

THE INFLUENCE OF THE SWEDISH SYSTEM OF GYMNASTICS ON SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN JAPAN

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Introduction

The Swedish System of Gymnastics was first introduced into Japan in 1902* and it had the great influence on the school physical education in Japan as well as on the military physical education. We are interested in the following two points with regard to this problem; one is how the Swedish System had been introduced into Japan and the other is what influence it had on physical education in Japan.

However, we have been able to make use of few materials on the history of the military physical education, so that it may be appropriate that at present the object of this study must be chiefly limited to the school physical education.

Concerning the former problem of the introduction of the Swedish System we have already investigated it to a certain extent and reported some of the results.²⁶⁾²⁸⁾

Therefore we have to consider the latter problem here. And it is curious that we have had few studies on the influence of the Swedish System in spite of the importance of the problem. Generally speaking, it may be said that school physical education in modernized Japan was based on the principles of the Swedish System and built a structure which was on firm ground.²⁷⁾

By the way it is worth noticing that 'medical gymnastics' to be well known as the Swedish System of Gymnastics were little introduced into Japan and in the most cases when they called the Swedish System of Gymnastics it indicated the Swedish System of 'Educational Gymnastics' on this account. It is also an interesting problem how the medical gymnastics was in Japan, but in the stage of our study we must notify beforehand that we cannot cover this problem here.

I. THE PROCESS OF INTRODUCING THE SWEDISH SYSTEM OF GYMNASTICS INTO JAPAN

The main theme of this study is to clarify what influence the Swedish System of Gymnastics had on the school physical education in Japan, however, we think it is necessary to outline the process of introducing the Swedish System into Japan. The process may be divided into the three periods:

The First Period (1902—1906)

The Second Period (1906—1916)

The Third Period (1917—1930)

(1) First Period

Motokuro Kawase returned to Tokyo after having studied medicine in Boston and got a position of a teacher at Nihon Tai-ikukai Taiso-gakko (Japanese Physical Education Association Normal school of Gymnastics) in 1900. He published two books concerning the Swedish System of Gymnastics in 1902, viz. :

Suêden-shiki Kyo-ikuteki Taiso-ho (The Swedish System of Educational Gymnastics)⁸⁾

Suêden-shiki Taisoho (The Swedish System of Gymnastics).⁷⁾

At the same time he began to introduce the Swedish System into Japan voluntarily and

actively.⁴⁵⁾ As soon as Aguri Inokuchi, who had learned physical education in and around Boston too, returned home in 1903, she took an appointment as professor at Joshi Kôtô-shihangakko (The Women's Higher Normal School). She also introduced and advocated the Swedish System through lecture meetings and so on. Thus it is found that the Swedish System which was first introduced into Japan was that of having been used in and around Boston.

When Kawase as a chief editor wrote "Suêden-shiki Kyoikuteki Taiso-ho", he consulted the following three books:**

1. George L. Melio; Manual of Swedish Drill, New York, 1889.
2. Hartvig Nissen; ABC of the Swedish System of Educational Gymnastics, Philadelphia and London, 1891.
3. Nils Posse; Handbook of School Gymnastics of the Swedish System, Boston, 1892.

And "Suêden-shiki Taiso" written by Kawase depended on the following works:**

Nils Posse; The Special Kinesiology of Educational Gymnastics, Boston, 1894.

In this manner Kawase and Inokuchi started the movement of introduction and diffusion of the Swedish System, so that many physical educators who had relied on 'Futsû-taiso' which was descended from so called 'light' gymnastics by Dio Lewis began to waver in their judgment and were eager to know which system was more suitable for the objectives of school physical education.

The Ministry of Education, therefore, organized the Committee for Investigation on Gymnastics and Play in 1904. The Report of the Investigation on Gymnastics and Play was submitted to the Minister in 1905. The report said, "so called Swedish System of Gymnastics should be adopted on the whole"¹⁾ At that time the Swedish System was officially adopted in school physical education in Japan.

