

Thirteen Rules for Disciplinants: #1

Jan. 22, 2016

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Good evening everyone. We are beginning a new section, a new group of discussion subjects. For this next group we've chosen a series of statements that Koichi Tohei Sensei wrote many years ago called "Thirteen Rules for Disciplinants."

So before we begin with #1, I think I had better say a few words about what this is in general. It's basically thirteen of what are called "rules." I am not sure where the word "disciplinants" came from, or why that was chosen. It is a very rare and hardly ever used English word. Most people don't have any idea what it means. Of course, it means "someone who is undergoing a disciplined training." But actually, the Japanese word, I was reminded by Sayaka, is "instructors." Actually, it is entitled "Thirteen Rules for Instructors." So why it was translated as "disciplinants?" I can only imagine that maybe the translator was trying to include everybody, not just instructors. And as long as you are making rules, I guess you might want to do that. The word in Japanese is "rules." I mean when we translate that word in Japanese into English, that word means "rules" in English. So Tohei Sensei did mean to say "rules."

Of course, I think you have all read these. They are printed in the Training Manual. I am not going to read through all thirteen of them right now. We will get them as we go along. But they definitely sound like recommendations of how to be, or how to act. That's what rules usually are. "Do this, don't do this." In the beginning, when we don't have much training, we need rules. We need rules in our society, otherwise we couldn't get along together. We have to follow rules. The drawback of rules is that, as everyone knows, we are brought up from when we are just babies hearing the word "should." "You should do this, you should not do that." And this conditioning that we build, creates a kind of a character for us. And that character, for good or ill, is somewhere between the "shoulds" and "should-nots." When we do what we were taught we should do, we feel proud of ourselves, and feel superior to other people. So that's dangerous in terms of our socialization. And when we do things that our conditioning says we should not do, then we feel guilty, and accuse ourselves of wrong-doing. This also makes for a difficult socialization. So you might wonder, why we do this to ourselves. Why do we do this to our children? And we all do it. We all raise our children to be "good" boys and girls. And if they are not, then we figure that there is something wrong with us. Maybe we should be better parents. Maybe we shouldn't have done this and should have done that. We are always trying to figure out what is the right way to be. And when our children don't come through in the way that we think, then we also, of course, blame them and then try to correct them. And so it goes, from generation to generation.

So we have successfully filled ourselves full of this conflict. Tohei Sensei says the relative world is filled with conflict. This is why it is filled with conflict. Because we are exactly how we are already. None of us "shoulds all of the shoulds" any more than any of us fulfills all the "should-nots." We are each of us a combination of those. So each of us has this conflict, and we are attempting to solve this conflict here by assigning thirteen rules of how to be with each other. But guess what we do with these? We make more

conflict with them. And when we don't fulfill these, or when we try to pursue these as a goal, and that goal is always out in the future, and when we don't reach that goal we accuse ourselves of wrong-doing.

In the beginning we do need to behave ourselves, because it makes us more likely to be able to listen to and follow the teachings and have an opportunity to have happen what really needs to happen. And what really needs to happen is that, if you are an instructor, you would act like this. So the word "should" has to be replaced by the word "would." And the word can be, someday, replaced by the word "is" or "are."

So it's interesting that here we are again with this paradox. If we are trying to follow some rules and become something, we push that away from ourselves, you know?

Let me read to you the Shokushu "Reiseishin," which does a very good job of describing the situation that we find ourselves in:

"Human beings are blessed with a mind that is directly connected to the mind of the universe. This is known as Reiseishin. The moon is clearly reflected in the water when the water is calm. In this same way, when our mind and body are unified and calm, our Reiseishin manifests itself completely. Once this happens all suffering and wicked desires fall away, the universal mind of love and protection for all things appears in us. Let us strive to realize Reiseishin."

So what this is describing is basically what the first rule of the thirteen rules is, which is:

"#1 – Ki training reveals to us the path to oneness with the universal. To unify mind and body and become one with the nature itself, is the chief purpose of Ki training."

Sayaka, would you read this for us in Japanese please? (Sayaka reads it in Japanese)

Thank you. And then let me read one more time. (he reads #1 again) That is the translation that was given to us back in the late 70's from Headquarters in Japan. I have no idea who translated it. But Sayaka translated it again just now for us, from that Japanese she just read, and it says very similarly:

"Aikido is the way to union with the Ki of the universe. We should set our main purpose of our practice to unify mind and body and become one with the universe."

