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I would like all of you that are receiving my bulletins; please send me an email confirming you are receiving my information. A YES or NO would suffice.

If anyone has a specific question or topic you would like to be addressed; please let me know. Your input is important to me.

I hope everyone had a great Valentine's Day and did not forget their significant other.

For those who noticed, yes, I now have the Trademark for the NKJUI® International.

The simple definition of the martial arts is any of several arts of combat and self-defense. **Kihon/Waza** will define the individual difference and variation of the martial arts.

Specific moves of any kind will be limited to the understanding of the anatomy of the body and its mechanics. They must work together.

When I teach kata, I reiterate that **kata** is a series of **offensive and defensive moves** set in a pattern to represent a fight. So make it look like a fight. I use this analogy only for tournaments. In class, I want my kata to be done slowly and emphasize every move. I will pick up the pace once the student has progressed enough to understand what he or she is doing.

Everyone can't be a good Instructor, lawyer or doctor. I believe **good Instructors** are born; that instructional excellence is somehow innate or genetically determined. **Instructors** such as this, so the logic goes, typically possess a kind charismatic presence that results in the aroused or highly motivated listeners.

Logic dictates that there were as many good Asian instructors as there was bad. Martial Arts taught by the true masters were meant to be used as a guide. Its workability will vary from person to person because of their physical makeup.

The Japanese, Chinese, and other cultures were not without fault. Just like today, we have those who have their idea of what is and what is not. I am all for change when change is right, but for a person to make insignificant changes within a style to create a new style and call it their own, is just another wanna-bee who seeks recognition, fame, and profit.

Look at it this way. I have a chester drawer with three drawers, a top, and four legs. If the color is pink and I change it to blue, is it not still a Chester drawer? It's just wearing a different suit. Yet so many are deceived.

If your Kihon and Waza were taught correctly, and you have dedicated your life to its perfection, there should be no need to change. Air is air, you may change the way it smells but at the end of the day, it's still air.

Asian culture has had to deal with this same issue. That is why we have so many styles and substyles, and those in the US use the term. **“My style is from the lineage of.”** They are just trying to make their made-up karate have some legitimacy and that it's

superior to the very lineage of what they claim they are from.

Think about it in the context of a specific variety of trees: a variety that has proven its strength and versatility. The tree trunk will be strong at its base. If it is well maintained it will begin to develop strong branches and these branches will in turn produce strong off shoots.

Somewhere along the way, you have those who want to change the tree to become a better and more profitable one. So they begin the process we call in Horticulture grafting.

If a person is not well qualified and trained in the process of grafting, you will wind up with a tree that is of inferior quality. It will be subject to disease, weak branches, and soon will die.

Some of the martial art styles today have become like a tree with a trunk having many branches, with some of these branches having little or no substance. Just like a tree, if these branches are not culled out and seen for what it is. The tree will in time, lose its identity.

I see so many instructors who have become complacent in what they do. The few who see this stagnation either make up something that has no validity or watches some video and begins to emulate what

they see. You can't possibly know what you're watching or have been shown will work unless you have had to use it and a good understanding of the mechanics and anatomical workings of how Waza works.

From 1973 to 1987, I was a student under Sensei Richard Baillargeon, or as we called him Soke or Mr. B. The first weapon he taught me was the Bo. Followed by the Sai. These two were Mr. B's choice of weapons. Later he became enthused with the sword as did I.

One afternoon as we were training in the back of his house, I made a statement. I said Mr. B; we bunkai our empty hand katas to see how the moves work against an opponent. Should we not do the same with a weapon? Bo against Bo, or Sai, Tonfa. Etc.?

It was at this point Mr. B and I would start attacking each other with the bo. I guess you could say we were sparring, from this we could see if the techniques we used in a kata would work. We would then switch up and see how one weapons technique would work against a different weapon. Mr. B enjoyed this, as did I.

None of the things we were doing together was ever discussed or taught in our regular class. We kept this in our own private training. Mr. B was one who liked to have surprises. He would show a little of this

sparring at clinics and camps to intrigue those around him. He was a businessman first and a karateka second. This, of course, is my opinion.

Weapons training is altogether a different animal and should be taught as such. First and foremost, the weapon should become an extension of one's self. You should have just as much control of your weapon as you do the fork you eat with.

To become one with the weapon, you must spend countless hours in training and know your weapons *strong and weak points as well as those of the other weapons*. Until you do this, you are just going through the motions and getting a false sense of security.

You should first practice drills with others using the same weapon. If you know your weapon and attacked by a similar weapon, you will know how to react.

A lot of karateka I have seen just practice kata with their weapons and have never been taught how to use it in an actual fight.

Which is superior?

NOTE: Many hard nose karateka will say that karate is by far superior to all other styles. This is naive. (You don't know what you don't know.) I am karate first. But I will cross-train in other arts that I see that will relate to what I do. Is it hard? Hell yes, but I am a person who is constantly trying to better

myself and perfect what I know and never to become complacent.

