

BREAKING THE CHAINS OF THE ANCIENT WARRIOR

Tests of Wisdom for Young Martial Artists



Illustrated by
Rod Cameron



Terrence Webster-Doyle

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mastering the Martial Arts Code of Conduct

TESTS OF WISDOM

- Breaking the Chains: *The Test of Respect*
- Hall of Battle: *The Test of Bravery*
- Way of the Golden Dragon: *The Test of Selflessness*
- Curse of the Ancient Warrior: *The Test of Honor*
- Mind Like Moon: *The Test of Unity*
- Gordian Knot: *The Test of Spirit*
- Games Martial Arts Masters Play: *The Test of Trust*
- Gift of the Moon: *The Test of Charity*
- Attacking Nothingness: *The Test of Compassion*
- Defeating the Enemy Without Fighting: *The Test of Understanding*
- Unbroken Flame of Attention: *The Test of Harmony*
- War of the Rose: *The Test of Strength*
- Quest for Peace: *The Test of Order*
- Fighting the Paper Tiger: *The Test of Focus*
- Way of the Sword: *The Test of Excellence*
- Beginner's Mind: *The Test of Wisdom*
- Faceless Face: *The Test of Purity*
- Face of the Enemy: *The Test of Humility*
- Bell Ringing in the Empty Sky: *The Test of Love*

To the Young Reader

To the Adult Reader

Questions for Understanding

MASTERING THE MARTIAL ARTS CODE OF CONDUCT

Dear Student—

Respect is the heart of the Martial Arts. It means being polite, courteous, and well-mannered. Being respectful is acting like a gentleman or gentlewoman. It is learning to get along with your family and friends, acting towards them in an honorable and thoughtful way. This is the Martial Arts Code of Conduct. It is what the Martial Arts are supposed to teach you so you can live peacefully. Martial Arts is much more than mere self-defense or a sport. It helps you to understand yourself and life. The real lesson to learn in Martial Arts is respect.

These words may seem “old fashioned” to you today, but they were the foundation on which the Martial Arts were built. Without respect, without being polite and well-mannered, the Martial Arts become mere fighting and can only create more conflict. The fundamental intent of all Martial Arts is to *end* conflict, to bring about peace by understanding what prevents peace. In order to have peaceful relationships, one needs to show respect, even for those who might do you harm. It is only through respect that you can learn about yourself and others, and begin to learn what Martial Arts are really about.

But there is a deeper respect than mere politeness and just being well-mannered. There are many people who are well-mannered, yet still create tremendous conflict because they have not been educated to understand the deeper feelings and thoughts in themselves.

For thousands of years, we human beings have inherited a tribal, warrior past that has come from fear and continues to create fear—and great conflict. It is the understanding of this warlike attitude, the Ancient Warrior, that needs the greatest respect, the most attention, for

respect is being attentive, being aware of what is going on around you. This respect creates courage and strength. This respect develops your character. Your character is how well you act, especially in the face of fears and the hurts of life. Character is also called “spirit.” If you feel weak and cannot face life’s fears and hurts, then your character or spirit is not strong. If you look fear in the face or confront your hurt, your character or spirit is strong.

Life is a challenge, a test of courage and skill. You will need to develop your character or spirit to meet the ups and downs of life. But, even more importantly, as a true Martial Artist, you will need to develop a very strong character, a brave spirit to face the Ancient Warrior within you and in the world.

That is what this series of tests is about—to give you that strength of character to understand and “defeat the enemy without fighting.” The enemy is what creates the warrior; the greatest enemy is fear because it is what keeps the Ancient Warrior alive. The greatest test in being a Martial Artist is to conquer fear. When fear dies, the Ancient Warrior will be defeated.

Are you ready for the tests of character? Can you face the Ancient Warrior with respect and learn from your encounters? Respect creates attention; attention brings about learning and in learning, intelligence will flower. It is this flowering, this awakening of intelligence, that will conquer fear and break the chains of the Ancient Warrior and the hold it has had on us for thousands of years.

With care,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terrence Webster-Doyle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Dr. Terrence Webster-Doyle

RESPECT

*Respect is the act of intelligence that breaks
the chains of the Ancient Warrior.*

BREAKING THE CHAINS

The Test of Respect

“Let me tell you the story of the shadow,” the Teacher said, stroking his white beard. The students sat upright in the old practice hall. The creaking of the trees in the night wind with the crackling of the fire somehow made the room both eerie and cozy. Shadows of the students played on the wall, enlivened by the fire in the large, stone fireplace. A screech owl cried, sending shivers down the back of each student. The Teacher leaned forward, his bright eyes ablaze, a neatly frayed Martial Arts uniform cloaking his massive body...

“Do you understand the meaning of the shadow?”

The students leaned forward in anticipation.

“Let me tell you its tale. There was a man so disturbed by his own shadow and so displeased with his own footprints he made up his mind to get rid of them both. The method he came up with was to run away from them. So he got up and ran. But every time he put his foot down, there was another print. And his shadow kept up with him without the slightest difficulty. He thought perhaps he was not running fast enough. So he ran faster and faster, without stopping, until he finally dropped dead. He failed to realize that if he merely stepped into the shade, his shadow would vanish. And if he stopped moving and sat down, there would be no more footsteps.

“Students,” the white-bearded Teacher went on, “each of us has a shadow, and we all leave footprints in time. We are inheritors from our ancestors. Human beings have been violent creatures for thousands of years, fighting each other in endless wars. We have inherited this vio-

lence from our warrior past; we are the children of the Ancient Warrior. We are still violent, war-like creatures who fear the dark side. Violence stalks us like our shadows; it is inseparable from us. We only pretend we have gone beyond our primitive past. But, like our shadow and our own footprints, we cannot run away from the violence which is part of who we are.

“Dear students, the most important intent of the Martial Arts is to free us from this warrior shadow, break the chains of the past, and allow us to emerge as new human beings who have understood this immense problem and gone beyond it.”

The flames of the fire played softly and silently on the figures in that large, old room. The polished wooden floor beneath them was hard and well-worn from years of practice.

“Our challenge as Martial Artists is to become new ‘warriors,’ Martial Artists for peace, Martial Artists with courage and understanding, seekers of truth. Most people see the Martial Arts as training in violence. Unfortunately, Martial Arts have too often been promoted and practiced solely as a means of physical self-defense—and not as a complete endeavor, incorporating the physical, mental, and spiritual.

“Your challenge here is to explore and uncover what this shadow is, how the Ancient Warrior in us can be met and understood, and to become free of these chains from the past which hold us in bondage, keep us in darkness, conflict, fear, and violence. Together we will explore this Ancient Warrior shadow in each of us; for to understand and go beyond conflict, the inheritance of our warrior past, is the ultimate purpose of studying the Martial Arts. Through this study, we examine the ‘martial’ in ourselves, our attitude that through war we can bring



about peace, a destructive attitude which has been passed from generation to generation, carrying with it tremendous suffering and sorrow. Can you see the importance of why we study the Martial Arts? Oh, dear students, begin to see this and you will begin to break the chains of the past and become free to live healthier, happier lives.”

The students listened intently to their Master Teacher, for they realized he was speaking of something very important. They had come to this school from all over the world, sent by their Teachers and parents to study with Master Teachers who know and teach the real meaning of the Martial Arts. They had all been carefully selected to spend this time together. Many had applied, but only the serious were eligible. This was a great privilege, not to be taken for granted.

“You have been specially chosen to be here at the International Martial Arts for Peace Camp,” the Master Teacher said forcefully. “Make good use of this time. We will be putting you through a series of challenging character developing tests you will need to meet and ‘defeat’ the Ancient Warrior. If you pass the tests before you, you will return to your schools world-wide, able to teach others about the Ancient Warrior—that which creates such tremendous violence and war. You will be ambassadors of peace, Martial Arts Educators for peace dedicated to understanding what creates conflict in human relationships and what it means to free oneself from the past. This is a serious undertaking, students. One that is very real. We are not playing games here! From this moment on, you will be constantly tested to see if you can meet the challenge. This is a trial of your strength and intelligence. It will be hard both physically and mentally. Remember, the most important weapon you have is not your fist nor your feet, but your brain—for to understand and defeat the Ancient Warrior, you will need to be very

alert, aware, focused.”

The moon shone through the window, softly pouring its light across the floor. The wind ceased and the fire grew dim.

“You will find out what it means to be a real Martial Artist who has cultivated fine qualities of character, such as honor, bravery, spirit, humility, and—most of all—intelligence and respect. For intelligence is the ability to understand yourself in relationship to others—and the Ancient Warrior, who reacts from fear and rage. Respect is the quality of mind which cares for oneself and others. Being respectful, one does not harshly judge the Ancient Warrior, but, rather, out of intelligence, one greets the Ancient Warrior as a teacher, someone we can learn from. Note we do not need to fear the wrath of the Ancient Warrior, for the Ancient Warrior is us. The Ancient Warrior is to be respected. He is not our enemy. Our judgment creates the ‘enemy.’ Fear is the ‘enemy.’ The chains of this dilemma have been handed down for thousands of years, from generation to generation. You, the new generation of Martial Artists, will learn to break these inherited chains. Being here is an opportunity to learn what the right use of the Martial Arts can do to end conflict, that which prevents peace.

“But first, it is time to sleep—to gain strength for the weeks to come, for the tests about to begin,” the Master Teacher concluded, looking intently at each student.

BRAVERY

*Bravery is not in fighting,
but in understanding the fighter within.*

HALL OF BATTLE

The Test of Bravery

Great swords, helmets and metal battle armor dented from clashes with the enemy.... Huge axes with thick handles wrapped in dark, sweat-stained leather bindings.... Helmets adorned with animal horns.... A heavy, spiked ball attached by a chain to a long, iron shaft which could be swung with murderous speed to mutilate the foe.... Arrows with sharp-tipped heads, and long bows.... Chain mail to protect the body from metal weapons.... Long spears to be thrown or carried when leading a charge against intruders.... A hall of weapons and ancient armaments, the primitive warriors' tools of the trade, a host of primitive killing machines....

The students, clothed only in their heavy, white cotton Martial Arts outfits, stood in awe of this array of battle gear. A tunnel had led to this musty battle hall.

“I wonder what you are thinking, students,” one of the Master Teachers said, breaking the silence.

“I cannot understand why anyone would want to use these weapons against another,” one of the senior students replied.

“You can see, students, we have a long and bloody history of war. Since the beginning of time, human beings have fought, killed, or were killed. This was the way of most people on the earth. But there have also been those opposed to war. There was once a temple in a distant, foreign land where Martial Artists trained for peace. Those people were dedicated to understanding why there was violence in the world and gathered together in the remote hills beyond a small village to live, work, and train together. Your school is like that temple of so long ago. We are attempting to find out why we are so violent and war-like. This

is our task.

“Your tests begin today. You will be challenged in many areas of understanding, both mentally and physically. Some of you may not make it through this trial. I hope most of you will. It will take a seriousness that perhaps you’ve never experienced before. You are young people, but you will be expected to act in a mature way. Every day from now on, you will be experiencing profound challenges—challenges which will disturb you, awakening you to the urgency of life. Most people are asleep because they have taken the path of comfort and material gain. But that path is a trap. There will be many such temptations to beguile you. You must stay alert!

“The warriors of ancient times represent the biggest trap of all, that of letting fear take charge of your life. Out of fear comes the need to defend, and the need to defend creates warriors and war. Ancient warriors were thought to be very brave in their time. They fought great battles and won—and lost. Millions upon millions of lives were devastated even though battles were won. There are no winners in war. Everyone loses. You will need to understand how such warriors are created so you don’t fall into the trap and join them. Bravery for them was found in fighting. Now, true bravery is seen as the ability to face that shadow of the warrior within yourself, to begin to awaken intelligence so the darkness of the past dies away in a flame of understanding. Perhaps you are too young to fully understand my words, but by the end of our time together, when you have completed all the tests, you will understand much better.”

The students continued to walk through that great battle hall, past the implements of war and destruction which sent shivers of fear through their bones.





“Watch how you respond to what you see. The beginning of intelligence is in understanding yourself. The first step is the last step. It is only now that matters. Stay with the now even though the ghosts of the past will come to haunt you,” the Master Teacher said knowingly.

They walked slowly, following the Teacher’s voice, looking at the various weapons of the Ancient Warrior. The hall was getting narrower and darker as they progressed towards some unknown destination. The sun which had once bathed them in warmth, had long ago been left behind. In this deep, dark hall, the students felt depression and loneliness.

Deeper and deeper they went into that great hall, beyond the last display of ancient weapons, down into what seemed like a bottomless pit. There were only small lanterns to show the way. Three of the Master Teachers escorted the students, holding the small beacons of light. For what seemed like an eternity, this small band of people, clad in Martial Arts uniforms and padded sandals, traveled to the depths of the hall. As they moved along, they began to feel as if other people were in that dark tunnel with them. Were they being followed? Occasionally, a student or two would look back into the blackness to see if anyone was there. The students felt the hair on the back of their necks stand up when there was suddenly a cold breeze, as if from a huge door shutting behind them.

No one spoke. The only sound was of their footsteps on the stone floor. The only sight was of their shadows on the cold, wet, stone walls, created by the light from the lanterns. Their fear felt like some slimy, snake-like creature slithering up their spines. It gripped them by the back of their necks. They were straining to see ahead when suddenly everything went totally, absolutely black. There was no light at all!

They all stopped dead in their tracks. No one spoke lest he or she evoke that great demon they feared was in their midst. Surrounded by that complete blackness, that cold, stone tomb, each one felt strangers were among them—as if their group had doubled in size. Each felt as if an unknown person or entity were by his or her side, following behind closely. The impulse to scream or run was stifled by a low groaning. The students' legs felt like cement; their hearts were pumping so hard, they could hear the blood rushing in their ears. The groaning became more audible and turned into a great, sorrowful wail. It grew and grew until it filled the darkness and overwhelmed them. When the groaning overtook them, the fear disappeared. There was only an immense feeling of terrible grief, as if millions of souls were mourning. A tremendous sadness came at them from all sides. They were completely immersed in that terrible, soulful wail. They felt the wail came from both inside and outside of themselves. Were the other entities in that black hall reaching out to them, across time and beyond the wall of life and death? They all suddenly understood what was happening. They were totally blind in that utter darkness, a darkness so great that all time and movement came to a complete halt. They were at the end of the tunnel with no recognition of what was up or down, left or right, in or out. In that total awful darkness, the pitiful cries came to an end as abruptly as they had started.

There was now a cleansing feeling coursing throughout their whole beings, a cleansing so profound they had a sensation of being nothing and yet everything. As light as mountain-thin air, they began to regain a sense of themselves in time and space. They felt they had been reborn, freed of a burden of the past.

“Move forward and don't look back!” a voice suddenly called out

from the nothingness. They all, as one, moved forward and slightly upward. They couldn't see anything, and yet they seemed to know what to do intuitively, as if they had been there before—many, many times before. As they moved, they began to see a very dim glow far out in front of them. The glow grew in intensity with each step towards it. Now, quickly, they came upon a magnificent light. The late afternoon sun shone as birds flew against the stark, blue sky, flecked with clean, white clouds. The fresh, fresh air!

“You have just met your shadows. You have greeted the Ancient Warrior! You now know real bravery. The trial has begun!” the Chief Instructor said with a voice filled with energy and life.

SELFLESSNESS

*In the Art of Listening, one goes beyond oneself—
and in this movement, conflict ends.*

WAY OF THE GOLDEN DRAGON

The Test of Selflessness

“There is an ancient riddle people believed would give them tremendous power and spirit if understood. Understanding the riddle would free them from fear, the Great Darkness causing so much suffering and pain,” the Master Teacher said with authority. She pointed to the painting on the wall of the practice area. The painting was of a brilliant, golden dragon, its claws protruding outward in defense against a giant eagle swooping down upon it.

“Martial Artists of old were taught the Way of the Golden Dragon, a powerful secret which could not only be used for self-defense, but, more importantly, for healing and self-understanding. You will be shown this Way of the Golden Dragon, for you will need it to pass the Test of Selflessness.” This was all she said.

For the next two weeks, the students vigorously practiced their Martial Arts forms. All styles were represented. Some forms imitated animals and came from China; other styles, less circular, were defined by angular, straight-line movements derived from Korean, Okinawan, and Japanese forms; some used throwing and locking techniques with very little blocking, punching, striking, or kicking. Day after day, the students were drilled in these many forms by Master Teachers. Not a word was mentioned about the Way of the Golden Dragon. Then the day came.

The students lined up outside the practice hall on the edge of the

forest. The woods, dark and thick with tall pine trees, were so dense in parts the sun was almost blocked out. It was late afternoon, approaching evening. There would be no moon that night.

“Students, I want to introduce you to the Way of the Golden Dragon. To learn this way takes a lifetime, and yet it takes no time at all. Tonight you will be tested again. Your test is to enter the Way of the Golden Dragon and from there, enter the Gauntlet, over in the woods beyond,” the Teacher said with a hushed reverence.

The students looked at the woods and wondered what lay beyond. They had been told not to enter the woods before this day. There had been stories about the woods and the Gauntlet. It was said no one survives the Gauntlet unless he or she can enter the Way of the Golden Dragon. But the students had been told by others that such stories were merely spread in fun to frighten new students. Yet in the back of their minds, the students weren’t really sure if the stories were merely legends—or perhaps half-truths. Anything might happen.

“Expect the unexpected,” the Teacher spoke sharply. “If you expect the unexpected, you will be prepared for what would otherwise surprise you. But if you are not expecting the unexpected, you may be caught asleep on your feet.”

The students were questioned continually, challenged by the Teachers to think quickly and understand clearly what at first seemed like nonsensical statements or questions. This was called Mental Freestyle and it kept the students mentally and physically alert to the many dangerous pitfalls of the Ancient Warrior, dangers which could lead to being caught in the past, chained to the wrath produced by fear and defensiveness.

“Stop, look, and listen. Sit quietly and let the Golden Dragon come to you. Let it fill you with its power and clarity of mind. Listen and you will hear it without any sound. Learn the Art of Listening and you will know the Golden Dragon,” the Teacher directed. The students sat on the ground and closed their eyes. “Listen to the silence,” she spoke softly. “Hear the wind waves in the tree tops, the birds moving from branch to branch calling their mates. Listen to just what is here and *don’t look back!* By looking back you will be caught in the prison of time, locked in the past. Let the past come and go, in and out, just like the river flowing, ever renewing itself, reflecting what is there but not holding on to any image.”

