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On the cover: On November 11th Frederic Paezkiewicz was awarded the "Croix du Combattant" (Cross of war), like veteran of the 4th generation on war. This medal is one of the most prestigious official award given by Ministry of defense. This cross reward military honours received for act of courage in 2002, operating in Kosovo..

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REMINISCING

Donald Miskel

The old have a tendency to do a lot of that. At sixty six I find myself looking back over my life. There are some things that I am quite proud of but there are a lot of things that I regret. Some of the things that I regret weren't choices. Much of what I did was simply for survival in a harsh environment.

Back in the day there was a detective series called 'The Concrete Jungle'. Usually when we think of a jungle we think in terms of dense rain forest inhabited by a host of beasts and predators that would kill you or devour you alive. That was the environment I grew up in minus the rain forest. Poverty, desperation and hopelessness tend to make for a dangerous environment. The neighborhoods I grew up in were uncompromising and unforgiving. I watched more than one of my friends being cut down by the streets. It is simply by the grace of God that I survived and even thrived with the life I lived. Out of necessity I learned to fight. I'm not talking about play ground scraps or bar room brawls. I'm talking about fighting for survival. More than once I was left a broken bleeding heap in the streets. At least once I was left for dead but as you see I'm still here. Like the old Timex commercial used to say, take a licking and keep on ticking.

I am the survivor of a real war with a couple of tours of duty in some unsavory places but I never took the beating there that I took in my everyday life. I experienced some traumatic experiences during my military career but I managed to get out minus shrapnel or bullet holes. Not so in the streets. I've been shot, stabbed, knocked in the head and ran down since I mustered out of the service. Out there running with the big dogs as they used to say on the corner.

As a rule I don't brag about my exploits. Not that there is that much to brag about. I was never a tournament champion. I fought in a few point tournaments and a number of intra school semi contact matches. I found them uninteresting. After fighting in the streets I found them unrealistic. There were occasions that I lost to opponents that I would massacre in a real street fight. I did some amateur boxing and I wrestled in school. That's the extent of my

experience in sports. I can't claim the experience of men like Frank Dux, Jimmy McMutrie or Irving Soto but I have fought in some nasty pit fights. They were rowdy and brutal affairs fought in barns, old warehouses, and empty fields or on barges. Wherever they could be held without interference from the law. I'm sure that there were some bribes and more than a few palms were greased in the process. They were illegal since they were supported by bets and wagers. I did well in them but I was better trained than the individuals that I fought. That isn't to say that the fighters weren't tough. Most were experienced street fighters, bouncers, enforcers, brawlers and any and everything in between. I did need the money but that wasn't my real purpose for fighting. I wanted to test some of the ideas that I was developing then. Those ideas along with the input of a number of local martial art instructors would form the core of the system that I teach now. I fought off and on for a couple of years and I fared well enough. I took some beatings but I never lost a match.

Again I won't try to bill myself as some kind of fighting champion. I wasn't fighting the caliber of fighters that the fore mentioned fighters did. I see all of the grief that some of them get by recounting their experience. I don't need that. I'm pretty sure that they don't either but notoriety brings some pretty harsh backlash.

I am not a fighter. I'll go out of my way to avoid a fight. I'm a minister and for the most part I left that behind with my former life. I was gang related as a youth and participated in more gang fights and all out brawls than I care to think about. I've worked as a bouncer, a collector, an enforcer, a body guard and a personal security specialist. In my career I worked as a psych tech, therapist, a crisis counselor, prison chaplain and as a university hospital policeman. All of those professions offer a number of opportunities for physical confrontation. Fortunately all of that is in my past.

Unfortunately I've had a couple of violent situations in the last few that led to physical altercations. On those occasions I had to defend myself. I can't really call them fights. I dealt with the situations without getting hurt and without seriously hurting my attackers. I'm more proud of that than of any violent victories that I've managed. In a fight there is never really a winner. Violence is bad for everyone involved whether the loser or the victor. There is nothing noble about fighting.

I listen to a lot of martial artists snarling, growling and beating their chests. They brag about all of their physical prowess and expertise. I wonder how many of them have been in a life or death confrontation. Without putting them down I wonder how well would most of them fare in the back allies and concrete jungles of the inner cities of any major city. I've seen some of the real life gangsters, prisoners and back ally brawlers. I was one of them at one time. How many of them have ever been in a real knife fight? How many of them have been shot, cut or stabbed? How many of them have had to take a human life barehanded or with a weapon.

I've been there and as they say, "it ain't nothing nice". No sane individual would want to go there. It isn't like the movies. It's nasty and down and dirty.

All I want to do in my old age is live my life in peace. I'm not proud of many of the things I've done but I am the sum total of all of those experiences whether positive or negative. Given the chance to do it all over again I would have walked a different path entirely. I lived a crazy life but that was in my past. Through it all I had the martial arts. To a large extent that's what kept me from going off the deep end. Later I reaffirmed my faith and answered the calling on my life. I became a minister and accrued graduate and post graduate degrees in various religious studies. That is my primary life focus now. I'm a minister and pastor and a licensed and ordained minister. I still train and occasionally I'll do a little teaching. Now days I spend most of my time in the arts focusing on the growth and day to day operations of the martial art organizations that I head or represent. I spend more time dealing with the philosophies of the arts than in actually teaching techniques. I have a few select students that I teach and I'll do the occasional seminar but more of my teaching is accomplished in doing what I'm doing now, writing and mentoring.

I have much to account for in my past but I try to balance out the ill that I've done by the good that I do now. You can't earn or work your way into heaven but I can try to even the scales.

In the end we all teach by precept and example. In my instance God's word and the philosophies and teachings of the martial arts are the precept but I offer myself up as the example. I pray that in my old age I will be a good one.

God bless you, my brethren. Train hard and go with God.

Rev. Dr. Donald Miskel, ThD, PhD, MDiv

STRENGTH TRAINING AND THE MARTIAL ARTS

Donald Miskel

I just crawled out of my home gym. I have both a gym and a small dojo in my home. I do most of my training at home. Occasionally one of my students comes to Chicago to train with me. Other than those rare occasions or when the grand mistress trains with me I train alone. I have a bag stand with a hundred pound heavy bag and speed bag but they're out in my outdoor dojo. Too cold in Chicago to abuse them.

I'm an avid weight lifter and strength trainer. At one point in my life I was a body builder. I never competed but at 5'9" I was carrying around 245# of raw muscle. At that time I was a cop at a large hospital complex. A person can look at you and not realize that you're a martial art master but strength and muscle speak for themselves. It kept me from having to wrestle with a lot of irate individuals. They took one look at my size and thought better of it. I have also worked as a psych professional. I have worked for social service agencies, hospital psych units and the penal system, all of them as a psych worker. You can't kick, punch, lock or throw a psych patient. All you have to work with is your wits and your physical prowess. Believe me, strength and size matters.

I began my martial art career in judo and boxing. I started strength training shortly after that. No-one ever questioned my predisposition with weights in the judo or jiu jitsu dojo. Though judo and jiu jitsu depend more on technique than on raw power everyone that studies them know that strength matters. There's a reason why most combative e sports have weight classes. During the era of point karate there was a lot of sparring with mixed weight classes. That worked because there was little or no actual contact. Let's face it; anyone with good sense would rather be hit by a middle weight than a heavy weight. Put a light weight against a heavyweight in a fight and the light weight will make the heavy weight look slow and clumsy. He'll move around and pepper the bigger man with quick strikes. He may cut him up

and bruise him a bit but sooner or later in a real confrontation the big man will make contact. I don't have to explain the outcome.

I'm primarily a kempo and karate stylist. I have advanced rank in jiu jitsu and aikijitsu but I am primarily a striker. I can lock an opponent up and toss him on his rearmost extremities with the best of them but if I get in one good strike the fight is over. Back in the day I loved to kick but extensive back surgeries made too much of that impractical but I'm pretty good with my hands. I love punching and striking.

I did a lot of street fighting when I was younger. Some of it by choice but most of it for survival. Growing up in the inner city of any city in those days you had to be good with your hands. I was better than most. I've always been pretty quick but my advantage was my strength.

When I started studying karate I was constantly told to leave the weights alone. It was the common opinion that you would become muscle bound and wouldn't be able to strike or move well. In extreme cases too much size can be a hindrance but if you know how to train effectively you will only become stronger and more effective with your martial art if you train for strength. I'm not advocating that you become a power lifter or extreme body builder but that you use strength training to enhance your martial art training.

Individuals like Master Ernie Reynolds guided me into the realistic advantage of weight training for the martial artist. I didn't know him personally in those days but he was a mentor by example. He was both a successful body builder and a skilled martial artist. His ability in the martial arts wasn't in spite of his weight training but because of it. I don't miss an opportunity to thank him for the example he offered. I styled myself after him in that regard. I became a better martial artist for it. After fifty six years in the arts I still strength train.

Boxers avoid putting on too much muscle beyond their natural body weight. Pro boxers have to be able to go ten or twelve rounds and all of that mass would fatigue them too soon. As martial artists we don't have to worry about that problem. Any real fight in the streets is going to last for less than five minutes; six or seven at the most. If you can't take an adversary out in that amount of time you need to go back to the drawing board. Karate as it was originally taught is a one hit system counter punching system. If you're trading a hundred punches with an opponent there is something wrong with your system, your ability or skill. Sometimes people choose a martial art that doesn't complement their body type or their temperament. If you're built like a sumo wrestler with short bowed legs taekwondo might not be your best choices in a martial art. You have to be realistic and find an art that compliments your body type.

Many fights are lost in the streets because of a lack of conditioning and stamina. Knowing a technique isn't enough. You have to have the ability and conditioning to pull it off. Just training to kick and punch or even to take down an opponent isn't enough. Conditioning should accompany training. Aerobic training is necessary. Speed training would be nice but strength training will enhance your ability. Heavy training will increase strength. Light weights lifted in a ballistic manner will increase speed. Heavy weights in multiple sets will increase mass. You choose your method according to your needs but I advise you not to overlook the training advantage offered by weights.

During our conference in Mississippi some of the martial artists that participated saw me in a tee shirt rather than a gi. They remarked on my conditioning, musculature and physical shape. Considering that they ranged in age from their twenties to their early forties and that I am sixty six years old that was good to hear.

Today I did a full strength training workout. Tomorrow I'll do some light spot training. I advocate training for chi and I love the internal martial arts but aside from being able to activate your chi meridians I can probably pick you up and body slam you. Just kidding. I don't want to take it that far. Considering the fact that my back is held together with nuts and bolts I'd probably do myself more harm than I would you. With that being said I will say that if I manage to hit you you'll become a believer. Believe me, my brother, strength counts. I would like to recommend that you consider adding strength training to your regimen. Believe me you won't regret it.

Train Hard my brethren and Go with God.

Rev Dr. Donald Miskel.

CROIX DU COMBATTANT

Frederic Paezkiewicz



On November 11th Frederic Paezkiewicz was awarded the "Croix du Combattant" (Cross of war), like veteran of the 4th generation on war. This medal is one of the most prestigious official award given by Ministry of defense. This cross reward military honours received for act of courage in 2002, operating in Kosovo.



The ceremony was presided by the mayor of Rumilly and by the assistant prefect of department Haute Savoie, in the presence of a platoon of 27th Bataillon de Chasseurs Alpains (special mountain unit).



The medal was handed by the Colonel André Laperle, veteran of Indochina and North Africa wars and president of official federal union of veterans.

FIFTY-SIXTH YEAR OBSERVATIONS

Donald Miskel

Today is October seventeenth, two thousand and thirteenth. Today I made sixty six years of age. That means I am no longer young. Actually I haven't been young for a long time now. Being a senior citizen means I can get away with saying some things that a younger person couldn't get away with. People have a tendency to chalk up older people's indiscretions to advanced age; Maybe a little senility or dementia. So if I say something offensive blame it on old age.

This month also marks my fifty sixth year in the martial arts. In all that time I should have learned something. Considering how opinionated I am I need to have at least a tiny bit of wisdom. I tend to be a prolific if not an insightful writer. That being said let me comment on yet another observation. If I offend someone in the process please remember I'm an old man. Please also remember that this old man could very possibly knock your hat around backwards.

In my several years of involvement in the martial arts I have seen trends come and go. I have watched the martial arts evolve in America. In the process we've learned more but understand less. We've developed a lot of pretty good practitioners but fewer really effective technicians. More emphasis is placed on the art than the martial aspects of the martial arts. We've grown more esoteric while losing much of the combat effectiveness in our various arts. I am convinced that the martial arts were developed for self defense and combat. Its development of body, spirit and mind is a happy byproduct but was never the intended purpose of those arts. They were a means of conquest and survival. Remove those aspects and you lose much of the effectiveness of the arts.

How many of you remember the popularity of point karate in the sixties? No contact was allowed because we were convinced that our techniques were too deadly for contact fighting. In those days we were determined to forge our hands into lethal weapons. We beat our hands on padded boards and thrust our hands in sand, gravel and iron shot. The kung fu

stylists beat their hands on iron palm bags and then tried to minimize the damage to their hands with various lotions and potions. Some of us even broke our hands so that they would grow back stronger. I question the wisdom of all of that but we were serious about being deadly.

We conditioned our bodies even as we conditioned our weapons. We trained like real athletes and not like weekend warriors. In those days a black belt meant something.

When I was aspiring for a black belt in the early sixties we were taught a hand full of pressure points. Not the dim mak or kyoshu jitsu that is taught today. We were taught about ten target areas to disable or even kill an opponent. With the knowledge of those easily assessable targets and hand and body conditioning when we hit a person they had a tendency to stay hit. Now we teach over a hundred nerve centers, pressure points and chi meridians that are said to disable an opponent. Being of limited intelligence and burdened with a growing learning disability I am overwhelmed with the intricacy of the arts that have developed around all of this knowledge.

Being the dim witted individual that I am I embrace the 'more is less' philosophy. I have taken the time and made the effort to learn if not perfect several martial arts. With the time I've invested in these arts I have managed to accrue advanced rank in several of them. I found many of them to be a bit top heavy. Many of the techniques they taught were more traditional than practical. I'm sure that they were more than efficient in dealing with the challenges that they were created to address but things have changed radically since those days. We no longer need flying kicks to unseat an opponent on horseback or techniques to address a sword or spear wielding adversary. Consequently some of what we were taught had little or no application according to the challenges of today.

In the systems that I've developed and teach I adhere to that same 'more is less' theory. I teach a combat system that I feel is more applicable to the needs and challenges presented by today's society. I love the traditional systems but I don't claim to teach them as such. Many of my students have been police officers, personal security specialists, prison and mental health workers or worked in other high risk professions. The art that I developed and teach reflects their needs and the challenges presented by the mean city streets that many of us grew up in.

My concept of pressure points and nerve center strikes is based little on chi or acupressure points. I teach a handful of critical targets. They attack vision, breathing, consciousness and foundation. My philosophy is that if a man can't see he can't fight. If he can't breathe he can't fight. If he can't stand he can't fight. And of course if he's unconscious he can't fight. Several of the said targets can be lethal but we try to avoid killing or seriously injuring an opponent.

For control we use a number of jiu jitsu and aikijitsu techniques. By the way, I teach both the striking and grappling systems separately but I blend them into a practical cohesive system that transitions from striking to grappling. We teach a handful of karate/kempo kata to teach basic balance and flow but we teach more with waza and scenario based training. Our Kukeren Gojute Kempo (Dan Te Ryu) and Jute Ryu Aikijitsu are modified systems that are purely combat oriented.

Many of my peers teach dim mak and kyosho jitsu. I've studied the systems myself. I admire them for what they do and I wouldn't dare question or criticize them or the arts they teach but for those of limited ability and minimal retention the arts that I teach are a perfect and very effective alternative.

