

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

“As my grandfather said, all opinions are worth listening too. You just have to be smart enough to understand you get what you pay for and it does no good to ask the doctor what you should ask your mechanic.”

Kenneth Lones, *Sensei*, quoting his grandfather.

Tachi no Heiho: Strategy of Stances

Knowledge of the more than seventy-five stances of *karate* and *kobudo* will permit the exponent to recognize the opponent's strategy, prior to attack. Such knowledge gives a wise strategist the possibilities in the maneuvers of his opponent. These maneuvers include the range, angle, reach, turning radius, speed and power inherent in each stance. To counteract these stance maneuvers, the exponent uses the *heihō* of rhythm (*hyōshi*) and the three types of attack (*mitsu no sen*); *sensen no sen*, *sen no sen* and *tai no sen*. Other styles use the terms *ken no sen*, *tai no sen* and *taitai no sen*. Regardless of style or terminology, the three attacks are pre-emptive, simultaneous or counter-attack. Obviously, these maneuvers include *ashi sabaki*, or movements of the feet. Examples of the more basic stances and strengths/limitations of them are given as follows. *Zenkutsu dachi* involve thrusting power and extension of reach. However, one foot must be crossed or brought to the other before a turn may be made. *Kokutsu dachi* imply a defensive mindset, but turns (pivots) may be made without crossing the feet (*sonoba mawari*, or in-place pivot). A *neko ashi dachi* is usually used for speed, especially from the front foot, and simply moving the foot to the right or left, changes the angle of attack. *Kiba dachi* gives great lateral strength and limited target areas.

Kiai: Energy Meeting

Kiai is the meeting of the energy of both opponent and exponent. It is a dynamic state of mind which releases a spiritual and physical force from the abdomen, usually in the form of a shout. There is a silent *kiai*, or *kensei*, related to the practice of meditation (*mokuso*). The *kiai* is a manifestation of the *aiki*, the active principle. The efficacy of *kiai* is dependent upon *kyoku-undo*, or breathing exercises. Every *Aikido* technique is a function of *kokyū*, which a combination of exhalation or “life force” (*seimei*) and inhalation or activity (*dō*). The *Aikidōka* begins with *suwari* (sitting) and *tachi* (standing) *kokyū*, collectively known as *kokyū undo*. S/he continues with *ugoku-kokyū*, or moving breath, and finally to *kyoku-ryoku* (aka, *kyoku-chikara*), or breath power.

Chowasuru: To Harmonize Movements with an Opponent

Chowasuru involves the harmonization of four elements. These are, *ki* or breath, *tai* or body, *shin* or mind and *ri* a moral outlook. These are reminiscent of Wilson *Kanchō's* definition of “9.” Emotion (breathing affects the emotions), the physical (body), mental (the mind) and spiritual (a moral, or ethical, outlook). Your *meiyo kyoju* recognizes that morals and ethics are not the same, but to simplify the concept, he has consolidated the two.

Shodō: Japanese Calligraphy

Calligraphy is considered a fine art in Japan. In fact, it is often referred to as the seventh *budō*. Many traditional schools recommend (some require!) that their senior students study *shodō*. There are three ways to write Japanese: *Kanji*, *kana* and *Romanji*. The first two are intimately related to *Shodō*. *Kanji* are Japanese versions of Chinese ideographs. In some cases they are exactly as the Chinese characters, but in some they have been simplified. *Kanji* are not representations of words! They represent ideas (hence, “ideographs”), and as such may be both verb and noun! To complicate things, there are (at least) two readings of a *kanji*. The first is the Japanese reading of the Chinese word, called the *ondoku* and the native Japanese word, called *kundoku*. For example, the *ondoku* for “the Way of the sword,” is *kendō*. The native Japanese (*kundoku*) would be *tsurugi* (sword) *no* (of) *michi* (way). If this weren’t confusing enough, there are two types of *kana*. The first is *hiragana*, which is a “cursive” style, used for a native Japanese word for which there is no *kanji*, or the *kanji* is extremely complex. *Katagana* are angular abbreviations of the *hiragana*, and are usually used for foreign words. However, they can be used to emphasize native Japanese words, much as italics are used in English. Because the *ondoku* contain many more homonyms than English (Chinese is a monosyllabic language), Japanese speakers will trace the *kanji* on their palm to clarify their meaning. *Romanji* is the use of the English alphabet to write Japanese words. There are two ways to do this. The first, and most common is the *Hebon-shiki* (Hepburn System) and the *Kunrei-shiki* (Wade-Giles), which is useful for the conjugation of verbs, but too confusing for general use. Most texts are written with a combination of *kanji* and *hiragana* (*katagana* for foreign words), although sometimes *Romanji* is used. To add to the confusion, there are three basic ways of writing *kanji*. The first is *kaisho*, which is equivalent to English printing. The second is *sōsho*, which is the equivalent to English script. *Gyōsho* is half-way between *kaisho* and *sōsho*. In addition, there is a fourth type of *kanji*, *tensho*, which is the ancient form of *kanji* used for seal characters.

