

Philosophy of Jujitsu

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If a person seriously studies any martial art it is inevitable that such a study will include the development of a philosophical background. It is also inevitable that, as a person grows further into the art, the interrelationship between the physical and mental aspects of the art will also be developed and strengthened. The result can be a philosophy of life in which the martial arts training serves as a base.

Such is the case with jujitsu. There is a philosophy that goes with the knowledge; there is a close interrelationship between the physical and mental aspects of the art; the resultant philosophy can have a profound influence on one's daily life.

There are a number of factors that affect a student's philosophical growth in jujitsu. The first factor is the destructive potential of jujitsu techniques from a purely physical viewpoint. A skilled jujitsuka can control his (or her) attacker's ki, which is the inner spirit, driving force, or center of energy. If a person commits himself (or herself) to a course of action he is committing his ki; his ki is directed toward that end. The skilled jujitsuka can control that energy. As a student becomes more knowledgeable in the use of nerves and pressure points he will develop the ability to create and control pain without doing any real harm to his assailant. Combine both of these elements with the ability to create real pain and disabling injuries and you can recognize the potential control and havoc that a skilled student can deliver to an attacker.

Because of this destructive potential, jujitsu places a strong emphasis on the concept of non-violence. A physical confrontation should be avoided whenever possible. There are two additional reasons that support this concept of non-violence. First, as the jujitsu student is confident of his skill he recognizes that he has a better than average chance of defending himself successfully. Thus it is unnecessary to prove he can if such a confrontation can be avoided. Second, a physical confrontation indicates that all rational means resolving the problem have failed. It is humanly degrading to become involved in a physical confrontation – it indicates that reason and intelligence have failed.

A second factor that will affect philosophical growth is the knowledge that can be obtained by studying the art. In addition to learning the forms and moves of the art there is also the continuous process of combining and varying the forms to deal with the same or different situations in different ways. It is an infinite mental process. Once the student masters basic techniques and the ability to integrate them the result is greater confidence.

The ability to control one's *own* ki and an attacker's ki is a third element affecting growth. To control one's own ki the student must be relaxed. Learning techniques should flow from the center of the body automatically, spontaneously. The student can sense and use his attacker's ki only if he (the student) is relaxed. If the student can control his own ki it is possible for him to remain calm and in control of himself in stressful situations.

Fourth, an understanding of the *circle theory* can be of profound importance. At this point the circle theory will be stated simply: everything moves in a circular motion. For every action there is an appropriate consequence suitable to the action. This theory, with respect to the physical aspect of the art, will be dealt with later in far greater detail.

The last major factor affecting the philosophical growth of the student is the circumstance under which the art is learned. If a student is taught jujitsu solely as a

means of self-defense, then that is all the student will learn. If the student learns jujitsu as an art – perhaps for relaxation, as I did – he can gain much more. He can look at the art as an art form rather than solely as a means of self-defense. He can see why techniques are done as they are and what makes them work. Rather than just learning techniques he can learn to *understand* them. If he can understand them he can adapt them to different situations and integrate basic moves with one another, knowing in advance what the consequences will be. The process can be related directly to daily life.

The philosophy of jujitsu as an art is based on the concept of continuity. Within the teachings of jujitsu there is the concept of continuous flow of things; by extending one's own ki one can control the ki of others and by controlling the other person's ki it is possible to control that person. As techniques must be modified to meet different situations so must we be able to change to meet new situations successfully.

Learning the art also involves developing a great deal of patience. Techniques are not learned and then put aside. They are constantly reviewed, improved upon, modified, and perfected. A good instructor will strive to train his students psychologically as well as physically, as my teacher did with me. "Words are cheap," Seki Sensei would always say. The higher in rank we became the more verbal harassment we had to put up with. The harassment served to encourage those of us who stuck it out to do better. It also taught us not to let words affect us, who we were, or our goals. To persist in our studies was our goal. Patience was the key.

By understanding jujitsu – the *art* and its concepts – it is possible to recognize that you can have greater control of your environment while accepting it at the same time. By studying the *art* you can develop a better understanding of the limits of your environment, yourself, and others. This is particularly true if you become an instructor. Students will come to you as clay, each one with a different malleability. You can do a great deal with your students if nurture, mold, push, and recognize them. You can help them recognize their own potential.

With time and training a student will develop a feeling of self-confidence combined with humbleness; it is not necessary to always prove oneself. He can be patient, tolerant, and understanding of others – a real asset to growth. He will also develop a greater self-control, recognizing that he can control his environment through confidence and an understanding of his abilities. All of this can give the serious student a positive outlook on life. Jujitsu can be learned as an art in all of its facets. It can give the student an understanding of what life is and how to be an active participant in it.