

# Kempo Jitsu Pre 1900 Martial Art System

## Kempo Jitsu – Pre 1900 Martial Art System By Tony Sims

The art of Kempo-Jitsu is a continuous study of pre 1900 applications of various martial art techniques using Okinawan Shorin Ryu kata, Yang style Tai Chi, Shaolin Chin-Na, Hung Gar Gung Fu, Ryu Kyu Kempo, and Japanese Ju Jitsu as core resources in its foundation. This unique blend of Chinese and Okinawan martial arts has lead Sensei Melbourne, the founder of Kempo Jitsu, on a life long quest to perfect himself and his system. With over thirty years (and still counting) of martial art training behind him, a Vietnam Vet (US Marine Corps.), and a sincere thirst for knowledge, Kempo-Jitsu enthusiasts have much to learn and gain under Sensei Melbourne's tutelage.

To better understand the system of Kempo-Jitsu and its focus on pre 1900 techniques, we must first be familiar with the history of the martial arts in general. The general history of martial arts varies from person to person, style to style, nationality to nationality, and etc. This is mostly due to the combination of political distortion and lack of actual written historical documentation. Fortunately, not all civilizations were as closed mouth as the Asians. We have paintings of martial (warring) practice predating Babylonian times. The most recent discoveries coming from cave drawings in Africa. For now, the martial arts history as taught in Kempo-Jitsu...

### Martial Arts History

The martial arts have been used to solve personal conflicts since the beginning of time. It may have been over a scrap of food, a mate, or hunting grounds. Knowing how to defend and defeat opposition meant the difference between survival and death. Mankind's will to survive was, and still is, the foundation of refining techniques and strategies to help ensure his very existence. There is archeological evidence of warriors using techniques of grabbing, throwing, and striking dating as far back as 3000 BC. This took place in the region of the world known as Babylon, present-day Iran and Iraq, and is thought to be the forerunner of Asian martial arts. Of course, it is also widely accepted that India is the birthplace of Asian martial arts. Again, lack of historical records makes the true origins of martial arts very difficult to pin point. This causes the martial arts history to be referred to as a puzzle. A puzzle having pieces scattered here and there.

### Hindu Connection

One very significant piece of that puzzle comes in the form of a book titled Veda (The Book of Divine Knowledge). This book was written around the year 1500 BC and reflects the life and times of the people in India of that time period. The Veda described Hindu religion, but a great deal of the book is devoted to the "War of the Gods" in domination of the Earth. To add to this book's historical importance, the weapons described are very similar to the weapons used by the Shaolin monks of China. To write such a book means the author more than likely had a working knowledge of the martial arts. Another piece of the puzzle, and probably the most well known story in the martial arts, comes from the tale of Bodhidharma and the Shaolin Temple.

In the year 563 BC, a man was born in Lumbini, Nepal, and was named Siddhartha Gautama. It was prophesized at his birth that he would either become a Universal Ruler or a Universal Teacher. He was well on his way to becoming a ruler when he witnessed the human suffering in his country. He was so overwhelmed from this he left his wife, son, and wealth to become a wandering hermit. His ultimate goal was to learn the meaning of human existence. It is said that while in Northern India, he decided to sit under a tree and meditate on his thoughts. Forty-nine days later, he emerged from his meditation the "Enlightened One" or Buddha, as he is more commonly called. This Buddhism, or Ch'an in Chinese, was the start of a legendary journey that led to the Shaolin monastery located in Northern China, in the province of Hunan, on Pine Forest Mountain. The Shaolin temple is also called "Pine Forest Monastery."

