

Midori Yama Budokai: *Hanshi's* Corner
Written by Ron Rogers *Hanshi Meiyokyoju*

Turning Side Kick

The efficacy of this kick is dependent upon the stance employed in its delivery. The stance used is that of the crane (*sagi ashi dachi*). This kick is primarily used as a follow-up to a displacement kick. When the opponent avoids a right displacement kick by circling to his or her right, the opportunity for this kick is presented.

When the displacement kick is avoided, *tori* brings the right instep in back of the right knee. *Tori's* left knee is slightly bent for better balance. As *uke* circles to the right, *tori* "pulls" with the right instep, turning 90° toward the direction *uke* is moving. This turn intercepts *uke* at the 90° angle and *tori* attacks with a right side thrust kick.

The kicking leg must be brought back to the knee before attacking to the side!

To practice this kick with the turn, *tori* may use the following drill as s/he moves counter-clockwise. *Tori* begins facing north with the right instep hooked in back of the left knee. S/he pulls with the right instep so the body faces west as the kick is directed to the north. The second turn has *tori* facing south with the kick toward the west. The third quadrant is with *tori* facing east and the kick to the south. Fourth and final, *tori* returns facing north with the kick directed to the east. *Tori* then hooks the right knee with the left instep and repeats the drill clockwise.

This drill will promote balance, movement and accuracy with the side kick.

From: *An Encyclopedia of Judo*

Overall, *kikomi* (attack) is a penetrating blow. One concentrates power towards a center or a point. This is hard *ki* (*kimi*). Compare *kokyū*. *Kime* (focus) is a swift and precise movement with a decisive mind. It is the focusing of all one's physical and psychological force on one point just beyond the target. *Kōbo ichi* means united in attack and defense. *Kō-* is from *kōgeki*, or attack; *-bo* is from *bogyō*, or defense. *Ichi* means one. Literally, offense and defense are one.

5.1.2 *Jintai kyūsho* or vital points of the human body. These *mato* (targets or vulnerable points) may be divided into *kan dokoro* or vital points ("killing" blows) and *shinkei chūsu* or nerve centers ("pressure points"). Dr. Yasushi Yamada, mentioned above, gave a list of eighty *atemi* spots. Nineteen on the head, nine on the neck, sixteen on the chest, seventeen on the stomach, six on the arm and thirteen on the leg. These are based on the acupuncture meridians. It should be noted, however, that the points have different names than those given to acupuncture. Also, the meridians for *jujutsu* are referred to as *in keiraku*. Those used in acupuncture are *yo keiraku*. A special method of breathing (*kikō*; Chinese: Qui Gong) is required to train the *yin keiraku*. The *Yōshin Ryū*, from which sprang the *Tenshinshinyō Ryū* and the *Shinshindō Ryū*, explicitly states, "the abdomen is the most important essence of our teaching. It is the very point from which all the internal organs and *keiraku* spread." Many traditions required knowledge of the *yin keiraku* before one was considered a fully qualified master. The *Takeuchi Ryū*, the oldest extant *jujutsu ryū*, still retains a book on the *keiraku*. Associated points on the back of the body are referred to as *yu. Bo* are the alarm points connected directly to the organs. The points are known as *tsubo* in Japanese. In general, *kandokoro* refer to one's vital points and *futokui* refer to one's weak points. *Kyūsho* are vulnerable spots on the body. *Kyūsho* is

sometimes translated as vital points. **Kanten** are points on the skin that are sensitive to temperature.

NOTE: All *kyusho* may be found by using the “hand span” method. This is composed of the full hand span and half hand span. If the hand is stretched, the distance from the tip of the little finger to the tip of the thumb is the full hand span. From the knuckle of the index finger to the tip of the thumb is the half hand span. If you start at a known vital point such as the *miken* or the *naisen* (the juncture of the brow ridges and frontal bone; the glabella), the full hand span/half hand span may be used to find other vital points. If the tip of the thumb is placed on the *miken*, the knuckle of the index finger will touch the *kachikake* or the point of the chin (mentum; CV24) and the tip of the little finger will be above the *hichu* (secret center or the projection of the thyroid cartilage of the larynx; ST-9 or CV-22). If the knuckle of the index finger were placed on *miken* and the hand wrapped horizontally the tips of the little finger and thumb will touch *komekami* or the temples (GB-5). This method may be used to locate all 365 points on the human body. *Kyusho* are generally divided into *jintai kyusho* (*komen*), or vital points to the human body (back of the body), and *jintai kyusho* (*shomen*), or vital points to the human body (front of the body). I have elected to list according to placement on the body; that is, high (*jodan*), middle (*chudan*) or low (*gedan*).

The following is from notes taken when working with Wilson *Kancho*: “To best perform *atemi* follow the natural paths to position the fingers to strike. To attack the eyes, first run the fingers down the opponent’s face, from forehead to cheeks, stopping at the cheekbones, then drive upward into the opponent’s eyes.

