

Cowtrapping

Origins

Let me elaborate a minute or two on the art-dimension: Adrian correctly referred to the birth of Cowtrapping as a sport in 1627, which indeed was a milestone for "Agri-sports" but I was always more interested in the ancient oriental roots that have been traced back to 1057ad and the Japanese Ryukyo-Ninja family developing a technique called Meuchi-Shikake-Jutsu (freely translated as Cow trick technique) whereby they trapped and hypnotised cows namely of the Wagyu-breed (later known as the beer-drinking Kobe beef-cow), crawled in through the anus and hid in the colon until the cows in the evening were taken in to the barn in the castle of the person they were hired to assassinate. There they popped out of the cow and killed their victim with a special poison, Shisofu, collected from mucus on the inside of the cows colon while hiding there. After the assassination they re-entered the cow and escaped.

During the reign of the Katakana-clan in the 15th century when Ninjutsu became obsolete the Ryukyo-Ninja family, still devoted to their way of life, developed the trapping and hypnotising part of the technique in to a more philosophical way of life, Meuchi-Shikake-Zen-do (see also "Zen and Cowtrapping" by Hirogana Kotsune, 7th edition, sadly out of print but still possible find), incorporating various disciplines such as meditation (gakka), acupressure massage (seiho) and the art of correcting joints, dislocated by the trapping techniques (koppo).

As Ade also mentioned, practising Meuchi-Shikake-Zen-do, thinking like a cow and becoming one with the cow has taken me to spiritual levels of enlightenment I never thought possible and when I perform Kakurizu-no-hangetsu-hiabayashi-gakke (the wing of the crane, in the nostril of the cow, half-moon arc-trap) and really get it right, I am one with everything, a part of the big pulsating life-force (Zenshin) and I feel a bolt of joy exploding in my heart. That is cowtrapping for me! I will write more later about my trip

to the little rural island of Shikoku where I met and trained with Ryokyou Kanakana the 27th grandmaster of Meuchi-Shikake-Zen-do, a direct descendant from the first grandmaster Ryokyu Kawamara in 1057 (they get really, really old these guys)

Cow trapping has probably been around in one form or the other ever since man realised that cows could be used for food, milk, butter, yoghurt and sex to mention just a few of the uses of this versatile animal. Even though the first documented system for cowtrapping was the Meuchi-Shikake-Jutsu developed by the Japanese Ryukyo-Ninja family, professional cowtrappers roamed the Asian savannahs long before they wrote their famous curriculum, the Meuchi-Shikake-Jutsu Kamoku-hyo. Evidence points to that the techniques were brought to Japan by the mysterious Chinese society of Shinobi, the shadow warriors. They in turn can be traced back to Sumerian myths where new research suggests that the surprised look and big staring eyes in the sculptures recovered actually are depicting spectators watching a professional cowtrapper in action. A statue of a cow in a primitive Yemen-style trap provides further evidence for this case. From there it has probably spread all over the then know world.

The Gyr

But that was not the reason I was writing today. The reason is the Gyr. This breed of cow has one of the most advanced anti-trapping camouflages in the world. Through some freak of evolution this cow can imitate both a sheep and a Spaniel (see picture). Especially in dawn and dusk, the prime trapping hours, numerous cowtrappers have crawled past Gyrs thinking "wow, a kennel" or "darn, a herd of sheep" happily ignorant that they have just missed an opportunity to trap one of the most illusive breeds. Previously the only way to be really sure was to get close enough to smell them. They might look like dogs but they sure smell like cows. Most trappers would however like to avoid that since there is nothing more embarrassing for a professional trapper to be caught red-handed by a colleague when sniffing a sheep's rectum. I guess we all remember the famous Luigi Trappatoni who committed suicide in shame after a fellow trapper filmed him sniffing a Springer Spaniel outside Puglia and the published the pictures on the www. He was risking it all for the glory of trapping a Gyr and paid the consequences as many a trapper going for fame had done before. (out of respect I am not attaching those pictures. I use them only when I am in a real bad mood and nothing else can cheer me up).

Up until now it has simply not been worth the risk to trap Gyrs, but now there is a new solution! The GyrDetect GX1000(TM) developed in cow-operation between, Stanford, Cambridge, MIT and myself. It is a small devise sending out a short electromagnetic pulse and registering the phase delay in the returning signal. The device easily separates a cow's skin from any other mammal's. Normally I am against this kind of high tech gadget but this one really works and if you send me £1000 in unmarked bank notes in an unmarked envelope I might send you one.

