

# President Theodore Roosevelt Takes Lessons In Wrestling from a Noted Japanese Athlete

### Strenuous Chief Executive Just Now Deep in the Mysteries of the Magical Jiu-jitsu...Acquiring a Wonderful Art of Fighting Without Weapons Which Will Prove His Best Means of Defense in an Emergency...Has Two Instructors and Receives Private Lessons at the White House

**P**RESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT, ideal all-around athlete, is just now busy acquiring what will unquestionably prove by far the most important of his physical accomplishments. The strenuous chief executive is deep in the mysteries of the magical "jiu-jitsu," and this interpretation is an excellent keynote to the character of this most secret of the arts of self-defense. In the Western mind jiu-jitsu is synonymous with Japanese wrestling, probably because of the fact that every noted Japanese wrestler is a student of this black art of the Orient, but in reality an athletic science jiu-jitsu stands head and shoulders above the other sports.

The exponents of jiu-jitsu are ever fearful of it taking root in foreign lands, and they guard as their most precious possession all knowledge of this mysterious art which would alone, should occasion require, give them power over the people of the other nations of the world. When, however, the ruler of the big republic which enabled the Japs to gain their boasted title of Yankess of the Orient manifests an interest in the old Samurai art the case is exceptional and no obstacles have interfered with the realization of President Roosevelt's ambition to become a champion.

The arduous of interest on the part of the President was due to Commander Isami Kodokoro, who is the founder of the art. Mr. Roosevelt's closest personal friend, Commander Takahira, who is stationed at Washington, is himself an expert in jiu-jitsu, and his descriptions of the art opened to its possessor early served to arouse the interest of the President. Accordingly it was arranged that the chief magistrate should take private lessons in jiu-jitsu. Two experts, who but recently arrived in this country, were brought to Washington and the course of instruction entered upon without delay, for while a smattering of the system is easily acquired, from six to ten years is required for the complete course.

It is interesting to note that the President has reserved time for one or two lessons a week in the busiest season he has ever known since he entered the White House. The lessons are given in the "den," or, as the President terms it, his "department of physical culture," on the second floor of the White House. The instruction is almost wholly on the illustrative plan, and by means of gestures, inasmuch as neither of the Japanese instructors speaks more than a few words of English. The President's new physical directors are men of powerful build, one being somewhat taller than the other, and attract considerable attention when they appear on the streets of Washington.

President Roosevelt has clearly manifested a natural aptitude for this Japanese art, and his progress is such that no person who does not hope to acquire it in any number of lessons, but he has been materially aided in his mastery of it by an extensive course of reading on the fascinating subject. Jiu-jitsu, it may be explained, is known in Japan in the sixteenth century, and its origin has been traced to a physician named Arima.

It was while traveling in China that this physician gained some of the fundamental principles of the art. He was a student of the old Chinese athletic system until he had discovered 200 different methods of fighting, and he was the first to combine them into the principles laid down by the founder. Many of the schools, it may be noted, are night schools, and the students are taken from one end of the year to the other. The professors who give instruction are of various ages, and the art is especially of the art, especially in the case of foreigners who seek to gain an insight into the science. In Kobe, Tokio and Yokohama the police are all obliged to study jiu-jitsu. Two experts, who but recently arrived in this country, were brought to Washington and the course of instruction entered upon without delay, for while a smattering of the system is easily acquired, from six to ten years is required for the complete course.

There is no doubt that once President Roosevelt has gained a fair knowledge of jiu-jitsu he will have a means of defense against cranks and intending assassins beside which will pale in comparison all the precautions of Secret Service men and policemen and even his own six-shooter at Harvard and refreshed by a post graduate course when Governor of New York. Through the magic of the Japanese art by a swift physical touch a victim's brain can be benumbed, his hips or shoulders dislocated, an ankle unhinged or a hand broken, and the whole of the lightning-like stroke an opponent can be rendered instantly helpless.

