

TRAINING

By Grandmaster Shoto Tanemura

In the past, severe training was the proper tradition, but nowadays people tend to avoid it as much as possible. Sometimes, being ruthless or withstanding brutality is part of the art of self protection. Easy training will not make it possible to protect yourself from attack and danger. When your life is in danger and you are totally involved in survival, you can easily endure severe injuries and hardships. Remember Sutemi no Sieshin, which is the spirit to fearlessly throw your life away. More literally, this is about your spirit/soul. It demands something more than is usually available to normal people, requiring that which is divine. In order to pursue this spirit, it would mean nothing to have your arm or leg broken in a real fight. So, for the purpose of accomplishing this, one should collect oneself before training. Pray to God and Nature in harmony. When ending training, thank them in gratitude. This is the true origins of our Ninpo martial art.

Since olden times we have followed the ancient idiom, "No gain without pain!" That is, one cannot do anything without great effort. The pain of effort leads to great joy at this stage. It is here that you attain the key to true victory. In the old days, in the martial training sessions of the Shinobi warriors, the slightest fault or hint of laziness brought swift judgment: If found to be in error, one was prohibited or was made ineligible for further advancement. The true warrior never cried out for help, but always handled whatever befell him. Therefore, it was for this reason that I never uttered a sound, even when I was seriously hurt. For all of you who are training, things are tremendously different. But, for the development of the soul and spirit, please try to follow the old ways!