

The Way versus the Art: Comparative Analysis between *Budo* and *Bujutsu*

The sword is *drawn* from its sheath; the scabbard is not *pulled away* from the sword. The former is an understanding of the Art (Bujustu); the latter a comprehension of the Way (Budo). The aforementioned example illustrates the misconceptions laid forth in both of Draeger's Classical Bujutsu and Classical Budo, which are incomplete overviews of Ancient China's philosophical history and Feudal Japan's martial history.

Reduced to three-dimensional forms, classical bujutsu holds the first priority as combat, its secondary concern is discipline and lastly morals; whereas classical budo focuses primarily on morality, secondarily on discipline and lastly on the ideals of aesthetic form. The intertwined and yet contradictory nature between the two can be viewed historically with the realization that if bujutsu was the norm, then bushido was a complete fabrication ex-post facto. The samurai code of the twelfth century only later became romanticized through such classics as *The Tale of Heike* (i.e., Jōmyō, the hero of the Battle at the Uji Bridge who slew two dozen men with 24 arrows before breaking his bow to make a staff and wandering off to a monastery), such as chivalry in Europe or the legend of honorable cowboys in the American West. In fact, most samurai were brutal, aristocratic thugs slashing peasants who didn't bow low enough or ambushed their foe before a duel (i.e., Miyamoto Musashi). Draeger has fallen prey to the common blunder of many Western writers explaining the mystique of Orientalism for he has confused myth with reality.

The current dojo experience is an example where the crude technical aspect of bujutsu has been eliminated by the necessity of budo. The contemporary setting of martial arts does not allow for daily, deadly combat and thus budo instead stresses the higher values of "gaining an understanding of the self, of being, and of nature, and for gaining self-perfection." Through 4th degree, the Kenpo karateka/practitioner studies nearly 500 self-defense techniques including variations (*yet, one must ask which self/Self we are defending?*) and 29 katas (including one's Personal Form). This discrepancy is illustrated in that fact that 5,000 ryu (*formalized Japanese martial traditions*) contain the art of the sword (*ken-jutsu*); however, only 400 ryu contain the art of sword-drawing (*iai-jutsu*). What is to be made of this imbalance? To imply that techniques are of greater value because they are shorter/more expedient would be equivalent to stating that katas are merely a series of techniques jumbled together. **Succinctly put, techniques are bujutsu of the system and katas represent budo.** Once this illusion has evaporated, a block becomes "grabbing the horse's mane" and a punch is "opening the barn door to let the horses out".

Understanding Budo would be worshipping the three sacred katanas: Tozuka (Ten-fister) Ama-no-hayakiri (Heavenly Serpent Killer) and Kusanagi (Grass-Mower). Studying Bujutsu teaches one the simple truth that a sword is a tool with a single purpose . . . death. The pursuit of the martial arts is simple: to un-speak of the Dao/Do, "the fire of truth", and to grasp at Cultural Humanism. Why else climb this mountain of martial knowledge to the fourth degree and beyond if not to seek connection with those who have already reached its peak . . . lined with those past masters of both the Way and the Art, waiting and asking, "What took you so long?"