

WARRIOR'S CODE

TRADITIONAL MARTIAL ART ETIQUETTE

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For the Christian Martial Arts Warrior, etiquette and protocol move beyond simple expertise in physical skills. They incorporate the development and mastery of the entire person. They involve the maturation of the spiritual character. Such progression and qualities of divine character traits are the foundation for advanced leadership within the martial arts and the Gospel Martial Arts Union organization.

Though ethics is instilled in part to control ones combativeness to a point, its main goal is to teach an inner relationship of respect and understanding toward one's teacher, fellow students, oneself and even toward the school from which one learns. Ethics help open pathways for one's internal comprehension and energy awareness. What follows are the skeletal rules and regulations of etiquette that govern the martial arts. Understanding the letter of the law is not the only objective; the devout and true martial artist also seeks to understand the spirit in which the law was written.

PERSONAL PROPRIETY

HONOR

- ✿ Psalms 104:1 *“Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honor and majesty.”*

Honoring the Lord Jesus Christ is the fundamental duty of every Warrior of God.

Always honor your family and give without the expectation of receiving. Strive for family honor. It is a lifetime responsibility.

- ✿ Exodus 20:12 *Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”*

Second to honoring your family, honor your teachers. They are to be treated like a father or mother, who gives you the art of life. Give and sacrifice without the expectation of receiving. This is a lifetime responsibility toward one's official teacher. Treat your fellow students as brothers or sisters. By giving and by helping them to be better you will strengthen yourself.

A courteous student bestows honor on his or her teacher. Others notice the proper behavior; this is a credit to the Sensei and sets a good example for the other students to follow. Conversely, discourteous behavior is dishonorable and sets a negative example. Such behavior is not only bad for the dojo, but also for the arts in general. One of the greatest downfalls of the martial artist is PRIDE. A sense of machismo that creates a “survival of the fittest” mentality is not compatible with the life of a Christian martial artist. Meekness (defined as great strength under great control) and humility are foremost of the character traits that we must strive to perfect.

- ✿ Romans 12:10, *“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another.”*

HUMILITY

- ✿ 1Peter 5:5, *“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”*

Senior students, be humble. Treat junior students as equals, thus enabling you to earn their respect of your position as a senior.

Junior students, be respectful to your seniors. Their treatment of you as an equal is a sign that they are acquiring deeper knowledge and are worthy of senior respect. Their humility is to be honored.

Never consider yourself knowledgeable, regardless of time in training. We are only on a staircase that is very long and with no apparent end.

Practice controlling your ego. Approach practice with a smile and from that you will get better at controlling it. Containment of one’s ego is essential for proper character. Remember, proper character is sharing and not competitive, unless you make it so.

Showing too much power in any joint exercises demonstrates that you have a low level of ego containment and lack the proper humility. The use of technique with kindness and appreciation is a sign of strength. To intimidate others is base. Instead, do all that you can to demonstrate containment of your ego; this is a sign of strength. When others better you do not attempt to get even with them. Compliment them on their achievements. Do not feel degraded about being bettered. View this as being helpful to your growth. They are giving you something to work toward for the future.

Recognize that everyone will have some strengths greater than your own and, regardless of their time in the arts, some weaknesses. Try to help them improve in their areas of weaknesses. In turn, your own weaknesses will eventually be strengthened. Senior students, you are responsible to demonstrate the “code of ethics” in and out of class. This will clearly indicate that you do not consider your art to be separate from your every day life, that it is in fact a part of everything you do.

TRUST

- ✿ 2Sa. 22:2-3, *“And he said, The Lord [is] my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; The God of my rock; in him will I trust: He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my Savior; thou savest me from violence.”*

The Christian Warrior is to put his faith and trust in God. He or she must also trust and rely on the judgment of the teachers and instructors (such as parents, pastors and others) whom God places in authority over us to edify us.

Rely on your teacher's judgment to the greatest extent possible. There may be times when you do not agree with policies or actions, but it is your responsibility to stand behind your teachers and strive for greater understanding, as the junior students do with you. Remember that you are on a single step; quite possibly the next step will give you a deeper insight.

Never ask for more knowledge. Let the teachers decide when you are ready. Asking is a sign that you have perfected that which has already been given to you. You must remember that any knowledge requires a lifetime of perfecting. Working hard on what you have already learned is the first sign that you are getting ready for more.

Remember that teachers are only human. They make mistakes and have problems like anyone else. Realize that no one will be a perfect example. Your kindness and understanding make you strong as you respect their humanity and appreciate their improvement.

