

From: Shizuo Imaizumi

To: Ralph Bryan and SBK students who are interested in learning this topic

Topic: Ran'ai (No. 12 of Seitei Nihon Jodo-kata based on Shinto Muso Ryu Jojutsu)

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Ralph Bryan wrote me a question on "ran'ai" through his email dated on September 30. The Japanese word "ran'ai" is one of technical names created by an organization of Shinto Muso Ryu Jojutsu (Jodo). That corresponds to No. 12 of Seitei Nihon Jodo-kata. This subject was excluded from criteria of shodan shinsa in NY SBK for making preparations for examination easier a little bit.

In my presentation of the composition of ran'ai, I divide ran'ai into six parts. But you should keep in mind that no numbering system such as the word "part" and (1), (2), (3), etc. are not applied for the original teaching in Muso Ryu Jojutsu. Here you find six parts of ran'ai although you must later perform ran'ai based on more than 20 consecutive actions. This is not a student manual, but this is a document based on my memorandum in Japanese regarding ran'ai. Therefore, this is a referential document for you.

Figuratively speaking, most of you have learned to drive directly from a person who carried his/her driver's license. Assume that you read a driving book first and try to driving immediately, you will be able to start driving accordingly. You are driving down the road when you see a small ice cream parlor and the idea hits you: You are going to get a scoop of ice cream. You say to yourself, "I think I'll try to do parallel parking over there because I read a section of that yesterday, and" You suddenly realize that you have skipped over reading how to stop a car. "I know how to force to quit my laptop. Which button should I push over here, a red button or a white one?" Fortunately and unfortunately, your car stopped accidentally while you were struggling with kicking around pedals. That caused damage to the board fence of that ice cream parlor. You missed a golden opportunity to enjoy a scoop of ice cream. No ice cream. You have spent money whole a lot for compensating the damage.

I know most of you have learned driving a car directly from a person who can drive legally. After that, you might read something specific as regards a driving. In the same way, I anticipate that you understood why I suggest you that you should learn ran'ai from a person who has already learned it. After that, you might need to use the following information. From the next page, the construction of ran'ai is expressed in the mixed style of writing, including romanized Japanese, kanji (Chinese characters) and English for explanation. When you find the arrow mark (→) or (←) in a description of ran'ai, that indicates to do the initial movement of that part. For example, uchitachi moves first (→) or shijo moves first (←).

RAN'AI 乱合

To begin with, you should understand the construction of my original note about ran'ai. Although the original ran'ai is a consecutive performance without any interruption, I personally divide ran'ai into six parts for the purpose of practicing and memorizing each action separately. Take a look at the chart below:

PART 1	PART 2	PART 3	PART 4	PART 5	PART 6
1 to 5	1 to 3	1 to 3	1 to 3	1 to 2	1 to 4
TOTAL: 20 numbers (5+3+3+3+2+4) in my note, which I explain to you in accordance with the above format.					

Below is a part of ran'ai from my original note as an example in Japanese.

PART 1:	打太刀	仕杖
(1) 帯刀（自然体）の姿勢で5歩（右・左・右・左・右）		(1) 常の構え（自然体）で打太刀の最初の2歩待ち、
		3歩（右・左・右）
→右手を柄にかける（右半身）（抜刀の構えとった時、		右片手持ちの杖先で顔付け（右半身）
杖先で顔付けされ、顔を後方に引く		

That looks good because of typing. Unfortunately, I don't have this form made by a word processor. I only have my hand-written form. The side of the left margin is uchitachi (打太刀). After the straight dot (|) of the center, the explanation of shijo (仕杖) appears.

What I try to do for expressing each part below is that all the uchitachi's actions in Part 1 are written from 1 to 5. After that, I start to write actions of shijo from 1 to 5. In other words, I no longer write the both roles parallel with each other like the above example in Japanese, because I don't need to consider the space of words when adding explanation in English. If you like such a format, you should copy this document and paste both roles neatly side by side. The important thing is that you should not mix techniques of uchitachi with ones of shijo. When you practice ran'ai, you can focus on one role: uchitachi or shijo.

PART 1: UCHITACHI (打太刀) – (1 to 5)

(1) Stands with a natural stance (shizentai) with the posture of TAITO (帯刀, to hold one's sword or bokken on the belt level).