### Heavenly Match

Around 220 AD, a physician for the Emperor Hua T'o devised a set of exercises called the "Five Animal Frolics." These were the strong points of the Deer, Bear, Bird, Tiger, and Snake. These exercises were taught at the Shaolin temple to improve speed, strength, balance, energy, flexibility, and chi flow. When a Buddhist teacher by the name of Bodhidharma came to teach the Shaolin monks, he soon realized the monks needed breathing exercises to keep them awake during meditation. To increase their stamina, he taught them the "Eighteen Stationary Breathing Exercises" to assist them while he continued teaching Buddhism. This union of breathing exercises and the Five Animal Form, which they discovered to be an excellent means of protecting themselves, became the foundation for one of the most famous fighting systems of all time...Shaolin Ch'uan, or better known as Shaolin Kempo. The

success of Shaolin Kempo is evident when considering the plethora of other Asian martial arts that can trace their roots back to this Shaolin martial art. Of these, Shaolin Chin Na and Okinawa Te steal the spotlight in Kempo Jitsu.

### **Kempo to Karate-Do**

Okinawa Te is said to have developed in the 16th Century due to the prohibition of weapons imposed on the Okinawan's by their Japanese rulers in the late 1500's. The trade routes and interaction between Okinawan and Chinese merchants and religious figureheads helped shape and functionalize Okinawa Te. One of the first acknowledged masters of Okinawa Te was a man by the name of Sakugawa Sensei (1733 - 1815). Sakugawa Sensei originally started studying under a monk of Shuri, one of three historically significant Okinawan cities concerning martial arts, named Peichin Takahara. Later, Sakugawa Sensei became the student of a famous Chinese official visiting Okinawa named Kushan Ku, or Kunsanku. Kushan Ku is honored by having two forms named after him, Kusanku Sho and Kusanku Dai, which are used in several different styles and systems in today's martial arts. As political struggles for power and control would have it, martial arts training were forced into secrecy or disguised in traditional dance.

### **Forever Adjusting**

With the coming of the Japanese government reforms in the late 1800's to early 1900's, many changes occurred that would alter the perception and practice of most Japanese/Okinawan warring martial arts into its present day sporting form. The effects of these reforms on the martial arts can be seen in the softening of techniques and lack of specific teachings. This softening and lack of certain instructions does not only apply to martial techniques, but applies to the whole spectrum of martial arts teachings. Prime examples would be Kodokan Judo and Shotokan Karate. Neither of these is as complete as originally taught and structured. It is very important to remember that it is not the founding persons to blame for these changes. These adaptations were done out of need. The need to ensure the art's very survival in the "new" era. In order to do this, the martial arts had to gain the approval of the government and general public. The easiest and most efficient way of doing this was to introduce safe competition and practice. This generated renewed interest by promoting good health and spiritual well being. The increase of practitioners and the public acceptance through exhibitions and tournaments helped solidify and guarantee the martial arts survival. Unfortunately, the adaptations made were of great consequence to many styles. Many techniques and interpretations of techniques have been lost. Many hidden teachings went to the graves with those who had knowledge of them. A large amount of known teachings have been greatly ignored due to a common belief of no present worth or value in modern times. Little did anyone realize how important these forgotten and neglected teachings would be to modern martial artists. Fortunately, the martial artists in modern times have not remained ignorant to the obvious gaps in present day martial training. The largest challenges have been where to find reliable sources that can answer these pressing questions. One such valuable resource to pursue would be Master Ken Melbourne. His thirty -plus years of martial arts training and real world experience has made him a highly combative and adept martial artist.

### **Kempo Jitsu Rediscovered**

Master Ken Melbourne, who, at the young age of 17, joined the United States Marine Corps in 1967. The Marines gave Ken his first taste of true, life or death, combative arts. The hand to hand, weapons, knife, and guerrilla warfare training were put to the ultimate test on the battlegrounds of the Vietnam War. Upon his return in 1972, Ken began studying Shorin Ryu, Judo, Ju Jitsu, and pre 1900 martial arts. It was during these early years Master Ken realized, as effective as these martial arts are, most conflicts between two or more people don't allow for the structured (sporting) applications as taught within the dojo(s). This awareness allowed him to be open minded concerning martial arts, their effectiveness, and developmental quality. Additional studies in Shaolin Chin Na, Hapkido, Hung Gar Gung Fu Hok, Yang style Tai Chi and pressure point manipulations have been implemented to enhance the fighting system of Kempo-Jitsu.

