

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

**Eighteen Hands of the Lohan**

Li was a martial artist from Shensi province. Along with Ch'uch, he expanded Bodhidharma's Eighteen Hands of the Lohan into 170. He then divided the form into dragon, tiger, snake and crane actions. Historically, these two men were supposed to have given moral principles as underlying themes to the Lohan form. This is doubly interesting in that "Li" ("Ri" in Japanese) may mean reason or underlying principle for any given action. The Lohan was named after the 18 legendary Lohan (Arhat or Bodhisattva, a Buddhist who has attained Nirvana), who started out as bandits, converted to Buddhism, and were so devout that they became "enlightened." These Lohan had well-respected martial arts abilities and their unique specialties were preserved for all time as 18 statues that still exist in the (northern) Henan Shaolin Temple. They are revered as saints today, and even their statues are considered saintly. Originally, the style was composed of one set of loose techniques, the "18 Routines of the Lohan" (routines meaning "patterns"). Note that there were eighteen patterns, not just eighteen methods (hands)! During the next few hundred years, at least 18 forms were developed for this style. By the end of the Ming Dynasty, a long Lohan Ch'uan form developed that had 18 "lu", or roads, with three sections each, making 54 sections in total. These are the names of the original 18 Lohan:

1. Xiang Long (Descending Dragon)
2. Yi Duo (Move Much)
3. Da Mo (Reach Touch -- also Mandarin name of Ch'an sect founder Bodhidharma)
4. Mou Lian (Eye Link)
5. Fu Hu (Ambush/Tame Tiger)
6. Nan Kan (Difficult Endure)
7. Dao Wu (Way Understand)
8. Zhi Gong (Good Public Works)
9. Bu Dai (Cloth Sack -- also name of Shaolin founder)
10. Li Feng (Power Wind)
11. Kai Xin (Joyous/Open Heart)
12. Bu Qiu (Not Demanding)
13. You Po (Excellent Old Woman)
14. Liang Wu (Rafters Fighting -- also Liang's Way of Fighting)
15. Fei Ren (Flying Vibration -- weapon)
16. Jin Shi (Enter Lion)
17. Jin Deng (Enter Lamp)
18. Chang Mei (Long Eyebrow)

**“Correct” Kata**

The question comes up from time to time, “What is the correct way to do *kata*?” Each style has their own interpretation for that answer. In most styles, each group of that style has a slightly different answer! Your *hanshi meiyō kyōju* has learned at least four different variations of just the *Heian kata*. In addition, because of body type, or possible

physical limitations, each instructor may vary the way a form is done. In addition, previous experience in other styles or systems of combat will influence how one does the *kata*. The *kata* of *Shotokai* is very different from *Shotokan*, although its founder, Egami, studied with both Funakoshi Gichin and Funakoshi Yoshitaka. Otsuka *Sensei*, who founded *Wado-ryu*, was also a disciple of Funakoshi, both father and son. However, Otsuka was a Master of *jujutsu*; consequently, his *karate* was quite different from both *Shotokan* and *Shotokai*. Oyama Masutatsu *Sosai*, who also studied with Funakoshi, interpreted the *Pinan*, according to his previous training in Korean T'aekwon and *Kodokan Judo*, as well as his study of Chinese circular motion. Kanazawa *Sensei*, one of Europe's greatest *sensei*, has made changes, based on his concept of *kata*. *Karate* is an art, and as such is subject to interpretation. But, like painting, the principles of the art must be maintained. The *Heian kata*, which were derived from the *Pinan kata*, are very different in the way they are done. This does not make them "wrong," just different. Funakoshi Gichin, in his *Karate-Do Kyohan*, stated that the *karate [kata]* done at that time was quite different from the way it was done "even ten years [before] on Okinawa." If a guest instructor does a form slightly different than the way you do, ask why. If they give a reasonable explanation, based on correct principles, that way is correct **for them**. If the form has been changed just because someone thinks it looks better, be hesitant to accept it. The long answer to the question is: If the form you are doing maintains, and does not violate, the principles of the form, it is correct. The short answer is: The way your *sensei* tells you to do the *kata* is correct!