(2) Second Period

In 1906 the Department of War inquired of the Ministry of Education about the unification of gymnastics in the Army and in the school.²⁶⁾ Both departments appointed the Interdepartmental Committee to examine the problem of the unification of gymnastics. But either of the departments was of the same opinion, so that the committee was discontinued for a while.

When the committee resumed work, Dômei Nagai, who was professor at Tokyo Kôtô-shihangakko (Tokyo Higher Normal School) and had just investigated the situation of physical education in Europe and America including Sweden, took an active part in the committee and finally succeeding in persuading the Army to admit 'Gakko-taiso Seiritôitsu-an' (Draft of the Rearrangement and Unification of School Gymnastics), which was based on the Swedish System in the main.

The co-existence of 'Futsû-taiso' and 'Heishiki-taiso' (military drill including military gymnastics) in the school physical education was thus abolished by this draft and exercises as teaching materials were newly classified as Gymnastics and Military Drill as well as Play. The plan of this draft was basically settled in 'Gakko-taiso Kyoju-yômoku' (Syllabus of School Physical Training) issued in 1913.

On the other hand the Army, after admitting the draft, felt an urge to study the

Swedish System, and sent First Lieut. Hayashi to Sweden so as to investigate physical education in the countries in Europe including Sweden. After his coming back to Japan in 1933 Rikugun Toyama-gakko (the Military School of Toyama) continued to study the various systems of physical education in Europe and America, and in the end in February 1916 finished 'Draft of the Manual of Military Gymnastics',^{18) 19)} into which the Swedish System was largely introduced.^{21) 22)} Then 'Manual of Military Gymnastics' was issued in 1918 after the draft was slightly amended through the experience of execution in the Army and the investigation in the Military School of Toyama.²⁰⁾

The above proves that in this period both gymnastics in the school and those in the Army were reformed in conformity with the principles of the Swedish System as a result of studying it in Sweden and considering the situation of physical education widely in Europe and America, and that gymnastics came to be placed on the firm basis both in the school and in the Army.

(3) Third Period

Tsunejiro Sakurai, professor at Kyushû Imperial University, was critical of the way of acceptance of the Swedish System, which had been, so to speak, a work-for-word translation, from about 1917.¹³⁾ Not only did he refer to Törngren, L.M.; *Lherbuch der Schwedischen Gymnastik* (übersetzt von Shairer, G.G. A.)¹⁵⁾ but he also tried to examine the Swedish System positively from the standpoint of medicine, especially Anatomy, and founded the practical teaching method of gymnastics on the scientific knowledges. In this way his "Rational Gymnastics" was shaped and it was a developmental form of an assimilated Swedish System in Japan. Many members who were studying or teaching physical education gathered around him^{14) 16) 17)} and they had much influence on the physical education in the districts of Fukuoka, O-ita, Kagawa, and Gunma.²³⁾

When the assimilation of the Swedish System progressed and it seemed that the moment of the autonomous development had just been generated, however, on the other side the new trend of Play, Sports and Games, and New Gymnastics in Europe and America was introduced by the leaders who newly returned from abroad. After there was a dispute on the quality of Niels Bukh's gymnastics in 1931, the need for the revision of the formerly revised Syllabus in 1926, which maintained the principles of the Swedish System, was especially raised. And it was really revised in 1936 and the more natural and elastic exercises were taken into it.

II. THE INFLUENCE OF THE SWEDISH SYSTEM OF GYMNASTICS

1) The Unification of School Gymnastics and Military Gymnastics

After the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) the military authorities began to have a force to meddle in the national education.²⁶⁾ They requested the unification of School Gymnastics and Military Gymnastics by the exclusive use of the latter. The Ministry of Education had to respond to the request and both departments as mentioned above appointed the Interdepartmental Committee to examine the problem in 1906.

