


The
Fundamentals
of
Japanese
Archery



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卷上



FOREWORD

When I arrived in Japan, in February five years ago I had already every intention of studying the archery of Japan, for I had long been a devotee of the English long bow at home. My first few months in Japan passed busily without my doing anything about it, and it was not until May of that year that I went to the Butokuden—the Hall of Martial Virtue, next to the Heian Shrine in Kyoto, to see the archery there. I had been in Peking during April for a short visit and had there visited the famous Bow and Arrow street where I acquired several Chinese bows. This really started me on my investigations into Oriental archery so that when I got back to Kyoto I made a point of visiting the Hall of Martial Virtue at once.

On the day of my first visit I was allowed to come in and sit in the hall from which the archers shoot, and watch the shooting going on, as tourists are allowed to do. Since I spoke Japanese I was soon busy asking questions and

answering those that they asked me concerning American archery. But when I said that I would like to learn to shoot Japanese style, there was a general shaking of heads. A foreigner might try, of course, but the consensus of opinion seemed to be that he couldn't get far! There was one man there, however, Mr. Tashisuke Nasu, who perhaps just for the sake of argument took my side and declared that in his opinion any man with the necessary intelligence and patience could learn, no matter whether Japanese or foreign. Then and there he very generously offered to begin teaching me on the very next day for the sake of proving that Japanese archery could be learned and practiced by a foreigner. Shortly afterwards we left the Butokuden together and went to his house where we had ceremonial tea and talked a while, after which we proceeded to a fletcher's shop where he ordered arrows for me, but first of all a blunt, featherless, practice arrow, for it would be a long time, he assured me, before I would be able to shoot with

real arrows at a target.

At that time I had rooms in a small sub-temple within the walls of the great Zen-Buddhist monastery Shōkokuji north of the Imperial Palace grounds. The priest who lived there was retired and let his spare rooms to students — and I had been fortunate enough to get one.

The place was wonderfully quiet, and my room looked out on a garden beyond which stood a deep grove of tall bamboos. For the next few months my friend and instructor Mr. Tōshisuke Nasu came almost daily early in the morning and taught me the art of Japanese archery.

He lent me a weak bow of his own to begin with, and brought his own makigawa or straw-tub, a great cylindrical bundle of straw tightly bound together and sometimes fitted into a tub, into which the beginner shoots end-on from a distance of four or five feet using a blunt featherless arrow until his form is so nearly perfected that he can be trusted with real arrows.

It was hard work. Months slipped by, and still I stood before the makigawa ceaselessly discharg-

ing arrows (the featherless variety) into it, and pulling them out again, while all the while Mr. Nasu stood to one side commenting freely on each shot. Sometimes he would walk around behind me and give me a sudden push to see if my stance was firm: sometimes he would do the same from in front when I least expected it. Some days everything would go wrong - some days he would note a considerable improvement. Gradually, very gradually, I learned to keep the grip on the bow so relaxed that the bow on being released began to show a tendency to turn in the hand. Day by day this tendency grew stronger - soon the string would describe a half circle and the bow would fetch up with the back facing straight towards me, and all the time Mr. Nasu saw to it that I did nothing with my hand to help it turn. The turning of the bow in the hand is not prized so much because of its beauty, as because it is a phenomenon that naturally occurs when the grip of the bow hand is exactly as it should be. It took several months to come, but at last it did happen that the

string came round smartly and struck me on the back of the wrist, and soon it was happening regularly.

Meanwhile Mr. Nasu had been occasionally writing out short descriptions of the various steps in archery — the stance, the draw, holding, releasing, and I would translate them, while discussing them with him. Hence properly speaking I am the translator, not the co-author of the text which follows, but since I have put in much here and there to make things easier for the American archer to understand, sometimes whole paragraphs, and since we discussed each thing at length as it came up with the result that many sentences were changed, the result can fairly be called our joint production.

It has been done in what little time I have been able to spare from the study of Japanese art and language, which has often been very little. Others also became interested, and used to come to help translate and join in the discussions. First there was Mr. Antoon Hulsewé, who was a fellow student of mine at Leyden and

now lives in Batavia. He was in Kyōto for just a year, during which time he too studied archery. Another was Dr. C. F. F. F. F., a scholar in Economics and Government now teaching at Pomona College, California. These two, Mr. Nasu, and I used to meet from time to time in the evening, and between us we translated a considerable part of the Shagaku-seiso 射学集, i.e. Orthodox School of the Study of Shooting, an old Chinese text on archery written during the Ming dynasty which I hope to complete and publish at some future time. Mr. Hulsewé was with us only at the start of that work, but Mr. F. F. F. F. F. who arrived in Kyōto just before Mr. Hulsewé left for Java continued reading with Mr. Nasu and me for many months. It is a very interesting text and I feel sure that American archers could much appreciate it.

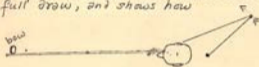
This book is not a treatise on Japanese archery in general, but a short statement of the aims and methods of archery as now practised in Japan, or at any rate as it has been taught to me. For there are

many schools of archery in Japan with all sorts of different traditions. Some emphasize one thing, others another, but on the whole it would seem that they really differ only in non-essentials — small tricks of technique and matters of ceremonial form. When it is a question of things like holding at full draw and the release they are all the same, and indeed could hardly be different.

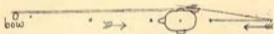
Accordingly the reader may be sure that he has here a fair presentation of a typical style of Japanese shooting, which in its fundamental aspects does not differ materially from other styles of Japanese, or indeed, Oriental archery.

To the Westerner by far the most interesting thing about the archery of the Far East is the fact that both in China and Japan the string is still drawn to a point well behind the ear as was done in the old English archery of Roger Ascham's time. That this is an advantage in some ways will, I think, be plain from the diagrams which show the

two positions drawn as if seen from a point directly above the archers head. The first diagram illustrates the American full draw, and shows how



the elbow of the draw arm must form an obtuse angle with the line of the two shoulders as long as the string is not drawn well behind the ear.



The second diagram shows the relative positions of the rear elbow and the shoulders in the oriental full-draw. Note that the entire pull of the string, is shifted directly onto the shoulder of the draw arm, instead of continuing to pull on the elbow as in the American method. The small arrows in the diagram show the directions of the thrust in the one case and the tension in the other.

