



**THE INSTITUTE FOR  
JEDI REALIST STUDIES**

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# Warrior Principles 101

A course developed by the Jedi Academy, an affiliate training program of

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# Martial Arts, Martial Ways and THE Martial Way

Greetings students,

I'd like to introduce myself to those of you who may be unfamiliar with me. My 'name' is Inari, and I will be taking you for this topic, on the ethics and other introductory aspects of the Warrior path.

I am not a black belt, nor do I hold a high ranking in any martial art. I have studied Judo, Wing Chun Kung Fu and Tai Chi for a few years each and attained mid-level rankings in two of these disciplines. I am currently studying Kendo and am ungraded in this. So though I will not kid you that I am an expert in martial arts, I have been knocking around a bit and did (more importantly) spend a great deal of time after classes drinking green tea out of tiny little cups discussing martial arts with my Sifu. Additionally, this class has been based on a specific text, namely 'Living the Martial Way' by Forrest E. Morgan. Additional texts have also been used as references; I invite you to check out the references section at your leisure.

Martial arts are more than a series of properly executed physical techniques. There is a rich philosophical foundation underpinning them; a common way of thinking, feeling and living amongst those warriors who developed the various martial arts and amongst those who still mindfully practice them nowadays. It is a core attitude, common to warriors despite any cultural differences they have; and it also separates them from non-warriors. It is the *Martial Way*.

The term 'martial art' is used in the West to describe all sorts of Asian combative systems and sports. However, not all of these were actually developed by warriors for combat. Some were developed for physical and spiritual development, some for personal self defence, some for sport. Some examples of these are Shaolin Kung Fu and Karate.

Martial arts do not have to be based on weapons, though originally most warriors fought with weapons and as such the bulk of their training revolved around their weapons. Unarmed martial styles such as Karate are still appropriate for warriors however because though they may not have been developed by warriors, they were still used for military purposes.

However, when one considers sports applications of combative systems, such as taekwondo, karate-do and judo, one realises they are not truly martial arts. This is one reason why I quit Judo (apart from the badly broken ankle obtained during my first and only competition, but that's another story lol). As I moved up in ranks, I began to realise how impractical Judo would be in any situation where I was having to defend myself. Sure, if someone was stupid enough to grab me from behind I might have been able to land them with a hip throw, but otherwise...I would have been dead meat. The main reason why sports-focused martial arts are impractical is that they have too many rules placed upon them, modifying the technical application of the techniques. People train to win within the framework of those rules, and then are lost in the no-holds-barred realm of true fighting. Of course, sports based arts still have some valuable things to teach us...perseverance; courage; fair play; physical fitness are all important things to learn and practice. However, it still isn't a true *martial* art nor is it the *Martial Way*.

So, get to the point Inari, I hear you say. What is the Martial Way?

Let's use Japan as an example, for now. In Japan, combative systems tend to fit into two categories. Those developed by warrior groups purely for use in combat are called *bugei* or *bujutsu* (both words translate as 'martial art'). Arts of this type generally end with the suffix *jutsu* or *jitsu*. The other type, *budo* (martial way) systems all in the suffix *do* (way). These systems were generally developed from the *jutsu* forms but have goals beyond (or instead of, thinking Judo) combat. The *bujutsu* practitioner is concerned first and foremost with prevailing in combat; the *budo* practitioner with a system of physical, mental and spiritual discipline through which s(he) seeks to attain perfection. This system is also known in China and other countries, Japan is not the only place with this dichotomy, in China the same concept is expressed by 'tao'.

So, how do we follow the *Martial Way*? Well, it's not easy. Firstly, you have to realise that any system you choose to practice is artificial. That is to say, mastery of it is not the desired end in itself but only a vehicle towards this end. This goes for the entirety of your training as a Jedi, by the way, it's NOT just applicable to this course. Secondly, you must learn to minimise the external gratifications of rank, prestige, competitive victory, ego etc. The true reward is your own personal development, and a strengthening of your connection to the Force. Additionally, just as in all facets of your Jedi training, the *Martial Way* does not end when you finish training for the day, it is a holistic discipline and the *Way* should be applied to all aspects of your life. This is what separates the *Way* from other pursuits, and differentiates the warrior from a hobbyist or someone playing a sport.

'Art is the way to the *absolute*' and to the essence of human life. The aim of art is not the one-sided promotion of spirit, soul and senses, but the *opening* of all human capacities – thought, feeling, will – to the life rhythm of the world of nature. so will the voiceless voice be heard and the self be brought into harmony with it.'

**Bruce Lee**

**Exercise: Please outline your previous martial arts experience (if any); and advise of which system you believe is most suitable for you as a Jedi, along with your reasons. This is to be placed into your journal.**

# Teaching Tale One – The Karate man and the Tiger

Gogen Yamaguchi, the founder of the goju-kai style of karate, had many adventures as a young man and one of the most famous occurred during World War II. The Japanese government had sent Yamaguchi to Manchuria on secret business, and whilst conducting certain negotiations he was captured by forces of the Kuomintang (the Chinese National People's Party) government. They shipped him off to a labour camp where he was treated very badly and suffered great hardship and deprivation.

Although a model prisoner who did everything he was told, Yamaguchi's captors were wary of him. There was something in his demeanour, the way he walked proudly and the way the other prisoners held him in such high regard which caused the guards to be almost afraid of him.

The normal day's routine for the prisoners was to eat whatever was available, which was never enough, and then to lounge about either sleeping or gossiping. But Yamaguchi did not behave as the other prisoners. When he was allowed out of his cell, he would run around the exercise area and practise all manner of kicks and punches hour after hour. In his cell he would sit and meditate for long periods. Yamaguchi refused to bow down and be broken by the conditions of his imprisonment.

The guards began to see this proud Japanese as something of a superhuman being. He always looked fit and healthy unlike the other prisoners, and yet he ate the same starvation diet. They began to think of him as a demon and their fear grew. News soon reached the camp commandant's office of this strange prisoner. On further investigation it was discovered who he was and orders were issued that at all costs he must be broken, so that he would lose face before the other prisoners.

Yamaguchi was placed in solitary confinement and his rations would have barely kept a child alive. For twenty hours a day he sat in his cell in total darkness. The cell was so small that when he sat cross-legged his knees touched the walls. Daily beatings by the guards still failed to affect him or break his spirit. Each day he would practise his special breathing exercises and then put himself into a trance-like state so that he felt neither pain nor hunger. The prison officials could not believe that one man could withstand such harsh treatment and still remain fit and unbroken. By now rumour was rife around the camp about the demon man whose very name seemed to frighten the guards when it was whispered by the prisoners.

The commandant finally ordered an ultimate test that would rid them of this man once and for all. They dragged Yamaguchi out of his cell and walked him across the compound to where there was a cage containing a half-starved tiger. Laughing, the guards pushed him into the cage and ordered the whole camp to watch the Japanese karate man being eaten alive. 'Lets see your karate help you now.' goaded one of the guards.

The minute Yamaguchi was pushed into the cage a strange look came into his eyes. He adopted a karate stance and with an ear-piercing yell he attacked the tiger. The animal was momentarily stunned by the shout, so allowing enough time for Yamaguchi to jump on to its back and apply a strangulation technique from behind. In the process he let out another screeching yell right into the tiger's ear and then pulled back on his arms, using every bit of strength in his body. Moments later the tiger slumped to the cage floor, dead. The guards looked terrified and ran off, leaving Yamaguchi in the cage overnight with the dead tiger.

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The next morning he was let out of the cell and allowed to rejoin the other prisoners. Less than two weeks later he was exchanged with another political prisoner, thus facilitating his release. The guards at the camp breathed a sigh of relief when this demon karate man left the camp.

Years later, when near to death, Yamaguchi was asked what karate was all about. He replied, 'Karate is not about fighting; it is about truth'.

# Lecture Two- The Warrior Mindset

Funakoshi was karate's greatest modern master. He was the man who raised the art from its obscure roots in Okinawa to public attention in Japan and eventually the world. As a result, more people are familiar with his name than any other in the history of karate.

Although Funakoshi was a great karate master, the source of his greatness and fame was not his physical prowess. Certainly, having devoted his life to the practice of karate, he commanded all the strength, speed, and technical skill associated with that art's mastery. But he had contemporaries who were stronger, faster, and perhaps, even more skilful than he. No, at barely five feet tall, Funakoshi was never destined to be a great champion in any physical arena.

The source of Funakoshi's greatness was his unwavering devotion to the training principles, ethics, and lifestyle that embody the martial *way*.

Gichin Funakoshi was a twentieth century anachronism. Born in 1868 into a noble family in Shuri, Okinawa, he grew up amidst the turmoil of Japan's emergence from feudalism. He and his family were *shizoku*, descendents of a long line of *samurai*. This was a turbulent time for Japan and Okinawa. The last *shogun* had been removed from power the year of Funakoshi's birth, and the young lad witnessed first hand the dissolution of the warrior class. He saw the special privileges members of his caste had previously enjoyed, disappear.

Unlike most of his contemporaries, however, Funakoshi never stopped being a warrior in spirit. He began studying karate as a child, even though practice of the art was forbidden by the Japanese, and he continued to study under several of Okinawa's leading masters throughout most of the first fifty years of his life.

This was by no means an occasional pursuit or part-time study. For Funakoshi, karate was a part of his daily existence as important as eating and sleeping. Nor should we assume his noble heritage provided him an easy life style with hours to devote to any pastime he fancied. For though the Funakoshi family were *shizoku*, they were poor, and young Gichen felt lucky when he first found work as a school teacher, even though it meant cutting off his queue, a symbol of his warrior heritage.

The fact is, Funakoshi was committed to a lifetime study of karate at all costs and at any risk. He worked long hours teaching school each day, and since karate was forbidden, he trained at night. Every evening he walked several miles to his instructor's house where one or more masters drilled him in *kata* (patterned movement) by the moon's light or that of a dim lantern. Often, he didn't get home until dawn.

Gichin Funakoshi never lost his commitment to training. Even during the last years of his life, while other octogenarians rested, Funakoshi began each day rising early, washing, and then practicing several *kata* before taking his morning tea.

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Now, lets compare and contrast the attitude of Funakoshi with that of some typical Westerners who practice martial arts (*Note: not meaning to say that everyone is like this. I have met several of all of these types myself*).

## The Hobbyist

Firstly, there are the students who 'do' a martial art as a hobby or pastime. They go to class a couple of times a week and don't think much about it at other times. They put their training

into the same mental bucket as a bowling night, or other regular social activity, and often seem confident that their training will devastate any poor mugger foolish enough to fool with them. Sometimes, this type of person is preoccupied with attaining rank.

### **Tournament Tough Guy (or Gal)**

These are the folks who are really into the competitive aspects of their chosen martial art, and that their skill is measured by how many tournaments they've won. Their techniques become more and more focused on scoring points and only vaguely resemble the origins of the art. Unfortunately there are plenty of these people around, both teaching and training.

### **Unbeatable and Deadly (or so they think)**

Finally, there are those who don't want to waste their time learning time-wasting things like, oh, fundamental techniques, *kata*, courtesies, and other aspects of disciplined training. Nope, they want the short cut to the deadly and concise series of kicks, punches and scratches that will make them unbeatable. (Heavy on the irony there folks). This sort of person tends to drift around schools a fair bit, always searching for that perfect combo.

So, we can see a fair contrast between the attitudes of the people above and that of Funakoshi. Sure, Westerners aren't usually born into a warrior heritage as Ginshin was, but the fact is that most Western martial artists don't see themselves as Warriors.

There's a fair correspondence to the general Jedi path here, as well. Many people who train in martial arts or train in the Jedi arts are just playing games with themselves, fooling themselves that they are warriors or Jedi when actively engaged in training; but reverting to their roles as students, geeky I.T. workers, or whatever when they cease training for the day. The crucial difference between a warrior and a non-warrior, a Jedi and a non-Jedi is **in the way they see themselves and the way they orient and prioritise the arts in their lives.**

A Warrior doesn't consider his/her martial training to be a hobby, or a game. They are the tools of his/her trade, and their skill at wielding them could determine whether they live or die in battle. The warrior arts are a way of life, an unrelenting commitment, and a constant struggle to improve. The **exact** same can be said of being a Jedi, whether you are simultaneously a warrior or not.

Understanding and cultivating the warrior spirit is what true martial training is about. Without this, one can develop physical skill but little more. And there IS more.

### **Getting the Mindset**

If we have a look at Funakoshi and others like him, we see that there are two traits that are common to those with the Warrior mindset.

- The Warrior acknowledges him or herself as a warrior.
- The Warrior pursues internal versus external objectives.

To **acknowledge your warriorship**, you need to think of yourself first and foremost as a warrior. You can most certainly study and practice several different martial arts, but you do so with the goal of developing yourself as a warrior and honing your spirit. In the same manner, you should think of yourself first as a Jedi, and then as a teacher, or healer, or geeky I.T. worker etc. It is this attitude of excellence that can be brought to all aspects of your life, and will help you achieve in all aspects of your life. This is one reason why people are attracted to the warrior and/or Jedi path.

The master warrior and Jedi is a person of character, wisdom and insight. I'm sure you'll agree with me there. The path to attaining these characteristics is via the **pursuit of internal versus external objectives**.

The *Martial Way*, as I described it in the first lecture, is a discipline devoted to the perfection of character. It is very personal, and the student needs to turn his/her attention inward; to evaluate the strength of her/his spirit and polishing those areas that need work. I highly recommend that students take the Personal series of classes to assist them with this endeavour. When people make many outward and public displays of their skill, especially when motivated by the desire to impress others, they are demonstrating that they possess weaknesses within, for example of self-esteem. Another pitfall can be the desire to attain rank for its own sake. Before Jigaro Kano introduced his grading system when developing Judo, students generally didn't receive any acknowledgement of their skills (beyond the minor fact that they were alive) until they were acknowledged masters by their peers. Ranking systems aren't necessarily bad, but they can be a detriment to attaining the proper mind-set if you are unwary.

#### Some **points to remember**

- The Martial Way is not a sport, hobby, or pastime. It is a way of life.
- Warriors belong to an elite group that knows no cultural boundaries.
- Begin by acknowledging yourself as a warrior. Once it was a birthright, now it is a calling.

Stuff your ego into a shoe box and pursue internal objectives. Learn the difference between internal and external motivations. Train to achieve personal excellence, not adulation or certificates. You are looking to develop your character, not fill a trophy case.

All of the above goes for being a Jedi as well.

**Exercise: If you have studied a martial art before, consider the definitions presented in this lecture and describe if and why you believe one or more of these applies to you. Additionally, ( for all students) consider your Jedi training and describe and how these definitions apply to it.**

## Lecture Three- Your Martial Destiny

Strangely enough, most people tend to see the martial art that they are practising as being the one that is superior to all others. But in reality, there are no superior or inferior martial arts...only warriors and non-warriors.

Warriors don't argue over which fighting style is best, or even which gun can blow a bigger hole in a soda can. They recognise that the important matters are survival and victory; and though the quality of a system is important, a warrior understands that no one system fits everyone's needs in all situations.

*You cannot see a street fight in its totality, observing it from the viewpoint of a boxer, a kung-fu man, a karateka, a wrestler, a judo man and so forth. You can see clearly only when style does not interfere. You then see it without 'like' or 'dislike'; you simply see and what you see is the whole and not the partial.*

*Bruce Lee, "The Tao of Jeet Kune Do"*

**All** systems are artificial. They are defined methods of teaching and practicing certain skill sets; based upon what the founder found worked for him/her and what he/she believed would work for others in similar circumstances. Although some warriors specialised, they all practiced **more** than one art. They recognised that different circumstances called for different skills to be used. When your goal is survival, egotistic ideals about superior weapons or fighting styles go out the window.

However, as the martial arts gradually fell into the hands of the sportspeople, hobbyists and those interested in self-defence; interest of multiple arts waned...these people usually only trained in one art. Unfortunately, when you study only one modality, one tends to become focused exclusively on the beliefs or 'doctrines' of that art; and shut out ideas from other sources. This is quite unlike the warriors who founded the arts, who were much more practical about such things.

A 'doctrine' is a broad and specific belief, and is the basis for all martial arts (in regards to personal combat, not religion or suchlike). The concept of a martial arts doctrine is closely related to strategy and tactics, but the terms aren't identical. Strategy is the general plans for fighting, developed according to ones chosen doctrine. On the other hand, tactics are the specific techniques and manoeuvres used to carry out those plans.

Here is a specific example to help you understand this concept. Tang soo do (China hand way) is a Korean martial art that is similar to taekwondo and related to karate; but due to doctrinal differences, its strategies and tactics are very different. According to the martial doctrines of both Korean arts, the foot is a far better weapon than the hand. A small man's legs are longer than a large man's arms and stronger than arms of even the largest man. A man's hips are located near the centre of the body, providing a pivot point around which the legs can swing. The Korean masters reasoned that it should be possible to learn to use one's feet against any target on an attacker's body, as quickly as and even more powerfully than with the hands.

This doctrine led to some distinctive strategy. To capitalise on the length of his legs, a Korean strategist sets his fighting range at the length of his longest kick and often resolves to keep opponents at that distance, out of arms reach. The longest, most powerful kicks are side kicks and round kicks, both thrown from side-facing stances. So Korean fighting stances tend to be

side-facing from the onset, unlike the more front-facing stances usually used in karate. A side-facing orientation leads to spinning attacks, making it possible to use both feet from either direction. These stances also lead to some specialised tactics.

Tactics in personal combat, like those for forces at war, are the specific techniques and manoeuvres needed to successfully apply a strategy. The Korean stylist has developed a general strategy to enable to him to use his feet...he'll fight from a distance, using side-facing stances, so he can strike with his longest kicks from either foot. Now he requires tactics to employ that strategy.

