

1st World Congress on Health and Martial Arts in Interdisciplinary Approach, HMA 2015

Why Japanese *budo* enthusiast study foreign martial arts? By the case study of the Chinese martial arts pioneer Ryuchi Matsuda's works and his thought based on Japanese traditional *budo* thought

Junichi Ikemoto, Chang Liu, Fumiaki Shishida

Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan

Abstract

Background and Study Aim. There are many forms of traditional martial arts in Japan, however, among all martial arts enthusiasts, only some dare to choose to receive the training of foreign traditional martial arts. Why they chose to practice these martial arts? And based on what kind of *budo* thought that led them to such choices? The purpose of this study is the relationship between localization of foreign martial arts and domestic *budo* thought by the case of traditional kung fu (Chinese martial arts) in Japan. Specifically, this study intends to clarify the introduction of kung fu to Japan was led by critical thoughts based on Japanese *budo* thought through Matsuda's life history and his concepts of *budo*.

Material and Methods. Ryuchi Matsuda (1938-2013) is one of the most influential pioneers of kung fu in Japan. This historical study mainly based on Matsuda's writings since 1970s. More specifically, this study analysis his autobiography "Nazo no kenpo wo motomete" (A quest for mysterious kung fu) [1], "Matsuda Ryuchi no kenyuki" (The journal of Matsuda Ryuchi 's travels to quest a fist) [2] and "Matsuda Ryuchi no zoku kenyuki" (The sequel journal of Matsuda Ryuchi 's travels to quest a fist) [3], and "Kenji" which is a series of comic books written by him as well [4-7].

Results. 1) Under the influences of his father, who is a kendo teacher, Matsuda was exposed to many classics about traditional swordsmanship masters in his childhood. Though with deep admiration toward these masters, he thought it is impractical to carry a real sword in modern society, thus "replacing sword with fist" and developing a strong *atemi* (attack without any weapon) into sword-like is the only solution to reach the achievement of those masters. To master the art of *atemi*, he received various kinds of trainings, including wado, shotokan, goju school of karate, and he also travelled to find kobudo (ancient styles of Japanese martial arts) masters in his school days. Among all experiences, the training of Gigen School left him with a strong impression. It was strict and rough swordsmanship training for a week in the last of high school days. After this experience, it became his lifework to master powerful *atemi* such as this school without sword. This could said to be a decisive experience that makes him determine to master his *atemi* to be powerful as Gigen, only without sword.

2) Meanwhile, as karateka, Matsuda gradually realized that only young and strong bodies could withstand the training modernized *budo*. Thus, he indulged into kobudo trying to find out skills and abilities without depending on youth power and strong physicality after graduated from high school. However, kobudo could not satisfy his need to master in *atemi*, since many kobudo mostly use throwing and submission skills. He started to study kung fu in Taiwan and mainland China from the 1970s. After contacting with kung fu, he firmly believed that kung fu has a set of skills and training methods could help to achieve the "best *atemi*". Finally finding an appropriate training method to master "best *atemi*" in the late 1990's, he thus started to practice *atemi* 3,000 times every day, with a goal of 10 million times in total. On a morning in 2013, he suffered an acute myocardial infarction, and 2 days later he passed away at the age of 75 years old. He was still practicing his *atemi* few hours before his heart attack. The number of *atemi* he achieved was estimated around 2,917,200 times.

3) Matsuda introduced the history, custom and skills of kung fu through articles in martial arts magazines and other writings. In addition, he was concerned with comics "Kenji" as writer. The story mainly develops around the protagonist "Kenji" and his journeys of searching for famous masters and the following trainings, in Taiwan, Hong Kong and China. The story is generally based on Matsuda's life history and his lifelong devotion in questing for the "best *atemi*". For Japanese martial arts enthusiasts, this series of comics not only introduces the knowledge of kung fu, but also creates a reference model for them, demonstrates that being Japanese, how to learn kung fu.

Conclusion. 1) The studying and practicing traditional foreign *budo* by Matsuda has established him as the pioneer of kung fu in Japan. However, his original intention was to master the "best *atemi*" interest in order to replace sword in modern society. Such concept was based on typical Japanese *budo* thought, and with the aspiration to become a traditional Japanese *budo* master.

