

# STANDING ALONE

As we have seen in the previous KIA feature, “Shakespeare and Martial Arts,” an excellent piece of advice was given to Laertes by his father, Polonius. That historic advice from Hamlet is from—Act 1, scene 3:

*This above all—to thine own self be true, and it must follow,  
as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.*

However, while being one’s own man offers certain advantages to living a good life, there is more.



Henrik Ibsen, Norwegian playwright  
(photo courtesy of Wikipedia)

Henrik Ibsen, a Norwegian playwright who lived in the 1800s, has been regarded as the most prominent playwright after Shakespeare. One of Ibsen’s most famous quotes is . . .

*The strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone.*  
Henrik Ibsen

How true is this statement! If anyone—man or woman—is going to be truly strong they most likely will have to “Stand Alone.” Why? Because this world and its people, in general, always try to tear down strong and independent people. Perhaps they do this out of envy, weakness, jealousy, hatred or dislike. Thus, just

being your own person is not enough. You've got to be able to stand alone and stand up to the onslaught of attacks from weak, jealous and insecure people.

Do you have any idea how many martial artists whose forte is fighting are frightened to perform a kata (choreographed routine) by themselves in front of an audience? Answer: too many to know.

Likewise, do you have any idea how many martial artists whose specialty is kata are too frightened to compete in fighting events? Answer: too many to know.

This is why if the goal is to become a truly strong and independent person, that person must be strong enough to "Stand Alone." Such people are rare, very rare, indeed. Just look around and see how many people you know or know of, will be like that person about whom Shakespeare and Ibsen write? Are you one of those people—one who can not only be true to themselves but stand alone, too?

The message then from our two famous playwrights is . . .

*Be true to yourself* (Shakespeare) *and be strong enough to stand alone.* (Ibsen)

Martial arts is one sure way to accomplish this task. This is one reason why the Karate Institute of America and Kiado-Ryu Martial Arts always urge performance-oriented students to compete in both fighting and forms (katas). Just fighting won't win a Grand Championship (all comers). Likewise, just doing a kata won't also win a Grand Championship. To be the best of the best means being a Champion in all aspects of competition and life.

Therefore, the way to being an exceptional human being is not only to be true to one's self but to also be strong enough and brave enough to stand alone in spite of those individuals who seek to denigrate, disparage, vilify and revile others.

The simple message—*Be true to yourself and be strong enough to stand alone.*

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Richard Andrew King and Kiado-Ryu Martial Arts.

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