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# ***The Power of The Way***



**A Spiritual Journey**

by Nodan

**Lighthouse Productions**  
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# **Warning!**

**The breaking and self-defense demonstrations shown in this book can be dangerous and should not be attempted without the supervision of a qualified instructor**

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## **KARATE JUTSU**

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## Introduction

After training for 15 years in a number of martial arts, I met Quan Li, who received his black belt in Shotokan karate from an “enlightened” master we called “Sensei.” But Sensei had stopped teaching his Shotokan karate in favor of aikido and kobudo (sword and jo), so I became Quan Li’s student to learn Sensei’s “one strike” Shotokan style. After a year and a half, I also joined Sensei’s aikido dojo to take advantage of the master’s spiritual wisdom.

Sensei showed me that martial arts could be practiced on two distinct levels. The first is physical, in which only one’s natural abilities are used. The breaking demonstrations in my YouTube videos were all executed at the physical level.

The second level is spiritual, where enlightened adepts like Sensei display extraordinary psychic power and superhuman strength. Arts like karate-do and aikido follow the Way (do), an occult path that leads to enlightenment. In my quest for “powers” like Sensei I engaged in occult practices and spent many hours in Zen meditation. This book provides a brief account of my training with Quan Li and Sensei, and tells how these experiences led me to the “dark side” of enlightenment and superhuman strength.

For karateka who wish to improve their striking power, the videos at my **nodankarate** channel on YouTube describe a *method* for developing “one strike” techniques for street defense that utilizes five striking principles and flexible post makiwara training to forge “one strike” power.

In 2004-05, I filmed a series of board breaking demos for a DVD warning karateka not to seek enlightenment through their arts. At that time, I created the make-believe master, “Nodan” (no rank), as a disguise to protect people who may not want to be associated with my occult past. In 2009, I began posting karate videos on YouTube.

Although Nodan’s buffoonish persona is a parody of my misguided quest for superhuman strength, the breaking demonstrations are authentic and can be replicated by following the “Breaking Protocol” on pgs. 22-23.

### **YouTube Videos**

**Nodan Karate (20:01)** Comprehensive summary of Nodan Karate’s “one strike” training method with SD applications

**Nodan Five Principles (8:41)** A concise summary

**Nodan Makiwara (4:52)** Instructions on how to build a basic indoor flexible post makiwara and board holder

**Nodan Self-Defense (4:07)** “One strike” street applications

**Nodan Board Testing (3:51)** Reveals an empirical method for measuring board strength using a barbell

**Nodan Students (3:46)** Edited black belt test

**Nodan Katas (2:44)** Tekki Shodan, Seisan, and Onsum

**Nodan Dagger Form (2:19)** Chinese/Okinawan long form

**Who is Nodan? (1:59)** Video montage of techniques

## The Dojo Spirits

The traditional Japanese dojo (Way room) is where the departed spirits of the masters meet with the true followers of the Way. Portraits of these masters occupy the kamiza (high seat of honor), and before and after each class students are led in a ceremonial kneeling bow before it. This ritual includes Zazen (sitting meditation), which serves to open the student's mind to make them more receptive to the spirits.

For many Western practitioners, bowing down before the kamiza is a symbolic act of respect that has nothing to do with contacting the spirits of deceased masters. This was my perspective, until I added a kamiza to my home dojo and began experiencing strange phenomena.



Quan's dojo kamiza displayed portraits of departed masters.



## **My Home Dojo**

Following Quan's example, I added a kamiza to my home dojo and Quan came once a week to train. He taught me the *Shotokan Karate-do Workout* that Sensei instituted when he taught the art. The workout was designed to burn away the ego, which Sensei claimed was essential for reaching enlightenment. Special emphasis was placed on the kata, because they functioned as "moving Zen." We performed many repetitions of the Shotokan forms using tempos that ranged from slow motion to full speed.

