Yanáz Mittlámu

This third in the series of Blue Room articles on Tekumeláni martial arts

explores the highly secret unarmed combat system taught in Livyánu,

mysterious land of the dread Shadow Gods. Yanáz Mittlámu is taught in five

principle styles, each similar to but also somewhat distinct from one

another, by the temples of Qame'él, Kirrinéb, Guodái, Ru'ungkáno, and

Kikumársha. Only members of the Vru'unéb, that Livyáni religious society

charged with enforcing the policies of the theocracy, today receive

instruction in the core techniques of Yanáz Mittlámu. Others, however, have

through the years picked up certain basics of the system through diffusion

down the security structure of Livyáni society.

Yanáz Mittlámu means, literally, "hand of destiny"; and, as its

meaning suggests, it is primarily a seizing and controlling art whose

techniques cause agony, numbness, sudden loss of consciousness, and even

death. At the hands of one of Yanáz Mittlámu’s masters, one is brought to his/

her final destiny -- be it arrest for later interrogation, torment, and

sacrifice; or simply death. The emphasis in Livyáni unarmed combat arts on

close quarters striking, grappling, and take-downs, however, has developed

only recently (at least by Livyáni standards!). Two thousand years ago,

before the region's many warring principalities were subsumed by the rise

of Livyánu's monolithic and theocratic state, unarmed combat arts closely

resembled a combination of Tsolyánu's two systems. Styles divided by

geographic region rather than by religion, however. In the south and west,

roughly below and beyond the Kanásh, Li'úz, and Kapráz rivers, long range

kick-oriented styles dominated. In the north and east, through the heart of

Livyánu and across the Tláshte Heights, closer range strike-enter-grapple

styles held sway. Once Livyánu as we now know it arose (under the

semi-mythological Dumúz Mélunez Chi'úna), however, it was ordered that all

unarmed combat arts be brought under the perview of the dire Vru'unéb. This

had a profound effect. The styles were consolidated and those techniques

least useful to the Vru'unéb were abandoned, while those techniques most

helpful to the Vru'unéb and its multifarious missions were advanced and

systematically improved. Many kicks were abandoned (only low-line,

rapidfire, nerve destruction kicks remain). Several throws were dropped

(especially those designed to send the opponent sailing away from the

thrower). But almost all grappling skills designed to control or lock an

opponent's joints, muscles, and tendons were retained, reviewed, and

developed. Thus, two millennia later, Yanáz Mittlámu looks quite a bit

different than its distant ancestors.

The purpose of Yanáz Mittlámu is to control and/or kill quickly. Its

grappling skills are designed to lock an opponent's joints or to tear his

muscles and tendons, destroying his movement and his will to resist. Its

kicks, strikes, and jabs are used to numb an opponent's limbs, make him

lose consciousness, or even to kill him. All techniques cause extreme pain,

attack nerves and arteries, and exploit human physiology with the precision

of a high-circle surgeon. There are rumoured to be over one-thousand Yanáz

Mittlámu techniques. They fall into five categories: 1) dividing the

muscle/tendon; 2) misplacing the bone; 3) sealing the breath; 4) sealing

the blood; 5) attacking the nexus (i.e., nerve center). Each of the temples

responsible for instruction in Yanáz Mittlámu specializes in one of these

categories of techniques, but by no means exclusively. They all know a

certain number of techniques in each category, enough to base and broaden

their distinctive styles, but have advanced knowledge in only one or two.

