

Shinto-muso-ryu

Jo No Hinkaku

(**The Dignity of the Jo**)

By Koichi Hamaji

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Foreword

It has been 23 years since my father and *Jo* teacher died. During those 23 years, the older generations of Shinto-muso-ryu *Jo* practitioners and sensei have been replaced by new ones. Even people born after World War II are practicing traditional Japanese martial arts. Today, some martial arts have become sports.

It is good that the martial arts, including *Jo*, are gaining popularity. Yet I am afraid that the true spirit of *bushido*¹ which our ancestors have handed down to our generation, and which we must hand down for posterity, has been neglected.

Recently, tape recordings of conversations between the late Mr. Gerald Toff and various *jō* (staff) masters² were found among Mr. Toff's belongings. With his wife's co-operation, I borrowed the tape of a conversation between Mr. Toff and my father and made a transcription of the recording. It is my pleasure that this transcription is published under the name of *Shintō Muso Ryu Jō no Hinkaku (The Dignity of Jō)*.

The tape says that the conversation was recorded on January 3 of Showa 52 (1977), when Mr. Toff visited my father in Obu City to express his New Year's greetings and dine with him.

In addition to being a university professor, Mr. Toff was also a researcher of Japanese martial arts and a well-known English sumo commentator for oversea audiences of NHK-BS television broadcasting.

In this book, my father describes 1) how *bushi* (warriors) lived their lives; 2) how *Jo* masters practiced *Jo* during the Meiji (1868-1912), Taisho (1912-1926), and

¹ *Bushido*, meaning "Way of the Warrior," is the Japanese moral code of the samurai class. It is loosely analogous to the concept of chivalry. Based on Confucian ideas, it originated in the Kamakura period and reached perfection in the Edo period (1603-1867). It stresses loyalty, self-sacrifice, justice, sense of shame, refined manners, purity, modesty, frugality, martial spirit, affection, and honor until death. "Bushido (The Soul of Japan)" is also a title of a book written by Inazo Nitobe in 1900, which explains what *bushido* is

² Takaji Shimizu Sensei and Ichizo Otofujii Sensei

Showa (1926-1989) eras; 3) the teachers who devoted themselves to spreading *Jōdō* among the Japanese, and their backgrounds; and 4) his hopes for the coming generation who will inherit *Jōdō*.

I am glad if this book will help those who practice *Shintō Musō Ryū Jō* to consider the meaning of traditional martial arts, without being washed away by the current of the times.

I did my best to transcribe the conversation faithfully, but I am afraid some parts are difficult to understand due to the complexity of the spoken word.

On the occasion of this book's publication, I would like to express my deep gratitude to Mr. Hiroaki Ishida, Mr. Takashi Tomita, Ms. Akemi Tsuge (who wrote the calligraphy of the title for the cover), and the members of Aijokai who contributed towards its publication.

August, the 20th year of Heisei (2008)

Mitsuo Hamaji

Shinto-musō-ryū Jōdō

*Menkyo Kaiden*³

Second President of the Aijōkai⁴

P.S. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Mr. Hiroshi Matsuoka and Mr. Russ Ebert, who introduced a part of Japanese martial art history to the world by translating *Shint-muso-ryu Jo No Hinkaku (The Dignity of the Jo)*. August 28, 2010

³ licensed full mastership

⁴ The *Aijōkai* is an organization that was founded in 45 Showa (1970) in Aichi Prefecture. Its purpose is to promote Shinto Muso Ryu Jo and to hand it to the next generation. The Aijokai's first president was Koichi Hamaji Shihan (1912-1985, biographical outline in page 5). He received a *Menkyō* (license of mastership) from Takaji Shimizu Shihan. He contributed to the promotion of Shinto Muso Ryu Jo and to the education of young people through Jo in Aichi Prefecture. Today, Mitsuo Hamaji Shihan and the other two Shihan, who received a *Menkyo* from Mitsuo Hamaji, are teaching Jo with the spirit of Hamaji Shihan's Jo. Mitsuo Hamaji is the second President.



Koichi Hamaji Shihan

(1912-1985)

BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE OF KOICHI HAMAJI SHIHAN⁵

1912: Born in Tokyo, the fifth son of Hachiro Hamaji on August 25, 1912.

1930: Begins training with Takaji Shimizu Shihan.

1936: Began work with South Manchuria Railway Company.

1943: Sent for one year to train *Jōdō* instructors in the now former “Manchu-kuo”, also known as Manchuria.

1947: WWII ends. He returns home from Manchuria and lives in Kamakura, Kanagawa Prefecture.

1960: Moves to Obu City in Aichi Prefecture. Begins to teach *Jōdō* at Isshin Temple in Nagoya City.

1964: Initiated in the *Gomuso* kata by Shimizu Shihan and Otofujii Shihan.

1966: Receives *Menkyo* from Takaji Shimizu Sensei⁶.

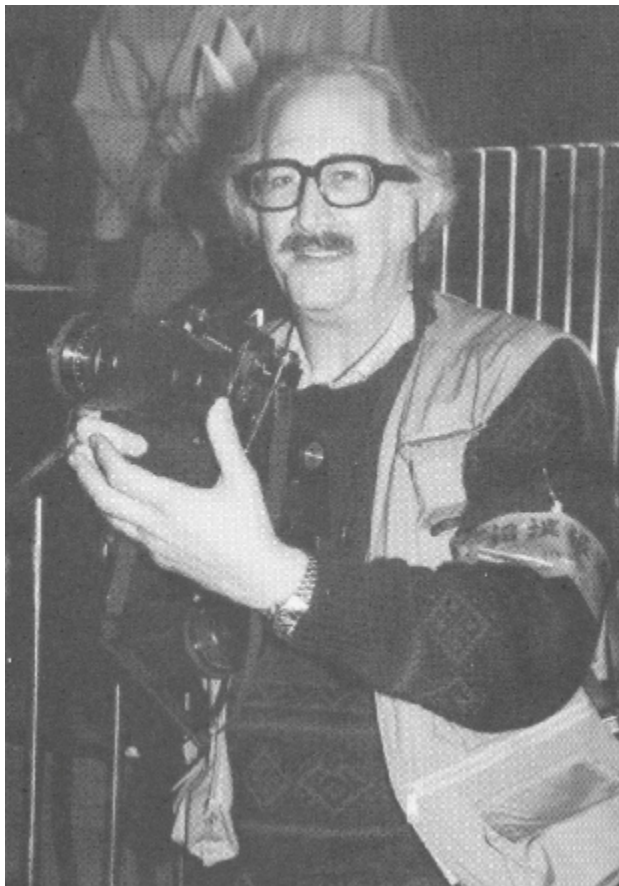
1979: Establishes the *Aijōkai* and becomes its first president.

1981: Publishes “Shinto-muso-ryu *Jo to Sono Densho*” (Shinto-muso-ryu and its Scrolls).

1985: Passes away due to illness on May 9 at the age of 72.

⁵ master

⁶ teacher



Gerald Toff

(1932-1999)

BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE OF GERALD TOFF

1932: Born in London, UK.

1958: Graduates from London University. Comes to Japan to study at Tokyo University as a government-financed foreign student.

1959: Begins training with Ichitaro Kuroda Shihan and Takaji Shimizu Shihan.

1970: Moves to Australia to work for the library of the University of Canberra, a national university of Australia.

1975: Moves to Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan to teach at Nagoya Institute of Technology.

Begins training with Koichi Hamaji Shihan as a student of Takaji Shimizu Shihan.

1979: Due to Shimizu-shihan's death, becomes Hamaji Shihan's student officially.

1992: Retires from Nagoya Institute of Technology as a professor. Lectures on "Comparative Study of Civilizations between Japan and the United Kingdom."

Serves as a commentator for the Grand Sumo Tournament on NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) English program.

