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Soft Power of the Soft Art: Jiu-jitsu in the British Empire of the Early 20th Century

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1. Jiu-jitsu in the East: Art or Craft?

It is often forgotten that Jiu-jitsu with 'jiu' meaning 'soft' and 'jitsu' meaning 'art' was the first successfully propagated Asian martial art in the English-speaking world, emerging at the turn of the century before Karate, Aikido, Kung-Hu, Tai-chi, or even Yoga had become fashionable¹. Strictly speaking, 'Jiu-jitsu' was a general term comprising a number of the unarmed combat forms of feudal Japan. Jigorō KANŌ 嘉納治五郎 (1860–1938) modernised Judo into 'an eclectic system of the art'² in the 1880s. Jiu-jitsu has sometimes been confused with Judo, however, and its anglicised pronunciation is different from the more correct 'Jiu-*jutsu*'. In its association with Zen and Taoism, the outlook of Jiu-jitsu steered a middle course between sports and meditation. Its openness was naturalised in Britain not only as a traditional form of physical culture but also as one of the leading syntheses of spiritual and physical discipline.

Not surprisingly, late Victorians demonised Jiu-jitsu as a fraud. In 1888, Rev. Thomas Lindsay and Jigorō Kanō published a paper, 'Jiu-jitsu, the Old Samurai Art of Fighting without Weapons', one of the earliest articles on the martial art in English, although the journal in which it appeared circulated mainly in Japan.³ This well-balanced historical introduction differentiates Jiu-jitsu from wrestling, 'its main principle being not to match strength with strength, but to gain victory by yielding to strength' (192). Although Lindsay and Kanō announce a forthcoming paper on 'a means of mental and moral training' (205), this was not published, possibly because the first article had not received a significant response.

A trial occurred in London in 1892. Tetsujirō SHIDACHI 志立鉄次郎 (1867–1946), later a leading banker, had read and published a paper on Jiu-jitsu and then offered a persuasive public demonstration. In

1 Recent studies have investigated the particular history of Ju-jitsu in Britain. See, for instance, Tony Wolf (ed.), *Bartitsu Compendium*, vol. I and II (Lulu Publications, 2005 & 2009) and Yasuhiro Sakaue (ed.), *Umiwo Watatta Jyu-jyutsu to Judo* [Jiu-jitsu and Judo across the Seas] (Tokyo: Seikyusha, 2010). This paper, on the other hand, mainly deals the transformation and appropriation of the idea Jiu-jitsu in the British Empire.

2 Rev. Lindsay and Kano, 'Jiu-jitsu, the Old Samurai Art of Fighting without Weapons,' *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, 16 (1889), p. 204.

3 Lindsay and Kano, 'Jiu-jitsu,' *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, 16 (1889), pp. 192–205. Page numbers will be included in parentheses in the body of the text, immediately after each citation.

it, Shidachi explains that 'the ancient art of self-defence by sleight of body' was far from the 'devilish art and craft of wrestling tricks' that Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) had recently described in the *Times*.⁴ As had Lindsay and Kano, Shidachi emphasises that Jiu-jitsu was totally unlike Western wrestling because it was based on 'a peculiar knack of gaining victory by yielding to the opponent's strength' (5). His performance seemed to attract the audience's curiosity, but the British response was a cynical one that drew the same misinterpretation as that of Kipling. In his paper, Shidachi quotes the article from the *Saturday Review* and argues that Jiu-jitsu is not 'the good old English "wrestling"' (17, 19). This frustrating dilemma would be encountered by other Asian intellectuals who were engaged in explaining and translating Orientalism. Once having exorcised the demonised image, they then often failed to explain the differences between their subject and its Western counterpart. Although his paper had almost been an exercise in futility, Shidachi argues that the 'art' of Jiu-jitsu would be integrated into British physical education because it deserved 'the attention of those who move[d] in the higher circles of the educational world, instead of being stigmatised as a minor and lower form of mere wrestling' (21).

The modernity of Japan, revelling in its victory over China in the Sino-Japanese war (1894–5) made Shidachi's remark plausible. Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904), the half-Irish half-Greek writer who came to Japan in 1890 to teach English, keenly depicted the unchanged Japanese mentality that lay beneath its modernisation. Coincidentally, his principal in his Kumamoto days was Jigorō Kano, whose teaching of Jiu-jitsu fascinated Hearn and led him to associate the art with alternative methods of civilization. In his epoch-making essay 'Jiu-jitsu' (1895), Hearn quotes as an epigraph several passages from the *Tao-Te-King* 道德經, the Chinese Taoist classic allegedly written by Lao-Tzu 老子, including the phrase 'he who relies on his own strength shall not conquer'. Echoing Kano's paper which was based on the Taoist maxim, Hearn defines Jiu-jitsu as a way 'to conquer by yielding'⁵ and emphasises its ethical, economic, and scientific aspects.

