

GOAL TO SAFETY AND LOW COST Motorsport Culture in JPN Dying or Evolving?

By Marnix N. EGTER VAN WISSEKERKE, Lieke J. HUISMAN, Mahiro SAKAMOTO

“Start your engines!” The sound of racing engines, wheel-to-wheel battles, and dramatic overtakes have long attracted millions of motorsport fans around the world. In Japan, iconic venues such as Suzuka Circuit have helped create a passionate racing culture, drawing spectators from across the country and abroad. In recent years, however, motorsport has undergone significant changes. Formula 1 and other racing series have introduced stricter regulations aimed at improving safety, reducing costs and supporting environmental goals. While many of these changes have been welcomed, some fans and drivers argue that stricter regulations have made racing more predictable and less exciting. But what do these changes mean for the people watching from the grandstands?

At Suzuka Circuit, one of Japan’s most iconic motorsport venues, around 315,000 spectators attended the 2026 Formula 1 Japanese Grand Prix over the three-day race weekend. Fans wearing team merchandise waved flags and held cameras high above their heads as they waited for the race to begin. The smell of fuel mixed with the sound of engines revving in the pit lane. As the cars accelerated onto the track, the crowd erupted in cheers. Despite the excitement, conversations among fans revealed a growing debate. Some spectators praised modern regulations for making racing safer and more environmentally responsible. Others questioned whether stricter rules had reduced the unpredictability that once made motorsport so thrilling. These discussions highlighted a central question in modern motorsport: how much regulation is too much?

One of the clearest examples of this change is Formula 1’s 2026 regulations. According to the Fédération Internationale de l’Automobile (FIA), the rules are designed to make racing safer, more sustainable and technologically innovative. Safety improvements include stronger front-impact structures, enhanced side-impact protection and stricter crash-testing requirements. These measures build on previous innovations such as the Halo, a titanium cockpit-protection device introduced in 2018 that has helped protect drivers in major accidents, including Romain Grosjean’s fiery crash at the 2020 Bahrain Grand Prix. The FIA has also strengthened standards for rollover

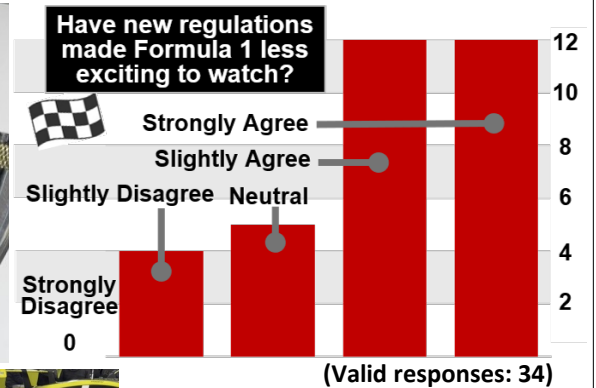
protection and cockpit safety to further reduce the risk of serious injury in high-speed crashes.

Aerodynamics have also changed under the 2026 regulations. Formula 1 cars use active aerodynamic systems that allow certain bodywork components to adjust while the car is on track. The cars can move between configurations designed for greater cornering performance and lower drag on straights. The FIA says active aerodynamics support the energy-management needs of the new power units, while the broader 2026 car concept is intended to improve raceability and closer competition. For some fans, however, the added technological complexity raises a different concern: could racing feel less dependent on driver skill and instinct?

Sustainability has become an equally important objective. From 2026, F1 cars will run on 100% sustainable fuel. According to the FIA, the fuel is produced without introducing new fossil carbon and is designed as a direct replacement for conventional gasoline. The new power units also move towards a roughly 50-50 split between internal-combustion and electrical power, a major increase in the electrical component. FIA President Mohammed Ben Sulayem has described the regulations as part of the organization’s commitment to innovation and sustainability, with the hope that developments in sustainable fuels and hybrid technology can eventually benefit the wider automotive industry. The question for the sport is whether those gains can be made without weakening the spectacle that attracts fans in the first place. Critics argue that greater reliance on battery management forces drivers to focus more on conserving power rather than racing aggressively, reducing the unpredictability many fans associate with F1.

