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**Kendo Sport Helps Japanese
Christians Learn Discipline**

By Lois Whaley

TOKYO (BP)--Ichiro Uchida stepped forward, knelt gracefully on the floor, bowed low to show respect for his opponent and rose to prepare for combat.

For a moment he stood gazing at the other young man. Clearing his mind of all other thoughts, he concentrated on the task before him. The moment of quietness brought calmness and confidence.

He thoroughly appraised his opponent. Every nervous twitch, every motion of the eye, every breath spoke of uncertainty and indecision. Tension built with the prolonged silence.

Uchido slowly raised his sword. Following the rules of kendo (a Japanese sport of fencing), he welded his mind, muscle and sword into one weapon. Then, with a blood-curdling yell he attacked.

Sword clashed with sword as the two thrust, parried, side-stepped and thrust again. Each new attack was accompanied by a yell. Eyes flashed and muscles tensed.

Then, with quick decision Ichiro thrust to his opponent's chest and scored a hit. His opponent staggered back, dropped to one knee and acknowledged defeat. Uchido had won. Still conscious of the discipline of character, Uchida again bowed in respect. Bending low before his vanquished friend, he then stretched a hand to help him to his feet.

Uchida, a descendant of one of Japan's old families, is a college student here. He has studied kendo for the past six years and says it teaches him the discipline of body, mind and spirit characteristic of the Japanese. In a highly competitive society, a young man must be calm, decisive and aggressive, he believes.

But as a Christian, Uchida also values the sense of respect and concern for his opponent which kendo teaches. He feels that this age-old art is definitely relevant to the life of a modern "samurai" (warrior).

Kendo is more than 1,000 years old and was a necessary discipline for the warrior class in feudal Japan. With the introduction of firearms into the country it lost its value as a martial art. However, it was still considered a necessary part of the education of any young man until 1945.

After World War II the military government of Gen. Douglas MacArthur banned the study and practice of kendo because of its military connotations. Interest in kendo did not die, however, and in 1959, it was re-instated as a sport. As Uchida says, today it is a valuable way of teaching the discipline and character of Japanese manhood.

Touru Kato, pastor of the Sapporo Baptist Church in Hokkaido, sees kendo as a valuable opportunity to teach discipline for the Christian life. His weekly classes in Japanese fencing are among the most popular activities of the church. Both boys and girls participate; traditionally both men and women have studied this demanding art as physical and mental exercise.

One day a week students swing their armor across their backs and hurry straight from school to the Baptist church. There they lose no time in changing into the traditional costume of loose blouse and full, pleated pants. When they have buckled on the breast-plate of heavy-lacquered leather and girdle of quilted cotton, they lay their swords, helmets, and gloves on the floor in front of them. Then kneeling, they wait for Kato-Sensei (Teacher Kato) to begin the lesson.

Then the pastor enters and kneels on the floor facing the students. The lesson begins with a most unusual chant. Everyone speaks loudly and clearly as they repeat together:

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"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Eph. 6:13-17, KJV)

Then they rise to the struggle.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Lois (Mrs. Charles) Whaley is the Southern Baptist missionary press representative for Japan.

(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers.

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Bluefield College Moves
Toward Four-Year Status

Baptist Press
7/29/76

BLUEFIELD, Va. (BP)--Bluefield College, a two-year Baptist school here, has received approval of the Commonwealth of Virginia Council of Higher Education to begin granting four-year degrees.

The college, founded in 1922, already has long had accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as a two-year institution and has been granted the status of "candidate for accreditation for a four-year institution" by the Southern Association.

Charles Tyer, president of Bluefield, said the Council of Higher Education's approval is "a significant step in our transition from strictly two-year to both two and four-year programs."

A college spokesman said the first baccalaureate degree will be awarded to about 40 seniors who will complete their college work in May, 1977.

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Protestant Faculty
Launched in Zagreb

Baptist Press
7/29/76

ZAGREB, Yugoslavia (BP)--A Protestant theological institution has been founded in Zagreb which grew out of a stimulus provided by last year's International Congress on Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland, according to a European Baptist Press Service (EBPS) report.

EBPS, citing a report from the Yugoslavian institution's founding committee, said the Matija Vlacic Ilirik (Mathias Flacius Illyricus) Theological Faculty, "was registered with the Secretariat of Education, Culture and Physical Activities on May 15, 1975, at the Zagreb City Assembly."

"The Lausanne Congress of last year provided the stimulus for our decision to further cooperation among Protestant fellowships in our country, as well as to manifest this cooperation with the foundation of a united educational institution, which for several years has been the dream of a number of those from evangelical communities," EBPS quoted the committee as reporting.

"On the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the death of our country's great Protestant reformer and thinker, Matija Vlacic Ilirik, we decided, with God's help, for the first time in the history of our country and in the entire Balkans, to establish an institution of higher learning for the benefit of all Protestant groups in the country," the committee reported.

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