

HISTORY OF PHYSICAL CULTURE

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The training of a warrior following the teaching of the classical Japanese and Korean schools of martial arts (C14 – C19th)

Submission: 16.09.2012; acceptance: 21.09.2012

Key words: martial arts, combat systems, weapon wielding, Japan, Korea

Abstract:

The author describes the canon of martial arts training of a warrior in Japan and Korea from the perspectives of the humanistic theory of and the anthropological systems of martial arts. He includes the skills of wielding weapons and hand-to-hand combat. Here we find an original classification of fighting arts and fighting skills. The author presents his practical knowledge of some Japanese schools of martial arts and an analysis of the contents of the royal Korean martial arts manual. This study also includes a comparison of the teaching martial arts in Japan and Korea, with similar traditions in other countries, and the content of other textbooks.

Introduction

Martial arts researchers are trying to determine the characteristics of their different varieties and forms in this field. In order to achieve this aim anthropological and cultural instruments [cf. Cordes 1994; Eichberg 2004; Jones 2002] or a historical description are used [Raimondo 2007; Green, Svinth 2010]. Attempts are made to classify martial arts according to various criteria and their encyclopedic description [Lind 1999; Reguli 2009]. Different theoretical perspectives, such as hopologia-related are suggested [Dreager 1990; Cynarski, Kurek, 2009].

Representatives of the Rzeszow School and the Idokan Association of Poland take a different view – in a new paradigmatic approach. It is a humanistic theory of, and systemic anthropology of martial arts, rejecting the reductionist approach to the holistic treatment of a man and putting him in the spotlight [cf. Cieszkowski, Sieber 2006; Obodyński, Cynarski 2008; Obodyński 2009; Cynarski 2004, 2012].

The previously dominant analyses and explanations of the combat phenomenon [cf. Binhack 1998; Kalina 2000] have been complemented by the socio-cultural dimension of martial arts. A comprehensive analysis of martial

arts practised today requires the inclusion of social and anthropological aspects in the description and interpretation. In addition, the systems of martial arts (such as the various forms of *Budō*) need to be analysed in a systemic and comprehensive way.

Martial arts firstly (historically) as systems of fighting techniques and self-defence, and then as education systems need to be included in a wider spectrum. Meanwhile, most methods of combat using traditional weapons are ignored in favour of hand-to-hand combat techniques [see: Raczkowski 2008; Lee-Barron 2011]. Just as the ancient warrior's training could not ignore fencing skills, so today's practitioner (and especially an instructor) of martial arts cannot neglect training in the use of classical weapons [Cynarski, Sieber 2006; Cynarski 2009b].

In a technical sense, martial arts or fighting arts in general, range from the arts of fortification, pyrotechnics and shooting, through the historic skills of horse riding and fighting on horse-back, swimming with weapons (Japanese *sueijutsu*), the use of bows and slingshot, hurling stones and sharp objects (*shurikenjutsu*), fighting from a great distance (ropes and chains with weights and blades, as in *kusarkigama*, spears or glaives as in *naginata*), fighting from a medium distance (sticks, swords, sabres, knives, and many other weapons) and hand-to-hand combat. The old schools (*koryū*) as *takeda-*

ryū and *tenshinshōden katorishintō-ryū* taught or continue to teach the majority of these skills which are valuable for a warrior. The techniques of these schools were connected to the strategies and tactics of armed struggle. Fighting without weapons was here only complementary [Tanaka 2005; Cynarski, Słopecki 2006].

Today, the opposite is true. Modern *budō* and the most popular fighting arts are focused now on using one's own body in a fight. However, in both kung fu and karate, the techniques of wielding at least a few types of weapon are practised, and in *jūjutsu* (especially in schools with a unique origin) it is similar. Aikido practitioners additionally practise with *bokken* (wooden training sword) and a *jō* stick. In the sport of *kendō* only sword techniques are studied. Forms with a sword are practised in *taiji quan* and *iaidō*, and the historical schools of European fencing still focus on cold steel. Fighting using weapons is still practised in the Philippine martial arts, in the Indian *kalarippayattu*, in *ninjutsu* schools and in many varieties of *kobudō*. Just as centuries ago, a complete warrior should be thoroughly trained in wielding any weapons and in hand-to-hand combat. An old Korean treaty *Muye Dobo Tongji* [Yi Duk-moo, Park Je-ga 2000] sets out techniques for wielding weapons (according to various schools), fighting on horse-back and horse vaulting and hand-to-hand combat, while fencing which constitutes about 80% of the content. Relatively complete systems still teach most of these skills [Cynarski, Buchhold 2006; Cynarski 2009a].

