

The Crossroad of Tea and Martial Arts

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The title of my presentation, Japan; The Crossroads of Tea and Martial Arts may not at first glance appear to have any connection, but as I progress, I hope you will come to realize there was a reason why these two pursuits came together. It is my contention that it was Zen that infused both and allowed them to compliment each other despite the seemingly disparate activities associated with them.

It is generally accepted that Zen and tea are native to China, both having flourished at the Shorinji.

The primary aim of Zen Buddhism is personal enlightenment, and according to Daruma, enlightenment cannot be found in books or sutras or in performing rituals. Rather, it is to be found within the self through meditation. Daruma taught that within each of us is the Buddha, and that meditation can help us remember our Buddha nature. By clearing our minds of distracting thoughts, by striving for a mental state free of material concerns, we will rediscover our lost but true Buddha nature.

The practice of Zen involves long sessions of zazen, or seated meditation, to clear the mind of distractions and to gain penetrating insight. Zen's assimilation into Japanese culture was accompanied by the introduction of green tea, which was used to ward off drowsiness during the lengthy zazen sessions. One Daruma legend says that Daruma brought green tea plants with him when he traveled to China; another says that Daruma plucked off his eyelids in a rage after dozing off during meditation -- the eyelids fell to the ground and sprouted as China's first green tea plants!! To this day an early form of the tea ceremony is carried out in some Zen monasteries in Japan in honor of Daruma.

Lu Yu (728-804), otherwise Lu Hongjian, Lu Ji or Lu Jici, was born in Tianmen County of Hubei Province in the Tang Dynasty. His childhood was spent in a Buddhist monastery. In the reign of emperor Li Longji (712-755) the governor of Lu's native province discovered his talent and helped him to go to school. A talent he really was, he studied strenuously and was known to the society very quickly and was given an official post of literary instructor to the heir apparent. He was soon promoted to the chief governor of royal ritual services but decided against taking the office.

Lu Yu declined the idea of marching into officialdom. He lived a literal life yet he liked to study, research and communicate with well-known figures and scholars. He showed intense interest in tea. Through researches he knew well in the art of planting, growing and processing, especially tasting tea. He lived a hermit's life in Huzhou of Zhejiang Province and wrote the book Tea Classic, reputed as the first expertise book on tea in the world.

Tea came out of China and spread over the world. At present, more than fifty countries in the five continents cultivate tea. The experiences of tea planting and drinking were introduced from China, either direct or through intermediate, to the world. Talking about communications between the East and West, one may count on over-land "Silk Route" or a route over high seas. Yet there also existed a route via which tea migrated and branched off to other parts of the world.





The Japanese Buddhist monk Eisai (1141-1215) introduced the Zen Buddhist Rinzai sect to Japan, and under him Zen first became acknowledged as an independent school of Buddhism. He is also responsible for popularizing the cultivation of tea in Japan.

Also known by his honorific title of Zenko kokushi (national teacher), Eisai came from a family of Shinto priests in the district of Okayama. Like many famous priests in his period, he studied at the great Tendai center on Mt. Hiei. In 1168 he made his first trip to China, where he visited Zen centers, especially those flourishing on Mt. T'ien-t'ai. He was much impressed by what he saw and felt with growing conviction that Zen could greatly contribute to a reawakening of Buddhist faith in Japan.

In 1187 he undertook a second trip to the continent for the purpose of tracing the origins of Buddhism to India. The authorities, however, refused him permission to go beyond Chinese borders. He studied on Mt. T'ien-t'ai until 1191, where he was ordained in the Rinzai (Chinese, Lin-ch'i) sect and returned to Japan. He constructed the first Rinzai temple, the Shofukuji, at Hakata in Kyushu.

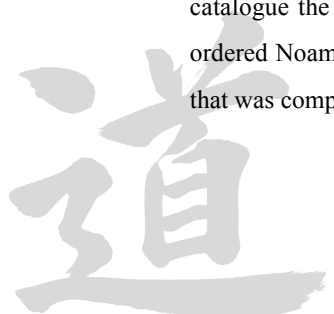
Eisai proclaimed the superiority of Zen mediation over other Buddhist disciplines, thus provoking the ire of the Tendai monks who sought to outlaw the new sect. However, Eisai enjoyed the protection of the shogun Minamoto Yoriei, and in 1202 he was given the direction of the Kenninji in Kyoto. Like Saicho, and particularly Nichiren, Eisai associated his type of Buddhism with national welfare and promoted Zen by publishing a tract entitled *Kozen Gokoku Ron* (The Propagation of Zen for the Protection of the Country).

