



A HIGHER STANDARD

A STUDY OF THREE IMPORTANT AREAS OF MARTIAL DISCIPLINE

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AN ESSAY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE RANK OF SHODAN IN CHANG MOO KWAN
UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF SENSEI JESSE BOYD
AND NAM SUK LEE'S LAST STUDENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Earning a black belt is usually the highlight in a martial artist's career. It is an emotional time whereby an individual tastes an overwhelming sense of accomplishment. On January 14, 2017, I earned my first shodan rank at Catawba Valley Martial Arts, an eclectic Chang Moo Kwan and Tomiki Aikido dojo, in Hickory, North Carolina. After a grueling three-day test that pushed me beyond my own presupposed physical and mental limits, my instructor deemed me worthy of advancing to this teaching rank. It was truly an emotional moment when I received that belt from my instructor's hand. I had crossed a necessary threshold along my martial arts journey. With this rank came a world of unique, important, and difficult responsibilities. Certain standards that students are expected to meet should be universal across the spectrum of martial arts. Respect, dedication, hard-work, motivation, consistent study, and teachability should be required to earn a genuine black belt in any traditional style. But these things do not cease when a student becomes an instructor. Instead, they can and should be magnified to an even higher standard, one befitting a student who's black belt rank also makes him a teacher.

The Bible speaks thus of those entrusted with teaching God's Word to others; "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (I Peter 5:2-3). In the same



I received my first shodan rank on January 14, 2017

vein, a black belt instructor must not lord over his students; he must feed them. And he feeds and motivates them best by his example. Thus, he is called to a higher standard.

As I was coming up through the ranks in my dojo, I trained under an instructor who led first by his example. Many years of hard work, determination, and discipline separated us, but these things motivated me as his student to push myself harder in my own training. My instructor did not just train me, he was continually training himself. His devotion to physical, mental, and moral discipline was a high standard that motivated me to be like him even beyond the baby step of earning a black belt rank. In fact, while he was training me he was also pursuing a shodan rank in Chang Moo Kwan, one of the two traditional bases in the art taught to him by his instructor. During this, I observed his ability to teach and to train simultaneously as he worked to pursue this rank. Moreover, I served as his uke when we travelled to San Pedro, California for his black belt test in front of Nam Suk Lee's last students. This example of teaching while training, by default, set a high standard for me and his other students: not do as I say, but do as I do. As I see it, this is the essence of real leadership, of motivating leadership.

As a black belt with the responsibility of leadership, it is important to live and train disciplined in front of one's students. I observed this in my instructor; and his example is what motivated me the most, particularly in his pursuit of the rank of shodan in the traditional art of Chang Moo Kwan, even after he had attained high rank in his core art. There are many areas of martial discipline one can cultivate in the study of martial arts. But my journey has taught me



I served as my instructor's uke during his Chang Moo Kwan shodan test (2015).

that there are three of most importance: physical discipline, mental discipline, and moral discipline. These have proved essential in helping me, not only in the training and study of my core art and Tomiki Aikido, both in which I am blessed to have earned the rank of nidan, but also in my pursuit of an instructor's rank in the traditional discipline of Chang Moo Kwan. I have observed these three martial disciplines in the life of my instructor, both in what he teaches and how he trains, and I am thereby motivated to pursue the same in my own martial arts journey. I believe these three areas should ultimately prove foundational for the serious student in any form of martial arts and should go without saying for a black belt instructor. And as I discuss them in this thesis, I must pause and consider how blessed I am to follow my sensei's example yet again — completing the requirements for shodan in Chang Moo Kwan as he once did, not by his blessing alone but also by that of Nam Suk Lee's last students, those entrusted by Mr. Lee himself with preserving the indigenous art he once helped to establish way back in the 1940s in Seoul Korea.

If a black belt in Chang Moo Kwan is to be an effective teacher and preserver of the art, I contend that physical discipline, mental discipline, and moral discipline must comprise a black belt's way of life, even outside the dojo. Physical discipline is necessary to forge and truly prepare the body for combat. Mental discipline is crucial for developing martial wisdom out of martial knowledge and for maintaining the selfless will to teach others. And finally, moral discipline is the very important framework that keeps the mental and physical disciplines and their application healthy and restrains what should ultimately prove to be a help to society from becoming a detriment.

CHAPTER ONE: DISCIPLINE DEFINED

Before expounding upon the physical, the mental, and the moral, we must ask: What is discipline? Jocko Willink, a retired Navy Seal Team Leader, articulates a good definition. “Discipline: The root of all good qualities. The driver of daily execution. The core principle that overcomes laziness and lethargy and excuses. Discipline defeats the infinite excuses that say: Not today, not now, I need a rest, I will do it tomorrow ” (Willink, 2). Discipline is the driving force to get things done when everything around seems to distract. It is the current that must power all three of the areas discussed in this thesis. Discipline involves taking the hard road, traveling the uphill way in body, mind, and spirit. It does not cut corners or find shortcuts. It is an internal drive that calls for strength, fortitude, and an immense amount of willpower. Discipline is a governing principle, not a physical, mental, or spiritual technique. Physical discipline trains long and hard, it conditions the body and can be comfortable with discomfort. Mental discipline embraces the value of academic study and the lessons of history. Moral discipline cultivates the mind and body for good and that which is right and resists temptation to use one’s training for evil. It is a restraining framework. A genuinely disciplined black belt instructor leads by example best amidst difficult circumstances despite the draw to take the easier and less resistant route.

Discipline necessarily involves the will and is intertwined with willpower. Willpower resides within an individual and cannot be generated by an outside source. Having the will to maintain proper discipline is not the same as feeling motivated. Motivation is a passing feeling that fades out during times of difficulty. This shallow foundation crumbles under hardship, and this emotion is left with nothing to stand upon. Someone who requires constant motivation from others will fail in his efforts to maintain a lifestyle of martial training. A genuinely disciplined

black belt who embraces the warrior mentality trains hard without anyone seeing him. He remains unaffected by outside circumstances and the opinions of others. He embraces the calling to a higher standard of living. This type of mental fortitude is what has set the warrior class apart from the rest of society from time immemorial. True warriors who forge their body, mind, and spirit through rigid disciplinary measures understand that this is their lifelong profession. The average individual will feel motivated to begin training regularly and studying more in order to gain approval and favor from the public. But when that approval doesn't come, his efforts will come to a quick and shameful end. Meanwhile, the disciplined martial artist will continue to muster the will necessary to remain training outside of the public eye, unaffected by the opinions of others, understanding that he is called to rise above the average standard of society to the higher standard of a warrior.

CHAPTER TWO: PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE

The Importance of Martial Training

The goal of martial training is simple: train and condition the body in order to win in combat. Having the mentality of a warrior necessitates being prepared for battle. Being in excellent physical shape is the most basic requirement in any branch of the United States Military. Soldiers are expected to be physically fit so they can come out of combat alive. The mindset of a martial artist should be no different than that of a soldier. Many martial practitioners today have neglected this foundational area of discipline. Countless so-called “instructors” across America sport massive guts, or sensei bellies, showcasing their lack of dedication to physical discipline. These fraudulent instructors find great joy in preaching “do as I say” rather than “do as I do.” They deserve to be called out for what they are, hypocrites and imposters. The lack of dedication to physical discipline in dojos across America is indeed a sad reality, and most martial artists today are not conditioned to be fighters. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance for a black belt of any traditional style to condition his body in martial training. Exercising should be a consistent way of life driven by discipline, not a brief phase spurred by shallow motivation.

Incorporating Shugyo

An unfortunate truth regarding American culture today is that a man can live his entire life not knowing whether or not he is a coward. The comforts, luxuries, and distractions that are normal ways of life in America have created weak men. The United States population has become a very passive and apathetic people. Individuals here will rarely, if ever, be tested beyond their physical and emotional comfort zones. This is also true concerning martial artists in this country. And it especially applies to today’s black belts. Countless dojos across America are

filled with black belts who have never tested themselves in an intense and stressful situation or a scenario that requires a tremendous amount of willpower to endure and survive. Warriors from time immemorial understood the importance of training themselves hard during times of peace. Why would they do this? They did so to be prepared when war inevitably arrived. The samurai had a name for this difficult peacetime training that served to test their mettle and forge their mind and body for combat. This ritual employed by martial artists of old was called *shugyo*.

The following is a good straightforward definition of *shugyo*: “It involves hardening the spirit through severe training or some extreme physical test” (Morgan, 59). Training the body for battle is vital, but hardening the spirit is even more important. Many martial artists exercise in order to be physically fit. They spend a lot of time maintaining a regular workout routine and keeping their bodies sharp, this is a good thing. However, this type of lifestyle does not harden the spirit. A consistent workout schedule is valuable, but the body and mind will just get used to it. Therefore, it is important to occasionally throw a great challenge or disruption into that steady routine. Through *shugyo*, a black belt can consistently be challenged. It is a way by which certain weaknesses can be located and eradicated, thus replacing infirmity with fortitude and lasting strength. Martial artists nestled comfortably in today's fluffy American culture need *shugyo* now more than ever. Just as the samurai used it as a way to be prepared for war and surviving combat during seasons of peace, today's martial artist should incorporate it into his life as preparation for whatever the future may hold, in times of war or in times of peace.

My introduction to this principle of training came by seeing it practiced in the life of my instructor. As I came up through the ranks, I observed that his life was marked with hard training and conditioning through various tests of *shugyo*. As his student, I had the opportunity to follow

alongside in a few of these *shugyo* endeavors. I have learned by following his example that there isn't a specific *shugyo* technique; it is a principle that has many applications. There is no set standard as to what it should look like, only what it is intended to accomplish in the life of the martial artist.

