualities, still cover numerous attributes at once. For instance, the Nigiri Gamae (gripping jars) are used to accentuate the grip, but also general arm, shoulder and core strength. The Kongo Ken (iron ring) is used as a whole body conditioning tool and the Chi Ishi (strength stone) emphasises the rotational and stabilising qualities of the shoulders and arms, along with the grip and back. To be functionally strong, we need to work our muscles together in natural unison, rather than (as in many conventional forms of resistance training) proactively challenging them in isolation. Since a true isolation movement does not really exist, striving for this in training goes against what functional training is trying to achieve.

Influenced alternatives

Whilst I do consider the traditional tools of hojo undo still worthwhile and as useful as the day they were first implemented into karate, I also believe that we should not be limited to our choices simply because of historic relevance, thus seeking to test and employ other tools from around the world that may help increase our physical attributes further. The technological advances of the modern world we all live in have brought us great luxuries; those that I'm sure the masters of our past would have enjoyed immensely. But quite often, our inherent laziness as human beings and need for quick results have in many ways pulled us further away from our goals as functional individuals. As karate-ka, our attributes will only be of use if they are functional in application – if we can't apply our strength or power, then everything else simply falls apart.

In most modern gyms today a great deal of emphasis is placed on client safety and for good reason too. But with the invention of many resistance machines that are designed to effectively isolate muscle groups and support the rest of the body, a functional result may be much harder to achieve through machine training alone. Although you are able to 'max out' much more safely, the highly guided pathway of the machine means that many of the supporting muscle groups are not 'fired' as they would be if the exercise were performed in thin air.

Free weights i.e. dumbbells and barbells can go some way to help fill the requirement for compound and unguided exercises, but (depending on how these are implemented) even these can have a number of limiting factors including in some ways, a lack of full body dynamics or ballistic effect. Indeed, the concept of 'full body strength' suggests that no single movement is ever performed with complete

muscular isolation and so our supplementary training as martial artists should mimic this idea as closely as possible. Ideally, the best solution would be to vary training sessions in order to reap the benefits of each type of training and help guard against the inherent flaws in each.

The kettlebell

(Fig 1) Notice the weight is situated offset from the handle, which makes wielding it more challenging than standard dumbbells or barbells.

Many martial artists have in recent years turned to the kettlebell (fig. 1) and with good reason too. If you've never yet laid hands on one of these then you really ought to. This old piece of kit, no more sophisticated than an iron ball with a thick handle on top, is a fantastic 'all in one' device that in my opinion cannot be beaten to directly enhance many of the vital attributes required in the pragmatic application of traditional karate. In fact, both the design and intent of the kettlebell bears a striking resemblance to a number of traditional hojo undo devices used in karate and therefore can replace many items. All in all, this simple hunk of metal provides so much for the karate-ka that if totally honest, we simply can't turn away from.

Before we get into talking more about the kettlebell, I'd like to first describe why I still consider training with it as being part of 'traditional' karate training, even though it was never employed as a hojo undo tool by the Okinawan masters. The dictionary definition of the word 'traditional' means to practice in line with past customs or beliefs. I really like this definition because it does in no way imply that as 'traditionalist' we are forced to practice any specific techniques or drills, only that what we do practice follows what was originally intended for the art. Now I'm not saying that we should be throwing out

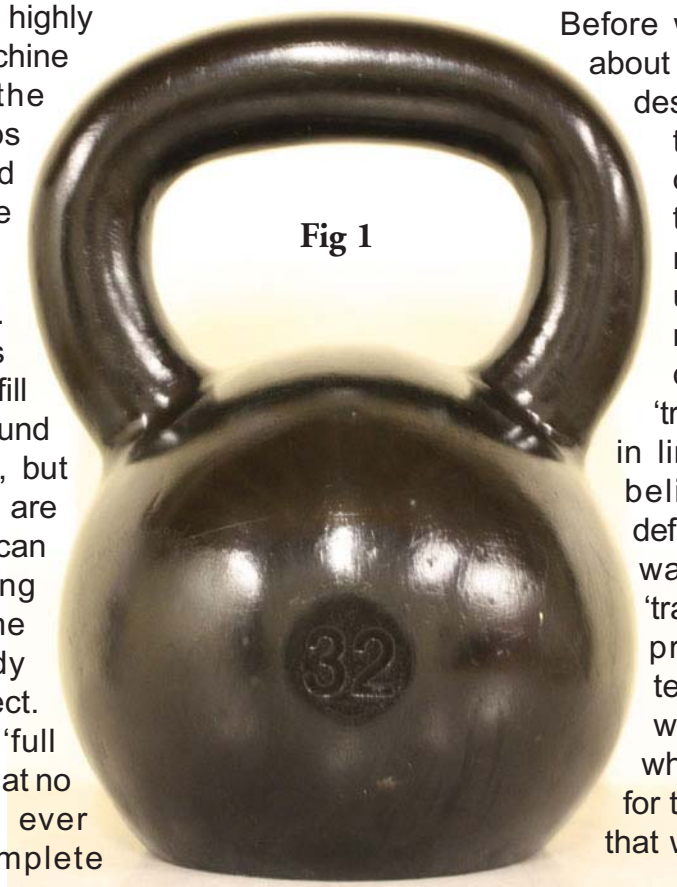


Fig 1

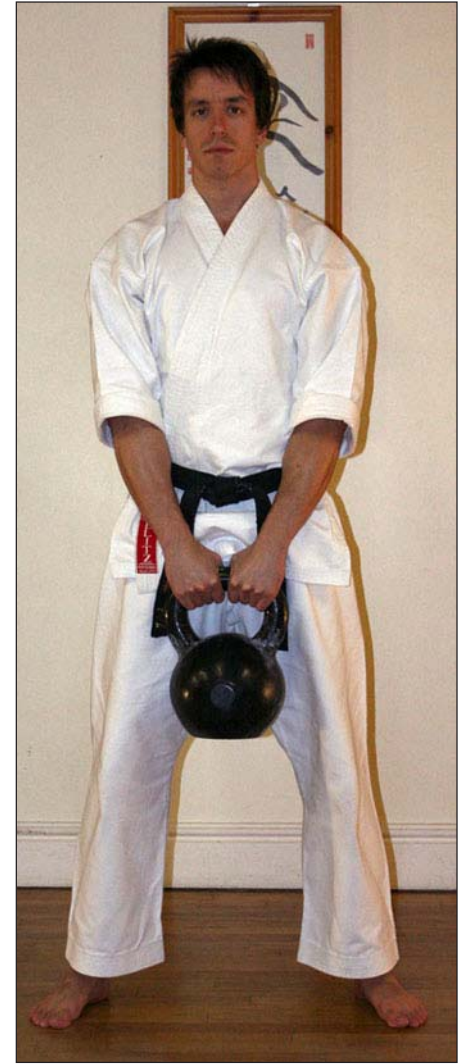
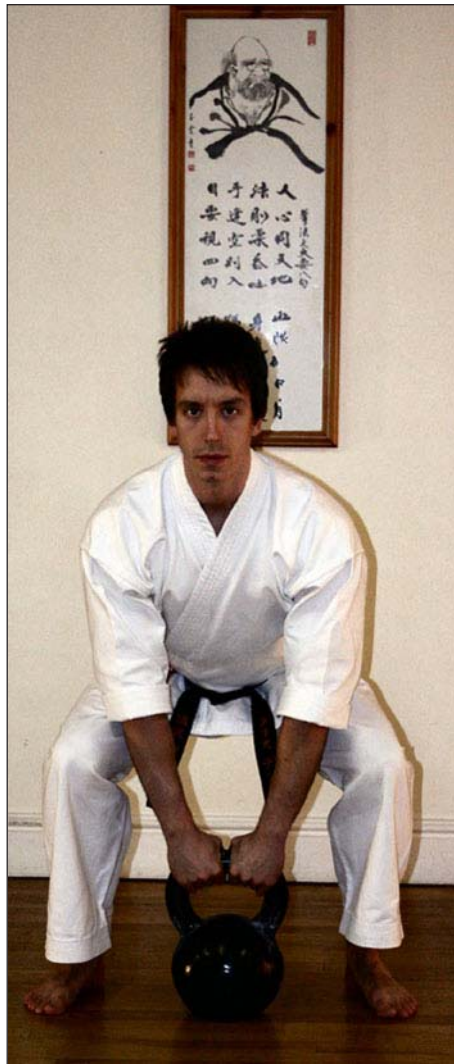
all our old kata etc (far from it), but I am saying that we should always be considering the original aims over and above the methods we use to realise them.

Everything we practice in karate is a means to an end. Kata has been preserved and has stood the test of time because its proper practice is a tried and tested method for developing pragmatic combat skills. I agree fully that we should never try to fix anything that's not broken,

the centreline of the grip, the kettlebell mass is actually offset from the handle. Straight away this results in more muscular involvement by the body in order to stabilise and shift the weight. This is especially true in the 'core' region and as I'm sure you will already know, these deep muscles of the mid-section have a great part to play in the functional application of karate or in fact any ballistic pursuit.

In my view though, it's the versatility of the kettlebell that really makes it stand out from the

figs 2,3,4 Always dead lift the kettlebell safely to the starting position.



but at the same time, the parameters of traditional karate are (or should be) set to allow for adaptation once we fully understand and appreciate what the art is trying to portray.

So why is the kettlebell so useful for the pragmatic traditionalist? Well first of all, its design has a large part to play. Unlike a dumbbell or barbell where the weight is situated along

crowd. You can practice ballistic swinging motions to help develop the whole of the posterior chain and with just a 'flick of the wrist', move into more grinding exercises that stimulate more muscles than you ever thought you had. Workout times are almost slashed in half when compared to standard resistance workouts and because kettlebell training stimulates both aerobic and anaerobic

pathways, each session becomes a complete physical challenge. This simple tool effectively builds greater strength, cardiovascular endurance, flexibility, joint strength and structural stability. It helps to develop strong posture and if that's not enough, it also burns fat like a turbo charged furnace!



Figs 5 and 6 Bump the kettlebell with a strong thrust of the hips to create a 'prep swing'. This kicks off the exercise.

best. The end of each phase (downward & upward) provides the impetus for the start of the other. This is very 'Yin Yang' and a smooth transition provides the most efficient movement because you are using opposing energies, rather than fighting against them. Also, like karate, you should train with

The Kettlebell swing

The most fundamental movement for all kettlebell lifters is the swing. It is a movement unlike any other performed with dumbbells or barbells and has a fantastic effect on the body to enhance functional power, especially in combat arts. The swing is primarily a lower body, hips and core exercise that targets and stimulates practically every muscle group situated on the back of the body, especially the posterior chain, in a very ballistic fashion. The posterior chain consists of the large muscles at the rear of the body, namely the glutes, hamstrings and erectors in the lower back and is regarded as being an important source for ballistic functional power in the human body.

The kettlebell swing also allows you to develop the ability to generate force in order to manipulate and project an object outwards away from the body. This force transference is directly relevant to power generation in strikes, throws, kicks and the like. Rather than simply driving the weight with your upper limbs, the swings teaches you to take power from the ground, transfer and enhance that power with the core and send it out efficiently into the limb or limbs in question – exactly as you would execute almost every technique in karate.

Another great benefit of practicing the kettlebell swing is that it requires you to be able to smoothly absorb the free fall of the weight rather than simply bracing yourself and hoping for the



Fig 7 Absorb the free fall by flexing at the hips primarily and then bending the knees slightly. Load up the hamstrings by visualising the kettlebell touching the wall behind, rather than simply falling to the ground.

bare feet so that you can maintain a good connection with the ground and feel the subtle weight shifts made by the body during the exercise.

To perform the swing, stand with your legs a little more than hip width apart and dead lift the kettlebell in both hands (fig. 2, 3 & 4). Next, perform a short explosive 'prep-swing' to get the weight moving by flexing primarily at the waist and then explosively driving the hips forward (fig. 5 & 6). If the arms and shoulders are relaxed, the kettlebell should move upwards away from the body. Almost like a pendulum on a large grandfather clock, keep with the momentum and absorb the fall of the weight, flexing again at the hips and bending slightly at the knees (fig. 7). Move the kettlebell again using a powerful

thrust from the hip, core, thigh, and lower back muscles (fig. 8 & 9). Repeat the movement continuously and add direct rhythmical breathing, making sure that your weight is centred over the heels of the feet and the back is kept in a neutral position at all times.

When practicing the kettlebell swing, observe the following important points:

Make sure that the effort originates in the lower body. If your shoulders are tiring then you're involving the upper limbs far too much. The hands should act like hooks, connecting the weight to the source of power.

Be sure to practice with a heavy enough weight. This may sound a little strange to begin with, but using a kettlebell that's too light will activate



Fig 8 Push through the heels and thrust the hips, transferring energy into the kettlebell.



Fig 9 Keeping the upper limbs relaxed; allow the kettlebell to swing up to around shoulder level before absorbing the free fall once again. Repeat the sequence.

the wrong muscle groups and make the exercise much less worthwhile. As a gauge, after practicing the technique, you should be swinging a weight that you can't laterally raise in front with the shoulders alone. This will help ensure that the lower body activates correctly and that the upper limbs don't naturally take over (as with a light weight).

Concentrate on powerful hip thrusts to move the kettlebell. The hips should be the main point of flexion and extension, not the knees.

At the end of the downward phase, emphasise the weight passing through the legs and rather than focussing towards the ground, visualise it travelling into the wall behind you (not literally of course!). This movement will more effectively load up the elastic potential in your hamstrings and stimulate the posterior chain further, to be released and projected into the next movement.

Really focus on transferring energy and momentum far out and into the kettlebell. You should feel like one of those demolition balls that easily knock buildings down!

Initially, practice performing 10 to 20 repetitions and then rest before the next set. With regards to beginner's weight; men should try a 16kg and women an 8 or 12kg, moving up from there as appropriate. It only takes a few swings with the correct technique to realise the sheer potential of this movement.

The force generated within the swing starts at the ground. As you extend the posterior chain, you are in fact kicking hard into the ground and because the floor is immovable, a great resultant force travels from the feet, upwards into the waist and then transfers into the hands. This is how ballistic power is generated and the more you train the swing, the more your body will innately transfer this mechanism into your karate in order to enhance technique.

In most cases, it's also important that you have a 'waist and limb delay' when striking. This makes sure that recoil is built and provides more acceleration. Performing the kettlebell swing is no different. Once the elastic potential has been achieved at the end of the downward phase, the posterior chain should fire initially and then the hips should be emphasised and thrust hard,

with the limbs lagging behind slightly. During the downwards phase, the opposite should occur. The hips should not start to flex until the hands have fallen at least half the distance. This will help to absorb the free fall from the weight and load the hamstrings for the next repetition.

Progressions & variations

To add some variety, you can try the progressions below once you have become fully competent at the static two handed swing. These vary in level from the easiest to the most challenging and allow you to really mix things up. For those who don't own a kettlebell, try the exercises with a dumbbell. You won't get the same experience, but you'll definitely get the idea. Then go out and buy a kettlebell – I believe it'll be one of the best investments you'll ever make towards your martial arts training.

Variations of the standard kettlebell swing:

Single handed swing – this adds a degree of asymmetry to the exercise and forces the core and grip to work harder.

Alternating swing – changing hands at the top of the upward phase adds elements of some co-ordination and complexity, as well as enhancing good timing and rhythm.

Moving swing – practice the two handed swings whilst stepping either forwards, backwards or sideways. Just remember to move at the top of the movement and not when the kettlebell is between your legs!

Double KB swing – pick up a kettlebell in each hand, widen the stand to a typical horse stance and experience a whole new world of hurt! You need to really ground your body during this exercise and focus on keeping your weight over the heels. Also because there's no physical connection anymore between each hand (i.e. the handle), it becomes much harder to ensure that both limbs are moving together in unison.

Double KB swing with uneven load – This has to be one of the most challenging variations ever! Because you have two different weights, the body has to really work hard to ensure stability and good sequential movement. Make sure that you swap the KB's over and practice

the same amount of repetitions on 'the other side' too.

You can also perform the swing within numerous high intensity drills. For instance, try the 'Tabata' style workout. Swing for twenty seconds and then rest for ten seconds. Repeat for eight rounds. This is a very demanding workout that is especially useful when time is of the essence. In addition, try working for 2 minutes continuously, seamlessly changing exercises every 30 seconds. First, perform the two handed swing. Next, remove a hand and undertake 30 seconds of single handed swings. For the 'third phase', perform a 'hand to hand pass' for single handed swings on the other side before finishing off with 30 seconds of alternating swings. This can be used as a fast and effective warm up.

To conclude

For karate-ka and in fact all martial artists, the kettlebell truly is a formidable yet thoroughly enjoyable training device, which aligns itself perfectly to the physical attributes

that the traditional arts require. It allows you to train a wide range of qualities at once, cutting down on workout times (leaving more time to devote to technical training) and supporting the facet of the muscles in the human body to work as one synchronised unit, instead of forcing a series of unnatural isolated motions as is often seen in other aspects of resistance training. This of course, helps to make your supplementary training regime much more functional, with high transfer effects to carry over into your art.

Chris Denwood is Chief Instructor of the ESKK™ and a senior instructor with the British Karate-Do Chojinkai. He is also a nationally qualified fitness trainer and 'extreme kettlebell instructor' as recognised by The Register of Exercise Professionals. Specialising in pragmatically applying the traditional principles of karate and utilising supplementary functional fitness activities, Chris is available for seminars & workshops and can be contacted via either www.chrisdenwood.com or www.eskk.co.uk.

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The E.S.K.K is a small, but dedicated traditional karate research group located on the edge of the Western Lake District in Cumbria, England. Our dojo is semi-closed by nature to ensure a positive learning environment and its unique syllabus emphasises a very malleable and adaptable approach to the art; in line with its original intent as a civilian fighting system, as well as a method for stimulating personal challenges, growth and achievement.

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For more information about the E.S.K.K, please call Chris on: +44 (0) 7801 531 914 or visit our club's website at: www.eskk.co.uk where you can also join our mailing list, read articles and download useful media.

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.

STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF A KNIFE: KNIFE AS WEAPON SERIES.

Rev. Art. Bodhi Chenevey, RM, DD

The mechanical structure of a tool determines how a device can be optimized. When we look at the knife as a basic tool, it is a lever (force multiplier) arm with a wedge or incline plane honed to its lever arm—either on one side or one both edges of the lever arm. This thin wedge or incline plane attached to the lever allows this blade to slip in between the molecules of a substance (skin or clothing) in order to more easily separate tissue or material apart.

This ability to cut and penetrate living tissue, easily, is the quality man has prized over the last tens of thousands of years. When a pointed stick and a sharp edge of a flaked stone were discovered to cut and impale tissue quickly and easily, man discovered a working tool, upon which he advanced as his knowledge of materials and designs improved.

Since these kind of cutting and thrusting tools have been around for tens of thousands of years, it is my opinion that mankind has developed an evolutionary aversion to such tools and such actions. Humans really do seem to instinctively fear or dread being attacked with a blade—more so than they do with firearms. Even the thought of being stuck with a blade is more psychologically debilitating than it is being shot from a firearm. Maybe in time, firearms will generate a similar genetically carried fear-response



The proper alignment of knife to finger knuckles. Isaiah is holding an old version of the Soviet AK-47 bayonet for illustration purposes.

as does the edged weapon.

Back on track, when placed in motion, the knife creates a small arc, which is capable of moving at rapid speeds, able to change its force vector, explosively and unpredictably. It is, however, still a small lever arm with limited reach, and if one wants to use a knife as a weapon, we must be extremely close to the intended target in order to cut or penetrate the intended target's structure to reach vital areas.

Obviously, a knife cannot do what a large blade (sword) can do, yet, many of the knife actions being taught today, whether the actions are defensive or offensive in nature, mimic larger arcing, sword movements. While angles of approach to an intended target are the same, the effects each blade facilitates upon the target in relationship to the anatomical and kinesiological aspects of the human wielding a blade, are much different, due to mass differential, surface area of the cutting edge, arm extension and body positioning.

The effective range of the knife is extremely close. To gain a full understanding of the closeness required to use a knife optimally, place our arms at our side, bend the arms at the elbow, keeping the upper arm to our side. Now place the chosen knife in the hand in a good strong grip as if

holding a hammer. The knife held in this grip is at a slight angle, obviously, but where the tip of the knife is located, place this on the surface of the intended target and imagine this target impaled to the guard or handle's edge, and we now have our effective range of the knife.

Many will argue—but this is the EFFECTIVE range of the knife. Beyond these ranges, the knife just is not effective—that is, being capable of killing or crippling the target.

In using this “posture of combat,” applying the ever useful Hick's Law, there are only two fundamental ranges in killing combat: IN RANGE and OUT OF RANGE. When we are operating in a lethal environment, we are always in range of the enemy, regardless of our weapons system, as the weapons system in which we are carrying can and may be used against us. I know what weapons I am carrying and what their functional (inherent limits) properties are. I do not know fully what weapons systems the enemy may be deploying. I am always in range of the weapons of the enemy, but I do not know if the enemy is in range of my weapons.

When we start worrying about and contemplating short range, middle range, long range, standing grappling, ground grappling, etc., these are just too many “ranges” to be considering for appropriately swift responses. Realistic training under duress employing harsh, force on force protocol, quickly demonstrates what is in range and what is out of range.

