



# The Bulletin

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**In this edition:** Czech amateur *judo* historian, *judoka* and *iaidoka*, Petr Brezina has sent us an interesting article on the early days of *judo* in the Czechoslovak Republic—including the contribution made by London Budokwai members. Petr's article has been edited for publication by Llyr Jones, who also produced this issue.

**News:** Again we remind you that we have quite a collection of video material now and would be happy to arrange showings for clubs. Remember you can buy copies through the website. Sets of Bulletins may also be purchased on CDs.

Regards Diana Birch



**Figure 1 – František Smotlacha (1884 – 1956)**

## The Kano Society

### The early days of *Judo* in Czechoslovak Republic (and the contribution of the London Budokwai) Petr Brezina & Dr Llyr Jones (editor)

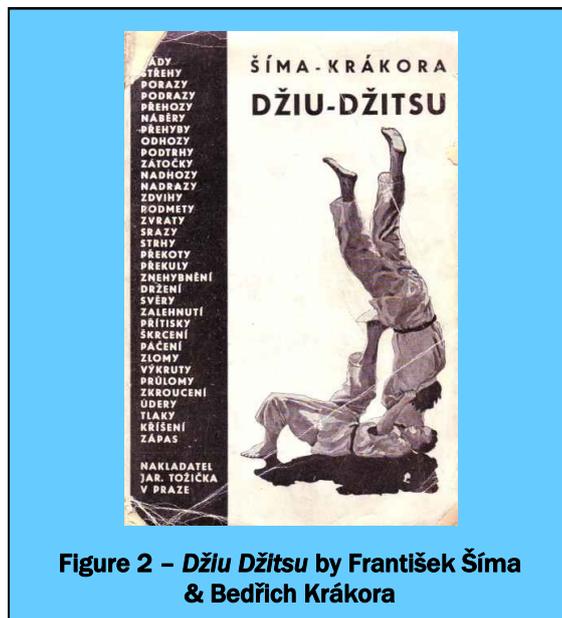
#### Introduction

In the former Czechoslovak Republic (Czechoslovakia), *judo* (known therein as *jiu-jitsu* [sic.] in the years preceding World War II) started to become widely disseminated in the 1930s. Early Czechoslovak *judo* pioneers, such as Istfán Fülöp (Dobó), built their experience and gained their information primarily through short visits by, and lectures from, Japanese teachers—including Tanaki-sensei (in 1934) Ichiro Hatta and Sugiyama-sensei (in 1935) and, Jigoro Kano *shihan* (in 1936), as well as other foreign teachers.

#### Tanaki

Tanaki-sensei arrived in Prague in 1934 to negotiate and prepare for the *judo* team contest, between Czechoslovakia and Japan, to take place the following year (1935). He had been travelling for some time promoting *judo*. Tanaki-sensei led one *judo* session at the gymnasium/dojo of Vysoké Školy (VŠ) Praha – Prague Universities – in Marathon House. (Marathon House was situated at Number 7, Černá Street, Prague 2 and was a sports centre for universities in Prague.) VŠ Praha was the club of Charles University and Czech Technical University (ČVUT), jointly, in this pre-World War II period.

When in Prague, Tanaki-sensei worked with František Smotlacha (the renowned mycologist and founder of collegiate sport in Czechoslovakia) who later became President of the Czechoslovak *Jiu-jitsu* Union – see Figure 1. Noboru Ogawa - the Japanese Ambassador and Major Maki - the Japanese Military Attaché, from the Japanese Embassy in Prague similarly supported these activities. Also contributing to the development of Czechoslovak *judo*



**Figure 2 – *Džiu Džitsu* by František Šíma & Bedřich Krákora**

were visits by *judoka* from the Budokwai Japanese martial arts club in London, United Kingdom.

There is some historic information available about these formative years of *judo* in Czechoslovakia [1] and Figure 2. It is the aim of this short article is to outline more of this history and also highlight the contribution made by some Budokwai members.

#### Istfán (Stefan) Fülöp also known as Dobó

In 1933, the Hungarian student Istfán (Stefan) Fülöp, commonly known by the nickname Dobó, started teaching *judo* in Brno - a major city some 205 km south-east of Prague. It is known that he had received the grade of 1 *Kyu* at the Budokwai in London. In the following year (1934) Fülöp began progressively to teach *judo* in Prague, where he instructed a group of university students at the *jiujitsu* club that practiced at a gymnasium/dojo in Marathon House. Furthermore, he also taught at a club situated in the Straka Academy – see Figure 3, at this time.