Shugyo can be undertaken in various locations and very different circumstances. One evening during regular class time, my instructor sought to push me beyond my normal limits. Before the night was out, I was expected to perform fifty forms back-to-back without pause, followed by five hundred sword cuts with a wooden bokken. After completing this, I was expected to fight against the entire class after I was already completely exhausted. Such is an example of *shugyo* inside the dojo. I experienced a different kind of *shugyo* when my instructor and I hiked thirty miles in one day along the crest of the Great Smoky Mountains on the North Carolina/Tennessee border. This day-hike traversed a large part of the range and bagged several 6,000 ft. peaks along that section of the Appalachian Trail. By the end of that trek, my legs and feet were destroyed, such that I could barely stand. Long-distance hiking builds physical fortitude in ways that weight training cannot. Such is an example of how *shugyo* training can be taken outside of the dojo and applied to a normal outdoor activity. The physical benefit of *shugyo* is certainly beneficial, but the mental training that comes with it, learning to push through until the end, is vital for a serious martial artist.

Endurance is an important part of this type of training, but an element that is often not considered is that of survival: pushing oneself to survive to the bitter end of the trial. When I was in India serving on a volunteer missions team, my instructor and I endured and survived together a very dangerous situation in the Indian Himalayas. We rented a few motorcycles and rode over

the Khardung La, the highest motor-able mountain pass in the world. Our destination was the remote Nubra Valley on the other side. As we crossed over the high pass, a heavy blizzard rolled through the mountains and literally engulfed us. There was suddenly heavy snowfall and hail. If we had been inside of a vehicle this wouldn't have been a problem; we could have simply waited out the storm. But, a motorcycle is a very different animal, and we needed to find shelter fast. We turned around from going to the Nubra Valley and began climbing back over the Khardung La to descend down to the other side, all the while driving through blistering winds riddled with dangerous precipitation. As we began our decent back toward where we started that day, my instructor and I were cut off by a landslide that was completely blocking the dirt road down the mountain. Thankfully, by this time the blizzard had ended, but we were completely soaked from head to toe, inside and out from the snow and ice; and our body temperatures were rapidly dropping, the beginnings of hypothermia. Sensei Boyd and I took shelter in a nearby military structure and were eventually rescued by some soldiers in the Indian Army. They took us to their barracks and gave us hot tea, food, and warm blankets. We soon recovered and found the landslide to be cleared. We thanked the soldiers for their kindness and eventually rode back down to town. This testimony is an example of a different element of *shugyo*, the element of survival. A black belt in any traditional art must learn how to push himself to the end of a challenge. This experience in the Himalayas taught me this important lesson. Little did I know at that time, but several years later, I would go back to those same Indian Himalayas to take on an even greater challenge, Stok Kangri, a peak not far, as the crow flies, from the notorious Khardung La.

Stok Kangri

The small mountain hub of Leh sits just above 11,000ft in the northern section of Jammu-Kashmir province of India in the heart of the Himalayan mountains. Moisture is scarce at that altitude, and the countryside boasts a dry desert landscape. Stok Kangri is the highest peak in the Stok Range of the Himalaya. It sits just south of Leh at 20,187 ft. above sea level. A mountain of that magnitude was far beyond anything I had summited before. Peaks at this altitude are such a difficult challenge because the higher in altitude you go, the less oxygen there is to breathe. Therefore, every move your muscles make is far more exhausting than if you were moving at sea level. Every time I walked out of our guest-home in Leh and saw the snow-capped peak cutting into the sky, my desire to climb it was fueled. The difficulty in scaling a mountain of that size ultimately did not shy me away from the challenge.

A climb like that was far too dangerous to attempt alone. There are things that could go wrong during an expedition like this. The biggest and most common threat mountain climbers face is AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness). This illness manifests itself in people who physically exert themselves at high altitude without first properly acclimatizing. Acclimatization involves gaining elevation slowly and camping at higher levels of altitude and sleeping in order for your body to adjust to the lower levels of oxygen in the air. Many cases of AMS are mild. The symptoms of the sickness often include headaches, nausea, vomiting, weakness, etc. Although most cases are mild, there have still been many cases that result in death. The higher you climb and ignore the first signs that you are getting sick (headaches and nausea), the greater the risk of permanent damage or death. Many climbers who attempt to climb Mount Everest in Nepal (29,029 ft.) and yet ignore the onset symptoms of AMS often perish before successfully

summiting. Altitude sickness is not a threat to be taken lightly. I understood that risk for Stok Kangri and knew that having a partner would be important for added safety. I placed some signs with my phone number outside the walls of a few trekking companies around town in hopes of connecting with someone. Soon, I received a message from a young man from the Czech Republic who was traveling alone in northern India and who had some experience in climbing high-altitude mountains. After having dinner together and discussing a course of action, he and I set off to climb Stok Kangri together.



Stok Kangri Trailhead

Stok is a small village located just south of Leh. The trailhead to the summit of Stok Kangri starts at the west end of town. From the trailhead to the summit, it is approximately twelve miles. Lucas and I were loaded down with ice axes, crampons, sleeping bags, extra layers of clothing, etc. Every tour company that offered guides to climb this mountain recommended a two-day itinerary in order to reach basecamp but my friend and I weren't interested in dragging out this trek unnecessarily. Instead, we slogged up to basecamp (approximately 9 miles) in a



Stok Kangri Basecamp

single afternoon. This was no easy task, as Lucas and I both struggled due to a lack of oxygen. At that altitude, ounces in your backpack feel like pounds. We arrived at basecamp late, and after a quick bite to eat, we tried to get a little sleep before a 2:00am summit push. Even sleeping can be difficult at high altitude,

for the heart works much harder to circulate blood through the body's circulatory system. Lucas and I tossed and turned with pounding headaches for what seemed like an eternity, but finally, 2:00am arrived. It was time to gear up and ascend.



A 2:00am Summit Push

Harsh cold air greeted us, and as I got dressed, it literally felt like a dream, but once we started walking, my body became quickly tuned to the task ahead. The trek from basecamp to the summit involved four thousand feet of elevation gain. The route climbed up a steep hillside and then traversed slightly down to a large glacier at the base of the mountain. Beyond the glacier, it was a steep ascent up a snowy face to the summit ridge followed by a final push to the highest point on that ridge. A few steps was all it took to make me keel over trying to catch my breath while my lungs were burning. In those moments, I simply had to detach and dig deep just to press on. After what seemed like an eternity, I found myself standing on the summit of Stok Kangri. Waves of accomplishment and victory coursed through me as I took in the vast beauty of the Himalayas, the roof of the whole world.

Climbing a mountain is difficult, but descending it can prove even more of a challenge. Completely exhausted from a steep climb, one then has to go back down steep and icy terrain with very tired and weak legs. It wasn't easy, but Lucas and I managed to make it safely back to basecamp just in time for lunch. That afternoon, we decided to go ahead and make the long slog back to Leh. Neither one of us wanted to try to sleep in that dirty and crowded basecamp another night. We kept on walking with thirty-hours already under our belts—a true *shugyo* session.

The lesson this testimony demonstrates is simple and straightforward: employ *shugyo* into your martial training to become a better martial artist. By summiting Stok Kangri, I managed to test myself both physically and mentally beyond what I thought were my preconceived limitations. When I stepped over that 20,000ft threshold, I entered into a new chapter as both a climber and a martial artist. Such is the purpose of *shugyo*. A difficult test is a gauge whereby a martial artist can pinpoint his limits and push beyond them. If he finds limitations and is unable push himself beyond them, he must then implement changes into his training and maintain consistency in a personal workout regimen in order to target these weak areas so that he may be better prepared for the next session of *shugyo*. Therefore, consistent martial training must be a way of life for the warrior: it is his calling.

Consistency is Key

Shugyo is an important piece of martial training that should be employed by every serious black belt. It is the means by which a martial artist can test himself beyond what he thought possible. However, one will never be prepared for *shugyo* if the other key ingredient of physical discipline is forgotten: consistency. Many people will go to the dojo one or two times a week. Yes, they train hard inside the dojo walls, but once they leave the building, their training is over until the next week. This should not be the epitaph of a dedicated martial artist. Physical conditioning and the study of your traditional art must be done consistently outside of the dojo. This is the difference between the casual practitioner and the warrior; one trains as



Training with my instructor outside the dojo in Bogota, Colombia

a hobby, the other trains consistently as a way of life.

Four Basic Movements

Training physically and consistently outside the dojo does not need to be complicated. As a missionary who travels the globe throughout the year, there are times I am away from home for months at a time. Because of this, I do not have access to a gym with equipment. My workouts consist primarily of body weight exercises, kata, and cardio. If done properly, training with body weight is a very effective means to increase muscle mass. Exercising in this manner can be organized into four simple categories: pushing, pulling, lifting, and squatting. With enough creativity, these can be accomplished at any time and in any place, even thousands of miles from a gym or a dojo.

It is important to note that each of these categories of movement must be accompanied with cardio conditioning. Working out hard requires a great deal of stamina. This is an important quality in warriorship. On the street, a martial artist should aim to end a fight in a matter of seconds. But scuffles rarely, if ever, follow a preconceived plan, and the martial artist needs to be prepared for drawn-out combat, to outlast an opponent. Therefore, a black belt does err to neglect proper cardio conditioning in his training.

Along with cardio conditioning, attention must also be given to core strength. Working out for the sake of boasting a sixpack is unrealistic and superficial. The reason a martial artist should condition his core is to generate more power in a strike or technique. Every movement should proceed from the core. Ineffective punches start from the shoulders, and weak kicks begin from the thighs. True power in martial technique proceeds from using the whole body, and whole body movement proceeds from one's core, his physical center. Whole body movement is

important, not only for striking but also for application of self-defense principle. Effective wrist or arm breaks are executed when the whole body generates the technique. Arm strength will not avail much for a small person against a larger opponent. In a battle of strength against strength, the larger person will always win. But when the principle of using one's core is understood and applied, the weak then become strong.



Wider pushups focus on the chest.



Narrow pushups focus on the arms.

