



Jigoro Kano: Role Model for Globalism

(Summary)

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After graduating from Nada Secondary School in Kobe, I enrolled in the Faculty of Letters at Kyoto University, where I studied English literature. Since then, I have been working for Nada Secondary School. While some may call me a “frog at the bottom of the well” (from the Japanese proverb describing a person ignorant of the outside world), I pride myself on knowing my school better than anyone else. After ten years as Principal and teacher of our school history to our incoming students every year, I am more than ever impressed by the greatness of Jigoro Kano, one of our greatest globalists. I would like to relate his life for our youth, who will create our future.

Early life, leading to establishment of Kodokan

Jigoro Kano was born into a cadet branch of the prestigious Kano family of saké brewers, known for their Kiku-Masamune brand. His father, Jirosaku Kano, ran a barrel-shipping business. After the Meiji Restoration (1868), Jirosaku moved to Tokyo, as he had been endorsed by Katsu Kaishu to serve the new government. Jigoro was enrolled in Ikuei Gijuku, a private school, at the age of twelve, where he studied English and German. In the following year, he was enrolled in a state-run foreign language school to study English. At the age of 14, Jigoro entered Kaisei Gakkou, a government-managed school (now the University of Tokyo), graduating with degrees in politics and business and thereby acquiring practical and philosophical grounding in addition to his English skills.

Jigoro Kano was under 160 cm in height, rather a short man. To overcome his feeling of physical inferiority, he attended several judo dojos of various schools. At the age of 21 he opened his own dojo with his peers and junior pupils. This was the beginning of the Kodokan International Judo Center.

A young contributor to the international diffusion of judo

After finishing graduate school at the age of 22, Kano began working for Gakushuin, an educational institution originally established for children of the nobility, and at 26 he was promoted to assistant principal. On his return from a European trip to inspect educational systems, he assumed the post of president of the Fifth Higher Normal School in Kumamoto. There, Kano gave judo lessons to

Lafcadio Hearn, who had joined his school to teach English. Impressed by the art of judo, Hearn included a text on jujutsu in his essay compilation, introducing judo for the first time as a non-Japanese.

Kano resumed his post as president of Tokyo Higher Normal School in 1893. Over the next quarter century from the Taisho period to the beginning of the Showa period, he continued in this position and produced educational management professionals for elementary and middle schools across the country. Over the same time, he implemented a series of measures to popularize judo while director at Kodokan. In 1893 he opened its doors to female practitioners, and in 1896 he began accepting pupils from China at his own expense. Thanks to the efforts of Kodokan pupils to promote judo in Europe and the United States, it gradually gained recognition as an international sport.

First Asian member of the IOC — Indefatigable spirit of international cooperation

In 1894, the French baron Pierre de Coubertin founded the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and the first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens two year later. He set the event on track to be held every fourth year, but no East Asian countries were included in the early years.

After the London Games in 1908, Coubertin requested the French Ambassador to Japan to recommend a qualified Japanese candidate for IOC membership. The following year, Kano became the first Asian IOC member. For the fifth Olympic Games in Stockholm, he led the first Japanese delegation of two athletes. In the seventh event in Antwerp, Japanese tennis players won Japan's first silver medals. On his way home, Kano gave a demonstration and lecture on judo in London.

In 1924, the United States banned Japanese immigrants. However, Kano continued to emphasize the importance of mutual understanding, based on his firm philosophy of international cooperation. In 1927, he established the Japan English Association and became its first Chairman among prominent English-language scholars.

“*Seiryoku Zenyo*” and “*Jita Kyoiei*” — The spirit of Kodokan

In 1922, he founded the Kodokan Bunkakai (Kodokan Cultural Association) to promote cultural activities in Japan. His famous mottoes, “*seiryoku zenyo*” and “*jita kyoiei*”, the spirit of Kodokan, were announced for the first time when he launched the Association. The two mottos are inseparable: they make sense when considered together. They apply also to nations, as a philosophy of international cooperation: we can construct a peaceful world by collaborating with other nations.

Adviser for foundation of Nada Secondary School

There was a time when Kano wished to found his own school, but he relinquished this idea because of his heavy commitments as an IOC member and a member of the House of Peers. It was around this time that he was consulted by his hometown, Mikage, on the foundation of a new private junior high school.

