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On the cover: Shijan Pedro Falcon Lopez doing Bunkai Kumite.

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GIRI (RISING TO THE OCCASION)

Donald Miskel

There are a number of Japanese words that have found their way into the American vernacular through the martial arts. One of the concepts that were universally accepted during the early days of the martial arts seems to have disappeared in the modern practice of the arts in the western world. The word I refer to is giri. Loosely translated it means duty but actually it can't be translated into just one word. It has too many layers of meaning for that. The word was used during the days of the Japanese samurai. It meant fealty or fidelity. It expressed total loyalty to ones lord, superior or leader. But then again, as it applies to the martial arts there are other more subtle layers to the word, several of which I would like to explore. I would like to speak briefly on authority, responsibility, ownership and respect. All of these are implied by what giri expresses in the martial arts.

I have learned much since I inherited the leadership of the Black Dragon Fighting Society. Formally my title is 'Head of Family' which implies much more to me than would the title of 'Senior Grand Master'. I am referred to as both but in my mind the former is a heavier responsibility to bear. In a family the head is the father. I am not old enough to be a father to many of the members in the organization. Some are older than me and some senior to me in the martial arts. I bow in respect to those individuals but somehow the role of leadership has fallen on me. Probably not because I am the best person for the job but because of my position in the lineage of our founder and my rare position as the last actual member of the BDFS still active in the organization. I don't take this position or its duties lightly. I am totally dedicated to the organization and its membership. It is my duty and more than that it is a labor of love. I honor and respect every member from the lowest to the highest rank. I am in effect placed in a position of servitude because I am responsible for the well being of the organization. In the end being a leader means being a servant. The greatest lesson that I have learned is that authority must be assumed. A position can be bestowed upon an individual but he has to step into the authority that it implies. I still have much to learn but I have to learn in the saddle.

Responsibility is another layer that is implied by the word giri. The Black Dragons has grown into a rather large organization and it is still growing in both size and influence. As a leader I can't keep an eye on every member. I wouldn't even if I could. I depend on the loyalty and integrity of each member to govern his actions and to be responsible for his conduct. I have found that the BDFS has become too big for one person to govern every aspect of its operation. Therefore authority is delegated in various aspects of the operation of the organization. Those placed in those positions will hopefully be able to operate in his position without constant supervision. I don't believe in micromanaging. If I assign or offer a position to an individual it is because I feel that he or she can be trusted to do the job asked of him without my continual input. That means that such an individual fully accepts the responsibility of his office and operates faithfully in it.

Each of us must learn to take ownership. This is our organization. It wasn't Count Dante's organization or Dr. Day's organization and it certainly isn't my organization. Each of the leaders of the BDFS has been and is a small part of the overall organization. My position, though more visible is no more a position than is that of the newest member. We are the members of one family. Each has his place and each place is important. Leadership is important but there can be no organization without the rank and file of the membership. As we grow we don't want to lose sight of the individual. We are all important and each of us has a part to play. I am asking each member in the BDFS to make it a priority. It doesn't have to be THE priority in your lives but it should hold enough importance to each of us that we are willing to take some ownership in its growth and its wellbeing.

Lastly I would like to remind us of the need for mutual respect within the organization and the martial arts in general. We are fighters and warriors. Each of us has the ability to do great good or great harm. Like the samurai who was governed by the code of bushido we must have and display mutual respect. That means that we must respect our peers, our seniors and our leadership. Our loyalty should be to our family, our organization and our leadership. I ask each member to support those who labor in the day to day operation of our organization. Let giri guide you in your loyalty to the organization and its heads. Lastly I ask for your confidence and your support. If any of you have concerns or suggestions I am very approachable. As the HOF of the organization I serve you. You are my priority. I am dedicated to the Black Dragons and its success and its position in the martial art world but along with that I am dedicated to our membership. You are my martial art family.

My love, honor and respect to each of you. I ask God's richest blessings on our family.

Rev. Dr. Donald Miskel

THE SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF THE MARTIAL ARTS

Donald Miskel

There are many aspects to the martial arts. There is the self defense and combative disciplines that most people think in terms of when they think of the martial arts. There is also the sports area that many of those practitioners with a competitive nature seem to be attracted to. Using karate as an example there is karate jitsu which is the fighting applications of the art and there is karate do which has more to do with self realization, self discovery and self improvement using the martial arts as a means to that end. There is also karate sho, the more acrobatic and flashy aspects of the arts that often find their way into martial art demonstrations.

Amongst the many aspects of these many arts the spiritual side of the arts are often overlooked by the modern martial artist. In ancient China the martial arts were taught in Buddhist, Taoist and Muslim temples. Even in Japan Shorinji Kempo is still taught in Buddhist temples as the physical side of Konga Zen Buddhism.

Many western martial artists, especially those that are Christians have turned away from the traditional spiritual aspects of those various arts considering them anti Christian and even paganistic. By rejecting the spiritual side of the martial arts they are throwing the baby out with the bath water. There was a reason that many such arts were taught alongside various spiritual disciplines. It was done in order to balance out the violent nature of those arts with spiritual principles.

As a Christian minister and pastor I can't sanction the practice of non Christian religious philosophies in the martial arts that I teach and study. However some measure of spirituality is needed to balance out the arts. Many Christian sensei(s) have tried to graft Christian principles into their martial disciplines with varying degrees of success. In many instances their efforts are less than seamless and in some instances it's like trying to mix oil and water.

Most warrior classes understood that teaching a combative art without some kind of moral or spiritual philosophy is like putting a loaded gun into the hand of a child. Violence with nothing

to temper it is dangerous and the martial arts by their very nature can be very violent. There is no gentle way to injure, maim or kill an individual. In many of the martial cultures (often) religious based philosophies are created to add a moral side to the violence of the trained warrior. In feudal Japan there was the philosophy of Bushido for the samurai. In Korea or the ancient Sila kingdom there was the Hwarang philosophy of their warrior class. The knights of Europe had chivalry to temper their warrior lifestyle. Those who trained such warriors understood the need for a spiritual touchstone to balance out their violent nature. Unfortunately for the modern western martial artist such codes are often missing. Many individuals have tried to fill this void with various religious and moral philosophies.

I have tried to instill Christian principals into my martial art students but often it isn't easy to explain the martial arts in Christian terms. In many ways the compassion of Christianity and the potential violence of the martial arts seem to be in opposition to each other. This dichotomy isn't always easy to explain away.

Also there is another side of the martial arts that is often overlooked by the Christian martial artist. The true nature of opposition is often overlooked or misunderstood. We often see only the physical aspects of a violent situation. We learn to respond to those physical demands without understanding the spiritual nature of the attack. We often strive to hurt or even destroy the person that represents the physical attack without seeing who the true enemy is. This side of the martial arts deals with spiritual warfare. There is a spiritual and sometimes a psychological side to physical violence that goes unaddressed in most of our martial art training. To understand those sides of physical threat we need to be well versed in the spiritual components of physical violence. Many Christian martial artists have struggled for true understanding in those areas. Unfortunately most martial art manuals deal with the physical threat and overlook those other aspects of warfare.