Dividing muscles, misplacing bones, and stopping an opponent's breathing

are relatively easy, external techniques which rely upon muscular strength,

physical agility, and practice for success. The Temples of Guodái and

Ru'ungkáno specialize in these techniques. Techniques designed to collapse

an opponent's lungs, explode internal arteries, destroy important nerve

centers, or shock vital organs require a detailed knowledge of human

anatomy, the theory and timing of internal and other-planar energies, and

other esoteric sciences whose mastery takes years of patient application

under qualified tutors. The Temples of Kirrinéb, Kikumársha, and Qame'él

specialize in these rare, frightening techniques. Vru'unéb members chosen

for instruction in Yanáz Mittlámu begin with the easier, external

techniques usually, and advance to the more esoteric "internal" techniques

only if they demonstrate physical talent, psychic ability, and honor, which

in Livyánu means a total commitment to the state and to the temples of the

Shadow Gods. If everything goes well, a student of Yanáz Mittlámu moves

from city to city, temple to temple, tutor to tutor as his/her mastery

grows. Some continue learning throughout their whole lives; others reach a

plateau and are then posted as espionage agents, interrogators, bodyguards,

ritual tormentors etc., depending upon their particular skills.

Like both Hú'on and Dedarátl, Tsolyánu's unarmed combat arts, Yanáz

Mittlámu tends to be executed with a circular motion. This conserves energy

and enhances the element of surprise. Surprise is important. Only surprise

guarantees accurate joint, bone, artery, and nexus attacks. Witnesses

report that opponents often find themselves controlled before they even

realize they've been set up or angled for a technique. Also like martial

arts in Tsolyánu, training with and against weapons (i.e., weapon control/

disarming) is central to the teachings of Yanáz Mittlámu. The secret

masters of Yanáz Mittlámu stress, in their teaching texts (which resemble

ritual scriptures more than anything else), that versatility is essential

to victory in combat. How one acts depends upon how one's opponent reacts.

Criminals against the laws of the Shadow Gods are desperate! They refuse to

be controlled, so Vru'unéb officers and/or agents must adapt their Yanáz

Mittlámu to fit the situation. Often they feint or strike their victims

before applying a core Yanáz Mittlámu controlling technique. For example, a

technique called "Arm Engulfs the Dragon's Neck" involves striking at an

opponent's center. When this strike is blocked, the blocking wrist is

grabbed and pulled so that both its shoulder and elbow strain against the

puller's chest as the striking arm continues up, across, and around behind

the opponent's neck. This seals his breath, tears his shoulder, and breaks

his elbow. Another technique, called "Chi'innéb Extends Her Neck for Water"

involves striking at an opponent's abdomen. When this punch is blocked, the

right hand grabs the blocking wrist while the other arm snakes down under

the elbow and then quickly reverses up and forward, over the upper arm,

locking the arm behind the opponent's back. The locked elbow is leveraged

higher to increase pain or prevent counters. The left hand is then free to

attack the near shoulder nexus, lift the victim's chin upward, tear his

neck tendon, or grab his hair to knee smash his face. Sometimes angling a

powerful or skilled opponent to apply a Yanáz Mittlámu control technique is

impossible, in which case kicks and strikes, aimed at causing

unconsciousness or even death, are used. These precision techniques are the

most demanding and feared in all Livyánu.