As he is primarily a foot fighter, his tactics will involve feinting attacks with his hands, to distract his opponent, while he then strikes decisively with his feet. He might also use several snap-kicks before striking the intended vital area. All of these manoeuvres are designed to employ the strategies of foot fighting, based on the general belief or doctrine that the feet are superior weapons to the hands.

So, how do we use our new knowledge of doctrine, strategy and tactics to make us better warriors and Jedi? Well, we use them by choosing the best doctrines on which to base our strategy and our entire approach to warrior training.

Sounds pretty full-on, doesn't it?

## **Choose your strategic foundations**

Now that you know that doctrinal beliefs form the basis of all methods of combat, it follows that in order to follow our martial destinies as individual Jedi, we must start from the beginnings... we must follow a sound doctrine.

Committing to a given doctrine will determine the art we will study and the strategies and tactics that will follow. But how do we go about selecting a doctrine to embrace? Well, a fundamental element of strategy is analysis, and the warrior approaches this problem, like all others, strategically. To select a martial doctrine, you must:

- ◆ Analyse the threat you are most likely to face.
- ◆ Evaluate your physical and emotional assets.
- ◆ Select a doctrine that best fills your needs.

## **Analyse the Threat**

You, as every warrior should, must start with a frank analysis of the threat you're most likely to face. We all live in different places, and the threats to our safety, and the constraints on our behaviour (such as laws) all vary widely. A soldier preparing for battle sees a far different threat than the person crossing the car park at night. A police officer may face conditions as lethal as the soldier, but the ways she is allowed to respond are much more limited.

At the moment, we will be looking at these without consideration of you as a Jedi. For example, women usually face different threats to men. Where a man attacking another man is most likely to strike with as much force as possible, he **may** be more likely to grab, subdue, and intimidate a woman or simply take her belongings from her. A woman must always be prepared, however, to face male attackers who may be as brutal as if they were men.

So the first step you must take is to analyse the threat you expect to face. Will it most likely be life threatening, or harassing? Will your attacker strike you, or wrestle you to the ground? And what can you do? Might you face legal penalties for beating the snot out of your attacker, or not? These questions, and others, need to be addressed and answered honestly before you can select an appropriate doctrine.

## Evaluate your physical and emotional assets

Each of us, as individuals, has different emotional and physical capabilities. This is an important thing to remember when selecting a doctrine and martial art(s) to study. For example, if you are a very small woman you might not do well in judo or a very hard martial arts style; conversely a rough-and-tumble football type might not have the patience to study some of the softer arts such as tai chi or aikido.

Body type is important when selecting a martial arts doctrine. A tall and lanky person might do better with a long range, foot fighting approach; a short and stocky person might be better off closing quickly with an opponent and going to ground. The key is fitting the belief system and, in turn, the method of combat best suited to your strongest physical assets. You need to be capable of performing the physical techniques with speed and power. Just as importantly, a warrior needs the fortitude to carry out the violent acts on your adversary that your chosen art may call for. For example, if you can't stomach the eye-gouges and groin-kicking that you might see in karate, you might be better off with a blending, controlling and throwing style like aikido. Essentially, you must have the will and the ability to do in a crisis situation what you learn in the training hall.

## Select a Doctrine

Once you've done the work above, you'll be ready to select the appropriate doctrine to follow....but it's not always that easy. Schools don't advertise their doctrines, and most Instructors probably wouldn't be able to explain it if you asked. So, how do you choose an appropriate one? Well, going along and watching a few classes can be a good way. It won't take you long to recognise that this one focuses on the hand strikes, this one on the foot, this one on throws etc. Some others can be harder to ascertain...for example Tai Chi, so I also recommend **research!** Look at books and videos; question masters in your local area; Google it!

After all of this work, it's not unlikely that you'll select a doctrine, study your chosen martial art...and then realise that it will not handle all of the potential threats you expect to face. What now?!

There are pitfalls to utilising a narrow doctrine. To go back to our Korean fighter's example, these chaps are in a bit of trouble if their opponent manages to close with them and grapple them to the ground. The fact is, no doctrine will suit all circumstances.

Warriors of the past knew this. This is why they trained in armed, unarmed and grappling techniques, as well as archery, horsemanship and strategy. Can you see a modern soldier concentrating on perfecting the ultimate grenade-lobbing technique and neglecting his or her hand-gun training?

Now, I'm not saying you should flit around from school to school and not commit to any one training method. This only demonstrates a lack of discipline and is insulting to the people who are training you. Rather, you should select a core art to study, then build around it.

## **Build your skills around a doctrinal core**

As mentioned before, it is an important part of your warrior development to find the martial doctrine most suited to your needs, based on your physical and emotional requirements and the threats you may face. This will become your core art, and you should devote the time and effort to mastering your core art. However, when you have reached a senior level (for example black belt) in your core art, you should examine the holes and weaknesses in it and find other disciplines to plug those gaps.

Finally, you need to integrate the skills from the variety of doctrines you have studied. The result should be a smooth fighter, effective at all ranges and in any situation. This is not with the goal of developing your own fighting style, (similar to what Bruce Lee did), but rather to not let your own fighting style be dictated by someone else's narrow doctrine. You must master your **own** martial destiny.

### **Points to Remember**

- ✦ **There are no superior or inferior martial arts; there are only warriors and non-warriors.**
- ✦ **Warriors don't bicker over which system of fighting is the best. They understand that no one system fits everyone's needs in all situations.**
- ✦ **Each martial art is based on a doctrine, a set of broad and general beliefs. People who study a single doctrine tend to close themselves to other sources. This is ignorance, and it does not benefit a Jedi.**

**Choosing which doctrines to follow not only determines what arts you will study, it drives how you'll develop your strategy and tactics.**

**Exercise: Perform the following evaluation for yourself.**

- **What are the threats that you consider are the most likely you may face?**
- **What are your physical, mental and emotional strengths?**
- **What sort of martial art do you think might be best suited to your perceptions of risk and your assets?**

## Teaching Tale Two- Patience is the Key

There was once a great karate sensei called Majuro who lived on the island of Okinawa, which is in the Ryukyu Archipelago off the coast of Japan. He taught his art very differently from other sensei's, and believed that philosophy and the art of the empty hand (karate) should be used in conjunction, with each complementing the other. His methods of teaching were always twice as long as other masters', but then the students he produced were twice as good as any other.

Over the years many prospective karate students knocked upon his door asking to be taught by the great master. Almost always they were refused. Majuro, it seemed, liked to pick his students himself.

One day he was visiting a herbal shop in the city when he saw a gang of youths taunting another boy who seemed to be giving as good as he got. Stopping to watch for a moment to see what happened next, he saw the group of youths set upon the lone boy in an attempt to beat him up. After about three or four minutes of fighting the gang left, leaving the lone boy brushing the dust off himself. Majuro walked across to the youth and complimented him on his bravery at taking on four fighters.

'You may not have won the skirmish,' he said, 'but you did not get badly beaten. I am a karate sensei and if you are willing to learn and ask no questions about your training, no matter what, I will teach you techniques that will equip you to fight four opponents with ease.'

The boy, who's name was Sato, eagerly agreed to become a student of this great master.

Once they had reached the sensei's remote house in the foothills of a small mountain range, Majuro laid down the ground rules to his newly acquired pupil. Sato was ordered that he must never ask about karate, must never speak about it and must never train by himself with what he knew already without the master's explicit instructions. He must obey every command that his master gave him no matter what it was.

For just over a year Sato would get up before dawn every day and fetch the water from the river in two big, heavy buckets - a trip of about two miles - then he would cook the master's breakfast before he started the washing. After cooking lunch for the master Sato would then gather wood for the evening fire and look after the garden. As dusk came he would prepare the evening meal and get more water from the river. Most nights he would retire to his bed totally exhausted. He never asked why he had to do all these chores, or mentioned a word about karate training to his master.

One day, Sato was in the garden working away in the radish patch when Majuro came up quietly behind him and gave him a vicious blow with the branch of a tree. Sato fell to the ground, rubbing his head. The next day whilst cooking the breakfast Sato suddenly received another terrible blow to the back of his head, and turning round he saw his master walking away. The master put his finger to his lips and said, 'Remember, no questions!'

Day after day, month after month, in every part of the house and garden Sato was attacked by his master with the tree branch. By the time another year had passed the slightest sound, even that of a petal dropping from a flower, had Sato on the balls of his feet ready to dodge the impending blow. Nothing else in his life mattered; for Sato there was only a constant, total readiness. The master then approached his student and said to him, 'Now you are ready to learn karate.' And five years later the people in his home town were calling him 'Sato the unbeatable'.

# Lecture Four- The Warrior's Way of Strategy

Last week, we talked a little about the importance of strategy to a warrior's life. This week, we are going to discuss this some more. This is because strategy is important in **all** facets of a warriors life; the art he chooses to master; the career she chooses to follow; the place they wish to live; all of these are strategic decisions.

## Strategy:

- a plan, method, or series of manoeuvres or stratagems for obtaining a specific goal or result: a strategy for getting ahead in the world.

1. In military usage, a distinction is made between strategy and tactics. Strategy is the utilization, during both peace and war, of all of a nation's forces, through large-scale, long-range planning and development, to ensure security or victory. Tactics deals with the use and deployment of troops in actual combat.

Courtesy of [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)

For some reason, few modern martial artists consider strategy as part of their practice; and have not studied some of the classics of strategy (see the end of the lecture for titles). They don't realise that strategy and tactics aren't just some words bandied around in military movies, but concepts that should actually be the focus of their training (hint: make these the focus of your training J).

Try asking the typical martial artist about strategy, and he might explain it by giving examples of "kick low, then punch to the face" or "fake with a quick back fist, then shoot a reverse punch into the opponents solar plexus". Sounds great, huh? Well, unfortunately, these are examples of **tactics**, not strategy.

## Tactics

/ˈtæk tɪks/ Pronunciation Key

- (usually used with a singular verb ) the art or science of disposing military or naval forces for battle and manoeuvring them in battle.

(used with a plural verb ) the manoeuvres themselves.

Courtesy of [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)

A warrior should know the differences between the concepts of strategy and tactics. Most modern martial artists don't. I didn't until I started researching for this course. It's just not mentioned much, and as such many people don't understand how to use these skills in fighting.

So, in this lecture, we're going to take a look at what strategy is all about, and some tools to develop your own, which you can apply to any area of your life. Then we'll do the same for tactics.

## Plan your strategy in four phases

Strategy, as we've discussed before, is the general or 'broad brush' plans to put one's doctrines into action. Just having the belief that your doctrine is best isn't going to do you much good, you also need a plan...actually, a set of plans...to turn those beliefs into reality.

Now, just sitting down and brainstorming all of the actions and reactions you could do for each given situation would take a lot of time and would be a difficult task. Rather, try breaking your strategic planning down into four phases. To develop your own personal strategies, you should:

- ◆ Identify your strategic objectives
- ◆ Collect intelligence
- ◆ Plan for environment
- ◆ Program for Engagement

Phew! What the heck is Inari on about? Well, I'm not cruel enough to leave you with only this, lets go into some details.

### Identify your strategic objectives

*"First say to yourself what you would be; and then do what you have to do". Epictetus*

As has been pointed out before, different people face different situations. A soldiers objective on the field of war is different from those of a police officer, for example. So, a warrior needs to plan her responses - taking into account the threats, her capabilities, the moral and legal constraints one faces as a citizen and as a Jedi, in order to achieve a variety of goals.

If you think this sounds a bit like selecting a doctrine, well Bingo!, you've got it. Strategic objectives lie between doctrine and strategy. The difference is that in choosing a doctrine we are weighing and choosing beliefs to guide our training, but by identifying strategic objectives we are planning how to use our capabilities in combat.

Take some time now and think. What do you want to achieve if you're attacked in a dark alley? Do you want to escape your attacker, beat him up, or subdue and hold him for the authorities? Will your objectives differ if there is more than one attacker? What about if they are adolescents instead of adults?

A warrior should consider all of these things in advance - not just for the dark alley scenario, but for all of the scenario's you think you are likely to face. Don't go into too much detail...life is rarely that accommodating, and if you are in a crisis you won't have time to mull over things. However, you do want to consider, in general terms, what you want to achieve in the situations you are likely to face. Decide in advance. That way, when the threat materialises you won't hesitate in your response. The goal is not to clutter up your mind with complex scenarios, rather to free it for the task at hand.

When your mind is free of debate over how strongly to respond, you are free to read the intentions of the attacker, free to become one with the Force and move smoothly and without thought.

Where non-warriors tend to freeze at the outset of a conflict, you're prepared for confrontation. And you're even better prepared if you've already collected intelligence on your adversaries.

## Collect Intelligence

War is often decided by which side has the better intelligence network. In 1967, Israel was surrounded and vastly outnumbered by saber-rattling Arab neighbours. However, due to Israel's superior intelligence network, Masad, she knew her enemies plans in detail and even knew the hour they planned to attack. With this information, Israel launched a massive pre-emptive strike, which helped Israel turn the tables and achieve a resounding victory in only six days.

Intelligence is a crucial factor in all levels of conflict, whether between armies or individuals. If you've read the Star Wars book 'Dark Rendezvous' by Sean Stewart, one of his characters, known as 'Scout' is weaker in the force than her student opponents during a tournament, but she spent a lot of time watching her fellow students train and had gathered enough information about their weaknesses to exploit them during the tournament and to win. As you can see from this example, the more you know about your adversary, the better you can prepare to fight him and the better you can handle yourself once combat has begun. If it is an individual, learn all you can about the fighting systems he studies, his personal life, his daily routine.

Unfortunately, these days we often can't identify our opponents in advance as Scout did. Most of us face more danger from the random violence of muggers and thugs. But, we can anticipate what our opponent may be like and plan accordingly. Have a look at the various fighting styles (including boxing) and some of the dirty tricks that they might pull. This will help you prepare.

## Plan for Environment

*"Examine your environment...Always chase the enemy into bad footholds, obstacles at the side, and soon, using the virtues of the place to establish predominant positions from which to fight. You must research and train diligently in this"*

Musashi from *A book of Five Rings*

Once there was a judo dojo where the *sensei* did an interesting experiment with his students. He paired up some of his biggest and burliest black belts with brown belts. Then he asked the black belts "If these guys attacked you in the street, are you sure you'd be able to defend yourselves?"

"Of course, *Sensei!*" they said immediately.

The brown belts began to squirm as their indignant seniors scowled at them. But the instructor did something that they did not anticipate.

"Take off the jackets of your uniforms," he said. They hesitated in puzzlement, but they removed their jackets. "Now, *randori*"

What happened next was a lesson for everyone. As the *sensei* watched with a grim smile, the students attempted to engage in freestyle. They were tentative at first, with no familiar sleeve or lapel to grab, but they soon launched into spirited matches. The results were nothing like the senior students had anticipated.

Their bodies, slick with sweat from their previous workout, were impossible to grab. One senior, catching his opponent over-extended, attempted a shoulder throw, but as he turned, the brown belts arm slipped from his grasp and fell around the seniors waist. The junior capitalised on this and half tackled, half fell on his opponent, both of them crumpling to the mat.

Before long, all the students were grovelling around on the mats, slipping in and out of each others grasp. Classical judo was out the window. The lesson demonstrated here was clear; you can't expect combat in the street to go as it does in the training hall. Therefore, you must plan and train for fighting in a variety of environments. Think of environments such as an icy street; attackers muffled in layers of heavy clothing; a snowy hillside; a heavy rainstorm; baking dry heat.

Plan and train for these environments in advance, even as you collect your intelligence.

## **Program for Engagement**

Now that you've done the groundwork, you need to begin planning how you'll defend yourself against various attackers. Once again, this isn't detailed scenarios, rather conscious, strategic planning to smoothly react to a variety of attackers in a broad range of environments.

Try fantasizing. Imagine yourself in some place or another and 'create' an attacker. Imagine him in detail. Give him a specific age, size, appearance and disposition, then see him attacking you given a specific set of skills. How will you react, defend and counter?

This process is a kind of mental programming. It will help you establish unconscious pathways that will deal with this sort of problem whilst leaving your conscious mind to apply tactics. This is a great tool, but you also need to practice. Practice diligently, using as many training partners as you can, in as many different environments as you can.

## **How to develop tactics**

The previous exercises will help you become a more effective fighter, and develop your strategy around a core doctrine. You've developed mental programs for fighting all kinds of adversaries in all kinds of situations; and physically practiced against as many different opponents in as many different places as possible. But to become a truly formidable warrior, you also need to master tactics.

Tactics are the nuts and bolts of fighting. They are the means by which you 'fool' your adversary into defeat. They are the tools you use to get yourself into a position to apply techniques. Developing them can be a difficult process though, and specific tactics tend to be related to specific fighting methods. But in the same manner as strategy, it's easier to learn tactics by breaking them into their principal elements. To understand and develop tactics, you must learn to:

- Read your Opponent
- Control fighting range
- Feint Effectively
- Use Rhythm and Timing
- Avoid, Evade and Intercept

## **Read your Opponent**

*"See first with your mind, then with your eyes, and finally with your body"*

Master Swordsman Yagyu Munenori (1571-1646)

Reading opponents is a skill all capable warriors have, and it's essential for mastering the Martial Way. Skilled warriors know at a glance whether you are close enough to kick, punch, or grab them. You can develop these skills too. Lets use a striking art as an example.

Look at the way your partner stands and moves. Do they have squared in, front facing stance, or a side on one? What does either situation tell you about which hand or foot he can attack you with before changing his stance?