1999: Passes away in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture at the age of 63.

Dialogue between Hamaji Shihan and Gerald Toff

Toff: How was *Jōdō* practiced in your early years of training?

Hamaji: We practiced every day, morning and evening, if Shimizu Sensei had the time to teach us and a place to practice.

We usually learned about three basic techniques every other day. We were allowed to advance after reviewing what we had learned. The next time, we would review the “basics” again, and then proceed to the next two techniques. When we practiced *Omote* (the first series of *kata* / techniques), we always reviewed the basic techniques beforehand. I remember Shimizu Sensei taught us the same *Kata* (techniques) two at a time, correcting our movement.

Shimizu Sensei didn't rely on detailed explanations and didn't give us the *dos* and *don'ts*. He merely pointed out our mistakes, and demonstrated proper techniques repeatedly. He trained us until we had mastered them.

While Shimizu Sensei taught us new techniques every other day, we spent plenty of time reviewing. Why did he spend so much time in review? It's not because he thought he had to, but because he had a small number of students and was able to train them intensely.

Shimizu Sensei had a lot of time to train one or two students intensely. Regardless of whether Shimizu Sensei had enough time or not, he did not teach us new techniques until he felt that we had mastered the ones he had taught already. That was his way of teaching. Therefore, we learned new techniques in a comparatively short time because we had plenty of practice time with Shimizu Sensei.

Today, the teaching of *Jōdō* is theoretical. It seems as though you are learning *Jōdō* mentally. When I was young, I learned *Jōdō* physically. Shimizu Sensei didn't point out our bad techniques in detail.

For example, in the case of *Hikiotoshi*, he would just say, “Hit from above. You hit from the side. Don't hit from side.” Or, he simply said, “Don't apply so much power. Why is *Hikiotoshi* effective? It's because you slide your *Jo* from the top down along most of the length of your opponent's wooden sword.” He didn't

teach us anything theoretical.

Toff: Recently it seems the method of teaching *Jōdō* has been influenced by the Western way of thinking. Usually, Westerners do not want to learn things unless they first understand them theoretically. Is it true that the Japanese way of learning and teaching *Jōdō* has been changing?

Hamaji: In the old days *Jōdō* teachers were very strict. They were dignified and never tried to gain the students' favor. While they were teaching *Jōdō*, they often said, "If you don't like it, you can quit." If a student gave his teacher an opinion about the techniques of *Jōdō*, the teacher used to reply, "If you think you understand *Jōdō* so well, you don't have to come to me to learn. If you don't obey my words, you are not my student. Those who ask me so many questions are not my students." If you wanted to receive a *densho* (catalog of techniques), you had to get your teacher to like you first; your skill in *Jōdō* didn't matter so much.

In those days, the masters had a very discerning judgment. Therefore, if they didn't like even a little bit of a student's character or attitude, he didn't give him a *densho* or teach him the *Hiden* (the secret techniques, also known as the *Gomuso*); even if the student was skilled. The teachers back then had confidence in their style. But if this was done today, students will probably quit learning and no new- students would join.

When a prospective student came to Mr. Tesshu Yamaoka⁷, he told the newcomer, "Just stand there." I am not sure whether the newcomer wore protection or not, but Mr. Yamaoka began thrusting a *Jo* into their body violently. If the prospective student returned the next day after the beating, they were officially enrolled as Mr. Yamaoka's student. Almost all of the applicants never returned after suffering such severe thrusts. This kind of test was prevalent in many *Jōdō* schools, I think.

⁷ Tesshu Yamaoka (1836-1888) the founder of Muto Ryu. a shogun's retainer, politician, person of thought, skilled in sword, zen, and calligraphy

Toff: Years ago when I started learning *Jōdō*, the *Oku*⁸ was never shown at demonstrations or in *Jōdō* training halls. Recently *Jōdō-ka*⁹ have been publically demonstrating the *Oku*. I think this is also a part of Western influences.

Hamaji: This is because *Jōdō* is not used in an actual fighting. Today it is impossible to imagine combat where the *Jo* is used. Therefore, it is all right now for *Jōdō-ka* to show the *Oku*. In former years, *Oku* was never performed in public. In fact, only *Tachiotoshi* was demonstrated publicly. Once your techniques were known to others, they could make up numerous counters and defense techniques to fight it.

For example, even if a lord wanted to see a *Jōdō* demonstration, the masters would only show *Tachiotoshi*. When my grandfather was six years old, he demonstrated *Tachiotoshi* in front of the lord of the Kuroda clan¹⁰. In old times a training hall had special *musha-mado* windows¹¹. If you closed them, you could not look inside the hall. Instructors taught *Jōdō* so that no outsider could see the training.

Toff: So, like the Katori-shinto-ryu¹². They didn't show the techniques, did they?

Hamaji: Martial arts schools didn't demonstrate their techniques publicly. In former years, every *dojo* had *musha-mado* windows. You could peep through them into the training hall. The windows were placed high on the wall, and were rectangular with vertical lattice. If you closed the windows, the training hall became dark. Some say warriors peeped through the *musha-mado* windows and stole techniques. If you are going to peep through a *musha-mado* window, you first put a stool under the window. Then you stood on the stool and peeped inside the hall and stole the secret techniques of other *ryūha* (schools). Therefore, masters of

⁸ the most secret of techniques, typically the last thing taught an advanced practitioner

⁹ Jodo practitioner

¹⁰ Kuroda clan governed northern part of Japan (1600-1871)

¹¹ *musha-mado* window (warrior-window): windows with heavy vertical lattice

¹² Katori-shinto-ryu was founded by Ienao Iizasa in 15th century. It is one of the three origins of Japanese sword martial arts

swordsmanship would pay utmost attention so that others did not steal their techniques.

The *Oku* are the most secret of the techniques. A skilled warrior was able to understand the *Oku* techniques even if they saw them briefly demonstrated. Although *Jōdō* students today have a lot of chances to see *Jōdō* techniques, they cannot understand the true techniques. They cannot get the core. Therefore, *Jōdō-ka* today thinks it is all right to show techniques publicly.

Toff: Probably one or two decades ago, Shimizu Sensei and Otofujii Sensei demonstrated one of the *Gomuso* techniques at Kamedo Shrine in Fukuoka (formerly called Dazaifu). Those who saw the demonstration did not understand it at all. It looked simple, and they did not remember it. That means that only an advanced practitioner can understand the technique, doesn't it? Shimizu Sensei taught us *Omote*, *Chudan*, and *Oku*, each in a different way. He trained us in *Omote* and *Chudan* repeatedly, but as for *Oku*, we were only taught once and never shown again. If we didn't learn *Oku* in this way, we were not allowed to come to the *Jōdō* training hall again.

Hamaji: Shimizu Sensei was inconsistent in his teaching. His way of teaching depended on who he taught. He taught one student a technique only once, but taught another student carefully and repeatedly. He understood the character and habits of his students and adjusted his way of teaching according to the student he was teaching. Some students needed plenty of time to learn techniques, and others needed only a short time to learn the same techniques. Every student is different in their character, habit, body type, and so on.

The students varied; some were foreign, others were Japanese. Among the Japanese, some were skilled in *Kendō*, and others in *Jūdō*. Shimizu Sensei observed his students carefully and changed his way of teaching to fit the students he taught. He changed his way of teaching that best suited to his student's age and vitality.

Shimizu Sensei did not have rigid way of teaching. He did not cling to the traditional way of teaching. I think he taught *Jōdō* in the way he thought the best.

Why do I say such a thing? Shimizu Sensei did not clearly talk about how

Shiraishi Sensei (Hanjiro Shiraishi¹³) taught him. Judging from the answers I got from Shimizu Sensei and from remarks he made during casual conversations with me, I came to the conclusion that Shiraishi Sensei was very old when Shimizu Sensei began to learn *Jōdō* from him. So, Shiraishi Sensei did not show the techniques himself, but taught them verbally or let his students demonstrate to Shimizu Sensei.

