

TOWARDS A GENERAL THEORY OF COMBAT (FIGHTING ARTS)

FUMINORI NAKIRI

Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, Tokyo (Japan)
President of the Japanese Academy of Budo (Japan)
e-mail: nakiri@cc.tuat.ac.jp

Concept of budo and the history and activities of the Japanese Academy of Budo¹

Submission: 16.10.2014; acceptance: 13.12.2014

Key words: concept of budo, history and activities, the Japanese Academy of Budo

Abstract

Research perspective and problem. The concept of “budo” and understanding of this term was undertaken through a historical approach. The aim of the study was also to show the activities of the Japanese Academy of Budo (JAB).

Material and methods. An analysis of hermeneutical statements of specialists, researchers of “budo” was made. Source materials and contemporary studies (analysis of the subject literature) were used.

Results and conclusions. The author of the study concentrates on the idea of “budo”. According to him and other researches the concept of martial arts includes budo, but the distinctiveness of budo is acknowledged. However, there is no distinction between “martial arts” and “combat sports”. Martial arts encompass religious, traditional, ethical, and dance concepts, suggesting a transformation in the theoretical meaning of the term. The use of “fighting arts” is also problematic as it does not distinguish the various characteristics of budo. The author suggests that budo should not be translated as “martial art”, but referred to as “budo” to underline various differences and thus the term “budo” should become internationally recognised.

The study also discusses the policy of the Japanese Academy of Budo, which was established in 1968, postulating that budo studies should not be an independent field of inquiry that is separated from practice, but that research activities should link research with the place of practice.

The important issues currently facing the Academy’s activities are aimed to: elucidate the concept and characteristics of budo, stimulate the activities of the Academy, support the incorporation of budo into the compulsory health and physical education curriculum for junior high schools, which began in Academic Year 2012, develop young researchers, conduct exchanges with researchers outside of Japan for the internationalization of budo study, and expand the English text and contents on the Academy website.

History

The Nippon Budokan was constructed to serve as the venue for judo at the 18th Olympic Games in Tokyo in 1964. The first president of the Nippon Budokan, Matsutaro Shoriki, stated that “In order to promote budo participation among youth, we will need a new generation of excellent instructors in tune with the age. To this end, we need to

develop budo as an academic field of inquiry”. Shoriki spearheaded an effort to work with universities and persons involved with budo, and the Japanese Academy of Budo was subsequently established in 1968.

Organization and Activities

The policy of the Japanese Academy of Budo is that budo studies should not be an independent field of inquiry that is separated from practice, but that research activities should be conducted from the view of always linking research with the place

¹ It was the first invited keynote speech during the 3rd World Scientific Congress of Combat Sports and Martial Arts, and the 3rd IMACSSS International Conference in Rzeszów 2014

of practice, which offers great originality from an academic perspective.

The Academy's headquarters are located inside the Nippon Budokan, and its members include budo teachers, university professors who specialize in budo, health and physical education, as well as teachers at elementary, junior high, and high schools. The Academy currently has around 900 members.

The Japanese Academy of Budo operates by collecting annual member fees (Yen 5,000) and through periodically-issued subsidies from the Nippon Budokan (around Yen 2,000,000). Mainly, subsidies are used to conduct research activities for publication in periodicals. The Academy is based in Tokyo and has 7 branches (Tokyo, Saitama, Tokai, Hokuriku, Kansai, Yamanashi and Chushikoku). Additionally, there are specialist subcommittees for the various budo disciplines (judo, kendo, sumo, kyudo, karate and naginata). In 2014, the Academy also established a specialist subcommittee for budo for the disabled.

The main activity of the Academy is the organization of an annual research convention. The convention hosts a general meeting, research presentations (oral and poster sessions), and a symposium on a timely topic, accompanied by lectures and workshops conducted within the specialist subcommittees.

Research presentations are categorized into the humanities and social sciences, natural sciences, and budo instruction methods. Humanities and social sciences cover research from the perspective of budo philosophy, ideas, principles, historical science, psychology and sociology. Natural sciences cover research from the perspective of budo kinesiology, biomechanics, body dynamics and sports engineering. Budo instruction methods cover practical research related to coaching and teaching content for the various budo disciplines. The *Research Journal of Budo*, the periodical of the Academy, is published three times per year. The contents of the periodical can be viewed by anyone accessing the J-Stage site from the Academy website (www.budo.ac).