Look at his weight distribution. Is his weight evenly between his feet, if so what will he have to do before he can kick with one foot or the other? If his weight is on his back foot, what can and can't he do with his front foot, what does it tell you if he quickly shifts his weight forward (hint: could be a round-house kick coming).

There are many other things to look at, there will often be telltale clues or telegraphed movements. With practice, you can read many fighters body language as surely as if you could read their minds, and this skill carries over to the street.

If you've studied meditation, you might be aware of the principles of mindfulness. You can apply mindfulness to reading potential attackers on the street. Learn to evaluate the people you pass.

Unfortunately, knowing what your adversary is going to do isn't enough. You have to keep her from doing it to you! You need to either pre-empt or defend against the attack. To do these things, you need to control the fighting distance between you and the opponent.

## **Control the Fighting Range**

There are masters in every martial art who completely confound their juniors when sparring. They always look like they are in reach, but they are actually just outside range, then when the junior strikes they find only empty air. This usually continues until the junior is thoroughly chastened, then the master will move in effortlessly and strike gently. My second Sifu particularly liked to rub this one in.

The skill involved in this comes from long practice in reading opponents and controlling fighting range. Each time the junior goes to attack, the senior moves with him, maintaining exactly the same range or moves to the side. Though I'm sure that we'd all like to think this has to do with the Force, it's really just a matter of practice. You need to learn your own reach, and then judge the others very precisely. From there, it's a matter of reading your opponents attack and then moving with it so **you** control the range, not him. Then you wait, until she is particularly overextended and vulnerable.

An exercise for developing this ability (you'll need a partner) is to adopt fighting stances with your partner at the proper range. Have him move about, trying to either get closer to you or farther apart than the set range. You will move with him, trying to maintain the distance.

At first this is very difficult. Some tricks to try are, don't watch your partners feet or any other place on his body. Instead, let your focus be soft and let your eyes fall over his whole being without resting on any one aspect. Second, sense the distance between the knots on your belts (if you are wearing belts) and feel his knot push and pull at you as he moves.

Remember, the important thing is to stay out of reach when he is strong, and close with him when he is weak. Until you can do this, feinting is an important tool, and you will need to do it well.

## Feint Effectively

Feinting is basically trying to convince your opponent that you're trying to do one thing, while you are really setting him up for something else.

For a feint to be believable, it must be thrown from the proper distance. Secondly, it must be made with commitment and heart. Ideally, if the opponent doesn't react to the feint, it should become the real thing! Finally, feint with a combination of techniques instead of singly or in pairs. The next skill to be described will make your feinting more affective.

## Use Rhythm and Timing

Each of us has a natural rhythm, both you and your opponent. The strength of your body and spirit cycle, as does his. Each breath you take, each technique you attempt, almost every step you take, you go through cycles of *yin* and *yang*. An essential step to mastering tactics then is to learn to feel your rhythms and hide them from your opponent, while sensing and capitalising on his.

This sounds hard, I know, but once you begin training, or if you are already training, you'd know that a punch starts off weak (*yin*) and becomes strong (*yang*), then dissipates at full extension (*yin* again). Exhaling on impact adds *yang* to your strikes, stuff like this. You'll be taught it, but it probably won't be described to you in these terms.

Some methods of telegraphing that your opponent might use are to breathe loudly or snort with the rhythm of the technique, or bounce, or similar things. **You**, as a superior warrior, should **not** do these things, but conceal your own cycle by breathing silently and evenly; step smoothly and keep your feet close to the ground. Keep your feet below your centre of gravity. The next step is to avoid, evade and intercept your enemy.

## Avoid, evade and intercept

There are only three ways to deal with an attack. You can avoid it, evade it, or intercept it. Avoiding an attack means to stay just outside the opponents fighting range and maintain that distance no matter what.

Evading the attack is more sophisticated. Like avoiding, you move to keep from being hit. This time, however, rather than move outside his range, you step inside his range but just out of his line of attack. you can step to either side, drop under, or leap over him. A good evasion will mean your adversaries attack will miss you and he will be overextended. Then he is vulnerable to a counter and within range. Evading requires the ability to read and time your opponent carefully, plus judging his feints well enough not to evade a false attack while moving into the real one.

The final option is to intercept the attack. This has little finesse, you simply overpower his technique with yours. This isn't really just brawn though, you need to catch his attack at its most *yin* point with a well timed *yang* block or counter.

## Points to Remember

- Strategy is the essence of warriorship. As you progress, it should increasingly become the focus of your training.

- Develop your strategy in four phases: First, determine your strategic objectives, then collect intelligence on your adversaries. Plan for fighting in a variety of environments and then program yourself for engagement.

Learn the elements of tactics. Learn to read your opponent, then use this to help you control the fighting range. Learn to feint effectively, and use rhythm and timing – yours and his. Finally, put it all together to avoid, evade and intercept your opponent.

If you would like to learn more about strategy, I recommend the following books to you:

- ♦ *'The Art of War'* by Sun Tzu
- ♦ *'The Book of Five Rings'* by Miyamoto Musashi

Both of these books should be fairly available, as they seem to have been reprinted recently. Amazon stocks them if you cannot find them elsewhere.

**Exercise: This is a long and complicated lecture. Be sure to read it thoroughly and post in your journal your thoughts on this lecture.**

# Teaching Tale Three– The Warrior as Bodhisatva

Taken verbatim from '**On the Warriors Path**', Chapter 8. Author **Daniele Bolelli**

No matter how much pleasure I derive from martial arts training, nagging questions periodically resurface. Why do we fight? What do we seek in the martial arts? What are we training for? Which primordial call pushes our bodies and minds to undergo hundreds of hours of practice? Yes, martial arts training can be incredibly fun and enjoyable. But are a little fun and enjoyment all that we are really looking for? In the vast majority of cases, I'm afraid they are. For many people, the goal is learning how to fight in order to defeat their fears and gain some measure of self-confidence. Some are simply bored out of their minds and want a hobby to distract them from the monotony of their lives. Sculpting their bodies into temples dedicated to health and strength is the aim of those hooked on fitness and physical well-being. Others are enraptured by aesthetic beauty and wish to create poetry through the movements of their bodies. For others still, martial arts are an inner path of self-discovery aimed at learning how to live calmly, in peace, beyond conflict.

I hope I don't come across as arrogant, but I believe that even the best of these goals are little more than side benefits. Although they stand as the ultimate aims of training for ninety-nine percent of martial artists, I can't help seeing them only as the tools needed before the real game can begin. Clearly, all these choices are legitimate and essential. Moulding our characters in order to become more gracious people in everyday life is already more than most people dream of doing. I would have never written the preceding chapters if I didn't have great respect for the people who approach martial arts with these intentions. But my feeling is that something much bigger is at stake. Idealism? Perhaps. But why should we settle for limited goals when so much more is within reach?

Once we have given shape to a body which moves with grace and power wherever it is – once we are at peace with ourselves, our minds are clear and we feel rivers of internal strength and love for life flowing in our veins – why should we choose to return to our nine to five world and channel all this energy into aseptic, lifeless environments hundreds of miles away from our inner beauty? Do the treasures we have found along the way serve only to make us more efficient on the job and our existence just a little more bearable? The inner strength, willpower and confidence that martial arts can bring would be better used for something much more radical than just providing a little help in our daily lives. I am aware of taking a step in a direction that not many martial artists are ready to follow. But my vision tells me that if the way of the warrior doesn't give birth to a spiritual revolution shaking the very roots of our way of facing life, we might as well flush it.

I love martial arts. I love their power. I love their beauty. I love hearing the sound made by the heart of a warrior...boom...boom...moved not by inertia, but by passion. Every beat echoes the magic of being alive. I love the romanticism of warrior legends. I love the way in which the warrior challenges his own limits. I love the way he smiles when faced by what normal people call impossible. The courage of the warrior has nothing to do with displays of machismo or with the rhetoric of football coaches. It is the courage to take destiny in the palm of our hands and become the leader of our own lives, and this is what I love most of all.

The way of the warrior is not a hobby nor is it a collection of fighting techniques and physical exercises. It is a way to wake up, to walk, to drink, to think, to act. One who remembers to be a warrior only within the confines of a Martial arts school is not a warrior at all. The sword master Seizan wrote, "The dojo is the background and everyday life comes first. Therefore, it is silly to

think that it is sufficient to carry oneself well only in the dojo." If our way of being warriors is limited to the practice of martial arts, we haven't learned much. Cultivating warrior virtues is not a part-time job: heroes for two hours within a dojo, before going back to a life without magic. Everyday life is the real battlefield.

Martial arts are not important. What is important is who we are and what we want to become. Important are our dreams, our ideals, our lives, the kind of persons we would like to be. To be truly walking on the warrior's path, we have to bring our minds back to the time when we were not ashamed of our dreams; when reality had not yet frustrated our ambitions; when our desire was still too strong to be repressed, and our spirit refused to surrender in resignation; when we were not yet doctors, businessmen, or lawyers, but still wanted to be heroes, leaders, bodhisattvas. The first step on the way to being warriors is to get back in touch with our dreams.

A few years ago, I was talking with a journalist about a book I had co-authored in Italy (*Mitologic Felici*.) During the interview, I was asked if the figure of the hero still had some meaning in today's world, if contemporary culture still had room for the existence of people like Buddha, Crazy Horse, or the Knights of the Round Table. At that moment, the question didn't strike me as particularly meaningful, and I let it go without responding adequately. Only now, after almost two years, I have realised the importance of the question and have found the answer that I would have liked to have given. Thinking that the figure of the hero belongs to the past or the kingdom of romantic fairytales is the biggest mistake we could make.

Open your eyes and look in any direction. The signs are everywhere. It is enough to take a deep breath to smell desperation. Every day, another piece of the planet we inhabit is destroyed. The voice of the Earth tells of forest being clear-cut, of the extinction of hundreds of species, of overpopulation, of the disappearance of natural resources, of poisons contaminating the air we breathe and the water we drink. The ecological condition of the Earth seems to have escaped from the apocalyptic nightmares of a biblical prophet who woke up in a particularly bad mood.

But this is only the reflection of our inner crisis. No ecosystem is as badly damaged as the hearts and the souls of human beings. The destruction is the product of a lost, wounded spirit that has forgotten how to live. We destroy anything crossing our path because we don't remember how to create. We have become hostages in the hands of the very system we have built. We devote most of our lives to jobs that don't make us dream or rejoice. We die a little everyday, accepting to sacrifice our desires in exchange for empty comforts and economic security. Occupying our time and filling our inner emptiness, materialism acts as an anaesthetic. But from the poorest to the richest among us, anyone who works for something less than being caressed every day by the ecstasy of life is nothing but a slave. There are billionaire slaves, slaves who control the political destiny of entire nations, and slaves who are famous and admired by other slaves.

Although maybe pleasant, ultimately wealth, fame, and power ultimately don't matter much. If our daily experience is not a source of happiness, we are still prisoners of our own existence. We have been raised in a society of unhappy people who have forgotten the beauty of being alive; thus, we deliver ourselves to the logic of profit and gain hoping that money can buy us our dreams. Schools and universities feed us to the mouth of the monster, boring us to death with studies devoid of life and warmth, inhibiting our natural creativity and preparing us to be swallowed up by the gloomy social structures. Often, our friendships, our relationships, our families, and even the houses in which we live and the food we eat are the reflections of the squalid life we find ourselves caged into. The nightmares of sleepy gods.

Confusion, insecurity, and self-destruction are the daily bread of millions of people. Every day seeds of unhappiness and sorrow are sown into the hearts of thousands of human beings. Every

day, violence, alcohol, and drugs destroy as many people as do dullness, lack of creativity, boredom, and the shallowness of lives lived without flashes of intensity. Every day, mediocrity and resignation find their way into the spirits of human beings. They stifle us little by little, making us forget our true nature and turning us into the fears of an assembly-line producing sadness and destruction: shadows of our divine potential.

Anyone can see that we live in a sick society. But recognising the disease is not enough. As Buddha says in the famous parable of the arrow, analysing the disease is not nearly as important as finding a cure. Complaining about the state of things is a common sport. But who among us has the courage and the willpower to hold on to their dreams when everything around us tells us to give up? Who has the passion and the creative strength to reinvent our approach to life? We are surrounded by cynicism and abandonment. There are no Jedi Masters guiding us along the way. Only a mass of faces on which are carved the wrinkles of defeat. We are left alone to confront reality, without anybody helping us to cultivate the warrior hidden in our souls.

The average level of self-confidence is so low that it should climb to the top of the Himalayas just to reach the navel of a gnome; but even if it weren't so, changing the destiny of the world would not be an easy task. Many people don't even attempt to take up the challenge, but prefer to surrender without fighting. The immensity of the task that lies ahead of us disheartens even the best of people. Faced with an undertaking of such gigantic proportions, we immediately become conscious of all the limitations of our individuality. The difficulties barring the way make us feel small and powerless. Kamikaze ants trying to stop a tank. Any effort seems to be in vain. But if we don't want to join the ranks of the living dead who simply endure life, it is better to stop complaining and expecting somebody else to find the solutions.

Today humankind has the potential to turn this planet into a paradise and live in beauty, just as it has the potential to destroy itself, the Earth and all living things. At stake in this game is our own individual existence, and the existence of humankind as a whole. What I have just described is not exactly a pretty picture, but my intention is not to depress, nor to advocate fatalism. Refusing to look at problems doesn't solve anything. It is healthy to stare the beast in the eyes. Pretending not to see it only because we are afraid of not being up to the challenge only acknowledges our defeat. Problems exist all around us. Big problems. Huge problems. Overwhelming problems. Terrifying problems. Problems with no apparent solution. The superficial creed of "everything is for the best" is a cop-out just as much as the pessimism of those who shrug their shoulders as they expose all the reasons why nothing can be done.

The fact that we are successfully flirting with self-destruction and that few people seem to care is not an encouraging sign. But let's not forget that nothing is predestined. The game is still very much alive. Right now is the time to lift our heads and show the power of our visions. As long as the spirit of a warrior lives in the heart of even just one of us, the dance is not over. Taking responsibility doesn't mean showing off our muscles or getting lost in visions of messianic omnipotence. Neither a teen-utopia nor the rhetoric of a Western movie, heroism is a matter of sensitivity. It is a yes to life. It means becoming a cultivator of happiness: doing the best to live in harmony and spread the contagion of harmony to those around us.

For years, the voice of resignation has whispered in our ears. If we listen carefully, we can still hear its echo anytime we begin courting our dreams. Bound to the same fate as Shakespearean kings, we had lethal poison poured in our ears while we were sleeping. We are served our dose of subliminal depressants from the time we are infants: a flow of concrete on the buds of our destiny. It is not a direct attack, but a constant buzzing that works on us from within. Settle for realistic goals. Lower your expectations. Be practical. Why don't you do as everyone else does?

Anything that goes up must come down. Don't ask for too much. Don't go beyond the limits. Don't fly too high. Humility. Moderation. Acceptance. Don't risk. Don't experiment. Uncharted territories are dangerous. You have no experience, just dreams. This is only a utopia, but the Real World is different. Do you think you are that special? You can't make it. You are just an idealist. We are simple, imperfect human beings and must be satisfied with our lot. Certain things only happen in fairytales, real life is something else.

More or less explicitly, we hear these messages from various sources almost every day of our lives. Any attempt to experiment with different lifestyles meets with ridicule and contempt. They tell us that following the Call inviting us to live out our dreams means almost no chances of success. We hear that chasing ideals and utopias is the pastime of lunatics with no sense of reality, rare individuals who pay with huge sacrifices and by living aloof, cut off from the Real World. In the best case, they are nice but irresponsible dreamers who, not knowing when it is time to grow up, keep playing, pretending to be heroes. They also tell us that the only true heroism is that of the hard worker who provides economic stability for the family. The true hero is the one who doesn't get lost in fantasies, but conforms to reality, setting for himself modest goals that, after years of effort, can guarantee the security and the serenity of a normal life.

Bullshit. Colossal, immense, unbelievable bullshit. There is nothing heroic in the acceptance of a sick concept of normality. If the reality surrounding you tells you to devote yourself to a dull job and embrace a life without surprises, it is neither noble nor wise to make an effort to conform. Becoming part of a system that feeds disharmony and does nothing to change the state of things is not a sign of moderations, but of mediocrity. Let's not settle for such a pathetically low ideal.

A leader is first and foremost the leader of oneself. The refusal to become part of the disease and the desire to be truly alive are what make us special and different. The Cops of Normality consider irresponsible riding one's dreams, but I think that nobody is more responsible than those who venture searching for better ways of living. There is no great sense of responsibility in remaining attached to the material securities provided by unhappy lifestyles. Copying someone else's mistakes for fear of making bigger ones is neither courageous nor responsible, but just cowardly. The title of a book by Indian mystic Osho Rajneesh reads "Be Realistic, Plan for a Miracle." True responsibility lies in following wonderful paradoxes like this one. Answering the Call is not an extreme sacrifice, since we are sacrificing nothing truly meaningful. It can be frightening to go beyond the boundaries traced by society and to move into uncharted territory, putting at risk economic security and social reputation. But if we choose not to risk, we end up paying a much higher price. The only true sacrifice is not answering the Call, because only out there, beyond the boundaries in which we limit ourselves, can we could find better ways of living.

It takes individuals with indomitable spirits to evade the negative conditioning caging us. Nice people don't stand a chance in this game. Gentle souls with good intentions lack the power to have any significant impact. Only warriors with sacred fire in their eyes possess the will to get back on their feet after being knocked down time and time again. Hidden between the fighting techniques are the tools to forge our character. As a sculptor creates a master piece starting from crude stone, martial artists can extract spiritual warriors from their personalities. The traits that are necessary to challenge our limits and be unafraid of battle are precisely those that can be developed through martial arts. More than an end in itself, martial arts practice can serve as the training ground to prepare us for the real game.

