

THE SENSEI
HIS NATURE AND ROLE

GMAU PRESS



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SENSEI (sehn' say) Japanese: “teacher” or “instructor”. A term used in all Japanese and Okinawan martial arts.

The Overlook Martial Arts Dictionary

by Emil Farkas and John Corcoran
Overlook Press

SENSEI: “Teacher “, “Born before”. A title which expresses deference, used towards those who have accomplished something of note. In the martial arts this title is sometimes reserved for the chief or creator of a Ryu or style, in general a 10th Dan. Today, depending on the school, it may be reserved for the head teacher of a DOJO or used for referring to martial arts masters, or even simply for anyone who is instructing at the time.

A Dictionary of the Martial Arts

by Louis Frederic
Charles E. Tuttle Company

INTRODUCTION

“A sensei must always be an example of high virtue. His relationships with his students must be, above all, objective and well-defined. Only in this way is the perpetual learning and improvement process kept intact. Since all martial arts training is primarily oriented toward the spirit of self-reliance, it is the SENSEI’S obligation to set an example for his students in all things: in excellence, discipline, moderation, and wisdom. A SENSEI thoroughly learns the art of helping himself before he obtains the ability to help others.... The SENSEI gives recognition and confidence when deserved; strong, honest criticism when necessary. All SENSEIS are perfectionists; thus, compliments are rare in a real Karate school. Every student learns to take it for granted that the basic requirement for continual development is to put forth his utmost effort at all times.”

Peter Urban

“The teacher of today must be a communicator, a facilitator who can help his or her student learn the true way of the martial arts.”

Daeshik Kim

“No true master flaunts his trophies, certificates, and awards, though he would not deny he earned them if occasion demanded. Modesty is not a virtue if false. To light a candle only to hide it is wasteful. ‘So let your light shine,’ said the great Master, that others may see it and do likewise.... The master influences others by their awareness of him. In the martial arts, ‘leader influence’ refers to a positive contribution to the attainment of personal and social improvement, and in this the master plays a crucial role in the activities of his disciples.”

Sang Kyu Shim

The nature and role of a SENSEI (SIFU in soft-styles and SA-BUHM NIM in Korean) received considerable attention in the formative years of the martial arts. It was understood that it was the instructor himself which made the key difference in what a student would learn and how he would use it. The techniques themselves played a secondary role. The pages of history in the martial arts contain story after story of famous practitioners who did little to teach their students the proper techniques or responsibilities in the martial arts. Those students often marred the name of the arts, or the art often died with the instructor. However, history also offers several good examples of instructors. It is well recognized that everything rises and falls on leadership. A SENSEI is a leader. Be it good or bad, the fact remains that he is a leader. Students will rise no higher than the SENSEI.

In America an interest in the martial arts amongst Christians is on the increase. Because of this, it is appropriate that we revive the fundamentals of the true martial arts SENSEI and ensure that these fundamentals as we apply them are consistent with the Bible.

This booklet will look briefly at the role played by the SENSEI in the traditional martial arts and then provide an in-depth characterization of the nature of a true SENSEI. The characteristics are categorized into the three key areas of the SENSEI: spiritual, mental and physical. The specific tasks to be performed by the SENSEI will be explained in a closing chapter.

As a level-set, the Christian SENSEI should be a born-again Christian, be obedient to Christ in his life, have a burden for lost souls, understand the relationship of the arts and the Bible, impart values based on Scriptural truths to his students, live a clear example to his students (both in the martial arts and his way of life), have an earned black belt, have a solid martial arts background in a variety of techniques, have demonstrated teaching abilities, be continually developing his understanding of the arts, have a vision for his students and team which is glorifying to God, and have developed a plan to realize that vision.

It is important that the reader recognize that the martial arts is more than a mere physical fighting skill, representing as it does a way of thinking, but a pattern of life requiring strict discipline. The art of karate is a way of life, not just self-defense. The student of the art prepares himself for the real battle, for winning by losing, for he knows that this is the most intelligent strategy for success. The student of the art has an entire arsenal of techniques from which to choose and due to his confidence, he can respond creatively to a potential conflict, whereas the traditional approach is "might is right." The SENSEI must not only exemplify creative application, but also transfer this concept into the very fiber of the student.