In Yokohama's treaty port, Kipling might have noticed a British sailor getting Jiu-jitsued and thrown to the ground by a local policeman, as Japan began its counterattack after the establishment of its Constitution in 1890.⁶ What Kipling had called the 'devilish art and craft of wrestling tricks' is interpreted by Hearn as a secret of Japanese anti-colonial modernisation. Hearn expresses his amazement at the 'devilish art' and its ability 'to direct and utilize the power of attack'. He argues that Japan had deployed the same art of self-defence, intellectually, against Western civilisation: 'She [Japan] has been able to remain herself, and to profit to the utmost possible limit by the strength of the enemy' (148). Hearn further declares that 'Western expansion and aggression' (182) would be halted by Asian competition, as '[t]he *Oriental can underlive the Occidental*' (italics original, 168). Hearn, formerly sceptical of the rice-eater's ability to assimilate the meat-

4 T. Shidachi, 'Ju-jitsu,' *Transactions and Proceedings of Japan Society*, 1 (1892), pp. 4–21.

5 Lafcadio Hearn, *Out of the East and Kokoro* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1922), p.144.

6 Rudyard Kipling, 'The Edge of the East,' *The Times*; 2 July 1892. As if escaping from new Japan, this article ended with his famous Orientalist poem 'Buddha at Kamakura.'

eater's civilisation,⁷ arrives at a new view after the Sino-Japanese war, in which 'the Oriental ha[d] proved his ability to study and to master the results of our science upon a diet of rice' (184). Hearn's long essay terminates with a doomsday vision approximating what the Yellow Peril propaganda had described⁸: 'They [Oriental races] would scarcely regret our disappearance any more than we ourselves regret the extinction of the dinotherium or the ichthyosaurus' (185). Hearn could not know that the former was a proto-elephant herbivore and the latter a dolphin-like fish eater, as Victorian palaeontology was developing through trial and error; it was still exceptionally radical of him, though, to predict the extinction of the meat-eater by losing a low-cost competition during the heyday of imperialism, when Britain enjoyed the geo-strategic lion's share.

Hearn's ominous prediction about the East was, however, hardly known, and in those Victorian London circles acquainted with it, it was not taken seriously. It was not Hearn's metaphorical Jiu-jitsu but recreational Jiu-jitsu that began to attract public attention. Edward William Barton-Wright (1860–1951), who had worked in Japan, was as impressed by this martial art as Hearn had been. When he returned to London, he adapted Jiu-jitsu for the British man clad in a suit and carrying a walking stick, anglicising the term into 'Bartitsu' as in 'Barton's Jiu-jitsu.'⁹ Through his articles in *Pearson's Magazine* in 1899, Barton-Wright propagated this hybrid martial art so widely that Conan Doyle (1859–1930) adopted it to revive Sherlock Holmes from the fall into which he plunged with Professor Moriarty: Doyle explained in 'the Adventure of the Empty House' (1901) that the knowledge of '*baritsu* [sic], or the Japanese system of wrestling' had helped the fictional detective.¹⁰ Similar surprise endings were very popular in wrestling matches between Japanese Jiu-jitsu champions in music halls at the turn of the century. Barton-Wright invited Yukio TANI 谷幸雄 (1881–1950) and Sadakazu UYENISHI 上西貞一 (1880–?) to choreograph his stage work and teach at his Bartitsu school.¹¹ Their tactful way of vanquishing stronger and heavier opponents impressed the audience, but the image of the 'devilish art and craft of wrestling tricks' remained. Tani, who came to London on 26 September 1899, and Uyenishi, who arrived in 1900,¹² set up Jiu-jitsu schools independently of Barton-Wright, but their popularity did not spread 'in the higher circles of the educational world' as Shidachi had hoped they would.

7 Lafcadio Hearn, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, vol. II (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1923), pp. 129–30.

8 About the Yellow Peril vision of the late Victorian age, see Yorimitsu Hashimoto, 'Germs, Body-politics and Yellow Peril: Relocation of Britishness in *The Yellow Danger*,' *Australasian Victorian Studies Journal*, 9 (2003), pp. 52–66.

9 E.W. Barton-Wright, 'The New Art of Self Defence,' *Pearson's Magazine*, 7 (1899), pp. 268–275 and pp. 402–410. Barton-Wright taught and popularised Jiu-jitsu as well. See Barton-Wright, 'Ju-jitsu and Judo', *Transactions of the Japan Society*, 5 (1902), pp. 261–264 and Douglas Sladen, *Queer Things about Japan* (London: Anthony Treherne, 1904), pp. 183–191.

10 Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, vol. II (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005), p. 802.

11 Edith Garrud, 'The World We Live In: Self-Defence,' *Votes for Women Newspaper*, 4 March, 1910, p. 355 and Percy Longhurst, 'Sada Kazu Uyenishi: A Word Portrait', in S. K. Uyenishi, *The Text-book of Ju-jutsu*, 9th edition, (London: Athletic Publications, n.d.), p. 103.

