

2019 Budo in The Gi Yu Kyo Kai

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By:

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We had a good turnout for the 12th Annual Gi Yu Dojo Seminar. On Saturday, the mat was almost full with 24 students practicing the Gi Yu Suwari Gata techniques. But, I noticed a few faces were missing. Sensei told me “There were another 12 people or so who said they were coming but didn’t. Can you imagine what it would look like with that many people in here? It would be awesome!”



I can imagine many reasons why someone couldn’t make it to the annual seminar, but it’s hard for me to think of reasons why someone would *tell* someone they were going to do something and then not do it. That is not how you treat people or should treat people. That is not how you treat your *teacher*. I think this behavior comes from a place of misunderstanding of what Budo and the Gi Yu Kyo Kai Dojos are about. Budo is different from MMA or a boxing gym. The Gi Yu Kyo Kai Dojo is different than any MMA or boxing gym. Did you ever wonder why a prominent banner about the seven virtues of Bushido hangs in the dojo? Gi – Justice, Yu – Courage, Jin – Benevolence, Rei – Respect, Makoto – Honesty, Meiyo – Honor, Chuugi – Loyalty. It is not an accident that the banner is there. It is not for decoration or to get people in the “Asian” feel of things. I know I have never seen a banner like that in an MMA gym or a boxing ring. I’ll bet you have never heard anyone talk about “honor” in an MMA gym or boxing ring. Why do you think that is?

義	Justice (gi)
勇	Bravery (yuu)
仁	Benevolence (jin)
真	Veracity (makoto)
礼	Politeness (rei)
名 譽	Honor (meiyo)
忠 義	Loyalty (chuugi)



MMA, boxing, and other activities may be worthwhile pursuits, but the goal is typically sport and competition and, in most cases, money. I have nothing against that, but Budo is different. Sure, there may be obvious similarities – punching, kicking, grappling, general physical fitness...etc. There can be a lot to learn from those disciplines about how to defend yourself and others. You can go to a thousand different dojos and gyms and learn techniques on how to hurt people and defend yourself; however, for a student of Budo at the Gi Yu Kyo Kai Dojo the ultimate goal is not the perfection of a specific punch, kick or technique. Our goal in Budo *is bigger than that*, ie; it should be the perfection of the total self, of which the techniques are just a part. MMA and boxing may make you physically tough and strong, which is important, but that tells me nothing about your character. No matter how strong you are, there are many challenges in this life where physical strength will not help you. There are times in life when you must have the *resolve* to quietly persevere, wait patiently, and be prepared for when times do change. Several years ago, there was a story about four football players who were out on a fishing trip and their boat capsized. Only one man survived being in the water for 36 hours. All the men involved were strong and extremely physically fit, but by the account of the only survivor, a few of the men became despondent and lost hope within the first day, surrendering themselves to the ocean. Physical strength did not save these unfortunate men.



There's not always an easy to identify line between what we are doing in class and our everyday lives. My son Lucas was not able to attend this year's seminar due to his commitments at college. His class schedule and courses at Georgia Tech have been challenging, to say the least. We were talking a few days before the seminar and he told me how much he was going to miss attending the seminar. He then told me how training has helped him in school. I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, when you're training in class, you're working so hard to get it perfect. Where your hand is, the angle of your foot...there's a lot of details to get right and you have to do them over and over again. It's a lot like math. And then the whole testing process...it's so hard and draining and you finally get through it and you just feel like you've really accomplished something, whether you pass or not. Other things just seem easier after testing." Training has clearly benefitted Lucas in ways far beyond merely learning how to punch and grapple well.



People watching from the outside probably wonder, "Why would he do that for hours and hours?" Even members of your own family might ask themselves, "Wouldn't they rather be doing something else?" I even had a friend ask once "When do you graduate and stop?" I understand why people say things like this. They only see what's obvious and apparent. What they don't see is that the outer struggle to perfect the physical is the essential fuel that powers the inner change of improving your character. Control of our emotions, control of our egos, control of our words – these should be a goal of our Budo.

So, if your goal is to get rank, then you've missed the point of Budo. If for some reason you think you're better than everyone else and you are foolish enough to tell others that, that is your ego talking and you've missed the point of Budo. If your mind tells you that you've seen these techniques before so there's no reason to pay to see them again, then you've missed the point of Budo. If you tell somebody one thing and then do another, then you've missed the point of Budo. There are a thousand other thoughts and actions that can trick you and keep you off the mats, but most can be traced back to some failure in the seven virtues. It is a personal choice to limit what Budo can accomplish in your life. For those who attended the seminar your life is probably different in ways you don't realize. For those who didn't, well, you will never know. I sincerely hope to see at least 36 people at the 2020 annual seminar.

