

Sword and Pen

Official Newsletter of the International
Combat Martial Arts Federation (ICMAF)
and the Academy of Self-Defense

Editorial

Concentrate!

To many people today it would appear that the idea of powerful mental focus is anathema to their preferred lifestyle. We note the recent phenomenon of that most obnoxious of references to personal working style, “multitasking”. In reality, multitasking is a euphemism for being an unfocused scatterbrain. Those who lack the intellectual power and discipline to concentrate on one thing at a time and get it done right cavalierly boast that they are “multi-taskers”. The ability to multitask is perhaps a desirable attribute for a circus juggler. It is a reprehensible flaw for most everyone else. Certainly any employer who permits some unfocused moron who multitasks instead of getting a much needed job done correctly and well to remain on staff is a fool, himself.

How would you like to go into the operating room with a surgeon who

fancied that, while performing the operation you required, he could also dictate letters to his secretary, and answer a phone call or two?

Learn how to concentrate, if our imbecilic society's public miseducation system has inculcated in you that flighty, useless state of anti-mind that is apparently anticipated to be in large demand during this 21st century.

If you want to become genuinely able to defend yourself, you need to learn the art of concentration, and you need to apply it relentlessly to your training in the armed and unarmed combative disciplines.

We do not espouse the classical/traditional martial arts of Asia (although we certainly respect them, as we respect serious individuals who pursue their study). One thing about the manner in which those arts were taught — and still are in a few very commendable circles — that we admire and emulate in our own approach to training, is a fierce atmosphere of intense focus and concentration. Contrast the true karate master of yore, who perhaps practiced two or three kata, (but who did so with fanatical intensity) with the “modern” yuppified karate buff, who — by the time he has been training for a year(!) — “knows” ten to twenty kata. If you think that the modernist is ahead of the old time karateka, you are truly stupid. Unrelated as much of classical/traditional karate is to real world hand-to-hand combat in the modern urban setting, a resurrected Okinawan, Chinese, Korean, or Japanese stylist from the old school would almost certainly be able to make quick work of one or more pieces of street s—. The number of “modern karate experts” (ie yudansha — “black belt holders”) who can handle themselves for real today, is very unimpressive.

Ours in an age of dilettantism. The dilettante is a shallow dabbler . . . he is

a ne'er-do-well, and — if a male — he is a DISGRACE. According to our philosophy a “man” is someone who remains true and dedicated to his few chosen serious values. He is generally, by the time he reaches around 30, set in his ways and in his core values. His inferiors call this “inflexibility”, or “stubbornness”, or “intolerance”, or “narrow mindedness”, etc. (as they go about their multitasking, one would suppose). But it doesn't matter. The truth is that anything that has ever been accomplished in this world that has nudged man ahead in any area, has been done by single-minded, purposeful, disciplined, focused individuals. And it is their accomplishments, generally, that the dabblers and other bums resent the most.

We are perhaps digressing a bit.

Look: If it is a thoroughgoing, reliable, genuinely usable ability with the skills of close combat, self-defense, and weaponry that you are after then stop looking for secrets (there are none), mysteries (there's nothing at all mysterious about this subject), or shortcuts (none exist). Understand, at last, that only **c o n c e n t r a i o n** and lots of it, on the simple, proven, basic and core methods of hand-to-hand and armed battle technique, will give you what you're after. It is just that simple! Accept it, and you'll make excellent progress in your training. Reject it, and you'll continue to flounder . . . always in search of new mysteries, new secrets, and new shortcuts.

We are both amused and disgusted by the dual popularity of practical self-defense seminars and DVD's. It is not so much that we do not appreciate the potential value of each of those learning aids, but rather our realization of how and why they are so popular, that triggers our amused disgust:

People gravitate to them because it is easier to spend a day or two in training than it is to spend a year or two (seminars), and because it is so much more pleasant to sit and watch a movie (DVDs) than it is to train hard under the guidance of a qualified teacher, and on a regular, persistent basis. (Yes, of course. There are some people who use the seminar and DVD mediums as supplementary aspects to their ongoing training, but let's be real: We both know that most people gravitate to these venues because they are EASY, and because the people are LAZY.)

Real training means concentrated effort. It means spending a lot of time working hard physically, and focusing mentally. It means discomfort, sacrifice, occasional injuries, periods of discouragement, and finding out firsthand that there are no secrets at all in the art of combat. This just isn't popular.

Practical self-defense and close combat skills are uncomplicated and straightforward. They are exceedingly easy to learn; but learning them, per se, is only the beginning. They must be developed, cultivated, mastered . . . “made one's own”, in a manner of speaking. It was never stated any better than it was by Rex Applegate: “Being able to throw a man is much different than knowing how.” This principle retains its validity when expanded to include every conceivable type of skill . . . not merely throwing!