We used a kiai shout on every focused technique, and without realizing it I began using the sacred Hindu word "om" (pronounced ah-oom) as my kiai shout. At the time, I was unaware of the subtle spiritual influences operating in the workout, which functioned as martial arts yoga.

During our workouts we routinely experienced unusual phenomena. For example, when we practiced prearranged sparring a mysterious dynamic caused our arms to barely make contact, even though our blocks were forcefully deflecting the full power punches we were throwing. One time the dojo was filled with such energy that the wooden floor vibrated beneath our feet, and on two occasions the 2x4 makiwara post cracked at its base during makiwara practice.

The power I was experiencing was exhilarating and steeled my determination to reach further and further beyond my natural strength. During the week I often practiced the workout on my own and spent many hours in meditation.

Ironically, I could not see that, rather than burning away my ego, the workout was subtly inflating it with the pride of becoming more and more powerful!

### **The Séance**

One night my senior black belt, JD, came to visit with his girlfriend, DeeDee, who brought a Ouija Board. After Quan and I had finished our evening workout, we decided to take the channeling device into the dojo to ask it questions. DeeDee was the only one who had used a Ouija Board and I was somewhat skeptical, not knowing what to expect.

But after communicating with the spirit(s) for forty-five minutes, we were all true believers in the spirit board's efficacy as a portal to the spirit world. Suffice to say, the experience bolstered my belief that I was following the right path to enlightenment and spurred my desire to investigate further into the unseen realm.

### **The Medium**

Shortly after the séance I went to see an old Spiritualist minister named Gert, who gave psychic readings. In practice, mediums summon up spirits who temporarily speak through them by taking over in a benign form of possession. I visited her on four occasions hoping to gain additional insights into the workings of the spirit world.

On my first visit, Gert led me through her house to the kitchen, where she informed me that a five-hundred-year-old

Native American spirit guide had been assigned to act as her psychic gatekeeper. We sat down at a table and she took hold of both my hands and began to speak in tongues.

When Gert opened her eyes she said, “Now as I come into close contact with you...” Immediately numbers of spirits began trying to come through. Gert frequently shook her head disapprovingly and spoke out, “No, not you,” to certain ones she did not want coming across. I got the impression there were many departed souls, not all of whom were associated with me, trying to get messages through this portal from the other side.

Gert knew details about my family that she could not have known beforehand and I have no doubt she was in contact with the spirit realm. Moreover, on two occasions I took other people for readings to validate her legitimacy and she easily passed the test. But when I asked her opinion of our Ouija Board séance, she became very angry and proceeded to denounce Parker Brothers for trivializing the board’s significance by marketing it as a parlor game, which she believed put an uninformed public at risk.

Ironically, the well-documented case of demon possession that inspired the 1973 block buster movie, “The Exorcist,” began shortly after the thirteen-year-old boy (not a girl as portrayed in the film) was introduced to a Ouija Board by his aunt, who was herself a practicing Spiritualist!<sup>1</sup>

## The Enlightened

After training for a year with Quan, I wanted to meet his former karate teacher, Sensei, who was operating a commercial dojo teaching aikido and kobudo (weapons). Quan had regaled me with many fantastic stories about Sensei and I wanted to see him for myself. Quan arranged for us to meet with him after his last class.

Upon meeting the master, I knew at once that he was everything Quan had said about him. His presence was different from other men, and when he performed his art a powerful energy flowed through him that seemed to transcend this physical realm. Now I knew what kind of master I wanted to become. I asked Sensei if he would give us private lessons in his karate, but he was skeptical and said, "You'd have to be a saint to find the Way through karate today." His misgivings, however, did not discourage us from going back to see him several months later.

After his last class he invited us onto the mat. As we kneeled before him, he looked straight at me and said, "Jay, everything you know is wrong." Although Sensei, by his own admission, had barely finished high school and I was a psychologist working for a prestigious university hospital, I knew he was referring to more than my knowledge of the martial arts.

