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Imitative forms of movement as a way of counteracting physical passivity of a contemporary man

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Summary

Common reception of post-modern mass culture and consumer civilisation in Poland has its very dangerous, delayed effect. Life based on this civilisation pattern does not help fulfil the needs for physical activity and work, which are very important for young organism's health and psychophysical development. Observation of the realisation of contemporary school aims confirms that consumer patterns are followed. School physical education – the only education responsible for pupils' somatic development and health – despite growing number of hours in a week, fulfils its aims only partly. Physical passivity symptoms are present also here. That is why it is so important to notice negative aspects of physical passivity.

The authors present the meaning of imitative forms, also called technical forms, in the perspective of anthropological theory of consumption, theory of physical education, sociology of physical culture and humanist theory of far eastern martial arts. They are practiced for health and fitness, for self-defensive skills or as an effect of fascination of the culture of the East which is always very beneficial as a way of constant care for psychophysical fitness.

Imitative forms are one of the ways of counteracting physical passivity among the youngsters. Practicing forms originating from classical martial arts is associated with the ethics of the way of self-perfection and non-aggression. They may be practiced by oneself, at suitable pace, best in the open air. In order to pass proper skills and knowledge to children, the classes of imitative forms should be first introduced into the curricula of physical education and teachers' colleges and university courses.

Key words:

Physical culture • Martial arts • Physical inactivity • Consumer civilisation • Society

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INTRODUCTION

Avoiding excessive physical effort, possibly most economic energy expenses at work or even careful use of any physical activity, have almost always been a norm for human beings as noticed by Hillel Ruskin (after [41]) at the end of the last century. Writing about physical education in West European countries, he stated that promotion of physical activity and accepting it as a social norm is disturbed by the syndrome of physical inactivity (passivity) of man. Nowadays, several years later, it may be confirmed that physical passivity is, in all probability, a significant and common element of the lifestyle of our society.

In Poland we combine reasons for spreading physical passivity with socio-political changes, with increasingly more common patterns of consumption civilisation with *reception of the patterns of mass culture of the West*. Indeed, after long-lasting attempts to manipulate the society and defending an artificial social egalitarianism, real human needs became finally visible. Some of them tend to follow the patterns of mass consumption civilisation. In the middle of the 20th century, Bogdan Suchodolski [45] and Jan Szczepański ([47], p.190) warned against socially negative results of these patterns seeing rescue in spreading a horizontal model of human development.

Szczepański in his anthropological theory of consumption divided human needs into the principal and marginal ones. He also defended artificial social egalitarianism by rejecting the latter needs. According to the theory of *Poverty of historicism* by Karl Popper [34], changing the society by means of social engineering based on communist ideology was unsuccessful. Nostalgia for the possibility of realising marginal needs obliterated understanding the hazards of from their mass-scale realisation [31]. Suchodolski's warnings against consumption civilisation were unsuccessful. He wrote that "the situation of people [in this civilisation] becomes complicated, their attitudes towards life reflect tensions and inner contradictions, the distance between intentions and achievements increases, frustrating feelings grow, work becomes boring and neutral, life is treated as a garden of pleasures but boredom advances possibilities of intensification of happiness, tranquillisers and stimulants used alternately make the contact with reality very shallow (...) despite that life sparkles with neons and attracts with the charm of possibilities for which one has to pay with great effort of fight for survival and rivalry for luxury" ([45], pp. 55-57).

The trends of passive mass culture are not diminished by an omnipresent unemployment in Poland. What

is more, a so-called 'unemployed lifestyle' [21] has been noted. Increasingly more often we rather do not want than cannot find ourselves in the consumption job market. It is very often associated with physical passivity, which is not recognised as a negative phenomenon and has its consequences in the form of consumption on loans. Fascination with mass consumption is perhaps a transitory phenomenon. At least Kazimierz Obuchowski [30] thinks this way; in his *Psychology of Human Aspirations* he stated that first generations coming out of poverty are characterised by fascination with mass consumption ([47], p.320).

Consumerism is mainly based on multiplying needs, creating 'artificial needs', taking into consideration the development of the United States. The Europeans living in the USA are astonished by the terrible power of collective conformities governing customs and the intellectual life to a greater degree than it could happen by any police force. It is an effect of a mad advertising technique. It is a fact that creating new needs is a condition of social progress ([19], pp. 245-250) but it is difficult to discern the needs precisely and establish a catalogue of real and permanent human needs; however, it is not a reason for not recognising these needs at all.