Historically, the martial arts implied a “way to be traveled in life.” As the seventeenth-century writer, Daidoji Yusan stated: “The idea most vital and essential to the BUSHI is that of death, which you ought to have before your mind day and night, night and day, from the dawn of the first day of the year till the last minute of the last day of it. When this notion takes hold of you, you are able to discharge your duties to their fullest extent; you are loyal to your master, filial to your parents, and naturally can avoid all kinds of disasters. Not only is your life itself thereby prolonged, but your personal dignity is enhanced. Think of what a frail thing life is, especially that of a warrior. This being so, you will come to consider every day of your life your last and dedicate it to the fulfillment of your obligations. Never let the thought of long life seize upon you, for then you are apt to indulge in all kinds of dissipation, and end your days in dire disgrace.”

The concept of the martial arts being a way of life is carried in the very words used to represent it. The Japanese MICHU, the Korean DO, the Chinese TAO, the Greek HODOS’ (John 14: 6) all carry the concept of a “way of life”. The essence of the “way” is characterized in seven distinct virtues as identified by Inazo Nitobe, who shows great evidence at having been a Christian.

1. Justice: The talent and skills of the BUGEI in action could not be employed without a sense of justice. Dishonesty and deceit did not constitute justice, even if supporting a loyalty --- they were unworthy acts.
2. Courage: Courage was the tempering influence upon the precept of justice, preventing cowardice from infiltrating that precept. It meant an integration of moral and physical courage, not simply physical bravery or daring. Courage was based on serenity. It was the product of experience. From childhood, the BUSHI had almost daily experiences that prepared him for battles. The BUSHI preferred death to retreat or capture.
3. Benevolence: It is a composite of magnanimity, affection, love, pity, and sympathy. Benevolence was seasoned with justice and tempered by right reason so as not to be taken as weakness.
4. Politeness: Although the earlier BUSHI valued courtesy, it was always related to self-protection. Courtesy disciplined the soul and brought a refined harmony of mind and body.
5. Veracity: The concept of honesty rose from the Nara period which saw “divine protection based upon honesty.” Lying was dishonorable and was thought to lead one eventually to a dishonorable death. Written pledges were unnecessary because the word of the warrior was sufficient.

6. Honor: Honor involved more than a BUSHI'S reputation; it dug deeply into his ancestry. For honor the BUSHI would quickly empty his scabbard. The taking of life was sanctioned if done in defense of honor. He was prone to slay all who offended his honor.

7. Loyalty: Underlying his philosophy of life was the warrior's idea of loyalty to his superiors. Glorifying the idea of "service and fealty to a lord-leader-cause," the BUSHI'S loyalty was firm. Even if the superior fell in defeat, there would be no transferring of allegiance.

Historically, these characteristics are those which one would expect to find in a SENSEI.

A BUSHI was a student of the martial arts. Rules of conduct existed for the BUSHI in every fiefdom. One such set of regulations formulated by Kato Kiyomasa, a celebrated general of the sixteenth century described the conduct of the student and instructor alike in the following way.

1. A rigorous, disciplined daily routine must be strictly observed.
2. One's vocation must also be his avocation. Recreation should consist of activities that support one's task and ministry.
3. Extravagance in attire is to be avoided. Moderation is the best rule.
4. One should pay close attention to his diet and moderation in eating is advised. Dining in solitude is also good for the soul.
5. The SAMURAI must continue to study and develop his physical skills.
6. Dancing and amusements which distract one from his mission and duty are forbidden.
7. The SAMURAI should be an avid reader and should also develop and refine his skills in the fine arts.

In 1645, the celebrated samurai, Miyamota Musashi laid out a code of behavior for those who wanted to learn the strategy of the “Way” as follows:

1. Do not think dishonestly.
2. The Way is in training.
3. Become acquainted with every art.
4. Know the Ways of all professions.
5. Distinguish between gain and loss in worldly matters.
6. Develop intuitive judgment and understanding for everything.
7. Perceive those things which cannot be seen.
8. Pay attention even to trifles.
9. Do nothing which is of no use.

