

Midori Yama Budokai: *Hanshi's Corner*

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Ichi go, ichi e: One life, one meeting

“Proper Breathing”

Proper breathing (also called “normal breathing” or “natural breathing”) is actually simple, but we (the ubiquitous “we”), as usual, tend to make it difficult. Proper breathing is how a baby breathes. When s/he breathes in, the abdomen expands; when s/he breathes out, the abdomen deflates. When an Asian martial artist is asked “to take a deep breath,” the chest is the last thing to expand (if at all!) When the Asian begins breathing in and expanding the chest, the equivalent of last rites is requested. In fact, proper breathing includes the ability to prevent the opponent to see you breathe at all. Generally speaking, before a movement, you breathe in; at the completion of the movement, you breathe out. Breathe in with the “chamber”; breathe out with the technique. Breathing in makes the movement easier and quicker; breathing out stabilizes the body. It is odd that we have to practice to return to a natural act. Your professor emeritus has done it for so long, it has become second (?first) nature.

Think of a cat: When a young cat is startled, it breathes in and arches its back -- startle response, placing it in a vulnerable position. It has increased its height, making a larger target, exposing more vital points and raising its center of gravity, making it easier to topple over. When the old cat is threatened, it flattens itself and breathes out -- combat mode, in which it has lessened vital areas of attack and lowered the center of gravity, giving more stability. The first leads to scattered thoughts; the second to focused intent. With meditation, natural breathing may lead to the alpha state, but its primary use is to center the body, mind, emotions and spirit -- essentially, to reach for “9.” There is even a correct way in which to place the tongue -- against the upper palate, just behind the back of the upper teeth. The tongue should just barely touch, with little or no pressure used. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the placement of the tongue closes the meridians of the Governing Vessel and Conception Vessel. This placement supposedly hinders a knockout blow on a *kyusho*. At the risk of sounding sexist, it has been my experience that the ladies have more trouble quieting their minds than the men. Men contend they are better at focusing; women contend the men have less to think about. Whether nature or nurture, ladies generally have to work harder to still their thoughts. My personal belief is that because women are usually the caretakers (even when working) that they develop (already have?) the ability to multi-task. Consequently, they may develop what the Japanese refer to as “monkey minds” -- that is, their minds are always busy. Yes, there are women who can focus and men who can multi-task -- there are always exceptions, but your professor emeritus would be willing to bet that in the majority of cases they had to train themselves to do it! It should be added that multi-tasking is not the same as a “monkey mind.” When one multi-tasks to the extent of not being able to “shut off” the thoughts after the job is done then one has the “monkey mind.” One quick test is when one goes to bed. If the mind may be stilled and one goes directly, or very quickly, to sleep, there is no “monkey mind.” If one lies there and thinks about what has happened, what may happen, what could have been done better, etc, then one has the “monkey mind.” Natural breathing with some form of meditation helps to still all these thoughts.

Some styles do teach to expand the chest with the in breath, but it is used for advanced breathing techniques – not for combat! This method is referred to as “reverse breathing.”

Forms of Peripheral Vision [*Metsuke no Kata*]: Training for Peripheral Vision

When looking back to see an opponent at the rear, the exponent should [first] focus his or her eyes straight ahead, then turn his or her head toward the shoulder *without shifting the eyes*. From this position, *the exponent may increase his or her range of vision by looking up*.

Note: *The exponent’s eyes must not shift* as s/he turns his or her head, and *s/he must not look down* at any time.

Note: If the exponent “focuses” and does not look down his or her eyebrows do not move and give him or her away. When looking up, the exponent’s opponent cannot be certain s/he has been seen as the exponent seems to be “gazing into space.” (*Jujutsu*, Volume I, page 118, I)

***Jutte* or Ten Hands**

There are two uses of the term “*jutte*.” One is the Japanese version of the Okinawan *kata*, *Jitte*, or “Temple Hands,” which is one of a set of three. The other two are *Jion* and *Ji-in*. The second is strictly Japanese, and refers to a metal truncheon formally used by the Japanese police to ward off sword attacks. In the hands of a skilled exponent, the blade of the sword could be captured or even broken. It should be mentioned that the cut was avoided and the entrapment was on the back of the blade – not the edge! In much the same manner as the *tessen* (iron fan), the *jutte* was used to block (*uke*), parry (*nagashi*), strike (*uchi*), thrust (*tsuki*) and restrain (*osae*). One use was to trap the fingers of the swordsman and prevent the use of the sword. Some *kagi* were sharpened and used to cut the fingers. Masamune Goro Nyudo, a renowned swordsman, is believed to have developed the *jutte* from a battlefield weapon, the *hachiwari*, or “helmet splitter.” It is believed that the *hachiwari* was held in the left hand to trap the opponent’s weapon, and the right hand struck with the sword. Hirata Munisai, the father of Musashi Miyamoto, was considered to have been a master of the *jutte*. The *jutte* was composed of seven main parts. The tassel indicated the rank of the wielder. Red was the color of the common policemen and purple indicated an officer. The butt of the *jutte* was termed *kan* and the handle *tsuka*. The *kan* is the site of the ring (*rin*) for the tassel. The protrusion opposite the *kagi* which is used to mount the *kagi* is called *kikuza* (literally, “chrysanthemum seat,” in reference to its supposed shape). The tip of the shaft was referred to as *saki* or *sentan*. Although usually translated as [having the power of] ten hands, another possible translation is hand [held weapon in the shape of the Japanese character for] ten. Although not common, there were *jutte* whose shaft, and sometimes hook, was sharpened. In a similar manner, the tip was usually blunt, but there were *jutte* with sharpened points. Concerning the blunt versions some were larger at the tip to give more weight to a strike. A *jutte* without a *kagi* was called *naeshi* or *nayashi* and resembled the professional knife sharpeners used by cooks. Other variations included a *tsuba* (guard) and a *tsuka* which unlocked from the *boshin* and housed a dagger.

