

F. W. ストレンジ考

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F. W. Strange: A Missionary of Sport in Japan

by

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F. W. Strange was a native of England, who had taught English at the Tokyo English School, the Preparatory School of Tokyo University and the First Upper Middle School from 1875 to 1889, and died in Tokyo on the fifth of July, 1889. He is known as one of the earliest introducers of western sports, such as athletic sports, rowing, etc. in this country, but few historical studies were made on him. It is the present author's point that further studies should be conducted on his works by the Japanese historians on physical education and sport especially in the light of global perspective for the development of sport in the last half of the 19th century. This was one of the trials made along this line utilizing official records and documents, newspapers and other first-hand sources and literatures.

Judging from his employment conditions, e.g. terms, salary and teaching subject, he seemed to belong to lower rankings among foreign employee teachers in those days. In contrast with other eminent foreign teachers who were invited and hired by the Japanese government to contribute to specific purposes he seemed to be employed incidentally by the government upon his arrival in Japan. Hence, it might be estimated that the Japanese government did not have any intention to import and promote sport in the Japanese educational system. However, there was a lack of information concerning with his motives to come to Japan and his career experiences while he was in England except he must be a graduate of Oxford University.

During his lifetime in Japan he actively participated in several athletic clubs established by foreign residents settled in Tokyo and Yokohama areas and often played cricket, athletic sports, football, etc. It was mentioned in the sport column of the Japan Weekly Mail that he was a committee member of the Tokyo Athletic Club and the Tokyo Cricket Club and that he was at a high level in such sport skills. Later in his life he successfully managed to hold friendly and/or exhibition games between these clubs and those of Japanese students; thus contributed to the development of student sports in Japan.

As he had been coaching mainly rowing and athletic sports for the students at the University since 1883, he earnestly suggested to the University to have athletic meetings and regatta and realized them. Then, his dedicated students succeeded in establishing the Athletics Association on campus of the Imperial University (formerly, the Tokyo University), which was the first students' sport body established in Japan. The Rules of the Association which was drafted by one of his disciples reflected great influence of the British view of sport he emphasized; that is high evaluation of character building effect inherent in sport.

It is the present author's contention that the reason why he is now called "Father of Sport" in Japan is due not to his coaching many sports but to his success in the firm establishment of students sport body in the national educational system in Japan with the strong belief in British concept of sport, for, after the first establishment of the Athletic Association at the Imperial University, there successively followed many student sport bodies which contributed to the development of sporting public in Japan. Also, many of the

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