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PHILOSOPHY / EDUCATION

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Abstract:

From the perspectives of both philosophical anthropology and humanistic theory of martial arts, the authors discuss the possible values and relevance of the traditional warrior pathways of eastern Asian martial arts to contemporary western society. They will also refer to other theoretical concepts of martial arts philosophy, especially the normative ethical practices usually associated with them. The pedagogical implications of the use of a variety of axiological traditional martial arts have been demonstrated time and time again in many countries around the world, but especially in those countries in eastern and south eastern Asia. The traditional pathways and ethical codes of martial arts (such as Japanese Bushido) are a universal cultural heritage full of potential from which today's physical education pedagogy could and, indeed, should draw.

The philosophy of martial arts is both a practice of selected axionormative systems determining lifestyles and a description of the internalization of certain important disciplines, morals and values. There is also an emerging philosophical sub-discipline as a result of the warriors' pathway anthropology [Cynarski 2012a, 2013a, c].

Finally, this “anthropology” serves as a superior approach to the area of knowledge and scientific disciplines described as martial arts and sciences. In particular, it provides for the possibility of practical application to the varying practices of martial arts pedagogy [cf. Cynarski, Obodyński, Zeng 2012; Cynarski 2013b].

General assumptions and findings

From a theoretical perspective, the ‘Humanistic Theory of Martial Arts’, the ‘Anthropology of Martial Arts’ [Cynarski 2004, 2009b, 2012a, 2013c], and “Conception of the General Theory of Fighting Arts” [Cynarski, Sieber 2012], we meet many pedagogical aspects. But, this is not the only philosophical approach. We could analyse the philosophy from the ancient Greek (Aristotelian) point of view [Hackney 2010], or from the European, Christian axiological issue [Mulholland 2004]. We could do it from the perspective of the philosophy of sport [Obodyński, Cynarski 2004], or the philosophy of cultural dialogue [Tokarski 1989; Kim, Bäck 2000; Cynarski 2004; Yu 2012]. Some authors go directly from the praxis of fighting [Kalina 1996, 2000; Tokarski, Sikorski 2011] or try to develop a pedagogy of martial arts [e.g. Jaskólski 2000; Wolters 2005; Sasaki 2006; Wolters, Fußmann 2008; Figueiredo *et al.* 2013].

Among the main theses formulated in martial arts philosophy, the three most important ones used for specifying the object of scientific inquiry, are:

1. Reducing martial arts and the warrior pathways to nothing more than a sport is a serious mistake, pigeon-holing and working from an inadequate definition of terms [cf. Maroteaux 1995; Sato 1998; Sasaki 2009; Gomaratus 2011; Sieber 2011]. First of all, in martial arts, the axiology is different from that of sport. In sport, the main goal is to score, to win the competition. In the martial arts we find the aims to be far more aspirational, tending to concentrate upon the improvement of the psychophysical personality and the task of becoming a better person in general. It is argued that sport can co-exist with the traditional martial arts without detriment to either [Haramnoure 2013].
2. It is important to conduct multi-dimensional and many-faceted analyses, taking into particular

account the axiological dimension, especially in terms of education. The concept of holistic education is especially noteworthy here [Szyszko-Bohusz 1998, 2003]. No less important are the socio-cultural [Binhack 1998; Sasaki 2009], and spiritual dimensions [Maliszewski 1996].

3. There is no one common axiology of martial arts (in the sense of a common canon), but rather there are many according to the variety of martial arts, individual masters, teachers and schools. There is a philosophy of the warrior's pathway known as *kyokushin* (the ultimate truth) [Oyama 1979] operating in the school and organisation of the master Masutatsu Oyama. There is also a philosophy of *idō* (perpetual motion), initiated by Dr Wally Strauss [Cynarski 2009a] and adopted by a group of today's practitioners.

Thus there are different "philosophies" for each type of martial arts, but an academic reflection on this topic may be described as research into the philosophy of martial arts, a new emerging discipline of philosophy [Cynarski 2012b, 2013a], which is also a meta-theory for the science of martial arts.

What are the values in the area?