The examination extended over a long period of time with a suspended intermediate time. After all, however, first the Syllabus of School Physical Training based on the principles of the Swedish System was issued for the school and secondly the Manual of

the Military Gymnastics founded on the same principles just as the Syllabus was issued for the Army.

In this manner School Gymnastics and Military Gymnastics were both composed on the principles of the Swedish System. This unification had an important meaning from the viewpoint of national physical education, because the consistency and the continuity of gymnastics in the school and in the Army was first ensured at this point.

And in the process of this unification there had been two confronting standpoints, so to speak, the Army's principles of efficiency to assign the possibly simple gymnastics and uniform pattern of them and the Ministry of Education's principle of education to give children various kinds of exercise in order to help them develop naturally.²⁴⁾

Therefore, it implied the approval of the latter standpoint to a certain extent to adopt the Swedish System which had the theory of making the lesson plan founded on the principles such as Day's Order and Progression.

2) The Rearrangement and Unification of the Exercises in School Physical Education

Before the unification of the School Gymnastics and the Military Gymnastics had been accomplished, the adoption of the Swedish System seemed to have started to rearrange and unify the exercises used as teaching materials in school physical education. And as to the rearrangement and unification of the exercises within realm of school physical education. The Report of the Investigation on Gymnastics and Play shaped a course.

Table 1

before the Report	the Report	the Syllabus
Futsû-taiso (educational gymnastics)	Taiso (gymnastics) Kakko-enshû (individual practice) Renzoku-enshû (serial practice)	Taiso (gymnastics)
Heishiki-taiso (military gymnastics & drill)	Heishiki-kyoren (military drill)	Kyoren ^{***} (military drill includ. ordermove- ment for girls)
Yû-gi (play)	Yû-gi (play)	Yû-gi (play)
		Gekken-Jûjutsu ^{***} **** (kendo · judo)

Two points should be noted. (1) In the first place, they thought ' since school physical education contains what school education needs concerning free gymnastics and apparatus gymnastics which are included in Heishiki-taiso, it is unnecessary to teach those gymnastics in Heishiki-taiso particularly '1) and excluded them changing the name of Heishiki-taiso for Heishiki-kyoren — literally means military drill —, which was going to give entirely individual drill, platoon drill and company drill from Part I Basic Drill in the

Manual on Infantry Drilling.

In this way the former classification of exercises as Futsu-taiso and Heishiki-taiso was abolished and the overlapping elements between them were removed.

(2) Secondly, it was a problem how to deal with the newly introduced and diffusing Swedish System and the old Futsû-taiso. And it was settled by the unification of gymnastics based on the principles of the Swedish System. Consequently both gymnastics were included in 'taisô' (gymnastics), changing the name of the Swedish System of Gymnastics for 'Kakko-enshû' (individual practice) and that of Futsû-taiso for 'Renzoku-enshû' (serial practice).²⁾

The direction that was indicated by the Report in 1905 was definitely settled by the Syllabus in 1913. First, Heishiki-kyoren turned to 'Kyoren' (order exercises and military drill), and all of the exercises for order which had been classified into 'taisô' up to this time, were included in 'Kyoren' and as a result of this rearrangement girls began to be given order exercises by the name of 'Kyoren'. Secondly, gymnastics, more profoundly based on the principles of the Swedish System, were rearranged and unified as what included the apparatus gymnastics in the former Heishiki-taiso and abolished such a classification as individual practice and serial practice. The elements of the old 'Futsû-taiso' was almost extinguished except the use of the tools.

Certainly we cannot deny that the development of theories of teaching materials and instruction had functioned as a factor which provoked this problem of rearrangement and unification of the exercises in school physical education, and at the same time it may be said that the newly introduced Swedish System gave physical education teachers the notions that various systems of gymnastics had almost the same principles as the Swedish System and that they really served to rearrange and unify the exercises in school physical education.

