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FUNDAMENTALS AND COMPETITION

The First Budo Congress was held October 5, 2007 at the Polish Olympic Committee Hall in Warsaw, Poland. This historic Congress was attended by top Budo leaders as well as academic professors of History, Philosophy and Physical Education. Hidetaka Nishiyama, Chairman of the International Traditional Karate Federation, delivered the initial presentation, which was followed by discussions and a Question and Answer Session. The following is a compilation of results of the First Budo Congress.

*The aim of Budo is perfection of self
by seeking and training in the Martial Arts.*

I. Evolution of Budo

A. Combat Techniques to Bu-Gei (Martial Arts)

In Japan, during periods of internal conflict (1493-1573) fighting techniques (Bu-Jutsu) were developed. These early fighting techniques, which included swordsmanship, archery, spearmanship, long handed sword (Naginata), horseback riding, grappling, etc., were developed for group fighting. In 1603, Ieyasu Tokugawa took control and brought peace to the country, which lasted 250 years. This situation resulted in many combat experts seeking to change the early group fighting techniques to individual techniques

Experts of the various fighting systems sought, developed and established high level techniques and training systems, called Ryu-Ha (Style). As techniques became more detailed and polished, the public began to

recognize these movements as art, eventually calling them Bu-Gei (Martial Arts).

Records indicate that the oldest fighting styles were formed as early as 1000 A.D., among them Kashima-No-Tachi swordsmanship. By 1600, there were more than 40 Style groups.

Remark:

Towards the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate (around 1860), a number of Styles of Budo existed:

<u>Style</u>	<u>Number of Schools</u>
Archery	71 (10)
Horseback Riding	67 (6)
Swordsmanship (Including I'ai)	745 (120)
Spearmanship	192 (26)
Jujutsu	179 (12)

Note:

Numbers within parentheses () indicate schools sharing the same Style system but under another name.

B. Bu-Gei (Martial Arts) to Budo

After the military regime of the Tokugawa rulers, Samurai (hereditary professional soldiers) became the governing class and the study of the Martial Arts became mandatory.

Eventually, specialists and experts from various areas of education soon recognized Martial Arts not only as art but an important tool in the formation of human character and scale. These experts influenced the educational system as follows:

1. Martial Arts Leaders

Martial Arts Leaders established Dojo (Training Hall) fundamentals as follows:

(a) Decorum

The study of Martial Arts is the unlimited seeking of a higher level of personal development of mind, body and spirit. Therefore, when a student's ego convinces him

that he is the best, his development can no longer continue. The instructor must teach the student to be humble, modest and always respectful of instructors, training partners and others. This will enable the student to continue on his or her path to understanding Budo and is the reason why it is important for instructors to teach and preserve this decorum in the Dojo.

(b) Seriousness of Intention

Students of Martial Arts should train with a focused attitude and understand that their Dojo training prepares them for life and death situations. This level of effort helps one focus mentally and physically not only in Martial Arts but in daily life as well.

(c) Self-Challenge

The objective of Martial Arts training is self-development. Each day the student must try to be better than yesterday, always striving to improve technical skills as well as mental attitude. Similarly, the objective of training is not seeking to defeat a less skilled or weaker opponent, as this only stunts a student's development.

(d) Self-Discipline and Hard Training

Hard training and disciplined instruction is fundamental to Martial Arts. Modern sports psychologists agree that hard training and discipline are keys to overcoming self-doubt and nervousness.

2. Religious Masters

After a Martial Artist becomes proficient in his techniques, one "ceiling" that can hinder further progress is nervousness. For example, while competing in a match, doubt and nervousness can result in the loss of mental and physical balance and thereby compromise proper control of techniques. Zen Buddhist masters and other religious schools of thought have sought the means to eliminate such a condition.

Zen philosophy focuses on the concept of *Mu-shin* or “no mind” * meaning a removal of all unnecessary emotion. A study of Buddhist tenets combined with meditation from the Za-Zen sitting position is employed to achieve Mu-Shin.

