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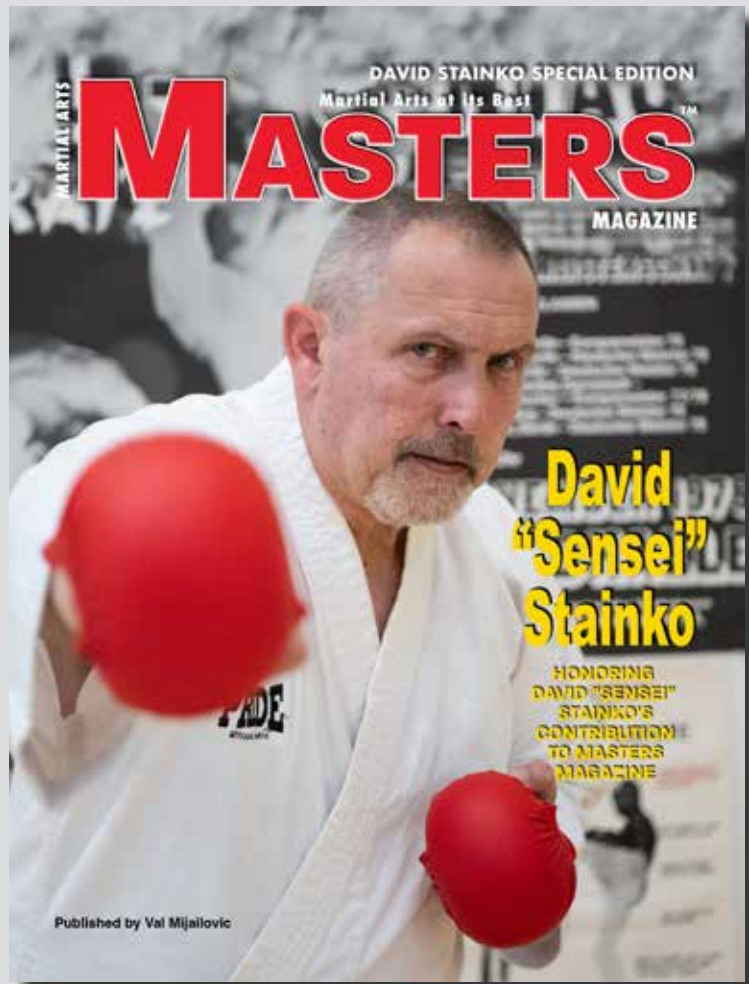
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Martial Arts Masters

DAVID "SENSEI" STAINKO

A Leading Figure of the Old School of Martial Arts

The Conversation led by Professor Sandra Maljavac • Photos – Photo studio Luigi (Opatija, Croatia)

We present to you Mr. David Stainko from Croatia, a respected instructor and internationally recognized expert in martial arts. David "Sensei" Stainko has dedicated 53 years of his life to learning, practicing, researching, and later teaching various martial arts. Within the martial arts community, Instructor David Stainko is known as someone whose knowledge stands out in particular. Discover who Instructor and Professor David "Sensei" Stainko is – a master of martial arts, an expert in martial science, and one of the leading figures of the old school of martial arts.



Your first encounter with martial arts happened in 1972?

A-Yes, that's right. That year I received a small but fascinating little book called *Karate Made Easy* by Moy Rone, in English. I started leafing through it, looking at the pictures, and trying to imitate the exercises as best as I could understand them. But that wasn't enough for me, so in October I enrolled in the Budokai Karate Club in Rijeka. I received my club membership card at the beginning of 1973, and that's when my "journey" into the world of martial arts officially began.

Tell us something about the Budokai style of karate – relatively little is known about it.

A-Budokai is a style of karate that originated in London, England. Its roots go back to 1918 and it was built on the foundations of the first judo club in Europe, called Budokwai, which was run by the Japanese master Gunji Koizumi. About twenty years later, several of his students off and began practicing what was then a new Japanese art to them – karate.

The name Budokai consists of two words: Budo, meaning "the way of martial arts," and kai, meaning "school." In the wider world, the Budokai karate style is also known under the names Budokwai, Budokwan, and Budokan, the latter having developed in Malaysia but also based on the foundations of the Budokai style. Budokai is a very effective style of karate, distinguished by its unique blend of traditional judo, jiu-jitsu, and karate techniques. Weapons training, as part of the broader ko budo discipline, began to be more intensively incorporated into the Budokai karate style in the mid-1960s.



A Leading Figure of the Old School of Martial Arts

“Among the many different karate organizations that exist today, almost all of them claim to be the authentic one.”



You trained and studied other karate styles as well. Tell us something about those.

A-That's right. I had the opportunity as early as 1973 to attend a seminar led by the well-known Shotokan master Taiji Kase. Later, I learned from other Shotokan masters as well, among whom I would especially highlight Hirokazu Kanazawa, Hidetaka Nishiyama, Shiroshi Shirai, and Dr. Ilija Jorga. I studied the Budokai style under Dr. Emin Topić, the Uechi-ryu style under Mario Topolšek, and the Sankukai style under Yoshinao Nanbu.

Today, I hold the rank of 8th Dan in the Budokai karate-do style, and I am one of the rare original representatives of that style. I also hold a 3rd Dan in Shotokan, a 2nd Dan in Uechi-ryu, and a 2nd Dan in Kyokushinkai, a style I helped introduce in Croatia. I am also well-acquainted with the Goju-ryu and Wado-ryu styles, which I practiced as well, and later on I went on to study other karate styles, too.

Today you prefer not to join any karate organization. Why is that?

A-These days it has become common for any somewhat well-known master to establish his own karate organization. As a result, there are now more than 15 Shotokan organizations worldwide, and the situation is the same with the Kyokushinkai karate organizations. Other karate styles are in a slightly better position, but even there it's far from ideal. Among the many different karate organizations that exist today, almost all of them claim to be the authentic one. I cannot agree with those claims, because I see many changes that have been introduced into certain karate styles compared to the original forms I learned.

Besides, when you go to karate clubs today, most of them practice sport karate with gloves. That isn't karate – it's purely a sport. They aren't very interested in the traditional karate styles. Their instructors are karate coaches, not teachers – not sensei. Karate as an art of the “empty hand” doesn't really exist for them anymore, so for many people today, karate-do has essentially become just karate sport. The same is true for modern judo, and even taekwon-do. Martial arts are not sports; they are far more than that.

You are also an expert in the martial art of kung fu. Tell us something about that.

A-I first encountered the kung fu martial art in 1974 in Germany, at a seminar taught by Master Al Dacascos. Later I studied in Italy under Master Shin Dae Wong, an expert in Tan Lang styles, as well as a variation of the Shaolin style and the Pa Kwa style. I began studying the Tai Chi Chuan style in Croatia and Italy, and continued my training in Switzerland and England.

In 1982, I began learning Wing Chun from instructors who had been students of the now-famous teacher Ip Man. I first trained in Hungary under Master Leung Ting and a bit later in Serbia under Master William Cheung. Building on that foundation, and influenced by Bruce Lee's films, I later studied the Jeet Kune Do system.



You hold the title of kung fu instructor and the status of sifu master.

A-Yes, I have held that status in the kung fu art since 1985. I must say that kung fu today is different compared to the past and the way I learned it. In many styles it's evident that changes have taken place. Today, alongside Tai Chi, people around the world mainly talk about the Sanda and Wushu kung fu styles. Jeet Kune Do as a fighting system is particularly interesting to me, though many promote it today while actually knowing very little about it. Many modern Jeet Kune Do instructors simply imitate Bruce Lee's movements, and that is completely wrong. Bruce always said that in martial arts you need to express yourself, and that Jeet Kune Do as a fighting system must be adapted exclusively to yourself and your own abilities. Furthermore, many people do not understand that this system is not fully effective unless you are a master—that is, you must have knowledge, speed, and fighting experience. After all, the name tells you everything: 'intercepting fist,' meaning the ability to anticipate the opponent's attack and intercept it before it happens. Only a good, experienced, and skilled fighter can intercept an opponent's attack A-for everyone else, it is mostly just an 'illusion.'

We know that you are also a boxing coach. Tell us something about that.

A-In Rijeka, my hometown, boxing as a martial art is especially respected. You can be a world champion in wrestling, fencing, judo, karate, or taekwondo, but if you haven't practiced boxing and if you haven't been to a boxing club to spar there, it's as if you never existed as a fighter or as someone who trains martial arts seriously. That's how I started, too—I fell in love with boxing and stayed with it. In 1987 I became a boxing coach. Around that time I also began studying savate—French boxing, and later earned the title of Silver Glove instructor.

You are also familiar with Korean martial arts, and you even led a Tang Soo Do club.

A-In 1974 in Germany I watched a demonstration by Master Jhoon Rhee and was introduced to TKD. As a martial arts enthusiast, my colleagues at the Faculty of Kinesiology rekindled my interest in taekwon-do, so I started training with them. In 1982 I began practicing TKD in the ITF system. The main instructor for Croatia at the time was the

A Leading Figure of the Old School of Martial Arts



Korean TKD master Park Sun Yae, who then held the rank of 5th Dan. I also met General Choi Hong Hi, though the seminar that left the strongest impression on me was the one in England led by Hee Il Cho. In 1988 I was offered the opportunity to lead the first Tang Soo Do club in Croatia, and I accepted it as a kind of a challenge. They mostly asked me to base the training on the Tang Soo Do approach presented by Chuck Norris. I was a witness to the time when many TKD instructors switched from the ITF system to the then more 'profitable and popular' WTF system for political reasons.

You were a successful competitor in several different martial arts. Can you tell us about your sports career?

A-Yes, I had around 200 fights in total, with about 17 defeats, though I'm not familiar with the complete and precise statistics. Back then, they didn't keep as accurate records as they do today, and I competed in various martial arts. I started competing in kung fu, where I was the junior champion of Yugoslavia for two consecutive years. Later, I competed in traditional karate, as well as in budokai karate, where I was the team leader of the team that won the Yugoslav national championship in 1982 and 1983. After that, I competed in semi-contact and full-contact karate, then transitioned to kickboxing, where I participated in 4 European and 4 World Championships. I was the youngest competitor at the first WAKO World Championship in 1978 in Berlin. I represented Yugoslavia, and later Croatia, but also Italy and Germany, and I even competed in England for a kung fu club from Oxford. I fought in kung fu, karate, semi-contact and full-contact karate, kickboxing, boxing, wrestling, judo, taekwondo, and even had fights in savate, kyokushin karate, and a few matches in the Yugoslav army. I won various competitions in former Yugoslavia, but also elsewhere, such as the Open Italian and German Championships. I was a European champion and a member of the European team in kickboxing, as well as the World runner-up in 1988. In 1991, when I was 29, the Croatian War of Independence began, and there was no more time for sports.

You were also a military instructor in martial arts in the Yugoslav Army?

A-Yes, in 1981, while serving my mandatory military service in the Yugoslav Army, they proposed that I become one of the martial arts instructors. I was tested along with five other instructors, and then I was selected as the lead instructor. I had about 400 soldiers under my command, along with 5 instructors and 3 officers, and I received orders directly from the major who was the commanding officer. It was he who was responsible for me undergoing special military training in knife combat, combat with a military entrenching tool, as well as knife throwing and survival training in nature. The training was primarily based on the Russian system.

Today you have the status of a veteran of the Homeland War.

A-Yes, in 1991, I was called into the Croatian Army due to the war that broke out in the former Yugoslavia, when Croatia was fighting for its independence. I was on the front lines with only a few short breaks from 1991 to 1994. I first served in the infantry, then as a tank commander and gunner, and later, at my own request, I was transferred from the tank unit to the military police. I left the army with the rank of military police officer and marksman.

You also worked as a bouncer in nightclubs and in security companies.

A-Yes, during my first year of college, when there was a freshman dance, they offered me to stand at the entrance and keep order and discipline. Later, I was invited to work at the student nightclub. In 1984, I was invited to work at the nightclub Tropicana, where I was well paid. After that, I worked as a bouncer in Italy and in various security companies as the head of security teams. I provided security for many well-known and famous individuals, and I was even part of the security team for Pope John Paul II.



“Many styles of karate are now marginalized and neglected, and the very essence of karate has almost been forgotten.”

A Leading Figure of the Old School of Martial Arts

It's less well known that you founded the first officially registered MMA club.

A—Yes, in 1978, we re-registered the former Youth Budokai Club Viktorija, but under a new name: Viktorija Martial Arts Club. In the former Yugoslavia, we faced many difficulties with the registration process. At that time in Europe, all clubs had names like boxing, wrestling, judo, kung fu, karate, taekwondo—each specialized in one martial art. There wasn't a single club that combined all martial arts in its name. This was certainly the first club of its kind in Europe, and perhaps even in the world. I had the idea that if you practice one martial art, it's hard to avoid contact, in one way or another, with other martial arts. I simply didn't want to limit myself. At that time, at 16 years old, I became the youngest verified WAKO chief instructor of any martial arts center in Europe.

You are one of the few instructors today of the almost forgotten martial arts system Bartitsu, which is also called the martial art of Sherlock Holmes.

A—Bartitsu is a martial arts system that originated in London, England, and was developed by the Englishman Edward William Barton-Wright. He taught this combat system from 1901 until early 1904. He was the first to devise a circular training system, where groups of practitioners rotated between different instructors. Today, it's a forgotten combat system. Bartitsu, as a self-defense system, is extremely effective and has advantages over many of the more well-known and popular systems or styles practiced today. The problem with this system, however, is that to truly master it, it takes about 7 years of training. Bartitsu is a blend of different martial arts, including boxing, savate (French boxing), wrestling, judo, jiu-jitsu, cane fighting (La Canne), and the old art of sword fighting with a sword in one hand and a knife in the other.



Today, you have the status of an expert in martial arts sciences, although many simplify it and call you an expert in martial arts.

A-Yes, I have a master's degree in kinesiology and am a senior organizer of kinesiology recreation, and I graduated from the University of Zagreb. I've been continuously involved in martial arts since 1972. In 1995, I began writing professional articles, which were very well received. In 2004, I finished writing my book "The History of Martial Arts". I published the book as an e-edition in Croatia, and it has been very successful and widely read. I say I'm an expert in martial arts sciences, but often instructors simplify it and say I'm an expert in martial arts. Some instructors are often surprised by this. They don't understand how someone can be an expert coming from Europe, specifically from Croatia. For those people, you can't be an expert unless you come from Japan, China, Korea, or at least from America. Well, let those so-called experts teach about martial arts originating in Europe, such as folk wrestling styles, Greek or Roman combat, boxing and savate, various forms of stick fighting, self-defense, knife combat, and sword fighting with a sword or a dagger. As for martial arts from China, Japan, Korea, America, or the rest of the world, all the best instructors were in Europe as far back as 1900. So, we've had 125 years to learn something, for those who actually wanted to.

You recently stated that you are not satisfied with the way martial arts are developing. Do you think the development is going in the wrong direction, and what exactly do you criticize?

A-There's a lot to mention, it's hard to cover it all. For example, karate is a discipline of the empty hand, but today, in various karate competitions, gloves are frequently used. In today's karate, they have become inevitable. Many styles of karate are now marginalized and neglected, and the very essence of karate has almost been forgotten. Many karate techniques are now neglected and rarely applied, such as certain hand strikes and many throws. In judo, many techniques have been eliminated simply to make it a sport. In taekwondo, as well as in some forms of jiu-jitsu, competitors no longer wear the traditional gi or dobok, but instead wear uniforms. In some competitions, they perform so-called creative katas, which are a mix of dance and acrobatic gymnastics exercises that have nothing to do with martial arts. There are also strange sports rules. For example, the Olympic gold medal in karate was awarded to someone who didn't know how to properly protect themselves and ended up getting a clean kick to the head. Furthermore, in American kenpo karate, there are more instructors holding a 10th Dan black belt than in all other karate styles combined. Today, there are many titles and ranks in martial arts, but the real knowledge in reality is much less.

You rarely hold seminars. Why is that?

A-Today, times are different, and there are certain things about seminars that I really don't like. In seminars, you always have to start with the basics because you're not sure of the participants' level of knowledge. And then, before you even get started, today's instructors immediately jump in with things like, "Oh, we already know this, we're familiar with that." They simply lack the patience to let you progress to more advanced techniques. Sometimes, you also come across individuals who can't control their egos. These people can be



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“Sport has its own set of rules, but sometimes these lack the proper codes of honor and the ways of conduct that have existed in martial arts for centuries. Just look at today’s UFC competitions.”

so unpleasant that you have to “take them down” to put them in their place. There’s also the issue of money. I don’t charge for my seminars, I just ask to be reimbursed for travel expenses. And that’s when the problem arises, because many instructors think that only what they’ve paid a lot of money for is valuable. These people don’t realize that no amount of money can pay for the lessons and knowledge I’ve gained over the years. Furthermore, some individuals think that if they’ve paid for something, they automatically deserve a title or status in return. Some even go as far as to push different diplomas at me for a signature. These diplomas and titles are essentially bought, not earned through hard work.

What do you mean by the term “Old School”?

A—It refers to the old way of training. Back then, strikes were delivered with more force, and there were a lot more bruises. It wasn’t rare for someone to be knocked out by choking. There were bloody noses, split lips, and other injuries. Training was approached with greater seriousness and complete dedication. Each individual martial art was treated with respect. For us, boxing was still the “noble art,” fencing was the “highest skill,” karate was the “art of the empty hand,” wrestling was the “self-defense for gentlemen,” judo and jiu-jitsu were the “art of gentleness,” and so on. Today, when I go to karate clubs to hold a training session, their kimonos tear as if they were made of paper, and in taekwondo centers, a third of the students leave limping after class with broken toes. In some martial arts schools, they don’t even use mouthguards, and some practitioners can’t even do ten push-ups. Today, everything is reduced to sport. Sport has its own set of rules, but sometimes these lack the proper codes of honor and the ways of conduct that have existed in martial arts for centuries. Just look at today’s UFC competitions. The foundation of martial arts is respect. You cannot practice certain martial arts without a partner. The better your partner, the more likely you are to improve as well. That’s why you must respect your training partner as well as your opponent in competition.






You have the nickname “Sensei.” Can you tell us something about that?

A-That’s what my students started calling me back in early 1988, as a form of respect for my dedicated work in martial arts. At the time, they found it interesting, and I didn’t mind it. So, the nickname has stuck with me to this day. Nowadays, some individuals also call me Hanshi, Sifu, Master, or Grand Master. The title by which someone addresses me isn’t important as long as they have a genuine desire to learn. Whenever I teach others, I also learn something from them. The more knowledge you gain, the more you realize how much you still don’t know. In martial arts, if you have knowledge and skill, diplomas and titles aren’t necessary. On the other hand, if you boast about your titles or diplomas without possessing true knowledge and skill, they are worthless. 🐉

Mr. Stainko, thank you for the conversation.

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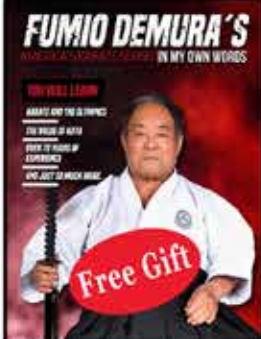
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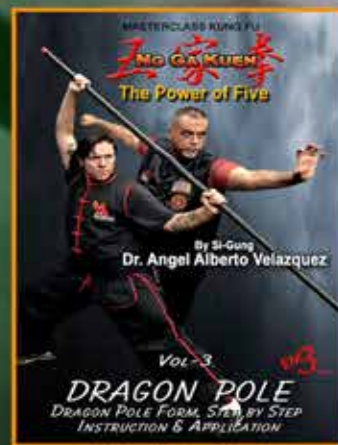
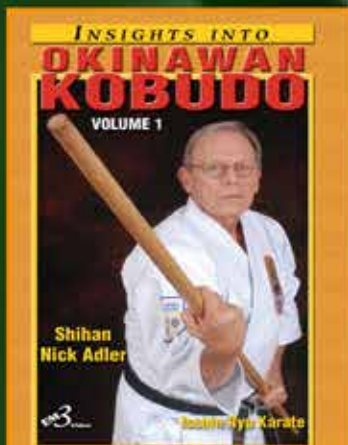
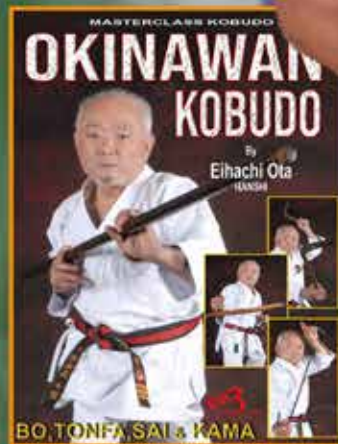
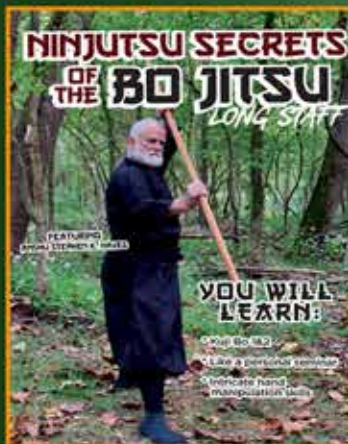
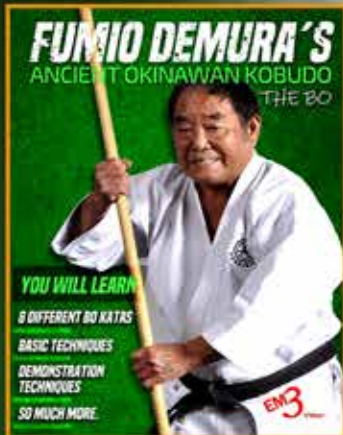
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THE CODE OF HONOR IN MARTIAL ARTS

By DAVID "SENSEI" Stainko, prof. | *mag.of kinesiology*



The code of honor is based on the assumption that honor is the most valuable characteristic of every person. Honor is the external face of a dignified human being. The right to a person's dignity is one of the basic human rights and equally belongs to every man, no matter his or her age, sex, class, race etc.

