



Jigoro Kano: Role Model for Globalism

September 10, 2017

Magohiro Wada
Principal of Nada Secondary School

After graduating from Nada Secondary School in Kobe, I enrolled in the Faculty of Letters at Kyoto University, where I studied English literature, graduating in 1976. Since then, I have been working for Nada Secondary School, thus spending more than 40 years here as student, teacher and principal. 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. However, I am not writing this essay to promote my school, but to share the philosophy and accomplishments of Jigoro Kano, who played an essential role in its foundation. It is no overstatement that our school would not be what it is today without his contributions. After ten years as Principal and teacher of our school history to our incoming students every year, I am more than ever impressed by his greatness. He deserves renewed recognition as a role model for the globalists that our educational community is striving vigorously to develop today. Here, I would like to relate the life of Jigoro Kano, one of our greatest globalists, for our youth, who will create the future of Japan and the world.

Early life, leading to establishment of Kodokan

Jigoro Kano was born in 1860 in Mikage, one of the five villages of Nada. He was born into a cadet branch of the prestigious Kano family of saké brewers, known for their Kiku-Masamune brand. His family had also run the Ken-Yoshi brewery, but his father Jirosaku turned to the barrel-shipping business to transport saké to Edo (now Tokyo), the largest consumer at that time. By the end of the Edo period (1603–1868), Jirosaku was running the government-appointed shipping line, was supporting Katsu Kaishu as a patron, and had undertaken the construction of the Wadamisaki Battery, which Katsu designed. Katsu also stayed with Jirosaku while establishing the Kobe Naval Training Center, the government academy opened in Kobe in 1864. Both Ryoma Sakamoto and Munemitsu Mutsu enrolled there. Jigoro was only three or four years old at that time, but he later continued his association with Katsu after moving to Tokyo. He invited Katsu to be a guest at the inauguration of Kodokan Dojo, which preserves framed calligraphies by Katsu.

After the Meiji Restoration (1868), Jirosaku Kano moved to Tokyo, as he had been endorsed by Katsu to serve the new government. He was accompanied by his nine-year-old son, Jigoro. While

administering trade and maritime affairs, Jirosaku recognized the importance of foreign language skills and an English education for his children, so 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. Jigoro's English skills and his globalist perspective must have been first cultivated during this period. At the age of 14, Jigoro entered Kaisei Gakkou, a government-managed school (now University of Tokyo), graduating with degrees in politics and business and then continuing on to graduate studies in ethics and esthetics. He thereby acquired practical and philosophical grounding in addition to his English skills.

Jigoro Kano was under 160 cm in height, rather a short man even for the Meiji era. To overcome his feeling of physical inferiority, he attended a judo dojo, despite his father's opposition. After practicing in several 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.

“*Bunbu Fuki*” and “*Bunkei Bui*” — Philosophies beyond “*Bunbu Ryodo*”

Around the same time, Jigoro Kano also launched Kano Juku (Kano School). The membership of Kodokan and Kano Juku probably overlapped to a large extent. While Kodokan was an arena for training in physical strength and martial art skills, Kano Juku was a place for culture and academic study. Kano truly practiced “*bunbu ryodo*” (pursuit of both academics and sports).

Kano preferred the phrase “*bunbu fuki*”, meaning scholarship and swordsmanship as one and the same, over “*bunbu ryodo*”, which encourages pursuit of both simultaneously but separately. In other words, *bunbu fuki* recognizes the importance of martial art aspects such as concentration and patience in study together with the essentiality of academic skills in sports as expressed in phrases such as “thinking baseball”.

Kano also often imprinted “*bunkei bui*” at the upper right of his Japanese calligraphies. *Bunkei bui* compares scholarship and swordsmanship to warp and woof in weaving everything together. This motto is a good example of Kano's intellect. He probably became acquainted with it from the Book of Jin, an official Chinese historical text, which includes a similar phrase *ibu keibun*.

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. During this period, he continued his efforts to popularize judo and published *Jujutsu: The Old Samurai Art of Fighting Without Weapons* in English with his co-author Thomas Lindsay, thus pursuing his ambition of promoting judo internationally from a young age.

In 1889, Kano was sent to Europe to inspect its educational systems. He spent a year and half travelling via Shanghai to Europe and across France, Germany, Austria, Scandinavia and England, before returning to Japan via Cairo. This trip must have broadly expanded his global vision. After

his return, he assumed the post of president of the Fifth Higher Normal School in Kumamoto. During his tenure, Lafcadio Hearn joined the school to teach English. Kano gave judo lessons to Hearn, and impressed by the art of judo, Hearn included a text on jujutsu in his essay compilation, “Out of the East”, the first introduction of judo by a non-Japanese.

After serving as principal at the First Higher Middle School (Ikko), 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 (with two hiatuses), he continued in this position and produced educational management professionals for elementary and middle schools across the country, until his voluntary retirement in 1920 shortly before his 60th birthday. He was one of the foremost educators in Japanese history.

