

Midori Yama Budokai: *Hanshi's Corner*

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Ichi go, ichi e: One life, one meeting

“The seven ideals of practice are benevolence, justice, honor, courage, loyalty, politeness and veracity.” *Bushido: Code of the Warrior*

***Tekki*, or Iron Horse**

Historically, the *Tekki kata* are said to have been derived from a Chinese form. It is believed that Itotsu divided the longer Chinese form into three *kata*, which he named *Naihanchi Shodan*, *Naihanchi Nidan* and *Naihanchi Sandan*. It was renamed *Tekki*, or Iron Horse, by Funakoshi Gichin because of the form's power. Motobu Choki maintained that *Naihanchi* contained all that was needed to become a proficient fighter. Yabu Kentsu, one of Itotsu's students, said that *karate* began and ended with *Naihanchi* and stated that the exponent must perform it a minimum of 10,000 times before it became his or her own. Kaneko Kaichi, a Chinese exponent and acupuncturist, studied a form of Taiwanese White Crane Boxing in the 1960's. The form was known as Dan Qui Ban Bai He Quan, which translated to Half hillock, Half White Crane Boxing. Kaneko, who resided in Yonabaru, Okinawa, taught this form as Neixi, or Inside Knee, in Mandarin. Neixi contained the same sweeping action as the *nami gaeshi* (wave change) in *Tekki Shodan*. Neixi is pronounced *Nohanchi* in the Fuzhou dialect, indicating that it could be the forerunner of *Naihanchi*, the Okinawan name for *Nifanchi*, the form's original name.

Muki (Musti Yuddha): Bare Knuckle Boxing

This particular style of boxing is found in Banares, or northern India. It is so old, it is mentioned in the Vedic scriptures. Players are known for how hard they can punch, and one test is smashing coconuts with the bare fist. Their training includes punching stones and bricks. Some actually punch sheets of metal. Although elbows, knees and kicks may be used, the fist dominates. There is also some training in developing internal energy. In addition, marma-adi is taught to a select group. This utilizes the theory of periodic energy flow along meridians. It is the Indian form of Chinese and Japanese vital point striking (dim mak and *kyusho*). Also, as with its Chinese and Japanese counterparts, Muki Boxing is accompanied by the warrior who practices medicine. What better way to learn how to attack the body, than by knowing how it works. A unique feature is that on occasion the team members and spectators join in. When one group is forced to withdraw, the other group wins.

Tameshiwari: Test of Strength with Wood

In *Karate-do Kyohan, The Master Text*, Funakoshi Shihan states that *tameshiwari* (breaking of inanimate objects) is but a small part of *karate*. He compares this component to the act of the straw-cutting test in *kenjutsu*. The test is not the objective of the art! For Funakoshi the true *karate-do* is both physical and spiritual, with neither being greater than the other. This meant, in Funakoshi's words, "...in daily life, one's mind and body be trained and developed in a spirit of humility; and that in critical times one be devoted utterly to the cause of justice." Funakoshi stressed that those who would study *karate-do*

must purge themselves of selfish and evil thoughts, for only with a clear mind and conscience, could they understand that which they received. The exponent was to always try to be inwardly humble and outwardly gentle, but when action was to be taken s/he was to have courage to follow his or her convictions. Funakoshi believed this to be the true meaning of “*kara*,” or emptiness, as form is emptiness and emptiness is form. Another tenet, which has been forgotten, is “the value of the art depends on the one applying it.” Today, we would say, “it is not the art but the exponent.” *Tameshiwari* was originally meant as a test for the individual to evaluate the power s/he had developed; an outward manifestation of inner strength – again combining the mind and body.

