

## **JIGORO KANO THE EDUCATIONALIST**

Open up a Japanese equivalent of Who's who? and look for the name Jigoro Kano and you will find him described as a (*kyoiku-ka*) and the man who created Judo, often in this order. *Kyoiku-ka* is the word for teacher but often indicates someone who not only taught at the 'chalk-face' but who involves himself in the wider world of education – including educational theory, history and policy etc etc.

The different aspects of the 'multi-talented' Jigoro Kano have often been contrasted. On the one hand he was the man who created the very physical art of Kodokan judo and on the other hand he was a school teacher. His work as an educationalist was defined by the various educational institutes that he supervised but he also served the Japanese Ministry of Education as counsellor/advisor with work that put him at the cutting edge of Japanese education at a time when education was a top priority for the new Meiji ruler of Japan.. In addition he ran the first male teacher training school in Japan before any policy for teacher training had been established and then went on to shape and develop the policy.

Kano is occasionally quoted as saying that judo and education are one and the same but what did he mean by this? A two hour training session in the Kodokan is somewhat different to studying politics on which one could comfortably spend days at a time. However judo is intensely physical which nudged Kano into the world of physical-education. Maybe what Kano meant was that judo and physical education were one and the same. It is noteworthy that Kano is often called the father of Japanese Physical-education but not the father of Japanese education..

As for terminology I can still remember when my school's PT classes (physical training) officially became PE (physical education). At the time we wondered how different PE would be to PT but in fact they were exactly the same thing. Judo is a complex art and it takes a long while to learn all about it but the process is the same as learning fencing, dancing or any other physical art. If you have never done it before you now have to learn what to do and a coach or a teacher will explain it. The educator in this case is the coach and the process is called education. In so far as judo is technically very complex it is quite likely that there are many things to be learned from it which can be used in daily life (*jisseikatsu*) but not that many judo teachers attempt to interpret this idea. This would make a good thread for judo blogs and the like. (What one can learn from judo other than judo).

For example when you put a hold-down on someone it has to be strong otherwise the opponent will perhaps escape. However a hold-down often fails because the holder hangs on too tightly and for too long and gets rolled over. If instead of hanging on to the bitter end the holder suddenly relaxes and switches to another hold he can stay on top. So in daily life, hang on tightly to what you have got but be ready to let go completely or switch and stay in a winning position.

The combat, moral and physical educationalist aspects of Kano's judo seem to have co-existed easily enough although he was not in the classical jujitsu mould ie. that of a chunky battle-scarred fighter. In fact he achieved a lot of publicity for his judo precisely because he was a teacher and not just a typical jujitsu master. He started

jujitsu as a young man to combat bullying at school but as he grew older his jujitsu club prospered and perhaps Kano the educationalist saw that he could easily combine education and physical education with combat judo (Shobu-ho) and moral training (Shushin-ho or Toku-iku-ho). Perhaps what Kano brought to jujitsu was a and calming influence which stood in contrast to the rough and tough Butokukai judo/jujitsu. I have a book written by a Butokukai 4<sup>th</sup> Dan of the Osaka Butokukai which lays out in some schematic detail the various uses of judo. There is not much on what we might describe as the 'principles' of judo. This might explain why judo was not banned by the American occupiers in 1945 and why Budo was.

For judo to develop in schools Kano had three tasks. First he had to convince the Japanese Ministry of Education that judo was a good form of physical education, secondly that it was good for combat and thirdly that it created moral and upright citizens. Kano however went even further and declared that judo was a form of chi-iku or mental education gained from the understanding and thinking through of the actual combat side of judo (shobu no riron no oyo).

Quite early on in his work in teacher training he noted that teachers who did some form of physical education got on much better with their students so Kano laid down how much physical education they (the trainee teachers) should do each week. Several hours were laid aside weekly for compulsory judo or kendo and other activities. His Koto Shihan-gakko looked superficially like a physical education school but it was not one since the very few Japanese physical education schools that existed then only did short courses of barely a year. Kano eventually managed to increase the phys-ed study period to three years. Kano also promoted competitive sports events and his school marathon and sports day competitions drew many thousands of spectators and attracted a lot of publicity. His school competitions became very much like mini Olympics and Kano was a natural choice for IOC representative for Japan and the East.