But Eisai was constantly obliged to face Tendai and Shingon opposition. As a compromise, Eisai conducted the Kenninji not as a purely Zen establishment but also with places for Tendai and Shingon worship. Indeed, he continued to recite Shingon magic formulas. Shortly before his death, Eisai established by government order the third Zen monastery at Kamakura, the Jufukuji, and the close relationship of Zen with the Ashikaga shogun and samurai caste dates from this time.

Introduction of Tea

Although tea had been introduced to Japan about 800 by Buddhist monks who had gone to China, its cultivation and consumption were not widespread before Eisai's time. Eisai, returning from China in 1191, brought tea seeds with him and planted them near Kyoto. In 1214 he composed the *Kissa Yojoki* (Drink Tea to Improve Health and Prolong Life), in which he set forth the hygienic and curative value of tea. Tea was considered an important adjunct to Zen mediation, for it acted as a mild stimulant against sleepiness.

Zen was introduced to Japan early in the Kamakura Era (1185-1333) and became a favorite of the new Warrior Class (samurai) who had wrested power from the nobility. From the time of the first Ashikaga shogun Takauji, the Ashikaga shoguns displayed an intense interest in art collection and connoisseurship. Yoshimitsu in particular promoted trade with Ming China and acquired many works of art in the process. In fact, the majority of the great paintings, ceramics, and calligraphic works brought to Japan from China were carried back by Zen monks who had gone to China to study. Stored in the treasuries of the great Zen monasteries, most of these works were requisitioned by the Ashikaga shoguns and became the property of the shogunate. Yoshimasa engaged Nôami (1397-1471), a *dôbôshu*, or professional connoisseur of art objects, and his son Geiami (1431-85) to attempt to examine and catalogue the shogunate's collection held in the storehouses of Higashiyama palace. At the same time Yoshimasa ordered Noami to develop standards for the new *shoin* style of architecture that was emerging at this time, a project that was completed by the time of Noami's grandson, Sôami (1485?-1525). Nôami also contributed to the



development of the art of the tea ceremony (*chanoyu*), studying under one of its early formulators Murata Jūkō (also Shūkō, 1422-1502), and recommended Jūkō to Yoshimasa.

Murata Shuko (村田珠光; 1423 - 1502) was a Japanese tea ceremony practitioner of Muromachi period. He proposed the importance of the spirit and mind in the ceremony from studying Zen Buddhism.

Leaving a temple at a young age for unknown reasons, he came to meet Noami, an advisor to shōgun Ashikaga Yoshimasa, and a priest Ikkyū from Daitoku temple, who records show had knowledge of tea practices in Chinese tea classics. Ikkyū hinted to Shuko the similarity between the spirit in Zen training and the mastery of tea and, for the rest of his life, Shuko sought to apply the principle of this similarity to the practice of tea ceremony, which was rapidly developing at that time. In particular, he first proposed the need of the host of the tea house to make tea for guests.

Shuko saw the tea ceremony as something more than just an entertainment or medicine and temple ceremony; his idea was that preparing and drinking tea allows for the expression of Zen values, as enlightenment must be found in everyday activities.

During the 16th century the feudal lords throughout Japan were continually fighting for power, while the wealthy merchants in Sakai supported the peace and prosperity of the city by amassing a huge amount of wealth through foreign trade and other activities.

These merchants also supported the advanced cultures of Japan at the time including *sado* - tea ceremony. Sen-no-Rikyū is the most famous master of *sado* who raised the tea ceremony to an art form called *wabi cha* - a simple and austere type of tea ceremony - which is still widely practiced today. Rikyū was one of the wealthy Sakai merchants. The financial power of the merchants was so formidable that Sakai remained a self-governing city and even the rulers of the country did not dare to challenge them. While the Sakai merchants at that time were famous for their extravagance in buildings, *wabi-cha* was sometimes practiced in a very small two-tatami-mat (3.3 square meters) room.

