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Preface

This book is the fourth in a series commissioned by Masaaki Hatsumi Sōke. It stems from a meeting between Hatsumi Sensei and Alex Esteve on the afternoon of January 24, 2020, during which Esteve presented the final draft of a previous book, *Ninpo Gairon*. That book project was something Hatsumi Sensei had encouraged Esteve to undertake some time before, and had collaborated with him on. Sensei was very happy with this book, commenting that it was a genuinely valuable work, not just for its content but also for its design and print quality.

Recognizing Esteve's effort and dedication, Hatsumi Sensei awarded him the 'Bujinkan Dōjō Tokubetsu Kōrōshō Jushō' or 'Nobel Prize' of his dojo. This award recognises meritorious service in the dissemination of martial arts.

Furthermore, at this same meeting Hatsumi Sensei asked Esteve to make *Ninpō Gairon* the first in a new series of books that would document the various areas of knowledge he had taught him and which he had studied under his guidance. The mission was clear: to compile and share the legacy of Hatsumi Sensei and the traditions of the Bujinkan Dojo through this new series of publications. The books would focus on various aspects of kobudo study, looking at internal transmission documents (densho),



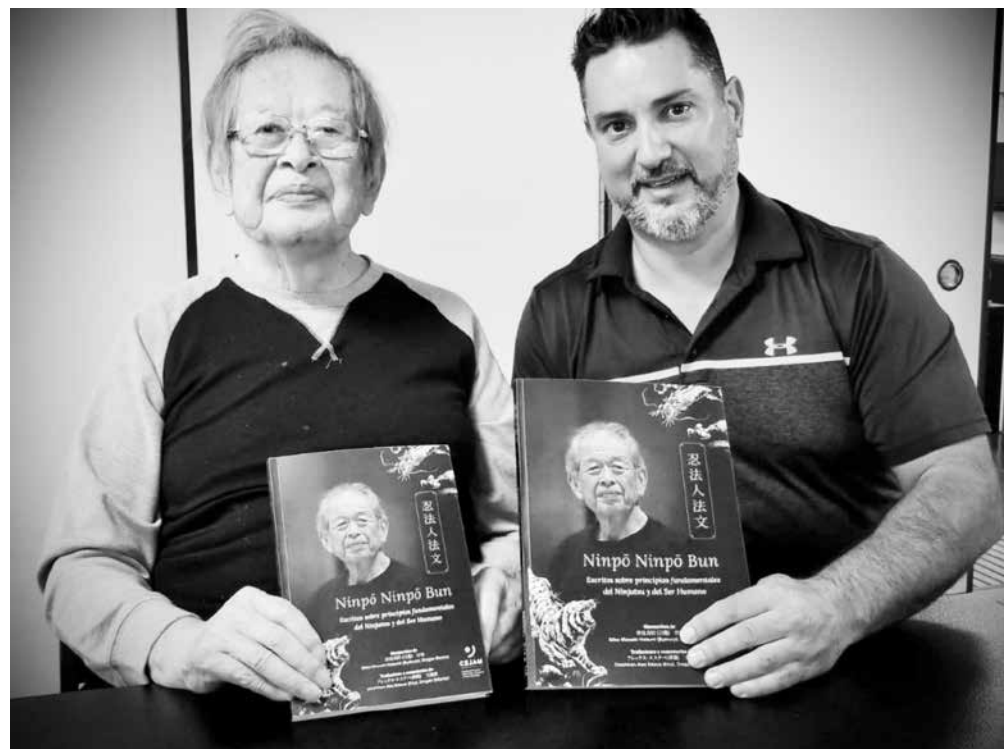
techniques in martial arts (waza), the Japanese sword (nihontō), Japanese armor (yoroi) and the teachings of Takamatsu Sensei, among other subjects. The overall goal is to provide a comprehensive and detailed set of insights into Japanese budō and ninjutsu in particular.

The history of Japanese martial arts is rich and multifaceted, bringing together physical skill with discipline and philosophy. Hatsumi Sensei sits at the centre of this world, and his teachings transcend mere physical techniques and the mechanics of ninjutsu to immerse the practitioner in deep reflection on life, honour, spirit and human development. This new book is a window into the very essence of budō, offering a fresh perspective on lessons learned over more than four decades of immersion in the world and life of the last living ninja.

