

Shoshin Ryu Yudanshakai Newsletter

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If It Works, Use It

by

Bryan Stanley

Simplicity is the heart of Danzan Ryu. However, simplicity can be found in every style. Even an untrained street fighter knows about simplicity. Also the simplest art in the world may not be terribly good. Then again, not many people can bounce right back from a poke in the eye.

What makes an art effective? The most effective technique may not be the flashiest or the most popular, but results are better than flash; effectiveness is better than popularity. Moreover, what works for the tall, skinny guy may not work for the short, stubby guy and neither may work for the woman with limited arm strength.

The question becomes how to judge effectiveness. How can a practitioner of Danzan Ryu figure out just what is the best technique to use?

Possibly the simplest answer to the question came from Professor Dave Williams. After a moment of thought he nodded his head and said, "Three words can answer that, *if it works.*" He elaborated, "As an example, if you are throwing somebody and you put them down, it works."

Professor Williams's answer is classic Danzan Ryu, the best techniques are simple and to the point. As direct as Professor Williams's answer is, there is plenty of room for much needed clarification.

The top man of American Shotokan Karate, Professor Bud Collyer, has seen a lot of trends, techniques, and people in his more than forty years of practice. His experience as a tournament fighter has allowed him to develop a clear idea of what makes a technique effective. He discussed what he looked for, "Is it a realistic technique? Is it something that you can put into practice not only in the dojo but out of the dojo?"

After deciding if something is realistic, Professor Collyer sees practice as the single most important part of effectiveness, "Nothing is going to be effective without practice. You can go over it in your mind a thousand times, but putting your body into the picture, you have to do the physical practice. You have to learn to block against realistic punches, not just someone sticking their arm out. You have to block against someone who intends to hit you, so if you don't block, you pay the price. That's the measure of the effectiveness, how does it work in practice? You had better practice it before you use it outside the dojo."

Keeping that thought, practicing a technique may not make it perfect, but it certainly will allow it to be there when it is needed. Even the least effective technique in Danzan Ryu can be available to a student who practices it. One never knows when that seldom used movement may pay off.

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Danzan Ryu Hall of Fame 1993 Hall of Fame Inductee

Professor Richard P. Rickerts was born on July 18, 1906, in Petaluma, California. In 1927 at the age of Twenty-one, he was struck with wanderlust and traveled up and down California. He also took up boxing and in October of 1929, he won the Pacific Coast Jr. Amateur Lightweight Boxing Championship.

Rickerts took a freighter to Hawaii in September 1931 and joined the Coast Guard in 1932. He boxed for the Coast Guard then retired from that activity in 1932. A few months later he ended up taking a jujitsu class taught by Professor Okazaki. He enjoyed the class, but after three months of practice, he suffered a badly dislocated ankle that kept him limping for more than a year.

On November 1, 1935, Rickerts enrolled in the Army & Navy YMCA Jujitsu class with instructor Harold E. McLean – a student of Professor Okazaki's. On May 25, 1936, Rickerts was awarded the brown obi, by Instructor McLean. Rickerts noted that he had never been so enthused over anything in his life as Jujitsu. He was fully determined to earn the first rank and be awarded the black obi.

Sensei McLean passed away in 1938, and at that point, Richard Rickerts came under the tutelage of Professor Okazaki. On January 7, 1939, he received his Shodan from Professor Okazaki. Rickerts left Oahu on December 6, 1941, and settled in the Oakland area where he continued to teach jujitsu and massage in Oakland and later in San Mateo.

Along with Bud Estes, Ray Law, and John Cahill, Rickerts founded the American Judo and Jujitsu Federation in 1958. Professor Rickerts suffered from Parkinson's disease beginning in the late 1960's and retired from teaching. He passed away in 1989.

Rickerts was known as the "Dean of Professors" and was well known for his compilation of the massage arts.

Professor Rickerts produced such jujitsu legends as Theodoer "Tony" Muran, Steve Byzek, and Al Holtmann.

Black Belt of the Month

Name: Ken Blaedel

Rank: Nidan

Number of years practicing the martial arts: fifteen years. I started when I was forty-five.

