

Japanese Martial Arts in Early Twentieth-Century New Zealand: A Story of Multipronged Cultural Migration

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Introduction

Japanese martial arts have become an integral part of New Zealand's contemporary cultural and sports scene. New Zealand boasts its own hand-to-hand martial arts heritage—that which was developed by the Maori long before European settlement—but it is the Asian influence (Japan, Korea, China, Thailand, Philippines) that is predominant in the martial arts seen and studied today. In fact, it could be argued that Asian martial arts, in particular the Japanese ones, sparked a renaissance in the reformulation and promotion of indigenous varieties. This trend is by no means limited to New Zealand.

Japanese martial arts (*budō*) are practised by people from all walks of life, and all ages in New Zealand. Currently, the most popular discipline in terms of numbers is karate, followed by judo and aikido. Disciplines such as kendo and most other mainstream modern Japanese *budō* are also present, but are very much a minority. Arcane *kobudō* (classical martial traditions) styles are also found in New Zealand, but the lineage and legitimacy of many such groups is questionable. Similarly, there are numerous hybrid martial arts that claim spurious links with Japan. Historical validity aside, they are heavily influenced by Japanese culture; or more specifically, a longing to somehow be affiliated with the samurai culture of feudal Japan, fantastical as such aspirations are. Again, such an attraction to, and distortion of “samurai culture” through patronising pseudo-traditional martial arts is certainly not restricted to the New Zealand experience; it is a common trend throughout the world, and even in Japan itself.

Despite the well-established presence of Japanese *budō* (pseudo ones included) in New Zealand, there has been little scholastic endeavour to plot their development or social significance in this country to date. Primarily using early newspapers, this paper investigates noteworthy trends in the first half of the twentieth century to establish the course of entry of Japanese martial arts into New Zealand.

Contextual Information on the Evolution of Modern Japanese Martial Arts

It is important to note here the difference between pre-modern and modern Japanese martial arts. The various modern *budō* disciplines (*gendai budō*) were developed during and after the Meiji period (1868–1912). Those already in existence before this are now referred to as *kobudō* (old=classical *budō*), *koryū* (old styles), or simply as *bujutsu*. Although modern *budō* traces its philosophical and technical roots to the classical traditions, the current forms, rules, protocols of etiquette, pedagogical methodologies, and objectives were developed in the Meiji era and beyond as vehicles for physical and moral education.

Over the course of the Tokugawa period (1603–1868), the military arts evolved into cultural pursuits rich in ritualistic symbolism and spiritualism. Towards the end of the bakufu regime,

however, it was clear that the now elegant, highly ceremonial martial traditions were hardly going to match Western firepower if it came to defending the country from foreign incursion. Consequently, *bujutsu* fell into disfavour following the Imperial Restoration of 1868 due to lack of perceived practical application in the modern theatre of battle. Guns, cannons, and a new conscript army were the order of the day, and *bujutsu* was viewed as a relic of an outdated feudal past that was best forgotten if Japan was to modernise successfully.

In the late 1870s, however, there emerged a groundswell of government officials and educators who voiced their inhibitions about totally ‘Westernising’ the education system. They wanted to at least retain certain aspects of ‘Japaneseness’ in the newly established curriculum, especially in physical education, which was constructed around Western callisthenics. Lobbyists raised the question of why it was not possible to develop a PE curriculum based on *bujutsu*. After all, *bujutsu* was a comprehensive form of indigenous athletic culture, with the added advantages of fostering military-style discipline, and connecting Japanese youth with their traditional heritage as the state sought to craft a modern national identity. To meet the Ministry of Education’s requirements for inclusion in the national curriculum, however, *bujutsu* first had to be modernised itself—that is, nationally standardised, purged of esoteric teachings and *ryūha* affiliations, made safe and hygienic, and systemised to enable group teaching.

Kanō Jigorō (1860–1938) was particularly active in adapting *jūjutsu* to clear the various educational hurdles identified by the government. Greatly influenced by the ideals of Herbert Spencer regarding moral, intellectual, and physical education, Kanō essentially provided a blueprint for the modernisation of the other martial arts with his innovations in creating a new martial art—judo. He studied the classical schools of Tenjin Shin’yō-ryū and Kitō-ryū *jūjutsu*, and discovered that his physical and mental strength vastly improved because of it. His original motivation, however, was to learn fighting skills to fend off bullies who teased him for his superior intellect and inferior size.

He had an epiphany that, with fine-tuning, combat principles could be employed to enhance intellectual, moral, and physical learning. To this end, he systemised techniques into rational categories for teaching and practising safely through free-sparring (*randori*). He did away with overtly dangerous techniques in *randori*-style competitions, preserving them instead as *kata* forms. He launched the Kōdōkan in 1882 as a school for teaching academic subjects concurrently with his new style of *jūjutsu*. He called it *jūdō* (the gentle “Way”) to differentiate it from *jūjutsu* which was typically associated with brawling and ruffians, and to emphasise its educational objectives of character development for the greater good. Now an Olympic sport (since 1964) with as many as 199 countries and regions affiliated to the International Judo Federation, it must be considered one of Japan’s most successful cultural exports.¹

In spite of the efforts of Kanō, and other groups such as the Dai-Nippon Butokukai—formed in 1895 as the self-appointed gatekeeper of traditional martial arts, and innovator for their transition into modern forms—it was not until 1911 that the MOE acquiesced and allowed martial arts to become officially endorsed subjects in schools. Objectives for teaching *budō*² in schools has

¹ Interestingly, although Kanō Jigorō spent his entire career promoting judo in Japan and around the world, it did not become established in New Zealand until long after other forms of *jūjutsu* had taken root. The first “judo” club (Judokwai) was not launched until 1948 by Dutch immigrant brothers.

continually changed with the times since then. It was utilised as an important component of the militarist agenda during 1930s and war years to instil nationalistic fervour and combat effectiveness, but is now taught in schools to educate Japanese children about traditional values and respect.³

In terms of migration to the West, apart from *jūjutsu* and Kanō's judo, Japanese martial arts never really took root in Europe until after the Second World War. The history of Japanese martial arts in former colonies such as Korea and Taiwan, and in the Americas, is more substantial. In the colonies, for example, *budō* was a compulsory part of the school system during the 1930s, as it was in Japan. In the Americas, *budō* disciplines such as kendo, judo, and sumo flourished primarily due to two factors: widespread participation by Japanese immigrants (Nikkei)⁴ throughout North and South America; and, the establishment of Dai-Nippon Butokukai (Greater Japan Society of Martial Virtue) branches in North America in the 1930s. As New Zealand had little interaction with Japan to speak of in the early twentieth century, and Japanese immigrants were too sparse to count as an established community, the martial arts never thrived in the same way.

Nevertheless, “jiu-jitsu”⁵ was to become a household word in New Zealand parlance, and certainly garnered a dedicated following in the first half of the twentieth century. Its migration to this part of the world was a multipronged affair, and barring the celebrity status of several Japanese *jūjutsu* exponents and some high profile Japanese naval visits, Japan's involvement in *jūjutsu*'s popularity in New Zealand was, for the most part, only peripheral.

