

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

“You can't practice Judo just to win a Judo Match! You practice so that no matter what happens, you can win using Judo!”

Unknown

Tachi or Stance

Stance is based on the concept of “nine solid and one empty,” which is one of six physical principles that, in part, define the mechanism of body movement. “Nine solid and one empty” refers to points on the bottom of the feet. All five toes, the “big and small balls” of the foot, the side of the foot and the heel, should all remain in contact with the ground (“nine solid”) and are therefore yang. The big toe is then “wrapped” in an isometric fashion to the small toe, which has the effect of drawing the arch slightly higher off the ground (“one empty”), so the center of the arch becomes yin.

Maintaining the "big ball" of the foot in contact with the floor activates the quadriceps and is mirrored in the theory of the mechanism of "extending" muscles, which is yang. In this case the quadriceps and adductors are activated in the legs. You should feel the yang "energy" pressing down to the big toe.

The big toe "wraps," in an isometric fashion, to the little toe, which then curls under and wraps the "energy" back around to the empty point at the center of the foot. From here it is then carried to the *dan tien*. The "small ball" of the foot, lies directly behind the little toe, and when in contact with the floor helps to activate the hamstrings and IT (iliotibial) bands, which, according to Chinese theory of mechanism, would be yin muscles. Again, energy is carried to the *dan tien*. When this stance of 9:1 is done, there should be a feeling of “sticking” to the mat/floor/ground – or, of being “rooted,” if you prefer.

Think of the 9/1 concept in terms of balance and stability as it relates to maintaining relaxation. If you maintain the center of gravity force too far toward the toe or heel, then the body becomes tense since you need to use more and more muscle tension to hold the body upright. The result is a severe reduction in the amount of force you can generate against an opponent, since power is actually generated out of relaxation.

Having reinvented the wheel, this same concept is now mirrored in the “pistol squat.”

Shizentai no Kumikata or Gripping from the Natural Posture

Almost all judo texts advocate – for basics, at least – gripping the left lapel with the right hand, and the right middle sleeve with the left hand (*migi shizentai no kumikata*). This grip is based on the concept that the exponent is right handed. Hand positions would be reversed for a left-handed exponent (*hidari shizentai no kumikata*). Arima Sumitomo, *Sensei* gives the rationale for this is as follows. In order to place the opponent in an off-balanced position, force should be exerted against the highest part of the body. Obviously, this would be the head, realistically, the head cannot be pushed effectively, even if the exponent is able to take hold of it. The lapel is a substitute, although the opponent has freedom of body movement. With the sleeves, you have moved even lower on the opponent's body and farther from the head, but this grip can prevent the opponent

from turning the body as s/he pleases. The lapel is thought of as holding the upper body of the opponent, and the sleeves control the sideward movement of the body.

For further explanation of this concept, consider a two-handed sleeve grip. This is usually the grip of the *sode tsurikomi goshi* specialist. Note that when s/he moves into a throw, one arm (*tsurite*) is extended upward toward the opponent's head. The other (*hikite*) performs as with a standard throw. One still adheres to the principle of controlling the upper body and the sideward movement.

***Sanchin hoko* or *Hangetsu Hoko*: “Crescent Stepping”**

Although named for *sanchin* or *hangetsu*, the actual stepping may be done from most stances, *zenkutsu dachi* being the most common. From *hidari zenkutsu dachi* (left front stance), bring the rear (right) foot to the left foot, making a quarter circle. Then step forward, also in a quarter circle, to *migi zenkutsu dachi* (right front stance). The inward, then outward movement of the foot will make a half circle, or crescent step. As with all traditional movements, this one is combat oriented. If the opponent kicks with the right foot, the inward movement moves the exponent's body from the line of attack. The movement outward and forward moves the *karateka* into the space occupied by the opponent. Done correctly, this can actually knock the opponent off his or her standing foot. When the traditional “chamber” of the arms is included, an attack with the opponent's right hand may be swept aside. The lower arm may check the attacking leg or mount a counter-attack to the opponent's ribs (or solar plexus). One of the key factors is attitude. The exponent is not moving into the opponent's space; s/he is occupying his or her space, which the opponent has invaded!

What Type of Fighter are You?

Recognizing that there are no absolutes and that most persons may change combat style, depending on the situation and number of opponents, there are three basic types of fighter. First, there is the fighter who relies on attack. There is little or no defense. The exponent simply “blitzes” the opponent until contact is verified (tournament) or the opponent falls (combat). This borders on (sometimes crossing into) the “berserker” rage, where the only thought is to destroy the enemy, no matter what the cost. Second is the fighter who relies on defense, hoping to wear the opponent down until the attack stops (Good Luck!). A master of this was Muhammed Ali with his “rope-a-dope.” Under tournament rules, it could work, but is highly unreliable in a combat situation – not to mention the opponent has every opportunity to call for help. Lastly, there is the counter-attacker, who relies on waiting for the opponent to make that one mistake, which may lead to the opponent's defeat. The major drawback is having an opponent that does not commit. Without commitment, there is very little chance for error. Obviously, the best fighter can move among the three types, depending on the circumstances. So! What type of fighter are you?