From the preceding three lists, it can be seen that the martial arts, from a traditional perspective, are clearly more than fighting skills. They embody a way of life. The SENSEI must not only model and live the “way” himself, but he must also impart the totality of the “way” to his students.

The original formalization of the martial arts as it took place in the Shaolin Temples bound the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of a complete man. This was a carry-over from the roots of Buddhism and Taoism. These two religions can be traced back to the sixth-century B.C. in China. The ground from which they sprung was rich in the worship of a monotheistic, triune, supreme god named Shang-Ti. This god was remarkably similar to the God of the Bible because the people of China carried this religious heritage with them as God scattered them abroad from the tower of Babel.

Other Oriental masters have also stated that equilibrium of the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects is essential lest one lose the essence of the arts.

While many of the arts as practiced in the world today have deviated from the original intentions, it need not be so. The role of the Christian SENSEI is to obtain this unity. This can only be accomplished by a thorough understanding of the martial arts and the Bible.

SPIRITUAL CHARACTERISTICS

Of the three aspects in every man, the first to fail is the spiritual. Jeremiah tells us that “the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked”, and left to himself, the natural man will do evil things. Since a falling away in this area directly causes decay in the mental and physical area of one’s life, Satan attacks it vigorously. It is here that Biblical standards must be held high. Without a strong fundamental spiritual component, a SENSEI can not succeed.

A. QUALIFICATIONS. The book of I Timothy identifies several qualifications for church officers. In all aspects, a Christian SENSEI should meet those same standards. While the language in this portion of scripture is male in gender, it should be realized that a martial arts SENSEI is genderless. Male and female are equally competent in this role.

1. A SENSEI should be “grave”, worthy of respect, honorable, not shifty or unstable in his faith (3:8).
2. He must not be “double-tongued”, not a double talker, but sincere in what he says and consistent. He must always be truthful, even if it hurts (3:8). The Japanese word for a hypocrite is NIGON, or two-tongued.
3. A SENSEI must not drink alcoholic beverages (3:8).
4. A SENSEI must not "love money," that is, not be greedy for money (3:8).
5. A SENSEI must “hold the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.” Being saved is a mystery to the lost, so the SENSEI must preach the mystery (Gospel) to the lost. He must be an active soul-winner. His conscience must be clean; no sin should go unconfessed (3:9).
6. A SENSEI must “first be proved.” Before becoming a SENSEI he should be given other jobs as a test of his character and ability (3:10).
7. A SENSEI must be “found blameless.” The Greek here implies irreproachable, that is, not having to be rebuked for anything in his life. The matter of Christian separation comes into view here. If a man cannot be obedient to God in this matter, it would be a terrible mistake to place him in a position of leadership and authority (3:10, 2 Cor 6:14-18).
8. A SENSEI must be faithful in all things pertaining to his daily Christian life in addition to those tasks assigned to him as a SENSEI (3:10).
9. A SENSEI must have a good spouse. She must be worthy of respect and thoughtful. She can not be slanderous, a gossip, and must not touch alcohol. The wife is to be faithful in all things (3:11).

10. A SENSEI must be "married only once" (that is only one living wife) (3:12).

11. A SENSEI must "rule his house well." His wife and children must be in proper Biblical submission. This requires a balance of love and respect on the part of all in the home. He must maintain this in the home, to be expected to run a martial arts school properly (3:12, Eph 5:26-6:4).

The blessing of God is essential to establish a proper martial arts team.

B. SOURCE. A SENSEI must recognize God as the source of all wisdom, knowledge and instruction (Ps. 111:10, Pr 1:7). He must believe that the Bible in its original text was the inspired and complete word of God. This Bible should be the text book for all manner of living (1 Tim. 3:16-17). To be a SENSEI, a man must:

1. Be faithful to God and his service (1 Cor 4:2).
2. Glorify God by being a soul-winner (John 15:8).
3. Have a daily time of study and prayer with God (Josh 1:8 and Ps 1:1-2).
4. Be in the Will of God for his life (Rom 12:1-2).
5. Be pressing on to the goal God has laid on his heart (Phil 3:13-14)
6. Recognize that his source of strength and power is God (Zech. 4:6), and if he is not doing the Will of God, he can not succeed (Ps. 127:1).
7. Not be a quitter (Lu. 9:62).