The Arrival of ‘Jiu-jitsu’ in New Zealand

As Japan opened its doors to the West and began to assert its “uniqueness”, a new nationalistic education regime popularised the idea that the Japanese people were the inheritors of samurai culture, even though samurai only made up 5–6% of Japan's total population before class distinctions were abolished in 1869. As Befu points out, “Japan's modernization coincided with the samuraization process—the spread of the ideology of the ruling warrior class.”⁶

Newly created notions of *bushidō* and of a glorious warrior past were propagated vigorously from the 1890s onwards. To apply Eric Hobsbawm's term, the modern versions of traditional martial

² In 1919, Nishikubo Hiromichi, a former Tokyo City mayor who served as vice president of the Dai-Nippon Butokukai, and also the principal of the Butokukai's specialist training school (Bujutsu Senmon Gakkō), changed the suffix ‘-jutsu’ for ‘-dō’ in the martial arts. The impetus was to accentuate the educational qualities of the martial arts as a ‘Way’ of life (*dō*), rather than just a quest technical proficiency. ‘*Jūjutsu*,’ ‘*kenjutsu*’ and ‘*kyūjutsu*’ became ‘*kendō*,’ ‘*jūdō*’ (different to Kanō Jigorō's Kōdōkan judo), and ‘*kyūdō*’ respectively, and the collective term ‘*bujutsu*’ became ‘*budō*.’ I believe that Kanō Jigorō's ideals clearly catalysed this adaptation, but it is open to speculation. The MOE officially changed its terminology from *jutsu* to *dō* later in 1926.

³ As of 2012, *budō* became a compulsory subject in Japanese junior high schools. For an in-depth analysis of the role of *budō* in the Japanese education system refer to Bennett's *Kendo: Culture of the Sword*.

⁴ ‘Nikkei’ is the generic term for people of Japanese heritage who reside overseas. The terms ‘Issei,’ ‘Nisei’ and ‘Sansei’ refer to first, second, and third generations of Nikkei respectively.

⁵ The term *jūjutsu* (柔術) is spelled several different ways (depending on the period in question) typically without a macron or italics, and with varied usage of capital letters and hyphens (Jiu-jitsu, ju-jitsu, jujutsu etc.). Apart from when quoting sources, I will refer to it as “*jūjutsu*.”

⁶ H. Befu, *Japan: An Anthropological Introduction*, pp. 50–52.

arts provide a fine example of “invented tradition”⁷ which was incorporated into Japanese political machinations during the period of modernisation to cultivate a strong sense of national identity. This process was indicative of what Levinger and Lytle describe as “nostalgic nationalism”. In other words, a “triadic structure of nationalistic rhetoric” is evident in which martial arts connect a “glorious past”, with the “degraded present” and ultimately the “utopian future.”⁸

This may have been the case in Japan, but Japanese martial arts took on a different meaning in the West. Nevertheless, they were still closely related to nationalism and a utopian outlook because of the growing infatuation with seeking perfection through physical activity, and the quest for national efficiency. According to Budd, “physical culture was an inheritor of a predominant Western martial ethos in its linking of functional activity—health or character improving—with a decorative or aesthetic ideal.”⁹ An ever-present concern addressed by the consumerisation of physical culture was training men in mind and muscle for war, trade, exploration, and any other activity to bolster the supremacy of the nation.

By the turn of the twentieth century, athleticism and the Muscular Christianity movement based on “the devout Christian, the earnest philanthropist, the enthusiastic athlete”¹⁰ had a massive following in Britain and America. Alluding to the ideas of Michel Foucault, Martschukat states, “sports and physical culture mixed with numerous other cultural fields and meshed with processes of social stratification. As such, they were part of an evolving bio-political order at the turn of the century, revolving around a culturally and biologically defined urge for a perfection of efficient individuals and the enhancement of the community at large.”¹¹

American president Theodore Roosevelt was brought up in a family that followed the philosophy, and he was a fervent advocate of the ideal that sport augmented physical and moral wellbeing. Roosevelt was one of many powerful and vociferous proponents of employing physical activity to mitigate the dangerous emasculating trends stemming from the urbanisation of society and modern technology.¹² One such trend was a well-publicised medical condition known as “neurasthenia”—fatigue of the central nervous system. Such concerns, and the desire to strengthen national power, gave rise to various “physical culture” systems in Britain, France, Germany, Sweden, and the USA from the mid-nineteenth century. Athleticism was touted as the antidote for many modern social ills.

As these schools of physical training gained in popularity and profitability, the agents of the systems became embroiled in intense international rivalry arguing the benefits and superiority of their method of physical training. Often promoting strength and perfection in mind and body in the White European sense, the Japanese martial arts were a surprise addition to the commercialised

⁷ Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, p. 1.

⁸ M. Levinger and P. Lytle, “Myth and Mobilisation: The Triadic Structure of Nationalistic Rhetoric,” *Nations and Nationalism* 7:2, pp. 175–94.

⁹ Michael Budd, *The Sculpture Machine*, p. 104.

¹⁰ Anonymous (1895), “‘Rob Roy’ MacGregor,” *The London Quarterly and Holborn Review* 84: 71–86, (retrieved 22 March 2017).

¹¹ J. Martschukat, “‘The Necessity for Better Bodies to Perpetuate Our Institutions, Insure a Higher Development of the Individual, and Advance the Conditions of the Race.’ Physical Culture and the Formation of the Self in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century USA,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 24:4 (December 2011), p. 473.

¹² See Clifford Putney’s *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880–1920*.

physical culture systems, but as Budd points out, “In terms of the physical culturalists’ egalitarian conception of the body, it made perfect sense.”¹³

As was the case with other physical culture systems, the growing popularity of Japanese martial arts undermined issues of class; but they also served to debase entrenched racial assumptions at a time when New Zealand (and other British colonies) had introduced prejudicial policies to thwart Asian immigration. Anti-Japanese sentiment with regards to immigration was never as high in New Zealand as it was in the United States, but even there, the Japanese had their high-powered admirers partially thanks to the martial arts. In the “News in Brief” section of the *Waihi Daily Telegraph* (August 11, 1904), a note from New York reports on the glowing reputation of *jūjutsu*. “The Japanese system of physical training, has ‘caught on’ in the United States. So impressed is President Roosevelt with the Japanese science of self-defence that he has recommended that it be taught at West Point and Annapolis.”¹⁴ A reputable pugilist himself, Roosevelt even took lessons in the Japanese martial system three or four times a week in a room at the Whitehouse.

Although far removed from Britain and America geographically, and even though the same degree of urbanisation and industrialisation was not seen here, New Zealand was certainly not immune to worries of neurasthenia and the depleting physical and moral welfare of the nation. According to Daley, “The South African war had pointed to the lack of physical preparedness amongst even the nation’s finest young men. High rates of infant mortality in the warm summer months were a continuing worry.”¹⁵ Health and wellbeing was a major concern in the Dominion, and *jūjutsu* was imported mainly from Europe as one means to satiate the desire for bodily empowerment.

