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### March 2020 NKJU® Bulletin

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**SUBJECT:**

**Words that can be confusing**

I want to address some terms used in the martial arts that, in my opinion, are misused. I know that this may be a sore spot for some, but like you, I have my

interpretation. The only reason I mention it is because some think that what they believe is right and everyone else is wrong. I know some of you are thinking that I may have this attitude. Well, you would be wrong. I do my research, and I don't let my personal feelings get in the way of logic.

This information I hope will be helpful to those new in the martial arts, and those planning to study the martial arts for the first time, and I hope it will bring a new narrative to some of the older martial artists who may not have seen this information in this context.

I would like for you just to be open-minded, do extensive research, and make your decision based on logic. ***"Logic-reasoning conducted or assessed according to strict principles of validity."***

Do not try to redefine what you read unless you can show facts that what you read is incorrect. Too many want to change a narrative to suit their agenda because it feeds their ego.

**Soke:** The widespread use of the term "Soke" is controversial in the martial arts community. Traditionally, it was rarely used in Japan, typically only for very old martial arts. However, it has become a somewhat familiar term for headmasters of schools created in the last few decades that **attempt or reconstruct or emulate older**

***styles of martial arts.*** You cannot redefine that which has been proven to work in both Karate-do and Karate-Jitsu. For those who believe they have found a new style by changing a few moves so they can feel justified to use the title Soke, are just being naive.

### **The Japanese use of Soke**

Those of you who are familiar with the name of Kokuba Kosho (Shogo Kuniba) of the Motobu-Ha Shito Ryu was given the title of 3<sup>rd</sup> Soke by succession and confirmed by the JKF. Japan has a governing body that establishes legitimacy in the martial arts and maintains stringent rules. There is no such governing body in the USA to assure those who use the name Soke.

Few knew that Sensei Richard Baillargeon tried to establish a governing body in the state of Georgia, with the help of many top rank black belts and backed by Joe Corley of the Battle of Atlanta fame. As in all things, politics got in the way, and a good idea never saw the light of day.

The position of Soke is inclusive to the Japanese because they have a governing body like **JKA and WKF**. *"This is my opinion."*

**Kaicho:** Most western cultures define the head of an organization, business, manufacturing, etc. by using the term

President, CEO, Chairman, or Chairperson. These positions can be handed down when one retires, or by a takeover from another corporation, who then appoints someone to fill the open position.

The word "**Kaicho**." is the Japanese word for President, Chairperson, etc. With Fuku-Kaicho defined as Vice President.

The words **Position**, **Title**, and **Rank** can be somewhat confusing the way it is used in the martial arts. This is how I distinguish the differences in these words

**Kaicho**/president, I define as a **position**.

**Titles**, as being that of Shihan, Hanshi, Kyoshi, etc. As in academia, we use the term Professor, Dr, BA, etc.

**Rank**, VERB: *"give someone a rank or place within a grading system."* Used in the martial arts as Kyu or Dan menjo ranks.

I believe that defining the word position, title, and rank this way makes it easier to follow and understand.

## "KICKS"

I was recently asked by one of my students about kicks and which was the best, fastest, and easiest to learn.

So I have decided to put my two cents worth in on that very question.

I want you to ask yourself a question. What would you consider to be the fastest kick in martial arts, and why? Most styles have these basic kicks. Sidekick, roundhouse, inside-outside crescent, front snap, ax, double jump, and spinning back kick. If I have left out any specific kick live with it, it will be irrelevant when I finish my thoughts on the subject.

First, I must define three words here before I go further. They are essential in determining the answer to my question.

**Arc**, a part of the circumference of a circle or other curve.

**Angle**, the figure formed by two lines diverging from a common point.

**Linear**, arranged in or extending along a straight or nearly straight line.

The best kick is what **you** perceive to be the best since **you're** making that presumption on what you have practiced the most, and you feel most comfortable doing. It may not be your best sense you are doing it the way you had been taught, which may or may not have been correct. You should understand the body mechanics of all the kicks you know and have practiced each with equal vigor. This will be a challenge if you do not have someone who understands arcs, angles, and linear motions as it applies to martial arts. If an instructor cannot explain

his or her methods by example or is stumbling for words, or says, we will get to that later. For now, do what I say. If this is the case, you need to get help from somewhere else.

This is one of the biggest problems I see in martial arts today. Most training I have seen revolves around monkey see monkey do with little or no understanding of what is and what is not. You can't change the dynamics of anything if you don't understand all of what you are dealing with.

I could care less about what rank you are. If you have become complacent, then you will never learn more than you know or think you know.

When attending a clinic or a camp where you have paid to learn something, don't hesitate to ask the hard questions. If their rank is any indication of their knowledge, they will not wait to answer and would welcome the challenge. If they attempt to make excuses of any kind, then call it for what it is a "Show." Seek knowledge elsewhere.

I love challenges in all the things I do and not just in the martial arts. It keeps me thinking and productive. In my opinion, if a person does not like challenges, then they are complacent, stuck in the mud, and think they are above everyone else in their logic. These types of people become agitated if

you question or challenge them on important issues. Look for the signs.

Now let's discuss the question I previously asked. What is the fastest kick?

In my opinion, the **front snap kick** is the fastest. There are two ways to do this kick. One, with the leg being forward or to the rear. If it is in the forward position, it will be faster but will have little power and height unless you are incredibly flexible.

On the other hand, if it's to the rear, which is the position most karateka use, you will have higher power and the ability to alter its moves. Let's look at the application has it relates to the front snap kick being to the rear.

If your right-handed, you will have your right leg to the rear with your left hand forward and right hand to your right side. *If your left-handed, it will be just the opposite.*

When you begin your kick from the rear, you first shift your weight to the front foot without lifting that foot. Note: "some will raise the front foot from the hill." *That movement is for another time.* Now, just bring your right knee up to a horizontal position to the floor while bringing your foot up and out at nearly the same time. You will note your foot and knee will be approximately in a straight line.

Following the movements explained above, you are dealing with two arcs. Both being short. Thus, giving you the speed that the other kicks can't achieve. As in a previous bulletin, I mentioned the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. Thus, the shortest distance in an arc will be the short arc. The primary target areas for this kick, in my opinion, would be anything from the waist down from your opponent. Note: the foot will only go where the knee is pointed, whether it be a straight line, arc, or an angle. Think about it.

I will not get into the many variables that can be done with the front snap kick. This is something I think you should be able to explore on your own. You must start with the fundamentals and see what best works for you.

It is difficult in words to explain precisely how techniques should work. Even with a video, it's hard to see the subtleties required to execute any technique properly. Bear in mind that every method will be unique because each one of us is unique in our physical makeup.

Without dedication, practice, and proper training, you can expect to be no more than mediocre.

*I hope all of you stay safe during this time of uncertainty. Its times like this that will challenge our resolve, but it makes us*

*stronger in the end. So often we turn away from life rather than toward it. We are masters of avoidance! But if we want to be present-to enjoy life and be more effective in it-we must orient ourselves toward facing reality. When the reality principle guides us, we develop a more profound capacity to deal with life more effectively.*

**Take your time.** *As the story of the tortoise and the hare tells us, slow and steady wins the race. By being in a hurry, we thwart our success. We get ahead of ourselves. We make more mistakes. We cut corners and pay for them later. We may learn the easy way but not necessarily the best way.*

*As an adage puts it: The slower you go, the sooner you get there. Slow, disciplined, incremental growth is the kind of approach that leads to lasting change and success.*

### **Words for thought**

**"Think critical, but where it takes you is your choice."**

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**Kaicho Davis**