The reception of Asian martial arts in the West today is mainly determined by the content of mass culture (especially martial arts films). Old and new myths function here. Some differences in the perception and understanding of martial arts and fighting arts are reported in Europe and the USA. Overall, however, the Western reception of the psychophysical phenomenon is similar [Cynarski 2006; Cynarski, Sieber, Litwiniuk 2006]. Organizations of different varieties and ways of fighting are trying to respond to the market's demand.

What will be the area for the general theory of varieties of combat (the general theory of fighting arts)? In addition to the anthropological aspects (humanistic and cultural) it must undoubtedly refer to fighting skills [Cynarski, Sieber 2012]. Let us distinguish, as in the art of war, the **great theatre**. It includes the strategy of warfare, tactics, the ability to conduct a successful battle, and constructing and capturing fortifications. The **average range** includes the use of long-range weapons. In the past catapults, bows and crossbows were used. Finally, a **small theatre**, which is a battle of groups or of

one person fighting with a few opponents (including the different situations of self-defence), and one-to-one duels. A warrior should be able to use all available arms in the fight: weapons or everyday equipment. It could be: 1) cold steel of various lengths and structure, including pole arms, maces and flails, 2) greater range weapons (for throwing and thrashing, cables, chains, etc.), 3) short-range weapons (so-called small weapons, brass knuckles), 4) fighting without weapons - using your own body.

Different means of combat were used while fighting on foot, horseback, or in chariots, including naval battles and other situations of action. A warrior should wield different weapons, both with the right and left hand, and use two weapons (such as swords) at the same time, with or without a shield. A warrior should skillfully (technique and tactics) use various weapons against other weapons. Similar skills to those systems have been taught up till now.

As far as hand-to-hand fighting is concerned we may distinguish various distances and positions. A structural model of combat operations is being designed, which takes into account the impact and kicks, throws, immobilization, strangling and levers on the joints [Figueiredo 2009; Rosa, Figueiredo 2011]. Kalina [2000] distinguishes soft measures (e.g. grips) and more dangerous (punches and kicks). General knowledge about the fight should indeed apply to the tactics, perception and controlling the distance, rhythm and timing, balance, teaching techniques, mental training etc. However, creating an abstract model in itself adds little value to the state of knowledge.

Combat sports, such as the sports of karate and judo, only teach fighting from a distance, or just with the grip. The **complete fighter** should possess, in addition to the traditional skill of wielding weapons, the practical skills of hand-to-hand fighting from a variety of distances (kicks, hand techniques), in the fight with a grip in the standing position (throws, takedowns, grabs) and at ground level (hold, strangling, levers). He should also get to know the rules of defence against an armed opponent or in the situation of several-to-one.

And what skills were included in the training of a warrior in the Middle Ages in Japan and Korea? Let us quote the contents of the curriculum of two classical Japanese schools of martial arts (*bujutsu*) and of the Korean systems. Martial arts in the two countries could be mixed as a result of the Japanese invasion and occupation of Korea. And these historical facts did indeed have some influence upon certain assimilation and borrowings – both in the construction of weapons as well as in fighting techniques.

Selected Japanese schools

To this day, in Japan the pathways of martial arts (*Budo*) have been followed, moreover, they are regarded as a part of the cultural heritage of the country [Matsunaga *et al.* 2009; Sasaki 2009; Uozumi, Bennett 2010]. As early as the fourteenth century *kenjutsu* (the art of the swordfight) was practised by the *ittō-ryū* school. Let us quote the contents of the manual for teaching classical martial arts based on the example of the *takeda-ryū* school and *katorishintō-ryū*.