Many non Christian martial artists may feel that such knowledge apply only to the practicing Christian martial artist but they would be sorely mistaken. To understand violence and warfare a person would have to take into consideration every aspect of combat to have a clear and complete picture.

I have addressed such considerations in bits and pieces in various essays and articles but at long last there is a manual that covers this other area of the martial disciplines. The author covers the subject in fine detail. He examines every area of the spiritual, moral, psychological and legal aspects of the martial arts and natural warfare. This manual should be read and then studied by any martial artist who is serious about his craft and is a must for the Christian martial artist. In my opinion this is the definitive work in this area of the martial disciplines.

The manual I refer to is Dr. John Enger's , "The Armour of Light" manual of spiritual combat of his Shinja Defense System. As a Martial artist, minister and Psych professional I can't recommend it enough. The training system comes with a certificate of certification upon successful completion of the course.

I have had the honor of being a small part of the development of Dr Enger's Shinja Buke Ryu martial art system and now I have had the opportunity to study this aspect of the martial art with its founder. Dr. Enger is a minister and pastor with Post graduate degrees in Theology and Biblical studies. He is a retired police officer and a certified police chaplain. His background in these various areas give him an excellent understanding of the subject.

I recommend this training manual to every martial artist and especially to all Christian martial artists. I am endorsing it and making it required reading for advancement in My Black Lotus Martial Art System and I am recommending it to all of the instructors, masters and grandmasters of the Black Dragon Fighting Society. If you read and study it you'll be wiser for the experience.

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

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

Judan Shodai Soke, BLMAA

Patriarch and Head of Family, IFAA BDFS

BULLY PROOFING YOUR CHILD

Donald Miskel

Bullying has become almost epidemic in our country. It probably won't come as a surprise that it is a major problem that effects all ages, races, both sexes and all ethnic backgrounds. To most that isn't a secret. If it hasn't impacted your family you can turn to the news or even closer than that look in your own neighborhood and you can see the effects that bullying has on our society. Families have been destroyed by the backlash of bullying. Lives have been destroyed and even lost because of this recurring problem. Okay, we know the problem but what can we do about it?

Laws have been made against cyber bullying but it is seldom enforced except in the case of a fatality. Even then it is hard to prosecute. Law enforcement is challenged by major crimes and unless a life is lost or serious physical harm is done the problem is left to the schools, the families and the community none of whom seems to have a solution to the problem. Often the perpetrators are children bullying other children. Schools will sometimes try to intervene but too often when they finally get involved the harm has been done. Knowing this we are left with the realization that this is something that has to be dealt with by the parents of the victims and by the victims themselves.

Obviously parents can't go out and beat up the ones doing the bullying. Likewise it wouldn't be wise to send out an older sibling to do the job. Even if it were possible to take such a proactive approach the resulting problem is often bigger than the bullying itself. So how do we deal with such problems if the schools are ineffectual and law enforcement take an interest only when things have gone to the extreme causing harm or even death to either the bully or the victim?

Some problems are better dealt with before they become a problem. Bullying is one of these. There are steps that can be taken before the fact. You've heard the adage that one ounce of prevention better than a pound of cure. To see how this is possible we must first look at the nature of the bully. We then need to understand why some children are more prone to become victims of this cruel method of abuse.

Bullies are predators. That may seem like a harsh statement when applied to children but children are often as cruel as or more so than adults. Predators by nature seek what appears like prey. A predator chooses its prey carefully. It isn't looking for something that may as easily prey on it. It shies away from anything that is too big or too formidable for it to handle. For this reasons a lion generally won't try to tackle an elephant or a rhino. A single lion won't generally try to pull down a cape buffalo. He shies away from any situation that could as easily be the cause of his death or injury as his intended victim.

I have always held that the best way to discourage a would be street predator is to exude confidence and appear capable of dealing with a situation. Better yet arming ones self with the skill and ability will often foster that same air of capability that would make most predators seek an easier victim. Predetors look for soft targets. They aren't looking for a fight. They are looking for a victim that will give in to their threats. The average bully isn't willing to get a black eye in order to give you two. They want to do their dirt with no threat to themselves.

You may ask what this has to do with the victim of bullying. Let's take a look of what makes up the personality of the victim of a bully. Often they show a lack of self confidence or a negative self image. Often they are small or different in some way or they may be loners with no peer support to insulate them from the effects of bullying. More often than not the victim isn't the product of his school or his environment outside of the home. Too often victims are made at home.

A positive self image isn't always a guarantee against bullies but a negative self image and a lack of self confidence draws them like flies. How does a child garner a positive self image? How does he gain confidence? These attributes are often the product of a strong family support structure. Loving supportive parents create confident children with a good sense of self and with self confidence. If they're made to feel that they are important and that they are valued they will seek less of their reinforcement from outside sources. He will be less prone to seek his sense of validity from the outside world. That's why we have to be careful about the message we feed our child. Words have power. Giving the right message empowers a child.

A child that is verbally or physically abused or who feels neglected and unloved will lack a sense of self worth or self confidence. As often as not he will walk with his head down and give the other indications of an easy target. A child who has a sense of self worth will stand up for himself and will be less subject to succumb to harassment of a group that seeks to make him feel small or worthless. He is less prone to listen to and give in to the negative messages that are directed at him.

It is possible by positive reinforcement to make a child who is able to resist the harassment of bullies. You can't always control what people say about you but you don't have to buy into the message. It is important to get that message across to your child.

In a day and age where cyber bullying is often practiced by groups bully proofing a child becomes even more important. It's easy to see it when a child comes in with a black eye or bruises but it isn't as easy to see when a child is being verbally harassed in person or through social media. A parent needs to be aware of a child's affect and his temperament. If there is any change in either it may be an indication that he is being bullied. Having a close relationship with your children will not only strengthen their resolve and make them more resistant to bullying but it will also allow you to see the sign of a problem before it becomes serious.

Aside from giving a child emotional support a parent can be proactive by contacting the school, the authorities and even the parents of the child or children doing the bullying. A child needs to know that his parents and his family are concerned about his problems and will be supportive to him. When assailed by outside forces he needs to know that he has the love and concern of his family.

If necessary get counseling for the child whether or not the problem seems to be solved. Sometime there can be lasting problems that will plague a child after the actual bullying stops. Put your child in a martial art class. Not so much to teach him to fight though he will have the ability if needed but to bolster his confidence and self image. In a martial art class he will have the support and comradery of a new group of friends which again will give him an additional support system. Often he will come in contact with other children who, through their training, have found the tools and confidence to face their own demons. He will begin to see through the possibility of being triumphant against the attacks of bullies however they may be presented.

As parents we must do all that we can to protect our children and to prepare them for the often scary reality of the real world. Children are precious. They are worth whatever efforts are necessary to protect and empower them. It can often mean the difference between life and death. A child is too important to lose and as the saying goes, a life is a terrible thing to waste.

Dr. Donald Miskel.

