

Jigoro Kano, The Founding, History & Evolution Of Judo

By

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Part 3

The Start of Judo's Growth

By now Kodokan Judo was growing, and the priest in charge of the Eishoji Temple requested that Kano leave as he believed the practice to be too violent and the practitioners training was causing damage to the building's structure, this small dojo that Kano was using to the side of the temple, measured only 12 by 18 foot. Fortunately, Kano found a vacant lot next to the Eishoji Temple and in 1883 moved into that and established a 20 mat area in Kojimachi, which became Kano's house. This area was the largest of its time.

From setting up his own dojo at the Eishoji Temple in 1882, it would be a further two years before the byelaws for the Kodokan were drawn up and formally established the Kodokan Judo name. However his original students names were registered back in 1882. During this time Kano devised the Judo maxim's of "Seiryoku Zenyo", maximum efficiency with minimum effort and "Jita Kyohei" mutual benefits, in otherwards to ensure the training was safe and beneficial to you and your partner.

As of 1884 students had to take some vows before being admitted to the school. From the beginning Jigoro Kano had used Judo as an educational means and not just as a useful passing of time. The following are the five vows:

1. Now that I have decided to devote myself to Judo I shall not stop practicing this form of art without due cause.
2. I shall never disgrace the reputation of the Dojo by my personal behavior.
3. I shall never reveal secrets to outsiders and I shall not subscribe to another school unless absolutely necessary.
4. I shall not teach Judo without consulting, and receiving permission from, my teacher.
5. For the rest of my life I shall respect the rules of the Kodokan.

Great Rivalry

As Judo's popularity rose, great rivalry began between Jujutsu and Judo. Many of the old Jujutsu masters were seeing much decline in numbers as students began to cross over to Judo. This decline was forcing many dojo's to close due to financial difficulties and many an old master forced to sell and even live homeless as a result.

However the first "Shiai" contests had begun between Judo and other Jujutsu Dojo's and Police Jujutsu Dojo's. In 1885 the Kodokan won its first Shiai against the Police who had adopted Jujutsu as their preferred method. However many of these early contests were won due to Kano's clever chose of participants. Many of the Kodokan competitors were previously noted masters of other Jujutsu systems. This clever usage of his student's previous and newly obtained skills, somewhat highlighted and elevated Judo above Jujutsu and more droves of students enrolled at the Kodokan. Among these students in Kano's school were four students, who became known as the Shitenno, the "Four Heavenly Lords" of early Judo. Their names rang out proudly through the land, Tomita Tsunejiro, Yokoyama Sakujiro, Yamashita Yoshikazu and the fearsome little scrapper from Northern Aizu Province, Saigo Shiro.

The Deciding Factor

In 1886 a contest was held to determine which art was superior Judo or Jujutsu, under the supervision of the Police Dept, the tournament was organized between the various Schools, in particular the Schools of Jigoro Kano and Hikosuke Totsuka, of the Totsuka-ha Yoshin-Ryu Jujutsu. The Totsuka Jujutsu were considered to be the greatest Jujutsu masters of the time and Hikosuke Totsuka's name was legendary throughout Japan as a trainer of extraordinarily outstanding Jujutsuka. Totsuka list of entrants also had 5 other Jujutsuka from other Schools, only 10 were directly from the Totsuka-ha Yoshin-Ryu Jujutsu. Hikosuke Totsuka employing the same tactics as Kano had been. Kano viewed the list of contestants and knew the Kodokan had their task cut out. It would be a decisive battle. The system that best suited the wishes of the Ministry would be officially recognized by the Ministry and would be taught on all Schools. Defeat would mean the end of the Kodokan. Both Jigoro Kano and Hikosuke Totsuka sent their fifteen best students to the tournament.

