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EDITORIAL

PAUL BOWMAN, LAUREN GRIFFITH, BENJAMIN N. JUDKINS & WAYNE WONG

This journal is resolutely interdisciplinary. This is because the heterogeneous array of practices that make up what we so loosely term 'martial arts' give rise to diverse questions that require different methodologies from different disciplines. This has always been reflected in the range of articles that we accept and publish, and we are proud of our achievement in drawing scholars from so many different fields into a shared space for intellectual cross-fertilisation.

This open issue is exemplary of this ethos, and illustrative of the many vibrant areas of the field or fields we work in. It opens with a major study by distinguished capoeira scholar, Matthias Röhrig Assunção, titled '*Engolo* and Capoeira: From Ethnic to Diasporic Combat Games in the Southern Atlantic'. This is followed by the detailed historical study, 'Shigeichi Yoshima's Trajectory in the Promotion of Judo in Brazil', by Rafael de Camargo Penteado Borges and Gustavo Goulart Braga Maçaneiro. After this is the equally enlightening study of another untold history: 'The British Ju-jitsu Society and the influence of *Kodokan Judo* on early *jujutsu* in the U.K.', by David Brough, Slaviša Bradić, Mike Callan, Lance Gatling, and Llyr Jones. Then we flip disciplinary and methodological realms, with 'An Exploratory Study on the Impact of Defensive Tactics Training on Police Recruits' Self-Efficacy in Handling Violent Encounters' by Jeremy M. Butler, Neha Gothe and Steven Petruzzello. Then, from the professional to the personal, we move to 'Mixed Martial Arts As a Way of Life: Going Beyond The Black Belt And Engaging in Life-Long Learning', by Shayna Minosky and Amanda Rose Dumoulin. Finally, we close with a significant new study by the world-renowned scholar of taijiquan history, Douglas Wile. This time, Wile turns to examine the topic that he terms 'The Many Lives of Yang Luchan: Mythopoesis, Media, and the Martial Imagination'.

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These articles show a clear cross-section of the disciplinary diversity of martial arts studies today. They do not reflect all approaches or concerns constituting the field – not by a long way. But they show us some key coordinates in a collegial *topos*, in which cutting-edge work of critical historians rubs shoulders with new research into pragmatic and professional technical training, studies of lifestyle, and theoretical meta-reflections on the status of enduring cultural myths and icons.

In '*Engolo* and Capoeira: From Ethnic to Diasporic Combat Games in the Southern Atlantic', Assunção provides a re-examination of the main Afrocentric narrative of capoeira origins, the *engolo* or 'Zebra Dance', in light of historical primary sources and new ethnographic evidence gathered during fieldwork in south-west Angola. By examining engolo's bodily techniques, its socio-historical context and cultural meanings, the piece emphasises its insertion into a pastoral lifestyle and highlights the relatively narrow ethnic character of the practice in Angola. This analysis and the comparison with capoeira helps us to develop certain hypotheses about the formation, migration, and re-invention of diasporic combat games between southern Angola and coastal Brazil, and more broadly, to increase our understanding of how African cultures spread across the southern Atlantic.

In 'Shigeichi Yoshima's Trajectory in the Promotion of Judo in Brazil', Borges and Maçaneiro begin by noting that the development and diffusion of judo in Brazil is attributed to a small group of Japanese immigrants living in the city of São Paulo. Their study seeks to present the importance of Shigeichi Yoshima and his role in the spread of judo in the countryside of São Paulo state. The results of their study substantiate that Yoshima arrived in Brazil in distinct circumstances from the majority of the immigrants and was a judo practitioner closely related to Kōdōkan Institute teachers and direct students of Jigoro Kano, the founder of judo. They argue that, as a specialised worker and university graduate with extensive experience in judo since his childhood, who might have had contact with the ground fighting specialists of the kosen judo movement, Yoshima represents a very unique group of Japanese immigrants to Brazil. They show how he was able to share his knowledge as a teacher when he started attending José Almeida Borges' well-known dōjō in 1949 in Campinas and later through his close connection with the group of teachers Seisetsu Fukaya and Tatsuo Okochi, who were instrumental in structuring the São Paulo Judo Federation. The study demonstrates the importance of Japanese immigrants for the development of Brazilian judo through a micro-historical approach.

In 'The British Ju-jitsu Society and the influence of *Kodokan Judo* on early *jujutsu* in the U.K.', Brough, Bradić, Callan, Gatling, and Jones point out that in the United Kingdom (U.K.) in the late Victorian and early Edwardian eras there was an explosion in the popularity of the Japanese martial art *jujutsu*. Seemingly invincible Japanese exponents toured and took on all comers in the music halls. They show that, as

this early wave of popularity subsided a number of organisations were established to continue the practice of *jujutsu*, and other Japanese martial arts. Most notable of these was the *Budokwai* in London, established in 1918 by Gunji Koizumi (which from 1920 would become one of the foremost *judo* clubs in the West). However, recent discoveries shed light on another organisation from this era called the British Ju-jitsu Society (BJS). Established in 1926, the BJS co-existed with the *Budokwai* and had member clubs throughout the U.K. Here, the authors provide an overview of the BJS, its activity, and insights into its operation and legacy.

In Butler, Gothe and Petruzzello's 'Exploratory Study on the Impact of Defensive Tactics Training on Police Recruits' Self-Efficacy in Handling Violent Encounters', the authors begin from the observation that police officers are often required to use physical force to effectively protect themselves as well as the public. To prepare officers for these physical demands, recruits receive training in defensive tactics and physical fitness during their Police Academy instruction. Their study aimed to explore the impact of martial arts training and police defensive tactics curricula on self-efficacy. It also aimed to develop a reliable scale for measuring an officer's self-efficacy and to use the scale to evaluate the impact of the Academy training on recruits' self-efficacy. They reveal that a very high proportion of the recruits in their study displayed an increase in self-efficacy post-training. Most of the participants credited the academy defensive tactics and fitness training with improving their self-efficacy. They argue that these results support the importance of martial arts and defensive tactics training on improving recruit officers' self-efficacy toward handling violent encounters prior to entering the law enforcement workforce.

Moving from the professional to the personal, Shayna Minosky and Amanda Rose Dumoulin offer a study of 'Mixed Martial Arts As a Way of Life'. In this qualitative study, the authors explored the experiences of 10 adults who trained in mixed martial arts (MMA), in order to understand the meaning they ascribed to attaining the black belt and their martial arts journey overall. Using a conventional content analysis, four themes were derived from the data: importance of the black belt, benefits of training in MMA, dealing with injuries, and being part of the MMA community. Training in MMA was regarded as very positive, with both individual benefits (improved physical and mental health, skill development, and personal growth) and interpersonal benefits (relationship development and sense of community) being reported. Self-determination theory and goal-setting theory were used by the authors to discuss participants' motivation in their pursuit of the black belt and continued training.

Finally, the issue ends with 'The Many Lives of Yang Luchan: Mythopoesis, Media, and the Martial Imagination' by Douglas Wile. Wile begins from the observation that the life of Yang Luchan, patriarch of the Yang lineage and founder of *taijiquan*'s most popular

style, is a biographical blank slate upon which conservative, progressive, orientalist, and just plain rice bowl interests have inscribed wildly divergent narratives. He argues that conservative scholar-disciples sought to link him with the invented Wudang-Daoist lineage, while progressives emphasised his humble origins and the health benefits of the practice. His life (c.1799-1872) straddled the height of the Manchu empire and its decline into semi-colonial spheres of foreign influence, while successive generations of Yang descendants propagated his 'intangible cultural heritage' through Republican, Communist, 'open', and global eras. Practised world-wide by hundreds of millions, *taijiquan*'s name recognition made it ripe for media appropriation, and Yang Luchan has been remythologised in countless novels, cartoons, television series, and full-length feature films. Wile argues that the case of Yang Luchan offers an unusual opportunity to witness an ongoing process of mythopoesis and to compare these narratives with traditional Chinese warrior heroes and Western models of mythology and heroology. He proposes that if the lack of facts has not constrained the proliferation of invented biographies, neither should it discourage the quest for historical context as we sift and winnow truth from trope in the many reconstructions of Yang's life.

Interestingly, then, Wile returns us to several of the themes that emerge across the first three articles in this essay. The first is the value of knowing our history. What is the value in knowing the personal and professional histories of the leading figures within an art? There is something of value here beyond hero worship or the cult of personality. In many instances, we are inspired by the stories – verifiable or not – about martial artists who accomplish amazing feats like making their bodies invulnerable to attacks by mechanised weapons or reaching states of enlightenment through self-deprivation and masterful focus. But as we see in Borges's article, it is also valuable to attend to the more mundane experiences of these key individuals.

This brings us to the second theme, which addresses how these individuals set a trajectory for the generations of practitioners that came after them. What must it have been like for an immigrant to embark on a long journey to Brazil and enter into a highly diverse nation that welcomed Japanese immigrants as part of their branqueamento program while simultaneously discriminating against other immigrants, including other groups from Asia, who were seen as less desirable? What would it mean to share a Japanese art with Brazilians at this time where anthropophagy was embraced as a route to creating distinctly Brazilian cultural forms? These three articles demonstrate the importance of understanding the social conditions that shape the trajectories of our arts. This is especially clear in Assunção's article in which he provides not just context for better understanding the reception of capoeira in colonial Brazil, which is what most scholarship on capoeira has stressed, but the big picture of what was going on in the west coast of Southern Africa at this time. His careful attention to the history of this region offers a more realistic picture of what

the precursors to capoeira might have been. And while his findings may not necessarily square with what some capoeiristas want to hear, particularly if they are invested in some of the more extreme Afro-centric narratives that underpin current day practices, it is an important reminder that our understanding of these arts is often incomplete and should be open to revision pending the discovery of new information. It also raises questions about if and how writing forgotten peoples into the history of these arts might change their futures. What will contemporary practitioners do with this new information? Will it draw new practitioners into fields that they might otherwise not have felt compelled to join? Ultimately, putting new knowledge about the past into dialogue with contemporary practice leads to new questions and opportunities for future research.

The last theme that these articles address is the questions of identity. Though Butler and Gothe focused primarily on the question of self-efficacy, their work necessarily starts with an exploration of who these police recruits are. Their sample is diverse, including men and women of different ethnic backgrounds and ages who have varying degrees of familiarity with martial arts at the outset of their training. Their training improves self-efficacy, but one might ask what other aspects of their sense-of-self changes as a result of their newfound proficiency. Do they see themselves as being different people than they were at the outset of their training, or are they more focused on their demonstrable proficiency in the technical skills that will help them resolve physical conflicts? It is interesting to compare this against the individuals in Minosky and Dumoulin's study whose identities are very much affected by their membership within the MMA community and the status they have achieved within it. While less explicit than some of the other themes we have engaged here, another thing worth considering is how martial arts practices engender community, which is a theme that will be picked up in our next issue as well.

For their invaluable help in producing this issue, we would like to extend our thanks to: our contributors, for submitting their work to us; our hard-working and eternally collegial network of peer reviewers, who offer detailed feedback for no payment or reward other than the satisfaction of contributing to the development of scholarly discourse; and to two new additions to our team: first, our erstwhile assistant editor, Wayne Wong, is now a full editor. And second, Lucy Aprahamian joins us as designer, responsible for giving this journal its uniquely stylish layout. Thank you all.

CONTRIBUTOR

Matthias Röhrig Assunção is professor of Latin American History at the University of Essex, United Kingdom. His research deals with history of slavery and post-emancipation society in Brazil, in particular in Maranhão, and popular culture and the martial arts of the Black Atlantic. He has published widely on capoeira and related martial arts and recently co-organised a special issue on capoeira in the various Brazilian states from 1950 to the present (Revista Entrerios, vol. 4, no. 2 (2021) https://revistas.ufpi.br/index.php/entrerios/index). He co-directed the documentary films Verses and Cudgels. Stick Playing in the Afro-Brazilian Culture of the Paraíba Valley, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (Brazil, 2009) and Body Games. Capoeira and Ancestry (UK/South Africa/Brazil, 2014). He was the principal investigator of two AHRC-funded projects "The Angolan Roots of Capoeira" and "Capoeira Contemporânea in Rio de Janeiro, 1948-82" and coordinates the website www.capoeirahistory.com and the associated YouTube channel www.youtube.com/c/capoeirahistory

ENGOLO AND CAPOEIRA:
FROM ETHNIC TO DIASPORIC COMBAT GAMES IN THE SOUTHERN ATLANTIC

MATTHIAS RÖHRIG ASSUNÇÃO

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Engolo, capoeira, martial arts, Afro-Brazilian culture, Angola, Brazil

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a re-examination of the main Afrocentric narrative of capoeira origins, the engolo or 'Zebra Dance', in light of historical primary sources and new ethnographic evidence gathered during fieldwork in south-west Angola. By examining engolo's bodily techniques, its socio-historical context and cultural meanings, the piece emphasises its insertion into a pastoral lifestyle and highlights the relatively narrow ethnic character of the practice in Angola. This analysis and the comparison with capoeira helps us to develop certain hypotheses about the formation, migration, and re-invention of diasporic combat games between southern Angola and coastal Brazil, and more broadly, to increase our understanding of how African cultures spread across the southern Atlantic.

INTRODUCTION: THE ZEBRA DANCE, OR CAPOEIRA'S FOUNDATIONAL MYTH

Capoeira is the only martial art of African origin practised on a global scale. Its successful expansion from Brazil to the rest of the world has also fuelled a growing body of research on the art and its history. Identifying specific African ancestors for capoeira, however, remains a thorny issue. This article provides a re-examination of the main Afrocentric narrative of capoeira's origins, the *engolo* or 'Zebra Dance', in light of new evidence gathered during fieldwork in south-west Angola. By analysing engolo's bodily techniques, social context and cultural meanings, and comparing it with capoeira, I aim to develop some new hypotheses about the formation, migration and re-invention of diasporic combat games between southern Angola and coastal Brazil, and more broadly, to increase our understanding of how African cultures spread across the southern Atlantic. This in turn helps us to understand capoeira's capacity for global dissemination in the late twentieth century.

Capoeira was first documented among enslaved Africans and creoles in late colonial Rio de Janeiro and expanded – despite periodic clampdowns by the police – to the free underclasses of the Brazilian cities in the course of the nineteenth century.[1] From the 1930s onwards the two modern styles of capoeira, 'Regional' and 'Angola', developed in Bahia and were disseminated during the 1950s to 1970s to the rest of the country whilst undergoing further changes. Contemporary capoeira styles have been propagated in the US and Western Europe since the 1970s, and spread to many other countries over recent decades. Today millions of young people of all genders practise capoeira, all over the world.

The widespread use of symbols of Brazilian identity (flags, belts using the national colours of green, yellow and blue) and its songs in Brazilian Portuguese suggests that capoeira today is an 'authentic' expression of Brazilian-ness, and indeed it is often marketed as such [Delamont, Stephens and Campos 2017: 158–174]. There is little doubt that capoeira functions as a strong ambassador for Brazilian culture and language. The dominant narrative of its history and origins emphasises its invention and further development on Brazilian soil, and its traditional as well as more recent songs praise its Brazilian heroes, or resistance against slavery. Yet there is another, more Afrocentric, narrative. Early twentieth-century practitioners in Salvador da Bahia associated capoeira with enslaved Angolans, as Brazilian folklorists such as Manuel Querino and Edison Carneiro have highlighted. Artur Ramos [1954: 121] was the first anthropologist who tried to identify specific African ancestors for capoeira.[2] Yet until the 1960s this approach met with little success, as no association with African practices seems to have persisted in the memory of the art's practitioners beyond a generic association with Angola, and its particularly close links to the 'Bantu' nations of the Afro-Bahian religion Candomblé [Assunção 2015].

The idea of engolo as the ancestor of capoeira was first promoted by a Luso-Angolan painter, Albano Neves e Sousa, during his first visit to Brazil in 1965. The son of a Portuguese colonial administrator, Neves e Sousa grew up in Luanda, and studied at the Fine Arts School in Porto (1944–52). On his return to Angola he became, in his own words, 'fascinated by what he saw', and decided to stay in what was then still a Portuguese colony, rather than to take up work in the metropolis.[3] Working as ethnographic collector for a local museum in Angola, he spent years travelling all over the colony, sketching its landscapes, people and customs, which then constituted the subjects of oil paintings he exhibited and sold for a living. In 1965 he was invited to visit Brazil, another formative experience for him, as he became aware of the country's numerous cultural links with Angola. From that moment onwards, his wider objective was to show that Angola was the 'mother' of Brazil, not only in biological but also in cultural terms, thus essentially prefiguring the notion of a Black Southern Atlantic [Neves e Sousa n.d.]. Seeing capoeira in Salvador, he was struck by the similarities with the combat game called engolo he had seen and drawn in Mucope, a village near the Kunene river in south-west Angola. Inevitably, he identified engolo as the forerunner from which capoeira had derived. Of course he shared his idea with the masters of the capoeira schools he visited, in particular Mestre Pastinha. Pastinha, the most prominent teacher of Angola-style capoeira, wholeheartedly adopted it and started to tell his students about engolo.[4]

Another prominent supporter of the theory that engolo represented the origin of capoeira was the folklorist Luís da Câmara Cascudo, a personal friend of Neves e Sousa since the former's visit to Luanda in 1963. Cascudo included a chapter on the engolo story in his classic book on Brazilian folklore [1967], extensively quoting Neves e Sousa, and added a short description of engolo to the entry 'Capoeira' in the new edition of his seminal *Dicionário de Folclore* [1972]. Pastinha and Cascudo were together the people most responsible for the engolo story trickling down to capoeiristas and being incorporated into one variant of the emic discourse of capoeira origins. In particular practitioners of the Angola style from the GCAP group, linked to the re-emerging Brazilian Black Movement, enthusiastically adopted it during the 1980s, because it finally allowed them to confront the Brazilian nationalist narrative with a concrete example, rather than only referring to vague and generic African origins [Peçanha 2019, 2021].

The engolo story also proved attractive to Afrocentric scholars in the United States, who were underscoring the importance of African input in the combat games of the Black Atlantic [Thompson 1987, 1991; Dossar 1992; Dawson 1994]. Its most elaborated version was produced by T. J. Desch-Obi, who dedicated large parts of his Ph.D. dissertation to the idea, followed by articles and book chapters to prove that capoeira was nothing more than a slightly altered form of engolo, just as

1 For detailed studies of nineteenth-century capoeira in Rio de Janeiro, see Holloway [1989], Soares [1999, 2001] and in Bahia, Abreu [2005].

2 See also Edison Carneiro's letter to Artur Ramos in Oliveira and Lima [1987: 89]. For more on the development of capoeira master-narratives, see Assunção [2005: chap. 1].

3 'Voltei fascinado pelo que vi'. Handwritten manuscript, collection M. Luisa Neves e Sousa.

4 Pedro Morais da Trindade (Mestre Moraes), interview, 7.4. 2011.

Brazilian jiu-jitsu is derived from Japanese jiu-jitsu [2000, 2008, 2012]. Desch-Obi was the first researcher who managed to visit some engolo practitioners in the Kunene region in 1997, and he also unearthed an impressive amount of primary and secondary sources to prove his point. He asserts that 'the martial art under the term e'ngolo [sic] can be dated to the close of the settlement of the Kunene floodplains sometime before the twelfth century' and that the practice 'evolved from the cosmological understanding of *kalunga* as an inverted ancestor world' [2008: 37, 38]. The problem is that Desch-Obi uncritically merges sources from different centuries, juxtaposing late twentieth-century descriptions of engolo with accounts from the time of the slave trade dealing with other issues. He describes an atemporal 'Kunene people', and their 'pastoral pugilism', as if the culture and the combat games in that region would not have been affected by the dramatic changes of the last two centuries. Moreover, he does not problematise the fact that not one single primary source we know of mentions engolo or describes a combat game with foot kicks prior to Neves e Sousa's testimony from the 1950s. Furthermore, whilst virtually all pastoralists in south-west Angola and adjacent areas practise stick fighting and combat games using open hands, only one out of the many ethnic groups in the whole region is known to have practiced engolo – the Nkhumbi.[5] Why then, it must be asked, would a practice restricted to a very small ethnic group have spread to all other African ethnic groups that were enslaved in Brazil, and their creole descendants?

The approach adopted here is different. Instead of fusing inconsistent information into an apparently coherent narrative that informs a fundamentalist account popular among some capoeiristas, this paper attempts to reflect on these contradictions in order to establish the extent to which sources support the idea of a monogenetic origin for capoeira, or rather suggest alternative lines of development. Therefore I first examine the history of the Nkhumbi, who are the only ethnic group in Angola among whom engolo practice is documented. This then provides the context for the description and ethnographic analysis of engolo movements, games, music and rituals, based on interviews with elderly practitioners and highlighting some of its distinctive features. In the final section I compare and contrast engolo with capoeira, present evidence suggesting that small, yet significant, numbers of Nkhumbi were taken to Brazil, and propose two hypotheses regarding the transatlantic links of capoeira. This paper thus combines historical and ethnographic material and methods to contend that there is no necessary close correspondence between numbers from the slave trade and degree of influence upon slave culture in the Americas. The argument is that minority practices could constitute the core of creole developments, as long as they provided adequate responses to new needs, could accommodate other contributions, and establish cultural meanings adapted to the new historical context.

1. THE NKHUMBI IN SOUTH-WEST ANGOLA

1.1. Precolonial Humbe states

The Angolan south-western territories – corresponding to the present-day provinces of Namibe, Huila and Kunene and parts of Benguela – were among the last to be conquered by the Portuguese. Early occupation of the area around the port of Benguela (founded in 1617) resulted in a profitable slave trade and the establishment of fortresses (*presídios*) with a Portuguese presence along a trade route into the Ovambo-populated central highlands (today Huambo and Bié provinces). But that didn't significantly advance Portuguese control of the Angolan south-west. It was the foundation of Moçâmedes, located further south, in 1849–50 by Portuguese settlers from Pernambuco (Brazil), which provided the basis for the subsequent occupation of the Huila plateau. Treaties – seen by the Africans as sealing friendship, whilst by the Portuguese as accepting vassalage – were signed with Mwila and Gambwe rulers of present-day Lubango and its adjacent area to the south in the 1850s [Pelissier 1997: 179ff].

5 This issue is completely omitted from Desch-Obi's accounts, where the homogenising terms 'Bangala' and then 'Kunene people' are used. Furthermore, the most important ethnographer of south-west Angola, Charles Estermann, does not mention engolo, either in his copious three-volume study on the peoples of that region [1956-61] or any of his numerous articles [1983].

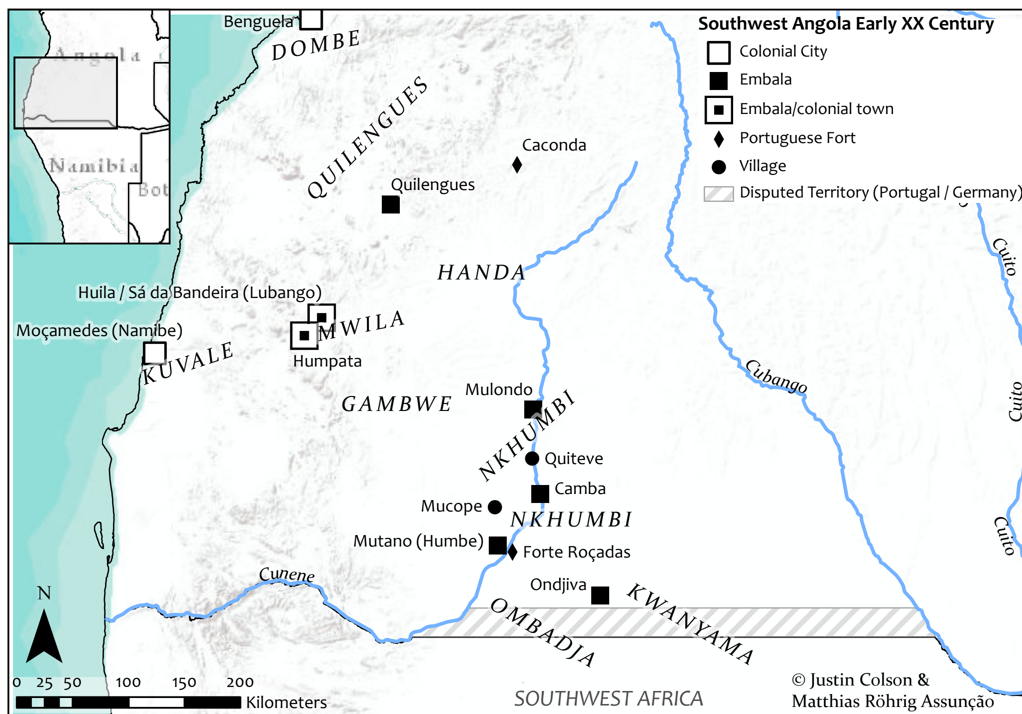

Figure 1: Southwest Angola, Early XX Century

Yet the territories further to the south, up to the shores of the Kunene river, still remained completely outside European control. A Humbe kingdom in this area from at least the seventeenth century is mentioned in colonial sources. Jaga (or Imbangala) conquerors are said to have founded Mwila in the highlands of Huila and Lu-nkumbi on the Kunene plains [Estermann 1960: 29]. Humbi-inene, the name of the legendary founder of this kingdom, became the title of the Humbe rulers. First evidence of interaction with Europeans only dates from the 1770s, when the Humbe ruler prevented the Portuguese and their African allies (*quimbares*) from entering his territory in the search of ivory and wax.[6] At the same time, Humbe traders offered gifts to the Portuguese governor of Benguela so they would be allowed to sell enslaved people in the Portuguese port. It is likely that this amounted to a kind of tribute paid indirectly by the Humbe ruler [Candido 2013: 186]. From at least this period, the Humbe state was involved in the transatlantic slave trade. As Joseph Miller has shown, various trade routes led out of the Humbe area. Initially enslaved people were taken up the Kunene river and then to Caconda, a Portuguese fortified outpost (*presídio*) and from there to the port of Benguela. A second route passed through the Huila plateau towards Moçâmedes, and from the 1780s onwards a third route went down the Kunene towards its estuary, where enslaved people were sold to French traders. According to Miller, the Humbe traders mainly sold ivory and only intermittently raided and enslaved the neighbouring Mwila and Gambwe populations of the highlands [Miller 1988: 221–2, 225–6, 603; 2002: 36 (Fig. 1.5), 52, 57 (Fig. 1.6); Candido 2013: 260].

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the so-called Nano wars in the Angolan south-west resulted in a massive increase in slave raiding and trading, as well as migration and restructuring of the existing states [Estermann 1960: 31–2; Pelissier 1997: 177–201]. When the slave trade to Brazil was abolished (1850), the Nkhumbi were living in three polities, or 'lands' (*terras*), as contemporary Portuguese sources called the 'kingdoms' of Humbe, Camba and Mulondo, each governed by its *soba* [Brochado 1867: 187]. It seems it was only then that Europeans first entered these territories and left the earliest written descriptions of their inhabitants. Bernardino Brochado, a Portuguese merchant who established an outpost in the neighbouring Gambos, estimated the population of Humbe then at 60–70,000, of Mulondo at 16–18,000 and of Camba at 7–8,000. [Brochado 1855: 207–8. Valdez 1861: 354–6 provides similar numbers]. He also noted that 'frequent wars' with neighbours had left the population greatly diminished. This suggests that Nkhumbi were not only trading enslaved people, but were also sold into slavery during the first half of the nineteenth century, as discussed below.

6 Letter by *capitão-mor* José Antônio Nogueira, 22 June 1771. Coleção IHGB DL81, 02.18. I am grateful to Mariana Candido for providing me with a transcription of this document.

Colonial Portuguese commerce with the Nkhumbi led to the arrival of some European ambulant traders (*funantes*) in the Humbe area in the second half of the nineteenth century. As part of Portuguese minister Sá da Bandeira's wider colonial expansion strategy, a fort was founded at Humbe in 1859. But only four years later it had to be abandoned, as the Portuguese had no resources to guarantee the outpost's safety.[7] Only in 1880 did the Portuguese re-occupy the fort and attempt to establish a permanent presence on the Kunene river, part of their strategy to have their territorial ambitions recognised by Germany and other rival colonial powers. Yet from 1885 to 1915 they faced fairly fierce resistance from the various peoples they were trying to bring under their yoke. The most difficult task was to subdue the Ovambo peoples, who still enjoyed political independence between the two expanding colonial empires of Germany and Portugal. The Cuamato (or Ombadja) were crushed and nearly extinguished in 1907; the Kwanyama subdued only in 1915. Even against the Nkhumbi, said to be more 'friendly' to whites, three wars had to be waged (1885–88, 1891, 1897–98) in order to achieve their total submission. In the Portuguese accounts, tyrannical *sobas* are usually held responsible for initiating hostilities, and indeed it seems that the three Nkhumbi *sobados* were rarely united in their fight against the Portuguese, who relied massively on African allies and mercenaries in their campaigns. The Portuguese systematically burned down homesteads and seized any cattle they could get hold of, making these conflicts particularly devastating for pastoralists such as the Nhkumbi. Subjection to formal Portuguese rule, moreover, did not end raids and enslavement. Although slavery had officially been abolished in the Portuguese colonies in 1879, small-scale raids continued well into the twentieth century on both sides of the Kunene river, and captured people were kept as *serviçais* (servants) in conditions akin to slavery, forced into five-year labour contracts and even sold to toil on cacao plantations in other colonies, for example to São Tomé.[8] Hence coerced labour akin to slavery was deeply engrained into the fabric of the various indigenous and colonial societies in south-west Angola at the turn of the century.

As a result of the raids and wars, but also of cattle disease present in the area since 1890, a great famine in south-west Angola further decimated the Nkhumbi and neighbouring peoples in 1915-16 [Clarence-Smith 1979: 76–7]. To escape disaster, a number of them migrated to the north [Estermann 1960: 22, 25, 45].[9] As a result, the Nkhumbi population in the Kunene region, which numbered around 90,000 in the 1850s, and at least 120,000 in 1888, dropped to only 10,000 by 1936, only slightly recovering to 12,000 by 1940.[10]

7 Douglas Weeler and René Pelissier distinguish two phases of colonial expansion: 1836–61 and 1877–91 [Weeler and Pelissier 2011: 89–104]. For the 'reflux' of 1861–77, see Pelissier [1997: II, 186ff].

8 For slavery on both sides of the Kunene, see Clarence-Smith [1979: 29–31], Gustafsson [2005], Zollmann [2010].

9 There is a Nyaneka sub-group called Quilengues-Humbis, which probably resulted from Nkhumbi migrations to that area.

10 Population estimates are taken from Brochado [1855], Wunenberger [1888: 224] and Estermann [1960: 24–5]. Wunenberger's estimate is for Humbe only, without Mulondo and Camba.

1.2. Colonisation, assimilation and evolution of ethnic identities

The new Republican regime in Portugal, established in 1910, tried to eradicate compulsory labour akin to slavery in the colonies, but without great success. The incorporation of the Angolan south-west into colonial society was not followed by major economic transformations, and the 1920s to 1940s were rather years of economic stagnation [Clarence-Smith 1979: 97–8]. Colonisation by white settlers was strongest in the area around Huila, where the native Mwila lost their best lands. Further south the Nhkumbi managed, for the time being, to hold on to most of their land. The pressure to pay tax, though, forced many to accept work within the new colonial labour system. As *contratados* they became migrant workers, at least during part of their early adulthood [Medeiros 1976].

Spiritan missionaries, already present in the area since the mid-nineteenth century, expanded their missions and presence among the Nyaneka and Nhkumbi after 'pacification'. The missionaries' attitudes were contradictory. According to Clarence-Smith these missionaries 'were particularly unsympathetic to African culture and aspirations in this area' and were unable to mediate between settlers and the Nyaneka [Clarence-Smith 1979: 85]. The Spiritans themselves judged the peoples of south-west Angola difficult to convert [Lang and Tastevin 1937: viii]. Yet at the same time some of them, in particular Alphonse Lang and Charles Estermann, deeply empathised with the indigenous population and carried out unique in-depth studies of their cultures.[11] As Iracema Dulley [2008: 72–3] has suggested, it may be useful to distinguish three, quite different, types of missionary: bureaucrats, ethnologists and lovers of the wilderness.

All nineteenth and early twentieth-century authors clearly distinguished between the Nyaneka on the one hand and the Nkhumbi on the other. Both Henri Chatelain and Diniz Ferreira, authors of the first ethnographic classifications, who worked independently from each other, listed them as two of the core groups in what were commonly referred to as the 'tribes of the interior of Moçâmedes'.[12] Some authors suggested that the Nkhumbi were, by culture and language, closer to the Kwanyama. Yet the near-complete genocide of some groups in the Angolan south-west, and migration across the border [Kreike 2004] and significant loss of former demographic importance for many others, led to a re-drawing of ethnic boundaries, at least from above. The Spiritan father and researcher Carlos Estermann, author of the monumental three-volume study of the peoples of south-west Angola referred to

11 See Estermann [1956–61, 1983] and Lang and Tastevin [1937]. Because of the War of Liberation and subsequent civil wars, almost no further in-depth research has been done in the region since then. The major exception is the work by Carvalho 1999 on the Kuvale.

12 Lang and Tastevin, *Les Va-nyaneka* [1937: 10]. Lang and Tastevin asserted that the Nkhumbi were not counted among the Nyaneka. For an overview of ethnic classifications in Angola, see Virgilio Coelho [2015: 1–14].

above, decided to amalgamate the various Nyaneka and Nkhumbi sub-groups into one category, the Nyaneka-Humbe. Estermann justified his amalgamation by racial, ethnic and linguistic criteria. Although these had, according to his own assessment, 'no mathematical rigour', his classification was embraced by José Redinha in his influential study, became the official norm by the 1960s, and has continued to be so since.[13] This does make sense for various reasons, not least the fact that even by combining all the smaller groups into one – the Nyaneka-Humbe – they still represent only 4% of the total Angolan population. Yet to this day, most people from the various ethnic groups that were included in the Nyaneka-Humbe still primarily identify themselves by those smaller identities, such as Handa or Mwila, and reject the official classification. Rosa Melo [2005], for instance, highlights the discrepancy between that label and the identities of social actors on the ground. As we will examine in more detail below, this is important insofar as *engolo* is one of the defining traits of the Nkhumbi, given that none of the other sub-groups of the Nyaneka-Humbe practise it.

1.3. Military skills, weapons and combat games in south-west Angola

Among the reasons that contributed to the remarkable resilience shown by many peoples from south-west Angola in the face of Portuguese conquest, their combat skills certainly were of key importance. So what can we say about their martial traditions, how these evolved and the role that combat games played therein? As Desch-Obi [2008:31] rightly emphasised, men from the Kunene plains learned to use weapons from an early age, in order to herd and protect their cattle, to assert themselves among their peers and – until conquest – to prepare for war and raids. Traditional weapons in the region were sticks, knobkerries (clubs with one thicker, round end), spears and bows and arrows, an assortment of which men would carry around for any eventuality.[14] During the colonial period, Europeans in Angola often judged that the further south one moved, the more 'barbarous' and belligerent the people became (except, of course, the San people, always considered inferior to the Bantu). The Kwanyama and other Ovambo groups established along and south of the Kunene river were hence often represented as living in the most 'primitive' state of all Bantu peoples [Brochado 1855: 191; Dulley 2008: 53]. Yet when the Kwanyama, strategically located on the border between two colonial empires, managed to obtain significant quantities of rifles, they became the most formidable threat to both German and Portuguese colonial control of the region. The Nkhumbi also adopted firearms decades before they were subjected by the Portuguese, and this likewise enhanced their military power. Among the Nyaneka-Nkhumbi the Gambwe are usually described as the most belligerent, whereas the Nkhumbi are seen as slightly more 'civilised' than their neighbours. In reference to their martial skills Brochado, one of the first Europeans to know the area well, insisted that the Nhkumbi used spears but were 'not very able with this weapon' [1855: 191]. They also had firearms, but were too 'relaxed' to carry enough ammunition. 'Yet they are the heathen known to be best at the cudgel game, and for that reason are respected by the others; there are Negroes who are so experienced, that if they want to hit a small target with the head or with the end of the handle, they can do this from a distance of sixty to eighty feet!!' [191] This extraordinary skill of the Nkhumbi was also highlighted more than half a century later by Diniz Ferreira [1918: 440].

