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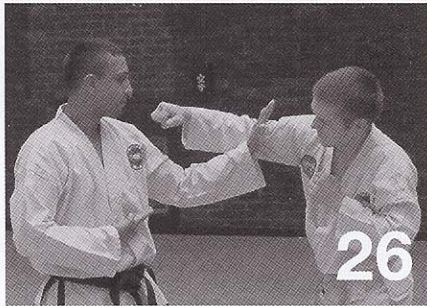
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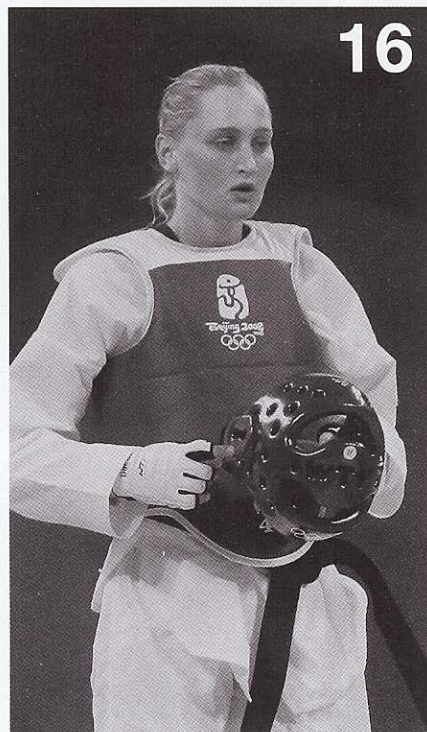
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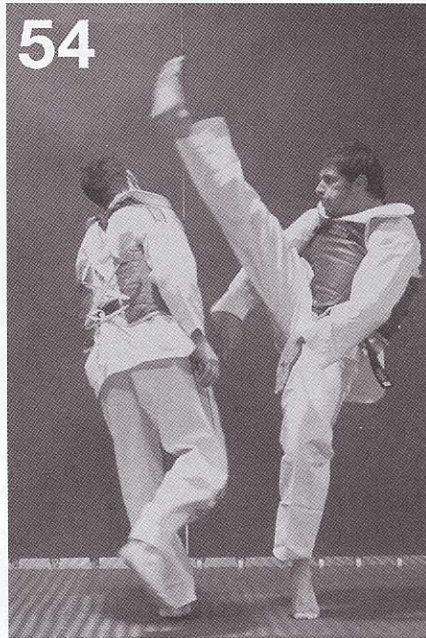
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By Stuart Anslow | Interview by Ruth Brown

PATTERNS with Punch

Real combat applications for TKD patterns

*Although all taekwondo students are required to know patterns to grade and continue their journey to Black-belt and beyond, many only see them as a meaningless series of movements, with no logical basis other than to be aesthetically pleasing. However, according to British taekwondo instructor Stuart Anslow, taekwondo patterns reveal some very specific self-defence techniques. He has written a book about the hidden applications of the Ch'ang Hon (ITF) form-sets, *Ch'ang Hon Takwon-do Hae Sul: Real Applications to the ITF Patterns*. Here, Anslow talks to ATKD about how the book came about, and reveals some of the many applications he details in its pages.*

Firstly, can you tell us a bit about your background in taekwondo and martial arts?

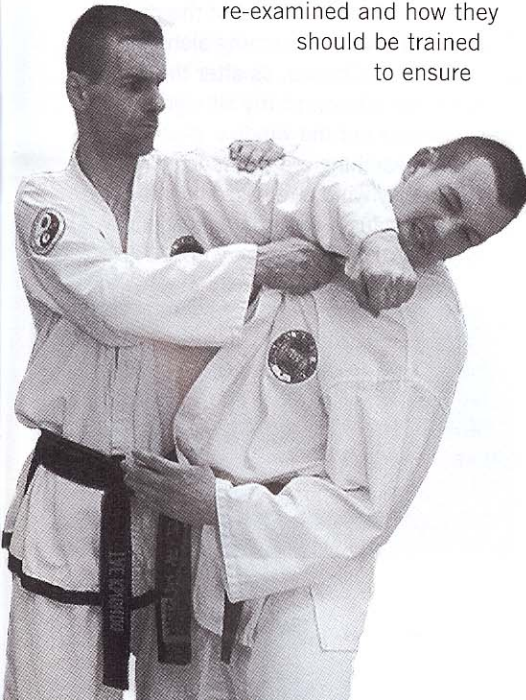
I became interested in martial arts whilst at school (I'm now 37). After dabbling in both Wing Chun and judo, I settled with taekwondo, receiving my Black-belt in 1994 and have continued teaching and training ever since. I am now a 4th Degree and run my own taekwondo academy in Rayners Lane, England.

