

The History of Judo and Zen Judo

A Brief History of Zen Judo

I would like to thank Sensei H.B. (Keo) Cavalcanti 6th. Dan head of American Zen Judo for the following information:

LIST OF CONTENTS:

Chapter 1. - The Roots of Japanese Martial Arts.

Chapter 2. - The Founding of Kodokan Judo by Dr. Jigoro Kano.

Chapter 3. - The Founding of Zen Judo by Dominick McCarthy.

A Poem. - "From Start to End - From Colour To Colour" by Dominick McCarthy.

Appendix 1. - Dr Jigoro Kano (The Founder of Kodokan Judo)

Appendix 2. – Kenshiro Abbe (The Founder of Kyu Shin Do)

Appendix 3. – Yukio Tani (The Development of Judo in Great Britain)

Chapter 1

Judo had its origin in the Japanese art of Ju-jutsu, a system of hand-to-hand combat. The bushi of feudal Japan (samurai) are usually credited for developing it. Ju-Jutsu was known by several names throughout Japanese history—taijutsu, yawara, kempo, kugusoku, kumiuchi, koshi nomawari. What is unique to the art is the use of skill, finesse and flexibility rather than strength to overpower opponents. Economy of energy, balance, and grace were the outstanding hallmarks of its practitioner.

S/he was expected to be soft and pliable, winning by appearing to yield. During the feudal period, Ju-jutsu was part of the bushi training, along with archery, spear fighting, swordsmanship, firearms, horsemanship, tactics, and etiquette. Its importance grew with the rise of the bushi class after the late Heian period. Subsequent periods of Japanese history (Kamakura, 1185-1336; Muromachi, 1336-1573 ; Tokugawa, 1603-1868) saw the art become more diversified and specialized as it was taught in schools (ryus) that emphasized different aspects:—

Throwing, groundwork and striking, according to their founder's vision.

Given the constant state of war in Japanese feudal history, ryus tested their vision of Ju-jutsu on the battlefield, where survival was the premium. The three hundred years of peace that followed the Japanese civil wars changed the nature of the art. Under the harsh Tokugawa martial codes combats between bushi became rarer. On the other hand, unarmed combat was more usual.

The rise of the common citizen at the end of the period required that Ju-jutsu techniques be adapted to their everyday life needs. At that time, several ryus gave up their insistence on ceremonial or ritual posturing in favour of a practical approach to hand-to-hand combat.

By the end of the period, the ancient martial arts of Japan (Bu-jutsu) created for a warrior class began to fade as the martial ways (Budo) created for the commoner gained importance. Budo was not simply a collection of fighting techniques. It was also a spiritual discipline, a way of life. With the Meiji Restoration (1868), several branches of the martial arts changed names and orientation--

KyuJutsu became Kyudo, Iai-Jutsu became Iaido, Aiki-Jutsu became Aikido and Ju-jutsu became Judo. There was a shift from a warfare approach to everyday life principles.

Schools passed their tradition to students in the form of techniques, philosophy and ethics. Students were expected to be fully versed on hand-to-hand combat but also to embody the philosophy of the ryus' founders.

Chapter 2

Dr. Jigoro Kano, founder of modern Judo, was born in Mikage, in the Hyogo Prefecture, on October 28, 1860. Shihan Kano never viewed martial arts as a means to display physical prowess or superiority. A pacifist, he studied them to find harmony in his dealings with others. In his youth Kano studied Ju-jutsu under Sensei Teinosuke Yagi, Sensei Hachinosuke Fukuda (Tenshin-Shinyo ryu) and after graduating from Tokyo University, under Sensei Iikubo (Kito ryu).

His search for a unifying principle for the techniques he learned led Kano to Seiryoku Zenyo (maximum efficiency in mental and physical energy). To him, only techniques that saved physical and mental energy should be incorporated into a Do. The idea was to use the energy of one's opponent to defeat his or her aggression. He called his system Judo, and to propagate it he founded the Kodokan (the "school to learn the way") at the Eishoji temple in 1882.

Kano's system was built around three major arts: throwing (nage waza), groundwork (katame waza) and striking (ate mi waza). Throwing techniques, drawn from the Kito ryu, were further divided into standing (tachi waza) and sacrifice (sutemi waza) techniques. Standing techniques included hand (te waza), hip (koshi waza) and foot (ashi waza) throws. Sacrifice techniques include full (ma sutemi waza) and side sacrifice (yoko sutemi waza) projections. Groundwork and striking techniques were drawn more heavily from the Tenshin-Shinyo ryu. Groundwork was organized into groundholds (osaekomi waza), strangulations (shime waza) and joint locks (kansetsu waza). While Kano taught groundholds earlier to his students, shime and kansetsu waza were saved for those who had attained a higher ranking.

