

Midori Yama Budokai: *Hanshi's Corner*
Written by Ron Rogers *Hanshi Meiyo Kyoju*

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Ichigo, ichi e: One life, one meeting

The best relationship is one in which your love for each other exceeds your need for each other.

Dalai Lama

***Bu* or “Stopping Combat”**

Bu, as has often been stated, actually means to “stop combat,” which is the basis of all military units. One can't be defeated if there is no fight! The persons comprising these units were known as *bushi*, or military persons, generally referred to (erroneously) as *samurai*. These individuals learned their skills in what today we would refer to as *busen*, or military colleges. *Bugei* referred to the old style (*koryu*) military arts prior to the 1600's. *Bujutsu* were the military techniques forming the technical knowledge of a combat form. *Bushi no nasaki*, or “the tenderness of a warrior,” referred to the concepts of mercy and tenderness which were meant to balance militarism. These were further elaborated upon in the concept of *bushido*, or “way of the warrior.” *Bushido* was a code of ethics and etiquette designed to guide the warrior in leading a respectable life. Foremost among these concepts was “*bushi no ichi gon*,” or “the word of a warrior.” “*Jutsu*,” or “art,” refers to technical proficiency for combat. “*Do*,” or “Way,” is for the development of character. *Budo* was the development of the *bugei* into ways of life through self-development.

Ch'ueh Yuan shang-jen

Ch'ueh Yuan shang-jen was a Chinese martial artist from Honan province. He is noted for expanding Bodhidharma Daruma's Eighteen Hands of the Lohan (Shih Pa Lo Han Sho) to seventy-two hands. This just a few decades after Daruma made the form. In all probability, Yuan is actually responsible for turning the Shaolin Temple into a martial arts academy. Daruma was interested in bettering the health of the monks so they could concentrate on meditation and exercise. Yuan was more interested in offense and defense for military goals. However, Bodhidharma was born into the kahatriya, or warrior class of India, and learned these arts before converting to Buddhism. He was the third son of Sugandha, a king in the southern Indian area of Conjeevernam (Kancheepuram). This was a Buddhist province just south of Madras, India. Some historians contend that the original form was really “Sixteen Hands of the Lohan,” and the Chinese monks added two others later in history.

Bodhidharma, aka Daruma and Ta-mo, was the twenty-eighth patriarch of Buddhism after the historic Buddha, Sakyamuni, and the first patriarch of Zen Buddhism in China. His religious teacher was Prajnatarata. This teacher also changed his disciple's name from Bodhitara to Bodhidharma. Although he was reputedly the first to bring Chan (Japanese: Zen; Sanskrit: Dhyana) to China from India, his teachings were far too difficult and strenuous for the average person. Bodhidharma met the Emperor Wu at Chin-ling (now Nanking, China). Wu was the Liang Dynasty Emperor (502 – 557 AD). However, the Emperor could not fathom Bodhidharma's teachings. Frustrated, Bodhidharma left and

traveled to the Shaolin Temple. It was Hui-neng (637-713 AD) who made Zen understandable for the Chinese mind and is the true “Father of Zen” in China. Hui-neng took the difficult abstract ideas of Zen and aligned them with Taoism. In this way the Chinese mind could relate to Zen.

Richard Kim states that Hsiang Ch’a Hsiang P’u is the Chinese name of an ancient East Indian fighting art. It had deep roots in Buddhism, and mendicant monks were taught and used this form of fighting long before China had martial arts. Classical references which allude to India being the birthplace of the martial arts are The Lotus Sutra, or Saddharma Pundarika in Sanskrit (*Hongyo-kyo* or *Hokke-kyo*, in Japanese) the art of vajramushti and a dance (resembling *kata*) called nata. The *Hongyo-kyo* describes a fight between Prince Nanda and Devadatta, using techniques alleged to be the forerunner of ch’uan-fa (Mandarin for the Japanese “kenpo”) and later *karate*. This sutra had a profound affect on Nepal and Tibet. This “India Connection” is alleged although China contends the martial arts for China were developed during the reign of the mythical-legendary Yellow Emperor, Huang-ti, who lived 5000 years ago.

