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**Statements by Arnaud van der Veere;**

- Life never stops, even death is no end.
- Greatness does not come without a fight.
- The day starts with sunrise, not with sunset.
- No fight starts with a weapon or just a word, it is the gesture that evokes the first action.
- Enjoy takes a moment, satisfaction is timeless..
- No day is successful without a purpose.
- Life seems long, but looking back it was so short.
- Time is immeasurable and elastic, stretchy one moment and the next overstretched.
- You invest in the future with the results from your past.
- To Achieve something takes time and effort, if you have neither, failure is you share.
- The day should start good start otherwise it ends up bad.
- When time becomes an issue, you are wasting it!
- You can die in an instance if you leave a legacy behind
- Life does not matter, what you do in it does
- when we wish for good fortune but do not want to work for it, lay down and wait for it. It will be more likely you will get hit by a train
- In the face of danger we learn to know what fear looks like. When in state of fear we cannot recognize danger.
- Sometimes you see light on the end of the tunnel but it could be an opposing driver
- When you wonder why you are living, check who is loving you
- Love and hate are closer to each other than man and woman.

## **The Universal principles of Fighting Arts**

Existence is vital for life. If there is no life there is no existence. Life and existence both are shown in materialistic shapes. Everything that lives has a spiritual side depended on the life-form of the existence. Each living element has a period to stay alive and to die, there is nothing permanent.

Every living thing need space. Most life-forms battle for space with other specie but also within the same to create a personal space, the comfort zone. This comfort zone must be considered a territory which is defended when under threat.

Every race did start fighting with only a physical performance and no weapons. From this point on all fighting arts, strategies and weapons are evolved. The first form of battle is the attack, without attack there is no defense. A life-form that attacks the other has “reasons” to do so. These reasons can be territory, need of resources, hate, desire or various other reasons. None of these reasons can be considered logical or reasonable. To attack another is always a negative action.

But attack is a natural action which is followed by defense. A defender protects its property by force or any other means available. If not extinct the defender continues its defense till the last specie, that is the nature of all living. An attacker only followed by treason of the defender side. Treason is considered the most serious crime in the Universe. Every specie should stay and defend their own specie.

Violence is progressive. When one party applies a certain amount of violence on the other it will defend or retaliate, as far as possible, with an even greater amount of violence. For this weapons are constantly developed and invented. The only winner is the one able to unite a large group with sufficient power to mark a territory and defend it from attack at all time. But time rules even this part. No winner will be a winner forever, a time comes that even the winner is defeated and the cycle starts again.

The Universal law of Fighting Arts is that to attack and to defend are united in the same principle of impermanency of any power. As we are part of this Universal ruling we should learn how to attack and defend to be sure of enough capacities to fight at all time. We also have to accept that our powers are temporary and we follow the cycle of strength; weak-growing-strong-fading-weak.

## Foreword

The source of this book can be found in the questions and comments from my customers. Since 1984 I sell Martial Arts gear and need to talk with thousands of people every day on all kind of topics related to Martial arts. Since the introduction of Martial Arts in the Western world changes and adaptations of these sports have been going on. As our society have seemed to change for the worse, we have become more aware of violence and crime, people are looking for the most effective ways to defend themselves. A sport is considered effective when it is relatively easy to learn and use in "real" combat situations. Ring sports (Kick and Thai Boxing) and self-defense products such as Krav Maga, Kapap and others are in the spotlight. The traditional sports are losing ground.

Within the hard combat sport traditions there is no space for independent mental / spiritual development. This is the thought of most of the trainers and participants. Being tough, strong, macho, acting dangerous, being a fighting machine and more of these expressions are seen as the ultimate expression of who you are by many participants. There is no place for spiritual development. But due to this they have created an emptiness in the minds and characters of these participants, they all feel a lack of knowledge and a need to compensate for that. Most of them use aggression, an incredible urge to train, a need for competition and exposure as stand in for the gap in spiritual knowledge. In recent years some have even turned to radical movements in religion or otherwise.

This lack of proper guidance resulted in a negative image in media and easy to influence participants. Some movies have shown the wrongdoing of the teachings without a spiritual heart and soul. In a movie as Karate kid we see a caricature of a teacher who teaches his students in the arts of aggression and improper behavior. The lack of spiritual guidance provides fighters without a norms and values. Students from these schools are like unguided rockets fired into society without proper goals.

Fighting (combat) Martial Arts are not only a physical way to train the body for competition, combat or pleasure moreover they are all to develop the mind, character and spiritual knowledge. It is the duty of teachers to have and carry out proper knowledge of the sports and instruct students thoroughly in physical practice and in a spiritual way. A teacher gives students weapons to fight with, they arm them with ammunition of techniques, strength, condition and tactics and send them back into society. Teachers have a responsibility to society by instructing the students how to behave, make proper use of the given weapons and develop on a balanced way strong mental powers which are useful in their life and for society as a whole.

This book is written to learn from the past and see the norms and values of ancient warriors and combine this knowledge with our current society. Our society may be technologically advanced but in spiritual matter we are still seeking for the truth. When you are a fighter, your skills can help but also destroy people, you carry a big responsibility. Fighting arts are the root of humanity, the skills of a fighter are used in everything, marketing to business strategy. Our arts are used as self-defense but also trained by special forces, police, military and security. Fighting arts have never been so popular as in our time.

Spirituality sounds woolly and something of new age people, but the way we face it is concrete, to the point and factual. We look for results and non-religious considerations. Our focus is on mental development which we can measure, character development which makes us stronger personalities and our position in society and sport. Some of the most important issues are;

- Conscious mental development
- Your mentality development over the years
- Your communication skills with yourself and others
- The ability to improve yourself and change
- Your need to set goals and to pursue them in a disciplined way
- Accepting your own possibilities and learn to work with them
- Your sense of enterprise, your will to discover and develop (f.i. Travel, events)
- Your ability to accept aging and your strength to adapt to changing circumstances
- Your personal thought of "supernatural", the unexplainable
- The desire to add a dimension to exercise such combining body and mind

By these descriptions the word spirituality can be seen in a very different way. Only one of the descriptions can be seen as "psychedelic" but it is not. There is more between heaven and Earth than we can explain. There are two ways to deal with it;

1. we can ignore all and deny it exist
2. to use it mindfully and accept or even take our part of it and make maximum use of the results

Our life is versatile and offers many possibilities, TOO MANY for most people. The purpose of this book is to make you realize that spiritual development is not an airy-fairy mind game but your only option in life. If you have no spiritual development your mind will be the same at age eight or forty.

A (wo)man must evolve for himself, for his family and friends. During your life you must keep evolving and your mind should look for balance otherwise existence is too hard to be true. Each battle of life has clear markers which we will face at all time;

- Preparation. Every fight in life, for instance an examination, needs a good preparation. If you are not prepared failure is evident.
- The battle / confrontation. This can be the moment you take your exam
- The result. After a fight there is a result, you can be a winner, loser or have a draw, there is always a result.
- Processing the result. What is your emotional / mental reaction to the result, how will you cope with it?
- Whatever the result may be you will have to take action according to the result. This action can be a next step, another try or a reconsideration of the former decision

How can you find a positive spiritual development of yourself?

- The long road. You have to develop your own techniques and tactic to reach results, this is considered the most complicated and difficult way
- The short road. You make use of the developed knowledge of former teachers and use their instructions to get to a result.

It seems an easy choice but to find the right master / teacher is very complicated in the jungle of information and cheaters who are using the words of masters / prophets and holy books to convince you of their right doing. The harder they try to convince you of their goodness, rightfulness and justice the more you have to doubt of sincerity. In my seminars I point you to the need of reading, considering theoretical issues and the practical application of all what you did learn. You need to collect and share information with trusted friends and set realistic goals. In the chapter about teachers I will give some guidelines to select the right one for you.

Spirituality in Fighting Arts is not woolly or strange, it is a fact of life and very needed to reach a goal. Our goals in fighting arts are very clear, you want to advance step by step, getting better in technique and personality, you wish to reach for a higher goal every time again. Reaching a higher spiritual level gives more balance and control, you dare to accept bigger challenges without fear of losing yourself. Mental growth is the power and source to give your life a meaning. After the first steps are taken and you have got the result, the taste for more always will be there and you can judge for yourself.

### **Some remarks**

In this book I will use the words; teacher / trainer often in the same context. When you read any of these words they always refer to the same person in front of the class.

I often use HE but always consider that it also could be a SHE. During writing it is not always esthetic nice to use the he/she combination.

## Introduction

Fighting arts are something you live, practice, imagine and is a part of life. Fighting arts or better called Martial Arts (MA), are not external arts, to experience them you need to live them. A real Martial Artist grows with his art in body and mind. The physical part cannot grow without the mental segment. When you learn to fight with a sword, we tell the student to become the sword and not use it. Some will be attracted by the element of competition others the mythical or the use as self-defense, each person can find something of demand in the arts.

When I started in 1968 Martial Arts were unknown and very few people had any realistic vision or even background information. My sources were old military and ex-prisoners of war from the Burma railway, Indonesian KNIL service men and fighters from the different world wars. As young boy these stories were impressive and near mythical. Legendary fighters and skills did pass by in stories so great that I listened with my mouth open. Heroes which defeated armies just with bare hands and fighters who battled for justice in the hell of war. I saw those images in my head and kept them for years. But I never saw super human powers in any of them, I did see the determination of training and a “never give up” mentality with a true believe in their own capacities.

At that time most Martial Arts available were of Japanese origin and only one from Korea, there was not much choice. I received training from the mentioned former Burma veterans in the art of Muay Thai but the same veterans did deny me entrance to their Indonesian root arts such as Pentjak. I was discriminated in my own country on a very serious way. In 1975 I decided to go to the source of Muay Thai, the country which became my second motherland, Thailand. In Thailand I did learn that the combination of poverty, freedom, believe in a future, having a positive vision on life and the attitude to fight till you die with honor the most important thing in life was. Klong Toy, the place I stayed, was considered a slum, one of the poorest parts of the country. But I grew richer by the day, the spirit of the poor, their power and joy of being alive made me understand that life itself had only value and all property we carry around this earth are for the time being. We do not own anything, not even the cloth we wear, all we have is for the borrow.

Nobody did speak a word of English, body language was all we had to communicate. During training I got instructions in Thai. Slowly I did learn the most important phrases and counting but I never could get a grip on pronunciation. But I did learn to follow orders without question, hear it / do it. Thai have a very professional training attitude in Muay Thai, there is no need for external force as in other Asian Martial Arts. Students come to train as they all know that competition is fears and without any excuse for failure. Self-discipline is considered the most important virtue of a fighter, you come to training to become a fighter, if not, stay home. If you want to become a fighter, training is twice daily and no complain or excuse, there are no positive nor negative encouragements.

In Thailand we did train in a camp. Fighters often live inside the camp, it is their social environment. They train, eat, drink, sleep and live in a small shat, accepting the daily fate and knowing they have only little chance to become champion and make good money. The camp is home with clear rules and regulations, nothing written down but manually transferred by staff and fighters. Thai are free people, they never have been a colony of Western powers even while all surrounding countries were occupied. Kings and intelligent rulers kept the country free of foreign interference and it could develop in their unique way. When you come to train in a camp, Thai consider you also a free person and will not apply force on you to train, they consider your coming a free choice and accept your for who you are. This is the only right approach to fighting arts, you have to make a free choice to start with it and to continue, there must be no external force. Believe in yourself and you are able to make something of life.

Martial Artists are considered fighters and not warriors. The term warriors is reserved for people who apply force for the benefit of the population and not necessary for themselves. Due to the changing attitude toward this word I will need to use it in the book as alternative for the word fighters but do so with a strong skeptical vision.

Fighters are free spirits, you fight by choice and not for a boss or dictator (again a clear difference with the warrior who is in the service of an organization). You are a free Martial Artist and you have the choice to develop your own world were you offer security to yourself and family and create a good environment. The power you develop by training the right mental attitude and development to find the right direction in life will allow you control over circumstances and life itself.

You are interested and ready to start with the sport, you are physically prepared. It is time to make your moves. But you need to keep in mind that the physical part is just a part of all training. From this book you learn that the

biggest advantages you have from Martial Arts are on the spiritual / mental side. To understand your sport, you have to dig deep and collect a lot of information, search history and read stories of the ancestors in the sport. This book is your guide on the road to mastery of the arts and spiritual development so I hope to meet you one day as a person who becomes member of our selected group of initiated Martial Arts masters.

## Struggle

Life is like a battlefield, a continue fight for survival and existence. To struggle is a natural force that confronts us every day again. One of the most important examples of our struggle is the battle between good and bad. Our thoughts are constantly busy to consider if something is good or bad, proper or not. Most of our struggle is deprived of our own continue deliberation of norms and values. Most people are insecure and seek a lead in life to understand life and environment. Everybody seek for what is important in life, some even the meaning of life, and we all look around for solutions at religions, philosophies and even “guru’s” which are offered at a certain moment.

Most people do not want to make a choice, they accept silently what is offered by the family or environment and follow the religion or customs without questioning them. Within every religion struggle between good and bad is the main issue. In all holy books this struggle is the center of conviction. Followers are supposed to fight for their freedom of religion, a place in society and against sins and enemies. Each book predicts a certain freedom to its followers promising an ever after solution when they offer their lives following the religion. A certain freedom of the mind and sorrow, from struggle and pain is preached with an incredible reward in the afterlife. Peace is preached as the ultimate happiness but when we read those holy books we cannot find back much of that peace. In the Bible we meet a Jezus cleaning up the yards of the temples by force, Buddha left his house keeping to seek his soul somewhere else and in the Quoran we find many stories of war and violent actions also. In other holy books we can find other stories to back up this statements.

Peace is the time between wars. Our human mind is made to struggle, to conquer the world and fight with enemies. The meaning of struggle can be considered positive and negative, it separates and unites people. When foreign forces attack a country most people will be united to fight against the common enemy. Their unity brings strength and cooperation, differences are forgotten. The fight against the enemy is a binding factor to combat the enemy as one force. When the enemy is defeated and time turns back into a peace situation the conflicts of the past will return to society and the unity is forgotten. From this we can conclude that people are able to be united for a period of time but never in the long term. On the other hand we are able to feel connection to people we never met, strangers on the other side of the globe or elsewhere when a disaster takes place or for other reasons. It is possible we feel more connected to strangers we never met before as we do not have a history with them that disturb our reasoning.

Struggle in general is considered as being negative. People struggle for power, a job, a wife or husband, from jealousy, for housing or territories and we can name so many other reasons. There are many reasons and ways to start a battle in life. When we study all the reasons why people start a battle we must conclude that they are to serve self-interest. The cause of a battle is to serve or protect self-interest of the group or the individual.

Millions of books have been published about war, battles and the struggle of men for its rights. We can state that 99% of all books the struggle the center theme is of an individual turning into a group process. When we watch movies or TV the foundation of a story is the battle between people, nations or even aliens. It is a given fact and we rarely ask for the reason why we start a battle or why we struggle.

The human being is made for battle, our body and mind are in a constant struggle with each other. We are working hard to let our mind control our body and our bodies are profound opponents which hardly ever let the mind win. When we grow up the constant struggle with our environment and people we are related too is a source of problem and inspiration. Our struggle takes place every second of day and night and never seem to end until we finally die. But struggle takes energy and is exhausting, too some people with the effect of depression or worse.

Spirituality calls for a new age feeling from the reader. When we talk about spirituality most of the time we recall pictures of flowers, happy dancing people, meditation and other woolly images. To most spirituality is unreal, not materialistic and far from reality way of life. But this is not a right way of thinking, it is better we look at the word in the right way.



Spirituality is everything considering the mind in relation with the body and its environment. We are confronted with spirituality every second of the day. Our relation with life depends on it. We can state that our spirituality is directly connected with our battles in life and the struggle of living. They are inextricably connected. Every person alive has its own struggle in life and with its spirituality, most turn to religions while few will follow the right path of research and consideration. It is easier to follow the path many did walk before but while walking you need to question the teachings, the time and most of all the reality of life as your being confronted with.

To make my case more clear I will picture you the most “holy” event possible; a monk or other religious person in need to come closer to his God or Spiritual development. When this person is growing up he will be confronted with an environment which does not understand his desires and wishes and they will try to convince him of his right or wrong doing. He will have to defend himself. When at a proper age he will have to go to a retreat of monastery. I take the path to a retreat in the mountains as sample. His first step is to get up to the mountain which will take him energy to walk up and his struggle to find a right path and place. After finding a place his next step is to build a shelter for the night and weather. Even a meditating monk needs to eat and drink and supply need to be found. He must arrange supply from a village or friends or has to go hunting for it by himself in any case it will not come by itself, his struggle for food will take time and effort. After he finally got his shelter and food arranged the meditation starts. After sitting down the inner battle begins in a fearsome way. Thoughts, emotions and his body will complain and disturb his peace and struggle for his attention, he has to battle for freedom and clearance of mind. During the struggle he needs to sleep, eat and drink, get back to his meditation and this cycle will continue until the target is reached. If it is ever reached.

Let us expect him to reach enlightenment. After this experience he wishes to share with others and needs to get back to the “living world”. Again he needs to struggle to get back to the village, stimulate his body to move and get on the road. He has to conquer distance and altitude, the elements may be an obstacle such as wind and rain or worse. To return to a village needs adjustment of clothing, people do not like to be confronted with naked persons, and behavior. Try to imagine this person is you and feel his struggle, a holy man battling for his life and message. It is not easy to be him in every way as in his silence he was confronted with the fundamentals of living; food, shelter, clothing, drink and communication. These fundamentals are to be fulfilled first as if not we die and all struggle for life would be in vain.

But let us get back to you. Imagine now a stranger coming up to you asking for a drink. A complete stranger asks you for a favor. Your first reaction is hesitation and consideration. Most people will not pick a glass of water or something else upon the first request. The first considerations are “what does he want from me”, “are you crazy? Why do you ask me “ or more relaxed “why is this person thirsty?”. In every case you have an inner struggle before you get into action. A very small number of people pick a drink without question, they have little struggle in life and accept all what comes easy and fast but they also have little to no spiritual development.

Struggle has a negative image and people do not like the word nor the event due to that. It is a negative emotion. But this is complete in contrary with reality. We owe our life to struggle. The battle to live and survive is the foundation of our being and it started upon conception. Your first fight was the moment your sperm cell flew into the vagina and got into contact with the egg cell of the woman, the love moment. You had to fight with millions of competitors all heading in the same direction and with the same target. In this battle for the ultimate goal you had to compete for the win and finally you were successful, some have twin brothers and sisters others even more and all living “we” are the winners of this first incredible heavy battle.

Women think that they are different but they are not. Each living human being did go through the same process of fertilization and conception, a fight to be the winner. Only after this first win the chromosomes decide the gender of your being.

After birth you have the first encounter with other human beings, often a scary encounter of a fight to be born and a strange hostile environment. Suddenly you have to breathe air, feel the cold and lost your safe shelter. Everything is new. The fight for your personal space has begun. Growing up is to conquer living space, create a personal living area and secure your position. As soon as we start to play with other children we have to seek for our own identity, who are we compared to the others, what is our position and how to get around with them. It is never easy to find your place in a world filled with strangers who are also seeking for their own position. Children have no borders or holding back yet.

To create our own personality we have to struggle in battle after battle with the other kids, the system and other parts of the environment, this is not an easy process for everybody. Most kids are harmed during that time, some physically but most mentally. It would be the best way if we are trained for the battles of life, as we are thought

to fight our inner battle and how to solve conflicts. Very few are interested or physically capable for the fighting arts but the lessons we learn are important to all living people. Our philosophy of life is a common fact in all martial arts in an often unspoken way. Most teachers and trainers are not aware of the true values of our arts.

Your life is like a battle field, you need to train and arm yourself to combat the negative issues that come your way. The weapons I hand you are simple and can be used by every person who is willing to be motivated and activated by it. You need to show discipline, loyalty and determination as “There is no shortcut in life but practice”( saying of Jaguar to, my partner in Hong Kong). To reach something in this life needs efforts and hard work and everything that is offered to you, no matter books, movies, advertisements and so on, telling you that success comes easy is a cheat and you should be very sceptic al about it. Life is not illusion but reality. Ask yourself ; how successful is the person who is offering me this success? If the answer is no, you better ask yourself why he/she is not successful but thinks they can make you successful.

In this book I hand you your personal; weapons of arts;

- Your body, use it well
- Your mind, set it to action
- Your knowledge , collect and use it

With these weapons I arm you to combat your battles of life and you can reach whatever you desire. Follow the knowledge of the book, apply all you learn and test it as soon as possible, find yourself a good teacher and work on your discipline and determination. Your will is your law but you have to live according to them. Now you are aware and armed and it is time for battle, get into the world and be ready for the action.

## Hard and inner styles

In fighting arts we differ hard and inner styles. The inner styles use to be called soft styles. The result of fighting is never soft, so I do consider this a wrong translation. Each style of fighting has one goal, to beat the enemy by all means. No matter what way a person will choose the final goal is the same, become victorious over a threat. Winning by defense or attack.

The difference between the styles are the way of training. Hard style focus on physical training, endurance, contact between opponents during training (sparring) and competition. Most hard style have a strong connection with competition. Real hard style will combat under Knock Out rules. Inner styles do not use full contact in competition or training, there methods are more like shadow fighting, physical control, acrobatics and kata (these are premeditated forms of practice, in this book I direct a chapter to this). In competition we also find semi-contact styles were the competitors are only allowed to make touch contact to the body for points. It has to be said that many semi-contact competitions are not as soft as they seem.

Each style can be trained in a hard and inner way. It can be stated that there are real difference between the styles but the way people are willing to train or compete. The trainer shows the direction to its students.

Martial Arts have a number of very clear targets;

- Increase confidence
- Enhance physical control
- Control and guide emotions
- Learn and apply techniques
- To know when to use and when not to use certain techniques (norm & values)
- Learn to control situation more than defense or attack

This is not a complete list but just the major point, more can be found in this book.

