

Black Belt Judo Blog on Jigoro Kano's Maxims

By [Gary Goltz](#)

1/22/2021

In my last Blog I covered how Jigoro Kano in developing judo by eliminating the jujitsu techniques which would lead to injuries, created the ability to [randori](#) free practice at full intensity. The result of this intense level training, coupled with a high degree of safety, was that judoka became very effective fighters. Kano's student Mitsuyo Maeda traveled to South America and Cuba engaging in matches resembling today's UFC but much rougher.

Back in Japan at the Kodokan the battle between judo and the various remaining jujitsu styles continued.



Tsunjiro Tomita



Yoshitsugu Yamashita



Sakujiro Yokoyama

Kano's top students included Tsunejiro Tomita and his son Shiro Saigo, author of the famous judo novel "*Sugata Sanshiro*", Seiko Higuchi known for his "*yama-arashi*" mountain storm highly effective sweeping hip throw, Sakujiro "Devil" Yokoyama", and Yoshitsugu (Yoshiaki) Yamashita who became well known in the West as President Theodore Roosevelt's personal judo Sensei.

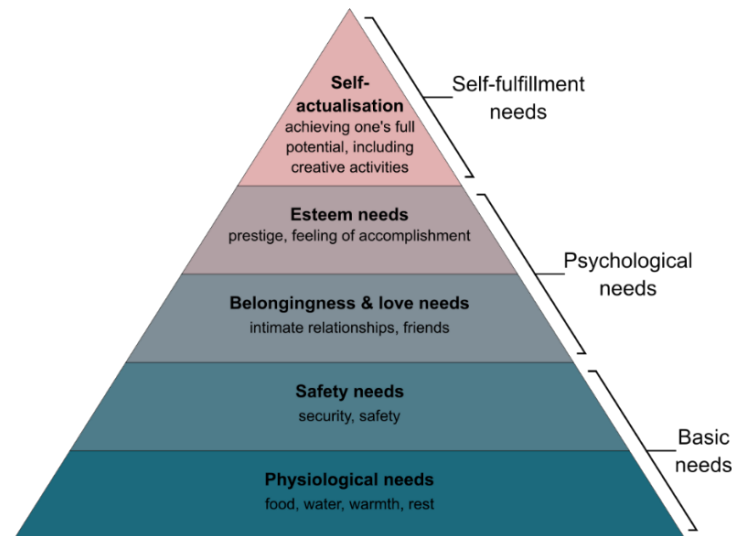
These top students of Kano's Judo continued to prevail in contests to determine the best martial art for use by the Tokyo Police. They were a tough group and Kano realized his group could become thug like if they weren't given a higher purpose.

During my 1995 trip to Japan, led by Kazuo Shinohara, the U.S. National Champion from the early 60's, I recall stopping by his father's dojo in Iyomishima. We also went to visit the Inuyama Samurai Castle nearby. It required taking a ski lift to the mountain top it was located on.

There Kaz' dad told us the story that real reason Kano developed his judo maxims was to keep his fighters tame and under control.



At the root of Kano's judo are these [two principles](#); *seiryoku zenyo* (to make the best use of your power or be energy efficient) and *jita kyoei* (to go forward together with your opponent or win/win). These principals added together, along with the adage *Onore wo tsukushite Naru wo matsu* (do your best and await the result) will work towards the ultimate goal of judo is *Jiko no Kansei* (to seek perfection of character). In his lecture [The Contribution of Judo to Education](#) Kano Shihan addresses this further.



Abraham Maslow would later define this as the highest level of fulfillment in his [Hierarchy of Needs](#) or [self-actualization](#). This is a person who really knows themselves in terms of the good, bad, and even the ugly. They can accept positive self-criticism and even seek it out. They know their own proclivities and are able to laugh at themselves.

For instance, people often make jabs at me about my hogging the microphone or the spotlight at events or meetings. Rather than take offense, I've learned to embrace these jabs and laugh at myself! This is in contrast to some very high ranking judo Sensei I've seen take offense to being told they were too intense.

Being able to take self-criticism even seek it out, is also an essential survival skill in business.

Many people do what Kano called **Small Judo** which is to focus only on the application of the physical techniques in the dojo or in winning *shiai* contests. **Big Judo** Kano defined as how one applies judo to all aspects of their life in an effort to improve themselves and contribute something positive towards the betterment of society. I will address this further in one of my future blog's regarding judo and life skills.

The late [Yukimitsu Kano](#) (Jigoro Kano's grandson) and me at the Kodokan in 1991





Seiryoku Zenyo

Jita Kyoei

My son [Nathan](#) displayed his passion for judo by having Kano's maxims tattooed on his back prior to his study at the [International Budo University](#) in Japan. A Chinese nurse once commented to him during a medical examination that to her these translated simply as 'Win/Win'.

Watch [Judo: from War to a Way](#)

