



NEWSLETTER #60

3<sup>rd</sup> QUARTER 2009

## *An Important Discussion About Kenpo Techniques and After 50 Years... A Revelation*

The techniques that we learn and teach in Kenpo have always contained an element of concern for me personally. My cause for concern was that there was just too many in the system that I didn't feel would do what they were intended to do when the chips were down in a confrontation on the street. And the greater the system grew, so did the number of techniques that I felt were somewhat, if not completely, off-kilter.

At the beginning of my training, this wasn't really an issue because there so few techniques, and most of them were designed for defense against a grab, hold or lock of some sort. With such a commitment by your attacker, it was relatively easy to effectively strike to the initial designated target and because your opponent was still in the approximate vicinity, it was also easy to strike to the next designated target and possibly even to a third target. I would assume that these were techniques that were taught to Mr. Parker by Professor Chow in Hawaii and rather faithfully passed on to us.

I know that Mr. Parker felt a need to alter some of the striking attacks from what he had learned in the Islands because the style of fighting on the Mainland was different from that in the Islands, which had a decidedly more Asian flavor, more kicking, to be sure. This was at a time when kicking in America was viewed as dirty fighting and could easily bring the wrath of any bystanders.

It took the introduction of Karate to educate the American public to the exotic fighting methods utilized by our Far East brethren. Up until the late nineteen-fifties or even the early nineteen sixties, a kick to the groin would probably be met by someone saying,

"Hey Man, that's dirty fighting, fight fair". However, after being exposed to Asian Martial Arts, the comment when an assailant got kicked in the groin then behind the knee taking him down, (THAI BOXER) would more than likely be, "Wow, did you see that, that guy really knows what he's doing". And if that combination was to be followed up by a hooking heel kick to the head (my favorite ending), the comment might have included, "Oh, beautiful". So, time and the introduction of Asian Martial Arts changed the way Americans fought and thought about fighting.

In the beginning we were much more likely to be attacked by the old John Wayne Roundhouse punch than any other style of attack, so Mr. Parker felt the need to train us more against that type of attack. He did, however, believe in utilizing all of the counter-measures, both offensive and defensive, that he had learned in the Islands, so we, as his students, got to learn all of the targets and weapons available to us. And that's where the Kenpo Techniques came in.

In the beginning, as earlier stated, most of the techniques were against grabs, locks or holds, but there were a handful of punching techniques as well. We were all fascinated by them and learned them with gusto, never once questioning whether or not they would work in a real combat situation. We simply assumed that they would because we witnessed Ed Parker do them and had no doubt that they would result in the desired effect (when he did them). It wasn't until much later that I personally began taking issue with many of the techniques that we were learning, because simple logic began telling me that there were flaws in the concept being put forth. But we kept learning those techniques because in order to be promoted in rank we had to, and they were fascinating even if only in theory. When there were only a few techniques against punching and kicking attacks, it was easy because we were being drilled so heavily on basics and our basics became so devastatingly strong that we didn't really need much beyond that. But it was later that the addition of so many techniques began to take the time away from strong basics that it began to affect the system.

There was a period of a few years in which Mr. Parker added one technique per week to program. Unfortunately, that became the system's downfall.

In retrospect, I believe the addition of those techniques came about after the core personnel of the main school in Pasadena left Mr. Parker for another Instructor who was teaching another system. I learned later that part of the reason they left was because the other Instructor sold them on the idea that Ed Parker had given them all that he had to give because at that time, in reality, Mr. Parker was so overextended that he had neglected to the Advanced Class in favor of other pursuits and gave the teaching over to that other Instructor. So that other Instructor was in a perfect position to steal his entire advanced class away from him. With the exception of myself, but that's another story.

After the breakup is when he began introducing a technique a week to the system, so one may safely assume that this was his way of insuring that no one would ever think he had run out of material, and he was good at creating more techniques. Unfortunately, not all of them were viable. In fact, some of them seemed to violate the very principles the good ones were built upon.

Unfortunately, those techniques weren't there just for the sake of learning targets and weapons, they were there to be learned and then later demonstrated as a means for promotion. Good luck in trying to learn and perfect over three hundred techniques, which is what the system eventually became. The system became so large that by the late seventies and early eighties practically no one could seem to get past the Blue Belt level except for the most dedicated and talented of students. The average student would look back at what they had already learned, which was a ton of material, and then they would look forward to what they still needed to learn, which was another ton of material, and they became discouraged and drifted away from the system.

