

DISCUSSION OF EXPERTS

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He has been practicing *Wing Chun/WingTsun* since 1970. He is one of the 2 first Westeners to complete the whole syllabus of WT up to Master or Grandmaster level (10th degree). His first instructor being Joseph Cheng (London) and then Leung Ting (from 1975 onwards). He also studied the Non-classical Gung Fu of Bruce Lee under his first student and assistant Jesse Glover in Seattle and Europe in the early 1980s. He has personally taught a million students in Seminars all over the world and is still teaching 4 hours every day of the week. “Black Belt-Magazine” called him “*The Father of WingTsun in Europe*“.

GM Kernspecht (10th degree in Leung Ting-System) is less interested in traditional *Wing Chun/WingTsun* and its techniques but more in a scientific *WingTsun* that is “radical“ because it goes back to the roots of *WingTsun*: the principles.

In his book “Fight Logic” (3 volumes over 440 pages to 600 pages each, German language) which will also be published in English, Russian and Italian he is examining the phenomenon of human combat and explaining the concept, principles and techniques of *WingTsun* (WT) as he interprets and uses them in the European WingTsun Organisation (EWTO).

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Solving the problem of the ‘ritual fight’ using WingTsun

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Introduction

I want to present my *WingTsun* (WT) as a *suitable means of practical self-defence* to solve a social problem that receives little attention: the problem of how to protect oneself as well as possible against the dangers of *degenerate* ritualised combat or territorial conflict within the group consisting of male members of our species.

In a similar way to his animal relatives, the “human ape” or “third chimpanzee” – as biologists often call him – defends his “territory”. This not only includes his seat in the pub or bar, his office desk and his marital bed, but also his social position, his ego or his self-image.

As is the case when members of other species come into conflict, this form of combat – which is presciently referred to as a “monkey-dance” in the English language – is not a real fight, but rather a

form of conflict management on the part of nature, a show intended to maintain the *status quo* and preserve life (or genes).

The competitor, the other male of the species, is to be driven from the territory by the *threat* of violence. Accordingly the animal world tends to fight “with its gloves on”: poisonous snakes have recourse to wrestling, and bears shove the competitor off their patch. The humiliated loser shuffles off and is allowed to live elsewhere.

(Degenerate) ritualised combat between men has been conducted in 5 phases for the last 30 years or so.

1. Eye-contact
2. Voice
3. a. Jabbing a finger at the other party

b. Shoving

4. A wild roundhouse punch (haymaker) curving downwards to the head with the dominant hand
5. Frequently, fatal kicks to the head of the downed opponent (degeneration!)

Anybody who wants to prepare his students for this must familiarise them with these five escalation phases and the effects of the stress hormones. These hormones are sometimes known as "fight or flight" hormones, though there is a third adrenal hormone effect that is far more dangerous: paralysis and an inability to defend oneself (denial).

Almost all report stress effects such as a dry mouth, moist hands, an accelerated heart rate, hyperventilation and muscle tremor. These symptoms are perfectly normal, and a fighter must not see them as a sign of cowardice. Nonetheless they should tell the fighter that he may no longer be operating within his optimal heart rate range.

As soon as this exceeds 175 to 200 beats per minute, the following happens in the view of prominent researchers:

- a. Fine-motor and complex movements, as well as peripheral vision, become difficult
- b. Making decisions between several options requires a life-threatening amount of time.

The only methods suitable for self-defence purposes are therefore those that make low demands in terms of fine motor movements and hand/eye coordination, and relieve the fighter from decision-making.

These two problems are best solved by methods that employ tactile/kinaesthetic responses, and forego decision-making in favour of the tactile sense.

Although most martial arts advertise themselves as a suitable means of self-defence, they do not concern themselves at all with the needs of ritualised combat and correct behaviour in the five phases:

Things that are seldom practiced anywhere

1. They do not practice the use of breathing techniques and visualisation to lower the heart rate.
2. They do not practice whether, how and for how long one can or must hold the gaze of the other party.
3. They do not practice responses to questions such as „*What the hell are you looking at? Are you looking for trouble?*“
4. They do not practice the correct responses when a finger is pointed, or to a shove with one or two arms.

