

# PRINCIPLES OF TRAINING

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

The following essay is a statement of my personal kyudo philosophy, intended primarily for my own students. As such, it presupposes a certain amount of familiarity with kyudo on the part of the reader. I have decided to make it generally available since one of my students suggested that it might be of some interest to others in the kyudo community. It is nothing more than my personal reflections, so it contains no instructional information on kyudo technique, ceremony, or practice methods. For authoritative information on kyudo, I refer the reader to Volume I of the *Kyudo Manual* published by the All Nippon Kyudo Federation (ANKF) and to *Kyudo, The Essence And Practice Of Japanese Archery*, by Onuma Hideharu Hanshi and Dan and Jackie DeProspero. These are the best English-language source books available for kyudo as it is most widely practiced in Japan today. I hope that nothing I say in the following pages can be taken to contradict anything to be found in either of these two volumes.

In writing this essay, I have made use of some Japanese language information that is not, to my knowledge, available in English. I take full responsibility for any mistakes I may have made in the translation of this material.

Since there is broad agreement within the kyudo community on most of the fundamentals of kyudo, much of what I say in the following pages may be familiar to those with kyudo experience. I have tried to be as original as possible in my presentation, and I hope that I have not inadvertently copied anyone else's work, or used sources without proper attribution. If I have, I apologize in advance and ask only that it be remembered that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work is dedicated to all of my teachers, but most especially to:

Kitayama Mitsuhide Hanshi, who taught me.

Murakami Hisashi Hanshi, who trained me.

Uchiyama Tozo Hanshi, who took care of me.

I would also like to thank the All Nippon Kyudo Federation, Urakami Hiroko Hanshi (the daughter in law of the late Urakami Sakae Hanshi), and Nakajima Sakae Hanshi for giving me permission to quote from their work in the preparation of this manuscript. Thanks must also go to Mr. Dan DeProspero, who has offered me much good advice over the years, and whose book is a source of constant encouragement.

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## FOREWORD

In March of this year I received the dojo name "Seishinkan" from my teacher and benefactor, Uchiyama Tozo, Hanshi 8th dan. In view of this, I thought that it would be a good time to try to explain the philosophy that guides my kyudo practice. The essential ideas and concepts that make up this philosophy are not in any way original or unique, and they can be easily found in one form or another in the *Kyudo Manual* or other published sources. Naturally, my teachers taught these concepts to me in their own way and I then understood them through my own experience. I have tried to present them here in my own words to the best of my ability. In any event, I believe that what I say in the following pages is a faithful interpretation of the teaching that I have received, explained in the light of what I have learned through my personal practice. I hope that it does not shame my teachers and will help, in some small way, to shed some light on kyudo.

Everyone practices kyudo in their own way for their own reasons. Since the experience of kyudo is such a personal thing, each archer will have his or her own interpretation of kyudo. Because of this, no single interpretation can encompass all of kyudo, and the multitude of possible interpretations only reflects the multifaceted nature of kyudo itself.

This does not mean that anything can be called kyudo, however. There are certain fundamental elements about which there is no room for dispute, and living tradition defines the boundaries within which kyudo exists. Within that set of boundaries, however, all archers will naturally have their own personal vision of what they believe to be true kyudo and will express it in their own way. Everyone has such a personal philosophy, whether or not they articulate it, and so I have decided to try to explain mine.

Many Westerners are initially attracted to kyudo because of its beauty and its seemingly exotic and mysterious nature. Until recently, much of the available literature tended to describe kyudo in a romantic and mystical manner, presenting it as something arcane, otherworldly, or even impractical. Traditional Japanese teaching methods, relying as they do on intuition and unspoken communication, only deepen the mystique which surrounds kyudo.

Kyudo is indeed profound, but it is not magic. The profundity of kyudo lies precisely in its essential simplicity. The basic act of shooting consists of only eight steps, and kyudo has little or nothing in the way of secret or hidden techniques that only the initiated adept is privileged to know. Kyudo rests on a few essential fundamentals, and correct shooting requires, primarily, that you learn to relax, do away with all strain and tension in your body and mind, purify your spirit, and fill yourself with vitality and courage. When you can do this, your body will come to life, your mind and spirit will naturally deepen, and your kyudo practice will deepen in response. As easy as this may sound, anyone who has practiced kyudo for any length of time knows how truly difficult it is, and it is the very difficulty of doing something that is seemingly so simple which gives kyudo its depth and subtlety. Because the human spirit is infinitely protean, kyudo is infinitely protean. Like snowflakes, no two shots are ever exactly alike, so you can always learn something new, no matter how experienced you may believe yourself to be.

True kyudo comes from within your own heart and soul, and it is through practice that you discover it. I believe, therefore, that anyone who has the intestinal fortitude to persist in the practice of kyudo will come to understand what kyudo has to teach, regardless of the level of shooting skill they may eventually attain.

Kyudo attempts to train your mind and spirit through training your body in the art of archery. Kyudo philosophy holds that the mind and the body are two intimately related parts of one integrated whole and so your mind and spirit can be seen in how you shoot. Shooting the bow correctly requires proper technique guided by a proper mind and spirit, so you attempt to gain the proper mind and spirit by doing the technique properly, and vice versa. Viewed strictly in the context of shooting, this pure mind and spirit is therefore a very practical need, since it is precisely that which allows you to shoot well. All of kyudo practice is structured to help you achieve this mind and spirit and give you the medium through which to express and refine it.

This is why I have chosen the dojo name "Seishinkan". The "Sei" of Seishinkan is written with the character "kiyoi", meaning pure, clear, or unpolluted. (This is also related to "sumashi" or a clear mental state.) The "Shin" is written with the character for "kokoro", meaning mind, soul, spirit, or heart. "Kan" means hall and refers to the shooting hall. Thus, Seishinkan can mean "Hall Of Pure Mind" or, perhaps more poetically, "Place Where The Mind Is Purified". This purity of mind is, I believe, the most important quality to strive for in the practice of kyudo, since success or failure depends upon it.

The ultimate aim of kyudo is higher than just success in target shooting, however. Kyudo philosophy holds that the true kyudo spirit must be evident not only in your shooting but also in how you live your

life. Judging the character of others is a very delicate matter since everyone has differing views on what constitutes a good human being, so I will confine my remarks to what I believe is the proper way of practicing kyudo itself and leave a discussion of virtue and morality to others. Suffice it to say that if your shooting is honest and forthright you will also be honest and forthright in your dealings with other people, and the strength of character you gain through the practice of kyudo should help you treat others with compassion and humility. In this way, kyudo attempts to train you so that you can influence society at large for the good, thus helping to foster peace and harmony between people. This is the virtue of kyudo. As is only natural, my ideal of kyudo is still evolving, as it must if my practice is to remain vital. Although the thoughts expressed in the following pages are an attempt, however incomplete, to explain that ideal, I do not claim to have succeeded in living up to it. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the value of kyudo lies in striving for the attainment of a noble goal and that this striving improves those who strive. I offer these words in that spirit.

Earl Hartman  
September, 1995

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# THE SHAHO KUN OF YOSHIMI JUNSEI

The Shaho Kun (Teaching On The Law Of Shooting) is the legacy of Yoshimi Junsei (originally named Daiuemon Tsunetake) a famous archer of Kishu who lived during the Tokugawa Period (1603-1868). He was the founder of the Kishu line of the Chikurin-ha of the Heki Ryu and received transmission directly from Ishido Tamesada, the second headmaster of the Chikurin-ha, in 1640.<sup>1</sup> He was the teacher of the famous archer Wasa Daihachiro of Kishu, who set the all-time record at the Kyoto toshiya competition in 1686, succeeding on 8,133 shots out of a total of 13,053.

The preface to the Shaho Kun outlines the myriad difficulties faced by the kyudo practitioner and then offers the solution to those problems: self-reliance and the constant practice of proper shooting technique with a pure mind and harmonious spirit. The Shaho Kun proper explains the fundamentals of the Shaho. Daiuemon Tsunetake became a Buddhist monk in his later years and moved his residence to Daitokuji Temple in Kyoto, taking the name of Yoshimi Junsei.

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In any case, the discipline of kyudo means this: with a body and mind that are agitated and without composure, you use the bow and arrow, that are alive and can be pushed and pulled at will, to pierce the un-moving target.

From the outside, shooting seems exceedingly simple, but shooting embraces the three spheres of *kokoro* (mind), actions, and thoughts; and these spheres, being linked together one to the other, bring a thousand upon ten thousand changes to the inner workings of the art, making it difficult to strike the center of the mark.

That which is captured in the morning is lost in the evening; if you search in the target, it is unmoving and without delusions; if you search in the bow and arrow they are guileless, being of No-Mind.

Searching only in yourself, you must cleanse your mind and correct your body, and, with singleness of purpose, nurture the proper spirit, train yourself in proper technique, and throw yourself into your training with all of the sincerity you can muster. This is the only way.<sup>2</sup>

The way is not with the bow, but with the bone, which is of the greatest importance in shooting.

Placing Spirit (*Kokoro*) in the center of the whole body, with two thirds of the *Yunde* (left arm) push the string, and with one third of the *Mete* (right arm) pull the bow. Spirit settled, this becomes harmonious unity.

From the center line of the chest, divide the left and right equally into the release.

It is written that the collision of iron and stone will release sudden sparks; and thus there is the golden body, shining white, and the half moon positioned in the west.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Kinsei Nihon Kyujutsu No Hatten* (The Development Of Japanese Archery In The Feudal Period), Ishioka Hisao Hanshi, Tamagawa Daigaku University Press, p. 326

<sup>2</sup> *Gendai Kyudo Rinen Kaisetsu* (Explanation of the Philosophy Of Modern Kyudo), lecture delivered by Nakajima Sakae Hanshi, in San Jose, CA, 1993 (translation by the author)

<sup>3</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. I, All Nippon Kyudo Federation, p. xi

## THE RAIKI SHAGI

The Raiki Shagi (Record Of Etiquette-Truth Of Shooting) explains the rules for the conduct of the shooting ceremony and the proper attitude archers should have towards their practice. It is from the Raiki (Record Of Etiquette) compiled in China in the 2nd century. The Japanese adopted this teaching in the development of kyudo and it became one of the bases for the emphasis on proper attitude and conduct in the practice of kyudo.

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The shooting, with the round of moving forward or backward can never be without courtesy and propriety (*Rei*).

After having acquired the right inner intention and correctness in the outer appearance, the bow and arrow can be handled resolutely.

To shoot in this way is to perform the shooting with success, and through this shooting virtue will be evident.

Kyudo is the way of perfect virtue. In the shooting, one must search for rightness in oneself. With the rightness of self, shooting can be realized.

At the time when shooting fails, there should be no resentment towards those who win. On the contrary, this is an occasion to search for oneself.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. I, p. ix

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR TRAINING

The correct expression of the shooting form of kyudo is what gives shape to kyudo and keeps it from being nothing more than a disembodied idea. At the same time, part of learning how to do anything that has a concrete expression in physical form is to practice it with the right intention and spirit. The forms thereby take on meaning and become the expression of the underlying ideas that animate them. Therefore, you should base your practice on an understanding that will help you focus your energies on doing kyudo correctly. You can then visualize and internalize the spirit of kyudo and express it through action. The following list of eight principles is not intended to be a definitive list of everything that is important in kyudo. Such a list is impossible to make. I believe, however, that if you keep the following points in mind you will be able to practice with the right mind and spirit.

