



## Ethical values in *jujutsu* of Japanese origin

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Authors' Contribution: A – Study Design, B – Data Collection, C – Statistical Analysis, D – Manuscript Preparation, E – Funds Collection

### Abstract

**Background.** The broad humanistic and socio-cultural theoretical perspectives applied to this research effort provides a foundation for the Humanistic Theory of Martial Arts and the anthropological focus on martial arts used in this paper. Hence, conceptual language has been adopted for this investigation. The aim is to assess and identify the ethical values and pro-social perspectives accentuated by high-ranking masters in the martial art of *jujutsu*. Specifically, this paper seeks to answer the question of which values are most often prioritized or stressed? **Method.** The discussion involves the analysis of a broad survey of scientific and expert literature. Quoted and compared are the opinions and perspectives of 11 Grand Masters of *jujutsu*, holders of the highest titles and master's degrees (i.e. 9-10 dan), are analyzed and presented as evidence. **Results.** Classical schools and their representatives uniformly accentuate the value of tradition. On the other hand, there is a trend toward modernization both in the content of teaching and in technical ideas. This modernization began with Jigoro Kano, whose followers are today seen as reformers. All present Grand Masters pay attention to the ethical values and educational aspects of martial arts, particularly with regard to *jujutsu*. **Conclusions.** Ethics in *jujutsu* extends, as a kind of *continuum* between the traditionalist *Butoku* (i.e. knightly virtues resulting from *Bushido*) and the axiology of Christian Europe. A general consensus exists as to its educational and pro-social values. Aspects may also include self-control, self-discipline, perseverance, and responsibility, which are shaped by long-term educational processes.

**Keywords:** martial arts, social values, ethics, jujutsu, butoku

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www.physactiv.eu

Received: 13.06.2020; Accepted: 30.06.2020; Published online: 03.03.2021

**Cite this article as:** Cynarski W, Yu JH. Ethical values in jujutsu of Japanese origin. Phys Activ Rev 2021; 9(1): 33-39. doi: 10.16926/par.2021.09.05

## INTRODUCTION

This discussion must begin with an understanding of the basic concepts used in this paper, defined according to the Humanistic Theory of Martial Arts, inasmuch as they incorporate certain assumptions and dictate the scope of the study.

*Budō* is a fundamental concept in the theory of martial arts. 'Dō' signifies the way/road, the United Way of Heaven (Chinese *tao, dao*, Korean *do*). 'Bu' means martial or military, etymologically from: "stop the spear" i.e. to stop aggression, to resolve conflict. 1) Originally in Japan, *budō* was understood as a synonym of *bushidō* – the way of a warrior. In a narrower sense, it refers to the Japanese tradition of chivalry (i.e. the knight or samurai), hand-to-hand combat, and wielding weapons. Another fact is that some martial arts were practiced by representatives of different social classes, e.g. townspeople practiced *jūjutsu*, fishermen and peasants on Okinawa practiced *karate*, while *ninja* assassins who lived outside the law practiced *ninjutsu*. Consequently, in central Japan today the most valued are the strictly Japanese martial arts, having been practiced by the old aristocratic families. 2) The concept of *Budō* refers, in a broader sense, to the "way of a warrior" or "a spiritual path of martial arts," and as a group of these cultural traditions throughout the Far East Asia, i.e. martial arts in general. 3) *Budō* is understood in a narrower sense to refer to a group of Japanese martial arts. 4) *Budō* is further understood as a way to "stop violence", promote moral development, as an educational system, and a path toward improvement and striving for widely understood perfection" [1].

The term *jujutsu* (Jap. *jūjutsu*) is the "art of flexibility" or "technique of softness." "The name refers to: 1) martial arts performing the principle of 'jū'; 2) Japanese hand-to-hand martial arts; 3) in general – related methods of self-defence (*goshinjutsu*); or 4) "sports" jujutsu, combined with *jūdō*, *karate* or kick-boxing" [1]. This term has been used either since about 1600 [2], or about 1630 [3]. Classic *jujutsu* can be defined as follows: "A method of combat without weapons or using small arms, used in attack and defence, a challenge to one or several armed or unarmed opponents" [3]. This martial art is subject to evolution and its current image is in many cases quite different from what it was in the nineteenth century [3,4]. This evolution has been due to many factors, such as changing socio-cultural motivations for practicing martial arts, e.g. *Budo*, as a new educational idea [5], and the reality of self-defence, a further improvement of techniques for melee or sportisation. Thus, as a result of such changing understandings, sometimes similar names are accompanied by completely different content. As Sato wrote [6]: "Recently a trend has developed where individuals create new methods, styles, and techniques while using traditional names to advance their cause and establish credibility. Grace jujutsu, which is currently very popular internationally, is typical of such a scheme. It should be clearly understood, Grace jujutsu is nothing more than another form of wrestling, and in no way it be considered 'jujutsu.'"

