

Student: "I am discouraged. What should I do?"

Master: "Encourage others."



The Scroll

Seasonal Newsletter for Fudoshin Victoria - 5th Edition, Autumn 2012

Welcome to another edition of The Scroll. In Sempai Cyril's absence, I am composing and editing this issue. We all hope that Cyril is enjoying his trek around various countries.

The first three months for 2012 saw us with the usual timetable. Getting back in to training, the various community events and preparations for the first gradings have been a challenge but the club community has managed really well.

It is good to see new members already. A big welcome to everyone who has joined our club this year. If you see a new face in the Dojo, be sure to introduce yourselves. Joining a club can be a little daunting. Although we train hard, it is important to remember 'kaishin' or our communal spirit.

March sees many people due for their annual renewal. It is always important to pay your yearly renewal as soon as possible in order to maintain membership with the AOFA. It is through this organisation that we have access to our grading materials, licenses, insurance as well as funds for further training studies.

Most people know that there has been a change with the format of the tatami (mats). This will happen from time-to-time in order to accommodate various training styles. Please be aware that the mats are to be put out and packed up under Black Belt supervision which means a Black Belt is responsible for them being put back in the correct order. For the junior class, this will mean that often the Orange Belts and above will be the only ones helping at the black belts discretion. For other juniors, you have exercises in your handbook to keep you busy.

A quick thank you to everyone who participated and helped to run/organise the various events we have been involved in. There will be more on it later, but it is always good to know that our community of members and families are willing to put in.

There have been some slight tweaking of organisational positions as 2012 sees us in a big transitional phase - the biggest one yet, that hopefully will achieve greater focus on individual skill development, targeted training for focus groups, more social events and better management of new members.

Enjoy the latest edition and, as usual, any feedback or articles for the next issue, please send to

dojo@fudoshinmartialarts.net.

Arigato. Sensei Darren.



Meet Shinobi. Each newsletter Shinobi will be hiding somewhere. If you can find him (and you are a Junior member) you win a half-hour private lesson after class with a Black Belt.

Training - it's quite hard

Now this, to some people, is an obvious thing. Of course training is hard, otherwise it wouldn't be worth it. Right? I think that all too often people forget the real struggle in their Martial Arts training. The mental and spiritual training that comes. As a Sensei, it is my responsibility to look after the wholesome education in the Martial Arts of all my students. For me personally this means Jasmine and Nyree, the junior and senior students, the black belts, the guests to the Dojo, my fellow Sensei around the country and even overseas. How can I look at helping all those different people? How is it possible for me to have this relationship? It isn't easy...it's quite hard, but that's what training is.

It would be very easy for myself or one of the other black belts to make sure everyone has a good physical class each session. Lots and lots of breakfalls and exercises, lots of contesting, more exercises and then, when it's almost over, perhaps some strength training in stances. This kind of training certainly has its place at the Dojo, and it works the body rigorously. If sweat and sore muscles is the only requirement for learning, then there are many gyms and other schools to look at. In Fudoshin, it is important to develop the mind and spirit as well. This often takes the appearance of lessons not so obvious. Lessons in patience, gratitude, benevolence, one's own ego and self-awareness. These things are vital to the philosophical development of the Fudoshin warrior. Without them, and many more, we are just very fit people who know how to fight. There must be a balance between the Bujutsu (combat techniques), the Budo (self-development) and Bushido (attitude and behaviour).

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This balance is always hard to gain, and even harder to maintain, especially when each student learns differently and many students have different techniques and syllabi to study at any given session.

I remember one day being given the 'heisokudachi lesson'. It was one of the first black belt lessons I received a few months after getting my brown belt. I was asked to stand in heisokudachi and wait until Soke came back. He just had to get something. Well, I stood there and waited. And waited, and waited. It was over half an hour before he came back. The lesson was patience. I was so excited about finally getting my brown belt and was eager to start my black belt training, but I was too eager. I needed to learn that no matter how hard I tried, some things only come with time. This is a concept not so foreign to adults, and I'm sure the more 'grown-up' people reading this were nodding their heads just now. Progress is a result of effort, focus, diligence and being able to apply what you know/have learned. Progress should be a daily and weekly focus rather than a monthly or yearly one. Progress should never be subject to a time-frame, or even a belt system. Our system of grades and belts are there to give a simple structure to what is a highly individualised and complex learning experience. No one 'achieves' the exact same levels, standards and satisfactions as anyone else. We are all different people. Different learners. Because of this, people are often dismayed at their lack of apparent 'progress', or how slow they are getting their belts. This attitude is one that goes against the Fudoshin training philosophy.