The migration of *jūjutsu* to the West in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries predated other Japanese martial arts. *Jūjutsu* involves hand-to-hand combat with the execution of throws, locks, and strikes to subdue an opponent into submission. Japanese *jūjutsu* exponents enthralled audiences in European and American music halls as they demonstrated their efficacy against much larger, physically stronger Western wrestlers. It must have been a curious sight for many to see such “small yellow men” placing a wrestling champion in an ignoble and painful hold. It was this idea of “weak overcoming strong” that led to *jūjutsu* being recognised in the West as an effective means for self-defence, and the New Zealand experience with Japanese martial arts started with a trickle-down from Europe and the United States. *Jūjutsu* arrived to New Zealand at least five decades before any of the post-Meiji modern *budō* disciplines (*kendō*, *kyūdō*, karate, *naginata*, *sumō*, Kanō’s Kōdōkan judo etc.) did.

An early and ongoing channel through which martial arts were showcased to New Zealanders was the 13 Japanese naval visits to New Zealand ports between 1882 and 1935.¹⁶ As McNeil notes, “these introduced far more New Zealanders to Japanese—and vice versa—than any other type of

¹³ Michael Budd, *The Sculpture Machine*, p. 88.

¹⁴ Roosevelt made a personal request to Kanō Jigorō for a teacher of judo to come to the United States. To this end, one of Kanō’s top students, Yamashita Yamatsugu, taught judo at such hallowed institutions as West Point, and even to the president himself in the White House. Roosevelt was also an enthusiastic advocate of Nitobe Inazō’s book *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* (1900).

¹⁵ C. Daley, “Selling Sandow Modernity and Leisure in Early Twentieth-Century New Zealand,” *New Zealand Journal of History* 34:2 (2000), p. 241.

¹⁶ 1882, 1883, 1884, 1886, 1902, 1907, 1912, 1916, 1924, 1926, 1928, 1932, and 1935.

encounter, and were always a great success.”¹⁷ The visiting seamen were welcomed with much pomp and ceremony, and from the visit to Waitemata by HIJMS Hiei and HIJMS Kongō in 1902 onwards, it appears that crews put on displays of martial arts, among other things, to entertain their hosts with forms of Japanese culture. “An entertainment was given which evinced considerable interest, consisting of wrestling, fencing, and musical selections” (*New Zealand Herald*, June 26, 1902). I believe that this may have been the first-ever official display of Japanese martial arts in New Zealand.

An earlier visit by the HIJMS Tsukuba to Auckland in 1884 is thought to be the first meeting between Maori and Japanese in any official capacity. The crew was welcomed by the Ngati Whatua people, and by the Maori king, Tawhio, who was gifted a set of samurai armour. The Maori people were quite amused at the small stature of the Japanese visitors, and the *Star* ran an article that points to the first-ever sumo bout between the two nations.

The Maoris are greatly tickled at their diminutiveness, calling them tamaitis (children). Some of the Maoris had a bout of wrestling with one or two of them, but after kissing the dust for their pains, went away with a much higher opinion of the physical strength of the tamaitis than they had at first entertained. (*Star*, April 18, 1884)

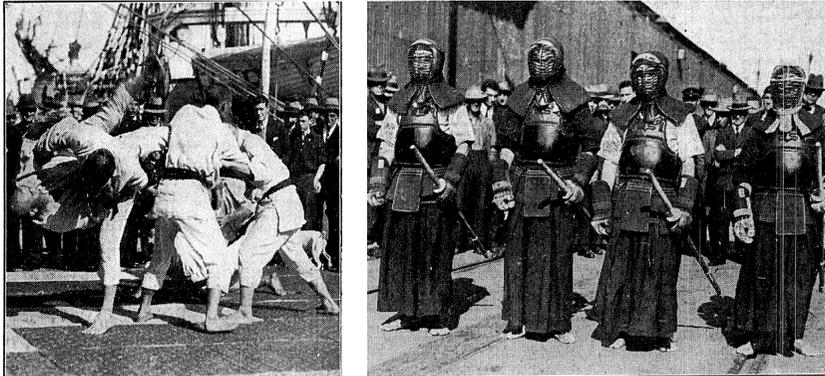
Sumo was demonstrated in a more formal way by crewmen of the HIJMS Azuma and Iwate in Wellington in 1916, and ensuing visits almost always featured popular displays of martial arts until visitations ceased after 1935. For example, the *Auckland Star* reports on hundreds of schoolboys who “invaded the Japanese mercantile training ship Shintoku Maru when the vessel was specially thrown open for their inspection” in 1933.

Exhibitions of kendo (Japanese fencing) and judo¹⁸ (jiu-jitsu) were given on the King’s wharf, where the training ship is berthed, and the spectators applauded heartily. In kendo the contestants, heavily padded and wearing metal masks, and black hoods and gowns, revived memories of the most virulent days of the Ku Klux Klan. At times they emitted strange noises that resembled the bark of a dog, but it was not difficult to judge from their utterances and actions when points had been scored. (*Auckland Star*, August 1933)

¹⁷ Ken McNeil, “Encounters, 1860 to 1940s,” in *Japan and New Zealand: 150 Years*, ed. Roger Peren, p. 42.

¹⁸ Given Kanō’s network of students in the Imperial Navy, I suspect that the style of ‘jiu-jitsu’ being shown here was in fact Kōdōkan judo.

The *New Zealand Herald* ran photos of the event.



POPULAR EASTERN SPORTS DEMONSTRATED BY CADETS FROM THE JAPANESE TRAINING SHIP SHINTOKU MARU Exhibitions of jiu-jitsu and Japanese fencing were given before an interested crowd of Aucklanders on King's Wharf yesterday morning by men from the Japanese barquentine Shintoku Maru. Left: Judo (jiu-jitsu, or Japanese wrestling) matches in progress. Right: Contestants ready to give an exhibition of kendo (ancient Japanese fencing). They are heavily padded and are wearing metal masks to prevent serious injury from blows given with the heavy sticks. (*New Zealand Herald*, August 30, 1933)

Exhibitions aside, the earliest detailed references to Japanese martial arts in New Zealand can be found in several reviews (replications from British or American newspapers) of H. Irving Hancock's now classic book *Japanese Physical Training* (1904). The timing coincides with the Russo-Japanese war, an event in history which solidified Japan's political status on the world stage, and in the eyes of many observers, made Japan a country worthy of emulating in the quest to remedy social woes prevalent in their own 'advanced' white nations. As one review begins, Irving "describes the Japs as the hardest people in the world." He explains "jiu-jitsu" as an "elaborate and scientific method, some of the particulars of which are rather gruesome, but with these the seeker after greater physical strength, with its greater personal activity, need not concern himself unless he chooses, for the simple exercise will prove sufficient to attain this end" (*Southland Times*, April 23, 1904). A slightly earlier article in the same newspaper (March 25, 1904) under the section "Topical Notes" states;

White people sometimes go so far as to condescendingly admit that 'the little yellow man' has considerable powers of imitation, and is richly endowed with a faculty for assimilation. A shallow remark of this nature entirely ignores the literature of Japan, which scholars say is both valuable and original, and there is certainly nothing imitative in the system of Jiu-jitsu under which the Japanese youths have been trained to such a pitch of physical perfection that investigators have declared the race to "possess, although diminutive, the greatest endurance of any people on earth."

Although not neurasthenia, youth ennui toward exercise was identified as a problem in New Zealand. In *Manawatu Evening Standard* (June 2, 1904), for example, there is mention of a raging debate over the poor state of physical culture in New Zealand schools. In this remarkably familiar, seemingly timeless observation, "Three-fourths of the children in some of the schools give themselves little or no

physical exercise. They spend their leisure in hanging around listlessly, chatting or playing little games which have no effect in developing the human frame.” Japan is viewed as providing some viable answers.

