

## International Budo Symposium

### Planning Intent

Nobuyasu Hirasawa [Chief Official of the Traditional Budo (Martial Arts)/Sports Culture]

Chairman of Executive Committee of the International Budo Symposium at the National Institute of Fitness and Sports in Kanoya [NIFS]

The NIFS sponsored the Japan Budo Symposium in 2002, but this is the first International Budo Symposium. We have often referred to sponsoring the symposium in our annual plan, since NIFS became a national university corporation, so it is with great pleasure that we convene the International Budo Symposium at long last today.

The official title of the Symposium is “Inheriting and Nurturing of the Spirit of Budo—Review of Etiquette.” With assistance from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan for the operating costs, the Symposium has become a reality as part of executing the 2008 Educational Reform Projects sub-titled “Rebuilding undergraduate education focused on acquiring cultural accomplishments—centering on the teaching of etiquette in the education of budo.”

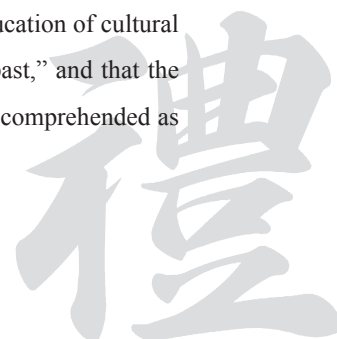
It is fair to say that the Symposium is a result of our efforts, as this Institute is in pursuit of the midterm objectives of developing human resources with a wide range of cultural accomplishments and a dignified and well-rounded personality.

Looking back on history, we can see etiquette incorporated into the liberal arts called “Rikugei “ (six Confucian arts), which were essential to the political leadership of ancient China, and in the major four subjects of Confucianism. In Japan, the Ogasawara School of Etiquette, which was originally established in the Muromachi era, became the code of conduct for samurai warriors in the modern era. Etiquette was the notion of cultural accomplishment that existed in Southeast Asia from ancient times.

However, it became a matter of concern among educators, as they see the mental, physical, and intelligent attributes of young people declining amid the sense of lost purpose or stagnation widely prevailing throughout society in Japan today; young people are coming of age without acquiring the appropriate morals and manners. It has also been also pointed out that in social situations where the “form” of things is falling apart, young people may be losing their ability to communicate supported by a healthy body and soul. Bearing in mind the context of social and ideological history, we would like to address anew the theme of etiquette in this Symposium, in order to review the logicity or spirituality constituting the motto of budo, which states that things must begin and end with etiquette.

As you may be aware, the education policy of this country began emphasizing the concept of being reactionary or returning to traditional values at the beginning of the 21st century.

For example, the Central Education Council announced on February 21, 2002, its recommendation titled “How the education of cultural accomplishments should be in the new era.” The Council said that “the education of cultural accomplishments” should be “perceived with far broader and multilateral perception than in the past,” and that the concept of education for discipline, which used to be viewed by intelligent aspect alone, should be comprehended as





a “holistic concept consisting of the awareness of norms, ethics, sensitivity, aesthetic sensibility, self-driving force, sense of balance, and mental and physical strength.” The Council placed importance on the enhancement of education for discipline, while dividing it into the five categories. For instance, in paragraph (5) of Chapter 2 subtitled “What cultural accomplishments are being sought in the new era,” it noted that they should be acquired through bodily feelings by starting to learn “form,” and the Council emphasized the necessity of reviewing afresh the culture of life and the traditional values of this country.

This recommendation will probably deserve attention from the historical standpoint that it has referred to the “education for discipline” for the first time in written documentation of educational policy since the end of World War II. Addressing educational reform by universities with an eye toward discipline-driven cultural accomplishments has hardly been heard, whether it be named “Budo education” or “education for cultural accomplishments.”

In the discussion of amending the Basic Education Law, there was a strong demand that the expression “respect for traditional culture” be incorporated into the educational objectives. As a result, the phrase “respect for tradition and culture” was spelled out in paragraph 5 of Article 2 of the Basic Education Law, when it was amended effective December 15, 2006, for the first time in about sixty years. In the first draft report released by the Education Revitalization Conference in December of the same year, the recommendation went on to say that “virtues, etiquette, and the beauty of form and models should be taught through learning about the lives of great persons, classic literature, folktale, mythology/fairy tales, children’s songs, tea ceremony, and flower arrangement/calligraphy/budo.