Nintai - Japanese for patience, perseverance and endurance.

It is entirely normal to be thinking these things, however.

If you find that you are, you should ask yourself the following questions:

1. Apart from grading/getting my belts, what motivates me to train?
2. Can I personally do anything to improve my training?
3. Am I applying myself, when I can, as best I can?
4. What are the things I want to change about myself in relation to my body/mind/spirit?
5. What personal responsibilities do I have for my progress?

These are questions which are good to ask yourself anyway, and possibly re-ask periodically throughout your training. It helps you to identify positive and negative training habits as well as habits of mind (attitude). Going through this small task of answering these questions may help you to discover something about your motivations and/or goals that you never knew you had. They may even prompt more questions that have no immediate answer. This is a good thing. This is training.

I am challenged daily. With my varying responsibilities as a husband, father, Sensei, teacher (career) and self (personal responsibilities), it is easy for me to lose focus, overlap commitments, get tired easily, get frustrated and stressed easily and a myriad of other thoughts and feelings. I have to keep reminding myself why I do it. What is my motivation?



I train because I feel I must. I like it. Love it. Need it. Want it. I enjoy the roles I have and the relationships I am involved with. I love being able to help develop confidence, strength and abilities in other people. I love being able to clear the confusions some people have, and then help them help themselves. I love to inspire and be inspired. I love to learn. At this point in my life, that mostly means teaching.

So, when you think that training is boring, or slow, or repetitive, or not-fun; just remind yourself that every time you step into the Dojo, you are training. Training is hard. It's meant to be. We grow through challenge. Training is quite often doing what we don't want, don't like or can't do (a word Soke hates with a passion); but...that is why we do it. If you can adopt the attitude of really enjoying

the experience of failing, falling down, growing tired, growing old then you have embraced a great spirit. If you are overwhelmed with your own successes, then you are still learning to learn properly.

Sensei Darren

"Good judgement often comes from experience.

Unfortunately, experience often comes from bad judgement"

- Unknown

Accountability

I have observed during training that sometimes people are lying to themselves. It tends to happen a few times each lesson. Someone will muck up a technique and automatically look at how it was not their fault. It was their partner, they didn't attack properly, or have the correct foot forwards, or they didn't wait until I was ready...blah, blah. The fact of the matter is that we can not be so quick to judge in many cases. If the attack were real, would it have mattered?

To have the proverbial sun-in-my-eye is something that we must all learn to deal with. I can see many a parent giving the same, sound advice to their children.

'If you do something wrong, you better tell the truth. If I find out, and you lied about it, then you'll be in twice the trouble!'

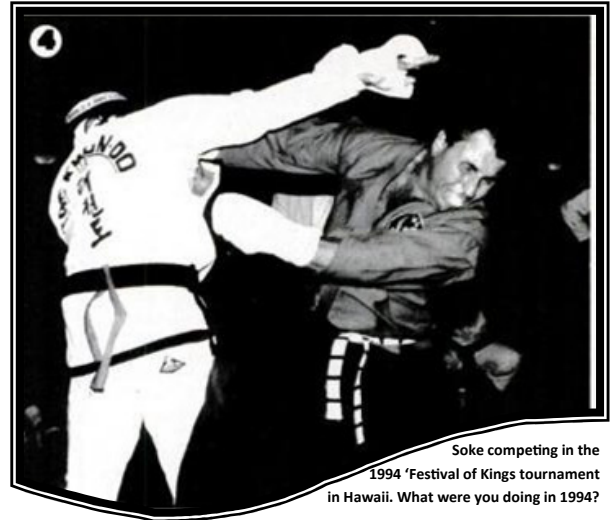
If a technique didn't work, by all means try it again. If you are continually not getting something, then stop and take a good look at yourself. Look at your stance, your breathing, your angles, your power (or use of strength), your attitude or your understanding of what it is you are supposed to do. Think about it. Feel it. Ask your partner about it. Take on board that this technique is not working, for the most part, because of something you are/are not doing. If the solution still eludes you, then speak to a Sempai or Sensei.