“Power Comes from the Lower Abdomen, Techniques from the Hips”

The above quotation comes from *Black Belt Karate: Then Intensive Course* by Hirokazu Kanazawa, who stresses that training the lower abdomen (*seika tanden*) is done through proper breathing. He includes thoracic respiration, abdominal respiration and lower abdominal respiration for achievement of mental concentration and cultivation of *ki*. All of karate’s basic techniques contain those elements listed above as well as the active employment of internal forms. These forms include mental strength, spiritual strength and visceral strength. In addition, Kanazawa states that training the *seika tanden*, increases abdominal muscle pressure, which produces a blood-cleansing process within the body. The *hara* (of which the *seika tanden* is part), is directly related to the breathing process in Japanese thought. It gives rise to the expressions, *hara ga dekite iru*, or “achieving *hara*,” and *hara ga suwatte iru*, or “having a well-set *hara*.” Both of these expressions refer to a person of character, who remain calm in any situation and can deal with matters in a level-headed manner. Kanazawa states that when the hips and lower abdomen work together, one develops his or her body, techniques and mind. Kanazawa goes on to explain how this is done (all in the Preface!) before continuing with the fundamentals, which include the techniques of *Heian* I and II (with basic *bunkai*), as well as *kumite*. The book is published by Kodansha International, and is representative of their excellence.

Jason Babiuch and His Study of *Kata*

Jason writes: “I was thinking about *bunkai* and playing with some ideas. For each movement, I have been trying to make it work when you are inside or outside of the opponent’s attack. This started me thinking about the eight lines of movement and the sphere. I was looking through *Zen and the Martial Arts* last night and came across a quote by Bruce Lee talking about the bond that two opponents share during a conflict. I began thinking about the three spheres. You have opponent A, opponent B, and the area they both occupy. As I typed this, I believe there to be actually four spheres. The 4th sphere occurs when the two opponents meet within their combined sphere area. In reference to *bunkai*, both inside and outside the opponent’s attack, I realized that in essence there are four positions you can be, relative to your opponent. You can be in front, behind, and to either side. These coincide with the four different ways to perform *kata*. The off angle lines 2, 4, 6 and 8 are just variations of the earlier four basic positions. In reference to the 4th sphere option, I was thinking that if there are two opponents, opponent A and opponent B, and they make contact, there would be one sphere acting on the other. This would be where Newton's laws of motion come into play. If O-A was

defending against O-B, who was attacking (using the ACE methodology), the O-A sphere would be affected. When he would off balance his opponent to the right rear 45o, he would off balance himself moving in that same direction [actually, s/he would be moving to the left front]. If you add the 4th sphere upon contact, then the off balancing would start within the 4th sphere, where it transfers motion to the opponent. This 4th sphere is not a constant, and only comes into play upon contact. As an example, think of Kote Gaeshi. When you lead the opponent off balance and redirect his motion the opposite way, this would be done within this 4th sphere. The patch shows these movements with the Yin Yang shapes, using three of those symbols. Consequently, I believe that the outer ring is the containment sphere and two of the three inner spheres represent two opposing motions. The third inner circle is the sphere which connects the two together, though it is not a constant.” Jason goes on to state: “Sphere 1 is the containment sphere. Sphere 2 and 3 are the opponents’ spheres. When they make contact their spheres converge to make the 4th sphere, where off balancing and sphere control takes place.”

Karate Ryu: Empty-Hand Styles

There are two main divisions of *karate ryu*: *Ryukyu* (Okinawan) *Karate Ryu* and *Nippon* (Japanese) *Karate Ryu*. The main styles of Okinawan *karate* are: *Shorin Ryu*, *Goju Ryu*, *Isshin Ryu*, *Uechi Ryu* and *Shorei Ryu*. Those styles which originated in Japan are: *Shotokan*, *Wado Ryu*, *Shito Ryu*, *Shukokai* and *Kyokushinkai*. In general, the Okinawan styles have shorter stances than their Japanese counterparts, although there are exceptions with both groups. Again, in general, the Okinawan systems tend to stress multiple attacks, and the Japanese stress “one blow, one kill.” As with the stances, there are exceptions for both styles. The Okinawan systems agree that the ideal is to end the fight with one well-executed technique. They recognize, however, that in reality this is extremely difficult, and work with consecutive techniques which are designed to set up the opponent for that “finishing technique.” Probably, the most telling feature is the design of combat for each group. Traditional Okinawan styles stress close combat, designed for the street, and against untrained opponent/s. The Japanese have stressed mid- to long- range techniques designed for competition. At the risk of “beating a dead horse,” there are Okinawan systems which include competition, and Japanese systems which stress techniques for actual “in-your-face” fighting. The issue of competition and professionalism in *karate* is what precipitated the split between *Shotokan* (competition and professionalism) and *Shotokai* (*kata* and non-professionalism).