Gichin Funakoshi pointed to such human qualities of a karate practitioner as courage, kindness, honesty, humility and self-control [Stevens 1995: 87]. Overall, "The Warrior's Pathway" means pushing one's own limits, a kind of transgression through continuous effort of self-development—it is a moral way, improving the character and personality of the fighter through his own weakness. Not so much a distant goal, as the way itself, is the main sense of self-improvement and personal values in the psychophysical systems of the East. It is the most important and the most difficult of combats. If it is consistent with the "Pathway of Heaven" or cabalistic "Path of Return" which eventually leads to spiritual refinement and enlightenment, we can also speak of its transcendental dimension. This terminology does not have to concern only the areas of East Asian martial arts, as it is also associated with a more universal ethos of knights and soldiers. The western code of chivalry closely parallels that of Japanese Bushido, for example, and the United States armed forces are now educated in what they call "the warrior ethos" which was itself predated by the now famous "Jedi Programme", which sought to turn certain special forces soldiers and intelligence officers into modern day "Spiritual Warriors" (see below). In addition, it is not self-acceptance, but also the growing awareness of one's own weakness

which enables improvement "on the way." Thanks to this practice, a person also becomes socially more valuable. Interestingly, a lot of people practising martial arts internalize these values [Cynarski 2006a, b; Kuśnierz 2011].

Experts in East Asian martial arts define a number of educational, normative and ethical, health, cultural and utilitarian values of the individual disciplines [Jaskólski 2000; Sasaki 2006; Zeng *et al.* 2013]. Practising Asian or Brazilian martial arts in Europe, or a more general kind of martial arts originating from a different culture, contributes to an attitude of tolerance for foreign cultures. The abilities obtained provide a sense of security and greater self-esteem. Martial arts teach respect for others, for tradition and authority; they improve emotional self-control, teach concentration, perseverance, integrity and they help to develop strong-willed people. Moreover, they are a great way of developing (and then maintaining) a high level of mental and physical fitness and positive health potential.

Practising technical forms of exercise, whether using traditional cold steel or without weapons, is an excellent way to improve physical memory, spatial orientation, visual-motor concentration, motor coordination abilities, arm strength, etc. [Pańczyk, Cynarski 2006]. These forms are one of the basic methods of teaching traditional martial arts, but not the only method. Martial arts in total, as systems for personal education, offer a rich set of educational, pro-health, and utilitarian values.

But, there are also anti-values and anti-pathways. The rules of the Japanese "Way of the Warrior" functioned in history as an expression of the worship of power and violence. We must remember on the dark side of the old Bushido code [cf. Stępnik 2009].

As an educational subject, the martial arts and sciences (of modern Budo) have a huge amount to offer all ages and abilities. This is reflected in the ever growing curriculum of the Institute of Martial Arts and Sciences (IMAS), which offers a wide range of courses in various aspects of this area, from the basic, introductory level through to CPD courses and even degree equivalency (Graduate of the Institute of Martial Arts and Sciences; Grad. IMAS) [www.instituteofmartialartsandsciences.com 2014].

The practice of martial arts has been shown to improve the performance of both individuals and groups by not only increasing health and fitness through the practice of encouraging regular exercise, but also in the improvement of confidence, self-esteem, teamwork and interpersonal skills. These softer outcomes are incredibly valuable to all types

of people, from the very young to the elderly and/or infirm, and from elite athletes and soldiers to the person next door. In the United Kingdom, they have even been used to effectively reach out and re-engage children and young people with various special educational needs, and those engaged in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme [Lee-Barron 2011].

Practical implications – physical education pedagogy

The “humanistic theory of martial arts” refers to the “holistic pedagogy” – a new teaching concept developed by *Prof. zw. Dr hab. Andrzej Szyszko-Bohusz* [1998, 2003]. It results in a number of practical applications in the field of physical education [Cynarski, Obodyński, Zeng 2012]. And what does it look like from other theoretical perspectives?

Is the Euro-American perspective of Asian martial arts philosophy consistent with the statements of experts from Eastern Asia? Martial arts experts who do not possess any philosophical knowledge usually treat the underpinning philosophy of their martial arts very superficially. For example, Wai-Po Tang [2002] brings down the “holistic philosophy” of kung fu to the system, in the sense of a comprehensive approach to, and understanding of, the Wing Chun style. In his opinion, it is necessary to look at multidisciplinary and, above all, practical experience. Other authors focus on the fashionable problem of ‘mind and body’ [Nagatomo, Leisman 1996], or the relationship between body and mind or body, mind and spirit in the light of the philosophy of the Far East.

