

Q1. Martial arts have been known to originate primarily in China and Japan. Your book Pammachon talks about the existence of European martial arts "way before Bodhidharma travelled to the Shaolin Temple or the celebrated Samurai of Japan even existed". What is the point?

A1. It is a custom in many cultures to exchange gifts when visiting other people. Gifts are often wrapped in beautiful packaging that serves to enhance the pleasure of giving and receiving. But as citizens of a global culture (perhaps the next stage in the evolution of mankind) and as both warriors and scholars, we must not be content with focusing on the wrapping, but rather carefully study the object placed within the package itself.

There is no doubt that Eastern martial arts have become very popular in the West. This is primarily due to the efforts of one very talented, one very brilliant man, the founder of judo, Mr. Jigoro Kano. Mr. Kano, a teacher himself, was the first person in Asia to successfully promote the importance of a physical, martial foundation as an educational base for all children in society (rather than as the exclusive domain of select family groups). Judo was followed by the popularization of other martial arts that lay within Japan's cultural heritage or eminent domain (karate by example is Okinawan and Japan had conquered Okinawa). Other countries quickly followed suit: Korea developed taekwondo, while China promoted their own heritage of wu shu (kung fu), Thailand their own form of boxing, etc.

What is not common knowledge, however, or rapidly grasped, is that, in addition to being Japanese, judo is the direct result of western heritage, an English education in particular, and the descendent of ancient Greek culture to boot. Let me explain.

Jigoro Kano was born into a relatively affluent family in 1860. His father, Jirosaku, worked as a lay priest and as a senior clerk for an international shipping company. He married Sadako Kano, daughter of the wealthy owner of a sake brewing company, and was adopted by that family, changing his family name to Kano, ultimately becoming an official in the Japanese government.

Jirosaku's son, Jigoro, received an intellectual upbringing and from the age of seven studied English, Japanese calligraphy and Confucian texts under a number of tutors. Jigoro's mother died when the boy was nine years old, and the family moved to Tokyo. The young Kano was enrolled in private schools, and had his own private English and German language tutors. In 1874 he was sent to an English boarding school run by Europeans to improve his English and German language skills.

When Kano attended the Tokyo Imperial University in 1877, at the age of seventeen, he started looking for jujutsu teachers because he had been physically weak for most of his life. With the fall of the Tokugawa dictatorship in the Meiji Restoration of 1868, however, jujutsu had become unfashionable in an increasingly westernised Japan. Many of those who had once taught the art had simply given it up because they believed it was no longer of practical use. Kano was eventually successful in finding a master, and studied with two or possibly three teachers of jujutsu over the next five years. In February 1882, Kano founded a school that set the basis for the creation of judo. In August of the following year, two live-in students were granted black belts, the first that had been awarded in any martial art - that is to say, Kano also came up with the system of black belts in the first place.

Regardless of my respect for both the man and his genius, I will have to say that five years is not enough time to grasp the essence of either a martial art or a combat sport. Moreover, it is with a broad stretch of the imagination that I can accept that a 22-year old, regardless of his capabilities, had the life experience to fully evaluate the potential effect of martial education on a society. And yet Jigoro Kano was most certainly spectacularly successful in doing so. Why? Was it simply his genius? Or is there a more mundane explanation?

My own opinion is that Kano was influenced by his English schooling and driven by the burst of development and culture that characterised late 19th-century Western society.

The Victorian Age in England was a period of rapid change and progress in nearly every field, tremendous advances in medical, scientific, historical and technological knowledge driving a boom in economic prosperity. England's financial elite were educated at Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Winchester, Westminster, Charterhouse, and a handful of other schools, but it is the curriculum of these schools that is of interest to us: it was heavily weighted towards the classics - the languages and literature of Ancient Greece and Rome. Physical culture was also very much a part of this curriculum: students were expected to actively participate in athletics, and the Greek maxim of "a healthy mind in a healthy body" was most ardently pursued. Moreover, martial culture was actively promoted, and fencing, single-stick, quarterstaff, wrestling, pugilism, and rough team sports like rugby, were very much part of what the student-body experienced.