However in Japan morality and etiquette are intertwined. Politeness or Rei was already interwoven into Japanese traditional morality as found in Confucianism where harmony and observance of correct relationships such as between husband and wife, servant and lord, father and son, ruler and ruled etc were highly stressed and in so far as this already existed in Japanese society it was not that difficult for judo to embrace this type of morality. Kano in his early studies of ethics would have been aware of Christian morality stressing the protection of women, the weak and the poor in society but little of it shows in the development of his judo as far as I can discover.

Judo/jujitsu consists of many techniques and applying them correctly to the combat situation would be a life or death matter since a failure to understand what the opponent is up to could result in death. However this applies to all bujitsu (martial arts) not just judo. Kendo (swordmanship) for example did not stress physical education perhaps because it was taken for granted that doing it provided a good physical workout and a technical challenge. It stretched the body and the mind.

As mentioned at the start of this article the question arises as to whether judo would have prospered so mightily if someone like Kano had not had well connected family and friends in high places or conversely whether his work in judo diverted him away

from mainstream education. He could well have ended up as Minister of Education or even Prime Minister.

His work in judo was shaped by the many thousands of people who passed through his Dojo Mon (literally 'gate'). Both kept him extremely busy. As a 'national' organization in the days when national organizations did not exist other than the state or government the Kodokan grew rapidly in size easily eclipsing all the jujutsu clubs that existed at the time. Kano indeed was in the best position to promote his judo but I suspect his promotion of judo as a method of physical education did not give it anything that was not there already, as in Kendo. Kendo and judo make an interesting contrast.

Kano was born in 1860. The military government of the Tokugawa clan collapsed in 1868 when he was barely eight years old leaving the way open for the Emperor Meiji to form a new Imperial administration. The last time an emperor 'ruled' Japan was under Emperor Godaigo in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries aggressive Western governments had flexed their muscles demanding Japan open up and trade. Japan recognized that it was not strong enough to oppose them and hastily began to modernize. Education and the building of modern warships were top priority. The emperor Meiji set the tone by issuing the Five Article Charter Oath (Go ka Jo no Seimon) in 1868. As far as Kano was concerned Articles Four and Five were the main ones. Article Four stated, "Uncivilized (*mikai*) customs of former times shall be discontinued, and all new customs shall be based upon just and equitable principles of nature". Article Five stated, "Knowledge shall be sought throughout the world in order that the welfare of the empire may be promoted." This was regarded as the first modern constitution of Japan although some Japanese historians interpreted it as more of a reversion to institutions of pre-feudal times.

The separate Imperial Rescript on Education which was promulgated in 1890, further defined Japanese Education. However, this Rescript mainly advocated a feudal type moral education which stressed Confucian loyalty and filial piety. Every school in the land had a copy of this Rescript which survived to 1948 and the ending of the Pacific War and it was meticulously observed. Students and soldiers had to bow everyday to the Emperor or in the direction of the Imperial Palace in the east. Jujitsu could easily have been regarded as among the uncivilised customs of former times but less so with its stress on physical education.

As already noted, Kodokan judo had three objectives. They were *Tai-iku-ho* or physical education. *Shobu-ho* or combat judo and *Shushin-ho* or moral education. The *Ho* in each of these objectives means *method*. So one could say that Judo was a method of physical education, a method of combat and finally it was a method of moral education. (Note that education in Japan was further divided into *Chi-iku* or mental education (thinking, problem solving, logic etc) and that *Toku-iku* was another word for *Shushin-ho*). This type of intellectual education was assumed to result from the thinking and action required in the combat situation. For example by looking closely at the attacker and noting how he stands or moves and for physical signs of injury or imbalance or giveaway signs of impending attack then coming to some decision as to how he might defeat him.

Kano matched his judo to the new educational principles of the day and in doing so matched the mood of the times in a way in which ordinary jujitsu did not.