The women as well as the men of Japan are ardent disciples of ‘jiu-jitsu.’ The Japanese have found out for themselves that by practising moderation in food and drink, by attending scrupulously to cleanliness, and by going through certain prescribed physical, exercises, for a short time in each day, they can build up the body to such an extent that the amount of strain which it will bear without any injurious consequence is simply marvellous.

The implied extent of *jūjutsu* participation in Japan in this period is grossly overstated in many such articles—it had not yet been introduced into the school system, and very few women, comparatively speaking, were students of the art.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the idea of *jūjutsu* and Japanese wisdom was certainly capturing peoples’ imaginations. In Wellington’s *Evening Post* (May 23, 1904) the question is posed, “Is water the secret of Japan’s success?” The article continues, “The Japanese themselves attribute their high average of physical strength to a plain and frugal diet, and the system of gymnastics called jiu-jitsu. Now, by those who go in for jiu-jitsu an average of one gallon of water a day is drunk.”

Clearly, the world was besotted by the Japanese taking on such a formidable foe as the Russians, and started taking notice of “Japanese virtues” which could somehow be used to great advantage elsewhere. As Budd indicates, this Western fascination with Japanese success signified “further evidence of a harkening back to a romanticized idea of feudal man-to-man combat.”²⁰ The international community was looking for clues to Japan’s sudden rise to “greatness” in such a short time since the backward feudal era. “Jiu-jitsu”—the mysterious physical culture system of Japan—and the nebulous spiritual tenets of “Bushido” were thrust into the limelight, even more so when the Japanese exceeded all expectations with their victory in 1905.

As far as hands-on participation in New Zealand is concerned, the first proof of actual practitioners is in an advertisement for lessons in Christchurch’s *Press* (November 28, 1904).

Mr. Tankard having received instruction in this remarkable system from a Japanese teacher in London, is now holding classes for children and adults. A weak heart and poor lungs safely and surely strengthened by this system. Specialist for spinal curvature. Medical cases. Send for prospectus. The school, corner of Gloucester street and Oxford-terrace.²¹

¹⁹ Kanō Jigorō started teaching women in judo from the 1890s. However, women or girls would typically be encouraged to train in the art of the glaive (*naginata*) if anything at all in this era.

²⁰ Michael Budd, *The Sculpture Machine*, p. 88.

²¹ Although difficult to substantiate, if in fact Tankard had studied under Japanese *jūjutsu* instructors in London, it could quite possibly have been Tani Yukio and/or Uenishi Sadakazu (usually written as Uyenishi). Both men, considered pioneers of Japanese martial arts in Britain, travelled to London in 1900 at the invitation of Edward William Barton-Wright, the founder of “Baritsu” (studied by Sherlock Holmes) and the “Baritsu School of Arms and Physical Culture”. They taught *jūjutsu* for Barton-Wright, and both made names for themselves as successful prize fighters. After parting ways with Barton-Wright in 1903, Uenishi established his own dojo that year near Piccadilly Circus, the “School of Japanese Self Defence.” In 1904, Tani and a newcomer from Japan, Miyake Tarō, opened the “Japanese School of Jujutsu” in London.

Also located in Christchurch was Hornibrook's Physical Culture Institute situated in Cathedral Square, which taught "jiu-jitsu" from 1909 along with various wrestling styles. Interestingly, Christchurch was the city in which the first fulltime Japanese teacher of *jūjutsu*, Fukushima Ryūgorō (Ray Shima), eventually settled down. He came to New Zealand around 1906, and travelled Australasia with vaudeville groups as a *jūjutsu* performer until 1914. He moved to Sydney and taught *jūjutsu* there until 1923, returned to Japan, and then "attracted by a wrestling boom" he came back to Christchurch in the 1930s and successfully naturalised in 1939. It was there that he established his own gym (Shima Gym) and taught members of the local community and the police until his passing in 1958.²²

Another Japanese, Kiyō Kameda, was a fascinating character in his own right with regard to New Zealand-Japan relations. He arrived in New Zealand in 1912 as a part of a *jūjutsu*-vaudeville group from Australia. Like Shima, he was eventually to become a member of a tiny group of Japanese-born naturalised New Zealand citizens, but not without undergoing a degree of prejudice. Although *jūjutsu* garnered them considerable respect among sports-loving locals, Kameda and Hakuichi (Harold) Kunioka, another *jūjutsu* exponent who arrived in 1907 and settled in Ruatoria, were the only naturalised Japanese settlers who were interned during the Second World War along with hundreds of Germans and Italians living in New Zealand.²³

Although Kunioka never took his skills into the realm of professional fighting (he managed a grocery store), Kameda and Shima often featured in the sports sections of newspapers throughout New Zealand and Australia. For example;

The turn which delighted most the large audience at the Opera House last night for the promised change of programme was the demonstration of ju-jitsu wrestling by Ryugoro Shima and Kiyō Kameda, two remarkably agile Japanese. Their clever tactics of attack and defence were a revelation, and when pitted against each other in a final trial of strength they provided an exciting item. (*Auckland Star*, March 26, 1912)

An observer wrote in the *NZ Truth* "If this scribe knew as much about the noble art of jiu-jitsu as Ryugoro Shima and Kiyō Kameda, at present throwing one another about at the Opera House, he wouldn't be afraid of the largest 'John' in New Zealand" (March 30, 1912). Perhaps this was an orchestrated performance, but both were lauded as genuine giant killers in numerous articles, and became quite the heroes.

There was a large attendance at the Excelsior Hall last night when Donald Tweedie, New Zealand's champion wrestler, was matched in a jiu-jitsu contest against Kiyō Kameda, a Japanese expert. Tweedie's weight was given at 12st 6lb, and Kameda's at 9st 11lb. It was announced that five bouts would be held. The first bout lasted for eleven minutes, and the second for six and a half. Tweedie's superior weight being no match for the Jap's cleverness. In the third round, Tweedie found that his opponent was too clever for him and cried enough. 'It's no good my

²² McNeil, "Encounters, 1860 to 1940s," p. 33.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

going on wrestling,' he said. 'If the Jap. is willing to meet me in the catch-as-catch-can style, I shall only be too pleased to have a go with him. No more jiu-jitsu.' It was accordingly arranged that the two men should meet in three bouts of catch-as-catch-can wrestling in Christchurch on a future date. (*Press*, July 24, 1913)

Kameda sometimes invited members of the audience to test their mettle against him, but challengers were ill-advised to do so as one man called Mathias was to discover. "It was Mathias who was thrown, and, unfortunately hurt. Dr. Simpson, who was present, attended him, and found that he had dislocated his leg just above the ankle and broken a small bone" (*Press*, July 24, 1913). Kameda also featured in high profile wrestling matches as an extra attraction. "An innovation will be an exhibition Jiu-jitsu match between Miss Doris Chaplin and Kameda. A gold medal will be given to the amateur making the best showing against Kameda" (*Press*, 16 August, 1913). In a follow-up article in the *Press* the next day, it is reported that a "jiu-jitsu tournament for amateurs was won by McAllum, a pupil of Kameda's." This suggests that Kameda was running classes by this stage.

