

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

“Profound knowledge is the best of possessions.” Count Katsu
As quoted by Lafcadio Hearn

Shime Waza or Strangling/Choking Techniques

These were the techniques your *hanshi meiyō kyōju* was most noted for. There are over one-hundred variations of these techniques, mostly based on entry. However, as with most classifications, these may be simplified as follows. Compression of the carotid arteries (strangulation) on one or both sides of the neck, which restricts the flow of blood and oxygen to the brain, compression of the windpipe, or trachea, which stops or reduces the flow of air to the lungs (choking) and compression of the chest and lungs, which prevents the opponent from inhaling. Compression of the neck (carotid arteries or trachea) may be done without use of clothing (*hadaka jime* or “naked” chokes/strangles), or by use of various parts of the clothing, usually the lapel (*eri*), though combat forms include the bottom of the jacket (*suso*) or the belt (*obi*). One variation uses the sleeves, *sode jime*, not to confused with *sode guruma*, which is something of a misnomer. Compression of the chest and lungs may be done by “body scissors” (*dō jime*) or “bear hugs” (*kumitsuki*). In addition, the chest and lungs may be compressed when doing “pins” (*katamewaza*). If, for example, a “chest hold,” or *kesa gatame* is done correctly, the entry will force air from the opponent’s lungs, reducing his ability (and will) to struggle. Compression of the carotid arteries has been shown to work, on the average, six times faster than compression of the trachea. Done correctly, the opponent usually doesn’t feel the effect of the technique, and only is aware it has been applied when awakening from it. What your *hanshi meiyō kyōju* liked about the *shime waza* was they were “giant killers.” That is, they worked on large opponents as well as smaller opponents (sometimes better!). Also, they have a greater success rate, when applied correctly. Your *hanshi meiyō kyōju* has only met two individuals in an almost fifty year career who seemed impervious to these techniques.

Ashi Sabaki or Foot Movements

Okuriashi is distinguished from *tsugi ashi* in the following manner. *Okuri ashi* is a movement forwards or backwards in which the stance becomes longer then shorter. If moving forward, the front foot moves and the rear foot follows. The reverse is true if moving backwards; first the rear foot moves, and is followed by the front foot. *Tsugi ashi* is a forwards or backwards movement in which the stance becomes shorter then longer. With this movement, a movement forward is done first with the rear foot, then with the front foot. Moving backwards, the front foot moves first, then the rear foot. Though this is true for other martial arts, especially *kenjutsu/kendō*, it should be noted that Kanō Jigorō used the foot movements of *okuri ashi* for what he referred to as *tsugi ashi*.

Suri ashi, or sliding foot, refers to the **way** the feet move, not the movement. *Suri ashi* is used with all *ashi sabaki*, and refers to the foot being no more than “the thickness of a

sheet of rice paper” from the mat or ground. It also refers to always having the balance centered while making the step. Normal walking is a process of not falling down, as the weight shifts with each step. With *suri ashi*, one should always be centered.

Fumikae ashi (a contraction of *fumi kaeshi ashi*) refers to changing the stance without changing distance (switching the feet in place). The 21st and 22nd moves in *Empi* (both with *shuto*), *migi mae ashi hidari kokutsu dachi* (right foot forward, left rear stance) to *hidari mae ashi migi kokutsu dachi* are done with *fumikae ashi*. *Fumikae ashi* is the “secret” to the first two moves of *Heian Shodan*.

***Jion* or Temple Sound**

Jion is actually one a series of three; the other two being *Ji-in* and *Jitte* (also called *Jutte*). All three share – obviously – similar applications. Specifically, let’s look at the *shotei uchi* or palm-heel strike. First, the strike is delivered in *kiba-dachi* - horse-riding stance, which tells you that body-weight is being dropped downwards as the strike is made forwards. Second, the strike is delivered at *chudan* (middle) level. The *chudan* strike is at your middle level, not (necessarily) the middle level of the opponent. Third, the *hikite* (pulling hand) is doing something or you wouldn’t bother pulling it back. This shows what the move actually is. This means that you grab hold of the opponent and pull him/her towards you to facilitate the strike. By dropping your bodyweight (*kiba dachi*) and spinning the opponent, you cause him/her to lose his/her balance, as s/he is pulled forwards and downwards. Remember the strike is your *chudan* level, so his/her head becomes the target. The palm-heel (soft weapon) strikes a hard target (the skull). The spinning nature of the step ensures the strike will meet and penetrate the target. Since the target is the head, this forces the head to spiral into the strike; so that impact is exponential (older tests refer to the exponential function as anti-logarithm). This simply means the force is proportional rather than equal. In this case, *kiba dachi* will give greater distance than a *zenkutsu dachi* to exacerbate the blow.

