

Current issues concerning Budo along with cultural change : Beyond the dichotomy between tradition and internationalization

Yuya SATO* and Seiji INOUE**

Abstract

This study seeks to examine the traditional thought inherent in the bodywork in *Budo* and discuss current issues surrounding it. In addition, this is an attempt to reevaluate its originality as a bodywork facing cultural change. E. Hobsbawm stated that many traditions are quite recent in origin, and invented tradition is understood as a set of ritualistic or symbolic practices, implying continuity with the past. *Budo* was established as an old Japanese culture when Jigoro Kano created *Judo* in 1882. Even though he respected traditional culture and tried to adapt it to modern society to create a new tradition, a coherent continuity is clearly visible in the developmental process. In addition, such a rapid internationalization has produced apparently opposite concepts : *Judo* as a traditional culture and *Judo* as a sport. Yet *Judo* must present a logical connection with the past to move beyond the dichotomy of tradition and internationalization.

Budo forms part of the Japanese educational system, and we must carefully examine the bodywork's usefulness, as well as how it benefits moral development in the educational context. In addition, the *Budo* training called "*Keiko*" mainly involves mastering several techniques and contains culture cultivated over the years as well as the philosophy by which we can feel and touch traditional ideas through bodywork. Understanding traditional culture through the *Budo* bodywork is the basic viewpoint in human formation, which is seen from Kano's consistent stance in promoting *Judo* to the world as traditional culture. The originality of *Budo* as bodywork and its educational values must be passed on to the present generation despite cultural change ; even then, it is necessary for us to reevaluate the originality of *Budo* as it faces cultural change and reflect on current issues relevant to it.

Key words; Budo Judo Cultural change Traditional culture Bodywork

* Graduate School of Sport System, Kokushikan University

** Faculty of Physical Education, Kokushikan University

1. Problem of issue

E. Hobsbawm declared that many traditions are often quite recent in origin and that invented tradition is taken to mean a set of ritual or symbolic practices governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules, automatically implying a continuity with the past¹⁾. *Budo* began as an old Japanese culture with Jigoro Kano's creation of *Judo* in 1882. Despite his respect for traditional culture and his attempt to adapt its form to modern society to create a new tradition, the developmental process has clearly shown a coherent continuity.

Judo then spread dramatically throughout the international community. However, as Imafuku pointed out, *Judo* was forced to set aside the uniqueness of traditional culture and become embroiled in modern concepts during its development²⁾. The rapid internationalization produced opposing concepts : *Judo* as traditional culture and *Judo* as a sport³⁾. Yet again, *Judo* has to present a coherent continuity with the past.

Nishikawa also appreciated that individual aesthetics mixed and became a "crucible of value" in the *Judo* competitions at the Rio Olympics⁴⁾. This is not a denial of contemporary *Judo* in the international community but rather a simple description of the transformation process of traditional culture trying to cope with modern society based on differing values. As with the regression of its origins, the essence of *Budo* needs to be reevaluated in a way that is appropriate for the present.

2. Purpose of the study

This study aims to examine the traditional thought embedded in the bodywork in *Budo* as well as discuss current issues surrounding the subject. This paper also attempts to reevaluate the originality of *Budo* as a bodywork that faces cultural change.

3. Cultural change involving *Budo*

The word "culture" is "a general term for lives that people have mastered from society by learning, including the style and content of life such as clothing, meals, housing, technology, academy, arts, morality, religion, etc⁵⁾." According to Kumon, culture is defined as "the various aspects of human acts learned and transmitted among people of the society unconsciously, and something that cannot be seen directly and be known by after reflection⁶⁾." Therefore, in a broad sense, culture is regarded as nonmaterial or formal, something akin to a custom or practice created through human social life, that is, human learning and communication in a limited space.

Ogasawara stated that the code of conduct in Japanese society incorporates *Budo* as part of the country's traditional culture⁷⁾. W. Cynarski also pointed out that it forms a kind of Japanese educational system within martial arts⁸⁾. The Japanese code of conduct is at the essence of *Budo* ; therefore, its origins may not be lost through cultural change. Based on the viewpoint that "the body is a culture⁹⁾," *Budo* expresses society's cultural background through the body and clearly reflects

the physical dimension of Japanese traditional culture.

