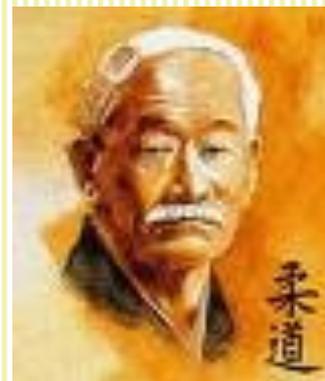


The Judo Compass

Summer - 2014



How to Care for Your Judo – Bonsai



The Bonsai tree is a judo analogy, and its care parallels the development of a person's life in judo.

The basic meaning of the bonsai is peace and tranquility. According to Japanese tradition, the Bonsai represents the three virtues or shin-zen-bi, which translates into "truth," "goodness" and "beauty". Because a Bonsai, with proper care, can live for hundreds of years, it is a great living heirloom, which can be passed along through generations, and can help to keep one close to ones ancestors.

The oldest Bonsai is 800 - plus years old. Another, a Japanese White Pine bonsai, planted in 1625, survived the ravages of both time and atomic warfare. It was in Hiroshima, Japan when the US dropped an atomic bomb on that city on August 6, 1945. So it is that some Bonsai alive today were beginning and growing throughout the time of the samurai, during the time of jiu-jitsu, the roots of judo.

The care and shaping of the Bonsai requires careful and meticulous attention. For the Japanese, it is an art. The trees are wired and weighted and trimmed with a specific design in mind. It takes many years of constant and careful attention to create the tree's design. Shin-zen-bi was an artistic appreciation of the samurai, too. These fiercest of warriors were drawn to it because it was in contrast to their brutal lives, and created a spiritual completeness. The creation of the Bonsai required great discipline, a warrior's way.

Ironically, Western cultures prized the trees as Japanese novelty art, rather than a way to express shin-zen-bi. Ironic, because the same devaluation of judo has occurred for many Westerners.

To simply say your judo is of special value is not enough. One must say that it can be of special value, if nurtured with shin-zen-bi, and with a plan for its outcome.



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