

## Survey announcement

# Finding the balance between martial arts and dojo business

*To attract students to the dojo, we dance like trained monkeys because true seekers of the way are few. Yet, without dancing around, how can honest and true martial artists pay the rent?*

—Kenshi Furuya, Kodo: Ancient Ways, 1996

The above quote points to an important conflict faced by all dojos in the American Judo and Jujitsu Federation. On the spectrum of profitability versus traditional instruction, where does your dojo stand?

I receive a “professional” martial artist monthly magazine every month that I promptly throw in the garbage. It seems to have nothing to do with the martial arts. For example, one article proudly boasted, “The best marketers consider a customer complaint to be an opportunity to deepen customer loyalty.” Another proclaims the accomplishments of an instructor who opened five new schools in only

18 months. I can only imagine how Miyamoto Musashi, Jigoro Kano or Master Okazaki would respond to such articles.

On the one hand, your dojo has costs that must be met: rent, phone, Internet presence, travel, gas, paperwork, advertising, and so on. Does the school head pay these expenses? If not, who?

Even if your dojo is in a community facility with their mats and subsidized advertising, you pay a price in terms of controlling your space and mat time. For instance, one DZR sensei turned down an offer of free space at a non-profit martial arts school rather than agree to rules that prohibited the teaching of chokes and sacrifice techniques.

And if your dojo is profitable, you must consider the opportunity costs of running the business against the time you’d otherwise be on the mat learning and teaching. If you rely on large classes of kids for income, for instance, someone must sacrifice the time and energy it

takes to teach them. Yes, it can be rewarding to teach children. But it also costs you something in terms of your own training.

The true way of the Danzan Ryu requires a number of considerations for sensei that are not geared to business success. For example, I have students that often cannot pay for class. I always tell them to come anyway. As their sensei, I value the student’s efforts more than money. Another example, I am hard on my students. I don’t think I should make the art “easier” because a student finds it difficult to follow the DZR curriculum. Both of these decisions cost me students and income every year.

I am not advocating where any dojo should be on the spectrum of marketing versus Bushido. I am just curious how other dojos deal with this conflict of profitability versus traditional teaching. I do believe that you are delusional if you think this conflict does not

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## S.C. Clinic

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There will be 5 mat areas plus a massage area. Instruction in martial arts will be ongoing during the clinic.

Some areas to be covered include:

- Yawara
- Nage
- Shime
- Goshin Jitsu
- Oku No Te
- Kiai No Maki
- Shinin No Maki
- Shinyo No Maki
- Judo
- Aikido
- Tuite-Jujitsu
- Kyudo
- Shuri Ryu

- Offensive Gun and Knife
- 0149 Healing Arts

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Those interested only in the Healing Arts will find classes all four days as well. The hours from these classes qualify for CEU’s for SC licensed massage therapists. You will have an opportunity to meet and learn from the Professors. You will be doing hands-on as well as class instruction in Traditional Oriental Medicine, Okazaki Restorative Massage and other forms.

Time will be available for massage with a Professor for \$80 an hour. This is a special opportunity to receive their attention. Times are limited.

Black belt exams will be conducted Thursday and Friday evenings, beginning at 6 p.m. sharp. Anyone planning to test should contact Ben Delich in the North-

east, Alex Washburn in the Southeast, or Tom Ryan, Eastern Division Manager. The cost is \$100.00, payable to the AJJF. If you are retesting within 90 days, the cost is \$75.00.