Among these disciplines, kendo and judo are the focus of the largest amount of research, and philosophical and principles research on budo is also prevalent. This data is slightly outdated now, but research trends have remained essentially unchanged. Also, although most research has been done in the fields of the humanities or natural sciences, recently there has been a considerable amount of work conducted in the area of budo pedagogy.

The important issues currently facing the Academy's activities are as follows:

1. Elucidate the concept and characteristics of budo
2. Stimulate the activities of the Academy.

Specifically, improving the research level of individual researchers, as well as both improving the quality and expanding the content of the *Research Journal of Budo*, is needed. This can be achieved by increasing the acceptance rate of Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) for acquiring research funds. In turn, this will lead to growth in research, and the successful acquisition of research funds will improve the performance assessment of individual researchers and promote increased professorships and hiring.

3. Support the incorporation of budo into the compulsory health and physical education curriculum for junior high schools, which began in Academic Year 2012.

In Japan, the Fundamental Law of Education was revised in 2006, and the government curriculum guide lines were revised with it, and budo became required in a junior high school from 2012. In other words all the junior high students will experience budo. Understanding that we have an excellent opportunity to popularize budo further, the Academy should survey the status of budo in the compulsory curriculum and the issues faced, and subsequently propose solutions and assess the educational effects of making budo part of the compulsory curriculum.

4. Develop young researchers. Expand instructions for graduate students at budo specialist universities, which can be achieved by expanding the awards system for young researchers. Educate young researchers about the need to actively participate in international academic conferences in order to disseminate accurate budo information to the world.
5. Conduct exchanges with researchers outside of Japan for the internationalization of budo study, and expand the English text and contents on the Academy website. To supply information to budo enthusiasts, scientific accomplishments regarding budo should be actively disseminated both inside and outside of Japan.

Concept of Budo

There is a considerable number of people worldwide with scientific interest in budo. The Korean Alliance of Martial Arts is active in Asia,

I imagine that many of them are interested in budo as a field of scholastic study as well. The number of Korean researchers was quite small, but I hope they also continue to grow.

The International Martial Arts and Combat Sports Scientific Society (IMACSSS) is actively pursuing scientific exchange among a large number of budo enthusiasts and researchers in Europe.

I participated in the 2nd World Scientific congress of Combat Sports and Martial Arts (IMACSSS) held in Poland in September, 2010. At the 2012 IMACSSS International Conference that was convened in Genova, Italy, the central topic was the competitive (game), drama, and religious ritual aspects of martial arts and combat sports. Research presentations were given on topics such as dance and traditional arts performed in religious rituals that were derived from battle. This brings up new problems in examining the concept of martial arts. If these practices continue to be embraced within the concept of martial arts, then the gulf between the concept of Japanese budo will only widen.

However, I noticed that there was no clear distinction between “martial arts” and “combat sports”. Furthermore, “martial arts” have come to encompass religious, traditional, ethical, and dance concepts, suggesting a transformation in the theoretical meaning of the term. This gave me misgivings as to whether or not “martial art” can be considered an accurate translation for Japanese “budo”.

At the 45th Annual Meeting of Japanese Academy of Budo convened at the Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology in 2012, we held an International Symposium entitled “Trends in the Global Perception of Budo”. This theme was proposed because of the need to understand how Japanese budo is seen by people outside of Japan.

Prof. Dr Wojciech J. Cynarski, president of IMACSSS, and Professor Dr Jung Haeng Kim, president of the Korean Alliance of Martial Arts, were invited to the symposium to discuss this theme. Professor Kim spoke about the educational qualities of budo for personal development. Prof. Dr Cynarski [2012] acknowledged that budo was a type of systematic education capable of providing moral direction, and facilitating personal development.