Training in taijutsu and mastering ninjutsu techniques is a matter of studying hand-to-hand combat and the expert use of traditional weapons. But what sets this book apart is its emphasis on the philosophical and conceptual aspects behind the movements. It aims to show how the practice of ninjutsu can be a path to self-awareness, strategy and a deeper connection with the world around us.

Esteve guides us through Hatsumi Sensei's teachings, highlighting their relevance not only within the dōjō but also in our everyday lives. Ninjutsu, as presented in this book, is a living art, a philosophy that advocates adaptability, emotional intelligence and a deep connection with the natural and social environment.

This book is more than a compilation of technique manuscripts and philosophies; it is a bridge between generations, an invitation to continue Masaaki Hatsumi's legacy. Through Esteve's work, the teachings of the Sōke become accessible and will hopefully inspire new practitioners to explore the richness of budō and ninjutsu. Within its pages, you will find not only the reflection of a life dedicated to martial arts but also a guide to a deeper understanding of ourselves and our place in the world, building a beautiful bridge between generations.



銘下して下さつてゐるのうう 伊よりも自分
 自身が指ちして その師風を求め真理を把握
 する要でないと師の教えを無にせしめてしま
 のうある。忍方は自命の忍ぶ度胸で自己を養
 い 忍んで 悪逆を消し去つてしまふ体は
 云つてもよいがしよつと真心と云ふ字は
 嘘の心と 辞典には解かたてゐるが
 嘘心相違いかわりもない おおむかち気持
 逆転する事心かけることが大秘あり 常
 人とはなせぬ秘を 常としてそのでありませ
 九鬼純伝の真心とは 真剣型の凍意の時
 真剣の眞の一字として 真心とせよと伝授し
 ておりませう 高松先生が 私の修業中の私に
 一本の横巻を下さしませ 心の心得の書に
 は 忍休とは心を養ひ 技をほげめて末永く
 辛持こそ 眞の忍若なり 一つも 忍は
 心の額を眺めながら 忍の心を養つてありませ
 う この心掛けが 戸隠流忍法八法秘剣の生
 命を養うたのがあり 忍法の極意に通じてる
 のがあるのう 阿と云ふことが この年

かつて 師の尊ぶと頭を在上想いと同じ
 辛持やば 養生することこのことかかなと 語
 師の姿が その津戸かかんでくる毎日はあ
 る。二三十年を生き続ける 生命力をもち
 いる。セコイヤの木が語るそうぞう 自然語
 り。私の命は二三十年と云うところからこ
 の二三十年のううは 和の命の本の木をけ
 育つてく水木 ありかたに ことぞう
 一豊ありとこぞう 現に 生命力がある
 一
 世ある 白龍の姿を見せ 高松先生が 和の
 歌を白龍として下さつてゐるといふ 其の思
 いくゆへに 豊ある 弟さんのような私
 の素直を絶かんとして 日々種ある姿を見るに
 つり 感謝してゐる詩題をありませう
 戸隠流 豊陰流 真心流
 忍法 一
 初見良明
 白龍



Study notes

1

(高松先生, Takamatsu Sensei)

Master Takamatsu refers to Toshitsugu Takamatsu (高松寿嗣), a great Japanese martial arts master considered one of the last great masters of the ninja and samurai arts. He was born on March 10, 1888, and passed away on April 2, 1972. Takamatsu Sensei was an expert in several Japanese martial traditions, including Togakure-ryū and Gyokko-ryū, which are known for their connections to ninjutsu and the combat arts of the ninja warriors. Additionally, he was also recognized for his knowledge in other disciplines such as judo, jujutsu, bojutsu and kenjutsu.

His legacy in martial arts is highly recognized and respected, and many martial arts practitioners around the world seek to learn from his experience and transmitted knowledge. Toshitsugu Takamatsu had many students during his life but chose Masaaki Hatsumi as his last disciple and dedicated the last 15 years of his life to personally transmitting his knowledge and teachings to him. This choice marked Hatsumi as the heir to the martial traditions of Takamatsu Sensei and made him the principal leader of the ninja and samurai arts he practiced.

Masaaki Hatsumi has continued spreading and teaching these ancient martial arts through his organization, the Bujinkan Dōjō, thus preserving the legacy of his master Takamatsu Sensei. His dedication and commitment to the preservation of these martial traditions have had a significant impact on the martial arts community worldwide.



