



Cambridge & Impington Tang Soo Do Clubs



The Challenge

One day a hungry old man entered a small village and noticed a sign proclaiming the name of a local laido school.

Knowing that it was customary for a dojo's Sensei to accept all challenges the old man decided upon a very dangerous plan. If he could entice the Sensei into a duel and be defeated but not killed, he would then by tradition be offered food and drink, as well as a place to sleep for the night.

Summoning up all of his courage the old man approached the dojo and then walking boldly in he proclaimed his intention to challenge the Sensei to a duel. In response a senior student stepped forward, introduced himself, and said that his Sensei was at home resting, but that he would gladly accept the challenge in his place. The old man refused and instead asked that a student be sent to the Sensei's home to tell him of the challenge.

Upon hearing his students report of the events that had just taken place the Sensei immediately put on his swords and hurried to the dojo. When the Sensei arrived he and the old man politely bowed to each other and in turn introduced themselves, after which the old man re-issued his challenge, but explained that it was not his intention to challenge for ownership of the dojo as was sometimes the case, this duel was merely to be a test of each man's skill with a sword. The Sensei accepted and because of the nature of the challenge and they agreed to fight using only wooden bokken (practice swords) so that if a customary fatal cut was made neither man would be killed.

The old man in truth had no skill at all with a sword, he was simply seeking a meal and a place to rest and this plan had seemed to offer the best prospect for success and so as he stood facing the dojo's Sensei across the tatami mat he just held the wooden sword very casually at his side. The Sensei upon observing how open the old man was to an attack and how unbelievably foolish his defensive posture appeared, suddenly began to believe that this duel might not have been such a good idea after all. Slowly in his mind he began to wonder about the old man's skill and in turn he began to doubt himself and his own chances for victory.

He knew, however, that his own reputation and that of his dojo was at stake and so he took an aggressive posture. For what seemed a very long time the two men just stood there facing one another, neither of them made even the slightest move. The old man for his part could not understand what was taking so long, but he knew he had no choice in the matter; all he could do was wait for the Sensei to attack and claim his victory. The Sensei on the other hand had by now thoroughly convinced himself that he did indeed face a true laido, master, but even so he knew that he must do something very soon and so he started to move towards the old man, determined to press home his attack with all of his skill even though he felt sure now that he had no chance of winning.

The old man seeing the look on the Sensei's face and sensing that he was about to be attacked in full force quickly dropped his sword and falling to his knees he broke down and



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confessed that he in fact had no skill at all with the sword, going on to explain that he had not eaten in days and that he had hoped merely to survive the challenge and then be offered a meal and a place to sleep for the night. Upon hearing this Sensei was suddenly overcome with the realization that by allowing his own doubts to fill his mind and by fantasizing about his opponents abilities he had almost defeated himself. He decided then and there to change the name of his sword style to

“Mu Nen Ryu” - The School of No Thought.

Instructors Comments

Sometimes the biggest obstacles and threats exist only in your mind, only because you give them power. Perception is coloured by emotion, reality and perception are often very different things.

This excerpt has been taken from “Sage Arts Unlimited”