

How to be a good Martial Arts teacher

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“A good teacher must always remain a student” are words which constantly echo in my mind when dwelling on the subject of teaching. Ninpo has always viewed morality as a requirement for a student to enter the gate. Hatsumi Sensei wrote plenty on this subject and is one which will be the focal point of this article.

Before one can teach any martial techniques to a student, one should first understand this subject.

Ninpo masters always viewed that a student’s success is not determined by his/her external appearance, nor buy their strength, rather by the student’s way of thinking and morality.

In olden days a student who was interested in entering the gate will first be accepted and participate in activities not related to martial arts for a period of 3 years. During such time the teacher will observe the students character and determine their quality. Although the methods may be different the same concept should apply today.

A good teacher will lead the student to the right path, and will help to build a strong foundation for future training. In addition good teachers always set a good example for their students with their spiritual and moral qualities. Good martial arts teachers do not only teach techniques they also teach a way of life.

For teachers, it is very difficult to find good students. When students commence studies, they are usually enthusiastic and sincere, and willing to accept and conduct themselves accordingly. However, as time passes, you get to see who they truly are, and sometimes it turns out to be quite different from the way the student initially acted.



Because of that teachers should spend at least three years watching and testing their students before they can trust them.

Martial virtue is called Butoku. Teachers have long considered Butoku to be the most important criterion for judging students, and they have made it the most important aspect of training in the traditional Japanese martial arts. Butoku further can be explained as to make one better by behaving with proper conduct and to have high morals. An individual should have at least 10 virtues in order to be considered a true martial artist. **Compassion, Humility, courage, mannerism, wisdom, loyalty, obedience, truth, grace, kindness.** Traditionally only those students who showed these qualities over time were initiated to the highest forms of the art. The only way for students to prove it is by their deeds. The reason for this is simple, deeds concerns the student relationship with his teacher, classmates and society at large.