I have no doubt that this same physical and martial culture was present at the English school that Mr. Kano attended in Tokyo. I have no doubt that he was influenced by the idealized example of classical Greek culture that prevailed in Victorian England. One can readily see this in his subsequent actions: Mr. Kano's educational philosophy was a combination of traditional Japanese neo-Confucianism and contemporary European and American philosophies, including Instrumentalism, Utilitarianism, and Social Darwinism. In 1909 he continued this trend, becoming a member of the International Olympic Committee, his intention being to promote judo as an Olympic sport.

In summary, it would appear that the current popularity of Asian martial arts around the world owes its origins to western educational values, based on 19th century English physical culture which in turn had based itself on classical Greek and Roman educational principles.

But it is a mistake to think of the history of martial arts even within this context. The martial arts are as old as man, and they have been tied to spirituality from the Stone Age itself. We can find by example many of the techniques used by judo, or by modern grappling, in Bronze Age depictions of submission wrestling in Egypt made 4000 years ago; my personal belief is that what we call martial arts goes back 10,000 years, and has been developed in some form or other by every human society that has walked the earth. However, since I will discuss this in another of your questions, let me defer this portion of my answer for later.

Q2. Martial arts training is all about cultivating integrity. You even state with firm conviction that the cure for mediocrity is integrity. Can you elaborate?

A2. You must not confuse integrity with morality and ethics; they are not the same. The word "integrity" derives from the Latin adjective *integer* (whole, complete). The best context to view integrity is as the opposite of hypocrisy, that is to say, as having internal consistency and cohesion, and with no apparently conflicting values or discrepancy of beliefs.

To have integrity is to perform and live with 100% of your being, without doubt or hesitation, without remorse or fear. It does not mean you are perfect or always right; it means you act in full accord with yourself and assume responsibility for your actions.

The central purpose of the martial arts is to fuse the various centres of the brain and nervous system into one wholly-tuned instrument, so that everything works together. We are tripartite creatures in the most basic sense - we have three brains: our conscious brain (the cerebral neocortex), our impulsive and emotional brain (the limbic system), and our most primitive subconscious brain (the reptilian cortex). To these three we can add our enteric nervous system, an independent entity, and possibly the information-gathering segment of individual cells themselves, the microtubules of the cytoskeleton. Normally, all these individual brains do not work together; the neocortex may issue one command, the limbic system responds with anger and fear, the reptilian brain does its own thing, the belly starts shaking (the enteric nervous system's contribution), and different parts of your body react in different ways. But if you have integrity, "there is no try", as Yoda would say. You either do, or do not.

That is the purpose of martial arts. If you are unified, someone who is not, cannot defeat you in any context; we first defeat ourselves, then surrender victory to our opponent. Under this same perspective, people who lie and cheat cannot truly be called martial artists, because, lacking integrity, they lack unity of purpose. This may appear like an oxymoron, because deceit is very much a part of combat, but once the concept of integrity is understood, the discrepancy fades; the reason is that those who make deception the central precept of their lives, tend to first deceive themselves, then move on to deceive others.

Q3. The philosophy of Pammachon is thriving with success in the turmoil of the modern world. What learnings do Martial arts reflect in regard to a strategy for life in society?

Q4. Martial arts is also understanding the principle of timing and distancing well in combat. Do you use the principle of timing and distancing when it comes to dealing with people too? For example getting a better response from a person simply based on timing your action?

A3,4. I will answer these questions together because they are related. The central tenet of Pammachon is simple: we seek power over no man, but surrender power to no man. As Nikos Kazantzakis once wrote, in the space beyond belief and hope, we are free. The goal in the end is freedom of every kind; freedom from fear, freedom from greed, freedom from envy, freedom from poverty, freedom from ignorance. There is a great degree of self-examination in the process, of course, and facing the inevitable realities of our existence is central: both death and illness are facts of life, for example, and it would be pointless to pretend otherwise.

