

## The history of judo

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Jigaro Kano was a skinny, and sickly child, who was often ill, so he decided to try and improve his health, and also learn how to defend himself against bullies. In 1878, aged 18 he started at the Tenjin Shinyo ryu school of jujitsu, and was taught by Fukuda Hachinosuke. The Tenjin Shinyo ryu was a gentle martial art that focused mostly on harmony rather than fighting, but also included striking and grappling techniques.

After studying at the Tenjin Shinyo ryu, Kano moved to the Kito ryu school to study under Tsunetoshi Iikubo. This type of jujitsu was much softer and focused on gentle workouts, physical technique, and throwing techniques.

Kano began to study of other forms of jujitsu such as sekiguchi-ryu and seigo-ryu. From this, he took the best throws and grappling techniques, and added some of his own, and got rid of more dangerous techniques such as foot and hand strikes. At 22, he presented his new sport which he called Kodokan Judo, *ko* meaning study or method, *do* meaning way or path, *kan* meaning hall or place, *ju* meaning gentle, and *do* meaning way or path.

He began his own Judo school, called the Kodokan, in the Eishoji Buddhist temple in Tokyo, which began with only 9 students and 12 mats but quickly expanded. Today the Kodokan has over 500 mats and more than a million visitors a year.

In 1886, because of rivalry between judo and jujitsu schools, a competition was organised to determine the superior art. Judo students easily won the competition showing judo to be more superior.

From 1889 onwards, Kano travelled around Europe and to the United States to teach judo, and to attend the Olympics and its committee meetings.

By 1910 Judo was recognised as a safe sport, and in 1911 it was integrated into Japan's educational system. In 1920, Kodokan Judo was revised by its members, and eight throws previously included were discarded, leaving 40 throws in the Go Kyo No Waza.

Kano achieved a doctorate degree in Judo, which is equivalent to a twelfth dan, and has been awarded to the creator of Judo only. He worked continuously to develop athletics and Japanese sport in general, and for this, he is often called the "Father of Japanese Sports." In 1935, he was awarded the Asahi prize for his outstanding contribution to the organizing of sport in Japan during his lifetime.

Apart from creating and developing judo, Kano was also a skilled player. When a highly skilled judoka was asked what competing with Kano was like, he said, "It was like fighting with an empty jacket!"

While returning home from an IOC meeting in Cairo where he managed to have Tokyo nominated as a site for the 1940 Olympics, Kano died of pneumonia on the S. S. Hikawa Maru on 4 May 1938, aged seventy-eight.

For more than sixty years the structure of Kodokan Judo had not changed. However in 1982 the Kodokan revised the Go Kyo No Waza by reintroducing the 8 techniques that were discarded in 1920 and by adding 17 new techniques. These sixty-five techniques became known as "The 65 Techniques of Kodokan Judo."

There have been two major developments in judo. The first was bringing in weight categories. Originally it was believed that weight was not important. Many people did not agree with the introduction of weight categories, some believed it meant the end of Judo as a skilful art. Judo was first included in the Olympic Games in 1964, and this helped to speed up this change.

The second development was teaching of Judo to children. At first it was thought to be dangerous to teach children because they would use it outside the club, but now many clubs have large numbers of junior members.

There are many different styles of Judo. Since it has been included in the Olympics, many clubs teach more contest style judo. Other schools see skill as more important. They prefer to practise techniques and usually also teach kata.