12 G. Koizumi, *My Study of Judo: the Principles and the Technical Fundamentals* (New York: Cornerstone Library, 1960), p. 23.

2. The Russo-Japanese War (1904–5) and the Jiu-jitsu Boom in Britain

Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese war made Jiu-jitsu a buzzword throughout the British Empire. Even the *Times*, while reporting the Japanese army's hasty retreat from 'Niu-chwang,' commented that they were 'applying the principles of *ju-jitsu* [sic] to the art of war, and have thrown the garrison of Niu-chwang with all desirable economy of force.'¹³ This was followed by a pile of cartoons comparing the war to a music-hall match between 'Little Japan' and a giant Russian bear. Jiu-jitsu's popularity even permeated British political satire. In an early example, 'Fiscal Jiu-jitsu [sic]' satirises the tug-of-war of the tariff reform debate. Two illustrations, possibly referencing Barton-Wright's article in *Pearson's Magazine* (April), show Prime Minister Balfour (1848–1930) shaking hands with Joseph Chamberlain (1836–1914) and quickly locking him.¹⁴

The timing was also important. The 1904 report on national physique thoroughly astonished the British when it revealed that one third of the volunteers during the Boer war were unfit for battle. Japan's fervent patriotism and ancestor worship inspired several significant movements during the nation's national efficiency craze.¹⁵ For instance, the caricature 'A Lesson in Patriotism' shows a geisha girl teaching John Bull about patriotism in the following conversation:

John Bull. 'Your army system seems to work splendidly. How do you manage it?'

Japan. 'Perfectly simple. With us every man is ready to sacrifice himself for his country—and does it!'

John Bull. 'Remarkable system! I must try and introduce that at home!'¹⁶

Inazō NITOBÉ's (1862–1933) *Bushido: the Soul of Japan* (1900) was soon rediscovered and its code of knightly chivalry taken as a panacea for modern over-civilisation.¹⁷ Japan was recognised as a civilised nation after the slaughter on the Manchurian battlefields, according to Okakura's 'Code of the Samurai—the Art of Death'.¹⁸ In the first influential book on the tea ceremony, Kakuzō OKAKURA 岡倉覚三 (1863–1913) contrasts the 'Art of Life' with Bushido; nevertheless, the 'hard' power of Japan had undeniably aroused interest in its 'soft' power.

The soft art, Jiu-jitsu, was no longer something farcically demonstrated by 'knock-about comedians.' 'Apollo the Scottish Hercules' or William Bankier (1870–?), an author of a Jiu-jitsu handbook, speaking

13 *The Times*, 'The War in the Far East,' 12 May 1904.

14 *Punch*, 24 May 1905, p. 371.

15 G. R. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency: A Study in British Politics and Political Thought, 1899–1914* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1971), p. 60; Searle, *A New England? Peace and War 1886–1918* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 305.

16 *Punch*, 6 July 1904, p. 3.

17 As for Edwardian Britain's Bushido craze, see Yorimitsu Hashimoto, 'White Hope or Yellow Peril? Bushido, Britain and the Raj' in David Wolff, et al. (eds.), *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective*, vol. II (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 379–402.

18 Kakuzō Okakura, *The Book of Tea* (London: G. P. Putnams, 1906), p. 7.

of the demonstrations performed by the music-hall entertainers Tani and Uyenishi and inspired by an article in the *Times*, praises Bushido and calls Tani a modern samurai.¹⁹ As similar handbooks mushroomed, the Japanese art of self-defence spread over Britain. The London city police, for instance, hired a Jiu-jitsu instructor in 1905, and *Punch* predicted that the British people would see 'a series of interesting acrobatic displays' in the London streets.²⁰ In the same year, Jiu-jitsu began to be taught in Britain's night-schools, and a *Punch* caricature satirised the ostensibly 'acrobatic displays' performed even in the home in a sketch showing a butler thrown by his buttons.²¹ A 'Japanised' John Bull was, of course, a fat target for *Punch*. A cartoon entitled 'Banzai!!,' known as the Japanese word for 'hurrah,' wittily cheers the Jiu-jitsu craze by depicting some kimono-clad Bobbies. A sketch showing the fictional 'new Utopian College for the Promotion of National Efficiency' satirises the future of this Edwardian Orientalist excess through a comment from a fictional student: 'Our conduct, for example, is regulated by the Code of Bushido, and our physical culture is based on the principles of Ju-jitsu [sic]'.²²

These caricatures would not have been a laughing matter for Robert Baden-Powell (1857–1941). The Boer war hero, shocked by reports of a serious deterioration among the young, founded the Boy Scouts and published its handbook, *Scouting for Boys*, in 1908. The first 50,000 copies of this best-selling book sold out quickly, and the volume was reprinted several times within the year. In it, Baden-Powell repeatedly praises bushido as a modern form of chivalry and recommends 'ju-jitsu [sic] exercises every morning and evening' because it contains 'numerous interesting games to teach grips and holds, and development of muscles'.²³ Bushido and Jiu-jitsu were being made to work hand in hand with builders of bodies and of the British Empire.