If the SENSEI is in the Will of God concerning a martial arts team and his heart is right, God will surely give him the skill and wisdom to succeed.

C. DISCERNMENT. The Word of God is truth (John 17: 17). Every aspect of Christian living and a martial arts team must be in harmony with the Bible. This must be used as a base for evaluating the arts. Here the spiritual maturity of the SENSEI is even more important, as only the spiritually mature Christian is able to make the proper judgment and evaluation necessary to be a leader (Heb 5:14). The SENSEI must be able and willing to test everything in the arts to ensure that it meets with the approval of Gods' Word (1 Thess. 5:21 and Is. 8:20).

D. LEADER. The SENSEI is a leader, and as such, he must have a vision (Pr. 29:18) and a plan to fulfill that vision (Phil. 3:13-14). What is your own personal goal? How will this glorify God? What goals do you have for your martial arts team and each individual member? Answers to each of these questions are necessary for a SENSEI to fulfill his task. If he has no vision, he is not a leader and should not be a SENSEI. A leader with a vision from God:

1. is excited and busy planning
2. is involved in accomplishing his vision
3. never forgets his vision and feels personally responsible for its completion
4. will associate with successful people and read inspiring and challenging material
5. will study his material in detail and organize it so that his vision can be realized
6. will impart his vision to others to carry it forward with him.

A leader is an individual with a purpose in life. He has found the Will of God and is living it out. He has goals to achieve the purpose. He has determination. He is a man of great faith. He has perseverance and can get back up after a fall. He has a worthy cause and is living by principles. A leader has simplicity, and can explain complex ideas to beginners. He is humble. He is obedient and has learned how to yield to authority. A leader is not self-reliant, but dependent and God-reliant. Such is a Christian SENSEI.

MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

The spiritual dimension will keep one in close communion with God and provide the wisdom necessary to be a SENSEI. It provides the Will. Now the mind must purpose to follow that Will. There are several characteristics that are essential for a SENSEI in this regard:

A. MENTAL AWARENESS. The SENSEI must recognize that there are several levels of mental awareness, and then carefully progress towards the spiritual level.

1. Physical. Here one is learning the basics and is purely developing physical techniques.
2. Combative. This is the basic motivational level and a self-defense aspect.
3. Competitive. At this level, the physical techniques are practiced under rules designed for safety. An emphasis on tournaments would be evident here.
4. Aesthetic. Practice and technique now take on new meaning because the art now becomes an enjoyable expression as the practitioner becomes attached to the art.
5. Meditative Discipline. This is a transitional level to the higher forms as the student develops his ability to mediate and focus his energies (spiritual, mental and physical) together to utilize the art for Gods' glory.
6. Philosophic. The student broadens his perspective as an understanding of the philosophy of the arts emerges. A development of values, a sense of history, a grasp of the totality of the arts, the Bible and a life-style take shape.
7. Spiritual. The student becomes fully alive and integrated with the spiritual, mental, and physical components in harmony.

A first-degree black belt could find himself in levels three or four. A second-degree should be at least at level four or five. A third degree, which is where an individual can become a full SENSEI, must be in the fifth or sixth level.

B. ATTITUDE. A SENSEI must have respect for all those in authority. Authority is God-ordained (Rom. 13:1-7) and must be acknowledged. This can range from the policemen on the corner, to elected representatives, to higher belt levels in his martial art school. Age is not a factor here, only position. God established the local church as the means for Christians to fellowship, grow, train, and reach the world for Christ. The pastor is the leader of the church. A SENSEI must be an active member of a church and supportive of its leadership. Aside from glorifying God, the martial arts have no other eternal value.

There is no place in the martial arts for a SENSEI who is haughty, proud, and boastful. Recognizing how little he truly knows and how much work yet needs to be accomplished, a SENSEI should stand with the Apostle Paul as he stated “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves” (Phil. 2:3). A spirit of meekness (great power under great control) is necessary to be a SENSEI. Many early Chinese masters kept not only their methods, but also the knowledge of their prowess secret. They believed that those whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make proud.

