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The study on educational property of Japanese budo –based on the formation of the *Bushi* status in the early modern period

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Abstract

Background and Study Aim: Against the backdrop of the increasing expectations placed on budo instruction, many of the basic concepts behind the traditional Japanese martial arts are unclear. Therefore, by focusing on the early modern period, which was a time of reform in the Japanese martial arts' culture, this paper aims to clarify the process through which *bugei*, from the early modern period, became enmeshed in the educational qualities that are fundamentally connected to budo in the present day.

Material and Methods: In concrete terms, I use *Heihosho* – a book about military tactics that can be called a text on thought, the art of war, and politics – to consider the process through which the *Bushi* formed a sense of self in early modern times.

Results: The process of forming the warrior's status through physical techniques in the early modern period, to consider the process through which the *Bushi* formed by: 1) The Yamaga-Ryu Heiho thought as the ideal *bushi*, 2) The kind of physical training in the Heiho practice, 3) The process of forming the warrior's status through Physical Techniques.

Conclusions: In *Heihosho*, the *Bushi*'s ideal daily actions include both etiquette, derived from classic Confucian writings, and manners, derived from fighting techniques in the civil war period. Thus, the idealized images of the fighting warrior and the statesman coexisted in the early modern period. With regard to the characteristics of the fighter and the statesman, their theoretical compatibility was also required in the *Bushi* class. In this context, warrior training involved teaching these characteristics as the process of making (or remaking) warriors who possessed both sets of qualities. This duality was likely embodied in actual lessons focusing on *bugei*, or fighting techniques. The early modern *bugei* features seen here were the prototypes for the methods of teaching values through the martial arts, which can be found in present-day *budo*.

Keywords: *bugei* • Yamaga-Ryu Heiho • the warrior's status • Japanese martial arts

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INTRODUCTION

Various Japanese budo have evolved into their modern form since the Meiji era (1868–1912). The brutal early modern martial arts have been transformed into a combination of skills acquisition and the cultivation of personal moralistic values. Several recent studies have indicated that combat techniques in the early modern period (1603–1868) were not necessarily focused mainly on killing or inflicting injury. This is perhaps because of the clear break in this period from the violence and upheaval in the medieval world. Considering the historical and cultural essence of Japanese martial arts as a combative sport, and questioning the established wisdom surrounding this topic until now, this poses an important problem. We cannot fully understand contemporary *budo* without a clear grasp of the meaning of “*bu*” (“martial”) in the early modern times and how it connects to Japanese martial arts in the late modern era.

Against the backdrop of the increasing expectations placed on *budo* instruction, many of the basic concepts behind the traditional Japanese martial arts are unclear. I will discuss the establishment of the concept of Japanese *budo* and its origins as a physical art in the early modern times, which is when its core elements are thought to have arisen. Therefore, by focusing on the early modern period, which was a time of reform in the Japanese martial arts’ culture, this paper aims to clarify the process through which *bugei*, from the early modern period, became enmeshed in the educational qualities that are fundamentally connected to *budo* in the present day [1].

As the material for this study, I use *Heihosho* – a book about military tactics that can be called a text on thought, the art of war, and politics in the early modern period. The concrete aims of this study are to clarify (1) the *Yamaga-Ryu Heiho* mindset (military strategy) as the ideal *bushi*, (2) the kind of *Heiho* practice and (3) the process of forming the warrior’s status through physical techniques in the early modern period, to consider the process through which the *Bushi* formed a sense of self in early modern times.

THE YAMAGA-RYU HEIHO THOUGHT AS THE IDEAL BUSHI

“*Bukyo-Honron*”, the *Yamaga-Ryu* military strategy textbooks, contain ideas about the *Yamaga-Ryu Heiho*. On this textbooks, Soko Yamaga [2] said that bushi should first study the chapters on the laws of nature (*Taigen*) and the foundations of the liberal arts (*Shuyo*) as a form of literary education (*Bun-Kyo*). Next they should study the chapter on military theory (*Senryaku*) as a form of military education (*Bu-Kyo*).

If bushi are brave but not educated then they will not rise above the level of common thugs. The basis of *Yamaga-Ryu Heiho* thought was that the ideal bushi is both a statesman and a warrior.

THE KIND OF PHYSICAL TRAINING IN THE HEIHO PRACTICE

“*Bukyo-Shogaku*”, the *Yamaga-Ryu* military strategy textbooks, on how to instruct beginners in combat techniques has instructions for students, which they have to observe at all times as a statesman/warrior, before receiving instructions from the textbook on combat techniques.

These are organized into instructions for a Bushi as a statesman and instructions for the bushi as a combatant. In acting as a statesman, the objective is to be rigorously loyal and pious by acting in accordance with the customs at all times. Among the general warrior class, becoming a student of martial arts provided an opportunity to learn how to conduct oneself and act morally.

Moreover, in the teaching content for acting as a combatant, we can see that students honed their skills as combatants not only in terms of battlefield elements such as understanding topography and commanding troops, but also in training their own bodies and sharpening their individual combat techniques. Even in the techniques of horseback combat, students were required to master practical techniques with little regard for their outward visual appeal. Such standards for training combatants were the same as those used for Bushi during the war-torn Sengoku period.

THE PROCESS OF FORMING THE WARRIOR’S STATUS THROUGH PHYSICAL TECHNIQUES

As the world grew stable in early modern period, a Confucian view of the warrior grew popular, and the combat techniques known as the *Heiho* were redefined as the “art of government.” [3]. However, the premises of the warrior as a combatant were also retained, and many promoted the view that a warrior can be a statesman and a combatant at the same time. “*Bukyo-shogaku*”, the *Yamaga-Ryu* military strategy textbook, on how to instruct beginners in combat techniques has instructions for students, which they have to observe at all times as a statesman/warrior, before receiving instructions from the textbook on combat techniques. These are organized into instructions for a warrior as a statesman and instructions for the warrior as a combatant.

It is the role of the bushi as the governing classes to learn the civil and the military. The reproduction of the bushi with the both character of a statesman and a combatant sides, was carried out through the practice of everyday act and military arts. In the practice to be thought to be the cultivation as a combatant, the creation of the ideal bushi to keep as a statesman was fixed its eyes on. This is one of the forms to acquire thought or an ethic in experience by a practice of physical techniques. It is thought that I will form one of the characteristics of the traditional physical arts culture that the practice of the military art forms the thought of the practitioner [4].

writings, and manners, derived from fighting techniques in the civil war period. Thus, the idealized images of the fighting warrior and the statesman coexisted in the early modern period. With regard to the characteristics of the fighter and the statesman, their theoretical compatibility was also required in the *Bushi* class. In this context, warrior training involved teaching these characteristics as the process of making (or remaking) warriors who possessed both sets of qualities. This duality was likely embodied in actual lessons focusing on *bugei*, or fighting techniques. The early modern *bugei* features seen here were the prototypes for the methods of teaching values through the martial arts, which can be found in present-day *budo*.

CONCLUSIONS

In *Heihosho*, the *Bushi*'s ideal daily actions include both etiquette, derived from classic Confucian

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