

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

Jujutsu Kata of Wilson Kancho

Although the *jujutsu kata* taught by Wilson *Kancho* seem simple, they contain both basic and complex movements. [Often, the emphasis in the *kata* was more upon how the practitioner transitioned between striking or blocking techniques than upon the techniques themselves.] Wilson *Kancho* taught nine such *kata*, and later added two more, which were introduced by Rogers *Hanshi*. Beginning with this copy of “Hanshi’s Corner,” there will be one form included with each issue. They are given as learned by your *hanshi*, with notations of variations. Wilson *Kancho*, as with many masters, taught *kata* to the individual; consequently, each individual may have learned a slightly different way of doing the same form, based on what Wilson *Kancho* was stressing at the time.

Hand Kata I

From a ready position, the *jujutsuka* begins by stepping back with the right foot into a back stance and striking horizontally with the left arm (this is to create distance). [Rufe *Kyoshi* remembers that with each step back, the pressing arm was raised higher. He also recalls that he began from the ready position, with no backward step, moving directly into the [first] strike, [as follows.] **1)** Step forward into a right front stance with a flat-handed strike to the throat (the palm hits the chest and continues upward into the throat with the “V” of the thumb and fingers (the intent is to knock the wind from the opponent, then seal the airway). **2)** step back with the right foot into a back stance with a horizontal forearm strike (the right elbow is thrust backwards, which can be a strike into the solar-plexus of an opponent to the rear). **3)** Step forward into a right forward stance, thrusting with the right fingertips to the solar plexus (this was actually a “snap” technique, not a thrust; the idea was that the technique would be done so quickly the fingers would snap back on their own – the *jujutsuka* would not pull them back). [Rufe *Kyoshi* remembers the left arm being placed across the lower rib cage, with the back of the hand beneath the right elbow.] Rufe *Kyoshi* shared the following anecdote with Rogers *Hanshi*. He asked Wilson *Kancho* about the power of the “snap back.” Rufe *Kyoshi*, states that Wilson *Kancho* threw a snap punch, which drove Rufe *Kyoshi* backwards, but without any physical contact! **4)** Step directly to the right side into a natural stance (*shizenhontai*) and perform a two-handed grasping block [Rogers *Hanshi* learned this as an arm bar; For Rufe *Kyoshi*, this was referred to as a parry.] **5)** Step forward with the right foot (right front stance) and strike the left side of the neck with the right knife-hand (palm up). **6)** Repeat number 2). **7)** Step to the right front corner with the right foot into a “Sumo” stance (or [low] horse stance) and strike upward to the genitals with the right ridge hand. [Rufe *Kyoshi* remembers this as a spear hand to the inguinal crease, which caused the opponent to bend forward for the next attack.] **8)** Immediately follow with a low-level side thrust kick to the right front corner (this attacks the inside of the opponent’s left knee). [Rufe *Kyoshi* remembers a [front] kick [with the knife-edge of the foot] done directly forward to the throat, when the opponent bent forward.] **9)** The right foot moves to the direct right side into natural stance and a strike with the right knife-hand (palm down) is made to the [neck] (or throat) [of an] opponent [on the right side,] as the left

