

# Shichido The Seven Coordinations User Guide

as taught in Jinko Kyudojo of the Zenko International  
Heki Ryu Bishu Chikurin-ha School of Kyudo

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# Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Overview.....	1
1.1: Kyudo .....	1
1.2: Jinko Kyudojo.....	1
Chapter 2: Shichido, the Seven Coordinations.....	2
2.1: Ashibumi - Taking the Steps .....	2
2.2: Dozukuri- Setting the Body .....	4
2.3: Yumi Gamae - Positioning the Yumi.....	7
2.4: Uchi Okoshi - Raising the Yumi .....	9
2.5: Hiki Tori - Drawing the Yumi .....	10
2.6: Kai - Meeting .....	12
2.7: Hanare - Release .....	13
Index.....	16

# Chapter 1: Overview

## 1.1: Kyudo

Kyudo, the "way of the bow," is the Japanese martial art of archery. Kyudo originated with the samurai class of feudal Japan, and is derived from combat-style archery. Kyudo, particularly horseback archery, or yabusame, along with laido, the way of the sword, were considered the highest disciplines of the samurai martial arts.

With the introduction of firearms to Japan, the yumi, or bow, was no longer the primary weapon of war. Under the influence of Japanese religions, combat archery evolved into Kyudo as practiced today.

This user guide addresses only the practices taught in the Heki Ryu Bishu Chikurin-ha school of Zenko International. Heki Ryu Bishu Chikurin-ha is distinct from most other forms of Kyudo, placing more emphasis on meditation than on hitting the target.

## 1.2: Jinko Kyudojo

In 1980, by invitation of The Venerable Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, a Tibetan meditation master and founder of Shambhala International and Naropa University, Kanjuro Shibata XX came to the United States from Japan to teach Kyudo. Together they founded Ryuko Kyudojo (Dragon-Tiger Kyudo Practice Hall) in Boulder, Colorado. All Kyudojos established by Kanjuro Shibata XX are governed by Zenko International.

Jinko Kyudojo is the only Zen Archery dojo in New Mexico and one of only a dozen in the US. Jinko is the 22nd international Kyudojo of Kanjuro Shibata XX.

Jinko Kyudojo was founded by Tanya Epp in 1996. The Santa Fe dojo was given the title of "Jinko," meaning God-Tiger. Jinko Kyudojo has been active since 1996.

# Chapter 2: Shichido, the Seven Coordinations

Shichido, the seven coordinations, is the basic form for aligning the body and properly releasing the ya, or arrow. The kyudoka, or practitioner, has the opportunity to clean away obstacles to see the mind and qualities of the heart more clearly.

The equipment used in shichido is the yumi, or bow, with its tsuru, or string, a ya, or arrow, and a kake, or glove. Ya have feathers for shooting outdoors and no feathers for shooting indoors.

## 2.1: Ashibumi - Taking the Steps

Ashibumi is the first of the seven coordinations in shichido.

Ashibumi is a stepping out to position the feet and establish the stable base which is the beginning of dozukuri, the second of the seven coordinations in shichido.

**Perform Ashibumi by doing the following:**



**Figure 1**

1. While in yumidaoshi, the yumi down position, the head turns left toward the target.



**Figure 2**

2. With your eyes and head, draw a line from the center of the target to the ground. Continue to draw the line to yourself and step out, about 12 inches, to the line with the left foot, toe first.



**Figure 3**

3. Continue to draw the line with your eyes and your head from the left foot to the right foot. Step out, about 12 inches, to the line with the right foot, toe first.



**Figure 4**

4. Check that the distance between your feet is more than a shoulder's width apart.
5. Return the head and eyes to look forward.
6. Angle your feet at 45 to 60 degrees out from forward.
7. Check that you are stable and equally balanced on both feet.

## 2.2: Dozukuri - Setting the Body

Dozukuri is the second of the seven coordinations in shichido.

Dozukuri is the setting of the body and creating a stable base. Check your balance, make sure that your hips are aligned over your feet and your shoulders are aligned over your hips. This body alignment should be parallel to the line you drew during ashibumi.

