

Midori Yama Budokai: *Hanshi's* Corner  
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***Ichi go, ichi e: One life, one meeting***

***Metsuke***

*Shodokan Aikido* (AKA Tomiki *Aikido*) stresses three elements before the attack occurs. First is the stance. *Shodokan*, heavily influenced by *judo*, uses *shizen tai*, or natural stance. *Yoseikan* refers to this stance as *mugamae*. *Tori's* feet are hip width apart with the toes pointed straight ahead (*karate's heiko dachi*). Weight is 50/50, with most weight being carried on the balls of the feet. The arms hang naturally at the side, having “no attitude,” the *mugamae* of *Yoseikan*. This stance permits quick movement in any direction without loss of balance, and without being “stuck” in a position. Wilson *Kanchō* referred to an unmoving stance as “buying real estate.” With the arms at the sides, *Shodokan* feels that quicker movement is possible and no information is given concerning any training. Also, it does not give any indication of a person being left or right handed. The second element is called *ma ai* or proper distance. This is defined as the distance at which either *tori* or *uke* must take one step forward to attack. The weapons of *tori* and *uke* just touch or barely cross in this position. In *shizen tai*, their fingers touch. If both have swords, the tips cross. The last of the three pre-attack elements is *metsuke*, or focusing of the gaze, literally “eye thrusting.” Most martial arts adhere to the gaze being focused on a “triangle” from the center of the head between the eyes moving down to each shoulder. All arts believe you should “look without looking.” It is known as *happo moku*, which is a technique of gazing into space and taking in the whole field of vision (*shiya*) and beyond (in eight directions – *happo*) without moving the head and without focusing on any particular object. That is looking at the triangle prevents one from focusing on the hands or legs. *Shodokan* explains why this method of “looking without looking” is applicable in self-defense. If you look at the weapon, no matter if it's a sword, knife, fist, etc., then you may not see the actual attack. For example, if you focus on the hands, you may get kicked. The reason for this is that actually looking at the weapon places your reflexes in the forebrain. This means that you look at the weapon, see the weapon coming and a message is sent to the forebrain telling you what to do. In essence, it is no longer reflex, but thought, and “if you have to think, it's already too late.” When you look at that triangle, you're relying on peripheral vision. In this case you are dealing strictly with reflexes, because with peripheral vision, the movement of *uke* goes straight to the “lizard brain,” and bypasses thought. You simply react. This is the basis for the “thousand yard stare.” You have reverted to reflex without conscious thought. The following are those principles needed after the attack has started and the defense is taking place. *Tai sabaki*, or body movement is the primary principle. It has been referred to as the “honorable art of getting the hell out of the way!” The second corollary is *sei chu sen* or natural centerline. This is simply the alignment of the body, and is the vertical center of the body. Practically, it is aligned with the spine from the top of the head to an imaginary spot between the feet. A tertiary concept is that of *ido ryoku*, or movement power. All movement is done from the center of the body, keeping the body aligned. This means that *tori* steps from *shizentai* with the arm or arms in *teगतana* (hand sword), which is moved from the center of the body. With this alignment and power moving down the center of

*tori's* body, *ido ryoku* is greater than simply pushing. If all the above are done correctly then *kuzushi*, or breaking the balance by attacking weak points, is relatively easy. As a drill in your *hanshi's* *jujutsu* class, *tori* and *uke* walk toward each other, as though walking down the street. *Tori* must keep his or her eyes focused on the triangle. When in striking range, *uke* attacks with whatever weapon s/he chooses. *Tori*, if attention has been on the triangle, defends without breaking stride, counter-attacks and continues moving forward. This won't work if *tori* is anticipating a specific attack and watches for it. Later, when *tori* is comfortable with this drill, s/he "walks the gauntlet." That is, s/he walks between a double line of *uke*. Each *uke* may attack with any technique, or not attack at all. This is a variation of the "shoot/don't shoot," used by law enforcement.