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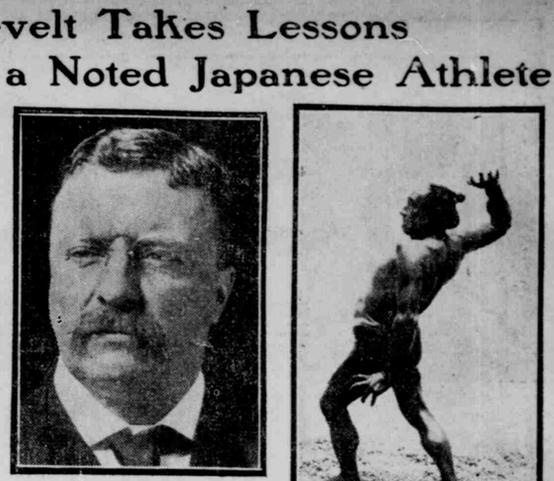
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President Theodore Roosevelt, Who is Taking Lessons in Wrestling

**A Japanese Wrestler**  
of the first precepts which has been impressed upon President Roosevelt, alike to every other beginner in jiu-jitsu, is the necessity of being pliant, for pliancy allows the muscles to stretch and contract as they will, many a time. To be ordinary spectators the positions in jiu-jitsu do not appear to differ greatly from ordinary wrestling positions. The expert's power lies in his lightning-like touches—that terrible legdemolition which is too subtle and too swift for the untrained eye to detect. Many of the "catches" in this form of wrestling would, in American eyes, be branded as fouls—as, for instance, one that appears little else than plain choking—and indeed, the jiu-jitsu catches are not allowed in the plain, simple wrestling matches of the ordinary kind in Japan, but they are terribly effective in emergency work.

Probably President Roosevelt's intense interest in jiu-jitsu is due, in some measure, to the evidence that the government idea is back of the growing popularity of this cult in Japan. In the Japanese army even commands are given, but a high rank are finished students. Every native soldier knows of the almost magic power it gives, and to this may be traced much of that magnificent discipline which the Japs have shown in the present war, the far East. The isolated Japanese soldier is small, and would ordinarily succumb to a harsher service beyond the power of science over brute force. Great muscular strength is as nothing against it, and the Japs have shown in the present war that a wily Jap becomes a formidable opponent for the great Russian, but with a knowledge of jiu-jitsu up his sleeve the wily Jap becomes a formidable opponent for the great Russian.

WALDON FAWCETT.

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## Hogoro Takahira, Japanese Minister, Talks of the Far Eastern Situation

### Frank G. Carpenter Secures an Accredited Interview from This Interesting Personage... What Japan Expects from the War...The Position of Korea

**G**IVE you to-day an interview which I have just had with Mr. Hogoro Takahira, the minister from Japan, on the situation in the far East. Mr. Takahira is one of the ablest diplomats in Washington. He has for years been connected with the Foreign Office in Japan, and has also represented his country as minister in Korea, Holland and Denmark, Italy, Austria, Switzerland and since 1900 at Washington. He is a man of broad education, speaking several languages, including English, in which our conversation was carried on. The talk took place in the parlors of the Japanese legation, Mr. Takahira expecting to go to the war with Russia.

"That question can be answered in one word," said the minister. "Japan expects justice. But speaking more in detail I may say that she expects the war to result in such a determination of the rights of the two countries as regards the north Asian littoral as will secure her against aggression in the future."

"What do you mean by the north Asian littoral?" asked the interviewer.

"I mean the territories of northeastern Asia, and more especially those which border the seas of the North Pacific, namely, Korea and Manchuria."

"But how about China, your Excellency? Some people speak of the war as one for the control of China. Is Japan ambitious to control China?"

"Distinctly and emphatically not," replied Minister Takahira. "Japan's attitude upon that subject was fully defined in the negotiations which preceded this war. In those negotiations she insisted upon a mutual engagement between herself and Russia to respect the independence and territorial integrity of the Chinese and Korean empires, and also upon a mutual agreement to maintain the principle of equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations in the Far East."

