

Midori Yama Budokai: *Hanshi's Corner*

Written by Professor Ron Rogers

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Ichi go, ichi e: One life, one meeting

“The soul would have no rainbow, if the eyes had no tears.” Native American

“Centering”

When we speak of “being centered,” or “being grounded,” we must remember the MYB patch. The “circles” are actually spheres and as such represent three dimensions, not two. Our somatic dimensions are length, width and depth. Length would refer to the height of the body at any given time, which will change from ground work to standing – or even jumping, as in “flying” techniques. I know, the actual height of the body won’t change – but its relation to an/other body/ies will. Width refers to a side to side dimension: shoulder to shoulder; hip to hip, etc. When lateral movements, such as a side kick, are included, the width will also change. Depth would be front to back, and this would include the reach of the arm and leg. When the center is spoken of, we usually think of the mid-section, but have to realize this mid-section includes head to feet, side to side and front to back. If we do not do so, we hinder our efforts to be grounded, which basically means becoming stable. This usually occurs because we omit, forget or simply don’t know about the vertical center (length or height). Consequently, our center rises to our chest and stability is lost. This is one of the main reasons for the use of the horse stance in training; it forces us to lower our center to become grounded. Being centered and grounded is extremely important in kicking techniques. This is why the supporting leg should be slightly bent, never straightened. When the leg is straightened with the knee “locked,” our body fights itself to remain stable. When the knee is bent, stability is retained. Stances also affect the distance of the sphere in any given direction. A front stance will extend the sphere; a back, or cat, stance will cause the sphere to withdraw inward; the horse stance will extend the sphere from side to side. When the body rises, as in a back stance to an “L” stance, the sphere is extended upward. All these must be done while remaining grounded and centered. Also, “being centered,” is related to time as well as space. Whatever is happening is happening now, so we have to “be in the moment.” If we are reliving the past or projecting into the future, our attention is not centered, and we may be easily distracted. To be centered and grounded means we have our balance. When either or especially both is lost than we have lost our center, or our balance. Distractions lead to mental and emotional imbalance (or unbalance, if you prefer).

Karate Kata

There is oral tradition that *Shisochin* (Four Directional Battle) might have existed in Okinawa before Higaonna Kanryo ever left for China, although it is credited to him. There is a written record of Aragaki Seisho performing a *kata* named "*Chisaukin*" in an 1867 demonstration, which is believed to have been an earlier version of *Shisochin*. Aragaki, of course, was Higaonna’s first *sensei*. Higaonna's most senior student Kyoda Juhatsu (of the *To'on Ryu*) contends that only four *kata* were brought from China by Higaonna, namely *Sanchin*, *Sanseiru*, *Seisan*, and *Suparinpei*. Uechi Kanei originally brought *Sanchin*, *Seisan* and *Sanseiru* to Okinawa for the *Uechi-ryu* (*Pangai-Noon*). The

standard *kanji* for *Shisochin* is said to be the Okinawan pronunciation of the Mandarin characters pronounced "*Shisauchin*" in the Hokkien/Amoy dialect or "Xishuaizhan or "xi xiang zhan" in Mandarin. Its main features are powerful hip movements, extremely fast kicks and fast and painful grappling techniques. These *tuide* techniques of *Shisochin* may be done standing or on the ground. With only four closed hand techniques, the *kata* focuses on *nukite* (spear-hand) and *teisho* (palm-heel). *Uechi-ryu* performs these, palm down, striking just below the nipple; *Goju-ryu* uses a vertical *nukite* to the solar plexus. *Shotokan*'s, *Unsu*, also taught by Aragaki, has a similar type of *nukite*, although done with one finger, from *neko ashi dachi*. Some researchers contend the finger thrusts are reminiscent of Hakka Praying Mantis, going so far as to translate Xi xiang zan, as "Cricket-Mantis Battle." More recently, Kanazawa Hirokazu *Sensei* performs a *kata* named "*Nijuhachiho*" (Twenty-eight Steps) from the *To'on Ryu*. Mabuni Kenzo spoke of this form as *Nepai* or *Nipaipo*. Mabuni and Kyoda were the only two *sensei* to have taught this *kata*, though sparingly.

One area taught by traditional *kata* was that of *suki* or opening. This consisted of three different types of *suki* (pronounced, "ski"). The first was *kokoro-no-suki*, or opening of the mind. This meant a lack of concentration, and *kata* requires that you concentrate on what you are doing. This included the second and third types of *suki*: *kamae no suki* and *ugoki no suki* (aka *waza no suki*). *Kamae no suki* is an opening in the posture, giving the opponent a chance to attack. This may include the improper stance (*tachi*) or incorrect hand position for attack or defense. *Ugoki no suki* means an opening in the technique. This refers to a technique that is mistimed or misplaced. That is, one was too slow – or fast! – or the target was inappropriate. Also included are superfluous movements, or "tels," which is short for "telegraphing movements." These are movements of the body (usually involuntary) which let the opponent know what is coming. The *kata* addresses *kamae no suki* and *ugoki no suki* by requiring the stances and techniques to be of a precise nature.

***Keiko no Shurui to Junjo* or Various Systems of Training**

Taken from, *An Encyclopedia of Judo* by Professor Ron Rogers

These are the classical forms of practice, which included training with the *bokken* or *suburito* (both forms of wooden sword). They are still used for practice by the higher ranks – especially for *Kime no Kata*.

