



David M. Valadez
Senshin Center
Dojocho

Another Existence
by David M. Valadez

Deshi: Sensei, you talk about the mature spirit often. It seems we find it hard to identify. It also seems we find it hard to identify an immature spirit.

Sensei: Some say the immature spirit is like a wild monkey. If we do not tether it, it is gone, or running all over the place.

Deshi: So we know the immature spirit by it being gone or by it running all over the place?

Sensei: Perhaps - if you want to concentrate on the monkey in the analogy. However, I would imagine it would be easier to identify the immature spirit by focusing on the tether or on the need for the tether.

Deshi: Explain.

Sensei: Better than a monkey, we can say that the immature spirit is like a child. The Way is like the way that is laid out by one's parents. To follow the way of one's parents, when we are children, it takes constant reminders, both positive and negative, that come to us from our mother and father. We do not touch the stove simply because it is hot, or because it is dangerous, or because our bodies are fragile to fire and other forms of such heat. Rather, we do not touch the stove because our parents said not to. Everything in life is this way when you are a child. As children, we are governed from the outside. As children, we are tethered. We mature into young adults and into adults as we stop needing less and less the external governance of our parents in order to do what is right. We know the mature spirit by how much it can follow the Way with only itself to rely upon. We know the immature spirit by how much reminding it needs from the outside in order to stay on Path.

Deshi: And what of the person that does follow his or her own way - believing it to be the Way - like a child that believes he or she knows best, knows better than his or her parents, but is wrong and naive. What of them?

Sensei: For them, as when such a child does not find the right parents, if they do not find the right teacher, one lifetime is not enough. They will have to wait to try again, in another existence.