Styles may differ but the targets and methods stay the same. In every fighting arts we learn to use weapons. Your first weapon is your body and only long after this you use tools. Your body is the only real weapon available at all time, when you are not able to use that, any other weapon does not work. Each product that is used as weapon is an extension of the body. When you are able to control your body, mind and weapons you become aware that fighting only is used for a good and just cause.

When we study the roots of fighting arts we always find origins in Asia. Nearly all Asian fighting arts have a direct connection with Buddhism and some to Taoism. Through this connection the influence of Asian cultures is felt in the spiritual parts. But when we continue to the core of Martial Arts we pass by cultures, philosophies, arts and religions we find the Universal principles of Fighting Arts.

## Society and you

It is our sincere wish to be an individual, to be someone. Everybody in this entire world wish to be noticed, if it is even only by the direct environment. Your development depends on it. To be an individual is only possible when we create a personal space. Some people need a large and others a small space. It is stated that the personal space varies per culture.

What is your personal space? To answer that question I would like you to measure your space first. You stand straight up and stretch your arms out as far as possible. The end of your personal space is located at the end of your fingertips. This is called your public zone, the place you need to feel comfortable in a normal environment. It is also called the comfort zone. Now you bend your arms and stretch the elbow out as far as possible. The next space is called social zone and is located at the end of your elbow point. People who come within this space must be familiar to you, only in crowds you tolerate otherwise. The intimate space is directly on and around your skin, you feel not comfortable when strangers enter this space. In fact you become upset if they do so.

It is really important to know your own comfort zones to allow others to come near you. The so called circle of intimacy has direct influence on your spiritual / mental development. When you are young the size of the circle is developed depending on the amount of people you grew up with, the connection you had with those people, your sexual experiences and the love you got from the caretakers (parents and others).

To be the individual you want to be in our society you must be aware of your personal space and learn to consider this in every situation. In Martial Arts we teach awareness of the enemy. Every person that enters the personal space must be felt. Your awareness of intrusion is vital to your survival. To create this form of mindfulness you have to train yourself to enter and exit the space of others while observing your own.

Some sports workout in close combat and the personal space is constantly intruded. In Judo, Wrestling, Jiu Jitsu, MMA and many others touching is an important part. When the hands of the “opponent” enter your space you should guide them to places you allow to be held or touched. When you understand this principle it can be used in crowds and other places to avoid or keep contact to the minimum or force maximum contact.

Our society is not Martial Arts friendly. Most Westerners are against any form of fighting and do not understand the need. But they also do not understand that life is a struggle, a fight to survive. They consider life a gift that will only be taken by death, they forget injuries and worse events. Ignorance is caused by a strange feeling of security. A security based on police and other protectors of the law. That these protectors need Martial Arts to be able to protect us is easily forgotten.

Depended on where you live and the cultural acceptance of Martial Arts it is advised to keep a low profile at all time, the lesser people know what you do the better.

## Martial Arts as spiritual path

Martial arts are not just sport, behind every style is a philosophy, a way of life and culture which digs deeper than just a physical practice. If you have chosen the correct teacher and school the mental effects of the training are visible soon after you start your practice. Your life will change for the positive the moment you decide to be a student. Self-discipline is the first step toward success in life and you are able to develop an independent way of life and thinking.

When we look at the training it is stated that the benefits you encounter after a certain time of training are;

- A better physical condition. When you train you become a better physical condition which benefits your health in general
- An enhanced health and physical resistance. By participating in training your body develops a higher resistance against disease and accidents. Your condition increases and through that the rest of your physic will function better. The body will heal faster and the brain is sharper.
- Physical resistance. Due to the training your body not only grows stronger it becomes harder. The pain tolerance level increases which makes your body and mind more resistant against setbacks and contact.
- Self-discipline. Participating in every possible lesson test your perseverance and you will question your needs and wishes. With an increase of time you develop a higher form of self-discipline which benefit you in life.
- Courage. You need courage to participate in sport and the struggle of life. Training is a direct confrontation with yourself and the other participants. Many people do not dare to take on this fight and will be followers, you took pride in the fact to take part of the training.
- Intelligence. Fighting in real life is not like in a movie, you need to use your brain and consideration in defense and offense. Make a plan and combine body and soul, control emotions, keep a clear mind and analyze the situation to give a proper response.
- Mental resilience. The effect of training is not only the strength of the physic, with the taking and giving of punches and kicks you learn to control pain, fear, emotions and face yourself at all time. Your mind will come at ease and a balance is reached in difficult circumstances.

When study the mentioned points you discover that 5 out of 8 are mental issues. Fighting arts have a strong mental effect, even more than on the physical. In the Western society it is common to judge the book on its cover instead of reading it well. The content of fighting arts are so much more metaphysical than physical. Learning Martial Arts prepare you for daily life better than any other sport.

Martial Arts has a strong connection with Buddhism, most people consider this a religion, which is not true. The pure form of Buddhism is philosophy, it shows you a way and solutions in life but you must decide to take or not. Buddhism does not conflict with Martial Arts even though most people do consider them as violent. I did start this book with the proof that life is a battle, a struggle to survive and have a good life. During our life we are the most fears enemy of ourselves and not the others. Buddhism claims the same, the source of suffering (dhukka) is found in the struggle (battle) of life we all face. Buddhism does not conflict with religion as the teaching shows the way to be a good person and to follow the path of self enlightenment, the improvement of your being and daily life. There is no denial of God(s) or religion and it is even considered another way to self-fulfillment.

The goal of Martial Arts is not to knock out an opponent, take part in competition or performance, but to increase of self-discipline, respect for life and fellowmen and enhance the spiritual life of yourself and others.

## Illusion of self-defense

Self-defense is a magical word for many course directors. They program this kind of courses to entertain their customers with the illusion of security. A very dangerous illusion in my vision.

Men started to develop weapons as early as it could think. Weapons are used to compete with stronger opponents. The invention of the weapon is to overpower an attacker, enemy or prey. In general this is the first thought modern people have when thinking of weapons, but the real reason probably is different.

Weapons are invented to hunt prey, to kill faster and easier. Killing a prey was considered dangerous and often it took a long time to force the animal down and methods that had to be used were time consuming. When the hunt and the killing took too much time it was not possible to go for more. Time limited the amount of food and caused starvation. The invention of weapons was a need for survival and not directly a need to be used in combat situations.

When weapons proved to be useful in the hunt they could also be useful in combat situations. The use of the first weapons in these combat situations must have had a shocking effect on the living tribes of that time. Before that time battles were not bloody and violent to the kill, each battle ended in submission of the enemy to the winner. But weapons did change that all. An enemy could be killed, eliminated completely. This made a group stronger and they could enlarge their territory beyond what was really needed. The first territory hunters occurred thanks to the superiority of the weapon. It did not take a long time before others did discover the benefits of weapons and started to find their own. The weapon "race" did start there.

Self-defense creates often the illusion that a not drilled to the bones person can fight off an opponent who is deterrent and experienced. In every normal person case the first reaction on attack is fear. When a person is in fear reaction time diminish, the mind gets clouded and decision are based on intuition not on a clear conscious. Intuition is something that is like an instinct and only is able to act when properly trained.

Animals react from pure instinct with a completely natural inborn reaction. Our instinct has two reaction possibilities. Fight or flight. Over 90% of the current population in the world will flight as fighting is something they avoid. Why do people avoid fighting? The current population on earth is not made to fight, they are made for labor and obedience, trained to follow orders of the few. I know this is a hard bargain to hear as your own reality and brings you to resist this statement strongly. But take out the emotions and become realistic, you find that you are not a warrior by nature. Only some of us are. These people react with fighting by instinct, they are not brave or heroic, it is their nature and they cannot help acting like that.

When your nature is to flight instead of to fight you must realize who you are and consider self-defense for what it is, a bunch of tricks to keep you aware and fit. But let we get back to the origin of the fight. To win a fight you need to have something that makes you superior. This need of superiority is strongly found in countries where men (and families) are allowed to own fire-weapons. Most of these families have more than one weapon. Their reason? You better have more than one just in case of.... But this incase rarely ever happens, it is something to ease the mind, to create a shadow of security.

To understand my statement I take you to a situation which is imaginary. Two masters in their own sport are confronted with each other. One fighter is a top-competitor in a ring sport like Muay Thai, Kick Boxing or MMA, a real good fighter with lots of experience. The other person only did practice with weapons, he is an experience fighter with sticks, swords and other weapons. Both have trained for years and are top fit. We can consider the situation as equal in skills, experience and all other factors. Both fighters face each other in a standoff situation. A judge is present to intervene when needed. The weapon master is armed with a stick and the other with MMA gloves. A call is made and the battle begins. The two opponents study each other and are not willing to take the first action. Both fighters know that taking the first action will impose a risk, the action must be completely successful otherwise the opponent will have an advantage. If not ordered to fight this situation will take a long time as both know the risk of combat.

Suddenly the unarmed fighter goes for the attack and the stick blocks the attack and immediately follows with an attack which causes direct damage on the head of the unarmed fighter, his skull shows the signs of the impact and blood is slowly spreading over his head. There are two possible reactions to blood in a fighter, one is to attack more fears and the other is to hesitate and withdraw. In this situation the fighter cannot withdraw and only one possibility exist. Another attack follows and the effect of the next damage is even more evident. The armed fighter has a brushed leg from the impact of the kick.

Now the blood is spreading over the head the weapons specialist goes for the arms and start to hit elbows and hands to inflict maximum damage on the most use elements for attack. After a few hits hands and elbows are no longer fully usable and the attacks continue. For the unarmed fighter it is hardly possible to defend against a stick. Slowly we see the armed fighter winning the fight, no matter the skills of the unarmed fighter.

Weapons are important in real combat situations and the combination of being a skilled unarmed and armed fighter is the most deadly of all. Real warriors do have these skills (see the chapter of warriors).

If you want to train self-defense you should start with a mentality training first, prepare a person for a dangerous situation. Learning observation, judgment of situation and environment, making conclusions and set things in action must be trained to be a part of instinct. Self-defense is to have a small number of techniques formed into instinct and the right mind set. It is important to touch and know how to use a weapon, dare to take an action, see and feel blood flow and face fear. That is the foundation of real self-defense, not technical shows.

What is the spiritual side of self-defense? To be confronted with your own fears, the threat of injury and death, daring to face your own inner self. Good self-defense training is confrontation with yourself and your environment, a movement to awareness and observation. The best self-defense training is the one who teach you so well that you are able to avoid getting into a dangerous situation at all time.

## Gym and Etiquette

A gym is a place where people come together to train and have social interactions. As in every group we need certain rules and regulations to keep it well organized. In a gym it is even more important to have clear rules and regulations on behavior and manners. To understand the rules and regulations of Martial Art gyms we should look at the background first.

Martial Arts are fighting arts. In fighting we target to hurt the other person, maybe even seriously. We fight to defend or attack, no matter the purpose it is our wish to survive. We want to have victory to stay alive even when we need to run away after the fight. This is our sincere intention, we fight to survive. When this is clear to you it is possible to understand the needs of etiquette in a gym where all people train with the same intention. If we have no strong rules and regulations every training will end in a battle field. The first rule is to listen and respect the trainer, follow his/her orders whatever they are and if not able to do so show this honesty and respectful. A good teacher understands his students and their capacities.

Most or all Martial Arts have their origin in Asia. Due to this origin we have taken over many of the traditions which come mainly from countries like; Japan, Korea, China, Thailand and in lesser extent Indonesia and Philippines. In general the rules and regulations are;

- When entering the training space we salute in the form of bowing or greeting, every time when we enter or exit we follow the same protocol. In most gyms the use of footwear is prohibit.
- Students and teacher sit or stand in opposite position. Students greet their trainer before and at the end of the classes.
- Each sport has a special student / trainer greeting ritual which must be followed. In tradition the highest graduated or eldest student will command the greeting ritual.
- During the lessons student pay attention to the explanation of the teacher and stop training completely while listening to the explanation. During some lessons students are demanded to sit in zazen on the ground. After the teacher is ready with the explanation it is tradition to bow to thank.
- Students who train with each other show respect by greeting each other in the way the gym commands. This greeting is not only to show respect but also to excuse for any damage or injury caused by the training. Training is going forward to a goal, to reach this goal you need the support of your fellow students for this you should be grateful and show respect.

All greeting rituals in Martial Arts are based on respect and have no religious backgrounds. Every person entering the gym, no matter religious background, personal philosophy or conviction must follow the traditional rules and regulations of a gym or should not enter or take part of the lessons. There must be no exception as mentioned we are a fighting art which demands the respect of fighters and the moral of warriors.

Beside the mentioned gym traditions and etiquette some gyms do keep other standards which have similar historical background such as;

- Cleaning the gym together after the training. Cleaning together shows than nobody is too high to clean a floor or do another kind of job. It is obvious that there should be no exceptions to this.
- The essence of greeting rituals are not to be a show to others, you should also use them when entering a gym alone or when you work out alone. These rituals are made to show a humble nature, knowing that our live is only as valuable as long as we live and it can be taken away any minute.
- When training with weapons you should take care of them well. Cleaning and maintenance are an important part of training. A weapons is an extension of your body and by taking good care of them you become one and the weapon will be a natural part of your body.
- The salute of ancestors and founders. Most traditional gyms have pictures of old founders or ancestors in the sport. We should offer these people respect for their legacy, the knowledge you are studying. You should understand that to show respect and thankfulness is something completely different from worshipping.
- You should attend seminars from different masters, teachers and trainers and learn to distinguish reality from fake. Seminars can enrich your life and bring new insights. I did follow many and always have stayed respectful even to the greatest idiots I met.



## Rituals and the ways to salute / greeting

Greetings are not only to politely welcome a person but also to express other values. One important value is the display of respect in the way how we salute. We need to distinguish the different ways of greeting. In a professional way we talk about saluting and this way exist to express unity, position and honor. In a private or business situation we talk about greeting each other. Even when the way of greeting can be formally it is always different from the professional way. Some groups have designed ways of greeting which are lingering between professional and private. Many ways of greeting are to display unity of a group or are a part of a ritual.

In Thailand the traditional way of greeting is called the Wai. Both hands are pressed together with open palms and fingers in a straight line. In my vision this is one of the most hygienic ways to greet each other. With the Wai it is possible to display a range of emotions and positions. A standard Wai greeting is when the hands are on chest height with fingers pointing up. The fingers do not touch the chin yet. When the fingers point toward the person we meet it is considered a good friend or a younger person. If the hands move up we tend to show more respect;

- The fingers are on “nose” level show a more respect for the person we meet
- If the fingers on the level of the forehead or a bit higher we consider this a deep respect for the person
- When the finger tops are higher than the head, the person we meet must be of royalty or equal, if combined with a bow of the head the person is of such position we may consider submissiveness

It is possible to explain the Wai in many ways as it is possible to display multiple manners of respect and emotions by the height, movement and direction of the fingers. Experts can see on a distance the relationship between the persons who greet each other, their emotions and what is going on between them. The moment of the Wai gives a lot of information to the viewer. This in contrary with the handshake were outsiders can see little but the partners of the handshake can feel it. While shaking hands the information is transferred in a relatively private way in compare with the Wai.

In Japan the bowing is their way of greeting. The way of bowing is studied and shows all kind of levels in respect. One should know how to address the different people with the right depth of bowing. It is not only the way how to bow and the depth of the movement but also how to keep the arms and hands and where to look during the movement. In Martial Arts we have taken this form of greeting as most common but without taking care of the details. Often we see rather rude behavior of people with various degrees in the sports due to not knowing how to address the right forms.

In many sports the Zazen way of greeting is another common part of the greeting system. The way of greeting in Zazen is even more complicated as in standing way. One of the main important things is that the person is never allowed to touch the ground with the head unless for the King or God as we say so. Greeting in Zazen demands a straight back, a raised head – you have to be aware of the surrounding at all time – and only one hand per movement goes down to the floor, never two hands in the same time. This way of greeting only is applicable in forms where weapons are used like sword fighting and stick forms in all other forms of fighting it should not be used.

Looking to other countries with Martial Arts we find many ways to greet. In China and India various hand positions are used in a way like the Wai in Thailand. Hands are shaped in different ways to express a certain unity between members of a style or group. Hand positions are often combined with a way of bowing or moving the upper body. Through the ages many ways of greeting came and went. We can find a lot of interesting displays back in society of which the greeting culture of American gangs is worth to look at, they are creative and use complicated patterns within the same groups.

After reading the above we can distinguish the most important functions of greeting;

- Say hello to the other person, for welcome or good bye, a sign of politeness
- A display of respect and position
- To show that we are a part of a group, style or society
- Cultural inheritance
- Emotions

All these functions are used in the relationship- teacher – gym – student.

When you enter a training hall (gym), temple or other holy place it is common good to take of the shoes. Shoes are worn outside where dirt is common. Inside most places people use the floor to sit on. Outside shoes will make the floor dirty. In the gym we face the same situation. You should take of the outside shoes the moment

you enter the gym and the gym should offer you facilities to store your shoes safely. Beside the hygiene aspect of taking of the shoes it is also a sign of respect for the place you enter.

The Western culture of touching, which mainly occurs in American oriented countries, is unwanted in most countries in the world. In Martial Arts we have a good explanation to this. When you let a stranger come close to you they become a potential risk. To give a stranger the opportunity to come that close to your body that you cannot see nor control their movements is creating a dangerous situation. You do not know the intentions, mental attitude or abilities of the person. Physical contacts are usually only for people we train with or persons we know well enough to allow a form of intimacy. In Martial Arts control over a situation starts with observation and calculation of risks. One of the major risks – which is proven by history so many times that we lost count – is to let people come to close. Danger lures when we cannot see what is going on. During intimate touching we lost all the control over a situation. This is the reason why many people do not like this form of greeting and feel very unpleasant if forced upon them.

In most cultures the head is a sacred part of the body. Some religions, philosophies, cultures and tribes consider the head as the place where our soul must be. To touch the head is considered unwanted and if done without the proper relationship even an insult. The Western move to touch the head of a child is often considered rude even when the intention is positive. Within the family and intimate relational bonding is seen normal to touch the head of a loved one. Any method of greeting with touching the head of the other person should be avoided.

Greetings can be converted into rituals. Many groups use these greeting rituals to exclude others from the group. Rituals have an important function in life. Children use a ritual to learn routine movements or to test situations over and over again. By the use of simple rituals like brushing the teeth's we learn to program our body and mind to adjust to certain needed situations. Most children rituals disappear after they are no longer of use but can suddenly pop up in another moment of life in situations which are recognized by the subconscious. Rituals bring concentration, focus and balance to the mind of the user. By the use of some rituals we are able to develop a stabile personality.

When getting older we use rituals for a deepening of focus and mindset. To follow a ritual allows the user to focus the mind on a specific topic. Behind each ritual we can find a development story. Most rituals consist of former practical actions combined with a target. A good example is the offering of incense in a religious place. In most cases we lit the incense, take it in both hands while using the Wai and put the incense in the vase. The way we do it is considered a ritual even some of the moves are different from one time to the other.

In Martial Arts there are many rituals which differ by sport and country but all have the same foundation and target. The rituals are to clear the mind and focus the concentration on training or else. We also need rituals to change from concentration into meditation. To understand this more we should separate routine and ritual movements. In my seminars I regularly address this topic.

Sample of a routine; after you arrive at the gym and get into the training hall you take of the slippers, bow and walk to your place. When you walk to your place you bend your knees a little and bow your head while walking. After you are seated you check your Gi and equipment and wait for the lesson to start.

Sample of a ritual; before the lesson starts, the teacher poses in a respectful position, head a little bend, in front of the picture of the old master of the sport. The teacher lights the incense in front of the picture and bows deeper. After this ritual he sits down and all students bow to him and to the picture of the old master.

## Respect

Life should be protected by all means as it is essential for our being here. A true person makes it its core value to protect life in every way possible. All beings have the right to live, no matter they are from animal or plant origin. But we have to learn to care more of things we do not yet consider living such as our mother earth and the Universe. If there is no good reason to harm or end a life we should not do it, in fact we should protect it and prevent others to waste life for no good reason. It is one core value of being a Martial Artist; protect life and defend against unnecessary wasting of it.

A battle is not a sign of violence but a measuring of strengths if two equal opponents combat each other. When the weapons and circumstances are equal the best will win. This is also the philosophy of the competition in Martial Arts. People who did train hard and are disciplined are matched to challenge the other person in competition. The moment we enter the battle field is a moment of acceptance of faith. We respect the opponent as we know the effort he/she has taken to oppose you. The determination of the opponent is expected to give us problems in battle and we must be well focused to compete. We respect an opponent who is well equipped, highly trained and fears in fighting.

We are living in a world of over 7 billion people, each with an unique appearance, DNA and most of all emotions and thoughts. There are no borders to our thoughts. We have to respect the thoughts of others as long as they do not intent to harm the innocent. Everybody is born in a place with a culture and environment which had not been voluntary chosen. From that we must conclude that each living specie is here for a purpose, no matter rich or poor, pretty or ugly. Culture gives us a personal value, a window of opportunities or blockades, a reason to live and an environment to develop in. To some their culture also provides them with a reason to live.

Although it has become increasingly difficult in a globalizing world cultures must communicate their values and identity without fear of losing it. In the ideal situation people from every culture should respect the other for its existence even when this culture exist within the borders of a major culture.

Life starts with the conception of the human and grows by the passing of days. At the start and the end of days every human needs help to survive. A baby and most elderly need the assistance of others because they are weak, defenseless and have no ways to support themselves. It is our duty to respect both and help where ever we are able to as we have been and maybe will be in that position again. In most cultures we see the respect of elderly as one of the fundamentals of the organization. A good display of understanding the importance of the elderly is the ancestor worship. In this case I consider the word worship a little too much and we should use the word respect more often as these ancestors are not worshiped like Gods or holy entities, they are honored for what they left behind. At some special days in the year masses of people move to the graveyards to clean and honor the ancestors. In this ritual we find that respect is not something that stops at the moment of passing away. In contrary to the Western world a death person still remains a part of the family in most cultures. They are a part by being at the family alter, the cleaning of the graves, family stories and pictures.