The *Katorishintō-ryū* school [Otake 2007] is the first in the history of Japan which has codified systems of martial arts continuously since the fifteenth century: old military ways (*kobudō*) have been taught. A master of martial arts Iizasa Chōisai Ienaō (1387-1488) established around the year 1447 a *tenshin shōden katorishintō-ryū* school (“tradition of combat that follows the pathway of the gods”) [Lind 1999: 232, 603]. It was the foundation of more than a dozen other schools of martial arts.

This school has a rich repertoire of techniques, with full dynamics of practised forms. It teaches combat techniques using different kinds of methods although the leading weapon is a sword. To this day, the techniques and forms of *kenjutsu* (fencing with swords) are taught (photo 1), as well as fighting with a shorter sword. Both techniques (*katana* and *kodachi*) are combined with *iai* (the art taking out the sword and cutting). The school programme includes: *bōjutsu* (fighting with a long stick), *iai*, *tachiai battōjutsu* (exercises with *katana* sword), *naginatajutsu* (glaiving techniques), *sōjutsu* (using a spear), *jūjutsu* (hand to hand fighting), *shurikenjutsu* (throwing metal spikes), *ninjutsu* (spying), *chikujōjutsu* (art of fortifications), *gunbai-chiri* (strategy and geography), *inyō-kigaku*



Photo 1. The elements of *kenjutsu itsutsu-no tachi* (five positions) from the *katorishintō-ryū* school [from the author's collection]

(philosophical and magical issues) [Matsunaga *et al.* 2009: 107]. “Double forms” are practised on the basis of teacher and student roles. These are forms of the *katana* sword and all other weapons against the sword. In addition to the sword the basic weapons are a 9 foot long stick and an approximately 11 foot long *naginata*. As far as the stick is concerned hits are made with one end, while gripping the other end, with a simultaneous *tai-sabaki* (rotation of the whole body). The stick is moved in a sliding motion between the palms. *Naginata* combines the advantages of a stick and sword, and because of its length (range) is a particularly dangerous weapon. Hand-to-hand combat is treated rather marginally. *Kyūjutsu* (archery) was not taught.

Takeda-ryū sōbudō is a system of martial arts, including: 1) the technique of the ancient *aikijutsu*, now under different names (*aikidō*, *aikijūjutsu*), 2) techniques of a Japanese sword – *iai*, *battōjutsu*; 3) techniques using an average length, about 5 foot long stick *jō* (*jōdō*), 4) the short stick *tambō* (*shugijutsu*) 5) hand-to-hand combat at a distance (*jū-kenpō*); 6) throwing blades or spikes (*shurikenjutsu*), 7) knowledge of martial arts medicine (*bujutsu-idō*). Sword techniques are related to the teaching in schools of sword (*ittō-ryū*). Blocks, pushes and punches, as well as grips, levers and strangleholds are taught. Students learn a relatively complete range of combat skills. The only skill that is not taught any longer in the Takeda clan *kyūba-jutsu* is horse archery. The historical Takeda cavalry was once famous for its great proficiency in that skill.

Takeda-ryū nakamura-ha school refers to an old military tradition of the aristocratic Takeda family from the sixteenth century. It teaches both the techniques of using one's own body as well as stick and sword. The school in its current form was devised by the master Ichio Oba. Currently, his student – *sōke* Hisashi Nakamura (10 dan), an outstanding master of sword and *tameshigiri* (it involves cutting rice straw, reeds or bamboo with a *katana*), leads the main *dōjō* (*honbu*) in Tokyo. He organizes competitions in *aikidō* and interesting tournaments of ‘*iaidō kumi-battō jiai*’, modelled on the samurai duels [Minamoto-no-Maroto 1992]. In this school, the level of black belt training requires *battō-kiri* (*tameshigiri*).

In addition to teaching Nakamura there is also the *takeda-ryū maroto-ha* system. *Aikijūjutsu*, *iaidō* and *jōdō* are basically taught here. *Shihan* Roland Maroteaux, who is the leader of this trend, is also engaged in *jū-kenpō* and *bujutsu-idō*. Just as in the *nakamura-ha* method techniques using long arms and fighting on horseback are not taught here.