### **The Right Stuff**

Kempo Jitsu fundamentals are root, hip, breath, speed, power, disruption, and flow. These fundamentals are applied in every aspect of the system whether expressed in kata, strikes, grappling, weapons, or any combination of each. The strict adherence to these key elements ensures the practitioners proper development and advancement in Kempo Jitsu. The system's rank advancements are structured in such a manner as to reinforce what has already been taught with the additional requirements. This encourages a practitioner to truly learn the instructions instead of memorizing for tests.

A good representation of the first three elements, root-hip-breath, would be in the footwork (movement) underlying the hip rotation behind the strikes denoted by the breathing. By this, the foot grips the ground to allow the power of the legs to channel into the hips which, when added to the power of the hip rotation (snap), allows for a much stronger fist strike to be executed. The breathing denotes each stage of the transitioning power through the sound of "Hiss" (the foot) "Sa" (the hip) "Hiss" (the strike). This breathing technique not only helps a practitioner develop power

and speed, it also teaches when and how to breathe in all techniques in application and kata. Not many styles or systems actually teach *how* to breathe in kata or prior to execution of techniques. They just simply inform the practitioner to *yell* at the strikes moment of impact or at this point in the kata. These three fundamentals, (root, hip, breath), lay the groundwork from which the remaining elements, (speed, power, disruption, flow) build upon.

The "Speed Fighting" of Kempo Jitsu best represents the speed element. This concept is an original pre 1900 martial art practice and focuses on developing the practitioner's ability to hit an opponent four to ten times in one second. So many systems and styles neglect this very important component of martial art training. Speed hitting is a very effective means of dominating an adverse confrontation. There are key attributes to be developed such as relaxation, trajectory, stance, footwork, breathing, and flow. Speed hitting emphasizes hand strikes primarily because in a real world encounter, you will naturally use your feet for movement and balance while your hands become responsible for defense and attack. Most confrontations will have the attacker going for a grab and then punch OR step closer to you and then punch. The thinking behind speed hitting is to hit, hit, and hit some more. A grabbing appendage is not a threat. It is preoccupied with holding whatever has been grabbed. It may be ignored so the body and face get struck several times. The appendage may also be the first target struck with proceeding strikes working their way into the body and face. In practicing this, practitioners inadvertently continue studying the initial fundamentals and begin training the remaining elements of power, disruption, and flow.

Power training in Kempo Jitsu can be understood as having two major concepts. The first is another pre 1900 training concept called "One Punch Kill" and the second consists of a two part breakdown called "Long Power" and "Short Power" techniques. One Punch Kill, (referred to as OPK for short), is often erroneously interpreted as a one punch knockout. The mentality behind OPK is to completely dominate an adversary by quickly ending the threat or to purposely end the threat...piece by piece. OPK uses long power or short power to achieve its goals. Long power is best described as movement in combat while short power involves non-movement in combat. An example of long power would be for a partner to grab and pull you forcing you to move in order to maintain your balance before defending. An example of short power would be for your partner to grab you and there is no need to move before you defend or attack. This practice further develops the known fundamentals when integrated together and leads into the remaining elements of disruption and flow.

Disruption entails the practice and integration of Judo, Ju Jitsu, Chin Na, and pressure point techniques. Judo, and Ju Jitsu, are well known for their throws, grappling, and joint manipulation. Chin-Na has five sections. Muscle Manipulation, Bone dislocation, Vein and Breath disruption and Pressure point Attacks, and is known for it's grappling efficiency. The inclusion of these techniques contribute to the study and understanding of balance, bone and joint manipulations, throwing, falling, and pressure point attacks. Grappling is not the only area these techniques are limited to. Pressure point targets also become the destination of the strikes from kicks and punches. The understanding of balance is used to disrupt the adversaries while maintaining yours. The motion often called a block becomes a motion that attacks a joint or pressure point. Even the stepping motions that advance the practitioner become more than a stepping motion. The economy of motion and ranges of attack take on a different and more complete meaning and understanding. The practice of disruption techniques further develops the aforementioned fundamentals and brings forth the life long training in the final element of Kempo Jitsu, flow.