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- The ultimate truth of kyudo is understood through the union of mind, body, and bow, or "Sanmi Ittai" (the three essentials as one body).
  - Seisha Hitchu (a true shot never misses) is truth. If the shooting is in accordance with the Shaho (the Law Of Shooting), the arrow will pierce the target without fail.
  - The Shaho is an immutable natural law and not an arbitrary human invention. Therefore, shooting must be in accord with natural principles.
  - Incessant practice, done correctly with a pure mind and spirit, is the only way to understand kyudo. Nothing can take the place of this.
  - Kyudo must be a balance between "Sha" (shooting) and "Rei" (courtesy, mutual respect and propriety).
  - Growth in kyudo has a natural progression. Instruction and practice must be in accord with this natural progression.
  - Kyudo tradition is the living legacy of past masters and the guide for future development. Therefore, practice must always follow tradition and the structure it imposes.
  - It is impossible to ever be perfect in kyudo; however, we must never stop training. It is the devotion to constant training that gives meaning to kyudo as a Way of life.

**The ultimate truth of kyudo is understood through the union of mind, body, and bow, or "Sanmi Ittai" (the three essentials as one body).**

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Sanmi Ittai<sup>5</sup> means the unification of the three elements of mind, body, and bow into one harmonious whole. Specifically, this means that kyudo requires:

1. a stable mind,
2. a stable body, and
3. assured and well-honed technique.

I interpret the meaning of this as follows: a stable mind is a pure mind that is free of the vain thoughts and delusions that interfere with the clear flow of mind and spirit; a stable body is that body which, controlled by a pure mind and spirit, is able to conform to the requirements of shizentai (the "natural body")<sup>6</sup>; and assured and well-honed technique means the perfection of the Shaho<sup>7</sup> (The Law Of Shooting).

This is the subject matter of both the Raiki Shagi and the Shaho Kun, and it has profound significance for all aspects of kyudo. The text of the Raiki Shagi alludes to the fact that this unification of mind, body, and bow leads not only to proficiency in shooting technique, but that kyudo practiced in this way reveals the virtue of the archer. Therefore, this unification is the basis for the true and natural expression of both elements of kyudo, "Sha" (shooting) and "Rei" (courtesy, mutual respect and propriety). It is a fundamental

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<sup>5</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. I, pp. 24-26

<sup>6</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. I, p 56

<sup>7</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. I, p. 24-31, 59-72; *Kyudo, The Essence And Practice Of Japanese Archery*, Onuma Hanshi and Dan and Jackie DeProspero, Kodansha International, pp. 65-87

assumption of kyudo philosophy that this leads to both success in shooting and the development of a virtuous character that you express in all aspects of your life.

This concept can also be rendered as "Shin Ki Gi", (Mind, Spirit, Technique) or "Shin Shin Kyu" (Mind, Body, Bow). All of these refer to the need for you to harmoniously integrate all elements of your art: the mind that controls the body, the body that operates the bow, and the technique through which the bow is used correctly.

What is meant by stability of mind? In kyudo, there are certain psychological blocks that are held to be barriers to progress and stains on the mind and spirit. These are called "The Seven Barriers", as follows:

- Happiness
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Surprise
- Sorrow
- Fear
- Thoughts<sup>8</sup>

All of these feelings and thoughts, engendered by the mind, adversely affect both body and spirit and thereby ruin the shooting. These feelings are only the result of our desires and fixations, conjured up in our own minds by the value we attach to external things. They are not inherent in the things themselves but are nothing more than the psychological baggage we bring to our practice. Therefore, to have a clear and stable mind, or "heijoshin" (everyday mind),<sup>9</sup> you must strive to rid yourself of them. When your mind is clear and unpolluted by vain attachments your body becomes firm, steady, and full of strength and vitality. You can then handle the bow freely, so technique can be perfectly expressed.

You cannot achieve Sanmi Ittai without the most diligent practice, where, through the most grueling effort, you conquer all of your weaknesses, mental, spiritual, and physical. Without this effort, your mind and spirit cannot be made pure. If your mind and spirit are not pure, your body cannot express the Shaho correctly. If you cannot express the Shaho correctly, you cannot achieve true and honest shooting. Therefore, the achievement of Sanmi Ittai presupposes a process by which you have, through incessant practice over many years, purged yourself of all those sicknesses of mind and spirit that make your shooting impure.

When your mind and spirit are purified in this way, they become naturally honest and forthright, allowing you to relate to your life and your shooting in a lucid and unprejudiced way and to achieve the perfect, ideal shot that is the goal of kyudo. When you can see yourself clearly through your shooting, you can see your life clearly. When you have this mind and spirit, you can express the ideals of "Shin Zen Bi" (Truth, Goodness, Beauty)<sup>10</sup> in a true and natural way. When you can express Shin Zen Bi in this way in both your life and your shooting, you are said to have "shahin" and "shakaku", dignity and nobility of shooting.

True shahin and shakaku do not mean just skill in target shooting. Shahin and shakaku cannot be attained unless you practice in a way that trains your mind and spirit as well as your body. If your mind and spirit are trained properly, this will naturally lead to the development of character. When you can express your sincerity and strength of character through the quality of your overall shooting performance, which is made up of a harmonious balance of correct technique expressed within the proper forms of ritual etiquette, your shooting will be seen to be in perfect harmony. It will be effective as well as beautiful. This is part of what the Raiki Shagi means when it says "through this shooting virtue will be evident".

The achievement of Sanmi Ittai, therefore, must be seen as the result of proper kyudo practice that contains within it all of the necessary elements, those that train you in shooting technique itself and those that train your mind, spirit, and character. In its ideal sense Sanmi Ittai is thus the cumulative expression, shown through shooting, of all of the essential elements of kyudo.

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<sup>8</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. II, pp. 14-15

<sup>9</sup> *Kyudo, The Essence And Practice Of Japanese Archery*, p.5

<sup>10</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. I, pp. 19-21, *Kyudo, The Essence And Practice Of Japanese Archery*, pp. 2-6

## **Seisha Hitchu (a true shot never misses) is truth. If the shooting is in accordance with the Shaho (the Law Of Shooting), the arrow will pierce the target without fail.**

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I firmly believe in what is called in kyudo "Seisha Hitchu",<sup>11</sup> "a true shot never misses". This has also been described as "Hosha Hitchu",<sup>12</sup> or "a shot done according to the Law (Of Shooting) never misses". What is meant by "Seisha" or "Hosha"?

Fundamentally, Seisha or Hosha means a true shot in that your shooting meets the requirements of the Shaho. From a technical point of view, this means that the shooting conforms to the kihontaikai, or the basic body form (the tateyokojumonji, the sanjujumonji, and the gojujumonji [the vertical and horizontal cross, the three-fold cross and the five-fold cross, respectively])<sup>13</sup> and that you have the concentration and the clarity of mind and spirit (shinki no hataraki)<sup>14</sup> necessary to perform the inner workings of the Shaho (tsumeai and nobiai)<sup>15</sup> properly, thus bringing the shooting to a successful conclusion. From a mental and spiritual point of view, this means that the three elements of mind, body, and bow are in harmony; that is, you have realized Sanmi Ittai. Your shot will then pierce the target truly and without fail. Seisha is thus the physical expression of the reality of Sanmi Ittai. While this may seem a nearly impossible goal, you must believe that if the shooting is perfect, the shot cannot miss. This is what we must strive for when we practice. Every shot, honestly done, is a step towards that goal.

The late Urakami Sakae Hanshi, a master of the Insai-ha of the Heki Ryu and the teacher of my teacher, the late Murakami Hisashi Hanshi, described his concept of Hosha Hitchu as follows:

"The purpose of the Way of Shooting is, by building up your courage, correcting yourself, and making your bones and sinews firm, to strike the target following the *Ho* (the Law, i.e., the Law of Shooting, or the Shaho). Therefore, everyone who wants to shoot a bow must make their intentions true, set their spirit to rights, and make the form of the shooting correct by following the proper standards, all the way from ashibumi, dozukuri, torikake, tenouchi and yugamae, through uchiokoshi and hikiwake sanbun no ni (hikiwake two thirds), and up to and including tsumeai, nobiai, yagoro, hanare and zanshin. When the form of the shooting is correct, your joints will be properly aligned, the power of your muscles will be properly balanced, your draw length will settle in accordance with your physique, your mind will become settled and distractions will cease to trouble you, your body and limbs will be filled with vitality, you and the bow will become one, your mind and body will be firm and resolute and the bow unwavering, and the entire arrow will fill with power and quicken with life. In this way you must wait for all of these separate elements to unite into one and for the release to come of itself.

If you shoot the arrow in this way, you will never miss the target by thinking too much. This is not just *mocha guchu* (a shot done in a haphazard way strikes the target accidentally) but *hosha hitchu* (a shot done in accordance with the Law never misses). Thus, if ever the arrow is shot and it doesn't strike the target, you must consider deeply whether the form of your shooting conforms to the proper standards or whether your mind and spirit are united, and search within yourself for the answer. Since whether the target is struck or missed depends entirely on yourself, hitting the target does not warrant boasting nor missing it anger.

The essential thing is to just dispel all doubt and ego and awaken to the as-it-isness of Nature, to not lapse into thinking and discrimination, to leave the realm of intention and thought behind, and, like an object reflected in a bright mirror or the moon reflected on the surface of the water, to calm the eyes of the mind in the realm of *munen muso* (no intention, no thought) and to strive to shoot the arrow according to the Law."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. I, p. 70, *Kyudo, The Essence And Practice Of Japanese Archery*, p. 2

<sup>12</sup> "The Purpose Of The Way Of Shooting Of Heki Ryu Kyujutsu", monograph by Urakami Sakae Hanshi

<sup>13</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. I, pp. 56-57, *Kyudo, The Essence And Practice Of Japanese Archery*, pp. 88-89

<sup>14</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. I, pp. 58-59, *Kyudo, The Essence And Practice Of Japanese Archery*, pp. 21-25

<sup>15</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. I, pp. 68-70, *Kyudo, The Essence And Practice Of Japanese Archery*, pp. 78-81

<sup>16</sup> "The Purpose Of The Way Of Shooting Of Heki Ryu Kyujutsu", translation by the author. In this monograph, it is interesting to note that Urakami Hanshi does not use the standard Shaho Hassetsu naming convention to describe the separate steps of the shooting. Modern kyudo considers torikake and tenouchi as elements of yugamae, and subsumes tsumeai, nobiai, and yagoro under kai. The sanbun no ni (two thirds) position, where hikiwake is momentarily halted at roughly the point where the drawing hand has cleared the archer's ear and the arrow is at the height of the eyebrows, is characteristic of the Insai-ha.

It is clear, then, that the correct execution of the Shaho requires the proper blend of physical and psychological elements, and that it is the psychological aspect (*shinki no hataraki*) that brings the physical technique to life. When this happens, striking the target is certain.

It is in this context that hitting the target in kyudo must be evaluated. Both Yoshimi Junsei and Urakami Hanshi make it clear that piercing the target with the arrow is fundamental to kyudo; indeed, how could it be otherwise? It is absolutely vital, however, to understand that it is not *whether* you hit the target but *how* you hit it that is the most important thing. You must bear clearly in mind, and accept as an article of faith, that it is only striking the target according to the Shaho, and that alone, that gives true kyudo meaning to hitting the target with the arrow. Striking the target by itself is not the objective; the objective is, as Urakami Hanshi says, to strike the target "according to the Law." All other hitting is only *mosha guchu*, just a matter of luck. Understanding this distinction is fundamental to proper kyudo training.

Therefore, kyudo philosophy makes a clear distinction between two types of hitting: "ateru", to hit the target as a result of a conscious, deliberate act; and "ataru", where the arrow naturally strikes the target as an inevitable result of true shooting. *Seisha* is the latter. It is preferred over the former because if the shooting unfolds naturally there is no chance for your conscious mind, susceptible as it is to thinking and discrimination, to interfere and ruin the shot. Therefore, *Seisha* is the way to achieve certain accuracy. However, just because a true shot will always hit the target does not mean that any shot that hits the target is, therefore, a true shot. To believe that is to walk the road of ruin in kyudo. This is arguably the most important thing in kyudo practice, so I cannot emphasize it too strongly. It is very easy to make a series of fortuitous mistakes and hit the target. Once you repeat and learn this pattern, it becomes an ingrained habit and if you continue to hit the target fairly well, you become convinced that you have mastered *Seisha*, and that when you miss all you have to do is make some small adjustment to your technique to get back on the right track. Then, without realizing it, you forget the fundamentals, start relying on little technical tricks, and are beyond help unless you realize what has happened and then have the strength of will to correct yourself. This is what Yoshimi Junsei means when he says that "the way is not with the bow but with the bone"; that is, the Shaho is not found in minor tricks of handling the bow but is based upon essential fundamentals.