Fukien

The Fukien Coast is far to the east of China’s coastline, bordering on the China Sea. This was where much trade between Okinawa and China occurred after 1600 AD. There were many great martial artists who resided in this area and this is where visiting Okinawans were taught the techniques and sometimes the deeper meaning of the martial arts. It was from this coast that the “thirty-six families” came in 1393 and settled in Kumemura, a village near Naha, Okinawa. Kumemura is known as Toei in the Hogen dialect of Okinawa. These families were carefully selected by the Emperor of China. Kamekura families made friends with these emissaries and were taught the Chinese martial arts from them. One of the best known martial artists, though not one of the families, was the emissary Kushanku. He was a martial arts master who visited Okinawa and lived in the Kamekura district. After a brief but ineffectual attack by Karate Sakugawa at the Izumizaki Bridge, he offered to teach Sakugawa important lessons of the martial arts. Sakugawa studied with Kushanku both before and after the death of Sakugawa’s sensei, Takahara in 1756 (also given is 1762 as Takahara’s date of death). In addition to teaching *karate*, Takahara was a genius, holding teaching assignments in astronomy, cartography mathematics and Zen. Many believe he was the true creator of *Kanku Dai* and *Sho*. He mapped the western coast of Japan and was instrumental in the reconstruction of Loo Choo after devastating destruction in 1742. Prior to this period, the T’ang Dynasty (618 – 906 AD) influenced Okinawa in many ways, including the naming of “T’ang Hand” (*Tode*). Later, the Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644) greatly influenced the development of Okinawan martial arts. It was during this time the *kon (bo)* became an Okinawan art. The city of Fuchow is the capital of Fukien Province. This is the city where the legendary RuRuKo taught. Nakaima Norisato (1850 – 1927) left his home in Kumemura, Okinawa and went to Fuchow for his education. While there, he worked with RuRuKo, taking the precursor of *Ryuei-ryu* back to Okinawa, which he taught to his son, Kenchu. Kenchu taught only one person in his life – his son, Kenko, from whom he extracted a promise of secrecy with a *heppan* (blood oath). Nakaima Kenko kept the family secret hidden until 1971. At this time he felt there was no longer any reason to keep the art hidden and opened a *dojo* near Nago, Okinawa in that year. Many of the Okinawan masters believed

it was a hoax until they saw the art demonstrated by Kenko. He was then accepted as a bonafide karate Master. In addition to his father, Kenko also studied with Kentsu Yabu. In addition to Nakaima, RuRuKo (aka Ryuru Ko, Ryu Ryo, Ryu Ryo Ko and Liu Liu Kung) taught Higonna Kanryo, through whom *Koeikan Karate* traces their lineage. RuRuko taught Higonna, who taught Kyoda Juhatsu. Kyoda taught Onishi Eizo who founded Koeikan. Higonna was taught five *kata*, which were *Sanchin*, *Seisan*, *Sanseiru*, *Seipai* and *Suparunpei*. RuRuKo also taught Uechi Kanei, founder of *Uechi-ryu Karate*. Uechi originally taught the first three forms, *Sanchin*, *Seisan* and *Sanseiru*, later creating additional forms indigenous to his system. RuRuKo's style was Southern Shaolin Ch'uan Fa, known in Japan as *Nakitsuru Ken*.

Ieyasu Tokugawa and Karate

Ieyasu Tokugawa influenced, albeit unknowingly, the course of *karate*. When he took over as Shogun in 1603 he had to deal with the Satsuma clan of Kyushu. The Satsuma were rebellious and powerful, so Ieyasu sent them to “conquer” the Okinawan people. The ostensible reason was Okinawa's refusal to send aid to Japan in 1592 for the war against China. In 1610, when the Satsuma arrived, Shimazu Ichisa imposed one of two bans on weapons, which had a profound affect on the development of unarmed combat techniques in Okinawa. In great understatement the Satsuma were stated to “not always [have been] the most well-behaved individuals.” Contrary to popular belief, however, there is not one documented case of *karate* being used against any of the Satsuma warriors.

After the Satsuma Venture, surviving martial artists met secretly in 1629, and the rudimentary art of what we know as karate was called “*te*.” *Te* was a blend of the previously existing *tode* and imported ch'uan fa from China. Supposedly, *te* was based on the following systems: *taiso*, or closed fist techniques, were from Okinawa, Taiwan gave the *nukite* to the system, *kaishu*, or (other) open-handed techniques, were from china and kicks were derived from southeast Asia. *Taiso* literally means progenitor and refers to the T'ang Dynasty. Although this dynasty gave its name to Okinawan martial arts as *tode*, its actual association with Okinawa is lost in long-forgotten history.

Errata

Although “*embusen*” is usually translated as “performance line” (as for a *kata*), it may also be used to mean the line of force between opponents.

Hito kata sannen, or “one *kata*, three years,” was a saying made famous by Funakoshi Gichin, who emphasized prolonged study in depth of one *kata* before learning another. Funakoshi states that he studied *Naihanchi (Tekki)* for this length of time, and Motobu Choki had his students do the same, before teaching them another form. As most of Motobu's students did not stay with him this long, he gained the reputation of teaching only *Naihanchi*.

Miyabi refers to “refinement,” or the elegance of a martial artist's behavior.

Loo Choo is the traditional name of the *Ryu Kyu* islands, popularly known as Okinawa. The name Loo Choo was first used by the Emperor Yang Chien of the Sui Dynasty. He had sent men looking for the “Land of Happy Immortals.” What they found was Okinawa, but no immortals. Okinawa literally means “rope in the offing,” referring to 140 islands stretching over 700 miles from Japan to Taiwan. Okinawa has come to refer

to all the islands, although it is the name of an individual island within the *Ryu Kyu* group. In addition to developing karate, *Ryukyu* is also noted for the Iriomote cat, one of the rarest in the world and not scientifically recorded until 1967. It survives in the rain forests of the westernmost island of the same name.

“*Os*,” is actually a contraction of “*onegaishimasu*,” meaning “I humbly request a lesson.” From this we learn that it actually refers to the opposite of its stated meaning, which is usually given as, “I understand.” To “humbly request a lesson” would imply that one does not understand. *Wakarimasu* means “I understand.” *Wakarimasen* means “I don’t understand.”

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