Styles studied: Danzan Ryu Jujitsu

Favorite book: *Mao* by Chang and Halliday (I don't think people realize how brutal he was.)

Favorite movie: *Star Wars* – Because it spurred my imagination.

Favorite actor: Dustin Hoffman

Favorite actress: None

Favorite food: I like a lot of Japanese food. Natto is my favorite. It's fermented soy beans.

Favorite activity away from jujitsu: I shoot high powered rifles. It's strictly mental focus.

Favorite ice cream flavor: Ginger

Most memorable moment in the martial arts: Getting really nervous for my shodan exam. In retrospect I enjoyed it, but only in retrospect.

Favorite thing about practicing Danzan

Ryu: It causes me to remain physically active. When I get off work I can turn left and go home, eat potato chips, and sit on the couch, or I can turn right and go work out.

Four famous people I'd invite to dinner:

I'm really interested in how people make decisions. So I'd invite Abraham Lincoln, Oppenheimer, Professor Okazaki, and Chairman Mao.

Biggest inspiration: My mother who tended to be opposite of me. I didn't realize how big of an effect she had on me until after her death.

The Literary Ninja

Martial Arts Basics: Ju-jitsu

by Kevin Pell, 8th Dan

Barnes and Noble Books

\$12.95

Short and sweet. In a box with twenty cards, two techniques on each. Cool drawings and descriptions. Title says BASICS and that is really true: covers falls to weapon defense.

On the Ninja's scale of white to black belt, I give *Martial Arts Basics: Ju-jitsu* a YELLOW belt.

The Value of an Art

by

Professor Mike Chubb

Whenever we acquire a new art or technique, we should consider what value that particular art/technique brings to our repertoire. Since it would be prohibitive to practice each art we learn every time we attend a workout, it really becomes necessary to prioritize them according to some value system in order to maximize our proficiency with them.

An art has “value” when it meets or exceeds certain criteria. For example, those criteria might include: (1) simplicity of execution, (2) universality of application, and (3) effectiveness of result. Let us consider each of these as it relates to any (and all) of the techniques we know. Please keep in mind that each of us may well have additional criteria for evaluating a given technique’s worth.

Simplicity of Execution. A technique which has few moving parts is more apt to be successfully applied than one that is rich in complexity. The more complex the art, the greater the chance something will go wrong during its execution. Murphy said it best: “If it CAN go wrong, it WILL go wrong.” Consider also that more simple a technique is the easier it is to learn and greater is the chance that you will use it. It hardly makes sense to invest valuable training time on techniques that have little or no chance of being brought into play.

Universality of Application. The more situations (variety of attacks) an art can respond to, the greater is the value of that art. An example of a technique which can be used against a variety of attacks is the wrist flex. The wrist flex has been successfully applied against a variety of punches, grabs, and even assaults with a weapon such as a knife, club, and handgun. To a martial artist, or law enforcement personnel, this technique would go to the top of a very short list.

Effectiveness of Result. The effectiveness of an art may be defined as the relationship between the amount of effort required to execute it and the result of that effort. If the art I respond with takes more effort to apply than my assailant’s initial attack then he is winning a war of attrition in spite of my success. Conservation of strength becomes very critical when confronted by more than one attacker simultaneously. If, however, the technique achieves the desired effect, (i.e. rendering the assailant unable to continue his action against me,) and I still have strength to maintain a defense against further threat(s), then the technique has great value, indeed.

In the final analysis we can only apply one technique at a time. It is incumbent upon us to choose the best response to a threatening act and execute it in a timely manner with precision and accuracy. Our ability to do just that depends upon the amount of time devoted to the practice of a particular art, oftentimes based on our perception of its value.