No one can deny the superior neatness and schematic beauty of the Oriental full-draw. For in it ^{that} can be, and should be, extended and the shoulders thrust apart as far as possible. For this reason it would seem that their archery is better exercise than ours though it can never equal ours for accuracy. In judging their system this point should be kept in mind, and it should also be remembered that the old English archers drew to the ear. Remembering that they drew with the finger tips, whereas the Japanese have the string in a groove at the base of the crotch of the thumb (see text p. 12 and p. 18) it will be seen that the string in Japanese shooting goes considerably further back behind the ear than was the case in the old English archery - the difference in fact being the distance from the crotch of the thumb to a point near the tip of the forefinger.

I hope that the consideration of this point may lead some American archers to experiment with longer bows which would permit a fuller draw in the manner of the archers of old England. And I also hope

that some may be stimulated to acquire Japanese equipment of their own, and try their hand at it. This need not ruin their technique with the American bow as the two systems are so entirely different.

Another great difference between Japanese archery and almost all others is that the shooting is done from a special building built especially for the purpose. After living in the rooms at Shōkokuji for six months I went back to America for a short time to get married, and on our return to Japan we took a Japanese house on the Kamo river facing Hieizan the largest of the hills flanking Kyōto, on the East. The yard was just large enough to lay out a shooting ground. One small shed had to be built to place the target in, and another considerably larger one to stand in and shoot from, and a gravel path extended from one to another. Most of the shooting in Japan nowadays is done in this way. Very rarely do they set up targets in the open fields and shoot in the open air, and hunting is never thought of. However these houses make a shooting match

a more intimate affair than it could be if held outdoors, not to mention the fact that one need not worry about the weather. As soon as my ~~弓場~~ yumiba or 'bow-place' was completed, we held a sort of opening ceremony, to which Mr. Nasu and I invited a number of archers from the various associations and clubs of Kyōto. I opened the ceremony by shooting the first two shafts, and was lucky enough to hit the target the second shot.

Mr. Hulswē and Dr. Fahs also made frequent use of the shooting house, and one winter Mr. Fahs, Mr. Nasu, and I did the kanjūko (literally 'cold-practise') together for two weeks. This involved getting up ~~too~~ early in the morning and 'dressing while it was still dark'. We would first shoot one hundred blunt arrows, piece into the straw-tub as fast as we could fit the nocks to the string, and only then begin to shoot at the target. Among the illustrations is one showing Dr. Fahs shooting his hundred.

There is also a picture of Mr. Hulswē with his bow which had to be specially made for him since he is several inches over six feet in height.

I should like to close this preface with an expression of my

deepest gratitude to Mr. Nasu, my teacher. He is a samurai by birth and has the same surname as the famous Nasu no Yoichi of the twelfth century of whom it is told that during the battle of Yashima on the inland sea when the Minamoto warriors were following the boats of the Tairas along the shore waiting for them to land, he shot at a fan held aloft on a pole by some of the enemy in a small boat as a challenge to his skill, and struck it. Not only did he hit the fan, so the story goes, but he struck it exactly on the pin which held the bamboo ribs together. This one shot entitles him to the renown of a veritable Robin Hood of Japan.

But to return to Mr. Nasu my teacher, he has been an archer ever since his boyhood, having learned it at a time when it was almost in danger of dying out in Japan, its present great popularity going back only to 1923 when it saw a great revival. Thus he knows the old traditions of the art far better than most who have learned since that time, since his teacher, Ichikawa Kojuro Kiyomitsu was a man who had actually seen the

bow used in war, and who died in the bow-house, while drawing his bow, at eighty years of age. No doubt I might have learned something about Japanese archery from some other teacher, but without his generous enthusiasm and zeal this little book could never have been written, nor should I have taken the first and second ranks in examinations at the Kitano branch of the Butokuden, which gives the the right to wear a purple leather band on my shooting glove. That I have done so, is entirely due to Mr. Nasu's zeal for introducing the true Japanese Way of the Bow to the West.

Written at my study the
"Bear's Den", October the third,
Nineteen hundred thirty-seven

William R. B. Acker



XIII

I

Tsunegawari or *Gripping the string.*
This shows how the bow is held on the knee, while the glove is fitted to the string at a point below where the arrow is nocked. Then the glove is slid lightly up the string until it almost touches the arrow —



I

Momomi or *Viewing the mark.* Swinging the bow and turning one's gaze towards the mark simultaneously, one concentrates on it. Then when not fully prepared, one may allow the lower nock of the bow to slip from the hand-cap, and begin to raise the bow —



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Uchiwakabi, Hikinet or Holding and Drawing. Here the Holding proper has just ended and the Draw proper has just begun. In Mr. Nani's school (the Chikara's), the bow-arm is never raised much higher than here shown during the draw.



■

Daiwa. See pp. 44 and 45. The continuation of the Draw proper, when the shock of the arrow is just about to reach the cheek, and before the strain on the effect of the draw-arm has been shifted to the right shoulder.



Y

Jimou, I. 6. Holding at Full Draw. All strain has been taken from the arms and elbows. Only the shoulders pushing outwards in both directions bear the backward thrust of the bow and the forward thrust of the string. The whole mind should be concentrated on the target to the exclusion of all else.



W

The arrow has gone, and the bow-string has wound, and the bow, leaping like a live thing in the relaxed grip of the bow-hand, turns so swiftly that the bowstring strikes the back of the wrist a sweet blow. The pose is held till the arrow strikes.





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The Dojo. The bow-house from which we shot. Its name is Hihidokucha (or also Amu-aruugi-kaji) i. e. Amu-yu-chi, alluding to the fact that the ancient Japanese bow was made of amu (yatalpa) wood and the ancient English bow of yew wood.



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The Kougiika (see Foreword). Dr. Fuku shooting his hundred into the straw tub at six of a cold morning. Mr. Nam is seen coaching him.



16 Mr. Nam shooting into the straw tub. This photograph illustrates the point about the advantage of the longer Japanese draw particularly well.



I

Mt. Holsow at full draw, see Forward.

