



Grandmaster Kim letters a students' name on his uniform in Korean - a long standing rank test tradition.

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## Master or Magician?

by Grandmaster Kim Soo, 10th. Dan & Founder, Chayon-Ryu

(An ancient Buddhist story becomes a valuable lesson...)

*A disciple was thatching the roof of a Buddhist temple. However, he didn't put the finishing touch of straw rope to the roof. The temple's Grandmaster warned the disciple, saying, "If the wind blows tonight, your work will be in vain."*

*The disciple, not expecting a strong wind, left the roof unfinished. Quite unexpectedly, a strong wind did come that evening; the roof was blown away. The disciple was chagrined, and said regretfully, "Grandmaster, even though you warned me with your supernatural powers, I did not listen, and have caused these unfortunate events."*

*The Grandmaster responded, "I only taught you the proper way of doing things. You not only disobeyed me then, but also now, for even worse, you are trying to turn me into a magician. If you think of me as having supernatural powers, you will never learn the Great Right Law from me. Your efforts will be wasted in looking for magical powers in me. Such thinking is dangerous. I urge you to correct your thoughts, and hereafter try to walk the sure and just way."*

This ancient story has stood the test of time. The truths it teaches are still valid today, for the martial arts and beyond. First, of course, is the immediate and obvious lesson--Patience and diligence do reap rewards.

Had the disciple persevered and finished the roof, it would not have been destroyed. Surely no better way can be found to become a skilled martial artist than to train hard, and put the finishing touches to one's house of technique.

However, an even more subtle lesson can be learned from this ancient story. This lesson has to do with "magic." Many people enjoy watching martial arts movies, reading of daring action involving karate or fantasizing of mighty leaps and devastating blows and kicks against multiple foes.

People also love chu'an fa (kung fu) stories, and legends of the ninja. Sometimes they may begin to believe in sorcery, the supernatural, or magic.

Too much exaggeration is found in cinema martial arts. The fantastic fighting and unbelievable techniques are solely for entertainment purposes. These do not represent the true meaning of martial arts. As a result, confusion exists in the

public's minds, and a blurring of the real meaning of martial arts has developed

Martial arts may be many things--including art, science, and philosophy. In no way, however, are the martial arts "magic.". Students, after only a few lessons in Chayon-Ryu, often expect some sudden transformation. "Poof!" and their hands and feet will become deadly weapons.

It's fun to dream about, but as the Grandmaster in the above story cautioned, to look for magical powers where none exist is dangerous. It prevents students from seeing that the only way to accomplish the goal of mastery of the martial arts is through tough training, hard work, and hours and years of study.

I have been a student of martial arts since 1950. I continue to train, study, and learn. Very simply, no magical short cuts exist.

Just as no secret technique, no magic formula, to mastery can be found, so too no sudden, magical, and instantaneous road to wisdom and enlightenment will open up. Understanding the Tao ("Do" or "Way") comes only after long, hard training.

Sweat! Work! Train! Do this in martial arts practice, and in life. Stop thinking about the easy walk; enjoy the long, hard climb instead. Think about maximum effort, not cheap illusions. Think more about training, and less about sheer technique.

Concentrate on the path itself, not simply getting to the destination.