

Karate Jutsu

by Kris Mansfield

What exactly is meant by the term Karate Jutsu? Let us first examine the various constituent parts of the term:

Kara- China or empty

Te – Hand

Jutsu – Science or art (depending again upon interpretations)

Recently, I was fortunate enough to read a first edition of Gichin Funakoshi's 'Karate Jutsu' whilst on a trip to New York. The experience alone blew my mind, but it was what was contained in the text that was really firing me up.

I wanted to see how this book related to what we do in the Karate Jutsu Association. One of the first things that struck me was the sheer amount of grappling and throwing techniques contained within the text and clear statements relating to where the techniques can be found in the various kata. This alone was an eye-opener. Now, I am by no means new to the idea that kata contains various grappling and throwing applications as I have read all of Iain Abernethy's work, most of Vince Morris', Patrick McCarthy's et al and am fortunate enough to train with an extremely open minded group of individuals under our Instructor, Jon Ryley.

However, to see grappling techniques written in black ink, under actual images of Funakoshi performing the techniques, was quite remarkable. How was it then, that Karate became the laughing stock of the martial arts world when it contains so many effective self-protection techniques and principles?!

In order to understand what is meant by 'Karate Jutsu' we need to first consider, what exactly is Karate then?

Rather than begin on a lengthy diatribe about the differences between Karate Do and Jutsu, I will rather discuss what I 'do' (pun intended) at my club and leave it up to other people to

argue over whether it is 'proper' karate or not.

It is a well documented fact that the founding fathers of karate all adapted and modified what they did in order to tailor Karate around themselves. Karate must adapt in order to survive, as must everything else in this funny little universe.



grappling

On Monday classes at my club, we follow a formal 'Karate style' format including the wearing of a gi, kata, kihon, kumite and kiais! On a Friday the seniors wear less formal attire and generally hurt each other for an hour and a half. It's all good fun though. However...

Am I actually doing Karate on both nights or not? At what point does Karate stop being Karate? This issue seems to really annoy some people, it makes me laugh actually. I have had friends remark how what I do at training sometimes isn't Karate. My response (if I can be bothered to entertain such mind numbingly boring statements) is usually along the lines of, 'Well, we were punching, kicking, elbowing, grappling, trapping, using pressure points, hitting with impact, sparring...so tell me...which part of that doesn't sound like Karate to you?'

What I find so refreshing about the way that we (and many other clubs these days) train is that we are not scared that other people may criticise that we are doing is not 'Karate'. There are only so many ways to hit someone after all. Even the term Karate as demonstrated at the start has a confusing history due to the politics associated with the definitions of the term. Motobu and Funakoshi themselves