Walks 5 steps (right, left, right, left, and right).

→ Lays the right hand on TSUKA (柄, the hilt of a sword or bokken) with migi-hanmi.

When taking the posture of BATTO (抜刀, to unsheathe one's sword), be done KAO-TSUKU (顔付け, aiming at one's face) at the tip of jo. Eventually, that attack causes to lean the head backward.

(2) Without moving the standing position, be done MIGI-HIBARA-TSUKU (右脾腹付け, to aim at the right rib).

(3) Without moving the standing position, be done MIGI-HIBARA-TSUKI (右脾腹突き, to poke a person in the right rib).

(4) → While doing BATTO (抜刀), steps back the right foot, unsheathes it upwards (oblique rightwards), and takes the posture of MIGI-KATATE-NANAME-JODAN (右片手斜め上段, migi-jodan with the right hand oblique rightwards).

(5) → Steps the right foot forward, attaches the left hand to the right hand's grip, and does SHOMEN-UCHI (正面打ち).

Eventually, be blocked at the higher position with uke style. Be done KURI-TSUKU (繰り付け, a technical name of jodo-kata), and takes the posture of MIGI-GEDAN (右下段) in front of the body.

PART 1: SHIJO (仕杖) – (1 to 5)

(1) Stands with a natural stance (shizentai) with the posture of TSUNE NO KAMAE (常の構え, holding one' jo at the right side aiming at about 45 degree with the tip of the jo). Waits for the first 2 walks by uchitachi, and then walks 3 steps (right, left, and right).

← After taking a look at the posture of BATTO by uchitachi, does KAO-TSUKU (顔付け) with migi-hanmi.

(2) ← Steps the left foot around the same line as the right foot (hiki-tsuke), moves the left hand underneath the right hand, and does MIBI-HIBARA-TSUKU (右脾腹付け) with the bottom of the jo raising vertically and with the natural stance (shizentai).

(3) ← Steps back the right foot, slides up the right hand, changes the right hand holding into the backhand style (gyakute), and does MIGI-HIBARA-TSUKI (右脾腹突き) with hidari-hanmi.

(4) Steps back the right foot, draws back both hands at the right side, takes the posture of MIGI-GYAKUTE-HIKIOTOSHI NO KAMAE (右逆手引き落しの構え, like migi-wakigamae with hidari-hanmi).

(5) Steps the left foot, thrusts out both hands, and does KAO-TSUKU (顔付け) with the tip of the jo with the grip of the left hand. Steps the right foot, turns the body about 90 degree turning the left foot backward, raises both hands, and does JUJI-UKE (十字受け, to cross and block with uke style).

← Steps the right foot, scoops up both hands, rotates (mawashi) downward, and does KURI-TSUKU (繰り付け) with the natural stance (shizentai).

PART 2: UCHITACHI (打太刀) – (1 to 3)

(1) From MIGI-GEDAN (右下段), steps back the left foot, and takes the posture of HIDARI-HASSO (左八相).

→ Steps the right foot, thrusts out both hands, and does MIGI-DO-UCHI (右胴打ち) with migi-hanmi. Eventually, be blocked by shijo.

With MIGI-GYAKU-CHUDAN (右逆中段), be done MIGI-HIBARA-TSUKI (右脾腹突き).

(2) Steps back the right foot, and takes the posture of MIGI-HASSO (右八相).

→ Steps the right foot, and does HIDARI-DO-UCHI (左胴打ち).

Against SHOMEN-UCHI (正面打ち), blocks with uke style, and takes the posture of MIGI-CHUDAN (右中段).

Eventually, be done UCHI-OTOSHI (打ち落とし, striking down), and stays with MIGI-YOKO-GEDAN (右横下段, to tilt rightwards).

(3) Steps back the right foot, and takes the posture of MIGI-WAKIGAMAE (右脇構え).

→ Steps the right foot, and does SHOMEN-UCHI (正面打ち). Eventually, be avoided that attack, and be done MIGI-HIBARA-TSUKI (右脾腹突き).

PART 2: SHIJO (仕杖) – (1 to 3)

(1) From MIGI-GYAKUTE-GEDAN (右逆手下段), takes the posture of MIGI-GYAKUTE NO KAMAE (右逆手の構え).

