

I found this very interesting text article in my collection from Jigoro Kano.

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The Philosophy of Budo

The Contribution of Judo to Education

By Jigoro Kano

The Object of this lecture is to explain to you in a general way what Judo is. In our feudal times, there were many military exercises such as fencing, archery, the use of spears, etc. Among them there was one called Jujutsu, which was a composite exercise, consisting principally of the ways of fighting without weapons; however, occasionally using swords and other weapons.

The kind of attacks were chiefly throwing, hitting, choking, holding the opponent down and bending or twisting the opponent's arms or legs in such a way as to cause pain or fracture. The use of swords and daggers was also taught. We also had multitudinous ways of defending ourselves against such attacks. Such exercise in its primitive form, existed even in our mythological age, but systematic instruction, as an art, dates only from about three hundred fifty years ago.

In my younger days I studied this art with three eminent masters of the time. The great benefit I derived from the study of it led me to make up my mind to go on with the subject more seriously, and in 1882 I started a school of my own and called it Kodokan.

Kodokan literally means a school for studying the way, the meaning of the way being the concept of life itself. I named the subject I teach Judo instead of Jujutsu. In the first place I will explain to you the meaning of these words. Ju means gentle or to give way, Jutsu, and art of practice, and Do, way or principle, so that Jujutsu means an art of practice of gentleness or of giving way in order to ultimately gain the victory; while Judo means the way or principle of the same.

Can this principle be applied to others fields of human activity? Yes, the same principle can be applied to the improvement of the human body, making it strong, healthy and useful, and so constitutes physical education. It can also be applied to the improvement of intellectual and moral power, and in this way constitutes mental and moral education. It can at the same time be applied to the improvement of diet, clothing, housing, social intercourse, and methods of business, thus constituting the study and training in living. I gave this all-pervading principle the name Judo.

So Judo, in its fuller sense, is a study and method in training of mind and body in the regulation of life and affairs. Judo, therefore, in one of its phases, can be studied and practiced with attack and defence for its main object. Before I started Kodokan, this attack and defence phase of Judo was studied and practiced in Japan under the name of Jiu Jitsu, sometimes called Tai Jitsu, meaning the art of managing the body of Yawara, the gentle management. But I came to think that the study of this all-pervading principle is more important than the mere practice of Jiu Jitsu, because the real understanding of the principle enables one to apply it to all phases of life.

This speech was given by Jigoro Kano at the University of Southern Los Angeles, CA, USA on the occasion of the 11th Olympiad, 1932. (From the archive in Kodokan Institute)