A SENSEI will accept the fact that he has never quite achieved his goal or vision. Perfection is always just a step away. Once a goal is realized, a new one takes its place. He will never settle for anything but the best (Phil. 3:10). With his vision in front of him he will continue to run the race with patience (Heb. 12: 1). Continuing to draw strength and purpose from God, a SENSEI will persevere. He will keep his mind on the vision lest he weary in the work (Heb. 12:3). He will be faithful in the work, always doing whatever is needed (1 Cor 4:2). With a vision from God, a SENSEI will never quit the work (Luke 9:62).

Finally, a SENSEI must recognize that as a leader, he is a role model for all his students. Students can not be driven to black belt. They must be lead. If the SENSEI has not disciplined himself to live right, his students will also fall short of the mark. A SENSEI is accountable for the spiritual, mental and physical growth of his students.

C. ORGANIZED. God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). A disorganized, poorly run martial arts school is not glorifying to God. The SENSEI must have a class routine, a place and position for everyone and everything, a reputation for promptness, and keep accurate and complete records.

If a SENSEI leaves a school and the school shuts down; or if a student achieves a black belt and then establishes his own school and it fails, the SENSEI himself has failed. A SENSEI must be a good delegator, training those under his charge to be leaders themselves some day (Ex. 18:20). This is one of the roles played by an effective KAI. A KAI is an organizational layer put in place to govern the affairs of a specific ryu (style or system). The KAI leadership must hold sensei accountable.

A SENSEI will always keep the three major aspects of completeness (spiritual, mental and physical) in front of himself and will strive for an equilibrium (Luke 9:23). An overemphasis on any area at the expense of another will result in a lopsided student who is not correctly equipped to serve the Lord.

D. LEARNING. The SENSEI must be an avid reader of not only the Bible, but also leadership and martial arts books. He should have an extensive and growing personal library. His thirst for more knowledge to enable him to be a better leader is unquenchable.

E. **DISCIPLINED.** The whole topic of mental characteristics revolves around discipline. A SENSEI must be capable of self-discipline (1 Cor. 9:27), for he is the authority figure in the school. If a man is unable to discipline himself to pray daily for strength, intercession wisdom (1 Thes. 5:17), practice and exercise his body daily (1 Tim. 4:8, and 1 Cor. 6:19), study and grow mentally (2 Tim. 2:15), memorize scripture (Josh. 1:8 and Ps. 119: 11), and have daily personal devotions (Ps. 1) he is not properly qualified to be a SENSEI.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

A Christian SENSEI carries a load of responsibility and as a result, much is expected of him (Luke 12:48).

A. **BODY.** The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). It must be cared for and treated properly. As the leader, the SENSEI must be a man of high standards in this regard. He must have an understanding of the impact of drugs, weight and exercise on the body. These principles must be taught to his students and practiced in his own life. There is little room for compromise. A clean testimony is required of a leader. He must not use any form of tobacco, drugs or alcoholic beverages. Since his body is the vehicle to be used to live out the Will of God, it must be kept healthy through a regular regimen of weight control and exercise. The Apostle Paul found it necessary to discipline himself to keep his body a fit temple for the Lord's work (1 Cor. 9:27). Exercise and conditioning can be an end in itself and this must be avoided. All things must be done in moderation (Pr. 25:16-17) with the goal of serving God in mind.

B. **TECHNIQUE.** The SENSEI must be a student of the martial arts. He must have a good understanding of the underlying fundamentals of his art style and apply them to all his techniques. It is not just a punch, it is balance, focus, relaxation, and breathing... he must truly know every move of every form and basic. As a student, one "goes" through his forms; as a SENSEI, one "knows" his forms. For each move, there is a proper place for the head, eyes, hands, and feet. The SENSEI must be able to immediately spot improper moves and positions. Allowing errors to continue (out of ignorance or lack of attention) will destroy a class. They will become a part of the student and then will be propagated to others through that student's teaching. The SENSEI must know his techniques because he has no one else to ask or look to for a question. If through lack of practice, he should forget a basic or advanced move, it has been lost.

