

CONTRIBUTORS

Jean-François Loudcher is Professor in the Sport Faculty (STAPS) of Bordeaux University. He teaches the social sciences of sport and has several lines of work and research, many of which focus on the history of combat practices such as savate, boxing, judo, karate, la cane, and wrestling. His other research areas include the history of sports and physical education in France and abroad. More broadly, his research interests include violence, health, politics, coaching, cultural heritage and sports heritage.

Christian Faurillon is a budoka and an independent researcher living in Okinawa.

THE INFLUENCE OF FRENCH GYMNASTICS AND MILITARY FRENCH BOXING ON THE CREATION OF MODERN KARATE (1867-1914)

JEAN-FRANÇOIS LOUDCHER & CHRISTIAN FAURILLON

DOI

10.18573/mas.135

KEYWORDS

Karate, French boxing, kata, Okinawa, French Military Mission, gymnastics

CITATION

Loudcher, Jean-François, and Christian Faurillon. 2021. 'The influence of French Gymnastics and Military French Boxing on the Creation of Modern Karate (1867-1914)'. *Martial Arts Studies* 11, 80-100.
doi: 10.18573/mas.135

ABSTRACT

The birthplace of karate is Okinawa in southern Japan. During its national integration through the military and educational action of the imperial government during the Meiji era, the basic katas (型) or 'forms' (series of defence and attack movements in space epitomizing combat against opponents) called pinans (ピンアン) or the quiet way, were created by Itosu (last name 糸洲) Ankō (first name 安恒). These laid the foundations of modern karate, at the crossroads of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. France played a major role in the organisation of the Japanese army in this period. This paper analyses the extent to which France influenced this process with specific attention to the model of French gymnastics and boxing associated with the influential Joinville School of physical education.

Karate is a world-famous combat practice, shaped in the melting pot of the Ryūkyū Islands in southern Japan. It encompasses several million practitioners in styles as diverse as *shotokan*¹, *goju-ryu*,² *wado-ryu*,³ *shito-ryu*,⁴ *shorin-ryu*,⁵ among many other branches and variants. Our questions are: Why was this fighting discipline born in this place? What were its influences? Multiple interpretations of its origin exist, oscillating between a Chinese paternity and it being a practice indigenous to the island. Most stories are based on a more or less embellished mythical background, in the absence of reliable written sources beyond the 19th century. Yet, in reality, karate takes shape (and this is one of its original features) from a set of techniques transmitted and developed with the help of *katas* (型) or 'forms', rather than via 'organized' combative encounters as seen in Western pugilistic practices [Loudcher 2000]. *Katas* are prearranged sequences that practitioners learn and perform, consisting of miming punching and kicking strikes as well as parries and ripostes. These are executed solo or against one or more imaginary opponents. The techniques are more or less complex, depending on level. Inevitably, what is deemed the 'correct' performance of such sequences will vary, depending on the preferences of different masters at different times.

However, a modern version of karate emerged at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries [Ikuko *et al.* 2000]. It was derived from a simplified version of certain *katas*, performed during group practice under the direction of an instructor who would chant numbers or key phrases during their execution. This practice then spread in an official and even institutionalized manner across Okinawan schools and teacher training colleges. According to several sources, Itosu (or Otsu) Ankō (1831-

1915) was both instrumental to their creation and their naming – as *pinans* (ピンアン - quiet way). This dissemination allowed karate to become increasingly well known throughout Okinawa and Japan in the interwar period.

Of course, Itosu Ankō did not create these *pinans* in *abstracto*. There were already specific fighting practices in Okinawa that were not then known in Japan, where fencing (*kenjutsu*) and various self-defence practices that can be grouped under the name of *jujitsu* were most dominant.

Without wishing to question the originality of these ancient disciplines of codified fighting skills, it is nevertheless significant that the basic karate *katas* appeared in Japan at a time when identical forms of collective teaching had already been widely disseminated in the occidental world for at least three decades. Their spread had been led, or at least influenced, by the French boxing of the Joinville School of Gymnastics [Loudcher 2000]. Created in 1852, under the Second Empire (1852-1870), the *Ecole Normale Militaire de Gymnastique de Joinville* was missioned to train gymnastics instructors for the French army⁶. Moreover, the French military had been present in Japan since the Meiji era (1868-1912), and had taken an active part in the country's military physical training and, consequently, in the Japanese educational system. Against this backdrop, one might legitimately ask what sorts of influences were at play in this global exchange.

Although a few academic works have accurately described these Franco-Japanese relations in the latter part of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century [Maejima 2014; Baba *et al.* 2015] none have fully considered the question of a possible link between French gymnastics and boxing and the invention of modern karate. Of course, as this history is anchored in Okinawa and the French military did not go there, it seems difficult to put forward this hypothesis. And yet, a rereading of the sources at our disposal, an analysis of the work carried out, as well as the discovery of certain previously unknown archives raise serious questions. Moreover, these go beyond the strict military framework. All of Japan was modernising and transforming itself, in industrial, cultural and commercial realms.

1 Shōtōkan: 松濤館 (流 style). Shōtō 松濤 means 'pine-waves', evoking the movement of pine needles when the wind blows through them. This was Funakoshi's pen-name which he used in his philosophical writings, plus kan 館 meaning 'hall' or 'house'. Therefore: 'Shoto's hall style'.

2 Gōju-ryū (剛柔流) means hard-soft style: a combination of hard 剛 and soft 柔 techniques. Both principles combine into one way, in line with the yin/yang philosophy. 流 means style.

3 Wadō-ryū (和道流). Wa (和) means 'harmony', and dō (道) means 'way'. 流 means style.

4 Shitō-ryū (糸東流): The name Shitō was created by combining the names of the two masters of Mabuni Kenwa: 1) Shi (糸) meaning Master Itosu (糸洲), Ankō (安恒); and, 2) Tō (東), meaning Master Higaonna (東恩納), Kanryō (寛量).

5 Shōrin-ryū (少林流): 'small' (少) and 'forest' (林). 流 means style.

6 The Joinville School of gymnastics (1852-1953) became more active after the war against Prussia in 1870, producing more instructors and trainers. At that time, non-commissioned officers and officers are trained for a period of six months. Besides, they come back to their regiment to train the regular soldiers. The name changes in 1872 and entitled as *Ecole Normale de Gymnastique et d'Escrime de Joinville*. One needs to notify that this school was not the only one to train military gymnastics instructors. Navy, for example, got its own training Centre in Brest. So, the field of physical training, in the army, was quite challenging.

Besides, even before establishing any clear or direct influences between French and Japanese hand-to-hand combat systems, a comparative study of these practices will allow us to consider a broader sweep of historical issues: for instance, both encompass a common problematic of political reinforcement of the bodies; but, in the case of Japan, this led to preparing the country for war. In other words, even if the hypothesis of a French influence on the appearance of modern karate turns out to be plausible, the fact remains that there is much that is original and unique to both.

1 THE JAPANESE GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT AND WESTERN INFLUENCES AT THE ADVENT OF THE MEIJI ERA (1868)

1.1. The first French military mission

The advent of the Meiji era gave the Occidental world the opportunity to come and modernise Japan on a massive scale. Of course, its opening to the foreign world had existed long before, but it was done in a controlled manner. After religion, introduced in the 16th century by the Jesuits, the end of the Opium War in China opened Japan to Westerners. Following Admiral Percy's *coup de force* in 1854 which transformed the geo-political situation, trade and politics took over. The Western nations provided diverse specialities and skills. For instance, the British took care of transport, and France – in light of its past Napoleonic victories – was entrusted with military organisation and armament [Maejima 2014].

However, it was on a commercial basis that these relations intensified. Following the Lyon silkworm epidemic, contacts were established with Japan in the early 1860s [Polak 2005]. In fact, Japanese worms proved more resilient and their importation became crucial for the French silk industry, which was in full decline. Relations between Japan and France were developed, which were all the more favourable as the English showed a lack of interest in the Japanese, coupled with mistrust following the war they waged against the Satsuma clan⁷ in 1863 [Fletcher 2019]. Contacts at the highest level were then established between France and Japan. In the word of La Peyrère, the minister, 'M.

7 The Satsuma clan (薩摩藩) was one of the most powerful feudal estates in Tokugawa Japan, which played an important role during the restoration of Meiji and in the government that followed. Commanded throughout the Edo era by the Shimazu clan's tozama daimyō, its territory spanned the provinces of Satsuma, Osumi, and southwest Hyūga on the island of Kyūshū, and had the kingdom of Ryūkyū as vassal. The territory is largely contiguous with the current Kagoshima Prefecture, and parts of Miyazaki Prefecture.

Léon Roche, did not hesitate any longer, and on 7 November 1866, the court of Yeddo was officially informed that His Majesty the Emperor of France had authorised the sending of a military mission to Japan' [La Peyrère 1883: 14]. Officially, this lasted barely more than one year.

The mission arrived in the port of Yokohama in early 1867. The group consisted of nineteen people and was led by Staff Captain Charles Jules Chanoine [Baba et al. 2015: 510; Chanoine 1897]. It comprised five officers, including engineer captain Jules Jourdan, artillery lieutenant Jules Brunet, cavalry lieutenant Léon Descharmes and two infantry lieutenants, MM Charles Dubousquet and Edouard Messelot. Non-commissioned officers and instructors from different arms accompanied them, including a second lieutenant attached to the Imperial Stud, André Cazeneuve and a trumpeter, M. Gutthig, attached to the guard [La Peyrère 1883: 26-27].

This mission was engaged to organise the army of the Shogun (Taikun) Yoshinobu Tokugawa (elite unit of the Denshutai).⁸ Jules Brunet started by creating a military school in Yokohama, then in Tokyo. But thereafter a series of dissensions arose. A year before the arrival of the military mission, Ōkubo Toshimichi and Saigō Takamori of the Satsuma clan had met with Kido Takayoshi of the Chōshū estate to form a secret agreement, the Satchō alliance, whose goal was the fall of the shogunate. In 1868, the so-called Boshin War⁹ broke out between the southern Daimyos who wanted to re-establish the power of the Emperor and the lords favourable to the Shogun. From then on, by the imperial decree of October 1868, the French mission was ordered to leave Japan. But Lieutenant Jules Brunet (1838-1911) and some of his non-commissioned officers (François Fortant, Eugène Marlin, André Cazeneuve, François Bouffier and Eugène Collache) continued to support the Shogun and resigned from the French army. Among the southern troops, 'the officers of the Satsuma clan had received some instruction [...] from a Frenchman, the Count of Montblanc, and from former French non-commissioned officers' [Lebon 1898:

8 This story is partly retold in the 2003 film *The Last Samurai* with Tom Cruise. However, unlike the film, the actual mission was not to the Emperor, but to the Shogun.

9 The Boshin war (戊辰戦争, literally 'War of the Year of the Dragon') is a Japanese civil war that began in January 1868 under the reign of Emperor Meiji, a few months after the restoration of supreme power to the emperor, and continued until May 1869. On the one hand, the armies of the clans of Satsuma, Chōshū, Tosa and their allies, close to the emperor, and on the other hand, the troops belonging to the Shogunal government of Edo and the clans that remained loyal to it, clashed. The clans of Satsuma, Chōshū and Tosa sought to supplant by force the opposing party and to prevent imperial authority from being exercised in a federal form by all the clans. It marks an emblematic break between the times. French soldiers dismissed from the French army to support the shogun party.