Sogawa observed that sport is a complex system focused on rules for determining excellence in which different cultural elements of society—spiritual, social, and technical—are interdependently related¹⁰. *Budo* is also a culture premised on the affirmation of others¹¹ ; if one lacks this cultural code for interpreting the other, one is incapable of correctly understanding the intent of the actions expressed through the body¹². The internationalization of *Budo* beyond the common cultural code is aided by the universality of quantified techniques based on modern rationalism¹³.

Internationalization moves people from local communities onto the global stage and includes the contradictory trend of strengthening differentiation, enabling diversity¹⁴. Cultural change is also caused by internationalization. More specifically, the *Budo* prototype inevitably changes in the process of internationalization ; therefore, it is necessary for us to consider both its origin and cultural change in a well-balanced manner¹⁵.

A famous example of the difficulties surrounding cultural exchange in the paradox of globalization is the case of the “Sushi Police¹⁶” . In this incident, Japan’s Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries was concerned about the marketing of non-Japanese food as “Japanese” in overseas sushi shops and, thus, proposed an international standard for Japanese cuisine, which garnered opposition as it was deemed an obstruction to the development of a new food culture. Although the issue eventually disappeared with the emphatic declaration “The sushi police are on their way!” in the *Washington Post*¹⁷, it still teaches us how challenging it is to control or accept cultural change within overseas cultural exemplars.

Ogasawara pointed out further the importance of not abandoning the common effort to maintain cultural ideas based on the premise of recognizing differences in the face of globalization¹⁸. It is essential to find common ground between *Budo* as traditional culture and *Budo* as a sport and keep the two well-balanced. Imafuku noted that traditional sport includes ritualistic and religious aspects that are not necessarily part of the modern context of sport¹⁹. Still, the origin of *Budo* does not change despite being accepted as a sport. Therefore, we need to reevaluate the originality of *Budo* as a consistent development from the past.

Budo originated from Kano’s creation of *Judo* in 1882, but despite undergoing changes as a response to such a transition, *Budo* has survived to this day as part of traditional Japanese culture. Reflecting on this history, one sees that the problem of damaging the “cultural” value *Budo* through cultural change is not simply a result of internationalization but was rather dangerously embedded in tradition from the beginning. Nakamura states²⁰,

Always with having intrinsic trigger, the tradition of *Budo* has to keep changing little by little to produce a new life. [...] In realizing that *Budo* is a process of adjusting the mind and body from inside, the tradition of *Budo* shall make up a new life through one’s awareness.

To preserve *Budo* as an aspect of traditional culture, it would be prudent to regard it as both original and modern. It is a bodywork technique inherited through changing times, and that process

of acquisition is called traditional culture. Therefore, one would be required to adopt the stance of inheriting traditional culture by following its origin to understand the present tendency of *Budo* caused by cultural change.

Murata noted that the guideline for discussing cultural change involves human wisdom passing across borders or nations²¹⁾. Thus, the so-called *Judo* as *Budo* faces cultural change may reflect new possibilities and guidelines for internationalization. Ogasawara's declaration that "changing the original form is not a negative element of the culture²²⁾" compels us to pay attention to *Budo* in the world.

4. Human education of *Budo*

The term "culture" includes two dimensions : traditional culture and intelligent culture, called "Kyoyo." The dictionary definition of *Kyoyo* is "to educate and nurse, to improve human nature and intelligence by disciplines or arts etc., the cultural content, knowledge, the way of behavior and so on depends on the change of the age and cultural idea of the nations.²³⁾" In addition, the Central Council for Education promotes nurturing *Kyoyo* through rich cultural experience²⁴⁾. Meanwhile, the term "education" means "one of the fundamental functions of society and the activity that intentionally encourages people by others and in the result to make a desirable one change and to realize the value²⁵⁾." Therefore, *Kyoyo* refers primarily to subjective efforts for human formation, whereas education is one effect of promoting such a formation. Touching on *Budo* as traditional culture in the educational framework leads to nurturing *Kyoyo*, where the traditional code of conduct in Japanese society is deeply involved.

