Specific efforts to introduce judō into girls’ education

A number of young women often with health problems or weak physical conditions consulted Kanō about taking up judō as an activity to improve their health. Consequently, the idea developed to also introduce judō into girls’ schools. In particular, Miyagawa Hisako, née Ōba, and one of Kanō’s earliest female students would become very important in the establishment of the Kōdōkan Joshi-bu [Kōdōkan Women’s Department] and in developing women’s judō. Miyagawa was likely born in or around 1877 [57]. Bennett states that Miyagawa graduated in March 1900, implying that she probably had started judō sometime in 1899 or 1900 [57]. It is interesting that Miyagawa is approaching judō or her interest to learn judō not from a self-defense goal, but rather seems to be driven by educational needs. As such it is easy to picture her as being mentally on the same wave length as Kanō.

It is unclear how long she remained an active student of judō and at what frequency she practiced. The school system certainly was one way through which women distributed their interest to taking up judō or self defense [73]. Ōba Hisako writes:

“Before long some ladies from the Kazoku Women’s Higher School came to train with us, and I also remember four other ladies who received recommendations to start”. (...) [57: p. 129-130]

Next to the reference to Kazoku Women’s High School, Ōba Hisako (later Miyagawa Hisako) who was a professional
teacher, would later become Head Mistress of Ō’in Chūgakkō Kōtōgakkō 桜蔭中学校・高等学校 [Tōkyō Ō’in Women’s Middle School and Vocational School], established in 1924 in the Bunkyō district, Tōkyō, the same district as the Kōdōkan. In this role she purportedly remained an outspoken advocate for women’s jūdō [73]. She was the first one to receive a special honorary shōdan from Kanō Jigorō on February 21st of 1936, when Kanō had decided to honor those women who were the earliest pioneers of women’s jūdō and who had started before the Kōdōkan Joshi-bu was created in 1924. At that point Miyagawa was 59 years old [73].

It seems that girls’ high schools formed an important catalyzing force in sensitizing women for taking up bujutsu in the late 1890s and the first decades of the 20th century. Seijō Ga- kuen 成城学園 Girls High School, Ochanomizu Girls High School お茶の水女子大学附属高等学校, Kazoku Women’s High School, and others, have produced a number of girls who expressed such interests. For as of yet still unknown reasons one of the martial arts schools that seems to have attracted more interest and enthusiasm from these women, and which therefore saw its numbers of women disciples grow, was Shin-no-shindō-ryū jūjutsu 真之神道流柔術, a school which has not survived [73].

On August 5th of 1926 Kanō-shihan held a two-week seminar at his home [74: p. 16]. The seminar targeted physical education instructors for girls and girls school instructors at Junior High School level. The rationale was that no established syllabus or methods existed for any special population group. Furthermore, Kanō opined that jūdō kata was the answer to that void. At the same time, kata could serve as a form of self-defense if ever necessary [75].

As to the contents of those classes Fukuda wrote: “In August of 1935, a clinic for Joshi Judo instructors was held. Joshi Judo had begun to expand. Following this, they began to teach Kokumin Taidoku Tandoku Renshu (Solo Exercises) and Kime-Shiki (Forms of Decision) to the Senior High School Girls in the physical education classes in the public schools.” (…)

Kanō’s achievements of a budō-based school physical education increasingly at risk for abuse by Japanese nationalist extremists and fascists during the pre-World War II (1926-1939)

A proper understanding of the history of jūdō’s incorporation in the Japanese educational system for children requires a more analytical and critical approach than the re-constructed versions offered by the Kōdōkan. The way jūdō was instructed and even structured during the first half of the 20th century, involved exercises which were conducted according to military-style orders and afforded the conscious adjustment of individual moves with the bodies of the instructor and fellow students. According to Ikeda: “… When the school curriculum was changed in May 1926, it reflected the militaristic policy to the extent that nationalism went beyond the aim of normal education to form a nation. Furthermore, after June 1928, when the Minister of Education emphasized the spirit of the founding a nation, the national ethos and ideological guidance through physical education, physical education was not only expected to increase physical strength for imperial invasion, but also to create a core role for the enhancement of characteristic Imperialism-Ideology of Japan.” (… [52: p. 202]

Thus the drive behind increasing physical education and martial art participation was motivated by much more than health or self-defense [51,53], and were part of an increasing Japanese fascism and pan-Asianism, which also involved the promotion of strong, healthy bodies. Kanō, as a pacifist, during most of his life resisted such attempts of others to abuse jūdō for political or ideological purposes. However, it seems that towards the end of his life with some of his strongest supporters passed away or changed camps, he increasingly lost control of where jūdō was going.

“During the Taishō 大正 years (1912-1926), liberal educationalists in the councils of the Ministry of Education safeguarded the younger age groups as well as female students against these objectives of the Ministry of Army.” (…) [76: p. 69]

Kanō too can be categorized here, hence the increasing gap between Kanō and other powers within the nation and within the Kōdōkan.

“Classical bujutsu as well as budō, the modernised versions of Japan’s autochthonous physical culture, were regarded as equally useful for the purpose of indoctrination because of their common emphasis on obedience, endurance, and self-discipline. Furthermore, the practice of budō allowed the immediate establishment of links with a glorious tradition and the historical continuity of the warrior ethics from feudal Japan. As Reischauer had observed, both primary school and conscription convinced the peasant population, ‘who for almost three centuries had been denied swords and other arms, that they too were members of a warrior race’ and ‘inculcated in them the glory of Japan’s great military traditions and the ideal of death on the battlefield in the service of the emperor.’” (…) [76: p. 69].