Never openly criticize your teacher; this demonstrates a total lack of trust. Hold your doubts or criticisms to yourself; your viewpoint regarding the matter may eventually change regarding the matter. Criticizing your teacher implies that you are equal in knowledge. In essence you are saying that you need another teacher. This is poor conduct.

CRITICISM

- ✿ Romans 14: 19, *“let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.”*

Do not take criticism personally. Criticism is an opportunity to gain insight from another perspective. That is the reason to take classes in the first place. Teachers are no different, requiring criticism from their seniors to grow. Without self-examination inspired by suggestions or criticism, you are no better off than if you would read a book. We need other eyes to tell the real story.

Empty yourself of arrogance and conceit; empty your cup of tea. Invite criticism and suggestions from anyone. Often students who have experience can offer suggestions or catch something that is true and quite helpful- if you are open Remembering that we are all equal human beings helps us to be receptive to things that will help us grow. Thinking that you know a lot means that you know little.

APPEARANCE/CLEANLINESS

- ✿ Isa 60:1, *“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.”*
- ✿ Mat 5:16: *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”*

Refined cleanliness means refined mind. Clean clothes and body show by example the honor and ethics possessed by the Christian Warrior to the ungodly and lost world that surrounds him.

Always wear a clean and neat uniform with any designated insignia in their proper place. Sleeves and trouser legs should be cut to the correct length and never rolled-up. A wrinkled or soiled uniform indicates that you do not consider cleanliness or neatness as being important. Belts are never to touch the floor when being donned, nor are they to be washed. Belts should be tied with the knot open to the left (representing open-mindedness) and the ends should always hang evenly. Belts should not be twisted in the back.

Unauthorized patches and/or gi's are prohibited. Jewelry and watches are never to be worn during class. Shoes and socks are to be removed BEFORE entering the dojo area. Students should take pride in their appearance. You will never see an instructor in a dirty or worn-out uniform. Learn to follow the example of your seniors.

TENACITY

It is your responsibility to do your best in all classes. Do not allow yourself simply to follow or stand idle. Practice, regardless of your current ability or comprehension of a given technique. Do not complain of tiredness or inability to do the practice. Tenacity is consistency with or without the teacher being present. If you are tenacious you will always feel better when class has ended, and you will earn honor and respect. Idleness will provide idle instruction in return. One reason that you take instruction is to practice tenacity in learning.

BOWING IN CEREMONY

The senior student should call for line-up at the appointed time so that when Sensei enters, the class is ready to begin (the conscientious student SPRINTS to get into proper position). Attention is called when Sensei steps on deck. At this point Sensei will recognize any other Yudansha. Never bow a lower ranking dan onto the deck after class has begun! This is not an appropriate action since they were not on deck when class began. If Sensei would call attention to them, the class would then bow, but to do so is the higher dan's prerogative. Example: If a 6th dan were running a class, you would not bow on a 5th dan and so on. If the class is in a stretching exercise or drill, they will stop upon a command from the senior and rise to bow Sensei onto the deck. Not doing this indicates to all, and especially to Sensei, that it is too much trouble or an inconvenience at the time to do so, which is most disrespectful.

Bowing is the martial arts' way of showing courtesy and respect to fellow martial artists. It is always appropriate regardless of where or when it is done. Not doing so indicates that you do not recognize the other person as a fellow student or a senior. Bow before and after a conversation, after drills, classes, etc. The junior will always bow first followed by

the senior, never in reverse. If the senior bows first, then the lower rank student has not learned his place in the lineage. Bowing to your teacher and to other students coming in or out of your training area is a sign of respect.

Senior students should know and feel comfortable with the rules and traditions of proper Classroom Etiquette. They should be willing and able to explain them clearly to junior students. Rules and traditions have rationales and ALL students should be able to understand their necessity.

NOTEBOOK AND BIBLE

IMPORTANT - Always bring a notebook and Bible to every class. These are to be used not only for devotions, but also to record what you have learned at each session.

The mature martial artist will recognize the importance of spiritual growth and will thus make church attendance and ministry a regular part of his weekly routine.

TARDINESS

Never walk into the dojo without being recognized by your teacher. You must be given permission to enter the class once it has begun. If you are late, stand inside the entrance to the dojo, and upon being recognized, bow, which is to say, "I apologize for disrupting the class." If you can't routinely make class on time for some specific reason, discuss this with your teacher. Instructors notice those who are on time and those who are constantly late for class and fail to apologize. This discourteous behavior causes unnecessary interruptions in the class and makes the teacher's job more difficult.