東洋弓道基礎

卷上



和容須那
廉惟伽阿
共著



行發會授梓

1937

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技藝畫志ノ具ニテ表現スル也。此類ノ、許セマシ武造ノ
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研究體得シテ心ノ外人中師。凡ノ人物ナリ

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TOSHISUKE NASU

styled
Munsuikan

The ancient seat of his clan is Shikotsuki in Nani province, the Nasu clan being a branch of the Northern Fujiwaras, founded by Nasu Jueitatsu Sakidom. He is also a descendant of the famous warrior Nasu no Yoriichi.

Special Instructor for Foreigners at the Detachment
Hama-jingu, Kyoto

Residence
Nawaraguchi Kurumazaki-choji In
Kyoto

足
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子

THE
TECHNIQUE
OF
JAPANESE ARCHERY
THE STANCE

The stance is the basis of all else in archery, for only by taking a firm stance can you keep your body upright and balanced and get into a good shooting position.

First of all, when, bow in hand, you take your place at the butts to shoot, you must banish all thought of other people from your mind, and feel then that the business of archery concerns you alone. Then, with the utmost concentration of mind, you turn

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and face your mark. in preparation to shoot.

In the practice of Archery there is always room for improvement — the possibilities for variation in mood, technique, timing manner of standing, drawing, releasing, etc. are infinite, and even after years of practice you never shoot two shots alike. In this variability and changefulness lies one of its chief charms.

When you thus turn to face your mark you do not merely look at it, but also concentrate upon it. This means that when judging distance, height, etc. you must not do so with the eyes

alone, mechanically as it were: you must learn to do all this from the belly.

In order to fix your position in relation to the target, you turn your left side towards it. Then advancing the left foot towards the center of it, you step backwards, in the same axis, with the right foot. The distance between the feet should be slightly (one or two inches) shorter than the length of the arrow you use. This arrow-length - yazuka - varies with each individual. The way to find out what the length of your arrow should be ^{is to} measure the distance from your Adam's apple

矢束

to the tip of the middle finger of your outstretched hand, add an inch to this measurement, and that is your yazuka -

The feet must be spaced naturally, without any mannerisms or tricks, the knee joints being kept straight. And as the arrow-length varies, so the spacing of the feet must vary according to the build of the individual man.

The stance should be firm, without the slightest feeling of floating, and without any unnecessary movements in the joints. The muscles of the whole body should be relaxed and straight.

To support the body properly

the stance must be firm as an immovable rock. And to attain to this stance, it is important to keep the muscles of the knees somewhat taut, and the knee joints pushed well back. But in doing so no special effort should be made: it is best to use only just enough strength, turning the knee-caps somewhat towards each other.

Standing naturally and erect, you must allow your body to settle easily but firmly, almost as though sitting down. [Translator's note: "sitting" here refers to the erect yet easy posture used by Buddhist monks in the practise of meditation]

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YUGAMAE

The general posture and the manner of holding the bow before raising it to shoot is called yugamae or preparedness. You must feel the arrow, the bow, and the hand which holds them as a unit, and hold them before you covering the target. In actual fighting the ^{archer's} (would face his enemy in the same manner, keeping him well covered and not giving him the slightest opening. This is the meaning of yugamae or preparedness. cf PL II

[Translator's Note. This "preparedness" is easier to obtain when shooting at a target, if one imagines it to be alive.]

GENERAL DESCRIPTION
OF THE

STEPS LEADING TO PREPAREDNESS

Let us now go back and examine in detail the steps that lead up to the stance and to the state of readiness which have been outlined above. The descriptions of these steps is based upon the traditional and formal procedure customarily observed at meets and tournaments in Japan.

First the archer advances to the spot from which he is to shoot. He holds his bow pointing straight forwards and downwards, the upper end of it being kept just a few inches from the ground.

Having taken his position he lifts the bow, and holding it straight before him, he nocks the first arrow^[1] then he adds the second [but feathers foremost] below, and parallel to the first, gripping it to the bow with the fourth and fifth fingers of the left hand. The nock of this second arrow thus lies directly under the head of the first, and its shaft touches the bowstring at a point not more than an inch from its head^[2]

And now, holding the bow and the two arrows in his left hand thus,

[1] In Japanese target shooting each man uses only two arrows and only one man shoots at a time.

[2] This is done merely for the style of it and the effect is indeed very pleasing. There are many such ornamental forms.

the archer next lowers his right hand and grasps the string with his thumb and his first & second fingers at a point equidistant from the lower tip of the bow and the place where the arrow is nocked. Then, looking straight before him, he raises the bow until the arrows are about level with his eyes, keeping the bowstring straight in front of him the while, and perfectly vertical.

Then he shifts, first his left foot towards the target, then his right foot away from it, thus taking his stance. Having taken his stance he lowers the bow, placing the lower tip lightly on his left kneecap, then letting go of the string with his right

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hand, brings it back and rests it lightly against his right hip. If the muscles of the shoulders and especially of the bow arm are relaxed, and the whole posture is easy and natural, the bow will of itself swing into the correct position, pointing sideways and slightly forwards.

At this point, before touching the string again, the archer should pause a few seconds to quiet and concentrate his mind. Some lay great stress on this pause, and recommend deep breathing, similar to that practiced by Buddhist monks in meditation, to settle and calm the nerves. Others do not consider this breathing to be necessary.

In order to understand the next step properly, it will be necessary to have a clear conception of the Japanese shooting glove. The diagrams given on the following page should give the reader some idea of it.

It might be said to consist of two halves, the boundary between them being along the seam AA. The left side, the thumb of the glove, is of extremely heavy and stiff leather. The part actually fitting over the thumb is of deerhorn lined with soft leather and covered with hard. The deerhorn inside cannot be seen. The other part, to the right, is fashioned of very soft, pliable leather. There are generally



only two fingers
but in some
parts of Japan
the gloves are
made with
three.

Let the reader extend
his right hand palm
downwards, and curl
his thumb out side-
ways and a little
under: then let him
place the tips of his
fore- and middle
fingers on his thumb.



Inside view of
Shooting Glove

nail and then, curling his third & little fingers under his palm, he will have approximately the position which the hand assumes while drawing the bow.

To go back to the glove: at the crotch of the thumb there is a groove [indicated by an arrow in the illustration on the opposite page] into which the string fits.

