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# SOME INTERRELATIONS AMONG MARTIAL ARTS, PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT, AND MILITARY CAREER

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*ABSTRACT: In my study, I attempt to present a diverse set of requirements through which a valuable person may be characterized for a professional army in the long term, with the use of a scientific description of the concept of human talent.*

*In the second half of the article, I explain in detail the personality-, character- and ability-shaping effects of martial arts. Following the psychosocial development process introduced by Erikson I analyse the specific life-course model provided by Japanese martial arts, which focuses on the lifelong exercise of budō.*

*KEYWORDS: budō, talent, self-development, Erikson's model of military career*

## INTRODUCTION

The current efficiency of socialization for military career is the key to the future of quality armies. In addition to providing military technology meeting modern requirements in order to defend the country and conduct other missions regulated by law, the opportunity to learn modern combat procedures is also provided, and the necessary financial resources in proportion to the country's financial capacity are allocated. However, all this is useless if the personnel operating the entire system is suitable for the determined mission only in a limited way.

In my paper I present, along with the principles of human talent, a diverse set of requirements characterising a person valuable for a professional army in the long run. I present the personality-, character-, and ability-shaping effects of martial arts. Finally, I outline a model career that focuses on the lifelong exercise of Japanese martial arts, *budō*<sup>1</sup>.

## THE TALENTED PERSON

According to the Collins English Dictionary, talent: “is the natural ability to do something well.”<sup>2</sup> Talent is usually interpreted as a specific set of special qualities necessary for a given activity, that is, many favourable conditions for the successful implementation of an activity, which makes a person faster as an average one trying to do the same.

<sup>1</sup> *budō* – a collective word for Japanese martial arts. In the transliteration of Japanese words, the internationally accepted Hepburn-methodology is applied, with the base written in italics. Some Japanese words have already become international therefore they are not highlighted specifically.

<sup>2</sup> “Collins English Dictionary”. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/talent>, Accessed on 13 February 2020.

According to Báthory and Falus (1997)<sup>3</sup>, talent is a characteristic feature of an individual to create valuable achievements in an area of life. Factors contributing to talent include high levels of intelligence, specific orientation in the given activity, and the intensity of action (interest, perseverance). According to the interpretation of Gabler–Ruoff (1979)<sup>4</sup> a person is talented if they have physical and psychical attributes and conditions which forecast a high-level performance in the chosen activity with greater probability than incidental cases. In the field of acquiring knowledge, information processing, or problem solving a talent has inherited features, hereditary and learned features, influenced both by cultural and environmental factors. This means that talent is a totality of a large number of factors.

Research in talent is a very important field of science for raising future generations. It is obvious that not all of the mentally and physically healthy children are able to give high quality performance in art, sciences, human studies, or sports. The successful long-term development of a country is based on the effectiveness of its current educational system, and on the proper orientation of children and young people there.

The specific intelligence that is important for successful military career has not been studied very frequently so far, and to my knowledge, the specific interpretation of talent for particular military fields is also rarely researched in this aspect. Intelligence as a problem-solving ability consists of several sub-areas. These parts work independently in the brain in accordance with their own rules. It is a well-known fact that certain intelligence factors are not equally present in all persons but are existent differently.

Grouping of talent based on Gardner's (1983)<sup>5</sup> theory:

- Linguistic intelligence: this affects the understanding of a written and spoken language, the ability to learn languages, and is also used for achieving certain objectives;
- Logical and mathematical intelligence: the ability to solve problems logically, apply calculations and perform scientific tasks;
- Musical intelligence: it enables the creation, recognition, and presentation of musical patterns;
- Physical and kinaesthetic intelligence: it provides an opportunity to solve problems with body and body parts. It makes one use their mental abilities to coordinate physical movements. It is closely connected to mental and physical abilities;
- Spatial intelligence: it allows the use of the patterns of broader and narrower space;
- Social Intelligence:
  - Interpersonal Intelligence;
  - intrapersonal intelligence.

<sup>3</sup> Báthory Z. and Falus I. *Pedagógiai Lexikon*. Budapest: Keraban Könyvkiadó. 1997. 34-36.

<sup>4</sup> Gabler, H. and Ruoff, B. A. "Zum Problem der Talentbestimmung im Sport". *Sportwissenschaft* 9/2. 1979. 164-180.