Combat isn't rocket science. There's nothing scientific about gouging someone in the eye or kicking them in the knee cap but those kinds of crude techniques can bring a fight to a quick halt. Nothing complex or esoteric about them but it's hard to argue against effectiveness. I look at the challenges of combat as improper fractions. My tendency is to reduce them to their lowest terms. Makes them easier to work with and the problems that they present easier to deal with. There you have it. The Don Miskel approach to combat and self defense. Fighting made easy. Call it old man kung fu. It ain't cute but you can bet your a--, I mean your rear most extremity, that they work.

Thank you for listening to the rambling observations of an old man. Apparently your studies in the martial arts have garnered you with both respect and patience. I appreciate both.

Train hard my brethren and go with God

Rev. Dr. Donald Miskel

WILD WILD WEST (MARTIAL ARTS IN A GUN ORIENTED SOCIETY)

Donald Miskel

What a time we live in. It's frightening and it's frustrating. It's frightening because you don't know what life threatening challenges you might face from one day to the next. It's frustrating because as individuals we can only do so much to deal with these challenges.

I live in Chicago. Actually I live in the burbs a little south of Chicago. Unfortunately the city influence doesn't recognize town lines. Much of my life and business is centered in the city. Many of the areas I find myself in are dangerous and have a history of violence. The young people in the city are calling Chicago Chiraq. Many of the students I have taught live in the city and are challenged with the threats that the city offers. It is my endeavor to give those students a sense of confidence and the tools to survive in the neighborhoods that they have to live in.

The combat some of us saw during the Viet Nam conflict wasn't as frightening. In the end you can come home from a war. Not so anymore. War is at our back door and the enemy is us. I made it out of the military and the danger of war in South East Asia. I came out with minimal damage. I've suffered more damage in and around the streets of Chicago than in any war I was a part of. I've been shot in a racially motivated assault. I've been wounded several times and by various methods since I was released from the military. That in spite of my physical prowess. I'm an excellent pistol shot. I'm adept with most small arms and explosives. I'm considered a martial art master specializing in self defense, unarmed combat and personal security. I grew up in some of the toughest areas of a tough city and I was a terror as a street fighter. With all of that I don't feel especially safe or secure in the city that I call home.

When I was a kid being tough gave you some security in the neighborhood. If you could give good account of yourself and weren't a bully or unnecessarily combative you were respected

and lived pretty much free from threat. That no longer is true. We've digressed to the code of the west. The gun is the primary tool of conflict resolution.

Many factions cry out for the right to bear arms. We aren't just talking about a handgun, rifle or shotgun for home or personal security. We're talking about fully automatic and assault weapons. Our solution for our nation's problems seem to be greater fire power. Many of us are actually arming ourselves in fear of a class, economic or race war. Others are arming themselves because of their fear, distrust and disapproval of their own government. We're afraid of terrorism from outside factions when we're as much in danger of domestic terrorism. How do we deal with this? Where do we draw the line?

Poverty, inequality and greed have always been a contributing factor to violence, especially in overcrowded urban areas. In the past those challenges were limited to certain areas and to certain social economic groups. That is no longer the case. Poverty has become an equal opportunity situation and violence is becoming as prevalent in the formally more affluent area as in some of the nation's ghettos. Unexpected violence has threatened and on occasion destroyed our, schools, homes and work places. No-one and no place seem to be safe. The causes and motivation are difference but in all reality when facing an imminent threat the cause isn't an immediate concern.

There was a time when martial ability translated into a deterrent to physical violence. If you were a half way decent martial artist you were more than able to deal with the average day to day threats of the communities we lived in. Not so anymore. The most innocuous conflict or argument can result in extreme violence today. A perceived slight, an unintentional glance, road rage and any of a number of other minor altercations can become life threatening. Since these situations are more subject to be dealt with by a weapons assault than fisticuffs why should we continue to study the martial arts? On the surface it would seem to be a waste of time and effort. It seems that we are practicing hand to hand combat in a weapon oriented society.

As any dedicated martial artist knows the martial arts offer a lot more than just physical prowess. Realistic martial art training does put one in a better stead in the event of a threat that is up close and personal. Muggers, rapists, barroom brawlers and suchlike don't generally shoot at a victim from across the street. Their endeavors require them to be in your face. It's in those areas where martial art training is most effective. That's in the event of an actual threat or attack. Unfortunately aggressors often attack from a safe distance. In such an instance no amount of physical prowess or training in close quarter combat will do you any good. So what do the martial arts offer in such a case?

Actually if the situation has evolved to that extent even a trained martial artist is in serious trouble. In such an eventuality fleeing or evasion is the best approach. In a realistic martial art it would be a good idea to understand the threat and limitations of the weapons that we may face. Learning to flee or evade such a situation effectively requires as much skill as physical combat. Those skills should be a part of any realistic martial art training.

Some of us who live in urban and even a more rural area have been challenged with roaches, centipedes and other such pests. Most of you will agree that it isn't always easy to send those little monsters to their next incarnation. Swatting or squashing them can be a challenge. They often exhibit an uncanny ability to evade our efforts. They have complex evasion patterns hardwired into their DNA. Evasion is their primary form of survival against wholesale smushing.

Fleeing a threat isn't cowardly. We should know when to flee and when to stand and fight. We should pick our battles and then stack the deck to maximize our chances of success and survival. Reason and not pride should determine our line of action. Misplaced pride can be fatal. You have better have a game plan. Strategy is as important as execution. By the way, those types of decisions shouldn't be considered when confronted with an eminent threat. Learning how to react to a threat require forethought and preplanning. It doesn't happen in the moment. Think and plan for such a situation before it happens. Like combat, if you have to think about it it won't work. These things need to be preplanned. You can't plan for every eventuality but you can learn how to react to various provocation.

Realistic martial art training should give you options and realistic levels of action. Fighting should never be a martial artist's only option. Fighting should be the last option. It should be a worse case scenario but when called on to fight we should go into total fight mode. You either fight or you don't fight. You can't half fight. Combat requires total commitment. Being defensive in a deadly situation can and probably will get you hurt or killed.

With that being said, the confidence and sense of awareness that martial art training offers should give the martial artist the ability to avoid most threatening situations. A martial artist should have enough confidence and presence of mind to remove himself from a threat should he find himself unable to avoid it. When avoidance isn't possible walking away or fleeing the threat should be the next choice. If fleeing isn't possible practical conflict resolution, de-escalation and reason should come to sway. All of which has to be accomplished without a show of fear or weakness. Fear and weakness encourages the predator. Always deal from strength even when begging for peace. Training and enhanced ability will give a martial artist that sense of strength and confidence. Actually that sense of confidence will discourage many predators. Predators aren't looking for a difficult fight. They look for a soft target.

Let's face it, we can't catch bullets in our teeth or catch a samurai sword between our sweaty palms. What we can do is learn to avoid the people, places and things that expose us to danger. We can carry ourselves with the sense of confidence, balance and awareness that mark us as hard targets. We can have a plan and be prepared for the eventuality of personal threat or violence. We can learn conflict resolution and de-escalation in a potentially violent situation. And, of course, if all else fails we can fight like an enraged tiger.

To a large extent a martial artist trains for the pure joy of training. It's an excellent form of physical exercise and a means of self discovery. It isn't the 'be all, end all' solution for every possible problem but it helps to equip us to deal with life on life's own turns. And if push comes to shove and all else fails it gives us the tools to survive a heads up confrontation. Even in the 'wild wild west'.

God bless you, my brethren. Train hard and go with God.

Rev. Dr. Donald Miskel

DEVELOPING SPEED IN THE MARTIAL ARTS

Donald Miskel

There are several concepts in the martial arts that are deceptive and often misinterpreted. Things aren't always what they appear to be or what they look like on the surface. There are no hidden secrets or secret techniques that give a master super human capabilities. If anything is hidden it's hidden in plain sight. We often see but we don't understand what it is we see. "There is nothing wrong with your eyes Hoppa Grass, it's your perception or lack thereof".

Too often people misinterpret power for strength or positioning for footwork. No, my friend, all of the hopping around and dancing in place that we see these days is not karate. Kick boxing has become confused with karate. Karate requires a strong base and a rooted stance to garner the power that is its earmark. That doesn't mean we just stand in one place. We use tai sabaki or body positioning to address an opponent's aggression. We also turn and position the body of our adversary to place him at a disadvantage.

Too often a karateka will try to substitute strength for kime (focus). Proper body physics, alignment and sequence coordination produce more power than raw strength alone. Understanding such simple principles will ultimately mean the difference between success and failure in the arts.

I could spend hours talking about such principles but that would be like trying to reveal the entire foundation of the art in a few paragraphs. Such an undertaking would require much more time and space than I am allotted here. What I would like to talk about is speed.

First of all speed is misleading. What the average person would consider raw speed isn't what it seems. When we think of speed we generally consider forward momentum or acceleration. Like saying a car can go from zero to sixty in six point seven seconds. That's raw speed. The time it takes to get from point A to point B. That type of speed is important

but having speed in the martial arts require more than that. It requires more than just hand speed.

What we interpret as speed involves several elements. One is deliberation. In a fight you won't have time to interpret your opponent's intentions, choose a response and act on it. By the time you go through that process you'll be hit and probably on your way to dreamland if not the hospital or the morgue. Self defense depends on muscle memory. You have to develop that in the dojo. You don't have the luxury of learning to fight during the conflict. Muscle memory is developed by repetition. You would have had to do a technique over a thousand times for it to become reflexive. If you have to think about it it isn't going to work. The seiken zuki of karate is a straight line punch that hits with as much or more power than a roundhouse punch or haymaker. Instead of the drawing back of the hand or the long wind up it depends on the twisting of the hips to create both power and speed. The seiken zuki creates tremendous speed and power over a short line of execution.

What we perceive as speed requires good eye hand coordination. Knowing how doesn't always translate into the done deal. That's why constant practice is necessary. The difference between the master and the average student is in the basics not in superior technique. Practicing the basics create the natural ability make speed and every other element in karate possible.

Another consideration in what we perceive as speed is reaction time. Responding to the opponent's action without hesitation. Again this is possible because the response is hard wired into neurological network of the karateka. Thousands of repetitions of a given technique, especially in relation to various stimuli makes this possible. This kind of reaction is said to originate from the spine rather than the brain. It bypasses the recognition/response sequence. And of course there is timing. Without timing reaction time is of no accord. It's possible to be too fast. If a block is too fast it can get there before the attack and still result in the defender getting hit.

Often the missing element in speed of execution is foot work and positioning. This principle is called tai sabaki. With superior footwork and positioning eye blazing speed is no longer necessary. With this concept it is possible to position yourself and your opponent to your advantage. From that advantage point it is often possible to throw one or several shots to an opponent's exposed pressure points with impunity. The result gives the illusion of speed because it allows several unanswered techniques in quick succession with no effective defensive reaction from the opponent.

Another element of speed is the narrowing of the defense/counter attack sequence. Eventually defense and counter will be accomplished in the same motion. An experienced

practitioner should be able to go from the two beat block counter sequence, to the half beat counter and eventually the simultaneous defense and counter attack.

Slipping, dodging and ducking attacks while attacking the exposed parts of the opponent's body also results in superior speed.

Various techniques such as parrying, jamming, locking, trapping and such like stacks the deck for the karateka and results in more effective defense and counter attacks. In combat the direct, least complicated approach is generally the best approach.

Lastly the ability to move the defending or attacking weapon from point A to point B or what we call raw speed can be developed. All of these elements work together to achieve actual and relative speed. Conservation of energy may often mean being no faster than success requires. Overtaxing the body by going beyond the requirements of the situation isn't a good practice. One never knows what other challenges awaits. Spending all of your energy on one opponent can mean disaster if another opponent presents himself.

There are many elements that add up to together to create an effective fighter. Speed is just one of them. All of them must be taken into consideration to create the well rounded fighter. It's possible to be fast and yet be ineffective. By the same token it's possible to be strong and have little or no power. Every link in the chain has to be present to offer a chance of success. Any link in the chain can spell a lack of success and even disaster. The art of karate or any other martial art must be practiced in its entirety. To perfect one element to the detriment of another will result in a less than effective system. The study of any martial art requires a balanced effort. It's a package deal. All of these fine points taken together will equal a total art. With the proper study, training and application that total art should translate into an effective art. In the end, the art is no more effective than the practitioner and the practitioner is no more effective than his training.

Train hard my brethren and go with God.

Rev. Dr. Donald Miskel

NEW BIRTHS AND FRESH PERSPECTIVES

Donald Miskel

As most of you know by now I don't buy into the traditional ranking system. In a sense I'm a nontraditional traditionalist. Like many western martial artists I have created my own system. Actually I didn't create anything. The techniques I use have been used since the martial arts were created in antiquity. Mine is just a difference of application and how I deal with certain situations.

That being said I would like to talk about the new systems that are cropping up in the martial art community. We may not like it and we may question the validity of the arts and their creators but like it or not the phenomenon has become a fact of life. It's like a brush fire in a dry climate. It's impossible to stamp them out so we'll have to find a way to live with them.

All systems are not created equal. How well a system is put together and how well it works depend on a lot of things. Of course every fighting system has to be built on some kind of foundation. Mine came out of a lifelong involvement in the traditional martial arts. In a sense, building on a preexisting foundation.

Knowledge of combat should be the foundation of any martial art. How we come by that knowledge is the question. It would either require prior training or a good deal of personal experience. Let's be honest with ourselves. A street fighter that has grown up fighting has a better sense of real combat and what it requires than the dojo trained weekend warrior. A lot of my fellow martial artists would disagree with this but how many of them have stood toe to toe with a seasoned street brawler? I'm not talking about the drunk in a bar. I'm talking about an individual who lives in an environment of constant violence and is a seasoned fighter.

There are fighting systems that have come out of our nations prisons that are well thought out and really dangerous. They were designed to deal with violent people in a violent environment. I would advise a martial art enthusiast to stand toe to toe with one of these

combatants before they talk to me about combat. It might be hard to convince some of them but most traditional martial artist have no real concept of combat. Theory doesn't always translate into reality. You'll never know how practical your training is until it's tried by fire. Not many would care to do that. not many should.

The Black Lotus Martial Arts Association and its subsequent arts came about because of the failure of some young black belts in the streets of Chicago. Too many of them were being trashed in the streets. On occasion the failure dealt with the individual but too often the fault was in what they were trained in and how they were trained. Many of them were battle ready if they faced a foe from the feudal era of Japan or Okinawa. Unfortunately those skills didn't translate to the reality of the streets. The BLMAA began as a collaboration of established martial art masters and instructors who came together to address these failures. That doesn't make the system that came out of that superior to any other but it addressed the problem.

Another consideration is how innovative is the creator of these new arts. How well thought out is the system? Does it address the problems that it's created to address and how well? In the end the efficiency of the system justifies it. It either works or it doesn't.

Too often we determine the acceptability of the art by the lineage of its creator. We might need to accept the fact that no-one has a monopoly on knowledge. It doesn't matter how it's acquired. If it's correct it doesn't have to be qualified through lineage.

Practicality and efficiency describes an art however it came about. If the creator is good at what he does and can recreate that level of efficiency in others he has a system that should be taken seriously.

Many of us would discard of these new systems piece mill. Instead we should take a closer look at them and see if they are something that should be accepted and perhaps sanctioned by the martial art community. We should realize that they aren't going to just roll over and die. Not if they have a following. I propose that we find a way to evaluate these systems and determine if they are viable. Instead of rejecting them unseen perhaps we should see if they have anything to offer and if so see what we can do to help them reach their full potential. Most of the creators of these systems won't want to be regulated by any oversight committee but they may accept any sincere help in getting their systems recognized and to the level where they will be accepted by the martial art community.

I try to offer such an atmosphere within the BLMAA and to encourage the same in the Black Dragon Fighting Society. There should be a place for these systems and their creators if they have something to offer. Let's not throw out the baby with the bathwater. Some of the most venerated systems came from dubious circumstances. Everything has to start somewhere. Instead of being elitist and dogmatic in our attitude perhaps we can help see that these

systems and the individuals that create them can reach their full potential. They may never be accepted in the traditional sector but that doesn't mean that they have nothing to offer. Old doesn't always mean better. Working together we can keep the martial art new and fresh. We don't want to be stagnant. Let's work and grow together. I believe that we'll all profit from it. More can be accomplished through cooperation than through opposition.