Since the thumb of the glove is hard and inflexible, the thumb cannot bend — hence unless the string fits snugly into this groove, it will be found impossible to draw the bow, since the string, sliding along the leather surface will easily force the the two fingers away

from the thumb, and the string will only fit snugly into this groove when the hand is held palm downwards. Release of the string is effected by allowing the two fingers which hold the thumb in place to slide off the thumb, and at the same time, by turning the hand and bringing the thumb very slightly upwards and so making the palm face the cheek somewhat.

But to return to our description of the steps leading up to the state of preparedness: we left our archer with the lower end of his bow resting upon his left knee and his right hand upon his right hip, performing certain

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breathings [which we will discuss in detail in another place] which have the effect of gathering his strength in his belly.

Then, as soon as he is quite composed, he brings his right hand around naturally and easily, and, using his third finger & little finger, grasps the second arrow by the head letting it hang down, gripped between the palm and these two ungloved fingers, while he shoots the first arrow. Some who find it inconvenient to hold this arrow in the hand while shooting, simply place it on the floor or else lean it against their kimono until they need it for the second shot.

Having thus taken the second arrow in his right hand, he proceeds to hook the glove onto the string by its groove, at a point about six inches below the point where the arrow is nocked. This is so that in engaging the glove on the string he will not disturb the nocked arrow in any way. The next step is to slide the glove up the string as far as the arrow, which it may just barely touch. This must be done carefully as a jerky movement may cause the glove to dislodge the arrow from the string, or moving the glove up too close to the arrow may cause it to push the arrow off the string

later when the bow is being drawn, as then the strain upon the glove may squeeze it a little out of shape and make it press up against the arrow.

While sliding the glove up the string in this way, his thumb and his first two fingers should form a "V", being kept well apart.

When the glove has been slid into position directly under the arrow, he closes his grip, placing these two fingers upon the tip of the thumb. While doing this he must be careful not to bend his elbow downwards and the muscles of both arms

should be quite relaxed and
nowhere taut. It is of the
utmost ^{importance} to keep the elbow
raised and not to let it sag.
See Pl **II**.



This diagram shows
the general relationship of the
string, the arrow, and the
glove.

THE
BOW HAND
AND
THE GRIP

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手 て
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One of the most difficult things about Japanese archery is the manner of holding the bow: the grip. When the archer has taken hold on the string with his glove, he then swings his bow around to the left a bit, still pivoting it upon his left knee-cap, and thrusts it towards the target making a "V" with his forefinger and thumb and keeping the other fingers relaxed, but more or less in line with the forefinger.

Then, drawing on the string till he can feel the strength of the bow, he settles his grip upon it. This grip is obtained by placing the large joint of the thumb firmly against the right hand corner of the belly of the bow, and resting the fingertips (except of the forefinger which still forms a "V" with the thumb) one by one beginning with the little finger on the right hand side of the bow, and in such a way that the fingers do not touch the back of the bow at all. There is a space which the fingers enclose, through which one should be able to

thrust a lead pencil. The fingers must be placed as high as it feels natural to have them, generally speaking the higher the better, so that when the thumb is placed easily and naturally over the nail of the middle finger, it will not slant down too much.

It is important not to let the little finger stick out, or the third and middle fingers grasp the bow too tightly. And when the bow is drawn, the thumb should, viewed from the side, appear at right angles to the line of the bow. This needs a great deal of attention. See Pl **II**.

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THE SHOULDERS

When men first began to practice regularly and systematically with the bow, they must have soon perceived the desirability of an easy, natural position, and set about avoiding the tendency to stiffness and angularity which seems to be natural to most beginners. This they effected largely by learning to keep the shoulders perfectly level, even at the full draw. Cf Pl V.



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MONOMI

OR

VIEWING THE MARK

Monomi consists in judging the height, distance and size of the mark to be shot at. The head must be turned squarely to the left so that the eyes look straight over the left shoulder.

When about to draw the bow, the archer allows his glance to rest upon the arrow at about the middle of the shaft and then lets it travel down to the arrowhead from which point it leaps directly to the mark. By so doing he guards against useless and haphazard movements,

and consequently at the same time acquires control over his mind. In this way the practice of archery may become of value in characterbuilding and has the power of conferring dignity on those who really study it.

Since, when one has practiced a bit, one has a tendency to begin shooting carelessly or at random, it is most important to remember to look first at the arrow and then at the target in the manner we have described.

See Pl **II** and **III**.

[TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: "Viewing the mark" is an almost literal translation of the Japanese word —

manami which is made up of mana, thing, and mi the root of the verb miru, to see.

It is a more general term than our "aim" as it includes looking at the target while, or just before, raising the bow and therefore though it does certainly include what we would call aiming, I do not think that the word "aim" should be used to render it.

Viewing the mark, then, consists in looking at the mark while drawing and leads up to the milkami or true aim - a word that might be literally, though not very elegantly, rendered by see-jamming from miru to see and the verb kamu which implies sinking into, or being jammed into something.

It will thus be seen that milkami - the gaze being jammed into the target - implies a degree of concentration which our single word "aim" does not imply. Manami is weaker than "aim" and milkami is stronger.]

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DŌZUKURI

By dōzukuri is meant the placing of the body squarely on the support afforded by the legs.

One should think of oneself as being like Vairocana Buddha,¹⁾ calm and without fear, and feel as though one were standing like him in the center of the universe.

Or one should be as proudly dignified and calm as when settles ones body into the saddle after mounting a horse. Thus the body should be upright and at ease, as though

1) Vairocana Buddha is god in the pantheistic sense, i.e. all existence. All other Buddhas are but facets of him.

simply standing straight in a natural manner. Then, the upper part of the body being straight and relaxed, one should concentrate all ones nervous energy in the abdomen.

See Pl III.

[TRANSLATOR'S NOTE - The Japanese pay great attention to the stance and to the placing of the body. While instructing me in shooting Mr. Nasu would occasionally give me a push unawares - sometimes from in front, sometimes from behind, just to see if I had a good solid stance or not. Sometimes I would be standing incorrectly & would topple at once. On the other hand, if I happened to be standing correctly he could give me quite a push without my toppling in the least.

The weakest and worst position of all is, of course, that in which the base of the spine is allowed to curve backwards so that the buttocks stick out behind. [The back bone must be held straight]

呼 吸

BREATHING

Of the two sorts of breathing, chest breathing and midriff breathing, midriff breathing is the more natural, and should be done without much distention of the chest.