It was about that time that Vic LeRoux decided to open a school in Hawthorne, California and asked me to become the Head Instructor. When I asked him what he was going to teach and he told me he was going to teach what he was teaching for the Old Man at his West L.A. school, I declined the offer. Poor Vic was a little more than dismayed, he was also confused, so we needed to have a long conversation about how the system had become un-learnable and un-teachable.

When we began going through all of the techniques he had been teaching at the West L.A. school and I began tearing most of them apart, over half right then and there. But half wasn't enough and it took until 1988 when we began planning what we were going to teach on video, that the system, as we teach it today, came into being. And that took a period of two years of planning to finally arrive at the system as it stand today.

For two years, 1988 and 1989, Vic and I spent our time re-examining in detail each of the techniques that we had been teaching at the Hawthorne School and cut, modified or combined fifty-five techniques into what we have taught since that time.

Our main goal was to include every plausible target and every feasible weapon utilized in Kenpo and many that we picked up from other styles and systems over the years that weren't necessarily in our own, but warranted inclusion. We also tried to make the techniques as workable as possible. Not all fit the bill, but our percentage was still far and above what we were forced to teach prior to that time.

## *Here Comes the Revelation*

By now, you must know what an obsession I have with having the techniques work on the street. Well guess what, suddenly, recently I came to the conclusion that workability isn't as important as I first thought it was.

What is important is that the student learns all of the vulnerable spots on the human body, how to get to them and what part of their anatomy to us as weaponry to strike those targets, and the techniques are what teach those elements.

**A SHORT STORY** - When the Karate Connection first produced the videos and presented them, there was a variety of comments from other Kenpo practitioners. In one, a gentleman stated, "After viewing their videos I'd have to say that the Karate Connection System of Kenpo, is all right, but it's a bare-bones system - with a few bones missing."

I must admit, I thought that was a clever use of language, "Bare-Bones with a few Bones missing." Upon reading it, I immediately issued a challenge to him. It was a friendly challenge, very simple and straightforward.

Tell me which bones are missing.

Show me a weapon we left out.

Show me a target we don't include.

Show me a block we don't utilize.

Show me a stance we don't do.

Show me a distance we don't work at.

Show me a cover we don't utilize.

Show me a principle we don't adhere to.

**Again, show me a bone.**

Actually, I'll tell you of a couple of bones that are missing, and for good reason.

For example, we don't do the short outward block that's included in the American Kenpo Short Form One. Why? Because it's a great way to get your head taken off. The block has no intrinsic strength. A little girl can punch her way through a grown man's short outward block and we've proven it many times in class. But it's still there in the Kenpo System that's being taught today. **Why?**

Another thing we don't do is kick with the top of the foot, the singular exception being when we are scooping the groin, otherwise kicking with the top of the foot destroys the penetration of the kick and leaves the kicker vulnerable to having their foot easily injured or broken. But, it's still being allowed in American Kenpo. **Why?**

As far as the number of Techniques is concerned; yes, we did **drastically** reduce the number that we teach because they were unnecessary in the learning all of the weapons and targets.

It isn't the number of techniques you know, as long as you know enough to cover all that is pertinent to Kenpo (which turned out to be fifty-five), it's how many times you do them that counts. Remember Mr. Parker's famous quote, "**I'd rather have ten techniques that I can fight with than a hundred techniques that fight me.**" Beyond that, it's also how adaptable you become at changing your action when your opponent changes his.

# *Flow of Motion and Extemporaneous Use of Weapons*

For years now, we've been expounding the necessity of extemporaneous use of our weapons, meaning, when the situation changes, the attack (or counterattack) must change as well. We have done that by insisting the student be able to add additional strikes at the end of most of the techniques, not all because some have their own endings. We give the students an example and then require that they come up with another of their own. It's what we refer to as "Thinking Kenpo" and it works. You should see what we've seen as to what our students have come up with for ending. They're fantastic and often far better than the ones we give them as examples.

Then, of course, there are the life-size dummies we work with. Once you've gotten past the stuttering and stumbling that the dummy causes when you first begin striking him full out, you can fly through the techniques like you did before then begin to add power and accuracy to the mix and know for certain that you're hitting all of the targets with the best you have.

## *Finally! The Revelation*

So, in the final analysis, the techniques are more to teach targets and weapons and to gain a flow of motion throughout your attack or counter-attack than they are meant to work in their entirety, because except for the escape techniques and handful of punching techniques, most of the punching techniques probably won't hold up once the action begins, because you can never truly predict how a person will react to being blasted. He might drop into a heap at your feet, he may turn and take off like a sprinter, he could easily buckle left when all logic says he should buckle to the right, or he might even just keep on coming at you with more of the same. And every situation is going to be different, so the only thing you can count on is that **you can count on nothing.**

But the beauty of having done the Karate Connection assemblage of techniques is that in your training, you'll have used every applicable weapon to every applicable target. You will have been at every possible angle to every possible target.