LEAVING EARLY

Never leave the dojo without an explanation to your teacher. To do so is to leave on bad terms, which causes you to "lose face" with your teacher and fellow students. Such action says that you have learned nothing about what is correct, and furthermore demonstrates an immature attitude toward the handling of responsibility.

TUITION & DUES

Never walk into the dojo and begin training if you have not compensated your school or Sensei for the class. If you are behind in payment of your tuition, then technically, you are not eligible to receive instruction. Always go to your Sensei if you are unable to pay and tell him or her the circumstances; perhaps something can be worked out. Just walking into the dojo implies that the classes and the instruction are not worth anything to you since you are taking them without paying for them.

Never debate the cost of instruction. If you feel that the cost is too high, find another teacher who charges less. Payment to teachers for their Instruction is your gift to them, which supports the ministry. It is a sign of respect. Also, debating the costs indicates that

the instruction given is debatable in its worth, which is a sign of disrespect. Always be timely with payment of your tuition. Teachers in turn will be timely with their instruction.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Never touch anything that doesn't belong to you, specifically weapons. Also, never touch or pick up a Yudansha's black belt without asking permission to do so.

Always keep your personal belongings in a gym bag placed in the designated area in your dojo. Never leave any personal belongings sprawled on the floor or any other area of the dojo. Respect your equipment. Never use or borrow someone else's gear or supplies unless they give you expressed permission.

IN CLASS PROMOTIONS & AWARDS

When receiving something from your teacher such as a certificate, award, etc., do so with both hands. This is an old custom and indicates that what you are being given is very special. Taking the object with one hand diminishes the significance. Bowing is done at the same time. When speaking to your teacher in a formal setting, never turn your back and walk away following the conversation. Always back up to your place of origin. Following an award or promotion, bow and return to the line up without turning around and showing your back. This is considered rude and shows disregard for your seniors. If this has been an occasion of some honor or promotion, a thank you note or small card given to Sensei is appropriate to further express your appreciation.

REGARDING PROMOTIONS

Never ask to be taught something new or to be promoted. THIS IS A GROSS BREACH OF PROTOCOL. Never begrudge someone else for being advanced ahead of you. If this situation should occur, the reason is that they were more prepared. Never assume that rank is a measure of fighting skill alone, as attitude is two-thirds of rank. To criticize a promotion is to criticize your Sensei. If you do not value his or her judgment regarding others, how can you trust your Sensei's judgment where you are concerned?

If you are constantly being taught the same lessons over and over during a class, quite possibly lack a full understanding of the technique. However, this need for repetition may indicate that you are not fully applying yourself or practicing sufficiently. Put 100% of your effort into your training!

PROLONGED ABSENCE

After a break in your training you should never return to class without first asking permission from your teacher. This request must be done in person and never by letter or telephone call. Your teacher's place is not to write or call to determine where you have been and why you are no longer training. If the break in your training has been a month or longer you must never return to class wearing the same rank as you wore before you

left. To be eligible to return in the same rank implies that you can perform all of the requirements for that rank upon request. If your skills are not up to par, then you cannot justify the rank that you previously wore in the school. You should ask your teacher what belt he or she would like for you to wear. *Never assume!* This would be considered arrogant.

A CLEAN CLASSROOM

Without being asked, clean the training area and various parts of the school. This shows humility and respect. This is a duty that should be performed regardless of rank or time in the school. If you see the teacher cleaning the school, this is an immediate sign to all students that they lack sensitivity to their responsibilities and should quickly take the hint.

- ✿ 1 Timothy 5: 17, *“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.”*
- ✿ Hebrews 13:7, *“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.”*
- ✿ Hebrews 13:17, *“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief for that is unprofitable for you.”*

The Sensei of Christian martial arts ministries are fulfilling a divine calling. They have been placed in their positions by God. While all Christian Warriors should be striving to be ministers of the Gospel, the Sensei has accepted a higher level of leadership and incredible responsibility in the field of martial arts. Because of this ordained calling, a certain level of respect and honor are to be bestowed upon those whom God has placed this high designation.

ADDRESSING THE INSTRUCTOR

Always address your teachers with their respected title in or out of class. They should not be addressed by their first names unless you have been specifically told that you may do so. The title of teacher, Situ, Sensei, Master, Mr. or Mrs. shows proper respect. Calling them by their first name indicates that you are not acknowledging their training level and breaches martial code.