Chest breathing is not natural and when practiced the continual distention of the chest causes considerable fatigue. The exhaling of air in this type of breathing, however is easy, and gives one a distinct feeling of relief.

The study of breathing consists in learning to breathe in the natural manner, and when

by doing so one has learned to concentrate one's strength in the pit of the abdomen - then one may be said to have come to a real understanding of archery.

To sum up: the manner of breathing should be quiet, not agitated, not stagnant, not sinking, not floating: even while holding the bow at full draw just before releasing one should so breathe.

[TRANSLATOR'S NOTE - This emphasis on breathing as a method of concentrating and at the same time quieting one's nervous energies reflects the influence of the Zen or meditation sect of Buddhism. This sect has no formal creed or doctrine - merely the belief that one can obtain enlightenment

through ones own efforts alone, prayers and faith being regarded as quite useless. They also are monists and admit no distinction between spirit and matter, or mind and body whence follows the idea that one may act upon ones mind or spirit directly by means of physical practices, and reach any desired state of mind or spiritual plane, entirely through exercises of the body.

Though Buddhism is Indian in origin, the Zen sect was evolved in China, and contains many elements which are purely Chinese, or which, at any rate were well developed in China before the introduction of Buddhism took place.

Thus they make great use of the word chi 氣 pronounced Ki in Japan. Chi is variously translated by "breath", "spirit", "aura", "animal spirits" and "nervous energy". It is that mysterious electricity-like fluid that runs along our nerves from one part of the body to another just like electricity along a wire. There is no single word in the English language vivid and definite enough to describe it, most of the words and expressions used to translate it having too

rarified and indefinite a feeling about them. At any rate there is no doubt that the word chi 氣, when it is used in connection with human beings, means just this "electricity" that flows back and forth along the wires of our nerves. Hence "nervous energy" might seem the best translation, and when I use the term the reader is to think of it as an almost physical and tangible fluid; tangible in the sense that its motion is perceptible to the mind - or the chi of another person may (like electricity again!) give one a distinct thrill or shock.

The Chinese again think of 氣 nervous energy as being plastic and under their control: at least, that is, if they care to learn the art of controlling it. One may, for instance, concentrate the chi in one's back, in the legs, arms, or shoulders or in the abdomen, by resorting to appropriate exercises.

However, of all devices for achieving conscious control over the chi 氣, systematic breathing is regarded as the most powerful. By means of their breathing exercises the Yogis of India are even able to stop and start the beating of the heart at will,

a feat probably never equalled in China or Japan.

The point is that to the Chinese there seems to be no fundamental distinction between the chi and the soul, or spirit in general. Hence getting control over one's nervous energy is identified with spiritual progress.

And again, since control over the chi is attained mainly through physical exercises, especially breathing, spiritual progress too goes hand in hand with, is in fact, progress in these breathing exercises.

For to the Zen Buddhist all attempts to effect spiritual progress by merely mental means such as prayer or extatic meditation on some divinity seem like the mind trying to lift itself by its own bootstraps as it were. If one's mind is to be improved, or spiritual progress made, it must be done through the body, for only so can the vital energy be directly acted upon. To him the body is not "gross" matter, nor is the soul anything intangible, or rarified — both are equally real and unreal.

When the Zen sect was brought to Japan from China, it immediately became popular

at court and among the intelligent-sia everywhere, so that the idea of the desirability of regular and deep abdominal breathing effecting a concentration of nervous energy in the hara or belly soon found its way into every art and every higher profession.

Even now, the flute player, the painter, and the calligrapher, all recommend and practise it.

In the tea-ceremony it is the zine qua non — even in the art of flower-arrangement one is told to sit so and breathe so while bending the branches & stems into the desired curves —

Thus, in Japan both the fine arts and the military arts have a kind of semireligious character: for each one of them the claim is made by its devotees that the practice of it constitutes seishin-tanren — spiritual training, or quite literally, spiritual forging. All these arts are known as miichi 道 or ways: the Chinese word for it being none other than Dao (generally written Tao but dao is the way it is pronounced and I prefer to spell it as it sounds) — a word of tremendous implications for which I can only refer the reader to the various translations of

Liao Dz (also written Liao Tsü,
Liao Tse and Liao Tze etc.)

Thus you have the Way
of the Bamboo (flute playing),
the Way of Painting, the Way
of Calligraphy, the Way of Tea,
the Way of Flowers, and among
the military arts the Way of the
Sword, the way of Pliability
(Jūdō known as Jūjitsu in
America) and the Way of the
Bow.

The first thing that is
told to the astonished Westerner
enquiring into any of these arts
is that the idea is not to
learn how to play the flute,
arrange flowers, write a good
Chinese hand, give your
adversary a spill, or cleave
his head open, or to transfix
him with an arrow = far
from it. The art's raison
d'être is invariably said to
be the development of character,
the acquirement of poise,
control of the mind and
spiritual training.

I think that one may
even say that this is especially
so in archery and fencing
for there are archers who will
tell you that whether or not
you succeed in hitting the
target does not matter in the

Slightest - that the real question is what you get out of archery spiritually. This attitude of course exists in the west, *mens sana in corpore sano!* but we have nothing like this haragei or art of the belly - that runs through all the arts of Japan, and whose mastery is a *sine qua non* to every one of them. And without Zen Buddhism it could not have arisen here.

THE DRAW

The draw may be said to have begun when the arrow has been raised above the line of vision. Throughout the draw a balance must be kept between pushing with the bow hand and pulling with the other, with the muscles and joints of both arms equally in action. The whole should be done with

the utmost calmness and deliberation, and as it immediately precedes the full draw itself, it is of the greatest importance. One may, indeed, almost say that it is the determining factor for good or ill in a man's shooting.

There is no way of determining exactly where and when the uchiokashi raising of the bow leaves off and the draw begins. It is entirely a matter of feeling.

After the draw has fairly begun, the archer's main concern should be with his shoulders which should on no account

be allowed to hunch up or get pushed out of line. The hand holding the bow, the wrist, the forearm and the shoulder must all be in the right positions relative to one another before the draw can be correctly executed, so that it is necessary to consider the previous activities of Preparation and uchiokoshi Raising the bow in this connection.