Robert de Haan, a 20-year-old Dutch Porsche Cup driver competing in Japan, understands both sides of the debate. “Nowadays there are many more rules than in the past, especially regarding safety and cost control,” he said. “Those rules are important, but they also leave teams and drivers with less freedom to approach things in their own way. As a result, the sport can sometimes feel more predictable.”

Despite these concerns, De Haan believes modern regulations have brought important benefits. “Modern rules have definitely made things safer and fairer, and that is ultimately something positive,” he said. “Many safety measures have



Above: Formula 1 race at Suzuka circuit in 2026 Middle Left: Robert de Haan winning a Porsche Carrera Cup Japan race at Suzuka Circuit in 2026 Bottom Left: A Porsche racing car undergoing race preparations. All Photos in Suzuka City, Mie Pref.

saved lives over the years. At the same time, some of the unpredictability and risk that made the sport exciting for many people have been reduced. It remains a balance between safety and spectacle.” According to De Haan, racing itself has also become more complex. “As a driver, it’s no longer just about driving as fast as possible,” he explained. “Strategy, tyre management, fuel consumption and technical regulations play a much bigger role than before. The goal is still to win, but the way you achieve that has become far more complicated.”

At the same time, De Haan believes fans have become more important than ever. “I think entertainment plays a bigger role than it used to,” he said. “Championships want to attract new fans, so social media, fan experience and the presentation of the sport receive much more attention. Nevertheless, I believe sporting performance still forms the foundation of motorsport.” Having raced in Japan, De Haan describes its motorsport culture as unique. “Japanese fans combine passion with respect,” he said. “They have a deep appreciation for both the drivers and the engineering behind the cars.”

While drivers experience these changes directly on the track, fans provide another perspective on the future of motorsport. To investigate how audiences view the changing identity of racing, we conducted a Motorsports Fan Survey, “The Fu-

ture of Racing Culture in Japan.” The survey collected 34 responses from motorsport fans in Japan and several other countries. Participants were asked about their viewing habits and opinions on regulations, predictability and the future of racing culture.

In this small survey, 73% of respondents agreed that motorsport is more regulated today than it was 10 years ago. The same percentage agreed that new regulations have made Formula 1 less exciting to watch. Among our respondents, stricter regulation was widely seen as affecting the spectacle of modern racing.

Regarding Japan specifically, 55% of respondents remained neutral when asked whether racing culture is evolving rather than disappearing, while 28% agreed. With more than half choosing a neutral response, the survey points to uncertainty rather than a clear verdict on the long-term direction of motorsport culture in Japan.

Motorsport in Japan is changing. New regulations are making Formula 1 safer and more sustainable while also reshaping how cars are driven and races are managed. De Haan describes the challenge as “a balance between safety and spectacle.” Our small fan survey did not produce a clear verdict on whether Japan’s racing culture is disappearing or evolving. Yet around 315,000 spectators attended the 2026 Japanese Grand Prix at Suzuka, suggesting that interest remains strong. For now, the debate is wide open: is motorsport culture in Japan approaching the finish line, or is it simply beginning its next lap?

By Katrell E. JEFFERSON,
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From Italian pasta to Indian curry and Chinese-inspired ramen, foreign cuisine has become a familiar part of everyday life in Japan. But the version served here may taste very different from the dish you know from home. These differences raise a larger question: when foreign food is adapted to local tastes, what gets preserved and what gets changed? This article explores how adaptation and authenticity coexist in Japan's food scene.

To explore that question, we surveyed domestic and international students from Nagoya University of Foreign Studies (NUFS) about their experiences with foreign food in Japan. The majority of respondents had tried at least five foreign cuisines in Japanese restaurants and had an overall positive impression. However, some international residents were dissatisfied with the range of flavours, responding that the “dishes never taste the same as back home” and are often “too sweet” or “mild.” Some international students miss the distinct spices and ingredients they associate with food from home. Domestic students, meanwhile, generally rated preserving authenticity as a lower priority when introducing foreign food to Japan, reflecting the habit of localising foreign recipes.