arm is brought across the chest, palm up (the left hand has grabbed and pulled the opponent into the attack). [Rufe *Kyoshi* remembers that the right hand was raised, so that it was vertical above the head, thumb forward.] **10)** Step into a right front stance, blocking with the left tiger's mouth (a grab to the nerve centers against the knee) and striking to the collarbone with the right knife-hand. [Rufe *Kyoshi* recalls that the hand was inverted so the thumb faced outward, with the fingers toward the inside; this prevented the opponent's knee from dislocating or breaking the thumb. [Rufe *Kyoshi* comments that the palm-heel block was then performed against the nerve center in the center of the thigh.] **11)** Step back with the right foot into a left front stance and perform a left rising block (the hand made into a fist, [with a right rear elbow strike as before]). [Rufe *Kyoshi* remembers this as being the highest level of the forearm guard; consequently, some *sensei* remember it simply as a forearm guard without a rise.] **12)** Step forward with the right foot (right front stance) and perform a right upper-level (or rising) punch. **13)** Step back with the right foot into a left front stance and perform an open-hand rising block [with a right rear elbow strike]. **14)** Step forward with the right foot into a right front stance and perform a flat spear-hand to the eyes (or throat). [Rufe *Kyoshi*'s memory is a "splayed finger" strike to the eyes, with the fingers loose in case they struck hard areas of the skull.] This was actually the way Wilson Kancho performed his "snake-hand" strike as a defense against a knife attack, so the "splayed finger" technique is most probable. **15)** Step to the right with the right foot into a natural stance and strike the lower abdomen (or "groin") with the right hammer fist ("down block"), the left fist, palm up, is brought across the lower abdomen; [Rufe *Kyoshi*'s remembrance is a short back stance (or reverse front stance)]. **16)** Step forward with the right foot (right front stance) and strike with the "reverse rack hand." I don't know another name for this, and have not seen it in any other style. It's a sort of cross between a back fist and roundhouse punch. **17)** Step to the right side with the right foot into a natural stance and strike the lower abdomen with the right "rack hand" (backfist), left fist, palm up, across the abdomen as for number 15). **18)** Step forward into a right front stance and perform a right inside-out block. [Rufe *Kyoshi* remembers being taught to perform the inside-out block from a back stance.] Without returning to ready position, the sequence begins over to the left side, beginning with the flat-hand strike to the neck. These would be movements 19) through 36). Originally, the *kata* ended with a left front stance and left inside-out block. Rogers *Hanshi* suggested that two steps backward with punches (as in Tae Kwon Do form Chon Ji) would return the *jujutsuka* to the ready position. Wilson *Kancho* accepted the suggestion and included the two rear stepping punches. Older students still end the *kata* as originally taught. It should be noted that, unlike *karate kata*, *jujutsu kata* did not always end in the same spot they began. [Rufe *Kyoshi* comments that: "When in doubt, the hand "at rest" ought to be placed on the hip."] All comments in [brackets] are those of Rufe *Kyoshi*, who was kind enough to look over the notes of your *Hanshi*.

Bersilat: Malayan Self-defense

Although "Bersilat" actually translates as "self-defense," it is the name of the system's founder, who was a woman. It is heavily influenced by Chinese and Indian fighting systems. Legend states that in 1511, while living in Sumatra, Bersilat received the system in a series of dreams. Later, the art was taken to Malaya. As a woman founded the art,

Malaysian weddings include a Bersilat form as part of the ceremonies. This public display is known as silat pulat. The actual combat techniques are known as silat buah, and are taught in secret. Bersilat should not be confused with pentjak silat, which is a different art taught in Indonesia. Pentjak is also known as Pukulan and Kun-tao and, simply, silat. There are about sixty styles, as each village has its own carefully guarded system. There are two major distinctions of these arts. First, they are designed strictly for combat; there is no sporting aspect to them. Second, they are very spiritual in nature and the practitioners profess being able to tell the ability of the exponent from his spiritual attitude. In fact, the hierarchy of instructors in one system is based on spirituality. The guru is the teacher, who is technically proficient, and has begun his inner spiritual development. With greater development of his inner power, he may become a maha guru or master teacher. The highest of these levels is a pandekar, who is renowned as a spiritualist and master teacher.

