



TETSUZAN

By Masaaki Hatsumi

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Issue #1

A New Era and a New Endeavor

On the occasion of the publication of this first issue of *Tetsuzan* (Iron Mountain), I have a debt of deep gratitude that I would like to express. This gratitude is due firstly to Takamatsu Sensei, and to all the other *Sōke* (Grandmasters) who have faithfully preserved our tradition for a thousand years; and secondly, to my fellow students. I also extend my appreciation to Mark Hodel and Jack Hoban for their efforts in having this newsletter published. At the same time, I'd like to convey my thanks via this newsletter to all those good

buyū (martial arts friends) and companions who are striving to make the best of their own lives and to contribute to society through the study and practice of our art.

In Japan, we have begun a new era this year with the passing of the late emperor and the accession of his son. This change is

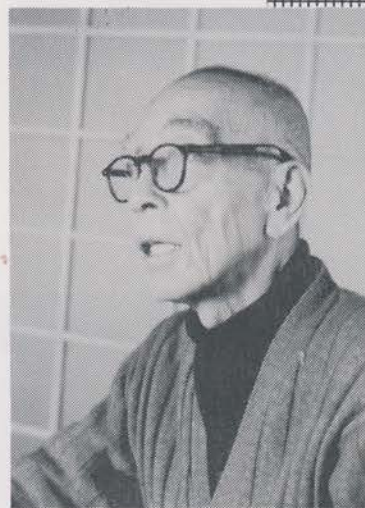
accompanied with the replacement of the old era name, Showa, with a new one, Heisei. *Heisei* can be translated as, 'Becoming peaceful, calm, ordinary or simple,' and signifies the renewal of the determination to maintain freedom and peace. So I would like the Bujinkan to set out into this new era with the attitude of true 'Heisei Warriors.'

At the end of last year, I conducted our first Daikōmyōsai Seminar. This was done to bring together Bujinkan *buyū* from all over the world so that they could have a taste of this life that has lasted almost a millennium. First, to give some idea of the deep connection between Takamatsu Sensei and myself that lasted for over thirty years, I brought some of the thousand and more postcards and letters that he sent me, and also a scroll that I received from him. This scroll, written in his own hand, contains (among other things) the line of transmission of our tradition from grandmaster to grandmaster. Even without any explanation, I think that those present

got an idea of the correctness and authenticity of the Bujinkan.

With my best wishes and thanks to Jack and Mark for undertaking this new enterprise, and to Bujinkan members the world over.....

Tetsuzan.



Toshitsugu
Takamatsu Sensei.

Left: *Sōke*, with a scroll in one hand, talking about the letters he received from Takamatsu Sensei, some of which lie before him.



Looking at the Gyokko-Ryū scroll written by Takamatsu Sensei.

Left: Part of a scroll written and painted by Takamatsu Sensei on Gyokko-Ryū ninjutsu.



Highlights of the Past Year (1988)

From August 1 to December 2 last year, Ground Self Defense Forces Major Fumio Manaka, 9th dan, went to the United States. In all three places that he visited—Ohio, Austin (Texas), and El Paso—he achieved three purposes: to transmit some important understandings about ninpo, to teach practically and directly (these two being known in ninjutsu as “speaking with both body and mind”), and to enjoy the



Above, right:
Sôke at home.

Below: Fumio Manaka,
9th dan.

company of everyone there. On returning to Japan, he spoke to Sôke about the trip. Their conversation is condensed below (S = Sôke, M = Manaka).



S What were your feelings about the August seminar in El Paso?

M Well, in general, I think, everything's getting on well. The forms—the *kamae*—and the techniques—were well done, but I felt there was still something not quite natural, something imitation, in the practice there.

S I see. It's good that things are going well. But if the linking from technique to technique was unnatural, as you suggest, there must be a lot of people who haven't really got the idea of what it's all about!

M Yes, that's right. So I tried to emphasize that the linking movements between any two techniques are made in just the same way as the linking movements between the basic techniques.