Traditional Japanese food culture often places value on seasonality, balance and natural ingredients. At the same time, several dishes now considered staples in Japan belong to *yōshoku*, a Japanese-Western fusion cuisine. Omurice, pork cutlets (*tonkatsu*), and Japanese curry are some well-known examples, while ramen and gyoza are similarly popular Japanese adaptations of Chinese cuisine. These dishes show that localisation is not simply a loss of authenticity: over time, an adapted dish can become part of a new local food tradition.

This makes food diversity harder to measure. Does “good food diversity” depend mainly on the number of cuisines available, or on whether diners can experience genuinely different flavours and cultural traditions within those cuisines?

Japan's history with foreign food is extensive, and one familiar example is carbonara. The exact origins of the Italian pasta dish are debated, but it became widely known after World War II. A common Italian version is made with cured pork, hard cheese, eggs, salt, and black pepper. The result is rich and savoury, with salty meat, a smooth cheesy sauce, and the warmth of cracked pepper. Japanese versions are often creamier and milder, frequently including fresh cream, butter, onions, mushrooms, and raw or onsen-style eggs. Rather than emphasising the sharp saltiness and peppery intensity associated with many Italian versions, Japanese carbonara focuses on a velvety tex-

FOOD DIVERSITY IN JAPAN

Are You Hungry for Something New?



Left: A quesadilla at Desperados, a Tex-Mex restaurant in Shinsakae, Nagoya City. The dish consists of a tortilla filled with spicy ingredients.

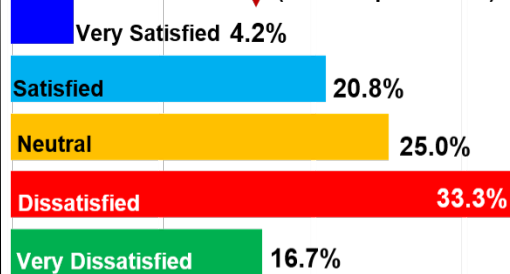
Below: The owners of Desperados.



Left: Carbonara has been adapted in Japan to have a creamy and mild flavour.

How satisfied are you with the variety of flavours available in Japan?

(Valid responses: 24)



ture, a gentle sweetness and locally familiar flavours.

The UK offers another example of how foreign food can develop a new local identity. Chicken tikka masala, a curry associated with Britain's South Asian communities, became so popular that former British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook famously called it a “true British national dish” in 2001. Tender pieces of chicken are marinated in spices before being cooked in a rich, creamy tomato sauce. Although the dish's exact origins are debated, its popularity shows how an adapted food can become strongly connected to the country in which it develops.

Another example is salt and pepper chips, a British-Chinese takeaway dish strongly associated with Liverpool. Crispy fries are tossed with garlic, chilli, spring onions, stir-fried peppers, and other seasonings, combining a classic British comfort food with Chinese cooking techniques. It is a local hybrid created from more than one food tradition.

The UK is often seen as a country considered to have “good food diversity.” Although many foreign dishes are adapted and localised, these

adaptations still introduce new spices, ingredients, and cooking techniques. In many cases, they are also developed by immigrant communities with the personal experience of their cultural cuisines to give the dishes a strong sense of authenticity. On the other hand, Japan tends to prioritise local tastes. Rather than highlighting unfamiliar flavours, many imported foods are modified to become milder and sweeter. As a result, foreign-inspired dishes such as carbonara, curry, ramen, and even hamburgers have evolved into distinctly Japanese creations that can differ significantly from their original forms.

However, not every restaurant serving foreign food follows a localised approach. We spoke with the owners of Desperados, an authentic Tex-Mex restaurant in Shinsakae, Nagoya City. Some of their most popular dishes include quesadillas—pan-toasted tortillas folded around spicy cheese, meat or beans—and enchiladas, which wrap similar fillings in tortillas and are served with a rich savoury sauce.