So I do not know whether Shimizu Sensei really understood Shiraishi Sensei's methods of teaching *Jōdō* and his *Jōdō* techniques. Possibly Shimizu Sensei intentionally kept silent about Shiraishi Sensei's techniques even though he understood them. When I asked Shimizu Sensei, "How did Shiraishi Sensei teach *Jōdō* to you?" he replied, "When I learned *Jōdō* from Shiraishi Sensei, he was very old. So I do not know his method exactly."

So, I am not sure whether Shimizu Sensei's present way of teaching *Jōdō* is Shiraishi Sensei's method or his own method. I think Shimizu Sensei picked the most suitable way depending on the student he was teaching. He would teach a foreign student in one way and a Japanese student in another way. In this sense, the student who trained one-on-one with Shimizu Sensei for a long time was lucky.

Toff: When you learn the art of tea ceremony or flower arrangement or Kabuki, you begin when you are very young and continue for ten or twenty years. Take tea ceremony for instance, it takes 20 years before you are conferred full mastership yet you continue to polish your art. As for *kobudō* (literally 'ancient martial art', but meaning traditional martial art), you must learn the techniques in a short time in order to defend yourself as early as possible, but it takes 20 or 30 years to understand the true spirit of *kobudō*, I think. Superficially Japanese traditional (performing arts such as kabuki?) arts and kobudo seem different, but they have much in common.

Hamaji: This is a guess based on what my father told me. When he was a child, his father (Kanoto Hamaji) didn't teach him *Jōdō*, though he was a *shihan* (grand master) of *Jōdō*.

¹³ Hanjiro Shiraishi (1842-1926) was given a Menkyo by Hanjiro Yoshimura

My father had to run a long distance before he started to learn *Jōdō*. In other words, running a long distance was an important basic training of martial art. My father had a good quality as a descendant of a *Jōdō* family, the Hamaji's. As a child, his *sozai* (material) was mixed with *kihonteki na tsuchi* ("basic soil") and iron, then forged and refined¹⁴. "Strike while the iron is hot" was the traditional way of martial art training. *Kendō*¹⁵ was *omotegei* (an indispensable skill of a samurai). Every samurai practiced kendo. I think that every samurai had this type of basic training when they were young. If a samurai had enough basic training and was skilled in kendo, they started to learn *Jōdō*, and the master may have taught the techniques without any difficulty in a rather short time.

In light of the way *Jōdō* is practiced today, I think students must first have fundamental training. What kind of training do you think a little boy old enough to ride a piggyback had in the old days? His father would take him to a grave mound where decapitated heads were publically displayed. He would lull his son with those heads instead of toys. This was his way of introducing *Jōdō*.

After all, such a fearless spirit is indispensable to mastering *Jōdō*. Nowadays people do not begin to learn *Jōdō* during their childhood, nor do they have the required qualities. Therefore, it is natural that the method of teaching *Jōdō* differs according to the student's age, character, body condition, and the social situation. Naturally, the method and purpose of teaching *Jōdō* today and those in my father's times are quite different.

The purpose of learning *Jōdō* today is first to train one's body to become strong enough to use the *Jo* effectively when involved in a quarrel. One can also develop inner strength. In a word, learning *Jōdō* is to satisfy one's own desire to strengthen the body and mind.

In former times, on the other hand, masters taught *Jōdō* in order to pass down *Jōdō* techniques for the posterity. Students learned *Jōdō* to defend their own lives and country. Today's selfish desire to be strong mentally and physically is far from

¹⁴ This part (...his *sozai*~refined) means that Hamaji Sensei's father had a severe training both mentally and physically as the proverb says, "strike while the iron is hot"

¹⁵ kendo: Hamaji Sensei used the word "kendo" here, but he meant "kenjutsu" or traditional Japanese sword techniques. The word "kendo" was coined around 1919. Kendo is a modern Japanese martial art of sport-like bamboo practice sword-fighting based on "kenjutsu"

the desire to defend oneself and one's country. Even though masters have their own ideology, they have to adjust the methods of teaching *Jōdō* to the changing world. Therefore, different methods have arisen.

I am sorry that today's students are learning *Jōdō* only to fulfill themselves. They should think of the selfless spirit *Jōdō-ka* (*Jōdō* practitioners) had in those days. They should understand what *Jōdō-ka* were thinking when they were practicing *Jōdō* in the past. They should know that the older methods have been adjusted to today's society. Knowing these things makes a big difference. I am afraid that the masters of today have forgotten the spirit of the past and are fixated on the present situation. The students are also to blame.

Toff: Recently the methods of teaching *Jōdō* have been gradually changing. I don't think the students are aware of it. Today, we don't perform *Kazari* (a ritual salutation, putting a *Jo* and a sword on the floor before and after *Jōdō* practice). Did you do *Kazari* years ago?

Hamaji: Yes, we did. We learned *Kazari* immediately after we mastered the basic techniques and before we started learning *Omote*. When I was in Tokyo and was learning *Jōdō* from Shimizu Sensei, we almost always commenced practice with *Kazari*, and finished with *Kazari*.

Members of the Manchuria Kyōwakai¹⁶ came to Japan to learn *Jōdō*. I think in those days *Jōdō* practice gradually became informal. So, people from the Kyōwakai did not know the orthodox way of *Jōdō* practice. Even Mr. Asakichi Nakashima¹⁷ didn't practice in an orthodox way. For a month or two, groups of ten or twenty people came in waves from the Kyōwakai to learn *Jōdō* from Shimizu Sensei one after another. Shimizu Sensei trained them all together in a short time. That was the beginning of "group training" in *Jōdō*. He crammed them. Naturally, he didn't have enough time to do *Kazari*. Therefore, *Kazari* gradually disappeared. That has become a kind of normal way of *Jōdō* practice. Also, the number of students in

¹⁶ a political group organized in Manchuria in 1932 to "realize an ideal Manchuria"

¹⁷ 1917~1976 Shimizu-shihan's student. Shihan for the Manchuria Kyōwakai Jo and Osaka Prefecture Anti-riot police Jo

Tokyo gradually increased. So, I think doing *Kazari* became troublesome.

But in former years *Kazari* was very important. It is not until you begin to learn *Oku* that you know the importance of *Kazari*. You then realize how you have been doing *Kazari*, or how seriously or how absentmindedly you have been doing *Kazari*. You will recognize whether or not you have been doing *Kazari* exactly as your teacher has taught you to do it. If you have been doing *Kazari* superficially, you can't do *Sakigachi* from the *Oku*. If the teacher does not teach *Kazari* heartily, he can teach *Sakigachi*, but can't teach the *real* *Sakigachi*.

In former years, when you were learning *Jōdō* from Shimizu Sensei on one-on-one level, his whole character entered your body. So, the connection between you and Shimizu Sensei was very strong although it lacked blood ties. There was a unity of feeling between the teacher and his student. That may be the student's respect of the teacher and the teacher's love of the student.

Today the ties between the teacher and the students have become weak. Because the teacher teaches a large number of students simultaneously, he can't help teaching superficial techniques. He can't teach the fundamental spirit of *Jōdō*. Formerly, the teacher's whole character influenced his students through *Jo*, but now we can't expect that.

For example, a recorded recitation of Buddhist sutra does not move you even if it is recorded by a famous priest. You can say the same thing about *Jōdō*. Live music moves you even if the music is not good. The convenient way of listening to great music by means of records and tapes is coming into kobudo (traditional martial arts). That may be all right, but you may miss the spiritual ties. The same Buddhist sutra sounds different depending on how you listen to it.

