



## The Code of Ethics

Students of the traditional martial arts learn more than techniques. They adhere to a code of ethics and behavior that is as central to martial arts as are the basic stances and movements. Following these tenets will make you a stronger martial artist.

### *Honor and Respect for Fellow Students and Your Family*

1. Always honor one's family without the expectation of receiving something in return.
2. Honor your teacher or teachers. Give and sacrifice without the expectation of receiving. This is a lifetime responsibility toward your teacher, who has given you the gift of the art.
3. Treat your fellow students as a brother or sister. By giving freely of yourself and helping them to be better, you will strengthen yourself.
4. Senior students, be humble. Treat junior students as equals, thus enabling you to have the respect and position of a senior.
5. Junior students, be respectful to your seniors. Their treatment of you as an equal is a sign that they are starting to understand the deeper aspects of Wu Shu (martial arts) and are worthy of senior respect. Their humility is to be respected.
6. Never consider yourself knowledgeable, regardless of time in training. We are all on a very long staircase with no apparent end.
7. Recognize that everyone will have strengths greater than yourself, regardless of their time in the art. Do not resent them for it. Try to improve their weaknesses, and your own weaknesses will gradually improve.
8. Senior students are responsible for demonstrating the Code of Ethics both in and out of class. This demonstrates the strength of your art and makes good practitioners and teachers.
9. Be an example of courtesy, regardless of what step you are on in Wu Shu. Courtesy in and out of class is a sign of strength. By giving courtesy freely to others, you will receive abundant courtesy and respect.
10. Be clean. Refined cleanliness indicates a refined mind. Clean clothes and body show by example the honor and ethics you hold, and is a sign of appreciation toward one's classmates.

### ***Conduct Toward Your Teacher***

11. Rely on your teacher's judgment. Many times you may not agree with policies, or actions, but it is your responsibility to stand behind your teacher and strive for better understanding, as junior students do towards you. Remember that you are on a single step, and the next step may give you better understanding.
12. Remember that teachers are human. They make mistakes and have human problems - like anyone else. Realize that no one will be a perfect example. Your kindness and understanding makes you both strong and humane.
13. Never openly criticize your teacher. Hold your doubts or criticisms to yourself and possibly your view will change later on the matter. Criticizing your teacher imputes that you are their equal in knowledge. This is considered very poor code and means that you need another teacher.
14. Never ask for knowledge. Let the teacher decide when you are ready. To ask is a sign that you have perfected what has already been given to you. Remember that any technique can take a lifetime to perfect, and believing that you have mastered a technique after a week is the height of hubris. Working hard on what you have is the first sign that you are ready for more.
15. Always remember your teacher's birthday or any special holidays. Give them a gift of appreciation from your heart, no matter how small.
16. If you are far away from your teacher and you visit them or any other teachers, it is proper to bring them a small gift each time. This can be food for casual visits or a present for more important visits. This is a long-standing tradition in the martial arts.
17. If you have had a falling out with your teacher, but want to reestablish your connection, it is important to bring a gift upon your first contact and to give your humble apology, regardless of whether you feel it is totally deserved.
18. Anytime one invites a teacher over to their home or anywhere else, ensure that food and drink are available. This shows good manners and respect.

### ***On Receiving Criticism and Carrying Yourself***

19. Allow criticism and suggestions by anyone. Others can catch something that is true and helpful, if you are open. Remember that we are all equal human beings apart from our rankings in the arts. Thinking that we know a lot is a sign that we in fact know very little.
20. Don't think of criticism as personal. Criticism is merely a suggestion or sharing from outside eyes to help you gain better refinement of the art. This is the reason to take classes in the first place.

21. Have pride. Carry yourself earnestly, and try your best even if your current performance is not up to your expectations.
22. Have tenacity. It is your responsibility to try your best in all classes. Do not allow yourself to merely follow or stand idle. Practice by yourself, regardless of your grasp of the technique. It is your responsibility to not complain of tiredness or your ability to do the practice. Keep your frustrations to yourself.