It is possible that other *jūjutsu* clubs were running in other centres as early as 1904, or earlier. In Wellington's *Evening Post* (October 4, 1905), for example, there was an advertisement for a "gymnastic carnival" and "assault-at-arms" to be conducted by students of Harrison and Juriss's Gymnasium on November 7 and 8, 1905. The show included an array of combat arts including, among other things, "up-to-date sword exercise", "battle-axe swinging", "lady fencers", and "Jiu-jitsu". In 1906, *Evening Post* reported on a special *jūjutsu*-only exhibition convened at Mr. Royd Garlick's school in Panamastreet, Wellington. The demonstrators were R. Parker and W. G. Talbot who showed interested onlookers some of the "principal grips and breaks, in slow time, so as to give the spectator a good idea of the system." The article concludes with the observation, "Judging from the large attendance and the interest taken in the proceedings jiu-jitsu promises to become very popular in Wellington" (March 13, 1906).

Indeed, in addition to Garlick's School of Physical Culture, there were other early clubs in and around Wellington such as the Belvedere Club, taught by Clarence Stevens from 1908. The Wellington Athletic Club opened in June 1911, and along with boxing taught by the "very capable instructors Messrs Sandow and McGibbon", the club also offered "wrestling, jiu-jitsu, massage, in fact every branch of physical culture" (*NZ Truth*, June 3, 1911). German-born Herman Henry Ratter (aka Harry Sandow) was a well-known "strongman and wrestler" in New Zealand.²⁴ A match he had with Japanese *jūjutsu* exponent, the aforementioned Shima, was reported as a "stirring jiu-jitsu contest" in the *Colonist* a few years before in 1909. After four matches, it was Sandow who came off second best.

While Sandow had Shima's collar gripped tightly, the Japanese got well under him, and with a powerful body hold, hurled the big fellow another somersault. Shima strained at Sandow's collar, and Sandow, very red in the face, gasped, 'De clothes settles me.' Some finesse followed, until Shima managed to get his 'choke' grip on once more. Sandow, now in desperate straits, battled

²⁴ Harry Sandow is, as far as I can work out, no relation to the famous Eugen Sandow. Eugen Sandow is widely considered to be the founder of bodybuilding. He was also of German birth, and toured New Zealand showing his near-naked body off to thousands of patrons to much acclaim in 1903 as a part of a vaudeville show. It is possible that Harry was nicknamed Sandow because of their shared country of birth.

hard to free himself, but it was no use. The Japanese smiled as he increased the pressure, until the big man cried enough in 3 min. 10 sec. This gave the match to Shima, whose fine skill won him rounds of applause. (June 29, 1909)

The Wellington YMCA offered *jūjutsu* courses from 1912 until around 1940. The club was first taught by P. H. Heward (*Dominion*, 9 March 1912), and later on by brothers Maurice and Tim Tracey who reputedly trained under Tani Yukio and Miyake Tarō in London. Garnet Sims also taught in Wellington from 1913(?), as did Fritz Holland's gymnasium on Willis Street from 1921 (*Evening Post*, January 15, 1921). There is a down-to-business advertisement placed by Garnet Sims in the *Evening Post*. "You will meet the unexpected situation with confidence and success, if you learn Jiu-Jitsu from me. No fancy costumes, but effective locks and breaks are thoroughly and intelligently taught. You have this knowledge and skill with you always, ready for instant use. Let's talk it over and then get to business." (May 24, 1922). Harry Baldock started teaching *jūjutsu* in Dunedin in 1927, and opened the Baldock Institute which is still in operation today teaching various arts for self-defence. Earlier advertisements in other parts of the country include a series run in the *Taranaki Daily News* (June 25, 1906) for specialist *jūjutsu* instruction by Professor J. J. Stagpoole. "Boxing, Wrestling, Jiu-jitsu—Deep breathing exercises and a course of physical training in four lessons, at Mr. Taylor's Central School Gymnasium, Mondays and Wednesdays, at 7:30 p.m."

The Route to National Dissemination

Jūjutsu was taking root in the first decade of the twentieth century in private salons and in the entertainment and professional fighting circuit. There were three individuals in particular, however, who stood out for their contributions to promoting the art to the masses.

Jūjutsu gained a following in a most unlikely quarter. Lieutenant Colonel David Cossgrove served with the New Zealand Army in the Second Boer War. As chance would have it, he fought alongside Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Scouts and Guides movement in Britain. Upon returning to Christchurch, and with Baden-Powell's consent, Cossgrove established similar programmes for youth—Dominion Boy Scouts in 1908, and Girl Peace Scouts in 1909.²⁵ Cossgrove included *jūjutsu* instruction for both girls and boys. Curiously though, an article in the *Press* in 1926, six years after Cossgrove's death, announces the abolishment of *jūjutsu* in the Boy Scouts.

Jiu-jitsu is no longer to be practised by Boy Scouts. At a meeting of the Dominion Executive Committee of the Boy Scouts' Association on Thursday night it was unanimously decided: "That in view of the recommendation of the Dominion Chief Scout, the training and practising of jiu-jitsu be prohibited amongst Boy Scouts." Further, it was unanimously agreed that the following notification be inserted in this month's extracts from the Dominion Headquarters: —That jiu-jitsu is not recognised as part of the training of Boy Scouts, and all Scout officers and Troup Committees are directed to see that it is not practised. (*Press*, May 22, 1926)

²⁵ It was his wife, Selina Cossgrove, who urged him to make Girl Peace Scouts' Association to appease their youngest daughter, Muriel.

It is unclear why boys were no longer to be taught *jūjutsu* in the Scouts. Maybe it had something to do with the total restructuring of the Dominion Boy Scouts in 1923 when they became a branch of the Boy Scouts Association of the United Kingdom. Or, perhaps it was related to the inherent danger of teaching young lads how to employ potentially hazardous fighting techniques. *Jūjutsu* featured in New Zealand newspapers a lot, but not always for good reasons. For example, the following incident occurred at a bakery in Cossgrove's hometown of Christchurch;

Two men began performing jiu-jitsu acts, and one succeeded in throwing his companion into a soporific state. The victim fell to the floor and began writhing in agony. Luckily one of the bakers who happened to be fairly skilled in jiu-jitsu took the unfortunate man in hand, and after a few minutes' patient handling succeeded in restoring consciousness. Had not immediate assistance available the happening would almost certainly have been attended by fatal results. (*Star*, July 4, 1915)

How fortuitous that there was a random baker also evidently proficient in *jūjutsu* there to save the day! Cossgrove initially came under fire for his efforts because his Scout movement was in direct competition with the more established Army-backed School Cadets. Furthermore, the necessity of a scouting group for girls was also questioned. In a letter printed in the *Dominion* (August 22, 1910), Cossgrove clarifies that the Peace Scouting for Girls movement was started by him as "a scheme for the moral, mental, and physical training of girls and young women. It aims at true and peaceful citizenship, and its object is preparedness for any situation or emergency that may occur in life."²⁶ Girls would be taught "practical rules for the care of her own health, ju-jitsu, self-defence tricks, home-nursing, care and management of infants, and invalids' cookery."