FUNDAMENTACIÓN KEN KYUSHO JUTSU SISTEMA DIDÁCTICO Y TÉCNICO/METODOLÓGICO PARA LA ENSEÑANZA DEL ARTE DEL KYUSHO

Pedro D. Falcón López

Introducción

La vulnerabilidad existe, eso es un hecho; en los animales en las personas o cosas existen los puntos débiles.

La indestructibilidad es un mito.

Sin dudas habitamos en un universo vulnerable, donde existen planetas vulnerables y habitantes vulnerables. La vulnerabilidad se hace entonces universal; este hecho no pasó desapercibido en la formación de los diferentes Métodos de Lucha ni en el origen y desarrollo de las AM y las RYU-HA tradicionales japonesas y provocó que se realizaran estudios en profundidad, en los cuales no se ha dejado de investigar ningún punto o zona presuntamente vulnerable de ser golpeada o punzada con diferentes tipos de ataque.

Es nuestro interés fundamentar como Arte Marcial el Sistema Técnico/ Metodológico Ken Kyusho Jutsu creado en Cuba con el objetivo de difundir selectivamente el Kyusho Jutsu en su visión Marcial y Terapéutica como un sistema de enseñanza del arte de los puntos vulnerables.

Para demostrar esta tesis comencemos por definir los conceptos que dan título a nuestro trabajo.

FUNDAMENTO: Según diccionario de la lengua española, dicese de la razón o motivo con que se pretende afianzar y asegurar una cosa. Raíz y origen en que estriba y tiene su mayor fuerza una cosa no material.

ARTES MARCIALES: Según la Real Academia de la Lengua Española: Las artes marciales son “el conjunto de antiguas técnicas de lucha del Extremo Oriente, que hoy se practican como deporte”

En esta definición no se incluyen los sistemas ancestrales de combate originados en otros países, como Grecia, Egipto, África etc. Por lo que dicha academia al referirse a los términos “Marcial” define que provienen de “Marte el dios de la guerra romano” y al término “Arte” como “la habilidad o destreza para expresar simbólicamente un aspecto de la realidad” Podemos concluir que las Artes Marciales comprenden todos los sistemas coherentes, formado por tradiciones de lucha y codificadas que implican una aplicación pacífica con un elevado contenido espiritual y ético.

BUDO:(vía del combate). Nombre adoptado en el siglo XX para las Artes Marciales en general, con una aplicación pacífica y que implica, además de las disciplinas físicas y de las técnicas de movimiento, un espíritu y una ética. A partir de 1868 con la abolición del sistema feudal, se dio el nombre de SHIN BUDO (nuevas vías del combate), que luego se convirtió simplemente en BUDO.

BUGEI: (Bujutsu artes de combate) tal como era practicado por los antiguos SAMURAI y enfocado principalmente a la eficacia de los golpes dados por las armas. Este arte guerrero incluye las leyes de comportamiento de los SAMURAI frente a sus adversarios, según el código del BUSHIDO. Se llaman BUGEI todas las técnicas extraídas del JUTSU.

KEN: Puño, espada

KYUSHO: Término japonés, Kyu (Rápido o urgente), Sho (Lugar o situación) definido como el método rápido de acceder a los puntos vulnerables del cuerpo humano, denominado en:

China: Dim Mak, Tien Hsueh, Diam Xue.

Corea: Keupso

India: Varma Adi

Vietnam: Huyet

JUTSU: Arte, Técnica

Teniendo en cuenta la exposición de estos conceptos, es nuestra pretensión afianzar con bases sólidas la concepción del sistema Técnico/Metodológico KEN KYUSHO JUTSU como Arte Marcial y lo haremos mediante un análisis y razonamiento científico a través de los tres niveles de obligado empleo, el histórico, el estructural y el funcional.

Fundamentos Históricos

Durante todo este análisis no referiremos al término Puntos Vulnerables fundamentado sobre la base que aunque muchos son puntos vitales, su mayoría solo son puntos que al ser golpeados o presionados con determinada intensidad y dirección dejan indefenso y vulnerable al adversario.

La aplicación y estudio de estos puntos vulnerables en el amplio proceso histórico, dieron origen a muchas leyendas y diferentes técnicas secretas bajo un mismo principio, según las escuelas más representativas por región pudiéramos hablar de:

-Varma Adi (Golpes a Centros Nerviosos)

-Tien Sha Chang (Palma de Hierro)

-Dim Mak (Toque Mortal)

-Gyakute (Mano Invertida)

-Ichigeki Hssatsi (Un Golpe una Muerte)

-Nen Goroshi (Efecto retardado)

-Go Ten Te (Manos de Palacio)

Una de las primeras civilizaciones en desarrollar sistemas de autoprotección militar fueron las castas hindú, sobre todo de la región de Kerala, existen tradiciones orales y escritas que hacen mención al Kalaripayat, Tenjiku Noranoraku o Vajra Musti artes que atacaban un grupo de áreas específicas en el cuerpo humano llamadas Marma y que hoy en día se reconocen como madre del Kung Fu Chino.

Si ahondamos un poco más en los orígenes de las Artes de Lucha o devenidas en Artes Marciales encontraremos la figura de Bodhidharma, también conocido como Daruma o

Tamo padre del Kung Fu del templo Shaolin; este príncipe Hindú, oriundo de la región de Kerala y auténtico maestro (Asanas) de Kalari Payat, trajo de la India diferentes métodos con una amplia gama de técnicas de mano vacía, semejantes al Karate Japonés y sus "Sudavus" ("Katas").

El Marma Adi ("Golpes a Centros Nerviosos"), la técnica más alta de las Artes Marciales hindú, estudiaba los "Pudu Varman" o puntos nerviosos del cuerpo humano para el ataque, los cuales tenían relación con las mismas áreas usadas en el masaje tradicional para aliviar ciertas molestias y enfermedades.

Con la aparición de la acupuntura que tuvo sus orígenes en China hace miles de años, los chinos se fueron cerciorando por su estudio, que algunos puntos eran privilegiados y que una acción sobre uno de estos puntos tenía un efecto especial.

Fue así como se descubrieron los Tsubo (Mato, Kyusho y Kinsho) o puntos vulnerables del cuerpo humano. Esta terapéutica se desarrollo principalmente en el norte de China, zona muy árida y se fue extendiendo por todo el extremo oriente y pasando por Corea llegó al Japón donde fue conocida con el nombre de Kampo.

Alrededor del 1300 el Monje Taoísta y acupuntor, Chang San Feng, experto en los estilos duros de Shaolin, creó una formula que permitía neutralizar al adversario utilizando la fuerza mínima, traumatizando las partes débiles del cuerpo humano; él viajó por toda China y experimentó en animales y seres humanos divulgando su arte disfrazado bajo las formas (Kueng o Katas), solo a los discípulos directos.

Estos conocimientos fueron llevados en formas de Quan o Kata al reino de las Ryu Kyu a través de los viajeros, monjes, embajadores, lo cual dio a la aparición del arte marcial Dim Mak, aproximación inglesa del término en cantones, y extensión del término en mandarín Dian-Xue que significa "manipulación de puntos de presión" (Appaku en japonés) un componente esencial de las artes marciales tradicionales chinas y okinawenses como por ejemplo el Shaolin Kung Fu y el Karate Jitsu (también conocido como Ryu Kyu Kempo, Okinawa-Te, Tode, etc.).

