

The Esoteric Principles of Judo

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Since the fundamental principle acquired through the practice of judo has been elevated to a finer moral concept called judo, 'The Way of Gentleness,' it may well be said that the primary objective of practicing judo is perfection of character. And to perfect one's character, one must be grateful for the abundant blessings of Heaven, Earth, and Nature, as well as for the great love of parents; one must realize his enormous debt to teachers and be ever mindful of his obligations to the general public.

As a member of a family, one's first duty is to be filial to parents, to be helpful and harmonious with one's wife or husband, and to be affectionate to brothers and sisters, so that the family may be a sound, successful and harmonious unit of the community.

As a member of a nation one must be grateful for the protection which one derives as a citizen; one must guard against self-interest and foster a spirit of social service. One must be discreet in action, yet hold courage in high regard, and strive to cultivate manliness. One must be gentle, modest, polite, and resourceful; never eccentric, but striving always to practice moderation in all things. One must realize that these qualities constitute the secret of the practice of judo.

Anyone who practices judo should neither be afraid of the strong nor despise the weak; nor should he act contrary to the strength of his enemy because of the art he has acquired. For example, when a boat is set afloat on water, one man's strength is sufficient to move the boat back and forth. This is only possible because the boat floats; for if, on the other hand, the boat is placed on dry land, the same man's strength is scarcely sufficient to move it. It is necessary, therefore, that the weak should learn this fact with regard to the strong.

The forms and techniques should be remembered as the basic art of judo. One should never use these arts against anyone without sufficient justification. Therefore, refrain from arrogance and do not despise a smaller enemy or a weak opponent.

Every student of judo should realize that honesty is the foundation of all virtues. Kindness is the secret of business prosperity. Amiability is the essence of success. Working pleasantly is the mother of health. Strenuous effort and diligence conquer adverse circumstances. Simplicity, fortitude, and manliness are the keys to joy and gladness; and service to humanity is the fountain of mutual existence and common prosperity.

As aptly expressed in the poem "The boughs that bear most hang lowest," one should never forget the virtue of modesty as one attains proficiency in the art of judo. Do not disdain or regard lightly either literary or military art; each is important and deserves equal cultivation and respect. Within constant motion and change there is tranquility; and within tranquility, there is motion and change.

Remember always parental love and one's enormous indebtedness to teachers. Be grateful for the protection of Heaven and Earth. Be a good leader to younger men. To lead younger men well, will in the long run, mean to attain proficiency in the skill of judo.

Like a drawing in India ink of the whispering of wind in the pines, the secrets of judo can only be suggested. Only through personal experience can one comprehend the mystic ecstasy of such secrets. It is said of judo that it would require ten years of practice to win victory over one's self and twenty years to win victory over others.

Whatever the trials or dangers, even 'Hell under the upraised sword,' remain calm and remember the doctrine imparted to you by your teacher.

A noted verse reads: "For the lotus flower to fall is to rise to the surface."

Only by cultivating a receptive state of mind, without preconceived ideas or thoughts, can one master the secret art of reacting spontaneously and naturally without hesitation and without purposeless resistance.

These are the secrets of Kodokan into which I have had the honor to initiate you.