2

(修業, Shūgyō)

The Japanese word “修業” (Shūgyō) refers to intensive and disciplined practice or training in a discipline, art, skill or path. Here is the breakdown of its meaning:

“修” (shū): Means “to cultivate,” “to refine,” or “to improve.” It indicates the idea of enhancing or perfecting something through practice and training.

“業” (gyō): Means “discipline” or “work.”

In this context, it refers to the discipline or path in which the training is being conducted.

Together, “修業” (Shūgyō) is used to describe the process of dedicating oneself to intensive training and practice with the goal of improving in a specific discipline. It can apply to a variety of fields such as martial arts, music, religion, philosophy or any other area where personal growth and mastery of a skill or knowledge are sought through dedication and discipline. It is an important part of many traditions and cultures in Japan and reflects the significance of perseverance and effort in the pursuit of mastery.

3

(神伝不動流, Shinden Fudō-ryū)

Derived from the line of Koshijutsu transmitted by Izumo Kanja Yoshiteru (出雲冠者義照), it was founded by Genpachirō Tameyoshi (源八郎為義) in the mid-12th century. A distinctive feature is that in place of formal kamae, or postures, it only has one natural stance (構えが自然体). However, in practice, this stance is assumed by creating an image in the mind.

“Upon examining the secret transmission document of the Shinden Fudō-ryū Dakentaijutsu Denshō (神伝不動流打拳体術伝書), it is observed that this style began during the Eikyū period (永久), from 1113 to 1118, with Lord Kandō Izumo (神門出雲卿), also known as Izumo Kanja Yoshiteru (出雲冠者義照), and during the Shōchō period (正長), from 1428 to 1429, it passed to Kandō Ko Kanja Yoshikane (神門小冠者義兼), consolidating the teachings of the school and establishing

the Kishin Fudō-ryū Dakentaijutsu (道神不動流打拳体術), which also includes Kenpō (剣法) and Sōjutsu (槍術). This marked the beginning of this style’s name.

The principal exponent of this style, Mizuhara Kurō Yoshinari (水原九郎義成), was the lord of Mizuhara Castle in the Mutsu region and is said to be a descendant of Yoshitsune (義経の落裔). Around the seventh year of the Kenkyū era (建久七年) in 1197, he was known for his mastery in Dakentaijutsu (打拳体術), horsemanship or Bajutsu (馬術), spear or Sōjutsu (槍術), fencing or Kenpō (剣法) and especially for being an expert in the art of drawing and cutting, or Iaijutsu (居合の達人), with a skill so fast that it could not be followed by the eye.

In the secret document of Amatsu Tatara Kishin no Hinbun (天津鞆韜廋神秘文), two volumes have been preserved containing secret thoughts on the sword and spear.

Written on January 21, 1984 (昭和五十九年一月二十一日)

On the day of the snow and the tiger (雪降る虎の日に)

By Hakuryūō (白龍翁), The Elder White Dragon.”

