

Professional paper

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN THE TRAINING METHODS OF BASIC JUDO AND JIU-JITSU TECHNIQUES

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Abstract: By comparing two methods of technique training, those of judo and jiu-jitsu, through two selected techniques, this paper analyses the limitations in the training of a self-defense practitioner. Examining the nature of judo randori, i.e. the possibilities that it provides for the improvement of technique, the advantages of that training method are considered comparing to the methods of the technique improvement in jiu-jitsu. Since the techniques of jiu-jitsu are extremely unsafe, it is basically impossible to master them completely. They are trained with high precaution, usually “until the brink of pain”. Consequently, the practitioner of jiu-jitsu is unable to perform the technique to the very end, which, in reality (physical conflict), he/she would certainly do. On the other hand, the techniques of judo can be performed with full power and with full resistance of the adversary. Therefore, a jiu-jitsu practitioner is practically unable to master the techniques completely, considering the stages of training methods, while for the practitioner of judo all of those stages remain available.

Keywords: *judo, jiu-jitsu, self-defense, randori, special physical training*

INTRODUCTION

Founding judo, Jigoro Kano has brought to light a new, revolutionary, system of exercise. He modified the ancient martial art of jiu-jitsu (or jujutsu) into a system of physical exercise, as well as a way of life, that quickly spread throughout the world. Since then, judo has gone through significant changes,

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surely the most important one being the predominance of its sports aspect when it became an Olympic sport in Tokyo in 1964.

Despite becoming an elite sport, judo remained a marital art. Even though the two terms are often mixed, the difference is important. Martial arts lack competitive aspect, they are strictly focused on the mastering of techniques, acquiring grades of belts and their unique philosophy. As such, aikido and nin-jutsu stand out. On the other hand, combat sports are focused solely on competitions, like boxing or wrestling. Judo, taekwondo and karate in their essence have both aspects: martial art as well as sport. The question is how much did the sports transformation take away from judo as a martial art, and whether it still has significant implementation in physical confrontation (outside sports battleground).

For a deeper understanding, we should take a look at the historical development of judo and jiu-jitsu. Medieval Japan was dominated by the warrior class of samurais, who dedicated their whole lives to serving their feudal masters, i.e. daimyo (Kliri, 2006). For that purpose they practiced martial arts daily. The most common one was the art of fighting with a sword – kenjutsu. In case of losing the sword in a battle, they practiced an additional martial art of jiu-jitsu, an art that does not involve weapons for the most part. Since its key role was on the battlefields, the very techniques of jiu-jitsu were extremely brutal and usually resulted in the death of the adversary.

The change came with the Meiji restoration, which completely transformed the Japanese society in order to catch up with the course of modernism, practiced by the imperial powers (Stojanović, 2015). One of the first acts of reform was the sword carrying ban, which resulted in the thrive of jiu-jitsu that then became a dominant martial art. However, in the modern Japanese society there was no room for the deadly techniques of jiu-jitsu, and the martial art itself had its reformer – Jigoro Kano. He conducted a strict selection of techniques and incorporated only the ones that were safe for both practitioners into his own martial art - judo. Another important action is that he was the first to include physical exercise in a martial art, since he was aware of the significance of sport in the modern society (Kano, 2007). The distinction is obvious in the name itself. While the suffix “jitsu” stands for a martial art that is adjustable and aimed at practical use, Kano uses the term “do”, thus creating judo. The very term “do” implies that the purpose of the martial art is in a profound, philosophical sense (De Majo, 2010).

Today, in judo, randori dominates as a consequence of the sports aspect of the art. In it, within the limits of precisely defined rules, various techniques are allowed, but many are forbidden as well. In this paper, the emphasis is on the allowed techniques, the possibilities of their use within

randori and the effects which such technique training can produce. Although belonging to the sports aspect, those are also self-defense techniques that can be found in a wide range of jiu-jitsu techniques (as a representative self-defense martial art) (Mudrić, 2005; Nešić, Radoš, 2002; Vukelić, 2004). By analyzing the training process laws, the dominant mastering of techniques, as well as the nature of self-defense techniques, we will try to perceive the role that practicing judo randori can play in the process of mastering self-defense techniques.

On the other hand, jiu-jitsu itself is taking the sports path. Namely, its sports aspect has been formed by means of a strict selection of the techniques of this previously exclusively martial art. Unlike judo, these fights are characterized by a far greater number of allowed techniques as well as the usage of techniques other than throwing and ground fighting, which are characteristic for judo. Nevertheless, in this paper the focus will be on the still dominant self-defense aspect of jiu-jitsu and on the technique that is banned from its sports combat version.