High ranking students were also expected to know the art of resuscitation (kappo), so as to conduct their training in a safe and responsible manner. Judo's striking techniques included upper (ude ate) and lower (ashi ate) limb blows. Among the techniques used were those fists, elbows, hand-edges, fingers, knees and feet strikes. Because of its lethal nature, Ate mi waza was also taught exclusively to high ranking Judokas at the Kodokan.

The Judo syllabus was taught in a well-structured manner. Standing techniques were organized into five sets ranking from less strenuous or technically difficult to more advanced (the Gokyo no waza). Ground and striking techniques were organized into sets also. All sets were introduced slowly as Judokas became more proficient in the art. Students were divided into mudansha (color belt level) and yudansha (black belt level). Mudansha were ranked into five grades (kyus) while yudansha were ranked into ten degrees (dans). Ranks indicated the student's level of expertise in the art as different techniques were introduced at each level.

To complete the transition from Jutsu (martial) to Do (way of life), Kano added a strict code of ethics and a humanitarian philosophy to his system. Kodokan instructors and students were expected to be outstanding examples of good character and honest conduct. Any hand-to-hand combat outside of the dojo or behaviour that brought shame to the school would lead to suspension or expulsion. Kano's ultimate concern for the well-being of both the individual and the community is reflected in his teaching methods and in Judo's second guiding principle. Kano utilized four teaching methods in

his dojo: randori (free practice of all techniques, similar to the physical training of the Ju-jutsu schools), kata (pre-arranged forms, considered the more technical rituals of the art), ko (his systematic lecturing), and mondo (periods of question and answer). The debates between Kano and his disciples led him to the second principle of Judo, Jita Kyoei (mutual benefit and prosperity). Kano believed that the diligent practice of Judo should lead to the realization that one could not progress at the expense of others; only mutual prosperity offered the key to any real progress in human life.

He was so taken with the principle that he regarded its diffusion, through Judo, as his greatest mission in life. Most of Judo's development took place around the turn of the century. In 1889 Kano travelled to Europe and America to promote the art. He would make as many as eight trips to other continents to propagate Judo before his untimely death at sea, on May 4, 1938.

Judo's technical aspects came into full maturity in 1900 with the founding of the Kodokan Yudanshakai (association of black belt holders). On July 24, 1905 eighteen masters representing the leading Japanese Ju-jutsu ryus gathered at the Butokukai in Kyoto to join Kano's system. Kano's work had triumphed over Ju-jutsu in Japan. The final touches were added in 1909 when the Kodokan became a foundation and in 1920 with the revision of the Gokyo no Waza. The art's intellectual and moral philosophy came into full being by 1922 with the creation of the Kodokan Cultural Judo Society.

Between 1912 and 1952 (when the International Judo Federation was founded), several of Kano's disciples immigrated to other continents to spread the art. Sensei Gunji Koizumi, 7th Dan, went to Great Britain in 1918, to found the London Budokwai. Mikinosuke Kawaishi, 7th Dan, a world expert on Judo kata, went to France in 1922. Sensei Sumiyuki Kotani, 8th Dan in 1952, trained the first team of American Air Force Judokas at the Kodokan (that team became the seed of American Judo and what is now the United States Judo Association). As Judo spread throughout the West it slowly gained the form of a sport. Its inclusion in the 1964 Olympic Games and popularity in World and Regional Games led to an emphasis on its physical aspects, sometimes at the expense of its intellectual, moral and spiritual underpinnings.

Chapter 3

In an effort to preserve the philosophical and spiritual aspects of Dr.Kano's art Zen Judo was created in England in 1974. Judo had been introduced to Great Britain in the early 1900s with Sensei Yukio Tani. He was followed by Sensei Uyenishi who taught Judo to the British Army at Aldershot. Sensei Gunji Koizumi founded the most famous Judo club in the country, the Budokwai of London, where he and Tani taught for many years. The post-war period saw the organization of several major Judo associations in Great Britain. The British Judo Association (BJA) was the largest and most influential. Not long after the BJA's creation, the British Judo Council was formed under the influence of Sensei Tani, and a third organization, the Kyu Shin Do, was created by Sensei Kenshiro Abe. Zen Judo originated from the Kyu Shin Do.

