

## Introduction

The ideas I put forth represent, rather than a scholarly document, an effort to place on paper the culmination of over 40 years of experience in the study of and teaching of judo—specifically, Kodokan judo—as founded by Prof. Jigoro Kano in 1882. In light of today's society, both in the United States and around the world, where an Olympic Gold Medal now translates into a \$20-30,000 bonus, the enclosed ideas might well be seen as archaic and irrelevant. It is, however, a project that I took on in order to achieve personal satisfaction. I share my conclusions here only in the hope of catching the attention of a few individuals, bringing into focus for those individuals a different perception of the role of judo in a modern-day society.

## Background

The concept and content of physical education has evolved over many years; from a military emphasis to a scientific perspective to the child-study movement. The focus has ranged from a gymnastics or calisthenics emphasis to today's multichoice programs. The latter programs often include choices that span cultures from around the world—such as martial arts of the Far East.<sup>1</sup>

Just as the role, methods and curriculum in physical education have changed, so has the application of martial arts. Originally, their emphasis centered on the "warrior" aspect, a pure study for offense and defense in clashes of combat. The term *bujutsu*, the art of self protection, is commonly used to describe this aspect of the martial arts.

As Japanese society changed, so did the emphasis of the martial arts, from that of *bujutsu* to *budo*, the martial "ways" of self-protection. This redirection of the purpose for training set the stage for the final evolving to the quasi-martial, sport type of orientation—such as *kendo* (The Way of the Sword) and *judo* (the art of throwing and grappling).<sup>2</sup>

Dennis Helm and associates have assembled a privately published booklet titled: **The First 100 Years: Kodokan-American Judo**, which gave a detailed account of the development of judo in the United States. Especially interesting are the comments by John Dewey as a result of his trip to Japan in the early 1920's.

## Proposition

- Maximizing the fulfillment of one's potential is possible only when one has maximized the ability for self-direction. This maximizing of self-

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### <sup>1</sup>Notes

This evolution has been well documented in Deobold B. Van Dalen, Elmer D. Mitchell, and Bruce L. Bennett (1953) **A World History of Physical Education: cultural, philosophical, comparative**. New York: Prentice-Hall.

<sup>2</sup>For more information, see the excellent works by Donn Draeger (1973) **Classical Bujutsu**. New York: Weatherhill, and **Classical Budo**. New York: Weatherhill.

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direction comes about through exploring and discovering one's possibilities. The experiencing of these possibilities can be haphazard or planned.

A sequentially planned, developmentally sound set of experiences directed through a Kodokan judo physical education program, can help in exposure to those possibilities.

- The quality of the individual's movement experiences can do much to determine the nature of the individual's total development.

Kodokan judo, as a physical education activity, provides quality, meaningful movement experiences; it is integral in developing body awareness, extending consciousness of time, space, force and flow. In so doing, it extends and broadens the dimensions of one's awareness and perception of self; thus opening up the possibility of a fuller self-actualization. In conjunction with and simultaneously with the previous two points, the twin attributes of cooperation and self-reliance are developed; as are courage, strength of will and perseverance.

- Change confronts us almost daily in some manner or other; the individual is often required to make complex and rapid adjustments. A set of experiences which help to condition the individual to make those adjustments, develop adaptability and flexibility becomes an important tool for the individual's welfare—and thus, in the long term, to the welfare of society.

The very nature of judo activity, from the first lesson and onward, places the student under conditions that demand and rewards the development of a frame of mind that is the epitome of adaptability, flexibility, and rapid adjustments. The very nature of judo activity, from the first lesson and onward, places the student under conditions that demand and reward the development of a frame of mind that is the epitome of adaptability, flexibility, and rapid adjustments.

### **Philosophy**

Judo is a means to an end, not an end itself. It is a tool or vehicle for furthering the complete growth of the individual, and, by doing so, give mutual benefit to one's family, community and society.

### **Purpose and Goals**

A judo physical education program should be so designed as to lead the

student through a set of experiences that will help in developing an extension of their perception of self, or their environment (body, image, space, time, etc.), and to force the extension of their awareness. Some goals are:

- To help develop an extended awareness of self.

- To help bring about a realization that many limitations thought to be real are really mentally self-imposed.
- To help develop the art self-discipline, control of self, and, through those efforts, a strength of will.
- To help develop flexibility and open-mindedness.
- To present the opportunity for the individual to pit themselves against a real elemental challenge — one that tests the fiber of their inner-self through a carefully, sequentially developed program that presents an increasing degree of adversity, challenge and demand factors.
- To help the individual to discover the depth of their resources to meet this test and to help lead in the development of those resources as needed.

### **Objectives**

Through mastery of both basic and advance breakfalls, the student will extend his or her awareness of space/time, develop control over body movement, eliminate the fear of falling and develop a positive self-image—thus, enhanced confidence.