But using timing and distancing in dealing with people is a beginner's trick, something that is commonly taught in Sales seminars around the world. It is not a difficult stunt; martial arts training can indeed be used in this respect, an easy application of principles learned, but in my opinion, to do so is missing the point.

What you truly learn from a martial education and can apply to social affairs or society in general goes beyond timing and distancing; it has to do with *viewing the Formation*. Only a fool would attack a castle's strongest walls, right? A wise man looks for weak points or flaws and does not attack a castle's strength. The shape of the castle, its composition and layout, the thickness or thinness of its walls, all constitute the fortresses' *formation*.

Everything in life exhibits a formation in turn, whether we are talking about an individual, a group of people, an entire society, or even a nation. Martial education allows you to view that formation in its entirety.

I'm not really sure what "success" means in this context however; it is very easy, almost juvenile, to use such skills in the pursuit of money, for example. But I know of no serious martial artist who has done so; material possessions are not something we overly aspire to. And yet we have obligation to provide for both our self and our family, and never be a burden. Also, "thriving" is a relative term. You will recall from my book that my Zagorian ancestors, having secured autonomy under Turkish rule, did so well financially that they were the primary financial backers of the subsequent Greek war of independence; and yet, they themselves were destroyed when they became so arrogant they thought they could place their own Sultan on the throne. The lesson here is that balance is essential, as Socrates taught us, and that this balance is the same whether we are talking about Nature and the environment in general or human society in particular. In fact, the current financial crisis that the world is staggering through, a by-product of the reduction in fiscal controls in the 90s, was brought about largely because our financial elite lost their sense of balance. In essence this means that they could no longer see the Formation, but concentrated on smaller parts of the castle instead, the castle in this case being the global economic system.

But to answer your question, it would be against our principles to "deal" with people, as this would be actively pursuing power over them. Again, it is not a difficult thing; for a martial artist, people's thoughts and intentions play across their bodies and faces like lights on a Christmas tree. Instead, we use our skills to protect ourselves and our families, and as our power grows, to protect the society we live in and beyond. Such is our burden.

Q5. Samurai culture is much associated with spiritual discipline and in them we have been shown (in mass media) an empowered figure of unshakable spirituality. Off course you debunk this as a myth. What is the reason?

A5. Maybe I simply dislike Tom Cruise? Seriously, one has power over circumstances only when he or she sees things as they truly are, not as we may want them to be. In the same light, one must be careful to distinguish a mythical ideal from historical reality, however bitter or sweet the taste may be.

Let's go back to Victorian England for a brief moment. When Pierre de Coubertin revived the Olympic Games in 1896 after 1500 years, they were revived in accord with his romanticized notion of physical and sporting excellence in an idealized version of Ancient Greece. Baron de Coubertin visited England for the first time in 1883, and studied the program of physical education instituted by Thomas Arnold at the Rugby School. Coubertin credited these methods with leading to the expansion of British power during the 19th century (they certainly contributed) and advocated their use in French institutions. First developed by the ancient Greeks, physical education was an approach to learning that he felt the rest of the world had forgotten and to whose revival he dedicated the rest of his life (sounds very much like Jigoro Kano, doesn't he?). But he did not accurately gauge the culture from whence the arts sprang, as it were. The Victorian notion of sportsmanship, in which participation is valued over winning, is an ideal brought to light within the 19th century (proof that humanity is progressing after all). For an ancient Greek, winning to attain *kleos* (glory) was everything, participation be damned. In my opinion, de Coubertin in his passion *improved* on historical Greek culture. This is a case of idealism superseding reality and producing a blessing for humanity; modern Japanese martial arts and combat sports are one such other.