“The throat may be similarly attacked by striking a glancing blow upward against the opponent’s chest, following the natural path to *uke*’s windpipe or the hollow of the throat.”

Heiho Okugisho: The Secret of High Strategy

Yamamoto Kansuke is attributed with writing the above. He died at the age of 68 at the battle of Kawanakajime in 1561. At the time of his death, he walked with a limp, was blind in one eye and was missing several fingers. Ten years after his death, Kosaka Danjo began writing *Koyogunkan* (presumably from the writings/teachings of Yamamoto), but did not finish it before he died. Forty years after Kosaka Danjo’s death, these writings were compiled and added to by Obata Kagenori. They were then published as *Koyogunkan* from 1616 to 1623. In 1804, *Heiho Okugisho* was extracted from *Koyogunkan* and published.

Yamamoto Kansuke (et al) informs us that: “To become a strategist, one would first learn *kempo*, or unarmed martial arts. Next, the strategist learned *koshi*, or the fluid movements of the hands and legs. After these came *shinshin*, or harmony between the mind and the body. After these the strategist learned *tanpyo no jutsu* or short weapons, and then *naga dogu*, or long weapons, followed by *tobi dogu*, or bows and arrows and guns. During this time, one also received instruction in *jinri*, the way to lead and control people, *chiri*, how to use one’s surroundings, and *tenri*, or making use of nature’s cycles and weather. The effective use of all these areas comprised strategy.”

There were five basic principles of action: *meshu*, learning with the eyes; *nishu*, learning with the ears; *shinshu*, learning with the mind; *shushu*, learning with the hands; and *sokushu*, learning with the legs. One was admonished to look at the colors with the eyes,

listen to the sounds with the ears, devise a plan with the mind and put the plan into action with the hands and legs.

Yamamoto informs us that there were no past records of schools as such. Because changes are important to strategy, it was of no advantage to have a set style for winning.

There were three types of strategists. The first was *heiho-zukai*, who understands the purpose of his teacher's teachings, but does not have many ideas of his own; nor does he practice much. He becomes a teacher of students. Second was *heiho-sha*, who adds his own ideas of effectiveness into his fighting and practices very hard. In ten fights he will have ten victories. *Heiho-jin* is the person who does not learn all of his teacher's techniques, but understands what he does learn. There is a fourth, known as *ha-heiho-sha*. This is the type of person who fights very well when he is enthusiastic or energetic, but does poorly when he feels depressed. This person does not use their mind and runs away when afraid. They usually die shamefully, disgracing their name and family.

Ryodo means knowing your own strength and that of your enemy. To do this entailed, *jinri*, *chiri*, *tenri* and *heiri*, knowledge of the use of weapons and *jori*, knowing how to use opportunities and chance.

For a more detailed explanation, I recommend *Heiho Okugisho: The Secret of High Strategy*, by Yamamoto Kansuke and translated by Obata Toshishiro.

T'ai Chi's Waist

One of the favorite statements of your *Hanshi Meiyo Kyoju* is: "The power is in the hips." This principle is a primary component of T'ai Chi. According to T'ai Chi theory, one must reach the inner part of a circle for centrifugal force to be effective. The ch'i is like a wheel and the waist like an axle. If the body moves 450, there is a ratio of 3:1, with the waist moving (roughly) a third of the distance of the arms and legs. This is one reason the cross, or reverse punch, has more potential power than a roundhouse blow. The roundhouse travels farther (slower) with less power (speed equals power) due to a delivery by the shoulders. However, the twist of the hips delivers the punch much quicker and, by definition, with more power. This pulling power is referred to as Lu Ching. Roughly, the roundhouse would take three times as long to deliver as the cross, presuming equality in size and skill. This is where the concept of hard and soft converges. For the revolving waist to pull the cross, or reverse punch, there must be friction. In this instance, the inside of the body is held like a steel bar and the outside moves as a rubber band, thus we have friction due to the flexibility of the body.

Boxing chronicles define the waist as an axle and the spine like a pole for a streamer. C'hi is perceived to be threaded to the top of the head, which gives strength of movement to the body. The waist is in charge and is the basis of moving energy. In simpler terms, the body must be straight, or it is difficult for the body to revolve. To understand this, try throwing a punch (or kick) with the upper body bent forward. If the body is centered, the waist is stable.

"T'ai Ch'i's waist" means the waist is issuing the strike from the center of gravity. More prosaically, when a punch or kick, pull or push, is made, the shoulders should be in line with the hips. Again, to understand, try punching with the right arm while drawing back the right hip. The source of movement is in the waist and spine. When one part moves, the entire body moves.

The ba mu or horse stance is used extensively for training the twist of the hips. This is especially true in the *Naihanchi*, or *Tekki, kata* of Okinawa/Japan.