One's acquires ability by concentrating on rendering the necessary effort in practice and drill. Concentration is key.

Training times must be regular, intensive, serious, sufficiently long to allow for a meaningful amount of work to be done, and they must be

undertaken with full concentration. No letting thoughts drift to the rent, to the job, to school, to domestic problems, to anything. Concentrate!

BJS

Added Benefits With Prof. Bryans!

WE hope that this does not sound too much like nepotism, but we must take a moment to call Arizona area readers' attention to the marvelous opportunity they have if they avail themselves of Prof. Mark Bryans' training. With our hand on our heart we will tell you: You cannot do better than enroll with Mark Bryans for training in our System (American Combato - Jen•Do•Tao). Not only is Mark a spectacular teacher with an in-depth knowledge of the very core and essence of the Art, but — he also offers professional instruction at a complete, no-nonsense weight-training facility, in Prescott!

When we first met Mark Bryans, and he began training with us in the 70's, he was already a dedicated and disciplined physical culturist. He worked out assiduously and made every effort to learn all that he could about weight training, and — to this day — he epitomizes the weight-trained combatives expert. His knowledge of training methods, dietary considerations, and sensible tailoring of training programs to clients' needs so far surpasses that of the "certified physical trainers" whom one finds, that — without intending to do so — Mark embarrasses them.

Here's a suggestion: If we have persuaded you that weight training is The Necessary Adjunct to close combat and self-defense training (and if you have been reading us for several years or more, we just may have!) then contact Mark now. Let him tailor a program to your needs and goals, and

let him get you started enjoying the strength and physical toughness that will drastically enhance your combat arts objectives.

Even if all you're interested in is basic fitness and thoroughgoing conditioning, Mark Bryans can set you up on an effective, balanced program, teach you exactly how to get the most out of it, and guide you personally toward your every training goal. (We'd hope that if you did start on a weight program with Mark, and if you had no prior combat arts experience, you might try some lessons in American Combato with Mark, too. Weight training and combat martial arts are the super-combination.)

We endorse Mark Bryans 100%. We know that if you work with him you'll be utterly delighted. He is, like ourself, completely dedicated to that which he does, and when you place yourself in his hands you can rest assured that great results will be forthcoming! Give him a call if you're in Arizona or plan on being in Arizona: (928)-777-1032 . You'll be very glad you did!

The Meaning Of “All In Fighting”

THE classic work by W.E. Fairbairn published and widely distributed as GET TOUGH! during WWII, began life as a manual titled ALL-IN FIGHTING, which was published in England by Faber and Faber. At the time of its inception, ALL-IN FIGHTING was produced as a manual for the British commandos, primarily. It reflected Fairbairn's post-Shanghai approach to personal combat. An original edition of the hardcover ALL-IN FIGHTING — if you could find a copy to buy — would almost certainly be priced at anywhere from \$250. to \$325-350., depending on condition. Thankfully, Paladin Press has once again come to the rescue of

those who research old classic volumes on combat and/or who are “WWII combat system” aficionados! Paladin has reprinted ALL-IN FIGHTING, and it might be worth your while to buy a copy, since it includes a little material that was left out of GET TOUGH!

Announcement!:—

Years ago we were told by one of our teachers (a former FBI counterintelligence agent, and a Department of Justice close combat trainer during WWII, who had trained under Fairbairn and Sykes) that Eric Anthony Sykes was Australian. Considering the source from which we received this information, we honestly never considered that it could be in error. Apparently, according to John Harding of London’s Metropolitan Police — also an unarmed combat expert, Fairbairn researcher, and possessor of documentation which verifies what he has conveyed to us — that information was mistaken. According to John Harding, whom we have every reason to believe and to trust, Eric A. Sykes was British. He was, and we now quote directly from Mr. Harding’s communication to us, “. . . born 5th February 1883 at Barton Upon Irwell in the County of Lancashire.”

We gratefully acknowledge John’s setting us straight on this, and we hope that those of our readers who have a serious interest in those two giants — Fairbairn and Sykes — will appreciate having this information!

But what is “all in fighting”? What was Fairbairn’s meaning. We know that his designation for his basic self-defense and police tactics system was Defendu. When he developed his wartime courses for commandos

and secret agents, he dropped the Defendu designation and his system became known as “The Fairbairn System”. (This can be verified, by the way, by referring to THE SECRET WAR REPORT OF THE O.S.S., by Kermit Roosevelt. We can also attest to the fact that Rex Applegate, whom we knew for more than 25 years and who was Fairbairn’s friend and early American protégé, when the “Shanghai Buster” was seconded to OSS, always spoke of Fairbairn calling what he taught “gutter tactics”. “The Fairbairn System” was utilized by many who referred to Fairbairn’s method, too. No one called the material “Defendu”.) In an OSS catalog of weapons, reference is made to “The Fairbairn System” as the method taught for use of the Fairbairn-Sykes Fighting Knife presented amongst the catalog’s offerings. Alternatively, Fairbairn spoke of his methods as being “gutterfighting tactics”, “foul methods”, “ungentlemanly fighting”, and . . . all-in fighting.

