

# Jigoro Kano, The Founding And History Of Judo

By

Phil Morris

Part 5

## **The Awakening – The Need to Constantly Develop**

1900 also saw the first defeat of the Kodokan in a contest with the Kosen Judo school losing every match to Kosen Judo.

The roots of Kosen Judo lay in two schools of Jujutsu, Fusen Ryu Jujutsu, which specialized in Ne Waza or ground grappling and pinning techniques, and this was the speciality that won the contests of the day and Kano's own Kodokan Judo. Kosen is the Japanese term for Higher School, and many of the techniques of Kosen Judo were aimed at the ability to teach effective submissions quickly, techniques that were faster for a beginner to learn. Kosen Judo's focus was less on throwing techniques than on going immediately to locks or chokes - whether applied standing up, as part of a take-down, or applied on the ground following a simpler form of take-down than many elegant throws that then formed the heart of Kodokan Judo.

Fusen Ryu was founded by Takeda Motsuge in the early 1800's and was a cohesion of other tradition Jujutsu Ryu, the most influential schools Motsuge had trained under were the Nanba Ippo Ryu Jujutsu (from Takahashi Inobei), Takenouchi Ryu Jujutsu, Sekiguchi Ryu Jujutsu, Yoshin ryu Jujutsu, Shibukawa Jujutsu and Yagyū-Ryu Jujutsu. Fusen-Ryu shone on the ground, where pins, chokes, arm-locks, and leg-locks are highly effective,

Typically, Kano persuaded the current Fusen Ryu's headmaster, Mataemon Tanabe who had challenged Kano to the contest, to reveal the core Kosen Judo syllabus to Kano. Kano also sought out a similar style Jikishin Ryu Jujutsu to incorporate its techniques into the Kodokan syllabus. From this point on, Kodokan Judo began a trend toward Ne Waza (Ground Techniques).

## **Judo Exceeds Jujutsu**

On July 24, 1905 eighteen masters representing the leading Japanese Jujutsu Ryu's gathered at the Butokukai in Kyoto to join Kano's system. Kano's work had triumphed over Jujutsu in Japan, replacing the Tokugawa period aggressive martial arts with the more sophisticated way of life he had envisioned.

In 1912, Kano called together the remaining leader masters of Jujutsu to finalize a Kodokan syllabus of training and Kata. Aoyagi of Sosusihis Ryu, Takano, Yano, Kotaro Imei and Hikasuburo Ohshima participated from Takeuisi Ryu. Jushin Sekiguchi and Mogichi Tsumizu participated from Sekiguchi Ryu, Eguchi from Kyushin Ryu, and Hoshino from Shiten Ryu, Inazu from Miura Ryu and Takamatsu, a Kukkishin Ryu expert.

Takamatsu had worked with Kano on weapons, at which Kano was also a recognized expert, and contributed his favourite personal technique of Hiza Guruma to Judo, which remains a popular Judo competition technique today.

Kano's efforts, represented by his 1912 conference with leading Jujutsu masters to finalize the syllabus and curriculum of the Kodokan, appears to have represented Kano's thinking that the Kodokan was a necessary conduit for older Japanese martial arts that were rapidly dying out. Kano himself later remarked that "eventually Judo replaced Jujutsu in Japan, and no one any longer speaks of Jujutsu as a contemporary art in Japan, although the word has survived overseas".

## **The Completion Of The Kodokan**

In 1907 Kano had the sleeves and pants of the Judogi fully lengthened to cover the arms and legs and protect the elbows and knees. The jacket was also shortened. Thus, the Judogi assumed the final form in which it is still used today. This was in sharp contrast to the early days when Judoka wore shorts and a jacket that left half the arms as well as the knees and legs exposed. By the time Kano was 60 he gave up wearing a Judogi, simply putting on a Haori (formal shirt) and performing his kata in that way.

1909 saw a big change in Judo when it became officially recognised as part of Japan's modern foundation. In this same year, Kano himself was elected to represent Japan as part of its International Olympic Committee. 1910 saw Judo recognised as a safe sport and through Kano's pioneering, Judo was adopted as part of Japan's physical education system in 1911 and the Judo's Teachers Training Department was set up.

The art's intellectual and moral philosophy came into full being by 1922 with the foundation of the Kodokan Cultural Judo Society. Also in 1922, the Kodokan Dan Grade Holders Association was organized, followed by the Judo Medical Research Society in 1932.

The Kodokan had become a repository of historical and technical information. Kano himself had studied Seigo Ryu, and Yagyū Ryu, as well as his Kito Ryu and Tenshin Shinyo Ryu. Tenshin Shinyo Ryu was, itself, a fusion of Yoshin Ryu and Shin No Shindo Ryu Jujutsu. In addition, Yoshin Ryu was Yasmashita's specialty. Tenshinshinyo Ryu incorporated striking, throwing, holding, and choking techniques as well as joint locks and Aiki-type movements. Training also included study of eighteen battlefield weapons.

Later, Takeuchi Ryu masters participated in the construction of the Kodokan syllabus. Takeuchi Ryu itself was a derivative of Daito Ryu. As Daito Ryu itself evolved into subsequent arts, Kano sent students such as Mochizuki to Sokaku Takeda and Kenji Tomiki to Morihei Ueshiba of Aikido to bring back developments.

Japan's war adventures during the 1930's, then World War II, stifled Judo's growth. The world was preoccupied by economic depression and warlike dictators. Unlike most of his martial art brethren, Kano was a pacifist, and viewed with considerable alarm the militarisation of Japan during the 1930's. Perhaps he believed that his beloved Olympic Games would focus world attention on Japan, and divert the government from its war footing.

In 1934, the European Judo Union was formed and another dream of Kano's, an International Judo Federation, plans for which Kano revealed in 1933, came true in 1952. Today, more than six million persons practice Judo in over 175 countries around the world.

*© 2003 reproduction by authors permission only.*