

The Budo of Kano and Ueshiba

by Dr. Mark Crapo

Editor's note: I asked Mark Crapo to write an article describing how Judo and Aikido relate. Mark is a long time Judoka and has extensive knowledge of the martial arts. I feel it is useful to see how Aikido relates to other types of training in Budo.

The traditional Bujutsu of ancient Japan were the martial techniques used in combat. They evolved over the centuries and became very specialized. There were both armed and unarmed *ryu*, or traditional schools, as well as those dealing with auxiliary arts such the proper way to tie up an enemy or to swim in full armor. Even such things as flower arranging, poetry, the tea ceremony and calligraphy were often linked to rounded training. These *jutsu*, or techniques, can be likened to the roots of a tree. These deep and powerful roots gave rise to not only the trunk but also the branches.

As time passed and Japan entered "the modern age" the techniques of combat gave way to "the **way**," or the *ways* of fighting, Budo. Modern Budo are those branches and the very fruits of the tree. While Budo came from the fields of battle, it evolved into something more than how to kill an opponent, more than a way to control an enemy. It became a method (or methods) to control one's self, betterment of the individual and thus society. We would say that the *jutsu* arts emphasized Satsujin-Ken, or the sword to kill while the *do* arts became Katsujin-Ken, or the sword to give life.

Professor Jigoro Kano was the epitome of a "modern man" in turn of the century Japan. He led the charge from one age, the age of *waza* or pure technique, the way

of power, into the modern age of *do* or the way. Specifically, he founded the *Way of Gentleness* or the *Yielding Way*, Judo. While the *jutsu* arts focused on how to survive in combat, the *do* arts focused on how to survive in the world around us; to survive in harmony and with dignity in a modern age, a modern way of life. He also served as a sort of ambassador to the world, making almost 15 trips to countries around the globe.



*Jigoro Kano Sensei, Founder
of Judo*

Kano Sensei was born in Mikage on October 28, 1860. As a young man he studied the ancient ways of combat. He particularly focused on two styles of Jujutsu, Tenshin Shin'yo Ryu and Kito Ryu. While both were methods of primarily unarmed combat, Tenshin Shin'yo Ryu dealt more with *atemi* (striking vital points) and *ne-waza* (ground techniques), what we now refer to as grappling. Kito Ryu was an art that concentrated more on *tachi-waza* (standing arts) and *randori* (free practice). Kano Sensei combined the best, most scientific arts in them to form what was to become modern Judo.

Jigoro Kano also earned his degree as a teacher. He became the headmaster of small school, but because of his innovations in education was soon promoted. After several posts he finally became the headmaster of one of the finest and most elite schools in Japan and an advisor to the government in the area of not only education but sports. In addition to Japanese he spoke English, German, and some Spanish. He applied an educator's skill and knowledge of learning into the formation of his modern art of Judo. He was also known to apply the stern discipline of the martial arts to his classroom students.

As an educator, Kano Sensei saw that the disciplines of the past could be used for discipline and betterment in the changing generation. But modifications would have to be made if the arts of self defense were to be broadly and **safely** practiced by the youth of the day. Eventually he combined the best elements of *tachi-waza* and *ne-waza* into one art. He eliminated the more dangerous *atemi-*

waza and limited joint locks (kansetsu-waza) to just the elbow. Shime-waza (choking arts) were also allowed. Thus in 1882 Judo was born. (It should be noted that while Kano Sensei eliminated the more dangerous arts from what is now called sport Judo, he did retain them in kata and the methods of self defense.)

While 1882 is the official "birthday" of Judo, the by-laws weren't written until two years later. It was in 1882 that Kano Sensei started his first dojo (at a Zen temple) but at that time what he was teaching was mostly jujitsu. His Kito ryu teacher, Iikubo Sensei, came a couple times a week to instruct at his new dojo. This continued throughout '82 and part of '83. At this time Kano earned his first teaching license (in Kito Ryu), after founding Judo!

In the early years of Judo, many Jujitsu masters were recruited into the Kodokan (the Judo Hombu Dojo). They brought with them skills from the various ryu they represented and the repertoire of the Judoka grew. The legitimacy of the Kodokan itself was questioned early on, and a challenge match was fought against a combined jujitsu team (several different schools). The winner would go on to become officially sanctioned instructors to the police force. While Judo won the match, it was the efforts of these newly recruited Jujitsu practitioners that turned the tide.