Okay. So again: Just what is “all-in fighting”?

Put simply: IT IS UNRESTRAINED, UNREGULATED, ANYTHING-GOES, TOOTH-AND-NAIL, KILL OR BE KILLED, ABSOLUTELY NOTHING EXCLUDED, ALL ACTIONS/TECHNIQUES/DIRTY TRICKS/FOUL METHODS “IN”, PERSONAL COMBAT.

It has nothing to do with any type, form, variant, or style of sporting contest or event. (Regrettably, this needs to be said, due to the UNTRUE pushing of the notion that the so-called “anything goes” UFC/MMA/ “Cage” fighting is “anything goes”. It is ANYTHING BUT ANYTHING GOES! Those (in our opinion) disgraceful displays of brawling-masquerading-as-martial-art have virtually ruined American martial arts. It is, in our opinion, due solely to the influence of these obnoxious

bloodsport events and the knuckle-draggers who participate in them (or who aspire to participate in them) that steroid drug abuse has now come to the martial arts.

Some people still don't get this. It is perhaps due to the MISINFORMATION being touted about contest fighting being some sort of "equivalent" to combat engagements. They are different. Combat cannot be played as a game or as a sport. Games and sports are not for combat.

Combat is the last resort of the civilized man when he is left no alternative by the uncivilized but to protect himself, his family, his community, or his nation. Combat is the first resort of the impulse-dominated savage; of the out-of-control punk, troublemaker, bully, or "toughguy". Only subhumans prefer war to peace, or violence to nonviolence. And, since subhumans abound and always have on this planet, it is absolutely necessary that those in the human minority become able to do battle in all ways against them — with and without weapons. When this emergency occurs, ALL-IN FIGHTING is the answer. There can be no conceivable reason or good purpose served by exercising the slightest degree of restraint or forbearance when one finds oneself obliged to defend the innocent from unjustifiable violence and terror. In all-in fighting there is zero restraint or forbearance.

All-in fighting is to be thought of and used as a weapon. It's proper role is in emergency situations where no choice exists but to fight if one prefers not to be maimed or killed, or if one must protect someone about whom one cares.

That's it. And let us hear no more of "contests" or "sparring" or "sport" of any kind as combat.

On Color Codes

ALTHOUGH we most emphatically do not agree with the technical method of pistol shooting that he taught us as replacing the established and war-proven point shooting technique which we acquired from Rex Applegate and others, we think that the late Jeff Cooper contributed a great deal to the art of close combat and personal defense when he set up his particular "color code" for assisting in the process of developing mental preparedness for combat in trainees.

Briefly, Cooper used White, Yellow, Orange, and Red as symbolic of the following mental states:

White: Unreadiness

Yellow: Alertness

Orange: Alarm (danger suspected)

Red: Danger known

By reference to these colors, which enable a person to get a handle on the mental states in a manner superior to that which might be facilitated by using letters or numbers, the student is guided to the point where, if he pays attention to what he is being taught, he can literally "click" to the appropriate mental state with little trouble . . . and thus master one aspect

of mental conditioning that is important.

We note that Cooper-copycats have — in order to aggrandize themselves, we suspect — come up with their “new” and “improved” color codes. Hardly to our great surprise, this was done by complicating matters. A new color was added. Black. So now, the Walter Mitty can feel he’s got something “better” because he’s got “more”.

What crap!

Chuck the five-color schematic, if you’ve been using it, will you? And if you read about it in some idiotic gun magazine, turn the page and read the ads. The “expert” who is pushing this color code is encouraging the use of a **NEEDLESSLY COMPLEX ITEM** where simplicity is a great virtue and asset!

The great virtue of the Cooper version of the combat color code is that there are fewer mental “sets” or “stations” to concern yourself with. The idea in any and all combat training is to continually look for simpler and still simpler ways that things can be accomplished. It is the sign of the amateur or of the dilettante to constantly seek “newer” and “more elaborate” methods and tools.

We’d leap at the opportunity to reduce the color code to but three settings — if we could figure out a way to do that. When we teach we simply try to persuade our students that “Condition white is no good and is invariably inappropriate, except in situations where you are isolated from human contact or are in contact only and exclusively with trusted persons”. “So,” we tell them, “live in ‘yellow’.”

