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The Power of The Way



A Spiritual Journey

by Nodan

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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**

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
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The Way of The Spirit

The Dojo Spirits	4
Meeting Sensei	8
Enlightenment	12

The Way of Technique

One Strike Power	17
Breaking Protocol	22
The Five Principles	24
Kicks and Blocks	36
Street Defense	42

Introduction

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

Sensei showed me that karate could be practiced on two levels. The first is physical, in which only one’s natural ability is used. This is called karate jutsu (technique) and the board breaking demonstrations in my YouTube videos were all executed at this level.

The second level is spiritual, where enlightened adepts like Sensei can display extraordinary psychic power and super-human strength. This is Karate-do (the Way), an occult path whose ultimate goal is enlightenment. In my quest for powers like Sensei, I engaged in occult practices and spent many hours in Zen meditation.

PART I, ***The Way of The Spirit***, gives an abbreviated account of my training with Quan and Sensei, and how I was unwittingly drawn into the “dark side” of enlightenment. Hopefully, this short summary will provide enough information for readers to discern the larger picture.

PART II, ***The Way of Technique***, describes a *method* for forging “one strike” power for street defense that utilizes five

striking principles and flexible post makiwara training.

In 2004-05, I filmed a series of breaking demonstrations for YouTube's **nodankarate** channel. At that time, I created the make-believe karate master, "Nodan" (no rank), as a disguise to protect the identities of people who would not want to be associated with my occult past. To that end, I have changed their names without altering any of the facts. The board breaking demonstrations are authentic and can be replicated by following the "Breaking Protocol" on p. 22-23.

Nodan Karate 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) Building a flexible post makiwara

Nodan Self-Defense (4:07) "One strike" street applications

Nodan Board Testing (3:51) Board testing 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

Nodan Teacher (1:23) Quan Li performs Heian IV and V

PART I

The Way of The Spirit

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 Zen meditation), which opens the student's mind to make it more receptive to the spirits.

For many Western practitioners, bowing down before the kamiza is more of 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 proper kamiza to my home dojo and began to experience 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 acted as "moving Zen" and 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 a 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 practice.

The power I was experiencing was exhilarating. What I could not see, however, was 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 a senior black belt, JD, came to visit with his girlfriend, DeeDee, who brought a Ouija Board. So, we took the channeling device into the dojo to ask questions. Since DeeDee was the only one who had ever used a spirit board, 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 Ouija 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 spirit realms.

The Medium

After the séance I went to see an old Spiritualist minister named Gert, who gave psychic readings. I visited her on four occasions hoping to gain more insight into the spirit world.

On my first visit, Gert led me through the house to her 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 her table and Gert 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 spirits began trying to come through. Gert frequently shook her head 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 told her about our Ouija Board séance, she became very angry and denounced Parker Brothers for marketing it as a parlor game, which Gert believed put an uninformed public at risk. Ironically, the case of demon possession that inspired the 1973 movie, “The Exorcist,” began 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.¹

After my “enlightenment” four years later, I realized I did not know for sure who or what was being channeled by Gert or whether all the information was accurate. This holds true for all occult (hidden) communications. It is because of the potential for deception coming from the spirit realms that occult practices are prohibited in both the Tanach (Old Testament) and New Testament writings.² In fact, the Apostle Paul called out the supernatural forces behind this deception when he wrote to the church at Ephesus:

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the spiritual rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of this wickedness in heavenly places.³

Meeting Sensei

After training for a year with Quan, I wanted to meet his karate teacher, Sensei, who was operating a commercial dojo where he taught aikido and kobudo. Quan had regaled me with many fantastic stories about Sensei and I was ready to finally see the master 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 again several months later.

After his last class, he invited us onto the mat. As we knelt before him, he looked straight at me and said, "Jay, everything you know is wrong." Though 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 much 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 could "feel" that his fist was close to the back of my head. I

waited until I could almost feel him 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 he 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 and 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 sight⁴ 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 access Sensei’s spiritual wisdom I joined his aikido school. The three-hour round trip commute would limit how often I could attend classes, but studying aikido and sword with an enlightened master over the next three-and-a-half-years transformed my understanding of the martial arts.

Sensei’s Aikido

Sensei developed his own style of Morihei Ueshiba’s aikido that was based on his expertise in judo, aiki jujitsu, karate, kobudo (weapons) and swordsmanship.



I studied aikido and kobudo with Sensei. My younger brother wields the jo and has practiced and taught aikido for more than 25 years.



Aikido is a throwing art designed to inflict as little damage as possible.

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 Philosophy

The goal of martial arts is 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 endless cycles 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.

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.” Sadly, at the end of his life Thomas Fox (aka Sensei), by his own admission died without hope.

Enlightenment

My “enlightenment” experience began late 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.”⁵

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 later breaking demonstrations seem like mere child’s play.

