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## The Hwarang's Path – Humility (part 2)

By: Grandmaster Taejoon Lee

In the secular world, we try to give ourselves value and worth by stating causality and with such grand theories as the Butterfly Effect – that the flapping of a butterfly's wings thousands of miles away can cause a tsunami; that even the smallest changes can create a ripple effect resulting in large changes. It gives the individual an illusion of hope and purpose to think no matter how small or insignificant they are, that they somehow through their actions have helped directly, but mostly indirectly many people and made the world a better place, bringing some sense of momentary contentment. Although this thought might be comforting, we fail to examine the inverse effect. In the same way all of the smallest actions we choose can create the opposite affect of indirectly negatively impacting the world and making it a worse place. However, our mind cleverly avoids the contemplation of our ill actions forcing it deeper into our subconscious, protecting our fragile egos.



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**T**he way we become humble is when we are humbled; when we discover that there is a person better, stronger, faster, smarter, than oneself. Even then, we never stay humble as we struggle to improve ourselves so that we may become better than the one who humbled us. In reality, we can never accept that another person is better than us and that is why we always look for the faults in others and fail to see our own.

When one is humiliated, that means he/she was not humble and no one likes being humiliated; no one says thank you for humbling me, rather they will lash out and try to harm you, to prove that you are wrong. Jordan played his best when he felt threatened, creating enemies in his mind, either real or imaginary, using the negative emotion of anger as some kind of a wonder drug that allowed him to focus all his faculties on the single purpose of winning.

Musashi's duels were all attempts to humble each other, to prove who is the best at the cost of killing one another. Although, Musashi has written in his "Book of Five Rings" to treat your enemies as if he were a guest in your own home, with respect and courtesy, at the end of the day some one had to die. Treating the person you're going to kill like a guest or an enemy, cordially or rudely really has nothing to do with the opponent, but everything to do with your own state of mind. Contrary to Jordan, it was not the emotion of anger that he needed to win, but as Musashi phrases it, "the state of Void", having no thought or emotion. It is in order to bring calmness to the self emotionally to be able to respond with mental clarity to win the duel. The stronger the opponent, the greater the enemy, the better one becomes. Both Jordan and Musashi found ways in order to win and they could not have been best without having enemies as they push you to become better. The desire to prove that oneself is best is fueled from the fear of humiliation, the fear of being insignificant, which is often a greater fear than even the fear of death. Hence, pride arises from fear, but humility from love. In reality they are both founded on love; pride rising from the fear of being unloved and humility rises from knowing that you are loved. Ultimately, fear is our worst and most formidable enemy.



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It is a world that is impure, corrupt, imperfect, and fallible created by humankind with its core founded on Darwinian Godless notion of survival of the fittest. Even before Darwin, the Fall of Man ensured the fall of mankind. The Age of Enlightenment offered the justification for man's actions without being held accountable to objective morals and values. No person, no ruler, no king, no tyrant, no great thinker in all of history who have ever tried to change the world ever did so thinking that their way would make the world a worse place to live. They did what they did, no matter how horrific or inhumane, with the idea that somehow they would change the world for the better.

If the Theory of Evolution is true; that we are all here due to random chance of matter plus time and ensuring our survival is by eliminating the weak and propagating the strong through natural selection, then there can be no room for humility, only winners and losers, the weak and the strong with being the best as its highest virtue. And, so it is!

Humility is the act of being humble and humble is defined as not proud or arrogant; having feelings of insignificance, inferiority, subservience; low in rank, importance, status, quality, lowly. Can a person without God ever truly be humble? I would think not. Without God, then evolution must be true and in that case being humble by its definition is only weakness and cannot survive. Not only that, it needs to perish to ensure the survival of the species.

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**“A flower, which possesses the essence of beauty, peace, and love by its mere existence, without any pretention, threat, or possible harm has been our ideal to aspire to become”**

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To be humble without God is the same as Musashi's treatment of his enemy whom he's going to kill. It will only be a pretention, to seem humble to others, to bring some inner calmness, a selfish act with ulterior motives. Musashi might have gained some sense of atonement through his prayers, achieving peace within himself, yet peace cannot bring fulfillment. To rid oneself of emotions is not human and it is not possible. The goal of suppressing or detaching oneself from emotions is to avoid pain and suffering. Being alone is not human as our greatest expression as humanity is love and it is because of love that we also suffer. Even though it was by choice that Musashi died alone, it does not mean he wasn't lonely. One may have peace, but that does not fill the emptiness of the heart.