Figure 1:
First French military mission in Japan 1867
(Bibliothèque nationale de France)



Figure 2:
Collache, Eugène. 1874. 'Une aventure au
Japon'. Le Tour du monde 28: 49-79.

23-24].¹⁰ After the defeat of Hakodate in May 1869, the victory of the Imperial (Mikado) party was total and marked the end of the short-lived independent Republic of Ezo (蝦夷共和国, Ezo Kyōwakoku).

10 Charles Descantons de Montblanc [1833- 1894] was a French diplomat. An aristocrat, he obtained an official post in the Philippines in 1854. In August 1858, he went to Japan with the mission of Baron Gros who signed the treaty of trading and friendship. He quickly learned Japanese and became the friend of Kenjiro Saitō, a man who was to accompany him in his exploration of Kyūshū. He then visited Kagoshima and returned to Europe in 1861. On 14 September 1865, he welcomed the Japanese mission of Nagaoki Ikeda of the Satsuma clan and on 23 September, began a contract of understanding between Belgium and the Satsuma. He planned the invitation of the Satsuma clan at the Paris Universal Exhibition in 1867. The same year, in October, the prince of Satsuma invited him to Japan. He then became the first French diplomat accredited by the Emperor of Japan and returned to France at the end of December 1869.

1.2. The second French military mission to Japan (1872-1880) and the Japanese geopolitical context

Far from holding France responsible for its indirect involvement with the Shogun, nor for the defeat of Sedan against Germany (1870), a second mission was sent, from May 1872 to 1880. On the side of the French army, after having been recalled and blamed, the officers guilty of the rebellion with the Shogun were quickly reinstated and some of them, moreover, had high functions – such as Jules Brunet, who reached the rank of General.

It is true that, according to Colonel Lebon, the first mission 'had created strong sympathies among the cadres it had begun to instruct' [Lebon 1898: 23-24]. Marshal André Cazeneuve was then an advisor to the samurai clans of Matsuma and, after being expatriated to Saigon by the French consulate in 1869, returned to Japan. In March 1873, he was appointed by the new government to look after the 'Arab' stallions donated by Napoleon III – although, of an original 26 or 28, only nine remained, the rest having been dispersed among the hands of clan chiefs. He died in 1874 during this quest in Fukushima [Maejima 2014].

Albert-Charles Dubousquet married a Japanese woman, the daughter of a samurai, in 1875 and remained in Japan. Moreover, military education had not been limited to the Shogun's troops; some of the military cadres 'had rallied, in 1871, to the Mikadonal government' [Lebon 1898: 24]. Relations had thus been established, notably through Ōkubo Toshimichi,¹¹ who was one of the leaders of the Iwakura Mission of 1871-73¹² and minister of the interior in 1874.

This second military mission was the most elaborate of the three and was comprised of around 100 people over the entire period [Baba et al. 2015]. It would vary in number and quality over the eight years it lasted. The mission landed in April 1872 at the port of Yokohama and was led by Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Antoine Marquerie. He was replaced a little later by Colonel Charles Claude Munier. The other officers were Captain Albert Jourdan, Engineer of the 1st Engineer Regiment, Captain of Light Infantry André Eichemann, Lieutenant of Light Infantry of the Guard Prosper-Henry Percin, Captain of Light Cavalry in Africa Léon Descharmes, Lieutenant of Artillery Georges Lebon [National Archives, Léonore database]. The mission comprised twelve non-commissioned officers, a cavalry sergeant-major, a bugler and various technicians.¹³ Charles Sulpice, Jules Chanoine, and also Charles Dubousquet, were in charge of the selection of soldiers because, like Albert Jourdan and Léon Descharmes, they had already been part of the first military mission.

Its influence was great, as a number of works have highlighted [Polak 2005; Tavernier 2014; Maeshima 2014; Baba & al. 2015]. It was mainly concerned with the creation and development of military training, and it was in and around Edo (Tokyo) that military training was established.

11 The Shimazu clan is one of the few Japanese families to have retained the same fiefdom (of 700,000 koku) from the Kamakura period to the Meiji restoration. This clan also ruled the northern Ryū-kyū Islands (Okinawa).

12 Iwakura Mission (also known as Iwakura Embassy) is a Japanese diplomatic mission sent to Western countries in 1871 during the Meiji period. Members of this embassy were tasked with observing certain scientific and social fields after a long period of isolation. Their knowledge would then be used to contribute to modern state development. This project was proposed for the first time by Guido Verbeck, an influential Dutch engineer missionary.

13 They are M. Jonquel, engineer sergeant, G. Dagron, infantry sergeant, A. Viest, army sergeant, J. Cros, infantry sergeant, A. Philippi, infantry NCO, U. Haurie, artillery sergeant, E. Moulin, arsenal chief, H. Lassère, infantry sergeant, Jean-Paul Isidore Vidal, military doctor: Albert Ohl, spent a year (1875-1876) in Japan and was a captain in the Marine infantry

The mission's remit was diverse and sometimes required the sending of specialists such as the engineer architect Georges Kreitmann, who spent two years in Japan (1876-78). In particular, the revision of the coastal defence plan meant it fell to them to respond to the threat of war with China. Above all, after compulsory conscription was established in Japan in 1872-73 on the French model, it became necessary to train instructors and establish military training centres.

Five military schools were set up. The 'Yonen-Gakko'¹⁴ or Youth School took care of young boys, mainly sons of officers and soldiers, who were preparing to take the French military school exams to enter prestigious military High schools as such Saint-Cyr or Polytechnique. Then, there was the 'Kyōdōdan' School or Guide School (of 800 students) which required seven years of commitment. This was created in 1870 in 'Ōzaka' under the name of 'Kiodotai' or 'Guide Corps'. It was then transferred to Tokyo in 1871 and became, two years later, in August, 'the present school for non-commissioned officers, Kyōdōdan (教導団)'¹⁵ [Villaret 1889: 157]. The third initiative concerned the creation of a veterinary school. The penultimate one was the Toyama School (near Tokyo) which was dedicated to the training of non-commissioned officers [Lebon 1898]. Abolished at the beginning of 1880, it was reorganised under the title and attributions of Special School of Shooting and Gymnastics in the years 1885-1887. But it was the great military school or *Shihan-Gakko* for officers (infantry, cavalry, artillery, engineers) which was 'the most important' [La Peyrère 1883: 83].

La Peyrère, who had the opportunity to visit it in April 1881, left a detailed account of the principles that governed its creation and development. It opened its doors in 1875. However, it was not inaugurated until 1878 due to a fire and the South-West War (*Seinan Sensō*), the so-called last *samurai* revolt against the Meiji reform.¹⁶ One

14 The Japanese terms in this section match the spellings used by Etienne de Villaret and Paul de La Peyrère in their books.

15 'It provides non-commissioned officers for the troops of all arms. Entry is by competitive examination. Candidates must be between eighteen and twenty-five years of age, unmarried and meet the usual conditions of physical fitness and good character. The duration of the course for the infantry is fourteen months' (Villaret 1889: 158).

16 This war is a bit more complex than just 'samurai revolt', although it is often portrayed that way in popular scholarship. Saigō Takamori, initially in favour of the change to the Meiji era, opposed it. Subsequently, the samurai, disappointed with the new regime, rose up in Kagoshima, on the island of Kyūshū. The imperial government sent its new conscript army to fight the forty thousand insurgents. The fighting lasted several months (22 February-14 April 1877) and the imperial army emerged victorious after furious battles.

hundred and fifty-eight candidates from all over Japan were part of the first class [Baba et al. 2015: 520]. In addition, a shooting school for the infantry, a large military arsenal including construction workshops for equipment, a weapons factory, a pyrotechnics school with a cartridge factory (2,500 to 4,000 workers), an artillery range (1873), a powder magazine and barracks were also built [La Peyrère 1883: 83; Baba et al. 2015: 520].

The French presence was massive, and its achievements diverse. Its influence permeated all levels of the army. According to La Peyrère: 'all the theories, all the books have been translated. The commands, which are exactly ours, are given in Japanese' [1883: 76-77]. Moreover, he asserted that 'the ringing [i.e., the trumpet calls] in the Japanese army is exactly the same as ours' [1883: 76-77]. The music for the official Japanese army anthem was even created by a Frenchman, Gabriel Leroux, at the request of Toyama Masakazu (1848-1900).

Moreover, beyond these material conditions, the French influence also left its mark on bodies, through the teaching of specific gymnastics.

2 INFLUENCE OF FRENCH GYMNASTICS IN THE MILITARY MISSION AND THE PLACE OF MILITARY FRENCH BOXING

2.1. Diffusion and influence of gymnastics in the first two military missions

Although the Dutch had already previously offered some military exercise content [Baba et al. 2015: 231], the arrival of the first French military mission was to change everything. French books on military exercise provided the essential basis for the Japanese military, who diligently translated a number of French manuals. Ōtori Keisuke (大鳥圭介), chief of an Infantry battalion, published in 1867 a translation of a French military treatise, *Manuel pratique pour l'infanterie légère* (1863), entitled *Furansu hohei teishihiki* [Baba et al. 2015: 510].¹⁷ Tanabe Ryōsuké translated two books: the *Kei-Hohen-Soten* (*Manuel d'infanterie légère*, 1867) and the *Furansu kei-hohei teishihiki* (*Règlement pour l'infanterie légère française*, 1869)¹⁸

In addition, he translated the first Japanese book of gymnastics in this country¹⁹ in 1868 from *Instruction pour l'enseignement de la gymnastique* [1863] under the title *Nouvelles techniques d'entraînement physique militaire transmises par l'Armée de Terre française* [Baba et al. 2015: 511]. For Okubo Hideaki, the *Mokuba no Sho* (*The Book of the Wooden Horse*, published around 1867) written by Hayashi Shojuro (1824-1896) – formerly a professor of French at Kaiseisho, National Academic Institute – would be a 'translation of a part describing the wooden horse exercises of the army's gymnastics manual' [Baba et al. 2015: 510]. In addition to the two hundred pages of text, eighteen figures illustrate thirty-three pieces of gymnastic apparatus and a plan of outdoor facilities for two to three hundred people is also included [Baba et al. 2015: 510].

Generally speaking, Jules Brunet implemented the teaching of gymnastics as it had been disseminated in France since Colonel Amoros created the first Gym in 1820 – an approach subsequently transmitted through his pupils, Captain d'Argy and Napoleon Laisné (both of whom founded the Joinville School of gymnastics). There was nothing in the Japanese manual that did not already exist in that of the French army (wooden horse, gantry, ropes, jumps, etc.). These courses were then recorded and began to be disseminated [Baba et al. 2015: 510].

The second mission is more specific in the teaching of body practices. According to the autobiography of Major-General Soga Sukenori, Director of the Officers' Training School [Baba et al. 2015: 520], he was involved in the development of the training programme with the French (fencing, gymnastics, mathematics, etc.). Moreover, in the revised manual entitled *Operation for the Infantry* (*Hohei Sōten*), second edition of 1873, he mentions having entrusted Nagasaka Akinori, under the leadership of Captain 'Echmann' [sic] in 1872-1873, to revise the 1871 version. The shortcomings of the previous manual are highlighted [Baba et al. 2015: 512]. But it was the translation of Captain Vergnes' manual in 1874 that really made the Japanese authorities aware of the military potential that physical education could bring them [Shiraishi 2009]. In France, this manual served as a military and school education programme from its publication in 1869 until 1880 and was widely distributed in both primary and secondary schools [Loudcher and Vivier 1993].