PsyKofarmaka

Why is it so quiet in the group. Is everyone out trapping, gathering material to share?

I myself have been quiet for a few days as I am trapped in the usual monthly meeting from hell but this time we are actually viewing a new group of products, psycowpharmaca for cows suffering from post-trapping trauma. One of the side effects of a non-professional trapping is indeed, as we all know, that the cow gets disoriented, starts mooing uncontrollably and in some severe cases starts singing Frank Sinatra's "My way". For most bovinecreatures this is a passing stage and in one to two days the cow is back to its normal dull self. But for some cows this does not happen and the symptoms get even worse over time, cross-dressing, compulsive cart-wheelingand generally behaving like a cow in a Larson Cartoon (Of course this is how the clumsy but enthusiastic trapper Gary Larson got the ideas for most of his strips). Previously these cows have been emergency slaughtered

(especially when singing "My way". Few people can stand that for a long time) but now new psycowpharmaca is being developed that would solve this problem. For the moment the biggest problem is the rectal administration of the drug leading to severe health risks for vets administering the cure. I will come back with more on this subject after the meeting

Group trapping

I am in! Although I'd prefer if we tried without the night goggles, at least for a starter. They are after all horribly expensive (although perhaps we could get a sponsor ... maybe MAFF) and I think the glory of trapping a Xianping without any high-tech gadgets would be a price worth taking some risks for. I will in the mean time set up my portable and foldable pharmacokinetics & toxicology home-laboratory (£7.99 at Argos) in the storage space above the water tank in the flat to start finding a serum to use as an antidote to the lethal neurotoxin from its whipping spiked tail. I think the Kruskal-Wallis twin-fake would do the trick if we are only two trappers. If we are 3 or more we should use the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Goodness of Fit Trap, reducing the injury risk while still in a distribution-free way secures the successful trap. While we're there we could try trapping a Yak too, just for fun.

We haven't discussed group trapping techniques very much, have we? It is a bit un-orthodox, I know, but nevertheless very effective in extreme cases like this and although trapping is not a team sport it is actually quiterewarding to celebrate a great trap cheering with and hugging your team-mates, thrashing some local pub as opposed to the usual brew of tea alone by the campfire, looking out over the meadows in silent rejoice.

Any other thoughts on group trapping?

Synchronised trapping is a pest when used for trapping cows It is, always has been and, I sincerely hope, always will be an art dedicated to trapping Water Buffalos (*Bubalus bubalis* (I love Latin, don't understand crap of itbut love it! (I also love multiple parenthesis))) where the non-parametric Spearmann Synchronised leg scissors move is effective and where the nose plugs are actually a help. But trapping Water buffaloes is an entirelydifferent discipline and when Yakamura-Achiproisit entered the

Cow trapping WC in Manila -94 wearing nose plugs and pink ballet clothes they definitely crossed the line of decency. Call me a fundamentalist but if a new invention or approach does not move the art of trapping forward I am against it. A similar problem is the Ice trapping phenomena, popular in northern Scandinavia, where cows are trapped by skaters, often to the sound of classical music. This is an outrage. I mean, cows are poor skaters so trapping them is no challenge at all. It is just a public spectacle like bull fighting, another sad offspring from Spanish macho trapping. Keep the art pure!

Transcripts from a meadow in Cornwall

- Moo chew chew glup moo MOOOOOO chew chew chew glup chew chew
- crawl crawl mmpf he he he ... crawl crawl
- moo chew chew fart FART moo glup FAAART!!!
- crawl phew whattafuck cough cough mumble mumble crawl COUGHH
- che ... moo? MoOOOOoO!?!?!?
- BANZAI!!
- umph grapple MOOOo umph mmgrfucking ... humpf kick grunt grapple yeah mOO MooOOooh ... oh ... oh ... sigh ...

later around the campfire

- Ahmygad your farts smell cow!
- Moo!
- You almost got me with that horse kick when I fumbled with the Tail Knot Sweep
- MooOOOo!
- Sorry, I meant cow kick! Honestly! Want some more tea?
- Mo
- Better drinking the leaves than eating them, aint it? Milk?
- MoOOooOO?!?!?
- She ran away! Why does that always happen to me ...