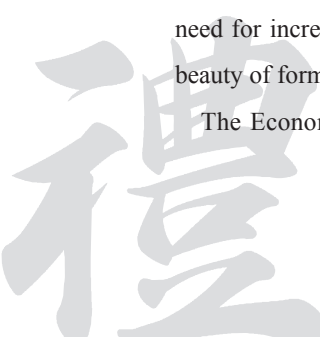
On the other hand, the recent years of Japan have seen Bushido: the Soul of Japan, authored by Inazo Nitobe, being re-evaluated and oftentimes referred to, while books written about the dignity of the nation or women sell very well. Some people often argue that now is the time for the Japanese to reconsider providing education, including the identity or traditional culture of this country. For example, it is argued that there needs to be “discipline education,” which will develop persons that have civility and consideration, speak politely and correctly, and behave appropriately.

“Form” is the most basic element in the traditions of this country including: the tea ceremony, flower arrangement, budo, Zen, Noh plays, and other aspects of culture. In contrast, in modern society, phrases such as “Don’t become fixated on form,” or “Think outside the box (i.e. fixed form)” appear to have the upper hand. However, how could it be done, if there is no form (absence of form) learnt from the very beginning? To make Japan a beautiful and dignified country, it may be necessary for us to re-acquire the notion of “form,” which is the foundation of all things.

I assume that quite a few Japanese people may feel that way. The argument to review the value of budo and the arts is being developed not only in councils related to education but in newspapers as well. The Asahi Shimbun (Dailies) has even carried an editorial insisting that the education of etiquette, such as the tea ceremony, flower arrangement, or Zen, and discipline education backed up by deep spirituality other than budo should be restored.

Similar observations were included in the seven recommendations of the first edition of the report released in January 2007 by the Education Revitalization Conference, which stated that education should be regenerated with all-out efforts by the entire society. Paragraph 3 of the report: “teaching all children norms, thereby ensuring what will make them proper members of society,” which was classified in the reform of education components, stresses the need for increased hands-on activities by examples of how to have children learn about virtues, good manners, the beauty of form, and models through tea ceremony, flower arrangement, calligraphy, and budo.

The Economic and Financial Reforms Conference noted in Section 6 of Chapter 4 of the 2007 basic policies



as follows: among specific approaches suggested in the creation of an environment supporting a great variety of lifestyles, “necessary measures shall be taken to improve the power of culture and to inherit the traditions of this country in accordance with the goals of the Revised Basic Education Law.”

Following the tide of the times, the Special Committee of the Central Education Council hammered out its policies in September last year that budo should be made a compulsory subject of physical exercise to be taught in junior high schools. As a result, the school course guidelines have been revised as of this year, requiring first and second graders to learn budo. This is still fresh in our memory. I hope that junior high school teachers teaching health and physical subjects, who are with us today, will find that the presentations by distinguished budo specialists invited from home and abroad will provide clues in practicing future education in each school for self-development.

Behind the decision to make budo a compulsory subject in junior high schools is reportedly the growing expectations to obtain the effect of moral education from practicing budo. Amid the ongoing interest in reforming education, I hope that this International Symposium addresses the issue of teaching etiquette in budo and will not only help upgrade the level of teaching cultural accomplishments for undergraduates at this Institute but also contribute to the local communities.

As you are well aware, budo originated in this country as one of the traditional cultures, which has become globalized today.

The International Judo Federation (IJF) was launched in July 1951 under the leadership of the European Judo Federation. As of now, a total 199 countries are affiliated with the IJF, topping the number of United Nations-affiliated countries of 192. Of these countries, France, for instance, is the only country with three times more Judo devotees than Japan. Meanwhile, 47 countries are affiliated with the International Kendo Federation (IKF), while there are apparently 50 million karate practitioners around the world. Today, such phrases as “kawaii (cute),” and “otaku (fanboy),” which have caught on among young people of this country, and kuroshio, baiu, tsunami, karaoke, as well as budo are globally accepted as Japanese-derived English.

With budo becoming internationalized like this, it is a well-known fact that we see judo gaining citizenship as a sport. By contrast, there is momentum building at home and abroad that we should return to the original spirit of budo. Among foreign intelligentsia and budo practitioners, a growing number of people feel the spirituality of Japanese budo and become interested in budo as traditional culture. There are even those who understand the Japanese language and kanji characters or favor calligraphy. For illustration, the France-Japan Sports Culture Association (ACS) cites “etiquette “in large kanji at the top of their website, which posts its policies on education. In the southern part of Germany, there is a judo club logo-marked as kokoro (mind). Also, we see scenes in sports events where foreign judoka enter and leave the judo arena, bowing in and out. This proves that such a trend is gathering momentum. While on a fact-finding tour of judo training halls in the U.K., France, and Germany in late September of this year, I witnessed budo etiquette spreading widely throughout these parts of the world.

