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# Very Old Martial Arts & Your Very Modern Life

How A Traditional Martial Arts Program Dojo  
Will Benefit Your Life Like Nothing Else Ever Has

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*by*

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This phrase, *sessa takuma*, carries the main reason we benefit from our study together:  
Continuously polishing and improving ourselves and each other.

# What is Kobudo?

## Who were the Samurai?

The original samurai were a class of warriors given the responsibility for keeping the safety of their village, castle, or family. In actively warring times, their lives were dedicated to the perfection of warrior skills and principles. In other times, their training also included the arts and proper behavior for their high status in society of the time.

## Who were the Ninja?

While many popular stories discuss the ninja as assassins or poor peasants with secret lives against the government, this was not always the case. In fact, some influential political and military leaders of the time were also secretly ninja clan leaders.

The ninja had two general categories of operation. They were sometimes called upon as clandestine operatives, gathering information in much the same way that a modern spy might use. At other times they would need to call upon their training as warriors, in some ways resembling the special-forces operatives of the modern military.

## What is Kobudo?

The term *kobudo*, which we use to describe our training means, “old martial path.” Of course, nobody in that era called it “old.” It was a way to meet their needs - for them it was a live, modern budo, which we still pursue today.

Many sports martial arts have a perceived need to mix and match several methods to achieve a more comprehensive training. **The truth is that the older training, like our *kobudo*, was already a comprehensive approach,** and covers grappling, striking, weapons, and much more already.

## Is this good for self-defense and family protection?

While it is my hope that nobody will ever need the skills that we diligently practice, the world is not perfect, and sometimes good people run into bad

situations. Understanding that, I am happy to let you know that some of my students have told me of times they've had to call on their training to protect themselves or others, and they've been successful. You will learn what to expect before, during, and after such a situation, and your preparation in class will help when you need it most.

### **What kind of people will I meet in your classes?**

Fortunately for us all, you no longer need to be born into a samurai family or ninja clan to be a part of these once-secret teachings. These days, **all kinds of people are involved in this type of training.** Old and young, men and women, of every occupation – this training can benefit everyone if they bring the right attitude.

So, what's the right attitude? We always pursue mutual growth and benefit. We need to always be respectful of each other, and help every training partner accomplish as much as they can during their time in class. You can be sure that your training partners want you to get very good, very quickly – and this way you'll help each other grow to be strong as martial artists, and as people on a magnificent life path.

### **Is it good for fitness?**

Some well known exercise physiologists have emphasized ten general physical skills: cardiovascular and respiratory endurance, stamina, strength, flexibility, power, coordination, agility, balance, and accuracy.

By training with us, **you will develop each of these areas as fully as possible** – giving you the kind of broad-based fitness that will allow you to excel in any future challenges you will face in life.

While there may be no “magic bullet” for fitness, a proper mindset is the biggest asset you can have in pursuing a more physically fit lifestyle. The challenges we present you in class, in combination with your growing drive to be at your personal best will propel you towards better decisions. **Martial arts may be the best influence you've ever had on your overall health.**

# Sword Training

Without a doubt, the samurai sword, or *katana*, is the most well known of all the traditional Japanese warrior tools.

## Modern Culture

The katana appears in popular films like: Kill Bill, The Last Samurai, Pulp Fiction, Zatoichi, and so many other samurai-type movies, television shows, and books.

I'm always interested to hear from students that long before finding our training, they already had a particular interest in the samurai sword. Often they'll tell me about swords they have owned for a long time, and even have hanging prominently in their homes.

I'm not sure what makes the *katana* such a prized object to so many different people, but it's a pleasure to be able to share traditional and authentic Japanese swordsmanship with them.

## Ancient Culture

There is a term we use often in martial arts, but especially in sword training. That word is, *zanshin*, and can be translated as "remaining spirit" and understood as a sense of alertness that continues.

In class, we discuss how the samurai had to execute their techniques to defeat their opponents, but also needed to remain alert in the moments that followed. Likewise, the stealthy ninja had to be constantly on alert throughout their entire mission, and not just when danger was obvious.

## Old Meets New

**That kind of attention and awareness helps in modern life, too.** Sword training will teach you to be aware of your environment like never before.

As a result, you'll likely find yourself noticing opportunities and problems earlier. To others, you might seem to have become suddenly "luckier" than ever before.

Sword classes demand more than attention to detail. You'll practice using your natural emotional responses constructively, merging skills, mind, and body to achieve your goals, under pressure.