17 **Practical manual for light infantry**, new edition also in 1869.

18 **Regulation of light French infantry**.

19 He wrote several works on military subjects, including military formations (1865), a glossary of French military terms with Japanese translations (1867), military gymnastics and training exercises (1868), and our work. This is a complete work on infantry drills and tactics, including training of new soldiers, how to form tactical units and deploy them effectively, how to operate a variety of weapons, etc.

Finally, the importance of teaching gymnastics for the French and Japanese authorities is underlined by the sending of Sergeant 1st Class François Joseph Ducros, of the 24th Battalion of Foot Chasseurs. He was seconded to Japan from the 26th March 1874 to the 10th April 1877 [AN, Léonore database] while serving at the Saint-Cyr special military school (since the 7th August 1871) as a gymnastics instructor. His involvement in the Japanese military teaching of gymnastics is certain, but it is not known whether he spread French boxing.

2.2. The Joinville model of boxing 'on four sides'

The question must be: what form of French boxing was taught in Japan? There is an obvious resemblance between, on the one hand, the basic katas that are the pinans, which can be seen at work in numerous photos from the beginning of the 20th century [Faurillon 2020], and, on the other hand, a particular four sides boxing model developed at the Ecole Normale de Gymnastique de Joinville.

In 1874, the pupils of the school delivered a gymnastic performance for more than three hours, in which one of the very first identifiable public performances of French boxing [Loudcher 2000]. The demonstration was innovative in both the number of soldiers presented as well as in the nature of the event. More than three hundred students performed a mimed combat exercise together. The so-called 'four sides' French boxing model is a set of codified movements which can be followed by dozens and dozens of people. Taking place on lines and columns, soldiers or pupils move together under the orders of a trainer: several series exist, expressing different steps of difficulties. In doing this, the School of Gymnastics established a model that would last until the 20th century. There seem to have been many influences involved in this, and it is difficult to say exactly who created it [Loudcher 2000]. Nevertheless, attack and defence movements 'on the four sides' are already mentioned in the treatise by Albert Lemoine [1857]. This suggests that the influence of military gymnastics was already at work not only in Switzerland and Germany, but also in France with Colonel Amoros. Later on, the 'lessons' on two and four sides mentioned in the book by Henri de Jarry de Bouffémont dating from 1869, propose the first chained figures (i.e., linked series of techniques, chained together in sequence) [Loudcher 2000]. But the desire to rationalise the teaching of military gymnastics, which developed massively with the defeat of Sedan (1870), led the School, now called the Ecole Normale de Gymnastique et d'Escrime (1872), to develop models of collective performance. The regiments sent simple soldiers who had been awarded a Master's degree, or even non-commissioned officers and sometimes officers, like Captain Etienne de Villaret, a famous figure in the third military mission to Japan. After training at Saint-Cyr, he did a six-month internship there between 1875 and 1876 [AN, Léonore database].

The break with the secular tradition of the masters-in-arms was complete. A new, rational and scientifically based training was in place. But in this process of creating the 'four sides' French boxing model, other influences nevertheless existed. As early as 1867, the Minister of the Navy, Rigault de Genouilly, had insisted on the need to practice this discipline [Loudcher 2000]. In addition, in the 1874 demonstration, sailors formed a large part of the students at the Joinville School. Finally, the following year, the Ministry of the Navy published an innovative manual in which, not only did this discipline appear for the first time in the army, but also in a more 'interactive' or combative way, abandoning the 'four faces' French Boxing model [Loudcher 2000]. In short, if the Joinville School created this particular form, it should nevertheless not be forgotten that the combative aspect was always present in the various army corps, particularly at Joinville, at least in the early days. Consider Pierre Loti's testimony from 1875:

Every evening, we meet at the 'Lapin sauté', a soldiers' gargote, at the bottom of a garden that smells of seringas and roses. At my place, the gang gets organised; we mix and change costumes, new sergeants and false sailors come out, there are ragpickers too, ridiculous 'gummers', circus 'Gugusses' and barrier 'Alphonse', impossible gangs of unbelievable characters. [...] With these excellent boxing principles that we all possess and the Herculean strength of our instructors, we are the law everywhere, – everywhere feared, everywhere the masters.
[Loti 1923: 123-124]

The official status of French pugilistic activity in this establishment was recognised in 1876, when 'two boxing instructors, two cane instructors and two baton instructors' were appointed to the school for the first time [*Journal militaire officiel* 1876: 316]. Three years later, there were five in the permanent staff [*Journal militaire officiel* 1879: 231]. In short, no soldier passing through this school could avoid its teaching.

2.3 Third mission: an ambiguous mission, to train and/or advise

The third mission started on 17 December 1884 in Yokohama and dealt with the setting up of military schools and the organisation of the army. Relatively small in size, it was made up of five people and lasted up to five years. Henri Berthaut, a captain, was the chief of the Staff Battalion (1887). Etienne de Villaret is an infantry captain (who would end up as a general), as is Henry Louis Lefebvre. They were accompanied by the Maréchal des logis Joseph Kiehl and a translator.

There are many rumours about Joseph Kiehl and Etienne de Villaret in the world of martial studies; they are said to be the first Westerners

to be initiated into Japanese fencing or kenjutsu. As a matter of fact, wrestling or sumo, reserved for selected quasi-professional practitioners, undoubtedly had little appeal for these soldiers. It was far from the technical finesse that Kanō Jigorō would develop with judo in 1882 [Bousquet 1877: 286].²⁰ Thus, fencing seemed to be relatively widespread to the point of presenting 'a frankly national spectacle' [Bousquet 1877: 81], whose rather sporting form might suggest that it held a certain attraction for Etienne de Villaret:

The assembly is numerous and perched on shaky scaffolding. In the middle is a sanded platform topped by a canopy, where the combatants stand. Their masks, made of strong wire, extend into a thick padded buffalo skin headdress, and extend as a collar over their shoulders; a solid wicker breastplate and gauntlets complete the paraphernalia. It is not too much of this armour to ward off the violent blows they deal themselves on the head and neck with wooden slats wielded with two hands like the Japanese sword. A third indispensable character is the camp judge who stands in the middle, with the ceremonial cloak over his shoulders, ready to lunge between the antagonists, which he is often forced to do.
[Bousquet 1877: 81-82]

But these interpretations are all more or less based on Watanabe Ichiro's book [1871] in which the author states that the two Frenchmen would have arrived in November 1887 in the dojo of Sakakibara Kenkichi, the 14th master of the famous school of swordplay, Shinden Jikishinkage-ryū (鹿島神傳直心影流).²¹ However, Joseph Kiehl, according to *Jikishin Kage Ryu* [Christian Polak 2005], stayed from 27 September 1884 to 24 July 1887. As for Etienne de Villaret, his return to France is attested on 17 December 1887 [AN, Léonore database]. He therefore left at the end of October. Neither of them could therefore have taken this *kenjutsu* course on the given date.

Moreover, in none of the thirty or so letters that Etienne de Villaret wrote to his mother and brother is there any reference to such teaching, although he admits to being passionate about weapons and mentions

20 It is not a nonsense to suggest that Kanō Jigorō could have been influenced by French instructors, especially those who dealt with biomechanics teaching in Joinville through Georges Demeny's system; the latter created with Etienne-Jules Marey, the first biomechanics lab in the world in 1882

21 Sometimes it is named 神傳直心影流 or Shinden Jikishinkage-ryū. Shin (神) den (傳) Jiki (直) shin (心) kage (影) -ryū (流). 'Jikishinkage-ryū' (直心影流) seems to be the diminutive of the name.



Figure 3:
Joseph Kiehl (private collection,
courtesy Mme de Villaret)

having brought back a series of *katana* (which were stolen from the family home in Lot) [Private archives, Mme de Villaret]. This passion is confirmed by photos in which he parades in samurai garb. His attraction to physical combat is not in doubt: he said, for instance, that he had chosen the infantry on leaving Saint-Cyr because it was the 'queen of battles'. In other words, infantry focusing on middle range and close-combat distance, it would demonstrate the body involvement of Etienne de Villaret [Private archive, personal writings of his daughter]. His story, full of twists and turns, bears witness to this adventurous if not bellicose commitment.²²

22 He went to Athens, Algeria, and was wounded in 1914 during the war against Prussia. In the same year, he had five innocent soldiers shot, which led to a trial in 1922, in which he was cleared.



Figure 4:
Etienne de Villaret in samurai outfit (private
collection, courtesy Mme de Villaret)

Thus, it is clear that the four sides model of French Boxing, performed collectively, consisting of miming combat scenes under the direction of an instructor, predates that implemented in the pinans. However, the possibility cannot be excluded that certain local practices enabled Itosu Ankō to facilitate their transfer. Indeed, a practice on four sides would have been quite widespread in certain katas according to Christian Faurillon, who sees a relationship with Japanese 'religious and artistic' dimensions [Faurillon 2020].

Nevertheless, a problematic question remains to be solved in order before one claim any direct influence of Joinville's French boxing, or an indirect one from Western gymnastics: How could Itosu Ankō have been inspired by it given that he did not, a priori, leave Okinawa and that there was no French military mission in these islands?

3 DEVELOPMENT AND JAPANIZATION OF GYMNASTICS EDUCATION

3.1 The militarisation of gymnastics in schools

The teaching of gymnastics in schools was to become an important national issue. As early as 1872, a first text (*Gakusei*) encouraged the development of gymnastics in the educational system: the following year, an 'Illustration of Room Gymnastics' (*Shachu Taisoho-zu*) as well as an 'Illustration of Gymnastics' (*Taiso-zu*) [Abe et al. 1992: 1-28] were officially presented by the Education Department.

Yet, 'it is from the 1885s that Mori Arinori (森有礼) makes gymnastics a tool in the service of the fatherland' [Okubo 2009: 12]. What are the contents of his teaching? One might have thought that this Minister of Education (1886-1889), who was keen on American and English teaching methods (he was ambassador to London), would impose the method of the American doctor George Adams Leland (1850-1924) based on the Dio Lewis system. Indeed, the Department of Education, having privileged contacts with the United States, invited him to come and direct the *Taiso denshu jo* (Institute of Physical Training) in 1878 so that he could continue his research [Okubo 2009].

The American's 'light' gymnastics (i.e., without apparatus) seemed to be perfectly suitable for the school, even if it also included a more elitist preparation for advanced students. Indeed, the Leland method spread in the early 1880s through an association of former students of the institute, which promoted it throughout Japan [Okubo 2009]. However, in 1881, the doctor's contract was cancelled and his teaching was even abrogated in April 1886 by the Ministry of Education, which had been in place since the previous year and imposed military gymnastics on schools [Abe et al. 1992: 1-28]. Meanwhile, by 1883, the Ministry of Education had developed *hohei soren* (infantry training) and *heishiki taiso* (military exercises) for secondary schools [Shiraishi 2009]. It is true that the Leland method has strong similarities with French military gymnastics, especially in the presentation of the exercises, which also explain this easy replacement.

