

The art was jealously guarded by the "Samauri" and marvelous tales were told of their prowess—tales which I fancy they took good care to amplify and ornament. They were supposed by its practice to kill an opponent by certain sounds only, even if he were in the next room; they were supposed to have the power of the "fatal touch," killing instantly by placing one finger on the secret spot. They also had power to bring back to life those killed by whatever cause it might be. Among the imaginative, superstitious, and ignorant people, it is easy to see how such stories would gain in the telling.

It is now about forty years since the feudal system was abolished, and the "Samauri" became a class in name only.

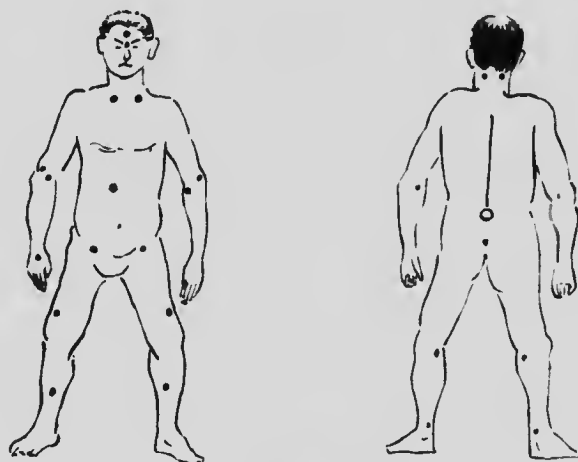


PLATE IV

and since that time these secrets have become common property. Books have been written on the subject and schools opened where it is taught and practiced, and it has even been adopted among the exercises for the cadets in the naval and military schools, in a greatly modified form called "Jiudo."

The recent exploitation and extravagant claims put forward for it in America have done much to raise and foster misapprehension as to its place and possibilities. When we think of the air of romance and mystery in which it was bathed in medieval Japan, and the attempt to bring these legends and fairy tales before a matter-of-fact, twentieth century American audience, through the medium of the press that cannot be said to show undue reticence when a chance for a