When did you first become interested in forms and the practical applications behind them?

Many years ago I saw a small article by taekwondo Master Willy Lim and it showed a few pictures of him applying the so-called 'blocks' of taekwondo as arm-locks. I didn't really think of this memory until after I wrote the book, but I believe this was probably the initial spark for my interest in the patterns and their applications. Also, when I turned Black-belt, my instructor David Bryan told me to re-examine the patterns and the techniques within them and I did and have been doing so ever since.

When and why did you decide to write a book about it?

Taekwondo was a martial art designed, developed and first taught to an active modern military force, proven and tested in combat, in the harshest arena in the world — the battlefield, where the cost of knowing what works and what didn't really was the difference between life and death. Originally, I was going to write a book to convey the original intent in many areas of taekwondo that have been down-played or ceased to be taught at all in many modern schools, to highlight what parts of taekwondo need to be re-examined and how they should be trained to ensure



taekwondo keeps or redeems its martial status and hopefully get students and schools to start practising their art as it was originally intended.

However, the book evolved and although I felt — and still feel — my first book idea was needed, there seemed to be more of a call for a book that explains actual applications in the patterns of taekwondo, step-by-step, and this is what I resigned myself to do. This came about from discussions with taekwondo students at tournaments and taekwondo-related internet forums, after seeing the now immortal phrases, 'What's this movement for?' or 'Can someone explain why we do this in this pattern?', time and time again, relating to various movements contained in a Ch'ang Hon pattern.

understatement and my mind was made up, it was time to set the record straight and give the students of our art more tangible applications to what they practice day in, day out!

What kind of research did you do, and how did you put the book together?

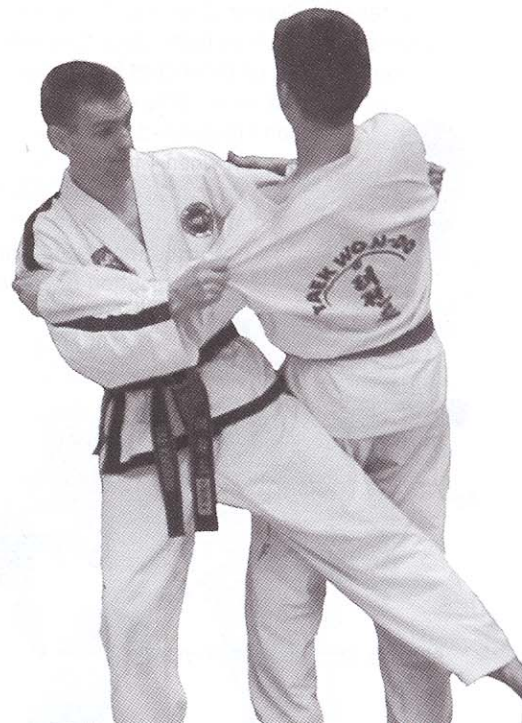
At first I was simply going to detail all the applications I had learnt to the various movements contained within the patterns and research why General Choi would have chosen to alter techniques he learnt from his previous training. But as I started to list out the applications, I came across certain movements and became aware that some applications didn't seem to fit. Often, the *Encyclopedia of Taekwon-do* had an application to a

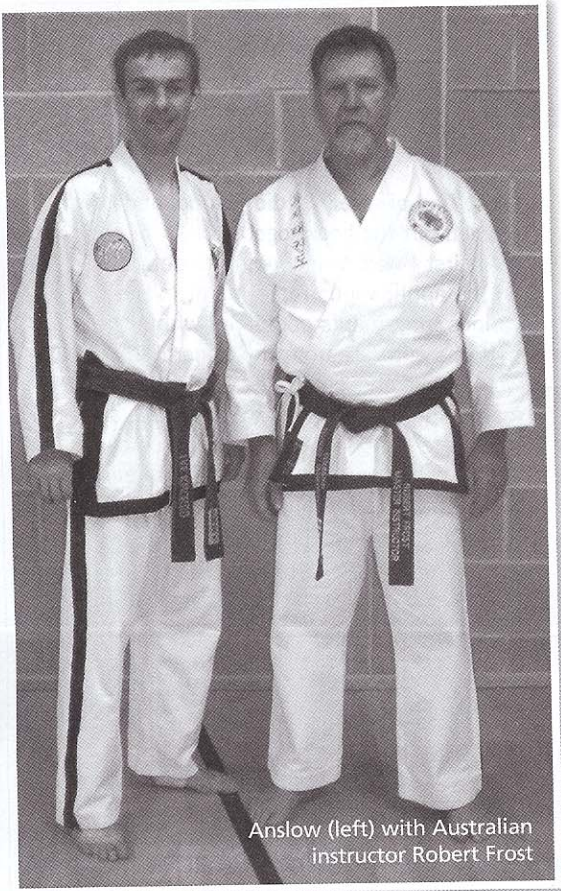
Taekwondo was a martial art designed, developed
and first taught to an active modern military force
proven and tested in combat, in the harshest arena
in the world — the battlefield