Now, with cardio and core conditioning as a backdrop, consider four important basic movements, the first of which is pushing. Pushups are perhaps the best means to train in pushing. A standard pushup with arms out shoulder width is the most basic. Arms can then be widened or narrowed depending on which body part needs to be targeted. A large number of pushups can be done quickly focusing on speed and power. They can also be done slowly focusing on proper form and time under tension. Pushups are a great body weight exercise that, when done correctly and consistently, can increase strength and muscle mass in the upper body

when weights and/or gym equipment are not accessible.

The next basic movement is pulling. The obvious body weight exercise for this category is the pull-up. Many people will make an excuse, claiming they cannot find a place to do pull-ups. Often, one simply needs to look a little harder. Any surface or object that can be grabbed or held can be used. One can use a thick tree branch, the deck of a back/front porch, or simply the top of an opened door. Just as pushups can be varied to target different muscle groups, so can

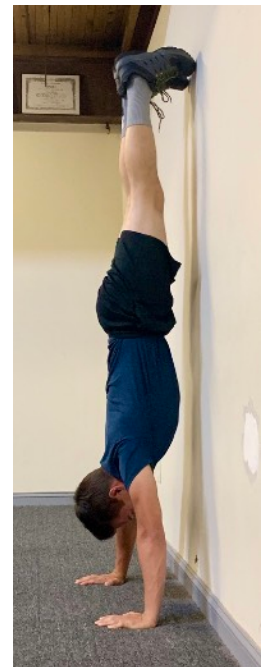
pull-ups. For instance, a wider grip will increase the difficulty of the exercise. Chin-ups can be done to focus on the bicep and tricep muscles. The legs can be pulled up to turn the exercise into L-pull-ups to engage the core. Dead hangs are good for focusing on grip endurance and strengthening the fingers. Much like pushups these can be done at a fast pace focusing on power or slowly concentrating on muscle tension. Pull-ups are by far one of the best bodyweight exercises a martial artist can employ.



You do not need a bar to do pull-ups.

Do not allow the excuse of not having a pull-up bar get in the way of this.

The next basic movement is lifting. Lifting objects targets the shoulders which can be neglected if all one does are pushups and pull-ups. Heavy objects are easy to find and can be used to do an overhead press. But when objects like that cannot be found, a wall can be used to do handstands. When doing a handstand hold, it is important to keep the proper extended position only until muscle fatigue, not muscle failure, so as to avoid injury. And if a person is strong enough, the next step of this movement is a full handstand push-up where your full bodyweight is pushed to the handstand hold position. This is a simple and effective way to target the shoulders without equipment. Pushups and pull-ups are great for strengthening the upper body, but handstands are necessary for isolating the shoulders.



Handstand holds are great for conditioning the shoulders

The last of the four movements I want to explain is squatting. This range of motion deals with strengthening the legs. The lower body serves as the foundation for every technique, whether this is a strike or self-defense movement. Therefore, it is important that they are not neglected in conditioning. Two exercises are all that are needed to condition the legs: squats and lunges. These can be made more difficult by adding weight. Simply hold a large object or fill a backpack with weight and wear that while performing the exercises. And like to the three movements previously mentioned, the squat and the lunge can be modified. These can be done slowly and controlled with focus on tension throughout the movement. Or, these exercises can be done more pyrometrically by jumping into them with focus on explosive power. Conditioning the legs is very important and should not be neglected by a martial artist. Every stance, strike, and technique begins in the legs and proceeds through the core.



Hold a weighted object to make the squat or lunge more difficult.

Another area of physical fitness that is widely neglected is flexibility. With hard physical training, a focus upon flexibility becomes even more important.. Stretching before a workout helps prevent injury. Stretching after a workout while the muscles are warm increases flexibility. This is very important and cannot be skipped after a hard training session. Lots of people stretch before working out but forget or neglect to do so afterward. You will never see an increase in your body's flexibility if you are not patient. Stretching after training cannot and should not be rushed. To stretch properly after a workout one should push his muscles until they tighten and then hold the position for a few seconds. After this, one should again push and hold, but a bit

farther than the first stretch. Stretching takes mental work as one should focus upon relaxing tight muscles with the mind. Breathing is also an important ingredient to stretching. One should never hold one's breath while training in flexibility. Condition your muscles hard, train the cardio vascular system, work the core, and then take time to stretch. Following this simple recipe of training will give a martial artist the tools he needs to prepare himself for combat.

Employ Kata in Training

Kata is a primary piece of martial training, and studying forms should be an essential activity for a martial artist. Unfortunately, many scoff at the practice of traditional kata. They claim the movements within the forms cannot be used in a fight. While there is some truth to this statement, it is a grave error to believe kata is useless. By rigorously training in kata, a person can target multiple areas of physical fitness. Forms can also help students learn and apply martial principles of movement and striking. Practicing kata correctly builds muscular strength and fortitude through the various stances, strikes, and movements throughout the form. Forms can also help develop flexibility with some of the exaggerated stances and high kicks. The old patriarchs in our dojo's martial heritage understood the importance of forms. They used kata as their primary means of training. It is unfortunate that within a few generations the forms of old have become so misunderstood, unappreciated, and even watered-down.

I have lived overseas away from the dojo many times. I've traveled throughout South America and South Asia during different seasons throughout the last five years. Several months will pass by when I have no partner with whom I can train. Yet, I harbor this not as an excuse or a reason to slack in my personal training. I credit my ability to defend myself and execute proper strikes with power and speed to my practice of forms. Kata has also helped me continue to

remember and apply principles of movement. Forms are an excellent tool for anyone spending time outside the dojo. However, if done incorrectly, or if the martial artist only performs them instead of studying them, they are not much more than a light cardio workout. They must be practiced consistently and correctly in order to glean the long-term benefits they hold.

“Simply walking through a kata without applying power, focus, and the necessary attention to detail will not advance your efforts toward being an effective fighter. Forms, done the way most students do them, really are a boring waste of time” (Morgan, 70). If kata is not practiced while focusing on the underlying principles couched inside them, they are useless. The shallow understanding and practice of forms is what gives them a bad name. This is why understanding the five elements of kata is important. When these five elements are applied in the practice of forms, your martial art will improve.

The Five Elements of Kata

To effectively train with kata, these five elements must be understood and applied. They should transcend through and underlie every form. The first element is *shin*, or “focus.” A martial artist who practices kata must be focused throughout the form. He cannot allow distractions to pull him away from the form. The mind cannot wander but must be in tune with the kata. Visualizing an opponent is important as the kata is executed. Ways that the movements in the form can be applied to an attack need to be envisioned. Correct focus in kata involves entering a state of *mushin* or “no mind.” This is a state of mind where the mental static gets turned off. This is the best place to be mentally during a confrontation or combat. Frantically planning techniques and responses to an assailant can complicate things and cause panic. A martial artist should rather enter into a calm state of *mushin*. By doing this he is no longer planning anything, but is now

responding to whatever movement the opponent chooses to do. The opposite of this is to react to the actions of an assailant. Focus is a key element of kata that cannot be neglected.

The second element of forms is *ki*. It is important to have a tuned-in awareness to the life force within our bodies. This energy is what makes the body alive. *Ki* is often romanticized in martial arts today. A quick browse on the internet and you will find countless videos containing old, fat, and incompetent instructors throwing their indoctrinated students across the room with a flick of the wrist. There is nothing mystic or superstitious about this element of kata. God gave this life force to man in Genesis 2:7 when “the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” By understanding this, *ki* can be used and extended through every technique in kata. In any application of kata, *ki* must be fully extended, otherwise the technique will not be effective.

When practicing kata it is vital to develop a greater awareness of *ki* by mastering the *kiai*, or “spirit shout.” *Kiai* is the dynamic expression of *ki*. It is rooted in strong, uninterrupted focus during kata. In the crucial point in kata that a *kiai* is to be released, a martial artist that is well-trained and understands the purpose of the *kiai* will unleash a powerful shout during the crucial strikes in the form. This shout will help him focus all of his energy into the blow that is intended to maim or even kill an opponent. Strikes in kata that incorporate a *kiai* must be used to better develop *ki* while practicing forms.

When practicing forms, it is important to have consistent rhythm and flow. Therefore, it is vital to understand the third element of kata, *unsui* or “cloud water.” This has to do with the flow of the movements in the form. Forms done correctly flow smoothly and are not choppy. The incorrect way to practice kata is to change tempo throughout the form. For instance, students will

oftentimes begin a kata strong and focused while maintaining a steady pace. But as the kata progresses and they become distracted, they either slow down or speed up the form. It is also common to see students stop and pause throughout a form as if unsure about the sequence of movements. Performing kata at black belt level necessitates flowing through the kata smoothly, and at no point compromising form or technique.

The fourth element is *ryoku*, or “technique.” Kata needs be practiced with proper technique. Stances should be correct. They cannot be shallow or tend to lack of balance. Strikes should be executed with proper targeting precision. Visualizing what part of an opponent is being struck is very important. Proper technique when punching or kicking in forms should be relaxed. These should never be thrown with muscle tension in the body. Tightened shoulders will render the punch weaker than it could be due to its lack of speed. Understanding *ryoku* is simple; attention must be given to the smallest details in kata.

The fifth and final element of kata is *bunkai* or “application.” *Bunkai* is an essential piece of kata. Without it, the form has no meaning. If movement in forms cannot be applied against a real world attack, then kata is simply a dance. It is nothing more than an exercise that holds no practical value in actual combat. It is important to remember that the application is found between positions in the transitioning movement itself. It is often not found in the static positions of the form. To properly break down and study a kata, study the movements and motions between stances. This element of kata is the most important. Kata can be equated to three things: a bridge, an atlas, and a treasure chest. It is a bridge to prompt and effective disarmament, an atlas of martial technique, and a treasure chest filled with martial principle. View kata as it ought to be: something meant to be studied and applied, not memorized and performed.

My instructor has given me an excellent example to follow concerning the five elements of kata. After spending long periods of time overseas and having no partners to train with, he would always return to the dojo faster and stronger than he was before he left. His power, speed, and stamina was without a doubt due to his relentless training using forms. But he did not simply train with kata, he trained with them correctly, paying attention to these five elements. I took note of this as his student and dedicated myself to emulating his training in my own life.

