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THE MIND OF KYUDO

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The problem of dying or surviving will be trained during the usual training and it is very closely connected to hitting the target. Of course nowadays we do not keep this idea of revenge or killing somebody, but this state of mind - to be killed or to survive - is still part of our training. Now when we are training and when we take this as our very tight purpose - to hit or not to hit the target - then from this point on the training of the technique will be very important. So when you do your everyday's training with this purpose of developing and training the technique, then from the technique itself the mind will develop. The training becomes a training of the mind.

There are three important points. The first is that the movements are always the same. They don't change. The second is connected with the skill, that the muscles are trained, different movements by different muscles. The third one is that you have nothing else in your mind. From these three points a special mind is to be developed.

From these three points many of the Japanese archers take out „no mind“ and take it for itself and make it to the big problem and task. They say this is the aim, the purpose of Kyudo. But „no mind“ or what is called concentration as it is often taken for Kyudo in Japan is only the entrance. The concentration is just one step on the way to the mind of kyudo, just something inbetween, just one step. When you use concentration for training the technique and you repeat and go on exercising, one time there will come a situation like a waking-up, the awakening of something. Then the whole world, this world, will be just wonderful. All people will be friends and there will be no enemies. And you won't need any honours. This does not mean, that honours are something bad, but you won't be looking for it. Of course it is very good to be rich but it is not necessary.

For example, when you are shooting and there are many people watching, it will be very difficult for you to shoot. But when you find the heart of the mind of the bow then even if there are thousands of people watching you it is something like they are melting to nothing. And you will have the same feeling as if you go out and you have the blue sky and the cool wind and it is just fine.

You have to go on and on exercising. Then sometime you will find somewhere what is called „munen muso“. In this state of „no mind“ – maybe we can say yourself – something will awaken. You have to find this. This state of mind is very similar to the state of the brain in zen meditation. When the state of „no mind“ of a zen priest reaches the region of alpha-waves, a usual person would be in the state of sleeping. When over sudden there is a sound, the meditating zen monk will show a reaction, even to the second and third sound. [*Inagaki Sensei draws two lines on the board. One for the zen monk (with curves), one for the sleeping person (with no curves after the second sound)*] The other line is from a usual person showing almost no reaction after the third sound. The brain will not react. In the case of such a meditating zen monk you will always have a clear reaction whereas a usual person will fall asleep and won't react anymore to an outside sound. The other state of mind is always being awake. If the final aim is concentration you will not come to this kind of state. Then the aim is only concentration.

All of you have to discover, to find this state of mind [*he shows the first line of the zen monk*]. The best and only way of coming to that state of mind is to exercise the technique every day. It is a difficult technique but it is just good to challenge this difficulty.

[*Inagaki sensei draws a graphic on the board:*
x-axis: difficulty, y-axis: skill]

Difficulty and skill are related to each other in that way, that a low skill shows a low difficulty, and the higher the skill, the more you come to difficulty. Psychologists say that if you come to a state with a low or middle difficulty and you become very good you will be bored. If you take Tsunami no Hataraki, which is a very difficult technique, and you don't become skillful, you will be suffering and you will become depressed. When you have a technique with high difficulty and you approach the same level of skill, this kind of person will have a great happiness and satisfaction.

I hope and wish for you that with Tsunami no Hataraki and with Nobiai, with this high difficulty, you reach the high skill and you get joy from it. If you are satisfied with only taihai, this rhythm of 1-2-3-4, this is that part [*he marks a low skill and a low difficulty*]. But if your aim is to reach the high skill of the art and technique of Kyudo and to get this joy, then you have to work hard for this purpose. If you think that the taihai, the atmosphere you get from the taihai, is Kyudo, I will be very sorry and this will be very bad for your Kyudo. The real Kyudo is to learn the difficulty of the technique, the high technique.

The present Kyudo in Japan is a Kyudo which considers taihai very important and archers misunderstand this (low difficulty / low skill) as Kyudo. Of course if you don't practise and don't have in your body the taihai the dignity of Kyudo will be lost. Also Konfuzius, the chinese philosopher, said this. So if just the theory or the thought on is good but the realisation is bad everything becomes just an ornament, a decoration. If there is only skill but no theory (this sign also includes culture), this is only a very rough person. Konfuzius said, when both are united, the cultured form and the real technique, then the real gentleman is born - this is from bushido, the cultured mind.

I really want you to learn both as one, to unite both, the cultural part and the skill, but this on a high level. In any case Kyudo is Kan-Chu-Kyu: A very strong arrow always hitting the target, from this will come out a long enduring skill.

I hope and I want you to learn the traditional real japanese archery. It includes a very difficult technique. But you should choose this very high level joy also. I want to stop at this point even though we should talk about it some other time.

This year I am 77 years old. I am very old and I don't know whether I will be able to come next year, or maybe I will be already under ground very soon,. But I want you always to remember these words and to keep in your heart to exercise and to learn the real Kyudo.

Thank you very much for your patience.