God bless you, my brethren. Train hard and go with God.

Rev. Dr. Donald Miskel ThD, DCC, MDiv.

Judan Shodai Soke, BLMAA.

GRANDMASTER KIM BYUNG CHUN YONG MOO DO CUP 2013. PAKISTAN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Rizwan Mustafa Zubairi

The Pakistan Yong Moo Do Federation had conducted the “Grandmaster Kim Byung Chun Yong Moo Do Cup 2013, Pakistan National Championship on 1st June 2013 at Bader-UI-Hassan Sports Complex, Nazimabad # 3, Karachi, Pakistan, under the rules and regulation of World Yong Moo Do Federation. Korea.



Grandmaster Kim Byung Chun is the President of World Yong Moo Do Federation, had officially approved the event from world Headquarter, Korea.

The chief Guest of the event was Mr. Nadeem Omer, Director Omer Associates and sports consultant.

The Chief Referee was Master Rizwan Mustafa Zubairi who is also the Yong Moo Do founder in Pakistan.

The Jury Panel included. Dilawer Bhatti, Nasir Ali, Ahmed Din and Mubashir Hassan.

The winners first, second and third positions in different Weight categories in Sparring event are as follows:

-45 KGS

1-Razi Ahmed. 2-Obaid Ullah. 3-Bilal

-50 Kgs

1-Abdullah. 2-Ehtesham-UI-Haq. 3-Ahmed Sohail

-55 KGS

1-Mohammad Ali Sohail. 2-Aqeel 3-Dilawer Khan

-60 KGS

1-Tajdar Ali Mehdi. 2-Jawaid. 3-Luqman

-65 KGS

1-Owais Ahmed 2-Sher Dil 3-Safder Ali

-70 KGS

1- Abdul Rehman 2- Amir Siddique 3-Muhammad Zaheer Mughal

-75 KGS

1-Muhammad Munir. 2-Sher Dil. 3-M.Sawal.



Suqrat Ahmed Farooqi had shown the demonstration of Yong Moo Do Kibons while Dilawer Bhatti had demonstrated body breaking.

Master Zubairi awarded the international Yong Moo Do Dan black belts certificate of World Yong Moo Do Federation to the following instructors.

1-Dilawer Bhatti,2- Nasir Ali,3- Ahmed Din ,4-Danish Khan,5- Mubashir Hassan , 6-AN Samey Khan , 7-Shahbaz John ,8-Tajdar Mehdi Al,9-Nehal Ahmed,10- Mohammad Taha Farooqi,11- Suqrat Ahmed Farooqi,12- Mobin Arif ,13- Naeem Akhtae,14-Choudhry Shahzad Ali,15- Mohammad Arif Abbasi, 16-Ubaid Ullah Arif.



Grandmaster Kim Byung Chun Trophies were awarded to the following Yong Moo Do Instructors for their active participation and promotion of Yong Moo Do in Pakistan.

1-Ahmed Deen (Karachi Yong Moo Do Association), 2-Nasir Ali (Secretary Sindh Yong Moo Do Association), 3-Dilawer Bhatti (Dilawer Yong Moo Do Academy),4-Mubashir Hassan (President-Mubashir Yong Moo Do Society),5-Danish Khan (Secretary-Karachi Yong Moo Do Association), 6-Naeem Akhtar (President Falcon Yong Moo Do Academy). 7-Mohammad Arif Abbasi.(President-Abbasi Yong Moo Do Academy)8-Choudhry Shahzad Al (President-Shahzad Yong Moo Do Club),9-Suqrat Ahmed Farooqi (Member-Zubairi's Martial Arts Centre),10-Mobeen Arif (President-Mobeen Yong Moo Do Academy).

Regards,

Rizwan Mustafa Zubairi.

Yong Moo Do Founder in Pakistan.

Yong Moo Do International Master Instructor & Referee.

President-Pakistan Yong Moo Do Federation.

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WEEDING OUT THE WEEDS

Donald Miskel

Oh really? One man's weed is another man's cuisine. Take the lowly dandelion. Weed? Flower? Pest or foodstuff? Dandelions are used for food in some cultures. Dandelion greens are nourishing and rich in vitamin C. Wine is made of the flowers and textiles can be woven from the strands of the stalks. So taking that into consideration is a dandelion a weed? Is it worthless? You may not want it to take over your lawn but the lowly weed that is so despised has more value than you may realize. Just because you don't see it as acceptable doesn't mean that it has no value.

Wonder where I'm going with this? If you know me you probably have a pretty good idea. Hopefully this is the last time I'll have to do such an article. Not that I expect to change the minds of those whose minds are already made up but I hope that those amongst the ranks of the organizations I am a member and representative of will hear my argument.

The martial arts are too political. There is an imperialistic attitude that some of its factions hold. That same attitude divides the martial art community into factions of inclusion and exclusion. Too many individuals seem to feel that they are martial art aristocracy. Others feel that they are the guardians of the fold. They have and should have a voice amongst their constituency but their voice isn't universal. They may speak for some but they don't speak for everyone. They don't nor should they have the final word in who is accepted and who is rejected.

There are too many levels of training and skill to put under one umbrella. I agree that there are those who exaggerate their backgrounds and accomplishments and even create a persona or alter ego to promote themselves. These individuals don't let their level of knowledge and expertise speak for them. Instead they fabricate a fantasy to fill in the blanks. This shouldn't be but to a greater or lesser degree this is too prevalent in the martial arts. Everyone wants to be bigger than life. The danger of this is that some individuals can get so entangled in the web they weave that they become lost in their own self created fantasies. In so doing some really good martial artists damage their own credibility. Actually some of the better known and accepted individuals in the arts wouldn't fare well if their experience was

examined under a microscope. That being said how do we weed out the real martial artists from the fakes? Easier said than done.

In my estimation there are a lot of false claims but those who make them aren't particularly fake martial artists. Those who train in an art at whatever level they train at are to varying or lesser degrees martial artists. They may not be very good martial artists but they are martial artists nevertheless. It isn't their backgrounds that disqualify them but their level of skill.

In my organization I tend to look past all of the claims that a martial artist makes and look to his knowledge, skill and ability. If he claims to be an instructor or master I look more at his knowledge and the quality of what he teaches than his credentials. Credentials are cheap. They can be created on a computer, printed up by a printer or bought online. Even if an individual is recognized by some organization or another I still look to his skill set. That describes a martial artist more accurately than his rank or inclusion in the ranks of some organization or another.

Knowledge can come from many places and be acquired in many different ways. Some people can train with some of the best teachers and still be inept. Others can learn from books or videos and be devastatingly effective in what they do. Lineage doesn't always translate into perfection.

In times past when a martial artist's skill could very well mean life or death their knowledge was jealously guarded. Teachers were very secretive of their knowledge sometimes even amongst their own students. That's why any training manuals were kept out of the hands of possible opposing factions and training was done away from the curious eye of any errant spectator.

I know of one judo sensei who acquired his initial black belt rank after training from a book on the martial art that he studied. No school was available in his area so the book he studied from was his only resource. With the knowledge acquired from the pages of that manual he tested for his black belt and became a legend and AAU champion. How many of us would call him a charlatan by today's standards? If you judge his rank according to how he acquired his knowledge and who he trained under he might be suspect but if you look at his skill you might have to reassess your opinion.

I tend to look at this argument from several positions. I see it as a martial artist, as a minister and as a psychologist. As a martial artist and the head of a couple of international organizations and a representative of several others I consider background but I weigh skill heavier in the balance. As a minister I call for honesty and transparency in the area of self promotion but I'm realistic about my expectations. As a psychologist or rather as a therapist I look at the psychological implications of these many self created persona that are created for

the public and the martial art community. Exclusion and none acceptance can create an exaggerated need to be accepted. Too often those who crave recognition and acceptance from the community they want to be a part of will go to extreme measures to garner acceptance.

Unfortunately this creates a problem in the martial arts. There are inept individuals creating ineffective systems and teaching them to an unsuspecting public. But again by the same token there are traditionally trained individuals that are as inept as their untrained counterparts. In the end if we are going to assess an instructor we should look at his knowledge and skill and look at the ability of his students. That will tell the story and offer an accurate assessment of the person in question.

All martial arts and all martial artists are not created equal. There are classical systems that aren't worth much as real combat systems but may offer other benefits. On the other hand there are some nontraditional systems that are extremely effective in combat. Either may fulfill the needs of an individual according to his personal needs and his reason for studying. If it serves the need of the practitioner and is efficient in what it is designed to do who am I to criticize it?

Please understand I'm not justifying dishonesty, exaggeration or false claims. That kind of thing is too common in the arts. What I am suggesting is that we reassess the way that we judge those individuals that exist on the fringes of the martial art community. Sometimes they are where they are not because of a lack of knowledge or ability but because of how they acquired their knowledge.

In conclusion I suggest that a teacher or a technician should be judged by his ability if he is judged at all. Likewise a system should be judged by its effectiveness. I believe that none traditional systems should be labeled as such as should eclectic approaches to the arts. Being nontraditional shouldn't disqualify a system or disqualify a proficient instructor or practitioner. To the nontraditional martial artist I encourage you to be realistic about who you are and be honest about how you came by your knowledge. Let your ability speak for itself. If you are sound in your martial skill you don't have to apologize for not traveling the traditional road. There is a place for you in the martial arts. You don't have to be anything other than what you are. Let your ability speak for you.

God bless you my brethren. Train hard and go with God.

Rev. Dr. Donald Miskel.

THE LITTLE THINGS

Donald Miskel

True martial arts are a study in precision. Every stance, every move, every technique have been carefully thought out. Martial arts were developed over years, not in weeks or months. A lot of observation, a lot of thought, a lot of trial and error have gone into the final distillation.

There's a difference between a martial art and a combat or self defense system. A combat or combat system is developed for those with immediate needs or who are in high risk professions. A lot of time isn't available for learning a usable system to address their needs. They are simple and must be easily learned in a short time. A martial art is more concise and much more advanced. It will take years to learn and many more to perfect.

Most martial art subtleties are catalogued and sometimes hidden in their forms or what we call kata in the Okinawan/Japanese systems. The kata were created in such a way that they required careful learning, training and much repetition to acquire the skill and learn the lessons that they teach. They are designed to make a technician train and study. It was the only way to access their deeper meanings. Most of the secrets of the art is hidden in its forms and it requires years of study and training to learn those secrets.

On the surface most kata are relatively simple. The average green belt student can learn the basic moves of most forms but it takes many years of patient training and exploration to extrapolate the deeper lessons they teach. In a traditional or classic art such as karate or kempo the kata is the art.

These days a student will learn many kata but that isn't the way that it was done in years past. A student would learn a kata or a school of kata in the lifetime of his art. Take the pinian or hein kata for instance. The series of five kata is an entire fighting system. The same with the bassai and tekki forms. Each series is a fighting system within itself. A martial artist will perfect only a handful of kata in a lifetime. Many of karate's greatest warriors knew only one or two.

I often quote Master Gichen Funakosi. When asked what is the kata for the beginner he quickly stated taikioka. When asked what was the kata for the master, he thought for a minute and replied, taikioka. Think about it.

When one sees the symbol for karate one sees a fist in the seiken zuki position. The bread and butter techniques of karate are the oi zuki (lunge punch) and the gyaku zuki (the reverse punch). There are many other techniques in karate but those two are the true power techniques in karate. That isn't to say that I would want to be struck with the infamous karate chop or be the recipient of a karate side kick but the karate punch, especially the reverse punch, is probably karate's most devastating technique.

The things that make a technique efficient or that keeps it from working is in the details; the small things. Sometime the way a foot is turned (as in the toeing in of the front foot in zen kutsu dachi) or a slight variation of angle of application can mean the difference between the success or failure of an applied technique.

Distance learning has become popular of late. While studying for my masters and both of my doctorates I took most of my courses on line. I feel that I'm too old to be sitting for hours in a classroom, especially with students who are young enough to be my grandchildren. Most colleges and universities offer distance learning courses online or however they are done. That same trend is becoming more prevalent in the martial arts. Many schools and organizations offer video training.

I have nothing against martial art DVDs. I have over five hundred myself and I'm working on a series of such myself. They make an excellent reference to the various arts available and insight into their techniques and methodology. I do have mixed feelings about students who make that their only form of training. It's not unlike the students from years past that studied solely from books. There have been the occasional student that fared well from this type of training and that became exceptional practitioners but I believe that they are the exception rather than the rule.

Distance learning is better than none at all. In areas where schools or instructors aren't available they may offer the only alternative. However one must keep in mind that a DVD, tape or book doesn't take the place of a good instructor. They offer good reinforcement to what an instructor is teaching but for the most part they make a poor substitute for hands on training. They offer general information but they don't correct those little things of which we've spoken. An instructor can reposition a hand or correct a stance. He can address the little things that sabotage the effectiveness of an art's techniques.

I won't discourage a student from purchasing DVDs and using them to supplement his training. If the logistics make training in a dojo impractical or impossible, again I say that that kind of training is better than no training at all. Half of anything is better than all of nothing. Still, I admonish those long distance students to seek the input of a good instructor at some juncture in their training, preferably early in their efforts. Bad habits are easy to learn and are often difficult to unlearn. Effective martial art training requires fine tuning and distant learning make that difficult if not impossible. Keep in mind, like the bible states, "It's the small foxes that destroy the vines". Those small things must be addressed if one if to become a competent martial artist.

Train however you can but avail yourself of the best alternative available. And remember to concentrate on the little things that make up the perfecting of the martial artist and his chosen art.

God bless you, my brethren. Train hard and go with God.

Rev. Dr. Donald Miskel, MDIV, Thd, DCC

NO HOLDS BARRED

Donald Miskel

I just finished watching an excellent documentary about mixed martial arts. Like many lifelong martial arts I've watched it grow from its infancy to where it is now and like most of my peers I have mixed feelings about it. It is probably the fastest growing sport in the world today. It is definitely a lucrative business and a serious money maker. Promoters and some fighters have made a fortune in the business. Say what you want about it, it is successful beyond anything most martial artists would have ever expected. Like it or not, for better or worse, it is probably here to stay.

Most traditional martial artists look upon MMA with a jaundiced eye. It doesn't have the esoteric appeal that classical martial arts have boasted over the years. Gone is the spiritual aspect that has been attributed to the traditional martial artist. Gone is the almost ethereal calm of the martial artists of the past. In its place you have a lot of loud in your face competitors more reminiscent of pro wrestlers than the long held image of the martial artist of yore.

My foundation is in the traditional martial arts but I'm not a traditional teacher or practitioner. Like many American martial art instructors I teach an eclectic approach to the arts that are for all practical purposes a mixed martial art. Even so I have a love hate relationship with MMA.

I've never been much of a competitor. I studied the martial arts for a completely different reason. I was attracted to the mystical appeal and spiritual air that the arts wore back in the day. I grew up in a tough neighborhood in the inner city on Chicago's mean South Side. I was a competent street brawler and was considered tough and brutal in an atmosphere that bred tough fighters. Amongst some nasty brawlers and street fighters I stood out. I didn't really need martial arts for self defense. I could take care of myself.

I started studying judo and jiu jitsu at about the same time that I started boxing. Eventually I changed my focus in the martial arts to karate and kempo. I was a good boxer and enjoyed the sport but it was just that; a sport. I wasn't into sports. I liked karate because it added

other practical weapons to my natural arsenal. I was initially attracted to karate because of its potential as a fighting system. I wanted more than the unfocused aggression of the average street brawler. I wanted science rather than raw violence. With my stint in the military during the Viet Nam conflict the nature of real combat impressed itself upon me. Combat was a reality. Violence is a fact of life and I wanted to be the absolute best.

