

Traditional or ‘Modern’?

Traditional: being part of the beliefs, customs or way of life of a particular group of people, that have not changed for a long time. Following older methods and ideas rather than modern or different ones

Modern: of the present time or recent times ([contemporary](#))

So, what do you study, teach, train in? Is it a Traditional Martial Art System (TMA) or a Modern Martial Art System (MMA)? [Please note I usually refer to MMA as Modern martial art rather than Mixed Martial art as all martial systems are of a mixed origin, if you look back at their development 😊].

For me the distinction is difficult if I stop and think about it. I usually just reply that I train in a Traditional system, however – The style I train in is actually based on a Traditional system, with the values and discipline these systems are normally known for, but we have absorbed techniques, ideas, methodologies and philosophies from other combat systems and areas to help improve (hopefully) what we train, and some of these are modern or contemporary titbits of knowledge.

Does this mean I train in a Modern Martial Art? Does it matter? Should there be any real distinction between Traditional and Modern? At some point in history all Traditional Martial arts were Modern, groundbreaking, revolutionary, a dangerously different way of thinking. The Masters of old are remembered not just for their abilities on the mat or on the street, but also because they broke away from the normal way of doing things, they adapted to the changes of their times, should we try to do any different, if we follow their footsteps how are we progressing and evolving our arts for the future. We all want to be as good as the Masters, both Old and New, but surely it is better for us to attempt to walk their path at their side rather than follow doggedly behind. Surely it doesn't matter if you train in a system that is 2000 years old and was used on the battlefield, or if you train in a 20 year old system developed and used by Modern Soldiers. As long as it works for you and helps to keep you safe it doesn't matter if it is labelled Traditional or Modern, all martial systems should strive to honour their roots but move into the Future, labels can hold us back and restrict our thinking, the journey is long and I would rather enjoy the scenery than worry about labels. So, in future when asked which I train in I'm going to reply with Martial Arts 😊

Respect to all my Martial Arts Family Members, even those I've yet to meet.

Yours in Budo,

Shihan D. Court

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