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**The Sword as Shield**  
**by David M. Valadez**

Deshi: Where does martial confidence come from?

Sensei: It comes from many places, but all are sourced in Faith.

Deshi: Can you mention one please?

Sensei: There is the confidence that comes from being at one with the body. Surety of movement harmonizes with surety of mind. It is like when you are first given the sword to wield: Initially, a person and his body think of the weapon as a purely offensive tool. When the pressure is on, and should one's attack not strike home immediately, one longs for a shield to make up for the defensive tactics one thinks he or she is in need of. When a surety of body is developed, one comes to experience the sword as both an offensive and a defensive weapon. One no longer desires for a shield, now confident that with the sword alone he or she is beyond being cut.