Steps the left foot toward the right foot around the same line (hiki-tsuke), steps back the right foot, pushes up the left palm facing it upward, and blocks with uke style against MIGI-DO-UCHI (右胴打ち).

← Does MIGI-HIBARA-TSUKI (右脾腹突き) together with pressing the joint area of the right arm.

(2) Steps the right foot, and takes the posture of MIGI-GYAKUTE-HIKI-OTOSHI NO KAMAE (右逆手引き落しの構え).

← Steps the right foot toward the left foot around the same line (hiki-tsuke), and does SHOMEN-UCHI (正面打ち). Eventually, be blocked.

← Steps back the left foot, rotates (mawashi) the jo, does UCHI-OTOSHI (打ち落とし). and does KAO-TSUKU (顔付け).

(3) ← Steps the left foot, and does MIGI-HIBARA-TSUKI (右脾腹突き) with the style of the second action of RAI-UCHI (雷打ち).

(That means the moment when being attacked the head, steps the left-foot avoiding that attack, and pokes at an opponent).

PART 3: UCHITACHI (打太刀) – (1 to 3)

(1) From a higher MIGI-CHUDAN (右中段), steps back the right foot, and takes the posture of MIGI-HASSO (右八相).

Steps back the left foot, blocks shomen-uchi with uke style at the higher position using a tsuba-moto (near a guard).

(2) → Steps the right foot while pushing (oshi).

→ Steps the right foot with okuri-ashi style while pushing (oshi).

→ Steps the left foot, and does MIGI-DO-UCHI (右胴打ち) with harai (sweeping) style. Eventually be avoided that attack.

(3) From HIDARI-GYAKUTE-CHUDAN (左逆手中段), steps back the right foot, and be done HIDARI-HIBARA-TSUKI (左脾腹突き).

PART 3: SHIJO (仕杖) – (1 to 3)

(1) From HIDARI-GYAKUTE-RYOTE-AGE (左逆手両手上げ, raising a jo with the left palm facing upward), steps back the right foot, changes the grip of the right hand, and takes the posture of MIGI-HIKI-OTOSHI NO KAMAE (右引き落しの構え).

← Steps the right foot, does SHOMEN-UCHI (正面打ち).

(2) Steps back the right foot toward the left foot around the same line (hiki-tsuke), and blocks with uke while being pushed. Steps back the left foot, and blocks with uke style the same as above.

Steps back the right foot toward the left foot (hiki-tsuke), and raises both hands avoiding MIGI-DO-UCHI (右胴打ち).

(3) ← Moves the jo at the right waist area, steps the left foot, and does HIDARI-HIBARA-TSUKI (左脾腹突き) with choku-tsuki style.

PART 4: UCHITACHI (打太刀) – (1 to 3)

(1) From HIDARI-GYAKUTE-CHUDAN (左逆手中段), steps back the right foot, and takes the posture of MIGI-HASSO (右八相).

→ Steps the right foot, and does SHOMEN-UCHI (正面打ち).

Steps back the right foot, lets go the left hand, steps back the left foot in front of the right one attaching the left hand at the side of the left waist, steps back the right foot, and takes the posture of MIGI-WAKIGAMAE (右脇構え) with only the right hand grip.

(2) → Steps the left foot, and does MIGI-KOTE-UCHI (右小手打ち) with only the right hand grip. Eventually, be avoided that attack.

(3) → Attaches the left hand to the bokken, steps the right foot, and does KAO-TSUKI (顔突き).

PART 4: SHIJO (仕杖) – (1 to 3)

(1) From HIDARI-HONTE NO KAMAE (左本手の構え), steps backs the right foot, and takes the posture of MIGI-GYAKUTE-HIKI-OTOSHI NO KAMAE (右逆手引き落しの構え).

Steps the left foot leftwards, steps the right foot, and blocks shomen-uchi with uke style.

← Steps the right foot outside of uchitachi, pushes (oshi) with KURI-HANASHI (繰り放し, a technical name of jodo-kata).

(2) Steps back the right foot for avoiding migi-kote-uchi attack, changes the grip of the right hand, and takes the posture of MIGI-HITI-OTOSHI NO KAMAE (右引き落しの構え).