I was surprised at first, as many of the questions asked were what I originally thought were the standard applications taught to everyone. I became even more surprised when no one appeared to offer answers, or inevitably answers would start with the words 'maybe' or 'perhaps', so I ended up answering myself. However, the worst thing was that these questions were not always from junior graded students, but people teaching this art to others, the instructors.

In 2005, I finally resolved to knuckle-down and write the book after reading how a Black-belt had just been 'enlightened' about a movement that had foxed him for years after attending a patterns course with a taekwondo patterns expert! The movement was from Juche, the technique was the fingertip cross-cut and the student was ecstatic as he had finally solved the riddle that had foxed him for so long. He had been told this technique was designed to... knock an opponent's glasses off! And this was taught by a high-grade (modern) master! To say I was shocked was an

technique which was very basic or simply had little chance of working. Many were repeated for different techniques and even though I had often been taught different applications to the same movement that made more sense, when I really dug deep, I realised even these





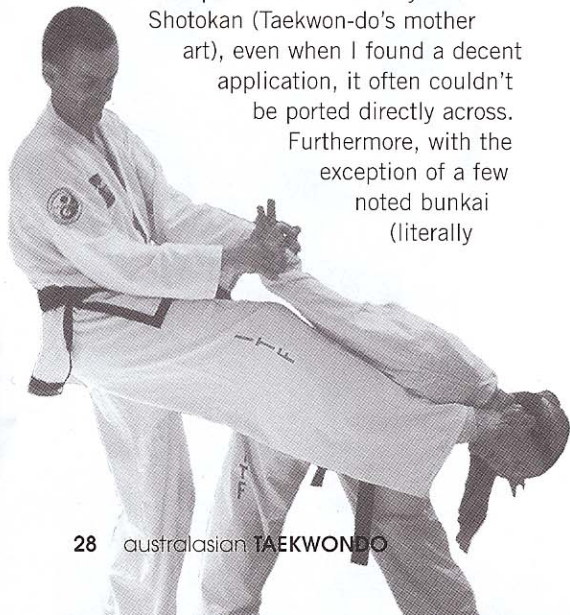
Anslow (left) with Australian instructor Robert Frost

needed to be researched somewhat, which is what I did.

Many of the pattern applications can be found by simply studying the Hosinsol sections of General Choi's books, though this still left some pretty big gaps. I wanted realistic applications and if I wasn't happy with an application or if it didn't make sense, I would research similar techniques or simply try out different applications to find one that fitted the MO (Modus Operandi) I had set myself. Apart from my own training, I researched the original kata General Choi learnt and the katas sources to find techniques that may fit, but as many of the moves in taekwondo are now performed differently to

Shotokan (Taekwon-do's mother art), even when I found a decent application, it often couldn't be ported directly across.

Furthermore, with the exception of a few noted bunkai (literally



'analysis', bunkai is the word practitioners of Japanese martial arts use to describe the practical applications of their patterns – ed.) researchers, much of the karate bunkai I came across was still very much of the block/strike variety and similar to what taekwondo students learnt anyway. When I did find something comparable in taekwondo and Shotokan, I'd ask myself how and why the taekwondo version is different. Was it modified or changed to suit army personnel, was a scientific principle unique to taekwondo added to it too, which may have altered it, or was it simply changed to acknowledge Korea in some way? All this is part of taekwondo's 'DNA' make-up.

