

Martial Arts in the Process of Institutional and Ideological Change on the Example of *Aikijutsu*

Wojciech J. Cynarski, Kazimierz Obodyński
(Faculty of Physical Education, University of Rzeszow, Poland)

Abstract

In the original martial arts whose example is *aikijutsu*, there occurs the ideological change – of the purpose and sense of practicing it. For the interpretation of the indicated process there can be useful the theories of intercultural dialogues, modernization and change, *westernization* and *easternization*, or the general reflection on the ground of the humanistic theory of martial arts and sociology of physical culture with basic notions of change, democratization and commercialization.

In the context of the present social-cultural conditionings, one may specify several main currents and tendencies of such a kind of changes. There occurs democratization of previously elitist *aikijutsu*. Martial arts become more and more available, which causes their popularization. In turn, world popularization of *aikijutsu* is connected with commercialization, fight for the market (popularity, number of students, incomes) and adaptive modifications (modernization). It is no more the teaching of “mortal struggle”, but original, cultural Japanese ethnos practiced in various countries of the world for recreation and self-realization, or self-defense, health or sometimes also for sport competition. The change, or rather variety of purposes of practicing martial arts, is followed by the change of their ethos or also of their philosophical background – e.g. from religious to some ideological.

The differences of views and opinions, interests (material and concerning “power” – decision-making matters) cause divisions of such a kind. Despite the noble ideas of “moral ways” of martial arts there decide on it just particular interests, incompatibility of characters of particular leaders and clash of cultures: feudal, samurai tradition and private property of school in confrontation with democratic formula of organization and economic calculation. For these mainly ambitions and economic reasons the present shoguns do not recognize one another. Another thing is that establishing institutions independent of Japanese supremacy is not only cheaper, but certainly easier. Therefore, there becomes decisive the choice between rationalization of such a kind and the effort for legitimization of originality of realized teaching.

Introduction

Far-Eastern martial arts are subject to evolution in their contents – both technical (methods of training, techniques and forms of combat) as well as ideological, and also within the scope of their institutionalization. The ideological change consists in the change of the sense, ethos or purpose of practicing martial arts, their religious, ideological or philosophical foundation.

The main problem undertaken in this work is to show this process of change on the example of *aikijutsu* - a typical, original Japanese martial art. How do the purposes, ethos and general sense of practicing martial arts change in the context of social-cultural conditionings? The authors indicate several main currents and tendencies of this kind of changes.

The classical *aikijutsu* (Japanese technique of harmonization of energy) was created in the times of Japanese middle ages and was developing between the 9th and 19th centuries in

several noble families (Minamoto, Takeda, Aizu) [Cynarski 1997; *compare*: Mol 2003, p. 50]. It is related to the original *jūjutsu* of so called old schools (Japanese *koryū*, *ryūha*), but considerably less known and popular than *jūjutsu* - the samurai art of softness and elasticity. However, it is subject to similar tendencies of changes.

Basic Notional Categories

‘Institution’ can be generally understood as an accepted and preserved way of action in a given matter. The process of institutional change concerns here the formal organizational structures, teaching, competence confirmation system, divergence from the rules of behavior sanctified with the tradition and modernizations of various kinds.

The ‘ethos’ is the model (example) of integrating values [Bock 1984, p. 403]. It constitutes the root of axionormative system of various ways of martial arts (*budō*). These ways are different according to the accepted emphases and priorities, or more deeply – in ideological assumptions and religious or philosophical background. To the past mosaic character of Far-Eastern martial arts, their variety resulting from social and ideological differentiation and outlook and personality differentiation of the creators of particular schools there was added the change of purposes changing the sense of the whole psychophysical practice. Several types, stages and currents of it can be distinguished.

For the interpretation of the indicated phenomenon or process there can be useful the categories of the conception of *reflexive modernization* of A. Giddens [Giddens, Beck, Lash 1994], the theory of intercultural dialogues and the categories of *westernization-easternization* of Tokarski [2004], or the general reflection on the ground of the humanistic theory of martial arts [Cynarski 2004] and sociology of physical culture with basic notions of change, democratization and commercialization.

From *aikijutsu* to *aikidō*

The researchers writing about *aikijutsu* in the past tense, as about a historical type of martial arts which has gone giving rise to *aikidō*, make a mistake. Also the change of notional category of ‘*jutsu*’ into ‘*dō*’ does not entitle to generalization that the old *aikijutsu* - as a form of *bujutsu* (classical martial arts) – is the past [*compare*: Draeger 1996; Litwiniuk, Cynarski 2003].

Up to the present day there have been cultivated old traditions of martial art *aikijutsu* fundamentally in two main lines of transmission - *daitōryū shū-ryū* (the leader master, i.e. *sōke* is here Munemitsu Takeda) and *takeda-ryū gen-ryū* (*sōke* Hisashi Nakamura). These arts are still being taught and promoted in the world “market” of martial arts, to mention only the books of Shirō Omiya [1999] and Roland J. Maroteaux [1993] or the articles in the magazines on martial arts [Maillet 1993; Kobilza 1998]. The term *aikijutsu* refers to the old techniques from the traditional schools or also to their utilitarian values.