Consumption, which at the times of Florian Znaniecki was "the sphere of privacy", has now become an ideology. It is treated as a value itself. High level of luxurious consumption is almost at the top of the hierarchy of values [28]. Leszek Kołakowski [20] described it in the following way: "We are at the phase of unrestrained voracity. Perhaps we will be wise enough to know that it is a disease although we do not know the cure. However, if we will not be wise enough it may be a fatal disease". As Zygmunt Bauman writes, spending money is treated as one of the most important duties and freedom is identified with freedom for consumption ([4, 28], p. 208). Consumerism tyrannises social life, is a criterion of progress and success of individuals and societies. Young generations are socialised into the world of consumption. The theory of 'true needs of a man' ([3], pp. 21-44) has totally collapsed which results in lack of criticism towards consumption societies [20] apart from radical humanism of Erich Fromm and social teachings of Catholic Church [6, 7, 15, 18, 38].

American patterns of mass consumption culture are apparently supported by European postmodern culture. The creator of the notion of 'postmodernism' Z. Bauman says that postmodern culture is constant carnival, procession of short-term fashions, excess of information, disintegration of human identity [4]. Zbyszko Melosik [28] shares that view indicating



consumption as a way of life, society of shows and advertising which reconstructs identity of a man through shaping his needs and standardising tastes.

Post-modern culture and consumerism are generally characterised by phenomena dangerous for the development and health of a human being such as:

- Uncontrolled growth of technology and media information;
- Isolation of a human being from nature;
- Various significant limitation of his physical activity.

Technology, for years a symbol of progress, changes our reality into “technopoly”. Neil Postman writes that the idea of progress of the mankind has been replaced by the idea of technical advancement ([35], p.8). Fascinated with technical facilities and without any criticism we undergo hypokinesia since technology is a symbol of modern and fashionable consumption, while physical activity is associated with a difficult period of access to consumer goods. Undoubtedly, technology eases human life but, in the perspective of human development and health, it constitutes great dangers. “Man like animals was programmed to move – work in natural environment” [43].

Along with limitations of physical work through technical facilities, a contemporary man is constantly attacked by an excess of media information. Media, a tool of superfluous and desired information, thanks to their multiplicity and omnipresence, create ‘a civilisation of scream and advertisement’ ([57], pp. 11-18) and a great part of their product is “searching for spirituality for neurotics”. Lost in the crowd of information, advertisements and advice in all spheres of life coming from media increasingly often, we suffer from anxiety, fear and stress.

Another very disturbing phenomenon is the isolation of a human being from natural environment. Several years ago, American doctors stated that ecological problems are only the beginning of evil resulting from isolation from nature. According to them, the essence of present-day danger is not damaged forests or toxic waters, but multiple perturbations in human mind and, in consequence, schizophrenia which is born because of contradicting nature and technical civilisation. Is it possible that the only place in a city where a man and nature co-exist in harmony is a cemetery [2, 46].

In Poland, Stanisław Zięba ([55], pp. 27-57) from the Catholic University of Lublin stated that “... con-

temporary man lost the sense of being ‘at home’ in nature; civilisational trends created distance from the roots of his development – the nature. Contemporary times are described as the time of fear of nature. The only rescue for a human being is, of course, the return to nature, at least partial” ([17], p. 223). This return is not so easy because attempts at “socialisation to nature” are often realised by means characteristic for culture and technical civilisation. Józef Lipiec [25] predicts that in the future we will be forced to join physical and ecological culture directed at the so-called ‘natural culture’ and even in the face of post-modern threats – ‘culture of life’.

Isolation of human life from nature is a part of a more general phenomenon – antinomy of nature and culture which spreads along with post-modern civilisation of consumption creating causes for many disease. “A disease – Stanisław Grochmal writes – is a resultant of human mistakes, a result of misunderstanding his role in nature, insufficient knowledge of his own body, its needs and among them those realised within the contact with nature. The world of material reality is infinite treasure house of building material for tissues and organs of our body as well as a source of energy conditioning constant biological change in an organism. Versatile process of getting familiar with the nature and its laws uniting all living creatures harmoniously allows to use this knowledge for preserving and building up health. We are not allowed to destroy life-giving sources of nature and become detached from common roots ensuring harmonious coexistence. It is also important for us to know the mechanisms preserving balance between biological processes of a human organism and the phenomena of surrounding nature as well as skilful use of its health properties” ([16], p.7).

