

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

Bunkai Application

John Burke, *Sensei*, of the UK, and *Keiko Karate*, posits an interesting answer to the question of how one knows if a move or application of a *kata* is useful. Burke *Sensei* states: “Have a look at the percentage of the move that is completed when you make contact with the opponent.” While he acknowledges Patrick McCarthy *Hanshi* in the latter’s development of HAPV (Habitual Acts of Physical Violence), Burke *Sensei* feels distance is more important. For Burke *Sensei*, this relates to understanding distance, which he considers absolutely vital, believing distance will dictate your response in using *bunkai* much more than the type of attack. He continues with the idea that what really matters is that the response to the attack makes contact with the attacker part of the way through the movement. The response must make contact before the movement ends; otherwise there will be very little kinetic energy to impact the attacker. In order to be useful (a good application) the “defense” must have the potential to pass force into the opponent. For this to happen, it cannot be at the end of the movement; it has to be at some point prior to the movement’s end. It can be midway or even earlier, but once the movement has ended, virtually 0% of force in blocking is all that’s left! We would refer to this principle as “jamming the technique,” that is preventing the attack from developing its full potential.

Think in terms of swinging a bat in baseball. If you have ever misjudged and had the ball and bat meet near the hands, very little energy is transmitted to the ball. The force comes at the last few inches of the bat. The same is true of an attack. The best time to defend is before the attack has completed its development.

Morote Uke: Double-handed “Block” (aka “Reinforced Block”)

I am reminded of what I was told about *morote uke* (aka *sasae uke*): “If I need two hands to block an opponent’s attack, I don’t need to be in that fight!” The first thing to remember is that “*uke*” means “receiving,” not “blocking.” The second is to remember what Booth *Sensei* said about using both hands: “If two hands were used in “blocking,” it was usually a throw (it could also be a lock)” *Kwanmudō* makes the following statement: “The *morote uke* is usually called an augmented block. However, the historical interpretation comes from the first movement of the *Matsumura Passai Kata*. That is, the supporting hand is really the block and the other hand the [simultaneous] strike.” With these caveats in mind, think of *morote uke* as also being the following: Block and grab with the forward (“blocking”) arm and attack with a right hand attack (*ura zuki* or *nukite*); block with the left (forward) arm and then strike with the right hand [this is a one-two technique; the previous was simultaneous]; block with the left arm, grab with the right (at the opponent’s elbow, locking him or her in place), and continue with a lead hand attack (the rhythm would be one/two – three; block/grab – attack). It may also be a throw. The right “supporting” hand grabbing the right wrist as the left “blocking” arm performs a form of *dō gaeshi* (trunk overturning). It may also be a form of *tenbin nage* (scale throw). Again, grab with the right hand and lever against the opponent’s elbow

with the left arm. With slightly different timing, the right hand can block and the left arm can strike the side of the opponent's neck. In the case of *Bassai* (*Passai*) the "preparatory" move (drawing the hands to the left hip), is actually grabbing the extended left arm, and the *morote uke* [here called *soe uke*] is a form of *kote gaeshi* (wrist overturning), using the forward momentum to reinforce the technique.

Budo

The term *martial arts* refer to the art of warfare. It comes from a 15th-century European term for fighting arts now known as historical European martial arts. The term is derived from Mars, the Roman god of war (which is where we also get the name for "March"). Mars was noted as the "red planet," and represented the blood shed in war. Ironically, in popular culture, the term *martial arts* often specifically refers to the combat systems that originated in Asian cultures, especially East Asian martial arts. However, the term actually refers to any codified combat system, regardless of origin. Native peoples of North America and South America had their own martial training which began in childhood. Some First Nations men, and more rarely some women, were called warriors only after they had proven themselves in battle. The so-called "war bonnet," was not indicative of a chief (though one could be), but of how many times the person had "counted coups." Each feather represented one act of this type of bravery. Other martial arts evolved into sports that are no longer recognized as combative. One example is the pommel horse event in men's gymnastics, an exercise which itself is derived from the sport of Equestrian vaulting. Cavalry riders needed to be able to change positions on their horses quickly, rescue fallen allies, fight effectively on horseback and dismount at a gallop. Training these skills on a stationery barrel evolved into the sport of gymnastics' pommel horse exercise. Gymnastics, by the way, comes from a root word meaning "naked," as Greek athletes trained and competed in the nude.