When I learned *Jōdō* from Shimizu Sensei and Otofujii Sensei, I felt as if I had gained power from them. Even a short practice with them gave me power. This is the same with listening to live music.

Toff: In Britain, since the industrial revolution, traditional ways have adjusted to modern ways, and most of them have disappeared.

Hamaji: The same is true with *Jōdō*. Traditional ways of teaching *Jōdō* will eventually disappear although the techniques will remain. You can't stop it.

Toff: I heard that Japanese Noh¹⁸ was losing its popularity in Meiji Era (1868-1912). A foreign diplomat deplored this trend, and appealed that Japan should preserve Noh. Because of him, Noh has been revived.

Hamaji: I think there are many other traditional cultures that have been preserved thanks to the advice of foreigners who found value in them. Outsiders often place more value in things than those who are involved in them. Many times people find value in traditional things only when they are reminded of it by outsiders. In the light of this, it is good that Noh has gained attention when it was destined to fade away.

The principal in my junior high school said that Japanese people at the time of the Meiji restoration¹⁹ exchanged celebrated swords for bottles of beer because they thought anything Western was better than anything Japanese. They exchanged the Japanese soul for Western civilization. In this way Japan began to change rapidly. The Japanese have a tendency to rush at anything once it is found to be good and in this way the Japanese forgot the value of traditional Japanese culture in those days.

Since I live and teach *Jōdō* in Nagoya, I sincerely hope that I can hand down real *Jōdō* to the Nagoya people, not mere techniques; the traditional spirit of *Jōdō*. I want to cultivate *Jōdōka* who will practice and study *Jōdō* with sincerity even if there are only one or two students.

My role is not to teach *Jōdō* to many students like in Tokyo or Osaka but to nurture even one or two students who will truly understand traditional *Jōdō*. I do not object to the present way of teaching *Jōdō*. There are many teachers who support it, but my opinion is different from theirs.

¹⁸ Noh: traditional masked dance-drama

¹⁹ Meiji restoration: restoration of Imperial power in 1868

Toff: The same can be said about teaching English. I teach English to a group of about 100 students, but it is not effective at all.

Hamaji: In former years, a teacher in a Terakoya²⁰ told his students to read a textbook in turns. The young and old learned from the teacher who adjusted his teaching methods according to the ability of each of the students. Before the World War II and in the Taisho period²¹ an applicant chose a university because that university had “such and such” professor he wanted to learn from.

The situation has changed today. Students do not care which university they enter as long as they can enter one. Any professor is all right for them. On top of it, professors use a microphone to give lectures to hundreds of students. The present way of teaching of *Jōdō* has something common with this mass-education.

Toff: That has also been influenced by the modern way of thinking. Everybody has become economical.

Hamaji: If you put stress only on efficiency in learning things, I doubt how much you will understand them. You may learn various things and know about them only superficially, and you will end up without understanding the spirit hidden in them.

What you can do may be Hiden, or what you can't do may be Hiden. After all, either is right. If you reach the highest level of martial art or tea ceremony, you come to something philosophical. Martial art lies between religion and philosophy. Therefore many people try to understand the secrets of martial art from a religious viewpoint.

I myself want to practice *Jōdō* much more. My techniques are still childish. My father would often say to me, “Your techniques are like borrowed gaudy feathers.” I understand what he said. Even when he was a young child, he played with decapitated heads instead of toys, ran a long distance, and trained his body by skipping rope. Even what he ate was different from what we eat today.

If you eat ordinary food like ordinary people, you smell. So you had to eat

²⁰ small private school in the Edo period (1603-1867)

²¹ the reign of Emperor Taisho (1912-1926)

certain food that does not make your body emit odor. Also your bones must be soft. Did you see *nawanuke* (techniques of slipping out of the ropes) on TV the other day? Those techniques have been handed down in the Hamaji family. I heard that you can't perform the art of *nawanuke* if you do not keep your bones soft in your childhood. So what you eat is limited. From such well-trained master's viewpoint, our *Jo* techniques, which we began to learn at the age of seventeen or eighteen, are a mere thin veneer.

When you use, say, these chopsticks, you must become the chopsticks themselves. In other words, your whole soul must enter the chopsticks. Then you do not exist. This is the state of perfect selflessness. When you are practicing *Jōdō* and put your whole self into the techniques, you are in the state of selflessness. This is when you can use *Jo* freely, without any restriction. This is *muga* or *anattan*²².

A master horseman once said, "No man on the horse, no horse under the man." This is a Japanese saying. It means the horseman accomplishes perfect unity with the horse. The horseman is absorbed in the art of horse riding. Since your "whole self" is absorbed in the horse, you have "no self". What remains is selflessness.

In short, the purpose of Zen sitting meditation is to put all your heart into love just as a Christian puts all his heart to Christ. Your sense of self will disappear when your whole heart is absorbed in love. What remains is only love itself. Mental training to attain this selflessness is Zen sitting meditation. However, today's people sit in Zen meditation in order to strengthen their bodies and to enrich their mentality. This is wrong. The true meaning of Zen meditation is the same as that of Christianity, that is, to devote your whole self to love; you turn into love itself. Turning yourself into love is Zen meditation.

For example, when your child gets injured, you must feel the same pain he feels. If your whole body is assimilated into that universe, you feel the same pain. Only when you feel the same pain, you sympathize with your child and want to help him in the true sense. The meaning of Zen meditation lies in changing yourself into a target object.

²² In Buddhism, *annattam* is the Sanskrit word for the doctrine that asserts the nonexistence of a personal and immortal soul

As another example, take Buddhism. If you chant, “Namu Amida Buddha,”²³ you turn into the “Namu Amida Buddha” and lose your sense of “self”. After all, the pursuit of Christianity or Buddhism is the same: to assimilate into the earth or the universe.

Therefore, whether or not you can put your entirety into Jojutsu²⁴ is important. Only when your body and soul become Jojutsu itself, you can understand many and various things about *Jōdō*. If you are evaluating yourself by thinking, “I am poor at *Jōdō*,” “I am good at *Jōdō*,” “I am worse than he in *Jōdō*,” or “I am better than he,” you are thinking only about yourself. As long as you think in a self-centered manner, your *Jōdō* is not real.

What I have told you so far is a theory, and so if you want to put it into practice, you have to actually practice *Jōdō*. We have not yet practiced *Jōdō* enough. As you know, Gonnosuke Muso²⁵ practiced *Jōdō* day and night all 24 hours during his travels. We practice *Jōdō* only once a week. How can you understand real *Jōdō* with such infrequent practice? *Jōdō* teachers may be a little better at *Jōdō* than their students. Their performance of *Jōdō* may be a little more beautiful than their students, but can they really teach *Jōdō*? They must pay attention to how Gonnosuke Muso practiced *Jōdō*. This is not limited only to *Jōdō*.

The Buddhist sutra my father used to recite is popular in China, but not in Japan. Buddhists of the Sodo and Rinzai sects of Zen Buddhism (sodo-shu, rinzai-shu, and zen-shu)²⁶ recite this sutra often. It is called *kongo-hannya-harami-kyo*²⁷, which my father studied since he was a child. He said his entirety was absorbed in the sutra. Its teaching is vast and boundless. It says that even if you recite this sutra, you will have no merit; nor will you become rich; nor will you become healthy. It says there is no such thing like a merit in the world. I think this is very interesting. It means “Empty emptiness,” but the sutra actually gives you a lot of merits. It says there is nothing in this sutra, but it contains a lot of things. This is a Chinese way of thinking.

The Japanese are rigid in their way of thinking. They want to decide things in

²³ Buddhist invocation

²⁴ the same as “Jodo”; The old way of saying Jodo.