Straight away the master set about proving his point. First, he moved behind me and instructed that I not look back until I sensed that his fist was close to the back of my head. I

waited until I could feel him almost touching me. When I turned to look, Sensei was standing ten feet away!

I tried again. This time I was confident that he was some distance away, because I could not sense anything close to me. Yet, when I turned to look the side of my face lightly grazed his extended fist. Somehow Sensei was able to extend and withdraw his ki (vital energy) at will.

Next, he faced me in a relaxed front stance with his arms hanging loosely at his sides. He said, "Attack me." I shifted into a fighting stance and cautiously looked for an opening. There was none. It was as if he could anticipate any attack I may have been considering. Later I learned he had used the "twofold gaze" of perception and sight<sup>2</sup> to thwart any attack I may have been considering. Now I was more motivated than ever to pursue an enlightenment experience that would make me a great master with powers like Sensei.

After another six months I made a momentous decision. Quan and I would continue practicing karate together, but to better access Sensei's spiritual wisdom I joined his aikido school. Studying aikido and sword with Sensei over the next three and a half years completely transformed my understanding of the martial arts.

### **Sensei's Strength**

Sensei once gave Quan a dramatic example of his power when he instructed him to touch his collar bone. After Quan received a strong "electric" shock, Sensei explained that the

“little” jolt was only a fraction of the power he could project. Another time he informed Quan, “If I hit you, you should be dead before you hit the floor,” and, “Once you have the Martial Spirit, no one will ever fight you.”

### **Sensei’s Aikido**

Sensei taught his own version of Morihei Ueshiba’s aikido and believed the goal was enlightenment, which is attained when the ego has been annihilated and the illusions of the physical world disappear. The emerging divine soul is no longer bound to an endless cycle of birth and rebirth, but has been absorbed like a drop of water in a vast cosmic ocean. Thus, one becomes One with the universe.

This philosophy, that we are divine souls inhabiting a divine universe, stands in stark contrast to the Judeo-Christian Creator God, who acts in history and transcends all physical and spiritual realms.



**I studied aikido and sword with Sensei. My brother, wielding a jo, has practiced and taught aikido for more than 25 years.**



**Aikido is a throwing art designed to cause as little damage as possible to the attacker.**

### **A man without hope**

I once gave Sensei a small token of appreciation that provoked a stunning response. It was a small brass plaque in the shape of the kanji symbol for “hope.” Sensei reached out and took the small gift in both hands and mournfully opined, “I have no hope.”

I could not fathom his melancholy response. Besides possessing extraordinary psychic ability and superhuman strength, he had a successful dojo, a live-in female disciple to assist him, and a loyal student following that revered him as a great master. Sadly, at the end of his life Sensei became paranoid and alienated from his family and many of his friends. By his own admission, he died without hope.

## Enlightenment

My enlightenment experience began one morning when I looked in my dojo mirror and the eyes staring back at me were not my eyes! They were black and piercing, and projected an alien intelligence of their own. Without thinking, I beckoned to them and inexplicably demanded, “Okay, show me the kundalini fire.”<sup>3</sup>

A cool, softball size “presence” manifested in my lower spine that intensified as it radiated throughout my body. The superhuman strength I felt was both thrilling and terrifying, and by comparison made my board breaking demonstrations seem like child’s play.

As I continued to look into the mirror, Sensei’s face superimposed itself over my own and morphed into a monstrous demon of enormous ferocity and power. Then the holographic-like image leaped out at me with a thunderous roar. It was shocking to see the source of Sensei’s power finally revealed. I stepped back and declared aloud, “If this is what it is, I don’t want it!”

As the kundalini fire receded back into my lower spine, I was suddenly transported to the outer darkness of the void, where I was a disembodied consciousness, forever bound to an eternal “now” beyond space and time. A veil was lifted, exposing that despite trying to do right by my family and friends, at a deeper level I had been living out of pride and self-interest. The ghastly vision soon faded, but not before I had passed judgment upon myself.



