

## Midori Yama Budokai: *Hanshi's Corner*

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January 2017

*Ichi go, ichi e: One life, one meeting*

### *Ashi no Tachi: "Stances"*

The question of stances and their uses has been asked. However, an auxiliary question is how are the stances related? When done correctly, the *shuto uke* (knife-hand receiving) may be (among others) an arm lock. The *kokutsu dachi* (rear-leaning stance) facilitates the stretching of the arm to ensure the lock. With the front foot toed slightly inward, the *zenkutsu dachi* (front-leaning stance) may lock the opponent's leg, placing pressure against the knee, either from the inside of the leg or the outside. Conversely, the front foot may be toed slightly outward for the same effect. *Kiba dachi* may be used to throw a version of *sukui nage* (scooping throw) when the leg is placed in back of the opponent's leg/s. This version is one application of the last two movements of *Jion*. As a combination, moving from *neko ashi dachi* (cat-foot stance) to *zenkutsu dachi* and *gedan barai* (low-level sweep) is also a variation of *sukui nage*. When the *kiba dachi* (horse-riding stance) moves into the *zenkutsu dachi*, the throw known as *uchi gari* may be performed. Again, the *kata Jion* gives other applications of moving from one stance to another. The *manji uke* (swastika receiving), in itself a combination of *gedan uke* and *jodan uke* (high-level block), is done from *kokutsu dachi*. The arms are brought into a *jodan morote uke* (high-level two-handed receiving), standing in *heisoku dachi* (blocked foot stance). This combination of stances moves from a simultaneous "block" and strike to an extremely effective arm lock. The first three moves in *Nijushiho* include an *osae uke* (pressing receiving), a counter-attack (the punch) followed by an arm lock (movement three). The *osae uke* draws the opponent into the counter-attack, which places him or her into position for the elbow lock of movement three. As your *Hanshi* emeritus learned *Heian Shodan*, the left foot withdrew to the right before stepping left into *zenkutsu dachi*. As this step was made, the hands "chambered," left open hand beside the right side of the head and the left arm stretched forward. The application was a parry with the left hand to *uke's* thrusting hand (either inside or outside!). This was coupled with a sweep/reap with the withdrawing left foot to *uke's* advancing foot. The throw would be a *de ashi barai* to the right foot and *ko uchi gari* to the left foot. The outstretched hand could grab *uke's* belt/pants and *obi otoshi* (belt drop) would be done with the advancing left leg. This was an old *jujutsu* throw, still done in *judo*. It is a particularly violent – and totally inelegant – technique, which may strain *uke's* back! In *Heian Sandan* the movement from *kiba dachi* into *heisoku dachi* with arms akimbo is a throw against an attempted "rear bear hug." A similar move is done in *Gojushiho Dai*, and is one application of the 270o turn in basic *kata*. The first two applications mentioned used the principle of centrifugal force in a "pure" form. The third, still using centrifugal force, is a variation of *fumikomi seoi nage* (similar to the modern *seoi otoshi*). When analyzing *kata* (*bunkai*) for application (*oyo*), you must look at the preceding and succeeding moves. Why are the particular stances adopted, and how are they related?

***Ninja Jubakkei: Eighteen Ninja Skills***

Just as the *samurai* had their “Eighteen Martial Arts,” There were eighteen designated martial skills associated with the *ninja*. Also, as with the *samurai*, there were more than the eighteen in actuality. However, those recognized in the “official” list are given below:

1. *Seishin-teki kyōyō* was spiritual refinement.
2. *Taijutsu* was unarmed combat.
3. *Ninja ken* was the art of the use of the *ninja* sword.
4. *Bojutsu* included the use of stick, short staff and long staff.
5. *Shurikenjutsu* was the art of throwing blades, including *shaken* or “stars.”
6. *Sojutsu* was the art of using the spear.
7. *Naginatajutsu* was the art of using the halberd.
8. *Kusarigamajutsu* was the art of sickle and chain.
9. *Kayakujutsu* was the use of fire and explosives.
10. *Hensojutsu* was the use of disguise and impersonation.
11. *Shinobi iri* was stealth and entering methods; literally, “stealing in.”
12. *Bajutsu* was the art of horsemanship.
13. *Sui-ren* was water training.
14. *Bōryaku* was military strategy.
15. *Chōhō* was espionage and spying.
16. *Intonjutsu* was escaping and concealment.
17. *Tenmon* was the knowledge and use of meteorology.
18. *Chi-mon* was the knowledge and use of terrain or geography.

*Ninja: the Shadow Warrior* by Joel Levy is an excellent reference book with both black and white and color illustrations.