The historical literature provides, however, much less information regarding combat games. One form, the open-hand fight (or slap boxing) was apparently widely practised in the past and still can be found today across the whole region, from the Ovimbundu in the highlands to the Kwanyama in Namibia. Known by various names (*khandeka*, *mbangula*, *kambangula*) it is carried out by two contestants surrounded by a circle of players and bystanders, who incentivise them with hand-clapping, singing and shouting. According to present-day informants, it is and was primarily practised by boys, adolescents and young adults alike, a date confirmed by early twentieth-century historical sources.[15]

Another common practice was stick fighting. According to Nogueira, who lived for twelve years among the Gambwe and Nkhumbi, this was also used to settle disputes between two adults.[16] One of the best descriptions of pastoralist boys' 'training for war' is provided by Edwin Loeb, who carried out fieldwork among the Kwanyama in 1947–48. He mentions various combat games: knobkerry fighting (*onhandeka*), throwing, target shooting and a cattle raiding game. Loeb [1962: 81–2] also highlights how these games had already changed by then: 'Kuanyama men no longer have occasion for their war dance and the boys today "box" one another with open palms in fun, and no one gets hurt'. In other words, the practice of combat games changed according to new needs, and it is likely that many of them have disappeared as they no longer served their original purpose.

In summary, European sources regarding the various ethnic groups in south-west Angola are reasonably attentive to military skills until their conquest and submission, even though their observations remain of course impressionistic and are never systematic. These accounts by Europeans may be tainted by colonialist prejudice and racial hierarchisation, but can still provide us with some insights. They allow us to conclude, for example, that although agro-pastoralists living in south-west Angola or northern Namibia shared a number of military

13 See Estermann [1956-57: 13–14] and Redinha]1971: 25] for the 'grupo Nhaneka-Humbe'. For Estermann's influence on Redinha and subsequent classifications, see Coelho [2015: 6].

14 For the Kwanyama, see [Loeb 1962: 85], Tönnies [1996: 56–9]; for the Kuvale, Valdez [1861, II: 323]; see also Brochado [1867].

15 Estermann [1960, II: fig. 98] does not describe it, but reproduces a photograph showing two Nyaneka boys practising *kambangula*.

16 Nogueira [1881: 269]. Desch-Obi [2008: 34] cites this passage, but does not differentiate between the improvised stick (*vara*) used here, and the more elaborated cudgel (*porrinho*).

combat traditions (weapon types and corresponding skills), there was still considerable variation according to ethnic group. Not all traditional weapons (bows, spears, daggers, clubs, etc.) were used by every group, and some distinguished themselves in the particularly skilful use of a specific weapon – for example the knobkerry, as we have seen in the case of the Nhkumbi. Differences in fighting skills and military might between the peoples of the Kunene plains and Huila highlands were further accentuated by unequal access to modern Western weapons, a feature often highlighted by contemporary ethnographers. For example, the Kwanyama are always singled out as the most heavily armed with European rifles and ammunition, one of the reasons why they were able to oppose the fiercest and most successful resistance to Portuguese and German colonisers.[17]

2. LEARNING ENGOLO MOVEMENTS

Although *engolo* seems to have been closely associated with the Nkhumbi since time immemorial (at least in oral memory), historical records are, as noted previously, silent regarding it. The earliest known – and until recently only – source for this combat game in which players kick at their opponents is the brief description by Neves e Sousa, along with his drawings, already mentioned above. This dearth of records makes it very difficult to situate *engolo* among other martial traditions of south-western Angola, and still less to assess its dissemination in the region at the time of the transatlantic slave trade.

Hence our description and analysis of *engolo* will rely mostly on oral testimonies from a group of about fifteen men and some women in their sixties, seventies and eighties, who were interviewed in 2006, 2010 and 2011. All the men had been practitioners prior to the outbreak of civil war in 1975, and the women had watched it and some had been married to practitioners. The Angolan civil war was particularly disruptive in the Cunene province as it escalated into the so-called South African Border War. Because the armed wing of the Namibian liberation movement SWAPO (South West African People's Organisation) had used frontier areas in Angola for strategic retreat and as operational basis, the South African Apartheid regime, which at the time also controlled South West Africa, started armed incursions into Angola in 1978, and in 1980 the SADF (South African Defence Force) occupied a large part of Cunene province, until the Tripartite Accord in 1988 resulted in the retreat of South African and Cuban troops from Angolan territory. Moreover, the UNITA, the armed opposition to the MPLA which had its stronghold in Ovimbundu areas in the central highlands, took advantage of the situation to bring large areas of the Angolan Southwest, in particular in Benguela province, under its control. Our interlocutors in Cunene province often remembered that during these ten years of warfare, they could not gather for celebrations, and often not even light fires nor make noises. People were interrogated and mishandled, and most adult men recruited into the FAPLA, the armed forces of the Angolan MPLA government. These circumstances made celebrations with engolo inviable. Even after the withdrawal of South African troops in 1988, the civil war lingered on until 2003. Hence reconstruction of the infrastructure in the area only slowly started after this date. At this stage younger generations of men, having not been familiarised with engolo until then, showed little interest in taking up practice, especially as the introduction of television and later internet opened up a whole new world which seemed to attach no importance to traditional Nyaneka-Nkhumbi culture.

Hence most of our interlocutors had not played engolo since the civil war and the South African incursions of 1978-88 – the important exception being one group in Humbe, the former headtown of the most important Nkhumbi chieftain (then known as Mutano). At all other times and locations (Mucope, Quiteve and isolated homesteads in the wider Nkhumbi-speaking area) our own arrival for research purposes was therefore the occasion for a revival of *engolo*. However, in 2010 three groups formed in and around Mucope and re-started practice, enlisting some younger men, which we saw playing in 2011. It is of course difficult to assess how this period of inactivity affected the practitioners' memory of their art. We felt that the importance engolo had for many of them in their early adult life - not only as a pastime they enjoyed, but also a central tenet of their culture, as discussed below - they remembered engolo with particular fondness. Their bodily memory also surprised us, as many of these elderly men were able to remember and perform movements that are physically quite demanding such as high-raising legs and jumps.

All of our interlocutors concurred that *engolo* was practised mainly by adult men, in conjunction with their work as herders. Younger men practised on their own or under the instruction of elders in the corral next to the homestead during moments of rest. During the dry season, the cattle were put to graze on the *sambos* (more distant pastures) and training also took place here. During the dry season pastoralists could also practise *engolo* on the sand of riverbanks.

Engolo was not for children, and only exceptionally for adolescents. Whilst the slap boxing *khandeka* was practised since early childhood, most practitioners we spoke to only learned *engolo* between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five: '*Khandeka* starts in childhood. Later, when they reach the age of these kids there in the car, they can initiate *engolo*… at eighteen, nineteen years'.[18]

17 For a detailed study of how the Kwanyama resisted Portuguese, German and British colonialism by moving south and north of the colonial border and reshaping their natural environment, see Kreike [2004]. For a political and cultural history of the impact of guns in Central Africa, see Macola [2016].

18 Utomba Chindonga, interview [29.8.2011]. Lumbolene Kihapela, interview, 9.8.2010, only started to learn when he was twenty-five. In the following, all dates next to names refer to the day of formal, recorded interviews.

However, if an adolescent was very keen to learn *engolo*, he may have watched the older ones practise in the corral, even at the risk of being told off: 'we went to watch. Until they [the older ones] say "Go and fetch the cattle!"'[19] What emerges clearly from all accounts is that there was no pressure to learn, neither from the family nor from the clan. Rather each individual needed to find his own motivation, and go in search of somebody older for instruction:

> He teaches you, he teaches you, and when you walk around you also do [keep training]. They [the older ones] will not call you. You yourself have to go there, if you have it [*engolo*] in your heart. When they go to the corral [to play], they have already learned. [Muhalamb-adji Moendangola 6.8 2010]

The optional nature of this learning, at a relatively late stage in life, probably contributed to the decline of the tradition after 1970, at least according to practitioners.

Practitioners mention three core locations for apprenticeship. The corral near the *kimbo* (compound), the riverbanks and the *sambos*, or distant pastures, where herders spent many months away from home:

> When we played there in the *sambos*, the older ones sat down and brought us a bucket of sour milk to drink. We drank that milk and continued to kick each other. Like this the older ones, sitting, looked at us in the *sambo*. [Patrício Vilawaliwa 17.8.2011]

There seems not to have existed any formal recognition for *engolo* teacher. Most interlocutors mentioned that various 'older ones' (*mais velhos* in Portuguese) instructed those keen to learn together:

> At first, it is just [young people] learning it by themselves. Then they go to the oldest, where they dance *engolo*, and get guidance, that it can't be like this, or like that. It's enough that you do something which is not [proper *engolo*] and the oldest will correct you: 'not like that, but like this' ... So first the young people will train, and at a celebration, they will wait to enter. Because there will be an older one who will know and help you to learn it. [Maurício Mumbalo 3.8.2010]

One informant used the term *munongo* for more experienced players, which refers to a person who excels at something, or is a specialist. Yet further enquiries with other practitioners left no doubt that a kind of formal mastership was unknown of in engolo.[20]

One quality highlighted by more experienced players we interviewed is that *engolo* is best learned by people who have 'a light heart', meaning they aren't easily upset if kicked by an opponent:

> For a person to be good at *engolo*, he needs to have a light heart. If he receives a strong kick, and he is bad, he will try to fight. And then he does not learn well. [Kahani Waupeta 3.8.2010]

Just as capoeira is based on the *ginga*, contemporary *engolo* relies on some basic steps, which provide the basis for offensive and defensive movements. Yet unlike the *ginga*, *engolo* practitioners move around in little jumps, often remaining in a sideways-on position. They jump backwards, forwards and sidewards, sometimes with one leg extended. Hands may help to avoid a kick, but are kept relatively close to the upper body.

Figure 2: Engolo jump by Kahani Waupeta, Mucope, 2010. © by Author & M Cobra Mansa

19 Jerusalem Mbambi [5.8.2010]. Kahani Waupeta says he learned while still a *pouna*, that is, a boy between ten and fourteen years old [3.8.2010].

20 This contrast with the claim made by Desch-Obi [2008: 41] that a formal mastership existed in engolo.

Our interlocutors used general terms like *mussana* (the kick), *ngatussana* (to kick) and *koyola* (to drag or pull), but did not employ a formalised system of kick names, as exists in codified martial arts. We observed three main sorts of attack: frontal kicks, circular kicks and sweeps or takedowns.

Figure 3: Angelino Tchimbundo demonstrates sweeping kick on M Cobra Mansa (2011) © by Author & M Cobra Mansa

The most common frontal attack in *engolo* consists in a kick which is somewhere in between a capoeira *meia-lua de frente* and a *chapa*. The circular attacks we[21] saw are (in capoeira terms) a *meia-lua de frente*, followed by a *queixada*,[22] and a kind of *armada*. The latter is made with the upper body more bent (although much less so when the player is standing very near to his opponent). The kicking leg can be kept straight but is also often half-bent (for comparison, in contemporary capoeira this may denote poor style). Furthermore, *engolo* players use a kick very similar to the capoeira *rabo de arraia* (spinning kick with the leg more or less straight); and a kind of hook kick from behind (similar to the capoeira *gancho de costas*). This kick is used when the opponent's upper body is very close to oneself. As we ourselves experienced during sessions with *engolo* players, this can be a very dangerous kick (as Muhalambadje demonstrates in the film *Body Games. Capoeira and Ancestry* 2014]). Finally they often execute a turn (*giro*) with a kind of *chapa de costa*, with or without jumping. Some players (Patrício) gave the *chapa* from the side, without turning. Some of the most experienced players gave a *martelo* (high strike with the instep) whilst jumping in the air (Kahani).

21 The plural ('we') refers to the core research team of the AHRC funded project, The Angolan Roots of Capoeira. See Acknowledgements.

22 A similar double movement has been called 'two from the front' (*duas de frente*) by capoeira masters such as Bimba.

We observed four kinds of sweep or takedown: first, a lateral sweeping kick similar to the capoeira *banda*, whereby the adversary's foot is lifted into the air and he falls to the ground; second, a *rasteira,* where one positions one's instep behind the heel of the adversary's standing foot and pulls/drags forward to throw him off balance; third, defending against the opponent's *rasteira* (we only saw this in *engolo* lessons, never in a game itself); and finally, a *rasteira* applied to the opponent's knee.[23]

Five basic defences against a kick are used in contemporary *engolo*: defending with one hand whilst executing a short jump to put one's body outside of the reach of the kick; an escape where the body is kept upright (Kahani); a dodge under the kick of the opponent, lowering one's head and protecting one's face with one arm; entering into the kick of the adversary with the arm protecting one's face; and escaping the kick with a jump with either one or both arms raised high or also kicking.

A number of further movements were documented by Neves e Sousa, in particular those using the hands on the ground as a basis for kicks (a technique very common in capoeira). We were not able to observe any player using this resource. When asked about kicks that use the hands on the ground, or shown the corresponding image from Neves e Sousa, our interlocutors reacted very differently. In Humbe, *engolo* player Lumbolene categorically denied that *engolo* is or ever was played with the hands on the ground, and judged this type of image from Neves e Sousa not to be *engolo*. Yet *engolo* player Muhalambadje showed us one movement that is very similar to an older form of *rabo de arraia*, as illustrated by Burlamaqui [1928]. A couple of other *engolo* players also commented that hands on the ground were used by very experienced players in the past, but are no longer employed.

3. ENGOLO GAMES AND MUSIC

The men keen to play start clapping hands and humming, which everyone recognises as the way to stimulate others to participate [Mulavela Kahangule, 2.8.2010]. When enough people have joined, one player feels that it is the right moment to start, and intones a song: at least, that was the standard procedure in the performances we saw. Players often enter the *engolo* circle challenging everyone (as in slap boxing). In that case, they jump into the circle, and move around releasing little shouts, until someone else joins them in the circle to play. They can also invite

23 This last movement does not exist in capoeira.

someone in particular, by kicking, or pretending to kick, that man. Yet rather curiously (for a capoeirista), this may result in that person not playing with the challenger, but with someone else. For instance, if A plays with B, A leaves the game and provokes C with a kick, so that C continues to play with B. When a player wants to finish the game, he can just turn his back on his opponent and leave the circle. He may also just raise both arms above his head and leave.

3.1. Engolo games

The games in *engolo* are usually very short, to the point that sometimes it seems they haven't taken place at all: it is common for two players to face each other, feinting a couple of kicks and jumping around for some seconds, and then just leave the circle. There are no headbutts, no offensive arm movements and no wrestling techniques; *engolo* players often remain very close to their opponent, seeming almost to adhere to his upper body. Their arms may also touch each other, but they are never a resource for attacks. Throwing is rare, with the exception of an attack similar to a kind of *vingativa* (takedown), where the player enters with one leg behind the opponent's leg(s) and pushes him to the ground with the thorax and one arm (see Figure 3).

Overall, circular movements predominate; the main objective is to hit the opponent's face or upper body with a kick. When confronted with a difficult situation, players often get very close to their opponent, and protect their faces with one arm. It would not be possible to do this in capoeira as there are several attacks to prevent this from happening, such as headbutts, or grappling (in some styles). Takedowns in engolo are mainly used as defences.

Overall, *engolo* appears to be a relatively spontaneous game with a minimum of formal ritualisation, at least in recent memory. As we have seen – and in contrast to capoeira – there is no long ritual preliminary to an *engolo* performance, not even to start a game. There are, however, some resources that have no primary martial function but provide the game with embellishments and drama that the audience seems particularly to enjoy. These consist, for example, in lifting the cloths worn around the waist (*pano*) with one hand and showing the buttocks to the opponent and the audience. Players comment on this gesture as being 'good' or 'beautiful' (*otchiwapele*) or as expressing happiness.[24]

Another common flourish to the game consists in turning around and kicking the air with one leg. This and other movements can be accompanied by short interjections ('Eh!', 'Ih!'). A further gesture we observed in some games, after one player managed to make his opponent fall, was for this player to put his feet on the back of the man lying on the ground.

Figure 4: Engolo: Stepping on defeated opponent (Mucope, 2010) © by Author & M Cobra Mansa

One explanation we heard was that whoever falls cannot move and has to protect his face. We read this as a sign of self-assertion, or even humiliation of the adversary, but that appears to be our interpretation as outsiders. Happiness (*oassuno*) was again the explanation given by experienced players [Mulavela Kanhenguele, 2.8.2010].

Mindful of the difficulty of capoeiristas in agreeing whether their art is to be classified as a sport, a game or a fight, we asked *engolo* players what *engolo* meant to them, (occasionally even asking if it was specifically any of these categories). The most common, and consensual, answer was, 'engolo otchimamo' [for example, Kahani Waupeta, 3.10.2010]. This is best translated as 'game' (according to our translator Tchilulu) but, as we discovered later, can also mean dance, culture, custom. This makes sense in Nhkumbi culture, where *engolo* or dances are seen as being all of these things at the same time. In other words, our initial question did not make much sense to 'engolistas'. Very revealing in this respect is that both the term *okumama* ('to dance') and the term *okussana* ('to kick') are used by *engolo* players. This polysemy of '*engolo*' leads us to believe that the term 'game' is therefore as adequate for *engolo* as it is for capoeira.

24 Muhalambadji Moendangola [06.08.2010], Utomba Chindonga [29.08.2011].

3.2. Music and lyrics

The *engolo* game is accompanied by hand clapping, humming and singing. We did not hear of any musical instrument ever being used. (Indeed, older players insisted this had always been so.) Players and audience clap hands and start humming '*ehem*'. Then one player takes the lead and intones a verse, to which the audience responds by humming and continuing to clap hands. There is no chorus. When one singer becomes tired, he can signal this by singing 'Help me, I'm tired', and someone else takes over [Mulavela Kahenguele, 2.8.2010]. According to some, 'there are songs for the beginning, and also to finish *engolo*' [Munekavelo Katumbela, 6.8.2010].

Lyrics consist of a short verses; for instance:

> It was wickedness! He has already hurt someone.
> Who dies in *engolo* is not wept for.

♩ = 160

Clapping: x x x x

Wa - ssan(wa) en - go - lo ka - li - lu - a, eh e eh eh e

Munekavelo Katumbela,
in "Body Games: Capoeira and Ancestry" (2014), Time Code: 01:07:34-01:07:39h

Figure 5: Engolo Song. Transcription by Christine Dettmann

The last line (*Wassanwa engolo kalilwa*) is a central assertion in *engolo*, which every player knows. It refers to the cultural context of the practice: if a player is hurt and dies, he is buried on the spot, and receives no proper funeral. His opponent and his family will not be held responsible for his death, and there is no weeping. This signals that *engolo* held a special, liminal place in Nkhumbi culture, and may also explain why not every man was keen to practise it.

Themes of *engolo* lyrics can vary widely, but they often refer to the everyday life of a herder:

> We spent the day with it [*engolo*]. Go help in the corral!
> Waiting in the corral of the calves is *engolo*!
> [Munekavelo Katumbela, 6.8.2010]

Beyond the herders' routine, other animals and plants are often evoked in proverb-like verses to convey messages that reflect the life experiences of the Nhkumbi:

> You can't take milk from the zebra with a *natchongwa* [cattle egret],
> The zebra can't be herded [it will go where it wants to go].
> [Utomba Chindenga, 29.8.2011][25]

'Engolistas' also often use hunting metaphors:

> They went around to eat/kill the people
> The hunters [people in *engolo*] stayed to cry.
> [Muhalambadji Moendangolo, 26.8.2011]

25 The egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) lives in symbiosis with the cattle.

Only the broader cultural context can explain the often opaque verses in *engolo*. In the last verse quoted, for example, 'they' refers to the feet in *engolo*, which are able to kill.[26]

Engolo lyrics seem to consist of a basis of established verses, to which an experienced singer adds new ones, improvising on the spot. Our presence, for example, sometimes provided the material for improvised verses. One wife and mother of an *engolo* player sang some verses also used in other combat games (*khandeka*) or dances (*ovipeluka*, a women's dance) [Nihova Yambalanda, 17.8.2011]. This suggests a certain amount of circularity between various Nkhumbi forms. Thus lyrics – provided one can decipher their meaning – can give core insights into Nkhumbi culture and the meaning of *engolo*.

4. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS

4.1. Festive occasions for engolo

Celebrations provided the occasion to show one's *engolo* skills in a more public, gender-mixed atmosphere. We identified five major festive occasions among the Nkhumbi where *engolo* was likely to happen: the return from the dry-season pastures (*mahata*); the *ongongo* fruit festival; funerals; the girls' puberty ritual (*efiko*); and the male age group celebration (*omakula*).[27]

Given the almost total lack of rain in the Kunene region outside the period from October to April, Nkhumbi herders would take their flocks away from their villages to distant and ungrazed pastures that might still be green because located near lakes, and into the vast and uninhabited savannah bordering their lands, where animals could survive on the leaves of some types of bush [Estermann 1960: 182–3]. The return from the dry-season pastures (*sambos*) was one of those yearly occasions when plenty of beer (*macau*) made from sorghum (*massambala*) and food was (and still is) consumed.

26 For more on the musical cultures of the Nyaneka-Nkhumbi, see Dettmann [2019].

27 Tchitula Pahula, 17.9.2011; Jerusalem Mbambi, 5.8.2010; Domingo Alfredo, 4.8.2010. The male age group celebration recalls, but is different from, the circumcision ritual during early puberty (*ekwendji*).

Figure 6: Engolo: Drinking macau (Lombolene Kihapela, 2010) © by Author & M Cobra Mansa

> *Engolo* is also danced when the cattle come back from the forest. Someone orders *macau* to be made, kills his ox, invites the others, and whistles like a herder (*mankhwenya*). … Because I'm going to call the others to come here, I'm going to kill an ox, because my cattle already came, and my wives made *macau*.
> [Jerusalem Mbambi, 5.8.2010]

Neighbours, friends and family were invited and expected to contribute with food or drinks and bring their calabashes as receptacles. Although *engolo* was part of the celebration, men would still assemble outside the homestead to play:

> In my time, when there was a party, or when the cattle came back from the sambo, after drinking a lot of *macau*, the *engolo* started. They go straight to the corral.
> [Patrício Vilawaliwa, 17.8.2011]

Although the initiation of pubescent boys (*ekwendji*) was a crucially important event for adolescents and their families, *engolo* did not figure prominently in it. This was not only due to the fact that circumcision was one of the central features of *ekwendji*, resulting in boys needing weeks of recovery, but also because few boys would have learned *engolo* at that age.

More important therefore for *engolo* was the *efiko*. This initiation of pubescent girls used to consist in six months of retreat and terminated with several days of festivities where the newly made woman was introduced to neighbours, friends and more distant family members. *Engolo* was played, alongside other traditional forms of celebration (dances, *khankula*). All our interlocutors seemed to agree that it had always been an important occasion for *engolo* to happen:

> The *engolo* is only danced at the *macau* for the celebration of the oxen. And at the *efiko* of our daughters.
> [Mulavela Kahanguele, 20.8.2010]

Adopting Audrey Richards's classic distinction [1982: 52–4], one could assert that the *efiko* also had some aspects of a nubility ritual, insofar as it often provided an occasion for the initiated girls to meet and get engaged to their future husbands. One of our interlocutors, for example, met her late husband during her *efiko* (Nihova Yambalanda, 17.8.2011). No doubt playing *engolo* during *efiko* provided one possibility for young males to show off.

A final important occasion was the funeral of an *engolo* player:

> In former times, when an elder (*mais velho*) who also danced *engolo* died, *engolo* could be danced at his funeral. Afterwards they went to sit down at the *tchoto* (homestead fireplace). And there, at the *tchoto*, they start to clap hands to dance the *khankula.*
> [Mulavela Kahangule, 2.8.2010]

The *engolo* at the funeral was intended not only to honour the dead, but could also aim to allow the player who had passed away to manifest himself in embodiment by some younger player from his family. This ancestral connection provides evidence that *engolo* was once at the very core of Nhkumbi identity. It also explains why older *engolo* players are so worried about its loss.

4.2. Spirit of the ancestors

A. F. Nogueira, who can be considered the first ethnographer of the Nyaneka and the Nkhumbi, already noted that the latter were 'given to trances (*extases*) and believe in the predictions of the diviners, through the mediation of spirits' [1881: 293]. The missionaries Lang and Tastevin [1937: 145] also related spirit possession among the Nyaneka in their detailed chapter on indigenous beliefs:

> It is above all the spirits of former hunters, healers, magicians, dancers or blacksmiths who thus come and help their descendants and communicate the knowledge they had acquired.

Incorporating an ancestral spirit was usually seen by our interlocutors as a necessity to cure an illness:

> If you are ill, you attempt to know what the solution is. The very spirit will show himself soon. Someone will appear: 'I'm inside you'.
> [Kahani Waupeta, 3.8.2010]

Often only the diviner can reveal the identity of the spirit. Paradigmatic is the case of Kahani Waupeta, who told us,

> I initiated with the spirit when I was already ill. They said it was my grandfather Mukwya. I did not know him. I was already an *engolo* dancer when the spirit found me.
> [3.8.2010]

Possession needs to be followed by a ritual initiation (*oktonkheka*). Kahani's *engolo* teacher was also the one who initiated him into the ritual of spirit possession.[28] All *engolo* players concurred that the link is usually with someone within the family, who also had played engolo and who had developed a particular affection for the descendant he is now possessing. As Muhalambadji Moendangola explains:

> The spirit goes to some person, the one he liked most. His nephew, or his son. He goes only there.
> [6.8.2010]

How does the ancestral spirit impact on the *engolo* game? Munekavelo, for example, not only named the spirit that haunts him, but also mentions him in his *engolo* songs: 'Nahango [son of] Yawabondo'.

When players incorporate a spirit this may not be immediately visible, as they will still play, maybe even better than ordinarily. But the audi-

28 'The one who taught me was a man called Francisco Tchibelembembe, but he already died. He taught me, and also led the ritual through which I was initiated to the spirit' [Kahani Waupeta, 3.8.2010].

ence will notice change in their behaviour, affecting in particular their communication:

> My friend, if you see me dancing, you will say, 'What is happening to this old man?' You will pay attention, because you know what my [ordinary] way of dancing is. You only will get scared when I'm crying. You will feel the heat. People can ask me questions, I won't say a word. I will only speak later on. Only like this will I know what the spirit (*omphepo*) is. It's the spirit of the deceased (*yo vaya kalunga*). It's only then that you will discover that my body is not right. If you see me dancing now, you will say, 'Oh! That older one, why is he like that? How did he behave?' [Munekavela Katumbela, 6.8.2010]

Spirit possession adds another, deeper meaning to *engolo*. As we will discuss below, very few cultural practices in the region allow for incorporation of ancestral spirits.

Given the centrality of *engolo* in Humbe culture, how could it have been so consistently overlooked by early ethnographers? Ferreira [1918:401] had no very deep knowledge of Nkhumbi culture, but relied on information from local administrators. Lang and Tastevin [1937], authors of the earliest ethnography of the Nyanekas, explicitly excluded the Nhkumbi and related groups from it. Why Estermann did not mention *engolo* at all is more difficult to establish, as he had been in much longer contact with the Nhkumbi. Living in the region since 1926 and writing at a time when all Kunene peoples had already been subdued, it is understandable that he was much less interested in the martial aspects of their cultures. Thus he also does not mention *kambangula*, although he included a picture of two boys slap boxing. Furthermore, as he was arguing for the amalgamation of the Nyaneka and the Nkhumbi into one single ethnic group, he may have preferred to understate aspects of their cultures that could cast doubt upon his procedure.

4.3. The dynamics of culture and ethnicity

Given the centrality of *engolo* to Nkhumbi culture and society – at least during the twentieth century until the 1970s – one is led to wonder what unites and what separates the various ethnic groups living in the region. What were their markers of identity, and how did societal change affect these? To assess this will help us to discuss the extent to which *engolo*, or some *engolo* predecessor, possibly made the transition to Brazil.

The peoples of south-west Angola clearly share not only many linguistic, but also many cultural features that provide a solid common basis facilitating interaction, intermarriage and eventually the redrawing of ethnic boundaries. Many cultural features are in fact characteristic of Bantu peoples more broadly: for instance, female puberty rituals. Others appear to be quite specific to the peoples of south-west Angola. Thus the female puberty ritual *efiko* is common to all Nyaneka and Nkhumbi, but shares important features with the practices of neighbouring groups – for example the *efundula* of Ovambo peoples such as the Kwanyama [Estermann 1956–61; Hayes 2006]. At the same time, however, the female puberty ceremony in each of these ethnic groups has specific features, which are recognised as important markers of ethnic identity.

Male circumcision during puberty and the rituals that accompany it constituted another core cultural feature of south-west Angolan societies. As Brochado noted in 1855 [190],

> The men from all lands on this side of the Kunene are circumcised; a folly, which they do from time to time, and which only happens when the ruler (*soba*) has sons between the ages of ten and fifteen, who are the owners (*donos*) of the celebrations. This barbarous baptism claims the life of many, the only ones who are buried without being divined by a sorcerer, and also not wept for.

This shows that 'not being wept for' was not a feature unique to *engolo*, but also applied to another core custom entailing the risk of unintended death.

Even though circumcision is still a common practice in south-west Angola today, Kwanyama rulers as early as the mid-nineteenth century abolished the practice, in the process of emancipating themselves from the Humbe kingdom, probably to increase their military power (war and circumcision both took place during the dry period).[29]

In other words, frequent wars, constant raids and enslavement, colonisation, diseases, droughts and famines had a huge impact on local societies in south-west Angola, which underwent massive changes during and after the end of the transatlantic slave trade. Wars led to entire groups being subjugated or even annihilated. The colonisers, by subjugating the *embala*, the residence of kings and symbol of their might, destroyed or downgraded this highest level of political power or kingship which the Nkhumbi called the *hamba.* The Portuguese only allowed local rulers to remain and adapt to a status as subordinate chiefs (*sovas* and *seculos*). This of course deeply affected the whole society. For example, initiation rituals were no longer centrally coordinated by the king or *hamba*, and were muted into becoming more private, family matters. Estermann's accounts already reflect these changes, even though he still held to his aim of classifying tribes 'objectively' according to racial (Bantu/non Bantu), linguistic and ethnic criteria [1956-57: 13–17; 1983: 30]. Linguistic criteria no doubt played an important role for the Nyaneka and Nkhumbi themselves, considering that the vocabulary

29 Loeb [1962: 236]. Hayes [2006: 7] suggests its abolition may have been associated with military reforms like in the Zulu kingdom under Shaka.

overlap between the various sub-groups could be relatively limited.[30]

It seems that cultural forms played, and still play, a central role in ethnic differentiation between the peoples now amalgamated into the colonial Nyaneka-Khumbi meta-ethnonym. Nogueira, who resided among both groups in 1851–62, pointed out that the 'notable difference' between them was that the Nyaneka celebrated annually the sacred cattle, whereas the Nkhumbi did not [1881: 262–3]. Estermann described six different classes of sacred cattle among the various Nyaneka groups – but without ever mentioning the Nkhumbi, hence implicitly recognising the cultural distance between the two groups. He also compared Nyaneka pastoral poetry with its virtual non-existence among the Nkhumbi, but added that in contrast the Nhkumbi have the *khankula,* where pastoralists 'dance' or show in performance the beauty of the cattle they own [1960: 190, 185]. And *khankula* has remained, to this day, another cultural form that functions as a core marker of Nhkumbi identity. Ancestors can dance *khankula* through spirit incorporation, as with *engolo* or playing the musical bow *mbulumbumba.* Possession hence seems to offer direct access to core tenets of Nhkumbi culture specifically, at the same time as some types of possession are part of a broader regional culture of the Angolan south-west and beyond. For example, incorporating an ancestor through playing the *mbulumbumba* is a wider feature, common to other Nyaneka groups. The Mwila for instance make use of the bow; but also of the friction drum (*phuita*) to worship ancestors, a practice of which we have seen no sign among the Khumbi. Hence musical instruments, dances or combat games and their combination in celebrations provide us with a fascinating display of the dialectics of identity and difference in south-west Angola, a picture which is completely at odds with the assumption that *engolo* was a widespread feature of a generic 'Kunene people'.

What all sources seem to indicate, in contrast, is that only slap boxing and stick fighting were generalised practices in the area, and that this was made possible because they were not associated (as far as is known) with deeper spiritual meanings, nor inserted in ethnically specific rituals. Since slap boxing and stick fighting were so widely practised by boys and young adults in south-western Angola, a question that also needs to be addressed is whether these were taken to Brazil. There is some evidence that slap boxing was practised in Salvador and Rio, and that some of its aspects entered capoeira.[31] Stick fighting also was part and parcel of combat techniques of enslaved Africans and the lower-classes, and even of nineteenth century capoeira, though one needs to acknowledge that its practice was widespread in Africa and even Europe, too. This of course raises an important issue with regard to the dissemination of *engolo* or its historical predecessor. Did only one ethnic group – the Nkhumbi – practise 'proto-*engolo*' at the time of the slave trade? Or did the practice have cognates in the region, which may have disappeared at a later stage, leaving no trace either in archives or in oral traditions? Before discussing this point, however, it is necessary to describe the core similarities and differences between *engolo* and capoeira. Despite some striking resemblances, capoeira, so the argument goes, is much more than *engolo.*

5. ENGOLO AND CAPOEIRA

5.1. A comparison

The analogy invoked between *engolo* and capoeira since the work of Neves e Sousa is based on the favoured use of feet for attacks in both arts, in particular a circular kick known in capoeira (depending on the style) as *meia-lua de compasso* or *rabo de arraia*, which is rare in other martial arts. And indeed practitioners of *engolo* we interviewed often seemed to concur in the correlation, primarily on account of formal similarities of bodily techniques. Just as capoeira movements are based on the *ginga*, contemporary *engolo* relies on certain basic steps, which provide the framework for the game's offensive and defensive movements. Yet to us, these jumping steps seemed very different from the swaying *ginga* of capoeira (for the latter, see Lewis [1992: 86-132], Downey [2005], Rosa [2015]). Jumps in *engolo* can be impressive in height, trained by jumping cattle fences for instance. We did not see handstands or cartwheels in contemporary engolo (*bananeira* and *aú* in capoeira terms). This also meant that a range of offensive techniques, such as kicking whilst head downwards in aú, weren't used either. However, one of Neves e Souza's drawings clearly shows that technique.

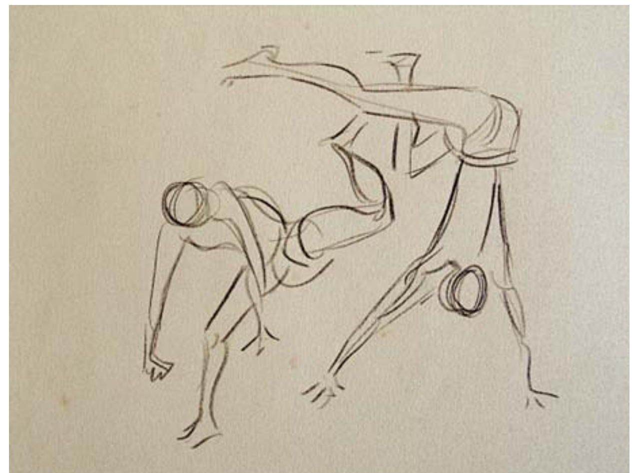

Figure 7: Engolo. Drawing by Albano Neves e Sousa, ca. 1955 (by kind permission of Maria Luisa Neves e Sousa)

Opinion among living practitioners was divided. In Humbe (formerly

30 Only 57% between Nyaneka and Nkhumbi according to Anita Pfouts [2003: 26-27, 30].

31 The British consul Wetherall [1860: 119–20] provides a description of slap boxing in the port area of Salvador in the 1850s. In Rio it is remembered as a street fighting technique by capoeira *mestres* such as Mestre Celso (interview, 02/04/2010).

Mutano), the former chief town of the main Nkhumbi polity, where a group of engolistas have occasionally been organising exhibitions before, there seems to be no memory of these movements. One of the group leaders, Lumbolene, explicitly rejected Neves e Souza's image as not representing engolo.

Figure 8: Discussing Neves e Sousa's images of engolo: Lumbolene Kihapela, Cobra Mansa & Tchilulu Ntchongolola, Humbe, 2011. © by Author & M Cobra Mansa

In homesteads in and around Mucope, in contrast, some elderly practitioners confirmed that this technique had been used in the past. At present and without further evidence, one can only speculate about this disparity. Does it reflect difference in local styles or an incipient folklorisation in Humbe, that may have led to a simplification of techniques? Or were practitioners in Mucope keen to establish a maximum of similarities with capoeira acrobatics?