You should feel solid, rooted to the earth; do not lock the knees. Your posture should be upright and straight, forming a straight line from shoulders to feet. Practically this posture will help to prevent the tsuru from striking your face when shooting.

Dozukuri includes all the movements from setting the body through notching the ya.

**Perform Dozukuri by doing the following:**



**Figure 5**

1. While in ashibumi, raise the yumi body, rest the foot of the yumi on the left knee. Align the yumi body about halfway between your left shoulder and your neck. The tsuru is on the left side of the yumi.
2. Maintain the "big tree" position of your arms.



**Figure 6**

3. Bring the yumi closer to your body with the yumi hand.
4. Reach around with the kake hand to the tsuru, palm inward. Grasp the tsuru with the kake hand little finger. Pull the tsuru to the right to rotate the yumi and bring the tsuru in front of you. The yumi body does not move, it just rotates in the yumi hand. You can now look through the "window" of the yumi body and the tsuru.



**Figure 7**

5. Slide the kake hand down the tsuru until it is across from the bottom of the leather grip on the yumi body. Using both hands, bring the yumi closer to the body.



**Figure 8**

6. Reach around and place the ya between the index and middle fingers of the yumi hand.



**Figure 9**

7. Push the ya left with the kake hand until each end of the ya is equidistant from the yumi body.



**Figure 10**

8. Stroke the feathers of the ya with all fingers of the kake hand, first the top feathers then the front feathers, then the bottom feathers. When you stroke the bottom feathers, the kake hand is palm up.
9. Grasp the ya nock with the thumb and index finger of the kake hand, with the kake at a right angle to the ya. Push the nock of the ya left until the thumb and index finger touch the tsuru.



**Figure 11**

10. Point the index and middle fingers of the kake hand toward the yumi, and cover the nock of the ya, touching the ya and the tsuru.
11. Draw the ya nock toward the yumi with the yumi hand then push the nock back onto the tsuru to notch the ya on the tsuru.



**Figure 12**

12. Return the kake hand to the hip to rest.



## 2.3: Yumi Gamae - Positioning the Yumi

Yumi Gamae is the third of the seven coordinations in shichido.

Yumi Gamae is positioning or readying the yumi for shooting. The movement consists of three phases; Torikake, Monomi, Tenouchi.

**Perform Yumi Gamae by doing the following:**



**Figure 13**



**Figure 14**

1. Torikake is gripping the tsuru with the kake hand. The kake hand "addresses" the tsuru.
  - a) Slide the tsuru between the thumb and fingers of the kake hand across from the first joint of the yumi, below the grip.
  - b) Position the tsuru in the tsuru-michi, the groove in the thumb of the kake.
  - c) Slide the kake hand up the tsuru to the ya and make a firm grip between the thumb and the middle finger of the kake hand.
  - d) Rest the index finger of the kake hand along and slightly below the ya.
  - e) Slightly twist the kake hand toward you.
  - f) Check that the fourth and fifth fingers of the kake hand are curled tightly into the palm of the hand to protect them when shooting.
  - g) Check that the arms continue to be rounded in the "big tree" position.



**Figure 15**

2. Monomi is turning the head to gaze at the target.

Turn your head to make a heart connection and to focus on the target.



**Figure 16**

3. Tenouchi is positioning the yumi hand on the yumi's grip for shooting.

- a) Pivot the arms left 45 degrees; the "big tree" position, or circle, becomes an oval.

- b) Swivel the yumi in the yumi hand as the arms pivot.

- c) Position the yumi in the tenouchi, the web of the yumi hand between the index finger and the thumb.

Note: The yumi and ya are now pointing at a 45 degree angle to the target.



**Figure 17**

Note: This is the tenouchi grip, the yumi hand has a loose grip on the yumi. The fingertips are on the side of the yumi grip. The wrist is up, keeping the palm off the yumi.

## 2.4: Uchi Okoshi - Raising the Yumi

Uchi Okoshi, raising the yumi, is the fourth of the seven coordinations in shichido.

Uchi Okoshi is the raising of the yumi above the head to prepare for the draw.