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

As a result of the archaeological exploration of Olympia in 1852, European cities began holding Olympian athletic events. Greece, the original arena of the ancient Olympics, planned to revive the games after regaining independence from Turkey. It held domestic sports events called Zappas Olympics four times in the latter half of the 19th century.

It was the French baron Pierre de Coubertin who turned the Olympic revival into a significant movement. Believing that educational reform was the only solution to France’s social stagnation after its defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, he promoted educational improvement, focusing on the role of sports. A founder of the Comité pour la Propagation des Exercices Physiques, he seems to have shared Kano’s educational philosophies. In the same year that Kano established Kodokan, Coubertin founded a French fencing club.

Coubertin began to pursue revival of the Olympic Games while visiting Britain and other European countries to study their educational systems and sports activities. In 1894, he founded the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and the first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens two year later. He became the second IOC president and set the event on track to be held every fourth year.

However, most of the participants in the early Olympics were from Europe, the US, and their former colonies; no East Asian countries were included. With the ambition to create a truly global event, in 1908 Coubertin requested the French Ambassador to Japan to recommend a qualified Japanese candidate for IOC membership. The ambassador recommended Jigoro Kano.

The following year, Kano became the first Asian IOC member. However, Japan still did not have any central organization for sports. Bringing together leading figures in each sport, Kano established the Japan Sports Association in 1911 and served as its first Chairman. For the fifth Olympic Games in Stockholm, he led the first Japanese delegation of two athletes and met with Coubertin. The sixth Games were cancelled because of World War I, but Japan participated again in the seventh event in Antwerp, where he met again with Coubertin and Japanese tennis players won Japan's first silver medals. On his way home, Kano gave a demonstration and lecture on judo in London, and a lecture in Los Angeles. The English skills acquired in his youth probably helped him significantly.

In 1924, the United States banned Japanese immigrants. The first Japanese immigrants to the United States had gone to Hawaii in the first year of the Meiji period (1868), and immigration had rapidly expanded to the US west coast in the early 20th century as the United States government initiated its Open Door Policy. However, cheap and diligent Japanese labor was increasingly boycotted, culminating in the immigration ban, which infuriated some Japanese and even caused protests against English education. Meanwhile, as a result of his firm philosophy of international cooperation, Kano continued to emphasize the importance of mutual understanding in the midst of this turmoil. 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

Kano left the front line of education in 1920 when he voluntarily resigned from the presidency of Tokyo Higher Normal School. However, he continued to inspect western educational systems whenever he travelled abroad as an IOC member. 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. *Seiryoku zenyo* means the maximum use of spiritual and physical strength for good causes and is translated as “maximum efficiency” by Kodokan. *Jita kyoiei* comes from a phrase Kano used in one of his lectures, “*Sojo Sojou Jita Kyoiei*”, which was a call for mutual support and mutual concession for the common prosperity of oneself and others. Kodokan translates *jita kyoiei* as “mutual welfare and benefit”.

The two mottos are inseparable: they make sense when considered together. Everyone is unique and possesses different capabilities. When we exercise our diverse capabilities in our own ways, together we can achieve more toward the welfare and happiness of every participant. This applies not only to individuals but also to groups and even to nations. It can be translated into a philosophy of international cooperation: if every unique nation makes the maximum effort with its own strength and collaborates with others, we can construct a peaceful world.

Adviser for foundation of Nada Secondary School

There was a time when Kano wished to found his own school in order to implement his concept of

the ideal education. He purchased a 3.5-hectare property by Lake Teganuma in Abiko, Chiba Prefecture, and a tree-lined path from Abiko Station to the school site was completed. However, he relinquished this idea because of his heavy commitments as an IOC member and a member of the House of Peers, to which he was appointed in 1922 by the Emperor. He therefore leased out the property as Kano Farm. 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 after the Meiji period, was known for its residents' enthusiasm for education. Although some private schools had been founded to mitigate the heated competition for entrance to public junior high schools such as Kobe Icchu (now Kobe High School), they were far from sufficient. The local Establishment decided to seek the advice of Jigoro Kano, a prominent educator originally from the region. Kano, who had just given up his dream of founding his own school, accepted their offer without a moment's hesitation, asking his relatives who ran the major brewing businesses for funding. He 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. Kano telegraphed Sanada, met with him at a Kyoto Station diner, and persuaded him to take the post. According to Sanada's memoir, the Sumiyoshi River school site was still just grassland when he visited it after their meeting. Nada Junior High School was named after the nationally famous brewing region.

Sanada was a vigorous founder, from negotiations with the sponsoring brewing companies to construction of the school building and recruitment of teachers and students. The school opened in the spring of 1928. Kano visited him 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. Kano left school management entirely to Sanada, but he often visited and lectured students in the auditorium. Today, it is one of the most prestigious private secondary schools in Japan. Its development has been supported by the ongoing devotion of teachers and students as well as the external backing of the educational system reform after World War II and the excellent Hyogo prefectural school system. Above all, Nada Secondary School would never be what it is today were it not for the wisdom of Jigoro Kano, who promulgated our school philosophy at the time of foundation, and for Norie Sanada, its first principal, who embodied Kano's philosophy by creating a school spirit of freedom and autonomy for teachers and students.

