
Combat and non-combat...

Combat and non-combat are based on the same action movement: breathing

By Gilles Mushin Maeder, Narbonne (France)

During zazen, the Zen meditation practice, attention is focused on the posture and the breathing. During combat, the focus is on synchronising the breathing and the attack technique.

Regularly practising zazen allows posture and breathing to be connected and this connection becomes natural. In the same way, training assiduously in combat allows the practitioner to reach a technical mastery which then becomes innate.

A mind free of attachment to its thoughts is necessary to practice zazen.

A mind free of attachment to its thoughts is also essential in combat sports.

With a serene mind comes the mastery of the situation and a correct view of one's surroundings.

Never let your imagination get in the way of your meditation or the management of a combat. Everything must be under control, from the meditative posture to the fighter's guard position. "Sit to meditate" and "stand to fight" are two identical concepts, they must be natural and without any inner or external tension.

Body and mind are One.

Controlling one's mind allows one to achieve this attitude and to create the optimal conditions to enter into the actions of meditating or fighting.

Zen meditation is an active meditation, where the attention is focused on the management of breathing and posture: zazen is an energy.

Combat sport is also focused on the coordination of breathing and technique: the technique must be perfect and efficient. The attack is carried during the exhalation: the exhalation is the energy of the breathing. As the training progresses, this coordination becomes natural, without calculation or preparation, and then the attack becomes as fast as lightning.

During zazen, the knees touch the ground and the shoulders are relaxed. During combat, when the attack is carried out, the feet are anchored in the ground and the upper body is free to move. In both cases, the practitioner masters space, he positions his body in a way that is right and perfectly adapted to his action.

Doing zazen and fighting are one and the same: they are the here and now, concentration, technique and mastery of the moment. Zazen was the meditation of samurai warriors in search of the control of their emotions, the concentration essential to the perfection of their combat techniques and the control of their breathing.

All our actions are sustained by the breathing, by the breathing of life. To breathe is to connect with oneself, to connect with the energies of the universe. Zazen leads to this.