Honor (lat. honos, gloria) is an abstract term which signifies the feelings of worth and respect which, in turn, affects the social position and self-evaluation of an individual or family,

society, military or military unit, country etc. So, to those individuals or their families, certain social communities, military or military units, military or civil schools, certain groups of people, countries etc. a value or reputation in society is assigned in line with how they perform certain tasks defined by the code of honor, as well as the moral code of the community as a whole.

As early as some martial arts were created, no matter the country of their origin, a certain code of honor was deeply

rooted in their basic moral principles. Accepting that code of honor, an individual would accept certain standards of behavior, as well as the ideals of the character that was necessary for a member of such a group of people, i.e. that kind of people that took up a certain martial art.

And so, in different historical periods, codes of honor were made in different countries across the world. Many of those codes of honor became widely known.

In Ancient Greece, the Spartans had their code of honor, and numerous others belonged to certain Roman legions, Alexander The Great's units, Genghis Khan's soldiers, and many more. One of the most famous codes of honor is surely the Japanese code of honor named "Bushido" to which many Japanese warriors, samurais, abided by. Although this Japanese code of honor is the most famous one, many others are also very well-known and we will mention some of them.

One of the older codes of honor is the famous French code of the warrior class – Noblesse Oblige (nobility obliges, requirements set for knights) which was followed by knights as early as the 13th century. The German code of honor called Gemut is also well-known and it is said to be followed by the German knighthood during the Middle Ages. One of the most famous one is definitely the English Gentleman's Code and the French Gentilhomme which were mostly military and patrician codes of honor that appeared around the 16th century. One of the more popular knight codes of honor is the Italian code called Cavalleria. Knightly codes of honor bore similar names- Código de Caballero an, sometime later, Honor de Cavalleria which was widespread in Spain. During the Middle Ages, in some mid-European countries the code of honor called Fidei et Honoris (a certain type of code of model behaviour and appropriate conduct) was used. In its basis, it respected the principle of integrity and honor. Those were all codes consisting of moral principles to which knights of various European countries needed to abide by.

Certain rules of behavior, i.e. codes of honor existed in the 18th and 19th century. One of them was, for example, the German code of officers' behavior called the Grey Book which regulated the rules of behavior in sword or gun duels. France was a country known for its duels based on insulting a man's honor. The famous commander Napoleon Bonaparte founded the French order of merit, Legion of Honour, as one of the first orders of such kind. During the 19th and 20th century, unwritten codes of honor existed in the American Wild West and its population lived in line with them. Those codes were known as The Cowboy Code or The Code of the West.

It is less known that one of the strictest codes of honor was implemented by pirates in the 17th and 18th century. It was called the Code of the Brothers of the Shore. In 1889 in America, the ethical code of honor for vagrants was estab-

lished – The Hobo Ethical Code. It became famous because of certain symbols that the vagrants used. Some criminal groups have also made their codes of honor popular, for example, the Chinese Triads have their own code, and the Japanese Jakuza have a different one. It is known among the Jakuza that, if an dishonorable actions was made, they will chop off your pinky finger. One of the most famous codes in the world is the one followed by the Italian mafia. They have their own basic code of behavior called the Cosa Nostra (engl. our thing, our way) and the code itself is known as Omerta.

Many abovementioned codes of honor were followed in Europe and they had a very strong influence in martial arts trainees, for example, on wrestlers, fencers and boxers. Naturally, Eastern martial arts, especially Japanese martial arts, were greatly influenced by the Japanese code of honor - Bushido.

Bushido – The Code of Honor

Bushido (bu – shi- do; bu= strong, strength; bushi = warrior; do= path, way) or the warrior's path (the path of the samurai) was an unwritten code of basic moral principles of the warrior class in Japan. Although the value system contained in the bushido code changed under various influences through the entire Japanese feudal period, its essence remained unchanged. Righteousness, honesty, bravery, kindness, honor and modesty were always pointed out as the most important virtues of every perfect warrior. A special emphasis was given to the feeling of contempt towards death, whereas loyalty to your family, coun-



Honor Throughout History

try and master (ruler) represented the highest samurai obligation.

The samurai class appeared as an important power during the Heian period (794 – 1185 A.D.) and it was made up of representatives of the warrior class- buke. They gradually became the court's official bodyguards. The name "samurai" was given to them from the word "samurau" which means "to serve, follow". In the beginning, the name referred only to the soldiers who served their duty in the emperor's palace. Later it signified all members of the warrior class. Their way of life differed quite a lot from the lives of other members of the court's aristocracy. Because of frequent wars during the Kamakura (1192 – 1333 A.D.) and Ashikaga/ Muromachi (1338 – 1573 A.D.) period, cultivation of warrior skills and constant appraisal of bravery on the battlefield was demanded from them. Indifference towards death was taken over from Zen Buddhism once it was discovered that discarding life as an object of worship can offer a lot to the warrior. Buddhism brought the faith to the permanence of fate, compliance with the unavoidable as well as the brave stillness in front of danger. Honor was extremely appreciated, however, under the influence of Shintoism (an authentic Japanese religion), warriors gave a lot of importance to the origin and reputation of their families.

Making a simple mistake or losing honor led to the highest readiness to sacrifice oneself- the obligation to commit suicide (seppuku). It includes ritually cutting open one's intestines (hara-kiri). This way of committing suicide is based on an old Japanese anatomical belief according to which the point just above the navel (Jap. Hara) is the centre of a person's soul and feelings. The basic guiding force for committing seppuku was "I will open up the place where my soul resides and show what it's like. You can see for yourself if it is corrupt or pure."

The warrior class's learning programme was mostly based on the following skills: fencing, archery, riding skills, the usage of a spear, war tactics, calligraphy, ethics, literature, history and, especially, mastering and practicing ju jutsu or the javara skill. As a martial art, ju jutsu was especially valued because, in comparison to wrestling, it wasn't based on physical strength and it differed from other attacking techniques because it didn't involve weapons. The bushido code was respected throughout the entire training and, straight from the beginning, it was a basic learning component in all martial arts that the warriors had to pass. Although it was written down, its unwritten rules were respected and followed.

In the way that martial arts developed through history, the knowledge about certain martial arts was passed on from one

teacher to their students, i.e. from one generation to the other. Naturally, each martial arts master passed the unwritten code of honor rules to his students as well.

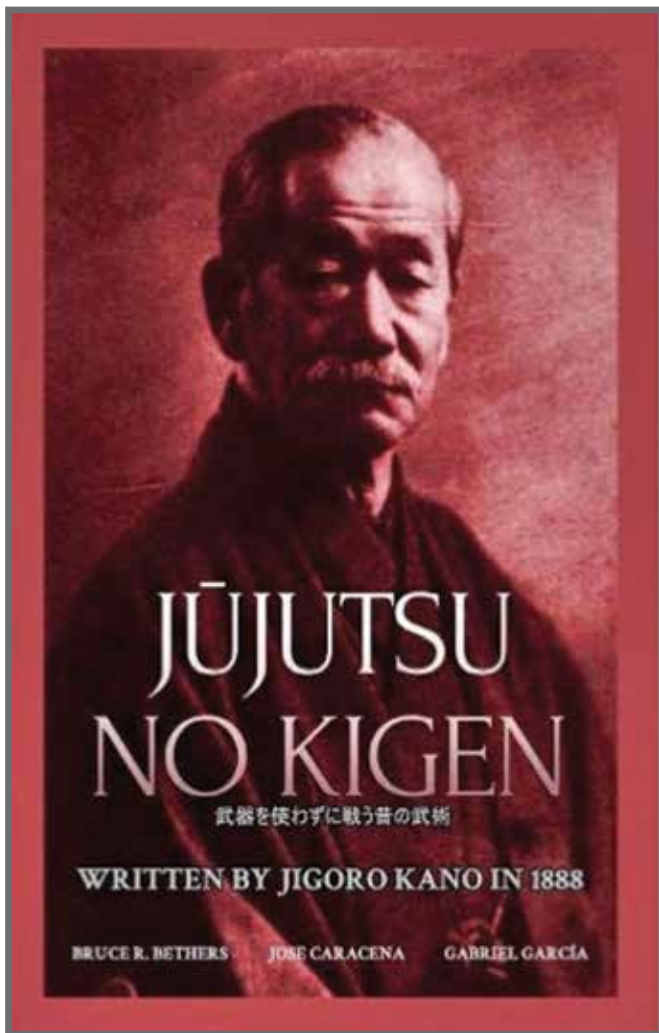
The Mode of Practicing and the Code of Honor – Jutsu or Do

The fighting techniques that were used by warriors in feudal Japan are called "Bugei". According to some martial arts experts, the majority of those basic techniques was developed in feudal times and there are around 40 of them. Those fighting techniques, Bugei, were practiced in war and that was their basic characteristic and usage. In other words, Bugei were warrior techniques in Old Japan. Individual warrior techniques of the Bugei use the word "Jutsu" (skill, artistry) and, because of their basic use, respecting the Bushido code was implied and encouraged in war periods.

The well-known martial arts master Jigoro Kano (1860 – 1938) practiced a number of different styles, i.e. schools of Jutsu during his youth. When he became an instructor (teacher), he saw that his school's name didn't quite differ from other schools that were active at that time. He thought about it and in 1898 came up with the idea to call his style "Judo". Master Kano wanted to use the name to preserve a certain traditional term, for example, Budo or Bushido, but still to avoid the skill from having its basic warrior purpose and the title "Jutsu". Within this new name, the Judo martial art encompassed the mode of training and fighting principle which, in turn, decreased its basic purpose of a warrior skill and the need to strictly adhere to the Bushido code of honor. This way master Kano could propagate the style to different profiles and professions and, at the same time, avoid the Judo style of fighting to be used solely for the purposes of the army or the police.

This is how, Judo was gradually developed from the Ju-Jutsu warrior skill (ju=tenderly, do= path or way). It is a mode of training of certain techniques and principles of fighting which grew step by step and changed its purpose. Today, it is mainly a sport. Seeing that the Judo martial art has a successful developmental path, some other famous martial arts masters took on the same principle. The well-known martial arts master and the founder of the Karate martial art, Gichin Funakoshi (1868 – 1957), called his style Karate-Jutsu as early as 1926. Ten years later, in 1936, he changed it to Karate-Do. Today, this martial art is turning more and more into a sport and it is usually called just Karate.

Another great martial arts master, Morihei Ueshiba (1883 – 1969) who, during his youth, trained different forms of the



Jutsu skills, in its very beginning called his style Aiki-ryu or Aiki-Jutsu. At the end of 1942, he changed its name to Aikido which is a term that almost everyone knows today. The name became popular in the beginning of 1948.

As soon as World War II was over, Japan faced many changes at the time, many of which affected martial arts. Many martial arts masters served as instructors to various officers in the Japanese military during the war or were members of the army themselves. Because of that, once the war was over, they wanted to show the world their peaceful viewpoints and not the warrior purpose of their martial arts techniques. This is why they propagated the “Do” way of practicing martial arts and, so, gradually decreasing their initial purpose and meaning of being a warrior skill. Also, they gradually diminished the effect that the Bushido code of honor had on martial arts. Finally, the Jutsu style was more and more replaced by the Do mode of practicing.

Many martial arts progressively changed their basic warrior purpose, i.e. the way they have approached training. Another

change was made to their names, for example, Ken Jutsu=Kendo; Iai Jutsu=Iaido; So Jutsu=Sodo; Kyu Jutsu=Kyudo; Jo Jutsu= Jodo etc. Even some different modes of fighting with weapons in Okinawa gradually changed their names to “Kobudo”. That kind of “Do” way of practice was accepted by many Korean martial arts, such as Hap Ki Do, Hwa Rang Do, Han Mu Do, Kumdo, Tang Soo Do and, certainly the most famous one, Tae Kwon Do. Even the famous martial arts master and actor Bruce Lee picked the name Jeet Kune Do for his own style of fighting. The modes of practicing according to the Do principle were accepted by some other martial arts around the world. An example is the Vietnamese Viet Vo Dao or Quan Ki Do, Defendo or Wen-Do in Canada or Zen Do Kan in Australia. The effect is also visible on the Indonesian Sindo as well as the Burmese Bando boxing.

The Code of Honor in the Modern Era

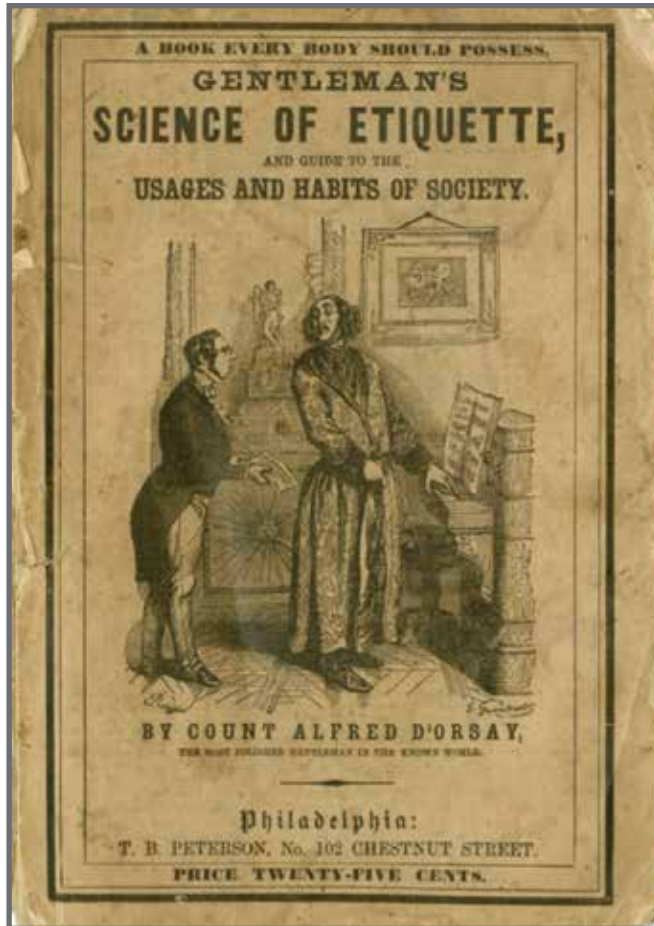
Whether some martial arts masters would like to admit it or not, today the Do mode, i.e. the Do way of practicing martial arts and its understanding is shifted towards sports and sports results than to the original martial art itself. It is even less pointed towards the warrior skill from which it originated. The code of honor is seldom mentioned because today’s sports have their own set of rules and fair play. And for the gross majority of sportspersons, that is enough. However, there are some smaller groups of masters that exist today which still respect and accept some of the rules of the Bushido code of honor. Certain “true” martial arts masters still live in the East or in the West today and they respect and abide by some of the life rules from that code of honor.

For those specific martial arts masters taking up a certain martial art is not merely a hobby or something they do in their free time. For them, it is not a sport and they do not practice it from a sports point of view. For them, it is strictly a martial art. Although some martial arts masters turn to it professionally, taking up the skill is not something they consider to be their main occupation. It represents a certain way of life which includes respecting the moral principles of certain codes of honor.

So, today in the West, you are able to come across martial arts masters which will tell you that the martial art of boxing is a noble skill. Some other martial arts masters will say that the martial art of wrestling or fencing are skills that are taken up by gentlemen who respect the code of honor. Although the era of samurai has long passed, in today’s Japan you can still find martial arts masters who live by respecting the principles of the Bushido code of honor.

Nowadays, there are more people who think that the time of knights and samurai is over. There are those who believe that, in modern martial arts, and especially in martial sports, there is no longer a need or space for some of the codes of

Honor Throughout History



honor because they have their own rules and fair play. However, there still exists a number of martial arts masters who do not agree with that notion. Those masters are loyal to the old way of learning a certain martial art which says that, if someone doesn't respect those unwritten rules and that specific code of honor, he will not be respected himself by the other masters of that skill.

No matter the country of origin of a certain martial art or a code of honor's name which is cultivated there, the basic principles of those codes of honor are almost identical in the East and in the West. The person who practices it or a trainer or instructor who doesn't live according to the moral principles of that code of honor is not and never will be the true master of that martial art.

Ancient samurai differed from other people of that time

firstly because of the fact that they lived according to the Bushido code of honor. Today, when you ask a random officer who graduated from the famous military school, West Point, how does he differ from other people, his answer will always be – “by a certain code of honor”.

Those who think that the basic difference between exceptional martial arts masters is in the color or the way they wear a kimono, in the emblems on their kimonos or sports t-shirts, in the color of their belt or their title, in their great knowledge or performance of a certain technique, are wrong. When you ask today's martial arts masters what is the basic thing that makes them different from other people or some other individuals who train martial arts, their answer will always be the same – “by the fact that we live in respect of the moral principles of the code of honor.”

Bushido, noblesse oblige, the chivalry code, the gentleman's code, gemut, cavalleria, the cowboy code are for most people just some old names of certain customs from ancient history. For them, they are customs that they've heard of from old legends and tales about knights or samurai. Those customs were never written down or even clearly prescribed, but their rules are merely living in various historical legends.

For some other people those are still unwritten rules of behavior. Their basic moral principles according to which they live. Those are unwritten rules by which their fathers and their fathers' fathers abided by and, for them, it is a family tradition.

A true master and teacher of a martial art will accept his student as someone who is a part of his family. By doing that, he will teach him the same thing he has learned from his father or teacher – to respect the unwritten rules of the code of honor. Moreover, he will show him with his own example how to live by respecting the moral principles of the code of honor. 🖐️

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SENSEI

The Origin and Meaning of the Word

By David "Sensei" Stainko

In various martial arts there are different names for the titles of some master ranks. In the following text I am going to mention and explain some of the most popular ones.

One of the most common and famous words in the martial arts that indicates a specific title is certainly the word sensei.

The word for the title sensei is commonly translated as a teacher, although the word literally would have another meaning - a person who was born before, ie. a person who was spiritually born before others, or rather, a person who knows life (one who has gone before).

The Japanese word sensei is composed of two words; Sen - before and sei - life.

The word sensei is a newer word, and it began to be used in Japan at the beginning of 1960, first in martial arts (ju-jitsu, judo, aikido, karate) and later in 1968 the word began to be used as a term of respect, and then indicating the title for a variety of learned men. Thus the name of sensei is now used as a title for teachers but also for doctors, pharmacists, lawyers, engineers, journalists as well as for many other learned and respected professions. The word, as well as the title - sensei, is often associated with Zen philosophy. In Zen Buddhism it is assumed that a person who knows life and has a lot of life experience, has a feeling as if reborn.