Within the public education sport system, Western sports were increasingly marginalized and oppressed. “The nationalist appropriation of Western sports acquired a rather absurd, yet highly symbolical dimension, when English expressions were replaced by newly coined sport terms in Japanese.” (…) [76: p. 70].

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1 Shin-no-shindō-ryū jūjutsu was founded by Yamamoto Tamizaemon Hidehaya 山本真左衛門英早 (1715-1788) from the Northern Ward Kita-ku 北区 of Ōsaka 大阪, a school that together with Yōshin-ryū 楊心流 represented the two parent schools of Tenjin Shin'yō-ryū jūjutsu 天神真鹿流柔術.
**Western failure in absorbing of Kanô’s jūdō’s educational intent outside of Japan: Feldenkrais in France as the exception on the rule**

Language problems between Japanese instructors and Western audience, absence of well-spread suitable translated Japanese jūdō books, and pedagogically insufficiently trained instructors made it virtually impossible for Kanô’s message to be transferred to a general public. Acquisition of jūdō-specific information was virtually limited to that what one could visually grab without requiring much intellectual investment: practical jūdō skills. The long-term effect in the West was that jūdō was merely a system of tricks meant to achieve physical victory over and adversary. Later the Western understanding would evolve to yet another misconception, namely that jūdō primarily would be a contest sport where the goal is to defeat as many opponents as possible on the way towards winning a medal and a champion’s title. The true intent of Kōdōkan jūdō, namely to provide a proper education and stimulate intellectual development more than a century after its introduction in Europe is still completely missed out on [3,4,5,6,10,13,77-80].

One of the few exceptions of Westerners understanding jūdō beyond the mere physical aspects was Feldenkrais in France. Moshé Pinchas Feldenkrais [Hebrew: מושה פינצ'ס פלדנקרס (1904-1984)] was an Israeli physicist. Feldenkrais was born in the Ukrainian town of Slavuta. In 1910 Feldenkrais and his family move to Baranovichi/Baranovitch, Belarus. In 1918, after his Bar Mitzvah [Hebrew: בר מצווה (בְּרֵמִיצָבָה)] he left his family to emigrate to Palestine, a relatively adventurous exploit in those days. The journey took six months to complete. Feldenkrais arrived some time after the 1917 Balfour Declaration [The Balfour Declaration refers to a letter from November 2nd of 1917 written for the UK by its Foreign Secretary, Arthur James Balfour, and which indicates that the British government favors the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in the Palestine, and commits to facilitate achieving this goal.]. There he worked as a laborer before obtaining his high-school diploma in 1925 after just two years of study instead of the usual five years. After graduation, he worked as a cartographer for the British survey office [81].

During his time in Palestine Feldenkrais began his studies of self-defense, including jūjutsu as a way to protect him from increasing Arab bullying and attacks against Jewish people. A soccer injury to his knee 1929 would later figure into the development of his method. During his recovery he completes two books in Hebrew, one on autosuggestion (1930), the other on jūjutsu (1931). In 1930 Feldenkrais decided to move to Paris, some of his reasons being his intent to further his skill in jūjutsu and to study medicine. However, he had little money and had to work as a charcoal on the ship that brought him to France in order to be able to afford the journey. In Paris he found employment waiting tables in a number of small restaurants. His dream of studying medicine is impossible to realize without considerable financial means, thus he decides to attend a specialized public school for engineering instead and finds himself at the École des Travaux Publics [School of Public Works] (ESTP) in the Quartier Latin, where he graduated in 1933 with specialties in mechanical and electrical engineering. Even though Feldenkrais had no relations in Paris, and was struggling with the language, his kind nature and humility opens doors. He became acquainted with the 1935 chemistry Nobel laureate J. Frédéric Joliot-Curie† (1900-1958), Feldenkrais became an assistant to J. Frédéric Joliot-Curie, who was a professor at the Institute for Radium, and started studying in 1933 at the Sorbonne with the intent to obtain a doctorate in engineering. One of his professors there was Marie Curie hence Feldenkrais also became acquainted with her [81]. In 1933, the same year Feldenkrais had started giving jūjutsu lessons, he was also helping editing a magazine called l’Auto. Another person who worked for the magazine, Charles Faroux, an outstanding world champion billiard player learns that a certain Kanô Jigorô is visiting Paris. Knowing that Feldenkrais has written a book in Hebrew about jūjutsu he informs him of Kanô’s visit that had already included two jūdō demonstrations, one of the September 25th of 1933 on the premises of the Secrétariat à l’Éducation Physique, the other one on September 28th of 1933 in the École de Joinville, and that Kanô would be giving another demonstration in the presence of the Sugimura Yotarō, Ambassador

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1 Note: it is unclear who exactly Feldenkrais learnt jūjutsu from and what precise style this was. It is not even sure he actually had a jūjutsu teacher. Kanô writes about his first encounter with Feldenkrais and that in re-sponse to his question to Feldenkrais as to where he had learnt his martial skills, Feldenkrais “said he had studied jūdō by reading more than forty different books” (…) [82: p. 48].
2 J. Frédéric Joliot was an assistant to double Nobel laureate Marie Curie and married her daughter Irène Curie after which he added her surname to his own with a hyphen.
of Japan to France, the French Minister of Education & Fine Arts, Jean Zay (1904-1944), and the French Under-Minister of Education Hippolyte Ducas (1881-1970) at the École du Saar et Métier [82: p. 47 & 86].