He also introduced various ways in which the martial arts are perceived:

1. Martial arts are understood as a means for competition and self-defence. The general perception of martial arts encompasses various understandings. Traditional martial arts were constructed from ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds, while modern forms were created by individuals.
2. Martial arts aim for mental and physical development by fusing combat techniques using bare hands or weapons based on tradition and ideas of personal practice. This process fuses physical training and deliberate independence with technical training, and aims for moral and mental

development. This is a highly budo-like perspective.

3. “Fighting arts” is a term that encompasses martial arts, combat sports, and budo.
4. “Combat sports” refer to competition-centred activities such as wrestling and boxing. Compared to “combat sports”, Japanese kendo and karate maintain characteristics more in line with “martial arts”.

To summarize these ideas, the concept of martial arts encompasses budo, but the distinctiveness of budo is also acknowledged. The concept of martial arts is expanding, and its differentiation from combat sports is becoming questionable. While “fighting arts” is a term that also encompasses martial arts, combat sports, and budo, the uniqueness of budo is becoming increasingly unclear.

Taking this into consideration, using “budo” as it is to represent the Japanese *budo* emphasizes its uniqueness, and differentiates it from other practices. In the future, it is both advisable and desirable to use the Japanese term *budo* to represent “budo”, and not translate it as “martial arts.”

The 2013 International Budo Conference convened by the Japanese Academy of Budo was held at the University of Tsukuba, in conjunction with the 46th Japanese Academy of Budo. The conference was conducted with the cooperation of organizations with which the Academy has had exchanges in the past, including the IMACSSS, the Korean Alliance of Martial Arts, the Forum for Budo Culture (Hungary), and the International Association of Judo Researchers (U.K.). Financial backing was received from the Nippon Budokan. More than 300 people attended the conference, including 20 participants from abroad. The symposium, entitled the “Integrated Science of Budo,” featured an exchange of opinions on budo as practice and as academic study, as well as practice and intellectual dialogue from an international perspective, and international scientific exchange concerning budo was achieved.

In Japan, the term budo first appears in *Azuma Kagami* (1195), in reference to warrior ancestry and the warrior profession. In *Taiheiki* (1371), it is used in reference to the way in which warriors must live their lives, contrasting with the way described in science, literature, and the arts. In a 1641 scroll of the Takenouchi-ryu school of classical bujutsu, the term appears in reference to the martial arts (*bujutsu*, *bungei*). During the Edo period, budo was commonly used to denote the same ideals as those in bushido. It was in 1919 that Hiromichi Nishikubo of the Dai Nippon Butoku Kai changed “bujutsu” into “budo,” and thus *kenjutsu*, *jujutsu*, and *kyujutsu* became known as kendo, judo, and kyudo, respectively. The term “kakugi” (fighting

techniques) started to be used in 1958, but was changed to "budo" in 1986 and is still in use today [source: Nakamura 1994].

With regard to the conceptual definitions and characteristics of budo, I would like to discuss the representative views of two people in particular. The first is Dr Yasuhiko Torii [2005], the former president of Keio University as well as the former chairman of the Central Council for Education of MEXT. Referring to Ruth Benedict's classic work, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946), he identifies the following qualities as having been lost by the Japanese: courtesy; returning favour; honour; shame; tenderness; hope; ambition; effort; and endurance. After Japan's defeat in the Second World War, post-war education became Westernized and democratized, and notions of individualism advanced. A self-tormenting view of history subsequently took root, and traditional outlooks concerning philosophy, ideas, culture, history and behaviour were shunned.

He thus argues that the social significance of budo is immense, given the present need for Japanese to re-establish their culture and identity. As chairman of the Central Council for Education, he asserted that it was essential for the development of Japanese youth to learn about their traditions and culture as part of their school education, which led to a decision to introduce compulsory budo education in junior high schools. As a result, budo was made part of the compulsory health and physical education curriculum at junior high schools starting in 2012. When speaking about the characteristics of budo, he talked about Inazo Nitobe's book, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, stressing the importance of moral development as human beings.

