

U.S. KOBUDO CLUB

*"THE WARRIOR'S HEART"*¹

By Grandmaster Shoto Tanemura

The following essay discusses the concept of *Bu-Fu*² (warrior-wind). It provides an example of what one's heart, as a warrior, should be like. Please read it over and over; nurture and find its spirit within yourself.

As a warrior, one should constantly practice awareness, from the moment one awakes in the morning; one should keep a watchful eye on his own behavior and manners, his conduct, never forgetting what it means to be human. These are all a part of *Bu-Fu*. Never act violently or develop an aggressive nature, and at no time should you take life for granted. Try to build up a gentle style of living, without hurrying through life. Consciously relax. Be not afraid of life; allow yours to be gentle and rich in love, in accord with the spirit of "*Kajo Chikusei*" ("flower's heart") or "*Kajo Waraku*" (the spirit contained within the growing bamboo).

If you are proud of the martial arts, do not tarnish their image by acting violently. People often say that we should bring relief to those who suffer, stand up against those who oppress others and knock them down. However, also be cautious of the weak; never relax in their presence for, at times, they themselves turn into oppressors. Be not one who seeks battles. If you wish to use this martial art, it should be used for the good of those in need, who truly are both good and honest, and never in the cause of the dishonest and evil. Those who follow these maxims may be termed true warriors.

If you are ridiculed or humiliated, do not allow it to move your heart; laugh it off instead. It is this type of heart, which contains the truly strong spirit of *Nin*, patience and perseverance. The true spirit of *Nin* also lies in the ability of not drawing one's *Katana* ("sword") too often, doing so, rather, only at times of intense need. A warrior must never forget this type of heart. Let your heart be

¹ I found this essay on the Internet many years ago and, taking *Soke's* recommendation ("please read it over and over") to heart, I have read, studied, and even meditated on it countless times over the years. Though the original text is probably no longer available (the source is certainly lost to me), I offer my edited version in the hope that my students will find it inspirational.

² Permit me to offer a little editorial comment on the term "Fu," contained within the concept *Bu-Fu*. This word implies much more than its literal English equivalent, "wind," would suggest. In the historical-cultural milieu out of which this concept is drawn, *Fu* was one of the elemental substances of the universe, a mysterious wind that came and went unbidden. To the ancients, though *Fu* could not be seen, its power was unmistakable. It is interesting to note that in the West, the ancient Greeks had a very similar concept, *pneuma* ("wind," "breath," or "spirit"). It was quite reasonable for the ancients to employ metaphors from nature (e.g., delicate beauty of flowers, unrelenting growth of bamboo, or dazzling glimmer of ice on a field) when talking about this phenomenon. Metaphors provided a repertory of concepts with which to describe the indescribable.

strong and your spirit full of vigor, resembling the autumn sleet on fields that shimmer in the sunlight, and full of love, as that murmured by the fresh wind of spring.

To attain this type of heart, a good command of both philosophy and the martial arts in true balance is of the utmost importance. Once obtained, the warrior is then a true servant of *Bu-Fu*.

To begin learning the Ninja warrior-way, then, the study and cultivation of culture and philosophy, and a heart full of evil-dispelling light, is essential. One must have a flower's heart and be honest—clean-cut and straight—as a blade cuts through a bamboo stalk. Allow your heart to develop the power to solve all of life's problems. Do not rely on your mind alone; learn through your body as well. If one is able to comprehend these essentials, one is sure to find *Bu-Fu* flowing within one's body and heart.

Finally, one must turn all the above into reality, strive to accomplish it all, so as to truly be a servant of *Bu-Fu*.

Let us train!