1. THE THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE PAPER

In a physical conflict between two individuals there are, roughly speaking, 4 distances. First, the distance of strikes where leg kicks and arm punches are dominant, especially at a distance, like *Mawashi geri* in karate. Next is the clinch distance where punches and kicks with arms, elbows and knees are common. Following this distance and for the paper the most important one, is the grappling distance in which the adversaries maintain a grapple and aim to knock down the adversary. As a consequence there is also the final floor distance, which is also included in judo, yet for self-defense it is not of great significance. This is due to the possibility of multiple attackers' attacks, in which situation, engaging in floor fight to disengage one of them could prove fatal.

The third, grappling distance is the subject of this paper. In it, the clothes or the body have been grabbed, it is essential to knock the opponent down to the ground. The same principle is also the key feature of judo randori, shaped by the long-standing experience and the demands of the International Olympic Committee. It is known becoming an Olympic sport requires compliance with stringent security standards prescribed by the IOC. Judo began its own evolution from a martial art to an Olympic sport with the introduction of "physical education" in judo training by Jigoro Kano (Kano, 2007). As a consequence, rules are strict and equal everywhere in the world where judo is practiced. For the topic of the paper, the corpus of allowed techniques is crucial, as well as the way they are conducted during the fight. Also, these distances are also trained in self-defense in order to

make fighter's skill set complete. Jiu-jitsu itself relies on judo throwing techniques in the grappling distance, using them to successfully overcome such distance - de facto to throw the adversary. Therefore, a practitioner of jiu-jitsu is not unfamiliar with judo throws, but rather exercises them in every training session.

Judo randori permits 38 basic throws and their numerous variations (Kudo, 1969). The nature of the performance of these throws, which is very close to an actual physical conflict between two adversaries, is significant to us: the throw is performed with the maximal use of force and, on the other hand, with the maximal resistance of the adversary.

This characteristic cannot be found among self-defense techniques, i.e. the jiu-jitsu techniques. Those techniques are practiced in strictly limited conditions, using an almost experimental method, which will be covered later in this paper.

We will regard these two characteristics as crucial and analyze them through the laws of the training process in the field of learning and mastering technique. The methodology of technique learning, according to Stefanović and Jakovljević (2004) consists of V stages:

- I stage: technique learning – conducted under facilitated conditions
- II stage: technique mastering – conducted under harder conditions
- III stage: the creation of style – upgrading the existing, acquired techniques
- IV stage: the creation of a specialty – forming a specific technical detail
- V stage: the creation of a new technique variation – the highest form of creativity

Unlike in sport, in martial arts the focus is on the first two stages, because of the broad field of self-defense. While in sport the fight is limited by the rules, in an actual conflict between two adversaries everything is allowed, with the only potential limitations being moral norms.

In order to successfully complete the given stages of technique learning, Stefanović and Jakovljević (2004) also define three phases:

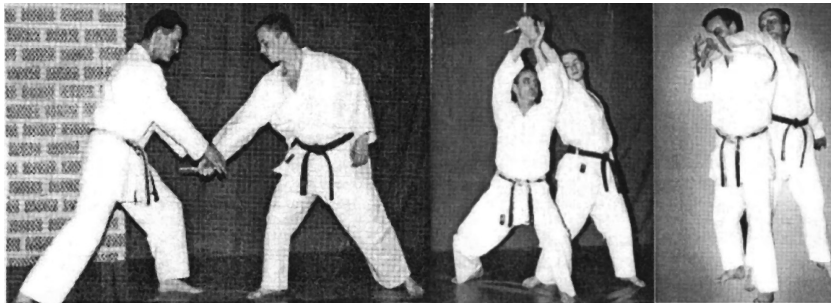
- I phase: basic technique learning under facilitated conditions
- II phase: mastering the technique under normal training conditions
- III phase: a situational technique training under competitive conditions

The first two phases are available both in judo and jiu-jitsu. The problem is in the third phase, which is in judo represented in the form of randori. The question of the realization of that phase in jiu-jitsu, i.e. the mastering of self-defense, and the possibility of its realization in judo is the framework of this paper.

As a self-defense technique, i.e. jiu-jitsu, the “Double block with hands, over-the-shoulder elbow lock” will be analyzed. Its methodology is described

in one of the rare practical books related only to jiu-jitsu: Nešić and Radoš (2002). The technique itself is displayed on Picture 1.

Picture 1. *Double block with hands, over-the-shoulder elbow lock*



The key feature of this, and many other jiu-jitsu techniques, is that when fully performed, especially in the third phase, it ends up breaking the adversary's arm in the area of elbow joint. Because of that it is extremely efficient but also dangerous to practice; due to this, it is usually practiced to the brink of pain, i.e. until the adversary surrenders because of the lock.

On the other hand, the judo technique we will analyze is the basic leg throw: *Osoto-gari*. The explanation of this technique (Picture 2), is found in the work of Kudo (1969).