S In the old days, we used to train very hard, remember? (And, you know, it's already thirty years since you came to me to enroll as a student.) Anyway, it's that space, that flow through space—between technique and technique, between form and form, body and body, mind and mind—that is the difficult thing. You could say that the discovery of this space is the intuitive knowing that is what the fifth *dan* test is all about.

Inazô Nitobe, the famous Japanese scholar who wrote the book *Bushidô*, said that in true scholarship the important thing is to understand the spaces between the words, to read between the lines.

M In America I also taught some of the basic moves with the sword, and long and short *bô* (six- and three-foot staffs).

S Oh, that's good. And, you know, if you get students to use weapons, you can see immediately how good they are at taijutsu. And if someone unskilled becomes completely carried away with trying to use a weapon, his taijutsu technique all goes into its handling. All the attention sort of leaks into the weapon so that nothing's left behind for controlling the body properly!... [Laughter]

M Yes, that's really true, isn't it? As soon as a person moves with a weapon, it's very important to watch carefully to see how sound his basic form, his *kihon happô* training, is. When I was there, I taught the weapon techniques with a lot of care. And there were

about 100 people in the seminar. Then in Austin, the seminar was held indoors, in a small room with a low ceiling, and so I went over some of the ways of handling a *bô* in that kind of environment.

S That's very good. Being aware of where you are, of your surroundings, is often spoken of in *bugei*, and is the teaching contained in the scroll called Jimon no Maki. When an animal fights, it usually makes itself look bigger than it really is in order to threaten its foe, and bares its teeth before attacking. Someone who is not a practiced hunter may fear this, but an experienced person knows how to stay calm and unperturbed, and may even be able to catch the creature alive. The real fight is a contest of resourcefulness and of the sixth sense, and takes place in a space outside the realms of the man's senses and the animal's reactions.

M Yes, indeed. That's certainly so!

And another thing I did—well, you know how tightly beginners tend to hold a *bô*? I told them to hold the *bô* more gently so that it could slide in the hands, and stressed how important it is for the *bô* to be readily adaptable for variations and new techniques.

In my El Paso seminar in October, as a kind of final touch, I dealt with sword techniques, emphasizing in particular the proper way to make a cutting stroke. But what I felt overall in these three seminars was that the things I was teaching were understood as a whole, but when it came down to practicing each technique, people weren't sure, and were uneasy about what they were doing. I feel that it's necessary in the future to go into this with a bit more care. I told them, if they're working at a basic level, to stick to basic practice, and to leave advanced techniques for an appropriate time, without mixing.

S OK, that's good, great.... So next year, you'll be going to the States again, I suppose? They'll be waiting for you, you know!!

Let's discuss some of the ways in which the paths of teachers and pupils have crossed, which have varied widely according to the times and the local conditions. The present kind of friendly relationship that has developed between teachers and pupils, as *buyû* to *buyû*, does not have much history.

In the Civil Wars Period in Japan, between about 1480 and 1560, for example, the Togakure-ryû ninja Minamoto no Kanesada had once been a retainer of the Shôgun Kisô Yoshinaka. After Yoshinaka Shôgun was killed in battle in Awazu, the young Kanesada, who had been fighting beside him and had been wounded several times, managed to escape into the mountains of Iga. However, the reason for his escape was not simply that life was so dear to him: he had been entrusted with the duties of preparing the Shôgun's grave and looking after the Shôgun's family. This he did, but it was there, in the mountains of Iga, that he came across the man who would become his teacher as a ninja.

There are many stories of such chance meetings in the Civil Wars Period. What we call *dôjô* (dojos) now are of comparatively recent origin. In the latter years of the Edo Period many martial arts schools, or rather, schools of fighting, were established. In castle towns, samurai opened private dojos of their own. The concept of a "*dôjô*," with "followers," and the practice of "certification"—what we call *dan* grading—that characterized the schools were taken from the Buddhist tradition, and Buddhist terminology was used. As a result, Buddhism and martial arts, religion and ninjutsu, came to be regarded by many as the same thing.



With the mayor of Dublin, Ireland, after being presented with the Freedom of the City of Dublin.