The owner was born in Mexico and raised in the US, spending much of his life working in kitchens. He later moved to Japan, met his wife and, in 1998, the two opened Desperados, a restaurant and bar in a small unit of a multi-tenant building. During our interview, we asked about the challenges of running a restaurant that aims to preserve familiar Tex-Mex flavours in Japan. Surprisingly, they said the biggest difficulty was not customers' reac-

tions, but finding the right ingredients. “Even basic ingredients, like beans, can taste different when we buy them in Japan, so we had to try a lot of options and import certain things to get the taste right.”

We also asked what impacted their menu choices. They said keeping the menu small and simple makes it easier for customers trying Mexican cuisine “for the first time to decide on what they want.” Although they sometimes receive complaints about the amount of spice or the strength of certain flavours, they said that “anyone who makes it up to our floor knows what kind of food they are ordering.” Customers come intentionally for their extensive tequila collection or the authentic Mexican cuisine, so negative feedback about the menu is relatively uncommon.

Finally, we asked why they chose not to localise the dishes further. The owner responded: “I wanted to share the food I grew up with, and give people the opportunity to experience flavours that can be difficult to find here. It also helps us stand out more as a restaurant, having such a different menu to other places around us.” Their difficulties in sourcing the right ingredients in Japan had already altered the taste and options for their restaurant, so further changing the recipes felt “too far from what I wanted to share.”

Food diversity, then, cannot be judged simply as “good” or “bad.” Exposure to new flavours can broaden cultural understanding, encourage curiosity, and provide sensory variety that can increase enjoyment and psychological well-being. At the same time, localisation makes foreign foods more accessible and gently introduces other cultures without the barrier of disliking unfamiliar flavours, encouraging more people to explore international cuisine. Determining which approach contributes more to food diversity is a complex issue, and one that largely relies on personal perspective. Is a society more culturally diverse when it preserves the unique characteristics of different cultures, or when it adapts them to create shared experiences? Do you value diverse flavours and authentic experiences more, or do you prefer the accessibility and familiarity that come with adapting foreign foods to local tastes? The next time you order a familiar dish in Japan, the interesting question may not be whether it is perfectly “authentic,” but what changed, who changed it, and what that change adds to the culture around it.

The NUFS Times



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By Justin N. CASTRO-VARGAS,
Fujina KONDO,
Lizbeth ORTIZ SANTOS,
Sumire TAMURA, Letitia N. TAN

For decades, Japanese animation has enjoyed immense worldwide popularity as well as substantial critical acclaim. A landmark moment occurred when Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away* won the prestigious Golden Bear award at the 2002 Berlin Film Festival and, the following year, secured an Academy Award win for Best Animated Feature. International film critics have observed that Japanese animated works possess a distinctive visual and narrative identity that separates them from mainstream Hollywood productions. What helps create that difference? Two experts point to storytelling traditions, history, production constraints and aesthetics.

To gain deeper insight into these creative foundations, we interviewed two experts. Mr. Raymond Rees is a lecturer at NUFS and a researcher of Japanese cinema. Mr. Rees notes that while both Western and Japanese filmmakers share the ultimate goal of emotionally engaging their viewers, they operate within entirely different storytelling traditions and audience expectations.

"Mainstream Hollywood animation has traditionally focused on broad family entertainment, clear character goals, fast-paced storytelling, humor, and emotionally satisfying endings," Mr. Rees said. He added that Hollywood animations "often emphasize individual growth, self-confidence, and clear moral lessons."

A good example of this is Disney-Pixar movies like *Tangled* and *Inside Out*, both of which depict protagonists learning about themselves and growing through change. In *Tangled*, Rapunzel breaks free from Mother Gothel to live her life as a crown princess in her birthplace. In *Inside Out*, the protagonist's struggles lead to her coming to terms with moving away from her hometown.

This contrasts with the conventions of Japanese animation. Mr. Rees points out that anime is routinely tailored to a broader spectrum of demographics, including adult audiences, giving creators room to explore nuanced themes such as ambiguity, melancholy, social issues, internal psychological conflicts and existential questions.

