

**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 IV (AKA Displacement Kata)***

Once this *kata* was learned, the *jujutsuka* was required to do it on paper (without tearing the paper, and preferably without moving the paper). Training was begun with a full sheet of newspaper and gradually reduced to an eighth of a page, approximately the size of notebook paper. The *kata* is begun facing North. **1)** From *shizenhontai*, the *jujutsuka* performs a right front snap kick to the North. **2)** The right leg is returned to position, displacing the left, which performs a left displacement kick to the South. **3)** The left leg is brought back through the right knee as the *jujutsuka* pivots 90o clockwise and performs a left displacement kick to the West. **4)** S/He then pivots 180o clockwise and performs a left displacement kick to the East. **5)** Without placing the left back onto the mat, a left front snap kick is performed to the West. **6)** A left displacement kick is done to the East (Wilson **Kancho** referred to this position as the “key position,” when done with partners. The “opponent” in this position had to move quickly to avoid being kicked.). **7)** The sequence now begins in a counter-clockwise direction, as a right displacement kick is done to the South. **8)** This is followed by a right displacement kick to the North. The *kata* now continues to the opposite side, beginning with: **1)** A left front snap kick to the North. **2)** The left leg is returned to position, displacing the right, which performs a right displacement kick to the South. **3)** The right leg is brought back through the left knee as the *jujutsuka* pivots 90o counter-clockwise and performs a right displacement kick to the East. **4)** The *jujutsuka* then pivots 180o counter-clockwise and performs a right displacement kick to the West. **5)** Without placing the right foot back onto the mat, a right front snap kick is performed to the East; **6)** (“Key position”), a left displacement kick is done to the West. **7)** The sequence now begins in a clockwise direction as a left displacement kick is done to the North. **8)** This is followed by a left displacement kick to the South. After the last displacement kick, the left leg is brought back to beginning position.

Number six was referred to as the “key position” as this form was also done as a five-person training form. Four persons surrounded the *jujutsuka* and blocked/parried the kicks. As the right/left front snap kick was followed immediately by a left/right displacement kick, timing was different – one had to move!

**Nuba Wrestling**

The Nuba of Sudan, Africa practiced a form of martial arts wrestling over 2,800 years before Christ. No other records in any corner of the world that can claim such a long, and unbroken martial arts tradition. This form of martial arts, which included weapons as well as fortification, and certainly empty hand self-defense, blossomed in 12th Dynasty Egypt. According to an oral tradition, the Nuba began wrestling in order to imitate certain species of monkeys, which were abundant in the hill country. The young monkeys played by trying to overthrow each other. The Nuba wrestlers imitate certain animal and insect characteristics while wrestling. Like a baboon or monkey threatening its foe, the Nuba will rub his hands on the ground; (and it helps his grip). He stamps his feet and roars like

a bull. Flicking his tongue and moving his fingers like a large flying insect, the Nuba dances into the ring, not as a man, but representing the spirit of his cattle herd. The athlete that is first to take his opponent to the ground, wins the match. Some wrestlers wear gourds around their waist. Unbroken gourds testify that the wrestler has not lost. But, if they are taken down, it is both embarrassing to them and painful when these gourds break against their bare buttocks. Every Nuba boy has the dream of one day representing his village in a wrestling match.

Wrestling is the medium that coherently ties together the various aspects of Nuba life. The sport is important to the Nuba for both social and religious reasons. Wrestling is the Nuba way to prepare a boy for manhood while providing an opportunity for all young men to achieve. Successful wrestlers marry more advantageously and enjoy a status that will follow them to the grave. The religious implications of Nuba wrestling are more complex, containing at least three interrelated ideas. First, wrestling is closely related to ancestral worship. Second, wrestling is closely connected with fertility rites. Finally, wrestling is the channel through which the participants dramatize their animistic beliefs. Wrestling has continued to unify an otherwise dislocated and isolated people. The importance of this sport to the Nuba cannot be overestimated.