For the rest of the day, I pondered how I might rid myself of the alien presence that continued to slowly undulate up and down my spine. Later that evening the thought came to me that nothing purges like fire, so I began gathering up things associated with my martial arts and began to burn them in our fireplace. These included rank certificates, numerous books and magazines, portraits of departed masters, and a prized personal letter from Sensei.

**“Do you love me more than these?”**

After a while a most astonishing thing happened. Out of the blue, in my mind’s eye I saw Jesus sitting in the chair across from me asking, “Do you love me more than these?”

My heart dropped into my stomach. Like most Americans who were born just after WW II, I had been raised in the church and knew the story of Jesus. As an adult, however, I had decided that Jesus may have been one of history’s great moral and ethical sages, but nothing more. Besides, my ego identity was firmly wedded to my karate. I had trained for twenty years and developed extraordinary strength in my karate techniques, and now Jesus was asking me to give it all up for him?

I knew answering “yes” would mean certain ego death, so I stalled by continuing to search for more things to burn. Among the items that I found was my original black belt, whose well-worn edges were frayed white, the evidence of years of dedicated training. Without hesitation, I cut my belt

into pieces and sacrificed them to the flames.

Yet, as the evening wore on I came to the realization that the alien spirit could not be purged by fire or expelled by force of will. I remembered Sensei's hopeless despair and the terrifying encounter I had with the demonic earlier that morning, so the choice should have been easy. But the ego is a stubborn and rebellious master and I continued to delay making a decision for several more hours. In the end, I reluctantly opted for "hope." I chose Jesus.

The moment I said "yes" to him the occult spirit, along with and my ego identity as a karateka, drained out onto the floor. I became empty and a crushing despair engulfed my soul. This psychic death was far worse than any physical death I could have imagined. I was abandoned and alone.

Within seconds, however, a truly miraculous thing happened. A wondrous *Spirit of Love* poured in from above and filled the void with sublime peace that cannot be described in words. Now I *knew* Jesus was a real, life-giving Spirit and Friend, who loved me enough to deliver me from spiritual darkness. He forgave me for the years I rejected him and accepted me with unconditional love.

Hence, my relationship with Jesus is personal and not grounded in doctrines or theological abstractions of belief, but in the mystical encounter I had with him on the evening of December 2, 1985.

\* \* \* \* \*

During my pursuit of enlightenment, I took part in occult practices and consulted a medium who showed me that the spirit realms were real. But looking back, I realize there was no way to know for sure who or what was being channeled or whether all the information was accurate. It is because of the potential for deception coming from the demonic realms that occult practices are prohibited in both the Old and New Testaments.<sup>4</sup>

The highest goal of Eastern disciplines like Zen, yoga, and martial arts that embrace “the Way” is enlightenment, and practitioners should be aware that these arts have an occult underpinning that can have negative spiritual consequences. This is especially true for those using them as a path or Way to higher consciousness and enlightenment.

Since the 1960s, Western society has seen a proliferation of occult themes in the popular culture that are causing some to think the unseen realms are mere fantasy. But whenever we open ourselves by abusing drugs and alcohol, or by engaging in popular occult practices, we risk opening a door for spirit entities to pass through.

It had taken five years of intense effort for me to unwittingly reach the “dark side” of enlightenment and superhuman strength, but only moments in time for Jesus to obliterate it. He showed me that he can be accessed at any time through a sincere act of the will. In fact, Jesus has rescued me from several personal crises in recent years and has proven to be the best Friend a person could ever have.

During the last supper with his disciples, Jesus made this astounding pronouncement concerning himself:

*I am The Way, The Truth, and The Life. No one comes to the Father but through me.*<sup>5</sup>

Jesus taught his followers many moral precepts, such as love your enemies and show forgiveness and mercy; be peacemakers and do not pass judgment on others; keep a humble spirit and do not serve money, but be charitable towards the poor.

