

Midori Yama Budokai: *Hanshi's Corner*

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Ichi go, ichi e: One life, one meeting

Kururunfa Kata (Goju-ryu)

Ku-ru-run-fa is written with four *kanji*. The first means “an extended period of time.” “*Ru*” implies wanting a guest to remain, and not wanting him to leave, but to stay longer. The third means “suddenly” or “abruptly.” The final *kanji* (*fa*), as with many others, has different shades of meaning. It may mean destroying, tearing apart, solving a problem, or even a sense of breaking through a defense. Taken as a whole, *Kururunfa* is a *kata* which exemplifies the *Goju* name (“hard-soft”). The exponent lures the opponent in, inviting over-extension of the attack (the “soft”). Then, suddenly, destroys the opponent with a well-timed counter (the “hard”). Wing Chun expresses this same concept as follows: “Lui lao hui soong, lut sao jik chung (Cantonese),” which translates to: “As my opponent comes in, I receive him; as he leaves, I escort him; upon loss of contact, I charge forward.” This same concept was expressed by Ueshiba Morihei in his art of *Aikido*, as well as by some of the higher ranked exponents of *Judo*. “When an opponent comes forward, move in and greet him; if he wants to pull back, send him on his way.” Also, note that the expression is “I receive him...” *Kururunfa* contains the *kuri uke*, or circling block (“*kuri*” refers to a rotating motion). This block begins as *Shotokan's shuto barai* and ends with *hiji otoshi*. The block moves from inside out using the knife edge of the hand, which pushes slowly forward with a little bit of tension. Traditionally, this was taught as a movement in which the exponent trapped the opponent's extended hand inside his kimono's sleeve.

Punching, Boxing Style

The following six concepts are those which give the traditional martial artist the greatest problems when learning boxing techniques.

- **Dropping the hands.** Wilson *Shihan* constantly stressed “kicks are not done with the hands! Keep the hands in a guarding position!” Even when punching, many exponents (even black belts!) drop their guard, leaving their head open for attack. Some styles even teach to extend the arms to the side as you are kicking, which is something that must be corrected later on.
- **Inadequate use of footwork and body movement.** Wilson *Shihan* would always be after his students to move, saying: “You didn't buy real estate, and you don't own the mat you're on! Move!” It was also his contention that launching an attack from movement was superior (more powerful) than from a stationary position. Joe Louis, “The Brown Bomber,” subscribed to this same theory. This was, of course, Joe Louis, the boxer, not Joe Louis, the *karate-ka*.
- **Panicking when hit.** Many traditionalists have 1) never been in a real fight; 2) have never been hit for real (as in full contact matches). Consequently, when in an actual situation they panic. Even in training (with proper equipment) light to moderate contact should be made. You don't have to try to knock your opponent into next week, but some contact is necessary. Be like a Timex: “Take a licking and keep on ticking.”

- **Punching with the arms.** As many times as we *sensei* advocate “put the hips into it,” or similar statements, most beginners, some intermediates and – yes, some black belts – punch only with their arms. When done correctly, the punch has the full weight of the body behind it. One training method for learning to punch with the full weight is to stand on one leg (for example, the left) and punch with the right hand. As there is no stabilization from the right leg, this forces the weight of the body into the punch. Once punching with the full weight of the body is felt, then the right leg may be lowered and a conventional punch is done – with the full weight of the body!
- **Delivering one punch at a time.** This is one problem with the old adage of “one blow, one kill.” That may be the ideal, but it is not very realistic! Boxers are trained to deliver combinations, based on the fact that one punch against a trained, moving opponent will probably not end the fight! (Also, see the first concept: Dropping the hands.) After that well-focused “killing” blow, the tendency is to relax one’s guard (presuming one has kept it up to that point!). In real life, whether in the full contact ring, or on the street, one keeps up the “blitz” until the opponent falls and does not get back up! Actually, the three lunge punches of the *Taikyoku* and *Heian Shodan* teach the concept of continuing attack. In addition, Dan Kennedy, *Hanshi*, teaches another reason for the three attacks. When a person is hit, endorphins are “dumped” to help withstand the shock. Generally, there is a 70% “dump.” When the second blow lands 70% of the remaining 30% of endorphins are used – obviously, the shock is greater since there is little to withstand it. When the third blow lands, there is only 9% of the original 100%, leaving little protection from a sustained barrage of blows. This is also the reason for broken rhythm in the three punches – a hard blow to stun followed by two rapid attacks. Conversely, one may throw two rapid punches to “set up” the final blow. “You must listen to your *kata*...” Boxing uses the same concept: a left jab followed by a right cross and a left hook – those three punches in the *kata* can be any type, at any level without stepping!
- **Improper training.** To be proficient, all training methods must be used. These include, but are not limited to, shadow boxing (aka *kata*), focus mitts (*makiwara*), heavy and speed bags, and sparring (*judo*: *randori*; *karate*: *kumite*).

Based in part on an article from Black Belt magazine, March 1997.

O Sensei: Venerable Teacher

O Sensei does not mean “Big, Large or Great *Sensei*,” as would *Dai Sensei*. The “*O*” is an alternate pronunciation for the character meaning “*Okina*.” *Okina* means “old man,” or “venerable.” In Oriental culture “old” does not have the pejorative meaning as in the Western culture. It is actually a way of giving respect to an older man. As with other terms (*san*, *sensei*) it follows the person’s name. Ueshiba Morihei was referred to as Ueshiba *O Sensei* (“old sensei”). His son, Ueshiba Kisshiomaru, and 2nd *Doshu*, was referred to as *Waka Sensei* (“young *sensei*” as opposed to “old *sensei*”). Ueshiba’s grandson, Ueshiba Moriteru, is now the 3rd *Doshu*.

Ueshiba taught that there were five steps to Enlightenment:

- *Kairimiru* or reflection
- *Hajiru* or repentance

- *Kuiru* or feeling of shame
- *Osoru* or feeling of fear
- *Satori* or actual enlightenment

And six pillars of *Aikido*:

- *Shihō nage* or four directions throws
- *Irimi nage* or entering throws
- *Kaiten nage* or rotation throws
- *Kokyu-hō* or breath power techniques
- *Osae-waza* or pinning techniques
- *Ushiro waza* or rear techniques

Hanshi and Shihan

Although the sounds of the two words above are the same, the characters used for “*shi*” in each of them are different. “*Han*” means “example,” “model” or “pattern” in both words. However, the character “*shi*” in *hanshi* means “gentleman,” “samurai,” “warrior” or “scholar.” The “*shi*” in *shihan* means “teacher” or “master.” To further confuse the issue, both are used to mean “teacher.” *Judoka* refer to Kano Jigorō as Kano *Shihan*, using the word as an honorific.

Onegai shimasu means “I welcome you to train with me,” or literally, “I make a request.” This is said to one’s partner when asking him or her to practice. Please note the beginning letters of each word!

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