### Understanding *Kata*

Most of you have heard your *hanshi* speak of his *Shodan* test. When Booth *Sensei* was asked what was necessary for *Shodan*, your *hanshi* was told: "You need to pick one *kata* and give four applications for each move." In recent years, your *hanshi* has learned that what Booth *Sensei* wanted was the following. Each technique (or series of techniques) should include: 1) a release, 2) a strike, 3) a joint lock (or choke) and 4) a throw. Unlike Japanese *kata*, in which the technique is one thing, and one thing only, Okinawan *karate* used each movement for multiple applications. To illustrate this concept imagine the *gedan barai*, or lower-level sweep, commonly called a down block. Should *uke* use a cross grip (left hand to left wrist), the *gedan barai* may be used to knock away his or her arm. This is, of course, the release. As a side-swinging hammer-fist uses the same mechanics as the *gedan barai*, little imagination is needed to picture a strike to the groin. If *uke* has gripped with a natural grip (right hand to left wrist), a joint lock is possible. *Tori* rotates *uke's* arm over so that the elbow is pointed upward and locked out. The *gedan barai* then strikes the elbow, causing a lock (obviously, there may be simultaneous strike and lock, strike and release, etc.). Most pivots utilizing *gedan barai* are actually throws. For example, after the punch to the right side, *tori* pivots 90o to the left to perform *gedan barai* in *Heian Shodan*. As *tori* turns, the "chambering" arm (the left) sweeps aside *uke's* right hand attack. As *tori* steps forward into *gedan barai*, his or her arm sweeps across *uke's* body and throws with a combination of *aikido's* *do gaeshi*, and *judo's* *sukui nage*. The 180o turn from the left side to the right at the beginning of *Heian Shodan* is the karate version of *judo's* *seoi nage*. The 270o turn at the completion of the three rising blocks (*age uke*) or three punches (*sanren zuki*) is *karate's* version of *aikido's* *kyoku nage* against a "bear hug." One of MYB's members, Kenneth Lones, *Sensei*, now refers to the above as the "Rule of Four." Another aspect of *kata* is that it contains follow-up techniques if the first one doesn't work. This does not apply to every technique, but there is usually one "follow-up" in each *kata*. For example, in *Heian Nidan* the first three moves (on each side) are: block-strike; cover; follow-up. In the first move the upper arm has blocked *uke's* strike or push and the lower arm is actually an "upper-cut" to *uke's* chin. This may be done inside or outside the arm. Should *uke* dodge ("weave") the upper-cut by moving his or her head to the side, *tori* uses the "chamber," or second move of the *kata*, to knock *uke's* initial arm downward. This should break *uke's* balance forward. *Tori* then continues with the third move by using a swinging punch (*furi zuki*) to the side of the neck (carotid artery), or a hammerfist to the throat (Adam's apple). Another follow-up is found in *Heian Godan*. Just be aware that there is a

multiplicity of applications. The above is not the only ones, just examples of how versatile and practical (yes, I said practical!) *kata* is.

### **Buddha's Hands**

We in the martial arts have heard the Bodhidharma (Daruma Taishi in Japanese) story so many times, it has taken a life of its own. However, what we usually haven't done is actually investigate the possibility of any truth in the story. We either reject it as legend, or accept it as gospel. Without debating the historicity of the personage involved (some historians, believe he was only legend), is there any evidence that such a person could have taught martial arts to the members of the Shaolin Temple? Well, yes. First, and foremost, is the individual who started it all – Buddha. Historically, Buddha was the son of a wealthy raja – he was a prince. He later rejected his status, not unlike children today, and became a wandering mendicant, seeking “the truth” – again, not unlike children today. As the son of the warrior caste, he would have trained in vajramushti, mentioned in February's “*Hanshi's Corner*.” Bodhidharma was also born in India of the Kshatriya caste, the third son of King Sugandha. What one really needs to observe are the statues of Buddha, especially in Japan. Many (perhaps most) have Buddha's hands in his lap, just as the monks place them today when practicing Zen (Dhyana in Sanskrit and Chan in Chinese). The back of the left hand in the palm of the right with the tips of the thumbs touching. This is referred to as “no hills, no valleys.” That is, the thumbs should be straight, neither raised (hills) nor lowered (valleys). As Buddha's eight-fold path, they are straight. These statues depict the meditative aspects accredited to the martial arts. It is the second variation of Buddha's likeness in which we martial artists are interested. Buddha is depicted with the right hand raised, and the left hand lowered, both palms facing forward. For any martial artist of the percussive arts, this will be recognized as the ending position of *mawashi uke* in Japanese *Goju-ryu*. Okinawan *Goju-ryu* refers to the “block” as *tomoe uke*, or whirling “block.” *Shotokan* gives descriptive names to both movements, found in *Nijushihō*, albeit their position is the reverse of the Buddha. The lowered (right) hand is referred to as *migi tekubi chudan makiotoshi* (right wrist middle-level downward wrapping). The raised (left) hand is designated *hidari teishō hidari kataguchi ni kamaeru* (left “palm-heel” held in position at the left shoulder). It is found twice in *Unsu*, although the terminology is slightly different. The first time is exactly as the statue of Buddha, and the second as in *Nijushihō*. So, given that Buddha was a trained warrior, who is shown with hands in an evident “blocking” posture, it is entirely conceivable that one of his monks, also a trained warrior, could have brought India's fighting art of vajramushti to China, from which it was taken to Japan.