Japanese animated films can also emphasize stylistic elements that

SECRETS OF JAPANESE ANIME

Exploring the Depths of its Creative Philosophy



Above: Young people in Japan work on creating their own original anime. **Right:** Interview with Mr. Rees (R) at NUFS. **Below:** Interview with Prof. Watanabe (R) and his students at a film studio at NUAS, in Nissin City, Aichi Pref.



are less prominent in mainstream American commercial cinema, such as deliberate silence, emotional restraint, and the interconnectedness of humanity, nature, society, and technology. However, filmmaking philosophy alone does not explain why Japanese animation stands out. Its styles have also been fundamentally shaped by economic, social, and cultural forces.

"The stylistic characteristics of Japanese animation were shaped by a combination of economic limitations, manga culture, television production practices, traditional Japanese aesthetics, and postwar social concerns," says Mr. Rees. He highlights the influence of Japan's manga culture, which cultivated a widespread public acceptance of graphic narratives and animation as serious media for adult audiences. This cultural foundation allowed animated cinema to explore a wide range of serious genres rather than being restricted to children's entertainment.

The trauma of World War II, the American Occupation, rapid postwar industrialization, environmental crises and the socio-economic stagnation that followed the collapse of Japan's asset-price bubble in the 1990s all left indelible marks on the medium. These collective national experiences gave rise to recurring thematic motifs, including localized destruction, technological anxiety, environmental devastation,

and profound social alienation.

This focus on internal psychological and societal realities is deeply connected to how Japanese animation handles movement. Film theorist Mr. Taihei Imamura argues in his foundational "Cartoon Film Theory" that the distinctiveness of animation lies in the prioritization of movement. When static drawings are set in motion, he argued, they gain a particular form of realism. This movement imparts a "life and spirit" to the imagery that forces audiences to see beyond what is being depicted.

Part of what makes Japanese animation stand out is the traditional Japanese aesthetic concept of *ma* (間), which translates roughly to "the space in-between" or "negative space." Unlike Western cinematic traditions that prioritize constant momentum, rapid dialogue, and continuous action to propel the plot forward, *ma* intentionally slows the narrative down. This technique allows the film to linger on quiet moments, letting the audience absorb the underlying mood and emotional atmosphere rather than rushing to the next plot point.

A good illustration of this can be found in Hayao Miyazaki's *Princess Mononoke*. In a serene sequence, the mysterious Deer God walks across the surface of a pristine forest pool. The scene drops into complete silence. With no dialogue or musical accompaniment, the scene

draws attention to the delicate ripples in the water and the sacred atmosphere, creating a contemplative pause amid the film's high-stakes conflict.

Another powerful execution of *ma* in the same film follows the protagonist, Ashitaka, as he pauses during his journey to observe an ancient forest populated by *Kodama* (tree spirits). The camera lingers on the moss-covered trees and the gentle rattling of the spirits' heads. Without dialogue or immediate narrative progression, this pause allows the viewer to fully internalize the sense of sanctity and environmental importance.

A similar sentiment was echoed by Mr. Makoto Watanabe, a professor at Nagoya University of Arts and Sciences (NUAS), who teaches filming and photography.

Mr. Watanabe remarked that Japanese animation is "not just entertaining—it's philosophical." He used the titular character, Totoro, in Hayao Miyazaki's *My Neighbor Totoro* as an example. "It's not just a character—it might be a reflection of the human heart, or perhaps a glimpse of the future. If you look at it from an interesting angle, in a sense, it feels almost like a god—a god walking among us." Mr. Watanabe said.

He also cited World War II and its aftermath as significant influences on Japanese animation. "People strongly desired entertainment because they were suffering and wanted a distraction from it, and movies became an accessible form of it. With only a projector and speakers, audiences could watch a wide variety of films, including movies from other countries," Mr. Watanabe explained.

Mr. Watanabe explained that economic hardship and limited funding pushed Japanese studios towards lower-cost production methods, helping shape distinctive animation techniques. To illustrate the contrast, he compared Ghibli's style to that of Disney-Pixar. He explained that Ghibli traditionally "used hand-painted animation cels," while Pixar and modern Disney productions "rely mainly on digital animation." Despite that, he emphasized that those differences do not make one better than the other as they both have "incredibly solid and original storytelling."