The SENSEI must recognize that both the hard and soft, systems (RYU) have techniques to offer to a successful martial arts school. Concentrating on one style to the exclusion of the other is a disservice to his students and the arts.

C. **APPEARANCE.** The SENSEI is a representative of the arts, his church and his God. There should never be any doubt as to his leadership. He is to stand, talk, walk, sit, look and dress like a Christian and leader. Any RYU would be remiss in issuing a black belt or SENSEI title to a person who is lacking in the mental or spiritual areas of his life regardless of how good he is physically. He should stand tall and proud (with humility),

talk with firmness, walk with a direction and purpose, sit straight, and keep his body clean.

DOJO TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. ADMINISTRATIVE. The administrative duties of the martial arts school are spread across the three SENSEI levels.

1. Assistant DOJO SENSEI. This is held by a brown or first-degree black belt. He is responsible for maintaining accurate DOJO records (attendance, injuries, fees, history). He is to lead in simple drills and help demonstrate techniques to the class. He will help supervise the practice and provide a better student-to-teacher ratio. In this role he is the first to demonstrate proper etiquette for the class. The assistant SENSEI is the one to call the class to order upon the arrival of the SENSEI. He is responsible for an accurate inventory of all supplies and for the care and maintenance of the DOJO and equipment. He must recognize and maintain his position as an instructor in the class. This requires a degree of separation from the students. DOJO business should never be discussed with students. Other instructors are not to be corrected in front of the class.

2. DOJO SENSEI. This is held by first, second or third-degree black belts. The DOJO SENSEI is responsible for the overall school operation. It is he who will delegate specific tasks to the assistant SENSEI. He will establish the class content and format. The final decision for all promotions will be made by the DOJO SENSEI. Since he's training up leaders, he must not correct his assistant SENSEI while they are teaching.

3. Full SENSEI. This requires a rank of at least third-degree black belt. The full SENSEI will be responsible for more than one school. He would also be a candidate for a state representative or field representative in some organizations (KAI). As a full SENSEI, he supervises the training of other SENSEI and will have major roles in regional clinics. He is responsible for ensuring that thorough and uniform ranking requirements exist for all KYU (white through brown) levels. He will conduct exams and supervise promotions.

B. BALANCED CLASS FORMAT. It has been said that one can punch and kick his way to black belt, but more depth and scope is required to advance beyond first degree. A responsible SENSEI will recognize that:

No one style will suffice for all situations, knowledge of fundamental precepts is necessary for a true understanding and application of the martial arts, and man has spiritual, mental, and physical needs. All three must be met and nurtured.

The SENSEI will be well-read and experienced so that he can establish a class content and format which will grow his students, train leaders for God's service, and prepare his students for real-life situations. It may not be possible to address all aspects of the art in each class, so the SENSEI must plan his classes to rotate key aspects by the class on a routine basis. A school should teach at least the following areas:

1. Spiritual truths and their application to the Christian life of a martial artist
2. Fundamentals of the art style (focus, concentration, balance, relaxation, breathing...)
3. Limbering up of the body
4. Proper stances
5. Basic movements to serve as building blocks
6. Forms (KATA or HYUNG) to organize the basic moves
7. Simple and complex counterattacks
8. Nerve center locations, attacks and the physical results of the attack
9. Restraint techniques
10. Sparring (controlled fighting)
11. First aid and safety
12. How to talk your way out of a conflict
13. Legal considerations
14. Proper etiquette
15. How to fall and roll
16. Basics on how to handle street situations
17. Board and concrete breaking techniques

To provide order in the class, a standard format should be established. An example could be:

1. Opening Prayer.
2. Limber and basics
3. Body conditioning through exercises
4. Technique 1
5. Devotions and lecture time
6. Technique 2
7. Sparring
8. Limber down
9. Closing prayer

During the technique 1 and 2 time, techniques from the previous list could be taught and practiced on a rotational basis.