<sup>5</sup> Gömöröy K. "Az iskolai tehetségfejlesztés pszichológiai háttértényezőinek vizsgálata felső tagozatos korban". PhD Értekezés. Debreceni Egyetem BTK, 2010. 68.

The  $2 \times 4 + 1$  Factor Talent Model by dr. Endre Czeizel<sup>6</sup>, illustrates the complex system that can define a talent. According to these factors, the following ones are considered basic principles:

- special mental capabilities;
- general intellectual capabilities;
- creativity;
- motivational capabilities.

These basic capabilities can be influenced by the following system:

- families;
- school;
- peer groups;
- society.

There is also a so-called fate factor that allows or prevents potential capabilities from becoming a real talent. It can be of biological nature, social character, or self-destructive fate. It can be stated that it is family which is primarily responsible for the first steps in the development of childhood capabilities, and it is often family that does not recognize a child's capabilities or has no opportunity to develop it. Consequently, an outstanding capability is lost.

According to Gagné's differentiated capability and talent model<sup>7</sup>, a person with different capabilities to develop talent needs development (learning, training, practice), which is primarily determined by intrapersonal and environmental factors.

Initial capabilities (areas of aptitude):

- Intellectual: high problem sensitivity, attention capability, information processing speed, selective encoding, memory capture, memory, inductive/deductive conclusion, association, mother tongue culture (speech ability, way of communication, specific terminology, metacommunication, global intellect);
- Creative: originality, ingenuity, sense of humour;
- Social sensitivity: leadership ability, tact, empathy, self-awareness;
- Motor: strength, coordination, endurance, flexibility;
- Other: sensual perception, healing.

Intrapersonal Factors:

- Physical: complexion, stamina, and general health;
- Psychic: cognitive/affective abilities, habit-based implementation stereotypes;
- Motivation: needs, values, interest;
- Will: concentration, endurance;
- Personality: temperament, character traits, disorders.

Environmental factors:

- Environment: physical, social, micro / macro level;
- Person: parents, teachers, contemporaries, mentors;

<sup>6</sup> Balogh L. "A tehetséggondozás elvi alapjai és gyakorlati aspektusai". *Pedagógiai Műhely* 34/4. 2009. 5-20. Gömör. "Az iskolai tehetségfejlesztés pszichológiai háttértervezőinek vizsgálata felső tagozatos korban". 22-23.

<sup>7</sup> Balogh L. *Pedagógiai pszichológia az iskolai gyakorlatban*. Budapest: Urbis Könyvkiadó, 2006. 119.

- Obligation: activities, training courses, programs;
- Events: encounters, decisions, coincidences.

Fields of talent operations differing by age:

- Sciences: language, different disciplines;
- Strategic/logic games: go, chess, simulators;
- Technology: mechanics, information technology;
- Art: visual, drama, music;
- Social activities: education, school, politics;
- Business: enterprises, trade knowledge, legal and economic knowledge.

The countries of the developed world meet increasingly frequently the lack of qualitative and quantitative human resources during the modernisation of various fields of state responsibilities, including national defence. This problem is coupled by the extremely high training costs of the crews and detachments of cutting edge military technology. This is the factor that necessitated the research enabling the identification of specific suitability, which may increase the success ratio.

In the light of the above aspects in the course of military career orientation and selection, the capabilities to be tested suggested by colleagues and personal experience:

- General level of knowledge: broad perception, convergent and logical thinking, analysing and synthesizing thinking, memory;
- Specific level of knowledge: skills;
- Divergent thinking (creativity): problem sensitivity, fluency, flexibility, originality, imagination, elaboration;
- Motivational forces: thirst for knowledge, interest in the new, playfulness, self-realization, communication, sense of duty, control demand, instrumental use, creativity;
- Commitment to the task: perseverance, concentration, subject/topic-result, dedication, relaxation;
- Insecurity tolerance: risk taking, nonconformism, openness to experiences, adaptation and resilience, sense of humour.<sup>8</sup>

## THE EFFECT OF MARTIAL ARTS ON SHAPING PERSONALITY

*Budō* is a Japanese word, a concept which means following the warrior's tradition from the reality of daily life and death, consequently through the culture of movement. It regards the development of personality as its main goal. In terms of martial arts, *budō* expresses all the intellectual and practical heritage that originate in the medieval and Edo-period Japan. The theories matured in medieval Japanese *budōs*, which laid the fundamentals of *denshōs* (martial arts dissertations), proved their values in the real struggles of history, and their results and experience can be directly applied to other, similar practical methodologies. This is also