The teaching on four sides was thus quite common. The Leland method proposed that 'exercises are performed symmetrically: once performed on the right, they are repeated on the left and once performed on the front (front face) are repeated on the back (back face)' [Shiraishi 2009: 11]. Furthermore, from 1883-1884, military gymnastics was taught at the Tokyo Normal School (Shihan Gakkō), then, successively at the Osaka, Nagasaki, Fukui, 'and through other schools such as those in Gunma, Kobe, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Osaka, Niigata, Mie, Ishikawa, etc.'

[Shiraishi 2009: 11]. So, gymnastics (体操科, *taisō-ka*) was included in the school curriculum for middle school students (中学校, *chūgakkō*) in December 1885 (明治年). In 1887, it was the turn of military gymnastics (兵式体操, *heishikitaishō*) to appear in the curriculum for middle school students – and also for student teachers. However, as in France, it would later fit in very well with the Swedish method which Kawawase Genkuro (川瀬元九郎, 1871-1945), Inokuchi Akuri (井口阿くり, 1871-1931) and others disseminated during the 1890s [Abe et al. 1992: 1-28].

In the end, either the contents of the training mattered little to Mori Arinori, who saw in this expansion of gymnastics a movement favourable to his views, or the Ministry of War (and this is the most likely scenario) imposed on the Ministry of National Education the teaching method on French sources. However, after this obligation to use gymnastics, a movement towards the Japanization of the content of training was to develop, particularly in the army.

3.2. The Japanization of military training content

The arrival of the third French military mission coincided with this period of change, in which the importance of gymnastics increased in the Japanese army, but also in the educational system. Thus, Etienne de Villaret and Joseph Kiehl would have begun the instruction of the first twelve non-commissioned officers of the Toyama infantry school shortly after their arrival in December 1884. They then extended the training to other groups of students [Watanabe 1971: 45]. In June 1885, the first Japanese instructors and assistant instructors graduated [Watanabe 1971: 46] and a year later (March), the first official course of Japanese military instruction was conducted under the direction of the Japanese officer Itō [Watanabe 1971: 47]. However, in the same year, the Toyama school was reorganised according to the model of the Ecole Normale de Gymnastique de Joinville thanks to the efforts of Etienne de Villaret. In a letter written to his mother, he states that he had submitted the restructuring plan to the Japanese authorities as early as June or July 1885 and that it was 'definitively adopted' in April of the following year [Mme de Villaret's private archives, letter dated 8 April 1886]. Although the mission team was small, the officer was pleased to have been able to set up a 'real infantry training school' comprising four sections: '1° Elementary tactics 2° Shooting 3° Gymnastics 4° Fencing' [Mme de Villaret's private archives, letter of 8 April 1886]. However, German influence had been growing in Toyama since 1885 with the arrival of Jacob Meckel, quickly followed by another of his compatriots.

Lieutenant Colonel Meckel of the German army arrived during my absence. It seems that he is a fat, fleshy man – a great lover of wine – who has given birth to n + 1 books [sic],

without much personality and who seems to be always in a rage. He is going to direct the Ecole de Guerre.

[Mme de Villaret's private archives, letter from Etienne de Villaret to his brother Antoine, Tokyo, 8th April 1889]

For Etienne de Villaret, this change did not suit the Japanese army system, which was not ready to receive the German one. He mocked it: 'It's laughing out loud', he added! [Mme de Villaret's private archives, letter from Etienne de Villaret to his brother Antoine, Tokyo, 8th April 1885]

Moreover, this two-headed military organisation led to a certain amount of competition and caused some problems of military discipline. In a letter written to his brother Antoine, Etienne de Villaret recounts how the 'master-at-arms Adjutant Kiehl' attached to the same school was 'threatened in uniform by Japanese soldiers, drunk, it is true, but in uniform and in a military enclosure' [Private archives of Mme de Villaret, letter dated 9 September 1886]. The Captain then goes on to expose the imbroglio of military decisions, reflecting the political stakes between the nations.

If, for him, the French and German officers were 'absolutely independent of each other', this was not the case for the German ambassador Von Holleben, who is said to have affirmed, in front of the Russian ambassador, that 'Commandant Berthaut was absolutely subordinate to Colonel Meckel' and that the latter was his 'direct superior' [Mme de Villaret's private archives, letter dated 9 September 1886]. Moreover, he is said to have added that, in order to be 're-enlisted', Commandant Berthaut 'had to agree not to teach anything that did not conform to German ideas'. For Etienne de Villaret, 'we are serving here as a pedestal for the Germans and it would be more dignified to leave' [Mme de Villaret's private archives, letter of 9 September 1886]. His departure, a year later, with that of Joseph Kiehl, was therefore in some way a consequence of the deterioration of local political and military relations and reflects the rise of German power.

A certain continuity was nevertheless ensured by Captain Henry Lefebvre, who did not return to France until two years later, on 30 April 1889 [AN, Léonore database]. No doubt he took part in the writing of the military fencing manual which appeared the same year. For Baptiste Tavernier, the *Kenjutsu Kyōhan* is based on the translation of the French military manual. It is divided into three volumes; the foil or *Seiken-jutsu* (正 剣術), the sword or *Guntō-jutsu* (軍 刀術), and the bayonet or *Juken-jutsu* (銃 剣術) [Tavernier 2014: 66-71]. But a change would occur, according to Kanezaka Hiromichi [2007], reported by Baptiste Tavernier [2014: 66-71], with the arrival of Baron Ōkubo Haruno (大久保春野, 1846-1915), who was appointed director

of the Toyama infantry school in 1890. He is said to have decided to stop teaching fencing and bayonet from the French school to focus on Japanese teaching and to have entrusted the direction of this revision to Tsuda (津田, 1850-1907), a practitioner of *Sōjutsu* (槍術) – the technique of handling the Japanese spear – and *kenjutsu* (剣術).

However, this interpretation is questionable. On the one hand, Ōkubo Haruno is Francophile²³ and it seems difficult to think that he could have disowned this heritage if he was not ordered to do so. On the other hand, he only stayed at the head of the institution for one year [Maejima 2014]. Baptiste Tavernier's analysis shows that the distancing from the French teaching of military fencing was only achieved with the publication of the 1894 manual. A mixed form of fencing between Western and Japanese practice was then proposed. 'The *guntō-jutsu* of 1894 is thus a hybrid system that mixes the European sabre and the Japanese *gekken*' [Tavernier 2014: 71]. Nevertheless, it was not until 1907 that the next manual achieved the complete break. 'A new revision of the *Kenjutsu Kyōhan* was thus published in 1907, in which circular blows are abandoned in favour of the fury of kendo blows. From this edition onwards, forearm strikes gradually become ignored' [Tavernier 2014: 73].

The movement towards the Japanization of content thus takes place after Okubo's departure as director of the Toyama school. Four years later, the creation of the *Dai Nippon Butokukai* (大日本武徳会: the Society of the Greatest Japanese Martial Virtues), an organisation intended to codify the contents of the national fighting arts, definitively signs this widely shared desire to build a national identity based on an 'invented tradition' [Hobsbawm & Ranger 2006] – or rather, a *reinvented* one.

However, although the country was gradually disengaging from Western influence in terms of military physical training, its leaders still had in mind the increased efficiency that technical and technological modernisation could offer. Other military collaborations were also promoted, such as the one with Emile Bertin, the famous designer of warships for the Japanese fleet.

It is clear that games of influence were played at different levels in the Japanese administration. In 1908, the Minister of the Army (陸軍大

臣), Terauchi Masatake (寺内 正毅, 1852-1919), had a Francophile background. This soldier, who took part in the South-West War (Satsuma Rebellion) in 1877 where he lost the use of his right hand, had studied in Kyoto at a military school three years earlier and was therefore under French influence. He stayed in Paris from 1882 to 1886 and it seems difficult to believe that he had erased all these past experiences when, on his return, he joined the management team of the Imperial Japanese Army Academy (陸軍士官学校長), becoming its head from 1902 to 1911. But for the Minister of Education between, 1908 and 1911, Komatsu Eitarō (小松原 英太郎, 1852-1919), the German connection is asserted as he was stationed at the Japanese Consulate in Berlin from 1884 to 1887. Against the backdrop of increasing independence and militarisation, but also indoctrination of the Japanese population, intra-governmental struggles for influence played out, reinforced by an extremely hierarchical system. Not only was the French example of a state plagued by anarchist attacks and workers' strikes being pitted against that of a more orderly German nation, but there was also an opposition between the Ministry of the Army and the Ministry of Education.

Nevertheless, a kind of understanding is gradually emerged between the two. This game of autonomy with regard to the Western powers and the search for a national identity put the school battalion experiment in a very favourable position. However, whereas the European powers were quick to point out the limits of the school battalions, Japan, on the contrary, made them an instrument of power and a key element not only in its 'fascistization' of the country, but also in the diffusion of modern karate [Abe et al. 1992: 1-28].

3.3. Japanese school battalions: the *undōkai* (運動会?)

The *undōkai* (運動会) or school battalions have a long history in Europe. The Swiss Cadets of the 18th century and, above all, the German Turnen, some of whom took part in armed conflicts (such as in Holland, in 1846), served as a model. The French paradox was to introduce them officially in 1882 into the educational system as the Third Republic wanted to be democratic and opposed wars aggression²⁴. However, the military and above all political context explains this seemingly contradictory situation, which lasted about ten years [Loudcher 2011]. Reserved for children over the age of twelve, these battalions consisted of military training for pupils. Demonstrations were held during the week and on Sundays and, under the direction of soldiers assisted by their teachers. These included military exercises (parades, platoon schools) and sometimes even live firing. Yet, from 1886 onwards, opposition arose. The initial enthusiasm gave way to

23 堀江提一郎 (大久保春野), Horie Teiichiro became Ohkubo Haruno or Ōkubo. Put in charge of the administration of the French language school in Yokohama in 1869. He came to France to learn military law. He stayed there for almost 5 years, until the end of 1875. In 1890, he was appointed director of the Toyama Military School (陸軍戸山学校) and the following year, director of the Officers' School and chief of staff of the 2nd division. He finished as an army general, the highest among French-speaking Japanese [Maejima 2014].

24 Although a nationalist part of the government wanted a revenge war to take back the Alsace and the Lorraine region, property of the Prussians dating back to 1870.

criticism from teachers, parents and, above all, the military, who took offence at these 'childish antics'.

In Japan, the premises of these *undōkaï* can be detected with the organisation of *rikigekai* (力芸会 – meetings for athletes) like the one that took place on 25 May 1878 in an agricultural school in Hokkaido in Sapporo. A second was held in 1882 at the law school attached to Meiji University (明治法律学校) and the following year at Tokyo University. Admittedly, one would have to detail their content to know to what extent they can really be called a school battalion. Once again, the temporal conjunction with the development of the hexagonal battalions raises the question of their influence.