Whatever the answer, it is clear that there were and are significant other differences in bodily techniques between engolo and capoeira. For example, unlike capoeira, there are no headbutts in *engolo*, and no wrestling techniques. Although the latter exist only in some modern capoeira styles, hands were used in older capoeira styles to administer blows (such as the *galopante* in Bimba's Regional style) or as a support for acrobatic movements known as *balões*. It is important to remember, however, that hands were used as the main attack in the slapboxing widely practiced in the whole Southwest of Angola. Furthermore, one variety of khandeka/kambangula includes throwing and some wrestling.[32] This again suggests that various Angolan combat games may have contributed to the formation of capoeira in Brazil.

32 See the footage from Quiteve in *Body Games, Capoeira and Ancestry* [2014, time code 18:00-19:10].

Another core difference with capoeira is that in engolo, there is (and never seemed to have existed) a game on the ground, with players moving around without getting up, a core technique in particular in Angola-style capoeira. This is hardly surprising given the locations in which engolo was played. Who would have wanted to kneel or put his head on a ground full of dung in the corral?

Nineteenth-century capoeira was also played from a more erect position (as confirmed by the existing iconography) and the ground game was probably only developed later on the flat and stony surfaces of squares and piers in Brazilian port cities. Hence the game on the ground which is so iconic of the Angola style – reputed to be more African – is probably and ironically less African than the exchanges of blows from a standing position, often seen as a Western innovation or 'whitening' of the art supposedly initiated by Mestre Bimba. Hence the emphasis on moving close to the ground may well be the result of what Brazilian traditionalist practitioners perceived as characteristically African during the emergence of the Angola style during the twentieth century.

In summary, the *engolo* game differs significantly from capoeira in character, insofar as 'engolistas' often remain very close to the body of their opponent, seeming almost to adhere to each other's upper bodies. Their arms may also touch, but they are not a resource for attacks as there are no offensive arm movements akin to those employed in capoeira. Indeed, it would be impossible to move in such a way in capoeira, as one would expose oneself to attacks such as headbutts, or (in some styles) grappling. These are just some of the fundamental differences between *engolo* and capoeira movements.

Engolo ritual is also very distinct, despite both games taking place in a circle. For example, in *engolo* a player leaves the game without much protocol, turning his back on the other player. In capoeira, by contrast, one has to take every possible precaution when finishing a game, and never turn one's back towards one's opponent or the centre of the *roda* until one has stepped out of the circle. More generally, it didn't seem to us that engolo had as many rules and rituals as traditional styles such as capoeira Angola and Regional. Furthermore, many aspects of capoeira's 'malícia' - usually translated as cunning or treachery – are absent from engolo. In that sense I would subscribe to the widespread belief among capoeiristas that the experience of enslavement favoured this kind of attitude among the first generations of practitioners.

Other aspects of *engolo* are also strikingly different. The music accompanying *engolo* (humming, singing, handclapping) may share with capoeira music its function of inspiring and moderating the game, but also differs greatly from the latter's orchestra consisting of various instruments, the codified rhythmic patterns used to conduct the performance, the structure of verses or the content of capoeira lyrics. No doubt very different contexts – plantation slavery and post-emancipation – and individual experiences (as reflected in many songs) have shaped the rituals and lyrics of capoeira.

The dissimilarity between engolo and capoeira should not come as a surprise given the contrast between the social contexts in which both arts were and are performed, and the disparate cultural meanings they convey. It also is not necessarily a good argument against any ancestral link between both. In fact, as already mentioned, a strong commonality was perceived and voiced by our interlocutors. One could argue that any combat game with kicks would have been seen as related to engolo. Yet clearly other aspects played an important role in this. The use of the berimbau (which we had brought with us for demonstrations) probably also contributed to this identification of capoeira as something originally Angolan. Various types of musical bows are widely used in the traditional music of the country; in particular the mbulumbumba (a laterally played bow with a calabash) among the Nyaneka peoples. The knowledge of the intimate bounds between Angola and Brazil, where the majority of enslaved Angolans were taken to, of course further strengthened the association of capoeira with engolo and other combat games such as kambangula or bassula.

Moreover, during our research in Angola, we were struck by an overall similarity in the way bodily techniques are used in games in both engolo and capoeira, best expressed by the capoeira term 'body game' (*jogo de corpo*). As Mestre Cobra Mansa explains:

> What I saw in the body game of *engolo* and *kambangula* is that people enjoy that moment. It is not the movement on its own, but it is this smile … this waiting for [an] opportunity. This is the same spirit you see in capoeira. It was very interesting how Kahani described *engolo*: like the wind hitting a tree … it has to bend. This is what people have been talking about in capoeira for a long time![33]

Broader comparisons may also be useful here. The overlap of meaning between game, dance and tradition in Nkhumbi culture expressed in the term *ochimama* (see above) echoes in Afro-Brazilian folklore, where many such forms of expression are referred to as '*brincadeiras*' ('games'). This has been seen by scholars as a way of disguising cultural resistance as something more innocuous. Our material from Angola suggests it could be more than that: the ambivalence between game, fight and dance seems more like a kind of ancestral grammar that *engolo* and capoeira share.[34] Despite their striking commonalities, however, in the absence of historical descriptions it is hardly tenable to posit direct ancestral links between the two practices – in effect purely on the basis of formal comparison of two contemporary practices across the Atlantic – unless further evidence can be adduced with regard to the historical presence of the Nkhumbi in Brazil.

5.2. Nkhumbi in Brazil?

How many Nkhumbi possibly came as slaves to Brazil (and the Americas in general)? As outlined above, historians have noted that various slave trading routes ran from the Kunene region to the Americas. Yet it seems almost impossible to establish with any precision how many Nyaneka, Nkhumbi or Kwanyama ended up in one of these networks. The great majority of enslaved Africans from the whole region were embarked in Benguela, and for that reason are usually referred to generically as 'Benguelas'. As Mariana Candido [2013: 16, 18] has shown, most of these Benguelas belonged to a variety of groups from the coast and the highlands, many of which were only much later identified as 'Ovimbundu'. At the time of the slave trade, linguistic and cultural affinities between these groups facilitated the emergence of a strong Benguela identity in south-east Brazil, the region of the Americas which absorbed by far the greatest share of them [Brügger and Oliveira 2009: 177–204]. But what can we say about the smaller Angolan identities, in particular from the Kunene region? Marcos Almeida [2012: 124, map 2], in his work on the ethnic denominations of enslaved Africans freed by the Anglo-Brazilian Mixed Commission of 1834–39, locates a small percentage as coming from the Kunene region. Daniel Domingues da Silva has used a broader sample of these lists and combined them with Angolan slave registers for 1854–56. This allowed him to extrapolate numbers for each ethnic group among the enslaved Angolans in the Americas. His estimates are 5,718 for the Nyaneka and 11,880 for the Nkhumbi, the great majority of whom would have gone to Brazil [Dominguez 2017, Appendix A: 174].

Looking at the other side of the Atlantic, Flávio Gomes found more than a dozen enslaved people classified as 'Muhumbe' in lists of runaways in Rio de Janeiro for 1810–30 [Farias, Soares and Gomes 2005: 37, table 3]; and since this is the very name used to this day by Nkhumbi to identify themselves in the singular, there can be little doubt that some of their ancestors indeed toiled under slavery in the city in the first decades of the nineteenth century – precisely the period when capoeira is first documented.[35] The numbers involved may be limited, but the link unquestionably exists. Furthermore, it is documented that a small number of enslaved Africans from the Kunene region were taken to the French Antilles, where other combat games using kicks

33 Quotation from the documentary film *Body Games.*

34 To explore this further would require a theoretical discussion for which there is no space here. See for instance Kubik's [1979: 46-50] discussion of 'Angolan traits' in Brazilian music, or the wider literature on African 'retentions' and creolisation.

35 Both Gomes and Brügger and Oliveira [2009] also found records of people classified as 'Mofumbe', a term which seems to be of Central African origins. If 'Mofumbe' can be equated with 'Mohumbe', this would increase the numbers of enslaved Nkhumbi people in Brazil, even if not by a great amount.

became established.[36] The late arrival of Nkhumbi in Brazil (not before the end of the eighteenth century) can also help to explain another conundrum: why capoeira only appears in the historical record towards the beginning of the nineteenth century, its very first mention dating back only to 1789 [Cavalcanti 2004: 201–2].

5.3. Conclusions

With respect to putative links between engolo, or any other African combat games, and Brazilian capoeira, the material presented above is admittedly fragmentary. It allows us, however, to formulate two divergent hypotheses regarding the development of capoeira. One possibility is that a number of related Angolan combat games, similar to engolo, were indeed brought to Brazilian port cities and, given their resemblance, merged into a generic capoeira that was still close to its Angolan origins – and hence its characterisation as of Angolan lineage or 'nation' at the beginning of the twentieth century. The problem is that there is no ethnographic evidence at all for the existence of any engolo cognates among other ethnic groups in Angola (contrary to the assertion of scholars such as Desch-Obi).

The alternative hypothesis is that a very small number of Nkhumbi herders provided the matrix from which capoeira developed, eventually accommodating other inputs from other enslaved Africans, be it attacks (such as headbutts) or musical instruments (such as the oricongo, which became the berimbau). Could such a small minority of Africans have introduced a cultural practice that was adopted by a much broader community of enslaved people? Such an evolution may not be exceptional. The basis for the Afro-Brazilian religion Tambor de Mina, for example, was provided by 'Jejes' (Ewe and Fon peoples) from Dahomey, who represented only 3.5% of all Africans brought to Maranhão; nevertheless 'Mina' became the dominant Afro-Brazilian religion in that area [Domingues 2008].[37] In other words, the new context of American slavery made possible the spread of formerly ethnic forms among Africans more generally.[38] And once capoeira succeeded in becoming a multi-ethnic African practice, the next step – its spread to the free, mostly non-white, underclasses – was enabled. Hence, through its various stages of creolisation, capoeira developed its astounding amenability to adoption by people all around the world. Although at each stage some of the original material was no doubt lost, the fact that even today practitioners of the arts discussed continue immediately to perceive links between them is testimony that they share a common grammar not only of bodily techniques but also at the level of broader cultural meanings. Yet if we are to express the relationship in kinship terms, as capoeiristas like to do, we should not think of engolo as the ancestor of capoeira, which would be anachronistic. We should rather think of both practices as located within the same generation – as brothers, or as cousins. The distinction depends upon what is emphasised: continuity or rupture, both of which are certainly in evidence. My own preference would be for 'cousins', in reflection of a crucial degree of difference between the two practices in terms of cultural meaning.

36 For numbers see maps in Eltis and Richardson [2010]; for martial arts in the Francophone Caribbean see Desch-Obi [2008:122-50].

37 There are many other cases in the Americas: for example, the disproportionate importance of Akan or 'Coromantee' culture in Jamaica.

38 Morgan [1997] has advanced the idea of a first 'charter generation' to explain the pre-eminence of cultural features from one ethnic group. In our case, however, the group in question was a rather late arrival.

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Documentary Film

Body Games. Capoeira and Ancestry. Directed by Richard Pakleppa, Matthias Röhrig Assunção and M Cobra Mansa. Portuguese/Olunyaneka, with Portuguese/English subtitles. 87 Mins. UK/South Africa; On Land and Manganga Productions, 2014.

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SHIGEICHI YOSHIMA'S TRAJECTORY IN THE PROMOTION OF JUDO IN BRAZIL

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ABSTRACT

The development and diffusion of judo in Brazil is attributed to a small group of Japanese immigrants living in the city of São Paulo. This study seeks to present the importance of Shigeichi Yoshima and his role in the spread of judo in the countryside of São Paulo state. The results of this study substantiate that Yoshima arrived in Brazil in distinct circumstances from the majority of the immigrants and was a judo practitioner closely related to Kōdōkan Institute teachers and direct students of Jigoro Kano, the founder of judo. Yoshima represents a very unique group of Japanese immigrants that came to Brazil, as a specialized worker and University graduate with an extensive experience in judo since his childhood who might have had contact with the ground fighting specialists of the kosen judo movement. The study demonstrates the importance of Japanese immigrants for the development of Brazilian judo through a micro-historical approach.

INTRODUCTION

In 1882, Jigoro Kano, a graduate of Tokyo Imperial University, founded his *dōjō* (place for practicing martial arts) the Kōdōkan. The years that followed served to develop and consolidate the now world-renowned Japanese martial arts and sport, judo. At the beginning of the 20th century, Japanese immigrants, far from their country of origin, began to internationalize the practice of judo. One of the countries to receive these immigrants and benefit from this opportunity was Brazil, one of the current powers of this sport.

On November 5, 1895, in Paris, Brazil and Japan signed the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation, which allowed the beginning of the Japanese Immigration to Brazil [Brasil 1895]. Although the treaty was signed in 1895, it was only nine years afterwards (1908) that the Japanese immigration process formally began. With the restrictions then imposed by the United States (at that time the focus of Japanese immigration) [Kawai 1908] the Japanese government decided to redirect migration to Brazil, a country with which there was already an agreement signed.

Looking further behind the reasoning for the Japanese immigration to Brazil, the search for potential immigrants had two main reasons. First, there was indeed a need to complement the workforce, particularly in the state of São Paulo where there was a rapid economic growth, particularly the growth of the coffee production [Brasil1897; Sasaki 2006]. On the other hand, there was a policy of 'populational whitening' (política de branqueamento) that directed governmental immigration policies towards the European immigration, in order to develop a new configuration of productive labor relations after the abolition of slavery, but also as a result of eugenic ideas which proposed the 'whitening' of the Brazilian population. In this sense, mass immigration was an important feature of the socioeconomic changes in Brazil from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. Between 1887 and 1930, about 3.8 million immigrants entered the country, with São Paulo standing out, concentrating 52.4% of foreigners who moved to Brazil. Thus, initially Japanese immigration was not a deliberate choice of the government for the option and intention of bringing the skilled worker from Japan since the immigration of European citizens was favored as a result of the 'política de branqueamento' policy [Carvalho 2019].

From the side of the Japanese government, due to racial prejudice, in the United States, Japanese immigration was not well accepted, so, despite a promising beginning, successive problems culminated in the prohibition of the arrival of immigrants in 1924, something that became practically impossible already from 1908 onwards. While in Brazil, at the time, German and Italian Immigration was already the focus of the Brazilian government, since 1859, as a result of the decree of 'Von der Heydt', German immigration to São Paulo has been prohibited. From the Italian side, based on a report by journalist Adolfo Rossi on the conditions of immigrants, in 1902 the Italian government determined, through the 'Prinetti decree', the prohibition of immigrants coming to Brazil to work on coffee farms. Thus, Japanese immigration to Brazil began in 1908 due to the conjunction of these events [Kawai 1980].

Kasato Maru was the first official ship to bring Japanese immigrants to Brazil in 1908 [Suzuki 1995]. The first judo teacher registered at Kōdōkan to arrive in Brazil, in December of the same year, was Sack Miura, who from 1909 would teach judo in the Brazilian Navy [SBCJ 1992; Masuda 2012]. Two years later, in 1910, Mamizuka Takezo (born in Fukuoka Prefecture, second dan of jūdō), another important name in the implementation of judo in Brazil, arrived to the country. [SBCJ 1992; Sekine 2015]. After working as a farmer in the lands of Jataí (current city of Luiz Antônio, São Paulo) on the Mogiana railway line, he taught judo at the São Paulo State Police, and later opened Brazil's first judo dōjō at Rua Gloria 98, São Paulo, in 1912 [Sekine 2015].

Other sources commonly acknowledge the names of other pioneers such as Mitsuyo Maeda (Conde Koma, 7th dan, 1878-1941) in 1914 along with Satake, Raku (commonly spelled in Brazil as 'Laku'), Okura and Shimisu; Tatsuo Okochi (8th dan, 1892-1965), in 1924; Yasuichi Ono in 1928; Katsutoshi Naito (7th dan, 1895-1969) in 1929; Sobei Tani in 1931 (6th dan, 1908-1969); Tokuzo Terazaki in 1933 (Belém, PA) and later still in 1933 in São Paulo; Ryuzo Ogawa (8th dan, 1883-1975) in 1934; Seisetsu Fukaya in the early 1930s [MEC 1982; CBJ 1986; Nunes & Rubio 2012; CBJ 2020]. There is also information that an acrobat named Manji Takezawa (竹澤万次) might have taught jūjūtsu to the guard of the Emperor of Brazil D. Pedro II around 1890 [Kobayashi 2010; Fukazawa 2016].

Publications and references from official institutions such as the Ministry of Education and Culture [MEC 1982] and Brazilian Judo Confederation [CBJ 1986; CBJ 2020], dealing with the development and diffusion of judo in Brazilian territory, for the most part, attributed to a select group of Japanese immigrants the responsibility of the introduction of judo in Brazil. The standard understanding of studies in the history of Brazilian judo divides the introduction of the sport in Brazil into two branches: intentional and occasional. The intentional branch is centered on the pioneers, who used judo as a professional activity, introducing it through professional fighting. The second considers as the main introducers of judo in the country the immigrants, who didn't have judo as their primary means of living and used the practice as a way of promoting their own culture, and a way of socialization among immigrants. Regarding the occasional aspect, São Paulo, as the state to receive the largest number of Japanese immigrants, is usually regarded as the most important region for the beginning of this process of occasional introduction and dissemination of judo in the country [Virgilio 1994; Franchini & Del'Vechio 2007; Nunes & Rubio 2012; Mazzei & Cruz 2015].

Many judo pioneers from the occasional branch, however, did not live in the big centers of the capitals, but in the state of São Paulo (SP) countryside, and with large concentrations in the northwest and central-north regions of the state [São Paulo 1915], giving that it was

in these places that most of the Japanese immigrants worked and lived [Queiroz 1987]. Little is reported and documented about the relevance of these Japanese immigrants to judo dissemination in Brazil, that belonged to the first major immigration movement. This is historically situated between 1908 and 1941, when 188,309 Japanese entered Brazil [SBCJ 1992. This first major immigration movement is comprised of two periods, the first being between the years 1908 to 1924, where transportation was subsidized by the Government of São Paulo with the arrival of 31,000 Japanese and; the second period, between the years 1924 to 1941, where transportation was subsidized by the Japanese government, with the arrival of 158,000 Japanese [Suzuki 1995].

The objective of this study is to demonstrate the importance of Japanese immigrants that lived far from large centers, in the dissemination of judo in São Paulo state through the historical study of the life of Shigeichi Yoshima (from this moment on, called Yoshima). Historical facts about the agricultural chemist Yoshima and his influence in the introduction of judo in the macro-region of Campinas are, then, presented in this study. The present work is justified by the scarce amount of information and documents on the life history of Professor Yoshima, more specifically on his life in the years prior to his arrival in Brazil and his judo historical background.

METHOD

This is a historical, analytical research [Thomas, Nelson & Silverman 2012]. Regarding its technical procedures, it is a qualitative, documentary and reviewed study. The present work was carried out through bibliographic review in books, magazine and newspaper articles, as well as research in databases such as: Kōdōkan Judo Institute (KJI), National Diet Library of Japan (https://www.ndl.go.jp/), Brazilian National Digital Library (http://memoria.bn.br/hdb/periodico.aspx) and scientific journals. Also, this study had contributions from documents of primary source acquired in the collection of the family of Shigeichi Yoshima and of José Almeida Borges, as well as documents from the collection of the judo association, denominated Associação Borges de Judo (ABJ).

This study seeks, through the micro-history approach, to expand the current understanding of the occasional branch of introduction and development of judo in Brazil. In this research the macro context in which the introduction of the occasional type occurred in Brazil was particularized trough the life of Shigeishi Yoshima. Therefore, taking an interest, as Sharpe [1992] assesses, in the point of view of the 'common soldier' instead of the 'general', as well as trying to look at the past in the light of the experience of its own actors. Not only that, rebuilding through the understanding of micro-history (having as object of analysis the private, the personal, the lived) the basis that underlie and support the theoretical division of the introduction of Brazilian judo on two fronts (intentional and occasional). For this, we use, as Ginzburg [1991] suggests, a name as a guiding thread.

Regarding the perspective of the micro-historical approach, it is worth mentioning that it understands the individual from the perspective of his freedom of action within a context. In other words, despite having an underlying social perspective, social action is a portrait of the result of the individual's negotiation in face of his normative reality. In this way, microhistory seeks to reduce the scale of observation, in order to make a microscopic analysis of the case, therefore it is a procedure that seeks the particular case as a starting point [Levi 1992].

The micro-historical approach creates a focal point, bringing a l'effect de réel (reality effect) to social history, placing the experience of the real human being at the center of attention [Szijártó 2011]. This approach brings the general closer to the particular and as Szijártó [2011: 211] states: 'It is in this way that the level of the individual case and the level of the general will be linked […] What we can gain is not only the more intimate knowledge of a person, but that of a past society as well'. Therefore, through the micro we seek to better understand the macro. As Port [2015] explains, the micro-historical approach demonstrates how ordinary people have agency, they are not just passive victims of impersonal forces that dominate their destiny. By looking at history 'from below', this study seeks to understand how individuals (in this case Yoshima) participated in the formation of supra-individual forces, as well as the structures that permeate society.

The results of this research considered the aspects of terminology used at the time, which did not have a discerning criterion for the use of the word 'judo' and / or 'jiu jitsu' in documents such as newspapers, as many Brazilians used these words interchangeably as having the same meaning. Another issue was that In Brazil, there was no standard form of writing for the term 'jiu jitsu', 'ju jitsu' or 'ju jutsu'. As explained by Borges [2011], the term jiu jitsu, commonly used in Brazilian books, magazines, and newspapers, until the early 1960s, refers to the content taught by most Brazilian teachers, who in turn were taught and trained by Japanese immigrants. The Japanese terms were transcribed using the Hepburn system [UH 2021; UT 2009]. The most important names of Japanese teachers / instructors and, the names of localities in Japan, were also transcribed and identified with the original ideograms found in the research.

YOSHIMA'S JUDO BACKGROUND BETWEEN 1915 TO 1941

Shigeichi Yoshima (重一吉間) was born on February 12, 1908, in the city of Kobe, Hyōgo prefecture, Japan, son of Hise Yoshima and Sutematsu Yoshima [SSP 1973; Yoshima 2020]. In 1915, at the age of seven, he entered school, equivalent to elementary school I (shogakkō). He graduated from high school in 1927, (figure 1) at the age of 19, at Dai San Kōbe Chugakkō (第三神戸中学校) also known as sanko (三策) in Kobe-shi (神戸市), Hyōgo ken (兵庫県), near Osaka [Yoshima 2020; Yamasaki 2020]. The current name of the school being Hyōgo Kenritsu Kōbe Kōtōgakkō (兵庫県立長田高等学校) [HNHS 2020].

Figure 1: School yearbook of Shigeichi Yoshima

Shigeichi Yoshima appears in the first photo in the upper left corner, and in the dōjō already as a black belt, in 1927, at the age of 19, at school, Dai San Kōbe Chugakkō 第三神戸中学校 also known as sanko 三策 in Kobe-shi 神戸市, Hyōgo ken 兵庫県 [Sanko 1927].

Until 1948, the Japanese educational system was structured in a different way when compared to the current system, where kōtōgakko and daigaku yoka worked as preparatory schools for prospective university students, equivalent to high school, lasting three years. After this period, the Japanese education system was reformed again until the current system was established after the Second World War [Abumiya 2012; Anderson 1975].

In 1929, at the age of twenty-one, Yoshima graduated from the former Kochi Kōtōgakko (高知高等学校) public high school in Kochi-shi [KHS 2020; Yamasaki 2020; KKGI 1928: 109]. At this school, Yoshima had the opportunity to practice judo and kendō at its Jūkendōjō (柔剣道場). Judo classes were taught by Ukita Toshio (浮田壽男) [KKGI 1928: 87], professor of judo registered at the Kōdōkan Judo Institute [KJI 1928: 224], from now on, called only Kōdōkan. Currently, at the same location, the University of Kochi (高知大学), opened in 1949 [UK 2020]. In 1930, Yoshima moved to Tōkyō after joining the agricultural chemistry course at the Imperial University of Tōkyō [IUT 1933: 369] or, Tōkyō Teikoku Daigaku (東京帝國大學), also known as Tōdai (東大), the same university that Jigorō Kanō (嘉納治五郎), founder of Judo, entered in 1877 and graduated in 1881 [Kano 2009: 175].

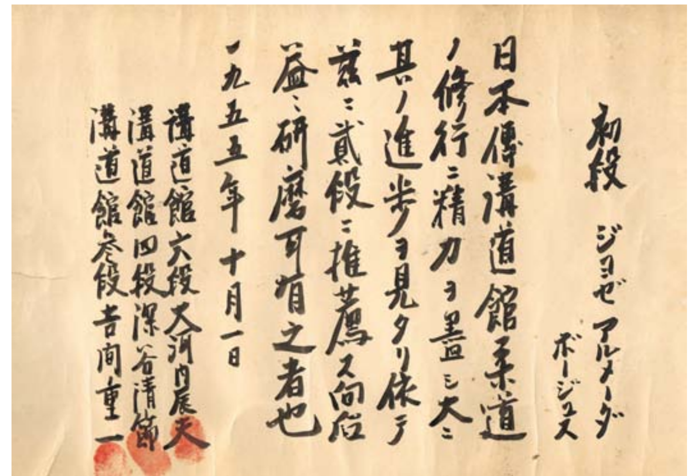
At Tōdai, students founded the dōjō called Hobunkan, and started practicing with Tenjin Shin'yō-ryū Jujutsu professor Inoue Keitarō, in 1887 a dōjō was built for kenjutsu and jūjutsu practice. Later, Shirō Saigō (西郷四郎, 4 of February 1866 – December 1922), was invited to be the head instructor [Kano 2009: 137;167], together with Tomita Tsunejirō and Ōkubo Yoshizaku as assistant instructors [Kano 2009: 167] when the judo club was formally founded. In 1897 the Tōdai Jūdō Club (東大柔道部) was founded [Kano 2009: 167, 176], with direct guidance from the Kōdōkan [Choi 2014: 183]. By then, Shirō Saigō had already graduated 4th dan, and was one of the main students of Jigorō Kanō, and therefore one of the main judo representatives, due to his great technical quality and physical conditioning [Kano 2009: 167].

Between 1918 and 1928, when Yoshima praticed judo in his schools' years, judo initiated a process of 'sportfication' evident and encouraged initially by the technical schools of Japan and, later, by the Imperial Universities of Japan. One of the main characteristics of this early 'sportfication' of judo, was the focus on newaza over tachiwaza, which started from the victory of the second higher school (nikkō) over the first higher school (ichikkō) in 1918. This fact left Jigorō Kanō dissatisfied, since the overuse of techniques in newaza by the champion school (nikkō) did not promote the elementary principles idealized by him. In June 1924, the Kōdōkan published a revision of rules, where judo stablished standard rules for championships, clearly limiting the use of newaza. Tsunetane Oda, at the time, manager of the Nikkō school, criticized Kanō and argued that the use of newaza was a valid method to win a fight [Nakajima 2014]. This discussion highlighted a divergence between the different rules that could be considered in competitive judo and was a determining factor in the process of making judo a sport. Until 1930, the Tōdai Jūdō Club, operated under the guidance of the

Kōdōkan through Kōdōkan's own nominated teachers, who in turn issued graduation certificates, hosted judo events, arbitrated competitions and published magazines. However, in 1930, when Yoshima entered the university, the leaders of the judo club cut all ties with Kōdōkan, and as a result, the club became dependent on alumni for training and competitions [Choi 2014: 183]. At the time, Tōdai, one of the seven imperial universities in Japan, started to adopt rules based on the type of judo developed in schools since 1914 (the so-called kosen jūdō, 高専柔道), with the objective of formulating the tournament of imperial universities called Teidai Taikai (帝大大会). On the other hand, Kōdōkan judo in the university club was practiced by the rules recommended by the 'Tōkyō Gakusei Jūdō Rengokai' or, Tōkyō jūdō Student Association until the year of 1930 [Nakajima 2014].

The close connection that the Kōdōkan had with Todai's judo club can be better understood by analyzing the club's instructors about the time Yoshima joined and attended the Imperial University of Tokyo. Shuichi Nagaoka 永岡秀一 (September 17, 1876 – November 22, 1952) started his career at the Takeuchi and Kito schools of jūjutsu, enrolled at Kōdōkan in 1893 and reached the 6th dan degree in 1904. One of the closest students to Jigorō Kanō, Nagaoka met the first generation of Kōdōkan, even defeating Sakujiro Yokoyama in 1899 at Kagami Biraki. In addition to being a professor at Kōdōkan and Tōdai [KJI 1930: 369], Nagaoka accompanied master Jigorō Kanō as an assistant on several trips, both in Japan and abroad. With a long career teaching in Japan and the West, he received his promotion to the 9th dan in 1930, and to the 10th dan in 1937 [Stevens 2013; KJI 2020b]. Kyuzo Mifune 三船久蔵 (April 21, 1883 – January 27, 1965) influential jūdōka, Mifune was part of the second generation of instructors at the Kōdōkan. He entered the Kōdōkan in 1903 and, at the age of 30, Mifune reached the 9th dan. After the death of Jigorō Kanō, he became the main instructor of Kōdōkan, being responsible, in large part, for the expansion of judo in the post-war period. Graduated to the 10th dan in 1945 [Stevens 2013]. Mifune taught judo classes at Tōdai until November 28, 1930 [Anonymous 1930; KJI 1930: 506; KJI 2020a]. Koyasu Masao 小安正男, was a judo professor at Tōdai [KJI 1933: 136] and at Tōkyō University of Commerce. Graduated as Kodansha (high graded practitioner), from Kōdōkan, he made a presentation, with Yamaguchi, of Koshiki no Kata to a large audience at Kagami Biraki, and in front of the then Kōdōkan president, Risei Kanō. It is part of the list of kodanshas presented in a documentary video by Hal Sharp, in a collection about the masters of Kōdōkan [Sharp 2013]. Other individual also connected to Todai's judo was Maruyama Sanzou 丸山三造 6th dan, Tōdai agriculture department official [KJI 1933: 347] who wrote the book of great historical value, 'dainihon jūdō-shi' [大日本柔道使, published in 1939].

In 1933, at the age of 24, Yoshima graduated from Tōdai [IUT 1933: 369], in the course of Chemical Agriculture (農芸化学) [Yamasaki 2020; UOT 2020]. According to reports collected in this research with the judo teachers Odair Antonio Borges (born in 1947, judo teacher, 8th dan, son of José de Almeida Borges) and Kiichi Watanabe (born in 1939, judo teacher, 6th dan); Yoshima, was graduated 3rd dan in Japan before arriving in Brazil, which can be confirmed in the signatures in the diploma of José Almeida Borges from the year 1955 (figure 2).


初段 ジョゼ アルメーダ ボージュス
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一九五五年十月一日
講道館六段 大河内辰夫
講道館四段 深谷清節
講道館参段 吉間重一

Figure 2: Diploma of José Almeida Borges
Graduation diploma of 2nd dan in judo of José Almeida Borges of October 1, 1955, (original size: 30 cm x 42.5 cm), with the signatures (from left to right) of Yoshima Shigeichi 3rd dan, Seisetsu Fukaya 4th dan and Tatsuo Okochi 6th dan, and their respective fingerprints. Photo: Associação Borges de Judo [ABJ 2020a]. Reproduced with permission of the ABJ.

The Arrival of Shigeichi Yoshima in Brazil

Yoshima's immigration to Brazil is directly related to the development of the Monte D'Este farm, or as it is still called today 'Tozan' 東山 farm. Attracted by the technology and development already existing in the city of Campinas and by the large concentration of coffee farms in the region, Hisaya Iwasaki, acquired Tozan Farm in 1927. The main objective was to bring cultivation technology, carry out agricultural experiments, expand the Mitsubishi group economic activities and create a model agricultural property outside Japan and, mainly, serve as a reference point for Japanese immigrants. In 1934, 'Indústria Agrícola Tozan Ltd', a manufacturer of products for Japanese cuisine was established in Brazil (Tozan 2021). The Iwasaki family hired agronomist Kiyoshi Yamamato who arrived in Brazil on October 15, 1926 [INCI 2021], who remained as the farm manager from 1927 until after the Second World War [Bunkyo 2021; Tozan 2021]. According to reports collected in this research with Yoshima's son, Osamu Yoshima [2020], Shigeishi Yoshima's arrival to Brazil happened given the work contract with the Tozan farm, negotiated while he was still in Japan. According to these

reports, collected by the authors, the purpose of Yoshima's immigration was to work in the sake laboratory. Yoshima was hired to improve the process of the sake manufacture at Fazenda Monte D'Este, where he arrived on August 9, 1941 [SSP 1973]. It is of notice that Yamamoto, the farm manager, graduated from the Faculty of Agronomy from the Imperial University of Tokyo [Bunkyo Rural 2021], the same university and course as Yoshima graduated, indicating that the two could be somehow connected through the University.

As can be understood trough this account, Yoshima was hired by a company that was already ran by Japanese owners and was chosen by his curriculum for a particular goal the company wanted to achieve in the sake production. This type of immigration was not the standard for Japanese immigrants. With regard to Japanese immigration, it should be noted that the vast majority of immigrants came to Brazil from rural areas and from economically disadvantaged sections of the population. Another characteristic is that, unlike many European immigrants, few Japanese immigrants initially settled in colonies isolated from the Brazilian population, because at first, they did not own the land on which they worked. For this reason, it was characteristic of these immigrants coming from Japan the tendency towards spatial mobility since the beginning of this process [Schaden 1980].

In February 1941, Yoshima embarked for Brazil together with his wife and two children, among them, Osamu Yoshima (1939-2020). They traveled on the ship Buenos Aires Maru [INCI 2020] and arrived in Brazil on March 12, 1941, as pointed out in the landing document, in the port of Santos, São Paulo [INCI 2020]. Yoshima arrives in Brazil in a turbulent moment for Japanese immigrants in Brazil. The Brazilian government policy of the 'Estado Novo' (New State), promulgated by the then President of Brazil, and dictator, Getúlio Vargas, began in 1937 and included several decrees, among them decree number 383 of April 18, 1938 that: 'prohibits foreigners from engaging in political activity in Brazil and takes other measures', including the prohibition of schools, clubs, associations and books [Brazil 1938a]; and subsequently decree 406 of March 4, 1938, which disposes clear rules for the entrance of foreigners in the country [Brazil 1938b]. These measures were strongly influenced by the approximation of Japan and Italy to the Nazi ideology in a moment that Brazil sought political alignment with the United States of America and allied countries. Such measures began to dismantle and restructure foreign organizations, mainly Japanese, which were growing rapidly and associated with the countries of the so-called 'axis' in the second world war. With Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, USA, on December 7, 1941 [Lopes 2015] the policy of 'New State', initiated by Getúlio Vargas, further increased the repression on Japanese immigrants, prohibiting the language and the publication of books, closing schools and newspapers, and regulating everything referred to Japanese culture [Queiroz 1987: 595-599; Demartini 2000, Silva 2011]. One aspect that probably hindered the development of Japanese culture, including budō, in this case jūdō, which at the time was organized in the city of São Paulo by a federation called Hakkoku Jūkendō Renmei (伯国柔剣道聯盟) [Maçaneiro & Franchini 2020], was the closing of this organization by the government. On January 29, 1942, the activities of Hakkoku Jūkendō Renmei were terminated, due to the decree published on page 70 of the Official Gazette of São Paulo on January 31 [DOMSP 1942: 70], and the interruption of diplomatic relations between Brazil and Japan, marking the end of the first major Japanese immigration cycle to Brazil.

After arriving in Brazil, Yoshima maintained his judo practice, and met judo instructors who founded the Hakkoku Jūkendō Renmei and would later form the Brazilian Kōdōkan Yudanshakai (black belt association) such as Tatsuo Okochi, Seisetsu Fukaya, and Ryuzo Akao, as well as São Paulo's judo federation, the first state judo federation of Brazil [Suzuki 1986; CCIB 2010]. It was through a common acquaintance that Yoshima and Jose Almeida Borges got to know each other and started to write the story of judo expansion in the Campinas region.

