

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

Midori Yama Budokai Eagle Claw (Ying Jaau or Washide)

Grandmaster Leo D. Wilson studied Eagle Claw with Master Fan Gin Han (AKA Fan Gin Hun) during the 1940's, on an almost daily basis. Master Han was a Japanese linguist and Master of *Aiki-jujutsu* and Hsing-I. Master Han studied with Chen Tsu-Cheng, who taught at the Shanghai Chin Moo Association until 1929. In addition, while in China, Master Han studied Long Fist, White Crane and Snake Ch'uan Fa.

Grandmaster Wilson actually began studying with Master Han in the art of *jujutsu*. Master Han gave no name to what he taught, simply calling it *jujutsu*. However, Grandmaster Wilson recalls that on rare occasions, Master Han referred to "*Cheena-Aida Jujutsu*." When your *hanshi meiyo kyoju* first began studying with Wilson Shihan, Shihan referred to what he taught as "Jujitsu/Karate," making no distinction between the two. Study extended to a three year and nine month period, at which time, Grandmaster Wilson entered the Navy during WWII.

While attending the *jujutsu* classes, Grandmaster Wilson noticed that some students were taken aside and taught differently. This was Master Han's Eagle Claw. Grandmaster Wilson began studying the moves and attempted to copy them. Master Han discovered the young Wilson and began giving him formal lessons in this art. This was quite a coup for the young Wilson, as all other EC exponents being taught were Asian. The circular movements of Ba Gua (Pa Kua) were emphasized. Master Han drew a large circle on the floor where Grandmaster Wilson and eight others trained. Grandmaster Wilson stated that this circle was "almost identical with the ones on our patch." Before his passing, Grandmaster Wilson modified the circle (but not the patch) to better represent his training. Movement and flow were carefully modified. Grandmaster Wilson was taught that centrifugal force drew the opponent in and centripetal force was used to escape. This is represented by the "inside" and "outside" circles. In addition, the three "circles" represented constriction, or compression, to generate more force. He made the analogy of a spring being wound, then released. Another representation was the cracking of a whip. This constriction of force is important in understanding motion. As the motion becomes smaller, one has greater efficiency with less energy. One has also accumulated greater power, which is not wasted, and is available for use. Emphasis was placed on the smaller circle/sphere controlling the larger circle/sphere. From a practical viewpoint, less effort is needed for the same effect.

Grandmaster Wilson always stressed that the "circles" on the patch were actually "spheres." That is, it should be viewed as three-dimensional, not two-dimensional. He emphasized that a *judo* throw done with this concept should be done as though the opponent would be "thrown through the floor, and return to the beginning position." He acknowledged that this was physically impossible, but the intent should be there. He likened it to the concept of *karate's kime*. One should not stop at the target (in this case the mat), but penetrate through it. Another concept of Eagle Claw was the concept of attacking at 45o angles. These represented the "weak points" of sight and body.

Further research, primarily by Baker *Hanshi*, has revealed that the Eagle Claw taught by Grandmaster Wilson is a southern style, which is notable for the use of the thumb, forefinger and middle finger as the “claws.” Northern styles use all four fingers and the thumb. In addition, it is believed that the style Han taught was military in nature, rather than stylistic. Grandmaster would refer to Eagle Claw as “kill kata,” in recognition of its deadly effectiveness. He related to your *hanshi meiyo kyoju* that four moves had been omitted, as he felt these were too dangerous to be taught today.

Originally, there were nine Eagle Claw forms, which were divided into sets of three. Each set demonstrated a different principle, or theory. With the completion of the second set (the first six forms), one may be designated a “Master.” At the conclusion of the third set, one was considered a “High Master.” Prior to his passing, Grandmaster Wilson considered modifying his order of forms. EC I and EC II were combined to form EC III. This was the first set. EC I taught the use of the eagle claw. EC II began study of the displacement kick and EC III combined the basic principles of hand and foot. He intended to use EC V as EC IV and EC VI as EC V. EC VI would be a combined form of EC IV and EC V, just as he had done with EC I and EC II to form EC III. The principles taught in this set would be the use of circular movements. EC IV would emphasize the circular movements of the legs, EC V would emphasize the circular movements of the arms and the combined EC VI would emphasize the movements of arms and legs as well as of the body. EC IV would then become EC VII (which is traditionally where it belongs). EC VII was the creation of one’s own unique form and EC IX would be all forms done in sequence, plus sparring with an EC Master.

EC I – III move from inward to outward [movement] with expansion (cycloid) [space]. This is a curve traced by a point on the circumference of a circle that rolls on a straight line [time]. This is based on the mistakes others make.

EC IV – VI move from outward to inward with contraction (tautocrone) using equal time, based on the most harmonious relationship to those around you.

