

EXISTING TO LIVE

A Poetic Reflection on Budo

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Preface

This book is not merely a collection of poems. It is a path, a silent pursuit of the essence of martial arts, an intimate journey through the movements of the body and the echoes of the soul. Each verse, each line, traces the road of initiation: from physical discipline to spiritual awakening, from visible combat to the invisible quest for inner harmony. Through precise gestures, through postures rooted in the earth, these poems speak to us of a mastery beyond strength, of a presence that transcends mere performance. The body becomes the temple of the spirit, each breath a meditation, each mistake a step toward wisdom. Combat, far from being a confrontation, becomes a dance in which balance, compassion, and letting go reveal themselves in the simplicity of the moment.

The words here do not seek to impose a truth, but to invite an encounter. *Seiza*, the seated meditation posture, opens the way to deep reflection, while *Chū*, the moment of action, becomes an experience of pure presence. These poems are not merely accounts of martial arts; they are reflections of life itself—metaphors for learning to live with balance, serenity, and full awareness. At the heart of this collection, the teachings of *Bushidō* and *Zen* intersect and intertwine, weaving a tapestry in which the very essence of mastery is found in the discretion of the moment, the modesty of the gesture, and respect for oneself and for others. With each page, the call to inner peace, to harmony with the world,

resonates like an invitation to leave behind the noise of everyday life and to listen to the whisper of breath, of the heart, of the world.

In this work, we thus discover a meditation, a bridge between martial arts and poetry, between body and mind. It is not meant to be understood through reason, but to be lived, felt, and experienced. An invitation for the reader to find, in the depths of their being, the space where silence becomes strength, where error becomes wisdom, where action becomes pure beauty.

Through these reflections, I recognize my dear friend Vasco Pinto, a great expert in martial arts, whose life is a living model of commitment and dedication to *Budo*. His daily practice, his constant quest for mastery and wisdom, further illuminate the depth of these words. In every gesture, every thought, this learned Sensei embodies the perfect union between martial art and the art of living. His journey, his experience, and his passion are present in each poem, bearing witness to a man for whom the lessons of combat are never separate from the lessons of life.

He guides us with humility, reminding us that ultimate victory lies not in outward conquest, but in the conquest of oneself.

Anthony Moyou

5th Dan Renshi – Kokusai Budoin IMAF

Introduction

Budo is not merely a set of techniques, nor a crystallized inheritance from the past. Above all, it is a path, a guiding thread that connects art to the human being, the visible practice to the invisible that lies within it. When we speak of *Budo*, we speak of something that transcends the gesture, for the gesture is only the surface of a vaster ocean. Its true essence is found in what precedes and follows action: in silence, in attention, in the intention that gives birth to movement and in the awareness that receives it once fulfilled. This work is born as an invitation to that crossing, leading the reader from the immediate and superficial plane to the intimate core where essence rests. It is a bridge between what is learned in the dojo and what is lived in daily life, between the rigor of form and the lightness of existence. Within these pages, one will not find descriptions of techniques or reflections on combat; each principle evoked here is an open door. Doors of the spirit which, once crossed, reveal broader dimensions of existence.

In martial practice, every gesture can be understood as a metaphor for life. The defense that rises at the right moment teaches us also to raise our own boundaries in daily life; the attack that dissolves without violence shows us that strength can be channeled without destruction; the fall followed by return to one's feet reminds us that life is made of inevitable falls, but also of indispensable risings. Thus, *Budo* becomes a map for a way of living. This path, with ancestral roots, is

not confined to the battlefield; on the contrary, it opens itself as a living philosophy, an art of being that applies as much to peace as to conflict, to the silence of meditation as to the turmoil of human choices. War and peace, love and duty, gesture and thought, all intertwine into a single fabric where the principles of *Budo* are at once discipline and liberation, restraint and expansion.