When Yoshima met José Almeida Borges (1921–1995), Borges was already a martial arts instructor (jiu jitsu, boxing, wrestling), and had dōjō located in Regatas Sports and Recreation Center where he started his teaching activities in Campinas in 1943. ([nonymous 1944; Campina 2013; DOMC 2014: 1; ABJ 2020b]. In 1949 José Almeida Borges, from this moment on known only as 'Borges', given changes on the Brazilian political circumstances was forced to transfer his dōjō to Clube Athlético Campinas, with the help of the Physical Education professor, president of Clube Atlético de Campinas, and student of Borges, Cezar Frazatto [Virgilio 1990: 15]. Pedro dos Santos, an employee at the Campinas Health Center and a friend of Professor Borges, frequently visited farms in the Campinas region to control vaccines and, on one of these visits, he mentioned to Borges that he met an employee of the Tozan farm named Shigeichi Yoshima that practiced judo [Virgilio 1990: 19]. On November 20, 1949, professor Borges invites Yoshima to come to his dōjō at Clube Athlético de Campinas to practice judo [ABJ 2020c], with the objective to learn more and improve his fighting techniques, which he has been practicing since the end of the 1930s. From that moment on, supported by Yoshima's technical knowledge, Professor Borges' dōjō starts to have the frequent presence of other great teachers from São Paulo, such as Messias Rodarte Correa (1925–2009), Arsênio Costa Vasconcellos Martins Martins (1925–2010) [Anonymous 2013: 60] from Fukaya dōjō; Seisetsu Fukaya [1913–1983] and, Ryuzo Akao, as recorded in the photos from the 1950s in the collection of the Borges de Judo Association (ABJ).

Given the initiative of Professor Borges and with the help of Yoshima and the Japanese colony, in April 27, 1952, the first judo Championship in the city of Campinas happened, with the participation of local judo Associations and also others from the cities of Jundiaí and São Paulo [Anonymous 1952a].

On October 9, 1952, Borges and Yoshima welcomed in Borge's dōjō the second official delegation from the Kōdōkan Institute of Japan [Anonymous 1952c; ABJ 2020d] in an initiative to promote judo in the Campinas region. On this date the delegation facilitated a workshop followed by a presentation at the Campinas Municipal gymnasium [Anonymous 1952e; Anonymous 1952f]. The Japanese delegation also held judo performances in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro [SIAN 1952].

On that day, the following were present: Osawa Yoshimi (大澤慶巳, 1926) Japanese absolute runner-up and currently graduated 10th dan in Kōdōkan. Professor Shinzo Takagaki (高垣信造, 1893–1977), director of Kōdōkan, graduated with 9th dan; Yoshihiko Yoshimatsu (吉松義彦, 1920–1988), 9th dan, Japanese absolute champion in 1952, 1953 and 1955, and world runner-up in 1956. Figure 3: Delegation of the Kōdōkan Institute of Japan in Borges dōjō.

Figure 3: Photo of delegation from Kōdōkan at Borges dōjō
October 9, 1952, the second official delegation of the Japanese judo delegation from the Kōdōkan Institute in Tokyo, visited Professor José Almeida Borges' dōjō, where they taught a class and made technical and Kata presentations. In the photo on the Borges dōjō, in order from left to right: Shigeichi Yoshima, Osawa, Takagaki, Yoshimatsu, and José Almeida Borges. Photo: Associação Borges de Judo [ABJ 2020d]. Reproduced with permission of the ABJ.

According to reports collected in this research with Osamu Yoshima, son of Shigeichi Yoshima, in 1959 Yoshima moved to São Paulo, to start a new job, in the pharmaceutical laboratory of Tatsuo Okochi, leader of the Kōdōkan judo group in Brazil. In São Paulo he continued his work as a judo instructor at the dōjō of Seisetsu Fukaya and, according to Suzuki [1986], Yoshima usually taught newaza classes. In 1962 Yoshima gave a speech for the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Brazil as an employee of Okochi's company [CCIB 2010]. A possible reason for Yoshima's acceptance for changing to a new company and moving to the capital of the State might have been concerns with his children's education. As noted by Miyao [1980], Since the mid-1930s and after the war, the tendency for Japanese immigrants to migrate from the interior of the State of São Paulo to the periphery of the city of São Paulo has increased. The biggest motivation was the problem of educating their children. Japanese immigrants, concerned with the education of their children, and due to the cultural importance, the Japanese gave to education, perceived a need to migrate to the state capital, where there were better teaching conditions to provide the best level of instruction. Education was seen the immigrants as essential for survival in social life, and for social ascension.

In March 18, 1969, the Brazilian Judo Confederation was founded [CBJ 2020] and, Yoshima was graduated 6th dan by the Kōdōkan on May 15, 1969 [KJI 2020c].

With the passing of Yoshima on November 24, 1980, at the age of 71, in the city of São Paulo, José Almeida Borges and Odair Antônio Borges, organized an open weight judo championship in his memory, that would happen a year later, in November of 1981, open to practitioners in the Campinas region and called 'Copa Shigeichi Yoshima de Jūdō' [Anonymous 1981a; Anonymous 1981b], with the presence of Yoshima's wife, Nobu Yoshima. The champion at that event was the athlete from the Associação Borges de Judo (ABJ), Antônio Ruas Junior, who received the trophy from Nobu Yoshima [Anonymous 1981c; ABJ 2020e].

NEWAZA AND KOSEN JUDO

As evidenced by Suzuki [1993], Yoshima had a preference for ground grappling (newaza). Later in his life, upon moving from Campinas to the capital of the state of São Paulo, Yoshima began to teach at the well-known and renowned Seisetsu Fukaya dōjō, ran by an experienced and recognized teacher, as well as a victorious athlete in competitions promoted by the Japanese community in the 30's [Maçaneiro & Franchini 2020]. Fukaya seems to have recognized this specialty and Yoshima's preference for ground fighting, as according to Suzuki [1993] Fukaya left the ground fighting classes in his dōjō to Yoshima. Possible background reasons, for this, already presented in this research are his connection with the school judo through kōchi kōtō gakkō, or even the judo club situation at the time of his entrance at Tōdai, a moment of transition and separation from the Kōdōkan, as previously mentioned in this study.

Another hypothesis could be that he had contact with the renowned professor, and newaza specialist, Tsunetane Oda. According to the accounts of Okada (2020), Tsunetane Oda (小田常胤, March 10, 1892–February 11, 1955), was sometimes at Tōdai teaching jūdō. Oda had his own dōjō called Shoshinkan (尚志館) located in Shinbashi, Minato-Ku, Tōkyō, at the same time as Yoshima was in Tokyo attending University [FSJC 2021]. These findings, might explain why José Almeida Borges' 1950s manuscript studies (figure 4), also signed by Yoshima, had a strong influence of Tsunetane Oda on pages 4, 5 and 6. According to the manuscript's direct quote, in the transcribed excerpt that will follow, the reasoning behind the practice focused on newaza is evident, as well as the concern to emphasize the teaching of ground fight as a combat strategy, attributed on the text to the way of thinking of Tsunetane Oda.

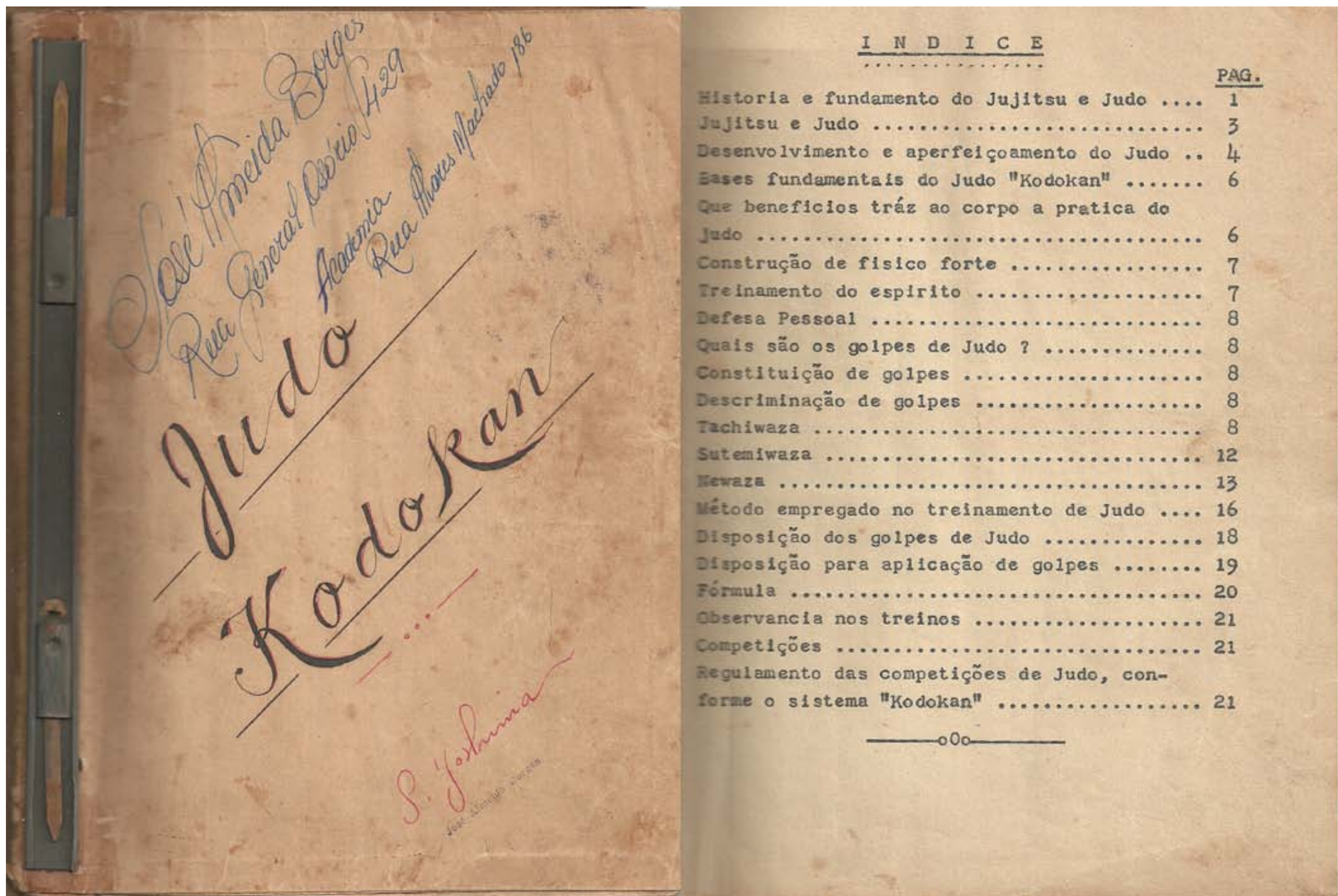

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Figure 4: judo manuscripts by José Almeida Borges.
Judo manuscripts by José Almeida Borges, published in 1950. Left page, the cover and right page, the index [Borges JA 1950]. On the cover, we can see the signature of Shigeichi Yoshima, the same signature seen on your official immigration document; and the full name of José Almeida Borges written manually with his calligraphy. Photo: Associação Borges de Judo. Reproduced with permission of the ABJ. In the excerpt transcribed below, from Borges' manuscript (1950), in the subtitle 'development and improvement of judo' details about Tsunetane Oda are highlighted by Yoshima.

Only Mr. Oda (black belt of 8th category), at that time (1900 to

> 1910), 4th category looked at the techniques of the 'katamewaza' system, discovering and perfecting several varieties of techniques and counter attack for offensive and defensive, teaching it to his students. [Borges 1950: 4, author's translation]

In the same section of Borges' manuscript [1950], in the following page it is shown a connection with the events that occurred between the preparatory schools' tournaments in Japan, very well explained by Nakajima [2014].

> Exalted with the success of Mr. Oda, the students belonging to the preparatory college for the Imperial University, in the western part of Japan, started a new exploration in this vast field of techniques that is the 'katamewaza' system, even drawing the attention of all the 'judo' masters of that era'. [Borges 1950: 5, author's translation]

The same portion of the manuscript details Tsunetane Oda's strategy on how to unite the techniques of nagewaza and newaza, for the transition to ground grappling, which allowed victory in disputes between the second higher school (nikkō) over the first higher school (Ichikkō) in 1918. It recognizes, as well, Oda as the one who realized a way to perfect judo by joining these two systems (Stand-up and ground fighting) [Borges 1950].

Following the direct mentions to Tsunetane Oda, in the subtitle 'Fundamental bases of Kōdōkan judo' it is possible to note a great deal of attention to guidance on techniques and conceptual approaches to fighting strategy in newaza. Borge's writing move to explain sutemiwaza and then, in the subtitle 'Fundamental bases of Kōdōkan judo', he briefly describes the use of 'do jime', clearly demonstrating that Yoshima also had knowledge of unconventional techniques in the newaza grappling. Borges [1950] keeps explaining the importance of newaza on the next title, 'Fundamental bases of Kōdōkan judo', emphasizing kansetsuwaza, showcasing the strategic and essential importance of ground grappling for jūdō, something he must have learned from Yoshima, as shown in this text. Also, it cannot be discarded the possibility that this manuscript was made through the direct supervision of Yoshima himself, as his signature is written in the front cover, and some notes in Japanese Kanji can be found throughout the text.

DISCUSSION

In this study, primary source records were found regarding Yoshima's formal education and judo training in Japan, as well as important dates that allowed the cross referencing of relevant information. The results of the research, when correlated to the Japanese immigration process in Brazil, allow us to infer that Professor Yoshima, when compared to many other judo teachers in Brazil, at that time, arrived with a more solid educational foundation as well as an important knowledge in judo, with his academic graduation at the Imperial University of Tōkyō, where he might have been graduated as 2nd dan of judo, since no records of this graduation were found [KJI 2020c]. Regarding the graduation of Yoshima in judo, the first record discovered was the completion of the school course, where in the photo of the judo club, Yoshima was already wearing a black belt and his 3rd dan graduation appears in Borges' diploma in 1951. In 1958 he graduated from the Kōdōkan as 5th dan and, years later, in 1969, Yoshima was graduated 6th dan [KJI 2020c] by the Kōdōkan. Yoshima, had a peculiar education as a judo practitioner, influenced by important judo teachers of his time and their teaching aspects, which he practiced from the beginning of his school years until his university graduation. He had Ukita Toshio as his teacher (4th dan in 1928); Shuichi Nagaoka (8th dan in 1930); Kyuzo Mifune (7th dan in 1930); Maruyama Sanzou (6th dan in 1933); Koyasu Masao (6th dan in 1933), culminating in a solid judo background, and a profound and well-rounded knowledge, both for nagewaza and newaza, as well as kata. This knowledge was passed on to his acquaintance José Almeida Borges from 1949 onwards, creating the environment for judo promotion and development in the region of Campinas [ABJ 2020c].

As was previously noted, Yoshima had a preference for ground grappling, characteristic which is noted in the manuscript of Borges [1950: 5], also signed by Yoshima, showing that Yoshima was aware of the events leading to what is commonly known nowadays as kosen jūdō. The dispute between these two styles remained for years, and that can be demonstrated by the importance and relevance of the Imperial University of Tōkyō in trying to conduct its judo club in line with the 'Kosen style' of judo tournament and on the other hand, the 'Student Association of Tōkyō jūdō', being more aligned with the Kōdōkan Institute, in 'Kōdōkan jūdō' [Nakajima 2014; Choi 2014].

The importance and prominence of Tsunetane Oda for the development of newaza in judo was demonstrated and portrayed in other studies and documents [Oda 1919; Nakajima 2014]. The results of this research suggest the possibility that the preference in judo's ground fighting, as learned by professor Yoshima, could have been influenced by the context of the judo of his time, the institutions where he studied, as well as the system developed by Tsunetane Oda, considering the manuscripts of José Almeida Borges of 1950. There is a possibility that Yoshima met Oda through Tōdai or even having attended Tsunetane Oda's private dōjō, nonetheless this should be further investigated. While the connection with Oda cannot be proved, these notes corroborate with Yoshima's great appreciation and emphasis for the techniques in newaza [Suzuki 1993]. It can be stated that the influence that Yoshima experienced in the preparatory course for the university, and in the University itself, being part of the University's judo club in this turbulent period, contributed to his affinity with newaza.

Shigeichi Yoshima's arrival in Brazil was favored by the immigration policy between Brazil and Japan that began in 1908 [Suzuki 1995], Yoshima immigration occurs at the end of the second immigration period as explained previously. However, the moment Yoshima arrived, during the 'Estado Novo' policy presented many challenges for the Japanese community. Despite the political scenario being unfavorable to the practice of Japanese culture, Professor Borges, who became an acquaintance of Yoshima, started regular jiu jitsu classes at the Regatas Sports and Recreation Center in 1943, as shown in the results and, confirmed by the requisition letter and its approval for the beginning of classes of jiu jitsu [ABJ 2020f]. However, a few months after the start of the activ-

ities, Regatas Sports and Recreation Center destroyed the shed where classes were held. Such a sudden and truculent act was never clearly justified, but it is understandable if one considers the requirements for compliance with decrees 383 and 406 of 1938 [Brazil 1938a,1938b).

Considering the socio-cultural scenario of the city of Campinas and its connection and proximity to the Japanese colony located in Tozan Farm, after the end of the President Getúlio Vargas New State dictatorship, it was important for José Almeida Borges to invite Yoshima to attend his dōjō from 1949 on, since this helped to facilitate the judo introduction in the region. On the other hand, through this partnership, Yoshima, felt safe in the post-war period, in attending places outside of the Japanese colony.

The most important fact attributed to the relationship between Yoshima and Borges was the presence of the official mission of the Kōdōkan Institute in Brazil in 1952. An interesting fact is that this same official mission visited the then President of Brazil, Getúlio Vargas in Rio de Janeiro, who was in his second term between the years 1951 to 1954. The entourage of the Kōdōkan institute, visited the city of São Paulo (SP) [Anonymous 1952b; DEESP 1952], and, also, the dōjō of José Almeida Borges, in the city of Campinas, which featured demonstrations of self-defense, nagewaza, newaza and shiai [Anonymous 1952e; Anonymous 1952f]. Despite Yoshima's move to the city of São Paulo in 1959, Professor Borges continued the teachings of judo and jiu jitsu in the city of Campinas, as well as continued spreading the art of judo in cities in the metropolitan region, training many teachers that would continue professor Yoshima's legacy in judo and Yoshima continued his activities by serving as a referee in tournaments [Suzuki 1986], teaching judo ground techniques in Fukaya's dōjō, and assisting the development of some important initiatives for the introduction of judo in Brazil [Anonymous 1952c; DEESP 1952].

CONCLUSION

This study documented the history of Shigeichi Yoshima, a Japanese immigrant and pioneer of Brazilian judo, who was part of the 'occasional type' of judo introduction in Brazil. Arriving in a time when Japanese immigrants faced difficulties due to the policies of the Brazilian government, because of the 'Estado Novo' policy, Yoshima was assisted by José Almeida Borges, a local martial arts instructor, to start his Judo's teaching career in the country. Having a solid judo background, Yoshima was instrumental for the introduction of judo in the region of Campinas. While he had learned judo from important and renowned Kōdōkan members, some of them contemporaries and students of Jigorō Kanō, through this study it was found that he preferred newaza as practiced by the Kosen judo movement. As was the case with many immigrants, later in his life Yoshima moved to the capital of the state where he kept teaching judo and helped with the formation of judo institutions such as: Brazilian Kōdōkan Judo Yudanshakai, and Federação Paulista de Judo. Until now, Shigeichi Yoshima was not a pioneer who had his judo biography completely understood or mentioned in the main documents related to Brazilian judo history. Because of that, this study highlights the need and the importance of new research on the development of judo in Brazil, as it was done by the occasional branch of introduction pioneers' trough the Japanese immigration process. By the biography of these pioneers one can better understand the context in which the development and introduction of judo in Brazil happened. Thus, through a micro-historical approach it was possible to better comprehend the context in which the occasional branch of judo's introduction happened in Brazil.

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THE BRITISH JU-JITSU SOCIETY AND THE INFLUENCE OF KODOKAN JUDO ON EARLY JUJUTSU IN THE U.K.

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ABSTRACT

In the United Kingdom (U.K.) in the late Victorian and early Edwardian eras there was an explosion in the popularity of the Japanese martial art *jujutsu*, with seemingly invincible Japanese exponents touring and taking on all comers in the music halls. As this early wave of popularity subsided a number of organisations were established to continue the practice of *jujutsu*, and other Japanese martial arts. Most notable of these was The *Budokwai* in London, established in 1918 by Gunji Koizumi, which from 1920 would become one of the foremost *judo* clubs in the West. Recent discoveries shed light on another organisation from this era called the British Ju-jitsu Society (BJS). Established in 1926, the BJS co-existed with The *Budokwai* and had member clubs throughout the U.K. Here, we provide an overview of the BJS, its activity, and insights into its operation and legacy.

INTRODUCTION OF JUJUTSU AND JUDO TO GREAT BRITAIN

Jujutsu – literally 'yielding art' – a family of Japanese close combat systems was introduced to the U.K. by Edward William Barton-Wright who established his personal eclectic martial arts system 'Bartitsu' in 1899 [Wolf 2008: 18]. Although Bartitsu was relatively short lived, it had a profound effect on the spread of jujutsu, and *judo* ('yielding way') from Japan to the West. A result of correspondence with the founder of *Kodokan Judo*, Jigoro Kano[1] and others, Barton-Wright brought over talented young *jujutsuka* (jujutsu practitioners) to teach at his club. Notable among these were Yukio Tani and Sadakazu Uyenishi. The Bartitsu club closed in 1903 and Tani and Uyenishi (and others such as Taro Miyake) set up clubs, toured music halls giving demonstrations, competing against wrestlers, and teaching students. Barton-Wright subsequently took a step back from teaching martial arts and concentrated on a rather unsuccessful venture of electrotherapies ultimately for the treatment of rheumatism [Wolf 2008: 28].

In 1918 Gunji Koizumi established the *Budokwai* (The Way of Knighthood Society) in London, as the West's first society dedicated to the teaching of Japanese martial ways. Joining Koizumi at The Budokwai, Yukio Tani became the chief instructor. In July 1920, Kano travelled to London on his way to the Antwerp Olympic Games. Before the trip he had been advised of the diligent efforts of Koizumi in teaching jujutsu to the British by judo black belt Yui Yokoyama, a member of the Genyosha Dark Ocean Society (an ultranationalist secret society) who had travelled to London earlier and observed The Budokwai [Kano 1921]. The Budokwai also became a sort of Japanese cultural centre for Japanese people living around London. The U.K. enjoyed more Japanese immigration than the rest of Europe combined (12,000 of over 22,000 total during 1868-1923 [Ichihashi 1931]), so early Budokwai recruiting was largely Japanese, including initially drawing Japanese workers from Koizumi's lacquerware business [Goodger 1981]. In his trip to London, Kano was joined by judo 4th *dan* Hikokichi Aida [Kano 1921]. Kano and Aida were met by Koizumi and Budokwai Secretary William E. Steers, whom Kano already knew; Steers had previously travelled to Japan twice, and in 1912 became only the second European to receive a Kodokan 1st dan from Kano [Wolf 2010].

Kano pursued a strategy he used often in Japan – co-option. When Kano began expanding judo across Japan, he colluded with school administrators to place budo qualified physical education instructors in key schools. However, some schools had already chosen local jujutsu instructors to teach, or some surviving instructors held significant status in their communities. Rather than compete with these established teachers, Kano began co-opting them by offering them advanced Kodokan judo rank, that brought them into the Kodokan network of schools and Kodokan-rules based competition. After traveling to Antwerp for the Games, Kano returned to London and (presumably after consulting with Aida) promoted jujutsuka Koizumi and Tani to 2nd dan Kodokan judo. Thereafter Aida stayed with The Budokwai for 15 months, his expenses covered by Kano and Koizumi, teaching and bringing The Budokwai into the fold of Kodokan judo [Wolf 2010]. Other jujutsu clubs persisted. The 'School of Japanese Self Defence', initially established in Golden Square, London, by Uyenishi and subsequently run by his student William Garrud, lasted until the late 1920s [Brough 2020]. At this time there were areas of jujutsu activity dotted all over the country, a legacy of the touring and teaching exploits of the initial Japanese jujutsu, pioneers and their students. Much of this activity would inevitably gravitate towards The Budokwai, but there were other movements at this time. This article focusses on the British Ju-jitsu Society (BJS), which appeared to have been an early governing body for the practice of jujutsu. The spelling *ju-jitsu* is used when related to BJS documents, which used this spelling exclusively. Practically forgotten, recently unearthed documents shed new light on its existence and operation.

1 Japanese names in this article are presented given name first and family name second – instead of traditional Japanese usage that places the family name first.

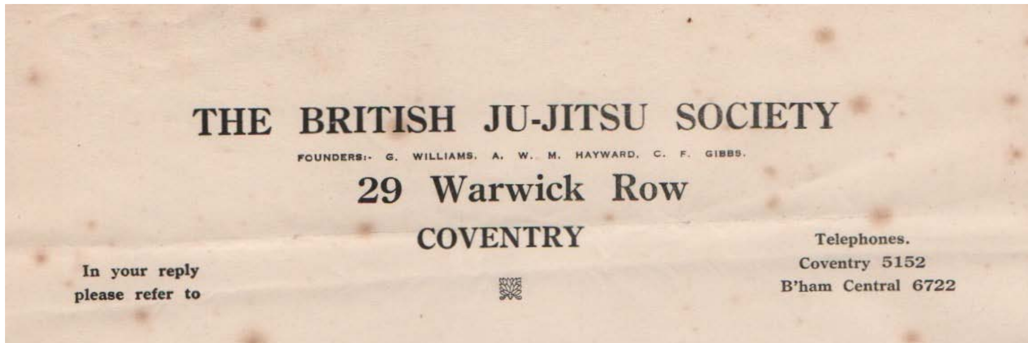
THE BRITISH JU-JITSU SOCIETY
FOUNDERS:- G. WILLIAMS. A. W. M. HAYWARD. C. F. GIBBS.
29 Warwick Row
COVENTRY
In your reply please refer to
Telephones.
Coventry 5152
B'ham Central 6722

Figure 1: *A letterhead of the BJS c1926. The original letter is currently held by the British Ju-Jitsu Association (GB)*

THE OPERATION AND PRACTICE METHODS OF THE BJS

The first reference to the BJS in the British Newspaper Archive is 23 June 1926 [*Worthing Gazette* 1926]. An article in *The Daily Mail* discussing the BJS published in March 1927 states that it was established 'just over a year ago' [*Daily Mail* 1927], suggesting the BJS was established at the end of 1925 or beginning of 1926. Recently discovered documents include a letter of introduction to the Society which is signed by the 'Principal', a G. Williams. The letterhead (Fig. 1) shows the Society is based at 29 Warwick Row, Coventry, and that the founders of the society are G. Williams, A.W.M. Hayward, and C.F. Gibbs. Although not dated, the letter must have been produced from 1926 onwards. Also discovered is a membership form, with which one can enrol as a member, and request the badge, and to learn the 'secret sign' of the society. The membership form also offers a subscription to the monthly journal of the society, *The Jujitsuan*, and details the prices for the different sections of the syllabus as outlined below. The discovered documents of the BJS consist of a prospectus, a booklet called 'The Art of Jujitsu', authored by G. Williams, and then eight syllabus booklets. The booklet titles in order are as follows:

Section 1 – Breakfalls
Section 2 – Principal Throws
Section 3 – Ground Locks
Section 4 – Ground Manoeuvres
Section 5 – Standing Defences
Section 6 – Counters to Throws etc.
Section 7 – Boxing Defences
Section 8 – Nerve Pinches & Fatal Blows

In the prospectus the work of the society is described by the following 4 points:

(1) *By publishing a monthly magazine called 'The Jujitsuan'*
(2) *By teaching ju-jitsu by post by means of correspondence lessons*
(3) *By conducting examinations in ju-jitsu and awarding diplomas to those who pass these examinations*
(4) *By arranging for members to meet each other socially, by arranging demonstrations and championship contests, and by helping members to get the best books and to get in touch with the best teachers of ju-jitsu*

There were three examinations of the BJS. These were:

1) The Preliminary Diploma examination
2) The Intermediate Diploma examination
3) The Final Diploma examination

A member passing the Preliminary Diploma became a 'Graduate' of the Society. Passing the Intermediate Diploma made the member a 'Fellow' and upon passing the Final Diploma the member became a 'Master' of the Society. There appears to be no practical component to the examinations as they were conducted via correspondence, however certificates were issued for their completion (Fig. 2).

THE BRITISH JU-JITSU SOCIETY

This is to Certify that Samuel Finn has passed the Preliminary Diploma Examination and has thereby qualified as a Graduate of the Society.

Dated this 6th day of June 1933

BJS

THE BRITISH JU-JITSU SOCIETY

This is to Certify that Samuel Finn has passed the Intermediate Diploma Examination and has thereby qualified as a Fellow of the Society.

Dated this 20th day of July 1933

BJS

THE BRITISH JU-JITSU SOCIETY

This is to Certify that Samuel Finn has passed the Final Diploma Examination and has thereby qualified as a Master of the Society.

Dated this 20th day of July 1933

BJS

Figure 2: *Diplomas awarded by the BJS. These awards are to Samuel Finn of Rochdale in 1933 and were provided by his granddaughter Susan Dobbins*

Figure 3: *Picture of Samuel Finn, the owner of the certificates shown in Figure 2. Picture provided by Susan Dobbins*

The badge of the Society is described in the prospectus as being 'artistically enamelled in dark blue round the outer circle and a light blue centre. The symbolic figure and the wording stand out in gilt. The design, altogether, is very pleasing and appropriate'. Some of the BJS badges survive today and one is shown here (Fig. 4). It is tempting to speculate that the symbol on the badge showing a hand gripping a wrist is in fact the secret symbol mentioned in the membership form.

Figure 4: *A badge of the BJS from 1926*

The prospectus states that there is only one rule: that members must not be guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct. Interestingly, the prospectus also states that the principals of the society do not give public displays and only do private demonstrations, though they will willingly assist in helping members give public exhibitions. The booklet 'The Art of Jujitsu' summarises some of the moves that appear throughout the syllabus booklets and provides a context for their use in self-defence situations.

Analysis of the throws in the BJS syllabus indicates a strong influence from Kodokan Judo (Table 1). Table 1 has been compiled by adding the name of the throws as they appear in order in Section 2 (Principal Throws) of the syllabus. The Japanese names, added subsequently, are chosen based on the diagrams and descriptions of the throws and cross referencing these with the list of recognised *nage-waza* (throwing techniques) as found on the Kodokan website [Kodokan n.d.] and in authoritative texts on the subject such as that by Syd Hoare [Hoare 1994]. As can be seen, all throws taught by the BJS are found in *Kodokan Judo* and are either part of the original (1885) or revised (1920) *Gokyo* [Kodokan n.d.], or else are Kodokan recognised techniques. Figure 5 shows a technique from Section 2 of the syllabus which Williams states is a drawing based on a photo of him and his wife.

Figure 5: *A figure from Section 2 of the syllabus (Principal throws). The throw is defined as the 'cross hook' in the syllabus (in Judo this throw is O-so-to-gari) and the picture is a drawing based on a photo of Williams and his wife*

Table 1: *Throws of the BJS (Section 2 of the syllabus 1926). Notes have been added as to where in the Gokyo (groups 1-5 (1920): Dai-ikkyo (1), Dai-nikyo (2), Dai-sankyo (3), Dai-yonkyo (4), Dai-gokyo (5)) the throw appeared in the standard Judo throwing syllabus.*

Throw (English) – BJS terminology	**Throw (Japanese)**	**Notes**
The stop ankle trip	*Sasae-tsurikomi-ashi*	*Dai-ikkyo*
The knee trip	*Hiza-guruma*	*Dai-ikkyo*
The backward ankle sweep	*Ko-soto-gari*	*Dai-nikyo*
The forward drop, kneeling	*Uki-otoshi*	*Dai-yonkyo*
The hip throw	*O-goshi*	*Dai-ikkyo*
The shoulder throw	*Seoi-nage*	*Dai-ikkyo*
The outside hook	*Ko-soto-gake*	*Dai-sankyo*
The cross hook	*O-soto-gari*	*Dai-ikkyo*
The side drop	*Tai-otoshi*	*Dai-nikyo*
The spring hip	*Hane-goshi*	*Dai-sankyo*
The side cutaway	*Hane-makikomi*	*Dai-yonkyo*
Outside and inside arm roll	*Soto- and Uchi-makikomi*	*Dai-yonkyo*
The fireman's lift	*Kata-guruma*	*Dai-sankyo*
The inner thigh throw	*Uchimata*	*Dai-nikyo*
The side sweep	*Okuri-ashi-harai*	*Dai-nikyo*
The rear ducking throw	*Ura-nage*	*Dai-gokyo*
The front ducking throw	*Yoko-guruma*	*Dai-gokyo*
Windmill roll, or corner throw	*Sumi-gaeshi*	*Dai-yonkyo*
The ankle roll	*Uki-waza*	*Dai-gokyo*
The stomach throw	*Tomoe-nage*	*Dai-sankyo*
The falling ankle trip	*Yoko-gake*	*Dai-gokyo*
The knee roll	*Yoko-wakare*	*Dai-gokyo*
The squatting hip throw	*Tsurikomi-goshi*	*Dai-nikyo*
The inside hook	*O-uchi-gari*	*Dai-ikkyo*
The inside ankle trip	*Ko-uchi-gari*	*Dai-nikyo*
The scoop throws or lunge	*Sukui-nage*	*Dai-yonkyo*
The heel and thigh throw	*Kuchiki-taoshi*	
The scissors	*Kani-basami*	

Section 2 of the syllabus, after describing the throws above, goes on to state: 'The fifteen formal throws which the Japanese practise are as follows, in the following order. They are the "grammar" of the art, and should be practised constantly, as a musician practise scales'. This view is not original to the BJS, but comes from Jigoro Kano who regarded *kata* (forms) as representing the 'grammar' of judo, and *randori* (free practice) as the 'creative writing' [Kano 2005: 24]. Fifteen throws are then listed, written exactly as follows:

1. *Forward Drop* - *Uki-otoshi*
2. *Shoulder Throw* - *Seo-inage*
3. *Fireman's Lift* - *Kata-guruma*
4. *Hip Throw* - *Uki-goshi*
5. *Spring Hip Throw* - *Harai-goshi*
6. *Squatting Hip Throw* - *Tsuri-komi-goshi*
7. *Backward Ankle Sweep* - *Okuri-ashi-barai*
8. *Stop Ankle Trip* - *Sasae-Tsuri-komi-ashi*
9. *Inner Thigh Throw* - *Uchi-mata*
10. *Stomach Throw* - *Tomo-enage*
11. *Rear Ducking Throw* - *Ura-nage*
12. *Windmill Roll* - *Sumi-gaeshi*
13. *Falling Ankle Trip* - *Yoko-gake*
14. *Front Ducking Throw* - *Yoko-guruma*
15. *Ankle Roll* - *Uki-waza*

Bar a few mistranslations, this is *Nage-no-kata*, a kata developed by Kano to support the practice of various *nage-waza*, or throwing techniques. This evidence suggests that the BJS had adopted a significant element of the techniques and practice methods found in the Kodokan.

THE ORIGINS OF BRITISH JUJUTSU

'The Art of Jujitsu' booklet written by G. Williams refers to the pioneering Japanese jujutsu, experts Tani, Miyake, and Uyenishi stating:

> Many people still remember the sensation caused when Jujitsu first came to England, when Yukio Tani, Taro Miyake, Uyenishi, and other Japanese experts pitted their prowess against all comers in public and proved with marvellous ease that they were a match for men twice their size and could defeat our best boxers and wrestlers.

Thus, the BJS made reference to the activities, teaching, and literature of the early jujutsu pioneers and their students. However, the early pioneers of British jujutsu credited with bringing jujutsu to the U.K. such as Tani, Uyenishi, and Miyake, were students from the *dojo* of Yataro Handa in Osaka, and were not from the Kodokan [Wolf 2016]. In an interview with *Health and Strength* in 1904 and republished in volume 2 of *The Bartitsu Compendium*, Uyenishi stated he was the Champion of Osaka and a student of Yataro Handa [Wolf 2008: 358]. Although Barton-Wright had some training in judo, he was also teaching *Shinden Fudo ryu* (Immovable Heart school) jujutsu techniques [Keegan 2019: 40]. Handa had a collaboration with *Fusen ryu* (Fusen school) jujutsu-expert Mataemon Tanabe, and their dojo became known for their expertise in competitive grappling or *ne-waza* [Wolf 2016]. Miyake had started to learn jujutsu with Tanabe before moving to Kyoto to train with a teacher called Uyemura, before moving to Osaka and training with Handa [Miyake 1905].