Although I am far from perfect, striving to live with Jesus' *Spirit of Love* makes me the best person I can be, which I find more satisfying than all the wealth, and power, and fame the world could ever offer. Besides, in the next life these worldly ambitions will be meaningless- like chasing after the wind.

Peace be with you,



# **KARATE JUTSU**

## **The Power of Technique**

## One Strike Power

***The following techniques are for those who want to increase their striking power for self-defense***

“Nodan karate” is not a *style*, but rather a *method* for developing “one strike” techniques for self-defense. The *method* applies five striking principles to flexible post makiwara training to forge “one strike” power.

### **4-board break with “weak side” bent wrist strike**



**A flexible post makiwara helps protect a student’s hands. A break fails if all the boards do not break *before* the bag begins to move.**

The following breaking demos illustrate the advantage of this *method* for creating “one strike” power techniques. To emphasize the point, I broke several of the thickest board stacks using my “weak side” left hand.



See the YouTube video, “Nodan Makiwara,” for basic instructions on how to construct a simple flexible post makiwara and board holder.

### 5-board break with “weak side” reverse punch



Bag must be motionless before striking. If moving toward karateka, strike will be stronger- If moving away, weaker.

### 5-board break with “weak side” circular palm break



Developing “one strike” techniques from a neutral stance position can be especially useful in close quarter self-defense situations.



“One strike” power is intended to stun, not maim or kill, so most street defense in this book has been limited to 3-board breaks.



### **Training Both Sides**

Training both sides is essential, because an injury can occur to either side before or during a street confrontation. Street assaults are fluid and unpredictable, and having the option of using either hand is a major strategic advantage.

#### **4-board palm breaks (left and right hands)**



**7-board bottom fist break with “weak side” left hand**



**7-board bottom fist break with “strong side” hand**



Despite practicing more with the “weak side” left hand, the “strong side” right hand broke 7 boards with greater ease.

## Breaking Protocol

**Materials:** 1x12x10-inch-wide boards were cut from clear white pine donor boards (actual mill size .75" x 11.25").

**Board Strength:** Board breaking is meaningless without an empirical method for measuring board strength. A 130 lb. barbell was *gently* lowered across the centerline of a test board, with the bar running parallel to the grain. The full weight of the barbell was left on the board for 1 full second before being lifted off. If the board held, the weight was raised to 135 lbs. If the board broke with 135 lbs., the donor board met the protocol standard of supporting 130-134 lbs. (See the YouTube video, "Nodan Board Testing.")

### Testing board strength using a barbell



Test boards support 130-134 lbs. and break with 135 lbs.

**Breaking Methodology:** Unspaced, suspended horizontal board breaking was used to measure the relative strength of techniques commonly used in street defense situations.

Boards should never be baked in an oven or scored along the centerline of the grain, and boards with knots along the centerline should be avoided.

Pine boards can vary widely in strength, depending on their moisture content. To ensure consistency, a test board from each donor board should be tested prior to breaking.

**Proportional Resistance:** Resistance increases proportionally with each additional board. A 3-board stack will support at least  $3 \times 130 = 390$  lbs. 5-boards will support  $5 \times 130 = 650$  lbs.

**Adjusting Board Width:** For filming purposes, I used only 1x12x10-inch-wide boards that conformed to the protocol. Board width, however, can be adjusted using elementary algebra. For example, if a 10" wide test board breaks with 150 lbs., then a 9" wide piece from the same donor board will break with 135 lbs. ( $10/150 = x/135$   $x=9$ ).



**Boards can be cut to any width that conforms to the breaking protocol supporting 130 to 134 lbs.**

## The Five Principles

### 1) Proper Bone Alignment

Proper bone alignment is foundational to all martial arts, in which the center of gravity of every stance is located or “centered” in the hara, a point approximately two inches below the navel. For a karateka, proper bone alignments are essential for leveraging “one strike” power.

The karateka’s mind must be “located” in the hara or “center,” because the ability to “move in center” is vital for the transfer of maximum power through the hips.