### ***In* and *Yo* (Chinese: Yin and Yang)**

Although the duality of *in* and *yo* are prevalent in Japanese martial arts, most Westerners are not aware that the symbol of the JKA (Japanese Karate Association AKA *Shotokan*) is representative of the more common Chinese representation of the Yin and Yang. The outer white circle represents the universe, which is shown as light. The darker circle inside, which touches the edge of the larger circle, represents opposing (dual) forces of the universe. To the Chinese, Japanese and Korean way of thinking, the two are inseparable, with each being contained within the other. Wilson *Kanchō* contended that the JKA symbol further represented the gaining of knowledge from a higher source (I).

Where the smaller, darker circle (Sing Yi) touched the larger white one (I Chang) was the gaining of knowledge.

### *Jin-Gi-Rei-Chi-Shin* The Five Confucian Virtues

	<i>Jin</i>	<i>Gi</i>	<i>Rei</i>	<i>Chi</i>	<i>Shin</i>
<i>Gogyo</i> : The Five Elements	Metal	Wood	Fire	Water	Earth
<i>Gojo</i> : The Five Cardinal Virtues	Benevolence	Justice	Courtesy	Wisdom	Sincerity
<i>Gojo</i> : The Five Passions	Grief	Anger	Joy	Hatred	Desire
<i>Gosai</i> : The Five Colors	Black	Green	Yellow	Red	White
<i>Goaku</i> : The Five Sins	Drink	Murder	Theft	Adultery	Falsehood
<i>Gozo</i> : The Five Viscera	Spleen	Liver	Lungs	Heart	Kidney
Ability + Learning + Knowledge + Wisdom = IQ Based on the Five Elements.					

*Jujutsu* (*jujitsu*, *jiu jiu*, *jujitsu*, *jiyu jiyutsu* (in France, this was referred to by the term *Djiou-Djits*, an attempt at its actual Japanese pronunciation, which would be joo-joots, not jew-jit-sue) are all ways of spelling the Gentle Art. This was the name given to an art (lit. gentle art) covering all forms of fighting with or without weapons. Its methods are very drastic and include *aiki jutsu* and *karate*. It was an ancient self-defense art of practical combat techniques, which used throwing, grappling, striking, and kicking as well as a variety of weapons. In the years of *Kanei*, *Manji* and *Kanmon* (1624-1673), *jujutsu* schools, with their masters and experts flourished. The names of *jujutsu* varied greatly, including *Kumiuchi* and its variants: *Senjo Kumiuchi*, which include *Yoroi Kumiuchi* and *Katchu Kumiuchi*, also *Heifuku Kumiuchi* and *Shuhada Kumiuchi*. Others were *Kogusoku*, *Koshi no Mawari* and *Kogusoku Koshi no Mawari*. Other names included, *Jujutsu* or *Yawara*, *Yawarajutsu*, *Yawaragi* and *Yawarariki*. *Wa jutsu* and *Torite* were others. Also, *Aikijujutsu*, *Aiki no Jutsu* and *Aikijutsu* were included. *Hade*, *Hakuda*, *Kempo* and *Shubaku* are listed along with *Goho* and *Koppo*. Other variations were *Kowami* and *Taijutsu* as well as *Shuren*, *Kyoho*, *Shira-Uchi*, *Koshimawashi*, *Taido*, *Mukaiuchi* and even *Judo*. *Tai jutsu*, *Toriuchi* and *Kogusoku* were the art of arrest and *jujutsu* was the art of throws, strangles and holds.

### Errata

For those of you who run you are probably familiar with "Runner's World," a magazine devoted to the art of running and to those who pursue the art. For those of us in the martial arts world there was "Self-Defense World." The same company that produced "Runner's World" published it. Unfortunately, it lasted a mere eighteen issues, because of lack of advertisers. If you still read "Karate Illustrated," "Inside Kung-fu," and "Black Belt Magazine," you will notice that easily one-half to two-thirds of the magazine is advertisement. Some of the advertisements read like those mentioned in "The Deadliest Ads Alive," in the January "Hanshi's Corner." Regardless of how irritating they may be, their lack cost the martial arts world an excellent, non-partisan periodical. It covered any and all subjects related to martial arts, both Occidental and Oriental. Issue 2, for example, began with the bo/quarter-staff, then jiu-jitsu (in this case Shidare Yanagi Ryu Aikido Jitsu), an article on bushido spirit and a comparison on the punches of boxers versus karate-ka. Next was a humorous story, "Hour of the Termite," followed by the basics of

Tai Chi, including combat applications! Other issues covered karate sparring with kendo gear so full contact could be made, the comparison of the side kick, back fist and punch of four martial arts styles (one article per magazine), how to improve reaction time and shiatsu for when control was lacking. Also covered was a historical perspective of the use of naginata and jo. In addition, judo, tae kwon do and meditation were covered. One issue even included detailed instructions on making your own hakama! The most amazing thing about these articles was the detail. You were actually given information on how techniques were done and how to tell when they were not done correctly. Your hanshi still re-reads those articles and is continually amazed at the information given.

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