

**CJA Jiu-Jitsu: An essay on the Historic Development of the  
Discipline correlated with my personal growth.**

Submitted to Sensei Bob Kranstz, Dec 15 2010

By Fletcher K. Falls towards Jiu-jitsu Black Belt- San Dan.

My name is Fletcher Falls and I do Jiu-Jitsu. For many not familiar with Martial Arts the assumption is that this means Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. This is not the case. I study, compete and live CJA Jiu-Jitsu, Combined **Jiu-Jitsu Arts**. This is neither traditional Japanese nor the more recent Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. Many modern day practitioners of the Brazilian discipline focus largely on grappling techniques despite the fact that the original founder was intent on teaching a more rounded approach focusing on many different aspects of fighting techniques. In a past interview Helio Gracie criticized many Brazilian schools claiming they were not teaching his Jiu-Jitsu as they were omitting essential components such as striking and Judo throws. [5]

CJA embraces many aspects of fighting (punches, throws, kicks, holds, grappling, Martial Arts weapons and joint locks.) It also presents the performance of stylized Katas and stresses the significance of understanding the philosophy of Martial Arts as essential to its optimum performance.

My special passion is to the form, art and competition of Sport Jiu-Jitsu, a component of CJA.

The intent of this paper is to further my study and understanding of Jiu-Jitsu. It was suggested that in grading for my San Dan, a paper on the history of Jiu-Jitsu would be appropriate. The research was to encompass the history of Jiu-Jitsu, its origins and how it evolved into what we practice today. My initial response was questioning. Why is it necessary to know about the history? How is this history significant? How would such knowledge improve my own performance or my ability to teach the art to others? To be honest I had never really given it much thought. The task presented a new challenge. So I started with what I knew, my own history, my own passage and growth through Jiu-Jitsu; my introduction to the discipline, lessons learned, goals accomplished. I could then take my own small story and relate it to the greater story of how CJA developed and evolved a history within a history.

My Jiu-Jitsu journey started in an unlikely place, the school bus. It was 1985; I was age five turning six. I was physically small in stature but had the wit and verbal jabs of a much older boy. A small boy with a large mouth is not a happy marriage. I was beginning to come home with black eyes and other bruises given to me by an assailant six years my senior. This bully saw me as small, weak, defenseless, an easy target. This abuse went on for quite some time until my parents said enough is enough we need to teach our boy how to defend himself. So my parents took me to Milton Jiu-Jitsu. I am not sure why they picked this club but in hindsight it was the very best choice.

At the time of joining Jiu-Jitsu I was anything but an athlete. I lacked self confidence, motivation, strength and coordination. My introduction to Sensei Darlene and Sensei Bob Kranstz was intimidating. I was scared. My first classes were overwhelming for a young boy with break falls, stances, throws and punches all being introduced. I was paired up with boys who had double my strength and coordination. I wanted to quit. Thankfully my parents had paid membership for the year and at the time had little money to spare. Quitting was not an option. They pushed me hard to continue.

At the starting point of my Jiu-Jitsu career I was not much of a competitor. I was still trying to grasp break falls and grabbing the stick that was being thrown my way. That is right, a stick. Often as Sensei Bob was teaching a class he would carry a plastic baton around with him and

without notice he would launch it into the crowd. Failure to catch this stick would result in the whole class doing push-ups. Easily distracted and lacking concentration skills I was frequently a target, the stick was often launched in my direction. I would often miss catching the stick, which would result in the inevitable and dreaded push-ups, followed by the ridicule of the rest of the class, in good cheer of course. Although at this stage of my life Jiu-Jitsu was hard and I was not very good at it, I persevered. It was in my first year of Jiu-Jitsu that I had the opportunity to show off some of what I learned to the bullies at my school. In Grade One my public school hosted a talent show for those who were interested. At this point in time Martial Arts were still in its early years in North America. Karate Kid had only just been released and Martial Arts did not have a grip on the nation or Hollywood like it does today. My displays of Kata number one was not only impressive but led the bullies to believe that Fletcher Falls was not to be messed with. The best self defense is that appearance of confidence which of itself negates the need for defense.