### ***On Sparring and Partner Exercises***

23. Sparring practice is practice in containing one's ego. Approach this practice with a smile and you will become better at it. The real opponent in a sparring match is not across the ring, but within yourself.
24. The showing of too much power in any joint exercises shows you have low-level ego containment. Use of techniques with gentleness and sensitivity is a sign of strength. To intimidate others is a sign of immaturity.

## **Martial School Etiquette**

The following are matters of protocol rather than core ethical concerns. Learning and observing these protocols signals that you have entered martial arts culture.

1. Always address your teacher with their respected title in or out of class. They should not be addressed by their first names unless you have been told to do so. The title of teacher, Master, Sifu, Mr./Ms. shows respect. Addressing your teacher by their title is an acknowledgement of their training level.
2. Always introduce your teacher by their title to students, friends, or the public, in or out of class.
3. Always address your teacher by their title when writing letters to them, no matter how long you have known each other.
4. Bowing to your teacher, to other students, and when entering or exiting your training area is a sign of respect. The Chinese martial bow consists of the right hand in a fist with the left hand covering it at chest level. The elbows should be bent. No incline of the body is required. Bowing is the Asian equivalent of hand shaking. It is purely personal and does not mean that you are subordinate to the person to whom you have bowed. It is simply a pure sign of mutual respect and gratitude.
5. Wearing your uniform in class is a signal to yourself and others that you have left your concerns and worldly identity outside the classroom, and are ready to devote the next hour to serious training without distraction.

6. Do not haggle over the cost of instruction with the teacher. If you feel it is too high, you should find another teacher who charges less. Be timely with your tuition. Teachers in turn will always be timely with their instruction. It is a sign of respect.
7. Try not to be late to class. If you are late, apologize to the teacher upon entering the class. If you must come late or must leave early, discuss this matter with your teacher ahead of time. It is disrespectful to leave class early without an explanation. Always bow to the teacher when entering or leaving, especially if entering late or leaving early.
8. Each system has traditions if it is a complete art. Pay good attention to these traditions, for these represent that particular system. Proper acceptance and usage of these traditions shows your skill level. Sloppy tradition means sloppy attitude, which means sloppy practitioner.
9. Without being asked, clean the training area or various parts of the school. This shows good humility and respect, regardless of how senior one is.
10. Senior students should know and feel comfortable with the teacher's rules and be able and willing to explain these traditions to junior students. Traditions have reasons and one should understand the necessity for them. If you are uncertain of the reason for a rule, ask the teacher at an appropriate time.
11. The longer you study from a teacher, the more you represent them. After five years of continuous study, you represent your teacher.

## **Etiquette for Visiting Other Schools or Teachers**

You are encouraged to visit other teachers, so that you might broaden your horizons. Remember, however, that when you visit another school, you are a representative of your own school. Following these rules ensures that you will not embarrass yourself or your school while visiting another teacher.

1. When going to participate in other schools, it is always important to ask the teacher's permission first.
2. If allowed to participate, make sure you always pay for the class or leave some kind of tribute to show your appreciation, regardless of whether the teacher says that money or tribute is necessary.
3. If the instructor at the school you are visiting attempts to intimidate you or insists that you fight someone against your will, politely decline and leave immediately. This person is not worth learning from.
4. If inviting a teacher or senior from another school or system out to dinner, always open the door for them, allowing them to enter first. Always pay their meals with no reservations as to cost. Do not allow them to pay. This represents your teacher's training of you and gives face to not only you but the system you came from.

5. When eating with anyone senior, especially your teacher or with other teachers, always wait until they have eaten their first bite of food before starting to eat yourself. Eating before your seniors start is considered very poor ethics and shows a lack of respect. If you are eating at a round table with shared dishes, it is appropriate to serve your teacher first, followed by any other teachers present, then pass dishes around to other attendees.