The students listened carefully, as they had been instructed to do at the start and end of each practice session. They sat quietly, with eyes opened, observing the scene around them. The sun was setting in the west over the tops of tall hills behind the forest. Darkness was approaching on the swift wings of night. The early evening stars began to shimmer like sparkling, jeweled diamonds in the heavens. The students sat there for an endless moment and felt the earth move, the heat of the ground lifting upwards like invisible smoke rising to the endless sky and beyond. As the light of day surrendered itself to night, the heat subsided while the birds disappeared into nocturnal, secret hiding places. All sense of self vanished, and with it, all fear.

Silently there came a new awareness of a presence before them. An enormous creature of the night lay in the woods, a predator on all fours, lurking in the dark recesses of a cave. Their primal instincts became alerted. Pupils dilated, hearts beat faster, blood rushed to arms and legs. They knew now what they had to face in the Gauntlet, in the depths of that primeval forest. The predator was present; it was in

them and in those woods. The Wrath of the Ancient Warrior was ready to meet them as they entered.

Night was now fully upon them as they moved forward to the edge of the forest, each student wearing a black uniform for night practice. Silhouetted figures moved among tall, dark trees under an endless black sky. The Gauntlet had begun; the test of selflessness was underway. “If you are captured, the test is over. Beware of what lurks within the Gauntlet,” were the last words they heard.

They saw a large, black figure dart between the trees before them. Having been trained as Martial Artists, they instinctively knew what to do. The students spread out, moving stealthily among the trees, being careful to place each foot gently on the ground so as not to create any noise that could give away their position. Suddenly, one of the students quickly rolled to his left to avoid a trap. The cunning device was designed to catch your foot and hold it fast by a clamp, unhurt. The students were ready for the many traps in the Gauntlet. Without realizing it, they had been training for this for weeks.

The forest closed in around them like a cloaked shadow enveloping each student in darkness. One could sense the trees and branches. One could smell the pine sap and earth. Above, a sprinkling of stars dimly lit the tree tops. The students moved forward. Suddenly, there was a scream, a high-pitched shriek chilling their very bones. Had someone been captured? One of the older students had moved off to the north and was coming around a tall pine tree when a large, black figure came rushing forward, wielding a long, thin object in the air. The student instinctively lifted her arm to fend off the oncoming strike from the *shinai* (a bamboo “sword”). The *shinai* caught her on the wrist with a stinging, but harmless, whack! She quickly brought her right arm and

hand up and over the outstretched hands of the attacker, and turned them sharply to the left, while twisting her body in the same direction. The attacker dropped the *shinai* and rolled a few feet to the right. Jumping up instantly, the attacker charged forward in a combat position. The student moved swiftly to meet the attack, grabbing both of her opponent's hands. While pivoting full turn, she threw the attacker, who again jumped swiftly upright, grabbing the student by her uniform. In turn, clutching the attacker's uniform, the student rolled backward, placing her feet on her opponent's midsection and pushing upward. The momentum thrust the attacker over and past her by a few feet. Having let go of her grasp, the student was up in a flash to grab the attacker's collar and—with arm under neck—hold her opponent in a vise-like grip. When the attacker slapped his own thigh with a free hand, she let go. The attacker scrambled into the woods. The student had not been captured!

Just a few dozen yards to the left of this attack, one of the students was standing completely still. There before him, in the dark, he could make out two human forms—bodies, faces, and heads covered in black, with just the slightest glint of intense eyes staring out. The student moved quickly to place one of the trees at his back. The two silent assailants moved stealthily towards him, one going to the left, the other to the right. As the two figures reached the student on either side, they attacked, only to run into each other through the emptiness left behind by the student! The two black-clad attackers looked around, blinking in surprise at the disappearance of their victim. There was only silence and the night. The assailants slowly circled the thick tree, finding no one. The student was gone, or so it seemed, when—without warning—the student was upon them from above, knocking the two assailants to the ground, pinning each with arm locks. Like the first attacker, the

two assailants slapped their thighs with their free hands and the student let them go to disappear back into the forest night.

As the night wore on, it became so dark it was virtually impossible to see anything beyond an arm's reach. The students sensed that more traps and attacks lay ahead, and became increasingly nervous because they couldn't see. They remembered their Teacher telling them about the Golden Dragon. "Just close your eyes, feel the darkness with your spirit. Feel the night air on your cheek, sense the subtle odors, the minute sounds. Welcome the dark, invite any fear to come forward. Greet it without any resistance. Move as the wind; let the natural way move you. Give in and feel life move in you. This energy you feel is life-giving; it heals the mind, body, and spirit. It is there all the time. It is the Way of the Golden Dragon. Now, when you are in the dark forest, in the Gauntlet, let this force arise. It will show you the way of acting naturally. In this, you will see without seeing, hear without hearing, feel without feeling, know without knowing. Enter the Way of the Golden Dragon and you will emerge from the Gauntlet without being captured. You will be invisible to anyone who tries to attack or trap you. Fear, which is yourself, is what gives you away. Enter the Way of the Golden Dragon and you will be gone. Emptiness cannot be trapped; nothingness cannot be captured."

The students, as if one body, could hear their Teacher. Each stood still with eyes closed, and felt the wonder of the silence, the magnificent forest, the earth below, and the endless night sky above. From this silence there arose a sensation, a feeling, an awareness that was neither man-made nor imagined. The brain had come to a still point. Time had ceased and there was nothing—and everything. A light of a different source was beginning to illuminate the darkness, allowing them to





“see” through the coal-black night. A moonless, star-speckled silent night. A soft, golden, lightless light guided them as they moved forward through the Gauntlet without leaving a trace—not shadows nor footsteps—as if the forest swallowed up their trail. Without effort, the students became the Golden Dragon and emerged through the forest, eluding capture. The test was over. The Gauntlet was behind them.

HONOR

*Honor is not fame or glory, but respect
for yourself and others.*

CURSE OF THE ANCIENT WARRIOR

The Test of Honor

“No matter what you do, how hard you try, struggle, or fight, you cannot get away from the Ancient Warrior within you. To resist is futile!” The Master Teacher addressed the students in the early morning sun. The lake at the bottom of the hill shimmered with reflections of snow-capped mountains. Birds flew overhead without disturbing the delicate quality of the untouched morning.

“Do you see this wicker tube I hold in my hand? Each of you has been given one to remind you of this lesson. If you should break it by trying too hard to understand how it works, you will fail the test.” In their palms lay a “Chinese Finger Puzzle,” a multi-colored tube about five inches long and wide enough for one’s forefinger to fit in each end.

“Insert your forefingers into each end of the tube, like so. The challenge now is to free your fingers. But, as you can see, your fingers become caught. If you pull too hard, you will break the puzzle and thereby lose. You must remove your fingers easily, without effort, without trying. Logically, one may think the only way out of the trap is to pull one’s fingers out the same way they went in. But that will prove to be unsuccessful. However, there is something that will free you effortlessly: understanding how the puzzle works. When you figure it out, you will see its simplicity. First, you see the old way does not work. Then you discover that by simply pushing your fingers towards each other, the tension is released—and with a slight grasp of the tube’s

edges with the thumbs, one can easily keep the openings wide enough to remove the two forefingers easily.”

The students played with their Chinese Finger Puzzles, putting them on, trying to pull them off, and then, without effort, releasing the tension and removing the puzzle with their thumbs.

“The Ancient Warrior within you is like this Chinese Finger Puzzle. The harder you try to escape, the greater the tension created. You’re trapped. If you try too hard, you could break. This is the Curse of the Ancient Warrior; it is difficult to get away from it without destroying yourself or others. But if you remember the lesson of the Chinese Finger Puzzle and approach the Ancient Warrior in you with this awareness, then you will be able to be free—not through trying or effort, but through understanding the hold it has over you. Understanding will set you free. But you cannot condemn the Ancient Warrior. Judgment only makes it worse. You must honor it!”

“But, Sir,” said one of the older students in surprise, “how can we honor that which we know is destructive?”

“Today you will meet the Ancient Warrior again, but not at night. In full daylight, we will evoke the Curse of the Ancient Warrior; we will meet the terrible wrath right here.”

The Master Instructor stopped talking and lined the students up for warm-ups and stretching exercises, led by an Assistant Instructor. After thirty minutes, the students were asked to sit around the outdoor fighting area, measuring fifteen feet by fifteen feet. Three Apprentice Instructors who lived at the school approached the younger students. These older students were training year-round to become one day Assistants to the Master Teachers. Each hoped to become a full instruc-

tor—then, possibly, a Master Teacher. They lived and breathed the Martial Arts.

Two Apprentice Instructors sat across from the new group of novices; the third stepped up to the edge of the fighting area. The Master Teacher signaled to his Assistant in the middle of the floor. The Assistant pointed to a younger, novice student, and then, at one of the Apprentices. They both came forward. Cautiously, the younger student approached the fighting area to meet the older Apprentice. There was an air of intensity and danger. The Assistant motioned for them to face each other. They bowed towards one another, to the Assistant, and finally, to the Master Teacher sitting a short distance away. Without a word being said, freestyle—a contest of skill in self-defense—was about to begin. No contact was allowed, except for blocks, sweeps, holds, and locks. If one of the contestants were trapped in a hold or lock, all he or she had to do was slap his or her leg to signal for his release when the discomfort became too great. Punches, strikes, and kicks were always pulled just short of their intended targets, so the students could practice full power techniques with absolute safety.

“Begin,” commanded the Assistant Instructor. Slowly, the two students moved around each other. Then, with lightening speed, the older student lashed out a footsweep, catching the younger student unaware and sending him to the ground. The older student swiftly moved on top to execute a painful arm lock. The younger student slapped his leg to signal release of the hold, but the older student kept the pressure tight, hurting the arm even more. The student again slapped his leg, but to no avail. In defense, he reached out and grabbed his opponent by the hair and pulled. The older student released his grip and jumped to his feet. The younger student got quickly up, visibly

shaken by this lack of proper conduct on the part of the older student, but before he could regain his composure, the Apprentice shot out a sidekick, catching the younger in the midsection, knocking the air out of him. The older student came in with a reverse punch to the face which the younger student narrowly avoided. The older student kept up the attack relentlessly, once knocking the younger student out of the ring. Unhurt, but dazed, the younger fought back again and again to protect himself from the onslaught of this older, stronger student. The Assistant Instructor did nothing to stop the fight, neither did the Master Teacher.

When the fight had first begun, the younger student was nervous but still in control. Now, he felt himself losing control. A slow-creeping, dark feeling made its way into his consciousness; a slow-burning anger began to smolder. The rage grew like a demon in his skull until he finally lost control. Holding back tears, the younger student started screaming at the larger, stronger student. His eyes blazed with fury, hurt, and fear. The Apprentice came at him again with a flurry of punches and kicks, sweeping the legs out from under him. The Apprentice again pinned him face down, the novice struggling in vain to get free.

“Stop!” commanded the Assistant Instructor. Finally it was over, with the younger face down, unharmed, but in rage and shock. He jumped to his feet to face his older opponent, eyes glaring with revenge.

“Come here, student,” the Master Teacher called to the enraged novice.

The younger boy did as he was told and stood shaking, eyes ablaze, in front of his Teacher.

“Meet the Ancient Warrior,” the older man said as he motioned to his Assistant. The assistant pulled out a hand mirror and turned it toward the novice, enabling him to see his own reflection. The boy looked at the face staring out at him and saw an Ancient Warrior's face. The eyes looking back were warrior's eyes. For a moment, the boy stood looking at what he could not recognize as himself, but did know as something he had felt in himself, today and before. Frozen for an unending moment, he understood what his Teachers were telling him. He was seeing himself through the eyes of the warrior within. The Wrath of the Ancient Warrior!

“Can you honor what you see? Can you respect the Ancient Warrior within?” he heard his Teacher ask.

He began to see a change in the face looking back at him—his face, the timeless face of all humanity, the face of fear, anger, rage. The eyes slowly softened and the Ancient Warrior's wrath subsided. Now, he began to see a face with thousands of years of suffering, a face lined with the sorrow of ages, a face scarred by millions of battles. As he felt that immense sorrow and tremendous suffering, he could honor himself and all humankind. He did not condemn what he was witnessing. In that moment free of judgement, the face receded and a new face took its place—one of youthful spirit looking innocently out to him, full of curiosity and wonder. And then, it was over, gone. The Assistant put the mirror away.

“Thank you for taking and passing the Test of Honor,” the Master Teacher said gently. In his Teacher's eyes, the boy saw great respect and honor for his new understanding of the Ancient Warrior within.



UNITY

*Unity is wholeness, that which is not divided
and hence, not in conflict.*

MIND LIKE MOON

The Test of Unity

The school's cat slumbered quietly in the corner, seemingly unaware of the small, gray, field mouse scurrying across the floor. The mouse, sensing danger, stopped and sniffed the air with its tiny, red nose, thin whiskers vibrating. Fifteen feet from the sleeping cat, the mouse sat motionless a few yards from its hole and safety. The students silently watched this life or death journey. Without any warning, from what appeared to be a dead sleep, the cat leapt forward with grace and stunning agility to capture its prey. But the mouse had a little measure of safety and scampered into its hole, just as the cat landed an inch behind it.

“Did you observe that trial, that test of life and death? A serious affair—like our lives—except the dangers are not as obvious to us as they are to the mouse,” the Master Teacher whispered so as not to disturb nature unfolding.

That night there was a glorious full moon which shone brightly on the water's mirrored surface. Students descended the hill to the lake with their Teachers. Looking towards the horizon, they could see moon rays evenly blanketing the land. An owl flew silently over the water's edge and into the forest beyond. The only sound was footsteps.

“Sit here,” one of the Master Teachers said in hushed tones. “Just observe and listen. This is your test. There are no answers. There is nothing to say.”

The students sat together, yet apart. The moon had risen even





higher in the sky, turning from a butter-orange to a creamy yellow the higher it went. There was no limit to the sky. The earth felt huge: a giant, round mass journeying through the galaxies like a wandering monk in search of the end of time.

They were bathed by moonlight and immersed in the lake, mountains, stars, and sky. There was no separation; all division between them fell away. There was no remembrance of what had gone before, no hoping for what was to come. They stayed there until the moon was high in the heavens.

SPIRIT

*Spirit is that energy needed to cut through
the confusion of self-made illusions.*



GORDIAN KNOT

The Test of Spirit

Dawn was just about to appear, filling that indiscernible moment between night and day when birds begin their daily hunt for food. The students looked towards a long, sloping meadow.

The eldest Master Teacher strode across the open yard, stopping in front of a row of three straw-bundled posts. He knelt down in front of one post and placed a sword on the ground in front of him. He sat quietly for a few minutes. The students watched him intently, not sure of what to expect. As the sun's first ray's broke forth, heralding the new day, the Master Teacher leaned forward, grasped the sword handle with his right hand and the sword sheath with his left. With a sudden, swift, spirited movement, he drew the sword from its case and stood upright, cutting through all three hay-bundled posts in three fluid, effortless motions. In a moment, he was sitting on the ground again. He ceremoniously resheathed the bright, steel sword and closed his eyes. The bundled bunches of hay lay neatly halved. The Master Teacher bowed deeply, his forehead touching the earth. He then got up with agile dignity and retraced his steps to the long wooden building behind the students.

The students had witnessed movements only a Master of the Sword would attempt. The sword is sharp and the movements quick. Students and Apprentices were warned not to practice this dangerous feat.

Later in the morning the students met with an Assistant Instructor to face their newest test—the test of their spirit.

“If you hesitate, you may hurt yourself, perhaps even breaking your hand,” the Assistant Instructor stated firmly. “This is not a game. It is a serious endeavor. It is not some sort of side-show or circus feat to dazzle and impress. Breaking is a means by which you can test your spirit. Spirit is giving your full attention with great passion, energy, and boldness. Spirit is being resolute of mind, feeling that fire in you which brings out your fearlessness. Break without fear. See it already broken in your mind and it will be so. All that is left is to do it! But if you think of failure or try to analyze how to achieve it, you will fail to break the board properly. You may be able to break it by brute force. Anyone can do that. But to have what you break fall away as naturally as snow from a branch is indeed something to experience!”

Each student, in turn, attempted to break the boards with various punches, strikes, and kicks. Most boards broke, but a few did not, causing some minor bruises.

“You lack spirit!” the Master Teacher reprimanded. “You hit at the board as if with a sledge hammer. You are using brute force. You do not just let it break. See it in your mind. Then, let it break. Just naturally extend your hand out as if you are swatting away an annoying fly. The movement is a natural one, not one of willpower. You cannot pass this test if you do not relax.”

The broken wood was collected and taken to the firewood box for kindling. The students gathered around their Master Teachers as one began speaking. “Students, sword cutting and board breaking represent slicing through the mind’s clutter, its entanglement of thoughts. Thoughts can tie the mind up in knots, creating disorder and chaos, clouding vision and preventing clarity. A knotted mind creates turmoil in the world. A mind agitated by thoughts from the past, thoughts evok-

ing feelings of fear or wrath, can create great harm and violence among people. Trying to analyze the confusion, the conflicting thoughts, can paralyze you. You cannot think your way out of thinking; thinking cannot resolve the chaos thinking itself is creating. So, what can you do when thoughts and feelings of past confusion arise? What happens when the wrath of the Ancient Warrior floods the brain, disorienting you?”

The students listened to the words of their Teacher, at the same time observing their minds and their many passing reactions. Listening and observing, in a heightened state of attention, the students could truly learn—not the learning that is carried over into memory as knowledge, but learning that is in the moment, learning that sees and acts simultaneously in ending inward confusion and conflict.

“Cut the knot! Break the chains! Focus like a razor, a white beam of light! Feel spirit rising in you! Spirit cuts through and ‘kills’ confusion instantly. If confusion should raise its head again, the light of focus can end it completely. Should you meet the Ancient Warrior on the road, ‘slay’ it with your sword of truth and understanding—for it is only a ghost, nothing to be afraid of.

“And, if you see another’s confusion, or sense danger in another before it is manifested—before the other is even aware of it in him or herself—you can end it at its root,” the Teacher said emphatically.

“Now practice your breaking with great spirit. Act cleanly, break cleanly. Let the board fall away without effort. And when you meet the Ancient Warrior, you will end the battle before it begins.”

