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Spring Cherry Blossoms - Okinawa - Japan Travel

**The official magazine of the
Traditional Okinawan Karate Association**

Training with Kata Effectively

By Renshi Liam Gorman



Kata is meant to be a progression in your chosen art, and the kata gets more difficult as you progress while your skill set also increases from your training. Each Kata sees new move and different applications of moves until we reach a peak where we have learned all the moves in a given syllabus ... or have we?

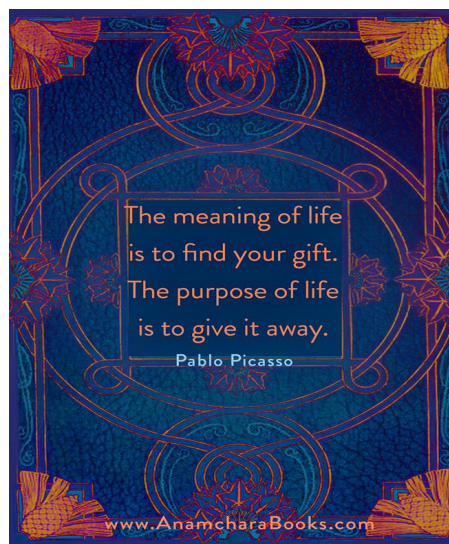
It's quite possible we have trained in all possible strikes, blocks, etc. But, as we advance we learn different ways of utilizing these moves, and so we will naturally have quicker reactions from our training. Still, I believe in advanced karate we find a way of using techniques more effectively and efficiently; yes, we knew the moves, and now we learn to use them to the best of our ability.

In advanced karate we should "step outside the [kata] box" and think about how things work on the street. For example, if one or more people attack you on the street and your life depended on it, would your kata save your life? It's quite possible that the answer is "no", because most people train at kata as if it were a dance and never think about kata in the modern world. Remember, kata was developed a long time ago, whilst there were certain threats back then, we now deal with druggies, muggers and sometimes domestic violence. I'm not saying that it was safer back then (I wasn't around), but it's a different world now. Therefore, we may have to deal with situations differently by thinking about our kata in a different light.

I believe that kata was developed for us not only to practice our skills without a partner but to develop our speed and timing with the accuracy needed to defend yourself in a potential situation. Call it a battle drill or platform for applications of theories. With that said, practice kata bunkai [applications] the way your instructor showed you, search on YouTube for more ideas, and then think about it. You should try to find your own bunkai which suits you, your skill set, and body structure. In the end, the techniques must fit your abilities and counter the most likely threats you expect to face. Play with it, and have fun!!!



NOTES AND QUOTES



You have brains in your head.

You have feet in your shoes.

You can steer yourself any direction you choose.

Dr. Seuss



Using Your Head (and various other body parts, as well).

By Don Roberts

In times past, Okinawan karate could well be considered a complete martial art. As late as the 1930's, karate instruction included such diverse topics as were to sit in a tea house, spitting on an opponent, and when to run away. As the art became "civilized" many of the elements that might be considered distasteful, or brutal, were removed. What was left was the "kick, punch block" paradigm with which we are all familiar.

There are some of us, however, who still feel that the old ways have a lot to offer for self-protection. Here then, are a few techniques that you may, or may not, have seen before.

Since the title of this article is "using your head," let's start with the venerable head butt. This technique is used at "bad breath" range. To prevent self-damage, and destruction of glasses, if you wear them, tilt the head as shown in the pictures, and



1 2

pull the opponent into the blow. 1 and 2.



3 4

A similar type attack uses the shoulder as the striking surface. Pulling the opponent's head down slightly allows the shoulder to crash into the

face. 3. And 4.

Reacting to a grab, the shoulder can be used to attack elbow joints. 5,6. And 7.



5



6



7

The hand, in addition to the fist and the shuto, can be employed in a number of ways. The first two fingers, can be pressed against the opponent's throat, under the "Adam's apple" to gain control of a close situation. Note: this is a non-lethal technique." 8. 9. And 10.