C. VARIED TEACHING METHODS. There is no “one” best way to teach a class. There are several methods and each has a proper place in a class routine. A SENSEI must understand the advantages and disadvantages of each and use them appropriately in the class. Some examples are:

1. Command Style. The instructor shouts commands and there is no room for feedback. Students merely obey upon command.
2. Task Teaching. Students are assigned a task or technique to perform, thus freeing the SENSEI for other activities.
3. Reciprocal Teaching. The students evaluate and assist each other, thus providing social interaction.
4. Guided Discovery. The SENSEI has a goal. By asking the students questions which require them to think and evaluate what they are doing, the SENSEI leads the student to the goal.
5. Problem Solving. Only the goal is given to the student. The student must seek and find methods of reaching that goal.

6. Modeling. The SENSEI performs the task with student, thus enabling the student see and practice the task.

D. BALANCE. The SENSEI must provide an equilibrium in the class teachings. The Bible is clear in its teaching of what a true man is. The “world” may not accept this, but that does not change its truth. Man is a spiritual, mental and physical being. All three must be taught, practiced and expected if a SENSEI expects to do a proper job. The use of the martial arts by a Christian is coming under scrutiny due to beliefs that:

1. It promotes violence
2. It is connected with Oriental religions and the occult
3. The Bible prohibits the use of force.

Each of these can be refuted and set aside by a SENSEI who knows the Bible and the true martial arts. The SENSEI must constantly keep the truths of the Bible in front of himself and use them as he establishes each aspect of his martial arts school.

The SENSEI must also provide balance and structure by dealing with the various kinds of problem students one finds in martial arts schools. He must be able to recognize and deal with:

1. The eager beaver. He wants to learn to kill in three easy lessons and jumps at the advanced techniques before he knows the basics. The SENSEI must patiently lead him to understand the true value of the arts and drill on the basics.
2. Mr. “what if”. Some students can think of countless “what if” situations. Patience is needed as the SENSEI teaches the concept of “learn the principle and this yields varied applications.”
3. Previous training. “I learned it this way” and “you don't do things the same.” There can be only one leader. The SENSEI must stress this fact and explain individual differences. The student must conform to the SENSEI.
4. The discipline problem. The show-off or inattentive student not only distracts others but challenges the authority of the SENSEI. The rules of etiquette, martial arts tradition and Biblical leadership principles must be clear and enforced. Violators must be disciplined by repetitive techniques, suspension or revocation of KYU rank.

E. **ETIQUETTE.** Etiquette is defined as “the forms required by good breeding or prescribed by authority to be observed in social or official life.” Strict codes of etiquette were established and practiced by the Orientals. This was a cornerstone of the arts themselves. Although they may “offend” some modern instructors, these rules of etiquette as modified to conform to Biblical teachings are essential to build the total man. A SENSEI must know this etiquette, practice it himself and incorporate it into his school

F. **LEGAL/SAFETY.** Each school must provide an environment where the martial arts can be practiced in safety. The SENSEI is responsible for establishing and maintaining that environment. First aid equipment must be available and personnel trained in its use must be present.

The legal ramifications of the martial arts and their use in a given locality must be understood and taught to the students. In general, the students are to be sure:

1. They have a right to be in a certain place
2. They utilize methods of avoidance
3. They issue adequate warning prior to using their skills
4. They use equal and justifiable force.

G. **EXTERNAL.** The SENSEI is the interface to the world beyond the martial arts school. As the leader, he is responsible to provide a positive-image to the pastor and church family. They should be kept informed of the status of the school (number of students, special accomplishments, problems, demonstrations, and spiritual fruit). The SENSEI is to arrange for all club demonstrations. He must insure that time and facilities will permit a clear presentation of the Gospel through the martial arts. Each demonstration should be viewed, planned and prepared for as a new and exciting way to represent Christ. The SENSEI is also the interface to the martial arts organization (KAI). He is responsible for providing clear, organized, and prompt data on his school’s operation.

CONCLUSION

Everything rises and falls on leadership. An organization whose goal is to build men for the Lord's work can not afford to utilize unqualified SENSEI. They must be tested to ensure that they are able and willing to do the work. Why not the best?

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