

Essay on Martial Art Practice

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We do Martial Art forms slowly in order to be tranquil.
Tranquility leads to contemplation.
Contemplation leads to clarity.
Clarity leads to comprehension.
Comprehension enables us to dissolve all doubts.

The best part of Martial Art is not the external form, but the internal cultivation.
You need to practice the external in order to find the internal.

There's no right or wrong in one's practice, only different levels of understanding.
There's no perfection in one's practice, only different levels of refinement.
There's no graduation in Martial Art, only different levels of progress.

Martial Art should not be a set of habitual movements, rather, move consciously.
Mindless repetition of physical practice is only a mechanical exercise.
The mechanics of Martial Art can be taught, but the essence of Martial Art can only be comprehended.
You cannot enjoy the beauty of Martial Art if you just practice but don't understand it.

It is our body that calls us to practice, for it wants to be in balance;
Instead, it is our mind that cries out: "Wait---not today!"
Don't find excuses not to practice, instead, find every opportunity to practice.
Indeed, some people feel more relaxed in a couch than at Martial Art lessons, however, they cannot take the couch along with them.

You have to open your mind first, then your body.
You have to relax your mind first, then your body.

Cultivate your body in order to accumulate skills.
Cultivate your mind in order to accumulate wisdom.

It is good to have faith in our practice, but a strong faith needs to be built upon our deep understanding of the art; else you start worshipping icons and develop false security.
When you are puzzled, your teacher is the answer.
Your teacher is a pointer to the source of truth, not the truth himself.
When you have comprehended, everything is your teacher.

The success of many ancient Martial Art masters was not from reading but training hard.
In the old days, students were told to practice first, understand later.
Nowadays, students want to understand first, practice later.
Thirty-percent of understanding comes from your teacher, but seventy-percent from your diligent practice.

To study with a famous master does not guarantee that you will be a successful disciple; you have to make success of your own practice.
A master is to teach us to be a student of Martial Art, not his.
A master's virtue should be more important than his powerful skill.
Skill dies with the master, but his virtue gets passed down.

A master's personal interpretations often became a lineage's secret transmission, and with a theory behind them.
All masters believe in their own interpretations, there's no point to compare their differences.

Tension is like hard knots hidden in our muscles, in our minds, and deep within our hearts.
We practice Martial Art in order to discover those hidden knots and dissolve them.
A relaxed body is a body that does not hold onto things.
A relaxed mind is a mind that does not hold onto things.
If you want to be relaxed, practice Martial Arts.
If you want others to be relaxed, practice Martial Arts (on them).

There are four levels of relaxation:
Level one: relaxing the shoulders and arms
Level two: relaxing the waist and lower back

Level three: relaxing the knees and feet
Level four: relaxing the mind.

It is easy to see "what," easy to show "how," but takes true understanding to explain "why."
Martial Art practice does not eliminate stress; it only helps you to manage it.
You have to master yourself in order to master Martial Art, and Martial Art mastery is about mastering yourself.
Don't try to surpass another's ability; instead, surpass your own.

Martial Art practice is a slow fix; sometimes it is so slow that the need to fix the problem is no longer important.
It is not how many rounds of the routine you've done, it is how deeply you've worked on it.
Don't just do the movements---feel them.
Don't let the unconscious body steer your mind, instead, let your conscious mind steer your body.
You are not doing movements wrong, you are just doing them unconsciously.

The common fears of learning Martial Art:
Fear of falling behind
Fear of being ignored
Fear of being incapable
Fear of losing face
Fear of physical pain
Fear of learning the "wrong way"
Fear of showing the "wrong way"
Fear of giving commitment
Fear of false fantasy

One bad thing about Martial Art is that it is difficult to understand.
One good thing about Martial Art is that once you understand it, there's more to learn.

The rich contents of Martial Art are hidden within the transitional movements.
Any posture in stillness can be considered a Wuji stance---Not moving but ready for any action.
Qi sinks to the dantien is only the midway.
Qi sinks to the feet is the final destination.

The highest level of Martial Art has no need of form and movement---It is a state of non-intent.