<sup>8</sup> Révész L. "Az élsport alapjai". College of Physical Education. <https://docplayer.hu/1202861-Dr-revesz-laszlo-testnevel-es-pedagogia-tanszek-foepeulet-ii-80-revesz-mail-hupe-hu-az-elsport-alapjai.html>, Accessed on 13 February 2020.

the reason why Japanese martial arts are so unique and became widespread throughout the world.<sup>9</sup>

Nowadays, *budō* is widespread not only in Hungary, but throughout Europe, however, the cultural, historical, ideological background and contexts behind its nature of competitive sport have remained undisclosed so far. This area of Japanese culture, also called *budō* culture, has a rather low amount of authentic international – primarily English-language – literature, and only one or two books available in Hungarian. The contents of Japanese-language martial arts dissertations, their philosophy, morality, the psychological aspects of religion, and the mediated patterns of behaviour, are of great importance and value to the people of the modern age as well.

The question arises as to what the defensive character of martial arts can give to members of combat units in an activity that basically uses aggressive, offensive tools and methods. I will try to answer this below, but pre-highlighting the most important elements: *budō* helps with self-control, discipline, and position recognition.

It can be stated that a human personality is subject to permanent change and development. Certain personality traits develop before birth. However, this does not mean that people come to the world with ready-made interest, abilities, and characters. These qualities therefore constantly change during an individual's life and activities. At the same time, everybody has had a certain nervous system structure since birth, concerning the brain structure in particular: a determined strength of the nervous system, its balance, and the mobility of the basic neural processes (excitement and inhibition). This is the basis of which the development of a person's psychic qualities will take place, including the formation of the totality of individual peculiarities and abilities. Further development of human abilities, temperament and character depend on these qualities. However, the evolution of these characteristics is not determined fatalistically, it is not the only basic condition on which an individual's personality depends. Among the capabilities, it is the higher-level nervous activity that takes the lead, but the nervous system type does not remain constant during human life, but undergoes a significant change as a result of education and training. Consequently, one's personality (character, interest, abilities, etc.), in spite of the fact that it is highly dependent on the congenital capabilities, always bears one's experience gained through life, the effects of training and socialisation. Therefore, it can be stated that one's personality is influenced by the patterns from the environment and other educational and shaping factors.

In Japan, it is believed that one becomes a mature personality after turning 46 years of age. The unmistakable character of a person develops and individual, creative solutions are made for the emerging problems.

The most important factor in *budō* is the flexible mind that enables one to recognize their weaknesses and overcome them with persistent practicing. *Budō* teaches how uplifting it is to work through perseverance and follow a chosen path. Spiritual control, the most difficult moments of critical moments: your sword, as well as your actions, signal your spiritual state. The sword is your mind. You have a full heart to face your opponent, or the tasks of life, while the turmoil in your mind must be minimized. This kind of duality, this separation is the most difficult task.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Szabó B. "Yoroppa ni okeru Budō rikai". In: *Bu to chi no atarashii chihei: Taiketeiki budogaku kenkyu o mezashite*. Kyoto: Showado, 1998. 168.

<sup>10</sup> Kiyokazu M. "Technika lélek és test a budó kultúrában". In *Mi a budo kultúra?*. Budapest: Forum for Budo Culture, 2002. 6-7.

In *budō*, the most important thing is to guess, to feel the opponent's next move. This requires experience. For example, in *kendō*<sup>11</sup>, during the fight, the optimum distance from the opponent (*maai*) must be maintained, while holding the centreline (*chokusen*) to keep the opponent under control. If you feel the *maai* and the centreline, you will instinctively feel the most appropriate moment of attack, when spirit, sword and body will unite. But if you are consciously looking for this moment, you will become less successful. This is the concept that characterizes *budō* itself so strongly.

One can be considered an experienced and advanced person in both martial arts and life if they are able to rely on previously acquired knowledge and experience beyond the necessary preparation when facing a challenging task, thus gaining confidence.