By the time I came out of the military I had been involved in the martial arts for well over a decade. I had studied with several instructors in a number of systems and was beginning to form my own ideas about combat and the martial arts. Tournaments didn't offer the opportunity to put my theories to the test. There were too many rules and sparring was still mostly no contact or controlled contact. I didn't want to spar. I wanted to fight. I found what I was looking for in the underground pit matches that were cropping up during that time. Such fights have always existed. They were popular during the depression but they have never completely died out. They were fought in old barns, warehouses or wherever they could take place away from the watchful eye of the law. They were illegal and money was made mostly by side bets. They were brutal and bloody but few martial artists were attracted to them and the skill level wasn't that high. However what they lacked in skill they made up for in brutality.

I make no boast about a great fight record. I was effective in the streets where it counted and I did well in those underground matches but they were a far cry from the bloodsport matches that some of my peers fought. They were more like brawls than matches but I made a little money and I learned what I wanted to know. In those matches and on the streets I've sat straddling another fighter's chest and tried to punch his lights out. Never did I dream that something like that would be embraced in a sport setting.

Had MMA been popular when I was young enough to compete I probably still would have avoided the sport. Like I said I'm not a competitor. I've never been shy about fighting. I did a lot of it and I didn't lose fights. Not so much because of my skill level but because I'd do whatever was necessary to win. In my mind the only rule that governs a fight is don't get hurt and don't lose. With all of the skill and knowledge that I've accrued since I started this journey in the late fifties I'm still basically a street brawler. That mindset is hard wired into my DNA at this point. I look on my martial arts like I do a pistol. Don't pull it out unless you're willing to seriously injure or kill someone with it. It isn't a contest with me and it definitely isn't a game. Fighting is about survival or at least it was where I grew up.

I don't train fighters for tournament fighting no more than I train competitors for MMA. As brutal as MMA is it's still a sport. Sports have rules. Fighting doesn't. I teach a combat oriented system. I'm not interested in turning out tournament champions or MMA competitors. For the most part I train individual in high risk professions.

I'll watch the occasional MMA match as I will a boxing match but I'm not particularly enamored with either. They're beautiful for what they are but they aren't real combat. Please understand; I'm not saying that I could stand toe to toe with some MMA champion. Perhaps I never could have. However my system has served me well and kept me safe in a very violent environment. My skill and abilities have seen me through a war and have helped me survive life in some tough neighborhoods. In the long run that's what a martial system is designed to do.

I'm up in age now and in spite of the implications of a hundred Saturday morning kung fu flicks I realize that the old wise eighty year old kung fu master can't go toe to toe with a young fighting champion. As I've said to my competent young students in the past, I can be your worst nightmare for two or three minutes but if you can last beyond that you've got me. Of course, you have to last those few minutes.

I won't criticize MMA or its competitors though I don't care for some of their attitudes. MMA is a fact of life and as much as I would like to see the traditional martial arts at the pinnacle of the martial art movement MMA will have its day. Whether it stands the test of time remains to be seen. I just hope that there will always be a place for the traditional schools of martial arts. Those schools have the ability to shape and change young lives. The traditional arts are more than a punch or a kick. They are treasures that offer more than competition or violence. They offer an opportunity of self discovery and growth that MMA doesn't.

It would be easy to become discouraged having to compete with the popularity of MMA but the traditional arts are treasures hidden in plain sight. Those who teach them realize that and those who pursue them and what they have to offer will be greatly rewarded. Don't throw in the towel, my brothers. Keep on doing what you are doing. We must see that there is always a place for the traditional martial arts.

Keep the faith, my martial art brethren. Train hard and go with God.

Rev. Dr. Donald Miskel

TRANSPARENCY IN THE MARTIAL ARTS

Donald Miskel

Recently something was brought to my attention that concerns me. The claims of several very recognizable martial artists are being put to question. Apparently several have been something less than forthcoming in their history. Actually such oversights, exaggerations and downright dishonesty aren't that unusual in the martial art world. Several controversial individuals are being questioned and a few actually dragged over the coals because of claims they have made or because of questionable qualifications. In some instances that is a shame in that some of those in question are very credible and on a few occasions are excellent martial artists. The credibility I speak of isn't in the level of technical skill that these individuals have displayed. They are good technicians but their backgrounds are a little shaky.

Transparency in the martial arts is the ideal but translucency and sometime opaqueness is more common. By the way this isn't limited just to those who are on the outskirts of the martial arts. Many who are pretty much accepted in most martial art circles and are well thought of by the martial art community couldn't stand to be put under a microscope.

Let's be honest with ourselves. Most people have a tendency to exaggerate and embellish a little bit when presenting themselves. Some of the greats in martial art history came with some less than sterling creds. If I cared to traumatize some of the more naïve members of the community I could state the questionable credentials of a several founders of what are now considered traditional arts. It would serve no purpose to name names or examine these instances in as much as the arts that they founded have proven to be quite efficient.

I'm not a cynic but I have a tendency to take everything with a grain of salt. There are many individuals today that wear the titles of masters or grandmasters myself included. I have enough sense to realize that I can't go into the dojo of some master in Okinawa or Japan and expect them to kowtow when I announce my rank. The rank I wear is recognized by my peers and the several organizations I am affiliated with. Very few of the masters in these new arts would be recognized outside of the confines of the U.S.

There are a number of unique American martial arts that have cropped up over the last several decades. Though these arts may claim oriental roots most are strictly American arts that address American needs. All aren't created equal but some are quite creditable. They serve the purposes of those who create and those that practice them. They require little else to recommend them. They don't need some dark mysterious past or esoteric roots to be viable. They only need to be viable.

Unfortunately many of the creators and practitioners of these arts feel that they have to exaggerate their backgrounds and their accomplishments to validate themselves or the arts that they teach or study. I tend to evaluate a martial artist according to his ability not his background or history. As long as his skill level is what it should be and his art is sound I don't worry too much about where he acquired his knowledge. Too often you have to wade through a mile of B.S. to get an inch of truth. I find that path too dark to tread when it's too easy to just evaluate the person according to his ability.

Transparency is always the best case scenario but I've come to expect much of the translucency that describes the average martial artist. I take fantastic claims in stride and look past them to see the person instead. A lot of egotism is tied into the claims of so many martial artists. Many have put their whole lives into their arts, some to the exclusion of all else. Many have all of their eggs in that one basket. The martial arts is the one accomplishment that they can claim. Because of that many present themselves as bigger than life. Even so, some with shaky pasts have grown into really fantastic martial artists, all outlandish claims to the contrary.

I haven't won any major tournaments. I'm not nor have I ever been that turned on by competition. I learned martial arts for survival. The only claim I can make is that I've been involved in the martial arts for most of my life. Most of my fighting has been in the streets or in the military. I'm probably not the best martial artist in the world but I'm fairly knowledgeable and I can hold my own in a nasty situation. I've survived the ghettos and inner city streets of Chicago and have lived through actual combat but I'm Bruce Lee. I don't claim to be nor should I have to. My survival is what describes the effectiveness of what I teach. I've trained with some really good people and I've done more than my share of self training. I don't feel that I've mastered anything. After well over half a century I'm still a student. Still I stand on what I know and what I have learned. I pass that on to those who believe in what I do. I need no other claims. I'm above board and I'm good at what I do. If anything, that's my claim to fame. I don't feel I have to be anything more than that. Nor should you.

My brothers let's just be ourselves. No apologies made nor undue explanations given. In the true martial arts you only need to prove yourself to two people; yourself and the opponent that you may have to face. You don't have to be more than what you are. You don't have to

be a secret student of Ed Parker, William Chow or Bruce Lee. You just have to be good at what you're doing. Be transparent and let your knowledge and your ability speak for you. In the end your skill will speak for itself. To the best of our ability let's be as transparent as possible. In the end that will always serve you best.

Train hard my brethren and go with God.

Rev. Dr. Donald Miskel

THE LEGACY OF PANKRATION: MIXED MARTIAL ARTS AND THE POSTHUMAN REVIVAL OF A FIGHTING CULTURE

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Abstract

Based on participant observation in a mixed martial arts club, this article analyzes the concept of cultural performativity in mixed martial arts (MMA) in relation to the ancient sport of pankration, which is considered to be the origin of MMA. Informed by performative theory on culture, I explore the bodily performances of MMA in combat sports and in a postmodern stand. Thus, the aim of this article is to acquire contemporaneous knowledge about Pankration and MMA and the connections they have to modern representations in combat fighting. Hence, this analysis discusses MMA's legacy and the posthuman impact of human violence that modern combat sports performance have on our postmodern cultures and societal norms.

Key words: ancient, fighting, Greece, MMA, Pankration, phenomenology, posthuman theory

Introduction

Every Tuesday at 8:00 p.m., I am at the mixed martial arts gym in my hometown. The gym is located in a basement that has blue mats and painted red walls. Usually, before the class starts, I and the other fighters sit against one of the walls, leaning back and watching the advanced session, when fighters with a professional record of competing in mixed martial arts (MMA) matches practice. We keep silent and MMA apprentices show respect for the pros.

At my club, where I am currently carrying out my participant observation, two fighters have records of competing in Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) matches. Finally it is our turn. The instructor orders us to start running in circles. "OK, you can start to carry each other in your arms," David, who is the main coach today at the gym, screams out loud, and after some two minutes he adds, "OK shift partner and carry another partner on your back." This drill continues for what seems to be an eternity, and after some twenty-five minutes of warmup I am exhausted and have a hard time breathing because my mouthguard restricts my inhalation immensely. My body is shaking and my muscles are really drained out.

David then sits down on the floor in the middle of the gym and gathers everyone around him. He explains how to pass and cross someone's half guard when in a dominant position and trying to mount the opponent. He uses one of the most adept fighters in the class and then demonstrates how to perform a full-mount technique; shifting his arms and legs, he uses his elbows to press the combatant's head down onto the mat. David reflects, "Just like the old Greeks used to do it," and a big smile spreads all over his face, "Great work, guys, we will practice these grappling techniques more next week. We're finished for today. Thanks, everyone." And the training session is over for that day.

After the shower I go home thinking; Greeks, fighting and antique warfare, Pankration, the link towards MMA and start writing down notes as soon as I sit down at my desk. Martial Arts practice and fighting combat sports has through the last two decades become increasingly popular and made reassessed via the extremely popular mixed martial arts turn. Therefore, it becomes vital to analyze and interpret how this increased forms of martial arts specialties has rendered society with sufficient material to study. Cultural norms, values and ideologies to some extensions affect societal behaviors and constructs/deconstructs how discourses on especially combat sports are handled and made innovative over and over.

Mixed Martial Arts and Pankration

During interviews relating to my ethnographical research at the local MMA gym in Sweden, the practitioners, or as we (anthropologists) call them, the others (the fighters in this case), or in academic terms, "the informants," usually like to talk about how mixed martial arts is actually based on an ancient fighting style borne out of unarmed combat called "Pankration."

Pankration is a Greek word deriving from "pan" and "kratos," meaning "all" and "powers". Its roots can be traced back to 648 B.C. when pankration was featured at the 33rd Olympiad. Pankration combat allowed fighting in an all out, every possible bloody brutal way, letting contesters e.g. pull hair, kneeling, elbowing and only biting and gouging were barred. It is said to have been a cruel and a vicious extreme form of unarmed warfare.

Pankration is the hybridization of Hellenic boxing and antique wrestling into a freestyle fighting sport. The sport was revered in ancient Greece and served as the climactic final event of the Olympics for centuries. Like its predecessor, pankration, competition in mixed martial arts has attracted attention because of the sheer (controlled and disciplined) violence that takes place in a public stadium. Consequently, MMA fighting, a new, kind of a postmodern martial arts phenomenon derived from pankration, is surely an “all” “powerful” combat sport which sets “two contestants wearing only trunks, small gloves and a mouth guard in a cage, and unleashes a multitude of full-force punches, elbow strikes, knee strikes, kicks, stomps, neck chokes, body throws and other grappling techniques against each other”.

A mixed martial arts fighter seeks victory by concussing an opponent into defenselessness, causing syncope by way of a neck choke, or by coercing an opponent into submission by any variation of these methods. Accordingly, this renewed and action-filled combat sport has awakened many critics, who argue that MMA is a brutal phenomenon, very much like ancient gladiators fighting in an arena as a spectator event, attracting many fans.

Greek pankration in juxtaposition may be among the oldest of martial art forms. It was very well documented before the coming of Christ, and its practice required the application of both athletics and warfare. The popular Ultimate Fighting Championships (UFC) and other similar mixed martial arts events are modeled after this ancient Greek combat sport and hitherto combat sports contest as the Japanese Kumeteki, have the bearings of MMA and Pankrations fighting, pitting two contestants in a ring against each other, with the use of the very body as sole weapon in martial arts action.

Posthuman Bodies and Postmodern Martial Arts

This study emphasizes the performative perceptions in fighting culture and the legacy of pankration’s influences, as seen in a posthuman perspective of bodies in MMA fighting. It also covers some background relating to Grecian combat, its role in modern martial arts events, and its influence on other forms of fighting, including the recent trend in no-holds-barred (NBH) bouts. The original form of pankration no longer exists, but it is still around today in various other forms (e.g. Brazilian Jiu-jitsu, Sambo, Shoot, and Savate, etc.).

Pankration has been redesigned its form as an ancient combat, and it has, through the sport of MMA, been given recognition for its controlled, focused, and disciplined style. Structurally, pankration is patterned after the original Hellenic and ancient integrating striking and grappling techniques in what was among the very first forms of mixed martial arts fighting. Seen in a juxtaposed perspective it is the resemblances between the two versions, one ancient, thousand years ago and one modern, drawn upon the original versions of combat

warfare. I stress that there is a situated ontological complicity that are implicated in the distinction between pankration and MMA fighting, at the gym and in its historical diversity that keeps them apart but in a fighting contexts also brings them together. Further more, this is what makes this sport so vital and interesting to modern combat sports and contact sports theoretical reflections and issues that are examined. MMA and pankration is on a narrow line, in a tight landscape addressing deep questions in our postmodern society, why ancient way of fighting has been brought up in contemporary society to be recognized and legitimized again? More so, it is these present questions, which is here to make the researcher aware of the epistemological oppositions that are integral in this interrelationship between the two martial arts specialties. That's one of the major aspects that needs to be scrutinized in order to be able in getting reliable answers on contemporary combat sport of today, exemplified through the posthuman phenomena of mixed martial arts full contact fighting.

Hence, this study opens up a general discussion of performance, performativity and representation in MMA and combat sports. Thus, the central logic and the topic of this paper is the extraction of the performative legacy in fighting culture from mixed martial arts practice in a postmodern era of combat sports. The study emphasizes MMA fighting in the light of "posthuman bodies," in that the emerging political, ideological, and technological aspects of the moving body in the wake of postmodernity are essential and interdisciplinary sites of investigation. Moreover, it is those legitimate issues that come at stake clarifying MMA combat sports of today, whether being 'sportive, violent, a masculine domain' etc. and ultimately; in the wake of a postmodern cultural phenomenon a revival that has been resurrected in new forms. A new arrangement that has brought reconsolidation to the sportive instrumental of the martial arts specialty thereby deepened the technical and tactical refinements of the bouts outcome. This has indubitably adjudicated the sport of ultimate fighting, via mixed martial arts practice with vitalized incitements of legitimate sports access.

In thinking about a contemporary combat sport as MMA, resurgence the typological models of staged violence indicting: the rise of a popular culture, vis-à-vis men measuring men in a full contact unarmed battle, just like in ancient warfare. However, such a comparison is also in lieu of pankrations locus of a staged event-taking place in an auditorium in antique Greece. Henceforward, public access to these hyper-modern battles in UFC events, broadcasted via high tech media (I pad, iPhone, PC and TV, etc.) allows for any viewers to be a part of a simulacrum that represents fighting in the light of posthuman bodies performing in front of our very eyes. Though these hyper-simulacra of battles, recreates pankration resemblances, we cannot travel back in time to discover and retrieve these antique events that took place. Yet, we can compare and via the juxtaposed similarities in todays MMA

fighting and yesterdays pankration warfare understand more of a postmodern singularity that is taking place. Combat sports has reached a sort of a reconciliation, and this system of full contact fighting addresses significant debates on MMA and what our society allows us to do with our very bodies at hand. Yet, these discussions how to define violence will depend on narratives.