They lived surrounded by *fusuma* sliding doors and *byōbu* folding screens decorated with gold-leafed pictures. But they enjoyed tea in an extremely simple and plain room, eliminating everything that looked unnecessary in spite of all the luxuries available to them. When there was nothing else to eliminate, it created a certain tense atmosphere which they felt was the ultimate luxury and the most creative form of art.

There is one anecdote about Rikyū and his *wabi-cha*. When Toyotomi Hideyoshi, before his visit to view Rikyū's morning glories, it is said that Rikyū clipped and threw away all the rare morning glory flowers he had except one, and used it as decoration to welcome and entertain Hideyoshi.

However the tense atmosphere created by the tea ceremony turned into a more serious tension as relations between the two men became strained. Eventually Hideyoshi ordered Rikyū to commit *seppuku* (disembowelment).

Regarding my choice to practice Shorinji Kempo and Chanoyu, one could say it was fate. I would have to agree. But then, anyone can choose to do something, it is another matter altogether to continue for a significant period of time.

What was it that caused me to continue for such a long time? I would have to answer first that it was not sitting seiza for hours at a time or harsh training in the Shorinji dojo. It was after all the philosophy presented by my teachers, Daisoshō, Genshitsu Sen XV, and Kaisō, Sō Doshin I.

Let me give you a brief overview, first of Shorinji Kempo.





"Live Half for Yourself and Half for Others"

So Doshin, Founder of Shorinji Kempo "Shorinji Kempo" was founded by Doshin So in 1947, after witnessing the extreme conditions resulting from World War II in the North-East region of the People's Republic of China (formerly Manchuria), where many people had lost all forms of moral values. He realized how laws, politics and the military were shaped by the personalities and the beliefs of the people involved.

Shorinji Kempo was initially developed for the goals of self-defense, physical and mental balance, and mutual growth through practice.

Shorinji Kempo is not practiced just for the sake of winning over your opponent, but rather to "conquer yourself". The main purpose is to develop the character, to train the mind, and to bring it into contact with reality.

Though deeply imbued with the theory of calm in action - seated Zen meditation represents the calm, and Kempo the action - Shorinji thought maintains that neither of these aspects of the whole can exist independently. In Shorinji Kempo, both facets (soft techniques - throwing, twisting, grappling; and hard techniques - strikes, kicks) are given equal importance. Furthermore, since all Shorinji training requires the cooperative effort of two people, practicing its techniques encourages mutual respect, understanding and growth.

Shorinji Kempo techniques are based on natural body movements and therefore do not involve any rigid or uncomfortable motions. As such, it is easy to switch from technique to technique, from hard technique to soft technique, from soft technique to hard technique, or any combination thereof, without sacrificing fluidity or power.

The techniques are logically created on the basis of dynamics and physiology to enable the weaker to control the stronger. Anyone, regardless of sex or age can practice these techniques.

"People, People, People, Everything Depends on the Quality of People"...

Doshin So came to the profound realization that since everything in the world is dependent on the "people," the only way to attain peace for which all humans yearn is to educate and train as many young people as possible to have a strong sense of justice, courage and compassion. Thus he decided to start educating young people. For this purpose, he combined the techniques of various martial arts he had mastered in China with his own original techniques and named it "Shorinji Kempo." He developed a new way to build better individuals based chiefly on Shorinji Kempo training.

A Method to Train Mind and Body Together

Shorinji Kempo is a method of training both body and mind together. Through this training, one develops a strong body and an indomitable mind, building a self-reliant individual capable of living as a positive force in this world.

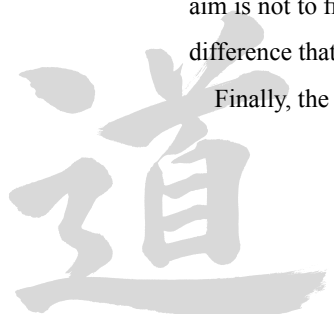
Basic Principle

Shorinji Kempo's basic principle is "to build a better society by developing as many people as possible, who can become self-reliant by training both their mind and body together, and who can act seeking not only their own happiness but also the happiness of others."

How to Practice

There is no competition in Shorinji Kempo. All the practice should be conducted in pairs, with one partner being the defender and the other the attacker, and changing these roles. One's partner is not a competitor or opponent. The aim is not to find out which of the two wins, but together to improve techniques through cooperation. This is a major difference that distinguishes Shorinji Kempo from judo, or other forms that promote winning over an opponent.