But let's try to take it a step further. The bodhisattva is one of the most beautiful figures of the Buddhist pantheon. Different from those who, after reaching enlightenment, ascend to superior realms of existence leaving behind the material world, the bodhisattva comes back to Earth using his/her power for the benefit of all living beings. The bodhisattva doesn't have all the

answers and is not a raving messiah claiming to save the world. He is a calm warrior, aware of his powers, and ready to use them. Some American Indian tribes have a similar idea. They say that it is a warrior's duty to take care of everything and everybody. Just as the bodhisattvas have achieved an awareness allowing them things out of the ordinary, warriors have the strength to do what others cannot. Thus it is their responsibility to share his talent.

Having the power of a force of nature doesn't help, if you don't know what to use it for. Stealing from the gods the fire of passion and creativity to lighten our life is just the first step of the trip, not the destination. Passion and creativity are not our private property, nor our very own toys. They are the sparks lighting the fire of a big tribal camp. Having talent and not cultivating it is a crime, but cultivating it without sharing its fruits with others may be even worse. In its highest form, the way of the warrior is that of the bodhisattva: putting one's talent at the service of a superior destiny.

Forging spirit and character can take years, but it is only the preparation before the real battle. Many people train and prepare by walking along the way of the warrior, but never discover, or maybe just forget, what battle they have been training for. The battle rages in front of their eyes and they don't even realise it. The small psychodramas of daily life distract them to the point of taking away their global vision and making them forget why they set out walking along the warriors' path in the first place.

The battle is against mental limits, dullness, short-sightedness. It is against resignation, greed, sadness. Against all those powers that separate human beings from happiness. The warrior doesn't walk into battle only for himself. The warrior fights for everything and everyone. He views the destiny of the entire planet as a personal matter. As a warrior, you are given weapons very few people possess. The self-confidence of a wild animal, a spirit that can't be broken, the tranquillity of one whose roots are too deep to be disturbed by minor events. If you don't change the world, certainly nobody else will. Changing the world has nothing to do with altruism or with trying to be a good Samaritan. Ultimately, since everything is connected, helping others inevitably means helping ourselves. At the highest level, there is no difference between egoism and altruism. It is a karmic ping-pong game. All our actions come back to us.

But it is easier to convert the Abominable Snowman to surfing than finding people who dare to dream big. I am allergic to people who start talking by saying "I just want to do my own little thing..." and I sneeze often because they are everywhere. Every one of us knows some of them. Maybe they are smart, and maybe they have talent but they have a problem. They are small. They think small. They act small. They are what happens to people when a green-thumbed God tries to create human-bonsai. You might think that a team of Japanese engineers specialised in miniaturisation were commissioned to work on their ambitions. They are the pygmies of the soul. Fans of minimalism. Armchair artists, new-agers, players who, when the game heats up, are afraid of taking in their hands the ball deciding the fate of the game, failed businessmen who recycled themselves into reiki masters (sorry, if the last example doesn't fit well, but I just felt like picking on reiki masters.) Too fearful to wholeheartedly follow their visions, they accept becoming the shadows of what they could have been.

Even some of the best people I know live by the "I just wanna do my own little thing." Satisfied with the happy little island they created for themselves in the middle of the ocean of the surrounding disharmony, they look at life from their seat in the audience. I have so many friends who have chosen to live this way that it doesn't shock me anymore. Nonetheless, I still consider this attitude one of the main causes of the mediocrity in the state of things. Often for creative people the beauty of their inner world can become a handicap. Too caught up by their subjective experience to learn how to dance through the physical world.

The result is that, limiting themselves to the cultivation of their own spiritual world, the most sensitive people leave to the most careless the management of collective reality. Pragmatists without horizons, or dreamers cut off from the Real World. This dichotomy is both masochistic and dangerous. Accepting it equates a spiritual hara-kiri.

Only a surfer of emotions can mend this fracture which tears apart the potential of individuals as well as the health of the planet. Somebody able to ride in balance between the waves of yin and yang. A poet warrior. A hippie samurai. The last image is not just a metaphor, but is the root of the kind of human being who could rewrite the rules of the game. Stereotypes blackmail us and try to convince us that we can only be one thing: either pragmatists or visionaries, either romantics or realists, either artists or athletes. If we buy into this idea and fall into the trap of clearly defined roles, we end up settling for a very low definition of what we can be. Specialists without global vision. Fractions of the happy divinities we forget to be.

On the contrary, the hippie samurai is the perfect Tao. It is a sweet samurai who smiles and dances softly under the moonlight. It is a reliable, organised hippie who arrives on time to any appointment and has the lucidity to manage an economic empire. The hippie samurai is what the yin and the yang talk about over dinner. It is the synthesis between sensitivity and efficiency. A recipe of mystic sensuality and Zen muscles. Am I kidding? Am I letting the lyricism of paradoxes lead me astray? Not at all. The hippie samurai is the union of two archetypes that shouldn't sound new to martial artists. An artist and a warrior: a martial artist. A hippie who ignores the code of honour and the warrior power of a samurai is prisoner of his own limits, just as much as a samurai who doesn't know how to relax, how to joke, how to play with children, or how to lose himself in laughter as he plays the banjo under the stars. One without the other is a caricature at best. In facing the complexity of the modern world, the stereotypes of the spaced out, artistic hippie and of the belligerent samurai living only to fight anyone crossing his road would be at best anachronistic, and in the worst case, just pathetic. Throughout the world, the resurrection of the warrior's spirit is badly needed, but the solution cannot come from blindly copying old models. Being warriors today is more difficult than ever because there is no ready-made formula that we can follow to stand up to the increasing complexity of our time.

What we need is a new alchemy. The new warrior can only be born from a hazardous synthesis, from unlikely marriages such as the one between hippie and samurai. It is not a question of going to battle against The Enemy, a kind of ultimate villain who, in the style of James Bond movies, oppresses the whole world. If it were so, it would be easy, but reality is much more complicated. Shallowness and mediocrity kill more people than the most ruthless tyranny. Being warriors today is about fighting those forces trying to crush us as much as it is about having powerful visions. Creating new ways of life is the way to give battle. The challenge is not about destroying something or someone. It is about creating. A warrior is a master at facing conflicts, and conflict is what stands between us and the fulfilment of our desires. But to ransom oneself and the world from the wretchedness of a depressed way of life, the warrior has to do more than fight any specific circumstance.

To be able to touch the heart of the problem, we need the imagination to reinvent the world. The Enemy that keeps us prisoners is not an individual, a political party, or a religion (even though individuals, political parties and some religions certainly contribute); rather the entire social structure we have created is the problem. Maybe, at an even deeper level, it is our way of viewing life: the necessity of an authentic spirituality, our relationship with the natural world, the way we use technology, the jobs we devote so much of our time to, the houses in which we live, the friendships we cultivate. These are the places where the battle is fought. A boundless heart, the fight of synthesis and far-reaching eyes are our weapons.

We started chatting about martial arts and we ended up with the destiny of the world in our hands. We didn't arrive at this point because we got lost on the way, but because, if we truly follow the spirit of martial arts, it is inevitable to find ourselves here. "The Way of a Warrior is to establish harmony," wrote Ueshiba. Martial arts are the bow and the arrow. The target is the creation of harmony outside of us and within us. There are many other means to hit the target, for being warriors is essentially a state of mind. One can be a warrior in hundreds of different ways. Martial arts are a beautiful path to forge those qualities we need for any great undertaking, but they are by no means the only one. If we want to have a chance to succeed at recreating the world around us, we can't let differences divide us. We owe it to life, to the earth and to ourselves. If we don't do it, who else will?

# Lecture Five– The Warrior's Spellbook

Here we look at some of the principles of the martial arts that have been used...loosely...during the creation of the fictional Jedi. Some of these principles will doubtless be familiar to you, from the computer games and books if not necessarily the movies.

For many Westerners, the most fascinating aspect of the martial arts is the almost magical abilities some adepts practice. It's almost as though the martial arts master has a 'spell book' that allows him or her to do these things. As noted above, these 'powers' are embellished by the masters of fiction and movie for the purposes of entertainment. A problem with this entertainment is that it misleads the public and potential students alike as to what is real, and what is made up.

The aspect of the martial arts that is called *ki* or *chi*, which we here at the IRJS usually refer to as the Force, is a pretty mysterious thing to most people. There is a lot of speculation over whether or not it actually exists (at least in the Western world) because no one has managed to measure it, and of course, if it can't be measured, it doesn't exist, does it? Of course, no one has yet managed to measure dark matter either, but plenty of scientists seem to accept it as a theory because it ties up so many annoying little loose ends.

There are some that say that *ki* gives them super strength; or can make them heavy or lighter than normal; makes their bodies immovable; crushed objects; extended their *ki* around their body and into another's. Whether or not these people can do this, or if it is possible for you to do it, is not the matter at hand here. Rather, we are looking at the application of *ki* to the warrior path.

*Ki*, as taught within the Indo-Asian modalities, is the 'life force'. All living things have it. All warriors have it. You have it. The important thing to the warrior and that gives him or her almost 'magical' powers – is the ability to coordinate and focus their mind and body effectively during combat. It's the **focused application of *ki*** that gives the adept their abilities.

Unfortunately, most instructors don't understand these talents, nor do they use them. Even those that do have them often don't understand them enough to pass the skills on, rather they just have to hope that at least some of their students catch on. This is unfortunate, because there are some methods for developing the esoteric skills used by traditional warriors.

## *Kiai* and *Aiki*

*Kiai* and *aiki* are Japanese terms to describe abilities used at the higher level of traditional martial arts. You might have noticed that these words are anagrams of each other; this is because the concepts are closely related. *Ki* is the life force, and *ai* means to blend, harmonise, or dominate in some contexts; in others, the existence of something in concentration.

*Kiai* means to concentrate or focus the life force. You might have heard the word defined before as a 'spirit shout', and the spirit shout is a tool to learn to develop *kiai*. Like many aspects of the martial arts these days, however, the outward manifestation of *kiai* practice has become confused with the internal function itself. Simply put, some of the classical martial arts, such as kenjutsu (Japanese swordsmanship) don't shout at all when they *kiai*, focusing their spirits and their blades into their targets. Masters of *kiai* sometimes project it without even moving, much less shouting.

*Aiki* means united life force or spirit. This union does not only refer to the coordination of one's own body and spirit, but to the blending with and domination of an opponent as well. In modern terms, it is usually used to refer to the act of physically blending with an opponents attack, then using leverage to upset his balance (such as the practice of push-hands); but there is more to *aiki* in the classical sense.

Early last century, a martial arts instructor said "*Aiki* is the art of defeating your opponent with a single glance." This application of *aiki* can be seen as an effect upon the opponent of projected *kiai*. Essentially, the **dynamic application of *aiki* is called *kiai*, the static application is *aiki***. It is up to you to decide whether you wish to think of these principles as a product of focused energy or of the focused Force, or simply a psychological result of a concentration of will upon a weaker ego. As Jedi, we probably lean towards the former, but either view will not stop you from being able to use these principles.

True *kiai* and *aiki* take a long time to develop, but to help you start to do this, you need to do the following:

- ◆ Find *kokoro*
- ◆ Practice *haragei*.
- ◆ Develop *kokyu chikara*
- ◆ Apply *kime*
- ◆ Practice *kata* with utmost seriousness.

## Find Kokoro

Any of you who are fans of AstroBoy may have heard this term before. Apart from its use in science fiction cartoons, the concept of finding *kokoro* is the starting point for developing *kiai*. *Kokoro* means heart, or what the Koreans call "indomitable spirit". Quite simply, it is a refusal to accept defeat.

It isn't easy to refuse to back down from a challenge or threat. Quite often, we go through our lives seeking the course of least resistance; but sometimes, in some situations, there just isn't any way to compromise. Sometimes, we have to fight. *Kokoro* is something that we all have inside of us, and we have to reach down deep within ourselves and drag it up, that is why the term 'finding' of *kokoro* is used. An example of *kokoro* is as follows: A retired Air Force colonel called Jack was 49, and had a mountaineering accident that crushed his right ankle. The surgeon told him it would never mend (they seem to like saying that) and the foot would be useless; he ought to let him take it off. But Jack would have nothing of that. He belligerently told him to fix his ankle, his walking days weren't through.

To the doctors disbelief, Jack was right. After weeks in a cast and months of physical therapy, he walked again. But Jack wasn't satisfied. His game leg made it nearly impossible for him to stay in aerobic condition. "If I could only run" he said, time and again.

Jack ran! He hobbled longer and longer distances each day until, little by little, he began running. Jack knows *kokoro*.

To develop *kiai*, you must first find your own *kokoro*. Make never giving up a habit. Attack a challenge, don't avoid or endure it. Life is for living, and you will also need *kokoro* in order to employ technical principles such as *haragei*.

## Practice *Haragei*

"If this sphere that is the universe is condensed, it becomes the one point in the lower abdomen"

**Aikido master Koichi Tohei**

You may or not be familiar with the term '*hara*', or with '*dan tien*' in Chinese terms. This is both the energetic and the physical centre within your body (centre of gravity) and is located 3 inches below your navel (and inside your body). The *hara* area is central to Chinese and Japanese martial arts and healing practices, in Zen Shiatsu (what I have studied) all movement and healing extends from the *hara*. It is also the technical foundation of *kiai*, in Japanese it is called *haragei* or "belly art". Any competent instructor should be teaching you to execute every technique from the *hara*.

*Haragei* has a physical and a spiritual aspect. . Asian cultures also believe that is the area in which the soul resides in the body. It is also described as the 'one point'. This makes a kind of sense, when you think about it, intuitive feelings and strong emotions are often felt in the gut, not in our head where we usually 'reside'. *Haragei* is also used for intuition in Japanese, and this is where it comes into play in this lecture. By focusing attention on their bellies, adept warriors were able to screen out conscious thought and free their minds to detect the subtle changes in their opponents. You will need a strong *hara* to develop *kiai* and *aiki*.

There are three training principles you can use to develop your *haragei*.

- **Maintain the One Point**

This means to become conscious of your centre; i.e. put strength into your abdomen and generate the power for your techniques from there. This is the physical centre of your body, and if you move your body properly, moving from this point, the rest of your body will effortlessly follow.

### **An exercise for learning to maintain the one-point**

With a partner, use a 3-foot staff or bo and take a front-facing stance to each other. Suspend the staff between you, with the ends pressed against your abdomens at a point 2 inches below your navels. Then, without touching the stick, step forward in stance, your partner stepping back, holding the stick on your abdomen with gentle pressure from your body. Walk around like this for a while, with one moving forward and one retreating (let me know how this exercise goes, I don't have a partner to try it out with lol). This exercise should help you become more aware of your centre point, and with practice, you should subconsciously move from the one point in everything you do.

- **Relax Completely**

It is important that you relax in martial arts. Even for those 'hard' techniques that stress power and flexibility, relaxing at the right point can actually increase your power. Unfortunately, learning to relax can be harder than it sounds. We live in a stressful society, and the tension from this accumulates in our bodies, impacting the effectiveness of our *haragei*.

There are relaxation exercises galore, ranging from yoga to meditation to receiving massages from people such as yours truly. Find some you like and practice them regularly. In whatever martial art you end up taking, also take some time to regularly tune in to your body to see if you are holding tension, and consciously relax it.

- **Keep Weight Underside**

Nope, I'm not saying that pear shaped is better than apple shaped...well, actually it is but that's not the point here. Rather, when you are maintaining your one point and are relaxed, you get a feeling like your weight is settling into the lower part of your belly. You feel rooted, yet agile; powerful, yet calm. This is *haragei*.

Because the one point is your centre of balance, when you are relaxed and focused on this area it makes you very stable, and able to swiftly direct your weight up or down or around in a very powerful way. People with well developed *haragei* seem very strong, and are difficult to move or throw (I learned that the hard way during Judo, ouch). Some instructors will say that it is because we are directing our ki downwards and out through our feet, others will say it is physics. I'll let you decide on your own explanation for this.

- **Develop *Kokyu Chikara***

That CTRL-I key is really getting a workout during this lecture! *Kokyu chikara* translates as "breath power", and is a basic part of all martial arts, as well as yoga. It involves using your breathing to coordinate your muscles contraction in order to more effectively use your physical strength.

*Kokyu chikara*, combined with *haragei*, gives the warrior great strength. To develop *kokyu chikara*, you need to relax and breath deeply into the abdomen, not the chest.

Concentrating on breathing into your *hara* will fill the lower part of your lungs as well as the top and bring your abdominal muscles into play.

Usually, one is taught to inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth, with your tongue tip touching the top of your palate. In most martial arts, the technique is performed with the exhalation, though there are some exceptions to this. Generally though, whether you inhale or exhale is really up to the nature of the technique. *Kokyu chikara* works well on the inhalation if you directing force upward or drawing it in; conversely if you are striking out or driving down.

Two things to keep in mind for breathing in combat. Don't empty your lungs completely. You'll fall flat on your face in short order. Secondly, don't puff or snort. Remember what we learned earlier about tactics and rhythm? Puffing and snorting is also telegraphing to the opponent what you are about to do. Keep your breathing as silent as possible.

- **Apply *Kime***

*Kime* means 'spiritual focus' and is probably the most important aspect of developing *kiai* and *aiki*. It is the 'focus' in the translation of *kiai*'s "focused life force".