²⁵ the founder of Shinto Muso Ryu Jodo

²⁶ sodo-shu, rinzai-shu, and zen-shu are the names of Buddhist sects

²⁷ a Zen Buddhist sutra

minute detail beforehand and act according to those decisions. The Chinese are different. They take their time to grasp the whole picture of things and act with flexibility within the picture. Their way of thinking is vast and versatile.

Therefore, Chinese martial arts are easy to understand because they do not have detailed rigid rules. Because they have no rules, they are soft, slippery, and flexible. On the contrary, Japanese martial arts are strict and rigid. *Jōdō* has rules and formality. The Japanese do not approve things if they do not have rules and formality. It is interesting that Chinese martial arts do not have rules but they are flexible.

*Kongo-kyō*²⁸ is different from *Kannon-kyō*.²⁹ In the sutra named *Kannon-kyō*, Kannon (the Buddhist deity of mercy) appears and saves people. Since this sutra has a lot of rules, it suits the Japanese character, and is widely read in Japan. On the other hand, the sutra named *Kongo-kyō* is vague and elusive. To begin with, you can't recite the sutra by heart. Only a very few priests can recite it. In the *Kongo-kyō* sutra, you have to repeat similar words and phrases again and again endlessly. So, while you are reciting the sutra, you return to the beginning without realizing it. *Kongo-kyō* is similar to *Eki-kyō*.³⁰ According to *Eki-kyō*, things emerge out of empty vagueness and gradually take shape.

When my father³¹ came back to Fukuoka from Tokyo, Shiraishi Sensei always visited him. My father was glad that *Jōdō* survived because Shiraishi Sensei lived a long life teaching *Jōdō* for many years. Shiraishi Sensei had a close connection with my grandfather in terms of *Jōdō*. I remember that Shiraishi Sensei brought Shimizu Sensei and Otofujii Sensei to my house. I myself met them once or twice.

Shiraishi Sensei visited my father in order to see his *menkyō* (certificate) and weapons. I have seen them with my own eyes myself. Shiraishi Sensei always said that he had to return the *menkyō* to the Hamaji's as early as possible³². Therefore, my aunt received a *menkyō* in *Chūwa-ryū Jutte jutsu*³³ because Shiraishi Sensei

²⁸ the Buddhist Diamond sutra

²⁹ the Buddhist Deity of Mercy sutra

³⁰ the art of divination; the Yi-King; one of the Chinese classics of Confucianism

³¹ Hachiro Hamaji (1864-1956), Koichi Hamaji's father

³² Originally Jodo was handed down from generation to generation through the Hamaji family

³³ martial art using a short metal truncheon, typically against an opponent armed with a sword

insisted that she do so.

Toff: Please tell me about Hakudō Nakayama.

Hamaji: Nakayama Sensei learned *Jōdō* from my mother's father. I learned *Jōdō* from my father. There are two pupil-teacher lineages in the same line of Shinto-muso-ryu *Jōdō*. One is my father's line and the other is my mother's. I have some photographs. One of them shows my sister using the *kusarigama* (sickle with a chain) with her grandfather³⁴. Coincidentally, my father's father and my mother's father learned *Jōdō* from the same teacher.³⁵

Nakayama Sensei came to my house in Kyobashi, Tokyo, and learned *Jōdō* from my mother's father.³⁶ Every student came to my house in Kyobashi, which was situated in the central part of Tokyo. My house had two large rooms on the second floor, so they probably got rid of the sliding screen between the rooms to make one large one.

Nakayama Sensei's *Jo* is different from the true Shinto-muso-ryu *Jōdō* because he seems to have mixed the techniques with kendo. So, his *Jo* is different from my father's Shinto-muso-ryu *Jo* techniques. Nakayama Sensei often visited my father to study calligraphy. Nakayama Sensei brought his writings to him and had him comment on them.

When I was a seventh or eighth grader, my father told me to go to Nakayama Sensei and learn *iai*³⁷ from him. So I went to his *dojo* for one or two months, but my father didn't tell me to learn *Jo* from him. Nakayama Sensei taught *Jo* too, but my father said that I must learn *iai* from him because his *iai* was excellent.

Ten years later³⁸, Shimizu Sensei came to Tokyo and was introduced to my father by a close friend, Mr. Setsu Suenaga. Mr. Suenaga found the name Hachiro Hamaji in his *densho*, and thought, "This must be the Mr. Hamaji who lives in

³⁴ Kanoto Hamaji (1830-1894)

³⁵ Seiichi Hamaji(1771-1848)

³⁶ Kohachi Takeuchi(1837-1908)

³⁷ the art of drawing one's sword cutting down one's opponent and sheathing the sword, all in one motion

³⁸ around Showa 5 (1930)

Ofuna³⁹.” So Mr. Suenaga took Shimizu Sensei to my father’s house. Both of them performed *Jo* in front of my father. After their performance, my father said to me, “This is the martial art which has been handed down generation after generation in the Hamaji family. So you must learn *Jōdō*.”

In my opinion, Shimizu Sensei’s *Jōdō* is orthodox, while Nakayama Sensei’s *Jōdō* is not, because he learned *Jōdō* only halfway and changed the techniques. Only a few people know such a background story.

Toff: Was Suenaga Sensei⁴⁰ older than Shimizu Sensei⁴¹?

Hamaji: Yes, of course. He was far older than Shimizu Sensei. Mr. Mitsuru Tohyama⁴² was nine years older than my father, and Mr. Misao Suenaga was about five year younger than my father.

Suenaga Sensei was an eccentric man. He was a scholar on ancient Japanese thought and culture. He never had a regular occupation in his life. He was a right-wing political activist and went to Siberia and the Philippines. He devoted himself to studying about revolutions. I think he actually supported revolutionary movements⁴³. He was one of the famous political activists during the Taisho era⁴⁴. He supported Shimizu Sensei in many ways. For example, Suenaga Sensei let Shimizu Sensei live in his house.

Suenaga sensei took Shimizu Sensei to Tokyo from Fukuoka so that Shimizu Sensei would spread *Jōdō* far and wide. So, Suenaga Sensei was a great benefactor to Shimizu Sensei. In this way, Suenaga Sensei and Shimizu Sensei had a very close connection.

Also, Suenaga Sensei worked hard to spread *Jōdō*. He introduced important people to Shimizu Sensei. Both Suenaga Sensei and Shimizu Sensei demonstrated *Jōdō* in many places. Interestingly enough, Suenaga Sensei performed only the first

³⁹ Ofuna City in Kanagawa Prefecture

⁴⁰ Misao Suenaga (1869-1960) a member of Genyo-sha, a nationalist group which helped the independence of Asian countries, and assisted Sun Yatsen and Chiang Kaishek.

⁴¹ Takaji Shimizu (1894-1978)

⁴² Mitsuru Tohyama (1855-1945) One of the top three of Genyo-sha.

⁴³ He supported Sun Yatsen’s Chinese Revolution

⁴⁴ 1912-1926

series of techniques, *Omote*, but he was very skillful in *Jōdō*. Also, he was talented orator who superbly explained *Jōdō* before live audiences.

Toff: What was your father's specialty?

Hamaji: My father was a lawyer for the Ministry of Agriculture and Trade⁴⁵. Since it was a government organization, he dealt with state level problems, such as a border disputes between prefectures. When samurai became commoners during the class abolishment of the Meiji Restoration⁴⁶, their stipends, which were paid in rice, turned into currency. My father's job was to convert the value of rice into money. From this, the Meiji government gave the calculated rice in money to the "new commoners." Also, he drafted a bill and advocated it after presenting it to the Diet. This way, he was engaged in government level jobs.

Besides his profession as a lawyer, he also intensely studied Kongo-kyo sect Zen Buddhism. He studied Kongo-kyo from a reputable priest, who taught it to Rousen Takashina⁴⁷, the superintendent priest of Sodo-shu sect Zen Buddhism. So, both my father and Superintendent Takashina studied Sodo-shu from the same priest, although my father was older than Takashina. In other words, Takashina was my father's brother in terms of the study of Sodo-shu, and I called Takashina-san "Uncle."