He published *Peace Scouting for Girls* in 1910 in which he extols the benefits of "jiu-jitsu" as an exceptional means of self-defence for girls. "One great advantage of the Japanese method of training is that no apparatus is required, nor any special room for the practices. Once the muscles have been formed they do not disappear again when you give up the practices" (p. 81). Interestingly, he also discourages girls from wearing restrictive corsets as they are uncondusive to participation in exercise.²⁷ The book was popular in New Zealand, and sold relatively well in the United States. In fact, the Girl Peace Scouts may well have been the first national organisation in any country to officially introduce Japanese self-defence techniques specifically for girls, and in this sense was quite a ground-breaking addition to the growing body of literature on *jūjutsu* in the West.

Where and when Cossgrove learned the techniques of *jūjutsu*, if he did at all, is unknown. He may have picked up some "tricks" during his time in the military, but it is just as plausible that he became aware of the usefulness of *jūjutsu* through the hype and massive following it was gaining in Britain. In the *Press* (July 8, 1905) it is reported that the "jiu-jitsu girl" had already become "an established type" of the English leisured class. It had a cross-gender appeal that the other physical culture systems of centred on body sculpturing did not offer.

²⁶ Almost identical rhetoric could be heard in Japan at the same time about the educational value of martial arts.

²⁷ This coincides with the growing influence of traditional Japanese kimono (hung from the shoulders) in Western fashion circles which helped guide a move away from the hourglass body shape that was seen as the ideal in women's fashion throughout the nineteenth century.

In London the numerous clubs for women have helped to bring this method of physical culture rapidly into fashion, and as its best features are a combination of ancient and well-tried hygienic rules, it is standing the test of experience much better than several of the other newly introduced systems which pay more attention to the development of flesh and muscle than to the strengthening of the general health.

Also, in the *Auckland Star*;

The Japanese 'art' of jiu-jitsu, or self-defence, has become the rage in London, and elderly ladies attired in 'physical culture' dress wrestle with each other instead of going to the countless massage establishments. Spinsters living in lonely suburbs are learning the art, so that they can tackle 'hooligans' in cases of necessity, where small Skye terriers afford little protection. Young men and old men have put themselves in the hands of Japanese professors, and the result of the boom has been an influx of little, yellow men into London, many of whom are very indifferent teachers. There are now over forty schools of jiu-jitsu in London, and the physical culture people, and those who run gymnasiums are doing all they can to pour cold water on the Japanese fad as being extremely dangerous and joint-dislocating. (June 28, 1905)

Fad or not, it was the "joint-dislocating" potential of *jūjutsu* that made it a very attractive tool for the Suffragette movement in Britain. Members were being physically harassed by "rowdies" and policemen at their meetings, and some of the leaders even feared for their lives. What better way to nullify the physical strength of male aggressors than with the science of *jūjutsu*?

A student of the famous Uenishi Sadakazu (resident in London) helped promote this social phenomenon. Uenishi taught William Garrud, the author of popular book *The Complete Jujitsu* (1914). Garrud's wife Edith led the movement to establish *jūjitsu* classes for Suffragettes. Her initiative is reported in the *Poverty Bay Herald* (July 7, 1909) concerning a public display put on by 30 Suffragette *jūjutsu* exponents at The Prince's Skating Rink in Knightbridge. Three acts were staged in which an uncooperative policeman was given his comeuppance. Shouting "The biggest policeman in London wouldn't get away now!" Edith Garrud took three curtains to rapturous applause.

A year later, the "jiu-jitsu" bodyguard movement was still gaining momentum with the Women's Freedom League organising a "Women's Athletic Society to provide jiu-jitsu experts to eject 'rowdies' at Suffragette meetings" (*Mataura Ensign*, June 22, 1910).

A woman's athletic society, the latest adjunct of the Women's Freedom League, has been organised by Mrs Garrud, a jiu-jitsu expert, and Miss Kelly, one of the hunger strikers, who entered a Dundee meeting by way of the fanlights. Mrs Garrud is not an inch taller than 5ft. She has already enjoyed the pleasure of throwing a 6ft policeman over her shoulder. 'I have already had the pleasure of ejecting one youth from a woman's franchise meeting, and after we have had our new society in full swing for some months we hope to have a regular band of jiu-jitsu officers who will be able to deal with all the male rowdies who dare to bother us. (*Marlborough Express*, August 10, 1910)

Their exploits attracted considerable interest in New Zealand even though women had already been granted the right to vote decades before. Keeping with the subject of women participation in *jūjutsu* and the theme of feminism, one of the most colourful exponents in New Zealand was Florence (Flossie) Le Mar (1889–1951), “The only lady jiu-jitsu expert in the Southern Hemisphere” (*Fielding Star*, July 20, 1912). She and her husband, Joe Gardiner, wrote *The Life and Adventures of Miss Florence Le Mar, the World’s Famous Ju-Jitsu Girl*, in Wellington in 1913.

In the book, Le Mar takes on all manner of criminally-minded men and ultimately subdues them all thanks to her mastery of *jūjutsu*. Although there are few details regarding her history learning the art, she does allude to having studied it in her country of birth (Nelson, New Zealand) from a very young age. Joe Gardiner (1886–?), originally a wrestler, was also a *jūjutsu* practitioner of some skill who, it is claimed in the book, studied under “several Japanese experts” (p. 10). Born August Joseph Gertenheyer in Sobernheim, Germany, he could have studied under any number of Japanese experts in Germany or Britain, and it is most likely that it was he who taught Flossie.

From 1909, Le Mar and Gardiner toured Australasia with their popular vaudeville show “The Hooligan and the Lady”. Their son, Ronnie (1911–2005), “the youngest Ju-jitsu exponent in the world” (p. 15) accompanied them on tour as they thrilled audiences with their deft skills. “Our great ambition” according to Le Mar, “is to arouse the public to the extreme value of Ju-jitsu as a means of self-defence” (p. 10). She was a staunch advocate for the plight of women against violent men, a role that Gardiner played with aplomb in the shows. “It is a melancholy truth” Le Mar lamented, “that one can rarely pick up a newspaper nowadays without reading an account of some dangerous assault upon timid and unoffending young women and girls” (p. 7). Their show was a veritable hit.

Gardiner and Le Mar, jiu-jitsu experts, direct from Messrs J. Fuller and Son’s, have secured a stand in the Winter Show Building, and will, with their complete company of vaudeville artists, present an entertainment during the four days of the Show. The outstanding feature of the performance will be an exceedingly clever display of jiu-jitsu, of which the members of the company are expert exponents. (*Hawera & Normanby Star*, June 10, 1912)

As verification of Le Mar’s genuine ability in *jūjutsu* as opposed to just being a good performer, the same newspaper followed up with an acclamation of her feats a few days later.

On Friday evening a spectator wagered that if he were allowed to first obtain a hold, Miss Le Mar would not be able to throw him inside 10 seconds. The condition was agreed to, and on the signal being given, Miss Le Mar tossed the venturesome spectator on to his back with about 9½ seconds to spare. (*Hawera & Normanby Star*, June 15, 1912)

In addition to their acclaimed performances on stage, they also taught *jūjutsu* to the public wherever they went. Le Mar wanted to show her “fellow men and women how easily they may put themselves on a perfect physical equality with persons possessed of twice their strength, by a careful and practical study of this fascinating art” (p. 7). Following the various fictional stories and anecdotes of how *jūjutsu* saved the day many times in the face of danger, the second part of her book provides detailed photographs and explanations for the mechanics of *jūjutsu*. It explains how to execute the techniques,

the theory that underlies them, and how the philosophy of *jūjutsu* can be applied to enhance all facets of one's daily life.