The other person I would like to mention is Professor Tsuneo Sogawa [2009] from Waseda University. He formulated four important factors in the construction of modern budo: 1. Japanese traditions or ideas that are inherently Japanese; 2. Mentality seeking differentiation from non-Japanese sporting culture; 3. Mind cultivation aiming for development through exercises in techniques derived from battle; 4. Competition and character as international sports. I think his ideas are extremely useful in defining what budo is, and will be of considerable use in steering the direction of research conducted by members of the Japanese Academy of Budo.

Bearing these views in mind, the Japanese Academy of Budo will continue its efforts to elucidate the conceptual definitions and characteristics of budo.

Conclusion

Budo is included in the idea of "martial art", but there is no clear distinction between "martial arts" and "combat sports". Furthermore, "martial arts" as I have already said, have come to encompass religious, traditional, ethical, and dance concepts, suggesting a transformation in the theoretical meaning of the term. The use of "fighting arts" is also problematic as it does not distinguish the various characteristics of budo. This gave me misgivings as to whether or not these could be considered accurate translations for Japanese "budo". My personal opinion is that budo should not be translated as "martial art", but referred to as "budo" to underline various differences. I see it as desirable that the term "budo" becomes internationally recognised.

Finally, the Japanese Academy of Budo would like to go to further develop international academic exchange with International Martial Arts and Combat Sports Scientific Society.

Reference

1. Benedict R. (1946), *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, USA.
2. Cynarski W.J. (2012), *Budo, Martial Arts and Combat Sports - Definitions, Ideas, Theories*, "Research Journal of Budo", vol. 45, no. 3, pp. 233-241.
3. Nakamura Tamio (1994), *History of Kendo Technique and Culture* [in:] *Kendo Encyclopedia*, Shimazu-shobou, pp. 13-15.
4. Nitobe Inazo (1900), *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, The Leeds and Biddle Company, Philadelphia.
5. Sougawa Tsuneo (2009), *Thinking about the budo of the globalization era - The concept formation of budo the modern languages*, *Modern Sports Criticism* 21, Soubunnkikaku.
6. Torii Yasuhiko (2005), *Restoration of Japanese Spirit*, Kenso, All Japan Kendo Federation, 17-3, pp. 17-27.
7. www.budo.ac

Koncepcja budo oraz historia i działalność Japońskiej Akademii Budo

Słowa kluczowe: pojęcie budo, historia i działalność, Japońska Akademia Budo

Abstrakt

Perspektywa badawcza i problem. W ujęciu historycznym podjęto problem ukazania koncepcji budo i rozumienia tego pojęcia. Celem opracowania jest także ukazanie działalności Japońskiej Akademii Budo (JAB).

Materiał i metoda. Podjęto analizę hermeneutyczną wypowiedzi specjalistów – badaczy *budo*. Sięgnięto do materiałów źródłowych i współczesnych opracowań (analiza literatury przedmiotu).

Wyniki i wnioski. Według autora badań oraz innych cytowanych w pracy badaczy, koncepcja sztuk walki zawiera „budo”, ale odrębność tego pojęcia powinna zostać uznana, chociaż często nie ma rozróżnienia między „sztukami walki” a „sportami walki”. Sztuki walki obejmują religijne, tradycyjne, etniczne, i taneczne pojęcia, sugerując transformację w teoretycznym rozumieniu tego terminu. Zastosowanie terminu „sztuki walki” jest problematyczne, ponieważ nie rozróżnia on różnych cech „budo”. Autor sugeruje, że nie należy tłumaczyć

„budo” jako „sztuki walki”, by podkreślić wielorakie różnice, a tym samym określenie „budo” powinno stać się międzynarodowym pojęciem.

Artykuł porusza także ważne kwestie dotyczące działalności Akademii, które obejmują: wyjaśnienie pojęcia i cech „budo”, stymulowanie działalności Akademii, wspieranie idei włączenia „budo” do obowiązkowego programu nauczania zdrowia i edukacji fizycznej dla szkół gimnazjalnych, który rozpoczął się w roku akademickim 2012, rozwijanie potencjału młodych naukowców, dokonywanie wymiany z naukowcami spoza Japonii w celu internacjonalizacji studiów „budo” oraz poszerzanie zakresu tekstów w języku angielskim i treści na stronie internetowej Akademii.