Baden-Powell's over-estimation of Jiu-jitsu was typical of the Edwardian health craze as embodied by the idealised body-builder Eugene Sandow (1867–1925),²⁴ but it might have been derived from his own witnessing of Uyenishi's heroic exhibition. In April 1905, 'Professor' Uyenishi invited the vast audience at the Windsor barracks to try to beat him and managed to throw a gigantic man, the champion wrestler of his regiment, in a Titanic struggle; this feat allegedly inspired Baden-Powell to cheer and praise Uyenishi's skill.²⁵ This event explains why he recommended 'The Fine Art of Ju-Jitsu [sic], by Mrs. Roger Watts (1867–1968), with excellent photos' in *Scouting for Boys*.²⁶ Watts, Uyenishi's disciple, praises her master in this book

19 Apollo, *Jujitsu: What It Really Is* (London, Office of 'Apollo's' Magazine, London, n.d.), p. 5, pp. 19–20.

20 *Punch*, 22 March 1905, p. 199. See also, 23 August 1905, p. 127.

21 *Punch*, 5 December, 1905, p. 405.

22 *Punch*, 'Epilogue,' 28 June 1905, p. 466.

23 Robert Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: a Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 25, p. 210.

24 See, for instance, Michael Anton Budd, *The Sculpture Machine: Physical Culture and Body Politics in the Age of Empire* (Basingstoke, Macmillan 1997).

25 *The Daily Mirror*, 7 April 1905, p. 6 and 'Ju-jitsu Struggle' in *P. I. P.*, 15 April 1905.

26 Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys*, p. 333.

(1906), and these ‘excellent photos’ depict a demonstration performed with the latter.

Baden-Powell’s self-imposed mission of strengthening his feeble people, although mainly targeted at the lower-middle and working classes, became an imperial initiative. Interestingly, he asserted that ‘we may as well learn German or Japanese’ in the future, ‘for we shall be conquered by these’ (289). This obsession with physical inferiority was internalised by the colonised Indians, who discovered the remedy after the Russo-Japanese war, as had the Edwardians, but differently.

3. Jiu-jitsu as an Alternative Method of Indian Self-Strengthening?

This widespread Edwardian sense of physical inferiority cast a dark shadow over Gandhi’s Indian boyhood. During his high school days in the 1880s, Gandhi (1869–1948) faced a difficult choice between the Vishnuite religious commandment and meat-eating as ways to develop India. His reformist school friends encouraged meat-eating as a means to empower and emancipate the Indian people from British rule. Gandhi notes that meat-eating was considered a solution for Indian modernisation and quotes a ‘doggerel of the Gujarati poet Narmad [Narmadashankar Dave (1833–1886)], which was popular among schoolboys:

Behold the mighty Englishman
He rules the Indian small,
Because being a meat-eater
He is five cubits tall.²⁷

Gandhi compromised by abstaining from meat while his parents were living (37). Even after leaving for London in 1888, he debated when he should resume his food reform. However, after glancing at Bentham’s book during his stay in London and as if recalling Lafcadio Hearn’s scepticism of the rice-eater’s ability to assimilate the meat-eater’s civilisation, he complained that ‘these abstruse things are beyond me. I admit it is necessary to eat meat. But I cannot break my vow’ (58).

Gandhi sees a sign of hope in the Russo-Japanese war. Quoting Narmadashankar and equating individual physiques with national power, he is amazed that the ‘thin Japanese’ had defeated ‘well set up and tall’ Russians. For Gandhi, the Japanese had shown that international competitiveness did not depend on the ‘physique of a man’ and that the secret of victory was the ‘laws governing the body’, namely ‘Jiu-jitsu’. Gandhi reports that the English army employed Jiu-jitsu instructors and asks his readers to learn of the art, though he sharply laments the probable vicious cycle of violence after ‘all the nations’ had learnt Jiu-jitsu.²⁸

27 M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography, or, the Story of My Experiments with Truth*, translated from the original Gujarati by Mahadev Desai (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), p. 35.

28 M. K. Gandhi, ‘Jiu-jitsu’ in the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. IV. (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1960), p. 418. Gandhi, like many of his compatriots, seemed to have thought of Japan as a model for Indian modernisation until around 1910. See also, ‘Japan and Russia’ (1905), pp. 466–7. For the impact of the Russo-Japanese war in general on India and other parts of the British Empire, see, R. P. Dua,

Following a similar line, Rabindranath Tagore exhorted the youths of India to build healthy and strong bodies and requested Kakuzō Okakura to send Jiu-jitsu instructors to his university, Santiniketan.²⁹ Jinno-suke SANO 佐野甚之助 (?–?) was hired to teach from 1905 to 1908; after an interval, Shinzō TAKAGAKI 高垣信造 (1898–1977) succeeded him from 1929 to 1932, during which time Jiu-jitsu became compulsory for the higher classes; the girl students, too, joined the lessons (259, 271)³⁰.