The topic of *Budo* as culture is important to the discussion of cultural change. Ogasawara stated that culture is a code of conduct that is deeply involved in the common identity of social organizations and that *Budo* as part of Japanese culture contains code and identities²⁶⁾. According to Kano, modern *Judo* was assumed to be an "educational" mission at the time of its establishment²⁷⁾. Cautioning against excessive intellectual education by calling for balance between moral and physical education, he staunchly advocated sanitary ideas and physical education by recommending *Judo* and *Kendo* along with walking, running, jumping, and swimming²⁸⁾. In addition, he considered the purpose of physical education in school as not only the development of the body but also the total development of one's life²⁹⁾.

Kano declared that one essence of an ideal physical education is a meaningful application of movement to daily life : he then recommended *Judo* as a movement for intellectual and moral education. His definition of *Judo* is "the way to use the mind and body power most effectively," and following that definition, one would see that everything is called *Judo*³⁰⁾. Kano referred to its usage as follows³¹⁾ :

Judo is the way to use the mind and body power most effectively, but all human actions in society must aim at "Zen (good thing)," so that it should be used for that purpose.

Kano said that all human actions should aim toward *Zen* but that it must be *Zen* throughout one's life. Such a philosophy becomes deeply involved in the concept of "*Michi*" (way) in *Budo*. Tokitsu stated that *Budo* is formed by the practice of "*Bu*" (martial arts) with an awakening to *Michi* ; it is important for such a concept to have an ascending and long-term perspective³²⁾. Ogasawara also noticed that *Michi* in *Budo* is a never-ending process³³⁾ ; therefore, *Michi* can be achieved by striving for continuous growth.

This concept is always the root of *Budo* and denies "the doctrine that victory is everything" seen in modern *Budo*. Tomozoe's words express this idea succinctly³⁴⁾ :

The other person loses inevitably in martial arts. Thus victory or defeat in martial arts is relative. So the parties of martial arts schools came to desire to conquer this relativity, then to reach a stage of absoluteness. It was the inquiry of ideas transcending victory or defeat and life or death, where they were obliged to approach some kinds of religion or philosophy.

Winning and losing in *Budo* are both inevitable, and, considering its relation to education, this is not a simple matter. Therefore, Kano stated that the spirituality of *Michi* is indispensable in *Budo* ; even if *Judo* spreads worldwide, the value of real *Judo* may not be acknowledged without the spirit³⁵⁾.

Kano also recommended comprehensive human formation through *Judo* while asserting its effectiveness from various aspects of educational value. The effectiveness of equally improving both physical and mental aspects is not only by *Judo* but also by the educational possibility embedded in overall *Budo* ; such a method is called the "mind-body training system." Simply put, the mind-body training system within *Budo* as traditional culture is also seen to characterize *Budo* itself.

Different from Western views, oriental philosophy promotes the unity of mind and body. According to Yuasa, "the various training methods of modern sport are generally aimed at improving physical ability, in a more limited sense, the athletic capacity of muscle in the limbs and its purpose is not mental training or the cultivation of character³⁶⁾." On the other hand, in the Japanese mind-body view, the specific purpose of *Budo* is "to improve the mental (or spiritual) ability through physical training³⁷⁾."

Abe also pointed out the Japanese people's monistic view of technique based on the oriental mind-body theory, whereas Westerners may have a dualistic view based on rationalism³⁸⁾. In other words, the relationship between body and mind is central to *Budo*. Tokitsu describes the specificity of body-centered structure of *Budo* compared with the recognition in Western thought as follows³⁹⁾ :

Mind and body are unified in *Budo*. Although the spiritual aspect of western fencing is obvious, they are separated in western thought and it is different from the assimilated structure in *Budo*. [...] The thought and method of *Budo* would light the blind spot of western culture.

Human formation through *Budo*, in which the body and mind interact, is realized in harmony. The

system presents new possibilities in modern society, primarily based on Western cultural modes of thought. The human formation system seen in *Budo* is a mind-body training system ceaselessly transmitted as part of traditional culture.

