

Midori Yama Budokai: *Hanshi's Corner*

Written by Professor Ron Rogers

March 2015

Ichi go, ichi e: One life, one meeting

“Do not try to fight a lion if you are not one yourself.” African proverb

Bataireacht: Irish Stick Fighting

Bataireacht is a form of traditional stick fighting which originated in Ireland. It became popular in the 17th century after a British ban on edged weapons. History does repeat itself, as the same situation occurred in Okinawa with the ban on weapons by the occupational Japanese. There are three basic lengths for the stick: short, medium and long or large (bhata triu). The bata pionsa replicated the broadsword (also known as backsword). Bata is the term for any stick, but the stick used for bataireacht is known as sail-eille, but is better known to Americans as the shillelagh (thonged cudgel). Another word used for the stick, which sometimes had a metal knob on one end, is a cudgel. These weapons were made from blackthorn, ash, oak and hazel wood. In the nineteenth century, bataireacht was associated with Irish gangs known as factions. These factions would meet and engage in a melee, consisting of both men and sometimes women (who used socks filled with rocks, rather than a stick). For the effectiveness of these factions, see the movie, *Gangs of New York*. Bataireacht is practiced in Ireland, Canada and the United States. The latter stresses the self-defense aspects of the art, as a walking stick or cane may be easily carried in modern society. As with many modern martial arts, different styles exist. One of the traditional styles that has survived is carried on by the Doyle family. It is referred to as rince an bhata uisce bheatha, or the whiskey stick dance. Gives a completely different meaning to, “Let's dance,” doesn't it? Whiskey referred to what the exponents of the stick were guarding. Dance was a euphemism for fighting. Maide Mear (Swift Stick) is a traditional form taught in Canada, Scotland and the United States. A modern amalgamation is cead bua (pronounced kay'd boo-ah) combines Chinese Stick Fighting, Filipino Stick Fighting and Irish Stick Fighting. Sifu Glen Doyle is the instructor, who learned rince an bhata uisce bheatha from his father, Greg Doyle. The sticks ranged in size from nine feet to one foot, and some of the names are given below. From six to nine feet, the “stick” was known as shea or ga, meaning spear, pice, or pike, maide caethrun (stafog caethrun), or quarterstaff and cleith or wattle. From four to five feet in length, the weapon was known as saile eille (bata siuil eille), or shillelagh, ailpin, or alpeen, and bata mor (bata triu), or large (great) stick. A three foot stick was known as bata pionsa (given above), bata, siuil (maide laimhe), or walking stick, caman, or hurley stick, and by some factions was known as bata mor or bata triu. A two foot weapon was known as smiste (crann bagair) or cudgel. A stick from one to two feet in length was known as smachtin buta luaidhe or loaded butt.

A method of two-stick fighting was called troid de bata, with the off hand stick used as a shield.

Atemi Nage: Throw Coupled with a Strike

As mentioned before, a throw may be coupled with a joint lock (*gyaku nage*), such as *yukichigai-koshi nage* (a wrist twist, leading into a hip throw; *sankyō-koshi nage*), *ude*

gatame-seoi nage (an arm bar over the shoulder, followed by a “shoulder” throw) or *ue ude garami-o soto gari* (an upper “figure 4” arm lock with major outer reap). A throw may also be coupled with a strike, such as age *shotei uchi-o soto gari* (upward palm-heel to the chin and major outer reap), *tembin nage* (strike to the elbow and throw forward) and *shita ude garami-tai otoshi*.(lower “figure 4” armlock [*judo*: *ude garami V*] with body drop) However, *ate mi nage* may also be a strong throw which uses the ground, or pavement, to strike the opponent. That is, the throw may stun the opponent, when he hits the ground. A throw may also be done into a wall, which also can stun the opponent. Many years (actually decades) ago, your Professor taught a six week self-defense course for women at the high school where he taught. One of the students came to him about the third week and was worried about what she had done. One of the football players had grabbed her from behind, and without thinking (remember this was the third week!) she threw him over her hip. Unfortunately – for him – both heels were slammed into the steel bumper of a car, and he couldn't play for quite some time afterwards. Living in a more enlightened time, nothing came of it except the teasing he received for letting a girl throw him around. However, two points of interest were observed: first, it was possible for a person to learn to defend him- or herself in a short amount of time, and second, throws were effective as self-defense.

Distance and Timing

Although these have been discussed (some would say an infinitum), it is important to understand their meaning in relation to self-defense.

Simply stated, distance is the space between you and your opponent. This may range from bodily contact to space where only a weapon can reach the opponent. All too often, distance is based on the idea that each of you will be fighting under the same conditions. That is, a Tae Kwon Do exponent may presume his opponent will maintain the same kicking range as him- or herself. A boxer may do the same with his or her mid-level distance, expecting the opponent to fight within that range. A wrestler may expect the opponent to place him- or herself in close grappling range. Ideally, the martial art you study addresses all of these distances, including those involving weapons.

Timing refers to the relationship and coordination of your movements with those of your opponent. Too early, you can be countered; too late, and you have already been hit! Of all the variables in combat (or contest) these two are the most important. It doesn't matter how fast or strong you are if you can't make contact when you need to.

Distance and timing are the primary components of *tsukuri*, or “fitting in.” *Tsukuri* implies being at the right place (distance) at the right time (timing) to assure the technique is performed properly.