Even though the training is done in a safe and caring environment, with the power of our minds, we are constantly facing our opponent with an imagined sense of real life-or-death danger.

### **Practiced Confidence**

In this way, we practice overcoming extraordinary circumstances over and over. The usual challenges of daily life will seem so much smaller in comparison to the challenges you will face so many times in a single sword class.

You (or your child) will **develop a quick, strong, steady state of mind** in sword training. This is why we encourage students to become involved in our detailed sword curriculum. It is a true challenge, but you will have careful instruction and caring friends at every step of your training to help you make the most of this opportunity.

# Family Training

We all understand that children really are the leaders of the future. Parents and teachers have been given the responsibility for raising these future leaders. If you are considering this training as an opportunity for your younger family members, you might rationally ask, “Is a traditional martial arts program appropriate for children?” It’s often a life-altering decision.

## **The authority challenge**

One of the greatest difficulties for parents and schoolteachers is that they are often perceived as “authority figures” by children, who then have a natural inclination to push the limits by even subtle acts of rebellion.

Martial arts instructors have a very different type of influence. Children (and adults) often perceive expert martial artists as a part of that elusive “cool” group. As a result, as students, they are more inclined to follow their example.

**Because he or she will be such a strong influence, it is very important for the instructor to model the behavior that will encourage your child to behave properly.**

Luckily, a properly implemented martial arts program can help students become physically fit in a way that improves their overall confidence, while surrounding them with **good role models** for behavior.

When the instructors and more senior students constantly demonstrate the positive lifestyles they lead because of their training, the newer students want to emulate those positive models in their lives, too.

## **Manners make the difference.**

We begin with behavior and courtesy. Certainly, a samurai was expected to hold himself to a higher standard, and we help our students to do the same. In class, we all stand tall, stand strong, and stand out. Better and more courteous behavior is a natural result.

Martial arts can provide an excellent example for students to follow. I make sure that my behavior is professional, and my speech includes lots of “Yes,

Sir” and “Yes, Ma’am” along with an abundance of “Please” and “Thank you.” **This is what we want for ourselves and for our children.**

## **Personal Goals**

While it would be silly to expect every student to be the absolute best, we do help each student reach towards **their own personal best**. Every student can improve their physical fitness, become more confident, and improve their emotional regulation in a way that benefits them throughout their lives.

**Rewarding the effort is the most important part** of building and keeping the habit of success in other areas of life.

## **Confidence**

Confidence is often misunderstood. We don’t expect that you’ll never again feel nervous or worried; however, we can help you (or your child) develop the inner strength to take proper actions **despite feeling nervous or worried**.

We do this by constantly giving our students new challenges that seem difficult, but are actually possible for them to do. This way, they **have the experience of success**, even in difficult situations, over and over again.

By the end of a training session, they’ve faced countless “dangers” and always managed to come out on top. **Success becomes a habit** – and that has a profoundly positive impact on their lives.

**The real secret** is that our peers influence us, but we often forget that **we can choose our peers**. However, at our Dojo, as your (or your child’s) fitness, confidence, and skills all improve, you’ll automatically be surrounding yourself with other energetic, success-oriented people – and you’ll all have a positive influence on each other. It’s a “vicious cycle” in a wonderful way!

## How To Beat The Bully

**Bullying is a problem – period.** It starts in youth, but doesn't always stop there. It is important to me that all adults and families understand that **nobody, at any age, should ever have to put up with being bullied.**

A proper martial arts program like ours will teach children (and adults) to stand, walk, talk and behave with confidence. Students also become more physically fit, and have a higher standard for their own behavior, so they will never be tempted to join, or become the bullies themselves.

As the students in class see the way I interact with others, shake hands, and maintain eye contact, they will begin to emulate that. As a result, they will immediately begin to appear stronger and more confident to people they meet in all areas of life.



## You Can Get Involved Now

I hope you'll be able to bring the benefits of our martial arts program into your life. The study of martial arts has been an immensely powerful and positive influence on my life, and I look forward to the opportunity to share it with you and your family and friends.

If you haven't already done so, please contact us to find out how you can become involved, and begin forging your own path in the way of the traditional martial arts.

**Call: 424-248-9664 or email: [info@ModernBudo.com](mailto:info@ModernBudo.com)**

Thank you for taking your time to read this. Please go ahead and share with someone you think would benefit from your generosity.

-Peter Steeves