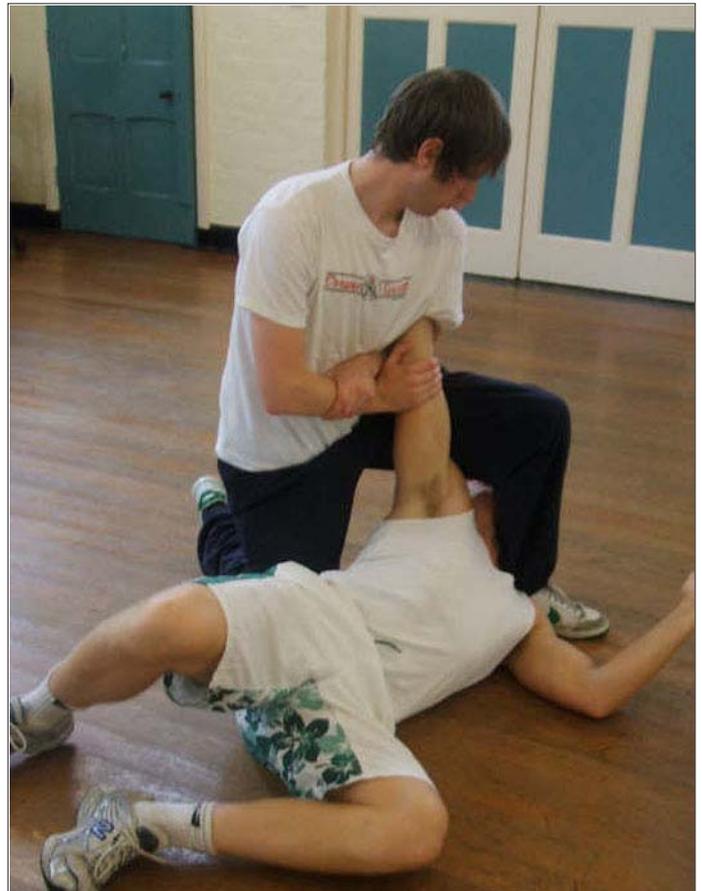
mid block

couldn't agree on what Karate was/should be, Itosu Anko changed virtually everything in Karate to make it suitable for children, Karate has and hopefully will be forever changing.

What you tend to find, is that most martial arts at some point come to a juncture, some sooner than others due to stylistic features and we start to notice patterns. For example, in my

club we frequently use the 'gunting' (scissoring) method as found in the Filipino Arts to attack the opponents attacking limbs, we also use the same principles when applying Torite (Grabbing hand) Jutsu techniques, or when we are body boxing and for Karate purists, the same principle can be found in the 'preparation' hand of uchi-uke.

So. If I am in a room with music playing, wearing grappling gloves and t-shirts, training hard utilising combative principles with my training partners, is that any less of a Karate



floor arm bar

class than two hours of line work? I believe not. In Funakoshi's own text of the same name, adaptation and application of concepts are encouraged. None of the 'old masters' copied their Sensei's version of Karate, so why should anyone now believe that they are the authority on what Karate is or isn't.

I know that I train in a scientific empty hand combat system. For anyone who wishes to translate that into Japanese, go back to the start.

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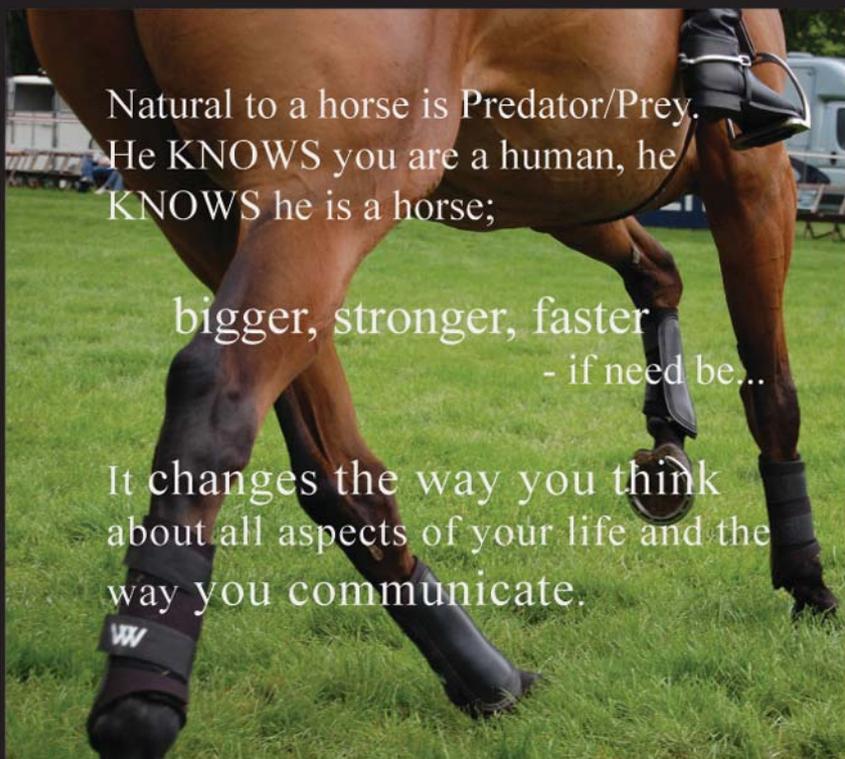


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