

Appropriate Dojan Behavior

The Dojang

The significance of the dojang is that it is a place of learning and self-sacrifice. It is also a temporary refuge from the distractions, pressures and responsibilities of daily life. Viewing it in this way is critical to making our time there more productive and meaningful. By seeing the dojang as a special place, we elevate our training to a higher level to meet that perception. It is not a gym where one goes to socialize, work up a sweat and then leave. It is a place where we transform ourselves into something more substantial.

That is why upon entering or leaving the dojang we always face the flags and salute as a sign of respect, and of course, shoes are never worn when on the dojang floor. While waiting for a class to begin, students should strive to maintain a feeling of calm and tranquility in the room. Loud conversation and horsing around only serves to bring the outside world in with you and should be avoided. It is also disrespectful to others who may want a few moments of silence to mentally prepare for the class.

Students should also show respect for the school by taking responsibility for its care and appearance. A school is a student's second home and should be treated accordingly. Cleaning the mirrors, organizing the training gear, sweeping the floor and so on are other ways of demonstrating the humility that is part of our development as martial artists. The instructor should never have to ask for students' help on this matter, and seniors should lead the way as an example to juniors.

The Beginning of Class

The protocol for the start and end of class may differ slightly among schools, but generally it operates this way.

If there is a Dan member in the room, Gups should bow to them upon entering. The same holds true for Dans entering when senior Dans are present. If there are many Dans of different ranks in the room, there can be an excessive amount of bowing, so a minimum rank rule may be in place to limit this. Ask your instructor if in doubt.

The instructor is usually the last to enter the room and the first to leave. When he/she enters, the senior student or Dan will call everyone to attention and bow to the instructor. Students should then quickly line up according to rank with your immediate senior to your right. (Never walk slowly as it is disrespectful and shows a lack of discipline.) The senior at the head of the line will give commands, in Korean, to face the flag, salute the flag by placing right hand over heart, return hand to side, close eyes and meditate, open eyes, turn to face the instructor and then bow again. If a student is late getting to class, they should never enter the training floor once the class has begun. Rather, they must wait at the doorway until recognized by the instructor and then quickly go to the end of the line. They may only take their normal place in line when directed to do so by the instructor.

During Class

First and foremost, the instructor is there for you and should be given your undivided attention. Talking in class, especially when the instructor is speaking is not acceptable. If you have a question, raise your hand and be recognized before speaking. Bow first, then ask your question. When the instructor is finished responding, bow again to show thanks.

From time to time, students may be asked to sit while the instructor speaks or other students are demonstrating. The proper seated position is legs crossed in front and hands resting over knees. Never lean against a wall or sit in a lounging position. If a student has knee problems or difficulty holding the position, consult with your instructor as to what is acceptable to overcome the problem.

Other Things to Remember:

- Dans are addressed using Sir / Ma'am, Mr./ Ms. followed by last name or by title such as Kyosa Nim, Sa Bumnim or Kwan Jang Nim. They should never be addressed by their first name, even if they are friends or relatives.
- When moving around others who are in line or working together, always walk behind them, never in front of, or in between them.

- When moving away from instructors (or test examiners and tournament judges), always do so moving backwards (facing them), not by turning your back to them.
- Unless otherwise directed by the instructor, students should avoid "teaching" or "correcting" others in matters of technique. That is the instructor's responsibility, for two reasons - he/she is better equipped to assess a student's readiness to learn a new technique, and also to ensure that demonstration and application of techniques are consistent.
- Never argue with instructor or others in class. If there is disagreement, it should be taken up in private with the instructor after class.
- When adjusting your uniform, always turn to do so, then turn back to your original position.
- Always be on time and ready to train
- Remove shoes before entering dojang
- Remove jewelry before training
- Keep finger and toe nails trimmed
- No eating, drinking or chewing gum in the school
- No free sparring without the presence or approval of the instructor
- Do not use equipment without approval of instructor
- Refrain from using profanity
- All students must wear approved safety equipment when sparring
- Do not engage in any activities that might degrade your reputation or that of the school
- Guests should be informed that noise be kept to a minimum so as not to distract class in progress
- Always be courteous and helpful to your partners

The End of Class

The instructor will signal the end of class at which time all will line up as in the beginning. The procedure with respect to bowing, saluting flags, etc. performed at the beginning of class will be repeated at the end.

The Instructor's Office

- Always knock before entering Instructor's office (even if the door is open).
- Bow before entering and when leaving.
- Never sit unless asked to do so.
- If you are an assistant instructor and have access to the office, never sit behind the instructor's desk unless permission is given, as this would be presumptuous of your position.

Outside The Dojang

When at tournaments or tests, all of the above still apply. Should you happen to encounter your instructor in a public place, the courtesy of a bow in greeting as well as use of the title is proper. As a martial artist, correct protocol is not limited to the training hall - it travels with you.

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