There would be no Koka or Yuko, these scores did not properly exist yet, scoring would only be by Ippon using throws, chokes, strangles, joint locks or hold downs. There was no time limit, this was up to the judge. The original intent of the word "Shiai" was to be employed under Jujutsu rules which meant "Shi ni ai" symbolically to meet death itself. "Shiai" being the modern word for contest. Contests went until someone dropped from sheer exhaustion or the judge ended it, awarding the match to the clear victor. Truly, it was "Shi-ni-ai".

The Kodokan turned out to be the undisputed victor with 13 matches won and two undecided draws, some accounts state only one draw and 14 wins. The contest firmly established Judo's popular principles and practical techniques and Kano's maxim's "Seiryō Zenyō" and "Jita Kyoēi".

The only known drawing match was between Yokoyama Sakujiro of Kano' Kodokan Judo, and Nakamura Hansuke. Hansuke was a master of the Ryoji Shintoh-Ryu Jujutsu and not from the Totsuka-ha Yoshin-ryu Jujutsu. Totsuka had drafted him in for the contest. He was a strapping 176 cm. tall and 94 kg. in weight. Hansuke was called the toughest man in Japan at the time and it was said he could hang by his neck from a tree without feeling any pain.

Accounts state that the two fought tooth and nail, using every technique they knew. Against the man-mountain, Yokoyama strained every ounce of his body. The match lasted for 55 minutes, with no quarter given or taken, until the judges finally ended it and called a draw.

Yokoyama bowed to his worthy adversary, then walked off the mat. It had been the match of a lifetime, but his heart sank. He knew, deep down, that a draw was tantamount to losing in the eyes of the Jujutsu old-timers. Even though Kodokan Judo had won the majority of the matches, it was left to Shiro Saigo from Northern Aizu to decisively beat his opponent in the last contest in order to hammer down any remaining doubts of the assembled audience.

Accounts of the day report that Saigo Shiro met with Ukiji Entaro of the Totsuka-ha Yoshin Ryu Jujutsu. If Nakamura Hansuke was a giant compared to other Japanese of his day, Ukiji Entaro, who ultimately inherited the Yoshin-Ryu mantle, was a behemoth, especially compared to the diminutive Saigo. This contest was a clear mismatch.

For some reason, Shiro appeared lethargic in the beginning of the match. Entaro managed to get a firm grip on Shiro's Judogi and quickly threw him through the air. Everyone expected Saigo to fall on his back violently however the thud that never came. Saigo completed a somersault in mid-air and landed on his forearm and knees, bringing gasps to the on lookers.

Ukiji strode over to finish the job, but suddenly Shiro, whose demeanour had changed, grasped his arm and collar in a vise-like grip. Saigo Shiro unbalanced Ukiji and spun him in a small circle, the centre of which was Saigo's own "Seika Tanden", or lower centre of gravity.

It was Saigo's renowned Yama Arashi (Mountain Storm) throw. Indeed, this technique, which probably had its roots in the Oshikiuchi of Saigo Tanomo, was unique to Saigo Shiro. No one since his time has ever been able to replicate this throw. Yama Arashi was Saigo Shiro's signature method. It was unique to him, and it died with him. Some say that it looked like a variation of the Hane-Goshi hip throw, but no one truly knows to this day how Saigo's Yama Arashi was accomplished.

On that day, Saigo's Yama Arashi moved a mountain. The gargantuan Ukiji Entaro was suddenly flipped head over heels, landing with a crash on his back. Dazed, Entaro rose up, hurt, confused and angered. Yokoyama Sakujiro reportedly stated "No one gets up after Saigo's Yama Arashi that fast! Entaro's a tough one!" Yamashita Yoshikazu, later to become the Kodokan's first 10th Dan, warned Saigo to "Watch Out".

Before Entaro could regain his bearings, Saigo bore into him. He leaned into Entaro, executing another devastating throw, Osoto-Gari (Major Outer Reaping Sweep), and slammed him again to the Tatami. The impact was felt throughout the crowd.

Entaro didn't rise up this time. He shook his head, trying to regain his surroundings. The judge halted the match. The fearsome little scrapper Saigo had won the greatest victory of the youthful Kodokan Judo.

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