5. Hardly any martial arts style is able to counter a wild roundhouse punch from close range.
6. And how many self-defence styles teach students how to survive deadly kicks to the head if they have gone to the ground?

The shortcomings of so-called self-defence methods

- Instead of preparing the student to respond with the appropriate behaviour in each of the 5 phases, the *problem posed by eye-contact* is not even recognised. In fact there is no ritualised combat that has not been preceded by eye-contact between the two parties.
- Instead of practicing the right, self-assured or deescalating answer to the aggressive question, there is no *use of speech* in the usual martial arts training.
- Instead of practicing *tactics against "finger-jabbing" (finger-pointing), shoving and the roundhouse punch*, students learn and practice senseless or ineffective, „*lifeless*“ techniques. Senseless is the right word for them, as they are defences against attacks that do not occur in reality, but only in the imaginings of martial arts teachers who have usually never been faced with such a situation.
- In short, the student only learns to defend against attacks by his own style.
- Most also ignore the fact that a fight *rarely lasts more than 3 seconds*, and does not take place at long range, but *at very close quarters*.
- They also ignore the fact that under the influence of adrenalin, *attacks always follow a curved path and are never linear techniques*.
- Also ignored is the fact that attacks do not consist of clean, clearly identifiable techniques, but rather a wild sequence or *fusillade of attacks*.

Ineffective blocks

Typical Asian blocking defences (familiar from Japanese *Karate*, Chinese *Shaolin Kung-fu* or Korean *Taekwon-Do*) work only against attacks if the attacker still needs to take a full or at least half-step to get into striking range.

Moreover, this only applies in the case of linear attacks. Typical Asian blocking defences and parries almost invariably fail against curving attacks – the very ones that are to be expected for evolutionary/genetic reasons in ritualised combat.

Stress hormones make most preparatory training illusory

In addition there is the sudden release of stress hormones, which causes the unaccustomed victim to „freeze“ into inaction, so that he usually allows the first punch and the subsequent hail of attacks to happen *without any attempt to defend himself*.

It does not even come to a fight in the sense of two opponents exchanging blows.

Senselessness of learning techniques by heart

Assiduously practicing and refining „techniques“, and memorising „stored behavior“ (Heinrich Jacoby), as is usual in the Asian martial arts, only creates hundreds or thousands of *senseless, sterile techniques that vainly await a suitable attack*. Vainly because every attack is different, and prescribed answers never quite fit. It seems to me that the main concern of most martial arts is to find and learn by rote answers to questions that *nobody outside their own style ever asks, and certainly not in the street*.

Specific, complex techniques requiring fine motor movements and a specific form of attack that never happens are of no use, but instead put the fighter under dangerous time stress because they confront him with unnecessary decisions.

What makes sense and improves our chances

However, non-specific training in *general, basic capabilities* such as consciousness, flexibility, balance, physical unity, sensual perception (especially tactile), timing, sense of distance and most particularly the development of fighting spirit and *familiarisation with the effects of adrenalin* is of great importance for the development of a self-defence capability.

Sparring does not really solve the problem of ritualised combat

Sparring – at least with full contact – would certainly be an improvement, however this too takes no account whatsoever of the actual sequence of events in a ritualised combat, as everything happens within the first second and one almost never sees a real exchange of blows. Moreover, sparring is pretty counterproductive when it comes to developing

body unity and timing.

There is no groundfight in ritualised combat

Groundfighting is a hype that is not one of the rituals in ritualised combat. It is very rare for both protagonists to go to ground and continue to fight on concrete, broken glass or dog-droppings using classic wrestling techniques, until some companion or other decides to get involved and kicks in the head of his friend's opponent. Groundfight training is the answer to a question that is never posed outside in the real world. Groundfight training is the answer to a question which the Gracies posed in the Ultimate Fighting Championships (a certain way of carrying out a competition). *As we are not concerned with sporting competition, it is more important for us to learn to maintain our balance, so that we do not go to the ground, can get up again quickly if it happens and can protect our head and ribs from kicks while we are down*.

I say this as somebody whose first martial art was wrestling, and who once worked part-time as a pro-wrestler in the late 1960s.