In later years, my father spent the majority of his days studying only Kongo-kyo. He lived to be 92 years old.

My grandfather⁴⁸ trained my father through basic exercises such as jumping rope and running. My father sometimes told me about the hard exercises my grandfather gave him. For example, day after day, he only practiced thrusting a dagger at an imaginary man's heart while kneeling on one knee. My father said that it was basic practice. He also practiced throwing *shuriken* (throwing spikes) with 15-centimeter-long nails, gradually extending the distance from the target.

My father said to me that he didn't practice swordsmanship, but when

⁴⁵ a state organization established in 1881 and abolished in 1925

⁴⁶ restoration of Imperial power in 1868

⁴⁷ the 18th superintendent priest of Sodo-shu (1876-1968)

⁴⁸ Kanoto Hamaji (1830-1894)

Suenaga-san brought Shimizu Sensei to him and both of them demonstrated *Jōdō* before Tohyama-san⁴⁹, Suenaga-san asked my father to be *uchidachi* (a sword attacker). Then my father took the role of *uchidachi*. According to my father, when he was taking the *uchidachi* role, Toyama-san said looking at him in the Fukuoka dialect, “Hamaji-san is performing *Jōdō*.” I guess my father’s *Jōdō* technique was worth looking at, because he criticized my *Jōdō* as borrowed plumes. He also practiced *Shinto-ryu kenjutsu* (Shinto school sword techniques) and *Uchida-ryu Tanjo-jutsu*⁵⁰.

Toff: What is the relation between Shinto-ryu and Muso-ryu?

Hamaji: The twelve *Kata* (forms) of Shinto-ryu Kenjutsu are written at the end of *Oku*: they are eight long-sword *Kata* and four short-sword *Kata*. The twelve forms are included in the Jojutsu techniques. They are separated from Jojutsu and are collectively called “Shinto-ryu kenjutsu.” They are officially called Hattsu Odachi (Eight Forms of Long-sword) and Shitsu Kodachi (Four Forms of Short-sword). All *Jo* are originated from Shinto-ryu kenjutsu. Following Shinto-ryu kenjutsu are written the final *Jo* techniques of Gomuso-no-Jo.

I don’t understand what is written in my densho⁵¹. I can’t make heads or tails out of it. Every student wants to get densho, but Otofuji Sensi says, “Why do you make a fuss about such a thing as a densho?” I think he can say such a thing about densho because he himself possesses one.

One day, I asked Shimizu Sensei to explain the meaning of the content of the densho. Shimizu Sensei just said, “It says, ‘Use *Jo* maruku (roundly).’” I didn’t understand what was written in the densho, but I thought Shimizu Sensei knew it. That’s why I asked him, but he avoided the direct answer.

Once in a while after practicing Jo, I read the densho. I feel I am gradually

⁴⁹ Mitsuru Tohyama (1855-1944)

⁵⁰ a school of techniques using the *tanjo*, a 90-cm staff, which was created by Uchida Ryogoro (1837-1921)

⁵¹ Scroll of transmission. It contains the brief description of Jodo, the list of official Shinto Muso RyuJodo techniques, and the successive *menkyo kaiden* masters of Jodo.

getting the meaning of the densho somehow. Of course, I don't understand it clearly, though.

The other day, Nishioka-kun (Tsuneo Nishioka – NOTE: the term '*kun*' is a Japanese diminutive indicated that Hamaji was both elder, superior, and familiar with Nishioka) came to me and asked, "Hamaji Sensei, I don't understand what is written in the densho. What does it mean?" I answered him, "Neither do I." Actually, when I am reading the densho, I abruptly come across Chinese sentences and some surprisingly new Japanese vocabulary. Sometimes the cited examples are way out of the context. Scholars don't quite understand it, either. Sometimes I find Chinese names. Only those who are well versed in adjectives can understand it, I am afraid. Once while I was interpreting the densho in my own way, I came across some difficult words. So, I consulted a dictionary, only to find that the words were a person's name. I think the densho is interesting all the more because it is incomprehensible. It wouldn't be interesting at all if you understood it perfectly. By the way, I sometimes open the densho and "read" it.

(The tape ends here, but I imagine my father and Toff, both of whom were fond of talking, continued carrying on their conversation longer. I sincerely hope more of these kinds of valuable tapes will be discovered in the future so that we can preserve the records and tradition of Shinto-muso-ryu *Jo* in an accurate fashion. -Mitsuo Hamaji)

Words entrusted to the next generation:

**The Thirteen Golden Rules of Jo
and their Meanings**

by Koichi Hamaji

THE FIRST

身をもって人を助ける杖のごとく この姿こそ士の道

Mi o motte hito o tasukeru tsue no goto kono sugata koso mononofu no michi

As the jō helps a man, it is also the path of the samurai.

Shinto-muso-ryu *Jo* was created by a swordsman named Gonnosuke Muso⁵², who was a master of both Katori-shinto-ryu and Kashima-shin-ryu during the Keicho era (1596-1615) when swordsmanship was highly developed. The weapon of Shinto-muso-ryu *Jo* is a stave measuring 1.28 meters long and 2.4 centimeters across, made of oak with a straight grain. In the *ryu* (school), there are 64 techniques to fight against an opponent armed with a sword.

The *Jo* symbolizes three virtues: Wisdom, symbolized in the straight shape of the *Jo*; Benevolence, shown in the *Jo*'s round shape; Courage is represented by the *Jo*'s tough material. According to the founder's interpretation, bushido is:

- (1) to cultivate the three virtues constantly
- (2) not to kill or injure others with the weapon
- (3) to sacrifice oneself in case of social crisis and to support society with all the might which one has acquired through *Jo* practice.

Muso Gonnosuke named his martial art "staff" (*Jo*) so that it might support and guide people. He intended to spread the martial art among samurai as well as those who wanted to cultivate the spirit of bushido. He also wanted the spirit of *Jo* to be the fundamentals of a peaceful nation governed by virtue.

⁵² Gonnosuke Muso (date of birth and death unknown, but he lived in early Edo era (early 17th century).

THE SECOND

神佛も声の力で現はるる 一喝必倒氣勢養え

Shinbutsu mo koe no chikara de arawaruru ikkatsu hittou kisei yashinae

*The power of the voice
can evoke the gods.
Cultivate a powerful voice
that defeats your enemy.*

We sometimes hear even in this modern world that one experiences magical phenomena when one's strength is channeled into a powerful voice. For example, you can visualize an image of Kannon (the Buddhist deity of mercy) thanks to a constant voice of prayer; you can kill a man by imprecating a thousand curses upon him; or you can let a restless spirit sleep peacefully in the grave with a thundering scold.

Regardless of its loudness, one can use a powerful voice to defeat their adversary with just a single *Jo* technique, as it discourages and diminishing the opponents fighting spirit.

Jo students should develop a powerful voice while they practice the techniques of hitting and thrusting of *Jo*.

THE THIRD

打太刀はふれれば切れる剣なるぞ 心にとめて剣を怖るな

Uchidachi wa furereba kireru ken naruzo kokoro ni tomete ken o osoruna

*Keep in mind that uchidachi⁵³ is a sword
that will cut you if it touches you;
but one should never fear swords.*

The techniques of *uchidachi* in Shinto-muso-ryu *Jo* are called “Real Sword Techniques,” which means that the founder of *Jo*⁵⁴ created the techniques based on the idea that *uchidachi* is a sword that can cut. I am afraid that there are many *Jo* students who regard *uchidachi* as merely a piece of oak. I am sorry that many students today are using *uchidachi* unaware of the difference between a sword and a stick. *Uchidachi* is, of course, a piece of wood, but unlike a *shinai* (bamboo sword), which is used in sport kendo games, you must handle *uchidachi* just like a real sword which can cut your enemy. Also, *shijo*⁵⁵ must regard *uchidachi* as a real sword. *Jo* students must believe in traditional techniques, follow them with faith and without doubt. Also, they should not fear swords unnecessarily.

