

Midori Yama Budokai: *Hanshi's Corner*
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Ichi go, ichi e: One life, one meeting

A world of grief and pain
Flowers bloom;
Even then...

Issa

Bu

“*Bu*,” usually translated (erroneously) as “martial,” is one of many Japanese words with which our culture has trouble in translation. First, *bu* is a concept, not a word. As a concept, it may have various shades of meaning, both inferred and implied. For the Western mind, which compartmentalizes every thing, this can be confusing and frustrating. Generally, the Western mind set is to have a definition for each word. Only when the word is used in a technological sense, do we feel somewhat comfortable with a different definition. A generator has different meanings for a mechanic, outdoorsman and optician, but each is correct within context. *Bu* is composed of two ideographs. The first, the two lines to the right, similar to half a square, represent crossed spears or halberds. The ideograph at the bottom left, represents a person who is standing still; that is, one who has stopped. The two combined represent the idea of stopping warlike efforts. However, the concept does not end there. For one to stop the war, one must know how the war is fought, and – consequently – how to end it. *Budō* – the Way of stopping warlike efforts – is a path of non-fighting, which is chosen by skilled fighters. That means that an “expert” in fighting has chosen not to fight. It does not mean someone who doesn’t know how to fight. When one is trained to fight and protect themselves or others, they have the choice to settle a dispute in a peaceful manner. *Budō* is a warrior virtue, as it requires very intense, hard work. A society that is lazy, dishonest and escapes responsibility will never know a peaceful society.



Zoor Khane (House of Strength)

Zoor (strength) Khane (house) refers to the martial art as well as the place it is practiced (refer back to *Shotokan*). It is the ancient martial art of Iran (Persia). At one point, this area consisted of a Dynasty stretching from India to Turkey (559 – 330 BC). Centuries later, their warriors actually resisted Roman Conquest at a time when Rome was at its peak (224 – 651 AD). Its geographical location has made it necessary to maintain a strong army. Unlike many cultures, Zoor Khane is strongly rooted in, not only its culture, but also its religion. Turkish (Ottoman) wrestling comes directly from Zoor Khane. Both are noted as forms of oil wrestling – that is, both wrestlers are covered with oil. The term used for oil wrestling is pishrow, which means to progress (see ranks). On the opposite side of Iran (Uzbekistan and northwest Afghanistan) there was a small kingdom called Farghana ruled by Babur, who was a direct descendant of Genghis Khan. This was the beginning of the 16th century. Babur became involved in a struggle for the throne, lost and had to flee to Afghanistan. Zoor Khane became a part of northern Indian culture,

which developed a strong wrestling tradition of its own. India has three main branches of kalaripayat; the northern, central and southern. Tradition holds that Zoor Khane, which exercises are different from the northern and southern styles, influenced the central style. Another difference in the central and other styles is the way it is taught. The central style is not taught in forms, but in practical drills. Footwork for the central style and Zoor Khane is for holds, throws and locks. Most dramatically, Hindus teach the northern and southern styles; Muslims almost exclusively teach Zoor Khane. The Sufis (“whirling dervishes,” from daerwish, meaning wandering mystic) use the same type of spinning (sema) as Zoor Khane. The former to reach an ecstasy with God (Allah); the latter to practice stability, coordination and balance. Zoor Khane is based on jaevanmaerdi, or chivalrousness. This chivalry is based on eight virtues; vaefa (loyalty), sedgh (honesty), aemin (trustworthiness), saekha’ (generosity), taevazo’ (humbleness), naesihaet (advice), hedayaet (guidance) and towbe (patience). These will lead to the four traits of a true warrior: ‘efaet (chastity), shoja’aet (bravery), hekmaet (wisdom) and ‘edalaet (justice). A champion is called paehlaevan. This was originally a military title used for the best and bravest officers. The best of the champions was jehan-paehlaevan, or world champion. Some zoor khanes use three other “ranks”: nowche, or beginner, nowkhaste, or youth and pishrow, or advanced practitioner (they have made progress), and great respect is given to age. As with western wrestling, zoor khane adherents use running, push-ups and calisthenics. As with *goju-ryu* practitioners, they use a variety of weight training methods. The mil is a variation of the Indian club, and may weigh as much as 45 pounds. As with Capoeira, exercises are done to music. The kaebade is an iron bow with weights attached to it. The saeng (stone) is a slab of stone (concrete) with a handle in the middle. They are pressed like dumb bells, but are in the shape of a shield. Each one is half the length of a man, and half again as wide. Bouts are decided when both shoulder blades touch the ground or mat. There is no count, only touching; consequently, all techniques are aimed at this goal. Leg takedowns are prevalent, as is a technique similar to *judo*’s *uchi mata*. Grapevines and half-nelson turnovers are popular.

For more information read Zoor Khane: History and Techniques of the Ancient Martial Art of Iran by D. H. Luijendijk.

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