

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

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Ichi go, ichi e: One life, one meeting

Departing Spring!
Birds Crying;
Tears in the eyes of fish.

Bashō

Ethics

As martial artists, and hopefully as persons, we many times speak of “ethics,” or of being “ethical.” The usual definition of ethics is “standards or rules of conduct by which one lives.” This basically relates to doing what is right or, if one is unethical, doing what is wrong. When we speak of someone being “unethical,” we mean that by agreed upon rules of conduct or a standard of living, that person has done something wrong. Where problems arise is that many times someone may do something legal (barely!), but not ethical. One example would be the instructor who uses his rank or position as a promise or threat to incur “favours” from students. If both are single and of age, the act/s may be legal, but hardly ethical. It would be just as unethical if the student initiated such an act hoping for, or demanding, favoritism from the instructor. Another example would be as follows. When your *hanshi meiyo kyōju* was just beginning to teach, a “Master” of a well known style, opened a school. It had everything needed, and the tuition was reasonable. However, the “Master” required that each student sign a contract for a year. After a period of time, and before the school opened, the “Master,” sold the contracts to a collection agency for a percentage, closed the school and left the area. Everything in the school had been rented, and was returned when he left. Though the equipment was returned, its value was lessened, because it was now classified as “used,” even though it never had been. What this person did may have been legal, but hardly ethical, and the act left a bad taste in the mouth of the public toward martial arts in general. Instructors in the area gave those individuals the choice of training in their schools without payment to try and undo the (mis-)perception. Some accepted the offer, but were still dissatisfied as they were not receiving what had been promised. Most refused, and regarded it as a “learning experience,” which meant they now regarded even those instructors who tried to be ethical in the same light as the “Master.” The problem of ethics is exacerbated by the modern concept of each person deciding what is right or wrong. What one does should have the approbation of parents, school and peers, as well as the person representing a good role model for society. The way to decide is simple: Would you want your mother to know what you did?

Jion: Temple

Jion is considered one of the most traditional of *kata* in the *Shotokan* system. Mention of it is found in many ancient documents. It should be performed calmly, precisely and strongly.

The distinctive salutation at the beginning of *Jion*, as well as *Ji-in* and *Jitte*, is a clue to its Buddhist origins. It was used so that members of the *Jion* Temple in China could greet

and identify themselves to others in much the same that early Christians identified themselves with the sign of the fish. This greeting consisted, in part, of enclosing the right fist with the left hand. To protect themselves on pilgrimages, the monks had learned *ch'uan fa* (Japanese: *Kempō*). It was taught to have the harmony of a Buddha with its calm movements and strong spirit necessary for mastering rotational movements and shifting direction (*hokō tenkan*).

This *kata* hides powerful attacking techniques within harmonious, and seemingly peaceful, movements. It is very suitable for learning to advance and use rotational movement with correct and effective foot movements, although there are no particularly difficult movements. The movements, consisting of stances and techniques, are largely found in the *Heian* and *Tekki kata*.

It is also valuable for mastering fast and slow tempo, as well as the fundamentals of simultaneous arm and leg movements. The *kata* utilizes many basic stances, blocks and punches, as well as kicks.

What is a *Kyoshi* (*Renshi*; *Hanshi*)?

Kyoshi is an honorary title for a teacher. It is sometimes translated as Master, and is the second highest in three instructor ranks. The three ranks are: *Renshi*, or Polished Person, and refers to someone whose teaching is exceptional. *Kyoshi*, or Faithful Person, refers to someone who is loyal (faithful) to the organization, and is capable of teaching teachers. *Hanshi* is the highest of the three ranks and is used to refer to someone others would want to emulate. *Renshi* would be the equivalent of a B.A.; *Kyoshi* is the equivalent of an M.A. and *Hanshi* refers to the equivalent of Ph.D.

The *Kyoshi* is someone who is able to understand the theories of styles other than his/her own, and by comparison, better understand his/her style, and improve his/her techniques, as well as those of his/her students.

Not every high ranked *budoka* receives these ranks. They indicate someone who does more than “show up” and “suit up.”

There are established criteria used in promoting someone to these titles. They are as follows:

1. How long they have been in the arts. This would suppose continuous training.
2. The rank (dan) relating to the title. *Renshi* would be *Yodan/Godan*; *Kyoshi* would be *Rokudan/Shichidan/Hachidan*; *Hanshi* would be *Kudan/Judan* or higher.
3. They must have their own school, and have been teaching for two or more years.
4. They must have loyalty to past teachers of the arts. This shows that the person is not switching from school to school/style to style just for rank.
5. They must have loyalty to their present school/style – in this case MYB. This shows a person who has a sincere desire to learn and who has learned and earned respect.
6. They must support their school/s//style/s by contributing to the school/style above and beyond the average practitioner. This is usually interpreted as introducing new techniques, new combinations or new training methods, as well as clarification of concepts and principles. Also, publication of articles or books may be considered.
7. Someone of the same rank or higher and who is in good standing with MYB must recommend them.