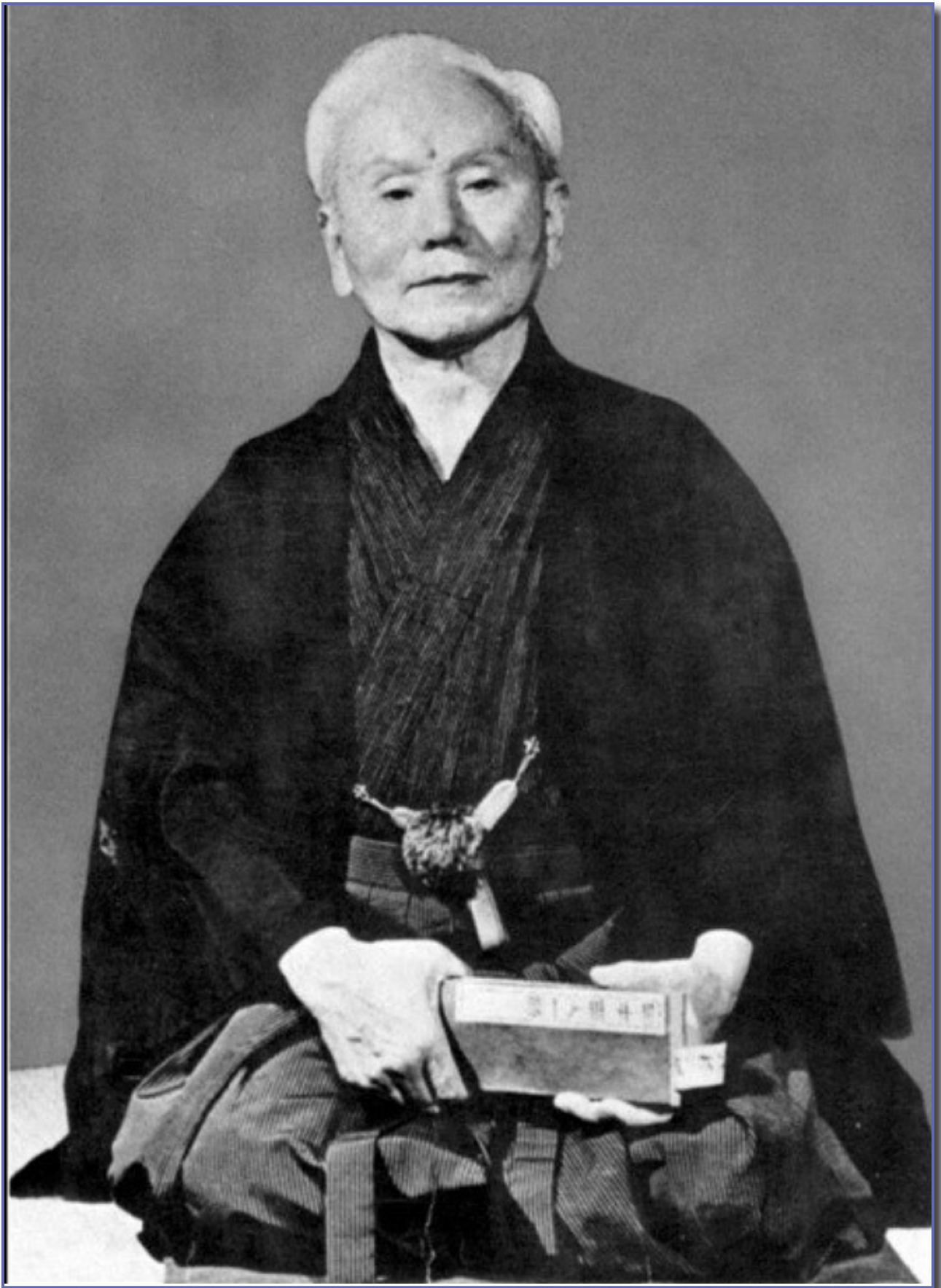
The word sen-sei, comes from the Indian word sen-an (sen ani), which was used as a name for the leader (the person who was acting as a leader or as a warrior leader) of the Indian caste of noblemen warriors - kshatriyas.

Their main feature was the ability to lead, ie. to be the leader of other members of that noble warrior caste. They were expected to show great courage, stamina, sense of justice, generosity, good diplomacy, as well as a desire to protect the weaker, either of injustice or death. Persons who bore such a title had to be ready, if necessary, to sacrifice their lives in defense of their subordinates. They were expected to show exceptional loyalty to their subordinates, too.

The caste of kshatriyas was slowly gone in the Middle Ages, and it was replaced by the Rajput caste. The Japanese name for the warrior kshatriya caste was Setsuri, and acceptance of some of their principles in Japan later resulted in the phenomenon of the famous warriors - Samurai.

The word sen-an spread over India to China, and from China it was gradually transferred to Korea and Japan. Also the word gradually began to change (different pronunciation and titles), and as the word altered itself, so its meaning did the same.

The word sen-an in China gradually changed into the word senfan (sienfan), and also its meaning slowly changed, and from the title of the wartime leader, it became the title for a person who is skilled in martial arts and teaches others in one of them.



The Origin & Meaning

In China itself, in martial arts, there were other names for people who taught others. The most common name for such people was Sifu (Cantonese) or Shifu (Mandarin Chinese) .

The meaning of the word would be, an old man who has a great knowledge and experience in martial arts, and teaches us like a father.

In India, the spiritual leader, according to Sanskrit writings, is called - Guru (Goru), while in Japan the name of the spiritual leader (senior teacher of Zen Buddhism) is Roshi.

Also, the Japanese sometimes use the title Sosai, which is used as a name for the presidents of some large companies, ambassadors, and directors - generals of certain large organizations, and even of martial ones (for example - Sosai Oyama).

There is also a title in martial arts Sempai, which is awarded to the older and more experienced students, who is also an assistant teacher.

In China, there is a martial arts title Shi, usually connected to the masters of martial arts from the Shaolin Temple, which indicates not only the great master of martial arts, but also a teacher of Zen philosophy. The very title of Shi has its stronghold in the name of the province ie. the name of the forest - Shao shi, where the Shaolin Temple is situated. The Chinese sometimes use the title of Shihan for a master who has attained the highest level of learning (as well as in martial arts as in Zen philosophy). It is often used in Japan, too.

The title that is closest in meaning to the words sen-an is the one which is used in Korea for the masters of martial arts - Tae kwon do, and its name is suseung-nim. It is given to a great master. The more commonly known title is sonseang-nim and it means the person who is a general master (war leader) and a great connoisseur of martial arts.

There is also the title O'Sensei, used out of respect for a particularly great teacher and master of martial arts like the creator of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba.

The word, the title O'Sensei, is usually translated as - a great teacher.

A similar word in the martial arts is the title Soke, which is given out of respect for the person ie. the master who is the founder of a particular martial style.

The meaning of the title of sensei, was best described by a Japanese martial artist Shigeru Egami (1912 -1981) in his famous dictum.

“Not every Sensei is a master and not every master is Sensei.”

Master Egami was a famous master of Shotokan style and the pioneer of Shotokai style.

This saying became more recognized and popular when it was repeated in the book “The Book of Ki,” by the famous Japanese master of martial arts (ju-jutsu, judo, aikido) Koichi Tohei (1920-2011).

Nowadays there are lots of those who present themselves as sensei, as well as those who would like to be one. Also, there are those people who are called sensei by others (sometimes out of respect for those persons, although mostly not knowing the meaning of the title sensei).

The title sensei requires the master's hard and lengthy work, good knowledge of martial arts, as well as a certain correct way of transferring his life experience to his disciples. The title sensei is not acquired with the





Dan rank.

All that use the title of sensei should know that the true sensei does not seek and recruit his students - even their followers, but they themselves find him.

In addition, when the connoisseur of martial arts enters any hall (dojo) in which Eastern martial arts are practised, he bows showing honour and respect to sensei (sifu) as well as to a certain martial art. Such a bow in the martial arts is best known under the Japanese title - sensei ni rei (Greeting to the teacher)

Sometimes at the same time in the hall (dojo) there are more highly ranked and recognized masters of certain or different martial arts, exercising together but, then only one of them is sensei, although there can even be more sensei or sifu masters in the hall. He then leads their exercise and takes on the role of the leaders so that all the other martial artists (regardless of their level of mastery) should listen and respect him.

However, none of the previously mentioned titles in martial arts, literally means a teacher, the term is most often used as translation of specific titles. Sensei - the leader and the person who guides us through life, because he knows it well and also has a lot of life experience, Sifu (Shifu) - an old man with extensive knowledge and experience that teaches us as a father, Sonseang - nim - a general master, a wartime leader, Guru - the person who takes us on the spiritual path .

To translate the name of these titles, with the word - teacher, is very simplified and distorted, and at least incomplete as the meaning of certain title.

Today many martial arts (skills) apply the name and title - coach or instructor. The title - Master or Grand Master is often used, too.

Some of the masters use even two titles, such as sifu shi or Master Sensei, although there are no real reasons for it. It would be the same case with a person who has obtained different degrees in a few different martial styles - the dan ranks; when introducing himself he gives the highest rank (for example, a person who has gained the title 3rd dan judo, 4th dan aikido and 5th dan karate, presents himself as a master of 5th dan) .

The Origin & Meaning

“Some practitioners think they will automatically become sensei when they get some master rank, such as 3rd dan, but it is not so.”



Some practitioners think they will automatically become sensei when they get some master rank, such as 3rd dan, but it is not so. Also, there are many coaches (instructors) who have the characteristic of a good sensei, as there are those masters who present themselves as the sensei, but they do not have the necessary qualities, nor the quality of such a large and demanding title like - sensei .

There are masters of different martial arts, that consider that the term sensei should be used for a person who is a guardian and admirer of tradition martial skills.

It is interesting that in the arts of aikido and jiu jitsu the title sensei is placed after the name of the master, while in karate, judo, nin jutsu like all the other titles in other martial arts, it is placed before the name of the master, which is according to the rules of writing titles more correct.

In some martial arts like Muay thai or Brazilian jiu jitsu, the titles of masters are not used, although these skills emerged on the basis of skills that use the titles such as shifu and sensei.

All in all, it can be said that the word and title sensei in martial arts, can not be translated simply as a teacher, because the title sensei, has a much broader meaning. 🐉

About The Author

David “ Sensei“ Stainko, the Master of Kinesiology and senior organizer of kinesiological recreation was born in Rijeka, Croatia in 1962. There he attended the primary and secondary school. In 1980 he enrolled at Zagreb University, Croatia to study Kinesiology and he got his M.A. degree there.

At present he is a Physical Education teacher and a counselor for martial arts skills. He lives in Rijeka, Croatia.

David Stainko has been active in martial arts since 1973. He started training in Budokai Club Rijeka.

In 1978 he founded the Youth Budokai Club, which later changed its name into The Club of Martial Arts Victoria. It was registered as the first of its kind in former Yugoslavia (where Croatia was one of the constituent parts) and one of the first in Europe.

In 1978 David Stainko got the titles of 1st DAN Budokai and WAKO instructor.

Since 1981 he has been intensely practising boxing and kick boxing, and in 1982 he also took part in Korean skills taekwon do and kung fu style- thai chi. At the same time he was perfecting the skills aikido, judo, ju-jitsu and kung fu wing-tsun. In 1983 he obtained the master title of 3rd DAN (Budokai), and a year later the title of the instructor of Jeet-kune do, and kung fu style – thai chi.

He got the master title of the black belt of 4th DAN and he became a kick boxing and tang soo do coach in 1986. He also became the trainer of karate kyokushinkai in 1987. At that time he got introduced to Vietnamese skill viet vo dao.

In 1988 David Stainko reached the title of the black belt 1st DAN shotokan and enhanced his knowledge of wrestling and Russian skill – sambo.

In 1989 he got the silver glove title and the coaching licence for savate- boxing, and a year later the title 5th DAN kick-boxing (PKA).

From 1989 he was also practising Brazilian skill capoeira, hwa rang do and pa kwa kung fu with masters from England, Korea, Japan, America, Germany, Hungary, France, Italy and Russian.

David Stainko is one of the founders of various martial arts associations as well as a federal judge for boxing, karate (WUKO), taekwon do (ITF) and international judge for kick- boxing and savate boxing.



He is the author of a number of articles on martial arts and sports, and a correspondent and counselor in several magazines in Croatia and abroad.

In 1997 Stainko was ready to acquire the master title MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) of 6th DAN after 25 years of martial arts study.

His permanent and intense research of martial arts has continued since 2000 so that in 2010 he fulfilled the conditions to gain the master title of 7th DAN MMS (Mixed Martial Scientists) that qualified him as an expert for mixed martial sciences (published articles and books).

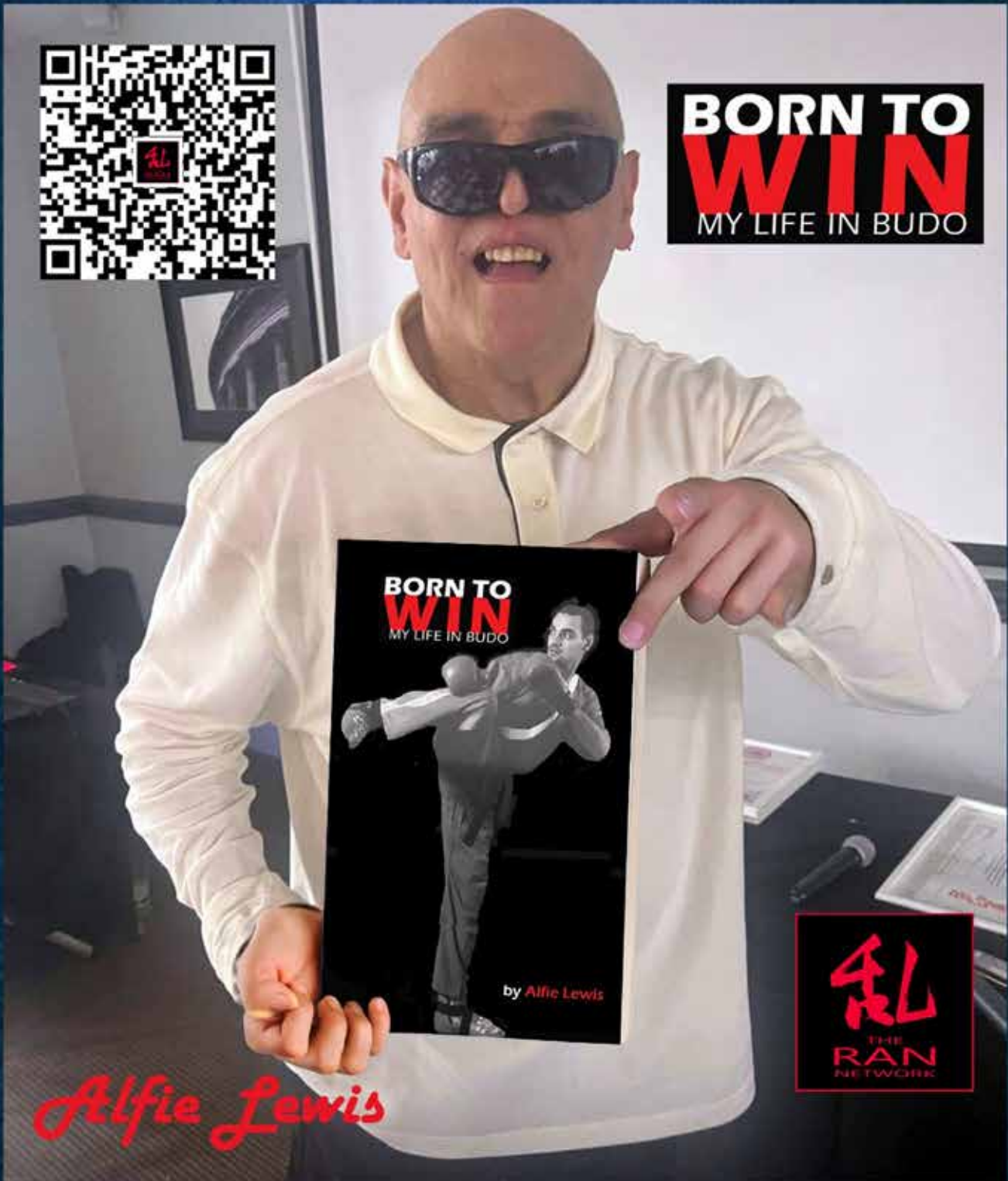
The year 2018 will bring him the master title of 8th DAN at the age of 55+ and 45 years of practising and studying of martial arts (with published articles).

David Stainko took part in 4 European and 3 world championships. He was the European champion in 1986. In 1987 he became the member of the European martial arts team. In 1988 he won the second place in the world championship (WMMAF).

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ZANSHIN

The Mind of a Warrior

By David Stainko

By practicing martial arts every person will experience different states of his/her mind. The reason behind this is that everything starts in our mind, and martial arts are no exception. Although martial arts trainees go through different states of mind while practicing them, we will explain 4 main states so that the readers can understand their significance. Shoshin, Fudoshin, Mushin and Zanshin are 4 powerful states of mind that have a special place in martial arts and, as such, have long since been recognized by various martial arts experts.

HISTORY OF KEMPO/KENPO

Unfortunately, these states of mind are incorrectly or partially explained in today's literature. Old masters who are acquainted with these states of mind do not mention them often, and sports psychologists do not give them too much attention because the used terms are not entirely clear. Although they are part of basic knowledge when it comes to martial arts, oftentimes a big mess is made when we try to explain those 4 states and the terms that surround them. The confusion often starts while trying to directly translate Japanese words that denote these states. We now have terms in Japanese (or Chinese) that do not reveal much themselves so different explanations are given for these states of mind.

But let's start from the beginning.

SHOSHIN – A BEGINNER MIND, A BEGINNER STATE OF MIND

Shoshin, according to the Japanese translation, means a beginner's state of mind. Shoshin is a state of open spirit towards learning something new, with no previous opinion, assumptions, expectations or guesswork. Shoshin is of essential importance in martial arts because it is the state which will allow the person to permanently acquire new knowledge and to repeatedly progress in each new day and, so, reach a new level of mastery. By advancing as a person and expanding your knowledge, it gets harder to maintain Shoshin. For example, some people believe that their learning ends when acquiring a black belt, but they are not aware that the first black belt is called "shodan", which literally means "first level". So, by acquiring a black belt you are finally ready

to wholeheartedly and devotedly learn and reach new knowledge and a higher level of mastery.

This means that the black belt does not signify an ending, but a beginning, i.e. an entry to a new dimension and arrival to a higher level. No matter which belt or title you have in martial arts, if you can keep this state of mind, you will surely advance. To clarify, Shoshin means to learn with a mind which is like an empty piece of paper waiting to put on new words, colors, ideas, new knowledge. We can explain this by words of old Zen teachers: "How can you try my tea, if you haven't emptied your cup first?" Shoshin can also be explained by words of martial arts master Shunryu Suzuki (1904 – 1971): "The beginner's mind has many possibilities, whereas a mind of an expert has only a few." So if you wish to constantly progress by learning new skills, you need to maintain a Shoshin state of mind – a beginner's state of mind.



FUDOSHIN – A STATE OF FIXED MIND, IMMOVABLE MIND

Fudoshin is a state of mind of unbreakable will and decisiveness. In Japanese, Fudoshin means "fixed, immovable mind". Simply, Fudoshin means that no external source can affect your mind. Fudoshin is a state of mind which leaves no space for doubt or withdrawal. Most people use Fudoshin to set their own goals. If you wish to achieve something, if you deeply believe in something, do not let anyone or anything stop you in achieving your goals. Be decisive, persistent and stable. That is Fudoshin.

Fudoshin is very important when the stakes are high, during combat, competition or while achieving some other more important goal. Viktor Hugo said, "Only those who fight live, those whose spirits and heads are filled with certain firm intention, those who climb high fates, a steep peak. Those are the ones who live, and I pity the rest." Old martial arts masters from Okinawa said about Fudoshin: "It can be understood only after a long, firm discipline and persistence of that which is hardest to strive for and of that which is most difficult to practice. A man of weaker will and mind will never understand that kind of effort." Nothing can stop you in achieving your goals. It is a persistent winner's spirit- Fudoshin.

MUSHIN – A STATE WITHOUT THE MIND

The literal translation of the word "Mushin" is "without mind". It seems like a paradox because it is impossible to have a mindless state of mind. Mushin is actually a representation of a state of an empty mind when it is not preoccupied with anything, no other thoughts, i.e. when you are literally thinking of nothing. Mushin is a state of mind when you literally empty it. "Empty your mind. Be without form, shape, think of yourself as water." -Bruce Lee (1940 – 1973)

Old masters often used to say "empty heart, empty mind" for the Mushin state of mind. When martial arts master and Zen teacher Yagyū Taimanō Kami talks about that term, he speaks about a perfect and precise reflection of everything that exists. To clarify, the Mushin state of mind is like the Moon's reflection on a still pond's surface. But when the wind blows, the pond becomes wavy and the Moon's reflection becomes distorted. In other words, when the mind and heart are full of thoughts, everything becomes distorted.

When trying to become one, in order to understand everything and feel everything as it re-

The Mind of a Warrior



ally is...you need to be totally empty and totally still. That is Mushin. Achieving that is not really simple, some people can achieve it by themselves, others need to be under a certain optimal level of stress, but most people achieve it through means of meditation. Mushin in Japanese and Wuxin in Chinese is a popular state of mind which many try to accomplish through Zen or Dao meditation. Mushin is actually an abbreviated term that comes from its Zen name which is mushin no shin, a state of mind without thought. So, an entirely quiet mind, free of all thought, i.e. a mind that is not occupied by any thoughts.

A mind that is totally quiet and not preoccupied with anger, fear or nervousness as well as certain egoistic thoughts from everyday life. It is a very relaxed mind which can sometimes work very fast without any real plan, direction or a certain intention. Many martial arts masters believe that the Mushin state of mind is key in martial arts, but they are wrong. It is certainly of great importance, but it is not key. This kind of belief is a result of the confusion between Mushin and Zanshin. These two states of mind are somewhat connected, but are not identical, there are great differences between them. The main difference is that the Mushin state of mind can also be used in meditation, in everyday life, it can be trained (in yoga, e.g.) whereas Zanshin state of mind has its use exclusively in martial arts.

ZANSHIN – A STATE OF RELAXED AWAKENESS, RESIDUAL MIND

The Zanshin state of mind is often referred to as the spirit of a warrior. Zanshin is a Japanese term for a certain state of mind (spirit) which a martial arts master needs to achieve during a fight. i.e. during combat or training. This state of mind is connected to de-ai ideas (starting an attack in due time) and ma-ai (correctly keeping at a positive distance). In other words, when we talk about Zanshin, we talk about physical, psychological and spiritual distance. A translation from Japanese would mean “residual mind” or “a mind that stays”. The literal meaning of the words kanji zanshin would mean “the mind’s leftovers” or “a mind without stay”, which doesn’t explain much.