Finally, the saying Ken Zen Ichi Nyo presented me with a way to practice Zen, not by merely sitting, but with



action.

Regarding my practice of Tea, it remains to this day, my oath taken inside the room dedicated to the memory of Sen Rikyu (Rikyu Onsodo) to spread the purpose of my teacher Sen Genshitsu XV. It was he, who as a member of the Tokotai here in Kanoya, was ready to give up his life. As he prepared a final bowl of tea for his fellow pilots before taking off, they received word that the war had ended. From that day forward it has been his life's work to make "Peace through a bowl of tea".

The meaning of studying Budo and Chado in higher education

Students in the west are in need of discipline and at the same time study something that benefits mankind. Chado teaches basic manners and courtesy for humans to live and contribute to society. It teaches a person to be humble and at the same time is a window into the aesthetic culture of what it means to be Japanese. It incorporates the artistic fields of poetry, calligraphy, literature, painting, pottery, and other handicrafts, which form the rich heritage of Japan.

Due to the efforts of the head of Urasenke, Sen Genshitsu XV, chado has become a recognized field of study in western institutions of higher learning. My university offers two semesters (six credits) of Chado study at the undergraduate and graduate level and is directly supported by Urasenke with study materials.

Martial arts, on the other hand, does not have an academic background, nor the support of the major schools to create one.

If one decides to study the martial arts the traditional way, one must become a deshi and remain so for many years. This takes too long and in the end there is no academic recognition in the west. I am an example of this situation. However, due to my study of Chado, I was able to secure a full-time position at FIU.

So, martial arts needs to form associations with other subjects that will build its academic profile, such as history, weaponry, tactics, philosophy, and other related university subjects.

Students' understandings and reactions toward Japanese culture (Budo, Chado) in U.S.A

Concerning my students ability to grasp the significance of studying a "gyo" I would say the following:

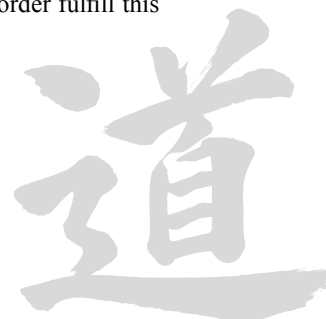
American college students, for the most part, realize that there is a lack of spirituality in their course of study that will allow them to reach a higher level of awareness. This is understandable given the short history of the country and the overall shallowness of the culture.

Japan benefits from its rich history of the martial arts and the tea ceremony. Over 800 years since the beginning, one cannot expect American students to engage themselves as would someone from Japan who has grown up surrounded by this culture.

They do realize however, that in order to benefit mankind, they must pursue a study that has no end and will lead to developing a complete individual of strong mind and body capable of achieving that goal.

It is this spark of awareness in some individuals that encourages me to promote the study of martial arts (particularly Shorinji Kempo) and Chado in as close a form as I studied in Japan for nearly ten years.

This is my (American, not European) view. Most students have no precedent of "shugyo" and lack discipline and spirituality that is necessary to study martial arts or Chado. Humans need a study with no ending in order fulfill this development of a body/spirit that benefits human society.





Advices for the Budo education in NIFS

- 1 . I believe a greater effort should be made to publicize the NIFS curriculum in various English language scholastic publications.
- 2 . Invite international scholars to join the NIFS faculty.
- 3 . Create an exchange program (affiliation) for faculty and students with western institutions. For example, the girl's kendo group could be sent abroad for demonstrations to universities with an Asian Studies degree.

On a more general note, NIFS should make the study of martial arts more academic to western standards. For the benefit of mankind this should include a philosophical(mental), health benefits, political tactics, and form a close association with the study of sports medicine based on Japanese advanced technological research.

In addition, NIFS should strive to create a more global campus atmosphere. Consideration should be given in the future to establish satellite campuses in other areas. This could include an online offering of courses (gakka) to complement study (jitsugi) at NIFS.

An attempt should be made to associate with major martial arts organizations in Japan and China such as Shorinji Kempo in Tadotsu and Shaolin in Hunan. An NIFS degree should be offered to students joining this program. (If there are conflicts with existing laws governing NIFS, then a certificate program might be a starting point, leading to a degree.)

Finally, students at the university level are deeply concerned about how their field of study will help them secure employment upon graduation. NIFS must make their degree attractive in this regard.