Basically, Tohei Sensei is saying here that if we unify mind and body..."we are blessed with a mind that is one with the mind of the universe." That's what Reiseishin means, and why I read that Shokushu just now. If we unify our mind and body and we are calm, then our being reflects the universal, or Reiseishin, the universal mind, already. In other words it's our nature. All we have to do is be calm, unify mind and body. And if we are trying to follow rules, and rules set up conflict in our mind body, how can we be calm and have mind and body unified?

Tohei Sensei is always telling us, "You can do this now. Don't think that what I am teaching you, you have to wait many years for. You can do this now." The first night you come to the dojo, you can understand. You can have an experience of mind and body unified, and hence of Reiseishin, hence in other words, your original nature. Our

original nature is the original nature. We are already one with everything that is. We don't notice it. We practice, so that we will be able to notice it.

So the most important thing is the nature of our practice. We have to make sure that the nature of our practice is not creating conflict in us so that we cannot notice. Because, if you think about it, for many people, and for all of us at some point in our lives, and maybe for some of you still, the way that you pursue your career, maybe your relationships with your spouse or children or relative or friends or business associates, education and so forth, the way that we pursue those creates conflict, because we are always trying to achieve a greater goal. And we are trying to achieve a greater goal because our parents told us we "should." We should be a certain way. And we are not seeing ourselves in that way yet, so we have conflict.

These two things together don't work very well. So we come to the dojo and we practice for awhile and we get this nice feeling and then we go out into the world and "Oh, it's still full of conflict out here. I don't feel any better." Right? So we have to practice more. We have to learn to live in a calm, centered, what we call "Keeping One Point" or "Extending Ki," inclusive present awareness at all times. So our practice then becomes a way of living. What we mean by practice is "how to live." It's a way to live. It's not something that you go and do. Practice is not something you do when you come to the dojo only, or when you get up in the morning and sit in meditation. Practice is living. That's what practice is. This practice. Shugyo practice, which is being present and aware and inclusive and open in every moment. To everything.

Remember the four principles of practice:

1. Show up
2. Open to whatever is here.
3. Follow it with an open mind, carefully.
4. Accept whatever the result is.

Because as soon as that result is happening, it's starting all over again. These four things are constantly happening every moment of our life. And if that is happening, then that makes up our life of practice, always present, showing up, always open, always following carefully what is being presented to us, even when we are driving or eating there is always something we are engaged in, and accepting whatever is happening, what ever kind of food it is, whatever the conditions on the road, whatever the other person is saying, whatever their conditioning. Whatever you are presented with.

So that's our practice. And when someone is more and more able to be mind/body unified or calm or Keep One Point in all circumstances, the more they are what we call "mature" in this discipline, in this practice. It's maturity. There are all kinds of maturity. There is maturity in business, there is maturity in musicianship, there is maturity in art, there is maturity in being an attorney. In everything, no matter what it is, there is maturity. In the beginning you are quite green and you make a lot of mistakes and you are often reactive, right? And you "put up with" a lot of stuff, because it pisses you off

but you have to be a good boy. So you put up with it. But when you become more mature then you don't have to put up with it, because you don't have that reactivity. You are calm, in other words. You understand where discomfort and disturbance comes from. It comes from you! Not from someone else, not from the outside world, not from the circumstance. Always it comes from each of us, for us. So when we begin to get that, we begin to get what we call maturity.

So I am going to read the translation one more time, in fact I'll read them both one more time.

The HQ version says:

"Ki training reveals to us the path on oneness with the universal."

That's not actually what it says. What it says is "Aikido is the way to union with the Ki of the universe." Quite different.

Second sentence of HQ version is:

"To unify mind and body and to become one with nature itself, is the chief purpose of Ki training."

The actual translation is, "We should set as the main purpose of our practice to unify mind and body and become one with the universe." And again, this phrase, "become one with the universe," we know from Tohei Sensei's *Reiseishin*, that he means you already are and you just need to notice. OK, so?

Student: So there is maturity. So let's say at your job, right, you do it every day, all day, and you get to a certain point where you don't have to think as much and if someone challenges you, you know it, because you've done it. But if you change in your occupation, say, and now you are stumbling around again, and you're not sure, so you tend to get angry, or...

OK, good question. I hope this doesn't surprise you, but..

(A student interrupts and asks for clarification from the other student)

Student: Well my question is the practice, because you have so much experience doing it you naturally become calm when you are doing it. But if you are new at it, you are not so calm. You try to be calm, but is that a fake calm or is it...?