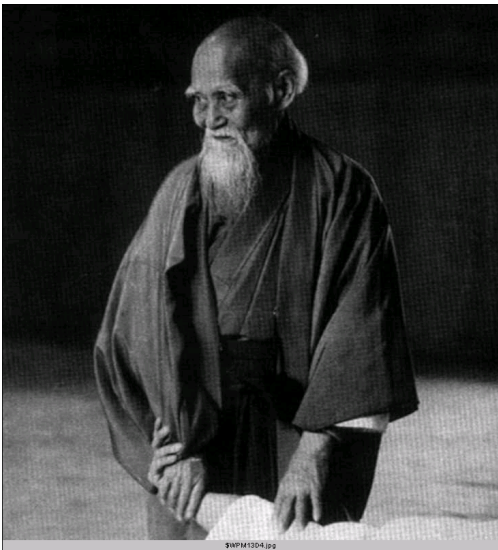
While Judo is often translated as *Gentle Way*, these early years were anything but gentle. These were rough and tumble years with many injuries. (Speaking of rough and tumble, our President, Teddy Roosevelt, had a portion of the White House converted into a dojo, and a representative of the Kodokan taught Judo classes for a short time. After the White House instruction ended, the teacher, Maeda Sensei, traveled the US engaging in challenge matches. He later settled in Brazil and became the teacher to the Gracies.) *Yielding Way* is probably a more accurate translation of Judo. The basic Judo philosophy is: when pushed, pull; when pulled, push. If you and your partner each have 10 units of strength a contest would result in a stalemate. But if your partner pushes with 8 of his units of strength and you pull with only 3 of yours, that equals 11 units - more than either of you alone possess and your partner can not win. That is also *Seiryoku Zen'yo* or Maximum Efficiency With Minimum Effort, one of the two maxims of Judo. (In Aikido this is simply called Aiki or blending.) The other is *Jita Ko'ya*, Mutual Welfare and Benefit. (In Aikido we would call this the Spirit of Loving Protection for All Things.)

It was Jigoro Kano that developed the present belt ranking system used by most Japanese and Korean systems today. There are two basic groups: Mudansha or the beginning ranks and Yudansha, the black belt ranks. You start as a white belt Mudansha with a rank of 6th kyu and progress up to the 1st kyu. You then start

all over again in the Yudansha ranks as a shodan (1st degree and move up towards 10th.) The color changes resemble a white belt gradually becoming old and worn, white/brown/black. Originally there were 3 white belt levels and 3 brown belt levels. While this is still seen in some dojo most have expanded into what is called the rainbow belt system with blue, red, purple, green, yellow, orange, and even camouflage belts. Today it is also common that while adults still start out as 6th kyu, children start as 10th.

Jigoro Kano's interests were not limited to only Judo, but encompassed all Budo. He had many prominent teachers from other styles teach at the Kodokan. He was even responsible for Funakoshi Sensei staying in Japan to teach Karate - later to become the Father of Japanese Karate.

It was Kano Sensei's wish that Judo become an Olympic sport. He worked to spread Judo around the world, even visiting the US. He also worked as a member of the Olympic committee. It was after a visit to the Olympic committee in Cairo in 1938 that he died (he was actually on his ship, returning to Japan). He had hoped that Judo would be accepted as an Olympic event in 1940 (and this was accepted), but because of the war this was not realized until 1960 when Judo was an exhibition event. In 1964 it gained status as a regular event.



*Morihei Ueshiba (O-Sensei)
Founder of Aikido*

The Judo we see today is not exactly what Jigoro Kano would have hoped for. While it has achieved world wide status and is part not only of the Olympic games but of many World competitions, changes have been made that Kano Sensei would not be entirely happy with. First, Kano Sensei believed in open

tournaments -- no weight classes. After his death, Judo started having competitive divisions, light weight, middle weight and heavy weight in response to international pressure. Today it has basically the same weight divisions as collegiate wrestling. However, many tournaments will take the winners of the individual weight classes and pit them against one another to determine a grand champion.

There are basically two ways to win a Judo match. One is by submission. You place your partner in a choke, joint lock, or hold down and they give up or submit. If they don't, they may legally be choked into unconsciousness or you can break their elbow which usually ends the match. You may also win by points. Up until the 1970's, you could win by $\frac{1}{2}$ or 1 point. You were awarded ippon (1 point) for successfully throwing your partner with a recognizable technique, with force, largely on his back. If one of those elements was missing, you could be awarded wazari ($\frac{1}{2}$ point). Two wazari did equal an ippon. You could also hold your partner down, in a recognizable hold for 30 seconds and be awarded an ippon. For less than 30 seconds but at least 25, you would be awarded a wazari.

In the mid 70's, in an effort to make Judo more of a spectator sport new points were added; yuko ($\frac{1}{4}$ point) and koka ($\frac{1}{8}$ point). However, these points do not add up. That is while two wazari or $\frac{1}{2}$ points equal ippon, four yuko ($\frac{1}{4}$) don't equal ippon and two yuko don't add up to one wazari. You can have 10 or 15 yuko or koka. One wazari beats any number of lesser points and one yuko beats any number of koka. While the intention was that this was to encourage more Judoka to become less defensive and liven the action up, it often results in them attempting very crude techniques, trying to trip or force their opponent down anyway possible, and results in some very sloppy Judo. I'm sure Kano Sensei would not be pleased.