No single factor explains the distinctiveness of Japanese animation. The interviews instead point to an interaction of storytelling traditions, history, economics and aesthetics. While Hollywood animation has traditionally served as a vehicle for narrative clarity and individualistic moral growth, Japanese animation offers a more contemplative experience. By embracing ambiguity, atmosphere, and the meditative philosophy "*ma*," Japanese filmmakers have created a medium that invites audiences to look beyond the plot to the space between. In doing so, they have carved a place for Japanese cinema in the increasingly diverse and competitive world of films.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS + DOMESTIC STUDENTS

The NUFS Times is produced through collaboration between international and domestic students. All students take Global Japan Studies Course (GJSC) offered by the Nagoya University of Foreign Studies' International Institute for Japanese Language Education (IJLE).

By Mélissa ADJOUT,
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Bushido, or “the way of the warrior,” was the ethical code followed by Japan’s samurai and emphasised values such as honor, loyalty, discipline, and respect. Traditional martial arts developed under these ideals and were intended not only to teach fighting skills, but also to build character and self-control. Today, martial arts have spread around the world and evolved into many forms, from traditional karate to modern combat sports such as kickboxing, boxing, and mixed martial arts (MMA). As martial arts continue to change, an important question remains: are they preserving the spirit of Bushido, or moving further away from their traditional roots?

The sound of gloves striking pads echoes throughout the gym. Students move across the mats, practicing combinations, footwork, and defensive techniques. Japanese MMA fighter and coach Mr. Kosei Ogasawara trains six days a week, multiple times a day, with sessions that typically include conditioning, technical drills, pad work, and sparring. Some members are preparing for competition, while others simply want to improve their fitness and confidence. Sweat drips from exhausted athletes as instructors walk between groups, correcting mistakes and offering advice. The gym attracts a diverse group of members, ranging from college-aged students to older adults. Most participants are men, although women also train regularly in dedicated women-only sessions.

Although the environment looks very different from the image many people associate with traditional Japanese martial arts, the same themes can still be found. Discipline, effort and perseverance remain essential. Students bow to instructors, arrive early for training, show respect to their training partners before and after sparring, and spend countless hours improving techniques that may take years to master.

For many practitioners, martial arts are more than just fighting. They are a way to challenge themselves mentally and physically. Reflecting on his own experience, Mr. Ogasawara said that daily training taught him that “true strength is not aggression, but peace of mind.” One student described martial arts as “a test of discipline and consistency,” while another explained that training teaches people how to remain calm under pressure. These experiences suggest that even in modern gyms, many values traditionally associated with martial arts continue to shape those who practice them.

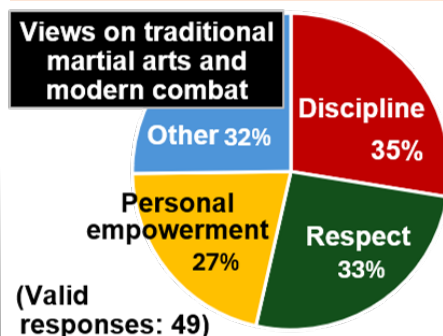
The karate instructor’s concerns about preserving tradition reflect a broader debate taking place both inside and outside Japan. In Japan, martial arts are often connected to cultural heritage and education. School clubs and traditional dojos frequently emphasise respect, etic-

MARTIAL ARTS IN JAPAN

Will the Warrior Spirit Live On?



Above: Mr. Ogasawara doing pad-work with his coach at ISTN MMA Gym, Nagakute City, Aichi Pref.
Right: Students of Mr. Suzuki during training at BUSOKAI, Nagoya City, Aichi Pref.



quette, and long-term personal development. The relationship between student and instructor is also often treated as an important part of the learning process.

Outside Japan, martial arts are also promoted through competition, self-defense, and physical fitness. Organisations such as the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) have introduced a global audience to combat sports, attracting participants interested in athletic performance, competition, and personal fitness. Within this more competition-focused environment, Mr. Ogasawara believes combat sports are developing in a positive direction. He explained that “MMA has grown from what was once considered a minor sport into one that is now recognised worldwide” and believes its public image continues to improve.

