

Zen Letter #1
November 18, 2008

"Beautiful birds always land on the top of the tree. brilliant people always express their journeys up higher." - Sifu Shi Yan Ming

Amitufo! Hello Everybody! This is the first "Zen" Letter I have sent out to my students in many a year. I want to make sure that I put all the addresses in correctly too. I am looking forward to open the lines of communication with you. I will at time write stories that I hope will inspire the Spirit or simply make you think. I will do my best to keep you all updated on news that is happening in the dojo (school) too I hope to educate you on some martial arts etiquette also, to help explain the whats, and whys, and whens Please feel free to write me if you have any personal questions. My promise to you is that I will always try my best to to serve the students and parents to the best of my ability. It is an Honor to share my time and friendship with you.

"People may pass away, but principles never will." - Abraham Lincoln

There is a term that all should know.....Bushido. Western martial artists often mistake the meaning of this word. Many believe it is the "Way of the Warrior". This is a half truth. A student of Bushido is a warrior indeed. He or she carries the highest qualities of a person: Respect, Discipline, Compassion, Honesty, Loyalty, Duty, Focus, Kindness, Courage, Sincerity, Humility, Willingness, Bravery, Inner Strength, Balance, Harmony, and Honor, to name just a few. There is something else that is of utmost importance, and that is the wisdom that a true warrior must serve. God, Family, Teachers, Friends, Neighbors, Community and even ones self. A true warrior is so much more than a person who kicks, punches, blocks and yells. We follow an ancient tradition built on values and principles that help keep harmony in the universe. Hard work is also something one must meditate on. Our positive attitude while working is key to our success in mind, body, and spirit. Every day notice the endless beauty that surrounds us.....it is everywhere indeed. Like a happy child looking for that colorful easter egg, all we must do is look. Now I do not want you to misunderstand the martial Arts that comes with "real" Bushido either. It is very real and effective. It takes (usually) three years, or so, to earn a Black Belt. A first degree Black belt has earned the rank of "Sho-dan". Sho means first or beginning. Dan is rank or level. So, a Sho-dan is a warrior who has earned their Black Belt, and is now on the path of Bushido. Every new day will bring new challenges and decisions. I feel that with the right "spirit", no mountain is too high, no river too wide. The path to Black belt should be a wonderful journey filled with sweat, patience, and determination. Parents, I ask you to please take an active roll in your child's journey. Encourage, support, even take part in their training by watching and asking questions. It WILL be worth it. My parents have been supportive and watching me train for 35 years. I can not even begin to explain how close I am to them and how thankful for their support since I was 5 years old. I am still amazed when I think of that fact alone.

Students.....More Chi- Train Harder! The dojo is awesome and getting better every day and year. I am so proud of you all and your accomplishments. Keep your eyes and spirits on the goal and your body on the path. The best is yet to come.

Well, there you have it folks, letter number one is finished. I had a lot of fun writing it (even though it is now 12:40am).....I love it. Martial Arts is forever and the path of Bushido is a noble one. There will be more soon my friends. Oos!

Peace and Zen to you, and God Bless you all, David Bowers - owner/founder of the Zen Dragon School of Martial Arts

"The slow moving turtle does not go anywhere without first sticking out its neck" - Grandmaster Eric Lee