

Chain of Command and Responsibilities

By Sensei Steve Shaw

I would like to take a few moments to write about organizational review, of the chain of command and responsibility within an organization. This topic is broad and can take many different forms depending upon the size of your organization, corporation, or company.

With any organization as you move up in the chain of command or "climb the corporate ladder" your responsibilities for the most part increase in number and become a more direct contribution to the goals of the organization. That is not to minimize the efforts or contributions of others with less responsibility. Understanding the chain of command or hierarchy of any group / company is imperative to ensure the success and longevity of the organization.

As members of our Dojo Group advance in their understanding and applications of the Ryu, their responsibilities advance in the area of administration as well as to other students and their Sensei. It is common evolution with-in any organization. Members who grade within our Dojo Group should also be ready to accept the duties inherit with the rank they have achieved "on the tatami".

Martial arts, for thousands of years, were taught only to the chosen few. If you had the right family tree, you could be instructed in the martial ways. If your bloodline did not permit such a privilege, an exception may be made if you were able to show your worth to a Sensei. Only as you learned respect, discipline, and an understanding of the martial ways, would you then be taught more regarding the physical aspects of the martial art. Should you disgrace the Sensei, you would be removed from the Dojo and lose the privilege of learning more.

North America has changed this in some ways however some parts remain unchanged. As students ascend the Kyu ranks it is important for them to understand the duties they will be asked to assume as a result of receiving the training / knowledge they have from their Sensei. You may notice that as you learn more (or think that you just finally understand a technique), a Sensei may show you more. If you seem to be at an impasse on a concept, Sensei's will help you find a way around that roadblock and sometimes, what we refer to as "a light bulb", will come on. Kyu ranks advance by refining the same Waza.

Dan ranks advance through a better understanding of the different Waza with much greater detail, requiring perfection. Advancement in both results in greater responsibilities to the art and to the Dojo as you ascend the ranks. This format ensures that everyone is working to a common goal and provides for an optimum environment to achieve your goals in training. We all need to meet the requirements and responsibilities of our rank in order to uphold the credibility and respect our Dojo Group has achieved thus far.