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## **BUDO - training for the soul**

The spirit of BUSHIDO and the training of BUJUTSU

How to revive BUDO in modern times

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Poem written by Emperor Meiji:

Through fire and water he will go,  
If woe the land assail,  
Who hath that soul sublime and grand  
That loves Yamato's soil.

(Quoted from "A Voice out of the Serene" by H. Saito published Taisho 1)

(Explanation: The meaning of this poem can be summarized as follows: "Being ready to risk one's life if important values are in danger and should be protected; This mindset is called YAMATODAMASHII." Note that YAMATODAMASHII does not refer to mere bravery or indomitability, but it refers to the power of judgment based on a heart that understands traditional Japanese values.)

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## **The spirit of BUSHIDO and the training of BUJUTSU**

### **Cultivating an unshakable mind**

The sudden outbreak of a wave of synchronised terrorist attacks on New York on the 11th September 2001 at the beginning of the 21st century was a shocking incident. Watching the “live” broadcast of the scene of the first hijacked passenger plane, followed by a second one, crashing into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center and then their subsequent easy collapse was an unbelievable experience of a nightmare becoming reality. Furthermore, although they ended as failed attempts (as opposed to successful attacks), other hijacked planes targeted key institutions of the state including the Whitehouse and the Pentagon. As the aim was to attack the opponent’s weak points, weaken their resolve and make them lose their power of resistance, and hence draw them into the terrorists’ game, we have to say, unfortunately, that this goal was achieved by these attacks.

For a single moment, America went into a state of paralysis and lost the ability to function as a military coming close to a crisis. Although the Commander in Chief, President Bush, seemed to back off at that moment, he immediately recovered, made America’s crisis management abilities function once more, turned to a counter attack and reversed the situation. However, the transition from defense to offense reversed again into defense, and proceeding in an unexpected direction resulted in a protracted war.

The expression “war on terrorism” used by the President has become devalued because Afghanistan and Iraq, which had been invaded to “eliminate terrorism” (as initially proclaimed), became trapped in a state of civil war and it became an uncontrollable situation. But the expression was an effective declaration because when first used it re-established the attitude of a nation that was at the verge of a crisis, it filled the soldiers with strong fighting spirit, prepared the citizens for a state of emergency, and it became an appeal to the whole world.

The photograph of the three firefighters standing up boldly in the smoking ruins and flying the Stars and Stripes high has been published all over the world as a truly deeply emotionally moving scene. It symbolized magnificently the strong spirit of intention of citizens who had the good sense of wanting to bravely fight against large-scale indiscriminate terrorism that involved innumerable numbers of ordinary people. It also symbolized their desire to re-establish righteousness. Against such

unlawful indiscriminate terrorism, it is essential that not just those directly engaged in defense or public order, but also ordinary citizens strengthen their own spirit of determination for defense.

BUDO is often considered in the narrow sense of one-on-one BUJUTSU, but it is important to think of a BUDO that encompasses the broader meaning of the defense of a nation or society, the preparedness to cope with such events and the elaboration of a contingency plan. However, in the situation where one can only come in contact with and gain information from the general reporting by the mass-media, one obtains no effective or beneficial proposal whatsoever;

Therefore, in this lecture I am going to reflect on the proper way of the original BUDO training and to express some ideas about how training should be carried out in order to make BUDO useful for modern times.

### **What is the foundation of training?**

It is valid to say that September 11 raised important questions about the foundations of BUDO training. Against such reckless, large-scale, and unexpected terrorist attacks, it is not enough to simply criticize that evil. It is indispensable that at least the BUDO practitioners, in their own special way, work out some kind of valid counter-measures to get rid of such terrorist conduct, and that at least they cultivate an intention that is not crushed by terrorist conduct. A question raised at such times is whether or not present-day BUDO training is of practical use against such inhuman attacks. And if it is of use, what then is this use?

If we assume it is not of use, then what meaning do the countless days spent on BUDO training have? If we consider it is of use, this amounts to attaching an important significance to BUDO training that has continued from ancient times until the present day and we can obtain more value by investigating this further.

In conclusion, in proportion to the increase in life experience gained by training continuously for 10 years, 20 years, 30 years or more, our most important point becomes: studying our intent (or spirit), clarifying our own determination and actually putting it into practice. For this purpose, training the mind and the body in flexibility through BUDO practice and training the SEIKA TANDEN (HARA) at its centre are vital. Among these, what is most fundamental is strengthening one's spiritual power by surmounting the fear of death (gaining peace of mind towards death).

In other words, the importance of developing a mind and body that is unshaken whatever the circumstances becomes clearer with experience. At the same time as gain confidence that we have not taken a wrong direction in training, we can fully realize the profoundness of cultivating a strong spirit or intent in traditional Budo.

