

## **4<sup>th</sup> Dan Statement of Philosophy**

**by Brian Hayes**

In the years since my last testing I have trained without the benefit of an instructor other than myself, except for a few training sessions with Masters Pak, Drahos, or Gundlach. I have tried to find my own way with the help of my students. When you are your own instructor you have certain responsibilities to the art which you practice, the greatest of which is the responsibility to increase your understanding of the art itself.

*In the summer of 1999 I was in the Mt. Vernon dojang with Beth Cody. We were preparing for her black belt test the next month. She grabbed me with a wrist side attack and I countered with a 90-degree backspin. In that moment I was granted an understanding of non-resistance that was far deeper than any I had before. That insight has profoundly changed the way I do every single technique, and my understanding of Hapkido itself.*

This incident two years ago was my first real experience of its kind. Now I know what true non-resistance feels like. Although I am not always able to bring out the non-resistance in my technique I know when I do and when I do not, therefore I can guide my own progress. After having it (and other similar ones) I have come to believe that they are the primary method of real advancement for the advanced Hapkido student. Here are my thoughts on how to cultivate these experiences.

Reaching the next level of understanding always requires a change in the way we think, the problem is we do not know what the new way of thinking is until we experience it. I had no idea my understanding of non-resistance was deficient until I surpassed what I knew before. We can not directly aim for this knowledge, since we do not know what it is, but I believe that by

keeping these four points in mind we will discover what we need. The four are 1. Dedication, 2. Insight, 3. Experimentation, 4. Self-evaluation.

Being your own instructor is a commitment to slow growth over time, rather like a conservative mutual fund. You need to stay invested. That means train regularly, for many years. Try to apply what you already know more effectively and in new ways. Focus on your goals and keep striving to reach them. Do not give up, even when it seems your progress is stalled. This is dedication.

Insight is the magic that will power your progress. It comes when it wants to, not when you expect it. It may be a small adjustment to a specific technique, it may be something that changes the way you see Hapkido, or it may change the way you live every day. Insight needs two things, an opportunity to appear and recognition when it appears. It is dedication that provides these.

Once an insight comes, it must be tested to see what it can do. Experimentation lets you see the depth and breadth of application. This can be a long process; I am still experimenting with the insight into non-resistance that I had two years ago.

Finally, you must be able to step back and analyze what you have done. This self-evaluation is critical because some insights are incorrect. Even if the insight was a good one, you still need to be able to evaluate your experimentation so you can understand where it can be applied. Only wise self-evaluation can keep you on the right path. An ironic side effect of this is that you become able to see your own deficiencies, although you know you are good and have great confidence in your skills, you can see how much better you could become. Brown belts probably think they are closer to true understanding than most master instructors think themselves.

As Miyamoto Musashi wrote about being one's own teacher "It is frustrating, confusing, very lonely, certainly frightening, and it will sometimes make you think you do not have much sanity left to deal with the everyday surroundings of your world. Also, there is no guarantee that you will attain perfection. It must all come from inside without any preconceived notions on your part." Good luck to any one who attempts it.

Quote from: The Martial Artists Book of Five Rings, by Steve Kaufman