Below, Nodan is assisted by his black belt, Yakov “the hammer,” and three former students who will attempt to push Yakov out of his “centered” one-leg crane stance.





**Yakov maintains a “centered” crane stance as the three men attempt to push him backwards. With proper bone alignment, he can leverage their energy into the floor.**



**By “moving in center,” Yakov drives the men backwards.**

### **“Moving in center” against a machete attack**

The machete is an essential tool that is used throughout the world. However, when used against a human being a machete can become a lethal weapon. In the Rwandan genocide of 1994, countless thousands of Tutsi civilians were hacked to death with machetes by Hutu militia groups.

Defending a machete assault is similar to confronting an over hand or side arm attack from an opponent using a club or hatchet. These weapons are large enough to require a slight “hitch” in the opponent’s swing. One strategy is to move in quickly as the aggressor begins to hitch, in order to jam the adversary’s weapon hand before it can generate enough speed and leverage to cause serious injury.



**Nodan assumes a relaxed front fighting stance position.**



**After a sudden head feint, he begins to step in to jam attacker's weapon arm (note the attacker's "hitch").**



**The momentum of Nodan's "centered" lunging step and palm heel strike thwarts the assailant's attack.**



## 2) The 1-2 Timing

The 1-2 Timing utilizes the “centered” bone alignments of the 1st Principle to generate speed and power through the hips, which in turn accelerate the striking arm. In Step 1 (below), the hips are rotated *before* the upper body is *actively* turned toward the target.



**Step 1- His hips are rotated towards the target.  
The upper body is relaxed and turns naturally.**



**Step 2- Nodan's upper body and shoulders are rotated and his reverse thrust punch is extended through the board stack.**

In the 1-2 Timing, the hip rotation (step 1) and the upper body rotation (step 2) are separate actions. In addition, the upper body rotation and the extension of the punching arm also move in a 1-2 timing sequence. This 1-2 timing within the 1-2 Timing spirals the energy generated by the legs and hips, up the spine and out the striking arm. In Japan, this sequence is known as the “double whip” or “returning wave.”

For the karateka, the physical movements within the 1-2 Timing create a whip-like action that must be *consciously* separated, until they become a natural part of every technique. This must be studied well.

### 1-2 Timing in the lunging elbow strike



Nodan holds his hips back as he steps into a diagonal straddle stance (left). Step 1- He rotates his hips toward target (right).



Step 2- He rotates upper body and extends elbow strike.

### 3) Follow Through

Follow Through is essential for projecting maximum force through the target, because the kinetic energy of a strike dissipates as it meets the resistance of an opponent's body.



**This 3-board cross-chest bent wrist break required a focused Follow Through, “all the way to infinity.”**

### **Follow Through with zero-inch break**

This difficult break requires that the 1-2 Timing and Follow Through principles are executed in one continuous motion. The challenge is to thrust against a single board with enough speed and body weight transfer to break it before the bag begins to move. This is a zero-inch break, because the hand stays in contact with the board from beginning to end.



Before thrusting, Nodan's front stance is relaxed, his spine is straight, his head is held erect as if suspended on a string, and his elbow is turned under to reduce power loss through the elbow and wrist joints (left photo).

Step 1- Nodan rotates his hips sharply towards the board.

Step 2- he forcefully rotates his upper body and extended arm through the board, while following through, "all the way to infinity" (right photo). Although not discernable from the photos, Step 1 and Step 2 are executed sequentially.

#### 4) Correct Breathing

All karate styles breathe using the diaphragm, *inhaling through the nose and exhaling through the mouth*. Shuri-te styles like Shorin-ryu and Shotokan use a natural breathing pattern, whereas the Goju-ryu and Uechi-ryu styles use a dynamic tension technique with forced exhalations.

When executed vocally, the *kiai* shout manifests as a primal roar that emanates from the depths of the hara or “center.” When Nodan executes *kiai* without using a vocal shout, a loud and forceful rush of air can be heard on every focused technique. Correct Breathing is essential for the execution of quick, multiple focused techniques (see the YouTube video, “Nodan Dagger Form”).