### *Nyūmonsha*

*Nyūmon* may be used to mean the entrance to a building, an introductory text, the jointing of a traditional *ryū*, or initiation into a given doctrine. *Nyūmon suru* means “to join the dojo.” *Sha* means a person who does something, specifically one who practices – a practitioner. *Nyū*, whose character may also be pronounced *irimi*, means – in the context above – to enter in. *Mon* is a gate. Therefore, a *nyūmonsha* is a person who enters in to practice an art. Literally, one who enters a gate. One of the first Japanese books on *karate* is titled *Karate-do Nyūmon*, translated as “An Introduction to the Karate Way.” It was compiled by the Society for the Study of Japanese Karate. Kodansha published a different book, written by Funakoshi Gichin, also titled *Karate-do Nyūmon*. In this case, the translation was “The Master Introductory Text.” It is explained that it “is an introduction to the world of karate.” In both instances, the implication is that *nyūmon* refers to a beginner who is introduced to the art (in this case karate) s/he has chosen to pursue. Dave Lowry explains in his book, *The Best of Dave Lowry*, this refers back to the original design of Japanese houses. The houses may have been square, but to enter into them, one traveled through a spiraling passage. They were almost mazes. To reach the center, one had to go around and around through a series of openings – gates. Only family members and trusted friends were allowed in the heart of the home – the *okumona*, or “hidden spaces.” This was carried over into the martial arts. Only family members or trusted friends/students were allowed into the *okuden*, or “hidden arts,” of the *ryū*. A person who is at the (first) gate and about to enter has a long path ahead of him or her. This is why Japanese never refer to themselves as *Sensei* or *Shihan*, *Renshi*, *Kyōshi* or *Hanshi*, and are never personally addressed by these honorifics, other than *Sensei*. These, when used by the individual, imply they have learned all there is to know, which is never the case. As there is always another gate (something else to learn), one is always a *nyūmonsha*!

### ***Dai* and *Sho* or “Large” and “Small”**

Translated as “Large” and “Small,” gives the false impression that one form is “larger” (longer) than the other. *Dai* and *Sho* refer to the complexity of the form, not the length. It has a direct correlation with the large and small sword. The use of the long sword is more complex than that of the short sword; consequently, the same nomenclature was used for two forms of the same name. The more complex form was named “*Dai*,” and the less complex form was referred to as “*Sho*.” This misunderstanding has led some styles to rename the forms according to length, not complexity. One may argue that a longer form is, by definition, more complex than a shorter form. However, the basic *Heian* belie this belief. If followed to its logical conclusion, *Heian* III would be the least complex, with twenty movements and *Heian* IV would be the most complex with twenty-seven movements. If length equaled complexity, the order of the *Heian kata* would be *Heian* III, *Heian* I, *Heian* V, *Heian* II and *Heian* IV. In passing, your *hanshi* would state that the first form he learned was *Heian* IV.

### ***Kata* or Form**

One of your *hanshi*’s admonitions is: “Listen to your *kata*!” This is said in reference to understanding the *bunkai*, *bunkai oyo*, *henka* etc. The question has been posited: “How do you listen to the *kata*?” As with most things, the answer is simple; the practice is as complex as you wish to make it. “Listening to the *kata*” is, in many ways, similar to listening when someone speaks. You have to pay attention to what has been said before and what is said after, not just what is being said at the time. With *kata*, what comes before a movement, and what comes after a movement? Both listening to a conversation and listening to a *kata* require that you concentrate. If your mind wanders (the “monkey mind”) you will not understand, or only partially understand, what you are being told. In addition, as with a conversation, many times it is what is not said, as much as what is said that is important. For example, the first three moves of *Heian* II may be continuation techniques or combination techniques. The first and fourth movements may be all that is needed. The rear (upper) arm blocks and the front arm attacks (with an “uppercut”). If done with power and to the appropriate *kyusho*, this may be all that is needed. However, if the opponent dodges the uppercut, then the subsequent “chamber” parries his forward arm as the upper arm circles to perform a punch to his or her ribs. This may be then be followed by a strike to the head/neck with the parrying arm, or the opponent’s arm may be locked across your chest. The side kick to the rear may be a knee (the “chamber”) to the opponent’s ribs and the knife hand may be used to lock the opponent’s arm, or to facilitate a throw. As with any conversation, what you “answer” depends upon what you hear. When you listen to a *kata*, it is similar to listening to music. What is the rhythm of the *kata*? What motif is repeated, and why? Where are the pauses (caesuras) and where are the crescendos? Answers to these questions will explain what the *kata* proposes to teach, and the principles underlying the form. For example, slow movements usually indicate some type of hold (lock, choke, etc).