The history of Jiu-jitsu in India deserves its own paper or book. For now, we will merely note that Jiu-jitsu was idealised as an alternative mode of self-strengthening and Indian nation-building. This perspective was never more clearly articulated than in Sarath Kumar Ghosh's (1883–?) *The Prince of Destiny, or the New Krishna* (1909). This novel, one of the few widely popular Indian works of fiction, features an Indian Prince, Barath, who devotes himself to modernising his state of Barathpore after studying at Cambridge and begins a quest for national efficiency under the weight of the British Empire.³¹ His model is, as it was for the British Edwardians, Germany, and especially Japan. The commander of his modernising forces studies in Germany and Japan and then invites not only Japanese engineers but also Jiu-jitsu instructors to teach the art to civilians and soldiers, for 'jiu-jitsu makes a man of the lowest wreck of humanity' (471).

In the preface, the publisher expects the *Prince of Destiny* to explain the cause of the current 'Indian Unrest' crisis to the British reader, while the novel proper contains the kind of radical perspective that could not have been published anywhere but in fiction. Echoing and adjusting Okakura's criticism in the *Book of Tea* (1906), Ghosh explains the necessity of employing self-strengthening power by arguing that slaughter, like that of the Japanese, is considered civilised by the European admirers of power, who yet consider Asian artists and philosophers barbarians (391). Ghosh then notes, as if following Hearn's argument even using his term 'cost' of living, that the British Indian in South Africa, the Chinese in California, and the Japanese in Vancouver are excluded not because of their officially ascribed, so-called 'moral inferiority' but because of 'their greater economic efficiency' (563). The present segregation and awakening caused by Japan's victory over Russia, he says, have aroused the 'Asiatics' and unified the East against the West (148). The author hastens to add, of course, that an awakening of the West caused by the awakened East will be followed not by conflict but by mutual understanding and appreciation (622). This vision might have been inspired by Edward Carpenter (1844–1929), who admired Hindu philosophy and resided in Ceylon. In 1907, Carpenter quoted a passage from Hearn's 'Jiujuitsu' (1895) arguing that China would follow Japan's

The Impact of the Russo-Japanese (1905) War on Indian Politics (Delhi: S. Chand, 1966) and Steven G. Marks, 'Bravo, Brave Tiger of the East! The War and the Rise of Nationalism in British Egypt and India' and Paul Rodell 'Inspiration for Nationalist Aspirations: Southeast Asia and Japan's Victory', both in John W. Steinberg et al (ed.), *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective*, vol. I (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 609–628 and pp. 629–654.

29 Gita A. Keeni, 'Study of Japanese Language at Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan—Its Past, Present and Future Prospects' in P. A. George (ed.), *Japanese Studies: Changing Global Profile* (New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 2010), pp. 258–9.

30 One of the students was teenaged Satyajit Ray. See, Krishna Dutta and Andrew Robinson (eds.), *Selected Letters of Rabindranath Tagore* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.400–401.

31 For the overview of the novel in an Indian historical context, see Alex Tickell, 'The Discovery of Aryavarta: Hindu Nationalism and Early Indian Fiction in English' in Peter Morey and Alex Tickell (eds.), *Alternative Indias: Writing, Nation and Communalism* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005).

path and that its efficiency and cheap labour would awaken the West and lead not to a 'yellow peril' but to 'a better understanding' through 'peaceful infiltration'.³²

This prophetic vision was not widely shared and accepted even in the Jiu-jitsu-friendly British Isles. The most sceptical and cynical writer was G. K. Chesterton (1874–1936). In 1906 article, he argues that the West could not be either awakened or Jiu-jitsued by Japan, since it was not Japanese methods or civilisation but Western ones that led to the latter's triumph over Russia; he wittily remarks that General Kuroki 'did not defeat [General] Kuropatkin with ju-jitsu [sic]'.³³ He admits that this scheme of wrestling was a 'very effective and exciting one' but concludes that it is nothing but 'ordinary wrestling with the addition of foul play' (269). Although Chesterton considered Japan's imitation of Europe as the demolition of an 'old Japanese institution' including that of Jiu-jitsu, Jiu-jitsu was actually a hybrid that adopted elements of wrestling, sports, and gymnastics. The founder and moderniser Jigorō Kano, for instance, taught how to conquer by yielding but did not deny the importance of physical power and bodybuilding; in fact, he contributed an introduction to a handbook of Sandow exercises, which he also recommended.³⁴ Kano, Edwardian modernisers like Baden-Powell, and Indian nationalists such as Tagore and Ghosh shared the same obsessive dream—to rebuild the bodies of man and nation; the mutual awakening of East and West by 'peaceful infiltration', though unacknowledged, was nearly realised.