Moreover, the philosophies and axiological spheres of different varieties of jujutsu, along with their styles and schools can differ significantly [7]. Within the marketplace of various martial arts disciplines are different schools and organizations, which bear little relationship to authentic *jujutsu*. In this situation, it seems necessary to delineate a choice set of values cultivated by the school of Japanese provenance. Furthermore, the discussion presented here omits consideration of the utilitarian values (i.e. fighting skills), health, areas of physical culture and military training, along with general aesthetics, focusing its analysis and attention on the ethical values, and pro-social aspects of jujutsu. In the process, this paper seeks to address the question of which among these values are most often accentuated?

Broad humanistic and socio-cultural theoretical perspectives provide the foundation for the Humanistic Theory of Martial Arts, as well as for the anthropological perspective of martial arts adopted for this investigation [8-10]. This perspective features a particular type of "self-defence art," and highlights two archetypes of the hero- the samurai and the *ronin* [10]. These archetypes are to a greater extent, however, the image of *jujutsu* as portrayed in the cinema of martial arts (*Sugata Sanshiro, Redbeard* by A. Kurosawa, and others) and are thus more reflective of a mythology than of the reality of everyday practice in the *dojo* of the XXI century.

This paper takes into account a broad discourse of scientific and expert literature [11]. In particular, the statements of a variety experts provide great value in the analysis of the ethics of *jujutsu*. Therefore, among the quotations and opinions quoted and analyzed here are those of 11 Grand

Masters (GM), *meijin* or *hanshi* - holders of the highest titles and master's degrees in the discipline, i.e., 9-10 dan.

## ETHICAL RULES

The classic Japanese school of martial arts, Tenshinshoden Katorishinto-ryu, which was founded in 1447, teaches not only *jujutsu* as a physical discipline, but along with it an ethical life-style by incorporating reference to moral virtue [12-14]. Moreover, the discipline appeals directly to the knightly virtues (*Butoku*) present in the tradition of *Budo* [13,15].

Etymologically, within the word *Butoku*, *bu* refers to *bushi*, the samurai warrior class. This tradition in Japanese society embodies the virtues of honour, courage, justice, loyalty, honesty, willingness to fight, respect, sacrifice, straightforwardness, devotion and kindness. The aspect of readiness to fight requires the attributes of stability, i.e., psychophysical balance; liquidity of motion; spontaneity; flexibility; agility, dexterity and precision in action; speed; and strength, as well as intuition. Wisdom and a gentle disposition are considered to be invaluable in facing the prospector possibility of death [16]. In general, the objective of *Budo* is to stop all forms of aggression and achieve a state of harmony, an inner balance. In terms of ethics, *Budo* requires a righteous life according to impeccable manners [16]. Honour is the manifestation of moral dignity with proper pride toward others, and involves acting in a selfless manner, as well as being an expression of self-confidence [16].

In practice, within the various schools of *jujutsu*, these virtues may be accentuated in different ways. For example, GM Minoru Mochizuki (10 dan, *meijin*) named his school *Yoseikan* - "House of Honour and Justice." A variety of personal instantiations have been promulgated by different European *jujutsu* masters, notably Erich Rahn (10 dan), Hubert Klinger von Klingerstorf (10 dan), and Lothar Sieber (10 dan) [17,18].

An example of the moral rigor emphasized may be found in the recommendations of *jujutsu* master Yanagi Sekizai Minamoto Masatari Iso Mataemon who advocated that his students strive for abstinence and dominion over sensuality. Mataemon was the 5<sup>th</sup> generation headmaster of the *Tenjin Shin'yo-ryu jujutsu* [9,19]. Generally, however, the content of education usually depended on the views and the hierarchy of priorities espoused by the master-teacher. If the main objective was to teach real combat skills, the educational process focused on the effectiveness of fighting techniques. Psychological preparation did indeed include some esoteric content, but the utilitarian values and principles of the strategy or tactics were strongly accentuated [7,20-22].

In continuing the tradition of the Takeda clan (*Takeda-ryu* school), GM Hisashi Nakamura refers to the poetics of the Middle Ages of Japanese history. The warrior is to be "quick as the wind, silent as the forest, voracious as the fire, immutable as the mountain". This heritage, with its principles of uniting body and mind, is of primary concern in today's *jujutsu*, as well as *aikido Takeda-ryu*. Dr. Maroteaux, in particular, emphasizes the aesthetic and ethical "spirit of chivalry" of *Takeda-ryu* martial arts [2,16].