TRUST

*Trust is not unquestioning obedience,
but rather the capacity for seeing and
acting on that which is true and real.*

GAMES MARTIAL ARTS MASTERS PLAY

The Test of Trust

The long Ceremonial Hall was alight with dozens of flickering candles. At the end of this long room was a large, low, black, wooden altar. On the altar was a statue of a half-human/half-animal creature with numerous arms in dance-like gestures. Beside it were two large bronze bowls, and a vase with flowers. On the floor near the altar was a large brass gong engraved in an unknown script, encircled by an intriguing design of animal figures with a large dragon in its center. The room had a heavy, sweet odor from the many burning sticks of incense in the bowl on the altar. Behind, on the wall, was an ominous picture of the Chief Instructor's Master Teacher with the inscription, "Great Enlightened Heavenly Teacher." The floor was bare except for round, black cushions placed in long rows. The only light came from an oval window high on the wall, casting a light on the altar and out along the floor.

An Apprentice Instructor led the students in and told them to follow what she did without question. The students had never experienced such a place before. They were hushed by the awesome spectacle. They sat down on the cushions in the typical Martial Arts, knees-tucked-under position, in wonder at this mysterious occasion.

After sitting for a while in silence, they heard a door open to the side. Not looking in the direction of the noise, they kept their focus on the altar. In a moment, a small, old man with a long, white beard appeared and knelt down in front of the altar. They couldn't recognize the

man because the area was dark and he had his back to them. The old man was dressed in a white Martial Arts top with a flowing, white, gown-like “skirt.” The figure began to chant in language they had never heard before. At times he bowed low to the altar. Then, he turned to the brass gong, still with his back to the students, and struck it once. The sound echoed through the room. Again and again, he hit the gong. The loud brass clashing in the old hall reverberated until the walls seemed to shake.

Slowly, the old man in the white robe moved towards the altar and knelt again within arm’s reach of several objects too far away for the students to see clearly. With his back still to the students, he resumed chanting. With his right hand, he began to wave a whip-like device. With his left, he gestured towards the large picture of the “Great Enlightened Heavenly Teacher.” The Apprentice Instructor motioned to the students to bow. Each time they were to bow, the Apprentice raised her hand. The students bowed and bowed as they had been told to do without question. The small, old, bearded man in white now began to talk to the picture in a voice filled with passion and reverence.

“Oh, Great Enlightened Heavenly Teacher, please hear me. I evoke your memory, your spirit. Come to us from the ages. You are our Spiritual Master, oh, Divine One! We pay you homage and obedience. We worship you as our Deity!” His voice raised to an emotional pitch with each invocation.

The students sat in awe of this spectacle. They became aware of a strange, powerful energy in their bodies. The influence of the large, old hall, the candles, the strange smelling incense, the mysterious looking altar, the chanting voice methodically droning on, the clashing of the gong, and the cryptic gestures of the magical looking old man in flowing

white clothes...their heads swam in it all. Their senses were overcome with so many sensations. They felt special, holy, as if they were elite warriors chosen for the work of the Great Enlightened Heavenly Teacher.

“Oh, students,” said the old man with his back to them. “You are the chosen ones, the ones to follow in His footsteps! You are the powerful elite, the warriors of His will! We are a brotherhood; a bond has been created for us by His recognition, His divine selection. You are the inheritors of His Masterhood.” The old man’s voice crackled with controlled excitement.

The feeling in the room was immense; the energy created by the experience was ecstatic and overwhelming. All felt lost in the moment, carried away by the zeal produced by the combination of elements.

“And students, you must remember one thing, and only one thing,” the old man shouted. “You must obey, follow the authority of the Masters *without question!*”

He swiftly turned to face the mesmerized group of students. For a moment, everyone sat completely still, stunned by what they saw. They blinked and some even rubbed their eyes. It couldn’t be so! Even in the light of the candles, the face was recognizable. The school’s gardener sat before them with a large smile on his face. He began to laugh—first a small, polite laugh, soon growing to a belly laugh with tears streaming down his face.

The students were confused and shaken. What was the school’s gardener doing dressed in these special clothes and why was he laughing? No one knew what to say. From the side door, two figures came into the room, two Chief Instructors. The older man sat to the right of



the gardener in white, and the woman Chief Instructor sat to his left. They were both smiling.

The woman spoke first. “Students, are you aware of yourself right at this moment? It is important to see what you are doing,” she said firmly. “We have tricked you. This has been another test. We have been playing a game, a very dangerous game, one which can hypnotize, creating false images for you to worship. Do you understand what I am saying?”

One of the students in the front spoke up hesitantly. “Excuse me, Teachers, but what is the gardener doing dressed like that?”

“Do you mean all of this—the altar, the incense, the robes—are just part of an act?” another student asked, mystified.

“Students, you are so vulnerable, so susceptible to what we adults tell you, especially adults who look and act like great authorities. It is all too easy for you to fall into our web, our hypnotic trance. We felt we needed to test you on this weakness we all possess. When we are young, we trust adults around us to show us what is right and true so we can live intelligent, happy lives, free from conflict and sorrow. But, unfortunately, there are many people in the world who want to take advantage of you, to condition you through strange rituals, foreign words, and experiences, so you will be manipulated to do what these people want you to do: to follow them unquestioningly, to give them your money, your obedience, and even your life. The main point of this test was to show you how easy it is to impress and hypnotize you.”

“I’m afraid I believed it for a moment. What scares me is that I enjoyed it. Well, enjoy is not the right word. I just felt a strange desire in me that was very, very pleasurable, as if something in me needed

that feeling. It's hard to explain," a student commented. "I still feel dazed by the experience and shaken up too."

"We have certain rituals at this school. The Martial Arts all have rituals. Students bow to their Teachers, to their school, and to each other. These rituals create a structure. Like a house, ritual creates the framework. But, beware! Ritual can imprison you and catch you up in a maze of convoluted mind games where you think you are the center of it all," the Master Teacher warned earnestly.

"Sir, what should we be aware of? How can bowing create a prison?" a student asked.

"Young lady, you see only the surface of things. You see bowing and you follow dutifully, like a good student. But, how far will you go before you question? Questioning breaks the influence of conditioning. Questioning exercises your brain, your intelligence. Questioning, if you don't immediately respond with what you think might be the correct answer, can lead to awareness and the observance of what is really happening."

"But you are our Teachers; you know what is right and good for us," said one of the younger students. "We trust you."

"We are your Teachers, but we are not your authorities. There is a difference. I hope you can understand what I say. I will try to explain this as easily and simply as possible," the Teacher responded affectionately.

"We see that young people are intelligent, but are like tiny seeds which have not yet been put into the ground. Our job is to plant the seeds and water them, to nourish them until they are strong enough to

grow and survive on their own. Then they, too, will bear fruit and plant their own seeds to be nourished. This is the way of things. Birth, death, and rebirth—the natural cycle goes on.

“That little, individual seed has in it the potential for infinite life. It contains the germ of life itself—the seemingly endless cycle of nature. That little seed is intelligence, life force, life energy, with the might to push a slight, fragile blade of grass through stone. It is tremendously powerful! You are that seed; each one of us is. So, we have to be careful how we care for the seed that we are. If we think the seed does not have the ability to grow from its own power, then we may destroy it by trying to grow it in artificial ways.

“As Martial Arts Teachers, we nourish the growing student. Helping a young person to understand what is right and good is a serious and important job, perhaps the most important work a human being can do. Your parents are your teachers, too, of course. We who teach the Martial Arts, along with your parents and school teachers, need to work together as a team to help you to be intelligent, capable, happy human beings. It is our job to show you the many traps in the world, the pitfalls you can fall into because the world is so full of challenges. Life is a serious but exciting adventure, and there are many tests you need to prepare for. Here at this school, we are trying to prepare you for the test of life itself, for the many trials you encounter each day. The greatest test is that of understanding and resolving conflict peacefully. This is our main intent here. We will help you understand how conflict is created so you will not become its victims. So many people fail the tests of life because they don't have the right education. People think education is learning history, mathematics, and how to read and write. But that type of learning is only one small part of education. Learning about how

to get along with other people is the most vital part.

“I know that perhaps all of this may be too much for you to understand right now. Just remember you can live a healthy, happy life and that the Martial Arts, if taught in the right way, can help you. And that is why we are all together at this school.”

“I think I understand some of what you say,” said an older student. “I can see how violent the world is, and I think what you are saying is that we can understand violence because we have created it—by the way we think and act. But there is much to learn.”

“Don’t worry, you will understand all we are teaching you if you really want. It takes work! You must be willing to listen and actively participate by questioning to find out what is true and what is not. We Teachers are not here to tell you what to think, what is true, or to demand that you obey us without question. We want you to question what we tell you, for in questioning, you are practicing ‘Mental Freestyle,’ as we call it. You are exercising that muscle between your ears,” the Teacher responded. “But beware, students—there are many traps along the way. Be alert, question, listen! Don’t accept what someone tells you as true without finding out for yourself. For even if your Teachers know what is right and good for you, how do you know? Trust your intelligence, for intelligence will tell you what is true. Intelligence is a small seed within you. That seed needs to be nurtured to be able to grow into full bloom.”

The students came up to the “altar” invented by their Teachers, to look at all the “stage props” used to hypnotize them. The picture of the “Great Enlightened Heavenly Teacher” was actually a picture of the school’s cook in disguise. After that day, the students were more aware

of how easily they could be influenced and began to see how this could happen anywhere. They also began to see the terrible danger when people become too hypnotized or fall asleep.

CHARITY

*Love and do as you will,
for in love there is intelligence.*

GIFT OF THE MOON

The Test of Charity

The moon hung above them in the clear, night sky. “This moon is called the Dragon Grasping the Pearl,” the Teacher said softly.

The students looked up at the quarter moon. Its lower right side was brightly lit while the rest remained hazy. Indeed, it looked like a finely translucent pearl, resting in a crescent-shaped claw. Near the moon shone the evening star. Such a lovely sight! The rest of the sky was dotted with fainter stars millions of light-years away.

“I want to tell you a story about a giving man, a man of charity. He passed a great test without ever knowing it was a test. The story goes like this...” The Teacher leaned forward with his chin resting on his hands. The students were sitting on the ground around him under the night sky. The trees looked like fingers pointing up towards the heavens. What a wonderful mystery life is under the stars!

“Teshu, a Martial Arts Master, lived a very humble and simple life in a small, mountain hut near a burgeoning city. He spent the days practicing his forms and writing a book, gardening and swimming in the mountain stream pools. He had a good, untroubled life.

“One evening, a thief came to the hut to rob Teshu, but found there was nothing to steal. Teshu had only a few belongings.

“Teshu had been out on a walk and when he returned, he caught the thief in his hut. Realizing the thief was a sad and very poor man,



Teshu said to him, 'You have come a long way to see me, and you should not return empty-handed. Please take my clothes as a gift.'

"The thief was bewildered. He took the clothes, bowed, and left.

"Teshu sat, clothed only in his undershorts, watching the moon. 'Poor Man,' he thought to himself, *'I wish I could have given him this beautiful moon.'*"

COMPASSION

*Sharing the sorrow of another because you, too, feel the pain—
in that there is compassion.*

ATTACKING NOTHINGNESS

The Test of Compassion

“What is one of the greatest tests of all, Teacher?” a student asked one bright morning.

“I know of one test which meant a great deal to me. It is a story of a great teacher, a Teacher of mine, just after a war had ended. This teacher had not supported the war because she was strongly against killing. She felt there must be more intelligent and humane ways to resolve conflict—without using violence. In her search, she had dedicated her life to the practice of the Martial Arts.

“One day, she was walking through a small town on her way home when a large, drunken man came crashing out of a house. My Teacher heard cries for help from a woman and a small child huddled inside. The drunken man held a sword and was cursing and challenging anyone near him. There was a small crowd of people who had gathered upon hearing the commotion. The drunken man looked desperate and dangerous. His clothes were ripped and soiled with vomit.

“Cries continued to come from inside the house. People watching this spectacle were frightened. No one seemed prepared to help. The dirty man charged drunkenly at the crowd, sending people fleeing for cover. The drunk then turned to look at my Teacher, who was standing quietly by the side of the road, looking attentively at the huge man.

“Whatta ya looking at?” he half-shouted, half-mumbled as he





glared at my Teacher.

“Nothing,’ my Teacher calmly responded with a friendly smile.

“The screams from the house were getting worse. Perhaps one or both of the people inside had been hurt. The crowd cautiously gathered again, but kept a safer distance from the menacing drunken man.

He spat out drunken slurs. He made a threatening lurch forward, brandishing his long, sharp, warrior’s sword at my Teacher. But, she stood still, not moving back from the man’s hostile advance.

“Sounds like someone is hurt in there,’ my Teacher said, pointing to the house.

“Yeah, so what! Them is my wife and kid and I can do with them as I please. You gonna do something ‘bout it?’ The man stepped forward again, moving closer to my Teacher.

“Looks like you are hurt,’ my Teacher said gently, pointing to the large gash on his arm.

“No one can help me now. I’m a warrior. I have been trained to kill. I just came home from the war,’ the big man said with an unexpected quietness, responding to the lack of fear from my Teacher.

“The big man stopped still, the menacing sword hanging loosely in his meaty hand. Blood was dripping down his arm onto the ground, leaving reddish-brown spots on the road.

“I’ve been at war, I’ve been at war, and there are bodies all over the place. They just kept on coming and we couldn’t stop them. They just kept on coming and coming,’ he said, swaying from side-to-side as if a giant tree ready to fall.

“My Teacher was a great Martial Artist. She could defend herself against the most highly trained people. A drunk, even with a sword, was no match for her. And yet she stood there talking with this sad stranger on a dusty road.

“You know, I am married and have a daughter. Do you have a son or daughter? My family lives in the next town and I am traveling there to meet them. My husband is a wonderful person. He loves us very much and we love him. And my daughter! She is so beautiful and smart. She is now in school and I am so proud of her,’ my Teacher went on happily as the man stood there listening, transfixed by the story he was hearing.

“Yeah, I am married, and I have a girl, too. They are in there,’ the big man said, gesturing with his free hand towards the house. ‘I must have really frightened them. I kinda went crazy. I just see the enemy everywhere. I can’t stop the fighting,’ he responded to my Teacher.

“It’s okay. There is nothing to worry about. It’s all over now. You can stop fighting,’ my Teacher said kindly with tears in her eyes.

“The big man looked through his drunken haze at my Teacher and could see my Teacher’s tears. He wiped his nose with his bloody arm and slumped down to the ground in a crumpled heap. He began sobbing and sobbing, emitting a terrible cry.

“My Teacher walked over to him and put her hand on the man’s shoulder and said, ‘It’s all right, it’s all right. Let it go.’

“The big man’s body convulsed with spasms of sobs. The crowd watched in silence.

“My Teacher gently grasped the sword the big man was clutching.

Sensing that his only weapon was being taken from him, he tried to rise and strike my Teacher, but before he could get up, she had removed the sword and tossed it aside. The big man reeled drunkenly and fell into my Teacher's arms, still sobbing.

“My Teacher sat down on the ground with the man and held him in her arms, rocking the drunk while he cried. After a period, he became quiet. Gently laying him down on the ground, my Teacher entered the house of this man to find his wife and young daughter cowering behind a large table.

“Please, don't be afraid. I will not hurt you. Your husband is all right now. Do you understand? It was the war, the war,' my Teacher said sadly. She led the shaking woman and girl out into the street to where the big man lay. 'He needs your help now. You have to be strong. No matter what he has done in the past, you must forgive him and love him. Only in this way will he heal those terrible wounds. Do you understand?' my Teacher asked gently, looking first into the eyes of the woman, and then those of the small girl.

“He will not hurt you. He is defeated. The war is over for him. Now help him.'

“The woman looked deeply into my Teacher's eyes to gain strength. The woman became quiet and pulled her child close to her for reassurance. She nodded to my Teacher, then knelt down next to her tragic, broken husband. The young girl, following her mother, did likewise. They both reached out and put their hands on his massive back. The woman began to wipe the blood from his arm and forehead with her scarf. The man quietly cried, his huge body jerking with subsiding sobs.

“Weak and shaken, the woman turned to my Teacher. Her eyes met my Teacher’s eyes and she could see love. It was this unjudgemental love that healed the broken warrior and saved his family from more sorrow and suffering. To me, this is the most wonderful test of all—the test of compassion, of love.

UNDERSTANDING

*We are what we think we are—
in understanding that, there is freedom.*

DEFEATING THE ENEMY WITHOUT FIGHTING

The Test of Understanding

“What does this mean, students?” the Teacher asked, pointing to the writing on the board.

We are what we think.

All that we are arises from our thoughts.

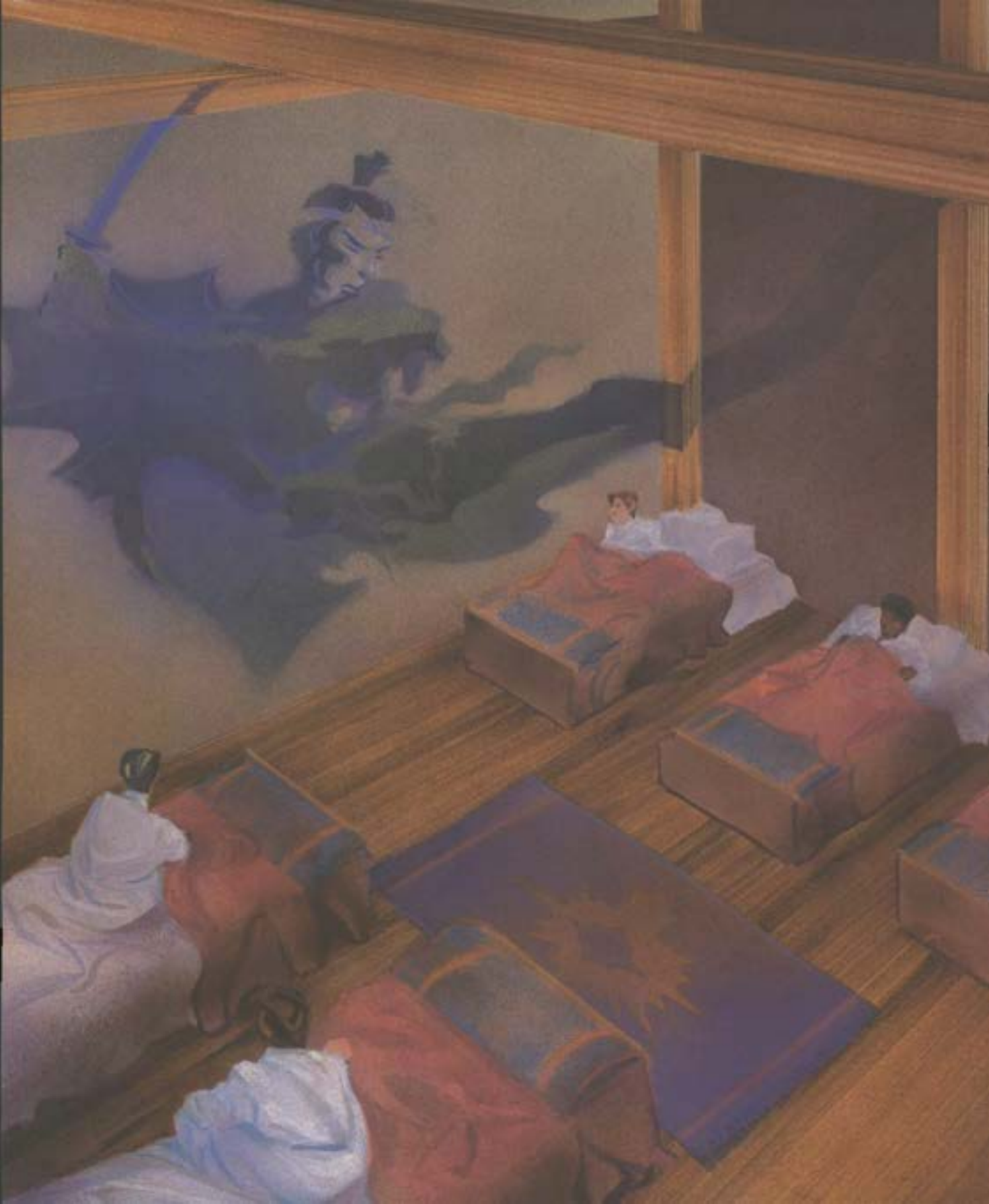
With our thoughts, we make the world.