Sabaki or Movement

When one speaks of continuous movement, s/he refers to circular movement. Linear movement tends to separate into collections of starts and stops. This type of motion leads to *henke* (a "blend"), which is a motion that acknowledges the existence of an attack and moves in a way that doesn't oppose it. For one to use this motion freely, s/he must be centered (relaxed), yet alert and ready to move. At the highest levels, this movement results in *takemusu aiki*, in which rigid form begins to disappear and a more spontaneous way of movement takes its place. This leads to *oyo waza*, or applied variations techniques. One method for learning this motion is *tai no henko*, or basic blending practice.

Kata Keiko: Training with Kata

Booth implied the following, which has been independently verified. Booth repeated over and over that for each technique (or series) one should find four applications -- that was the *Shodan* test for your *hanshi meiyo kyoku*. He chose one *kata* (ostensibly his favorite, or *tokui kata*) and had to come up with four applications as given above. Independently, from a separate source, he learned what those four techniques were:

Each technique (or series) should include:

- 1) A strike (this includes the so-called "blocking" forms)
- 2) A joint lock (or choke/strangle)
- 3) A throw
- 4) A release from a grip

In addition, old masters did a form with four variations:

- 1) As generally taught (*omote*); today, this would be done through *Shodan*)
- 2) Moving to the opposite side (*ura*: *Heian Shodan* would begin to the right); this would be started now about *Nidan*, depending on the ability of the student.
- 3) From the end to the beginning (*go*); for modern exponents, this would begin about *Sandan*.
- 4) Moving from the end to the beginning on the opposite side (*ura go*); presuming exceptional abilities, this would be today's *Yodan* and above.

This is why the old masters only learned two to three forms. With one form, they had four different ways of doing all the techniques in it. Also, each (traditional) form handled all the basic ways in which they could be attacked. More than two or three -- for combat -- were superfluous. If you can do the above, you "know" a form, although there are other methods of continuing the training for *Godan* and above. Another item of interest is that *kata* include some follow-up techniques when the original technique fails or does not go according to plan (imagine that in a fight!).

One of Booth's training methods was to have the student begin with *Heian Shodan* and go all the way through *Heian Godan*. However, one did not come back to ready at the end of each *kata*. For example: When *Heian Shodan* ended with the left knife-hand "block" at the diagonal, that's where *Heian Nidan* began. If you felt particularly ambitious, you could begin the movement to the reverse side with *Heian Shodan* at the ending of *Heian Godan*. At the conclusion of *Heian Godan* (*manji* block, left foot leading), you shifted forward into the first movement of *Heian Shodan*, but moving right foot forward.

Miscellaneous

Michi is another word for *do*, or path, road or way. The connotation is one of harmony and peace rather than that of a “rough road.”

“Ying pu,” the Chinese characters for wrestling, is pronounced *Sumo* in Japanese.

Nei Chia and Wai Chia: Internal Styles and External Styles of Chinese Ch’uan Fa. The traditional schools of each are given as follows. The Nei chia, or internal styles, were: 1) Wudang P’ai; 2) Tai Chi Ch’uan; 3) Pa Kua (Bagua); 4) Hsing-I Ch’uan; 5) Tzu Janmen; and 6) Liu He Pa Fa. The Wai Chia, or external styles, were: 1) Shaolin; 2) Hung Ch’uan; 3) T’au T’ei Yu T’an T’ui; 4) Hon Ch’uan; 5) Erh-lang Men; 6) Fan Ch’uan; 7) Ch’a Ch’uan; 8) Mi Tsung Yi; and 9) Pa Ch’uan.

Tokonoma is an alcove in traditional *dojo* where softness (*ju*) is shown by flower arrangements (*ikebana*), paintings (*sumi-e*), incense etc.

Nata is an East Indian dance which has many similarities to the *kata* of Japanese martial arts. As with other martial arts, the “martial” may be hidden within a dance, as in Okinawa (*omoro soshi*) and the Brazilian Capoeira. The Highland Dance of Scotland (remember: Scotch is what a Scot drinks!) gives methods of using sword and dagger. When individuals refer to *kata* as “nothing but a dance,” they are disregarding history. Virtually all groups in all areas have “hidden” their fighting techniques in a “dance.” One such dance is featured in the movie, *Brigadoon*, with Gene Kelley.

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