



Cambridge & Impington Tang Soo Do Clubs



Journey of a Thousand Miles

There was once a youth who had studied karate for nearly five years. He would learn all the techniques as fast as he could and then beg his master to assess him in order that he could go up a grade. This went on year after year and all the time the youth was continually pressing his teacher to test him so that he could rise to a higher rank. In the end his master said 'I can teach you nothing more about karate. To take yourself further you must seek guidance from one that is better than I. He is my old sensei and lives very far from here.'

The youth rushed off to the dojo of his master's master. After travelling across Japan nearly a month he finally came upon the martial arts school of his master's sensei. However it was closed and upon enquiring from some karate students training nearby he found out that the sensei had gone to visit a local shrine to lay offerings, and would not be back until the next day. The youth entered into discussion with the students and before too long he was telling them what grade he was and how he wanted to train with their sensei in order to hurry through the grades to become a master himself. The students quickly tired of his conversation and left, so the youth bedded down for the night under the porch of the karate school.

The next morning he saw the sensei approaching. He stood back as the teacher opened the door of the dojo and then followed him in. Upon seeing the youth the sensei asked what he wanted from him.

'I wish to become a student at your school and be the finest karateka (one who practices karate) in Japan,' the youth replied 'How long must I train to accomplish this?' He asked.

'Ten years at least' the sensei answered.

'Ten years is a long time,' said the youth 'What if I studied twice as hard as all your other students, how long then?'

'Twenty years'

Twenty years! What if I practice night and day and cut my sleeping time by half?'

'Thirty years.'

'Why is it that each time I say I will work harder you tell me that it will take longer? It doesn't make sense.'

The old sensei smiled at the youth and replied, 'The answer is clear. When one eye is fixed upon your destination, there is only one eye left with which to find the way.'

Instructors Comments:

We must concentrate on what we have to learn to move forward in our art.

We should focus on the task at hand and not worry what others may be doing.

We should accept the rate at which we learn as something individual to ourselves.

We concern ourselves with what we think we should know, and miss the simple lessons, which can teach us so much more.

This excerpt has been taken from "Myths and Legends of the Martial Arts" by Peter Lewis