Words of Wisdom

“Common sense is the collection of prejudices acquired by age eighteen.” – *Albert Einstein*

“When opposed to someone physically stronger than yourself, do not be afraid and, on the other hand, never despise one weaker than yourself. Do not recklessly resist your opponent’s physical strength; imitate the action of a boat adrift upon the surface of the ocean. If your strength is inferior to that of your adversary, it is useless for you to oppose strength with strength.” – *E.J. Harrison*

“Behold the turtle. He makes progress only when he sticks his neck out.” – *James Conant*

“They are able who think they are able.” – *Virgil*

(If It Works, cont. from page one)

“Assessing Uki is most important,” said Professor Imi Mullins. She takes into consideration the attitude of her attacker before deciding on a technique, “When someone comes forward like gang busters, fists-a-flying, you need to defend yourself with the same intensity. The situation calls for a more brutal defense. If someone is just being a jerk, you can ignore them or walk away, but certainly don’t put your guard down.”

She takes into account the body type and posture of her attacker as well, “The effectiveness of the technique is based on what the uki gives you, their posture, attitude, and body shape. Then from there it is whatever techniques or parts of techniques that will put an end to the conflict.”

It may seem like a lot to consider, but in a stressful situation, the mind works quickly, and assessment of how to respond only takes a split second. That is, ultimately, what all the hours in the dojo are about. “Practice,” said Professor Mullins, “the more you practice, the more it becomes second nature. At the heart of a good technique is practice.”

Professor Mullins raises another good point. If the armbars from Tenada Shime will work in coordination with a Tsukikomi Shime then go for it. No skilled practitioner of Danzan Ryu is going to compartmentalize their techniques so much that they won’t flow from one to another.

Yet however simple the idea may sound, it does raise the issue of practice. In order for those techniques to be there, in any combination, any part of a movement fluidly blending with the next, they must be practiced. It is harder to pull parts of techniques together than it sounds, especially if those techniques are not commonly put together.

Once one has the techniques together, another aspect of self-defense becomes visible: attitude. Professor Joe Ristrom has a unique perspective as both a Godan in Jujitsu and a fifth degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do. Having skills in both a hard and a soft style allows him to see the advantages and disadvantages of both.

Uniquely, his approach to a desired technique doesn’t focus on technical ability at all, “Conviction of intent that’s what makes a technique. I’ve seen guys like Rich Charlebois and Bill Fischer go out in a judo contest and they know what they are going to do, and they do it. It’s their intent, and there’s not a damn thing you are going to do. When Rich was going to throw a Sasae Ashi, it was going off. What you had planned was irrelevant; he was going to do the throw.”

In explaining what he meant by conviction of technique, Professor Ristrom takes into account the number of fights he had seen while working as a bouncer at various night clubs around southern California. Those experiences tempered his view, “In a street fight situation, it was the guys who really truly believed that they were going to kick your butt that had the most conviction in their technique.” He pointed out what that did for them, “If you get two guys who are even, it’s the guy who is more committed to his technique who is going to come out on top.” He had seen it time and time again. It didn’t matter about size, David can topple Goliath, as long as he’s committed.

“It’s not that hard to hit someone in the face,” Professor Ristrom continued. “If you do enough jujitsu, it’s not that hard to throw someone as long as you believe in what you are doing.”

Raising the point again, even that lowly technique will work if you believe it will. Those blocks and punches will be there if you have faith in them, as long as you practice them and prepare them for when they are needed.

It didn’t take Professor Roy Center long to explain the elements to an effective technique. He’s spent the better part of his life practicing Danzan Ryu, and he’s had time to reflect on what makes something work. “Simplicity and effectiveness, those are the qualities that I look for. That’s for any technique, some of them look pretty, but they take a long time.” A fight moves fast, and time may not be there to waste. So the best techniques get the most done with the least amount of effort. “As an example think of a wrist escape, you want something that is going to
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12th Annual Kamp KaishinKai

