

**Jūjutsu,
Jujitsu,
Jiu-Jitsu...
Which is correct?**

柔術?

by Prof. George Arrington

Depending upon the source you will see a variety of spellings of the name of the Japanese martial art which is translated, "gentle art". One can see "Jūjutsu", "Jujitsu", "Jiu-Jitsu" and others. Why is there such a variety?

A standard for the romanization of the Japanese language was proposed as early as the 1880's and was decreed by the Japanese cabinet in 1937. This was repealed during the occupation of Japan after World War II, but then decreed again in 1954. Prior to this, a wide variety of spellings existed. An example is the famous book written in the early 1900's called The Complete Kano Jiu-Jitsu by Higashi and Hancock.

One part of this standard involved how long vowels are written. The proper way to write the martial art 柔術 translated as "gentle art" is Jūjutsu. The first kanji Jū has a long U sound and is capped by a horizontal bar known as a "macron". Similarly, the art founded by Jigorō Kanō, 柔道 is written, Jūdō with a long "o" sound on the second kanji.

The Japanese language consists of both Kanji (Chinese ideograms) and Kana (phonetic symbols). Each kanji can have several pronunciations and so it is often necessary for written Japanese to include the kana to show the intended reading. For example, the character for "gentle" may pronounced phonetically as Jū , じゅう or Yawara, やわら.

The sound "jū" in Japanese does not exist as a single symbol, but is produced by combining several kana. Here's a brief tutorial in understanding the reading and pronunciation of these symbols:

- The base kana for this term is shi, し .
- Two small tick marks are then added to the upper right of the kana "voices" it to "ji", and looks like じ .

- The kana for the syllable “yu”, ゆ is then added to the right to make the sound “ju”, and looks like じゅ.
(Note: This may be why earlier versions were written as Jiyu or Jiu.)
- Finally the long "u" sound is made by adding the kana for “u”, う to the right and appears as じゅう.

Jutsu is created in a similar way:

- Start with “ju”, じゅ.
- Add the kana for “tsu” つ, so that “jutsu” looks like, じゅつ.

Jūjutsu is written in kanji as 柔術, and written in kana as じゅう じゅつ.

Using the correct standard for romanization, Jūjutsu is the proper spelling and is pronounced "juu-jutsu". The "u" at the end of "jutsu" is pronounced lightly.

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