



# The Bulletin

Issue No 18

January 2008

## The Kano Society

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**In this edition** - We are publishing some of the articles which authors have contributed to the website and begin with Joe Svinth's article on Kano in North America. We will continue Kano's journeys in the next issues where we will look at Richard Bowen's piece on the visit to London and the Budokwai.

**News** - This new year we will be providing more services to clubs in terms of holding some of the sessions such as the very popular newaza presentation featuring Len Hunt and with commentary by Larry Ralph. We have quite a collection of video material now and would be happy to arrange showings for clubs. First in line will be Dorking in April. Also please remember you can buy copies through the website—see back page.

Bulletins are available as pdf files to download from the web site Sets of Bulletins may also be purchased on CDs.

Regards Diana Birch

## Jigoro Kano in North America By Joseph R. Svinth

### Jigoro Kano in North America

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Although Jigoro Kano's influence on North American judo came mostly through students trained at the Kodokan, he personally visited both the United States and Canada on several occasions. The following is therefore a synopsis of those visits. Kano's first visit to the United States took place during the winter of 1912-1913. While passing through New York City on his way home from the 1912 Olympics, he gave a judo exhibition attended by local sportswriters. Later, the ship Kano was on stopped in Honolulu. While paying his respects to the Japanese consul, Kano met with Shigemitsu Teshima, who with Naomatsu Kanshige had established a judo club in Honolulu in March 1909. During the 1970s, signs Kano brushed for Teshima still hung with pride in Honolulu's Shunyokan Dojo. Kano's next American visit came in 1920. He reached San Francisco on June 24, 1920, and from there went to New York. Probably he spoke to both reporters and Japanese associations, but so far I have found nothing in print to substantiate this belief. After going to Europe to attend the Olympics, he returned to

Japan via the United States. His port of entry was New York, and on December 23, 1920 he demonstrated his art at the New York Athletic Club. The *New York Times* said afterward that Kano and his partner, Ryoichi Taguchi, 5-dan, "went through a series of offensive and defensive movements ... with an agility that drew frequent applause... Mr. Kano defined judo as the study of the maximum efficiency of the mind and body for the purpose of attack and defense."

Kano revisited the US in 1932. While his main purpose was to promote Japan's bid for the 1940 Olympics, he also gave lectures. The title of his 1932 speech was probably "The Contribution of Jiudo to Education," as that was the title of his paper subsequently published in the *Journal of Health and Physical Education*.

From late July until the middle of August Kano was in California, where he attended the Olympic Games in Los Angeles. Once the Games were over, though, Kano took his own private tour of the Pacific Coast. His traveling companions included Ryoichi Taguchi and Eitaro Suzuki. The party reached Vancouver, British Columbia, on August 17, 1932. Among the people greeting them

was Yoshitaka Mori, 1-dan. (Vancouver Dojo leader Shigetaka Sasaki was in Tokyo at the time, studying for his 3-dan ranking.)

The stay in Canada was only overnight, and the following afternoon Kano spoke to the Japanese Language Schoolteachers' Assembly of the Northwest in Tacoma. His theme, unsurprisingly, was the role of judo in education. Consul Kiyoshi Uchiyama also spoke during this lecture. The gist of his speech was that the Nisei [second-generation Japanese Americans] needed to learn what Japanese language schools taught if they were to be able to properly interpret Japan for the benefit of European Americans.

On August 19, Kano gave a similar speech to the Japan Society of Seattle. This organization had been established in July 1923 and its mostly European American members included the chairman of the University of Washington's Asian languages department, a city judge, the city school superintendent, and the city librarian. Kano told this distinguished group that the Nisei must live up to high standards and expectations if they were to fulfill their duties as patriotic American citizens.

"This mighty ocean," said Kano: *is no longer is a dividing gulf. With the developing advancement of the lines of communication, year by year, the blue waters of the Pacific are rapidly becoming transformed into a connecting link that will eventually join us together in our common aim of world friendship and peace.*

Afterwards Kano showed some judo moves. His helpers included Seattle Dojo's George Maniwa and Kaimon Kudo. Said the *Japanese-American Courier* afterward, "Carefully and with the precision of a slow motion picture, Mr. Kano illustrated the science of Judo to his audience in such a manner that it was easy for everyone to understand."