In knife combat, we must employ keen situational awareness with dispassionate assessments of all existing close-quarters threats, and then according to these accurately perceived threats, engage in situational correct, smooth, explosive, total body movements in an evasive, elusive and lethal combination of activity with our knife in order that we survive and prevail within such combat. This is not about knife fighting. It's about killing with a knife and not getting killed in the process.

Given the nature of combat, in the reality of military and law enforcement operations, using

a knife as a weapon is relegated to a tertiary weapon. Military and law enforcement use other weapons and tools, which are primary and secondary to any knife they may be carrying.

In the civilian sector, those who choose to carry a knife as a defensive tool, the knife then, is considered the primary weapon. And for those who are engaged in all out criminal behavior, using the knife as both a means to gain a psychological advantage and a physical advantage, it is likewise, a primary tool.

As scary and as destructive to living tissue as an edged weapon can be, it is not an effective and efficient killing tool. It takes time and much effort to kill another living human being with a knife. A person being attacked with a knife is usually not going to allow this attack to occur easily. Trained or untrained to deal with a knife attack, the person will provide considerable resistance of one form or another.

When looking at power cutting with a blade in a human hand, we have the forehand, downward diagonal, the backhand, downward diagonal, the vertical downward backhand and forehand cuts and the backhand horizontal cut. These are power cutting arcs, and are needed to generate enough velocity in order to cut through durable layers of clothing to access living flesh deep enough for potentially crippling cuts.

A quick follow up cut that can be devastating, though not as powerful as the aforementioned blows, given the angle of the forearm to the body of the wielder, is a forehand upward diagonal, which helps to feed into more power cuts, while accessing viable targets in the meantime. This forehand, upward diagonal approach to the targets assists in maintaining the continuity of the knife's deadly flow on an unseen vector.

Some defensive cutting actions involve snapping cuts or flicks with the knife's tip that the arms snaps out quickly toward the eyes of the lethal threat and then quickly recovers back to the driving body for another snake like delivery of this defensive action. The idea of this application is to keep the threat at bay and from closing the safety gap. The quick snap

with recovery to the in-tight posture is to maintain the ability to deliver a deep killing thrust from a neutral grip should the threat seek to charge. This snapping cut is the only time the wielding knife arm ever extends beyond the arms in, elbows bent posture.

The hand positions for thrusting actions amount to a neutral gripping position, a pronated gripping

position, and a supinated gripping position. The knife is held in such a fashion that the primary cutting edge of the blade is always in alignment with the interphalangeal joints of the fingers in order to transfer maximum power to the cutting portion of the blade.

Looking at the clock model I prefer to use over an arbitrary numerical system, we are looking at angles along the noon, one o'clock, eleven o'clock and nine o'clock angles for a right handed person. The five o'clock angle represents the "hidden upward cut." The snapping cut usually follows along the nine and eleven o'clock approaches. Thrusting at the neutral grip would follow along the six o'clock approach. The pronated grip could follow along anywhere along the five o'clock through the noon approaches for a right-hander. The supinated grip follows anywhere along the seven o'clock through the noon angles for the right-hander.

Defensive and offensive footwork is always about maneuvering the entire body into and out of range of the weapon without losing contact with the target. The center of gravity must always move first with the feet maintaining the hips under with balance. Moving our body,



Neutral grip of the bayonet.

likewise follows and orients to the clock model. We are always positioned in the center of the clock facing twelve and our rear facing six o'clock. Stepping off line would be akin to stepping anywhere other than to my noon and to my six o'clock. Tactically, we want to step out of range but not out of contact in close quarters battle, and we want to be on the outside rear of the enemy or his six o'clock to noon. Remaining in front of an attack in actual combat for any purpose—even when training for real—in a toe-to-toe body position is tactically unsound. We must train to get out of the way—to not be there, and to maneuver our body to the enemy's rear for controlling the enemy or for escape.

Using a knife to close with an adversary is about moving in on an angle, power cutting anything and everything available or in our way, as we eliminate the space necessary to gain the position for a lethal power thrust into the major targets of the

adversary. When predators attack prey, they primarily do so on the prey's rear flank or it's four/five o'clock or seven/eight o'clock respectively.

Working defensively against such brutal knife attacks closing in on our vital targets, we must move our body—those vital areas—out of the way of this rapidly moving cutting tool. Intercept the knife wielding arm with blows, without chasing after the knife, all the while smashing available targets of the head, neck, face regions. If, as we are smashing this attacking arm, getting to the outside rear.

When we manage to snag that arm, keep the snagged arm close to our body, and continue smashing the arm, neck, ears, face of the

assailant with the other hand. If we merely grab an arm with both hands, the knife wielding adversary cuts his way out of there. If we chase after the knife and grab an arm with both hands, we tie ourselves up to his one limb. The knife wielder can then simply cut his way free, striking us with his free hand

In so far as a knife fighting stance is concerned, most are rather hilarious to see over time's passing. Our fighting stance is whatever position we are in when we are attacked. Can we access our weapon readily, from a variety of postures and positions? Can we use our weapon against an adversary or adversaries from a multiple of postures and positions with proficiency, and not drop it? Can we maneuver our body independently, yet as a whole, both offensively and defensively, within these many, many different postures and positions while using our weapon effectively and efficiently? Our stance or stances arrive from this set of requirements. Remember, we must quickly and effectively neutralize the threat with as little damage to ourselves and those we may be assigned to protect.

Some will say that we can use low-line kicks as we engage a knifer, wielding a buzz-saw-of-a-knife. Good luck with that. This action of a knifer trying to kill us, and us, trying to stop this incredibly fast-forward, brutal and explosive



Supinated position of hand in relation to bayonet.

assault requires that we remain mobile yet solid in our balanced mobility. As soon as we begin lifting a foot or knee in an attempt to stomp or knee the adversary's low-line targets (are we thinking about blasting into the feet, shins, knees, thighs, groin?), we are immediately off-balanced. Our center of gravity is severely weakened due to the precarious balance needed in maintaining a mobile stability.

Personal experience has demonstrated that while we are simultaneously trying to gain control over his trashing, cutting, thrusting blade, as we crush his face, gouge his eyes, pound his ears, blast his neck and throat, if we are to maneuver our body out of the way of the blade, while maintaining an in-close bodily position, we cannot be messing with the strong base our legs provide in the fast-forward enemy attack. To lift a single foot means we break the integrity of our maneuvering stability.

Once the weapon has been snagged or slowed or some how controlled by rendering the attacker's brain incognizant, and once this fast-forward momentum is abated somewhat from our attacks, then and only then can low-line attacks be utilized to safely finish off the attacker. In the throes and center of this mayhem, anytime we attempt to utilize low-line attacks, the enemy will use this break in our base integrity to his advantage over us. The action must slow down before low-line attacks can be used proficiently. We dig in with our legs and attack with our arms, like the big cats do.

When I observe and critique the numerous knife curricula and counter-knife curricula being taught (in the commercial martial arts arena) , I see too many fancy toe-to-toe non-dynamic knife on knife and knife-on empty-hands drilling, involving overextended arm work. The knife sparring I observe, likewise possesses too much unrealistic, non-dynamic, toe-to-toe actions reminiscent of sport's fencing and kick-boxing, which has nothing to do with the killing nature of knife combatives

I hear the same reasoning justifying these training methods of knife and counter knife work, too. "Well, we used it in full contact knife sparring, and it worked." Oh, full-force-on-force

fighting, with live blades and brutal action designed to take and preserve life? This is what makes learning offensive and defensive knife tactics so difficult. When real, force on force knife and counter knife methods are taught realistically, people get injured in practice. Even when we use real steel knives, which are not sharpened, operatives sustain broken ribs, broken fingers, bone bruises to the arm anatomy and skin tears to the neck and face, as well as the hands and fingers. There is no way to avoid this. And this is unacceptable in commercial martial arts training studios. It is my professional opinion, from my experience, we must train to deal with committed knife assaults with this level of training intensity and injury sustainment, if we are to be competent in surviving and prevailing in such armed assaults.

Realistically, once a knife assailant has gone totally rapid (bull-dogging), the above concepts of attacking the attack are the only means of survival. If the assailant has not gone rapid, verbal de-escalation, avoidance, evasive movement and drawing a sidearm, taser or ASP-baton are sound defensive tactics.



Pronated hand position in relation to the bayonet

If the knife attack is not a committed, fast-forward, bull-dog assault, but a static threat or a half-hearted attack, these forms maybe dealt with, through quick and explosive evasive body movements made in conjunction with strikes and controls which powerfully stun the adversary from wanting to engage in any more aggressive thoughts and actions. When we control such adversaries and slam their faces into the ground, cranking their wrists, elbows and shoulder joints of the knife wielding arms to the breaking point, we are able to gain dominance over such half-hearted attempts. These are dangerous attacks, nevertheless, but the also exist on a different level of mind/body commitment in both assailant and assailed. Such attacks are a bit easier, and a tad safer to learn, utilizing such aggressive, force-on-force knife/counter knife training protocols.

There is no room for artsy-fartsy, toe-to-toe exchanges when using a knife or managing counter knife methods in the realm of warfare or street survival. There is even less need for such arsty-fartsy knife working and counter-knife working curricula and drills teaching offensive and defensive knife methodologies for these two life and death realms of operation.

For those who have survived and prevailed in knife and counter-knife combative situations, whether in the mean-streets or battlefields, such individuals know what is needed and what is not. Everyone else merely speculates and imagines what will work, and this is the primary problem in so many knife curricula in commercial martial arts today. When you speculate about something for which we do not know, and this realm is real combat, well, combat has a unique way of weeding out the incompetent very quickly.

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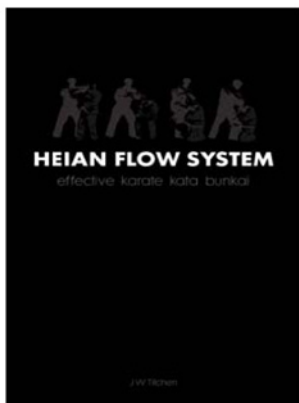
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Gavin Mullholland Interview

Interviewed by Michael Rosenbaum

Gavin Mullholland is the Chief Instructor for Daigaku Karate Kai. Born in Northern Ireland, he has been training in the martial arts since the 1960's and his latest book 'Four Shades of Black' has received critical acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic. During the summer of 2009, I interviewed Gavin for JISSEN.

•Gavin your father taught Judo and unarmed combat to the British forces. Where did his martial arts begin?

My Dad was a very good fencer who became fascinated (or perhaps I should say obsessed) with Judo. I think he used to mix up his Judo with techniques he got from the various books that he could get hold of to add into his unarmed combat instruction.

•As a child you began training under your father's tutelage. What were those early sessions like?

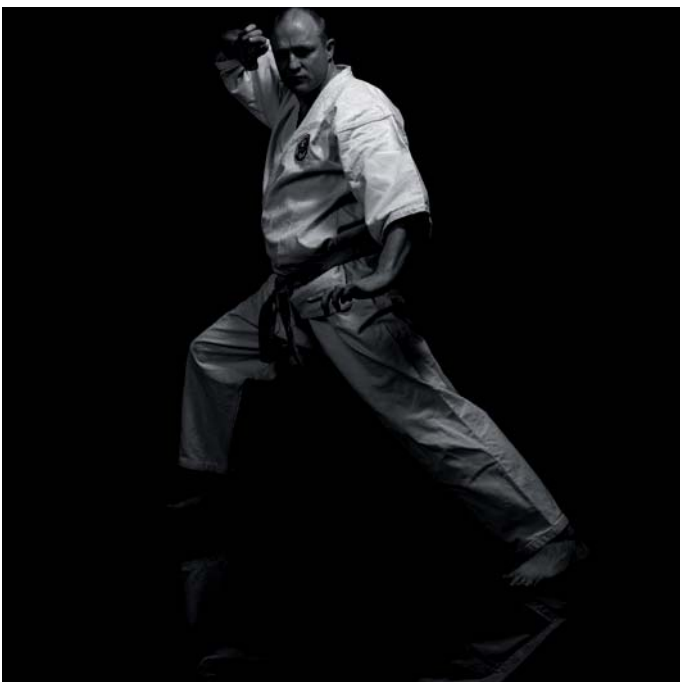
It would be an exaggeration to call them sessions as there were no formal classes, and even when there were, there was no such thing as a kid's class. As you can imagine, finding instruction in Northern Ireland in the 1960s would not have been easy, and when my Dad opened his first club, the Ken-Cho-Kai, in Limavady in

the far North of Ireland, he was only a green belt. He opened it alongside a brown belt called Bill Norris (Uncle Bill to me) and they were both considered high grades in those days.

My Dad's job meant that we grew up around military and air bases and he always had access to gyms and mats. I have three brothers and Dad would take us on base, lay the mats out and work through various throws, holds, and moves from books; working out what worked and what didn't as we went along. It all sounds very haphazard and it was, but two of my brothers went on to fight in the Southern Area BJA squad when we moved to England in the 1970s.

One of the downsides of being in a military family was that we had to move a lot and as a kid, that means trouble. We would not arrive at a new school and not have a fight – that was unheard of until we eventually moved to the South of England where, much to our consternation and confusion, the kids all said 'hello' and were friendly. We, being unused to such a lack of hostility, didn't immediately reply in kind and we got into a fair bit of trouble in the early days.

As I said, my Dad was something of an obsessive and he would not accept one of us losing a fight. If one of us came home battered,



he would ask the details and if we had not won, he would send us back out to do a better job. Once when we first moved to Scotland my brother John was threatened by another kid with a knife so he ran away and came home. When my Dad found out, he still sent John back out to deal with it – which he did.

•When you grew older did your father expect more from you as a martial artist?

I think he did. We had been training in a Judo club in Southampton when one day we visited another club in Winchester. Our Southampton club was BJC but the Winchester one was BJA and it was a lot tougher - we were thrown all over the place so he moved us there and was happy to drive us the 70 mile round trip to Winchester Judo club two to three times a week.

He loved us training in the martial arts and I think he was very disappointed in me when I gave up Judo and moved over to Karate. He came around but he wasn't happy at first.

•Did your father influence the way you trained later, as an adult?

My father continues to influence me and my training to this day. He trained in a time when if you wanted knowledge, you would really have to put yourself out to get it. Nowadays, everyone is spoon fed and they expect everything on a plate. That's not a good thing. Other than that he taught me to love the martial arts, to obsess about what you want, and to strive to be as good as you can possibly be.



•During the 1970's you witnessed a demonstration by Kyoshi Kim Roberts and as you stated "became an immediate convert." Why was that?

This would have been very late 1970's and I saw Kim Roberts giving a demonstration at a school fete. Sensei Dave Arnold was there and so was Mick Lambert who I think was a 5th Dan at the time. It was the sheer power and raw ferocity of Goju that grabbed me. They appeared to just lay into each other and Dave eventually broke a chair over Kim, who fell over and got up laughing. I found out years later that none of it was scripted and that's how they used to do their demos – no wonder we never had many students! Mick also punched a paving slab in half and I'd never seen anything like that before. I wanted to train under Kim and I didn't care what style he was doing. In fact, I didn't even know that there were styles at that time – I just knew it was Karate.

•You describe Goju-ryu as an "holistic fighting art" could you explain what makes it holistic?

I'm sure that there are other holistic systems but I basically mean that Goju has remained more in tact than many – well mostly anyway. Karate got pretty badly chopped up when it went to Japan and a lot of it was removed but Goju retained all of its grappling and ground-fighting which a lot of the other systems lost.

Also with the renaming of 'China hand' to 'Empty hand', people also stopped using the weapons that had always been a part of the old systems. Fortunately Goju retained much of its weapons



work and Yondan (fourth level black belt) is still a weapons grade today.

Finally, Goju has never been a catalogue of techniques featuring 12 kicks, 17 wristlocks and 45 punches – it is a principle based approach to fighting; a philosophy of combat and as such, almost everything that I have ever come across I have found to be in Goju as well.

•Are there other styles of karate that you would consider holistic fighting arts?

Anything that actually claims to be a fighting art has to cover both stand-up and ground fighting. If it doesn't, it's not an holistic system. As I say, I am sure there are many holistic systems out there but I don't think I'm really in a position to name them.

•Do you feel that Goju-ryu is superior to other karate styles, or is it the practitioner who ultimately decides a style's fate?

The PC answer would be to say no, that I don't consider Goju to be superior but that would compromise my integrity as a teacher and as a martial artist. If I knew of something better, I would be doing it, it's as simple as that! Having said that, I have no doubt that there are other ways to achieve what we achieve, (because I have seen the results), it's just that I know the Goju way, I understand how it all fits together, and I have confidence in it.

Ultimately it is of course down to the individual but the style still has a part to play. If, as I do, you believe that we are all striving to build the fighter,

we are all aiming for the same goal. All a style is, is a different set of opinions and training mechanisms to achieve the same thing. The end result will probably look identical as there are only so many ways to punch, kick, bend, or break someone, but its how you got them there that differs.

•Gavin your approach to karate is a remarkably well balanced one. You embrace both tradition and pragmatism? How did you develop such an open minded view of karate?

I guess the true answer would be that I see pragmatism in the traditions. I believe that most, if not all, of our traditions have direct and relevant fighting implications – be that technique, mindset, focus, or intensity – somewhere it will have value and if you believe in the system, you have to find it.

I also think I was very lucky with the clubs and instructors that I found. In fact it wasn't until I moved to London around 1990 that I was even aware that other Karate clubs didn't train, spar, and grapple in the same way that we did. Some of what I saw was completely unrecognizable to me but I try to see the value in what they do.

I learnt that lesson from one of Alfie Lewis' students at a tournament sometime in the 1980s. At that time we were not what you might call good sports. We were encouraged to intimidate and 'bother' opponents in the changing rooms – just little things like changing were they were changing, cuffing someone as you put your gi on



– all nonsense really. Anyway, we used to fight far too hard and at this time I had yet to figure out that that was simply cheating. Going in full-contact against a semi-contact fighter is unacceptable but we had no respect for semi-contact fighters and I was yet to learn that lesson. We were up against Alfie Lewis' team and my opponent was wearing a red silk suit. Well, back then that was a red rag to a bull and I decided I would knock him out as soon as Hajime was called. Hajime was called and I launched at him with a totally illegal head punch. But...before I had time to think, this guy slipped my punch, leaned back and kicked me twice in the face – gently! I was out of the tournament and I was stunned. I went over and shook his hand and from that day to this have seen the value in what those guys do. I wish I knew his name because it was a seminal moment for me and it changed my outlook entirely. I always look for the benefits in how others train now and if you take that attitude, you will often find something of value.

•You've also trained in Japan, Thailand, Indonesia and China. What did you gain from those experiences?

I had a fantastic time everywhere I went but if I am brutally honest, the main thing I learnt, was not to fear an Oriental in Gi. In hope that doesn't sound too bad but I think it is a demon that we in the West have to slay. Far too much of the rubbish we have seen perpetuated in the martial arts today has come about because of an almost slavish respect for the Japanese or Chinese.



Don't get me wrong, I met a great many people with talents far superior to my own and I took a few kickings along the way, but I also met my peers, and I met those worse than me. As you mentioned earlier, it is the man that makes the fighter, not the style and definitely not the race.

If you think about it, in the 1970s our best probably had 20 years experience at the most compared to their 40 or 50 years. But today, we have the 40 or 50 years as well. There are good reasons to want to train in the East but if you are looking for higher skills or greater knowledge, you are going to have to look long and hard and I think you'll find a lot of what you need is a lot closer than you think.

•How has cross training benefited you?

I don't really consider myself to cross train. With the possible exception of Judo as a child, I have done very small bits and pieces in other things and as I said, I found all of it in Goju anyway.

What I would say is that as an holistic system, Goju covers pretty much everything. That means that specialist styles are going to be better than us at certain aspects of what we do. For example, for every 20 minutes we spend throwing, Judo do 2 hours; for every 20 minutes we spend grappling, Ju jitsu do two hours; for every 20 minutes we spend kicking, Taekwondo do two hours; etc. Therefore, if the time comes when one of our students needs to get his throws up to scratch, I think it's a good idea to visit a Judo club for a while. I suppose you could call it cross



training but to me, it's just putting on a different set of clothes to specialize in an area that we cover anyway. I think it was Iain Abernethy that first pointed out that it's not cross training, it's cross dressing... (I.A. – It was actually Bob Sykes ... but I like the phrase so much I do use it a lot!)

•Kata is one of the most widely debated subjects in karate today. What role does it play in your training?

Kata underpins everything that we do. If you try to define what 'Karate' is, pretty much the only thing that distinguishes it from the other Japanese arts, is its use of kata. It guides the phases of our training in the Kyu grades, and it adds knowledge and wisdom in the dan ranks.

•Gavin in 'Four Shades of Black' you indicate there is an unseen side of kata, techniques not formally presented that should be used with those inside the kata. In layman's terms what is the unseen side of kata?

I wouldn't exactly call it an unseen side – neglected might be a better term. I am talking about something that goes beyond the simple performance of the kata (that's like getting a martial arts DVD and simply watching it); something even that goes beyond deconstructing the kata and pulling out its techniques bunkai; I'm talking about training in the very 'spirit' of the kata itself.