We almost get yellow, orange, and red to be the only settings they ever think about . . . but not 100% of the time.

Yellow to red is a possible transition, and a practiced man can make it. Orange to red is easy. The problem is we just can't have a person "living" or "staying" in either yellow or orange only. Yellow is the place to be in all environments where and when human contact is a probability, but there is no danger specifically anticipated. However, there needs to be a warning level — a level in which one is primed to go, but is still holding back because, while suspicious, whoever is being confronted has not yet indicated physical hostility. Orange is that warning level, but one most certainly would never wish to live in orange for very long. In orange one is expecting trouble at any moment. Going through six to eight hours of that every single day will make most people candidates for a straitjacket within a month. And, as we interpret it, red is the action state. No more talk. No more holding back. No more waiting. You've perceived the initiation of violence and you are now occupied with rendering the threat harmless.

You need those four stages to fully understand and to work realistically with the setting of your mind for the contingency of using force in self-defense.

But you do NOT need (or want!) "five" colors.

Points For Teachers

WE receive lots of reader replies to our Newsletters and to our monthly Journal (Close Quarters: The Professional Journal of Ungentlemanly Warfare). We appreciate and value all respectful and rational reader

contact, and we read every piece of correspondence that meets those two simple standards.

Recently, we were asked about recommending a set of guidelines for those who teach close combat and self-defense, and that sounded like a good idea. So, the September issue of CQ (Close Quarters) had a complete feature on the subject. However, we thought that bringing this matter up right here in our Newsletter and addressing it in a somewhat abbreviated and more suitable fashion for a Newsletter — ie “thumbnail” style — might be of interest to our monthly readers on this site.

Teaching, as we view the matter, is a solemn responsibility and a deadly serious calling. Done as we demand (of ourself, and of Mark Bryans) it is no less a profession than is teaching at a college or at a university.

Our first experiences teaching occurred when we were in our middle teens. We assisted with the instruction of newcomers in ju-jutsu classes. We enjoyed it. But of course it was nothing like the teaching that would eventually become a significant part of our life’s work. Today — writing and speaking from the vantage point of having accumulated 45 years total teaching experience — we have this to say in hopes that it will assist others who are sincere in their efforts to be genuine professionals:—

- First, know your subject thoroughly. Close combat and self-defense comprise studies and interrelated disciplines that are considerably broader and deeper than the “martial arts seeking public” generally realizes.

Having a first or second degree black belt hardly qualifies anyone by itself as a “teacher” of the discipline in which he possesses that rank. Living and breathing the art that one is teaching, and having been doing so

for ten or more years qualifies someone who can teach to begin to instruct beginners.

- Do not confuse a background in the classical/traditional or sporting/competitive “martial arts” as adequate for teaching combat and self-defense.

It’s great if you hail from such a background (assuming that it is extensive and real), because it gave you fitness, discipline, and a comprehension of how to employ your body to execute combat-related actions; but you need some solid years of study and training in combat disciplines before you should branch off and represent yourself as a “teacher” in that area.

- Never try to be all things to all people. Don’t try to “sell” self-defense and combat as something that is a fitness activity and a competitive sport, and a recreational outlet. Combat training is a definite, specific discipline, and prospective students should be honestly told that if they “also” want a sport or “also” want a tradition-based Asian system or “also” want an approach to inner development and esthetic satisfaction, they are NOT advised to enroll for serious combat work.

Physical fitness, personal growth, psychological benefits, satisfaction from accomplishment, and poise are indeed ancillary benefits that come with a serious approach to training in close combat and self-defense. However, the “ancillary” must be stressed, and students should frankly be told: “The focus here is on personal self-defense, protecting your loved ones, and survival in dangerous emergencies. It stresses these things in and to the extreme, so do not begin training here if you want “something else, too”.

Explain why it is virtually impossible to train for competition and for combat. (If you’re a professional, you should be able to do this easily, since you’ll know the reasons, backward and forward!)

- Be appreciative of the very real benefits that training in all legitimate martial arts provides. Ju-jitsu, hapkido, kenpo-karate, taekwon-do, wrestling, boxing, judo, etc. all have much to offer. It is impolite and ridiculous to sneer at the training which a sincere student has acquired in a properly taught system of martial arts before coming to you. You can point out why you do things differently; but you sound like a fool if or when you say, for instance, that “such-and-such style of karate is ‘no good’”. Who the hell do you think you are?

Obviously, the foregoing in no sense means that you cannot or should not be as critical as possible of reckless or dangerous or irresponsible “martial arts” approaches in which brawling and drug usage are possibly considered “okay” by participants. When we speak of being tolerant and respectful of other systems and arts we speak of systems and arts that foster responsibility, disciplined training, nonviolence outside the training hall, and respect on their own part toward those who follow other training venues.