Humility without God is weakness personified. It is elevated to be noble only when there is God. Many claim that they care not of what others think and only do things for themselves and for their own satisfaction and approval. This is a complete lie and an absolute delusion used as smoke and mirrors to bring down the other's defensive guard. They say this beating their chests to show their autonomy where in fact they are slaves to the approval and recognition of others. Their entire sense of worth is based on the opinion of others and need constant validation. It is a slippery road to take for a person claiming that they are in complete control, independent of influence by others, and will always be their ideal humble self. Even though in their beginnings they might have been humble, as they accumulate more successes, more wins, more public approval, greater fame, and wealth, they cannot help but to



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fall into the delusions of grandeur, feeling invincible, infallible, entitled, and deserving of even more.

One is wrong to think that people, who possess fame, power and wealth because surely they have plenty, more than enough, can ever be humble. On the contrary, it is not within our human nature. There exists always some exceptions, but most all with power and wealth feel that they are deserving as they worked so hard for it and that they must have been gifted by God or determined by fate because they are worthy. It is illogical to think that they are underserving of their successes and fortunes, thus others who are with less fortune are the way they are because they deserve what they don't have.

This is the human condition. Even though we start off with the best of intentions, just as a child innocent and pure, the world corrupts us and the more we want of the world, the more corrupt and delusional we become. Jordan in the documentary series was quoted to have said that he was "the Black Jesus". Surely, Musashi also felt he was invincible. How can he not when he has never lost? We are all guilty of self-aggrandizement and thinking our opinion matters, that what we think is the truth where in fact all we have is an opinion and opinions are not truths. In reality,

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the truth is that Jordan, although great he was, he was just a basketball player and Musashi, although undefeated, was just great at killing people with a sword.

It is the lacking of humility and building up of pride that humanity suffers from the beginning and continues to suffer. There can never be a perfect society created by imperfect beings. There can never be peace through violence. It is when we come to understand that only perfection can create perfection; that only peace can produce peace and that we as human beings are neither perfect nor holy; that no matter how hard we try that we will never be gods; when we discover unconditional true love; only when we surrender to God can we be truly be humble. It is when we come to understand that our father will love us no matter what we do or who we are, not that we have proved worthy or deserving, but because we are his child so we are loved. And, because we know we are loved by our father, our Holy Father, that we can love and be humble to one another; that proving we are best so that we can feel worthy of love should not be our life's pursuit, but rather doing the best that we can because we want to please the Father whom we love, who created each one of us in his own image for a unique purpose.

After a lifetime of being a Hwarang, I have learned the true meaning of "Flowering" within the words "Flowering Knights." "Hwa", meaning flower, which symbolizes the blossoming, becoming enlightened, but enlightened with what? It



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took two thousand of years of history for it's true meaning to come to light to a Hwarang. A flower, which possesses the essence of beauty, peace, and love by its mere existence, without any pretention, threat, or possible harm has been our ideal to aspire to become. There is one man in history, one master who possesses all of these qualities, exemplifying the perfect human being who changed the world without any violence, armed only with love, with ultimate humility as He was also God, who became flesh among us, Jesus Christ.

I would like to end with an anecdote from a man that has made an immense impact in my life, the late Dr. Ravi Zacharias, who has recently passed away. He was one of the greatest apologists of our modern times who was called to God in his death bed from attempted suicide at the age of seventeen, who made a promise to God that if He saved him, he would dedicate his entire life in seeking the Truth, leaving no stone unturned.

There was a boy, who was on a soccer team, but he was not very good and never played, only sitting on the sidelines dreaming of a day when he can participate in a game. He never missed practice and worked diligently. One day the boy came to the coach and asked if he could miss practice. When the coach asked him why? The boy replied, "My father has passed and I need to attend his funeral." Of course the coach gave him permission to miss practice. At the next game, the boy begged and pleaded with the coach if he could play, even if it was only for a short while and if he played poorly then he can be pulled out of the game. The game was going well for the team so the coached decided to let him play. The boy played his heart out and did better than ever before. The other coaches were commenting that they should put him in the game more often. When the game was over the coach asked the boy, "Wow, you played great! What got into you? Was it because of your father's death?" The boy replied, "Well coach, it's a little more than that. You see my father was blind. Now I know he can see me play for the very first time."

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