Simply put, regardless of the size of the incident, one should not shrink at such terrorist actions (and their subsequent damage), and not give in, abandoning one's own intentions. [It perhaps out of scope of this article, but unclear intent is also a characteristic feature of modern man. The foremost goal of BUDO is precisely clarifying one's intent, knowing one's true heart that has transcended life and death.] In BUDO this is expressed as cultivating willpower (KIRYOKU) or building center (HARA, abdomen) or training the *one point* (SEIKA TANDEN) in order to have a source of power to use the moment you make up your mind to do something.

Even if we say that, in one word, this is cultivating willpower, various elements and progressive practice are necessary as part of the method for materialising our intent and cultivating willpower. From a practical point of view, first of all researching one's spirit's intention [i.e. one's thinking], and training one's heart in a practical sense, training the body, as well as mastering methods and techniques, and creative intelligence are needed.

Therefore, we can understand that, even if it is only for coping with terrorist actions without being surprised, the holistic training of mind (KOKORO/SHIN), energy (KI), body (KARADA/TAI) and technique (WAZA/GI) in the technical side of fighting and in the spiritual and mental side is necessary as man's path/way (MICHIDO). In BUSHIDO of the age of BUSHI (warriors), this can be expressed as the BUSHI's spiritual research and training in BUJUTSU. Now, in BUDO, a modern version of BUSHIDO is sought.

In this incident we have experienced a violent shock as if the heart's righteousness were to atrophy, but conversely this has become a personal experience like a wake-up-call for the nation's soul. Here, we Japanese have felt strongly the need for at least three aspects:

1. Cultivation of a spirit and thinking that is not shaken by any crisis,
2. Development of a strong battle spirit that puts both offense and defense into practice

3. Creative originality and mastery of fighting methods and means [including techniques, strategy and tactics] that meet the requirements of the time/era.

We may say that at the same time, it made us realize the core training of traditional BUDO, and it reminded us of the importance of training the HARA, i.e. the SEIKA TANDEN.

In BU, the term “training for the soul” is an expression used by Yokoi Shonan, a gifted member of the Western Civilization Movement during the Meiji Restoration, which became the cornerstone of Japan’s modernization. In the midst of a historic transition that saw crisis after as if determining not only one person’s life or death, but the rise and fall of a whole nation, heroes of the era were born as their souls were woken up and trained as national spirit, although it may have been only a limited number of persons. Even if it is classroom-type dojo practice, that cannot be called a battlefield where life and death are risked, if accumulating real experience by learning BUSHIDO that was born from the actual fighting that gambled with life and death and by training BUJUTSU with the tension of seriousness of a real sword, it is also in modern times possible to re-awaken the soul that is flowing continuously in the nation’s psyche, to train it and to build it into something strong and magnificent.

Yokoi Shonan, who perceived BUDO as training for the soul, originated from the Hosokawa clan in Kumamoto. There, the teaching of BU of actual fighting of master fencer Miyamoto Musashi is directly transmitted, and words remain that can allow us to feel the power of actual fighting in the turbulent war period, differing in taste from episodes that are reported in novels out of mere curiosity. I am going to refer to one of those teachings. It is one of his core teachings.

## What is the “body of a rock” (IWAO NO MI)?

It is reported that it was at the age of 57 (in the year 1640, that is the year Kanei 17) when Musashi went to Kumamoto on the invitation of Lord Hosokawa Tadatoshi of Higo. In the following year, following Tadatoshi's order, HEIHO SANJUGOKAJI (“35 Articles of HEIHO”, HEIHO: art of war) was compiled; and in this book, among articles noting down the knowledge of the art of war, there is one article entitled “The thing that is called the body of a rock”. Rock means a firm, large stone which is deeply rooted in the earth and also sticks out high into the sky.

“Body of a rock” means a mind that eliminates all motion and thus becomes powerful and great. If this principle is completely acquired in the body and thus an inexhaustible state is reached, then all living creatures develop a feeling to avoid attacking this body. Even plants that seem insentient (i.e. incapable of feeling and thinking) are living and have roots and mind. The falling rain, the blowing wind, too, possess the same mind, so we should carefully investigate this *body of a rock*.”

When he wrote this, he was 58 years old (1641). The document he left behind two years later (at the age of 60) for his best student Terao Magonojo, is the famous Book of Five Rings (another two years later (1645) he passed away at the age of 62). Because no original handwriting exists, the degree of its authenticity cannot be fully determined, but it is valid to say that it was written on the basis of “The 35 Articles on the art of war”.