- *Kei* – surpassing
- *Ko* – (one's) ancestors.

Keiko is training designed to perfect oneself in an art or technique and surpass (*kei*) what has gone before (*ko*). It is becoming aware of the totality of the past through training. The deeper meaning is reflection and refinement. It is returning to the origin and discovering reality. Only through the study of the past, and an appreciation for its existence, can we understand the present and refine our spirit.

- "*Onegai shimasu!*" – "Let us begin [training]!"
- "*Domo arigato gozaimashita!*" – "Thank you very much [for your instruction]!"

- *Aite no chikara* – You have to practice at the level of the ability of your partner. It always has to be the stronger and more adept person that has to adjust to the less adept.

MYB Shime Waza: Strangling Techniques

Naked Strangle Variation [*Hadaka Jime Henka* aka *katate haigo hadaka jime*]

Tori blocks a right-handed punch with his or her right hand. S/he spins *tori* around as for *ushiro kata otoshi* (rear shoulder drop). *Tori* applies *hadaka jime* (naked strangle) with the right arm only [*katate hadaka jime*]. *Tori*'s left bent wrist is placed in the center of *uke*'s back [*haigo*] at the *katsu-satsu* point. The palm may be used but the bent wrist is preferred. (*Jujutsu*, Volume II, page 180, I-A)

Naked Strangle with the Legs [*Ashi Hineri Jime* aka *hiza jime*]

This is a strangle using the legs from a standing *juji gatame*. The important thing to remember is the turning in of the left foot. *Tori*'s left instep is placed beneath *uke*'s left shoulder between the neck and shoulder. *Tori*'s right instep is placed in an opposite manner at the right shoulder. Strangulation is applied with the lower parts of the legs in a twisting motion. (*Jujutsu*, Volume II, pages 180-181, I B)

Strangle with a Spine Lock [*Hadaka Koshi Hishigi*]

Entry is the same (as for *yoko do jime* or side trunk squeeze ["body scissors"]) except *ushiro do jime* (rear "body scissors") is used in conjunction with *hadaka jime ichi* (naked squeeze/choke one). *Tori*, by arching his or her back, can continue into a spine lock at the lower back [*koshi hishigi*]. (*Jujutsu*, Volume II, page 204, I-C-2)

Kubi Shime no Ri: Principles of Squeezing the Neck

Wilson *Kanchō* always stated that strangulations should be done "as if a snake were constricting the neck." The arm (or leg) should not be placed stick-like against the throat, but "wind" around it so there will be no space between the arm (leg) and the opponent's neck. Your Professor Emeritus found that using the thumb joint to pull the muscle from the artery, vein and vagus (pneumogastric) nerve, then constricting all three, caused prompt unconsciousness. When done correctly, the opponent will begin blacking out when the muscle is pulled forward. S/he should be completely unconscious by the time the lock is actually secured.

Three Useful *Kyusho* (Vital Points)

LV 14 (*getsui* or *tsukikage* on the left side; *denko* on the right side) is at the top of the floating rib. Strike inwards and 45o upwards. Two methods may be used. The first, and most effective, is done by striking toward the spine. This should make the body turn away from the strike, with the weight sinking towards the rear leg. The second method has move striking inwards away from the spine. The body should sink onto the front leg, turning toward you. The back curves and causes the head to drop forward.

LI 10 (*sanri*) is located about an inch from the humerus on the thumb side of the arm. It is located on the mound of the forearm, just below the elbow. This is below the radiobrachiallis muscle, which is filled with neuroceptors. The optimum blow is by using a "heavy hand" strike at a 45o angle toward the wrist.

ST 5 (*jingei*) is located in the mandibular foramen. This is a small groove in the lower jaw bone. If a vertical line is drawn from the corner of the mouth to the bottom of the jaw, this is its approximate site. This vital point has a very high probability of a knockout blow. Strike this point at a 45° angle. This may be attacked upwards from the front to the rear and downwards from the back to the front. This should not be struck during training!

Hara to Koshi: Abdomen and Hips

“*Te de tsukuna, hara de tsuke; ashi de keruna, koshi de kere.*” This phrase is translated as: “Do not punch with your arm, punch with your *hara*; do not kick with your leg, kick with your *koshi*.” To effectively punch with the *hara*, one must learn deep breathing. In kicking with the *koshi*, one propels the lower back forward so the body mass is moving with the technique. *Hara*, as has been stated, is the center of gravity for the human body. If one is not centered, the balance is precarious, at best and possibly lost. *Koshi*, translated as “hips” actually refers to the full width of the lower back, just above the buttocks. This is the connecting point between the upper body and lower body, indicating that in performing a technique, both the upper body and lower body are involved. This is another way of saying, “use the entire body” in applying a technique. When both *hara* and *koshi* are utilized, the technique is very powerful. A general rule of thumb is that the hips should stay centered beneath the shoulders when a technique is done.

In regard to punching, the use of the elbow is also of extreme importance. It should never be “locked” straight, regardless of the ending position. However, when done correctly, the elbow faces downward, not outward, at the end of the punch. Most of the actual power comes from the twist of the forearm, which should be at the moment of contact. That is, the fist barely makes contact with the target, and then twists into position. When correctly executed, this gives great depth of penetration from the blow. When this method is used, the elbow is protected from attack from the outside. In addition, the twisting of the forearm prevents the elbow from “locking out.”

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