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A Comment on Modern *Kendō* (2)

By Kunikichi Kaneko*

It is clear that *Kendō* which is now practised as a part of physical education is the sport like other physical education. However some people in the field of *Kendō* believe that *Kendō*, though practised as sport, is the cultural inheritance which has time-honored tradition and which has been handed down among our nation, and is essentially practised as *Budō*.

This means that *Kendō* is *Budō* which is different quite essentially from sport imported from foreign countries.

Budō, in this case will be the physical education with philosophy of ethics and religion and with the emphasized spiritual philosophy.

On the other hand, *Kendō* through the process of its origin and development has come to exist as a part of the physical education (sport) with the change of social background, and is quite the same as other sports.

As mentioned above, there are two kinds of ideas about *Kendō* and these two ideas must be judged by the way of judgement of *Kendō* instructors, but the fact of change of social conditions can not be ignored, and naturally *Kendō* must be in conformity with this law of phenomenon to display its true value.

We can achieve the purpose of physical education through means of *Kendō* and the idealistic way of thinking about *Budō* stresses the spiritual phase of human beings. This interpretation of the philosophy of *Budō* is a nostalgia toward military arts and is a wrong interpretation of reality.

We can not agree with a special view of *Budō* derived from view of ethics and religion.

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Substance of modern *Kendō* is a sport.

Now we will discuss internal points of *Kendō*.

If the inherent actions of human beings, there are so-called reflex action and impulse action which are caused by the other party, that is these actions are caused by the adaptation with the outside impetus, and spiritual and physical internal impetus.

The reflex and impulse actions require will at first but by the repeated training it will become easy actions and in the end will become actions without need of will.

In the training of *Kendō*, this degenerated development of will is a desirable state of action. Weakness, strength and change of impetus are very difficult to be perceived when the same change of weakness and strength continues. Only when different changes occur in impetus of strength and weakness changes hitting and thrusting would come.

That is to say, tension and relaxation of the power of attention will bring about changes in the substance of consciousness. The tension of the power of attention will stimulate nerves making it shrewed. Actions of *Kendō* are rapid training and a skill precision training and partially, a feat of strength. Moreover it accompanies a complicated operation of muscles.

Accordingly, reduction of time necessary for the reflex and impulse actions by accelerating the degenerated development of will will become an important factor.

From older times many such important items for handling rewards as "make observations" has been inherited and practised.

These items has greatly influenced on the training technics of modern *Kendō* but it is not proper to apply these items to the modern sport *Kendō* with referee system, game rules, time limit and restriction to a bamboo sword being adopted.

These items when they are fully analyzed, examined, rationalized, explained to be adapted to the theory of modern *Kendō* and are put into practice will be able to display their true value. These are important bases and are connected with difference of technics.

In short, training of harmonized actions is most important. The classification of new technics is that technics now being trained should be taken as a part of the

continued actions accompanying the movement of body and that it aims at a training of balanced technics. It is quite natural that this training, by the repeated training of basic action for moving a body and by not falling into fault such as one sided movement and wrong warding off of a bamboo sword should be practised.

This classification was made for the purpose of creating new technics necessary for the enforcement of a speedy, safe and high probability technics by making a classification of an individual technic and also by making an analysis and explanation of an individual technic.