Ruth B. Gardner, *Yudansha*

Ruth Gardner was one of the first occidental women to be awarded a *Kodokan Nidan* rank. She attained this award, after she went to Japan and actually studied at the *Kodokan* with Mifune Kyuzo, *Judan* and Fukuda Keiko (then *Yodan*, now *Kudan*). The actual instructor assigned to her at Kodokan was Takahashi Sensei (Hachidan), who was head of

the women's department. Interestingly, her first *judo* instructor was June Tegner, the mother of prolific author, Bruce Tegner. Mrs. Tegner received her rank of *Sandan* from T. Shozo Kuwashima, *Sensei*. Kuwashima was the author of two books on *judo*: *Judo, Jiu Jitsu the Art of Self-Defense* and *Judo: Thirty Lessons in the Modern Science of Jiu Jitsu* (later expanded to *Forty-One Lessons*, etc). Mrs. Gardner wrote *Judo for the Gentle Woman*, which is based on Kuwashima's teachings.

***Irimi* or Entering**

Aikido uses five basic types of movement to facilitate technique. *Nagashi* is a step to the rear, usually at an angle, to avoid an attack. *Hiori* is a movement to the direct side for the same reason. *Irimi* is an entry, usually at an angle, to "jam" or redirect an attack. *Irimi senkai* is a diagonally forward movement followed by a pivot of 180° or greater. This may be *soto irimi senkai*, or a forward movement and turn outside the attack, or *uchi irimi senkai*, a diagonally forward movement to the inside of an attack. Finally, there is *o irimi senkai*, which is a *soto irimi senkai* preceded by a jump into the entry and turn. *Irimi* should be learned before the *irimi senkai*. Your *hanshi meiyō kyōju* prefers an aggressive form of *irimi*, which actually attacks the opponent's attack arm. As with the *sanchin/hangetsu hoko*, much of the entry is attitude. Enter with the idea of destroying the opponent's balance with *ate kuzushi* (a strike to un-balance). The exponent's left arm drives into the inside of the right arm of the opponent, striking the never center just below the elbow. This should cause shock to the exponent's body, disorient the exponent's mind and drive the opponent into a position of imbalance. At this point, the exponent may finish with whatever technique seems most advantageous. Incidentally, a form of this entry may be used with *soto irimi senkai*, attacking the base of the triceps muscle after the outside turn.

***Karate-do*: The Way of the Empty-Hand**

Funakoshi Gichin, *Shihan* spoke of his art in the following way: "The *Karate-do* is to *Atemi* what *Judo* is to *Jujutsu*; training without danger in probably the most efficacious combat technique that exists and the quest of the same *Do* as that of *Judo*. ... The *Dan* of *Karate* does not correspond to the number of boards broken but to the degree of technique and the moral development. ... The "Way" easily follows the "Valley" and the students of this way were obliged to strive to obtain a very pure heart, to abstain from evil. As for the *Kara* of the *Karate*, it means "empty" it means also empty of bad intentions, "purity." The practice of the *Karate*, by its aspect of preparation for true combat, is also training for purity, for the *Do*. ... The thought to lay low – to kill – the adversary with a single blow, "or else it is death," must not abandon us. Here is the true martial spirit." Quoted from: *A Complete Guide to Judo: Its Story and Practice* compiled and edited by Robert W. Smith.

Aiki*: *Kiai

Aiki (*Ai* = Meeting + *Ki* = Spirit) is composed of the same characters as *Kiai* (*Ki* = spirit + *Ai* = Meeting). In the words of Tsuji *Sensei*, "The "Aiki" in *Aikido* is closely related to the "Kiai ... of *Judo* – the use of mental and psychic forces to assist in physical self-defense and in other phases of a person's live activities." Within the context of the *In-Yo* concept of the *Do*, *Aiki* would be *In* ("passive") and *Kiai* would be *Yo* ("active"). This

would apply even more to the *Kiai* in *Karate-do*. It must be realized that it is the spirit of both exponent and opponent that is involved. Just as *In-Yo* represent the opposite sides of the same phenomenon, both the spirit of the exponent and of the opponent must be considered to form the whole. After all, if there is no opponent, there can be no exponent. It is a meeting because the technique, reinforced by either *aiki* or *kiai*, happen exactly when the opponent attacks – not before and not after, but exactly at the moment. For those who are uncomfortable with the use of the word, “psychic,” it should be remembered that the root word for “psychic” literally mean “breath.” “Ki” refers to “air,” and by extension, “breath.” In this usage, “mental and psychic forces” would refer to thought and breathing coinciding at the moment of attack/defense. It is well known that a person is more vulnerable when breathing in, and more stable when breathing out. Again, the concept *in-yo* is applied, as the exponent breathes out and the opponent breathes in. Without one, there cannot be the other.

Miscellaneous

Kamaete is a command to assume a fighting posture.

Semeri waza (*semekata*) are attacking techniques (offensive forms); in *kenjutsu/kendo* they are the old term for *shikakiwaza*.

Kamiza, or upper seats, have a special philosophical meaning. This is a special place in the *dojo* which is to exhibit a subtle gentleness and refinement. It is meant to be the opposite of the stark austerity of the training floor. Within the *dojo* it is the *in* (yin) within the *yo* (yang).

Sochin is a form designed to use strategy rather than brute force. It is to be noted that this is the *Sochin* of Arakaki Seisho and not of Funakoshi Yoshitaka, as the two are radically different. Arakaki's form is found in *Shukokai Karate*.

For those who are interested in such things, George Bernard Shaw was “a bit of a boxer,” and also studied *judo*, when it became popular in England. George Bernard Shaw wrote the play *Pygmalion*, which was later made into a series of movies. The first was, of course, *Pygmalion*, the second was known as *My Fair Lady*, and the most well known is *Pretty Woman*. In addition, Shaw was a close personal friend of both T. E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia), and the boxer, Gene Tunney. Shaw attended a 45 minute lecture (without notes) given by Tunney on Shakespeare's, *Troilus and Cressida*, Shaw's favorite Shakespearean play.

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