

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

Nanakorobi-yaoki: Seven Falls, Eight Rises [Seven Times Down, Eight Times Up]

This is one of Lones Sensei's favorite sayings. This Japanese proverb refers to succeeding due to an undaunted spirit. In Japan, the Daruma doll is weighted so that when pushed or knocked over it will immediately return to an upright position. It is considered lucky, as it is symbolic of this type of spirit, which precludes failure.

Its corollary is: *Saru mo ki kana ochiiru*, or "even monkeys fall out of trees." This is one of your *Hanshi Meiyo Kyōju's* favorite aphorisms. It is not an excuse to fail, but the realization that all of us at some time "fall down." What we must do is pick ourselves up and continue, learning from our mistakes. "*Nanakorobi-yaoki.*"

"Iron Shirt Training"

Although usually thought of as a Chinese method of training, this type of training is also found in Okinawa, and to a lesser extent in Japan. Conditioning the body is known as *tai gitae* (tie guh tie) and conditioning of the arms is referred to as *kote gitae* (usually pronounced: koh-ticky-tie). There is also *ashi gitae* (ah-she guh tie), or conditioning of the legs. One partner systematically kicks the legs/shins of the other, deadening the feeling. Kubota Takayuki, *Shihan* of *Gosoku ryū*, and inventor of the kubotan, systematically hits his shins with a one-handed sledge, as used by blacksmiths. In Okinawa, your *hanshi meiyo kyōju* saw *karateka* break two baseball bats with their shins. Almost all schools use some form of *kote gitae* so that blocks may be made without hurting oneself. The *tai gitae* is usually limited to the *Goju-ryū* and *Uechi-ryū*. The methods used are actually an early form of weight training. Use is made of *kame*, which are large jars with protruding rims. These may be empty or filled with water, pebbles or sand. The fingers hold the jars by the rims. *Sanchin* (crescent) stepping is done carrying these jars. The exercise is good for the grip, forearm strength, chest and shoulders. Another weight training method is the use of the *chishi* (chee-she). This is basically a weight at the end of a bar, or wood dowel of strong wood. Think of a weight at one end of a dumbbell (no jokes, please). Your *hanshi meiyo kyōju* has had some made using quick-crete poured in margarine tubs with a length of broom handle. The *chishi* may be held with the weight down the arm, or with the weight above the hand. Blocking techniques are practiced with the *chishi* to strengthen the forearms, grip and shoulders. *Ishi-sashi* are similar to kettle bells, except they are solid pieces of stone (cast concrete, for westerners), and are used in much the same fashion as the kettle bell. Tradition has it they were actually locks on wooden gates. Actual dumbbells are called *tettsuiarei*. Old methods also included *ishi geta* (stone clogs) and *tettsui geta* (iron clogs) used to strengthen the legs. *Goju-ryū* uses *tettsui wa* or iron rings, varying in size. Some are made to fit into the palm of the hand to strengthen the grip. One is round covering (approximately) the torso. This is used to practice the *wa uke*, or circular (two-handed) block. The largest, a *kongoken*, is a rectangular piece of metal as large as the person, and may be use in two man exercises. One person may stand on one end, resting the hands on the sides of the *kongoken*. The second person holds onto the top of the rectangle and

pushes the bar and the assistant back and forth – a sort of standing push-up. And speaking of push-ups, the assistant may stand on end of the rectangle, with the other end against the back of the performer's neck. From this position, the person does push-ups with the weight of the bar against his or her neck. The *makiage kigu* is a bar with a rope attached to the center. At the end of the rope is a weight. One rolls the bar, winding the rope around the bar, then lowers it. This is also for grip and forearms. The traditional method for developing the weapons of the hands and feet is the use of *makiwara*. There are two types. The first is the most well known, and known as *tate* (upright) *makiwara*. The second, lesser-known, version is referred to as *age* (hanging) *makiwara*. It is basically a bundle of bamboo stalks wrapped with hemp rope (again, no jokes, please). Ropes are secured to each end and hung from the ceiling/rafter. Downward strikes and kicks, as well as rising kicks, are practiced on this version.

