

Kangeiko impressions

by Roberto Ugolini

I am not satisfied. Fifth and last day of the *kangeiko*, the temperature is of 2°C. The previous days, it has oscillated among the -2°/-3°C. The early-morning wake up has not been a burden, the dojo is to the limit of its capacity, today joined the practice also the people that in the preceding days were in the waiting list.

Sensei Spongia calls the umpteenth repetition of the *sanchin*.

I concentrate myself, *yoi*, bend the knees and load the *morote chudan yoko uke*, then long breathing in, breathing out, *kime* still stronger, I inhale and I move in *hikite* the left arm.

I try to concentrate, body and mind unified, through the breath in the action. But the mind roams, the thoughts of the hard, full of contrasts, previous working day, attack me, I can't concentrate.

I finish the *kata*, I feel tired, I'm almost breathless: I have finished the *kata* but have I performed it really?

Higaonna Sensei writes:

“The movements and the posture of the *sanchin* are coordinated with the method of respiration through the mind. ‘Mind’ means the correct mental concentration. For example we should never transfer the daily worries in the practice of the *sanchin*.

Problems and worries cause a relaxation of the muscles that instead would owe to be kept constantly in tension. Besides the worries disturb the rhythm of the respiration.

The correct mental concentration that allows to avoid these problems is nothing else than the *heijo shin*. The daily, continuous, persistent practice of the *sanchin* builds that strong mental constitution that allows us to reach the *heijo shin*.”

The Path of *Karate* is long, hard, tortuous and full of obstacles.

The words have a meaning and the Japanese word *keiko* (*kangeiko*, *yudansha keiko*) seems to assume a particular meaning referred to the *karate-do*.

(the text that follows is drawn in a large extent from “The spirit of the martial arts” of Dave Lowry)

The term *kei* means “to think”, “to cogitate”, “to consider”, the term *ko* is written combining the numeral “ten” to “mouth” and it points out the transmitted wisdom from ten generations, that is “ancient.”

Keiko means therefore “to meditate on the ancient things.”

The word perfectly describes the road crossed from the followers, a path that strongly depends from those people that have walked it before them.

Training, practice, learning, perseverance: all are functional aspects to the *keiko*. To be absorbed, body, mind, spirit. Participating in the practice, with the spirit of the *keiko*, you can be sure that you won't divert from the path, however long, hard, tortuous and full of obstacles.