EC VII begins in place [space and time] and relates to constriction (brachistochrone), using the shortest time. One may believe they “know it all, but are mistaken. Seven is a “wild card,” and is represented in math by “null J.” This may be related to the “chaos theory.” In passing, a circle may be evenly divided by any number 1-9, except by seven. $360/1 = 360$; $360/2 = 180$; $360/3 = 120$; $360/4 = 90$; $360/5 = 72$; $360/6 = 60$... $360/8 = 45$; $360/9 = 40$; but, $360/7 = 51 \frac{3}{7}$. The 45° angle is based on the eight basic directions. Each angle has similar correspondences (360° the opponents are facing each other with little or no advantage; at 180° one is at right angles, giving less of a target, etc).

EC VIII is the exponent’s own form, created by his or her knowledge of motion.

EC IX is the sequential performance of forms I – VIII.

EC I – III move from inside out, or expand.

EC IV – VI move from outside in, or contract.

EC VII – IX move in place, both in space and time.

EC I – IV are a balance of numbers, regardless of where they fall.

EC VI – IX are the sum total of ways which must be balanced. When you reach EC IX, you will be back at one.

A circle bisected both vertically and horizontally may represent “J”. This looks like the crosshairs on a sight, or the astronomical symbol for earth. It may be further thought of as

four quadrants. One and two are the top quadrants and three and four are the bottom quadrants. Thus, null “J” functions are represented by a double pi sphere, which works on two planes.

“Te” or “Ti”

It is commonly acknowledged that there were three areas noted for *Te*. All of these areas were located on the southern portion of Okinawa. Castle warriors to protect the king used *Shurite*. This style was named for Shuri, the city where the king and nobles lived. The nobility, or upper class studied it. Remember that Motobu Choki was a descendent of the king. Its most notable exponent, Matsumura “Bushi” Soken, was a bodyguard to the king. Its primary *kata* was *Kusanku*, named for (and possibly taught by) a Chinese envoy by that name or title. Later additions included *Naihanchi*, *Passai*, *Seisan*, *Chinto*, *Channan*, *Useishi* (*Gojushiho*) and *Hakutsuru*.

The second area was Naha, from which came *Naha-te*. Naha (which is where your *hanshi meyo kyōju* was stationed) was a coastal city, made up of a large trade center. The merchant, or middle, class practiced this art. Many believe it to be based on the Chinese Crane Style. The *kata* unique to this system – and remain so – are *Sanchin*, *Sanseiru* and *Pechurin* (*Suparunpei*).

Some historians believe *Tomari-te* developed from *Shurite*, and was influenced by South China arts. Tomari was an area of farmers and fishermen. The working class mainly practiced this style. *Kata* unique to this area were *Wansu*, *Rohai* and *Wankan*, and remained so until the mid- to late 1870’s. Itosu created three *Rohai* (*Shodan*, *Nidan* and *Sandan*) from the original form, as he was later to do with the *Pinan*. Some historians believe the *Pinan* were created from *Kusanku*; others that they were created from an older form, *Channan*. Other researchers contend that they were an amalgamation of both *Kusanku* and *Channan*.

San no Michi (Sando): The Threefold Path

First is the body, which is the instrument of life. One must train the body. *Judo* uses the maxim, *seiryoku zen’yo*, meaning maximum efficiency of the body and mind, to address this ideal. Second is character, which is the desire to live as civilized beings. Character is the manifestation of the principles of life. The *judo* maxim, *jiko no kansei*, “to strive for perfection as human beings,” expresses this concept. Third is intellect. Intelligence builds character, and makes the person complete. Intelligence is the combination of knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge is the accumulation of facts and wisdom is the application of knowledge. *Judo* uses the maxim of *jita-kyoei*, or mutual welfare and benefit, for this path. With knowledge and wisdom comes the ability to interact with others.

Aiki/Kiai

In the art of *judo*, *aiki* (harmonious energy) refers to the tendency to become affected by the opponent’s attitude. This is, of course, what *aikido* refers to as “leading.” Technically, it is the circular dissipation of an enemy’s force.

Kiai (spirit meeting, or meeting of energy), for Japanese and Korean (*kihap*) is a shout to summon extraordinary strength (*jitsuryoku*; literally, efficient strength, or force) when applying a technique. This is achieved through abdominal control (*haragei*), with the technique of *fukushin ni kokyu*, or deep abdominal (diaphragmatic) breathing.

Renshu* and *Keiko

There are two words, both of which are translated into English as “Training.” However, in Japanese they refer to very different, though mutual, types of training. *Renshu* is used when the training of the body is meant. These include *junbi undo* (warm-up exercises), *shumatsu undo* (cooling-off exercises) and *hojo undo* (auxiliary exercises). *Keiko*, on the other hand, refers to training the spirit. The most widely used methods for *keiko* are *kata* and *zazen* (seated meditation). Both are necessary. One must have a conditioned body to withstand the rigors of the physical training. In addition, if the techniques must be used in an actual situation, then stamina and strength may well decide the outcome. It is also important to have a strong spirit. Stamina and strength will avail a person little if the will (spirit) to continue, or even to engage, is not present.