Indeed Lee Siao Lung (1940-1973), better known as Bruce Lee, studied philosophy at the University of Washington in the United States. He also studied classical Buddhism, Taoism, and the Chinese philosophers. His concept of the philosophy of combat contained in the Tao of Jeet Kune Do becomes understandable when using paradoxical logic [Cynarski 2002-2003]. Lee [1975] put into practice his concept of life and fighting mainly from Taoism and Zen Buddhism. Here, we would be dealing with the Chinese perception of martial arts philosophy (one of its approaches) and its own attempt to present it in a comprehensible way to the American recipient.

Matthias von Saldern (teacher and *karatedō* practitioner, 5th dan) proves that the ideals of Budo are still valid, even in Western countries [von Saldern 1998]. Angelika Förster (philosopher and *aikidōka*) suggests applying the philosophy of

martial arts to sport and, as an alternative, “the culture of the inner way” [Förster 1983: 236-237]. However, to what extent is their message clear, among philosophers, representatives of the science of physical culture, or sports authorities? Or, at least, is the scientific community willing to accept the philosophy of martial arts?

As in the case of understanding the meaning of martial arts, we can distinguish opposing forms: a) the Eurocentric approach to the philosophy of the martial arts pathway, and b) – let’s call it the traditionalist approach, where the philosophy is derived from the cultural context of the creation of martial arts. In the latter case, authors are trying to reach back to the sources, or add weight to their statements by providing supporting quotes from the “wisdom of the East”. For example Masutatsu Oyama, did this when describing his own “philosophy of Budo”, created and developed to a large extent for the use of the Oyama’s International Kyokushinkai Organisation (IKO).

If we assumed that Oyama’s philosophy [1979] was absorbed by even a small percentage of students worldwide training in the *kyokushin* style (now in various forms), there is already quite a large body of people who practise this very popular style of karate. So that practice is not a theoretical figment of some philosopher’s imagination, but something which exists objectively, and which influences human behaviour. A similar value, although on a much smaller scale, has the “philosophy of *idō*” at work in the Idōkan organization (Idokan Poland Association, IPA) [Cynarski 2009a]. This is partially a description - partially, a project - especially to clarify the axiology. The “Ido Philosophy” has been developed in Europe and for reference it can be categorised as “A” i.e. the Eurocentric approach. In addition to the strictly European, humanistic values, and references to the tradition of chivalry and Christianity (ideal of *homo creator nobilis*), there are strong links with the concepts typical of Bushido in its humanised version.

The Chief Master of Idokan and honorary president of the IPA - *meijin* Lothar Sieber (10 dan *ido*) gave an interpretation of the meaning of karate, according to the literal translation from the Japanese. “Kara” means void, to empty, to purify of selfishness and anger – a clear mind, heart and hands (“te”). The same is, in the opinion of that great master, the meaning of taekwondo, as a Korean variety of karate, according to the teaching of General Choi Hong Hi [Sieber, Feb. 2011].

The IPA Technical Director, *kaiden shihan* Cynarski (10 dan *ido*), adds to this the spiritual dimension of the fight, the problems of making a moral choice and overcoming the weaknesses

that lead to spiritual decline. Archangel Michael, a unique symbol of the fight in the name of Goodness, is the patron saint of the IPA activities, whereas St Michael is a patron of the scientific, educational, and sporting society. In addition, St Michael, as "God's warrior", has always been integral to those engaged in spiritual warfare (rites of deliverance and exorcism) and this is especially true as regards certain groups such as the Society of Jesus or Jesuits (sometimes referred to as "Gods marines") and the Presidium of St Michael, which specialises in such matters [Bailey 2013]. Indeed, this spiritual dimension is an incredibly important aspect of the warrior pathway in many cultures and, as one would expect, especially so in the various traditions of the "warrior monk" such as the Shaolin of China, the *yamabushi* of Japan and, in the West, the knights templar.

According to one of the authors of this article, himself a *kaicho* (school chief) of the *yamabushi-ryu* and modern knight templar, it is this spiritual and philosophical dimension that is the most important of all:

"The warrior tradition is a thread that weaves its way throughout the fabric of humanity. If looked for, it can be found in literally all cultures and in all places. Nor is it any ordinary thread: It is a golden thread that transforms the ordinary cloth of our existence into a much richer, more profound tapestry of life. In this manner, it is nothing short of "accelerated evolution", as it eventually transmutes the base metal of the normal, everyday person into the tempered steel of the warrior.

