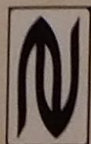


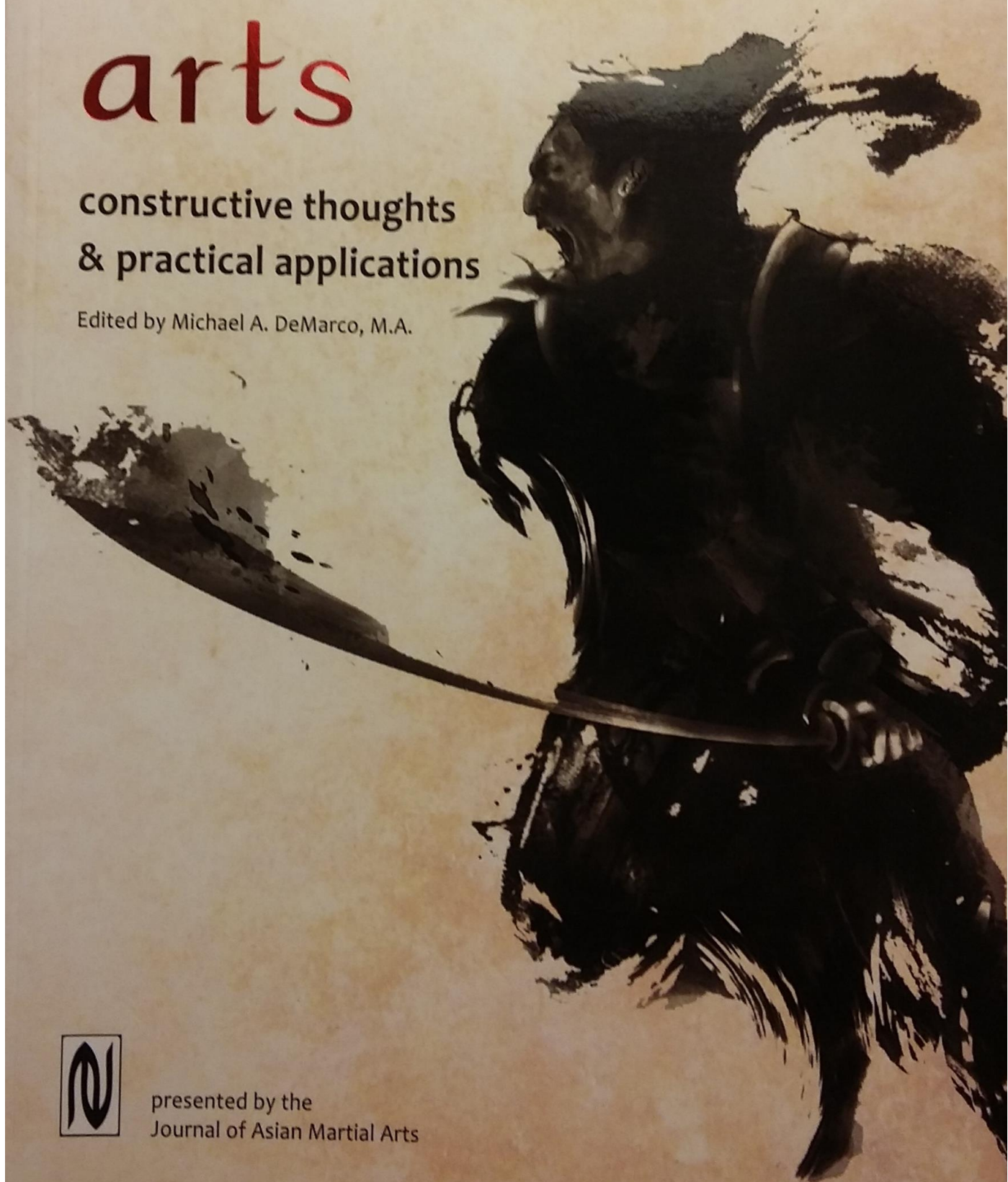
asian martial arts

constructive thoughts
& practical applications

Edited by Michael A. DeMarco, M.A.



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Classical Taekwon-Do

I have chosen the techniques shown in these photographs because they represent our system fairly well, and I know that if they fit the situation, I can make them work. They are not for everyone, and need a decent amount of practice. My personal comfort with them comes from (a) the repetition of Taekwon-Do basic motions (as found in patterns and fundamental drills) performed with attention to mechanical detail, (b) the “anatomical weapons” awareness and confidence built by methodically striking hard objects, and (c) dedicated practice of kicking skills in accordance with the standards set forth by Korean stylists during the 1970’s and 80’s.