Somehow “between” the military, utilitarian in its primary form *aikijutsu* or *aiki-no jutsu* and “the way of harmony of motion” in the version of master Morihei Ueshiba (1883-1969), and more precisely his later conception, there is the evolutionary form under the name *aikibudō*. *Aikibudō* is the most general term and it indicates various ways of martial arts in which the primary principle is *aiki* - harmonization of opposed energies. This is how “early Ueshiba” called his practice in the years 1930-1940. The system *aikibudō* of Alain Floquet contains both classical forms (*daitōryū* techniques) and evolutionary forms (from the school *yoseikan* of master Minoru Mochizuki).

In turn the term *aikidō* is associated with the system popularized by Morihei Ueshiba and his students. Meanwhile, some schools, as *yoseikan* of M. Mochizuki and *takeda-ryū* of

Hisashi Nakamura use also the names *aikidō* and *aikidō jūjutsu*, despite teaching classical techniques. It results from currently emphasizing the moral and educational dimension (the element *dō* - Japanese ‘way’) of practicing martial arts.

In International Martial Arts Federation (Kokusai Budō Renmei), where Prof. Shizuya Sato (expert in *jūjutsu* - 10 dan, *hanshi*) is the leader, *aikijutsu* is classified among *kobudō* - the complex of classical, traditional martial arts. Once it was the elitist art, practiced in the aristocratic families of mediaeval Japan, but today it meets the criteria of so called sport for all (for everybody).

Cultural Tradition, Self-defense or Sport?

Aikijutsu in its various forms of today remains more or less true to the Japanese original as the heritage of culture of this country. Its useful value in combat at mediaeval battlefields and in duels of ancient warriors preserves usefulness also in contemporarily taught self-defense. However, there often occur modifications towards greater many-sidedness in teaching the techniques and tactics of hand-to-hand fight at the cost of teaching greater number of forms of wielding classical weapon [Cynarski 1997; 2004].

Especially sport competition implemented in the school *takeda-ryū* of master H. Nakamura, and concerning duels in *aikidō* and *iaidō* (practically *aikijutsu* and *kumi-battō-jiai*), forces the change of technical profile, program of teaching and applied training methods.

During the Second Congress European Sobukai Takeda-ryu (EST) in Liège (1995) in Belgium took place the First European Iaidō/Battō Shiai Tournament – championships of the old continent in the sport version of fencing duel of samurais. The chief referee was H. Nakamura [Cynarski 1995 a; 1995 b] who in Japan also organizes combats in *aikidō* with the use of conventional strikes (using protectors) and techniques of throws. However, the attempt of wider popularization of this formula in Europe failed and there were no more European tournaments, nor world ones.

However, will the tendency to accept the formula of sport competition not direct *aikijutsu* onto the paths similar to those which is followed by technically and axiologically related *jūjutsu*? A part of *jūjutsu* environment already accepted the sport competition, however, a part sticks to traditional teaching of this martial art or concentrates on the very utilitarian dimension, i.e. self-defense (which constitutes a subsystem of *jūjutsu*).

The example of world career of *jūdō* is ambivalently accepted here. This Olympic discipline became – despite intentions of its creator J. Kanō - a force and aggressive combat sport, losing a lot from the idea of *budō* - the moral way of non-aggression and self-realization, which is confirmed both by the results of sociological studies and by common observation [Villamón, Brown, Espartero, Gutiérrez 2004; Cynarski 2004]. Modernization of *jūdō* is in fact its westernization and going away from basic canons of martial arts [Förster 1986; Carr 1993; Tokarski 2004]. Only its physical form – the technical sphere (*waza, kata*) and *tatami* mat constituting the arena remain Far-Eastern. However, even here one may observe occurrence of wrestling holds and techniques of Russian *sambo*. Is *aikijutsu* condemned to similar, gradual regression?

There is yet possible the formula of ritualization of the old art accepted by master M. Ueshiba, the creator of modern *aikidō*. As his son puts it, “In the years 1910-1923 the Creator extremely diligently studied the old forms of *jūjutsu*. If he had stayed faithful only to one school, there would not have been *aikidō*, because *aikidō* - although one may find elements of tradition in it – in fact it is a dynamic part of contemporary community” [Ueshiba 2002, p. 146]. Modification of techniques was accompanied here by the change of axiological background – the code of *bushidō* and the chivalry way of self-realization was replaced by the religion of the Shinto sect *Ōmoto-kyō*, the way of “love and peace”. There also changed the

purpose and the way of exercises which are to serve – according to this *guru's* teaching – achieving harmony with macrocosm through harmony of motion.

Conflicts of Interests and Organizational Break

One of the first Europeans undertaking research over the tradition of *aikijutsu* was Alain Floquet who in 1973 founded Cercle d'Etude et de Recherche en Aiki et Kobudo (CERA). Floquet introduced in Europe the classical *aikijutsu daitō-ryū* in the transmission of *sōke* Tokimune Takeda (and now of his nephew whose name is Munemitsu) and founded adequate *shibu* - the branch office of *daitōkan* school. The intention of Floquet was to come back from contemporary forms of *aikidō* to the roots and military techniques of combat of the noble families of old Japan [Floquet 1989]. However, he popularizes mainly the method and techniques originating from *yoseikan* school and has no authorization to teach *daitō-ryū* on his own.