In this sense, the kyudo approach to shooting is seemingly quite paradoxical. The conscious effort to hit the target, motivated as it is by a combination of the desire for success and the fear of failure, is inextricably linked to the "Seven Barriers" that cause the mind and body to become tense and disordered. When your mind and body are tense and disordered, you cannot shoot the bow freely. If you cannot shoot the bow freely, you cannot strike the target truly. The way to the target, then, is for you to divest yourself of your attachment to it so that you can become calm and aware enough to shoot the bow correctly. To do this, you must believe with perfect, complete, and utter faith that if you strive to your utmost to shoot according to the Shaho, the arrow will never miss the target. This can happen when, through your own effort, you "dispel all doubt and ego, awaken to the as-it-isness of Nature, and calm the eyes of the mind in the realm of *munen muso*". The target will then come to you without your having to chase it and you will achieve the art of "hitting by not hitting". It must be stressed, however, that you cannot achieve this without the most strenuous practice.

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## **The Shaho (The Law Of Shooting) is an immutable natural law and not an arbitrary human invention. Therefore, shooting must be in accord with natural principles.**

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There are many possible ways to translate "Shaho". "Sha" means shooting and the character for "Ho" is usually translated as "law", meaning a fundamental or essential principle. I have therefore decided to refer to the Shaho as the Law Of Shooting. (The *Kyudo Manual* refers to it as the Principles Of Shooting.) To my mind it means a natural law that, arising out of the inherent nature of the bow and its relationship to the archer, defines the essentials of the shooting method.

On the physical level, the bow is a tool like any other, and so has been designed in a specific way for a specific purpose. There is, therefore, a perfect way to use it. Obviously, this Way, in order to be perfect, must be in harmony with the bow's own innate nature and fundamental operating principle. Thus, this perfect Way is determined by the nature of the bow and is not an arbitrary creation. What I mean by this is that even though the bow and shooting technique were created by humans, the law governing the functioning of the bow is not an artificial invention but arises out of the nature of the bow itself.

This perfect Way of shooting the bow is embodied in the Shaho. It is expressed in the Shaho Hassetsu (The Eight Stages Of The Law Of Shooting) which make up the fundamentals of the art of shooting. The Shaho has been discovered and elucidated by the past masters of kyudo and represents the essence of their empirical knowledge. The Shaho therefore requires the most profound and diligent study.

Kyudo is a perfect union of the archer and the bow and cannot exist without this union. Therefore, in order to shoot the bow according to the demands of the Shaho, your body must also conform to the natural principles inherent in it. This is the principle of shizentai, or the "natural body". Most people interpret "natural" as that which is free of any rules or restraints. However, kyudo philosophy posits that nature has its own rules and guiding principles, that kyudo is founded upon these rules and principles, and that humans must train diligently in order to discover them and put them into practice.

To grasp the essence of any art, the practitioner must be able to intuitively understand the essential, unified principle that underlies and animates all aspects of that art. In kyudo, this principle is discovered through the unification of the mind, the body, and the bow. This requires a clear mind that can see things as they really are. As a human being, you consist of body, mind, and spirit. Since your body is governed by your mind and spirit, for your body to work correctly your mind and spirit must be clear and unpolluted. Your body then becomes a "living body" which can respond according to the principles of shizentai and thus execute the Shaho Hassetsu correctly. When your mind is clear and your spirit calm, you can understand the nature of the bow rather than try to impose your will upon it. You must open the eyes of your mind to the nature of the bow, and once having understood that nature, not resist it but shoot in perfect harmony with it.

I believe that this is part of what Urakami Hanshi means when he says that "the essential thing is just to dispel all doubt and ego and awaken to the as-it-isness of Nature". When you shed your preconceived ideas and rationalizations and learn to rely on your intuition, you will awaken to the guiding principle of nature as it functions in shooting. Then, your body, mind, and spirit will naturally balance themselves and "the entire arrow will fill with power and quicken with life, the separate elements will unite, and the release will come of itself". This is the true expression of the Shaho.

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## **Incessant practice, done correctly with a pure mind and spirit, is the only way to understand kyudo. Nothing can take the place of this.**

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How, then, can you purify your mind so that Sanmi Ittai, Seisha Hitchu, and the Shaho can be realized? The answer is very simple: you practice kyudo. To quote Murakami Hanshi: "It is necessary, *through the exercise of technique in your everyday practice*, to sufficiently master such mental and spiritual aspects of kyudo as mental calmness, the development of spiritual power, mental and spiritual concentration, and decisiveness"<sup>17</sup> (italics added). Suzuki Hiroyuki Hanshi says: "Since shooting is honest and is a mirror, if you have any dishonesty or problem, this will surely reveal itself in the results".<sup>18</sup> Taken together, these statements mean, quite simply, that the results of the shooting will show to what extent you understand your art and that the only way to understand kyudo is to practice it.

Yoshimi Junsei perhaps says it best in the preface to the Shaho Kun: "Searching only in yourself, you must cleanse your mind and correct your body, and, with singleness of purpose, nurture the proper spirit, train yourself in proper technique, and throw yourself into your training with all of the sincerity you can muster. This is the only way."

What does Yoshimi Junsei mean by cleansing the mind and nurturing the proper spirit?

I believe that cleansing the mind means that you must have nothing in your mind that prevents you from shooting in accord with the Shaho. The proper spirit means practicing diligently with pure motives, pure meaning that you should put all thoughts of gain or loss out of your mind and strive to shoot for the sake of shooting. Unfortunately, a person with this kind of truly pure heart is exceedingly rare. Therefore, one of the goals of kyudo is to nurture this spirit through the practice of proper shooting.

People do things for many reasons. Without realizing it, most people have ulterior or impure motives for their actions and these motivations affect their kyudo. Some people want to be liked and admired for their accomplishments; some aspire to position and power; some love competition and the adulation achieved through victory; some fear losing and so shun anything having to do with competition; some hold themselves in high regard and therefore believe that their way is right while others are wrong; others think little of themselves and value everyone's opinion but their own. Peoples' deepest character traits, even those unknown to themselves, affect everything they do, including their shooting. A physically strong person will shoot with confidence and power, but with too much aggression and brute force. A spiritually weak person's shooting will vacillate and lack decisiveness. A person whose mind is erratic will shoot erratically. A sloppy person will shoot sloppily. A tense person's shooting will be tense and an angry person's shooting will be angry. As the person is, so is their shooting.

Further, kyudo itself must be understood in a balanced way. Some people think that the bow can be pulled with the body alone. They therefore concentrate on technique only and neglect to cultivate their spirit. Such people, if they are strong, confident and athletic, can become very skillful archers, sometimes fairly quickly. However, their skill is limited and they often quit when they encounter obstacles within themselves that take too much effort to overcome. Some people, on the other hand, believe that technique is secondary and only the mind is truly important, so if they just put themselves into what they believe is the proper frame of mind, the shooting will somehow create itself.

Murakami Hanshi says, however, that "kyudo consists of technique and *kokoro* (mind). Kyudo cannot exist without technique, but it cannot exist by technique alone. Technique and mind must be united like the twisted strands of a rope".<sup>19</sup> The physical act of shooting cannot be divorced from the mind and spirit and there is no dichotomy between the mind and the body or between technique and spirit. They are interdependent, so by properly training in technique you train your mind and spirit. To the Western mind this may not be as obvious as it sounds; but it is one of the most fundamental things to understand in the practice of kyudo. What it means in practice is that every physical action is viewed as a mirror of the state of your mind and spirit. Therefore, once you have learned technique to the point where you can shoot with reasonable fluency, the teacher starts to watch the spirit with which you shoot more and more closely. The quality with which you shoot holds the key to understanding your mind.

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<sup>17</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. IV, p. 183, translation by the author

<sup>18</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. IV, p. 143, translation by the author

<sup>19</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. IV, p. 179, translation by the author

## The Mind And The Target

Among kyudo practitioners there is the phrase "makiwara hanshi", or "master of the straw target". This refers to someone who can shoot perfectly at the makiwara but who falls to pieces the minute he faces a real target. Why does this happen? Murakami Hanshi puts it like this:

"It often happens that although you may be able to shoot at the makiwara as well as you wish, you cannot display the same ability when shooting at the target. Similarly, even if you are able to fully exercise your skill in practice, unexpected results can frequently occur at some important event (such as a competition or a test). This is because the mind, being swayed by negative attitudes such as attachment and desire, becomes agitated, making it impossible to put forth all of your skill and technique. In short, you are defeated by the working of your mind (*shin*) and spirit (*ki*).

Archers sometimes lose their composure. At important events, you can be affected by the atmosphere of the event. As the strong internal and external stimulation causes increasing excitement, both your mind and body become abnormally tense; technique which you can normally perform smoothly and without thinking loses its cohesiveness, continuity, and sustainability; your body and mind become rigid; and you are seized by uncertainty and become unable to control your own mind. In short, you lose your self-control. No matter how strong and skillful you are, you cannot fully exercise your ability if this strength and skill is not accompanied by the proper working of the mind and spirit. Consequently, in order to improve your skill, you must strive to fulfill the following three conditions:

- Maintain good health
- Continually practice technique
- Strive to increase mental power and learn spiritual calmness by training the mind and spirit."<sup>20</sup>

The meaning of this is clear, I think: since the one thing that will honestly show the true state of your mind is your reaction to the target, you must continuously shoot at the target in order to develop the proper working of the mind and spirit. This process will increase your mental power and teach you spiritual calmness. The medium through which this is accomplished is the unceasing practice of kyudo technique itself.

The target and the mind have a relationship similar to that of a catalyst and that which it catalyzes. When a catalyst is introduced into a seemingly stable chemical solution, for instance, a violent reaction will occur if there is anything in the solution that is receptive to the catalyst. In the same way, the target, taken by itself, is meaningless, and your mind, not affected by thoughts of the target, can remain calm. When the target and your mind are joined through the act of shooting, however, the target suddenly assumes overpowering importance. You see it as an object that must be pierced with the arrow. It is the goal, the objective, the physical representation of all your hopes and fears. Hitting it means success, and missing it failure. Everyone reacts to it in a different way, based upon what it represents to them. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance for you to face the target and, through shooting, to learn to deal with the emotions it engenders. You cannot lie to yourself about how you feel about the target, for the shooting does not lie. It will be obvious for everyone to see. An honest archer, therefore, does not shy away from this confrontation, for this confrontation, more than anything else, holds the key to understanding the essence of kyudo.

This is what Murakami Hanshi means when he says that "the paper target on its wooden frame is just a physical object, a medium for your own mind. This physical target is unmoving. However, the target of the mind is always restless and tumultuous and is never still".<sup>21</sup> When, through constant practice, you have rid yourself of the "Seven Barriers" brought into sharp focus by the target, your mind will become still and pure and the shooting will be natural and flowing, like a stream of pure water gushing from an unpolluted spring. As Ise Tadatake, quoted by Murakami Hanshi says: "In archery, training the mind is the most vital thing. If the mind is agitated the spirit is agitated; if the spirit is agitated the heartbeat is agitated; and if the heartbeat is agitated the whole body is agitated, so the target will not be struck".<sup>22</sup> Therefore, in order to train your mind, your selfish attachment to the target, which is the source of your mental agitation, must be faced squarely and overcome.