As I progressed through the belts, Jiu-Jitsu began to mold me into a martial artist and a confident young man. Confidence in my physical prowess and fighting abilities spilled over into other facets of my life, my self-assurance in academics and personal relations also grew. Improved self-reliance and belief in self became part of my every-day life. Growing up I was always smaller than other boys my age but this no longer affected confidence in my own ability. I was never even the best in Jiu-Jitsu class but the Senseis always gave praise which drove me to persevere. One of the greatest gifts Jiu-Jitsu gave me was this tenacity. Sensei Bob always said “can’t” was one of the worst four letter words one could use. So I took that word out of my vocabulary and replaced it with “can” and “will”.

Without a doubt this is the same kind of mentality the originators of Jiu-Jitsu tried to instill in their students, the lasting value of belief in self, self reliance, perseverance in the face of adversity and the presentation of a front which reduces the chance of dangerous physical confrontation.

It is hard to be exact about the absolute beginnings of Jiu-Jitsu. There are so many different ideas of its origins. Every society in history boasts some kind of unarmed combat and the use of simple weapons wielded by individual men. If we look to history we find that Jiu-Jitsu probably originated out of India at the same time as Buddhism, around 2000 years ago. Written evidence of Martial Arts in Southern India dates back to the Tamil [Sangam literature](#) of about the 2nd century BC to the 2nd century AD. The [Akananuru](#) and [Purananuru](#) describe the use of spears, swords, shields, bows and [silambam](#) in the Sangam era [1].References to fighting arts are found in early Buddhist texts, such as the Lotus Sutra(1st century AD) which refers to a boxing art. It also categorized such combat techniques as joint locks, fist strikes, grapples and throws. [2]

It can be assumed that a lot of the grappling and throws found in Martial Arts, specifically Jiu-Jitsu, were brought to India by Alexander the Great as he continued his conquest of foreign lands into India in (356 - 323BC). The combination of Roman and Indian Martial Arts many believe lead to the practice of Kunfu or the Wushu Martial Arts almost 1000 years before Jiu-Jitsu was being formally taught [3]. From here Martial Arts moved into China with Buddhism. A Shaolin temple was built in the middle of China by Bodhi Dharma where he introduced Buddhism and Boxing (senzuikyo). The story that supports the idea of Jiu-Jitsu coming from

China takes place around the time of the fall of the Ming Dynasty. It states that a man named Chingempin came from Japan to live in Tokyo at a Buddhist temple where he met three Ronin (masterless Samurai) named Fukuno, Isogai, and Miura. Chingempin told the Ronin of a grappling art he had seen in China. The Ronin became particularly interested in pursuing the study of this art, so they then began teaching in Japan, and this art became Jiu-Jitsu [3].

Jiu-Jitsu was beginning to develop at a very hostile time in Japan known as the Feudal period. This explains why many of the techniques developed as a response to an opponent reaching for his sword. The Samurai sword plays a big role in the art of Jiu-Jitsu even the way we kneel down to bow. During the feudal time Jiu-Jitsu was often referred to by other names such as Yawara, Hakuda, Kogusoko, and possibly others. It was not until 1532 that the earliest recorded use of the word "Jiu-Jitsu" appeared and it was coined by the Takenouchi Ryu (school). A lot of the schools at this time were very secretive as it gave their teachings a sense of importance and also allowed them to change the story behind the art to give them credibility as an instructor.

Once the Feudal period was over, Jiu-Jitsu was no longer a necessity for the battlefield and many schools went underground. It was not until the late 1800s that the fighting art form resurfaced. A man named Jigoro Kano developed an alternative way to practice specific parts of Jiu-Jitsu safely and this was referred to as Judo. Although the name was not specifically coined by Kano he is credited as being the father of Judo. It was not until the 1880s that Judo began to really take off. The increased popularity began with a match-up between older styles of Jiu-Jitsu and Kano's new style of Jiu-Jitsu (Judo) at the Tokyo police headquarters. Judo was then named the national martial art of Japan. It was the official art used by law enforcement in the late 1800's, and continues to be popular to this day.

One of the ways that Judo became popular was through Rondori which allowed people to practice a series of moves within a set of rules safely. It was because of Rondori that Kano's students could practice more often without becoming injured. We see a parallel development in the ritualized Katas of Jiu-Jitsu.

Another area of Judo which is greatly reflected in CJA Jiu-Jitsu is Kuzushi or the off balancing of an opponent. The breaking of an opponent's kuzushi can be seen in most of the moves that we practice today in CJA. The term kuzushi was given to Judo by Kito-Ryu.