"Will there ever be an alliance of Japan and China against the world?"

"No," replied the minister from Japan. "I do not believe that any sane political thinker who understands the actual conditions of the two nations can honestly suggest such a possibility. The suggestion is either founded on gross ignorance, or it is based upon a mistaken view of the position of Japan in the eyes of the world. An alliance between two powers necessarily based on mutual advantage, and where each gains strength by an alliance offensive and defensive, is a fact which is an established principle of modern political science that the power which is to hold any weight in the world must win it not only by deterring itself from outside nations, but also to control and organize its people at home, and hence no nation can be a power until it has done so."

"What Japan would like to see as to China," continued the minister, "is that she should follow in her footsteps in utilizing such elements of the Western civilization as are suited to her needs. This would lead to the development of her great resources in industry, commerce and trade, and in the development Japan only wishes to share equally with the other powers. What we need most is that the other nations should take the same position towards China that the United States has so ably maintained for the past few years. That, more than anything else, would help to preserve peace in the far East."

"Then you think that China should hold its present independent position upon the map of the world?"

"I do," replied the Japanese minister. "From our standpoint the preservation of Chinese independence, or what has been well termed 'the administrative entity' of the Chinese empire, is most desirable. That is one of the objects for which Japan is contending. A divided China means peril to Japan, and I sincerely believe that it would be of no lasting advantage to any Western nation. On the other hand, an independent China, with her territorial integrity unimpaired, must, as her enormous resources are more and more developed, prove a fruitful field to the commerce and industry of all nations."

"How about Korea?" I asked.

"Speaking generally," I may say that we hope the same good for Korea, with the introduction of Western methods and civilized influences and the peaceful development of its resources. At the same time the world recognizes the fact that the neighborhood of Korea to Japan and the strategic importance of Korean territory, so far as regards the maintenance of the security of the Japanese empire, naturally give Japan what is called in the ante bellum negotiations a "preponderating interest" in Korea. In saying this I do not mean that Japan has any designs upon the independence and territorial integrity of Korea, nor any purpose of excluding from Korea the industries or commerce of other nations, nor hampering foreign enterprise in any way. I mean that Japan cannot, with due regard to her own safety, permit any other nation to absorb Korea, or to use Korea as a vantage point from which to attack the Japanese empire."

"But even if Japan does not nominally own Korea, Mr. Takahira, will she not



The Japanese Minister

eventually control it by her predominance of trade and her ownership of the railroads, much as England controls Egypt?"

"I think that the Japanese minister, Mr. Takahira, has sought to achieve privileges of any kind whatever in Korea. She does not seek the exclusive ownership of the railroads. The arrangements under which the Fusan railroad is being built have been published and they show that Korean rights are guarded in the minutest particulars. The arrangements are, I may say, far different from those which the Eastern Siberian railway has been constructed. As to other concessions, one of the most important is the right of the Japanese to own and operate the railroads in the northern part of the empire, is owned by an American syndicate, and there is no prospect of any other concession. Enterprises shall not have their full share in the future development of Korea, and Russia to prevent such participation in the benefits which must follow the development of all nations in the Far East."

"RUSSIA IN THE FAR EAST."  
"What is your opinion, Mr. Takahira, does Russia want in the Far East?"

"That is a subject concerning which I must naturally speak with reserve," replied the minister from Japan. "We have shown that we thought of Russia's designs in the East by our present action. Whether those designs were the result of a great ambition or of a desire to gain an advantage has been publicly stated, is not for me to say. It is sufficient to remember that Russia's intention of permanently occupying Manchuria and of finally absorbing Korea, has been a fact which has been a source of concern to all nations, and after endeavoring to obtain Russia's adhesion to proposals, which I think were very properly framed, moderate and unselfish, and having failed to obtain the assent of the Russian government to those proposals, we have been obliged to establish a firm and enduring peace in the extreme East, nothing more than a great extension of a faction, the completion of plans which not only threatened Japan's commercial and industrial interests in China and Korea, but even her national safety."