The time period that taekwondo was formulated is unique; the information General Choi had available at the time and what I call taekwondo's 'DNA' make-up, all contributed to the conclusions I reached. In short, I tried to look through the eyes of General Choi and his first generation of pioneering instructors, many of whom had their own applications to certain moves that differ from each other and the General himself. The book is a combination of my own knowledge gained through training in martial arts and personal research to find more pragmatic applications to the taekwondo patterns.

The book's main focus is each of the patterns up to Toi-Gye (the seventh form), broken down into combinations with photographs and descriptions of the applications that can be used. The book also has in-depth research on the meaning of each of the patterns, which is a by-product of the research I undertook, plus much information on taekwondo itself as an aside to the pattern applications.

What has the reception to the book been from other instructors and practitioners?

The reception has been great from those I already know, such as Australia's own pragmatic taekwondo instructor and researcher Colin Wee, as well as from those I've never met before. I've had numerous emails from both students and instructors about it and for many it was an eye-opener. It has encouraged others to implement more realistic applications into their own training or classes and encouraged others to think about their own applications. All in all, a great thing for taekwondo. Many were surprised by all the other stuff in the book beyond the applications themselves, as writing it was a bit of a labour of love for me, so I included lots of additional stuff. I've also had visits from other

instructors, including some from around the world, such as Australia's Master Robert Frost from Toogee Taekwon-do which allows me to swap ideas and train with others, which benefits all that I do further, which is all fantastic.

Do you think understanding the applications of the forms is integral to understanding taekwondo?

If you want an in-depth art, then yes. If you're happy just kicking and punching and doing tournaments, then no. Personally, I am a martial artist and a teacher of my art and want it to be as detailed, practical and useful as it can possibly be. All taekwondo students spend a massive amount of time practising their patterns in class and on their own — they are required for every level of taekwondo — and a deeper knowledge of the patterns, realistic applications and how to translate that into practice and reality can only be a good thing.

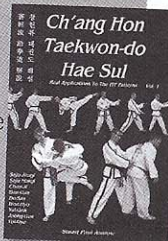
Do you think this is something that many instructors neglect?

This is actually a yes and no answer. Yes, it's neglected, but [this] wasn't always out of choice. A few years ago, everyone was simply doing the patterns without much thought and many instructors simply passed on what they were taught without questioning any of it. Now, they have a choice to teach patterns in a more realistic manner or continue as they have always done; the information is now out there if they want to utilise it and it's growing all the time.

Do you have any plans to release further books covering more of the forms?

Yes. This first book was in fact volume one of a planned three series that would follow up and cover the rest of the patterns. The second volume is coming along as quickly as I had hoped, as after the first book we had a baby, so my all-night writing sessions went out the window, plus I am still researching areas I'm not happy with, but they will be released eventually. Until then, volume one contains enough information to be getting on with. **ATKD**

Stuart Anslow's book, *Ch'ang Hon Taekwon-do Hae Sul: Real Applications to the ITF Patterns*, is available from Amazon. For more information, visit www.raynerslanetkd.com.



Do-San Tul

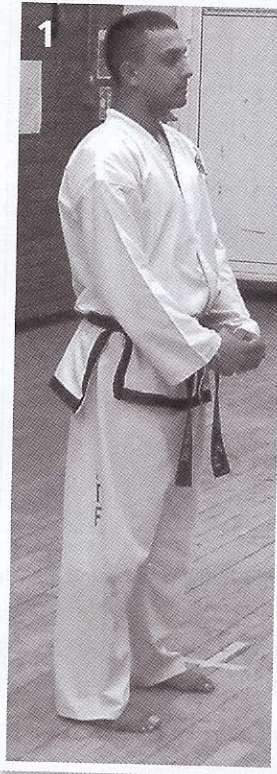
Do-San sees the student introduced to inside blocks, the straight fingertip thrust, 360-degree spinning motions and their purposes. It also introduces the students to split-second counter striking and starts to teach the student how to use techniques that flow into each other via the use of body mechanics rather than shifting stances. This pattern is split into combinations, mainly of two or four (two-by-two) movements and allows defences to be practiced to both sides. This pattern seems to concern itself chiefly with releases from wrist and arm grabs, followed by fast counter strikes. Do-San tul starts from the ready posture *narani junbi sogi* (parallel ready stance). Though there is no record of this ready posture having any significance, some believe it signifies a man in hand cuffs. However, subsequent patterns with the same ready posture (Yul-Gok, Choong-Moo, etc.) have no mention of the figure they describe being imprisoned so the reason is tenuous at best. Nevertheless, it remains a nice way to describe the posture.