You will have used a looping back-fist from an inward block to crash through a ribcage and in one continuous motion a hand sword (Chop) to the back of the neck (**Beheading the Dragon**).

You'll have driven the back of your head into an opponent's nose and slammed your gluteus maximus into his groin (**Escaping Ram**). Ask the guy who talked about the bones if he's ever popped someone in the balls with his ass and he won't even know what you're talking about.

Moving along -- You'll have broken a nose with your forehead and used the ubiquitous knee to the groin, plus twin heel palms to floating ribs (**Thrusting Release**).

You'll have struck a temple with a back-fist, driven a rear-hand straight-punch through his solar plexus into his backbone and struck the temple once again with another back-fist for good measure, (**Returning Serpents**).

You will also have kicked someone in the groin with a rear-leg ball kick and slammed his temple with an unforgiving forearm strike, (**Deflecting Thunder**).

Add to the list, another kick that you've done to the groin, this time with the front leg and another straight punch, this time with the lead hand (**Thunder and Lightning**).

At his point you're only through the Orange belt Techniques; and there are forty-nine more techniques to go. When you begin to examine the techniques you'll find all the bones that guy was talking about, and quite a few she didn't even know about. You'll see that it would be almost impossible to get into a position relative to an opponent where you don't have a target and a weapon with which to strike it.

## *Some Bits of Humor*

I've heard all of the war stores over the years and most of them have ended with the first or second shot. One student told me he was disappointed because the technique he wanted to do didn't work. When he described the encounter, he said the guy threw a

punch at him he went under it and reverse-ridge-handed the guy in the groin and the guy dropped like a sack of hammers (a slight variation on **Repeating Hammers**, no pun intended), but he didn't get a chance to do the rest of the technique, so in his mind, it didn't work. I couldn't believe that anyone could be so thick as to not understand that the first shot took care of the entire situation and made the rest of the technique unnecessary, so he could just walk away, which he did.

In another incident, a student told me that when a guy swung a really hard roundhouse punch on him that his Extended Outward Block took the guy right off his feet and set him on his butt. He said the guy was so embarrassed that he got up and walked away, or is it possible that the pain in his arm is what encouraged him to split. Either way, not even one blow was necessary; the block alone did the job.

# Our Blocks are for Real

Once you've learned the Kenpo Blocks, they'll do their job and the first strike should give you a real head start on delivering more blows which should come in rapid succession because that's what you are accustomed to doing. And remember, **the best defense is a good offense**. So once you go on the offensive, keep on going until there's no longer a need to. But as soon as you no longer have the need to defend yourself, stop, because to keep on after that could be a crime for which you'll have to pay.

A drill I especially like (we did it at the Seminar and it was great) is often done with rank beginners. It blows them away. Almost immediately after teaching the inward and outward blocks and making sure that all have the principles and concepts down, I take those who have just learned it and put them against more experienced people. The more experienced people then put on a pair of blocking arm guards and come in swinging hard roundhouse punches at the beginner' heads. Blows that they are likely to



see on the street from untrained but serious fighters. (In the case of the Seminar, the student's weren't rank beginners but they were Under Belts.)

When the beginners feel the power that is being used against them and they realize that they are capable of keeping those blows from landing, it gives them a boost of confidence they couldn't have gotten any other way. And the people throwing on them are instructed to make sure that the bolows are hard and fast, not just lazy swings or taps. Of course, blocking is only one part of the self defense equation and then comes the rest of the story. But I can see it in their faces, they are very impressed with their own performance and with the Kenpo Blocks, and well they should be. Our blocks aren't just a simple barricade, they're designed to do damage at the same time they are keeping us from getting our heads taken off.

Over the years I personally have had more than a few people ask me what I would do if someone were to throw a hard punch at me and I have invited them to go ahead and throw one. All I have ever had to do is block their punch and reaction has always been the same, "Hey, you didn't need to hit me so damn hard". Then I would have to explain that I put no power into the block whatsoever. It was their power coming back on them that caused the pain. I further tell them that punching at me like they did was the equivalent of throwing into a lamppost. The lamppost isn't moving on you is it? But if you do it hard enough, you'll probably break your arm, right?