In an interview in 1915, Taro Miyake described his training. In this interview Miyake (freely conflating judo and jujutsu) states that the main schools of jujutsu in Japan at that time were Kano's Kodokan, which focused more on standing techniques (*tachi-waza*), and the Handa dojo which focused on ground techniques (*ne-waza*). This view is consistent with the suggestion by Stevens that Kano favoured ne-waza less than tachi-waza [Stevens 2013: 31]. However, we know that Kano did incorporate Tanabe's ground techniques into judo after observing the difficulty the Kodokan experts had against Tanabe in contests [Bowen 2011a: 138]. It is also very likely that students of Handa knew much of the Kodokan's standing techniques and Miyake states as much: 'Of course, every Kodokan expert knows more or less about Handa, and every Handa man knows a lot about Kodokan, but nevertheless they are each highly specialized, individual professions' [Wolf 2016].

Koizumi's training in jujutsu before he arrived in the U.K. in 1906 consisted of *Tenshin shinyo ryu* (Devine True Willow school) in Japan, and then some instruction in *Shin Shin ryu* (New Heart school) and *Akishima ryu* (Bright Island school) while on his travels through Korea and Singapore respectively [Koizumi 1960: 17].

Tani, Miyake, and Uyenishi would all have taken part in the intermural jujutsu contests taking place in Japan at the time, in what lay the foundation for *'Kosen Judo'* [Wolf 2016]. '*Kosen*' is an abbreviation for *koto senmongakko*, which is, in turn, a compound of two words – '*koto gakko'* meaning 'senior high-school' and '*senmon gakko'* meaning 'professional or technical university'. In the early 1900s, when the rules for judo competition were being formulated, the rules that came to be used for intermural contests tended to encourage and reward ne-waza. Consequently, *Kosen ne-waza* techniques and tactics became highly developed and refined. (See the text by Kimura et al. [2014] for a comprehensive guide to this aspect of Kodokan Judo.) Thus, the jujutsu that the early pioneers brought to the U.K. would have borne a similarity to the system practiced by the Kodokan. This is evident from the literature produced by the pioneers and should not be a surprise, as the core of judo's techniques had their origin in ko-ryu jujutsu. Judo did not immediately totally replace jujutsu (not in Japan, nor elsewhere); and judo as a mature system was created over an extended time-period of a few decades. Over this period Kano engaged with several jujutsu experts, from a range of schools, in his continuous search for effective techniques.

Throw in Japanese (Uyenishi)	**Throw in English (Uyenishi)**	**Throw in Japanese (Kodokan)**
Ashi-harai	The ankle throw	*De-ashi-harai*
Hiza Guruma	The knee throw	*Hiza-guruma*
Kekaeshi	The cross hook	*O-soto-gari*
Koshi-nage	The hip throw	*O-goshi*
Hane-goshi	The spring hip	*Hane-goshi*
Hiki-otoshi	The pull over side throw	*Tai-otoshi*
Seoi-nage	The shoulder throw	*Seoi-nage*
Okuruashi	The second ankle throw	*Okuri-ashi-harai*
Yoko-sutemi	Third ankle throw (or ankle roll)	*Uki-waza*
Sutemi	The stomach throw	*Tomoe-nage*
Kugi-nuki	The scissors	*Kani-basami*

Table 2: *Throws described by Uyenishi in 1905. Shown are the throws as Uyenishi described them in Japanese, and English, and in the final column the name of the throw as it would be described by a Kodokan judoka if different*

In 1905 Uyenishi wrote what would become a standard text on the subject for decades, *The Text Book of Ju Jutsu as Practised in Japan*. All the throws described in Uyenishi's book are well known to judoka, though the terminology used by Uyenishi is distinct and is described in Table 2. The adaptions to throwing techniques to render them safe for practice (i.e., throwing an opponent onto their back as opposed to their head) would have been common to all jujutsu schools training students for competition.

The throws described by Uyenishi either use the Kodokan terminology, a variation of the Kodokan terminology, or an apparently distinct terminology [Uyenishi 1952]. The precise origin of the distinct terminology used by Uyenishi is unknown and may come from the Handa dojo or elsewhere.

An early student of Uyenishi in the U.K. was Emily Diana Watts, who, in 1906, authored the book, *The Fine Art of Jujutsu*, in which she demonstrates a kata she calls the *'Landori'* [sic.] *kata*, which is presumably an erroneous phonetic transliteration of *Randori-no-kata*. Watts also describes Kodokan judo's *Nage-no-kata* in her book (amongst other jujutsu techniques). It is essential that Watts' 'Landori' kata is not confused with Kodokan judo's 'Randori-no-kata' [Otaki & Draeger 1983], which is the collective name for Nage-no-kata (Forms of throwing) and *Katame-no-kata* (Forms of control) – i.e., the two kata that can help develop skills in free practice (randori). Watts' 'Landori' kata is interesting for several reasons outlined below and is described in Table 3.

Table 3: *Throws of 'Landori' kata and Nage-no-kata as described by Emily Diana Watts (1906). NB: An asterisk (*) indicates throws listed in the book but not demonstrated by Watts*

***'Landori' kata* as described by Watts**			***Nage-no-kata* as described by Watts**	
Throw as described by Watts	**Kodokan nomenclature**	**Notes**	**Throw as described by Watts**	**Notes**
Ashiharai (a)	*De-ashi-harai*		*Uki otoshi*	
Ashiharai (b)	*Ko-soto-gari*		*Seoi Nage*	
Kekayashi	*Like O-soto-gari*	Written kekaeshi by Uyenishi (1905)	*Sukui nage*	As per the *Nage-no-kata* standard before 1906
Hiza guruma			*Uki goshi*	
Hiki otoshi (a)	*Tai-otoshi*		*Tsurikomi-goshi*	Sequence is incorrect – should follow *Harai-goshi*
Hiki otoshi (b)	*Tai-otoshi*		*Koshiharai*	*Harai-goshi*
Tachi hikiotoshi (a)	*Tai-otoshi*		*Okuri-ashi-harai*	
Tachi hikiotoshi (b)	*Tai-otoshi*		*De-ashi-harai*	Watts describes as *'old friend ashiharai given in a different way'*. Should actually be *Sasae-tsurikomi-ashi*
Koshinage	*O-goshi*		*Uchi mata*	
Seoi nage			*Tomoe-nage*	Watts calls it simply '*sutemi*' in Landori *kata*
Sutemi	*Tomoe-nage*		*Ura-nage**	
Yoko sutemi	*Uki-waza*		*Tsuriatoshi**	As per the *Nage-no-kata* standard before 1905
Kuge nuki	*Kani-basami*		*Yoko-gake**	
Koshi harai	*Harai-goshi*		*Yoko-guruma**	
Uchi mata		Watts states that it *'really belongs to nage-no-kata'*	*Yoko wakare**	Should be *Uki-waza*

As seen in Table 3, Watts uses Uyenishi's terminology for throwing techniques for 'Landori' kata, and Kodokan nomenclature for Nage-no-kata. Also, while Nage-no-kata is organised into 5 distinct *waza* principles (*Te-*, *Koshi-*, *Ashi-*, *Ma-sutemi-*, and *Yoko-sutemi-waza*), 'Landori' kata seems to have no such logical organisation. Watts correctly states that Nage-no-kata belongs to the 'Kano School' in Japan [Watts 1906]. It should be noted, though, that at no point did Jigoro Kano personally name any 'system' after himself. However, this did not prevent others from using his name to distinguish his system (judo), through using 'Kano ryu', or 'Kano School'.

The 15-technique Nage-no-kata described by Watts is by and large the standard that she would have learnt around the time the book was written and incorporates most of the modifications that were made to the kata around then. Note that the *original Nage-no-kata*, formulated by Kano around 1885, contained 10 techniques and is lost. For completeness, the evolution of Nage-no-kata, as it is understood, from 1895 (when it became a 15-technique kata) to the present day is provided in Table 4 [Fournier 2020: 2; Gilon 2020].

Table 4: *Development and evolution of Nage-no-kata [Fournier 2020: 2; Gilon 2020]*

Nage-no-kata				
Grouping	**1895**	**1902-04**	**1905**	**1906 onwards**
Te-waza	*Uki-otoshi*	*Uki-otoshi*	*Uki-otoshi*	*Uki-otoshi*
	Seoi-nage	*Seoi-nage*	*Seoi-nage*	*Seoi-nage*
	Sumi-otoshi	*Suki-nage*	*Suki-nage*	*Kata-guruma*
Koshi-waza	*Uki-goshi*	*Uki-goshi*	*Uki-goshi*	*Uki-goshi*
	Harai-goshi	*Harai-goshi*	*Harai-goshi*	*Harai-goshi*
	Tsurikomi-goshi	*Tsurikomi-goshi*	*Tsurikomi-goshi*	*Tsurikomi-goshi*
Ashi-waza	*Okuri-ashi-harai*	*Okuri-ashi-harai*	*Okuri-ashi-harai*	*Okuri-ashi-harai*
	Sasae-tsurikomi-ashi	*Sasae-tsurikomi-ashi*	*Sasae-tsurikomi-ashi*	*Sasae-tsurikomi-ashi*
	Uchi-mata	*Uchi-mata*	*Uchi-mata*	*Uchi-mata*
Ma-sutemi-waza	*Tomoe-nage*	*Tomoe-nage*	*Tomoe-nage*	*Tomoe-nage*
	Ura-nage	*Ura-nage*	*Ura-nage*	*Ura-nage*
	Tsuri-otoshi	*Tsuri-otoshi*	*Sumi-gaeshi*	*Sumi-gaeshi*
Yoko-sutemi-waza	*Yoko-gake / Yoko-guruma**	*Yoko-gake*	*Yoko-gake*	*Yoko-gake*
	Uki-waza	*Yoko-guruma*	*Yoko-guruma*	*Yoko-guruma*
	Tani-otoshi	*Uki-waza*	*Uki-waza*	*Uki-waza*

* In 1895 it is not possible to know which of these techniques had been chosen.

It cannot be discounted that the 'Landori' kata may have been a randori kata of the Handa dojo, an invention of Uyenishi, or from some other unknown source. This information also suggests that Uyenishi may have had a working knowledge of Nage-no-kata. Although it is possible that a visiting Kodokan instructor may have taught Watts, Uyenishi is the only instructor Watts acknowledges [Watts 1906]. Kodokan exponents such as Akitaro Ono were in London in 1906 and may have had some bearing on this [Bowen 2011a: 223]. Anyway, it would seem reasonable to conclude that while Uyenishi and others coming from the Handa dojo were not Kodokan men, they may have had knowledge of nage-waza and kata as taught in the Kodokan.

What is clear, however, is that the throwing syllabus of the BJS appears almost entirely Kodokan derived (Table 1), and the Japanese terminology previously used by Uyenishi has been completely superseded by Kodokan nomenclature, suggesting additional judo influences in the intervening period between the heyday of Tani and Uyenishi, and the establishment of the BJS. Of course, The Budokwai had focused on teaching Kodokan judo since 1920 and so the influence of the Kodokan will have extended to students visiting the Budokwai from that period, or observing demonstrations, or reading related literature.

The term *'jujutsuan'* (in the BJS it is *jujitsuan*), as opposed to the more common jujutsuka, to describe someone who practises jujutsu appears in Uyenishi's 1905 book [Uyenishi 1952: 17]. From at least the third edition onwards of Uyenishi's book there is a forward by Percy Bickerdike, signed as a Member of the British Ju-jitsu Society [Uyenishi 1952]. In 1914 another of Uyenishi's students, William Garrud, published *The Complete Jujitsuan*. Garrud's book contains an evolution from the jujutsu taught by Uyenishi in that it includes a chapter on 'Jujitsu versus Boxing' where we see some of the throws adapted to combat a punch, rather than be executed from a grip [Garrud 1914]. Section 7 of the BJS syllabus also incorporates boxing defences. In Section 2 of the BJS syllabus, randori is described as 'Loose play' as opposed to the more common 'Free practice' or 'Free exercise'. The term 'Loose play' to describe randori was previously used by Uyenishi's student, Emily Diana Watts in her book [Watts 1906: 45], but was also a commonly used term to describe a freestyle wrestling contest in this period. Section 8 of the BJS syllabus, 'Nerve pinches & Fatal blows', contains a description of *atemi* (strikes) and a few pages on nerve pinches, but states that use of any of these techniques is forbidden in ju-jitsu contests – again following the Kodokan's custom and practice. Thus, while there is an influence of the jujutsu of the teachings and students of the early pioneers on the jujutsu of the BJS, there has also been an assimilation of Kodokan techniques.

Jujutsu or Judo?

Analysing the BJS syllabus it is difficult to distinguish between the jujutsu and the judo that were being practised at this time, and indeed it seems that the British protagonists from the time did not draw any distinction. Newspapers from this time often started with 'jujutsu' (or ju-jitsu) in an article's title but then shifted to using 'judo' interchangeably. It was only later that 'judo' become established as the dominant term, and 'jujutsu' still being used for *kobudo*, or 'old school' systems and for Western hybrids or derivatives. G. Williams wrote an article on the British Ju-jitsu Society for the *Health and Strength* annual in 1928 titled 'Ju-jitsu. Rapid expansion in 1927'. In this article Williams makes reference to the Budokwai as a jujutsu club in London. Williams wrote the following:

> The year 1927 proved that ju-jitsu has become increasingly popular both at home and abroad. The Budo Kwai, of 15, Lower Grosvenor Place, S.W.1., the principal ju-jitsu club in London and affiliated to the Kodo Kwan in Japan, gave more displays during the year than ever and also enlarged its premises to make more room for the increase in members. Ju-jitsu in London has now spread amongst young lady workers who are to be regularly seen at the classes of the Budo Kwai.

The article went on to reference a further event at the Budokwai:

> Another event of the year was the opening of the new exercise hall at the Budo Kwai in August. Mr W. Jackson who is an old member of the British Ju-jitsu Society, took part in the proceedings and distinguished himself by 'downing' three opponents one after the other in splendid style. [Williams 1928: 67-69]

It is clear from this article that, at least for Williams, there was little distinction between jujutsu and judo and since other authors also used the terms interchangeably, it seems reasonable to conclude that at this time ju-jitsu was a word commonly used to describe judo and vice versa. Indeed, Kano initially settled on the term judo as it was already used within jujutsu schools (including the *Kito-ryu* – School of the Rise and Fall – which he had practised), and as it avoided the negative connotations associated with the dangerous practise of jujutsu. Judo described the practise of jujutsu as a way of athletic and moral development, and thus the change of the name was not a technical reference, but the introduction of a new way of practice [Committee for the Commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the Birth of Jigoro Kano 2020; Lindsay and Kano 1888]. It was not until 1936 that the term judo replaced jujutsu in the Japanese school curriculum and arguably in preceding years judo had been regarded as one of the various styles of jujutsu.

Percy Longhurst, a former student of Tani and Uyenishi, had met Kano when he visited London [Bowen 2011a: 102], and was a prolific author on the subject. In the sixth edition of Percy Longhurst's *Jiu-jitsu and other methods of self-defence* he refers to the 'late Dr Jigoro Kano', dating the book as 1938 at the earliest. In this book Longhurst attempts to clarify the difference between jujutsu and judo as it was understood at the time. Longhurst writes:

> It is perhaps well to make clear that the difference between Jiu-jitsu and the term 'Judo', generally used day to day when referring to the art, is nothing more than one of nomenclature. In Japan a variety of Jiu-jitsu 'schools' came into existence, each favoured by some notable teacher of the art. [Longhurst c1938: 6]

In an earlier publication of Longhurst's, *Ju-jutsu and Judo*, Longhurst offers the following definition: 'The modern word Judo, loosely used as though a synonym for Ju-jutsu, is the name of the most advanced, the best and most scientific, of these varieties of Ju-jutsu' [Longhurst 1928: 5].

There were of course philosophical differences, even if they were not widely appreciated at this time and if the effects of Kano's 1920 visit had yet to lead to the principles of judo being widely accepted. The practice of judo was based around Kano's principles of 'maximum efficiency', and 'mutual welfare and benefit'. In the BJS documents the philosophy is one of British fair play. Competing using jujutsu/judo for financial reward was frowned upon by the Kodokan and the Budokwai [Yamanaka 1920: 6]. Not so for the BJS, who actively sanctioned prize contests. It is possible that from 1912 Kano's views on amateurism were influenced by the founder of the Olympic movement Pierre de Coubertin. Kano founded the Japan Amateur Athletic Association in 1911 in order to be able to select a team for the 1912 Olympic Games, and met Baron de Coubertin in Stockholm in 1912, the first of several meetings [Committee for the Commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the Birth of Jigoro Kano 2020]. So, was the BJS a jujutsu or a judo organisation? It is unclear that they were even aware that there should be any difference.

THE MAIN PROTAGONISTS OF THE BJS

The article in the *Health and Strength* annual of 1928 goes on to give an overview of BJS activities [Williams 1928]. The article states that the BJS increased its membership by over 2000 over the preceding year, and listed a number of BJS clubs around the U.K. [Williams 1928]. Thus, although the BJS provided teaching by correspondence, this seems to have been practised, largely, by a few affiliated clubs. The clubs named in the article are listed in Table 5. The rapid growth of the BJS was also mentioned in the press. A newspaper article in 1927 promoting jujutsu to women, reports that the BJS is enrolling over 250 new members per month, and notes that undergraduates, clergymen, doctors, barristers and policemen are among the people taking up jujutsu [*Daily Mail* 1927].

Table 5: *Clubs of the BJS 1927 (Williams 1928)*

Name	Address
A.J. Morgan	22 Burgos Grove, Greenwich, S.E.10.
J. Bell	13 Huxley Road, Edmonton, N.18.
A.E. Butcher	19 Fairland Road, Stratford, E.15.
W. Fry	13 Buckingham Palace Gardens, S.W.1.
A. Banister	51 Balfour Road, Highbury, N.5.
W. Pearson	The Paragon Institute, 40 Paradise Street, Liverpool
J. Smith	19 Chestnut Grove, Victoria Road, Wavertree, Liverpool
H. Bryce	17 King's Lane, Stretford, Manchester
R. Stubbs	45 Milton Street, Bradford, Manchester
P. Bickerdyke	52 Basinghall Street, Leeds
P. Wilkie	180 West High Street, Buckhaven, Fife
C. Bowman	318 Perth Road, Dundee
G. King	34 Bluevale Street, Dennistoun, Glasgow
J. Kirkwood	209 Fulton Street, Knightswood, nr. Glasgow
J. McHaffie	77 Abercorn Street, Paisley
J. Hipkiss	'Veronica'. Slade Road, Little Sutton, Birmingham
J. Whittaker	9 Shrubbery Terrace, Coralie Street, Brookfields, Birmingham
W. Saddington	1 Garlic Row, Cambridge
Capt. Harriss	16 Station Road, Cambridge
G. Footitt	18 Kenwood Park Road, Sheffield
Messrs Ambler & Bennett	17 Ovenden Road Terrace, Halifax
C. Daniels	Mos Room, Merton House, 14 De Parvs Avenue, Bedford
H. Evans	18 New Road, Ammanford, Carmarthenshire
S. Dyson	198 New Hay Road, Oakes, Huddersfield
L. Twigger	Trent Cottage, Farndon Fields, Newark, Notts.
O. Sinclair	Ridgeway House, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire
A. Meldrum	2 Links Place, Burntisland
J. Monen	26 Bell Street, Old Swan, Liverpool
J. Partington	12 Milton Street, Bolton, Lancashire

In addition to listing BJS member clubs, the *Health and Strength* article describes a competition of the BJS: the return match for the British Ju-jitsu Championship between James Hipkiss of Birmingham and Alf Morgan of London, which took place at the Folk House, Erdington, Birmingham on 13 December 1927. The article describes a closely fought match over four rounds with Hipkiss the victor. The article describes what happened next:

> Mrs. Williams, wife of the President, presented Hipkiss with the silk championship kimono and sash. This kimono is made like a ju-jitsu jacket of orange coloured silk with a blue collar and blue sash. The kimono bears the monogram of the Society in gold silk, with the words, 'British Ju-jitsu Champion, 1927'.

A picture of Hipkiss wearing his championship kimono and performing a scissors throw on Alf Morgan at the British Ju-jitsu School, Church Street, Birmingham, was published in *The Birmingham Gazette* [1928]. The contests of the BJS were conducted under rules drawn up by the British Ju-jitsu Championships Committee [Williams 1928]. In 1928 the membership of the Championships Committee is as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: *British Ju-jitsu Championships Committee [Williams 1928]*

Name	Address
Peter Gotz	75 Jamaica Road, Bermondsey, S.E.1.
A.E. McCarthy	80 Harford Street, Stepney, E.1.
Frank Dawson	24 Sailsbury Road, Manor Park, E.12.
C. Boxsell	Tekoa, Dorset Road, Merton, London, S.W.
J. Monen	26 Bell Street, Old Swan, Liverpool
A. Butcher	19 Fairland Road, Stratford, E.15.
J. Hipkiss	'Veronica'. Slade Road, Little Sutton, Birmingham
G. Faulkner	26 Meverton Road, Erdington, Birmingham
H. Essex	150 Newhall Street, Birmingham
John Smith	19 Chestnut Grove, Victoria Road, Wavertree, Liverpool
L.R. Smith	155 Derby Road, Kirkdale, Liverpool
W. Pearson	The Paragon Institute, 40 Paradise Street, Liverpool
W. Saddington	1 Garlic Row, Cambridge
A. Rees	6 Morlars Terrace, Tonna, Neath, Glam.
W. Jackson	Police House, Tollesbury
S. Dyson	198 New Hay Road, Oakes, Huddersfield
C. Bowman	318 Perth Road, Dundee
H. Tester	97 Glencoe Road, Chatham
A.J. Morgan	22 Burgos Grove, Greenwich, S.E.10.

As stated above, the contest described by Williams [1928] was the return match for the British Ju-jitsu Championship. Richard Bowen describes the first contest, taking place on 16 March 1927 in London, as an equally gruelling affair with Hipkiss emerging victorious with Morgan retiring due to an injured knee [Bowen 2011b: 18]. Morgan had won a title from Harry H. Hunter, who was calling himself European Ju-jitsu Champion, and who was author of the book *Super Ju-jitsu* [Hunter 1927]. Hunter's book suggests he was European Ju-jitsu Champion between 1924 and 1927. It is unclear where Hunter got the title from, but an article published in 1921, when Hunter was based in Ramsgate, suggests he was being matched for the European Ju-jitsu Championship [*The Thanet Advertiser and Echo* 1921]. There is also a record of Hunter giving a jujutsu demonstration with BJS member W. Saddington from Cambridge (see Table 5) [*The East Kent Times* 1922].
Interestingly, another jujutsu student called Ernie Hurrell was active in the early 1920s and was a one-time European Ju-jitsu Champion [Fairhurst 1991: 22]. There is an article from 1923 where Hurrell, then of Bristol, challenged Hunter for the Ju-jitsu Championship of England [*The Advertiser and Echo* 1923], so it is possible they met. Hurrell ultimately opened a dojo in Chester [Fairhurst 1991: 22]. By 1925 Hunter had a dojo/gymnasium at 78 Shaw Street in Liverpool and appeared in the local press stating that he had learned jujutsu in Japan over 20 years previously [*The Liverpool Echo* 1925].

Incidentally, Hunter's book, *Super Ju-jitsu*, was published by the European Ju-Jitsu Association, for which the address given was the same as Hunter's dojo, suggesting the organisation, and perhaps championship, was Hunter's creation [Hunter 1927]. The exact source of Hunter's jujutsu is unknown, but we know he left Liverpool for Canada in 1929 and in a newspaper article in *The Gazette*, Montreal, in 1939, he states he first learned jujutsu in Yokohama while stationed there with the Navy in 1904 [*The Gazette, Montreal* 1939]. Hunter's obituary in 1941 states he died aged 57 in Montreal, was a native of Ramsgate, and had served in the Navy for 13 years, losing sight in one eye during the Great War. It also states he taught jujutsu to numerous police forces [*Advertiser and Echo* 1941].

Bowen records that, upon beating Hunter, the BJS wrote to Morgan on 26th August 1926, congratulating him on his victory over Hunter. On 31st August 1926, the BJS again wrote to Morgan asking him to join the BJS and issuing him a certificate confirming him as a 'Master of the British Ju-Jitsu Society'. The BJS also asked Morgan whether he would consider a controlling stake in the organisation [Bowen 2011b: 421]. Upon winning Hunter's title and then joining the BJS it is possible that Morgan's title became that of British Ju-jitsu Champion. Hipkiss joined the Budokwai in 1929, but as they would not allow professional wrestling/jujutsu he was soon asked to tender his resignation [Bowen 2011b: 20].

During this period, however, Hipkiss gave demonstrations with Tani and other Budokwai members. For example, at the Aston Amateur Boxing club Tani and Budokwai members including Matsutaro Otani (Fig. 6) gave a judo demonstration while Hipkiss had a jujutsu contest with Fred Perks, before giving a catch-as-catch-can wrestling demonstration with BJS member George Faulkner [*Birmingham Gazette* 1930]. In another article, Hipkiss (described as 'the British Ju-jitsu exponent') 'will try conclusions' with Yukio Tani, 'the well-known Japanese wrestler', at an exhibition [*Birmingham Gazette* 1931]. It is possible that this interaction only happened because Hipkiss joined the Budokwai, or perhaps Hipkiss joined the Budokwai because of an existing interaction with the BJS, which may help us understand the Kodokan influence described above.

We know that Hipkiss defended his British Ju-jitsu title on many further occasions and when he authored his book *Unarmed Combat* in 1941 he stated on the title page that he was British Ju-jitsu Champion [Hipkiss 1941]. Interestingly *The Kilmarnock Herald* reported in 1933 on a contest for the British Championship between the holder Dave Munro of Rutherglen and David McInally of Kilmarnock, who was a Master of the British Ju-jitsu Society (Coventry) and instructor to the Kilmarnock police [*Kilmarnock Herald* 1933]. This suggests that there were multiple titles, perhaps for different weight classes, or that there were titles endorsed by groups other than the BJS. There is no record in the British Newspaper Archive of a contest between Hipkiss and Munro or McInally. Hipkiss helped to establish many judo clubs in the Midlands, and after World War 2 worked as an osteopath, and was even one time a trainer at Birmingham FC [Smith 1965]. James Hipkiss died in 1979 aged 82.

Figure 6: Yukio Tani throwing Matsutaro Otani in a demonstration [Longhurst 1935]

Percy Bickerdike was another prominent member of the BJS. Bickerdike was a physical culture instructor in Leeds and taught classes at the Burmantofts Y.M.C.A. In a 1930 newspaper article, Bickerdike was described as a 'Master of the British Ju-jitsu Society and a Physical Culture expert' [*Leeds Mercury* 1930]. In 1932 in a display of physical culture at Leeds Town Hall, Bickerdike gave a lecture on jujutsu followed by a demonstration assisted by John Crow (retired amateur champion of Leeds), and Hubert Fell. After this demonstration, Bickerdike refereed a contest for the amateur Championship of Leeds between R. Owen and H. Raisin British, in which Owen was the victor [*Leeds Mercury* 1932a; *Leeds Mercury* 1932b].

In 1934 a group of girls of the Leeds Health and Strength club from the Burmantofts Y.M.C.A., trained by Percy Bickerdike, were pictured giving a jujutsu demonstration [*Leeds Mercury* 1934]. When Bickerdike was 40 he suffered an accident whilst taking part in exercise that developed into a long and painful illness until his death at age 43. In his obituary he was described as expert in gymnastics and Indian club swinging as well as jujutsu and, in a potentially distant echo of Barton-Wright, was said to be 'deeply interested in the electrical treatment for rheumatic conditions, in which direction he did much good work in conjunction with the medical profession' [*Yorkshire Post and Leeds Mercury* 1943]. Other mentions of the BJS in the British press include the Dundee Y.M.C.A. where William Keith and Charles Bowman, Master of the British Ju-jitsu Society, were giving instruction in jujutsu [*Evening Telegraph* 1927; 1928].

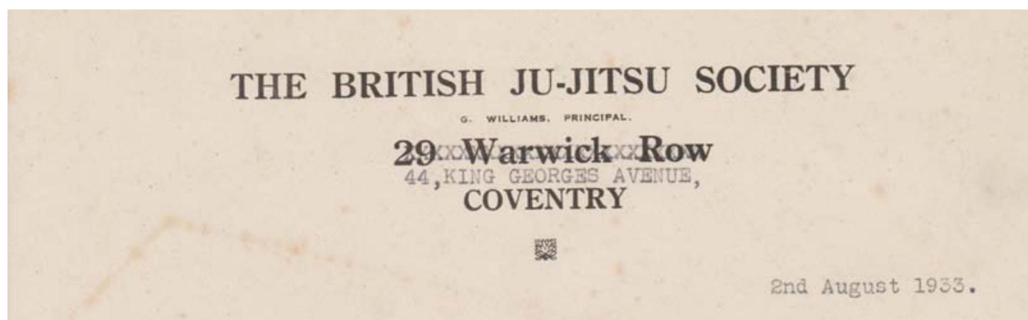
THE BRITISH JU-JITSU SOCIETY
G. WILLIAMS. PRINCIPAL.
29 Warwick Row
44, KING GEORGES AVENUE,
COVENTRY
2nd August 1933.

Figure 7: *The letterhead from correspondence with Samuel Finn from 1933. Provided by Susan Dobbins*

Other than what has been described above, there is little record of the BJS in the newspaper archives and what there is vanishes from the mid-1930s. By 1933 the BJS was using a new letterhead in correspondence, with only G. Williams noted as the principal. Further, the address 29 Warwick Row no longer appears in use as it is struck out and replaced with 44 King Georges Avenue (Fig. 7).

The BJS was not the only option for those wishing to learn jujutsu. In addition to the Budokwai, there were independent clubs and other organisations being formed. For example, in Liverpool in 1928 Gerald Skyner established a jujutsu club [Keegan 2019]. Notably, Skyner's dojo was associated with the Japanese judoka Mikinosuke Kawaishi for a period of several years in the 1930s [Keegan 2019]. Kawaishi who had first studied jujutsu and judo at the Kyoto-based *Dai Nippon Butokukai* (Greater Japan Association of Martial Virtue), and subsequently the Kodokan, was an active teacher in the U.K., including helping to establish the 'Anglo Japanese Judo Club' in London in 1932. It is probable that it was during this time that Skyner was associated with him [Keegan 2019: 85]. Kawaishi would leave the U.K. under a cloud in 1936 and it seems that at this point Skyner's 'Liverpool Jiu Jitsu & Judo Academy' was affiliated to the 'International & South African Jiu Jutsu Society' with Jack Robinson in South Africa [Bowen 2011b: 214]. Skyner's dojo then appears to have been independent up to his death in 1971.

Another jujutsu dojo from this era was 'The Alpha Ju-jitsu School' established by Jack Britten allegedly in 1924 [Keegan 2019: 73]. Britten made a point of stating on a business card that there was no connection between his club and any other [Keegan 2019: 75]. In an article for the *Merseyside Sporting News* on the 14th of December 1946 Jack Britten discusses jujutsu [article reprinted in Fairhurst 1991: 21]. In this article Britten is described as the 'Principal' of The Alpha Ju-Jitsu School in Liverpool, and uses the term 'jujitsuan' to describe someone practising jujutsu, suggesting a possible influence of the BJS. Furthermore, on a business card Britten describes himself of being of 'Master grade' [Keegan 2019: 75] – all terminology consistent with the BJS. Britten ends his 1946 article with an endorsement of Koizumi and the Budokwai as a good jujutsu school in London [Fairhurst 1991: 21]. Britten is also known to have commented that the techniques he taught derive from 'The House of Kano' [Fairhurst 1991: 20], perhaps suggesting he did not learn from the first Japanese arriving in the U.K. from the Handa dojo, or their students.

SUMMARY

So, what can we say about the BJS? In his discussion of the BJS and other professional schools, Bowen [2011b: 21] suggests that while most

were a 'rip off', some may have been genuinely interested in teaching judo (jujutsu) for a modest return. The BJS provided literature to members in the form of the monthly *Jujitsuan* magazine, an organised syllabus and certificates. There were BJS sanctioned championships, and it seems that it perhaps catered for a need to which the Budokwai was opposed.

As can be seen from the above, in 1928 the BJS was well supported with member clubs throughout the U.K., suggesting that the BJS provided the British jujutsu community with a governing body of sorts. From the evidence presented the BJS appears to be a genuine attempt to manage and coordinate jujutsu activities within the U.K. The jujutsu taught seems largely based on Kodokan judo, with other influences incorporated, indicating that judo had largely superseded the jujutsu taught by Uyenishi and other graduates of the Handa dojo.

It is unclear what happened to the BJS in the end. It may have been that as Budokwai-affiliated clubs expanded the BJS could no longer attract students. The more direct association with Kano and Japan certainly would seem to have been attractive to potential students in the U.K.; judo and other aspects of Japanese culture had captured the imagination of the West as a way to explain Japan's success in fighting and winning against its recent enemies, China and Russia, immensely larger land empires that tiny Japan had to cross oceans to engage and defeat. While the climate may have been conducive for the popularity of judo, the most authoritative Japanese judo histories ascribe the Budokwai's success squarely on the leadership of Gunji Koizumi [Maruyama 1967].

The legacy and impact of the BJS is hard to quantify. As a professional jujutsu school, the BJS instructed thousands of students in the techniques of judo and jujutsu that will have filtered into the fabric of British martial arts. For example, in addition to the Leeds Y.M.C.A. where Percy Bickerdike will have trained many people in jujutsu and judo, he also organised physical training for unemployed youths at junior instruction centres through which 16000 young people passed [*Yorkshire Post and Leeds Mercury* 1943]. It is possible that jujutsu was a component of this training. James Hipkiss is largely responsible for the establishment of judo and jujutsu in the Midlands. All over the country clubs were established that seeded new enthusiasm for jujutsu and judo that can only have supported the current levels of activity seen today. Indeed, some modern organisations can trace a link back to the BJS. For example, Richard Morris, who was for a while a leading instructor in the British Ju-jitsu Association and World Ju-jitsu Federation in the 1970s and 1980s was at first a student of Alf Morgan [Keegan 2019: 101], and there may be other examples.

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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF DEFENSIVE TACTICS TRAINING ON POLICE RECRUITS' SELF-EFFICACY IN HANDLING VIOLENT ENCOUNTERS

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ABSTRACT

Police officers are often required to use physical force to effectively protect themselves as well as the public. To prepare officers for these physical demands, recruits receive training in defensive tactics and physical fitness during their Police Academy instruction. The present study aimed to explore the impact of martial arts training and police defensive tactics curricula on self-efficacy. Additionally, the study aimed to develop a reliable scale for measuring an officer's self-efficacy and use the scale to evaluate the impact of the Academy training on recruits' self-efficacy. Most of the participants credited the academy defensive tactics (98.5%) and fitness training (88.1%) with improving their self-efficacy. These results support the importance of martial arts and defensive tactics training on improving recruit officers' self-efficacy toward handling violent encounters prior to entering the law enforcement workforce.

Police officers are responsible for protecting citizens and resolving complex, rapidly evolving situations. Because of this, they are often required to use physical force in order to safely carry out their duties. According to the U.S. Department of Justice [2020], 549,892 police officers were assaulted in the United States between 2010 and 2019. Of these assaults, 436,630 were carried out using personal weapons (i.e., hands, fists or feet) and 29.1% of those attacks resulted in injuries to the officer. The increased likelihood of being involved in force encounters as a law enforcement professional threatens the safety of both officers and civilians. Therefore, an evaluation of the physical skills taught in police training, in addition to how these skills impact an officer's confidence and performance in handling non-lethal force situations, is needed. Additionally, identifying whether targeting potential recruits with martial arts experience may be of benefit to the field of policing, is worth exploring. Creating change in police training culture by increasing the value placed on martial arts and defensive tactics training may be a potential solution to keeping officers and civilians safe under high-pressure non-lethal force encounters.

