A Pattern of Disseminating Ju-jutsu and Judo Overseas before the World War II

An Analysis of "JUDO: Forty-one Lessons in the Modern Science of Jiu-Jitsu"

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Abstract:

A Pattern of Disseminating Ju-jutsu and Judo through Combining Them

At the 44th Japanese Academy of Budo Conference, Nagaki and I clarified an aspect of the dissemination of Japanese ju-jutsu and judo to Great Britain in the early 1900s. We did so by way of analyzing The Text-Book of Ju-Jutsu -As Practiced in Japan-, which Sadakazu Uenishi – who, together with Yukio Tani and others, introduced and disseminated ju-jutsu and judo in Great Britain – wrote in English with the cooperation of his disciples.

The word “ju-jutsu” is mentioned in the title of Uenishi’s book, but the techniques that are actually presented in the book are very similar to those of the Kodokan school of judo (they include techniques which were used in the period when judo was created but which were subsequently banned); this is particularly true of the throwing techniques. At the time, twenty years had already passed since Jigoro Kano created judo; it was a period when judo was overtaking traditional jiu-jitsu in popularity even in Japan. Using judo-like skills (throwing techniques), Tani and Uenishi also won wager matches against wrestlers; and it is believed that Uenishi systematically organized those skills, arranged them for the general public, named them “ju-jutsu,” and published his book.

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This kind of introduction and dissemination of a mixture of ju-jutsu and judo is something that was commonly seen among foreign authors before the World war II, as has been previously mentioned by several researchers. In this presentation, We would like to try to clarify a pattern of disseminating ju-jutsu and judo in Western countries prior to the war by focusing on analyzing JUDO: Forty-one Lessons in the Modern Science of Jiu-Jitsu, co-authored by T. Shozo Kuwashima and Ashbel R. Welch. The first edition of this book was published in 1938; the book belonging to me, the presenter, was published in 1951 and is the thirteenth edition. One of the authors, T. Shozo Kuwashima, was born in Kagawa Prefecture, and is believed to have gone to the United States in 1916 as an “accredited representative to teach Judo” and provided instruction in Chicago, San Francisco, New York and New Jersey, among other places.

In the preface of the book it says, “This book has not been written with the intention of providing a complete text on judo and jiu-jitsu”; it also states, “In this book we have selected actions that can be mastered by the average man or woman and even by children and beginners.” Much of the book is devoted to presenting self-defense skills that employ applied ju-jutsu techniques. The latter part (31 pages) introduces various throwing techniques from judo – the body drop, hip throw, shoulder throw, one-armed shoulder throw, neck throw, large outer reap, inner-thigh reaping throw, circular throw, knee wheel, etc. – and some judo holds. However, the first half up through the core of the book (114 pages) mainly focuses on, as mentioned, self-defense skills, providing detailed descriptions of hypothetical situations involving dealing with boxers, kicks, pistols, knives and more. From these descriptions, this book can be seen as a means of disseminating judo, while mainly focusing on an art of self-defense that incorporates applied ju-jutsu techniques as introductory and basic skills. This approach, different from that of the above-mentioned Uenishi’s book, is interesting.