In *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* (1891), George Bernard Shaw explains the principle of what Henrik Ibsen saw as the "life-lie" and its relation to reality and idealism. Ibsen and Shaw both believed that many of us find reality so unpleasant that we try to cover it up with a mask of idealism, creating an alternative, unreal "life" for ourselves that is essentially a "lie." But the further we move away from reality, the more damage we can cause to ourselves and others in our efforts to maintain our mask. This is a terrible danger in the martial arts, and one that has caused people harm again and again over the millennia. We must always look stark reality straight in her eye.

Hand to hand combat is one of the central components of martial arts training - any factor that could potentially affect the tactical reality of that training is dangerous. So when I read professor Thoman Conlan's translations of actual 14th century samurai reports, it became readily apparent that the popular image of the samurai was a mythos created for political purposes. By translating 1300 14th-century military documents, Conlan was able to portray the lives of these samurai with a clarity that we in the West had never witnessed before. Swords, for example, were rarely used in battle; the weapons of choice were the arrow and spear. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the descendents of these men, who suffered under a centuries-long hereditary dictatorship, needing to justify their status in the face of technological evolution in the science of war, promoted the image of the samurai made popular by fiction today.

But that is not to say this image had no basis in reality; in fact, there were and are samurai schools at least 400 years old in which both the sword and spirituality are central pillars, and in fact the historicity of the techniques and principles taught has been confirmed. But they are not that many, and the techniques that have reached us are not really battlefield tactics at all, but rather methods for duelling between two samurai - primarily with swords.

We are fortunate in that it is this precise mythical image, regardless of its basis in historical reality or not, that was passed on to modern Japanese budo (combat sports), hence

providing a basis for martial education. But that does not mean that the techniques taught, which are very deliberately passed on in a Japanese cultural context, are all of use on a battlefield - in fact many contain profound tactical errors. We must also view these arts within this context, or suffer the penalty when our own well-being is at risk.

So to answer your question very deliberately, I have no intention of debunking anything. What I am pointing out is that the tactics of the traditional schools are subject to question given that historical research has proven they are not really derived from use on the battlefield. And while I applaud the proliferation of spirituality into modern combat sports as a derivative of Japanese martial arts, once again, that spirituality was tied to very few schools of the sword historically, and its spread into mainstream Japanese society was carried out purposely for political reasons that had nothing at all to do with spirituality itself. That is the tangible reality of the situation.

Q6. "Muscle mass is too much work and why bother anyway when fire arms are used in modern combat." In this scenario why should a person learn martial arts?

A6. Freedom. If you value freedom above all else, then you can probably become a good martial artist. But take note - that freedom does not mean shirking your responsibilities! There can be no grant of freedom without assumption of responsibility, no action without consequence, no rights without accountability in turn.

But on a more mundane level, the answer to your question is self-defence. If you have access to firearms and have some experience shooting same, you will know that a firearm is secondary to the person using it. It is well documented that without the right training, a person under stress will probably miss a large target with a pistol at short range; there are examples of police officers emptying their guns from six feet away and still missing the criminal.

Someone without the right physical and mental training runs the risk not only of using a weapon badly, but having that same weapon taken away and used on themselves. But let's forget about Hollywood movies for a moment, and look at the average person's life around the world - firearms are usually not a component of those lives, and the likelihood of extreme violence of some sort is a limited risk except in those places where social order has broken down. The rude drunk and/or unruly stranger is likely the worst threat many people will encounter. And yet, the threat of violent crime, limited though it is, is extant. It is far better to be prepared than unprepared, and at the most basic level, true martial arts training can help prepare you for this.

The second basic benefit of martial education is awareness. Often stated, this is the most important aspect of self-defence. Correct martial arts training is one of the best ways of gaining this awareness of the environment and the people in that environment. Being aware of when to use force is a fundamental responsibility; without that awareness, the results can be tragic, multiple lives destroyed. People who do not have martial training often overreact with extreme violence when a more amicable response is appropriate, and this can lead to legal consequences. Even if acquitted, they will bear the burden of guilt for the rest of their lives. There is no need for complications of this nature, life is complex as it is, and classical martial arts training can prevent such circumstances.