Nam Suk Lee's Dedication to Kata

An excellent testimony of the importance of employing kata in your martial training comes from Chang Moo Kwan Patriarch Nam Suk Lee. Mr. Lee began his study of forms when he discovered a copy of Gichin Funokoshi's text, *Karate-Jutsu*. This book was a Chinese translation and contained detailed information on several traditional forms. He found it lying in a gutter during the Japanese occupation of Korea. My instructor recounts Mr. Lee's finding of Funokoshi's text stating, "He took it home and began to pour over the text and accompanying black and white photographs. Of course, this perusal would have included in-depth breakdowns of the five Heian/Pinan kata, Kanku-dai, Naihanchi, and others. Interestingly, footprints of all seven of these traditional Okinawan forms are seen in The Twelve. Nam Suk Lee was hooked, and for him, finding that book was 'point zero'" (Boyd, 20). The beginning of Mr. Lee's career in martial arts began with discovering this book. Many years later, when Nam Suk Lee taught in San Pedro, California toward the end of his life, he still placed a great emphasis upon forms. He taught his first and his last students the importance of using kata in their martial arts training. His top student, Jon Wiedenman, who he promoted to 9th Dan in Chang Moo Kwan upon his death, described his teacher's love for kata in this way: "Supreme Grandmaster spent the majority of his

adult group classes and his private lessons with Grandmaster Wiedenman working on form. It was very clear this was his foundation, and it did not matter what your rank was, you were going to do forms” (Wiedenman). Nam Suk Lee understood the importance of kata training for a martial artist. Therefore, any true black belt in the traditional art of Chang Moo Kwan must share this same dedication to forms. In fact, I will be so bold as to say that you cannot be a Chang Moo Kwan martial artist and not train in kata!

There exists rare video footage from 1999 of Sensei Wiedenman training in Chang Moo Kwan kata under the watchful eye of Nam Suk Lee. He made Mr. Wiedenman perform several forms multiple times while picking apart small details. Kata was very important to Nam Suk Lee. He not only preached this, but he lived it. Mr. Wiedenman writes, “Believe me, when Supreme Grandmaster demonstrated, everybody stopped and watched. It was like observing a miracle in motion. Grandmaster Nam Suk Lee was very active and energetic. During our private lessons he generally did forms and one-steps right along my side. He was seventy-four years old, but all evidence to the contrary.” (Wiedenman). In other words, Nam Suk Lee never spoke of the importance of implementing kata without demonstrating it himself first. My desire is to share this same dedication to forms. The hard work he sowed into the art does not deserve to be in vain. The traditional Chang Moo Kwan forms, which hold a treasure chest of martial principle and application, must be carried on to the next generation.

Mr. Wiedenman understood the importance of passing these forms on to others correctly. He describes it thus: “Shortly after Supreme Grandmaster Nam Suk Lee passed away, Grandmaster Jon Wiedenman, Master George Fullerton, Master Tony Barnes, and Master David Johns presented a forms unification seminar where all forms taught and passed on by Supreme

Grandmaster Nam Suk Lee were demonstrated by Grandmaster Wiedenman. It was a wonderful day where almost all the Masters involved with Supreme Grandmaster's training were present. With respect to Supreme Grandmaster, the event took place at the San Pedro YMCA Dojang" (Wiedenman). This event teaches us a vital truth within Chang Moo Kwan's history.

The forms passed down by Mr. Lee are the heart and soul of this traditional art. Mr. Wiedenman understood this fact. He therefore endeavored to make sure that every kata taught to him was preserved, down to the smallest detail. This



Nam Suk Lee demonstrates a traditional Chang Moo Kwan form alongside Jon Wiedenman and George Fullerton, his last students.

seminar was a pivotal point in Chang Moo Kwan's history. I can attest as a student of this art that I have personally benefited by the preservation of these forms. And I understand the important responsibility I now possess in passing them down. This must, by default, be a part of my physical martial arts training

Closing Thoughts

Conditioning the body needs to be a consistent part of a black belt's life. It is not a hobby for him, it is a way of life. Having this mentality regarding physical training will override any feelings of wanting to give up. By focusing on the four basic movements of pushing, pulling, lifting, and squatting using various bodyweight exercises or weights, the body will be conditioned well. All of this needs to be coupled with regular metabolic conditioning and core strengthening. A certain level of attention also needs to be given to maintaining flexibility. And, never neglect the importance of implementing kata. By following this recipe of physical

discipline, a martial artist should be well-equipped for the occasional test of *shugyo* to test his mental and physical limits. If one maintains this manner of training consistently, he should also be equipped for the ultimate test of combat. Let the martial artist who desires a black belt in the traditional art of Chang Moo Kwan preach these words by his example: “Do not do as I say, but rather train as I train!”

CHAPTER TWO: MENTAL DISCIPLINE

The Importance of Academics

When thinking of a skilled martial artist, the picture that usually comes to mind is someone physically disciplined, a person who trains his body on a daily basis, one who can make short work of an opponent on the mat and who possesses physical skill. However, there is more to martial arts than just the physical, the what to do. There is the why and the when, and to master these things requires a different type of discipline. Something lost in many dojos in our nation today is the importance of mental discipline. Mental discipline is the sharpening of one's mind by studying martial principle and philosophy. It involves the study of martial arts history, especially that of one's own dojo. And, it is the ability to understand and articulate principles and application to students. Being physically disciplined and conditioned to be prepared for combat is important. But if a martial artist is not disciplined mentally, he will not be a good teacher. And this is a chief requirement for someone who desires the rank of black belt.

In essence, academic discipline necessitates continual learning. The martial artist should be consistently studying to sharpen his abilities, and also be able to pass on this knowledge to students. It is hypocritical for a black belt to require his students to study dojo history and martial principle when he himself is not well-versed in these things. I would like to explore this second area of martial discipline while reflecting upon my study of kata during my years as a martial artist. Kata plays an essential role in the art of Chang Moo Kwan, therefore it seems fitting that this chapter would revolve around the study of forms. A very simple way that a martial artist can discipline himself mentally is through the study of history concerning kata, martial principle within the forms, and how to properly apply kata in a fight.

Kata Interpretation and Application

Bunkai, or application, is a critical piece of the five elements of kata. A black belt who trains with kata needs to study his forms properly so that he can interpret and teach them to students correctly. And as with any academic discipline, continual learning means perspectives often shift and change, capability is cultivated. Therefore, a martial artist's understanding of kata needs to change over time, to be cultivated. A student's age when he begins his study of martial arts does not matter, neither does the style he chooses to pursue. If someone is committed to an art and seeks growth, evolution of that person's understanding of kata is inevitable. Kata is not a progression of movement to be memorized, performed, and then forgotten. It is a tool by which a student can grow in his understanding of self-defense. When a student begins learning forms, his understanding is surface. He learns techniques, footwork, and proper targeting. But the beginner does not understand how to interpret and apply the movements within the kata. He is not able to see the form as teaching defense against an attack. He is unable to see it as it should be seen, a fight against an invisible opponent. Neither are the many martial principles understood that kata teaches. Beginner students tend to view kata as a dance, a progression of movements to be memorized and performed, not studied and applied.

Kata is indeed full of deeper interpretations and applications. What does history teach us concerning traditional forms? In our modern age, kata has lost its meaning in dojos across America. Part of being disciplined mentally as a martial artist is being able to dive into the history of martial arts and learn from the past. A study of martial history will show us exactly how the patriarchs in times past taught kata. They understood the applications found within the forms. History truly has many lessons to teach us. Therefore it behooves any martial artist to

have enough discipline academically to study the lessons found within history and learn from them.

Ancient Testimony Regarding the Study of Kata

The secrets of kata were not taught openly. Forms concealed a great deal of information within them. Martial artists of old would study a kata in depth to discover its secrets before they learned a new form. Consider an interesting testimony from Gichin Funakoshi when he studied under Yasutsune Azato, who according to Funakoshi, was one of Okinawa's greatest experts in the art of karate. Funakoshi's dedication to karate shows just how serious these practitioners took their art. It also displays how kata was studied and applied, not memorized and performed.

Funakoshi worked long hours every day teaching school. He would then train hard at night. Every evening, he walked several miles to his instructor's house, and there he would be drilled in kata. Sometimes he would practice a single form all night, while Azato simply watched and observed. He never commented much



Gichin Funakoshi

on Funakoshi's form. A simple "good" or "again" is the most Funakoshi would ever hear. "A little more, a little more, so often a little more, until the sweat poured and I was ready to drop: it was his way of telling me there was still more to be learned, to be mastered" (Funakoshi, 6). Funakoshi continued to train in kata into the latter years of his life. "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. How different this is from the attitude of

today's martial artists" (Forrest, 19). At the very least, this account should be sobering to anyone training in martial arts today. It should also put many to shame considering the dedication and focus that was poured into one simple form. Funakoshi's instructor most likely taught him in this manner to teach him the principles and secrets contained within the form. This ancient mentality has been forgotten. Individuals simply lack the mental discipline required to break down a form and study it.

Azato was a martial arts master who took training his student seriously. He wasn't interested in spoon-feeding an easy curriculum. Training was not to be taken lightly; it was serious business. Sadly, this old-school mentality regarding the seriousness of martial training went missing sometime within the last century. After World War II, in particular, there was a large shift in thinking regarding martial arts. No longer did people train martially, and training was changed to promote sports or regulated competition. The focus was



Yasutsune Azato

no longer learning how to maim and kill an opponent, instead it was about how to win in a tournament. This was largely due to the fact that the practice of lethal martial arts became illegal in places like Japan and Korea after World War II. Therefore, watering down and taming the various martial arts to more tournament friendly activities was the only way people could train. Sports became the only way people could practice in the open. Taekwondo was born during this historical shift. This art came to fruition when the leaders of nine various *kwans* of Korea, including Chang Moo Kwan, came together under this new banner of competition in 1959. The various military styles of training which used the hands and feet as weapons lived on in Korea,

albeit watered-down for competition, under the umbrella of Taekwondo.