So for example, the first kata in the Goju syllabus is called Gekisai Dai Ichi. This translates as 'Attack and Smash Number One', and is referring

to developing a straight-line, hard, direct, attack and smash mindset in your training. That can of course be used as a fighting strategy, and the bunkai you pull out should be direct and attacking, but that mindset should also feature in all aspects of your training during the time you are majoring on that particular kata. Your fitness should be attack and smash, your padwork should be attack and smash, your kihon should be attack and smash. You should eat, drink, and sleep attack and smash until such time as you are ready to move on to the next kata which, in the Goju system at least, get progressively 'softer' – hence the Go first, Ju second.

•Do you believe one kata can be representative of an entire style of karate?

Yes I do. If we look at the second Goju kata, Gekisai Dai Ni (attack and smash number two) you find it is focused on evasion, angles and footwork. It is still attack and smash in nature, but it is much more subtle and highly skilled. So now, instead of a headlong attack and smash strategy, we are talking about using footwork and evasion to get you into a position of positional advantage before launching an all-out attack and smash counter. That pretty much describes Boxing to me. I don't need any ripping skills because I am not allowed to grab. I don't need any grappling skills because the fight is not allowed to go to the floor. Boxing is Gekisai Dai Ni.

•Why is there so much confusion surrounding kata today?



You know why! It's because people don't understand kata. But that doesn't stop them from going ahead and teaching it anyway! I believe a lot is to do with Shodan's opening clubs and teaching that has led us to this sorry state of affairs. A Shodan is a beginner's grade. They have mastered the basics and are supposed to move on and learn in depth what karate is all about. Third dan is supposed to be the teaching level and by that stage hopefully you will have a better understanding of what the approaches, practices, and mechanisms of your style are actually for.

I recall recently reading on a forum, a newly graded Shodan (Sho meaning 'beginning' by the way) writing his experience of what he had rejected along his journey! In this case I think it was pressure points, or Chi – whatever really, but it just showed how people really view Black Belt as a destination, not a start point. It was like a newly qualified architecture graduate telling a bunch of established working architects what he was rejecting from the world of architecture. Totally ridiculous. I think you know exactly why there so much confusion surrounding kata today!

•Is it possible to transcend kata?

Yes of course. Kata is like a DVD. Once you have the messages, you could simply throw it away. The problem arises if and when you want to pass it on to the next generation. How would you do that? You could try passing on a bunch of techniques but without them being connected to

anything or themed in any way, what use is that?

Also, what if better techniques come along to do what you want to do? If you have only passed on techniques they may become redundant or even obsolete, but the kata is the spirit of combat, so for example, a new and unheard of smashing technique would fit right in with Gekisai kata - the kata indicating when and for how long to train in this phase of fighting without being overly prescriptive.

•Gavin has your 15 years' as a doorman changed the way you practice kata, or for that matter karate?

I have to say that doorwork was never my full time job, but nevertheless, I think it worked to calibrate and recalibrate what we do in terms of getting actual real-life feedback about what works and what doesn't. In fact, it is an interesting point that you can only ever prove what works, not what doesn't. Just because you couldn't make it work doesn't mean that someone else couldn't.

It didn't change how I trained in kata but there are some kata that are more applicable than others. The attack and smash of Gekisai was sometimes necessary but usually over the top. The breaking free and controlling aspects of Saifa and Seiunchin were far more applicable for that environment.

Having said that, I'd hate to go into a confrontation without the concrete knowledge that I can knock the other guy out so it's always best



to build from the basics up. All the other stuff works but if it goes wrong for whatever reason, you definitely want to be able to lay someone cold. Do not neglect that basic karate trait of hitting hard – very hard.

•Is it possible for a karate-ka to develop effective self-protection skills inside the dojo?

That's a very good question and I take it you are talking about all the pre-fight awareness and 'soft' skills associated with self protection as opposed to self defense. I guess that is down to a) the instructor – does he have the knowledge? and b) the student base – do they need the knowledge? At one time all of our Black Belts had to do six months on the door in order to develop those very skills but it all became too unwieldy and controlled so we don't do that anymore. I touch on it but I guess the majority of karate schools are going from a position of worst-case-scenario – i.e. its already gone wrong so what can I do about it.

•After having spent so much time as a doorman do you believe that all fights go to the ground?

No, that is unmitigated rubbish. Only a tiny proportion of the altercations I have been in over the years have ever gone to the ground. In all that time I reckon I can count the number of times I went to the floor on one hand and I worked with many people who had never gone to the floor, ever! It simply doesn't happen like that.

When it comes to the punters, admittedly, two untrained, unskilled, drunken fools, flailing around may eventually bump into each other and fall over. But it doesn't happen with skilled fighters – why would it? Even in the cage, the fight only goes to the floor if one or both of the fighters want it to. The cage is the only environment where someone would willingly go to the floor.

•What role does grappling play in self-defense?

As I said, we train for worst-case scenario and there is not much worse than ending up on the ground with someone on top of you. Given the nature of the intended assault, male on female attack is more likely to end up the ground but that's fairly irrelevant. Personally, I don't like to distinguish too much between 'female' self defense and everyone else's. That being the case, you need the skills to control your attacker and regain your feet so it's not an area you can afford to ignore. The emphasis should definitely be on getting to your feet though.

Having said that, I recently heard about one of my students in the States getting mugged. He was hit in the face with a brick and went down. He managed to drag his attacker down with him, roll him, break his arm and phone the police (and his wife to tell her that he was going to be late) – all while still controlling his attacker and sitting on him till the police arrived. He made a point of telling them on the phone that he would



be the one on top when they arrived!

Not the way I would advice using them but undoubtedly good skills to have.

•Several of your students have achieved a high degree of success in cage fighting. Do you feel that MMA complements karate?

Yes, in our first 20 fights we had 16 wins. One of our guys won the Ultimate Challenge Heavyweight World Title and another is fighting for the British Welterweight title in a couple of week's time. Having said that, I am very clear that I am not teaching MMA, I teach Goju and that is where my interest is. I think Karate has always been about facing your fears and challenging yourself and I think, for young men these days, the Cage is a really good test. I think it's fairly inevitable that karate guys would end up testing themselves in that environment.

•What can the traditional karate-ka learn from MMA?

I love the intensity, mindset, courage, and of course, conditioning that is displayed in the cage. I think what it has done has reminded us all that what we do needs to be pressure tested. In that way we are able to calibrate the worth of what we are doing. Everything we do should in some way be improving the fighter, or the person, and in the traditional world, we try to do both.

I also think that it acts as a reminder that all systems are mixed – all of the founders used to look around, beg, borrow and adapt techniques.



Again, it comes down to the fact that techniques don't make a system, strategies, ethos, and concepts do. If I come across a wrist-lock I have never seen before and I use it, is it Goju? The answer is yes, it is – and it's Goju because I am doing it. Whatever 'new' technique it is, I would be applying it with the mindset, delivery, and strategies of the hard/soft principles of Goju. It is just nonsense to think that any of the founders would have rejected a technique because they had never seen it before. I think MMA reminds us of that.

•What do you feel the MMA fighter can learn from traditional karate?

Actually, I think a lot. Mostly around respect and discipline but also in the approach to the fights. When you are in there to test yourself, your opponent is really irrelevant. The reason we bow to our opponent is because without them trying to tear us apart we are not able to test ourselves in the way that we want to be tested. We are therefore grateful to our opponents for the opportunity and, win or lose, because it is about self, you cannot really lose at all. To quote an old martial saying; never losing does not mean always winning.

•In 2008, your highly acclaimed book 'Four Shades of Black' was published. Could you provide us with a brief summery of the book and what inspired you to write it?

Four Shades of Black was an attempt to show people how the traditional arts used the sequence



of their kata to build complete and rounded fighters in the run up to black belt. I had noticed that some fairly naive (but of course forgivable) questions about karate and kata had started to creep from the lower grades into the higher ones, (presumably because those higher grades had never had their questions answered when they were in the lower ranks), just the usual stuff like 'why are there no high kicks in the kata?', 'What is the point of tamashiwara?' and 'Where is the grappling in karate?', that sort of thing. I was beginning to see understanding of karate and kata really starting to slip as 'family' clubs and pyramid schemes became commonplace and started to steal and erode our practices, symbols, and good name. They were becoming what people thought 'Karate' was. In the eyes of the public, Karate was becoming nothing short of a joke.

At the same time there were people like Iain Abernethy fighting back. He, and people like him, were trying to show how the kata should be deconstructed and the inherent bunkai extracted to develop all-round fighters and fight strategies which is fantastic. With Four Shades, I wanted to strip away one more layer of the onion and move beyond even bunkai to show how the actual 'spirit' of the kata that you are studying should actually underpin and guide all of your training at that point in time.

•Presently you're writing another book, what aspect of karate does it cover?

The working title is More Shades of Black and that is really the concept I am working with at the moment. Four Shades used the four stages up to Black belt and ended at Shodan and so, ambitious as it sounds, I want to take the next four 'shades' and talk about the Dan grade phase of a student's training. This book will take the Black Belt student from Shodan to Godan showing how each grade is supposed to be different from the last with each having its own area of deep in-depth study and how the systems continue to build the students right up until the final testing grade of fifth Dan.

There is so much stuff out there written for Kyu grades but hardly anything for Black Belts and I'm afraid that is also starting to show. As I mentioned earlier, there is already a greatly mistaken belief that a Black Belt is a 'master' grade when it is in fact a beginner's grade.

However, it is worse than that – even amongst those who acknowledge that it is a beginner's grade appear to be being let down by the system because simply put – they don't know what they are supposed to be beginning. And many systems are no longer telling them.

I look at second Dans and what they are training in, and I can tell that they are doing exactly what they were doing as first Dans. Their training is the same, what they are training in is the same, and their next grading will be more or less the same as the one before. Sure, they might throw in a new kata every now and then, but essentially, they are doing the same thing and that is simply wrong. What's more, everybody knows it is wrong because they arrive at the staging post of Shodan fit, strong, willing, and eager to 'begin' but become quickly disillusioned by finding themselves doing exactly the same thing that they were doing before, but in a different coloured belt. Or worse still, they are forced out into a teaching role way too soon and to the detriment of everyone.

•One last question Gavin. As a martial artist where do you hope to be in 10 or even 20 years from now?

Well, I've never really been one to plan in that way so I don't know the answer to that one. I'll take whatever comes my way, look for the best in it, and then move on. That'll do for me.

Gavin Mulholland, thank you.

My pleasure, thank you.



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SPEED IN TRAINING

By John Titchen



Those of you that have ever moved house and had to find a new place to train, or advised newcomers to the martial arts on a forum, will be familiar with the need to 'find somewhere good to train'. What is often interesting, particularly when reading threads on forums, is finding out how other people believe you can judge a good club.

There are naturally many different factors that make a martial arts class good or not, no matter what style is practiced. One aspect that springs to mind is the value often placed on the intensity of the training experience in a class. The speed at which students drill within class, and the physical demands placed upon them by this, might seem to be an integral factor to the intensity and quality of training. However the implications for each student's development through the variations that can be made in training speed are so fundamental that they are rarely given even a moment's thought.

No matter how long we train, whichever way we turn, the roots of our progress lie in our attention to basic principles, and the level of our understanding as to why we train in the manner we do. To a student, new or old, the answer to a question of 'why' should never simply be 'because that's the way I was taught' – a reply that dodges the question. Whether training fast or slow, the knowledge of the pros and cons of each method should be understood.

Static Training – Non moving Visualization

Advantages

Recreates the feel of a movement

Allows injury recovery with reduced performance deterioration

Confidence

Time and location efficiency (can be done anywhere, any time)

Disadvantages

No aerobic/anaerobic benefit

No strength benefit

Limited value for techniques that rely on tactile feel unless practitioner is extremely advanced

Does not work/test timing or reactions.

How slow can you train? Static visualization is not necessarily a training method associated with being in class, and yet is an extremely valuable method of improving performance. Muscle memory is a myth, your memory is the result of electrical patterns in the brain – and your brain creates and stores those patterns from the information it receives from the body. The brain does not distinguish between visualized actions and actual actions, thus mentally rehearsing a drill can strengthen the neural patterns in much the same way as actual physical practice. One of the greatest advantages of this form of training is that mental rehearsal allows the 'perfect' reproduction of a movement. Watching another person performing when you know the movement they are doing triggers the same patterns in the brain as actually doing the training. This is one reason why coaches should encourage injured students to watch lessons for free since it reinforces their existing skill level while making it less likely they will quit (because they are still reminded of what they are missing and remain immersed in the social scene of

training). The greatest disadvantage to visualized training for beginners is not the lack of aerobic/ anaerobic load, but its reliance on prior proficiency in the trained skill set.

Slow Speed Training

Advantages

Ensures skilled technique

Can be used as a strength, balance and flexibility workout

Can be used as part of an injury recovery workout

Disadvantages

Limited value for increasing aerobic and aerobic fitness

Limited value for training timing and reaction speed.

Slow speed training allows trainees to focus on 'getting the movement right'. There is a common saying 'practice makes perfect', but as American Football Coach Vince Lombardi observed, "Practice does not make perfect. Only perfect practice makes perfect." Training in slow motion allows trainees to perfect the biomechanical movement aspect of a technique, failure to train in this manner will result in far greater time being taken to achieve an equivalent skill level – if it is ever reached at all.

One of the great advantages of slow training is the degree of precision and control it allows over movement. This is of particular importance for trainees recovering from injury since it allows a technique, strength, balance and flexibility workout while lowering the risk of aggravating the existing problem.

The disadvantages of slow training are obvious and important. While slow training can assist in the identification of the minute telegraphs that give away techniques, it does not test the ensuing reaction speed, or work the timing of how early or late to respond to an attack so that the other person cannot recommit. While you will burn calories during slow training, you will not work your aerobic or anaerobic capacity due to the lack of pressure involved – a disadvantage if you are training for an event where greater efficiency

in this regard is essential. Slow training can be used to perfect technique, and in some respects may be the most beneficial (and safest) way for new students to train, but can be very boring for inexperienced trainees and put them off attending class.

Medium Speed Training

Advantages

Training can be sustained for long periods

Good for the development of aerobic fitness

Good for maintaining interest.

Disadvantages

Training can lack psychological pressure

Sustained practice at this level reduces the opportunity to develop refinement in the execution of techniques

Can reinforce bad technique and hamper skill development.

Medium speed training is the half way house. Good for many things, bad for many things, excellent at nothing and terrible at nothing.

By training at a medium speed students are able to keep going for a long time, thus gaining an aerobic workout. The pace allows a coach to get the students rehearsing a broad range of techniques or combinations throughout the class, thus reinforcing a large number of neural pathways and stopping the students from becoming bored. In terms of keeping students training (ie preventing them from quitting) this is very beneficial because from the perspective of the average martial arts student, it ticks a large number of the boxes that match their expectations in training. For the instructor it seems beneficial because training at this pace allows the class to cover the majority of the techniques they may need to know for their grading syllabus, thus the class can practice and the instructor can assess.

The downside of this method of training is that as students tend to focus on speed more than precision, if the movement is not already ingrained precisely, the technique performed will be sloppy. Faults in performance will naturally increase as a student begins to tire. If this forms

the majority of training then what is being rehearsed and drilled into the neural pathways over and over again is likely to be incorrect technique. Since the speed is not quite full tilt, the benefit of training for things such as timing is reduced. The greater risk of performing sloppy technique due to fatigue increases the risk of injury.

High Speed Training

Advantages

- Only real test of practicable ability
- Develops anaerobic fitness
- Excellent for developing reaction speed
- Develops distancing and timing appropriate for the activity being trained
- Places students under psychological stress.

Disadvantages

- Over use will reinforce poor technique
- Generally does not allow for refinement as fine motor skills will be inaccessible if placed under real pressure
- Can only be sustained for short periods of time.
- Full Speed training – the holy grail. Whether you are training for the competitive arena, or for self



defence, the ability to execute techniques with precision at full speed under pressure is surely one of the most important aims of any trainee.

There are many advantages of training this way, both psychological and physical.

Training at full speed, whether with or without any form of protection, brings with it the danger of being hit – and the natural fear in many people of pain. This in turn puts an element of pressure in the performance that cannot be matched in training at any other speed (unless students are engaged in static drills where they have to be hit). Successful execution of techniques under the conditions of high speed training builds real confidence appropriate to the arena being trained.

In physical terms, only high speed training can assess the accuracy of students' abilities in reading body movements and spotting the telegraphs of techniques in time for threat avoidance, and put their reaction time and speed of movement to a real test – whether in attack or defence.

The disadvantages of high speed training are ultimately linked to the limitations of human performance and the nature of the training regime. A student cannot work at high speed all the time as they will quickly fatigue. Real high speed training is the equivalent of a 100m sprint, something that can only be sustained for seconds rather than minutes. The obvious answer is to intersperse high speed training with training at other speeds, but there is another issue with working at high speed – technique. When a person moves fast and are under pressure, they tend to make mistakes – a posture that is not quite optimal, over-extension, greater telegraphing, not enough torso or hip rotation to give a technique as much power as it could have. How well a person performs under pressure is dependant upon a number of factors, but two very simple ones are:

1. How familiar they are with working under pressure.
2. How good and ingrained is their existing technique.

Repeatedly working under pressure will address factor number one, but spending too



much time working under pressure can be exceptionally detrimental to factor number two, since the more you rehearse a technique sub optimally – the more likely you are to perform that way consistently. As was said earlier “practice does not make perfect. Only perfect practice makes perfect.”

Conclusion

On the face of it the speed of training may determine the visible intensity of training, but in

actual fact is often a false indicator of the quality of training. Consistently fast and hard does not necessarily mean good, and slow training while less visually impressive may be both technically and physically demanding. Too much of any type of training has the potential to be detrimental. Ideally training should be balanced, with different emphases on different speeds according to the health and level of the student, but it would be helpful for both students and coaches to know what precisely they are aiming to achieve with each training method when they do employ it.

Coach John Titchen teaches Defence Attack & Resolution Tactics to students, education professionals and corporate clients and can be reached via his website: www.d-a-r-t.org.uk, e mail: jwt.dart@gmail.com. He is available to teach seminars in confrontation management self protection, use of force and the law, physical intervention and 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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Training provided by Jissen Columnist J W Titchen

Kyusho

By Nikolaj Fæno Skarbye

Kyusho, Vital Points, Pressure Points, Dimmak - sweet child has many names...

This article is to clarify not the name, but the child behind it. Even though the child has many names, its still the same child no matter what name is used.

You have probably seen the videos on youtube, where people fall to the ground, either after a short series of strikes, or what seem to be simple hits, to somewhat ordinary targets for all martial artists, boxers and mma-fighters alike.

If you haven't go to youtube.com, write: "kyusho knockout" and watch some of the videos. You will probably think, bullshit or shout out FAKE - if you haven't had any experience with this prior.

Go now - do it! Don't just read - watch.

If you haven't noticed yet, you will discover that, the names L5, LI18, Si16, H2 etc. might show up. This is the nomenclature used by practitioners of kyusho, to map out, where the kyusho points are located. The nomenclature originates from acupuncture.

The Kanji for Kyusho, consists of two, Kyu and Sho. We have those words also, in most budo arts, meaning Sho - being, the first grade of black, Shodan. Kyu for the different grade-levels below black - ikkyu meaning 1st grade. But even though the romanization of the Kanjis are the same, the kanjis are different. The Kanji for Kyu in Kyusho, means sudden or hasty - the Kanji for Sho in Kyusho, can be translated with point. And together they are translated into vital point.

There are a lot of vital points attacked in kyusho, most commonly it's the nervous system. Not going to deep into the nervous system, there is the central nervous system and the peripheral nervous system. The CNS consist of the spine and the brain, and the PNS of the nerves in the rest of the body. The vital points, attacked in kyusho is mostly located at synaps'. Three different targets exist; at a nerve ending(1), at two nerves intersecting or when a nerve is dividing(2).

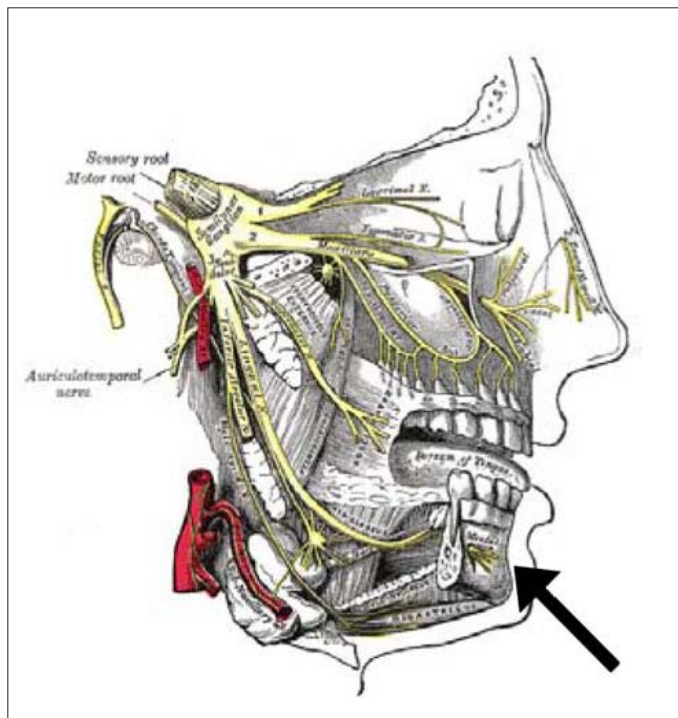


Fig 1, The arrow points out the mental nerve ending.