Death blows which shock or destroy internal arteries and organs are

only taught to those persons in whom the Temples of the Shadow Gods place

incredible trust. A man can easily kill with one finger once he has

mastered the skills of sealing the breath, sealing the blood, and attacking

the nexus. These "advanced techniques" of Yanáz Mittlámu are taught in

highly ceremonial fashion, with the student getting the feel of the nexus

strikes or presses slowly, as though he were acting out some deeply

religious drama (often elaborate costumes and jewelled masks are worn, so as

to improve visual learning and remove mental blocks). Students recite

ritual verses which contain key concepts written with Kénemuz, whose

meanings provide insights into the deeper secrets of Yanáz Mittlámu. It is

up to the student to interpret them correctly, however. Concepts such as

"'ail", ascend, "shánz", break, and "'opú", seize, are examples. The

Temples of Kirrinéb, Kikumársha, and Qame'él routinely dedicate several

years when teaching these techniques; those of Guodái and Ru'ungkáno spend

relatively less time because their advanced techniques are "external" and

therefore simpler. Students in all five temple-styles learn that there are

four general methods for controlling a person: to numb a part of his body,

to cause him to faint, to take away his breath, and to kill him. Numbing

part of a person's body involves striking nerve centers, utilizing either

external or internal power, causing paralysis and loss of function. Making

a person faint from pain also involves striking nerve centers, but usually

more vital ones closer to the spine, important organs, or the brain

(sometimes fainting can be produced while tearing tendons and breaking

bones, but only in cases of weak-willed individuals). Taking away a

person's breath is done in either of two ways: externally by damaging his

esophagus or carotid arteries (i.e., with a punch); internally by

collapsing his lungs with a deep nexus attack. Infinite are the ways in

which someone may kill a person: weapons, Onumísh-poison placed beneath the

fingernails, or the secret death strikes of Yanáz Mittlámu. These involve

destroying internal organs through primary (the liver explodes), secondary

(the brain dies after strikes to the temple burst blood vessels), and

tertiary (the heart stops when a certain nexus lying along its meridian

gets hit hard) modes of attack. All advanced techniques target four general

areas of man's anatomy: the head, the spine, the nexus points, and the

internal organs. These attacks may be either direct or indirect, and their

effects immediate or delayed, depending on their target and the circulation

of bioelectrical energy through the body.

Training methods for Yanáz Mittlámu's advanced techniques demand much

from those who would master them; they must develop highly detailed

esoteric knowledge and extremely powerful hands. Mind and body. The

original theory for these methods derive from "Li'ób Mikkúl Shirúdanaz"

(The Book of Becoming Shadow), which the Livyáni claim was written 40,000

years ago. The practitioner must develop external penetration ability and

internal power. The first step, however, is to strengthen the hands and

fingers for striking with various weapons in a variety of forms (such as

the Secret Sword Hand). There are five stages in strengthening the hands:

finger push-ups, striking into kettles of raw beans, volcanic sand, and

then iron filings, and developing concentration, accuracy, impulse power,

and penetration. After extensive training a Yanáz Mittlámu master's fingers

resemble thin steel rods moving at great speed; no wonder such persons

cause extreme damage when hitting their target. Fantastic stories of

Livyáni assassins killing their victims with a touch become more realistic

and less fantastic when one considers it often takes ten years to reach

this level of proficiency.

The methods of developing internal power are too complex to be gone

into here, but they are similar to those used in sorcerous academies for

building psychic ability. They involve relaxed visualization leading to

high mental focus, physical movements initiating the generation and

concentration of energies, and then methods of channelling these energies

into various techniques, not all of which are strikes necessarily. A

different sort of energy is used to strike, to take down, and to grapple;

another sort is used to sense or perceive an opponent's momentum. Highly

skilled Yanáz Mittlámu practitioners can enter close combat in total

darkness, sense their opponents' moves while masking their own, and deliver

a death blow that destroys a nexus (the nerve center at the base of the

throat?) with precision and ease. Directing energies along the line of an

attack is a sure way to achieve deep bodily penetration; this is how

internal organs are destroyed. The spell "Missile of Metállja", which

launches a bolt of psychic force toward a target, is a phenomena related to

the applications of internal power described above, but it requires a

spell, is more powerful, and draws its energies partially from the Planes

Beyond. In Yanáz Mittlámu, internal power extends at the same time external

physical force is applied; it becomes instinctive and immediate and no

spell or other-planar energies are required. Nor do metals adversely affect

internal energies: one can wield steel weapons and still accomplish feats

of martial ardour. The non-psychic can achieve nearly the same results with

the right nexus attack, so Yanáz Mittlámu is an unarmed combat system

available to nearly everyone. Athletes tend to concentrate on those

techniques taught by the Temples of Guodái and Ru'ungkáno. Esthetes tend

toward those techniques taught by the Temples of Kirrinéb, Kikumúrsha, and

Qame'él. Whichever one or combination of several styles a chosen agent of

the Vru'unéb pursues, the greatest glory of the dread Gods of Shadow is

served.