Always introduce your teacher with his or her title to students, friends, or to the public, both in and out of class. This demonstrates a very distinguished level of respect for not only the person but also for the position.

SENSEI OFFICE

Never walk into your teacher's office unless you are invited to do so. Upon entering, do not sit down unless a seat has been offered. If your Sensei has an office with a door, knock and wait for a response; never open the door and casually walk in. Once the Sensei acknowledges your knock, if you see that he or she is speaking with someone, excuse yourself and wait outside or speak with your immediate senior. Also, when Yudansha are speaking with one another, you should never walk into the conversation or take a seat. Stand ready and wait to be recognized if you wish to speak to them and wait to be invited before joining them in the conversation.

INVITATIONS

It is in perfect and proper form to invite the Sensei to functions outside of the dojo.

When a teacher is invited to your home or anywhere else, it is proper and essential that food and drink be available. This demonstrates good manners and deep respect. Also, it is proper for the teacher to partake of food and drink first.

SPECIAL DAYS

Always remember your teacher on his or her birthday, special holidays, etc. Give a gift of appreciation, no matter how small, that truly comes from the heart. This sign of thoughtfulness and respect allows a bond to develop that makes the teacher feel appreciated. Usually your teacher, wanting to show his or her gratitude, will reciprocate by genuinely wanting to further your knowledge.

LONG DISTANCE LEARNING

If you live far away from your teacher and you visit him or her, it is proper to bring a small gift each time you visit. This can be food for casual visits or presents for more formal visits. This is traditionally important.

REINSTATEMENT

If you have had a falling out with your teacher and later desire to re-establish your relationship, it is most important to bring a gift upon your *first* visit and extend a humble apology, regardless of whether or not you feel that it is completely deserved. A good teacher will always accept a genuine apology without regard as to who might have been wrong.

1 CORINTHIANS 5:20

NOW THEN WE ARE AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

1. When desiring to visit and participate in another school, it is important first to ask permission from your instructor, then to seek approval in advance from the teacher of the school you wish to visit.
2. If allowed to participate, make sure that you always pay for the class or leave some kind of tribute to show your appreciation, regardless of whether the teacher says that money or a tribute is not necessary. Many times a teacher will use this as a test of the visiting student's level of appreciation, and his or her response may impact upon future class participation.
3. Never wear-any symbol of rank in another school unless given permission to do so. To be even more proper, you should not wear your regular class uniform unless the school you are visiting is the same association or system. Even if the teacher approves of wearing your uniform, a better plan would be to wear something such as sweats that have no symbolism relating to your school or any system. **THIS IS NOT APPLICABLE WHEN ATTENDING A SEMINAR AT ANOTHER SCHOOL OR LOCATION.** When attending a seminar or other function an ALL WHITE uniform should be worn with your school's patch worn on the lapel. Your earned belt should also be worn.
4. Always bow when entering and leaving another school. Using the bow that you are familiar with is acceptable until you observe how the bows are done for that school. Once you see their way of bowing, use their method. This shows respect for their system.
5. When inviting a teacher or senior from another school or system out to dinner, always open doors for them, allowing them to enter first. Always pay for their meals with no reservations as to the cost. *Never allow them to pay.* This indicates your teacher's training of you and gives "face" to you, your school, and the system that you represent.

Tippling generously is also a good sign of etiquette and demonstrates your genuine gratitude and respect for the occasion.

When eating with any senior to you, especially your teacher or with other teachers, always wait until they have eaten their first bite of food before you begin to eat. Starting to eat before your seniors is considered poor etiquette and shows a lack of respect. Even the seating can be offensive if some seats are better than others. Be attentive to see that their cup is always full. The most senior cup is checked first, followed by the descending levels of seniority. This is required whether you are the host, another teacher of junior rank, or the person of lowest rank. Serving your honored guests properly is considered good code. Undoubtedly, these seniors will analyze your actions and decide in their minds what level of practice you have attained

6. When introducing a visiting teacher to your teachers, always start with the most senior regardless of gender. Never lag in introductions and always use their title; never use only their first name. This order of introductions applies to senior students and their levels as well.

7. Writing a letter or a thank you note to an instructor expressing your appreciation for their time and knowledge shared with you is very appropriate. Such correspondence should be done in black ink. Before writing, ask your Sensei for permission. Also, Sensei will most likely have the correct address for the instructor if you need it.