Immediately following the demonstration Kano attended a garden party hosted by Japanese

(Continued on page 2)



Hasui Ishimaki Snow

## Jigoro Kano in North America (cont)



*Jigoro Kano (left) and Shigetaka Sasaki in Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1938.*

consul Kiyoshi Uchiyama and then a dinner hosted by the Seattle Yudanshakai (black belt association). One presumes that at formal dinners such as this, the younger black belts did not engage in their usual after-dinner game of seeing who could eat the most bowls of rice.

On August 20, Kano and Taguchi drove two hundred miles to Portland, Oregon. After Kano gave some speeches the two men sat for photographs with local judoka and their fathers. Then they drove back to Seattle. As Kano had another speech to give at the Nippon Kan (a still-extant community theater) that night, the speedometer probably eased past seventy miles per hour as their automobile raced past the stump farms lining the newly completed highway between Vancouver and Olympia. [FN1]

At the Nippon Kan that evening, another Japanese visitor named Kyugoro Obata joined Kano on the

platform. The secretary of Tokyo's Japanese-American Relations Committee, Obata told the mostly Japanese audience that education and scholarship would effectuate a better understanding between the US and Japan. For his part, Kano said that the Nisei "must first of all be taught to become genuine and good American citizens. The ideal of world peace and mankind's welfare must always be kept before them." Finally, said a Seattle community newspaper, "Both speakers frankly expressed the opinion, the Americans of Japanese ancestry could only fulfill their proper part in their country's national life by becoming genuine citizens."

On August 21, Kano attended a Seattle judo tournament. "Originally the event had been scheduled for the Nippon Kan from 3 p.m.," explained the *Japanese-American Courier*, "but owing to the

big sell-out of tickets throughout the Northwest, the change [to the larger Chamber of Commerce auditorium] was necessitated."

After watching the matches, Kano approved some promotions, including a 2-*dan* ranking for Ken Kuniyuki, a future leader of Southern California's Nanka Yudanshakai. Finally, around 11:30 p.m., he and Taguchi boarded a train for San Francisco.

From San Francisco, Kano and Taguchi went to Yokohama via Honolulu. While in Honolulu, Kano took the time to visit the Hongwanji Japanese High School and pose for a photograph with its judoka. He also awarded the Hawaii Judo Association, which by then had ten member clubs, with a certificate of recognition. Dated November 15, 1932, the form was obviously signed in Tokyo and mailed rather than delivered on the spot.

Kano passed through Seattle again in

July 1936. During his speech on July 6, he told his audience that the spirit of judo was not a spirit of competition but a spirit of cooperation. He added that Japan wanted the Olympic Games because nations became more sympathetic toward one another through competing in sport. Said he, "If China understood Japan's intentions, they would try to cooperate in all matters. China is torn by internal wars. They misunderstand Japan's real intention."

On July 7 Kano boarded a train and headed to British Columbia. Vancouver Dojo leader Shigetaka Sasaki greeted him at the station in Vancouver, and then accompanied Kano across Canada to New York City and Berlin. A photograph of their visit to Lake Louise in Banff can be found in the University of British Columbia archives and the cover of Glynn Leyshon's *Judoka*.

In New York City on July 16, Kano held a press conference at the Hotel Astor. After the obligatory luncheon, Kano attended a judo exhibition given by the Jiu-Jitsu Club located at 114 W. 48th Street. His host was T. Shozo Kuwashima [FN2] and the *Japanese-American Courier* reported that "among the judoists were not a few Japanese and American women who have taken up the art."

On his way back to Japan Kano visited with the Japanese community in Los Angeles. On October 23 he attended a dinner at the Kawafuku restaurant in Los Angeles. As the judoka who paid for the dinner included the professional wrestlers Kaimon Kudo and Shunichi Shikuma, the stories about Kano withholding promotions from professional wrestlers appear to owe more to postwar Olympic platitudes than fact.

The next two days found Kano watching a judo tournament pitting a Washington State all-star team against a California all-star team. Promotions approved as a result of this tournament included a 3-*dan* ranking for the future US Judo Federation president Masato Tamura.