One of America's great boxers, Jack Dempsey, describes the left jab as follows: "Shoot the left fist as far as it will reach, at the same time throwing the body forward into the blow. The blow should be delivered with a snap, as the most of the weight shifts onto the left foot. The force of this blow lies in the snap that is put into it."

Dempsey goes on to explain the right cross: "Step in about a foot, at the same time shooting your right fist over and across your opponent's left arm and shoulder [described here as a counter-blow] to his jaw. When landing this blow you hit with the knuckles, at the same time pivoting your body from the waist and hips toward the left with the blow. This puts added weight behind the punch and adds snap and power to it." Also: "The right cross, or cross counter, is delivered with the elbow slightly bent."

The Champion states there are ten rules for top physical development. The first two are given. "Rule 1. Stand up straight." As comparison, see the quote from boxing chronicles above. "Rule 2. Breathe deep." Correct (deep) breathing has always been a part of the martial arts – no matter what culture.

As can be seen, principles are the same: elbow slightly bent, hips and waist adding torque to the blow, and a snap at the end, using correct posture and deep breathing.

Kata aka Shadow Boxing

The very things espoused by boxing are the same principles taught by *kata*. *Kata* was never to be "done in order," or performed against multiple opponents. The movements were used in groups of two, at the most three (rarely, four), and against one attacker. There may have been more than one attacker, but realistically one can only fight one person at a time. Also, the movements in *kata* were seen to have more than one application.

Shadow boxing is against one opponent, with certain combinations more effective than others. As with *kata*, more than three techniques and you have a clinch (grappling). Shadow boxing programmed the fighter with muscle memory, which was also the aim of *kata*.

As there are more variations in *karate kata* than in boxing, longer forms were needed to record them. However, both shadow boxing and *kata* are composed – for the most part – of basic techniques and different combinations.

Bunkai et al were the partner training developed from the *kata*. In boxing, training partners sparred, using the combinations they had developed.

Judo kata were never to be "solidified." They were originally developed to train the participants in muscle memory and principle. If you could not perform the technique against a non-resisting *uke*, how could you expect to perform it against an opponent who was also trying to defeat you?

Nage no Kata was originally intended to teach the ideal time to apply technique while moving in the most opportune direction. When this was learned, the body could respond appropriately to *randori* or *shiai* conditions.

Katame no Kata was used to teach correct positioning for techniques on the ground. The escape attempts were originally real, and later became stylized. Again, if you could not hold the opponent in an ideal situation, how could you do it against a resisting opponent? It is not the *kata* that has been outdated, but the manner in which it is taught. *Kata* was originally used to train for combat, not for promotions.

Iki; Kokyū (Breath)

Iki refers to the physical act of respiration. *Kokyū* (animating breath, as in He breathed life into Adam) signifies the deeper cosmological aspects of breathing. It is similar to the Hindu prana, or life breath of the cosmos (cyclic energy). *Kokyū* is the coordination of *ki* flow and breathing. *Fukushiki kokyū* is deep abdominal breathing. This type of breathing is from the *hara* and sets the (soft) *ki* in motion. It involves perfect synchronization of breathing and movement, which produces *kokyū ryoku*, or breath power. Both *musubi* and *kokyū* are perceived as spiraling motions; *kokyū* is the in and out pulsation of the breath. When one is endowed with *ki* and *kokyū* s/he possesses *seimei*, or life. According to Ueshiba, when one's *kokyū* is full and deep, one is in tune with the workings of the universe. *Kokyū-nage* is a throw, which overthrows the opponent using only the opponent's own momentum, and the timing of one's mind and body. There is no pressure applied to the opponent's joints. *Kokyū tanden hō* is an exercise in *musubi*, or blending the rhythm of your vital energies (*ki*) with those of your partner. For Ueshiba, *musubi* was the harmonious connection and unity with opposites. Ultimately it is our unity with all life and with the universe. *Kokyū-hō* is the skill of breath-meditation necessary for *kokyū ryoku*, which is the power generated by the skill. In *Aikidō* there are three levels of breath-meditation. These are used to calm the spirit (*chinkon-kishin*; calming the spirit and returning to the divine) and establish true *kokyū* by coordinating *kyōku-ryoku* and body movement (*kokyū dōsa*) to increase *ki* power. *Kyōku-ryoku*, or breath power, is the irresistible power that emanates from true *kokyū*, which in turn emanates from the abdomen. *Shūchu-ryoku* is the concentration of power. *Kokyū-undo*, or breath movements, are techniques to develop *kokyū ryoku*. The first is *ten no kokyū*, or the breath of heaven. The second stage is *chi no kokyū*, or the breath of earth. The third level is known as *jin no kokyū*, or the breath of human beings. These are collectively referred to as *nai kan gyo* or silence and action. They are training which teaches us to still the mind and see inside ourselves.

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