⁵³ *uchidachi* has two meanings: (1) a wooden sword (2) the person who uses *uchidachi* in *Jo* practice. The *uchidachi* in this sentence means (1) a wooden sword

⁵⁴ Gonnosuke Muso (ibid)

⁵⁵ *shijo* has two meanings: (1) *Jo* (2) the person who uses *Jo* in *Jo* practice. The *shijo* in this sentence means (2) the person, and not *Jo*

THE FOURTH

線当り刃物持つ身の好餌食 点で打つゝそ杖の打なり

Sen atari hamono motsu mi no kou ejiki ten de utu koso jo no uchi nari

*Don't hit your opponent with the side of the Jo,
or you will fall prey to the swordsman.*

Hit him with the end of the Jo.

Even if you hit a swordsman with the side of the *Jo* to “cut” him, a mere hit is not fatal because he is guarded by a powerful will to kill you. He ignores your bladeless stick, enters your defense range, and tries to cut you. Therefore, don't use the *Jo* like a sword. You must hit him without giving him any chance to invade your defense territory. You must hit his face with the end of the *Jo*. The moment you hit his wrist, aim the end of the *Jo* at his stomach and discourage his intention to enter your territory. Such a hit is called *ten de utsu* (to hit with either end of the *Jo*) as opposed to *sen de utsu* (to hit with the side of the *Jo* trying to “cut” him as in Kendo). The length of a sword is 3 *shaku* (90.9 centimeters), and that of the *Jo* is 4 *shaku* 2 *sun* 1 *bu* (128 centimeters). You must make the most of this difference in length.

THE FIFTH

太刀は鋼 杖は樫 ガツンと当てずに 円るゝずらしていなす心で

Tachi wa kane jo wa kasha gatsun to atezu ni maruku zurashite inasu kokoro de

Tachi⁵⁶ is steel; Jo is oak.

Don't hit tachi hard.

Parry it by sliding the Jo along its length

as if to scold the tachi.

Since *Jo* is made of oak and *tachi* is made of steel, *tachi* is made of far better material than the *Jo*, and is more fatal. Just the sight of *tachi* frightens you. But when you duel with a swordsman, never fear *tachi*. Don't simply hit the side of *tachi*. When you hit *tachi*, remember that flexibility is stronger than stiffness. You must swing the *Jo* down from above, and the moment the *Jo* has contacted the sword, adhere to it and slide it along the length of *tachi* as far as the *tachi* hilt. When you parry the *tachi*, do so by *zuri-age* or *zuri-oroshi* (to slide the *Jo* along the length of *tachi* upward or downward). Always avoid hitting the side of the *tachi*, but instead, try to slide the *Jo* along its length as if to soften the speed of the *tachi*'s movement.

⁵⁶ sword

THE SIXTH

折り返す手首の握りで敵を打た 後手の力まかせは技をねわす

Orikaesu tekubi no nigiri de teki o ute ushirode no chikara makase wa waza o kuruwasu

*When you strike with the Jo
use the grip of your orikaesu-te.
If you strike with the gote too forcefully,
you cannot attack effectively.*

Orikaesu-te is the hand holding the end of *Jo* in each position of *Honte*, *Gyakute*, and *Hikiotoshi-uchi*. *Gote* is the other hand. (When you use *tachi*, *orikaesu-te* is the left hand.)

If you make the most of *orikaesu-tekubi* (the wrist of *orikaesu-te*), you can not only “extend” the length of the *Jo* but also make a powerful attack even if the distance between you and your opponent is short. If you follow this technique, you can strike the *tachi* more easily. The technique can be applied to *tachi* and *tanjo*, too. Make the best of *orikaesu-tekubi*.

THE SEVENTH

かわしつっ小手を打ち上げ目を制し 体勢くずして技かけよ

Kawashitsutsu kote o uchiage me o seishi taisei kuzushite waza kakeyo

*When parrying the sword with the jo,
hit the wrists from underneath and aim the tip to the eyes.
Before using Kuri-techniques⁵⁷, unbalance the posture.*

The seventh rule explains the techniques of *Kuri-tsuke*, *Kuri-hanashi*, and *Tai-atari*. The *Kuri*-techniques practiced in recent years teach the correct ways to parry the sword: (1) how to avoid the sword; (2) how to hit the sword's handle; (3) and how to apply the techniques. These basic forms are not incorrect, but in actual combat, you cannot apply the techniques by just hitting the handle of a swordsman who is desperately trying to cut you. Therefore, as the *Kyohan*⁵⁸ teaches, you should hit your opponent's wrists as if to scoop them up, and at the same time point the end of *Jo* right at his eyes to discourage any further intention to attack you. This movement breaks his balance. Never miss this chance. It is the very moment you apply *Kuri-waza*⁵⁹. When your opponent brings his raised sword down on you with lightning speed and steadiness, you cannot apply the techniques by just hitting the handle from underneath.

Generally speaking, you cannot apply any technique to your opponent when he is well balanced in posture, mind, and alertness. Therefore, before you apply the techniques, you must sense the opponent's *Okori*⁶⁰ and immediately take advantage of it because he is off his mental and physical guards at the very moment; or you must disturb his equilibrium.

⁵⁷ *Kuri-tsuke*, *Kuri-hanashi*, and *Tai-atari*

⁵⁸ a *Jo* instructional book

⁵⁹ *Kuri-tsuke*, *Kuri-hanashi*, and *Tai-atari*

⁶⁰ *Okori* or *Okori-gashira*: the very moment when your opponent intends to hit you; the very moment when he intends to move his sword to attack you

THE EIGHTH

古き形少しもたがわずくり返せ 自然に身につく氣杖体

Furuki kata sukoshi mo tagawazu kurikaese shizen ni minituku ki jo tai

Practice the time-honored techniques repeatedly.

Imitate them exactly as your teacher shows.

Aim at attaining a perfect unity of body and spirit with the Jo.

Believe in the techniques handed down from teachers to students for hundreds of years. Do not doubt, but practice them hundreds and thousands of times, and you will learn the unity of Jo, body, and opportunities for offence and defense, that automatically corresponds to your opponent's movements. This is similar to typewriting. The beginner looks at the words, find the keys, and types them. A well-trained typist does not look at the keys, but they just look at the words and automatically type them.

My father once told me about the art of war. When he was learning calligraphy from an honorable teacher Shin Kei Ho, he said to my father:

“Begin with the rules which calligraphy teachers created when they, after practicing thousands of times, reached the level where they could write without thinking about the techniques. It is only after practicing the rules innumerous times that you can write well.

“This is the order of practicing calligraphy: first, don't write with your finger, but write with your hand; second, don't write with your hand, but write with your arm; third, don't write with your arm, but write with your shoulder; fourth, don't write with your shoulder, but write with your body; fifth, don't write with your body, but write with your heart; sixth, don't write with your heart, but write with nonattachment; seventh, write freely.”

It means that you can't write as long as you have something to say or think about calligraphy.

In Chikuzen (present western part of Fukuoka Prefecture), where *Jo* was

founded, there is a place called Hari-suri (needle-grinding). A long time ago, when Tenmangu-sama (Michizane Sugawara⁶¹) left Dazaifu⁶² and climbed Mt. Tenpaizan to pray to Heaven⁶³, he saw a peasant sharpening an ax, and asked him what he was doing. The peasant answered that he was making a needle out of the ax. Tenmangu-sama was surprised and realized that his prayer had not been enough. So, he began to pray much more heartily, and finally he became the god of Tenjin Shrine.”