I remember giving two black belts 50 press-ups in a class once because they adopted this attitude. One was punching (oi tsuki chudan) and the other was supposed to defend. Instead of defending, however, they just stood there and let the strike hit them. This was a not-so-subtle and possibly slight egotistical way of saying that the punch was ineffective and that they could withstand the strike. In fact, the defender had wasted an opportunity to practice their technique! I dropped them both for 50 - bad attack and bad defensive attitude.

It is always easy to blame others. It is sad to think that it may be because we are socially trained to do so. Fudoshin is ultimately a process of polishing ones mirror, so that they can get a better picture of your self. Your true self. So instead of first looking at what others are doing wrong, look to yourself to see what you are doing wrong. Be attentive to your own training and faults and requirements. Let the Sensei worry about others.



Snippets of History



Soke competing in the 1994 'Festival of Kings' tournament in Hawaii. What were you doing in 1994?



A photo taken in 1986 with Soke, myself and my little sister Shalina. I was 7-years old at the time.

"Iron is full of impurities that weaken it; through forging it becomes steel and is transformed into a razor-sharp sword. Human beings develop in the same fashion."

- Morihei Ueshiba

Tameshigiri - sword cutting

Some students may have seen Sensei Richard, Sempai Paul and myself do some test-cutting at the recent demonstration in Frankston. We were invited to demonstrate our style at the Frankston-Susono Japanese Festival.

Test cutting is one of the higher levels of Kenjutsu (Art of the Sword). It involves cutting various things with the sword and examining the stance, breath, action and the final cut in order to assess the whole technique.

Test cutting is part of the next part of the gradings for most of the Black Belts who are all studying the sword.

It is said that the sword is the epitome of Martial Arts. We are very lucky to have such a comprehensive system that incorporates the study of the samurai sword.

Miyamoto Musashi (宮本 武蔵?, c. 1584 – June 13, 1645), also known as Shinmen Takezō, Miyamoto Bannosuke or, by his Buddhist name, Niten Dōraku,[1] was a Japanese swordsman and rōnin. Musashi, as he was often simply known, became renowned through stories of his excellent swordsmanship in numerous duels, even from a very young age. He was the founder of the Hyōhō Niten Ichi-ryū or Niten-ryū style of swordsmanship and the author of The Book of Five Rings (五輪の書 Go Rin No Sho?), a book on strategy, tactics, and philosophy that is still studied today. Miyamoto Musashi is widely considered to be one of the worlds greatest swordsmen who ever lived. His philosophy and teachings greatly influenced our own founder, Robert Lawrence, when forming our own system.



Student submission

After a recent conversation with a fellow student who shared their thoughts on their progression with me, I realised just how simple things are when it comes to training.

100% effort, 100% truth, 100% reward.

50% effort, 50% truth, 50% reward.

If you feel like you're not getting enough reward from your training, chances are you're lying to yourself about who's responsible for that, and the truth is you're not putting in enough effort.

Fudoshin is the ultimate insignificance experience.

Particularly as an adult student, if you think for one second that you are special in any way and that the feedback you will get will be much more than "do it again, but with more effort", or if you think that you should be able to decide what happens in the class to suit your personal needs, or if you have decided when you think you should be grading or not, you are bound to be consistently disappointed.

That's all for the Sensei to worry about. He/She has the burden of your progression to consider. There are an infinite number of things about you that the Sensei has to consider.

You as a student have the following to consider -

1. TURN UP.
2. TRAIN.
3. WATCH, LISTEN, LEARN.
4. REPEAT.

Do those four things consistently and you will progress. Leave out any one of the four, and you will not.

Do you do all four? If the answer is no - that's why you haven't progressed.

- Nyree Hunter

Tough Mudder



The Yamagawa Dojo put a team of students in the Tough Mudder event this year. The event is claimed to be the 'Toughest Event on the Planet' and the general consensus from everyone was that it was a lot of fun.

The challenges were, challenging, but not as much as we all thought they would be. It was a great experience, however, to go through a rather long obstacle course (just over 20km) with fellow Fudoshin-ka as well as help complete strangers with certain obstacles as well.

I believe Sempai Shamus and Sempai Paul are looking at organising a big team for next year's event. For those interested, please contact them at:

shamus@fudoshinmartialarts.net

or

paul@fudoshinmartialarts.net