Sequence #1

We will utilise the first set of combinations as a release and counter attack from a wrist-grab. Though these releases can be used if grabbed by either hand, we will use the first set to show the effect from a cross grab and the second for a same side grab (i.e. left hand to left hand or vice versa).

From the ready posture, the attacker grabs the student's left wrist with their left hand. The student immediately pulls the wrist to the chambered position (inside of the reaction arm) and then drops into the walking stance whilst performing the block. When applying the technique, the student's arm is brought up beyond the attacker's arm (the chamber) to enable the lock/release motion and then sharply put into place. I refer to a lock as if the attacker doesn't release, the arm becomes locked (the attacker's arm can also be clasped if needed). The chamber position not only raises the arm

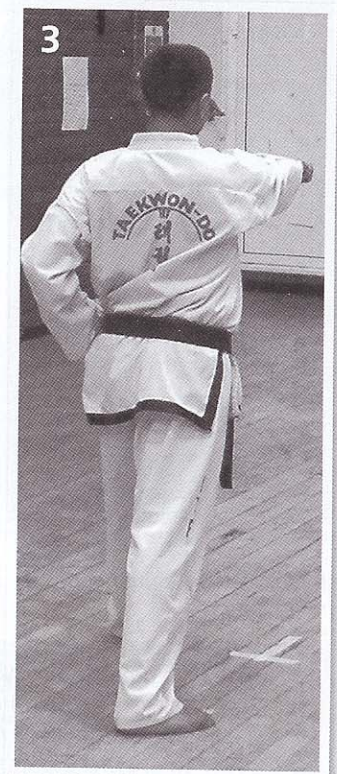
Do-San pattern #1



Parallel ready stance

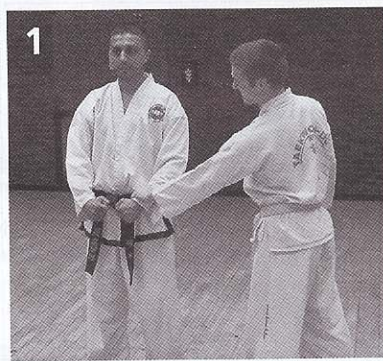


High-section outer-forearm side-block



Middle-section reverse fore-fist punch

Do-San application #1



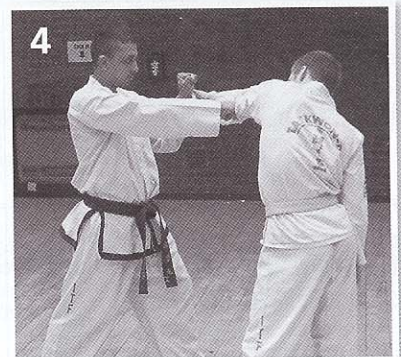
An attacker grabs the defender's wrist with their left hand.



The defender twists the attacker's hand up and over...



...and then drops into the walking stance whilst performing the block.

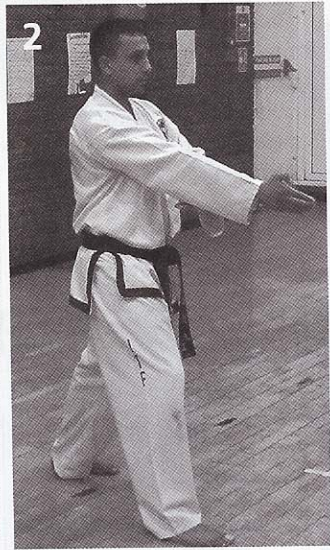


And follows with a reverse punch

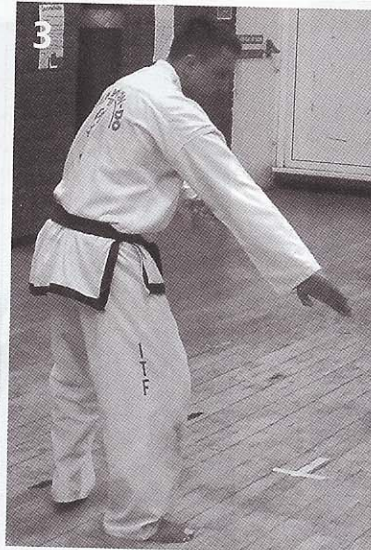
Do-San pattern #2



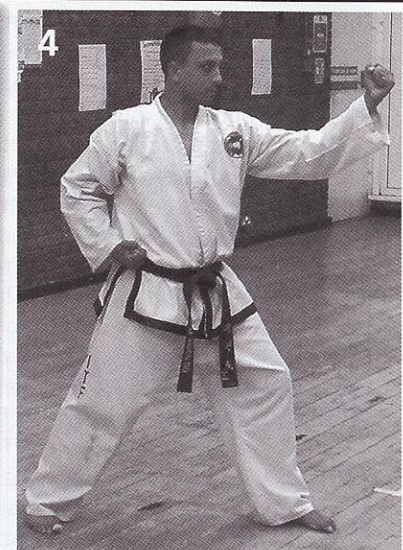
1 Middle-section knife-hand guarding-block