Hippocrates wrote about the influence of nature on human health as long as four hundred years before Christ. Despite his knowledge, a contemporary man consciously isolates himself from nature under the influence of civilisational trends. The reasons for this isolation are not only a fashion for life in closed spaces in which a man creates himself optimal for his annealed conditions, e.g. constant high temperature, lack of climatic surprises, etc., but above all the possibility of submitting to physical passivity. Sitting body posture – a symbol of consumption lifestyle of a contemporary man – is closely associated with closed spaces. Physical activity, according to Napoleon Wolański ([52], p. 100), combines man with nature, is at present is one of the few forms of contact of a man with the environment, part of his niche in a given natural and social environment.

Physical activity and passivity

From the point of view of human development and health, a clearly negative evaluation of phenomena of spreading technology, media invasion and isolation of human beings from nature, is only a part of dangers. The phenomenon of a significant restriction of human physical activity seems to be the most dangerous one.

“Movement is a biological need of animals and people, it is an elementary basis of mental and physical health” – wrote Halina Szwarc as long as 40 years ago. An organism devoid of movement develops pathological processes; such organisms get ill and grow old faster. It results from the functions performed by muscles in the metabolism of the whole system. Muscle work and movement are not merely factors indispensable for maintaining psychophysical fitness and endurance of adults, but also a very important feature in the development of a growing organism. Growth and development are not mechanical nourishment-dependent processes. For proper growth, for proper process of synthesis of living material, interchangeability of assimilation and dissimilation, alternate phases of stimulation and suppression, work and rest. These processes cannot be correct under conditions of lack of movement or limited motion activity” ([48], p. 223).

Such a high evaluation of movement has been kept for a long time. It was confirmed by W. Romanowski and A. Eberhard ([39], pp. 20-47), who wrote that movement causes morpho-functional perfecting of tissues and organs. Lack of movement is a reason for disappearance of active tissues, muscles, nerves and inner organs, diminishes the flow of oxygen thus slowing down the metabolism. In the growth phase, a lack of movement arrests growth, the body develops disharmoniously (defects of posture) and disabilities with other psychophysical consequences may occur. It negatively affects the development of bone structure, and brings about irreversible changes, e.g. hypertrophy of connective tissue, collagen accumulation and various deposits, leading to degenerative changes in the joints and inner organs. Sedentariness and lack of exertion accelerates metabolism, increases the excretion of calcium, phosphorus, potassium, nitrogen and sodium, induce symptoms of atrophy (e.g. heart volume reduction, clear decrease in physical capacity – diminishing living volume and vital capacity. The post-exercise and even the resting heart rate increases due to a decreased stroke volume and the heart recovery time increases. The volume of body fluids – blood and extracellular – decreases. According to Henryk Kuński ([24], pp. 17-115), sedentariness

makes it difficult to eat rationally, favours obesity and makes its treatment difficult, disables blood circulation, weakens tendons and muscles, rises the risk of joint damages and diminishes resistance to the hardships of everyday life.

Wiesław Romanowski ([40], pp.26-41) compared indicators of heart size (by relating the heart mass to body mass) and demonstrated that hearts of people living physically passively are smaller in comparison to those of physically active, intensely working people. The same is true for wild animals living in e.g. zoological gardens. In case of active people, the possibility of developing any form of heart disease is smaller; it is easier to by-pass heart and, thus, to recover from heart attack. Moderate physical effort results in increased leukocyte number and increases a resistance to cancer. Motor activity prevents the nightmares of civilisation – obesity and diabetes. “Motor liberation”, meaning voluntary physical work or movement in a selected form, frees the man from mental tensions, nervous reactions, apathy and weariness. For a man favouring trends of the present times and, thus, - as Stanisław Kozłowski ([22], p. 11) describes it – a sitting, overnourished and excessively emotionally aroused man, movement is a biological need both as prevention and therapy.

Due to the abovementioned statements, the reasons for common physical passivity are worth reflecting on more deeply. This phenomenon cannot be explained by a steadily increasing creativity, in dealing with various problems of life which take so much energy that not much is left for everyday physical activity. Three reasons for physical passivity can be presented:

First of all, physical work and motor activity are not longer a vital need. Nowadays, only a small part of living, security and transport depend on muscle work, most of it is technology-related. Work and movement are no longer instrumental values, necessary for life, obvious for everyday realisation. Physical activity has become an autothelic value, a need of much higher range. In the hierarchy of needs by Abraham Maslow [27], it moved from the lowest rank of vital (biological, physiological) needs, characteristic not only for people but also for animals, to the borderline of highest ranks. The needs of these are realised in the face of full emotional harmony and awareness of the sense of developing own personality. Contemporary physical activity is not a vital need but a conscious realisation of developing own personality needs of a man. Thus, only few individuals in societies take part in it. It is more often present in human reflection as a desired value. Unfortunately, man in his reflection often seeks higher values and in everyday conduct



rather realises own vital needs, i.e. the hedonistic ones. More frequently, a true interest in physical activity as one of the primary needs occurs in people who luckily survived the first heart attack. Andrzej Ziemilski ([54], pp. 33-64) explains that it is not a sign of full internalisation of positive attitude towards physical activity but rather the fear of death.