Shihan Dominick McCarthy, the founder of Zen Judo, was trained in the Kyu Shin Do system. When the Kyu Shin Do began to emphasize more Western aspects, Shihan McCarthy created a separate group to preserve its original spirit. In September 1974 the Zen Judo ryu came into life at the Community Center on Love Lane, Petersfield,England.

Since its creation, Zen Judo has spread across England. There have been clubs also in Germany, Canada and now in the United States. The first American dojo opened its doors on March 6, 1991 in Nashville, Tennessee, under the leadership of Sensei H.B. (Keo) Cavalcanti. The first American Zen

black belts were awarded in his club to Kimberly Sory, Stephanie Bunte, Elizabeth McDaniel, and Neal Warren.

Zen clubs tend to attract a good following, with low membership dropout and high retention rates. Student interest in the art seems considerably greater than in the competitive styles. As an effort to preserve the traditional style of Judo pioneered by Dr. Kano, Zen Judo dojos do not participate in tournaments or competitions. As a Judo ryu it is devoted to technique, skill, and merit rather than the athletic ability.

Webmaster Note:-

On the 1st. January 2000 Sensei Andrew Millard 6th. Dan former Technical Director and Gordon Lawson 3rd. Dan formed The British Zen Judo Family Association with the aim of "taking it (Zen Judo) forward to new beginnings". What effect this will have on the Zen Judo style we will have to wait and see. For more information see other links.

(10th.Jan. 2000)

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A Poem by Sensei Dominick McCarthy - The Founder of Zen Judo

From Start to End - From Colour To Colour

The white is yours from the start, so hold it well.
Yellow, to eliminate your fear, brings out the best.
Orange, to feed the fruit of your labours, to ban all pretext;
Green, to gather wisdom like Mother Earth.
Blue, to reach for the sky - its limits are yours.
When Brown appears, like fertile soil, you are almost settled.
Only Black, at the last, helps you peer through the darkness,
of the everlasting light of Arts.

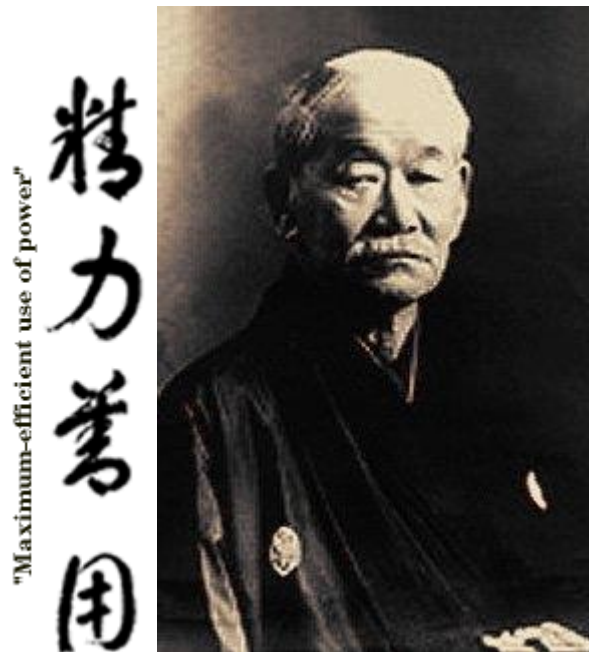
Dominick McCarthy.

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Appendix 1. - Dr Jigoro Kano (The Founder of Kodokan Judo)

Dr Jigoro Kano

The Founder of Kodokan Judo



Judo is best known in the west as an Olympic sport and in this form has been practiced by a large number of students. But when it was first practiced in Japan it was as a form of self-defence. Dr Jigoro Kano was born in 1860 in Hyogo Prefecture, he studied Jujitsu for many years with a number of masters and from this wealth of knowledge formulated his method of self-defence which he called Judo to distinguish it from the original Jujitsu.

In 1882 he founded the Kodokan in Japan to teach his style of what has become known as Kodokan Judo. He graduated from Tokyo Imperial University having studied literature, politics and political economy. Among his many achievements was in 1909 when he became the first Japanese member of the International Olympic Committee.

He died at sea aboard the Hikawa Maru in 1938 on his way back from an IOC meeting in Cairo.

Appendix 2. – Kenshiro Abbe (The Founder of Kyu Shin Do)

Kenshiro Abbe 8th Dan

The Founder of Kyu Shin Do

Webmaster Note:

The following article was published in the Butterfly Newsletter by Brian Baggot 6th Dan Zen Judo and is reproduced here with his kind permission.