### ***Tegumi in Relation to Kata***

*Karate*, like most martial arts, was developed on the idea that it's a pretty good bet your opponent is most likely untrained and has no idea how to fight scientifically or with any sort of skill. However, if you run across a drunken smartass who fancies himself a grappler you may be in for a rough time. "You can be a 10<sup>th</sup> *dan* on your feet and a white belt on your back." In 1908 Itosu Anko defined the purpose of traditional *karate*, in a letter to the Okinawan education authority. He wrote, "[*Karate*] is not intended to be used against a single skilled opponent but instead as a way of avoiding injury by using the hands and feet should one by any chance be confronted by a villain or ruffian." Two facts stand out: first, the original *karate* was not designed for dealing with a single skilled martial artist in a ring or in the *dojo*; second it is a means of keeping ourselves safe against unskilled opponents. Itosu also states, "Enter, counter, withdraw is the rule for *torite*," an old term for grappling which means "seizing hands." According to Itosu the traditional *karate* way of dealing with civilian grappling is to get in there (enter), do some damage (counter) and then, once it is possible, flee (withdraw). Traditional *Karate* did not concern itself with outfighting a single skilled opponent, but instead focused on simple, direct methods needed to ensure skills in a self-defense situation against unskilled opponents. *Karate* of that era did address grappling under those conditions. However, *karate* did not contain the grappling methods for dealing with a skilled single opponent. Later, Itosu's students recorded examples of this strategy in their own works. Nagamine Shoshin tells us that Motobu said, "The applications of *kata* have their limits and one must come to understand this. The techniques of the *kata* were never developed to be used against a professional fighter in an arena or on a battlefield. They were, however, most effective against someone who had no idea of the strategy being used to counter

their aggressive behavior.” This is not to say *karate* is in any way deficient, but that it was designed for a certain set of circumstances. Consequently, we need to be clear on what kind of grappling we are discussing. In the 1935 book “*Karate-Do Kyohan*” Funakoshi Gichin, the founder of *Shotokan* karate – and another student of Itosu – wrote “In *karate*, hitting, thrusting, and kicking are not the only methods, throwing techniques and pressure against joints are included ... all these techniques should be studied referring to basic *kata*.” Willingly deciding to grapple means you are in the fight for the long haul with escape becoming much more difficult. The primary method, as originally stated by Itosu, is to hit hard and fast and then flee. The same book shows a number of locks and throws –occasionally referring to where these methods can be found in *kata* – and are discussed and demonstrated by Funakoshi in his “master text.” In relation to the loss of grappling, Mabuni Kenwa – founder of *Shito-Ryu* and yet another student of Itosu – was one of the first (in his 1938 book *Karate-Do Nyumon*) to express concern that this side of *karate* was being neglected as the art moved from Okinawa to mainland Japan, stating that it was an incomplete version of the art and that people were wrong to think that *karate* was devoid of grappling, and those practitioners who did not practice *karate* in its entirety were learning a “hollow version of the art.” Another myth of modern *karate*, is that its original exponents did not practice, what today we call “cross-training.” In actuality, cross-training is very traditional. Mabuni also taught *Shin-den Fudo-ryu Jujutsu* to his students. This included Tani Chojiro, who later founded *Shukokai karate*. Mabuni trained in the grappling side of *karate* and supplemented this with methods from other arts. Another *karateka* to train in *Jujutsu* and make it part of their *karate* was Otsuka Hironori, founder of *Wado-Ryu karate*, Otsuka reached grandmaster level in *Shindo Yoshin Ryu Jujutsu* after many years of study under Nakayama Tadasaburo. When he founded *Wado Ryu*, he included techniques from his *jujutsu* experience, which include throws and locks, and even ground fighting techniques such as *juji-gatame*, in the two man drills of *Wado*. H.D. Plee, one of the pioneers of *karate* in Europe, in his 1967 book *Karate: Beginner to Black Belt*, wrote: “One must not lose sight of the fact that *karate* is “all-in” fighting. Everything is allowed ... This is why *karate* is based on blows delivered with the hand, the foot, the head or the knee. Equally permissible are strangulations, throwing techniques and locks.”

### Miscellaneous

*Kowami* is severe physical exercise, meant to “drive the dross” from the individual. *Kowami* is to the individual what forging is to the blade.

*Kyūcho* is the senior *mudansha* in a *dojo*. The first criterion is rank; then, if there is more than one *ikkyū*, the next criterion is time in grade; lastly, there is the criterion by name. This would be last name, first name, middle name. And, yes, it is very similar to the military. For the “what differs”: if there were two *ikkyū* by the name of John James Jones, both promoted on the same day and both born on 14 October, then the next criterion would be the year born (oldest). Anything beyond that is to be dealt with when the time comes! In traditional *dojo*, a name board (*nafadakake*) is hung which lists each student by rank. Obviously, the traditionalists worried about such things also.

Typhoon is derived from the Chinese Tai Fun, meaning “large wind.” This same “Tai” is the Japanese “*Dai*” in *Bassai Dai* and *Kanku Dai*

*Hyodo* are “martial methods,” or “military ways.” In the case of the latter meaning, it referred to an in depth application of *in/yo* to military goals. It referred to a contrast, such as fast and slow and the principles of active and receptive. It was also a moral doctrine of the *Mugai Ryu*, which was founded by Sakemochi Tsuiji Getten (1650 – 1729) in 1695.

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