

Ninpo:
Wisdom for Life

NINPÔ

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For Janet, with love.

Note:

The Editor and Translators of this work would like to express their apologies for any inadequacies in this translation. Every effort was made to keep the "flavor" of the original text. Be aware that many social and cultural differences exist from our country to that of the author. If you have any questions please contact Mr. Maurantonio at the address listed above.

CHAPTER ONE

PHILOSOPHY OF BUDÔ AND NINPÔ

This chapter contains the basic theme of this book. Therefore, I would like you to read it over and over to appreciate it.

PHILOSOPHY OF BUDÔ

In a broad sense *bujutsu* means to protect one's country and to a narrower extent, it means to protect your community, your family and yourself. *Bujutsu* is not only a technique with a sword, but also a technique with your mind. To learn how to strike is *kenjutsu*, to learn how to chop is chopping wood. [Techniques without conscious awareness are bland and rhythmical].

While *jutsu* means technique and must contain *waza* [skills], *jutsu* must also have heart. If your heart is not pure, your technique will not be reliable. If you have a good heart, your technique will be good. Purpose is the same as *jutsu* and if there is no purpose, there is no *jutsu*. True victory relies not upon you, but on your enemy. Thus, victory comes naturally to you. You have only to wait for it to happen. Do not search for victory or seek gain, allow it to happen naturally: just as flint and steel come together naturally to make fire.

Even if you are an eighth *dan* (or a master), there is no evidence that you are good. You have to deeply taste a beautiful technique. If you think it exists, it does not. If you think it does not, it does. When you and your sword come together, that is the foundation of *bu* [the Martial path].

PHILOSOPHY OF NINJUTSU

The essence of martial arts is self-defense. However, the essence of self-protection lies in *ninjutsu* because *ninjutsu* also protects one's spirit. Without the proper spirit in martial training, one can be lead to ruin.

For example, medical technology is dedicated to healing lives, but when misused it can also harm people. Food and drink are necessary for nourishment. However, overeating harms the body. Politicians are responsible for governing countries and protecting the interests of the people, but when these individuals become greedy, ignorant and are afraid to commit their lives to their endeavors, they only bring about disorder and cause suffering. A religion, when it is sincere and steadfast, can inspire people to protect themselves, make their families thrive, and benefit society. When corrupt, it destroys people and puts the nation in jeopardy.

If you are a martial artist and master *budô* and practice *ninjutsu*, you will gain the most essential secret of all methods. This secret is called the *shin-shin shin-gan*, "mind and eyes of god." This knowledge is to know *Tendô*, "the path of heaven." The truth of heaven is the correct way, without evil intent.

People must have faith. This is the only justice that exists in heaven and in society. Wood, fire, soil, metal, water and spring, summer, fall, winter cannot exist without the Earth. The four seasons and the five elemental manifestations balance the Earth in the same manner as truth balances heaven.

If a person is honest, virtuous and faithful, he is walking upon "the path of heaven." When he goes with the path of heaven, he is following the will of heaven. This is the "mind and eyes of god." Therefore, a ninja has to be a sensible and righteous person. Ninjutsu methods of perseverance can also be understood as methods of perception. A ninja is always calm and never surprised by any situation. This is the *Togakure ryu* martial way.

KEY POINTS TO FINDING THE GOKUI

In the past eras, everyone wanted to get hold of the secret scrolls. It was believed that if you received a scroll you would improve [in training and skill]. Nevertheless, you were to train until the time when you were of ability to receive the secret scroll. Finally, having received it, you become too tense to move. In other words, when you received the scroll, you should not do any technique wrong. Then, after several years of training, you would become capable of handling the weight [burden] of it. That is the first time when you would be in true possession of the scroll because you would know [feel] the belief and preparedness [resolution] of having the secret scrolls deeply in your heart.

When people train in karate, they sometimes wear iron *geta* [traditional Japanese platform sandals]. At first, these *geta* feel heavy, but eventually the wearer gets used to them. Receiving the scroll is like this idea. It is heavy at first but eventually it gets lighter.

What are the *gokui* [essential teachings]? My teacher, Takamatsu *sensei*, used to be nicknamed "Mongolian Tiger." In China, he was a young warrior feared by many. However, in Japan, a friend visited him and said Takamatsu (who lived in Yamato) was more like a "Yamato house cat." Takamatsu responded, "Since I have become a house cat, I can live longer and women like to cuddle me."

Someone once asked me, "Hatsumi *sensei*, why don't you fight with a bull?" I replied, "A bull is much stronger than I am, therefore, I would lose. Nevertheless, a farmer can put a ring in a bull's nose and lead the bull anywhere he wants it to go. I would do the same. Why couldn't a ninja put a ring through a bull's nose, too?"

A secret teaching is an insight and preparedness of a person. In other words, if you want to get the secret teachings you must always be prepared to answer the types of questions like those Takamatsu and I have answered. In this sense, everybody has the nature [gift] to understand the secret teachings and to teach them to their students.