A short list of personality traits developed by *budō*:

- Integration into community;
- Team thinking;
- Adaptability;
- Good cooperation capability;
- Balance;
- Conflict tolerance;
- Conflict management;
- Good problem-solving skills;
- High-level commitment;
- Discipline;
- Monotony tolerance;
- Endurance;
- Stress tolerance;
- Physique;
- Excellent behaviour;
- Sense of duty;
- Aspiration for perfection;
- Reliability, independence;
- Solid decision-making ability;
- Renewal ability;
- Need for development;
- Personality creating and carrying values.

It is also possible to develop skills even at an advanced age with the use of *budō*. It may take up to 50 years to learn the basics of *budō*. Over the age of 60, one begins to physically weaken. After that, one begins increasingly relying on reason and spirituality. Over the age of 70, the whole body begins to weaken, but by that time the unmistakable consciousness has developed. The series of *dan* examinations<sup>12</sup> is actually training the mind. *Budō* is the path to perfection, which is for a lifetime. Maintaining pure consciousness is the most important, so one can always respond flexibly to the events around them.

<sup>11</sup> *kendō* – lit. sword way, the Japanese martial art of swordsmanship.

<sup>12</sup> *dan* – a Japanese system indicating the training level. It is in use in modern martial arts as well.

Decades of dedicated practicing of *budō* – whichever school based on any credible basis it is – provides continuous physical, physiological and personality development for the follower of the path, during which the body adapts and perfects for the given type of movement.

Referring to the Meinl-Schnabel movement-training model, a brief review of the essential features follow, which are refined through *budō*'s type of movement and are developed to skill level for the practicing person:

1. High-level, variable, formally accurate execution of the style motion structure with perfect timing. This is the level of creative fine coordination;
2. The process of movement is characterized by optimum and expedient use of muscles, coordinated force communication, perfect synchronization, and lack of unnecessary movements. Therefore, the practice involves a very small number of injuries;
3. Perfect and also selective information perception and processing;
4. Optimum use of sensory capacity;
5. Extremely detailed and accurate observation, memory of the movement, and definition. This is already a level for which practicing is not always enough, it is rather the question of capabilities;
6. Fear may occur, but it can be handled properly, and transformed into an advantage;
7. Perfect perception of the “must” and “exist” values, i.e. the full knowledge of the most effective and/or exemplary movement and the proper assessment and adaptation of one's own capability level. It also detects a slight deviation from the “must” value;
8. Changes in external and internal conditions do not affect execution, conditions do not interfere;
9. Both internal and external control systems work perfectly. In other words, in terms of regulatory domain dominance, closed-end movement skills<sup>13</sup> and open-type movement skills<sup>14</sup> are also at high levels;
10. Perfect corrections, perfect anticipation at every stage of the activity, while the personality is manifested in both motion and execution;
11. In the case of capabilities, backsliding occurs only at very high stake-stress;
12. Fatigue matches the physique, but it can be compensated with other techniques. The given physical and nervous system load has a balanced influence on the actual physiological state, the considerable experience and adaptability helps with avoiding the mutual weakening of the loads. Movement processes are characterized by significant control of energy consumption;
13. Cortical supervision is limited to the time of decision making, and motion control is automatic. As a result, nervous system fatigue occurs only after a long time.<sup>15</sup>

Over time, through intense practice of martial arts, many abilities develop in an individual, which are well adapted to the individual and group capabilities expected as a result of military training. These include perception ability, response skills, fast under-

<sup>13</sup> Environment is constant and easy to influence, movement ability is of permanent character and fine-motor, performance, and learning are its typical features.

<sup>14</sup> Environment changes, hard to influence, the movement ability is variable, perceptuo-motor (detection, sensing), decision and learning characterises them, involved tactical skilfulness.

<sup>15</sup> Nádori L. *Az edzés elmélete és módszertana*. Budapest: Magyar T. E. 1991. 164-181.

standing and mastering of the correct motion structure, optimum synchronization, reception and processing of information, proper way of using sensory organs, observation, motion memory, independent and fast processing of fear, perfect perception of “must” and “exist” values, necessary introversion, assertiveness, anticipation and abstraction capability, limited aggression ability, minimization of psychic fatigue with its limitation to physical reasons.

