

***Kamae – By: Soke Masaaki Hatsumi***

The body postures of taijutsu are more than utilitarian stances or formal ways of positioning the trunk and limbs. The kamae of ninjutsu can be best described as the physical embodiment of the mental outlook. In any living or fighting situation, the body and the consciousness it houses are constantly being subjected to the ever-progressing development of a series of present instants. In order to be the most effective in any of these situations, the mind and body should be totally in tune with each other to prevent inappropriate actions or reactions. In actuality, “mind” and “body” are mere arbitrary terms that we apply to made-up divisions of one single entity.

When properly applied, the kamae reflects the ninja’s heart. This means that our physical nature conforms to our intentions, and there is no division between our interior and exterior aspects. This state of integrated mind and body action is totally natural, and can be observed readily in the movements of the movements of animals as they interact with their environment. Only human beings seem to develop the need to be trained in a natural body motion.

The kamae themselves are mere guides or suggestions for the most effective use of the body weapon. As such, they are physical attitudes, and are by no means to be adhered to in precise imitation. Each individual body, with its unique configuration of muscle and bone alignments will naturally determine it’s own pragmatic and comfortable variations of the basic fighting postures. As the student progresses, the kamae become less and less significant as specific poses, as they are gradually assimilated into the character of the individual. Once these fundamentals are internalized, the most advanced fighting posture becomes a “no fighting posture.”