It is one of the earliest books on martial arts in the world that amalgamates the technique, philosophy, and holistic benefits of *jūjutsu* with feminist ideology. In many ways, the book is quite ground-breaking, and her contribution to the early spread of *jūjutsu* in New Zealand cannot be overstated. Although long forgotten (she ended her career selling confectionary in a movie theatre), in recent years she has attracted somewhat of a revived cult following. A play about her called "The Hooligan and the Lady" premiered at the 2011 New Zealand Fringe Festival, and she is also depicted as one of the secret bodyguards protecting the leaders of the Suffragettes in the graphic novel trilogy titled *Suffrajitsu: Mrs. Pankhurst's Amazons* (2015).

Around the time when Flossie Le Mar was entertaining audiences, Europe was embroiled in the "war to end all wars". It is here that yet another fascinating character makes his name selling *jūjutsu* as a combat method par excellence, and one that has considerable application, as he supposedly proved in the theatre of modern warfare. Perhaps more influential than Le Mar in the popularisation of *jūjutsu* in New Zealand, and certainly more controversial, was the enigmatic Brit, Captain Sydney Temple Leopold McLaglen, "Jiu-jitsu Champion of the World".

Leopold McLaglen first appears in New Zealand around 1915, and seems to have endeared himself to the locals rather quickly. In Christchurch, for example, he is credited for creating "something of a craze" following his *jūjutsu* demonstrations there. He was always keen for opportunities to promote *jūjutsu* at event such as the "monster patriotic entertainment in the Town Hall" organised by the Railway Service in Wellington, which included "a grand assault-at-arms" and "exhibition of jiu-jitsu" interspersed with "patriotic music." This event was planned to raise money for "starving Belgians," victims of the raging hostilities in Europe. An article introducing the event states that "Jiu-jitsu, as applied in modern warfare, is now being taught to the [NZ] troops in camp at Trentham" by "Captain Leopold McLaglen, the jiu-jitsu champion of the world, who has been supervising the training of the men in the science" (*Dominion*, March 5, 1915).

He is introduced in the *Otago Daily Times* (April 10, 1915) promoting a display by Otago Boys' High School Old Boys who will "present a programme that will prove quite novel to a Dunedin audience. Arrangements have been made with Captain Leopold McLaglen, who is at present Dunedin instructing the Territorial officers in bayonet exercises and jiu-jitsu to give an exhibition of his work." According to his profile, he had "the honour of winning in Japan the jiu-jitsu championship of the world." What is interesting here is that he appears to have found an inroad to teach bayonet practice and *jūjutsu* in New Zealand schools, which was undoubtedly a first. Incidentally, McLaglen was also referred to as the instructor of *jūjutsu* for the Girl Guides in New Zealand in 1926, so he most likely crossed paths with Cossgrove in his travels. Before then, however, his contribution to the cause in preparing Kiwi males to fight for King and country was timely and true.

The High School cadets gave a fine display of the new bayonet drill, exemplifying the use of the butt and several new parries and guards. This item, in which the boys have considerably improved since their display at the High School Fete, was loudly applauded. The jiu-jitsu exhibition was also most instructive, and was well done." (*Oamaru Mail*, April 5, 1915)

And;

The military display and jiu-jitsu exhibition to be held at His Majesty's Theatre on Wednesday evening promises to be one of the most interesting entertainments yet held in Dunedin. Squads of thoroughly trained Territorials and High School boys will give exhibitions of bayonet fighting, and Captain McLaglen, the jiu-jitsu champion of the world, will give jiu-jitsu exhibitions, and will, moreover, defy the efforts of two draught horses to separate his grip. (*Otago Daily Times*, April 17, 1915)

In Christchurch, he collaborated with the Canterbury Regiment to hold another assault-at-arms tournament touted to be “one of the most interesting events ever held in New Zealand.” As the director of events, he is hyped in the article as the “inventor of the new system of bayonet fighting used by British troops in the present war,”²⁸ and had conducted similar displays in “Australia, South Africa, India, and England.” The article promised performances of him “cutting down sheep whilst going at full gallop,”²⁹ and “defying the united efforts of two draught horses to pull his arms apart,” as well as a “display of jiu-jitsu, at which science he is said to be the champion of the world.” He was also going to demonstrate “the wonderful Japanese sleep-producing system” where a “well-known local gentleman” would be rendered unconscious, and then miraculously revived again in front of a military officer to verify it was not a stunt. Again, the proceeds were to be donated to those unfortunate souls suffering deprivation in the war in Europe (*Press*, July 10, 1915).

There was a number of secondary schools throughout the country that taught *jūjutsu* to both girls and boys in the 1920s and 30s. It is arguable that McLaglen's legacy lived on long after he departed the country in that he pioneered the way for future instructors of the art to youth. J. B. Adams, for example, although not a student of McLaglen, followed his example and conducted classes for hundreds of pupils at the Auckland Grammar School, Mount Albert Grammar School, Auckland Girls' Grammar School, Seddon Memorial Technical College, and Otahuhu Technical High School, as well as for the Y.W.C.A. and the Defence Department. He even made an application to the Minister of Education, Hon. P. Fraser to have “jiu-jitsu instruction included in the school curriculum” (*New Zealand Herald*, January 27, 1936).

²⁸ On the cover of his book, *McLaglen System of Bayonet Fighting* (1916), he claims to have “influenced 30,000 Australian and New Zealand troops” with his innovative system of using a bayonet with *jūjutsu* techniques.

²⁹ A display that surely contravened the ideals of the New Zealand SPCA (Society of the Prevention and Care for Animals), which had already been established by British immigrants in 1882.



BECOMING EXPERTS.—Learning the art of jiu-jitsu has been taken up enthusiastically by girls of Seddon Memorial Technical Collage. (*Auckland Star*, August 15, 1935)



JIU-JITSU FOR GIRLS: A pupil of the Seddon Memorial Technical College taking part in yesterday's display in the school gymnasium. (*New Zealand Herald*, December 10, 1941)



Blind students of jiu-jitsu and physical training receiving practical instruction in the various holds at the New Zealand Institute of the Blind. (*Auckland Star*, September 12, 1933)

It is quite remarkable that he was so readily employed by the New Zealand military and some of the country's finest secondary schools to teach *jūjutsu* and bayonet practice when his credentials, upon close inspection, seem to be questionable. What little research that has been done into his career tends to lead to the conclusion that he was little more than a "showman," and although domineering in a physical sense, he was not endowed with any genuine fighting skill. Many of his self-proclaimed exploits in the ring were dubious, and he most certainly was never the *jūjutsu* champion of the world in any recognised arena. For example, following his match with the Japanese T. H. Kanada in front

**You Can Learn
JIU-JITSU
at Home from the
WORLD'S CHAMPION**



JIU-JITSU is a gentle art. You don't have to be a brute to defeat your adversary. Skilled victory in this highly skilled sport can be obtained without the disfigurement or injury common in boxing or wrestling. There is no danger of hurting oneself in learning JIU-JITSU under the expert tuition of CAPTAIN McLAGLAN.