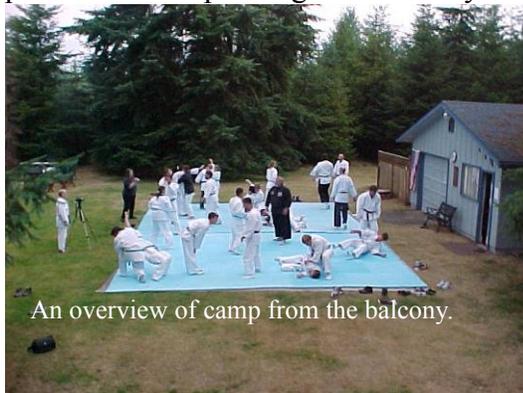
by
Sue Jennings

Weather was nearly perfect for the 12th Annual Kamp KaishinKai on August 11-13, 2006. Hosted by Prof. Ron Jennings and Sensei Sue Jennings on their property near Centralia, Washington, the camp had participants from Washington, Oregon, and as far away as Utah. Campers arrived late Friday afternoon and stayed through Sunday afternoon with classes all three days.

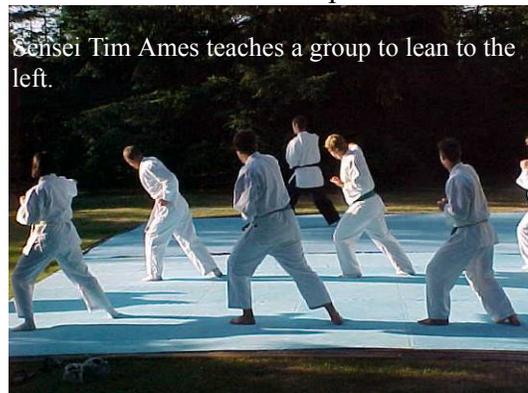
One of the great features of the camp is that almost all lists of Danzan Ryu Jujitsu are covered from Yawara through Shinyo and arts from the Kiai No Maki. Other arts such as Aikido, Kenpo Jujitsu, Judo, and Taekwondo are taught as well. There is also instructor training for the camp instructors. We pack a lot of material into one long weekend and succeed in exhausting even the fittest martial artist through the succession of classes from early morning through late evening. Held in conjunction with the Perseid Meteor Showers, late night is spent by the campfire watching for falling stars and eating s'mores.

Meals and t-shirt are part of the registration fee, which also included a generous Saturday evening catered banquet. Most of the participants slept in tents in the overgrown tree farm on the back of the property or in the dojo, but there are a few that needed to return home each evening, and even a few that brought their motor homes. One of the traditional events of the weekend is the annual viewing of the movie, The Adventures of Ozzie Twightly.

At the close of camp, those that were strangers at the start of camp, gave their goodbye hugs to all their new friends. Camp has the ability to create a great bonding between the participants, so that they all start becoming one big extended family. With that in mind, we invite everyone to plan ahead and put August 2007 on your calendars to attend the 13th Annual Kamp KaishinKai.



An overview of camp from the balcony.



Sensei Tim Ames teaches a group to lean to the left.



Ron Jennings and Sensei Ross Gibbs take a break.

Ask the Doctor

Dear Dr. Rich:

While I was working out last week, I walked into my partners hand. She was reaching up to start a maki komi. I leaned in just a little, at just the wrong time bringing my face right into her hand. I got poked in the eye. This has happened before. I expected a few minutes of burning and blurring. This was different, though. Ten minutes later, I still could not open my eye. I tried forcing it open, but the lights in the room looked blurry and caused pain. I was not able to finish the work out. I went home early. After waking the next morning in pretty much the same shape, I went to my doctor's office. She ended up giving me an eye patch to wear, and some antibiotic drops. So, my question is this: when is a poke in the eye something to worry about?

Sincerely,
Corny Ella Brasion

Dear Corny,

I'm intentionally going to avoid a detailed answer about specific eye injuries here because this is one of those subjects in which a thorough understanding of the problem does not aid decision making. I don't want someone in your recent position to sit trying to remember details about eye injuries.

There are two conditions of the eye that should result in immediate evaluation by a physician:

- 1) Anything that causes persistent eyeball pain.
- 2) Anything that causes persistently decreased visual acuity.

Obviously, anyone who gets poked in the eye will have some immediate pain or discomfort and blurring as the eye tears (as in crying, not ripping). That discomfort and blurring should resolve within about five minutes though. If after a five minute rest, the eyeball itself still hurts, or vision is still changed from normal, the injured person should be taken immediately to the emergency room for evaluation.