So, we are talking about a state of mind where the martial arts master tries to develop a certain state of active surveillance confronted with potential or real danger. To clarify, the Zanshin state of mind signifies a perfect bond between body and mind in time and space. When you are in Zanshin, you are in maximum concentration, but you are not focused on one point or object. Miyamoto Musashi once said: “Perception is strong, but the sight is weak. It is strategically important to see what is far away as if it was near as well as to have a distant view of what is nearby.” (The Book of Five Rings)

Saotome Sensei tells us about Zanshin: “We must never lose focus; we mustn’t lower our guard for a second. We must always be alert, aware of our training partner or our opponent in combat, aware of every movement around us, ready of what comes next, prepared for whatever unexpectedly comes from any direction. We should never turn our focus on the opponent; we mustn’t let our mind separate from him...Zanshin is the future, but it is also now. The quality of our Zanshin is the quality of our aikido.” (Aikido and the Harmony of Nature)



Zanshin precedes an attack or defense, it follows us during combat and stands beside us when the battle ends. In Zanshin we have a mind without worry, without wishes, fear or nervousness; it is a free mind which is focused entirely on combat and, thanks to anticipation, it is prepared for anything. Such a state of mind can be accomplished only by experienced martial arts masters – warriors. To clarify, a beginner or even an intermediate-levelled fighter cannot achieve the Zanshin state of mind. The reason behind this lies in the fact that this state of mind can only be accomplished by the most difficult way – with experience. So, a beginner is preoccupied with thoughts about defeat or win during a fight. He fights his own fears. Fear from injury or fear from potential death. He is thinking about his surroundings, about light or dark, about the wind, various sounds that surround him, the spectators (observers), about the surface he is standing on, about his clothes or footwear and, of course, the technique he should apply during combat. Because of all this, he is unable to achieve the Zanshin state of mind. Old and experienced martial arts masters would say – too many thoughts.

An experienced fighter is focused solely on his opponent and the fight, his mind is still and relaxed. During the fight, his mind works without any unnecessary thoughts or fears, his reactions depend on the actions of his opponent. He acts instinctively and compulsively. One of the best definitions of the Zanshin state of mind was given by the well-known boxer Sugar Ray Robinson. In his own words, he said: “You don’t think. It’s all instinct. But if you stop to think, you’re gone.”

Some martial arts masters sometimes confuse the terms of Fudoshin, Mushin and Zanshin states of mind. The reason is that, before the fighter – warrior achieves the Zanshin state of mind, he must achieve the Fudoshin (an unwavering will to win) and accomplish the Mushin state of mind (a state of mind without any thoughts, i.e. without unnecessary thoughts, a relaxed and calm state of mind focused on the fight). So, the Zanshin state of mind includes Fudoshin and Mushin within itself. 🐉

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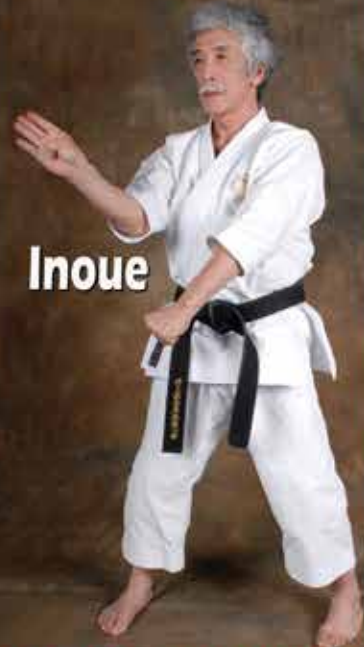
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Ben Otake

Ben Otake – Otake's extensive experience with martial arts stems back to the early 50's, beginning with judo. From there he studied karate and kempo and was one of Ed Parker's first students. He then moved on to study with Tak Kubota of the International Karate Association, earning the rank of 6th Dan—some 30 plus years ago. Otake taught the Gosoku Ryu system (IKA) in Puerto Rico from 1967 to 1972. During his time as an instructor for the IKA he taught Pan American champion Manuel Gonzales and world class champion Tony Tulleners (to name just two).

Today, Ben Otake teaches martial arts and self-defense the way he feels it was taught originally – for self-preservation rather than trophies. In order to better achieve this goal he began a new association with co-founder John Seits; they named it Shindokai. The focus of this association is to concentrate on those movements and techniques that are the most efficient and effective for self-defense. As Otake says, "A sword that doesn't cut is just a symbol. Self-defense must be grounded in reality to be effective."

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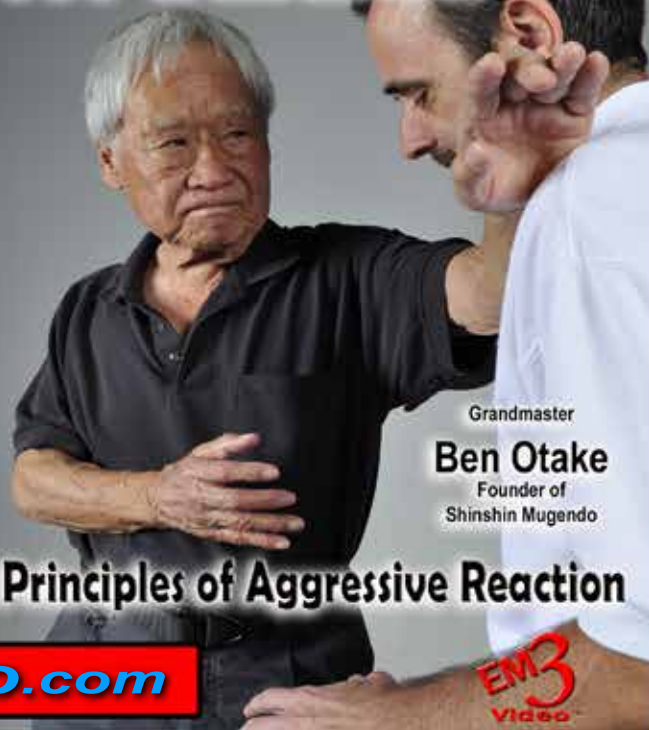
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NINE CONCEPTS for DEFENSE



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Principles of Aggressive Reaction



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OSS OR OSU

My Bow and My Deep Respect

By David Stainko, prof. – *Master of Martial Arts and Science*

There is a Japanese word that today many people who practice martial arts frequently use. It is a word that is now known almost everywhere in the world. That word is OSS or OSU. However, when you ask various martial arts instructors what the exact meaning of that word is, as well as where it originated—that is, where it exactly comes from—only a few instructors will be able to give you a precise answer to that question. Many martial arts experts, as well as various professors, historians, and even scientists around the world, have been discussing this word for quite some time and searching for a clear answer to that question.

The word OSS or OSU is used in various martial arts around the world: in almost all styles of karate, in American Kenpo, in Kajukenbo, in judo, in jiu-jitsu, in ninjutsu, in aikido, in sumo wrestling, in sambo, in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, in semi- and full-contact karate, in kickboxing, in taekwondo, in Muay Thai, in Sanda kung fu, in kendo, in the art of kobudō, as well as in many others. The word is also known to many members of the police and the military, and it is familiar among wrestlers, boxers, fencers, as well as among people who practice MMA. We can say with certainty that the word OSS (or OSU) has taken root in many martial arts. Some instructors will tell you that the word OSS (or OSU) is a universal expression that does not have only one meaning, but several. Thus, depending on the situation, the word can mean: “Yes,” “I understand,” “Please,” “Thank you,” “I will,” “Here you go,” and it can also be used as a greeting such as “Good day” or “Goodbye.” But is that really the case?

In order to answer that question, we need to examine several different theories about where this word comes from, as well as what its true meaning is in martial arts. Some martial arts experts will tell you that, essentially, there are only three different theories about where this word originates and what it means. I would not agree with that, because I believe that there are actually several theories regarding the meaning of this word. However, let us begin our exploration of this word step by step. The word OSS or OSU is pronounced and written in slightly different ways depending on the country. Most people write the word as OSS or OSU; the difference is mainly in spelling, although both forms are correct and acceptable. The actual pronunciation of the word is closer to the expression “OHSS.”

Some martial arts instructors will tell you that the origin of the word OSS (or OSU), as well as its usage, originally comes from Japan—but not from Okinawa, the cradle of karate.





My Bow and My Deep Respect



Such a claim is only partially correct. In order to determine this more clearly, let us begin by examining the various theories about the origin and meaning of this Japanese word. One of the better-known theories comes from the Japanese language expert **Dr. Mizutani Osame**, a professor at Nagoya University, who published a work titled **“Japanese: The Spoken Language in Japanese Life.”** In his work, Professor Dr. M. Osame devoted special attention, among other topics, to the study of various well-known greetings used in Japan.

Dr. M. Osame concluded in his research that the Japanese word **OSS (or OSU)** may be an abbreviation of the official, formal Japanese expression **“Oha-yo gozaimasu.”** The Japanese use this expression on rare occasions when they wish to politely say **“Good morning”** to someone. Dr. M. Osame also believes that the word **OSS (OSU)** may represent a rougher expression, one that is mostly used by men when addressing each other, and that in such cases the word carries a meaning similar to the English expression **“HEY YA.”** However, we may also have reason to question this published scholarly work by Dr. Osame, because we do not know the exact number of participants who were part of the research, nor their age. For that reason, the true credibility of the study—namely the actual extent to which this word is used across Japanese regions—remains uncertain. Furthermore, a legitimate question arises: what connection would this have with the use of the word in martial arts (karate, judo, sumo, jiu jitsu, kendo, aikido)?

The second theory relies on certain historical research suggesting that the word **OSS** may have been invented by a samurai of the Saga clan, **Yamamoto Tsunetomo (1659–1719)**, on the island of Kyushu. Samurai Tsunetomo is the author of the well-known book **“Hagakure,”** in which he explains aspects of the martial and spiritual life of Japanese samurai warriors. In his book, among other things, Tsunetomo mentions that young warriors of the Saga clan in the 17th and 18th centuries greeted one another every morning on their way to school with the word **OSS**. However, this theory also has its shortcomings, because although it attempts to point us toward the historical possibility that the word **OSS** was used by samurai, it does not actually tell us anything about the meaning of the word itself.



There is also a third theory which suggests that the word **OSS (or OSU)** may be an abbreviation of the phrase **“Onegaishimasu”** (pronounced oh-nay-guy-she-mus), which in a loose translation would mean **“Please take care of me”** or **“I place myself in your care.”** But what direct connection would this have with martial arts? It would make sense only in the situation when a young student arrives at a dojo, yet even this theory should be viewed with some skepticism. Some instructors say that the word **OSS (OSU)** is a polite way of saying “please” and that it is an informal form of the expression **“onegaishimasu.”** But is this really the

case? We cannot say with certainty that the word OSS (or OSU), in the context of modern martial arts, truly carries that meaning.

There is also a fourth theory, most strongly promoted in **Kyokushinkai karate** (although the same theory is also fairly well known among others), which is known as “**Osu no Seishin.**” According to this theory, the word OSU (or OSS) is considered an abbreviation of two words: the verb “**osu,**” meaning to push or strive strongly, and the word “**shinobu,**” meaning to endure. However, is there really a direct connection with the phrase “**Osu no Seishin**” when, in reality, the word “**oshi**” means to strive strongly, while “**shinobu**” means to endure? Because of this, we can say that it is, at the very least, somewhat strange to claim that the word OSU (or OSS) is an abbreviation. And if it is, then exactly which Japanese words would it be shortened from—that is, from which precise phrase: “**Osu no Seishin**” or “**Oshi Shinobu**”?

Also, regarding some instructors who claim that the word OSU (or OSS) represents the warrior spirit, and that it reflects the importance of patience, determination, and perseverance in martial arts—we can only say that we are not entirely convinced by that interpretation. Some instructors from Kyokushinkai karate even go so far as to claim that the word OSU (or OSS) first appeared within **Kyokushinkai karate** itself. Well, that is not the case. **Masutatsu Oyama** published his first books in Japan in 1958, and only around 1966 in America and Europe. By that time, the word OSS (or OSU) was already in use in Europe among practitioners of martial arts. As you can see, this theory also has certain shortcomings and does not provide answers to the basic questions: **Does the word truly originate from there, and what is the actual meaning of the word?**

There is also a theory that says that some history books tell us that the word dates to the early 20th century when it first appeared at the Imperial Japanese Navy Officer Academy. However, this theory is refuted by another theory which tells us that in his book – „The Book of Five Rings“ or „Go Rin No Sho“, written by **Miyamoto Musashi**, a famous warrior with a katana, he wrote that samurai use OSS/OSU or other similar phrases to gather their inner strength, as well as to pay their respects to their opponent on three occasions ; Before the fight, in the middle of the fight and after the fight (wich usually ended fatally).This theory is sometimes used in BJJ, with some instructors saying that the word OSS/OSU serves as a compliment, as well as encouragement to oneself, and even as admiration for a good performance of a technique . However, this is not the correct explanation, nor is the use of the word.

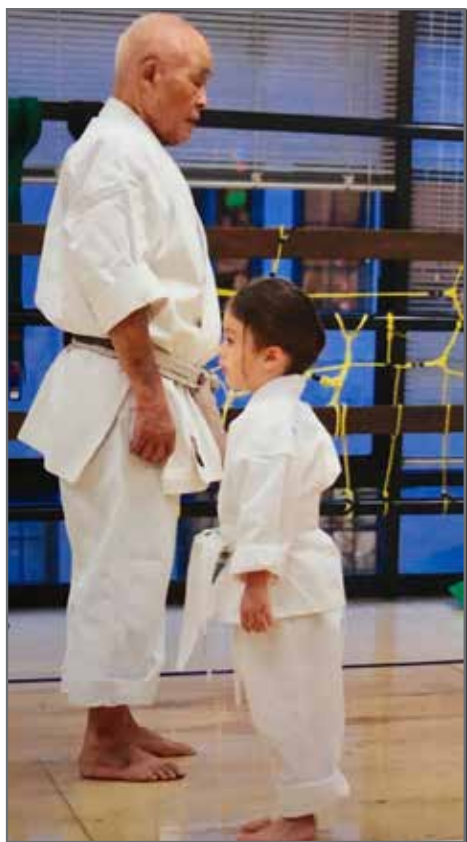
Some instructors claim that the word OSS (or OSU) has appeared in certain films and suggest that this is “proof” of something—but they don’t explain exactly what it is supposed to prove. They also mention some chefs who use the word OSS (OSU), as well as certain TV hosts and others, yet they fail to explain what connection this has to martial arts. Certain instructors from aikido claim that the word OSS (or OSU) is an abbreviation of the expression “**Ohayo gozaimasu,**” which translates to “**good morning**” (based on Dr. Osame’s research). However, this assertion should be taken with a high degree of skepticism, as it does not really explain anything meaningful. Some world-renowned martial arts masters do not support the use of the word OSS (or OSU) at all, considering it inappropriate, artificial, and meaningless.

Among certain instructors, we can especially highlight the words of the well-known master **Fumio Demura (1938–2015)**, who said:



My Bow and My Deep Respect

“Japanese people generally avoid using the word OSS because it directly evokes associations with gangsters.”



“OSS is not a good word. People often use OSS, OSS, OSS. Do they even understand the word? Even I don’t fully understand it. In Japan, only gangsters use this word all the time.”

And yes, that is true. Now we come to Japanese gangsters. You might be wondering: what do Japanese gangsters have to do with the word OSS (or OSU), and if they do, how does that relate to martial arts? Well, it does. The **Yakuza** is the most well-known Japanese organized crime group, famous for its strict hierarchy, rituals, and full-body tattoos. The most prominent clans are **Yamaguchi-gumi**, **Sumiyoshi-kai**, and **Inagawa-kai**. They are involved in extortion, blackmail, gambling, and other illegal activities.

What interests us most is the fact that members of these clans frequently greet each other with the word OSS. For them, the word signifies **humility** and serves as an expression of **respect toward one another**. In Japan, Yakuza members had influence over many professions: merchants, restaurateurs, butchers, craftsmen, as well as the police, politicians, and numerous other professions—including martial arts instructors. They collaborated with some instructors, while others were even extorted or used as trainers for their members. One of the larger Yakuza clans was based in **Naha, Okinawa**. For this reason, instructors from Okinawa generally avoid using the word OSS, to prevent any association with gangsters or the Yakuza clan. Interestingly, some martial arts styles from Okinawa use emblems that are identical or slightly modified versions of Yakuza clan symbols—specifically the **Kyokuryu-kai** clan. These styles include **Uechi-ryu**, **Shorin-ryu**, **Kyokushinkai-ryu**, **Ryu Kyu Kempo**, **Goshin-ryu Kempo**, **Ryu Koku Seindokan**, as well as some **jiu-jitsu** styles.

The Yakuza use the word OSS in reference to the **Bushido** code of the **samurai**—specifically to its seven key virtues: **Meiyo** (honor), **Yu** (courage), **Gi** (integrity), **Rei** (respect), **Jin** (compassion), **Makoto** (honesty and humility), and **Chugi** (duty and loyalty). In other words, they associate the use of OSS with the Bushido code, which itself has strong connections to Japanese martial arts. The Yakuza are not the only gangster organization that greets with OSS; even some branches of the Chinese Triads use a similar greeting, combining a bow with the word OSS—particularly among members from Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, and the United States. To summarize, **Japanese people generally avoid using the word OSS** because it directly evokes associations with gangsters. For this reason, they mostly refrain from using it in public, including within their dojo and martial arts training centers.

Although it is true that in some Japanese high schools and universities certain sports groups use the word, and that some athletes also use it, and that it appears in certain martial arts, in most cases **Japanese people rarely use this word outside of martial arts centers**, that is, outside the dojo and are not advocates of its use. Despite this, the word OSS (or OSU) has become firmly established in martial arts worldwide. Some use it frequently, some even excessively, while others use it more sparingly. But do you really know **when this word should be used in martial arts?** According to unwritten rules, it should actually be used **much less often than is commonly believed**.

The word is **always used the moment you enter a sports center—or dojo—even upon first stepping inside**. Even if there is no one in the dojo at the time of your arrival, you say OSS (or OSU) as you enter, as a bow and greeting—that is, as an act of respect toward the martial art you practice and toward the dojo itself. If there is an instructor and some students already in the dojo, you greet them with a single OSS (or OSU). If the instructor was not in the dojo when you arrived and comes in later, you greet them separately with OSS (or OSU). When leaving the dojo, the word is generally **not required**. At competi-

tions, the word is used only once—either when greeting your opponent and their coach, or when greeting the judges. If you are successful and step onto the podium to receive a medal or trophy, you say **OSS (or OSU)** as a form of gratitude toward the tournament organizers. Once you leave the competition, you are no longer obliged to use the word.

If you are in a dojo and an instructor is speaking to you or explaining something, **you are not required to respond with the word OSS (or OSU)**. Similarly, if you are at a competition and your instructor is guiding you—explaining tactics, techniques, or other instructions—you are **not obligated to reply with OSS (or OSU)**. In martial arts, the word is simply **not used in these situations**. Many people then ask: What, then, does the word OSS (or OSU) actually mean in the context of martial arts? The answer is actually quite simple. If you ask various instructors from different martial arts around the world to explain, in simple words, what the word OSS (or OSU) essentially means to them, **about 95% of them will give the same answer: “My bow and my deep respect.”** Some instructors even use the word OSS (or OSU) at the end of written correspondence as a closing greeting, expressing deep respect toward the person to whom the letter is addressed.

And finally, here is one more theory about the use of the word **OSS (or OSU)** in modern martial arts researched by **Professor David “Sensei” Stainko from Croatia** which at first may seem completely strange or even absurd. When karate, judo, jiu-jitsu, aikido, kendo, and other Japanese martial arts began to be practiced in Europe, the word **OSS (or OSU)** came along a little later. European instructors understood that the word was accompanied by a bow toward the person it was addressed to, as a sign of respect. And believe it or not, **that was all they knew about the word at the time**. Bow, then the word **OSS (or OSU)**—and it made sense to them. Why? Because they were aware that in Japan, as part of their culture of etiquette, bowing is very common. However, Europeans (as Westerners) quickly associated this Japanese custom with one of their own earlier traditions, which made it easier for them to understand and accept. From there, they began using it frequently in martial arts, integrating it naturally into their practice.

So, in Germany as early as the 17th century, merchants used a well-known greeting “**Mein Bogen**” and in Austria, the same greeting was said as “**Mein Bucken**.” This greeting was performed by **bowing the head or upper body toward the person being greeted**, and it became known as “**my bow**.” This greeting was not only known in Germany and Austria, but was also familiar in **Switzerland, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia**, and in parts of **Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Poland, Serbia**, and even **Russia**. In other words, the greeting “**my bow**” was a widely recognized custom across Europe. European martial arts practitioners simply combined this familiar custom of bowing with a new word **OSS (or OSU)** when adopting Japanese martial arts. They applied something already known to them as a solution for something that was otherwise foreign and unfamiliar. And importantly, **they did not make a mistake**. In this way, Europeans not only adopted this Japanese custom but, in a sense, **helped propagate it among martial arts enthusiasts** around the world.