OK, so when you are "used to" doing something, you are not necessarily mature in that. You haven't necessarily learned maturity from that. You are just used to doing it, so it is second nature and you are not troubled by it. It doesn't disturb you too much. But, while you are doing it, if you are disturbed by someone else, you might not be very mature. So, when I say every discipline has it's stage of maturity, I mean every discipline can provide you with maturity, or we can learn maturity through it. But it is not necessarily so that you do, just because you are good at it and have done it for a long time. That is not what maturity means. If you do one kind of job and you become mature in that job, then you can be a white belt in something else and you will still be mature in how you go about

learning the new thing. If you start something that is new, and it is frustrating to you, then you were not mature in your last work.

Student: Thank you Sensei.

Student: Sensei, could you translate Reiseishin?

Sayaka, would you translate Reiseishin?

Sayaka: Rei is spirit, sei is nature or origin, and shin is mind.

“Original spirit mind” is what we could say. Tohei Sensei just calls it “original mind,” or sometimes I have heard him call it “divine spirit.” But he doesn’t use that much, because it sounds to us in the west as kind of religious. And we all, or a lot of us, have reactivity around religious things, because the whole idea of “god” scares the shit out of everybody, so they have problems with it.

But actually, it is not scary at all. That is all he is doing, is just saying “Look, it’s this right here.” You can call it whatever you want, but you better get used to it!

So, OK?

Student: Yeah, thanks.

Student: This is not exactly a question, but maybe it is. I can often find myself falling into a trap. I can listen to the words, and go, “Oh, I know this.” But it doesn't mean that I am doing those words. Now I am coming to a point where it is very clear to me whether I am knowing it or doing it. It happened while you were talking. I was feeling uncomfortable, and I looked at it, and just let go, and then I could start doing it. This is, for me, a common misstep, or whatever.

Yeah, that’s a really good point and I think everybody understands that. And maybe here is a good spot to point out, or to remind ourselves, that we can only be where we are. We can’t be somewhere that we aren’t. And we can only be when we are. We can’t be some time when we are not. And that’s all OK. Well, we have no choice.

But quite often human beings try to pretend that they are someone that they are not or that they are someplace that they are not. And conversely, sometimes we find ourselves in positions where we are needed, and so given a position, and we are not yet really qualified for that position. But, we have been given the position. So then it becomes not a source of more conflict, I hope, but an opportunity to, as Suzuki Sensei would say, re-double your efforts and look more deeply, notice more comprehensively, accept for fully, include more inclusively, and you will mature into what you have been given to do.

Student: So Sensei, could we see the rule as a transitional stage, like “as if” this were the case? Because, when we come in, we are not acting from that place of knowing our original mind. But the rule is kind of pointing to that to help us until we can let go of the rule.

Yes, it's a tool. Rules are tools. And yeah, they are useful that way. But it's like, if you are a religious person and you have a religious text of some kind, like a Bible or a Koran or the Sutras. Those are very useful tools, up to a point. But at some point you have to burn the Bible, or that transition where you are working directly with the universe can't happen. You can become rule bound. And this has obviously happened in a large part of Islam right now, and hence all the difficulties they are having accepting the world that they are in, because they are rule bound. I mean, what's the very worst thing that you can do? Burn the Koran. That's the worst thing you can do. Even to step on it, it's insulting. And you can get killed for stepping on a Koran. So this is really being rule bound, really stuck. Not that we should go around stepping on books that are used in that way. These are tools that are filled with wonderful wisdom. I am not advocating doing anything insulting or disrespectful, BUT keep going. There is no place to get off. There is no place to stop and say "OK, now I've got it. I know."

Student: The Zen dictate, "If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him."

Yeah. Exactly right. And no one is recommending killing anybody.

Student: Sensei, you talk about being in the present, but then we have all of these rules guiding us that are actually describing something that is not in the present, but is in the future, and we are striving for. I guess my question is...you were talking about earlier that when you are cooking something, planning a meal, you have an idea of what you want. So when you are approaching something like that, you are actually not in the present, right? You are putting yourself into the future.