We also see similar changes developing in the academic field. Japanese studies overseas used to be traditionally weighted toward, if anything, studies of literature, history, or religion. In recent years, however, interest and coverage are becoming diversified; today we see full-fledged researchers appearing on the history of budo (culture). Among the panelists we invited today is a young researcher from France who earned a PhD in the collection of literary works by Jigoro Kano. It should be noted that in recent years, prominent budo (martial arts/martial skills) researchers are coming into being, despite a few yet, in Russia and Oceania, other than Europe and the United States. In September



of last year, the International Judo Researchers' Association was launched in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, while some universities began introducing budo into their educational curriculum in the U.K.

It seems, however, that some budo practitioners at home and abroad are concerned that the questing spirit inherent in budo may be getting thinner, although Budo has spread overseas. With budo becoming globalized these days, it seems that some criticism and suspicions have been voiced as to whether the spirituality sought by foreign budo practitioners could be successfully inherited and maintained by Japanese counterparts. It seems to be true that some foreign budo practitioners or trainees feel less satisfaction with the budo circle of Japan and the personal qualities of Japanese budo leaders in their discipline. In this Institute, there were sarcastic remarks once in a while in the past that the etiquette exercised by students in the budo course does not leave the training halls.

Foreign culture will generally undergo changes from the social background accepting such culture. There may be slight differences in the frame of reference of budo from country to country, and there may be different expectations, aspirations, or questions from Japanese people with respect to the cultural perception or educational value.

The International Budo Symposium intends to inherit and nurture the budo spirit by reexamining the meaning of budo etiquette from a global standpoint. For this purpose, we will try to determine the perceptions of foreign budo practitioners about budo etiquette and level of the understanding in foreign budo circles, to have foreign participants introduce the state of budo etiquette overseas, and to compare the instruction of etiquette by foreign budo leadership with the etiquette training in Japan. The panelists representing foreign countries will be requested to provide an overview of the spreading level of budo etiquette and its current state in each country, while reviewing their practices and experience in discipline.

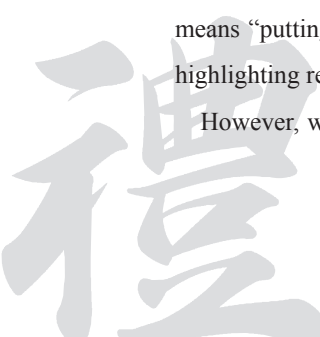
This year in China, a major earthquake hit Sichuan Province, and an emergency relief team was sent there from Japan. The media reported a scene in which the team members were offering silent prayers to a dead body. It was reported that such etiquette of condolence was highly appreciated by the Chinese people, contributing to a change in the feelings toward Japan, and as a result, the Chinese image of Japan has significantly improved coupled with the state visit to Japan by President FU Jintao. Apparently, etiquette can move the minds of people of a different race.

It is said that so-called soft power plays an increasingly important role than in the past in today's globalized society. From the viewpoint of this country's diplomacy, budo etiquette and education could act as software to catch the minds of foreign people by sending out an attractive culture of our own. It is with the greatest pleasure that we see pro-Japan people increase overseas by sending out the spiritual value of budo, which is tradition culture peculiar to our country.

In fact, it seems that a growing number of budo practitioners in foreign countries are focusing their attention on the aspect of moral education within budo. For example, we see some signs of such enlightening moves started by the France Judo Federation. Meanwhile, according to NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) news on May 25, Premiere Putin of the Russian Federation said in his speech that the spirit of tolerance within judo should be put to the best use in building a nation.

Regrettably, there are harsh realities in the world of today in which a chain reaction is taking place due to hate and terrorism from differences in race and religions. For reference, one of the interpretations of "bu" in budo means "putting aside halberds." This International Budo Symposium may be able to make a small contribution by highlighting rei or etiquette in materializing the idea of building a society where multiple cultures can live together.

However, while some people agree to the custom of etiquette in budo, there have been cases that developed into



conflict causing religious friction, depending on the cultural sphere. We will have no objections to paying respect to individual cultures. However, I expect that in today's panel discussions the participants will analyze the subject from the perspectives of historical sociology, international culture, and the history of cultural exchange without focusing on narrow nationalism.

Fortunately, this Institute is favorably rated where students properly greet not only the teaching staff but the general public off campus. It is said that the positive custom has been started by graduates of the inaugural class, which was handed down by the following graduates. In recent years, I have personally seen a growing number give greetings in a courteous manner creating positive impressions.

I hope that this symposium will be looked upon not only by students of the Institute but also by the rising generation of budo practitioners as an opportunity for soul searching with respect to the traditional beauty of restraint. I expect to see the learning process of budo pursued by foreign Budo practitioners to provide an opportunity for students of this Institute to discover fresh value, which may lead them to reassess the traditional spiritual culture.

Thank you