***Shi-Ki-Chikara*: Intention-Energy-Strength**

Shi is usually translated at “mind” *Ki* usually remains untranslated, or is given a mystical meaning; by extension, *Chikara* may refer to the body, through which power is transmitted. “The intention directs the *ki* and the *ki* directs the body.” The true source of power is the *hara*'s mid-point, *seika no itten*, which is approximately the center of the body. What is not usually stressed is that while it is centered from left to right, it is closer to the back than the front, in a roughly 3:7 ratio. This places it at the center of the inter-vertebral disc between the third and and fourth lumbar vertebrae. It is Conception Vessel

6 in acupuncture. Energy is derived from efficient use of the body through the correct use of the waist (usually referred to as “the hips”). While usually thought of in Asiatic terms, this same concept is echoed in Western rolfing, ideokinetics and the Alexander technique. As may be seen, the direct intent to use energy correctly corresponds to that part of the physical body most closely associated with curvi-linear movement – the torso at the waist level. As with many so-called “esoteric” images, the *seika no itten* of the *hara* is based on physical reality, as is *ki*, which is a form of energy, and intention, which is a dedicated process of the will. A great component of this process is the integration of breath and body. For this process to be effective, the bodily state is not just physical, but involves the condition of the whole person – the attitude of the mind and body. Attitude in this instance refers to poise, which is the dynamic balance of the body. In a natural stance (*shizentai*) no muscle is rigidly fixed nor collapsed and flaccid. The dynamic condition of the body in this state is referred to as eutony which is an alive balance between tension (hypertony) and relaxation (hypotony). Eutony is why the *orenai-te*, or “unbendable arm,” works. If the arm is held fixed and rigid, it may be overcome by sheer strength. If it is flaccid, it will simply collapse when pressed. It remains “unbendable” because of eutony, the balance between tension and relaxation. Eutony also aids correct breathing. When the body is poised in a natural stance, the diaphragm is free to work unhindered, and natural breathing is possible. This is why martial arts stress *kamae*, which refers to an attitude of combined body, mind, emotions and spirit, rather than a fixed rigid stance.

Nage Waza: Throwing Techniques

Tsukuri is a two-part process. First one moves into the most advantageous position in which the opponent's stability is compromised. This is *aite no tsukuri*, or positioning of the opponent. Second is placing one's own body in the most appropriate position with stability for making a technical attack. This is *jibun no tsukuri*, or positioning one's self. These principles are also applicable to *katame-waza*, or “grappling” techniques, as well. The point at which the opponent is unable to recover his or her balance is referred to as *kuzushi*, which is a component of *tsukuri*. Many exponents attempt to forestall being thrown by maintaining a very low center of gravity, as this makes the body more stable. However, no matter how low the center of gravity, nor how wide the base, one may lose stability, if a vertical line running through the center of gravity does not pass through the center of the base. A contributing factor, which determines stability, depends on whether the aforementioned vertical line falls to the inside or the outside of the fulcrum, necessary for the throw. If it falls to the inside, a throw to the outside of the body will not work. Conversely, a line falling outside the body will preclude a throw to the inside. Though obvious, but often overlooked, is the fact that a moving body is easier to throw than one which is “planted,” simply because it will take less effort to overcome inertia. The throw is best against a moving body due to Newton's second law of motion: “A body in motion will remain in motion unless acted upon by an outside force.” Also, *kake*, or the actual moment of the throw is a part of *tsukuri*. If one has placed both him- or herself, as well as the opponent, in the proper position (*tsukuri*), the the throw (*kake*) will happen of itself.

Igen

Tominakoshi Gichin, Funakoshi Gichin's original rendering of his family name, was born into the *shizoku*, or Okinawan gentry. As such, he was expected to be carefully schooled

in the Chinese classics. Concurrent with this was the importance of *igen*. His class was expected to possess a special demeanor – not a pretense, but an outward manifestation of an inward quality. This was known as *igen*, an unaffected, permeating dignity of demeanor. This was exemplified by a genuine humble attitude coincident with the confidence of his class and his learning. It was the attitude of *igen* which enabled Funakoshi to reach the upper classes in Japan to spread the Okinawan art of *karate*. Kano Jigoro was a lifelong friend of Funakoshi after the latter's arrival in Japan. Kano was so impressed by the intelligence and sincerity of Funakoshi, he asked that the *karate-ka* remain in Japan to teach him the basics of *karate*. These techniques were learned and assimilated into Kano's art of *judo*. Due to Funakoshi's overabundant humility, Kano treated him as a peer and introduced him to many influential persons, which helped the spread of *karate* in Japan.

Shotokan Karate: Its History and Evolution by Randall G. Hassell

“Master Instructor”

Following is a list of terms from different systems, meaning “Master Instructor”:

Cantonese: Sifu [Shih fu]

Mandarin: Shi fu [Master-father]

Sanskrit, Hindi, Telugu and Malay: Guru

Japanese: Shihan

Korean: Sa Bum Nim

Malayalam: Kallari Gurukkal

Tamil: Asaan

Thai: Achan

ACE: Developed by Jason Babiuch

Jason Babiuch, *Yudansha*, has been doing extensive study of the *kata* and applied *bunkai* (*oyo*) and sent your professor this outline based on those studies. He states that his intention was “to narrow down the broad principles of fighting for *bunkai* and *kumite*.”

- I. Avoid the attack.
 - A. Parry the attack or lead the attack away from you.
 - B. Move to a better position.
 - C. While moving, use atemi to prevent a second attack.
- II. Control the attacker.
 - A. Break the opponent's balance.
 - B. Grab what is accessible.
 - C. Apply:
 1. Aikido
 2. Judo
 3. Choke hold.
- III. Eliminate the threat.
 - A. Put the opponent in a position where s/he cannot attack.
 1. Knock out the opponent.
 2. Throw the opponent to the ground.
 3. Use a joint lock to control or break the opponent's limb.
 4. Use a choke until the opponent is unconscious.
 - B. Get to safety.

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