Egyptian Stick Fighting

Egyptian stick fighting is one of the most ancient martial arts in the world. Today it is practiced during religious ceremonies and processions as well as sport and game. The original Egyptian was done as a form of entertainment, but was based on actual fighting systems or shield and sword – similar to Okinawan *timbe* and *rochin* (shield and spear). Consequently, it is used as a single stick, rather than double stick, as in the Filipino **arnis** or **kali**. It is believed that the stick was not an actual battlefield weapon, but a means to practice the deadly techniques with a non-lethal weapon. Its main advantage was keeping the Egyptian army trained and ready for war without casualties during training. It was, and is, used to settle disputes between members of rival families, mostly in the outlying villages. The stick itself is about four feet long (as is the *jō* of Okinawa and Japan). It is called an **asa**, **asaya**, **assaya** or **naboot**, and is swung in large figure-eight patterns. As this was the sign of infinity, or eternal life, in Egypt, the pattern is religious in origin. The speed and violence with which an adept can swing the stick is discernable by the displacement of air. As with **capoeira**, the practice, or fight, is accompanied with music. Instruments used are the **tabvol**, or bass drum, and the **mizmar**, a shrill pipe. The drum is two-sided and worn with a shoulder strap, causing it to hang sideways in front of the drummer. It is played with two sticks. The right hand holds a heavier stick with a hooked head, which are the heartbeat of the rhythm. The left hand uses a light twig, used as a switch, to produce rapid-fire staccato sounds. The deep sound of the heavier, knobbed stick is called “**doom**.” The higher sound from the switch is referred to as “**tak**.” Originally, men practiced the art, and the stick was regarded as a symbol of masculinity. Later, when women practiced the fighting, they dressed as men. Women also created their own highly flirtatious style, which was incorporated into cabaret or “belly dancing.” This style is known as **Ra’s el Assaya**, or Dance of the Stick, which includes balancing the stick on the head, hip or shoulder.

***Seven Taoist Masters: A Folk Novel of China*, translated by Eva Wong**

This book introduces us to the Seven Taoist Masters (Seven Immortals) of The Complete Reality School of Taoism. This school is very close to Zen Buddhism, on which many modern martial arts are based. Wang Ch’ung-yang is the Taoist monk that teaches the

Seven Taoist Masters. Ch'ung-yang means the rebirth of yang, which is life and growth as used here. Together they refer to rejuvenation physically and mentally. Each disciple represents a different way of achieving Tao. Ma Tan-yang is the first disciple, whose name means "bright, pure pill," referring, of course, to the Golden Pill. The Golden Pill is a synthesis of three energies: generative, vital and spiritual. The Pill gives rise to conception and development of the spirit, leading to immortality through simplicity in thought and action, after overcoming complacency. The second disciple, Sun Pu-erh ("No Second Way"), is resolute in pursuing the Tao with singleness of mind without straying from the path (the second way). Hers is the most difficult path. She totally abandons the ego through sheer discipline ("disciple" is, of course, the root word of "discipline") of mind and body, after realizing intellectualism is preventing her from achieving Tao. In the words of Shakespeare: "{S]he thinks too much!" Ch'iu Ch'ang-ch'un, or "eternal spring," is the third disciple, whose name refers to continuous growth. When one's body is eternally young (like spring), they have achieved immortality. Ch'iu does this through unshakeable faith in the teachings, after overcoming impatience. He is always interrupting Wang during discourse, and continually wants more than he is ready for. Fourth is Liu Ch'ang-sheng, "longevity" or "eternal life," who achieves the Tao through intuition and using desire to conquer desire, as sexual desire has prevented him from achieving his goal. The fifth disciple is T'an Ch'ang-chen ("forever enlightened" or "eternally enlightened"), who must overcome pride through the stability of mind and strict discipline. Hao T'ai-ku, the sixth disciple, represents "the ancient," referring to following the teachings of Tao's cofounders: Lao-Tzu and the Yellow Emperor, of "the Ancient Days." Hao attains his goal through selfless giving, overcoming rigidity of thought and body. Finally, there is Wang Yu-yang ("bright jade"), representing the clarity of enlightened consciousness. The most enlightened beings dwell in "The Palace of Pure Jade," and are said to have merged with the Tao in its undifferentiated state. Wang finds this state in the absolute stillness of meditation. The above is taken from the book's "Introduction." Each of the following chapters is a treatise on Taoism given as discourses by Wang Ch'un-yang to his disciples. Each disciple represents a different way of achieving the enlightenment of Taoism. If you are interested in Oriental philosophy, especially as related to the martial arts, this is an excellent source book. Many of the things alluded to in *The Golden Flower*, will be made clearer.

