

Shichido – the Seven Coordinations

Drawings by Dominique Zaugg

Prelude:

Step 1: "YO I"

Gaining the Correct Spirit/Mind/Heart



The left hand holds the yumi, and the right hand holds the ya in a relaxed manner, making three straight lines: yumi, body, and ya. These three are thought of as one unit, not as three separate entities. The feet are straight and parallel to each other, with a distance about the width of one's fist between them, from toe to heel.

The body is completely settled and "listening" in a sense. It is open in order to receive the "spirit" or "energy" from far away, which enters for the making of a strong "tanden".



Step 2: "YUMIDAOSHI"

Lowering the Yumi

Slowly, in rhythm with the breath, lower the yumi and ya to the hips so that the shoulders, elbows, wrists and hips form a circle in a vertical plane. The top of the yumi should be pointed downward, almost touching the ground, midway between the two feet.

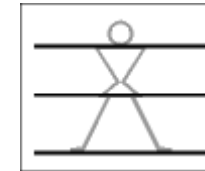


1. "ASHIBUMI" - Taking the Steps

The target invites you, like hearing the sound of a temple bell in the night, and you are naturally drawn to it. Your head turns slowly toward the target. The eyes and head follow this plane, as the right foot slides equally and oppositely away from the target, so that both feet come to rest forming a 60-degree angle. The knees do not bend throughout this movement and the body remains straight, not leaning.

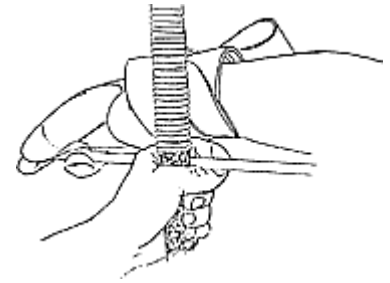
2. "DOZUKURI" – Setting the Body

Like a tree whose branches extend naturally to heaven, but whose roots are planted firmly in the earth, first strengthen the stance. Tighten the muscles in the buttocks and thighs, lock the knees and press them inward so that the calves are turned slightly outward. Next, develop a sense of upliftedness through the upper torso, as if a string were lightly pulling your head to the sky. Relax the shoulders. Feel the environment, undisturbed by the passing moments. The lines of the feet, hips and shoulders are parallel in a vertical plane. Take a moment....



Having achieved this "joining of heaven and earth," execute the following:

1. Raise the yumi and rest it on the left knee, being careful not to lower the elbows.
2. With the left hand lightly gripping the yumi, take the tsuru with the right hand's first finger, second finger and thumb, and turn the yumi.
3. Place the ya and notch it.
4. Return the right hand to its former position on the hip.

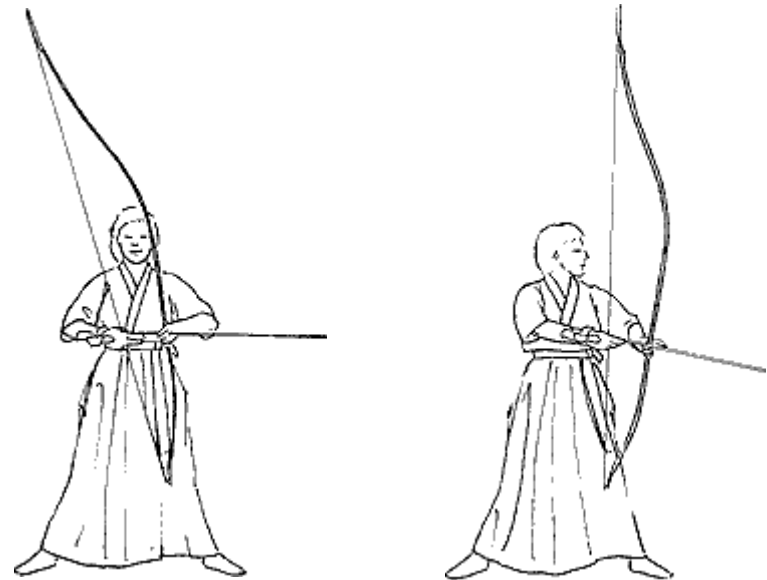


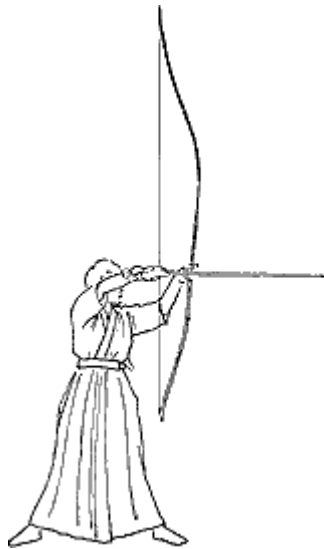
3. "YUMI GAMAE"