But let us get back to freedom and integrity for a moment. Recall that when Ghandi set out to liberate India, his first tactical consideration was to free India's citizens from dependence on British material goods. We ourselves are like that. Our limbic system, our palaeomammalian brain, is continuously preoccupied with our status in the pack; one could argue that pack status is the whole reason for its distinctive development in the first place. So I wonder, if people knew that when they are preoccupied exclusively with thoughts of societal status or desire for a new pair of Prada shoes, that they are in essence a slave to their "monkey brain," would they so obsess with same? Do they gain satisfaction from being the servant of a chimpanzee? Martial education allows the practitioner to know all aspects of their Mind, and know that we can be both god-like with compassion and wisdom and brutal and deadly as a dinosaur. It is the monkey brain that promotes fear and worry, lust and anxiety over social (pack) affairs; in this modern society of ours, we give it far more credence than it should have. I say let the monkey sit next to both the angel and the dinosaur as an equal member of the team, for that is what Nature intended, and if it is lucky, it can even catch a glimpse of the Mind of God. And that is true freedom.

Q7. How does one come to realise the part of the Divine we all retain within ourselves through martial arts?

Q8. You speak about a mental dimension called by the Japanese as the 'suigetsu' or the 'moon's reflection on water'. What does this mean and how can one get to this stage?

A7,8. I will address these questions together, because they overlap. Indeed, they are very difficult questions to answer within the context of an interview; in my book *Pammachon* I dedicated an entire chapter to them, where perhaps a whole book was required. I will use excerpts from that chapter to answer these questions.

The Gorgon's face turned men to stone, such was her power - and yet to conquer her and take her head, all one man had to do was bring a mirror. Once her head was cut off, the bearer retained her awful power, and could use it to defeat his own opponents. The Gorgon in the myth of Perseus is the Absolute, the mirror which he held up to look into the Gorgon's face was himself. That the mirror was his own shield is symbolic, and a reference to martial education. Introspection into one's own being can help you come to terms with the Divine, if you are both lucky and skilled; it is a parallel path to that of Indian yoga, with the added spice of physical combat in its repertoire.

The martial arts are indeed an ancient path towards realization of the Divine Spark within all of us, perhaps the oldest such path still extant. There are depictions of ritual combat during religious festivals at Gilf Kebir in Libya that date to the 8th millennium B.C.; perhaps such combat was held in imitation of the springtime mating duels of animals. Ornamental daggers From the Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük in Anatolia provide ample evidence that a warrior caste was in place circa the 6th millennium B.C.; Bronze Age depictions and carvings in Egypt circa 2000 B.C. confirm that ritual duelling was very much a part of their religious rite. And as far as classical Greece was concerned, the best depictions of their martial arts that have reached us today are from the holy-of-holies of the ancient world, the Parthenon itself, and therefore date to the 5th century B.C.. In fact, contest was so much a part of the religious ritual that athletic games were held specifically during religious festivals; by example, the famous Olympics were first and foremost a religious festival. And they were violent - in Greek, an athletic contest was called *agon*, and it is from this term that we derive the modern English word agony.

We have already discussed the different components of our nervous system; each one of these is an independent "mind" that strives for control depending on the circumstances. Integrating these components is a three-stage process, which, for a minority of practitioners becomes a four-stage process allowing them to come into contact with a part of ourselves not normally encountered.

Training begins by assuming the proper posture while carrying out the movements and techniques of the martial arts. Hence the new student begins by receiving an appropriate base upon which to build his further progress: that is, the proper kinesiology and stance. The body is kept upright (but not rigid, or too upright), and the feeling one has should be, that it would make no difference if one were wearing heavy armor or not. Breathing is important both for this level and the next. One should breathe as if they were wearing heavy armour; what this means, is that breathing should take place in the belly rather than the chest, the gut expanding with each inhalation, contracting with each exhalation. To further correct their stance, the beginner student should imagine he is wearing a helmet. How does one move when wearing a helmet? How do you turn your head? How do you maintain your posture? How do you stand, turn, look, feel? All these factors are important, since you should use the same type of movement whether you are wearing armour or not.

