

Why BUSHIDO-KAI Seminars are Different 2

Last week, I talked about how Bushido-kai seminars differ from many others in that they emphasize the aspects of SUBJECT-orientation and NEW APPROACHES. This week, I'll continue with the aspects of ATTITUDE, EMPHASIS, STUDENTS and more.

ATTITUDE

All good martial arts seminars, regardless of subject, share at least three of characteristics: (1) the material is interesting, (2) the teacher presents the material in a manner that is both interesting and easy to grasp, and (3) the attitude of the teacher and attending students is not judgmental, arrogant, or condescending. (By the way, I am right about this and if you disagree, you are worse than a drug-dealing mass-murderer with a virulent plague who crosses the border illegally and wraps himself in the American flag in order to inveigle himself into...oops, sorry.)

Nobody wants to attend a seminar in which the instructor or others make the student feel uncomfortable because they are wearing the wrong uniform, the wrong dojo patch, studied under the wrong instructor, or belong to the wrong federation. But would you really want to attend a seminar in which the teacher did not have a strong point-of-view? I have definite points of view for which I give clear reasons, but I also make clear that I know as little about the absolute truth of martial arts history, martial arts application, or martial arts teaching methods as the next guy. In fact, I think we are all babes in the woods when it comes to these things, but I hope to offer my way out of the woods based on my personal journeys, if the student is interested in taking it. That doesn't make me right, just qualified to have an opinion.

EMPHASIS

Do you remember that seminar you went to last year in which the instructor knew his stuff but was not invested in *your* knowing it? Seems like lack of instructional quality keeps material "hidden in the open", whether or not is taught publicly. Although I cannot be sure that every student at every seminar comes away with a superior knowledge of my subject matter, I can be sure that I make my instruction as clear as possible and that I go from student to student to answer questions, give encouragement, and correct obvious errors.

Hey instructors! If you don't really want them to learn it, why teach it?

STUDENTS and ATMOSPHERE

You can never tell who will show up to train at a seminar. Some students will have attitudes; some will have learning problems; others will resist the instruction in favor of something they already know and are committed to. That is a factor that the presenting instructor cannot fully control. He/she can, however, have his/her own students integrated into the populace in order to set the tone and, frankly, countermand or report bad attitudes. Once the atmosphere of a seminar is set, however, seldom do the rusty nails stick up their heads. The instructor and his/her personal students help set that atmosphere.

BONUSES

It is nice to get a reduction in price if you sign up for a seminar early. It rewards the student for letting the sponsor know how many he will have in the dojo that day. However, few sponsors offer the additional bonus of a free \$59-\$79 DVD of the event, which allows the student both a memento of the event AND a way to review the material at will. In addition, in most Bushido-kai seminars, whether or not you register early, you are presented with a handout, often several pages, giving history, detailing concepts, and/or illustrating techniques, another memento and learning tool.

ARCHIVED INTEGRATION

It is easy to be a little near-sighted when attending a seminar. Your attention is understandably on what you are learning and how you are performing. But there is a bigger picture as well. The DVD created from the seminar is usually part of a sequence of instructional events that integrate into a larger knowledge of the art being instructed that day. For example, our [seminar on the Nijushiho/Niseishi kata](#) will archive our method of performing a kata both for Takeshin Karate nidan and for *kodansha* (upper black belt) level training. It adds to one's knowledge of kata analysis not just by adding two kata to the liturgy, but by giving an additional method of approaching kata, one not usually expected of *mudansha* (non-black belts). In other words, we are thinking not just of the day's event, but also of the lifelong learning of students who attend and those who purchase our educational videos series.

There are many talented martial arts instructors out there. There is more knowledge floating around on DVD and in seminar venues than any one person can absorb in a lifetime. It is understandable then that people are particular about which events they attend. And particular people, I am gratified to say, lean more and more to Bushido-kai and that guy who teaches there—what's his name again?

Bushido-kai seminars are different, and not just by my say-so, but also by the say-so of so many students who have attended. Many thanks to all those who have supported Bushido-kai seminars and help make them what they are.