CAPTAIN LEO McLAGLAN, undefeated World's Champion, will teach you JIU-JITSU by post, in an entirely new and most fascinating way. YOU LEARN-AS-YOU-LOOK—every movement is shown by photographs—a minimum of effort for a maximum of effect.

The new postal training in JIU-JITSU develops agility, quickness of mind and eye, and flexibility of muscles. It is a method of attack and defence, whereby the small and apparently weak may prevail against the strong. It gives confidence in a tight place. It gives you an advantage over an adversary who may grossly insult or attempt to rob or assault you.

CAPTAIN McLAGLAN has defeated the Japanese Champions and has an unassailable record. Post the coupon below. You will receive full particulars, FREE, of his most unique world-famous Jiu-Jitsu Course by return. SEND NO MONEY!

**This Free Coupon
is for You!**

Captain Leo McLaglan,
London, Bob Champion,
Martin Burns, SYDNEY.

Please forward, without obligation, and by return post,
your free particulars on "How to Learn Jiu-Jitsu."
NAME _____
ADDRESS _____



(*New Zealand Herald*, September 11, 1928)

of what McLaglen boasted was “15,000 spectators” to claim the title of “Champion of the World,” the *Vancouver Daily Province* reported, “There was little, if any, jiu-jitsu to the performance. . . It was apparent to everyone that McLaglen’s knowledge of the game could be covered with a pinhead” (October 5, 1907).

Irrespective of whether history has been fair to him as a martial artist or not, he obviously had a highly charismatic disposition. His influence in New Zealand is indisputable.³⁰ He wrote several books on combat related topics in New Zealand such as the *McLaglen System of Bayonet Fighting* (1916), *Bayonet Fighting for War* (1916) and *Jiu Jitsu: A Manual of the Science* (1918). In the foreword for *Jiu Jitsu: A Manual of the Science*, the principal of Waitaki Boy’s High School, F. Milner, is generous in his praise of McLaglen.

This is to certify that Captain Leopold McLaglen trained the whole of the boys at this school (260 in number) in Jiu Jitsu. I have carefully watched Captain McLaglen’s work. He is a fine disciplinarian. The boys have benefited greatly from his tuition, and he has enlisted their enthusiastic admiration. (p. 10)

He left New Zealand sometime after the War, but made frequent visits back. McLaglen was based in Australia between 1928–1930, and several advertisements appear in New Zealand newspapers during this period pushing his latest innovation: a *jūjutsu* course by correspondence, complete with a free coupon! Although the American wrestler Martin Burns is recorded as having developed a mail order enterprise to teach wrestling in the early part of the twentieth century,³¹ maybe this was a world’s first for *jūjutsu*.

As an aside, the twilight years of his life were even more curious. According to the American newspaper, *The Independent* (October 27, 1937), while teaching *jūjutsu* at the Los Angeles Police Department, Leopold, the 49-year-old “burly brother” of Hollywood screen star, Victor McLaglen, was arrested on the charge of perjury and commissioning a crime—extortion of a wealthy

³⁰ English compatriots William E. Fairbairn (1885–1960) and Eric A. Sykes (1883–1945) developed “Defendu”, a hand-to-hand combat system based on *jūjutsu* techniques, knife fighting, bayonet combat and boxing. Apparently, Fairbairn had spent time in Tokyo where he studied at Kanō Jigorō’s Kōdōkan. He wrote a book called *Defendu* in 1926 in which his system is introduced. Fairbairn and Sykes’ system was taught to British commandos and other Allied special forces during the Second World War. The appellation “Defendu” obviously derives from the English word “defence”. The “-du” could possibly be a mispronunciation of “-dō,” the suffix meaning “Way” in Japanese *budō*. The reason I mention it here is because records suggest that McLaglen taught Fairbairn *jūjutsu* and bayonet practice in 1914 at the Shanghai Municipal Police.

³¹ M. DeMarco, ed., *Judo and American Culture*, p. 6.

sportsman.³² He defended himself by claiming to be a British secret agent whose mission it was to spread anti-semitic propaganda and to gather intelligence on communists. Years later in 1948, he visited an old wrestling foe in South Africa, Tromp Van Diggellen, but was very ill and hardly able to talk. According to Van Diggellen's account of the meeting, McLaglen claimed that his inability to converse coherently was due to his tongue having been partially removed when taken prisoner by the Japanese.³³ In a War Office file about "Leo the Great" is a rather sad summation of the man. "The best thing they [the Americans] can say in his favour is that he is probably a little mad."³⁴ He died in 1951, possibly in Kenya.

Conclusion

Jūjutsu was one of the most recognisable Japanese words in everyday New Zealand parlance in the early twentieth century. Its introduction and establishment in New Zealand was greatly assisted by certain political and social trends happening in the 'home country' (Great Britain). Namely, the growing popularity of *jūjutsu* among men and women as veritable form of self-defence, and later as an aid in the plight of the Suffragettes. Japan's success in the Russo-Japanese war, an event that took the world by surprise, also helped to highlight *jūjutsu*, as did popular naval visits to New Zealand's ports. Vaudeville shows that featured intriguing demonstrations of *jūjutsu* alongside dancers and other forms of entertainment, as well as well-publicised *jūjutsu* matches at wrestling contests, made local and Japanese *jūjutsu* exponents minor celebrities on the professional fighting circuit.

Following these often unrelated activities by Japanese and non-Japanese groups and individuals, not to mention the interest garnered through trends and happenings far away from New Zealand, *jūjutsu* became established as a system of self-defence and health maintenance. It was taught to girls and boys in youth groups and schools, at community clubs, in the military, to prison guards, and to the police. When women were admitted into the police force in 1941, the first ten recruits were instructed in *jūjutsu* to ensure they could apprehend criminals and defend themselves in the case of retaliation (*Listener*, July 4, 1941). It is rumoured that Flossie Le Mar was involved in some capacity.

The science of *jūjutsu* certainly originated in Japan, but by the Second World War it had well and truly evolved into a form of global culture. It had become ubiquitous, and was deemed to be so useful, that few took issue with its Japanese roots even during the hostilities of the Second World War. The April 1943 issue of the RNZAF's in-house magazine, *Contact*, contains a feature article with photographs of trainees learning *jūjutsu*.³⁵ It was no secret that New Zealand's military, as with other Allied armies, made *jūjutsu* a regular part of their training regime. As Leopold McLaglan so prophetically stated in the introduction of his Christchurch-published book, *The McLaglan System of Bayonet Fighting* (1916), "a knowledge of jiu-jitsu will soon become an integral part of the training we give to our soldiers before they go to the front." (p. 10). He probably never thought at the time

³² Leopold McLaglen himself appeared in a film called *The Bars of Iron* (1920). Apart from Victor, his four other brothers, Arthur, Clifford, Cyril, and Kenneth were also actors.

³³ Graham Noble, "Early Ju-jitsu: The Challenges," *Dragon Times Online*.

³⁴ J. Svinth, "The Science of Jiu-jitsu," *Journal of Non-lethal Combatives*, http://ejmas.com/jnc/jncart_McLaglan_1202.htm (accessed 22 March 2017).

³⁵ Diana Looser, "The Development and Characteristics of the Martial Arts Experience in New Zealand," p. 40

that they would eventually be going to the front against the Japanese. Probably, the Japanese never envisaged this reality either.

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