Kuzushi is one of the words that sticks out for me as a child learning the Martial Arts. As a child it reminded me of the sound of a sneeze. A great comparison because a healthy sneeze can easily throw one off balance. So we always followed a good Kuzushi with a "God bless you".

Kano was developing his martial art form incorporating what he was learning from the various forms of Jiu-Jitsu such as Fusen Ryu from which many of the Ne Waza developed, or what we call ground work. Kano also incorporated the styles of Jikishin-ryu, Kito-ryu and Tenshin Shinyo Ryu all of which were known for their striking and throwing skills. In 1912 Kano met with the remaining masters of Jiu Jitsu to finalize a Kodokan syllabus of training and Kata. Many see Judo not as a separate art but as an art which falls within the teachings of Jiu-Jitsu. The Kodokan style can be considered a starting point for the Jiu-Jitsu which we practice today as CJA Jiu-Jitsu.

In 1904 two of Kano's students traveled to the United States, Tsunejiro Tomita and Mitsuyo Maeda. While in the U.S. they demonstrated the art of Judo for Theodore Roosevelt at the White

House, and for cadets at the West Point Military Academy [3]. They really impressed the President with their skill as they were able to subdue a formidable wrestler with chokes and arm locks. Maeda eventually ended up settling in Sao Palo city, Brazil. Here Maeda was trying to start a colony and was being assisted by a Brazilian of Scottish decent named Gastao Gracie. To show his appreciation to Gastao, Maeda offered to teach his oldest son Carlos Gracie the techniques of Jiu-Jitsu. Carlos in turn taught his brothers, these included Helio Gracie... In 1940 Helio Gracie opened the first formal school of Jiu-Jitsu in Rio. Helio is considered the father of the Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. He learned from Carlos his brother by watching from the side lines as Carlos taught people from the bank. One day Carlos was late for his class with the director of the bank so Helio took over and started teaching [5]. This was the beginning of his teaching regime. He had to take the existing techniques and adapt them to accommodate his size and capabilities.

In an interview with Blackbelt Magazine Helio stated, "I didn't invent the martial art. I adapted it to my necessity-what I needed for my weight and lack of strength. I learned jujutsu, but some of the moves required a lot of strength, so I could not use them. I couldn't get out from some of the positions I learned from my brother because of my lack of strength and weight. So I developed other ways out." He stated that many people already have physical strength and ability when they start Martial Arts, characteristics that he did not have. This same principle of adaptation, flexibility to meet the needs of the participants and the conditions of the environment, still applies today in CJA Jiu-Jitsu. Sensei Bob and Sensei Darlene are always adapting Jiu-Jitsu moves to better meet limitations of physical size and capabilities or to be more practical in today's world. This is true too at a personal level. As I practice Martial Arts I notice that I change moves to suit my body type so that maneuvers can be performed successfully. I think that is one of the things that Helio recognized in Jiu-Jitsu is that we are not all built the same nor have the same capability. Jiu-Jitsu is often referred to as the art of flexibility. Participants are adaptable, always ready to adopt techniques to fit their own abilities/limitations and those of the opponent.

Another way Jiu-Jitsu reached North America was in the early 1900s there was an immigration surge from Japan and these immigrants brought with them their culture and their Martial Arts.

Also resurgence surfaced during the Second World War. American soldiers began to practice Jiu-Jitsu and or Judo in Japan and began to bring their studies back to North America.

I think one of the most important individuals in helping CJA Jiu-Jitsu take shape is one of Sensei Ron Forrester's first Judo instructors. A man by the name of Frank Hatashita was a Japanese immigrant who opened a Judo school in Toronto. Sensei Frank Hatashita was most likely relocated during the Second World War to the eastern side of Canada like many other Japanese Canadians. Hatashita started the practice of Judo in 1927 at the age of eight. He was promoted to Shodan at the age of 15, an unimaginable feat in the early years of Judo in Canada. During the visits of Professor Jigoro Kano in 1932, 36, 38 the young Hatashita had the opportunity to meet this founder of Judo. During one of these visits Kano saw a match in which Hatashita (18 years) was fighting and commented on the high quality of his technique. It was at Frank's school in Toronto that Sensei Ron Forrester was introduced to Judo and Jiu-Jitsu. {6} In Frank's Judo school there was a man by the name of Hank Jansen who was originally from Holland and was teaching Jiu-Jitsu out of Frank's Judo club. Sensei Forrester quickly became a fan and transferred to the Jiu-Jitsu classes in 1958 [4]. In 1962 Henk returned to Europe and Sensei Forrester became the chief Jiu-Jitsu instructor at the Hatashita School. One of the things

