



#7

You Must Win The Cross



In cleansing the soul
and losing its dross,
it's axiomatic --
You Must Win The Cross.

*Without recognizing the ordinances of Heaven,
it is impossible to be a superior man.*
Confucius

Another way of expressing the phrase, *To become everything you must first become nothing*, is this corroborating maxim, *You Must Win the Cross*. The symbol of the cross is ancient, far antedating its use by Christianity. It also has application to martial arts.

What is the *cross* in martial arts? Actually, it's several things. The first is associated with the combat environment and its structure. The distance between fighters is referred to as the "gap." To physically engage in combat, this gap must be crossed by one or both fighters. The fighter who crosses this gap most efficiently and safely is likely to be victorious in the engagement. Hence the phrase, *You Must Win the Cross* or, in other words, the *crossing*.

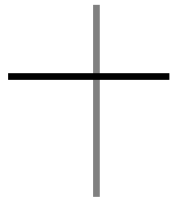
The second meaning of winning the cross is philosophical with tactical overtones. As discussed in the previous vignette, *To Become Everything You Must First Become Nothing*, the goal is to eliminate the individual ego by sublimating it to the Great Power or Divine Source that creates and sustains it.

In the following two part diagram, Image A [a vertical straight line] represents the self, the ego. The second, Image B, which has the appearance of a cross, represents that self, that ego, being expunged, i.e., crossed out by a horizontal line.

Image A. The Self [expressed as a vertical line]



Image B. The Eradication or "crossing out" of the Self [expressed as a cross]



It is the expunging of the self, the ego, in surrender to a greater power that is the basis of the statement, *You Must Win the Cross*.

The tactical overtones of this statement not only apply to crossing the gap between fighters, but also to the more important understanding that the successful fighter must eliminate his ego, especially as it is a function of his mind. When we fight, often we think too much. In the fiery speed of battle, however, there is not time to think. There is only time to act or react. By the time one stops to think, the fight could be over with the one who paused to think laying prostrate, never to think again.

Another tactical aspect of the phrase *You Must Win the Cross* involves not thinking that the fight is all about us. At least 50% of the fight is about the opponent. By studying him, his physical attributes, athleticism, quickness, balance, rhythm, posture, footwork, stance, weight distribution, general movement and fighting temperament, we gain insight as to how to exploit any weaknesses or chinks in his armor or fighting style. If we ignore studying him and think that the fight is all about us, we will most likely not be successful unless we get lucky. By winning the cross, i.e., by eliminating that part of our warrior-self that may think the fight is only about us and our ability, we increase our chances of victory. As the famous Chinese warlord Sun Tzu observed, to be successful in combat we must know ourselves and our opponent. This knowledge will insure victory and negate disaster.

Thus, *You Must Win the Cross* has both tactical and philosophical implications. Regarding the former, it secures victory in conflict. Regarding the latter, it allows us to grow beyond our ego and ultimately assist us in merging with that greater Power that created us, sustains us, and is the very core of our being. All

high level mystics teach that in order to merge into God we must ultimately relinquish our own egos. Otherwise it is impossible to do so. Therefore, the admonition and exhortation in both fighting and life is to remember, *You Must Win the Cross!*

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