Figure 3 - The Straka Academy, Prague

Also in the same year, Dobó participated in the first European *Judo/Jiu-jitsu* Championship held at the Kristal Palast in Dresden, Germany) from 30 November to 2 December 1934, where he represented Czechoslovakia and placed second in the heavyweight category. The Czechoslovak *judoka*, Alois Cígner, also medalled at the event - placing third in the lightweight category [2].

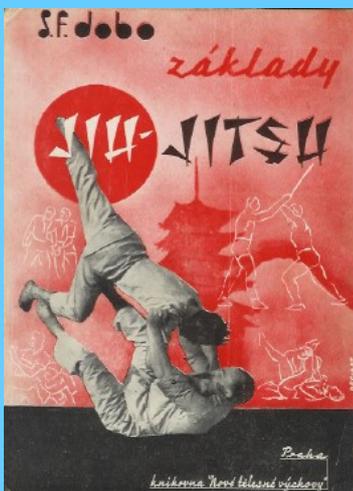


Figure 4 - *Fundamentals of Jiu-jitsu* (1936/37) by Stefan Fülöp (S.F. Dobó)

In 1936/37 Fülöp had published, under the name S.F. Dobó, a Czech-language *judo* textbook entitled *Fundamentals of Jiu-jitsu* [3]. See Figure 4 (above).

Fülöp also taught *judo* in Pilsen (a city in western Bohemia about 90 km west of Prague), and it is additionally noteworthy that in Hungary he attended and taught at the *jiujitsu* school of Tibor Vincze [4].

It is sad to record that the Second World War brought a tragic end to Fülöp's life with him being murdered in a German concentration camp in Mauthausen - a small market town in the Austrian state of Upper Austria, some 20 km East of the city of Linz. Official records [5] state the following: "A man, Stefan Fülöp, with Jewish roots, was shot on the run in Mauthausen on October 1, 1942" (...).

In 2011, Stefan Fülöp Dobó was inducted into the Hall of Fame of the Czech *Judo* Union.

#### Ichiro Hatta, Sugiyama and Sarah Mayer

In the summer of 1935, the Japanese *judo* teachers Ichiro Hatta [Figure 5] and Sugiyama-sensei visited Prague. They were accompanied by a team of Japanese *judoka* and by the British female *judoka*, Sarah Mayer [6].



Figure 5 - Ichiro Hata (1906 - 1983)

Mayer [Figure 6], who practiced in Kobe, Kyoto and Tokyo from 1934-35, is understood to be first Western woman to be

awarded the *judo* grade of 1 Dan in Japan (by the Kyoto-based *Dai Nippon Butokukai*). For the interested reader, her activities are re-counted in letters to Gunji Koizumi - the then President of the Budokwai [7].

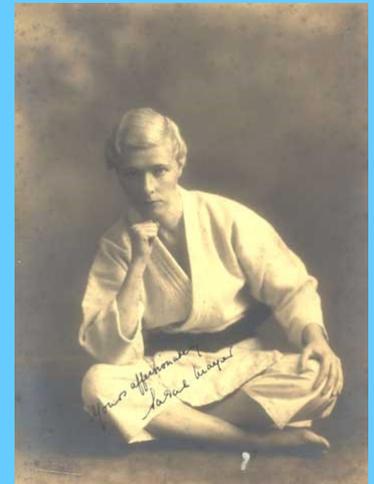


Figure 6 - Sarah Mayer (1896 - 1957)

A short *judo/jiu-jitsu* course, totalling about six lessons, was held at the Straka Academy and Hatta and Sugiyama also demonstrated *judo* and *jiujitsu* during an evening promotional event held at the Prague Radiopalác. Similarly, Sarah Mayer was a demonstrator of *judo* that evening.

On 31 July 1935, the planned *judo* team contest was held between the Japanese team and a Czechoslovak team comprising Dobó, Cígner, Velebil and a fourth *judoka* whose name is not recorded. The Japanese team is known to have won all the matches.

#### Trevor Pryce (T.P.) Leggett

During the summer holiday period of 1936 the Prague universities *jiujitsu* club (VŠ Praha) organised a Summer *jiujitsu* and *judo* training camp in the village of Unhošť in the Kladno District of the Central Bohemian Region, some 20 km west of Prague. Leading the training camp was the celebrated British *judoka*, Trevor Pryce (T.P.) Leggett [Figure 7]. Also participating in giving instruction were other foreign *judo* teachers - namely Martin Pampell from Germany and Julius Fleck from Romania.