Kano's last visit to North America came during his return to Japan from an Olympic meeting in Cairo in 1938. His first stop was in New York City, and on April 17, Kano and members of the New York Dojo demonstrated judo for reporters, using some Japanese American black belts as his models. As usual,

## Jigoro Kano in North America (cont)



The boy Kano attacked by bullies - an inspiration to develop Judo

Kano accompanied the demonstration with a speech about how thinking about judo had caused him to create his theories about maximum efficiency and mutual welfare. When a reporter asked him how he reconciled the drive to win with the need sometimes to submit to the overwhelming force, he replied, "When yielding is the highest efficient used of energy, then yielding is judo." After the press conference, Kano went to the airport, where he caught a United Airlines DC-3 bound for Seattle via Chicago. On the evening of April 20, Kano ate dinner with members of the Seattle Yudanshakai at Seattle's Gyokko Ken restaurant. Afterwards the Seattle judo association held a promotional tournament at Washington Hall. Fife's Ryoichi Iwakiri received promotion to 3-dan while his fourteen-year old son George Makoto received promotion to 1-dan. [FN3] While some have claimed these as Kano's last promotions, other Northwestern players including the future US Judo Federation president Eiichi Koikai

the were promoted during this tournament, and it seems petty to argue about who stood last in line. More importantly, Kano visited the Kido Kan Dojo in Vancouver, British Columbia on April 22 and probably promoted someone there before leaving.

As for the impact of these visits on young men who saw them, sixty years later Frank Moritsugu recalled Kano's visit to Vancouver for the Judo Ontario newsletter: [Stephen] Kamino-sensei did a quick phone-around in Kitsilano to get several of his students out of school that day and into dress clothes to rush downtown to wait outside the Vancouver dojo with other young judo people. As we waited, we were instructed in the technique of *sai-kei-rei*, an extremely low bow of respect, which we were to do when the great man arrived.

The taxi drew up. Mr. Sasaki got out first, and then came this small man in a dark suit and coat with a brown hat. He didn't seem impressive at all until you got a good look at him. Then there he was: Jigoro Kano himself!

Under that hat, he looked just like the man whose portrait adorned every judo dojo we'd ever visited. And on the barked command from Kamino-sensei we did our *sai-kei-rei*, not daring to peek until we straightened up again.

### A Note on Sources

The chief sources for this article were interviews with Nisei judoka conducted by the author between 1996 and 1998, and microfilmed community newspapers such as the *Great Northern Daily News*, *Japanese-American Courier*, and *North American Times* (Seattle) and *Japan Times* (Tokyo). See also:

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### Acknowledgments

People who contributed information or stories included in this article included Howard Alexander, Richard Bowen, Jerry Dalien, Fujiko Tamura

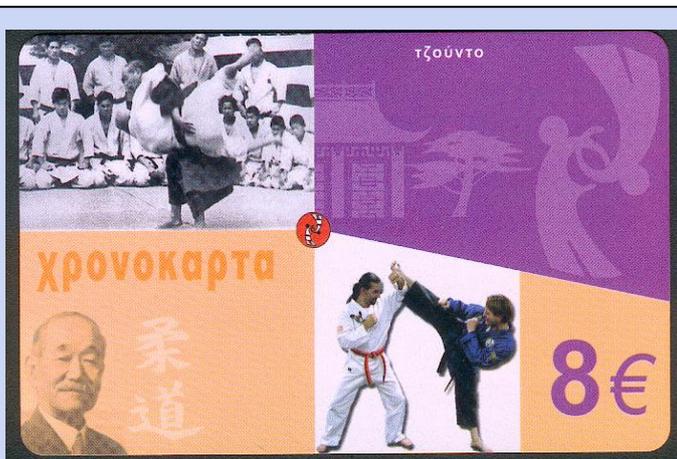
Gardner, Richard Hayes, Larry Kobayashi, Graham Noble, Teru Okawa, Kenji Okuda, Jim Onchi, Robert W. Smith, and David Waterhouse. The financial support of the Japanese American National Museum and the King County Landmarks and Heritage Program is also gratefully acknowledged.

### Footnotes

FN1. I am well aware that during the 1930s the normal travel time on the Pacific Highway between Portland and Seattle was around five hours. Going that speed, however, would have made Kano late to his Seattle speech. And it is certain that Japanese Americans sometimes exceeded the posted speed limits. For example, in March 1920 the Seattle *Star* reported that a Japanese American named M. Yamato received a \$100 fine for driving 65 miles per hour on the Pacific Highway near Kent, and by 1932 cars were much more powerful than they had been in 1920.

FN2. Remembered today mostly for his book written with A.R. Welch (*Judo: Forty-One Lessons in the Modern Science of Jiu-Jitsu*, 1938), Kuwashima was born in Kagawa Prefecture in 1893. After studying judo at Tokyo Agricultural College, he emigrated to the United States in 1916. He taught judo in Stockton and other Northern California locations until the mid-1930s, when he got a job teaching judo in New York and New Jersey. Later he moved to Chicago, where he operated a judo club until a skin disease forced his retirement in 1945. Demonstrators shown in British versions of Kuwashima's book included Ted Mossom and Stan Bissdell.