This is why the metaphor of the clear mirror is so often used in kyudo. When the mirror is stained, it cannot reflect the truth. When your mind is clouded by selfish desires, the target, in a way, acts like a mirror

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<sup>20</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. IV, p. 177-178, translation by the author

<sup>21</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. IV, p. 181, translation by the author

<sup>22</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. IV, p. 180, translation by the author

that reflects all of the stains on your spirit. The arrows fly everywhere but into the target, and the more you chase the target, the more it seems to run away from you. When your spiritual stains have been removed, there is nothing to deflect the arrow from its natural path, and it will fly straight and true. It is precisely the existence of an objective that trains your mind and spirit, by constantly testing your real attitude to it. Therefore, without the target there can be no real training.

The confrontation with the target, expressed through kyudo technique, is thus the confrontation with your own mind and spirit. Improvement in technique is important because it is the medium through which your mental and spiritual growth can be seen. This does not mean only improvement in accuracy, however. It means, primarily, the subtle yet profound change in the overall feeling and quality of your shooting.

When your mind has been stolen by the target your shooting will be strained and unnatural, and the bow will make an ugly, harsh sound as the arrow is released. This kind of shooting is linear and two-dimensional, where you strain to push and pull the bow only with your fists, forgetting the inner working of the whole body, the mind, and the spirit as you fight with the target. Conversely, when you have transcended the target and achieved a pure and undisturbed mind, your shooting will be like your mind: pure and undisturbed.

When you have such a mind, your shooting will naturally develop great depth and what is called *enso*, or roundness and sphericity. It will be supremely calm but filled to overflowing with tremendous, palpable power; and even though your arms and body may seem to be in the same position, all is smooth and round in appearance with no rough edges, angularity, tension, or strain. Shooting like this has *sae*, that quality which embodies the elimination of all non-essentials to reveal the as-it-isness of true shooting: pure, piercing clarity, vitality, power, vibrancy and naturalness. *Sae* is revealed in the *tsurune*, the sharp, clear, and melodic sound the string makes when it strikes the upper part of the bow when you release the arrow. When your mind and spirit are liberated, your body is liberated, and in response, the bow, quite literally, "sings". The quality of the shot can be divined from the *tsurune* alone. As Kaminaga Masakichi Hanshi says: "Perfect shooting is proof of a perfect mind; since the mind and spirit have *sae*, the shooting has *sae*".<sup>23</sup> In this way, your shooting reveals your inner self.

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### The Importance Of Hard Training

Therefore, the only way to train your inner self is through unceasing training in the outer aspect of kyudo, the physical act of shooting. For this reason, it cannot be emphasized too strongly that the pure kyudo mind is not something that will happen spontaneously if you just sit and wait for it. Rather, through a relentless, ferocious, and determined act of will, you must, as though your life depended on it, shoot and shoot up to and beyond the limits of your physical and mental endurance in an effort to purify your mind and discover the Way.

Murakami Hanshi always said that when you are in *kai* you must devote yourself to *nobiai* utterly and completely, to the exclusion of all else, until either you break or the bow breaks. What did he mean by this? He meant that you must throw aside all of your petty concerns and doubts and hurl yourself fearlessly into the shooting. You must shoot with desperate courage, holding nothing back, for without this effort kyudo cannot be understood. One day, somewhere deep within this frantic struggle, you will finally see your own true mind and the Way will open up for you. You will then achieve "sumashi", a clear and serene mind. Kaminaga Hanshi describes this process as follows:

"If you consider *shagi* (shooting technique) in its individual parts, there is always discrimination and differentiation; but in order to perfect *shagi*, to unify it, and to give it life as true kyudo shooting, you must completely use up all of your energy, right down to the last ounce. When you reach the state of utter desperation where you are at the bitter end, where the bow has taken away your strength and where you can no longer apply any technique, the conviction that you yourself must take care of your own situation will come into being. That is, when your ego is stripped away, the *kihaku* (spiritual strength, guts, and determination) that makes the shooting crystal clear will grow like an explosion from deep within your heart and soul. It (*kai*) should be deep until everything quietly becomes clear and serene, since this will nurture the spirit of absolute certainty, where, no matter what the situation, there is no hurrying, no agitation, no fear, and no hesitation. In this way, you show your true Self, and then and only then will bright and open-minded *sae* be born.

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<sup>23</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. II, p. 57, translation by the author

In kai, when spirit and technique merge, a spark is ignited and this becomes kai (meeting), that is, hanare (parting). The instant that *kokoro* and technique meet is hanare. In this instant, all idle thoughts are extinguished, and you enter the state of *shinku muso*, the Void of No Thought. Because you are in the Void of No Thought, the transition called hanare occurs. No matter where it is, the mathematical number one is always one and cannot be reduced further; but when the space called the Void is entered during shooting, one becomes *mu* (nothing), all the Universal Laws return to one (this is not the mathematical number one), that is, Great Harmony, and this one penetrates space and is restored to one, that is, ten thousand. This space is the state of *munen muso* (no intention, no thought), and by entering this state you are freed from all past attachments, an unpolluted light shines forth, and there is the soul, just as it was when it was born.

When, through shooting, you bathe in the absolute Void, wickedness is reborn as righteousness, sloth is reborn as diligence, weakness is reborn as strength, an evildoer becomes virtuous, a darkened spirit becomes bright, and the mind and spirit are purified."<sup>24</sup>

These words are somewhat cryptic, reflecting, perhaps, Kaminaga Hanshi's Zen and Shinto religious training. I do not claim to understand all of their aspects, nor to have experienced what Kaminaga Hanshi calls the Void. I also think that such words must be approached with great caution since too much can be made of them by people who have little or no practical experience in actual shooting. I do believe, however, based on my own experience and the instruction I have received from my teachers, that Kaminaga Hanshi is alluding to a fundamental truth of kyudo that must be pursued, even if we fall short of its attainment.

Kaminaga Hanshi is speaking here about the state of *issha zetsumei*, "one shot, one life", the state where you pour every faculty of mind, body, and soul into the shooting, treating every shot as though it were your last. If you can truly shoot with all your heart, soul, and might, you will transcend your attachments and delusions and achieve *makoto*, the "stainless mind". At that instant this stainless mind will, like a smooth and perfect mirror, intuitively perceive the undistorted essence of the shooting. In this state, rationalization and discrimination are left behind, and the unity of the shooting, where there is no difference between one and ten thousand, is clearly revealed as though in a flash of lightning. This happens during *nobiai*, where your body and mind are in the state of the highest tension and equilibrium, straining against their limits. True *nobiai* frees your mind and causes "the entire arrow to fill with power and quicken with life, the separate elements to unite, and the release to come of itself". This is the *muhatsu no hatsu*, the "release of no release"<sup>25</sup>, the release that is born without conscious intention. When you accomplish shooting like this, it is said that "the shooting is like flowing water and *zanshin* is like the blooming of a flower."<sup>26</sup>

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### **Fudoshin - The Immovable Mind**

When this happens, all doubt and fear vanish and are replaced with an unshakable confidence and certainty. This spirit of truly knowing, deep down in the marrow of your bones, that everything is all right, that there is no need to hurry, to be agitated, to be afraid, or to hesitate, is called "heijoshin", or everyday mind, the mind that can face everything with calmness and equanimity. It is also called "fudoshin", or "immovable mind", the mind that is so clear and unclouded that nothing can move it. When the mind is freed in this way, tremendous power, energy, and vitality are unleashed. Fudoshin is personified by the Buddhist deity Fudo Myo-O, the Immovable Bright King, wreathed in consuming flames and holding a sword or a rope with which to cut down and bind evil and delusion. Since it sees everything as it really is, the immovable mind harbors no hesitation, confusion, doubt or dishonesty, and therefore fears nothing. Like an irresistible natural force that sweeps away everything in its path, this mind is invincible. Nothing can stand before it and nothing is beyond its grasp.

Fudoshin is described in the following verse from the *Fudochi Shinmyoroku* (Divine Record Of Immovable Wisdom) taught by the Zen priest Takuan: "Keeping the mind tranquil as it moves in the myriad directions in the midst of uproar and commotion is true tranquillity. Tranquillity in tranquillity is not true tranquillity; it is tranquillity in action that is the true tranquillity."<sup>27</sup> What, you might ask, is the "uproar

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<sup>24</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. II, p. 55-56, translation by the author

<sup>25</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. III, p. 24

<sup>26</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. II, p. 55, translation by the author

<sup>27</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. IV, p. 181, translation by the author

and commotion" of kyudo? Kyudo is among the quietest of activities. The uproar comes, not from the outside, but from the inside, from the target of your mind, "restless and tumultuous and never still." When you shoot, you are always assailed by doubts and fears that sap your strength and vitality. "Will I hit the target and win the tournament? Will I pass the test? What will happen if I miss? Will I fail the test or lose the tournament? Will my teacher scold me or praise me? Am I a good shot or a bad shot? What will people think of me? Am I better or worse than so-and-so?" Fudoshin cuts through all of these phantoms of the mind, reducing them to nothing, making it as though they never existed. All that is left is the brimming power of the immovable mind and the incandescence of pure shooting, the "shower of sparks born of the collision of iron and stone".

I want to stress that while some people may view this state of mind in an overly romantic way, divorced from mundane considerations, it has, so far as shooting is concerned, a very practical application. This mind gives birth to flawless shooting and so the results of your shooting will show plainly whether you have achieved it or not. Therefore, you can only grasp it through shooting, and when you grasp it, your shooting will be perfect.

This is extraordinarily difficult and requires heartbreaking effort. As Kaminaga Hanshi's words make clear, you cannot achieve it unless you have the courage to push yourself up to and beyond the edge of desperation, willing yourself through sheer determination into the state of *issha zetsumei*, where true shooting reveals itself through the *muhatsu no hatsu*. This seemingly unconscious release, therefore, is not effortless in the sense that it comes from somewhere outside of you, like a gift of grace or like the apple falling into Newton's lap as he waits, oblivious to what is happening. It is, rather, the result of you having trained yourself to enter a physical and psychological state where true shooting will naturally unfold. This can only happen when you have the courage to trust the shooting, let go of your attachment to it, and "leave matters to the will of Heaven". This ushers in the real symbiosis between you and kyudo, where you become the vessel for the expression of your art. When you succeed, you will naturally come to possess the mental calmness, spiritual power, mental and spiritual concentration and decisiveness of which Murakami Hanshi speaks. Since knowing and acting are one and the same, the natural flow of the shooting is never interrupted and so the perfect opportunity is never lost. Such a shot cannot miss.

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### **Honesty In Training**

This kind of true shooting can only come from within the depths of your own being, from your guts and your blood. These depths cannot be plumbed except through the unstinting practice of correct shooting, faced with fearless resolve.

For this process to work, there is one vital trait that you absolutely cannot be without: the capacity for honest self-evaluation. This does not mean evaluating little details of technique. It means to really look into your own soul for the true causes of things. If you are not honest with yourself, you will always make excuses for poor shooting and will never be able to accept whatever shortcomings you may have. Everyone wants to think highly of themselves, but if this prevents you from seeing your shooting as it really is, you will never make any lasting progress. Each shot gives you the opportunity to see your true self. When you do, you must honestly accept whatever deficiencies you may find, reflect clearly on them, resolve to correct them, and then act on that resolve, come what may.

This is why self-reliance, unrelenting dedication, and complete honesty are so important. It is the effort to achieve this completely honest mind that trains the whole person and makes kyudo a Way that benefits you in all aspects of your life.

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## **Kyudo must be a balance between "Sha" (shooting) and "Rei" (courtesy, mutual respect and propriety).**

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For kyudo practice to lead you on the true path, it must be properly balanced between Sha and Rei. Although shooting technique is vitally important, if you concentrate only on technique, you will, without knowing it, become greedy, lose your composure of mind, and shoot hurriedly and without proper attention to all of the necessary elements. Your shooting will become ugly and impure as you bend all of your will towards the external target. On the other hand, if you concentrate on formal ritual and ceremony to the exclusion of technique, your shooting will degenerate into an empty dance, pretty to look at but robbed of all of its vitality and energy.