Generally, in Japan from ancient martial arts traditions to this day it is mainly fencing techniques (*kenjutsu*, *kendō*) and hand-in-hand combat (especially *jūjutsu*) which have survived [Tanaka 2005; Uozumi, Bennett 2010].

Korean schools

In Korea martial arts are still regarded with great esteem, and their philosophy is still valid [Kim, Bäck 2000]. Although the Korean national martial art and sport "for export" is *taekwondo*, old fencing techniques such as *gumdo* are still practised and respected. What were the warriors of old Korea taught then?

Traditional teaching in Korean martial arts schools has been shown in *Muye Dobo Tongji* [Yi Duk-moo, Park Je-ga 2000]. This is an illustrated manual of traditional systems of martial arts, commissioned by King Jungjo (1776-1800) and with a foreword by him. King Jungjo added descriptions of the six methods of combat and finished the book, which was published in 1790. Prof. Cynarski has an American edition translated by Sang H. Kim. In a sense, this book is a compilation of the content of several other earlier papers on ancient Korean martial arts.

The manual contains: documentation of military strategy from the fourteenth century to 1789 (pp. 20-33); reference to the history of Korea; ancient military knowledge and military strategy; the philosophy of the *I Ching* ("The Book of Change") and literature on fencing etc. The main part of the book is divided into four chapters devoted to wielding different types of spears and swords, as well as fencing and horseback riding and other special skills.

Book One

Jang Chang or a "long spear" about 3 metres long. The patterns of Korean and Chinese spears were used. The technique involves particular thrusts from different positions of the body, breaks and dodges. Poetic names are used for the positions with weapons which refer to the animals which symbolise strength (dragon, tiger).

Juk Jang chang is a long bamboo spear, up to about 4 meters long. It is lighter than the *jang chang* and allows for attacks from a greater distance. The *kee chang* (flag spear), a technique similar to that of *jang chang*, but with a separate formal system (description on pages 93-95).

Dang pa is a three-pronged spear (trident), used

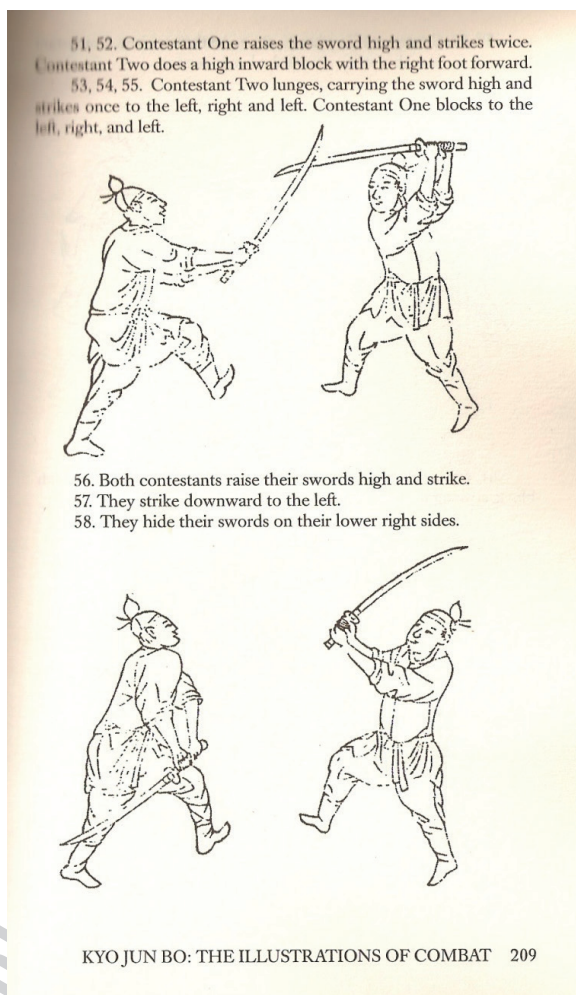


Figure 1. Positions and guards in the Korean art of the sword [Yi Duk-moo, Park Je-ga 2000: 209]

