

After Iftar **بعد الإفطار**



Sensei Abdulwahab in action

Photos courtesy of WJJC-Kuwait

THAT GENTLE TOUCH ... JUST IN TIME

JU-JITSU

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Taking the enemy down

Martial arts fanatics in Kuwait are turning to the latest craze these days — Ju-Jitsu. They find it more exciting, more practical and useful away from the traditional forms of martial arts.

Ju-jitsu also known as Ju-Jitsu originated in feudal Japan and was a perfect unarmed compliment to the armed combat of the Samurai. Ju-Jitsu translated as the "gentle way" or "the way of compliance" is an effective form of martial arts. Ju-Jitsu techniques do not rely on strength but on an understanding of the human body, physics and centre of gravity to achieve powerful and devastating punches, kicks, locks and throws. Ju-Jitsu is a Japanese martial art and a method of close combat for defeating an armed and armored opponent in which one uses no weapon or only a short weapon.

Ju-Jitsu is the modern art of street-fighting and a very useful form self-defence especially at these fast changing times. Ju-Jitsu schools may utilise all forms of grappling techniques to some degree such as throwing, trapping, joint locks, holds, gouging, biting, disengagements, striking and kicking.

Japanese Jiu Jitsu, the original samurai art that some call the "mother art", incorporated everything that they needed to use on the battlefield when the samurai soldiers were fighting. Obviously certain assumptions come along with that; that you are big and strong, that you are wearing armor and that you're carrying a samurai sword (a Katana).

Over the years in Japan the art was passed down from one generation to the next and it was sort of, not watered down, but it was obviously made a bit safer in some ways. As an example, the original "hip throw" wasn't your back to someone else's stomach. You would rotate around and it was your back to someone else's back. You would throw them over the top so that they would land on their neck. The idea on the battlefield was breaking their neck, something you can't really practice very often.

So there were certain things that were changed and adjusted over the years. But, the interesting thing about Japanese Ju-Jitsu is that it contains so much. There are so many different elements to it in the classes. You might do grappling sometimes, but you also might do "kata" (synchronized movements, or "forms"). It could be the throws that you see in

Judo. It could be Aikido or directional throws. It could be striking, some of which got brought over into Karate. So there are lots of different elements under the umbrella of Japanese Ju-Jitsu or Ju-Jitsu.

Sensei Abdulwahab M. Alburaidi, the National Technical Director of World Ju-Jitsu Corporation Kuwait (WJJC-K) who has 17 years of extensive martial arts experience, in this interview, takes us to the world of Ju-Jitsu to better understand this gentle way of martial art, its importance in self-defence, the growing interest of the millennials as well as adults in Ju-Jitsu, different techniques from the straight punch, hook, upper cut and hammer punch to grappling, coping with pain and other challenges and the future of Ju-Jitsu in Kuwait and the Middle East.

Question: When did you start your interest in martial arts?

Answer: I started when I was eight years old and I've been hooked to it ever since.

Q: What made you decide to learn martial arts?

A: When I was kid I was a big fan of action and martial arts movies so I asked my father to get me into any martial arts school and that's how it all began.

Q: What type/s of martial arts did you learn first?

A: I started with taekwondo then kickboxing, Kajukenbo, Arnis then, seven years ago, I found the best martial art for me and this is Ju-Jitsu.

Q: How did you find your training in your early years?

A: It was very traditional, very hard. I've experienced different kinds of body pain after every class because of the exercise, movements and techniques but when I got the hang of it,

everything had become very easy. It became part of my lifestyle.

Q: What were the challenges that you had to face when you were still starting?

A: There are a lot of challenges as I have mentioned earlier when you're starting with martial arts, you just have to keep on going to master it. Currently, I'm facing the biggest challenge, being the Sensei of the only school in Kuwait and the Middle East that teaches the new modern Ju-Jitsu for street fighting and self defence system, hence, not too many people understand what Ju-Jitsu is all about and how it came to Kuwait. But I believe, Ju-Jitsu will soon be in the forefront in the art of self-defence.

Q: Was there a point in your life that you feel like quitting martial arts?

A: No never! Quitting is never part of my vocabulary. The thing with martial arts, you learn self-discipline and the determination to hurdle all the challenges no matter how difficult the task may seem. It teaches you to be a real fighter not only in class but in life as a whole.

Q: When did you start joining competitions? How was your first competition? Did you win?

A: I started when I was in kickboxing. I lost by points in my first competition not because my opponent was more skilled but because of the confusion of the general atmosphere during the fight. But in my later fights, I did well in some competitions.

Q: From your martial arts training what are the values that you have learned that are useful in life?

A: You get to learn a lot of values that you can apply in your life but the most important lessons that we learn are respect, discipline and self-control in all aspects of your life.

Q: How popular is martial arts in Kuwait then and now?

A: Martial Arts has been popular years ago because of the movies but now, martial arts has become more popular or I may say very, very popular because of the social media and people get to understand that the martial arts is not aggressive and only for fighting, it's a lifestyle and they learn so many new skills. In the past only the boys could practice martial arts, but now everything has changed,

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Sensei Abdulwahab Alburaidi with WJJC Founder Shodai Soko Adriano Busa