

Zen in the Art of Pistol Shooting

Foreword by John Dreyer

www.bullseyepistol.com

Introduction

Volumes of material have been written about acquiring proper physical technique and mental discipline in precision pistol shooting. I have found that most are tremendously valuable to any serious competitor and do a good job of describing the mechanics and philosophy of shooting. However, very few truly explored the ongoing tremendous internal battle of the competitor or the many other spiritual aspects of the sport.

In my journey from Marksman to Master, I learned a great deal about not only punching holes in paper, but about myself and my perception of life itself. Because I was unable to put together the words to relate my experiences, I sought for credible written works that properly illustrated my discoveries both on and off the range. As a result, I collected and dissected over fifty books plus almost that many articles from periodicals and other media on a variety of aspects of life and shooting. After almost a year of research and reflection, I was finally able to assemble that massive and mysterious puzzle of intellect and emotion that encompassed life both on and off the range. Surprisingly, the final piece of my puzzle turned out to be an incredibly simple way of looking at life, an ancient Eastern philosophy called Zen, a Japanese subset of Buddhist tradition.

Shooting as a Zen Art

Deceptively simple in appearance, yet vastly complex is the art of pistol shooting. Without question, its mechanics are simple. As Bill Joyner explains, "Create a machine rest with your stance, grip and breath control. Then with the gun in the machine rest, apply [trigger] pressure directly to the rear until the hammer falls." Attaining the physical prowess to accomplish this task is one thing. However, the mind's influence makes the process a bit more difficult. As Frank Higginson has said, "In shooting, you learn more about yourself than any other sport." This self-discovery that exists in shooting is nothing more than Zen itself.

拳銃道

"Kenjudo"

Kenjudo, literally translated as the "Way of the Pistol," is the appropriate Japanese name for our sport when practiced as a traditional Zen martial art.

While you may have thought of Zen as distant and mysterious, bear with me while I present it here in a series of diverse articles for you to explore. I encourage you to set aside any preconceived notions you have about Zen and check out these works. At minimum, you will gain insight into an aspect of competitive shooting that you may never have considered before.

As far as I know, this is the first extensive collection of writings published in *any* medium that explore the practice of precision pistol shooting as a Zen art.

Use the buttons on the navigation bar to the right to journey through the many writings on Zen in Shooting.