3) The Establishment of Teaching Pattern in Physical Education

The Swedish System introduced into Japan played an important role as well in the establishment of the teaching pattern in physical education which had long been maintained afterwards. This had been greatly urged by the development of pedagogy, especially theories of instruction — that is much the same as the case of the rearrangement and the unification of the exercises —, however, the principles and the methods of the Swedish System which appeared to be based on the laws of physical activities were suitable to the request of teaching in physical education.

(i) Particularization of the Regulation on Content of Education

First of all, if we consider the policy of education at that time, it may be worthy of notice that the regulation on content of education had gradually been promoted after 'Shôgakkô Kyosoku-taiko' (The Outline of the Rules for Teaching in the Primary School) issued in 1891. This 'Kyosoku-taiko' was not only the most concrete content of education in the school that had ever been regulated, but it also requested each school to make up 'Kyoju-saimoku' (the Details of Teaching) founded on 'Kyosoku-taiko.'²³⁾ And then the teacher was asked to draw up 'Kyoan' (the Lesson Plan). In this manner the channel, 'Kyosoku' (the Rules for Teaching) → 'Saimoku' (the Details of Teaching) → 'Kyoan'

(the Lesson Plan), which the content of education was particularized, was being completed in other main subjects such as morals, Japanese, arithmetic, history, geography and science.

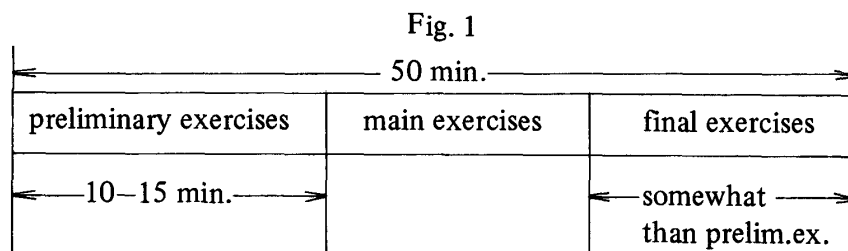
As to physical training, however, this channel was slower in completion than other main subjects and when it was completed, the particularization seemed to be comparatively simple. It may be said that this was because the teaching method in physical training had been underdeveloped in comparison with the main subjects.

(ii) The Influence of Neo-Herbertianism

Hausknecht, E. (1853–1927), a German teacher who was invited to the Imperial University (at Tokyo) in 1887, introduced Herbert’s pedagogy into Japan. And after that many Herbertian’s works had been successively translated into Japanese and read. In the 30’s of the Meiji era (1897–1906) the teaching method of each subject had been systematized by the medium of those Herbertian’s theories of education.

The interest of the teacher was focused on how to construct the formal steps of instruction which corresponded to the process of cognition. In W. Rein’s case it was composed of five formal steps, viz.: Vorbereitung — Darbietung — Verknüpfung — Zusammenfassung — Anwendung. As these kinds of formal steps of instruction were grounded on the process of cognition from the intuition to the conception, it would have been impossible that the steps directly applied to physical training which was much different from other cognitive subjects. In the tool subject and the skill subject, therefore, the formal steps of instruction inclined to consist of three steps.²³⁾

Heizaburo Takashima (1867–1946), who played an important roll as a leader in the theory of physical education in the 30’s of the Meiji era, asserted that the formal steps of instruction in the exercise subject should have been composed so that it might be chiefly based on the laws of physiology and also fitted those of psychology.¹²⁾ He suggested that it could be composed of three formal steps as shown in Fig.1, viz.: Preliminary Exercises → Main Exercises → Final Exercises.



In this way the problem how to compose the formal steps of instruction — which was closely related to the particularization of the content of education through the channel of ‘the Rules for Teaching’ → ‘the Details of Teaching’ → ‘the Lesson Plan’ — was given a direction which made it possible to compose the formal steps as to the teaching materials in physical training. And it was the theory and method of the Swedish System that really functioned to realize the composition of the formal steps.