8

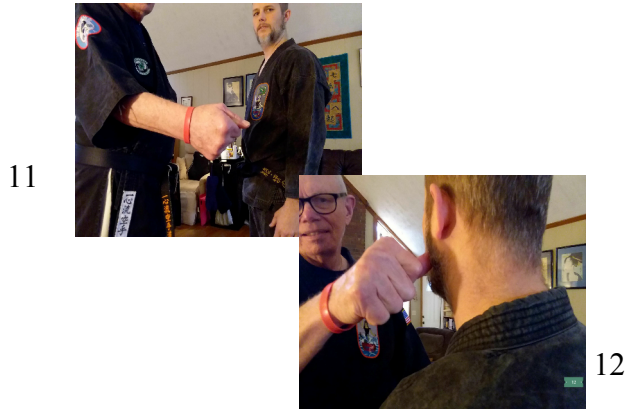


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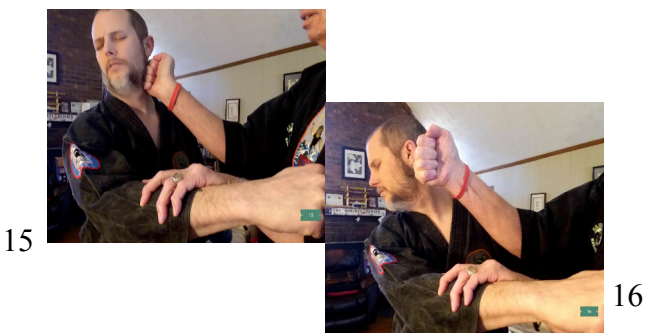
The tip of the thumb, formed as shown in the picture, can be a highly focused striking weapon. 11 and 12.



If the thumb is presented as shown, it can attack arteries in the neck. Note: this technique can be dangerous. 13 and 14.



With the hand formed into a loose fist, the middle knuckles can target the hinge of the jaw. The wrist should snap and the point of impact. 15 and 16.



When the forefinger is snapped down on the opponent's chin, his mouth will be jarred open in a shocking manner. It can be used to escape from someone who is harassing by holding the clothing. 17 and 18.



This technique was reportedly used by Master Chotoku Kyan, to win a match against a large Japanese Judo-ka. As the opponent rushed up to grasp and throw the smaller Kyan, the Okinawan thrust his thumb into the Judo man's mouth, formed his hand into a fist, and dragged him to the ground. I have experimented with this tactic and found it to be very effective, if nasty. 19.



These are some of the more exotic waza of karate-do. There are, of course, many more. If you choose to practice these "old style" self-defense techniques, please be very careful. Remember, you are responsible for your partner's safety. Good training.





The President's Corner

Greetings to the members and friends of the TOKA O'hana. Hope everyone is well, and training hard. In a few weeks, the TOKA Board of Directors will meet in Gatlinburg to complete our plans for the upcoming Summer Seminar, August 7th, 8th, and 9th (Friday afternoon, Saturday, all day, and Sunday morning). The location, as it has been for the last several years, will be Edgewater Hotel. This is an outstanding facility, conveniently central to everything in Gatlinburg, and providing a terrific area for our classes. Jan will be sending information and registration forms via E-mail, but it is a good idea to take care of your room registration early, just in case.

Once again, we will be providing a free Bar B Que dinner for all participants after classes on Saturday. Non-participants will be charged a small fee. I hope everyone will take the opportunity to thank Sensei Freddie and Libby Cantrell, as well as the students, friends and families of the C.C. Dojo. You guys are the greatest, and a terrific example of what the TOKA team can do.

We also plan to have T-shirts available again this year, prepaid and waiting for you when you arrive.

Also, again this year, Jan will be sending out E-mail updates with information on instructors, classes, etc.

As you know, the Seminar is our big event of the year. Not only is it a great learning opportunity, but it is a chance to reconnect with old friends, and hopefully make some new ones.

As Master Wheeler wanted, we offer a pure learning experience, where egos are left at the door, and everyone is can be a student. I sincerely hope to see everyone there, so start making you plans early. Gambatte!



OHANA - FAMILY

During this heartbreaking time, our TOKA Family would like to express our condolences to Master Jim Alley (Heaven Earth Dojo - Isshin Ryu Karate) for the loss of his precious wife Charla. The times we got to be with her, she always impressed us with her good nature and her character.



Our family would also like to remember the victims and survivors of the recent Tornado Outbreaks. Our thoughts and prayers are with them during this difficult time.



