

How Chayon-Ryu Changed My Life

Introduction

I believe that learning and practicing Chayon-Ryu for the last seven years and achieving a rank of 1st Dan has greatly influenced my life and how I live it. There are things in one's life that can be viewed as trivial to others, perhaps even taken for granted, and yet when discovered for oneself – completely life changing. Chayon-Ryu has been the catalyst for change in my mind, body, and spirit.

Mind – Self-worth / Patience / Attitude

Self-confidence, self-esteem, how you carry yourself in your daily life, how you treat people, how you want to be treated by others, how you view humanity and nature - these are all aspects of oneself that can be viewed as positive or negative. Chayon-Ryu gives you a looking glass into who you are or what you can be.

Chayon-Ryu provides a foundation to face major life's challenges. One of the greatest benefits is learning how to handle life's day-to-day trials and tribulations. One of the first things I noticed when I started Chayon-Ryu was the banner hanging on the front wall of the dojang which meant "without patience there is no victory." That banner really stuck with me because being an impatient person meant I was going to be doing forms over and over which involves patience. I realized I was probably not going to get immediate results. This was going to be a long journey.

The way I was going to get through this receptiveness - or my mindset – was to realize that each time I do the form or technique I was going to learn something. That was the key. You can't hurry. Just like life, you can't hurry through. I realized that I was going to have to take each training session one day at a time. With every new practice, every new day, every new form, I started to gather bits and pieces of information. Like auto-correcting a down block – you might realize that perhaps the way you've done it the past four years is incorrect. Some may view corrections as a negative or a failure. On the contrary, it's a benefit not a criticism. View it as a positive. Your ego may take a hit if you've done it incorrect for four years, but the path through being a better person and a better martial artist is to accept improvement.

Seeing that banner every week reinforced a patient way of not only practicing Chyon-Ryu, but how to live my life. To keep the idea of maintaining patience fresh in my mind on a daily basis, I went ahead and had a replica of the banner to hang in my home. Results are not always immediate. Sometimes you have to work hard at things.

With these mental changes came a better attitude about myself. I acquired a quiet self-confidence in my new ability to accomplish goals even when I didn't know what some of the goals would be. But I knew the seed had been planted, and with a good attitude and clear mind, would grow and be fruitful.

Body – Health / Strength / Movement

Soon after starting my practice of Chayon-Ryu, I noticed a much needed physical change. I soon found that if I didn't go to class for 2 weeks, I was more stressed out in my daily life and my body did not feel in balance. I needed to practice regularly to feed my body with movements and natural motion. After a while, I also began to feel myself gaining in physical strength.

Natural motion is one of the basic tenants of Chayon-Ryu. How do we move? You do not walk with your arms attached to your sides. You have a natural swinging motion. You have natural movements which will carry through to the forms, which builds up body control. I've noticed outside the dojang that I can feel that control in my movements and how I walk, how I carry myself, even how I can physically avoid minor obstacles. Simple occurrences at the office, like someone walking around the corner on a direct path to collision, I find myself doing a side step away. These simple body movements for avoidance have become second nature. I've not experienced a threatening situation, and I don't know exactly what would I do until it were to happen. But avoidance is key – then defense. I believe I have the capability to do both now.

Spirit – Marriage / Relationships / Work / Death

Although not able to quantify it at the time, Chayon-Ryu training allowed me to find someone special to share my life with. The confident mental state of mind, the more attractive man inside and out – these gifts of Chayon-Ryu greatly contributed to being ready to ask her to marry me and provide her a better version of myself than I had previously been before I started on this journey.

Social relationships and work interactions have all been improved with continued training. I'm calmer at work, taking the higher road in conflicts. Remembering "without patience there is no victory," I'm able to work my way through the daily issues and work conflicts, usually with good results. The confidence and self-esteem gleaned from doing a form correctly or breaking a brick plays a large part in all of this, but I'm careful to keep in check the negative effect it could have on my ego as far as self-importance. Keeping one's ego in check is crucial. Chayon-Ryu has taught me that respect for others should never be forgotten. Let the ego go, which is basically what is holding us back to begin with.

Finally, one of life's biggest challenges is of course, death. Losing one's parents is one of the most difficult and trying times of one's life. Everyone goes through the cycle of life, but how does one prepare for this? Chayon-Ryu training has a calming effect that allowed me to progress through a most difficult time of losing my mother. I was able to realize that the journey of passing away is something no one can avoid or defend or fight against. The end of our physical life does come upon us all. Chayon-Ryu gave me patience and inner peace to get through this. For me, good spirit is the best benefit of all from Chayon-Ryu.

Summary

How does one quantify or put a value on what's been learned? How can I truly express the benefits that Chayon-Ryu has given to me? I go to practice every week, not as a hobby, but as an integrated piece of my life. Now that I have taken the time to reflect upon my practice by writing down my thoughts and thinking about the positive changes I've experienced over the years, I realize even more the correlation between my commitment to practice and becoming a better man.

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