So, remember this simple rule: persistent eyeball pain or a persistent change in vision after an injury to the eye means a trip to the ER immediately.

Dr. Rich

Promotions

Shichikyu:

Marco Carvalho	DZR Jujitsu of Arizona
Martin Yarra	Downey YMCA
Daniel Palma	Downey YMCA
George Villalobos	Downey YMCA
Jose Barragan	Downey YMCA
Tommy Diaz	Downey YMCA

Rokkyu:

David Villalobos	Downey YMCA
Chris Rambo	Downey YMCA
Sergio Garcia	Downey YMCA

Gokyu:

Cliff Carrico	KaishinKai
Katherine Roundy	KaishinKai
Diane Carrico	KaishinKai

Yonkyu:

Pete Barnhill	KaishinKai
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Sankyu:

Daniel Bracket	KaishinKai
Chris Eller	KaishinKai

Nikyu:

Joe Lentz	KaishinKai
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Shodan:

Lyn Taylor	Downey YMCA
Mike Mares	Downey YMCA

(If It Works, Cont. from page Four)

get you out right now, not thirty seconds from now, BAM, you want out.”

Sounds easy enough, but Professor Center put a practical application to his reasoning, “The thing is that as you get older you want to end a fight as quickly as you can. Maybe when I was twenty years old I could go for fifteen minutes, but at sixty-five I’ve got about two seconds and I’m wore out.” The answer sounds like hyperbole, but he’s correct. In a fight it’s the guy who can do the most the quickest who is going to have the advantage. Obviously physical fitness and technical ability are part of the fight equation, but that initial contact is going to put a little doubt in the mind of an attacker and that may all that’s necessary.

“The art is about simplicity and efficiency, those are the most important things,” Professor Center continued. He finished his point with what ultimately is the main idea of every martial art, “The goal is to accomplish the most you can without looking like you did anything.”

Professor Rich Charlebois has broken down what makes an effective technique into four elements: reliability, brutality, decisiveness, and low risk. By looking at a technique through this prism he can determine what works and what doesn’t.

In order to clarify what he meant, Professor Charlebois defined each element. “Reliability is the ability to perform a technique from any position in any condition. Can it work every time? You don’t want to rely on a technique that only works about a third of the time.”

“Brutality ends a conflict as quickly as possible with the lowest risk. Brutality is a disincentive. If I am brutal in my response, the likelihood that the attacker is going to get back up and attack me a second time is reduced. I also want to discourage anyone else, for instance one of his buddies, from coming at me.”

“Decisiveness means that the technique has the ability to end the fight. There’s got to be enough pain involved that the attacker isn’t going to get back up. He may not want to if I’m brutal enough, but it needs to be painful enough that he says, ‘Nope, no more, I don’t want any part of that guy.’”

“Low risk techniques do not compromise position and play the odds as well as possible. Why go for a Ko Bushi Shime when a punch to the face might be just as effective?”

It was after he defined his points that Professor Charlebois put all the pieces together, “Effective techniques make your attacker feel stupid. They make your attacker feel like this was the stupidest mistake they had ever made. If that means I just take a side step and forearm him to the throat or elbow him in the head then that’s fine. It makes them feel stupid.”

He finished up his explanation with a serious, unemotional analysis of what makes an effective technique. “Every fight is a potentially life-threatening encounter. The most effective approach is a calculated, brutal, systematic dismantling of the attacker that maximizes survival and minimizes risk.”

What makes a technique effective? Practice? Conviction? Simplicity? Reliability? Brutality? Probably. A technique is what one makes it. Just keep in mind that one yudansha’s Kote Maki Dori is another yudansha’s Deashi Hayanada. Then again, maybe a poke in the eye is best.

Yudansha Notes

More from KaishinKai

On Saturday, October 28, nine from the KaishinKai Dojo trekked over 200 miles for a regional clinic in Eugene, Oregon. Nearly thirty people were in attendance with nine instructors sharing their art. The next Pacific Northwest Regional Clinic will be held in Hillsboro, Oregon, in December, then at the Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, in February, 2007. The Regional Clinics are held every other month at one of the participating Northwest dojos. The students enjoy the diversity from the other schools, and seeing the friends they make at each of these events.