“You need to be challenged both physically *and* mentally if you are to be free of the chains of the Ancient Warrior, free of the inherited fear and violence creating such tremendous suffering in the world. You are challenged physically in self-defense Freestyle; you are challenged mentally in Mental Freestyle. Your mind is your greatest weapon. In order to cut through confusion and chaos, your mind needs to be like a very sharp sword—a sword of truth and understanding—not a physical sword which hurts and destroys. The chains of the past will weigh you down unless you act quickly and think. Be alert, awake!” the Teacher said with urgency in his voice.

One of the students spoke up, “I think this means our thoughts signify who we are...what we think is what we do.”

“It means we have been conditioned to think certain thoughts and to act in certain ways. Like being brainwashed,” another student responded energetically.

“We are responsible for what goes on in the world because we



create action by our thoughts. Violence and terrible wars are created by how we think and act. This comes from being chained to our past, chained to the Way of the Ancient Warrior. The chain is the conditioning we've inherited. It's like a disease everyone has, and when you come into the world as a small child, you get the disease and become sick like all the people around you. But, you don't have to get sick if you can understand what is happening," one of the senior students added.

"I can see you are beginning to learn the lesson well. Are you starting to see why we are here? How important Martial Arts training can be? How it can help you understand and go beyond conflict, both within yourself and within the world?" the Teacher asked his students.

"How does thinking make the world?" the Teacher continued. "How does it create conflict? Thought can create illusions and we can get caught in make-believe worlds. We have to look for what is true or false in our thinking and in what thought has created. This is by far the greatest challenge for the Martial Artist—understanding how thought creates conflict through the illusions it weaves."

"Thought creates the illusion that a certain belief is right and more important than other beliefs. This divides people, separates them, and creates conflict," an Apprentice Instructor spoke out.

"We create an enemy in our minds, and this in turn creates physical conflict," said a young student.

"How?" the Teacher questioned.

"An enemy is like a frightening monster in a nightmare. It's only a dream, but we think it's real while we're dreaming it."

"Let's go into this for a moment," the Teacher continued. "Can

anyone tell me how this works? How we create the enemy? Go slowly and carefully.”

“Well, I can see that if you are attacked by a large, black dog, for example, that dog becomes your enemy, a real physical threat, so you need to defend yourself. Now, what if you see another large, black dog a few days later, but it isn’t the same dog. You automatically react to this dog in a self-protective way because it reminds you of the one who bit you. So, you think this dog is your enemy, too, when it really isn’t,” the senior Apprentice Instructor commented. “We react to certain people in a similar way. Suppose you’ve been told a type of person or group of people are a threat to you. This type of thinking originated in the days of cave people, when men and women had to gather together as tribes to protect themselves from wild animals and other groups of people who were a threat to their survival.”

“Go on,” the Teacher encouraged.

“Well, it seems to me that what we’ve done is to carry on that tribal way of life when it isn’t even necessary anymore...or to our benefit. We still think of other groups or tribes as a threat to our survival. So, a particular enemy is created in the minds of a whole people. Like the dog who bit you, you carry that memory and apply it to the next black dog you see, and your fear eventually gets passed on to your children. A fear gets passed to the next generation, and that generation passes it down to the next. We have finally inherited what you call the ‘Ancient Warrior.’ The Ancient Warrior was created from the need to protect oneself and one’s group or tribe from the ‘other’—the ‘enemy’—who was, at one time, an actual physical threat to my, or our, survival. But, that was a long time ago. And, yet, we are still reacting to certain groups or tribes in the same way—as if it were then. Does this make

sense?” the senior Apprentice Instructor questioned.

“Yes, it does. That was a clear example of how thinking from the past can get carried over to the present to continue the conflict. This has gone on for centuries. The intelligent Martial Artist understands how thinking functions and how destructive thinking gets carried over from the past, continuing to create conflict in the world. We need to understand *we are the world, and the world is us*—it is all one and the same thing. *We* create the world by how we think and act! If we can see the truth of this simple fact, then we can be free of the destructive, tribal, divisive thinking and acting which creates enemies and warriors. Dear students, please look at this for yourself. Some of you may be too young to grasp all of this, but keep at it and you will understand. Just remember to watch your thoughts; be aware of how they can bring the past into the present and create conflict. Start with simple examples in your own lives—like when you think of something you really want but cannot have, how such a thought creates conflict. Then look at the other examples. As you keep looking, *if* you are serious and truly want to find out, you will begin to see how thinking has created enemies, warriors, and war. It’s all in our minds, like the monsters in our nightmares. Our challenge is to wake up from the dream! This is our greatest test, the test of understanding *how we create conflict* by the way we think and act. Students, the test has just begun!”

HARMONY

In harmony there is no actor acting—no “me” doing.

UNBROKEN FLAME OF ATTENTION

The Test of Harmony

The arrow flew swiftly through the crisp, thin air and landed dead center in the target. The twang of the bow, the swift flight of the wooden, steel-tipped shaft spiraling silently towards its goal, then the dull thud of its landing—those were the only sounds to be heard. All had happened so easily, so effortlessly. The Master Teacher sat down on the ground and closed his eyes, in the same position he had taken before shooting the arrow on this moonless, pitch-black night. They had all seen it for themselves when they approached the target. Dead center! The arrow was imbedded deeply into the target's inner-most circle. They stared at it in silent awe. From where he had stood, he could not have seen the target in the dark.

“How can someone hit a target at this distance and enter the bull’s-eye without seeing the target?” another Teacher asked the next day. “You are going to find out, for this is your next test,” she continued with energy.

The students were all issued bows and quivers of arrows. The early morning fog was lifting off the archery field as they took up their places next to each other in a long line, facing targets a short way off. These targets were much closer to the shooter than the targets used by the Apprentice Instructors and Teachers.

In turn, each student notched the arrow, pulled the taut bow-string, and let the arrow fly. Arrows showered down to the earth, sprinkling the long, green lawn with wooden sticks. Only a few came close to the targets. Again, they all fired in order; again, the wooden shafts,

propelled through the air, landed haphazardly around the target areas. This ritual of archery went on for over an hour. A few finally hit the oversized targets. Hard as they could try, no one seemed able to hit the center of the target as had their Master Teacher the night before. He had hit the bull's-eye from a much greater distance than they were now shooting from, with a smaller target, and at night without any moonlight! The students had been the same distance from the target that night, yet none of them could see it in the darkness of the night.

Practice was over for the day. Their Instructors made no comment as the students packed up their bows and arrows. The next day, after an early workout in Freestyle, a swim in the lake, followed by breakfast and an hour tending the organic garden, the students assembled again at the archery field. There was an obvious and extreme change in the arrangement of targets. The oversized targets with large circles had been moved closer than their former positions and placed within five feet of the shooting area.

“Line up, take your bows, and notch your first and only arrow for today,” the Teacher directed without emotion.

The confused students did as they were told. They were asked to suspend questioning during this day's practice, and to observe non-judgmentally. The students lined up and took their ready positions. On command, they notched their bows with the wooden arrows. In turn, each shot an arrow into the target just a few feet away. When all had finished, the Teacher congratulated them.

“Very good, students. You have each hit the bull's-eye. That was the intention, was it not?”

The students looked confused. Indeed each had hit the bull's-eye. There was no way anyone could miss at that distance! The arrow was almost touching the target as each student readied to fire. Missing the

center was almost impossible. The Instructor ended the lesson for the day.

The following morning, the students were again taken out to the archery field. Today there was a different arrangement, though, for all the large targets had been removed.

“Now, students, I want each of you to hit the bull’s-eye today. In order to pass this test, you must do so. Do you understand?” the Instructor inquired.

“No, Sir, I don’t,” one of the students responded. “There are no targets. How can we hit the bull’s-eye?”

“Do you need glasses, students? Can’t you see the targets out there?” the Instructor yelled back, as he strode away from them down the archery field. Reaching a spot much farther away than the first day’s practice targets, he called out to them, “Do you see the targets now that I am pointing them out to you, or are you still blind?”

The students were even more confused. They looked at their Instructor standing between two trees, one on either side of the long and narrow field. He was gesturing to something they could not see.

“Can you still not see it?” he repeated. “Well then, come here if you are so blind.”

The students walked forward in unison towards their Instructor. As they drew closer, they still could not see what he was pointing to. The Instructor kept shaking his head in disbelief.

When they came within a few yards of the Instructor, they could finally make out a thin string tied between the two trees. On closer inspection, they saw sewing needles suspended from the thread in a single row.

“Now, this is your target and the test is to hit the bull’s-eye—to





thread the eye of the needle with your arrows,” the Teacher said in all seriousness.

The students looked even more dumbfounded at this impossible command. How could an arrow fit through the eye of an ordinary sewing needle? They couldn't even hit an oversized target at normal placement, much less hit a needle's eye at this great distance!

“Please, no questions now! Just do as I ask,” the Teacher said simply.

The students went back to their starting positions, took up their bows, and notched their arrows. On command, each of them, in turn, shot their arrows at the unseen targets so far away. Arrows cascaded through the air, landing in the general vicinity of the invisible targets.

“Try harder, try harder,” the Instructor implored of them. “You must hit the needle's eye; it is imperative you try as hard as you can. This is the test!”

All morning, the students tried. Then, after lunch, they tried and tried and tried again. Late into the day, they continued shooting arrows towards the targets until they were exhausted. They went to bed early that night after supper, dreaming of bows and arrows, of hitting the target, of arrows magically piercing the eyes of hanging needles. The next morning the students woke up refreshed, ready to take up the archery test again. Today, the old targets were back in their original places. The students lined up and assumed their positions.

“Today, you will learn about the unbroken flame of attention, of harmony, of being one with the bow and arrow and target,” the Teacher said upon greeting them in the early morning. The dew was still on the grass and leaves of the trees. The bright, clear sunshine glistened on the small beads of water, sending out tiny, sparkling reflections. The

birds were quiet. The sky was brilliant blue and cloudless. There was a newness, a freshness about this moment.

“I want each of you to pick up the cloth by your feet and tie it around your head as a blindfold so you cannot see,” the Teacher stated.

On the ground next to the arrow stands were dark, narrow pieces of cloth. Each student picked up a strip and carefully tied it around his or her head and over both eyes.

“Now, I want you to listen carefully to what I say during this time. I want you to forget the bull’s-eye, forget where the arrow is supposed to go, forget there is any target or purpose to archery at all. All you need to do is draw the bow and when the string reaches a certain point which you will feel, *just let it fall*—like ripe fruit from a tree.”

They had listened carefully. Slowly, each drew the bowstring until it reached a point where it could no longer be held. The string burst from their fingers and they heard the “twang” of the string as the arrow shot into the unknown. As they felt for their next arrow, one by one, the students began to remember their collective dream. They could see and feel the arrows flying through the air and magically piercing the eyes of the needles. Again and again, they relived the magic of their dreamed archery contest. As they shot their arrows in the darkness of their blindfolds, they listened carefully to their Instructor as he talked them through their lesson, their test.

“*You* get in your way. Don’t focus on anything except what is actually happening now. Feel the strain of your muscles as you pull the bowstring; feel the tension at the moment before the arrow releases. Draw the bow with your spirit, effortlessly, naturally. You have it within you, like the Way of the Golden Dragon. This does not depend on strength, but rather on presence of mind, on the vitality and inner awareness with which you shoot. ‘It’ shoots! ‘It’ hits! Bow, arrow, and

person become one in harmony. There is no division, no separation. Let the arrow fall like snow from the branch.”

For a timeless period, the students let arrows fly. After a while, there was a new sensation pervading them and infusing each with a sense of lightness and transparency. The arrow notched itself, the bow lifted itself, and the wooden, steel-tipped shaft let itself go, winging its way into the unknown, as if it was nothing at all. And, so it was—nothing at all. The test was underway; the test was forgotten! It was over when it began.

STRENGTH

*When you are that which you observe—
when the flower's blossoming blossoms you—
in that there is strength without limitation.*

WAR OF THE ROSE

The Test of Strength

“Throw him, throw him!” the Master Instructor said, urging the boy on. “Use your hips, move with the throw; don’t just stand there like a stone Buddha. Lift, using the natural way. Don’t force it. You’re not throwing around sacks of cement. Use leverage. Move at the point of ease. Create that small movement, pivot that small circle, then put your whole being into it. Move with your breath. Mind...breath...body. Hear what your breath is saying. Move with your breath.”

After over two hours of instruction, the students sat down to cool off.

“You all try so hard, but have little strength. The harder you try, the weaker you are. *You* are defeating yourself! Do you understand?” The Master Teacher looked intensely at each student, his eyes directly meeting theirs.

“Perhaps a story might give you an insight into what I am saying. A long time ago, a man named Carlos lived in a small village halfway between two great cities. Carlos was a kind and gentle young man. He was also physically strong. He practiced the Martial Arts, studying many different forms. Carlos had come to this country to study these Arts, for his life and only love was his practice. He lived for the Martial Arts. One day, as he was walking northward to one of the great cities, he met a band of rough men on the road. They were surrounding a powerfully built, yet smaller and older man. The older man stood calmly in the middle of this group of thugs as they encircled him and called him names.

“Come on, old man. Show us how strong you are,’ taunted one of the thugs.

“Yeah, weak one, show us your skill. You are supposed to be a great Martial Arts Master. To me, you look like an ordinary man,’ said another.

“The older man did look ordinary, but only to the untrained eye. His clothes were ordinary; his looks were ordinary. But there was something about him that, to Carlos, was indeed extraordinary. It was something very subtle in the way he stood there, dignified and upright, looking at the thugs and yet, not looking at anyone at all. He seemed as if he were in a dreamlike state. His eyelids were half-closed and his arms were relaxed by his sides. He stood with his sandaled feet slightly apart, while he waited motionlessly. He said nothing.

“Hey, old man, you gonna fight us? Can you take us all on? Why so quiet? What do you have to say before you get your beating?’ one of the boisterous thugs called out, egging him on.

“Carlos watched the older man intently from a distance as the thugs closed in on him. One grabbed the older man around his neck from behind and held him with a choke hold. For a moment, they all froze. Carlos noticed the older man had turned his head to the side, so his chin was tucked down to his chest and fitted into the fold of the younger man’s bent arm. With one hand, the older man lightly grasped the choking hand of the thug. The thug pulled very hard on the older man, even lifting him up off the ground. It looked like the older man was defeated, perhaps even choking to death. Carlos was about to intervene when the older man made a quick movement and suddenly stood behind the thug, holding his arm up and pressing it into his back. The younger man screamed out in pain, ‘You’re breaking it! Let go! Ow, you’re breaking my arm!’

“At that moment, another thug leapt towards the older man. Using the captured thug as a shield, the older man ran the two younger men into each other with a sickening thud. The charging thug fell backward with his partner on top. Stunned, the two just lay there. Then, another two thugs attacked, but the older man was ready. He ducked down under the closer one and lifted himself up at just the right point, catching the first oncoming man under his midsection, hurling him through the air to crash into the second charging thug. The two collided in mid-air and landed in a heap near the first pair of defeated men.

“The last two thugs yelled and charged. The older man stepped deftly to one side with the agility of a young deer and caught the two oncoming attackers by the arms. He swung them around in one direction, suddenly reversed to the other, and swept them both off their feet, leaving them to crash to the ground. Applying a joint lock on both the men’s arms, he held them fast until they shouted out in pain.

“‘Let go, you’re killing me,’ said one in extreme agony. ‘I give up.’

“He let go of the two men. After a few minutes, they were all on their feet, only slightly hurt, but stunned by what had happened. Quietly, they sulked off to nurse their pride and bruises.

“Carlos stood transfixed. The older man brushed himself off lightly and picked up the bundle he had lain aside at the start of the fight. He started to move down the road. Carlos, realizing this man was surely a great Martial Arts Master, ran after him. When he came up to the older man, Carlos knelt on the ground and bowed.

“‘Please, Teacher, I want to be your student. Teach me your strength. I will do whatever you say,’ Carlos cried out.

“The old man took no notice of Carlos and kept on walking. Carlos was very stubborn so he kept up with the older man and threw himself

on the ground again, asking to be taught. Once more, the older man simply ignored Carlos. They neared the outskirts of the great city. The agile old man quickly turned a corner. As Carlos ran and turned the same corner, the older man stood waiting for him.

“So you want to be taught, to be shown the secret of strength. How much will you give me to know this?” he asked curiously.

“Carlos stopped in his tracks, caught off-guard by this sudden turn of events.

“I will give you anything you want, Teacher,’ Carlos said earnestly.

“Come to my house tomorrow and I will show you my secret. But, only if you can defeat me.’

