

Open Letter

by Roberta Roncallo

One of the examination test for Kyu and Dan graduation in the IOGKF Italia is the written test. A questionnaire is submitted to the candidate that have to compile it in all its parts. For some subjects he has to choose the answer he considers correct among the suggested answers, in other parts of the questionnaire he has to answer directly in the given space. One of the question that corresponds to this last case is the following:

“Which are the motivations that have brought you to the practice of Karate-do and how have them changed in your actual experience”.

Roberta has made the examination to 5° kyu and the space reserved to the answer to this question on the questionnaire seemed to her too narrow, so she decided to write on a sheet apart her reflections which have taken the form of a letter that she has accepted to share with the readers of Tora Kan Dojo.

To one of the questions that you made me tonight, in the examination of theory, I immediately realized to have too little space for the answer.

If I had been able I would have written all this.

(Even more, but I already fear to dwelling on it too much.)

My day started like the others, wake up at 6,30 a.m., breakfast and news, shower, cream, the good taste of my toothpaste and then away.

I turn on the scooter, traffic, the entrance of the pub, my colleagues, the sweet peach flower (Francesca) and all the frantic job that waits us.

Routine, simple and banal routine, but that each day from a few time I have realized to be always different.

I try to explain better: the things that I do are always the same,

around 10 hours out from my home for job and it seems to me that a

great space is filled, instead I discover to have still a lot of time, so I start with the kick boxing, some weights, a sauna, a chat in the dressing room and then I go to sleep.

I feel all right.

But often a sense of sadness, darkness or maybe it is better to say of interior emptiness arrives.

At this point Ale (Alessandro Venturini) arrives on the scene

he has really roused my interest, succeeding in convincing me.

I try to come to the dojo of karate, wonderful he says, very boring I think.

I had many prejudices, and I expected everything was static.

Ignorance, nothing else, I thought I was a sportswoman, but I discover that my body doesn't do what the mind asks and vice versa.

Everyone seems to me fluid, elegant, concentrated, vigorous,

I would dare to say almost ecstatic, while I am revealing me not coordinate,

awkward, stiffed, nevertheless I have a lot of breath, a lot of energies,

enough muscles to be used.

Nothing, it doesn't work.

I try again, it seems to me to follow with attention.

Nothing, it doesn't work.

Immediately, from that moment, I know with absolute certainty to have

found my space, my house or perhaps it is more correct to say

the WAY or at least the way that I want to walk.

Since the beautiful feelings that I feel moving inside me,

despite I feel so uncouth, I tell me, or better, I let me

say: try to make Zazen.

Well, from that moment on, it has been like uncorking a

bottle of sparkling wine too much shaken.

I feel thousand things go out, from the body, from the head and in the

meantime the life is going on the same but different.

I discover that every moment is the moment, that everything has to be lived until the last breath.

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I find strengths, energies, I finally succeed in not removing.
But I succeed in living what comes, beautiful or ugly it is secondary,
the important thing is that I feel, I live.
When I sit in Zazen it is like if I can see myself from outside,
still awkward, rigid, stiffed with the body and with the mind.
Only later I understand it, while I am drinking the cappuccino at the bar
with the others companions.
When I sit sometimes I suffer because there is the "wall" that is
waiting for me and I don't like what I see in it.
I try to accept it because it is what I have.
Ah, I remember, I had to answer why I reached the dojo...
I believe to have said it in a certain point.

Thanks Ale

Thanks Sensei Paolo Spongia
An immense thanks, to have undertaken your Way.
And to have known how to point out me as it was easy
to move the first step in mine.

Roberta Roncallo