Nieuwenhuys, Calijouw, Leijsen, Schmeits, and Oudejans [2009] conducted a study on police officers' performance on five arrest and self-defense skills. Based on a skill performance scale developed by police instructors, officers' performance declined during high-pressure environments. Renden, Landman, Savelsbergh, and Oudejans [2015] revealed similar findings regarding the impact of psychological factors (i.e., anxiety, pressure) on performance. They examined how Dutch police officers perceived their ability to handle violent encounters and their preparation for using arrest and self-defense skills. The results indicated that additional martial arts training and on the job experience was associated with perceptions of better performance, but officers who experienced anxiety often reported more issues. Officers also felt the skills taught and the frequency of training needed improvement. Renden, Savelsbergh, and Oudejans [2017] additionally found that reflex-based self-defense training was associated with better performance for officers in high-pressure arrest situations.

Ellifritz [2013] conducted a study with agencies in Ohio (United States), focusing on unarmed self-defense and control tactics, which examined how much training officers received as well as their perceptions of that training. Despite their reports of a desire for more training, their confidence levels in their defensive tactics skills were 'extraordinarily high'. Additionally, the more training officers received (by the department or off duty), the more confident they were in their abilities with handling situations.

SELF-EFFICACY THEORY

Self-efficacy, a major construct of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, is an individual's belief in their ability to produce a desired outcome in a specific situation [Bandura 1997]. Self-efficacy influences what actions people choose to take, the amount of effort they invest, and how hard they try when faced with obstacles [Bandura 1982; Bandura 1997]. Additionally, it is enhanced with experiences of personal mastery, observing others performing the behavior, social persuasion, and positive physiological/emotional states during performance [Bandura 1977; Bandura 1986]. Use of force self-efficacy refers to 'self-confidence in determining the appropriate amount of force in a use of force situation' [Torres 2020]. A pilot study conducted by Torres [2020] indicated that martial arts training and use of force self-efficacy predicted officer confidence in going hands-on. Officer self-efficacy may play a critical role in the safety of civilians as well as officers in use of force encounters. While previous studies have given insight into various psychological factors that impact police performance in non-lethal force encounters (e.g., anxiety, stress, confidence), minimal research has been conducted on police academy recruit training within this regard.

POLICE ACADEMY TRAINING

Over the past 60 years, the formal process of basic police training has become commonplace across the United States. Before this time, police training was largely informal, unstructured, and inadequate considering the demands of the job [Alpert & Dunham 1997; Walker 1999]. Today, there are police training academies in every state with varying sizes and standards. The training curricula include, but are not limited to, education on federal and state crime laws, traffic enforcement, physical training (including defensive tactics), firearms training, driving skills, arrest procedures, and officer safety [Chappell 2008]. The physical training is generally aimed at increasing the officers' physical fitness and teaching the use of specific tactics to effectively control and subdue subjects. Defensive and control tactics training includes all forms of less-lethal use of force options such as come-along holds, manual restraints, unarmed self-defense, pepper spray, impact weapons, and electronic control devices, most of which are based in martial arts [National Consensus Policy and Discussion Paper on Use of Force 2017].

Previous research on police recruits has focused on assessing various instructional approaches to the overall training curricula [Chappell 2008; Vander Kooi & Palmer 2014; Werth 2011], defensive tactics training approaches [O'Neill, O'Neill, Weed, Hartman, Spence, & Lewinski 2019], and fitness training [Arvey, Landon, Nutting, & Maxwell 1992; Crawley, Sherman, Crawley, & Cosio-Lima 2016; Korre, Loh, Eshelman, Lessa, Porto, Christophi, & Kales 2019; Marins, David, & Del Vecchio, 2019; Orr, Dawes, Pope, & Terry 2018; Shusko, Benedetti, Korre, Eshleman, Farioli, Christophi, & Kales 2017]. However, as shown above, studies addressing officer perceptions of their defensive tactics training and personal abilities have primarily targeted veteran officers. Understanding the effectiveness of police academy curricula and martial arts through a recruit officer's perceptions of their abilities to execute the training (i.e., self-efficacy), may lend insight toward refining approaches to improving their overall safety and wellness.

AIMS AND HYPOTHESIS

The aims of this study were twofold. First, a self-efficacy scale was developed and tested for reliability, specifically for assessing a police officer's perception of their ability to effectively protect themselves using defensive tactics. Second, the scale was used to explore the impact that police academy defensive tactics training has on self-efficacy with regard to an officer's preparedness for handling a non-lethal, violent encounter. Recruit officers who were enrolled in a Basic Law Enforcement Training program (i.e., the Academy) at the University of Illinois Police Training Institute were assessed before they began their training and upon completion of their training. It was hypothesized that: (1) recruit officers would have a moderate level of baseline self-efficacy before they began training; (2) considering martial arts experience has been associated with perceptions of better performance [Ellifritz, 2013; Renden et al. 2015], recruit officers with previous martial arts or self-defense training would have a baseline level of self-efficacy higher than the untrained group mean; and (3) recruit officers would have an overall increase in self-efficacy after the Academy training. Additional analyses were conducted on the impact of fitness training, subject demographics, and type of martial arts background on self-efficacy.

METHOD

Participants

Study participants were solicited from recruits attending one of three University of Illinois Police Training Institute Basic Law Enforcement (i.e., the Academy) classes. To be included in the primary measures for analysis, the recruit must have successfully completed the Academy training, have provided information on their martial arts or self-defense background, and completed the self-efficacy scale before and after the Academy. Of the recruits enrolled ($N = 185$) across the 3 Academy classes, 46 recruits did not complete both surveys, 2 recruits chose not to participate, and 3 recruits did not finish the Academy. A total of 134 respondents (72% response rate; 108 males, 26 females; $M_{age} = 26.53$; $SD_{age} = 4.42$; age range: 20 – 41 years) completed all measures and were included in the primary analyses.

Police Training Institute

The training intervention for this study was administered via the University of Illinois Police Training Institute (PTI) Basic Law Enforcement Academy. PTI holds multiple 14-week, 560-hour resident academy training courses throughout the year to prepare recruits to excel as police officers in the state of Illinois. Data for the 3 classes assessed in this study were collected between May 2018 and April 2019.

Within the area of physical conditioning and use of force, recruits receive 14, 4-hour blocks of firearms training, 13, 4-hour blocks of arrest and control tactics training (i.e., defensive tactics), daily 1 hour physical fitness training sessions, and 8 hours of verbal de-escalation training. The arrest and control tactics base curriculum includes standing control positions and takedowns, handcuffing tactics from various positions, pressure points, weapon retention, and ground defense tactics. The ground defense techniques, which are primarily derived from the art of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, include tactics for safely getting up from the ground, tactics for getting past a subject's legs on the ground, escaping from the bottom while being mounted, and submissions from the bottom if someone is between the officer's legs grabbing their weapon. The daily physical fitness training consists of total body calisthenic exercises including jogging/running, jumping jacks, push-ups, pull-ups, squats, lunges, and stretching [Schlosser 2013].

Procedures

With the exception of the pre- and post-training data for this first class, the survey was administered online via Qualtrics to the PTI classes in person before the first defensive tactics (DT) training session and upon completion of the last DT session. The pre- and post-training surveys for the first class were administered via email using a Word document. Prior to any data collection, the investigator explained the study, provided participants with the informed consent, allowed participants time to read it, and answered any questions they had. The investigator emphasized that participation was completely voluntary, all individual responses would be kept confidential, and that none of the instructors or employees at PTI would have access to participant responses. University of Illinois Institutional Review Board approval was obtained prior to any data collection.

Police defensive tactics self-efficacy scale

Participants completed a baseline questionnaire including items regarding demographic information such as sex, age, BMI, race/ethnicity, level of education, and previous martial arts/self defense training experience (see Table 1). Upon completing the baseline questionnaire, participants completed the self-efficacy scale specifically created for assessing a police officer's perception of their ability to effectively protect themselves using DT in a non-lethal, violent encounter. Considering there are currently no scales, to our knowledge, that specifically assess police DT and non-lethal force self-efficacy, the scale was created to contribute to this line of research. The scale constructed for this study closely followed Bandura's [2006] instructions for creating self-efficacy scales. According to Bandura, 'There is no all-purpose measure of perceived self-efficacy' [Bandura 2006: 307]. Since most 'all-purpose' self-efficacy scales may have limited relevance to the domain of functioning, they may also be of limited explanatory and predictive value [Bandura 2006].

In the nine-item scale created for this study, officers were asked to rate how confident they were that they could perform each task. Examples of survey items included: 'I can effectively control a violent subject that is bigger than me' and 'I can think clearly while engaged in a violent encounter'. The rating scale ranged from '0' signifying 'Cannot do at all', to '100' signifying 'Highly certain can do'. The post-training survey was identical to the pre-training survey. However, for the post-training survey, additional items were added to assess whether the academy arrest and control tactics/DT training, any additional martial arts/self-defense training, and/or the fitness training they received impacted their responses.

Pilot group testing of Cronbach's alpha

Pre-training data from the first academy class (n = 60) was used to test the reliability of the self-efficacy scale using Cronbach's alpha. The results yielded a strong reliability coefficient of .930. The pre-training and post-training data from this class were included in the overall data analysis and no changes were made to the scale before administering it to the other participants.

Data analysis

Data analysis was done using SPSS version 24.0. The baseline questionnaire and the self-efficacy scale were first checked for missing data and errors. An Excel data file was created with participant ID numbers and their responses. The participants' body mass indices were calculated in $kg{\cdot}m^2$ using self-reported height and weight data. The self-efficacy scale responses were calculated for each participant by summing the confidence scores across the items and dividing that number by the total number of items. All demographic data and self-efficacy scores were transferred to an SPSS data file for analysis.

To investigate the primary hypotheses, various analyses were used. Means and standard deviations for pre- and post-training self-efficacy were calculated and a paired samples t-test was used to evaluate the differences in pre- vs post-training self-efficacy scores. One-way ANOVAs were used to compare the mean self-efficacy scores based on martial arts/self-defense experience. Additionally, an independent samples t-test was used to compare pre-training scores by gender, and frequency distribution tables were used to evaluate the specific variables that impacted improvements in the officers' self-efficacy scores (e.g., Academy arrest and control tactics, fitness training).

RESULTS

An overview of demographic data from the participants is presented below. To evaluate the reliability of the self-efficacy scale, Cronbach's alphas were measured for each time point. This yielded reliability coefficients of .959 for the pre-training time point (N = 182) and .964 for the post-training time point (N = 134).

Table 1. Demographic Data

		Males	Females	Group Mean	*N*
Participants		151	31		182
Mean Age		27	25	27.0	182
Mean BMI	Pre	27.3	24.1	26.8	180
	Post	27.2	24.1	26.6	133
Age Groups	20-29	109	25		134
	30-39	38	6		44
	40-49	4	0		4
	Total	151	31		182
Race/Ethnicity	White	92	20		112
	African American	11	2		13
	Hispanic or Latino	14	3		17
	Asian	1	0		1
	American Indian or Alaska Native	0	1		1
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	1		1
	Other	1	0		1
	Total	119	27		146
Education	High School Diploma/GED	7	0		7
	Some college, no degree	30	7		37
	Associate degree	19	6		25
	Bachelor's degree	59	13		72
	Master's degree	3	1		4
	Total	118	27		145
Previous Martial Arts/Self-Defense	Yes	73	12		85
	No	78	19		97
	Total				182
Level of Experience	No Experience	78	19		97
	Minimal Experience	19	5		24
	Experienced	51	7		58
	Total	148	31		179

As hypothesized, recruit officers (*N* = 182) had a moderate level of pre-training self-efficacy, with a mean score of 65.15 (*SD* = 19.22). A paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the mean pre- and post-training scores for participants who completed the measure at both time points (*N* = 134). The mean pre-training score was 64.56 (*SD* = 20.60), and the mean post-training score was 85.62 (*SD* = 10.97). Recruits in this group had a moderate baseline self-efficacy score and a significant increase was observed at post-training ($t(133) = 12.80$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.28$).

An independent samples *t*-test comparing male (*n* = 151) and female (*n* = 31) recruits who completed the pre-training self-efficacy measure (*N* = 182) also revealed a significant difference between the groups ($t(180) = 5.461$, $p < .001$). Female recruits had a significantly lower mean pre-training score (*M* = 49.20; *SD* = 20.85) than male recruits (*M* = 68.42; *SD* = 17.19), with a Cohen's *d* effect size of .24. A median split (median age = 26 years) comparison of younger versus older recruits revealed that older recruits (*M* = 31.26 yrs; *SD* = 3.67) had a significantly higher mean pre-training self-efficacy score (68.47 vs. 62.71, $t(180) = 2.012$, $p = .046$) compared to the younger recruits (*M* = 23.58 yrs; *SD* = 1.65) with a Cohen's *d* effect size of .30.

A one-way ANOVA was computed comparing the baseline mean scores of participants with no martial arts experience, minimally experienced participants (less than 1 year), and experienced participants (1 year or more). A significant difference was found among the participants ($F(2,176) = 14.04$, $p < .001$). Tukey's *HSD* was used to determine the nature of the differences between the participants. This analysis revealed that participants who had no martial arts experience scored lower (*M* = 59.09, *SD* = 19.38) than participants with more than 1 year of experience (*M* = 74.97, *SD* = 15.84) with a large effect size ($\eta_p^2 = .138$). Participants with more than 1 year of experience and those with less than a year of experience were not significantly different from each other.

A one-way ANOVA was also computed to compare the mean pre-training scores of participants by category of martial arts/self defense training. The categories included: military training, defensive tactics, traditional arts, combat sports, and those with experience in multiple categories (i.e., blended group) (see Table 2). The blended group had the most participants represented (*n* = 25) and the highest mean pre-training self-efficacy score (*M* = 77.45, *SD* = 12.03). A significant difference was found among the training categories for the pre-training scores ($F(4,80) = 2.60$, $p < .05$, $d = 1.33$). Tukey's *HSD* was used to determine the nature of the differences between the groups. This analysis revealed that participants in the blended group scored significantly higher than participants in the traditional arts group (*M* = 57.35, SD = 24.04) with a large effect size.

Table 2. Mean SE Scores by Category of Training Experience

Training Categories	**N**	**Mean SE Score**	**SD**
Military Training	11	68.04	17.65
Defensive Tactics	20	72.05	16.62
Traditional Arts	8	57.35	24.04
Combat Sports	21	73.37	15.24
Blend (Multiple)	25	77.45	12.03
Total	85	72.06	16.62

A frequency distribution analysis was run to examine whether the Academy arrest and control tactics training and fitness training improved participant self-efficacy. Nearly all participants (98.5%) reported the arrest and control tactics training improved their self-efficacy and 88.1% reported the fitness training improved their self-efficacy. Only 11.9% of the participants reported participating in additional martial arts or self-defense training during the time they were in the police academy and all of these participants reported it improved their self-efficacy. Half of the participants (50%) reported that they participated in additional fitness training during the police academy and 95.5% of these individuals reported it improved their self-efficacy. Regardless of the source of change in self-efficacy, 91% of the participants showed an increase in self-efficacy post-training, while 7.5% had a decrease in self-efficacy, and 1.5% displayed no change.

DISCUSSION

The primary aims of this study were to 1) create and test the reliability of a scale designed to assess an officer's self-efficacy toward protecting themselves using defensive tactics (DT); and 2) use this measure to explore the impact of Academy DT training on an officer's perceived preparedness for handling non-lethal, violent encounters. Previous studies have addressed an officer's level of confidence in their physical abilities [Butler & Petruzzello 2019; Ellifritz 2013; Renden et al. 2015], but this was the first study to assess recruit officers using a scale specifically designed to assess self-efficacy. We hypothesized that recruit officers would begin the Academy with a moderate level of self-efficacy, those with previous martial arts/self-defense experience would have a higher baseline self-efficacy than untrained recruits, and there would be an overall increase in self-efficacy for the participants at the conclusion of the Academy training.

Regarding the first hypothesis, officers did show a moderate level of self-efficacy before any training and female recruits had a significantly lower mean self-efficacy than males. Even though over half of these participants (53%) had no previous martial arts or self-defense training, the overall mean pre-training score was 65.15 with the inexperienced group scoring 59.09. These moderate levels of self-efficacy could be associated with unreported life or work experiences with violence. For example, participants who may have had increased exposure to violence growing up in high crime communities, or those who spent years in other careers such as security, may have had more confidence in dealing with physical encounters. Another possibility is that untrained recruits may possess personality traits that encompass more assertiveness, openness and confidence despite a lack of comparable behavioral capability. Certain personality traits may even be ideal predictors of performance in law enforcement [Afsheen, Rafique, Qaisar & Musarat 2017].

Our second hypothesis was also confirmed in that participants with previous martial arts/self-defense experience had a mean baseline self-efficacy that was significantly higher than those with no experience. This finding is consistent with previous literature on how martial arts training is associated with higher levels of confidence in police officers [Ellifritz 2013; Renden et al. 2015; Torres 2020]. According to Bandura [1997], self-efficacy influences the amount of effort an individual exerts when faced with difficult situations. This supports the notion that adequate martial arts/DT training may reduce the likelihood of officers unnecessarily escalating to excessive force (e.g., firearms) due to fear caused by lack of confidence when faced with situations that could otherwise be handled with effective DT [O'Neill, O'Neill, Weed, Hartman, Spence, & Lewinski 2019]. Additionally, the applicability and depth of the training may be a factor in determining levels of self-efficacy considering those who trained in multiple categories had greater levels of efficacy than those in the traditional martial arts category.

Regarding the impact of the Academy training, the results of the third hypothesis revealed that recruit officers' self-efficacy significantly increased from pre- to post-training. All but two participants attributed their increase in self-efficacy at least in part to the arrest and control tactics they received at the Academy. The fact that over 90% of the recruits showed increases in self-efficacy post-training provides support for the effectiveness of the Police Training Institute control tactics curriculum. Additional influences on the increased self-efficacy among some recruits included participation in additional martial arts training, and to a larger degree, both Academy fitness training and additional fitness training outside the Academy. This highlights the significance of fitness to an officer's perceptions of their self-defense abilities, although many studies have indicated that actual fitness training is often not maintained after the Academy [Anderson, Plecas & Segger 2001; Anderson, Cychosz & Franke 2003; Bissett, Bissett & Snell 2012; Dillern, Jenssen, Lagestad, Nygård & Ingebrigtsen 2014; Lagestad, Jenssen & Dillern 2014; Orr et al. 2018]. Nevertheless, the results of this study indicate that Academy training provides a solid foundation for officers to start their careers with a healthy level of confidence in their abilities to handle violent, non-lethal encounters when necessary.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

To our knowledge, this is the first study to develop and validate a self-efficacy measure that examines a police officer's perception of their ability to effectively protect themselves using DT in a non-lethal, violent encounter. This research is timely and has implications for translation and policy in law enforcement. We were able to partner with the local police training academy to successfully conduct this research and the recruits were willing to participate in the data collection process. Due to the relatively small sample size and the variability in training curricula across police academies, one limitation of this study is the lack of generalizability of the results. While the results certainly offer support for the recruits' perceptions of their training at the Police Training Institute, we cannot presume the same applicability to other police

training academies. Future studies may consider replicating the present study at other academies in an effort to assess the effects of the physical training program (i.e., defensive tactics and fitness) on self-efficacy.

IMPLICATIONS

The police academy is the foundation of a recruit officer's journey in a career in law enforcement. This study aimed to demonstrate the benefits of martial arts and defensive tactics training for law enforcement beyond the physical domain. The inherently dangerous nature of the job along with the responsibility to protect citizens requires officers to be adequately prepared both physically and mentally. Considering officers are more likely to use non-lethal force during physical encounters, evaluating and improving the confidence levels of recruits in these areas may positively impact their performance in the field. The results of this study lend insight into ways in which we can assess and improve the self-efficacy of recruit officers using martial arts, DT and fitness training within a standard police academy training course. It also lends consideration for targeting individuals with martial arts experience for recruitment due to its baseline physical and psychological advantages prior to entering the field. Future studies should also evaluate incumbent officers using the scale to assess the impact of police experience, departmental training, and knowledge retention from police academy training on self-efficacy.

COMPETING INTERESTS

It should be noted that Jeremy M. Butler is a former police officer in the state of Illinois, a graduate of the Police Training Institute, and was hired as a part-time instructor. All other authors have no competing interests to declare.

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MIXED MARTIAL ARTS AS A WAY OF LIFE:

GOING BEYOND THE BLACK BELT AND ENGAGING IN LIFE-LONG LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

In this qualitative study, we explored the experiences of 10 adults who trained in mixed martial arts (MMA) to understand the meaning they ascribed to attaining the black belt and their martial arts journey overall. Using a conventional content analysis, four themes were derived from the data: importance of the black belt, benefits of training in MMA, dealing with injuries, and being part of the MMA community. Training in MMA was very positive, with both individual benefits (improved physical and mental health, skill development, and personal growth) and interpersonal benefits (relationship development and sense of community) being reported. Self-determination theory [Ryan & Deci 2000] and goal setting theory [Locke & Latham 2002] are used to discuss participants' motivation in their pursuit of the black belt and continued training.

> Like if I didn't have this [jiujitsu], I don't know who I'd be as a person. I got asked when I joined the [job], I got asked if I'd be willing to give up fighting for work, in my interview. And I didn't have an answer to the question because I've been doing this [jiujitsu] for so long. I don't know what I would do if I didn't have this. I can't picture my life not doing this. It's just part of me now, it's like you're tied to this. This is part of your identity… Like to me, this is the same as eating. It's the same as f***ing drinking water. You just do it and you go every day. You do it. [M5]

Mixed martial arts, or MMA, is a physical combat sport that combines techniques and theories from a variety of disciplines. Striking-oriented disciplines, such as boxing, kickboxing, and karate, focus on using punches, kicks, knees, elbows, and blocks to attack and defend oneself from a standing position. Grappling-oriented disciplines, such as jiujitsu, wrestling, and judo focus on taking an opponent to the ground through throws and takedowns, and using clinch fighting, pinning or controlling techniques, and submission holds [Rousseau 2018]. While MMA derived from the combat sport of Pankration at the Olympic Games in 648 B.C [Stenius 2014], in our more modern era it has been commercialized into a professional league of competitive fight events, such as the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) [Walters 2015]. The last two decades has seen considerable growth in participation in MMA [Mierzwinski et al. 2014]; however, this participation can be competitive or recreational in nature and not all martial arts practitioners will engage in competitions (at a professional or amateur level).

MMA has often been presented in a negative light, with these beliefs primarily being endorsed through the media and entertainment industry, which promotes MMA as a media spectacle [Smith 1999; van Bottenburg & Heilbron 2006]. MMA has been portrayed or stereotyped as consisting largely of physical combat and cage fighting in which competitors represent a masculine archetype, like a modern gladiator, and participation in the sport is full of violence and aggression [Abramson & Modzelewski 2011; Channon & Matthews 2015; Cynarksi & Litwiniuk 2006; Green 2015; Mierzwinski et al. 2014; Rosario et al. 2014; van Bottenburg & Heilbron 2006]. Some studies have shown an increase in aggression [Reynes & Lorant 2002] and antisocial behaviour [Endresen & Olweus 2005] among male boys and youth as a result of participating in martial arts and combat sports. However, Rosario and colleagues [2014] note that some forms of aggression are acceptable and can be healthy and appropriate within this sport context. For example, aggression can be seen positively as a form of self-assertion, or negatively as a form of hostility, with combat sports tending to be more associated with the latter [Basiaga-Pasternak et al. 2020]. In a study that compared various type of aggression between amateur and professional-level combat sport athletes, Basiaga-Pasternak and colleagues [2020] found that aggression tended to be slightly lower among the professional athletes, and surmised it could be a result of learned self-control over the length of their training. Moreover, Kuśnierz and colleagues [2014] compared aggression levels among men practicing MMA (capoeira, boxing, or jiujitsu) and a group of non-practicing controls and found the non-practicing controls to show higher levels of overall aggression.

There have also been several benefits identified as a result of participating in martial arts. For example, many traditional approaches to teaching martial arts use meditation and mindfulness techniques [Harwood et al. 2017; Milligan et al. 2015; Vertonghen & Theeboom 2010], which has been linked to improved self-regulation and performance in MMA fighters [Massey et al. 2015], as well as increasing self-understanding and calmness, and better tolerating discomfort in youth with learning disabilities [Milligan et al. 2015]. Additionally, Bird and colleagues [2019] found that offering MMA training, in combination with psychotherapy, resulted in improved mental health, as well as having a positive impact on other aspects of their life due to an increase in confidence and self-reflection. In fact, Vertonghen and Theeboom [2010] and Harwood and colleagues [2017] reviewed the literature on the impacts of involvement in martial arts for youth, and though their inclusion criteria were different, both reviews found that consistent involvement in martial arts improves mental and physical well-being, and also decreases tendencies to respond aggressively or with violence.

Most disciplines of martial arts have a ranking system. While rank and belts are not fully equivalent across disciplines, they all start at the white belt level and ultimately progress to a black belt (and higher degrees of black belts). The length of time or training required to achieve a black belt also differs across disciplines, with some disciplines, such as Brazilian jiujitsu often taking 10 years of dedicated training to achieve a black belt [MMA Guru n.d.]. The process of attaining a higher rank or belt level is called a promotion and is achieved through a testing of technical and practical skills, which may include sparring, that the trainee has learned through the training process. Obtaining a black belt in any form of martial arts requires perseverance and dedication by the trainee, and few people who begin training in martial arts will progress to this level, making the attainment of a black belt a substantial accomplishment [Layton 1988].

The purpose of this narrative study was to use qualitative methods to explore the experiences of adults who engage in mixed martial arts. Participants needed to have a black belt in a discipline of martial arts, or needed to have trained in a discipline of martial arts for a minimum of five years and were near to having a black belt. The sample included both those who were high-level competitors and those who engaged in martial arts at a recreational level. The first objective of this study was to gain a better understanding of the meaning that those training in martial arts ascribed to the black belt and attaining the black belt. During the course of the study, a second objective was added to explore, more broadly, the meaning that trainees ascribed to their entire martial arts journey, as it became clear that the black belt was only one small element of this journey.

METHODS

Ethical approval was granted by the institutional research ethics board [REB # 2020-31].

Participants

A total of 10 participants (9 male, 1 female) were recruited for this study. Participants were recruited through contacts of the first author (who is also involved in MMA) and through snowball sampling. Seven of the participants had achieved one or more black belts in a discipline of martial arts (Brazilian jiujitsu = 4; Hap Do Sool = 2; Uechi-Ryu Karate Do = 1; Taekwondo = 1) and three of the participants were one belt level away from a black belt (one each in Jeet Kune Do, Hap Do Sool, and Brazilian jiujitsu). All participants had trained in a variety of disciplines of martial arts: Brazilian jiujitsu = 9; boxing = 8; kickboxing = 7; wresting = 6; Kung Fu = 2; Taekwondo = 2. In terms of the experience levels, participants had been practicing martial arts for a minimum of four years to a maximum of 35 years; only one participant was not currently still involved in martial arts. Participants ranged in age from 28 to 51 years, with an average age of 36 (*SD* = 8.48). The majority of participants were White (n = 7), one was Asian, one was South Asian, and one was mixed White, Black, and Native.

Interview schedule and procedure

All data were collected through individual interviews conducted by the first author. Electronic consent was obtained through Qualtrics prior to conducting the interview. With the consent of each participant, we audio recorded each session and then transcribed these sessions verbatim. We used a semi-structured interview format whereby a set of 10 open-ended questions were asked regarding their experiences in mixed martial arts (e.g., how they got involved in martial arts; highlights and challenges of their training; their views on achieving a black belt on and competitions; the impact of martial arts on their well-being). Interviews ranged from 25 minutes to one hour and forty minutes, with most interviews taking approximately 40 minutes. All participants were offered a $5 Starbucks e-card as a thank you for their participation.

Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using QSR International's NVivo (version 12; NVivo, 2018) and followed a conventional content analysis approach [Hsieh & Shannon 2005]. This approach was selected as it is suitable for exploration in an area that is understudied and could benefit from further exploration. To begin, the first author (SR) read through the first eight transcripts several times to allow for data immersion and to get an understanding of the data as a whole. Next, SR took notes on her first impressions, thoughts, and initial analyses, and developed codes directly from the text for each unit of meaning identified. These codes were then organized into themes and subthemes based on similarities. Each of these themes and subthemes was then defined to clarify their meaning and a coding book was developed. All transcripts were then reviewed again and coded based on themes/subthemes in the coding book, with adjustments being made to the coding book as needed. Exemplars reflective of each theme/subtheme were also selected. Two more interviews were then conducted, transcribed, and coded based on the coding book. As a reliability check, three of the transcripts were coded again by the second author (AD), which resulted in an intercoder reliability of 79% agreement with the first author's codings [Miles & Huberman 1994]. Cases of disagreement were discussed to reach a final consensus. Memos were then written for each of the themes.

The following strategies were used to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of our findings: (a) member checking where each participant was provided with a summary of the findings and asked to confirm the accuracy of the synopsis—six of the participants responded to this, confirming the accuracy, (b) writing memos throughout the analytical process in order to document the evolution of codes, analytical ideas and decisions, and (c) using descriptive quotation exemplars as evidence of our findings [Hsieh & Shannon 2005; Lincoln & Guba 1985].

RESULTS

There were four overarching themes that were derived from this analysis: (1) importance of the black belt, (2) benefits of training in martial arts, (3) dealing with injuries, and (4) being part of the martials arts community. There were six subthemes within the benefits of training in martial arts theme and one subtheme within the being part of the martial arts community theme that will be further described below.

Importance of the black belt

The participants had some mixed, and inconsistent, feelings about how important it was for them to have achieved a black belt. For the seven participants who had a black belt, four of them stated that getting the black belt was a goal for them right from the start, or that it became a goal as they started to progress through the belt levels, and that when they got their black belt it was one of the biggest highlights of their training.

> I got my black belt in 2018, which was actually a massive highlight. And that was in Brazilian jiujitsu which takes forever to get a belt in. [M9]
>
> I felt on top of the world and it was just amazing. It truly was because there were so many years, so much sweat, so much everything ... it meant a lot to me. [M6]

The other three participants reported that their ultimate goal was more about skill development than achieving the black belt. However, even though they had initially said the black belt was not important to them when asked directly, in continued conversation it clearly did hold meaning for them when they had achieved it. Given that they had achieved their black belts many years ago, perhaps they were currently more focused on their continued skill development and did not remember their former drive for the black belt before they had actually attained it.

> I didn't even think of black belts at all when I started, like it was all just to do it to be proficient … I actually kinda hated the idea of belts. I'm really not all that sold on the idea of belts to tell you the truth. I don't know. I think it's kind of like a North American, like impatient kid, kinda just needing to be told they're doing well … well, when I got it, it was kind of a bigger deal than I though it would have been. But I don't know. I like go back and forth with it now because like now, like I do see it as a pretty cool thing to be able to achieve. [M10]

When further asked about what the black belt signified for them, the participants reported that it represented a long-term accomplishment, credentials for running or instructing at a gym, the development of long-term relationships, and/or a way to identify skill levels among different belt ranks.

> It means proficiency and it means that you, you haven't given up and that you have a sound understanding of that martial art in question. [M7]

For the three participants who did not yet have a black belt, getting their belt was an important goal because, for them, it signifies having put in the effort to master something and earning the respect of their peers.

> It shows that I basically went from a complete scrub in the beginning to like someone that has basically mastered everything. [M2]

> It symbolizes how much effort, how much work you put it. [M5]

Benefits of training in Martial Arts

The most dominant theme from the interviews was the many benefits that the participants had received from their training and journey in martial arts. For nearly all of the participants, they viewed martial arts as an integral part of their lives and plan to continue in martial arts for as long as they are able. There were six types of benefits that participants identified from their involvement in martial arts: learning and maintaining their skills, self-defence, physical health benefits, mental health benefits, personal growth, and learning how to win and to lose through competitions.

Learning and maintaining skills

All participants discussed that one of the main reasons that they enjoyed martial arts and continued training, often for decades or more, was because they were constantly developing their skills and learning new skills. They noted that martial arts are always evolving and that nearly every training session offers something new. They compared this against other activities, such as running or weightlifting, which they remarked was very repetitive.

> But I think what I love with martial arts is that there's no limit to what you can learn. Like everybody always has something new. It's always evolving. And I think that's just what I really like. [F8]

> For me it's about learning. Just getting better, always improving. [M1]

Additionally, many of the participants expressed that they plan to stay in martial arts, with some saying that it is a life-long endeavour. This was particularly expressed by those training within Brazilian jiujitsu. The participants who were initially, or primarily, involved in boxing and kickboxing commented that they had either switched to jiujitsu or that they plan to eventually switch to only jiujitsu because they felt it was easier on the body and was something they could do into old age.

> I would like to keep doing jiujitsu. And the other thing about jiujitsu is the older you get, the less you want to get punched in the head … And I think jiujitsu is a good way to age through, to be able to train forever. [M1]

> I feel like martial arts will always, it will always be part of my life. [M7]

Self-defense

Another benefit that six of the participants mentioned was that their training and skill development made them feel confident that they could defend themselves, and even others, if needed.

> [I'm] not looking for a fight, and I know most people are just generally minding their own business, but at least in the back of my head I know that I have tricks up my sleeve. [F8]

> And I like having the skills to know I can protect myself or my family. [M7]

Physical health benefits

Six of the participants talked about the physical benefits of training in martial arts. This included being physically in shape, both in terms of cardiovascular health and the tone and shape of their body. They also

spoke about how physically challenging their training can be.

> And I like pushing myself. Honestly, it's one of the best ways to keep in shape. It just kinda hits everything in terms of really good cardio, building natural muscle, agility, everything. [F8]

Mental health benefits

Nine participants talked about benefits related to their mental health, explaining that the physical exercise was an effective way to reduce stress, tension, and anxiety and to feel more energized.

> Actually, my anxiety gets really bad if I don't train … but I think just having that hour or two where everyone leaves me alone and you're doing one thing. There is nothing else to worry about … for that one hour everything just kind of goes away. I think that's really important. [M1]

> I find that when, after I'm done training, it's the worries of my day or my life aren't there anymore. [M7]

Seven of the participants also discussed feeling more self-confident because of their training and the skills they had developed.

> As far as self-confidence, I feel incredibly powerful. You know it just makes me feel good that I have abilities. It makes me feel good that I can feel strong. It makes me feel good that I am technically sound … it just really makes me feel good about myself. Like as far as confidence, you know to, to, it allows you to believe in yourself. And it gives you a real-life situation where you can justify believing in yourself. [M6]

And, for some of these participants, they reported that this confidence extended into other areas of their lives, such as work or school.

> What training helped me with accomplishing is that every time I was able to do a move that kind of gained my confidence. And every time I do that skill more and more and more I become more confident. And that translated to my lifestyle to where I think ok, I think I can do this, and I do it. And it works because I was more confident about it. [M2]

Additionally, one participant talked about how their training helped them focus and assess situations more clearly, both in and out of the gym.

> I think jiujitsu helped me learn to really calm down and assess the situation a lot better... It's not going to help you in a situation to s**z out and to waste energy really. You just need to calm yourself down, take a breath, and think. And I think that really works its way into all aspects of life really well. [M10]

Personal growth

Nine of the participants spoke to the ways in which participating in martial arts had contributed to their growth as a person – beyond just the learning and development of skills – and that this impacted all aspects of their lives.

> And it's all about like personal growth, like you just need to focus on getting better yourself. Don't focus on everybody else, it's all about you. [F8]

> And then just like the growth that you get and the knowledge itself that you get from experience that you, that you gain in martial arts and in competition I find to be, I found to be very valuable. [M9]

Three participants specifically noted that martial arts helped keep them out of trouble and gave them something to focus on as both an outlet for aggression and stress and as a goal to keep them motivated.

> And without all the lessons that I learned, I don't know what I would be. It's almost terrifying to think of it. I'd probably be where a lot of my other friends were when I started fighting, where a lot of my other friends that I had then ended up now is like a lot of people in jail, a lot of people on drugs, a lot of people are dead. So I feel that I've really become a whole different person because of it… and I'm really grateful. [M9]

> I feel like if I hadn't had the martial arts in my life I would have had more, I would have been more of a troublemaker. Like I enjoy fighting. I thoroughly enjoy fighting. And if I didn't do it there, I'd probably do it somewhere else. [M5]

Several participants also spoke to martials arts helping them to identify their own weaknesses and overcome these weaknesses, such as their own ego, claustrophobia, getting upset about trivial things, and anger issues.