*Kime* is a hard term to define, as it has physical, mental, and spiritual aspects. It is *kime* that, along with the leverage of *haragei* and the coordinating aspect of *kokyu chikara* that concentrates the power of a strike. It is *kime* that directs the strategist mind, to give him or her a tactical advantage. It is *kime* that concentrates a warriors will, giving him the *kokoro* to achieve the impossible.

Like most other aspects of this lecture, the place to develop *kime* is through its physical applications. To develop *kime*, apply the following three principles in your training.

- Focus your entire being on achieving the objective

"I **will** be a Jedi Knight!!!". Oops you just caught me focusing on **my** objective. This is the central premise of *kime*. When you apply *kime*, there is nothing else but the task at hand.

This level of commitment must be physical as well as mental. For example, a hard stylist should put every ounce of speed and strength possible into a strike, whereas for a soft stylist, *kime* involves feeling and blending with the opponents energy, turning initial passivity into domination.

In the hard styles, *kime* is a very important aspect of *kiai*, it is the focus that concentrates the life force. For the soft styles, *kime* facilitates the sensing, blending and dominating forces of *aiki*. In both cases, the 'spirit shout' is a tool to help warriors develop *kime*.

- Master the 'Spirit Shout'

A spirit shout is not a grunt, or a 'huh', which is what you'll probably be hearing in your training place. Rather, it is a very valuable tool for developing *kime* and subsequently *kiai* and *aiki*. The shout should erupt from the abdomen for the hard stylist, helping you focus your *haragei* and *kokyū chikara*. For the soft stylist, its not quite so loud, more of a growl that grows as intensity as the energy performs its circular movement, climaxing when it shifts to domination of the opponent. In both instances, it's a tool to focus physical, spiritual and mental energy.

- Focus your spirit through your eyes.

A principle that is often taught is that you should keep your eyes on your opponent's chest or belt, the rationale behind this that if you are watching his centre, you can better see his whole body. While this works for competitive sports, it doesn't cut it for the warrior. Fighting isn't just a physical contest, its also a battle of wills. You can read the strength of another's spirit in the eyes, and your focus in this context is to dominate, and to do that you need to have your gaze resting lightly on his eyes.

You can still see the other persons body doing this, and the focus of your spirit will tell you when something is a feint just as well as watching his centre. Keep your gaze broad and your eyes relaxed, but committed.

## **Practice *kata* with the utmost seriousness**

*Kata* is the purest form of *kiai* training. Proper *kata* is a distillation of all the essential elements for developing *kiai*. It emphasises the coordination and focusing of physical and mental energy into each technique. This section may be short, but it is very...serious. *Kata* are important.

## ***Mushin* – Mind without Thinking**

*Mushin* is also called "mind-no-mind". It is a mental state that is the main source of a warriors quick reactions. It seems mystical, but boils down to – just don't think. This is one of the reasons why meditation is a useful practice, as it also teaches you not to think. If you've tried it, you probably remember that it's much easier said than done.

Thinking interferes with fighting. Of course, you have to think to learn, but once a technique is mastered there should come a point when consciously thinking about it actually interferes with executing the technique and slows you down.

Developing *mushin* is a long process. First, you need to train long enough to develop conditioned responses for all your techniques. Then you need to internalise your strategies and tactics, finally you need to stop your internal dialogue.

### ***Zanshin—So Alert you Dominate***

This is an advanced skill. *Zanshin* is a Japanese word that doesn't have a direct translation, but it is like alertness, but more than that. It is absolute, focused alertness and dominance. It is an instinct in all predatory animals, and it isn't really something you train for, rather something you discover within yourself eventually. I can imagine that the fictional character Mace Windu had *zanshin* by the bucketful!

There are some ways to help find this. Practice alertness and awareness, make it a habit. Sense what is around you, pick up smells, sounds, feelings. Become one with the Force.

### **Points to Remember**

- ✦ *Ki* is the life force, and is in all living things. It is important for a warrior to coordinate their body and their *ki* during combat.
- ✦ *Kiai* means to concentrate or focus the life force. *Aiki* means blended life force or spirit.
- ✦ You can develop *kiai* and *aiki* by first finding *kokoro* the warriors heart. Next you practice *haragei*, moving from your physical and spiritual centre. Develop the breathing power of *kokyū chikara* and apply *kime*, or focus. Put all these together and practice *kata* with utmost seriousness.
- ✦ *Mushin*, or mind-no-mind, is the mental state that is the main source of the warriors quick reactions
- ✦ *Zanshin* is ultimate alertness.

**Exercise: Whether you practice a martial art or not, consider what you have learned in this lecture and write two to three paragraphs on how you may use it in your life. Remember, businesspeople today read the 'Art of War' to apply to their work practices.**

# Lecture Six- The Foundations of Honour

Honour is central to a warrior, and is a common concept to all warrior groups, regardless of the culture that formed them. Sometimes it was called *Bushido*, or the Code of Chivalry, or something else, regardless of the name all fighting men and women aspire to ethical codes that guide the manner in which they practice the profession of arms and how they live their lives.

Given the moral nature of these codes, they are compatible with most religions and as such are often mistaken for religious doctrines; however they are not. Warriors aren't honourable because they're scared of what God will do them if they aren't. They are honourable because it's a practical requirement of the profession; it's a powerful way in which to live; and because to behave otherwise is just plain cowardly.

Honour is a necessity amongst professional warriors; because when many lives are at stake, superiors need to know that their subordinates are absolutely reliable; that they report their information accurately; and that they have their unflagging loyalty. The non-warrior portions of society also must rely on the honour of warriors, because warriors are the most dangerous group of people there is, and those without honour quickly become tyrants (as we've seen in many countries throughout the world).

Personal honour is also important for you. Studying martial arts, as well as the Jedi path, makes you stronger than your non-warrior peers and more capable of hurting others. Only a sense of morality separates a warrior from a thug.

## The Basic Tenets of Honour

*For Bushido, the three qualities of Loyalty, Right Conduct, and Bravery are essential. We speak of the loyal warrior, the righteous warrior; and the valiant warrior; and it is he who is endowed with all three of these virtues who is a warrior of the highest class.*

**From *Budo Shoshinshu*, by Daidoji Yuzan**

Many people use the term honour, but fewer understand it. For many, it conjures images of 'honour' duels or military campaigns, but when pushed they have trouble explaining exactly what honour has to do with these things. They can usually describe situations, in which someone did or did not act honourably, but have difficulty with explaining the **why** of it.

Many people equate honour with honesty (hey, they sound similar!); if you tell the truth and pay your debts you are honourable. Others link honour to their reputations, if they are respected then they feel their honour is intact, if that image is marred then their honour has been damaged. Their attitude is "I am a man of honour. Cross me and I'll make you pay for it!" ...hmm, does that seem an honourable attitude to you?

Truth, self-restraint, loyalty, and the other virtues are honourable. But just because you practice one or more of these virtuous behaviours doesn't necessarily make one a man or woman of honour – at least not in the warrior model. In order to practice warrior honour, one must understand it. In the classical sense, warriors honour has been based on:

- Obligation
- Justice
- Courage

To look at the Jedi of the fictional Star Wars universe, their Order had accepted the Obligation to be the caretakers of the Republic; to see that Justice was given to all that needed it, particularly in the care of the weak and oppressed; and to have the courage to do what was needed, even if it meant humbling themselves, which sometimes requires more bravery than fighting.

## Obligation

Obligation is the root of all warrior honour, and meeting ones obligations is the principle part of what makes a warrior honourable. This isn't just financial obligations; or even obligations to perform work tasks assigned by ones boss, though these examples do apply. Rather, it is all of the obligations inherent to human society.

*No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.*

John Donne

Life in society is essentially a social contract. Even if we feel we are very independent people, we still have some reliance upon others. And when someone helps us, or provides a service, or does us a favour, we acquire a social and moral obligation to repay that person. This is usually defined as duty.

Most people are fairly mindful about repaying favours, but warriors tend to be more so, and then there are societies like the Japanese who take it to extraordinary lengths. There is a concept called *giri* in Japanese society, which is sort of like duty, but is more of a moral obligation (closer to a burden of obligation) upon you to repay a favour in a manner equal to what the other did for you. The Japanese describe this as carrying his *on*, and fulfilling the obligation is *giri*. I'm sure you found that interesting, but I haven't found any indication in the fictional Star wars universe that the Jedi carried their obligations to this extreme, though they were serious about fulfilling their obligations.

There is a part of the concept of *giri* that may be more familiar to you. For example, leaders train, support and look after their subordinates; and in return their followers are obliged to obey, protect and sacrifice for their superiors. Honourable warriors also watch each others back, knowing that his compatriot will return the service. All are honour-bound to defend their nations or lords etc that provide them with shelter and stability.

Though the concept of obligation is important to a warrior, it can become an ugly thing if it is applied without recognition of Justice.

## Justice

Justice lies at the heart of honour, for no obligation fulfilled is honourable if the act of fulfilling it creates an injustice. Justice is knowing the difference between right and wrong and doing right.

In *Budo Shoshinshu*, Yuzan defines three degrees of doing right. He illustrates his point with a parable about a man who dies during a journey. Before leaving, the dead man had trusted one hundred *ryo* of gold with his neighbour for safe keeping. No one else knew of this transaction, so the neighbour is left with the dilemma of whether or not to act honourably. Of course, taking the money is dishonourable, but Yuzan proposes that there are varying levels of honour, depending on **why** the friend returns it.

The first, and most honourable course of action is to return the gold to the dead man's family without ever considering theft. A second alternative would be to covet the money briefly, but then be overtaken with shame and return it. The third possibility is to consider keeping the money but decide against it for fear of being discovered by family, friends, or servants. All three situations have the same outcome, but they also reflect different degrees of moral conscience and a different level of honour the individual has attained, though they will be the only one to ever know this.

This is also similar to the three levels of character growth that people move through as their sense of honour develops. Initially, we begin learning the difference between right and wrong by experiencing the positive and negative consequences of our actions (e.g. a hug from Mum for doing something right, or being sent to ones room for doing something naughty). This causes us to (eventually) begin to weigh our prospective actions against the possible outcomes and choose those that are more positive. As we grow further and come to understand right and wrong, we develop a conscience or a sense of shame. This leads us to weigh alternatives and avoid wrong actions even when they could go undiscovered. Finally, honour becomes a habit and we find ourselves not even considering wrong alternatives.

Most of us are neither pillars of virtue or moral degenerates; we lie somewhere in between. We struggle through life, weighing our alternatives and trying to make choices in situations where right and wrong are not always obvious; and sometimes, obligations conflict, and we are forced to default on one to meet another.

Conflicts of obligation, can, unfortunately, be common for warriors, so it is necessary to develop your sense of justice in order to guide us through these conflicts. In each situation, we must weigh the scales of honour and choose what is most right. Above all, we should avoid becoming obligated to dishonourable people. However, it is not quite enough to examine your obligations for justice, but you must also have the courage to carry them out.

## **Courage**

Courage is the virtue that is usually thought of when one thinks about warriors. Courage is an honourable quality, it takes courage to risk ones life to meet ones obligations. But the courage to live a life of honour is often quite different from the bravery expected on the battlefield.

We all face situations where we can see the right thing to do, but taking it puts us in jeopardy. Perhaps when you were a child you had to own up to breaking your neighbours window, or face your father after a prank damaged someone's property. As adults, we face similar situations, and our personal honour depends on whether we have the courage to face them responsibly. An example of this might be explaining to your boss why something isn't done, without making excuses. This certainly can take a lot of bravery, but the main point I am trying to make here is that it is how we handle the small conflicts of our lives that says a lot about our sense of honour.

Another point I'd like to make about courage; having it doesn't mean you don't feel fear. Fear is a natural human emotion and both dishonourable and honourable people feel it (and Jedi still feel it, too). What determines your level of courage, and whether or not you are a Jedi, is how you handle fear. Warriors and Jedi face it, get control of themselves, and do what needs to be done.

## **Develop your own sense of honour**

Don't be discouraged if you've lived dishonourably in the past. We all fail in our obligations or turned our face from justice from time to time. It is in the past now, it is done with. All we can

do is to live as honourably as we can, today. A Jedi must cultivate and nurture their own sense of honour; and practice the principles of obligation, justice, and courage until they become second nature. In order develop your own sense of honour, you should consciously examine each of your social interactions for how the tenets of honour apply.

Some tips on how to do this:

1. **Determine your obligation (and if you want to be obligated).**
2. **Weigh the situation for justice**
3. **Take courage and act**

**Exercise: Post in your journal at least two paragraphs on your thoughts regarding this lecture.**

# Lecture Seven- Honour in Action

If we have a look at the newspapers or watch the news on TV, it doesn't take long to realise that those of us with the highest responsibilities; the most money and power, seem to be those who also go astray the most. Equally unfortunately, vice isn't the exclusive province of the rich and powerful, plenty of other levels of 'service' (such as the police and military forces) are also tainted by corruption.

So...what can we, as Jedi and warriors, do about this? Is it our task to hunt out corruption and expose it to the cruel light of day? Maybe, in some cases, we should, but as Jedi, we also need to examine the circumstances before acting rashly; 'There is no ignorance', and all that.

As warriors, we have a moral obligation to attend to the cause of honour. We have a responsibility to see that justice is served in any area in which our duty leads us. However, right and wrong are not as black and white as some movie directors would like to paint them; and the call of honour does not entitle us to meddle in areas where we have no business, responsibility, or direct knowledge. In this case, we are NOT the galactic police officers of the fictional Star Wars universe. Trust me, the Force will bring plenty of opportunities your way for acting honourably and doing the 'right thing' without you having to go actively looking for them (unless that's your job, of course). For one thing, our society is addicted to scandal, and people happily assume the worst of any questionable situation. Of course, if we have direct knowledge of injustice it is our duty to speak out; but blindly making judgements on too little information and condemning others in our own opinions is just defamation, not justice. As Jesus once said 'Let he who is without sin cast the first stone'.

So...what **can** we do to make society more honourable? Well, just like charity, honour begins at home. We must attend to our own honour first; if we do our best to meet our obligations and make certain that justice is served in all of our dealings; then not only will our own small areas of influence be cleaner, but we just might serve as an inspiration to others to follow our example. Which is, after all, just what inspired us to become Jedi in the first place, isn't it? Following the noble example of the fictional Jedi?

## Putting Honour to Work

As a Jedi, you are gradually growing stronger, more educated and hence more powerful than many of your associates...but this comes with a price, which you may or may not have discovered yet. In many ways, to live as a Jedi is to be an emergent leader, and in doing so you have the responsibility to lead ethically, justly and benevolently. You must put your personal honour to work for the good of society. In order to apply honour to situations in your own life, you must understand how it factors in to the following issues:

- Truthfulness
- Courtesy
- Restraint
- Loyalty
- Service

## Truthfulness

Honesty is the virtue most often associated with honour. Even non-warriors understand that a dishonest man is a dishonourable one, even if they can't exactly explain why. In fact, truthfulness is rooted in the foundations of honour, most directly in obligation. We are obliged to be truthful, because the trust that others put in our words creates the obligation on us to be truthful with them. Furthermore, if others are to act on our word, then the information we have offered **must** be correct, else they may be in dire straits and that would be injustice.

Courage is what binds honesty to truthfulness. It takes an act of bravery to be honest, especially at certain times when you know it's going to get you into trouble; hence to the ancient warriors lying was not so much an act of immorality, as of cowardice. When people lie, it's often out of fear of the consequences of others knowing the truth. Lying to the boss about why a deadline wasn't made; the teacher as to why homework wasn't done; the parent about where you were the night before. All of these lies, big and small, are acts of cowardice and are dishonourable. Therefore, truthfulness is clearly an issue of honour, as is courtesy.

## Courtesy

Isn't it funny how people who perceive themselves as being a notch above others on societies ladder seem to feel that its OK to treat others rudely? Well, that attitude won't cut it for Jedi. By physical, mental and spiritual training warriors have often been in the highest levels of society, but this 'superiority' brings with it an obligation to all subordinates and non-warrior members of society...to be courteous as a matter of honour. When you are training in a martial art, you (should) see that the most humble, courteous and patient members of the school are the senior members. If not...get out of there, fast! Courtesy, like other aspects of warrior training, is a discipline that demands daily practice to master. It is an advanced art, a key element of warrior (and Jedi) training.

## Restraint

Should you choose to train in a martial art or arts, you will become a dangerous person. A Jedi who is trained as a warrior has been hardened to violence and the pain and emotional trauma of fighting. Most people, when attacked, go into shock. It is different for a warrior. Faced with this situation, a warriors being will fuse into an unthinking, unfeeling weapon. This is one aspect of 'being one with the Force' that is not emphasised enough; when the Force is showing you where the danger is coming from, and from whom, a Jedi will not stop until the threat is disabled, though this does not necessarily mean in a death, it will mean pain and suffering. Because of the power that a warrior/Jedi has cultivated, it is vitally important that they exercise the greatest restraint upon themselves in regards to the unleashing of this power, else they become a greater danger to society than anyone else. Anakin Skywalker was possessed of enormous raw power, but he did not possess the restraint and self-discipline that should have accompanied it; as such those weaker than he suffered enormously.

## Loyalty

Loyalty grows from an obligation to repay a great service – specifically, an extended, personal sacrifice someone makes for you. Filial duty, for example, has always been a central theme to all warrior societies. Men and women of honour learn to recognise when they carry a debt to another, and what greater debt could we have than that we owe to our parents? Our parents would have had more comfortable lives if they had not had us. They fed us, clothed us, and saw to our education. Sure, they may not have done a great job of it but in most cases they did try. Unfortunately, all too often young people today forget the sacrifices their parents made for them, and expect that everything in life should come to them as a gift.