This Raising consists in bringing the gaze and the bow hand around squarely facing the target, and thrusting the bow hand toward it. At this time both the upper part of the

torso as a whole and the left shoulder will move towards the left, which is natural at this stage. Then, as the bow is drawn, this obtuse angle between the line of the two shoulders and the left arm gradually straightens until Drawing settles down into Holding, when the bow hand, the two shoulders, and the elbow of the draw-arm all form one straight line.

And further, during the Raising, at the moment when one wishes to begin the Draw, immediately after the lower nock of the bow has left the

left knee cap where it has been resting, and the bow hand has begun thrusting the grip towards the target — just at that moment the draw hand should begin to draw, with a tendency for the palm to be turned downwards, not violently but still firmly.

Only after a perfect grip has been taken on the bow, will the wrist also be faultless, for the wrist is so closely linked to the grip that they cannot, indeed, be considered separately.

First of all, in taking the grip, in order that the middle

of the space between the thumb and the forefinger [the exact center of the crotch of the thumb] may rest exactly in the middle of the belly of the bow, the correct procedure is to place the centre of the crotch of the thumb and forefinger in line with the center of the top of the

wrist, Uwasuji.

Translator's note. The term UWA SUJI 上 筋 or upper line means an imaginary line down the arm from the shoulder to the wrist bisecting it vertically, the hand being held facing right in the case of the left arm. The NAKA SUJI 中 筋 or middle line is a similar line running from the palm side of the wrist to the shoulder bisecting the arm horizontally. Technical terms.

When the wrist and the grip have been put in order, and the bow begins to push the arm back against the shoulder, in such a way that it receives the whole thrust, and none comes on the elbow or wrist, then and then only can the left shoulder function properly and the arm be thrust forwards gradually even to the last gradual and smooth stretching out which occurs just before the release, which is called gobu no tsume 五部の詰 or the Five Part Finish. But this last is only possible when one has learned to pull the shoulder

Down and so slightly forwards,
by drawing in the sides,
that is to say, the
muscles leading up to
the shoulder or arm-pit
are made to pull down-
wards as hard as possible
which has the effect of
absolutely flattening the
tops of the shoulders,
which would remain slightly
hunched up if one did not
thus draw them down.

When the shoulders are
thus powerfully drawn down
and flattened, they are
thereby naturally thrust some-
what apart, hence the extra length.

When the elbow of the draw arm, and the hand holding the bow are in line, and the whole power of the draw has been gathered in the elbow, and the straight line between ^{the} two can be effortlessly maintained, then balance, tsuriai 金釣合, between the two arms has been attained.

The following three points connected with the draw should be noted: —

1. There should be no forcing of the glove. i.e. it should not be turned downwards too forcibly while drawing, and the release must be smooth without conscious

moving of the hand.

2. In drawing, the strength should be concentrated in the elbow of the draw arm.
3. When at full draw the draw hand should be drawn in close to the right shoulder.

By the Balance of the Big Three (Dai San no Tsuriai 大三の釣合) i.e. the trinity of the bowhand, the drawhand and the right elbow, is meant the moment when the shaft of the arrow touches the cheek as these three points are then in the

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correct relationship to one -
another at that time. This
is also known as Sō no
osamari (雙方のおさまい) the
final form of the two sides -
and as chichi-haha no osa-
mari (父母のおさまい) the
consummation of father and

mother Translator's Note These
terms are very hard to translate.
osamari (双方) means term-
ination, conclusion, settlement,
wind up etc. but with an idea
of success in it, hence "success-
ful conclusion" or "consummation"
might be the best words to
render it. so (双方) simply means
both here both sides - or both
hands of course. Chichi-haha or
father-mother is a natural
enough term to express harmon-
ious relationship - an idea
implied in osamari. In one
of the many poems on archery
the two hands are also
compared to the sun and
moon.

One should start drawing keeping this balance of the big three in mind and should feel it coming throughout the draw, which must end in the position of the two: so no i 雙の位。

Translator's note. I believe as indeed the above seems to imply that there is a distinction between the Balance of the Big three, and the Final Form of the Two Hands - The big three refers to the relationship of the forces of the two hands and the right elbow just before and just when the shaft touches the cheek - it implies motion - whereas so no osameri refers to the two hands - the balance of forces of the two sides - after the elbow has ceased to move, and after the strain hitherto born by the right elbow has been shifted onto the right shoulder as will be described later on.

Summing up : the grip and the correct alignment of the wrist come first - then the shoulder and the upper arm must be arranged in the right position, and only after these things have been done should the glove and the elbow of the draw arm, be brought into relationship with the others, and the draw begin. In order to get the full strength out of the bow arm, one must study the action of the muscles of the top line uwasuji, the middle line nakasuji, and the bottom line shitasuji,

of the left forearm. The triceps and the biceps of the upper right arm should also be carefully studied in their action.

Note. For the terms yuwasuji, nakasuji and shitasuji see the note on page forty. Shitasuji T. ⁵⁸/₅₅ or lower line is not explained there but its meaning should be obvious by analogy with the others.

It is an interesting fact that, at the beginning of the draw the point of the elbow of the bow arm points downwards, and that, as the draw progresses & the strain increases, the elbow gradually turns clockwise until the point of the elbow points horizontally to the left having moved from six o'clock to nine, so to speak.

People who have practiced archery for a long time can often revolve the elbow thus without moving the hand or shoulder while holding out the arm as though gripping a bow.

THE FIVE CROSSES

1. The bow and the arrow.
2. The bowhand & the bow.
3. The thumb of the shooting-glove and the string.
4. The backbone and the shoulders.
5. The jugular vein and the arrow at full draw —

These are the "Five Crosses" which are superimposed one after the other. The most important of them is that of the back and shoulders.

JIMAN

or

HOLDING AT FULL DRAW

In holding, the following points are important: -

1. A straight line: the thumb in the shooting glove must be kept straight during the draw and while holding.

2. The cross. This refers to the general appearance of the bowstring, the glove, and the fist.

NOTE. i.e. The line of the forearm, the hand, and the thumb should be at right angles to the string where it touches the glove. 50.

3. The manner of gripping the bowstring. The glove hand should be felt to be twisted clockwise (looking from behind, in the direction the arrow points). This twisting should not be too strongly felt.