Major F. Manaka: "I ate seven of these in the U.S. this time!"



Fumio Manaka, 9th dan, and Stephen Hayes, 8th dan.



Certification, for instance is concerned with the authorization to pass on the traditional teaching and to have access to its secrets. Initiation then was a formal matter, and to be initiated into a dojo one had to go through a set ceremony, but few of these places were left at the end of the Edo Period. But, as part of the initiation proceedings, two or three, or five white folding fans were necessary. These were put in a special fan box of paulownia wood made for the purpose, which was then placed on a raised ceremonial tray, and handed with great politeness to the teacher of the dojo as a symbolic request to be accepted into the dojo. After the teacher accepted this, a vow to a god (differing according to the dojo) was made. In this way, the link was established between the teacher and the new pupil.

As for the money involved, firstly, a membership fee had to be paid, a certain amount had to be given in July and December (rather like the mid-year and end-of-year presents that are still traditionally given in Japan to people to whom special respect or thanks are due), and these were quite apart from the regular monthly dues, and so on. So, as the records of the time show, it all added up to a considerable amount. After the beginning of the Meiji Era, (1868), judo and kendo became popular, developing like karate and other fighting techniques as sports; aikido was created, and the whole lot became internationalized.

M I remember in the old days you didn't even charge us a monthly fee when you taught us.

S Yes, that's right. This monthly fee system is very recent, really. It started after some students established dojos and started making a living from teaching.

M Yes, that was it.

S Anyway, the most important thing in *budô* training is to use the dojo to cultivate the mind and heart, and never to forget that. Takamatsu Sensei often used to tell us to set the heart and mind of a martial artist—of a true master—as our goal, and always to keep going in that direction.

M Yes. I remember.

S Well, anyway. Next time you go to the US, please teach some more *kihon happô*, just as you did this time....

The Kihon Happô

By Ohgo (Fumio Manaka, 9th dan)

Since there have been increasing signs recently that the *kihon happô* are not properly understood, I will give a brief description of them here.

The *kihon happô* are the basis of all techniques, whether the ninja is armed or unarmed, and are therefore extremely important. In particular, thorough learning of the ways to move from the basic *kamae* is vital to future progress in ninjutsu.

While I was in the United States last year, one thing that could be said of every person attending the three seminars I conducted was that their *kihon happô* were not satisfactory. Since everyone was just copying the *kihon happô* of others, their execution was very amateurish. They were a long way from being capable of performing well in a real fight. Therefore, in your practices in future, at least half of the time should be concentrated on perfecting the *kihon happô*. The movements are very simple, but they have to be so ingrained that they become unconscious responses, like reflexes.

If the *kihon happô* are perfected, 70% of any other technique can be well executed by merely learning the sequence of moves. Western people tend to be blessed with bigger, more powerful physiques, so that to add mastery of ninjutsu to such a natural endowment can produce a very formidable result. What I have discussed here has been taught by Takamatsu Sensei to Hatsumi Sensei and by Hatsumi Sensei to us, for some three decades or more. Those who take it to heart and put it into practice will learn much that is extremely valuable. What is needed is devotion and greater diligence. I feel confident that these attributes will materialize.

Firstly, *kihon happô* are the group of eight essential forms of the Gyokko-ryû, namely, three fundamental striking techniques and five fundamental grasping techniques. An outline of these follows.

I. Three Fundamental Striking Techniques

- 1) Techniques from *ichimonji no kamae*.
 - a) *Jôdan-uke* and *gedan-uke* (high and low parries)
 - b) From *jôdan-uke*: Striking with *shutô* left and right, *omote* (front) and *ura* (back)
- 2) Techniques from *hichô no kamae*.
Gedan-uke followed by a kick and a strike with *shutô*.
- 3) Techniques from *jûmonji no kamae*.
From left or right *jôdan-uke* to left or right *shitô* (thrust with thumb)

II. Five Fundamental Grasping Techniques

1. *Ura kote sakadori* (Forward wrist twist).
2. *Omote kote sakadori* (Backward wrist twist).
3. *Mushadori*.
4. *Onikudakidori*.
5. *Gansekinage*.