- Sarcasm, personal derogatory remarks, impatience, and any form of physical abuse are all absolutely inexcusable.

This garbage is rampant in the martial arts, and it is as disgraceful as it is unprofessional.

How well we remember the child abusers who were passed off as “teachers” when we were a boy in elementary school, in the Bronx, New York. Rotten old hags (Miss Monahan, Miss La Porte, Miss Crowley, Miss Lazary, and other s—t, who never ought to have been permitted to be near zoo animals — save as live food — were turned loose on kids (ages six or so, to eleven or twelve) to howl, rant, bellyache, scream, and behave like the sewage they were, free of all concern about being stopped or called to account for their evils, simply because they were the authority figures and we — the children — were an incarcerated audience, held

captive under their supervision, by law.

Anyone who is in a position of power or authority, whether teacher, cop, office manager, commanding officer, prison guard, or what-have-you, and who pushes those under him around or who abuses them in the slightest manner, in our opinion should be fed to sharks.

You are, as a teacher of combat skills, obligated to look out fully for the physical welfare of your students while they train under you. And while there is never any guarantee in any martial arts instructional setting that there will be no injuries, there **MUST** be the assurance that there will be no deliberate carelessness and reckless abuse of the students that might cause preventable injuries. Otherwise, you are a negligent incompetent who has no business teaching.

Similarly, there must be an understanding that every student's dignity must be respected. Insulting (however subtly) any student, ought to get a teacher (in the martial arts or in any other field) **SHOT**.

Students learn at their pace, not at yours. If you cannot be patient and tolerantly understanding of a slow learner's or of a difficult learner's pace, then don't represent yourself as a teacher.

When a student makes what is to you a "silly" mistake, courteously and patiently correct him; and let him know and feel that — as far as you are concerned — it's okay if he makes the same mistake a hundred times. Your job is to teach him. If in fact the material is so easy, then be glad that teaching it will be such a simple task. But **NEVER** insult a student's learning pace, or let him feel that you're tired of repeating yourself or of trying to explain to him how something is done. Your job and responsibility is to keep on repeating yourself — **TACTFULLY** — and to continue explaining — **PATIENTLY** — until the student gets it! If you won't or can't do that, then do the world a favor: Stop pretending to be a teacher.

Remember: Many individuals who come to you for instruction will have been victims previously of bad teachers. These scum have perhaps made learning even more difficult for them than it would otherwise be. If any student of yours has been acclimated to the kind of crap that is atypical in the public school system, for example, then he will appreciate you all the more if you prove to be a REAL teacher, and do right by him.

If our words here sound harsh, they are intended to be so. We speak up now for the hundreds or thousands of individuals every week throughout the country who unfortunately put up with and actually PAY FOR some egotistical bastard to denigrate them and/or to send them from their instructional sessions with injuries or bruises or with a sense that, for some reason, they need to put up with this abuse, so the insane “teacher” can continue to inflate his miserable ego at their expense.

- Watch out for “husband and wife” enrollments.

Actually, we encourage husbands and wives to enroll together, and we even have a “one pays, the other comes for free” policy with married men and women. However, we must caution readers who are teachers that invariably, they will find that only one of the couple is really serious about the training, or that both are seeing this as some kind of “togetherness package” and are not genuinely dedicating themselves to training for combat purposes and self-defense.

While it is not always true that the husband is the serious enrollee when a married couple joins a school, it usually is. The wife is there because she wants to “do something with her husband” or “show her husband that she’s interested in what he likes” ad nauseum. Our advice is: Give the couple the very best teaching of which you are able, and do not take the inevitable lack of seriousness in one of them, personally.

- Do not tolerate insubordination. While you have every obligation to be respectful, courteous, and mindful of the welfare of your students, they in

turn need to know their place. If you encounter an “attitude” of any kind, the student is history. Period. End of story. They may not give you “advice” on the program, manipulate alterations in the system taught, direct how other students with whom they train ought to be progressing, or interfere with or interrupt instruction. Most problems with this kind of human debris can be avoided by carefully screening people and/or by giving an introductory course before permitting someone to become a regular student. But every now and again a mental case slips through the cracks. In coming on a half century of teaching we have only had to get rid of three individuals, and we have had occasion to sever contact with fewer than ten, following their training with us. It was for excellent reasons, and we were never surprised when the result was these individuals becoming critics and bad-mouthing us. We count ourselves lucky to be rid of these creatures, and as far as we are concerned, anyone stupid enough to believe their attacks against us can go right on believing that which pleases him. We do not tolerate disrespect either as the giver or as the recipient, and we urge other teachers to follow our example. Adopting this philosophy will keep your “people problems” to a minimum.