4. Degree of depth. This means the "depth or shallowness" of the closure of the grip on the string.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. A grip in which the index and middle fingers are kept nearly straight, so that they rest lightly on the tip of the thumb without, however, entirely covering the thumbnail is called light (literally asa shallow) where as a grip formed in such a way that the

two fingers are crooked over the thumb so as to quite cover the end of it would be "deep".

5. Weighing the string. This refers to the use of just exactly the right amount of strength in drawing and holding, and to the subtle feeling for the right amount of energy to be expended.

Too much force, and the hold will gradually weaken; too little and a real "holding" cannot even be attained.

There should be neither violence nor sluggishness.

The above-mentioned five points should be especially noted regarding the full draw.

There are two kinds of yazuka or arrow-lengths, the one which can be accomplished by drawing, and the other that cannot be drawn (see note below). In the yazuka which cannot be drawn (merely with the arms) the whole body is in equilibrium; it is the utmost length that can be drawn without any distortion of body or departure from ideal

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. The word 矢束 yazuka has thus two main uses - one simply denoting the length of the arrow that one uses, so many feet, so many inches etc, the other has a more abstract meaning - as will be seen in the above paragraph.

form. It refers to a draw during which neither the face, nor the body, nor the arms show any unnaturalness or strain. But in the drawn yazuka the archer who is not yet accomplished gets stiff in his attitude and his joints do not stretch, so that he cannot perform the draw in the proper fashion. Therefore since there is a yazuka over and above this, to which one SHOULD be able to draw, this alas! more common variety is called the yazuka which can be drawn.

While the archer is still a beginner, he should be taught that he must eventually be able to draw beyond his present capacity. And the more he progresses, the nearer he will come to being able to perform the gobu no tsume⁽¹⁾, so that the

yazuka will finally become a fixed quantity. By the gobu no tsume, 五部の言旨 is meant the steadying down of the whole body after the draw has come to its end.

The literal meaning of the words is the final effort

(1) See also p. 41

(tsume) of the (no) five parts (gobu). The five referred to are: —

1. The final effort of the wrist
2. " " glove
3. " " right shoulder
4. " " left shoulder
5. " " chest,

By "wrist" is meant the wrist of the bow hand;

By "glove" not only the glove but also the draw arm;

By "left shoulder" the shoulder of the bow hand;

By "shoulder" the shoulder of the draw arm —

And by "chest", the chest with all its muscles —

Another way of classifying these could be :

Under Yin 陰 efforts, the glove and the right shoulder. The chest effort is called the "reduplicated effort" or else simply "stretching" (nobi 伸). And finally the Yang 陽 efforts - the final effort of the left shoulder and that of the left wrist.

Now a word as to the action of the shoulders : in the "father and mother consummation" (See p. 45) the most important element is the shoulder of the bow arm. For just so long

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As this left shoulder is imperfect faults will flourish and develop like weeds elsewhere. To avoid trouble here the best thing to do is to draw instantly from the moment when the "balance of the big three" (See p. 44) takes place at the level of the eyes. That is to say, one raises the bow in such a way that the pull of the string is taken up by the lower part of the groove in the shooting glove alone, in which case the thumb points too far upwards, and

then soon shifts the relationship so that the string pulls mainly on the upper part of the groove, with the thumb pointing slightly downwards. At this point one should pull to the full draw and enter the stretching stage, thrusting forth the left arm as far as possible. Only at the moment when the stress of the string is taken up by the upper part of the groove, may the two shoulders be fully and easily stretched apart. This stretching is the fundamental action

necessary to put all the joints in good order and into proper relation one to another. While thus "putting in the shoulders", the muscles and bones stretching and stretching further and further still, will produce a perfect and natural position of the chest and shoulders, whence everything else will be in good order.

Thus the form of shooting has been sufficiently treated of. Now it is a question of what happens at the time of the release.

AIM

For hitting the target correct aim is of the utmost importance. It is like fixing one's gaze upon a snowflake falling from the sky and following it with one's eyes until it reaches the ground. This means that the gaze, firmly fixed upon the falling snowflake, never leaves it till it reaches the ground — but in order to be able to do this the mind must be quiet as the surface of a still pond. One should shoot with such a mood, illuminating

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the target with the true
light of the bow.

Aiming should be done
to the left of the bow.
The right eye should do
most of the work, the
left eye being merely
accessory. And the
left edge of the bow
should cut the target
in two, so that the
visible half appears
like a half moon.

This is the usual rule
for aiming, which
ought to suit most
people. If at first one



cannot hit the target aiming in this way, one should nevertheless not abandon it, but persevere until one has learned to score using this method.

However, when due to some individual trait or idiosyncrasy of the archer's (such as manner of viewing the mark, memori, or the power of vision) it proves necessary to aim to the left of the bow, so that

the whole target is seen
and no part of it is
hidden behind the bow,
this appearance is called
arizake 有期 or "the
moon at daybreak".

This kind of
aim should
never be
resorted to
unless experience
has proved that
the archer in
question cannot
hit in any other way.



Lastly, when the
target is quite hidden
behind the bow, this
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condition is known as yami
闇, obscurity or darkness
(eclipse).



These are the three
ways of seeing the
target when aiming.

離 HANARE
THE RELEASE 丸

The consummation of shooting is in the release, and the life of the whole art depends upon it. If the Seven Ways themselves are epitomized, they will be found to come down to the same thing, namely the release. The Stance, Preparation, Posture, Raising the Bow, Drawing, and Holding; all these are but preparatory activities. Everything depends upon an unintentional

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involuntary release, effected by gathering into one the whole shooting posture by means of stretching in the goku no tsume.

When this feeling is at its full, the art has reached its highest point; the state in which the release takes place of itself, when the archer's breathing seems to have the mystic power of the utterance of the syllable Om and the power of his muscles seems to enter into the very bow itself - making it more powerful still. At

that moment the posture
of the archer is in perfect
order - as though he were
unconscious of the arrow's
having departed. His body
feels refreshed and his
mind suddenly cleared, so
that he naturally seems
grave and dignified. Such
a shot is said to leave
a lingering resonance
behind - and this is
really the very highest
point of attainment in
archery.