2) Based on Japanese *budo* thought, Matsuda established a new style through his studying foreign traditional martial arts. He also criticized the sportization of *budo* and the losing of original spirits. The embodiment of his ideas towards Japanese *budo* could be found in the protagonist of the comic, which based on his own life story.

Keywords: Hirokazu Kanazawa • Masutatsu Oyama • Liu Yun Quao • Yuki Yoshi Sagawa • Su Yuzhang

Published online: 17 September 2015

Copyright: © 2015 the Authors. Published by Archives of Budo

Contributors: Junichi Ikemoto, Chang Liu, Fumiaki Shishida conceived the study design. Junichi Ikemoto collected the data. Junichi Ikemoto analysed the data. Junichi Ikemoto prepared the manuscript. Junichi Ikemoto, Fumiaki Shishida secured the funding.

Funding: Departmental sources

Conflict of interest: Authors have declared that no competing interest exists

Ethical approval: Not required

Provenance and peer review: Under responsibility of HMA Congress

Corresponding author: Junichi Ikemoto. Waseda University, 1-6-1 Nishiwaseda, Shinjuku, Tokyo, 169-8050, Japan; e-mail: ikemoto@aoni.waseda.jp

Open Access License: This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-commercial 4.0 International (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, the use is non-commercial and is otherwise in compliance with the license

Cite it: Ikemoto J, Liu Ch, Shishida F. Why Japanese *budo* enthusiast study foreign martial arts? By the case study of the Chinese martial arts pioneer Ryuchi Matsuda’s works and his thought based on Japanese traditional *budo* thought. In: Kalina RM (ed.) Proceedings of the 1st World Congress on Health and Martial Arts in Interdisciplinary Approach, HMA 2015, 17–19 September 2015, Czestochowa, Poland. Warsaw: Archives of Budo; 2015. p. 171–174

REFERENCES

- Ryuchi M. *Nazo no kenpo wo motomete* (A quest for mysterious Kung fu). Tokyo: sinbun syuppan-kyoku; 1975
- Ryuchi M. *Matsuda Ryuchi no kenkyu* (The journal of Matsuda Ryuchi ‘s travels to quest a fist). Japan: BAB; 2005
- Ryuchi M. *Matsuda Ryuchi no zoku kenkyu* (The sequel journal of Matsuda Ryuchi ‘s travels to quest a fist). Japan: BAB; 2006
- Ryuchi M, Yoshihide F. *Kenji. Shogaku kan*; 1988-1992
- Gekkan hiden. “Nazono Kenpo wo motomete “Real Kenji; “Ichigeki Tankyu” Shikou wo hiraku”(“Real KENJI Matsuda Ryuchi quested for mysterious Kung fu”; “Quest for one attack”). Japan: BAB; 2013
- Eiji Y. *Hakkyoku ken to hiden: bujutuka Matsuda Ryuchi no osie* (Bajiquan and Secret: the teachings of Matsuda Ryuchi as martial artist). Toho syuppan; 2014
- Ryuchi M. *Sinso zoho ban Nazo no kenpo wo motomete* (Quest for Mysterious Martial Arts, augmented edition), Nichibo Syuppan sha; 2015

Table 1. Matsuda’s life and martial arts history

Year	Life history	Martial arts history (learning experiences are “☆” and related important persons are “○”)	Publication and Mass Media
1938	Born in Aichi		
1945	His family suffered a great airstrike and moved to their grandfather’s house	Encountering with the book “Musashi Miyamoto” by Eiji Yoshikawa in grandfather’s house and the admiration towards traditional great swordsman began to grow	
	Elementary school days	Began practicing Karate by his own style	
	Junior high school days	☆ Wado Ryu Karate in Aichi	
	High school days	☆ Goju Ryu Karate (Masutatsu Oyama, Seigou Yamaguchi) in Tokyo during summer and winter vacation ○ Kenichi Sawai (Taiki-ken) ○ Tatsuo Yamada (Nihon kenpo) ○ Hiroshi Kinjyo (Okinawa Karate) ○ Kotaro Yoshida (Daito Ryu) ○ Seiko Fujita (Ninjyutu) ○ Gentyo Yagyū (Sinkage Ryu)	
	Moved into a temple due to involving into a fighting his final year of high school	☆ Gigen Ryu Ken Jyutsu (Shigemasa Togo) in Kagoshima ☆ Kenbukan Karate in Wakayama	