So, the **bow represents humility**, and the words **OSS (or OSU)** express **someone’s deep respect toward the person it is addressed to**, and this is universally accepted in martial arts. When someone addresses you with a bow and says **OSS (or OSU)**, that simple word conveys **their profound respect for you**, and that is the highest acknowledgment you can receive from another person in martial arts. This short, three-letter word, when spoken, represents far more than just reciting titles, more than using words for ranks, and even more than giving gifts or other gestures. In martial arts, everything begins with **respect**. My bow and the spoken word **OSS** or **OSU**, as my deep respect toward you, **communicate everything about me**. I hope this explanation clarifies what many people in martial arts say and do frequently, yet many of them only partially—or not at all—understand **why they do it**. 🙏



K I A I

THE POWERFUL SHOUT

By David "Sensei" Stainko – Mag. of Kinesiology • Master 8th Dan - Mixed Martial Sciences



KIAI (Kihap or *kyap* -Korean, sometimes and *hangul* or *hanja*) is the consequence of a special kind of breathing. It is usually said that it is a guttural sound, but the right KIAI comes from the abdomen as a result of strong expiration. The real KIAI is the consequence of the unconscious part of the human being and it is not deliberately provoked.

KIAI (sometimes and kanji or hiragana in Japanese) is largely connected to the proper breathing because the right KIAI means the proper expiration, and only the proper expiration enables the proper inhalation. Moreover, the contraction of abdominal muscles while exhaling strengthens the trunk, i.e. the pelvis as the axis around which extremities rotate.

The technique of strong guttural expiration was also applied by Zen masters for explaining some ideas to their disciples and they called it KATSU. It is not possible to determine with certainty the influence of Zen philosophy as well as of Do or Tao philosophy on the development path of KIAI shout (breathing technique).

Dan Tien is a Chinese name for the central point on the human body, which is located just below the navel and they equate that affects breathing. The Japanese name for the same point is HARA.

The Greek name for this point is *pneuma* (airflow, breath or life forces). Some martial arts experts believe that the kiai breathing technique originated in India, while others believe that breathing technique originated in China. According to one theory, such a technique originates from Korea. However, none of these theories have been scientifically proven.

By observing human movement or stillness in a short time interval it is possible to see two basic possibilities for man's relationship to the surroundings in which he finds or doesn't find support. The complete expiration lowers the unconscious brunt of the body in the surroundings where we find ourselves, while we strengthen the central part of the body around which peripheral attachments circulate under the impact of the force of muscle contraction. All the life phenomena are connected to the process of oxidation or reduction, i.e. without oxygen there is no life.

The supply of our cells depends on blood and oxygen transport by blood. While contracting, the muscle gets up to ten times more blood than when it rests, thus taking more oxygen and *glikogen*. The input of oxygen is just one function of exhaling function which also covers the rejection of CO₂. The cells become free of waste products so that they release them into blood, and this cleansing particularly takes place in the lungs. To sum up, the complete expiration, i.e. KIAI is the condition without which there is no right and complete inhalation.

The volume of air that lungs can take is called "the vital capacity". The aim of numerous breathing techniques is to enlarge that capacity. Nevertheless, before enlarging it to the maximum we should use the amount we already have as the result of strong expiration (KIAI). The movements of the diaphragm and the chest speed the venous circulation in the whole organism. The muscles of the diaphragm are ones of the strongest in the human body. The expiration KIAI which consists of AU, AI, OI or EI makes the whole skeleton of the thorax vibrate, which proves that vibrations are transferred to the air mass closed in the lungs so that the gentle membrane of alveoli in contact with the air vibrates stimulating pulmonic cells gases replacement.

The more recent works of Western physiologists report that this vibration has a very noticeable effect on endocrine glands, which science pay more attention to. It has been

**KI (chi, Qi in Chinese)
– inner energy**

AI – uniting, joining



The Powerful Shout

proven that the emission of vowels during the exhaling (KIAI) causes a vibratory self-massage of organs. These vibrations reach to the deepest tissues and nerve cells enlarging the blood circulation in the organs.

Endocrine glands that send hormones directly into blood and lymph are getting stimulated (the pituitary, the thymus, the adrenal gland etc.) as well as sympathetic and the brain nerve subject to this useful influence of vocal vibrations. The vibromassage is particularly important for the organs situated in the thorax and the abdomen. Such vibrations create electromagnetic waves which spread throughout the organism thus enlarging the dynamics of living. Under the impact of this internal vibration the man gets rid of depression, the inferiority complex, and achieves mental balance.

Practising martial arts not only relieves and removes depression but also greatly prevents its return. Certainly one of the most effective exercises is the breathing exercise, whether it is a known technique of breathing yoga - pranayama, or similar breathing technique - uyai, or kung-fu breathing technique -chi kung, or karate technique -kokya (aikido, tae kwon do) or breathing technique with the emphasis on exhalation technique - KIAI (kihap -Korean). The use of breathing and breath control has a long history in the traditional martial arts (KIAI jutsu).



Most martial arts pay attention to a special breathing technique. Such a technique is performed in kung-fu (chi kung, tai chi chuan, pa qua etc.) in karate (for katas-sanchin, tensho, when performing strikes etc.), in tae kwon do (forms, when performing strikes etc.), but also in aikido, hapkido, kendo, judo, ju jutsu, nin jutsu, kobudo, naginata and many others. In kendo, for example, a point is only given by the referees if the hit is accompanied by a strong, convincing KIAI. In karate a KIAI can show that you had the correct intention to score, which is one of the criteria for achieving ippon. For these reasons, it is important to develop a good kiai.

The right breathing implies deep breathing caused by diaphragm and chest movement. It is also important to expire completely, which enables the next complete breath. The right breathing technique is practised at the very beginning of martial art practice and many trainers emphasize its importance. Basic training for the KIAI involves different breathing exercises, of which there are many similar to the Pranayama practices of India.

The appropriate breathing technique reduces muscle tensions which causes the right muscular distribution. Frequent martial arts practice reduces weight. Obese people have the problem that fat tissues reduce breathing functions and can cause respiratory inflammation.

The breathing technique helps people with depression to relax and calms them down. One of the best ways to breathe is the technique in which a slow inhalation is carried out through the nose while you count up to three, followed by a shorter pause, and a slow release on the mouth with a count of six. The breathing can be performed so that we breathe first and then later, through the other nostril. Another method of breathing is the more powerful inhalation of the nose, followed by the more powerful exhalation of the mouth. The inhalation is followed by a strong exhalation after which athletes practice various punches that are accompanied by a loud kiai (kihap).

By practicing martial arts trainees strengthen chest muscles thereby improving lung function. This applies not only to the arts; kung-fu, karate, tae kwon do, kendo and aikido, which in practice require a certain special breathing technique. In other martial arts and skills such as judo, BJJ, sambo, boxing, kick boxing, wrestling, and mixed martial arts and the like, trainees not only develop upper body, especially the arms and shoulders, but also strengthen the muscles of the chest, which positively affects the breathing function. Which is closely related to the KIAI technique.

As the air is coming from the lungs (KIAI) and making the vocal cords vibrate, it completely occupies the consciousness, which results in direct economy of nerve impulses or available energy for other things, and it is the best way to get rid of irritability and get back stability and peace. After all, doesn't music provoke various emotions by means of vibrations?

Just enough to understand KIAI - the strong shout. The first book that mentions the Japanese martial art of Kiai jutsu was translated in 1911 (Kiai-jutsu, Sakkatsu Jizai, by Kumashiro Hikotaro), when the martial art became more popular among the people - the art of KI - AI.

KIAI has got a unique and noted role in martial arts. KIAI is used in the fight while performing strikes, it is used in KATA, as well as in breaking techniques TAMESHIWARI (KYOK PA -Korean). Some movements in kata require from the practitioner an exceptional balance, the others endurance and breathing control. Breathing is here a very important link between physical and mental moves. KIAI is rarely but sometimes used in some styles that use certain internal energy.

Also, the breathing technique while performing the katas (forms) varies across styles. In Karate the breathing is deeper, slower and oriented towards the abdomen (Ibuki), while in many Kung Fu styles the breathing is much faster and more shallow. Certain deviations in the breathing technique exist the same way as in Karate styles and Kung Fu styles.

“Practicing martial arts not only relieves depression but also greatly prevents its return.”

The Powerful Shout

Also, minor but also visible variations in breathing techniques exist even among masters of a certain style which depends on the person. Every master will alter a certain style and breathing technique to his own needs.

KIAI is also applied in self defence- when we want to intimidate the opponent or encourage ourselves and, therefore, prepare for the fight (spirit yell). Thus the strike and the defence will be more efficient. KIAI can be rather loud (scream) or on the contrary quite silent (breathing out), it can be longer or shorter depending on a certain person and situation. Although some believe that there are only four basic types of KIAI performance ; loud, screaming (high), normal (semi-loud) and silent (names kensei). In reality there are many more different ways of performing KIAI – breathing technique.

In some martial arts the application of KIAI breathing technique is highlighted in the names of these disciplines, e.g. in China the style TAI CHI (CHI, Japan- KI), in Japan – AIKIDO (AI-KI-DO), IAI DO (KENDO), in Korea – HAP KIDO (HAP-KI-DO) or KUK KI TAE KWON DO etc. Also such a breathing technique is known as KIAI JUTSU and is closely related to technique AIKI JUTSU and KYUSHO JUTSU. According to some historians, the KIAI technique began to be used in Japan around 1400 years ago, first in swordsmanship.

Therefore, KIAI breathing technique is used in karate, judo, kung-fu, kendo, ju-jutsu (KIAI jutsu), tae kwon do (kihap or kyap), also in wrestling (when throwing the opponent), boxing and kick-boxing (when performing strikes), fencing as well as in lots of other martial arts. We can say that breathing technique Kiai jutsu or Kipahsul (Korean) is the shout - used as a Weapon. With a certain KIAI technique, a martial arts master can frighten, paralyze and even knock down his opponent (famous Japanese skill Kiai jutsu or Chinese Noi chun or Korean Kipahsul) .

The technique of breathing with a loud exhalation (shout) is known in many nations. It was used by ancient Vikings, Maori, Scots, Mongols, Chinese, American Indians, Mexican soldiers, various Russian tribes, and many others. One of the funniest KIAI is in old Maori dance form Haka, but it is certainly KIAI.

It is interesting that the strong scream (KIAI) can be heard from various sportspersons not only in martial arts but in other sports, too. Some examples are: athletes (shot putters, javelin throwers etc.), weightlifters, as well as skiers (when leaving the start). The loud scream (KIAI) can also

be noticed in tennis when players run a stronger shot, but it is not the only case. Many athletes give a scream of support to his team or a scream (shout) of victory.

All of the above goes for the thesis that the real KIAI is not the consequence of willing to act. On the other hand, it is true that it can be trained and perfected.

As soon as you have started thinking about correct breathing as well as its importance for your body, you have already profited.

Enough to understand KIAI – the powerful shout!





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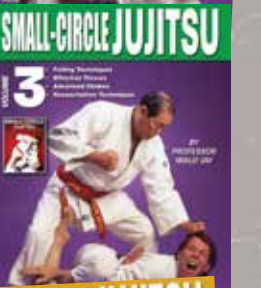
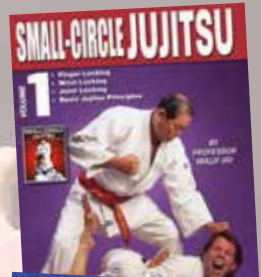
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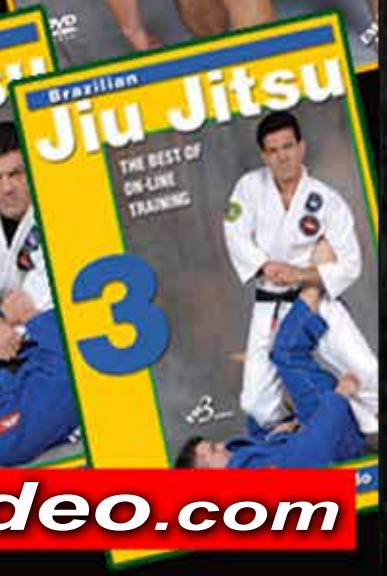
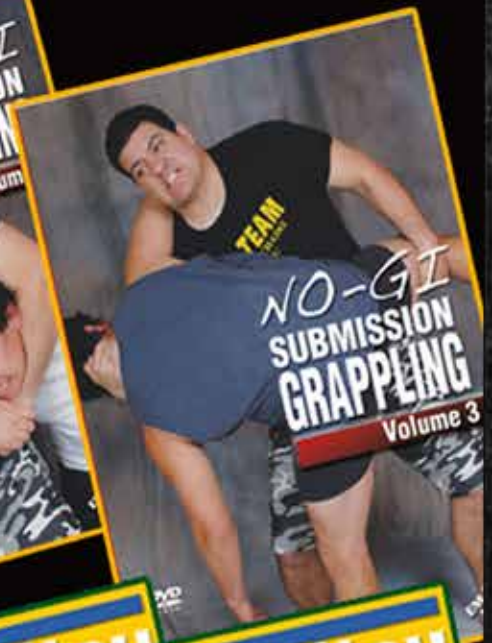
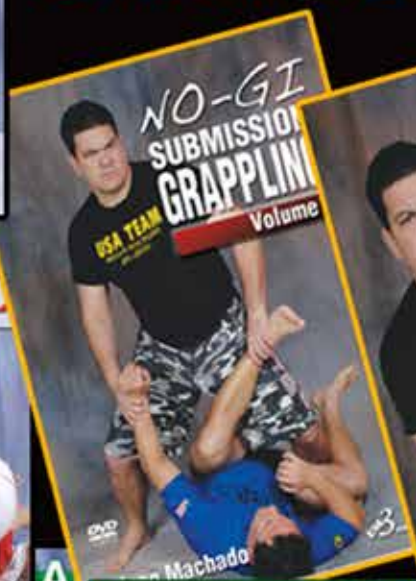
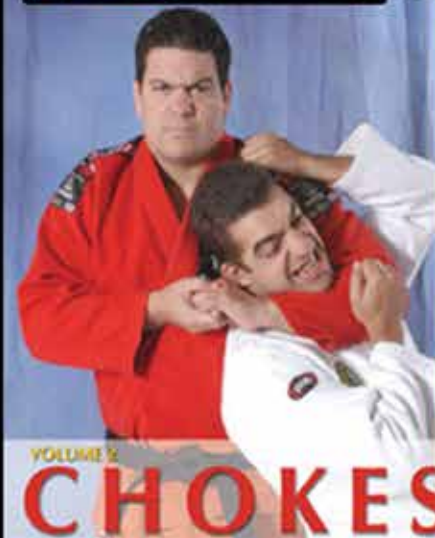
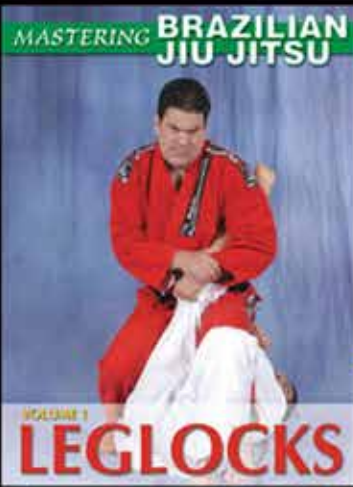
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THE HISTORY OF THE BELT IN MARTIAL ARTS

Grading and Ranking

By David Sensei Stainko - 7th Dan Mixed Martial Sciences

Gradings- ranking in martial arts varies from skill to skill and from style to style although for all of them it defines the degree of the disciple's knowledge. The general rule is that the knowledge a master has is formed into a system and certain style in order to transfer it to his disciples. The history of ranking is very long and it has been following the appearance of particular skills, and the current ranking system (belt, Dan) which appeared shortly after World War II has spread quickly worldwide and was accepted in almost all of styles.

The belt, the Dan- what do these terms mean for martial arts?

The history of the belt is very interesting. In ancient China, the belt was , in the beginning , used for suspending trousers, but later it was also used for inserting some valuable items or weapons for personal defence. Different colours of the belt showed the social order, clan or region the wearer belonged to. Moreover, the colour of belt could also show which style of martial arts the man practised as the colours differed from school to school. Ranking at schools (styles) in China followed the pattern- the beginner, the more advanced disciple (assistant) and the master. Such type of ranking is also present in some schools nowadays. Between the two world wars Japan used the system of ranking in which the traditional symbols of colours was used: white for beginners and black for masters. These colours symbolized the colours of life and death. The white colour, in contrast to the western concept, is the colour of death so that the white kimono and the white belt symbolized that the disciple comes to sacrifice himself and rejects his previous life and therefore accepts a more sophisticated understanding of life. When the disciple gains the master belt (in black colour) it shows that he has won the fear from death ; that's why his attitude to life and death is something natural and he accepts it without any fear. There has been a rule that when the disciple puts on the belt once, he doesn't take it off throughout all his practice. The kimono is changed because the disciple grows and becomes stronger as well as it gets ruined by frequent trainings. But what happens with the belt? What makes the belt change the colour and what meaning does it have? Well, the belt is white in the beginning, but through long training it becomes yellowish (titled-Mudansha) from the disciple's frequent sweating.

As practice was held in nature the belt would become greenish from sweat and grass and later purple brown from dust and soil while practising in the yards of a certain school. By the longtime training the belt got soaked with sweat, grass, soil, dust and even with the disciple's blood becoming dark brown i.e.dirty black (titled-Yudansha). If we have the knowledge

how the colours of the belt were made and how they changed from white to black, we can understand the link between a colour and the length of the disciple's practice and development.

Different schools or styles have different belt colours to rank the disciple's development from the beginner to the master as well the time intervals necessary for passing from one level of knowledge to the higher one. However, it's common to all schools that the colour of the belt (KJU) has the meaning of ranking and grading the disciple's knowledge (create – Mikonosuke Kawaishi master of ju jucu and judo - Paris 1948, and master Gichin Funakoshi -1953).

The beginner's white colour is somewhere changed with yellow, and somewhere else with orange, while in a higher degree of knowledge, it can be replaced with green or blue, afterwards with brown (red and purple in some styles) and finally with the master's black colour. It is also common to almost all the skills that the necessary time span between the beginner's to the master's degree of knowledge is nearly the same, about four years. For example, in karate (Shotokan, Goyu -ryu, Wado-ryu, Oyama-ryu and Shito-ryu) the necessary time interval from the white to the black belt is at least four years to maximum four and a half years. The only exception is the traditional style Uechi-ryu which requires five years' practice from the white to the black belt. Such time interval is also needed in some traditional Kung-fu, Ju jutsu or Brazilian jiu jitsu style (with obligation competition). In Judo the average interval from the white to the black belt is four years. Masters wear the black belt from 1st to 5th Dan, the white-red from 6th to 8th and the red one from 9th to 11th Dan. The red colour symbolizes the colour of blood, and it is considered that a master holding such a high title in his practice should have spilt lots of sweat or even "blood". Ranking in belts was introduced in some kung fu schools in 1974 (wu shu -1993) implying that there is an average time span between the beginner to the master of three and a half years. The master title Dan is called Toan (duan) in Chinese styles. In Korean styles Tae kwon do, Tang soo do, Hwa rang do and Hap ki do, it normally takes four years from the first degree- the white belt to achieve the master of the skill- the black belt. The exception in martial arts is Savate (the French boxing) where the ranking from the beginner to the master is not in the colour of the belt, but in the colour of the gloves; so that the beginner wears blue gloves, the competitors who are the masters of the skill have the silver ones, but the supreme knowledge is shown with masters who either wear silver or honorary platinum gloves. The time needed to reach the level of the master of the silver glove is three and a half years. Before World War II savate practitioners used to wear the belts as well as some boxers before World War I. Nowadays boxers, kick boxers, savate fighters and fighters in UFC (MMA) compete for the world champion's belt, which is somehow a tribute to tradition. Beginners in wrestling and boxing also need about 4 years of practice to achieve the master rank.



What is the meaning of DAN ranking in martial arts? (create Jigoro Kano -1886)

In JAPAN -"Jiki dan" would, in free translation, mean the personal consultation with the master, therefore, the sign Dan has the meaning of time interval which the master of martial arts, the wearer of the black belt spends in active training or knowledge transfer with the consultation of his tutor as the older and more experienced one whose knowledge he is going to inherit. It is interesting that the difference in ranking from the master of the black belt "the 1st Dan" to the top master skill of "the 10th Dan" is small, so that the expected time interval between the 1st Dan and the 2nd Dan is two to three years. For the third Dan it takes two, or three years in some disciplines. After getting the third Dan you need three or four years to reach the 4th Dan. The 5th Dan implies about 17 years of continuous training and for the 6th Dan you should have 22 to 25 years' practice. The 7th Dan is obtained

Grading and Ranking

after 35 years of practice, and the 8th Dan requires 40 years of frequent exercise, studying and teaching the skill. The master of the skill is then about 55 years old (there are subtle differences regarding the style). The 9th Dan is given to the masters more than 60 years old and still active in practising, studying and teaching the skill of fight. Finally, the 10th Dan is obtained by the masters whose age passes over the age of 69 presuming that they are still active in training, studying and transferring the knowledge of the martial arts. There are only 9 Dans in some Korean styles.