From his early days Kano's had a variety of teaching jobs. His daytime job was that of teacher at his own school (the Kano-juku) and lecturer at the Komaba Agricultural University and Aristocrats College (Gakushuin). In addition he worked as an administrator or bureaucrat at the Gakushuin. Later on he was appointed Japanese Ministry of Education advisor/counsellor where he was assigned special tasks such as school text-book selection (still important in China and south east Asia) and teacher training. However, his main teaching position for the best part of twenty three years was the headmastership of the Tokyo Koto Shihan Gakko which was a male teacher training college for middle (or higher) school teachers. It was the Japanese equivalent of the French and (Ecole Normale Superior) and American Higher Normal Schools. His involvement in Japanese education was time consuming as can be imagined.

At this time Japan was emerging from centuries of feudalism and isolation and needed to modernize both its army and navy in order to stand up to the aggressive Western powers. The national slogan of the time was *Fukoku-kyohei* which meant 'A wealthy country and a strong army'. Education was a primary need for the country and Japan set to this task with a will by studying Western methods, importing experts from abroad and sending its best men to study there. In this it was spectacularly successful. In a quite short order Japan was able to build up a modern navy and challenge the might of Russia and Britain on the high seas.

In addition to all this Kano ran his own judo dojo in Tokyo, better known as the Kodokan. All over the country its various semi-autonomous branches (Yudansha-kai or black belt associations) sprang up to the extent that the Kodokan had to set up the Chuo Yudansha-kai or Central Black-belt association in Tokyo. In this he was assisted by the setting up of the Kodokan Deliberation Council (Kodokan Shingi-kai) and a change of Kodokan legal status to that of Zaidan Honin (Foundation Juridical Person). He also set up the Kodokan Cultural Association (Kodokan Bunka-kai). He had plenty of good men to assist him in these organizations - see his list of 10<sup>th</sup> Dans - although one gets the impression that he was disengaging himself somewhat from his creation.

The various objectives of Kodokan judo influenced each other. For example the inclusion of dangerous combat techniques would go against the principles of physical education. Kano would not promote any techniques that might damage the health or integrity of the body. Randori and competition rules were often amended so that judo looked good. These influences were not one-way influences. Modern ideas affected his judo in for example his search for fundamental principles such as **go** and **ju** and his final shift to more Western principles such as Seiryoku Zenyo & Jita Kyohei.

Along with this went practical daily life applications which his judo was full of. One wonders what Jigoro Kano might have to say to someone who asked for advice today on learning judo. He was a hands on practical man and might say - Do it, just do it, think about it and thirdly read a good book on the subject. Although he gave many lectures on judo which were later published he wrote comparatively very little on judo technique.

For example in the Kodokan in my time there was one very high grade who damaged people's arms quite a bit in ne-waza. My Japanese coach suggested I go on with him regularly. I countered by saying that he was a menace on the mat but my coach shrugged and said Yes, but his arm-locks are second to none. Go on with him and learn how to deal with them! I did as told and had my elbow joint stretched quite a bit several times. But I learned a lot about them.

Kano had a number of interesting things to say about education and why he turned in that particular direction. What follows below is drawn mostly from the biography of Kano Jigoro which was published by the Kodokan in 1964:-

'One day in the 5<sup>th</sup> Year of Taisho (1916) the head of the Tokyo Teacher Training college (Tokyo Koto Shihan Gakko) – Jigoro Kano - gathered all the students in the great hall of the college and expounded on his beliefs'.

"When I left university as a young man I thought about becoming the Prime Minister of Japan or becoming a millionaire but then I thought that becoming the Prime Minister was perhaps a trifling matter and that becoming a millionaire was also a trifling matter. I came to the conclusion that a life which money cannot buy and which would occasion no regrets was Education and that is the direction I turned and this is what I have created'.

Like many Japanese in other fields, Kano created *seiku* or set phrases which reflected his essential understanding of education.

In these he proclaimed that ["Nothing in this world is more noble than education and that nothing is more pleasant than education"].

Also ["The virtues of one man are spread by education to ten thousand men and the evolution of one generation spreads far to become one hundred evolutions of one thousand men"].

[ "Nurturing the gifted helps create goodness in the world "],

["Even though the body declines its merits linger on for ever"].