Feldenkrais, as expected, attended the event and became acquainted with Kanō. Feldenkrais stood out as an unusual non-Japanese advocate of Japanese martial arts. He already had jūjutsu experience (apparently obtained through studying books), and he had an outspoken intellectual background and network. Because of his engineering background, he had thorough understanding in mechanics, and his original interest to become a medical doctor has caused him to have an outspoken interest in human anatomy. Given Feldenkrais’ own bad knee injury he was particularly sensitized to the possibility of ‘reeducating’ and rehabilitating the body and how Kanō’s jūdō might contribute to that. Because of his background, and because of his network involving the intellectual and academic elite, Feldenkrais was able to get several high profile people involved in jūdō. Kanō was not insensitive to this realizing well what he needed in order to market and popularize his jūdō outside of Japan. Thus, he encouraged Feldenkrais to take up jūdō, which Feldenkrais did. Feldenkrais also became one of the early European black belts, even though other Caucasians like Americans David T. Weed (first ever Westerner who gained Kōdōkan shodan: 1910) and Allan Corstorphin Smith (fifth Westerner who gained Kōdōkan shodan: 1916), Russian Vladimir Oschepkov (fourth Westerner who gained Kōdōkan shodan: June 6th, 1913), and British like Ernest J. Harrison (second Westerner who gained Kōdōkan shodan: 1911), W.E. Steers (third Westerner who gained Kōdōkan shodan: 1926), Trevor P. Leggett (London Budōkwai shodan: 1926), H. Shepherd (London Budōkwai shodan: 1926), and Sarah B. Mayer (first Western woman to obtain a Japanese shodan in jūdō, though not from the Kōdōkan but from the Butokukai in Kyōto: February 27th of 1935), or Irishman Dermot M. ‘Pat’ O’Neill (already Kōdōkan sandan in 1935, and thus ‘s worlds most senior foreign jūdōka at the time) had preceded him. As to Europe, the Budōkwai in London from 1920 through 1935 promoted 37 people to shodan among who three women, and another eleven people in 1936. That same year (1936), Feldenkrais earned his shodan black belt in jūdō from Kawaishi (though unlike what is sometimes claimed, not from Kanō and later gained hisidan 2nd degree black belt in 1938.

Feldenkrais was a co-founding member of the Jiu Jitsu Club de France, located at the Rue Beaubourg 82 in Paris, and one of the oldest jūdō clubs in Europe, which is still in existence today. Among his jūdō students was his boss J. Frédéric Joliot-Curie and wife Irène, as well as the French Jewish chemist and wartime nuclear energy developer Bertrand Goldschmidt (1912-2002). The jūdō club would merge in 1937 with Kawaishi’s club, the Club Franco-Japonais, which had been created by Kawaishi Mikinosuke (1899-1969), in July 1936, the same year as the foundation of Feldenkrais’ club. The new club would retain the name given by Feldenkrais, and Kawaishi then a Butokukai 4th dan–holder in jūdō who had arrived in Paris in October 1935, would become the chief instructor (Figure 6). Kanō had been the honorary president of Feldenkrais’ club since its opening.

In 1935 Feldenkrais translated his Hebrew jūjutsu book in French and published it under the name La défense du faible contre l’agresseur [The defense of the weak against the aggressor]. In 1938, the same year Feldenkrais married his wife Yoan Rubinstein (Beringer 2010), he also published his first jūdō book ABC du Judo. Between 1939-1940 Feldenkrais worked under physicist Paul Langevin, famous for his work on magnetism and Brownian movement (Langevin equation), of which the importance in understanding jūdō biomechanics was later demonstrated by Italian physicist Attilio Sacrapianti [99].

With the Germans in 1940 moving up to Paris, Feldenkrais of Jewish origin was forced to flee to Great-Britain. He became a science officer in the Admiralty working on Anti-

1 Minister of National Education & Fine Arts from 1936 until 1939
2 Dallas Morning News, January 6th, 1911
3 Indian Evening Gazette, February 26th, 1916.
4 Japan Times, April 3, 1913, p. 6
5 Japan Times, March 1st, 1935
6 During the second residential stay of the inaugural Master’s in Teaching and Coaching Jūdō course in January 2012 in Ostia, Rome, the instructor of jūdō for children, Nicola Moraci incorrectly claimed and insisted that Feldenkrais would have been the first non-Japanese and European black belt which he supposedly would have received from Kano.
7 Feldenkrais is listed on a website with personalities of the Butokukai. There it says that he would have been promoted to shodan already in 1932: http://www.budokwai.org/past_personnelities.htm. However, upon further verification, the name of Feldenkrais does not appear anywhere in the historic dan-rank register of the Budōkwai. In fact, Feldenkrais only joined the Budōkwai in 1948, thus well after he had left France and had moved to England. Further investigation showed that the information on the Budōkwai website was copied from the Judo Magazine of September 1959 as part of a series on “jūdō personalities”, and was not cross-referenced with the club’s dan-rank register. For these reasons and because the 1932 date does not appear anywhere else, it must be assumed that it is a typo [Bowen, John: Personal conversation, March 13th, 2012].
8 Feldenkrais’ shodan, since it was issued by Kawaishi, was recognized in France and Europe, but was not directly recognized by the Kōdōkan because Kawaishi was not an official Kōdōkan envoy [83: p. xvii, preface by Michel Brousse].
9 Also, in France, he was also have been preceded by Maurice Cottreau (Kawaishi’s first student and France’s first jūdō black belt), Jean De Herdt (1923-1933), and Paul A. Bonét-Maury (1900-1972).
10 The Budōkwai in London, founded in 1918 by Koizumi Gunji, was obviously older, and is commonly known as the first jūdō club in Europe and was located at 15 Lower Grosvenor Place, along the back wall of Buckingham Palace. However, earlier ‘temporary’ jūdō clubs seem to have existed. For example Sasaki Kichisaburō 佐々木吉三郎, professor at the Tōkyō Kōtō Shihan Gakkō [Tōkyō Higher Normal School] had been sent to Budapest in 1906 where he taught jūdō for a year on the sports grounds of the Budapest University Athletes Club (BEAC). That same year also the first European jūjutsu clubs were formed such as the one at Trinity College, Cambridge University, England by E.C.D. Rawlings, and the one by Erich Rahn (1885-1973) (probably Tautsumi Hōzan-rō 塚塚宗山流 in Berlin.

