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## Tradition and modernity of Japanese security culture

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## **TRADITION AND MODERNITY OF JAPANESE SECURITY CULTURE<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract:**

*This article aims to show that currently, when our culture, system of values, sense of security and the economic situation suffer from a vast crisis, it is advisable to look for a solution not only in the immediate vicinity. European systems of values derive from antiquity and Christianity. Unfortunately nowadays they are frequently forgotten and neglected, which lowers the level of ethical and security culture (both in micro and macro scale). Western societies become the “worshipers” of consumerism. That is why the values which came from ancient China and Japan and have been collected in Bushidō (the ethical code of the Japanese marital clans) can be an interesting alternative for Europeans. It is possible for the Far East values to relate to Western cardinal virtues. Seeing the fundamental virtues in a new way can be a help to the renewal of the value system among Western societies. This applies mostly to uniformed services which have contact with the Far East principles through training of the Marital Arts.*

**Keywords:** *Martial arts, Bushidō, values, security, culture.*

After world war II, decisions of the leaders of America, Great Britain and Soviet Union moved Poland to the soviet sphere of influences. It meant a very strong impact of Stalin’s totalitarianism on Poland and its citizens. Special administration, including police forces, then called Citizen Militia, was treating “public order and safety” very peculiarly. In the period of 1945–1990 Militia was the appliance of oppression for keeping the status quo for commu-

<sup>1</sup> This article is based on: J. Piwowarski, *Tradition and Modernity Along With Identity and Openness, as Factors of Complementary Security Culture of Japan*, [in:] *Zbornik prispevkov z V vedeckej konferencie*, Uniwersytet Mateja Bela, Bańska Bystrzyca 2012, p. 511-517).

nist authorities. When The Round Table finally gathered and made the well known important changes, special administration gained democratic social mandate for fulfilling real tasks for public order and safety. So luckily, we've passed those times, when word "duty" was causing fear in people.

The process of exchange of the opinions together with globalisation allows to use a potential of wide variety of all human cultures. Securitology should see the potential of cultures often called as foreign. They can be used as means of prevention activities, as well as in sustaining, regaining and rising quality of safety of many countries and societies.

This article shows how old Japanese culture and military tradition survived to our days and how it can positively influence European civilisation.

At the end of the 19th century Japan was not a world power. It had weak agriculture, technology and military forces which were modernized during the Meiji period.

At that time Japan, regained complete control of its foreign trade and legal system. It has also established full independence and equality in international affairs. In a little less than a half of a century, Japan had exceeded its goals, and changed its whole society. Japan's success in modernization has created great interest in why and how it was able to adopt Western political, social, and economic institutions in so short a time and create the most powerful and decent political system in the world (The Meiji Restoration and Modernization. Available online).

Japan as a country, society and culture is unique. It is caused by several factors:

- Geographical location of Japanese Isles causes the isolation of its inhabitants.
- Foreign ideology was only partly incorporated and significantly adapted into old Japanese culture.
- The insular mentality results in high sense of self-identity.
- Japanese culture was strongly affected by ancient civilisation of the Chinese Empire.
- Hard living conditions developed ability to cooperate and a sense of tolerance.

In the past, Japanese political power was subdivided into several hundred local units, or domains controlled by local daimyō (lords), each with his samurai unit, which entailed high political and military rivalry. This caused creation, development and constant preservation of knight's ethos – a culture of honour. It was widely developed during the Kamakura period (1192–1333).

History and development of Japan were (and still are) dominated by concepts of duty and natural hierarchy (Jankowiak, 2010).

According to the above, the power and supremacy of Japanese military and economical system comes from its deep devotion to the old tradition and culture. Japanese can also adopt new ideas for the common good. The ability to adapt themselves mixed with the loyalty to their own notions was repeatedly confirmed as a friendly strategy for human existence and development. That's why at the time of Meiji reform in 1882, Japanese Emperor Mutsuhito and public elites – Samurai descendants, revived their devotion to Bushidō and its virtues:

- Gi – Rectitude.
- Yū – Courage.
- Jin – Benevolence.
- Rei – Respect, Politeness and Meiyō – Honour.
- Makoto – Sincerity and Shin – Honesty.
- Chūgi – Loyalty.
- Kō – Filial Piety (Czajkowski – Piwowarski, 2008).