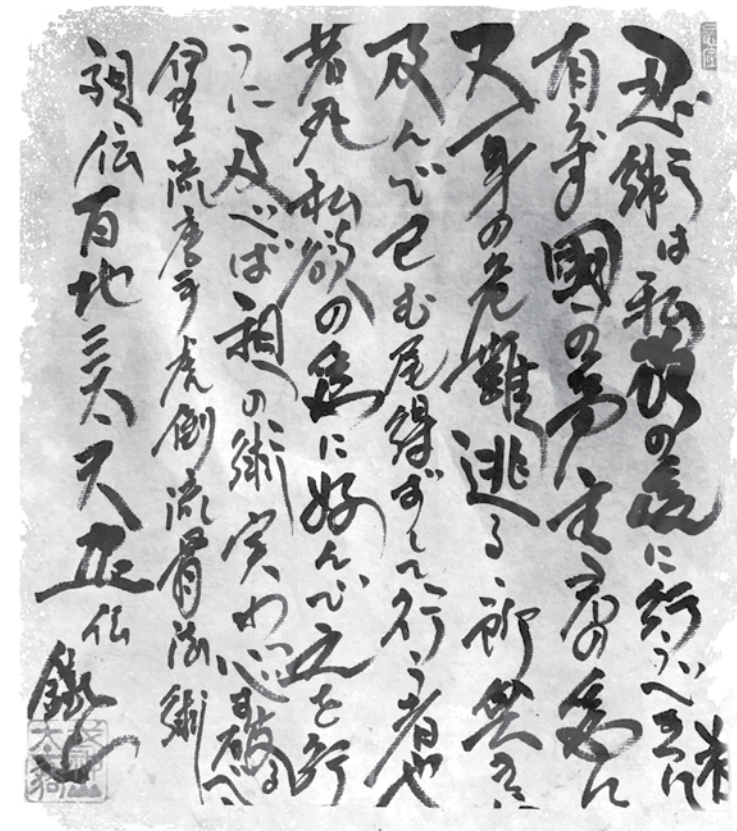
4

(虎倒流, Kotō ryū)

Founded by Toda Sakyō Isshinsai (戸田左京一心斎) in the mid-16th century, who learned the Gyokko-ryū school from the monk Gyokushin. Originally, “Koppō” (骨法) was a technique transmitted from ancient China, also known as “Kyōhō” (強法). According to Hatsumi Sensei, “kotsu” (骨), which means “bone,” also refers to the secrets or tricks of the technique.



百地三太夫忍術の極意
 Momochi Sandayū Ninjutsu no Gokui
 The writings of Sandayū Momochi

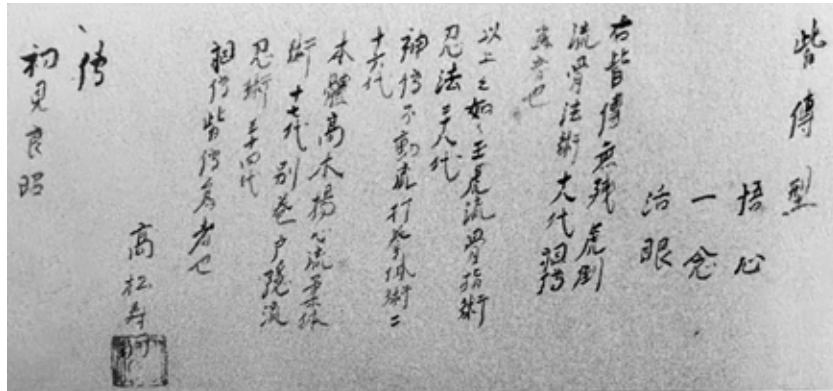


忍術は私欲の意に行くべきもの(者)
 に有るず国家の為主君の為に
 又は一身の危難逃る所無きに
 及んで已む尾得ず(やむをえず)して行うもの(者)也。
 若死私欲の為に好んで之を行
 うに及べば祖の術実わ(実話) 必ず破るべし。

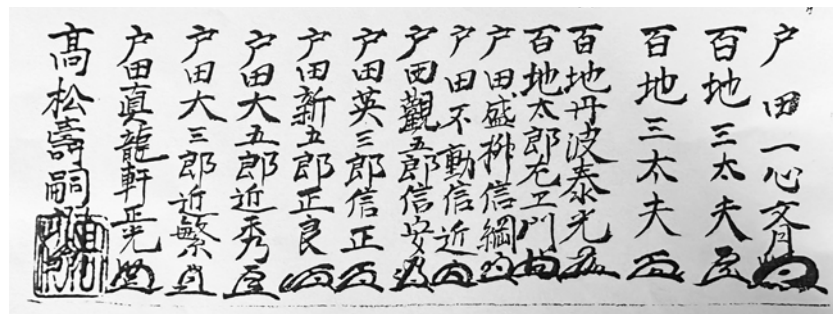
伊賀流唐手虎倒流骨法術

祖伝 百地三太夫 正伝

鐵山



Densho of internal transmission from Toshitsugu Takamatsu to Masaaki Hatsumi, certifying Hatsumi Sōke as the 18th generation of Kotō-ryū Koppōjutsu, 28th generation of Gyokko-ryū Koshijutsu Ninpō, 26th generation of Shinden Fudō-ryū Dakentaijutsu, 17th generation of Hontai Takagi Yōshin-ryū Jūtaijutsu, and 34th generation of Togakure-ryū Ninjutsu.



A list of some of the names in the lineage of the Kotō-ryū school, handwritten by Master Toshitsugu Takamatsu.

