

A study on the tradition of Judo: Focusing on “qualitative thoughts on traditional Japanese values”

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to re-evaluate the diverse values of Judo from the perspective of manner. It also attempts to consider the prospect of martial arts, which respects tradition but looks ahead to further development.

Budo in modern society recognizes great value in competition. However, its maturity is different compared to that as a cultural entity. Therefore, the individual is immature as a Budo athletes. The way Budo adapt to modern society should be a culture that can include such athletes, and we need someone to guide them.

Judo shows the methods and processes of education for various purposes. However, the goal of integrating those “Michi” is cultural excellence. Thus, Judo and other martial arts are systems that aim to develop maturity in cultural beings. Moreover, a new martial arts culture will continue to be created by the mature existence there. Therefore, the development potential of culture by the mutual relationship between humans and culture and universal value thinking at the core of that interaction are the traditional qualities of Budo. We will disseminate the structure and elements globally. Furthermore, efforts to popularize better Budo will be the foundation that will support the future development of the Budo.

Key words: Judo, Budo, manner

I. The problem

Given that culture is a community of diverse elements, maintaining order is necessary to stabilize it. Various ways are available to maintain the order of culture, but rules are commonly used to control acculturation because of their coercive power.

One example is the tactics centered on MOROTEGARI (双手刈), which was rampant in Judo competitions before 2008, and the trend of the International Judo Federation (hereinafter translated as “IJF”) against it. Therefore, the IJF stipulated new rules restricting attacks to the lower body, citing that MOROTEGARI, which is unleashed from a non-combined state, significantly infringes on the cultural character of Judo¹⁾. While the efforts of the IJF have been evaluated as having taken the initiative to preserve the culture of Judo, frequent voices of disappointment have also emerged at the loss of the various techniques based on its principles. Thus, the rule-based control aimed at

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the succession of tradition can lead to the loss of the diverse values and individuality contained therein, and for martial arts, it can lead to serious losses.

II. Purpose of the study

This study seeks to re-evaluate the various values of Judo from the viewpoint of manners. Moreover, it is an attempt to consider the future of martial arts while respecting tradition and looking ahead to further development.

III. Budo and manner

Nakabayashi insists on the difference between sports that evaluate techniques that are performed at the very limit of penalties as advanced and effective and Budo that seeks more accurate and beautiful techniques that stay away from those regulations as much as possible²⁾. Apparently, restricting one's behavior beyond what is enforced by the rules appears to be irrational behavior. However, such behavior is based on cultural history, and such a peculiar code of conduct is sometimes understood as "manners."

Budo is a culture that emphasizes "Rei." Hence, for Budo that learns the art of attacking the opponent, Rei of Budo is also an essential element for social acceptance. Additionally, the calming of the spirit through bowing originates from Zen Buddhism, which was adopted to release the tension in the body when martial arts was a battlefield technique³⁾. This kind of diversity of Rei remains influential today. Nonetheless, when presenting the significance of etiquette in modern martial arts, it is generally limited to respect for others. Broadly interpreting the meaning of Rei is also an important attempt to grasp its reality.

First, the assertion of Yano serves as a reference here. Yano focuses on the fact that etiquette is always fixed. According to him, etiquette deepens friendships with members of the community, but it also limits relationships beyond the community⁴⁾. Therefore, the characteristics of etiquette include "the effect of making relationships with others closer" and "the effect of making relationships with others uniform."

Kimura's definition of manners is also crucial. Kimura considers manners to be "a kind of physical technique created so that humans do not have to face the animal dimension of humans as much as possible⁵⁾." Kimura cites the roles of manners as "moderation" to maintain order in civil society and "differentiation" to show off the cultural sophistication of an individual⁶⁾. Both roles aim to maintain the order of culture, but they operate in very different ways. The aspect of moderation suppresses the desires and short-sighted behavior of an individual and encourages the selection of appropriate actions on the spot. Conversely, the performance of differentiation has the role of showing the cultural value of an individual by controlling and refining his/her behavior and showing off his/her mastery.

In modern society, manners, rules, and morals act in multiple ways, and direct "physical strength" weakens its value. Consequently, human society is recognized as a different dimension from the natural world (animal society), which is built on the basis of instinctive behavior. Nevertheless,

considering the point of Morris that “people judge the status of others by small differences in clothing and customs⁷⁾,” there is no big difference in the structure of human society and animal society for the purpose of showing off the worth of an individual. Therefore, to demonstrate the value of an individual culturally while maintaining the order of culture, the refinement of *Rei* and manner is always required from both sides of moderation and differentiation.

The concept of manners is a kind of physical technique that supports the maintenance and development of culture, and it is also critical in martial arts. Thus, if the maintenance of order is entrusted only to the restrictions of rules, then the spread and deepening of that culture will be cut off. The concept of manners is not constrained by the relationship between opposing existences and their elements, and even with all the contradictions, it forms an order there. Hence, the concept of manners is to encourage coexistence with opposing beings, and it is what makes the inherent contradictions of martial arts a culture.