***Kongo* or Diamond**

The word “adamant” comes from the old word for diamond: adamantine. It is this meaning that defines the Japanese *kongo*. The diamond is the hardest substance known; therefore, one should train him- or herself to have the strength of the diamond. The concept is strongly based on Buddhist terms, and is directly related to *Sanchin*. First is *kongo-mi*, or diamond body. One should, through *renshu*, train the body to be as hard as the diamond. The second term is *kongo-shin*, or diamond mind (heart). One must train the mind, the emotions and the spirit with *keiko*. One must have the willingness to believe and to defend those beliefs, as well as defending one’s physical self, or those one loves. Egami *Shihan* states, “*Kongo-shin* signifies the single-minded (*isshin*) will of the [person] to aspire to sublime ends.” Finally, there is *kongo-riki*, or diamond strength. Again, in Japanese “strength” does not have only the connotation of physical strength. One must also have strength of the mind (will), emotional strength and spiritual strength. If any of these are weak or incomplete, the person is not centered, and cannot use his or her full capacity. In Buddhist paintings, one may see a Bodhisatva holding a vajra, or “the lightning bolt of Shiva.” It looks like a miniature dumbbell, and is referred to in Japanese as *kongo*. In addition, one of the Japanese Buddhist texts is referred to as the *Kongo Sutra* (not to be confused with the *Kama Sutra*, though this text refers to physical and spiritual training as well!).

Performance of Technique

There are five elements, which make up a good technique (though one should strive for perfection). These are rhythm (*choshi*), timing (*hyoshi*), [correct] distance (*ma no torikata*), *kokyū* (breathing) and *ki* (vital energy). When any one of these is not present, the technique lacks power. One must not become caught up in the opponent’s rhythm, but force him or her to move in one’s own rhythm. Timing is extremely important. If the technique arrives either too early or too late, it becomes ineffective. Distance is important in that one does not want to overextend or be “jammed up” when applying the technique; either will cause one to lose power. Breathing is extremely important. How one breathes and how the opponent breathes can win or lose the battle. Breathe out when attacking; attack when the opponent is breathing in. At this point, s/he will be less stable and may be easily unbalanced. *Ki* may be thought of as simply “energy,” and energy is what permits us to perform any or all of the above.

Hara wo Neru: Training the Stomach

The martial artist “trains his or her stomach” when seeking self-enlightenment. In addition to strengthening the stomach muscles, the budoka learns to control movements of the arms and legs, and the breathing. The karateka learns to punch by moving the hips and punching with them; i.e., the hips drive the arms and legs. When this is done, the hands and feet will move in unison and the entire body will be behind the punch. The hips and shoulders must stay in alignment. Only when there is no feeling of power or resistance is the punch effective. This means that the movement has become natural and there is no extraneous movement.

Choku-zuki and Ushiro Hiji Ate

When performing either of the above techniques, one of the most important factors is the armpit. We hear of the lats, the abdomen, the chest, etc., but rarely do we think of the armpit. When punching (*choku-zuki*), it is important to tighten the armpit for two reasons. First, the closeness of the arm to the side of the chest protects that vital area. Tightening the armpit will prevent the shoulder from following the punch; that is, rising. Second, tightening the armpit forces the shoulder downward, adding more force to the blow. When withdrawing the non-punching arm, the armpit must be tightened, again to protect the side of the chest. In doing so, the shoulder is lowered to prepare for the next punch. This method will eventually become natural and the shoulder will be lowered and relaxed at all times. Remember, the armpit that is tightened, not the shoulder.

Dai Nippon Kempo Karate-do: Great Japanese Fist Method Empty-Hands Way

The above is the actual name given *Tode* by Funakoshi Gichin in Japan. Note that *Shotokan* is not used. As has been mentioned many times, Funakoshi changed the character for “Tang,” into the character for “empty.” He did this, as he believed it symbolized the obvious fact that no weapons were used; only the hands and feet. He further believed it symbolized emptying the heart and mind of all earthly desire and vanity. This was reflected in Buddhist scriptures as “*Shiki-soku-ze-ku*,” and *Ku-soku-zeshiki*.” The first meant “Matter is void,” and the second meant, “All is vanity.” “*Ku*” as used in both phrases, may also be pronounced “*kara*.” Funakoshi also stressed that one’s mind should be empty of aggressive thoughts. This emptiness (void) lies at the heart of all matter and all creation. Scientifically, matter can be neither created nor destroyed, but only changed in form. Science believes that all matter came from the vacuum (void) of space; the Bible states, “In the beginning the world was without form and void.” The only difference among these concepts (Buddhism; Bible; *Karate-do*) is the words used to express them – and since they all use “void” in their language, there isn’t even that difference! Although three concepts are presented, it should be noted that all great philosophies and religions present the same truths, only in the language used by their culture.