The danger posed by ritualised combat is actually a paradox

This is because its very intention is to avoid bloodshed amongst members of the same species. The danger arises from the fact that many people are no longer familiar with the unwritten rituals of male territorial combat; especially because owing in part to the influence of the mass media, a *new, more recent 5th phase* is becoming widespread that all-too often brings a ritualised fight to a fatal end: *kicks to the head of the downed opponent. (Ceterum censeo, lawmakers should make kicks to the head of a person on the ground subject to the same criminal law as the use of a weapon)*.

The degeneration of ritualised combat is found in both perpetrators and victims

- a. *The victim* does not give way to the stronger party, usually the holder of the territory, and does not retreat.
- b. *The perpetrator* does not know when enough is enough. It is no longer enough for him to make the transgressor submit or chase him off his territory. Instead he goes after him and does not even stop when the other party is on the

ground, but rather starts delivering kicks to the head, or the ribcage when the downed opponent raises his arms to protect his head. It is *degenerate* ritualised combat that makes effective counter-attacks – i.e. ones that pose some danger to the attacker – necessary to eliminate the threat!

Combat sports and martial arts are not suitable preparation for ritualised combat

My own analysis and 50 years of experience lead me to conclude that the martial sports and martial arts *per se* are not fundamentally a suitable answer to the danger posed by degenerate ritualised or territorial combat between men.

To give an example: every military or police instructor knows that target shooting cannot be used on a 1:1 basis to prepare for combat shooting.

This is because target shooting *lacks the element of deadly danger and its effects in terms of a much higher release of stress hormones.*

One very important argument against the sportification of the martial arts comes from Kano, who created sportified and therefore competitive Judo from the old and dangerous art of Jiu-Jitsu. This may surprise some in Kano, but he was also dealing with his own, inner contradictions. Kano was torn between his wish for the ideal Judo and the desire to spread it worldwide. *Moshé Feldenkrais*, who was asked to spread Judo in Europe on Kano's behalf, remembers a discussion he once had with Kano:

„So long as Kano was alive, he did not allow Judo into the Olympic Games, and he did not allow weight distinctions. ... In the Olympic Games you have weight categories. ... Like in wrestling, they believe that a lightweight cannot beat a heavyweight. Now they have that weight system that requires a small man to fight a small man, never a big one. So you see, those fellows using strength to push each other, and they don't do any Judo ... Kano said: ‚So as long as I am alive, Judo won't have weight divisions and when the day comes that it becomes part of the Olympic Games, it will become a wash-out. Judo is finished with inclusion into the Olympic Games.‘ And unfortunately he was right.“

But if you come up against a larger, heavier and stronger opponent (or are a weak woman against a strong man), you learn that physical factors must not be allowed to be the most important for self-defence. If the opponent is no heavier than you owing to the weight classification system, then strength training etc. enables you to make the difference under competitive sporting conditions.

We must also use our practical WT in a modified way in a ritualised combat situation if it is to decide the issue

We therefore use our *WT in a modified way* as a course of action in ritualised combat. We need to distinguish between two approaches:

1. WingTsun falls back on *natural defensive and attacking mechanisms* (fright reactions) that evolutionary genetics have already implanted in man, and which are perfected by specific training to become the starting point during surprise attacks.
2. Specific stress training is used to practice and instill surprising, *artificial movements* that do not occur in nature, and in a serious encounter these can be automatically retrieved and are immediately available.

We attack the attacker

In the basic and intermediate programmes described here, the *beginner* and the *intermediate* student do not tend to learn defences, but rather the *self-initiated, preventive attack*, which makes lesser demands in terms of reactions and the tactile/kinaesthetic sense.

It is essential for the attack that forestalls the opponent's build-up (Bruce Lee called this *Jeet Kune Do*) to be launched before the first heartbeat discharges the frequently paralysing hormone cocktail into the bloodstream.

The mental barrier that makes most people reluctant to strike is overcome by using an instilled *trigger word* (what NLP refers to as an *anchor word*). A large amount of training time must be devoted to this. I owe this idea to my friend Geoff Thompson!

We ensure legality

The student is also taught to demonstrate the legitimacy of his self-defensive actions to any witnesses by means of prior deescalation attempts, repeatedly and obviously taking a step back and loudly protesting that he does not wish to fight.