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is often practiced by physiotherapists. Feldenkrais believed that health is founded on good function. He asserted that his method of body/mind exploration improved functioning (health) by making individuals more aware: “What I am after is more flexible minds, not just more flexible bodies”. The Feldenkrais Method tends towards being a form of self-education as opposed to a manipulative therapy [81].

Feldenkrais’ approach was essentially experiential, grounded in tools of self-discovery. Even though in the end Feldenkrais used his knowledge mostly for rehabilitation, and even though Feldenkrais did not gear his approach specifically towards children, it proves that it is possible for Western people with the proper intellectual capacity, education and commitment to understand that judo is an education and teach it that way instead of needing to transform and reduce it into something it is not, such as for example a mere combat system or a competitive sports geared towards winning medals and titles. Feldenkrais believed that “judo should be taught more generally as a preparation to health adult behavior” [83: p. xxxviii]. He finally gave up judo, likely because of a twofold reason: 1. his ongoing troubling knee injury, and 2. the increasing transformation of traditional judo as a form of education into a mere competitive sport15.

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15 Moti Nativ, Head of Bujinkan Israel, in his foreword “Turning Point” in Feldenkrais (2010, p. xxxviii).
Kōdōkan’s formal organization of children’s jūdō and their progression through the ranks

The oldest preserved document in which Kanō discusses jūdō for children is the transcript of the May 1889 lecture before the Dai Nippon Kyōikukai [85]. This lecture was interspersed with several demonstrations. There were three different groups of children: 12-13 year olds, 14-15 year olds, and 18-19 year olds [56]. Kanō considered those who were 20 years and older as adults. Although the transcript does not directly say so, it is suggested that those three age groups for children may conform to official age categories of instruction as used by the Kōdōkan in those days. However, the above are not the age categories of children as typically known within the Kōdōkan later in Kanō’s life or today. Kōdōkan officially terms their children’s division as Yōnen-gumi 幼年組 (Figure 7). There are two subcategories within the yōnen-gumi:

- shōnen-gumi 少年組 [juveniles group] (<15 yr)
- seinen-gumi 青年組 or 成年組 [adolescent group] (>15 yr)

Jūdō rank belts also know some differences in the shōnen-gumi when compared to the adult group. Specifically beginners in the youngest group traditionally started wearing a light blue color belt, and a purple or violet belt for their sankyū 三級 [third kyū] through ikkyū 一級 [first kyū] ranks, following a change implemented in the Kōdōkan Grading Regulations in 1923 [57: p. 113].

Contents and proper structure of Japanese jūdō instruction for children as intended by Kanō Jigorō: randori + kata

According to the founder of jūdō’s own words, the proper study of jūdō essentially has to involve both randori and kata [10,73,86,87]. Thus, the same formula was followed for instruction of jūdō to children in Japan. Kata was suitable particularly for the calisthenics part and for those techniques that are unsuitable to be performed in free randori form. Kata are prearranged and abstract attack/defense choreographic forms, which represent the grammar of jūdō. It is particularly important to realize that some of the more dangerous yet essential techniques in jūdō only exist in the form of kata [85]. In other words, those who only focus on competitive fighting contests-type jūdō lose out on a crucial part of jūdō essential to properly defend oneself against malicious physical attacks [88,89]. We note that in the West most jūdōka traditionally have considered kata in jūdō as sets of skills that are only taught to and practiced by those starting to prepare for a dan rank promotion exam [90]. This evidently is a deep misunderstanding of the intentions of Kanō and the pedagogical structure of jūdō. In Japan, instruction through randori and

Figure 7. This picture shows that jūdō practice for children and adolescents at the Kōdōkan during the old days could be literally overcrowded to the degree that according to present-day safety standards, such activity would be considered outright dangerous with a high risk for anterior-cruical ligament injuries, if a person was thrown against someone’s lower leg. One must also consider that any such injuries in those days would be very debilitating and leave the person disabled for life. The picture dates from around 1905 when the jūdōgi still included shorts. From Sasaki [103: p. V]
kata, logically was complemented by kōgi 講義問答 [lectures] and mondō 講義問答 [questions and answers] (Figure 8).

Over the last five years or so the international jūdō community has started devoting more attention again to kata, driven largely by the increasing organization of international contests. Notwithstanding this recent upturn in interest, the true educational cohesion between randori and kata has been largely lost during the progressive ‘sportification’ of jūdō. Even now, with competitions and the ensuing opportunity to win medals, those who perform in kata contests often represent a different type of jūdō athlete performing before a different type of jūdō audience than those competing in and watching jūdō shiai fighting contests. The existence of “kata jūdōka” vs. “randori/shiai jūdōka” goes against a proper understanding of jūdō since kata, randori and shiai are all essential and complementary parts of a proper, holistic jūdō education [11,82,91,93,94]. Whereas traditional Japanese jūdō instruction and kata exert a positive effect on one’s socio-psychological development, from the moment kata is transformed into a competitive event, certain physiological phenomena commonly observed in standard jūdō competition will also occur, such as increases in plasma cortisol levels reflecting a surge in psychological stress [95].