4. Jiu-jit-Suffragettes, Gandhi's Satyagraha and 'Moral Jiu-jitsu'

The art of Jiu-jitsu awakened British women as well. The weaker sex deployed it for empowerment and self-defence against the hooligans among the empire-builders. Evelyn Sharp (1869–1955), for instance, recommended that readers of the *Daily Mirror* take Uyenishi's newly opened class for women, while adding an illustration of a typical Edwardian woman locking and throwing her professor.³⁵ The secret of yielding, rather than using, power seemed to be attractive because Jiu-jitsu did not 'overdevelop the muscles' or spoil the figure.³⁶ A show even appeared that exploited the Jiu-jitsu boom following the Russo-Japanese war: the

32 Edward Carpenter, 'The Awakening of China' in the *Co-operative Wholesale Society's Annual* (Manchester, 1907), p.201. This paper was reprinted in 1917. See, *Towards Industrial Freedom* (London: Allen, 1917), pp. 210–212.

33 'On Local Cheeses: Seriousness in Dance and Sports' (originally appeared on 25 August 1906), in *The Collected Works of G. K. Chesterton*, vol. XXVII (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), p. 269.

34 Kanō Jigorō, Introduction, in *Sandau Tairyoku Yosei Ho* [Sandow's System of Physical Development] (Tokyo: Zosikai, 1900), no pagination. This handbook was extremely popular in Japan at the beginning of the 20th century: the revised 64th edition was published in 1911. An advertisement for Sandow's 'Whitely Health Exerciser' appeared at the end of the 5th edition (1900), popularising gymnastics and dumbbell exercise. I would like to thank the discussant Professor Shin'ichi Yoshinaga for his inspiring comment. He emphasised the global influence of Sandow and suggested the unknown but important aspect of an invented tradition between Kano's Judo and Indian Yoga with reference to Mark Singleton's *Yoga Body: the Origins of Modern Posture Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

35 Evelyn Sharp, 'Self-Defence Made Easy', *Daily Mirror*, 4 December 1903. According to the article, the school was at 31 Golden Square in London. Tani's school also hired a special instructor for ladies, 'Miss Roberts'. See the advertisement of the Japanese School of Ju-jitsu facing frontispiece of E. J. Norman, *The Fighting Man of Japan* (London: Archibald Constable, 1905).

36 'Ju-jitsu', *P.I.P.*, 30 December 1905.

Ju-jitsu Waltz (1907) was an 'athletic dance' show at the Gaiety Theatre, featuring the famous actress Gaby Deslys (1881–1920) singing a song while elegantly throwing Yukio Tani.³⁷ The Jiu-jitsu lessons were, of course, not only entertainment for men but also a means of empowerment for women, as well as aids to self-determination and self-strengthening. Another example from show business is that of Marie Studholme (1872–1930), well known for playing the lead in British Orientalist operettas, such as *San Toy* (1899) or the *Geisha* (1904 revival), who commented that the practice of Jiu-jitsu created 'a feeling of independence'.³⁸ Possibly inspired by these self-sufficient women, H. G. Wells (1866–1946) had his independent heroine Ann Veronica protect herself from a predatory man with Jiu-jitsu.³⁹ The female Jiu-jitsu master published a handbook in 1906, whereupon Baden-Powell recommended Mrs. Roger Watts' *The Fine Art of Jujutsu* in his *Scouting for Boys*. Later, one of the first British female Jiu-jitsu instructors went beyond her master Uyenishi and back to the basics of European physical culture. She became obsessed with the idea that she could revive, like Isadora Duncan (1877–1927), the arts of ancient Greek posture and gymnastics using documents and paintings. For her 1914 book, she reverted to her middle name 'Diana' and posed as the Greek goddess as if imitating Sandow, who fashioned himself after Hercules. Jiu-jitsu was, therefore, no more than the vestige of secret knowledge guarded and bequeathed by the Samurai clan until 1860, after having been brought from Greece to China via Persia.⁴⁰

Another female Jiu-jitsu teacher, Edith Garrud (1872–1971), went far beyond her teacher. Her husband learnt Jiu-jitsu from Uyenishi according to W. H. Garrud's *Complete Jujitsuan* (1914). It was not known whether Edith acquired the art from her husband William Herbert or Uyenishi, but she gave a public demonstration of Jiu-jitsu at the Women's Social and Political Union Prince's Skating Exhibition in 1909 and, in December, advertised in *Votes for Women* a 'suffragettes' Self-Defence Club, Tuesday and Thursday evening, from 7, 5s 6d per month' (240).⁴¹ Nearly two years before Garrud taught the Suffragettes how to conquer the stronger by yielding, a cartoon in *Punch* satirising the military complexion of the Votes for Women movement had wittily proposed that the London Bobbies should put on a Jiu-jitsu match using Pankhurst-like dummies.⁴² The Suffragettes made the first move, however: Garrud changed her ordinary Jiu-jitsu demonstrations at W.S.P.S. in 1910 and used a policeman dummy in a performance that was reported in *Sketch* (6 July 1910) under the title 'Mrs. Garrud, a Well-known Suffragette, demonstrates Jujitsu [sic]' with 6 sequel photos showing her throwing a policeman who tried to hold her hand.⁴³ After

37 James Gardiner, *Gaby Deslys: A Fatal Attraction* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1986), p. 20. 'The Ju-jitsu Waltz' in *P.I.P.* (6 April 1907) reproduces a number of still pictures from the performance.