This change is also clearly seen in the art of aikido. Pre-WWII aikido was MARTIAL in every sense of the word. It was a system of self-defense designed to break bones, joints, and deliver powerful strikes. All of this was lost, however, when it became illegal to teach martial arts in Japan after the War and the principles had to be tamed to accommodate formal competition.

Practitioners of martial arts in the past were serious about kata and its secrets of self-defense. They were not open to sharing those secrets with others who could not understand or appreciate them. George Dillman writes, “In China, most styles originated as family systems, taught only to family members. When the scope of students was expanded to include a whole village, some teaching was held back, reserved solely for the immediate family” (Dillman, The Dillman Method, 37). Dillman also goes on to talk of the samurai and how they maintained three levels of instruction, *Shoden* or basic teaching, *Chuden* or intermediate teaching, and *Okuden* or secret teaching (Dillman, 37). *Okuden* was reserved only for the immediate family. Advanced knowledge and application (i.e. *bunkai*) of kata was not openly taught to the public. It was considered too dangerous and valuable. Someone who would not take it seriously or who would misuse it’s application had no right to partake in this knowledge.

Anko Itosu was a student of Sokon Matsumura and a teacher of the Shuri-te tradition of Okinawan karate. He was also another of Funakoshi’s teachers. Itosu created a number of traditional kata. He was an excellent fighter and a truly fearsome martial artist. If you read Itosu’s letter to the Japanese Ministries of Education & War dated October of 1908 you will understand how serious he took the art of karate. In one of the points of this letter Itosu writes,

“When you train, do so as if on the battlefield. Your eyes should glare, shoulders drop, and body harden. You should always train with intensity and spirit, and in this way you will naturally be ready” (Itosu). He believed in the importance of physical discipline, training the body martially to prepare for battle, and conditioning the body with a level of focus and intensity that is all but lost in martial arts today. Knowing this,



Anko Itosu, the Father of Modern Karate

there is no doubt Itosu took the practice of kata seriously. We can only conclude that he also possessed an advanced knowledge of *bunkai*. However, he did not openly share this information with his students. There are several different theories as to why this was the case (Clayton, 241):

- Itosu didn't understand the *bunkai* of his own kata.
- Itosu was satisfied with the superficial interpretations.
- Itosu thought the applications were unimportant.
- Itosu wanted his students to discover *bunkai* on their own.
- Itosu was sworn to secrecy.

These may have been valid reasons for Itosu to withhold kata *bunkai* from his students. However, there is an interesting story about him and one of his students, Choki Motobu, that sheds some light upon this. Every time Itosu taught Motobu a new technique from kata, Motobu took the technique and picked a fight with someone on the street to test it out. Itosu eventually found out about this and expelled Motobu from his school. Now, there is debate as to whether Itosu expelled him for simply using the technique he was taught in an irresponsible way, or because Motobu disregarded his vow to secrecy. Either way, this account explains why Itosu was

hesitant to share *bunkai*: it is dangerous to teach brutal and effective martial arts principle to irresponsible students. Itosu was not ignorant; he was circumspect with the advanced knowledge he possessed. Bruce Clayton elaborates on this saying, “There might well have been some moves that Itosu couldn't explain. He might even have had a few dingle-hoppers of his own. That idea misses the point. Itosu knew many effective applications for the kata, but he didn't teach them to his students. Even if Itosu was partially ignorant of the applications, this partial ignorance would not explain complete silence. There was some other mechanism operating” (Clayton, 241). This mechanism, I believe, was the concealment of deadly applications of kata for the protection of his students or of those with whom they came in contact. So, the martial arts patriarchs of old understood advanced kata interpretation and how to use it, and they valued the mental discipline of knowing why or when to use it.

When I began my journey as a martial artist, I had no understanding of these historical facts, and I was only beginning to understand the importance of having a disciplined mind, one that dives into history and actually learns its lessons. Now, I understand proper kata interpretation and the importance of being responsible with the applications derived from it. History has valuable lessons to teach. We need to be willing to listen and learn. If not, we might not repeat the noteworthy accomplishments found within history. Or worse than this, we will be doomed to repeat the same mistakes from the past. The lesson here is simple: Discipline yourself mentally to study history. These historical facts tell us that kata is valuable. They are keys to understanding technique, atlases showing effective *bunkai*, and treasure chests containing practical and effective principles of self-defense.

A Personal Testimony

In my early years as a martial artist, I never struggled with disciplining myself physically. I understood the importance of hard training and learning kata. Where I truly lacked was in ability to study forms and learn applications from them. When I learned my first kata back in August of 2013, my understanding was extremely limited. I had the ability to pick up and memorize forms very easily although my execution of the movements felt awkward and unnatural. My body was stiff; my stances shallow; my technique was sloppy. But, I never was one to shy away from hard physical training, so I practiced kata relentlessly. In those days I was in the first stage of kata development: learning the sequence of movements. Understanding the following stages of kata development would take more than physical discipline. This is the transitioning point where kata is not just physical training, but mental as well.

There are three stages of kata development. The first, as previously mentioned, is to learn proper sequence and technique. This takes more physical than mental ability. It involves being able to memorize the movements found within the form and execute them effectively. The second stage is when a student's demonstration of kata is more intuitive, focused inward, and undeterred by outside distraction. This is the stage of understanding forms where focus is key. Students shouldn't be distracted by anything around them as they move through the kata. Focus must be zeroed completely on the form. Students should learn to pay close attention to every detail of kata, completely undeterred by outside sources. This will ultimately lead into the third and final stage of kata development, where the demonstration of kata is instinctive, focused outward, and attended by multi-directional awareness. Students have learned this final stage

when they are able to perform kata with excellent power, technique, and rhythm while at the same time fully aware of their surroundings and of the applications of kata movement against an envisioned opponent. This third and final stage of kata development takes more than physical discipline; this is when kata training transitions from being physical exercise to mental exercise.

It was evident to me that I had a long way to go before reaching the third stage of kata development. Being in the first stage, I hadn't the slightest understanding of forms themselves. I could execute the moves correctly with a decent amount of power, but I did not understand what



My Instructor demonstrates bunkai from Chang Moo Kwan kata.

the movements meant or what the progression was really depicting. I had no knowledge of how to apply kata movement to a real attack. It wasn't until later that I began to study kata the proper way. With the help of my instructor, I was on my way to learning practical applications found within kata. At this time I

was taking my first steps into the mental side of training using forms.

Even later down the road, my instructor began recording some kata *bunkai* videos. These were part of his shodan promotion in the traditional style of Chang Moo Kwan. He made several clips breaking down and explaining applications found within *The Twelve*, indigenous forms passed down by Nam Suk Lee to his last students in San Pedro, California. These videos gave me insight into easy and effective kata interpretation. This was also the period of my training where I was first introduced to kyusho-jitsu, or the use of pressure points in martial arts technique. I watched and observed as my instructor broke down movements from *The Twelve*

and displayed pressure point applications against realistic attacks. I still had little to no understanding of pressure points or how they worked. However, by studying these videos from my instructor, I began to see how the movements between postures in kata aren't just transitions; they are illustrated guides to defending oneself from a real-world attack. And how almost every move in kata can be applied to pressure points.

It was at this stage of my training that I began to take the mental side of training in kata far more seriously. I was taking the first steps in understanding how kata could be translated into real-world self-defense. An early example of an application I learned can be found in one of the moves from *Ki-bone O*. The movement was a shuto block followed by a pressing block and a spear hand to the solar plexus. At first glance, someone inexperienced in kata interpretation would look at this movement and think it simply shows an open-handed block followed by thrusting an open-handed strike into an opponent. I discerned the shuto strike as a block against a strike, catching the opponent's wrist. The spear hand displays the extension of *ki*. Therefore, once the strike has been caught and the assailant's elbow is exposed, the opponent can be put to the ground by rolling over the elbow with a raking motion.

This example of *bunkai* also incorporates pressure points. Triple Warmer #11 is the point on the elbow that is targeted with this raking motion. By using this pressure point the elbow is hyperextended and the shoulder locks. This point will enable the finishing pin. This is a very simple example of *bunkai*. Along the arm are several pressure point meridians: lung, pericardium, and heart. The points on these meridians are yin polarity and congregate around the wrist to form the Wrist Torque Cluster. By properly grasping and torquing the wrist with a firm amount of pressure, these meridians will be ignited. Couple this with raking or rolling over the

top of the elbow with the blade of the hand, igniting not only Triple Warmer #11 but also Small Intestine #8 and Large Intestine #12. This adds up to a painful and dangerous sequence of destructive self-defense technique using pressure points.

In my early years as a martial artist, I lacked the mental discipline required to see these secrets within kata. Movements in forms can map out specific pressure points that work together causing severe pain in the body. They can also lead to an effective knockout as a means to end a fight quickly. What seemed a simple sequence of techniques is actually a textbook on how to fight. What was merely an exercise to test my physical endurance evolved into a task that tested my mental ability. It was the introduction of pressure points that fueled and jumpstarted this transition. And the ability to slow down and study one's forms, to learn these things, takes discipline of the mind.

What Are Pressure Points?

Before pressure points can be applied from forms, it must be understood what they are and how they work. The body has vital points that can be targeted in a fight. Striking someone in the nose, stomach, or groin with enough force can end a hostile encounter. However, a pressure point is a more specific targeting area. The opponent is far less likely to flinch and protect these as he would a more vital point like the groin. A pressure point is roughly the size of the tip of a needle. But as small as it is, a pressure point is easily accessible. These can be activated by rubbing or striking a general area over the point roughly the size of a quarter. These points are very effective in a fight.