For more information, your *meiyo kyoju* highly recommends *Budō Jiten* (Martial Arts Dictionary), written by F. J. Louvret.

Meiyo Kyoju: Emeritus

Mei = distinguished; noted; wise + *Yo* = praise; honor; glory > Reputation; honor

Kyō = teach; give lessons; inform + *Ju* = grant; confer; award; invest with authority > professor

Meiyo is a praiseworthy person of honor; *Kyoju* is a professor; a distinguished person of honor invested with the authority to teach

Meiyo kyoju (emeritus) would imply an honorable and distinguished person invested with the authority to teach

Mei is also the first character of *mei jin* (noted person) or “expert” (a term your *meiyo kyoju* tremendously dislikes!)

Kyo is the same character used in *kyoshi*.

Meiyoshoku would be an honorary position

Ying Jow Fan-Tzu (Yingzhao Fanzi Quan): Eagle Claw Martial Tumbling Boxing

General Yueh Fei (Ngok Fat in Cantonese), was a General during the Sung Dynasty (960-1279 AD) under Emperor Chao Kuang Yin, and is credited with creating a style of martial arts that he called "Eagle Claw," developed from the external side of the Shao Lin Temple kung fu systems. General Fei's troops quickly gained a formidable reputation which brought Yueh Fei's Eagle Claw system acceptance within the martial community. Yueh Fei learned both internal and external principles of the Chinese arts, as well as Chin Na from a Shao Lin Temple monk named Chou Ton. The art disappeared from record until the Ming Dynasty (1368 - 1644 AD) when a monk by the name of Li-Chuan developed a style still taught today that he called Fan Tzu Ien Jao (Fan Tzu Ying Jow). He developed this style by using a combination of the Eagle Claw style and the Fan Tzu style of ch'uan fa. Lau-Fat-Mang specialized in the Chin-na hand of the Eagle Claw Fan-Tzu system. A specializing student often broke with his original school to found a new style or branch which revolved around his/her speciality. Fan-Tzu Eagle Claw was a highly acrobatic system, taught by the famous Ching Wu (Jing Mo in Cantonese) Athletic Association in Shanghai, China. Its present popularity was due mainly to Grandmaster Liu Fa Mang. Lau-Fat-Mang developed the use of the Eagle Claw knife and shield. It was the Fan Tzu style who led the notorious Big Sword unit against the Japanese invaders during WWII. Lau, Jeanne (born 1951), began her study of the martial arts with her father, Lau Fat Min, in 1956 (correct: five years old!). She eventually became a tournament champion, including Grand Champion in 1975 at the San Francisco tournament, as well as First Place in kata and weapons in Las Vegas. In 1976 she won the Internationals championship at Long Beach, California and the Sacramento karate tournament championship. Another prominent practitioner is Leung Shum, a Chinese born Eagle Claw instructor, who studied in Hong Kong. Leung came to the U.S. and opened a school in New York City in 1972. He taught Fan-Tzu Eagle Claw and My-Jong Lan Horn (Northern Shaolin Praying Mantis). Both the Eagle Claw system and the real life eagle use speed and precision to take the opponent/prey. Both rely on power, precision and attacking pressure points. The most essential fundamentals of Eagle Claw, are to strengthen the fingers forming the claw as well as the arms, and develop quick and sharp eyesight, with a profound understanding of the chin na techniques and the body's pressure points. The exponent tries to manipulate the opponent's entire body, to knock the opponent off balance like an eagle takes its prey in nature. Hung Fut, a Southern style, has a snake and eagle form, sei ying kuan. The strategy of this particular form is as follows: The snake has a lot of quick strikes, where you bite (strike) and pull your hand back fast. The eagle in this form uses mostly circular movements. Combined with the strike of the snake, it is very effective.

Just for fun: In Greek, Eagle Claw, would be aetonyx (the actual name of a dinosaur which existed about 198 million years ago during the Hettangian Age).

Note the various spellings of the Grandmaster's name.

Miscellaneous

Nippon is the proper name for Japan and literally means sun-source; i.e. “the land of the rising sun.”

Nishimura Mitsuya was the president of the teacher’s college (*Shihan Gakko*) who was instrumental in hiring a *karate* master to teach *karate* in grade school. The Master he chose was Itosu Yatsusune, who actually only taught one day a week. On the other days Funakoshi Gichin or Yabu Kentsu taught. In 1903, Nishimura was the person who brought *karate* to the high schools.

Tenshin was one of the early names for *Tensho*.

James Mitose was born in Hawaii, and allegedly the direct descendant of the family responsible for *Koshō-ryū*. During WWII he enlisted on December 8, 1941 to serve his country and began teaching fighting techniques to Americans. He had five famous students, to whom he awarded *Shōdan*, or Beginning Level black belts. These five were Thomas Young, William Chow, Paul Yamaguchi, Arthur Keawe and Bobby Lowe. William Chow’s most famous student was Edmund Parker. Parker was awarded his *Shōdan* by Chow. One of Parker’s students was the late Elvis Presley.

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