

## An Interview with Shihan Toshiro Nagato

This interview was conducted on the 19th of May 2001, and was translated by Tim Bathurst)

Gentlemen, thank you for your letter and your request for Nagato Sensei's opinion on pertinent elements of Budo training. I hope you don't mind, but to save time and trouble on translating and so forth, Nagato Sensei asked that I translate into English his thoughts as expressed during a conversation discussing your question on the most important points in Budo training.

Nagato Sensei: Well, that's quite a complicated question. How many good answers could you give to "the most important point of Budo"? Firstly, there is the point that Hatsumi Sensei is always making. "KEEP GOING" Gambatte, right. In the end that is a very important point, you must persevere in your training to be able to make anything of it.

Next I think an important point is to find a good teacher, and this is probably the most important decision in your Martial Arts career. If the teacher is good, the student can become good, but if the teacher is no good, it doesn't bode well for the students. A good teacher should be a person who is a good balance of instructor and student.

Of course, when you start you don't know who is good and who isn't, but as time goes on you will be able to see if your teacher is any good or not. This is why it is so important and special that Sensei travels all over the world to teach his Budo "man to man". If you haven't seen Hatsumi Sensei you wouldn't know. If your instructor moves like Hatsumi Sensei then you know he is at least on the right track.

A good instructor also has a good balance of knowing when to teach and when to let the students figure it out for themselves. A teacher who is too kind, as in giving too many explanations, makes the students lazy and inhibits their ability to work things out for themselves.

Apart from that, it's important for a student to be able to depend on his or her own judgement. Relying on the teacher to correct everything will lead to you becoming weak. You have to think and decide for yourself, otherwise you can be easily controlled.

A Budo teacher is not like a football or tennis coach, it is not a trivial or short-term relationship, a Budo teacher is a teacher for your life.

Toshiro Nagato  
Moko