***Iro* or Colors**

Following are ten colors used when not preceding a noun.

- *Shiro*: white
- *Kiuro*: yellow
- *Daidaiiro*: orange
- *Midori*: green
- *Ao*: blue
- *Murasaki*: purple
- *Chairo*: brown
- *Nezumiuro*: gray
- *Kuro*: black
- *Aka*: red

Keep in mind that *iro* means “color.” Four of the above colors are made by adding *iro* to a noun.

- *Kiuro*: yellow (*ki* [sulfur] + *iro* [color])
- *Daidaiiro*: orange (*daidai* [a kind of orange fruit] + *iro* [color])
- *Chairo*: brown (*cha* [tea] + *iro* [color])
- *Nezumiuro*: gray (*nezumi* [mouse] + *iro* [color])

With the exception of the color “gray,” the colors are those used for rank in MYB. I have included gray for the following reason. At one time, Wilson *Shihan* had trained a young man, who was technically proficient, but lacking in maturation for his black belt. Wilson *Shihan* felt there should be some recognition for the lad’s proficiency, but did not want to award a black belt to someone so young. Consequently, the young man was “promoted” to gray belt, until he could reach an age for black belt.

Note: A problem with colors, especially primary colors, in Japanese is they are more abstract than in English. *Aka* can refer to any color from dark orange to copper or reddish purple. *Ao* ranges from green to bluish purple. *Ki* ranges from light orange to pale yellow.

Yagyū Shinkage Ryū

Yagyū Shinkage Ryū was founded by Yagyū Sekishusai Muneyoshi, aka Yagyū Tajima no Kamitaira no Muneyoshi, 2nd Headmaster of *Shinkage Ryū* [?aka Ushu Tatewaki], circa 1568. It was derived from *Kage Ryū* (Aizu) of Kamiizumi (Hidetsuna) Ise No Kami, *Nen Ryū* and *Tenshin Shōden Katori Shintō Ryū*, famous for *iai jutsu*. The name meant the New Shadow School of Yagyū. Also taught were *sen*, *ken jutsu* (*odachi*, *kodachi* and *nito*), *jojutsu*, *shuriken jutsu* and *ju jutsu*. This was the official *kenjutsu* style of the Tokugawa Shogunate. A direct descendant of this style was *Yagyū Shingan Ryū*. This *ryū* had a decided *Zen* influence and its major philosophical thought included *munen* (no reflection) and *musō* (no thought). From 1903 to 1908, Nakai Masakatsu taught this style to Ueshiba Morihei, who was awarded a mid-level license in *Gotoha Yagyū Shingan Ryū Taijutsu*. Oddly, Ueshiba did not receive a full license from any of the systems he studied, although Kano Jigorō (*Jūdō*) received one from *Tenshin Shinyō Ryū*, as well as being named the successor of his *sensei*, and also a second from the *Kito Ryū*.

Miscellaneous

Shobu means contest and may be an *ippon shobu* (one point contest) or *nihon shobu* (two-point contest) as in *jūdō*, or a *sanbon-* or *gohon* (three-point or five points) *shobu* as in *karate* (the “best two of three,” or “best three of five”). The *nihon shobu* of *jūdō* is no longer used outside of a few traditional *dojo*. The intent was to score an *ippon* with a throw (*nage waza*) and follow it immediately with an *ippon* from the grappling portion (*katame waza*). One had to score two *ippon*, one immediately following the other, before s/he won the match. Such training would still be practical in that one learns not to depend on a full point, but go immediately into mat work (*ne waza*).

Katagana is the fifty-five phonetic sounds used in Japanese to write foreign words, for which no *kanji* is known. Hiragana is the second set of phonetic sounds used for native Japanese for which the *kanji* is not known, or to clarify the pronunciation as used.

Tsukuri refers to moving your body to take advantage of your opponent’s body motion.

A *kashiki-bo* is a staff made of red or white oak. A *kashiwagi-bo* is a staff made from Mongolian oak, reportedly a very strong wood.

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