"But can Japan raise the money to carry out these plans?"

"This far she has had no difficulty," replied the Japanese minister. "The domestic loans which she has raised in the past few years, and the careful estimates of our financial experts indicate that there will be no very serious financial difficulties enough to carry on the war for some time to come. We have no foreign debt of any magnitude, and we have no large sum of money from abroad."

"But is not the war impoverish your people?"

"It will undoubtedly impose heavy burdens upon us," replied Minister Takahira. "But I do not think it can possibly impoverish the nation. It is a war of self-defense, and the expenditure of money and the loss of life will not be enormous. I am sure there will be no extravagance or recklessness. I believe that Japan will display great recuperative power, and that after the war is over her position will be much better financially than it has been in the past."

"JAPAN'S WAR WITH CHINA."  
"What was the effect of the Chinese-Japanese war upon your industrial and financial condition?"

"The Chinese-Japanese war was followed by a period of overexpansion, and that in turn by a period of depression. Baron Shibusawa, one of our most noted financiers, has said that the war was followed by waves of prosperity followed by waves of depression, so in the economic history of Japan since the restoration there have been five or six such waves. He adds, however, that such changes do not necessarily impoverish the nation, but that they are a part of the normal life of a country. As he states, the resources of Japan are varied and fair in quantity. We have an abundance of raw silk and tea and valuable mines of coal, copper and silver. We are rich in our water supply and water power, which may take the place of coal to a large extent. In Yesso there are coal and silver mines and oil fields, while Formosa is rich in gold."

"On the whole," concluded the Japanese minister, "I think our outlook for commercial and industrial expansion is bright. We are not rich as compared with the United States, but our resources are as yet to a great extent undeveloped. Our progress along modern lines is a matter of comparatively recent date, but within that time the country has made marvelous strides."

"What is the size and population of Japan?"

"The empire contains about 161,000 square miles. It is about four times as large as

your State of Ohio. Its population, as shown by the census of 1901, was 47,690,000. "That is more than half as many people as we have in the United States," said I. "Is not Japan overcrowded, and is this war not after all a struggle for territory?"

"On Japan's part most certainly not," replied Minister Takahira. "We have distinctly declared that we are not contending for territorial aggrandizement, and even if we had not made that solemn pledge there is no necessity for us to acquire territory for our surplus population, for we have abundant outlets for that as it is."

"Japan is not overcrowded," continued Mr. Takahira. "I mean by that that we have available territory of our own to meet the demands of our increasing population, although the emigration of the Japanese is not as yet directed to those parts of the empire that are not yet developed, for example, the Japanese government has systematically endeavored to develop the resources of those countries. It has met with fair success, but the climate in both territories has been an obstacle to their rapid development, and especially in Formosa, where the most desirable parts of the island are unhealthy. The government is improving sanitary conditions there, and in time Formosa will be a desirable place of residence for both Japanese and foreigners. The same may be said of Yesso, which has undeveloped resources and which will support a large surplus population. The Japanese government is making a large investment in the Asiatic continent. Many Japanese have settled in Korea and in other adjacent regions on the same terms as the citizens and subjects of other nations. Russia and other nations are naturally peaceful and industrious, and excellent citizens wherever they go."

"FORMOSA IN 1904."  
"You speak of Formosa, Mr. Takahira," said I. "What is the condition of that colony to-day?"

"Formosa is rapidly improving," replied Minister Takahira. "Since it became a part of the Japanese empire its revenue has been increased by 600 per cent. It has been charged that our government has done nothing for the development of the island nor for the betterment of its people. This is not true. In connection with it, I cannot do better than quote what the Rev. W. Campbell, a Scotch missionary, who has lived in Formosa for many years, says. He writes that in considering Formosa he must remember that in 1850 the Japanese took possession of the island, and that the people everywhere in arms against the invaders. The Japanese, however, their way from north to south before they could establish a settled government. As a result of the war, the island has been divided into two parts, the northern part being under the control of the Chinese and the southern part under the control of the Japanese. 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