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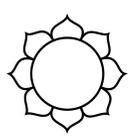


押忍 OSU!

極真会館



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PATIENCE, RESPECT, AND APPRECIATION



押忍 OSU!

OSU 押忍 is a familiar or well-known term or use of diction within the Martial Arts, especially in regards to all Karatekas 空手家 (practitioner of Karatedō 空手道 - Empty-Handed Way). The lexicon is a made up word in the Japanese Language 日本語 (Nihongo ga), so it is unfamiliar unless one is involved in a aforesaid discipline. Pertaining to Karatedō, the term is used all the time, for which it should be, and which will be explained as to why shortly. The first usage or demonstration of it is when one is upon the threshold of the door entering one's dōjō (Karate school). So, when gets to the front of one's school, one is to bow in a Yoi Dachi 用意立 (Ready Stance) and say loudly with conviction, "**OSU!**" This practice is many times overlooked by many Karatekas and is especially troubling when it is a high rank or senior belt that is not affirming one of the most basic and first lessons of his/her Karatedō. This is also something that all Karatekas say to one another constantly, and principally to high ranks, such as Sempais 先輩 or Senpais 先輩 (senior students) as well as Kōhais (fellow students), and imperatively to one's Sensei 先生 (Teacher), Shihan 師範 (Master), 範士 Hanshi (Expert Teacher), 錬士 Renshi (Senior Teacher), or Kaichō 開帳 (Founder of an Organization). It is truly something that all say to one another all the time, and rightfully so.

Linguistically, the morpheme (the smallest grammatical unit of speech) has mainly three known definitions, which are *Patience*, *Respect*, and *Appreciation*. However, to break down or comprehend the lexicon, the "**O**" is the prefix, per se, and it means "**push**"; the "**SU**," which is the suffix, per se, means to "**endure**"; so, combined it means many things, e.g., it is also used in conversation as "yes/okay" or "I understand" or "I will try to," as well as "I will make the effort" or "I will persevere"; in short, one will try one's hardest and persevere to do one's best. Juxtaposed is the main definition or the three excellent/ wonderful adages or virtues that we can all imbue within ourselves for the better, i.e., for humility. This is why Karatekas say it in all the aforementioned reasons above. Despite this, many Karatekas have issue with saying or expressing it to lower ranks or Karatekas of other styles. I can understand this to a point since one does not know the other person or style or may have hear less-than positive things about

them or the style, but this paradigm is insular nevertheless. I.e., the entire point of one “OSUing” anyone or anything is to demonstrate one’s humbleness/humility, which by definition is one lacking Ego or Egoistic or Egocentric concepts or perceptions. So, regardless of others and what they are or appear to be, one should still show that veneration, which is a show of respect of oneself or that one has no Ego and can bow before another, which is why in religion and in particular Buddhism 仏教 why Monks 侶 or Buddhists 僧 bow (Rei 礼) to one another and anyone else that they encounter; they do not care who it is, they just bow. Kōshō Uchiyama Rōshi 内山 興正老師, a Buddhist Monk wrote a poem about this:

Bowing

Put right hand and left had tougher as one and just bow

Just bow to become one with God/Buddha

Just bow to become one with everything I encounter

Just bow to become one with all myriad things

Just bow in the Way Life becomes Life

The above expresses one’s humility by bowing, and this should be at the forefront of one’s mind in life, instead of materialistic gains or Egoistic paradigms, which only moves one further away from being humble and thus, one’s connection with all living beings, including oneself. Hence, the importance of all Karatekas practicing this attribute. And as one does this, one will feel better, i.e., more balanced within oneself and with others as well, because Ego does not abound and moreover, one is projecting wonderful and honest energy and intention outwardly. If I may digress for a moment, this is akin to the formal handshaking that goes along with OSUing; e.g., all Karatekas partake in handshaking with their Sempais, irrespective of the rank, and use two hands when performing this custom, but when they are around lower ranks or other Karatekas not from within their own style, they usually use one hand, which is vapid in

reality, because what one is saying without words is that *'you are lesser-than me, so I do not need to show that veneration to you; instead, you show it to me.'* Does that sound lack one who has a lack of Ego or is it quite the antithesis of that? In regards to me, I never used one hand to shake anyone's hands, even when I was a Senior Instructor in a Honbu Dōjō 本部道場 (Headquarter's School), I always graciously and humbly used two hands and in having my own Organization, in which I invited and had many other Karatekas from other styles visit and train, I always used two hands. Not to mention, with my 学生 Gakusei (Students) or Deshis 子 (Disciples) I always used the aforesaid custom as well as instilled it into them to do so, in which they followed my protocol. Therefore, bowing to anything and anyone is a supreme way to humble oneself and thus, become a part of everything and everyone since it will impart on oneself to be in connection with others instead of in opposition or externally, i.e., *'I am here, you are there'*: **Subject versus Object** paradigm or dichotomic thinking. Regardless if others understand it or undermine it, one should be true to oneself and thusly, one's practice: Karatedō.

