

Dietary Life of “Do”

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Today, I would like to talk about Macrobiotic as “Do” or the way. The concept of Budo (The way of martial arts) and sports are different. Budo has been considered as the way of the Samurai. The term “Do” consists of the way, which emphasizes a person’s humanity such as Karate-do, Ken-do, Ju-do, Aiki-do, Sa-do (Tea Ceremony), Ka-do (Flower Arrangement), etc., as oppose to the word “jutsu” (literally means techniques) used in terms such as Ju-jutsu, Nin-jutsu and etc.

Macrobiotic is a way of life. It is not a symptomatic way such as “Jutsu”(techniques). We have to consider Macrobiotic (Seishoku) as “Do” (Seishoku-do) instead of “jutsu” (techniques - the symptomatic treatment). Therefore, for those who put Macrobiotic into action, there are two school of thought. One is considered the way of healing (how to cure disease with symptomatic way of treatment) and the other is the way of polishing one’s humanity. In other words, the former is for those who are concerned only with his or her health and the latter is for those who want to share their health and happiness with others.

In Macrobiotic, egotism is considered the most difficult stage of disease to cure. From the Macrobiotic teaching, every disease starts with the first stage, that is, fatigue. When the disease reaches the second stage it becomes pain; then infectious disease (the third stage); the disorder of autonomic nervous system (the fourth stage), resulting in the manifestation of severe conditions such as diabetes, heart problems, cancer, etc., (the fifth stage). When this reaches the sixth stage, it becomes a mental problem. Finally, it develops to the seventh stage, becoming egotism. In other words, an egoistical person could be a candidate of any disease in any of the stages. A person in fifth or sixth stage could be a candidate of the seventh stage (egotism).

Macrobiotic believes all diseases are related to one another. As such, symptomatic treatments such as the way of Western medicine will not work. The ability to prevent and/or cure the disease in the seventh stage (egotism) is the central theme of Macrobiotic. This is “Do”.

A long time ago, my senpai’s (senior student) wife had a baby. She told us she desired to raise her child in the country. She thought that if they went to the country they could grow their own natural food because in the city there are many foods with additives and chemicals. Ohsawa Sensei berated her in front of us, “You are an egoist!” His point was that she was thinking only of herself. If you find some expensive good natural organic products in the store, you spend a lot of money and eat only those foods for yourself. This is the wrong way of thinking according to the Macrobiotic principle. Because the idea of Macrobiotic is that every man and woman on the earth can attain good health with simple and local foods everywhere in the world.

A Macrobiotic diet does not cost much (Ohsawa Sensei said, actually less than what ordinary people spend) so everybody can afford to live and attain good health. Therefore, from the true Macrobiotic teaching we have to expand our mind and to share those good foods with others.

As for Budo, there are “Jutsu” (techniques) and “Do” (a way of life) as I have mentioned earlier. The (kanji) character of “Bu” consists of two characters - “spear” and “stop”. Therefore, “Budo” literally means the way to stop the spear. Hence, the word Samurai doesn’t mean soldier. A Samurai is not a conqueror, he is a defender, poet, philosopher and swordsman. “Bushido” or

the way of the Samurai originally teaches us not to fight, but not to be defeated, either. However, if we get a big weapon, we may start a war because of human desire.

There is a saying in Japan, “Win without fighting”. The main goal of “Budo” is not to destroy the enemy, but to overcome the fear within yourself. No one can conquer you unless you have an opening or weakness. The Macrobiotic principle shares in the same concept. If you are healthy, no bacteria and virus can enter your body. If you get sick, this is because your body is not healthy, therefore you get affected by bacteria and viruses. If you have a strong and healthy body, the enemy can not get in. For example, from the Macrobiotic understanding, if you eat too much sugary food/drink and/or animal products such as meat and eggs, your body becomes the soil in which bacteria and viruses will grow because they love such solution. Additionally, salt free diet may also promote this condition in our body.

Macrobiotic emphasizes that one’s life is derived from one’s environment such as the air you breathe and the food you eat; for we take in our environment through food/drink. Food is transmuted into our body cells and thus sustain our life. Food is life. Therefore, it is very important to talk about how and what kind of food you eat, in order to create a healthy life.

In Japan, there are many children who have allergic dermatitis. I have also heard here in America that many children who have asthma. Well, why is it that so many people get sick? Where does this weakness in our life come from? In order to understand this, we have to understand what life is, first of all. This is the central theme of Macrobiotic and its diet as “Do”.