Accepting Responsibility Inherently Goes with Rank

After attaining the rank of First dan or *Shodan*, the student's training really begins. It is at this level that the student begins to demonstrate a more serious attitude, realizing that a black belt is nothing more than one who knows the requirements for the grade. A Shodan must teach or at the very least assist in the instruction aspect for a period of not less than one year before even being considered eligible for promotion to a higher level of black belt. (At least 16 years old)

Since maturity, experience and balance are all essential to being an instructor, general age guidelines should be adhered to for each dan level.

Second dan is attained through exceptional effort and greater knowledge, but specifically as a result of teaching others below black belt. One is formally given the title of "SENSEI" which is to say *Teacher*, and permitted to start an associated martial arts school or club. As a Nidan, the Sensei is allowed to teach and train students up to Shodan, BUT ARE NOT PERMITTED TO TEST THE STUDENT TO SHODAN. A Nidan Sensei must present his/her student to a formal Black Belt review board so that his/her student's skills may be judged. (At least 18 years old)

At Third dan the title of Senior Sensei may be earned. The majority of martial artists never make it past Shodan or at the very highest a Nidan. Not only must the time-in-rank and knowledge be considerable, but a lifelong commitment to the arts must be made. Skill in the arts as well as life skills must be in order. Those individuals who lack discipline in their personal life will not usually attain this level. (At least 24 years old)

Fourth Dan is a supervisory position, and it is the Yondan who looks after the dojo in an administrative and organizational level. The Yondan is also responsible for the lower dans within his/her association's geographical region. Only individuals who teach as a profession usually receive this level, but there are exceptions. In accordance with tradition, it is common that only ONE IN TEN THOUSAND that seek to possess it ever attain a Yondan level of rank. (At least 30 years old)

Attainment of Fifth dan is considered EXCEPTIONAL and those who possess this rank are regarded as Chief Instructors within the Hombu Dojo. At this level one is given an independent status. It generally takes about 16-20 years of continuous martial arts training to reach fifth dan. (At least 35 years old)

Sixth dan promotions are RARE and are given at the discretion of the Hombu DoJo and the Grand Master. At this level one is considered a Master Instructor. In many cases it is the Rokudan Kai that administratively directs various programs for the Hombu Dojo (International Headquarters) directly under the guardianship of the Grand Master. (At least 40 years old)

Seventh and Eight dans appointments are EXTREMELY RARE and are given in conjunction with nominations from the Grand Master ONLY. These ranks are based upon immeasurable dedication to the martial arts. At this level of achievement one is considered a professor in his/her style. (Usually at least 50 and 55 years old respectively, but there are exceptions.)

Ninth dan is given to ONE man by the Grand Master. This rank is given to that individual the Grand Master is grooming as the heir apparent. The preparatory training period is usually around ten to fifteen years. This appointment nullifies any controversies over who will serve as the succeeding Grand Master. (Usually awarded no earlier than 60 years old, but there are exceptions.)

Tenth dan is adopted by the Ninth dan upon the death of the Grand Master. This most high level of attainment is the result of a lifetime of dedication to the preservation of the art, and the proliferation of the art to all peoples.

TITLES

<i>KoSensei</i>	Shodan level. A title for a black belt holder who is qualified to be an assistant instructor.
<i>Sensei</i>	Nidan and above
<i>Senior Sensei</i>	Sandan or above. Head of a dojo. Considered a “scholar” of his/her system
<i>Master</i>	Title usually awarded at 6th dan by the Hombu Dojo, but there are exceptions
<i>Kyoshi</i>	7 th and 8 th dan level. A title commissioned by a Grand Master. Considered a Professor.
<i>Hanshi</i>	9th dan level. A title authorized by a Grand Master
<i>O'Sensei</i>	“Great Teacher”; A title reserved for the Grand Master of a system. This person also serves as the Executive Director of an international organization.

SOME LAST WORDS

Fighting is regarded as a last resort by martial artists, only to be used in the most extreme circumstances. Well-skilled practitioners who have attained the rank of black belt have been trained in such humble regard as to give their attacker the feeling of superiority when, in fact, it is the black belt, who walks away rather than fighting, who has been the strongest. It is the serious martial artist who trains diligently for the day when his skills may be used to protect his life or the life of another, but wishes, above all else, that he never be forced to do so.

- ✿ John 15:13, *“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”*

Jesus Christ went a step further than simply dying for his friends; He died a horrible and yet necessary death on a cross for all those who are an enemy of God. His precious blood poured out of His broken and beaten body as a perfect sacrifice for the sins of all humankind.

- ✿ Romans 5: 10, *“For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”*

**CHRIST IS OUR SAVIOR!
HE IS THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR!**