In Martial Arts we consider respect as the fundament of practice. We respect the ancestors for their work and development of the sport and philosophy of which we benefit right now. All you learn is developed by their devotion, experience and trials. You are using their knowledge and all they invented. Every kick, punch, clinch or other movement has been developed by someone from that past who probably did suffer a great deal before it was perfected. We cannot address a specific person for all this as they were with many. The unknown masters who sacrificed their life in developing what you are using now, consider the fact that you could become a famous person just by using what they did develop, that is an honor and deserves your respect in every way.

Respect in current society is a far cry from reality. Most people ask how did we come to this. The answer is so easy to give; everything we learn, we eat, drink, consume, watch or read is taken from granted. Nobody is teaching you to understand that people did work hard for what you use, to be thankful to the ancestors who made this all come true. You have a future thanks to what they did in the past. People can cry to remember the victims of war but they hardly ever stand still with the people who are at the foundation of prosperity. How many inventors, writers, scientist and others are honored for their works ? The foundation of respect is gratitude, thankfulness and understanding. When we are not though one of these extremely important values in life we will never understand why we should respect another person.

How many people do you know are thankful to others? Our young generations expect electronics to be easy to use and life should be the same easy to understand. Most do not want the struggle for life to be so difficult. Every day lesser people are able to feel gratitude for what others do. Being thankful has become a weakness and

not a strength. Independency is the sound of glory but in most cases this ends in being single or alone. Slowly the feeling of thankfulness is disappearing from society, being glad for a gift, happy for an event all these feelings are fading away. Empathy is based on respect and without both we are facing a cold time.

In Martial Arts we are thought to be thankful for little things so we are able to have respect for everything. This is strongly depended on the teaching and the teacher. To learn something we do need a good teacher, we need fellow students to train with and have to understand that we all offer our time to come and train together for progress and entertainment. Some of the readers will think; but my partners come to train for themselves, they do not come for me. You are probably right but imagine to enter the school without any other student as they went to other gyms. Always keep in mind they may not need you but you surely need them. It is a good reason to be thankful to your fellow students just only for the fact that they share your gym and assist you in your training, without them it will be a lonely road with little progress.

Gratitude is decreasing in daily life as we do take most for granted. We pretend all we meet and face is normal, it is just something out of the ordinary. You get your daily meals and never ask who took care of them, who did work to collect the products for your meals, who produced most of it. You expect the train to be in time and if not you complain. If we look in all honesty into current society we discover that we are living in the “century of complaint”. We only look for the things that are going wrong, are you also such person that can point out all what is negative today?

In Martial arts 90+% of your training goes wrong in the beginning. You learn step by step from mistakes and failures. Techniques are often hard to learn, you learn by mistake. During lessons we consider mistakes as an important part of the process and that is why they are not negative. Due to the mistakes you learn what and when to do something and how to do it. You learn to use the body in the right way, a mistake is a learning moment. But are you thankful for your mistakes? I bet you are not, you get irritated and annoyed and seek to do it better. The learning process is only discovered long after you made the mistakes. To competitors I always say that they learn more of losing than a winning. Winning is easy losing a burden to body and soul.

In the Netherlands we have gyms everywhere, it is a common good. To become member you walk into the gym, pay for the training and participate. It is an easy process as long as you pay your monthly fee all seems to be arranged. Why should you be thankful for something you pay for?

Most people who enter a gym think that a teacher is there for the money, he must be making lots of money otherwise why should he be there? But the opposite is true. Over 99% of trainers and teachers never make a penny of their sport. They just love what they do, it is their passion. Everything that concerns money is a side issue. It is the passion for the sport that moves trainers and teachers to do what they do, they want to share their knowledge with strangers in the hope to pass their passion to others and share. They wish to share their knowledge and life with you, make you aware of what they love in the sport and why they do so. They are willing to spend their free time and often money to serve that goal. This is a very respectful attitude and should be honored.

In over 40 years of worldwide experience I have to say that nearly all teachers and trainers have to bring money with them to teach others, only very few made some money but no one got rich. Trainers and teachers spend money on competitions, equipment, food and other things to create a good training environment. Most have no knowledge of commerce, advertisement or ways to make money in sport. Promoters of events seldom generate more money than to cover the costs. Thanks to sponsors and gifts they make it worth doing the efforts.

But why should anybody do it? If it is not the money, fame or other reason why should you put your whole life in the sport. Passion is the main reason why all those people wish to spend their life in a gym, they receive so much mental feedback that they are willing to put in more and more, it is the passion that makes the champions. Next to passion are some other reasons like the continuation of a generation, a tradition or out of respect for a teacher.

Many people have a negative image of society, I was often wondering what the reason could be. One of the main reasons is the increasing knowledge of the personal rights of the people. It seems that every person in society is well aware of their own rights and how to stand up for them. Claiming your right is something common now and people will cross borders to get it. But rights come after duties, this is something people tend to forget. You only can claim your right after duties have been fulfilled. A law that gives people the right too something does not cancel other laws that informs about the duties. To stay with our sports you could understand that you only earn the right to participate in competition if you show up to your duties of training. If you do not train a teacher /

trainer will not allow you to go into competition. No training / no match. Duty before right. Fighters respect each other the moment they know how much effort they put into training. You only can earn the right on respect when you are able to put the efforts in the right training.

Respect is based on emotions. To be recognized and earn the respect of a person is only possible if you touch their interest and get attention. When a person feels attracted to who you are or what you do they are willing and able to show respect for you. There are many people who deserve respect but never get it. When people have a difference in opinion or interest it is very hard for most of the people to consider having respect for that person or his achievements. In my vision we should respect every person on earth until proven they do not deserve it. Respect in its very basic is to accept a person for who he or she is, without a personal opinion or assumption nor expectation. If a person morally breaks your personal values, does things which are against human behavior codes or is intentionally harming others they do not deserve our respect and we should make that clear or oppose them.

When we are young the next two questions will pop up the mind and for most people they will never leave again as the answers are so hard to get;

- how do we earn respect?
- how do we keep respect?

In the past people got respect by position. When a person had a certain position they did get the respect of others by nature, they did not have to take any action to earn or deserve it. But times have changed. Currently every person who want to get respect needs to earn it. The first step in earning is taking actions which are visible for others. People will judge your actions. An action is anything which displays your capacity to be useful for society no matter you are a scientist, sportsman or social worker. People in any walk of life who take action will get some kind of respect of others. It is impossible to get the respect of everybody. There is one important saying I would like you to keep in mind the rest of your life; “ An everybody’s friend is a nobodies friend” , meaning that if you try to please everybody you will end up pleasing nobody.

To get respect you have to conduct a performance, have a special achievement, be impressive, get a certain position or be a hero. With other words to earn respect you have to take action, there are no free ways to it anymore. To get long term respect you have to repeat your actions more than once. People who have a onetime only action – like a hero – are very rare and do get a special kind of respect. They are rewarded for their actions and because of the rewards they get the respect they deserve.

If you want to earn respect in sport you should perform well and people will pay attention to you. To get this attention you should take part in competition or be at the front rows of leadership. Top sport people are honored because of their performances and managers for their governance. Both in different ways and for different reasons. If you want respect for the long time your performance has to be unique of nature . In management the decision must be lasting, innovative or must have had a great impact. But competition is never far and even the greatest performance can be outdated. Never count that respect will last forever unless your work does.

But in above I refer to the respect of the masses but most people do not desire this at all, they are happy with a respect of some people. To them this is a greater reward than to be in the spotlights of fame. You have to ask yourself in all honesty who’s respect you want to have; your friends? Your lover? Family? Or others? But from whoever you wish to earn respect you have to take action to receive it.

In Buddhism the rule of Karma is applied to all we do. Karma is – simply said – a balance of your actions. Every action needs a re-action. In this balance we have good and bad deeds. According to the law of Karma the balance always must be shifted to the positive. If a person takes many negatives deeds he/she will be rewarded with bad luck and disaster, they will be confronted with a lot of negative events in their life. The philosophy is clear that when you do good you will get good in return. Most people only get respect by positive actions.

But there are exceptions to this positive image and respect story. I know a few persons whose actions were mainly negative and did terrorize the lives of millions, created wars and caused many people to suffer. But they are famous and still respected by some, they have even followers. The history of Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Mussolini, Sada, more recently Osama Bin Laden and so many other names are on display in every history book. These people have committed crimes against humanity but still are honored by many.

To keep public respect depends on the deed itself and the amount of people who paid respect and honor to the action and person. The actions need a certain level of being unique, a change in history of thinking, a

development that is very useful, or performance that is not rivalled for many years. To get and keep respect has become increasingly difficult in a time where people are flooded with information. Due to the extreme increase in information people have to select more and the tendency is toward “easy to grasp” information. It is a fact that the more information is available the more people will be selective and many important events or performances will not get the attention they actually deserve.

On a smaller scale you are able to deserve respect to serve others by teaching, coaching, physical caring or other ways of servicing. In a gym you are able to show how hard you work and your performance can stimulate others in their actions.

## Motivation

The word itself has a magical energy for most people. Everybody knows the word and seeks for the meaning. For anything we do we need the right motivation. Without motivation there is no action. Motivation follows immediately after intention.

What is motivation and how can we optimize it? Many books are written to answer these questions, mainly from a commercial point of view. In Martial Arts we have to look at them from another way. During my research I got many examples of how to motivate students during competitions and I would like to share some with you;

- Negative motivation methods; hit the face of the fighter to make him angry (very rarely used with female fighters), talk or even shout at him, cite quotes of the opponent or things he said before about the fighter, refer to a diseased person with whom the fighter had a close relation with and many other ways. Most of the time this methods are used with people who are less secure of themselves.
- Positive stimulation; you tell the person how great he is, how wonderful or strong, how hard he did work to get here and he could be the best even better than anybody before, he is the champion and so on. This method works on people with a large Ego.
- Passive stimulation; some fighters need a sleep, some meditation, a quiet place to cool down their mind. After this time of silence they have an empty mind and able for maximum focus. This is a select group of people who only comes alive on stage or in the ring when confronted with the opponent.

I only mentioned few methods as reference, in seminar I work on many others.

With the description of the methods it is not clear what motivation really is. Real motivation is a strong focus to reach a certain target. A person is strongly motivated when he/she has a clear target and a strong urge to do anything in its capacities to reach it. Motivation is the right concentration and focus to canalize all emotional, psychological and physical energy toward a single goal. Without the right motivation it is not possible to reach a specific goal.

After you grasp the what and how of motivation it is time to work on yours and maximize where we can. It seems easier than it really is so be prepared for a tough ride, knowledge of the origin is not the solution to a motivational problem. We start to distinguish two ways of motivation first;

- Self-motivation (First hand motivation). The most difficult part which starts from very young. We can call it determination, you need to be able to stimulate yourself all the time.
- Motivation by others (Secondhand motivation). Most people are motivated by the actions or through the actions of others. Samples of these motivating activities are; a record of a person in your sport, the adoration of a person, family and friends, examples from historical events, disasters and other events and scientific experiments. The list goes on and on. But the most important are mentioned here.

The secondhand motivation is important to most people to set a performance. Appreciation from the motivators for what they did and the performance is important for a mutual binding. But to reach the top of the world you need more than secondhand motivation, to reach the goal in life self-motivation is the only key to success. Your own efforts are the core of an achievement. A real top-sport person never strives to meet the goal by the stimulation of others, in the heart and soul of this person the final goal is burning and the desire to win is strong. In the part of Ego we become acquainted with the real drive of any top performer, it is the egocentric emotion to be the best, to be the winner and defeat all opponents. Most top performers will not even think of opponents, only watch them carefully. The same attitude is needed in society while working in a commercial profession. You are not able to reach the top by the appreciation of others, this is only possible in politics. A top achievement is only possible when a person will go for over a hundred percent for the goal, believe in him(her)self and is not willing to safe him(her)self in anyway. Each performer will keep a certain form of insecurity in mind which enables them to go to the deepest part of their soul and body in the last moments of the game. A real successful person is never sure of him(her) self until the goal is reached.

To improve self-motivation you should start with a goal. You have to reach the goal no matter what will happen, your desire to reach it must be the highest of feelings you ever had, everything must be put aside for it. When the feeling is focused we move to the next phase, a realistic planning. You never reach a goal by taking big steps. It is like walking the stairs, when you take step by step the chance of falling is small, the bigger the steps the higher the chance. From that moment on you eat, drink, breath, smell, taste the goal, thinking of other things is no longer allowed. The path to reach the top is lonely, never easy and to most not worth the effort. Most of the readers are not interested to reach the top of the world but settle for less and willing to put all efforts in these goals. Keep in mind on the top of a pyramid is little space and most will fall down. Life is so much easier if you dare to settle for less.

To improve self-motivation it is a matter of mentality and planning. You should consider a goal that is possible to reach in weeks instead of months or years. Observe others and learn how they did reach that certain target or something related to what you want. When you review their results you can draw conclusions and get some motivation. As you see self-motivation can become a mix of internal and external drive. When you reach your target you need to take some time off to enjoy the result, be proud of yourself for a moment.

Some exercises in motivation are;

1/ Wake up 5 days on a row at a certain early time. No matter what happens you get out of bed and start the day. You force yourself to take a breakfast and do some morning exercises. Use 20-30 minutes only, do not take longer in the beginning.

2/ when you are ready at your work, close the door. Leaving the job means leaving the problems of the day behind. Close the door carefully and do the same in your mind. Do not look back on the day, it is the past.

3/ when the morning starts a new day is there with new energy, you set yourself specific goal that must be finished during the day. Be clear in what must be finished and fix it even when disturbed by others. Focus your mind to get the task done in time and if possible in lesser time than planned.

4/ set yourself realistic training targets and check, or even better ask someone else to check, if and how the target is reached

Motivation is personal and these are only a few general exercises. Normally every program is personally designed to have maximum impact on the person. You want results, this is only possible if the training suits you.



## Ego

What is Ego? Ego is the a melting of characteristics, experience, knowledge, environment, thoughts of every kind and some other factors which are directly connected to the mental state of development from an individual. The real Ego is the representative of that individual during its life, the extrovert expression factor.

The Ego is not a product from development during life but occurs at the moment of conception. During pregnancy the individual grows a conscious where the source of the Ego is based. It is interesting to know that the Western world is still discussing when “life” starts in a human being. Most of these discussions are connected with the religious believes that a God will give every human a soul at a certain time. Only after the soul gets in the embryo it is considered alive. It is a discussion not based on facts but on ideology and not a shred of evidence to support it. Live starts at the moment of conception.

When the sperm enters the egg cell it starts the process of multiplication in a breathtaking speed. Multiplication is the first sign of life, life starts at the moment of conception. Life does not come instantly it is transferred from two beings into one being. Two persons have given their DNA to be connected into one to continue their existence. Life and conscious are two different entities. Real consciousness occurs only after awareness starts. Awareness starts from the moment we are able to receive information and impressions, with other words our conscious can only be developed when receiving information. With the development of our senses we develop a growing awareness of our conscious.

Our conscious is the foundation of Ego development. From all we discovered we found that we are connected with the Universal powers. From all we know it can be set that Ego and Conscious are both from the same source but during life they develop in a different way and have a different expression. Our conscious has a minute to minute existence and is clearly available at all time, without it we cannot function. The ego is hidden behind the conscious and to most people not visible but it is the driver on the backseat. To make it even more clear I always state that the Ego is the driver and the Conscious the vehicle itself.

To be a driver is a responsibility as we are able to take any direction we wish to go, our vehicle will follow our orders within its limitations of conscious being. If we take the speed to high the vehicle gets damaged, we are able to polish the scratches, repair the damage but it is impossible to control the aging process. Every vehicle is judged by its cover, people will give it a value but are not able to see the damage inside. Even the greatest expert mechanic is unable to estimate damage in any vehicle exactly, we only can make a guess. The best repairman is unable, even with a profound detailed control, to tell how long a car can last. It is a known fact that it is not the sum of all parts that makes the machine run but the cooperation of these parts will make the thing move. To explain Ego we need more than what is mentioned here.

The Ego has a reflection of expectations in life, every person has dreams and wishes he/she wish to fulfil during life. All this expectations and wishes are the foundation of our experiences and studies. Most people have moderate demands in life, a good job, family with children, a house and a car and everything to make their life comfortable. Some seek wealth, fame or other ways of life. Every expectation reflects in our days routines. In a next chapter I write about Maya = illusion. Part of our ego is based on Maya and that is why we cannot fully control our own ego all the time.

During our everyday life we need our Ego to show the world of who we are, it is a leader of our image and representation. But as part of our Ego is based on illusion we grow problems over the years as it becomes harder to be in connection with our true self. When the years go by our ego gets more buried under the created illusions of life.

Example; you own a small garage box and you park your car (= your ego) inside. It is a car you only use once in a while as it is beautiful and will be stolen if you drive around and park it on roadside, so you are careful with it. After the car is parked there you start to move stuff to be stored in the box. This moving of stuff continues for a period of time. Not only you bring things in there but also your children and family, slowly the space is getting fuller and fuller. Upon one day you need the car and opens the front door. A lot of stuff falls down on the floor and out of the garage, everything becomes messy while you search for a way to take the car out. You do not want to damage the car so you pay a lot of attention to move all the stuff from one place to the other to open a way for the car to get out, but there is too much stuff and you need to spend a long time on the details (illusions) and as the time keeps moving you are losing track of the main topic ( the car = your ego). After a while it becomes impossible to take the car out of the garage without throwing away a lot of products. But are you willing to go that far?

Not only our own expectations play an important role in our life. These of our family and friends, the environment and society do place a heavy load on our shoulders. But the real effects come from the most unexpected group called your “enemies”. This “group” consist of bullies, horrible college, political opponents, competitors which all have a lasting effect on your life. Most of the time these negative people have a bigger influence on our lives than the positive and we still let it happen without strong resistance.

Like the mentioned car the ego slowly get polluted with dirt as experience leaves lots of scratches and dents and sometimes even holes behind. When the lacquer of the car is damages and sensitive parts break is becomes aware that to repair the car is hardly possible. After a while it becomes impossible to repair but we have to replace parts and the original will never return.

Just before birth we consider the Ego to be in balance. This all changes at the moment of birth. An enormous amount of positive and negative energy comes down on the little person in the moments of birth, these impressions have a strong influence on the conscious and subconscious. To some people the effect will last all life but most never remember it. One of the most important factors which makes a deep impression is the welcome a child receives upon birth. Is it welcome and greeted with joy and happiness or are there sorrow and pain, fear or other negative emotions around?

Often we talk about balance but there is no such thing as balance as scale of balance with weights. In fact we refer to a connection between different energy levels of which we prefer to use the positive level. But we also need the negative level to counter the positive and make our life functional in every way. To explain this I better give some examples;

Negative energy- most people are led in life by fear, anger, frustration, revenge, desire, power, eager, lust, mistrust and other emotions which can start from small but easily grow to extreme levels. Many people can be successful due to these emotions even they have to give in to the positive sides of life. Some people go to the extreme to be in power. Nearly all who followed the road of the negative emotion get to a turning point in life were they realize how much damage they have done and want to go for a change. Most really start to try to change their lives but are not successful due to the net they have got themselves into. To untangle their life from the negative spiral takes a huge effort and energy. But it cannot be denied that the people with this negative controlled energy levels also reach their targets which in itself can be a positive thing also. When we look at history we see that many real negative events also left positive trails behind. During my lessons I come with remarkable effects of disasters, wars and other events that have led negative energy into a positive field.

Positive energy- People who are motivated by positive energy are working for the good causes such as their environment, the welfare of the group or the change in position for a person or group. Positive energy is used for the benefit of others without losing yourself in the moment. Positive energy is not a complete denial of yourself or existence! In Top-Sport the performance of an athlete motivates many others and its records or other wins will give something others consider as a positive energy into society. In general we can state that positive energy is more directed into the benefit of the society, group or environment than to a person only. People who chose for this way have lesser chance to get rich or be powerful but generally live a happier and more peaceful life.

Our ego makes choices which energy level we choose at what time. Our life is completely influenced by these choices. The mentioned energy levels are different from what we know as good and bad. Power can be reached and used in a positive and in a negative way and the road toward it also can be taken from different directions.

To get some understanding of the strength of your own ego I have developed some exercise methods to test the strength of resistance or acceptance. We use open hand techniques to test this. Two persons are taking an opposing position with palms placed against each other. One person steps toward the other, first slow, than fast. Do you feel frightened? The other person also approaches and the distance becomes shorter. The level of personal interference is rising and the comfort zones are entered. The next exercise, following the first, is to stretch one arm and bend the other in opposing order. Your faces will come very close, what do you feel? The best way to do this exercises is with strangers and not people we know. In case of heterosexual people we prefer to do this exercise with same gender persons and with homosexuals with opposing genders. The idea is that you are not allowed to get into a comfort zone feeling.

## Maya

Maya means illusion. I have chosen to use this simple Indian word over the English version as Maya has been used for thousands of years by many experts of the mind.

Everything we perceive is based on depended observation. Our senses are the source of information we receive every day. During our life we build a personal database of combinations were we connect information with emotions, events, actions- reaction and so on. Everything is placed within a cadre we understand and accept. If we do not take this action we would be busy all the time with the question; is this really true what I meet now?

Our senses give uncensored visions to our brain, there we add more information to become aware of what our senses have registered. After this we are able to react on what we became aware of. But each perceived piece of information is temporary and based on the moment, everything is in constant change. (Krisnamurti mentioned that the only universal constant is change). Knowing this we must realize that nothing is hundred percent certain and everything temporary. If we understand this we may avoid that we start to believe in an illusion.