Because the ninja could climb walls and hang upside down, they could view [perceive] things differently. The world can often be a bad place and you must sometimes look at things from a different perspective in order to see society's good points.

According to the *denshō* [written transmissions], *yari*, *bō*, and *ken* [sword] techniques should be natural, flowing body movements. These should be done without thinking about the technique. From nothing [not thinking], something [an action] comes forth, and the person who masters this idea is the one who can comprehend the secret teachings. This understanding in your heart is more important than the techniques. The mind of "*munen muso*" [no thought, no mind] in the heart is the real secret teaching rather than the *waza* [skills].

ENDURING THE KNOWLEDGE

There is a trend that people who are good at social discourse become popular and will often rise to the top of their respective businesses. Those who are clumsy and ordinary will most likely not rise to the top. Students sometimes complain that people who do not have enough knowledge often get promoted to the top.

In such a case, I answer like this, "When I was young, I would often fight with foolish people. I was a real brat. I was poor at socializing, too. As I grew older, my rhythm (timing) in dealing with people got better. What is important is not to forget your purpose and goal. As I told you before, if you become a raccoon you can trick other people [in Japan, a raccoon is thought to have powers that can deceive people] but you do not trick yourself. For warrior arts, you must gain knowledge, but on the other hand, it is also important to endure knowledge. In simpler terms, to endure the knowledge is to know the time when you should use the knowledge and when you should not use it. You must become a person who can do this."

The student said, "So, that is why you socialize with some people who are not so prominent. You sometimes act so wild and spontaneous that it makes us nervous. But now we understand you were socializing with them within that context." The other students nodded in agreement.

Even if a person is stubborn and lacks knowledge, if you can match your rhythm with his, sometimes you can still find him a very nice person. When you are young, you feel that people who have no

knowledge are stupid and you get sick of them, but at that time, you should have the perseverance to go forth and deal with those people. Those who have this type of perseverance are truly brave people.

If you promote valor, and can match rhythm, you should encourage our young people, our next generation, to go forth with knowledge and understanding and clean our environment. I believe that from now on people should improve [current environmental problems] by asserting their knowledge and intelligence.

DO NOT NEGLECT SELF-TRAINING

Modern *budô* students often forget to practice by themselves. I used to practice by myself. When there was no teacher, I found the secret teachings by my own desire. I used to go into the mountains and train with nature (trees, animals, etc.). I used to do *uchikomi* [striking skills], *sakanage* [throwing reversals], *nagewaza* [throwing techniques], *sabaki* [evading techniques], *moguri* [diving] and *taihenjutsu* [ground hitting skills] with trees. Similarly, I would train with animals. I would often read their intention, evade them, and practice *nagewaza* with the bigger animals. I learned to predict and to use the changes of nature. I did *sumo* with nature, also. In this way, I trained myself for my own benefit.

Of course, it would be better to have a teacher. However, if the teacher were bad, you would only learn the movements and not the true essence of the martial arts. Recently, a book called *Honin Shugi* [about not interfering with a person's development] became a best-seller and we should be satisfied with it. This approach shows people can become creative sometimes.

Some students find it difficult to learn regardless how hard you teach them. Nevertheless, some truly have a passion for *budô*. I leave these students alone, do not say anything to them, nor provide them with explanations. Even if I do this, the student who really loves *budô* will come every day, practice and still gain something like "*moanzen no kozo*." No matter what the problem is, I believe that too much teaching is not desirable.

Mr. Oyomei had a technique called *do-in jutsu* and with this technique, he could predict the arrival of people who would be coming to visit. However, he noticed that teaching others this technique was not good for them. Therefore, he stopped teaching them.

Anyway, too much of something is not good. It is the same with *budô*. I have a policy, I do not teach high level techniques to beginners unless they are marvelous students. I believe secret teachings should only be given to those students who can find and create new lessons for themselves. This is because the secret teachings are not about how many techniques one knows, but rather about a person's insight and preparedness.

The non-interference policy is a method of education that was born from spiritual awakening of "nothingness." No human being should be brought up with the sense of modern education in which everything comes from something [already present].

Often I tell high school students, "It seems young people study reluctantly. This is because you do not have any determination or intent in your life. Now I am going to teach you. First, try to fall in love with one thing. Fall in love with *ninpô*. This is within your grasp. To fall in love with one thing is to give birth to a thousand possibilities. I hope you will understand since you are almost adults. If you fall in love with *ninpô*, you can practice all by yourself. Then from there you will learn many things."

Because people from all over the world come to see me, I began to study many languages. You must study, even to learn a single thing, no matter if it is the history of *budô*, ideas, religion, philosophy, language, psychology, chemistry, physics, etc. You learn to study by yourself. It is more important to learn by yourself instead of being taught techniques by a teacher. I often remind my students, and myself, "Life is to practice by myself." This is my guide to life. In addition, if you do train with others it is important to pay attention to them.