Mixed Martial Arts: A Performative and a Representative Return

While reading the books *Pankration, The Traditional Greek Combat Sport and Modern Mixed Martial Art*, edited by Jim Arvanitis (2003) and *No Holds Barred, The Complete History of Mixed Martial Arts in America*, by Clyde Gentry (2011), I observe how frequently the authors of these texts use a terminology that is taken from the fields of anthropology and performance studies. More specifically, the authors speak in terms of performance and ultra modern fighting cultures, or, as Jim Arvanitis explicitly puts it: “mixed combat and the modern world’s version of fighting performances”. Gentry in turn, speak of extreme performances of bodies that clash into each other in a postmodern society.

This performance terminology that is used in relation to combat fighting refers to an analytical approach to culture called the performative turn, a methodological approach adopted by the social sciences and humanities that became particularly fashionable during the 1990s. In short, what is essential to the performative turn is an urge to conceptualize how human bodily practices relate to their contexts in a way that goes beyond traditional approaches to culture and society in that it takes the heuristic factor into account. Its theoretical standpoint attempts to go beyond a concept of the lived body itself by not seeing the body as an object or a “thing” or a notion in its undivided entity. Rather, the performative turn tries to unlock the human body and look upon how embodied experience responses in a comingling of the body’s specific actions. Men’s bouts in mixed martial arts contests are strongly characterized by polarized oppositions, between winning and loosing, sacrificing the very corporeal existence in the ring. Fighters then serve as archetypal representatives in their battles performances, becoming the stereotype of a popular cultural inducement via actions that are utterly depended on a violent performativity in this case.

This is something, which also stresses that MMA fighting is carried out by way of a rational, instrumental, or affective form of violence. This affective form is made through a fighter’s engagement of autotelic violence used with the balance of confrontational tension in between them. However, fighters do this with a great knowledge of combat and a “normalized” mimetic experience of the chaos of the sport, where anything can happen.

So, through the commentary on MMA fights and the responses of research subjects (fighters bodies: as subjects with agency), it can be seen how mixed martial arts, from a postmodern view of the fighting experiences of bodies in the “return” of pankration’s legacy, shows us how the performative violence of “unnatural” chaotic acts becomes “natural”, mimetic, mnemonic and autotelic by the use of physical force, defined in sportive terms, as sites of natural performance. This is what MMA comes down to: an act of natural performance or unnatural act of representation? What seems to be at stake here is how mixed martial arts fighting are to be judged, perceived and negotiated as harmful or non harmful by its critics and by its fans?

As MMA still is a relatively young sport in its own remark, having existed since 1993, approximately two decades, ultimate-fighting contexts may be in need of more data income, over a longer period of time. Taking narrow and stressed conclusions might be misleading and a source of more prejudiced opinions against the sports composition. Nonetheless, dissecting MMA locus via the posthuman bodily stance can direct some fundamental upbringings that has been neglected and conceded in earlier research in MMA.

Posthuman Proficiency and Implementation of Legacy

A posthuman perspective concentrating on fighters’ violent combat, might therefore be reevaluated in the light of a postmodern gaze to view personal (e.g. two contesters/ fighters brute struggled displayed in the octagon) performance as either a phenomenological approach to the world (in which bodies are in an unambiguous cultural sphere of sportive or violent framings, presenting an performative act; in that the representation is perceived as violent from the audience’s perspective, or as a sensory autoethnographical knowledge, in which it is an experimental, embodied understanding that relates to that specific situation occurring. Sources of this type are intended to associate MMA with being interdisciplinary and having an inside perspective, not reflecting on the cultural outcome of these events. Obviously, a cutting edge existing here, perhaps even more, comprehensive members of martial arts combat would not agree to outer sociality opinions criticizing the sport for being so overdriven in its controlled and disciplined violent framing. Rather proponents, argue the necessity for grasping across the allowance in what bodies may do to other human beings.

Full-contact combat is therefore a situated individual enactment of existing corporeal conceptualizations of autotelic and mimetic fighting transpiring, which relates to a person’s or bodily primary dyad of relationships. It involves the descriptions of the senses and the sociality of research participants through the embodied experience of pain and injury and the senses and rhythm of combat. There is a correlation in MMA that points towards building

bodies, and yet, as a simultaneous coprocess, breaking them down again. Seen in this perspective, the pugilist implementation of fighting is an indecisive target for mixed martial artists, as it is framed in a regulated arena and there are certain rules to follow, characterized by a dualism: success and failure, fit bodies and damaged bodies, and routine training and a public performance of bodily spectacles. Ultimately, bodies are thus punctuated and symbolized broken and defeated. Further more, if these symbolic actions then are a way of reinstating the contender's corporeal capital, in a 'Pierre Bourdieu' habitus sense of transpiring into manifested events of 'brutal' unarmed war, then these matches are indeed scenes of 'postmodern pankration' manifesto occurring.

Hence, calibrating these contest into an analyze consisting of performative returns and turns of actions in a new posthuman (where bodies ultimately are at the core of clashing into each other) era clearly demonstrates that there is a cultural materiality in a cutting edge going on here. New-materialism theory in which the body is seen as an agent affected and effected of its cultural milieu, depicted in the sociality, has shown that some parts fit into MMA:s recital habitat and others are not allowed. These actions would for instance be, emotional behavior that are restricted to minimum and instrumental agency are heightened to maximum in order to meet the demands of a legacy in such a return of an ancient sport revisited. Concluding that MMA in a macro format legitimate the macro level of pankration heritage and on a global scale instigating MMA in legacy of antique unarmed battle. Though, there are no concrete rejoinders, it is likely to enhance MMA:s legacy hereon.

Subsequently, conceptions like performance and inheritance function both as representations and as analytical tools in providing the means for framing and analyzing the construction of social and cultural phenomena in combat sports as performed practices, e.g. the impression of violent mixed martial arts performances. Where performance is the embodied re-actualization of symbolic systems, e.g. "men fighting in a cage," it thereby connotes aggression, fear, and violence. More so, it is also on the verge of an unarmed war.

Accordingly a posthuman idea, then, consists of considering what an individual person's body has done in an explicit performance (e.g. the metaphors of pankration) or in a sublime performative act (sportive connotations and denotations), and what a fighter actively does with his body, that is, performing martial arts practice as a civilized sport. So, academically, the performance and the performative concept are used to describe the cultural interactions between social actors (fighters) or between a cultural/social actor (a fighter and the audience) and his or her surrounding environment. A milieu that is often read as punitive and constructed on the seemingly binary split of physical conduct deployed in the battle cage.

From this perspective then, the perceived outcome of how to interpret a mixed martial art fight is determined and understood. In this case, the performative aspects of physical actions

function and operate as a subtle description of how mixed martial athletes become pankration's warrior legacy in full-contact fighting. As they embody the foundations of pankration in mixed martial arts combat (martial arts techniques are based on pankration), the practitioners convert a reinstatement of the performativity bequest of this embodied practice. It thereby enhances the posthuman aspect in bringing consolidated practices back to life in a new form of bodily performative shows through MMA fighting. Interesting and adequate that these bodily powers cemented in front of our eyes in the 21st century, founded nearly 2500 years ago, in a posthuman corporal way, exists and are being brought back in recognition, made essential legitimate and validated.

A Combat Turn of Performativity

In spite of being considered a phenomenon of the 1990s, the performative turn has its roots in the 1940s and 1950s, where it stems from two strands of theory, an anthropological/sociological strand connected with names such as Kenneth Burke, ritual theoretician Victor Turner, and Erwin Goffman, and a second strand from the philosophy of language theory, connected with names such as John Austin and John Searle. However, from the 1970s onwards, the concept of performance has been integrated into a variety of theories in the social sciences and humanities, such as poststructuralist thought, phenomenology, critical theory, semiotics, Lacanian psychoanalysis, deconstruction, feminism, and recently, posthumanism and new materialism. New-materialism and MMA here cuts an important yak, an edge, on the verge of imploding backwards as violent fighting implements abhorrent reaction in postmodern society, integrating the cosmology of an ambivalent cultural stand.

Consequently, the noteworthy thing about all these different theoretical frameworks that have integrated the concepts offered by the performative turn is that they are far from compatible most of the time, one being a critique of another, and so on. Yet they all seem to be compatible with the ideas and the terminology of the performative turn. Why is this so? What is it about the bodily element which turns the art of fighting and wrestling into a mixed martial arts performance that can strike such an awe in so many different types of thought about culture, society, violence, the human being, the world, and subjectivity, and so forth? My point here is that if the concepts alone can bridge new scientific knowledge to this extent about bodily performances, what couldn't we learn from turning to the phenomenon of mixed martial arts fighting, where these concepts come from, that is, the art of pankration and combat cultures? That is to say, people, the human being has fought bloody wars throughout history, which one cannot deny or at least not disagree to? Pankration and MMA of today detectably bear the marks of battle war, the conflict of a non-technological order utilized to hold up a clear arbitration that in a postmodern society not is supposed to be crossed.

Pankration/ MMA and fighting practice now has the potential to offer even more understanding of corporeal practices. It is this potential that I explore in this study by uniting the past with the ideas of the present: connecting pankration with a deeper knowledge in mixed martial art training to gain performative knowledge of how bodily actions function and operate. To mention one example, Dale C. Spencer, the sociologist, PhD scholar and instigator of ethnographic studies in a phenomenological turn, who understands fighting culture and mixed martial arts, successfully applied the notion of phenomenology to the human bodily performing arts of fighting cultures. According to Spencer, outside the performing arts, phenomenology is an expressive embodied behavior more than an imaginative one. To emphasize the coded aspects of fighting culture, Spencer defines fighting performances as “restored practices,” which also underlines the connections to pankration’s rebirth in our modern, postmodern, and posthuman society. Pankration serves as the remedying insight that provides the means and the genuine answers to questions any criticizing towards mixed martial arts culture receives. So, the performance of violence is in birthright, placed and fixated as a platform seen in a sportive context, where fighters compete.

Furthermore, they (fighters of mixed martial arts) should be seen as a continuum, considering that not everything is meant to be a performance at the same time and that everything ranging from a fighting performance to a political rally, court procedures and sports events such as an MMA gala is performativity contradicted. MMA when bodily studied as such and consequently be seen to be close in contemporary terms to a popular, cultural re-imagining of either a gladiator game or an Olympic event of pankration battle reconstructed over and over again: this turns the fighting performances of MMA into a “hyper simulacra” of pankration. These hyper-simulacra operate as an actor, a discourse, and an agency connecting, the ideology of violent bodies to a meta-violence, then bodies to pankration, to MMA and eventually bodies to a posthuman society, where there are no rules. Like UFC in the beginning, in 1993 claimed, there are no rules to follow, that the event were called ultimate fighting, no holds barred sports. Insinuating this unarmed battle of warfare, thus infers that fighting in MMA contests are balancing on the edge of a new combat era/turn.

Following on this track, for the purpose of analysis, Spencer distinguishes between two senses of bodily performances and phenomenological body practice. Referring to a framed event, he argues that performance is in one sense an enactment of cultural conventions and traditions, something that he calls a “bodily-experience of performance.” Performance also refers to the informal happenings of daily life, which implies that everyday practices are performed, something that, in the other sense, he calls “bodies in time and space of performance”. What Spencer alludes to here, in short, is the materiality of bodies in such approaches to the “body,” and he sets the key parameters to the overarching external

environment in which social and cultural actions of extreme performances take place. Moreover, in extracting this line into MMA logics of perception, as it is viewed in media, by the researcher, by its critics and by its fans, it is obvious that combat sports cannot exist without the body, its material and its organic composition, which is the central mechanism to ultimate fighting culture. This guides us to follow in the legacy of pankration violent body order. The combat of bodies, the sacrifices that are made via the body is per se, instantly a materiality in and/ out of what a human being can do and are allowed to do, namely, destroy and at its peak kill another human being in battle.

My study, then, relates to the legacy of pankration's cosmology in combat culture and Spencer's corporeal theory, as he exemplifies the offering of just the kind of knowledge that bridges the range of critical theory present today, including posthumanism, phenomenology, and the new materiality of bodily performance, which are all used in the bulk of my own ethnographical fieldwork as they serve as an umbrella for my auto embodied thinking in general. Since the early 1990s this "new" postmodern combat sport has emerged that challenges this conception. MMA competitions feature competitors in a ring or a caged-in area who inflict pain on their opponents by punching, kicking, elbowing, and kneeing their opponents into submission. Its features are undeniably similar to the structural basis of pankration's combat system and in juxtaposing both of them serves its logical substances on the performance in martial arts locus. A martial arts locus that must have a degree of corporal bias, to such extension that bodies and the embodiment of fighter's battles are encompassing contesters, serving them in vicious surroundings. Yet, be that violence becomes an immersion of sportive means and a sociality of accepted violent norms to follow.

Pankration Performativity and Phenomenology

It is important to mention that within the arts (in practical corporal research) there has also been a performative turn that has taken place on the border between practice (as a way of studying phenomena such as the example above relating to embodied knowledge) and art proper as the 1960s performance art culture came into existence (which the performance scholar Richard Schechner came out of). The German theater theorist and historian Erika Fischer-Lichte describes this development both from a historical and a theoretical perspective.

From a historical perspective, Fischer-Lichte argues that the first attempt to theorize performance was when Theatre Studies was founded as an academic discipline at the beginning of the last century. In Germany, Theatre Studies was founded by Max Herrmann, who claimed in his similar work that the bodily copresence of actors and spectators during

an event is what constitutes the performative aspects—not the dramatic action going on, as was earlier claimed when the study of theatre was a branch of Literary Studies.

One of Fischer-Lichte's historical points is that Theatre Studies and Ritual Studies (which today for the most part are parts of anthropology) share a similar historical development in refocusing on performance and eventness instead of focusing on drama. This happened around the same time as the founding of theatre studies and therefore is at the base of a close allegiance between these two disciplines: displaying how MMA is made up of violent, dramatic acts transgressed through rules in a staged performance of eventness.

As modern martial arts combat like MMA is staged at extreme cultural events, in huge arenas, which highlights the similarity of these combat wars to Olympic pankration events, a theatrical approach is in lieu of the terms that Fischer-Lichte (2008) proffers that theorize the performative turn within the performative arts. A new, performative aesthetics that entirely rethinks how bodily meaning, mind, and dualism are communicated between the stage and the auditorium is based on the facts that MMA is a form of theatrical platform and performance arts are not objects of arts but are taking place as events. Instead of a semiotic communication model, Fischer-Lichte proposes the idea of an autoflowing feedback loop. She bases this on the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, as does Spencer, who claims that mixed martial arts is to be seen from an embodied and sensorial experienced phenomenological angle.

Fischer-Lichte is very much in line with Herrmann, who focuses on the embodied and experientially, based copresence of performers and bodily involvement that, in a collaborative spirit, negotiate the meaning of the performance together (e.g. on a micro level, two fighters sharing their bodily knowledge or, on a macro level, pankration and MMA sharing the same practicalities).

The meaning of embodied performance, disembodied from performativity of knowledge, however, as the performance art culture of the 1960s and onward helps Fischer-Lichte to illustrate, is negotiated on two different perceptual levels. Thus, the perceiving subject in the octagon, its audience/ auditorium and the performing subject, the fighters on stage/ in the ring, oscillate between "the order of presence," which emphasizes the lived, phenomenological, autotelic, violent body, and "the order of representation," which emphasizes the semiotic body of pankration. Experiential meaning is first attained while oscillating between these two perceptual orders. Consistently with Merleau-Ponty's account, the lived experience in fighting is what allows for reflection to occur in the first place, upon which reflective meaning, e.g. how violent perception can be attained in mixed martial arts practice, is gained. Looking at the form of violence in MMA in this sense is an aesthetic

approach to violence that seeks to uncover the intrinsic features of the semi staged mimetic violence.