A major part of Kanō’s focus after the approval by the Butokukai of the basic kata of Kōdōkan jūdō and the consolidation and distribution of Kime-no-kata in 1917, was a new project that would consist of the last kata of Kōdōkan jūdō created Kanō Jigorō, called Sei-ryoku zen'yō kokumin taiiku; the term literally means “National physical education based on the most efficient use of energy”. Kanō-shihan completed this project in 1927-1928 [60,61,63]. This exercise, though grouped with the formal exercises (kata 形) of Kōdōkan jūdō was intended to provide a logical series of gymnastics based on martial arts that could easily be performed by anyone (thus also children) anywhere (thus also in schools), and which did not require any special equipment or clothing [74] (Figure 9).

However, this kata has remained relatively unpopular, almost everywhere except in the Kōdōkan Joshi-bu. The reason presumably has to do with the general perception in many jūdōka that it differs too much from what the majority of people is looking for in jūdō: either self-defense (and the biased perception of many is that this kata lacks immediate applicability for self-defense purposes), or sporting competitive combat. Instead, Sei-ryoku zen'yō kokumin taiiku shuns any sense of spectacular stalwartness. Even though the majority of the jūdō population may themselves be to blame themselves for their ignorance of Kanō Jigorō’s true objectives in jūdō, the point remains that Sei-ryoku zen'yō kokumin taiiku for many has become the “Kata of anti-climax”. Even the inclusion of the smooth and elegant jū-shiki and the gentle yet decisive Kime-shiki did not stave off the kata becoming rapidly unpopular.

Western experiments of incorporating kata in jūdō instruction for children

Jūdō instruction for children in Western countries generally consists of three components: 1. gymnastics, usually as part of the junbi undō 準備運動 [warm-up exercises], 2. ukemi 受身 [breakfalls], 3. randori 乱取 [free fighting exercise] with preparatory, mostly static nage- 投技 [throwing techniques] and katame-waza 固 [control techniques] techniques. Kata is not typically part of Western children’s jūdō teaching syllabi. A considerable number of books, academic theses, and papers on jūdō pedagogy have been published in the
West. Remarkably, virtually all of them tend to approach jūdō for children as a 'game' or 'play' [17,19,20,21,23,27,28,29,30,96] and with a few exceptions [26,97,98,99], never as it was meant by Kanō Jigorō, who had intended jūdō as a form of education with emphasis on moral education as a preparation to improving society. Instead, even Western pedagogues tend to approach children’s jūdō as a preparation for improving physical performance in the light of optimizing sports achievements [17,30]. The misunderstanding is so well spread and serious that it has become institutionalized among Western jūdō pedagogues. One might wonder what has caused this devolution. The answer is not difficult to find. When one consults academic theses on jūdō pedagogy one only has to look at the bibliography. Academic theses are supposed to be well referenced, but what one immediately recognizes in most Western theses on jūdō pedagogy is the absence of any Japanese source in the original language [21,23]. This is even more so in popular jūdō books. To the best of our knowledge there are no research data available as to the proportion of Western jūdōka who are fluent in or at least have a good practical use of Japanese, but the number cannot be many.

Only a very minor part of Kanō’s writings on jūdō or of other Japanese jūdō textbooks has been translated into Western languages [82]. Consequently, most Western jūdōka therefore have only cursory knowledge of Kanō’s views, often brought to them merely via anecdotal stories or non-referenced information in popular magazines or on the Internet. For those Westerners doing research on jūdō, it be it in physical education, medicine, pedagogy, motor learning, and even history, there is usually no willingness or commitment to first acquire sufficient Japanese language skills, which are often essential in order to enable them to do such research properly and thoroughly. Arguably, studying Japanese to fluency is a daunting task that would require at least 5-6 years of daily commitment. There is no viable alternative, unfortunately, and we experience the results of that limitation everyday in today’s jūdō. That being said, Western experimental jūdō approaches deserve to be examined on their merit irrespective of whether they had good knowledge of Kanō’s intentions or not.

A lot of good Western pedagogical works on jūdō come from Germany. Particularly Pöhler has devoted attention to alternative approaches. In a 1998 workshop entitled “Kata für Jugendliche — eine lohnende Sache” [Kata for juveniles, a rewarding cause], Pöhler reflected upon the merits of integrating kata practice in jūdō instruction for juveniles [97]. He discerns five advantages:

- it promotes the intense theoretical discussions of judo techniques and principles
- it allows the enjoyment of judo at grassroots judo in separate age groups and groups of different abilities
- it supports perfecting techniques if it is included in such training
- it creates additional possibilities for education in juveniles and adults
- its in practice for juveniles and in sports for all, can lead to (practice) of traditional kata

But, kata practice must fundamentally change if we want to achieve these goals in juveniles and children. It is possible to practice and realize those additional opportunities when training jūdō kata in the form of “free kata” [97]. According to Pöhler, these “free kata” should meet the following conditions:

- Juveniles should be able to master them in no more than two sessions
They should be proper to the technical level of the partner who executes them.
They should be sufficiently free to allow practice in groups of mixed-ability groups, and allow different solutions or responses.
They should be incorporated into the current training program (appropriate for the belt they are pursuing), and build on other tasks.
Both partners should be active, i.e. they should switch the roles of uke and tori.
Their contents should be based on the current training syllabus or complement it.
They should have an idea or theme, which should be clarified through sensible selection, order and progression. The selection should be justified.
They could synthesize different training steps.