FN3. On page 16 of "The History of American Judo," *Judo USA*, 3:3 (Jul 1977), Dennis Helm of the US Judo Federation historical committee wrote: "Professor [Ryoichi] Iwakiri exhibited such skill that he received his First Dan by Professor Kano at the age of thirteen. At that age, he could defeat everyone in his class. Since his father would not promote him, the promotion came directly from Kano." As Ryoichi Iwakiri did not start judo in the United States until about age eighteen this statement evidently refers to this promotion of Iwakiri's son George Makoto in 1938. That said, I strongly doubt that either Iwakiri ever told anyone that they could defeat everyone in a club whose members included Masato Tamura, George Kawasaki, Sunji Dogen, Jack Ohashi, and all their brothers.



Kano on a Postage stamp



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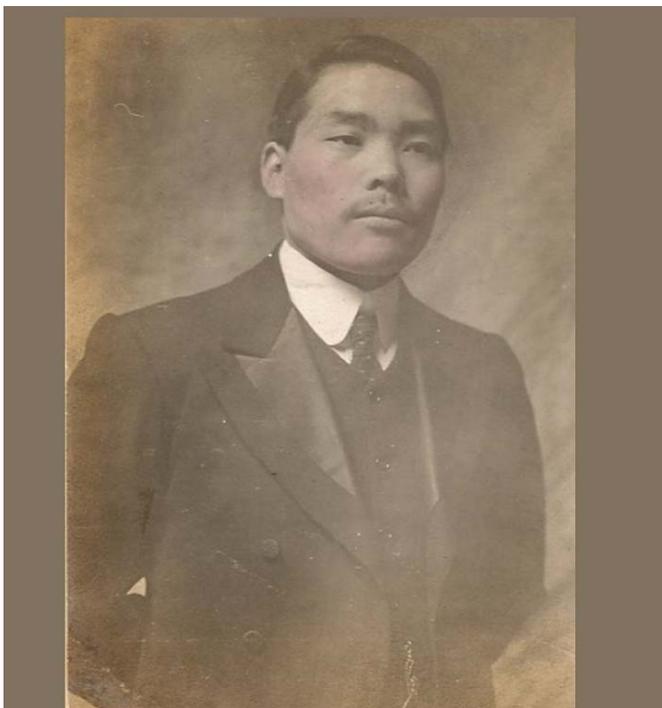


## Time Tunnel - Judo and the Art of living—GK

In training of any form, the point of greatest importance is to be free of all bad habits. In Judo we first change into the standard costume pure and white. This puts us all upon an equal basis - mere men. As we enter the Dojo there is a reminder on the door, a notice "Have you washed your feet?" to wash away the dust of the streets. Then on going onto the mats we are prepared to take falls safely - for we have to take falls - many of them, to learn how to throw. This is followed by instruction on the principle of balance, the main technique of which is not to resist force, the way to retain one's balance, to preserve energy, and to disturb one's opponent's balance with the minimum of effort.

Judo is sought after as an art of combat and self defence, the aim of which is to disable the opponent by causing injuries, even death. But in reality what one seeks is not the art itself, but the security which the art provides. A simile is the man who selects a vessel for catching water dripping through a leaky roof, whereas the permanent solution is to repair the roof. But to do the repair, he must have confidence in his ability to do the job. Security is secure when one is amidst one's friends but the enemy cannot be transformed into a friend by breaking his neck. But such a thing is possible by magnanimity of heart supported by confidence and strength of character. Judo promotes in one this confidence and strength enabling one to see by the light of cause and effect what such a course of action would produce. So the way of gentleness - Judo.

The art of living is as complex as life itself but the fundamental principle should be to harmonise the mode of living and the current of thought with the rhythm of natural laws and cultural evolution in order to achieve the basic urge of life - happy contentment.



## The Richard Bowen Collection



In 1949, Richard Bowen began judo training in London at the Budokwai, of which became Vice-President. He lived in Japan for four years to deepen his studies. A former British International, he fought in the first ever World Judo Championships in Japan in 1956. He was the author of more than eighty articles. Richard Bowen built up an extensive Judo Library in the course of research for his articles and books, and he kindly donated it to the University of Bath Library. Items in the collection are for reference use only (not available for loan). Items can be viewed between 9am-5pm. If you would like to look at an item from The Richard Bowen Collection, please contact the Subject Librarian, Peter Bradley. +44 1225 384784

A copy of the video 'An Interlude with Richard Bowen' has also been donated to the collection.

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