

武士道 *BUSHIDO*

"THE WAY OF THE WARRIOR"

Bushido is the moral and ethical code of the samurai, the warrior class of ancient Japan. Created as a standard code of behavior by early warriors whose lives were spent in constant warfare. Bushido encompasses the whole life of the Samurai. The moral and ethical teachings of Bushido were refined and articulated during the peaceful years of the Tokugawa period (1603-1878). During this period, Bushido, which had long been a way of war, became dedicated to the goal of peace.

The spirit of Bushido is realized in benevolence, courage, honor and a dedication to humanity. In feudal Japan the samurai were the guardians of peace and security; it was their duty to maintain justice and protect the innocent. In the course of their duty, the samurai were required to decisively and responsibly make reasonable judgments in matters of conduct. Bushido taught the samurai to follow compassion as a guiding light in their service to the community. Furthermore, because they accepted their own death, the samurai were able to maintain stoic composure in the midst of danger. Having conquered their greatest fear, the samurai could face the unknown with a steady and sure heart. The ability to understand when it is right to live and right to die, requires a state of mind known in Zen practice as "the mind of no mind." This is the cornerstone of Bushido

Bushido is not only the code of the ancient samurai, it is the heart of modern Budo. Wisdom, benevolence, and courage are required in all forms of true Budo. Unlike in sports, the practitioner of Budo must train as if facing death at every practice session.

The spirit of Bushido can be seen during practice at the Dojo. Students of Budo train to achieve maximum efficient use of their energy and to contribute to the mutual welfare and benefit of their environment. Respect for one's seniors, compassion for juniors and discipline in training are visible signs of the spirit of Budo, is not limited to the Dojo, however. It must be integrated and applied to every aspect of life. True Bushido is realized through regard for one's fellow man, dedicated to honor and ultimately through one's contribution to the community.