'These *seiku* set phrases show the passion with which he regarded education. "For those young Japanese born during the reign of Emperor Meiji who burned with fresh ambitions this dream of Kano's and his bright hopes must have seemed like the voice of the gods and prophets." Perhaps it could be said that he showed more passion for education than judo.

'From the standpoint of influencing minds and contributing to the nation it cannot be denied that Kano was an exceptional man as can be seen in his views on politics and money above. Many of his young students came to understand that'.

'The passion of Headmaster Kano – through his students at the Tokyo Koto Shihan school and the Kodokan and in turn their students and then their students' students became like a single wave that became ten thousand and eventually millions of waves that washed all over Japan and the world. The evolution of the headmaster and his

first generation will extend to many other evolutions and generations. (Note the possible connection here with Herbert Spencer the English evolutionary philosopher)'.

“Those students who received his teaching discovered for themselves his greatness and through their beliefs came to think of themselves as second or third generation Jigoro Kano-s”.

At first Kano burned with the desire to advance into the world and studied politics, and economics at university. But because he liked to teach others, even as a student, he was regularly requested to look after and teach those children he accepted for his Kano-juku boarding school which he ran for forty years. In Meiji 15 (1882) he moved into the Eisho-ji temple precinct where the Kodokan dojo was also established in 1882. This illustrates well the two early prime-movers in his life.

After getting his doctorate in literature at Tokyo university he returned to his studies in Tokyo and enrolled in the philosophy course. (This would seem to be the Japanese equivalent of the Oxford and Cambridge University PPE course namely Politics, Philosophy & Economics). After completing this extra year he was invited to become a teacher at the Gakushuin (Nobles College) where he first lectured in politics and economics to the children of the aristocracy. Also around the same time he became lecturer in economics at the Komaba Agricultural College. He plainly liked teaching.

The Japanese are traditionally hardworking so his work first at the Kano-juku and then the Kodokan followed by the Gakushuin and then the Tokyo Koto Shihan Gakko and finally the Komaba Agricultural college must have stretched him to the mental and physical limits.

The work at the prestigious Gakushuin Nobles College loaded even more work on to his shoulders. Kano quickly perceived that there were many abuses of the system as applied to this institution which needed to be sorted out. The most obvious abuse was the new national three-class system (the samurai as a class were dropped) which was based on the previous feudal four-class (warrior, merchant, farmer and artisan) system. The Institute's dormitory system also divided the students by clan and class and put them together. There was a certain amount of elitism in this system and a fair amount of deference to the laziness of this 'elite.' Kano opened the institute up and brought in bright students not of military or clan origin. As a result he was soon upgraded to bureaucrat and combined the role of lecturing and administering the college. On occasions when Tani the head of the College was not present Kano stood in for him.

In 1887 the young son of the Meiji emperor began attending the Gakushuin and Kano had the job of supervising his education and choosing his classmates. This student was destined to become the Taisho Emperor of Japan. In 1884 Kano was promoted to *Soninkan* which meant that he became a senior official appointed by the Imperial Household Agency and who had to report directly to the then Emperor. It seems quite likely that Kano taught him the 'modern' Western sciences of economics and politics.

It is recorded that during his time at the Gakushuin, Kano visited Katsu Kaishu for advice. Kaishu was one of three men who were regarded as the three great heroes of

the Imperial Restoration. The other two were Saigo Takamori and Yamaoka Tesshu. With the collapse of the military government, when rival Japanese factions were squaring up, the nation looked set for civil war and the wholesale burning down of Tokyo, these heroes visited both sides – at great danger to themselves – and persuaded them to solve their problems without recourse to bloodshed or fire. Kaishu was also in charge of Imperial warship construction where he worked with Kano's father. Yamaoka Tesshu was a Kendo man who wrote about Kendo and was also noted for his deep understanding and practice of Zen Buddhism. Tesshu it seems was recruited to teach the emperor Kendo. In training he knocked him to the ground and when the chamberlain protested Tesshu said, "If he wants to learn about Kendo he must learn to fall." Few would be permitted to do that.

