

Is there a future for Budo in the modern epoch?

Maybe it would help if we look at what Budo means. So what are they? The term itself is modern being used in the 20th century as an umbrella name to encompass the martial arts with special emphasis on their peaceful application.

The term Martial arts is European in origin and was used by the Greeks and Romans to cover all war like fighting skills, Martial coming from the planet Mars or planet of war, therefore the western translation of Bugei better exemplifies the true meaning of martial arts.

In addition to their respective physical movements, emphasis is placed on the individual's attitude of mind, working in harmony and balance with one's own body, one's partners, all mankind and indeed the universe. Budo also teaches certain ethical aspects toward our manner, the all-embracing word 'education' is also a key feature of Budo.

Budo differ from Bugei, Bugei is the collective name given to the fighting arts of combat that primarily have one goal and that was to kill one's enemy in combat.

The true name for Budo is Shin-Budo the term Shin Budo was defined in 1868 to define the distinction between Bugei and the now shortened name of Budo.

Budo are now regarded as sport and in 1964 Judo was included in the Olympic games thus firmly establishing it in the eyes of the masses, as sport. Karate, Aikido, Kendo, Kyudo and Iaido are all now practised as "sport".

I think sporting Budo will continue in its various corrupt ways and eventually complete the circle by reverting to Bugei. We only have to look at "full contact" Karatedo to see the sheer brutality that has been allowed to develop in the field of Budo. With the coming inception of paid "professional" combat in Judo and Karatedo how long will it be before deaths occur. After all, one MUST now win to be paid!

Can a revival occur? I think all is possible but unfortunately improbable, but why?

Throughout history mankind has evolved (I choose not to use the word – develop) and used various systems to assist him at that specific time, the horse and cart here superseded by the car, wooden sail boats by steel steam ships then nuclear ships and so forth.

Bugei played a vital role in all nation's history. The knights of the round table fighting and killing in the "name" of Christianity and "freedom". In Japan the Shogun was surrounded by Samurai, the equivalent of European Knights. As the Chinese invented gunpowder and the gun came along, close combat

became less usual because a bullet can kill from a distance and a bomb will kill more than a man with a sword, indeed even some later day Samurai and Ronin carried an arkibus though traditionalists frowned upon this preferring to live and die by the honourable Katana. In the 1st WW, the British had generals opposed to the use of tanks as it simply was not "cricket"!

The revolution came when Kano, Funakoshi and Ueshiba Sensei further formed or transformed Bugei into Budo and tried in vain to teach Budo as an education of one's mind and body, reaching for balance between one's very being and the world around, Kano in particular is identified as Japan's greatest educationalist for his day - was he a man born too early for his time? I write in vain as even in Dr Kano's time he was becoming more and more disillusioned about the misuse of strength and imbalance between Kata, Randori and Shiai. Watching two JudoKa fight like two bulls with locked horns Dr Kano commented to Mifune Kyozo that "if this is allowed to continue it will ring the bell of death for Kodokan Judo".

With the development in the West of "have today and pay tomorrow attitude" (or never as the case may be) this ideology has been indoctrinated into each generation since the 2nd WW thus Dojo have become bereft of hard working "thinking" Budo Ka who wish to achieve personal perfection in terms of mental and physical harmony into sports halls of ignorance. To the vast majority of Budo Ka the world wide Budo Dojo are now sports halls with "mats" and are viewed no differently than the basket ball court, swimming pool, or football pitch.

The main purpose and philosophy of all the Budo are the study and perfection of the self. With competition through championships one is put against another. This is acceptable as a very small part of Budo only as an instrument to measuring, developing and achieving self realisation in terms of testing one's Waza and self control and discipline while under pressure. International championships, however, have a very detrimental effect on the Budo Ka as they become "nationalistic" in nature and begin to divide the races and not unite them. Kano was ardent that Judo never be allowed to slide into this position, one only has to see the present situation to know why.

Even under the premise of misusing Budo as a sport, the sporting federations have had to change their rules to make them more appealing to the public! coloured Gi, Koka/Yuko and score boards are but a few examples of how even the sporting element has failed. Where does it say that Budo are there for the entertainment of spectators? I would go further and say that when misused as a sport they have become corrupt even by the standards of true sportsmanship. I have heard coaches of "sporting Judo" instruct their pupils that when they fight they must identify their opponent's injuries and "go for them" also push him off the Tatami and thus win by his default? Honour and the code of the gentlemen in terms of sport have even disappeared. One way or another that medal must be won!

I have often thought of the maxim "maximum efficiency, minimum effort" then I look at two Olympic fighters and think- why don't they use guns....Rei, Hajime..... bang...wonderful, one need not even come into contact with one's opponent, it would certainly fit the maxim better than having them commence Shiai! The reader may well laugh at this notion and say, 'That would not be Judo now would it? I would reply, 'Nor is what they are doing without the gun and after the command Hajime!'

The question is succinct and does not call for the laying of "blame" so I will not aim any, needless to say one's pupils can only grow in the footsteps of the Sensei and Sensei will generally do as they are told by governing bodies such as the Kodokan (in terms of Judo) who have been hell bent since the 2nd WW in showing how modern they are and willing to open their arms to western ideology and the vicious circle is perpetuated. After their defeat at the hands of Geesink A in 1961 at the world judo championships, the Kodokan replaced some Tatami with weight training equipment and introduced, through the American Draeger D, weight training in the thought that "physically stronger" Japanese JudoKa would never suffer the same indignity again. This is yet another classical example of how the East has thought the west superior and wished to emulate us. This was yet another "nail in Judo's coffin", I dare not begin to write about the effect Russian "Judo" or more aptly named Sambo has had on the world scene. It may interest the reader to know that several Japanese world champions have also trained in Russia in 'Sambo' and become expert at that sport winning many victories over the Russians, Okano being one that springs to mind.

This is not a cheerful article as the demise of Budo is a great loss to the world in terms of culture and ideology especially at a time when so many young people seem to wander in their own small world looking for fulfilment and seeking their identity, this concept particularly in adolescents is not new but the availability to find groups or organisations that can help youth to develop the "self" in a secure and structured manner have gone. If only they could know of the true potential in the practice of Budo. If only the Japanese would turn the circle and begin to lead the world in Budo and not be led by Western ideology that has no understanding of the legacy of what Japan in terms of Kano, Funakoshi and Ueshiba Sensei left to all.

To conclude, I would suggest that though Budo could benefit mankind, at the present time and possibly more than in the past, due to the sociological and political ways of the world, a reversion to Budo away from sport and Bugei are unlikely, apart from the very fact that there are no longer the teachers who understand what Budo are, including the Japanese. The vast majority of the population actually enjoy misusing Budo as a sport, sports are simpler and do not need teachers or pupils that are expected to think past the one goal of winning in competition. Pumping muscle can be achieved in the gym and within a very short period of time one can see the muscular results of one's work. Training the mind and pumping those grey cells, needs teachers of

great integrity, ability and understanding AND pupils who are willing to begin a very difficult journey - that of self development and realisation.

Winning in life is seen as the purpose of life, success is identified by the number of medals one has in the trophy cupboard not how one is as a person.

Ronin Kyoshi, 1999