



HANSHI SPEAKS

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Dearest Bushi,

I am combining June and July's newsletter due to the many deadlines happening in the next two months in preparation for the release of my book and DVDs this fall. Once we get through these demands, we'll return to our normal monthly schedule.

In past newsletters we have spoken to target selection, martial awareness, center, balance, Ki and movement. In this installment I would like to address the concept of *hand shaping* or *hand form*, to create technique. In our system we have 50 hand shapes used to enhance one's striking or punching ability.

The concept of forming the hand reaches back centuries and can, in most cases, be directly related to *Tode* (China hand) and the early animal styles. The interesting fact here is that almost all styles and systems share some common hand shapes though the reference names may be different.

Some of the more common shapes are the *knife hand* or *hammer fist*—two hand shapes that clearly reflect the term. These names and hand shapes are designed to maximize effect and, more importantly, provide you to recall the form through the name.

Each hand shape was designed to enhance one's ability to apply different levels of damage or to focus strikes into selected target areas, increase access and, more importantly, aim damage specifically at those targets.

We must also remember that each technique can be put into motion through a wide variety of physical conveyances and motions. Thrusting, snapping and lunging are just a few examples; add footwork and body mechanics to drive the technique, and you have created a very effective weapon.

A great example would be the use of a *narrow spear hand* versus a *broad spear hand* to the

eye. The *broad spear hand*, though effective when striking this soft target, would limit penetration, while the *narrow spear hand* would provide a much more penetrating aspect to the target. This subtle difference is key to understanding hand shapes and their applications.

It should be noted that hand shapes also bring support or strength to the hand, hardening or reinforcing the hand to protect the fragile bones and make the hand a more robust tool for this type application. In many cases through the centuries, and I would think more so with the use of safety and/or sporting equipment, these details seem to be less and less important or simply forgotten.

You should recall that most strikes are thrown with the hand open and the palm exposed, and punches are thrown with the use of a close fist. Most of the elaborate hand shapes fall into the striking category. It is justly important to remember that not all hand strikes are effective on all targets as I alluded to just paragraphs ago.

To be successful in using these hand shapes and applying them one must have a solid base knowledge of target areas and their related impacts when struck. This reaches back to our concept of control, when this is illustrated in most Dojo or Dojang environments, it is done so with the person throwing a punch full force, then stopping it just millimeters from the target subject's face.

We, on the other hand, stress that control is the ability to regulate the amount of force to be applied, though we can stop a strike, punch or kick just before impact we can also make contact and inflict anywhere from zero to maximum damage. This is key to commanding the art of applying solid technique. This also plays a very large role in the ability to work someone's center through the use of controlled strikes and kicks. Too much force, and the opponent is knocked down, but not really neutralized because the rest of the technique that would have controlled

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him or her or caused damage is no longer feasible. Too little force, and the technique requirements are not met, and the individual has the ability to reengage in an aggressive manner.

So, for any technique to be successful, one must understand the following generalized concepts.

- *Technique and the purpose it was intended to be used for*
- *Target areas and cause and effect when struck*
- *Center – yours and your opponent's*
- *Direction, motion and physical elements required to execute technique*
- *Understanding Speed, Power & Accuracy*
- *Control or regulation of Technique*
- *The use of Ki to enhance technique*

These elements build a solid means by which one can create, execute and successfully apply technique.

With the use of hand shapes Bushi should be aware that in some instances the hand shape will be executing multiple actions within a signal application. A prime example often demonstrated in class is the use of the *tiger's mouth*, which is a combination of a strike and a grab. The uses of our control concepts provide the person applying the technique an ability to *strike and control* or *strike and crush* a target.

To follow is a sampling of hand shapes for striking:

- *Knife Hand*
- *Hammer Fist*
- *Tiger's Mouth*
- *Eagle Claw*
- *Serpent's Mouth*

When training to apply any one of these hand techniques, accuracy becomes a priority. The best means by which one can develop accuracy, is through slow execution of the technique. Move slowly extending the hand, reaching the selected target, then increase speed on a slow and steady basis. This will assist in imprinting muscle memory required to successfully strike a specific target.

It will be important to keep three elements in mind while developing your technique. These are: physical effort, mental discipline and strategic application which lead to desired results on the targeted aggressor.

The old adage "*Practice makes perfect*" applies here, in the truest sense...

As always, if anyone has any questions just drop me an email or see me in class...

CAMA 1ST ANNUAL RETREAT:

As those of you that attend class know, we will be having our First Annual CAMA Retreat Weekend in the very near future. This event will be a focused training session dealing with multiple aspects of our system. The tentative schedule will be the following:

FRIDAY EVENING

Workshop 8 to 10pm (*Guest Instructor*)

SATURDAY

Morning KI & Meditation Class (outdoors) at 6am
 Bushi Morning – traditional workout & lunch
 Afternoon – break 2 hours
 Weapons Class
 Dinner
 After dark walk
 Get-together

SUNDAY MORNING

Morning Meditation & Blessing
 CAMA breakfast
 Light Workout
 check-out
 Lunch optional

We are currently organizing dates and cost. Watch the website and listen to announcements in class for details. Event is open to all those interested in the martial arts.

MR. CUTTER'S FATHER UPDATE

Dear Class, your kindness, thoughts and prayers for Mr. Cutter's father have been greatly appreciated. He is doing well and showing some improvement, though he is still in the Intensive Care and on a ventilator at this time. Mr. Cutter sends his thanks to you all!

TIME & GRADE

As you are all aware, you are required to have a specific amount of training time to meet minimums for advancement. We had mentioned in class the following formula so that you understand what is required of you on a monthly basis.

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In a 30 day period you need to average 5 classes out of 12 to meet your monthly time requirements. Students holding 2nd and 1st Kyu rank should be attending 6 classes a month as a minimum. Black belt holders are required to attend a minimum of 8 classes a month.

We have begun to keep an official roll and no longer solely base your time on a quarterly basis. As the system management begins to become better organized, these requirements will have to be met for promotion to your next rank.

DUES

We are thinking about moving to a quarterly billing system as of Oct 1st, 2006. This will help minimize paperwork and reduce the time spent in class collecting dues. We will keep you posted as this change nears.

WARM-UP

As of October 1st, 2006 the pre-class warm-up will be reduced to 15 minutes. Those of you who choose to not attend it, will be expected to come prepared to train no later than 15 minutes past the scheduled start time.

BEING LATE

As we have stated in the past, it is important to come to class no matter what time you can get there, just come. This has never been either an invitation nor a "be late on a regular basis" pass. I would suggest that, since our program schedule is a given, like other events you have scheduled in your lives, you begin better managing your time to be prompt to class.

LATE OF ATTENDANCE

As a standing policy we will not teach a class of less than 5 students. Those of you who are absent from class may be the cause of others not getting to train. This is something to take into consideration.

UPCOMING BLACK BELT TEST

We will be setting a testing date for those who will be testing for black belt this winter. Please understand that you will fall under testing requirements which will be released later this summer. Please see Mr. Boyles for details.

Stay Safe.

With Deepest Regards,




Vincent Anthony
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