38 'Why not Ju-Jitsu for Women', *P. I. P.*, 18 December 1909.

39 H. G. Wells, *Ann Veronica* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1909), p. 211.

40 Diana Watts, *The Renaissance of the Greek Ideal* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1914), p. 39.

41 Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: a Reference Guide 1866–1928* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 240. See also, Antonia Raeburn, *Militant Suffragettes* (London: Readers Union, 1973), pp. 96–97 and pp.167–168.

42 'One Man One Suffragette: A Suggestion to the House of Commons Police,' *Punch*, 13 March 1907, p.193.

43 These photographs are reprinted in Midge Mackenzie (ed.), *Shoulder to Shoulder: a Documentary* (Harmondsworth: Pen-

this performance, the *Punch* cartoonist possibly with Garrud in mind hyperbolically depicted a crowd of Bobbies being thrown and terrorised by a smiling Suffragette.⁴⁴ As *Punch* predicted in 1905, ‘a series of interesting acrobatic displays’ transpired in the London streets—not with criminals but with the fair sex. A backlash against their militaristic approach widely spread. Suffragettes who relied on Jiu-jitsu, wittily labelled as ‘Ju-Jutsuffragettes’ by *Health and Strength* journal,⁴⁵ were considered chimeras crossing the border between man and woman, East and West. Militant suffragette Evelyn Sharp, who once recommended Jiu-jitsu to the female readers of *Daily Mirror*, described a conservative mother in her autobiographical fiction who associated suffragettes with hooligans mastering Jiu-jitsu as a kind of miscegenation with ‘the unpleasant little yellow person.’⁴⁶ On the other hand, Dr. Caleb Saleeby (1878–1940), a well-known British active supporter of eugenics and racial purity, having seen photographs of a suffragette throwing hapless men by Jiu-jitsu, deplored that they were no more women.⁴⁷ In her 1913 address, Sylvia Pankhurst (1882–1960) advised the Suffragettes to learn Jiu-jitsu because the police and the army practiced it.⁴⁸ Then she called up and termed ‘The People’s Training Corps’, and 300 men and women joined her new ‘army.’⁴⁹

This vicious cycle of conflicts was exactly what Gandhi foretold in 1905 from South Africa. In fact, few Suffragettes tried to apply the idea of conquering by yielding to party politics; one who did was Catherine Marshall (1880–1961), who in 1911 said that ‘we should act on the principle of Ju-Jitsu [sic], which teaches how the weaker combatant may prevail by using the strength of his adversary’.⁵⁰ During his London visits of 1906 and 1909, Gandhi often told the Suffragette movement that he was very sympathetic to their cause but disapproved of their violent tactics.⁵¹ He had already introduced the idea of non-violent protest or ‘satyagraha’ in South Africa in 1906,⁵² but he was deeply shocked by Chesterton’s attack on Indian nationalism; following the logic he used to mock the British Jiu-jitsu craze, Chesterton satirised Indian nationalism for essentially mimicking British civilisation and destroying their own traditions. Quoting Chesterton’s ‘The Indian Nationalist Movement’, Gandhi wondered whether his struggle might simply destroy ‘what the Indian

guin, 1975), p. 255.

44 ‘The Suffragette that Knew Jiu-jitsu,’ *Punch*, 6 July 1910, p. 9.

45 Edith Garrud, ‘Damsel v. Desperado,’ *Health and Strength*, 23 July 1910, pp. 101–102.

46 Evelyn Sharp, *Rebel Women* (New York: John Lane, 1910), p.54

47 C. W. Saleeby, *Woman and Womanhood: a Search for Principles* (New York: M. Kennerley, 1911) pp.19-20. It might be Edith Garrud because so many articles and photographs concerning her Jiu-jitsu demonstration widely appeared. See, for instance, ‘Suffragette Jiu-jitsu,’ *Daily Mirror*, 13 April 1909 and ‘Athletic Suffragette,’ *Daily Mirror*, 28 June 1910.

48 ‘Suffragist Militancy,’ *The Times*, 20 August 1913.

49 ‘Suffragettes’ Rifles? Rules for Men and Women of Miss Sylvia Pankhurst’s New Army,’ *Daily Mirror*, 13 November 1913.

50 Jo Vellacott, *From Liberal to Labour with Women’s Suffrage: the Story of Catherine Marshall* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), pp. 114–5.