Having analyzed the above points, the United States Army officially adopted in the 1990's a special code, similar to Bushidō Code, named as the "Seven Core Army Values" which was supposed to teach soldiers basic warrior traits such as loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honour, integrity and courage.

Japanese Christians, Kanzo Uchimura (1861–1930) and Inazo Nitobe, also descendants of samurai, found virtuous tradition of Bushidō as a foundation for Japanese Christianity, which they called "Christianity grafted upon Bushidō" (Miura, 1996). Additionally in James Williams' article "Virtue of the Sword", a quite simple explanation of modern Bushidō can be found:

The warrior protects and defends because he realises the value of others. He knows that they are essential to society and, in his gift of service, recognises and values theirs... take the extra moment in dark parking lots at night to make sure that a woman gets into her car safely before leaving yourself. Daily involvement in acts such as these are, as much a part of training, as time spent in the dojo, and indeed should be the reason for that time spent training... When faced with a woman or child in a situation in which they are vulnerable, there are two types of men: Those who would offer succour and aid, and those who would prey upon them. And in modern society, there is another loathsome breed who would totally ignore their plight! (Williams, 2000, Available online).

That's why a today's man of honour should declare that:

**As a samurai, I must strengthen my character;**

**As a human being, I must perfect my spirit** (Stevens, 2001, p.43).

This kind of philosophy is opposite to the rules which are in the power in current Western societies. They assume that human as an individual is most important. Unfortunately such egocentric individuality isn't good for democratic system. Disadvantages of it are pretty clear: e.g.

- loosening of social bonds followed by growing freedom of men;
- primacy of instrumental over ethic sense;
- centralisation of power and increasing bureaucracy.

Meantime the philosophy of public spirit and skills training is characteristic for the Far East. It is based on the unique Way of the Warrior. Nowadays you can still see the values of Bushidō in some parts of modern Japan. That is because the Japanese have loads of respect and loyalty to their country and families – they would do nothing to shame or dishonour them. That way of thinking comes from the old tradition of samurai breeding. Each bushi (warrior), even the poorest one, should follow the way of *teiōgaku* – (upbringing for the emperor) a conception of upbringing in the way of the chivalry which stresses chariness, loyalty, mastery in martial arts, and honour unto death. A bushi should mature in a spirit of leadership, which allows him to be the master of himself and a guardian of his community. This philosophy was influenced by Confucianism, Shintoism and Buddhism, that allowed the im-

petuous existence of samurai to be tempered by wisdom, peace of mind and evenness of temper.

Confucius even instructs all men how to omit errors and become a sufficient and superior citizens:

There is the love of being benevolent without the love of learning; – the beclouding here leads to a foolish simplicity. There is the love of knowing without the love of learning; – the beclouding here leads to dissipation of mind. There is the love of being sincere without the love of learning; – the beclouding here leads to an injurious disregard of consequences. There is the love of straightforwardness without the love of learning; – the beclouding here leads to rudeness. There is the love of boldness without the love of learning; – the beclouding here leads to insubordination. There is the love of firmness without the love of learning; – the beclouding here leads to extravagant conduct. (Legge, 2004, *Confucian...*, p. 121)

Bushidō has also played a big role in Japan's economy which is concentrated on big companies. Business in Japan is affected by the samurais' great regard to honour and perseverance. It enables to create an excellent work ethics. This way they can develop new technological notable achievements and provide answers to modern problems and draw benefits from successful business relationships in Japan (Mente, 2005; Collins – Porras, 1997). Even the term Business is War (Sera, 2010) should be considered as derived from the ethics of samurai passed to Japanese businessmen. Additionally the Japanese workers believe that if an employee does well, he benefits the whole company. But if a worker does poorly it is very shameful. He would most likely quit because of the dishonour towards himself, his work, and his family.

Analysing mentioned strengths of Japan's mentality, we can take a closer look at the reasons which caused that state.

First of all Japanese military administration is a system in which ethics, administration and management are historically proven. It is based on long shogunate and samurai tradition. They greatly influenced the level of organizational culture, securitology, modern technologies, effective national economy and outstanding efficient army.