Later, another French *aikidōka* and instructor of *hakkō-ryū jūjutsu* Dr Roland J. Maroteaux met in Japan the current, 44. *sōke* of the second main line of transmission of the old *aikijutsu* - master Hisashi Nakamura 10 dan and visited the seat of the schools of *takeda-ryū nakamura-ha (honbu dōjō)* - Nippon Sōbukan in Tokyo (1987). Maroteaux after years of studies and research became the first *shihan* - the teacher of *takeda-ryū* school in Europe. Nakamura assessed his knowledge and skills with the high degree of 6 dan. Later, however, a Viennese instructor Siegfried Kobilza competing in Europe with Maroteaux, gained higher degree (7 dan).

First Nakamura appointed Ms. Werhahn-Mees (2 dan *aikidō, iaidō*) from Luxemburg as his European representative. His second European favorite was very Maroteaux who gained high degrees 6 dan in *aikidō*, 5 dan in *iaidō* and 5 dan in *jōdō* (main disciplines taught within the framework of this school) and the master degree *jōden-shihan*. Maroteaux, together with students, established the association European Sobukai Takeda-ryu (EST) based in Avignon. In the result of the conflict with master Nakamura (since the EST congress in Liège, 1995) Maroteaux established his own line of teaching under the name *takeda-ryū maroto-ha*, and also ESTAM (European Sobukai Takeda-ryu Maroto-ha) and WTMF (World Takeda-ryu Marotokan Federation). Nakamura, however, in July 1997 deprive the French leader the authorizations given to him and promoted an Austrian, Sigfried Kobilza, leading ISTB (International Society for Takeda Budo), and gave him the high title *okuden-shihan*. Similar conflicts and divisions concern the second main line of transmission – the school *daitōryū*, where, however, to a greater extent it concerns claims for succession of the school and the function of master-leader [Zięba 1996].

Certainly the differences of views and opinions, interests (material and concerning “power” – decision-making matters) cause divisions of such a kind. Despite the noble ideas of “moral ways” of martial arts there decide on it just particular interests, incompatibility of characters of particular leaders and clash of cultures: feudal, samurai tradition and private property of school in confrontation with democratic formula of organization and economic calculation. For these mainly ambitions and economic reasons the present shoguns do not recognize one another. Another thing is that establishing institutions independent of Japanese supremacy is not only cheaper, but certainly easier. Therefore, there becomes decisive the choice between rationalization of such a kind and the effort for legitimization of originality of realized teaching.

Maroteaux kept the name *aikijutsu (takeda-ryū maroto-ha)*, but at the same time he uses the name *aiki-goshindō*, indicating the “way of self-defense”. M. Takeda and A. Floquet use the name *aikibudō*, and Nakamura – *aikidō (takeda-ryū nakamura-ha)*. For defining the techniques originating from *daitō-ryū* and *yoseikan* there is also used the name *aiki jūjutsu*, as

Jan Janssens (Belgium) and Stanisław Cynarski (Poland) do it. Moreover, it is not always known who has the formal right to use the names and emblems of a given school, because sometimes, for commercial success, self-appointed masters assume names of famous Japanese schools without having adequate licenses. Different names result from marketing or legal reasons – possessing or not possessing of branch offices of a given master and school, authorizations to teach and examine, rights to sign certificates and to possess the seal etc. To the economic matters (costs of education “at the source”) there comes the problem of not possessing by some *aikijutsu* teachers a complete knowledge on the program of a given school and the contents of the system – similarly as it concerned teaching *jūjutsu* in many Western countries in the beginning of the 20th century [*compare*: Mol 2003].

Very often paralleling to the conflicts of world and continental leaders there occur divisions and conflicts among domestic instructors and activists. In the years 1987-1994 *aikibudō*, *kobudō* i *aikijutsu* came – thanks to the effort of pioneers – simultaneously instructors and activists – to Poland [Maroteaux 1995; Cynarski 1997; Draus 2004], and then also to other countries of Middle-East Europe. The students of Floquet competed in Poland for several years, then they founded associations teaching the systems independent of the organization managed by this French expert. Competition for leadership in the domestic organization and representing a given style or school of combat in a given country takes place in the borderland of institutions of feudal origin (nominal authorization or obligation to responsibility gained from the master) or democratic origin (elections to the authorities of the association).

The wish to appear in the role of instructor of “historical” *aikijutsu* causes also careless naming with this term the practices which are very remote from the original, various eclectic systems and schools of other types of hand-to-hand fight.

Recapitulation

In the original martial arts whose example is *aikijutsu*, there occurs the ideological change – of the purpose and sense of practicing it. It is no more the teaching of “mortal struggle”, but original, cultural Japanese ethos practiced in various countries of the world for recreation and self-realization, or self-defense, health or sometimes also for sport competition. The change, or rather variety of purposes of practicing martial arts, is followed by the change of their ethos or also of their philosophical background – e.g. from religious to some ideological.

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