In many ways the founder of Aikido, Morihei Ueshiba, was the direct opposite of Jigoro Kano. While Kano Sensei was the modern gentleman, Ueshiba Sensei was the ancient mystic. Jigoro Kano studied modern literature and politics. Morihei Ueshiba studied the ancient classics and religion.

Morihei Ueshiba was born in Tanabe on December 14, 1883. He did enjoy some of the same wealth and privilege that the young Kano grew up with. His father, Yoroku Ueshiba was a town councilman and businessman. As a youngster Morihei demonstrated some affinity for numbers and studied the abacus and accounting. However his real love was the martial arts. He was drawn to them and studied them with a passion that many found to border on the obsessive. He is known to have spent some time studying various ryu of bojutsu (staff arts) and kenjutsu (sword arts) along with sojitsu or yarijutsu (use of the spear). While he did become quite proficient in these, eventually teaching bayonet techniques in the military, he spent most of his efforts learning jujutsu.

While he may have studied more than one jutsu style, he was mostly influenced by Daito-ryu. This is also called Daito-ryu Jujitsu and today even known as Daito-ryu Aikijujitsu. He met his teacher, Sokaku Takada, in 1915 and studied with him, on and off for the next 7 years. Today when we think of *studying an art*, we often think of attending a class at the dojo lasting an hour, an hour and a half or in some dojo, two hours. While it is common for some students to attend classes three times a week, others may only go once or twice. It was not uncommon for Ueshiba Sensei (and many other students of his era) to study for 8 hours a day, for days on end. Practicing 6 or 7 days a week was more the rule than the exception. It was not uncommon for someone to rack up more practice hours in a week than some of today's students earn in 3 or 4 months. Progress came rapidly. (Former Hombu Chief Instructor Koichi Tohei's first promotion in Aikido was to Godan - 5th degree black belt.)

In 1922 Ueshiba Sensei earned his Menkyo or teaching license in Daito-ryu. In his early years of teaching he started blending his knowledge of other arts, sword, staff, and spear, into his empty hand techniques. He was gradually developing his own "style." Such experimentation and evolution was very common among instructors of that era. Even though Takeda Sensei would visit and teach at his student Morihei's dojo, gradually a split occurred between the two men. This may have been a split more for philosophical reasons than any other. The art Ueshiba Sensei was teaching gradually became known as Ueshiba-ryu and Aikijujitsu.

The early years, of what was to become Aikido, were as rough and tumble as those of Judo. The Aikijujitsu dojo became known as Hell Dojo. Workouts were often brutal. My experience in the martial arts 25 to 30 years ago was that you were not so much taught a technique as you "stole" it. Instructors weren't much at "instructing" as we would know it today. Rather they demonstrated a technique several times, at best, and you were expected to copy it. You learned over time to take in everything you could of the short demonstration and tried to "steal" what the teacher showed. Ukemi was taught in much the same manner. Let someone throw you a few hundred times and eventually you get the idea. . . or you quit.

In the early '30's Jigoro Kano visited Ueshiba Sensei's dojo to observe his young art. After watching his techniques Kano declared that Ueshiba's art was the true Judo, the best martial art. In the following years Kano Sensei sent many of his finest students to study Aikido. Some switched completely, others continued to study both. Professor Tomiki, who I believe was an 8th dan in Judo, became an Aikido Instructor at Waseda University. Much against the wishes of O-Sensei he combined elements of the two arts and started Tomiki Aikido, a style that includes competition. This was done because of pressure from the college. They demanded some sort of competitive sport. Today this style is little known in

Japan, but it is still popular in England and there are a handful of dojo in the US. Another such student was Mochizuki Sensei. He went on to combine elements of Karate, Judo, and Aikido to form Yoseikan Budo. This style is also little known in Japan today but is still popular in France and has a small number of dojo in the US.

The art O-Sensei taught underwent a transformation during World War II. Rod Kobayashi Shihan was fond of pointing out that the name Aikido was formally adopted in 1942, prior to Japan's defeat. This signified a shift; Aikido became an art of timing and finesse and less of one that concentrated on power as Ueshiba-ryu or Aikijujitsu had. The transformation was not instantaneous though. Even today, the slow evolution of technique continues. O-Sensei was quick to point out that he was still a student following a path, continuing to learn. The art he taught became softer and yet more powerful as he aged. Unfortunately there are those instructors today that forget the living art Ueshiba Sensei taught was still growing. They attempt to fix the techniques in time. They teach the arts he taught in the 30's, 40's, 50's, or 60's. One teacher shows a waza as he learned it in 1954 saying, "This is the way." Another says, "No, Sensei showed it this way. . . in 1967." The true practitioner says, "He was leading in this direction. Let us follow."