Where do our loyalties lie, as Jedi? Have a little think about that one. In most warrior societies, men and women of honour are loyal to their parents, their superiors, and their country. Being disloyal can be one of the darkest stains on a warrior's honour. Consider this. Australia has not had the death penalty for over 50 years...except for traitors. No one has received this penalty, of course, but it indicates that disloyalty can be considered the most serious breach of trust there is. Even in more common relationships, if one partner in a marriage, say, is not faithful to the other, it is often impossible to overcome the breach of trust and the relationship dissolves.

Consider it this way. A Jedi Padawan carries an obligation to their Master, because the Master is not only giving them their knowledge, but also devoting an incredible portion of their very lives to their student. As such, we see in the movies that Padawan's (usually) repay this debt by their unwavering obedience, respect, and loyalty. For example, when Qui-Gon says 'Jump!', Obi-Wan doesn't even ask 'How high?'. He just does it!

## **Service**

Jedi train hard, and as such develop many gifts. But nothing in life is free, and any gift brings with it the obligation for repayment. The burden warriors pay for their gifts is the obligation of service to society.

It's no coincidence that the various branches of the armed forces are referred to as "military services", for service is the ultimate obligation of warriorship. Not all of us are professional warriors, but this does not free us of the obligation to serve. If you wish to become a Jedi, the obligation to serve is part of the price you must pay.

There are many ways to serve. Some may serve in volunteer or charitable organisations. Others may be politically active; or teach or many other ways. Another way to serve in your occupation is to provide the best product or service possible. After all, the pursuit of excellence is the essence of the martial *Way*.

## **Honour in the fog of life**

Now, in an ideal world, matters of honour would always be black and white. Unfortunately, we do not live in that world, so in every situation, a warrior must determine the most honourable course of action by weighing the three keystones: obligation, justice, and courage. There are not static, prescribed commandments binding you. What may be honourable in one instance, would be unthinkable in another.

Truthfulness is not always honourable. Sometimes, we must lie. A moralist might insist that you could avoid lying by simply refusing to answer, but that is not always possible. If you must lie, it should be to meet obligations greater than that of being truthful.

Courtesy and restraint are, of course, honourable virtues in a peaceful society, but place the warrior in a battle environment, and these disciplines contradict their very purpose. Courtesy may be honourable to an enemy in some circumstances, but at other times it's just going to get you killed. Sometimes, even loyalty and service are dishonourable. It is up to you to determine, as you are the receptacle of your own honour.

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## Points to Remember: Honour in Action

- ✦ Corruption finds its way into all levels of service, military and civil, when those attending to the public trust do not first attend to their own honour.
- ✦ We have a responsibility to see that justice is served in any area in which our duty leads us. But we must attend to our own honour first. If we all do our best to meet our obligations – if we find the courage to see that justice is served in all our dealings – then not only will our own small spheres of influence be cleaner, but others around us may be inspired by our example.
- ✦ As an emergent leader you assume the responsibility to lead ethically, to apply your power justly and benevolently. You must put your personal honour to work for the good of society.
- ✦ Truthfulness is rooted in the foundations of honour, most notably, obligation. But the strongest element binding truthfulness to honour is courage.
- ✦ The personal superiority and upward mobility of warriors brings with them an obligation: warriors are compelled to be courteous to their subordinates and non-warrior compatriots as a matter of honour.
- ✦ Warriors are dangerous people. Therefore, they have a solemn obligation to restrain themselves from tyrannising and assaulting weaker members of society.
- ✦ Loyalty grows from an obligation to repay a great service – specifically, an extended, personal sacrifice someone makes for you.
- ✦ The instructor-student relationship is one of ever growing obligation. The instructor gives the student more than they can ever repay. Subsequently, the student assumes an incredible obligation and the only way to repay this burden is through obedience, respect, and loyalty.
- ✦ The burden Jedi pay for their gifts is the obligation to serve society. There are many ways to serve.
- ✦ Honour isn't always black and white. There are sometimes greater obligations than to be truthful, courteous, and restrained. Even loyalty and service can be dishonourable if misapplied.

Not all instructors deserve loyalty. It is a two-way street. If an instructor dishonours himself and his students, this cancels their obligation to him.

**Exercise: In your journal, give an example of a time you felt you have not been honourable and a time when you felt you have. Do you intend to live more honourably in the future, and how will you go about this. A minimum of three paragraphs is required.**

# Lecture Eight-Religion and Mysticism on the Warrior Path

There is a common myth amongst Westerners that the martial arts are tied in with Eastern religions, possibly created from such early TV shows such as 'Kung Fu'. This even puts some people, such as Christians, off of studying martial arts because they are afraid that to do so will to be also practicing Eastern religions.

In this lecture, we'll go through the relationships that martial arts do and do not have with religion; comparing Eastern and Western religious thought; and looking at four of the major Eastern doctrines and how they relate to the martial arts.

We'll also have a look at Eastern mysticism; and finish up with some guidelines about how to reconcile your religious convictions with martial arts training. This may also be useful for some who have trouble reconciling religion and the Jedi path, as well.

## Eastern Versus Western Religious Thought

As a Warrior and a Jedi, it is important for you to have a basic understanding of the key Eastern religions and philosophical doctrines. Not only did these influence the development of the Asian martial arts, but they also had a heavy influence upon the conception of the Jedi, too. However, Asians perceive and practice religion in a different manner from Westerners, so before you can understand how Eastern religious thought relates to the martial arts, you first need to understand how it differs from the Western concept of religion.

Firstly, many Eastern religions began as philosophies, and were not originally intended to involve deity worship or going to 'heaven' or otherwise being rewarded after death. Confucianism, for example, is still mostly philosophical and not really very theosophical, even today. Zen Buddhism, which can be considered a meditative sect of Buddhism, makes it quite possible for anyone, including Westerners, to enter their monasteries and undertake the curriculum to gain enlightenment, without actually converting to Buddhism or even being asked to. It is the philosophical journey that is the important thing here.

The second thing to understand is that where Western religious doctrines are **exclusive** (i.e. you can only follow that or they kick you out), Eastern religions and philosophies are **inclusive**. To a Westerner, you have to practice only one faith to be saved, and only 'their' religion is the right one. In the few short years I have been a member of the Jedi Community I have seen so much sorrow and angst from my fellows because of this central tenet of Western religion. They are torn between their religion and their hearts call to the Jedi path. Most Asians, however, don't believe that any one doctrine holds the monopoly on the truth. So to give an example a Japanese person might be married in a Buddhist temple one day, and then go participate in a Shinto ritual the next. **He does not feel any moral conflict** in that behaviour, nor would the clergy of either faith object. This is a monumental difference between the East and West.

Eastern religious and philosophical thought is deeply intertwined with their cultures, and this is reflected in the martial arts that they have developed. But it is important for you to understand that not only are the martial arts not religions, but the Eastern religious doctrines themselves do not need to be treated as religions in order to study and apply their principles. This is how George Lucas was able to take the philosophical core of these practices and apply them to Jedi; and in the same manner we can recognise this; recognise the fundamental wisdom behind these precepts, and use them in the same manner as George to build ourselves into the Jedi we want to

be; whilst maintaining our core religious faiths. There is no conflict, only conflict within yourself.

Furthermore, you are not required to subscribe to all of the aspects of each philosophy. Rather, there are useful points of view in each that are vitally important for warriors, so take what you can use and discard the rest. This approach actually applies to more than just Eastern philosophies. You will find that it works for Western ones as well.

## **The Principle Asian Religious Doctrines**

There are three main Eastern doctrines that shaped the development of martial arts, at least in the East. Part of the reason for this is that for centuries, China was the cultural centre of Asia; hence it stands to reason that two of these philosophies, Confucianism and Taoism originated there. The third, Buddhism, began in India and spread east through China to Japan, undergoing local changes in each place. Each philosophy reflected the culture of the time, and also incorporated the more popular aspects of the preceding doctrines. Hence, we'll have a look at these in chronological order.

### **Confucianism: The Way of the Sages**

The first of these major philosophies is Confucianism. Confucius was born in 551BC, to a poor family, and his 'real' name was Chung Ni Chu. Confucius was very intelligent, and though a self-educated man it did not take long for people to recognise this, though he did not have a large following during his own lifetime. K'ung Fu Tzu (Master K'ung), the 'Tzu' signifies 'master' in the same manner as 'Sun Tzu' is 'Master Sun' in Chinese founded his own school of philosophy, which is focused on man's roles in society. He emphasized the importance of loyalty to the state, filial duty to parents and veneration of ancestors in order to maintain social order. His teachings state that every creature and object has its appointed place in the natural order and that they should behave as their station requires.

Another tenet of Confucius was regarding the 'superior man'. Since he had to struggle to educate himself, he venerated knowledge and learning. It was his opinion that educated men were superior and hence should lead society. As a consequence, many of his proverbs are devoted to describing the qualities of the superior man.

Confucius never intended for his teachings to be anything other than philosophical, and like many philosophers he was a profound sceptic. Over the centuries after his death, the popularity of his teachings increased and eventually people began to consider him a saint. Unfortunately, those who did not fully grasp his teachings began conducting rituals and sacrifices in his name, and as the lore evolved, it incorporated a host of major and minor deities, usually borrowed from local nature cults or from other cultural heroes who became 'deified' in the same manner. This shift towards religion was encouraged by the state because the emphasis Confucianism had towards loyalty and obedience helped the nobility and bureaucracy control the masses. The replacement of the sometimes difficult intellectual aspects of Confucianism teachings with ritual made it more acceptable and accessible to the general public.

By 59AD, Confucianism was China's official state religion, and as her power and influence spread throughout the region, so to did her culture and legal systems, which were based upon the principles of Confucianism. As such, even today, Confucian ethics form the backbone not only of all Eastern military codes of honour, but also of the day-to-day legal systems of most Asian nations. If you have read 'The Art of War' by Sun Tzu, then you may see how Confucian influenced this text.

## **Taoism: In Pursuit of the One True Way**

Lao Tzu ('Old Master') was the father of Taoism. There is some speculation about when he was born, some saying that it was around 600 BC, others about 300 BC; but either way it is generally agreed that the *Tao Te Ching* and Taoism developed as a counter-movement to Confucianism.

Confucianism was the 'official' religion of the state and the government tried to make it more accessible to the general population; but Taoism and its mysticism was generally preferred by the people. The word *tao* means 'Way', and in this usage it is the single Way that lies behind the surface, and is a unity of which all things are a part.

The philosophy of the Tao seeks to recognise and harmonise with the *tao* in all things. It is nature, and according to Taoists the only appropriate attitude to nature is non-interference. As Lao Tzu said 'Do nothing and there is nothing that will not be done'. It is both a passive philosophy and a statement of power, because Taoism teaches that by becoming one with the *tao* you become one with nature. Taoists adopted an older principle, that of *yin* and *yang* to be part of their own doctrine because of the duality of their philosophy. There is no concept of a supreme being, no afterlife, no incentive to worship. Taoism simply addresses man's role in harmonising with nature.

But once again, put a philosophy in the hands of the superstitious and lo! Rituals and sacrifices once again became built around it and it soon became a popular religion. It is still different from Confucianism, however, because its mystical bent encouraged alchemy, astrology, divination, and other 'magical' practices.

Eventually, the state bowed to the inevitable and began to incorporate aspects of Taoist rituals in 165 AD. The philosophical basis of Taoism also survived and spread throughout Asia in the same manner as Confucianism. It was especially incorporated into the martial arts and is the basis for all of the 'soft' arts such as Tai Chi and Aikido. The duality of opposites is also a central principle in most martial systems, hard or soft. This can also be reflected in the Japanese word '*Do*', which means the same as '*tao*', hence if you study a Japanese martial art that ends with *do*, you are practicing the principles of Taoism.

## **Buddhism: Following the Eightfold Path**

Buddhism began in India in the 600's BC, as an outgrowth of an older form of Hinduism called Brahmanism. The prince who was the first Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, was raised as a Brahman, but came to realise that his royal lifestyle was only transitory and entered the world as a beggar to find the answers to life's miseries. He spent time following a guru; he joined a group of ascetic monks and subjected himself to fasting and self deprivation, until one day he fell on his face in a stream due to his physical weakness, picked himself up, and decided that this wasn't working.

He had a meal, then sat under a fig tree and meditated for 49 days. During his meditation he had a vision of man bound to an endless cycle of rebirth and pain because of desire. He realised that he had ceased to desire, and hence had attained enlightenment. He arose and began to preach; sharing with others his four sacred truths. At the time, his doctrine was very radical, as most Indians at the time followed the polytheistic Brahman faith. The way that the Buddha taught though did not present Buddhism as a religion, but more as a philosophy for self development.

After Gautama's death, his disciples all began to disagree on his teachings and eventually divided into two different camps, who then set about religionising (hey, I just made up a new word) his teachings in the same sort of manner that we saw with Confucianism and Taoism.

Eventually, one of the doctrines of Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism was the main one to take root in China and spread. Buddhism was very similar to Taoism so the two suffered some merging in China. The first concrete link between martial arts and Buddhism came about when a Buddhist monk, who retired to a Shaolin temple in Hunan province, began to teach the monks exercises, which eventually developed into the various fighting systems that Shaolin monks are famous for (this is the very, very short version of the story). Additionally, the Buddhist temples evolved into centres for intellectual study and free thought...this led to them becoming gathering places for those who were opposed to political oppression. Sometimes, the monasteries become refuges for political fugitives and otherwise became involved in politics, which was a rather good incentive for learning how to fight! This occurred in both China and Japan. And though the Samurai and the monks were sometimes on opposing sides, it was not uncommon for warriors to retire to temples in times of peace for rest and renewal, and often studied Buddhism (particularly Zen) whilst doing so; and in Buddhism they found a strength of will that served them well in times of war.

### **Mysticism and the danger of Cults**

Mysticism is a controversial topic among people who study the martial arts. Some shy away from it, associating the term with magic and the occult. Others run toward it, eagerly searching for the mysterious and ethereal side of everything they study. Mysticism is the belief that one can only achieve a direct communion with ultimate reality through intuitive sources rather than by objective learning. There is nothing magical about this idea, most founders of philosophies and religions were mystical, in that they achieved their spiritual awakening through direct communion with what they perceived to be the ultimate truth. Whether you call this 'God', or 'Tao', or 'The Force' doesn't matter, but the fact is that they received their insights intuitively, rather than by being taught by outside knowledge.

Taoism and Buddhism are classic examples of mystic philosophies. Both encourage followers to turn their attention inward, to block out the distracting influences of objective knowledge and rational thought, so they can awaken to the ultimate reality within. And since the Asian martial arts are influenced by both of these doctrines, they can indeed have mystic connotations if you are open to them, but you do not have to if you do not want to. Just as the martial arts aren't methods of worship, they also are not intended to be pathways to spiritual enlightenment, but methods of warfare.

Some organisations that teach Asian combative systems incorporate mystic doctrines into their training programs. Sometimes they may claim to have secret or forgotten knowledge from past warrior societies. You are free to pursue these avenues if you desire, but understand that you aren't open to your **own** intuitive insights while learning someone else's ideas, it's simply another external doctrine.

Now I'm going to touch upon the concept of cults. **We've** been described as a cult, more than once, to my knowledge. Webster's dictionary defines a cult as a "system of religious beliefs, or its adherents, which are regarded as unorthodox or spurious". In some ways we may fit this bill, we certainly aren't orthodox but it's the religious bit that I personally dispute. Equally, most of the world's religions and philosophies fit this description when they first appeared, so it isn't necessarily bad that we, as Jedi, are sometimes described as one, and there isn't necessarily anything bad about being unorthodox. What you need to look for is **abusive cults**, which you may or may not find in the martial arts community, as well as amongst the broader Jedi community.

Abusive cults manipulate their members into accepting their definition of truth and reality. Sometimes they do this through intimidation, or physical or emotional abuse, sometimes their methods are more subtle.

These groups prey on the weak; those searching for something or someone to reassure them of their self-worth. They always claim their doctrine offers a secret that no one else has, an insight the rest of the world needs but hasn't yet found.

These sorts of groups will sucker you in by offering you techniques and secrets you can't get elsewhere. Here are some danger signals to keep an eye out for, both when looking for a martial arts club to join and also when examining the greater Jedi community (two lessons for one here ).

### **An Irrefutable, Charismatic leader**

Cult groups form around a leader whose words are beyond question. He or she often claims ranks or titles and a remarkable past that cannot be verified. Veterans of the group exhibit the "true believer" attitude, and they speak of the leader in tones of awe. If that sounds like a school you are considering joining...don't!

### **An Unassailable Doctrine**

Cult-oriented schools always claim theirs is the only way. Their techniques and teaching methods, often abusive, are beyond question. Often, they say they teach the original martial art; the others have gone soft or lost the secret over the years. Nobody else knows what they know. What a crock.

### **Slogans and Clichés**

Do seniors seem to have a canned answer for every question you ask? That's a sure sign they don't think for themselves. They are repeating their leaders dogma. Don't you stop thinking too.

### **Outlandish Promises**

Control groups tend to focus not on who you are but on what they claim they can make you. They hold out the golden ring of secret techniques, remarkable abilities, and anything else they think you want. If they don't seem to like or respect you now, don't wait around to see if they will later.

### **Focus on recruiting and fund raising**

Sure, fund raising is necessary for equipment and eating. Most traditional instructors, however, aren't too keen to talk about money and are embarrassed when they have to ask for dues. Classical schools are also often hard to join, they don't advertise and prospective students may be discouraged from joining if they feel they don't have the self-discipline to commit to the training.

Cult groups, on the other hand, are always recruiting and trying to raise money. Sometimes they'll find subtle ways to bill their students; and may get quite brazen about demanding money when they've got their hooks in. Some may offer contracts.