(iii) The Suitability of the Swedish System

Takashima had undoubtedly referred to the Swedish System, especially the order of exercises when he asserted his idea on the formal steps. The Report of the Investigation on Gymnastics and Play determined ‘the Fundamental Form in the Practice of

Gymnastics' more explicitly based on the order of exercises in the Swedish System.¹⁾ It was as follows:

Introductions

First Practice	neck and chest movement	free & apparatus
Second Practice	heave movement	free & apparatus
Third Practice	whole body movement (balance move.)	free & apparatus
Fourth Practice	back movement	free & apparatus
Fifth Practice	abdominal exercise	free & apparatus
Sixth Practice	side movement	free & apparatus
Seventh Practice	whole body movement (jumping & vaulting)	free & apparatus
Eighth Practice	leg movement	
Ninth Practice	respiratory exercise	

This 'Form' had a view that from the physiological viewpoint gymnastics should be practised so to attain the objective of gymnastics most adequately and therefore they had to follow the 'Form' based on the laws of physiology. When the 'Form' was determined on the basis of the order of exercises in the Swedish System, some examples of the practice were shown in the Report.¹⁾ An example of the 'individual practice' was as follows:

For the Third Grade of the Primary School

Order of Practice	Position & Movements	Commanding Words
Introductions	Fundamental Standing Position. (fund. st. pos.)	Feet-close! Close! Feet-open! Open! One! Two! One! Stop!
First, Neck and Chest Movement	fund. st. pos. Head backward bend.	Head-backward-bend! Bend! Upward-raise! Raise! One! Two! One! Stop!
Second, Heave Movement	fund. st. pos. Hips-firm.	Hips-firm! Position! One! Two! One! Stop!
Third, Whole Body Move- ment (Balance Mov.)	Wing Standing Position. (wing st. pos.) Heels-lift.	Hips-firm! Heels-lift! One! Two! One! Stop! Position!
Fourth, Back Movement	Yard (1) st. pos. Arms-flinging.	Arms-sideways-lift! Arms-backward-fling- ing! Arms-forward- flinging! One! Two! One! Stop! Position!
Fifth, Abdominal Exer- cise	fund. st. pos. Trunk backward bend.	Trunk-backward-bend! Upward-raise! One! Two! One! Stop!

Sixth, Side Movement	wing st. pos. Sideways flexion.	Hips-firm! Trunk-to the left (r.)-bend! Upward-stretch! One! Two! One! Stop! Position!
Seventh, Whole Body Move- ment (Jumping & Vaulting)	wing st. pos. Double-quick in place.	Hips-firm! Heels-lift! In place-march! One! Two (or Left! Right!) Class-halt! One! Two! Three! Four! Five! Position!
Eighth, Leg Movement	wing st. pos. Courtesy standing.	Hips-firm Knees-half- bend! Knees-stretch! One! Two! One! Stop!
Ninth, Respiratory Exer- cise	fund. st. pos. Double arm elevation.	Arms-sideways-lift! Arms-sink! One! Two! One! Stop!

Some examples of the 'serial practice' which conformed to the Fundamental Form were also shown in the Report. In any case, regarding gymnastics the Fundamental Form of the practice was thus determined. And at that time the Report itself mentioned nothing about the relationship between the Fundamental Form and 'Yû-gi' (Play). Gendô Tsuboi and Toku Kani, who were both leaders of school physical education and taught in Tokyo Higher Normal School as Professor and Assistant Professor respectively, said as to the application of this Fundamental Form to 'Yû-gi' in their joint work, "Shôgakko Taiso Kyokasho" (Textbook for the Primary School Gymnastics – for Teachers) in 1907, "... if possible, Yû-gi may be given so long as it is inserted into an item of the Fundamental Form according to the feature of the exercises. For instance, simple marching may be practised under the item of 'leg movement', graceful marching under 'balance movement', violent competition under 'jumping and vaulting', and other play may also be given after considering its feature so far as it comes under the Fundamental Form."¹¹⁾

