

## TRUE BUDO

By Grandmaster Shoto Tanemura

Do you understand the difference between sport Budo and real Budo? Sport is for competition. It is full of rules, including those that assure people of safety. For example, "a participant should not kill or be killed." The person who practices sport martial arts will need strong muscles, but just consider this: an animal is stronger! Of course, sport has its good points. I know them well. But the true Japanese martial arts cannot be made into a competition for the simple reason that fighting is a life or death matter, and not something to be taken lightly.

The Ninpo martial artist never surrenders the spirit of, "I will win!" even when he is dead. If a Ninja is physically weak, then he uses his head; if his head is weak, then he uses and coordinates his technique and spirit. Whether one is a woman, child, or an aged Ninja, when an attack comes, one must possess the spirit of "I will win!" How to survive is one of the essences of Ninpo.

True Ninpo techniques involve the ability to change the impossible into the possible. We have the ability to make our physical body and spirit strong. True beliefs (spiritual knowledge) are given to one by God, and so strong intuitions can help one to survive.

Well, how does one go about answering the question, "What is Ninpo," in one sentence? I would reply, "Ninpo is the True Budo, the True Religion, and the True Art."

So what is True Budo? It is a combination of *shingitai* (physical techniques and spirit) combined with the powerful light of *butoku* (martial virtue). Do not dwell on things such as winning or losing, or being skillful or not skillful. True Budo is the way to defend one's body, one's heart, and one's God. These are Ninpo's three jewels, the Sanpo Hiden.

Next, the True Religion, the *sattori* (comprehension) of the truth, is the knowledge that spirit and body are one, and understanding the purpose and mission of life. Try to be happy together. By doing this, the truth will last forever. This is *taruma* (daruma). The reality (truth) of the human person is that the soul/spirit has a life before birth and after death. There is never just an end. These things one has to comprehend the first time. The martial art that does not have this true religion is merely a sport—violent techniques for killing and/or techniques for winning money and fame. These qualities degrade an art and separate it from true martial arts.

Finally, I must explain what the True Art is. The art encompasses one's complete personality and character, and has the ability to move an onlooker's heart and soul. It matters not which country one comes from and, least of all, whether one is female or male. Everyone's heart and soul can be moved by just looking, hearing, touching or doing. Art is not just simple fashion; it is created by hard training of the heart, soul, and spirit. The way is very long.