When he met Kaishu, Kano said, "I am thinking of submerging myself in learning for a while." Kaishu replied, "Do you want to become a scholar or do you want to do things in society?" Kano said, I want to do the latter and for that purpose I think I should concentrate for a while on the necessary learning'. Kaishu replied, 'That will not do – you will end up as an academic. By all means do things in society but at the same time pursue your scholarship.'

*This advice struck a deep note in the young Kano's heart. Since then Kano always thought about things from a practical and actual point of view and when necessary read a book on the subject. In his later years he said of this advice, "In all the things I have done this advice has had the greatest effect.'*

When Kano turned his mind to the basic principles of judo it was quite noteworthy how he first turned his attention to the ancient Chinese principles of JU and GO and in doing so abandoned them for the much more Western and modern Seiryoku Zenyo and Jita Kyoei (best use of mind and body & mutual welfare and prosperity) or (minimum effort maximum effect). Nowhere in this process does one find any discussion of the traditional Zen Buddhist principles and the like which are very evident in books produced by the Kendo Association for example.

Eventually a military man by the name of Lt. General Miura Sogo was brought in to head the Gakushuin and a clash of opinions between Kano and himself resulted in Kano being sent abroad for sixteen months by the Imperial Household Agency to Europe to study European education. Miura being a military man favoured a more cadet style education at the Gakushuin and wanted to confine the school to educating the sons of the former military families. Kano on the other hand was keen to educate the brightest people without regard to their samurai background or lack of it.

Leaving the Gakushuin gave Kano a much needed break and gave him a chance to establish his priorities. In the process he saw the downfall of the great Bismarck in Germany and his loss of power. Both in Europe and Japan he was much impressed with the power of established religions but he later on wrote that the European churches seemed like empty vessels. His decision to concentrate on education began to firm up all the more. One practical consequence of this was his belief that money should not be a barrier to learning judo. He said that one does not pay to enter a church so judo students should not pay to do judo which is similar to religion in several respects.

One very practical thing which struck him was the inefficiency of the Japanese writing system which led him to set up the Nichi Eigo-kai (Japanese English Society) to consider other ways of writing Japanese. He advocated the use of Roman letters and looked at Esperanto but his efforts were not particularly successful. The main problem was the limited sounds of Japanese (unlike Chinese which has many more). This meant that many of the Japanese ideographs/characters had the same pronunciation but quite different meanings. In ordinary conversation (but not in writing) this led to many misunderstandings. The two character Japanese word *seitō*, for example, can mean ten very different things. The most common meaning is 'student/pupil'. One way to deal with the problem (still commonplace) is to show which character for example is meant by using one finger to draw it on the palm of the other hand. Kano maintained his interest in the Nichi Eigo-kai (Japanese-English Society) till quite late in life. This was quite a daring thing to do. Many Japanese liked Japanese as it was written then but did not like the idea of having to abandon centuries of use, art and tradition. Kano also considered inventing new characters to be used for ideas and things not found in Japan.

As mentioned above when Kano lost the job of Gakushuin head it was suggested that he should spend some time in Europe to see how they did things there. Noteworthy is the fact that the Kunaisho (Imperial Household Agency) ordered this and not the government. Kano had a powerful patron.

During his early two months stay in Paris Kano met and was much influenced by the French educationalist Frederic Buisson who not only won a Nobel peace prize but set up the French primary school system. He was both a pacifist and socialist. Bear in mind that during this period left wing ideas were spreading in Japan and elsewhere. Another French influence on him was the famous French educationalist of the time, Gurearu of Paris University, whose lectures he attended (this is a phonetic rendering. Actual name is not known).

After a couple of months in Paris Kano took off on his travels and visited Berlin where he studied some German and met a wide range of Germans in educational positions. After that he spent some time in south Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Holland and England. Here he continued to meet and talk with educationalists and visit their libraries and museums and schools.

The main impression of Europe he gained from visiting the grand Christian monuments such as Notre Dame of Paris and St Paul's of London. These he thought were like empty shells and not true promoters of their religious faiths. He saw a gap between their professed Christian austerity and the enormous amount spent on building such monuments. It would seem that here Kano was comparing these monuments with similar Buddhist monuments in Japan such as the Hongan-ji and their greater closeness to their religious principles.