- Positioning the Yumi

Lift the right arm and notch the kake (glove) into the tsuru, slightly twist the kake hand. The baby and ring finger should be curled tightly into the palm of the hand. Push down with the first joint of the middle finger on top of the thumb.

The arms should be extended and rounded as if hugging the trunk of a large tree. Together, the head and arms turn toward the target. The head turns completely so that the face is in full profile. The arms pivot 45 degrees, still keeping the "tree-hugging" shape, which has now become oval-like. The left hand grip should be loose so that the yumi turns naturally with this pivoting.





4. "UCHI OKOSHI" –
Raising the Yumi

From the previous position, raise the yumi slowly to a level slightly above the head, maintaining the sense of hugging a tree. The head should be turned directly toward the target, not cocked up or down. The eyes look at the target over the left forearm, which forms a 45-degree angle within this line of vision.

With the chin slightly tucked in and with both eyes open, look at the target.

There is no tension in the shoulders or hips and the spirit/mind/heart continue to be concentrated in the "tanden".



5. "HIKI TORI" – Drawing

Here there are two distinct motions: the left arm first pushes out from the shoulder, while the right arm holds its position. The right arm then pulls the tsuru back, using the elbow, not the wrist, as its source of strength. The right arm draws in the form of a large arch over the top of the head and ear. The proportion of effort used in these two motions is 70% push, then 30% pull. All pushing of the left hand is done between the thumb and the index finger (known as the "Tiger's Mouth") with the palm not touching the yumi (known as "Te No Uchi").

The wrist is straight, not cocked. Only the little finger is tight, the other fingers are relaxed. The right hand grip remains twisted slightly inward, both to keep the tsuru from releasing prematurely and to keep the ya in place.

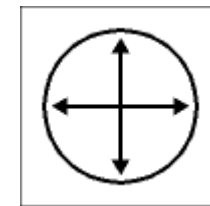
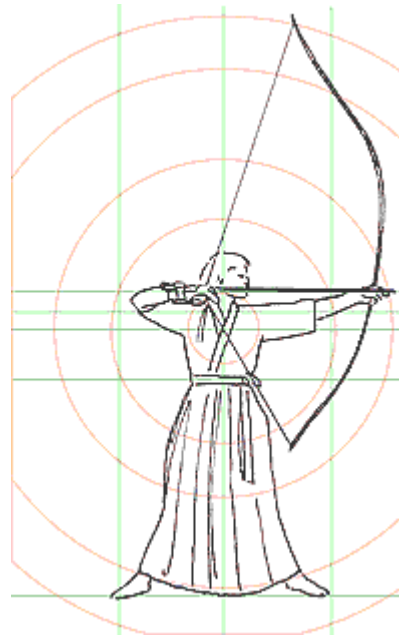
6. "KAI" – Meeting

The five crosses are perfectly balanced and hence all the separate components "meet" at this stage. Continue breathing naturally as in meditation and concentrate the spirit, allowing the moment for release to ripen. Since both arms are extended in pushing the yumi and drawing the ya, there is a feeling of being "stretched" horizontally.

Extending vertically with the mind creates a perfect circle, which expands until the moment of release. It is like equal pressure over the entire surface of an inflated balloon.

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7. "HANARE" – Release

When you have achieved "KAI", the moment of release has ripened and energy flows up and out from the "tanden".

The right arm grip releases from the elbow, like a sword cutting the air.

"Hello means good-bye."

FINALE

"ZANSHIN" – Lingering Mind and Body

Follow the path of the ya, allowing your mind to rest in this space. This "lingering" is like the deep resonance of a temple bell after it is struck.

YUMIDAOSHI (see above)