A dedicated person skilled in *budō* has a large number of other outstanding capabilities, including:

1. During training, with equal workouts, he/she achieves better results than his/her peers, and develops faster;
2. Bears the load of training relatively well, and responds favourably to the increase of the load which can be increased sooner;
3. Learns movements more quickly, and acquires more complex technical elements. As a result of the new form of movement, he/she develops organically, psychically, with better results;
4. Applies and implements technical and tactical instructions at a high level;
5. Uses the knowledge and gained experience creatively in struggle and solves unexpected situations expediently, applies original solutions;
6. Tough, persistent, usually hard-working, and more ambitious when overcoming difficulties, willing to take on the fatigue of training, his/her work is conscious, and he/she cooperates with his peers in a creative way.

## BUDŌ AS A CAREER MODEL

Erik H. Erikson published his ground-breaking theory of 8 stages of lifelong psychosocial development in 1950.<sup>16</sup> His theory expanded psychoanalytic concepts of psychosexual development to include the importance of social dynamics; it transcended then current thinking that psychological development culminated in early adulthood, acknowledging that systematic human development continues throughout the entire life cycle.

Comparing the psychosocial development model produced by Erikson with *budō*, it can be observed how the practice of *budō* in the process of self-development influences self, self-image, self-knowledge, and self-esteem. If a person chooses *budō*, one must be aware that the first step towards the *dōjō*<sup>17</sup> must be made by the person interested. The practice of *budō*, if begun in early childhood, promotes the development of a strong personality, the ability to shape the environment and self-reliance (orientation towards internal control) become natural. Continuous positive competence motivation greatly enhances self-esteem and positive self-image. In the Erikson model of the psychosocial development process, it is known that each stage includes a particular conflict, that is a crisis situation.

<sup>16</sup> Kivnick, H. Q. and Wells, C. K. “Untapped Richness in Erik H. Erikson’s Rootstock”. *The Gerontologist* 54/1. 2014. 40-50. DOI: 10.1093/geront/gnt123

<sup>17</sup> *dōjō* – “the place of following the road” which means the place where one can practice a given martial art.

Stages	Ages	Basic conflict	Important event	Description	Budō method	Military career
1. Oral Sensory (Infancy)	From birth to 18 months	Basic Trust vs. Basic Mistrust	Feeding / HOPE	In newborns the first love and trust towards their nurturer develops or is taken over by the feeling of mistrust	parental harmony	
2. Muscular Anal (Early Childhood)	From 18 months to 3 years	Autonomy vs. Shame, Doubt	House-breaking / WILL	The infant's energy is focused on physical skills like walking, holding, and regulating the constrictor. The child learns control and is taken over by shame and doubts in case of failure.	parental harmony	
3. Locomotor Genital (Play Age)	Between 3 and 6 years	Initiative vs. Guilt (Self-restraint)	Independence / PURPOSE	Increasing child independence, growing initiative, risk of too much violence, getting guided by sense of guilt.	parental harmony, establishing and transferring way and rhythm of life,	Parental example (military family, environment)
4. School Age (Latency)	Between 6 and 12 years	Industry vs. Inferiority	Schooling / COMPETENCE	Need to learn new skills to fight inferiority, failure, and incompetence	Establishing cooperation with peers, building self-image through new knowledge and skills, achieving appreciation, satisfying newly appearing need for output	Parental orientation (satisfying the interests of the child)
5. Adolescence (Puberty and Adolescence)	Between 12 and 18 years	Identity vs. Confusion	Relationships with children of the same age / FIDELITY	The adolescent has to establish identity in connection with career, sexuality, politics, and religion	Exercising Budō is a fundamental principle in shaping ego. It is a main advisor, manifestation of the sense of commitment, finding the role fitting individual, establishment of correct ways of problem management	State orientation, education in military secondary school

Stages	Ages	Basic conflict	Important event	Description	Budō method	Military career
6. Young Adulthood	Between 19 and 40 years	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Love relations / LOVE	Young adults need intimate relationships, otherwise they face and fight the sense of isolation	Significant influence on a developing personality, surfacing special capability-factors	BSc/MSc training, advancement from junior officer positions to staff officer assignments
7. Middle Adulthood	Between 40 and 65 years	Generativity vs. Stagnation (Self-Absorption)	Parent role / CARE	The adult should find the way to support and encourage the next generation	Increasing responsibility for the community, taking leading role in a community, commitment to traditions develop, increased expectations from the community coupled with the pressure to meet them	Rising from mid-level leader to high-level leadership, occasionally research and summary of experience in scientific research
8. Older Adulthood (Maturity)	From 65 to death	Ego, Integrity vs. Despair	Assessment and acceptance of career path / WISDOM	The issue of loneliness and satisfaction with life gets the foreground	Respect by the community, summary of oeuvre, contribution to the development of acquired knowledge to a higher level	Soldiers retire, taking advisor role

