

## **Judo**

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### **Author Biography**

Dr Mike Callan is Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology and Sports Sciences and leader of the i-dojo International Judo Research Unit, at the University of Hertfordshire. He is the editor of the Routledge book *The Science of Judo*.

He is the President of the International Association of Judo Researchers, Education Director of the Commonwealth Judo Association and founder of the Richard Bowen History of Judo Archive at the University of Bath, which was nominated for the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme.

Director of the consultancy firm Judospace, Dr Callan has advised a wide range of federations and organisations including the Government of Japan, and the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee. Previously he was the International Federation Services Group Leader for Judo for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Mike has been a Board Member of the British Judo Association and he holds the grade of 7th *dan*.

Holder of an International Olympic Committee Diploma, and a life member of the British and Maltese Judo Federations, he was awarded the International Judo Federation Special Achievement Award for global contribution to judo education and research, and the Commonwealth Judo Association Presidents Special Recognition Award for his significant contribution to the development of judo in the Commonwealth.

### **Abstract**

This chapter presents judo as a modern Olympic sport founded in the history and traditions of the Japanese martial arts. It outlines the influences on the founder Jigoro Kanō and the key figures in early development of the Kōdōkan. Judo quickly spread in popularity, through students travelling overseas, most notably Yamashita Yoshitsugu who taught judo to President Roosevelt and the role of the Budokwai in London in disseminating judo in Europe.

The internationalisation theme continues when Kanō is appointed as a member of the International Olympic Committee, eventually leading to the acceptance of judo onto the Olympic programme in 1964. The establishment of international bodies led to the World Championships, initially for men, and later for women, in modern times the World Championships is the premier event in the International Judo Federation World Tour which sees athletes collect ranking points towards qualification for the Olympic Games. Judo has a culture and tradition of contributing to social good and efforts supporting displaced persons and peace in the Middle East are explored. Finally, the chapter addresses technical aspects of judo and the role of *kata* in the teaching of the sport.

Judo was the first sport of Asian origin to be accepted into the Olympic Games.<sup>1 2</sup> Founded by the first Asian member of the International Olympic Committee, Professor Jigorō Kanō,<sup>3 4</sup> it is an activity that effectively juxtaposes its roots in oriental culture with its global brand as a modern combat sport.

Judo is an education for life, developed as a physical, intellectual and moral education by the Japanese polymath Kanō who described judo as “a study and training in mind and body as well as in the regulation of one’s life and affairs”.<sup>5</sup> Kanō specifically used the term *jūdō* (anglicised to judo), rather than the more commonly accepted term of *Kanō ryū jūjutsu*. Seeing his creation as a way through life, rather than simply a technical skill. The *Kōdōkan* defines judo as the way of softness and flexibility.<sup>6</sup>

International judo is governed by the International Judo Federation, founded in 1951 in London, and led since 2007 by its President Mr Marius Vizer. The IJF define judo as an educational method derived from the martial arts, “a highly codified sport in which the mind controls the expression of the body and is a sport which contributes to educating individuals”.<sup>7</sup>

The 1860s were a time of great change in Japan, with the abolition of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the return of Imperial rule under the new emperor Meiji.<sup>8</sup>

Shinnosuke, was born in 1860, the fifth child of Jirōsaku Kanō and his wife Sadako, later he was given the name Jigorō.<sup>9</sup> He was sent to boarding school at the age of 12 following the death of his mother. A slight and studious boy, he was bullied in the dormitory and avowed to develop himself physically and learn the traditional samurai martial art of hand-to-hand combat known as *jūjutsu*.<sup>10</sup>

By the age of 17 he had found Hachinosuke Fukuda a teacher in the *Tenjin Shin'yō-ryū jūjutsu* tradition. Kanō studied hard with Fukuda, and in 1879 they were invited to give a display for Ulysses S. Grant, who was visiting Japan from America. Fukuda died shortly afterwards, and Kanō continued to train under Masamoto Iso for two years. Following the death of Masamoto, Kanō sought out Tsunetoshi Iikubo, teacher in the *Kito ryū* style, which had a greater emphasis on the importance of timing.

By this time he was a student at the Kaisei Academy, (later Tokyo Imperial University), where he was heavily influenced by the American, Ernest Fenollosa.<sup>11</sup> It was Fenollosa who taught about the English Victorian philosopher, Herbert Spencer. In 1861 Spencer had

published his treatise *Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical*<sup>12</sup> which was to have a great influence on the ideas of Kanō,<sup>13 14</sup> and can still be seen in the modern judo we know today.