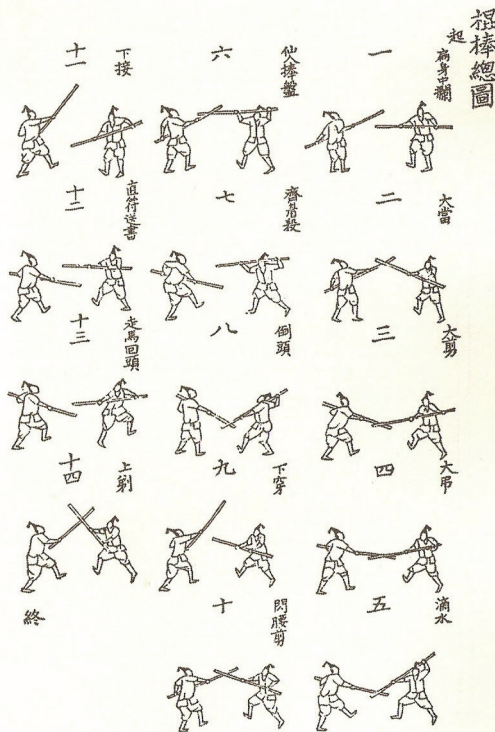
according to the Chinese or Korean model. It is a wooden pole about 2 meters long. The technique is not different from wielding a spear. However, fighting with a spear on horseback (*ki chang*) requires excellent riding skills. Thrusts in different directions and throwing the enemy off the horse are made at full gallop.

Nang sun is a 15-foot-long bamboo spear with many teeth. The enemy can be injured with sharpened bamboo shoots sprouting from the pole. Thrusts are performed with such a wide grip of the spear that its arms form nearly a straight line (pp. 116-120).

Book Two

Ssang soo do is a long sword handled with one hand and with both hands. Its structure resembles a Japanese katana, but the technique is different. Undoubtedly it was influenced by Chinese fencing, as in the case with the short sword (*ye do*) and some of its varieties. Short sword techniques are

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Figure 4 The double form of the long stick
[Yi Duk-moo, Park Je-ga 2000: 349]

These positions had poetic names like "mountain autumn wind" (*chusan uhpungse*), "white tiger" and "blue dragon".

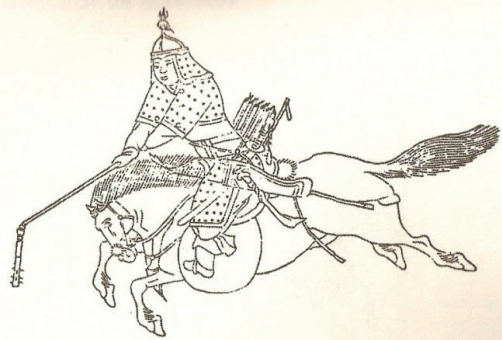
Hyup to are spear-swords, a kind of glaive, which could be also used to thrust. Japanese, Korean and Chinese models were used. The techniques are almost identical to the Japanese art of *naginata-jutsu*, however, they are made here without a partner (pp. 294-296).

Dung pae involves using a shield, usually together with a sword (sabre) or lance (spear). The bigger, oval shields in the Chinese style and smaller, round ones in the Korean style were used. Particular techniques and forms (technical systems) were practised (pp. 297-306).

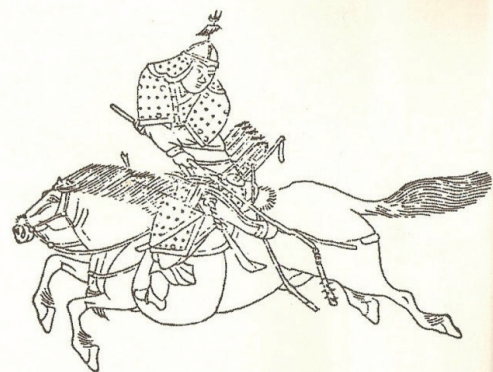
Book four

Kwon bup (fist fighting method), included boxing techniques, kicks and wrestling holds (pp. 317-332, fig. 3). Some technical elements here are similar to physiotherapy (such as Chinese qigong). There

6. Make the Byukryuk Hwiboose (Thunder Clapping Posture) and strike to the left once.



7. Continuing, look to the left and block.



MASANG PYUN KON: FLAIL ON HORSEBACK 365

Figure 5. The combat flail used in a fight on horseback
[Yi Duk-moo, Park Je-ga 2000: 365]

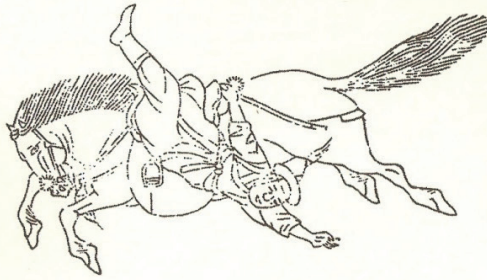
are high or low positions, as in the style of "long fist" in kung-fu. It is a kind of primordial art of unarmed combat.