Figure 1 *Psychosocial stages of life (developed from Erikson's model by the author)*

In the latency period from the age of 6 to puberty, there is a high level of interest in accommodating new knowledge/skills during which the child requires cooperation with peers. The new knowledge/skills significantly determine the self-image and the child uses them to gain recognition. Since this is a very sensitive period, a proper manager can develop a desire for recognition and performance without creating an overvalued personality image and various failures do not produce a feeling of inferiority. Children's training in *budō* requires special attention from the coach. A great deal of experience and teaching ability are needed to remain in this narrow path. In any case, this is the period of time that can mean a life-long commitment, or a seclusion.

*Budō* acts as the main advisor in the quest for identity in adolescence (role confusion) and self-consciousness, since that is the period when young persons – due to the lack of experience – discover how difficult it is to find the most suitable activity that matches their character and capabilities. This conflict is made particularly complex by the diversity of leisure opportunities in our time, which entice and divide the lives of adolescent people into so many directions. Practicing *budō* is a commitment, a life-organizing principle, and since both the teaching and the master in this age of quest serve as a model for the young, it can

highlight the role of its talent. It is also the master's primary responsibility to maintain the balance between the adolescent's adherence to a group and the discovery of his/her own self, including the resolution of conflicts within the group. During this period, the master also plays a mediator role between the parents and the adolescent in resolving the friction caused by the aspirations of independence.

Early adulthood is a turning point in practicing *budō*. At that time, there are significant changes in the life of young people. Studies do not only mean changes in their daily schedule, but in many cases they need to get settled in another region of the country. In many cases, higher education entices the individual abroad. The other major change is in the personal relationship. The chosen partner does not always accept the previous habits, and the fear of losing him/her also forces the young adult to make a decision.

In addition, *budō* also has a significant impact on the developing personality, which is the result of a very complex process with the ability made to be highly sensitive to certain areas. However, this can also be a big burden. Therefore, such kind of effective and purposeful attitude is not accepted in all life situations by the environment. Of course, a *budōka* having appropriate time and intelligence will find the balance, the form acceptable for everyone, while maintaining efficiency.

Adulthood is the period of settling, where human creativity develops at the highest level in a lifetime. Since we are talking about a *budōka* with up to 20 years of experience and a high degree of *dan*, the question of setting up an independent *dōjo* may also come up. At this stage of life, the conflict mainly evolves around the delicate balance between family and profession, the balance between the two, and the time management. Adult responsibility here is not only about raising offspring but also about the future of the practiced *budō* branch. Since in this age the person is one of the determining members in the given school, the education of the beginners is of not only an individual need but also an expectation. Stagnation, which is the dark side of adulthood, is not typical for those practicing *budō* for a long time.

Old age is a kind of reward for life in *budō*. In Japan, a person who has turned 61 enters the gate of old age. Since that time on, he/she has been regarded as an elderly person, and has been entitled to unconditional respect not only in the world of *budō*, but also in daily life. This age is a period of epitome, which means the recapitulation of the results, successes, or even failures of a long active life. Looking at the entire life of a person it can be stated that it is in the old age when *budō* values may be of great help. *Budō* gives the devoted person who practiced it a complete life program that not only manifests itself in the *dan* degrees, the hierarchy, but in the evolution of the personality, in the spiritual way as an old master becomes wise.

In Japan, the 61st year of age may generally bring the attainment in *budō*, the 8th *dan* and the highest, *hanshi*<sup>18</sup> instructor level for a person practicing *budō* since childhood, where the integrative-analytical thinking reaches a very high level. There are several reasons why there is no known old-age crisis, why the issues "Did it make sense for my life?", or "How much I didn't realize!" do not emerge in these people. One of the reasons is the entirety of *budō*, the other one is the feeling of achieving, coupled with the consciousness that in Japan a person at the age of 61 is regarded more like a middle-aged person, so he/she still has long decades to complete the transfer of the knowledge acquired through his/her talent

<sup>18</sup> *hanshi* – the highest degree, which can be earned after dan 8. Often translated as Grand Master.

and ability with the greatest respect. The person should feel that the community needs him/her and is a decisive part until the last moment of his/her life.