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

As the kundalini fire receded back to my lower spine, I was suddenly transported into the outer darkness of the void, where I was a disembodied consciousness, forever bound to an eternal “now” beyond time and space. 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 passed judgment on 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. I began gathering up things associated with my martial arts and started 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.

After several hours an 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 born following WW II, I had been raised in the church and knew the story of Jesus. As an adult, however, I had concluded that Jesus may have been one of history's great moral 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 techniques, and now Jesus was asking me to give it all up for him?

I intuitively knew that answering "yes" to Jesus would mean certain ego death, so I stalled by searching for more things to burn. Among the items I found was my original black belt, whose well-worn edges had frayed white, the testament to many years of dedicated training. Even so, I cut the 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 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. But in the end, I reluctantly opted for "hope." I chose Jesus.

The moment I said "yes" to him the occult spirit, along with 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 felt abandoned and alone.

Yet within seconds, 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 all the years I had rejected him and accepted me with unconditional love.

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

Postscript

Since the 1960s, there has been a proliferation of occult themes in popular culture that makes some think the spirit realm is only a fantasy. But whenever we open ourselves by

abusing drugs or alcohol, or by engaging with the occult, we risk opening a door for spirit entities to pass through.

It took me five years to unwittingly reach the “dark side” of enlightenment, but only moments for Jesus to deliver me. Indeed, Jesus can be accessed at any time through a sincere act of the will. In fact, he has since rescued me from several personal crises and is the best friend one could ever have. Jesus is the *true* “power of The Way,” which he proclaimed by declaring, *“I am The Way, The Truth, and The Life. No one comes to the Father but through me.”*⁶

In the oft quoted “Sermon on the Mount”⁷ Jesus taught his disciples many moral precepts that challenge today’s cultural values. For instance, he told them to love their enemies and be forgiving and merciful; to be peacemakers and not pass judgment on others; to keep a humble spirit and not serve money, but to be generous 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 this world could ever offer. Besides, in the next life these worldly ambitions will be meaningless- like chasing after the wind.

Peace be with you,



PART II

The Way of Technique

One Strike Power

“Nodan karate” is not a *style*, but rather a *method* for developing “one strike” techniques for street defense. The *method* applies five striking principles to flexible post makiwara training to forge “one strike” power. As such, Nodan Karate is karate jutsu (technique), not karate-do, the Way to enlightenment.

I was already in my late fifties when I filmed the following breaking demonstrations. My intention was to show the advantage of this training *method* for developing “one strike” techniques. To further emphasize the point, a number of the thickest board stacks were executed using my “weak side” left hand.

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



A rubber padded flexible post protects the hands. Board breaks will fail if all the boards do not break *before* the bag begins to move.



The flexible post works on the principle of “graduated resistance” and the rubber padding conditions the hands without forming calluses.

5-board break with “weak side” left hand punch



5-board stacks will support at least a 650 lb. barbell placed across the centerline. (See “Breaking Protocol” p. 24-25).



I trained on this flexible post makiwara for thirteen years before filming the board breaking demonstrations in 2004-2005.

5-board break with “weak side” left elbow strike



The suspended bag should hang motionless before striking.

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 strategic advantage.

4-board palm breaks (left and right hands)



7-board bottom fist breaks (left and right hands)



Despite practicing more with the “weak side” left hand, my “strong side” right was able to break the board stacks with greater ease.

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



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



“One strike” techniques are intended to stun, not kill or maim the attacker. Since the head and neck are the most vulnerable targets, strikes to these areas are limited to 3-board breaks in my videos.

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 the 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 130-135 lbs. (See the YouTube video, "Nodan Board Testing.")

Testing board strength with a barbell



Test boards were required to hold between 130-135 lbs.

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

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.

Note that boards should never be baked in an oven or scored along the centerline of the grain. In addition, boards with knots along the centerline should be avoided.

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 130-135 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 senior 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 alignments, he leverages 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 agricultural tool that is used throughout the world. But when used against a person a machete can become a lethal weapon. For instance, In the Rawandan 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 overhand or side arm club or hatchet attack. These weapons are large enough to require a “hitch” in the attacker’s swing.

An effective strategy for a trained karateka is to head feint and move in quickly to force attacker to begin to hitch his arm. The goal is to jam the assailant’s arm before he can generate enough momentum to cause serious bodily injury.



Nodan takes a relaxed front fighting stance position just out of his adversary’s effective striking range.



After a sudden head fake, Nodan steps in to jam the opponent's arm as he begins to "hitch" and attack.



The momentum of his "centered" lunging step and palm heel thrust stops the assailant in his tracks.

2) The 1-2 Timing

The 1-2 Timing uses the “centered” bone alignments of the 1st Principle to generate powerful centrifugal forces through the sequential rotation of the hips and upper body. This action accelerates the striking arm.



Step 1- Nodan's hips rotate toward his target, while his upper body is relaxed and turns naturally.



Step 2- Nodan's upper body and shoulders rotate as his punching arm remains relaxed. Next, his punch is fully extended. This is "1-2 timing within the 1-2 Timing."