the Sensei Forrester found lacking in the Jiu-Jitsu being taught was the lack of striking. In his first classes he started to include striking in his Jiu-Jitsu. In 1963 Sensei Forrester started the Canadian Jiu-Jitsu Association with the help of his Judo Instructor Hatashita. He changed Jiu-Jitsu from solely a grappling martial art to a comprehensive martial art, encompassing all combative techniques with emphasis on striking techniques. He brought in top instructors from around the world including Joe Lewis one of the best Karate fighters of all time, Bill Superfoot Wallace, middle weight karate and kickboxing champion and Wally Jay the founder of small circle Jiu-Jitsu [4].

Sport Jiu-Jitsu was beginning to take shape; in 1977 Professor James Muro of California hosted the first recorded tournament in Hawaii using rules similar to today's Sport Jiu-Jitsu. Five teams participated in that tournament including teams from mainland USA and Canada. The Canadian contingent was led by Sensei Ron Forrester and Sensei Bob Kranstz. In 1984 the first World Council of Jujitsu Organization (WCJO) World Championships was hosted by Sensei Ron Forrester and in 1986 a tournament was held in Leeds, England hosted by Colin Whitaker. [2]

Naturally, I personally have no recollection of these tournaments. Even in 1986 I was a very young and very junior member of the Milton Jiu-Jitsu club. But at any age all true martial artists must contribute to their sport and I do remember raising funds selling caramel and chocolate almond bars for \$2.00 each. My major contribution was to eat the bars and have my parents pay for them! Maybe they should be awarded a black belt!

These tournaments were organized to show the world our style of Martial Arts. In fact this style of fighting could be considered the birth place of mixed Martial Arts fighting. Although at this time grappling was not incorporated in the fighting system. If there was a throw, points would be awarded and the fighters would stand back up and continue to fight.

One of Sensei Ron Forrester's earlier students, Sensei Robert Kranstz, who was also a student of Judo, opened his own school in 1974. Sensei Robert Kranstz School was called the Milton School of Jiu-Jitsu and was located in Milton, Ontario. Many great fighters and instructors have come out of Milton Jiu-Jitsu, thanks to Sensei Bob's and now Sensei Darlene's dedication to the advancement of CJA Jiu-Jitsu.

In 1984, two years before I joined the club the first World Jiu-Jitsu Championships were held in St Catherine's Ontario and Sensei Bob's Sensei, Ron Forrester, was elected the chairman. Milton Jiu-Jitsu was now a member of the Canadian Jiu-Jitsu Association. Sensei Bob's competitiveness and enthusiasm in regards to sport Jiu-Jitsu was evident even when I was a child and as students we were all encouraged to go to tournaments and test our skills. There was an early reluctance about tournaments. There is a huge fear of the stigma of losing, especially in a public forum. Sensei Bob must have known this was the reason for a lot of his younger students wavering about competing. I specifically recall him saying that never trying is the same as losing. So I entered in tournaments, I never came in last but my first places were few and far between. It was not until the age of 14 that I really got the bug for sport Jiu-Jitsu. I was a junior brown belt (red belt) at the time and I often assisted in teaching the younger student classes on Saturday mornings. I often had to wait into the afternoon for my parents to pick me up. During this time I was privileged to watch some of the notable fighters from Milton at that time practice, Blair Phillips, Barry Hadlow and Nick Petroff come to mind. I started to become interested in the fighting and began to practice with them. One of the first reality checks I had was fighting

Graham Ridell. I quickly found out that leaving your hands down was a great way for a free nose job. I also learned that even though I was small in stature I was able to throw punches that were effective against my bigger and stronger opponents by using proper technique. My journey into sport Jiu-Jitsu was really beginning. I realized at this time that sport Jiu-Jitsu allowed me to practice CJA Jiu-Jitsu in a semi controlled environment. Another reason that Jiu-Jitsu became a big motivator for me was girls. Sensei Darlene would often run a one week program at Milton district high school for the students which I would help out with and it gave me a reputation for being respectful and tough which went a long way with the ladies. In fact I eventually met my wife Danielle teaching her Jiu-Jitsu in Milton.

In the earlier years of my competitive Jiu-Jitsu career there were no joint locks on the ground only hold downs. As a child this was the best aspect of my sport Jiu-Jitsu, even today many people find it extremely difficult to escape my hold downs.