The region between Osaka and Kobe, the home of many wealthy Osaka businessmen, was known for its residents' enthusiasm for education. There was heated competition for entrance to public junior high schools such as Kobe Icchu (now Kobe High School), and the number of schools was far from sufficient. Kano accepted the offer and recommended as principal a Tokyo Higher Normal School alumnus whom he most trusted to have the spine for the position, Norie Sanada from Izu, Shizuoka Prefecture. Sanada was surprisingly young, in his late thirties, but he was already serving as principal of Kameoka Women's High School in Kyoto. The new school was launched in 1928.

During preparations, Kano visited Sanada several times to offer advice, and he established the school credos "seiryoku zenyo" and "jita kyoei", which are still two spiritual pillars of Nada Secondary School. Even after the launch, he often visited and lectured students in the auditorium.

Dream of Tokyo Olympic Games

In the course of time, Kano wished to host the Olympic Games in Japan. Supported by Tokyo Mayor Hidejiro Nagata, Japan decided to bid for the 1940 Olympics. Japan was isolated from international politics after seceding from the League of Nations in 1933, and there was an issue of the geographical distance between the western nations and Japan in the Far East. In those days, it took several weeks to send delegations by sea. Kano, addressed the IOC assembly: "Japan has been a regular participant in the Olympic Games since Stockholm in 1912. If distance prohibits the Olympic Games from coming to Japan, there will also be no need for us to participate in European Games because it is too far". Japan won its bid to be the first Asian host country. Kano was 75 years old.

Kano dedicated his last years to his dream of Tokyo Olympic Games. After attending the 1938 IOC Assembly in Cairo, he developed pneumonia on the homeward voyage and died on the ship Hikawa Maru. Two months later, amidst the hopeless mess of the Sino-Japanese War, Japan returned its hosting rights to the IOC.

1964 Tokyo Olympic Games — Pursuing Jigoro Kano's dream

In 1941, Japan took the path that led to the Pacific War. After regaining its sovereignty by signing the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951, Japan bid again in the 1959 Assembly and won the hosting rights for 1964. The final speaker at this Assembly was Kazushige Hirasawa, a diplomat who happened to have been on the Hikawa Maru with Kano when he died.

The audience at the Assembly fell silent when Hirasawa was introduced with this Jigoro Kano episode. Paying homage to Kano's 1936 speech, Hirasawa addressed the audience: "Westerners call Japan the Far East, but it is no longer far as the jet flies. Global communications and interactions are the foundation of world peace." It was a short but compelling speech that lasted only 15 minutes.

The result was that Japan gained the majority of votes in the first round. The first Asian Olympic Games in Tokyo, a dream which Kano had devoted himself to achieving but could not witness, was

finally realized. In these Games, judo was included for the first time.

Brave New Globalists

Junichi Hamada, former President of the University of Tokyo and himself a graduate of Nada Secondary School, coined the slogan “Be global, be tough!” for his students. Global capability in his terms is not merely a geographical reference. It means the ability to solve problems without fear when students encounter obstacles they have never experienced in their world. Jigoro Kano possessed potent globalist qualities. He remains an ideal role model for students and young workers, whose future will be full of unknown challenges.



(Please see the full text: <http://urx3.nu/P5Je>)

Author profile:

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Brief biography:

2007 to present: Board member of Nada

Ikueikai; Principal of Nada Secondary School

1976: Started career as English teacher at Nada Secondary School

1976: Graduated from Faculty of Letters (English Language and Literature), Kyoto University

1971: Graduated from Nada Secondary School

1952: Born in Osaka

Other official roles:

2017 to present: Designated Professor at Center for the Promotion of Interdisciplinary Education and Research, Kyoto University

2013 to present: Executive Director of Hyogo Private Secondary School Federation; Councillor at Japan Private Secondary School Federation

2011 to 2014: Expert Committee Member of Secondary School Education Division of Central Council for Education, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

Field of specialization:

Educational administration for private secondary schools

Topics of research:

Measures for cooperation among public and private schools

Reform of connection between secondary schools and universities

Educational philosophy of Jigoro Kano



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