## **Pressure to commit**

"Don't be a wimp! Join now or don't come back." "Sign up for the master's seminar or we don't want to see you again." These ultimatums sound extreme, but some groups use exactly that kind of pressure, usually when the student is most vulnerable.

### **Martial Arts training and religious convictions**

By now you should have at least a little understanding of Eastern religious thought, and you can tell the difference between mysticism and cult-oriented behaviour (or I certainly hope so). But what if you still have misgivings about bowing in class or studying an art that began in a Buddhist temple? Well, here is a four-step approach to reconciling your warrior training with your religious convictions:

#### **Remember, you are studying methods of warfare, not worship**

The warrior arts are methods of personal combat; they aren't religious rites. Even those arts that originated in temples were used for military or paramilitary reasons. Of course, Asian warriors were often religious, but so were European knights.

Some groups might tell you religion or mysticism is part of the martial arts and to learn their art you must take part in rituals, make offerings etc. This is poppycock. You can do so if you wish and it's what you are looking for, but they aren't part of the martial arts.

#### **Evaluate Asian doctrines as philosophies, not religions**

This is exactly what I tell people to do with Jedi philosophy, too. The three principle schools of religious thought in Asia – Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism – all began as philosophies. They only became religions because superstitious followers and greedy politicians got hold of them. The relevance of these doctrines to the martial arts is philosophical, not religious.

#### **Accept the philosophical principles that work for you; discard the rest.**

Study and understand the philosophical principles behind Asian schools of thought. You may find some of them very insightful and very helpful in your warrior training. Some of them might conflict with your religious beliefs; or not be helpful to you; or just confuse the heck out of you. Don't worry that you are practicing a pagan religion, you aren't unless you choose to accept and worship the deities that go along with the religious versions of these doctrines.

#### **Perform school formalities as observances of tradition**

Bowing in Asia is not a religious act; it's not the same as a genuflection. It corresponds to shaking hands or saluting in the Western tradition. Martial arts schools formalities are gestures of respect and the preservation of tradition, but the amount of ceremony observed from school to school varies greatly. Not bowing when entering the school was good for about 50 push ups at my old Kung Fu school, but others places I've been don't care. If you find that a school has elaborate traditions that make you uncomfortable, join a school whose traditions are more acceptable to you.

## Teaching Tale Four- The Shaolin Temple

It is often disputed that because such a wide variety of martial arts styles exists in China they should all have originated at the Shaolin Temple in Hunan province. What is perhaps nearer to the truth is that there were a number of temples throughout China where warrior monks trained in the combat styles. The Shaolin monastery (Shaolin means 'small wood' or 'little forest') was built around AD 495 by imperial decree of the Emperor Hsiao-Wen and lies at the foot of the Song Shan mountains. It was probably the forerunner of later establishments elsewhere in the country, which were founded by Shaolin priests who had qualified and gone out into the world. Therefore various martial traditions were nurtured and underwent subtle changes, emerging as subdivisions of the major styles. Each style was named after the priest or monk who initiated the changes.

Two hundred years after its founding the first Emperor of the T'ang dynasty, T'ai Tsung, appealed to the fighting monks for a force to help him defeat General Wang-Shih-Ch'ung, who was attempting to establish a separate regime. The Shaolin monks went to the aid of their Emperor and together they defeated Wang.

Legend states that 13 monks gave their assistance, but in reality it was perhaps a much larger force, as the monastery was known to house at least 500 fighting monks. In recognition of their great deeds the Emperor conferred upon Shaolin the title 'Number One Monastery Under Heaven'.

In 1674 the Shaolin monks were called upon again by an Emperor to provide a contingent of warrior monks. This time by the Ch'ing Emperor K'an-His. Scrolls from the period tell of how these monks fought seven and ten men at a time, defeating all who came in their path. Their skill was such that the Emperor commented, 'Give me then thousand of these monks and I will conquer the world.'

After the war the monks returned to Shaolin to resume their religious life. Moves were afoot, however, at the imperial court to undermine the favour and patronage the Emperor showed to the monks. Through petty jealousies and vicious plotting by Hunan landowners and lords, the Emperor was eventually persuaded that such a force, with its amazing expertise in the art of combat and strategy, would one day prove to be a threat to the throne and should therefore be disbanded.

The Emperor half-heartedly gave way to the land-grabbing nobles and a huge army was mustered. Aided by a renegade Shaolin monk, the Emperor's army attacked the monastery and after many months of fighting razed it to the ground. It is said that only five monks managed to escape this carnage and fled to the Yellow River to evade capture. These monks are known as the five ancestors and considered to be the legendary founders of China's notorious secret society, the Triads.

The Shaolin monastery still exists and attracts tourists from all over the world. It has been extensively rebuilt by the Chinese Peoples Republic and is preserved as a historic monument. Monks still live and work there and practise their kung fu techniques daily, though their kung fu style now is more gymnastic than lethal.

# Lecture Nine– The Warrior Stands Alone

*The superior man undergoes three changes:*

*Looked at from a distance, he appears stern.*

*When approached, he is mild.*

*When he is heard to speak, his language is firm and decided.*

**Confucius**

I'm sure you have probably heard of the term 'walking in dignity'. To be a warrior is to follow a dignified calling. Its professional elite; whether they are military officers, law enforcers, or some other warrior vocation all move with a sombre grace, an air of power. It is not arrogance, rather their quiet confidence that if they are called upon to do what they must, including killing other human beings, then they have the physical, emotional and technical ability to do so.

Many martial artists these days both look and strut like peacocks, wearing bright costumes and trying to out-prance the others. They think of martial arts as sports, as a result of this they do not live them, they play them; and they **love** to perform. Yet warrior dignity does still exist, there are men and women who keep it alive.

There are still those who quietly walk into crowded rooms and command attention simply by their presence. These people stand straight and tall, and they project a confidence that only comes from years of disciplined training. They don't join in cliques – more times than not, they stand alone – but they recognise and gravitate towards one another. Only warriors understand other warriors.

This sense of presence was described well in one of the Star Wars fictional books 'Medstar 1: Battle Surgeons' when the Padawan Barris Offee arrived at the Rimzoo...

" He blinked.

One of the human females was wearing the robes and trappings of a Jedi.

There was no disputing it; the plain dark hooded robe, the lightsaber hanging from her belt and, most of all, something as indefinable as it was unmistakable in the way she comported herself – all these identified her as surely as if a neon holo had been blinking JEDI above her head. "

In this lecture, I will attempt to describe to you how you can achieve a Jedi's dignity. We'll look at the social and tactical importance of a commanding posture, and you learn how to influence others and encourage their respect. Decorum and physical grace are qualities that set warriors apart from other people. The aim is to avoid the antics of the social clown and strive instead for personal elegance...if this is what you want to do, anyway. Finally, we'll look at how combining these forces with the skills of a warrior will help you to develop personal power.

## **The Three keys to Warrior Dignity**

What is it that makes a warrior so different from other people? Is it pretense? Does he or she simply move and act in ways that convey dignity, or is it something more? Well, its more... believe me!

Dignity isn't something you can take on and off like a coat. It is deeply rooted behaviour which takes time to develop, and cannot be faked. So though nothing you learn in this lecture will make you a man or woman of substance tomorrow, it will hopefully give you some guidelines for you to work at changing your own behaviour. At the very least, you can learn how not to look foolish.

There are three main keys to cultivating warrior dignity. These are:

- ✦ Develop a commanding posture
- ✦ Discover the power of physical grace
- ✦ Cultivate the austere quality of *shibumi* (yes I'll explain this concept)

### **Develop a commanding posture**

Some say the eyes are the window to the soul, and this may be true, but a person's posture is also a reflection of one's spirit. In the Oriental and Remedial therapies courses I have undertaken, we were trained to look at a person's posture. Using Western methods, we note that this person's shoulder are rounded and curved inwards, that person's head thrusts forward, etc. In the Eastern tradition, we are taught to relate that to the person's mental and spiritual state. Posture can tell a story about your strength, your resolve, and your confidence. It is an essential part of warrior bearing.

We all know how important first impressions are, and a person's posture is often the first thing we notice (even if it's not consciously). Your posture tells people about your physical condition and your spiritual strength. It speaks of your resolve, your commitment to who you are and what you believe. It even (whether people will admit it or not) reflect your social standing relative to those that you are dealing with. Posture is the currency of leadership.

It is also not only a social issue. It's a tactical and technical one as well. Keeping your head up broadens your field of vision, and keeping your back straight enables you to move quickly and with less effort around the pivot point of your hara. You are more balanced.

Unfortunately, many of us are so accustomed to slumping, slouching etc and our shoulders are rounded and our upper spines are curved. We do all sorts of twisting around to compensate for this (which, incidentally, causes lower back pain, hip pain, knee pain etc etc). Holding this unnatural posture causes some muscles to be overworked, others to weaken. You are not able to stand up straight even if you wanted to.

As with most other things, prevention is much better than cure, but even if you have poor posture and its attendant physical problems you can still aim to improve it. The key is constant attention; in making good posture a habit.

To get good posture, stand up straight and pull your shoulders back. to get your head squarely over your hips you may need to tilt your pelvis forwards or backwards (depending on whether your lower back is too curved or too straight). Imagine a cord running through the top of your head and down through your spine, and that you are hanging from it like a puppet from its string. Then consciously try raising your ribs by expanding the distance from the front bottom of your ribs and your pelvis.

Practice these principles as often as possible, while standing, sitting, walking, kneeling. Work at making it a habit.

## Discover the power of physical grace

Grace is the product of confidence, strength, coordination and perfect balance – qualities that are to be admired in both sexes (hey, it's not just a girly thing). Grace is the outward expression of physical and spiritual power.

The prerequisite for grace is confidence, unfortunately it is very difficult to be graceful when you are plagued with self-consciousness, fear, and doubt. I suggest that if these are problems for you, you undertake the Personal series of courses to help you work through these issues. Remember though, that all of us lack confidence now and again. In those days when you lack confidence, you must fill the void with courage.

Physical strength and coordination are also essential to moving with grace. The stronger you are, the easier you can manoeuvre your body and coordination, which might be defined as the control and balance of muscular tension and relaxation – is the very essence of graceful movement. You'll develop these qualities through your physical training. Balance can be worked on through strengthening your core muscles and being aware of your *hara/dantien/centre of gravity*. Always move from your *hara*.

## Cultivate the austere quality of *shibumi*

*Shibumi* is a Japanese word which has no direct, single translation in English, but which you might be familiar with nevertheless. It is a sense of simple elegance, an aura of quiet perfection. You might have heard of Zen decorating, where the simplicity of a few twisted branches in a vase is preferred over a flashy, brightly coloured bouquet of flowers. Or even just look at the Jedi in the fictional films, and their lightsaber's, especially Mace Windu's. They dressed simply and in a utilitarian fashion, yet that very simplicity was an understated elegance compared with the garishness of the Senate's costumes. *Shibumi* is a clean, restrained sense of distinction, refinement and taste. It is austere. It is the smooth curve of a Japanese sword, compared to the garishness of a gold-plated, pearl handled pistol.

You can see *shibumi* in every facet of Asian culture; in their art and most especially in the traditional martial arts. It is hard to find *shibumi* modern combat systems. Jumps, spins, kicks and flurries are athletic, but a single, perfectly-executed blow is exquisite in its efficiency.

Warriors and Jedi strive for *shibumi* because to strive for it is to strive for perfection and a greater appreciation of the Force. The Force is everywhere, of course, but it is much easier to find and appreciate in simplicity and efficiency. Do you feel closer to the force sitting by a quiet stream in a field; or in a busy, bright shopping mall? Developing a sense of *shibumi* is not a question of doing more, rather it is a slow, deliberate process of paring away what is superfluous in your technique, your conduct, your manner. What is left is simple, elegant and dignified. What is left is a Jedi.

## The Secret of Personal Power

There is an old story about a confrontation between a master of the Japanese tea ceremony and a *ronin*, a rogue *samurai*. It seems the *ronin* was passing through the village and while in the crowded square, turned abruptly, banging his scabbard against the tea masters hip.

"You banged my sword," the *ronin* said coldly. "That is a grave insult, and I will kill you for it."

The tea master knew immediately the *ronin* really meant to kill him, and he was gripped with fear. "I meant you no insult, Noble Sir. Please excuse my clumsiness and let me live. As you can see, I'm not a warrior and I have no sword."

The *ronin* could smell the mans fear, and it excited him.

"Then get a sword and meet me on the road tomorrow at noon. There, I'll let you die like a man. But if you don't show up, I'll find you wherever you are and cut you down like a dog." He turned his back on the stunned tea master and walked away.

The tea master was beside himself with fear. What can I do, he thought. I'm a dead man. Then he remembered hearing that another *ronin*, a famous master swordsman, was also in the village. Perhaps he will help me, he thought. So he sought out the swordsman and told him his story. He explained that he had money to pay for his services and offered to hire him for protection.

"I don't hire to commoners," the swordsman said coolly. "Use your money to buy a sword and fight your own battles."

"Then, will you teach me swordsmanship? I can pay you handsomely."

"I don't teach martial arts to commoners either. Besides, what do you think you can learn in a day?" the swordsman said.

"What have I to lose?"

Indeed, thought the swordsman. Even though the man was a commoner, the *samurai* realised he was an innocent victim needing help. He finally agreed to teach the tea master what little swordsmanship he could in a day. The tea master bought a sword, and the two men began their practice that afternoon. But alas, the poor man was hopelessly inept. After several hours of watching the tea master struggle through hundreds of awkward practice cuts, he shook his head and sighed.

"Tomorrow you are going to die," the swordsman said with calm conviction.

The tea master was crushed. he was physically and emotionally exhausted. He dropped his sword to his side and stood there staring at the ground, shoulders sagging and sword hanging loosely from his hand. The *samurai* pondered him for a moment then said, "Lets have tea." The tea master looked up in puzzlement, but he carefully sheathed his sword and began unpacking his tea set.

The two men settled beneath a tree, and the tea master began his familiar routine. The swordsman marvelled as the man gracefully poured water into the bowl containing the bitter, green powder. As he artfully whisked the mixture into a frothy brew, the swordsman saw a remarkable transformation occur. Gone was the tired, broken man who stood before him only moments ago. Now the tea masters back was straight, his shoulders square, and his head erect. Before the swordsman now sat the solemn, dignified master of an ancient ritual.

The tea master poured the tea into a cup and, turning it in the ritual manner, offered it to the swordsman. His face was the picture of calmness, and looking into his eyes, the swordsman knew immediately the man was in *mushin*.

"Stop!" the swordsman said firmly. "Do you want to kill your enemy tomorrow?"

"You said I am going to die."

"You are, but do you want to die like a warrior? Do you want to kill your enemy?"

"Yes," the tea master said calmly.

"Then do what you are doing right now."

"But I'm doing nothing right now."

"Exactly! Your mind is empty. You neither desire life nor fear death. Tomorrow when you meet your enemy, I want you to empty your mind as you have now and raise your sword above your head. When he attacks, do nothing but cut and die."

The tea master, being a master, understood.

The next day the *ronin* was surprised to find the tea master standing in the road, waiting for him. When he approached and the man raised the sword above his head, the *ronin* chuckled to himself. but as he got closer, he began to feel uneasy. he expected to see the man shaking in fear, but the tea masters sword was still, and his face was grimly calm. he stopped a few paces away and searched the tea masters eyes. He saw nothing...only death.

The *ronin's* mouth went dry. After a moment he said, "I cannot defeat you." He turned, and walked away.

This story illustrates power in its most naked form. The *ronin* began in a position of power. He knew he could kill the tea master and he enjoyed frightening him. But the master swordsman showed the tea master that he ultimately more powerful than the *ronin*. The *ronin* was a competent swordsman, but he was no master. The tea master, on the other hand, was hopeless at combat, but he was still a true master. He had discovered the secret of personal power.

Personal power is a quality few understand. It has little to do with physical strength or technical prowess. Rather, personal power is simply the force that results from freeing yourself from the fear of failure, no matter what the consequences.

You've probably noticed by now that the instructors here at the IJRS harp on about overcoming fear. This is because people usually decide on courses of action based not on what they can achieve, but on what fearful outcome they can avoid. As a result, individuals or circumstances that threaten these people with things they fear have power over them. Achieving personal power means finding the courage to drive ahead no matter what your opponent threatens. Whether the challenge is conflict with your boss, a legal confrontation, or personal combat, when you divorce yourself from any fear of consequences, your adversary no longer holds any power over you. Just think, for a moment, of how Anakin's fear in the third Star Wars movie held enormous power over him and his actions.

Man's greatest fear is death; but think of the power you have when you throw off any fear of dying. How threatening would the loss of your girlfriend or boyfriend, a job, or financial ruin seem today if you knew you were going to die tomorrow. If you can get over that fear, then all the other calamities in life seem trivial. so the first step to achieving personal power is to always assume you are going to die tomorrow.

I'll just add a little extra to that. I have two children, and I find that my greatest fear is not of my own death but of theirs. My fear is that my children will suffer harm and death and I would not be able to prevent it. To an extent, this fear is natural...it's probably genetically hardwired into us so we make at least some effort to preserve our genes, etc etc. However, I've found that I need to move past this fear, and to do so I've adapted the above; so not only do I try to work from an assumption that I'm going to die tomorrow, but I also try to work from that assumption regarding my children, too, though usually not very successfully. Think about how that makes you savour every day, since it always...always has the possibility of being the last.

Warriors with personal power stand tall and strive for *shibumi* in everything they do. Why settle for anything imperfect or frivolous today when you are going to die tomorrow. You don't have the time to waste on such stuff.