Always start by training in the correct kihon happô forms.

From the following photos, try to get a feeling for how the movements flow through space between each kamae and from them into any other posture.



1



2



3

1) Left ichimonji no kamae.

2) Left ichimonji no kamae.

3) Left hichô no kamae.

4) Jûmonji no kamae.

5) The form of the body as it moves through space is important.

6) An attack aimed at the heart.



4



5



6

Be aware that the kamae are forms in motion.

They may appear to be static, but they live and move like the beating of the heart.



1- About to strike with the shutō (handblade).



2



3

The body moves through space in a continuous series of living kamae.

*"Now like a little stream,
now a deep broad river,
now a flood..."*

*In our tradition, this is
how the flow of
movement and the
flow of mind are
described in
relation to space,
and to the void.*

Party Celebrating Sōke's 30th Anniversary, December 20, 1988

It is now 30 years since Takamatsu Sensei passed on the title of Grandmaster of nine schools of ninjutsu—Togakure-ryū, Gyokko-ryū, Kukishinden-ryū, Kotō-ryū, Gikan-ryū, Shindenfudō-ryū, Gyokushin-ryū, Kumogakure-ryū, and Takagi-ryū—to Hatsumi Sensei. Articles in the major newspapers in Japan described the party held to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the succession of the "world-renowned ninja and martial artist Mr. Masaaki Hatsumi" to millions of readers. About 300 people attended, including The Honorable Kenzaburō, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and his wife; two other members of the Diet, Mr. Tomonō and Mr. Kurata; the well-known author, Mr. Mitsugu Saotome; the cast of "Jiraya", from Asahi Television; others from the political and financial world; and many leading artists, all to present their good wishes.

During the party, a poet, Mr. Hiroyoshi Abe, read the following poem, named "Mr. Hatsumi," that impressed and amused everyone:

*For me, it's as if the ninja Mr. Hatsumi
Has been with me for a very long time....*

*I feel the familiar friendliness of a
favorite dog*



The members of the Yamaji family from the TV series *Jiraiya*.

Right : Sôke, Mr. Hiroyoshi Abe reading his poem

*Or the relaxing company of a cow or sheep
That walks in friendship by my side.
I am touched gently by affection and warmth.*

*He told me he was the Chairman
Of the Animal Association of the Universe—
And I really believed him!*

*That affection and friendliness
Are the instinctive bonds between the animals:
The closeness that links them all.*

*Never before now have I felt so well
Man's kinship with the animals....*

*As a child at school,
I was chosen for the part of the pheasant
In a play on the legendary Momotarô,
And was later the turtle in Urashima Tarô.
But these roles seemed to suit me well,
And I felt no incongruity.*

*Mr. Hatsumi seems to be
Just like one of my own animal family—
So next time I meet him,
We'll probably chat in barks and wags
And other words of the canine world!*



In the Bujinkan, we use Sôke's birthday for the Daikômyôsai celebration. It is a day when we can recall and strengthen our bond with the *Bujin* (the God of War/God of Martial Arts), receiving the spirit of the *Bujin no Butoku Ikô* (the Great Martial Light of the *Bujin*), so that we may progress correctly and unswervingly along the path of *Bufû* ("martial wind"). In the three days following the 1988 Daikômyôsai, a Daikômyôsai Seminar was held to help renew links with our *buyû* (martial arts friends) in the Bujinkan. Hatsumi Sensei has decided to hold such a seminar every year at the same time for the world community of *buyû*. So in, 1989, when we have the Second Daikômyôsai Seminar, we hope that as many people as possible will come from all over the globe.

At the 1988 Daikômyôsai, the following five gentlemen received awards from Sôke for their distinguished services in spreading peace and friendship in the world through the *bufû* of ninjutsu:

Tetsuzan Award:	Mark Hodel (USA)
Tetsuzan Award:	Brian McCarthy (Ireland)
Friendship Award:	Sven-Erik Bogsater (Sweden)
Friendship Award:	Peter King (UK)
Friendship Award:	Jack Hoban (USA)

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