The second reason for physical passivity entering the lifestyle of contemporary generations should be seen in a widely understood commercialisation of sport. Modern sport, which has been present in lives of societies for over a hundred years, has become a phenomenon alienated from physical activity of whole populations. Competitive achievements beyond the human scale, supported financially, medially and pharmacologically, gained by selected heroes realising their passions at the cost of health or even life. Such sport ceased to motivate people for physical activity. Sedentary, fun-generating emotions are the most frequent ones. That sport, created to a high degree by media, is part of the consumption lifestyle. It is difficult to explain what human needs that kind of sport fulfils but, certainly, not those supporting development and health of man; rather, as N. Postman [36] says, it belongs to the “Amuse yourself to death” category. Negative evaluation of contemporary sport due to very small social meaning, does not motivate for physical activity, development and health. Additional problems are fashions – using expensive equipment, wear and facilities, closing oneself in costly, properly prepared and furnished rooms, as well as indicated significant level of physical fitness and motor skills of ‘sporting’ participants.

The third reason for “spreading physical passivity” lies in the offer of post-modern consumption civilisation towards human body. Jean Baudrillard [3] states directly that “...Among many symbols of consumption, human body has been placed on the highest level”, and Zbyszko Melosik ([28], pp. 5-111) says that the contemporary “man creates his identity through constructing a visual image of his body” but it does not mean that somatic values gain special meaning. Zbigniew Krawczyk [23] warns that in a post-modern society, as far as somatic values are concerned, we are threatened by destructive process of excessive instrumentalisation of the body and as far as wider social aims – preferring living values and the same depreciation of symbolic (spiritual) values. Instrumental treatment of human body means being interested more in its looks (fashion) than physical fitness, physical capacity or health. Among post-modern offers concerning the body, most pertain to artificial embellishing the body (tattoos, body piercing, bodybuilding based on anabolics, wonder diets,

plastic surgery, certain varieties of fitness) instead of a real help in to improving fitness and physical capacity, as well as the appearance of the body in a safe way. Such offers are too difficult for ‘comfort-valuing’ contemporary people. They require strong will, time, and what is more important, resistance to fashions. Regardless of the abovementioned reservations, a significant part of present-day societies (especially women, irrespectively of age) expect improving their appearance, physical and mental fitness and health, more from cosmetic, pharmacological, medical and psychotherapeutic services, than from own physical activity, not mentioning movement in contact with natural environment. All ‘modern’ procedures do not require everyday engagement and although they are expensive and painful at times, they do not throw people off blissful physical passivity, a symbol of post-modern comfort. Unfortunately, this comfort is rather, according to Tadeusz Łobożewicz ([26], p.13), a “pseudo-comfort of satiety, warmth and stillness to which it is easy to get accustomed. It is an example of degenerating adaptation of an organism. Health, however, is conditioned by undertaking toughening and effortful procedures lying in the sphere of discomfort”. To like the discomfort of effort, fatigue, hard work, means to change the physically totally passive lifestyle, becoming popular along with post-modern consumption.

Danuta Woitas-Ślubowska [51] describing the way of life writes that “characterising the way of life one aims at showing all human behaviours, at exhausting their description, on the other hand, consideration on the lifestyle draw attention to specific entities significant for a given subject. We may speak about lifestyle when there is a possibility to choose patterns of behaviour while the way of life includes also behaviours fully determined or even forced to the same degree”. Thus, lifestyle will include a set of attitudes, behaviour and philosophy of life of an individual or a group. According to Woynarowska and Mazur ([53], p. 8), lifestyle depends on life conditions, environment, social norms, culture, personal values, attitudes, knowledge and beliefs, skills of life, dignified economy, politics and organisational structure of societies. Lifestyle is a resultant of conditions and choices. It is a choice of patterns of behaviour among given possibilities. A choice which scale widens with the age of a young man in order to undergo greater conditioning at the end. Unfortunately, according to Radosław Muszkieta ([29], p. 16) as many as 86% of people in Poland do not see the connection between early death and lifestyle. It confirms the necessity of extensive work on shaping healthy lifestyle or at least within physical education physically active lifestyle.