Year	Life history	Martial arts history (learning experiences are “☆” and related important persons are “○”)	Publication and Mass Media
1957	Began his work in Toyota Company, but resigned after 4 months, and working part time after	☆ Boxing in Aichi	
1959		☆ Daito Ryu (Yukiyoshi Sagawa)	
1961		☆ Basic skills of Xing Yi Quan (Wang Shu Jin) in Meiji Jingu ○ Shimazu Kenji (Yagyū singan Ryu)	
1964	Got married		
1967	Moved to Tokyo	☆ Basic skills of Xing Yi Quan and Ba Gua Zhang (Kinbei Sato) in Tokyo	“The study of Chinese martial arts” in <i>Modern Karate</i> (newspaper of Kyokushin kaikan)
1969		☆ Shosho Ryu in Morioka (Kyozo Takahashi) ☆ Xing Yi Quan (Hong Yi Xiang) in Tokyo	
1970		☆ Xing Yi Quan (Hong Yi Xiang) in Taiwan ☆ Bajiquan (Su Yu Zhang) in Taiwan	
1971	Became a Buddhist and given his Buddhism name as “Ryuchi”		“The note about Shaolinquan” in <i>Tyuu koron</i>
1972		☆ Yan Qing Quan and Ba Ji Quan (Liu Yun Quao), Chen style Tai Ji Quan (Xu Ji in Taiwan)	· The Oriental Secrecy of making a Strong Body · Chinese Martial Arts: Shaolinquan and Taijiquan
1973	He work in Buddhism temple till 1974. The movie “Enter the Dragon” was released on December in Japan.	☆ Ba Gua Zhag(Liu Yun Quao)	· <i>The Introduction of Tai Ji Quan</i> · <i>The Chinese Secret Method of Making a Tough Body</i> · <i>The Introduction to Shao Lin Quan</i>
1974		○ Hirokazu Kanazawa (Karate) ☆ Double sickle and chain	· Comic “Otoko Gumi”, Supervisor (1979)
1975		Established „Orient Traditional Martial Arts Study Group” in Waseda University	· <i>Quest for Mysterious Martial Arts</i>
1976	Travel to India and Nepal for Buddhism Study		· <i>Introduction of Chinese Martial Art by Picture</i> · <i>The Illustration and History of Chinese Martial Arts</i>
1977	Travel to India and Pakistan for Tibetan esoteric Buddhism study	Changing the name of „Orient Traditional Martial Arts Study Group” into „Chinese Martial Arts Study Group” in Waseda University	· <i>Introduction of the secrecy of Chen Style Tai Ji Quan</i> · <i>Introduction of Mi Men Tang Lang Quan</i> · <i>Introduction of Chinese martial Arts</i>
1978	First visit to People’s republic of China		· <i>The Secret of Japanese Jujyutu</i>
1979		☆ Chen style Tai Ji Quan (Xu Ji) in San Francisco	· <i>The Chinese Martial Arts for Illustration of Real fight situation through photographs</i> · <i>Introduction to Xing Yi Quan</i> · Martial arts instructor in special TV series „Megaro Man” (Fuji TV)
1980		Visited Beijing, Zhengzhou, Luoyang, Xi’an, Shaolin temple. ○ Chen Xiao Wang (Chen style Tai Ji Quan) ○ Hou Chun Xiu (Zhao Bao style Tai Ji Quan)	· Acting in Children’s programs „Open ! Ponkikki” (Fuji TV), „Here is Information Section” (NHK)
1981	Participated “Pan-Asia culture centre”		· <i>The World of Chinese Martial Arts</i> (The first special volume of kung fu)
1982	The movie “Shao Lin Temple” was released on November in Japan	Visited Shanghai, Xi’an, Zhengzhou, Baoding, Cang xian, Chen Jia Gou, Shaolin temple, Beijing ○ Ma Xian Da, Ma Ming Da (Tong Bei Quan) ○ Wang Xi’an, Zhu Tian Cai (Chen style Tai Ji Quan) ○ Wu Lian Zhi (Wu style Ba Ji Quan) ○ Zhang Shi Zhong (Li style Ba Ji Quan) in Tokyo.	· The Introduction of Northern Chinese Martial Arts illustrated by sequence photographs. · Martial arts instructor in <i>The Story of a Police Detective</i> (movie, Vol. 1 to 5, ~1987) Supervising editor in <i>Wu Shu</i> (First Kung-Fu magazine)
1983		☆ Wu style Ba Ji Quan (Wu Lian Zhi), Yin Yang Ba Pan Zhang (Xu Yong Xiang), Ying Zhao Fan zi Quan (Chen Zheng Hui) in Shi Jia Zhuang ☆ Tong Bei Quan (Ma Xian Da) in Xi’an	