Even though Pöhler argues that it has to be the way he says or proposes it, he does not offer any experimental evidence or scholarly studies to back up his assertions. Pöhler also suggests that such “free kata” for juveniles should not contain more than 8-10 techniques [97]. In this way memorization should not become a burden. Eventual thematic subjects for such kata, according to Pöhler, could be: combinations and counters, transitions from standing to ground, gripping strategies, mat work, tokui-waza, or valid contest scores [97]. In this way memorization should not become a burden. Eventual thematic subjects for such kata, according to Pöhler, could be: combinations and counters, transitions from standing to ground, gripping strategies, mat work, tokui-waza, or valid contest scores [97]. In this way memorization should not become a burden. Eventual thematic subjects for such kata, according to Pöhler, could be: combinations and counters, transitions from standing to ground, gripping strategies, mat work, tokui-waza, or valid contest scores [97]. In this way memorization should not become a burden. Eventual thematic subjects for such kata, according to Pöhler, could be: combinations and counters, transitions from standing to ground, gripping strategies, mat work, tokui-waza, or valid contest scores [97].

Consequently, Pöhler also proposed kata tournaments and judging rules for competitive kata demonstrations for juveniles of 11 years and older [100].

From involvement of kata instruction in children to kata competition for children, of how history repeats itself

The pervasive need of Westerners to see everything in jūdō as a competition, as something where one is ‘better’ than another human being, is rather contrary to Kanō’s intent, although to be fair, Kanō did accept that competition was necessary for some ages as it would add additional motivation to do better. However, even in that case, the goal was self-improvement and not winning an actual place, title or medal or cup.

Kanō writes: “In everyday practice as well as in competition, an upcoming contest is often emphasized, while the essential spirit of jūdō is neglected. While it may be a proud moment, competition between schools is not the ultimate goal of the study and practice of jūdō. Students should practice jūdō not for the purpose of competition but rather to become able to use it to attain a greater purpose in life. Therefore, interscholastic competition is not a goal but rather a means toward attaining a more noble goal.” […] [82: p. 132]

“In the same way, in competition or in fighting, feeling proud of yourself after winning by inconveniencing your opponent does not fulfill the spirit of jūdō.” […] [82].
"This teaching, one of the most important concepts in jūdō fighting, says, 'If you win, do not boast of your victory, if you lose, do not be discouraged. When it is safe, do not be careless; when it is dangerous, do not fear —simply continue down the path ahead.'" [Antique Forms] [101,102,103], the two most advanced kata of jūdō and with which most Japanese adult jūdōka at ranks of 6th-8th dan and 40-50 years of jūdō experience behind their belt, still struggle. These are ri-no-kata 理の形 [forms of principles] which contain the okuden [esoteric archives] and theoretical principles of jūdō that lie far beyond what a child can grasp. Thus instead we see performance where completely made up stories are told to "give meaning to the kata" and where background music is added to give it a programmatic character [101,102]. In this way the kata become distorted into a physical symphonic poem. Whilst proponents argue that everything is justified as long as the kids are doing jūdō, such is the wrong question to ask. The correct question is the same that you would ask about them practicing randori, namely how it has improved their jūdō.

In any case, the jūdō quality of the kids in the US who already participate in national kata contests or those preciously demonstrating the Itsutsu- or Koshiki-no-kata on music, show jūdō skills that are rarely better than that of children of similar age who do not perform kata. Rationale for that undoubtedly is not that kata is useless to improve technique, but that kata is not taught for what it is as a tool to improve one's jūdō, but merely as a mechanistic choreography one has to memorize and replicate. In this case, the practice of kata obviously defeats its purpose, and is not part of "traditional jūdō instruction" (i.e., the type of instruction known to exert positive effects on children’s development), but equally of "modern competition-oriented sports jūdō" (i.e., the one linked to the many mental and social problems, such as anxiety).

That being said, we see the same phenomenon happening in Japan, which we have seen occurring in Japanese jūdō before, namely abandoning fundamental jūdō principles in order to piggyback certain questionable Western jūdō developments. We have seen this when Japan started kata competitions or veterans divisions competition. On October 10th of 2011 Japan held its First Japan Jūdō Kata Sports Tournament for Juveniles [Dai Ikka Nichi Sei Zen Koku Shōnen Jūdō Kata Kyōgi Kai] 第1回全国少年柔道形競技会 (Figure 11). With this, effectively, Japan solidified jūdō kata representing a sports performance event just like ice skating or synchronized swimming or gymnastics. One can under-
stand that Japan would do everything to prevent a repetition of the 1964 humiliation when Geesink beat the Japanese in one of their own national sports in Japan when it was put for the first time on the roster of the Olympics. Needless to say that Japan did not want to see this repeated when jūdō kata had its first World Championship, or now that suggestions have been heard on jūdō kata potentially being added next to ordinary shiai as part of the Olympic jūdō events. Maybe Japanese jūdō might not suffer the same detriments we have observed in Western jūdō, but this may well be wishful thinking. The Japanese teachers who still received instruction from direct pupils of Kanō are becoming fewer and fewer, and with that, knowledge beyond the mechanistic details of kata is rapidly deteriorating as is frequently observed during Kōdōkan international kata courses. Instead today, most discussions that are related to jūdō and budō in Japanese schools also mainly revolve around mastership of techniques [82] and cashing in on those skills in competition instead of a focus on education and on developing children and adolescents into responsible and moral citizens in accordance with Kanō’s objectives [3,4 74,104].

