

HAPKIDO

At Master Chang's dojang in Chicago, students are asked to keep the training hall immaculately clean. Many-a-day black belts and lower belts alike can be seen vacuuming the carpet and dusting the shelves.

A new student started a while ago. "Before you go, please vacuum," he was asked. "Who do you think I am," the student protested, "I pay good money to be taught not to clean!"

At that time an Instructor and University Professor was also in the hall. "Tom, vacuum," he was instructed. The instructor smiled,

"Yes, sir."

Later that week the new student returned and apologised, "I had not understood."

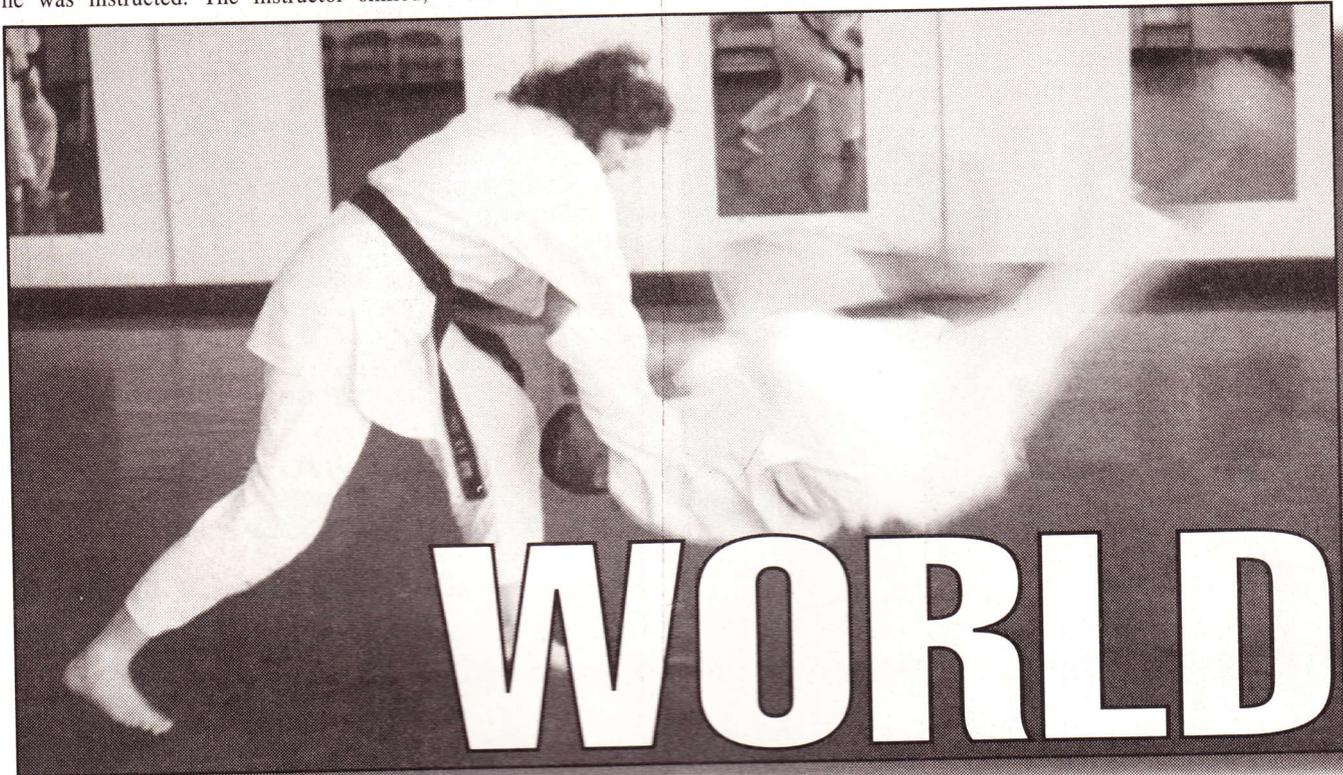
Martial Art tradition is full of stories such as this. Stories of disciples cleaning their masters clothes, or spending hours polishing, sometimes only to be told that their efforts are not good enough.

The wise master uses these daily chores as a way of checking his students state of mind, checking their humility, discipline and concentration.

When we notice a speck of dirt on ourselves we must immediately rectify the situation, check our state of mind and attitude. Through purity of mind any imperfections that creep in will immediately be obvious and can be thwarted with little effort. We will increase our energy, be relaxed and have greater self-confidence.

Through this quest for a perfect state of mind, we can and will reach our goals within the martial arts, becoming not only excellent fighters, but also leading figures within our locality.

About the author: Tammy Parlour teaches Hapkido in Lincoln and is a long time student of Master Gedo Chang (8th dan). For more information she may be contacted at 89 Carholme Road, Lincoln, LN1 1RT. Tel. 01522 539468 (evenings).



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