The flowing of techniques is best seen while practicing and dissecting the Okinawan kata of Shorin Ryu. When the kata are interpreted using applications of pre 1900 techniques, the flow of these techniques become known and understood. The practitioner is first shown the kata to learn. Once the movements of the kata have been learned, the dissection of that kata begins. The techniques found within the kata will incorporate the seven fundamentals of Kempo Jitsu. The root, hip, breath, speed, power, disruption, and flow are constantly shown and represented in kata. Most martial art practitioners familiar with kata dissection, also known as *Bunkai*, are familiar with the strikes and some are aware of the throws and bone breaks. The majority, however, are oblivious to the pressure point targets and how to properly strike them. Many are not aware of the underlying factors that define one motion leading into another in kata. The study of Kempo Jitsu will assist any practitioner who is ambitious enough to pursue a deeper understanding of pre 1900 martial arts. In consideration of those not fortunate enough to be near a certified instructor of Kempo-Jitsu, several training aids have been made readily available.

Kempo Jitsu currently has five training video tapes for martial artists of all different systems to utilize in expanding their martial knowledge. The Kempo-Jitsu/ M.A.C.K.O. internet web site located at <http://www.geocities.com/Colosseum/Park/6990/> that offers four of the five training videos, newsletter, chat room, and Sensei Melbourne's email and snail mail (regular mailing address) for those wishing to discuss or find out more about Kempo Jitsu. A major point of interest to those pursuing the web site is that Sensei Melbourne personally responds. Also, Sensei Melbourne has written a book, from which some material was taken to assist in this writing, about the Kempo Jitsu system expected to be available later this year.

The fifth training video, [Kempo Jitsu Introduction Tape](#), is offered at the United States Martial Arts Association's, (the USMA is a non-profit organization), web site located at <http://www.mararts.org/> to help raise money, and promote the Kempo Jitsu system.

\*It should be mentioned that ALL video training tapes produced by M.A.C.K.O. for the Kempo Jitsu system are created with meticulous attention to detail in showing techniques to facilitate learning. The Kempo Jitsu fundamentals are discussed and shown in each tape to demonstrate the flow of energy\*

- [Tape 1](#) teaches the movements of Kihon Kata's 1, 2, and 3. From showing the kata movements, Sensei Melbourne progresses on to demonstrating the fundamental pre 1900 techniques pointing out the "hidden" techniques of Shaolin Chin Na. teaches the movements of Kihon Kata's 1, 2, and 3. From showing the kata movements, Sensei Melbourne progresses on to demonstrating the fundamental pre 1900 techniques pointing out the "hidden" techniques of Shaolin Chin Na. teaches the movements of Kihon Kata's 1, 2, and 3. From showing the kata movements, Sensei Melbourne progresses on to demonstrating the fundamental pre 1900 techniques pointing out the "hidden" techniques of Shaolin Chin Na.
- [Tape 2](#) teaches the movements of Kihon Kata's 4 and 5. The progression leads to the demonstration of pre 1900 techniques of Shaolin Chin Na found within the kata's. teaches the movements of Kihon Kata's 4 and 5. The progression leads to the demonstration of pre 1900 techniques of Shaolin Chin Na found within the kata's. teaches the movements of Kihon Kata's 4 and 5. The progression leads to the demonstration of pre 1900 techniques of Shaolin Chin Na found within the kata's.
- [Tape 3](#) teaches the movements of Pinan Kata's 1 and 2. The pre 1900 techniques of Shaolin Chin Na are then demonstrated as found in the kata's. teaches the movements of Pinan Kata's 1 and 2. The pre 1900 techniques of Shaolin Chin Na are then demonstrated as found in the kata's. teaches the movements of Pinan Kata's 1 and 2. The pre 1900 techniques of Shaolin Chin Na are then demonstrated as found in the kata's.
- [The Black Cobra Speed Fighting Tape](#) The Black Cobra Speed Fighting Tape teaches drills that will build speed fighting skills and incorporate the "*One Punch Kill*" of the Kihon and Pinan video training tapes listed above. The tape also discusses economy of motion and footwork.
- [Kempo Jitsu Introduction Tape](#) Kempo Jitsu Introduction Tape teaches the pre 1900 meaning behind the modern fundamentals or "hidden techniques" of kata, "One Punch Kill," Speed Fighting, and includes the first of three ground grappling kata of Kempo Jitsu.