Subsequently, Kano continued to promote judo and other sports and encourage international exchange, attending every Olympic Games as an IOC member up to the 11th in Berlin (except the 8th in Paris, missed because of illness), and lecturing across the western world. He also delivered speeches in Japan on *seiryoku zenyo* and *jita kyoei*, and he devised the National Seiryoku Zenyo Exercise using judo motions, visiting schools across Japan to popularize it. Kano continued to contribute to developing younger generations even after the age of 60.

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. In 1932, at the 10th IOC General Assembly in Los Angeles, Kano read out Nagata's letter of invitation. After heated debate over numerous bidders, the IOC failed to decide a host country in the 1935 Assembly, but it held a runoff vote between Tokyo and Helsinki in the Berlin Assembly the following year. Even though Japan was isolated from international politics after seceding from the League of Nations in 1933, it was still conjoined with the western world in sports. Japanese track-and-field athletes and swimmers were performing outstandingly, and some IOC members were interested in holding the first Asian Olympic Games. The problem was 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, the final speaker at the Assembly, stated in dignified, fluent English, "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." As a result, Japan brilliantly won its bid to be the first Asian host country. Kano was 75 years old, and this was the year when the February 26th Incident, an attempted coup d'état, occurred in Japan.

Around this time, a hostile political climate was increasingly evident, and global cooperation through the post-WWI League of Nations was barely functioning. Japan withdrew from the League of Nations in 1933 after the Manchurian Incident two years earlier, and it plunged into the Sino-Japanese War triggered by the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in July 1937, a year after Japan won its Olympic bid. In November of the same year, the Anti-Comintern Pact was signed by Japan, Germany and Italy. In September 1937, Pierre de Coubertin died at the age of 74. Amidst this turmoil, Kano made enormous efforts both in Japan and abroad to realize the Tokyo Olympic Games. In 1938, he attended the IOC General Assembly in Cairo and confirmed our hosting of the 12th Summer Games in Tokyo and the 5th Winter Games in Sapporo in 1940.

After leaving Cairo, Kano visited Greece, Italy, Germany, France, England and the United States to ensure the success of the Tokyo Games. But on the homeward voyage from Vancouver, Canada, he developed pneumonia and died on May 4th, two days before his ship, the Hikawa Maru, reached Yokohama. He was 77 years old. It is no exaggeration to say that Kano dedicated his last years to his dream of Tokyo Olympic Games. Two months later, amidst the hopeless mess of the Sino-Japanese War and the weakening of the faction supporting international cooperation, Japan returned its hosting rights to the IOC. The Committee decided to hold the 1940 Games in Helsinki, which had won second place in the bidding. In the end, the Games were cancelled when the German invasion of Poland launched World War II.

1964 Tokyo Olympic Games — Pursuing Jigoro Kano's dream

In 1941, Japan took the path that led to the Pacific War, a conflict that cost the lives of millions of soldiers and citizens and left the country nothing more than a scorched land. Mainland Japan was occupied by the Allies for six years. After Japan regained its sovereignty by signing the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951, many thought that it would take a long time to recover sufficient economic power and international credibility to host the Olympic Games. However, the recovery of sports was achieved sooner than expected. In 1952, the year we were allowed to return to the Helsinki Games, Shohachi Ishii won a gold medal in wrestling. In 1954, Japan bid for 1960, but lost to Rome. Japanese athletes continued to perform well, with the gymnast Takashi Ono winning gold in 1956 in Melbourne. Supported by its economical recovery, Japan bid again for 1964 and won in the 1959 Assembly.

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. Kano had shared his stories of struggles and accomplishments, and Hirasawa had stayed with him until he succumbed to pneumonia. 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." Although he was allotted an hour for his presentation, he finished it in fifteen minutes, a compelling speech that resonated with the IOC members. 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. Kano's lifetime achievement deserves to be called his Olympic legacy.

Brave New Globalists

While Kano dedicated his life to international cooperation through sports, his attitude was never submissive to western countries. On the contrary, he succeeded in promoting Japanese culture through judo and exhibiting Japan's statehood to the world by regularly sending delegations to Olympic Games whatever the distance. None of this was achieved by building on pre-existing efforts; he created it all from nothing.

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 encouraging success overseas. It means the ability to solve problems without fear when students encounter obstacles they have never experienced in their world. In this sense, 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.



* Author profile is on the following page.

Author profile:
Magohiro Wada

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

The Outlook Foundation publishes proposals for a better future by brilliant front-line experts.



Your feedback is most appreciated. abrighterfuture@theoutlook-foundation.org

<http://www.theoutlook-foundation.org>

© 2017 The Outlook Foundation, All rights reserved.