Many decades of exercise in *budō* can lead to a healthy, balanced personality development also because the person has appropriate time to progress from Dan to Dan, to meet the challenges and the ever increasing demands physically, mentally, and psychologically. If someone has not yet reached the next level, it is obvious that he/she will not get the degree, and will continue practicing, and developing. This way there will not be confrontation with a role that goes beyond his/her capabilities. Because there is a strong and merit-based hierarchy in *budō*, the decline is not typical parallel with continuous practice. It is noteworthy that if a person dedicated to practicing *budō* becomes limited in continuous practicing for some reason, then he/she finds the specific way of developing his/her abilities over time.

The other characteristic of old age, the feeling of passing away, the fear of death, is reduced in a person practicing *budō* for two reasons. On the one hand, the culture in which *budō* is embedded has developed over several centuries and is able to accept passing away through religious teachings. On the other hand – for practical reasons – *budō* deals with death just enough not to be completely alien to the *budō* practitioner at the end of his/her life. The admirable calmness of the old *budō* practitioners is said to be precisely because they are already close to death and do not separate life and death as sharply as a young *budōka*, who is still frightened by the idea of departing. That is why the great masters state that the true depth of practicing *budō* can be truly experienced over 70 years.

However, there are significant public health and social values as well in the practice of *budō*. Through practicing martial arts since childhood or adolescence the brain of the person remains much fitter at old age. Although experience has shown that the time of starting practicing and the number of years spent practicing *budō* are also critical for maintaining cognitive abilities at old age, even if the practice of *budō* is dropped in adulthood, there are significant benefits stemming from it. This is probably because of the complexity of the motion system and the later-understood philosophical background, as a lifestyle is coupled with many years of practice and learning, therefore it is likely to create alternative brain connections that are able to counterbalance the cognitive decline associated with aging.

At old age, most people face a number of locomotor problems resulting in a significant decrease in activity for real and/or perceived reasons. This is another blow to the slowing metabolism that is already at an advanced stage, so the weight gain and lack of energization make a vicious circle. People whose life is accompanied by practicing *budō* until old age, have many advantages. The pace of life established over decades, physical and mental activities, make the body much more prepared for the challenges of old age. It is noticeable that these elderly masters do not practice less actively as opposed to the physiological rules of competitive sports, nor can be stated that they are less effective. They simply possess a vast amount of movement experience, deep knowledge of the human body and anatomical features and their abilities. They have a completely different approach than a “novice” practicing merely for 20-30 years. And since they are completely free of unnecessary muscle use and movement, it is obvious that they need less energy to carry out the same form of movements and perform with the same efficiency. These elderly masters are usually more skilful in their everyday life than their peers, which can be attributed to the lifelong exercise of complex forms of movement. Interestingly, when they nevertheless come to the inevitable time of physical decline, and when the techniques practiced indefinitely are discussed or when they enter into an inspirational environment, such as their own beloved dojo, they completely change, forgetting all physiological barriers. This is the true value and true depth of *budō*.

## CONCLUSION

Budō is an opportunity, a kind of preparation for military career, and here I mean not only acquiring the self-defence techniques necessary for military service, but of developing a set of skills that also serves to relieve the nervous system. In the life of the Hungarian Defence Forces, both in the preparation system and the free-time activities of the service members, some branches of the Japanese *budō* have been present for decades, primarily for their combat efficiency. My *budō* idea differs from this practice in that it also gives *budō* an opportunity not only to shape an attitude but also to increase the mental stamina of the person through practicing that can be done until very old age, which is important since it may provide a sort of solution for the special crisis situation generated by the extended service time of professional military personnel.

It can be seen from my paper that these do not exclude but rather complement each other in military profession, as both may be necessary. *Budō*, as a lifestyle, a way of life, is a great help in military training, in doing military tasks, and experience shows that it is easier to avoid different deviations, and to reduce the impacts of inward burden on a personality.

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