More than a strategy of combat, *Budo* teaches us how to find ourselves. It reveals itself as a subtle guide, a journey that, in each principle, brings us back to what is essential: the awareness of ourselves in the movement of life. If *Budo* were only combat, it would have already lost its meaning in times of peace. What grants it permanence is its timeless nature: a philosophy that spans centuries and remains alive because it touches the core of the human being. The masters of the past transmitted to us techniques, but above all they left us principles that continue to echo in the present. These principles are not meant merely to resolve physical confrontations; they are orientations for life, compasses that help us navigate the complexities of the everyday. In daily life, each of us faces invisible battles. There are moments when the adversary is not another human being, but fear, doubt, uncertainty, or pain. It is then that the teachings of *Budo* reveal their true strength, not as weapons of destruction, but as tools of transformation. The mind disciplined in training learns not to lose itself in the chaos of existence; the body educated through movement learns to find balance in every

fall; the spirit that rises in silence learns to recognize peace even amid turbulence.

In this work, *Budo* is understood as a mirror of life. Each principle presented here does not end on the tatami but extends into the small and great choices that shape destiny. They are maps of mind and heart, guides that illuminate our relationship with ourselves and with others, reminding us that the true combat is never against our neighbor, but against the illusions that separate us from clarity and truth.

Thus, this book is not a manual, but an invitation. It is not merely a reflection on martial principles, but a poetic journey into the essence of being. Through these pages, the reader is invited to open inner doors, to question, to discover in the gesture its metaphor and in silence its response. For *Budo* is not a static tradition, but a living path, a way of transformation that begins with the sword and reaches the spirit, that is born in the gesture and blossoms into thought.

In the end, what is proposed here is simple and at the same time profound: that each one discovers, through *Budo*, a place of reunion with oneself. That each principle, each reflection, may serve as an invitation to awareness, to truth, and to inner transformation. For *Budo*, more than art or discipline, is a path of return-not to the past, but to the innermost center of who we truly are.

Tachirei 立ち礼

Bowing while standing

In the simple act of salutation,
There lies more than form or station;
An echo of centuries, masters' breath,
And silence teaching beyond all death.

I bow not to another alone,
But to the essence we have known,
The fleeting moment's impermanence,
The unseen dance of self and absence.
To bend the body shows no defeat,
But strength in pride's release discreet,
For pride is a weight the spirit denies,
The lighter soul, unbound, still flies.

I bow to beginning, to journey, to end,
For all is learning, to break and to mend.
I rise to fall, I bow to ascend,
And for one instant, all roles suspend:
I am but wind, with no pretense,
Passing through pines in pure silence.

Seiza 正座

Sitting

Kneel down, oh soul, upon the ground,
Where body's weight and spirit's light are found,
Bow to the earth, your steadfast base,
Yet lift to the sky with a growing grace,
In stillness of sitting, time dissolves away,
Like horizon stretched on the sea's vast sway.
Each pulse of pain in the legs is a call,
Each ache a lesson, acceptance in all,
The folded body is no submission,
But echo of humbler recognition.

In posture lies silent flexibility,
In hardship, a deeper unity,
Discipline shapes the spirit's form,
Like rivers carve stones through ages long.
It is not strength that sustains the frame,
But surrender that keeps the flame,
To sit is to speak with silence alone,
To hear eternity's murmuring tone,
To be small before the vast universe here,
And yet within it, exist whole and clear.

Seated, it's truth and respect we keep,
A posture that dares the self to leap,
And at the body's limits, with no end in sight,
Upon the earth, we discover the infinite.

Kihon 基本

The Basics

From the very beginning the body will learn,
Simple motions, like winds that return,
Each step an echo, timeless, profound,
In repetition, the fleeting is bound.
The strike through the air is no show of pride,
But search for the form where truth may reside,
The block that halts is not just defense,
But balance of life in pure essence.

Within the basics the infinite lies,
The master is not who forever flies,
But he who returns to the origin deep,
And there finds himself, his essence to keep.

The basics are stone, they are root, they are ground,
The fire contained in a hand that is sound,
Practice that molds with both force and care,
The soul that seeks the sacred there,
In simplicity depth is found,
In smallest gesture eternity resounds,
Art is not lived in what's complex,
But in the heart, steadfast and reflex.

Who trains will learn, in practice unending,
That start and finish share the same garden.