“Shocked, Carlos was about to say that defeating such a great Martial Artist would be impossible, when the older man went off.

“Where do you live?” Carlos called after the older man.

“Just ask, and you will find me. Until tomorrow morning.’

“The next morning, Carlos went back to the very spot where he had left the old man and asked a group of women talking in the road where the great Martial Arts Master lived. They pointed to a small hut on the top of the hill.

“Carlos walked up the steep, dirt road. There he saw a small but well-kept hut. In the backyard, he could see the Teacher practicing Martial Arts moves—slow, rhythmic movements. Carlos watched the older man in awe. *‘How can I defeat a man such as this?’* he thought to himself. *‘He is truly a great Master of the Martial Arts. I can see he is very powerful. His movements show tremendous strength. I cannot beat such a man! He is much too strong. His actions come from a pure mind.*

Such a man can never be defeated.'

“Bowling low, Carlos announced himself.

“Greetings, great Teacher. I am here as you asked.’

“Good, let’s go then. Attack me. Ask no questions,’ the older man cried out. ‘We have no time to discuss. Attack!’

“Carlos was temporarily stunned by this urgent demand. Before he could recover, the older man charged forward and grabbed Carlos by the collar and, turning quickly to the side, sent him flying through the air. Carlos landed in a pile of hay at the end of the small yard. Unhurt, he quickly leapt to his feet. His Martial Arts training was automatic. When the older man charged again, Carlos was ready. But to no avail, for the older man dodged Carlos’ attack and rolled away, while at the same time, swept the young man’s feet out from under him. Carlos again jumped up and tried in vain to stop the older man. Again and again he failed. Finally, the older man grabbed him from behind, applying the same choke hold the first thug had used in his attack on the older man the previous day. Carlos felt the Teacher’s strong arm around his neck, pressing tightly, keeping him from breathing. Just before Carlos blacked out, the older man let go and adeptly stepped in front of Carlos, looking him straight in the eyes.

“You fool, you defeated yourself. You could have defeated me, but you let yourself lose before you even started,’ the old man shouted at Carlos.

“Do you still want to know where my great strength comes from?’ the old man inquired, looking intently into Carlos’ eyes.

“Half-choking, his eyes watering, Carlos nodded.

“Then come back at midnight and I will show you,’ the older man

said emphatically. The Teacher turned quickly on his heels and, grabbing a walking stick, strode rapidly out of the yard and up and over the hill.

“Carlos stood for quite a while, trying to regain his breath. The older man had attacked him many times, but had never hurt him.

“That night, exactly at midnight, Carlos approached the Teacher’s house. He found him sitting quietly in the backyard under the light of the full moon.

“‘Sit here,’ the Teacher said, pointing to the right of where he himself sat. Carlos took his place next to the older man, on a small mat which had been set there for him.

“‘What do you see, young man?’ the Teacher asked after a few minutes, breaking the silence.

“‘Flowers,’ Carlos said. For, in front of them both was a lovely garden of red roses illuminated by the bright moonlight.

“‘Do you see the very large one in front, separated from the rest? We will watch this rose until morning. By then you will know the secret of my strength.’ The older man spoke softly in hushed tones. He said nothing else. They sat in silence.

“For hours the two sat there watching the lone rose in the garden. At first, Carlos was curious at what everything meant. Then after a time, he began to get restless. His legs started to ache and his back hurt from sitting for so long. His mind began to wander and he wanted only to leave. He thought about home and how nice it would be in his comfortable bed, sleeping on soft, downy cushions. He was annoyed at sitting there looking at this simple flower. He felt foolish and angry, staring at this rose, the rose staring back at him. It seemed as if the rose was at war with him, trying to defeat him, to break down his will, to sap him of his strength. It seemed to be a battle of wills, a staring match.





“The night became very quiet. Even the crickets had gone to sleep. There was nothing except stars above and the moon casting a soft, pale, white light on the scene below. The two men sat. The Teacher never moved. Carlos was exhausted. Hour after hour the long night crept on.

“Carlos kept looking at the rose, the moonlight gently lighting the flower. The anger had passed and he felt calmer now. Finally, he could sense the slightest lifting of darkness. Slowly and delicately, the night gave way to day. The moon receded and the sun inched up in the eastern sky. Faint rays of sunlight spread their fiery color across the horizon.

“Carlos watched the rose in the new light. He could see its petals. He could feel them opening in the early morning dawn. He could smell the odor arising from the flower. He could sense the growth of its roots in the soil. He could almost hear the rose blooming. His eyes became the rose; his ears, his mouth, his fingers, his whole being became the rose. And, in being that rose, there came a growing strength, a tremendous sense of energy flooding his senses. It grew upwards from his spine and downwards from his spine. It went up to the sky and down into the ground. The sky and earth were the rose. An energy was growing inside him. The rose was everything—and yet it was only a lone rose in a garden of roses.

“The old man spoke for the first time that night, breaking the silence which had enveloped them both. ‘Can you defeat me now, student?’

“Out of that silence an insight was born. *‘I am defeated only by myself,’* he heard himself thinking.

“Carlos looked at the older man, his Teacher, and smiled.

“‘There is no need to, for we are that,’ Carlos said, pointing at the

rose in the garden.”

* * *

“Understand the story of the war of the rose and you will understand where great strength comes from. Be the rose, dear students. Forget thoughts of winning or losing. You will defeat yourself by comparing yourself to another. You will lose your strength by thinking another is more powerful than you,” the Teacher said, bringing the group of young Martial Artists back into the present moment. “Do you understand the story? If you say you do, you do not!”

The students began their chores of tending the flower gardens, weeding between the plants, watering seedlings so they could grow and blossom—as they had done every year, year after year.

ORDER

*Can knowledge create order?
Or, does knowledge create more disorder?*

QUEST FOR PEACE

The Test of Order

Each student had his or her own particular chore to complete the cleaning of the practice hall in an orderly fashion. Cleaning the hall and the school as a whole was a respectable activity. To be chosen for the harder tasks was an honor, for this meant you were giving your attention to the tasks at hand—your chores were done with care.

After their chores, the students were called together by one of the Master Teachers.

“Today I am going to ask you a question no one will be able to respond to correctly,” the Master Teacher said with twinkling eyes.

“The question is, ‘What creates order?’ or ‘How do we bring about order?’”

The students’ hands went up immediately, waving to be chosen to give their answers.

“Order is created by putting everything in its proper place.”

“Order is brought about by thinking right thoughts.”

“We bring it about by having good relationships with people.”

“We create order by understanding disorder.”

“You learn well, students. All of your answers are quite right, but they are all wrong. No one has responded correctly to my question,” the Teacher said with some annoyance.

“I don’t understand, Teacher. You say we all gave you right answers, and yet did not answer the question correctly. What is the correct answer?” a senior student inquired.

“I will ask it again, ‘What is order?’”

The students sat quietly this time, hesitant to answer the question. One small, young boy raised his hand and the Teacher acknowledged him. The boy pointed to the library of books in the corner of the practice hall, books which were valued and well taken care of. Every day, one of the students would put them in perfect order. The students and Teacher all turned to look where the young boy was pointing.

“Good, he understands!” the Teacher exclaimed.

Then, the same boy, sitting on the floor among his fellow students, attempted to move the people around him into a straight line. The students, somewhat baffled by this young boy’s silent urgings, reluctantly moved as he pulled and tugged at them.

“Good, he understands,” the Teacher exclaimed again. “Can you see what he is doing? When asked, ‘What is order?’ he sat silently when most hurried to give *explanations* of order, answers you had memorized. When asked again, ‘What is order?’ you fell silent and he pointed to the order of the books in the library. He gave us an *example* of order. Then he started to create order by getting the rest of you to line up in a straight and orderly fashion. By this, he gave us an *experience* of order. Do you understand the difference?”

“Now, I want each of you to respond to the question again, but without any words. You must answer through silence. Now, ‘What is order?’” the Teacher questioned once again.

The students looked at each other, then got up slowly and began to mill around the room. One of the students went over to the books and

arranged them with great precision. Two students went over to the entrance where the others had left their shoes and began to put them in more careful order. A few students went to the dressing areas and began to straighten up the clothes. All around the school, students were creating experiences of order.

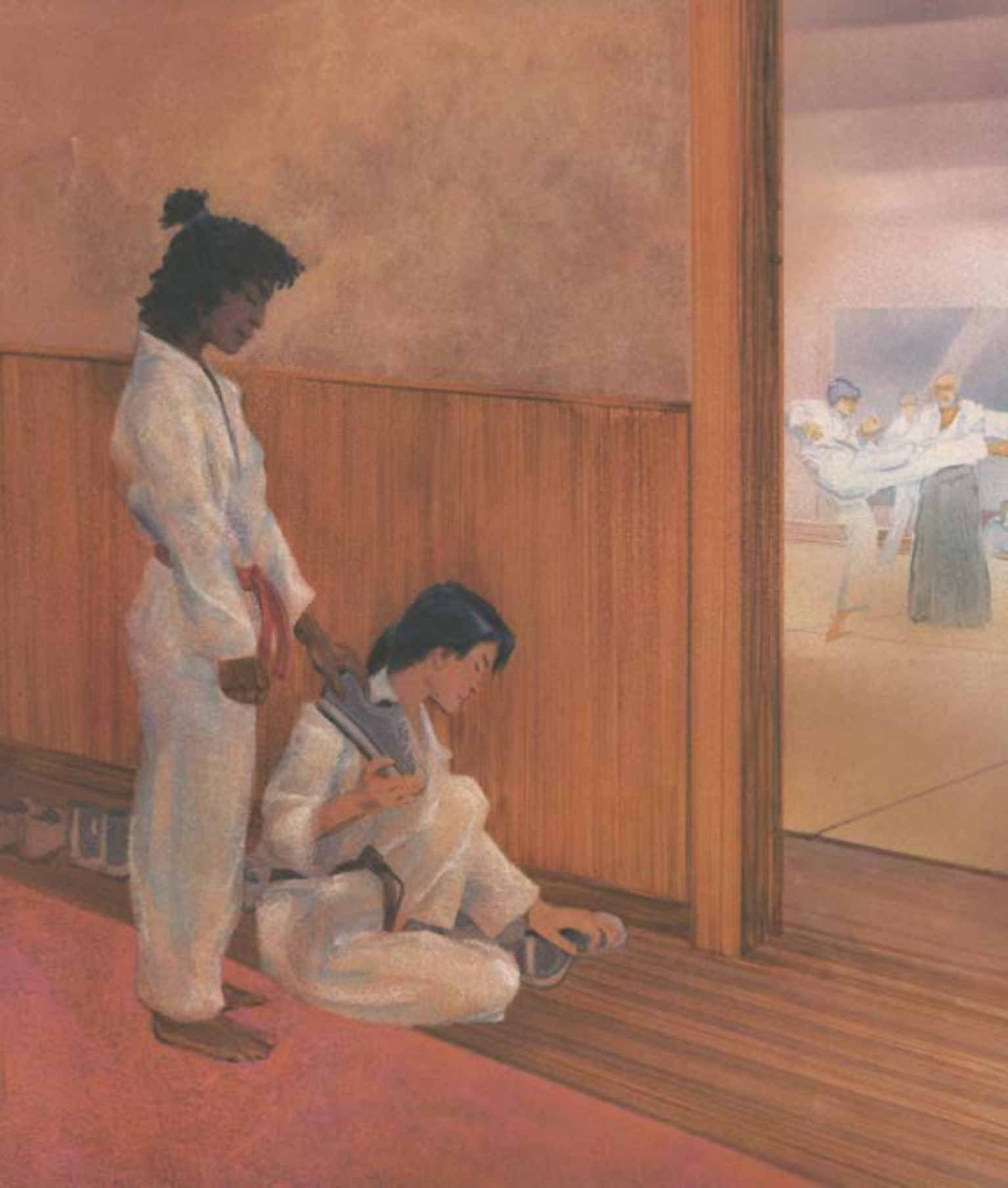
“Now come back and line up quickly, in one straight line,” the Teacher commanded suddenly.

The students stopped what they were doing and ran to line up. There was some shoving and jostling to get to the head of the line. A few stragglers tried to push into the already formed line, but the other students were reluctant to let them in.

“What happened to that order just now?” the Teacher asked sharply. “You seemed to understand how to bring about order. You were fast to demonstrate that knowledge, but when asked to line up, your order fell apart. Why?”

“We forgot,” said one of the students.

“You forgot? That means order is just a thought regarding what you should do. Order is an ‘ideal.’ But, is order only a thought or an ideal? Is order only what we have been told it is? Our brains have been conditioned to come up with answers for everything. We are very clever. But, to *do* order, to *experience* it, cannot come about through a learned answer. Answers are knowledge, something you know and have been taught. Memorized knowledge is necessary to answer correctly when someone asks you a question about mathematics or science. But, when someone asks you about order, what does the brain immediately do? It comes up with an *explanation* of order. But, is the explanation order itself? Is knowledge order? Let’s put it another way. Can an explanation or knowledge of order bring about order? Or does knowledge in this case create disorder? Go into it slowly, for this is very important in under-



standing what it means to break the chains of the Ancient Warrior,” the Teacher urged.

“Someone tells you order is, for example, peace of mind, or having good relationships with people, or putting everything in its right place. The brain memorizes that explanation and then, because it ‘knows’ or has ‘knowledge’ about order, it thinks it has created order. But all the brain has done is form a concept, a thought, an explanation of order. Do you see this? It is actually quite elementary if you look at it simply,” the Teacher continued.

“So someone asks, ‘What is order?’ and what happens? The brain immediately searches for the answer, the explanation from its great or small resources of knowledge. Your hands go up and you want to be the first to give the correct answer. You have been trained to do this, and under certain circumstances, it may be the correct thing to do. If I ask you, ‘What is $2 + 2$?’ you would tell me the answer is four. This is correct knowledge, an *explanation* answering the question correctly. You may also demonstrate $2 + 2$ by taking four stones and putting two together in two separate piles. This would be giving an *example* of $2 + 2$. And, if I ask you about order—what creates order or how to bring it about—you give me a well thought-out answer, an explanation. *Does this explanation, this knowledge stored in the brain, actually create order?*

“Order is essential in understanding why there is so much violence and suffering in the world. If you want to understand and be free of the chains of the Ancient Warrior, you must understand the differences among an explanation, an example, and an experience. The first is telling, the second is showing, and the last is doing. It is the *doing* of it—not because you *should* create order, but because it makes sense. Order creates beauty, clarity of mind and body. It comes from *seeing*, from *insight*, and not from any command to be orderly.

“If you only know the explanation, the knowledge—as so many people do—then you will create disorder, more violence, and continue warring. The Ancient Warrior lives in knowledge carried over from the past. Knowledge won’t end knowledge carried over from our violent history. *Insight* is needed to break the chains of knowledge by *seeing* the bondage. Knowledge of our bondage only adds to more knowledge and creates the illusion of understanding.

“Dear students, this may sound complex. It is, but you *can* understand if you give your full attention to it. All you need to do is look at your own brain. It is how this brain functions, or malfunctions, that needs to be understood. *We* create our own problems. *We* have created the wrath the Ancient Warrior feeds on. And we continue to carry on this problem from generation to generation. Order is necessary, not only as an explanation, but as something which occurs naturally, out of insight, sensitivity, intelligence, out of understanding what creates disorder. Understanding that which *prevents* order brings about order! The mind needs to create order to prepare itself for that which is beyond thought and time—to enter into the essence of the flower, the silence of nothingness. This is the essential work of the Martial Arts: to bring about order so we are free of the chains binding us to our violent past. Understand this and you will truly master these wonderful Arts. And your quest for peace, for ending the Ancient Warrior in you, will blossom in that newly discovered order.”

"Now, look to your right, to your left. See the disorder, but without judging it. Don't say that the disorder you see is bad or wrong. *Just see it!* Be aware of it and in that nonjudgemental awareness watch, observe how your mind naturally creates order and beauty. Through that observation—through perceiving without thinking about it—the brain freely and effortlessly ends the disorder.

FOCUS

*In that quality of attention when there is focus,
there is no room for fear to enter.*

FIGHTING THE PAPER TIGER

The Test of Focus

“Teacher, how many boards can you break?” asked one of the students.

“Why, I can’t break any,” answered the Teacher with a kind smile.

“But, Teacher,” the surprised student responded, “how can you be a Master of the Martial Arts if you cannot break boards?”

“You tell me, dear students,” said the Teacher, “how many boards have attacked you lately?”

The class, including both the Teacher and the inquisitive student, laughed heartily.

All morning, and after a light lunch, the students had been practicing the basics of punching and striking. They were using punching boards, thickly wrapped pads on top of shoulder-height, wooden shafts imbedded into the ground. The students would practice their punches and strikes on these matted boards to test their focus, their ability to concentrate the mind and body at one point and release that energy on the target just beyond the surface of the contact point. They had developed great power using these matted boards and felt more confidence in their physical skills.

“You are not strong until you can defeat the Paper Tiger,” the Teacher called out during the lesson.

“Perhaps you can break boards, bricks, stones, and probably your bones practicing like this. But, this is not the ultimate test of focus. Sit

down and I will demonstrate focus.” The students sat in a semicircle around their Teacher. Birds hopped about pecking the earth for any little food they could find. A woodpecker’s intense hammering on a nearby tree distracted the students for a moment.

“Have you ever watched a woodpecker?” the Teacher asked, responding to the moment.

“The bird has great energy because it is not distracted. It is single-minded. But, this doesn’t mean it is not aware of everything around it. Focus doesn’t mean solely concentrating on one single thing. Focus is total. And because it is, that is where the energy lies—the energy to wholly master a Martial Arts technique. When you focus in Freestyle, do you see only the eyes of your opponent or do you see his or her total body, the physical and even spiritual being? Can you also be aware of the cricket in the grass near you or the bird flying above, or feel the warm sunlight on your back and the cool breeze on your face? That is focus. It includes everything and yet, that everything is also, at the same time, concentrated to a single point—like the woodpecker.”

The Teacher sat silently for a few minutes to let the lesson sink in, and also to allow the students time to listen carefully to the woodpecker’s focused, urgent, and compelling activity.

“Now, let’s fight the Paper Tiger!” the Teacher said with energy. “I will show you how to really focus!”

The Teacher hung a thin piece of white rice paper from two delicate pieces of string, loosely tied to a tree branch at shoulder-height. Closing his eyes, he moved into an upright, combat stance. His body was completely relaxed, but remained strong. His hands were poised in front of him, one high, one low. His feet were apart, his legs bent slightly at the knees. He slowly opened his eyes and then, with the quickness of a cobra, he struck out at the paper. The paper moved ever

so slightly, as if a breeze had just kissed it.