Only the very advanced user no longer needs to attack preventively to be safe

In the case of *experts* (advanced level), there is no longer the moral conundrum of having to attack the aggressor preventively to stand a chance.

The advanced student is so accustomed to the hormone cocktail by his „stress inoculation training“ that he does not „stiffen up“, but is able to use tactile/kinaesthetic responses at close range.

With the help of *Chi-Sao*, the proprioceptor training used in the advanced level programme described here, the advanced WT user is reliably able to avoid even non-linear attacks.

With perfect *timing*, *physical unity and flexibility training*, the WT fighter is able to strike with enormous effect, usually using *chops*, *palm-strikes or his elbows*, and within 3 seconds achieve the knockout that ends the encounter.

Reliable self-defence

As Moshe Feldenkrais correctly saw in the mid-20th century, the path to reliable self-defence is paved with *reduction of complexity* and active *reverse planning* for correct timing. Whenever the opponent makes a move, the tactile sense must recognise and exploit („cooptation“) those components of the movement that help the WT fighter to avoid being struck and instead deliver the decisive blow himself. *Anticipation* based on experience, *adaptation* based on *proprioceptive* training and *separation* from the opponent when his pressure no longer constitutes a threat culminate in an eliminating knockout – these are the methods employed by our WT.

The *strategy* (*grand strategy*, *moulue* in Chinese) employed is settled in advance, as what one might call „homework“. The WT user must be clear about the ethical values for which he is prepared to fight. These then become the „switches“ that are thrown in the form of the *trigger word*, leading to an instant attack. He must clearly understand that his attack must never be half-hearted, but rather delivered with full force at the right point, otherwise it would be better if he offered no resistance at all.

There is no place for a *strategy* when the fight is in progress, just as a general does not interfere in the fighting actions of his soldiers or in the on-the-spot decisions of his non-commissioned officers.

This is where *flexible tactics* count, where everything depends on the situation and nothing can be planned. Because any plan would compromise flexibility, preventing the fighter from seeing the many favourable opportunities that arise during the constantly changing process of a fight.

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Rozwiązanie problemu „rytualnej walki” z wykorzystaniem WingTsun

Słowa kluczowe: sztuki walki, kombatologia, samoobrona, WingTsun

Streszczenie

Autor przedstawia problem „zdegenerowanej rytualnej walki” lub terytorialnego konfliktu z wykorzystaniem WingTsun. Przedstawione zostają fazy typowej zrytualizowanej walki, które obejmują: kontakt wzrokowy, użycie głosu, dźganie palcem przeciwnika, popchnięcie, uderzenie z półobrotu, często niebezpieczne kopnięcia w głowę przeciwnika leżącego na ziemi.

Autor podkreśla, iż typowe ćwiczenia nie przygotowują uczniów do prawdziwej walki ponieważ często odbywa się ona szybko (nie dłużej niż parę sekund), w bliskim kontakcie, pod wpływem stresu i adrenaliny oraz nie jest ona wyreżyserowana według planów nauczyciela. W trakcie treningów samoobrony nie mówi się zwykle o takich aspektach jak kontakt wzrokowy czy użycie mowy (np. groźby). Ponadto, według K. R. Kernsprehta w azjatyckiej typie obrony użyte bloki nie działają jeśli atak nie jest linearny i zapowiedziany. W walce rytualnej często dochodzi do rozlewu krwi, a nawet śmiertelnego pobicia. Degeneracja

zrytualizowanej walki dotyczy zarówno ofiary jak i napastnika. W pracy zaproponowane zostało użycie WingTsun w zmodyfikowanej formie. Walka powinna opierać się na naturalnym odruchu obronnym i powinno wykorzystywać się ćwiczenia zawierające nietypowe, „sztuczne” ruchy, które mogą pojawić się w czasie walki i stanowić zaskoczenie oraz prowadzić do klęski. Adeptci sztuk walki powinni nie tylko uczyć się samoobrony, ale częściej ataku prewencyjnego, gdyż w trakcie walki trudno jest zastanawiać się i przygotowywać odpowiednią strategię.