**Correct Breathing uses the diaphragm (left) and not the intercostal muscles in the upper chest (right). Boxers, wind instrument players, and opera singers are trained to breathe using their diaphragms.**

## 5) Soft and Hard

Soft and Hard refers to the sequential relaxation and contraction of the skeletal muscles in the body. For example, the street defense below mimics the quick strike of a Cobra snake and requires a fraction of a second to execute. The maneuver combines two rapid hip thrusts with two quick Soft and Hard transitions.

First, Nodan rotates his hips and executes a Hard bent wrist block to his assailant's weapon arm. Next, his entire body goes Soft before he executes a second hip rotation that propels his spear hand strike to the attacker's eye. (Note that Yakov is wearing construction safety goggles.)

### Soft and Hard block with spear hand counter



See the YouTube video, "Nodan Self-defense," to appreciate the speed at which this defensive maneuver is executed.



**Nodan deflects the knife thrust using a bent wrist block.**



**In one continuous motion, Nodan's bent wrist block transitions to a spear hand strike to attacker's eye.**



## Kicks and Blocks

Kicking and blocking techniques utilize the five principles. For self-defense, the middle and lower-level applications of the kicks are the most practical. Lower-level kicks are easier and safer to perform and are more effective against relatively untrained street criminals.

### Reverse front thrust kick

In the reverse front thrust kick, the hips are rotated 45° as the knee is raised. This opening of the hips releases the hamstring muscles and allows for greater flexibility of movement, which maximizes speed. The knee should be raised higher than the intended target, because a “down and in” motion gives the front thrust kick its greatest power.



**Nodan uses a front fighting stance to face a knife threat.**



**He blocks the assailant's weapon arm and punches toward his face to disguise his intention to kick.**

### **5-board break with reverse front thrust kick**



**He thrusts "down and in" to attacker's lower abdomen.**

### **Reverse front thrust kick on suspended bag**



**“The hammer” applies 1-2 Timing to a front thrust kick.**



**The suspended bag rebounds off Yakov’s foot, which is what distinguishes a front “thrust” kick from a “push.”  
Yakov maintains “center” throughout the technique.**

### Low back thrust kick defense



Nodan's hips are cocked and ready to execute a low back kick to his adversary's knee joint. His blocking hand holds its position to momentarily disguise his intention to kick.



Head to heel, Nodan's body forms a straight line through his "center," as he powers through the 4-board stack.

### **Formal downward forearm block**

The formal downward forearm block is an example of a “one strike” blocking technique that hits with the entire body, and not only with the arm and shoulder.

Formal Shotokan blocks use the “unbendable arm,” in which the arm is extended in a soft/hard state of tension using the triceps and latissimus dorsi muscles that run along the upper sides of the back. With the application of the “unbendable arm,” the downward forearm block becomes a “slightly bent steel rod wrapped in cotton cloth.”

Formal blocks use the full range of motion to develop proper form. With practice, however, karateka can project strength into the shorter and quicker street applications.

### **5-board break with formal downward forearm block**



**This break is made possible by applying the “unbendable arm.”**

### **Abbreviated downward block defense**



**Nodan defends from a “hands up” surrender position.**



**He drops into a “centered” stance and “thrusts” his blocking arm downward to intercept knife thrust.**

### Formal middle level forearm block



As the hips begin to rotate, his blocking arm moves naturally (left).  
The hips fully rotate (center) before block makes contact (right).

### Abbreviated middle level block defense



Nodan defends a knife thrust using an angle step and abbreviated middle block. His hook punch to the head breaks 3-board stack.

