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September Skies

By James Peters



The project: during the month of September, every morning at approximately the same time, go to the roof terrace and take a picture of the morning sky. I had no fixed goal, only an open mind and heart.

The discipline of taking this task on every day gave me a rhythm, a taking off point to begin the day. It offered me a chance to stop and breathe, a time to cast my eyes skyward if only to contemplate the frame. At the same time, I knew I could never really capture what it was that I saw.



These reasons alone make this worth the effort. But what does it mean? Is there a point beyond the obvious? How does it relate to the training and my development as a Gorindoka?

The main subjects of these photos are the sky, the sun, and the clouds. But there are also unseen subjects: the wind, the earth, and my being. Though all of the subjects are separate entities they are subject and dependant on one another. They are all moving and changing.

Sky

Always there, a deep empty canvas. So full of empty. Intimidating in scope, there is nothing on this earth wider or deeper. The sky itself is always changing but in ways that are mainly unseen by the eye.



This is the mind, the canvas of creativity. It is here where thoughts are formed; it is the venue for our conscious thoughts.

Sun

The source of energy. Though far off, an integral part of every moment of every day. Ever changing, but in ways that are not so obvious.

This is the spirit, steadfast and constant, the source of drive and determination. Changes here are difficult, requiring persistence over time. Moreover, the change that occurs here goes unnoticed. It is not easily seen from the outside.



Clouds

Of all the subjects, they are constantly in a state of change. They are effected by the direction and intensity of the wind. The topography of the earth effects how they gather and are scattered. They are there and they are not. At one moment thick enough to block the sun. The next, thin enough not to be seen.



These are our thoughts, always changing, always moving. Effected so dramatically by outside forces. However, in the face of these forces there is opportunity. Are we able to reel the mind back in in spite of

distraction? Can we remain focused on a task or a technique while there are other things going on? What is the unifying force?

Training

Training is what ties it all together. Through repetition, and by putting oneself in compromising situations, we learn to have a level of focus. We learn to practice a high level of awareness, to be aware of what is going on around us, while still completing a task or technique.



Even when the mind is full of thoughts, we know that the mind is still present. We can draw power from our spirit even when it can't be seen.



As martial artists there is much to learn from nature if we open our senses to the world around us. When we begin training we learn how to breathe and walk, and the more we advance we learn when to breathe and walk.

I learned much during the month of September!

With a joyful Kiai!!