It should be added that a variation of reading the character for “ten” is “*ji*,” so *jitte* may be written with the same characters, but pronounced “*jit-teh*,” rather than “*jute-teh*.” To add to the confusion, other terms were used for the *jutte*. Another version of *jitte* was

written with different characters; in one instance the character for *jitsu* (*ji*) was different, and in another “*te*” was written with a different character. Also used were the terms *jucchoh* and *jicchoh* (which could also be pronounced *juttei*, and meant “ten levers”), *jutsute* (which could be abbreviated to *jutte*, and meant “art hand”), *juttoh* or *jittoh* (“ten hits,” or “on target”), *tetsushaku*, *tetsu-ken* or *tekkan* (“iron sword”), *tetsu-mu*, *tetsu-hoko* or *tetsu-boko* (“iron halberd”), *tettoh* (which also meant “iron sword”), *honeono* or *kotsukin* (“bone axe”) and *teboh* (“hold in both hands”). The *tokushu keibo* (the Japanese expandable baton) is the modern version of the *jutte*.

Based on *Secret Weapons of Jujutsu* by Don Cunningham and *Jutte: Japanese Power of Ten Hands* by George Kirby.

Bogyo: Defense

Following are the components of defense against throws. “Components” is the key word as they are most often, if not always, used in conjunction with one another. Any or all of the individual components should affect the opponent’s balance, placing him or her in the position of *kuzushi* (disruption of balance).

Tsugi-ashi, or follow foot. The defender moves the feet forward or backward (usually to the front or rear corner) as the opponent moves in to throw. This should place the opponent in an unbalanced posture (*kuzushi*). An extended foot movement may lead to the next component.

Jigotai, or defensive posture. This is the primary component; however, it is not the bent-over posture used by today’s *judoka*. *Jigotai* as originally conceived was a widening of the stance as the center of gravity was lowered. Once the opponent’s technique was stopped, the *shizentai* was reassumed and a counter attack was attempted. This defense led to the creation of *tsurikomi-goshi*.

Tai sabaki, literally “body movement,” it is generally used to refer to body pivoting. As the body’s center of gravity (CG) is lowered (*jigotai*), the defender’s body turns away from the direction of the throw.

Hikite, or “pulling hand,” refers to the defender yanking the arm from the opponent’s pulling hand. This action could be thought of as “*hikigaeshi*,” or pulling reversal. From *migi shizentai no kumi kata* (gripping form of the right natural posture), the defender pulls the right elbow from the opponent’s left hand grip on the sleeve. Again, this should be done in conjunction with *jigotai* and *tai sabaki*.

Te osae, or hand press. If the throw is done quickly, there may not be time to pull away the arm (*hikite*), nor do a pivot (*tai sabaki*). In this instance, the defender drops the center of gravity and pushes against the hip of the opponent. If the opponent has attempted, for example, *migi seoi nage* (right back-carry throw), the defender drops the body weight (*jigotai*) and pushes against the right hip with the right hand.

Kusabi dome, or wedge block. When the attacker attempts a right side hip throw, the defender places one leg in front of the attacker’s supporting leg. The throw may be blocked (literally, “stopped”), but the defender cannot sweep or reap the supporting leg from this position due to the inherent dangers.

Kawazu gake, or “frog” hooking. Again, this may be used to stop the technique, but cannot be continued into a throw. The attacker has attempted *migi ushiro goshi* and the defender “grapevines” the opponent’s right leg with his or her own right leg.

Hiki ashi, or pulling leg/foot. This is the component used for *tsubame gaeshi* ([barn] swallow reversal). The attacker attempts *de ashi barai* with the right foot to the

opponent's left foot. The defender avoids the attempt by bending the left knee and raising the lower leg away from the attempt. The defender then lowers the leg and counter sweeps the opponent's right foot with his or her own left foot.

Sukashi waza, or "slipped" techniques. These defenses lead immediately into counter throws (*kaeshi waza*). Done with proper timing, they are the counter throw. The opponent may attempt a *migi uchi mata*. To avoid being thrown, the defender removes the left leg from the path of the sweep. The attacker's momentum may carry him or her over as for *uki otoshi*. A variation would be for the defender to return the leg into a *hidari tai otoshi* (left body drop).

Tombo gaeri, or dragonfly turn. This is a specialized technique to defend against *tomoe nage* (whirling throw). It is a variation of the gymnastic "round-off," which places the defender 180o from the beginning position of the attempted throw. This is a favorite of the *judoka* who specializes in grappling.

Based, in part, on Kawaishi Mikonosuke's *Standing Judo, the Combinations and Counter-attacks*.

Terminology

Koshin means rearward.

Fujubun means "not enough power."

Attate iru means "contact."

Kaku zuki is a square punch, aka hook punch.

Shi zuki is a beak thrust in which the fingers and thumb form a "beak."

Phrases

Domo arigato gozaimasu is the most formal way of saying "Thank you very much." "Arigato" is very informal and only done among friends.

Onegai shimasu means "please teach us."

[**Sempai**] **ni mawate** means "turn toward [the senior student]." *Sensei* may be substituted for *sempai*.

[**Sempai**] **ni rei** means "bow to [the senior student]." *Sensei* may be substituted for *sempai*.

Sumimasen means "excuse me," or "pardon me."

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