



HANSHI SPEAKS

VOL. 02, ISSUE 05 FEB/MARCH 2006

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Dearest Bushi,

I would like to continue in this issue dealing with the topic of **Center & Ki**. As most of you are aware Center or Ki is the developed awareness of our internal force and the ability to project or apply it to technique.

It has been stated, that the projection of Ki is of a pure spiritual nature, though I personally feel that this is only a small part of what is required to apply Ki. I would suggest that Ki is the effort or attempt for perfection in technique which equates to a meeting of mind and body. I have often reflected on just how much information must have been lost over the centuries, simply through the downside of how our brains store and retrieve information. Prior to written accounts, most arts much like ours had been handed down through teaching. This introduces many issues related to what has been lost and what has been passed forward most likely creating gaps in knowledge, distorting lineage and impacting on style origin.

My general observation is, in some cases, time brings improvements, but it appears that this happens with some associated form of sacrifice or cost. With today's modern means of capturing data and retrieving it, the future of martial arts and the preservation of the exact word have high potential, but I don't want to get too far off track. I have mentioned to those of you who attend class in our Dojo, the term *Kamiwaza* which translate to "divine technique" or "divine hand." It was said that in the past all men were born with divine abilities, which have since been lost due to a wide range of conditions and reasons.

As we all know, the martial arts have a direct relationship to nature and science. Most styles, especially of Chinese origin, are associated with animals, the elements or mythical creatures. We see this animal association directly apparent throughout a wide range of the Arts with such techniques, as eagle claw, tiger fist, eagle beak and so on...

I often ponder the collation between all these influences and the search for *Kamiwaza*, my divine hand. The term *Karate* translates into "empty hand." We all associate this with the ability to fight empty handed, when, in fact, does it really suggest that our hand no longer holds the divine ability?

I do not want you to think that this statement is anything more than an observation, I am not suggesting that there is some "New Age" aspect that we should all take into consideration. I am in contrast seriously suggesting that Ki is an inherited ability much like our genetic structure.

I have been training for almost four decades—a major part of my life—and have been searching and training to tap into my Center. I feel that I can successfully explain, demonstrate and help others understand what Center is, but in the same breath, I feel that it is a lifelong effort to perfect or reclaim a small portion of what historical documents suggest. Though I possess some knowledge on the subject, I feel that Ki is a lifelong experience during which the learning process never ends.

It is important to stop for just a moment and think of the thousand of sub-conscious messages the brain sends to the body in seconds to execute a front kick. The many adjustments and corrects that occur so you retain your balance, the calculation required to judge distance and hit what you are kicking at, the adjusted amount of applied force regulated—all these details are often taken for granted and not reflected on or acknowledged. I had mentioned this "awareness" in my last installment when dealing with the general concept of center.

This is what I find of interest—think for just a moment of what you are doing as you are reading and understanding this newsletter... The many levels of "technique" or skill you are tapping into, the ability to see and to translate the words into conscious thought, the ability to read out loud, the fact that you can understand and grasp what I have written, the ability for

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your eyes to focus of the page and see the difference between black type and white paper, the technology that delivered this document and the complexity of the science. All these steps are associated with a simple action of reading this document, but as important the interface of your actions and your mind to access, manipulate the technology, along with the physical effort to accomplish the task.

When we stop for a moment and think of those efforts and actions we have to say, "WOW". In retrospect, how often in the past have you ever looked at your martial ability with that type of depth? So, the things that are natural to us or the abilities we have developed over the centuries as a species have been taken for granted. Life doesn't seem to be as physically demanding and we are not at risk of extinction from being eaten by a T-Rex, but our mental abilities seem more challenged and, at this time and point in history, we are adapting to and blending into our lives' new technologies.

So, you have to be asking by now, what the heck does all this have to do with the Martial Arts? Think of how many of you remember or speak about rotary telephone dials on a regular basis. I suggest that at the time, the ability to dial a phone was divine, but with time and change, the mechanical aspect was abandoned for speed and an easier means by which to dial. Though it accomplished the exact same process and could still function on most telephone systems today, it was abandoned for an issue of convenience, speed and the next best thing.

Simply put, "out with old and in with the new," this is the model of modern civilization.

The above statement illustrates that over the centuries, as people found easier methods to accomplish the same combative result, they abandoned the more taxing or demanding training for less complex methods, providing them an ability to do other things when their combative skills were not required. I am not suggesting that the entire human race at one time was solely a combative collective. I am not suggesting that everyone walked the planet with a divine ability. I am suggesting that there was a time when the distractions, dedication and the ability to focus on one aspect of life provided the ability to tap into and develop a higher skill level. Those that had this ability could teach others how to use it. That social demand and change created a need to focus on other aspects of life as we individualized and became less and less a collective or tribe-based. The need to eat, survive and develop socially could have outweighed dedication that was easier when food, water and housing were provided through socialist means.

