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The Body
by David M. Valadez

Deshi: The Way is not an exercise in philosophy or in logic. You have said things to that affect several times. This has led me to reflect upon the role the body plays in our practice. How exactly should we relate to the body in our training?

Sensei: The body in Budo is both the container and the contained. It must be strong, nourished, flexible, healthy, and vibrant. It is what we train with, train for, and train toward. Like a nomadic culture that uses the horse for every task, where the horse is worshipped, eaten, worked, killed, and bred, etc., that is how the body is to the Budoka. Neglect it, and like the nomadic mounted warrior that neglects his horse, your charge in Budo will end. Each day the body must be attended to. Each day it must be studied. Each day we must bring our full attention to its role in our life and in our practice of Budo. What work we save for another day is what we pay for dearly on this day and on more days that follow. Sometimes the body will require us to undergo great changes - changes that may take years in order to reach a full fruition. Sometimes there are changes that we can attend to in a day. Whatever the case, for the Budoka, the body is both wielder of the sword and the sword itself. Because of that, concerning the body, we must do what must be done, as it must be done, when it must be done, because it must be done.