



TRADITIONS FOR THE FUTURE

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Kancho's Corner

During a seminar a few years ago I was asked one seemingly very simple question. It never fails to amaze me just how far down the rabbit hole a straight forward enquiry can take you... and this was one such excursion.

The question was "How can we as martial artists improve our speed?"

I pointed out that there are various physical training methods available that will enhance our physical speed and these are well documented, so instead of trying to answer the question at hand, we might instead focus on refining the question first.

This particular seminar was on Kenjutsu - Japanese sword – so the first thing we addressed was what it was we actually needed to accelerate...our body or our weapon. A short demonstration ensued and an important distinction was made. Trying to increase the speed of our body was not an effective strategy. We had to focus instead on *using our body to accelerate our weapon*. Nishioka Sensei used to say "If a sword could speak it would say only one word – Cut". We need to establish a relationship between sword and body that is conducive to this... a feeling not only in the hands but in fact throughout the whole body that optimises the sword's capacity to perform its function. A sword has its own weight and we tend to support and connect with this weight in such a way that it often threatens us more than our enemy, mostly because we resist becoming one with it as a result of our own tension.

While in this instance we were talking about swords and other hand held weapons, my question to them was could we make the same distinction regards our bodies more natural weapons – the hands and feet for example. Talking about 'improving our speed' was simply too broad a goal, but applying the above principle of managing tension to allow the weight of

your natural weapons to be available *and* using your body in such a way as to accelerate those weapons was an idea we could focus on.

Another element to consider in discussing and developing speed is less to do with mechanics and more to do with the simple reality that speed is always relative. There is an excellent book – 'Bounce' - by Matthew Syed, a former Commonwealth and Olympic table tennis player, in which he cites an early experiment measuring athlete's reflexes. In 1984, having tested the entire British Table Tennis team, including the manager, a researcher revealed that his tests proved that Desmond Douglas (all time legend of the game whose name remains synonymous with speed) in fact had slower reflexes than *all* the other team members – including the manager. Naturally the researcher's results were ridiculed at the time and the machinery was declared useless. Years later however Syed established that in fact the results had been correct. How could this be possible? When he investigated the history of the 'fastest' team member, he found that from a very early age, Douglas had played all his games in a small shed that forced him to stand very close to the table. This conditioning had created in him the ability to 'read' his opponent's movement and respond accordingly to an extraordinary level. What *looked* like speed was not speed at all.

Syed further illustrated this point via another experiment in which he attempted (unsuccessfully) to return serve on a tennis court against former Wimbledon tennis champion Michael Stich. In table tennis the time available to return serve is 250 milliseconds while in tennis it is 450 milliseconds – nearly twice as much time. Despite this apparently considerable advantage, Syed was unable to even pick out the ball before it was past him. With the use of equipment that determined where Syed's eyes were focused at the time of the Stich serve, the other members of the research team were able to conclude that the ability to 'read' your opponent is actually movement specific. It's not *whether* you watch for signs of imminent movement... it's a combination of *how* and *what* you watch. You have to know which are the areas described as 'information rich' and these are different

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Kancho's Corner Cont'd

for different activities. If you know where the information rich areas are in your enemy, your ability to read their movement will be very high... and this will allow you to respond with what appears to be incredible speed.

Taking this further again, Nishioka Sensei spoke of two other aspects pertaining to relative speed. The first was training to 'hide your Ki' (mask your intention) or in the language of Syed, to limit the information available to your opponent so as to reduce his response time. The second was to 'create a disruption in your enemy's Ki' or bring about what he would call in English 'the psychological moment' which could then be exploited.

On the way home I was talking to my assistant and he said how much he'd gained from the talk about speed which surprised me because he'd heard it all before a hundred times. His response was that while he was still working on the technical nuances of the speed concept, the thing that had really struck him for the first time was the importance in life of getting the question right before we go in search of the answers. The answers we get will only ever be as good as the questions we ask...

Osu!

Sensei David

Upcoming Events

Save the Date!

Kenshinryu
流神剣

Kenshinryu Winter Gasshuku 9 - 11 June 2017

Aikido . Shinto Muso Ryu Jujutsu . Shinto Ryu Kenjutsu & Laijutsu

Suitable for practitioners of all styles aged 15yrs + and any level of experience
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Contact us today to book your place in any of these events!

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Upcoming Events Cont'd



Kenshinryu
剣神流

Kenshinryu Mudjimba will be offering a series of Women's Self Defense classes...



WOMEN'S SELF-DEFENSE

Practical self-defense techniques and strategies designed specifically for women!

- Suitable for women & girls from 12yrs
- Female participants only
- Not strength based
- Regular weekly classes allow you to develop effective skills
- No previous martial arts experience necessary
- Certified Kenshinryu senior instructor with 20yrs Aikido experience

WEDNESDAYS 7:30pm - 8:30pm
(please arrive 5 or 10 mins early)

FEES

- Adults \$15 per class
- School students \$10 per class
- Additional family members \$10 per class

Pre-Paid Packages:

- 6 classes (adults) \$75 (equals 1 class free)
- 6 classes (students) \$50 (equals 1 class free)
- 6 classes (mother & daughter) \$99 (**introductory special - save over \$50)

Contact us today to book your individual or group sessions!

Northshore Community Centre, 701 David Low Way, Mudjimba
P: 0418 753 184 E: info@kenshin.com.au



Kenshinryu Mudjimba will be hosting a series of Women's Self Defence classes every Wednesday from 7:30 - 8:30pm.

The classes are suitable for women and girls only, from 12yrs of age. There will be regular weekly classes allowing you to develop and strengthen your skills and there is no pre-requirement for joining, and no martial arts experience necessary.

Classes will be held with a certified Kenshinryu senior instructor with 20yrs Aikido experience.

Fees:

Adults \$15 per class
School Students \$10 per class
Additional family members \$10 per class

Pre-paid Packages:

6 classes (adults) \$75 (equals 1 class free)
6 classes (students) \$50 equals 1 class free)
6 classes (mother & daughter) \$99

Contact us today to book your individual or group sessions!



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I'd like to recommend that you have a look at this [website](https://www.aikiinsights.com/) and become a subscriber. <https://www.aikiinsights.com/>

When I was last in Melbourne I was interviewed by its founder, Marvin Oka, and I have since listened to all the podcasts on the site.

There is an absolute wealth of information for Aikido and Budo students - all being shared in a conversational format by some very highly experienced Teachers including Joe Thambu, Robert Mustard and Darren Friend Sensei's.

The information is suitable for absolute beginners through to students and instructors with many years practice behind them.

Accelerate your development in Aikido - Double your results from your training efforts - Improve your mind-body coordination - Develop your Aikido spirit - Embody and apply Aikido principles in daily life.



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Get insights and teachings from various Sensei that make a difference to how you train.



Improve your Mind/Body coordination

Learn tips and techniques to enhance your Mind-Body connection when doing Aikido.



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Learn about Aikido philosophy and key principles, and how it applies in daily life.