5. Bodywork in *Budo*

The culture-integrated use of the body is called “bodywork.” This is defined by M. Morse as “man’s traditional way of using the body in each society⁴⁰.” Therefore, the practical mind-body training system in *Budo* is one of bodywork. It harmonizes the mind and body to promote the development of individuals without creating a “mismatch.” In other words, it aims to build the mind and body as the foundation of human formation by sensitizing bodily feelings. In modern society where different values are mixed, understanding tradition based on bodily sensation as cultivated in *Budo* has a certain educational value and is a basic viewpoint in the field of human education. In addition, it is a process of understanding traditional culture through the body.

The bodily sense in *Budo* is cultivated through “*Keiko*” (training), meaning “looking back at the past,” where we can see a huge accumulation of history providing continuity with the past⁴¹. One characteristic of *Budo* is the education of the mind and body through bodywork ; however, the concrete educational system occurring through *Keiko* in *Budo* mainly involves the mastery of several techniques, as well as aspects of traditional culture cultivated throughout the years. In addition, such a system entails a philosophy that allows for the tangible sensation of fruitful ideas through bodily movement. Thus, acknowledging the perspective of cultural differences within the training leads to the comprehension of current issues in the education of the body. It is necessary for us to once again recognize the importance of such value.

Motomura said that *Budo* as physical education is an important “place” relative to traditional culture ; in its sport aspect, one directly attacks their opponent’s body to achieve victory, which requires respect for others and traditional actions⁴². In studying *Budo*, one understands traditional thinking, particularly regarding respecting others and concentrating on practice and games⁴³. In other words, one of the roles of *Budo* is preserving one’s connection to Japanese traditional culture.

The bodywork in *Budo* also leads to an understanding of tradition and encourages the sensitization of bodily feelings. Uchida stated that the body’s quest to seek pleasure starts through discomfort avoidance and that learning empirically about such discomfort sensitizes the body to its movement ; this is one of the most important factors of physical training in *Budo*⁴⁴. It is crucial for us to understand our own body well in *Budo*. The bodywork in *Budo* is stylized by “*Kata*” (form) at its most basic. According to Nakazawa, being conscious of unconscious movement is the cultural refinement of self-action⁴⁵. He describes *Kata* as follows⁴⁶ :

Establishing such a cultural norm makes it possible to grasp the state of the body. [...] In addition to correcting the deviation of the body, it leads to recognition of the deformation of the body more clearly.

Recognizing and correcting the condition of one's own body through *Kata* leads to understanding and maintaining its normal state. However, the word "*Kata*" has a more restrictive meaning : that of limiting one's bodily freedom as "stereotyped" or "unusual." According to its dictionary definition, "*Kata* is the original form that produces the shape of individuals⁴⁷⁾," but it is important to say that further development is also expected from this base without being bounded by *Kata* itself. According to Saito⁴⁸⁾,

Kata is usually thought to limit freedom. However, good *Kata* makes people free. [...] If *Rei* is grasped as *Kata*, it is not always necessary to consider the other's emotions. It can also reduce the stress on human relationships by maintaining reasonable rules.

Through *Kata*, human social life can develop into a more advanced cultural stage. Saito also stressed that the value of *Kata* can be learned by iteration without understanding its significance⁴⁹⁾. Therefore, by encountering traditional culture in *Kata*, one can learn traditional ideas and culture through bodywork.

According to Nakamura, the techniques lost from modern *Budo* remain in various types of *Kata*⁵⁰⁾. In other words, learning wisdom and the thoughts of pioneers through body movement can be done through practicing *Kata*. Here, Japanese culture has been assumed to have originally emphasized physical elements ; therefore, it is necessary to understand that intellectual and moral education is connected to physical practice.

Mental elements are also important in *Budo*. In particular, "*Rei*" is an important practice of *Budo* bodywork. Nakamura said that *Rei* is a form of culture, changing with time and place, in which unexplainable distortions are sometimes tolerated⁵¹⁾. Like culture, it is necessary to recognize *Rei* as something changeable. The dictionary definition of *Rei* refers to a collective term for living standards that maintain social order, including manners, facilities, crafts, and others, in which Confucianism is the most important moral idea⁵²⁾. However, in *Budo*, merely maintaining the spirit of *Rei* in such a limited sense may narrow its meaning.