Drawing on Fischer-Lichte's theoretical description (in arguing for the personal, embodied, ethnographical, field-site value of grasping and placing the juxtaposed knowledge in between MMA and pankration, I will refer back to her historical description), it is vital to pay attention to the fact that whereas there is a lot of knowledge about the contemplative meaning-making in the performativity of perceived inhumane MMA fighting.

There is still much to learn about the experiential meaning-making process that is first and foremost lived and therefore is not communicated as long as combat cultures are not examined on the level of bodily experience. The reason for this is that the embodied experiential level for the most part remains tacit in the relationship between MMA and pankration, and obviously, in relationship to pankration, that is difficult to study. However, the distinctness of MMA as a drama form puts both performers and the audience in contact with the experiential level of its violent exposure. Even better, something that Fischer-Lichte is adamant to point out, the experiential level is not experienced as "ordinary" but experienced as "extraordinary". When experienced as extraordinary, the ring, the octagon, and the fighters in particular can cut through the scrutiny of the experiential level to get at lived knowledge through their bodies' representation.

In studying mixed martial arts and pankration in relation to performative meaning-making quandaries like these categories (brute force, semi staged and event), there is much more understanding to be gained, pertaining not only to performance and phenomenological theory but also to cultural theory, for instance as it taps into the idea of the posthuman and new materialism evaluation on bodily actions and agency. Seen in this perspective, autotelic violence can be thought of as complementary to explanations that focus on the performativity of violence in itself. Through a phenomenology of violence, we can then elucidate the autotelic aspects of the performance acts themselves. They are on the border and the limits of being meticulous acts of brute force. Hence, a power that is human and instigated to destroy and defeat another person's embodied being. Keeping this in mind doesn't solve the bearings of how to analyze the performativity's rightful legacy in conducting full contact actions, as restrictions, rules and taboos adjusts to the normality of the sport development. Such symmetries in MMA and combat sports as a whole, affects the fluctuations over time in how to view violence appearing on stage and performed in safety.

Ethnographical Combat Ontology

Before explaining the pankration connection to MMA that I have envisioned, I will describe a brief idea of the posthuman stance. In critical theory the posthuman is a reconception of the human being (in this case MMA fighting), that is, an applied ontological being (a combat warrior) that is not a singular defined individual, but one who can "become" or embody different characteristics and understand the world from multiple, heterogeneous perspectives. The list of words explaining key concepts within the various posthumanistic theories that is included in the book *Posthuman Key Concepts* explains posthumanism like this: "Theories, commenting on the changing conditions of human being, a body in the wake of modern transformations related to technology, health, democracy and environment".

In the process of writing my doctoral thesis, *Full Contact: An Ethnographic Encounter With Mixed Martial Arts*, I developed a model for an ethnographic phenomenological ontology that contrasts with something that I define as a postmodern performative ontology: the conjecture means that the researcher needs to be embodied and inaugurated to curb certain knowledge in the practical field. What the posthuman phenomenological ontology helped me to explain was the different ways in which a fighter can become and embody MMA on the semistaged and metatheatrical level, as a metawarrior, adapting the features of pankration and thereby cognizing the violence associated with the sport. Since the main focus of my doctorate project is not on posthuman scenic ontology, but on getting an ethnographic encounter for contemporary bodily understanding in mixed martial arts combat violence by studying how one becomes a fighter in the training center and on stage, I would like to emphasize the focus on the "autophenomenological ethnography of ontology" more thoroughly and in much greater detail in connecting it to pankration. In addition, there is also great potential in such a project to move the model outside of the performing arts, sliding MMA in to sportive terms in a similar way to what Spencer did with his theories of performance and phenomenology of the bodily experiences in full-contact fighting.

In one article, entitled "Ontologies Politics: one word and some questions," that is included in *Posthuman Key Concepts*, the Dutch anthropologist of science and technology Annemarie Mol argues that reality is multiple and not a singular object that can be described from different positions or situations in terms of aspects of one singular reality. To perceive how this multiplicity of realities is played out, Mol relies on the performance metaphor showing how the reality is created in several coexisting versions. Between these versions of reality, ongoing negotiations take place that Mol defines as a political ontology—the body is doing MMA fighting—and in a phenomenological approach that is employed here, Mol emphasizes the sensory experience of embodied singularities. I contend that the body in the singular must be analyzed continually in relation to other bodies and be seen as a legacy of those other bodies and asked why it is seen in a particular way and why it is looked at from a

perspective that also includes the pankration inheritance. In the case of MMA, where rules are instituted to encourage certain forms of “reasonably” us of performative violence, there is sublimation between violent practices and the violent body, and a distinction between whether or not the fighter’s body becomes a violent weapon, as in the combat fighting of pankration applied.

Building on Mol’s notion of a political ontology, I have created a model for posthuman phenomenological ontology. I claim that in relation to the politics of practical ontology going on during a staged event in mixed martial arts fighting as part of the performative feedback loop of pankration heritage, an epistemological level must also be seriously considered, with bodies taking primacy over cultural and social experience. Hence it is, in Fischer-Lichte’s terms, extraordinary rather than ordinary bodily performances that take place during a full-contact fight in MMA combat culture. Consistent with ontological reasoning in general, I not only discuss the reality of the staged fights in relation to performative ontology, but I also discuss the fighters being on stage in a metalevel of performance. Importantly, modern phenomenological ontology has considered public space (e.g. an octagon in MMA) to exist along a vertical axis between a high level and a lower level, conscious and unconscious, abject, subjectivity and objective reality, and so on. Spencer shows how these conscious acts of performance transgress fighting bodies to determine the status of the body and therefore define what the MMA body is, turn to how bodies move and experience in manifold ways, and what bodies are capable of doing. Mol shows us that there is also a horizontal axis suggesting coexisting versions of a staged reality rather than a singular objective reality, which also relates to the performative aspect in active bodies that are inflicting physical brutality and/or viciousness such as in MMA fighting. The ontology of being/becoming a fighter in MMA refers to the relationship between the human being and the world, where the ontology of being on stage in a ring or an octagon would refer to the relationship between the fighter and the world outside of him or her derived from pankration warfare, which in this case is imaginative and set to reassemble that particular legacy. It thereby legitimizes the coexistence of a version of MMA and features of pankration in a postmodern contemporary world of today.

From the time when pankration and theories of performance history began until postmodern performativity was developed, the fighter has always been perceived as in the world in the ring/octagon, just as the human being is assumed to be in the real world. What I evoke in my model is that the fighters’ being (and the audience seeing, e.g. MMA being violent or not) on stage oscillates between at least three coexisting versions of being in relation to the world. The fighter, as well as the human being, is oscillating between being in, of, and with the world. Being of the world is an understanding derived from Merleau-Ponty and being with the

world is an understanding derived from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Whereas Fischer-Lichte builds her idea of the ordinary as extraordinary on the oscillation between perceptual orders as framed by the feedback loop and founded on the lived body's experiential capacity, she cannot fully get at the multiplicity of this process.

In shifting from perceptual orders to a phenomenological ontology, we can internment the multiple participation that is happening during a staged fighting event, at its semitheatrical core. I call this multiple competing the overdrive of the politics of practical ontology. The overdrive in this case also stems from the fact that in the performative corporeal act there is an additional line of fighting in MMA that is going on: beside between versions of reality/ authenticity and versions of fighting-being, there is a play between facticity/fictitiously, the materiality of bodies that exists in between physical reality, and the fictive states of an MMA fight as staged. When the oscillations between all these levels of fighting come together, how can one not talk about a spectacular overdrive in the MMA event-taking place? Studying this overdrive closely in its extraordinary state of "brute" force, can explain important things outside the performing arts about, at the very least, the experience of becoming a fighter, that is, a human being in, of, and with the world originating from pankration. This is the legacy of a posthuman bodily stance on embodied performance, which transports transhuman Pankration of wargame into a postmodern reality of mixed martial arts combat sport.

Conclusions

I want to stress that my take on practical combat ontology, as it can be translated into a discussion on ontology, pankration, and MMA combat within cultural criticism in general, offers a compatible fresh conceptual understanding of embodied, situated knowledge, since I show that the point is not that the various theoretical frameworks that explain the human fighter as a being in, of, and with the world are compatible. They are not. Making a mishmash of them as a scholar is neither convincing nor consistent. However, the point of coexisting versions of MMA and Pankration is not compatibility, but the fact that they all exist at the same time (or at least are brought back in a simulacra) and that there is a constant political negotiation going on in mixed martial arts fighting, e.g. whether it should be brutal or not. Thus, this new conceptual understanding needs to be theorized properly and communicated to a wider audience outside of academia performance and phenomenological theory. This is why I stress that a researcher studying combat arts from an ethnographic perspective should practice combat arts to gain valuable knowledge of its performance of representativeness.

A posthuman understanding of pankration's influence on modern combat sports, exemplified through MMA, shows us that this phenomenon of fighting culture is a performative action, bodily, and highly post factum event which have a dyadic and integral violent relationship. Violent exposure, through our very bodies themselves, disperses to break down the proximity between combatants in MMA fighting, and is in lieu of posthuman ontological tendencies of being more than just a self-destructive activity, reduced to self-serving singularities. MMA fighting and MMA bodies show us that this postmodern sport, reinvented as a legacy of pankration, does indeed rest on a performative turn and as such is a phenomenon of much more than outer objectives in homosociality/homoeroticism or brute aggressiveness in their appearances. Rather, MMA rests on the dyadic participation of two combatants or a covenanter in a two-party interaction of physical and autotelic violent friction.

The basis of MMA, similar to that of pankration, involves a greater level of bodily intimacy and reciprocal exchange in the force of action in integral combat. This conception may be sui generis in the cultural and social relationship between fighters, its motivation (fighters using intentional violence in MMA) and forms of consent in fighting being (Pankration related to MMA) in order to be able to describe and understand mixed martial arts. When put together, in post-factum, out of two tendencies, one monistic, and the other antagonistic, the link between Pankration and MMA becomes visible. As noted, MMA's bodily performance, transgressed by the use of inflicted violence, is a performative action in its irreversible dyadic legacy of Pankration genuineness in posthuman and postmodern case of human bodies undertaking forceful acts. To sum up, MMA, closely related to pankration, is a dyadic performativity of violent actions, performed in a strategic and tactical framework of rules that allow force in between the inside and the outside of the corporeal activities that determine the level of veracity in fighting. With regards to a posthuman tendency, in that MMA fighters seek a lived, action experienced culture instead of the culture affecting them as actors, combat sport is first and foremost a legacy of pankration that needs to be explored further. The UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) and MMA is a measurement of violent exposure allowed and MMA here becomes an indicator for how to perceive sports violence.



Fig 1 and 2. Professional MMA-Fighters in the mixed martial arts club at the fieldwork location in northern part of Sweden.



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PUTTING YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD

Donald Miskel

Before I embark on this one sided discussion let me do a disclaimer. I am not trying to send you into communication overload with these articles and messages. Having dedicated well over half a century into the study and teaching at the martial arts two things have occurred that have caused this prolific outpouring. I have been elevated to the rarified position of Grandmaster by my peers and I have suffered the backlash effect of all of my years of training. Consequently I spend more time contemplating various aspects of the martial arts than teaching and training. Please don't get me wrong. Like many of you I am a martial art fanatic and literally breathe martial arts. I still train and to a lesser degree I still teach. I just spend more time pontificating. I probably think too much. Too much time on my hands. I have one more article in the hole so I beg your patience. Please bear with the rambling of an old man and I promise to (try to) put myself on article restriction.

What I would like to discuss today is the effect wing chun and jeet kune do has had on the martial arts and its pros and cons for the Japanese and Okinawa inspired martial artist.

In the two afore mentioned arts a strong hand forward approach is advocated. This is what a right handed practitioner would call a south paw or unorthodox stance. This type of approach advocates defending with the rear hand and countering or attacking with the forward weapons. This would include kicks as well as strikes. Karate and its associated arts along with European boxing advocate the strong hand back approach. Both have their advantages and disadvantages.

Wing chun and jeet kune do tend to lean toward blitzing attacks. Karate in its purest form is a power system and adapts the one hit one kill philosophy. This isn't as common an approach as in the past. Most karateka these days aren't able to generate the power to affect that one strike capability but that is more because of the way karate is taught and practiced today than it does the capability of the art.

Back in the day a karate fighter was generally unarmed. His only defense was the natural weapons of the human body. He honed these weapons to a lethal state by conditioning the striking surfaces and bone structure and by applying physically sound principles into their methodology. Karate and its resultant power is a marvel of physics. No hocus pocus; no prestidigitation. Just sound physics. With the proper training it's possible to garner the kind of stopping power that old world karate was capable of. One must take into consideration that because they were often confronted by armed and skilled opponents in life and death struggles the karateka's weapons had to be as deadly as the weapons they were confronted with. They seldom had more than one chance to affect a telling blow that incapacitated or destroyed the opposition. Imagine facing a skilled and battle tested samurai warrior in a life or death struggle. You wouldn't want to get in a give and take jousting match. Every move had to count. More often than not you didn't get more than one chance. Hence the one strike one kill philosophy.

Boxing and kick boxing have changed what we know as karate today but karate wasn't always as benign as it is now. It was practiced and executed with total commitment. There were no combinations or in between techniques. Every single technique was designed to maim or kill.

Wing chun and the arts that were derived from it take the blitz Krieg approach. The idea is to overwhelm the opponent's defenses and to overload his central nervous system with a strategic combination of strikes. I may be over simplifying but that is basically the approach taken. The forward hand offers the fastest access to the target. Since a one strike kill isn't attempted the initial strike doesn't have to have the power of karate's gyaku zuki or reverse punch.

The karate practitioner often had to face an opponent who was outfitted with armor and had to have weapons that would breach the barrier that it presented. His hands had to be able to crash through such obstructions. This required conditioned hands and the power that the reverse punch offered.

Wing chung because of its necessity for speed uses high stances. Karate on the other hand is (or was) a counter punching system. A karat fighter would redirect the force of the opponents attack with a devastating and often incapacitating block and position himself into an advantageous position that allowed him access to the opponent's most vulnerable targets while offering the least access to his own. This is called tai sabaki. From that position a finishing technique was implemented, hopefully to the opponent's detriment. Usually only one step was taken in the process. No bouncing on the toes. No stick and move. No shuffling in and out. Just one devastating technique that more often not ended the fight.

Various martial arts developed to address the needs of a particular person or group of people. It addressed the challenges that he or they would be met with. There was nothing esoteric or artistic about fighting. It was as direct and deadly as possible. How cute you looked during the process didn't enter into the equation. The effectiveness of a particular art determined its efficiency. It either worked or it didn't. If it didn't most combatants didn't have opportunity to go back and correct their technique. Not unless it was in their next incarnation. Okay, no theological backlash on that statement. I'm trying to use a bad sense of humor to illustrate a point. In real combat your system and your personal ability either worked or you were sent to meet your maker. In other words you were rendered stone cold dead.

I believe that the martial art that one studies should not only be based on availability and body type (though they weigh in heavily in the equation) but on what the art will be used for. I have nothing against the various arts that are represented by the martial art community. Each is beautiful in its own right. I believe that an art should be chosen and practiced in its pure form. If it isn't broke don't fix it and if it is broke find another art. What I am saying is that by trying to incorporate the principles of another art into your own you often come up with a system that hasn't the effectiveness of either art. One is oil. The other is water. Just because both are effective alone doesn't mean that a compilation of the two will be better. On the other hand if one is lacking mixing them often causes more problems than it solves.

I like wing chun and I admire the thought that has gone into the creation of jeet kune do but I realize that they aren't karate and they don't particularly mix well with karate. I have had opportunity to delve into the study of both wing chun and jeet kune do and I admire both. I just recognize myself as basically a karate ka and I don't try to mix the oil and water aspects of those arts. I'm not proclaiming one art better than the other though I have full confidence in my karate. It has proved itself in some rather serious situations and I believe in its effectiveness. In effect I've learned to put my best foot forward and to stay in my lane. Mixed metaphors, yes, but you get my meaning. Train in the art that is best for you and that best serve your purpose. If it works stay with it. If it doesn't work for you you would probably do better finding another art than trying to recreate the wheel by mixing arts that don't complement each other.