These nerves require different method, for the most outcome of a potent attack. Meaning you have to get the location, angle, method of activating the nerves, the correct tool for activating, and the right intent.

The location is obviously needed. Without it you have no target. The locations of the vital point, is no bigger than the size of a small coin. This probably makes you think, well if I have a hard time, hitting his head - how can I ever hit a small point like that? Incorporate it into your practice - every time you train and target the head, don't just target the head, find a spot, the spot is on the head, so you still get the head BUT you will also get the spot. So it's a Win-Win situation - nothing to lose!

Now the angle, if you have to categorize this, the second most important factor to understand, when attacking nerves. In kyusho you can activate a nerve by either stretching it or pinching it against a bone. Many of the nerves are placed closely along muscles, and if a nerve is struck into a muscle, the muscle absorbs much of the

power, the muscle may get sore, but the effect from the nerve attack, will not appear.

The method is closely related to the angle. There are mainly three ways to activate the vital points; Touch, rub or hit points. This is depending on what type of nerve we are going for.

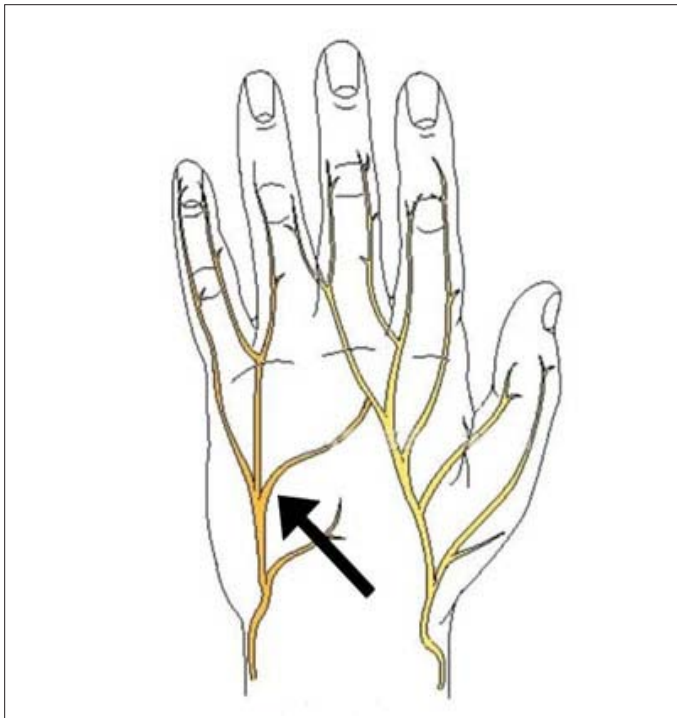


Fig 2, Triple warmer/heater/burner. (SanJiao) Ulnar nerves split-that is why, when you strike your elbow your little finger and your ring finger will feel dazzled or eventually numb it is the same nerve that runs to your little and ring fingers

Here the tool refers to what part of your body, you will use at the point. The knuckles are great for rub points, the palm are great for superficial nerves and closed-hand strikes can be used to pinch the nerves to the ribs, at the right angle at the right location - knowing which method should be used to activate the point.

Finally the intent. When striking a person, you need to really want it, you need to bypass your natural safety issues, for hurting your training partner. If you can't do this, you can't get focused enough.

These five guidelines are not something you need to remember, but something, with time, will feel natural. It is just like, when practicing throws, you need to establish a base, and disturb the balance of your opponent, as well as you need to get a good grip on him and many other guidelines.

Recently a guy, who was attending my training - wrote a review of the seminar I did, with a comment on: "kyusho is very effective, but perhaps best in the summertime". I filmed this video, where I am attacking the point Lung 5. Watch and see for yourself.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTr3ZSNWRtc>

You must notice, that when practicing kyusho, we only utilize perhaps 10-20% of the power possible, when performing a technique - in a real encounter, we use 120%! Ofcourse - so if you say, "this doesn't work on me", simply strike harder, adjust the angle and chose the correct tool. The light touch techniques performed in training is to explore the theoretical universe to expand ones understanding of the biomechanics in the human body.

Frequent comments

"There are no shortcuts to being an excellent fighter!"

That's absolutely true, in every aspect of your training, you have to work it over, and over and over again, repeat it, drill it and work it as close to live as possible - same goes for kyusho. You don't make the perfect spinning jumping backkick the first time you try it. So you won't get the strike to L5, the first time you try it (unless your lucky, because L5 is alot easier hitting, than doing a jumping spinning backkick!)

I normally drill the vital points, finding it - standing still. Drilling it from any type of grap, to explore the possible angles, lapel, wrist, neck etc. Then try with some punches, where you catch the punch and then target the point. Then you can strike directly at the point. Then start all over, with closed eyes, feel with your hands, and your body, measuring his size, and length of his limbs and try work it. Remember to get the feedback from the recipient. This can be done that he tells you have the strike felt, and then he can give you a number from 1-10. 10 being totally unconscious, 1 not much happens. This should only be done for absolute new starters, because the striker with time, will be able to feel how great and impact his attack had, watching the neurological effects of his technique. Feedback is important - whether audio or visual!

"The videos on the internet makes this work everytime!"

Would you, if filming a video, where it didn't work - put it up? Ofcourse you only edit the clips, you like, which looks good. In training, no it doesn't work everytime, unless you're a really skilled kyusho practitioner. But we are also using such a little amount of force, as you saw on my video, that could easily be adjusted.

"I came back from a seminar, tried the stuff out I learned, and nothing worked!"

The first time, you learned a lock, and went home to your brother or father, tried it, it probably didn't work to. Practice and training. When you worked with a partner at the seminar, his nerves and pain stimuli might be different, from the one your working with, so you need to learn, to naturally adapt to a person and adjust the strength and pressure needed for an application. Bear in mind that at an eventually real life situation, you won't measure - but just go full throttle immediately.

Now you've read, and watched, go try it out! I made this video, so descriptive and instructional that it should be really easy for you to pull this off, try it out, and email me your experiences with it.

Just remember in every aspect of training these three sentences aren't quite out of line:

-Point of Opportunity (if he is wearing a huge jacket, attack his legs, don't go for his belly - if your arm is closest to his chin, hit it with it!)

-KISS - Keep it Simple Stupid (don't think of the 1.000.000 ways to break his arm - if its there, break it.

-If it hurts - It works

Hope you enjoyed my article. Be free to write any questions, comments and or feedback to:

forsvardigselv@hotmail.com

Also I would be happy if you commented and rated my youtube-videos, eventually feedback on how to improve these.

Kyusho organizations worldwide:

RyuTe
Dillman Karate International
Kyusho International
Kyusho Aiki Jutsu
Hogan Karate International
Dragon Society International
Kyusho Denmark

Three Aspects - Two Sciences - One Family

Body, Mind and Spirit & Western and Chinese medicine & All martial artists are in one family

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- Breathing and Relaxation exercises
- Healing and Revival techniques
- Mental training

If trainee joins of all this information together, it is possible to achieve understanding of a real art of Kyusho Aiki Jutsu. Trainee will learn different methods to stop attacker in confrontation and much more, during of the training Kyusho Aiki Jutsu.

"Most common weapon in the martial arts is solid fist – yet, it is good weapon for beginners. Masters will use the open hand as a weapon - but grandmasters will use only finger tips."

Toni Kauhanen, founder of Kyusho Aiki Jutsu is available for seminars, lectures and courses. There are schools of KAJ in Finland, Danmark, Switzerland, Spain, South-Africa and Germany.

www.KYUSHOAIKIJUTSU.com

急所合気術

Ben Hockman Interview

On Training in Urban Krav Maga

Q: Hi Ben. Thanks for joining us for this interview. Tell us why you think that training in Urban Krav Maga is beneficial to those working within the security sector?

BH: On a general basis, I feel that training in some sort of reality-based self-protection/survival system is essential to those operating in the security sector. Any training in this regard should also address intervention techniques and scenarios for defending others and property, as well as oneself.

Whilst others may feel an ethical or moral duty to intervene in order to help defend 3rd parties, it is actually our professional responsibility to do so, i.e. we are paid to do it. That having been said, physical intervention should be a last resort, always superseded and preceded by excellent planning, risk assessment, environmental awareness, tactical communication and conflict management skills.

In more specific terms, in my professional opinion, Krav Maga, and specifically Urban Krav Maga, provides an ideal training system for security operatives for the following reasons:

a.)It places great emphasis on the pre-emptive 'soft' conflict management skills I mentioned previously. It also places significant emphasis on the 'hard' pre-emptive skills, vitally important to survival in any confrontational situation

b.)UKM champions principals above specific techniques, a must when the pressure is on with limited decision-making time and high levels of stress

c.)Through various means of training, it addresses both the emotional and physical responses to conflict that we are likely to experience in any given situation

d.)Its techniques, concepts and principals are quick to learn, dynamic, not reliant on size/



strength and always supported by intensive scientific research and pressure testing, as well as being tested by those UKM Instructors who also work operationally, such as myself

e.)The way the system is taught helps re-create, in a safe training environment, the various chemical reactions that take place in the body when under stress and gets students used to, and confident in, performing under these conditions

f.)Unlike other self-defence systems, UKM devotes a significant portion of its syllabus to the principal of defending others, as well as oneself, which, for the reasons I mentioned previously is very important to us security professionals

Lastly, I would just like to briefly address the difference between training in a martial art, and what we are talking about here. For me, martial arts can be divided into 3 broad categories: Sport-based, Tradition-based and Reality-based. I have no doubt of the various benefits to be gained by training and developing the attributes that both sport and tradition-based martial arts



bring. This however is far removed from the subject area at hand, where we are ultimately preparing for what could be the most important 5-10 seconds of our lives, or in the case of some operatives, our Principal's life. Through the training I offer through my business Beyond Fighting, specifically the Urban Krav Maga system, I address this specific gap in 'standard' martial arts and/or self-defence training.

Q: How does UKM differ from other self-defence, martial arts and combative systems and how is this relevant to security operatives?

BH: UKM was founded by a team of experienced Instructors, headed by Stewart McGill of the Central London School of Krav Maga. The group pooled their experience to devise a system containing the following unique elements when compared to other self-defence systems:

- The simplistic nature, never-say-die attitude and highly impactful elements of the original Krav Maga system developed for the Israeli Special Forces shortly following WWII

- As I mentioned above, the concepts are easy-to-learn and not reliant on size and strength to ensure effectiveness – I am 5'8" and weigh just over 70kg!

- Placing emphasis on the threats people face in modern society, both in the UK and overseas. For instance, many of our techniques are developed based on Home Office statistics relating to the frequency and likelihood of different assaults and attacks

- Significant emphasis on pre-emptively dealing with confrontation, either through awareness, avoidance, evasion, communication or as a last resort, devastating physical force

- Significant emphasis placed on 3rd Party Protection – I'm not sure why other systems and styles do not really address this area. The law in this country and others does give us equal entitlement to defend others (and property) as it does to defend ourselves after all!

In any event, that's why UKM is a truly unique system.

Q: You and some colleagues have just released

an instructional DVD boxset, Urban Krav Maga; tell us a bit more about this project:

BH: The boxset contains 2 DVDs and has been filmed over the course of a 2-3 month period in late 2009. Disc 1 deals with MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) Grappling for Street Self-Defence and is led by Leo Negao, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu World Champion and MMA Fighter for Team Nogueira. Leo addresses some of the differences between sport-based and reality-based training that I allude to above. For instance, the target areas ruled out of MMA competitions such as the UFC are precisely the target areas we would want to hit, grab or manipulate in the face of a real-life confrontation.

Any form of grappling will in my opinion always be a last resort when it comes to self-preservation. However, to avoid training in it and to ignore preparing for its eventuality leaves a significant gap in your preparation. In my experience as a Door Supervisor, perhaps partly due to working in clubs and bars with beer-soaked floors, if physical intervention is attempted, there is a high likelihood of ending up rolling around in said beer, not through choice but because that's simply the way events often transpire.

Disc 1 also includes the acclaimed Urban Krav Maga Knife Defence and Avoidance system, taught by Stewart McGill. The media is rife with stories of rising violence associated with bladed weapons so this aspect of the DVD is very relevant for us all, regardless of the jobs we do.

Disc 2, led by myself, deals exclusively with 3rd party protection. I relate techniques, scenarios and concepts to a.) the general public, b.) security operatives working alone and c.) security operatives working in teams

The DVD has received excellent reviews including those from serving door supervisors, close protection operatives working in the UK and in hostile environments overseas, Fighters Only Magazine and security training providers such as Shield Consultants and Clearwater Special Projects.

Stewart, Leo and I are also available for intensive, tailor-made courses and seminars focussing on the content of the DVDs or any other

aspect of your other physical intervention-based training needs.

Q: What prompted you to produce this DVD, covering these specific areas?

BH: I think to be honest it was a combination of a genuine belief in the system, based on experience as well as putting it to excellent use in reality, coupled with the desire to put something together that was truly different from the various other material out there in that its focus is on defending other people as well as defending oneself.

Q: Tell us a little more about your training background

BH: There's more information about this, and me, on my website: www.beyondfighting.com but to summarise:

- Age 31

- 13 years martial arts experience 3rd Degree Black Belt and Senior Instructor, British Combat Association under Peter Consterdine



- Commando Krav Maga Instructor
- Former Police Officer Protection and Defensive Tactics Instructor, South Yorkshire Police
- Senior Instructor – Urban Krav Maga with the Central London School of Krav Maga
- Certificate in Protective Security
- United Nations Department of Safety and Security: Advanced Security in the Field Certificate
- SIA Licensed Close Protection Operative
- SIA Licensed Door Supervisor
- Security Consultant
- Chief Instructor and owner, Beyond Fighting, www.beyondfighting.com
- Currently preparing for Masters Degree in Terrorism and Security
- Owner, Seguro Close Protection, www.segurocloseprotection.com
- Through my training business, Beyond

Fighting, provide bespoke training to civilians, security operatives and law enforcement personnel on a national and international basis

Q: Where can people find out more about the DVD box set and your training services?

BH: If people have any questions whatsoever regarding this interview, the DVDs or my training and/or operational services they can e-mail me at either info@beyondfighting.com or info@segurocloseprotection.com

My website www.beyondfighting.com also contains quite a bit of information and you can contact me through the site as well.

The DVDs can be purchased on-line at Amazon UK. Here's the link:

http://www.amazon.co.uk/Urban-Krav-Maga-MMA-Real/dp/B002QRJQM1/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=dvd&qid=1258538720&sr=8-1

Q: That was most informative Ben. Thank you for your time.

BH: My pleasure. Hope to talk again soon.





The Way of Kata

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

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

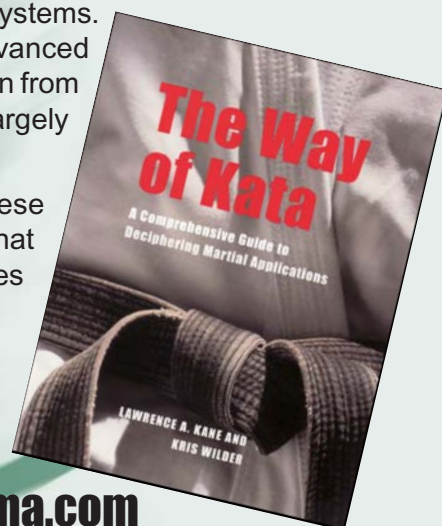
The theory of deciphering kata applications (kaisai no genri) was once a great mystery revealed only to trusted disciples of the ancient masters in order to protect the secrets of their systems. Even today, while the basic movements of kata are widely known, advanced practical applications and sophisticated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

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

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

Loren Christensen, 7th degree black belt

Available from Amazon.com, Amazon.co.uk & ymma.com



It's Hard to Fight When You Can't See

By Lawrence Kane

I purchased the wrong type of coffee yesterday, a ground drip blend rather than the whole bean variety I normally buy. When I popped the top of the vacuum-sealed can, a blast of grit exploded into my face and left eye.

Now I'm a pretty tough guy, a black belt in karate who's been in more than 300 violent altercations working stadium security. And I wore contacts for years before getting Lasik surgery so I'm somewhat used to having foreign objects in my eye. Yet I experienced a nearly overwhelming desire to fall onto the floor and scream like a little baby. I didn't, but I really, really wanted to. If you've ever gotten smoke, sand, or similar substances in your eyes you have a good idea of what I mean.

I stumbled to the bathroom and then took the better part of five minutes, and most of a bottle of eye-drops, to rinse the sludge out of my eye. It's still red and sore some five hours later.

So, what does a face full of coffee grounds have to do with self defense? It's very tough to fight effectively when you cannot see. That makes an assailant's eyes an important target in a legitimate self-defense scenario. Compared to all our other senses, eyesight is dominant in its impotence. It's not only how we view the outside world but also how we acquire targets and defend ourselves against assaults.

A Couple Hundred Words of Caution

Assaulting the eyes is dangerous stuff. In a legitimate self-defense scenario it can be life-saving, but where it's not warranted it can lead to serious jail time, or worse...

Not only can you cause horrific injuries, but you also let the other guy know that he is in a very serious confrontation. If you attack his eyes and miss, you're going to piss him off in a primal way, becoming the target of a lot more anger and violence than you might expect. Anything goes from that point on.

Anybody who wears glasses can relate to this.

Having your glasses knocked off by another person, even accidentally, pisses you off. It is personal, it is primal, and it's instantaneous. Even in an accident, it takes real effort to control the instinctive reaction. This gives you a glimpse of the type of response you can elicit from another person when you attack his or her eyes.

So, while attacking the eyes can incapacitate an adversary, it can enflame him too. Consequently you need to know how to do it right. And practice effectively. The best techniques use either your thumbs or fingers. Either way, attacks must be executed powerfully, with resolve, and often more than once. The chances of failure without these three points are high.

Here's how to attack the eyes most effectively:

Attack with the Thumbs

The thumb can be used as a wedge to displace the eyeball from the eye socket. This is done by placing your thumb against the inside of the bridge of his nose and pushing into the corner of your adversary's eye socket. Typically, you'll use your fingers as a guide alongside the other guy's face. It works much better if you can support his head with your other hand or block it against an immovable object such as a wall, the ground, or a parked car so that he cannot move his head back or twist away.

When shoved forcefully into the eye socket, your thumb works much like a wood-splitting wedge, displacing the eyeball. This ultimate result is not typically a full removal of the eye from the socket, which is very challenging, but rather a stretching of the optic nerve that attaches the back of the eye and shoots excruciating pain into the brain.

A thumb to the eye can cause blurred vision, disorientation, shock, and in some cases blindness, more than enough trauma to let you escape to safety in most cases. If you actually displace the eyeball, the disabling affect is even more severe.

Attack with the Fingers

If you are a trained martial artist you almost certainly know how to do an open-hand block (e.g., hiki uke). After initially intercepting the opponent's blow, you can bounce off his arm and thrust your fingers into his eye socket. Or, you can rake across the eyes. Either way, whenever your open hand crosses in front of the other guy's face, you have an opportunity to reach his eyes. Even if you do not make contact, such movements can be distracting, leaving the adversary open to a follow-on attack such as a low kick or a knee strike.

Attempting to jab your fingertips straight into an adversary's eye can be challenging. It is fast and effective, but will damage your hand if done incorrectly, so advanced training is necessary. Horizontal raking across the eye, however, can be nearly as incapacitating and can be easier to execute on the street. A good way to do this is to thrust your palm against the attacker's cheekbone, which serves as an anchor and

guide. Then sweep away from the attacker's nose toward his ear dragging your fingertips across his eye. This motion is relatively natural, like twisting the lid off a jar.

Raking the eyes can damage the cornea, the outer lens of the eye. Scratching the eye with your fingertips can cause excessive tearing, light sensitivity, pain, and disorientation. While it may not cause sufficient trauma to let you escape immediately, it is likely to set up a fight-ending follow-on strike.

Practicing Eye Strikes

While the eyes can be a lifesaving target in legitimate self defense situation, it is psychologically challenging to place your thumb or finger into another person's eyes with the intent to do damage. It is also hard to practice such things safely with a partner. However, there are a couple of ways to practice eye strikes effectively. As with any training regimen, oversight by a competent instructor is strongly



encouraged for the safety of everyone involved.

The first option is to use a BOB, Body Opponent Bag. This training tool is shaped like the torso and head of real person. It facilitates contouring strikes to various vital points such as the eyes, and is soft enough to strike hard without damaging your hands, assuming you do it correctly. Begin slowly and gradually build speed and power, practicing the aforementioned thumb and finger strikes against the BOB until you can do them instinctively.

The second option is with a live training partner. This can be dangerous if done improperly, so exercise extreme caution. Cut an orange in half, duct tape it to a set of safety goggles, and give them to your training partner (despite the goggles, your partner would be well advised to keep his/her eyes shut tight and have a towel handy to wipe away any juice that gets through). Practice striking the orange with the aforementioned thumb and finger strikes. Striking against a real human, even one wearing this type of getup, can be disconcerting in a way that using a target dummy is not. Even if you use a BOB it's a good idea to try the live drill

too.