Rei is the generic term for the norms of living that are needed to maintain the order of society. It is said that Rei begins when a person learns to curb the desire for instant gratification. In human society, this drive for the instant gratification of selfish desires, regardless of how other people are affected, is the root of conflict. Therefore, all societies have developed certain codes of conduct that allow people to interact peacefully and harmoniously. In its broadest sense, Rei can thus be taken to mean common courtesy and moral and sincere behavior. While this basic concept holds true in all human societies, Japanese tradition and social convention require that these concepts be displayed in certain ways of behaving. Rei thus includes such things as paying proper respect; showing gratitude, mutual consideration, compromise, and forbearance; observing the proper forms of etiquette, propriety, and decorum; and even, in a sense, the social graces. Simply put, the most important thing in Rei is to be sincere and courteous. Without this, Rei is robbed of its inner meaning and becomes a pointless and pompous exercise in empty formality and posturing. In kyudo, the concept of Rei is given tangible shape through the ceremonial forms within which the shooting is performed. In this way, kyudo manners are the formalized expression of the ideal way in which people should behave towards each other as well as the vehicle through which to teach people that ideal behavior.

In discussing the balance in kyudo between Sha and Rei, I must refer back to the discussion of Sanmi Ittai. The unity of kyudo expressed in Sanmi Ittai lies in the balance of physical technique with mind and spirit. Through the perfect expression of the ideal shot, kyudo attempts to give physical form to the concept of the harmonious unity between humans and nature and between person and person. Sanmi Ittai is thus the concrete expression of the kyudo ideal of harmonious beauty, where everything is in balance. Without the spiritual calmness that comes from being in harmony with yourself and others, your shooting will never be balanced.

Therefore, practicing kyudo does not mean just practicing shooting technique alone. It means striving to achieve balance. When the ideal inner balance is achieved, both the formal ceremony and the shooting form of kyudo become beautiful as opposed to just pretty because they come to life and so become the natural outer expression of inner harmony. Since it is an expression of natural principles, harmony is naturally beautiful. Since the shooting is in harmony with natural principles, the arrow naturally pierces the target. It is this dynamic balance between form and function that makes kyudo truly beautiful and saves it from being just an exercise in aesthetics. The practice of Rei is a vital part of teaching you how to achieve this balance.

Shooting must be conducted with proper attention to Rei for a number of reasons. For you as an individual, practicing the formal shooting ritual prevents you from hurrying and forces you to concentrate on settling your mind and maintaining the proper posture and bearing. This naturally calms your mind and allows you to truly concentrate on your shooting. When you are shooting as part of a group, the insistence on Rei requires that you consider the other people with whom you are shooting, thereby causing you to develop proper consideration for others. Finally, the proper Rei of kyudo is defined by tradition, and so cannot be ignored. Since the shooting is a Way for training the body, mind, and spirit, it must be treated with the respect such an undertaking deserves. Because of this, Rei also includes the idea of gratitude, both to the shooting itself as well as your fellow archers, since through participating in shooting, you are given the opportunity to train yourself. Thanks should be given for that. Therefore, you must bow before you shoot, expressing the feeling of "please give me the chance to train myself", and bow after you shoot, expressing the feeling of "thank you for training me".

This does not necessarily mean, however, that every shot must be done with all of the formal ceremony of a sharei. There is a time and a place for formal ceremony and a time and place for a somewhat more relaxed approach. The degree of formality and ritual to be used in any situation depends on the circumstances. However, you must always shoot with an attitude of respect towards the shooting that allows you to understand and express the proper flow of the shooting. The diligent practice of Rei, expressed through formal ceremonial ritual, is one method of training your mind to understand this. It is, therefore, no less important than technique. At the same time, it is not more important than technique.

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## **Growth in kyudo has a natural progression. Instruction and practice must be in accord with this natural progression.**

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Growth in kyudo, as in anything, follows a natural progression from beginning to intermediate to advanced. While some may progress faster than others, the order of this process cannot be changed and everyone will inevitably follow it regardless of how much they may want to quickly achieve success. In kyudo this is expressed in the phrase "Shin Gyo So.

Shin Gyo So can be defined as follows:

- *Shin* means following the truth. It means that the fundamentals of shooting should be diligently and scrupulously followed.
- *Gyo* means carrying out the truth. It means that the shooting should obey true principles.
- *So* means form as nature. It means that the shooting should be natural and in harmony with all things.

This refers to a natural evolution where Shin, Gyo, and So follow seamlessly upon each other when the time is ripe.<sup>28</sup>

Shin refers to the beginner. In the beginning, you copy the forms and movements with little or no understanding of their application, significance or meaning. Everything is a mass of incomprehensible details, and the slightest distraction or unexpected event will throw you into confusion. In this stage, you must practice very diligently and carefully, consciously drilling yourself so that you learn to do everything exactly according to the correct fundamentals.

Then, as you become more familiar with the shooting over time, your movements will gradually become more and more confident and assured. Your breathing will become ordered and calm, your movements will take on vigor and decisiveness, and your shooting will become smooth and dynamic. At some point along this continuum, you pass naturally from Shin into Gyo, where you are now really training. You have assimilated the correct shooting fundamentals and are now working on refining them and making the shooting part of yourself.

Finally, as the years pass and you train more and more diligently, at some point the shooting will become second nature and you and the shooting will finally become integrated into a harmonious whole. You have passed naturally into So.

I think that there are many ways to look at this progression. Murakami Hanshi speaks of three levels of spirit, roughly analogous to Shin Gyo So, through which the archer advances. First there is "haru ki", or a stretched or taut spirit, then "sumu ki", or a settled spirit, and finally "saeru ki", or a clear spirit.<sup>29</sup> In his book, Onuma Hanshi speaks of three levels of shooting expertise: "toteki", or mechanical accuracy, "kanteki", or the forceful piercing of the target with the arrow, and "zaiteki", the stage where the shooting is so perfect the arrow, as it were, exists in the target before it is even shot.<sup>30</sup> I think that the following rough analogy can be made that expresses the progression of the archer's spirit and technique. I believe that this is a natural progression, and that all archers inevitably pass through it:

<b>Shin</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>Haru ki</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>Toteki</b>
<b>Gyo</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>Sumu ki</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>Kanteki</b>
<b>So</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>Saeru ki</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>Zaiteki</b>

In Shin, you will practice with what Murakami Hanshi calls "haru ki", a stretched or taut spirit. This is the spirit of youth that relies on raw energy, enthusiasm, and drive. It is dynamic, but as unstable as water. To quote Murakami Hanshi: "Haru ki ... can also be called "kihaku", or spiritual intensity. A taut spirit has

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<sup>28</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. I, p. 29

<sup>29</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. IV, p. 182-183

<sup>30</sup> *Kyudo, The Essence And Practice Of Japanese Archery*, pp. 2-3

about it a feeling of youthfulness, brightness, open-heartedness, and excitability. However, ... under the influence of emotion, a taut spirit can exhibit its opposite side and reveal aspects of shrinking, hastiness, slackness, rashness, excessive fixation, or agitation."<sup>31</sup> This spirit can be compared to that of a rambunctious puppy. Much as the mood of a puppy can swing wildly between happiness and fear depending on how it is treated by its master, when your shooting is spiritually immature you are always bouncing back and forth between elation and despair based upon external results. Because of this, once you learn the rudiments of shooting, you will, almost inevitably, judge the value of your shooting solely by whether you hit or miss the target. Thus, hitting the target takes on a vital significance and all of your efforts are directed towards discovering those tricks of technique that will allow you to hit the target regularly. Once learned, you will cling to them and reject any changes that you think may hinder your accuracy.

This is the stage that Onuma Hanshi calls "toteki", just hitting the target with the arrow. Toteki shooting can be fairly accurate, but it is limited as well as erratic. If you are having a good day, you can shoot fairly well. However, the smallest variation can throw your shooting off completely, so your accuracy can vary greatly from one day to the next. Since you do not really understand your art, you are often unaware of the changes in your shooting, and even if you are aware, you usually don't understand why the changes have occurred, and so you have no idea how to correct yourself. In addition, since toteki archers don't understand their bows very well, they have a tendency to mistreat them by unwittingly shooting with too much stiffness and unnecessary force. This sort of shooting is not only ugly, it "kills" a bow: it cannot display its full potential and the abuse it suffers can cause it to break.

However, the toteki stage is not necessarily an evil thing in a beginner. Beginners, by definition, don't know anything, and, having no experience of their own and thus no basis for making a judgment, cannot understand the deeper aspects of kyudo. In a way, their attitude is very logical and pure: they can plainly see if the arrow hits the target or misses it and they will naturally use this to judge success or failure. There is nothing strange in this; it goes without saying that, all things being equal, a hit is preferable to a miss. Only a kyudo master of supreme development can shoot so perfectly that he is truly unconcerned about where his arrows fly.

While this may sound like a contradiction, it is not. Of course you must strive to free yourself of the greed and selfish attachments that spoil your shooting, but pretending to be free of these attachments and actually being free of them are two different things.

Some archers feign a lack of interest in whether or not they hit the target, thinking that somehow this puts them on a higher spiritual plane, but this is usually just a pose. Archers like this shun situations that objectively test their true abilities, such as competitions or rank examinations, pretending that these things are not important to them. In reality, though, they avoid these situations because they fear failure: deep down, they value victories in competition and advancement in rank as much as anyone but are afraid that in being tested they may be found wanting. This kind of dishonesty is foolish, counterproductive, and only impedes development. You cannot free yourself of your greed for the target unless you admit to yourself that you have it. The toteki stage is a natural stage, and everyone goes through it to one degree or another. You should also bear in mind that kihaku, or spiritual intensity, drive, and energy, are vital elements in the practice of kyudo. Without drive and determination, you cannot succeed. The issue is how to harness and refine this intensity.

However, if you cannot pass beyond the toteki stage, real, lasting development in kyudo is impossible. Passing through this stage depends on your maturity of character. Eventually, as you gain experience, you must mature to the point where you can clearly see that toteki is a dead end road and that kyudo holds something deeper that you must seek. Until this realization comes, you will always be mired in the toteki stage whether you realize it or not. When the realization comes, however, the change in your attitude is significant, and your practice will become refined, dignified, and intense. Your kihaku becomes inwardly, rather than outwardly, directed. You have learned to sacrifice immediate gratification to the goal of real inner development, since you now see clearly that it is only by developing your spirit that you can progress further. You have passed into Gyo, the stage of real training, where you concentrate on training your mind and spirit, knowing that this is the way to true skill.

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<sup>31</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. IV, p. 182, translation by the author

Thus, as you train yourself ever more diligently you learn to rise above the petty concerns, such as advancement in rank or victory in tournaments, that trouble the immature archer and at some point, to quote Murakami Hanshi again, "begin to display the aspect of "sumu ki" (a "settled" spirit). When you reach this level, your mind ceases to be restless, the shadow of worldly desires such as fame or gain hides itself, your mind is unconcerned and serene, and, like a mirror, both mind and technique are firm and steady".<sup>32</sup> You have achieved the stage of "kanteki" shooting, where your arrows fly straight and true, and consistently pierce the target with decisiveness and power.

The kanteki stage can, perhaps, be considered the pinnacle of achievement in kyujutsu, or bow art. Yet, kyudo strives for something higher. This is the stage of So, where you pass beyond the conscious exercise of technique and are able to shoot perfectly, seemingly without premeditation of any kind. So long as the conscious mind directs the shooting, there is always the possibility of "suki", or weaknesses and unguarded moments, in your mind. These come upon you suddenly and without warning, showing you that your shooting is not yet perfect, that somewhere, deep within your mind, you still harbor doubts and fears. So you continue to strive and at some point you will break through the final barriers and achieve "saeru ki" (a "clear" spirit), where there is no gap between your mind and your shooting. You have achieved Sanmi Ittai, the unification of your mind and spirit, your body, and your art. You, the bow, and the target all exist as a harmonious whole without differentiation or separation. At this point, the shooting is so flawless that it can be said that the arrow exists in the target before it is shot, so certain it is that the shooting will succeed. This is "zaiteki".