Modern Japanese approaches to teaching jūdō to children as a form of education

In any case, through a survey of the Japanese jūdō literature and through extensive personal experiences with jūdō in Japan, we certainly have come across a number of innovative and well-considered pedagogical approaches to children’s jūdō. One such noteworthy Japanese approach is that of Magara Hiroshi 真柄浩 from Juntendō University 回天堂大学 in Tōkyō, who is well known for the several books on jūdō for juveniles which he authored, such as, for example, the well received Me de miru jūdō kyōshitsu 目で見る柔道教室 [To look at jūdō in the classroom] [106]. In particular, Magara integrates both randori and kata in his teaching programs for children, and for that purpose has developed Shōnen jūdō-no-kata 少年柔道の形 or “Forms of jūdō for juveniles” [105].

The approach is interesting for several reasons. Firstly, it strongly contrasts with approaches in the West where many consider kata in jūdō a skill that is only taught for those starting to prepare for shodan and higher [107], thus usually at ages approximately 16 and over. Secondly, Shōnen jūdō-no-kata does not only involve randori-no-kata 乱取の形 [108,109,110], but also forms retained from Kōdōkan’s Forms of suppleness of Jū-no-kata 柔の形 [74,87,108,109] and of the Forms of decisiveness or Kime-no-kata 極の形 [87,108,109]. This is even more unusual to Western jūdō standards where the Forms of Suppleness and the Forms of Decisiveness typically are taught only to jūdōka who have reached about sandan 三段 [Third-degree black belt] and who thus are typically at least in their twenties.

Shōnen jūdō-no-kata, a proper synthesis of the lost Japanese dimension that merits being added to contemporary children’s jūdō instruction

Before reflecting on the merits of the Japanese approach to teaching jūdō to children, let’s have a closer look at Shōnen jūdō-no-kata. Magara introduced Shōnen jūdō-no-kata to the
Figure 12: This picture shows that judo practice for children and adolescents in the Grand Dojo on the 7th floor of the present-day Kodokan located at 2-chome, Kasuga-chō, in Tokyo's Bunkyō-ward, where it has been located since 1958. Practice includes both standing techniques and mat work. Picture was taken on July 15th of 2007.

Table 1: Structural and functional overview of the 27 techniques contained in Shōnen Jūdō-no-kata and divided over three main purpose groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shōnen Jūdō-no-kata</th>
<th>(Forms of Jūdō for Children)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. SHŌNEN ATEMI-NO-KATA</strong></td>
<td>少年当身の形</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[FORMS OF STRIKES FOR CHILDREN]</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Mae-geri 前蹴 [Forward kick]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ushiro-geri 後蹴 [Backward kick]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Migi (Hidari) → geri 右(左)横蹴 [Right (Left-) kick]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hiza-geri 膝蹴 [Knee thrust]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mae-tsuki 前突 [Forward thrust]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ushiro-tsuki 後突 [Backward thrust]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Mae-uchi 前打 [Forward blow]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ushiro-uchi 後打 [Backward blow]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Naname-ue-keri 斜上切 [Diagonal upward cut]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Gohō-tsuki 後方突 [Backward thrust]</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Gohō-uchi 後方打 [Backward blow]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Naname-ue-uchi 斜上打 [Diagonal upward blow]</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>II. SHŌNEN KIME-NO-KATA</strong></td>
<td>少年極の形</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[FORMS OF DECISIVENESS FOR CHILDREN]</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Idori 屈取 [Seated]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Ryōte-dori 両手取 [Seizing with both hands]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tsukkake 委掛 [Stab to the middle]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Suri-age 撈上 [Scrapping upwards]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Yoko-uchi 横打 [Striking to the side]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Kiri-komi 切込 [Slashing]</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Tachi-ai 立合 [Standing]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ryōte-dori 両手取 [Seizing with both hands]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Tsuki-age 突上 [Uppercut]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Yoko-uchi 横打 [Striking to the side]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Ke-age 前上 [Upwards kick]</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Ushiro-dori 後取 [Seizing from behind]</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>III. SHŌNEN JŪ-NO-KATA</strong></td>
<td>少年柔の形</td>
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<td></td>
<td>[FORMS OF NONRESISTANCE FOR CHILDREN]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Tsuki-dashi 突出 [Forward thrust]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Kata-oshi 肩押 [Shoulder push]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Kata-mawashi 肩掛 [Shoulder twist]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Katate-dori 片手取 [Seizing with one hand]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Katate-age 片手上 [Raising one hand]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Japanese jūdō world in a 1992 paper as part of his comprehensive structural overview of the contents of jūdō techniques [105]. No background is provided in their paper regarding its history or development, but its contents is given. The kata consists of 22 techniques divided over three series (see Table 1), named: 1. Shōnen atemi-no-kata 少年当身の形 [Forms of strikes for children] containing twelve techniques, 2. Shōnen kime-no-kata 少年極の形 [Forms of decisiveness for children] containing two subseries each of five techniques (Idori 居取 [Seated] vs. Tachi 立合 [Standing]), and 3. Shōnen jū-no-kata 少年柔の形 [Forms of nonresistance for children] also containing five techniques. The techniques found in Shōnen kime-no-kata and Shōnen jū-no-kata are retained from Kōdōkan jūdō’s kime- and jū-no-kata respectively. Kime-no-kata is known to contain unarmed as well as armed attacks with either tantō 短刀 [dagger] and wakizashi 腹差 [short sword] represented also by the tantō or katana 刀 [sword]. Within Shōnen kime-no-kata one armed attack, i.e. Kiri-komi 切込 [Slash], has been selected as apparently suitable for children and consequently was preserved within the Idori series of this new kata.