This first level correlates to our brain's neocortex, and its intent is simply to provide the student with a foundation of proper technique and efficient movement, nothing more. Beyond live-action role playing, which is what most students of the martial arts actually engage in,



completion of the first level can allow the student to progress to the second level, which involves coming to terms with, and using the power of, our emotions.

The physical training of the first level has, in fact, no emotional factor involved. The student is rarely in actual danger. Even while sparring or in a fully competitive match, their opponent is not out to end their life, cripple, rape, or enslave them. The only thing that is in danger during conventional martial arts training is one's ego, nothing more. Oh, you may be injured in contest, but rarely will an opponent bite your nose or face off. Professional athletes of competition martial arts do tend to run some risk, but, how much more, one may ask, than a professional rugby player? In fact, cycling, American football, and European football (soccer) have a higher incident rate of head trauma than amateur boxing does.

Beyond role playing, however, martial arts should teach a student how to deal with violent situations. And emotion is always a component of violence. In the second level of martial arts training, the part of our brain that we are dealing with is the limbic system or palaeomammalian brain.

When we are subject to any type of stress, our limbic system begins to take over. This more primitive part of ourselves still deals with anything that is immediately vital to our lives. It runs procreation, it runs hunger, it runs emotion, it plays a major role in a fight. When you are threatened by a perceived lesser status in the pack, your limbic system will kick in, whether you want it to or not. Given the way our brain is formulated, the limbic system is not interested in concession – for it, everything is either pro or con. When held in thrall by the limbic system, a human being is still communicating – but only to be able to perceive weak points to attack in his opposition's arguments. He is interested in being right. He is interested in being the winner of the game. He is not interested in anything else.

During the limbic-system-dominant stage, whether having sex or throwing a punch, the brain can still communicate, and this is most important, because we are interested in having it communicate with itself first and foremost. Many instructors expand upon the need to stay calm during combat, but this does not mean disregarding the accompanying emotional surge. The biological factors that come into play during limbic system activation are very important for any skirmish. Chief among these is the release of adrenaline and its related hormones. While the aptly named adrenaline rush should be avoided (because by virtue of its presence, wholly conscious thought may be voided and tactical considerations waived), the release of adrenaline itself is a desired trait. What we desire, is a constant, controlled release of this hormone, a calm release of this hormone, which will serve to strengthen and revitalize the body during combat. What we do not want, is for the adrenaline to rush. Accordingly, the neocortex has to work not to shut off, but to align, the limbic system. The emotional context developed by any ritual, then, whether it be conflict-centred or religious, is not something we wish to discard. In fact, emotion and belief may be the key to achieving seemingly supernatural states of being. The limbic system is not to be discarded, but treasured and brought along for the ride. We just can't let it run the show.

So, how to train the limbic system? A good start is to work backwards – since this part of the brain affects physical behavior, we use physical behavior to affect that part of the brain.

First and foremost are, as mentioned earlier, stance and breathing. The armour-based stance described above actually works against limbic system dominance by virtue of its character. You cannot throw out your chest while wearing armor. You cannot throw out your chin while wearing a helmet. Breathing with your belly, deeply and slowly, will in most cases prevent an adrenaline surge. So continuous repetition using this type of stance, pushing the student until he is physically exhausted again and again, is very good conditioning to expose him to this state of mind.

Scenario-based training and simulation is of the utmost importance here. The student must be exposed to fear and adrenaline, he must be exposed, under controlled conditions, to

the existence of a mortal threat. However, for the purposes of this text, I will simply state that, within the Pammachon system, we have teaching methodologies that use scenario-based training and drills to expose the student to limbic-system controlled states. But because these drills must be carefully supervised to avoid complications, I will not elaborate on them here.