El Dim Mak fue conocido en Okinawa con el nombre de Kyusho-Jitsu y era una pequeña parte de un arte más complejo llamado Atemi-Jitsu (Arte de Golpear el Cuerpo Humano).

La historia guardó los nombres de maestros legendarios en este arte tales como: Matsu Higa, Bushi Matsumura, Peichin Oyadorami, Aragaki, Ankoh Itosu, Kanryo Higaonna, Nabe Matsumura, Hohán Soken, Wakinaguri no Tanmei, etc....

Estos maestros transmitieron sus conocimientos a un grupo reducido de leales alumnos.

Hohan Soken (1889-1983) alumno de Nabe Matsumura (1850-1930) y por lo tanto heredero del clan fundado por el legendario Chikudun Peichin Sokon "Bushi" Matsumura (1809-1901) llamado Matsumura Seito Shorin-Ryu Shuri-Te Karate-do.

Por la segunda Guerra mundial este maestro emigró a la Argentina; George Dillman, un destacado competidor de los EU lo conoce y Soken le entregó a Dillman un set de notas donde se observaban gráficos con algunos puntos y sus efectos.

Dillman trató de entenderlos correctamente pero no logró comprenderlos, así que lo dejó en el olvido, hasta que conoce de la existencia en USA de Taika Seiyu Oyata (nacido en 1928) alumno de tres brillantes maestros:

Wakinaguri no Tanmei

Uhuchiku no Tanmei

Shigeru Nakamura

Dillman lo visita y toma lecciones tratando así de entender el arte.

Con todo este conocimiento y el set de notas de Soken el maestro George Dillman crea su propio sistema al que llamó Ryu Kyu Kempo (Posteriormente DKI) y se dedicó a formar a una gran cantidad de alumnos los cuales iniciaron la expansión de este y del Kyusho-jutsu.

Entre sus alumnos más destacados se encuentran:

-Evan Pantazi

-Jim Corn

-Gary Rooks

-Mark Kline

-Toni Kauhaken

-Chris Thomas

-Jack Hogan

Unos de estos alumnos, Evan Pantazi elaboró un sistema didáctico para la enseñanza del Kyusho que hasta el momento se practicaba a la par del Karate de Dillman; viendo las posibilidades comerciales registra este programa en el año 2000 bajo el nombre de Kyusho Internacional, dejando la DKI de Dillman en el año 2003.

Esta organización basó su expansión en un impresionante marketing fundamentado que el Kyusho no es un arte marcial sino un complemento de las artes marciales (Una verdad a medias) atrayendo cada vez mas a practicantes de diferentes Artes marciales, de esta manera logra una expansión sin precedentes en el mundo, convirtiéndose de esta forma KI en la organización líder (de carácter occidental) a nivel mundial en la instrucción de los puntos de presión del cuerpo humano, dando lugar a diferentes organizaciones y grupos que lejos de practicar el Kyusho como un arte marcial se dedicaron a divulgar sus elementos mas espectaculares como el conocido Ochiru ó KO (perdida de conciencia producto de la acción de un golpe, presión ó estrangulación de un punto de vulnerabilidad).

En el 2003, uno de los discípulos del Maestro Evan Pantazi, el Sensei Randall Sánchez Gutiérrez, Costarricense, quien ya tenía un reconocimiento en el medio internacional del Kyusho Jutsu y un modesto grado en las Artes Marciales (Kodenkan Dan San Ryu Jujutsu) y que había acompañado la difusión de la organización Kyusho en Europa, y otros países, motivado por el interés de ahondar más en los aspectos éticos y filosóficos del Budo decide comenzar con una nueva organización a la que denominó Kyusho Ju -Jutsu y a través de Internet comenzó a enseñar Kyusho; fue sin dudas algo novedoso. Su expansión fue rápida: España, Chile, El Salvador, Panamá, México, Argentina y Costa Rica.

En el año 2006 y devenida de la organización Kyusho Jujutsu surge una nueva organización (Creada en Cuba) Kyusho Ryu Budo Kai como organización de artes marciales que busca el rescate de las tradiciones del Budo de las escuelas Nanban Satto Ryu Kempo, Nihon Ken Kyusho, Nihon Bujutsu Kenkyu Jo (Escuela para el estudio de las Artes Marciales) y que se sustenta en un marco ético-moral en forma de sistema de conceptos, principios y normas que sirven como regulador de la conducta del practicante y define en gran medida el sentido de su vida.

En el mes de Mayo del año 2006 se reúne un grupo de expertos cubanos con el maestro Randall Sánchez y con la aprobación de resto de los maestros de Kyusho Jujutsu de los diferentes países miembros de esa organización se aprueba la creación de Kyusho Ryu Budokai, siendo electo por el Shihankai ceado al efecto (mayoritariamente cubano) el maestro Sánchez Gutiérrez como presidente de la organización, Maestro Pedro Falcón (6to

dan Shotokan Ryu Karatedo en esa fecha) es designado director técnico y presidente del Shihankai Internacional de KRBK.

Para analizar:

-A saber que en año 2006 después de un vínculo del Sensei Pedro D. Falcón López con el Maestro Randall Sánchez Gutiérrez que databa desde el 2005 Cuba es visitada por este maestro y se crea la Organización Kyusho Ryu Budo Kai Internacional con el objetivo de estudiar el arte de los puntos vulnerables.

-A saber que Kyusho Ryu Budo Kai como organización no poseía un sistema inscrito y reconocido técnicamente para la enseñanza del arte del Kyusho, el programa que instruye es el mismo de la desaparecida Kyusho Jujutsu que en análisis colectivo no cumplía las expectativas de desarrollo que se proponía la KRBK.

-A saber que en Cuba se realiza un estudio profundo y serio sobre el Arte del Kyusho y se decide crear un programa Técnico/Methodológico para el aprendizaje del Kyusho Jutsu como Arte Marcial y ubicarlo en la escala de grados Kyu/Dan

-A saber que se establece un sistema con un programa Técnico-Táctico-Terapéutico-Filosófico propio con todos los elementos técnico/táctico a partir de la integración de las diferentes Artes Marciales que permitiese estructurar docente y metodológicamente un sistema de enseñanza para acceder a los puntos vulnerables de la anatomía humana y capaz de formar un artista marcial.

Propone de esta manera convertirlo en un sistema integrador que fundamenta su presencia en la enseñanza de las Artes Marciales más tradicionales del Budo.

En el año 2010 se decide nombrar este sistema con el nombre de Ken Kyusho Jutsu (El arte del puño del Kyusho) en homenaje a las más tradicionales Ryu japonesas; se decide asimismo inscribir el sistema con derecho de autor y propiedad intelectual.