Indeed, the Japanese government may have been aware of this experience in France quite early on. In 1884, the Minister of War, General Iwao Ōyama (大山巖, 1842-1916), led a mission of fourteen officers who spent two months visiting the various arms [*Le Matin*, 6 May 1884]. The general was well acquainted with the hexagonal operation since, three years earlier, when he was Minister of War, he had received a French delegation including La Peyrère at the *Shikan Gakko* in Tokyo. He was then 'surrounded by his staff, among whose officers [...] Messrs Osaka, Funakochi Nagamine and Ogouni' [La Peyrère 1883: 98]. Jules Chanoine, who was responsible for their visit to France, took them to many places, including Sedan.²⁵

Even more, two years later, Mr. A. Hamao, adviser to the Japanese Ministry of Public Instruction and chairman of the Fine Arts Commission, visited France. Under the leadership of M. Le Guénec, school inspector, he 'began his study tour with a visit to the Ecole normale des instituteurs de la Seine' [*Le Moniteur officiel de la gymnastique et de l'escrime* 1886]. The French inspector was the author of a book on gymnastics in school battalions, in which he devoted a whole chapter to the teaching of French boxing; in particular, he criticized the use of the four 'faces' boxing model in the school domain. However, as the Parisian schools and especially the Ecoles Normales were the most advanced at this paroxysmal moment of development of the school battalions, it is almost certain that Councillor Hamao witnessed a demonstration of 'four faces' boxing model either by teenagers or by adults.

Finally, if one more argument were needed to prove the knowledge of these school battalions in Japan, the testimony of Etienne de Villaret is decisive. On the one hand, the Captain was perfectly familiar with this model of Joinville on 'four faces' he had trained for six months at the school of gymnastics and fencing in 1876, two years after the

demonstration at the Faisanderie [AN, Léonore database]. On the other hand, in a letter written on 12 January 1885 in Tokyo to his brother asking him to carry out a certain number of 'commissions', he wrote: 'send me, if it exists, an instruction manual for the school battalions, a Japanese man has asked me for it' [Private archives of Mme de Villaret, letter of 12 January 1885]. Thus, there can be no doubt about it. This teaching method was known in Japan in the mid-1880s. Moreover, it is perhaps following this dispatch that the adviser Hamao was sent to Paris.

Did Joinville's 'four faces' boxing model spread through the French school battalions, which in turn influenced the development of *undōkaï*? There is no evidence to support this hypothesis. Moreover, it was not Etienne de Villaret who could have spread this model in the military schools because his criticism is radical: 'I don't know if anyone is thinking of developing this vermin here', he exclaims [Mme de Villaret's private archives, letter of 12 January 1885]. Finally, the establishment of the pinans by Itosu Ankō took place at the end of the 19th century. Therefore, if there is a conjunction between the *undōkaï*, the French school battalions and the Joinville model of boxing on four sides, it would rather be during the 1890s.

4 OKINAWA AND THE CONTEXT OF THE INVENTION OF MODERN KARATE

4.1 Japanese policy in the Ryukyu Islands

On the eve of the reforms led by the Minister of Education, Mori Arinori (森有礼, 1847-1889), education was the object of growing interest on the part of the Japanese authorities in Okinawa.²⁶ Its implementation followed the needs of a subtle policy of development and reinforcement of national identity in a very sensitive context which is particularly well reflected in the official trip of the Prime Minister Yamagata Aritomo (山縣有朋, 1838-1922). Here too the French heritage is present. The Prime Minister, although not bilingual, made a trip to Europe and particularly to France in 1879, at the height of the rise of Jules Ferry and the Republicans. He also forged very close links with Louis Emile Bertin in Japan. How can we not interpret the changes he made in the education system in the light of his personal history?

²⁵ Sedan is a very symbolic town because it was the area where the great defeat of the 1870s war took place and led to the French capitulation.

²⁶ He imposed six years of compulsory, coeducational schooling and the establishment of high schools for the training of an elite. Under his leadership, the central ministry took more control over the curriculum and emphasised neo-Confucian morality and national loyalty in the lower schools, while allowing some intellectual freedom in higher education.

The Prime Minister left Tokyo on 26 February 1886 and, after stopping off at Kagoshima and the island of Amami, arrived in the port of Naha on 3 March. In an increasingly tense international climate, the archipelago was a choice military location. The French and the British had colonies in South-East Asia, and China and Russia were still threatening empires, not to mention the development of Korea. Okinawa was therefore a key part of the defence system of the southern islands. However, although Yamagata Aritomo planned to establish conscription on the Japanese model (1873), he did not want to create a military garrison or even a simple regiment made up only of natives. In fact, conscription was only instituted late in Okinawa (1898) and there was never a regiment made up only of local conscripts. When the latter had to do their military service, they were dispersed and sent to the regiments established on *Kyūshū* (in particular to Kumamoto where the garrison was located). The method of integration was meant to be gradual and, above all, it aimed to not offend the Okinawans. This can be measured by the method developed in the field of education.

Thus, the Prime Minister's trip was mainly focused on the dissemination of the Japanese education system, to which he reserved his most important visits. On 3 March, Yamagata Aritomo visited the Shuri primary school. On the 4th he inspected the *Shihan Gakkō* (沖縄師範学校) or Okinawa Normal School. The best of this elite could go and study at Japanese universities in order to immerse themselves in Japanese science and culture and thus become its most fervent defenders once they returned to the Archipelago, particularly in the elementary classes. The teachers were therefore key elements and might easily be compared to the 'black hussars' of the French Republic.

To the famous words of General Chanzy who, in 1882, declared: 'Make us men, we will make soldiers of them!' is answered by the slogan developed by Yamagata Aritomo: 'one must have the patriotic fibre' or *aikokushin* (愛国心). But where republican France demanded secular and devoted citizens on the basis of voluntary adherence, the government policy supported by the Emperor developed indoctrination based on socio-cultural and religious foundations favourable to the exercise of hierarchical and vertical authority that did not support opposition [Abe et al. 1992: 1-28]. 'This nationalisation of an elitist culture, without any real popular base until then, is one of the major characteristics of Japan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries' [Bougon 2011: 54-60]. In particular, it is the 'regional micro-nationalisms (*okuni-jiman*, the pride of the country, in the sense of region), on which the modern national feeling will be grafted' [Bougon 2011: 54-60].

From then on, the integration of Okinawans was intended to be gradual and above all smooth. The Prime Minister gave the necessary rules for language instruction to change from *Okinawaguchi* (the local dialect) to standardized Japanese. Still, the report states that it is not useful to copy

the Japanese curriculum in detail, but to adapt it to Okinawans in order to gradually bring it closer to the Japanese model [Kondou 1993: 37-51]. The 'Japanization' or *Yamatoka* (大和化) was on its way.

4.2. The development of gymnastics and undōkaï teaching in Okinawa

The consequences of the Prime Minister's visit in Okinawa were immediate. This was followed by a visit from Mori Arinori in 1887 [Maeshiro 1992: 294] who promoted school battalions:

Following Mori's visit, Miyako Island was the first (in the entire Okinawa prefecture) in 1887 (明治20年) to organize an undōkaï with the participation of the following elementary schools: Taira, Shimoji, Nishibe and Irabu. As for the main island of Okinawa the first organization dates back to 1889 (明治22年) and was held mainly in the following areas: city of Naha (那覇), district of Shimajiri (島尻) and district of Kunigami (国頭郡).²⁷ [Maeshiro 1993a: 293-302]

Little detail is available about the content of all these undōkaï. The one celebrated on the occasion of the victory over the Chinese in 1895 was attended by 7,765 school children from the main island of Okinawa. The total number of actors, including spectators, was an impressive 15,000 for the time and place [Maeshiro 1993a: 293-302]. There is no doubt that these *undōkaï* were part of the Japanese government's policy of strengthening national unity. Thus, on 19th September 1895, the Minister of War Ōyama Iwao (大山巖, 1842-1916) ordered that the student teachers of the Okinawa *Shihan Gakkō* Normal School (沖縄師範学校) who had graduated be required to undergo six weeks of military training. They were expected to participate in these patriotic demonstrations.

However, *tōde*/*karate* is not yet included in the curriculum, nor is it in the 1898 (明治年) or 1904 (明治年) curriculum. Little is known about the programmes of the next six undōkaï. In that of 1905, however, a first appearance of *tōde* (唐手 Chinese hand) is specified in the *Ryūkyū shimpō* (琉球新報) newspaper of 11 November²⁸ [Katekaru 2017: 109].

27 '明治20年の森の来島後、先島の宮古郡では平良、下地、西辺、伊良部の各小学校が連合した運動会が開催されている。'4) 本島では明治22年から那覇・島尻郡、国頭郡の連合運動会が継続的に開催されるようになってきた; translation by Christian Faurillon.

28 The word 'tōde' (唐手) appears in full in the 31st place of the activities. But there is no mention of which kata(s) were performed (or whether it was a kata), nor is there any mention of the time allowed for this exhibition. The programme only states that the participants are second and third year students.

During the 1910, a meeting in Okinawa is recounted in which a demonstration of *tōde/karate* is again noted. But other demonstrations at various gatherings (which could strongly resemble *undōkai*) had already evoked these practices [Maeshiro 1993a and b]. Thus, in 1904, a performance was organised by the youth association of the island of Miyako. The following year, in March, a demonstration of *tōde/karate* and *naginata* (glave) took place for a celebration in honour of Viscount Hōjō Ujyūki. In July 1906 and 1907, the same youth association of Miyako Island organised a *tōde/karate* demonstration. On 26 October 1907, a similar performance was produced by the Shimajiri District Youth Association [Maeshiro 1993b: 377-386]. Furthermore, after introducing the practice in 1905 at the Okinawa Normal School in Shuri, meetings were held there in February and October 1908 and in June 1909 [Maeshiro 1993b: 377-386]. Other associations took over, such as the youth association of Goeku and Shuri or the one of the Ozato district [Maeshiro 1993b: 377-386].

The programme of the 1910 *undōkai* reveals a grandiose spectacle with no less than 20,251 students! Such performances were comparable to those that took place in France during the federal gymnastics festivals. Out of fifty different physical activities, six had names with purely military connotations and each one was given a precise numbering. The numerous exercises and demonstrations were carried out by schoolchildren over 12-13 years old and each performance was meticulously timed. For the first time, the presentation of a pinan kata (ピンアン) by the students of Shuri High School was annotated which lasted for seven minutes.

It was in this period that the basic katas were formalised. But to what extent did Itosu Ankō create and introduce them in these meetings?