Every action in our live is based on time but time is a very relative truth. Our personal clock ticks 25 hours, that is considered our biological clock. Our day is 24 hours. Our sun, star system, galaxy and universe all have different levels and use of time. It is impossible to combine our personal timeframe with this of these almighty powers around us. We must consider time frames to be smaller with the size of the organism. When we look at microorganism, time is divided in seconds if refers to our time. It is still a guess but I think that the smaller the organism the different their experience of time in relation to our time. There is no end to time variations. Time is an invention and very relative but we have to work with it to make our live organized. We need time! But now you understand when time itself is an illusion our registration of what we consider truth is never fully right.

Maya refers to the illusion of our daily observations and experiences. Everything we do has a direct effect on our life, balance and personality. If this is a true fact it is important we realize how we build a future on an illusion that is called our life? Nobody wants to live in an illusion as it feels very insecure, so how can we control it?

To understand our position we have to look into the animal world. Each animal is born as part of the food chain, there seems to be no higher purpose for their living. It seems to be born to continue the race and be a source of food for others to continue their race. A circle of life that continues since earth existed. We do not expect consciousness from animals. But is this true? An animal knows affection, hierarchy and rankings, know to spot danger and act on it, has emotions of several kind and many more features we humans also have, this gives us food for thought. When we look closer we ascertain that animals react by instinct and not after careful consideration, it does not look back in past memories to recall events. Animals learn to repeat over and over until it becomes a part of their routine or instinct. They copy the behavior of superiors in their group and never from the lower levels. An animal sets no targets in life than multiplication and survival till they are killed or die of old age.

A big difference between human and animals is the fact that we are born helpless. After birth it takes years before we are able to be independed while any animal must become independed in weeks or months after birth. We are depended on good care otherwise we die. During life we continue to develop some form of dependency on others and continue to do so until we die.

Our human race is poorly build without any form of physical protection against attack. Our flesh and blood offers no defense what so ever. That is why we learn fighting arts and produce weapons to defend ourselves and become stronger. The majority of our human tribe disapprove with any form of violence and refuse the use of weapons or ways to protect themselves seriously. Most are weak and unprotected and if in danger they are hopelessly lost in fear. They have the illusion that they are living in a save world protected by others and when confronted with violence they are shocked and traumatized.

Our sleep is an important part of the Maya system. During our sleep we organize the events of the day in a structural order unique to mankind and each person. During the organization weak points are spotted and sometimes reflected in dreams. Our brain also prepares protection structures for the days to come and it does a small brain reset to wipe out useless memories, brings others to the long term storages and cleans the ready to use parts. But more and more people cannot catch enough sleep and miss this important cleaning part. When sleep is often a problem the brain becomes overloaded and dirty which results in more problems than only a sleep disorder.

Maya in fighting arts is a helper and a danger. When we practice Kata or shadow exercises we do need the illusion of an opponent and make use of it for our own benefit. We create opponents who never be there and test our reflexes on never existing objects. Each move is carefully designed to mimic a situation of the past but does not come close to real situations, the theory is made to improve many skills. It is important to use the illusion of Maya in a kata to perform well.

On the other hand it is possible Maya becomes a danger. When you consider the mastery of Martial Arts of such level than you become invincible and you have an unconditional chance on winning. When you are the best in the gym and fast as lighting, maybe even the champion of champions in your sport it does not mean you are good in a street fight. Reality is often completely different from the gym performances. In real battle there is no referee or judge. Your character and personality are more important than your fighting skills. Fear is deadly on the street and humiliation is always nearby.

When you realize that Maya is an illusion you are able to use it in full and in corporate it in your training, it is very useful in mirror battles, kata and other ways of practice. Visualization is the use of Maya in practice. It is important for every trainer to show their students what is Maya and what is reality in all honesty without a commercial vision behind. Dealing with Martial Arts is dealing with life and death and illusion maybe useful in training but it must be clear so students can distinguish the difference.

## Hate

Hate is one of the strongest emotions of mankind. History shows proves of many people who became very powerful and lead nations into battle, wins and defeats just because of the hate of a person or a group. Dictators are often led by this strong emotion. To most people hate is a negative emotion that is senseless and we must be freed of it. But is this true?

Hate is not only a mental emotion it has direct physical consequences. Our bodies respond to hate as much as it does to love. Our chemical structure changes the moment we are touched by it. Some people get sick of hate and other show a boundless aggression. Hate is felt by people in your surroundings, it reflects in your personality, it drives people away but also attracts others. People who are driven by hate will attract others who have the same and they bundle powers of this emotion for a short period of time. When we search history we find that more people are bounded by hate than by love.

But is hate a useful emotion for us? Can we use it to become mentally and physically stronger and to reach our goals in life? When we think this way we have to realize that it is possible to control positive energy emotions but it is hard or even impossible to completely control the negative. This makes the use of negative energy insecure for our purposes. You can consider them volcano's, they burst out when they feel like it and we have no control over them. The powers of hate are uncontrollable we consider its energy as purely negative. Hate has no borders. Love has clear borders. We know what is considered good and not good in love. We know the different levels of love by nature. Both emotions can grow. A person in love grows a better personality, a person who grows hate shriveled the personality until insanity sets in. Hate clouds the brain while love sets to expression.

To most people hate and revenge are alike but that is absolutely not the case. It is possible to take revenge without any form of hate. Revenge is retaliation for former actions. A person who takes revenge from a feeling that unjust has happened to him or the people he/she represents and does not need to hate the target of revenge. It is even possible that a person who takes revenge loves the "victim" of his/her revenge very much. Revenge must be separated in levels of the different emotional involvements.

Can we give hate a place in our training of Martial Arts? A question that is often asked. I think that hate is a good engine to start with Martial Arts and will give the person a lot of drive to learn but at a certain level that person will be confronted with something very contradictive. Hate and true fighting spirit cannot be united. A true fighter can never be driven by negative emotions as hate. During training and workout passion is needed to perform the heavy training sessions. Passion is conflicting with hate as it is the opposite in the emotional spectrum. Training cuts down the sharp edges of hate and slowly cuts all of it out. Hate may change into a feeling to take revenge but for a reason and not as for the emotion. But when it takes a long time even revenge is an emotion that will lose its powers.

Training in real Martial Arts is physical and mentally a challenge. Your fitness depends on your effort, your awareness on the mental availability, your endurance on your character and speed is attitude. During training all pass by in a never ending mix, like a fast river. Hate blinds a person and it makes impossible to grow in a fight as you want a result to fast. During fighting you need to have objective information about what is going on inside you and the opponent(s), emotional outbursts are dangerous because of the loss of control over the situation. For people who never had a real fight before something incredible interesting occurs during a fight. When the fight is fears and two opponents battle with everything they have combatting on the same level in a near life to death situation, beating each other so hard the environment is shivering in fear. These fighters become respectful toward each other more and more during the battle for the best. They start to appreciate the force of the other. The longer such battle takes the higher the appreciation and respect. This is a very strange emotional and psychological experience which can hardly be understood by people who have never been in a real fight. There is a saying which I would like to share with you; Warriors never hate, they all die in honor. Meaning that whatever side your represent if you are a true warrior you will battle till you die for the honor and not the emotion.

Love and hate come from the same source and intensity in many ways. Often they can swift places. There is a constant interaction between them but it is possible to make a permanent switch from one extreme to the other leading to obsessive behavior. Someone who goes from love to hate will experience a real cold feeling in their body while a person moving from hate to love will experience a warm gentle feeling. In Chinese Traditional Medicine and Ayurveda we meet these opposing energy levels as for instance the symbols of Yin / yang.

It is important we experience the intensity of hate by ourselves. The negative energy of the emotion is able to expose a lot of our own motives in life and our real need to be loved and to love. If you never did hate a person or other thing intensely it is not easy to love deeply. But hate cannot be forced, it is impossible to hate spontaneously or on command, this again is the same like love. Both come unannounced, often without a clear reason or a cause. The intensity of the emotion is effected by factors beyond our control.

To reach a higher spiritual level in life you should explore love and hate to understand your true driver in this life. Which emotion does motivates you the most as there is a sliding scale of intensity between the two with so many different levels and variations like the colors of the rainbow.

## **Buddhism and Martial Arts.**

To understand the sources of Martial Arts better we need to know some fundamentals of Buddhism. This chapter has no intention nor the pretension to be complete, it is only written to give you an impression and awake your interest for the topic. If you are sincerely interested you can read my book Practical Buddhism or other sources for a more profound knowledge of the topic.

The fundament of Buddhism is the enlightenment of prince Siddhartha Gautama, who was a prince around 500 BC in what is now called Nepal. When Prince Siddhartha reached the age of 30 he felt that his life was not complete and the itching of his soul since childhood had become stronger and stronger. He felt like missing something but was not sure what it was. He was trained to rule the country, had a wife and children but found his freedom to move was limited by court rulings. One day he decided to leave the palace and broke the rules. During his trips outside the palace he met a holy man without any possessions who was happy with his life, an old man, a sick person and he saw a death body. As he never had seen any of this, it was a deep experience for him. He felt to complete his life he needed to search for the reasons of life and living and he left the palace. He knew his wife and children were well taken care of by his family

During some years he tried to find a way to reach enlightenment like all the other wise men from the country. To do this he reached for the extremes and tortured himself with different lifestyles but none of them brought him any more than suffering and pain. His soul got more burdened than releases. After trying many things he found that the only way to reach enlightenment must be the path of the middle, a way that did not concerned about the extremes but realized that they were existing. He reached enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. After this he decided to share his inside and started to preach his words. He got many disciples who remembered his words until ages later some people decided to write it all down. The first writings were on bamboo and palm leaves which were kept in baskets. There were three baskets.

The tree baskets (pitaka's) were called Tripitaka texts;

1 / the first basket was filled with the rules and regulations for Buddhist monks and nuns called the Vinaya

2/ the second basket was filled with the speeches and stories of Buddha it is called the Suttapitaka

3/ in this baskets all stories and philosophical comments of his students and followers are gathered and called the Adhidhamma

In 250 BC the Pali-canon (the Tripitaka) is closed and as far as we know since nothing is added, changed or taken away.

According to the Buddhist philosophy there are four honorable truths;

- 1- Life is suffering, such as no appreciation for what you do, separation, sickness and death
- 2- Desire is the main cause of suffering, such as the desire to be rich, friendship, eternal life
- 3- You can end suffering by overcome your desires
- 4- The eightfold path helps you to pass by suffering and eternal happiness

The eightfold path to a happy life are known as;

- 1- Right vision – know what is important
- 2- Right decision
- 3- Right speech – use the right language in the appropriate situation
- 4- Right deeds – take care of animals and people
- 5- Right way of life – have honest work
- 6- Right effort – work and do not be lazy
- 7- Right attention – focus on the good things
- 8- Right meditation – inner peace

In the Buddhist tradition we have the cycle of life called reincarnation. This theory means that after we die we are reborn into a next life. It is our duty to fulfil our spiritual journey of lives until we reach maturity and enlightenment which allows us to enter the state of Nirvana and the cycle of lives stops.

Another tradition is the building of Karma, which we can find back under other names in every religion in the world. Karma is the balance between good and bad deeds. When you do good you receive good, the more good you do the higher scale of positive Karma you collect. With Karma the rule action – re-action is one of the mean important features. When your action is positive the reaction is often also positive. Karma is not only build by the deed itself but the intention behind as some good meant deeds can take a wrong turn.

To move on the way of Karma Buddhist will choose for cremation more than burial. When you believe in reincarnation the current body is no longer needed. This is completely different from most religions who believe in resurrection of the death who bury the corpses. Most Asian religions believe that the soul must be freed after death and many rituals have been written down to do so. One great example is the Book of Death from the Mahayana oriented Tibetan Buddhist.

Most of our negative emotions, such as attachment, anger, pride, are caused by the misunderstanding of the truth and reality. As we stick to these emotions we desire to a complete survival of our identity, our spiritual self, this causes a rebirth. The shape of our rebirth is decided by the level of Karma we did build during our live, the effects of our actions.

In the Western world the words “suffering” and “desire” have a clear meaning. When we consider suffering we relate this to pain and disease, loss and fear. With desire we think of concrete matters as a house, a car, power or fortune. In Buddhism this topics are placed in a wider and more subtle explanation. Suffering or Dhukka refers to the fact that life is not perfect. To make it easy to understand we compare it with; walking with a little stone in your shoe all the time and whatever you do the stone will not leave your shoe. This leads to annoyance and you want to picture the things different than they really are (Maya, in Pali known as Tanha). You will imagine things and compare them with your current situation such as ; “if I had a better house / a bigger car /a better job / a different partner / more loving parents / easier children, my life would be perfect.

Within the eightfold path we differentiate 3 major groups;

- Prajna (also called Prana) shows wisdom and insight vision
- Sila – morality and good behavior
- Samadhi – meditation

This three are needed to show you the direction to enlightenment but are not the reason of it. You can compare this with training on the striking paths is needed but cannot be compared in any way with a real match.

To be freed of the eternal cycle of reincarnation is possible to get the insight of the reasons of cause and effect, how do we get attached to something or someone and how can we control the temptation of the mind and body. To reach this Buddha told all his followers to “never take anything for granted, you have to research yourself and understand by experience”. With this statement Buddhism became one of the few non-dogmatic philosophies.

Buddhism studies our existence and the imperfection in causal factors (in Pali; idapaccayata); action is always followed by reaction, if something disappears it is very likely something else will disappear also. In the Piticca-samupphada the causality of depended existence is written down to explain that everything becomes to existence due to certain events which did cause other events to happen. When new circumstances come to existence events and their results change which on its turn have a direct effect on what is happening or give a change in materialistic products. In this context I would like to refer to so called time traveling in science fiction movies. In these movies people are always very well aware of the effects of time travel and the possible change of history. When you change a little in time or history things will multiply and have lasting effects that cannot be controlled or manipulated.

With the chain of depended existence the twelve steps of the cycle of reincarnation, birth, living, dying, rebirth are described. According to this we can state that the main cause of our suffering (Dhukka) is ignorance. When we are ignorant we automatically misunderstand events and we desire is taking charge. When we feel desire, attachment is created, through attachment the source of reincarnation is created. It is considered that due to ignorance we continue to reincarnate until we perceive the enlightenment of knowledge.

Following all this we can state that everything, either materialistic or spiritual, has three characteristics;

- Everything is transience and submitted to change (Pali- anicca)
- Because of the nature of change, nothing stays the same, our wishes and demand never can be fulfilled which gives us pain (Pali- Dukkha)
- Everything is selflessness. There is nothing we can consider “this is me” as we are temporary like everything else is (Pali – anatta), there is no eternal soul.

Nama-rupa

In Buddhism the human Nama-Rupa is a combination of Mind – Dust. Our bodies are the combination of dust and mind which is able to act and observe. Our five senses are focused on Rupa while Nama has no physical



existing targets. Memories, fantasies and thoughts are the productions of our mind. When we study Nama-Rupa and its occurrence we break them down to five groups of experience;

1. Shape (materialistic and energy)
2. Perception
3. Feelings / emotions
4. Thoughts and intentions
5. Consciousness

Everything we experience is a part of a group only the unlimited Nirvana is not part of any of these groups. Everything that is a part of these groups is of temporary existence and start and end empty as nothing is of permanent nature.

In Buddhism we talk of six senses and not the five as known in the Western world. Beside the known senses, eyes, ears, nose, tongue and touch there is also, according to the Tripitaka, awareness of idea's as sixth sense. Because of the connection between our conscious and senses we experience observation of sound, smell, taste, touch and light. Our observations are positive, negative or neutral that is all decided in our conscious. Depending on the value of what we observe we create thoughts and visions.

When you read this chapter you become a bit aware of the complex way the Buddhist view live and existence. It is a realistic vision which cannot be denied nor ignored. When we study the vision well we experience the foundations of our materialistic and spiritual live. Buddhism is no religion and knows no Gods, its fundament is the human being itself and its own responsibility. It is a personal matter between yourself and your environment. The teachings are not only on a spiritual level but help to solve your daily matters and teaches you to take a path in life that suits you. Most people need assistance when walking the path of live. And you?

## The Bushido Code

Nitobe Inazo wrote the book; Bushido, the soul of Japan to advertise the code to the world and show the strength of Japanese philosophy. The book is based on the living code of the Samurai warriors.

The Samurai did become a legend for a reason. Originally the Samurai were common soldiers who did what was ordered by their superiors, they had no special treatment nor ranking. But at a certain moment in history the Samurai got rules and regulations which did distinguish them from other warriors, they started to wear special clothing and weaponry and became members of an elite group of people. The Samurai was sworn into the group and had to take an oath for life. From a simple warrior they became the protector of justice and state but their myth developed to protectors of the people. History shows many stories of Samurai whom battled for the honor and safety of the population.

When we study the Bushido code we find a profound and significant liking with the Buddhist regulations such as the 4 and 8 fold path. Due to the importance of Buddhism in Japanese history we could understand this. Enclosed I want to reveal the code and I hope you keep all these well in mind when continue in this book reading the other warrior codes.

1 – Righteousness and fairness (justice). A Samurai could judge over life and death in a second. Fast decisions had to be made in a very short period of time to wound or kill a person, this pressure needed a specific kind of judgment system from a warrior. To judge this way the Samurai had to value the lives of others as its own. Righteousness and fairness (justice) can be compared with the backbone of every human, it is needed to keep the body straight and to protect all nerves which run through it.

2 – Courage. There is a clear difference between bravery and courage. A brave person feels no fear and goes for the goal without considerations. A courageous person has first considerations if his actions are righteousness and fairness (justice) before taking the action. A courageous person does what is good and honorable.

3 – Benevolence (benignity) and mercifulness (compassion). The Samurai had the power to judge about life and death and had to do so right. To have this gift of judgment the person should understand why people do what they do and understand their reasons. When you are compassionate you are willing to stand in the shoes of others and able to judge a situation from their point of view. Mercifulness is found in all religions, philosophies as the force of a righteousness and just person with powers to rule.

4 – Politeness. Japanese social behavior is difficult to understand for outsiders. It is even harder to understand the difference between being humble, submissive, slave like or just politeness. To Japanese this difference is very clear. To a Westerner politeness must be motivated by the power to help or assist another person as of kindness and goodwill. The simple rule; treat others as you wish to be treated yourself makes this all clear. But to Japanese to follow the order of etiquette is the most important part of their social life.

5 – Honesty and sincerity. According to Nitobe the Samurai had to follow the virtues of the Buddhist monk. All earthly matters such as wealth and possessions were in the way of the gathering of spiritual wisdom and mental development. A Samurai was brought up with the ideology that money was bad and you should stay away from all these earthy matters as far as possible. To despise earthly matters was a token of a good upbringing. Talking about money was considered bad manners and ignorant, to live in luxury was seen as not manly as a real warrior must live a simple life close to nature without a need to care for possessions.

6 – Honor. There is no rational explanation for the word honor. Everything related to the word and feeling plays on a spiritual level. The code of honor is unwritten but for all participants clear. The honor of a warrior is found in the way he serves his “superiors” and reliability to his partners, family and friends. A true warrior can bare the unbearable, face danger with no fear of dying, and fights in combat to protect the honor of himself, the master and the country. The code of honor is from every time and nation and we meet it in all rankings of warriors and descend people, but it seems to be a typical male thing as women are hardly ever involved in it.

7 – Loyalty. Next to Honor is loyalty one of the most important fundamentals of a true warrior. The Samurai swore to give his life in honor to defend its “lord”. To be loyal means to give everything to serve a person (emperor, king, queen or else), company or society and even put your life in this balance. In ancient times this was expected from all who served in military rules. In the past there was no doubt that any warrior in the world would have done this without thinking otherwise. We should make a clear difference between loyalty and being

faithful. You are faithful until otherwise has proven that you are doing so to the wrong person. You can break faithfulness but you can never break loyalty.

8 – Character and control. The Bushido code demands a high degree of morality which equals loyalty in every way. The bearer of the code will act according to the principles of; what I consider good = good , what I consider bad = bad. The mentality of the warrior demands a fast and right judgment in reference to the situation. A warrior act according to that judgment and not consider the consequences that may arise from his actions. A Samurai educated his children according to the principle of character building, to control emotions in every situation. Most children did have a hard time growing up that way but it was important that a warrior kept a cool mind in the most bloody battle or dangerous situation and could judge or plan a strategy. A though growing up is a need for any warrior no matter the tribe or nature.

Loyalty, courage and sacrifice are the words that brings a clear vision of who a Samurai was. The nature of being a Samurai demanded a high standard of morality. Because of this even today most serious Martial Artist honor the Bushido code and try to live accordingly.

There is an important difference between the Bushido code and other warriors codes; seppuku or hara-kiri. The tradition to commit suicide is only found in Japan this way. Another difference is the myth that a Samurai was a Robin Hood like personality with the soul of a saint and the education of a Mandarin. This is far besides the truth. It is an historical fact that a Samurai was first a real warrior, a serviceman to his lord, a well-trained swordsman who was trained in battle and to kill, which time was spend with training, family, friends and his social duties. A Samurai did not have much time for study nor meditation or moral duties.

Without any disrespect for the current followers of the Bushido code I would like to mention that the origin of the code is in a time were people did not have fear for death as it was an integral part of life in general. The fear of death is a common thing in the Western world where religions always have treated the death as something to be really scare off. Death was not a part of life but a time for payback. It was (and still is) the moment you be judged by the Gods and were you be send to hell or heaven. In a Karma based society as Asia the judge is not some external power but yourself. Only you will be judged by your own deeds and return to the living or find a way to the Nirvana , which can be considered an equivalent of the Western heaven.

Death must be a part of live as much as training is a part of the warrior. The people who pass away are not only memories and a picture on the wall, they are a part of your live, people who had influence and made you for who you are. A body can die but the spirit lives on. We keep the death alive by our thoughts, our actions to thank them in live, be thankful and appreciate the past. It is important to cherish the ancestors as they are the source of who we are.

The Bushido code is considered the link between life and death which are united in the way of life of the warrior in training, thinking and behavior.

