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*We can't of course read the founders' minds, but I think we can safely infer a few things. At the risk of being overly simplistic, I will divide "the founders" into four phases: Shaolin Monks, Japanese Samurai, Okinawan Gentry, and relatively modern masters. What did they want their martial arts to accomplish, and how close have we come to their ideals?*

### SHAOLIN MONKS

Their goal was not to found a martial system or even to pass an existing system to further generations; rather, they simply wanted to have a form of exercise that both kept the monks in shape and with which they could ethically defend themselves should they be accosted. Therefore, there was a physical and a spiritual emphasis but no prominent intellectual aspect to their training.

### JAPANESE SAMURAI

After Sekigahara (1603), there was less and less need for military training and the martial instructors had to find another emphasis. Obviously, they were still training "soldiers" but their training was as much about discipline as it was about combat. Having previously been influenced by Zen Buddhism and their education in the Chinese classics, higher ranked samurai had been expected to compose a "death poem" to show their mastery over the mind and the body. Their peacetime arts therefore inherited both a spiritual and intellectual tradition.

### OKINAWAN GENTRY

Westerners often thought that karate grew up in Okinawan among the peasants. They have an image of fieldworkers in the white clothes that became their *keikogi*, working under the sun during the day and then retreating to a backyard after dinner for *makiwara* practice. Actually most karate-ka belonged to the upper classes of Okinawa and the founders often held titles such as *chikudan* (a lower class samurai), *satunushi* (a middle class samurai), or *pechin* (high-middle class samurai). Sometimes, when martial arts instructors were among the highest rank in their village (and thus the most educated), they would be considered the wise men of the town and even its healers. As sensei, their job was to train young people in methods that would provide self-defense, but also keep them disciplined and add to their education. There may have been a Zen influence in their culture, but it was less emphasized than it was among the Japanese warriors who employed it so that they could face death with an imperturbable mind.

### RELATIVELY MODERN "OLD" MASTERS

The masters whose names we are familiar with (Miyagi, Funakoshi, Kano, Ueshiba, etc.) were inheritors of at least one of these traditions, but also saw their teaching emphasis change in their lifetimes. In general, they wanted to benefit society—pre-war, the benefit may have been intended for their own culture; post-war it was more global in its intent. Budo kept its self-

defense and physical conditioning emphasis, added a sport emphasis, and kept an association with both a spiritual and an intellectual aspect, although the latter aspects took a minor role.

We contemporary “traditional” martial artists have inherited our arts from them. We can emphasize exercise, self-defense, sport, spirituality, and intellectual study and justify our emphasis within some aspect of our tradition. But, for the most part, we don't. Instead, we take the one aspect that appeals to us most and make it our sole concentration.

Not everyone can aspire to be his ideal of what a martial artist should be. However, we should recognize as traditional martial artists that none of our historical traditions ever terminated all but one aspect. If you use your body to train and your mind to analyze, learn, and seek a better life, you are doing exactly what Not Everyone Can.