Se registra en España en la World Earth Life Confederation of Martial Arts and Personal Self Defense

No de registro: II/15/1600 Ref. II-90-1853M-T-II F. 83 No 364 R.S.T.-II F.40 No 293/294

-Se crea en ese mismo año (2012) la organización Internacional Ken Kyusho Ryu Association afiliada a WELCAM/ACYAM y que acoge como su programa oficial el Sistema Docente Metodológico Ken Kyusho Jutsu.

-El Maestro/Fundador del Ken Kyusho Jutsu el Sr. Pedro D. Falcón López es nombrado presidente de la Organización y asume los derechos de autor y de propiedad intelectual de la obra didáctica Ken Kyusho Jutsu y el derecho de explotación con el grado máximo docente Kyoshi Kaiso y el marcial de 7mo Dan.

Fundamentos estructurales y funcionales.

Existen cientos de Artes Marciales tradicionales, modernas y sistemas de defensa personal, pudiéramos incluso dividir las por regiones y países, sin embargo si apelamos a la palabra métodos (del griego original Meta-Odos) podemos apreciar que son pocos los métodos de enseñanza de Artes Marciales y Sistemas de Defensa que funcionan adecuadamente en la formación marcial.

Para comprender este apartado comenzaremos por definir que en toda enseñanza se debe aplicar un método con una didáctica y procedimientos adecuados, para lograr los objetivos propuestos, que no son otros que la formación física, mental y humana del educando a través de las Artes Marciales, que en el caso que nos ocupa debe ser:

1.-Inductivo: Enseñanza de lo particular a lo general.

2.-Deductivo: Enseñanza de lo general a lo particular.

Formulándose como.

-Graduado: De lo simple a lo complejo, con progresión y con los factores de seguridad, facilidad, variedad, motivación y lógica.

-Asociativo: Que permita la asociación de técnicas entre sí.

-Repetitivo: Que permita mediante la repetición de las técnicas su comprensión y conocimiento en Grado máximo. -Integral: Que desarrolle las cualidades del alumno.

-Aplicativo: Que se pueda aplicar a la vida real.

-Demostrativo: Que demuestre mediante la técnica el método. Este método debe enseñarse de forma mixta, es decir de forma analítica (por partes) y global o sintético (en conjunto).

Es común ver como muchas personas consideran que su Arte Marcial o Sistema de Defensa reúne estos requisitos y puede no ser así. Consideramos que es importante

analizar si el Arte marcial que practicamos, es la opción más real para nuestra seguridad personal.

Al hacer este análisis no puede obviarse que las todas las Artes Marciales tienen como origen formativo el hecho de haber sido creadas por y para la guerra y se estructura como arte que posee una filosofía propia, que desarrolla en el educando manifestaciones artísticas y que desarrolla valores.

Basándonos en esto y analizando que los sistemas de defensas devienen de las Artes Marciales, entonces tanto las AM así como los SD deben tener como fundamento principal la eficacia en la pelea basados en la equidad y en los conceptos filosóficos del Budo, en la aplicación de los principios de la no resistencia y la no violencia, lo que implica el desarrollo de habilidades táctico técnicas y filosóficas de un elevado desarrollo ético moral en el practicante a través de la transmisión de estos principios y métodos marciales.

Al analizar el apartado técnico, se concluye que toda Ryu de Budo debe contar con los siguientes elementos:

- Kihon (fundamentos básicos)
- Uke waza (técnicas de bloqueo y desvío).
- Atemi waza (técnicas de golpe).
- Kyusho ho (método de estudio de los puntos vulnerables). - Katame waza (técnicas de control).
- Kata (Estudio de Formas). - Kansetsu waza (técnicas de luxación).
- Shime waza (técnicas de estrangulación).
- Osae-komi waza (técnicas de inmovilización). - Appaku / Gyokky waza (técnicas de presión y punzamiento). - Hobaku waza (técnicas de atar al adversario).
- Renko ho (formas de conducción).
- Nage waza (técnicas de proyección y derribo).
- Renraku waza -Renzoku waza (Encadenamientos y combinaciones de técnicas de carácter fijo o creativo).

- Bu waza (Técnicas con armas. Estudio de las armas, tanto para la defensa como para el ataque.

Armas antiguas y modernas).

- Kuatsu waza (técnicas de reanimación).

- Oyo waza (Técnicas superiores).

- Randori ó Keiko waza (Trabajo libre).

-Materias específicas

Estudio de técnicas especiales para grupos concretos.

(En este apartado tienen cabida temas diversos tales como policiales, seguridad, protección, relajación, supervivencia, estrategia, la cultura y religión oriental.

- Filosofía e historia

Filosofía:

Compendio de conceptos y técnicas que aunque teniendo como base las enseñanzas y tradiciones del pasado incorporan los conocimientos de Artes Marciales modernas como son Judo, Aikido, Karate Do y todo Arte que aporta algún concepto positivo hacia la defensa personal y en consecuencia a la superación personal como Do (Vía) para encontrar las más altas cotas alcanzables como ser humano.

Historia:

Conocimiento de la historia y evolución de las Artes Marciales en general para el mejor conocimiento de la Ryu estudiada en particular. El Kyusho, arte de los puntos vitales o puntos vulnerables del cuerpo humano, ha sido y continúa siendo material vedado para la gran mayoría de los practicantes de Artes Marciales. Lo que resulta muy interesante es que toda Arte Marcial posee el Kyusho dentro de su estructura aunque en la mayoría de ellas se encuentre ubicado entre los Myo del Okuden.

Conclusiones

El Kyusho es un arte, un Arte Marcial muy antiguo, su verdadero origen se pierde en los vericuetos del tiempo, no puede adjudicarse su creación a persona alguna, escuela o región,

sin embargo se ha podido encontrar informaciones que fusionadas a mitos y leyendas (fundamentalmente orales) estipulan un recorrido formativo desde la India a China que podríamos ubicar en una primera etapa y en Okinawa, Japón y Corea en una segunda.

Podemos afirmar que el arte de los puntos vulnerables y vitales (Al menos en Okinawa) fue deliberadamente oculto y modificado por la necesidad de preservar sus secretos.

Esta corriente secretista y modificativa afectó a todas las Artes del Bugei y Budo, así las fechas 1906, 1945 y 1957 fundamentalmente en Karate Jutsu y Karatedo son significativas:

1906-El reino de las Ryu Kyu es invadido por el clan Satsuma. 2da prohibición de armas en Okinawa.

1945-IIGM Japón se rinde a los aliados. El archipiélago Ryu Kyu queda bajo el control de las Fuerzas Armadas de Estados Unidos al mando del General Mac Arthur.

1957-Muere Funakoshi Sensei (26 Abril) Se celebra la primera competencia deportiva de karate.

Se debe reconocer que el arte de los puntos vulnerabilidad no se enseñaba en la mayoría de RYU japonesas y a partir que George Dillman lo expusiera públicamente, comenzaron las escuelas tradicionales a estudiar el Okuden e incorporar en sus enseñanzas el Arte del Kyusho.

