

A Study on Martial Arts Inherited by Seiko FUJITA(藤田西湖)

— An attempt to understand “Kempo Zu (拳法図)” as “Pre-conceptual History” —  
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In this presentation, in understanding the techniques depicted in “Kempo Zu” which is said to have been left by Seiko FUJITA, we will not only clarify the techniques as martial arts with empirical logic and explanation but also consider the significance of inheriting them as figure.

“Kempo Zu” consists of 59 images depicting martial arts techniques performed by Tengu. The Japan Martial Arts Institute published this “Kempo Zu” in 1985. The diagrams depicted in this “Kempo Zu” have been revived and passed down as martial arts techniques by the All Japan Taïdo Federation(全日本体道連盟), led by Masatoshi Fujitani, who took over the Bujutsu Kenkyujo(武術研究所).

To explain body techniques with empirical logic means to analyze the offensive and defensive movements in martial arts, understand the mechanisms, and then translate them into words. Such a way of understanding is an attempt to express subjective physical sensations objectively through words. However, the more accurately one tries to describe a momentary event, the more fragmented and fixed the movement becomes. To express it in words as symbols, we can inevitably approach the technique only by approximation. Thus, this inevitably leads to the unspoken.

But that does not mean that we should give up trying to put it into words. Without such a bold practice of verbalization, it will be impossible to understand the technique. Toshiharu TAKEUTCHI (竹内敏晴) says that words is “the pre-conscious world of symbiosis that rises to the cognitive horizon of understanding.” That is why the method of transmission of martial arts would be done as “oral transmission (口伝) ”.

On the other hand, the “Kempo Zu” is considered to explicitly state the existence of techniques and to call for the genesis of body techniques. This is because the body technique is neither reproduced nor imitated but can only occur in the present time. “Kempo zu” can be thought of as “Pre-conceptual history”. It is also thought that “Kempo Zu” conveys the idea that the techniques to be inherited must be created in a creative manner.