Further, this is something to carry into competitions, whether one is competing or not at/ in another style's competition. The situation is always moot, but one's humility is not. This was the idea behind using it in Karatedō. A lesson taken from Buddhism and transposed into the Budō 武道 (Martial Way) or 古武道 Kobudō (Old Martial Way) since there is a ranking system, which reinforces a difference in the students, but is only supposed to represent one's dedication (time spent) in one's practice and also due to the Kumite 組手, in which tempers flare, due to Ego until one practices for a while and releases one's Ego via being within the moment or Zen 禪 and just sweating Shikan Suetto 只管 スエット. It is also done to underscore one's respect to one's dōjō or place of practice as well as to one's Kohais, Sempais, Senseis, and overall to the entire Organization, no matter how large or small it is. Consequentially, it becomes empowering for one to learn and display this practice. And is that not yet another superlative of Karatedō? I.e., to be able to feel no envy or desire to be like another; it is to know that one outside of oneself is oneself; in short, there is no "other" person, the "other" is truly YOU! That old adage that everyone is a reflection of one is acumen in its highest/truest form. To parse the parables of dichotomic thinking or perceptions is to have acuity in life and knowing we are all a part of one

cosmos, one living organism (the Earth) and are all Interconnected. This helps us to “accept” one another without malice and more importantly judgment. This of course is incredibly hard to learn and harder to do or put into practice, but that is the strength of Karatedō. It will force one, for the most part as well as for most Karatekas, to look inwardly at oneself and then to realize that one is among others who are a part of oneself. This is transcendence and again, why OSUing is vastly significant.

Sometimes this is seen in Knockdown Tournaments, but not often enough in my humble opinion, in which after a round or several rounds or as one progresses in the tourney as one is reaching the final rounds or round, the Karatekas will embrace after a loud “OSU” and handshake. This is the epitome of humility, because many will either project the ‘I beat you up and I am better than you’ mentality or the “loser” will be embarrassed and not engage in a loud OSU or quality handshake due to Ego. Even if the judging is suspect or political, which it often is, one should still venerate oneself, the tourney, and the Karateka, in which one fought with a loud “OSU!” and true handshake, and if the reverence is heightened, a hug too. Accordingly, this is practiced in one’s school all the time as one enters, trains, and leaves the dōjō. Additionally, one should do some minor reflection, not rumination over this and realize the importance to oneself in partaking in it. And needless to say, this is something that most Karatekas have experienced at some point in their training. Notwithstanding, many Karatekas never think or realize this; they just go in and train and too many of the times, just focus on the pugilistic aspects of Karatedō and disregard/disrespect the importance of humility (OSUing), which undermines their essence of training: to lack or remove one’s Ego to gain humility and thus, the Middle Way or balance.

Touching examples of the “good” or endearing aspects of the aforesaid paradigms or Karmas कर्म (actions) regards children of Karatedō. For instance, many little kids or youngsters take the OSUing very seriously and will do it emphatically, be it to one another and chiefly to their senior ranks/instructors. Discerningly, this is very cute, sweet, or touching, because they embody the essence of the term, which amounts to action as stated above. So, we can all learn from our younger Karatekas who will carry on our spirit and the heritage of the style/system or

teachings by emulating their passion of the term and conviction to do so. That axiom of the teacher is the student and the student is the teacher is ostensible in this manner and should always be heeded by the Karateka. This is a part of one's mental training (and Karatedō is 90% mental), in which one reminds oneself that one is constantly in a state of learning or Zen. As is standing in Yoi Dachi while one listens to one's instructor (Sensei/Shihan/Hanshi/Kaichō/Renshi). One always desires to stay mentally sharp/awake or clear, i.e., in the moment as one does when practicing Zazen 坐禪 (Buddhist Meditation) or Mokusō (Karateka's meditating). Suffice it to say, the power (energy or spirit) of this word is immense especially by true Karatekas. It also has a different sound to it, due to its meaning to that very individual saying it, whereby it can touch one's soul or spirit and can also charge one emotionally as well, depending on who and how it is being said or used. But the more imperative aspect of the word is what it represents, i.e., how it humbles each one of us as Karatekas of Karatedō, reminding us that we are one or connected, albeit, that we are individuals, we share Interconnected and Universality. That is the Ensō 円相 (No Beginning, No End) or the Om ॐ (Universal Sound of Existence) as well, which is not a pious word or use of diction, rather, it is akin to the Buddha 仏 (Enlightened or Awakened Being) in one's altar or the Mālās (Garlands/Prayer Beads) माला or the dōgi (Karate Uniform) that one wears; i.e., it is a symbolical representation of one's practice and nothing more. That is the power of the word and the correlation to Buddhism 仏教 and Bushidō 武士道. Ergo, it represents oneself and reminds one to look inwardly always, instead of looking outwardly for answers or guidance. Thus, one is the key to one's happiness or recognizing one's True Nature or Original Face. And via Zazen/Mokusō in Karatedō, one again sees one's Original Face, which is balance or peace. That is the cadence of Buddhism and Karatedō through the usage of the word "OSU." And as a result, the Karateka who has acquired/manifested great balance or the Middle Way, will justly have the most vociferous "OSU" upon entering, leaving, or in greetings. The vibrancy of the oration will cascade or abound within the dōjō and throughout everything and everyone, because it is the spirit of Karatedō within a dōjō. Hence, "Osu" is powerful, venerable, and humbling. It demonstrates a spirit that is imperturbable,

balanced, at peace, and benevolent, reflecting how one feels about oneself in addition to how one feels about others too. And to reiterate, it is the word of Universality/Interconnectedness for the Karatekas of Karatedō. It has No Beginning, No End. It is not biased and lacks Discriminatory Mind, or Comparison (ego or self-attachment). It is the Middle Way and Karatedō: **OSU!**

OSU 押忍 and Namaste नमस्ते!

リベラ 先生 開帳

~ Rivera Sensei
Kaichō