The Nerd Theory

By
Don Roberts

In recent years, much valuable research has been done into the origins of Karate-do. One of my favorite investigators is Jesse Enkamp, aka, the “Karate Nerd.” Jesse san has produced a series of You Tube videos about various aspects of Karate and Kobudo. These videos are entertaining and informative, and I can recommend them for kids, and/or beginners.

While most of his videos relate to Okinawa, and the martial arts that are taught there (see Karate Nerd in



Okinawa), he recently undertook a study trip to southern China. In the “Karate Nerd in China” episodes, he discovered some interesting and solid connections between Okinawan karate and Kobudo, and systems he was introduced to in China. For example, one Sifu demonstrated a kata he called Seisan. It was long, complex, and only faintly resembled the kata we know today. But, what a coincidence!

After he returned from China, Jesse had a brain storm. Like most of us, he had been taught that there are many bunkai for each movement in every kata. But what, he reasoned, if we had put “the cart before the horse?” What if the self-defense technique (or bunkai) came first, and the kata later? What if there was only one bunkai and many different memory aids (kata)? And if the original technique was lost in time, could true understanding of the original intent of any kata even be possible?

So what is the answer? I believe, like other old masters, that Karate is always evolving. Like a pond that is fed by a stream, karate is constantly refreshed by new interpretations.

Without the stream, the pond becomes stagnant. However, just as the pond must have a bed to give it shape, the contribution and inspiration of past masters must not be ignored. Training with a good heart not only honors the past, but may well provide the answers you need.



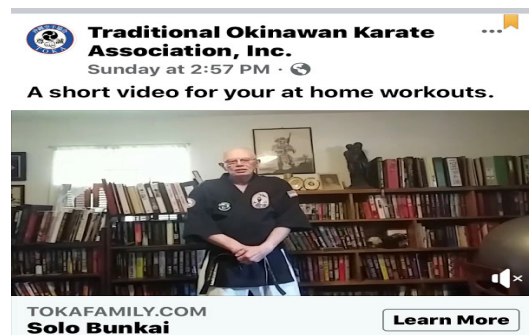
Around TOKA

Jan and I recently shared an enjoyable meal and visit with our good friends of the IKKU. We have known and admired these skilled karate-ka for many years, and consider them family. They are led by one of the most knowledgeable master that I have ever met, Soke Joe Ruiz, who I am proud to call my friend. They remind me of our friends in TOKA, good, dedicated people, and a joy to be around.

I have noticed that many students (and sensei) have only a hazy notion of the island of Okinawa, the birthplace of karate. Fortunately, on line, there are some excellent videos produced by Jesse Enkamp. His You Tube series, “Karate Nerd in Okinawa” are informative, fun, and suitable for kids as well as adults.



**Check out President Roberts’ video
“Solo Bunkai”
On the Traditional Okinawan Karate
Association , Inc. Facebook Page-**



**To our T.O.K.A. Family,
From William Scott Shamblin
Member, T.O.K.A. Board of Directors**

I watched an interesting video on You-Tube recently. It concerned the BJJ response to the Corona virus (COVID-19). It was interesting to see the many ways that our martial arts communities are handling this situation. My hat was off to the BJJ group. Their responses were honest and for the most part, responsible. Most of the instructors were saying that they were going to close their schools during this time, while a few others planned on business as usual, but with as much precautionary methods in place as possible.

However, what caught my attention was a comment made by one of the instructors who said that, BJJ is all about close body contact in training, and that he felt that during this time, it was just too risky to do. In essence, it is very difficult to practice BJJ without another person. That is true. There are many things that BJJ practitioners can do by themselves that can be of great benefit, but without being able to roll with someone, it limits their individual practice options considerably. BJJ groups and martial arts that include striking can still work solo on heavy bags, target work etc., if they have access to them, but standard BJJ training which revolves around primarily grappling on the mat, may need to be limited or altered for a while.

In any event, in karate, we have much of the same problem as our BJJ brothers and sisters. Some of our dojo may have to be closed for a period of time or classes altered to fit the circumstances. Like our BJJ friends, we need to spar. We need practice with live opponents in order to ultimately perfect our skills. However, unlike our friends, we have a tool available to us that we have had all along, and its very nature is designed for times such as this – kata.