> You're constantly overcoming things you didn't think you're possible of and that transcends into everyday life. And it changes your perception of what you think you can do. [M3]

> I used to be a cry baby. I'd cry about the little things. Like even when it's not supposed to be a big deal, I make it a big deal…. This is kind of a weird thing, but I always think that, you know what, this is not as bad as getting punched in the face. Like if I'm getting punched in the face and I can take it, I can take someone calling me stupid or idiotic, calling me names. It's like I'm not going to cry about that. [M2]

The participants also noted that in order to succeed in martial arts and achieve a black belt, certain traits are required, such as persistence, drive, self-motivation, and discipline.

> You need discipline because you can't just show up once or twice a week and expect to get it. If you don't put the time in you won't get it... So if you want to achieve anything you need to be self-motivated. You need to be able to get up and want to do it. And if you don't, you're not going to go very far in martial arts or in life. [M4]

Learning to win and to lose through competition

When asked about whether they had competed as part of their training, nine of the participants had competed; this ranged from one tournament to hundreds of matches. These nine participants also indicated that sparring and competition were important parts of their training and/or that they had an important role in MMA training generally. Many of the participants talked about sparring and competition as a highlight of their training, particularly when they won a match or competition. There were two key benefits that the participants received from this. One was that it allowed them to test their skills.

> The training, you know it's satisfying if you're training for a fight, and especially if you win. Being able to hold your own against somebody who used to be able to beat you is inspiring. [M1]

> I got to learn what hard work really is. And how rewarding hard work can be when you do the hard work. So I would train probably two months before the tournament and after that tournament time I go in and I fight and I get medals and that's all from the hard work I've done. [M2]

The second benefit was that it allowed them to overcome challenges within themselves, including learning how to take a loss.

> You just get hungry for this challenge [competition]. Even if you fail, it's what you learn in the process. That's what martial arts is to me. The fact that you brought yourself in, you brought yourself in to the challenge. [M3]

> I think competition is super important to anyone's development. I think it really is like learning how to lose, learning how to accept that you need to go back and work on what you messed up. Uh, developing yourself and not putting the blame on other people when you do lose. [M5]

Dealing with injuries

There was only one recurring negative aspect of martials training that was mentioned by the participants: dealing with injuries. Nine of the participants commented on injuries they had received while training or competing. Only one participant reported not having any injuries beyond some bruises.

> Obviously for the amount of time that I've been in it, I've been very lucky [no injuries]. The amount of times that I have been hit in the nose, like come on (laughs) ... But you know that's just the game. [F8]

Injuries were raised when the participants were asked about challenges they have faced during their martial arts training. Shoulder and knee injuries were the most commonly reported injuries (aside from bruises and scratches), with broken or sprained toes and fingers also being quite common (particularly for those involved in jiujitsu). Some participants did mention some fairly serious injuries, such as concussions and fractured facial bones, and a few have had surgeries related to their injuries.

> Torn knee twice, torn shoulders, primarily with jiujitsu. Not to steer anybody clear of it ... I'm more thankful for what jiujitsu has given me positively than any other art. But the injuries come regularly, just tears and stuff ... over the course of ten years, over a year for sure has been down on injuries. I wouldn't trade a minute of it. [M3]

Interestingly, several participants noted that it was not the injury itself that was the negative aspect, but rather that the injury prevented them from training. This often led them to feeling frustrated at not being able to train and losing any progress they had been making in their training.

> And I'm not, again, not really the person to take time off. I've trained through almost every injury I've ever had... The injury itself is nothing, like it's ok to be injured. In a sport like this, you're going to get injured at some point. It's going to happen. But not being able to train is like, it's like, jiujitsu, even if I'm having a bad day anywhere I can go do jiujitsu and have at least an hour or two of good day. [M5]

> When you get an injury you know suddenly all your progress is gone. And then you also start going backwards, right, you start losing your skill and your time and, and you can't train and that's frustrating too. [M6]

Being part of the Martial Arts community

The last theme that emerged centered on the martial arts community and the sense of belonging that the participants felt within this community. Nine of the participants talked about the friendships that they had formed, which were often built on trust and respect because of the level of physical intimacy that is involved in training in martial arts, and particularly jiujitsu. Many of these friendships have been formed over a long period of training together.

> The camaraderie of being with like-minded people. We would have students come and go, but it was the people that stuck around, and then we would train together and we would learn from each other and it made it a lot more fun. [M4]
>
> The friendships I've made along the way. Like there's, you don't get, the way you're close with someone you've beaten up or been beaten up by, it's so different to like the way a normal friendship is. There's like a huge amount of intimacy in that. And like me, one of my best friends, I've only known for like a year, but we are super close because we train six, seven days a week together, try to hurt each other every day, just builds that, there's like a trust to it. [M5]

Three of the participants also commented that within the jiujitsu community there is a world-wide acceptance of martial artists and that someone who trains in jiujitsu can walk into another jiujitsu club anywhere in the world and be welcomed and invited to train.

> Take it [martial arts gi] always with the team patch and you're welcome anywhere in the world… what else does that for you? The ability to connect with other humans on the other side of the world. [M3]
>
> With BJJ you can go anywhere, anywhere in the world … as long as you know this art, you have this language. And you can't even speak the same language, but everyone that you know in this place they speak jiujitsu so you can train with them and speak a language with them. And it's a beautiful thing. [M6]

Role of teaching

Within the theme of the martial arts community was a subtheme related to teaching. Seven of the participants are currently, or have previously been, involved in teaching. All these participants loved teaching and felt very passionate about their teaching. And when asked what some of the most rewarding aspects of being involved in martial arts was, they responded it was the teaching. There were two primary factors that motivated these individuals in their teaching. One was that it helped them to improve and refine their own skills because teaching it forced them to learn and understand the techniques themselves so they could teach it to others.

> Having to think things through, how you do something or why you're doing it and having to explain it to someone actually reinforced the technique and the principles with yourself … made me a better practitioner. [M7]
>
> It helps when I'm instructing because I get to show everybody how, how to do the moves and how I was taught the moves. It also helps remind me how to do the moves and stuff when I show it to other people. [M3]

The second factor had to do with the more interpersonal aspects of working with kids and adults and how the participants felt rewarded by being in a mentorship role. They enjoyed seeing the progress and gains that their students would make and developing long-term relationships with their students.

> The really rewarding stuff is the coaching … walking around town and seeing kids that you taught when they were little … it makes you feel old, but it's cool. That's the really rewarding part. [M1]
>
> Even now owning a gym I really love the transformative aspect of it and how we can, how we can really help to change people with it [martial arts]. [M9]

A couple of these participants also noted that this was a way to pay it forward and give back in a way that they had experienced as a student.

> And how I can kind of explain all of the lessons and the journey that I've experienced to them. [M9]
>
> They tell me, 'oh thank you for teaching me'. And I just smile. I smile because, you know, I tell them this, I go, you remember that first guy I told you about, I called him my grandpa and stuff like that? [referring to a mentor when first starting in martial arts] I go, you know what, someone taught me when I first started. So I'm happy to teach you. I'm happy because you know I was a 16-year-old kid who didn't know anything and this guy came and he taught me. So hey, you know, if I can teach you, it's a blessing to me. It makes me very happy. [M6]

DISCUSSION

In this study, we qualitatively explored the meaning that participants ascribed to achieving a black belt and to their involvement in martials arts as a whole. Being involved in martials arts was overwhelmingly seen in a positive light, with both individual benefits (improved physical and mental health, skill development, and personal growth through both training and competitions) and interpersonal benefits (relationship development and developing a sense of community within martial arts) reported by all participants. The findings from this study are consistent with the results of previous studies. Overton [2017] also found that participants in his study spoke of personal growth and skill development as a result of participating in martial arts. Additionally, these participants spoke of the value of martial arts for self-defence, physical benefits, mental health benefits, and relationship formation. Chinkov and Holt [2016] interviewed men and women involved in Brazilian jiujitsu and found that all participants reported positive benefits of being involved in the sport, including physical and emotional changes, skill development, a sense of commitment and dedication, and personal growth,

including increased self-confidence inside and outside of the gym. Peer support and a sense of community was also identified by these participants as important to their training and development. Studies focusing on the use of a mixed martial arts program for at-risks youth and young men reported physical benefits, improved mental health (confidence and emotion regulation) and relationship development [Bird et al. 2019; Milligan et al. 2017]. Additional benefits outside of the program, such as improved academic performance and their own sense of personal growth were also found [Milligan et al. 2017]. A study involving older adults found that involvement in karate improved mental health among older adults [Jansen et al. 2016]. Finally, a quantitative study of over 900 men in Brazil that were engaged in martial arts (Brazilian jiujitsu, judo, karate, kung-fu, or taekwondo) reported an overall higher quality of life compared to a normative sample based on national data [Schwartz et al. 2021].

Being injured, and the resulting break in their training, was the only consistent negative aspect that was mentioned as a result of participating in this sport. Injuries have been commonly associated with involvement in martial arts, with a systematic review of injuries sustained in this sport finding an incidence rate of 246 per 1000 athletic encounters [Thomas & Thomas 2018]. Jensen and colleagues [2017] found an incidence rate of 23-29 per 100 fight-participations, with disciplines such as boxing, kickboxing and karate having higher rates of head and facial injuries, and disciplines such as Brazilian jiujitsu, judo, and wrestling having higher rates of joint injuries. However, despite the risk of injury as a result of this sport, this has not been a deterrent to anyone that participated in this study to discontinue their training.

Role of motivation in Martial Arts

Each of the participants in this study has shown high levels of dedication and motivation in their pursuit of a black belt and in choosing to continue to train in mixed martial arts. Self-determination theory (SDT) [Ryan & Deci 2000], which seeks to explain human motivation, can be drawn upon to explain this long-term commitment. SDT proposes that, within a social context, individuals have three basic needs that must be met to help fuel their self-motivation: autonomy, relatedness, and competence [Ryan & Deci 2000]. An individual is autonomous to the extent that their behaviour is willingly enacted and that the actions and values related to the behaviour are fully supported by the individual [Chirkov et al. 2003]. Relatedness refers to the sense of belonging and cohesion that an individual feels within the social environment [Calvo et al. 2010]. Competence, which is particularly influential to motivation in a sport context [Reinboth & Duda 2006], relates to an individual's ability to perform well in the sport.

SDT also distinguishes between three distinct types of motivation and their effects on learning, performance, and well-being [Ryan & Deci 2000]. Intrinsic motivation is an individual's innate tendency to seek out and participate in activities that they find interesting and enjoyable for their own sake and satisfaction. Extrinsic motivation is when an individual engages in an activity because there are certain outcomes that they value or are looking to achieve. These outcomes could include rewards or acknowledgements. A third type of motivation is amotivation which refers to having no intention to be actively involved in the activity or just going through the motions of the activity with no real intent.

We found that the participants in our study demonstrated elements of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation throughout their years of training. We can see their intrinsic motivation through their talk about wanting to continue to learn and develop their skills, even after achieving their black belt. Many participants spoke of their intentions to continue to be involved in marital arts, and jiujitsu in particular, for the foreseeable future, which clearly demonstrates a strong level of intrinsic motivation. The development of relationships with their peers and instructors, the sense of community they feel – and the role of mentorship for those who teach – may also contribute to their intrinsic motivation. The goal of achieving the black belt and in engaging in competitions demonstrates the influence of extrinsic motivation. They have been rewarded, or are on the road to be rewarded, with the black belt for the hard work and dedication they have put in. In the case of competitions, the incentives are the social acknowledgments and medals/trophies that they get through competition and winning. Overall, research supports that those who experience higher levels of satisfaction and the attainment of the needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence demonstrate higher levels of motivation and achieve greater overall well-being [Chirkov et al. 2003; Ryan & Deci 2000; Sheldon & Kasser 1998].

Another theory relating to human motivation that we can draw upon is goal setting theory [Locke & Latham 2006]. As defined by Locke and Latham [2006], 'a goal is a level of performance proficiency that we wish to attain, usually within a specific time period' [332]. According to goal setting theory, if individuals set realistic goals, such as achieving a specific standard of achievement (like a black belt or entering a competition), this will increase motivation through a desire to attain the goal, which will, in turn, improve performance. By setting a goal, an individual draws their attention and effort towards the goal. This then helps them to focus on actions that will lead to the attainment of the goal and away from actions that would reduce their likelihood of achieving the goal [Latham 2004].

One's level of commitment toward achieving a goal is influenced by two key factors: importance and self-efficacy [Locke & Latham 2002]. Goal importance relates to the purpose and value in achieving the goal and the expected outcomes in achieving the goal. Self-efficacy reflects the belief that one has in being able to attain the goal. Self-efficacy is key because if one believes they can attain the goal, they will be more motivated to do so. Furthermore, through the achievement of the goal, one can experience many positive outcomes such as an increased interest in the activity, pride in performance, an enhanced sense of personal satisfaction, greater happiness, and a higher level of satisfaction and well-being [Latham 2004; Latham & Locke 2006].

Setting goals have a number of important psychological benefits [Latham 2004]. One, in selecting and committing to a goal, an individual focuses their attention and energy on the goal and away from other goal-irrelevant activities. Two, having a goal can serve to energize an individual and keep them focused on success and on staying committed to the goal. Three, goals can encourage individuals to use their prior knowledge and experience to help them in achieving their goal or strategizing how to achieve their goal. While goals can be performance-based, such as achieving a black belt, they can also be learning-based. We see this in the way that nearly all of the participants who had attained their black belt have continued on in their training. Only one participant quit martial arts after earning their black belt. By having a goal to continue to develop their skills, to learn new skills, and to teach others, they continue to stay motivated and engaged in their martial art, and continue to assign importance and value to their training.

LIMITATIONS

There are four key limitations of this study to note. One, it is likely that the views expressed by the participants in this study, who have stayed involved in martial arts for years, and even decades, are different from the views of those who choose to leave the sport early. Two, there was only one female participant in this study and, although her views were aligned with the male participants, there are also likely important aspects of participating in martial arts that are gender-based. Further research with a larger female sample would be of great value. For instance, as a female involved in the sport myself (first author), I believe that there may be some differences regarding acceptance in the martial arts community for women who train in gyms that are largely male dominated. Additionally, as a female interviewer, there is a chance that the male participants may have refrained from discussing some aspects related to martial arts involvement, such as masculinity or violence [Green 2015]. However, given that many of the participants were personally known to the first author or were known acquaintances of other participants, we feel that participants were quite open in these discussions of their involvement in this sport. Fourth, this study was based on a relatively small sample size and short duration and would benefit from a more in-depth consideration of this topic.

CONCLUSION

In sum, this study shows that, for those who have stayed committed to the sport of martial arts, there are numerous physical and psychological benefits: improved cardiovascular endurance and muscular strength; skill development, including self defense; improved mental health, including increased self-esteem and confidence and reduced anxiety and stress; and a sense of belonging within the martial arts community. There are also high levels of intrinsic motivation among these individuals as they have been involved in the sport for years, and even decades, and many choose to continue their training long after achieving the black belt and to engage in life-long learning and skill development. Research has shown that engagement in sport has been positively linked to overall mental health [Snedden et al. 2019]; thus, having long-term involvement in this sport may positively influence one's mental well-being across decades. Martial arts is a sport that is welcoming of people of all ages from young children to older adults. This not only allows for individuals to get involved in this sport in their youth and remain involved for decades, but also provides the opportunity for multiple generations to interact with, learn from, and mentor one another. One benefit enjoyed by many of our participants was the ability to pay it forward to those starting out in martial arts. Finally, these findings may also make a meaningful contribution to the sociology of sport and have demonstrated the importance of friendships, mentorship, and the sense of belonging that one feels as part of the martial arts community. We, as humans, are social animals and social interaction is another important element for our health and mental well-being [Snyder-Mackler et al., 2020].

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THE MANY LIVES OF YANG LUCHAN: MYTHOPOESIS, MEDIA, AND THE MARTIAL IMAGINATION

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ABSTRACT

The life of Yang Luchan, patriarch of the Yang lineage and founder of taijiquan's most popular style, is a biographical blank slate upon which conservative, progressive, orientalist, and just plain rice bowl interests have inscribed wildly divergent narratives. Conservative scholar-disciples sought to link him with the invented Wudang-Daoist lineage, while progressives emphasized his humble origins and health benefits of the practice. His life (c.1799-1872) straddled the height of the Manchu empire and decline into semi-colonial spheres of foreign influence, while successive generations of Yang descendants propagated his 'intangible cultural heritage' through Republican, Communist, 'open', and global eras. Practiced world-wide by hundreds of millions, taijiquan's name recognition made it ripe for media appropriation, and Yang Luchan has been remythologized in countless novels, cartoons, television series, and full-length feature films. The case of Yang Luchan offers an unusual opportunity to witness an ongoing process of mythopoesis and to compare these narratives with traditional Chinese warrior heroes and Western models of mythology and heroology. If the lack of facts has not constrained the proliferation of invented biographies, neither should it discourage the quest for historical context as we sift and winnow truth from trope in the many reconstructions of Yang's life.

To know what you know and acknowledge what you do not know, that is true knowledge.
Confucius, *Analects 3: 2*

Seek truth from facts.
Ban Gu, *Hanshu* (History of the Former Han), 'Biography of Liu De'

Facts are such horrid things.
Jane Austen, *Lady Susan*, XXXII

INTRODUCTION

Among the burning issues in *taijiquan* historiography – the creator of the art, the historicity of Zhang Sanfeng and Wang Zongyue, and authorship and provenance of the 'classics' – the role and background of Yang style progenitor Yang Luchan (c. 1799-1872) is the focus of renewed scrutiny as various 'cradles' and 'birthplaces' vie for market share of *taijiquan* tourism. The irony of Yang's absence from official records, yet enduring cultural legacy, is widely acknowledged, but the dearth of credible biographical detail has not constrained a thriving industry in creative reconstructions of his life. Late Qing dynasty (1644-1911) historiography on the local level is mainly a chronicle of degrees earned, offices held, and acts of filial piety. Thus, although recognized as founding father of the Yang style of *taijiquan*, practiced today by hundreds of millions worldwide, his name does not appear in local gazetteers, examination rolls, family genealogies, gravestone epitaphs, or correspondence – i.e., the grassroots sources that one might call the 'first draft' of Chinese history. Moreover, his prowess as a martial artist attracted the attention of the Manchu court, we are told, yet there is no mention in official Qing histories.[1] If dynastic histories have a vested interest in glorifying their founders, and local gazetteers in celebrating their native sons, the bias inherent in family genealogies and epitaphs is exponentially greater. Nevertheless, in spite of the 'motivated reasoning' that characterizes all reconstructions of Yang's life, it becomes a lens through which to view the forces shaping Chinese intellectual history and a cautionary tale for current students confronting competing paradigms of rationalization and mythologization.

This study traces the story of Yang's career from three sentences in a single contemporaneous 19th century source, through its invented elaborations in 20th century mass-market instructional books, to 21st century novels, cartoons, television series, and full-length motion pictures. If the Wu brothers (Wu Yuxiang, Wu Chengqing and Wu Ruqing) initiated the textual tradition of *taijiquan*, it was fellow Yongnian native Yang Luchan who put it on the martial arts map and sired its most influential style and lineage. Though his literacy and that of his sons and grandsons is in question, there is a considerable body of published Yang family technical teachings, often attributed to ghost writers Chen Weiming and Zheng Manqing. Nevertheless, Yang Luchan remains the critical link between Yongnian County, Chen Village, Beijing and beyond, with an impact that spans the Imperial, Republican, and Communist eras.

SOLE CONTEMPORANEOUS ACCOUNT

Li Yiyu's 1881 'Short Preface to Taijiquan' (*Taijiquan xiaoxu*), that accompanies his handwritten recension of uncle Wu Yuxiang's collection of 'classics', gives this account of Yang's background:

> Mr. Yang from the Nanguan district of my hometown admired the art and traveled to Chen Village to study it. He applied himself with great diligence, and after ten years, had mastered its subtleties. Returning to his hometown, he demonstrated it to fellow martial arts enthusiasts. My uncle, Wu Yuxiang, was very impressed and often sparred with him, but Yang did not lightly reveal the secrets, so Uncle Wu was only able to grasp the general idea. [Gu 1983]

This tantalizingly terse account leaves ample latitude for scholarly speculation and artistic license. Each of the few details in this sole contemporaneous account has been roundly contradicted and pointedly contested in later versions. Family, educational level, martial arts background, exploits and reputation, relationship with Chen and Wu families, and life beyond Chen Village and Yongnian are all lacunae ripe for creative fabrication. The 'cults of personality' that grew up around such Chinese figures as Chiang Kaishek and Mao Zedong allowed for their images to be installed on family altars, but were constrained by norms of historiography that stopped short of claiming divine lineages and walking on water. Yang Luchan, by contrast, is a man virtually without formal history, and thus a blank slate or mirror for reflecting the values and motives of the tellers.

What follows, then, is a survey of successive generations of students and scholars whose accounts of the life of Yang Luchan set the parameters for future speculation, a process that proceeds unabated to the present.

1 Shao Baosheng presents a cogent case questioning the authenticity of the famous calligraphic couplet praising Yang's skill attributed to imperial tutor Weng Tonghe (1830-1903). Shao estimates that Yang was 66 to 73 at the time he entered the employ of the imperial household. He also disputes the oft-repeated claim that the Weng couplet was the first association of the cosmological concept of '*taiji*' with Yang's art, and that Yang himself referred to his style as '*huaquan*' or '*mianquan*'. Shao reminds us that the 'Wang Zongyue Treatise' uses the name '*taijiquan*' [Shao 2006].

SCHOLAR-DISCIPLES AND DESCENDANTS

As mentioned, we have no gazetteer biographies, no family genealogy, no autobiography, and no epitaph, a situation strongly suggestive of illiteracy on the part of Yang Luchan and his sons Yang Jianhou and Yang Banhou. The next generation of Yang's descendantsfinds us in the midst of early Republican Era ideological battles between progressives and conservatives, with their different visions of what constitutes cultural treasures (*guibao*) or trash (*zaopo*), baby or bath water. A cohort of polymath cultural preservationists, including Guan Baiyi (1882-1956), Wu Zhiqing (1887-1951), Chen Weiming (1881-1958), Dong Yingjie (1888-1961), Zheng Manqing (1901-1975), and Wu Tunan (1884-1989), sought out living lineage holders and promoted the diffusion of native martial arts as a remedy for the 'Sick Man of Asia' image.

China's earliest mass-market publications on taijiquan are as remarkable for their sins of omission as for their fanciful fabrications. Guan Baiyi's 1912 *Taijiquan jing* (*Taijiquan Classics*) and Sun Lutang's (1861-1931) 1919 *Taijiquan xue* (*The art of taijiquan*) both propogated the myth of the immortal Zhang Sanfeng as creator and Wang Zongyue as disciple, with no acknowledgement of Yang Luchan whatever. Even grandson Yang Chengfu's recently discovered 1925 *Taijiquan yaoyi* (*Essentials of taijiquan*) adopts wild creation and transmission myths, but makes no reference to his own grandfather Luchan. Dong Yingjie's 1946 *Taijiquan shiyi* (*Introduction to taijiquan*) and Zheng Manqing's 1947 *Zhengzi taijiquan shisan pian* (*Master Zheng's thirteen chapters on taijiquan*) and later *Zhengzi taijiquan zixiu xinfa* (*Master Zheng's new method of self-study for taijiquan*), likewise devote lengthy expositions to invented lineages, while omitting, or giving short shrift, to Yang Luchan, though both were students of Yang's grandson Yang Chengfu.

By contrast, Xu Yusheng (1887-1945), student of Yang Luchan's son Yang Jianhou (1839-1917), produced the 1921 *Taijiquan shi tujie* (*Illustrated manual of the taijiquan form*), which featured line drawings of the Yang family art and the following tribute to Yang Luchan:

> When Master Yang served as tutor in the Manchu garrison, there were three students who grasped the true transmission: Wan Chun, Ling Shan, and Quan You. One excelled at power, one at repelling, and one at neutralizing. We might say that each of them mastered one aspect of Yang's complete art, or the difference between sinews, bones, and skin. [Xu 1921]

Chen Weiming's 'Preface' to his 1925 *Taijiquan shu* (*The art of taijiquan*) relates that Chengfu said to Weiming: 'My grandfather learned the art from the Chen family of Henan', and the section titled 'Taijiquan shu yuanliu' ('Origins of the art of taijiquan') sets forth a genesis with Zhang Sanfeng as creator, Wang Zongyue as transmitter and author of the 'Treatise', down to the Chen family, and thence to Yang Luchan. When it comes to family background, Chen says, 'Chen (Changxing) had more than ten disciples, and Yang Luchan spared no expense to study with him' [Chen 1925]. This account merges mythological origins with the historical Chen family and gives us an image of Yang Luchan as a martial arts enthusiast and a man of means.

Scholar and martial arts advocate Wu Tunan, born four years after Wu Yuxiang's death, and a student of Wu Jianquan and Yang Luchan's grandson Yang Shaohou (1862-1930), writing in his 1928 *Taijiquan*, introduces a novel biographical detail, providing Luchan with a hometown traveling companion, Li Bokui, and making them the first outsiders to be accepted as students by Chen Changxing (1771-1853). Going even further, Wu Tunan reveals in his 1936 *Guoshu gailun* (*General introduction to Chinese martial arts*) that Wu Yuxiang was preparing to take the military exam, practicing the traditional 'archery, horsemanship, sword, and weightlifting', and approached Yang Luchan for training. Yang Luchan was disillusioned with teaching and passed Wu off to his second son Yang Banhou. Yang Banhou was offended by Wu's arrogance, and Wu for his part did not appreciate the Yang family policy of secrecy.[2] A similar account is given in Huang Yuanxiu's (1884-1954) 1934 *Taijiquan yaoyi* (*Essentials of taijiquan*). Huang was a student of Yang Jianhou and says that Yang Luchan and Li Bokui learned of Chen Changxing by reputation and made the pilgrimage to Chen Village, where their sincerity moved Changxing to break tradition and reveal the secrets to the two outsiders. Luchan returned to Yongnian and spread the teaching throughout his hometown, where it was called *ruanquan* (soft boxing), or *huaquan* (transformation boxing), eventually traveling to the capital and becoming tutor to the Manchu princes.

Yang Chengfu's 1934 *Taijiquan tiyong quanshu* (*Complete principles and applications of taijiquan*) gives a more ideologically inflected account of grandfather Yang Luchan's background, informing us that he reported being impressed with the feats of Chinese street performers, whom he considered the equals of Western strongmen. China's professional code of secrecy inhibited progress, so he proceeded to Chen Village, and after proving his determination, Chen Changxing consented to teach him at night. Completing his studies in Chen Village, he moved on to the capital, where he vowed to teach all comers openly. Seeking to spread the teachings further, Luchan then traveled south to Fujian and Zhejiang provinces. Chengfu says his grandfather taught that the transmission was from Zhang Sanfeng at the end of the Song, to Chen Zhoutong, to Zhang Songxi, to Jiang Fa, whose only student was Chen Changxing. If Luchan died in 1872, and grandson Chengfu was born 1883, Chengfu's account of his grandfather must be from his father Jianhou's recollection, or coaching from ghost writers [Yang 1934].

In general, the accounts of the scholar-disciples and Yang family descendants emphasize the putative Daoist origins of Yang's art, and

2 This is similar to Wu Yuxiang's 8th grandson Laixu's *Brief Biography of Grandfather Lianquan* (*Xian wangfu Lianquan jun xinglue*), which tells us that when Yuxiang learned of Chen Village masters, he was anxious to study with them, but was unable to get away, so sent Yang Luchan instead. Interestingly, both accounts have Yang withholding secrets from Wu when Yang returned to Yongnian [Wu 2013].

a willingness to historicize such figures of folklore as Zhang Sanfeng, Xu Xuanping, and Wang Zongyue. They tend to gloss Yang's family background and minimize or omit the roles of the Chen family and Wu brothers. To the chagrin of modern historians, these scholar-disciple accounts devote more space to fabricating martial arts credentials for the legendary immortal Zhang Sanfeng than to researching the real-world background of Yang Luchan.[3]

SCHOLAR SKEPTICS AND RECENT REVISIONISTS

With minor variations, scholar-disciples and descendents share a common narrative of taijiquan's origins. They splice together the Huang Zongxi 'Epitaph for Wang Zhengnan' lineage of the 'Internal School', from Song dynasty Daoist alchemist Zhang Sanfeng through successive transmissions to Wang Zongyue, who wrote the 'Treatise', to Jiang Fa, who delivered it to Chen Changxing, and thence to Yang Luchan. All blithely ignore Li Yiyu's 1881 'Preface', that responsibly confesses: 'We do not know the origins of taijiquan' [Gu 1983]. Nevertheless, the former became the standard model of Yang's biography until challenged by Tang Hao, who claimed that Yang was sold as a bondservant to the Chen family of Chen Village in Wen County, Henan, where he learned from Chen Changxing [Tang/Gu 1964]. Tang Hao's 1930's field work in Chen Village led him to conclude that Yang was sold as a young boy to Chen Dehu of Chen Village, who also operated the Taihetang Pharmacy in Yongnian which was rented from the Wu family. Although Chen Dehu was a member of the prestigious Hanlin Academy, the highest academic body at the Manchu court, he patronized martial arts and allowed Chen Changxing to teach clansmen in his courtyard. When Chen Dehu died, it was considered unseemly for Yang to remain in the same household with the young widow, and he was released from bondage. Returning to Yongnian, he lived in Chen Dehu's Pharmacy, where he met Wu Yuxiang. Tang believes this version of Yang's background is confirmed in Chen Xin's *Chenshi jiasheng* (*Chen family genealogy*) and interviews with Hao Shaoru (1907-1983), fifth generation Wu (Yuxiang) lineage holder.[4]

Fellow pioneer martial arts historian Xu Zhen (1898-1993) largely agrees with Tang's account, and laments the modern trend to conceal the humble origins of accomplished figures, contrasting this with examples of great men throughout history who did not gloss their origins, and citing painter Qi Baishi as a rare contemporary exception. Xu Zhen speculates that when Yang returned to Yongnian, he ingratiated himself with the wealthy and influential Wu family, who for their part, were so impressed with his skill that they were willing to stoop to studying with someone below their station. The Wus introduction of Yang to the Manchu nobility proved to be a great boost to his career and family fortunes for generations [Xu 2006]. Extrapolating from the various timeframes, Gu Liuxin calculates that Yang was born in 1799 and returned to Yongnian approximately in 1849 [Gu 1983].

Tang, Xu and Gu, riding the wave of the New Culture Movement of the early turn-of-the-century, opposed the tendency to sacrifice 'fact' on the altar of family and face, a 'feudal' retention they considered an obstacle to China's progress and modernization. Today, nearly a century later, a faction of the new post-Mao/post-Deng generation has revived the humble origins theory, originally a paradigm shift of Kuhnian proportions; but in this latest iteration, it is embroidered with dramatic details conjured out of active imaginations. Representative of this development is Zhang Shengquan, portraying Yang Luchan as an enterprising peasant boy who sold coal and vegetable oil, and also worked as a cook, but through ambition and acumen rose from poverty. During three trips to Chen Village, he offered to work as a servant for free, and was so conscientious that Chen Changxing was moved to break precedent and teach a non-family member. Returning to Yongnian after 18 years, Yang Luchan impressed the Wu brothers, and Yang enrolled his son Yang Banhou as a student with Wu Yuxiang, expecting that Wu would one day pass the *jinshi* exam and could be useful to the fortunes of the Yang family. Although Wu Yuxiang was able to compare notes on martial arts with Yang, after some years, he still could not grasp the essence. Wu then journeyed to Chen Village, where he learned that Chen Changxing had retired from teaching, but he was able to use his brother Wu Chengqing's political influence to get Chen clansman Qingping in nearby Zhaobao Village released from prison, and thereby win acceptance as a student and the gift of a copy of the 'Treatise' [Zhang 2021]. While this account contains no supernatural elements, and seems perfectly rational, there is not a shred of documentation.

Qing Fengxuan adheres to the Tang/Gu poor boy thesis, but revises Yang's birthdate from 1799 to 1797, has him learning the art by 'observing', rather than 'spying', while waiting on Chen Changxing during clan training sessions in Chen Dehu's pharmacy courtyard in Yongnian [Qing 2012]. A variation of this version appears in an anonymously authored Baidu.com entry for the Taihetang Pharmacy, which relates that the staff were from Wen County in Henan and practiced the Chen family art. Yongnian villager Yang Luchan, who used to deliver coal and provisions to the pharmacy, so impressed store manager Wang Chang that he hired him to work in the store and participate in martial arts practice. Eventually, store owner Chen Dehu asked Yang's father if he

3 The following is a chronological list of publications by students of second and third generation Yang family members: Xu Yusheng, 1921, *Taijiquan shi tujie*; Chen Weiming, 1925, *Taijiquan jiangyi* & 1929, *Taijiquan dawen*; Yang Chengfu, 1931 (Dong Yingjie, ghostwriter),*Taijiquan shiyongfa* & 1934, *Taijiquan tiyong quanshu* (Zheng Manqing, ghostwriter); Huang Wenshu, 1936, *Taijiquan yaoyi*; Wu Zhiqing, 1940, *Taiji zhengzong*; Chen Yanlin, 1943, *Taijiquan, dao, jian, gan, sanshou hebian*; Zheng Manqing, 1947, *Zhengzi Taijiquan shisan pian.*

4 Interestingly, the only other source to show similar restraint is the official Yang Family website, that offers biographies of second, third, fourth, and fifth generation family lineage holders, but is mute on the subject of Yang Luchan, and the name does not appear once. This is particularly telling given the family's keenness to establish legitimacy by lineage and the general cultural practice of honoring ancestors. One can only speculate that this conspicuous omission represents an acknowledgment of the lack of information and unwillingness to encourage baseless claims.

could adopt the boy as a foster son, delegating Chen Changxing to instruct him. Ten years passed, and Chen Dehu sent Yang Luchan back to Yongnian to teach martial arts. Later, Chen Dehu and Wu Ruqing, who both made *jinshi* and were both appointed to the elite Hanlin Academy, invited Yang to the capital to teach martial arts. Finally, Wu Yuxiang traveled to Chen Village and studied with Chen Qingping, thus the Taihetang Pharmacy became the cradle of both Yang and Wu (Yuxiang) styles of taijiquan. This narrative is echoed in the commemorative plaque to Yang that hangs today in the restored Wu family mansion in Guangfu City [Anon. n.d.].

Li Jinfan (1920-1991), Li family descendent and fifth generation Wu Yuxiang stylist, offers a detailed chronology of Yang's movements and interactions with the Wu brothers. He says that Yang was born in 1799, and in 1813 went to live with the Chen family in Henan as 'a matter of survival'. In 1818, the Wu brothers began studying *hongquan* with their father, and four years later, trying conclusions with Yang, defeated him. In 1825, the Wu brothers began training at the Taihetang Pharmacy, and the following year, Yang traveled to Henan to study with Chen Changxing. After briefly returning to Yongnian to take a wife, Yang went back to Henan. In 1836, Yang returned with his family to Yongnian, and once again visited his teacher in Henan. In 1845, he finally bested Wu Yuxiang in a friendly match. After repeating that performance in 1852, Wu determined to make the pilgrimage to Chen Village, and after receiving the Wang Zongyue manuscripts from Chen Qingping, and training with nephews Li Yiyu and Li Qixuan, in1856, he defeated Yang. Regrettably, this impressive chronology, with its familiar cast of historical characters, and presumably based on family oral traditions, is delivered without a single reference [Li 2010].

NEO-CONSERVATIVE REACTION

The Tang/Gu 'rags to riches' narrative challenged the custom of honoring one's ancestors by inflating their backgrounds and maintaining family monopolies by 'secrets', instead emphasizing the broader national interests and the human potential residing in the masses. This became the dominant tone in Mainland martial arts scholarship until after the Deng Era reforms that opened the door for the revival of family lineages. Thereafter, in a kind of Counter-Reformation, family histories were slanted to refute the Tang/Gu claims and to bolster the legitimacy and mystique of their own lineages. These new revisionist biographies often contradict each other, but the shared impetus is to remake the image of Yang Luchan by elevating his social status.