My father said to me, “When one shoots an arrow from a bow, he can hit the target if he takes a correct stance as his teacher instructs. He doesn’t have to make a particular effort in aiming at the target.” Shimizu Sensei said to me, “Don’t intend to hit this or poke that. You can hit or poke the target without making efforts. Your loaded intention will fail the correct wielding of Jo. Don’t doubt *kata* or the set form of techniques, but use *Jo* exactly as instructed. You cannot hit the target as long as you take a wrong posture.”

⁶¹ Michizane Sugawara (845-903) a Japanese politician, poet, and scholar

⁶² one of the military and administrative centers of Japan in 8th and 9th centuries, located in present Fukuoka Prefecture

⁶³ Sugawara fell into a trap of his rival in 901 and was demoted to a minor official of Dazaifu. He pleaded his innocence on Mt. Tenpaizan every day

THE NINTH

わが杖は切り刺しならぬ唯の棒 打ったら突けの心忘るな。

Waga tue wa kiri sashi naranu tada no bo uttara tuke no kokoro wasuruna

One's Jo is merely a piece of wood.

One cannot cut or stab with it.

Therefore, never forget this:

“Strike and thrust.”

The ninth rule supplements the fourth one and phrase “strike and thrust” is not literal. It means that one must perfect techniques so that one can *strike and thrust simultaneously*.

THE TENTH

仕も打も進退共に打つ心　これがなければオドリ罔然。

Shi mo uchi moshintai tomoni utsu kokoro　korega nakereba odori douzen

*Both shidachi and uchidachi should always keep in mind
the spirit of attack in both forward and backward movements.*

Without this spirit, Jo techniques are simply a dance.

You are practicing *Jo* faithfully following the instruction of your teachers and the predecessors. Both *uchidachi* and *shidachi* should practice *Jo* with unflinching aggressiveness.

When you are the *uchidachi*, you should have a sense of dignity. Never give the *shidachi* any chance to attack you. It is natural that when you are taking a forward step, you are intending to cut the *shidachi*. You should take the same attitude when you are taking a backward step, too. Even if a bout is over, don't step back just following *kata*. When you are stepping back, don't lose your concentration. Be alert and ready to cut *shidachi* if you find any chance. On the other hand, when you are *shidachi*, don't avoid *uchidachi*'s eyes, but read his spirit, and attack him if you have any chance.

Since you know beforehand where to hit next and where to poke next, you tend to overlook the movement of *uchidachi*. *Jo* is not dance.

THE ELEVENTH

仕合高上希うなら 起きた素振りと寝て工夫

Shiai kojo negau nara okite suburi to nete kufu

*If you want to make progress in Jo,
practice suburi⁶⁴ during the day;
Exercise ingenuity during the night.*

The eleventh rule is meant for those who cannot go to *dojo* because of some business and for those who want to improve their *Jo* techniques.

You may practice *Jo* hard at *dojo* but once you leave there, you tend to forget about the *Jo*. You won't spend enough time to digest the techniques. You just learn new techniques one after another but you don't practice them until they become your own. I regret that I often see students who don't think deeply about *Jo* techniques. Such students, who don't have a teacher nor an *uchidachi* to practice with, tend to gradually begin to abandon what they have learned. This is a waste of time and energy.

Who do you think was *uchidachi* for Gonnosuke Muso? He was a master of "kenpo" or swordsmanship. He was probably his own *uchidachi*. He devised the techniques against an imaginary *uchidachi* based on his rich experiences in actual combat with his enemies. Not being satisfied with the imaginary *uchidachi*, he worked on creating techniques by secluding himself away at Kamado Shrine in Mt. Homan⁶⁵. And finally he is said to have received an oracle and then founded Shinto-muso-ryu *Jo*. His original techniques have undergone the test of time and have developed into 64 *kata* or forms today. The last form of *Okuden* is *Aun*, which is just a single *hidari-honte-uchi*.

With the spirit the founder cherished we, the *Jo* students, should practice *suburi* in the correct form fully aware of the importance of the basics. Night and day, we

⁶⁴ to practice the movement of wielding *Jo* by yourself

⁶⁵ a mountain in Dazaifu (present Fukuoka)

should study and brush our techniques with untiring perseverance: characteristics of the *Jo* and sword, the intention behind the form, eyes, an effective connection between one technique and another, movements of hands and arms, movements of feet and legs, timing of hitting, and posture. Without studying them, your *Jo* is superficial. You can never grasp the quintessence of *Jo*. If your teacher is away from you, heaven is your teacher. You should make the most of his absence, regard it as a chance for self-practicing and improvement of your techniques. I sincerely hope that you will keep brushing up your techniques.

THE TWELFTH

色々と種々に兵法録えども 真剣勝負に決りなし。

Iroi-ro to shuju ni heihou utaedomo shinken shobu ni kimari nashi

*However many various Jo techniques there may be,
there are no rules in true combat.*

It may be good to know many techniques, but if you are bound by them, you are their slaves and lose your freedom. Moreover, you may miss the chance to attack and make a heedless mistake. All you have to do in a real combat is to discourage your enemy's fighting capability.

Your *Jo* will run as fast as lightning and the flower of practice will bloom when your body and mind are united and concentrate only on fighting. In actual fighting there is no rule, no technique, no yourself, or no enemy. The only thing there is your soul. Don't decorate your body and mind. Fight with your "gloves off."

THE THIRTEENTH

杖により武徳をつみしその力 我にとどめず末永く傳えよ。

Jo ni yori butoku o tsumishi sono chikara ware ni todomezu suenagaku

*Do not confine the virtue and power
attained through practicing Jo.
Hand them down from generation to generation.*

Try to win the understanding of as many people as possible about Jo, which was established on a true *bushido*⁶⁶ spirit. Don't use the *Jo* improperly.

I sincerely hope that each of you will make your best efforts to serve as a foundation for the peace of the world when it is confronted with enormous difficulties.

The thirteen rules are excerpts from “Shinto-muso-ryu *Jo* To Sono Densho” (Shinto-muso-ryu *Jo* and Its Patrimony) written by Koichi Hamaji, published in the Showa 55 (1980).

⁶⁶ see footnote No. 1, page 2

Afterword by the Translator

It is my honor that I had a chance to translate “Shinto-muso-ryu: Jo No Hinkaku” (The Dignity of Jo) into English.

Since the book centers on *Jōdō*, one of the Japanese martial arts, I found it difficult to translate the *Jo* terminology and its background history into English, but I tried to do my best. For those who do not fully understand them, I explained as many items as possible in the footnotes. Besides these difficulties, I also had a hard time translating Hamaji Shihan’s Japanese into English, because Japanese usually omits the subject in both written and spoken form. On top of that, as is usual with any conversation, the speaker sometimes jumps from one topic to another before completing the original topic, resulting in illogical development of the conversation. I did my best to clarify the subjects and make the translation as readable as possible.

Since I have been practicing *Jo* for more than 15 years, I have learned a lot about *Jo* techniques, history, background people who preserved the *Jo* techniques till today through translating. I am glad I have gained more than I expected through the job. I find “the Thirteen Golden Rules and Their Meanings” especially useful.

I would be very happy if the reader finds this translation helpful for furthering their *Jo* practice. I sincerely hope Hamaji Shihan’s *Jo* spirit will be handed down to the next generation.

Finally, my thanks go first to Hiroaki Ishida Shihan, who was kind enough to help me understand the meaning of *Jo* terminology and its background history. Next, I would like to thank Mr. Russ Ebert, who kindly helped me translate the book into English. Without his proof reading, this publication would not have been realized.

Hiroshi Matsuoka
August 20, 2010

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