- Be available to your students.

While it is quite true that some schools operate with the underlying assumption that the head instructor is some kind of “deific presence”, and that one must not dare to impose upon “his majesty”, but must instead simply grab what scraps he throws to the students occasionally, and in the meantime be satisfied with that which his underlings teach and say, only the most idiotic fools will actually pay for and tolerate such utter crap.

Your students are important and they are valuable to you. You are not doing them any “favours” by teaching them; you are earning your living by trading your knowledge and experience for the tuition that you charge. Give your students your honest best!

Encourage them to call you if they have questions about their training, and try to stay on top of each of their rates of progress. Know them as individual human beings, and be approachable at all times, within reason, so that if they need assistance or encouragement, you're there to give it to them.

You may indeed be your students' superior when it comes to the subject that you are teaching, but if you are enrolling high quality adult individuals (as we do) then every single one of your students is your superior, in at least one way! They will appreciate knowing that they can count on and trust you. That's being a teacher.

Hopefully, we've provided some helpful tips for those of our readers who teach, or who aspire to teach in the future.

A Suggestion For Some

Excellent, Refreshing Reading!

ONE of our closest friends, colleagues, and allies is James R. Jarrett. His ongoing blog is a delight to follow. Just google "the far rider journal" and you're in for a real treat!

It has always amused us how a tenement boy from the Bronx (i.e. US) and a cowboy from Nevada (i.e. JAMES) could be so unbelievably similar in their basic, core values, and in their convictions regarding just about every fundamental issue that confronts us today (and that has always confronted thinking human beings throughout history). But alas, 'tis so!

We're sure that you'll enjoy James' musings. He's a great writer!
The Brilliant Chinjab Smash!

VIRTUALLY every style and system of hand-to-hand combat has, someplace in its repertoire, a blow that employs the heel of the hand. We are of course speaking now of combat systems, and we acknowledge that this type of strike has of course been eliminated — quite properly — from all sporting and competitive arts.

The great genius of William Ewart Fairbairn was multifaceted. One of his truly significant achievements in the field of close combat was the innovation of the CHINJAB — ie that blow (illustrated in ALL-IN FIGHTING, GET TOUGH!, and HANDS OFF!) in which the open hand, fingers spread, is driven straight upward and deeply back underneath the jaw with full bodyweight and upward thrusting force behind the action. End result is almost always at least a knockout. Sometimes it's a broken neck.

Several things can and should be acquired as bolstering or supplementary tactics, and these enable the blow to be utilized often with enhanced effect: Some of them are . . .

- Whipping the forward hand and arm (when the rearmost is used in delivering the chinjab smash) around the enemy's lower back. If you whip your forward left arm, then your left hand impacts sharply with your enemy's left kidney. If your right hand is the lead, then the right kidney is smacked. This action is done simultaneous with the chinjab's impact

- Grabbing the enemy's belt or frontal portion of his trousers with your lead hand, as your rear hand delivers the chinjab smash
- Driving the vertical forearm of the chinjabbing hand smartly and sharply into the enemy's sternum as the chinjab lands under his jaw
- Following impact of the chinjab smash raising the elbow of the chinjabbing arm and driving a powerful tiger's claw grabbing action to the enemy's face and eyes, then smashing him downward — on his head

This particular blow — ie the chinjab smash — did not exist prior to Fairbairn's innovation of it. The straight heelpalm thrust (an excellent strike, too) was the mainstay heel-of-the-hand strike, and some of the Chinese ch'uan fa arts utilized a "whipping" and an "overhead circular" type of heelpalm blow. But Fairbairn created the chinjab!

The great thing about the chinjab blow is that it produces the most amount of destructive trauma for the action rendered. The neck muscles cannot provide protective resistance against this blow when it is properly delivered, and the enemy has no chance of even seeing it coming! It requires little strength, it cannot injure the user's hand, and it will cause some degree of injury even if it misses its primary target. In fact, there are numerous targets for the chinjab smash:

- The nose
- Either eye

- The temple
- The jaw hinge
- The mental foramen nerve (two inches down from the corner of the mouth — the boxer’s “knockout point”)
- The base of the skull
- The sternum/solar plexus
- Either kidney
- The liver
- The spleen

There are some more, but you get the idea!

We favor using the chinjab smash with Jack Dempsey’s falling step — but in any case, whether or not the falling step is used — the entire body should be turned into the blow, and every effort should be given to strike with the totality of one’s bodyweight.

Where did Fairbairn get the idea for the chinjab smash?

Obviously, we can only speculate, because we have no knowledge of his ever explaining the genesis of this technique. Rex Applegate was unable to shed any light on the matter, either. We asked him many years ago.

