

# Kendo and Purity of Spirit

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### Clear Mind; Pure Spirit

The meaning of what a dojo is: a dojo is a place for people to conduct the study of their life.

When we speak about this study, it is really the study about one's own heart. In the process of this study, we acquire the elements that make us human beings.

From the very beginning, from the time that we were born, we come to this "road" of life with a very pure heart, but in the process of growing up and coming of age, there are a lot of effects on our lives, things that we learn and the understanding that we come to have, and in this way, that pure heart of ours, we can say, becomes soiled or takes on some mistaken understanding about the meaning of life.

With time and the impact of the events that have occurred in our lives, some troubles accumulate in our hearts - some misunderstandings, confusion, illusions. However, we must have the desire and spirit to refresh ourselves, renew ourselves, and regain that purity: this is the meaning and purpose of our study of kendo.

In the history and development of the Japanese traditional cultures, there is a very specific type of theatre, called the Noh theatre. In the Noh theatre, in the early stages, there was a great Zeami Motokiyo. Zeami served to define what Noh theatre would become, formalizing Noh in his treatise the Kadensho.

Zeami articulated three points about the approach one should have in their life and study:

From the very beginning, the pure heart &ndash; do not forget the simple, uncomplicated, pure heart that we are born with, try to regain that, to find that once again.

The second element, from moment to moment in our lives, not just broad theoretical concepts, but in practice in everyday life - from moment to moment, to see the wonderful things in our lives, to be aware of them, to keep your heart full of wonder, you must never lose this.

The third element, even throughout your life, when you become senior in age, you have accumulated a wealth of experience, you've seen all, you've studied all, even then, look upon life, and find unexpected moments, see the fantastic nature of things, be surprised, continue to be full of emotion, and continue to see the beauty of one's life.

From the time that we are all born, and all throughout our lives, even until the moment that we die, be a person who is full of emotion, full of the joy of life. This is the thing to learn.

Today, I think all participants must remember that during our severe practice, a young child caught my attention. From the distant part of the room I looked over and heard his voice calling out so clearly 'yaaaaaaa meeeeennnn'. It was so enthusiastic. It was this pure, heart full of passion that I wanted to point out to you all. Please remember it

All of us acquire some education, and there is the impact of the environment over the years, and as a result our hearts become more complex. I want you to take care, to not lose that pure voice, that unobstructed, simple joy of doing things.

I would like you all to have this freshness of your life, to revere life. To have that pure voice that rings out. When you possess this and you are confronted with another person, in all tracks of life, if you have this emotion, this feeling, you will project this out, and engage the heart of your counterpart with it. They will be able to feel your heart as well. This is the kind of human being that I would like to ask everyone to try to become, to strive to become.

In the process of our study, also keep in mind that we would like to find that purity of life through practicing earnestly, and polish ourselves as human beings. We should strive to polish our hearts, wash away the confusion, and regain purity. A human being can do this in a way, like hearing music or seeing some beautiful art. The moment that we are confronted with some beautiful thing, we will have a fullness in our hearts, emotions pour forth, and as a result of this experience we can feel the joy and beauty of life. A heart of a person is the same thing, with it, you can move and inspire others, your joy can evoke joy in others.

If we each do this, and more and more people refine themselves, elevate themselves, become enlightened in this way, we will have a society full of such wonderful people, and society itself will become enlightened. This is the study we

undertake, to make an enlightened society, bright and full of optimism. This must be our aim.'

-Inoue Yoshihiko hanshi

This is expressed in my opinion in the hakama especially with respects to jin mercy, gi justice, rei courtesy, wisdom chi, faith shin and truth makoto and the harmony as discussed between mind body and sould is ittchi (a state of agreement or harmony) between these elements. Purity of spirit is also expressed physically in the Niwa - pure place is the word for the Japanese Garden. It has its echo in Eden which in the western cosmology was a garden of purity before sin entered into the world. Since sin never entered Niwa, it is still the pure and beautiful place it has always been. (Professor Lennox Tierney). The elements in the garden are the same as the kamae stances water, fire, wood, earth gold (some include five stances). In the Zen Garden the harmony in spirit and the agreement between elements is symbolised through;

"-Gates (torii), fences, straw ropes, and cloth banners acted as signs to demarcate paces. -Shrines were more of a mental construct than physical emplacements, a place that existed in the mind instead of a place that could be seen. The shrine is a setting of spirit. It is also a place where humans and spirit meet. -The garden is the setting for human activity. - Sand represents water. -Stones are the major elements of design in Japanese garden. They are considered more important than trees to the Japanese, perhaps due to the strong desire for eternity and stones represent the eternal elements in nature. Stones also represent fertility mostly because of their phalli's shape. The stones from the mountains near Kyoto have been highly treasured for centuries. The fine stones, especially, were handed down through generations of warlords. In Japanese garden design, stones are used in combination with other stones, or sand to imply a natural scene or to create an abstract design. The shapes of natural stones have been divided into five categories called five natural stones. The Japanese used the characters of wood, fire, earth, metal and water to represent stone elements, and are applied to five classes of stone shapes:

-Taido: wood. Tall vertical. Implies high trees. Also called body stones, placed in the back of a grouping.

-Reisho: metal. Low vertical. Implies the steady and firmness of metal. Often grouped with tall verticals. It is sometimes called soul stones.

-Shigyo: fire. Arching. Branches that shape like fire. These types of branches called stone atmosphere and peeing stones. Often placed in the front and to one side of other shapes.

-Shintai: water. Flat or horizontal. Called level base stones or mind and body stone. Usually used for harmonization in rock groupings.

-Kikyaku: earth. Reclining. Often known as root or prostrate stones. Usually placed in the foreground to create a harmony appearance.

- Rocks represent the sense of power and desire or feeling of tranquillity .To the Oriental's perception, rocks suggest mountains, islands.

- White sand cones represent the Shinto salt cones of purity.

- Crane and turtle islands represent symbols of longevity."

(<http://gallery.sjsu.edu/oldworld/asiangate/gardens/jpggardens.html> - 15 Feb 2009)