The first time you feel the orange give way beneath your fingertips should prove enlightening. It is important that a training partner be wearing the fruit to better simulate a real person than can be done with an orange alone or taped to a target dummy. You may well find that you are incapable of doing striking another person's eyes, something that is best known before encountering a life-or-death confrontation on the street.

Parting Thoughts

Self-defense really isn't about fighting like most people think. It is about not being there when the other guy wants to fight. Or de-escalating the situation before the first blow is struck. Nevertheless, despite your best intentions, there are times when violence cannot be avoided. Consequently, if you find yourself in a bad situation where the only alternative is to fight your way out, eye strikes can be an important aspect of your martial repertoire. It's very hard for an adversary to fight when he/she cannot see.

The Little Black Book of
VIOLENCE
*What Every Young Man
Needs to Know About Fighting*

Men commit 80 % of all violent crimes and are twice as likely to become the victims of aggressive behavior. The Little Black Book of Violence is written for men ages 15 to 35, and contains more than mere self-defense techniques. This book provides crucial information about street survival that most martial arts instructors don't even know about. Kane and Wilder explain how to use awareness, avoidance, and de-escalation to help stave off violence.

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

by Lawrence A. Kane & Kris Wilder

How Many Martial Artists Does It Take to Screw In a Light Bulb?

By Eric Parsons

So, how many martial artists does it take to screw in a light bulb? One hundred. One to screw it in and ninety-nine to say, "That's not how my teacher taught me!"

Hopefully, most everyone got at least a small chuckle out of that one, but as with any joke, its humor lies in its relationship to the real world. We laugh because it takes a fairly commonplace occurrence and makes it absurd. And exactly what commonplace occurrence is the joke poking fun at? The propensity of martial artists from various styles and schools to argue ad nauseum about the exact, precise way to execute a technique in a kata or the one true application of any given movement within a form.

Now, in my opinion, I find most of these arguments extremely tiresome and typically pointless. They amount to little more than kinesthetic semantics – a lot of sound and fury, signifying nothing. Still, it must be recognized that sometimes these arguments do matter. There are correct and incorrect interpretations of kata, and it is certainly not uncommon for small, minute details within a technique to make all of the difference in the world, taking something that was not working and turning it into a devastating application. Hence, as martial artists, it is vital to be able to separate the wheat from the chaff, to understand when a valid point is being made and when someone is simply arguing style supremacy.

To help distinguish between the valid and the irrelevant, it is useful to distinguish between two types of arguments – arguments about the applications of movements within kata versus arguments about the specific movements themselves.

The first of these arguments is the simplest to deal with. In my job as a mathematics instructor, every semester I have to teach the concept of exponents. To understand and use exponents effectively, the students need to know five properties or rules of



exponents and three definitions. However, for any given exponent problem, these properties and definitions can be applied in various ways. As a result, after working a problem on the board, I often get questions such as, "Can't I do it this way?" or, "What if I did this first?" I answer these queries with two questions of my own – "Did you follow the rules?" and "Did you get the correct answer?" If the answer to both of those questions is yes, then the method used to solve the problem is completely acceptable.

Returning to the martial arts, those same two questions must also always be kept in mind when deciphering applications from forms. In this case, a “correct answer” is an effective application that can be used to decisively stop an altercation under the given scenario or in the given context. And what about the rules? Well, until recently, finding these was no easy task. Unless a student was lucky enough to have a good instructor who taught this information, the rules were obscure, hidden,

education goals or outcomes. Then, different degree programs are designed to reach these goals. These programs are then, in turn, constructed from individual classes, the content of which is meant to support and build towards the program outcomes. Within each class, of course, are units and within each unit are sections and so on down to the individual class periods. However, as the system is atomized, it is important that each smaller unit is building towards the goals



Square...



Or sideways?



Sanchin Dachi...

and typically only stumbled upon by accident. However, with the publication of books such as *Bunkai-Jutsu* by Iain Abernethy and *The Way of Kata* by Lawrence Kane and Kris Wilder, these rules are now much more readily available to a general audience. As such, students of the martial arts are in a better position to answer the above questions in the affirmative.

The second type of argument is a bit trickier to tackle because, if the movements of a form cannot be agreed upon, then there is little hope of agreeing on its applications. However, in this case, educational theory can be put to use to help solve the problem.

In the field of higher education, the system is designed to work from the top down. An institution will start out with an overarching set of general

and objectives of the larger unit directly above it. If this is done properly, then there is a unity of the curriculum from the very bottom to the very top of the system.

Now, it is certainly possible to over-formalize this ideal. This often happens in the education establishment, where the goal seems to be to make bad teachers passable, average teachers slightly better, and good teachers frustrated. However, this administrative fault does not make the top-down linkage system any less valuable. In fact, it is something that good instructors inherently understand and use when developing their curriculums. Moreover, it can also easily be applied to the instruction of the martial arts. To begin this process, let's start at the top. First, we need to define the overall goal of martial arts training. This is no simple question, as there

are varying reasons why people sign-up for martial arts classes. However, given the readership of this magazine, I think that it is safe to assume that most of us would consider the primary goal to be the development of effective and practical self-defense skills. In fact, I have argued in a previous article why I believe this should be an important goal for all martial arts schools ("Differing Visions" – Jissen #3). Hence, let us set that as the top level objective.

aspects or the style itself is going through some sort of identity crisis.

Below this strategic goal, many systems have a series of forms or kata that are the equivalent of the courses that build the stylistic program. I have long been of the opinion that each of these forms can be seen to have a small number of themes and principles that they are trying to impart. This is an idea that is explored in more depth in Gavin



Or Zen Kutsu Dachi?

Of course, given that objective, there are many possible ways of achieving it. This is where different styles come in. Each style has a preferred strategy that its practitioners will use to accomplish the above goal. For example, the primary strategy of Goju-Ryu is to get in close and attempt to quickly disrupt the opponent with powerful strikes, possibly leading to takedowns, throws, or further strikes that are continued until the opponent is incapacitated or there is an opportunity for escape. In contrast, judoka want to obtain a grip and throw their opponents to the ground with impetus, letting gravity and a hard surface do the damage for them. These, then, are the second tier objectives and should be fairly consistent across a given style. In fact, if two instructors from the same style disagree at this level, either one of the two is lacking understanding of the style's deeper



Block and poke...



Or rising strikes?

Mulholland's excellent book *Four Shades of Black*. For example, Sensei Mulholland sees the Goju-Ryu kata Saifa as an exploration of escaping from grips and the kata Seiyunchin as a form that focuses on grappling. Similarly, one could argue that Saifa also imparts the use of broken rhythms, and Seiyunchin works to teach proper weight shifting and movement within low stances.

As can be seen, at this level, disagreements (in emphasis, if not in content) are likely to arise across instructors in a given style. However, the presence of disagreement need not imply that one instructor is right and the other is wrong. As long as the various interpretations of the themes work to support the higher end strategic goal, there is no inherent conflict in the different positions. Using Saifa as an example, clearly being able to escape from grips is a vital skill to becoming an effective

close-in fighter. However, using broken rhythms to confuse the assailant and land strikes is also a useful ability in and of itself. As a result, these two themes can coexist peacefully. There is no need to drop one in favor of the other. In fact, these themes actually complement one another, as the application of broken rhythms is helpful in extricating oneself from an opponent's grip. Similarly, the weight shifting and low stances found in Seiyunchin are essential in the development of grappling skills.

Continuing to work downward, each form is then comprised of sequences of techniques. Of course, if disagreements can occur at the kata level, they are likely to multiply exponentially when looking at individual techniques. In this form, do you block/poke, block/poke, block or do a sequence of rising strikes to the throat? Do you stand sideways or square to your opponent on this technique? The list goes on and on.

Now, clearly, if the techniques change too much, an entirely different form has been created and the point becomes moot. However, as long as the structure and techniques of the form are generally the same and recognizable, the question of which version is right or wrong should not be answered using some dogmatic and arbitrary definition of tradition, a definition that is certain to be debated heartily (and often angrily) by both sides of the argument. Instead, we should once again ask if the technique in question supports the higher level objective, in this case the goal or theme of the kata. For example, the precise placement of the hands may not matter when executing a grappling technique in Seiyunchin. Or perhaps one hand placement fits one grappling application, while the second fits another. Since both are grappling applications, however, they both fit the theme of the form. On the other hand, if someone is performing Seiyunchin using only high stances, one might wonder how effectively that teaches the grappling principles that the kata puts forth. Hence, this might be seen as an incorrect interpretation of the kata's movements.

In addition to helping reconcile movements within forms, working from the top down also makes it possible to explain across style differences between seemingly similar techniques. For example, the head block in Goju-Ryu (jodan uke) looks quite similar to the head block found in Tae Kwon Do. However, in Goju-Ryu, the forearm is positioned almost vertically (thumb facing the

blocker) as it is raised and is then turned over at the end of the block, while in Tae Kwon Do the forearm is held horizontally as it rises. The reason for this difference, however, is the result of differences in each style's strategy. Since Goju-Ryu is a more close-in fighting style, there is a need to generate force in tight spaces, something that the more vertical head block does well. Tae Kwon Do, on the other hand, focuses on creating space and driving in with hard techniques. Given this strategy, the horizontal head block is superior. Once again, there are no rights or wrongs here, just different strategies leading to differing techniques. A similar explanation can be used when looking at the hand chamber positions in the two styles.

So far, this exploration has led us from the overarching goal (Defend yourself.) all the way down to the details of the specific techniques. Of course, it is also important to work our way back up the structure, making sure each level supports the one above it. Does each technique in the form support that form's theme or themes? If not, is there an issue with the technique or has the overall theme(s) of the form been misinterpreted or otherwise limited? Then, does the theme from each form support and build towards the strategic aim of the style? If not, is there something wrong with the theme? The strategy? And at the very top, does the strategy make sense in the context of practical self-defense?

If all of these questions can be answered positively and the system continually error-checked and revised, the result is an extremely unified style of self defense that provides strong support and protection to its practitioners. Moreover, just like with a physical structure, by asking these questions we begin to understand that different design elements can still lead to a solidly built building. Instead of expecting (and insisting) that my karate look like your karate or my Goju-Ryu look like your Goju-Ryu, I can instead say, "My house doesn't look like exactly like your house, but yours is solid, well-made, and could certainly protect someone from a storm." At this point, we can begin to see the beauty in the variation and no longer be satisfied with cookie cutter uniformity. This attitude can also be quite liberating, as it allows us to spend less time arguing and more time training and learning.

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



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 Helping Fight HIV/AIDS in Uganda
 Through Life Skills Development
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Martial Arts Scepticism: How Factual is Martial Arts TV?

By Jaimie Clubb



I guess it is little coincidence that the dramatic rise in interest in martial arts and its subsequent commercialization coincided with the amount of chop socky being dished out on our TV sets. The 1960s saw programmes like *The Avengers* and *The Green Hornet* set a formula for martial arts expert sidekicks. The 1970s transferred this expertise to the lead character in the hugely successful TV series, *Kung Fu*. Of course, the 1970s are now popularly remembered as the time of the “Kung Fu Boom” as not only did Bruce Lee make his name as the world’s most successful martial arts actor, but he also died thus establishing an iconic status that would become synonymous with the popular image of martial arts. The aftermath of the ‘70s saw the growth of the global martial arts industry. Today martial arts are part of mainstream culture with clubs in virtually every town and many villages in the developed world. Its success still owes a lot to

fictional TV series from cartoons to adult action shows, but there is also a growing demand, particularly in the USA, for factual programmes about martial arts. As time has moved on, the programmes have progressed from being just straight documentaries that give us history lessons on various marital arts and more into the realm of hands-on training journeys for the TV show presenters and purported scientific investigations. But just how factual and fair are these programmes with their investigations and reporting?

I certainly don’t have the time to go through all the various individual mistakes made in the growing number of marital arts TV documentary series. I admit that I don’t watch most of them on a regular basis. However, there are some pretty fundamental points that I have seen crop up from show to show.

First off, it is not difficult to see a large amount of pre-science and pseudoscience being carried over from the world of martial arts and onto our television screens. Alternative medicine practices, often with their basis in the supposed existence of a mystical energy known as chi (qi) or ki or gi or khi, are pretty common in the western world now and it is important to remember that many martial arts come from the same culture that spawned acupuncture, acupressure and their like. Therefore it is not surprising that we see programmes repeating the mystical claims made by many martial artists.

The BBC’s *Mind, Body and Kickass Moves* was an entertaining British television series presented by martial artist, Chris Crudelli and produced and directed by Will Henshaw. As well as having Crudelli travel to the Far East to train with various masters, each programme would also include small sections in-between with Crudelli showing various people simple martial arts techniques in an approach similar to street magicians. The programme was well produced, directed and presented with some interesting new angles such

as Crudelli looking at a zoo to juxtapose the various animal styles contained in martial arts. However, there was a fundamental problem from the off. Crudelli is promoted as being a master of “esoteric energies”. That claim should set off the warning signals in any self-respecting martial arts sceptic!

Sure enough episode two not only has a master with a mystical amulet, but also has Crudelli learning a martial arts skill which amounts to telepathy. The presenter has to endure 10 minutes under an icy waterfall in order to be able to detect “satki” (or killing intent) in his opponent. To test this Crudelli sits behind a screen and detects every time a swordsman delivers a “killing” stroke on the other side. If this really is a credible skill then I am sure the James Randi fund would be delighted to dish out one million dollars for it to be proven under real scientific conditions. Unfortunately any skill that remotely resembles telepathy has yet to be proven under such clinical conditions.

The series also has an episode with a renowned “kiai master” who can stop opponents by the sheer force of his voice. Master Sasaki, sensei of Hida Shiki Kyouken Jutsu, argues that as the human body is mostly made up of water it is susceptible to the force of kiai. During his interview Sasaki explains that chi/qi is “ambiguous” and that kiai has a more “concrete” foundation in fact. He is depicted knocking one of his katana wielding students to the ground with a kiai shout and the TV show accentuates the feat with a shockwave visual effect. The power of his kiai shout is then shown as he rings a bell from 25 feet away. Interestingly Master Sasaki has to stamp his foot every time he shouts to ring the bell. Ockham’s razor would determine that vibration caused by the stamp, if set up correctly, could ring the bell without the shout. I wonder if the same thing could be said about this feat without the stamp!

Chi, of course, is covered in the series. Sadly this comes in the form of fakir tricks, which I always feel degrades Chinese culture more than it promotes the effectiveness of their martial arts. I grew up on a travelling circus and these feats although impressive are more a demonstration of good physics and physical conditioning than any sort of evidence of the existence of an energy field being used to protect our bodies. Such feats being performed in Chinese martial arts turned up around the beginning of 20th century when

martial artists turned street entertainers in order to make money. They were derided and debunked by the likes of no-nonsense martial artists like the historian/rebel Tang Hao.

Interestingly although this series does report a liberal dosage of mysticism in every episode it also documents a good example of what happens when illusion in martial arts become delusion. In short, it shows what happens when a “master” believes too much in his own mysticism. One such Filipino master from Manila tried to recreate an ancient ritual he believed would make his body, or at least a part of his body, impervious to injury. He tried to demonstrate this with a razor edged machete with near disastrous results. The deluded master hacked at his arm with predictable results. According to Crudelli the cut went right down to the bone.

Mind, Body and Kickass Moves was very open about its mystical slant and therefore, I guess, expected to take a fair amount of scepticism. However, in the USA there have been several programmes that purport to use science to explain or even test the martial arts. The History Channel’s The Human Weapon was also another well-produced show. This time the presenters were two individuals with a background in very down-to-earth training methods. “Big Bill” Duff was no martial artist, but a 6’4” and 280lbs former professional American football player. Jason Chambers is a veteran of 25 mixed martial arts matches, a senior brazilian jiu jitsu student under Eddie Bravo and a jeet kune do instructor. The premise for the show was that they would visit different countries all over the world to seek out martial arts masters. They would then be challenged to fight in a particular style of martial art and spend a week investigating the art so as to better prepare them for the fight.

Different techniques were explained in mathematical terms and demonstrated using capture-motion 3D animation. Physics would be used to explain how the force of a technique was applied to create the desired result. The conclusions of these demonstrations were that in theory every martial arts technique could potentially yield devastating results.

The premise of the show was pretty sound and to be fair most episodes went to great lengths to produce a legitimate pressure test at the climax. In most instances the match would be a full

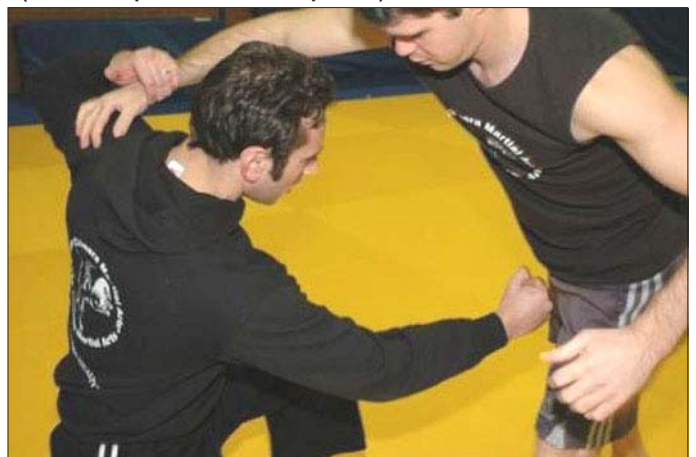
contact bout, showing the most extreme version of a particular art. So, for example, the Russian grappling art of sombo was shown as combat sombo, a type of jacket wrestling version of mixed martial arts. Full contact combat sports such as muay thai, pradel serey, judo, savate, mixed martial arts and the revived ancient Greek sport of pankration easily provided suitable pressure tests. Karate, which for the most part, uses semi-contact and point-stop competitions for their sporting expressions, put up their full contact knockdown format, which is fairly exclusive to the Kyukushinkai School. eskrima produced a full contact competition using the no armour and padded sticks format. Kung Fu is perhaps even harder to define than eskrima and pretty much encompasses all Chinese martial arts. That particular episode had sanda, their full contact form of kickboxing, as its final test. Of course, some martial arts either didn't have a sporting side or, on the whole, their main organization didn't want to align themselves with sport. Krav maga and marine corps martial art MCMAP, for example, are marketed mainly on being self defence only and their pressure tests were a sort of ordeal/test hybrid. Silat produced a rather dubious type of low contact test that seemed to be a semi-ritual. After an episode that was a review of the series the producers seemingly left the two arts that have produced the most amount of controversy regarding effectiveness in the martial arts community: taekwondo and ninjutsu. Ironically the tests in these arts produced the most injuries to the two presenters, and Bill Duff was even knocked out cold during his taekwondo match.

The problem with the shows is the problem I foresee in most martial arts shows: there is a need not to offend. Despite using science and having two practical presenters, there is no feel of scepticism throughout the show. Instead human weapon seems to fall over itself to explain inconsistencies and justify certain methods. A clear problem is that when Duff and Chambers are given a week to prepare for sporting event they spend the week training at some pretty disparate places. This is an entertainment device to show the viewers the culture of a certain martial discipline. However, even Chambers has to admit that learning a peculiar double uppercut from a quasi-traditional muay thai school is not going to be of much use to him in the ring. The kung fu

episode stretches credulity even further with the two presenters learning tricks on a martial arts movie set, which will supposedly prepare them for the sanda kickboxing match.

Contradictions seem to leap out at you when you watch one programme to the next. One moment we have the episode on silat arguing that the techniques being used are too deadly to be properly tested in a full contact environment and the next we have krav maga, which also sells itself on being self defence only, providing a type of pressure test under full contact conditions.

The over-the-top desire to be respectful that spills over into a lack of self-respect comes out in earnest during the ninjutsu episode's pressure test, which seems to have little to do with the assault course training the two presenters have endured at a ninja camp previously. It amounts to both presenters taking on a ninja with foam and plastic safety weapons. The comparison with the sort of pretend fights you had as a child is very apt. Every touch to an exposed body part supposedly proves the effectiveness of the practitioner in the art. Duff actually takes a bit of a whack to the head via a plastic weapon. However, it is Chambers who almost accidentally exposes the lack of efficiency on offer during his "test". The 15th dan ninja he faces suddenly decides having had a decent amount of success matching Chambers with rubber throwing stars and plastic swords to throw caution to the wind and use his tajutsu (unarmed combat) fighting skills. Chambers instantly reacts by easily overpowering him and then, as an afterthought, stabs him with the plastic sword. It was a rather embarrassing moment that not so much exposed the ninja's lack of ability, but the validity of the test as it was clear that the intensity and dynamic of the whole test went to pot as soon as the toys (I mean practice weapons) were thrown aside.



