

## *Why BUSHIDO-KAI Seminars are Different 1*

This week and next will mark a brief departure from my regular journal entries. This essay is a bit of an exercise in self-promotion, but written by one of my most severe critics—me. With a new seminar coming up, I have been thinking about the history of our seminar series from which we derive our DVD offerings. It occurred to me that many students and teachers, who might consider having me travel to their dojo to teach a seminar or travel to mine to attend a seminar, may not know the items that make (at least in my biased opinion) our seminars unique.

### SUBJECT

A famous martial arts celebrity like Bill Wallace or Joe Lewis has a specialty (in this case, both of them emphasize sport sparring, albeit in different ways). An equally famous traditionalist like Hirokazu Kanazawa does not need to have as refined a specialty—he will attract many Shotokan traditionalists who want to get to know or improve in Kanazawa's methods of training. Seldom do big names offer individual subjects for their seminars—it is their names that draw people, and, if not the name, it is the specialty, not the subject.

I don't fall into either of those categories: my name is not so big and my specialties are rather varied. In Karate, you could narrow my specialty down to kata analysis, but that is not cut and dried since there are many approaches to kata analysis. In Aiki, you could narrow it down to effective minimal motion waza, but that is not as simple as it seems, since there are several paths up the mountain of minimal motion and several peaks on the mountain. One person's method of minimizing is not another's. So if you come to a BUSHIDO-KAI seminar, you often get this guy named Tony Annesi, but I think you are not necessarily there to see him, rather you are there because the subject he is teaching seems interesting to you. There are positives and negatives to the subject-oriented approach.

By my advertising one subject, the prospective seminarian knows in advance what to expect, thus saving him time and money if it is not his cup of tea. But by advertising one subject, I simultaneously take the chance that a person who might truly benefit from the seminar will not see the benefits at first glance. For example, if I advertise [Hard and Soft Applications of Gojushiho-dai and Gojushiho-sho](#), an actual seminar we've held in the past, those who want to learn or compare the kata are enthused because seldom do teachers hold open seminars on advanced kata. Those who want to discover throwing, locking, and escaping applications in karate kata will also be interested. But students who see the Gojushiho kata as out of their league, something they don't know and may never get to, may not attend a seminar that would benefit them. Non-karate stylists who could profit from both the analysis and the applications might not find the spark that will bring them in. But, if I told them they would learn an application that would help them escape from a rear bear hug, a rear double arm-entangle, AND a full-nelson, they might pay attention. It is difficult to advertise every sub-emphasis, so the subject-oriented approach tends to lose potential customers that are used to filtering carefully what they spend their

seminar dollar on. If we didn't use this approach, however, how many would jump at the chance to attend a "Tony Annesi seminar" every three months? It would get old quickly even though (little do they know) I go to lengths to try to take a slightly new approach every time.

### NEW APPROACHES

If you have attended a few kata-analysis seminars, for example, you get a sense of how I go about analyzing a kata—that is, after all, the intent of the seminar. If you didn't get the idea, I wouldn't be doing my job. Once you get the idea, you assume that you understand my method and therefore need not attend other of my seminars. Well, maybe, maybe not. I do try to use a similar method in each kata-analysis seminar in order to have familiar ground from which to vary. That way, I do not have to cover the same territory to a new audience every seminar—it would make for a boring seminar and a boring DVD. But people do not realize that only 20% new will appear "brand new", so my adjusting the seminar so that it is 5% to 15% new is a better idea. If the new model of a Corvette Stingray seems only to offer new headlights and a new side trim, it drives one to start looking at the Chrysler Crossfire instead. If it restyled 50%—new front, back, sides, 7 headlights and 5 wheels, people are repulsed at the newness and shoot over to the Crossfire. Whereas, if the Stingray is one fifth restyled with new front, back, and profile, it peaks the attention.

I have been justly criticized (I respect polite and sincere criticism) for doing many of my kata applications against standard lunge punches. 'Tis true, 'tis true, and verily I say unto thee that doing so puts everyone in the seminar and everyone in DVD-land on the same page quickly and without much divergence into having to train attackers. Okay, but what about other emphases besides Annesi's aiki-like applications from a standard karate punch? Well, me bucko, that's why I do seminars like [Inferior Superiority](#) (about avoiding ground grappling), [Situational Self-defense](#) (about how kata applications address many common attacks), and [Hidden Joint Jolts](#) (about an important set of applications often over looked in kata analysis).

Similarly, I have been justly criticized for not showing follow-ups to an application, whether drawn from the kata, implied by the kata, or logically appended to the kata application. Guilty as charged. Sorry, but I couldn't do that and get to all the material I wanted to cover in a 4-5 hour seminar. The subject should be addressed, I admit (so now you have something to look forward to). I promise to work to make what is already good even better.

*Next week we will cover other aspects of a BUSHIDO-KAI seminar, specifically ATTITUDE, EMPHASIS, STUDENTS, BONUSES, and ARCHIVED INTEGRATION.*