To explore these changing perceptions, we surveyed 49 domestic and international NUFFS students about their views on traditional martial arts and modern combat sports. When asked what they associated with traditional martial arts, 35% selected discipline, 33% selected respect, and 27% selected personal empowerment. For modern combat sports, 33% selected empowerment, 31% selected discipline, and 18% selected respect, while 10% associated them with aggression and 8% with violence.

Students’ written responses added more detail to these results. One participant described martial arts as “mental strength,” while another wrote that they are “unique to Japan’s culture.” Others highlight-



ed practical benefits, describing martial arts as a way to build “confidence,” improve “mental training,” and learn “self-defence.” One respondent took a more critical view, saying traditional martial arts focus “too much on kata and not training real experience.” That comment highlights part of the debate: some students value practical, realistic training. Overall, however, the survey responses showed appreciation for both the cultural values of traditional martial arts and the realism offered by modern combat sports.

Together, the survey findings and interview responses suggest that martial arts do not serve a single purpose. They can combine elements of cultural tradition, personal development, athletic competition and self-improvement. Rather than simply replacing one another, traditional martial arts and modern combat sports continue to complement one another.

One person who has witnessed the evolution of martial arts firsthand is a Japanese Goju-ryu karate instructor, Mr. Kojiro Suzuki, who has trained for 42 years. “I started karate when I was five years old,” he explained. “This year marks my forty-second year of training.” Goju-ryu is one of Okinawa’s oldest karate styles. He believes many people today misunderstand the original purpose of karate. “Originally, karate began when people from Okinawa travelled to China and learned Chinese martial arts,” he said. “Later, a martial art called ‘Te’ developed in Okinawa and became the foundation of karate.”

Mr. Suzuki also explained that ordinary farmers were often prohibited from carrying weapons and therefore learned to defend themselves using their bodies and everyday tools. Kata, a sequence of chore-

ographed offensive and defensive movements, became an important training method because it allowed practitioners to rehearse techniques even when alone. Traditional martial artists may worry about losing this history, but modern combat sports also bring energy, excitement, and new ways of testing skills. Mr. Ogasawara sees that evolution positively, arguing that MMA has grown from a minor sport into one that is now recognised worldwide. He also believes that combat sports have become more accepted as mainstream sports.

Mr. Suzuki’s comments raise an interesting question about the future of martial arts. If fewer students learn the history behind their training, what happens to the values that shaped these traditions? While modern combat sports continue to grow in popularity, many traditional martial artists argue that techniques alone are not enough. They believe that understanding concepts such as respect, discipline, and perseverance is equally important.

When asked how karate affected his life, Mr. Suzuki focused less on fighting and more on personal growth. “Karate has taught me never to give up, always to look forward, and to understand the importance of continuing something no matter what.” Mr. Ogasawara shared a similar lesson from his own experience, explaining that daily training taught him that “true strength is not aggression, but peace of mind.” Although they come from different martial arts backgrounds, both interviews suggest that martial arts can be about developing character as well as physical ability.

Today, people practice martial arts for reasons beyond self-defence. Fitness, competition, stress relief, and social connection are often stronger motivations than traditional warrior values. While some critics argue that martial arts have become commercialised, others believe this evolution has allowed them to survive, reach new generations, and remain relevant in modern society. Mr. Ogasawara shares a more positive view: “Combat sports have developed in a positive direction and become more widely accepted around the world.”

Rather than viewing tradition and modernisation as opposites, martial artists should embrace both. Traditional values such as respect, humility, discipline, and self-control can sit alongside the realistic training, technical development, and competitive opportunities of modern combat sports. Together, these approaches can develop not only skilled martial artists but also resilient and respectful individuals.

As martial arts continue to evolve, preserving their history while embracing innovation will allow future generations to experience the strengths of both approaches. If tradition and modern competition remain in conversation with each other, the spirit of Bushido can continue to influence martial arts for generations to come.