Shinobi/Ninjutsu

Shinobi literally means to "steal in," that is, "sneak in." This referred to a method of becoming "one of the crowd," and not being noticed. *Ninjutsu* is a different way of pronouncing *shinobi*, but refers to methods and applications by the *ninja*. A *shinobisha* (a practitioner of stealth) could be anyone, including the samurai, who used methods of stealth to infiltrate an area. In the Tokugawa era, *ninja* referred to assassins and terrorists with no sense of honor. In either case, the method was to blend in. For the *shinobisha/ninja*, the idea was to become one of the classes of feudal Japan. This consisted of seven "disguises": A *sarugaku* dancer, a *ronin*, or masterless *samurai*, a *komuso* (flute playing monks who wore huge basket-like hats), a priest, a *yamabushi*, or mountain warrior, a merchant and a strolling player (entertainer). Although, Grandmaster Hatsumi states that the "black" costume actually had a touch of red, so if the *ninja* were cut, blood did not show and added to the "superman" myth of invulnerability, one could

not blend in by wearing a black suit and hood. S/He might as well wear a sign with “NINJA” printed on it. Stephen Turnbull, an author of Japanese culture and history, believes that historical documents refute the black costume of the *ninja*, citing at least two examples. In the first, the *ninja* “‘did not give their battle shout on entering’ as they ran around killing, so the defenders thought they were traitors from within...” In part, this was due to the fact that “the *ninja* dressed like the defenders, the better to cause confusion...” Second, Turnbull states that: “Most of the *shinobi* operations...imply the use of disguise so that the spy or assassin could mingle with his surroundings.” In both of these examples, the *ninja* was dressed as those around him, which led to even greater confusion. If the *ninja* dressed in such a costume at all, it was on very rare occasions. The “black-clad assassin” was no more real than the “heroic *samurai*.” Both were what the public was led to believe, not historical fact. This is much like the concept of the “deadly gunfighter” of the American West. The quick draw holster, which rides low on the thigh, is a recent development. The truth was, the western gunfighter carried his holster on his belt, as our law enforcement officials do today, or even in his pocket. On some rare occasions, a few used a shoulder holster. Depictions of the consistently black clad *ninja*, were based on what the artists of the eras believed the *ninja* wore. The black outfit associated with the *ninja* is what the scene changers in the *Kabuki* theatre wear. With the black curtain in the background, they blend in and one has to be very observant to notice them at all. Centuries before Japan had the *Ninja*, China had the *moshuh nanren*, which were the cadre of spies mentioned in Sun Tzu’s, *The Art of War* (*Ping Fa* in Chinese). Sun Tzu wrote: “...there is nowhere you cannot put spies to good use.” Just as the *tengu* (demons) were to have taught sword techniques to certain *samurai*, Chinese *moshuh nanren* claimed descent from *lin kuei*, or mountain demons. In each case, the demons were believed to have magical powers, which they transmitted to the *moshuh nanren* and *ninja*. Just as the former Japanese *ninja* joined the police force, military and *yakuza* (Japanese “Mafia”), the Chinese *moshuh nanren* formed the *t’ongs*, or brotherhoods and the *Triads* (Chinese “Mafia”). The Korean *wharang*, or flowering knights, were influenced by the *moshuh nanren*, and in Malaysia, the criminal gangs were known as “nightsiders.”

Chinese Medicine

For those interested in Chinese Medicine, probably the single best book is *A Barefoot Doctor’s Manual: Practical Chinese Medicine and Health*. This book was first published by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. There is a foreword by Victor W. Sidel, M.D., who, at the time, was President of the American Health Association. There are 960 pages, consisting of traditional acupuncture, moxibustion, and herbs, as well as modern Western techniques. The book was originally meant as a text for health workers in China. After extensive chapters on the human body, hygiene and diagnostic and therapeutic techniques, the text gives instruction on the acupuncture points, their locations and uses. In the back of the book are over 500 herbs and how to prepare them. Each diagnosis is accompanied by the illness, its symptoms, and treatment. The treatment includes the aforementioned Western techniques, Chinese acupuncture/moxibustion and herbal treatment. The book has to be read to be believed, there is such a wealth of information. If the healing arts appeal to you, this would be the book to begin you on that path.

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