Of this spirit, Murakami Hanshi says: "Saeru ki is that spiritual state where sumu ki has been further refined and polished and has ripened into maturity. " This is the realm of what is called the master. The master swordsman Miyamoto Musashi has expressed this serene and clear state of mind in the following poem:

*"Kanryu taigetsu  
Saeru mizu no gotoshi"*

"Cold flow, still moon  
Like clear water"<sup>33</sup>

In this poem, Musashi speaks of the clarity, or sae, of pure water, evoking the purity of an unblemished mind. If water contains any impurities, it becomes muddy and unclear when it is disturbed as all the debris it contains rises to the surface. This agitated, impure water can be compared to haru ki. As the water becomes calm, the debris settles and the water becomes clear. This is sumu ki. Saeru ki is when all of the debris is gone. When there is nothing left to cloud the water, it will always be clear no matter what happens, because it is just water, with nothing else in it.

This, perhaps, is what Onuma Hanshi is alluding to when he says that when the shooting is perfect "nothing comes between the thought and the action and nothing is left over."<sup>34</sup> Perfect shooting contains nothing extra, either good or bad, to disturb its purity: it is just what it is, no more and no less. When you are shooting, everything needed is always instantly available in perfect measure, and when the shot is over, it is over: nothing is left behind, either pride at success or sorrow over failure. Like Michelangelo, who removed everything unnecessary to reveal the statue hidden within the marble, you must remove all of the unnecessary outer layers of pride, ego, and attachment to reveal the true, essential shot hidden within you. Since true shooting is stripped of everything but its purest essence, it is completely unfettered and spontaneous, free and self sufficient. Therefore, it cannot fail. When you can shoot like this, you are said to have achieved the art of "a thousand hits without shooting".

In a way, the Shin Gyo So process can be compared to learning how to play a musical instrument. You start understanding the essentials of how to play the instrument by learning basic technique, practicing scales, and memorizing simple progressions of notes. This is Shin, drilling in the fundamentals. Once you have understood the basics, you then go on to learn more complex techniques and pieces of music, training yourself to the point where you can play the music without any mistakes. In this way, you slowly master all of the complexities of the instrument and the music. This is Gyo. At some point, after all tech-

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<sup>32</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. IV, p. 183, translation by the author

<sup>33</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. IV, P. 183, translation by the author

<sup>34</sup> *Kyudo, The Essence And Practice Of Japanese Archery*, p. 22

nique and notes have been learned, you can pass beyond them and allow your spirit and soul to roam free. Now you can play the most difficult piece of music flawlessly, with a feeling and soul that no one will be able to imitate. This is So. Charlie Parker, the famous saxophonist, said "Learn your horn inside out, and then throw it all away and just play." In kyudo, it is the same: you must learn your bow inside out and then throw it away and just shoot.

However, you cannot forget something that you have never learned. In order to forget your bow you must first learn it, inside and out. You must master it so completely that there is nothing about it that you don't know. Since mastering the bow and mastering yourself are one and the same, there is no shortcut through this process. It takes years and years of practice. When you succeed, however, your shooting will be utterly unique, needing no models and allowing no imitation. It will be yours and yours alone. Only at this point can it be said that you have truly mastered your art.

Since all archers are somewhere along the Shin Gyo So continuum, their training will reflect that. A beginner cannot leap from Shin to So without passing through Gyo. The instructor must direct the students so that they can learn to find their own way along the road, introducing new elements when they are ready. Thus, the emphasis on one element or another will vary based on the level of the students' progress. Beginners start at the beginning, and more advanced students can study more advanced aspects, such as the sharei, when they are ready. What is appropriate at one level is not necessarily appropriate at another. Also, since every archer's progress is unique and individual, not all can develop or be trained at the same pace.

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## **Kyudo tradition is the living legacy of past masters and the guide for future development. Therefore, practice must always follow tradition and the structure it imposes.**

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It is natural for people to be impatient and want to hurry, or to change things to suit their tastes. In the modern world, this is usually welcomed as progress, since it makes life easier. However, this must be avoided in kyudo. Kyudo practice has been designed by the great past masters to lead you on a certain path. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance for you to realize that you must follow the guide of tradition and adapt yourself to kyudo rather than trying to adapt kyudo to your preconceived ideas. Only then will your mind become calm enough for you to be able to understand the inner meaning of kyudo.

People almost always want to be freed from the discipline that structure imposes. However, the structure of kyudo is precisely that which gives the practice direction and coherence. If it were not for this structure, everyone would do whatever they wanted and kyudo would lose its value as a Way of training. Simply put, kyudo training is supposed to be difficult. It is this difficulty and how you face it that give kyudo its value as training.

It is human nature to view things in a utilitarian way, where we judge the value of a thing only by how well it suits our immediate, selfish needs. Consequently, people are always trying to remake things in their own image and use them for their own purposes. However, kyudo demands the opposite: you must remake yourself in the image of kyudo. You must believe that there really does exist that thing known as the perfect, true shot and that its perfection and trueness are not due to any practical use it may have but are intrinsic to it and therefore have a value that transcends considerations of utility.

This is what raises kyudo to the level of art and separates it from mere craft or technique. A true shot is like any other true artistic endeavor. Regardless of the mode of expression, all real art shares something that moves the human heart: a tangible spirit of sincerity, directness, purity, and naturalness that touches the soul immediately on a deep, subconscious level. It may not be possible to rationally explain exactly what this quality is or why it affects us as it does, but it is real nonetheless and it is the difference between a true shot and one that is only the result of skillful technique. Skill is important, and mastering the technique and craft of shooting is the first prerequisite, but it is only one part of kyudo. True kyudo demands that your skill be animated by a true and honest spirit.

In kyudo, this spirit is expressed in the phrase "the true bow does not lie". A part of what this means is that your shooting always shows who you really are and your true level of skill. It also means that true kyudo brooks no dishonesty in body or mind and so shooting must be done with complete sincerity. Regardless of the results, when you do your absolute best out of nothing but a pure desire to achieve the best shot possible, your shooting is truly beautiful because you are putting everything you have into what you are doing, holding nothing back. In kyudo, this is what is meant by sincerity. Therefore, the real value of a true shot does not lie in the uses to which it can be put or in the results to be gained by it. It lies, rather, in the shot itself and the way in which the pursuit of it trains your spirit.

This attitude is of fundamental importance, and all of kyudo tradition serves to reinforce it. That is why you must accept that the past masters of kyudo understood their art and passed it on in the way that they did for a good reason. You must subordinate yourself to kyudo and believe that through practice, you will come to understand it.

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**It is impossible to ever be perfect in kyudo; however, you must never stop training. It is the devotion to constant training that gives meaning to kyudo as a Way of life.**

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There are many ways to evaluate success in kyudo. Some people achieve great skill and dignity and become "Hanshi", or living examples of the essence of kyudo. Some achieve great success in tournaments and competition. Some cultivate and maintain a healthy and balanced lifestyle through kyudo. Some develop lasting friendships through kyudo and enjoy kyudo as one aspect of a rich and cultured life. Some enjoy kyudo as a leisure activity, sport, or hobby. These are all aspects of kyudo as it practiced today, and all have their own place in modern kyudo, so long as they are balanced in relation to each other. Not everyone who practices kyudo can expect to reach the greatest heights, which are reserved for the few who really have the inborn ability, the courage and determination, the willingness to accept correction and failure, and the access to teaching required to become great.

Modern kyudo is no longer the privilege of the warrior or aristocratic classes of Japan, reserved for the chosen few. It is available to everyone now, and everyone can benefit from it. Regardless of what aspect of kyudo each of you may emphasize, from what angle or state of mind you may approach your practice, and what your level of skill, there is a common thread in kyudo that applies to and can benefit everyone who practices it.

This is the ability of kyudo to act as a vehicle for *seishin tanren*, or the forging of the spirit. The meaning of *seishin tanren* may have changed over the years, but all of kyudo tradition makes it clear that the aim of kyudo is to refine the spirit and instill virtue in the practitioner.

What is it in kyudo that gives it this ability? Yamada Jirokichi, 15th Headmaster of the Jikishin Kage Ryu of swordsmanship said: "Be satisfied with your accomplishments only at death".<sup>35</sup> This is an admonition to never stop training and seeking to improve yourself. The truth of this statement is not limited to swordsmanship; it applies to everything in life, and kyudo in particular. It is held by most masters of any art that it is not possible to ever be completely perfect in one's art or one's life, yet you must never give up the effort, since it is this effort itself which trains you. Therefore, it is not the result of training but rather the act of training itself that is important. Kyudo is a Way in that it seeks to use the art of the bow primarily as a medium for training your mind and spirit. This training will lead to great proficiency in the art of shooting if you are sincere and diligent, but this is not the sole objective. The development of character through training is the real goal.

However, kyudo is like anything else in life: it will give back to you exactly what you put into it. If you treat it as a sport, it will be a sport. If you treat it as a diversion, it will be a diversion. If you treat it as a Way, it will be a Way. Therefore, it is up to you yourself to imbue kyudo with meaning through your own efforts.

This is why honest and sincere effort is so valued in the practice of kyudo. If you can become skillful in kyudo and win tournaments with little or no effort, how does this benefit your life? How does it train your spirit? Something that comes easily is usually held to be of little worth. That is why the best test of success in kyudo is whether or not you keep practicing and never give up. If you never give up, no matter what the difficulties, it can be said that you have achieved success in kyudo, no matter what your level of shooting skill.

It is my firm belief that it is precisely this honest dedication that will lead you on the true path. To quote Murakami Hanshi again, "The strict discipline of learning self-control nurtures the spirit of fidelity, self-denial, decorum, humility, self-reflection, and harmony, and so is beneficial for cultivating the character, thus leading to a richer and fuller life. I firmly believe that the saying of the sages, "shooting is life and shooting is living", must come alive, word for word, in your daily life."<sup>36</sup>

This can only come through constant training. In this sense, it really is true that "it doesn't matter whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game". This is not a sop to soothe the feelings of those who are not as skillful as they would like to be. It goes to the heart of whether or not a person has the guts to keep training in spite of constant setbacks. It is this determination that gives meaning to the Way of kyudo and

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<sup>35</sup> *Modern Bujutsu and Budo*, Donn F. Draeger, Weatherhill, p 104

<sup>36</sup> *Kyudo Manual*, Vol. IV, p. 178, translation by the author

makes it possible to achieve success. Without this spirit nothing is possible, but with it everything is possible.

Part of the reason kyudo is called a Way is because it is a road to travel throughout life. On that road, every arrow that you shoot is a new arrow and gives you the chance to start out on the Way all over again. Along this Way, you will always have those days when nothing works, no matter how hard you try; on other days, everything will be so crystal clear, and the shooting will be so perfect and effortless, that you will be astounded that you couldn't see what was so obvious. The next day, it will all have vanished like a mist, "captured in the morning and lost in the evening." This is reality of kyudo practice, and you must learn from all of your ups and downs and use them as steps on your journey along the Way.

On this journey, always remember the old saying, symbolized by the Daruma doll that, no matter how many times it is knocked over, always comes back to an upright position: "Fall down seven times, get up eight times." Never give up, and you will certainly succeed.

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# KOKORO NO YOI (PREPARING YOUR MIND)

by Saito Chobo  
TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

The following essay, *Kokoro No Yoi* (Preparing Your Mind) forms part of the introductory section of the treatise on the Ogasawara Ryu in the 2nd volume of the *Gendai Kyudo Koza* (Lectures On Modern Kyudo), a series of seven books on various aspects of kyudo. It was written by Saito Chobo, an accomplished Ogasawara Ryu stylist and respected kyudo historian who trained under Ogasawara Kiyoaki Sensei, the 29th headmaster of the Ogasawara Ryu, and who reached the hitoharikyū menkyō level. This essay was written in 1968, two years before Saito Sensei's death in 1970 at the age of 69.