As a 22 year-old graduate from the Department of Political Science and Economics of Tokyo Imperial University<sup>15</sup> in 1882 he founded a small private school the *Kanō juku* in the grounds of Eisho-ji Temple, Inari-cho and alongside his school he founded an institution to teach his way of judo, calling it the *Kōdōkan* (Kōdōkan ), or place to study the way.

Kanō's first student was Tsunejiro Tomita and name appears in the first line of the enrolment book of the Kōdōkan. Tomita started judo as the first live-in student aged just 17, five years younger than Kanō, and his main training partner. He was also the first student to be awarded the *shōdan* (1st *dan*) in 1883. Kanō had adopted the *dan-kyu* system of ranks for the judo students, similar to the board game Go, as opposed to the *menkyo* system which was common in other *jūjutsu ryū* .

Saigō Shirō was the second student to join and achieved *shōdan* alongside Tomita. Saigō was very skillful and could avoid the favoured *uki-goshi* of Kanō, this led to Kanō developing *harai-goshi*. Saigō left the Kōdōkan in 1890. The book *Sanshiro Sugata* is based on him. Written by the son of Tomita, it was dramatised as the first movie by the director Akira Kurosawa.

Tomita and Saigō were two of the Kōdōkan Shiten'nō (four heavenly kings), the others were Sakujiro Yokoyama and Yoshiaki Yamashita. Yamashita was the 19th member of the Kōdōkan, he made rapid progress and achieved *shōdan* in just three months. He went on to be the first person to achieve *judan* (10th *dan*). 'Demon' Yokoyama was considered the most formidable of all judo experts of his time. He was aged 22 when he joined the Kōdōkan and by the age of 40 had achieved 7<sup>th</sup> *dan*, the highest grade at that time.

In part the reputation of the Kōdōkan was founded on the promotion of their victorious matches against other schools. Most famously there was a match at the *Keishicho*, Tokyo Police dojo in 1886 when the Kōdōkan was challenged by the *Totsuya Yoshin ryū*. This was one of the first times that the Kōdōkan team wore black belts with white judogi. The final deciding match pitted Saigō against the heavier opposition captain. Saigō was overpowered and thrown up in the air, but always landed on his feet in a controlled manner. Saigō's movements were likened to that of an agile cat. After 15 minutes Saigō perfectly executed his trademark *yama-arashi*, which ended the match with such force that his opponent retired with

a concussion. This match helped firmly establish judo as superior to other *jūjutsu*, and judo was subsequently adopted as the official training style for the Tokyo police academy.

In 1926 the Kōdōkan women's division *Joshibu* was established in the Kaiun-zaka dojo, and by January 1933 Katsuko Kosaki became the first woman *dan*-holder in the Kōdōkan. A year later in January 1934 Ayako Akutagawa and Yasuko Morioka were promoted to 1st *dan*, and Masako Noritomi was promoted to 2nd *dan* with her 1st *dan* skipped. Also a member of the *Joshibu* around that time was a young Keiko Fukuda, grand-daughter of Hachinosuke Fukuda, Kanō's first teacher. Fukuda would go on to achieve Kōdōkan 9<sup>th</sup> *dan*, the highest grade awarded to a woman.<sup>16 17</sup>

In 1899 Kanō was asked by the Imperial Household Agency to travel to Europe to study education systems overseas.<sup>18</sup> Whilst travelling Kanō took every opportunity to teach and promote judo.<sup>19</sup>

Meanwhile the Kōdōkan attracted more and more members, moving venues frequently in search of additional space. By March 1907 the Kōdōkan had moved to the Shita-tomizaka dojo containing 300 mats. By that time the Kōdōkan had enrolled around 10,000 members in the Tokyo area, and 70,000 elsewhere.<sup>20</sup>

The end of the Russo-Japanese war in 1905 led to a surge of interest in the art of *jūjutsu* particularly within the United States and the United Kingdom.<sup>21 22</sup>

Kanō sent his instructors overseas, one of the first was Yoshitsugu (Yoshiaki) Yamashita who travelled to the USA in 1903 with Saburo Kawaguchi at the invitation of Samuel Hill and attracted the attention of President T Roosevelt who requested lessons. Whilst Mr Yamashita taught the President, his wife Fude taught judo to the first lady.<sup>23 24</sup> Other famous travellers included Mitsuyo Maeda, who taught in London in 1906 before moving to Europe, and then travelling to Brazil, where his skills were greatly admired.<sup>25</sup>