The guidelines for rank requirements of Kempo Jitsu & the [Kempo Jitsu Introduction Tape](#) can be found by visiting the United States Martial Arts Association web site. The USMA is at <http://www.mararts.org/> and from there, clicking on "USMA Systems" for the rank requirements and by clicking on "Resources" for the video training tape.

Many students of different arts experiment in other styles to gain knowledge and strengthen their personal foundation. This is a good pursuit, but the greatest impediment of personal development is for a student to try and take a short cut to the advanced knowledge before understanding the basics. The basics of one system may not be the same in another system. It is very important for a student to begin their studies from the beginning before progressing.

Once a student begins studying Kempo-Jitsu, he or she will soon see how the ranges of combat are effectively addressed with proven techniques. From striking to throwing to grappling, it is all covered in the combative martial art system of Kempo Jitsu. The speed fighting, "one punch kill," pressure point, and Chin Na techniques of the pre 1900 era make for a truly potent and functional martial (warring) art. Kempo Jitsu is a system, not a style, which has no boundaries placed on practitioners to limit their knowledge and development. Kempo Jitsu is not threatened by, or better than, other martial arts because Kempo Jitsu IS other martial arts...before they were stylized.

### **About the Founder**



Ken Melbourne, 8<sup>th</sup> Dan

Director and Master of United States Martial Arts Association (USMA)

Kempo Jitsu Founder of Melbourne's American Combat Karate Organization (M.A.C.K.O.)

Ken Melbourne grew up on a farm in Hope Valley, Rhode Island. In 1967, Ken joined the United States Marine Corps. It was this military experience that introduced him to combat arts. Upon his return from Vietnam, he began studying martial arts under several different people from different arts. This includes the following:

1967 – Military Combative Arts

1972 – Shorin Ryu

1978 – Judo and Ju Jitsu

1980 – Shaolin Arts

Some of the more instrumental instructors in his martial art development deserve special mention in their support and professionalism freely given to Sensei Melbourne through personal and book/video study. These individuals are:

Mario Yambao, 6<sup>th</sup> Dan, Shorin Ryu, Japan World Tournament Medallist - James Beyersdorf, 5<sup>th</sup> Dan, Judo/Ju Jitsu - Ken Miarecki, 6<sup>th</sup> Dan, Judo/Ju Jitsu - Ed Szejter, 8<sup>th</sup> Dan, Judo/Ju Jitsu -

Joe Slaiman, 7<sup>th</sup> Dan, Hapkido - John Wooten, 10<sup>th</sup> Dan, Ju Jitsu - Philip Porter, 10<sup>th</sup> Dan Ju Jitsu, 9<sup>th</sup> Dan Judo – Woo, Ping Chiu, Grand Master, Hung Gar Gung Fu and Shaolin Chin Na –Dr. Yang, Jwing Ming, Master, Shaolin Chin Na - James Leech, Instructor and a top student of Dr. Yang's - George Dillman, 9<sup>th</sup> Dan, Ryu Kyu Kempo Tomari-te.

Sensei Melbourne has also received "Founder of the Year" at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Martial Arts Masters, Pioneers & Legends Hall of Fame (M.A.M.P.L.H.F.) hosted by Master Ed Brown of the Chairō-Kan Bushi Shindo Hombu of Norwalk, Connecticut.

Sensei Melbourne teaches Kempo Jitsu full time and is available for seminars by contacting him via email: [macko@dxmusa6.com](mailto:macko@dxmusa6.com)

Or his web site at <http://www.geocities.com/Colosseum/Park/6990/http://www.geocities.com/Colosseum/Park/6990/>

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