***Ji-shin* or Confidence**

Ji-shin, or confidence, is predicated on a person's centeredness. Much of this centeredness is based on *shin*, or *kokoro*, which may mean soul, spirit, heart, or mind. Specifically, this is the serene state of mind, which discerns the opponent's intention. This discernment is known as *genshin*, the ability to anticipate an opponent's movement before the movement occurs. At very high levels, it is discerned before becoming a reality in the mind of the attacker! One must have *zenshin* or preparatory concentration to achieve *genshin*, which is symbolized by the use of three major analogies. First is *mizu no kokoro*, or a mind like water. This refers to water reflecting whatever is around its unruffled surface. When agitated, the water, like the mind, reflects incorrectly and the object (attack) may be seen differently than its real image. Second, and a corollary of the first, is *tsuki no kokoro*, or a mind like the moon. Obviously, the moon may reflect in water, but equally important, the moon shines upon everything indiscriminately. In a detached state, the mind does not see the difference between the moon in the water and the moon in the sky. The line between the subjective and the objective is removed. The defender and attacker become one and the same joined in a dance. To have this state of mind, one must have *heijoshin*, or the everyday mind. *Heijoshin* is *shoshin*, or beginner's mind, after extensive training. Both require an open mind, *mushin* or, more correctly, *muga mushin*, no thought, no mind. This does not mean the mind is void, but only that there are no preconceived ideas – the mind is receptive to all that is around it, and movement may be made without having to process information. Action becomes reflexive to the point of becoming instinctive – not thought, no mind. One simply acts. The goal is to act simultaneously to the opponent's movement as though looking into a mirror. That is, when a hand is raised, the hand in the mirror is raised at the same instant – there is no delay because the mirror has no thought, no mind. This is the mind that is controlled through breathing and stance. *Kito-ryu* referred to this as *hontai*, or a state of mind that is immovable in its physical, mental, emotional and spiritual center, no matter what is happening around you. *Fudo-no-seishin* is the more correct for of *fudoshin*. This refers to being unchangeable and strong at heart. One may remain calm and detached at all times and in all emergencies. Finally, there is *tani no kokoro*, which refers to a mind like a valley. A quiet and peaceful mind will hear every sound the opponent makes and hear it without distortion. The greatest obstacle to this state is *shishin*, or “stopped mind,” (also called *i-tsuku*). This is caused by *bonno* or a disturbing passion, which leads to a

dead time or pause. In Japanese, the word for cowardice is *okubyo*, from two *kanji* meaning “to think” and “illness.” “If you have to think it’s already too late.” *Rentan jitsu*, or training of the spirit, leads to *te-o-tsukami kao*, or ultimate power derived from the melding of body and mind. When a warrior possesses these attributes, s/he will experience *kokoro mochi*, or the living moment – the nature of things as they actually are. For warriors, this is seen as *budō seishin*, or the martial spirit inherent in one who follows the way of combat (*budō*). When a warrior (*bushi*) has reached this level, others may experience it as *ningen no hikara*. This refers to an “aura,” or attitude, in which – when manifested – no one would dare attack the individual. This may be expressed through *mikomi* or “jamming” the gaze into an opponent. Literally, this means penetrating gaze, and it is a component of *zanshin*, or the awareness of having to continue the attack against a controlled or defeated opponent, if necessary. The mind is vigilant without fixating on any one thing, attentive to the present moment (*kokoro mochi*) and the moment, which comes after. This is achieved through *kanken*, “looking and seeing,” with *metsuke*, which lets one see the opponent without fixing the gaze on any one point. It is *enzan no metsuke*, the “thousand yard stare.” This is sometimes referred to as *miru no kokoro* or a vision of the mind. You see with more than the eyes. This refers to being totally aware of the opponent and the surroundings, while evaluating his or her position in space and the time interval (*kukan*) that might be needed to close with him or her.

The Way to Black Belt: A Comprehensive Guide to Rapid, Rock-Solid Results

Lawrence A. Kane and Kris Wilder (*The Way of Kata; The Way of Sanchin Kata*) have produced another excellent book given above. It is 267 pages devoted to the individual who has the talent, or potential, to become a black belt, but lacks the motivation (intention, if you will). This book defines a functional path from white to black belt, delineating what needs to be studied and what is necessary for each step. This explains what is really necessary, and the hard work needed. Indira Gandhi stated, there were two kinds of people: those who do the work and those who take the credit. In true martial arts you must do the work; the credit will be given to you by others as recognition by your peers. For those of you for whom the martial arts is not (yet) your life, this is your book. For those of us they are, this helps us understand the person who doesn’t eat, drink and breathe martial arts. Always remember: “A black belt is a white belt who didn’t quit.”

From: *An Encyclopedia of Judo (Jujutsu)* by Ron Rogers

SHI KI CHIKARA NO ICHI: The union of Mind, Spirit and Strength. Also known as *SHIN KI RYOKU*, this refers to the strength of the spirit/heart or spirit breath: “[T]he adrenal glands located at the top of the kidneys . . . secrete the powerful stimulant known as adrenaline. This [chemical] endows one with heightened powers of quickness and almost double one’s normal strength. The function of the *kiai* then, is to unite these two physiochemical reactions into a single action, thus multiplying the effect. . . . “[S]ince the muscles of the lower abdominal wall are used to push the air from the lungs, the [*ki*] of the body having been collected in the *hara*, is likewise transmitted.

NOTE: The following is – to the best of my knowledge – the first attempt to cross-reference the principles contained therein. Any errors are therefore mine. I hope that such effort will inspire another to better what I have begun.

Seiken setsukan is a movement of time, which, being brief must not be lost. *Tori* must act without thinking (*muga mushin*). For illustrative purposes, this may be divided into three stages, each of which is based concurrently upon certain principles already stated.