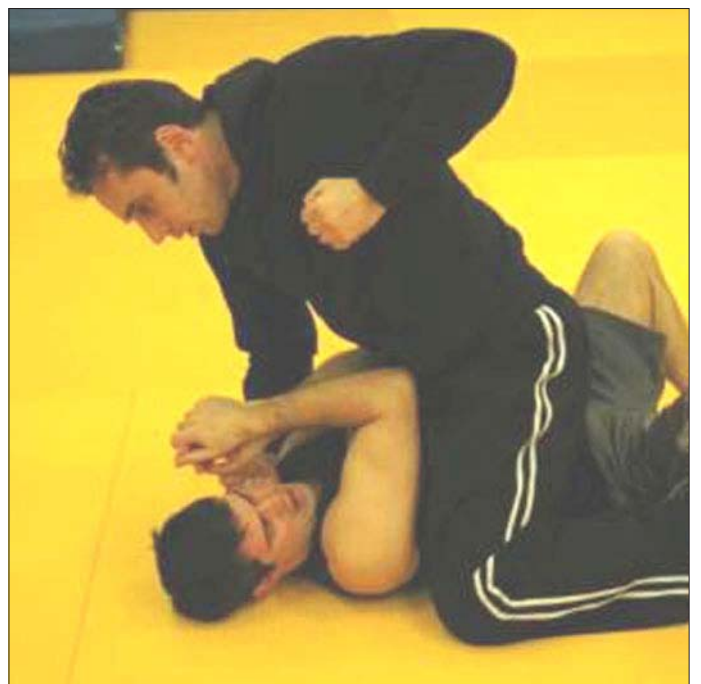


The history side of Human Weapon varies from reasonable to the reproduction of common martial arts myths, such as the Shaolin Temple once being the hub of martial arts knowledge or Bodhidharma being the founder of Chinese martial arts. However, they also contribute a fringe theory, which pretty much amounts to martial arts hyperdiffusionism (the concept that a single civilization is responsible for the formation of others all over the world). In the pankration episode, it is explained that the shoulder throw, common in judo and various other wrestling martial arts, had its origins in ancient Greek pankration. According to the theory this technique along with many others were transferred to India by Alexander the Great. The techniques then spread from India to China, most probably via Bodhidharma. From China it then spread out to Japan and so on. There is no historical evidence to support this theory whatsoever. Apart from the fact that wrestling and strike-based arts seem to have developed independently in some form or other in different primitive cultures the world over, this theory hinges on the long debunked myth that Bodhidharma was a martial artist who taught kung fu in the Shaolin temple and that the temple was largely responsible for the origins of most forms of martial art. We have records of systematic forms of Chinese martial arts, such as shuai jiao (Chinese wrestling), which uses a shoulder throw, being practiced many centuries before the founding of Shaolin.

Approaching martial arts from a scientific perspective is a brave but admirable endeavour. There are so many different variables in violence and methods to use against violence that it could be argued that the term “Martial Science” is a misnomer. The trouble is that you could argue just about any martial arts technique is effective or possible so long as it doesn’t fall under the

category of pseudoscience. Human weapon seemingly led the way with their impressive looking animated sequences, which beautifully dissect individual techniques and break them down into mathematical explanations. The physics might be good, but as some YouTube contributors have noted they get their biology mixed up in the savate episode, where the liver is first described as being on the left side of the body. Interestingly it is shown on the correct side of the body later in the same episode!

Nevertheless, science is a fairly robust discipline that takes a sceptical view and prompts both questioning and testing. Human Weapon wouldn’t be the only martial arts show to employ it. Fight Science actually based its premise on testing the validity of martial arts techniques and the effectiveness of individual arts. It also set about the task of putting martial arts legends on trial. This seemed to be more like it, but unfortunately some basic considerations were taken into account. For example, when it came to measuring who had the most powerful punch it was little surprise that the winner was the heaviest participant and the striker with the lowest score was the smallest. These points were openly criticized by Rhett Allain, professor of physics at Southeastern Louisiana University. Furthermore there seems to be no attempt to apply commonsense or any sense of probability. For example, the ninja “death strike” to the heart was revealed to be the deadliest martial arts strike. This was due to it being like a reverse version of Cardiopulmonary resuscitation. In theory this



could do more damage than any of the other strikes being tested. However, it is also significantly rarer than any of the other strikes. In *Human Weapon*, Jason Chambers mentions the technique, reporting that the only case of it happening was during a freak accident in an ice hockey match where an ice puck hit someone in the heart. And yet full contact competitions the world over allow full contact strikes to this area with no reported fatalities or even much in the way of stoppages. Yet we have case histories galore, in competition and on the streets, reporting people being stopped by blows to the head and strangulation techniques.

The *Deadliest Warrior* is probably the most successful martial arts documentary series in recent years. It has a popular formula and brings both history and science into the frame. The premise is to hypothetically compare two warriors (sometimes two groups), often from different time zones, to see who would win in a confrontation. An impartial team of scientists and general weapons experts bring in contemporary representatives to argue the case for their particular warrior (or group) and then after a series of tests on individual categories, the results are put into a computer and a hypothetical fight to the death is created. Fantasy enactments of fights that never happened are a popular source of debate among males. Little boys often postulate who they think would win in a fight between two imaginary characters, which often grows into discussions over real historical figures. The subculture of martial arts seems to be no different with films and many an online debate or pub argument centring on which martial art is more deadly. Despite the childish nature of this, it is very easy to see the appeal.

Great pains are taken to create experiments to test the weaponry of the different warriors with modern day experts put on the spot. In the end the number of kills concluded from each test are added up and processed by the computer, producing the victor. What tends to prevail is the technology of the weapon. Generally a more modern weapon wins over a more primitive one. To a certain degree this is a fair point, but it is far from a satisfactory conclusion or one that is always backed up by historical evidence. During the 100 years war the primitive English long bow famously defeated the more technologically advanced French crossbow again and again. One



theory for this was that Englishmen were trained in using the long bow from when they were children whereas part of the reason for the creation of the crossbow was so that untrained soldiers could operate it with ease. Therefore a longbow man could reload and shoot his bow two to three times faster than a crossbow man. The 1879 Battle of Isandlwana not only saw how a better strategy and intent by a more primitive side, the Zulus, could best a more technologically advanced side, the British colonials, but also how reliance on these more advanced weapons could also bring about one side's downfall. This particular loss is said to have stunned the world as although the Zulus outnumbered the British by over 10,000 men, they were only armed with essentially stabbing weapons against rifles and artillery, which should have had a far higher killing rate. Even in the 1990s during the Johannesburg riots there are reports of traditional weaponry being matched against firearms. Many a police officer died on the assumption that he would be able to stop a knifeman with his fire arm. The Tueller drill exercise was designed to test how much room and time trained gunmen would need to put down a knifeman.

Now don't think for a second I am arguing that advances in technology are not a major factor in deciding a battle or a duel, but that there are other considerable factors that *Deadliest Warrior* does not take into account. Furthermore, we come back to the lack of actual pressure applied in any of the tests, a fundamental problem I have discussed about *Fight Science*. We can have an acrobatic kung fu artist showing a tremendous display of agility and speed when he is using his weapons on a moving target, but does this really prove how efficient the Shaolin monk was in combat? The test that pitted him against a Maori warrior who had proven superiority in every

weapon category bar one put him ahead purely based on the kill rate of a more advanced steel weapon in his armoury and his supposed more effective agility. If there is one thing we have seen from case studies on interpersonal violence it is that the success' of flashy and complex techniques are the exception to the rule, and that attitude and natural attributes are proportionately large advantages. Subsequently the Maori's well documented savage ferocity and clear difference in size was not taken into account.

On writing this article I really had to swallow a lot of my own personal preferences. I like most of the shows I have described and each has strong unique traits I would love to see furthered in future programmes. Mind, Body and Kickass Moves, not only served well to discuss self defence with people on the street, but also actually exposed the dangers of delusion in that one particular episode. That alone would have been a great area to explore in the martial arts and a useful lesson for future martial arts students who have become enraptured by the mysticism of the arts. Human Weapon had a strong format with two great presenters. The formula was improved on with Fight Quest, a show that spent more time on getting its presenters (Jimmy Smith and Doug Anderson) ready for a fight rather than feeling the need to tie itself in knots with various pieces of archaic or pseudo-traditional martial arts culture. Having said that, the Hapkido episode had difficulty marrying up the techniques used in the end of show fight with those the presenters were made to present before hand.

Fight Science could have been the Mythbusters of martial arts TV shows with its scientific approach and it would have been good to see some form of pressure test set up to prove/disprove a certain martial arts claims. However, even Mythbusters, a non-martial arts science programme with a strong sceptical core, came up with a rather disappointing show when it went after the world of martial arts. Before any of the tests began one of the presenters compliantly allowed a ninjutsu practitioner to demonstrate one of his defence moves. After that it is all about testing some pretty outlandish claims that fit more into action movie myths than martial arts myths. It wouldn't surprise me, but I don't think there are many ninja schools that teach their students how to catch swords and arrows. At best this is a straw man argument that sceptics should keep away

from. However, there is a test whereby a student with their eyes closed has to avoid the strike of a sword. It would be interesting to see just how valid this test really is under scientific conditions!

Growing up in showbusiness all my life I am not naïve to the pressures that are put on creators of entertainment. The second series of Ricky Gervais's Extras is a wonderful morality tale on how easily a person's artistic integrity can be compromised by the might of those with the money or the power. Martial arts media often makes it harder with the fact that they are dealing with a relatively small world, broken up into even smaller worlds and so on. It's also a world largely made up of retailers and promoters rather than professional artists who get paid to their thing. This means that it is heavily networked and, in a manner of speaking, everyone seems to know each other. Such an environment makes it hard to become overtly critical, and we often see this in the various magazines whereby most articles are virtually mini-adverts for a particular martial art. This spills over into factual documentary making, whereby filmmakers need the cooperation of martial artists who are protective of their small businesses and subculture.

However, as I have explained, there is tremendous potential for more rational-based martial arts investigations. More sceptical programmes are being produced today and are proving popular as sceptics become activists. The public consumer is beginning to outweigh the professional critique due to the influence of the Net Generation, and they are beginning to demand more honest reviewing. Previously the mainstream had little interest in the inner problems of the martial arts world – such problems were often shielded by the insular nature of martial arts schools up until the 1990s. However, this was before the internet. Now we have students in regular communication on a global scale, sharing and showing experiences. There are at least two website I know dedicated to scepticism and debunking in the martial arts world, one of which is a very large and very active online community. The nature of the Net Generation is to be an investigator rather than a passive receiver of information. Given the strong connection between the media world and the internet this can only mean good things for critical thinking in the martial arts.

Fighting Dirty With Karate/TKD/TSD's Most Commonly Used Technique

By Charlie Wildish

As I believe has been mentioned in Jissen before, Hikite is the most commonly practiced technique in Karate, and TKD/TSD. Hikite is Japanese for pulling the hand back (usually to the hip), and is usually performed in conjunction with a punch, strike or "block".

Applications for Hikite are usually depicted as grabbing the opponent's wrist and pulling them on, whilst the other hand/arm attacks the opponent, either by striking or applying some kind of joint lock/break.

However, for this article, I would like to look at other self defence applications for Hikite when the fight gets close in and dirty. I would like to approach this from the point of view of being attacked by an untrained thug, rather than a trained fighter (of any discipline). A trained fighter might well be able to cope with these tactics, but an untrained thug probably would not. And let's face it; we are more likely to be attacked by a thug, then by a disciplined and trained fighter. Whenever a fist is made (in basics or kata/forms/patterns), it is quite safe to assume that it is either to strike



These pictures demonstrate the forming of the grip used for the flesh grab described on page 70

or to grab. As Hikite is pulling back to the hip, then it is safe to assume that the fist in Hikite is grabbing.

First of all though let's look at Hikite more closely as it varies from style to style. It normally starts with the arm extended, palm facing down. Some styles start with an open hand whilst others start with a fist. If the hand is open, then the first thing it does is to close into a fist, which more or less gives all variations the same start point; a grab. From here, some styles rotate the fist to palm facing up as it starts to pull back to the hip. Other styles however, begin to pull back and rotate the fist to the palm up position near the end of the travel (as fist reaches the hip).

The applications covered in this article will work with either variation. However, in these specific applications, the twist is used to increase the pain threshold. I would therefore suggest that these specific applications will probably work better if the twist is performed at

the beginning of the pullback, rather than at the end of the pullback.

The first application I would like to look at is pulling somebody's hair. Although often considered "girly fighting", it can be a good way to control an opponent (pain compliance) and break their structure/balance. With training with a partner, try grabbing their hair and just holding. This will not be too uncomfortable for them. If you then pull, it hurts them. If you stop pulling, it stops hurting. This is why in a "girly fight" they grab the hair and keep pulling backwards, forwards and sideways, to keep the pain going.

Now grab your partner's hair and apply the Hikite. First just grab and twist. The act of twisting, drives the small knuckles of your fist into your training partners head and at the same time, maintains the pulling tension to the hair without you having to pull and push their head all over the place. Whereas with normal hair pulling, your training partner/opponent can move



with the pull/push to lessen the effect, they cannot do anything to lessen the effect of your grab and twist. The pain is constant for as long as you keep the twist on.

Now pull back to the hip as usual and their structure and balance will be compromised as they are distracted with pain. It will also work if you pull first before twisting, but without the pain



of the twist at the beginning, the opponent will be able to resist the pull a little bit more at this stage.

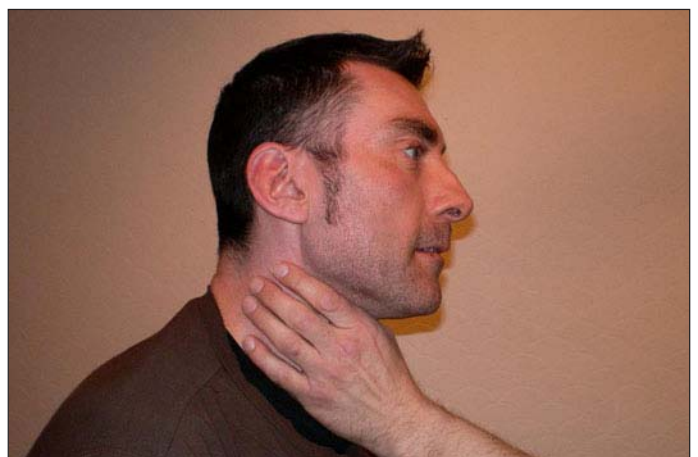
Once you have them prone, in pain with their head by your hip, if you judge the situation as



being not too bad, then you may try to talk some sense into your prone opponent. If the situation is serious, then you can beat some sense into your opponent without them being able to resist very much.

This would have been particularly useful when these techniques were first introduced as many men wore their hair in a top-knot, which is quite easy to grab. However, today many men wear their hair short and many are, well . . . follicly challenged. In this scenario, grab the ear instead. There is a reason why many of us can remember parents and/or teachers grabbing us by the ears as kids; it because the ears are sensitive and it hurts. It just requires a bit more accuracy than grabbing the hair.

Another application is grabbing the throat. This has to be reserved for all but the most serious of confrontations. Grabbing the throat and squeezing is always dangerous, but grabbing around the windpipe and twisting applies more



pressure and can seriously damage the windpipe which can lead to death (and a long jail sentence). A much safer way is to use a flesh (or skin) grab. This is common in many style of Kung Fu, but has not been transmitted very much into Karate. For this application, let's go back to when we first started to learn martial arts and we are taught how to make a correct fist. First, close up the outer set of knuckles (in the fingers), then close the last set of knuckles



(where the fingers join the hand).

With a partner try clasping their neck (carefully), fingers one side and thumb the other side. Now close the first set of knuckles (in the fingers), but as you do so make sure that you secure some skin of the neck. Be careful with your training partner as this can be very painful and usually leaves marks. Now continue to close up the rest of the fist, twist and pull (again,



carefully). This is more painful than the hair pull, but you end up in almost the same prone position where you can talk or beat sense into your opponent.

If you are in a clinch and you are both trying to control each other, grabbing hair, ears or throats will be awkward, as both of you will be trying to guard your heads from attack. However, whilst

so close to each other, your opponent may not notice if you lower one hand to the side of their body, preferably just below their ribs, then grab lower torso flesh by closing up your first set of knuckles as before. You don't need to grab large amounts of flesh, just some skin on the side will do. Then of course, grab, twist and pull. This should be enough to make them loosen their grip, off-balance them and give you the



opportunity to land a clean blow.

Just be aware however that if the opponent is drunk, they may not feel the full effect. That said, as long as you can pull them off-balance, you can follow through.

Take another scenario where some thug has taken you to the floor and is sitting astride you while trying to hit you. Grabbing the flesh around their waist, twisting and pulling will, to say the least, get their attention and probably stop them trying to hit you as they try to release your hands. From here, pull with one hand whilst pushing with the other to remove them sideways. This should be enough to move the average Joe thug; though again, be aware that if they are very drunk or high, they may not feel it so much.

Another defence if you are caught in this position is believe it or not gedan barai (lower



sweeping block). The hand that you would normally "block" with is always pulled back to the opposite ear before sweeping downwards. Use this position to cover your head from your opponent's blows. Your Hikite hand, slides down the centreline of your body until you find your opponent's testicles. From here, your hand should already be in the palm up position (usually only here after twisting). Grab and pull at the same time as you sweep downward to push your by now very distraught opponent off you. You could actually twist your wrist in the opposite direction, just to add some insult to injury. If you opponent is too drunk to feel this, then he should be too drunk to walk, never mind fight.

Basics and kata/patterns don't just teach techniques, they teach principles and the principle here is grab, twist and pull (or pull and twist –depending on style); close in and dirty. The flesh grabbing can be applied to most parts of the body, not just the examples above. Anywhere that you can grab flesh/skin, be it torso, limbs, head, wherever, this Hikite principle can be applied.

It should also be noted that our biceps are our main pulling muscles and our triceps are our

main pushing muscles. To get the best pull, we want our biceps to be able to effectively contract. They contract better when we twist our palms upwards as Hikite teaches us to do. Hikite therefore teaches us to use our body in its strongest alignments.

This actually leads to one more application, pulling clothes. Although it does not directly cause pain, it can give a momentary jerk to the opponent (another jerk) which can unbalance them just long enough for you to hit them

These techniques may not be fight finishers, but they can give you an advantage to distract (through pain) and break the opponent's structure and balance. It is a human instinct to try to correct the balance first. If somebody has to re-gain balance at the same time that an opponent is trying to hit them, they will instinctively try to regain balance BEFORE they try to fend off the blow. This gives you a small window of opportunity to finish them off. A small window should be enough for a well trained martial artist of any style.

By Charlie Wildish 3rd Dan (who trains under Paul Mitchell 4th Dan:
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Dead or Alive

By Kris Mansfield

Having recently re-read 'Streetwise' by Peter Consterdine and finding it still to be absolutely fantastic, I believed it was high time to check out 'Dead or Alive' by Geoff Thompson, which is a perfect accompaniment to Consterdine's modern classic.

Now, before I begin let me state that I have been involved in "real" fights, though not hundreds, due to the area I lived in and had trained on and off in a few different martial arts. Whilst in University I decided to take up World Tae Kwon Do Federation style Tae Kwon Do and was making good progress. Or so I thought. I was actually busy reprogramming what had always come quite naturally to me. I wasn't punching as much because they don't score points in competition. I wasn't head-butting or grappling because, yes, you've guessed it: you can't do that in competition! I was almost starting to believe that I could pull off a spinning hook kick in a real encounter (ala Terry O'Neil) due to minimal success with the technique in sparring and competition, but in reality couldn't throw it at all. A few years ago I was given a massive wake up call. I was quickly forgetting what a real fight was like. There is no referee, there are no rules.

Five years on from starting TKD, with my first Dan grading looming on the horizon, I was out in town for drinks. It was your average Saturday night out in Liverpool city centre, my girlfriend, step-brother and I had met friends, had a few too many drinks and had a good night. Walking to get a taxi we met trouble. We were subjected to a nasty and unprovoked attack involving eight Neanderthals. Needless to say, we didn't "win." I managed to get away with a split lip, fending off three of them with my arms forming a barrier (which I later discovered was a form of 'the Fence') my girlfriend was armed with a bag of chips, which she launched at the nearest person (ancient Okinawan technique, I'm sure) and my step-brother, well... he was on the floor at this point, after throwing maybe two punches and was unconscious having his head jumped on and kicked into the curb by the remaining cave-dwellers.

I feel questions coming on at this point. Maybe something like, "Well, what did you do when you saw this happening? Did you use your previous TKD training?" The answer quite simply is no. In all honesty, I froze and watched the assault happen in slow motion. After what felt like an actual eternity, I ran to help my...what? Unconscious? Dead? Step-brother/best mate.

Thankfully he began to regain consciousness, still lying in the middle of the road, with cars driving past. I was so angry at myself. Why did I drink that last pint? Why didn't I cross the road when I saw a group of drunken idiots? Why didn't I start dropping them as soon as they were in front of me? Why did they pick us? It took me a good while to take control of these feelings. This feeling, which Geoff Thompson refers to as the 'Black Dog' in his book, was well and truly chasing me around the park and I couldn't out-run it.

When the police finally arrived and we identified the culprits, we were then faced with questions such as "Who started it?"(!) I was told to "calm down" and to "stop swearing" or I would be arrested. I had never experienced this sort of situation before. We were the victims of the assault, yet we still needed to justify this to the 'second-enemy', the police. Both Geoff and Peter, remind us that even if you do act in 'self-defence' and with 'reasonable force', it is what you say after the encounter that determines the outcome in court.

