



The Fighting Spirit of Japan

E J Harrison

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This is Gold to Martial Artists. An amazing piece of insightful writing and a classic contribution to the core wisdom of Japan's Martial Arts. Harrison was a Western journalist who spoke fluent Japanese and lived in Japan from about 1900. This makes his observation, comments and writing unique.

Harrison became obsessed with the spiritual dynamics of Japan's Martial Arts and its effect on human strength and capabilities. He was very skilful himself and was graded by the most demanding of Japan's Masters. He won their respect because he understood the esoteric thinking that was common to all the supremely skilful Top Grades, in their application of subtle winning techniques.

Harrison asserts, for instance, that until Westerners learn the lessons of harnessing the great abdominal powers open to us, the Japanese will always defeat a Westerner in a fight to the finish. He writes, "This is not a technical exposition of Japanese Martial Arts. My independent research, access to such great Japanese minds and the very high quality of my original source materials is most unusual. I have tried to use it to explain the secret of unquestionable Japanese fighting superiority.

This is an imperfect attempt to explain the esoteric thinking, which in turn produces their whole fighting rationale." It was at the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war in 1904 that Harrison moved to Tokyo and joined the Kodo kan. During his life there, he met and befriended Suichi Nagaoka, Kyuzo Mifune, Sakujiro Yokoyama, Nobuyuki Kunishige and Dr Jigoro Karo – Founder of the Kodo Kan. All of them were towering figures in the revered world of Japanese Martial Arts and its philosophies.

Harrison's personal relationships with the historical giants of Judoka make his understanding and knowledge absolutely invaluable. He provides a unique glimpse of a period of Japanese history and culture that was a complete mystery to the West.

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