

Kosshijutsu - By Andrew Young

KOSSHI (a fresh definition)

The two characters which comprise the word kosshi go more than skin deep. In fact they go right to the bone. So what is kosshi? In a recent private talk with Soke Hatsumi a fresh feeling to the meaning of this year's theme (Gyokko Ryu Kosshijutsu) was given. The basic definition of the characters are BONE & FINGER. So let's look at each character more closely.

Bone

In earlier times Japan respected the bones of the dead. These were collected from the ash of the dead after a funeral.

Traditionally strong bones were also seen as the capacity for one to be able to work in the fields or fight in battle. As Soke pointed out, what makes us human as much as anything is our skeletal structure; without which we would be nothing more than a jellyfish. Our skeleton gives us the advantage of walking bipedally and gripping a weapon for self protection. Fundamental to the make up of Kosshijutsu is the Sanshin No Kata. Explained here as skeleton, soft tissue and skin. Even bone could be expressed in terms of the sanshin as teeth, bone and cartilage.

FINGER

The five digits of the hand represent the five elements. "Chi" is represented as the little finger through to "fu" as the thumb.

The techniques in the Ten Ryaku No Maki or first section of Gyokko Ryu are practiced with the feeling of gravity in mind. The natural force of gravity continually pressing down on us is countered by the skeletal structure whose bones grow naturally to form a strong shape and natural position. This could be expressed as the only true "FORM" of any kamae or technique.

Ever wondered why the kihon happo is derived from the Gyokko Ryu? Well, as I said the bone represents the three centres (sanshin) of the whole being and the fingers represents the five elements giving us eight. In other words the person within the environment. If one wants to master the kosshijutsu and kihon happo then the only way is to "work(practice) one's fingers to the bone!" .

Mr Tommy Lawlor of Ireland is credited with supplying the necessary questions to this article over a discussion taken place at Hatsumi Sensei's home in February 2001.

"BUFUSUI IKKAN"

(Any feed back will be most appreciated)

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