Thus a trend that was going to set forth both play and gymnastics in the same framework arose then. It was by Dômei Nagai (1868–1950), who contributed to make the Syllabus in 1913, that the trend was given an impetus. He divided the formal steps of instruction into the following three stages:¹⁰⁾

[i] The Beginning Step – Here it is necessary to prompt the circulation of blood, produce the normal respiration and stimulate the mind. And it is the preliminary step in order to proceed to the more intense exercises. Marching, leg movement, upper limbs movement and head movement may be usually used in this step, and sometimes lateral trunk movement can be also used.

[ii] The Middle Step – This consists of the comparatively most intense exercise in a lesson and other exercises which are combined with it. The exercises of chest, back, abdomen and lateral trunk as well as hanging exercises and jumping and vaulting, and moreover the exercises of balance, leg and others which are combined with the afore-

said exercises may also be used here.

[iii] The Final Step — As it is aimed at restoring the normal respiration and circulation of the blood and calming down the excitement of the mind in this step, so leg movements, balance movements, and respiratory exercises may be usually used. And besides upper limb and lateral trunk movements can be used sometimes.

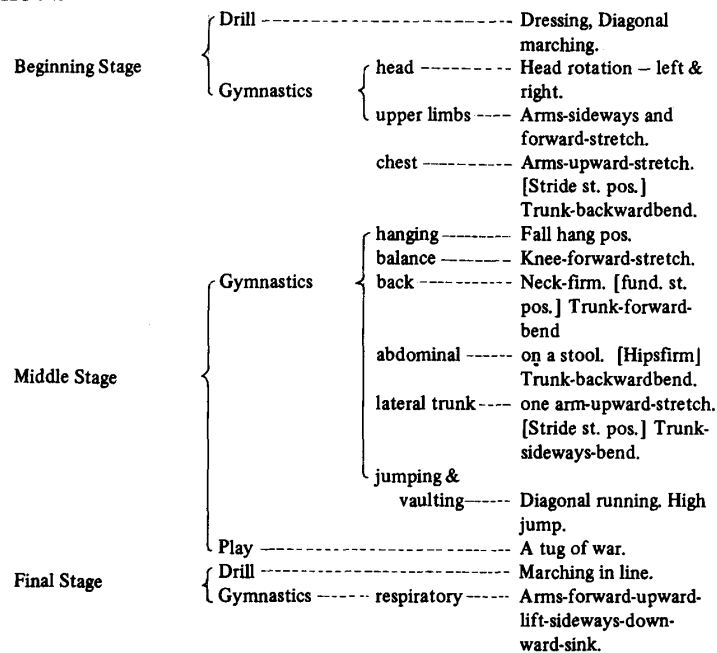
Nagai composed such three steps of instruction as this, and furthermore he added the following principles of arrangement of teaching materials to it:¹⁰⁾

a) To arrange the exercises in the order of 'harder and harder and then easier and easier.' It proceeds from easy movement to difficult one and from simple to complex.

b) To arrange the exercises alternately changing easy and difficult or simple and complex.

He said that the arrangement of b) was that of the Swedish System, that this was a surpassing way of arrangement which gave much exercises but less fatigue and that in this case considering how to compose the formal steps of instruction it depended on the development of children how complex the arrangement should be or how long the time for a lesson might be.

The following is one of his examples, which was for boys in about the fifth grade of the primary school.⁹⁾



Then the composition of the formal steps of instruction made it possible to make a lesson plan as the last step in the channel of the particularization of the content of education, 'the Rules for Teaching' → 'the Details of Teaching' → 'the Lesson Plan' and greatly improved the teaching method in physical education which had been comparatively behind other main subjects.