This brief essay is notable for its economy of style, its clarity, and its straightforwardness. I think that it is compelling for two main reasons: it touches upon some very fundamental aspects of the spirit of kyudo which, in my view, are of such importance that a true appreciation of kyudo is impossible without them; and it does so in a remarkably frank and unpretentious manner. It comes straight to the point and minces no words. In it, the true spirit of kyudo is explained with a beautiful simplicity and insight as sharp as the keenest arrow point.

It is interesting to note that throughout this essay Saito Sensei consistently refers to archery as kyujutsu; indeed, the word kyudo appears only once, and he also often refers to archery in general simply as yumi. This is entirely consistent with standard Japanese usage. While the term kyujutsu is hardly ever used any more, it was quite commonly used to refer to archery in the not so distant past. Saito Sensei's use of the term is also significant in that he was a highly accomplished practitioner of the oldest extant archery tradition in Japan; his views are thus clearly grounded in tradition and are by no means out of the ordinary. Indeed, part of the reason I wanted to present this essay to the English speaking kyudo community is because it faithfully reflects the attitudes of my own teachers and shows that the true spirit of the bow is universal and is not limited by semantics or confined to any one particular school or tradition.

Earl Hartman  
November, 1997

# KOKORO NO YOI (PREPARING YOUR MIND)

by Saito Chobo

Preparing your mind is important. In the end, there will be a great difference depending on whether you begin practice on a whim or after you have made a firm resolution. By all means you should keep the following points in mind.

## **Choose The Right Teacher**

While there are a number of ways to look at choosing a teacher, such as whether he is good or bad at teaching or whether he treats people well or badly, you should first of all choose a teacher who is possessed of proper shajutsu (shooting technique) and a correct spirit. If you make a mistake in this choice, the result of your long years of effort will be that you will, in the end, finish your days as a base and vulgar archer.

## **Take Up Your Bow With An Obedient Spirit**

So long as you are receiving instruction, you must leave your ego behind and leave everything to your teacher. If you simply cannot follow your teacher, you should respectfully take your leave of him.

## **Do Not Copy Other People**

The teaching of kyujutsu changes depending on the physical and mental attributes of the student. Correcting your shooting based upon what you see in another's shooting is something that comes only after you have become very advanced. Copying other people will destroy the order of learning and is the cause of failure. Proper training is a slow process. The kind of archery that is learned by copying what you see at a local archery range is, after all is said and done, nothing more than that.

## **Take Care With Each And Every Shot**

There is an old teaching that says "One hundred hands, one hand; one hand, one hundred hands". (One hand means a pair of two arrows.) It means that two hundred shots done carelessly are inferior to two shots done with care, and two shots done with care are superior to two hundred shots done carelessly. Among those who practice, there are those who want to cavalierly shoot a lot of arrows and those who are lazy and want to shoot as little as possible. Neither of these is good; the best way is to carefully and diligently shoot as many arrows as possible. I was told by my teacher that "he who shoots one hundred arrows a day will go neither forward nor backward". If you want to become skillful, you should shoot more than one hundred arrows every day, day after day.

If you do this carelessly it is harmful and profitless; you must bear down and shoot each shot with firm resolve. You must not make the mistake of thinking that shooting carefully means to experiment at random. Shooting is a practical skill. "Knowledge follows action" is how kyujutsu should be. You must practice over and over again just as you have been taught. In this process, you will grasp a certain secret, trick, or knack (kotsu). Then your teacher will correct you and explain this secret. This is how kyujutsu must be learned. The world today has become a hectic place, so I suppose it is unavoidable for people to seek the explanation for something first and then try to master it later; but the biggest nuisances are those people whose knowledge precedes action, who thoughtlessly listen to or read snatches of things that their teachers haven't taught them.

## **Do Not Get A Swelled Head**

Among all of the different martial arts, there is no art where it is as easy to get a swelled head as kyujutsu. If you take up two arrows, face the target, and hit the target with both of them, so far as hitting is concerned, this is the same for anyone, no matter how skillful an archer one may be.

There are always people who, after practicing yumi for a year or two, think: "My teacher shot one hundred arrows and only hit seventy, but I shot one hundred arrows and hit eighty. I have surpassed my teacher" or something like that. A strong person will quickly become able to shoot a stronger bow than his teacher. If his bow is stronger than his teacher's and he hits the target more often, he will start to become most appallingly arrogant. He will start saying that "there is no one in this dojo who can teach me anything." Of course, at this level, this is a period of time where he is unaware of his own weaknesses

because his practice is shallow and immature; later he will pass through this crisis and reach a state where he can finally become clearly aware of his own shabbiness. For some people this can take ten or fifteen years; then there are those who can never reach the state where they can see themselves clearly. Those who are afflicted with this are truly to be pitied; when all is said and done they have spent time and money practicing yumi for pride, to be seen by other people, or in order to gain the compliments of the ignorant mob, which are not worth a penny.

If, with a spirit that recognizes that the Way is endless, you keep going on and on and reach a state where you can see yourself, you will be astounded at how wretched you are, shot through and through with flaws, and you will be moved to correct these flaws, not neglecting even the smallest one. It is at this time that the confidence that comes from facing your true self will finally be born. Even if conceited people can shoot in front of their juniors with a bold swagger, once they are up against someone to whom they have no chance of measuring up, they start quaking in their boots, a pitiful sight.

For a person who knows himself and has true confidence, the people who are watching have nothing whatsoever to do with him. Even if no one is watching he shoots with all his might; and no matter how many people are watching he cannot shoot any better than he always does. He just shows his actual, natural self. He doesn't seek praise and is unperturbed if he is disparaged. I think that this is one good lesson that kyujutsu can teach. The Way is endless. I earnestly hope that you, the reader, will go forward with a humble spirit.

### **Do Not Lose Interest**

No matter what happens, losing interest in training is forbidden. There are many forms that this takes: some lose interest quickly, some after having trained for a while, and some after they have progressed to quite a high level; but all of these are unacceptable. With an attitude that you may perhaps achieve some small measure of skill after practicing for ten years, you should practice unstintingly with a patient frame of mind.

### **Practice Without Letup**

You must practice every day, even if it is only for 30 minutes or an hour. It is no good to practice all day Sunday and then not shoot during the week. If you simply can't get to the dojo, you should practice even if you just do subiki (drawing the bow without shooting an arrow). Another good way is to set up a makiwara at home and practice every day. Makiwara practice is liable to be monotonous, so there are those who dislike it, but it is a useful thing. If you shoot at the target when you are a beginner you can ruin your form without realizing it, but the makiwara does not have that drawback. People are prone to want to shoot while fooling around with their friends, but in a situation like this, not only will you of course make no progress, those who will not develop bad habits are few. For those who find the makiwara boring, I hope that you will bear with it and practice until it becomes interesting.

### **Make The Target Your Only Goal**

Among those who practice kyudo, there are those who say that in yumi it is not necessary to hit the target, or that all that is necessary is that your form is good; there are even those who say that form doesn't matter, that spirit is the most important thing. Of course, those who have a twisted spirit are a pain in the neck no matter what they do; and practicing yumi with bad form is not good. However, to have good form (shooting technique) and to not hit the target is against nature. Do not be misled by nonsense. If your shooting form is good, accuracy will surely follow. I want you to not forget that missing the target means that something is wrong.

If you practice yumi diligently, you will gain some kind of spiritual benefit. However, kyujutsu is by its nature a physical activity, so if you want to engage in spiritual training, you will get faster results if you do something like zazen rather than archery.

I was once told by Kiyooki Sensei (Ogasawara Kiyooki, the 29th headmaster of the Ogasawara Ryu) that "the more a person shoots a bow, they worse a person they become." There are probably a lot of people who find this statement strange, but in one sense it is definitely true. I want those who are starting yumi to pay attention to this point. This is what I mean when I say "make the target your only goal". No matter how many years a person may have been shooting, if he aims only at the target there is no chance that he will become corrupt.

However, when a person learns yumi, in the beginning he will practice with complete devotion to hitting the target, but before long if he starts hitting the target he will go around to tournaments in the hope of winning prizes. After progressing a little further, he will aim for a rank and then a teaching license. Fi-

nally, he will aim for a position in the archery community, even if he has to push other people out of the way in order to get it. In this process, there are few people who can avoid becoming corrupt. I want those of you who are going to begin practicing yumi to resolutely avoid being misled by this delusion. To say nothing of things like tournament prizes, getting a rank or a teaching license will not make a person who is a bad shot into a good one. Even more so, I want you to deeply understand that positions of honor are nothing but trouble and have nothing to do with training in the Way.

*Created December 4, 1997.*

## APPENDIX A - Glossary Of Terms

### **Ateru/Ataru**

To strike or to hit. Ateru is the transitive form of the verb meaning to hit, and ataru is its intransitive form. Since it takes an object (the target) "ateru" is used in kyudo parlance to denote hitting that is a result of a conscious, deliberate act. Since ataru does not take an object, it is used to refer to a shot that hits the target naturally.

### **Enso**

The aspect of a circle. Enso refers to the "round" feeling of calm, natural shooting. It is highly prized since it is evidence of spiritual maturity.

### **Fudoshin**

The immovable mind that cannot be disturbed by confusion, doubt, or fear. Supreme and natural confidence and fearlessness. See Heijoshin.

### **Gojulumonji**

The fivefold cross. The fivefold cross consists of five crosses which are formed when the bow is fully drawn. The vertical and horizontal lines of these crosses must intersect each other at right angles. The five crosses are:

1. the arrow and the bow,
2. the tenouchi (grip) and the bow,
3. the thumb of the string hand and the string,
4. the center line of the chest and the line connecting both shoulders, and
5. the arrow and the tendons of the neck.

### **Ha**

A branch, or sub-category, of a ryu. For instance, the phrase "Heki ryu Insai-ha" refers to the Insai branch of the Heki school of archery.

### **Haru Ki**

A "taut" spirit. This is the spirit shown by the immature archer whose attitude is always strained and unstable.

### **Heijoshin**

Everyday, ordinary, or normal mind. This refers to the ability to be calm in all situations.

### **Heki Ryu**

The school of archery considered to have been founded by Heki Danjo Masatsugu.

### **Hikiwake, Sanbun No Ni**

This refers to a stage in the shooting style of the Heki Ryu Insai-ha, where the draw is momentarily halted about two thirds of the way through, at a point where the arrow is roughly at the level of the eyebrows and the drawing hand has cleared the archer's ear.

### **Hosha Hitchu**

Literally, "Lawful shooting, certain hitting". This phrase expresses the belief that a correct shot will always hit the target. See Seisha Hitchu.

### **Insai-ha**

The Insai branch of the Heki Ryu, founded by Yoshida Genpachiro Shigeuji, also known as Issuiken Insai.

### **Issha Zetsumei**

Literally, "One shot, life ends." This refers to the idea that you must totally devote all of your physical, spiritual, and mental energies to each shot, as though each shot were your last.

### **Kanteki**

To pierce the target. This refers to a shot that is powerful and accurate, the result of skillful technique.

### **Kihaku Kihontaiki**

Fighting spirit, guts, and determination. Esprit. Basic body form. Kihontaiki is considered the essential basis for correct shooting and consists of three groups of crosses formed when the archer's posture is correct: the tateyokojumonji (horizontal and vertical cross), the sanjujumonji (the three-fold cross) and the gojujumonji (five-fold cross). See Tateyokojumonji, Sanjujumonji, and Gojujumonji.

### **Kyujutsu**

Bow art. Kyujutsu was one of the generic terms for archery before the term kyudo came into general use.

### **Living Body**

The body that is brought to life by the archer's correct intention and spirit. See the Kyudo Manual for a more detailed explanation.