Baker *Hanshi* gives the following analogy: “The objective of the *kata* builds with the moves before a certain movement. Like a wave coming in from the ocean, that movement builds to a crescendo and then returns to the sea which would be the after movement moves, only to repeat itself again in another manifestation through a different wave. As you listen to the waves crashing to the shore, there is always that pause before

the next wave arrives. That rhythm and that timing is what you listen for. The combination of blocks and strikes are all part of the wave to achieve the desired goal. As one goal is completed, the next one begins. Like water that flows between the rocks and other barriers before arriving to shore, the interpretation of the movements will vary based on what the barriers are. By listening to or sensing the barriers our opponent has in front of us, we can complete our objective.”

Hanyes *Kyōshi* adds: “The concept of listening to your *kata* goes far beyond simply studying the *kata* that you are learning at the moment. Someone who is sincerely interested and wishes to completely understand what is going on in their *kata* must also study the history and the evolution of the *kata* as well. Consider the following story...

Let's say an individual by the name of Joe has been training for quite a while. He develops a series of *karate* techniques that he is working on. After a while, he starts putting these techniques into a *kata*. Now he is not creating this *kata* for the wrong reasons (i.e. creating a legacy, leaving a mark, pumping his own ego), but instead for all the right reasons. He is simply doing this for his own personal benefit, and he doesn't necessarily want to teach anybody else his personal *kata*.

Then someone comes along and sees him practicing his personal *kata*. Let's say that this person is named Fred. He likes what he sees and asks Joe to teach him the *kata*. Therefore, Fred ends up learning the *kata*. Then Fred leaves the *dojo*.

Over several years Joe continues to develop the *kata*. He tweaks certain moves, he adds series, and he deletes other parts. Then ten years later, another person named Julie asks him to teach her the *kata*. He ends up teaching her the *kata* as well. Eventually, Julie also leaves the *dojo*.

Joe continues to work on his *kata* for several more years, and after another ten years the *kata* has continued to evolve. At this time, another student by the name of George asks Joe to teach him the *kata* also. Joe teaches George the *kata* and the next day, Joe dies.

At the funeral, many people come to pay their respects. Among these individuals are Fred, Julie, and George. At this time, they begin to discuss the *kata*. Fred says, “I learned this *kata* 20 years ago and my way the is the correct way, because it is the original.”

Julie says, “Well, I learned this *kata* 10 years ago, and the way that I do the *kata* is different than the way that you do the *kata*. My version is correct.”

George says, “Well, I learned the *kata* three days ago, and since mine is the most recent version, mine is the most correct.”

The question is, which version of the *kata* is the correct version? The answer is, they all are. If Fred, Julie, and George taught each other their versions, then they could study the evolution of the *kata*. Therein lies the true value of *bunkai*. One *kata* is simply a snapshot of a point in time where a person's thoughts were at that moment. Studying several versions of a *kata* can provide a much broader and deeper understanding of the *bunkai*.

So when we talk about “listening to your *kata*,” a practitioner must not only study the version that he does, but also as many other versions as he can.”

