

道術

do

jutsu

Do vs. Jutsu

Two Japanese word elements are commonly found in the names of most Japanese martial arts: *do* and *jutsu*. *Jutsu* simply refers to a collection of techniques, methods, skills or technical applications in a practical or scientific sense. *Do*, on the other hand, is more philosophical, referring to a “way” or “path” to be followed as a lifestyle.

In Zen Buddhism (a major influence on the development of martial arts in Japan), a *do* or *tao* is a religiously oriented way of life which is practiced for its own sake and which brings about self-knowledge and spiritual enlightenment. In secular life the term refers to any art which is practiced to develop both technical proficiency and spiritual maturity, harmonizing body and mind. Consequently, when Gichin Funakoshi introduced *karate-do* (rather than *karate-jutsu*) to Japan, he introduced much more than an Okinawan fighting style, claiming also a spiritual and philosophical foundation for karate training. As a *do*, karate was transformed from a fighting system into a Way which could rightfully claim a place in traditional Japanese martial culture.

Other examples of this dichotomy include *budo* (“the martial way,” or, more literally, “the way of ending conflict”) vs. *bujutsu* (“military science”), *kendo* vs. *kenjutsu* (*ken* = “sword”), and *jujutsu* and *aikijutsu* (dangerous samurai grappling arts) vs. *judo* and *aikido*; *judo* is a safer-to-practice version of *jujutsu* developed primarily for purposes of sport and personal development, and *aikido* is a kinder, more humane version of *aikijutsu* with a strong mystical and philosophical foundation.

Another Japanese *do* is *bushido*, *bushi* meaning “warrior.” The Way of the warrior was the concept most intimately tied to the warrior culture of Japan, a rigorous standard of behavior and thought demanded of all samurai, and designed to produce principled citizens as well as effective soldiers. In this early form of *do* the martial arts were not yet viewed as vehicles for self-development and enlightenment, but were nevertheless expected to constitute a total lifestyle and way of thinking beyond simple combat technique.

At the KoSho karate school the Dojo Code gives a first indication of the responsible attitudes which students are expected to cultivate, if they haven’t already. Philosophical concepts are rarely discussed overtly in class, but psychological effects of the training tend to emerge anyway. Especially with children and young people, the improvements in concentration, perseverance, self-confidence, self-esteem, responsibility, achievement, sociability and level-headedness are often pronounced. And even a kind of spiritual

maturity sets in, involving reduced hostility and a feeling of being at peace with the world. Such subtle changes in attitude do place students irrevocably on a new and better “path” in life, as they advance in the arts of karate-*do* and kobudo.

Reference

WINGATE, C. (1993) Exploring our roots; historical and cultural foundations of the ideology of karate-do. *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*, 2 (3), 11-35.

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