



Virtues

Virtus, the latin word for virtue, was defined in the 6th Century BC, by the Chinese philosopher, Confucius (551-479 BC). He classified the virtues into five practical moralities:

Humanity, righteousness, etiquette, wisdom (knowledge) and trust
Confucius believed that these virtues should be incorporated into the ethical education of all people. This belief can also be clearly

seen in other Chinese philosophers like Lao Tze. One of Lao Tze's famous quotes was, "Knowing others is wisdom, knowing yourself is enlightenment."

Humanity

Humanity means love and humaneness. The Tang Soo Do student must, by all means, practice this virtue by accepting others in a manner of benevolence and sincerity. Tang Soo Do's doctrine - avoid all violent acts unless it is a matter of life or death - was derived from this theory of humanity. This idea is further suggested in the oriental maxim, "The angry man will defeat himself in battle as well as life".

Emotional anger and fear usually escalates into violence when there is a loss of self control. The true martial artist should control self at all times and dominate over physical force through the development of spiritual power. It is through the development of proper spirit and discipline that self control is possible.

Self control, and thus personal power, is displayed when a person has developed a noble character. Personal characteristics such as tranquility, courage, self confidence, generosity, justice, sincerity, and responsibility are traits inherited through diligent training.

Although it is human to meet force with force, it is not the way of "nature", nor the way of life. When someone challenges, we respond instinctively and avoidance of response is most difficult because we have an instant reactions of fear, anger, emotions and self pride.

However, we must be aware that rigidity and stiffness are not always strong. "Stiff and unbending is the disciple of death. Gentle and yielding is the disciple of life. Thus, an army without flexibility never wins a battle. A tree that is unbending is easily broken. The hard and strong will fall. The soft and weak will overcome."

The above quote speaks of flexibility, which, by its definition, is the ability to adjust or give. Flexibility or adaptability for most humans. The majority of people respond or react rather than adjust or give. Being stiff and unbending leads to loss of flexibility, balance and control. The true Tang Soo Do student is receptive rather than reactive. The ability to control negative emotions and remain flexible insures mental, physical, and spirit balance. This balance allows the student to sense danger before it happens and to avoid violence. By avoiding violence and acting fairly, the Tang Soo Do student contributes to society and, thus, humanity.

Righteousness

A righteous person always stands on the side of justice. Confucius said, "If you want to be treated fairly by others you treat others fairly first." The golden rule as it is often called in the west, is the bedrock of eastern moral philosophy. In its more advanced stages, this philosophy suggests that fair treatment of others is not enough. One must

defend against injustice as well as further the cause of justice. Legendary stories abound regarding those who have cast down their lives for the cause of justice. The Tang Soo Do student always stands on the side of justice. When necessary, he or she will do what is necessary to ensure equity.

Etiquette

Etiquette is the virtue of modesty and self discipline. Etiquette disciplines us to control and mediate human emotion and selfish desires. Tang Soo Do etiquette is essential for the cultivation of respect, loyalty, and obedience. This is why Tang Soo Do students require strict adherence to etiquette inside and outside the Dojang.

Wisdom (Knowledge)

Oriental philosophy has long stressed the importance of wisdom and knowledge. Confucianism suggested that knowledge is "The greatest form of good" and "the lack of is ignorance". Applied to armed or unarmed combat, this philosophy is construed to mean that a lack of knowledge of your opponent creates miscalculation and results in defeat.

Trust

Modern society with all its potential conflict has had the affect of eroding trust among people. The Tang Soo Do student, however, strives to preserve trust. Acknowledging that not all people are trustworthy, the true martial artist nevertheless looks for the best in others, and above all, diligently strives to be worthy of other's trust. This philosophy is suggested in the oriental saying, "Flow with whatever may happen and let your mind be free, stay centered by trusting your instincts. This is the ultimate." (Chuang Tzu)