The human body is far more than meat, bone, and organs; there is something more within us. Our bodies boast of *ki*, the life force or energy which makes us alive. This *ki* that is within us

does not flow randomly, it follows along pathways or meridians. There are roughly 360 pressure points found all along these meridians. A pressure point can be equated to an electrical transformer. An electrical transformer is found on an electrical line and can be accessed by a lineman to adjust, reroute, or cut off the electrical current. A pressure point is similar to a transformer as it is a point along a meridian where the flow of *ki* can be accessed. Just as a lineman works on transformers to tamper with the flow of electricity through an electrical line, so a martial artist can use these pressure points as gateways to disrupt the flow of *ki*.

There are fourteen pressure point meridians within the human body. Twelve of these are bilateral, and two are centerline. The bilateral meridians are named after certain organs within the body. The points on particular meridians, through observation, seem to effect their corresponding organs. For example, the lung meridian effects the lung organ, the small intestine meridian effects the small intestine, and so on. Each of these meridians are also associated with an element. The five basic elements are metal, water, wood, fire, and earth. There are three cycles that can be followed with these elements that can serve to damage the body or heal it. The Cycle of Destruction reveals how each element can be used against another (i.e. metal cuts wood, water douses fire, etc.) The Cycle of Construction shows how the elements can build upon one another in harmony and promote healing (i.e. wood feeds a fire, water hydrates wood, etc.). Finally, the Reverse Cycle of Construction reveals another way these elements can be used to inflict harm (i.e. earth can put out a fire, wood can dam the flow of water).

These elements teach us how pressure point meridians interact with one another. Depending on how these elemental cycles are applied, the flow of *ki* through the body is either disrupted or restored. Restoring the flow of *ki* is the basis for acupuncture and acupressure

massage. The pressure points used in kyusho-jitsu, (i.e. pressure point fighting) are the same pressure points used in this practice. George Dillman writes: “Acupuncture regards a pressure point as a gate where the flow of vital energy (*ki*) can be manipulated. The acupuncturist uses these gates to increase or decrease the flow of energy in order to restore a healthful balance within the body-system. The Kyusho-jitsu fighter uses the same points to disrupt the flow of energy in order to defeat the opponent” (Dillman, Pressure Point Fighting, 53). Pressure points boast a dual purpose: restoration and disruption. Obviously, the latter is the focus of kata interpretation and *bunkai* application.

One additional matter to consider is the natural flow of *ki* throughout the body as it moves from one meridian to another and then recycles. This is called the Diurnal Cycle, and it begins at the lung meridian and continues through the others until the liver meridian and then recycles. Each meridian has a corresponding number for its position in the Diurnal Cycle. Manipulating the flow of these points in harmony with this cycle can further restore or disrupt the natural flow of *ki* through the body. Studying *ki* energy and pressure points should make us pause and consider the complexity of the well-designed human body; and it should open our eyes to the treasure trove of secrets in even the most basic of kata.

Rules of Kyusho-jitsu

Now that pressure points and the ways they function have been properly defined, let us discuss the general rules of kyusho-jitsu. This name simply translates to “vulnerable point fighting” or “pressure point fighting.” Any form of striking, grappling, or pinning that uses pressure points is the art of kyusho-jitsu. The question then is how exactly can these pressure points be manipulated or controlled? In other words, how can they be used practically against an

opponent?

There are five basic rules of kyusho-jitsu that must be understood when using pressure points in combat or self-defense. These will enhance the destructive or disruptive effects they can cause. First, learn to attack more than one point on the same meridian. For example, if a lung point is activated near the wrist, connect with a follow-up strike to a lung point on the elbow or the shoulder. Second, learn to attack points with opposite polarity. There are fourteen meridians but only two polarities, yin and yang. Half of the meridians flow down the body's posterior (yang), and the other half flow up the body's anterior (yin). If a yin point is followed up with a yang point, or vice-versa, the disruptive effect is binary. The third rule is to follow or utilize the body's Diurnal Cycle. Disrupt the natural flow of *ki* throughout the body by attacking points on the meridians in the order in which *ki* flows from meridian to meridian. Fourthly, learn to utilize the Elemental Cycle of Destruction. Learn how the elements that are associated with each meridian react to one another. The final rule is to target alarm points, associated points, meeting points, and point clusters.

Alarm points and associated points are related to specific organs in the body. In pressure point fighting, they are used as a means to directly affect an organ. An alarm point directly targets an organ from the front side of the body; an associated point can directly target an organ from the rear of the body. Most associated points all fall along the bladder meridian and are used for resuscitation if someone is knocked out, or are a means of attacking organs directly from the back of the body. A meeting point is an area where different meridians connect or intersect with each other. These points are especially potent because they can be treated as if they belong to each of the meridians which intersect there. Finally, there are point clusters. Clusters are certain

places where two or more points exist in a group that respond to the same type of method (rub, touch, strike), or they have the same angle and direction of activation.

By sharing this information I hope to convey a simple truth. Learning and studying is necessary to better perfect your art. This requires a certain level of mental discipline to accomplish. The intellectually lazy do not care to learn of martial principle to hone their craft. This is a lot of information to absorb, but the study of kyusho-jitsu, for example, shows how one can easily control and manipulate his opponent with pressure points. And this will help one understand how to apply movements from kata against an opponent. Now, let us apply these rules to some simple *bunkai*. I am going to highlight how the progression of Chang Moo Kwan kata movement, not only conceals deadly knockouts, but also maps effective pressure points targets that can quickly end a fight..

Kata Bunkai

One thing that sets a black belt apart from the student body is his ability interpret and apply forms. If kata can only be performed without being interpreted, it has not been properly learned. The patriarchs of traditional martial arts understood this, and they sought to teach these principles to their students. Martial artists today are inept in this area of martial training. With all of this information regarding pressure points and kyusho-jitsu in mind, let us look at a few simple applications from different Chang Moo Kwan kata.

The first I would like to explore comes from the first *Chulgi* form passed down by Nam Suk Lee. *Chulgi-il* is one of the many wall forms found throughout differing traditional styles. These kata follow a straight line moving from side to side, as if the one's back is up against a wall while facing a opponent or multiple opponents.. It is important throughout the form that the



body's center, or *itten*, remains level. It should never bounce up and down. However, there is a movement in the beginning where the *itten* is dropped.



Chulgi-il begins with the right hand balled into a fist and covered by the left

hand. The four knuckles of the right hand are pressed into the base of the four fingers of the left hand. Then, looking to the right and stepping across with the left into a cross-legged stance, the *itten* is dropped and the hands are pressed in a downward motion. This movement displays a powerful blow to the center of an opponent's body. The pressure points targeted lie on the conception vessel meridian, which



runs directly up the center of a human body. Embedded in the *itten* are four points, Conception Vessel #3-6. These combine to form the Tanden Cluster, an excellent target to strike thereby folding the body and causing an opponent to literally keel over. Good *bunkai* need not be complicated. This movement in *Chulgi-il* does not necessitate that the strike be done with both hands as the kata demonstrates. Rather it shows a target to strike and the motion by which to do so.

In the traditional art of Tomiki Aikido, there are two principles of movement by which every aikido principle or technique can be applied, *irimi* and *tenkan*. These are foundational principles of movement or entry into an opponent's attack. *Irimi* movement enters into an

opponent's attack directly, much like closing or opening a door by pushing. One's force is driven inward directly into an opponent to offset his balance. *Tenkan* motion enters into an opponent's attack indirectly, much like closing or opening a door by pulling. I believe both of these movements are displayed in the first Chang Moo form, *Gensu-gensa*.

Toward the end of the kata is a section that begins with a shuto block on the 45-degree angle with the left hand. Once the block is made, the hand and foot are then pulled to a tight cat stance. Then using a slow and controlled circular motion, keeping the left hand in the center of



the body, make a 135-degree turn to the left. After this, a second shuto block with the right hand is executed on the 45-degree angle, repeating the previous turning motion. This sequence displays a simple application of *irimi* and *tenkan*.

The first movement is a *tenkan* movement. This is demonstrated by the slow 135-degree turn with the hand extended. When turning the body it is important to keep the hand in the center of the body and focus on *pushing* with hand as the turn is made, leading with the pinky. Envision an opponent grabbing the wrist on the same side, point the fingers and begin pushing in a circular motion on



the outside of the assailants body to take balance. The next movement is *irimi*, this is shown by the shuto block that follows the 135-degree turn ending on the 45-degree angle. The opponent's balance has been taken using the *tenkan* movement, turning out and breaking his balance by pushing in a tight circle. The shuto block after the slow turn then demonstrates the *irimi* principle, moving in to a strike directly on the assailants balance. An important rule when interpreting a form is paying attention to the movements between postures.

The last application I would like to discuss comes out of *Tan-Tui*, an old Northern *chuan-fa* form that predates Chang Moo Kwan and may very well reflect the tradition originally taught to Byung-in Yoon when he studied under a Mongolian Grandmaster and began a martial arts journey that would eventually put him in the path of Nam Suk Lee and result in the founding of Chang Moo Kwan. *Tan-Tui* contains long and extended circular movements. This is no surprise considering that the northern styles of chuan fa were known for smooth, soft, and blending motions. Unlike the north, the southern styles utilized smaller, stronger, and more compact movement. *Tan-tui* an excellent form for learning important principles of relaxation and fluid movement.

The sequence I want to break down is a simple rising block with the left hand followed by an uppercut with the right hand. This is a powerful strike, simulating a blow to an opponent. Once it has been delivered, both arms lower and the right hand is fully extended in front of the body facing upward and the left arm sits into an augmented



block. This position is also found in the seventh cadence of *Pyan-dan Som*. The left arm is shown touching the inner knob of the elbow of the right arm. This is the location of the #3 pressure point on the heart meridian, and therefore, this *bunkai* shows the principle of mapping. Certain movements in forms show vulnerable areas to strike. Usually when mapping is used in kata, the movements are done on your own body. Certain wall forms contain kicks inflicted on the inside of the practitioner's own leg, showing good targets on the attacker's leg.

