

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

Jujutsu Kata of Wilson Kancho: Kick Kata III

Your *hanshi* learned a slightly different version of this as “kicking combinations.” However, Rufe *Kyōshi* learned it as Kick Kata III. The comments placed in (parentheses) will be those of Rogers *Hanshi*.

Wilson *Kancho* taught this *kata* to emphasize transition. For him, the transitions were more important than the strikes (kicks), although the kicks had to be done correctly. [Wilson *Kancho* referred to this as a *kata* of Chinese kicks as opposed to Japanese kicks. According to his definition, Chinese kicks were done from behind the supporting leg, and Japanese kicks were done from in front of the supporting leg.]

From a ready position, turn to the left (90° counter-clockwise), drawing the right instep behind the left knee for a crane stance.

Perform a mid-level side kick.

Step down into a horse stance leaning to the left (Chinese: bow and arrow stance, which is a variation of the front-leaning stance of *karate*).

Rotate the right foot and turn the left shoulder to perform a left “true” back kick. For Wilson *Kancho*, a true back kick is performed without rotating the hip. The heel goes straight to the target with the toes pointing directly downward.

Lower the left foot in front of the right foot, moving into a left bow and arrow stance, facing the direction to which you just kicked.

Rotate the body to the left (counter-clockwise) and perform a whip kick with the right foot. The target was inside the groin or beneath the floating ribs.

The right foot swings behind the left foot.

Do a right rear kick, and step away from the opponent into a left bow and arrow stance. (Your *hanshi* learned this as a right displacement kick, which is a form of the rear kick. From the right whip kick, the right foot was brought down in front of the left foot. The right foot had to point straight ahead, with the weight on the right foot! The *jujutsuka* looks over his or her left shoulder. The opponent has to believe the kick will be with the left foot. The *jujutsuka* should be able to kick with that foot if necessary! (This was the version shown to Rufe *Kyōshi*.) The head must remain erect without leaning back and without dropping forward. The arms swing in the opposite direction to counter-balance the kick, which prevents loss of balance for the kicker. Two of Wilson *Kancho*'s kicks were delivered off the weighted foot: the displacement kick and the offset kick. Generally, it is believed to be mechanically impossible to kick off the weighted foot. Consequently, these kicks, which are not found in other styles, are designed to take the opponent by surprise.)

The right instep is placed behind the left knee in a crane stance. (Your *hanshi* was taught a left drop kick, following the displacement kick. From there, the *jujutsuka* moved back into a side facing horse stance, and repeated the sequence to the opposite direction.)

Step back out and rotate the feet to the right. The left foot moves into a crane stance (left instep behind the right knee), and the *kata* is repeated to the opposite direction.

Note: A drill for the crane stance and side kick, began from a side horse stance. We brought the foot behind the knee. From this position, we “pulled” with the instep, rotating the supporting foot 90°. At the completion of the rotation, we did the side kick, and brought the instep back into position behind the knee. We then rotated another 90°, until all cardinal directions were covered. The drill was then done to the opposite side. Wilson *Kancho* stated that if one were right-handed, do fifty with the right leg and one hundred with the left.

The drop kick is not the one used in wrestling, which is more akin to Savate (La Sabat). For the *jujutsu* drop kick, one drops to the mat/ground onto the right knee and both forearms. S/He kicks to the rear with the left heel as for a rear kick. S/He may look over the left shoulder, or beneath the left arm. The second method prevents the leg from twisting into a side kick. There are two methods of rising from the drop kick. The first requires a cross pivot, the kicking leg crossing behind the right as one pushes up with both hands. The second method is more dynamic, requiring the practitioner to “leap” to his or her feet. S/He pushes up with both hands as though for a “seal” pushup, simultaneously bringing the left knee upward through the arms, “as though trying to hit his- herself in the chin.” One comes to his or her feet in a narrower stance than the one s/he began from. The arms swing into a defensive posture.

Makiwari Use – and Misuse

The following words of wisdom are from *Uechi Ryu* great George Mattson *Kyoshi*, and a fellow practitioner of *Uechi-ryu* – Gordi.

Moderation is the key to successful, lifelong *karate* training. Expertise comes with tenure and smart training, not harmful methods and overwork. A three-word axiom that applied to all training comes to mind: CONSIDER SAFETY FIRST! Any training, which injures or causes disability - other than the expected sore muscles or occasional bruise - must be avoided at all cost! Building power (different from strength) must be accomplished slowly and gently, without damage to the body and spirit of the practitioner or the partner. This is the message of *Sanchin*, and *karate* in general - become a "Whole Person". This simply can't be done by going overboard, endangering one's health for the sake of procuring a set of scary-looking knuckles but compacted metacarpals, huge biceps, triceps, and pecs but no sense of balance when punching or blocking, great abs but no understanding of breathing, muscular legs but poor posture especially in the lower back, and so forth. One can have all these desirable attributes, but only by balancing the training and going slow.