I told the Police officers that I had ran after two of them chasing them on to a bus. I was asked "why" I had chased them, as the attack was over. If I would have hit one of them following this I could have been charged with assault. This subject matter is explored in great detail in 'Dead or Alive' and is something that should be contained in every book on self-protection. Following this assault, no charges were made, as there was no evidence that the people who we had identified had been the ones who attacked us, even though my blood was on one of their shirts. CCTV, we were informed, was not working that night.

Fortunately, the only damage was a severely bruised ego and a lot of pent up anger. I realised that something needed to change. As a child and teenager, growing up in your typical working class area, my Dad's advice was always, stay away from trouble, but if you can't, make sure that you get the first shot in! This is basically the crux of 'Dead or Alive' and all sound self-protection advice. Avoid violence at all costs. Escape a situation if possible. But if you need to protect yourself, hit first and hit hard. You do not want to end up in a fight.

As a result of this, I decided to stop training in TKD as I found it unsuitable, in its sporting form, for an actual street encounter. I was learning techniques that are used in a sport with rules. I had spent no time training in workable bunkai, as you only needed the patterns/forms to pass your grading. I also realised that I, myself, need to take responsibility for what I was doing.

Mo Teague, in the Appendix of 'Dead or Alive' reminds us all of the dangerous and debilitating effects of alcohol and fighting. Basically they are like oil and water. They do not mix well. Alcohol can make you aggressive and become the loud, an obnoxious 'Two-can Van Damme' type, who wants to take on the world, or simply it reduces your perception and decision making skills. I know



that I was too drunk when we were attacked; I thought that it happened 'out of the blue' because I was not switched on. I was in 'Code White', happily devouring my take-away, thinking about being home with the missus.

This is not to say that I blame myself or my friends for the attack, rather we/I should have perceived the problem before it was, quite literally on top of us. The people who attacked us did it because they wanted to. It's that simple. 'Dead or Alive' explores this mindset in far more detail, interviewing "people" who purposely go out to attack random people for enjoyment.

With regards to actual 'fighting,' there are a couple of chapters in 'Dead or Alive' which demonstrate techniques, but it is the other information contained in the text that is essential in a real situation. In particular, 'Coopers Colour Code' system is explained, something that is also recommended in 'Streetwise' and is definitely a mind-set which I use now. In addition to this, Geoff Thompson covers all of the pre-fight rituals, which must be understood and trained in order to survive a violent encounter.

Having become a member of Peter and Geoff's brainchild, the British Combat Association, four years ago, under the tutelage of Sensei Jon Ryley, I have never looked back. The training is realistic and honest. The training can be painful at times. But this is needed. We 'absorb what is useful' from the likes of Western Boxing, Kali, Karate Jutsu, JKD, Torite Jutsu and apply them to realistic scenarios.

I have wanted to write this little article for a while now, as I am an avid reader of martial arts literature and have read some seriously bad/dangerous books in the past few years. Also having been in a number of dangerous situations, I have a minimal, but actual understanding of what is required to survive a street encounter. I am no expert on the subject of self-protection nor am I trying to convince anyone that I am. Geoff Thompson's 'Dead or Alive' however, is straight to the point and contains some of the most important martial arts information that you can find written anywhere and is by an actual expert on the subject. This book is an absolute must for anyone interested in the life protection arts and I cannot urge you enough to read this book. Dead or alive, what do you choose?

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

“The Martial Arts Unanswered Question”

By Ron Breines

In Leonard Bernstein’s book, “The Unanswered Question,” based on his Norton lectures at Harvard, he said that the reason music is universal in terms of its artistic progression and expression is because of tonality, which is fundamentally an internal necessity that all cultures, primitive and modern, share. He theorizes that the tonal nature of music is innate and therefore has intrinsic impulses that drive the inspiration; any elements of dissonance within the larger context of the piece, is not only acceptable, but necessary. Once composers like Schoenberg and Webern started throwing away that innate universal formula – by creating music through mathematical equations or graphs, etc. - it ceases to be art because it loses its functionality – the reason for its very being. It no longer serves the purpose that drove it in the first place.

Likewise, we can view the paintings of the realists, renaissance romanticists, impressionists and even pop artists as universal because their tonality also serves a purpose dating as far back as prehistoric times. Great art tells a story, tugs at our emotions or compels us to think. Once we get into the abstract, like the atonal expressionists, it is much more difficult for the viewer to grasp the purpose, except to see it in a self-centered light. We simply lose the connection to what is familiar and necessary.

So then, is abstract art, art? I suppose it is, but I think to myself, “If a monkey or elephant can paint a painting and I can’t tell that an animal painted it, is it art?” At least not how Bernstein describes “functional tonality.” And is a bird’s singing or a lion’s roar art? No, because there is no explicative creation involved in it. It is purely driven by an internal drive to simply be, rather than to create anything. In other words, there is no act of creation; there is just the natural act.

Likewise, we tell stories to interpret and then explain the human endeavor. We use language, words, to do that. But if we take those words and rearrange them in orders that do not make sense (Gertrude Stein and the expressionist writers and poets come to mind) is it art? Well, babies talk this way when learning to communicate, and it is not really art. Why would adults making baby talk on paper, etc. be art?

Of course, these are all subjective arguments, but I think the crux of the issue Bernstein was delving into is that without some reason for connecting the creative endeavor to the internal needs of human beings, the creation becomes less universal, merely an experiment in ceaseless dissonance.

And so I come to the “martial arts.” If we go back to the origins of martial arts, in all cultures, we understand that they were created for self-protection or combat. We know that wrestling and later on, judo, was extrapolated from these ancient grappling martial arts and turned into sport. The Greeks and Romans competed in various games to demonstrate their athletic abilities. Rules of engagement were developed to keep the participants relatively safe. Jigoro Kano did the same for judo. And we have boxing, MMA, etc.

But the question is, are these combat sports, martial arts? If we call them martial arts, shouldn’t they be artistic in nature? Shouldn’t they share the functional tonality Bernstein spoke of in music – the necessity of purpose for which the art was designed and progressed?

If we look at “traditional” martial arts vs. combat sports, we’ll find similarities in both that concern physical acts of defending oneself – one for points, the other for safety or even life and death. But that simple difference is major, and it is that difference that convinces me that combat sports are not martial art at all. If we

look at the history and growth of classical martial arts we find a continuous growth in not only technique, but in the study and therefore the expansion of the art. Art, by nature, is organic, because again, it is universal in its most basic necessity.

But sport, which is an outgrowth of our competitive drive, is, dare I say, really entertainment; the competitors, performers, not artists. Therefore the skills derived from combat sports are negligible when applied to street attacks or combat. The “point” tapping system will do little for a victim in combat. In fact, even at the highest levels of today’s karate tournaments, the karateka do not really know what it feels like to be seriously hit while engaging in their sport, therefore, they don’t develop the functional skills to avoid at all costs being struck in a way that can permanently damage or kill them.

Recently, I attended a tournament and watched black belt karateka bounce around in their fighting stances - resembling those of Marquess of Queensberry boxers - leaning way back, keeping enormous distances between each other until one finally attacked, often with his/her face, throat, groin or knees unguarded, only to tap the opponent for a point score.

I thought back to when I competed in the late 1970s in full contact competitions without any sparring gear, and remembered that when I got hit, hard, it hurt, and so I quickly learned to never let my guard drop and to attack with a fierceness that might help me avoid the pain of the punches or kicks I would endure if hanging back while sizing my opponent up. I learned to jam the kicks rather than block them, beat the punch rather than counter it, move to the side rather than straight on, and hit, not tap. I learned to do what the masters had taught through kata, through Okuden waza. There was an innate sense of self protection which was indeed, martially tonal.

Yet even in full contact karate, I knew that competition was still a game with rules, and more than likely, I wouldn’t get too hurt. It wasn’t the street fighting I had experienced firsthand in New York as a youth. But the question is, do

today’s competition warriors understand that difference? Do they even know what it means to really get hit? Do they realize that tournaments are games and that their skills are being developed for show, not for self defense?

My sensei some years earlier, an ex-military combat instructor, had us do a lot of what Iain Abernethy and other self defense oriented sensei - classical artists - call kata based sparring. In thirty seconds of hell, we practiced where to strike to maim or to kill – in essence, end the fight as quickly as possible using applications that would need to become second nature. Our focus was to do quick damage to end the fight - just as the masters taught - even though we knew quite well that even this type of practice has limitations (i.e. controlled punches, etc.) But there were no three minute bouts, because there was no time to “size up” an opponent or opponents. Real fights are usually over within seconds, not minutes, so we needed concepts that came straight from the origins of the art, when artists were fighters who understood why they were learning these skills, and over time, how they could make them more efficient and yes, deadly - again, the functionality of artistic purpose. If we went to grappling, we’d be on the ground until we were able to get back up, strike and get away.

I thought again about this modern tournament training and how detrimental it actually is to the reality of the art of self defense; that there really is little relation between the two. The distance between these “fighters” is unrealistic, and so these tournament warriors size up their opponents in ways a predator, or an attacker high on crack would never, ever do. There is no surprise in any of these contests as the contestants have practiced over and over choreographed kumite which basically makes up the bulk of their defenses and attacks. Rarely do these attacks go beyond one or two strikes before the referee halts the action and the fighters return to their fighting stance. In reality, a street attacker will try to pummel a defender into the wall or ground, continuously, and the defender better be effectively swinging or grappling until escape or he/she might be

permanently disabled or killed.

So where in sport karate/judo/wrestling is the art? In my humble opinion it is in the mind only. The sport fighter thinks he/she has deadly fighting skills handed down over centuries, but in reality he/she does not. How many sport fighters really study, I mean study, kata bunkai? How many actually practice the total essence of their art? The master artists practiced thousands of kata and bunkai (not kihon and kumite) until they understood the complete fighting systems each kata was designed to express. Fancy high spinning jumps weren't the goal.

Today, bunkai means: gedan barai against mae geri, kizami zuki/gyaku zuki chudan response for a finale attack. Where are the myriad of Okuden waza in kata?

In judo, judoka learn throws, escapes, reverses, but they are not allowed to strike. In MMA, they can do strikes, throws and locks, but they are often limited by a lack of mastery of any one art and are again subjected to rules designed for relative fairness and limited injury,

mainly for sensational entertainment - the competitors, martial performers, albeit, athletes - but not artists.

Prior to *Rubber Soul* and *Sergeant Pepper*, the Beatles arguably were really not artists, even though record companies use the term interchangeably for all performers. It was after they stopped performing and went off to a studio on Abbey Road with a trained classical master named George Martin that they began to explore the processes of creation, breaking new ground while creating music within the framework of functional tonality, which Bernstein considered the essence of art in the human endeavor.

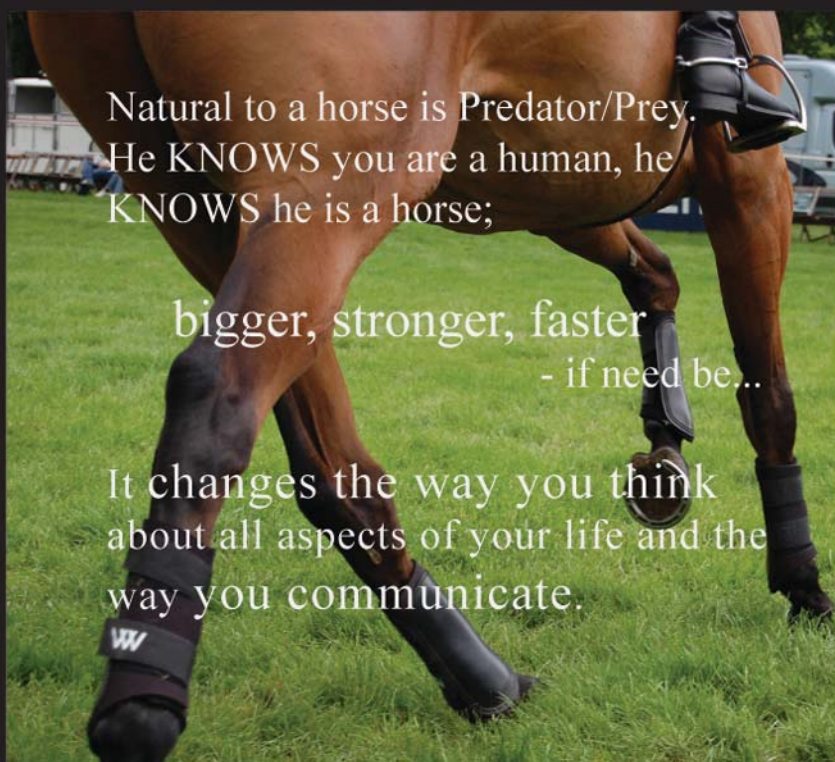
I believe this must be the same path for the martial arts. Unless we study, practice and "create" within the framework of the functional tonality designed for street combat as the early classical masters did - and yes that means building on their work, not just stagnating inside it - the martial arts will simply devolve into combat sport, disguised as what used to be, art.

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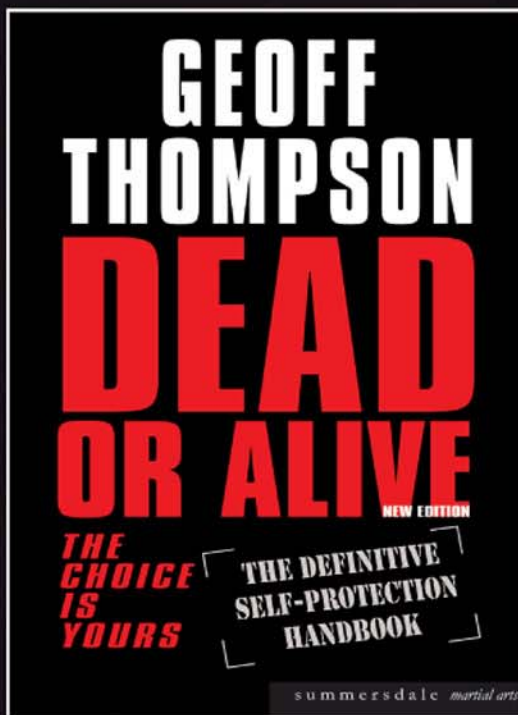
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The Roundhouse Kick, Karate's Best Kick Or A Risk To Your Survival?

By Martin O'Malley

Roundhouse kick is one of the most common kicks thrown in striking based competitive Martial Arts. Competitors generate tremendous force in the impacts from this fantastic kick, and anyone who has received 'a good one' will know that it has a significant effect on the whole body, from the pain of the impact to the disorientation as you try to locate the opponent again to give it back to him/her.

Yet, despite its unquestionable effect, roundhouse kick is not seen in Karate Kata. Gichen Funakoshi the 'Father of Japanese Karate-do' doesn't mention it in his books in 1925 or 1936.

Shoshin Nagamine, one of the great masters on Okinawa doesn't mention it in his 1970's training manual, the Essence of Okinawan Karate, while Choki Motobu, contemporary of Funakoshi and one time teacher of Nagamine, noted for his practical applications of Karate demonstrates kicking in his Okinawan Kempo, and yet roundhouse kick doesn't feature.

In fact, I have not seen any book by any Karate master pre-1940 which includes the roundhouse kick (please advise if you have a genuine copy of one which does), and even our own W. E. Fairbairn doesn't include it in his training manual 'Get Tough'.

Incidentally, Funakoshi, Nagamine and Fairbairn all include front and side kicks, but not side thrust kicks as performed in modern Karate, rather sokuto geri (of a type in Fairbairn's case) is demonstrated.

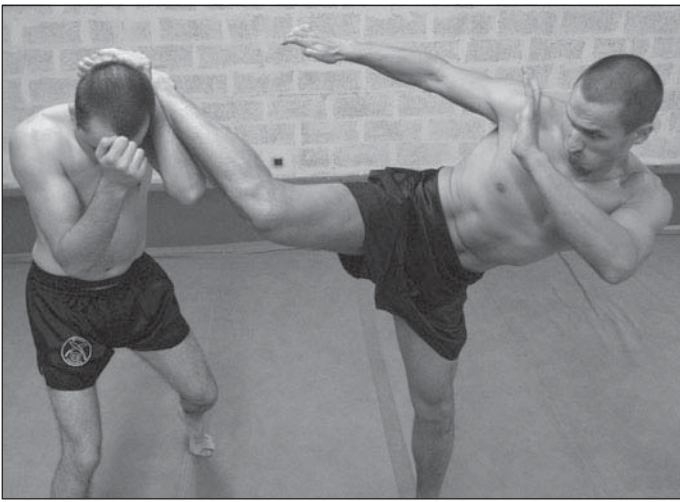
Why, would such eminent masters of Karate neglect to mention, even in passing the formidable roundhouse kick especially when Funakoshi and Nagamine both list the basic techniques of Karate in their written works? And why would Fairbairn not include this devastating kick in his preparation of the military personnel

for battle. The only conclusion that I can come to is that it was not considered a good kick for self protection/combat situations.

Then, how did it end up in Karate? According to some sources, including written work by some members of the Shotokai organisation, it was actually Funakoshi's son Yoshitaka (Gigo) Funakoshi who introduced the roundhouse kick to Japanese Karate, along with yoko geri kikomi and ushiro geri. These developments would seem to have come about or at least presented to the world sometime between his father's publication of Karate Do Kyohan in 1936 and his premature passing in 1945.

Now, some will be thinking to themselves, 'who is this guy saying that it isn't a good kick', or 'just because it was developed recently doesn't mean it's no good', but to be honest, I cannot





see that generations of people who trained for genuine life threatening situations, cross trained with Martial Artists all over the oriental/south Pacific trade routes, which according to maps in Shuri Castle, included Thailand where some claim the roundhouse kick was originally developed, over the course of several hundred years didn't even consider the technique of roundhouse kick, but a guy who trained for less than 20 years, suddenly and inspirationally developed this exceptionally powerful technique which could devastate the legs of any opponent.

If it had been practiced in Shorin-ryu which Nagamine and Funakoshi both studied, or in Naha-te which according to some Funakoshi trained in under Higashionna, and of which Nagamine's friend Chojun Myagi was a great master, then surely they would have recognised its importance and included it in their teachings, however, the fact remains, they did not and so the question must be asked, why not?

When we consider the key factor in generating power in the roundhouse kick we can see that the supporting foot must rotate significantly during the kick. There can be various discussions as to at what point and how far, but the fact remains that the rotation must occur. We can also see by just standing and slowly bringing our leg around without rotating the supporting foot, pressure starts to come on the knee, ankle and depending on how far you go, the thigh/hip area. We can literally feel that this is a dangerous movement for our joints. As instructors, we advise students to make the rotation, not just for the power development, but also to protect their bodies.

If we suppose for a moment that you are in a conflict situation, and for some reason, your foot could not turn, suppose it was obstructed by something and you put everything into the kick, I would suggest that you would at the very least seriously damage the ligaments of the knee and ankle joints of the supporting leg, decimating your chances of successful counter attack.

Should you be in a combat situation on the dirt roads, fields or mountain sides of old Okinawa would the surface have been clear enough of obstructions to risk such an injury? Would the battlefields of WWII be any better? And if you did receive such an injury would your opponent(s) stop and bring you to the nearest doctor for treatment or continue with their former action?

The environment of application must be considered as an integral component to the realistic application of any technique. Example – no one would question the effectiveness of a hand grenade, but no police force would issue its members with them. They don't suit the environment of application.

So what exactly are the risks to us in our day? Of course, we have tarred roads, pavements,



etc, but pot-holes in roads, cracks in the pavements, man-hole lids, kerbs, rubbish bins, steps and stairs, still make for a relatively uneven or obstructed surface. How many times have you personally or someone you've seen trip or miss their footing while walking down a street?

Go into bars and nightclubs, with steps and stairs, beer soaked floors, the act of trying to balance on one foot in this environment is crazy, but then add another component, twisting on that foot, and it's down right dangerous.