**Dr. Ikutaro Nishida, Professor of Philosophy, explains “No mind is mind of no mind”.*

In the late 16th century Japan, a high-ranking Zen Buddhist monk named Takuan was asked by Munenori Yagyu, who was a sword instructor to the Shogun, to write about the concept of Mu-shin and its Martial Arts application. This resulted in the book “Fudouchi Shinmyoroku.” Today, this Zen Buddhist influence can be seen in the opening and closing “Sei-za” (meditative seating ceremony) practiced at most Dojos in an effort to reach Mu-shin.

Remark:

What Martial Arts received from religious masters was not religion itself but a method or an approach on the way to achieve Mu-shin.

3. Confucians

Confucians recognized the value of Martial Arts training as a way to educate the working class people who contribute to the progress and development of their country. The influence of the Confucians is evident in the ethics and social morals taught in Martial Arts Dojos.

4. Medical Researchers

Medical researchers agree that Martial Arts training is a form of physical education.

The advice and research described above complete the evolution of the Way (“Do”) of human development through Martial Arts (“Bu”).

Each Style or Dojo Group followed its own established system, but none of these systems were practiced nationwide. After Japan became a constitutional nation in 1867, a new educational system was established.

In 1911, Kendo (Swordsmanship) and Judo, under the name “Budo”, were taught as mandatory basic mental and physical education beginning in Middle School.

Remark:

(1) *Bushido and Budo*

Bushido (Samurai tradition) is a moral or ethical code of unending loyalty for the Samurai’s lord, shogun or emperor. This code was instilled in the Samurai (hereditary soldiers) during the Tokugawa Shogunate. During times of peace, these professional soldiers served as general officers for the Shogun or the local government. They studied Budo; however, most completed only elementary levels, mastering no more than a few high level techniques. Meanwhile, regular citizens also studied Budo, with some reaching truly high levels of skill. Because Budo is a physical and mental art established for the development and fulfillment of one’s human potential by consistent training in Martial Arts, it is not directly related to Bushido. However, because of the nature of Dojo training, Samurai manners and actions are evident in most Budo Dojos. This is the only connection between Bushido and Budo.

(2) *Sumo*

Sumo had its origins in the battlefield. Later it became a form of recreation popular among civilians and was a regular event at festivals. In earlier times, Sumo used kicking techniques. During the 8th century, formal rules were set and eventually formed the basis of modern Sumo. Around 1300, some Sumo practitioners separated and developed the combat art of Jujutsu.

(3) *Aiki-Jutsu*

Aiki-Jutsu originally began with Jujutsu; a group broke off and developed what later became Aiki-do.

(4) *Karate*

Karate evolved in Okinawan Japan as a weaponless Bu-Gei. This art was called Te or To-de. Around the 1920's, To-de was introduced to mainland Japan and became Karate-do.

C. Benefits of Budo

1. Physical Health

Bu-Gei (Martial Arts) body movements begin internally, first by mental condition and breathing. Initially, the mental condition and breathing methodically control the muscles resulting in muscle movement. Step by step, this internal body action creates the physical power necessary for Bu-Gei.

Since internal movement is natural to humans, this type of training (with movement starting from the inside) develops the internal organs resulting in a healthy, balanced body.

2. Character Development

The aim of Martial Arts is the unlimited seeking of a higher level of personal development of mind, body and spirit. The requirements of Dojo training result in the development of character as follows:

A. Decorum

In the Dojo, students learn to be humble, modest and always respectful of instructors, training partners and others. This type of personality also creates harmony in the Dojo and in social situations as well.

B. Stable Emotion

Dojo training develops stable emotions and enables a person to react to any situation with correct judgment and action.

C. Self Challenge

Striving to improve oneself each day is the aim of Budo. The study of Martial Arts is a continuous effort; laziness and idleness are discouraged.