## The warrior code

The international code of the warrior is never clearly written down as the Bushido code is. Most of these codes are hidden in stories over heroes, a poem or literature from the past. The carriers of the code only transfer the content to new initiated warriors after severe tests have been passed. Each code has a demanding structure which forces the initiated to follow the rules and regulations even when not written down. Most of the codes are connected with the local religion and customs. The “secret” warrior code is only for the initiated and never imposed on others no matter who they are. Breaking the code will end in a certain death penalty in most cases.

Since the dawn of time the human beings have been involved in wars and conflicts, this is the nature of our being. Warriors were mainly male, history recorded few women who reached the ranks of true warriors.

A warrior is not an ordinary person. The true goal of the warrior is to protect and defend the social norms and values of the society who gave him that duty. To be the defender of “faith” they needed their own set of group rules and regulations that connects and divides them from others. The code is not written down but has the same features as these of the Samurai such as honor, integrity, righteousness, honesty, sincerity, loyalty, courage and most of all the wish to serve the community. The honor of the code sets the real warrior apart from a serial killer. The way of life of a warrior is completely integrated with the code and a non-negotiable part of its life.

A warrior is a person with a license to kill and it is NOT a sportsman. People from any walk of life or sport who call themselves a warrior without the proper authorization are fraud. It is important we state this so very clearly to honor those people who are willing and wanting to give their life for the sake of society no matter in which nation or cause. Being a warrior is an honor.

Why do warriors need a code of honor? Why should warriors be forced to initiate a code to rule their lives? To explain this I need to give some explanation which is not perfect or complete but surely will clear these questions.

- A warrior is confronted with all kind of violence, most of all with death and killing. He often will look death into the eyes and be in gruesome situations. In the past an enemy was de-humanized. A warrior was told that the enemies are not human, not the same as they are, they were lesser people or no people at all. It was important to create a distance between the deed and the situation to prevent mental damage to the warrior and leave psychological trauma of the events.
- A warrior needs to accept win and loss. When in war the battles are never a clear win or lose situation. Some battles are won and others lost. Winning and losing must be calculated as a part of life. Even when the enemy is de-humanized as much as possible there is always a chance they win. A true warrior always respects its enemies with this in mind. Respect is needed for a mental stability in case of loss.
- A warrior works in duty of the society. To perform this duty in the right way he has to be ready to kill, mutilate, injure or kill without great psychological damage to himself. It is very important that the warrior is able to make a firm difference between him and a serial killer by recognition of its position by society, to divide private life and work, and honoring of the society of his work and sometimes personality.
- A warrior lives according to the ethical code at all time. It can be stated that it is not the action that rules the ethical order of the code but the ethical order of the code that rules the action.

We have to make a clear distinction between the current time and the past. Warriors were a part of society, they were honored and only went to action on the call of the society they were protecting. They had an exceptional position as the people were depended on them.

The current warriors are specialized parts of armies, police or other forces such as Special Forces, Arrest squads, Marines, Commando’s and other specialized groups. They are no regular soldiers, they have deserved a special position which demanded extraordinary skills and did set them aside from the regular people and forces. We have to separate them from people with special assignments such as persons working for the secret services, these people are not considered warriors.

What can we learn from the warrior code? The most important part is that we should follow their code to be honorable, righteousness and fair to our sport, loyal to our trainers, masters and gym and most of all sincere to our goals. An active warrior has to go against the main rule of all religions and philosophies; they should not kill. This action delivers many mental problems to any person honoring the codes.

All warriors train in fighting (Martial Arts) for exercise, mental stability and as part of their practical skills. To fight in a fair descend situation is a mental assistant to them to counter balance the effects of real situations.

During training they are able to relax, reload in energy and re-organize body and mind. Martial Arts are a needed part of each warrior life.

When we study the different warrior codes and the Buddhist philosophy we encounter something remarkable. No matter the code of the country or the type of warrior the following rules do apply to all;

- 1- Right vision – know what is important = Righteousness and fairness (justice)
- 2- Right decision - Benevolence (benignity ) and mercifulness (compassion).
- 3- Right speech – use the right language in the appropriate situation
- 4- Right deeds – take care of animals and people
- 5- Right way of life – have honest work, believe that what you do is honest and righteousness
- 6- Right effort – work hard and with all passion you have
- 7- Right attention – be aware and clear in mind at all time
- 8- Right meditation – inner peace, find time to balance life and work

Media is giving us the wrong information on the warrior and their work. After reviewing some movies we get the impression that the warrior of today has become a machine, a technical art work but this is far besides reality. Every action needs a human mind to control, judge and decide. A machine is never able to judge a situation taking all kind of details in consideration. It is important to take an action and return to base with as less harm as possible and no casualties. But after an action the warrior needs it's time to rebalance life and to do so Martial Arts are often its way out.

## Initiation and name change of a student

Through the last few decennia gyms changed. In the past if a student wanted to train a Martial Arts he had to call on the gym and it often took a while before a person was accepted as student. To become a student was never easy. Time did change a lot since.

In current situation any person can take classes in Martial Arts by just walking into a gym and pay for a subscription. For a monthly fee, some gyms even accept class by class payments. Most students have even taken this a step further. They are no longer student instead, they have become a demanding customer, one who demands rights for specific classes and quality. They think to buy knowledge, ability and more with paying a monthly fee. When they are not able to learn what the teachers teaches it is the mistake of the teacher. This is an awkward situation for student and teacher. We should look at it a little closer.

Sample story; When a person wanted to find work in the past they had to apply for a job with a master in a certain range of business. You had to learn the trade. Everybody was supposed to start at the bottom. When the Master took you in you had to start with all kind of small jobs working yourself up to the moment he would let you start to learn the real profession. Often it took years of looking , training and trying to become a Master yourself. In general it took around 11 – 15 years before a person reached some kind of Master title in his trade. In some countries to become a Master you had to do an examination and was proposed by your own Master to a closed union for “registration” . Only after you was accepted as a Master by the union you supposed to open your own business. It was a long and hard way to become a Master and you had to work hard to earn the title.

When we look at our current time we see an opposing movement happening. We have a good system of education at least that is what most Governments think we have. On the other hand inside the education system more and more students become rebellions and fight the systems with disobedience, increasing real violence and resistance. Teachers are de-motivated by ridiculous rulings and are forced to pressure students to the limits. Due to this kind of situations more students / teacher relationships are considered oppressor / oppressed than a proper student / teacher one. This is an unhealthy and negative situation which we can find in nearly every developed country.

This unhealthy situation is copied to the sport education and delivers awkward situations in the Martial Arts classes. Most students come to Martial Arts classes in the expectation to learn and receive spiritual guidance. But most classes, due to time and financial pressures, are reduced to physical training only.

Students who wish to learn movements which are related to Martial Arts do consider these exercises for no other purposes as to get fit. They are not interested in the application of the real techniques, in fighting or let alone even in competitive activities. For this group fitness is the goal. This group is not interested in spiritual content and consider this more a bothering than an additional virtue.

But the serious Martial Artist is left alone in the dark here. They want to learn more than just a movement, work on their body to get control and wish to see a mental growth and not a muscle blow up. For this increasing group training in the gym has become an empty shell. They find teachers who are no longer interested in the real value of what has been thought through the ages. Quality versus quantity is a financial discussion here.

The spiritual education in Martial Arts is one of the most important parts and should get the attention it deserves. A teacher / student relation is one which is sacred and based on trust and a long term cooperation. The quality of the relationship strongly depends on the level of knowledge the teacher has to offer. Most teachers can be great in the physical level and make their students perform very well in competition but lack the knowledge to take a student to a spiritual higher level. To understand this we should look at the age related development of the Martial Artist.

- From 4- 8 years old we consider the child playful and they must enjoy training as a game, a natural part of their development. During this time the child is educated in physical control and understanding when to use what and what are the limitations of using it.
- From age 8 – 12 some develop a competitive feeling while others are interested in the knowledge and the exercises. This is a 20 / 80 %, where only 20% is willing to go in a competitive direction.
- From 12 – 18 we see a separated development of these two groups. The competitors are going on to reach goals, take part in competitions and work for higher rankings. For them the competitive aspect is most important in development of their mentality and personality. Trainers should bring them also the understanding of relativity of competition, their own physical possibilities, pay attention to mentality

development (and meditation to) learn to control mind and body more. It is important to teach them to find peace in themselves, create “oases” in their travel and competition schedules. Students in the non-competitive group need also goals such as perfection, mastery in some special weapons or skills, for them the mastery and the deeper knowledge of it should be brought to their attention.

- From 18 – 30 is a life change and carrier time to all, no matter involved in competition or the arts itself. Each individual needs to find a way to involve training of the art in their live while continue with building a carrier, family or otherwise.. This is the most challenging time for a teacher / student relationship. The binding between them must be strong as distance and opportunity can become radical different. Social media and communication tools can provide a solution here.
- After 30 most people finish competition orientation and a new period of development starts. The physical competition turns to a challenging mental development which must be planned and controlled. During this time the role of the teacher is one of guidance to individual mastery and training a student to become a teacher or assistant.
- After 40 / 50 new masters stand up and are in need of students to transfer their knowledge and develop new.

When we understand the cycle of development of every individual it is important to bring this into action. Students and teachers should create a long term binding knowing about the real cycle of life in Martial Arts.

To create a true binding between student and master we should look back in time and connect the same way. In the past a student took an oath of honor with his teacher and promised loyalty. The teacher on the other hand accepted the responsibility for the student to educate and develop as long as needed. It is important to know that when the student took its initiation the master also took the oath of being a good master to its student, a two way street.

What is a true initiation of the student? To explain this I recall from personal experience. It was a long time ago in Thailand (1977). I was training in a gym and the owner of the gym thought it was time for me to proof loyalty to the sport and gym. A day of initiation was set and I had to prepare well. To be prepared I collected Two yellow robes for the monks that would be present at the initiation, incense, soap and some other daily used products, a piece of cloth to wrap it all in, flowers, candles, bowl of rice and some other bowls which I had to fill later. All this had to be prepared on plateau’s to carry to the gym and placed so I could hand them over. I also had to prepare my cloth which were ancient style Muay Thai trunks, a shawl, a sword and some other articles. To do this I was assisted by an elderly man who pointed me to everything needed and did take me around for days before the ceremony.

The gym was changed overnight. A stage was prepared where the monks and teacher took seats. A few tables were placed in front of the seats and the place was decorated with flowers and holy items. It was in the early morning that the ceremony did start. Monks have to eat before eleven.

When I entered the gym the monks and teacher were seated. The two monks were at the side of the teacher, one on the left and the other on the right. After entering I did bow three times and took my first plateau with gifts for the monks. After another three bows I went back for the second plateau and the same ritual repeated. For the third time I went back to my place and got the plateau for the teacher. I did place the plateau in front of him on a small table and bowed again. This time I was supposed to sit and wait patiently. The monks did not touch the packages. My teacher greeted me with a wai ( I was sitting with in a wai position all the time) and asked me to come forward by only moving his hand. He handed me three incense sticks which were lighted by a helper and I had to place them in a prepared vase. After this I had to do the same ritual again to be placed in another vase. Together we sat down and “prayed” the “Om mani padme hum” and ended with a wai. This was about the first part of the initiation.

The second part started with name giving. Hardly any Thai could pronounce my name that time so they wanted me to have a name they could remember and pronounce well. Finally they decided to call me Ranava, which was derived from Ravana a mythical figure from the Ramayana. When I was watching the Ramayana plays in the temple yards I was quit and sat down for nearly seven hours which amazed them as normally they could not get me to sit down for an hour. To them it was even more amazing as in their eyes I could not understand a word of what was going on but I could tell them the whole story back after that evening. After the fighters name the name of the camp I joined placed the that time and my new name was used for fights after that. The reason why a new name is given is to symbolize that you start a new life and leave all old behind you.

After I got my new name I was handed a trouser with my name, amulets to wear around my neck and my arms during fights and finally I got a mongkong placed on my head. Receiving your own mongkong was a real honor that time, especially because the mongkong given to me was old and according to the teacher from one of his ancestors who was a great fighter.

The ceremony ended with a lecture of the monks to use the sport according to the principles of the eight fold path, to be loyal and honest to the gym and teacher, to appreciate the sport and carry it to the furthest corners of the world and understand the laws of karma well. I had to work hard, be faithful to the principles of the sport, be a good student, a fearless fighter and have no fear to die in battle as the glory is with the one who fights and dies with honor in the knowledge of doing so for a good cause.

When the ritual ended we sat around for a little longer, got lots of foods and drinks and another day started.



## **Meditation, active and passive**

Most people consider meditation a passive way to focus the mind, empty the thoughts and relax. But through the years I learn that not every person needs a passive meditation to reach a higher state of mind. Most people are not able to meditate in a passive way. To start a good meditation session we should find ourselves the right way that suits our abilities and physical condition. Meditation has some very clear goals and we should realize these goals step by step.

We are Martial Artist and we are performing active sports. Our way of concentration is to move and seek perfection in the movement. To reach perfection in movement it is important we find the right techniques that suits our bodies and often we need the right partner who has the same targets. To find that partner can take time and effort and to do so demands a clear set of steps and targets from your side. It is never easy to find a partner, let alone the right partner. With setting up a Martial Arts network I hope to provide this service in the future to all serious practitioners who seek a right partner for personal development.

One of the most important parts of all meditation exercises is breath control, no matter it is passive or active participation. During active exercises it is not easy to reach control over breathing as so many factors influence your movements and disturb control. It is possible to control the circumstances by using a boxing bag or the right paddy-man who understands your movements. The most important part of these form of active meditation is to get in a “flow” of movements where your breathing and movement are undividedly connected with each other.

Another way to get into a “flow” is the use of forms, which I call ‘kata’ in this book. When I refer to kata I do not actually focus on certain forms of Karate, TaeKwondo or other sports. These forms are not always acceptable or possible to perform for a person. The original kata from one of the oriental sports are very useful for a person who actually is busy in these sports but for an outsider they are hard to grasp. In my vision it is possible to design also a personal kata which will enable you to reach a higher spiritual level by applying specific techniques in breathing, focus, physical and mental control moments and visualization. During seminars I point the details of how to create your own kata for spiritual growth.

To achieve a maximum result in mental development we need to combine passive and active meditation exercises. People who only practice passive meditation end up with an unrealistic worldview. As I have mentioned before the world is made of struggle and we all fight the constant battle of life. We fight to get peace, to have moments of reflection and yes finally we wish all to live in peace. Martial Arts are the highest possible form of personal struggle to get to higher metaphysical levels of being. The though training, the rigorous self-discipline and the constant strive to be better than before, to reach perfection and never accept the limitations of body and mind and explore the borders as far as we can. Our connection with Buddhism and the use of our methods in every culture shows that Martial Arts has no borders and that our strive for perfection and spiritual knowledge passes all boundaries of cultures. We can state that Martial Arts in itself is a culture.

## **Passive meditation**

Most well-known and used forms of meditation are passive. To apply this methods to its best features it is needed to have a quiet place and seek a comfortable physical position in which you are able to focus on all what is going on in your mind. Meditation is like taking the stairs, you have to take step by step and slowly move forward. The first phase is concentration and from there you continue by controlling the breathing and feel the bloodcirculation. Both are very important for the continuity of your physical shape and mental performance.

In contrary what people think of meditation, it is not a mind blowing matter. To reach concentration and focus you have to narrow the mind as much as possible. Good meditation targets to empty the mind completely. To explain this more clear is to image your thoughts being pushed in a pipe which becomes more and more narrow, finally the space is so narrow that no thoughts are able to pass anymore. The moment you are successful to pass that phase you experience a clear bright light and no pipe around you anymore, you have reached the final destination. A form of enlightenment is your part.

But to reach enlightenment you need a lot of exercise and guidance. It is an idfix that you are able to reach a high level of meditation without proper guidance of people who are superior than you on a spiritual level. During our meditations we are confronted with many form of experience which are confrontational emotional and not possible to solve alone. Only very few self-thought or autistic personalities are able to develop some form of enlightenment. To be successful in meditation you need a certain personality features which are important to climb the ladder of self-consciousness and ban out the existing reality.

More people practice passive meditation than active and with good reason. The first and major reason is the fact that during the passive form you do not need anybody, but that is an illusion. Most people use music, smell, taste or other assistance to create an environment to meditate in. When we study this use of additional items to be useful to real meditation it must be said that they are a disturbance more than a help. What happens to people using these assistance is a temporary self-hypnosis. The combination of assistant products and your own development and opening of the mind lead to hypnosis and not meditation. It is very difficult to distinguish these two and that is why guidance is needed.

Meditation knows many different steps which all must be followed in an indisputable order of which we do not have any control. Each step (phase) of the path to enlightenment is experienced in a personal way but it is unambiguously that active and passive meditation are connected. All Buddha used exercises to stimulate the body to be able to use the mind to reach the final goal. Without activity it is impossible to reach higher spiritual levels. Passive needs active and vice versa.

### **Active passivity**

Repeating a movement to eternity, this is an impression of Martial Arts that many people have of Asian practitioners. To most this repetition leads to perfection, but that is not the true story. Perfection is not reached by repetition only. One of the major parts of repetition is to program the body until any movement is automatic and the fighter never have to think what to do next but use a technique without thinking. Program the body by empty the mind and fill the muscle and nerves with movement and energy.

Repetition of movement is a form of concentration that leads through focus into active meditation. A continuation of movement produces a new chemical process in the body leading to a controlling mind stimulating the body. Slowly all thoughts be banned from the action. This is a state of mind that is hard to reach for Westerners (non-Asian people). To reach this state of mind we need to pass several stages such as;

1. A number of movements must be selected which will not harm joints or muscle structures even with high numbers of repetitions, this selection can only be made by expert masters who are not only into Martial Arts but also have a profound medical knowledge
2. Each movement must be perfected to the personal physical capacities
3. During training the participant will encounter severe muscle sourness, different levels of pain, periods of discomfort and other experience which need to be communicated with teachers who can talk of their own experience
4. Each movement is a combination of right breathing, the right way of standing and walking, balance and position, environment and external disturbances. I do not advise to use any kind of music during this form of training
5. At the start, during the form at specific moments and at the end there are moments of complete standstill. During this moments we control standing, breathing and focus on what movements come next.
6. The idea is that we are able to continue unlimited but it is important to create limits. It is important that these limits are imposed on you by the teacher.
7. After the form Kata is finished it is important to take time for a passive meditation. During this meditation the form is re-lived again and every step and movement controlled by the mind. This mind game is important to maximize the neural system as it is a fact that when all the exercises are done during the meditation a neural stimulation of the muscles do happen.

Some sport make also practical use of this method such as archery, biathlon, shooting sports, fencing and others. All these sports have a connection with Martial Arts and have the same roots.

Important tips to follow when implicating exercises;

- Exercise in clean fresh air without extreme odors
- Beware of a smooth surface as for walking and other movements
- Choose space enough so you are not bothered by anybody or run into an object
- Start to work out with your eyes open and when advancing try to do the same with closed eyes and a focused mind, vision always brings some disturbance
- If possible have someone around to take care of the environment
- Start with a diagram of maximum 5 movements and slowly increase when you feel concentration did increase, 20 movements are the maximum
- Train in different directions , use square or star models

- Do not try to create realistic fight models for known situations, crib some parts at other Martial Arts.

## **Kata**

In this book I would like to use the most neutral form of a series of movements in Martial Arts which I consider is the word Kata. With this word I refer to every style and series of movements and not to disclose any. Please accept my apology if your style is using a different name.

There is more to Kata than meets the eye. Each movement deserves the same amount of attention and concentration. Before, during and while exercising the movement an explosive power must be given at the right moment with sometimes a Kiai (voice explosion, shout) and a preparation of the next movement without delay or hesitation. Everything is directed to a perfect execution of the movement under complete control of thoughts and physic.

In Martial Arts we have many styles. Each have different Kata ways. Take for instance the flexible forms of Pentjak Silat and the power of Kyokhosin. Both have specific details in their forms which need a different way of breathing control. The kata has the same spiritual, ritual and traditional function in each sport. To perform it well it is not only important to have the right technical background. To perfect a performance you need to take care of;

- The right focus of the form
- Right breathing, inhale and exhale must be at the right moment / timing
- Rhythm of the kata. Every kata has a specific rhythm in movement, a short movement here a longer there
- The right combination of dynamic, flexible, static and explosive movements
- The right clothing is important for emotional control and performance

To perform a kata is bounded to age. In the last forty / fifty years a lot has changed. A kata in the past was performed in serene quiet where now it is done on screaming popular music and sometimes with an exciting lightshow. The value of the kata did not suffer from the change in performance but for spectators it did. Today it is much nicer to see a person perform a kata than it was in the past. The joy of young people to still use the kata as form of expression is great to see. In my vision it is important that young people enjoy what they do and so learn this virtue for when they get older and continue the value of this experience.

Ringsport fighters are focused on the competitive elements of fighting and do not pay attention to kata. This is a missing link felt by elderly fighters who have a lack of knowledge in the performance of the kata and did not develop a connection with it. A kata is very valuable in recuperation / revalidation periods. Fighters are able to use the kata as a part of their own revalidation by individual training. The right kata form enables a person to check its own abilities at certain moments, allow to check improvement in range of movement of joints and muscles, control physical fitness and most of all the mental ability to cope with the disease, injury or even handicap.

The psychological effects of walking a kata are important for Western society. The use of kata has many positive effects such as;

- Stress / burn-out or related problems. We use kata in two ways. First we train on the physical level. By the increase of muscle tension, blood circulation and the need of neural stimulation a person suffering from one of these problems encounters a reduction of stress levels even in a few times of walking the kata. After regular practice it is important that the kata is visualized and “walked” within the mind only. It is proven that with the right concentration on the kata the muscles contract and neural stimulation takes place, reducing stress levels fast.
- Lack of concentration. Many people have problems in concentration and focus. By the use of kata forms the person becomes more concentrated on their own body and mind. When the person is able to walk the kata with closed eyes the problems with concentration are surely gone.
- Disease. Kata is one of the ultimate recuperation ways for revalidation practice. The use of Tai Chi has proven this and the fact that Tai Chi is now considered one of the better medical treatments for people with movement problems and used in revalidation proves this fact. The positive effects of kata has been proven over thousand year history.