Another possible influence was Koizumi Yakumo (1850-1904) who was a Greek born Irish novelist and poet teaching at the Kumamoto High school where Kano also worked. Koizumi was so impressed by Japanese culture that he took on a Japanese name and married a Japanese woman. His western name was Lafcadio Hearn. It was said by the Japanese of the time that of all the foreigners in Japan Hearn had the greatest knowledge of Japanese culture as shown in his works *Kokoro* (meaning



heart), Kaidan (ghostly stories) and others. He is said to be the first non-Japanese to write about judo in his book *Out of the East*. In this book he describes Jigoro Kano running a judo class and the impression it made on him. Hearn was much attracted by the idea of Ju which may have coincided with his pacifist views and how it could overcome brute force. Many Western judoka subsequently followed him in this without knowing its Chinese Taoist origins or applications.

Koizumi Yakumo it seems was also attracted by the ideas of Herbert Spencer who along with Darwin was an English evolutionary philosopher, much in vogue at the time, who later became very unfashionable. He supposedly coined the phrase 'survival of the fittest' Spencer preached that evolution was a one way street to perfection and that if all strived for perfection we would end up in a perfect world. (I turned to Bertrand Russell's *A History of Western Philosophy* and could find no mention of Spencer nor very much on Darwin and evolution)!! When I tried this idea on my children they objected quite sensibly that people and things can and do turn out badly. Note the use of the words 'perfection' and evolution in the establishment of the Kodokan Bunka-kai (Cultural Association) of 1922.

Kano spent sixteen months touring Europe and then on his return to Japan was sent to Kumamoto on the island of Kyushu where he was appointed headmaster of the Kumamoto High school (1891-3). This was first regarded as a retrograde step by Kano. But his energy and vigor had to show itself and it was not long before he was pushing to promote a new Imperial university in Kyushu.

During this period Kano was subject to a mix of important influences but influences on people can be difficult to establish. For one reason or another people may be thrown together in universities, work or prison and the like but may or may not take on board each other's ideas. Straight forward quotes and attributes help considerably but without them there is little that one can do other than mention the proximity of the two. Kano for example would no doubt have spent some time with Hearn in Kumamoto and may have taken to Spencer's ideas.

The second thing he gained from his European tour was that no matter where he went the exterior impression of the churches was magnificence but the interiors were very frugal. Frugality was much practised and a lot of money for development of old folks homes and the like was raised. For example cigarette ends were collected and recycled. Kano said that in later years when he was looking at the basic principles of judo this practice in part helped in his thinking on Seiryoku Zenyo. Kano does not elaborate on his understanding of the Protestant/Catholic divide in Europe and may have got a mistaken view of the three monastic vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience

The third thing he noticed was his growing understanding of the strong and weak points of the Japanese vis a vis the European educators. When he met European scholars and other intelligentsia he felt the factual (knowledge) superiority of the Europeans but when it came to actual ability the Japanese were stronger. In other words the Europeans read a lot of books both of their specialty and outside it but were not so good at using and applying new facts they had learned.

Kano also noted how the Europeans in Japan would cheerfully use bad grammar and incorrect words of Japanese but would eventually get more and more fluent in contrast to Japanese students who would seize up in the attempt to be good at both right from the start. Trevor Leggett quotes an example of the difference between Japanese and European novice chess players as told to him by a Grandmaster of chess. His Japanese students said the Grandmaster are very serious and will do exactly as told whereas the Europeans take a very haphazard approach and are slow to learn in the beginning but he said eventually the Japanese trailed behind the Europeans (and Americans) with less flair in their game.

Possibly the greatest amount of Kano's time in later years was devoted to political activities especially after he was elected to the Upper House of Aristocrats (Ki-zoku-In in 1922 when Kano had turned sixty two. In addition he had the Japanese International Olympic Association to organize and he spent a lot of time touring Japan and demonstrating and lecturing on his new Seiryoku Zenyo Kokumin Taiiku no kata. Behind all this the impending war in the pacific cast a long dark shadow.

As above I have tried to shed some light on the activities of Kano Jigoro the educationalist. More useful work needs to be done.

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