

## *San Satsu Ho, Mitsu no Sen, & The Four Sicknesses*

*Stephen D. Quinlan*

*January 10, 2012*

### *San Satsu Ho: "The Three Laws"*

The **san satsu ho** (三冊法) are guidelines on defeating an opponent.

*Ken o korosu.* (剣を殺す) "Kill the sword". Control the opponent's **kamae** such that it becomes ineffective. The sword is the source of the opponent's ability to attack as well as their method of defense. "Ken o Korosu", and your opponent can't attack nor can they defend.

*Ki o korosu.* (気を殺す) "Kill the spirit". Mentally/spiritually dominate your opponent, such that they begin to doubt themselves and hesitate in their actions. Doubt and hesitation create **suki** in your opponent creating flaws in their offense and defense. "Ki o Korosu" and your opponent is defeated before you even attack them.

*Waza o korosu.* (技を殺す) "Kill the techniques". Disrupt your opponent's techniques such that they become ineffective. "Techniques" refers to both mental/spiritual and physical techniques. If the opponent attacks, parry or disrupt it allowing a counterstrike. Mental or spiritual techniques refer to methods used to mask their intent or to dominate your spirit.

### *Mitsu no Sen: "The Three Initiatives"*

**Mitsu no sen** (三つの先) are the three (advantageous) opportunities of attack.

*Sen no sen.* (先々の先) This term translates to taking "initiative (yours) on the initiative (of the opponent)". Sen no sen is when one makes an attack as the opponent is initiating an attack or movement.

*Go sen no sen.* (後先の先) This translates to "initiative (yours) after the initiative (of the opponent)". This is when one responds to the opponent's attack with a counter; the attack is launched, recognized, then responded to.

*Sen sen no sen.* (先々の先) This term can be parsed to "initiative (yours) on the initiative (of the opponent) to the initiative (yours)". Somewhat similar to go sen no sen in that one responds to the opponent however instead of recognizing the attack after it is launched and responding to it, one has prior knowledge of the coming attack by drawing it out from the opponent, i.e., via **seme**, and counter-attacking using that knowledge.

They're not a specific formula per sé but more a method by which one can expose or create **suki** in the opponent.

Sen no sen and go sen no sen are often shortened to "sen" and "go no sen" respectively. Go no sen is also called "tai no sen". Tai (待) translates to "wait, depend on", and go (後) translates to "behind, later". Each term gives the same meaning of taking action after your opponent, dependent on what they do.

*Shi Kai: “The Four Sicknesses/Admonitions”*

The **shi kai** (四戒) are afflictions which cloud the mind.

*Kyofu.* (恐怖, “*fear*”) Fear of the opponent, fear of being scored on, or fear of the unknown. Fear leads to hesitation, doubt, loss of opportunity, and prevents one from reacting naturally and spontaneously.

*Gimon.* (疑問, “*doubt*”) Doubt in oneself or in one’s techniques leads to lowered self-confidence and a lessening of the spirit.

*Odoroki.* (驚き, “*surprise*”) Surprise is due to a momentary loss of one’s **connection** between oneself and the opponent. Surprise clouds one’s ability to think and act freely.

*Tomadoi.* (戸惑い, “*confusion*”) Confusion indicates the complete loss of a **connection** between oneself and the opponent, or the loss of a connection between one’s mind (intent) and one’s body (physical action).

The four sicknesses are connected to the san satsu ho, however this is beyond the scope of this text. One need only consider the san satsu ho and their effect on an opponent to see the connection.