### ***Kime: Concentration of Focus***

Concentration or focus refers to both physical and mental focus. Mental concentration is that of attention; physical concentration is that of force. *Empi kata* exemplifies these principles. Force is the use of energy (*ki*) and power, including breath (*kōkyū*), strength (*ryōku*) and methods of executing the technique (*gihō*). Power refers to achieving maximum force through correct use of strength. When done correctly, it seems that no effort is being exerted. Also important are body momentum, torque, gravitational marriage, timing (*hyōshi*), speed (*hayai*) and penetration. The last is the depth of focus, which refers to power extended beyond the actual target. Body momentum includes movement of height, width and depth. Moving forward in a horizontal plane (*zenshin* or *irimi*) or backward (*kōtai* or *nagashi*) uses depth. Gravitational marriage utilizes the vertical plane, or height. The entry with *kōsa dachi* in *Enbi* uses this concept. *Koshi o ireru*, or driving with the hips is the use of body rotation, or width. *Hanmi* or *gyaku hanmi* ([forward] rotation or reverse rotation) use this principle.

### ***Tekki Shōdan: Oyo***

Referenced are movements 23 (b) through 25. The opponent has grasped both lapels and forced you against the wall (which gives a whole new meaning to fighting with your back to the wall!). The forearm across the body comes down onto both of the opponent's arms. This does two things: First there is the double strike to the brachial muscles on top of the arms, to (hopefully) collapse the arms. Second, the opponent's arms are pinned and he is now held by you. As this is done, you strike a back fist to his nose or upper lip. With the opponent still pinned, you perform *nami gaeshi* as a toe kick to the inside of his right

thigh (femoral artery). It should be a toe kick rather than a ball of the foot kick. Try both and you will see the difference. The foot is placed back as a side stomping kick to the inside of the opponent's left knee. At the same time the right arm strikes to the right side of his neck to the carotid artery. As a follow-up, with the opponent's arms still pinned in place, you do a toe kick to the inside of the left thigh. This is followed by the stomping kick to the inside of his right knee and a strike to the left carotid artery.

### ***Bunkai and Oyo: Analysis and Application***

Sometimes used interchangeably, the terms “*bunkai*” and “*oyo*” have different meanings. *Bunkai* is the analysis of *kata*; that is the theory of how a movement (technique) is used. *Oyo* is the actual application based on the theory. *Kata* gives the pressure points to strike, how to strike, the best order in which to strike, where your opponent will fall, where to follow up a strike and how. In other words, *kata* teaches *oyo*; it is our job to figure out (*bunkai*) what that application is. Every move should be applicable to the front, rear and sides of your opponent. These moves should include releases, strikes, grappling (locks or strangles) and throws.

*Karate: the Hidden Secrets* by Russell Stutely is recommended for your study of *kata*.

### ***Kote Hodoki: Wrist Releases***

***Yori hodoki*** or release while advancing. *Tori* begins in *hidari ai gamae* (both *tori* and *uke* stand with the left foot forward in a *hanmi*, or a half-facing stance). *Tori*'s right wrist has been grasped by *uke*'s left hand (*hidari jun katate dori*). From *hidari sankaku tai* (left triangular stance) *tori* performs *hidari tsugi ashi* (left foot moves forward, followed by the right foot), which would be the *karate hidari okuri ashi*. The *atemi* (body strike) of *metsubishi* (“blinder,” or a back fist to the nose/eyes) is performed simultaneously. The release (*hodoki*) is done by raising the right hand vertical to the inside of *uke*'s wrist.

***Kiri hodoki*** or release by “cutting.” *Tori* is in *migi gyaku gamae* (*tori*'s right foot is forward and *uke*'s left foot is forward). *Tori*'s right wrist is held by *uke*'s left hand (*hidari jun katate dori*), but with *tori*'s arm vertical. *Tori* rotates (“cuts”) clockwise, downward and out.

***Akushu hodoki*** or release from a cross grip (literally, “shake-hands” grip). *Tori* and *uke* are in *migi ai gamae*, *hanmi* (right foot forward, half-facing). *Tori* steps forward (*fumi dashi*) with the left foot and performs *atemi* (body strike). *Tori* steps with the right foot and rotates the captured right wrist counter-clockwise.

***Kirigaeshi hodoki*** or release with cutting overturn. *Tori* and *uke* are in *migi ai gamae*, *hanmi*. *Uke* holds with *migi akushu dori* (right hand to right wrist in a “cross grip”). *Tori* rotates his or her hand clockwise and performs *kiri kote kudaki* (wrist crush with a “cut”).

### **Terminology**

***Reishiki*** is ceremony or ceremonial; it refers to the proper method of showing respect.

***Ninja*** is actually a Chinese derived pronunciation of “*nin*,” and “*sha*,” which combined give the word “*ninja*.” The Japanese pronunciation is “*shinobi no mono*.” *Nin* and *shinobi* both mean stealth or quiet action. Both may also mean “to endure.” *Sha* and *mono* both mean person. *Shinobi* and *mono* require a linking word, hence the inclusion of “*no*.” *Ninja* (*shinobi no mono*) may be used to mean “a person skilled in the art of stealth,” or “one who endures.” Words used to describe *ninja* qualities are: ***Kanchō***, written with

different characters, than for “Master of the House,” may mean spies. *Teisatsu* means scouts. *Kisho* means surprise attackers. *Koran* refers to agitators.

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