In 1909 at the invitation of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, through an introduction by the French Ambassador to Japan, Auguste Gerard, Kanō became the first Asian member of the International Olympic Committee. Just two years later he founded the Japan Amateur Athletic Association (which became the Japan Sports Association and the Japanese Olympic Committee).<sup>26</sup>

During a visit to the Olympic Games in Antwerp in 1920, Kanō visited London, where the Budokwai (Way of Knighthood Society) had been formed, at the invitation of William Steers,

an Englishman who had achieved *shōdan* at the Kōdōkan during his time in Japan. Kanō graded the two teachers, Gunji Koizumi and Yukio Tani to 2<sup>nd</sup> *dan*, and the Budokwai adopted Kōdōkan judo as its primary activity.<sup>27 28</sup>

The Budokwai was very influential in the development of judo in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Influential judoka who practised there included; Mikinosuke Kawaishi<sup>29</sup> and Moshe Feldenkrais<sup>30</sup> who would both have a significant influence on the development of judo in France,<sup>31</sup> Christmas Humphreys, the founder of the Buddhist Society in Great Britain, Trevor Leggett, the acclaimed judoka and teacher who studied extensively in Japan, and authored many books on judo, yoga and Zen Buddhism,<sup>32</sup> and the actress Sarah Mayer, famously the first western woman to achieve *shōdan* in Japan.<sup>33 34 35</sup>

In 1936 Kanō attended the Olympic Games in Berlin in his role as an IOC member. He had been instructed by the Japanese Government to try to secure the 1940 Olympic Games. He was an effective lobbyist and at the Congress the IOC did award the Games to Tokyo where judo was intended to be a demonstration sport. Those Games never took place following the outbreak of the Second World War.

There were early efforts to establish a European League of Judo in 1932, which did not survive the Second World War, following the war Budokwai members established the British Judo Association in July 1948 and four days later the European Judo Union at the Imperial College Union, London. By 1951 the EJU received an application to join by Argentina, and so to accommodate them, the EJU was dissolved and the International Judo Federation was founded under the chairmanship of Dr Torti from Italy. Japan was unable to attend the meeting that established the IJF, and Risei Kanō, President of the Kōdōkan sent a letter to Gunji Koizumi containing a proposal that a permanent home for the IJF be established at the Kōdōkan. At the second meeting of the IJF in Zurich in 1952, the EJU was resurrected and the Presidency was offered to Risei Kanō.<sup>36 37</sup>

The first World Judo Championships was held in Tokyo in 1956, attracting 31 competitors from 21 nations. With one open weight category, the victory went to Shokichi Natsui of Japan. The fourth World Championships in 1961 saw a turning point in the internationalisation of the sport. It was held in Paris, outside Japan for the first time. The victor was a young Dutchman, Anton Geesink, who had forged his judo skills in the Tenri University dojo in Nara Prefecture.<sup>38</sup> This created a concern in Japan, as there was a real risk that at the upcoming 1964 Olympic Games the showpiece judo event would be won by a

foreigner, and so the solution was to have four weight categories at the Olympics, thus increasing the likelihood of Japanese victories.<sup>39</sup>

The strategy worked, Nakitani at 68 kg, Isao Okano at 80 kg and Inokuma at over 80 kg were the first Olympic judo champions, but as many expected the Open category was won by Geesink, beating the host nation favourite Akio Kaminaga in the final match. Immediately following the victory Geesink's supporters sought to rush onto the mat, and his demeanour in ushering them away in recognition of Japanese traditions enamoured him to the host audience and help seal the future of judo as a global sport.<sup>40</sup>

A World Championships for women was introduced in 1980 thanks to the tireless efforts of the American organiser Rena 'Rusty' Kanōkogi, and the support of the IJF President Dr Shigeyoshi Matsumae. Hosted at the famous Madison Square Garden in New York City.<sup>41 42</sup> Women's judo joined the Olympic programme as a demonstration sport in 1988 and as a full sport in 1992.