A Kata can be personalized. In my work I personalize kata to suit a specific physic, mental target, recuperation need and even just to relax and enjoy. Some practitioners get a pattern only while others receive a combined form with music, speed changes and so on. To write a personal kata needs inside in a personality and only is

possible after a direct consultation. It is my recommendation to all readers to have your own personal kata as it is a real life saver and you do not need to be a fighter to use it.

## Competition

Competition is the ultimate form of testing yourself against others in a physical, emotional and mental way. To take part in competition needs courage and determination. Not everybody wishes, wants or is able to take part in a competition. People do have good reasons not to take part in it. In this book I use the phrase “PLAY a match” and not fight one. I wish to focus on the mental part as we are not working toward a championship.

To take part in competition time and effort are essential. Ringsports are very popular in the Netherlands and our fighters (over 70 kg) and trainers are the best of the world since a few decennia. We have worked hard to reach this goal. To get where we are now we had to select fighters on the following characteristics;

- Perseverance
- Sufficient training
- Technical level
- No fear to perform in public

To the untrained eye the first three are the major point of a fighter. But the experienced know that the last point has the highest priority. The fact that a person must stand in front of a crowd and perform is an issue that cannot be taken lightly.

Sparring is considered one of the most important part of preparation to competition. The sparring looks alike the real competition but the target is development of both participants and not a win or lose situation. In most gyms sparring often lead to near fight situations because of the heat of the moment. During sparring both fighters encounter an range of emotions which go from fear to anger and sometimes even rage. Fear and retaliation pass by in a constant stream in both fighters.

Fighters have a strong ego, especially who take part in competitions. During sparring these ego's often get hurt. Even more when spectators around. When the situation is not fully under control of a third party a sparring easily can end up in a real fight. This is the negative side of competitiveness, there is no winning or losing, there is always the wish to battle more.

To most people a sparring is the nearest they will ever get to a competitive fight. Less than 10% of the people who join for fighting classes will ever take part in a ring fight. In traditional Martial Arts that number is much higher. Depending on the age we can see a rise to 40%. The priority of taking part in competition is the amount of danger involved to get an injury. The lesser the chance of injury the more people will take part in competition.

Real contact sparring has some important advantages but this does not count for every person.

- You always start with respect for the opposing side
- You learn to undergo emotions and control them
- Pain will be always there, you need to control it to continue sparring
- When fighting in the ring you lose oversight and the coach outside the ring will instruct you what to do. During a sparring you learn to divide your attention between opposing party and your corner instructions

Sparring teach you to control your own emotions, you are forced to use and consider what techniques can be used, pain needs to be controlled and tolerated and after a while you learn to think rational / emotional and develop a personal strategy of combat. Training in sparring brings reality much closer, your time spend in training is tested and you develop a more stable emotion system. Most people who take part in sparring feel that their ego is tested in a hard way and it takes a serious effect on the development of a person's ego.

It is important that sparring only takes place in controlled environment with experienced people. Opposing parties are only allowed to have a huge different in ranking or must be of equal standard. We expect well trained persons to spar with high control. I do not recommend beginners to do any form of sparring as it is a well-known fact that beginners causes the highest amount of damage to each other and third parties. Sparring can be very therapeutically if applied with the right persons and with a high degree of control.

Taking part in competition is a whole other matter. You perform in front of an audience which is critical and sometimes even hostile to you. When the spotlights are on all attention is on you and your partner. From that moment on you are the center. To most people the fear to perform in public blocks them from all capacities. It

has always been my challenge to train a student to perform in front of an audience. The challenge is interesting when a student shows signs of fear. To bring the student from fear to actual performance is a great satisfaction, no matter winning or losing of the fight. I have always admired people who took control over their own fear and walked up on the stage to perform and do what had to be done, no matter in what way.

To people who do not have that fear the first performance is always a hard bargain. Winning is taken with happiness but a loss is often felt as a real failure and taken very hard. Some people feel losing in front of an audience as a direct form of humiliation. Most people join competition with high hopes but will quit after only a few matches. The reasons vary but in general the hardship of training, the disappointment of fighters who do not turn up and the needed discipline are the main reasons to stop.

But if the fighter wish to continue there are four stages of further development;

- Higher focus
- Improved use of techniques and higher degree of combinations
- Able to split concentration between opponent and corner
- Implementation of specific strategy

Peace of mind is the core virtue of the fighter who can reach this stages, fear is no longer an issue. All focus goes to control of the mind and body during the fight, keep oversight and imply control. Command and control are the most important virtues of this phase.

When a fighter rises to fame there is more to worry about. No longer is the battle fought in the ring. Fighters are seen as primitive and not-educated, often considered low-classed and not sophisticated in any way. These prejudices are met nearly everywhere, even in countries where they are very popular. The main reason is that fighting is considered a primal emotion that must be controlled completely in current society, if a person fights he / she cannot be civilized. It is very hard to impossible to fight this prejudices.

Fame comes with attention, media, fans and more. Most fighters get confronted with their past activities, their history becomes public interest. Suddenly the fighter must change attitude and behavior, from a sportsman he / she becomes celebrity and everything change. In our multi-media society it is impossible to have control over what will be told and spread about you in news and gossips. A new challenge arise which change a fighters life such as;

- Dealing with media attention
- How can you keep training on a professional level
- Self-motivation
- Future vision and planning
- Exchange of knowledge (like in seminars, lectures and so on)
- Complete control of emotions and adjust to the value and norms of the (changing) environment

Fighting maybe an individual way of life but in this chapter we have seen that on the road of the competitor there are many hurdles to take and games to be played. All have a certain influence on your personality. It must be clear that to be involved in professional fighting takes a whole different attitude than when participating in practice only. To be a professional is seldom good for a high spiritual development as the environment will not allow you to have it.

## Injuries

A chapter in this book about injuries seems awkward as most people see no connection between an injury and spiritual development. But that is not right. Most people consider an injury as a problem, most of the time a minor but sometimes it is much more. An injury is a direct confrontation with yourself, your abilities, planning and even with the expectation of others. Some serious injury can bring you to a re-consideration of your life.

When you get an injury one or more questions will flash your mind;

- Why me?
- How long will I suffer from this?
- Is it serious?
- Do I have to change my future expectations and how long?

Everything is directed in the “I “ form as an injury is a direct emotional and egocentric confrontation with yourself. Individuals who take part in competition do not care about pain but about the game and what will happen to the continuation of it. Pain is the last thing they care of at such moments, that comes at the moment they realize that the game goes on even without them. Sport and pain are inter related, every person involved in sport knows that pain is a part of the game.

When you get an injury the following steps are passing by, often quickly;

- The moment of injury, the confrontation with the pain and you trying to control it
- People in your surrounding realize what is going on and see you are in pain
- You and these people pay attention to the injury and the guessing start
- Consideration and conclusion, continue the game or go for treatment
- When treatment is needed , who will do this and when and why
- Start of treatment and set a period
- Plans for revalidation and return to the game

It is clear you will go through many steps before you actually are back in the game or have made some life changing decisions.

During every part of the process you go through a mental process which forces you to make choices. Will I continue or do I give up? You have a constant battle with yourself and sometimes also your environment. Is it healthy to continue, do I need to make changes and many more questions pass your mind. Most injuries are not only physical, when suffering of a serious injury the mental part can take over 50% of your recovery some people suffer depression.

Dealing with injuries is something we all should learn before we get one. The most important part is acceptance that every person alive gets an injury one day. You do sport and have a greater risk than a general not sporting person. But even that person is at risk all the time. Think about it, some lose stones in the street, drunken drivers, falling trees, wet floors and so on, a never ending list of risks. Life is a risk in itself.

Every living being is at risk for an injury. By participating in sport you dare to take a higher risk. When you train you need to avoid getting injured by staying alert, keep a clear mind and a strong focus on the game. With a conscious mind working in the “here and now” you take a minimum risk.

- Accept that injuries in sport are common good. Every sport has a range of specific injuries. Accept the fact that you get them also. Be prepared and make a plan for alternative training when it actually happens.
- Knowledge of injury. Beside knowing which injuries are common good it is important to search for treatments and remedies that have been proven. Make a careful assessment of each possible major injury and make a file on it. Collect knowledge on the cause and effect, treatments with different methods, find medication and their alternatives and map hospitals or clinics in your neighborhood or around the places of competition. Keep in mind that you are always responsible for your own body.

You can learn a lot from an injury but you should be open to it. Here I give some guidelines;

- Self-control. Pain, anger, worries and so on cloud your mind. Clear them as soon as you can Try to get a clear story of what did happen and how. The first aid and all who follow will be thankful for a detailed prescription of the event. When you are clear they are able to act fast.
- Agenda and future planning. Injuries do mess up your planning, sometimes even your way of life. Try to relax and face reality, avoid “what if...” thinking.

- Revalidation can be the way back to “business as usual” but never count on that until you are at that very moment. Keep a positive attitude and focus only on what you are able to and not what you cannot do.
- Injuries show friends. When you are fit and healthy you have many friends. At least that is what you think. But when you are injured you get to know the reality. They pass by and talk to you, cheer you up and stimulate you to get back as soon as possible. Others only mock you.

The injury curve that I made is to make you realize the emotion / physical impact is;

accident – unhappy – realization – acceptance – revalidation – return or new target

Understand your emotional change during this curve and show determination – acceptance and emotions to a limited amount of people. Re-live the moment of injury when needed and learn of it, if you take your time an injury can bring you lots of knowledge and spiritual power.

## Expectations in life

Expectations are a part of desire and can be closely connected to greed. Most of the time we can say that expectations are the source of disappointment. To expect something is to plan for a result to an event in the future. Most people create expectations on a not solid fundament of thoughts and hope. Expectations are always a source of sorrow and emotional changes and have physical effects. In former chapter I did refer to getting an injury. Most of the time injuries happens due to an expectation that failed.

In my vision, to expect is to walk a road of disappointments. When you start to expect you have a result in mind. A result that is uncertain but to you the result is already a fact before it occurs. To have expectations start at a very young age. As baby we expect to get food in time. If the food does not come we cry. When we growing older we expect to play and people pay attention to us, when it does not come we cry or shout. In other words we always did show that we are not satisfied if the expectation does not find fulfillment. It is interesting to know that only in Buddhism it is mentioned that expectations are the source of Dhukka, meaning sorrow and pain.

Expectations become a part of our development and they are also forced upon us. Already in a very early stage of childhood people start to expect things from us. Think about the time people expect us to have tooth or to walk, to talk and learn. They told us that they did expect to see results and when they did not get what they wanted they showed that they were not satisfied. We deal with internal and external expectations all the time. When growing we find that expectations are a ruling factor of life, gradually we lost control over our life.

In Martial Art we learn to live in the moment, expect the unexpected, be prepared for the unknown and have multiple strategies ready in case a situation might not be what it seems. At least that is when you receive the right training. When we enter the gym we expect a full size training program but get only the physical part instead. The real part of what Martial Arts is all about is forgotten, left out due to the expectations of the owner of the gym. He is expected to pay the rent in time, spend limited time with his students, join competition, pay his taxes and so on and on.

Fact is that none of your expectations of spiritual developments comes true if you do not take personal actions. Your spiritual life is your responsibility. But we offer you some help, a hand to walk the road of expectations to fulfil your dreams.

## Daily expectations

Daily you set the alarm clock and expect it to ring in time. When it does you are satisfied for the ringing, not for waking up. But what happens if it does not ring in time? You be late, people are angry, you get frustrated and blame the clock. The day start with the expectation that the clock helps you. But the clock is a thing which only follows your guidelines, your instructions and the energy supplied.

At school or job you are expected to work hard and you expect to get good results. In both cases there are multiple factors that influence the outcome of your activities and you have limited control. When you understand that your influence on expectations is little it is easy to follow that any expectation involving unclear or uncontrollable factors is only a chance and never a fixed result. Your daily expectations are gambling on future outcomes, nothing more. We can say that expectations are equal to betting / gambling.

Gambling is considered a negative habit by most people. But gambling is also associated with chances, with hope and desire. The feeling that goes with gambling is one that easily lead to addiction. We must conclude that most people are addicted to their expectations and these of others. Expectations are a foundation of our daily lives. We have expectations oriented on future events and on a short or long term. Due to our future expectations we no longer live in the present time.

Expectations close our perception, it changes our observations and manipulates our thoughts on people and events. It is clear that expectations create a none existing world for us. Our own expectations make us start believing things as we want to see a result of our expectations. When expectations become goals or even a focus of living the reality is stressed and suffering starts. To most people expectations are the foundation of suffering and reason of depression and failures. It is important to ask a third party, for instance during our meetings, for an opinion about your expectations in life and how realistic they are. The only way to avoid severe disappointments is to be confronted with the reality of life and adjust your visions. Honesty unmasks expectations.



## Wealth expectations

Wealth is connected with goods, products, houses and more possessions. Most wealth is directly related to temporary things. In my vision all I have in this life is for the borrow, I use it well during my lifetime with respect and thankfulness. All products help me to survive and make life easier. But I do own nothing even I am able to use them all.

To most people wealth is a dream , a target, a desire. Living in wealth is something most people love to do. Being wealthy is a status and gives a 'face' , people give respect and know who you are. To most wealth is the possibility to buy and use whatever is of their wishes and desire. But in every life the moment comes to realize what is wealth without health ?

When I visit churches, mosques, temples and monasteries I see many people praying for good luck and fortune. They are surrounded by the wealth of their religion, in houses of their Lord decorated with in the finest way that was affordable for the community, buildings that represent power and fortune. They come to pray for wealth and expect a higher being to help them to get it. Before they sit down they already realize that the higher being will not throw the desired products from heaven to earth. They realize that no Gods delivers instant children. All they do is to sit down and share the frustrations of life with themselves as no God nor higher spirit will influence on the daily matters of the suffering people. No, the Gods are not home for wealth. But people still believe in it and why not ? Isn't everybody praying for something personal, something to get ?

We expect wealth to bring us happiness and luck. To most people wealth brings live to a higher level and probably it will do so when your wishes and desires do not go higher than the material level you are able to afford and handle. To many people being rich is the highest ideal to expect in life.

We do think different about this and according to my knowledge every religion or belief and even the rich and famous do agree with me. If life was only the products that surround us now , how poor were all our ancestors, how terrible their life should have been. No cars to drive, no planes to fly, no music festivals to visit and no Jacuzzi to bath in. But still they had a wish for a spiritual life. Rich people did not spend their money on useless things. Even in the ancient past they realized that arts and other spiritual matters were more important to their legacy than the battles they personally won.

We are born naked and die 'naked'. Nothing will be taken to and from this earth. All we have is for the use of making our life easier to live. We may use them, they are there for temporary time. Wealth is a borrowed gift. Being wealthy is a blessing and a curse. Wealth brings problems, often more than we can handle. These problems are based on greed. Not only the greed of the person who is wealthy but mainly that of others. Officials are greedy to take part in wealth by taxing, others will come with charity requesting gifts. When you become known to be wealthy it feels like you are the honey and attract flies from all over the world. The burden of wealth is not easy to carry.

## Health expectations

Health is a general perception. A person is healthy when he or she has a feeling of wellbeing. Healthy is not only a physical concept based on medical terms. Real health is a combination of physical and mental wellbeing. A good health gives a person the ability to do the things as wanted. To most people a disabled person is not healthy, I do consider this a wrong perception. Most disabled persons feel themselves perfectly healthy as they came into peace with their disabilities and accepted their live as it is. This is a very healthy concept of which many able persons should take sample of.

Health is fragile. It easily can be shattered, hurt or destroyed. Most people have clear health expectations but never think of their health at all. Daily we take actions that could be dangerous to our health. To be healthy is taken from granted. Health is something we have only limited control about. In many of my books you can read the sentence ; "you are what you eat ". We are a part of society and food is something we have little control about when we live in a city. Food is also one of the main point of concern when living in a community.

When we study religions the concept of health is rarely ever a topic of major importance while it should be the center point of life itself. Our health is our life and without it we do not have the capability to enjoy, improve and make it fruitful. Our health is the center of our being, is the most precious of all we own. I did find references to food in all religious books which shows that the founders of these religions and philosophies were all aware of the importance of food in daily life to every living person. In Buddhism I found even an important reference to

the fact that food was not only a physical issue but had lasting effects on a person's mental wellbeing; (*Surāmerayamajjapamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi* ).

“We respect life in its purest form and will not destroy it unnecessarily” This is one of our first rulings of the Law of Life foundation. A clear reference to our food and resources. In cities most people do not know the source of meat anymore let alone they know if the meat is killed for them or not. The application of that rule in ancient time was easy as all meat was killed in low amounts and transported on short distances. In the current situation we do not know how old the meat is not where it comes from.

Being healthy in one, staying healthy is a complete other thing. To use conscious living concerns to our daily matters such as food. It is important to understand how we can take care of good food and at the same time improve our spiritual powers.

Eat as less (red) meat of four leg animals as possible. This meat is often from bred animals in large farms and have used all kind of medical appliances to stay “healthy” and grown fast. The influence of it on our mental stability is strong and long lasting. Due to the dull and stressful existence of these animals their bodies are filled with hormones which do have long term negative effects on our population, cancer is just one of these manifestations. But we also have to be aware of the fact that we are not natural born vegetarians which I will address more in another chapter.

Fruit and vegetables are important for our body and should be taken daily. To eat food we have to choose the time of the day wisely. Most people work during the daytime and the most important meal of the day is breakfast in the morning. Eating the right meal in the morning will enlighten our mind and body and prepare it for the tasks to come. The better we are prepared the more we have energy for doing the right efforts.

During the day, depending on your daily work, it is good to divide the meals in small easy to digest portions, something like every three hours a small meal. These meals must be easy to digest and not to contain heavy carbohydrates (such as fried rice or potatoes) or proteins (such as red meat) to keep a clear mind. Food is an important part of physical and mental development and it strikes me time and again that so less time is paid to a healthy lifestyle in nearly all teachings. A healthy body is the temple for a healthy soul.

Beside the food itself it is important we pay attention to the way we prepare it. We can eat food in many different ways. Some foods do need heat to make it possible to consume it such as meat. It is not advised to eat raw meat as our digestive system is not capable to cope with that. Heat breaks down the carbohydrate complexes and the different amino acids, the fats to be consumed by us. Some foods need to be taken raw while others can do with only little heating (au-bain marie).

When we consider food and action it is important to know that every food has a different digestion time. Eating before a competition or training is only good when the content of the food is digested in the time before the training or competition starts. In some cases we also have to be aware of the waste material some foods can cause, for instance if we need to be prepared for a long trip without possibilities to stop. The collecting, preparation and consuming of food deserves great attention as a part of our physical and mental wellbeing.

## Vegetarism on consumerism

Buddhist are vegetarians. This story still goes around the world. It is not true. Buddhist, even the monks, are allowed to eat meat. But there are some rules to be aware of. The meat is not allowed to come from animals who have been slaughtered for the purpose of feeding the human. This rule merely accounts for the people who took an oath not for the common people, laymen.

Food has an important function in our life, it effects our body and mind all the time. To understand vegetarism better we need to have a look at natural vegetarians. Cows, giraffe, sheep and even the giant elephant are vegetarians by nature, they have no choice as herbivore. Their digestive system is complete organized for plant materials and cannot digest large amounts of meat like the carnivore (meat eater). Each of them will fall ill when forced to eat the food of the other. But we have to make a note here. Carnivore, when feeling ill, will eat herbal products to ease their digestive system, sometime to throw up food or as medicine. On the other hand herbivore eat small amounts of meat all the time in the shape of insects.

The digestive system of the herbivore is around 4 x longer than of the carnivore. The length of the system included more stomach bags are needed for the digestion of the herbal products. A carnivore often eats faster, has a shorter digestive system and produces more waste material.

When we look at the neurobiological side of the digestive system we find that science slowly gets convinced that it has a "mind of its own" with other words, science slowly starts to accept that the digestive system has some kind of brain function in the body. When we look around us it is obvious that a disfunctioning digestive system has direct effects on a person's mood, attitude, characteristics and functioning. To understand this better we need to look in the animal world.

Carnivore has a short digestive system and needs to take all nutrition's from the food as fast as possible. To do this the enzymes, acids and body fluids need to be strong and effective. A carnivore eats often to get the needed nutrients. There are some exceptions to this rule; snake, crocodile and turtle are known for their slow meat directed system. To eat meat the carnivore must kill. To kill needs a specific mental attitude. A carnivore has just one goal, to get prey, kill it and eat it fast. There are no feelings involved. Nature has given the carnivore an attacking and aggressive personality to survive.

The herbivore does not have to run behind food, it needs no aggression but knowledge were to find the food. They need to know what is to be find where in which part of the year. The herbivore prefers a small territory that provides with enough resources for all year, when that is not possible they need to know where to find it. That is why some species travel over distances to reach their food resources. During these travels herbivore are often under attack of the carnivore and must defend themselves. Herbivore are defenders and can only attack when under threat. Their nature prevents them otherwise.

The source of the food has a direct connection with the attitude of the animal. Carnivore need to be fast, aggressive and explosive by nature to chase, kill and consume their prey. To do so each carnivore has an unpredictable, aggressive and attacking nature. The herbivore is the near opposite. Their source of food never runs away so they do not need to attack. A herbivore need not to fear their food staple as it will not defend itself. This makes a herbivore a passive and defending animal. Their nature is quit and patient.

A human being is omnivore by nature. Our digestive system is made to consume meat and vegetarian products. Everything in our system is created to do so. We produce enzymes and body liquid that are able to consume meat at any time. Vegetarians cannot produce any evidence that they do not. This implies that the human by nature possesses aggressive attitudes which are needed to kill for survival and defense. These are impossible to deny.