Personal power leads the warrior to absolute dignity. A man who knows he will die tomorrow doesn't act like a clown; he doesn't make a fool of himself in public. A woman with personal power chooses her words carefully; she doesn't want some trivial nonsense to be remembered as her last words. When men and women of power speak, others listen. They can feel that these people stand behind what they say. How would you prefer to be remembered, if you were going to die tomorrow?

**Exercise: In your journal, write your thought and what you have learned (if anything) from this lecture. A minimum of two paragraphs is required.**

# Lecture Ten- Martial Arts and Healing

*This article has been sourced from the 'Massage and Bodywork' magazine, April/May 2003 edition. Story by Gary Lescak, Kathy Lescak and Jeff Todd.*

In a village in feudal Japan, a man falls from a rooftop, and the force of the landing causes him to stop breathing. A crowd gathers; they know the man is in trouble, but they are unsure what to do. Suddenly, a little old man pushes through the crowd, grabs the victim, gives a loud shout (kiai) and strikes him. The victim is instantly revived. Although the old man practices medicine, he is not a doctor. In fact he is a person that few Westerners would expect to heal someone: a martial artist.

Hundreds of years ago in Japan, old men who had practiced martial arts all their lives were respected by the population in general, and their students in particular, for two distinctly different reasons. Obviously, people lived in awe of their ability to harm or kill others. A fact that is not commonly known though is that well-developed martial artists placed as much value on healing and resuscitation arts as they did on combative techniques. These arts, known as *katsu* or *kappo*, gave the practitioner the ability to restart someone's heart, resume breathing that had stopped or treat other injuries, such as nosebleeds and testicle blows. These tactics were a natural outgrowth of martial arts practice where the need to reverse techniques was commonplace. These abilities, coupled with bone-setting and other healing arts, earned the old martial artists as much, or more, respect as their martial abilities.

## The Connection

The connection between the healing arts and the martial arts is not merely one of association based upon practicality. It also exists because of fundamental commonalities; they are in many ways kindred spirits. As startling and unlikely as this may sound, once we examine some specific connections, we can see that their coexistence and complementary development have a natural flow.

Keep in mind, however, that we cannot truly convey the experiential nature of these two arts within an intellectual, conceptual construct; such constructs must all fall short simply by the definition of 'art'. Also, understand that we are dealing with nebulous, enigmatic ideas originating in different cultures and different historical eras. A good conceptual framework for our comparison of similarities, therefore, is to use the mind/body/spirit paradigm, since both arts emphasize the interconnectedness of these three dimensions and train the practitioner in each.

## Physical Similarities

In both healing arts and martial arts, the need for precise anatomical knowledge with the ability to identify and pinpoint a specific spot on the body the size of a dime (or smaller), is fundamental to all advanced techniques.

In Japanese *sefhukujitu* (a broad term that includes deep tissue massage, specific massages for specific ailments, bone-setting and resuscitation techniques), there is a whole body of resuscitation techniques (*katsu* or *kappo*) to stimulate and start someone's heart or breathing; many of these techniques involve percussive actions/striking/point stimulation. They are referred to as cure of kill (*kappo* or *sappo*) techniques. The reason for this is many of the points that are stimulated in the healing arts to start someone's heart or breathing are the same points that are struck (stimulated) in the martial arts to stop someone's heart or breathing (with obviously different focus, intent and stimulation methods). This is also true in the Chinese Arts: many of

the points stimulated in acupuncture to balance the body's energy are the same points that martial artists strike to damage or disrupt that energy.

Another interesting commonality is the "feel" by which very skilled practitioners in both arts locate these points. As in any craft, the novice must first learn the rudiments and through constant application gain proficiency with the techniques; over time the application of skills becomes second nature. Likewise, in both martial and healing arts, the beginning student is taught precise methods to measure the body, to locate specific areas and either strike or treat them. The long-term practitioner, though, is able to unerringly touch the precise point without hesitation and without even looking directly at the point.

The physical conditioning for each experience is also extremely complementary and the practice of each art actually enhances the ability of the practitioner while performing the other art. Specifically, in advanced striking in martial arts, a great deal of conditioning emphasis is placed upon development of connective tissue, such as tendons and ligaments; the Chinese say that ones power comes from the sinews. In advanced point hitting, the martial artist oftentimes uses his fingertips and even a single digit; this all takes a tremendous amount of hand, wrist and forearm development. Such development mirrors what you need for and get from deep-tissue massage and acupressure.

We can list other examples of this physical connection: the ability to analyse or "read" a persons physical build, posture, and gait; the development of hand strength for grabbing, kneading, gripping and ripping; techniques for using your body weight to full advantage; and many more. These are all concrete, fundamental, physical examples, but these may not be the most fascinating comparisons. For those, we turn to the realm of the mind and spirit.

## **The Mind/Spirit Links**

Under the mind/body/spirit paradigm, the mind is the bridge between the spirit and the body. The spirit has to meet the body on the bridge called the mind for advanced practitioners of both arts to gain their unusual abilities in very esoteric areas. For our comparative purpose, our two main categories here revolve around perception/sensitivity to energy and projecting energy.

Martial arts training sensitizes one to an opponents energy. The advanced martial artist can perceive the opening (*suki* in Japanese) or "find the gap," as the Chinese say; this intuitive perception enables him to enter and neutralize the opponent, often with the opponents initial movement, sometimes before he ever moves. This is not about a physical opening and does not rely on physical cues; this is about a mental (focus/concentration) opening or a spiritual (energy/attachment) opening.

In the healing arts, this type of perception is fundamental to advanced diagnostic techniques, like reading the pulses in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), for example. When we talk about TCM theory, treating the whole person begins by understanding energy blockages and deficiencies; the root of the physical problems are to be found in the mental and spiritual realm. The advanced practitioner has the ability to discern the specific problem because he has developed the intuitive perception necessary to connect with the clients mind and spirit.

Once this perception/sensitivity to energy is put into practice in either art, it is followed by energy manipulation of the subject by energy projection from the artist. This requires a mind/body/spirit connection by the practitioner that takes many years to develop.

In the martial arts, this takes the form of techniques like *kiai* (literally, spirit uniting shout) and *tora nirami* (tiger stare) in Japanese martial arts, and *dim mak* (point hitting) and *do ming dien mo* (delayed death touch) in Chinese martial arts. These techniques are about energy projection and disrupting an opponents energy, sometimes without touching him.

In the healing arts, this energy manipulation and energy projection are what benefit the patient. It can take the form of energy exchange in massage techniques; the aforementioned resuscitation techniques; and acupuncture, which manipulates the body's energy to enable it to heal itself. And, as in the martial arts, it can sometimes be done without physically touching the person, as in reiki, a type of energy massage.

## Energy Exchange

Our attempt here has been to introduce you to the fundamental ties between the martial arts and healing arts, to convey introductory information about some very complex ideas and relationships. Although volumes could be written on this connection, you seldom see anything about this subject for several reasons: 1) it is complex and can be difficult to describe and to understand; 2) few people know both arts in depth well enough to discuss this connection; and 3) those that do are probably senior martial artists who are generally rather low profile and secretive. One can acquire knowledge in the healing arts without knowing its martial application, but in order to be a truly knowledgeable, senior martial artist, one cannot do it without the healing art knowledge.

In the story that opens this article, the old martial artist used his knowledge and intuition, developed over years of practice, to read the energy of another. He used his skill not to kill an opponent, but to cure a neighbour. We feel students and practitioners in each art would be well served to explore the other art, to learn the intricacies of the energy exchange between individuals. as we tell people in both contexts, feeling is believing.

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**Exercise: In your journal, write your thought and what you have learned (if anything) from this lecture. A minimum of two paragraphs is required.**

# Lecture Eleven- Mastery and the Jedi Path

"Master Jedi". Has a nice ring to it, doesn't it? These are two words that the fictional character of Anakin Skywalker craved to hear from his fellows, to bolster his poor sense of self worth. The denial of this coveted status by the Jedi Council was a good portion of Anakin's 'fall' from grace.

How many of us in the Jedi community also greatly desire this title? More than a few, I suspect. However, what entails 'mastery' of an art...any art, let alone one that is still in the flux and flow of development? 'Traditional' martial arts usually only bestowed the title of 'Master' upon those who were fully trained and knowledgeable in all of the techniques, forms, strategies, tactics, and the principles and philosophies behind them. It is certainly an objective worth devoting a considerable portion of ones life to, yet one must be careful not to chase that goal as an end in itself, because otherwise you are running towards an empty shadow.

In every field of endeavour, there are men and women who, while mastering the mechanics of their system, intuitively sense that there is something **more** than technique, something beyond physical practices or remembered knowledge. These people sense and reach for a level of mastery most ordinary people don't even know is possible. They move beyond technical mastery to touch the soul of their craft; they perceive and merge with the very essence of what makes their calling art.

The field of music offers us some of the best examples of this kind of mastery. We see men like Mozart, who could compose entire concertos in his mind, then visualise and dictate the complex musical scores for all the instruments simultaneously. And there was Beethoven, who created his most beautiful and complex orchestrations after he was totally deaf. These were men who stepped beyond mastering the technical details of music and moved naturally with the *tao*, the *Way* of their art.

Traditional martial artists have long recognised this kind of genius. They know that there are individuals who step beyond the mere technical mastery of artificial systems to touch the essence of personal warfare, the soul of the Martial Way. People of this calibre do not study one art alone. Rather, they study personal combat as a whole, using systems of technique as vehicles towards mastery, not doctrinal cages to imprison them.

To aspire to be a Jedi Master, one will have to similarly study many arts and then move beyond these, to total command and understanding of the Force. At least, that is the definition of a Master that I will give you. If you disagree with that, that's fine, plenty of people do, especially those who hunger for a title without thinking about what it truly entails.

To me, a Jedi Master has understood and mastered many different disciplines and studies. The skills of combat, the ways of healing, the deep thought and understanding of philosophy. A Jedi Master is truly a Scholar Warrior, who doesn't just have the technical skills from studying many disciplines, but the humbleness of spirit, the strength of will, and an understanding and connection to the Force that is rare to behold. Hopefully, in the future, as our Order grows and develops, we will see such people rise to take on the true meaning of the word 'Master', rather than the mere appeasement of ego that was Anakin's driving force (pun definitely intended).

I hope that you have enjoyed this course, and learned something from it. Much of the course has been sourced from the following books, and from my own experiences. May the Force be with you in your endeavours on the Warrior Path.

Inari.

## References

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'Martial Arts Teaching Tales of Power and Paradox' by Pascal Fauliot

'Zen in the Martial Arts' by Joe Hyams

## Final Exercise

**There have been a lot of concepts introduced and explained in this course, and I hope that you have learned something from it.**

**For your final exercise, please write a minimum of one A4 page (at 12 point) on what you have gained from this course, any changes you intend to make to your lifestyle due to it, and how this will influence your Jedi path, if at all.**

**This is to be posted in your journal.**

# Teaching Tale Five- Teachings of the venerable cat

(from Teaching Tales of Power and Paradox)

Shoken, an expert in the art of swordsmanship, had been plagued for several days by a rat who had moved into his house. The best cats from the surrounding area had been brought into the house, which had been transformed into a sort of arena for the occasion. To the surprise of everyone, these matches always ended with the same scenario: the hunter, terrified by the attacks of the rat, would flee the battlefield meowing piteously.

In desperation, the expert decided to take on the task of killing this terrible beast himself. Armed with his sword, Shoken went on the offensive. But fast as lightning, the rat dodged all of his blows. Shoken intensified his efforts. The rat remained untouchable. Covered in sweat and out of breath, the expert finally gave up. Would he now be forced to give up half his house to this cursed rat? He found this prospect making him increasingly depressed.

One day, he heard talk of a cat with a reputation as the greatest rat hunter in the province. When Shoken saw the famous cat, all remaining hope left him. The elderly animal was truly nothing to look at. Having nothing to lose, however, he brought the cat home and let it into the room where the rat held sway. The cat entered the room, treading serenely, as if nothing were amiss. When the rat saw him, it froze where it stood, clearly terrified. The cat calmly approached it, caught it with no effort, and left the room, holding its prey in its mouth.

That evening, all the cats that had taken part in the rat hunt gathered together at Shoken's house. The great cat, as the hero of the day, was respectfully invited to take the place of honour. One of the other cats took the floor, "We are considered the most experienced cats in the village. But not one of us managed to do what you have done with that terrible rat. Your mastery is truly extraordinary. We are burning with impatience to know your secret."

The venerable cat responded, "Before trying to impart to you the principles of the Great Art, the direction of the way, I would like to hear what you have learned and how you were trained."

The black cat rose up and said, "Born into a famous family of rat hunters, I was trained from infancy in this art. I am capable of making leaps of six feet, and insinuating myself into rat holes, in short, I have become an expert in all manner of acrobatics. On the other hand, I know a great number of ruses and have more than one trick up my sleeve. I am ashamed at having had to beat a retreat before that old rat."

The great cat explained, "You have only learned technique. You are only concerned with knowing how to plan out your attack. The ancients have in fact invented techniques with the sole aim of initiating us into the most appropriate method for performing a task. The method is naturally simple and efficacious. It contains all the essential aspects of the art. Technical prowess is not the goal of the art. It is merely a means that must remain in accord with the way. If the way is neglected and efficiency trumps it in importance, the art of combat will quickly degenerate and be used for any conceivable purpose. Never forget this."

The tiger cat stepped forward to proffer his advice, "In my opinion the most important thing in the art of combat is *ki*, energy, the mind. I have trained long to develop it. I now possess the most powerful mind around, one capable of filling heaven and earth. Once I have confronted and adversary, my *ki* imposes itself upon him and my victory is assured even before the fight actually begins. Even when a rat is running across a roof beam I can catch him, all I need do is direct my *ki* at him to make him fall. But with this mysterious rat, nothing worked. It was beyond me.

The venerable cat replied, "You are capable of utilising a large portion of your psychic powers, but the simple fact that you are aware of your ability to do so works against you. Opposing an adversary with your potent psychic strength is not a solution because you always run the risk of encountering someone stronger than you. You say that your mind fills heaven and earth, but you are mistaken. It is not actually your mind itself but only its shadow. You should never confuse psychic power with the mind. True mind is a wave of inexhaustible energy that flows like a river, whereas your force depends on certain conditions much like those torrents that only exist during a storm. This difference in origin necessarily entails a difference in results. A cornered rat often shows itself to be more combative than the cat attacking it. It is on the alert and its entire being embodies the very spirit of combat. It is the rare cat that even has a chance of breaking down its resistance."

The grey cat then took the floor. "As you have just finished saying, spirit is always accompanied by its shadow, and no matter how strong it is, an enemy can take advantage of this shadow. I have trained for a long time not to resist the enemy, but, on the contrary, to seek to use his own strength against him. Thanks to my flexibility, even the most powerful rats can't manage to strike me. But this astounding rat wasn't caught in the snare of my attitude of non-resistance."

The old cat responded, "What you call the attitude of non-resistance is not in harmony with nature. It is actually a gimmick fabricated by your intellect. Artificial non-resistance requires a psychic will that interferes with the quality of your perceptions and obstructs the spontaneity of your movements. In order to allow nature to manifest thoroughly, it is necessary to rid yourself of all mental constraints. When nature follows its own path and acts as it pleases within you, there is no longer any shadow or any fault from which your adversary can profit."

"Although I am but a simple cat who doesn't have a great knowledge of human affairs, allow me to bring up the art of the sword to express a deeper truth. The art of the sword doesn't consist merely in vanquishing one's adversary. It is primarily the art of being aware, at a critical moment, of the cause of life and death. A samurai must keep this in mind and strive for spiritual training as well as knowledge of fighting techniques. Therefore, he must attempt to penetrate into the cause of life and death. When he has attained this level of being, he is free of all egotistical thought, nourishes no negative emotion, and doesn't waste time in calculations and deliberations. His mind is then non-resistant and in harmony with all that surrounds him."

"When you have succeeded in achieving the state of non-desire, your mind, which by nature is formless, contains no object. The spiritual energy *ki* will then expand in a balanced manner with no blockages. If, on the other hand, an object attracts it, the energy seesaws and flows in a single direction, leaving a void in the other. Where there is too much, it will overflow and be out of control. The place where *ki* is lacking will not be sufficiently nourished and will begin to shrivel up. In both cases you will find yourself incapable of confronting situations that are constantly changing. But when non-desire has prevailed, the mind is not drawn in any single direction, and it transcends both subject and object."

Shoken then asked the question, "What do you mean when you say 'it transcends the subject and the object'?"

The venerable cat stated, "Because there is an ego, there is also an enemy. When the ego no longer exists, there is no more enemy. If you stick a word on things, if you enclose things in fixed and artificial forms, they appear to exist in opposition. Male opposes female, fire opposes water. But when there is no judgement within your mind, no conflict of opposites can take place. There is then no longer either an ego or an enemy."

When the intellect has been surpassed, you get a taste of the state of absolute 'nonaction,' you are in serene harmony with the universe. You no longer have to choose between true or false, pleasing or displeasing. You are free of the dualistic world manufactured by your intellect. It, its power is spent. But when even an extremely tiny piece of dust enters our eyes, we can no longer keep them open. The mind is similar to the eye; once an object has entered

"This is all I can explain to you here on this matter. It's up to you to experience its truth. True understanding is found outside of all written teachings. A special transmission from one man to another is necessary, but in any event the truth is only obtained by one's own efforts. Teaching is not difficult, nor is listening; what is truly difficult is to become conscious of who you really are inside. *Satori*, awakening, is nothing other than the fact of truly seeing within yourself. *Satori* is the end of a dream. Awakening, self-realisation, and seeing within yourself are no more and no less than synonyms.

**The End**

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