One of the areas of training that was remembered was the absence of calisthenics type of exercises. One learned a warm-up set of basic exercises that included techniques from the *kata*. Most of the emphasis was on the actual *karate*. This included *kata* (forms), *bunkai* (applications), *kumite* (prearranged and freestyle sparring). Auxiliary exercises included *kotekitae* (arm conditioning) and strength drills, or the use of various devices to enhance the muscles used to deliver *karate* techniques. In Wakiyama Japan, the original *dojo* where Uechi Kanbun first taught, no exercises were taught as part of the class. . . at least not in 1966. His class was heavily influenced by two person drills with emphasis on arm conditioning and free style sparring.

Uechi Kanbun also formalized the aforementioned exercises. He created a set of ten warm-up exercises, (*junbi undo*) and additional supplementary exercises (*hojo undo*). The

junbi-undo were the original, simple stretching exercises beginning with the feet and finishing with the neck. The *hojo-undo* were movements from the *kata*. These were blocks, punches, kicks and elbow strikes with stepping added.

Classes with Tomoyose Sensei lasted about 2- 2 1/2 hours and were quite strenuous, but the energy was spent doing *karate*, not just exercising. When asked, Tomoyose stated that all the strength, speed, coordination, accuracy and most importantly the "spirit" comes from the *kata* and most especially *Sanchin*.

Although specific techniques from *kata* were practiced as drills, Tomoyose stressed that this was to help learn the sequences of the moves. The ability to use the movement comes from the *kata*. He further clarified the issue by saying that the farther removed the techniques were from the *kata*, the less effective they became. Learning a snapping-block (*hajiki-uke*) as part of a *kata*, creates a different and more effective "muscle memory" than a block simply repeated a thousand times in the form of a drill.

Although he allowed students to practice on a *makiwara* (pounding stake), he repeatedly emphasized that it was unnecessary and actually blocked correct development of both the punch and the fist-weapon. Body and mind would develop best through the *kata*. When hitting the *makiwara* one has to stop hitting when the following conditions are met: hip motion is good, the shoulder is locked down correctly but still mobile, the wrist is straight and tendons tensed properly to protect the wrist joint, and the follow-through is strong. At that point, the *makiwara* training has served its purpose - and one is ready to work application in a "less static environment." The strengthening is accomplished on the inside with strong and proper form, good snap in the punch, a clean twist to the delivery at the end, and good internal control of power. It is not accomplished with large, callused, deformed knuckles and broken cartilage. Tomoyose was fearful (at least back in the 50s), that too much emphasis was being placed on the devices, and not enough on the *kata*. The equipment so cherished by many foreigners today is only a set of training tools, and such training, like anything else, can be overdone. A competent instructor should carefully supervise such training.

Tomoyose felt more comfortable with the Chinese way of training rather than the Okinawan and later Japanese influenced methods, and emphasized that the *makiwara* was a tool, to be used to strengthen the tendons and muscles used for a punch. . . not to develop the punch! And certainly not to develop the knuckles! He didn't believe in training with *makiwara*, etc, and stated that all your training could be attained through practicing your *kata*. In essence, the power and the real fighting are in the *kata* - not in the bagwork, etc He believed equipment training has its place in a student's life - but only as tools for the understanding of proper body dynamics and motion, and to help learn and practice a good application safely. Tomoyose often chastised one for abusing the *makiwara*, showing the weakness in a fist by pressing the end of his thumb between the spaces of bruised knuckles, smiling as one cried out in pain! Kanbun taught that the *makiwara*, (improperly used) created pillows on the fists.

The Okinawans are rightfully credited for adding a dimension to martial art's training that includes the *makiwara*. Properly used, these devices can help speed up the strengthening of weaknesses in the individual. Some very traditional teachers believe that these "weaknesses" will be corrected through the *kata*. . . a bit more slowly, but more healthful and more accurately and that outside devices were not necessary.

Okinawan *karate-ka* build their strength and endurance over long periods of time and mostly through exploration of form and *kata*, and use equipment sparingly. In most Okinawan *dojo*, use of this equipment is sort of like a curative for a specific weakness - a medicine, if you will, but in no *dojo* seen in downtown Okinawa is any such training mandatory.! Weak punches may be strengthened by various means, including use of certain heavy training equipment. Weak or poorly balanced kicks may be balanced and focused through use of the heavy bag. I have seen great fighters do bag work only occasionally, and the same with *makiwara* training, *chishi* training, for weak wrists and shoulder joints. They work till they have accomplished a certain feeling of ability, looseness, stability in the wrist joint or hip, balance, etc. - then go on to effect an application of this training in *kata*, *bunkai*, and *kumite*. The object of bag work or *makiwara* training, etc. is to feel balance and power in the technique and apply that to the sparring partner or the street situation.