During this season of uncertainty and change to our daily lives, I would like to encourage all of our members to look for ways in which we can benefit. In order to strengthen our auto-immune systems, any exercise that you can do right now is helpful. For us in karate, the physical benefits can coincide with a golden opportunity to laser focus on one of the most important fundamental elements of our art, the kata. If your dojo is closed for a while, and you can't attend classes, you can still practice your kata at home. You can practice them a lot! You can break the movements down and work on individual parts, concentrating on form, breathing, kiai, placement of technique, eye focus, speed, power – the list can go on and on – with the point being, you have a plethora of material that you can work on, and the beauty is, you can do it on your own.

Not everyone likes kata. I understand that. If kata tends to bore you, then get creative in the ways that you practice them. There is great benefit in that challenge. Here are only a few ideas for your consideration. These are for fun, but I hope that they will lead to a deeper appreciation for more serious kata study. As an Isshinryu karate-ka, I am only using Isshinryu kata as examples here, because that is my tradition. Whatever style you practice, you have great kata that can be used in many creative ways. Here goes...

- 1) Practice your kata in slow, slow motion. Then practice it as fast as you can go. Alternate back and forth, slow and then fast, for 10 to 20 minutes non-stop.
- 2) Practice your kata blindfolded. Try to start and stop on the same spot, and facing in the EXACT same direction. (Easier said than done.)
- 3) Practice your kata outside on un-even ground. Practice your kata outside on un-even ground BLINDFOLDED. (Important safety tip: Don't do this near a tree or the road.☺)
- 4) Practice your kata full speed in regular street clothes. (If you don't do this, you should. It is a game changer.)
- 5) Practice Seisan kata with obstacles on the floor that you have to navigate around. (You can come over to my house. My garage is perfect!)

- 6) Practice Seiunchin kata (with shoes) out side on a loose, gravel road. (Find your balance.)
- 7) Practice Naihanchi kata in a narrow hallway.
- 8) Practice Wansu with an emphasis on the throw. If you have a heavy bag, take it down and prop it up. Perform the kata and when you get to the throw, toss the heavy bag. This is GREAT training!
- 9) Practice Chinto kata on a stairway.
- 10) Practice Kusanku outside at night.
- 11) Practice Sunsu with distraction. Have your little brother or sister, husband, wife or kids, try their best to distract you in any way that they can. See if you can complete the kata without losing your concentration.
- 12) Practice Sanchin kata three times a day; in the morning, around noon, and before 7:00 pm in the evening (not later) for a week. Every day. Faithfully. Then, notice how you feel. I think you will be surprised.
- 13) Have someone video your kata performance, and then study it. Look for specific things that you can improve upon. It can be humbling, but you'll learn a great deal.
- 14) Or, any of a million other ideas. Come up with your own unique kata drills.
- 15) Don't forget your weapons practice (ko budo). What can you do with them?

Sometimes we hear criticism of the practicality of kata. That is okay. You don't have to practice kata to be a great fighter. At the same time, because you practice kata, it does not mean that you can't be a great fighter. Kata gives you another tool in your tool-box; one more way to train your mind and your body – not just for fighting, but also for life. In the event that you cannot train regularly with other people, which may be the case for many of us now, know that we have a tried and true, built in training method that has worked well for a long time. This season will pass. My hope is that once it does, we will understand the value of the things that really matter – a “return to basics” if you will. Isn't it funny?

Our karate ancestors seemed to understand this all along.



Overholt's Karate Studio (OKS) Reaches Out To the Community By Conducting Self Defense Seminars

OKS (Overholt's Karate Studio)
5284 Brights PK. Morristown, TN 37814



Paola Martinez
Judo Black Belt
21 years of experience.
Physical Education
Teacher.
Master's Degree
in Education

Roger Overholt
9th Degree Black Belt
40+ years of experience
Karate & mixed
Martial Arts.
Master's Degree
in Adult Education

Group 1: Kids <i>closed</i>	7-11 years	5:00-5:45 pm
Group 2: Kids (<i>3 spots</i>)	12 -15 years	6:00-6:50 pm
Group 3: Women <i>closed</i>	15 + years	7:00-8:00 pm

Believe in yourself OKS Karate Studio Self Defense Classes 2020			
January You Are Amazing	February You Are Brave	March You Are Strong	April You Are the Best



Hosting Live Class Online

By Clay Worley

Of course, you've seen the Peloton commercials. Who ever thought a group class on a stationary bike could make that much money? You already know as a seasoned professional that when the students see you working out as you're actively guiding them through what you do, they get inspired. It's not unlike leading Marines; Marines won't follow an officer who stands on the sidelines or tries (in vain) to lead from the rear. You're a frontline leader; that's what counts when things are at their worst in this world.