In 1988 the use of blue and white judogi was brought in to help the television audience distinguish the competitors. Initially the change was controversial with some research suggesting that the use of coloured judogi may influence the competition outcome.<sup>43 44 45</sup> This is just one of a number of changes to the rules in an attempt to make the sport attractive to the viewer. Throughout this process, the sport has retained much of the original ethos of fair play and respect for the opponent.<sup>46</sup>

Many great champions have emerged since the 1950's among the men these include Yasuhiro Yamashita (JPN) the 9 times All-Japan, 3 times World and Olympic Champion, undefeated for 203 matches over an 8-year period. Teddy Riner (FRA) continues his career at the time of writing and has amassed 10 world championships and 2 Olympic Games gold medals. Tadahiro Nomura (JPN) is the only person to win 3 Olympic Gold medals, Ryoko Tani (JPN) holds the most Olympic medals with five, she also has 7 World Championships gold medals.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century judo on a global stage has been transformed under the leadership of IJF President Mr Marius Vizer. The introduction of the World Ranking List (WRL), alongside a series of events at Grand Slam and Grand Prix level has led to a situation whereby the world's top athletes compete on the World Judo Tour, as the final two years of the WRL contribute towards points for Olympic qualification.

The seeding for the Olympic Games is based on the top eight judoka on the Olympic Qualification List, meaning that judoka chase those positions during the qualification period, as they know that a seeding at the Olympic Games will mean that the draw will keep you separate from the other top ranked judoka until the quarter final stage. Considerable research continues into the WRL and the effect of the seeding system on the results of the competitions.<sup>47 48 49</sup>

The role of media in the presentation of judo has also been transformed. The IJF World Tour is live streamed, with entertaining and informed commentary, so that the judo fans around the world can follow their favourite judoka most weekends.

The media packages available for the Olympic judo event were increased to allow broadcasters to purchase the rights to a wider variety of options, for example, opting to broadcast only the medal fights. This had a significant impact on the number of countries where Olympic judo could be viewed, leading to an increase in the worldwide viewing figures for judo, and a consequent increase in the share of the Olympic broadcast revenues to the IJF.

Jigoro Kanō explained that the ultimate aim of judo was to benefit society, he outlined the three levels of judo. Firstly, training for defence against attack is the lower level, cultivation of the mind and body and putting one's energy to use is the middle level. The upper level of judo is to put one's energy to use in society.

Throughout the world there are many examples of judo initiatives to benefit society. One of the most obvious examples is the Judo for Peace project. Founded in Norway as Judo for Fred which created judo clubs in war-torn Afghanistan. Judo for Peace supports judo clubs in Syria and elsewhere and has a special focus on displaced persons. At the Rio Olympic Games there were two *judoka* in the Olympic Refugee Team.

The Solidarity of International Judo Education is a Non-Profit Organisation established by Yasuhiro Yamashita. It organised a number of initiatives to use judo as a tool for peace in the communities of Israel and Palestine. An example included inviting Israeli and Palestinian children to Japan, and whilst there they were able to practice judo together.

On the IJF World Tour, the Arab nations refused to allow the Israeli athletes to parade under their own flag, and so the IJF threatened to withdraw the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix from the United Arab Emirates Judo Federation, unless there were assurances that Israeli athletes



would be treated equitably. History was made in October 2018 when Sagi Muki won the gold medal in the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix and the Israeli national anthem rang out around the stadium.

Technically judo has evolved although many of the more traditional techniques can be found in the *kata* or forms. Throwing techniques are categorised into five sections in the Kōdōkan *Gokyo* (*te waza*, *ashi waza*, *koshi waza*, *ma sutemi waza*, *yoko sutemi waza*), grappling techniques are categorised into *katame waza*, *kansetsu waza* and *shime waza*. More techniques have been added to the *Gokyo* over time and the Kōdōkan now recognise a total of 100 techniques. There are eight *kata* recognised by the Kōdōkan; *Nage no Kata* and *Katame no Kata* (collectively known as *Randori no Kata*), *Kime no Kata*, *Ju no Kata*, *Kōdōkan Goshin jutsu*, *Koshiki no Kata*, *Itsutsu no kata*, *Seiryoku Zenyo Kokumin Taiku no Kata*.<sup>50 51</sup>

<sup>52</sup> The value of practicing *kata* should not be underestimated, and it is often a focus of study for high graded *judoka*. Sometimes *kata* is referred to as the alphabet of judo.

There are four ways to study judo, through free practice (*randori*), forms (*kata*), lectures (*kogi*) and question and answer (*mondo*). The skills of the *judoka* are tested in contest, known as *shiai* (Hoare, 1980).<sup>53</sup>

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