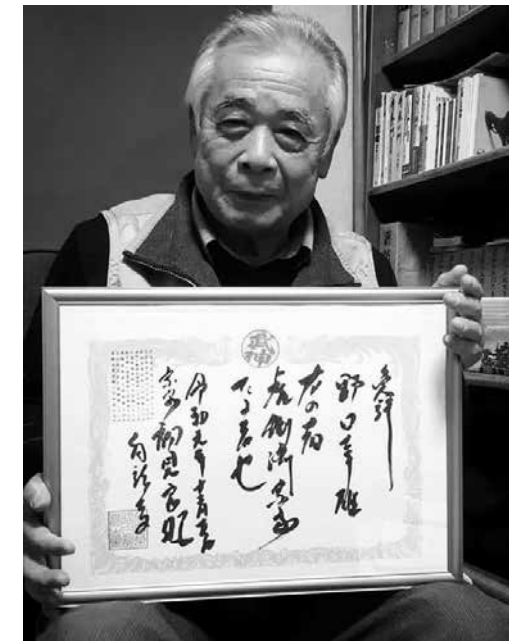


Current photograph of the Momochi family house in Mie.

Ishitani Matsutarō was the son of Ishitani Takeo, an expert in Takagi Yoshin ryū, who had dedicated his life exclusively to martial arts, specializing in the use of wooden swords and other weapons until around 1907 (year 40 of Meiji).

Due to problems with his right eye and ear, and after several recent exam rejections, Takamatsu decided to pursue his ambitions and moved to northern China. There, after about a year of work and training, he participated in the founding of the Martial Arts Group in the Youth Section of the Japanese Civil Association in Tianjin, Nihon Mindan Seinenbu Bujutsu Tokukai. During a tournament to decide the president of the association, Takamatsu competed and defeated twelve to thirteen opponents, thus becoming the president of Bujutsu Tokukai.

Later, the Bujutsu Tokukai association grew to have more than three thousand disciples, demonstrating great success. During this time on the continent, a prominent Chinese martial artist named Zhang Si-liang, known for his technique of “Shōrinji Kenpō” and weighing over 30 “kan” (approximately 112 kilograms), challenged Takamatsu to a fight.



On the left, a young Masaaki Hatsumi Sōke with one of his titles as heir to the Kotō-ryū school. On the right, Yukio Noguchi Sōke, current head of the Kotō-ryū school, who, after more than 50 uninterrupted years as a personal student and having accompanied Hatsumi Sōke to 33 taikai around the world, continues to protect and cherish the centuries-old tradition secretly passed down from the famous Sandayū Momochi.