Such basic techniques should follow the idea of generating power using body mass and maximum acceleration of the striking tool upon impact. This demands to keep the body (especially shoulders and hips) relaxed, using some (reduced) winding up motion, and unleashing the power into the target. Winding up is the way to break the inertia by a movement to activate/liberate the center of gravity from the its resting state, initiating a sequential chain from the axis (spine) to the limbs as body segments join as the motion increases in acceleration. The winding up would be inadmissible in a competition facing a fast, trained and attentive opponent; for that reason training to score points focuses on quick motions that should not be detected in their initial stage, while reality combat striking gives priority to final acceleration of techniques. Two images may help: Hands and feet should be considered rocks swung around the torso, arms and legs being ropes not unlike King David’s slingshot. Imagine your technique progressively gaining momentum as a sea wave, to fall down into your helpless opponent. The speed of the flying rock and the relaxed downfall of the wave should inspire us. Besides power generation, adequate transfer (application) to the target is crucial. Taekwon-Do provides a broad array of techniques using different anatomical weapons using varied paths, lengths, directions and targets which may be used in diverse postures so that someone who has mastered the system may, without assuming any preparation or stance, effortlessly deliver a decisive blow to an available target placed in any angle within certain range of motion. The highest the level of such expert, the shorter the distance he/she will need for issuing a powerful strike.

My primary source for these concepts was my teacher, of Moo Duk Kwan and ITF background, with a talent to analyze and synthesize seemingly opposite ideas. My reverse-engineering approach took me back to the strong Shotokan and the agile Korean kicking, and then I focused on General Choi Hong Hi’s sine wave. It all helped me to understand and get faster to where I was imperfectly being driven by instinct. My thirst for technology on striking power was quite serious, since I only weight 62 kilos. In the few real-life scenarios had to use techniques, I had previously resorted to the surprise element, weak spots (i.e., the groin) and

positioning strategy. Although they had helped me to stay safe, raw striking power put me –and can put anyone- into a completely different league in terms of self-assurance and protection needs.

I have found two world-level experts who have written about physical martial arts principles and ways to face violence in real-life scenarios: Steve Pearlman and Tim Larkin. Their background and approaches are very different, yet I recommend their work to all serious martial artists. My personal suggestion is to avoid engaging into violence if at all possible, but if unavoidable, one should take command of the situation being the first to start the action and going for it all in a cold blooded chain of attacks until the situation is terminated.

Martial arts' training typically involves an exchange of attacks and defenses among students. Sparring or drills are a form of physical conversation, a relationship using the common language of a system's syllabus and codes. That is great for skill, coordination and personal improvement, but may lead to dangerous misconceptions. When your life is at stake there is no contest, no counter technique, no protocol, no dialogue. It is a monologue in which you grab the microphone until you get to say the last word and leave. Alive.

Classical Taekwon-Do provides many of the tools necessary for survival, but the ability to use them depends exclusively on the decision of each student. We must assume personal responsibility on conditioning mind and body, on gaining accuracy and power, and on investigating the conditions that make techniques work. The true martial artist is both an obedient student who practices what he/she is told no matter how difficult the teacher may be to understand (time will clarify), and a skeptical and creative observer mentally free to put everything in doubt. Those two wheels, motored by perseverance, will make take the martial artist far in an unforgettable journey.



(Korean names reference motions in Taekwon-Do patterns)

Technique No 1

- 1a An unexpected attacker rushes forward on me.
- 1b Using his inertia, I crush his ribs with a sliding straight punch while controlling his arm (Sam Il # 29).
- 1c I step in with my right foot to control his center, rotating his right hand almost slapping himself into an outward wrist lock while I strike a hammer fist into his face...
- 1d The wristlock and the vacuum generated by my left foot as I turn counterclockwise, lead him headfirst into the wall.
- 1e To prevent him from recovering, my final action is a stomp to the side of his leg to break his knee and ankle.



Technique No 2

- 2a I am grabbed by my lapel, close to a wall.
- 2b I smack an upward ridge-hand strike to the attacker's genitals.
- 2c As he bends forward, I pull his head into my right upset punch (Hwarang # 5).
- 2d He stumbles back and I jump-spin clockwise into the air ...
- 2e ...To connect a side kick to the face (Yon Gae # 44)...
- 2f ...He falls backwards to the pavement, and I check out that he is no longer a threat.