Secondly many modern security systems which come from Japan and Far East were originally Western systems which were improved by engrafting Far East philosophy of security and Japanese ethos of work into Western standards (Liker, 2005; Imai 2007).

Thirdly Japanese world-known companies such as Toyota or Sony are financial giants, known for caring for people and for international cooperation. Japanese military administration, science achievements, universities and many companies, are considered to be the leading in the world and are managed by Japanese management systems.

Subsequently in Japan all citizens feel responsible for their country. Nowadays reorganisation of security culture seems to be very important and should be conducted from the point of view of polemology, irenology and (in general) securitology. This leads to obtaining people's awareness and the choice of peace, in every aspect of life, which is crucial for World's political stability and international, peaceful cooperation.

Next there is an ethic factor which is fundamental for the level of security culture. Listlessness and routine in conveying family virtues can be overcome by incorporating "foreign" religious and philosophical values. This could help to revitalize our ethics from a different point of view.

What is more, the expansion of Martial Arts, based on Budō, has been going on in central and eastern Europe for over fifty years. Fascination of vivid Far East Martial Arts was enlarged by contrasting them with a sad communism reality of past decades and introduced many positive values into our security manners.

The reader should realise that safe existence of societies, cultural environment, simultaneously with advanced security system, depends on several factors, i.e.: public services (such as government, police, army) and commercial services (such as personal and property protection firms), perfectionism of activity forms in administration and authentic people's commitment.

It can be enhanced by a proper education system that will apply not only to uniformed forces but to individuals, families, professional groups, local communities and societies.

Education pillars can be based on previously mentioned *teiōgaku* and Confucian ethos of martial upbringing called the Four Beginnings and its four profits:

- empathy generates humanness;
- sense of shame and disapproval for evil generates justice;
- respect generates dignity and good manners;
- distinguishing between good and evil generates wisdom.

In the social field Confucian Five Social Interactions were of great importance:

- relation between emperor and civil servants based on fairness;
- relation between father and his son based on love;
- relation between husband and wife leading to sense of respect;
- relation between siblings causing the sense of age hierarchy;
- relation between friends consolidating loyalty.

Accordingly to Samurai, when carrying out combat, or in police or family duties one should behave like an emperor and act according to the Nine Standard Rules for the Government of a State. The Rules can be successfully used when the term emperor is swapped for uniformed officer:

- cultivation of oneself,
- the honouring of virtues,
- affection towards one's relatives,
- respect towards great officials,
- identifying oneself with the whole body of officials,
- dealing with the nation as with own children,
- supporting the artisans,
- treating foreigners with indulgence,
- treating feudal princes with kindness (Wójcik, 2002).

As it can be seen there are many rules that can be applied in Western countries to improve their systems but there is one more which probably is the most significant – samurai should follow the way of a sword and literature (Draeger, 2006). Only the balance between the body and the mind, ability to use at the same time both arms and knowledge, is the basis of uniformed

forces efficiency, not only in Japan. This kind of equilibrium is crucial in coping with internal and external threats which are usually met by police officers or soldiers.

Seeing European fundamental virtues, in variety of ways presented above, can help to renew the system of values among Western societies. To apply it to uniformed services the formation of new rules and leaders is demanded, as according to Confucius:

When right principles prevail in the kingdom, there will be no discussions among the common people (Legge, 2004, *Confucian...*, p. 115) and when the people keep their several places, there will be no poverty; when harmony prevails, there will be no scarcity of people; and when there is such a contented repose, there will be no rebellious upsettings (Legge, 2004, *Confucian...*, 114).

The Far East model of managing people also reminds that the people are the root of a country (Legge, 2004, *The Shu...*, p. 64) which can easily refer to any society or uniformed forces.

At the beginning of 20th century Nitobe Inazo and Tagaki Takeshi have shown that Far East philosophy can be used in any practical way. Kanzo even once said that:

Bushidō is the finest product of Japan.... Christianity grafted upon Bushidō will be the finest product of the world. It will save, not only Japan, but the whole world (Miura, 1996, p. 66).

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