Born on 15th. December 1915 in a village in the Tokushima province, Japan, Kenshiro was the fourth son of Toshizo and Koto Abbe. His father was a school master and a Kendo teacher, however he was never to learn Kendo from his father as Toshizo died tragically in a flood during a Kendo weekend course in the mountains in September 1919. Kenshiro was initially keen on Sumo wrestling and was the strongest in his class he won many prizes. He eventually became Tokushima schools champion of wrestling.

At 14 years old Kenshiro joined judo classes when they were founded in the village. His enthusiasm was boundless and he was awarded 1st. Dan within a very short time. A year later he graded to 2nd. Dan and at 16 years old he became champion of the High School Judo League at Tokushima and was awarded 3rd. Dan. He was the youngest ever to gain this award.

During his 5th year at school he entered an inter-city tournament involving 30 towns, representing the town of Kawashima as Captain. Being very fast and light he threw every opponent and was given the nickname of Pegasus, the winged horse. Kenshiro was successful in gaining entrance to 'Busen', exclusive training college of the Butokukai in Kyoto where he studied Kendo and Judo. He received instruction in Kendo from Ogawa Hanshi, 10th. Dan Sword master and in that year he was the youngest student to gain his 4th. Dan in Judo.

Every Saturday afternoon tournaments were held at the Busen which involved Kenshiro fighting five opponents in succession, each contest lasting five minutes. He invariably won these tournaments and in the Autumn of his second year he gained 5th. Dan.

In June 1937, at the age of 21, Kenshiro enlisted in the army, spending the next four years in Manchuria where he had no chance of training in Judo. As an officer he was, however, required to study Kendo and was awarded 3rd. Dan. He finished his service in 1941, returning to Kyoto and the Busen, but was recalled when the war began to Tokushima to run a training company. The Japanese army concentrated on Jukendo - bayonet fighting - and he considered it his duty to study the weapon in depth. He became one of the first and foremost exponents of the bayonet, overcoming a Kendo 6th. Dan in a Command match at the Japanese Imperial Tournament.

It was during his period of military service he first formulated his theory of Budo, Kyushindo, although he did not reveal it publicly until much later. Also at about this time he was selected by Morihei Ueshiba, the creator of Aikido, to receive special training with him. Aikido at that time was still secret and only very special students were selected to train with Ueshiba. Abbe studied for ten years under Ueshiba Sensei and became his senior student of Aikido.

Abbe was greatly concerned about the modern trend towards materialism and it was as a spiritual alternative to this that he saw his theory of Kyushindo:

Kyu: means desire, yearn, sphere or circle, search or study.

Shin: means the heart, spirit, true inner nature or nexus point, universal truth or law, to be true to oneself.

Do: means the way or path, sense of a total path. A way of life or self discipline.

Kyushindo philosophy is derived from three fundamental precepts, which are:-

1. Bambutsu Ruten: all things existent in the universe turn in a constant state of flux, undergoing a succession of changes.
2. Ritsudo: this motion is rhythmic and smooth, a flowing movement.
3. Chowa: all things act, flow, work in a perfect accord or harmony (go with the flow: Ed)

Thus to attain perfection in technique means to attain perfection as a human being, and through your studies to become a better person and a useful and positive factor in society.

(Compare this with the philosophy underlying Ueshiba's Aikido!! Ed)

During the early 1950's Abbe broke off all liaisons with the Kodokan as he was of the opinion that Japanese Judo was in the decline. This was around the time that their syllabus was reviewed and rewritten with Olympic contest in mind - the syllabus which is more or less in operation today in the sports styles of Judo.

Abbe headed for Britain and was accepted as President of the London Judo Society (LJS). Seeing Abbe in action was something new to the British, and he was noted to be amazingly powerful - he once demonstrated this by chopping a table-leg (still on the table) into two pieces using his toes!

With Bill Woods, Abbe helped form the British Judo Council and introduced his own theory of Kyushindo. He also introduced Kendo, Karate, Kyudo, Aikido, Iaido and other branches of martial arts to the UK.

Abbe later went to Europe where he taught in many countries, always returning to London. He suffered a car accident in 1960 which left him with permanent neck damage. Henceforth he was in constant pain and resultant nerve damage impaired his mental faculties.

He returned to Japan in 1964 at the time of the Tokyo Olympics, but was not received well by his family. He lodged alone in a cottage apart from the main house and remained there until his death in 1985.

Altogether Abbe resided in London for nine and a half years, at the end of which time the organisation he founded numbered some 50,000 members world-wide. One of the greatest influences in Abbe's life was Ueshiba, the founder of Aikido, under whom he studied for many years.