La expansión del Kyusho como complemento de las Artes marciales y no como un Arte Marcial con sistema propio codificado de transmisión y enseñanza de los valores mas tradicionales del Budo, trajo consigo una expansión distorsionada de la realidad, dado que de nada sirve tener el conocimiento de los puntos de vulnerabilidad, si no tenemos un sistema técnico, práctico y realmente eficaz que nos permita acceder a estos puntos de forma rápida y precisa en un enfrentamiento real, ni nos permitiría la enseñanza a un neófito en AM de la técnica de Kyusho ni del sostén filosófico y ético necesario para su transito por las AM.

Debe entenderse que sin un método progresivo de enseñanza no se podrá formar un verdadero Artista Marcial. No se trata a nuestro juicio solo de adquirir conocimientos técnicos, sino que al mismo tiempo adquiera un amplio conocimiento de la aplicación terapéutica del Arte del Kyusho.

El hecho que en el resto de las Artes Marciales existan métodos de estudio y enseñanza de los puntos de vulnerabilidad (Kyusho Ho) y que en los últimos años se ha tratado de difundir una imagen del Kyusho como complemento de las Artes Marciales y el marcado interés de algunas organizaciones a hacer creer esto, con el objetivo de lograr una mayor cantidad de adeptos y de hecho una mayor ganancia pecuniaria, ha corrompido la enseñanza en occidente del arte del Kyusho Jutsu. Cuando analicemos la estructura de aprendizaje del Kyusho Jutsu a través del Sistema Técnico/Metodológico Ken Kyusho Jutsu, que comprende desde las técnicas básicas, bloqueos, desvíos, luxaciones, presiones, inmovilizaciones, control y Atemi entre otros elementos dirigidos a los puntos de vulnerabilidad, así como el estudio de las diferentes armas y su aplicación táctica a estos puntos, su estrategia, terapéutica, reanimación y filosofía, unido al elemento historio milenario que la integración de las todas las Artes Marciales al concepto Budo No Bugei nos permite considerar que Ken Kyusho Jutsu es un Arte Marcial cuyo sistema Técnico/Metodológico ha sido creado en Cuba bajo las mas estrictas formulas Marciales.

Diferencias entre la Ken Kyusho Jutsu y otros sistemas de enseñanza/aprendizaje de Kyusho

1-Es un sistema técnico-metodológico propio con un enfoque científico y cultural multidisciplinario.

2-Defiende los valores autóctonos del Arte Marcial Japonés Tradicional.

3- Promueve una conducta ética y filosófica entre sus practicantes acorde a la sociedad actual.

Si se revisan los programas de estudio y transmisión de Ken Kyusho Jutsu se puede concluir que es una estructura de cualidades transmitidas sensorialmente, con un método de enseñanza que aplica los dos principios, el inductivo y el deductivo, que se enseña con variedad, motivación y lógica progresiva, con una estructura propia de relativa autonomía, repitiendo los Kihon, kata, y técnicas hasta la comprensión total y el desarrollo reflejo, de las técnicas con aplicación real en la vida ante cualquier confrontación, constituyéndose como un artefacto de la habilidad y el virtuosismo de la expresión individual a partir del Kyusho.

Finalmente podemos concluir que Ken Kyusho Jutsu desde la óptica y proyección docente debe ser trasmitido como una genuina Arte Marcial fundamentada en la ética y filosofía del Budo y en las tradiciones guerreras del Bugei haciendo honor al principio de Budo No Bugei.

SISTEMA KEN KYUSHO JUTSU

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FADE TO WHITE

Donald Miskel

You might recognize the title of this article as a play on an old theatrical phrase. After the end of a scene or at the end of a movie the screen is said to fade to black. That marks the end of a scene or of the movie. I am using the title I chose to try to illustrate a concept in rank and position in the martial arts.

In a previous article I discussed the history of the kyu and dan belt ranking system. In this article I would like to delve into some other concepts of growth and rank in the martial arts. The ranking system as we know it today describes a full cycle. From 10TH kyu to first kyu is 180 degrees of that cycle. The progression from 1ST dan to 10TH dan represents another 180 degrees making a complete 360 degrees or a full circle. If I left it there I wouldn't have much of an article but I would like to take it a step further.

Circles and spheres are common throughout nature and creation. Water tends to form in round droplets. The planets and stars assume a spherical shape. Even in nature we see many cycles. For instance we see the water cycle. Water evaporates and eventually forms clouds. The clouds form rain which in turn feeds the streams, creeks and rivers that feed into lakes and eventually to the sea where it first started. All water seeks to reach sea level which completes the full cycle. Likewise we have the life cycle. Man comes from the earth. You may or may not embrace the theological explanation of creationism but any science student recognizes in the human body the elements of the earth. Man is conceived in the womb. He is born and goes through infancy, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, adulthood, old age and eventually death. From there he is buried and the elements of his body go back to the earth completing the entire life cycle. I can go on and on with that but you get the general idea. These cycles guarantee that nothing is wasted and nothing is lost. In it we see the balance of the universe.

Now let's apply this universal law to the belt ranking system and see where that takes us. The white belt marks the very beginning of a student's martial art journey. We can look at white as representing a number of concepts. White can mean emptiness as in an empty page. An empty page has potential but tells one nothing in its present state. On the other

hand white can incorporate infinite possibilities. Scientifically white isn't the absence of color. It's the inclusion of all color. White light refracted through a prism will reveal every color in the visible spectrum. Therefore we can see the white belt as showing raw potential. All possibilities are reflected in that strip of cloth that the beginner ties (probably improperly) around his waist.

On the other end of the first 180 degrees of the cycle we have the black belt. We recognize the 1ST degree black belt not as having attained perfection or expertise but as having learned the basics and having emptied oneself of all false precepts. That is when a student truly begins to learn his art and to perfect the basics that he has been given. The foundation has been laid that the student will now build on.

Actually by the time the student has reached 5TH dan he has pretty much mastered the physical side of his art. The last five degrees in his journey if he ever makes it that far will be devoted to mastering himself and building in others. Teaching and researching the arts will deepen his understanding of himself and of his art. It will also build patience and character. Should a student reach the tenth degree he has completed the cycle. Usually at that rank a master will wear a special belt to recognize his mastery of himself and his art. I would like to look at those masters belts and explore what they might mean.

As one gets higher in rank one may wear a renshi belt. Usually these belts are red and white. I like to think of that as representing the blood sweat and tears shed in growing from the emptiness of our lowly beginning toward mastery of self. The ninth or tenth degree black belt may wear a red belt. Red here again, in my mind, represents blood. Blood represents life. We have to grow to our full awareness to be fully alive and to live life in its entirety. Also life can create life. The master has reached a point where he can look back and see the many students that he has breathed life into. Those are of his lineage which in a sense is a blood lineage.

I feel that the final master's belt should be the masters white belt. Back in the day a master wore the same black belt that he was first given when he earned his shodan or first degree. You knew the old seasoned masters because over time the belt he wore frayed and eventually became more white than black. The master's white belt is different from the one worn by the beginning student. Usually it is wider than the beginners white belt and more often than not it is trimmed in red. I like to see the white of this belt as representing the purity that is reached in the fuller's fire. Like gold has to be heated and melted in the crucible to remove the impurities so the master through his own sacrifice and suffering has been through the fires of life to get to that point. All impurities have been removed in the heat of the furnace

and he comes out pure and untainted. The white of the master's belt like the beginner's belt represent emptiness. Not because there is an awaiting of filling but because he has emptied himself of all misconceptions. At this point he has completed the cycle. In a sense he no longer has a rank in the arts; he has stepped outside of rank.