I learned that one directly from Ed Parker. He did it to an actor who was being a jerk on a movie set and told me about it later. After he winked, I knew that he had indeed put something into the block, as was his habit. I don't think Ed Parker could do a block without putting something into it, and that something was usually a lot compared to anyone else. And I guess the apple doesn't fall far from the tree, because we do too. It would actually be difficult to do a block without putting in some torque, some snap and the usual speed that naturally accompanies any Kenpo Block, so even at its minimum it can be shocking, but when you really crank into the block it's just about as good a feeling as can be had. Nothing feels better than a good crisp block slamming into some guy's really hard punching arm, especially when you see the guy's eyes light up and he gets that familiar shocked expression. Especially when you've struck the radial nerve.

It's just one of those times in life that you can't buy, you just have to be lucky enough to have someone brainless enough to throw on you that way.

One of Mr. Parker's favorite sayings was, "Your weapon is my target", and if you were foolish enough to throw on him, you'd find out what that meant and remember it for the rest of your life. Once was usually enough to enlighten even the dimmest bulb in the marquee.

Blocking is one of the things I enjoy most about freestyle fighting because while the fighting itself is all controlled mayhem, the blocks are absolutely for real. We all know that your opponent, or fighting partner as it would be in the dojo, is supposed to be controlling his blows to come within a fraction of an inch of his target, but considering that his target is your head or groin and considering the fact that you could easily zig when he thinks you're gonna zag or zag when he thinks you're gonna zig, you can get tagged, and by tagged I mean sometimes dropped, so why take a chance with anything less than real block? Once the Kenpo Blocks have been learned and practiced, even an intermediate student becomes a really difficult opponent to get to, and when they add the offensive counter-measures, they become formidable opponents.

So, there you have it. Now we all know why we learn and practice the Kenpo Techniques, and it will make it so much easier in the future for me personally to teach some of those techniques that I don't necessarily think a lot of because I'll know that within those techniques are strikes and targets and a flow of motion that I wouldn't have otherwise. I'll know that even though a technique may not live up to my expectations in its entirety, it still has value and contains some of the bones that are so important to the system.



# Some Very Thought Provoking Questions

A while back Sandra Cadena, of Universal Kenpo Karate in Edinburg, Texas, asked me to respond to a series of questions for a course she was taking at the time.

I found the questions to be very interesting and thought you might as well. Also, I personally would be quite interested in the answers you might come up with.

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers, only how you feel about the queries put forth. Respond if you care to and tell me if you would like your answers published or not.

I'll show you mine, if you show me yours.

**How would you define wisdom?**

**How does a person attain wisdom?**

**What connection exists between wisdom, Knowledge, and life experiences?**

**Reflect on the most influential mentor that has shaped and transformed your learning. In what ways did this person challenge you to examine your conception of self and the world to formulate new, or developed perspectives?**

**How has your approach to learning and development changed throughout the years?**

**Describe one major life experience (either positive or negative) that has significantly influenced your beliefs and attitudes?**

**What advice would you give young adults who are interested in maximizing their personal growth and development?**

# "Rank for Certified Instructor Status"

## Amendment to the IKCA Bylaws

As you know, the IKCA had recently received a request to put forth a vote to the membership that would allow a Degree in Black Belt available to be awarded to all those who attain Certified Instructors status.

The vote for the amendment was voted upon and passed, with what would have been a unanimous acceptance by the membership, with the exception of one vote. So it stands that when you become a Certified instructor (See your IKCA Bylaws for information on Certification) you will be awarded a Degree in Black Belt for the achievement.

The Degree you are awarded will in no way effect your "time in rank standing". You will be eligible to test for your next degree in the usual three years from the last promotion you received by testing.

**Added under the heading of Rank**

**The second amendment to the**

**INTERNATIONAL KARATECONNECTION ASSOCIATION BYLAWS**

**Ratified on the 25th of April, Two Thousand and Nine**

**is to read as follows:**

### **RANK**

**15. A single additional degree in Black Belt will be awarded when the status of Certified Instructor is attained. (see page 10 - INSTRUCTORS QUALIFICATIONS). This degree must be requested by the Instructor through IKCA Headquarters and a small processing fee will be required.**

**A. This Degree is independent of rank attained by the three-year time in rank rule and will not affect the time in rank requirement between degree tests for Black Belt.**

**B. The status of Certified Instructor and the Degree associated with it must be earned for any Black Belt to attain the rank of Grand Master, 10th Degree, in the International Karate Connection Association.**



# PROMOTIONS



**We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your promotion. We know what kind of dedication and perseverance it requires to earn rank in the Martial Arts and we wish to pay our sincerest respects to you for having shown what it takes to appear on this list.**

