

Bubishi – de 8 koder for Isshinryu

1. A person's heart is the same as the heaven and earth.

The heart is the wellspring of life for humans. If the heart is sick, then the human is sick. If the heart stops, life stops. Humans, because of their intelligence, their ability to adapt physically, mentally, and emotionally are the strongest beings on earth. Yet, humans possess characteristics that can also make them the weakest. Humans are but a heart beat away from demise.

Earth is where we live. Heaven is where we strive to go. Our heart, through our health/deeds/behavior, plays a big part in how we live on earth and our efforts to strive for heaven. We must keep the heart clean and pure. We should ensure that the heart is void of grudges and of animosity towards others.

Heaven and earth have no conflicts. If a person's heart is the same as heaven and earth...then a person lives in peace... has no conflicts... and has no reason to fight. Where there is no fight, there is no blame.

A meditation that compliments this code goes something like this:

Being just, you will have an open mind.
With an open mind you will be open hearted.
Being opened hearted you will act with grace.
With open mind, open heart, and acts of grace,
You will attain the divine.

2. The blood circulating is similar to the moon and sun.

Throughout history, the sun and moon have been revered by many civilizations. In some cultures they were worshiped. They have always been considered essential for life on earth. In the orient, the rising sun symbolizes the break of day and the beginning of life. The setting sun signals the end of day and a prelude to the mysteries of night.

The sun is the hub of our universe. The sun gives us light and heat during the day. The sun gives the moon the light to brighten the darkness. The earth is constantly in motion...revolving around the sun and its own axis. The moon revolves around the earth. This sun/earth/moon cycles gives us night and day, changes of season, and different climates. Without the sun and the moon life cannot exist on earth.

Blood in the human body is like the rivers that flow on earth. It is essential for our survival. The heart pumps the blood. As long as our blood circulates in our body, we continue to be alive. When circulation stops, death occurs. The blood circulating resembles the rotation of the earth; it's circulation around the sun, and the moon's circulation around the earth.

3. The manner of drinking is either hard or soft.

In this code, the yin-yang philosophy is brought to light. In the oriental culture, the principal of yin-yang is a way of life. The yin is the soft/receptive/passive force. The yang is the hard/active/aggressive force. The yin and yang are always blending and in harmony. They are interacting...when one is dominant...the other is recessive.

Everything we do in life can be handled in a hard or soft manner. In Isshinryu, we practice hard and soft techniques. There is a time and place for each. Sometime we counter a hard attack technique with a hard block. Sometime we parry softly.

This hard-soft principal can be applied to our manner and to many of our activities in life. Be it at play or work. Be it during exercise, combat or person to person negotiation. The wise know how and when to be hard and when to approach softly.

4. A person's unbalance is the same as weight.

In order to succeed and maintain a uniform way of life, we learn to balance all that influences us. With balance there is harmony. There is imbalance when there is a shift in how we distribute our weight. In physical combat, if we are off balance, we will be knocked down on the ground. Consider a foot sweep. When properly applied, it causes a shift in the balance of the body...the center of gravity of the body shifts...the weight distribution shifts...and the body is in imbalance. When we practice our katas, we are very aware of how we master the stances...for that gives us the balance that we need during combat.

As we go through life, we try to maintain a proper balance in our daily activities...a balance between work and play...earning and spending... etc. When the scale is tipped in favor of one over the other, there is unbalance...then it is like an added weight that will drag us down.

5. The body should be able to change directions at any time.

As human beings, we do our best when we are moving forward. Our comfort level is highest when our issues and concerns are in front of us. When in a combat situation, we try to face our opponent from the front. There is a psychological gain for us when we can see what is in front of us, and when we defend or attack from a frontal position. However, the human body is built in such a manner that allows us to bend, twist, and move in all directions...forward...backwards...sideways...This allows us to change directions and defend against attackers from any direction. Our Isshinryu training teaches us to do that.

The code is very applicable to our everyday activities in the life arena. We learn how to deal with problems and events that cross our path from different sources. We have to change directions and make new decisions as different problems or challenges enter our life. Our success level depends on how well we can change directions to deal with new issues as they arise.

6. The time to strike is when the opportunity presents itself.

This seems to be an easy thing to know..."strike when the opportunity presents itself"... This also tells us "do not strike unless the opportunity presents itself". It is a judgment that we have to make based on our training, experience, knowledge, and conditions of the moment. Animals are born with the instinct that tells them when to strike. The hunter stalks the prey, and at the right moment, pounces on it.

As human beings, we are given a brain to help us learn, think, and assess situations. Sometimes we find ourselves in situations of not knowing what to do. If we know what to do, we may not know when to do it...or even not do it at all

In our Isshinryu training we are taught different techniques that we could use when the opportunity presents itself. That split second decision may make a big difference in the outcome of any confrontation we encounter. Does that knack of knowing "when" come naturally to us, or can we learn to read the signs and act accordingly? Through proper Isshinryu training we can train ourselves to read the signs...to strike or not to... at the right time.

7. The eye must see all sides.

In this code we will examine two phases of “must see”. The first, of course, is when we visually see things. As mentioned earlier, we are at our comfort level zone when we can see what we are dealing with. We seem to focus on what is in front of us. With our ability to utilize peripheral vision, we can train our selves to effectively cover a much larger vision zone...and see all sides. This is important when multiple attackers confront us. Can we see what is behind us? We can when we turn around and get it in our area of vision.

The other phase of “must see” falls in the mental category. This is where all efforts are made to gain an understanding of a situation. In a confrontation, after one person presents an explanation, the other is given the chance to “see” the other point of view, and thus avoid a quarrel.

8. The ear must listen in all direction.

A few years ago I frequented a small snack and coffee counter managed by a blind person. As soon as I addressed him, he would respond by calling my name. I noticed that he did that to every regular customer he had. I asked him how he could tell who every person was. His answer was “ I listen and I can ‘see’ each person from their voice”.

Listening and hearing...be it in a complete darkness or brightly lit environment...is very important. Our natural ability to listen and hear covers a full circle around us. This allows us to “ listen in all direction”, and gives us a large source of information to digest and deal with.

An important point to bring out is that we should listen to every issue (all directions) before we take action. Sometimes, by listening, we may gain enough information to clarify a situation, and thus avoid a fight.

Sometime back, I started practicing the katas with my eyes closed. I found this practice to be very satisfying and enlightening. While in this dark environment, I concentrated on listening. I could hear things that I normally overlooked. I found my concentration to be more on the kata and the techniques. I could still deliver the techniques to their proper targets without seeing them. If you have not tried that, try it...in particular the sanchin kata.

Over every possessor of knowledge

Is one who is more knowing.

Isshinryu... One Heart