So, how can this sequence be applied against an average punch on the street? The left rising block motion shows a block and catch that stops the opponent's punch from connecting. The right-handed uppercut clearly simulates a strike to the head or neck. Both of these move together as one strike. After the opponent has been dazed with a strike, the augmented block to the arm shows an effective finishing technique. The weak point in the assailant's arm is shown with the augmented block. A strike or downward push to the crease of the elbow while the opponent's balance has been compromised will take him to the ground.

The pressure point application of this technique is brutal. The targeted point to the neck is



Stomach #9 which is part of the Neck Cluster. This is a yang point associated with the earth amongst the elements. And in the crease of the opponent's elbow, there are several points that can be activated. Heart #3, Pericardium #3, and Lung #5 all lie along the yang meridians. The rule applied here is attacking points with opposite polarity. One yang and three yin points can be struck. This *bunkai* also utilizes the Reverse Cycle of Construction. Remember, enough earth will douse the strongest fire. Stomach #9 is an earth point, while Heart #3 and Pericardium #3 are both fire points. This application from *Tan Tui* shows a very effective way to disrupt an opponent's *ki* while simultaneously sending him to the ground.

These examples of *bunkai* are simple and practical. Applications from kata should never be fancy or complicated. The secrets found within forms are often hidden in plain sight.

Therefore, if the breakdown becomes too complicated, perhaps the martial artist is digging too deep. Simplicity must govern the interpretation process. Forms are important in the art of Chang Moo Kwan, and any black belt of the style should be able to study kata and teach his findings to his students. Do not view kata as simply an exercise, but see it for what it truly is: a textbook meant to be studied and applied, not memorized and performed. And to study kata properly requires mental discipline

Closing Thoughts

The lesson to be taken from this chapter is simple: Be devoted to a disciplined lifestyle of continual learning. Physical conditioning is important for the martial artist. But, an individual who is not disciplined academically or principally will not be a good teacher. His art will become stagnant. Take the initiative to learn curriculum outside of the dojo. Study history, martial principle, and forms. Absorb this useful information and use it to better your art. Then, take these

things and endeavor to teach them to students. The ultimate way to test whether or not a black belt understands something is for him to teach and explain it and then see it reproduced in his students.

Students learn best when their instructors are ensamples. They do not simply talk about what to do; they practice what they preach. A good Chang Moo Kwan instructor desires that his students become better teachers than him. And the best way to effect this is through mental discipline and leading by example. Genuine students have greater respect for an instructor who doesn't simply train hard physically but also studies hard mentally, proving his genuine love for martial arts and the desire to teach it to others. My desire is to raise up future teachers in the art of Chang Moo Kwan. I want to pass on the knowledge that I have gained through my study of martial history, principle, and forms. The future of Chang Moo Kwan lies with those who currently study the art. If we do not strive to pass it on, nobody else will.

CHAPTER THREE: MORAL DISCIPLINE

The Importance of Honor

Devotion to physical and mental discipline should be prerequisite for obtaining a black belt. An unwavering dedication to improvement in these areas is key. Leadership within both of these categories depends upon the individual's level of determination to perfect them in his own life. How can he lead students if he does not take these things seriously in his own career? The lifestyle of a black belt must rise above mediocrity; his calling is an elite one. Displaying these standards in his way of living should cause students to observe and aspire to emulate these things themselves. The responsibility of leadership is a great one. Training physically and studying academically in martial arts is pretty straightforward and will inevitably show itself a good example in the dojo or to one's students. However, the last category of martial discipline I want to discuss is far more challenging. In this chapter, we will delve into the thoughts and intentions of the martial artist's heart. His life must also be one that is morally disciplined.

This sense of morality in the life of a martial artist is equatable to honor. "The non-warrior elements of society also must rely on the honor of warriors, for warriors can be the most dangerous people in the world. As a group, they are the fittest and the best trained fighters in any society, and they wield most of the weapons, including those most sophisticated and destructive. Warriors without honor quickly become tyrants, as some third-world countries today demonstrate" (Morgan, 140-141). These words illustrate the importance of moral discipline in the lives of warriors. Black belts living in today's culture should be no different than the honorable warriors of old. They are acknowledged by the people for what they are, an elite class. With this position comes responsibility to abide by a moral code, a sense of honor.

A warrior not governed by moral restraints becomes exactly what Morgan described, a tyrant. With no sense of right and wrong, there is nothing to prevent a martial artist from using his abilities for evil. He has conditioned himself physically beyond the average person. Therefore, he has the physical ability to bring harm to others if he so desires. He is well-versed in martial history and principle which gives him a strategic advantage in combat. And, he has become skilled in the use of weapons, whether they are blunt, edged, or able to fire a bullet. All of these give him an upper hand over the general populace. Because of this, discipline regarding morality in the life of a black belt is not a suggestion, it is a requirement.

Any fighter who has a sense of honor bases it upon something. It is not a fleeting emotion that passes by. Any code of honor serves as the foundation by which the warrior lives. There is a foundation upon which I base my sense of morality. I have found it to be a source most trustworthy and one that truly reveals the thoughts and intentions of the human heart. My code of honor is found in God's Word, the Holy Bible.

Authority of the Scriptures

As a Christian, I believe in the inerrancy of the Scriptures. I believe all 66 books, which make up the canon of Scripture, to have been written down by men under divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Peter, one of the twelve disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, writes these words in his Second Epistle found in the New Testament:



My Personal Bible

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the

prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:20-21). The Bible is not an average piece of literature written by various authors. If it were so, contradictions across the 66 books would be evident. Instead, it is a reliable collection of historical documents written down by eyewitnesses during the time of other eyewitness that reported of supernatural and historical events. These events took place in fulfillment of specific prophecy. These men claimed their writings were divine rather than human in origin, and detailed fulfilled prophecy, as seen throughout history, is the proof. Therefore, I believe the Scriptures are the final authority concerning the morality by which men and women should conduct themselves toward God and other people.

Humility

It is very important for a martial artist to control his ego. Inflated egos cause dojos to become divided against themselves. A student with a proud heart will be unteachable. He will not see the need for growth in his own life. Instead, he sees himself not needing any outside instruction. Teachers overtaken by pride and an egotistical attitude become tyrants. They lord over their students with a rod of iron. And, they are unwilling to learn something from their own students. Puffed-up egos bring harm within the walls of the dojo. Having a spirit of humility is a key ingredient for preventing this.

The Proverbs of Solomon speak a great deal about pride and humility. “When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom” (Proverbs 11:2). Those who seek to exalt themselves and glory in their own accomplishments will one day be abased. The egotistical martial artist full of his own successes and physical abilities will one day meet someone who surpasses them. The instructor who boasts about a large amount of black belts in his school may

one day find himself betrayed and abandoned by some, if not all, of his students. The truth of Scripture always comes to pass. “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18). The legacy of martial artists with inflated egos will end with a fall. Their shallow legacy left behind will quickly be forgotten in the dustbin of history. They will be looked back upon as nothing more than failed examples not to be emulated.

The root of this prideful attitude is insecurity. Often someone who puffs himself before others is insecure in his own ability, therefore he needs to overcompensate by displaying an arrogant attitude. This person constantly needs reassurance of the quality of their position or abilities. Humility is the means by which this can be controlled. A humble attitude from an instructor shows greater strength to the students than a prideful one. In humility is a realization that one has not arrived and that, in truth, there really is not such thing as a “master.” There is always more to learn and improve upon. And, a black belt who carries this spirit with him is willing and able to learn even from a low-ranking student. Control your pride, deflate the ego, train hard with a spirit of humility. If the ego is not controlled, it will control the individual.

A Person of Peace

Historically speaking, a good martial artist fights for peace. Peacefulness is his lifelong pursuit, and he will always seek to establish it. The non-warrior classes in society depend upon this from the warrior class. Consider the words of Jesus Christ in the book of Matthew, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God” (Matthew 5:9). This is an attribute of the righteous. They are peacemakers. This is not laying down your arms and making peace with everyone in this world. How does this translate concerning evil people who thirst for violence? Are we to simply lay down and let them overtake us? Of course not!

There are people in this world who simply love destruction. This is a sad but true reality. They do not care about ruining the lives of others. A martial artist well-trained in the art of combat has a moral obligation with his abilities. He is obligated to protect the innocent. When there are wicked individuals who seek to harm the powerless, he is responsible for his lack of action. The Scriptures say, “If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small. If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? And he that keeps thy soul, doth not he know it? And shall not he render to every man according to his works?” (Proverbs 24:10-12). When the innocent are in position to be harmed or killed, the honorable martial artist is obligated to put a stop to it. If he does not, and makes excuses concerning his inaction, he is responsible for the injury or death of those individuals. Seeking to establish peace is a moral obligation for those who train in the art of war. These abilities cannot be used for unjust violence. They must be used to bring peace to a chaotic world. Koichi Tohei, a student of Morihei Ueshiba and a contemporary of Kenji Tomiki in the Aikido tradition, rightly spoke of the circumstances that demand the use of martial force to bring peace: “When one is in personal danger. When one sees someone else in danger. At a large meeting when a small number of rogues is making a nuisance of themselves and inconveniencing the public” (Tohei, 51).

Commitment to Purity

Sexual assault or molestation is sadly prevalent within many American dojos. My instructor’s sensei actually had to take over a Chang Moo Kwan heritage dojo when he was a student back in the 1980s because his instructor had tried take advantage of one of the young

ladies in the class. Such schools are run by perverted men who exploit women and children who come to learn self-defense. The irony of situations like this is truly horrific. Men who don a black belt and stoop to this level of debauchery are beyond shameful in the world of martial arts. They deserve to be excommunicated from this honorable discipline and brought to justice. Living the remainder of their days in shameful solitude is too good for them.