51 See, for example, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. IX, p. 303 and pp. 324–5.

52 Stanley Wolpert, *Gandhi’s Passion: the Life and Legacy of Mahatma Gandhi* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 59 and p. 93.

people ha[d] carefully nurtured through thousands of years.⁵³ For this reason, Gandhi, unlike other Indian nationalists, completely rejected the Japanese model of self-strengthening through Bushido and Jiu-jitsu, emphasising traditional Indian culture instead. In his epoch-making *Hind Swaraj* (1909), Gandhi describes Japan as not Asian but British because of its imperialism and commercialism; he stresses the importance of passive resistance, which ‘need[s] no Jiu-jitsu.’⁵⁴

Gandhi’s strategy was nevertheless associated with Jiu-jitsu in the 1920s. Women in the British Isles finally won the suffrage in 1928. That year, Richard Gregg (1885–1974), an American social philosopher who had lived in India, wrote that the ‘low purchasing power and enormous unemployment of India [we] re acting like jiu-jitsu to overthrow competition of foreign cloth against khaddar.’⁵⁵ Gregg developed this metaphor in his next book, *The Psychology and Strategy of Gandhi’s Non-violent Resistance* (1929). Interestingly or ironically, Gregg calls Gandhi’s non-violent resistance ‘a sort of moral jiu-jitsu’ and explains it by quoting from Uyenishi’s textbook as follows.

Dont [sic] resist when your opponent pushes you; rather increase your pace in that direction and pull him a little at the same time [...]. By following this precept you are—if I may describe it so—almost catching your balance before he wishes you lose it, while he is practically losing his and is without the aid of your resistance on which he has been more or less depending to help him regain *his* [italics original] balance. Thus in an easy and simple manner you neutralize his efforts to get you off your balance, and at the same time create a favourable opportunity of effecting a throw, by keeping him off his.⁵⁶

Furthermore, Gregg contrasts it with ‘physical jiu-jitsu’⁵⁷ and refines this idea in a 1935 work entitled ‘Moral Jiu-jitsu’ because the non-violence is to cause the attacker to lose his or her moral balance and self-confi-

53 *Works*, vol. IX, p. 427. Gandhi misprinted the date of Chesterton’s article as 18 September instead of 2 October. About the original text, see *The Collected Works of G. K. Chesterton*, vol. XXVIII (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), pp. 400–403.

54 M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, edited by Anthony J. Parel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 94. See also note 37 and note 38 from p. 27 to p. 28.

55 See the quotation in ‘An Epoch-Making Book,’ a review of *Economics of Khaddar* (1928), *Young India*, 19 April 1928, p. 122. The first edition (1928) is very rare and not available for reference.

56 Richard Gregg, *The Psychology and Strategy of Gandhi’s Non-Violent Resistance* (Madras: S. Ganesan, 1929), pp. 42–43. As for the original, see, S. K. Uyenishi, *The Text-book of Ju-jitsu*, 9th edition, (London: Athletic Publications, n.d.), p. 29. According to this edition, Uyenishi uses ‘makes’ though Gregg quotes ‘wishes’ in the above line 3. Incidentally, Gregg mentions a *Modern Review’s* article on Kano, ‘The Moral Value of Judo’ (November 1922, pp.637–638) but misprinted Kano’s first name as ‘Jigosa.’ The *Modern Review* prints the name correctly and quotes the leading paragraphs from Kano’s article ‘Judo as Physical and Mental Culture’ in *Japan Advertiser*, 29 July 1922.

57 It is worth noting that Jiu-jitsu was used by fascist women as a weapon against their same-sex enemies; male members could not use force upon women. See, Martin Durham, *Women and Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 55 and Julie V. Gottlieb, *Feminine Fascism: Women in Britain’s Fascist Movement, 1923–1945* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), p. 66.

dence.⁵⁸ It is not clear whether Gregg had read this passage from Kakuzō Okakura's *Book of Tea* (1906): 'In jiu-jitsu [sic] one seeks to draw out and exhaust the enemy's strength by non-resistance, vacuum, while conserving one's own strength for victory in the final struggle.'⁵⁹ Gregg grasped what Okakura tried to articulate, however, and coined 'moral jiu-jitsu' as a catchphrase for non-violent resistance across the British Empire and Japan. The soft power of the soft art of Jiu-jitsu really went far beyond what its disseminator and populariser Uyenishi had expected; the fact was nearly forgotten that it was not Kanō but Uyenishi who came to Britain as a music-hall entertainer and did so much for and against the British Empire through his Jiu-jitsu performances.

58 Richard B. Gregg, *The Power of Non-Violence* (London: George Routledge, 1935), pp. 26–27. In the endnote to the passage, Gregg quotes the same sentences from Uyenishi's book and refers Kano's article with the same misprint too, see note 3 from p. 253 to p. 254.

59 Kakuzō Okakura, *The Book of Tea* (London: G. P. Putnams, 1906), pp. 60–61.