Liu Xiwen's 2011 'Yang Luchan shenshi kunhuo' ('Confusion over Yang Luchan's background') reopens the case, bringing together many objections based on circumstantial evidence. He begins by pointing out that martial arts training usually takes place in the early morning or early evening, precisely when servants are busiest with domestic duties. Moreover, given the birthdates of his three sons, and the claim that Yang was indentured at ten and emancipated after 30 years, Liu wonders how he could have married and had children while a servant? He replaces this scenario with the proposal that Yang was a successful trader, who simply paid tuition for training in Chen Village. Returning to Yongnian, he injured an opponent in a match, and to avoid a lawsuit, fled to Beijing, where he found employment as a tutor to the sons of Zhang Fu, a pickle shop proprietor who was an exclusive provisioner to the royal palace. Yang intervened in an incident where Zhang's life was in danger, thus revealing his martial arts prowess, and it was Zhang who introduced him to the palace and not Wu Ruqing. Incorrectly attributing the 'three trips to Chen Village' legend to Li Yiyu's 'Preface', Liu calculates that given the 28 year age difference, if Yang was 21 at the time of his first trip, Chen Changxing would have been 49. Chen was a bodyguard by profession, and a man with much experience of the world, so it is unlikely that Yang stole the family secrets by spying, or was moved by Yang's sincerity, proposing that only a man of means could undertake the three 500 km round trips and pay tuition. Liu also reminds us that Yang's eldest son Yang Fenghou died an opium addict, an expensive habit requiring considerable resources. He also wonders how, without a certain cultural level, a simple peasant could function in the sophisticated milieu of the Manchu princes, and even win the praise of imperial tutor Weng Tonghe. Taijiquan founding fathers, the three Wu brothers, nephew Li Yiyu, Quan You, Wu Jianquan, Sun Lutang, and Zheng Manqing were all men of letters, and it seems unlikely that Yang would be the lone exception. Finally, Liu points out that the Manchu garrisons in Beijing were divided into the Eastern and Western Camps – the Eastern for the fittest, and the Western for the weaker. The fittest were trained in wrestling, and the weaker were assigned to Luchan, who modified his regimen accordingly, as he had for the Manchu nobility and scholars, with their long robes and queues [Liu 2011].

One ingenious strategy for reconciling many differences (such as those between Chen and Yang styles, the absence of classics, or even the name 'taijiquan', in Chen Village, and connecting the historical Chen Changxing and mythological Zhang Sanfeng) is Jin Enzhong's insertion of a 'Daoist' *deus ex machina* into the narrative. This involves claiming that Luchan only gained a glimpse of the art from Chen Changxing, but was fully enlightened by Daoist priest Chen Yinchang [AT 2019]. Jin constructs a genealogy originating with Zhang Sanfeng and extending to Liu Guquan, Wang Zongyue, and Jiang Fa, who transmitted it to Zhaobao Village, and finally reaching Chen Village, where it was picked up by Chen Changxing and Yang Luchan. Jin admits that his version of events is vehemently denied by Chen family descendants in Chen Village today. Jin also points out that in the 'Preface' to his *Taijiquan tiyong quanshu*, Yang Chengfu states that he personally saw his grandfather – which, given Yang Luchan's lifespan (1799-1872), would be impossible, since Yang Chengfu (1883-1936) was not yet born at the time of his grandfather's death. This inconvenience is bravely reconciled by Jin's suggestion that Luchan actually died at 97 [Jin 2000].

Still other accounts cast Yang Luchan as a scholar employed in a rich man's household, where one day he drops his disguise to single-handedly rescue three household bodyguards who had been beaten and

bound by intruders. Taking an opposite tack, Ziqi Donglai insists that Yang was an accomplished hard-style fighter before going to Chen Village, and that his success in the ring may just as well be attributed to that background as to anything he learned from Chen Changxing [Ziqi Donglai 2018]. This conjecture, of course, can neither be definitively confirmed nor denied, as there are no eye-witness reports of 'Yang the Invincible' overcoming opponents using soft-style or any other techniques.

Yunzhong Gongzi has a highly novel interpretation of Yang's life, which radically recasts the whole origin and development of taijiquan. He contends that the original Chen family art was strictly external, and that it was Chen Changxing who infused it with spiritual cultivation (*xinfa*), with the goal of achieving perfect 'stillness' (*jing*), thus transforming it into an ' internal' art, with sitting and standing meditation, more like *xingyiquan*. Originally, this practice had no name, and Chen Changxing and Yang Luchan developed it as a way of deepening stillness. As neither of them were scholars, they did not record their teachings, but Yang attracted the attention of Beijing elites, who were not serious about either meditation or martial arts, but used it for amusement, stitching together poses to create forms. When the 'Treatise on Taijiquan' appeared, it gave its name to the art and shifted the focus to self-defense, so that stillness became a means to master martial arts, rather than the original intent, which was for martial arts to be a means, or side-effect, of achieving stillness. Yunzhong Gongzi asserts that taijiquan, xingyi, and yoga have all lost their spiritual emphasis and become mere empty shells of poses, although traces of the original standing meditation (*zhanzhuang*) can still be detected in the momentary pauses and palm facing postures of Wu (Yuxiang), Yang Banhou small frame, and Sun styles. He believes that the ultimate goal should be to achieve absolute mastery of our metabolism and be able to suspend breathing and hibernate. It was this paranormal ability, he claims, that allowed Yang Luchan to gain the reputation of invincibility and not the practice of forms or teachings described in the classics [Yunzhong Gongzi 2017]. This revisionist account, while posing as sober scholarship, begins to tread the slippery slope toward biographical fiction.

Poster Winriman has a creative explanation for why Yang and Chen styles are so different in spite of universal agreement that Yang Luchan spent years in Chen Village. Many assume that Yang modified the style to accommodate the new cultural environment he encountered in the capital. Winriman begins his argument by accepting the authenticity of the 'classics' revealed by members of the Li family of Boai County, Henan, which they claim to have discovered in their family genealogy and dated 1716. The reason Yang's form, terminology, and styles are identical to these texts is because Chen Wangting studied with a Daoist priest in the Boai Thousand Year Temple, and this knowledge was secretly preserved in the Chen family lineage. This is what Changxing taught Yang, along with giving him the classics, while other members of the Chen family created forms based on *tongbei* and Qi Jiguang's *Quanjing* (*Classic of pugilism*), which is now what we recognize as the Chen style. He emphasizes the 'Daoist' origins of the art, and that Yang alone received the form and classics from Changxing, and not Wu [Winriman 2020]. While not introducing any supernatural personnages or supernormal feats, his narrative of transmission writes a wholly original script for a familiar cast. Needless to say, this decentering of Yongnian, Chen Village, and Beijing, shifting the origins to the Li family and Thousand Year Temple in Boai County, has been met with accusations of forgery and fabrication by most martial arts scholars.

These accounts are representative of a transitional stage in Yang's biographical narratives between fact and fiction. Real historical figures are granted the power to perform supernormal feats, as in Jin Enzhong's reports of Yang's ability to defy gravity by clinging to a wall like a gecko, or lifting himself off the ground by his own queue [Jin 2000]. In the next stage, all pretense of representing fact is abandoned, and Yang becomes a figure of folklore, biographical fiction, and fantasy.

Biographical Fiction: Novels, Films, and Cartoons

Entering the realm of biographical fiction, we find new characters, new settings, and new plots grafted onto already thin historical root stock, and a willingness to co-mingle real and supernatural characters, conflating history with myth. This phenomenon cannot be separated from the promotion of mass literacy in the 20th century and the explosion of print, broadcast, and film media. We are now two removes from any claim to 'history' [Lao 2020; Song 2016]. The combination of biographical blank slate and high name recognition made Yang Luchan a tempting target for fictional inscription as individuals, the martial arts, and the nation struggled to create new identities and roles in the mid-20th century.

Gong Baiyu's (1899-1966) 1940 biographical novel *Touquan* (*Stealing the martial arts secrets*) was wildly popular and opened the floodgates for future invention in the Yang Luchan saga. In Gong's version, Yang hails from a *rich* peasant family, but is a sickly child whose father prescribes martial arts training as an adjunct to his academic studies. Initially, Yang trains in *changquan* with security guard Li Defa, but after hearing of Chen Changxing, he poses as a mute beggar and makes the pilgrimage to Chen Village. Finally, after passing out from hypothermia at the master's gate, he is taken in as a servant. Ultimately, Chen is persuaded by Yang's sincerity and dedication to reveal the whole art to him [Gong 1940].

In the People's Physical Education Publishing House 1982 cartoon version of *Touquan*, Yang is a peasant with a weak constitution and diminutive stature, but an obsession with the tradition of righteous knight-errantry (*renxia*). Yang's father arranges for him to study *huaquan* with local strongman Li Defa, who insists that only brute strength prevails in a fight. Yang, for his part, secretly peruses books promoting taiji teachings, such as 'softness overcoming hardness' and 'four ounces deflecting a thousand pounds'. Li scoffs at this, but in a test of mettle, Yang defeats his teacher and resolves to seek out Chen

Qingping. His determination is only strengthened, when on the way, he encounters Fang Zishou, Chen's lowest ranking student, and as a result of an altercation, Fang easily defeats him [He 2018]. The original book sold in the millions, and the cartoon adaptation in the tens of millions. A poster who goes by 'Lao Lin' tells us the cartoon sequels, issued by popular demand, departed from the novel, adding episodes from oral folklore.

Once biography has morphed into mythology, and invented plots have proliferated across such modern media as novels, films, cartoons and television serials, the next stage is from myth to archetype, employing similar plot elements but with a different cast of characters, even verging on farce. An example of this genre is the 1997 film *Taiji zongshi* (*Tai Chi Master*), whose protagonist Yang Yuqian from Hebei Province, Yutian County, travels to the capital in search of martial arts masters to realize his dream. Along the way, Yang encounters *bagua* master Dong Hancheng, who rebuffs his application, but Yang continues on to Chen Jiabao in Henan, where Chen Zhengying accepts him as a disciple, and he ultimately becomes a style founder. In this iteration, the trope of 'stealing the secrets' has been dropped. The names are thinly disguised near-homophone references to characters in the Yang Luchan story that will be familiar to Chinese viewers and foreign taijiquan enthusiasts.

Even today, it is evident that the dust has not yet settled on the conservative-progressive culture wars that peaked during the 1898 Hundred Days of Reform, the New Culture Movement (1915-1925), and Cultural Revolution (1966-1975), but continue now in the new environment of globalization and commercialization. While we gain little in the way of 'facts' about the life of Yang Luchan from all of this, we learn a great deal about the fraught state of Chinese martial arts historiography and how quickly myths rush in where history fears to tread.

Finally, one is tempted to add the restored 'original residence' (*guju*) of Yang Luchan to the list of invented interpretations. Standing in Handan City in what was formerly Guangfu Town in Hebei Province, Yongnian County, it is a truly grand affair, whose recent construction in the traditional style gives it the look of a museum rather than a restoration, except for the lack of authentic period artifacts. Its scale and magnificence show proper homage to the founder, but in no way represent the still official 'humble origins' narrative.

Comparisons toward a Conclusion

What are we to make of this cacophony of conflicting accounts of Yang Luchan's life? Logically, they cannot all be true, but they *can* all be false. Of course, if one *is* true, it cancels the others. We began this investigation with the observation that there were few facts and much biography, and an inverse relationship between distance from events and detail of description. Li Yiyu's 1881 'Short Preface' is respectfully vague, but subsequent biographies became vehicles for progressive or conservative, and finally Nationalist and Communist cultural ideologies. That is to say, the variations are not random, but colored by partisan interests.

The earliest biographies of Yang Luchan were appended to instructional manuals intended to popularize taijiquan; the second were critical tracts aimed at reforming martial arts historiography; the final projected Yang as a folk hero for mass culture entertainment. The Wu brothers, as degree holders and officials, were the subjects of numerous genealogical and gazetteer entries, as well as epitaphs, biographies, and autobiographies, which somewhat tempered hyperbole. Yang biographers, however, lacking stable biographical plot points, other than a relationship with the Wu family, a sojourn in Chen Village, and a stint in the capital, had no such constraints, as Luchan, sons, and grandsons were not degree holders, and thus did not rate official biographies.

The persistence of what common sense tells us are mutually exclusive paradigms, rife with essentialism, creationism, concretism, and magical thinking, reveals that we are not playing by the evidentiary rules of the laboratory or court of law. Nevertheless, fabrication holds a fascination of its own, and fabrication is, after all, a cultural production as interesting to the historian as fact. The final sections seek to explore more theoretical perspectives on the construction of Yang's biography in light of parallels in the historical moments that witnessed the revival of soft-style martial arts during the Ming-Qing and Qing-Republican transitions, traditional Chinese heroology, and general theories of mythology and narratology.

More than Coincidence: Mining the 'Epitaph' for Theory, Biography and History

The use of the *Yijing* (*Book of changes*), *Neijing* (*Classic of medicine*), *Quanjing* (*Classic of pugilism*), *Neijia quanfa* (*Art of the Internal School*), *Sunzi bingfa* (*Sunzi's art of war*), *Daode jing*, *Zhuangzi*, and the writings of Chang Naizhou have all been extensively examined for their metaphysical and biophysical contributions to the development of taijiquan. Moreover, in hitching their history to the Internal School, the Yang family (or their proxies), they borrowed elements of the 'Epitaph' to construct an historical and theoretical lineage for the popularization of taijiquan, involving: Zhang Sanfeng as creator, Internal School movement principles, Wang Zong's rebirth as Wang Zongyue, Wang Zhengnan as virtuous and patriotic martial arts hero, and the reinterpreting of 'Internal' from a distinct historical species to a genus that includes bagua and xingyi, under the broad classification of 'internal martial arts'.

It was the progressive scholar-skeptics who exposed the culture war dialectic of the mythologizing versus modernizing interpretations of Yang's life, but whether based on fantasy or fieldwork, they both selectively mined the 'Epitaph' for their basic themes and motifs. For this reason, it may be useful to review the details and structure of Huang

Zongxi's account of Wang's life. The following excerpt from Huang's 'Epitaph for Wang Zhengnan' should suffice for that purpose:

> Shaolin is famous for its boxers. However, its techniques are chiefly offensive, which creates opportunities for an opponent to exploit. Now, there is another school that is called 'internal', which overcomes movement with stillness. Attackers are effortlessly repulsed. Thus we distinguish Shaolin as 'external'.
>
> The Internal School was founded by Zhang Sanfeng of the Song Dynasty. Sanfeng was a Daoist alchemist of the Wudang Mountains. He was summoned by Emperor Huizong, but the road was impassable. That night he dreamt that the God of War transmitted the art of boxing to him and the following morning killed over a hundred bandits.
>
> A hundred years later, Zhang's art spread to Shaanxi Province, where Wang Zong was its most noteworthy exponent. […] [after successive transmissions] Dan Sinan's student was Wang Zhengnan. […] After retiring from the army and returning home, he was very secretive about the subtleties of his art. Practicing behind closed doors, even his students were unable to catch a glimpse. Wang spied on him through a hole in the floorboards and got the general idea. Dan's sons were unworthy, and he lamented that after his passing, there would be no one to carry on. When Wang heard this, he presented him with several silver goblets to be used for financing tea production. Dan was very moved by this gesture and gave him the whole transmission from beginning to end.
>
> Wang was very cautious, and after receiving the transmission, never betrayed the slightest hint of it. He only used his art in the most dire emergencies. One night there was an incident involving a spy, and Wang was detained by the guards. He was tied to a pillar, and more than a score of men stood guard with a great deal of drunken revelry. Wang picked up a piece of broken pottery and secretly cut his bonds. Drawing a piece of silver from his bosom, he tossed it into the air, and all the men struggled to grab it. In this way he was able to escape. […] The guards were still convinced that he was a criminal and surrounded him in great numbers. Wherever Wang struck, he left wounded.
>
> Once during his later years, Wang was traveling alone, when he encountered some soldiers who tried to coax him to carry a heavy load for them. He begged to be excused, but they insisted. Wang waited until they reached a bridge, and then threw the load over. The soldiers drew their swords and pressed him. Defending himself with bare hands, several of the soldiers were sent sprawling and dropped their swords with a clank.
>
> In striking opponents, Wang made use of acupuncture points – death points, mute points, and vertigo points – just as illustrated in the bronze models of the channels. […] Wang was a knight-errant and would avenge wrongs only when moved by real injustice.
>
> As a young man, Wang had an interview with Lu Haidao. Lu tested his abilities and gave him a post. […] He carried out his duties unstintingly and was named to fill the post of company commander in Linshan. […]
>
> After the military disaster, Wang vowed that until defeat was avenged, he would abstain from eating meat to express his dedication to this goal. […] Wang gave up his post and retired to his home. Those who admired his skill thought because he was poor he could easily be compromised. The high-ranking military officers all paid their respects, but he was completely unaffected and ignored them. He continued to dig in the fields and haul manure as if unaware that he possessed a skill that could earn him an easier living.
>
> One day Wang happened to meet an old friend who shared living quarters with the garrison commander. Just then Drillmaster Yan Songjiang was instructing his troops in the martial arts. The drillmaster, relaxing and strumming his three-stringed lute, regarded Wang with his hemp headgear and coarse clothing as a non-entity. When his old friend mentioned that Wang was adept at boxing, the drillmaster, glancing sidelong at him, said, 'Is this true?' Wang modestly declined. The drillmaster, loosening his clothes and raising his eyebrows, said: 'How would you like to have a little match?' Wang once again declined. The drillmaster, taking him as a coward, pressed him more forcefully, so Wang had no choice but to respond. The drillmaster was thrown once, and when he requested another round, was thrown again with such force that blood streamed down his face.
>
> Wang had no formal education, but was refined and cheerful in conversing with the gentry, with no hint of crudeness. Once I accompanied him to the Tiantong Temple. One of the monks, Shanyan, was renown for his strength, and four or five men could not pin his arm. As soon as Wang touched him, he jumped back in pain. Wang said: 'Nowadays, people feel that the Internal Art lacks dazzle, so they adulterate it with the external. For this reason, the art is doomed to decline'. This is why he consented to recording its origins. [Wile 1999]

These basic biographical details are recapitulated in Huang Zongxi's son, Huang Baijia's, *Neijia quanfa* (*Art of the Internal School*), along with precise descriptions of the techniques and training methods. Huang tells us that he neglected his academic studies, devoting himself instead to martial arts under Master Wang. Huang senior, however, realizing that his son was headstrong, and that the empire was thoroughly pacified by

the Manchu conquerors, persuaded him to resume preparation for the civil service examinations. Likewise, the 'Biography of Zhang Songxi', 16th century Internal School lineage holder, that appears in the *Ningbo Prefectural Gazetteer*, also attributes the origins of the Internal School to Zhang Sanfeng and praises Zhang for his humility. It relates anecdotes of Zhang dispatching Shaolin monks, splitting rocks with his bare hands, and emphasizes the advantages of defensive strategy and striking acupuncture points [Wile 1999].

The first wave of publications, those written by scholar-disciples and Yang family descendents, appropriate the Zhang Sanfeng creation myth from the Internal School and the Wang Zongyue disciple claim from the 'Treatise', but otherwise add nothing to our knowledge of Yang Luchan. Chen Weiming is the first to connect the fantastical Zhang Sanfeng of the 'Epitaph' to the invented Wang Zongyue of the 'Treatise', to the historical Chen family, and finally Yang Luchan. However, since Yang's class background is a critical point of contention between progressive and conservative partisans, it is worth noting that Wang Zhengnan presenting Dan Sinan with several silver goblets to gain acceptance as a student is echoed in Chen Weiming's, 'Yang spared no expense to study with him [Chen Changxing]' [Chen 1925].

Li Yiyu's 'Short Preface' reveals little about Yang's background or motivation for traveling to Chen Village and spending '10 years' studying. The theme of secrecy, however, is introduced in relation to his unwillingness to share the secrets with Wu Yuxiang on his return to Yongnian. Acquiring the secrets by spying on the master is another conceit debuted in the 'Epitaph' that was appropriated by later narratives. Wang resorts to spying to steal the secrets from Dan Sinan according to the 'Epitaph', and in Li Yiyu's 'Short Preface', Yang, in turn, withheld secrets from Wu, who was forced to make his own trip to the source in Chen Village. Li tactfully avoids the issue of Yang's background and does not explain Wu's willingness to indulge his amateur interests at the expense of his academic studies and career advancement.

Grandson Chengfu's 1934 work follows the 'Epitaph's Internal School lineage, adopting Zhang Sanfeng of the Song as founder, together with the Chen Zhoutong and Zhang Songxi transmissions. This is perhaps clearest evidence of appropriation of the Internal School lineage by Yang family patrons, as it is completely foreign to the Chen family tradition, and highly unlikely that any members of the Yang clan themselves read Huang Zongxi.

What is the response of the scholar-skeptics? Obviously, writing in the 17th century, Huang Zhongxi could not have foreseen the later events that led to the development of taijiquan. While acknowledging similarities in movement principles, the skeptics reject the creation myth and fabricated genealogy, and attempt to set martial arts historiography on a rational course. They are eager to embrace Wang's 'hauling manure' and 'having no formal education' as the precursor to Yang's bondservant background. However, the new generation of revisionists are neither bound to the Internal School association nor to the political agenda of the early progressives. In terms of dramatic episodes, the 'Epitaph' records four anecdotes of Wang Zhengnan reluctantly engaging attackers, but among the skeptics and revisionists, only Li Jinfan recounts a collegial match between Yang Luchan and Wu Yuxiang. Neo-conservatives take bold dramatic liberties, especially exploiting the tropes of modestly concealing and reluctantly revealing martial prowess, and foreshortening the Daoist connection, making Yang Luchan the direct disciple of a contemporary Daoist. Once Huang has deployed 'Wudang Daoist' as code for native Chinese, it becomes a point of pride to link the Internal School, and by anachronistic association, taijiquan, with a unique and superior martial art.

Both Wang and Yang had military careers, but Wang fought the Manchus, while two centuries later, Yang served them. Both found themselves in complicated circumstances, caught between crumbling dynasties, peasant rebellion, and foreign invasion. Huang's 'Epitaph' is redolent with allegorical symbolism: Daoism becomes quintessentially *Chinese*; Zhang Sanfeng is visited by a *Chinese* god, and heeding the summons of Song emperor Huizong, slays a hundred 'bandits', ultimately founding a soft-style martial art. For Huang, the irony could not have escaped him that it was Daoist devotee and esthete Song dynasty Emperor Huizong who made a fatal pact with the Jurchen tribes against the Liao invaders, only to be betrayed and overthrown, while in Huang's own time, it was the same miscalculation that brought the Manchus (descendants of the Jurchen) to power.

Huang Zongxi's 'Epitaph for Wang Zhengnan' eulogizes his comrade in arms for his martial prowess, knight-errant ethics, and last-stand resistance to Manchu takeover. However, there is a curious contradiction in Huang's 'Epitaph': on the one hand, it celebrates a hero of the anti-Manchu resistance, reason enough for Huang's works to be banned by the Qing rulers, and on the other hand, it portrays Zhang Sanfeng as an ally of the Huizong emperor for his slaying of 'bandits'. The Huizong Emperor, who summoned Zhang Sanfeng, is the same figure who in the novel *Shuihu zhuan* (*Water Margin*) is the target of Song Jiang's righteous rebellion, although eventually granted amnesty and enlisted against other rebels and the Liao invaders. The glorification of rebels in *Water Margin* caused it to suffer the same fate at the hands of Ming and Qing censors as did Huang Zongxi's works. Still, the insertion of the Zhang Sanfeng myth into the 'Epitaph' is confounding unless interpreted as a personal and political strategy of passive resistance and preservation of ethnic pride. A cogent critic of the *ancien regime*, in the end, he saw no choice but to uphold the crumbling Ming dynasty against rebels and invaders.

A century later, with Manchu power in decline, and the empire once again beset with rebellion and invasion, it may be more than coincidence that this strategy was revived by the Wu brothers as a defense against despair. But, parallels between the times gain new resonance if the 'Epitaph', now the *Ur-text* for the archetype of the internal martial arts hero, is viewed as raw material for fleshing out the biographies of Yang Luchan. Luchan, living in equally perilous times, is portrayed in

grandson Chengfu's 1934 account as determined to match the feats of Western strongmen, breaking the code of secrecy, and propagating the art to the southern provinces. This may have been a retrospective nod to the Qing government's belated self-strengthening policy, though it is implicitly contradicted in Wu Tunan's 1936 account that portrays Luchan as weary of teaching and secretive even with Wu Yuxiang.

If the credible data points for Yang's life are sparse, the historical record for the period is exceptionally rich, as it was a time of national crisis and soul-searching. Wei Yuan's 1844, 'Learn the barbarian's methods in order to control the barbarians' [Wei 1844] presaged Feng Guifen's 1861, 'Chinese learning as essence; Western learning for utility' [Feng 1861], and finally claims of the Chinese origins of all Western knowledge [Lackner 2008]. These maneuvers meant that China could preserve its sense of civilizational superiority, while adopting Western technology for purely instrumental purposes.

Why, we must ask, were martial arts placed in the category of sacred 'cultural essence' and not in the category of utilitarian methods? Even while there was wholesale adoption of Western armaments, both purchased and reverse-engineered, there were also periodic anti-foreign movements, culminating in the 1900 Boxer Rebellion. And then there's the matter of making a folk hero of someone who by all accounts served the conquest dynasty. Han defectors, from generals to rank-and-file, early on swelled the Manchu forces, eventually constituting a majority. Furthermore, native coolies were indispensable to the success of Western military engagements in China. While foreign military advisors trained Chinese troops in Western calisthenics, and the YMCA introduced Western sports, did the Chinese martial arts represent a kind of protest against Western cultural imperialism (the kinesthetic equivalent of the survival of native visual aesthetics in the practice of brush and ink calligraphy after the introduction of the printing press)?

The 19th century explosion of millenarian, utopian, anti-Manchu, anti-Western, anti opium, and anti footbinding movements have been much studied as setting the stage for revolution and the emergence of modern China. However, simultaneously, but often decontextualized, we witness the rise of internal martial arts and inner alchemy – the search for invincibility and immortality. Both hail Zhang Sanfeng as their progentiur, with Li Xiyue (1806-1856) claiming a personal encounter with Zhang and Lü Dongbin on Mt. Emei, compiling *Zhang Sanfeng quanji* (*The complete works of Zhang Sanfeng*), and founding the Western Sect of inner alchemy. Both were embroiled in theoretical debates around the issues of hard versus soft styles in the case of martial arts, and sexual versus solo practices in inner alchemy, and both have survived in the present. Unlike the more dramatic social and political movements of the era, they presented themselves as more revival than reform, a version of fundamentalism in the face of future shock. At the very least, we should not be misled into thinking they were any less the product of their times.

Zeng Guofan and Zhang Zhidong's founding of the Jiangnan Arsenal in 1865, with its translation bureau, foreign advisors, and modern weapons manufacture (1861-1895), together with diplomatic and study missions to the West beginning in 1868, would seem logical responses to the times. But the creation of a soft-style martial art?

The formation of local militias, notably the Xiang Army (1850-64), to suppress rebellions, such as the Taiping (1850-1864), Nian (1853-1968), Dungan and Panthay (1862-1877), plus anti-foreign Opium Wars (1839-1842, 1856-60) would seem logical responses to an existential crisis. But a soft-style martial art?

The 1860 Treaty of Tianjin, following the Second Opium War, forced concessions like Treaty Ports, extraterritoriality, legalized opium sales, and free missionary access, eventually leading to Spheres of Influence for the Western Powers, Russia, and Japan. The Manchus and Japanese were more than respectful of Confucianism, and Buddhism had long since been indigenized, but Christian missionaries considered the Chinese unsaved heathen. Famine, disease, and natural disasters claimed the lives of tens of millions and resulted in an infant mortality rate of 42% and life-expectancy of 32 years, while a quarter of the adult population was addicted to opium, not to mention slavery, illiteracy, concubinage, and footbinding. This was the lifeworld of Yang Luchan in the 19th century. The systematizers of taijiquan theory (Yang Luchan, the Wu brothers, and Li Yiyu), far from being Daoist recluses, or even ordinary citizens, were habitues of the capital and intimates of the court, and could not have been unaware of such momentous international events as Japan's 1854 signing of the Treaty of Kanagawa with America, the Meiji Restoration, and almost overnight modernization.

The Empress Dowager's (1835-1908) attempts to preserve the monarchy, the empire, and the dynasty, Han elites' attempts to save the nation from Western colonialism, and popular rebellions by starving peasants are all understandable. Less intuitive is teaching taijiquan to pampered Manchu princes and to Manchu Bannerman as they prepared to face bandits, rebels, and 'foreign devils' armed with breech-loading Mausers, Krupp cannon, and ironclad, steam-powered British warships. Perhaps, if we take Qi Jiguang declaring martial arts irrelevant on the battlefield to its logical conclusion in the light of modern warfare, it represents the final phase of the separation of martial arts from military praxis. During Yang's lifetime, the challenge to native physical culture was from Western military calisthenics, during the Cultural Revolution a century later, it was the accusation of 'feudal dregs', and today it is from full-contact spectacles.

The success of the Yang family and their gentry promoters, with their Daoist alchemist Zhang Sanfeng as creator and Yang Luchan as style progeniture must have posed a great challenge and offered an unexpected opportunity for the Chen family. After all, Yang Luchan and Wu Yuxiang's study there was indisputable and at last offered the possibility of a fully historical genesis of the art. Based on his 1931 investigations in Chen Village and references to martial arts practice in the 'Chen Family Genealogy' and *Wen County Gazetteer*, Tang Hao claimed 9th generation Wen County native Chen Wangting (c. 1600-1680) as creator of taijiquan. Family standard bearer Chen Xin in his 1933 *Chenshi*

taijiquan tushuo (*Illustrated introduction to Chen family taijiquan*) antedated the origins all the way back to Chen Bu, the first to move the family from Shanxi to Henan. Nevertheless, for both Yang Luchan and Chen Wangting, a few short, oblique references and family legends were sufficient warp for motivated reasoners like Tang Hao and Chen Xin to weave elaborate woofs of heroic hermeneutics.

Mythology, Narratology and Heroology

Why this kind of hero at the historical inflection points we call the Ming-Qing and Qing-Republican transitions? Clearly, Wang Zhengnan, Chen Wangting, and Yang Luchan belong to the warrior archetype, but what kind of warrior hero? Empire builder, righteous rebel, patriot defender, chivalrous rescuer of damsels in distress? They were not tragic heroes in the classical Western sense of possessing an *hamartia*, or tragic flaw, usually *hubris*, or pride, but they all saw their homeland succumb to 'barbarian' invaders and ended their days in humble circumstances. They also did not fulfill the classical Western condition of noble pedigree and high station, required for a dramatic fall, although conservative apologists insisted that only an educated and enlightened individual could have created (or channeled) taijiquan. In this sense, Huang Zongxi, or better yet, son Huang Baijia and Chen Wangting might be closer matches for martial arts figures with something to lose. Still, why not simply a hero who is faster, stronger, and smarter than the enemy? Why a defender who makes a last stand in a lost cause and uses stratagem not strength?

They were humiliated by 'barbarians' – Jurchens, Europeans, and Japanese – whom they considered culturally beneath them. How does one preserve a sense of superiority in defeat? Is it simply a case of Lu Xun's 'Ah Q syndrome', declaring 'psychological victory' from flat on your back, or the Spanish maquis' consolation that, 'Though he [Franco] may have won all the battles, we [the anti-fascists] had all the good songs'. Was taijiquan the psychosomatic counterpoint to the grim reality of the Qing approaching the nadir of its dynastic cycle, or in Gramsci's words, 'as the old world faded, and the new world struggled to be born'? [Gramsci 1947] Do timeless truths arise in times that try men's souls, or is it simply making a virtue of necessity, a reflexive retreat into self-cultivation in the face of forces that would not be sinicized or acknowledge China's cultural centrality? Without stooping to stereotype, it might not be too much of a stretch to suggest a shared cultural ethos that prefers philosopher-kings to warrior-kings, Confucianism to Legalism, and the 'uncrowned king' (Confucius) to 'the First Emperor' (Qinshihuang).

In creating an heroic personna for Yang Luchan within the Chinese tradition, can we look to prototypes in the popular imagination? One thinks of Hua Mulan, China's 5th century Joan of Arc, Guan Yu, loyal Three Kingdoms general deified as Guan Gong, Yue Fei, Southern Song general martyred for his patriotic zeal in resisting Jurchen invaders, flamboyant 12th century Song Jiang and his Robin Hood rebels, and wiley and irreverant Monkey God, Sun Wukong. Chinese heroes are typically actively engaged in battles that determine the fate of the nation, either as unifiers, rebels, or defenders. They embody virtues like loyalty, patriotism, and self-sacrifice, often ending as martyrs and divinities of folk religion. Is Yang Luchan at home in this company? Certainly not an empire builder, righteous rebel, patriotic defender, or martyr, but given the practice of ancestor worship and the temple-like trappings of his 'restored residence', there is an unmistakable atmosphere of apotheosis.

Antedating and inventing progenturs like Bodhidharma for Shaolin, Zhang Sanfeng for taijiquan, or Yue Fei for xingyiquan is consistent with 'the older the better' (*yuegu yuehao*) syndrome, as is lionization of historical style founders like Yang, Dong Haichuan, and Li Luoneng. However, as recently as the 1960s, manufactured mass-culture mythology resurfaced with the figure of Lei Feng (1940-1962), a humble truck driver in the People's Liberation Army given national prominence for his wholehearted devotion to the people and the Party. Many historians doubt his very existence and consider his diary a forgery. He died in a freak accident, and not on the battlefield. Yang Luchan is neither a defender of the nation, nor a defender of the downtrodden. What then? We have no reports of taking from the rich and giving to the poor, dumping opium, or repelling foreign invaders. Wu Yuxiang's highly sophisticated and original 'Treatise' is not attributed to Yang but to a mysterious 'Wang Zongyue'. What we are left with, then, is the decontextualized image of a hero who represents the martial arts version of art for art's sake.

Zhang Sanfeng, Wang Zhengnan, Chen Wangting, and Yang Luchan all achieve archetypal, even cult, status by different routes. Imperial summons is the Nobel Prize of pre-modern China, and both Zhang and Yang were said to have been summoned to the capital for their exceptional talents. As a perennial mythical figure, Zhang transcends the specifics of family background and historical period. Wang Zhengnan, however, is very much a man of his time and a hero of history for his unbending patriotism. The lack of family lineage is more than compensated by his role as a link in the unique martial arts transmission known as the Internal School, the adopted ancestor of taijiquan. Chen is very much a man of family lineage, and the transmitter of a family art, but who stumbles into fame posthumously as no less than the officially declared creator of taijiquan.
Huang had first-hand contact with Wang, and likewise Li Yiyu with Yang, yet Li's very brief and very bland description is diplomatically vague, while Huang's is an emotional eulogy for a man after his own heart, though not of his class.

Origin tales of the art featuring gods, immortals, divine revelation, and supernatural feats may not stand the test of Popper's falsification principle, but going beyond the categories of true and false, we can acknowledge that myth-making is still alive and well in the modern age, as any Madison Avenue ad executive might attest. Plato in his *Phaedra* recognizes that *muthos* and *logos* (myth and reason) are two different modes of thought and speech. Homer's telling of the tale of Odysseus and Circe differs in many details from Alcaman's version, but we naturally attribute these differences to the circumstances of public

recitation, dramatic performance, and shifting audience taste. The third century BCE Greek thinker Euhemerus famously regarded the Greek gods as originally historical men who were revered in their own day and deified by later generations. Certainly, it does not strain credulity to believe that tales of the likes of Robin Hood, John Henry, William Tell, and Johnny Appleseed were folkloric embellishments of the doings of real men. In the case of Yang Luchan, we witness this process of apotheosis compressed into a mere two generations, as biography morphs into myth, myth begets archetype, and archetype gives rise to tropes. Although typically analyzed according to left-right/true-false categories, all of the many tellings have elements of the *bildungsroman*, or coming of age tale, and echoes of Campbell's 'hero's journey'. It is Yang as Jung's 'trickster' archetype who steals the secrets by spying, and Yang the hero of the timeless 'monomyth', who undergoes the stages of separation from family, initiation by master, and homecoming, as he shares the boon of this new art with the world.

Finally, as suggested at the outset of this study, we cannot hope to establish new facts in the absence of new evidence. However, sinologists will recognize the role of warrior heroes in the Chinese popular imagination, anthropologists will recognize the perennial orientalist obsession with invincibility and immortality, and lay students of the art will be armed with a critical attitude towards dehistoricization.

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