### ***Mokujin* or Man of Wood**

This is the Okinawan version of Wing Chun's Muk Yan Chong (Mook Yan Leong), or "Wooden Dummy." There is no "standard version," as there is in Wing Chun. Although used in the same manner – simulation of a training partner – the actual dummy is limited only to the participant's ingenuity. A version of this with a movable "arm" is seen in the Okinawan *kaketebiki*, or "to hang and pull with the hand." This may be found in *Manual of Karate*, translated and adapted by E. J. Harrison. There should be at least one set of "arms," preferably two sets for both mid-level and upper-level techniques. In addition, there should be at least one angled "leg" to practice blocking and trapping with the foot and leg. There is actually one Wing Chun book (*116 Wing Tsun Dummy Techniques as Demonstrated by Grandmaster Yip Man*, written by Master Yip Chun), which gives instructions on building this training aid. One of the simplest is two four-by-fours joined in a cross shape. The areas used for striking or blocking may be covered with padded carpet. A somewhat more elaborate dummy would be a round piece of telephone pole with two hardwood rods angled through it as though for a saw horse stood on end. These, of course, would be the arms. The "leg" would be a piece of wood at approximately a 135o angle to simulate the knee and shin of the opponent.

### ***Hiji Ate or Empi Uchi?***

Although the terms above are often used interchangeably, there is a technical difference. *Hiji ate* (elbow hit) would be comparable to *tsuki*, or a straight punch or thrust (if thrusting with the fingers, it is technically referred to as *sashi*). *Empi uchi* (elbow strike; literally, "monkey arm," usually given as "long arm") would be similar to a backfist or hammerfist delivery (*uraken uchi* or *tettsui uchi*). Simply put, the *hiji ate* moves in a straight line and the *empi uchi* moves in a curved line. Technically, it would be *ushiro hiji ate*, *yoko hiji ate* and *otoshi hiji ate*, but *age empi uchi*, *mae empi uchi* and *mawashi empi uchi* (this may be *mae mawashi empi uchi* or *ushiro mawashi empi uchi*).

### ***Hikite or Pulling Arm***

In *karate*, this arm retracts to the side as the technique is performed. This was also treated as an *ushiro hiji ate*. Generally, the power should be greater than the block or strike. Traditionally, one could tell the style by the placement of the *hikite*. *Shurite* (from which *Shotokan* was derived) pulled the fist back to the hip. In *Tomarite*, the fist was retracted beside the floating ribs. *Nahate* (from which we get *Goju-ryu*, *Uechi-ryu* and *Kyokushinkai*) brings the fist to the level of the armpit. *Hikite* is also the name used for a variation of *kake-uke* (hooking block). The blocking hand follows through with a grip and pulls the opponent off-balance. A further variation is *hinerite*, or twisting hand, which is more effective than a straight pull. Either variation is coupled with a simultaneous counter-attack.

### ***Osu no Seishin: The Spirit of Perseverance***

This is the motto bequeathed to *Kyokushinkai Karate* by its founder, Masatatsu Oyama, also known as Sosai Oyama. It refers to never giving up. This is best exemplified in Oyama's *hyaku nin kumite*, or hundred man free fighting. As of 2001, only fourteen men completed this grueling test of perseverance. It is one hundred bouts of two minutes each with full contact. A unique feature is that strikes and punches to the head are not allowed, but kicks are. A knock out of over five seconds disqualifies the participant. At least half,

or fifty, of the fights must be clearly won. These wins may be *ippon gachi* (full point win), *waza ari* (95% of a technique, usually referred to as a “half point”), or *yusei gachi*, win by superiority. It was introduced in 1965 when Oyama fought three hundred men over three days. Originally, it was the requirement for 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> *dan*, but he soon found that not everyone had the perseverance to complete it. When first implemented, the participant was to fight fifty men a day over a two-day period. Later, in 1967, Oyama changed it to one hundred men in one day.

### ***Chiburui* or Blood Swinging**

*Chiburui* is the original classical pronunciation for *chiburi*. This is the movement of shaking the blood from the sword after a cut. Found in virtually all *iaido* systems, it is symbolic only. It is not sufficient in real combat after striking a human target. The only real cleaning action is to wipe the blade with a piece of cloth or paper (*washi*). This is referred to as *chinugui*; literally, “wiping off the blood.” Only then can the sword be returned to the scabbard without subsequent damage to the blade from the blood’s moisture. *Chigatana* refers to a bloodstained blade.

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