In the Book of Five Rings it says:

“The Body of a Rock: When you have mastered the Way of strategy you can suddenly make your body like a rock, and ten thousand things (i.e. anything) cannot touch you. This is the body of a rock. You will not be moved. Oral tradition.” (quoted from a translation of GO RIN NO SHO by Victor Harris)

The descriptions of these two writers differ. The former has a deeper meaning. Particularly in “If this principle is completely acquired in the body and thus an inexhaustible state is reached” and what follows, one can feel the depth of personal life experience as a BUJIN (warrior, man of BU).

The latter writes on this point only “When you have mastered the Way of strategy”, so “The Body of a Rock” becomes a mere theory of technique as “you can suddenly make your body like a rock, and ten thousand things

(anything) cannot touch you.” It is acceptable to think that the contents (of both texts) imply the same thing, but the difference in description points to a difference not only of 2 years of age, but also of personality (i.e. they may be different persons). However, I do not wish to further investigate this matter here. I would like to gather knowledge by considering both persons’ words as they are written.

In “35 Articles on the art of war”, the core of the appearance of the body that is called “body” of a rock originates from a “mind” that eliminates all motion and thus becomes powerful and great.

Because it is an eternal fact that the human body has harmonized with the principles of nature and the universe from the very beginning and has always been continuously changing, living things that possess form are directed by an intent that tends to avoid everything.

Even in plants that [seem to] lack a mind, the pointed ends of roots [that do the equivalent mind-focusing of nerve cells], even if they look as if they are fixed, are extending below ground in an evasive way, subtly making their nerves stretch around objects, and they don’t become rigid at any point. Regarding blowing wind and falling rain, in the same way, their disposition towards avoidance is similar. [To say nothing of a deadly fight with real swords, in the same way a mind arises that wants to evade instinctively, therefore knowing this disposition] train diligently to acquire the mind that is called “body of a rock” and eliminates all motion and thus becomes powerful and great! It is a characteristic feature that “body” and “mind” become one.

According to the description in the Book of Five Rings, you should aim to master the feeling such that when receiving attacks, you can “suddenly make your body like a rock”, and that with regards to attacks of ten thousand things (ie. anything), they “cannot touch you” and “You will not be moved”. Ten thousand things (anything) probably does not mean at all only BUJUTSU-type attacks in the narrow sense of the word.

Considering the meaning of both writers together, the teaching of the body of a rock can be described as follows: aiming to develop a body/mind that ten thousand things (i.e. anything) “cannot touch you” and “will not be moved” and aiming to cultivate “a mind that eliminates all motion and thus becomes powerful and great” on the basis of the prerequisite that living creatures are subject to the fact that “all living creatures develop a feeling

of evasion” not only when trapped in a life-and-death matter or in a state of emergency but always.

We should be able to grasp that there were things that became clear here in Musashi’s long and strict training.

Shonan, who grew up in Higo Kumamoto, which draws on a tradition of Musashi’s teaching of HEIHO (art of war), perceives the essence of Musashi’s HEIHO as follows:

Hearing Musashi teaching about BU, one has to continue forever the quest to understand the true meaning of stopping expecting favors from others, self-control, caring for one’s family, government, and SHIDO (chivalry), based on earnest SHINPO (how to control the state of mind).

In particular, it is not enough if you only do the empty-handed ZARON (sitting discussion), looking at the KANPO (way of thinking) of ZEN and extracting practical methods. Instead, meet an enemy (ie. one’s own deficiency) from time to time as a stimulus, and train your CHIHI (ability to solve problems and to learn spiritual strength) of SHINJUTSU (ethos, attitude, disposition) to learn from the deficiencies discovered! Consequently, the practice with wooden swords should be only six times per month, and besides this you should polish training of real substance (ie. with real swords or real problems) as BUSHI (warriors). You will understand that not only Musashi, but most of the BUJIN (warriors) of that time thought in this way when you see the deep knowledge/truth in each of their books on secret traditions (such as the Book of Five Rings).” (quoted from “Kokuze Sanron – Shido”)

One cannot deny that Shonan, who was regarded as one of the leaders of the Western Civilization Movement, put importance to SHINJUTSU and SHINPO in this short article because the subject he studied was Confucianism, or that he put further importance to SHINPO because the situation at that time tended to only practice with wooden swords. However, if we think about what real BUDO is and think about the important points of BUDO training, we can say that Shonan’s perception hits the bull’s eye and is very close to Musashi’s real life.



## Musashi's essential teaching

What kind of HEIHO instruction did Musashi actually give? The following episode is handed down that showed practically how Musashi, when asked by lord Hosokawa Mitsuhide of Kumamoto (the feudal lord who followed Tadatoshii) about the essential point of "The body of a rock", called his personal student and demonstrated a real life example on him.