**Perform Uchi Okoshi by doing the following:**



**Figure 18**

1. Starting in yumi gamae, slowly raise the yumi straight up until the ya is level with the top of the head and parallel with the ground.
2. Maintain the "big tree" position.



**Figure 19**

3. Continue to look directly at the target.
4. Maintain the right forearm and kake hand parallel to the floor
5. Relax the shoulders.

## 2.5: Hiki Tori - Drawing the Yumi

Hiki Tori, drawing the yumi, is the fifth of the seven coordinations in shichido.

Hiki Tori is the drawing apart, it is an opening. The draw starts by spreading the arms, simultaneously pushing the yumi with the yumi hand and drawing the tsuru with the kake hand. During this opening, the yumi gradually descends as the draw opens with the descent ending when the ya is next to the lip at full draw.

**Perform Hiki Tori by doing the following:**



**Figure 20**

1. In uchi okoshi, start the draw by pushing with the yumi hand until the left arm is almost fully extended.
2. Push with the tenouchi, the web of the yumi hand between the index finger and the thumb. The left wrist is straight not cocked.



**Figure 21**

3. Continue the draw by pulling the tsuru with the kake hand. Remember to keep the twist with the kake hand to keep a firm grip on the tsuru.
4. Keep your kake hand above your head as you draw. Pull towards the right shoulder.



**Figure 22**

5. Slowly lower both arms together, as you come to a full draw, until the ya is at mouth level.
6. Finish the draw by opening your shoulders, opening your heart.

## 2.6: Kai - Meeting

Kai is the sixth of the seven coordinations in shichido.

Kai is the full draw or the meeting. Continue the movement started in hiki tori, until full draw is achieved with the ya placed slightly below the cheekbone or level with the mouth. The ya points along the line set up during ashibumi. The kake is just behind the right ear.

**Perform Kai by doing the following:**



**Figure 23**

1. In the full draw, continue expanding the opening of the chest and shoulders.
2. Maintain good posture both horizontally and vertically.
3. Unite the expansions of the body, let the moment ripen.

## 2.7: Hanare - Release

Hanare is the last of the seven coordinations in shichido.

Hanare is the release. The movement results in the tsuru being released from the kake hand and the right arm extending behind you.

Hanare includes zanshin and the return to yumidaoshi.

Zanshin is a moment of reflection after the shot, "lingering body and mind" or "the continuation of the shot." You remain in the position reached after hanare while returning from the state of concentration associated with the shot.

Yumidaoshi is the lowering of the yumi.

**Perform Hanare by doing the following:**



**Figure 24**

1. Make a cut with the kake hand to release the tsuru. The cut pivots at the elbow; the kake hand making a straight sweep back from the tsuru to full extension of the right arm.



**Figure 25**

2. Reflect for a moment after the release. This position is zanshin.



**Figure 26**

3. After zanshin, return the head to look forward.



**Figure 27**

4. In an arched motion, allow the kake and yumi hands, in unison, to gracefully fall forward and return to the hips.



**Figure 28**





**Figure 29**

5. Close your ashibumi; left foot first, then right foot until there is a fist's width between the feet, returning to yumidaoshi.

# Index

## A

ashibumi, 2, 4, 15

## B

"big tree" position, 4, 7, 8, 9

## C

Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, 1

## D

dozukuri, 2, 4

## H

hanare, 13

Heki Ryu Bishu Chikurin-ha, 1

hiki tori, 10, 12

## J

Jinko Kyudojo, 1

## K

kai, 12

## M

monomi, 8

## R

Ryuko Kyudojo, 1

## S

seven coordinations. *See* shichido

Shibata XX, Kanjuro, 1

shichido

ashibumi, 2, 4, 15

dozukuri, 2, 4

hanare, 13

hiki tori, 10, 12

kai, 12

uchi okoshi, 9, 10

yumi gamae, 7, 9

yumidaoshi, 2, 13, 15

zanshin, 13

## T

tenouchi, 8, 10

torikake, 7

tsuru, 4

tsuru-michi, 7

## **U**

uchi okoshi, 9, 10

## **Y**

yumi gamae, 7, 9

yumidaoshi, 2, 13, 15

## **Z**

zanshin, 13

Zenko International, 1