VI. Acquisition of manner and inheritance of culture

One of the traditional characteristics of Budo is that it is a cultural educational system, but Budo is a culture created by humans. Thus, it is only when humans, who have matured culturally through Budo, inherit their techniques and ideas that a unique form of tradition emerges, and the continuation of culture is guaranteed. From such mutually supportive structure of culture and human beings, the importance of looking at the existence of Budo athletes who form themselves within the Budo culture becomes clear. Many of the Budo athletes can be understood as “excellence” who seek cultural sophistication through mind-boggling repetition.

As Thomas points out, excellence is highly ambiguous⁸⁾. Sato cites the achievements of athletes and achievements as an example of excellence but insists that it is only a part of excellence⁹⁾. However, the discussion showed that the improvement of technical skills and competitiveness is also one of the excellences. Hence, “excellence in Budo” refers to the presence of refinement of many Budo skills, including competitive ability. Sato states that the “*Michi* process (Budo and *Geido* training),” which aims to acquire physical techniques with cultural value, is the process of sublimating oneself into a cultural existence. Thus, that “cultural existence” is the excellence of Budo, and its existence can also be confirmed in “Budo as a competitive sport,” which is the center of various discussions.

According to Nishimura, the mental attitude of suppressing emotions has existed in the sports world of Japan for a long time, and various forms of it have been confirmed even today¹⁰⁾. It also suppresses the emotions caused by sports wins and losses. Such peculiar spirituality is related to the origin of martial arts. The Zen Buddhist practice that influenced the spirituality of Budo was aimed at attaining “*Mushin*,” a way out of pain¹¹⁾. Accordingly, Sogawa points out that *Bujyutsu* aimed to dissolve the relationship between himself and his enemies¹²⁾. Sogawa also asked, “Was the dissolution of the relationship between himself and the enemy really useful in killing people¹³⁾.” In any case, there is no doubt that such circumstances deepened the cultural character of Budo. Hence, the aim of Budo’s development can be expressed as the pursuit of ideas that transcend victory. The cultural

nature of Budo, which was deepened by the introduction of religious thought, remains a certain amount of influence over time, and the numerous behaviors based on this are elements that play a role in cultural existence.

On the basis of such a premise, I would like to consider the tradition of Budo from the point of view of an athlete. Weiss says, "young people can't do much about preserving or contributing to culture ... the best most of them can do is excel at sports¹⁴⁾". However, it is also described as a goal worthy enough for them. Weiss also discloses, "The contestant is fighting to satisfy himself in the present when he himself is creating him. We seek, can, and will excel in excellence¹⁵⁾."

The mentally and physically immature perspective of athletes is often focused only on the task at hand. Furthermore, this approach is a process of forming oneself through self-motivated efforts aimed solely at self-satisfaction. Emotions generated by such subjective actions become various "experiential values of sport" and form the self. Takahashi states the following : ¹⁶⁾.

Experience impoverishment is on the rise in modern societies. However, people who play sports have the possibility of being released from that crisis and encountering an open field of experience. Examination of the experiential values of sport is also an opportunity to re-evaluate the educational and social value of sports that transcends existing frameworks.

Furthermore, Takahashi says, "Humans accept various meanings from the sports environment and grow in the process¹⁷⁾." In the future, the value of Budo culture must be discussed, without focusing only on the growth of athletes and the inheritance of culture. There, in addition to improving competitiveness that attracts considerable interest, developing a "Budo environment" that allows contact with the rich value concepts of Budo is necessary.

Budo in modern society also recognizes great value in competition. If so, then excelling in competitive ability is also a state in which a part of the value of Budo is acquired. However, maturity as a player achieved in the process does not mean maturity as a cultural being. Hence, as a Budo athlete, he is only halfway there. As a way of martial arts culture that adapts to modern society, it is necessary to include such "sports-like Budo athletes" is crucial. The presence of those who lead them to cultural existence is indispensable.

Much of the current interest in Budo is focused on "competition" and "education". However, focusing on various values that Budo has in the future is necessary ; hence, preparing an environment and human resources that can provide such diverse values will be an effort to support the future development of Budo.

V. Conclusion

Budo has an aspect of seeking more correct and beautiful technology by restricting its own actions beyond the framework of "rule". Therefore, the behavior of Budo is a technique refined based on its history and experience and a concept of "manner" that transcends so-called universal concepts, such as rules and ethics. Although it contains all sorts of contradictions, it still forms an

order. The acquisition of manners is an attempt to create a culture that embraces diverse ways of being, and the respect for this is a uniquely Japanese sense of values and represents part of the cultural value that martial arts contain.

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