

THE CLASSICAL MAN

by Joe Dixon

The author of *The Classical Man*, Richard Kim, was born on November 17, 1919, in Honolulu, Hawaii. His martial arts training began when he was six years old. He was known as O' Sensei Richard Kim. Throughout his novel, details are laid out in the form of short stories. Each short story concerns just one of the many aspects of martial arts. The following are just a few of the many points made in the novel.

The first tale illustrates a man named Hariya Sekiun. He was known as the greatest swordsman of his time. Through meditation he could overcome his regrets and fears. One day Hariya Sekiun was in his yard when two men approached him. They challenged to him to a fight because they wanted to test his skills. Being a man of humility he sent them off and refused to fight. They were there to arrogantly demand an audience with Hariya. Sekiun ignored their rudeness, but they insisted that he show them his mighty blow. They headed back to town to tell everyone that Hariya was a coward and that he turned down a match, but the townspeople didn't believe them. They went back, to challenge him again, and this time Hariya told one of the two men to put on a helmet and use a real sword. Hariya used a wooden sword and as soon as Hariya squared off with the guy he hit him in the head lightly with the helmet on. The man dropped like an egg and fell against the tree with blood streaming out his mouth. This story shows that humbleness is an attribute to being a great martial artist.

The final arbiter is a story about two samurais seeking fame by killing the greatest swordsman, Ordagiri Ichiun who was sitting on a rock dozing off. One of the samurais quietly went up to Ordagiri as the other stayed back and watched. The samurai was ready to attack and swung his sword three times and missed. The first blow missed as Ordagiri nodded his head and swayed forward out of range with his body. The second blow missed as he completely swayed in the other direction, and when the third blow descended, Odagiri still dozing, raised his hand, grabbed the samurai on the wrist and flung him to the ground, as he just kept dozing like nothing happened. The moral of this story is that one must use defense and not openly attack unprovoked.

When Kanryo Higashionna was in his youth he started work with a rich tea merchant. His boss made periodic trips to China, in order to purchase tea and close business deals. One of his trips he was beaten up by Chinese bandits. As Kanryo found out he made up his mind on taking up martial arts. Later for the first time he understood the meaning of the motto, "The first principle of self-defense starts with ones self, as said in the book. Woo Lu Chin was the teacher of Kanryo Higashionna, and had taught him everything of martial arts that he knew. After his learning, Kanryo returned to Okinawa and practiced daily of what he had learned. The sensei's reputation preceded him and students flocked around him, eager to learn. He had opened his own dojo, and among all the students who came to learn was Miyagi Chojun. Sometimes the student would try, with permission, to choke the master by tying an obi around his neck and pulling from both sides as in tug a war, but there was no effect. In festivals men would try to pull him down with rope around his ankles, as he stood in sanchin-dachi. No one came close. This shows that after a long period of time of dedication anyone can become a great martial artist/ meijin with incredible strengths and skills as Kanryo Higashionna was.

Sato was a student who at first obviously didn't know what karate was, and meant. In the day, he and his fellow students were practicing Budo. Sato was having troubles with weapons not due to himself being more experience with open hand fighting, but being drunk and out of his own control the night before. One day Sato met another karate fighter that was just a little more "foxy " than him, as it was said and the other karate fighter put Sato to sleep by punching his in the jaw... Sato remembered that karate is not only for the body but also for the mind! This means that karate, and Budo and any other martial art are not just in the dojo, but also within our selves and a part of our daily living and must be remembered that way.

Psychology of the martial arts is defined as looking into ones self and taking control of all emotion. Most importantly the strongest emotion, fear, if had been controlled then the fear of death it self can be overcome. Zap-Zen is a process used to become fully relaxed with your mind, and body, to get rid of tension, and anxiety. The martial artist, the samurai, reached deep down into his subconscious and through imagination restructured his mind to view death as a passing phenomenon to the beyond, not to be feared, to be welcomed instead as something natural to the scheme of things, as so said in the book. Whenever any emotion takes over the mind and gets out of control, the physical body stiffens up, gets tense and this exacerbates pain and fear. The martial artist understands this and in understanding fear he creates or sets a stage for his opponent to be overcome with fear. There are three steps that the psychology of martial arts is comprised of, (1) reflective concentration, (2) using the imagination and bypassing the intellect during a period of self-look, and (3) isolating the strongest emotion possible and putting it in the right perspective. The moral of this is that one of the most important parts of martial arts is to overcome fear, and be relaxed with ones self, and to have control of strongest emotions.

In conclusion, the novel "The Classical Man " by Richard Kim brings out many important points, and aspects of martial arts, many years of dedication, and improving ones self.