“There, it is done!” the Teacher exclaimed.

The students sat politely with confused expressions on their faces. Nothing had happened except that their Teacher had quickly struck at the paper. But the paper still hung suspended from the branch by strings.

“But, sir, what is so great about hitting a piece of paper?! It didn’t even fall down. At least when you break a board, you can see the two halves and thereby know your strength,” one student said politely.

“Come up here, student,” the Teacher motioned, “and see for yourself.”

The student did as he was asked and looked carefully at the rice paper. What he saw astounded him. Right in the center, like a snake bite, were two finger-sized holes.

“Can you see the holes now? Perhaps you should all come up and look,” the Teacher said.

“How did you do that? Is it easy? It looked like nothing at all!” students cried out in excitement.

“Would you like to try?” the Teacher asked.

“Yes, Teacher, we would like to fight the Paper Tiger,” they responded, one and all.

“Tonight, meet me in the field behind the practice hall.”

The students hurried through the day, completing their daily chores, fixing meals, and finishing their assigned readings. At nine o’clock, they met in the dark behind the hall. The moon was still somewhat full, so there was enough light to see. Their Teacher stood waiting

with an Assistant.

Facing them was a row of brightly lit candles on top of round, wood pilings at shoulder-height. The scene looked lovely in the night—such beautiful, natural order.

“Now, line up in a row behind the candles, just like you did with the matted punching boards,” the Teacher said softly in the night air. The Teacher stood watching the candles for a moment. They flickered gently. He placed himself in front of one of the candles in the same combat position he had adopted earlier that afternoon, when he had stood in front of the hanging paper target. He again closed his eyes and remained quiet for a few moments. He slowly opened his eyes, and, as quick as a king cobra’s strike, lashed out at the candle. The light suddenly went out. He went down the whole row of lighted candles, performing the same technique. Candle after candle was extinguished with the Teacher’s snake-like attacks. At the end, he once again closed his eyes. On opening them, he said to the students watching him, “Now it is your turn.” He motioned to his Assistant to relight the candles.

Each student, in turn, moved into position in front of the candles. On command, each took focus, trying to punch out the candle flame. No one could. Some even punched the candle off its wooden piling. This was the only way any of the candles went out!

“You are trying to break boards,” the Teacher observed. “The flame is not a board. A board is hard, fixed, and unmoving. The flame dances and jumps about with life. It is fluid, alive, and soft. You cannot extinguish it by trying to break it like you would a board. You are too willful, too full of your own strength and pride! You think you are strong and can defeat this simple candle flame, perhaps even defeat the Paper Tiger too, just because an old man like me can do it easily. You are too proud! Am I correct?” he asked the students. They looked down at the





ground, ashamed of themselves.

“Just as I thought. Oh, you young people, you think you know it all. So full of yourselves! But to tell you the truth, I, too, was like you once. See these bashed knuckles? I, too, thought I was strong, but the stone I was so sure I could break was much stronger,” he laughed. “Don’t worry, you will learn, despite your youth and pride.”

For a long while, they practiced punching at the candle. Occasionally, when a flame would die, there were jokes made about a gust of wind or blowing out birthday candles.

“Let me demonstrate this again. Watch carefully. You know when I say, ‘Be careful,’ I mean take care, be attentive, be aware.”

The Teacher, again and again, put out the candles with almost no effort at all.

“You see I do not try hard, but can put the candle’s light out. Yet, you try very hard and the candle still stays lit. What is the difference?” the Teacher asked.

“We are trying too hard, Teacher,” a student responded.

“So, what will you do? Let me tell you the secret. It’s in the pull back, when your hand comes back to you. It is not in the outward motion of the punch or strike; in the pulling back, the flame is also pulled back and goes out. Therefore, you have to be very loose, calm, at ease. Like a whip. You see that a whip is limp, loose, but with a flick of your wrist, it will lash out and crack. It has strength in its ability to be flexible.

The students were then handed thin, wet towels. “Now, snap these towels like a whip, but sideways—not overhanded as you would do with a real whip.” The Teacher demonstrated the movement with dexterity.

The students practiced snapping the wet towels until they moved like whips cracking the cool, night air.

“Now, drop your towel and snap at the candle flame.”

The students, one by one, snapped their hands in a backfisted motion towards the flame, pulling their hands back faster than when their hands went towards the candle. Again and again, they tried until they could finally manage to get a flame to go out.

“Good, you are learning focus. You are learning the real strength you will need to defeat the Paper Tiger.

For about a week, this daily ritual of the candle flame continued, until the night of the test. They arrived early, at dusk, just after dinner. Instead of the candles, a row of small sheets of rice paper were suspended from string between two trees.

“You feel nice and contented after dinner, relaxed,” the Teacher observed.

“Now, line up in front of the Paper Tigers and do as I ask. Hold your hand up in front of you with your first two fingers outstretched like the fangs of a snake. When I say, strike out—but not ‘at’ the paper. Rather, try to grab it with your two snake fingers.”

The students lined up and were about to strike out when the Teacher asked them to close their eyes.

“In your mind’s eye, see the holes already there. See your hand moving like a snake back into its coiled position. The act is done before you start. As with the flame, get out of the way and let the whip do the work.”

On the teacher’s command, the students struck out at the hanging paper. At first, the paper flew away from them. Some sheets were

even ripped off the string. But, eventually, the students could actually rip the paper, if only in a crude fashion.

“This takes great practice, but you will learn to do it eventually. There is really no great secret. First, you must understand you are trying too hard, trying to break paper as if it is a rigid board. That kind of power is not the power you seek. This power will come from being relaxed, from knowing how to strike. Understanding real focus can eventually defeat the Paper Tiger. Focus is awareness, and awareness is also needed to defeat the Ancient Warrior. If you fight the Ancient Warrior in the same way as you try to break boards, *you will break; you will be defeated.* But, if you know the Ancient Warrior and its ways, then you have a chance to defeat it as you will understand what it takes to win.”

“Everything we are doing here is towards this end of understanding the Ancient Warrior, the chains that bind us to a violent heritage. We are testing you so you can develop the qualities necessary to defeat the Warrior, not by force or brutality, as were the ways in the past, but by intelligence and understanding. The quality of being focused is an important test you will need to pass in order to qualify as a new warrior—a warrior of peace, a warrior of the Spirit that can end the conflict of our ancestors.”

EXCELLENCE

Skill in action is excellence in living.

WAY OF THE SWORD

The Test of Excellence

The reading assignment for the evening told of a young man, in times long ago, who wished to study the Martial Art of Swordsmanship under the teaching of a great Master Swordsman. His only desire was to learn a discipline which could teach him excellence, not to master a Martial Art for hurting others. He believed the Martial Arts to be a spiritual endeavor and a way to understand the violence in the world. He knew the intent of all properly taught Martial Arts was to end conflict, not to contribute to it.

He traveled a far distance to meet this great Master. Upon arrival, the young man asked if he could study the Way of the Sword with the Master. But, as was the tradition in that time, he was not allowed to begin study of the Martial Arts immediately. He was assigned chores in the household, serving the Master Teacher and the senior students. The first teaching he received was in the Art of the Tea Ceremony, a very detailed ritual requiring concentration and inner peace. He studied this Art for over three years, but never received any lessons in swordsmanship. His main duty was to serve tea to the Master, which he did with great skill, respect, and peace of mind.

One day, the young man, now a skilled tea server, was sent to the nearby village to purchase some supplies. As he was walking down the crowded street, he accidentally bumped into a large, older man, who, as it turned out, was a Master Swordsman of great skill. This swordsman had a bad temper and showed his anger easily, but was nonetheless respected for his ability with the sword.

The young man immediately apologized for his clumsiness and

begged for forgiveness. The Master Swordsman told the young tea server his apology was not accepted, and demanded the tea server meet him the next day at noon to fight. The tea server ran back to the school and, filled with fear, told his Master what had happened.

The tea server explained the incident to his Teacher, saying that he didn't want to fight but was afraid this angry Master Swordsman would seek him out and kill him. The young man thought it best to meet the Swordsman so as not to bring harm to the school.

The Master Swordsman listened to his young student with much affection. "You are a good tea server; you know the Ceremony very well. When you serve me, I can see you are focused and have peace of mind. Each of your actions is simple and clear. Your body and mind are in harmony. Tomorrow when you meet this Swordsman, think not of fighting him; think only of serving tea as you serve me. If you do this, you will be unharmed."

The young tea server was unsure of his Master's advice, but knew him to be very wise. And, as the young tea server felt confident in his skill of serving tea, he knew that because of this training, his mind was calm and strong.

The next day, the young tea server traveled to town and met the angry Master Swordsman. He did not let the boldness and sheer strength of the Master Swordsman bother him, but rather, concentrated on the ritual he knew so well, feeling the inner peace of his perfected skill.

The two men faced each other and knelt down. The young man placed the sword given to him by his side. The Master Swordsman, looking fiercely at the tea server, also put his sword down. For a moment, both of them sat quietly, eyes downcast, focusing on their breath. The young tea server thought of nothing but serving his Master tea.





Each opened their eyes and quickly drew their swords, pointing the tips towards the other's throat. A small crowd had gathered to witness this event. They were all transfixed by the two fighters, each remaining so still. The Master Swordsman stared at his opponent with a terrible anger. The young tea server saw only himself offering a cup of tea to his own Master Teacher, holding the sword perfectly still in a gesture of love and respect.

For several minutes, the two men faced each other in this way. The tea servant kept his eyes focused and held his sword with remarkable poise. The Master Swordsman, on seeing the steadiness and peace of mind of the younger man, became confused and forgot his anger. The sword of the Master began to waver.

After fifteen minutes, not a thing had changed except the sword of the Master Teacher was shaking even more. The tea server, with his eyes still focused, held the sword tip pointing at his opponent's neck extremely still; he did not waver and was in complete control of himself.

The Master Swordsman could no longer stand facing one so focused and calm. He placed his sword back in its sheath and bowed low to the tea server. "You are truly a great Master of the Sword. I am defeated by your presence. I have never observed such calmness and peace of mind. Against such control, I have no chance," the Master Swordsman stated with great reverence and humility.

The young tea server returned to his school and told his Teacher what had occurred. "You have not had one lesson in Swordsmanship, but you are already an accomplished Master; you have done what others do not. You have mastered excellence, and in doing so, you have mastered yourself."

WISDOM

*Wisdom is in seeing the illusions the mind create
in its quest for freedom.*



BEGINNER'S MIND

The Test of Wisdom

Three students were sitting cross-legged on the hillside overlooking a wide, long valley. The sun behind them bathed everything in the golden, late afternoon light. Lofty, lazy puffs of clouds hung suspended in a bright, blue sky. A gentle breeze cooled the backs of the sitting students. Birds flew from tree to tree; silence abounded.

The students sat quite still with their hands folded gently in their laps. Their eyes looked down at the ground. They were oblivious to the beauty around them. Nothing distracted their intended objective. They breathed in a controlled, precise manner. They seemed asleep, yet were indeed conscious—but not awake.

The Teacher approached them from behind. He stopped for a few moments and keenly observed the three students. He picked up two good-sized rocks from the ground and began to rub them together, creating an irritating, grinding sound. At first, the noise of the two rocks being rubbed together did not seem to bother the three students, but after a while, they could no longer keep their silence.

“Excuse me, Sir, but what are you doing?” asked one of the three students, trying to keep the sound of annoyance out of her voice.

“I am rubbing stones together to make a mirror,” the Teacher called back, continuing to grind the two stones together.

“You cannot create a mirror by rubbing two stones together,” the student responded politely, but with irritation.

“Neither can you attain enlightenment by sitting cross-legged,”

responded the Teacher with a smile.

“But, Sir, this meditation was handed down to us from our Teacher’s Teacher’s Teacher; it comes from the time of the Enlightened One from the Orient. Our style can be traced back to the original monastery where the Martial Arts began. Sitting meditation is our heritage; it calms the small mind so the Big Mind can enter. Through sitting, one will obtain Enlightenment, freedom from the prison of illusionary thought, free from the Warrior’s past,” the student replied proudly.

“Dear students, what is it you are trying to get free of?”

“We are freeing ourselves from ourselves—our desires, our past which chains us to the present,” one of the students answered.

“How can *you* free *yourself*? This is like trying to lift yourself up by your own bootstraps! *You* are the chains...*you* are the past...*you* are the Ancient Warrior. Trying to get rid of the chains of the past is futile, because the *you* who is trying to free yourself from the *past* is one and the same thing. It’s like trying to divide yourself up into two people—the past person who is not wanted and the present person who is trying to dismiss the past person. Like a house of mirrors, it is a trick of the mind.

“We are so greedy. We think we can get everything. Money, fame, position, power, and the most desired achievement of all—Enlightenment, that pure state of being, free from suffering and pain. But trying to free ourselves by some mechanical practice such as sitting only creates the illusion of freedom and brings more annoyance, pain and conflict.”

“But, Sir, this tradition has been ongoing for thousands of years. It is the way of the ancient Martial Arts Masters,” the student replied in a shocked tone.

“What makes you think that simply because something has been

going on for thousands of years it is right? And why do you unquestioningly accept the authority of the ‘Masters of old’? How do you know they were right? If you accept the authority of the past because it sounds impressive, because it is very old, then you become a blind follower and will create more suffering. Find out for yourself what is true! In finding out through questioning, you will become alert, intelligent. It is this intelligence, this questioning, which will understand the chains of the past, the Warrior, and will end it. Not through sitting, but through your being alive, awake, and sensitive, will you achieve this. The intelligent Martial Artist has respect for his or her Teachers and elders but does not blindly follow their psychological authority, no matter how old their style, no matter how far back their Teacher’s lineage goes. It doesn’t matter if you have any heritage. What’s important is to look for yourself now at this immense problem of conflict in human relationships—how we are chained to the past, the Warrior, and the mentality of war. A Martial Art can give you physical skill and a deep inward confidence so you do not automatically react to a threat by fighting or running away. It can also bring you to a point of psychological understanding of how the human brain has been conditioned to accept fighting and war as an honorable solution to solving the problems of relationship.”

“Excuse me for being rude, but who are *you* to say that? Who are you to tell us what to do? How do you know? Isn’t that just your opinion?” one of the students challenged, offended by the Teacher’s words.

“I appreciate your boldness in questioning me. This is just what we are encouraging you to do. But we are also asking you to *listen* and find out for yourselves if what we say is true. I am not asking you to accept what I tell you; however, I am asking you to take it into consideration, to see if there is truth in it. For if you find out what I have said to be the truth, then it is not my truth—it is a truth anyone can see. Therefore, I don’t have to tell you what to do or not do. You will know.

Do you understand?"

"What you say is a shock to us because we believe in our Teachers and their absolute authority. In our school, we repeat the sayings of the Masters, but now I wonder about this. I've never questioned it before; no one pointed out this was something to question. I have just accepted what was considered to be true. We repeat the school slogan each day at the start of practice, but now I wonder if this is just another habit which dulls the brain and puts us to sleep," one of the students responded thoughtfully.

"Looking at life anew is called 'Beginner's Mind.' Such a mind is 'pure' and sees life with freshness and vitality; like a child's mind, it is innocent and curious. An alert, active, and alive mind questions the authority of the past and sees through illusions. This 'Beginner's Mind' is not habitual or mechanical. It does not fall asleep under the weight and authority of the past or of the 'Great Masters,' no matter how glorious that past may sound or how important those Teachers seem. But be very careful. Don't fall in love with the words 'Beginner's Mind' either! If you do, then you have again fallen into the trap, because words have then taken on the power and illusion of authority. You might think, *I am obtaining 'Beginner's Mind,'* and be caught up by the same old game of trying to get to an imagined state of freedom. Watch, be alert, and question. Now—how will you know if what I am saying is true or not?"

PURITY

One is rendered empty in the face of the eternal mystery of life.

FACELESS FACE

The Test of Purity

“Tonight you will face Death, and depending on how you respond, you will either die or become the Ancient Warrior forever,” the Teacher said gravely.

The students looked puzzled. The practice hall was alive with candles, orange flames dancing on the ends of thick, rounded, wax columns. The trees creaked, and the eerie howling wind sent shivers down the spines of the students as they sat in the late evening’s shadows.

Silently, they were led into the night. The wind whipped at their uniforms, pushing them ahead into the darkness. They followed the trail down towards the lake and then back up along the hillside to the mountain beyond. Two Teachers led the way with lanterns, and two brought up the rear.

“Watch where you are going,” one Teacher called back.

They climbed higher and higher to reach the top of the magnificent mountain overlooking the lake. They had traveled this route before, but only in daylight. With the sun upon them, they could see the total expanse of the lake, to an even larger lake beyond. Surrounding both bodies of water were low hills covered with trees. The lake closest to them was dotted with small islands, some of which the students had visited by boat. It was such a breathtaking view in daylight. Their school and the land surrounding it could easily be seen from the highest point.

But tonight it was very dark. The cool night air blew hard as they struggled up the rocky trail leading to the mountaintop and the ledge

overlooking the lakes.

It was difficult to sense time passing, or anything familiar, as they walked in complete darkness. The only beacons were the swaying lanterns held by their Teachers—just enough light to see where they were going, but not enough to see anything else. They felt they were leaving the comfort of the known and entering an unfamiliar land. They were also thinking nervously about what their Teacher had said at the start of this journey; were they to meet Death and the Ancient Warrior? However, they knew no real harm would come to them. Their Teachers often spoke in riddles and made strange statements that the students could not decipher at first, but usually came to understand after a test such as this.

The lead Teacher called out, “We’re almost there. Put out your lanterns. Everyone grab the person’s hand behind you and form a chain. Move forward slowly, and don’t lose your partner’s hand or you will be lost.” Tentatively feeling their way up the last few yards to the top, the students inched their way forward into the unknown.

They felt the hard surface of rock underneath them and, as a group, moved carefully out onto the large ledge atop the mountain.

“Now let go of your partner’s hand and sit down,” the Teacher requested in a barely audible whisper.

They all sat on the ledge above the lakes and their school. Only a faint outline of the lake was seen in the night.

“Now look up and meet Death! But don’t look back. If you do, you will be lost forever in the eternal chain of Ancient Warriors!” the Teacher spoke with sudden urgency.