Just like any good TV show, you must keep your audience hungry for the next episode. Since this isn't TV, I am advising the instructors on my team not stress about getting it perfect all in one take; the focus should be on delivering good content. After all, V-loggers "keep it real" and come across in a raw, almost unscripted way. In turn, they have thousands and millions of followers. So, why not you? This is a real possibility since you already have great content.

When I was asked to do the Century DVD series in 2008, four volumes of material for kids seemed to be a little overwhelming. Then, the director suggested that I look at it like teaching a bunch of five minute classes. That was the answer. Hence, each disc has about nine of those, and the series still sells well today. The trouble is that I've learned a lot more about teaching since then, and I would like to do an update. Anyway, this isn't about me; it's about you and your clients. Remember the concept I just mentioned though: five minute classes. You've already got a good grip on that, and I'm so glad we're aligned in that respect.

You already know that five minute lesson works. This could run even ten minutes if necessary. Call it a short or compressed lesson if you want. The framework I recommend for a short lesson is:

1. Get to the **BOTTOM LINE UP FRONT**. Tell the audience **WHAT** they will learn in 30 seconds or less.
2. Explain **WHY** this important to them in 30 seconds or less.
3. Show them briefly **HOW** to do it with a good demonstration of the technique.
4. Then, **CRAWL, WALK, RUN** through the lesson.

CRAWL: Break down the steps, and use your nifty memory cues to help the lesson stick. Give the audience time to try it. Act as if you're in the room with them.

WALK: Show them the medium speed, and give the audience time to do 10 reps with each side of the body. This is time for you or your assistant to run through it with them.

RUN: While they take a breath, remind them of the key pointers on what to do in order to get it right, what to avoid, and/or to be patient with themselves. Then, guide them through another 10 reps with each side.

When you close the lesson, you might cover questions that students typically have about the content. Then, drive the bottom line home with them one more time.

Whether these are pre-recorded and posted or hosted live, it's a basic framework that works and is repeatable. Keep your clients fed. They can, if you want, download and watch them on the go. Again, you probably know a lot of this. The market was already taking a hard swing in this direction. Fortunately you're moving forward while leading from the front, and you already had this in mind.

Again, I hope this information is something the rest of the family may find useful.



DOJO NEWS

Congratulations, Sevierville Dragons with their successful kickoff to the 2020 Tournament Season.



(Pictured in front is Gianna Tsourouktzis, & in the middle row is George Tsourouktzis. Back row-Randy Van Dyke, Freddie Cantrell, & Markos Tsourouktzis)



(Pictured from left-right: Lisa Matthews, Kaitlynn Delacruz, Kendra Bayless, Conner Ramsey, & Brayden Bayless.

Congratulations, President Roberts for being recognized at Master Doyle Seiber's Isshin-ryu Kong Shou Dao Banquet on March 13.



Special Interest

Individual Membership	\$20.00/yr
Lifetime Membership	\$150
(after 5 yrs continual membership)	
Dojo Membership	\$20.00/yr
Dojo Listing	\$10.00/yr
(For member dojos only)	
Kyu Promotion Certificates	\$5.00
TOKA Patches	\$7.00

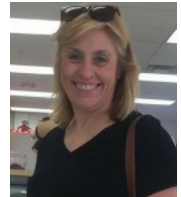
Please make checks payable to TOKA. Mail membership application with checks to Jan Roberts, 610 Waterboy Rd., Fairburn, GA 30213.

Please mail news or articles to same address. or to Gambatteisshin@aol.com or to Melinda Reese at ms.reese@comcast.net . Deadline for the August issue is July 1,, 2020.

Editor's Notes

By

Melinda S. Reese



I hope that all of you are enjoying reading **THE TOKA TECHNIQUE.**

If you would like to contribute any items to the newsletter, please send them to my home email: ms.reese@comcast.net or school email: reesem@hchoe.net We would love to see how you and your students are doing! Please share your activities and promotions with us.

Dojo Listing

Fugate's Martial Arts Center
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fugatesmac@earthlink.net
www.fugatesmacenter.com

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Sensei Roger Overholt
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Free Spirit Grand Junction
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