Abbe was very fast and light in foot and body and it was almost impossible to follow his technique when he applied it.

He would say :-

'Natural movements and natural stances are your combat movements and stances.

And your combat movements and stances are your natural movements and stances.'

On 1st. December 1985 Abbe passed away suffering from a stroke. According to his will his body was donated to be dissected at the Saitama Medical University and on 10th. June 1986 the funeral was held in Tokushima City and his remains were buried in the grave of the Abbe family. With his passing the world lost a genius.

His natural form of Judo, Kyushindo, lives on within the Zen Judo Family and maybe one day his dream will be realised and this will be taught throughout the world.

By Brian N Bagot.
(6th.Dan Zen Judo)

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The Development of Judo In Great Britain

And The Introduction of Kyu Shin Do

Webmaster Note:

The following article was written by Nigel Porter who has been a member of the British Judo Council, Kyu Shin Do Budo Academy (Bideford) and The Tokushima Budo Council International. And is reproduced here with his kind permission.

LIST OF CONTENTS:-

Chapter 1. - Jujitsu Arrives.

Chapter 2. - Judo Is Accepted.

Chapter 3.- Kenshiro Abbe and Kyu Shin Do.

Chapter 1 - Jujitsu Arrives

On the 26th of September 1899 a British engineer, called Barton Wright, returned to England after an extended period of living and working in Japan. He brought with him an eighteen year old Japanese man whom he had developed a friendship with, and who he believed had something special to give to the British people.

The Japanese youth was Yukio Tani (1881 - 1950) and he was an exponent of the Japanese art of Jujutsu. The combination of Barton Wright, as entrepreneur /manager and Yukio Tani, a natural showman, led the two men into touring the Music Hall circuit, where Tani would challenge anyone willing to wrestle with him. With the temptation of winning £1 for lasting each minute, over an initial 5 minutes, or £50 for winning, there was never a shortage of challengers. However, at a diminutive 5 feet 6 inches (1.67Mts) Tani allegedly lost only one music hall match and that was to a fellow Japanese national.

In 1900 S.K. Uyenishi joined the circuit, but soon after began teaching self-defence and physical education at the Army Gymnastic HQ in Aldershot. In the May of 1906 the feet of arguably one of the most famous Judoka, in British history, touched our shores. His name was Gunji Koizumi (1885 - 1965), a Chinese lacquer expert by trade and master of Tenshin Shinyo Jujutsu, Kenjutsu, Akishima Ryu Jujutsu and Katsu. He was only to stay for a year, training and instructing his martial Arts around the country, notably at the Kara Ashikaga Jujutsu school, the Piccadilly School of Jujutsu, the RNVR, etc. until he decided to journey to the United States. He did, however return in 1910 and eventually founded the London Budokwai, in 1918, offering Jujutsu, Kendo and other Japanese arts to the British public. A year later Koizumi asked Tani to join him as an instructor at his school of Martial Ways and Tani accepted, retiring from his Music Hall bouts.

In 1919 another, yet to be famous, Martial Artist arrived in Britain. This time it was a Japanese gentleman by the name of Masutaro O'Tani (1899 - 1977), who had worked his passage on a merchant vessel. He was a Jujutsu man, having trained in Japan as well as Ceylon, where he had lived during his passage.

Chapter 2 - Judo Is Accepted

Koizumi and Tani were teaching their Jujutsu method at the Budokwai until 1920, when a delegation formed by Jigoro Kano, the founder of Kodokan Judo, Hikoichi Aida and E.J.Harrison, both Kodokan Dan grades and members of the Budokwai, influenced them to convert to Judo. This was achieved and the Jujutsu men were awarded their Judo 2nd Dans, in recognition of their technique and status. From there on Judo was formally taught at the Budokwai and this can be recognised as the starting point of British Judo. Meanwhile Masutaro O'Tani had been looking to continue his Martial Arts training and subsequently joined the budokwai in 1921. Within 5 years he had risen to the position of assistant instructor to Yukio Tani and become close friends with this character.

In 1948 the British Judo Association (BJA) was formed, uniting the majority of Judo clubs in Great Britain and installing Gunji Koizumi as President. Two years later Yukio Tani passed away, having previously suffered a debilitating stroke. Over the next few years O'Tani became disenchanted with the Judo that was being promoted by the BJA and its anglicising of the Japanese sport he loved. He was also said to be unhappy with the level of support and care that had been extended to his old friend Tani. Consequently, in 1954 O'Tani severed his links with the BJA and formed his own organisation - the Masutaro O'Tani Society of Judo (MOSJ).