### **Makiwara Hanshi**

Literally, "master of the straw target." A somewhat derisive term jokingly used to refer to an archer who shoots perfectly at the makiwara, but cannot shoot well at a real target.

### **Makoto**

Sincerity. The quality of purity, honesty, selflessness, and doing one's best in all situations.

### **Metete**

The string hand. The term metete is used when the bow pushing hand is called the "yunde", or bow arm (hand). The string hand is also referred to as the "katte". When the term "katte" is used, the bow hand is referred to as the "oshite", or pushing arm (hand).

### **Mosha Guchu**

Literally, "Blind shooting, accidental hitting." This refers to a shot that, although it hits the target, has not been done according to the Shaho.

### **Mu**

Nothing or nothingness.

### **Muhatsu No Hatsu**

The "release of no release". This refers to a spontaneous release that occurs as the natural result of the fulfillment of kai rather than as a result of a conscious decision on the part of the archer.

### **Munen Muso**

No intention, no thought. The quality of having an undisturbed or seemingly "empty" mind. This mind is not empty in the sense that there is no mental activity at all, which would mean complete unconsciousness. Munen muso means the state of mind where worries, attachments, fears, and mundane thoughts have been purged from the mind so that the natural intuitive mind can respond unhampered as the situation requires.

**Nobiai**

Nobiai means harmonious stretching and expanding and, with tsumeai, is one of the essential elements of kai. It refers to the final opening, stretching, and expanding that leads up to the release of the arrow. Once tsumeai has been physically completed, the archer concentrates on fulfilling and extending tsumeai by applying the full force of the mind and spirit so that tsumeai can evolve into nobiai, where the final fulfillment of kai is achieved through mental and spiritual strength. Although tsumeai and nobiai are considered separately for purposes of explanation, they are two parts of a continuous process. See Tsumeai.

**Raiki Shagi**

A text from 2nd century China detailing the proper way in which shooting should be performed. It is the basis for the emphasis in kyudo on proper bearing and attitude.

**Rei**

Rei has a wide meaning and can mean bowing, respect, manners, propriety, decorum, etiquette, ceremony, or ritual. In kyudo, Rei is often used in a general way to refer to the proper shooting ceremonial and all of the specific actions included within it, such as the proper ways of walking, bowing, approaching and retiring from the target, and entering and leaving the shooting area.

**Ryu**

A school or tradition. This term applies to kyudo as well as to most traditional Japanese martial and cultural arts. The phrase "ryuha" is sometimes used interchangeably with ryu.

**Sae**

Clarity, or purity in the sense of absence of adulteration. Sae refers to the quality of there being nothing unnecessary in the shooting so that the intrinsic essence of the shooting is clearly displayed. Since sae cannot be achieved except through a spiritual awakening, it is one of the most highly prized qualities in kyudo.

**Saeru Ki**

A clear spirit that has been purged of all extraneous elements.

**Sanjūjūmonji**

The threefold cross, consisting of the three horizontal lines of the ashibumi, waist, and shoulders, intersected by the vertical line of the spine. The spine must be straight and the three horizontal lines must be perpendicular to it, parallel to each other, and on the same plane when viewed from above.

**Sanmi Ittai**

The three essentials as one body. This refers to the ideal unification of the mind, the body and the bow.

**Seisha Hitchu**

Literally, "True shooting, certain hitting." This phrase expresses the belief that a correct shot will always hit the target. See Hoshu Hitchu. Seisha Hitchu is the more commonly used term.

**Seishin Tanren**

Spiritual forging, or the process of spiritual refinement and growth that takes place as the result of training in martial arts.

**Seven Barriers**

The seven barriers refer to the six emotions of happiness, anger, anxiety, surprise, sorrow and fear, together with thoughts. These seven barriers are held to be the greatest obstacles to success in kyudo.

**Sha**

Shooting, or a shot. Sha is used to refer to a person's shooting in the aggregate. When someone is said to have a good "sha", it means that person's shooting is good in all of its aspects. Sha therefore refers primarily to the overall quality of the shooting as opposed to the accuracy only.

**Shagi**

Shooting technique, sometimes also called shajutsu.

**Shahin**

Quality of shooting. The natural nobility, dignity, grace, and elegance displayed by a technically and spiritually mature archer.

**Shaho**

The Law of Shooting, also called the Principles Of Shooting. The Shaho refers to the proper fundamentals of how to shoot a bow. See Shaho Hassetsu.

**Shaho Hassetsu**

The Eight Stages Of The Law Of Shooting. This refers to the eight steps of the shooting procedure:

1. Ashibumi , or taking the stance,
2. Dozukuri, or setting the torso,
3. Yugamae, or bow at the ready posture,
4. Uchiokoshi, or lifting up,
5. Hikiwake, or drawing apart,
6. Kai, or holding at full draw,
7. Hanare, or the release, and
8. Zanshin, or remaining body (mind).

See the Kyudo Manual and The Essence And Practice Of Japanese Archery for a detailed explanation of the Shaho Hassetsu.

**Shaho Kun**

A text authored by Yoshimi Junsei, also known as Daiuemon Tsunetake, the founder of the Kishu line of the Chikurin-ha of the Heki Ryu. It explains the fundamentals of the Shaho.

**Shakaku**

See Shahin.

**Sharei**

A formal ceremonial shooting ritual.

**Shin Ki Gi**

"Mind Spirit Technique". Like Sanmi Ittai, this phrase expresses the ideal unity of the archer's mind, spirit and technique.

**Shin Shin Kyu**

"Mind Body Bow". Akin to Sanmi Ittai and Shin Ki Gi.

**Shin Zen Bi**

"Truth, Goodness, Beauty." The expression of truth, goodness, and beauty in both one's shooting and one's life is considered the highest goal of kyudo. See the Kyudo Manual and The Essence And Practice Of Japanese Archery for a detailed explanation of Shin Zen Bi.

**Shinki No Hataraki**

The working of the mind and spirit. This refers to the proper functioning of the archer's mind and spirit required for correct shooting.

**Shinku Muso**

The void of no thought. This refers to the void, or the serene and untroubled mental and spiritual space, that is entered when the archer achieves the state of munen muso. See Munen Muso.

**Shizentai**

The "natural body". In kyudo, this refers to a natural posture and way of using the body. Proper kyudo technique is based upon how the body ideally operates when it functions naturally. See the Kyudo Manual for a more detailed explanation.

**Suki**

A gap or opening. In kyudo, suki refers to the state of being mentally and spiritually unprepared or caught off guard.

**Sumashi**

A clear or settled mind that is free of idle and distracting thoughts.

**Sumu Ki**

A settled spirit, related to sumashi.

**Tateyoko-jumonji**

The vertical and horizontal cross. The vertical axis of the body, composed of the spine and legs, and the horizontal axis of the body, composed of the shoulders and arms, must be perpendicular to each other.

**Tenouchi**

Gripping the bow, or the position of the bow hand on the bow.

**Torikake**

The action of setting the drawing hand to the string.

**Toshiya**

An annual archery competition held at the Sanjusangen-Do in Kyoto during the Tokugawa period. The Sanjusangen-Do is a temple with a long verandah measuring about 120 meters from end to end. The archer sat at one end of the verandah and, over a twenty-four hour period, attempted to shoot as many arrows as possible over the opposite end of the verandah without hitting the overhanging roof of the temple. Victory meant great prestige for the han (fief) to which the archer belonged, and competition in the toshiya led to great advances in archery equipment and techniques. The all-time record of 8,133 successful shots out of a total of 13,053 attempted was set by Wasa Daihachiro of the Kishu han in 1686.

**Toteki**

Hitting the target. This refers to the lowest level of shooting expertise, where the archer, unconcerned with shooting according to the Shaho, has learned to utilize a certain set of technical tricks in order to hit the target.

**Tsumeai**

Tsumeai means to fill and fit. Tsumeai is one of the vital parts of kai, where you reinforce your physical posture with proper strength so that all of the physical elements of kai are firm and steady. See Nobiai.

**Tsurune**

The string note, or the clear, sharp, and melodic sound the string makes when it strikes the upper part of the bow when the arrow is released. A pure and clear tsurune cannot be achieved without the natural release of the arrow, so it is prized because it is evidence that the archer has reached a level of spiritual and mental maturity that is expressed in the natural execution of shooting technique.

**Yagoro**

Yagoro is the instant immediately before the actual release, where tsumeai and nobiai have reached their balanced fulfillment, following which the release must naturally occur.

**Yunde**

The bow arm (hand). The term "yunde" is used when the term "mete" is used to refer to the string hand. The yunde is also called the "oshite" or the pushing arm (hand). When the term "oshite" is used, the string hand is called the "katte".

**Zaiteki**

Literally, "the arrow exists in the target". This refers to the highest level of shooting expertise, where the archer's shooting is so perfect in all respects that the arrow cannot possibly miss. Since this is so, it is considered that the arrow exists in the target prior to the release.

## APPENDIX B - Kyudo Histories of Quoted Teachers

### **Kaminaga Masakichi**

Born in 1885 in Tochigi Prefecture, died of illness in 1961, age 76. Hanshi, 10th dan. Studied Heki Ryu Sekka-ha under Hoshino Tadatoku for about three years beginning in 1905, later studied under Honda Toshizane and Awa Kenzo. Studied Zen and underwent Shinto misogi austerities in 1914-1915. Received the rank of Hanshi from the Dai Nippon Butokukai in 1929. Succeeded Awa Kenzo as the head of the Daisha Kyodo school (Way Of The Teaching Of Great Shooting) upon Awa Sensei's death in 1939. Advisor to the All Nippon Kyudo Federation. Member of the Shaho Establishing Committee.

### **Murakami Hisashi**

Born in 1902, died in 1987, age 85. Hanshi 10th dan. Mastered Heki Ryu under Urakami Sakae Hanshi. Prior to World War II, held the government post of budokan (the official in charge of martial arts) in the Welfare Ministry, which had overall authority for supervising martial arts affairs. In this capacity, was active in the martial arts world and in the Dai Nippon Butokukai. Oversaw the dissolution of the Butokukai after the war and was made managing director of the ANKF under Chiba Tanetsugu Hanshi, the third president. Under the direction of Chiba Sensei, was instrumental in the effort to create the first edition of the Kyudo Manual. Held the posts of ANKF Vice President and, after stepping down as Vice President, Advisor to the ANKF.

### **Suzuki Hiroyuki**

Born in 1901, died in 1984, age 83. Hanshi 10th dan. Studied kyudo under Awa Kenzo Hanshi and Chiba Tanetsugu Hanshi. Served many consecutive terms as member of the ANKF Deliberative Committee.

### **Urakami Sakae**

Born in 1882 in Hyogo Prefecture, died in 1971, age 90. Began the study of Heki To Ryu kyudo at the age of 10 under the tutelage of his father, Urakami Naooki. Received his menkyo (license) in 1912 from Tokuyama Katsuyata Hanshi of Okayama, the center of this ryu. From that time, made his living as a teacher of Heki Ryu kyudo. Received the rank of Hanshi from the Dai Nippon Butokukai in 1927. Taught kyudo at numerous schools, universities, and governmental institutions throughout Japan. Author of many books on kyudo. Member of the Shaho Establishing Committee.

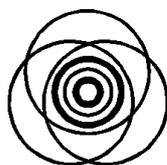
### **Yoshimi Junsei**

First named Kitaro Tsunetake, later Daiuemon. Also known as Junsei. Retainer of the Kishu han. Founder of the Kishu line of the Chikurin-ha. First studied kyujutsu under Shimomura Yoshitane, then under Yoshitane's older brother Shimomura Chuzaemomn Yoshinao. Later studied Chikurin kyujutsu under Kawarabayashi Narinao. Received transmission from Ishido Tamesada, 2nd generation headmaster of the Chikurin-ha, on March 15, 1640. Inherited the densho (records of transmission) of Nomura Katsuyoshi and Kawarabayashi Narinao from Satake Kichizen in 1656.

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