The 11th and the 12th Dans are exceptional and only Judo (and traditional Ju-jucu, Aikido, some traditional styles both in China and Korea) have them, but these titles of judo masters are mainly theoretical. To understand their ranking better, one should know a little about Zen philosophy. For example, the classification in twelve Dan master titles represents the idea of one year interval. In Japan philosophy, the famous Zen master Hyakujo (Pui Chang-726-814) declared the proverb: „A day without work is a day without food“. It would figuratively mean that the master should practise and progress every day, every



month, all the year and permanently all his life. Moreover, the theoretical title of the master of the 12th Dan is based on Zen philosophy. It is interesting that the master wears the white belt, which is related to closing the circle (such a circle is called samsara in Zen philosophy), and, thus, completing one cycle. In fact it is a kind of a trap of ancient masters (J.Kano?) because Zen philosophy knows neither the end nor the beginning. In other words, the more a master knows about the skill, the more he becomes aware of his lack of knowledge. That's why enlargement turns into reduction. Moreover, no master of any martial arts can say he has all the answers, which means that a cycle can't be finished because it is endless. The end is only and exclusively- the death (only J.Kano have 12th).

It is also interesting that many folk forms of wrestling have a belt in the equipment so that the common technique of knocking down the rival is linked to the technique of catch for the belt (European-for the belt, Glima, Japanese- Sumo, etc.). Lots of wrestling masters decorate their belts in a special way. The belts in Sambo skill are the same as in Judo to the black belt, then comes the black one with the colour of the national flag, after which follow



the so called international belts- in the colours of the medals: bronze,silver and gold, following on top by the gold belt with the colour of the national flag. The belt is also worn in certain folkdance fighting skills as Brazilian Capoeira. In Capoeira, the practitioners achieve the master title cordao (cord- lace), and they use the belt to show which region they come from or as an ornament to tie the laces on. Some old masters of martial arts in Burma (Bando, Burman boxing and Thaing skills) tattoo the degrees of their knowledge on the body of the practitioner, as well as in India, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos and somewhere in Malaya.

On the other hand, with the Sikhs in India , the mastership in martial arts is shown by the turban, although not by its colour but by the size, weight and decorations on it.

The belt is also worn in Japan fencing skill - Kendo (Tare) and archery- Kyudo.

The masters who have got the master title in at least three martial disciplines or sports are called the masters of mixed martial arts, and the experts among them who have published research papers in several fighting skills or sports are called the experts for mixed martial sciences. According to some sources there are about thirty such experts in the world. It is interesting that among the leading experts for mixed martial sciences,besides men,there are also a few women and disabled persons. They are mostly unknown to the general public.

CONCLUSION

Some experts think that the story of how colours of the belt were created by longterm training is an old myth and a kind of legend, but it has a logical and historical meaning and presents the basic idea of the change of belt colour.

DAN- the title in martial arts is connected to an old Japanese (Chinese) mind game GO, but this fact can't be proven either.

There are some masters who think the black colour might be linked with the ancient tradition of swimming teams in Japan,but this fact can't be proven.

Various belt colours for the beginners were invented by M.KAWAISHI in Paris (France) between 1935 and 1948, but their interpretation of symbolism differs from the east to the west as the understanding of symbolism does in the eastern and western culture respectively.

The real truth is that neither Dr. J.KANO and M.KAWAISHI left any precise and written instructions.

However, tradition tells us of the white belt that becomes black after longterm training, and when one deserves and gets such a belt, he doesn't change it until the belt after longterm training turns into white again, as well as the master's hair; which in fact presents the waste of the material. 🐼

KATA

An Important Part of Martial Arts

By David Sensei "Stainko"

Prof. of Kinesiology - Master 7th Dan MMS

KATA (Form) –Japan

KUEN (Form) – China

*HYONG (hyung, ITF –tul,
WTF- poomsae , pattern) - Korea*

QYONG- Vietnam

AKA- Burma

KHAWANKAY –Kashmiri

OBYAZATELNYY (Form) – Russia

FORM- Europa,America

Kata is a form of unique obligatory exercises involving a series of hand and foot techniques of punches and kicks connected by certain moving, and these movements represent a fictional fight against an imaginary opponent. Therefore kata is a defined series of striking techniques suitable for training martial arts techniques. Kata is also choreographed patterns of movements practised either solo or in pairs (practised is also on the team). Solo training of kata is the primary form of practice in some martial arts, such as – Japanese fencing - Iai do. In the martial skills of the East like judo, aikido, kung-fu, ju- jitsu, tae kwon do as well as karate, the old masters perform these exercises properly to stay in good physical condition. Some movements in kata require from the practitioner an exceptional balance, the others endurance and breathing control. By practising various kata one used to reach universality, or to exercise different striking techniques and keep good physical condition.



The first well- known kata included Indian ways of fighting eg. nata and varamushti (lightning fist), the original predecessors of popular yoga exercises that the Indian monk Bodhidharma rearranged and completed with the movements of Chinese combat style, so-called chi-chi. These exercises were formed in order to develop body fitness, raising concentration as well as punch strength of the monks. He completed the exercises in 18 techniques. The essential part in kata has always been the technique and rhythm of breathing, which was indicated by Bodhidharma himself. By exercising kata the practitioner had to be filled with a kind of peacefulness, determination, with controlled performing in the strength and speed of the movements enriched with the harmony of techniques of a certain martial art. Breathing is here a very important link between physical and mental moves. For each kata there has - bunkai or certain techniques contained in them. Especially performed kata for beginners or for masters. Although we should stick to certain rules in teaching katas, many masters violate these rules (they determine the number and order of teaching katas).

In judo kata (form) is an exercise that consists of a number of throwings and grips which are performed in strict order accompanied by a strictly regulated ceremonial. There are seven classic kata and one extra for women, but since 1960 there has also been a kata for self-defence. Recently some masters have been performing even eleven katas.

In other martial arts of the East kata exercises usually include from 20 to 50 techniques of punching, kicking and blocking that are performed according to a fixed order and movement lines. Lately, since 1965 there have been competitions in performing kata divided in two categories of exercises: so-called tough (strong) and soft (with gentle movements). Later, since around 1974, kata have been also performed with music. In such competitions the judges evaluate the total impression of kata performance together with the artistic impression. Some modern forms are performed in tournaments and include gymnastics related elements, such as backflips, cartwheels and splits. Many modern katas can also be performed with various weapons.

It is considered that nowadays there is a huge number of various katas, but the majority of them are not generally used. Some experts think that there are 400 various katas worldwide. Most of the kata were named after some famous master from the past periods of certain martial arts. The ancient masters of martial arts created the kata as a way to pass along their knowledge to future students. Lots of masters agree that the essential kata are t'ai chi chuan (supreme ultimate boxing) in kung fu, sanchin (meditation in motion) in karate or the basic pinan (heian) accompanied by seven already existing in judo and five basic in tae kwon do.

Of interest is the number 108, which has a special symbolic meaning in kata (zen philosophy).

In kung fu - the number 108 (mok jan dong) - position exercise, also has 108 katas in karate.

Some kata may therefore be known by two(three) names, one in Japanese, the other in Chinese.

Many masters of martial arts have been performing kata, the most prominent being: T. Sakumoto (the world champion, WKF) from Japan in performing so called tough kata from shotokan (ryuei-ryu) style. Canadian J. Frenette (the ninefold world champion, WAKO version) is the best in performing soft kata from sankudo a substyle in karate.

One of the best connoisseurs of tae kwon do forms is Korean (English) master Hee Il Cho.

In kung fu skill we must mention the masters in performing kuen - Al Dacascos and Eric Lee.

Here is the list of some of the most frequent katas (forms) :

Karate (Shotokan, Wado ryu, Goyu ryu, Shito ryu, Sankukai, Uechi ryu, Oyama ryu) - Sanchin, Kanshiva, Seirui, Seisan, Sesan, Konchin, Saiha, Pinan (from 1 to 5), Seisanbankai, Yantsu, Heian (Pinan - from 1 to 5, stable and safe), Tekki (from 1 to 3, iron horseman), Fuji kata, Unsu (arms clouds), Seichin, Bassai sho, Daini seisan, Goyushiho sho (54 steps), Nijusshiho, Jion, Bassai dai (punching fortress), Gankaku, Chinte, Randori nino kata, Jitte (Jutte, ten hands), Teki nidan, Kanku (kushanku 1 and 2, into heaven), Wankan (kings crown), Passai, Sochin (power and control), Meikyo (great mirror), Ji-in (Gi in), Gojushiho-dai, Isshin ryu, Izumaki sho, Ten no kata, Naihanchi, Kushanku, Chinto, Seishan, Randori no kata (from 1 to 4 - Nanbu), Sanpodai, Sanposho, Ikkyoku, Kanshu, Saifa, Seiyunchin, Shisochin, Sepai, Kururunfa, Suparinpai, Hangetsu (crescent



An Important Part of Martial Arts



moon), Hisatake te kata, Tani te kata, Gudrun, Kaminari, Tsubame, Gekisai dai, Tensho, Shinsei, Niseishi, Bassai, Ryudoshindo, Rohai, Chunking, Sanseyryu, Ongyo, Yuchinin, Nabikiri, Itosu (from 1 to 5), Empi (Wanshu, years swallows),

Taik yoku (from 1 to 5), Seyuchin, Sanseru, Naifanchin(1-3), Naifunchin, Unshu, Kato kata, Tomari(from 1 to 3), Asai (Junro) kata, Anan, Sandarui, Enpi (Empi), Semping dai, Hakutsuru,

Matsumura no rohai, Matsumura no bassai, Matsumura no sanchin, Hakucho, Nipaipo, Papporen, Aoyagi, Juroko, Miyoyo, Shinpa, Matsukaze, Shihotai(from 1 to 7), Nanbu(from 1 to 5),

Seinchin, Hyaku hachi, Kaiten – randori no kata (1 and 2), Suwari – randori no kata (1 and 2), Gyaku-randori no kata (1 and 2), Teki shodan (the dance of death), Ananku (Anan, Ananko),

Wado ryu hidden kata, Taisabaki (from 1 to 3), Sunakake (Sakugava) no kon (1 and 2), Shi ho hai,

With tools or weapons ; Bo-kata (1 and 2), Jo- kata, Yara, Kingwa, Yavara- kata, Hiryo ongyo,

Ju-no kata, Tonfa- kata, Isshin ryu bo, Kama- kata, Nunchaku- kata (from 1 to 3), Yoshi- kata, Isshin ryu- sai, Nage no- kata, Tsukenshitanaku, Tenryo no- kata, Sakugawa no- kata, Semping dai, Yanata no- kata, Chunking sho, Oshimata ke shii, Daita keshin, Bokken -kata, Tessen jutsu- kata (fan kata), Kusari gama- kata, Manriki gusari- kata (force 10.000 people) Sai kata (from 1 to 5), Tsuhenkita haku no sai, Kho – bu ni – cho kama, Nama higa no tonfa,

Kendo - Katana no kata (from 1 to 4) , Iai do, Naginata do (kata), Tanto jutsu (kata),

Iai do - Ipponme, Yohonme, Yoponme, Hihonme, Sanbonme, Kyu honme, Hana honme,

Judo (Ju-jutsu, Aikido, Sambo, Bjj, Kempo) - Randori-no kata, Kime-no kata, Itsutsu-no kata,

Ju-no kata, Nage-no kata, Katame-no kata, Gonosen-no kata (create M.Kawaishi), Gyaku no kata, Koshiki-no kata, Go no kata (create T.Daigo), Kaeshi - no kata (create Y. Tani),

Kodokan goshin - jutsu, Sei-ryuoko-zenyo-kokumin-taiiku no kata (create J.Kano), Nage-waza, Katame-waza, Kata-gatame, Yiu-waza, Gokyo-no waza, Tuidi-waza, Junuki-hirakinuki, Keri goho-no kata, Kata - guruma, Kata Ashi-dori, Kata - Te jime, Yoko - gake, Tambo - no kata, Jo - kata, Ura -no kata (create K.Mifune), Bokken kata, Gyaku-waza, Shime-waza, Ne - waza, Hangetsu, Shinken sho bu - no kata,

Wu-shu (Kung-fu) - Tai chi chuan (long exercise, from 1 to 5, style Yang, Ho, Sun, Wu and from 1964 Yun - tong), Tai chi chuan (short exercise), Pa kwa chuan (8 style boxing), Pa tuan chin-chuan (exercise with swords), Tang lang chuan (Pray in movement), Chung-kuo, Tai chi chi kong, Chi-kung, Chung-kuo chuan (the fight of strong hands), Snake style (kuen),

Yishou-kun, Moi fah kuen, Choy-lat kuen, Wang tsung-yueh, 108 mok jan dong (108 position exercise), Hung gar (about 25 forms), Chang kuen form, Cham kuen (searching hands),

Nanguan form, Tai chi gong, Tai chi chien (exercise with a sword), Biu ji (hitting fingers), Sil lim tao (a little idea), Shiu lim tao, Tiger style (kuen), Wing tsun kuen (singing in spring),

Gung gee fu kuen, Yang long kuen, Tam-tuie kuen, Tuet jin kuen, Cha kuen (long hands),

Wu ching kuen (five ancestors), Quan fa (techniques fist), Xing yi kuen (form and mind),

Dao yu kuen (find the way), Hou quan kuen (monkey style), Crane style (kuen), Tien mon,

Lohan chi kung, 12 akas of Thaing skill, 18 Qyongs of viet vo dao (vovinam), Long ho qyong, Hau qyong, Wu bu kuen, Leopard style (form), Long quan (dragon style kuen - from 1 to 15), Chuji chang kuen, Qi nng kuen, Xa qyong, Ba qyong, Ngu mon qyong, Lien hoa linh, Wu dang (form-hammer), Shaolin dao kuen, Zhang form, Blue scorpion form, Hong qyong,

Tai shing kuen (monkey style), Zui quan kuen (drunken style), She quan kuen (snake fist), Yang gang kuen (stick family Yang), Kung ji fook -fu kuen (power that controls the tiger),

Tae kwon do (Hwa rang do, Tang soo do, Hapkido) - Tae geug hyong (1 and 2), Tan -gun, Hwa-rang, Choong-moo, Gwang-gae, Po-eun, Ge-baek, Yoo-sin, Se-jong, Ul-ji, Chong-jang, Choi-yong, Sam-il, Ko-dang, Tong-il, Dan-gun, Do-san, Won-hyo, Yul-kok, Yul-gok, Toi-gye, Joon-gun, Chon-ji, Yi-dan, Giecho hyung il bu, Giecho hyung yi bu, Giecho hyung sam bu, Giecho hyung il bu sang gup, Giecho hyung yi bu sang gup, To-san, Won -hya, Chun-gun,

Evi-am, Moon-moo, So-san, Seo san, Yoh-ge, U-nam, Palgwae (from 1 to 8), Hae-san (1 and 2),

With tools or weapons; Bong hyung (from 1 to 3), Dan (Tahn) bong hyung, Sila pole, Jung bong, Jahng bong hyung, Cha - rywk, Kho - bu ni - cho kama, Park jong soo, Kwon - moo, Sai hyong (from 1 to 3),

Most hyong originates from various historical daynasty (various military commanders).

Boxing (Kick-boxing, Muay-thai, Savate, MMA, UF) - the fight with an imaginary opponent (shadow fight) two minutes for three times or three minutes for three times (precisely



An Important Part of Martial Arts



defined sequence of exercises – have elements kata). In Savate there have been recently certain kata accompanied with music (a new version of modern skills, is not related to the old art jeu marseillais – game from Marseille). Old art (game from Marseille, dance – form) is unfortunately forgotten.

Yoga- Hatha- Suryanamaskar (sun greeting) - a morning or evening exercise, Vajramukti- Tenjiku naranokaku (fight techniques of India), Danakataka (closed fist gift),

Capoeira – dance – form (basic movements), Haka - Maori war dance (old version),

Eskrima (Arnis, Kalaripayattu) - dance-form (old exercise – basic movements),

Bartitsu – stick fighting (old basic exercise), Juego dell garote – stick fighting old exercise,

La Canna (Le Baton, Juego del palo, Jogo do pau) – stick fighting (old basic exercise),

Quarterstaff (Singlestik, India stik fighting, Africa stik fighting) – old basic exercise


Some competitors in martial arts believe that kata practice does not make sense. They consider that kata (form) are not helpful in sport fight. Such an opinion is totally wrong.

Kata exercise has a very useful application in the fight; it is very useful for practicing new techniques, also practicing kata can serve as an active break from hard training.

The fact is that some of the best fighters in his exercise use certain kata.

It is interesting that sometimes masters adapt certain kata to themselves and their style (often the same kata is performed differently in different styles). Certainly it is not in the spirit of tradition but the new time imposes new rules. Regardless of the modern way of training, kata will remain one of the most common practice in martial arts. Every few years the number of katas in the world grows.

It is interesting that no expert in the world in mixed martial science knows all the names of katas, nor their final number. Some stick fighting skills also have kata elements as well as some dance form (basic or old version). One of the funniest kiai is in dance form Haka, but it is certainly kiai.

However, kata exercise will remain ingrained in martial arts forever. 

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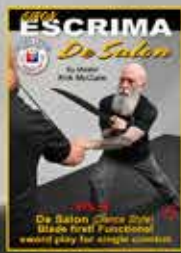
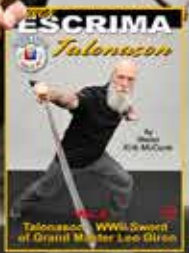


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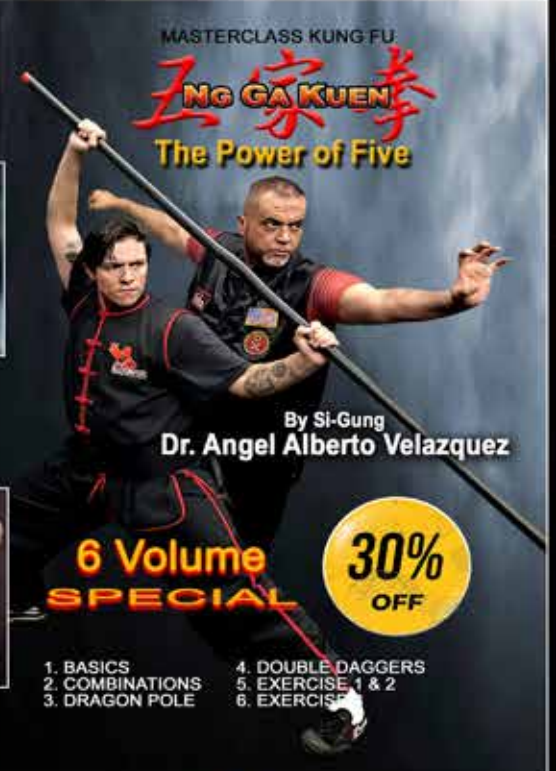
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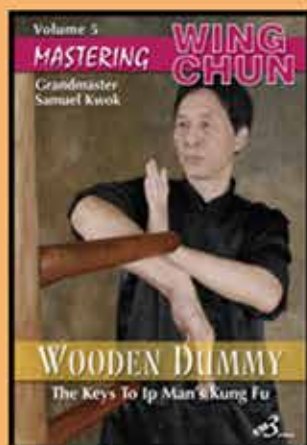
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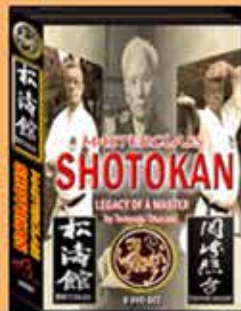
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WHAT IS BUNKAI IN A KATA?

By DAVID "SENSEI" STAINKO, prof. | mag. of kinesiology

Since ancient times, practicing martial arts has meant using and demonstrating katas. We can say that katas (forms) have accumulated knowledge of many techniques used in various martial arts. Ancient martial arts masters often conveyed their knowledge and martial arts techniques to their students by performing various katas (forms). The purpose of each individual kata as well as a basic usage of techniques that are being transferred in that kata is called Bunkai. Bunkai (分解), is a Japanese word which, when translated, means „to analyze“ or „to break down“, i.e. “explain“ something.

Certain martial arts instructors believe that Bunkai is simply an analysis of an individual kata on its shorter counterparts and the explanation of how a technique from those parts of the kata are, later on, connected and form a whole kata. Such way of thinking is only partially true. So, even at the start of learning a certain kata we use different didactic methods. When learning a kata, we mostly use a, so-called, analytical method. In this method of teaching certain motoric movements (movements and techniques in a kata) are learned broken down and in phases. After acquiring each individual phase of the kata separately, we turn to learning the movements and techniques from a kata as a whole. This is when we can shift from an analytical method of teaching to a synthetic method, i.e. to a wholesome method of teaching in which the content is learned (the movements and techniques of a certain kata) and performed as a whole.

So, certain martial arts instructors believe that Bunkai is the same as the analytical method of teaching, but they are wrong there. The word Bunkai has a somewhat different meaning. Bunkai signifies the purpose of a certain kata, its basic technique which is a part of that very kata as well as its usability in self-defense. Along with Bunkai, the word Bunseki is also used. It signifies an analytical technique which is performed in certain parts of a kata and new ideas and ways in which it can be utilized in self-defense. Along with these two words, the Japanese word Oyo is also used and it denotes the knowledge of recognizing a certain technique performed in a certain kata (form) as well as its purposeful usage in martial arts.

Today, some martial arts instructors believe that we simply cannot surely know or fathom the entire and original meaning of performing certain techniques that are used in certain old katas as well as their entire purpose and usability in certain martial arts. This is why those instructors talk about how, basically, there are 3 different views on Bunkai and its understanding in a certain kata. The Japanese terms Omote, Ura and Honto are used for those 3 approaches and views on Bunkai in katas.