Fighting Strategy

The following statements were taken from Mao Tse-Tung’s book, *On Guerilla Warfare*:

“When the enemy advances, we retreat!

When the enemy halts, we harass!

When the enemy seeks to avoid battle, we attack!

When the enemy retreats, we pursue!”

These same principles may be used in individual combat, as well as for armies.

Waza no Ri: Principles of Technique

Regardless of style, there are certain elements which remain the same. There are only two ways in which to block: The blocking limb moves from outside the body toward the

inside, or the limb moves from inside the body toward the outside. There are only three ways in which to execute kicks: as a thrust kick; as a snap kick; as a sweep. Similar to the kicks, the arm may be used to thrust or to snap when utilized as an attack. It could even be argued that the “roundhouse” attack is a type of sweep! Joints can be straightened beyond their limits, or bent and twisted beyond their limits. When straightened or bent, they may only be done in two directions: rotating the joint with the thumb to the outside of the body, or rotating the joint with the thumb to the inside of the body.

Ashi Fumikae: Changing the Feet

Also known as *fumikae ashi*, this technique is one of the “secrets” of *kata*. It is actually shown in *Enbi (Empi)*, Funakoshi’s name for *Wanshu*. In movement number 22 (JKA), the exponent moves from a right knife hand block to a left knife hand block, by switching the position of the feet. This is the “secret” of the punches in the *Heian kata* which follow a down block. If one actually did a lunge punch, the punch would be “jammed” because the exponent would be too close for power to develop. If a reverse punch were substituted, the opponent would be out of range. After the down block *ashi fumikae* is used to obtain the correct distance without moving out of range. Timing is very important, as the new forward foot must stabilize as the punch is being made. In actuality, the foot should stabilize just before the punch lands. The movement is more than just switching the feet. In addition, the hips must move quickly to add torque for the power of the punch, and the body weight must shift correctly for the best use of body mass.

Ne Waza: “Ground” Techniques

The following outline shows the methods used for “ground work,” or *ne waza*. *Katame waza* refers to any grappling maneuver whether standing or on the ground. The outline is judo based, but with modification, may be used for any art.

Osaie Kata or “hold downs.” Literally, *osaie* means to press [against].

- A. *Kesa* refers to the diagonal pressing across the chest, from right/left hip to left/right shoulder. *Kesa* literally means “surplice,” and refers to the garment worn by Buddhist monks, which is worn from the left shoulder to the right hip.
- B. *Shihō* means “four corners,” and refers to the two shoulders and two hips. There are three main methods, all with variants (*kuzure*): *yoko shihō*, or holding from the side (“cat’s cradle”); *kami shihō*, or holding from the direction of the head (“smother hold”) and *tate shihō*, or straddling the body (“full mount”).
- C. *Uki* means “floating,” and is usually a transitional move, although originally a recognized pin. *Uke* is on his or her back, with the standard *migi shizentai kumikata* being used. *Tori* pulls upward with both hands as the right lower leg is pressed across *uke*’s chest. *Tori*’s right instep is against *uke*’s right hip and the right knee is near, or at, *uke*’s left shoulder. The torsion effected by the upward pull and downward pressure of the leg immobilize *uke*. It could be argued that the placement of the lower leg would make this a *kesa* variation.

Seme Kata means methods of attack.

- A. *Hairi Kata* refer to direct methods of entry into a technique. “Leg swinging,” that is, swinging the legs to the side so entry may be made is an example of this form of entry.

- B. *Kaeshi Kata* refer to methods of overturning the opponent and entering into a technique. *Kibisu gaeshi*, also known as *kakato gaeshi*, or heel overturning, and *morote gari*, or two-hand reap, would be examples.

Fusegi refers to defenses from the ground.

- A. *Kaeshi Kata* are methods of overturning the opponent and reversing the hold. The “sit-up” escape and the “bridge and roll” are examples of these methods.
- B. *Nige Kata* literally means “methods of running away.” The “up-hill turn” is an example of these methods.

Gyaku Geki refers to the use of reversal of the joints as counter-attacks. The best example of these methods is the “legs-over” escape moving into a *waki gatame* or armpit “lock.”

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