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Exams by **David M. Valadez**

Deshi: Sensei, is not the exam so totally out of place with Budo that no matter what one does one can never address all of these various subversions and excesses of the Way that testing brings to the training?

Sensei: Though it can happen, the deshi who makes it through such a system and remains totally true to Budo is the anomaly of such a system.

Deshi: For example, the student that “crams,” the person who trains with moments of off, on, and really on, is not the wandering sheep that has gone astray but the most likely result of a institutional practice that is totally misplaced?

Sensei: When one considers everyone involved, this would seem to be the case.

Deshi: It is curious that we cannot let go of the exam – how even in light of its ongoing failure to remain consistent with its own agenda of measuring skill and transmission we have done little to modify it. It seems that some effort should be made in the direction of harmonizing the examination more closely with the Way.

Sensei: Perhaps not. In our dojo, we have no tests. We have only the constant and profoundly deep examination that takes place every second of every day.