The mission of a warrior in this modern society remains precisely the same as it has always been: To serve humanity to the best of our ability by spreading and sharing as much goodness and happiness as we can throughout our lives, bringing joy where there is sorrow, laughter where there is tears and strength where there is weakness. Within the confines of our (*yamabushi ryu*) dojo, a student should find happiness and love, the seeds of which should be planted in their hearts and nurtured through their training."

He goes on to say:

"It is said that a warrior of the sacred mountain should have a Will of iron, a body of steel and a heart of gold. Our training reflects these lofty ideals, and we live by three simple rules:

1. Love each other.
2. Do good.
3. Fear nothing.

In this way, we continue to fight the good fight, no longer by having to die in battle, but by living in peace. This is the reason why warriors are born and sent in to the world." [Lee-Barron 2014]

Hikaru Matsunaga and co-authors [2009: 16] write about the philosophy of Budo – Japanese martial arts ways – that these ways and their philosophy are derived from the traditions of *Bushidō*, the pathway of the warrior. Budo is a respected form of physical culture. The aim of studying martial arts is to achieve a unity of mind, technique and body, improving the personal character of the practitioner, cultivating moral principles and the ongoing pursuit of self-perfection. In this way, the study and practice enables the personal development of people engaged with martial arts and contributes to the harmonious functioning of society. Similarly, many of the martial arts were pointed to by sensei Taketo Sasaki¹, 7 dan judo, who includes Japanese martial arts among the components of high culture (the cultural heritage) of his country [Sasaki 2009]. Budo is the educational system originating from samurai culture. It contains a number of components.

And many other authors refer to the idea of *butoku* – the virtues of chivalry and Bushido, especially the humanised version of this code. *Bu* means martial, but here it refers to *bushi* – knights, warriors of a samurai class. These virtues are: honour, courage, justice, loyalty, honesty, willingness to fight, respect, sacrifice, straightforwardness, devotion and kindness. When fighting, the fruits of this practice will be stability (psychophysical balance), smoothness (of movement), spontaneity, flexibility, agility and dexterity and precision (activity), speed, strength and intuition. Wisdom and gentle disposition will be helpful in the face of death [Maroteaux 2007: 6-7].

Budo is all about stopping different forms of aggression and achieving a state of harmony and inner balance, but the Budo ethic comes down to a virtuous life lead with impeccable manners [Maroteaux 2007: 17-18]. Honour is a sign of moral dignity and proper respect for others, acting in a disinterested way, and as an expression of self-confidence [Maroteaux 2007: 21]. The author of these words is a Knight of the *Homo Creator Nobilis* Order (awarded by the European Jujutsu & Kobudo Committee) and holder of degree 9 dan in *aiki-jūjutsu* awarded by the respected Japanese Dai-Nippon Butoku-Kai (DNBK) organization. We can sense here an echo of the ethos of European knights, which is consistent with comparative studies by Takeshi Takagi [1984; cf. Cynarski 2012a]. Referring to the same canon of interpretation (the European reception of the *Bushidō* tradition) there

¹ Dr T. Sasaki is Professor emeritus at the University of Fukushima, an active member of the Committee of Scientific Research and IPA Dan Committee and former technical director of the Japanese Academy of Budo.

is a description and design of the ethos of the warrior's pathway by Juliusz Piwowarski [2011]. This "Religious Studies" scholar and philosopher, who is also a coach and the holder of the degree of 8 dan in *karatedō*, mainly analyses the *Bushidō* code of the dojo oath and historical contexts. He also describes the personal patterns of the martial arts masters Morihei Ueshiba and Masutatsu Oyama, who are fully devoted to Budo. And he does so in relation to the humanistic theory of martial arts.

Patrick McCarthy, while explaining and working on *Bubishi*, the classic textbook of hand-to-hand combat, devotes just a few paragraphs to the philosophy of Chinese martial arts [McCarthy 2008: 103-104]. He explains that in *quanfa* the sense of *wu* (in Japanese *bu*) is not a victory or defeat, but rather an exercise of the virtues of patience, sincerity, honesty and kindness. The secret is to build up vital energy *qi* (*ki*) through acting in accordance with the laws of nature. In addition, the Chinese art of the fist requires compliance with rules of courtesy for the practical goal which is social respect and a happy, peaceful co-existence. It is, therefore, a set of simple rules for a wise life.