Our opinion (and it is opinion, please note; not “fact”) is that Fairbairn’s exposure to the internal boxing system of Pa G’wa Ch’uan (“The Eight Trigram Fist” school of internal boxing) taught him the value of the open palm as a striking implement. Having the street fighting and ju-jutsu background that he did have, Fairbairn probably understood that the lengthy process necessary for mastering the “internal” methods was simply impractical for most men. He also knew how to hit hard (from his atemi training). He loved the ju-jutsu edge-of-the-hand strike, and probably surmised that the heel of the hand could be utilized similarly, though to different targets — delivered in an upward direction. To the best of our knowledge, Pa G’wa Ch’uan teaches the pupil to hold the palms open and up, but does not train them in anything like the chinjab blow. Fairbairn may well have put two and two together, and come up with what is certainly one of the most important blows in unarmed combat.

Anyway . . . that’s our thought on the matter.

No matter how you look at it though, and you might enjoy trying to figure out what prompted the “Deacon” to create this great move, yourself, you must learn and master the chinjab smash if you aspire to effectiveness in close combat. It should become one of your primary moves — as it was one of Fairbairn’s.

Mastery of the chinjab will not, by itself, make your life secure. However, it will place one helluva dynamite weapon in your personal arsenal, and it will enable you to strike any foe viciously, powerfully, and effectively in any serious predicament.

Stop The Extreme Stretching

WE have had the pleasure of meeting and training numerous black belts in most styles and systems over the years. Often, those that had been trained in taekwon-do evidenced two conspicuous detrimental attributes (among others): 1. The penchant for high and fancy kicking, and 2. Serious hip and leg strains and problems (due to continual efforts to achieve and maintain the skill to do #1).

We have no comments for those readers who may be in taekwon-do and who love the art, and who have no intention of ever getting out of it. We all must pursue the paths that make the most sense to us. However, for those in taekwon-do or any similar system in which extreme stretching and flexibility is continually emphasized, and who are training because they wish to acquire hand-to-hand combat abilities for the real world, we must point out:—

a) High kicking and any fancy kicking is anathema to practicality and realism. These types of leg and foot maneuvers will almost certainly get you killed or seriously injured in any encounter with a determined and experienced violent felon.

b) Extreme stretching is extremely dangerous and detrimental to many people whose physiological propensities do not permit them much flexibility to begin with.

So, we caution those for whom our message has value: Stop training for acrobatic kicking if you are serious about personal defense and close combat. The resultant capability (assuming that you possess the genetics

to achieve it) is irrelevant for self-defense, and the means by which you are struggling to acquire it may cause serious and even permanent injury to you.

Extreme stretching can harm the joints and the ligaments and tendons of the body. True enough: Some individuals appear to be naturally endowed with a greater capacity for flexibility than others, and they might not be damaged by this kind of exercising. But others may be. And we have seen an awful lot of injuries that have been the result of this kind of physical training, over the years. We ourselves were once a student of an excellent style of taekwon-do (Chungdokwan), and we were never very flexible, naturally. We were fortunate, as we learned several years after leaving taekwon-do, to have abandoned the stretching and high kick work before being harmed by it. In fact, in the particular School that we attended there was (as taekwon-do schools go) only a mild emphasis on kicking to great heights and to achieving extreme flexibility; but still the effort to achieve and then to sustain the ability to kick to head height with a side thrust kick would certainly have resulted in some very painful injuries had we persisted — given our physical structure — with such practice into our 30's and beyond.

If you doubt the truth of that which we are saying here about the potentially detrimental effects of extreme stretching, check with a sports physician. If you doubt what we say about high kicking being dangerous in hand-to-hand combat, do as you please. (You may find out one day in the actual arena of battle — and if you survive you will start training differently from then on, and — doubtless — be less skeptical of that which we have said).

Should You Practice Hand Conditioning?

IN a word, yes — you most definitely should — must — practice some kind of natural weapon conditioning if you are serious about being prepared to defend yourself. However, before jumping to the conclusion that this means pounding a makiwara and splitting bricks with your bare hands, let us explain that by “hand conditioning” we simply mean: Gaining some direct experience actually striking and kicking objects — tangible targets — with your body’s natural weapons, so that you have confidence that you can make hard contact with the blows that you are learning. A degree of “toughening” of the natural weapons is also highly desirable; however there is no need for the extreme hand conditioning (sometimes accompanied by actual deforming of the hands) that is practiced in some circles.

For unarmed close combat two hand weapons predominate: 1) The handaxe chop, and 2) The chinjab smash. Training in striking a padded post or a steel bar, or even a heavy bag, Spar-Pro, or BOB dummy occasionally with those weapons is all the “hand conditioning” that you need if you are simply after basic self-defense ability. (Your punching will be restricted to the solar plexus/sternum area, and perhaps to the testicles, so a little practice punching a heavy bag will be plenty for training the fists at a basic level).