Train hard, my brethren and go with God.

Rev. Dr. Donald Miskel

STILLNESS IN COMBAT

Donald Miskel

Okay, many of you are probably looking at me funny at this point. What the heck is he talking about now? Has he finally lost it?

Not really, my brothers. You probably think that stillness in combat is a recipe for disaster. It's according to what one means by stillness.

Have you ever seen a seasoned martial artist in a tournament? Too often all of those techniques that looked so beautiful during kata and are so sharp and powerful in the dojo degenerate to ineffectual flailing in a tournament. Worse yet have you ever seen that black belt technician freeze up in the face of an attack and get his hat knocked around backwards in a fight? I've seen black belt fighters look like grammar school girls in a playground brawl. Embarrassing to see.

The Black Lotus Martial Art Association came about because a lot of the black belts being turned out in some of the dojo(s) in Chicago were being trounced in the streets. Commercial schools were vying for students and many schools had a contract that promised a student a black belt in a year. I remember when it took from six to eight years to earn a black belt. That is if you were capable of attaining a black belt. Many trained for years and never were able to attain a black belt. I also remember when there was no black belt rewarded to a student under eighteen years old. There were no poon belts or junior black belts. Let me reveal my age here. I remember when there were only three belts. White, brown and black and there were no degrees in those belts. Okay I realize I'm going back a ways. Animal skin gis and loin cloths.

The collaboration of instructors that eventually became the BLMAA joined together to help those inept, would be, black belts and in the process save the reputation of the art in Chicago. In those days people would sometimes come into karate schools and challenge the students or the instructors. Some were practitioners from other schools or systems and some were hooligans from the neighborhood who for whatever reason took exception to the school. That was karate in the sixties and seventies in the big windy.

Unfortunately, too often, even good karate practitioners were being embarrassed in the streets. They knew the techniques but lost it under the stress of combat. Believe me, fighting isn't the same as sparring.

Many combat oriented systems have done away with the more complex techniques all together. One reason is because they take too much time to perfect but also because most people can't use them in the heat of combat. When adrenalin charges the blood and heart rate goes up eye hand coordination goes out the window. For the most part only gross motor skills are there for the average person under those circumstances. Yet many of those classical techniques were combat effective when these arts were actually combat systems. What happened? Why don't those tried and true techniques work for today's fighter? They seem to work in the dojo.

It isn't the techniques that fall short it's the practitioners of today. Even many of the highest degree black belts are only partially trained in this modern age. In a day when karate and its sister arts are practiced for competition or for physical exercise or even for spiritual reasons the ingredients that made them most effective have been lost or simply aren't being taught.

In the BLMAA we have given in to the trend of many of the modern combat systems. Most of our techniques are basic and based on natural reactions. We concentrate primarily on techniques that incorporate gross motor movement. With my private students however I teach many of the more advanced and complex techniques. In the more basic combat system our pressure point techniques attack balance, vision and breathing. We leave the more advanced pressure point techniques for the most advanced student and our inside or closed door students.

Those more advanced techniques are sound in theory and given the proper training can be effective. The necessary training involve endless repetition, strategy, what we call tai sabaki or advantageous positioning, footwork, breathing and mushin.

Strategy, footwork, body positioning and repetition are technical aspects of the art but breathing and mushin, which I'll explain in a minute are more esoteric. Too often many karateka will only step backwards or forward in a fight. A few are taught to sidestep but lateral motion is too often completely missing. To a large extent lateral movement makes tai sabaki possible.

Many fighters have no strategy in a fight. They just wade in punching and kicking. Perfecting those technical skills will go a long way toward making a better fighter. Strategy is learned in the dojo not in the heat of combat.

Constant repetition translates into muscle memory. Without muscle memory it's impossible to be an effective fighter. If you have to think about it it won't work. In a fight you have time to only act and react. You don't have time for planning.

Okay we've got that out of the way now let's address the real meat of this essay. I'm a Christian minister so I'm a little suspect about the spiritual implications of the zazen and transcendental meditation that sometimes accompany the practice of the Eastern martial art disciplines. This isn't a theological essay so I'll leave that argument for another time and place. Come to my Wednesday evening bible class at my church and I'll address that for you. Still, even without the religious or spiritual implications that Eastern meditation would involve some kind of meditation is necessary if you hope to be able to implement some of the more challenging karate, kempo or kung fu techniques in combat. Meditation not only calms and focuses the spirit it also helps a practitioner learn to control his breathing. Breathing controls heart rate and we've already touched on the effect of erratic breathing and a wild heart rate. What we are trying to do is implement a state of mushin into combat. Okay oh great grand pooba of everything ryu karate. What the heck is mushin? I'm glad you asked, Hoppa Grass.

Picture in your mind a calm lake. I mean really calm. Not a ripple on the water. In such still water you can see your reflection like in a mirror but let there be even the slightest agitation to the surface of the water and all you see are erratic flashes of light. A calm lake reflects. Troubled water refracts. You get plenty of light but no focus of vision or perception. We liken that calm lake to mushin. Mushin is the calm almost detached stillness that the ancient martial artist incorporated into effective combat. In that state he could use the most complex skill effectively.

Let something startle the sh... I mean scare the heck out of you and see how much control you have over your motor skill. You can't even get your key into your car door until you calm down. If you don't have a remote you'll have to stand in the cold until you get yourself together. If the unexpected scare was nothing but the backfire of a passing newspaper truck you're okay but what if that sudden sound was the scream of a deranged assailant? Can we talk about buying the farm? That's where mushin comes in. If you can keep your center and control breathing and heart rate and you've developed your defensive skills into muscle memory you have a good chance of surviving the experience. It is imperative to have a still mind in the face of impending danger. Without it you become a spectator and worse a victim.

If you are going to be effective in the face of combat you have to be able to remain calm enough to fight back. If you're struggling to breath and trying not to soil your undies you're toast. If you want to be able to give a good account of yourself in a confrontation you will have to learn the art of stillness.

Mushin will serve you in every area of your life. You'll be less challenged by life's daily stress. You'll be able to perform better in whatever opposition you are faced with. Finishing that brief. Passing that midterm exam. And yes winning that life and death struggle. You'll be able to control your temper and deal with those pesky unsolicited sales calls that punctuate your evenings. You'll be able to live your life more effectively unaffected by the little irritants that seek to knock you off your square.

Before and after your training and whenever possible during your work day find a time and a technique that allow you that moment of stillness and calm. Control your breathing. Breathe from the belly and not from the top of your lungs. Slow deep breathing promotes calm. If you find yourself in a threatening situation breathe don't pant. You'll find that if you are able to control your breathing you'll maintain your calm. In many instances the calm demeanor you display in the face of the threat will be enough to make a miscreant think in terms of another target. Assailants want soft targets. They depend on your fear to take away your resolve and give them the advantage. They aren't looking for that calm and confident individual. Predators are looking for easy prey. He is looking for an easy conquest not a hard fight.

In the end whether you have to discourage a would be predator or combat an attacker mushin, that calm in the face of opposition, that stillness in the storm, will serve you to greater affect and help you implement the tools that you have honed in the dojo for just such an occasion.

Fighting is more than defense and offense. It's more than a block, punch and kick. It's an attitude; all of it is a package deal. No one part will work by itself but if all elements are there and you are calm and confident you stand a more than better chance of coming out of the experience the victor. Knowing that should make you breathe easier.

God bless you, my brother. Train hard and go with God.

Rev. Dr. Donald Miskel

STRENGTH IN UNITY

Donald Miskel

My brethren; this is not a religious dissertation though you'll find some quotes the bible used to illustrate a point or two. I admonish those of my brothers who are not Christian to bear with me and not turn away from the truth that I'm trying to expound. As much as I would like to see the conversion of every one of my brothers and friends to Christianity this isn't an effort to accomplish that.

The psalmist said in Ps. 133:1, "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Unity certainly makes human interaction smoother and less confrontation. But more than that there is power in unity.

When I was in boot camp the various companies indulged in competition in different areas. Coming out first in those competitions awarded a flag to recognize those accomplishments. The flags awarded to each company would be displayed while marching in the graduation ceremony.

For public relations purposes the Chicago Cubs financed the training of one of the companies in boot camp. All of the members of the said company hailed from in and around the Chicago area. Because I had four years of R.O.T.C. I became the first platoon leader of that company.

We had been successful in drill competition and had won the D flag. We had also excelled in academics and had won the I (Intelligence) flag. We coveted but had yet to win the A flag for athletics. We had won the track competition and only needed to win the strength competition to take the A flag.

Our company was company 444, The Cubs Company. Our sister company, company 442 was offering stiff competition for the acquisition of the A flag. They had won the swim competition and the strength competition would determine the final winner. There was a serious problem challenging our success in strength against our sister company. They had some big robust farm boys in their midst. We had no-one of comparable strength to contest them. They were obviously bigger and stronger. We couldn't out strength them. We needed a strategy to nullify the difference in strength and size. The last competition was a tug of war

where strength, size and weight mattered heavily. Our only hope was in teamwork. We figured that if we worked together we could overcome the obstacle represented by their size.

At the offset of the competition we were being overwhelmed by their superior size and strength. They were pulling us dangerously close to the mud pit that separated the two teams. I was at the front of the rope. Weighing all of 190# I was staring into the determined eyes of a 250# corn fed ox of a fellow. He grinned wickedly as I was tottering at the edge of the pit. Our second platoon leader was a big guy and was our anchor. He yelled from the rear to remember our plan. Somehow we regained our focus and began to pull and release in perfect unity. The results were instantaneous. Our competitors were bigger and stronger but they didn't work together. They depended on their obvious advantage to garner victory but in the end our unified effort won the day. We won the coveted A flag against all apparent odds. In the end our unified effort made the difference.

There is power in unity that goes beyond size, strength and numbers. Christ said the "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I will be in the midst thereof. And if any two of you agree touching on anything it shall be done unto them." God recognizes the power of unity and honors unity and harmony. That type of oneness is close to his nature.

I belong to two international martial art organizations. I am the chairman and Grandmaster of the one (the BLMAA) and a patriarch and 'Head of Family' of the other (the IFAA BDFS). The two organizations are sister organizations in that, in a sense, they sprang from the same roots. They serve different purposes and have different visions but they have one thing in common; to propagate and encourage the growth and unity of the martial arts. The BLMAA is a Christian martial art organization and focus on the mentoring of its students. We concentrate as much on moral and spiritual growth as the physical aspects of the martial arts and our rank structure reflects that. The IFAA BDFS is a secular organization and focus on the self defense and combat aspects of the martial arts. We concern ourselves with the moral and spiritual growth of student and teacher but that is secondary to our purpose. As the name implies we are a 'fighting society' and martial in our purposes. What both organizations have in common is a desire to see unity within the martial arts and especially in the body of the organizations.

Any organization bands together to propagate some common purpose but all seek the strength of numbers. Hopefully those numbers will work together in the strength, power and, yes, beauty of unity. In a harmonious atmosphere the whole will be greater than the sum of its parts.

In authority I can only speak for myself and the organizations that I represent but in spirit I speak to all of my brethren in the arts. We have different ideas and we practice various

martial disciplines but we also have something in common that should unify us. We are all brothers in the arts. Whether we practice a do (or ascetic art) or a jitsu (or fighting art) we are all martial artists. Strikers or grapplers. Sport or combat oriented. Internal or external stylists. It really doesn't matter. We are involved in the same endeavor, to improve ourselves through the martial arts. In the end our strength is in our common visions. Not where we differ but where we come together. We can agree or we can agree to disagree but if the arts are to grow and strive we must stand and work together.

In a forced march soldiers found that they had to stagger their steps while marching across a bridge. If they marched in step they could cause a resonance that could collapse even a strong stone bridge. There is that much power in unity and harmonious effort.

We are like a column of soldiers. If we are to march together we are no faster than our slowest man but working together we can achieve our goals. If we arrive at all we will all arrive together or we'll fall short together. We will all win or we will all lose. If we want the martial arts to grow and flourish we have to unify our efforts and strive together. Like that tug of war team we can win against insurmountable odds if we work together.

My brethren, this is a call to unity. Let's find a common ground and agree where we can and agree to disagree where we can't but let's dwell together in unity.

God bless you my brethren. Train hard and go with God.

Rev. Dr. Donald Miskel, ThD, DCC, MDiv.

Judan Shodai Soke, BLMAA Patriarch, Head of Family, IFAA BDFS, Traditional Historian, Worldwide Dojo

STUDENTS OF THE HEART

Donald Miskel

In my fifty five plus years of studying, researching and teaching the martial arts I have had only a few personal, closed door students. In years past in Japan and Okinawa an uchi deshi was a live-in student. Since it's hard to find a wife who will allow you to move a private student into the home and few dojo(s) have the amenities to second as an apartment for a personal student the term has taken on a different meaning. The ushi deshi is the chosen student(s) that a master chooses to pour the essence of his accumulative knowledge and wisdom into. While my wisdom has often been in doubt my knowledge has seldom been questioned. For many years of my life I ate slept and dreamt martial arts. I was one of the nineteen sixties proponents of the 'karate is my life' philosophy. Fortunately I have grown beyond that phase in my old age. Family, ministry and marriage take a front seat to the martial arts at this late date but the martial arts is still a priority even in my old age. In this phase of my martial art career I spend more time in researching and writing about different aspects of the arts along with trying to manage a couple of martial art organizations rather than actual hands on teaching. Even so I do have a couple of closed door students. I guess old habits are hard to break.

In all honesty training with me is more than a notion. I'm old school enough to make the process difficult and often painful. I don't attract the classical martial art student or the sport orientated individual. Instead I teach the hard core combat oriented practitioner and those in high risk professions. I'll still teach the occasional children's class but that has to do more with mentoring and ministry than turning out hard core martial artists. For the most part I prefer to train advanced black belt students my core system and self defense to law enforcement and security personnel. I grew up in a harsh environment in one of the nations more dangerous cities and you know how it is with old dogs and new tricks. My primary focus is on practical and realistic combat.



Getting a black belt from me has always been like pulling teeth. I haven't turned out a huge number of black belt students in my career. Most students these days are into instant gratification and would rather take the fast track. I don't give out dan rank in one or two years. If you want high rank from me you have to be in it for the endurance because yours will be a long road.

With all of that being said, the system that I teach appears basic on the surface but is complex in its application and takes years to even begin to perfect. The techniques tend to be direct to the point and often brutal but that's the true nature of combat. Life and death combat isn't a game. It isn't a sport. As fore stated it's just that; life and death. What I teach isn't for the squeamish or faint of heart but what I teach I teach with spiritual content. After all, my brutal system to the contrary, I'm a minister, pastor and Christian. I teach war craft but I don't advocate violence.

I have a number of students, sempai, masters and grandmasters who align themselves after me and swear by what I teach. All of them aren't my private students and most of them didn't get their initial training from me but they are still my students. In my belief the martial arts is like an iceberg. What you see, the techniques and training principles, are but the tip of that iceberg. Most of the iceberg exists out of sight beneath the surface.

In a sense all martial arts are basically the same though all aren't created equal. Martial art systems consist of either striking or grappling or various combinations of the two. There are only so many realistic ways to defend against and attack another human being. The various philosophies of how these techniques are used make up the various martial art systems. In the end any realistically trained martial artist will be similarly outfitted.