The word Omote means “superficial” and denotes that which a person sees is the only sure thing, i.e. how one sees a movement in a kata is the very purpose of that same technique and an individual kata. The other way of understanding Bunkai is called Ura and, when



translated, it means “behind”. In other words, the word Ura means to be hidden behind something and not entirely visible. The third approach to Bunkai is called Honto and means “real” or an actual approach to understanding Bunkai in a kata (form).

The Omote approach is lacking because, oftentimes, how we see things does not necessarily mean that they are truly that way, i.e. we need to have certain martial arts knowledge so that a person can understand what he or she is looking at. The Omote approach gives us an opportunity to assume, i.e. a possibility to give a rushed, superficial and incomplete view on the meaning of Bunkai in a certain kata. The Ura approach allows us to search for what is hidden under a kata performance, i.e. what is not entirely visible to us. The weakness of such an approach in the understanding of Bunkai is that, if you truly really “know” a certain kata, it is assumed that you must know and understand its Bunkai. An instructor that taught you a certain kata had to introduce you to its Bunkai purpose and this is when it won't be unknown or hidden to you anymore. So, if your instructors taught you katas in a correct way (by explaining the Oyo and Bunseki techniques), you will know its Bunkai as well. In that case, the only approach which is correct for you will be the Honto approach – the real understanding of Bunkai.

A New Era in Martial Arts



Certain misunderstandings around the correct and whole comprehension of Bunkai in a given kata stem from the fact that the oldest known katas were formed in India 1500 years ago and, later on, in the Shaolin Temple in China. A couple of other known katas were formed 400 years ago in China. Still, the majority of the rest of the katas are from 50 to 100 years old. Many instructors conveyed a certain kata from one generation of their students to the other while, oftentimes, making a couple of changes to the given kata. This is how some instructors have, consciously or unconsciously, affected the change in technique of a kata (oyo) as well as the basic purpose of a certain kata, i.e. its Bunkai. This is how some katas were given a different name depending on their style and was performed differently (a certain oyo technique). Consequently, its Bunkai was more or less changed. A good karate expert will be able to recognize the style of karate in which a given kata is being performed based on someone's rendering (performance) of the kata itself.

As an example, we can mention the oldest known kata sanchin which was most likely longer in its original form and is, today, divided into the sanchin and tensho kata. The kata is now known in a somewhat different and changed form and, depending on the style of karate, under the terms: Seisan, Seishan or Hangetsu. In different kung fu styles, the sanchin kata is in China known under the following terms: saam jin, san chan, sanchien, samchian, sanchiem, sanzhan, zach zan. This depends on the Chinese region and dialect from which a given kung fu style originates from. In Korea, the sanchin kata is known under the name seishan kata and it is being performed in certain Korean styles. So, the same kata is performed somewhat differently depending on the martial arts style and has

a different oyo (the technique of performing certain movements) and, consequently, a bit different Bunkai although the very purpose is basically identical.

One of the reasons why today's kata practitioners cannot understand Bunkai in a certain kata is the reason why practicing those katas is approached superficially. In past times in Japan, the sanchin kata in certain styles of karate was learned for 2 or more years. Today, learning the sanchin kata takes only a couple of months. A similar situation is seen with other katas where the trainees are usually focused on the "correct" performance of the kata techniques as part of the sports discipline. They are more or less interested in its Bunkai or partially interested, i.e. the amount that will be enough to gain a competitive result. However, in more recent years (from 2024 onwards), the meaning of the kata, i.e. its Bunkai in karate is given the same importance as to its performance. So, according to the rules of the WKF, in more recent times, the total allowed time for a kata and the demonstration of its Bunkai is 6 minutes.

While some styles understand the purpose of the kata and give certain significance to its Bunkai, there are also those styles and sports competitions where Bunkai is not a major concern. For example, certain kung fu or tea kwon do performances include a sportsman who is performing a certain routine and shows off flexibility of his movements, his gymnastic and acrobatic skills as well as some circus-acrobatic skills which he has fitted in his kata to show a certain "dance" choreography. The audience is clapping, the judges give out titles and trophies and no one is actually interested in the purpose of the kata, i.e. its Bunkai. A similar thing happens when performing a kata with weapons. It is not uncommon for a trainee to perform various tricks by throwing a stick, katana or a kana by also performing circus-acrobatic skills that are part of his "creative" kata and his "dance" choreography in which there is no room left for its Bunkai. So, the basic purpose of those katas (forms) is to win a trophy and its meaning as well as the usage of the oyo technique in self-defense (or in a real fight) is of no interest to anyone.

When you watch a performance of a more or less known kata, wanting to recognize the oyo techniques and understand their purpose and their Bunkai will be of the utmost importance for your martial arts experience and knowledge. In order to recognize oyo techniques as well as their purpose in self-defense, you need to be acquainted with the

“When learning a kata, we mostly use a, so-called, analytical method.”



An Important Part of Martial Arts

basic terms and the historical development of certain martial arts styles. So, you need to give up on the “sports” way of thinking and the sports way of performing a kata. Go back to the historical development of certain martial arts styles. You need to accept the fact that wrestling, jiu jitsu and karate techniques are used in judo, and wrestling (sumo), kung fu, judo and jiu jitsu techniques are used in karate. You need to constantly have that in mind in order to recognize an oyo technique in a certain kata. There is also the possibility that the instructors- experts in certain martial arts will understand a given oyo technique differently. Reasons for this are varied and, usually, sum up to the usage of certain oyo techniques with a correct bunseki way of thinking in self-defense, i.e. there is far more than just one purpose in a real fight.



For example, in certain karate katas, some will, with the help of the bunseki way of thinking in the oyo technique, recognize a hand block, while others will see it as a jiu jitsu grasp with a knee lever. In other karate katas and their oyo techniques, some will recognize the judo foot throw- deashi barai while others will say that it is a foot kick. Some instructors-experts will recognize a judo throw kata guruma (or a sumo wrestling throw) in a certain karate kata while others will say that this is simply a performance of a double block. In case the performer-sportsman in a certain karate kata raises his leg, certain instructors will say (with a bunseki way of thinking) that he did it because he was attacked by an opponent who is performing a judo throw (e.g. deashi barai), another one will

say that the opponent attacked him with a foot kick (e.g. sokuto -fumikomi). However, a third might say that it is obvious how the performer was attacked by an opponent using a stick in a semi-circular motion. Oftentimes, performing an oyo technique from a certain karate kata has several (bunseki) applications in self-defense. Consequently, if you are not entirely sure in an oyo technique that is being used, you cannot surely recognize the whole Bunkai in that kata (form).

Certain karate instructors ask for an understanding of the oyo technique (bunseki) in a specific kata by solely relying on their knowledge in karate and the application of karate techniques and this is where they are often wrong. Sometimes the oyo technique can be recognized in some karate katas as a technique of other martial arts such as, for example, a sumo wrestling technique, a judo technique, a jiu jitsu technique, a kung fu technique. Some experts will even recognize it in a muay thai technique, a ninjutsu technique or even a capoeira technique, etc. Sometimes the application of a certain oyo technique in a karate, tae kwon do or kung fu kata is surprising. Because of this, young trainees mostly rely on their immaculate execution of a certain kata technique and a pre-learned application of an oyo technique as well as the very purpose of a Bunkai in a kata. Older and more experienced instructors have more knowledge about various oyo technique applications that are performed in certain katas and, consequently, a different, wholesome and usually a more correct understanding of a purpose of each kata as well as its Bunkai.

So, the word Bunkai signifies an analysis and a breakdown of a kata according to its phases and explains the meaning of the techniques as well as the purpose of each individual kata (form) in which at least 2 or more trainees take part. One trainee defends himself while

“Many MMA (UFC) fighters perform an oyo technique from certain katas as part of their exercise that they have learned before or have seen from someone else.”

the other one (or more trainees) are attacking him with kata techniques (oyo) in a pre-defined order. In some Bunkai katas there are only 2 trainees (one who is attacking and one who is defending himself), and in most tae kwon do katas there are 4 to 6 attackers. In some karate or kung fu katas, there are even more than 8 attackers where sometimes 2 attackers attack at the same time. In a sports presentation of a Bunkai kata there are only 2 attackers who are alternating in the attack or they simultaneously attack the trainee who is defending himself. The basic purpose of training katas with a Bunkai understanding is to train self-defense techniques up to total usability because none of the techniques (oyo) are not learned until they are usable (Bunseki) in changing combat conditions. Performing Bunkai katas is most similar to a real fight especially when they are rehearsed well and this is when anyone can realistically and credibly understand the purpose of each kata (form).

There are those instructors who believe that the number of katas is too big and propose that certain katas that use the same oyo techniques are connected in a way that the same techniques that are being repeated are reduced while other techniques could be connected to other katas in one single longer kata. Such way of thinking has its reasonable basis when we observe the performance of certain similar katas in one or more martial arts styles. Unfortunately, there are those martial arts instructors who believe that performing katas (forms), their purpose (Bunkai), as well as their techniques (oyo) are total nonsense. They believe that performing katas (not even with a Bunkai approach) has no use in a sports fight or a real fight, i.e. self-defense. They believe that performing katas is a total waste of time. Such way of thinking is completely wrong and shows a basic ignorance of the purpose of katas which are performed with Bunkai as well as the ignorance of using an oyo technique in a kata and bunseki to analyze the application of the same techniques in a real situation.

The reality is still different and shows us how many excellent fighters-sportsmen often use the “katas, forms, hyong, patern, kuen” in their work. Boxers use a well-known approach called shadowboxing. It is an exercise the same as a kata in which a person gives punches to an imaginary opponent. Here there are strictly defined “oyo” techniques, a “bunseki” and, of course, the exercise has its “Bunkai”, i.e. its purpose in performing a certain punch. A good boxing expert will, according to this exercise, be able to tell which school of boxing it belongs to (for example, English, American, Cuban or Russian school). It is less known that, in wrestling, there is an exercise known as shadow wrestling. The application of various oyo techniques from judo, jiu jitsu, aikido, tae kwon do, kung fu, karate, ko budo, kendo, muay thai katas as well as katas (forms) from other styles in real or sports fighting is truly quite large. This is why the Bunkai kata is of great significance.

Many today's MMA (UFC) fighters-sportsmen perform an oyo technique from some individual ones parts of certain katas as part of (to a lesser or greater extent) their exercise that they have learned before or have seen from someone else. There are many proofs for this kind of statement. As an example, we can add video material from many UFC competitions, various videos filmed during trainings as well as many movies that deal with a martial arts topic including famous actors as martial arts masters. Surely, all fighters (sportsmen-competitors) as well as numerous martial arts trainees wouldn't be performing those exercises if they didn't make sense. So, each kata (form) consists of its oyo techniques and, with a bunseki way of thinking about those techniques, we will achieve its full purpose and its Bunkai will be clear to us as well as the way in which it should be applied in a real fight. 🐅



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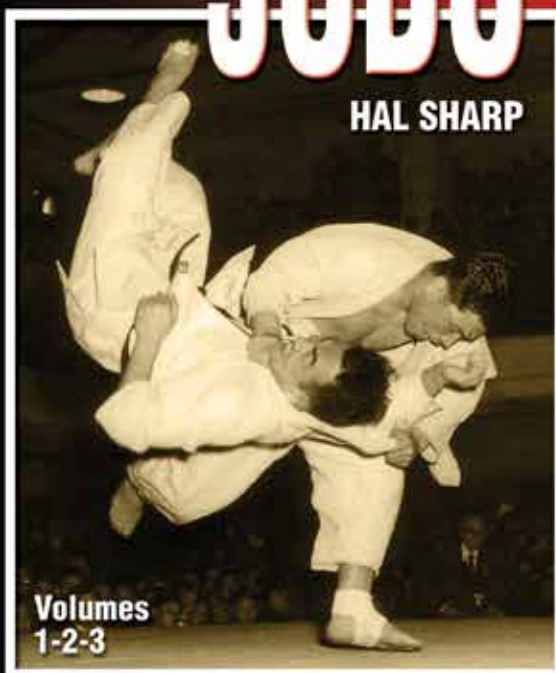
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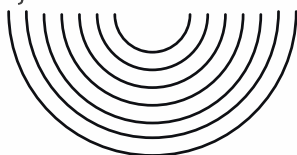
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WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT KARATE?

By David "Sensei" Stainko, 8th Dan Budokai karate
(Bu Do Kai Kara Te Do)

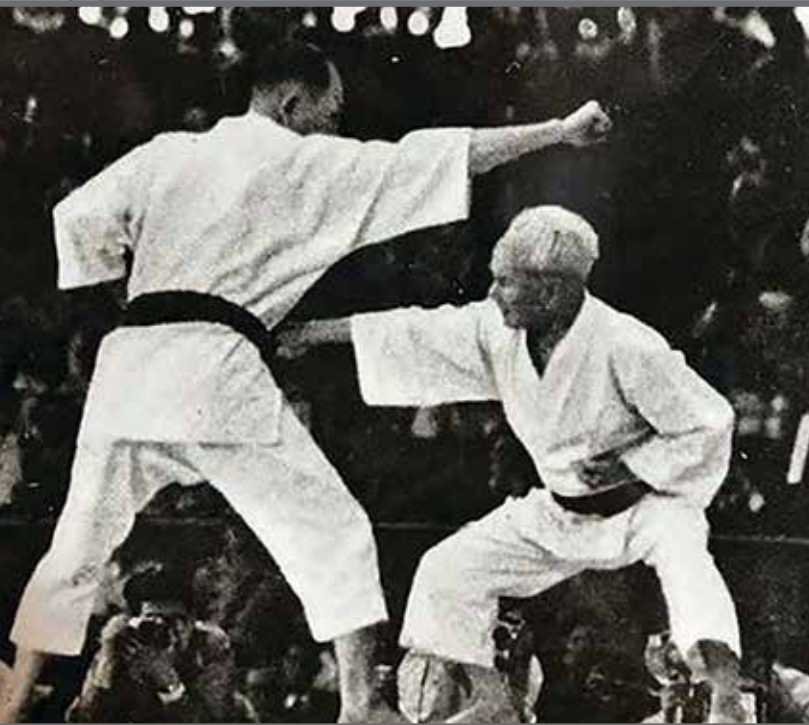
The art of karate or karate do (or karate jutsu) as it is commonly referred to is usually associated with Japan and often mistakenly believed to have been created and developed by the Japanese. It is true that Japan has greatly contributed to the evolution and organization of karate, however, its origins are found in Okinawa an island where many Chinese newcomers brought their knowledge of various martial arts. It is often the case that certain knowledge possessed by individuals from a certain martial art affects the development of some others in the nearby regions of a particular country or a neighboring country. The first Asian fighting arts are believed to have been created during China's Warring States Period (403 - 221 B.C.). Chinese martial arts evolved further after 520 A.D. when the fighting applications of internal energy were discovered and added to the existing martial styles. These new methods were developed at the Shaolin temple in Honan province.

Many Chinese who were not satisfied with life in China for various reasons went to Okinawa. The closest to them were the Ryukyu islands, of which Okinawa is the largest island. Native Okinawan fighting methods date back to before 616 A.D. The first fighting methods and weapons in Okinawa were without a doubt primitive and lacking in the sophistication of Chinese arts. It was after 616 A.D. that Okinawa entered the Iron Age and began producing metal tools and weapons. In that period, the influence of various Chinese martial arts had a great role on the general development of martial arts in Okinawa. Chinese martial arts that merged with the previous Japanese original martial arts (dance called mekata) and combined with the previous techniques (sumo, ju jitsu, yawara,) created a new martial art that the Okinawans simply called -Te. Te in Okinawa means "hand" and refers to boxing methods.

During Okinawa's Three Kingdoms Period 1187 - 1429 armed and unarmed techniques were tested and perfected in combat. In 1392, 36 families emigrated from China for cultural exchange and settled in Kume village (Naha city). Among these families were experts in the Chinese art of Chuan Fa (pronounced Kempo in Okinawa). During the subsequent reign of King Sho Shin 1477-1526, to establish his control and insure peace the first restrictions on weapons began. First the wearing of swords was banned and a stockpiling of confiscated weapons followed. The private ownership of any weapon was banned outright in 1609 when the Satsuma clan from Japan invaded Okinawa. 3,000 samurai warriors occupied Okinawa and controlled all aspects of policy. The inhabitants of Okinawa were forced to adapt to the newly created situation, so they also adapted their practice of martial arts to that time and the situation in which they found themselves.



What Do You Know About Karate?



As a result of continued disarmament Okinawan commoners began converting farming implements into weapons and continued the serious practice of unarmed fighting arts from China. Many trainees who practiced the Okinawan martial art -Te, left Okinawa and went to China to perfect their knowledge of martial arts. This covert activity was practiced in absolute secrecy due to the fact that possession of any weapon and the practice of Te was absolutely illegal. The Okinawan government and Japanese invaders knew skilled fighters were the only people who could challenge their authority. During the 1700's the study of fighting arts from China was heavy and Okinawan commoners trained with a severe determination knowing that their existence depended upon their ability to defeat a heavily armed and armored Japanese samurai with nothing but bare hands or improvised weapons.

During that Chinese influence on Japanese martial arts- Te, came to be known as Tode and a little later known as Kara Te meaning "China Hand". Practitioners of martial arts Kara Te are very quickly realized that they also need the knowledge of practicing with different weapons or other handy tools that will serve them for self-defense. The use of improvised weapons developed into a martial art of its own known as Ko Bu Jutsu, meaning "Ancient Martial Techniques". This Japanese martial art of fighting with different types of weapons is known today as - Ko budo. It is known that the following weapons have been traditionally used in karate

since ancient times: Bo-stick, sai-dagger, kama -sickle, nunchaku -connected sticks, tonfa - handled, katana - saber, tanto - small knife, naginata (polearm) as well as occasionally some other lesser-known weapons (tanbo, hanbo, tekko, eku, etc.) .

In Japan 1890. each major village had its own version of Kara Te art and prominent masters. Three villages had become famous for the practice of martial art Kara Te, they were Shuri, Tomari and Naha. The existing Kara Te styles were known as Shuri Te, Tomari Te and Naha Te. Famous Okinawan Karate masters include ; Higashionna Kanryo born March 10, 1853 in Naha village who traveled to China in 1873 and studied Chinese martial arts before returning to Okinawa in 1882. Itosu Anko was born in 1832 and practiced the arts of Shuri village. Uechi Kanbun born in 1877 went to China in 1897 to study and founded the style known today as Uechi Ryu. Considered "The great grandfather of - Kara Te" Matsumura Sokon or "Bushu" Matsumura (1860 -1930) was the instructor of many famous Okinawan masters. Some historians believe that he is the reason for today's name Budo (Bu shi - Bu do), for Japanese martial arts. One of Matsumura's students went on to become probably the most famous karate master to date Funakoshi Gichin (1868- 1957).

Funakoshi is considered "The father of karate" and is the Okinawan master responsible for introducing karate to Japan. Funakoshi was born in 1868 in the Okinawan capitol of Shuri. Funakoshi studied with karate masters Matsumura, Itosu, Azato, Kiyuna, Toonno and Niigaki. Funakoshi maybe not have been the best martial arts master of his time but he was educated and very intelligent and knew how to use his current position and show off his knowledge. In 1901 Funakoshi gave a demonstration of karate in Okinawa the led to karate being included into the physical education curriculum of Okinawan schools. By 1906 public karate demonstrations were common in Okinawa. In 1912 personnel from the Imperial Navy were sent to Okinawa to study karate. In 1917 Funakoshi traveled to Kyoto, Japan to demonstrate karate at the Grand Martial Art Hall. Funakoshi continued

to demonstrate his art to the Japanese and in the 1920's many Okinawan masters traveled to Japan to bring awareness of their arts.

It was during the 1920's and 30's that efforts were made to organize and classify the various styles. Up to this point karate had been referred to as Kara Te Jutsu or To Te Jutsu. This name paid tribute to three countries that contributed to its development. Kara Te Jutsu meant "China Hand Techniques", Kara from China, Te from Okinawa and Jutsu from Japan. In the early 1930's many karate masters decided to formally change the spelling in Japanese, and the meaning, of Kara Te to a homonym pronounced Kara Te but meaning "Empty Hand". Many reasons were offered for this name change including the emphasis on defeating ego and perfecting character, this being the "empty" of empty hand. Other claim it was named empty hand due to its emphasis on unarmed combat. The more accurate reasons are unfortunately political. During the early 1930's Japan was conducting military conquests in Manchuria and China and did not want a popular activity such as karate to have Chinese overtones or undue influence. Many people even refused to believe that Japanese karate had its roots in ancient China.

The meaning of the word Kara Te and in translation empty hand, as much as it was for the Japanese the easiest achievable desire for change, it is fundamentally far from the real truth. The main reason for this lies in the fact that the martial art of karate has never stopped using techniques in working with different weapons, which does not correspond to the name of the skill „empty hand“. While many variations and minor styles exist there are four main styles of Okinawan Karate. Shorin Ryu is the Japanese translation of Shaolin style and has its roots in styles of the Shuri and Tomari villages. Okinawan Goju Ryu means hard/soft style and is a combination of the styles of Naha and Tomari villages. Uechi Ryu is a Naha style named after its founder Uechi Kanbun. Isshin Ryu means "One Heart Style" and was based on all existing Okinawan styles especially Shorin Ryu.