Kon bang (a long stick) is one of the ancient weapons used universally as training equipment and as a means of combat. This technique is characterized by a relatively wide handle to the stick (hand span) and hitting with both ends, as in the traditions of Shaolin and Okinawa. Double forms are practised e.g. stick against stick (pp. 348-349, fig. 4).

Pyun kon (combat flail) is a variation of the two-handed flail (as *nunchaku*), but one club is about foot long (182 cm) and the other about 2 foot long. Techniques and forms are practised with that flail against a stick (pp. 352-359). The person using the flail holds it at the longer end. The combat flail used in a fight on horseback (*masang pyun con*) had a shorter metal club, square in cross-section or it was studded. The rider used the flail as a club, but with a greater range and power of destruction in different directions (pp. 360-366, fig. 5).

Kyuka koo is a ball game on horseback (pp. 367-376). This kind of game, and horse riding

6. Make the Woodungejangshin (Right Stirrups Grip) picking up sand and soil from the ground with the left hand and spraying it around while being dragged backward.



7. Again make the Joadungejangshin (Left Stirrups Grip).



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Figure 6. Horse riding and horse vaulting
[Yi Duk-moo, Park Je-ga 2000: 382]

and horse vaulting (*masang jae*, pp. 377-383) are the ways to prepare Korean warriors for battle on horseback (fig. 6).

In addition to the styles and weapons described, the textbook also describes the uniforms (*aside kwan dosul*) of warriors on horses and infantry, as well as athletes in riding competitions. *Koi pyo* is a comparative card containing errors or differences in using various forms of fighting techniques (pp. 388-390).

In *Muye Dobo Tongji* there is nothing about horse archery, but pictures show warriors on horseback equipped with bows and arrows, which probably were not just for decoration (figures on pp 254-259, 362-366 of this book). This is especially the case since Korean soldiers had perfected their archery skills since the early years of the Yi dynasty (1392-1910).

Discussion and conclusions

The original combat techniques, as described in *Bubishi* [McCarthy 2008: 56-59, 202-229] are a type

of ancient form of martial arts – jujutsu, karate and related variations, in different styles (see Appendix, fig. 7-8). In these ancient school and systems, we can find holds and punches, kicks, throws and joint lockings. Similar techniques were used in the original old-Korean *kwon bup* and original *jujutsu* (or more exactly in *yawara*) of the *katorishintō-ryu* school. Former *aikijutsu* from the clans of Minamoto and Takeda included punches, joint locks and throws. All of that, just as medical, magical and philosophical science, complemented the skills of wielding weapons.

Some martial arts still mainly teach fencing with a variety of cold steel as it still is in *latoa escrima* – the school originating in The Philippines (GM Bill Newman, 10th degree). The same applies to classical the Thai art of wielding weapons of *krabi krabong* (GM Chuchchai Gomaratur). On the other hand, in many schools of Chinese martial arts techniques are taught alongside “manual” techniques and with different weapons.

In the Japanese and Korean systems of martial arts discussed here it is fairly easy to see the influence of older Chinese weapons, fighting techniques, teaching methods and tactical or magical reasons, but also the impact of Japanese *kenjutsu* on Chinese and Korean fencing [cf. Otake 2007; Voronov 2007; McCarthy 2008].

Revived and taught today Polish historical martial arts consist mainly of old Polish fencing [Zabłocki 2000; Cynarski 2008, 2009c; Sawicki 2011], often in connection with the tradition of knights and cavalry. Historically, the art of war has always included the art of fortification [Jędrzyśiak, Mikos from Rohrscheidt 2011], then the use of pyrotechnics, artillery and other military skills.