Through the mastery of balance and off-balancing, foot movement and body placement, the student will develop a skillful and effective manner of total body movement.

Through the study, practice and mastery of such factors as timing, space, force, turning, yielding, and mass-energy relationship, the student will develop an understanding about, an appreciation for, and a joy of the dynamics of human movement.

Through the practice and mastery of the constantly changing judo environment, the student will develop the necessary skills of action, reaction, adaptability, flexibility, and adjustment to cope with the circumstances of the given moment.

Through regular practice, the student will develop a positive and constructive use of leisure time.

Through regular practice, the student will develop a positive and constructive method of controlled emotional release.

Through regular practice, the student will develop a positive and constructive attitude from interaction with others, under a variety of conditions—as given throughout their training sessions.

Through regular practice, the student will have the opportunity to achieve muscular development and establish a high level of fitness.

Through regular practice, the student will have the opportunity to develop a high level of neuro-muscular skills.

### **Adaptation To a Variety of Individual Interests**

With both the time restraints and budget limitations that are currently in effect at most colleges and universities, a physical education activity must reach across a broad band of individual goals in order to justify its inclusion in the program.

At the most basic level is the simple desire to learn something new and different. This phase includes and goes beyond the “basic or introductory” course; it can also include a progression of learning skills and activities that can carry the individual well into the future years.

The student is introduced to a sequentially planned set of skills and activities, incorporating each new set with those previously acquired. Because learning judo also means learning about and through movement, the student is constantly engaged with a partner; cooperation and responsibility are key elements in their working together.

This application of movement progresses from a “low” level of intensity to a “high” level; in judo terms: from a standing *uchikomi* (cooperative practice) to a moving *uchikomi* to a *randori* (a free form of exercise in throwing skills).

All too often, however, this phase is used by some instructors as nothing more than a stepping stone; their real purpose being to push the student into a competitive situation as soon as possible. These instructors do not see or appreciate the long term value of this learning– or practice–only phase as an end in itself. Thus, many beginning students are turned off to the possibilities of a long term involvement in judo because they are not strongly motivated toward its formal competitive aspects.

Ironically, Professor Kano, as an educator, sought to promote his Kodokan judo as a physical education activity; it is reported that he had an early distrust of promoting it as highly competitive sport.<sup>3</sup>

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Going along hand-in-hand with this “non-competitive” level of judo involvement is the study and practice of various *katas*—prearranged forms of movement. *Katas* require two closely matched individuals who spend many hours practicing their moves together; the end result is usually a demonstration before their peers.

The next and succeeding levels of involvement takes the student into the area of formal competition. The first level—and its simplest—takes place at the inter-club or intramural level. From this point on, the level of

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1881: Graduated from the Tokyo Imperial University

1882: Founded the “Kodokan Judo Institute”

1893: Appointed as Principal of the First Higher School in Tokyo

1909: First Japanese member of the International Olympic Committee

1922: Elected to the House of Peers

1928, 1938: Attended the Olympic Games as a member of the International Olympic Committee

1938: Died at sea while on the voyage home from the 12th Olympic Games



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competition matches the level of motivation of the individual and the need to increase the intensity of training; at each of the subsequent levels; the individual can make a choice to move ahead or to pull back.

It is not uncommon for students to try the state and regional levels of competition and decide to go no further; the national and international levels are for the highly motivated and skilled players.

### **Curriculum**

The importance of the curriculum can not be overstated. It is more than just the right content; the sequencing of that content needs to be understood and developmentally organized. Like gymnastics, judo asks the participant to do some very unique things that are beyond the mainstream of the ordinary, everyday life. For the beginner, a step by step approach that allows—indeed, promotes—the development of self-confidence is vital to the success of the student and his or her long term involvement in a judo program.

Such a curriculum has been constructed by a committee of Japanese judo experts; it is formally called the *Go Kyo No Waza* or the Five Groups of Instruction. Each group consists of eight throwing techniques, offering a variety of throwing actions—with the foot, leg and hip taking on a primary role within the first three groups.

For beginners, the first group of eight techniques is the most important because it introduces the level of action in throwing with that of learning how to fall safely from such techniques. Thus, as the student acquires higher levels of “breakfalling” skills, there is an introduction to throwing techniques that increase in complexity, distance or height off the floor, and degree of impact on falling.

In addition to the correlation between the introduction of throwing techniques and the learning and practice of breakfalls, the sequencing also allows the teaching, at a beginning level, of a continuous flow of movement from one throwing technique to another.

### **Conclusion**

I hope that this brief presentation of the preceding ideals will be accepted as a starting point for further discussion, examination and analysis by those of the younger generation as to the potential of Kodokan judo in American Higher Education Physical Education programs, and in society in general.