There are four main styles of Japanese Karate. The original form brought to Japan by Funakoshi was simply referred to as Kara te jutsu or to Te jutsu and was a compilation of virtually every known Okinawan karate style unified into one. This form is often considered an encyclopedia of karate. Later Funakoshi's students named this style Shoto Kan Karate. Shoto was Funakoshi's pen name when he wrote and kan means house or home in Japanese. Shoto Kan Karate then translates as "karate practiced at Shoto's house". Japanese Goju Ryu style is Okinawan. Goju Ryu synthesis between go-strong and ju-soft or gentle, that was renovated and given a stronger Japanese emphasis. Shito Ryu is a blend of the karate taught by masters Higashionna and Itosu to Kenwa Mabuni (1889-1952) who combined characters from his teachers names and ended up with Shi Ito Ryu. Wado Ryu meaning "Way of Peace Style" was the creation of one of Funakoshi's students- Hironori Oucuka (1892-1982). Very quickly, in just a few years, from the four basic styles of karate, about 20 styles, let's say, better-known styles were created.

So today there are many styles of karate exist such as ; Shotokan (Shoto kan), Shito ryu, Goju ryu (Shorei ryu), Wado ryu, Chito ryu, Budokan (Budokai), Shuri ryu, Uechi ryu (Pangai nun), Ryobu kai, Kenpo (Kempo), Yoshu kai, Kyokushin, Ryuci ryu, Seido juku, Gonoku ryu, Isshin ryu, Sankukai (Nanbudo), Fudo kan with many more sub-styles. You can't even imagine how chaotic the situation in Karate is. This is best shown by the fact that only in the Shoto kan style of karate in the world today there are as many as 15 more famous Shotokan karate directions and organizations they exist. And those are; JKA, ITKF, ISKF, SKIF, WSI, SRKHA, TSKF, JKF-WF, SKA, JSKA, IJSK,



What Do You Know About Karate?



JKS, KWF, TKIC and Shotokan Asai. Each of these organizations claims that it is the only true follower of the Funakoshi Shotokan karate style. "Pure Shotokan does not exist. The JKA practices a type of Shotokan - but it is the Shotokan of the JKA. Each master has a different brain, a different comprehension of things." - Master Hirokazu Kanazawa (1931-2019). The situation is not much better in other karate styles either, as an example we can single out the fact that today in the world there are about 15 kyokushin karate directions and the same number of organizations exist.


Shito-Ryu was introduced by Kenwa Mabuni. Kenwa Mabuni was the 17th descendant of the famous warrior Oni Ufugusuku Kenyu. Perhaps because of his weak condition, he began training at the Shuri-Te Dojo at the age of 13. He trained there under the guidance of Anko Itosu. He trained hard for several years, learning many Katas from this Great Master. Anko Itosu was the person who first developed kata and the word Pinan. One of his close friends, Chojun Miyagi introduced Kenwa Mabuni to Kanryo Higaonna. Then Kenwa Mabuni started practicing Naha-Te. Goju-Ryu Karate has its roots in Naha-Te, an Okinawan fighting style developed by Kanryo Higaonna (1853-1915). Higaonna traveled to China and studied the Chinese martial art known as Fujian White Crane, which significantly influenced the development of his own style. Development by Chojun Miyagi. Chojun Miyagi (1888-1953): One of Kanryo Higaonna's most prominent students, Chojun Miyagi, continued to develop and refine Naha-Te.

In 1930, Miyagi gave the name "Goju-Ryu" to his style, which means "school of hard and soft", reflecting the balance between hard and soft techniques. Miyagi developed several kata (forms) to convey the principles of Goju-Ryu, including Sanchin (Three Battles) and Tensho (Spinning Hands). These katas are fundamental in Goju-Ryu training and emphasize the combination of strength, flexibility and control. We can say that the famous kyokushin style of karate originated from the Goju ryu style. His creator is Sosai Masutatsu Oyama (1923-1994), he was born in Korea and at birth was named Choi Yeong-eui, but in

the history of martial arts came under the world famous name Masutatsu Oyama. Oyama was a student of the famous master of Goju ryu karate style Gogen (The Cat) Yamaguchi (1909-1989). He himself said the best about his style of karate. "The heart of our karate is real fighting. There can be no proof without real fighting. Without proof there is no trust. Without trust there is no respect. This is a definition in the world of Martial Arts. One becomes a beginner after 1000 days of training and one becomes a master after 10,000 days of training..."M.Oyama

Karate was primarily confined to Okinawa and Japan until the end of World War II. When the United States Occupational Forces arrived in Japan they banned the practice of Japanese martial arts such as ju jucu, ken jucu and kendo (Japanese fencing), but not judo, sumo, karate and aikido. The first karate school outside Japan was opened by Robert Trias (1923 -1989) in Phoenix, Arizona in 1946. Robert was a boxer who practiced karate for about a year during World War II, in the Solomon Islands. He learned the Shito ryu ? (or Goyu ryu ?) style and he himself developed the shuri ryu style. After the war and during the 1950's karate spread to Europe and the rest of the world. In 1954, in Europe, Henry Plee (1923-2014) opened the first karate club in France (Paris). In his youth, Henry practiced wrestling, boxing, fencing and French boxing (savate), later he practiced judo and aikido, later the style of karate he learned was shotokan. Karate has been passed down from generation to generation with its secrecy and should be taught to anyone who seeks knowledge with honesty and integrity.

Today, any true practitioner of karate should be familiar with the Katas (forms) of their style. It is however a sad fact that many contemporary yudansha (black belts) have never even heard of, let alone learned or mastered, any of the traditional katas. Most of the forms (katas) practiced by modern martial artists are only ten or twenty years old and created by men whose only understanding of karate is the "sport" applications. Of the true kata the last one created was Pinan in 1907 by Itosu Anko (1831-1915), the instructor of Funakoshi Gichin. Kenwa Mabuni was considered an important and influential figure in the knowledge of Karate katas and their application of Bunkai (basic technique in kata). The majority of traditional katas are hundreds of years old. Shitō-ryū style places greater emphasis on katas, as evidenced by the large number of katas taught. Miyagi developed several katas (forms) to convey the principles of Goju-Ryu, including Sanchin (Three Battles) and Tensho (Spinning Hands). These katas are fundamental in Goju-Ryu training and emphasize the combination of strength, flexibility and control. Importance of katas in training, which transmit the principles and techniques of Goju-Ryu. Focus on breathing, deep and controlled breathing techniques, especially in the Sanchin and Tensho kata.

Nowadays, karate is mostly considered a martial sport, and most people practice karate precisely for sporting reasons. Karate sport, like any other sport, has its own rules, there are permitted and prohibited techniques that may or may not be performed. Of course, there are also judges who score and judge what is performed correctly and what is not, which techniques are allowed and which are not, and more. The style of karate is completely unimportant here, so many karate techniques are not performed at all. Also, the protective equipment used in karate sport makes it impossible to perform certain karate techniques. In today's karate sport, some kick techniques from taekwon -do or savate as well as some techniques from kick boxing are used. The athlete in karate sport wears gloves on his hands, and the term karate- empty hand is no longer mentioned, so it loses its meaning. The term karate-do (karate jutsu) is completely neglected today, especially among athletes, so today's karate, even what some people call traditional karate, can hardly be called - KARA TE DO. After all, that is why it is used in a general, simplified and abbreviated name simply - KARATE. Although there are those individual karate masters who try to preserve the tradition of karate as a martial art nowadays, they are unfortunately in large minority and cannot compete with large and richer sports organizations. 

“Today, any true practitioner of karate should be familiar with the Katas (forms) of their style.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF TACTICAL PREPARATION IN MARTIAL ARTS

By DAVID "SENSEI" Stainko, 8thDan – Martial Arts Expert, Professor of Kinesiology

Sports tactics is, to simply put it, the art of conducting a sports fight. Sports tactics comprises appropriate ways of controlling a sportsman's condition which is directed towards a certain idea or plan to gain a competitive goal. It is thought that technical and tactical preparation are two closely related or even inseparable way of sports preparation. However, this is an outdated way of thinking in today's terms because these two modes of preparation can certainly be separated. Of course, technical-tactical as well as tactical-psychological preparations are closely related, but each of them can and should be considered separately. It cannot be





disputed that an athlete can reach his/her full potential only if he/she is optimally prepared in a technical, tactical, psychological as well as motor and functional way..

Unfortunately, when preparing for a competition, many athletes together with their trainers primarily focus on the development of their motor skills. After that, they deal with technical preparations, i.e. the amount of learnt techniques which they will be able to use during a competition as well as the amount of physical condition (functional capability). Tactical preparation as well as certain psychological preparations are oftentimes neglected or totally overlooked and they are often given very little or no attention when preparing an athlete for a competition.

That way athletes and their trainers trivialize something which is of great importance for their success in competitions and oversee this mode of preparation thinking that tactical preparation is not of some great or critical relevance for the athlete. They naively think that it is easy to prepare the tactics by which the fight will be conducted during the competition itself. They are wrong in many ways here and, by thinking this way, they show their misapprehension.

Sports tactics represent a planned, rational and economic way of the athlete's activity during a competition, by choosing and using the most effective techniques, methods and forms with a goal to gain maximum results. Using certain tactics comes forward as a result of pre-agreed and pre-exercised tactics which were used as a part of tactical preparations. The athlete learns a set amount of knowledge which are connected with the flow and effects of competitive fighting. Tasks which are part of a tactical preparation are comprised of learning theoretical facts about the rational usage of motor skills and choosing the best elements and techniques in certain conditions. So, tactical preparation is a system of a learnt set of knowl-

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The Importance of Tactical Preparation in Martial Arts



edge and rules about setting and conducting a sports fight and using certain techniques and tactical variants in order to gain the best results.

Athletes plan tactical preparations with their trainers in two ways. The first is planning and the tactical preparation itself according to some prior knowledge of the athlete and the trainer (instructor). The second is based on certain scientific facts, statistical data or led exclusively by rational consideration. It is best if the athlete and the trainer combine the two way of tactical preparation together (experiential and scientific) and plan their course of actions accordingly. Of course, the tactics won't always be the same, but will, according to various conditions, often vary. Firstly, it is considered that it depends solely on the athlete's abilities. If he or she has learnt and trained the technique well, prepared well in both physical and mental ways, he or she will be able to conduct a more complex tactic.

If, during the competition itself, the trainer or the athlete estimate that the pre-planned tactical scheme won't be successful or if they weren't able to make a better plan due to an unknown opponent, the competitors are given new instructions so they can continue with the competition with an updated set of tactical assignments and more useful actions. So, tactical abilities of the athlete imply memorizing certain facts and actions that need to be performed during a competition. Also, the athlete's ability to react fast in certain situations is also very important and depends on the development of events during the competition (fight) itself and which is related to his or her sports intelligence. Overall, if the competitive process is developing according to a preset tactical agreement, the process of executing that agreement is the one that dominates. However, if the process develops

in a way that it needs certain changes or corrections in the tactics, it will mostly depend on the athlete's intelligence (situational reaction) as well as the intelligence and the knowledge of his or her trainer.

Of course, the tactics will be specific for each martial art and will greatly depend on the type of floor, the size of the arena, the referee's style, the rules of each martial arts sport, the athletes' intelligence, prior experience of the competitors, the audience, the importance of the competition, the psychological condition of the competitors, the quality of the opponent, the weather conditions, and many other factors. Sports tactics are a well prethought and preplanned set of activities which allow the athlete to use his or her individual skills and abilities the best he or she can as well as finding the opponent's weaknesses in order to win at a competition. In tactical terms, the most complex sports are those which are played with a ball and, certainly, martial arts disciplines.

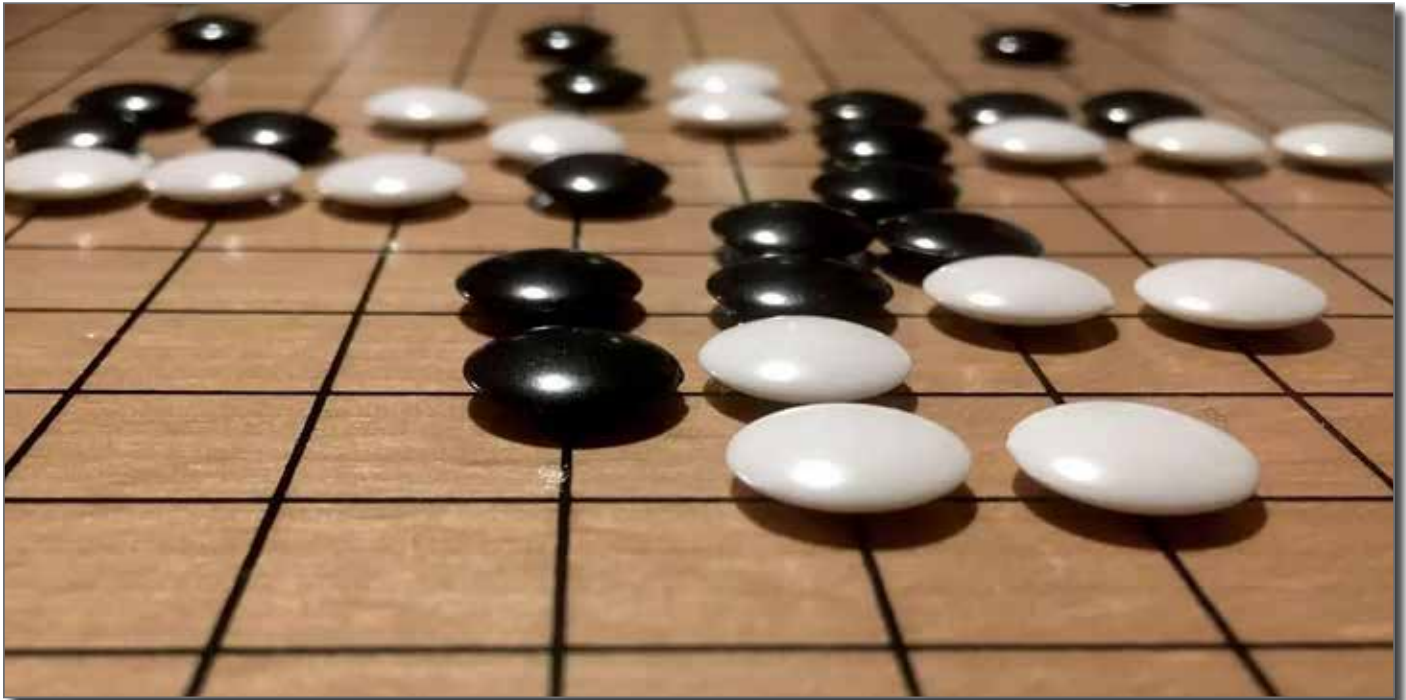
A tactical idea is a creative thought process that is based on the trainer's or athlete's idea or the idea of his or her training team. It is related to a certain sports event (fight) and derives from the pros and cons of the athlete himself/herself as well as his or her opponent. A tactical plan is a well-planned concrete solution that comes from an idea of the trainer or athlete and which is argued with professional-scientific knowledge in order to beat the opponent. The tactical plan is set in relation to: the physical fitness of the athlete-fighter, technical and psychological readiness, the quality and dimensions of the arena, the good and bad sides of the system of each martial arts discipline and its set of rules, the anthropometric characteristics of the athlete-fighter, the contribution of the audience, the momentary shape of the athlete and his or her opponent. Sometimes it also depends on the weather conditions, etc.

One can argue that tactics hold a position between an athlete's technique and sports fight strategy. Tactics are a component of rallying, it is an upgrade from an athlete's technique, condition and all psychophysical abilities that come to show in sports. Tactics are a mental expression of psychophysical power and intelligence that a sportsman-fighter shows while conducting a sports fight. Tactical manoeuvres and changing the tactics during the competition while aiming to use one's own wisdom and knowledge against the opponent's weaknesses in order to win the fight. As it is to adjust to a given situation during a fight, it usually includes a surprised opponent who didn't expect a certain manoeuvre or a technique that an athlete used. In other words, it is better to surprise an opponent with a certain manoeuvre or technique which he or she isn't expecting than to be the one who is surprised. An athlete's ability to conduct good tactics, i.e. to adapt rapidly to a new situation in the course of the fight helps him or her to win.

The aim of each tactics and tactical planning is that the physically, technically or, in some other way, weaker fighter wins a stronger opponent in a sports fight with a correct choice of tactics. Actually, it comes down to seeking weaknesses in an opponent's defense, but also in his or her physical characteristics and their ability to set up a way of fighting that doesn't fit well with the opponent. It's important that the fighter develops a spoofing or faking skill in order to gain different goals during an attack, counterattack and defense. That's why a competitor-fighter needs to train how to reveal the opponent's plans and intentions during the course of the fight as well as see through his style of fighting and his favourite forms of movement (favourite techniques- specialties). This is all done with a goal to defeat an opponent.

“If two excellent fighters confront in a sports fight, the advantage will go to that fighter who is tactically better prepared.”

The Importance of Tactical Preparation in Martial Arts



It isn't rare for a, realistically-speaking, better fighter loses a sports fight from a weaker opponent. A fighter who, thanks to a bad choice of tactics or due to bad tactical manoeuvres, lost a fight will say the following after a fight: "Today wasn't my day.", "I wasn't focused enough.", "I wasn't able to impose my rhythm of fighting.", "The opponent surprised me with his/her choice of technique.", etc. Sometimes the referees might also be mentioned as well as certain sports rules, etc. A fighter will rarely admit that his tactical preparations weren't done properly and that this is why a wrong choice of tactics took place during the fight. In other words, the real truth, i.e. the reason behind a lacking tactical preparation or a bad choice of tactics in a lost fight will rarely come up. We can also say that a weaker fighter was able to outsmart a stronger opponent and that he won a fight thanks to a good choice of tactics.

Man people often mix terms such as strategy (Greek *strategia*= a warfare skill) and tactics (Greek *totaco*= in a line or alignment) thinking that they are interchangeable. Tactics and strategy are in the "warfare" theory and well as in martial arts theory characterized separately because both terms have a unique dimension. A strategy means making a current decision which should be achieved in the future, while tactics are carried out in a certain present moment. If an athlete-fighter applied bad tactics in a sports fight, he or she might lose that fight- and that's all. But if a certain person chooses bad tactics in a street fight or during self-defense, he or she can lose much more. In those situations, a person can be gravely injured or even mortally injured. During war, commanders will draw a certain plan, i.e. war strategy before sending their troops to the battlefield and each person-warrior

needs to develop his own tactical plan. If a certain strategy or an individual tactical plan made by the warrior is poorly chosen, the consequences could be dire for that person.

While a strategy is abstract and turned to longlasting goals, tactics are concrete and come down to deciding what is currently the best more. (Gary Kasparov)

Tactics come down to knowing what to do when to do it, while a strategy is comprised of knowing what to do what nothing can be done. (Savielly Tartakower)

We can say that, in martial arts and sports, there are certain “generally-valid” tactical plans or, to better say, some generally-used tactics that can be valid for all fighters. As one of the examples, we can use the tactics of the legendary martial arts master and actor Bruce Lee who said: “Empty your mind, be shapeless, shapeless like water.”; “Be like water, my friend.” There are also individual tactics that are specific for a certain fighter who can turn those tactics into action. An example of that is the legendary boxer Muhammad Ali who said: “I fly like a butterfly, sting like a bee.” These are just two examples among many. In martial arts and sports, there is an extremely large number of different tactics, tactical plans and tactical manoeuvres.

Many tactical plans that help the athlete-fighter to defend from an attack exists. The same goes for situations where it turns into a counterattack or how one defends from a counterattack. There are also tactical plans of how an athlete can confuse the opponent, as well as how and when he can tire the opponent while preserving his or her energy. Other actions include how to throw someone off balance, how to confuse one with different tricks and traps, how to impose your own fighting style and tempo, etc. The tactics also depend on the physical height of the fighter because a shorter fighter will often have to shorten his distance towards a taller and more explosive fighter, especially in those martial arts where good leg techniques are also important.

Martial arts belong to a group of individual sports where the primary goal is to defeat the opponent in a way that is regulated by rules of that martial arts discipline. So, in martial arts, there is only one individual- the opponent who needs to be defeated by using certain punches, throws, grasps or by fighting in the arena. In order to achieve that, one needs to use fitting tactics, tactical plans or tactical manoeuvres.

The better and more experienced the athlete-fighter, tactical variants become a crucial factor when fighting against the opponent of nearly the same psychophysical and technical qualities. In other words, if two excellent fighters confront in a sports fight, the advantage will go to that fighter who is tactically better prepared, i.e. has a better tactical plan and knows how to better use tactical manoeuvres during a sports fight. So, good tactics, a good tactical plan and manoeuvres will be of great importance for the sportsman- fighter in order to win a fight. From everything that was mentioned before, we can conclude that tactical sports preparations is of great importance for those who wish to win at sports competitions.

So, we can surely say that good tactical readiness of a competitive athlete is very important. Also, no athlete should neglect his or her preparations before a competition because the very choice of good tactics as well as creating a good tactical plan can make a difference and directly affect the win or defeat. 