Figure 5: Programme of the 1905 *undōkai*
[Katekaru, 2017]

回	演目	出場者
第1	遊技 忠誠義連	那覇尋常小1、2年
	遊技 たこ	首里尋常2、1年
第2	遊技 鳩ボツボ洗濯	首里尋常女1、2年
	遊技 電と虎、酒島太郎	松山小2、1年
	遊技 うれしい今日、幼年景	泊小1、2年
第3	遊技 かちへ山、調練	那覇幼稚園全体
	遊技 かちへ山、赤筋シャツポ	首里幼稚園
第4	遊技 体操 見返せは、電と虎	甲辰小1、2年
	遊技 美容術	首里尋常小男3、4年
第5	遊技 体操	附属小全体
第6	遊技 美容術	那覇各小学校(尋常小3、4年
第7	遊技 秋日本の景色	松山小3、4年
	遊技 方形行進	首里尋常恩納3、4年
第8	徒手体操	中学校1年
第9	体操 各隊異色の美容術	首里高等小男全体
第10	体操 美容術	那覇高等小男全体
第11	円形遊戯	天記小全体
第12	徒歩競争	甲辰2、1年
第13	盲啞徒歩競争	甲辰3、4年
第14	二人連絡給	松山小1、2年
第15	裁縫用具整理	松山小3、4年
第16	徒歩競争	泊小3、4年
第17	徒歩競争	那覇尋常小3、4年
第18	徒歩競争	附属小全体
第19	福拾競争	首里尋常小男全体
第20	福拾競争	首里尋常小女全体
第21	日英同窓競争	首里高等小男全体
第22	支度競争	首里尋常小女全体
第23	二人連スプーンレース	天記小(選抜)
第24	徒歩競争四百米男	那覇小(選抜)
第25	徒歩四百米突	同上
第26	中隊教練	中学4、5年
第27	遊技 ショッツアス	首里高小女全体、首里工芸全体
第28	体操徒手	商業校
	製作演習	首里徒弟全体
第29	綱引	養秀小全体
第30	遊技	富等小女全体、慈濟生全体
第31	唐手	黒中学2、3年
第32	中隊教練	師範校全体
第33	スプーンレース	工芸学校3年
第34	腹取競争	富等女学校(選抜)
第35	徒歩競争 六百米突	首里徒弟校選手
第36	徒歩競争 千米突	養秀選手
第37	徒歩競争 千米突	富生選手
第38	徒歩競争 六百米突	商業校選手
第39	徒歩競争 千米突	師範選手
第40	徒歩競争 六百突	中学選手
第41	徒歩競争 千米突	中学選手

表-4 連合運動会のプログラム
出典：琉球新報，1905年11月11日の記事より作成)

5 THE OKINAWAN MELTING POT AND THE ORIGINAL MODEL OF A BASIC FOUR-SIDED COLLECTIVE COMBAT PRACTICE: THE PINANS

5.1. Itosu Ankō, trajectory and biographical elements

It is important to dwell on the trajectory of Itosu (last name 糸洲) Ankō (first name 安恒) because the character is, in many ways, a crystalliser of influences.²⁹ Born into a family of minor nobility in the village of Yamagawa (首里山川村), his aristocratic title is Itosu Chikudon Pechinn Ankō (糸洲筑登之親雲上安). Born between 1830 and 1832, he would die between 1914 and 1916. He passed imperial examinations called *kakyo* (or) 科擧 in Japanese and *kējū* (科擧) in Chinese, giving access to a senior state position, the first of which was that of *sōshi kuri* (双紙庫理 - 首里王府の役職), otherwise known as steward of the day-to-day affairs of the palace [Faurillon 2020]. At the age of twenty, he learned *tōde* (唐手) under Matsumura Sōkon (松村宗棍) (1809-1901) [Svinth 2001: 8-17]. The latter is considered the greatest of the masters of this art and is also known as 'Bushī' Matsumura. Itosu Ankō was part of a small circle of students along with Maki Chōchū (牧志朝忠), Itarashiki Chōchū (板良敷朝忠) and Asato Ankō (安里安恒).

It is not clear why he joined another master called Nagahama Chikudon Pechinn³⁰ (長浜筑登之親雲) also nicknamed Bushi Nagahama (武士長浜) who taught the so-called *Naha-te* method (那覇手) [Faurillon 2020]. Yet, in reality, these schools consist of sets of techniques gathered by an individual identified most often with a place, which, from the perspective of combat anthropology [Loudcher 2012], corresponds to the original time of the creation of a practice. Thus, Yamazaki of Naha (那覇の崎山), Matsumora of Tomari (泊の松茂良興作), Makishi of Shuri (首里の牧志) and many others are mentioned [Faurillon 2020]. For some, Itosu Ankō is also said to have learned the rudiments of Chinese martial arts from a man named Chán Nán (禪南), who is said to have been shipwrecked and housed, pending his repatriation, in the holding centre that was located in the village of Tomari [Faurillon 2020]. Eventually, his martial journey made him the first (known) master to have practiced the three styles later listed as *Shuri-te* (首里手), *Naha-te* (那覇手) and *Tomari-te* (泊手).

At the end of the Okinawa Kingdom becoming a Japanese prefecture (1879), Itosu Ankō had a fairly easy conversion from royal official to state official employed at the prefecture. He would resign from

29 Sometimes he is also called 'Yasutsune' (安恒) which is actually just the Japanese reading of the characters that make up his first name.

30 Aristocratic title.

The Influence of French Gymnastics and Military French Boxing on the Creation of Modern Karate (1867-1914) Jean-François Loudcher and Christian Faurillon

this position in 1885 at the age of 54 and it is around this period that he would have started teaching *tōde* at home, thus training a first generation of students such as Yabu Kentsū (屋部憲通), Hanagusuku Chōmo or Hanashiro (花城長茂) and Kudeken Ken'yū (久手堅憲由). In addition, he taught it to the two brothers of the former royal family living in the Shuri district, Motobu Chōyū (本部朝勇) and Motobu Chōki (本部朝基). Several generations of students were thus to follow his teaching, the most famous of whom were Chibana Chōshin (知花朝信) in 1899, then Mabuni Kenwa (摩文仁賢和) in 1903 and Funakoshi Gichin (船越義珍) in 1900 [Funakoshi 2014].

His education enabled him to seize the opportunities generated by the great social and political upheavals in which he participated and to envisage the teaching of this practice which would only later be called *karate*.

5.2. Itosu Ankō and the 'invention' of basic katas

How did Itosu Ankō create these pinans and what were his sources? Even more, to what extent is he the real creator? According to some authors, traditional dances were an inspirational influence, such as the traditional Gojushiro kata influenced by classical Ryukyuan dance [Svinth 2001: 8-17]. For others, Itosu Ankō would have borrowed from certain ancient katas of Okinawan or Chinese origin such as *kushanku* (or *kusanku*), notably thanks to the teaching of his teacher Matsumura Sōkon [Quast 2015, 2016] who, himself, would have learned them in Beijing.

In any case, it seems quite clear that the creation of the pinans is fundamentally linked to the development of the school system and the need to formalise and simplify mass education. However, while it seems certain that Itosu Ankō worked with island education to gain permission to add *tōde* (唐手) to the physical education classes taught at Shuri Normal School [Miyagi 1987;³¹ Svinth 2001: 8-17; Maeshiro 1993a], the process of its acceptance and dissemination is still subject to conjecture.

The request is said to have been transmitted to the Japanese Ministry of National Education through Ogawa Shintarō (小川銀太郎) in a detailed report he made after visiting the school where Funakoshi Gichin taught 'at the very beginning of the century' [Funakoshi 2014: 63]. But while it is generally inferred that it took place between 1900 and 1902, since it was during this period that Ogawa Shintarō attained the position of Inspector General of National Education (文部省) for the Okinawa region, a doubt remains. In fact, it is Funakoshi Gichin

31 Okinawan by birth, former researcher affiliated with the Urasoe Museum and karate practitioner.

Figure 6:
Programme of the 1910 undōkai [Maeshiro, 1993b]

開院官同紀下歌連合大会運動会		
明治44年12月18日。於：那覇海軍 幕下2区3部		
全プログラム	時間	演 技 団 体
君が代 唱歌合唱		全 体
1 各節演習	7分	那覇各小学校全体
2 人馬競争	5分	島尻県立学校全体
3 西。2分間休養 車。各節演習	7分	首里小学校男全体
4 行進遊戯	7分	島尻各小学校尋常五、六、女全体
5 各節演習	7分	中頭郡各小学校尋常四、男全体
6 スプーンレース	4分	師範学校女子部、那覇女子技藝学校
7 西。各節演習 車。唱歌体操	7分	田頭郡各小学校尋常高等男全体
8 球送り	7分	中頭郡各小学校高等女全体
9 兵式徒手体操	6分	国頭中頭郡立学校全体
10 徒歩競争	2分	県内尋常小学校選手1校1人宛48人
11 同	2分	県内尋常小学校選手1校1人宛48人
12 各節演習	5分	島尻郡各小学校尋常四、男全体
13 中隊教練	7分	中 学 校
14 主婦の多忙	2分	那覇各小学校女全体
15 明眼徒歩競争	2分	中頭郡各小学校尋常五、六男101人
16 種 花	5分	島尻郡各小学校尋常五、六男全体
17 兵式徒手体操	6分	中学校分校那覇南学校全体
18 種 花	2分	師範学校附属小学校75人
19 お手玉	3分	首里女子小学校60人
20 徒手体操	7分	中頭郡各小学校尋常五男全体
21 五色徒歩競争	3分	県内高等小学校男選手二区三郡各5人
22 旗取競争	4分	島尻郡女子工業徒歩学校全体
23 球竿体操	5分	島尻郡各小学校高等一、二男全体
24 各節演習	7分	師範学校附属小学校全体
25 西。作業競争 車。道花競争	10分	首里工業徒歩学校40人 女子校藝学校全体100人
26 旗 操	7分	那覇各小学校男全体
27 種 花	7分	中頭郡各小学校尋常六男全体
28 方 舞	14分	高 等 女 学 校
29 兵式徒手体操	6分	那覇商業学校・水産学校
30 徒歩競争 ：六百米突	3分	県内高等小学校男選手各校1人宛
31 玉送り	7分	島尻郡各小学校尋常四女全体
32 種 花	15分	島尻郡各小学校男全体3140人
33 旗 手	7分	中 学 校
34 プロネージ	7分	那覇各小学校女全体
35 各節演習	7分	中頭郡各小学校尋常四女全体
36 中隊教練	15分	師範学校全体
37 西。富士山 車。プロネージ	7分	首里女子小学校全体
38 各節演習及旗 竿体操	5分	島尻郡各小学校尋常五、六男全体
39 野試合	8分	各 中 等 学 校 選 手
40 徒手体操	7分	中頭郡各小学校高一、二、尋五、六女全体
41 旗取競争	3分	国頭郡各小学校尋常男100人
42 各節演習	5分	師 範 学 校
43 五色徒歩競争	3分	県内尋常小学校男選手二区三郡各5人
44 球竿体操	7分	中頭郡各小学校高一、二男全体
45 徒手体操	5分	島尻郡各小学校高一、二、尋五、六女全体
46 同身長徒歩競争	2分	那覇各小学校男70人
47 旗取競争	3分	中頭郡各小学校尋常四男61人
48 旗取競争	3分	国頭郡各小学校高等男100人
49 徒歩競争 ：六百米突	3分	中頭郡各小学校高等男57人
50 徒歩競争 ：一千米突	4分	中等学校選手各校3人宛
天皇皇后陛下 万歳三唱		

*『地球新報』明治43年11月30日記事より作成
明治期の沖縄県における運動会に関する歴史的研究
真栄城 穂
琉球大学教育学部紀要 第一部・第二部(42): 293-302
1993-03 University of the Ryukyus Repository

The Influence of French Gymnastics and Military French Boxing on the Creation of Modern Karate (1867-1914)

Jean-François Loudcher and Christian Faurillon

who gives this imprecise date, which has been used by many historians. Specifically, he 'thinks' that it was on the day of the festival for the investiture of Ogawa Shintarō as 'director' at the Okinawa *Shihan Gakkō* (沖縄師範学校) (Normal School) in 1901-1902 that 'Itosu performed a kata' [Funakoshi 1994: 110]. However, he fulfilled this function between 1897 and 1899 [Kondou 1993: 37-51].