Even though Shōnen jūdō-no-kata has been around now for some 20 years, no follow-up study or data on its use or success in Japanese children's jūdō are available. It is, nevertheless, interesting to reflect further about such an approach to children’s jūdō, in particular when considering Kanō Jigorō’s thoughts and pedagogical intentions. This is particularly important when re-evaluating the question about the effects of jūdō education in children in the light of negative effects on aggression and social skills which studies have reported in connotation with modern competition-oriented jūdō teaching, and in contrast with traditional values and traditional teaching that also included kata.

Conclusions

Contrary to what is often purported by instructors, clubs and federations, Western-style jūdō practice has mostly been found to exert considerable negative effects on the mental and social development of children, including increased aggression, violence, social dysfunction and body image dissatisfaction. However, jūdō instruction programs which emphasize traditional values such as self-discipline, self-control and which included kata practice but avoided competitive fighting, significantly improved academic achievement and social behavior of normal children and of children with a history of delinquency. Ever since its inception Western jūdō teaching has been focusing on and overemphasizing competition and winning [11,111]. In this way Western jūdō has largely become a major distortion Kano’s intention. This anomaly historically is a consequence of most Western jūdō instructors having acquired their skills and jūdō knowledge from Japanese-unable instructors, federations, populist sources, or from Japanese instructions who lacked sufficient bilingual abilities. Indeed, Japanese instructors oftentimes established themselves solely by their physical prowess which enabled them to display higher technical skills and beat the strongest Western contestants, rather than by possessing the literacy to properly explain abstract issues, intellectual insights and nuances. Basic winning and losing rather than academic discourse or critical analysis have dominated the development of jūdō in the West. In addition, most Westerners in jūdō often were and have remained ignorant of the original Japanese sources due to the same lack of thorough Japanese language ability, the unavailability of those Japanese sources in Western libraries, and hence were forced to depend on equally flawed knowledge from communicated to them by more senior instructors, while lacking the heuristic analytical skills to assess the veracity of that often flawed knowledge.

More than anything else it was Kanō’s intent to deliver a new form of education to enhance people’s morality already from a young age, so that one could and would actively contribute to making the world into a better place. The vehicle to achieve this would be, to have Western-style physical education in the school system in Japan replaced by jūdō. This is what Kanō for more than three decades spent the majority of his energy on. This goal was finally achieved in January 1931.

Although it is fairly well known that Kanō derived a large part of his educational ideas from Westerners, in particular, John Dewey, Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill, he was also influenced by several other outspoken liberal-minded foreigners, such as, for example, Lafcadio Hearns. Contrary to what is generally known Kanō did not derive his ideas solely from Japanese, American and British or Irish intellectuals, but also from several French thinkers, such as notably, radical socialist and pacifist Ferdinand E. Buisson, and educator Octave Gréard. In the West, though, initially very few understood that Kanō’s jūdō was actually about education rather than about winning fights. One person who appreciated the multi-dimensional nature of jūdō was Moshé Feldenkrais in Paris, though in later life jūdō for him rather became part of a holistic well-being and form of rehabilitation.

The oldest Kōdōkan source dealing with jūdō for children probably is Kanō’s 1889 lecture before the Dai Nippō Kyōkai [85]. The Kōdōkan refers to its children’s division as yōnen-gumi, which was divided up in two categories, the shōnen-gumi [juveniles <15 yr] and shenen-gumi [adolescent group >15yr]. According to the founder of jūdō’s own words, the proper study of jūdō essentially has to involve both randori and kata. Thus, the same formula was followed for instruction to children in Japan, with an emphasis on discipline, etiquette, gymnastics and technique, and exclusion of children’s games that are only of limited relevance or which are itself not jūdō, but which in the West are often included to infuse jūdō practice with ‘fun’. In Japan and according to Kanō, kata was suitable particularly for the calisthenics part and for those techniques that are unsuitable to be performed in free randori form. It is extremely rare in the West though for kata to make part of the standard jūdō curriculum for children, and when it does, again the factor competition, now in the form of kata competition, is never far away [11,111]. The same evolution is now taking place in Japan. In October 2011 Japan held its first
All Japan Kata Tournament for Juveniles in this way certainly attracting additional interest, but at the same time sadly furthering the erosion process that Kōdōkan jūdō is currently undergoing. In Japan, Magara Hiroshi has proposed Shōnen jūdō-no-kata "Forms of jūdō for juveniles", an exercise resulting from critical analysis of the jūdō educational goals for children. The kata involves randori, as well as atemi and forms of suppleness. It shuns the competitive element and brings children's practice back closer to Kanō's intentions. It is a well-thought and worthwhile exercise which Western instructors should consider implementing in their instruction sessions to children. In doing so, they should understand that emphasis should be on bilateral development, motor skills, sound technique, timing, gymnastics, and not on performance or obsessive mechanistic conformity which is so often present in kata instruction.

Notes
Japanese names in this paper are listed by family name first and given name second, as common in traditional Japanese usage and to maintain consistency with the order of names of Japanese historic figures.

For absolute rigor, long Japanese vowel sounds have been approximated using macrons (e.g. Kōdōkan) in order to indicate their Japanese pronunciation as closely as possible. However, when referring to or quoting from Western literature, the relevant text or author is cited exactly as per the original source, with macrons used or omitted accordingly.

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References