Dr. Jigoro Kano, founder of *Kodokan judo* school, first taught *Tenjin Shin'yo-ryu jujutsu*. On the basis of his knowledge of *jujutsu* he developed his own system of education, which he called *judo* (accent on the "way" of personal improvement and pro-social attitudes). Subsequently, *judo* gained recognition as a component of the system of education, not only in Japan but also in other parts of the world where the discipline is practiced [23-25]. The pursuit of general social good (*Jita Kyo-ei*) was the principle that Kano introduced to the tradition of classical *jujutsu*. Kano has found followers among those who were trying to adopt *jujutsu* primarily for pedagogical aims. GM Shizuya Sato (10 dan *jujutsu, hanshi*; 9 dan *judo, hanshi*), who created the style *Nihon Jujutsu*, has to date rejected any sport competition. In his view, the main value of the martial art form is its educational discipline and attitude of respect for tradition, along with its physical education for the development of individual phylogenetic potential and psycho-physical functional integration. For Sato, *Budo* (and *jujutsu*) is the art and way of life [6].

Likewise, Dr. Krzysztof Kondratowicz (12 dan), the creator of the style *Goshin-ryu jujutsu*, which focuses attention on the values of self-defence and the "art of gentleness", has rejected the aspect of sports competition in his approach to training. Kondratowicz stresses the defensive nature of the techniques and the principle of gentleness. In his view, "a code of ethics *jujutsu*" provides, inter

alia: the faithful transmission of the tradition, warranting continuous and multilateral self-improvement, freedom from addictions, respect, loyalty, obedience and gratitude to the teacher, respect for elders and helping the younger adepts, kindness to all people, getting rid of aggressiveness, not doing anything to the detriment of martial arts masters and organizations, not teaching without the permission of one's teacher, a ban on demonstrations of techniques outside the *dojo* (a place exercise), avoiding fighting, fighting only in self-defence, and possibly a mild manner and norm to provide victim support [26].

In turn, Dr. Czerwenka-Wenkstetten (9 dan, *hanshi*) has defined the original *jujutsu* as a path of personal development, which in addition to the obvious utilitarian value, contains or implies the following: 1) the formation of personality in an atmosphere of friendship, mutual respect and responsibility, discipline, and job training; 2) development of skills, health, and satisfaction with life; 3) building the hierarchical order of the road (ethics, personal development, fight, aesthetics), practical philosophy of life, and the ideology of peace. The strategy and philosophy of *jujutsu* recognized it as follows: 1) to attack (violence) is to hit in a vacuum; 2) in others, we find friends; 3) adapting to an attack or situation embodies the principle of flexibility; 4) developing the courage to be reasonable, achieving dynamic balance at its centre, willpower, as well as the ability to react and make decisions; 5) in the area of ethical precepts is the love of life, society, and nature (in Japan, this equates to national pride). As a "clean *Budo*," *jujutsu* is based on a contemporary adaptation of *Bushido*. The discipline assumes goals which are ethical, aesthetic and functional, unlimited activities on the mat. An example of the humanitarianism in *jujutsu* is embodied in the concept of *seifukujutsu* (*katsu, kappo*) - the principle and the method of first aid or resuscitation of a victim [27,28].

GM Georg Kirby (10 dan, *hanshi*) lists among the advantages of *jujutsu*: self-control (mastering emotions), and perseverance. In addition, Lothar Sieber (10 dan, *meijin*) emphasizes the reduction of aggressiveness, self-discipline, and self-confidence. Respect for one's partner during exercise helps to improve interpersonal communication. However, as the source of ethical conduct, GM Sieber sees the Ten Commandments, as opposed to any wisdom of the East [8,17].

According to Dr. Jan Slopecki (10 dan, *hanshi*) [29], in general "The most important principles in this martial arts discipline are respect for the other person and respect for the traditional principles of *jujutsu*. Personally, however, he asserts that: "Thanks to Providence, and the confluence of the facts of life for me, the most important value is to know myself in the context of a particular signpost by the Creator."

*Ido* philosophy, as developed by the masters of *Idokan*, can arguably be extolled as a special treasure of normative ethics. This philosophy embodies a synthesis of the chivalric ethos of Europe with selected ideas of *Budo*. Thus, fraternity and solidarity, fidelity to truth and dependability, norms of nobility and courage, the pursuit of higher values, and perseverance are integrated in this martial arts discipline [17]. GM Baron Hubert von Klinger Klingerstorff [30] pointed out that the development of *jujutsu* and *judo* has led to the emergence of *judo-do*. Josef Kohlbauer, whom Klingerstorff approvingly quotes, indicates that the aesthetics of *judo-do* promotes exercise that strengthens courage and self-esteem [31]. On the basis of *judo-do*, "the extended path *judo*", *Ido* was developed [26].