Around that time the London Judo Society (LJS), a BJA group co-founded by George Chew and Eric Dominy, decided to invite a high ranking Japanese Judo player/teacher to their society, to become their chief instructor.

Chapter 3 - Kenshiro Abbe and Kyu Shin Do

In 1955 and as a result of the LJS decision, a man, whose credentials were incredible by Japanese standards let alone British ones, arrived in Britain. The man was Kenshiro Abbe (1915 - 1985) and he was single handedly to have more of an impact on British Martial Arts than anyone who had gone before or, for that matter, after.

Abbe Sensei was born in Tokushima province, Japan and was first introduced to Martial Arts by his father, a Kendo teacher, at the age of 3. Abbe Sensei learnt Sumo wrestling at school and became the regional school champion. In 1931 Abbe Sensei began Judo and one year later, when only 15 years old, was graded 2nd Dan. His Judo prowess grew from there, becoming the Tokushima High schools champion at 16 and receiving his 3rd Dan from the national Martial Arts governing body, the Butokukai.

In 1933 he enrolled at the Butokukai's special teacher training college and later was graded 5th Dan, graduated and retained as an instructor. In 1935, aged only 18, Abbe Sensei won both the All Japan East/West Tournament and the 5th Dan championships, a pinnacle in competitive Judo. It was around this time that Abbe Sensei began a 10 year study of Morihei Ueshiba's Martial Art - Aikido and formulated his own Budo philosophy of Kyu Shin Do. Abbe Sensei received his 6th Dan in 1938 and during the war years ran a military training company, where he studied and mastered Jukendo, the way of the bayonet.

In 1945 the Butokukai graded Abbe Sensei 7th Dan Judo and 6th Dan Kendo and in 1949 he took up the position of chief instructor to the Kyoto Police and the Doshisha University. Six years later Abbe Sensei was teaching in Britain.

Although initially invited by the LJS to be their chief instructor, a series of disagreements resulted in Abbe Sensei parting company with them. The stage was set for Abbe Sensei to teach pure Kyu Shin Do to the British and in order to achieve this Abbe Sensei formed a number of martial Arts Councils,

including the British Judo Council (BJC), the British Kendo Council, the British Karate Council, etc. as well as an overall governing body - the International Budo Council (IBC). It was through these various councils that, by 1957, Abbe Sensei had introduced Kendo (the way of the sword), Aikido (the way of spiritual harmony), Kyudo (the way of the bow), Jukendo (the way of the bayonet), Iaido (the way of sword drawing), Yarido (the way of the spear) and Naginatado (the way of the halberd) to Europe.

Around this time (1956) O'Tani, by then a 5th Dan, made contact with Abbe Sensei and very soon began training under him. By 1958 O'Tani had been given the position of national coach to the BJC. The early 60's were to prove very exciting for British Martial Artists and Abbe Sensei was instrumental in inviting leading Budo teachers to Great Britain, including Nakazono Sensei - 6th Dan Aikido and Harada Sensei - 6th Dan Shotokai Karatedo.

In 1964 Abbe Sensei returned to Japan in order to see the Olympics hosted in his home land and Judo represented for the first time. It was 5 years later that he finally returned, his delay being caused by an old injury to his neck, that had gradually got worse since the car accident that caused it, back in 1960. What he returned to was a near dormant IBC and a BJC that had changed course in his absence. He felt that, instead of studying the truth of Budo, most BJC members only wanted the physical instruction, misunderstanding the origins of the teaching and consequently corrupting the essence of Abbe Sensei's Kyu Shin Do philosophy.

Subsequently Abbe Sensei set about redressing the situation, virtually dismantling the BJC and leaving in place only those worthy to help in the reconstruction. O'Tani was made president of the BJC and graded 8th Dan. O'Tani was also left in charge of the IBC, with a number of other loyal students. In 1970 Abbe Sensei returned to Japan and in the same year O'Tani merged the MOSJ into the BJC. During the early and mid 70's the management of both the BJC and IBC became difficult for O'Tani and those that had been left to continue Abbe Sensei's teachings. In 1978 the BJC severed it's links with the now 'all but' redundant IBC. Since then many organisations have sprung up, promoting the Kyu Shin Do philosophy, but few truly grasp what Abbe Sensei meant.

Abbe Sensei sadly passed away on December 1st 1985.

By Nigel Porter

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