Nakamura provided the example of pursuing "beauty of form" as one of the features of *Rei* in *Budo*⁵³⁾. In addition, Nishimura suggested that politeness, another aspect of *Rei*, is intimidating⁵⁴⁾. Nishikawa developed an appreciation of this during the *Judo* competition at the Rio Olympic Games in the attitude of Shohei Ohno, who organized his actions until he got off the tatami after finishing *Rei* with an opponent and embodied its spirit⁵⁵⁾. More specifically, beautiful *Rei* expresses not only respect for others but also one's own "quiet strength."

Rei was born as a cultural activity and was transformed into a "threat and provocation" : a physiological and behavioral mechanism to avoid conflict⁵⁶⁾. It is a "rule" or "cultural" mechanism, as well as a cultural lubricant in human society, reflecting the spirit of concession and respect. However, as a combination of several elements, beautiful *Rei* intimidates others. The suggestion of violence inherent in *Budo* has been accepted as "quiet strength" and has been adapted to the present although its manifestation as a pursuit of excellence goes beyond the competitive nature.

Internationalization inevitably leads to cultural transformation, and *Budo* continues to change. After all, traditional culture not only inherits old things but also creates new ones. In this sense, *Budo* can showcase its original nature without being caught in a given time or place. We must reevaluate the essential bodywork in *Budo* in terms of an entire mind-body training system.

As a clue to solve the original role of *Budo*, Nakazawa states that intellectual endeavors and art are phenomena formed in the world around them and their meanings and values are understood only by people who belong to the same world⁵⁷⁾. Ikuta has the following remarks on the subject⁵⁸⁾ :

In the traditional *Geido* (arts), watching the training of pupils, chatting with peers and listening to the conversation of the master and pupils are all considered a part of training and immersing oneself in or infiltrating the world of the art is an extremely important factor in acquiring the art.

Daily life and traditional techniques are closely related. In Kano's strong suggestion, the concept of *Michi* in shaping one's life without interruption and the spirit of *Rei* might be valuable as cultural mechanisms strongly promoting the application of *Budo* to everyday life. Regardless of age and place, learning these values through bodywork holds a certain significance.

A. Bennett observed that the cultural change in *Budo* is often described as "cultural friction," but whether this is positive or negative as a site for cross-cultural communication, it provides a good chance for different cultures to study one another⁵⁹⁾. In a global society, cultural change and cross-cultural friction are inevitable. The task currently imposed regarding *Budo* is the deep understanding of its value and the attitudes necessary to adapt to cultural change.

Mutual understanding is compulsory because *Budo* assumes the affirmation of others. *Budo* is performed in harmony between the mind-body self and others. Thus, *Budo* is an important "place" to cultivate human relationships. The cultural act is a guideline for self-formation in modern society. Yet, it is still necessary to reevaluate the usefulness of the *Budo* bodywork itself within the educational framework.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the traditional thought inherent in the *Budo* bodywork along with relevant issues in the present. In addition, this study tried to reevaluate the originality of *Budo* as a bodywork facing cultural change. To echo Nakamura's words, when one realizes and becomes aware that *Budo* is a process of adjusting the mind and body from the inside, its tradition will create a new life⁶⁰⁾. Cultural change because of internationalization is inevitable, and *Budo* as part of Japanese culture has faced many different influences and continues to transform. Not only does traditional culture inherit old things, but also it continues to produce new ones. We need to review the originality of *Budo* as a distinctive bodywork and the mission of the mind-body training system.

The basic viewpoint in human education is understanding traditions based on bodily senses

through *Budo*. Kano's constant promotion of *Judo* internationalization may contain an inherent success for traditional culture. Yet, when considering current issues facing *Budo*, it is necessary for us to note the significance of the original intention of opening *Budo* to the world. To inherit *Budo* as traditional culture, it is vital to respect the original as well as changes brought about by modernity. Bodywork techniques are inherited through changing times ; however, their acquisition process is part of traditional culture. It is important for us to deeply understand that the originality of *Budo* as bodywork, as well as its educational value must be acknowledged even after cultural change has occurred.

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