The limbic system, as I mentioned, retains communication factors when it comes into play. But under the influence of this part of his mind, an aggressor will rarely physically attack. It is when even more primal systems kick in, that an actual attack takes place. When a human being moves in to kill, the reptilian-complex takes over and runs the show.

Tactically, since it defines the most primitive of our impulses, surrendering to the reptilian-complex's impulses may not be the most clever thing we can do, moreso in modern combat. To prevent this, in Pammachon we once again work backwards: since there are changes in our physical stance immediately prior to engaging in combat, we work through our stance and breathing to maintain control of ourselves while in combat. Again, we do not want to lose the power of the reptilian-complex, we want to take it with us; if we are going to engage in combat or any dangerous activity, this particular part of our minds provides many useful attributes for the task. What we want to be able to do, however, is to place our conscious mind in constant control of both the limbic system and the Reptilian-complex, and yet fully utilize both of them at the same time.

At the third level of martial arts training, the student must learn to focus on the "mental" dimension, and it is here that we achieve that state of consciousness called by the Japanese "suigetsu", or the "moon's reflection on water." At this level, there is no hesitation before action takes place, and our senses and reflexes climax to a point where everything seems to be moving in slow motion. Anatomically, I believe that this state is produced by a harmonic oscillation of thought between the autonomic nervous system, reptilian brain and the neocortex, with thought bouncing back and forth (or perhaps spiraling through) between the three like a wave. To achieve this state, a fully upright stance is required, the spine straight and tall, the breathing centred, the energy of our being balanced on all sides. In this state, we are unaffected by surges of emotion; the energy is there, pulsing through our body, raging, coursing, but our mind is somehow still, clear, like a still lake under the full moon.

Many of my students and I myself have experienced this state in actual physical combat where our lives or property were threatened, and it is truly, like the moon's reflection on water. Later, when the danger has passed, your limbic system may fill your thoughts, your hands and belly shake as you consider "might-have-beens", but at that time, when the danger is there, your mind is still, at peace as mundane life's desires and fears flee in the face of mortal danger. Many combat veterans return to battle again and again, destroying their lives in the process, only so that they can re-experience this state of mind (which does come to us naturally after all), not realizing that it is ours to claim again and again as we choose, that it never leaves us.

After this third "mental" level is complete, the student may attempt to move on to the fourth "spiritual" level (or not, as he chooses), in which contact with a part of ourselves not normally encountered is pursued. In this attempt, each student's experiences are unique and extremely personal, as he is constantly using his will, emotional and mental "silence" to come in touch with that part of the Divine we all retain within ourselves. At this point, the entire body fills with thought, the very cells of our being participating, seemingly "unthinking" components of our being such as the spine and enteric nervous system playing critical roles. But there is no religious dogma involved here, no particular belief system to promote, for we are of all creeds, religions and beliefs (or none at all). One could, for example, simply consider this state-of-mind as a manifestation of what Carl Jung called the Collective Unconscious, the ancient idea of an all-extensive world-soul - it doesn't really matter. But somehow, when such Contact is made, the practitioner is different, changed from the inside

out, and we can recognize one another. The questions, then, to answer are as follows: What produces the phenomenon of synchronicity that so intrigued Jung? Is it quite simply a Matrix of individual human consciousnesses, or are they melded together into the Mass Unconscious Mind? If so, does this Mind set goals, drive History, define our lives? Does it judge, punish, and reward? (This would be closest to Buddhist metaphysical theory, for example.) Or is there a Deity outside Time and Space, superior to our unconscious Mind, a God who drives the Universe (and our Mass Unconscious)? Is He our Creator, and will He be our judge? And if so, is there a non-dogmatic means by which simple men can touch this Deity and be made aware of His presence?

I do not have the answers to these questions. And, in the end, I believe that it is up to the individual to answer them to his own satisfaction. But, I am convinced that the way to that particular Door lies along the path of our own Mind, and this path is something I am somewhat familiar with.

This, in the end, is the Fourth, or spiritual level, of Pammachon; nothing more, and nothing less.