餘韻如縷
不斷如縷

"The lingering resonance
goes on and on
Unbroken like
a silver skein"

When, after having drawn
full compass the arrow (then
being held at full draw) is
drawn still further back until
the arrowhead not only reaches
the thumb and the wicker
wrapping around the bow
just above the grip, but
also almost comes back as
far as the belly of the
bow itself, then the
arrow moving as quietly as
a breath, and indeed almost
seeming to be a living thing,

reaches the height of the yazuka. And when one releases with an exhalation of the breath, having drawn and then thrust outwards with both shoulders, then the release takes place, the arrowhead having been drawn back as far as it will come without danger of catching behind the belly of the bow.

This release is done softly yet it is very powerful

But the arrow that is released without the active coöperation of the thumb of the bowhand will

not fly well. For then, drawn and released by the draw-hand alone, the arrow's flight will be dull and sluggish. Up to the last moment, one must falter neither in body nor in mind.

Immediately before the release comes the Five Part Finish, and the posture immediately following upon it is called zanshin. But the release is the culmination of the whole. It may not, indeed, be seen, but by closely observing the Five Part Finish it is possible to judge of its relative excellence.

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in a general way. Also it is possible to judge from the form of the 残身 zanshin or remaining form, whether or not a release was good or bad.

From the beginning in the bow hand, there are the difficulties of the grip and the wrist position. And further, it is absolutely necessary to arrange in correct alignment the bones and joints of the upper (bow) arm and the front shoulder.

As for thrusting strength, even after one has expended

what may seem like more than enough effort, this will generally prove to have been really insufficient. So that one should always expend more energy than one might tend to think necessary at first.

Neither the release nor the zanshin can ever be faked, being, as they are, the very essence of the Seven Ways of Shooting, and the whole aim of shooting, towards which we strive, is none other than the release, which can be judged according

to the archer's attitude and appearance after the arrow has sped.

Even technique carefully drilled in according to the order of the Seven Ways may very easily deteriorate and be lost, hence one must be ever alert and on ones guard.

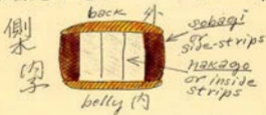
Japanese archery is more than a "sport" in the Western sense; it belongs to Bushidō the Way of the Warrior. Further the Seven Ways are based upon spontaneous principles, and not upon mere reasoning.

Yumi hikite,
Hikuma! Kamae yo!
Tamotazu to
Hana-re wo yumi ni
Shirasenu zo yuki.

Having drawn sufficient,
No longer "pull" but force it.
Still without "holding".
The bow should never know
When the arrow is to go.

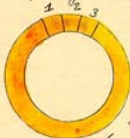
DESCRIPTION OF THE BOW

The Japanese bow, unlike the English bow, is made mostly of bamboo. It is a composite bow, the back and belly being thin strips of bamboo. The following diagram will make the construction clear:



Between the strips forming the back and the belly, in the middle, are three

strips of bamboo cut thus:



and arranged
as above
side by side

between the
back and belly strips. They
are put in not flat but
edgewise, which gives great
strength to the bow. The
gluing is done with fish
glue. On either side,
flanking these three middle
strips are side strips
(sobagi, lit. side wood)
made of hazé wood, the

wood of the waxtree, a tree with very brittle wood and poisonous sap and leaves. The best bamboo for the back and belly strips is a stem of three year's growth; if younger, or older, it will be too brittle.

Instead of horn for the nocks at either end of the bow the Japanese use wood — a special piece being fitted in behind the back strip which continues to the very tip at both ends. This wooden "horn" is bound to the back strip by means of rattan winding

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at both ends. In many cases bows are thus wound at intervals all the way down their length. The handle of the Japanese bow is not in the middle but considerably below it, only about a third of the distance up from the lower extremity. The grip is of leather — deerskin — usually dyed black.

The string has of course two loops, one of which, the lower, is permanent. The other may be tied and untied again at any time in order to

adjust the height of the string. (Their listmole is about the same as ours).

Japanese strings are of grass fibre, and very often break, which strange to say does not harm the bow. However, care should be taken that the top and bottom loops are set straight on the bow.

The method of tying the knot at the upper end of the string is as follows.

1) Holding the string just below the red cloth

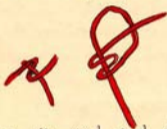
wrapping (with which the string is tightly wound at this end) between the thumb and forefinger of the left hand, you bring the end around clockwise over the part already held.



2) Next bring the end around behind, and poke it up through the loop from behind



3) Bring it around again
the same way to the
left and through from behind



4.) Take the end and bend
it from above around the
other leg of the loop and
repeat

several
times



pulling the knot tight
each time. The material
used for bowstrings is a tree
bark called zosō or kanakosō

Upper
noose.



String
continuing

Lower
noose.



which seems to be a variety of hemp. The diagram to the left will give some idea of the general appearance of the string. As I remarked before these strings are not very strong, and are continually breaking which does not seem to hurt the bow at all.

I think myself that the Japanese really prefer them thin (they say the string should be just strong enough to last a few months without breaking) their reason being that they prefer the sound of the thinner string. It seems that it is possible to tell from the sound of the string alone whether or not the release was a clean one. Here the Japanese have merely pushed one step further a principle well known to all archers of all ages all over the world. Who has not thrilled at the twang of the string of a well stringed bow!

ὥς ἄρ' ἄτερ σπουδῆς τὰ νῦν
 μέγ' ἔβρον Ὀδυσσεύς.
 δεξιτερῇ δ' ἄρα χειρὶ
 λαβὼν πειρήσατο νευρῆς.
 ἢ δ' ὑπὸ καλὸν ἔεισε,
 χελιδόνι εἰκελῆ' αὐδῆν

So without effort did Odysseus string
 the great bow. And he held it in
 his right hand, and tried the string,
 which sang sweetly beneath his
 touch, like to a swallow in tone.

The Arrow.

The main difference between
 the Japanese arrow and
 the American is the
 length: the same man
 shooting a Japanese bow
 needs an arrow many
 inches longer than will
 shoot with an American
 bow. The feathers too
 are about five inches
 long and are always
 secured by winding above
 and below. Being of bam-
 boo they are extremely
 light, and the centre of
 gravity is very near the
 centre. The arrowheads
 used for target shooting
 are very much the same
 as those that we use.

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