Each student looked upward and beheld the sky filled with millions of stars! The concern they had felt at being on the ledge in dark-





ness vanished in that moment of awe and great wonder. It was as if they were gone and there was only the black night and crystalline stars in the limitless universe. Unknowingly, they sat there for a timeless period.

The next thing they were aware of was being back at the school, sitting comfortably in front of a roaring fire.

Their Teacher spoke as if for the first time. “You met Death, and died to the known, that which was you—all the petty worries and fears we live with constantly. In that moment of wonder, ‘you’ died, and in dying, the unknown was born. In the unknown, the past cannot enter. In the unknown, the Ancient Warrior is completely nonexistent. When ‘you’ die, the Ancient Warrior dies, because they are one and the same. You cannot try to get rid of the Ancient Warrior through any means. Death comes only when the mind understands what prevents Death—or by being temporarily overwhelmed with the beauty and wonder of nature itself, like you were tonight. But, be careful, you cannot capture the experience of ‘Death,’ the unknown. That is greed and will create only more conflict and suffering.

“When there is something so great and incomprehensible as nature, then the chattering brain shuts down in awe of that. Do you know how far those stars are from earth? The distance is measured in ‘light years,’ the time it takes light to travel in one year. In one second, light travels *186,000 miles*. And in one *year*, light will travel almost *six trillion miles!* The galaxy in which we live is about *100,000 light years* across. Can you imagine that distance? Our galaxy has a few hundred billion stars, including our sun. There are galaxies of stars which range in distance from two million light years to perhaps *over ten billion* light years. This is what we are!

“And, who am I?” the Teacher continued. “I am filled with the

known, the past, endless self-centered thoughts making up 'me.' Can I die to the known, the chains of the past, and live free in the now, in the glory of the endless moment? Or, is this just some romantic nonsense?

“Dear students, see what prevents you from entering the unknown; see what holds you in chains. Who are you? What was your face before you were born, your faceless face? Discover that and there is purity of mind, a purity untouched by the known, the past, the Ancient Warrior. A pure mind is one which has understood and gone beyond its limitations. Purity is the ending of time, the ending of 'you.’”

The stars glimmered above the silent earth. There was nothing.

HUMILITY

Goodness comes when "I" am not there.

FACE OF THE ENEMY

The Test of Humility

The school bell sounded; the ring permeated and filled the space between—and there was only that. Morning dawned and a new day was upon them. There was no need to carry over the past.

“I want you to draw the Ancient Warrior, the Enemy, the shadow,” the Teacher requested.

With paper and colored pencils, the students silently drew that which instantly came to mind. After ten minutes, the Teacher instructed them to bring their drawings to completion.

“Show me your drawings,” the Teacher said with curiosity.

Drawings of demonic beasts and strange fighting creatures, evil-looking monsters in battle gear, wielding giant, bloody swords and axes, brutish, hairy warriors with piercing murderous eyes, and ghoulish, graveyard ghosts filled the pages.

“My, you have such vivid imaginations,” the Teacher commented, somewhat amused. “Is this what you fear, or is this only an image of what frightens you? Do you see the difference? Can an image hurt you or can a drawing of a warrior attack you? So what are we afraid of—a real warrior or an imagined picture of a warrior?”

“Now draw the image most people have of what they think a Martial Artist is. Don’t censor yourself. Think like they do, and just let that image come out on paper.”

After ten minutes, papers were presented. Again, there were

drawings of brutish, monstrous beasts, but this time, clad in Martial Arts outfits. Some looked like cave people; some looked like modern villains and terrorists. Some were pictured as ‘good guys’ killing ‘bad guys.’

“Is this what the Martial Arts are, or merely what many people think they are?” the Teacher asked.

“Now think about what you’ve drawn and see that these pictures originated in your brain, formed by what you’ve been told or seen enacted. Can you see that these images are not real...that they’re not accurate representations of the actual?

“A drawing of the Enemy—the Ancient Warrior—is only that: a drawing. What is there to fear in a piece of paper with some pencil scribbles? Unfortunately, the image of a Martial Artist as a violent, beast-like warrior is the one many people have. But, that is not what we practice here or what a real Martial Artist is.

“Let me approach this from another direction. Do you know what it would feel like if you *really* got hit with a full-power punch or kick? This is not make-believe. Make-believe people get hit, kicked, and shot, but don’t seem to get hurt.

“Physical self-defense skills are taught in the Martial Arts to give you the confidence *not* to fight. But we must realize the danger of fighting and how real the danger is. Unfortunately, we live most of the time in illusions, captured by images of what life is, or what it could be.

“Here at this school, self-defense skills are taught as an Art, a physical representation of the primary force of nature within us. This physical Art allows us to bring about a feeling of great energy and power. Not power to hurt, but, rather, power to feel in its raw form—like thunder and lightning. We can so easily fall asleep and not *feel* life.

The Art of the Martial Arts wakes us up! And, in this, there is great beauty.

“Students, we have little time left together here at this school before you return home. You have come from around the world and will leave here as ‘Peace Ambassadors.’ Yet there is so much more to learn. You have just begun to discover the potential of these incredible Arts. Just remember the Martial Arts, *if* taught properly, can help you to understand and resolve conflict *before* it even becomes conflict—both individually and globally.

“Unfortunately, many people who train in the Martial Arts only acknowledge the physical aspect. They think studying physical self-defense skills alone will help them resolve conflict. This can become a brutal attitude, one which *creates* conflict by carrying on the ‘eye for an eye,’ ‘might is right,’ Ancient Warrior’s code. This attitude *must* be questioned! Otherwise, the general public will turn away from the Martial Arts because they are tired of violence, tired of seeing people—especially children—being conditioned as ‘trained killers’ and ‘thugs.’

“Many young people like yourselves are impressed with the physical side of the Martial Arts. They see demonstrations of mysterious and miraculous feats of strength and agility and want to attain that. But this is not the essence of the Martial Arts. Why are you so easily impressed with gymnastics tricks? These feats are not special or superhuman. Some would like you to think so, but such people are clever tricksters and magicians who wish to mystify you with their superficial skills.

“So many Martial Artists train physically, but lack real confidence and strength because they study the physical by itself and ignore the more important, mental side. The ability to defend against a physical attack is of limited value. Understanding conflict does not require



physical techniques, and physical techniques cannot end conflict peacefully or intelligently. Physical defense deals with the problem *after* it has become one. What we are doing here is learning to understand and deal with a problem *before* it turns into conflict. In this way, we prevent the birth of conflict at the root or cause. Physical skills only attempt to end conflict after there is danger and threats to physical well-being.

“If you really want to understand what creates conflict within the human being and, hence, within the world of human relationships, you will need to feel the urgency to create places where people come together to explore these issues, like this school. The Martial Arts have a unique and very important place in understanding conflict. As you well know, these Arts involve more than just physical self-defense skills. Even many ‘experts’—people who glorify themselves as “Grand Masters”—actually create illusions and do not bring about understanding and intelligence.

“Young people, please listen to what we have to say. Question to find out if all this is true or not. Don’t be fooled or mystified by the Martial Arts. We have used some unique ways to bring you face-to-face with yourself. But don’t be fooled by the language. Look at the truth in the words to see if what they point to is real or false. In this way, you become you own ‘master.’ At the same time, understand that no one ever masters life! And, most of all, be humble and kind. It is so easy to think of oneself as someone important. Just remember—you are nothing! Oh, dear students, see the beauty of that!”

LOVE

Love is understanding that which prevent peace.

BELL RINGING IN THE EMPTY SKY

The Test of Love

The axe pierced the air, barely missing the student who had fallen backwards in defense of his life. The student swung the heavy sword up from the ground at the Ancient Warrior, meeting metal with metal as the two clashed in a violent struggle for dominance. On his feet again, the sword-wielding student lunged at the huge, armor-laden attacker, driving him up against the thick, stone wall. The student's arms were heavy with exhaustion, but there was not a second to rest; the Ancient Warrior fought on with animalistic ferocity.

Around these two combatants were hundreds of others, fighting to the death. Armed with every conceivable weapon and dressed in various military uniforms, the battlefield was teeming with war.

The student felt a sudden surge of energy and fought with renewed strength. The Ancient Warrior, in horned helmet and animal skins, fought back with equal power. But the battle was turning. The student slowly beat back the advances of the Ancient Warrior with continuous counter-attacks. Finally, the student swung his sword and hit the Ancient Warrior full in the chest. On impact, the Ancient Warrior vanished. Turning to face another oncoming foe, the student, gaining power with each moment, began to shift the tide of the war. Again and again, he defeated the Ancient Warrior in its many forms. Again and again, the Ancient Warrior charged at him with tremendous rage, but the student moved to meet each attack, vanquishing one after another with mighty blows of his gleaming, silver sword. Each contact with the enemy obliterated the Warrior, sending it back into the void from which it came, until there was only the student standing on a

large expanse of battlefield, alone with the grass, trees, and sky.

He looked around for anyone, but all had disappeared. The day seemed peaceful and calm when, all at once, the earth cried out, trembled, and roared. The sky darkened; the momentary tranquillity vanished. The earth shook violently and cracked open in great fissures. About twenty yards from him, there appeared—out of the bowels of the earth—a gigantic demon dressed entirely in an Ancient Warrior’s fighting gear. The demonic Warrior seemed one hundred feet high and looked down at the student with burning eye sockets. It was covered with thick, rusting chains. Bright red flames shot out of its mouth as it spoke:

“I have come to conquer you. You are my enemy and I must destroy you,” it roared in a magnificent but evil voice.

The student raised his sword with outstretched arms and looked up at this towering demonic presence. He did not move, but rather, fastened his eyes on the eye sockets of the other. The beast was the great Ancient Warrior risen from the dead. Battle scarred from thousands of years of combat, the Ancient Warrior grew to immeasurable height, filling the sky, blocking the light. The darkness grew unbearable and the odor of fear was intense. Yet the student stood still with arms outstretched, grasping the bright, silver sword which pointed upwards at the underbelly of the tyrannical monstrosity above him. The great Ancient Warrior, bumping up against the sky, threw back its helmeted head and laughed, sending tremors through the earth.

“How can you defeat me?” it roared with a deafening bellow. “You puny little child! I am the God of War; I am Death and Destruction. I have leveled entire cities and brought nations to their knees. I have been worshipped by the high and mighty. There are great monuments to me. I am the Victor, the Terrorist, the Enemy, and Hero. I am all that

which is violent, evil, warlike—and you dare to stand against me!”

The student did not waver but kept his sword true as the great Ancient Warrior looked down upon him with crazed black-holed eyes. Its body towered like a fantastic mountain range. The roar of cannons echoed through the valley as the Ancient Warrior raised its mighty axe overhead, chains rattling like thunder. The axe was bloodstained with millions of soulless, dead warriors. The axe reached its apex, and began its thunderous way down when the student—still focusing on his shimmering, silver sword—sent forth a tremendous burst of energy from its razor-sharp tip. Like a blinding bolt of lightening, the energy pierced the Ancient Warrior.

There followed a timeless moment where everything stood absolutely still—the student with arms outstretched, the towering Ancient Warrior with axe poised to strike its final blow. Then, slowly, from the deepest corners of eternity, there arose a scream like one never heard before, a scream so blood-curdling, so magnificently evil, that it enveloped the universe. Eyes, now blast-furnace red, burned through the empty black sockets of the beast. It roared its dying call and fell away, crumbling and spilling downward like a molten, volcanic eruption.

The student witnessed the titanic death as if it were the death of evil itself. Great bolts of lightning and claps of thunder broke the air as the chains encircling the Ancient Warrior began to break apart, rusted metal chunks spewing outward.

The sky filled with black smoke, tinged orange and red. Then, the sky opened and torrents of rain cascaded earthward, forming pools of water. The wind howled, bending trees to their breaking points. A sudden, gigantic blast of thunder set the student upright in his bed. Lightning flashed outside his rain-soaked windows. The fire in the small room had died out.





The student jumped up to peer out the window of his refuge from the storm raging outside. Pressing his face to the cold glass, he watched the sky as it lit up with nature's fireworks directly overhead.

* * *

Today was the students' final day at the school; tomorrow they were all returning home to the far corners of the globe.

"Last night I dreamed of the Ancient Warrior," the student told his Teachers and fellow students after they had gathered in the old, wooden-floored hall that morning.

"And you slayed it," one Teacher commented.

"How did you know?" the student replied, surprised at the accuracy of her statement.

"Because either you give in to it or slay it. There is nothing in-between. I think we all have this dream eventually, perhaps in different ways, but of the same battle. The Ancient Warrior, as you have come to learn, is in you. You have inherited this violent legacy of war. And the only way to slay it is through love.

"Love is understanding how the Ancient Warrior was created and how it lives on in us, chaining our minds and hearts to past Warrior ways. This kind of love is not personal; it's not for another person. It arises in you when you least expect it. And, you can never expect it! It can only come when you have brought order to your lives, when you *live* the tests you have experienced here, when you are those qualities which make up an intelligent, kind, sensitive human being. Love is that quality which can shine even in a dark world, bring light to the shadow. Like the moon, this light does not discriminate, judge, or compare. It shines on everything equally.

“Your mind, through your dream, was allowing the shadow to surface into the light of awareness, of love. When you face the shadow in yourself without turning away, then there is the possibility the Ancient Warrior will be consumed in light, awareness, and love. In love, the enemy no longer exists. In love, the shadow becomes the light. In love, you wake up from the dream—*because it is only a dream!* The Ancient Warrior in you and in the world is a living nightmare. **WAKE UP FROM THE DREAM! BREAK THE CHAINS!**

“You must die to the known and the inherited warrior past. Do you know the word ‘Karate’ means ‘empty self,’ rendering oneself empty of all that which *prevents* peace, all that which blocks out the light of love? Please see this! This is real! We Teachers may express what we see in a way that is foreign to you, but the words we choose are accurate reflections of something that has not generally been inquired into before. Don’t fall in love with words, because if you do, you will get lost in a never-ending maze of convoluted thinking and become vulnerable to Fire Dragons which will devour you. Stand in the Eye of the Hurricane and watch as the storm rages on just outside of your reach. In the still point of the eye is freedom. There, the chains do not exist. Be careful, for it’s easy to fall asleep and get caught up in the storm again, in the wrath of the Ancient Warrior, to carry on the violent past in the present.

“Tomorrow, you will leave here to return home, bringing with you all you have come to understand. You are Martial Arts Peace Ambassadors whose challenge is to bring light to an ignorant and confused world. You have been trained properly, *both* physically *and* mentally. You know physical adeptness alone is not enough. You have passed the tests we set up for you here, but this is just the beginning. The real test starts when you leave and return to your lives at home.

“Just remember one thing—question! In questioning, you will become alert, intelligent, aware. Start with one unanswered question

and move from there.

“We wish you well, dear students. Perhaps you will come back again. We will be waiting for you, for you are our children, the young people of the earth.”

The student sat in silence and listened. The storm had now passed and they all walked outside to greet the new day. The rain-soaked, green hills glistened and the air was fresh and clean. The brightness of the clear blue sky dazzled their senses. The odor of blooming flowers filled their heads with a delicate perfume. Overhead, a hawk circled, calling out its primal cry, “Enter here, enter here!” In that, there was nothing and everything.

The chains of the Ancient Warrior were broken by the flame of attention, by facing the warriors within themselves. That night they all slept well. The dream was over. Life was beginning.



To the Young Reader—

You have finished the tests in this book. Now the *real* test begins! What will you do now that you've understood the Ancient Warrior? How will this affect your life and the lives of others around you? Or are these “tests” just interesting stories to be enjoyed but not lived?

You are the creators of tomorrow's world—and tomorrow is soon to come. Either you will carry on as the generations before you have, or you will—because you've understood something of great importance in these “tests”—bring about a new society, a new and truly peaceful way of relating to others.

Do you have the strength of character?

Is your spirit brave?

Do you have the wisdom to understand the importance of all of this?

It is up to you.

In the cherry blossom's shade
complete strangers
do not exist

—*Issa*



To the Adult Reader—

Developing Character Through the Martial Arts

Martial Arts can be a unique, educational, and fun way to develop character (or “spirit”) in young people. Learning patience from developing physical and mental skills is *one* of the values Martial Arts teaches. But there are many more.

It seems young people don’t have much opportunity to develop character-building values so necessary to help them live in today’s challenging world. As parents and teachers, we must give our children skills to survive and flourish. We have given so much of our time and financial resources to developing intellectual skills—the “3 Rs”—that we’ve neglected giving our children the greatest gift of all—the “4th R”: relationship-building skill.

As I was growing up, relationship-building skill, or character development, was taught as an integral part of my overall education. Values such as respect, courtesy, and kindness were a part of my everyday life, as were studying and taking care of my health.

It seems that teaching young people values—character development or relationship skill—has become a thing of the past for the most part. It is not that we don’t want to teach them; rather, we don’t seem to have the time as we are so busy preparing young people academically. We have gotten caught up in the notion that academics or knowledge will solve all our problems. And there is also the matter of competition, that our children need more and more knowledge, and need to be more and more aggressive in getting and using that knowledge.

There is one other issue which, I think, has contributed to the decline in teaching values to our children. This is *how* we teach them. The “how” is, to a great extent, a process of punishment and reward, which translates into pain and pleasure. In our well-intentioned but misguided attempt at teaching children values, we create people to whom morals, ethics, or manners have a painful, underlying negative feeling. In the process of trying to bring about goodness, we judge behavior in favor of the ideal of “right” and “good” behavior. We create

conflict within ourselves and our children by the very means which were to bring about freedom from conflict. Goodness is held up as an ideal, something that we *should be*. What we are, our *actual* behavior (such as anger, greed, lust, and so on) is judged as something we *should not be*.

Simply said, we create unethical behavior by the very process that we are using to bring about ethical behavior! To be good means judging our “negative” qualities as “bad,” while conforming to a standard or ideal of goodness. To be good feels good, rewarding. But, to be “good” also feels bad, and therefore painful, because the process of becoming good means that one judges oneself as bad in light of the ideal of goodness.

This all may sound complicated or merely one of those strange paradoxes of life. But, in fact, it is neither. It is just an inappropriate notion of *how* to bring about moral behavior and develop character. So, if the approach of judgment and conforming to ideals creates conflict, then what does work? How do we create ethical behavior? How do we teach values and build character without the pain and fear of punishment or the pleasure of rewards?

In my view, the seemingly contradictory practice of the Martial Arts might hold the key to answering these questions—*if* taught intelligently. By looking at the popular Martial Arts films, magazines, video games, and many schools of Martial Arts, one might wonder why anyone in his or her right mind would suggest such a thing.