Picture 2. *Osoto-gari*



Just like other judo throws, the technique is safe for the adversary. If performed on tatami, and if the adversary is familiar with the falling

techniques, the very performance of the technique involves no major dangers to practitioners. As such, Osoto-gari is a part of judo's competitive techniques.

By analyzing these two basic techniques, we will consider the (im)possibilities of their practicing in those phases, and by doing so perceive the significant differences that emerge in the methodology of technique mastering in judo and jiu-jitsu.

2. THE ISSUES IN THE PROCESS OF LEARNING AND MASTERING TECHNIQUES

The displayed technique of jiu-jitsu "Double block with hands, over-the-shoulder elbow lock" can certainly be practiced in the first two phases: basic technique learning under facilitated conditions and mastering the technique under normal training conditions. The issue arises in the third phase: the situational technique training under competitive conditions.

For the art of self-defense, competitive conditions represent an actual, maximum intensity confrontation between two adversaries. What is notable is that if the given technique was conducted in such circumstances, the adversary would suffer a serious elbow injury. Consequently, the technique itself is never practiced through that method, but in strictly limited conditions. In the process of training, the adversary (or in the process of practicing the technique, the partner) in jiu-jitsu must not offer significant resistance. He/she must cooperate with the attacker in order to conduct the technique safely. Due to this a practitioner of jiu-jitsu is not capable of performing the technique to the very end, far away from "competitive conditions", i.e. an actual physical conflict.

On the other hand, Osoto-gari can be conducted in full intensity without major consequences for the practitioner, provided that the technique is performed on tatami and that the partner has mastered the falling technique. In addition, the competitive conditions in judo are found in randori, in which the technique can be fully tested.

As a consequence of the radically different conditions of technique mastering, we have radically different approaches to its training.

In jiu-jitsu the issue with technique mastering is a, surely necessary, limit: "to the brink of pain". To avoid the technique performance to cause injuries to the partner, a practitioner of jiu-jitsu is not capable to perform the technique to the end, unless in an actual physical conflict. This is a significant drawback in the process of learning and mastering the technique.

On the other hand, in judo, randori, a practitioner is able to perform the technique with adversary's full resistance and know for sure that they have mastered the technique. By successfully performing a throw in randori, judoka is certain that they have mastered the technique, i.e. that they passed all the aforementioned stages of technique learning.

A practitioner of jiu-jitsu cannot have that certainty, unless he has an experience from a real physical conflict. Experts tried to solve this methodological problem of jiu-jitsu in different ways. For example, Nešić and Radoš (2002), as well as Mudrić (2005), recommend combinations of techniques which would cover a wide range of possible physical conflicts between two individuals. This would lead to the mastering of certain technical elements, but not entire techniques, thus enabling the practitioner to overcome the situation. From the aspect of special physical training (the training of the army and police Special Forces), Vukelić (2004), aware of the danger that full intensity practicing of jiu-jitsu involves, nevertheless recommends: “harder, and even risky conditions for beginners”. It is important to bear in mind that the stated methodology is recommended only for special forces, because “a poorly mastered technique could cost a member of special forces his/her life“. Implementing the same approach in case of practicing jiu-jitsu as a civilian is out of question.

Consequently, third phase of technique mastering (a situational training in competitive conditions) in judo randori is almost completely safe. Even the later stages of technique learning (the creation of style, the creation of a specialty and the creation of a new technique variation) can achieve their full swing precisely in randori. In jiu-jitsu, except in special physical training, those stages for a practitioner remain within a practitioner’s reach, and the technique itself is never fully mastered.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of two techniques “Double block with hands, over-the-shoulder elbow lock” and Osoto-gari, first and foremost shows significant differences in the methodology of learning those techniques. While it is possible to master Osoto-gari, with the self-defense technique the final stages of the learning process remain unattainable.

Thereby in the self-defense techniques of jiu-jitsu, through the analyzed “Double block with hands, over-the-shoulder elbow lock” a significant methodological problem is noticeable. The practitioner is unable to fully learn the technique, i.e. master all the stages of its learning, which leads to the questioning of the real usage of this very technique. On the other hand, it is possible to master the judo technique – Osoto-gari by completing all the stages of technique learning, and even form a specific personal style.

Theoretically, the jiu-jitsu technique is undoubtedly more realistic and more applicable in an actual physical conflict. Osoto-gari can also be useful in a physical conflict. Yet, as a throwing technique it has a major drawback: there is no overcoming the punching distance, but the technique begins at the grappling distance. From that point of view, the jiu-jitsu technique is clearly superior, particularly having in mind that Osoto-gari was formed for

a sports confrontation and not for a physical conflict. However, the question of the actual applicability of the jiu-jitsu technique outside the “experimental” conditions at the very training remains open, while the technique of judo can be mastered to perfection.

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