

Dear respectful Bujinkan members:

Due to the increasing numbers of people attending training and visiting Japan recently, we have been asked to clarify the guidelines for visiting Japan. **This is directed to those that visit Japan for training on a regular basis, and those that are planning on visiting Japan in the near future.** The following points have recently become a concern for many of the people who volunteer their time and are responsible for various things here at the Hombu and Ayase classes and need to be made very clear to avoid miscommunication or problems in the future.

Recently, due to various reasons, such as no plans for a Taikai or other various "rumors" going around, there has been a very large constant flow of visitors and practitioners from around the world to the Hombu and Ayase classes. It is great to see so many people training in the Bujinkan and making the trip to Japan to train here. Training in Japan is definitely a unique experience and something that all members should do when they can. Sensei has been very happy and energetic to see so many people coming in the last couple of months on a constant basis. The Hombu Dojo has been very full and Ayase almost looks like a Daikomyosai from 10 years ago.

However, please remember to review the "Rules of the Bujinkan" before attending the training sessions as well as being up to date with your membership etc.

There have been increasing problems with many things lately such as:

- Garbage in and around the Hombu and Ayase Dojo
- People taking photos or video without permission
- Drinking and eating in the dojo at Ayase

Also please be aware of the following rules and guidelines:

If you want to visit Soke's class

1. **Those who do not belong to the Bujinkan cannot watch Soke's classes without permission.** If you need permission, please talk to Ohashi or a Shihan at the Dojo beforehand.
2. If you are a Bujinkan member, you can watch the class. You don't have to pay for it.
3. **We do not allow you to take photos or videotape the class during the session without previous permission by Soke (even if you are a Bujinkan member)** because we are learning Budo, not a sport.
4. Please do not ask Soke for a conversation or a photo unless you know him directly. Consult with a Shihan, an administrator, or a local practitioner

first instead. They can help you to read the situation and/or facilitate the interaction given Soke's busy schedule.

5. Please learn to read the atmosphere and use your best judgment given that atmosphere. Those who cannot read the atmosphere often cause difficulty. Please be careful.
6. **The Tokyo Budokan (Ayase) forbids eating and drinking in the Dojo.**

If you want to place an order from the Hombu Office

1. Write the following on a sheet of paper.
 - Your name, rank, nationality
 - A complete list of what you want (number and unit prices)
 - The date you are leaving Japan
 - Your exact address in case the Hombu Office has to mail the stuff to you later (enclosing a business card is preferable).
2. Sign your name on an envelope and put the sheet of paper and the correct money in the envelope.
3. Hand it to Ohashi or a Shihan at Soke's class.
4. Notes.
 - Soke's assistants usually mail items to the people who ordered them, however some of them return as dead mail because the address is not correct. This is a waste of time for both sides. Please write **your CORRECT addresses with READABLE letters**. (It's appreciated if printed.) And additionally, your e-mail addresses or URLs might help the Hombu staff when you have such troubles.
 - When you mail the Hombu Office, please send the money (in Yen or as an "International Money Order") and the list of what you want in the same envelope. If the Hombu Office receives only one of the two, you will not receive anything (or have to wait for a long time at best). Please be careful about this because this kind of problem happens very often. Needless to say, the money should be exact.
 - If you want QUEST DVDs/videos, please buy them at/though bookstores, etc. (either online or offline). The Hombu Office has stopped selling them.

When you enter the Dojo

1. Stack your shoes or line them up neatly at the entrance. It would be appreciated if you put them in your gear bags when the Dojo is crowded. (especially at the Hombu Dojo)
2. Stack your gear bags or stuff empty ones inside each other. (Please leave a nice "trail" for Soke to get into his changing room when you are at the Hombu Dojo.)
3. Do not bring your suitcase unless it is really necessary.
4. Bring a plastic shopping bag or two with you everywhere for garbage.

These things may not seem like a big deal to people, however, **it is a large burden for all members if one person is not respectful of the rules, or non-cooperative when it comes to enforcement of these rules.** Training is for everyone, but if we continue this way it may become difficult in the future if we cannot be respectful and careful.

Granted, it is not possible to know all the rules or guidelines and that is why **you should ASK before doing things.** You should be humble and sensitive to the situation and be patient especially when someone with obvious authority is asking you to stop or cease something that is not allowed. Comments such as these are always being done so at the request of Soke or someone very senior in the Dojo. These comments are not coming at the requester's own whim. **There is NO excuse for arguments when such a request is made.**

Another important point that is being more and more overlooked is the fact that **Japan is a unique place.** It is not America, England or any other country. Therefore, people need to be sensitive when visiting here. Garbage is treated differently than any other country and basic rules are expected to be followed with respect and consideration. This goes for how you handle garbage at your Ryokan, Hotel etc. It should be handled in the expected manner. Culture, rules and other things you take for granted in your home country do not apply in Japan or can even be considered rude or disrespectful in Japan. There is NO excuse for continued misunderstanding in this area. **The reputation of the Bujinkan and its members are at stake.**

When people leave the Hombu Dojo and toss their trash at the side of the road, for example, it is Soke who gets the call from the angry neighbors. If Soke apologizes and assures the neighbor that "It won't happen again," it shouldn't happen again.... But inevitably (and sadly), it will.

Although the new trash incident will be at the hands of a different visitor than the first incident, that same neighbor will call Soke to complain once again. Such repeated "incidents" are an embarrassment for Soke.

People do not normally think that tossing an empty can/could lead to Soke's early retirement. But it could if we are not careful! If such incidents happen too many times, the pressure that Soke feels from the neighbors could eventually push him to no longer teach! And that would be a travesty for us all!

Next, members are now attending training sessions with their families, children, friends and colleagues. This generally requires permission by Soke or the instructor when they

are not Bujinkan members. It is the sole responsibility of the member bringing someone to gain permission for those people to watch training, take pictures, etc.

People who bring someone must be respectful as well as take responsibility for those people to understand the rules. Otherwise, no one will be allowed to watch training or be present while training is taking place unless they are a participating Bujinkan member. This statement has been made on several occasions.

Most importantly, Shidoshi are responsible for their students when they visit the Hombu Dojo and should be aware of when they are visiting. Students visiting will be representing their Shidoshi when they are here. Please be aware that the names of the Shidoshi are often asked when people are visiting in order to be clear on the person's history or credibility. This is common sense in the world of Budo. Especially, senior members of the Bujinkan have a growing responsibility for their students' actions as well as upholding the honor and respect of the Bujinkan.

The above are not merely rules or guidelines for behavior. They play a key role in protecting Soke, the Shihan, the Hombu Dojo, neighbors around the Hombu Dojo as well as all training members. As students of a martial art, it is vital that we consider things in this way.

*

The intention of this document is not to hurt people's feelings. The intention is to lay forth some rules that need to be followed with common sense and judgment. We are asking everyone to be more sensitive to the situation and therefore preserve the training experience for present and future Bujinkan members. **Above all, this is expected and requested out of respect for our Soke and the Bujinkan.**

Hope to see you all in Japan.

Doug Wilson, 12th Dan - Bujinkan Hombu Dojo
George Ohashi, 12th Dan - Bujinkan Hombu and Ayase Class Administrator

Ver. 1.00 (April/23/2005)