A preliminary analysis of physical activity in youth, as well as throughout the life of a contemporary man ([5], pp. 30-68), informs us that the situation is dangerous. Spontaneous movement, fun, ‘crawling’ of the youngest seems to be even more limited due to hygienic and cultural rights to such a degree that the necessity to use Dennison’s gymnastics to save child’s development is common. In kindergartens physical activity is limited, which results in a deficient motor co-ordination or even manual skills. Integrated education, the first stage of learning in reformed school, gives children, in accordance with the will of their parents, a poor substitute for movement ([32], p. 76). The second stage looks a bit better but at lower secondary schools there is ‘wild freedom’ which allows giving-up movement, again with parents’ consent. In higher secondary schools the situation improves a little, except girls, whose majority will remain passive for the rest of their lives. Only a small part of adult society, especially elderly people, do any form of recreation – those are usually activities in the garden and walks, more rarely marching, running, cycling or swimming.

On the other hand, the patterns of behaviour of a contemporary man, whether chosen or imposed, indicate that the post-modern consumption really created a range of sedentary patterns of behaviour in all spheres of life. Sedentary pose is inseparable from many jobs, e.g. learning, entertainment, fun, personal, family, social celebrations with prayer, leisure, rest, consumption of meals, interpersonal interactions of various kind, travel, creative work, etc. Sitting with eyes glued to a computer screen often takes our precious sleep. We shorten it and move to late night hours. Such a lifestyle is accepted by children. Never before the lifestyle of children, not only when we consider sitting postures of the body and physical passivity, has been so similar to lifestyles of adults. It may have dangerous consequences. Even earlier, Ziemilski studied external symptoms of weekend lifestyle filled with physical laziness in the following manner: “Young people are physically neglected... Long necks of girls seem to be attached in a different place than they should be. Boys usually walk bended. Under great load? Overwhelmed by suffering? A pose, customary pattern? Real pain? Lack of the real need for being slim, agile, fit. Their active rest is wandering. So they wander lazily, aimless. They wander because their supervisors wander. They stare at exhibitions, queue for wafers, ice-cream. There is lack of example from the older generation. A 30-year-old Pole is carefully growing big belly which after a while becomes impressive in size. Ad it goes on like this until the heart attack” ([54], pp. 33-64). According to Kozłowski ([22], p. 11),

that lifestyle is evolving in the direction of dangerous civilisational diseases. There are traps in the form of addiction to own adrenaline (gambling, extreme sports), drugs and other substances, ‘wonder’ diets, bodybuilding with the use of steroids, plastic surgery and the mirage of eternal youth. Responsibility for own health is transferred onto health services and dynamically developing pharmaceutical industry.

Priest Jan Twardowski, in an interview for “Olympic Magazine”, said that everyone who valued more the effort put into perfecting own life and stands against death was an Olympic champion [56]. A planned fight against physical passivity in order to shape an active, at least a bit healthier lifestyle than the present one appears indispensable. Reforming schools and within it still standing alone and lost physical education ([37], pp. 51-70) does not fulfil real development and health needs of children. The school is efficient only in verbal tasks for children and youths. Physical education does not have proper place at school. Torn between biotechnical shaping of fitness and skills on one hand, and humane, positive attitudes towards life, physical activity too often tries to realise the latter only verbally. It is much too little. This kind of physical education seems to rather deepen than soothe physical passivity.

Technical forms called *kata*

The ways of martial arts introduce knightly values lost at present, offering a morally pure and simple way as a cut of a sword to the commercialised world. It is a way of self-discipline and effort of self-creation, protection of life and aiming at inner spiritual mastery (to the fullest of personal humanity) [7, 12].

The creator of contemporary *karate-dō* (the concept changing the military ‘Chinese hand from Okinawa’ into ethical humanistically oriented ‘way of an empty hand’), Gichin Funakoshi, saw in it a way of combining health exercises with the educational and self-creative effect. He recommended to practice above all *kata* (*Japanese* forms) – imitative technical sets. They begin and end with techniques of blocks emphasising the defensive, non-aggressive character of a martial art understood in this manner.

The forms may be practiced at various paces in various places and by various people – young and old, regardless of age and sex. This ancient record of fight techniques will be done very dynamically requiring great effort by a person full of strength. A similar technical pattern will be done more slowly in a more



economic way as adjusted to motor and exertion capacities of an elderly individual with low fitness. Repetitive practice of these forms (e.g. a hundred consecutive repetitions) is a classical way of realising individual training.