Table 1. Opinion of Grand Masters about the most important values in *jujutsu*

| Name of GM                  | Country of origin/activity | Opinion on values                                   |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Sugino Y.                   | Japan                      | <i>Butoku</i>                                       |
| Mochizuki M.                | Japan                      | <i>Butoku</i>                                       |
| Maroteaux R.                | France                     | <i>Butoku</i>                                       |
| Kano J.                     | Japan                      | Pro-social education                                |
| Sato S.                     | Japan                      | Pro-social education                                |
| Kondratowicz K.             | Poland                     | Pro-social education                                |
| Czerwenka-Wenkstetten H.    | Austria                    | Pro-social education                                |
| Kirby G.                    | USA                        | Self-discipline/self-control                        |
| Kinger von Klingerstorff H. | Austria                    | Pro-social education & Self-discipline/self-control |
| Sieber L.                   | Germany                    | Self-discipline/self-control & Decalogue            |
| Slopecki J.                 | Poland                     | Self-discipline/self-control & Decalogue            |

However, *Ido* goes beyond the concept of *jujutsu*, as it incorporates the idea of *Aiki*. Degrees in *Ido* are obtained by masters, who have already attained master's degrees in at least two different martial arts. A summary of accentuated ethical values in various schools of *jujutsu* is contain in Table 1.

## DISCUSSION

Certain ethical rules of Budo are common to a variety of martial arts, not only of Japanese origin. The meaning of the way to mastery is similar in various martial arts [32,33]. The process of attaining successive degrees (*kyu*, *dan*) or license (*menkyo*) teaches patience, humility and perseverance. It is also a systematic, long-term training or learning discipline, which promotes self-discipline, respect for authority, and an understanding of the consequences of actions.

However, within *Budo* and in *jujutsu* there are different philosophies and value systems: "The axiology of other cases is sometimes different. For example the *idōkan yōshin-ryū* system is similar (in terms of ethics) to the radical humanism of Fromm and the Christian personalism. In other martial arts schools, the focus is sometimes more on utilitarian, health, or environmental issues" [34].

These differences are mainly dependent on the knowledge and views of the main master-teacher. The sphere of values this martial arts discipline is subject to change. A hundred years ago, the Old Japanese *jujutsu* was treated especially as a valuable method of physical education and promoting health [34,35]. Today, this aspect is given more attention by the "museum" portrayal of the discipline [3]. A new era implies change and the need to adapt old institutions to new conditions. This dynamic applies to *jujutsu* and other martial arts in the modernized, technologically advanced, and continually developing Japan [35-37]. One of the pioneers of the Western idea of sport and Olympianism in Japan was Jigoro Kano [38]. Kano's achievements in this area have raised objections from traditionalists. Proponents of the modernization of *jujutsu* and those affiliated with the Kodokan Institute consider Kano to be a genius [6,27,39]. On the other hand, traditionalists accuse him of bringing about the collapse of many schools of *jujutsu*, which regardless of the positive or negative interpretation ascribed to it, is a historically established fact [3,40].

Under the new societal conditions within which *jujutsu* instruction was occurring, ideological changes, modernization, and adaptation were beginning to be reflected in the content of individual educational systems. However, the ethical canon of traditional *jujutsu* and the fundamentals of educational content were retained, not only in schools that referred directly to Japanese tradition (as *Shibu Kobudo* in Poland), but also in modern *jujutsu* organizations and *goshinjutsu* [41,42]. Only those organizations that have "aimed at developing *jujutsu* with the main emphasis on usability (e.g. special units) have not developed educational values in the traditional sense due to the nature of training" [42].

Masters of *jujutsu* from Christian Europe have referred to the ethics arising from their Christian heritage, rather than from purely Japanese tradition even though the two significantly coincide. Therefore, the culture and religion of the master's country forms a major signpost for the moral teachings and in the case of Western masters is not the concept of the *sensei*, but for example the Decalogue. This fact is confirmed by the results of research on the hierarchy of values among *jujutsu* students in Poland [43].

Nevertheless, all of the Grand Masters included in this study have paid attention to ethical and educational values of martial arts, which are at the core of *jujutsu* and are similar to values existing in Japanese martial tradition [14,44]. Only those perspectives and features which have been accentuated differ.

## CONCLUSIONS

Ethics in *jujutsu* extends, as a kind of *continuum* between the traditionalist *Butoku* (i.e, knightly virtues resulting from *Bushido*) and the axiology of Christian Europe. The intermediate area of this martial art form is occupied by a general consensus of its educational and pro-social values. *Jujutsu*'s accentuated aspects sometimes broaden to include self-control, self-discipline, perseverance, and responsibility. These character traits are shaped in the context of a long-term educational process.

Furthermore, indications of other parallel values, namely utilitarianism, health, and beauty, are at times highlighted.

This work was presented during the 14th EASS Conference / Special Session IMACSSS in Prague, 2017.

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