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 full 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 punching arm.

In Japan, the powerful centrifugal force generated by the 1-2 Timing is known as the "double whip." For karateka, the three parts of the 1-2 Timing 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 (Extension of ki)

Western practitioners more easily understand the “follow through” concept taught in sports that throw, hit, or kick a ball. The Eastern concept of “extending ki” is different from the follow through practiced in sports. Practically speaking, however, Follow Through is similar in that the energy or force of every block, strike, and kick must be *mentally* extended or projected, “all the way to infinity.”

The Follow Through principle is essential for breaking suspended, unspaced board stacks, because the kinetic energy of a strike dissipates as it meets the resistance of each successive board. The 3rd Principle helps maintain the speed and momentum of the strike all the way through the target.

Follow Through with 3-board bent wrist break



This difficult cross-chest break from a cat stance requires a double whip hip thrust and a 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 remains 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 hard, 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 rapid, multiple focused techniques.



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

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 technique below mimics the lightning fast strike of a Cobra snake and requires a mere fraction of a second to execute. The maneuver combines two double whip hip rotations with two Soft and Hard transitions.

First, Nodan withdraws into a “centered” stance and executes a “one strike” bent wrist block to his assailant’s thrusting weapon arm (top p. 39). He goes Soft before executing a second hip thrust that transitions his bent wrist block into a thrusting spear hand strike to his opponent’s eye(s). (Note that safety goggles are worn by Yakov.)



Nodan initially assumes a *Soft* (relaxed) front fighting stance.



Using the twofold gaze, He detects the adversary's quick knife thrust towards his throat and executes a *Hard* focused bent wrist block.



In one continuous motion, Nodan's blocking arm becomes *Soft* and transitions to a *Hard* spear hand to attacker's eye (left). He becomes *Soft* and executes a *Hard* follow up punch to attacker's upper body.

Kicks and Blocks

Kicking and blocking techniques also apply 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” trajectory gives the front thrust kick its greatest power.



Nodan takes a front fighting stance to face a knife threat.



He blocks weapon arm as he strides in and punches to attacker's face (left). He raises his knee above his intended target before he executes a reverse front kick to the attacker's lower abdomen.

5-board break with reverse front thrust kick



He kicks "down and in" to his adversary's lower abdomen.

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



The application of the “unbendable arm” makes this break possible.

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.

Formal rising forearm block



He lifts the blocking arm using his shoulder and latissimus dorsi muscles on the upper sides of his back. The block will assume a 45° angle on completion as he applies the “unbendable arm.”

Abbreviated rising forearm block defense



He moves in to jam an overhand knife attack using a simultaneous rising block and an upward thrusting palm heel strike to the jaw.

Street Defense

From the beginning, I viewed karate as an exercise in street survival, but the training at my dojos did not teach self-defense applications. Fortunately, a college classmate skilled in combat jujitsu taught me street defense techniques that could be used in conjunction with karate.

Today the mixed martial arts (MMA) have taken center stage as an entertainment blood sport, where well trained professional athletes compete for fame and fortune in highly promoted cage matches. This latest edition to the martial arts, however, is very different from reality street defense.

No rules in the street

There are no rules in the street. Striking the eyes, throat, and groin are among the many tactics prohibited in sport competition. Although ground techniques are good to know, biting is a strong deterrent against grabs and holds. Sport competitors have warmup time, wear hand protectors and mouth guards, and are protected by a referee. Moreover, sport competitors do not fight armed or multiple opponents, in which grappling skills are less relevant.

For effective street defense, karateka should train to respond to more than just competitive fighting techniques. They need to understand the predatory nature of street criminals and adapt their arts to specific kinds of street assaults because, *what we practice is what we will do in a real attack situation.*

Not everyone will have the ability to develop the “one strike” power necessary to stop a determined attacker with a single blow. Moreover, “one strike” training may not be available or may be too expensive or time consuming.

A practical alternative is to take a hands-on self-defense course and carry pepper spray (mace), which is available in handy pocket-sized containers. Pepper spray is relatively safe, inexpensive, and legal in most jurisdictions. Users should become familiar with its proper use and legal application, and should practice arming and discharging live canisters in both indoor and outdoor settings. Fortunately, there are excellent YouTube videos showing basic self-defense techniques and the proper use of pepper spray as a self-defense tool.



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

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 him to take advantage of the element of surprise.

Second, he says something such as, “Okay, take anything you w...” 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 180° into a 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.

END NOTES

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

² Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Galatians 19:19-21; Acts 16:16-18, 13:8-10; Revelation 9:21, 21:8, 22:15

³ Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 6:12 (ASV)

⁴ Miyamoto Musashi, ***A Book of Five Rings***, The Overlook Press, 1974, p. 54-55.

⁵ *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 refused to discuss it with his students.

⁶ The Gospel of John 14:6

⁷ The Gospel of Mathew 5-7

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