As we have already mentioned above, the introduction of theories and methods of the Swedish System influenced on the composition of the steps of instruction in physical education class, the rational arrangement of exercises as teaching materials and the placement of Play in the framework of the arrangement which chiefly aimed at the development of health. These elements totally established a new teaching pattern for

physical training class. For a long time afterwards this pattern had been maintained in physical education in Japan.

4) The Involuntary Character of School Physical Education

It may be said that the advocacy of rationality of the gymnastics and the framework given to physical training class in the school characterized the subject of 'physical training' in the school as 'gymnastics-centered' physical education literally in Japanese. Another thing we have to note here is that the teaching of physical training class had a feature that usually the movement was executed to 'commands.'

M. Kawase explained the feature of the teaching method of the Swedish System and said that all exercises in the Swedish System were executed to 'commands' in the same way as in the 'Heishiki-taiso' (Military Gymnastics and Drill), while in the 'Futsû-taiso' the exercises had been executed on the 'memory' of the order of them or in 'watching and imitating' the teacher's movement.⁵⁾ It was because the commands were expected to enable the pupil to concentrate his attention on the movement itself.

Concerning this feature A. Inokuchi also said, "Any movement will not be performed with full volition in the Swedish System until the teacher commands, so the pupil as well as the teacher oughtn't to be absentminded in the least" and she also requested the pupil to concentrate his or her attention.²⁾

The lesson led by the teacher's commands also intended to teach discipline. And though gymnastics was recognized to be volitional and intentional exercises, it had evidently had the quality of keeping the pupil's body under the one-sided control by the teacher. D. Nagai said "The orders of the teacher must be obeyed rapidly and correctly, and the orders are sure to be executed whatever orders are given, the pupil should be ready for the orders once he make out them."⁹⁾

This character made it difficult for the pupil to enjoy physical activities and carry over them into the life after his school days. And it was after the World War II that this character had been changed to a great extent, because many kinds of sport were adopted in school physical education, the object of recreation was explicitly set up and many people could have the experience in sport clubs of the junior high school which was founded as a result of the educational reform in 1947.

In this manner, though the lesson of gymnastics emphasized volition of the pupil and requested strain of his mind, it did not mean directly the great respect for the pupil's need and interest, and on the contrary, in fact, it gave such an involuntary character as mentioned above to the physical activities in the physical training class in the school.

Summary

The Swedish System which was introduced into Japan after about 1902 had the great influence on physical education in Japan as follows: (1) It played an important role in the unification of gymnastics in the school and in the Army. (2) Within school physical education gymnastics which had been consisted of 'Futsû-taiso' (educational gymnastics) and 'Heishiki-taiso' (military gymnastics and drill) were unified and rearranged by the principles of the newly introduced Swedish System. (3) The teaching pattern in physical training lesson, which was composed of three formal steps — beginning, middle and final

— and which had the order of exercises, was established by the acceptance of the theory and method of the Swedish System together with the previously introduced Neo-Herbertianism which had discussed the five formal steps of instruction. Play was also placed in the order of exercises and all exercises in the physical training lesson were set in a frame of health as the chief object. (4) On the other hand the lesson led by the teacher's commands which was a feature of the teaching method of the Swedish System gave the character of involuntary and controlled exercises to the physical activities in the school physical training class. It had long been an obstacle to give an impetus to the voluntary physical activities in the Japanese history of physical education.

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Notes:

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- 2) This study received Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (D) by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in the fiscal year of 1978.

* As Kawase, M. took an appointment as a teacher of Physiology and Hygiene at Nihon Tai-ikukai Taiso-gakko in 1900 and seemed to start introducing the Swedish System, it is possible that the year which began to introduce the Swedish System may have been before 1902.

** The years of these books issued were only estimated, because Kawase, M. did not mention them clearly.

*** The exercises had been already classified as Taiso, Kyoren and Gekken-Jūjutsu by the revised regulations relative to the application of the Imperial Ordinance on School.

**** It said only 'it is possible to add Gekken-Jūjutsu.'