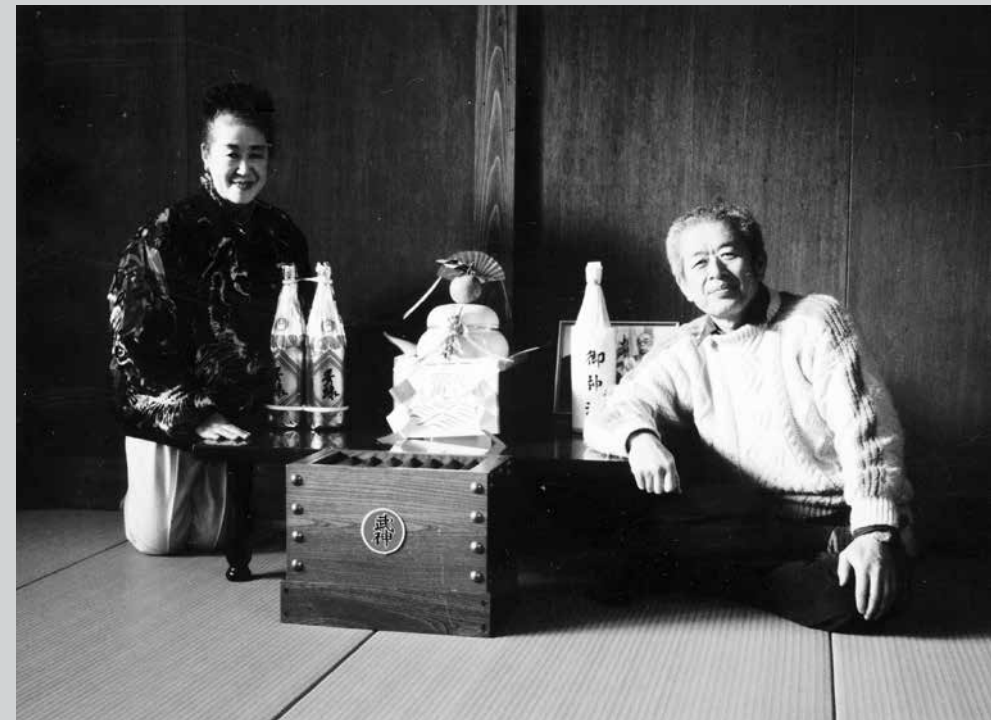
Sōke Masaaki Hatsumi Kuden

Here are some Kuden from Sōke Masaaki Hatsumi, transmitted during classes at the Hombu dojo in Nodashi, at the Tokyo Budokan in Ayase, in public lectures and in private conversation.



***“The key is to find a way of living
with luck or in the manner of having
a fortunate life.”***

December 7, 2016



***“...I spent the next 42 years
teaching what I couldn’t
remember.”***

December 5, 2016

***“kotodama = the power of
the soul of language.”***

April 17, 2015



Contemporary applications of the philosophy, concepts and techniques of budō and ninpō

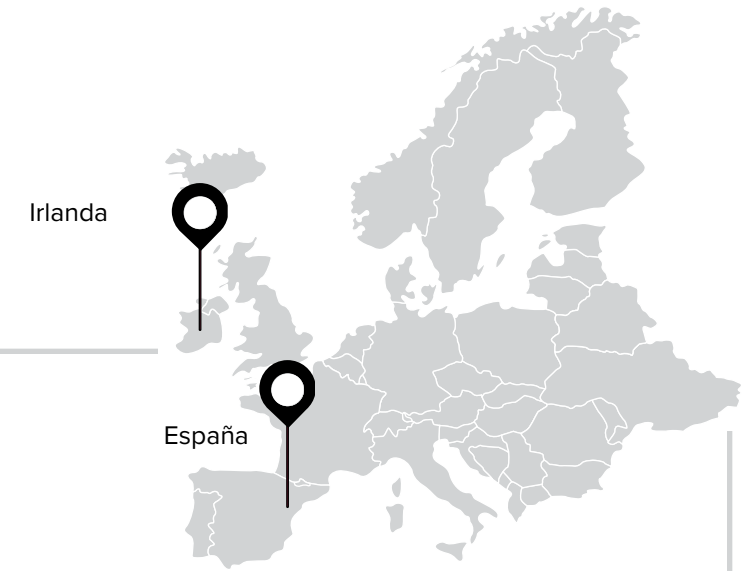
In recent decades, the techniques, concepts and philosophy of budō and ninpō, as taught by Masaaki Hatsumi Sōke, have been taken and applied practically by various groups around the world. These include training programs for military personnel, police officers, private security staff, comprehensive self-protection for children, conflict resolution for businesspeople, physical and mechanical restraint for healthcare workers in psychiatry and mental health, and various other use cases.



Budō and ninpō in the academic world

Europe, America, and Asia

In recent years, a variety of lectures and training opportunities focusing on the history, philosophy, concepts and techniques of the budō and ninpō of the Bujinkan Dōjō have taken place universities worldwide. Thanks to the work of Masaaki Hatsumi Sōke, along with some of his highest-ranking students, lectures, seminars, courses and new qualifications have been officially recognized by a number of well-regarded universities.



Europe

Bujinkan Kiryu Dōjō (Alex Esteve Daishihan) at the University of Girona, Spain

University expert certificates, postgraduate, and master's degrees in classical and modern martial arts of the Bujinkan Dōjō

Since 2017, the University of Girona (UdG) has offered various university specialisation courses in Japanese studies, including expert courses in the classical and modern martial arts of the Bujinkan Dōjō.

Some of these courses are open to any student interested in Eastern culture, while others are exclusive to members of the Bujinkan Dōjō. To enrol in the university-certified courses for instructors in Bujinkan Dōjō martial arts, students must present a copy of the original Japanese Shidoshi-ho or Shidoshi certification issued directly by Hatsumi Sōke prior to registration. Meeting this prerequisite allows students to enrol in specialisation courses officially comprising 200 hours of lectures and 8 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System, recognized in more than 46 countries of the European Higher Education Area).

Students who complete the course and pass the exams and final projects of the different modules receive a university certificate in ECTS credits. Accumulating different specialisation courses allows students to earn a postgraduate diploma or a master's degree.



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