By that point the master has probably reached old age. To reach that rarified position takes a lifetime of studies. He has devoted at least fifty years of his life to reach that position and the sacrifices he has made are taking their toll and are making their demands on his life. The efforts that he has put forth, the blows and falls he has suffered and the trauma that he has visited on his body over his many years of sacrifice are visiting him in his old age. He is nearing the end of his life cycle and soon will sow the elements of his physical body back to the earth. That replenishment of the earth starts another cycle and the release of his spirit yet another. Likewise he has reproduced of his own kind. He has passed his knowledge and wisdom on to others who will continue the cycle. That is only as should be because the cycle is continuous. A circle has no beginning and no end. It merely continues its cycle into infinity.

THE RANK SIDE OF RANK

Donald Miskel

In my very long involvement in the martial arts I have seen many trends come and go. Some were beneficial some less so. Even some of the passing trends left something of value behind as they faded into the netherworld of martial art trends past. Unfortunately some left only a bad taste in the mouth of any serious martial artist.

One of the less beneficial sides of the martial arts has to do with the ranking system especially as to how it relates to the western martial art community, its instructors and practitioners.

This year will mark a fifty eight year involvement in the martial arts for me. I began my training in nineteen fifty seven and even earlier than that if I counted my father's failed attempt to teach me some of the U.S. marine combat jiu jitsu that was prevalent before and during WW II. My father was an MP and spent much of his enlistment in Hawaii. Because of that he had access to some of the martial arts that were popular on the islands at that time as well as the training in hand to hand combat that his job required. He tried to teach me some of that when I was really too young to understand what he was trying to do.

My first instructor was a lowly brown belt in judo and was an Inter service boxing champion. Stationed on Okinawa he had some rudimentary understanding of the striking arts of that country though I suspect that what he taught us was a synthesis of western boxing and the atemi waza of jiu jitsu. My formal training began in nineteen fifty nine when I began studying under the prevalent judo sensei in Chicago. In those days judo and jiu jitsu were the only eastern martial arts taught to occidentals in Chicago.

I remember when it took from six to eight years to reach black belt level if a student was ever able to reach that coveted rank. Many students studied their entire life and never went beyond brown belt. Most of us considered a brown belt an expert at his art. The level of black belt was almost esoteric to most of us. In those days there were no colored belts other than the brown belt and we didn't know anything about levels in the kyu or dan ranks. You were either a white, brown or black belts; no stripes, no degrees.

The belt ranking system as we know it was founded by Master Jigero Kano, the founder of Judo. When Master Gichen Funakoshi came to Japan he taught karate at the Kodakan, the home school of judo. He adapted Master Kano's ranking system.

Judo came about as the feudal era of Japan drew to a close and the traditional fighting arts were frowned on and went the way of the samurai. The modern attitude of Japan no longer embraced the old ways and the combat oriented ways of the former days fell into disfavor. In that dire time for the fighting arts Master Kano wanting to preserve the spirit if not the intent of Japan's fighting arts created Judo from the several jitsus of the time. Instead of a jitsu or fighting system he presented it as a do or a way of self-discovery and self-improvement. The more dangerous techniques were eventually removed from the art as it began being taught in Japan's school system. During the occupation period of Japan after WW II all other martial arts were forbidden by the occupying forces.

In that atmosphere Master Funakoshi followed Master Kano's lead in how his art was presented to the public. The Shotokan karate that we know today was shaped and created because of the attitudes of Japan at the time and as it too began to be accepted in the public school system it went through changes to make it as much a physical education tool and a sport as a fighting art. Along with Master Kano's philosophy concerning the martial arts Master Funakoshi also adapted the belt ranking system. In karate as taught in its home country of Okinawa there was no formal ranking system.

In the earlier days of Japanese martial arts there was no kyu or Dan belt ranking system. They followed the menkyo system which certified an individual as a certain level of instructor up to Menkyo Kayden. No belt was furnished with such certification to hold the pants up or the komona closed. In each of the koryos or traditional martial art system there was only one master. Other than that there were only sensei(s) and students. There were no grandmasters, senior grandmaster or supreme grandmasters in those arts then or now. The cavalier use of the label of master and the concept of a grandmaster is simply a western concept.

Some of the traditional martial arts are still being practiced and taught in their pure state here in the U.S. but that has become more the exception than the rule. To a greater or lesser degree many or most of those arts have become somewhat eclectic in nature. America is a land of innovation. We take what we need from other countries and make it uniquely our own. Many of the martial arts that are taught in the U.S. today have become uniquely American arts in both form and function. I have always preached that martial arts evolve

according to the needs and nature of the communities or countries they are practiced in. Those arts take on the flavor of the places where they are taught and practiced.

Many of the eastern arts have become eclectic enough as taught here to be recognized as new or different systems. As an old traditional martial artist that has changed with the demands of the passing years I can see no problem with that. Not as long as the synthesis of those arts are based on sound principles, are put together in a practical and useful manner and can be reproduced in the students of the founder. It has to be able to do what it was designed to do effectively if it is to have any practical and lasting value.

There are a few martial art prodigies that crop up through the years. Ed parker, Bruce Lee and John Keehan come to mind as I speak. Each of these individuals became great martial artists, strong fighters and innovative teachers. Though none of them attained master level through their teachers each became a master in his own right. All three of these were low to mid level instructors but created organizations and systems that live on long after them. Unfortunately few of us, however creative we may think ourselves can claim that about ourselves or the innovations that we offer the arts.

It seems that everyone who gets above sandan (third degree black belt) or its equivalent in other arts is creating his own system. In most cases unless an individual has reached about fifth degree or above and has experience in some other arts he isn't qualified to do what he's trying to do. He has neither the foundation, understanding or the experience to create a new art. However capable these individuals are they string together a few techniques, get a few followers create a fledgling organization and crown themselves a grandmaster. Many have less than twenty years in the martial arts. A handful are just barely that old. The ranking game has evolved into a feeding frenzy and we have grandmasters and tenth degrees coming out of the woodwork.

With my many years in the arts, my extensive experience and whatever little innovative ability I may have I am considered a grandmaster and am ranked a tenth degree in the American martial art community. These considerations were endowed upon me by my peers not self-designated. I appreciate the recognition of my years of training, researching and teaching but I take those designations with a grain of salt. I wouldn't expect to go to Okinawa, Korea, Japan or China, present my rank certification to the ninth degree head of some traditional martial art and have him fall to his knees and kowtow to me. The rank I have is recognized only by my peers.