"Once, lord Mitsunao asked Musashi "what is this body of a rock?" Musashi answered "Without facing a real situation, this is difficult to explain. If you send for (my student) Terao Kyumanosuke Nobuyuki, you will be able to see it directly." Kyumanosuke was a person who had obtained the KAIDEN MENKYO (initiation certificate) of NITEN ICHIRYU (Musashi's sword school). So, the noble sent for him, Kyumanosuke followed his order and appeared before him. At this moment, Musashi who was sitting near the noble, instructed him: "Terao Kyumanosuke, lord Mitsunao ordered you to kill yourself by cutting your abdomen (SEPPUKU). Understand this and start preparations immediately." Kyumanosuke said "I understand and respect your order. I shall start preparations immediately." and walked off, his appearance as self-possessed as always.

At this moment, Musashi said "Kyumanosuke's appearance, that has just been demonstrated to you is precisely what is meant by 'the body of a rock.'". Lord Mitsunao was strongly impressed and said in admiration: "Kyumanosuke's skills (demonstrating the body of a rock) have reached perfection. This is due to Musashi's great instruction (teaching)." (from "BUDO GOKUI" – "Essential points of BUDO" by Uchida Ryohei, published in Taisho 14)

The author Uchida Ryohei (1874-1937) was born in Fukuoka and in a family of masters of JOJUTSU, but he was also a master of JUDO and a lot of martial stories about him exist. He was also famous as a person who from the mid Meiji era to the Taisho era (Sino-Japanese war and Russo-Japanese war) organized the Black Dragon Society and embarked upon the continent to Korea, Manchuria, Russia etc.

The evaluation of his personal history is difficult, but this opinion on BUDO can be called unique in modern times. One can say that in this work, this one passage, in which Miyamoto Musashi's essential instruction method was written down, explains that the essential point of BUDO is "gaining peace of mind towards death", and it is an opinion that can be trusted.

Thinking about Musashi's teaching as recorded by Shonin and (thinking) about Musashi's essential instruction regarding responding immediately to the noble's question, if we compare this to BUDO training in the Dojo as it is carried out routinely nowadays, it is clear that the master-student relation is reversed. I have not reached a level of mastery to comment on this, but if I dare to say something with my small personal reflection, it is not as master, but only as a student. In other words, we are merely "practicing with wooden swords" rather than undertaking the "quest to understand the true meaning of stopping expecting favors from others, self-control, caring for one's family, government, and SHIDO (chivalry), based on earnest SHINPO". Moreover, the present state is that this practice with wooden swords is also far removed from real fighting and has become Katageiko (practice of forms) missing soul/spirit and without any feeling of tension.

It can be said that in the present condition of the world as written down at the beginning (of this text), the question is now raised how to make BUDO useful for real life. It says that BUDO's original aim was: Training the "CHIKI (ability to solve problems and to learn spiritual strength) of SHINJUTSU (ethos, attitude, disposition)" developed in the quest for SHINPO (principles of the mind) by from time to time meeting an enemy (ie. one's own deficiency) and accepting such attack as a stimulus. I would like to reconsider these points once again.

## How to revive BUDO in modern times

When the situation of nation and society is in chaos and the deterioration of public order declines to a serious state and human mind grows wild, it is also hoped that the times of promoting spirit of the past history will be revived. However, this does not mean this can be obtained without doing anything. On the verge of a ruined country, decline without recovery is also very likely.

The knowledge of BUDO is that lack of preparedness is one's greatest enemy, so do your utmost and prepare for the worst. In addition to that, await Heaven's decree.

Given Japanese BUDO continues to live on as a training method to truly develop the spirit of a nation, it must be something that can contribute in some kind to arousing the strong spirit of intent of a nation when it arrives at a national crisis. For this purpose, one should first prepare for each of the "ten thousand things" of extraordinary states of emergency, cultivate one's spirit, train one's body and aim to master techniques. The recent condition of society is not a case for training that is half-hearted and that has become a mere shell, but an era has now arisen in which training is sought that, so to speak, steps out into society and is practically useful. One can say that such signs are already becoming visible in the front line of the international situation and society.

I strongly hope that the many students studying various (styles of) BUDO day by day will do their best with their utmost effort.

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Poem by Emperor Meiji:

Pine

In a world of storms  
Let there be no wavering  
Of our human hearts;  
Remain as the pine tree  
With roots sunk deep in stone.

(Explanation: Although storms bring awful destruction to the world, the pine tree clings firmly to its rock with spreading roots. Like that pine tree, we, in our faith and conviction, need not be shaken by the world around us.)

Quoted from “Waka Poetry of The Emperor Meiji” published by Meiji Jingu.

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