A man who possesses a black belt should have proven that he has a level of control over his mind and body. He has enough control physically to push himself hard while training. And he also has a decent amount of mental discipline to focus while studying to improve himself academically. However, all of this discipline means nothing if he cannot control his sexual urges. This lack of self-control will bring about destruction, not only in his life, but in the lives of everyone else affected by his actions. Failure in the area of sexual purity proves a lack of moral discipline in a man's life.

The book of James records, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (James 1:14). Falling into a terrible immoral deed begins with the individual. A person draws himself toward this terrible act through his own lack of self-control. Most of the time, this begins in the privacy of a person's bedroom. Internet pornography is so easily accessible today, and this has opened doors to sexual perversion in ways people in the past never could have imagined. Studies prove excessive use of pornography causes a great deal of brain damage. During each viewing session, large amounts of chemicals are released into the brain. The individual will soon become addicted to this stimulation. Therefore, the use of pornography is labeled as a chemical addiction very much like what goes with drug use. (Christensen). Before long, certain pornographic videos that were once arousing are no longer

exciting. Eventually a person is driven to go out and do the acts he watches from behind the screen.

A black belt must show that he is above a life addicted to pornography. Giving into this temptation shows a tremendous amount of weakness in the area of moral discipline. He must be steadfast in this area of purity, enduring various temptations thrown into his path and not succumbing to the weakness of capitulation. As a black belt, maintaining a life of purity is a difficult battle, but a necessary one that is worth the fight, especially with regard to one's students.

A Man of His Word

“In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not” (Psalm 15:4). This Psalm mentions a key attribute of a righteous man, someone who keeps his word. A man of character will endeavor to not go back on promises he has made. No matter what the circumstances, he will keep his word, even if it brings harm to his own life. Sadly, this area of morality is seldom viewed as a big deal in today's American culture. How many times have promises been broken? How often has someone communicated one thing and then later changed his mind to profit himself? There should be no place for this in the life of a black belt who stands amongst an audience of students.

Trust is far too valuable to lose. Students need to be able to trust their teacher. It is the responsibility of the instructor to maintain that trust. Students need to trust that their teacher will not change with the courses of the wind. Their curriculum needs to be communicated and enforced in a manner that is steadfast. There is a dichotomy in this scenario. If something is unnecessary and impractical in the dojo requirements, it is better discarded and replaced with

something more effective. But, many instructors are unwilling to step away from impractical and useless traditions and adopt an eclectic mentality that better enables an instructor to keep his word.

Giving someone your word and not changing shows integrity, especially under unforeseen and difficult circumstances. There may be situations where backing down from one's word saves one's own skin, but changing one's mind last minute without proper communication to the party involved is an act of selfishness. Many times there is no communication because of fear. We fear what the other party will think or how they will react if we change our mind, so we don't communicate. This piece of moral discipline may seem small in light of other areas, but for the martial arts instructor, it bespeaks integrity, even more so when his word is kept against all odds.

The Heart of Man

As I mentioned earlier, I believe the Scripture to be the authoritative foundation for all of these moral issues. There are many other things the Scripture speaks about concerning morality, but it would be impossible to address even remotely close to all of it within this thesis. The Scripture speaks concerning man's overall attitude toward morality. The Psalmist writes, "The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doth good, no, not one" (Psalms 14:2-3). Man is born with a wicked heart. There are many who will argue against this statement, but the problems of today's world speak and affirm this truth. The heart of man's problems is a problem of the heart (Jeremiah 17:9), and God judges a man's heart. The Lord Jesus Christ addresses this issue in the book of Matthew, "Do not ye yet

understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Matthew 15:18-19). An individual may try his best to do good on the outside. But, man’s heart, even that of the martial artist, is open to the eyes of God. Imaginations might be hidden in the dojo, but they cannot be hidden from His sight.

The Solution For My Life

The Scripture declares that the hearts of men are wicked in need of change. Our hearts do not need patching up; they need regeneration. I believe I have found the solution to this problem within my own life, and it has not been through dead religious practices or unending quests for meaning all over the globe. I have found the answer in the Son of God, Jesus the Messiah.

As a boy, I grew up in a Christian home. My parents were very conservative in their beliefs, and the house was governed by biblical principle. However, I realized one day that my heart was not right with the Lord. Being born into a Christian home did not make me a born-again believer in Christ. I knew of Jesus and what the Scripture said concerning Him, but I did not understand the Gospel: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. One night that all changed when I realized my sins had me separated from God. The message of the Gospel finally clicked with me that evening. I understood why Jesus Christ came to die upon that cross. He perished that day for my sins. He died the death I deserved, so I could have eternal life. And three days later, He showed Himself to be the true Messiah when He arose from the grave and eventually ascended to heaven. Because of His resurrection, my faith is not in vain. I saw the Gospel for what it truly is: good news. I cried out to the Lord to save me that night. And since, I

have been indwelt with God's Holy Spirit, and I have lived as a disciple of Christ.

The night I became a believer in Jesus Christ, I received a wonderful gift, the Holy Spirit of God, as mentioned in John 14:26. I believe this is key in maintaining true moral discipline in life. He exists to teach the believer the truth of God's Word and bring to remembrance what it says. He also brings about guidance and conviction in times of temptation (John 16:7-11).

Anyone who has this gift is a new person with new desires. No longer are you destined to make wrong choices concerning morality. As a born-again believer, God's Spirit is there to help. I have found this to be true in my own life, and I can truly say that I am the believer that the book of Titus talks about, "Who gave Himself for us (Jesus Christ), that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).

Disciples of Jesus Christ are a changed people. No longer slaves to sin, now righteous individuals. Therefore, I am duty-bound to conduct myself with morals and integrity and to be zealous of good works, even in martial arts. God's Word is the moral framework whereby I practice and teach both inside and outside the dojo.

Closing Thoughts

Living a moral life takes a great deal of discipline. When set next to physical and mental discipline, a morally disciplined lifestyle rises above in importance. Therefore, I believe a black belt should base his training and his teaching upon sound moral principles. He must be a positive role model for his students. The examples I provided in this chapter involve a small handful of moral issues, but I believe these will serve as a strong foundation. The martial artist must understand why he trains. It is not to bring violence, but rather to prevent it. This manifests itself in controlling his sexual urges and keeping them in check. A lack of discipline in this area shows

great weakness. He must be a man of his word, standing upon the promises made even when circumstances pull on him to break them. And above all, he must control his ego. His life must be one guided by a spirit of humility. A martial artist must be unwavering in the face of temptation that surrounds him, attempting to lead him to compromise in these areas. By standing strong concerning these moral issues, he will show himself to be a great leader to his students, and a promising role model that leaves a lasting legacy.

I have found that by surrendering my life to Jesus Christ, I have been given great assistance in this area of discipline. Men can attempt to live moral lives on their own. They can try and measure up to the standards of the Scriptures in their own strength. But, they will find this to be impossible to do for very long. We will always fall short. And apart from God's Holy Spirit working within us, we will never succeed in living righteously. This is my personal testimony on the matter. The reader may do with this information as he pleases.

CONCLUSION

I believe the standard to which a black belt must aspire is a high one. Anyone who holds this rank is, by default, looked to as a leader whether he embraces that role or not. Therefore, a person who shoulders this responsibility needs to accept the high expectations that come with it. This is not an easy task, and it will take hard work. And the force that will drive this hard work is discipline. Motivation will fade overtime, but discipline will remain. This will enable the martial artist to embrace the role of leadership and actually succeed at it. Through proper discipline, he can be an ensample to the student body. The rank of black belt today has been largely adulterated due to the neglect of this character quality. I believe a black belt in the art of Chang Moo Kwan must rise above those who take this lightly.

Physical discipline must be a regular part of a black belt's life and not in a manner that is out of control. Too much training will inevitably lead to burn-out. However, a consistent workout routine should be normal. Incorporate simple and effective bodyweight exercises targeting various muscle groups. Condition the cardiovascular system and maintain a decent amount of flexibility. This conditioning should prepare him for the occasional session of *shugyo*, difficult tests upon his limits to push thresholds of limitation in training. Black belts should also never neglect the use of kata, and forms must be practiced correctly. Proper attention should be given to the five elements of kata: focus, *ki*, technique, rhythm, and application. Nam Suk Lee and other patriarchs of old understood the importance of training with forms. A black belt in Chang Moo Kwan disgraces the art and the founders thereof by neglecting the use of kata.

Training the mind is also key. Any martial artist who neglects the study of academics will never be a good teacher. Study the valuable lessons found within history. Dive deep into the

richness of the information discovered and shared by those in the past. Martial artists today can learn a great deal from the martial artists of old. If we do not listen to what they have to say, we may be doomed to repeat their mistakes, or we may not repeat their successes.

Because forms are such an integral part of the art of Chang Moo Kwan, studying them is very important. Understanding how to properly break down and apply the movements of kata is a necessary skill for a black belt. This *bunkai* must always be practical, able to be used against realistic attacks. These movements in kata can be applied to pressure points, and therefore, the study of kyusho-jitsu can only deepen one's understanding of kata.

Finally, both of these areas of discipline must be governed by a moral code. This takes the greatest amount of willpower. It is easy to train and study hard, but making the right moral choices in this life is the true challenge. Without a sense of morality, the legacy of the martial artist will be one of selfishness and corruption. He will be nothing more than an example of what not to be as a black belt. I have found in my own life that the Holy Spirit of God, given to me through my faith in Christ, assists me in this. No longer a servant to my flesh, I have been equipped to walk in the spirit and live righteously.

I began this thesis discussing the importance of leadership. It is through the three core areas of physical, mental, and moral discipline that a black belt will be able to one day look back on his career and rest knowing he was an effective leader for those who sought to learn from him. As far as I am concerned, no one deserves to hold the rank of shodan without showing growth and maintenance in these three areas of discipline. They are essential for anyone who wishes to obtain this rank. My study of Chang Moo Kwan and my instructor's example over the years have taught me such things, and I understand the responsibility that comes with a

meaningful black belt. I thereby commit to always hold myself to a higher standard, not just for my sake, but for the sake of the art.

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