(3) Steps back the left foot, raises both hands, blocks kao-tsuki attack with uke style, and takes the posture of MIGI-HONTE NO KAMAE (右本手の構え).

PART 5: UCHITACHI (打太刀) – (1 to 2)

(1) From MIGI-CHUDAN (右中段), steps back the left foot, and blocks pushing (oshi) with uke style.

Steps back the right foot, and steps back the left foot while blocking with uke style.

Steps back the right foot avoiding shomen-uchi, and takes the posture of MIGI-HASSO (右八相).

(2) → Steps the right foot, does MIGI-OYAYUBI-KIRI (右親指切り, to cut the right thumb) diagonally. Eventually, be avoided that attack, and be done SUIGETSU-UCHI / MIGI-KOTE-UCHI (水月打ち・右小手打ち).

PART 5: SHIJO (仕杖) – (1 to 2)

(1) ← From MIGI-HONTE NO KAMAE (右本手の構え), steps the right-foot with okuri-ashi style, and does pushing (oshi).

← Steps the right foot with okuri-ashi, and does the second pushing (oshi).

← Steps the left foot while doing MAKI-KAESHI (巻き返し), and does SHOMEN-UCHI (正面打ち).

(2) ← Steps back the left foot toward the right foot around the same line (hiki-tsuke) while raising both hands for avoiding oyayubi-kiri. The tip of the jo should aim at the eye of uchitachi.

← Steps the right foot, and does SUIGETSU-TSUKI / MIGI-KOTE-UCHI (水月突き・右小手打ち).

PART 6: UCHITACHI (打太刀) – (1 to 4)

(1) From MIGI-CHUDAN (右中段), steps back the left foot, and takes the posture of HIDARI-HASSO (左八相).

(1) → Steps the right foot, does MIGI-DO-UCHI (右胴打ち).

Steps backs the right foot, and takes the posture of MIGI-HASSO (右八相).

(2) → Steps the right foot, and does SHOMEN-UCHI (正面打ち).

Be done HARI (張り, to swing sideways), takes the posture of HIDARI-WAKIGAMAE (左脇構え), but moves the bokken to the central position, and takes the posture of MIGI-GEDAN (右下段).

(3) Without moving, be done SUIGETSU-UCHI (水月打ち).

Without moving, be done KAO-TSUKU (顔付け).

(4) Steps back the left foot, and takes the posture of MIGI-GEDAN (右下段).

Finally, moves both hands rightwards for taking the posture of KAMAE-TOKU-MIGI-GEDAN (構え解く (to undo a fight) 右下段).

[NOTE] This is the final explanation of RAN'AI (乱合) regarding uchitachi.

PART 6: SHIJO (仕杖) – (1 to 4)

(1) From MIGI-HONTE NO KAMAE (右本手の構え), steps back the right foot raising the left palm upward and blocking migi-do-uchi with uke style, and rotates (mawashi) the jo.

← Steps the right foot, and does UCHI-OTOSHI (打ち落とし). Eventually, be avoided that attack so that the tip of the jo points at the floor and the upper body leans forward.

(2) From MIGI-GEDAN (右下段), does HARI (張り, to swing the jo from left to right), steps back the right foot toward the left foot around the same line (hiki-tsuke), and MIGI-HASSO (右八相).

(3) ← Steps the right foot and SUIGETSU-UCHI (水月打ち), and takes the posture of MIGI-HONTE NO KAMAE (右本手の構え). Does KAO-TSUKU (顔付け) as ZANSHIN (残心).

(4) Finally, steps the left foot toward the right foot around the same line (hiki-tsuke), moves both hands to the right waist for showing OSAME (納め), and stands with TSUNE NO KAMAE (常の構え).

[NOTE] This is the final explanation of RAN'AI (乱合) regarding shijo.

CONCLUSION

In my opinion, an instructor who can teach ran'ai to a new student should follow the above process. As ran'ai is constructed from various jodo-kata, I recommend a new student to learn each basic sabaki (to handle) such as ashi-sabaki, te-sabaki, tai-sabaki as well as ken-sabaki and jo-sabaki. Those are building blocks of weapon training. Strictly speaking, when you don't have building blocks, in this case, you should stop constructing ran'ai until you are ready. Good luck, all of you.

GASSHO (合掌)!

