



Wado International Karate-Do Federation

DOJO CONNECTION

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Bushido

The recent Presidential Election seemed in the minds of many voters to focus very strongly on “Moral Values.” I found this brief description (I don’t know where it came from) of the Philosophical Code of Honor : Bushido. These were the moral values that Samurai were supposed to strive for. I think these “values” are still worth striving for today.

Honesty and Justice (Gi) – Be acutely honest throughout your dealings with all people. Believe in justice. To the true Samurai there was no shade of gray in the question of honesty and justice. There was only right and wrong.

Polite Courtesy (Rei) – There is no reason to be cruel. There is no need to prove your strength. A Samurai is courteous even to his enemies. Without this outward show of respect they considered one to be nothing more than an animal. A Samurai is not only respected for his strength in battle but also by his dealings with other men. The true strength of a Samurai becomes apparent during difficult times.

Heroic Courage (Yu) – Rise up above the masses of people who are afraid to act. Hiding like a turtle in a shell is not living at all. A Samurai must have heroic courage. It is absolutely risky. It is dangerous. It is living life completely, fully, wonderfully. Heroic courage is not blind. It is intelligent and strong.

Honor (Meiyo) - A true Samurai has only one judge of honor, and this is himself. Decisions you make and how these decisions are carried out are a reflection of whom you truly are. You cannot hide from yourself.

Compassion (Jin) – Through intense training the Samurai becomes quick and strong. He is not as other men. He develops a power that must be used for the good of all. He has compassion. He helps his fellow man at every opportunity. If an opportunity does not arise, he goes out of his way to find one.

Complete Sincerity (Makoto) – When a Samurai has said he will perform an action it is as good as done. Nothing will stop him from completing what he has said he will do. He does not have to “Give his word.” He does not have to promise. Speaking and doing are the same action.

Duty and Loyalty (Chu) – For the Samurai having done some “Thing” or said some “Thing” he knows he owns that “Thing.” He is responsible for it, and the consequences that follow. A Samurai is immensely loyal to those in his care. To those he is responsible for he remains fiercely true.

“Good character is more to be praised than outstanding talent. Most talents are, to some extent, a gift. Good character, by contrast, is not given to us. We have to build it, piece by piece – by thought, choice, courage and determination..” – John Luther

Self-Defense

I am frequently asked for advice on this topic. Here is the answer I give people:

Become stronger.

Become more agile.

Become faster.

Become more durable.

Training as Warriors Train

Sometimes I get concerned that many karate schools have come so far from their warrior roots that they have forgotten the ancient lineage of lifetime martial arts. They have forgotten not only them but also why we chose to take martial arts to begin with. So what should the goal of martial arts training be?

Yagyū Munenori, a master swordsman of the House of Tokugawa (1571-1646) wrote that the goal of training in the martial arts is to overcome six kinds of disease. These six diseases were: the desire for victory, the desire to rely on technical cunning, the desire to show off, the desire to psychologically overwhelm the opponent, the desire to remain passive in order to wait for an opening, and the desire to become free of these diseases.

This way of thinking, the ability to see all existence from a non-self-centered perspective, is the essence of all the martial “Way” and cultural “Way” of the Japanese tradition. Ultimately, physical, psychological, and spiritual mastery are one and the same – a complete triangle. They are not about making a buck and being surrounded by devoted disciples.

If you want to train as warriors train consider doing the following:

- ✓ Make training a daily habit.
- ✓ Employ Shugyo (severe training) to condition yourself.
- ✓ Train against serious attack.
- ✓ Make free sparring an important part.
- ✓ Become a student of anatomy.
- ✓ Practice kata with utmost seriousness.
- ✓ Focus on your purpose. Focus your spirit through your eyes.
- ✓ Practice alertness. (Zanshin)

**Everyone is enthusiastic at times.
One person has enthusiasm for 30
minutes – another has it for 30 days,
but it is the person who has it for 30
years who makes a success of karate.**

Traditional Taoist Story

A poor farmer’s prize horse disappeared one day, last seen heading for the country of the barbarians. The other farmers, poor like him, knew how much the horse meant to the family and expressed their sympathy. The old farmer said only, “How do you know this isn’t good fortune?”

A few months passed. Lo and behold, the farmer’s horse came back, bringing with it another horse, strong and of new stock. The neighbors congratulated the farmer for his good luck. The farmer was terse. “How do you know this doesn’t forebode disaster?” The peasants merely shook their heads and went back to their work.

The two horses mated, and soon the family had many fine horses and became very rich. The farmer’s son, with leisure time now on his hands, took a fancy to riding his beautiful horse, and one day he fell off and broke his hip. Once again came the farmers to offer condolences and to wish the farmer a quick recover for his son. He told them, “How do you know this is not a good thing?”

Well the hip did not heal well and the son became lame as a result. Some time went by, and the barbarians crossed the frontier. War had begun, and all the able-bodied young men were required to fight. Nine out of ten of them died. The young farmer with the limp stayed home and alive.

I always try and remind myself, and my students, not to get too elated when things are going well and not to get too down because things seem to be going wrong. It frequently seems to be that things turn out best for those who make the best of the way things turn out.

In his book, See You at the Top, Zig Ziglar says, “Attitude is more important than aptitude.” A study by Harvard University supports this position. The study revealed that 85% of the reasons for success, accomplishments, promotions and such were because of attitudes. William James, the father of American psychology, stated that the most important discovery of our time is that we can alter our lives by altering our attitudes.