I have recently been given the position of Chief Examiner of the newly formed 'Grandmasters Council'. The GMC was created to recognize reputable masters and grandmasters in the martial arts. In a day and age where authenticity is always in question the need for such an organization is sorely needed. The credentials and backgrounds of candidates are carefully examined before they are considered for inclusion. Such an organization can act as a clearing house for authentic, master level teachers and practitioners of the arts. I urge anyone who feels that they are qualified to explore the possibility of becoming a member. It will serve as a good way to authenticate your rank, system or organization with a responsible governing organization.

Many of you know me because of my long involvement in the martial arts, my many articles or as the Head of Family and a Patriarch of the Black Dragon Fighting Society and the cofounder and Senior Grandmaster of the Black Lotus Martial Art Association. Along with those positions I serve on the council or governing boards of several other organizations and serve as an advisor to several others. I am a minister and pastor and I try to bring the integrity and transparency into my attitude and practice of the martial artist. I believe heavily in honesty, honor, humility, respect and equity in the martial arts. Brotherhood, caring and compassion must temper our martial ability to offset the lethal capabilities of the arts we practice, study and teach. Our focus should be more on growth and learning rather than rank and recognition. Rather than promoting ourselves let's allow our lives and our life efforts to speak for us. Above all let's be honest to ourselves and others. In the end all of us including the greatest supreme grandmaster are just students. The date we stop learning is the day we stop living.

God bless you my martial art brethren and my friends, family and associates. Study hard and go with God.

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

FEED THE NEED

Donald Miskel

I'm a firm believer of growth and evolution. I'm not talking about the Darwinian concept of evolution but the evolution of growth and change in the world we live in. Society isn't the same as it was a hundred years ago. We have learned and implemented a number of scientific discoveries and these discoveries have shaped our world. Some things are unchangeable. Those things are the foundation on which we build. What we build on those foundations is the question.

Doing something the same way because it has always been done that way may give a nod to tradition but is it realistic? There are religions that deny progress and still ride in horse drawn buggies. In the jet age they are a throw back to a tradition that the rest of the world has grown from. I don't discount the value of tradition. As a pastor I'm often seen as old fashioned because I see the value and truth in some old values. That doesn't mean that I choose to live in the past. Though I value the lessons taught by the past I live in the real world. In a sense I suppose I live in both worlds. I live in the present time while valuing the lessons of the past. You may ask what this has to do with the martial arts.

I believe in feeding the need. Human beings have grown larger and stronger and live longer because of modern nutrition. Science and new strides in horticulture and husbandry has given us more of what we need to grow stronger bodies and bigger brains. In the long run you are what you eat. The trick is to know what your requirements are and to 'feed the need'.

Tradition drives many schools of martial arts. In many of these arts the practitioners do things the same way as the creators of the art that they practice in spite of the fact that the challenges and conditions that created those arts no longer exist. These individuals still train as if they are facing sword wielding samurai or attackers on horseback. That's the equivalent of bringing the traditional knife to a gun fight. Many traditional martial artists are unsuccessful in real life combat because they are bringing nineteenth century technology to a twenty first century playing field. They're in effect, racing a Corvette with a one horse carriage. Do I need to predict the outcome of such a challenge to you?

In our martial arts we need to reflect the traditions of our arts but face the reality of a twenty-first century world. We may embrace the philosophies of the samurai or the ninja but we need to face the reality that we are not feudal warriors. The effectiveness of modern fire arms pretty much makes the samurai's katana obsolete for modern combat. As much as I love the sword arts I wouldn't want to face an AK-47 with a samurai sword. No future in that.

While honoring our martial art predecessors and the ones who created and developed the traditional art let's not get stuck in the past. Combat effectiveness is progressive. Probably the traditional arts would still address the challenges of an eighteenth century feudal world if it still existed but when was the last time you faced a sword wielding adversary? If we're going to be combat effective in our arts we have to develop arts that address the challenges of the modern era.

Shotokan karate is still shotokan karate whether we train to defend ourselves from muggers, strong-arm robbers, rapists or terrorists. Hopefully they won't be wielding swords and spears. I can pretty much guarantee that very few of them will be on horseback.

I am thrilled when I see a karateka or a taekwondo practitioner take to the air and destroy those pesky boards. It takes strength, training and athleticism to accomplish such feats. It's beautiful as long as we don't mistake such techniques as real combat. Tobi geris (flying kicks) were designed to attack an opponent who's on horseback. There's nothing wrong with developing such skills. They challenge the skills of the young and give them an athletic outlet. There is value in sports and competition. Everything doesn't have to translate as combat. However if we consider ourselves warriors we have to train accordingly. We tend to fight the way we train. If we are going to fight we have to train to fight.

If you want to know what's effective in combat look at how our elite fighting forces train. Very few of them spend years perfecting a level of skill that will not address their needs in combat. They train for what they do and according to the challenges that they are most likely to face. Many of them are trained by seasoned martial artists who have spent years perfecting their craft but those who train these fighters don't try to teach them a full system of a martial art.

We spend years studying and training in our various arts. From many of those arts have evolved more combat oriented systems. When we train in an art let's keep in mind that we are studying an art. An art may include combat effectiveness but being an art it transcends this. We train realistically, hopefully, and we are combat able but we become much more. Anyone who believes that he has to spend thirty years of his life to become combat effective doesn't understand the nature of combat.

The way I train my students probably more closely resemble the Filipino arts than the Japanese and Okinawan arts that I study. In kali, arnis and escrima weapons are taught before empty hand combat. That's because theirs are fighting systems and as such they teach armed combat first. With the samurai jiu jitsu was never their primary system. Most samurai carried three blades. A katana, a wakazashi and a tanto. That is to say a long sword, a short sword and a knife. The weapon of preference was always their most formidable weapon. Jiu jitsu was taught to address the unlikely loss of all other weapons. Jiu jitsu was a last ditch effort not a first choice. In my system I teach self defense, combat and then the more esoteric aspects of the art in that order. As a modern martial artist with classical roots I teach some kobudo (traditional weapons) but I'm more likely to train my students in the use of knives and small arms. Not that I advocate solving disputes with such weapons but I believe in erring on the side of caution. I'd rather have a weapon and not need it than to need a weapon and not have it. If I'm facing a knife wielding opponent I'd rather have a knife and better yet (in some instances) a gun. If I have no option I'll use my empty hands but as much as I advocate karate, the empty hand, I'd rather face such an opponent with a similar or superior weapon.

I have trained police officer, correctional officers, security and psych personnel. I don't train them like I train my martial art students. I'm giving them a survival tool not an art. They aren't interested in spiritual growth or self improvement. They are training for the reality of the confrontations that go along with their professions. If they join my formal classes I'll teach them kata and waza but their time would be wasted with such training considering what they are training for.

What we teach should address the needs of those that we teach. There will always be a place for the traditional martial arts because there will always be people who enjoy the challenge of perfecting an art. However if we endeavor to teach a practical system of combat and self defense we have to address the realities of the times we live in. What we teach has to offer a solution to the challenges that people face in the real world. Give the people what they need in the modern world. This is the reality we're faced with in an aggressive world. This is the real deal, not a game. We have to 'feed the need'.

Donald Miskel

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