



STUDY GROUP TOMIKI AIKIDO - Friday 19th April, 2013

Unfortunately this was the weekend in which Adrian suffered a mild Stroke.

Aikido Kata : A demonstration according Shu-Ha-Ri

Shu-Ha-Ri is a concept in martial arts (or other forms of cultural value). It describes the learning process of a discipline in 3 steps.

In a lecture by Daigo (senior judoka 2008), he explained the progression from the basic form through to a deep understanding of kata using this concept.

Shu : 1st stage - The study of a teacher's lesson. The stage of imitation.

Ha : 2nd stage - The meaning of kata is investigated deeply.

Ri : 3rd stage - Kata practice is treated freely and spontaneously.

The study of kata is the process to connect mental and physical discipline into a harmonious whole. Some important concepts are :

- The harmony between Yn and Yo (yin and yang).
The harmony between Ju (flexibility) and Go (strength).
- The commitment of Uke to attack Tori.
- The optimization of the physical and mental component by Tori.

Kata as a competitive and grading tool, but.....or.....

By using kata as a tool for competition and grading, we stimulate people to study kata. Without these tools Tomiki Aikido will degenerate into a "only randori" activity. But using kata only for competition and grading will not bring forward the real value of kata.

The sportification of kata will create a form of kata display according the rules set by the organization.

Kata as a tool for grading must show a progression from basic performance to deep understanding according the level of grading.

The demonstration of kata cannot be a "carbon copy" required by the Rules Book.

Kata has to be a tool to enhanced insight or personal growth.

The purpose of Kata training

Kata is not created to become a ceremonial kata demonstration, but are created to support the correct learning and practice of the principles.

When we see kata demonstration (for competition or grading) we often see a choreographed demonstration but almost never a true practice of techniques and principles.

Sometimes kata is done with a lot of ceremonial performance, but the true meaning of kata is for the improvement of the understanding. It is also useful to enhance one's reflexes, flexibility, coordination and focus.

Kata should always be studied for their educational content and not just to "look good".

The study of kata

On a fundamental level (Shu) we will look at the logical order of the techniques and movements, the correct spirit (focus, commitment,...) and a correct application of the body mechanics. We can say this is 1st-2nd-3rd dan level. When someone reached the level of 3rd dan, the practitioner understand on a basic level the concepts of shizentai no ri, kuzushi no ri and ju no ri. He can demonstrate the mechanics of the 6 Koryu no kata, although it is not necessary to know the sequence by heart of all the koryu.

On a more advanced level we will look at the optimization of the physical and mental components. This study starts around 4th dan and above.

The practitioner deepens the study of shizentai no ri, kuzushi no ri and ju no ri. He can explain and demonstrate the relationship between the 3 concepts. The integration of these concepts can be seen in the demonstration of the kata.

