

# History of Judo

Last Updated Monday, 09 February 2009

## THE HISTORY OF JUDO

The origins of Judo date back to the mid 19th century when Japan was going through the Meiji Restoration. During this time of Cultural Revolution, Japan ended its policy of National Seclusion and began to open up to the West. It was also during this time that the Samurai (warrior class of feudal Japan) began to lose their role in society and were forbidden to carry swords. Thus with declining skill in the weapon arts, Jujitsu (unarmed fighting methods), once a minor technique became the main ability for the anachronistic fighting class. During this intense period of modernization the Jujitsu schools began to lose popularity with the Japanese public.

This was the setting in which a man named Jigoro Kano took up Jujitsu in his youth. Kano, who later became to be a Professor of education with degrees in literature, politics and political economy, realised that the declining Jujitsu had some important strengths that should not be lost.

In 1882 Professor Kano developed Judo, based on Jujitsu, and established the Kodokan ("place for studying the way").

Kano made Judo more efficient and less dangerous to practice than Jujitsu by refining the techniques used and adding some of his own. He intended judo to be training for the mind, body and character, not just a system of fighting.

From its very beginning, competition has been an integral part of Judo. This ensures that Judo's techniques are continually refined as the unrealistic techniques are discarded in favour of effective and efficient ones.

Judo quickly spread in popularity throughout Japan, and after the Second World War, Judo spread throughout the world. The International Judo Federation was formed in 1951 and the first World Championships (for men only) were held in Japan in 1956. Judo was included in the Olympic games at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics (again for men only). At this event Ted Boronovski of Australia won a bronze medal. The first Women's World Championships were held in New York in 1980. Judo for women was included as a demonstration sport at the 1988 Seoul Olympics. At these games Sue Williams and Julie Reardon won gold and bronze respectively for Australia. (Judo for women is now an official Olympic Sport).

Today Judo continues to grow in popularity throughout the world as people take up Judo for fitness, sport and self-defence

Japan is hailed as the birthplace of Kodokan judo and it was here that the first dojo was established in 1882.