Chuchchai Gomaratur, the Muai Thai expert, explains the meaning of Thai martial art as primarily an educational system. The purpose of practising Muai Thai is mainly to develop a good man. Reducing this martial art to the level of a sport – training, combat, and a competition result – is a misunderstanding stemming from a lack of understanding of its deeper meaning [cf. Gomaratur 2011].

Similar and comparative values have, always, also existed in the west [Cartier 2012], where the improvement of character is absolutely vital to the training of a warrior.

Japanese researchers indicate a problem with the "sportification" of Budo [Matsunaga *et al.* 2009: 32]. Their Western colleagues [Villamón *et al.* 2004] explain, using the example of judo that the "sportification" of martial arts leads to a decline from the educational system of a "moral way" to hard sport, the combat itself, and the competition. Next, we talk about the 'de-sportizing' of combat sport, as applied to the so-called MMA - mixed martial arts. In addition to that, Raul Sanchez Garcia² writes about the processes of "informalization" and hybridization of Eastern and Western styles taking place here [Sanchez Garcia, Malcolm 2010]. It may be added that MMA is an extreme manifestation of modern gladiatorial bouts and the cult of violence,

which is due to extreme commercialization and dehumanization. Spectacles of this kind can hardly be called sport, but even more so in the light of the humanistic theory of martial arts have little in common with martial arts [cf. Cynarski, Litwiniuk 2006].

Different perspectives and approaches arise from the knowledge and beliefs of the authors whether theorists or researchers. The philosophy of martial arts can make connections, even in terms of the class struggle (for example Marxist social conflict theory) [Halbrook 1974], but is it worth it?

Certainly, it can be said that the martial arts, both as a sport and a pastime, tend to break down a lot of social barriers- bringing different people together from all classes and walks of life who would, otherwise, never have even met. Therefore, the correct practice of martial arts increases both social interaction and social awareness among people.

In our contemporary society, we can see that the idea and ideals of the warrior pathway still remain relevant: Business people study avidly the works of Musashi and Sun Tzu, applying these warrior principles to their marketing and commerce, and their seems to be a huge resurgence of interest in traditional warrior values and their application and implementation in modern life.

Even the modern military is not exempt from this renaissance: The "Soldiers Creed" of the United States army, for example, has at its heart something called the "warrior ethos". This "ethos" lays down the core values expected of the modern warrior in today's army. It encourages good behaviour and strong morals and ethics when it comes to soldiering, expecting the soldier to always behave with honour and integrity [Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2013].

Perhaps a precursor to this modern soldiers' creed can be found in the so-called "Jedi project" of the late 1970s. which entailed (among several other things) special operations forces exploring and experimenting with various martial arts systems.

The chief "hand to hand" (H2H) instructor for the US special forces at this time was a certain Michael D. Echanis (November 16, 1950 – September 8, 1978) himself a former soldier and decorated war hero. This project meant that a great number and variety of martial arts instructors were, at this time, invited to Fort Bragg, North Carolina in order to run short "taster" courses for the soldiers, and these instructors would "make hay" out of having been involved in such an undertaking. Little did they know that the Jedi Project was meant to go far beyond the need for effective close combat techniques: These soldiers were all members of an

² Dr Sanchez Garcia is a sociologist (University in Madrid) and *aikidōka* (1 dan). He is a member of the Sociological-Anthropological Division of the IMACSSS.

elite unit, with most being battle hardened veterans, so they were all already quite capable of closing with and destroying the enemy. Add to this the fact that Echanis, himself, was already a very accomplished martial artist (judo, boxing, *ninjutsu* and – especially – *hwarangdo*) and had already revised and updated the close combat courses for most of the special operations troops of the United States including the army Rangers and Navy SEAL teams, and you have to come to the conclusion that, while they might still integrate certain techniques of interest, the goal must have been something beyond mere fighting techniques. And it was.

During this period, both the special operations and the intelligence and security commands were closely examining some of the ancient warrior traditions, exploring what they could offer the modern military, and how best to implement these ideas. Surprisingly, they seemed especially interested in the more spiritual aspects of these traditions and how these might help to hone a more competent type of "super-soldier" or, if you like, "Jedi". [Ronson 2004]. Echanis and his fighting system were celebrated, and some of his methods were eventually written down and are still available. Unfortunately, he was killed in 1978 before being able to finish the series, so only three books exist out of the proposed eleven volumes.