D. Seriousness

Serious training with a focused attitude prepares one to make the right decisions as one learns to focus mentally and physically in the Dojo as well as in daily life.

E. The Budo doctrine of “Thinking by Mind, Acting by Ki”

With this type of training, one learns to react calmly and act firmly, without fear or doubt.

Budo was a part of Japan’s mandatory basic educational program from 1911 until the end of World War II (1945). It is believed that the mandatory study of Budo in schools is one factor responsible for the phenomenal rebuilding of Japan after the war. Today, the Japanese government is planning to reinstate Budo as a mandatory basic educational program beginning with Middle School by the year 2012.

II. Budo and Competition

Originally, sporting activities were a means of amusement as well as physical exercise. Most sports set up written rules whereby participants learned the rules for the sole intention of winning in competition.

Today, nationwide professional sports and international events such as the Olympics are experiencing tremendous global popularity. Also, recreational sports are enjoyed by millions of people and have become a part of their lives. Naturally many participants in competition sports have begun to train solely to win. Many athletes have even gone to excesses in order to win “by hook or by crook” and some have even used chemical enhancers that are detrimental to their health.

Originally, the purpose of sports was physical and mental development and creating healthy bodies. This is the basis of sportsmanship. Lately, however, it seems this has become a “dead letter” issue as some athletes have shifted their focus to winning at all cost.

Recently, Budo competitions, which developed over the last few decades, have grown in popularity because the concept of Budo along with the competition aspect appealed to the public. In addition, Budo competitions

have a major motivating influence on Martial Arts practitioners since competition has become a part of Budo training.

On the other hand, there is a danger that Budo competitions have the possibility of going the same way or following the pattern of regular sports competitions whose main focus is winning at any cost. If so, then, Budo is lost because the original aim and principles of Budo are lost.

It is necessary, then, that preparation for Budo competitions includes the following key elements:

1. Budo competition rules must be established with the same spirit and principles of each respective Budo. In regular sports, the competition rule of each sport is the definition of the respective sport itself. If Budo competition rules differ from the original ideals and principles of Budo, there is a danger that the definition of Budo itself will be changed.
2. In Budo competition, it is necessary to have “Ippon Shobu”, which is recognized as “One technique or one move destroys the opponent’s offense power”. As in real combat and based on Budo, this one technique is delivered in the shortest possible time using “Todome Waza”, destroying the opponent’s offense power.

Combat is not a game; it constitutes a very serious life or death situation and everything is at stake with just one perfectly executed and timed technique. This seriousness must be simulated in regular training whereby success is measured in the development of high level effective techniques as well as the development of the human character. The simulation of real combat is the reason why, in earlier times, Budo practitioners referred to it as “Shiai” (“Testing one another”). Oftentimes, they would make a simple agreement among themselves to aim for “Ippon Shobu” in these contests.

Remark:

Sometimes, “Sanbon Shobu” (Three rounds) is allowed whereby the winner is determined by the most rounds won.

If Budo competition uses the point system like in other sports, it will become merely a game of amusement, destroying the principles and values of Budo.

3. Budo is a philosophy; it is the principle and spirit behind the details of techniques. The manifestation or expression of these ideas as rules is very difficult. Therefore, it is necessary that Budo competition rules must be drafted by the top master of each respective Budo.
4. Competition Judges must be experts and possess an in-depth understanding of the rules and underlying spirit behind these Budo fundamentals.
5. Each respective Budo organization must establish a training system in which Budo training itself becomes competition training.
6. It is necessary for each respective Budo organization to educate its members that seeking high-level technique and self-development is more important than winning in competitions.

Budo is a treasure of human culture that has been handed down through hundreds of years as a priceless heritage. This valuable body of knowledge shows us the way to seek perfection of self through physical, mental and spiritual training. It is our responsibility to protect and preserve Budo for future generations.

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