Let's discuss the bo, hanbo, and the rattan "aka" escrima sticks or baston. I think we can all agree these three weapons deal mostly with thrust, and arcs as a way of attacking or defending one's self.

These three weapons have their advantages and disadvantages. **Until you have trained with all three weapons and have a full understanding of what each can or cannot do, it would be unwise to prejudge one is superior to the other.**

Fact: The shortest distance between two points is a straight line. You can also say the shortest distance between an arc is a short arc. The longer the arc, the longer it takes to get from A to B. The bo (typically 6 ft. long) creates a longer arc than the honbo (typically 3 ft. long) and the honbo's arc is longer than that of the typical baston used by Eskrimadors (typically 28 inches, however its length varies greatly depending on style).

So, ask yourself which is faster in attacking or blocking? A lot of things will contribute to, which is the **overall** better weapon. Such as a person's height, weight, proper training followed by constant practice.

If you have a bo whose mass is greater and its arc is longer, then it makes sense it will

develop more pressure on impact if properly used. Followed by the honbo and then the rattan baston. Therefore speed, angling and accuracy with the rattan baston being shorter are essential in defeating the latter.

Both the bo and honbo taught by most karate instructors teach these weapons by moving their body in a straight line by going back, forward, left, right, or at a forty-five-degree angle and rarely in thing more. To have any sense of control you need both hands. This is not the case with the rattan.

On the other hand, the Eskrimador is taught to go off at any angle from the centerline.

Some martial artists are taught if your opponent attacks you in a straight line, whether it is by hand or a weapon, you should go forward at an angle and follow through. I would venture to say 80% of people who are attacked do not follow this teaching. Rather they move backward. Think about it. It's hard to counter after moving backward in an attack. With the rattan ninety percent of the attacks from this weapon is forward and at angles.

As I stated earlier, I trained with the bo from 1974 to the present. The transition to the hanbo was not that big a deal for me. I am only 5.5 ft. and the bo I use is 5.5 ft. with the hanbo being 3.0 ft., I just had to adapt to the shorter arcs of attack. On the

other hand, the transition to escrima techniques was for lack of a better word was **“HELL”** because of my many years of training in karate which deals with more linear movements.

Escrima training teaches you to move with fluidity using a variety of angles. This is very difficult to do if you have trained only in karate. Escrima has very little defensive moves as all these so-called blocks are attacks to the closest hand (usual holding the weapon) or arm. Once you disarm or destroy the weapon hand or “Defang the Snake”, the attack continues to the body.

Without being too modest, my five-plus years of training under John Sliger in the escrima/arnis, has giving me a comfort level that I now feel that I can handle myself against a majority of karate weapons and nontraditional weapons, as I know these weapons pros and cons, but It’s still a work in progress.

As one karateka put it, Escrima/Arnis is just sticks hitting sticks with no body contact! That just shows the ignorance of some individuals that do not understand what they are looking at. In escrima, the rattan baston is representative of a blade because the Spanish colonists outlawed the use of real blades in the Philippines. The locals hid their fighting art in the use of their sticks.

As a karate practitioner, I am justified in saying that most of the karate weapons training is learning techniques to be used in a kata format. Rarely were there any weapon sparring. If you happen to be one of the few that have, then you know where I am coming from.

In my classes, I have always taught weapon sparring. This is what Mr. B and I did, and if anyone has been in law enforcement as I have, then you will appreciate this type of training.

A point to remember

A fighter never sacrifices speed for power. Power is the result of speed. And never sacrifice timing for speed. Timing and precision are the most important factors to consider. This holds true in open hand or weapons training.

Arnis/Escrima facts: One of the popular training modalities of Escrima is what they call Sumbrata. A Sumbrata is a counter for counter drill that teaches how to respond to various attacks. Once two people become proficient at Sumbrata, it can also be used for disarming, locking and throwing training. Anyone who thinks this is easy, I challenge you to try it. In fact, I challenge any karateka to take their simplest honbo kata and use it to spar against one of your

students doing the same moves from a kata.

Most of the karate weapons training is just doing kata, not sparring. Self-reflection and understanding of ourselves and the weapons we use goes a long way.

Arrogance is the enemy of growth. We must learn to observe without judgement and then test for ourselves what is good and what is not. Too many practitioners sit back with their hands in their belts and try to relive their glory days. They do not understand that we should try to learn from everything and apply what is useful to our own training.

I am in no way an expert in arnis/escrima but I can say this without reservation that if a karateka had his bo or honbo and met an Escrimodor. I will put my money on the Escrimodor any day. **It is what it is.**

“A person who knows what is right but continues to find some form of logic to prove his or her point is just being naive.”

If you wish to be removed from the e-mail list just say so. Or if you know someone who would be interested in this bulletin forward it to them. **Remember you don't know what you don't know.**

“Food for thought”

Don't ignore minor detail; they are the key to your success.

Kaicho Davis