Some of these ideas found renewed vigour post 9/11, with President Bush encouraging his special operations forces and intelligence agencies to "think outside the box". Indeed, certain of this information has now been made famous by the film "The Men Who Stare at Goats" (2009), which was, itself, loosely based upon the book of the same name which was, in turn, written to accompany the documentary series "Crazy Rulers of the Word" by Jon Ronson [2004]. While it could be said that some of the techniques practiced were a bit dubious (to say the least), the fact still remains that all this did happen. One of the more positive results of this experimentation would be the development of a variety of non-lethal weapons which could be used to subdue an enemy rather than killing them. The philosophy that was affirmed was that wars are no longer won simply by killing people and, while it is obvious that we still have a long way to go, and a lot of extra work needs to be done, this program was clearly a step in the right direction. Some of these concepts eventually culminated in the publication of "The Field Manual of the First Earth Battalion" by Col. Jim Channon in 1989 which includes an eclectic and, given the official backing this work received, surprising mix of new-age shamanism, psychological warfare techniques and traditional warrior philosophies (not to mention some other,

rather more dubious material) aimed at producing a kind of super-soldier which he termed (funny enough) a "warrior monk". The basic precept of this manual was that by relating to your potential enemy and making him your friend, you could win a conflict even before the first shot had been fired, thus taking the "Psyops" strategy of winning the hearts and minds of the enemy to a whole new level.

As strange and far fetched as all this may seem, it did happen and is well documented (one of the authors has actually trained with an instructor involved in the Jedi project, who was a close friend and colleague of Echanis), and some of these ideas are still being experimented with and implemented to this day [Channon 1989; Ronson 2004].

Summary

Within the philosophical anthropology of martial arts and the humanistic theory of martial arts, a selection of the values of today's warriors of the Eastern Asia pathway has been set out. The pedagogical implications of the use of a variety of axiological traditional martial arts have been proven in many countries, but to the greatest extent in most East and South East Asian countries (China, Japan, Korea and Thailand). The pathways of martial arts (such as Japanese Budo) constitute a huge potential and universal cultural heritage from which today's pedagogy of physical culture can and should draw.

The warrior tradition is a repository of ageless wisdom that is as relevant to our society today as it was hundreds of years ago- perhaps even more so. It is a pathway of learning, development and discovery that enriches the lives of all who tread in it.

The philosophy of martial arts is both the practice of selected axio-normative systems, determining lifestyles and a description of the internalization of certain values. There is also an emerging philosophical sub-discipline resulting from the anthropology of the warriors' pathways. Finally, this approach to martial arts is a superior theory for the area of knowledge and scientific disciplines described as martial arts sciences. In particular, it gives the possibility of practical application through various methods of teaching martial arts.

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Filozofie sztuki walki i ich konsekwencje pedagogiczne

Słowa kluczowe: sztuki walki, filozofia, pedagogika, ogólna teoria

Streszczenie

Z perspektywy zarówno antropologii filozoficznej, jak i humanistycznej teorii sztuk walki, autorzy omawiają potencjał wartości i znaczenie przekazu (tradycji nauczania) dróg wojownika wschodnio-azjatyckich sztuk walki do współczesnego społeczeństwa zachodniego. Odnoszą się również do innych teoretycznych koncepcji filozofii sztuk walki, zwłaszcza etyki normatywnej związanej z tymi praktykami.

Pedagogiczne znaczenie wykorzystania różnych tradycyjnych sztuk walki i ich bogatej aksjologii wykazano już wielokrotnie w wielu krajach, a zwłaszcza w Azji Wschodniej i Południowo-Wschodniej. Tradycyjne drogi i kodeksy etyczne sztuk walki (np. japońskiego *bushidō*) stały się powszechnym dziedzictwem kulturowym. Jest to potencjał, z którego dzisiejsza pedagogika wychowania fizycznego może, a nawet powinien czerpać.

Filozofia sztuk walki jest powiązana z praktyką wybranych systemów aksjonormatywnych, określających tryb życia. Stanowi także opis internalizacji pewnych ważnych zasad, moralności i wartości. Istnieje również jako filozoficzna subdyscyplina, odnosząca się do antropologii „dróg wojowników”.

Podejście „antropologiczne” można uznać za najważniejsze dla obszaru wiedzy i dyscyplin naukowych opisujących sztuki walki. W szczególności przewiduje ono możliwość praktycznego zastosowania w edukacji – powiązania z pedagogiką sztuk walki.