Tomarite Kata

The purest tradition concerning *Tomari kata* contends that the *Naifnachi*, *Passai*, *Chinto*, *Jitte*, *Jiin*, *Jion*, *Chintei*, *Wanshu*, *Rohai* and *Wanduan* are original *Tomarite kata*. Other *kata* of *Tomarite* are *Chinpe*, *Chinsu*, *Juma* and *Uenibu*, but were probably introduced from Taiwan in the 20th century. A *kata* known as *Ananku* or *Ananko* was probably an old *kata* of *Tomari* that Kyan Chotoku restored around 1895. The *Chinto* passed on by Kyan, is known as *Tomari no Chinto*. However, the original *Tomari Chinto* was very similar to the one taught by *Itosu*. Most of these *kata* belong to the Fujian Monk Fist and Crane Fist systems. Most of *Itosu's* knowledge of *kata* came from a *Tomari* master called *Gusukuma* and from the *Naha* master *Nagahama*, as well as *Matsumura Sokon*. *Gusukuma* was a disciple of *Annan* and of *Jion*, a Buddhist monk, who taught the *kata* of the same name. Apparently, *Gusukuma* taught *Itosu Naifanchi I & II*, *Rohai*, *Wanshu* and *Chintei*. From the *kata*, *Jion*, *Itosu* formed the two *sai kata*, *Jitte* and *Jiin*, which he adapted for empty hand *kata*.

Throwing Techniques [*Nage Waza*]

From a Half-moon (Crescent Moon) Block [*hangetsu uke*]

This is taken from hand *kata* I [*Te Kata Shōdan*]. When *tori* sweeps inside *uke*'s arm with the half-moon block [*uchi hangetsu uke*], s/he may follow up with *yoko tai otoshi*. (*Jujutsu*, Volume II, page 178, II-B)

If *uke* resists the above throw, *tori* can follow up with *kō soto gake*. (*Jujutsu*, Volume II, page 178, II-C-1) [This *kō soto gake* is unique to Wilson *Shihan*'s *jujutsu* system, and not the *ko soto gake* of *judō*. *Kō*, as used here, is an archaic form of the modern *o*, or large.]

If *tori* sweeps to the outside of *uke*'s arm with the half-moon block [*soto hangetsu uke*], s/he may apply *ko soto gari* or *de ashi barai*. (*Jujutsu*, Volume II, page 178, II-C-2)

Miscellaneous

Iai literally means to exist together, and usually refers to the *bushi* and his/her sword. This gives the difference between *battō jutsu*, which is a technical art of quickly drawing the sword – a purely mechanical act – and the art of *iai jutsu*, in which the exponent and sword become one. Realize, however, that either one is not mutually exclusive of the other.

Seishin tanren is spiritual forging which requires great discipline from the warrior in his or her training.

Jū, most often translated as “gentle,” is best translated as “supple” or even better, “flexible.” Gentle may imply passiveness in spirit in regard to the individual; flexible or supple implies the important aspect of not fighting force with force, but “giving way” in order to defeat a stronger opponent.

Kami is a maturity marked by *miyabi* (refinement), which is seen in a *meijin* of any art, martial or otherwise. It may be partially charisma, but goes further in the way a person carries him- or herself. In the West, we would refer to such a person as a “natural born leader.”

Though most of the *Kyokushinkai kata* are traditional, at least two were created for the system. *Oyama Masutatsu Sōsai* created *Garyū* (Reclining Dragon), which was named for his *nom de plume*. The *Tsuki no Kata* was devised by one of *Oyama*'s students, *Nakamura Sensei*. *Yantsu*, as previously mentioned, is believed to be *Oyama*'s adaptation of an older (and longer) form. It is referred to as a “wall *kata*,” emphasizing that it is to be used when fighting with one's back to the wall.

Robert Conrad, of *Wild, Wild West*, was a student of Bruce Lee.

The first movie, filmed in the west, to feature Asian martial arts predominantly was *Blood on the Sun*, with James Cagney. Cagney predicted how Japan would react to entering WWII. Critics (because of “political correctness”) gave the film bad reviews, but later events proved that Cagney was about 95% correct in his predictions.

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