2 Straight fingertip thrust



3 Step around 180 degrees



4 Back-fist high side-strike

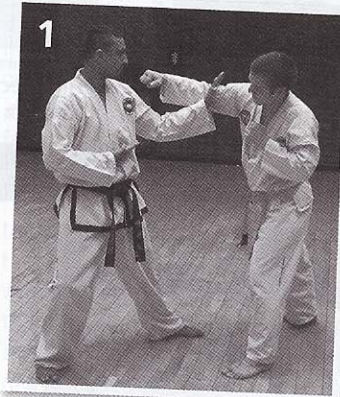
to the correct point to apply the release/lock, but also has the effect of nullifying an incoming strike by sharply twisting the opponents shoulders and thus, throwing the opponent's right shoulder backwards, taking power away from the opponents other arm in case an attack was imminent.

Sequence #2

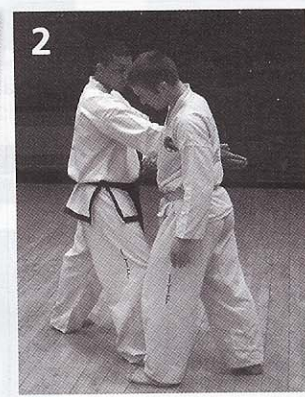
The fact that we are using a knife-hand, rather than forearm block leads me to believe we are moving away from our original opponent, rather than grabbing and breaking their neck (which we could do with this block) but the direction and angle of the knife-hand would possibly require more body motion to generate power for a throw using only the head. Plus, the fact that the block chamber doesn't start from a forward position first means we are not using the chamber as part of the block, but the end motion to strike into our opponent (of course, you can simply block if you want).

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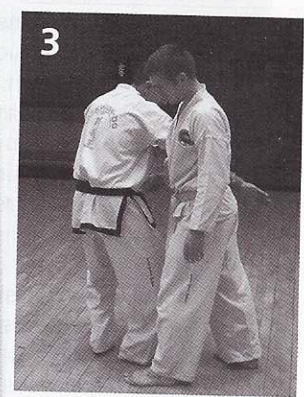
Do-San application #2



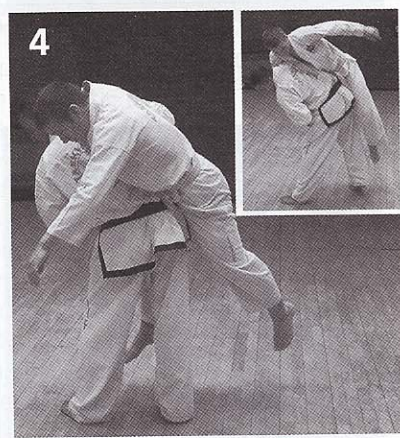
1 The attacker punches with their right hand, which the attacker blocks with a knife-hand guarding block.



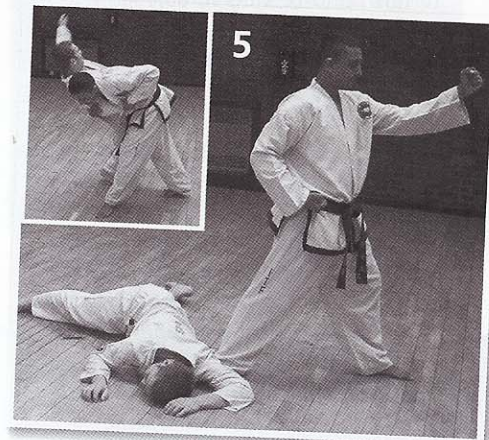
2 The defender slips his hand under the attacker's armpit...



3 ...twists back towards his left shoulder...



4 ...then, at 90 degrees, grabs onto the attacker's arm and performs a shoulder throw.



5 With the attacker on the ground, he turns a further 90 degrees, then executes a back-fist against any further opponents.