Year	Life history	Martial arts history (learning experiences are “☆” and related important persons are “○”)	Publication and Mass Media
1984	Became executive committee in “Japan traditional Martial Arts Convention”	Visited Beijing and Xi’an and meet Ma Xian Da and Chen Li Qing for arrangements of <i>Japan and China Martial Arts Friendly Demonstration Exchange Convention</i>	· <i>Qi Xing Tang Lang Quan by sequential photographs</i> · <i>The mysterious Kung-Fu, Instruction to Ba Gua Zhang</i>
1985	Part-time lecturer in Tokyo University. He became a formal pupil of Ma Xian Da in Xi’an	An executive committee in <i>Japan and China Martial Arts Friendly Demonstration Exchange Convention</i> ☆ Chen style Push Hand (Chen Li Qing, Chen Xiao Wang, Wang Xi An)	· <i>Jiao Men Chang Quan</i>
1986	Visited China as Japan <i>budo</i> representative. Special lecture of All Japan Tai Ji Quan Association.		· <i>Luo Han Quan, Shao Lin Kung-Fu, From Basic to Fighting techniques.</i> · <i>Traditional China, Kai Men Ba Ji Quan.</i> · <i>Poem of Fighter (Video)</i>
1987	Experimentation on the power of “one inch punch”	○ Zhu De Bao (Qiang style Ba Ji Quan) in Cang Zhou.	
1988		☆ Qiang style Ba Ji Quan (Zhu De Bao), Mi Zong Quan in Cang Zhou	· The Soul of Art (Collection of conversation) · “Kenji” (Comics, writer, ~1992)
1991		☆ Xin Yi Ba, An Hui style and Luo Yang style Xin Yi Liu He Quan in China	
1992		Study of Dai style Xin Yi Quan in Shan Study of Xin Yi Ba in Shao Lin temple	“Traditional Training of Chinese Martial Arts” in <i>Sports sciences</i>
1993		☆ Xin Yi Liu He Jian in He nan. Study of Tang Ping Seven Style ○ Huo Wen Xue, Fan Chuan Yi (Chang Chun style Ba Ji Quan) ○ Xu Cai, Kang Ge Wu in Beijing	
1994	Received Mantra from a Tibetan eminent priest		
1996	Participated Tai Ji Quan International Competition in He Nan	Study Xin Yi Ba in Shao Lin temple	
1997		☆ Qiang style Ba Ji Quan (Zhu De Bao) in Cang Zhou	
2000			“Cosmic Dance, Ba Gua Zhang” in <i>Tonpa</i>
2003	Began his practicing of 1 million repetition of Peng Quan (Xin yi Quan) from December		
2004	Achieved his one million goal in April. Started practicing 1 million repetition of Chong chui (Ba Ji Quan) from July	☆ He start to practice Wu style Ba Ji Quan at Wu Lian Zhi’s Training session in Japan	Kung-Fu magazine “Wu Shu” publication terminated
2005	Finished 1 million times at February. Started practicing Chong Chui with the aim of 10 million times.	☆ Wu style Ba Ji Quan (Wu Lian Zhi)	The journal of Matsuda Ryuchi, s travels to quest a fist
2006		☆ Wu style Ba Ji Quan (Wu Lian Zhi)	The serial journal of Matsuda Ryuchi, s travels to quest a fist
2007		☆ Wu style Ba Ji Quan (Wu Lian Zhi)	
2008		☆ Wu style Ba Ji Quan (Wu Lian Zhi)	
2009		☆ Wu style Ba Ji Quan (Wu Lian Zhi)	
2010		☆ Wu style Ba Ji Quan (Wu Lian Zhi)	
2011			The innermost secrets, Fa Jin and basic techniques
2012			The innermost secrets, lethal technique and practical usage
2013	Passed away at 24, July	Visited Wu Lian Zhi in Japan in April	
2015			Quest for Mysterious Martial Arts, augmented edition