- **Zenshin** is the state of mind that anticipates any attack. In strategy, it is represented by *kake no sen*, by which *tori* wins through superior initiative. *Tori* anticipates *uke*'s intention and performs a pre-emptive strike. This has been achieved through competing in many *shiai* and transcending technique (*ri*). *Tori* has gone beyond style and is now formless in movement. When *kuzushi* is effected, the fact of *tori*'s judgement and penetration is a function of the mind. This function of the mind (*shi, shin* or *kokoro*) is a serene state of mind that discerns the opponent's situation.
- **Fudoshin** is an imperturbable state of mind in which the mind is not bothered by any outside condition. This is represented by *tai no sen* or initiative through control of the opponent by avoiding the attack. The necessary reaction of the body for this avoidance is obtained through constant practice in *randori* in which *tsukuri* is continually practiced – in part – by *uchikomi*. After *kuzushi*, *kake* is a function of the spirit (*ki*) through proper *tsukuri* that continues *uke*'s momentum (*hazumi*). At this point, one breaks the chain of tradition (*ha*) by developing one's own special style of *judo*. At this stage, the function of *tori*'s mind is that of *ki* in which the condition or operating state is in the mind's energy.
- **Zanshin** the ability to finish ready for continuation of attack is developed through *kata* in which *Tori* learns proper body position and control so a ready state of mind may be maintained. Strategically, this is *go no sen* by which *tori* wins defensively by controlling *uke*'s body. The practice of *kata* is done through *shu*, or learning from tradition. It is this tradition on which *ha* is built and from which *ri* transcends. With correct *tsukuri* of both *tori* (*jibun no tsukuri*) and *uke* (*aite no tsukuri*), following *kuzushi*, *kake* is the function of the working strength (*chikara*) in obedience to spirit (*ki*).

Dojo or “Training Hall”

The concept of the *dojo* is vastly different in Asian and Western cultures. *Dojo* comes from the Chinese word, Tao Chang, which comes from the Sanskrit word, Bodhi Mandala. Bodhi Mandala was used to refer to a place where martial arts were practiced solely for the pursuit of spiritual wisdom. Bodhi [Tao or *Do*] originally meant “wisdom.” Mandala (Mantolo in Chinese and *Mandara* [*dojo*] in Japanese) referred to any special area or place delineated in some fashion, to represent the realm, peripheries or relationships between various aspects of Perfect Wisdom. Such wisdom may be presented in many diverse ways. Contrary to popular belief, Buddhism was a philosophy – not a religion. The literal translation of *dojo* is “Way Place,” or a place for finding the way, or truth. Note that what was sought was spiritual wisdom, not a belief system based on rhetoric. Philosophy is ultimately personal. One may be guided toward discovering the truth, but each individual must find that truth for him-, or her- self. This is why the concept of *shu-ha-ri* is stressed. With *shu*, the individual is guided toward the truth of the martial way. With *ha*, the truth is internalized within the person. Finally, *ri* allows the person to express the truth in a personal way. This does not mean that each person has their own truth, but that each person discovers the truth in their own way. In the martial arts, this truth is found in the moment of applying the technique. If any part of the

technique is incorrect, it will not be effective, and therefore it is not “true.” If everything flows, as it should, the technique is (humanly) “perfect” for that moment in time – and the individual recognizes this moment of human perfection, however briefly it may last.

“White Papers”

As conceived by its founders: “The object and purpose of Midori Yama Budokai, Incorporated shall be to study the ancient martial arts of the orient as well as Europe. Books and white papers will be written to attempt to understand the religious and meditative processes that are contained in the Martial Arts. We will also attempt to define the manner in which the Martial Arts conform to the human bodies of Asia and in the process try to correlate these art forms with the western human body. All such material that may [be] written will be given freely to other such groups that may desire this material. We will get together with other such groups and physically study moves that are involved in the martial arts, and we will give clinics to similar groups that desire to know the details of our studies.”

There are various definitions of “white papers”:

- A white paper is an authoritative report or guide that often addresses problems and how to solve them.
- A white paper is an article that states an organization's position or philosophy about a social, political, or other subject, or a not-too-detailed technical explanation of an architecture, framework, or product technology.
- Since the early 1990s, the term "white paper" has also come to refer to documents used by businesses as a marketing or sales tool.
- A company may release a white paper to the public in order to educate consumers about one of their products. The terminology used may be somewhat technical, but the goal of a white paper is usually to describe the technology or product in terms most people can understand.

The first and fourth of these are the ones promulgated by Wilson Kancho; especially the fourth. The first would be our Policy Statement. It is the fourth that is most pertinent. Wilson Kancho had wished for his instructors, especially the higher ranks, to write white papers to explain their arts so that others could understand what their techniques and ultimate goals were. To some extent, this is what I have tried to do with “Hanshi’s Corner.” If any of you would like to contribute, concerning your art, or facets of it, please send your articles and I will include them under your name and rank.

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