A Classic Conflict

By

Professor Rich Charlebois, D.O.

I recently ran across a thought-provoking article published on the Internet. The article's author allowed herself several critical remarks pointed at practitioners of traditional jujitsu, which she defines as having developed before 1900. The author, obviously proud of her inclusion in the "in" group, pasted together a naïve perspective praising the superiority of her Brazilian style of jujitsu over other martial styles. In the process, she managed to skip all around an insightful observation on the classic conflict between progress and tradition.

This dichotomy between progressive and traditionalist views permeates each of our lives every day. It sets the agenda. It frames the questions. It colors the choices we make at decision points from mundane to life-altering. Do I circumcise my son or not? Cremation or burial? Elope or big wedding? Classic Coke or New Coke?

The same conflict exists in healthcare. Some doctors are traditionalists. They reminisce about a day when their words constituted law, and when patients obediently followed directions. To the traditionalists, several centuries of accrued medical tradition are sufficient grounds for medical decision-making. Picture a stodgy, white-coated, British doctor, standing tall with his hands clasped behind his back, peering over small spectacles dangling at the end of his nose.

The medical traditionalists are opposed by doctors promoting a new trend toward evidence-based medicine. They believe that the best medical care comes with decisions based upon rigorous science, not the weight of tradition. Evidence-based medicine tears down the castles, and upends the statues. It abandons tradition in favor of progress.

Medical studies have proven that evidence-based medicine is healthier for patients than tradition. Studies have also revealed three other interesting facts. 1) All physicians become more traditionalist as they age. 2) The pace of scientific progress depends most upon how quickly a generation of scientists "gets out of the way" of the incoming batch of new researchers. Most importantly, 3) the ethical backbone within any branch of science or medicine derives from its older generation.

Clear parallels exist in the martial arts. The Brazilian stylists have re-opened the debate between tradition, and "teaching what works." I have heard many of my respected martial traditionalists friends comment that their particular style works just as well as Brazilian jujitsu. They are just whistling in the dark. If street-effectiveness against a single attacker is the only measure used to assess the strength of a particular style, then the Brazilian stylists have clearly put together a superior strategy and approach to training. Some argue that other styles now effectively challenge the Brazilians. If true, they have done so by co-opting the Brazilian approach.

Many students now come to jujitsu simply to learn to fight "like they do in the cage." They have no interest in the tempering that comes with training in a traditional martial style. Evidence-based medicine without the tempering of medical ethics is bankrupt. It ignores the patient's humanity and dignity. Likewise, jujitsu instruction without grounding in the art's tradition is just as bankrupt. It foolishly sacrifices an appreciation for respect and humanity in exchange for pure efficacy and violence.

Martial styles can get mired in their traditions. They become beautiful, once-lethal, but now irrelevant relics of the past, like Stone Age arrowheads. We must avoid becoming personality cults devoted to the memory of long-dead innovators who themselves once bucked authority. As we struggle to remain relevant and effective, we need to look to our traditions, less from a desire for lethal secrets and more for our ethical bearings. There is a place for both progress and tradition in our art.



Shoshin Ryu Yudanshakai

Membership form



Please check one: _____ New member _____ Renewal _____ Date _____

Name (Last) _____ (First) _____ (MI) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Birthdate _____ Sex: M / F Phone(s) _____

e-mail address _____ Dojo affiliation _____

Instructor _____ Your current rank _____

Dues/ fees: \$25.00 per year. Membership dues include mandatory liability and supplemental medical insurance. Membership is for the current calendar year from January through December 31.

Signature _____ Date _____

Parental consent if under 18 years _____

Mail to: **Shoshin Ryu Yudanshakai**
C/O Prof. Kevin Dalrymple
5547 E. San Juan Dr.
Orange, CA 92869

Please enclose your check payable to Shoshin Ryu

For more information, visit us at www.Shoshinryu.com