Eventually Sensei Bob left the Canadian Jiu-Jitsu Association and joined the World Kobudo. To my mind this was a positive move. Membership in the World Kobudo Federation meant that we would be able to further our Martial Arts system. Unlike the Canadian Jiu-Jitsu Association which only encompasses the art of Jiu-Jitsu the World Kobudo Federation encompasses all Martial Arts and opens the gates to the sharing of information and skills with others through seminars and practice.

At the age of 15 I had my first real set back in Sport Jiu-Jitsu. My left arm, both radius and ulna bones, was broken while attempting to reverse a throw in a tournament. This generated a great deal of pain, trepidation over surgery and then a cast for over 6 weeks. But not a tear was shed. Jiu-Jitsu had taught me to draw on my inner strength.

For many people such an accident would mark the termination of their fighting career. In fact it did the opposite for me. The event increased my desire to compete, raised my excitement about fighting. Was it the desire to improve? Was it the wish to show others that this fighter would come back in the face of adversity? Was it vanity, pride? Who knows? Obviously there is still room to improve self awareness.

Even the cast did not stop me. I actually went to class with my cast on. Once the cast was removed I found it almost impossible to fight with my left hand forward anymore. Firstly there was the fear of re-injury. Pain has a long memory. Secondly there was no longer the same degree of control in my left arm. So, the history and art of flexibility came into play. Left hand weakened, so right hand forward. This change actually made me into a better competitor. With my right hand forward my jab was quicker and my front kicks faster and stronger. Both my throwing and my defense against throws improved. Also fighting with my right hand forward as a south paw it was more difficult for opponents to adjust as most fighters assume the more orthodox stance of left hand forward. Just like many instructors before me I had to adapt to my own weakness and make it my strength. I find that both Sensei Darlene and Sensei Bob do this quite well. Sensei Bob is strong but despite all efforts he is not very flexible, conversely Sensei Darlene lacks some of the physical strength of her father but has a large range of flexibility. Both have been extremely successful in competition by recognizing and working around their limitations. I have learned techniques from each of them and incorporated the techniques to my own strengths and weaknesses.

Once fully healed I began to compete frequently. I fought many formidable opponents including some who later competed in the UFC (Carlos Newton). In 1999 I won the World Kobudo world championships for sport Jiu-Jitsu beating competitors from Spain, United States and another competitor from Canada. An exciting and rewarding accomplishment.

Competition is exciting and rewarding but it is also important to contribute to the art in other ways. It was around this time that I branched out from Milton Jiu-Jitsu and began to teach with Kyle Bromley, another former Milton Jiu-Jitsu instructor, at the University of Guelph. Teaching is a significant and equally rewarding aspect of my Jiu-Jitsu. At the next World Kobudo tournament a severe shoulder separation side lined me from further competition, but I could still teach.

From 1999 to 2009 the CJA continued to grow and advance introducing new techniques.

Sensei Bob brought in notable grapplers such as Darrell LaFrance and Renzo Gracie. He also brought in notable UFC champion and Wrestler Dan Sevren. All this to improve our knowledge base so we could incorporate a greater variety of throws, including wrestling throws which are being used more and more in combat fighting. CJA Jiu-Jitsu is a progressive sport and self defense system, a system prepared to change and advance with the times. CJA must be true to its title, C for Combined. Joining the World Kobudo provides access to different moves and techniques, a necessary shift if the sport is to truly advance especially in the area of Sports Jiu-Jitsu. Sensei Bob has a great interest furthering Sport Jiu-Jitsu. He designed the rules for Sport Jiu-Jitsu which are followed by the World Kobudo Federation and the ISJA.

My last competition was in the summer of 2009 in Florida as a member of the Canadian contingent. Alas, here I tore a ligament in my left knee. No more competition but again teaching and coaching is an appealing alternative. After only three weeks of rehabilitation following surgery I began to coach a team to compete at the 2010 World Kobudo convention. Here Milton Jiu-Jitsu and our style of CJA took top honors.

Hopefully one day Sport Jiu-Jitsu will be sanctioned as an Olympic sport using the rules that Sensei Bob developed. This would establish another milestone in the history of Jiu-Jitsu. A history still in the making. A history which this assignment has helped me understand.

It is easier to get where you are going if you know where you came from. This is true both as an individual (me) and as an institution (the CJA)



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