

No Mind

Nidan Essay by
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Much is said about the mind, body and spirit in the martial arts, often without giving real thought or understanding to the meaning of the relationship. The phrase is usually a reference to total commitment and focus, however even that can be interpreted in many ways and take on a variety of manifestations. Through training I have been shown a way I strive to follow and better understand.

For me, Aikido is a Way of action rather than contemplation, and it is through training, particularly Jiyu Waza and Randori, that understanding can be formed on the proper mind. In training, Jiyu Waza and Randori most resemble life by the unpredictable nature of each. As we train in Jiyu Waza or Randori, the nature of the encounter takes on a life of its' own, and like a fabric woven by it's own design creates a uniqueness of itself, unlike any created before and never to be duplicated again. After it has ended it is over, and has no relationship to the next Jiyu Waza. Long after the design has faded and the cloth has unraveled, only the loom that created it remains- Mushin; Shisei; Aiki; Kuzushi.

In an encounter, what can be known for certain from the past? We can know nothing other than anything can happen. What we know from what has occurred the past year, month, minute or second has no meaning in the immediate moment. What can be predicted of the future? Nothing, and attempting to anticipate is useless. Predicting what cannot be known can only, by it's nature, lead eventually to a false prediction. How, then, can we prepare mentally? By not preparing; by accepting as truth uncertainty and the unknown, and by that total acceptance find calm. By that full acceptance, free the mind from encumbering preconception, delusion, desire, fear, anxiety and ego, which are connected to the past and future. Within that calm, still mind success or failure, victory or defeat, life or death are not present; only awareness and a melding with the body and spirit.

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