

The Depth of Budo 2

I wrote in *Why do You REALLY Like Your Art?* that Depth was one of my key attractions for on-going study.

Why is it that most martial studies have such depth? Is it the nature of all worthwhile studies or is it unique to traditional martial arts? Well, my answer is yes and yes.

Most martial arts present a depth of study because their founders had a breadth of study and/or experience to draw from. Often the arts they drew from, in turn, had founders who had a similarly broad background. After decades of studying a style, we begin to realize that it has siblings and cousins that have the similar DNA but look different. Investigating those relatives makes us aware that the family tree has a lot to offer that is not explicitly taught in our chosen branch. We then become more tree-oriented than branch-conscious, i.e. more art-oriented than style-conscious.

I would also argue that many worthwhile studies are similarly profound. Of course, something can be worthwhile without being world-shatteringly meaningful or having the depth of volcanic fissures, but even items that are not academic in nature show similarly deep characteristics. I had a cousin who was a Master Mechanic. He understood engines such that no matter what you put before him, he could tell not only how it worked, but also what would probably need repairing next year. You can be an auto mechanic without being a Master Mechanic, but you won't be able to work on large trucks and factory engines with equal facility. I have friends who have flown 747s and others who have flown Cessna aircraft. All are competent pilots, but the Cessna guys can't fly the 747, while the jumbo jet pilots can fly most anything in the sky, with only a few questions asked and a few facts obtained.

When I was a kid, the Amateur Athletic Association prohibited any professional athlete from competing as an amateur in another sport. This meant that a pro-bowler could not compete in Olympic archery, or that a pro-golfer could not take part Olympic basketball, for example. Using these examples, the rule made little sense so it was changed, but consider why the AAA created the rule. Would a professional baseball player be likely to be superior in driving a golf ball? Would a professional basketball player be likely to have superior accuracy when rolling a bowling ball? Competency in one field may not mean competency in another, but experience in one field certainly can positively influence competency in another.

Karate-ka are usually far too rigid and sharp in their motions to perform effective Aikido. Judoka are far to fluid and mobile to perform sharp, snappy karate kata. But, studying Aikido can help a karate-ka relax so that he/she begins to see more applications in karate kata and can do them with less effort. Similarly, studying karate can help judo-ka in the performance of their 2-

person judo kata. Not only can one art influence another, but also once an art has been influenced by another, different but complementary art, by necessity, it will then hold a greater breadth of possibilities and consequently a greater depth of knowledge.

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