## Rising forearm block defense



**Nodan moves in to jam opponent's overhand knife attack.**



**He adjusts block outward to intercept attacker's arm (left).  
and uses an upward palm strike to break a 3-board stack.**



## Street Defense

There are no rules in the street. Striking the eyes, throat, and groin are among many of the tactics prohibited in sport competition. In addition, biting is a strong deterrent against grabs and holds. Sport competitors have warmup time, wear hand protectors and mouth guards, and have a referee to monitor the action. More importantly, sport competitors do not fight armed or multiple opponents, in which grappling skills, while good to know, become less relevant.

Karateka should train to respond to more than just competitive fighting techniques. They should study the predatory nature of street criminals and adapt their arts accordingly, because *what we practice is what we will do in a real street situation.*



**My students, Yohan and Yakov, practice a twisting joint hold defense that I learned in combat jujitsu during the 1960s.**

### Back and side head strike defenses

The number of boards that can be broken with a given technique does not always indicate its effectiveness. My back head strike (below) lacked the speed to break more than two boards, but the mass of the head makes it a devastating strike to the face. Likewise, the speed of a snapping side head strike can easily stun an attacker into submission (bottom photos).



**Nodan pins his attacker's arms and executes back head strike. Speed and power are generated by a "double whip" hip thrust to the rear.**



**Nodan feigns surrender while subtly moving his head out of the line of fire (left). He applies a twisting joint hold (center) and follows up with a snapping side head strike to face. Head strikes are banned from sport**

### **Defending a gun hold up from behind**

This defensive maneuver provides a good example of the difference between sport fighting and reality self-defense, which often begins from the “surrender” position.

First, Nodan raises his hands in “surrender” to give the gunman a false sense of confidence. This will enable Nodan to take advantage of the element of surprise.

Second, he says something such as, “Okay, take anything you w...” But before finishing his sentence, Nodan abruptly turns his upper body and raises his arm, which moves him out of the line of fire. This tactic is effective because the gunman’s brain will naturally anticipate and finish Nodan’s sentence before he can react to pull the trigger.



**Nodan psychologically disarms gunman, giving him false confidence by feigning surrender and saying, “Okay, take anything you w...”**



**He turns into a "centered" straddle stance and wraps and pins the gunman's weapon arm against his side.**



**He executes a hook punch to the gunman's temple. A real gun holdup may justify more force than this easy 3-board break.**

### **Defending a pitchfork attack**

Defending against a pitchfork attack is similar to facing a thrusting sword or staff. A good strategy for a skilled karateka is to use an initial head fake before executing a spinning maneuver behind the attacker. This strategy positions the defender to execute a decisive strike before the adversary can turn and counter attack.

A “spin and run” maneuver can also be used as an escape strategy when surrounded by multiple opponents. Rugby players and football running backs often use this tactic to spin out of the grasp of would be tacklers.



**Nodan assumes a front fighting stance that is just beyond his attacker's effective thrusting range.**



**He utilizes a head fake to freeze attacker just before he begins to spin outside the line of attack. The adversary reacts and thrusts.**



**Nodan continues to spin into a “centered” ready-thrust position, from which he can counter attack to his assailant’s head, spine, or kidney.**

## END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Thomas B. Allen, ***Possessed***, iUniverse.com, Inc., c. 1994, 2000, p. 2-4

<sup>2</sup> *The twofold gaze of perception and sight*- The gaze sees distant things as close and close things as distant. After learning the technique, I found it has an uncanny way of *perceptually* slowing down an opponent's movements, which makes it especially useful against armed street assaults.

Miyamoto Musashi, ***A Book of Five Rings***, The Overlook Press, 1974, p. 54-55

<sup>3</sup> *Kundalini fire*- Kundalini is the Hindu snake goddess, whose dominant feature is energy infusion or possession. When awakened, *Kundalini fire* spirals upward to the crown chakra to bring on enlightenment. Sensei had intimate knowledge of the kundalini, but was reluctant to ever discuss it.

<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Galatians 19:19-21; Acts 16:16-18, 13:8-10; Revelation 9:21, 21:8, 22:15

<sup>5</sup> The Gospel of John 14:6

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