We have always felt that being able to kick barefoot is critical. There are times when, for whatever reason, you might be caught without footwear (at home, at the beach, possibly as a prisoner, etc.) and your ability to kick formidably without injury to your foot is crucial. So, we’d recommend doing some kicking drill — barefoot — against a heavy bag or dummy.

Putting a pair of sneakers on and getting some kicking practice against a tree or brick wall can be a real confidence-builder, and in fact training of this kind, occasionally, is valuable.

We do NOT recommend extreme degrees of hand conditioning in which knuckle bones are deliberately broken in order to have them calcify and become like stone. This may look dramatic, and it might impress an occasional moron who believes that reading a newsstand martial arts magazine is more important than reading Aristotle, but it may well result in crippling your hands in later life, and it is not necessary for self-defense ability,

Should You Practice “Kata”?

WHEN Bruce Lee dubbed traditional practice of the Chinese sets (called kata or formal exercises by Okinawan and Japanese practitioners, and forms or hyung by Koreans) “organized despair” everybody and his grandmother jumped on the new bandwagon that Lee started rolling, and atypical of the comments many teachers heard when someone called their school was: “I want real self-defense. I don’t want to do those kata.”

Bruce Lee was a very dedicated martial artist. We cannot say that we feel he was anything resembling an “actor”; but a terrific martial arts man, yes. Still, Lee’s philosophy and personal style (Jeet Kune Do) was hardly perfect or flawless. And when Lee dismissed kata entirely — concept, techniques, etc. — he made a colossal error.

It is important to understand that kata is by no means restricted to the karate type arts. Ju-jutsu traditionally used kata exclusively to train

warriors, since the old combat ju-jutsu forbade full bore practice of the skills without great caution and restraint in regard to attacks and to full force throws. There are katas in sword fighting, in archery, in kendo, in judo, in naginata training, in . . . virtually every martial art. Kata is the means by which the formalized skills that comprise the essence of the individual art are catalogued and set up for strenuous drill in a manner that enables students to master those skills safely. Combat training must employ some form of kata (USMC bayonet training always did, in fact — to use one example of modern Western application of the concept). The Western boxer's shadow boxing drill (deemed second in importance only to fighting in the ring as preparation for boxing, by no less an authority than the late Jack Dempsey, is another example).

The formalized, traditional kata of the various karate arts are, for the most part, useless as training for hand-to-hand combat. But that hardly means that the idea of kata — of its purpose and methodology applied more realistically — is useless. It is not. It is valuable, important, and in our opinion vital.

The way we advocate that the kata concept be used is by drilling in high repetition combinations of attacking moves that are practicable and realistic for actual combat. We teach and employ an entire syllabus of these actions in American Combato™, and we hope that we can persuade serious combat arts students everywhere to adopt and to employ a viable method of kata practice to fully master their skills.

Attack actions should be set up and arranged in a manner that is combatively logical (ie a manner in which they really can be used against an enemy, not merely applied “in the air”). Counterattacking actions

(“self-defense” techniques) should be developed so that they can be practiced full force with a partner or with partners, while carefully refraining from making contact with blows, and while carefully refraining from smashing the partner to the ground (doing throws) or crushing his neck (using strangles and chokes). This practice method (which certainly does require the cooperation of one’s partner when training on counterattacks with him) develops fast, accurate, precision skills that work.

All real impact work should be restricted to heavy bags, posts, and dummies, of course. However, by practicing with partners using combat KATA movements, one can focus only on truly vital points — with safety — and not make that monumental error made virtually everywhere in the martial arts of trying to “remember” what targets to go after in a real situation, while practicing and sparring with actions that cause no serious injuries, and that avoid the opponent’s genuinely vulnerable target areas.

Classical/traditional kata are beautiful. They are excellent physical fitness builders, and they are esthetically satisfying to study and to master. But they teach a man nothing about hand-to-hand combat “for real”. The idea of kata, however, is not to be dismissed and abandoned quite as cavalierly as so many in the martial arts appear to be inclined to do. Their is tremendous value in the CONCEPT. So, if you are a teacher of martial arts — or a student with a mind of your own — make sure that you reconsider that which far too many have, in lockstep with one of those who was an icon to them in this field, shrugged off as “organized despair”.

Kata training is organized, all right. But it hardly constitutes any kind of “despair”. It requires disciplined visualization, and intense mental focus. It

builds speed, balance, accuracy, power, while at the same time committing to motor memory well-planned, proven combat techniques. That is, if you do it right.

So do it right.

Until November, stay alert and train hard.

Best wishes,
Prof. Bradley J. Steiner