Social condition has driven and created a change in the Martial Arts, in the past it was a lifestyle not a sport or hobby, the advancement process took a lifetime. Now, with a credit card and 24 months, an 8-year-old can become a black belt. That convenience is measured and marketed by what seems reasonable in regard to time invested and cost.

Time, society, social structure all have impacted on the Martial Arts since the dawn of time. We must always hold fast in the understanding that modern armies evolved from who and what we are as Martial Artists. The rank and structure, the tactics, the organization stem from great Martial Artists such as Sun Tzu and others like him.

The overall connection here is awareness, Center or Ki exists in all of us, buried under the distraction of short-cuts and the need to be the instant experts, masters of our domain as quickly as possible. It becomes an issue of making the effort to become aware, stepping off the moving sidewalk, finding time to disconnect and become aware of the world around you, ease off the gas pedal and becoming aware of who you are, what you do, and how you move through life in the martial aspect.

Ki is the understanding of both mind and body, the combined effort of reaching into yourself and understanding those 10,000 plus adjustments it takes for you to cross the street, while you alter your surroundings and the time and space you occupy.

Sit quiet and listen to yourself breathe, not in the Guru Mediation kind of way, but taking time to hear yourself, focus on the words and actions of others, open your eyes as wide as you can and see the big picture and then, the details. Understand the social tactics of combat, grasp cause and effect, learn how predisposition is ingrained in our social fabric, and become aware that, as a martial artist, you can strive to have a wider view of the dimensional world we live in.

Okay, so you have to be asking yourself by now what does all this really mean and what is he writing about?

Here it is, plain and simple: mind and body are one, if I limit, restrict or destroy your mind, the body is of little purpose. Destroy the body and, though mind can live on, it can be trapped, strangled and die, clearly illustrating that the body is dependent on the mind and the mind needs the body to function.

Ki, starts in the mind and the effort we are speaking about, is the ability to extend Ki into technique. This cannot be accomplished without mental awareness of where your Ki rests, what it is, how to train your body

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to find it and understanding how to release it through technique.

If you recall the heavy imaginary bucket drill we have done in class—this is attaching the physical and mental aspects of the brain and body together through visualization.

The drill, if you recall, is as follows: imagine a heavy bucket of sand in front of you between your feet, adjust your stance, make sure your feet shoulder-width apart, bend your knees, reach down and grasp the imaginary bucket by the handle. Now lift it to the center of your chest, imagine and react as if the bucket that is not there, really is there. Slowly extend your hand and be very aware of the slight drop at the end of the effort of extending your arm forward, which is caused by the imagined weight of the bucket.

Now, slowly retract the imaginary bucket and put it back on the floor as you had picked it up. This is one of the most basic Ki exercises and helps develop an overt awareness of the physical effort being enhanced through the use of your mind. Though the bucket does not exist, after five or six attempts it should, once you can imagine the bucket, feel the effects it has on technique, and understand the drop at the end of the extension of your arm—you are on your way to grasping Ki.

As always, these writings are intended to spark interest, provide insight and share information. At no time do I want anyone that has read this issue to think I am suggesting anything more than the following closing statement.

Ki is an internal element. We all have and can—with training—tap into this source of energy. The material I have shared is an attempt to put something as old as educated man into terms that might help you see the concept of Ki in a different perspective.

Please email me if you have questions or see me in class...

CAMA NEWS

We have moved and scheduling has changed! That's right, after four years at our old location we have moved and our new location is better and brighter.

We are now at: **Sport & Health Club**
8250 Greensboro Dr.
McLean, VA, 22102

The new class schedule is:

Adults: Monday..... 7:30pm - 9:30pm
Wednesday... 7:30pm - 9:30pm
Saturday..... 12:00pm-2:00pm
Tiger Tots Saturday..... 9:00am-10:00am

TESTING

We will be testing April 29, 2006. All rank levels are eligible for testing and you should begin preparing for your test. Times and location will be announced as we get closer to the date. Please see Mr. Boyles for requirements, fees and any questions.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We have an opportunity to setup an information table in the lobby of Sport and Health Club on Saturdays and Sundays, 8:30am-12:00pm. I am looking for volunteers to man it. Please email me at Bushido@aol.com.

Dates for information booth:
March 4 & 5
March 11 & 12
March 18 & 19

The goal is to hand out invitations to attend class and answer any questions that people may have; your support is and will be greatly appreciated.

Stay Safe.

With Deepest Respects,




Vincent Anthony
Hanshi, 8th Dan
www.camausa.com