Yes, there is a good example. Planning a meal is planning for the future. So for myself, I am a functionary. I am a cook. I am not a chef. I provide meals for my family. And as such, by 7:00 or 8:00 in the morning, I had better know what it is that I am going to cook for dinner, and soon after that I have to know how many people are coming. So I go to the market and I buy what I need for the meal that I am making. But as someone pointed out to me recently, "Yes, but a chef doesn't do that. A chef goes to the market, finds what is freshest and best and what appeals right at that moment, and creates the meal around that." OK, so if that's maturity in cooking, then I am not yet mature in cooking, in my just-functional way. I am still just providing a kind of a service. And that's fine. I am not pretending to be more than that. I don't aspire to be more than that, so much. Once in a while I cut loose a little bit and create here and there. But that's very dangerous.

Everything we do, we have to plan for. And like they say in the military, "The best laid plans evaporate with the first contact with the enemy." In other words, you can plan an attack, but you never know what's going to happen. When you get there it is always going to be different, and you are going to have to adjust. You plan the meal for tonight, but you don't start cooking it now. You plan it now, carefully. You go shopping, finding the best that you can that serves this purpose now. And then, finally, you cook it now, and then you eat it now. But if you didn't plan, you wouldn't have anything in the refrigerator to cook.

So we have to plan. I don't know about your business, but in my business I have a book and plan every single day, sometimes weeks, months, or even years ahead. Everything is planned. I put the curtissensei calendar on the website. That plans the whole year, right down to each day. I am leaving on May 6th and returning on June 13th to and from Europe for teaching. Lynn is coming with me for some portion of that trip and all of that has to be planned ahead. We have to buy the tickets, arrange the hotels, they have to advertise the seminars, etc. The world is run by planning.

The point is that, yes, you have to do that. But you stay here now as you are doing it. You don't day-dream, you don't imagine. We call that "wish-full thinking." You don't wish that things are going to be a certain way, different than they are now. You are not fooled by that book called "Secrets," probably the most damaging book that's ever been written for modern man, because it was so sucked up. It was so wonderful, "Ohhh... You mean I can wish to be healthy, I can wish to be wealthy, I can wish to be free of cancer, I can wish to have that girl or that guy?" This is living "off-time," living in an imaginary universe. This is what we have here. You do it as well as you can, and when things arise that contradict your plan, that's your test of maturity. That's your Ki test. Are you mature, or are you going to get reactive and then shut it down and have to put up with it and deal with it? Or are you fine, can you go ahead with it?

That's the most difficult thing, isn't it, for all of us? When that contradiction comes up and, I don't know about you, but for me that's what I have worked on, and still have a lot of work to do, in my lifetime, that reactivity that seems like it has to be either expressed or put down. But either of those is a big mistake. What are you doing reacting to something that's outside of you? It's you. So maturity means recognizing that you are the one the fuels everything, and you are the one that causes everything to be felt and thought within you. That doesn't make it real or important or valuable. It's just there.

I told you about a bumper sticker that says, "Don't believe everything you think." It should say, "Don't believe anything you think!"

We want to be in touch with this calmness because this is what we all love, this mind/body unified state. And so when someone is attacking you, verbally or emotionally, or physically, and that's why Tohei Sensei says if you practice on the mat you can get this, they are looking for attention. That's why they are after you. And you can't satisfy that. It's a bottomless pit. You will never satisfy them by giving them what they want. But what they really want is the true attention, which is love, which is calmness, which is mind/body unification, which is their original nature, their original condition. So, in Aikido, we are practicing to be that, to Keep One Point, *osaeru*. So when someone attacks, you are here for them, you are embracing them, you are offering them. We call it "leading them," but we are offering them the path that is free, not the path that will lead them away from freedom.

Of course, I always like to say, please sit more, please breathe more, please come to every class you can come to. And I do mean that. That's a good rule. Of course there are times when you can't, and you have to know when it's time to stay home and when it's not. Like I am going to go home after this class, because I have a cold right now. It's like I was telling David, beards are beautiful. A beard is a nice thing. But you have to be

sure that you are not doing that because you are lazy. Yeah. And so it goes with everything. Everything has value. When we practice we notice what we are choosing, what we are doing, what we see our conditioning bringing up in us, and what we are attracted to. We notice the way we are, and noticing is what makes all the difference. You don't have to then do something about it. Just notice it. Pay attention. And the noticing is what makes everything develop, change, and mature.

It's all about noticing. That is the practice. Being present and aware, not trying to do something and trying not to do something else. That's not moving forward. At the same time, please don't hurt anyone or be cruel or speak harshly to anyone or blame yourself unnecessarily for things.

OK, anything else? Thank you very much.