To be honest, great fighters and *kata* performers have done an ENORMOUS amount of bag work and other strenuous training with *dojo* equipment - but only during a specific point in their training, and mostly to remedy a specific weakness they have discovered in their form - be it fighting or *kata*. Once corrected, all this extra exertion tapers off except for occasional periods of "maintenance training", and this is far less intense than the initial corrective training.

Zen Kobudo: Mysteries of Okinawan Weaponry and Te

Mark Bishop dispels quite a few myths in this book. Many of them cherished as gospel. However, for those who want real history, this is one of the best books on the subject. There are over fifty hand-held weapons recorded for Okinawa, which are divided into twenty-one types. Some are commonly known and taught; some are rare; and some are probably not known or taught outside of Okinawa. Following is a list of the types:

I. Metal Weapons (bladed)

1. Yumi-ya or bow an arrow. This includes the *oyumi* or longbow, *koyumi* or short bow and *ishi yumi* or crossbow.
2. Katana or sword, which includes the single-edged sword (katana proper), *ryōba katana* or double-edged sword, *kogatana* or short sword, *tantō* or knife, and *yamanaji/yama gatana* or "mountain sword," a broad-bladed, single-edged sword.
3. *Naginata* and *bisento*, the Japanese and Chinese glaive, respectively.
4. *Yari* or *hoko*, the hand-held spear. This includes the *puku* or hunting spear and the *tuja* or three-pronged fishing spear.
5. *Rochin* and *tinbe* (or *tinbei*), the shield and short spear.
6. *Kama* or sickle, which includes the *nichogama* (*nicho kama* or *mamori kama*) (as the *kama* are usually used in pairs), *irana kusarigama* or two sickles connected by a chain, *rokushaku kama* or six foot staff with a *kama* attached to one end, and *toyei nobori kama nata* or staff with a hatched type blade at one end.
7. *Kuwa* or *kue* or *how*. This is a broad-bladed, mattock-like agricultural tool.

II. Metal Weapons (non-bladed)

8. *Sai* or three-pronged metal truncheon with one straight prong and two curved prongs. This also includes the *manji no sai*, in which the two curved prongs face opposite directions and the *nunte* (*nuntei*) which is a seven foot staff with the *manji sai* attached to one end (also called the *nunte bo*).

9. Suruchin or chain (sometimes rope) with weights at both ends. This also includes the gekiguan, which is a short bo with a weighted chain or rope at one end.
10. Tekko or knuckle duster (“brass knuckles”). These are usually used in pairs and may be made of wood.
11. Ticchu, tecchu or techu are short, tapered metal (sometimes wood) metal rods with a swivel ring at the center.

III. Wooden Weapons

12. Bō, kon or kun, a staff. The different types are the kyushaku bō or nine foot staff, hasshaku bō or eight foot staff, rokushaku bō or six foot staff.
13. Jō or short staff, also called tsue, sutiku, sanjaku bō (three foot staff), yonshaku bō (four foot staff) and goshaku bō (five foot staff). This also includes the tankon or staff for single-handed use, the take no bō or bamboo sticks, the guan or guan jo, which is a heavy ovoid cross-sectioned stick and the tanbō or nijō tanbō usually used in pairs, the method is similar to Arnis’ “double sticks.”
14. Kai, eiku, eku or ueku is a long paddle-like oar.
15. Nunchaku, nunchiku, nunchakukun, renchaku, sosetsu kon or nuchiku. What they are not are “chucks,” (they don’t belong exclusively to “Chuck”) “nunchuks,” (these are presumably used by woodchucks) or “numchucks!” (And these are used by numb skulls!). These include dajio, which is two sticks joined by a length of rope, uchi bo or renkuwan, which is a long-handled flail-like weapon with two rods of unequal length joined by a rope. Sansetsu kon is a weapon with three long lengths of wood joined by chains.
16. Tonfa, tunfa, tuifa, toifa, tenkua, taofua, tonfua, tunkua or tuiha are wooden sticks with handles set at right angles to the staff, and used in pairs.

IV. Miscellaneous Weapons

17. Kasa is an umbrella made of paper and bamboo. Kristen Alexander’s mother was very adept at using this particular weapon!
18. Ogi or fan. This was a paper or cloth fan carried by the Okinawan nobility.
19. Kanzashi or hairpin. This was a poniard shaped weapon used to hold the topknot in place.
20. Kiseru was a tobacco pipe with a long stem; chimi was a plectrum used for playing stringed instruments; and mame or dried beans used as throwing weapons.
21. Kaki or firearms. These included the kenju or flintlock pistol and the hinawaju or musket.

With few exceptions, the nobility of Okinawa used these. The common people rarely, if ever, used them. In addition, there was never a recorded use of any of them against the Satsuma clan from Japan. After 1609, the fighting arts were done by individuals or families for recreation, spiritual development (not religious!) or personal self-defense. The peasant farmers and fishermen did not develop them. These classes were too busy trying to eke out a living. Only the nobility, with idle time, could indulge in these fighting arts.