In order to demonstrate the possibility that the Martial Arts might have the capacity to teach young people the “right” character-building values—ethical behavior—we will need to put aside for the moment our preconceived notions, our prejudices about the Martial Arts, and look at the Martial Arts anew. This is exactly what I am trying to do in all my books, because I see the potential within these Arts not only to build character and teach values, but also to help people understand and resolve conflict—individually and globally. This may sound grandiose, but it is a statement based on decades of inquiring into this premise.

It would take quite a few pages to demonstrate how this can come about. I have done so in all my books. Or without further reading, you can begin to examine for yourself whether the Martial Arts can be a means to help explore the “Martial” within us, to begin to discover how we create conflict in relationships, by

preventing ethical or peaceful behavior.

I have attempted to create a context within which young people could come to understand themselves. The “tests” are mirrors for behavior, *without passing judgment!* Seeing what actually is, our actual behavior without judgment, without needing to conform to some ideal, creates the ability to understand that behavior. It is this understanding, this intelligent observation, which frees one from a behavior. There is no need to live according to any conditioned dictates of how one shall or shall not act. By bringing awareness to one’s behavior, one’s life, one is awakening intelligence. Intelligence is alive and active. It brings about understanding and, therefore, the value of goodness without trying to *be* good.

A unique way to bring about values without the reward/punishment method of “normal education” is through “tests” designed to take young people through character-building situations. The word “education” comes from the Latin word *educare* meaning to “lead” or “draw out.” The tests in this book, and real-life situation roleplaying, “draw out” the strength of character from those who participate. A young person becomes self-disciplined through the events or circumstances that prove his qualities. In this way healthy, humane values are drawn out of a young person’s intrinsic nature.

But there is a deeper “value” that is called for in this book, as well as in life. It is understanding our inherited militaristic predisposition to war, respecting the “Ancient Warrior” within that has and continues to cause tremendous conflict and suffering in our lives. Teaching young people merely to be polite and well-mannered isn’t the answer in creating “right” and “good” relationships. Many polite and well-mannered people still create conflict even though, on the surface, they seem to be respectful. Respect goes much deeper than social skill.

Developing strength of character, more importantly, involves understanding the roots of disorder and fear in living. And it is fear which creates personal and social disorder, keeping the Ancient Warrior alive and continuing to perpetuate warlike attitudes of mind which have been passed on generation after generation for thousands of years.

The essence of Martial Arts practice is to develop an understanding and resolution of human conflict—individually and socially. With all the violent Martial Arts images in the media, one would naturally be skeptical of such an intent.

Putting aside the false view of Martial Arts, one can recognize their underlying theme. One first sees that teaching Martial Arts involves teaching Martial Arts “ethics”—a code of conduct. For without this code of conduct, teaching people lethal self-defense skills is dangerous, to say the least. But on deeper inspection, one begins to uncover the fundamental intent of the Martial Arts—that of discovering the roots of conflict within us. It is this fundamental intent that has been ignored or generally misunderstood.

If one is to study the Martial Arts seriously, as they were meant to be studied, one has to take into account not only the ethics of Martial Arts, the “code of conduct,” but more importantly, this fundamental intent of understanding and resolving conflict, conflict that in the extreme leads to war. For conflict is conflict whether within a person, or between groups people; the basic structure is essentially the same in all its aspects.

The Western world is beginning to recognize the Asian Martial Arts as much more than merely techniques for self-defense or competitive sports. As the challenges of life increase, we adults look for ways our children can learn to cope with them successfully. The Martial Arts, *if* taught properly, can be a means of character development and conflict resolution. When this is recognized and practiced, then these Arts will demonstrate to society what their full potential can be, and will be placed in a respected position in the education of children worldwide.

QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING

Note for Adults Working with Young People—

The questions presented here will help you to stimulate young people's thinking about what these "tests" have to offer—in understanding destructive conflict, both individually and socially. Reading the stories together with young people and then using these questions can assist you in creating the right image and intent of the Martial Arts. There are no right or wrong answers. The most important thing is to open students' minds to a new way of looking and understanding. Generally, questioning is only intellectual—wanting an answer from a body of knowledge already memorized. These questions ask the reader to *observe* what the question is pointing to. Therefore, this type of learning through questioning is not mere memorization of information, but more importantly, it is learning which is immediate, bringing clarity of mind and action into the moment. It is this "in the moment" learning which is needed to understand and end the inherited, conditioned, war-like attitudes which have been passed on from generation to generation, creating tremendous suffering and sorrow.

Please note: students need to read the stories themselves before considering these questions. It will be helpful if each student has his or her own copy of the book to refer to when asked these discussion questions.

Breaking the Chains: *The Test of Respect*

1. What creates the Shadow?
2. What can we do to stop being influenced by the Shadow?
3. What does it mean to say "we all leave footprints in time?"
4. What keeps us chained to the Ancient Warrior?
5. What is the most important intent of the martial arts?

Hall of Battle: *The Test of Bravery*

1. Why is it important to be “disturbed,” to “wake up”?
2. What does the statement, “Most people are asleep,” mean?
3. How does “fear take charge of your life”?
4. What was “bravery” in the past? What does it mean in this test?
5. What is intelligence? How will it help you understand and be free of the chains of the Ancient Warriors?
6. Why is the “first step the last step”?
7. Who was the unknown person “by their sides”?
8. What was that cleanliness which “pervaded their whole being”?
9. Why did the voice call out, “Don’t look back!”?
10. Can you see anything in this test that can help you better understand your life?

Way of the Golden Dragon: *The Test of Selflessness*

1. How can the “Way of the Dragon” take a lifetime to learn, yet take no time at all?
2. What does “expect the unexpected” mean?
3. What is “Mental Freestyle”? Why is it important to the Martial Arts? To life?
4. Why is the “Art of Listening” so important in the Martial Arts and in life?
5. Again, the teacher commands, “Don’t look back!” Why is this so

important?

6. Before the students entered the woods, they sat quietly in Nature and their fears left them. Why did that happen?
7. How did the students see without seeing, hear without hearing, feel without feeling, know without knowing, in that pitch-black night?
8. What does “emptiness cannot be trapped; nothingness cannot be captured” mean? How is this important in the Martial Arts? In everyday living?
9. What does it mean when “the brain has come to a still point”?
10. What does “time had ceased and there was nothing, and everything” mean?

Curse of the Ancient Warrior: *The Test of Honor*

1. Why can't you get away from the “Ancient Warrior within you”?
2. What is the lesson of the “Chinese Puzzle”?
3. How can you free yourself of the Ancient Warrior? Through effort (to *try* to get away) or through **understanding**?
4. How does condemning or judging the Ancient Warrior within you just make it worse?
5. What does it mean to “honor” the Ancient Warrior within us?
6. Why did the Assistant Instructor fight so hard with the younger student? What was the Assistant trying to accomplish? Why?
7. Whom did the younger student see in the mirror? Where did that

image come from?

8. What did the younger student do when he saw that reflection? Why was what he did *not* do so important?
9. What does respect have to do with understanding what happened to the younger student when he saw his reflection in the mirror?
10. How can this test help you in your everyday life? As a young person? As an adult?

Mind Like Moon: *The Test of Unity*

1. What was the lesson of the cat and mouse? Why is it important in understanding the practice of the Martial Arts? In understanding your life each day?
2. Why are there “no answers” to this test? Why is there “nothing to say”?
3. What was the “division between them”? How did it fall away?
4. Why was there no “remembrance of what had gone before, no hoping for what was to come”?
5. Why is this test so important in understanding the Martial Arts’ real meaning?

Gordian Knot: *The Test of Spirit*

1. What meaning did cutting three bundles of hay have?
2. What is “Spirit” and how is it important to Martial Arts training? To daily life?

3. How do you just let the board break?
4. Why is the movement to break a board not of will-power? What “power” breaks it? Why is this important to understand?
5. What does sword cutting and board breaking represent?
6. Why is it important to understand thinking?
7. How can you be free of confused thinking?
8. What kind of learning can help you be free of the mind tied up in knots?
9. What does, “Should you meet the Ancient Warrior on the road, ‘slay it’” mean?
10. How can you end confusion or danger at the root?

Games Martial Arts Masters Play: *The Test of Trust*

1. What feelings did the students have when they were in the Ceremonial Hall? What caused these feelings? Are these feelings dangerous? If so, why?
2. What was the white-robed man at the alter doing to make the students feel that way?
3. What did the white-robed man ask the students to obey? How should they obey? Is this intelligent?
4. Why did the Teachers trick the students?
5. Why are the students “so susceptible to what we adults tell you”?
6. Why would adults take advantage of young people?

7. Why was the experience in the hall “pleasurable”?
8. Are there necessary rituals in the Martial Arts? In life? Are there unnecessary and even dangerous rituals in the Martial Arts? In life? What are they? Why are some necessary and beneficial and others unnecessary and destructive?
9. What is trust? How can it be abused by another?
10. What is an authority? Are some authorities necessary? Who? Are some authorities unnecessary? Who? Is it important to question authority? If yes, why?

Gift of the Moon: *The Test of Charity*

1. Why did Teshu give the thief his clothes?
2. How did this affect the thief?
3. What was the gift of the beautiful moon?
4. Why did Teshu want to give it to the thief?
5. What meaning does this test have for Martial Artists?

Attacking Nothingness: *The Test of Compassion*

1. How did the Teacher respond to the drunken man? Did her response help the situation? How? What is the lesson in this for the Martial Artist?
2. Why was the drunken man so angry?
3. Did knowing this reason help the Teacher act calmly towards him? Why?

4. Why didn't the Teacher use her Martial Arts physical self-defense techniques against the drunken man? What kind of Martial Arts skills was she using?
5. How did the Teacher help the man? What does this have to do with the Martial Arts?

Defeating the Enemy Without Fighting: *The Test of Understanding*

1. What does the saying mean? Why is it important to understand this? Why is this a part of the Martial Arts?
2. What is your greatest "weapon"? Why it is the greatest?
3. What does "conditioned" or "brainwashed" mean? Does "conditioning" create conflict? How?
4. In this test, how are violence and war created?
5. What is "the greatest challenge for the Martial Artist"?
6. How is the "enemy" created? How do we protect ourselves from the "enemy"? Where does the need to protect ourselves come from?
7. What does "we are the world, and the world is us," mean?
8. How does "destructive thinking" get carried over from the past? How does this past destructive thinking affect the present? The future?
9. What is "our challenge"? Why is it important?
10. Can understanding how thought works, how we create the enemy, affect global peace? How?

Unbroken Flame of Attention: *The Test of Harmony*

1. How did the Teacher hit a target without seeing it?
2. Why were the targets placed just a few feet away from the students?
3. Why did the Teachers ask the students to shoot their arrows at sewing needles? What was the point of this lesson?
4. Why was it so important to try very hard to hit the eye of a sewing needle when it was virtually impossible?
5. Why were the students' dreams important? How did the dreams help them?
6. How did shooting arrows while blindfolded help them?
7. What does it mean, when shooting arrows, to "just let it fall—like ripe fruit from a tree"?
8. What did the Teacher mean when he said, "*You* get in your way"?
9. What does "It' shoots! 'It' hits!" mean?
10. Can one try to bring about harmony? What is the flame of attention? Does this "make way" for harmony?

War of the Rose: *The Test of Strength*

1. What did it mean when the Teacher told the students, "You are defeating yourself"?
2. What was *not* ordinary about the old man?
3. How did one old man defeat younger thugs?

4. Why did the older man ignore Carlos' plea to be his student?
5. Why did the old man ask Carlos to attack him?
6. How did Carlos lose before he started?
7. How was the rose a way to power?
8. Why did sitting and watching a rose create "a battle of wills" for Carlos?
9. What was Carlos' state of mind at dawn? How was it different than the day before? What does this have to do with the Martial Arts? With everyday life?
10. What does comparing yourself with another do? Can this "defeat" you? How?

Quest for Peace: *The Test of Order*

1. Why was cleaning the school an honor?
2. Why weren't the explanations of order correct?
3. What is the difference between an explanation and an example (of order)? An experience of order?
4. Can order come about by an explanation, an answer? If not, why?
5. After the students learned order was in the doing of it, how come they couldn't line up in an orderly manner?
6. Why was there the most commotion at the head of the line?
7. Why is order important? In the Martial Arts? In life?
8. How does only knowing an explanation of order prevent order?

9. What is “insight”? How is it different from knowledge?
10. What does the Teacher mean when saying, “Understanding that which prevents order brings about order”?

Fighting the Paper Tiger: *The Test of Focus*

1. What is the lesson of the woodpecker? How is it important to Martial Arts Training?
2. Is breaking boards similar to punching at a flame? What different skill do you need to put out a flame than to break a board?
3. What is the lesson of the wet towel?
4. What kind of power is needed to strike at hanging paper?
5. What are the qualities necessary to defeat the Ancient Warrior? How are they important in the Martial Arts? In everyday living?

Way of the Sword: *The Test of Excellence*

1. Why was the young man assigned by the Sword Master to learn the Art of the Tea Ceremony instead of learning Swordsmanship?
2. Why did the young man’s Teacher tell him to approach the outraged Master Swordsman as if he were serving him tea?
3. What helped the young man remain calm in the face of his opponent?
4. Why did the Master Swordsman become confused and begin to waver?
5. What did the young man master? Why is this important?

Beginner's Mind: *The Test of Wisdom*

1. What were the three students doing sitting on the hillside? What were they trying to attain? Could they attain what they wanted by sitting like this?
2. What lesson did the Teacher show the students by rubbing two rocks together?
3. Were the students being greedy? How? Why?
4. What made the students think they were correct in this type of sitting practice?
5. Did the students question authority or accept it? Which is more intelligent? Why?
6. What does respect mean in this test?
7. What did the Teacher ask the students to do besides questioning?
8. Was the Teacher their authority? Why not?
9. What does repetition of slogans do to the brain? Why?
10. What is a "Beginner's Mind"? Why is it important to understand? What does it have to do with the Martial Arts? With life?

Faceless Face: *The Test of Purity*

1. What death did the students face?
2. What "killed" them?
3. What is "dying to the known" mean? What is the known? What is the unknown (death)? Can you capture the unknown?

4. When “you” die, what also dies? How? Why is this important?
5. In the realization of the tremendous mystery of life, what happens to “me”?
6. Who am “I”? What makes up “me”? What are “the chains of the past”? How can we be free of them?
7. What prevents you from “entering the unknown”?
8. What is your “faceless face”?
9. What is purity?
10. What is “the ending of time”?

Face of the Enemy: *The Test of Humility*

1. Is the Ancient Warrior only an image? Can the image hurt you?
2. What is the popularized image of a Martial Artist? Is this the correct representation?
3. Physical self-defense helps you to do what? What other skills will you need to stop a conflict *before* it becomes one?
4. What does practicing the Martial Arts do for you? Why is this important?
5. What are “Martial Arts Peace Ambassadors” and why are they important?
6. Are the Martial Arts an “eye for an eye,” “might is right” way to resolve conflict? If not, what is the intelligent way for Martial Artists to resolve conflict?
7. Are the Martial Arts merely a set of gymnastic skills? What is

their other side? Why is it valuable to study “the other side”?

8. What is the basic intent of the Martial Arts?
9. What do we sometimes get fooled by? Why is it important not to be fooled?
10. What does the Teacher mean when saying to the students, “You are nothing”? How is this important in bringing about an end to conflict, individually and globally?

Bell Ringing in the Empty Sky: *The Test of Love*

1. How did the boy defeat the Ancient Warrior?
2. What is the only way to slay the Ancient Warrior?
3. What can happen when you bring order to your life?
4. What does it mean to say, “Wake up from the dream!”?
5. What does the Teacher warn the students about? Why is it important?
6. How will you get caught up in “a never-ending maze of convoluted thinking”?
7. What is the one thing to remember? That which will begin to break the chains of the past, of the Ancient Warrior?
8. What will happen if you “fall asleep”?
9. What do all these tests have to do with the Martial Arts? With life?
10. Where will you go from here? Have you really learned something or did you just memorize what has been said to get all the “correct answers”? Who will tell you?

BOOKS BY DR. TERRENCE WEBSTER-DOYLE

For young people:

Breaking the Chains of the Ancient Warrior: *Tests of Wisdom for Young Martial Artists*

Operation Warhawks: *How Young People Become Warriors*

Tug of War: *Peace Through Understanding Conflict*

Fighting the Invisible Enemy: *Understanding the Effects of Conditioning*

Facing the Double-Edged Sword: *The Art of Karate for Young People*

Why Is Everybody Picking on Me: *A Guide to Handling Bullies*

Eye of the Hurricane: *Tales of the Empty-Handed Masters*

Maze of the Fire Dragon: *Tales of the Empty-Handed Masters*

Flight of the Golden Eagle: *Tales of the Empty-Handed Masters*

For adults:

Karate: *The Art of Empty Self*

One Encounter, One Chance: *The Essence of the Art of Karate*

Growing up Sane: *Understanding the Conditioned Mind*

Brave New Child: *Education for the 21st Century*

The Religious Impulse: *A Quest for Innocence*

Peace—The Enemy of Freedom: *The Myth of Nonviolence*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Terrence Webster-Doyle is a Martial Arts Peace Educator. He is the Director of the Martial Arts for Peace, an author and educator who has a Ph.D. in Health and Human Services, a Master's degree in Humanistic Psychology/Counseling, a life-time secondary and community college teaching credential and draws on many years of experience in conflict education and the martial arts.

He holds a sixth-degree Black Belt in the Art of Karate and is the author of over 100 internationally acclaimed, award winning literary works that are used across the U.S. and worldwide. Dr. Webster-Doyle was inducted into The World Martial Arts Hall of Fame. He is the recipient of the prestigious Martial Arts Industry Distinguished Service Award for his outstanding contributions in the education of children in the martial arts in resolving conflict peacefully.

Dr. Webster–Doyle is the creator of the specially designed Youth Peace Literacy Child Safe Program called S.O.S. — Safe Options Self-defense — an age appropriate, developmentally sound, non-lethal integrated system of humane physical and mental martial arts self-defense skills where young people can develop an overall confidence to cope successfully with being bullied on the playground to prevent it from leading to bullying on the battlefield.

Fighting the Invisible Enemy – Understanding the Effects of Conditioning was translated into Russian and serialized into the leading Russian teacher’s magazine and distributed to 70,000 schools in that country.