Jerry Bull	Vallejo, CA, USA	<b>6TH DEGREE BLACK</b>
Tim Beers	Benicia, CA, USA	<b>5TH DEGREE BLACK</b>
Doug Pilcher	California City, CA, USA	<b>2ND DEGREE BLACK</b>
Jess Lindsay	Canada	<b>2ND DEGREE BLACK</b>
Jim Taylor	North Point, AL, USA	<b>3RD DEGREE BLACK</b>
Caner Yalcintuna	Napa, CA, USA	<b>PURPLE BELT</b>
Miracle Greathouse	Gun Barrel City, TX, USA	<b>YELLOW BELT</b>
Chad E McBroom	Artesia, NM, USA	<b>ORANGE BELT</b>
Jorge Bartolo	Salinas, CA, USA	<b>YELLOW BELT</b>
Benjamin Cheek	Salinas, CA, USA	<b>YELLOW BELT</b>
Tyrel Leitzell	Salinas, CA, USA	<b>GREEN BELT</b>
Ralph Garcia	Morgantown, WV, USA	<b>PURPLE BELT</b>
Laureen Long	California City, CA, USA	<b>ORANGE BELT</b>
Zane Bachara	California City, CA, USA	<b>PURPLE BELT</b>
Michael Long	California City, CA, USA	<b>PURPLE BELT</b>
James Pilcher	California City, CA, USA	<b>PURPLE BELT</b>
Ben Bachara	California City, CA, USA	<b>BLUE BELT</b>
Caleb Bachara	California City, CA, USA	<b>GREEN BELT</b>
Rick Chavez	Bellflower, CA, USA	<b>BLUE BELT</b>
Alfredo Gomez	Bellflower, CA, USA	<b>BLUE BELT</b>
Luis Lopez	Bellflower, CA, USA	<b>BLUE BELT</b>
Michael Armstrong	Torrance, CA, USA	<b>PURPLE BELT</b>
Susanna Coleman	Torrance, CA, USA	<b>YELLOW BELT</b>
David Lee	Reno, NV, USA	<b>PURPLE BELT</b>
Siisialafia Liufau	Garden Grove, CA, USA	<b>ORANGE BELT</b>
Dennis Bellavia	Los Alamitos, CA, USA	<b>BROWN BELT</b>
Reid Brown	Hudson, FL, USA	<b>ORANGE BELT</b>
Monica Ashcraft	Napa, CA, USA	<b>3RD DEGREE BLACK</b>
Dan Rush	Manitowoc, WI, USA	<b>2ND DEGREE BLACK</b>
John Barnett	Redondo Bch, CA, USA	<b>6TH DEGREE BLACK</b>
Leah Eubel	Australia	<b>1ST DEGREE BLACK</b>
Harry Wilford Jr	Casa Grande, AZ, USA	<b>5TH DEGREE BLACK</b>

Bob Barnett  
Glen Lyman  
Glen Lyman  
Joshua Leon Guerrero  
Mick Jolly  
Gabriel Jolly  
Eli Raphael Jolly  
Clause Hansen  
Chris Roman  
Genesis Yrad  
Jacob Hee  
Joe Manluco  
William E Melendez  
Sky Parson  
Joshua Pinney  
James Dyer  
Shame Gildea  
Teresa Covarrubias  
Cedric Adams  
Samantha Barnes  
Matthew Elias  
A. C. Wiley

Irvine, CA, USA  
Cedar City, UT, USA  
Cedar City, UT, USA  
Vallejo, CA, USA  
Ferndale, WA, USA  
Ferndale, WA, USA  
Ferndale, WA, USA  
Denmark  
Napa, CA, USA  
Vallejo, CA, USA  
Vallejo, CA, USA  
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Lompoc, CA, USA  
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Lompoc, CA, USA  
Lompoc, CA, USA  
Lompoc, CA, USA  
Lompoc, CA, USA  
Lompoc, CA, USA  
Watertown, NY, USA

**7TH DEGREE BLACK**  
**8TH DEGREE BLACK**  
**9TH DEGREE BLACK**  
**5TH DEGREE BLACK**  
**4TH DEGREE BLACK**  
**1ST DEGREE BLACK**  
**JUNIOR BLACK BELT**  
**4TH DEGREE BLACK**  
**1ST DEGREE BLACK**  
**2ND DEGREE BLACK**  
**2ND DEGREE BLACK**  
**3RD DEGREE BLACK**  
**4TH DEGREE BLACK**  
**JUNIOR BLACK BELT**  
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**1ST DEGREE BLACK**  
**5TH DEGREE BLACK**  
**JUNIOR BLACK BELT**  
**JUNIOR BLACK BELT**  
**4TH DEGREE BLACK**