In Mediterranean and European history the military preparation of soldiers included fencing and often horse riding. This was the case from ancient times through to the twentieth century. It was recommended for a warrior to be able to use any weapon [Moszumańska 2006].

Fighting on foot or on horseback using different types of weapons required comprehensive training of the individual warrior. Commanders also needed to have knowledge of strategy, the art of fortification, ways of acquiring information (secret intelligence), psychology and medicine. There were attempts made to pursue this system of training in both the East Asian countries – the Kingdom of Korea and in Japan ruled by the shoguns.

Appendix



Figure 7. Old Chinese hand-in-hand combat
[McCarthy 2008: 56]

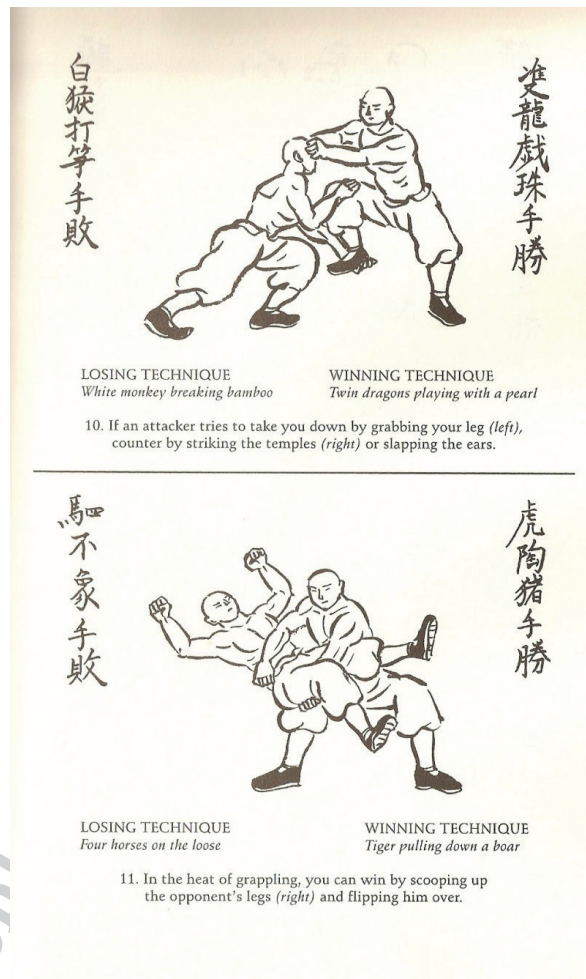


Figure 8. Techniques for winning according to Bubishi
[McCarthy 2008: 209]

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Wyszkolenie wojownika w nauczaniu klasycznych szkół sztuk walki. Szkoły japońskie i koreańskie (XIV-XIX w.)

Słowa kluczowe: sztuki walki, systemy walki, władanie bronią, Japonia, Korea

Streszczenie

Z perspektywy humanistycznej teorii sztuk walki i systemowej antropologii sztuk walki autor opisuje kanon wyszkolenia wojownika w Japonii i Korei w zakresie zespołu sztuk walki

- umiejętności władania bronią i walki wręcz. Znajdujemy tu autorską klasyfikację *fighting arts* i *fighting skills*. Autor przedstawia swą praktyczną wiedzę o wybranych japońskich szkołach sztuk walki (*aikijutsu* i *sōbudō takeda-ryū*; *kenjutsu* i *kobudō tenshinshōden katorishintō-ryū* oraz analizę zawartości koreańskiego królewskiego podręcznika sztuk wojennych - *Muye Dobo Tongji*.

Artykuł zawiera porównanie nauczania sztuk walki w Japonii i Korei z podobnymi tradycjami innych krajów (Chiny, Europa, Filipiny, Tajlandia) i treścią innych podręczników. W omawianych tu japońskich i koreańskich systemach sztuk walki autor dostrzega m.in. wpływ starszych, chińskich rodzajów broni, technik walki, metod nauczania i uzasadnień taktycznych lub magicznych, ale także np. wpływ japońskiego *kenjutsu* na szermierkę chińską i koreańską.

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