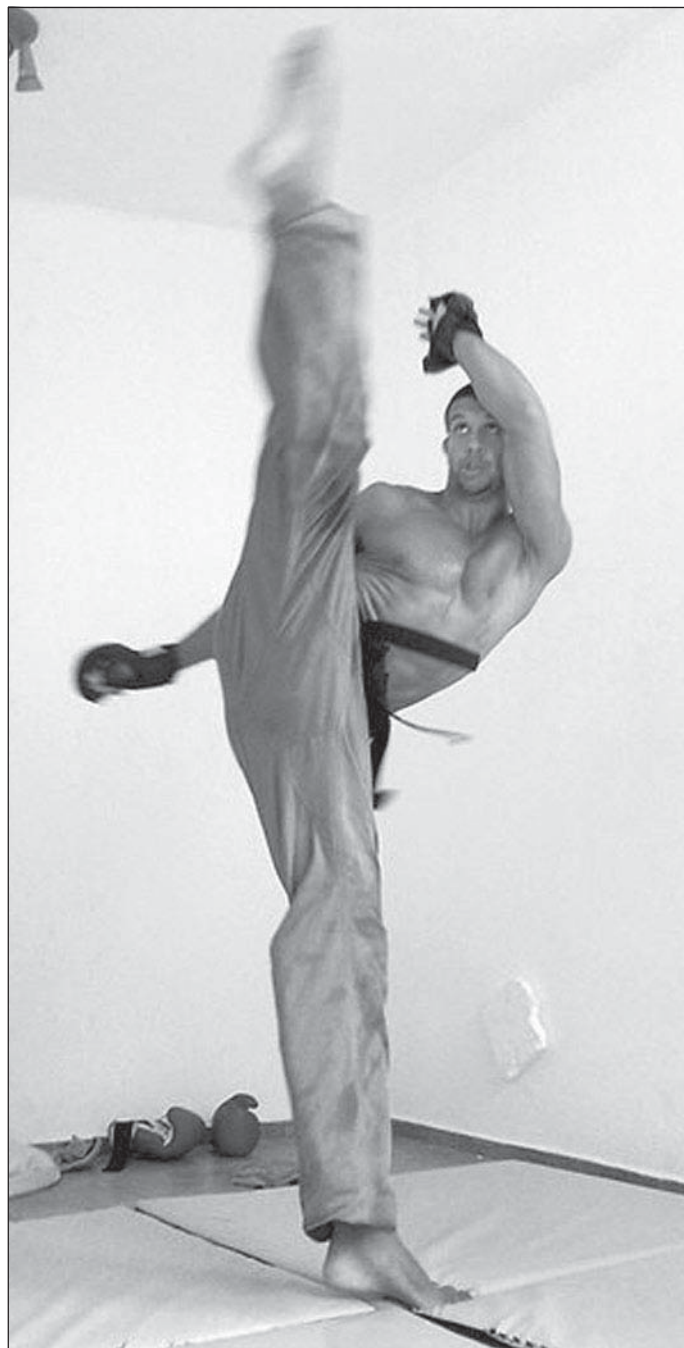
Combat Sport-wise, in a clean, clear, dry, unobstructed matted area such as a tatami, boxing ring or octagon, the benefits are immense, however, in the streets and back alleys, pubs and clubs, where obstructions, rough ground and wet surfaces are very common (particularly in our rainy weather), it is questionable as to whether or not roundhouse kick should be even considered for inclusion in Kata applications/self protection training at all.

I can hear people saying, 'but we have always practiced roundhouse kick, it has become an integral part of Karate and self protection, we have to do it'.

Ask any security officer who is involved in Martial Arts how many roundhouse kicks they have used at work over the last year, in fact, ask any security officer at all how many of any kind of kick they've used in the last year. I'd suggest that for all but those in the 'fight every night' pubs and clubs the answer will be less than three. Yet time is taken, practice is done and participants of classes and seminars all develop their skills at roundhouse kicking.

What does happen is that participants get the feeling of hitting a hard, low roundhouse kick and feel that they are ready for action (which does in itself have some inherent psychological value), however, in actuality, front kick is of infinitely more value.

Then there's the other statement I can imagine people saying – 'when we enter the fight, we'll decide what techniques we are going to use in particular situations'. Sorry, you're not going to be able to think of your own name, never mind decide whether the situation is environmentally friendly enough for one particular technique.

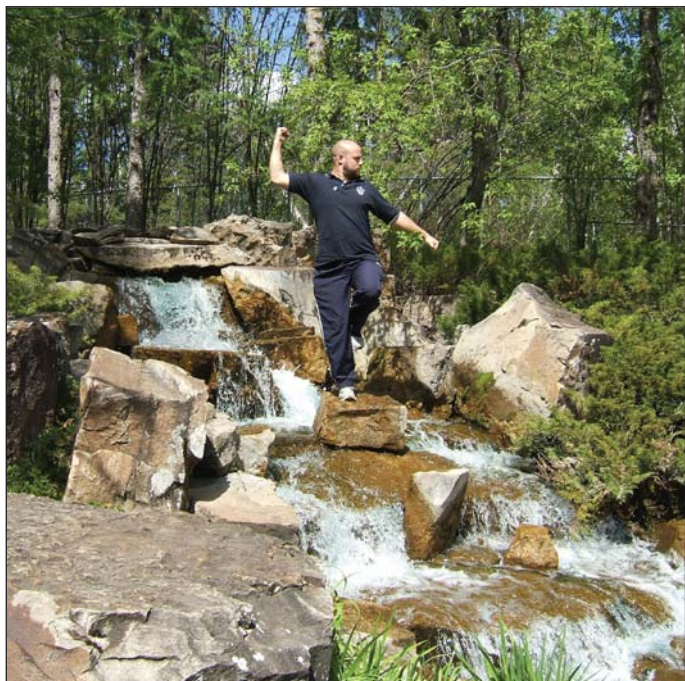


The purpose of this particular piece is not to upset or offend people, but to highlight the need for those interested in the combat application of Karate to examine the techniques from the usual perspectives, base meaning, entry, exit, responses, stopped technique, etc., but also from the perspective of environmental factors, where is the technique going to be used, and what are the limitations on it's use within this environment.

When we take all of these into consideration we can then make a better decision as to whether we are teaching techniques because we always have, or because they are genuinely useful to the people who place their faith in us as teachers.

Karate's history: Is it a thing of the past?

By Iain Abernethy



Is an understanding of the history of karate important? Or is it an irrelevant distraction from the pursuit of combative efficiency? Perhaps it can be both? As I see it “history” can be a force for either progress or stagnation and in this article I would like to talk about a number of issues relating to karate’s history and how that may effect our approach to the art today.

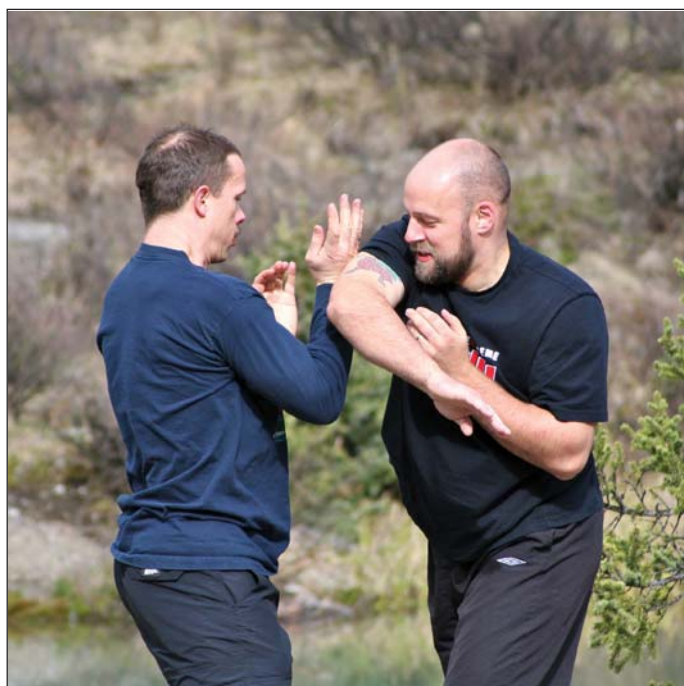
Those who are familiar with my previous articles will know that I draw a distinction between “pragmatists” and “historians”. An historian would be someone who is interested in how the martial arts were practised in the past. Historical accuracy would be their primary concern. Conversely, a pragmatist is someone who wants to make the martial arts as efficient as possible in today’s world. Combative effectiveness would be their primary concern. Although I find the history of the martial arts to be of great importance, I would nevertheless class myself as a pragmatist as I always place combative efficacy above adherence to the practises of history.

My personal identification as a pragmatist may surprise some due to the heavy emphasis I place on traditional kata. However, kata is part of my practise precisely because it serves my aims as a pragmatist. I don’t practise kata for historical interest or to “remain true to tradition”. I practise kata and bunkai because of my interest in their combative application.

When we begin our martial practise we are taught the system of our teachers. As time passes, we should begin to discriminate and decide what aspects of that teaching we wish to keep as is, reinterpret, and which aspect we will totally drop. This is the “shuhari” process and I talked about that process in greater detail in my “Styles: Are They Killing Karate?” article in a previous edition of MAI.

As part of my own martial development, there are practises that I have dropped. For example, in my dojo we do no one-step, three-step or five-step sparring. It matters little to me that these were practises passed onto me. It also matters little to me that that such practises could be considered “traditional” (although I would personally dispute that definition) or of historical importance. It is my experience that such practises do not lead to combative efficiency – indeed they get in the way of it by introducing many falsehoods – and hence I have not kept them as part of my practise.

I can assure you that had I found kata and bunkai (kata application) to be of little combative value, I would also have dropped it without hesitation. I also fully support those people who have not found value in kata and have hence dropped it from their practise. However, it has been my personal experience that kata has had a lot to offer and hence it is central to what I do. I’ll reiterate that kata is central to what I do, not because it is “historical” or



“traditional”, but because it has proven valuable to me and my students for its combative value.

Kata was something taught to me as part of my initial martial study. As time passed, I endeavoured to understand kata in greater depth. The more I studied kata, the more combative value I found in them. Kata provided a syllabus and a structure to the physical “self-protection” or “civilian combative” aspects of my study and teaching. I found kata and bunkai (kata application) to be a very valuable part of my practise and teaching; so I invested more time to its study and practise.

As part of my study of kata, it was important that I understood the process of its development. I needed to appreciate, what kata was originally created for and how kata practice and the kata themselves have developed over time. I found that kata was originally a method of ensuring information relevant to civilian combat was preserved and passed on through the generations. Kata was then reinterpreted into a very formal karateka vs. karateka affair in the early 1900s.

(I’ve written about this elsewhere and would ask anyone interested in this to checkout previous articles or the articles section of Iain Abernethy.com). So for me to find value in kata, I needed to be aware of these historical changes so I could strip them out in order to achieve the combative efficiency that I sought. Even though I am a pragmatist, an understanding of history was definitely needed to achieve that pragmatism when it came to kata and bunkai. All of this brings us to a very important distinction.

I believe my approach to kata and bunkai to be inline with the historical information available to us, and I also believe it to be combatively functional. But can I say that the specifics of the bunkai I teach are exactly the same as the combative techniques that gave rise to the kata in the first instance?

In a small number of cases – where we have specific references to certain motions i.e. an arm-bar in Naihanchi and the double leg pick up in Passai (both referenced in Funakoshi’s early writing) – the answer would be “Yes”. But in the majority of cases, I could not be certain that my bunkai is the same as the originator’s bunkai; because that information is not available to us. I can be certain that the precepts that gave birth to that bunkai are the same; for example the fact that the angle in kata represents the angle you are in relationship to the opponent is referenced in the wrings of both Mabuni and Motobu. So I would expect that when addressing the same problem (civilian conflict), through the studying the

same solution (kata) via a common set of principles, that the end results would be similar. But we can never be certain that they would be exactly the same. Back to the important distinction: For an historian – who is interested in the specifics of how things are done in the past – this is a problem as there is no firm historical certainty. But as a pragmatist, it matters little if the bunkai being practised is “historically pure” or not. All that matters is that it works.

The evidence is not there for the historian to draw certain conclusions on the specifics of bunkai. We can rule things out though, because although the information may not be there to confirm specifics, the evidence may be there to rule things out. The fact remains though that the historian is reliant on historical information for validity. The pragmatist, however, can check their conclusions in live training and hence the validity can easily be confirmed or denied. It’s not adherence to the past that we should be seeking, but adherence to what works. After all, that was the process adopted in the past! More on that later.

Before we move on with this discussion, its worth pointing out to those who feel pragmatic bunkai is a “modern falsehood” (and they are a few of them about), that there is not the historical evidence to support their view that kata is about other karateka patiently waiting on the eight cardinal compass points to launch their oi-zuki on cue ... and not a moment before!

There is some relatively modern writing that espouses that view to be sure, but there is nothing to suggest such practises were part of karate before it reached the shores of mainland Japan. There is



however evidence to say such practises were not part of karate before this time. So not only does choreographed karateka vs. karate bunkai not work practically, there is little to support it historically as well.

The key point I wish to make here is that, in my view as a pragmatist, we should always put pragmatism ahead of adherence to either historical dogma or pseudo-historical dogma. There is value in history in so far as it helps us understand our foundations, but we should be building upon these foundations and measuring by effect, not perceived “historical accuracy”. Are we martial artists or historical battle re-enactors? Do we want to know if our skills are valid today? Or if they would have been valid in a past age?

To my way of thinking being “traditional” is not about rigidly sticking to historical dogma, it is about pursuing what has always been pursued (well aside from the last few decades or so). When we take what has been passed onto us and do all we can to ensure ever increasing combative efficiency through information gathering, testing and refinement, we are walking the path that the past masters walked and it is then that we are being traditional. We should not get “stuck in the past” as one thing that everything is the past has in common is that it is no longer current. Karate will die if we place too great an emphasis on history.

Do we stick to something we know to be less efficient because it is “historical”? Now an historian or “battle re-enactor” may well do that. But as a modern martial artist who wants useable skills that would seem to be a bizarre and very tenuous position to take. And yet we see it all the time.

I’ve lost count of the times when “traditional martial artists” reject obviously effective methods on the basis that “it’s not traditional”, “it’s not what they did in the past”, “it’s not what master so and so originally taught” or “it’s not how my ‘style’ does it”. These are all examples of past history being placed ahead of functionality. And, perhaps paradoxically, it is not what the old masters themselves did!

Gichin Funakoshi (founder of Shotokan Karate) in “Karate-Do: My way if life” said of his two main teachers, “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 other masters of their acquaintance, urging me to learn from each the techniques at which they excelled.” So we can see that Azato, Itosu and Funakoshi were keen on the

idea of seeking the best methods out there, as opposed to rigidly sticking to the teachings of any one master or method.

The Okinawan masters did not preserve their native arts or the Chinese systems; they melded them together and tried to make them better. Indeed if you look at what happened, not one generation kept things exactly the same as they were passed onto them. They all took what was taught to them and tried to make it better. That’s how all the various styles evolved in the first place! Not a single one of the masters of the classical generation took what they were taught and passed it on totally unaltered without revision, subtraction or addition.

To again quote Funakoshi from “Karate-Do: My way of life”, “Times change, the world changes, and obviously the martial arts must change too.” In the same section Funakoshi talks about the changes to karate during his own lifetime. Change is traditional!

This idea of things being passed on without change over endless generations is a pure myth. I don’t want to get into this too much, but I feel the notion of things remaining historically fixed only really takes off when you are no longer measuring by effect – and things have warped so much that effectiveness is being lost – that you need a new datum by which to measure “improvement”. So an arbitrary “standard” is set – which is justified with the myth of being “traditional” or “historically pure” – and then we are then no longer perusing what the masters originally sought, but instead have “deified” an empty and hollow shell.

Let me make totally clear that I am in no way saying the karate that has been given to us should not be valued or respected. Quite the contrary! It’s great information that saves us from having to start from scratch. As in all fields of human endeavour, what is passed on to us and what we don’t need to “rediscover” provides us with a base on which to build. Without the work of those who came before, we would not have that invaluable base! We should then build on that base to hopefully provide a better base of the next generation.

When we see “history” as something that we must rigidly adhere to, we kill all progress. Imagine if scientists, inventors, doctors, etc. all decided that what was passed onto them should be rigidly preserved instead of being used as a base of further progress? Civilisation would stall, perhaps even start to slide backwards.

It is my view that we betray the work of the past

masters and we dishonour it when we say it should never be altered. Because when we do that, we ensure karate's stagnation and demise and we contribute to the death of the art that the past masters worked so hard to create and develop. We honour the past most when we use it as a base from which to learn and from which we can do our best to further advance the art.

One very important point is that not everything will need to be revised or developed. We have to be careful to avoid change for change's sake in order to provide the illusion of progress. If certain aspects of what has been passed on are working fine as they are, then of course we should keep them as they are (while simultaneously accepting that future generations may disagree and change it further down the line). We should concentrate our efforts on the areas where we feel we have the information and experience to make genuine improvements. So it's far from being all or nothing.

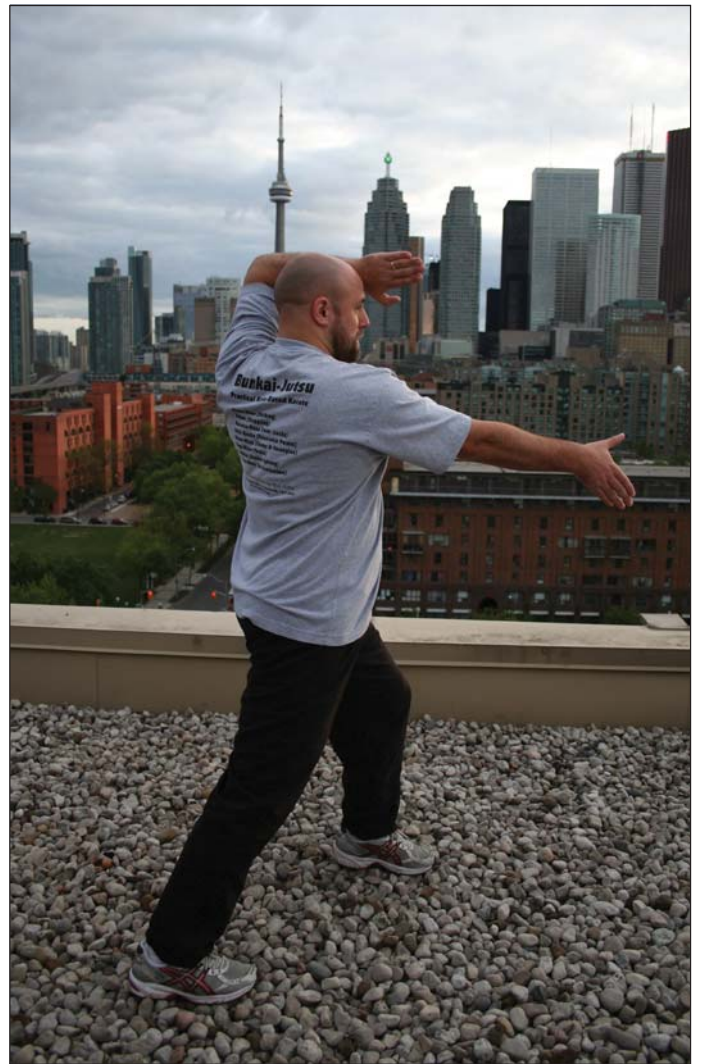
I do get people (both traditionalists and modernists) writing to me to object that I'm not being consistent! The modernists generally like the pragmatism of what I do, but they don't like, or get confused by the fact that I place a heavy emphasis on kata. The traditionalists on the other hand, like that fact that I value kata, but get upset when I spar differently (i.e. holistically) and reject things like three-step sparring. They see it as being all or nothing. The traditionalists in particular get upset when I will agree with a past master on one point, but disagree with them on another. To their minds, this is being "inconsistent". But I don't see it that way. I don't have to accept the past entirely or reject it entirely. I also don't have to agree with the past masters (or anyone else for that matter) entirely or disagree with them entirely. It's an issue by issue, technique by technique, and practice by practice affair. It's a matter of taking what works for me and rejecting what does not work for me. It's simply a matter of choosing pragmatism over historical dogma.

As I frequently say at the seminars, there are two very common errors when it comes to the traditional martial arts:

Error 1 – Thinking that the old master got everything right (as the more blinkered traditionalists are prone to do).

Error 2 – Thinking that the old masters got everything wrong (as the more blinkered modernists are prone to do).

The truth, as is so often the case, is found between



the two extremes. History has passed on some amazingly effective things, but not everything passed on is amazingly effective. We need to be discriminate and examine all that has been passed on without wholesale acceptance or rejection.

I'm very lucky that I get to spend a lot of my time travelling the globe and swapping ideas with other martial artists. What I see is a growing number of karateka who are honouring their historical roots by studying them in-depth, not in order to acquire knowledge for knowledge's sake, but to ensure total relevance to the modern world and to ensure the growth of the art. This leads to a form of karate that is living and vibrant and has a bright future. However, those karateka who choose to be totally bound by the past – through a misguided sense of "tradition" – will cause their karate to stagnate and become a thing of the past. The irony of course is that they are not being truly traditional when they do that!

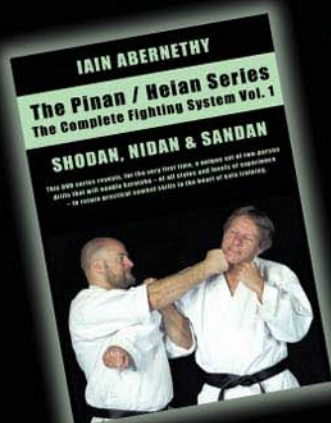
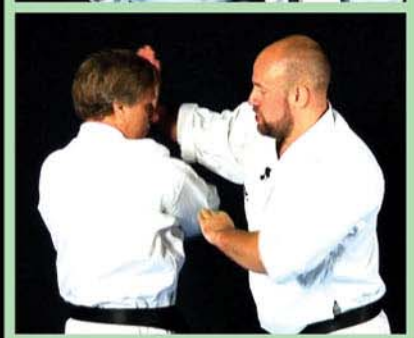
Karate has a strong history that all karateka, regardless of preferred approach, should be very proud of. However, I would say that looking to the past only had value when we use that information to take us forward into the future.

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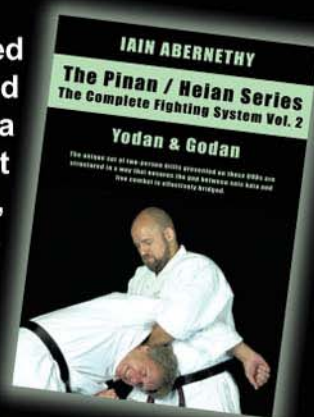
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