**Figure 7 – T.P. Leggett  
(1914 – 2000)  
[Photograph taken around the time  
he was instructing in the  
Czechoslovak Republic]**

During September and October 1936, T.P. Leggett taught *judo* at VŠ Praha and also at the club SK Stráž Bezpečnosti (Sports Club for Police/Security Guards) in Prague [8]. The club SK Stráž Bezpečnosti accommodated several supports (both soft and hard), including athletics, (association) football, boxing, wrestling, swimming, fencing and *jiujitsu*.

In October 1937, T.P. Leggett introduced *judoka* from Pilsen to both the *Nage-no-kata* and the *Katame-no-kata*. It was said that this study of these *Randori-no-kata* made a very positive contribution to increasing their technical *judo* skills.

#### **Jigoro Kano shihan**

In September 1936 the founder of *judo*, Jigoro Kano *shihan* himself, visited Prague during his homeward journey from the XI Olympic Games that had been held in Berlin, Germany. In Prague he opened the new university academic year, by giving a lecture about *judo*, in the German language. The contents of this speech was similar to the he had given to the 1932 Olympic Congress that had been held in Los Angeles, United States—namely “The contribution of *Judo* to Education”. The *shihan* also led a short *judo* lesson while in-country.

Figure 8 shows Jigoro Kano with František Smotlacha, by now President of the Czechoslovak *Jiujitsu* Union, in Prague in 1936 [9].

#### **S. Lyons and A. Stokes**

In 1938 the British *judoka* S. Lyons and A. Stokes led monthly holiday courses at a summer camp in small city Ledec nad Sázavou,

some 85 km south-east of Prague. (Similar courses were held in subsequent years and elsewhere in Czechoslovakia.

Figure 9 shows a photograph taken at a *judo* camp held in the village of Radov, some 90km south-west of Prague in the summer of 1939 [9].

In late August 1938, the Japanese Military Attaché Major Maki was teaching advanced-level Czech *judo* competitors at Marathon House, VŠ Praha. At the suggestion of Mr Stoakes, supported by Major Maki, František Šíma was awarded the grade of 1 *Dan* via the London Budokwai.

#### **Concluding Remarks**

Contact between Czechoslovak *judoka* and those from the Japan and the Budokwai was brought to an end by the Second World War. During the war, and the years thereafter, Czechoslovak *judo* continued to develop independently.

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2. Judo Inside Website. *European Championships Dresden – Event*. URL: <http://www.judoinside.com/event/1301>
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5. Památník Terežín/ Terežín Memorial Website. *Čeští vězni v koncentračním táboře Mauthausen 1938-1945*. URL: <http://www.pamatnik-terezin.cz/vyhledavani/mauthausen/detail.php?table=Mauthausen&col=id&value=3199>. [In Czech].



**Figure 8 – Jigoro Kano with František Smotlacha, President of the Czechoslovak *Jiujitsu* Union, in Prague in 1936**



## The Kano Society

PO Box 45408  
London SE26 6WG  
England

Email: [sensei@kanosociety.org](mailto:sensei@kanosociety.org)

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**The Bulletin**



**Figure 9 – A Judo camp at the village of Radov in the Summer of 1939**

### References (continued)

6. Callan, M. & Spenn, A. (2009). *A Fashionable Judo Girl, Sarah W B Mayer (ne. Tapping) (1896 – 1957)*. International Association of Judo Researchers, 6th International Science of Judo Symposium. Rotterdam.

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9. Brezina, P. Personal archive of Petr Brezina.

### Notes

Japanese names in this article are listed by given name first and family name second, instead of traditional Japanese usage which places the family name first.

A Czech-language version of this article by Petr Brezina—entitled *Pionýrské časy džúdó v Československu* can be found online at URL: [http://www.budonews.cz/pionyrskesy-dzudo-v-ceskoslovensku-budonews\\_id-517](http://www.budonews.cz/pionyrskesy-dzudo-v-ceskoslovensku-budonews_id-517)

## The Richard Bowen Collection



In 1949, Richard Bowen began judo training in London at the Budokwai, of which became Vice-President. He lived in Japan for four years to deepen his studies. A former British International, he fought in the first ever World judo Championships in Japan in 1956. He was the author of more than eighty articles. Richard Bowen built up an extensive judo Library in the course of research for his articles and books, and he kindly donated it to the University of Bath Library. Items in the collection are for reference use only (not available for loan). Items can be viewed between 9am-5pm. If you would like to look at an item from The Richard Bowen Collection, please contact the Subject Librarian, Peter Bradley. +44 1225 384784

A copy of the video 'An Interlude with Richard Bowen' has also been donated to the collection.

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In preparation—Kimeno Kata



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