Dedaratl: Temple of Thumis martial art

by David Lemire

Dedaratl Inaction

The Professor has approved this material as compatible with "Real" Tekumel.

Dedaratl, the martial art developed by and taught in the temples and

monasteries of Thumis and Ketengku, seems almost the opposite of Hu'on, the

other martial art now practiced in Tsolyanu (which was described in my last

dispatch to the Blue Room). Whereas Hu'on stresses external actions, such

as striking with initiative, strong combinations and counterattacks, and

advantageous evasions, Dedaratl concentrates on the esoteric spiritual

condition of having all parts of the self in complete and utter

coordination. The Hlakme, "the conscious mind", acts as perceiver. The

Baletl, the spirit-soul, acts as the center of 'Stability'. The Pedhetl,

the "reservoir of raw emotion", acts as the power source. The Chusetl, "the

shadow-self or unconscious mind", acts as the mind-body coordinator. And

finally the Bakte, "the physical body," acts as the instrument of response.

Dedaratl seeks to fuse these elements together through "a stringent,

continuous program of mental as well as physical application," quoted from

"Dedaratl lel Qadarkoi Prazhurin" (Dedaratl and the Eternal Struggle). Once

fused, any aggressive solicitation causes an immediate, and more

importantly "unimpaired", circle of response which includes perception,

evaluation-decision, and reaction. According to Dedaratl's theory of attack

and defense, the problem with most martial arts is that emotional,

intellectual, and environmental interferences disrupt even trained

combatants in high stress situations so that their reactions are either

weak or excessive. These disruptions take a variety of forms: some fail to

perceive an attack until it is too late; some are paralyzed by the very

fact of the attack or are too focused upon just one of its elements; others

poorly assess its speed, direction, or developmental momentum; finally,

some lack the physical conditioning to effectively respond. Dedaratl seeks

to remedy these shortfalls through the fusion of the five selves mentioned

above.

"It is meaningless and self-defeating to concentrate on the outer

factors of a martial art", says Horu hiVrazhimu, who studied Charage as an

adolescent under his famous grandfather's direction but has since become

one of the greatest devotees of Dedaratl in recent centuries. He goes on to

stress:

"The body has its all too obvious limitations, but who can describe with

any certitude the mind's limits or its developmental possibilities. Combat,

in reality, begins in the mind! And the domain of the mind is limitless and

ever-expanding. To develop the imaginative and controlling powers of one's

mind, to fuse all the powers of the five selves -- only one of which being

the functional capacities of the Bakte, the physical body -- means the

possibilities of that self-same body will be enhanced and its general

functioning improved, while the character and personality is developed and

matured. Without inner growth, the rest is nyelmekh -- illusion!"

Dedaratl thus pursues what in the literature is called a "noble"

defense strategy -- one in which the combatant instinctively selects the

proper techniques for neutralizing a particular attack, reacts so swiftly

that these techniques are applied while an attack is still developing or,

at higher levels of practice, before an attack has even been fully

launched, responds so consistantly that Dedaratl has become a part of the

combatant's overall self, and acts so powerfully that the entire combat is

controlled from beginning to end. Four principles have evolved over time to

achieve the above: the "Belkhanu"-principle (centralization), the

"Avanthe"-principle (extension), the "Karakan"-principle (leading control),

and the "Hnalla"-principle (sphericity). The first refers to a condition of

centeredness or "Stability", both inside and out, whether in combat or not.

The second refers to channeling the Pedhetl's vital force into one's

techniques to produce an immovable stance or irresistible action of

defense. The third refers to "leading" the potentially dangerous and

concentrated force of an attack into harmless channels (i.e., toward the

outer edges of its intended line of development, or beyond its intended

point of impact). And the fourth refers to the innumerable horizontal,

vertical, and diagonal circles into which the Dedaratl master leads his

opponent's attack(s).

The principles of leading control and sphericity make it very clear

that Dedaratl is a combat art in which the bilateral strategy dominates. In

other words, Dedaratl is about responding, defending, reacting and

counterattacking rather than attacking. In fact, in its most traditional

form -- that taught in the famous Hauninggakte Monastery -- there are no

strikes at all! According to Dedaratl theory, direct attacks, especially

committed ones where the attacker is oblivious to anything other than

striking his target, render the attacker vulnerable at every stage of their

unleashing. Attacks cause an inevitable widening of the attacker's

defensive perimeter as hands, elbows, knees and feet move to bring the

weapon to its target. This "widening" creates numerous opportunities for

countermeasures: strikes, sweeps, grapples, throws, locks, bars, etc. The

Dedaratl stylist thus waits for his opponent to attack, and then slides in

toward, out beyond, or along side the line of his attack, and once there he

uses his opponent's own momentum to defeat him circularly. Some traditions

of Dedaratl refer to this as "gathamikh naikh" (lit., taking the spear).

There are other traditions of the art, however, which eschew all such talk

of strategy. Dedaratl, according to its grandmasters within the monasteries

of Ka'alur and Hauninggakte, becomes a part of one's nature. Once the

fusion of the five selves has been achieved, it flowers without strategy,

without thought. One reacts with no conscious intent when attacked.

Dedaratl happens spontaneously. It harmonizes opposing forces, thus

preserving "Stability". Attacks flow naturally around the "fused"

individual. The attacker, never knowing exactly how, finds himself flying

head over heels, or facedown in the dust with his arm and wrist locked

'just so.'

This fusion of the five selves, it must be said, is achieved through

exercises similar to those taught in sorcerous acadamies for sharpening

Psychic Ability, so there is some question as to whether non-psychic

persons can ever truely master Dedaratl. Horu hiVrazhimu reports that he

can "see" an attack before it even begins. This level of pre-cognition

cannot be expected of general practitioners.

Dedaratl, it must also be said, is not a unified art. There are

numerous branches of Dedaratl, ranging from what is thought to be the most

traditional and least aggressive (that style taught in Hauninggakte,

Ka'alur, and the temples of the far northeast) to the least traditional and

most aggressive (that style currently popular in Bey Su and other major

cities). As was said before, Hauninggakte Dedaratl has no strikes. Modern

versions of the art (those developed after A.S. 1000 roughly) simplify the

complicated techniques of traditional Dedaratl and include so-called

"finishing" or streetfighting moves: defenses designed to counter the most

common grabs, punches, chokes, kicks, and strikes of all kinds. These

include kicks, punches, strikes, and breakings that were never part of

Dedaratl before the religious wars of the ninth century. This spectrum

merely gives one an idea of the range of Dedaratl practice. Individual

masters further specialize. The priest Kerrune hiChuyon, for example,

emphasizes in his acadamy at Urmish the use of pressure points and other

physiological softspots within human and, where known, non-human anatomy.

The use of nerve secrets, knockout pressure point attacks, and potential

death blows clearly departs from the ease and spontaneity of traditional

Dedaratl, but many of his students argue that these innovations, along with

other more straightforward techniques to finish an aggressor, make Dedaratl

much more useful than it was previously. They also state that, in many

acadamies, time once spent on "the fusion of the five selves" is now spent

on strenuous athletic preparation and training in "every possible principle

of strategic application" because opponents are increasing in their skill

and power. This seems to be a tacit recognition that the bilateral strategy

is not applicable in every circumstance. For instance, when the opponent

feints, draws a Dedaratl counter, and then himself counters that counter!