When a well trained martial artist comes under my tutelage I don't try to discard his foundation and rebuild him. He should already be efficient in what he does. I may do a bit of fine tuning to bring him to what I consider an acceptable level but I don't try to recreate the wheel. If they aren't competent martial artists I'll consign their training to one of my students or send them back to their instructor. If I find his level complimentary to his rank I'll on occasion take him on as a student. Some of these individuals live across the nation or even in different countries. The rare or occasional face to face contact that I have with them doesn't qualify me to be their actual instructor even though I sometime guide the direction of their training by offering new ideas and concepts or different directions in their training. These people are my students though my relationship with them has little to do with gyms, dojos, dojangs or kwoons. These are my students of the heart. Aside for the afore mentioned verbal instruction and advice my relationship with them is more philosophical and spiritual. They grow under the guidance that I can offer as an older and supposedly wiser individual.

In the rarified world of the martial art master and grandmaster the difference between the two is often only time in grade and growth in the spiritual arena. If a grandmaster pours knowledge into an established master he will offer more than technique and training. If the said student has reached master level he has that already. As the 'Head of Family' in the IFAA Black Dragon Fighting Society I don't have a lot to do with giving of rank. That's primarily handled by the masters and grandmasters of the individual systems or by the 'Grandmasters Council' of the organization. In the Black Lotus Martial Arts Association however I do have that authority. Because the BLMAA is primarily a Christian organization I look upon rank differently. Below godan (5TH degree black belt) rank is given like in any other system. Master rank however is awarded differently. I figure by godan a master has the knowledge and ability that he'll carry throughout the remainder of his martial art career. Beyond that I am looking beyond the physical aspects of the arts. Along with time in grade I am looking at moral and spiritual growth. For the average sensei the arts is more about mentoring and creating better human beings than turning out trained killers. That ability and focus is what I strive to instill into my senior students. I've turned out my quota of trained killers. I'm more concerned with training those who will be molders of men and mentors to those who come under their tutelage. These are the students of my heart.

God bless you, my brethren. Train hard and go with God.

Rev. Dr. Donald Miskel

Judan Shodai Soke, (IFAA) BLMAA. Patriarch, Head of Family, IFAA BDFS. Traditional Historian, World Wide Dojo

WHITE BELT KARATE FOR THE BLACK BELT FIGHTER

Donald Miskel

There has always been a marked difference between karate do and karate jitsu. Actually at one time there was no karate do. There was only karate or as it was called in its earlier incarnation, tode. First and foremost karate was a tool. It was a fighting system; a tool for survival in an often hostile world. The idea of karate for competition or self improvement had yet to become popular or even be conceived of. Its techniques were designed to disable and even maim or kill. For this reason its techniques were simple and direct. All of the rather esoteric techniques that we see these days were nonexistent. If it didn't work in combat it wasn't practiced or taught.



In the late sixties Black Belt Magazine did an article on a trend that had become popular amongst young martial artists in Japan. Its techniques were similar to what some young people would call 'tricking' today. Its techniques were acrobatic and it required its practitioners to indulge in the most difficult and impractical techniques possible. Obviously it

had no value as a combat system. It would impress the heck out of an opponent before he knocked your hat around backwards but it posed little threat to an assailant. Contrary to the once popular Saturday morning kung fu flicks summersaults, cart wheels and such were never meant for combat.

In combat simplicity is the key. Basics work. A good example of this combat reality is shotokan karate. Shotokan is a lean system based heavily on basics. Three kicks, two punches and a hand full of strikes make up the major offensive arsenal of the system. Its bread and butter techniques consist of a gyaku zuki (reverse punch) and a mae geri (front kick). Despite the lack of complex and fancy techniques shotokan is the most popular and arguably one of the most practical systems practiced today. It's easy to learn but takes a lifetime to perfect.

Karate as its practiced today is inefficient as a fighting system. Perhaps we should get back to karate's combative roots. Seeing the art as what it was intended for will help to keep us honest. I have nothing against competition as long as it doesn't change the practical aspects of the art. When competition begins to shape the art you are no longer practicing a fighting system.

Let's break it down to basics. Techniques should be direct and to the point. Stances should be rooted. Use the closest weapon to the target. Hands for high targets. Kicks for low targets. The shortest distance between two points is a straight line. The occasional mawashi geri (roundhouse kick) is okay but for the most part karate is a straight line system.

Bobbing and weaving and ducking and dodging are boxing techniques. Karate blocks not only injure and even occasionally destroy the offending limb it also allows a skilled practitioner to open his opponent's defense and position him for an attack. Tai sabaki (body positioning) serve the same purpose as boxing's bobbing and weaving. Bobbing and weaving tends to compromise the integrity of the karateka's stance. Karate for combat requires slightly higher stances than the groin dragging stances of some systems. Stances should be high enough to allow mobility and low enough to give a foundation for strong techniques.

Basically karate is a counter punching system. There is no first attack in true karate. Allowing your opponent to commit himself gives you an opportunity to take advantage of your opponent's body positioning. That approach is the essence of karate.

Aerial techniques (flying kicks) were designed to deal with an opponent on horseback, not to kick a standing opponent. Rear kicks were designed to deal with an opponent attacking from the rear. No real fighter will intentionally turn his back on an opponent. In my way of thinking that puts rear spinning or turning techniques in question.

Hopping up and down isn't karate. No serious combatant will choose to fight on the ground. Ground techniques should be designed to allow you to get back to your feet as quickly as possible. A fighter is at a disadvantage on the ground. If we are going to practice real karate we have to be honest with ourselves. We have to be realistic and practical.

Karate techniques shouldn't be changed or discarded to accommodate competition. Neither should they be changed to allow children to change. The practitioner should change to accommodate the system; the system shouldn't change to accommodate the student.

Again, basics are the rule of thumb. A front kick, a reverse punch, a knife hand strike, a rising block. Err on the side of simplicity. Sounds like white belt karate doesn't it? Don't let the simplicity fool you. In the end, less is more. Basics work. White belt karate perfected to black belt level is karate at its efficient best. Let's get back to real karate. Leave the esoteric stuff for the kids who practice tricking. They don't claim to be fighters.

Train hard my martial art brethren and go with God.

Rev. Dr. Donald Miskel. Judan shodai Soke, BLMAA. Patriarch, Head of Family, IFAA BDFS

ZEN AND MAKIWARAI TRAINING

Donald Miskel

No, my Christian brothers, you'll find little Zen included here but it's a pretty nifty title, don't you think? It's no secret. I'm a big proponent of 'back in the day'. Things are changing so fast that today's innovations are obsolete the day after tomorrow. I'm amused by the commercials that have children telling slightly younger children how hard they had it back in the day. Pretty funny stuff but not so far from the truth. Not so much that these kids 'earned their bread in the sweat of their brow' but things are changing that fast.

As a kid I was burdened with listening to how hard my father had it as opposed to the easy road I got to trod. I'm still trying to figure how my father had to trudge to school barefooted in the snow (in Mississippi yet) uphill both ways. Okay, my Christian brothers. I have to repent behind that one. That may have been a slight exaggeration but I believe you get my drift.

Well, let me tell you 'youngons'. You don't know how good you have it. Back in the day karate classes easily ran for four hours or more. I usually worked my students until they could no longer function. That indicated when class ended. In the old World Karate federation under Doug Dwyer (my sensei) and John Keehan (aka Count Dante) we had a saying. 'Class wasn't over until there was blood on the floor'. Sounds crazy but too often that was the case. We literally trained until we dropped.

I look at how martial arts classes are taught today and how they were taught when I was a young kyu ranked student. Many of the instructors had honed their skills in the military. Marines and airmen did tours of duty in Okinawa and army and navy personnel did the same in Japan. When they came back to the States to teach they brought their military attitudes and methods with them. Actually it went back further than that. During World War II martial arts was taught for combat. That militaristic attitude influenced both the Eastern and Western arts. Martial arts classes took on the characteristics of boot camp. Today martial arts have become commercial and like any other business it caters to its customers. Consequently the needs and sensitivities of the customer too often determine the content and methodology of the classes taught. Work them too hard and you lose students.

Modern teaching methods have made the teaching of the arts more efficient and less painful but I wonder what has been lost with this trade off. The martial arts are, after all, about combat and if they aren't taught with the necessary intensity one has to wonder how realistic the end results are. Soldiers aren't pampered in basic training because they won't be pampered on the battle field. Hardship is part of war. You will receive no polite consideration on the field of battle. In the end how you train will determine how you fight.

I realize that the 'do' concept of the martial arts means that it isn't all about combat and physical confrontation. We're trying to build better human beings, not trained killers but in the end a martial art that isn't affective in combat isn't a martial art. It takes on more of the characteristics of American football, combative in nature but not in intent. Following too much of that approach will have us (like children) playing at combat.



When I was training we spent a lot of time in conditioning the weapons. We worked on the makiwari for hours, often until our hands were bleeding. We conditioned the hands and feet until they calloused and the bones thickened. Karateka sported large knuckles and calloused knife hands. Some of us even went so far as to shove our hands into buckets of sand, gravel and iron filings. That's crazy but we were fanatical about conditioning our hands. The toughening of the weapons was originally practiced because combatants often wore some kind of body armor and the hands had to be like stone to be affective against them. Also, because their opponents were often armed, a one hit kill had to be developed. When facing a trained samurai with a katana one hit was probably all an unarmed combatant got. It was an all or nothing proposition.

Please, don't get me wrong. I'm not advocating beating the hands into those types of weapons. That was thin. This is now. Many of us suffer arthritis today because of those practices but if we insist on hitting with the fist some conditioning is necessary. Believe me, for the most part, the head is harder than the hand. Hit someone on the tip of the chin to

achieve that picture perfect knock out and you'll do your hand more damage than you will your opponent. I've been knocked unconscious and I've broken my hand. I got over the former quicker than the latter. Aside from a little brain damage (according to family and friends) I was little the worse for wear from the knock out but I still feel the effects of the numerous breaks to my hand. If we are going to use the fist as a primary weapon some conditioning will be necessary, otherwise we'll be developing techniques that we can't really use. There's a reason why boxers wrap their hands and wear gloves.

We have become more innovative in our teaching methods. We're actually able to accomplish more in (slightly) less time. We have shied away from many of the more brutal and less affective teaching methods but we don't want to 'throw the baby out with the bath water' as they used to say. Some of the training methods from 'back in the day' had merit and were tried and true. There is no easy way to learn a combative art. It's going to stress the human body and it's going to hurt. The adage, 'no pain no gain', definitely applies in the martial arts. This essay hasn't been only about hand conditioning though I use it to illustrate a point. Everything new isn't superior and everything old isn't obsolete. Some of the old methods are still around because they achieve a purpose. As we teach and train we should evaluate the methods and tools that we use to increase the ability of our students and ourselves. We have to develop a balance of effectiveness and safety. Learning to defend yourself and ruining your health in the process is counterproductive but learning techniques that your body can't accomplish safely is a waste of time. We have to be realistic and effective in our approach to combat. Everything doesn't have to be done the way it's always been done just for tradition's sake. Effectiveness in combat should always be the martial artist's first concern. There are other ways of doing things. A palm heel to the chin is as effective as an uppercut (if not more so) and offers less chance to injury to the hand for instance.

I believe that as instructors we have to understand, our arts, combat and what we teach well enough to balance the old with the new; tradition with modernism. Though we embrace much of their philosophy or like to think we do, we aren't samurai. Our needs and objectives are different. If we want to train in a traditional samurai art I can see no harm in it. It can be a great character builder while giving one a good physical and mental presence that it's difficult to garner through modern sports. Still, in my opinion a combative art has to serve the needs of the people who practice it.

I was there 'back in the day' but my predecessors were there 'way back in the day, walking to school barefoot in the snow. Both ways. I'm still trying to learn what they know.

Train hard and train realistically, my brethren and go with God.

Dr. Donald Miskel

BUILDING ON A PREEXISTING FOUNDATION

Donald Miskel

Archeologists often find older cities beneath cities that rose up later. I'm not sure why that is but maybe it is because they use the strength of the foundations of the previous structures to build on. I could be wrong in that assessment but the principle seems pretty sound to me. If it's usable why lay a new foundation?

I have studied several traditional martial arts in my many years of study. Several I've received advanced rank in. For years I taught classical systems of karate, kempo and jiu-jitsu but these days I lean toward a more eclectic approach. I'm the type of person that hates to discard of anything that I can find a use for. If it's useful I'll find a way to use it. That has become my approach to the arts that I teach. I'll use whatever is usable.

In my many years of teaching I've only had a hand full of uchi deshis (close door students). They are the ones that I hope will carry on my system after I'm gone. While developing the system that I now teach the art went through a number of incarnations. What I taught in the eighties bares only a passing resemblance to what I teach now. Each of my private students was taught according to what I was doing at the time. If you brought them together it would be hard to believe that they were trained by the same person. It may even be hard to tell that the individual students I teach studied the same system. There's a good reason for this. I didn't necessarily teach them the same thing. The basics are the same but the art that I teach is plastic and is molded to the individual student.

Several things determine what I'll teach a student. Age, personal ability and athleticism figures into the equation. I also take into consideration individual body types, strength, flexibility and attitude. I also consider who I'm teaching and what they require from the martial arts. Different people study for different reasons. I'm not interested in teaching for competition but if I were I wouldn't teach a sport based system the same way I do a fighting system. The needs of the student varies and I will teach each according to his individual needs. Another thing that I take into consideration is former training. If a person has a good

foundation in whatever art he studied previously I'm not going to raze that foundation and build another. Not if the old foundation is useful.

I've studied several striking arts as well as a number of grappling arts in my career. I've also had opportunity to study fighting arts, self defense and military unarmed combat. With that pool of information I'm not so limited in what I can teach a student. This gives me the knowledge and flexibility necessary to consolidate their former training into what I teach them. I'll expand their knowledge into other areas but if at all possible I prefer to build on their existing foundation.



I believe in a well rounded approach to the martial arts. I think a striker should be able to grapple well enough to enable him to deal with a grappler long enough to implement his game plan. He should also be able to challenge another striker by introducing some grappling into the mix. In so doing he can take a better or equally skilled striker out of his element. Unless you're better in that particular area it isn't a good idea to fight another opponent's fight. You have to be able to flip the script on him and confront him with a challenge that he can't meet.

I can teach a lot of different techniques but I believe that a personal system shouldn't be too top heavy. For example I know a lot of joint techniques but I don't teach them all. For one reason I feel that some are more effective and easier to apply than others. By the same token some can be used in a wide variety of situations. Those kind of techniques will be the

kind that I'll lean toward. For this reason I don't teach aikijitsu or jiu jitsu as separate arts. I teach what I feel blends well with the other grappling and striking techniques that I teach. I feel that every element of the system should compliment all of the other areas. That way different approaches can blend together into a cohesive system.

The method that I teach has a lot of possible combinations so the system has hundreds of techniques and combination of techniques but I only teach the bulk of the system to those that I hope will carry the system on after I'm gone. The rest of my students manage to learn a rather simple system custom made for them and tailored to their own needs. Consequently I believe that I'm teaching a practical system that anyone can learn and excel in. For the same reason it tends to be efficient and effective in its application.

One of my uchi deshi (s) in Tucson studied judo in his youth. His background was pretty comprehensive and his ability was better than acceptable. I accepted him as a student and we spent almost eight years studying together. I taught him a blend of karate, kempo and aikijitsu but because of his judo background I placed more emphasis on aikijitsu and jiu jitsu. He turned out to be a good striker with decent kicks but he excelled in the grappling techniques I concentrated on. He didn't particularly like it. He moaned and groaned on the evenings that I announced jiu jitsu night. I'm probably not the most gentle teacher in the world and to his credit he kept coming back in spite of the constant whining and complaining. He now has black belts in both the jiu jitsu/aikijitsu and the kempo systems that I teach and he is currently teaching in Tucson. He was recently reacquainted with his judo sensei and they plan to stay in touch. I look forward to seeing what that relationship will develop into. His judo sensei is proud of him as am I. You will find his articles on World Wide Dojo. I like to think that I develop minds as well as bodies. Through his articles as well as his teaching and training he continues to grow and show his grasp of the arts with their underlying principles. Hopefully I played a role in his development in all of those areas but he came to me with a pretty good preexisting foundation. I just built on it.

God bless you my martial art brethren. Study hard and go with God

Rev. Dr. Donald Miskel

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