Moreover, according to the official table, this investiture party took place in 1897 [Fujisawa 2019: 214]. Unless Ogawa Shintarō made his visit as headmaster and then produced his report afterwards as inspector, it is therefore possible that the introduction of *tōde* in these educational institutions predates 1900-1902. In any case, Funakoshi Gichin states that it was as a result of this visit that 'karate was integrated into the training given at Daiichi Prefectural College and the Men's Normal School' [Funakoshi 2014: 63]. He even states that after securing 'the joint agreement of Asatō and Itosu', he took 'the students in an official manner' [Funakoshi 2014: 64]. Finally, Itosu Ankō's involvement in the teaching and dissemination of *tōde* in the Okinawan education system is rather unclear. It is quite likely that these initiatives are more or less linked and result from a favourable context within which the action of a larger group gravitating around Itosu Ankō proves decisive.

5.3. A plural initiative

Thus, three men are likely to have played a role in the creation of the pinans with Itosu Ankō: Yabu Kentsū (屋部 憲通), Hanagusuku (長茂 花城) and Asato Ankō (安里 安恒). The latter, a friend of Itosu Ankō, accompanied the last king of the Ryūkyū in his exile in Tokyo. In fact, he frequented Japanese circles and also certainly those of Westerners too. In addition, he would have learned from Master Sekiguchi (関 口 某), the art of archery (弓術) and, from Master Megata Masachika (目賀田 雅周, ?-1895), horse riding. Now, the latter master was himself taught western-style riding (西洋馬術) by a French military instructor stationed in Yokohama (横浜市) – possibly Lieutenant Léon Descharmes – and received an instructor's diploma (御允許) [Faurillon 2020]. Asato Ankō returned to Okinawa in 1892 and worked under Itosu Ankō, a great friend, according to Funakoshi Gichin. Nothing more is known about him [Faurillon 2020].

The most likely influence would come from Yabu Kentsū and, perhaps, Chōmo Hanashiro (Hanagusuku). Both enlisted in the Japanese army in November 1890 [Feldmann 2020]³² at a time when conscription was

32 Thomas Feldmann reproduces an article from an Okinawan daily newspaper, (see Figure 7 opposite) entitled Ryūkyū Shimpō [18 March 1932], with its translation, in which Yabu Kentsū discusses these memories. www.researchgate.net/publication/344378697_Whenever_Yabu_fought_he_always_won_A_short_story_about_Kentsu_Yabu%27s_military_education_in_Ryukyu_Shimpō_March_18_1932.

not yet mandatory. They were part of a group of ten young Okinawans who were sent to train in the 'Kōnodai' training camp [Feldmann 2020]. Yabu Kentsū received the rank of *Gunsō* (i.e. sergeant), and possibly that of *chusa* or 'lieutenant', which he is said to have earned in particular during the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), in which he actively participated with Hanashiro [Svinth 2001: 8-17]. Funakoshi Gichin briefly mentions this passage in the army:

During the Sino-Japanese War [of 1894-1895] a young man trained earnestly with Itosu [Ankoh] for several months before joining the army. When he was assigned to the Kumamoto Division, the division medical examiner, noticing his well-balanced muscular development, said, 'I hear you're from Okinawa. What martial art did you train in?' The recruit replied that farm labor was all he had ever done. But a friend who was with him blurted out, 'He's been practicing karate'. The doctor only murmured, 'I see, I see', but he was deeply impressed.

[Funakoshi 1988: 25-26]

Now, this training camp was a legacy of the NCO school that was established in 1870 in 'Ozaka' under the influence of the French. It took the name of '*kyōdōtai*' or 'corps des guides'. In 1885, it was transferred 'some distance from the capital, to Kōnodai (Konodai), on the Naritakaido, and provided the vast majority of the army's non-commissioned officers' [Villaret 1889: 158]. Although Etienne de Villaret does not specify that he worked there, it is obvious that general movements, if not French boxing exercises on all four faces, must have been taught there. Less than three years after his departure (one year for Captain Lefebvre), the two young Okinawans joined this camp. How can one imagine that they were not influenced in some way by the Western military heritage in their teaching once they returned to their island of origin? Especially since Yabu Kentsū seems to have taken up his post as a military instructor at the Okinawa *Shihan Gakkō* in 1897 [Okinawabugi karate 2017: 146], i.e., two years after the end of the Sino-Japanese war. However, it is the same year that Itosu Ankō would have made a demonstration in this establishment for the investiture of Ogawa Shintarō as director.

Later, it was attested that Yabu Kentsū was an instructor of military gymnastics in 1902 alongside Itosu Ankō, who was then teaching at a 'school in Shuri prefecture' [Hokama 1998: 88; Svinth 2001: 8-17]. However, he was absent for a year during the Russo-Japanese War (February 1904-September 1905), in which Chōmo Hanashiro also took part, before returning to teach at the Shuri Prefectural Normal School [Svinth 2001: 8-17]. Chōmo Hanashiro would have remained there until the death of Itosu Ankō in 1915.

However, according to Christian Faurillon, Yabu Kentsū did not hold the pinans in high esteem and preferred to practice kata *kushanku*. Did he subsequently lose interest in this basic teaching? Was it Chōmo Hanashiro who did most of the work in this direction? Another possibility concerning the creation of the pinans lies in the inspiration that these *undōkai* (the one of 1895 in particular) would have offered to Itosu Ankō; he could therefore have asked these two students for details of these military-type performances. A shadowy decade obscures this past (1890-1902).

In any case, in a context of growing warmongering, it seems that, after the school recognition of *tōde* which was to become karate, Itosu Ankō now sought to attract the attention of the Japanese military authorities. He published a well-known handwritten letter in 1908, entitled *Ten Precepts of Tōde* – *Tōde Jukun* (唐手心得十ヶ条).

In fact, it does not mention the Ministry of National Education once. The author focuses on 'Japanese military society' (軍人社会) [Faurillon 2020]; he then participates, by blindness or belief, in its 'fascistization' [Abe et al. 1992: 1-28]. From then on, one may wonder if a break with Funakoshi Gichin did not occur during this period. Indeed, the creator of the *shotokan* style has, it seems, a less warlike vision of karate than the one proposed by Itosu Ankō in this letter. Given this, would he not be the one to add the notion of 'do', i.e. 'way', to the name *karate*? Moreover, this research would bring him closer to Jigoro Kano when he settled in Tokyo after the First World War.³³ This distancing is also confirmed with the creation of the variant of the basic katas that he entitled *Heians* (平安). But the reasons for this are probably as much moral as patriotic or prosaic.³⁴

Nevertheless, one can also wonder whether the 1908 letter was really produced by Itosu Ankō. One can, in fact, see in it the action of his students, notably Yabu Kentsū and Chōmo Hanashiro: their warlike past speaks in favour of this military orientation whereas that of Ankō Itosu,

33 It was from 1923 onwards that Funakoshi Gichin (船越 義珍) attended classes, focusing on Buddhist texts (仏教), and under the guidance of Furukawa Gyodo (古川 莞道 1872-1961), the father superior of the Enkakuji temple (円覚寺 慧訓 管長). This temple is located in the former shogunal city of Kamakura (鎌倉). This famous Buddhist monk is said to have exerted a great influence on Funakoshi Gichin which is said to have been reflected in various aspects of his teaching [Faurillon 2020].

34 On 25 October 1936, a meeting was held between the great masters of the time to ratify a *fait accompli* and thus officially confirm the adoption of the ideogram 空 (*kara*), generally translated as 'which comes from China', as 'empty hand'. This was a different character. The character 唐, which means China, can be read as *kara* or *tō*. The character 空 just means empty and does not have a connection with China. The characters were changed.



Figure 7:
Reproduction of the article from an Okinawan daily
newspaper, entitled Ryūkyū Shimpō, (18 March 1932),
with its translation by Thomas Feldmann

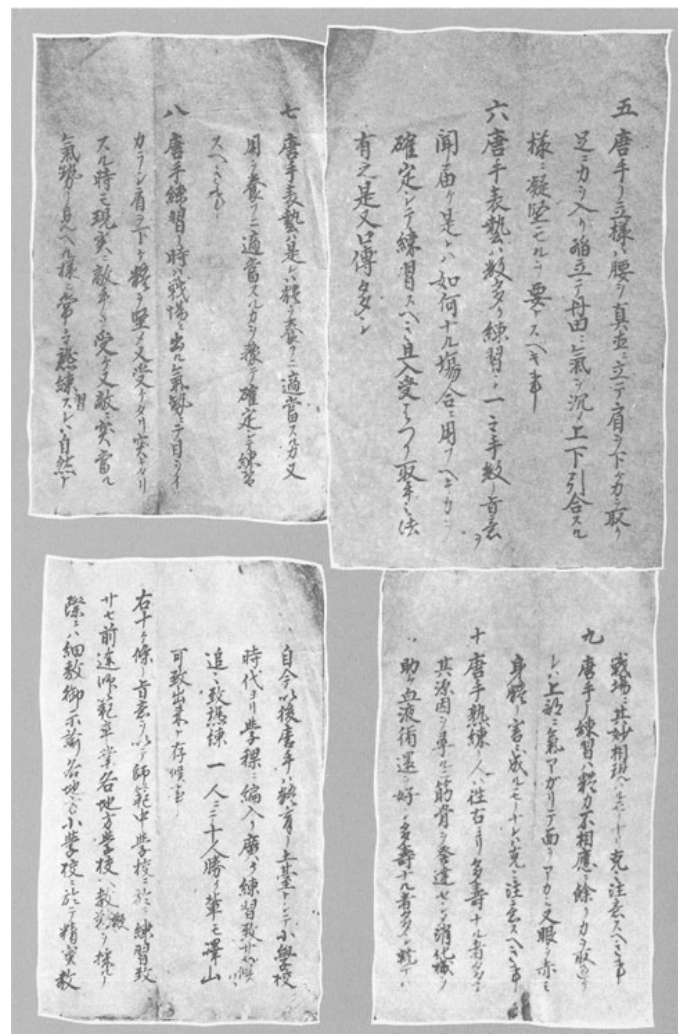


Figure 8:
Itosy's Letter, ten precepts of todé
Todé Jukun (唐手心得十ヶ条).

reported by Funakoshi Gichin through several anecdotes, pleads more for a behaviour of peace and persuasion than of confrontation and use of force.³⁵ Moreover, since Itosu Ankō came from a middle-class or 'pechin' family [Svinth 2001: 8-17] while his students came from a more noble lineage, could they not have 'persuaded' him to write this letter which they would have 'piloted'? Seven years later, Itosu Ankō passed away. Finally, the legends about karate's origins were free to become reality.

CONCLUSION

The search for the influence of French gymnastics and boxing, in particular Joinville's four sides model, on the development of modern karate led us quite far back in time in order to weave some occasionally tenuous links between two distant countries. What join them was the trajectory of men who, by strange twists of history, found themselves linked, and sometimes in a rather close manner, over a fairly long period. Although military influence was of primary importance, it should not be forgotten that this was always linked to other political, commercial, religious and cultural issues. From the relations established via the silkworm trade in the mid-1860s to the military aeronautical missions of the inter-war period, via the construction of military ships and education, exchanges were numerous and often dependent on the complexity of international relations in an Asian geopolitical context prey to strong warlike tensions.