That type of exercise may be recommended as a perfect way of improving or maintaining a high level of psychophysical fitness. It improves speed endurance, motor memory (co-ordination) and concentration. *Kata* includes secrets of ancient masters as far as fight techniques and numerous symbolic meanings which result in cultural and historical studies [8, 11] are concerned.

Technical forms were a basic method of transmitting skills and teaching far-Eastern martial arts across generations. In numerous Asian varieties of combat sports and martial arts they are used till now. It applies to various styles of karate, Korean *taekwondo* and *hapkido*, Chinese styles of *wushu*, *kung-fu*, Vietnamese varieties and others.

In teaching *kata*, much attention is paid to following the *kata* line, to the rhythm, precision of technique, understanding movements (interpretation), breathing and shouts – emphasis to the techniques, tensing and relaxing muscles, executing consecutive movements dynamically or slowly, fluent transitions to the forthcoming positions and their stability, etc. Many organisations of combat sports and martial arts also organise competitions in technical forms.

Teaching is conducted from less complicated forms, in which only a few techniques and basic positions are repeated, to more difficult ones with complex designs and a greater number of movements and techniques – including the more advanced ones (kicks, turns, jumps, somersaults) [1, 14, 42, 44]. The symbolic and methodological meaning of the forms is also explained [13, 33, 49].

Certain schools teach forms with greater significance for health rather than for defence. It applies to e.g. *qigong* exercises, originating from the Taoist tradition, which were supposed to be an immortality elixir [50]. These forms are particularly popular at present as health gymnastics in China and in many countries.

There are forms requiring small surface such as *sanchin* or *yangzu* which may be practiced in own apartment. Other forms require a little more space. Increasingly often they are practiced in parks, woods, squares or backyards without creating a sensation. It is especially recommended to field

exercises in close contact with nature, which additionally favours reaching the state of inner harmony.

Some schools of classical martial arts (Chinese, Japanese, Korean) teach forms – both manual and with traditional weapons – done with a partner. However, there are many forms which (at the era of dominant individualism) may be self-practiced, perfecting this *kata* and own personality for years. One may aim at perfection in karate techniques or in exercises of wielding weapons (sticks, sabres, pole-axes). The art of reaching for a Samurai sword (*iaijutsu*, *iaidō*) is already very popular in Europe, especially in France and Germany. The practitioner follows an old Japanese master of fencing doing a set of covers and cuts. It reminds of a certain ritual or theatrical spectacle introducing into past epoch of Samurai culture [10].

The forms may be practiced for fascination with ancient culture of warriors and martial arts, for health and fitness, or for fighting dexterity and self-defence. The authors think that it is a valuable alternative for the attitude of cultural and physical passivity, extremely beneficial from the point of view of physical and health culture, especially as it is combined with the ethics of the way of non-aggression, with the way of psychophysical perfection and the principle of overcoming own weaknesses [9].

Practicing imitative forms called *kata* should be introduced into curricula of colleges of physical education in order that the prospective teachers could pass this kind of motor competence to students. This way of introducing elements of martial arts is both safer than a sport encounter and more beneficial in educational terms. Perfecting the forms shapes the attitude of perfectionism while competitiveness is a paradigm psychologically, ethically and socially controversial.

Concluding remarks

The patterns present in mass culture and created on the ground of consumption civilisation, favour physical passivity. This phenomenon is dangerous for psychophysical development and health of young generations, and so far physical education at schools has not been counteracting this sufficiently.

Imitative forms practiced for health and fitness, for improving self-defence skills or as a result of fascination of the culture of the East, are extremely beneficial as a way of continuous care for psychophysical fitness – for the whole life. It concerns manual forms,

like in karate, breathing exercises and 'energising' gymnastics, like in *qigong*, and especially forms with classical weapons.

It is an interesting suggestion as one of the ways of counteracting physical passivity. After all, it combines accessibility of exercise (no special rooms, dresses or equipment are required) with the ethics of the way of self-perfection and non-aggression. One may self-exercise at own pace, having been

familiar with these forms and ethical premises of proper styles and schools of martial arts.

In order to pass proper skills and knowledge to children, shape their perfectionist aspirations and develop co-ordination abilities, it is necessary first to teach imitative forms at teacher's courses and physical education colleges. In this way, elements of far-Eastern martial arts should become a part of basic canon of education.

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