Our world has become a consumers paradise. We have put our faith into the hands of consumerism. The choice of products has become huge, in fact so much that we hardly are able to make the right choice. But people think when they make a choice for a certain lifestyle they influence their biochemistry. You can influence your chemistry by the choice of food but it is not possible to change the nature of the being. If you choose not to eat meat we need to consider that a moral choice and not a natural one. We do not need to eat meat so often, we should be more careful in this.

Because of our original biochemistry our bodies will affect our mind in case of aggressive behavior, our emotional system (fight or flight) and our decision making. It is not good to suppress, with drugs or religions but

to control it as fear and anger are the worst advisors in life. Fear ends always in defeat as a fighter in the ring will prove so.

The source of our human power is to overcome fear and control emotions. You get control when you are able to make the right choices and dare to go for a confrontation. Food is one of your most important choices, eat meat or not or other lifestyles, which affects our way of life in every angle of our existence.

From my study and experience with fighters and other sportspeople, trainers, coaches, food specialists, doctors and physiotherapists I reached the following conclusions;

- When you are young there is a certain need for meat for a healthy development of body and mind. It seems not so important what is the nature of the kind of meat but surely the source is. It is important to eat clean meat. Meat that has grown as clean as possible according to the values of nature and not chemically induced.
- The amount of meat we can eat depends on the individual fat%. A person with a high fat% must be advised to eat as less red meat as possible, only a few times per week at the maximum. It is advised to exchange this with meat of everything with wings or lives in the water. Red meat has a high percentage of fat and this is not easily digested by most.
- From age 30 for females and 35 for males it is important to lower the amount of intake of carbohydrates and red meat. The lowering depends on individual fat%. Due to a changing biochemistry of every person the fat% will rise, metabolism lowers and the hormones goes through a change. Every person physical abilities are affected by a decrease of mobility, flexibility, explosive power and change of mentality. The use of fat meats is not advised, methods of preparation as frying and baking must reduce and an increase of easy available protein resources must increase.
- After forty a dramatic lowering of carbohydrates, such as sweets and sugar products, must take place with an increase in green vegetables, fruits and high protein resources. In this period of life we should pay a lot of attention to our food lifestyle as it influences all parts of life that follow.

Changing your food style and the discipline needed to do so has a direct effect on a person's spiritual development. In the Western world we talk about the carbohydrate addiction. Most people brought up with sweets with a strong dependency as result. This addiction shows clearly in the sharp increase of diabetes, rise of overweighted people, lower motivation in children to move and a decrease in concentration. The results of this epidemic of carbohydrates are;

- Increase of people with low concentration levels
- Lack of orientation skills
- Uncontrollable behavior
- Increase of intolerance, violent behavior as addiction makes people less stable
- Increase of ADD and ADHD and other energy related problems

With a strong decrease of carbohydrates in the daily meals and consumption we see a change of behavior within a week. The longer we continue an addiction the harder it becomes to change behavior.

## Sex and relationship

I am a lover not a fighter. You did hear this saying before. This phrase suggest two things;

- A lover is someone who is nice and a fighter is aggressive and dangerous
- The person who is saying this wants sex and not a relationship he/she has to fight for

Martial Artist do not have a positive name in relation with violence, relationships, sex and aggression. The reason is that some people with a lower spiritual development used their physical powers to abuse others. But when we study rapist, people who commit violent crimes and aggressive people we find that none of them is a master in the Martial Arts. None? Yes none, as if a person commits one of these acts it is treason to the philosophy of Martial Arts and a master should surely be aware of that.

In every relationship we encounter struggle between the partners, there is not a single relationship excluded of this. But advanced Martial Artist know that to learn and improve you should respect the wishes of the partner to get the best results. It is like sparring where two persons need to take and give to get the best result. If one wants to be superior the other will not return to the training and finally both end up with nothing. As in sparring, we have to do it often and we do prefer to train with some partners more than others. In sex we prefer to have a partner that suits us well. Unlike sparring it is important to get to know the partner well to get the best results.

Sex can be a spiritual experience if you dare to commit. The spiritual side is in the fact that you dare to open completely for all emotional involvements of the love process without holding back. Before you are able to reach this stage you need to be sure you are in safe arms. When you are busy with the “game” of love as a fighter you are able to play with the senses and sensibilities of your partner to experience different levels of comfort and emotions which brings the energy level up. The real spirituality of a good sexual relationship is found in the level of loyalty and respect for each other, the wish to please the partner with all you are able too.

In the past some “spiritual” leaders like Bagwan Sri Rasni preached the sexual experience as a major breakthrough in spirituality which attracted many followers. The weakness of the statement was in the fact that that most of his followers did not want to have any commitment but go with the flow. The spirituality of sex is not in the moment but in the total relationship building and continuation. In this case I would like to state that sex does not need to be a full physical experience at all time. Some people can have it without any physical interaction. In most relationships of Martial Artist only one person is committed to the Arts while the other is supportive or milder active.

A real sexual experience brings both persons in a higher state of mind. But both experience it in a different way. In the first phase excitement is the leading factor. Both have a wish and a need. But here the first signs of difference occur between male and female. The male wants to “score” and starts the sex right away while the woman wish to have a good foreplay. From the man it is expected to be patient, take time and effort and build the passion. Most man care more of their own satisfaction than of the partner. As suggested before a good relationship is one with respect and loyalty and whatever happens the task of the man is to satisfy his partner and of course vice versa. This only is possible when two partners are into the relationship for the long term. Like with training it takes time to learn the techniques and even more to bring them into practice.

You have to see a relationship as a commitment to loyalty as between a trainer and student. It is for the long term and possibly for a lifetime. From now on you can use the phrase “I fight to love” to counter the first mentioned one.

## Friendship relationship between man and woman

We need to create more understanding between the genders and cultures in which man and woman live and share the same environment. This chapter is part of another book of mine and just a reflection to make you understand some basic principles only. A relationship between the different genders is considered the most complicated but also most important one in our live.

The main question we need to ask is a simple one; can a man be a good friend of a woman without love or sex being involved?

The answer is yes. Statistical we can say that 95% of the friendships between man and woman end in a love affair involving one way or another physical contact, wanted or not by one of both sides. Only 5% of this kind of relationship are true and honest friendships.

This percentage is very low compared to equal gender friendships. Keeping a man and a woman in one room creates tensions and these tensions are often stronger than the psychological advantages of a good friendship. In most cases the man is the weaker factor.

Why is a man a weaker factor in a relationship between man and woman? The main reason is that women are able to a higher emotional control. In a relations we have several important factors that account for this pressure (three systems);

- Sexual desire / physical attraction
- Availability (distance / Proximity)
- Reward oriented (wants results that can be measured, protection)

Women are able to shut down feelings of sexual nature from all three systems. A woman is able to do that for protection and when growing children. Man can never fully shut down all systems at the same time as they need them for survival. When man and woman are together the woman automatically will shut down all these systems as with a friend she will feel safe and protected. The man on the other hand will keep one or more open causing mental disturbing. Only few men are able to control these desires.

Three systems according to Collins and Freeney.

Collins and Feeney have examined the relationship between attachment and intimacy in detail. They define intimacy as a special set of interactions in which a person discloses something important about himself or herself, and a partner responds to the disclosure in a way that makes the person feel validated, understood, and cared for. These interactions usually involve verbal self-disclosure. But intimate interactions can involve non-verbal forms of self-expression such as touching, hugging, kissing, and sexual behavior. From this perspective, intimacy requires the following:

- willingness to disclose one's true thoughts, feelings, wishes, and fears
- willingness to rely on a partner for care and emotional support
- willingness to engage in physical intimacy

Collins and Feeney reviewed a number of studies showing how each attachment style relates to the willingness to self-disclose, the willingness to rely on partners, and the willingness to engage in physical intimacy. The secure attachment style is generally related to more self-disclosure, more reliance on partners, and more physical intimacy than other attachment styles. However, the amount of intimacy in a relationship can vary due to personality variables and situational circumstances, so each attachment style may function to adapt an individual to the particular context of intimacy in which they live.

In most cultures women get the blame for the fact that men lose control with a woman while the woman is perfectly in control of herself. If man say that this is nature I always reply with the simple question why we have so many man raping woman and so very few woman raping man.

## Massage and spirituality

Thai massage called Nuad Boran is a combination of massage, pressure point, stretching, energy treatment, herbal medicine and medical knowledge. To study this I spend 4 years in Wat Pho which is located next to Wat Pra kao, also called the Emerald Buddha temple or Kings temple.

Massage has a direct and strong relationship with Martial Arts and to be honest I do not understand why nearly all gyms, camps and school ignore this very important part of our Arts. Every fighter undergo one day in his carrier a massage, competition fighters receive it every time they have to perform. an important proof that Martial arts are interlinked with massage shows the combination of training and massage in Kalaripayattu (also called kalarippayattu, kalaripayat, kalarippayat, of kalaripayit) which is considered the oldest Martial Arts on earth. Every trainings session has elements of massage to prepare the body for training.

We distinguish two kind of massage methods. One is self-massage and the other is when you massage another person. In this book I focus on the spiritual side of massage itself and not on technical details.

One of the most important effects of massage is the influence on the energy system. Massage brings a flow of energy on the move in the body and when applied well you can reach a certain balance. There are two competing energy levels which are called Yin / Yang in Traditional Chinese Medicines. For the ease of this book I stick to those two names but they have other names in Ayurveda and other methods referring to the nearly the same energy. One is “negative” = Yin = female and the other one in Yang = ‘positive ‘ = male. While reading this you have to force yourself not to think negative when I mentioned the word negative as it has no negative meaning, it is a way how to show the opposing side of energy.

Self-massage is very important for every person and most of all for any person performing sport. For a Martial Artist it has beside the function of controlling energy levels also a way to learn more of your own body. Massage show the strong and weak parts of the body. These part do change regularly depending on your state of health of the period of month / year you are in. This refers to your natural biorhythm system. To test the body we make use of pressure points which are located alongside the meridians. By pressing the point you stimulate or break an energy flow. When applied it is possible to cure injuries faster and cool down the mind. After a good massage it is easier to meditate.

One of my teachers told me that “when you break something down, you also should know how to repair it”. When you massage another person you learn the strong and weak spots of the other person, you learn how to manipulate energy levels within the body. While massaging you learn the different muscle tensions in the body of a trained and an untrained person, you learn a lot about pain and distinguish real and fake pain. When you touch a part of the body that feels painful the source of the pain does not need to be at that spot. The source of pain can be at one place the body but the manifestation elsewhere. The problem of Western medicine is that they lost the holistic touch by looking at pain as a local issue.

A good friend of mine compared Western medicine with a car repair shop. You go in with a broken front light which they repair as requested. When you drive away the doctor sees that you back light is broken and will not warn you for that, he knows that you will come back again. Is it commercial or ignorance? Neither. Western Medici are trained in symptomatic treatment, they treat a certain cause and will not look at the rest of your system as if they do they enter the field of another specialist which is not allowed.

With massage you help people (and yourself). With massage you transfer energy between your body and the person you massage, a too much will be released and a too less will be withdrawn by your methods. To have a positive result in massage you have to bring mind and body in the right balance. To massage effectively bring body and mind in harmony by the right preparation such as a concentration exercise or meditation, this also counts when you massage yourself. To reach the right state of mind I suggest following techniques;

- Use personal key words or sentences and you are able to get inside the needed state of mind faster, sometimes these keys are called mantra’s
- The use of sound. Bass is a typical male sound while a female sound is higher and lighter. The use of sound brings vibrations which have energetic effects.
- Close your eyes when you massage. Without sight you are able to focus on the differences in energy and tensions within the body you are busy with. Also your mind does not get distracted by emotions or other things.

- Visualize technical applications while working. Massage is looking forward to the next grips, the next move and follow the energy lines. To massage well you need to apply different technical methods for a maximum result. Think about the use of elbows, knees, shoulders, feet, body weight and so on.

A warning is at place here; if you do not have the right techniques do not apply them. Like in fighting arts when you apply the wrong technique you or the opponent will get injured and this is the same in massage. Only use what you are able to and no more, your partner is not a toy nor a doll and must be treated with care and respect.

There are plenty of different massage related methods of which I strongly advise to leave to the experts and do not experiment without proper knowledge.

- Moxa treatment is with herbal conical, ball or spike shaped products which are placed or hold on certain parts of the body and lighted with fire. The heat enters the body with a healing effect.
- Cupping therapy is a method that use heat to create a certain vacuum and cups which are placed on certain parts of the body
- Acupressure, the method looks like acupuncture without needles

In Ayurveda we find the use of warm etheric oils during massage. For a specific complain they use different kind of oil. The way of massage consist of stretching and the application of different force directions.

Massage create a connection between people. With physical contact the energy of the two persons gets involved with each other and opens channels that could be closed before. Many people get emotional of massage in various ways. When you are able to adjust your energy level to the person you are massaging you have a communication without words, a real connection of energy. Massage stimulates balance of energy levels and take away blockades in the body and mind.

But it is also the intimacy that scares people. When a person has bad experience in the past with intimate contact – such as rape or molest victims – massage must be applied on the cloth and not directly on the skin. There is an important difference between Asian and Western methods. In Asia most methods are based on a person wearing clothing while in the West it is normal to go naked. When you wish to apply massage please do take good note of the wishes and past of a person to avoid awkward situations.



## Getting older

One thing we cannot avoid is to get older. Everything on earth is under the law of time. Getting older is not easy to most people. Many get frustrated of the decrease of performance they experience. To name a few points we experience while getting older;

- Lack of time for training due to social life and carrier
- Decrease of performance abilities
- Most gain weight
- Increase of stress, frustrations and aggression amongst many other things

When do you get old in fighting arts? The answer depends on the Martial Arts you practice. Ringsports are demanding and in general the age to practice is lower than in traditional sports. It also depends on the country where you are. In Thailand a fighter is old after the age of 24, that is the age most fighter retire from the ring. In the Netherlands top-fighters of 40 plus are rather common. Everything depends on the person and his/her environment. Most people get “old” due to the forces of the surrounding and not by physical demands.

But when we enter a gym, no matter where in the world, we see the majority of the students is young, often teenagers. The reason is that this group has time and energy to spend and they are willing to do it. When you pass the age of 25 most people has set other priorities. Martial Arts does not have the priority to most people it should have due to the lack of spiritual knowledge and opportunities of flexible training for aging people.

There is a saying; when you get older you get wiser. But to most it is just a saying. Real wisdom starts with the acceptance of getting older. When you do get older you have to set new priorities depending on the stage of life you are in. What priorities are considered important when you age?

- The start of a relationship and family
- Work and carrier
- Housing
- Financial matters of all kind

Sport and health are often not part of this list for a reason. Sport cost time and health is considered evident. We have only 24 hours in a day and 8-12 we use to work, the rest for family and other mentioned priorities. But when we are seriously looking at these “free” hours we find that most is spend in vain, doing nothing that brings us benefit.

A part of these free hours must be spend to prepare your future and your future is only depended on the level of your health. When your health weakens, your performances will go down and the result of your work also. In media and everywhere else you are called to pay attention to your health for different good reasons;

- A bad health has a negative effect on your carrier and even can make you lose your job
- Lowering health levels are negative for your family life, not only in a sexual way
- Bad health is a financial risk which often lead to higher insurances and costs

But when you finally decide to choose to train you should again take the following steps in good consideration before spending your time. If the sport does not answer to one of the mentioned you really should ask yourself why you want to do the sport;

- The sport must improve your health and not harm it. When you spend time to do a sport you need to learn how to do it right. First of all you should get proper instructions, guiding and lessons how to do it without injuring yourself or others.
- It must improve your physical and mental defensibility. You want to become physically and mentally stronger to combat stress and other negative effects from your daily life.
- It must be functional as well as spiritual an improvement to your life. You wish to understand your own body and mind better and get higher degree of control over it.

Training in Martial Arts has a more than 50% lower risk at injuries than in team sports and fitness. To train well you need to select the right trainer / gym and partner(s). Be aware that you are no longer have the wish to be competitive and your training is more recreational than before. Let any idea of competition go. It is not your target.

Use good protection gear. As promoter of the Martial Arts I have always strived to let people train in maximum safety. My reason is that people need and wish to train as often as possible but when injured they will not come

to training. Protection is not an obstacle but an aid. We need the protection as we train for our health and we have many other jobs to do. The better the quality of the protection the harder you are able to train.

I am well aware of people who refer to ancient times where protection was not needed and people were so much tougher than today, I bet that is true. But when I look outside my window, watch the time table I realize we are no longer ride on horses, have battles with swords and spears but have evolved to a different level and most important we do not die at age 40-50 anymore. Time has changed, people have changed and our goals did go along in these changes. We are training for fun and health and no longer for the battle fields.

Training in Martial Arts is growing as a person, an evolution in personality. In general we can state that from 8 – 25 we are more competition oriented, between 25 – 35 we continue to like competition but often set other priorities first, after 35 we become more technical, spiritual and wish to see different results from training. It can we said that becoming mature in Martial Arts is at the age between 30 – 35 for most of us.

We know that maturity is mainly a mental issue which comes by realization of your position in life. Every person comes to a moment were they suddenly see themselves in the light of the day, a moment of truth. When you practice Martial Arts you realize who you are from a spiritual point of view more than physical. The awareness of a bright future with so much possibilities is there to go in contrary with people in other sports do we have options for development and improvement. Growing older in Martial Arts opens doors which will be closed too others. When you choose the right way in Martial Arts you grow old with a smile.

## Women in Martial Arts

The battle between the genders is the oldest in history. It is said that men and women cannot live together but also not without each other. Like Yin / Yang the connection is complicated but indissoluble. The battle between men and women is not for power but because of incomprehension, the way of thinking between men and women differs much. Men tend to throw themselves into adventure where women are more cautious. It is possible to find an explanation for everything that happens between the genders but one thing is for sure; most men protect their created territory from the influence of women.

In the dark ages, in most countries something like 40-50 years ago, women could not take part in Martial Arts at all. In some sport it was thought that women were a disgrace to the sport if they participated, others considered it inappropriate while in some countries they were scared women brought bad ghost. Gladly so much is changed. In the last 20-30 years we have seen a great evolution in female participation and some women have mastered the sports to superior level or became gym owners and trainers.

The men considered the influence of women as negative on his performances. Women distracted them from the goals of fighting, from a spiritual development or even were of influence to the result in competitions. It is for sure women did have a certain influence as they often doubted the decisions made by fighters and trainers. From a rational point of view they showed the fighter the results of his decisions and brought his responsibility for family and other things to his attention. But a fighter has a large ego and feels easily humiliated which reflected in a turning down of all the female brought in, some even demonized the women for their concerns. The biggest problems occurred when finally the women proved to be right.

Martial Arts is still virgin territory for female training. Due to the lack of interest the development of training methods for women is still far behind. Most trainers have no clue about the female physic neither they could understand the psychological issues around them. In some traditional Martial Arts women could play a minor role but most of what we found in history is based on myth more than fact. But there is a change going on in East and West and I see more and more women participating in training and competition and to be honest, I do enjoy their level of technical development, their tremendous mindset and fighting power. Some try every way to break taboos around the female participation sometimes by extreme measures.

To have a maximum training result a woman needs to periodize. Due to her menstrual periods it is not possible to have maximum training results all the time. Menstruation has effect on condition, emotional stability, resilience, power and availability. In short on everything we need in sport. It is possible to use birth control pills to enhance control but it does not cover all completely. One of the most important issues to work on is a mental stability and realization of the women and trainer to work with bioenergetics methodology.

When I did my research on the participation of women in Martial Arts I found that most Western oriented women, to be clear hereby I also refer to Asian and all other women in the world, are interested in Boxing and Muay Thai. The younger generations dare to take the challenge of hard training, physical contact and competitive issues around the sports. The women who participate want to prove something to themselves and not to the outside world. Some consider it as the ultimate fitness challenge while others consider the self-defense part realistic enough. Most women know that their environment are dismissive to their actions but they seem to care lesser than ever before.

In contrary with most male participants are women interested in the spiritual parts of the sports, they are interested in how to find any mental support and how to integrate training into their live. Often they seek guidance but cannot find it. Some go to the East to find spiritual care but can hardly be satisfied. It is important for any female participant on Martial Arts to consider spiritual growth together with their control of body and mind in their monthly cycles. If you seek more explanation contact me.

## Teacher Part

### Trainer (=teacher)

In Martial Arts the trainer is more than just a guy (or lady) in front of the class. A trainer is a person with the passion for his sport and art who devoted his/her life to the style. At least this should be like that. But the truth is different. It seems that everybody can call him/her self-teacher now with a range of incredible titles, of course most or all are fake, to impress others. During my years of travel and practice I did encounter the strangers specimen of human beings calling themselves trainer or teacher without even having the sufficient knowledge of what they were doing. Being a teacher / trainer is a demanding task on technical and spiritual level and should not taken lightly. In this book I focus on the mental / spiritual content of being a trainer / teacher. Currently it is possible to open a gym in Martial Arts in any part of the world without diploma, significant track record or proper educational background. You should be warned when you enter any gym.

Why does a person want to become trainer?

- He/she loves the sport very much and wants to share knowledge
- He/she is past a (professional) carrier and it is time to continue his passion otherwise
- He/she wants to create champions and get fame
- He/she wants to have followers and considers Martial Arts and easy option

This list is not complete but it makes clear that there as many negative as positive options to become a trainer / teacher.

A trainer is a sample to his students and needs to set that example in class and outside. When you enter a gym you can see on the behavior of the advanced students what kind of teacher the person is. Believe it or not everybody is able to get students and followers even the greatest cheater or a person with only a fantasy style. But a trainer has also great responsibility for his followers as setting a sample implies that you carry the responsibility for the future of your followers. This is why we should also hold a trainer accountable for his teachings. Cheaters should be prosecuted whenever discovered. I suggest we set up a world court for Martial Arts teachers to judge and trial them in case of failure. I do know it is just a dream.