Finally, through the history of the development of modern karate and the implementation of the so-called basic katas, a whole system leading to the 'fascistization' of the country can be seen. The story takes on a particular twist insofar as the extent of foreign influences in this destiny is considered. The military administrative system and the weight of the school battalions (*undōkai*) certainly contributed to the development of 'the gradual completion of the control apparatus required for a socio-political ideology' [Abe et al. 1992: 1-28].

Ultimately, what can we say about the influence of French gymnastics and boxing on modern karate? Certainly, the strong links between the military of each country that were established, the tangible and intangible war achievements (camps, manuals, etc.), the sending of specialists in physical exercises and weapons, etc., made it possible to forge 'Western' bodies and to make known these hexagonal practices of which the school battalions, military gymnastics and French boxing of Joinville on the four sides are part. But the latter does not seem to have

found a resonance in Japan during the Meiji era. It is in Okinawa that a certain meeting may have taken place between these two practices. However, there is no formal proof, in the current state of research, that there was a transfer of knowledge and/or skills, even if it is certain that Yabu Kentsū or Chōmo Hanashiro received military training from the French heritage. Did they see or participate in Joinville's French boxing training on four sides leading them to transform Itosu Ankō's *tōde* teaching? Similarly, no formal evidence has *identified* an influence of the collective military exercises observed on *undōkaï* practice in Tokyo and Okinawa although strong relationships exist with the development of katas in these islands. However, the diffusion of these practices, the temporal conjunctions, notably at the end and beginning of the 20th century, constitute a cluster of clues that seems to be consistent enough to lean towards one and/or the other of these interpretations. Further research is underway that will perhaps lead to more precise answers.³⁶

However, other hypotheses are still listed. It is possible that the many Japanese who came to France to train at Saint-Cyr, Fontainebleau or even at the Ecoles Normales [Maejima 2014] at this time, may have been informed of the Joinville boxing model. Official visits and inspections were also sources of inspiration, such as the visit of Prince Fushimi and Minister Yamagata on 11 May 1896 [Chanoine 1897: 171].

Did the French heritage stop there? An additional hypothesis concerns the influence of the kicking techniques of French boxing (*savate*) on those of modern karate.³⁷ Indeed, the range and level of kicks in karate is meagre until the inter-war period, whereas those of French boxing are diverse. It is not impossible that during later relations, such as the important military mission of aeronautics (1919 and 1922), and the increase in exchanges between the West and Japan, there were opportunities for transfers of body techniques. These avenues are still to be explored.

In any case, these possible French (and other Western influences) in the field of gymnastics and boxing were perfectly integrated into a Japanese society that was able to ensure a strong transition between tradition and modernity and thus create a true national practice; not without serious consequences, it is true.

36 The restrictions caused by the global pandemic in 2020-21 limited our ability to easily access military archives.

37 This hypothesis is evoked in particular by Jesse Enkamp in a video posted on YouTube in 2021 that went viral among the world of Japanese martial artists, with, of course, an anachronistic and disjointed summary of the historical narrative to enhance the visual aspect and attractiveness www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQUh5tVWd-E

35 In particular, the passage titled 'Winning by Losing' [Funakoshi 2014: 72-81].

REFERENCES

- Abe, Ikuo, Yasuharu Kiyohara, and Ken Nakajima. 1992. 'Fascism, sport and society in Japan'. *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 9: 1-28
doi.org/10.1080/09523369208713777
- Baba, Kaoru, Francine Hérial, Sekiko Matsuzaki-Petitmengin, and Elizabeth Weinberg de Touchet. 2015. *Deux ans au Japon (1876-1878), Journal et correspondance de Louis Kreitmann, officier du Génie*. Paris: Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Etudes Japonaises.
- Bougon, Yves. 2001. 'Le Japon par lui-même – Des nationalismes', *Critique Internationale* 13.1 54-60.
doi.org/10.3917/criti.013.0054
- Bousquet, Georges. 1877. *Le Japon de nos jours*. Paris: Hachette.
- Chanoine, Jules 1897. *Documents pour servir à l'histoire des relations entre la France et le Japon* (no edition and no place). Gallica.
- Collache, Eugène. 1874. 'Une aventure au Japon'. *Le Tour du monde*. 28: 49-79.
- Delpérier, Louis, André Jouineau, and Bertand Malvaux. 2000. *La Garde Impériale de Napoléon III*. Nantes: Éd. du Canonnier.
- Fletcher, Robert. 2019. *The Ghost of Namamugi: Charles Lenox Richardson and the Anglo-Satsuma war*. Renaissance Books.
doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvf3w2fs
- Fujisawa, Kenichi. 2019. 近代沖縄の教育会における人的構成がどのように変容 - 法政大学沖縄文化研究所 / 藤澤健 (Institute for Okinawan studies / Hōsei university)
- Funakoshi, Gichin. 1988. *Karate-Do Nyumon: The Master Introductory Text*. Tokyo and New York: Kodansha International.
- Funakoshi, Gichin. 1994. Ryūkyū kempo karate 琉球拳法 / 冨名腰義珍 (船越義珍) 解題: 宮城篤正/榕樹社 (First edition: 1922).
- Funakoshi, Gichin. 2014. *Karate-Do, ma voie, ma vie*. Noisy sur Ecole: Budo Editions.
- Kondou, Kenichirou. 1993. 'A study on the Education Policy for Okinawa Immediately after the Close of the Ryūkyū Court (Ryūkyū-Shobun): Focused on Aritomo Yamagata Report in 1886'. *Studies in the History of Education*. 36: 37-51.
doi.org/10.15062/kyouikushigaku.36.0_37
- Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger. 2006. *L'invention de la tradition* (1983). Paris: Ed. Amsterdam.
- Hokama, Tetsuhiro. 1998. *History and Traditions of Okinawan Karate* (translated by Cezar Borkowski Hamilton). Ontario: Masters Publication.
- Journal Militaire Officiel*. 1976. 18 December: 316.
doi.org/10.1137/1018067
- Journal Militaire Officiel*. 1879. 13 May: 523.
- Katekaru, 2017. *Creating and developing Okinawa Karate – The significance of transitions in the term “karate”* (Waseda university) 沖縄空手の創造と展開-呼称の変遷を手がかりとして/著者: 嘉手苺, 徹/早稲田大学リポジトリ ci.nii.ac.jp/naid/500001086862
- Katsuren, S. 2017 *Okinawabugi karate* 沖縄武技・空手 (edition Okinawa bunnkasha 沖縄文化社).
- La Peyrère, Paul (de). 1883. *Le Japon militaire*. Paris: Plon.
- Lebon, Georges, 1898. *Les origines de l'armée japonaise*. Paris: Berger-Levrault.
- Loti, Pierre. 1923. *Un jeune Officier pauvre*. Fragments de Journal intime rassemblés par son fils S. Viaud, Paris: Calmann-Lévy.
- Maejima, Michiko. 2014. *Édifier et équiper les bases de l'armée japonaise Transferts de technologie France-Japon 1868-1930*. PhD thesis. Paris: CNAM.
- Maeshiro, Tsutomu. 1993a. 'A historical study of Undokai in the Okinawa prefecture in the Meiji period'. Ryūkyū University. 42: 293-302. 明治期の沖縄県における運動会に関する歴史的研究
- Maeshiro, Tsutomu. 1993b. 'A history of social sport in the Okinawa prefecture in the Meiji era: A case of the youngmen's association and the club of physical education'. Ryūkyū University, 43: 377-386. 明治期の沖縄県における社会体育史: 青年会と体育会の活動を中心.
- Miyagi, Tokumasa. 1987. *L'histoire du karate*. Okinawa; bunko; 宮城篤正, 空手の歴史,おきなわ文庫
- Okubo, Hideoki, 2009. 'The trace of French assistance military advisory at the end of Edo Period in the formulation of Japanese modern physical education system'. *Japan Journal of Physical Education and Health, Sport Science*. 54: 1-14. 近代日本体育の形成における幕末フランス軍事顧問団の影,
doi.org/10.5432/jjpehss.a540107

Polak, Christian. 2005. *Sabre et pinceau, Par d'autres Français au Japon. 1872-1960*. Tokyo: Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie Française du Japon.

Polak, Christian. 2014. 'La mission militaire française de l'aéronautique au Japon (1919-1921)'. *Ebisu*. 51:
doi.org/10.4000/ebisu.1459

Quast, Andreas. 2015. *A Stroll Along Ryukyu Martial Arts History*. CreateSpace: Independent Publishing Platform.

Quast, Andreas. 2016. *King Wu Once Buckled On His Armor; The Seven Virtues of Martial Arts*. Sports and recreation.

Shiraishi, Tetsushi. 2009. *Physical Technique of the School Gymnastics in Japan* (Waseda) 日本における学校体操の身体技法. myrp.maruzen.co.jp/book/9784841931174/

Svinth, Joseph. 2001. 'Karate Pioneer Kentsū Yabu, 1866-1937'. *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*. 10: 8-17.

Tavernier, Baptiste. 2014. 'Forsaken Kendo'. *Kendo World*. 7.3: 66-73.

Watanabe, Ichiro. 1971. *Meiji Budō Shi*. Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu Hōraisha.

Sources

Private family archives of Mme Claire de Villaret (great granddaughter of Etienne de Villaret), Floiras (Lot region).

National Archives, Léonore database (online) of the files of the recipients of the Legion of Honour.

Christian Faurillon's blog, 2020, karatehistorique.wordpress.com

ABOUT THE JOURNAL

Martial Arts Studies is an open access journal, which means that all content is available without charge to the user or his/her institution. You are allowed to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of the articles in this journal without asking prior permission from either the publisher or the author.

The journal is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

Original copyright remains with the contributing author and a citation should be made when the article is quoted, used or referred to in another work.



Cardiff University Press
Gwasg Prifysgol Caerdydd

Martial Arts Studies is an imprint of Cardiff University Press, an innovative open-access publisher of academic research, where 'open-access' means free for both readers and writers.
cardiffuniversitypress.org

Journal DOI

10.18573/ISSN.2057-5696

Issue DOI

10.18573/mas.i11

Accepted for publication 25 June 2021

Martial Arts Studies

Journal design by Hugh Griffiths

MAS.CARDIFFUNIVERSITYPRESS.ORG

TWITTER.COM/MASTUDIES

MARTIAL ARTS STUDIES

EDITORS

Paul Bowman
Lauren Miller Griffith
Benjamin N. Judkins

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Wayne Wong

To discuss publication or to submit
a paper please contact:

martial.arts.studies@gmail.com

EDITORIAL ADVISORY PANEL

Oleg Benesch *University of York*
Stephen Chan *SOAS*
Greg Downey *Macquarie University*
D.S. Farrer *University of Guam*
Adam Frank *University of Central Arkansas*
Thomas A. Green *Texas A&M University*
T. J. Hinrichs *Cornell University*
Leon Hunt *Brunel University London*
Felipe P. Jocano Jr *University of the Philippines*
Gina Marchetti *Hong Kong University*
Meaghan Morris *The University of Sydney*
Daniel Mroz *University of Ottawa*
Meir Shahrar *Tel Aviv University*
Dale Spencer *Carleton University*
Douglas Wile *Alverno College*