Having said all about the negative options of trainers / teachers I would like to focus on the positive people who are seriously busy with what they love most. Being a trainer is something you do with passion, not for the money. Only very few teachers / trainers do make serious money to live of it, most do so as a side job or hobby. Passion is what keeps a person standing and believing in him/her self and pass difficult times.

Besides passion a trainer should have a vision, a clear plan for his future and that of his/her students. It is important for several reasons;

- The influence of a trainer on young students is large.
- A trainer can make or break mentality of a student
- Being a trainer is being an educator in physical and mental issues

What kind of vision should a trainer have to be a good, proper and successful person and trainer;

- A physical vision on how a training should run. Providing a lesson program for classes from beginners till advanced.
- When basic skills are set he has to be able to direct the student to competition or recreational training
- Mentality profile of the student. What would you like to reach with a particular student and in what term. It is not important that there is significant difference between what the students wants and the opinion of the teacher. If needed changes can be made.
- Which mentality shaping exercises a trainer will add to his work outs? Is there any time for spiritual issues? Is integration of mental / spiritual training possible or does he need to separate the lessons?

In a multicultural society we are confronted with many religions which all have their specific opinions about behavior. When a student joins a gym he / she must realize and made clear that entering a gym is to leave all religion outside and follow the rules of discipline and etiquette of the gym. If a student refuses to do so he or she is not welcome to join the lessons. Respect to the trainer, the ancestors of the sport and the cultural heritage of the sport is more important than personal feelings or conviction of the individual student.

To become a fighter needs a strong mind and a rigorous set of rules and regulations. All great fighters, no matter in competition or outside, must have a good moral as the mentioned warrior as they carry strong weapons and are able to judge over life and death. This is a responsibility that should be understood well.

A teacher should continue to develop him/her self during life in all stages and continue to do research and be open for the opinion and questions of others. Students ask questions and a teacher cannot have the answer to every question. If you are not able to answer the question directly you must be frank to say so and find the answer elsewhere. Being a teacher is to absorb the knowledge you can get from your students as questions, behavior, physical shape and characteristics are all sources of unlimited information for any teacher.

Being a teacher is to live your passion, to be able to do what you really love. It is important to choose your students and not let yourself be led by the luring of money, the story of fame, the potential of competitors or other outside sources. A teacher should be led by his passion and the desire to learn more, collect more information, grow and develop as a teacher and a human. To develop as teacher is to spiritually develop oneself to a higher moral and spiritual standard. That is the final goals of the teacher, an individual goals with the benefit of others in mind.

## **From Student to Master**

Being a teacher is one thing but to keep students is a whole different matter. Today students come and go as they wish. In a time that money can buy all it is hard to be a sincere teacher. As teacher we have to understand that every students passes some phases in his “carrier” which we need to understand and follow.

- Primary school. A student comes into your gym and starts with its study, some are “bright” others are slower. In general we can say that a student will understand his basics and more between 4 – 6 years of study with you. After this time they will show the first signs of struggle toward you. Some wish to move on and join other gyms or consider other options. You must act sincerely on this demands. I call this the primary level of training as one teacher is enough like in a primary school.
- High school. After 6 – 12 years of study the sport students need to be guided by more than one trainer like in a normal high / secondary school level more teachers, who are specialized in their topics, are needed to improve the students ability and increase knowledge or its competitive possibilities.
- After high school we go to University. With around 12+ years of study the student wishes to reach the highest level of its abilities and does need more professional support from specialist on different fields. The student has proven to be and capable and interested to continue so far, this is an honor to the original teacher who was able to motivate this student so far. When at University the student may consider him/her self mature enough to be respected by others and give the respect that his former teachers all deserve after all he/she had come to this level with the knowledge and support of these teachers.

Loyalty is one of the greatest worries of the current generation of teachers. Most students live in a “freedom & happiness” society with the perception that loyalty is no longer needed. No student feels like they have a moral obligation to his/her teacher who has spent his years training the student, this mentality is particularly strong in ring competition sports where the individual glory has become more important than the fame of the gym. In traditional sports we still can find some form of loyalty.

Why can we find loyalty in traditional sports and so much lesser in Ringsports amongst non-Asian students, although I hear different stories of radical change there also. In traditional sports teacher pay attention to proper rules and regulations and the spiritual background of the sport. They spent time teaching the moral sides and things as concentration and meditation. In Ringsports the focus is on physical development and techniques, hardly any time is spend on spiritual / moral issues. Something you do not teach you will not get returned. Another reason is that in traditional sports students must climb a ladder of education, they must pass exams to get a certain degree. Doing examinations create a form of dependency as the issued diploma has a value for life. When the diploma is also registered officially it gives entrance to official education programs. The connection between loyalty to the teacher can also be found in the fact that it is impossible for the student to deny who signed his diploma’s.

Another reason why loyalty is no longer high is the decreased distance between student and teacher. Most students get a closer relationship with the teacher that comes close to a friendship. Some relationships are more like parent / child. A traditional distance is needed to earn the right form of loyalty, a teacher should not be too close to his students. In a close relationship the depended factor, in this case the student, will take a lot of effort to “break free” from the relationship and often will deny its existence later on.

In a proper relationship both sides know responsibility. A student should learn and know that nothing comes for free. Knowledge has a value and money cannot cover that value. The student must become aware it has a moral responsibility toward the teacher by gratitude for what he did learn and respect to the person who thought him / her. Besides this there must be clear responsibilities between both.

Distance is needed in a teacher / student relationship. Only when we keep the right distance it is possible to develop a good relationship. You need to guide the student through the mentioned development process of life from primary school to University by keeping a proper distance and offering a strong foundation. Your gym must be open to this student and you should regularly invite him/her for classes, create a fan base if the student is a famous fighter and impose a supporter / fan club, be active to keep the connection but also keep enough distance to avoid emotional involvement as everything can be over in a flash.

It is important to understand why people are loyal to someone. There are a number of reasons why people have loyalty such as;

- Standing. The persons represents power or authority like a King or President.
- Admiration, like to a movie or music star
- Believe, like a follower of religion
- Knowledge, the knowledge is unique or special
- Performances, like a sport star
- Association, when people want to be associated with you
- Future benefit, they expect to get better from you in the future

The first reasons of loyalty are strong and often solid in foundation. People who are loyal for such reason are this for life.

But the last three reasons are unstable loyalty and we should be concerned about the stability of it. We can say that the last two forms of loyalty must be considered negative as the person who is loyal is waiting for some profits out of the “relationship” . The last reason even has a gruesome kind which suggest “I wait till you die till I get my profit” form of loyalty.

Loyalty can be created by obligation. A good sample is the tattoo of the Japanese Yakuza or many of the Thai fighters. They get a tattoo on their body to prove a lifelong obligation to the organization. In the Western world we see this with motor clubs and gangs. But we could use the idea by asking our students to bring out the logo of the gym on all their social interactions such as on internet and more. The wearing of gym related clothing is also important. Let students show they are proud of being your student and that they are a member of your gym, the more they express the higher your chance on loyalty. This way of creating loyalty is by connection through personal obligation.

Another way to create loyalty is to set up a common goal for all members of the gym and members should join in to show their connection and social awareness. A good cause is a gym for poor children in certain districts of Thailand (this is just a sample idea) where all students help to finance the possibilities and also visit to help in person. In return they get original Thai training and hospitality. This way an emotional and social connection is established often for many years.

It is clear that the spiritual lessons of a good teacher are much more than physical training only. Every teacher should realize that loyalty of students is worth every bit of work you put in. To guide others mentally and spiritually you need to be prepared to evolve yourself. To enjoy Martial Arts you need a spiritual growth which supports all your physical activities, goals and gains. You will be enriched with unlimited pleasure in your life and good fortune.

## **Titles in Martial arts**

Sensei, shihan, sempei, kru, master, grandmaster, pendakar, sifu, pilatih and there are so many more titles in Martial Arts. So many that it is impossible for an outsider to understand what they represent. Every country has its own specific titles to go. Most of the words have the same meaning.

The use of titles is to command respect of followers and people in the same sport. Each title supposed to represent a level of knowledge and ability, the higher the title the more the carrier is supposed to know. The owner of the title also shows he is the “servant” of his students, he will guide them in their road to mastering the sport.

Through the years the use of titles has been disgraced often. Many people gave themselves a title which they did not deserve, this mainly happened in Western countries. As every sport and every country uses different titles it is a mess now and titles do not have a real value anymore. To check the quality of the teacher we should seek references and records. Deception is the name of the game and we should be cautious to any person showing or representing his / her title in the most strongest way possible. Real masters introduce themselves with a name not a title first.

I am not against the use of titles at all but it should be clear to the outsider who you are. To show you are real I suggest you to create proof as follow;

- A traceable and proven past that can be verified
- Every degree has a certain age attached. You cannot expect high standards from an 18 yrs old.
- A clear vision on life, lessons and the direction in life (goal setting)
- The social wish to teach and not to create followers (sectarian thinking)
- The title does represent something serious of value and distinguish

Diplomas can be faked. I wrote many educational programs, examined them and issued diplomas. To back up a diploma I advise students to follow the above mentioned guidelines and before becoming an active teacher to be assistant of a teacher and learn the insides before opening a gym.

Titles are not more than a symbol, they show the degree of development and qualities of a teacher in his sport. The most important signs of a spiritual leadership are charisma, knowledge and the wish to share both. Some teachers talk about secrets and hidden techniques they suggest things they will never be able to let it happen or come true. Techniques come in levels like we learn mathematics, it is impossible to jump levels if you do not understand the foundations. A good teacher tells you that you are not ready for certain technics and be patient.

## Dealing with the younger generations

Martial Arts are the ideal form of sport for young people to do. During growing up we suffer stress, competition forces, bullying and most of all we need to develop a personality. In Martial Arts there are so many directions that we can say that every person has a way to deal with their own body and mind. Growing up is a process that comes in periods which differ per person but have a general framework.

- From zero to the last grade of primary school. This time is shaping the kids and the dare and not-so-much-daring kids. Some grow up faster than others but in the last grade the realization often kicks in that great changes in life are coming. In this grade we see who will cause the problems in the future and who will not. This is a general perception not a statement that is always right.
- Middle and high school is a period where bullies really come to life, the silence of the majority does not control the over-shouting minority who is ruling the schools. Most people focus on the small group of problem makers and forgot to pay enough attention to the large numbers. With Martial Arts we empower the majority to control the minority of trouble makers.
- The University period is where a minority will go when high school is finished. Study at an University seems a better thing to do but during many research studies I found students to get some rather ugly habits at such places, one of it is the mis-use of alcohol.

During the school periods we see a development in the classes. Groups take shape within every class in the world. We see the development of;

1. Leaders, sometimes more than one in a class
2. Followers, this can split or unite classes with a direct result for the teachers
3. Neutrals, they do not choose sides but try to stay in the middle in every way
4. Victims, this is the group of pitiful kids which are destined to be bullied in their life

Leaders set out some lines of how they want a class to move. Most little leaders do not have a vision which can be used by the teachers. Kids who are natural born leaders develop a vision fast to stabilize their position, these kids are hard to deal with and need to be taken apart regularly for training. Gladly we do not meet many during our teaching time. Followers always challenge the leaders in a hidden way, they keep the leaders sharp. It is nature that a follower challenges the leader all the time, most followers wish to take over the leading role but fail to do so because of lack of control of others. Most leaders got down because of their closest followers. Within Martial Arts classes it is possible to use the leader / follower to create more powerful groups in the classes.

To have good result in your classes I have made a guideline for mental development.

1. From as young as possible the students start with target practice. Kids need coordination and neural control. To use bags, pads, pillows, balls and other materials as targets it is possible to develop the control of external forces like hitting, kicking and throwing but also the incoming powers such as receiving a throw, a punch or kick. We train with target to teach children that it is good and nice to hit targets for emotional outburst and not their friends. It is important that kids learn that anger and aggression are natural emotions and they should channel them toward objects. When you address every emotion positively you grow a mental stable child. Channeling is the keyword here not repression.
2. After the age of eight around 20% of the kids are willing to do sport in a more serious way. Do not bother what kind of sport, stimulate everything. It is important kids find their way to move without your manipulation to like your sport more. Due to the better neural control kids are able to learn higher technical abilities. It is important to work with an action = reward system. This system is based on name and fame and never or physical rewards as products and gifts. I advise to use certification or school announcement. We use different reward systems for;
  - a. Physical performances
  - b. Technical abilities
  - c. Perseverance
  - d. General performance
3. After twelve the puberty comes around and kids make rapid changes. Their mentality shows radical behavior due to the hormonal changes, but this strongly depends on cultural background, family situation and environment they grow up. We can separate the following groups;
  - i. Sportkids. Most participate in training already for a longer time, they are a separate group and distinguish themselves from the others. Too many changes in their environment work as a disturbing. It is a group that needs control and continuity.
  - ii. Supporters. This group looks a little like the mentioned followers but they come and go by the popularity of the gym, a movie or TV broadcast. They merely follow trends than people.



- iii. Talents. This “group” has high abilities and often good in many sports. It is hard to get them under control as they are bored soon due to the lack of constant challenges in our sports. They seek kicks and challenges which also puts them into the attention of others.
- iv. Workers. These are individuals who wish to reach something, they are willing to put a lot of effort in although they know and feel they cannot reach the top. They are often not seeking popularity but start with a sport to find “themselves” challenge their own abilities and seek their own borders. They have a wide interest in the sport and are open to learn as much as they can to take in their advantage.
- v. Swaggers. A group of often highly irritating, over confident individuals who show their street and other knowledge to whoever wants to hear and more often to who does not want to hear it. These individuals come with a small group of followers who think it is cool to join each other in messing up things. These kids must be treated only in likeminded groups. The more swaggers in one group the easier it is to control the group.
- vi. Seekers. Sometimes very talented people but more often “I do not know what I want or like” individuals. They come and go and you do not have any influence over them. For them the current society with its easy “light weight” connections is the ideal place to live. Commitment is often a strange word to them.

During lessons we have individuals who represents all these groups which makes teaching a hard job. As we are in Martial Arts and dealing with some form of risk it is important to have clear rules and regulations about behavior and control. You need to expect struggles between these individuals but avoid to get battles.

Teaching young people is strategy. During lessons with mixed groups it is important to observe the internal powers of the group. By often changing the structure of training and not let people who might be a potential problem train together you avoid the mentioned battles. Another way is group punishment to control the force dynamics. When you punish the group for the behavior of the individual, the group will challenge and control that individual more.

Most gyms in the Western world are full of young people between 12 – 20 years old. The majority of the lessons are filled with these groups. They are more competitive and have time to invest in sport. Martial Arts also give “face” to a youngster. It shows courage and gives the participant some kind of image in school and street.

A growing group of over 30 is waiting for opportunities, they are the people who did train in past years, past the turbulent years of setting up families and carrier and now came to a point they have time again for training. Teachers should pay more attention to this growing group which is also open to a more spiritual way of training.

## Books written by Arnaud van der Veere

**Kick Boxing (1984)**– the first book on this topic in Europe, publication early 1984. The book explains the techniques in a clear and easy way. Most of the current trainers and top-fighters started with this book as it has been also used for over five years as the leading guide by the National Kick Boxing organizations for education purpose. It was a top-seller of publisher Elmar and no longer available.

**Ninja, de kracht van het ninjutsu (1987)** – the first book of its kind in Europe on the secret art of fighting of the Ninja, or Yamabushi, a secret society in the time of the Samurai in Japan. The book explains clearly many self-defense and attack techniques and the unique fighting style of the Ninja. This book is basis of the development of many other fighting arts that are currently popular. The book is still available in Dutch only.

**Budo kracht (1993)** – the first book dealing about power and speed & agility training specific for fighting arts. The writer researched the development, progress, and integration from the knowledge of Body Building and Fitness into the active power use in Martial Arts. The book is no longer available.

**Reishandboek Vietnam (1994)** – Elmar was the first publisher to take Vietnam into the travel guide series. As Arnaud van der Veere was involved in the promotion and development of the country as consultant and local expert. Arnaud wrote a guide that included poetry to reflect the feelings he had while traveling in the country. It was the first book with a full train schedule, This was copied worldwide after the edition.

**Age Control (1997)** – The aging process is unstoppable, in contradiction with Anti-Aging Arnaud van der Veere wrote the book to explain how a person is able to control the aging with simple but yet effective methods. It explains the way to eat, drink, use of products like smoking, drinking, medicines, and supplements. One important part is about physical activities.

**Resocialize & reprogram our youth (1999)** – This contains special programs for complex youth issues such as addiction, obesities, ADHD, and other problems with youth. The booklet was written to promote and inform officials of Governments and large scale organizations of the possibilities of BOT projects in their country.

**Fight therapy** – A booklet based on the combination of cognitive development of using martial arts as part of a treatment program for depression, addiction or autism. The program is also used with problem groups that are often considered untreatable. The booklet explains the terms how to use the therapy and.

**Kick2beFit** – A fitness-related program developed for a non-aggressive use of martial arts techniques against a standing or hanging boxing bag. The booklet is developed for professionals to teach them how to use the program in a fitness related way to improve skills of students.

**Home Fitness** – A DVD developed with a number of large-scale fitness organizations to promote the use of fitness at home with practical home use fitness products. The DVD is a combination of technical information, food schedules and information and how to build your own training schedule it is a highly comprehensive movie based trainings tool

**Bag Workout** – The first of its kind in the world training DVD with instructions of how to train on a boxing bag. The DVD is filled with short movies of how to train on a boxing bag in a multi-disciplinary way. We show the training of children and adults. Instructions are given in boxing, kicking and all other forms of enjoying workouts on a hanging or standing boxing bag.

**Poetry e-motion** –Arnaud van der Veere is a gifted poet. This is his first album with around 60 poems in the English language. It was distributed amongst a large group of artist around the world in 1995 and since than many of his poems are sited around the Internet.

**FIMTT training manual** – The official training instruction manual for the Federation of Independed Muay Thai Trainers. This book is written to promote the Muay Thai sport and is used by international recognized organizations to teach future instructors for many years.

**DWC Dynamic weight control** – Dynamic Weight Control was developed as an alternative way of training with free weights. The book is an instruction manual with attached movies and describes over 40 different moves with muscular explanations and information on related sport applications.

Functional Fitness – This small booklet explains the use of fitness in its most useful forms. Functional fitness is related to the practical daily situations in work and life. The program is so called adaption related which refers to the use of training methods of own body weight and overload principles. At functional fitness we use not only standard fitness gear but also daily instruments as boxes, chairs, cupboards, poles and all available at a specific working area.

Nationaal Convenant Preventieve Gezondheid – (2009), this book is written in relation with the Dutch Government changes toward Preventive healthcare. It shows the current situation in 2009 and what has been done by officials and the sport world to improve health awareness with the public. In the book Arnaud van der Veere gave advise of weak and strong development processes and how to change the healthcare into a prevention care system.

Good Night Sleep (China) (2010)/ PMPH – This book is specially written for the Chinese market to advise and assist persons with sleep disorders. The book targets the reader to use simple methods without the use of pharmaceutical and is handing special methods to improve the quality of sleep.

Addiction (China) (2011) / PMPH– This book is written for the Chinese market and explains the most common legal addictions. The book explains how people get addicted and how to recognize addiction before they occur. It describes smoking, alcohol misuse, gambling, Internet addiction, dating dependency and other forms of computer addiction. The book also gives samples of how to solve these cases. It is a practical book.

Relationship for woman of 30+ (China) (2012) / PMPH – The first book in China written by a foreigner about the problems of the Chinese woman in a changing society. The book shows the position of the woman in relation with her environment, education and men in general. An important topic of the book is how to find a man and how to separate. Both topics are highly controversial and the approach is completely different from the Chinese vision.

Girl Power (China) (2012) – The one child policy made it complicated for young girls to grow up and be advised. Most parents are not able to inform their children well about the changes of life during puberty and the risk they encounter on internet, during love affairs, whit having sex or even dating in general. The book explains clearly the way to control and understand life in a modern society.

Chinese Body Language (China) (2013) / PMPH – Asian body language has been a secret until this book. In this book Arnaud van der Veere describes the way Chinese use body language in their own specific way. The book is written to teach and make Chinese aware of their own body language is every situation. With this book Arnaud van der Veere proves to have a profound comprehensive knowledge of the Chinese society and the cultural aspects of the daily and business life.

Relationships for woman 30+ (Indonesia) (2013) – This book is the Indonesian language version of the Chinese edition with additional information and edited texts. The content suits better with a Muslim oriented and male dominated society.

Muay Thai (English)(2011) – In cooperation with the famous Meyer & Meyer publisher / Germany the book is a complete re-write of Arnaud van der Veere first book in 1984. This book targets the Muay Thai enthusiast from begin till advanced. The book explains the competitive orientation of the sport and the cognitive issues in relation to training and participation in standard and special classes.

Muay Thai (German)(2012) – The in German translated version of the English book. This book targets the Muay Thai enthusiasts from beginners to advanced. The book explains the competitive orientation of the sport and the cognitive issues in relation to training and participation in standard and special classes

Practical Buddhism (China) – Buddhism has many followers. Most hardly know the original scriptures but follow some rites that they have been taught by others. This book is written to promote the use of Buddhism in daily life from the experience of the writer. It is a very practical and useful book.

Boy Power (China)(2013) – Written for the boys growing up in a one-child policy oriented China of today. For a boy it is a complicated matter to grow up without the assistance of brothers and an over active mother. This book is written to assist the boys to pass puberty as safe as possible and advise them how to build an independent lifestyle in an ever increasing complexity of the Chinese society.

Law of Life (2014) – Book about the purpose and causes of life as a whole and the reading as specific target. The book is to build and organize a better world.

Spiritual Muay Thai and The spirit of fighting arts – two comprehensive books about the effects of fighting arts on a mental level. The books explain the use of rules and regulations, respect and above all a personal development.