# Judo and the Olympic Stage

How Japan Used Sports to Build an International Reputation (1912-1940)

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Under the gaze of 85,000 excited spectators filling the seats of the Tokyo Olympic Stadium and millions more watching through international telecasts, on October 10, 1964, Yoshinori Sakai ran up the stairs to light the Olympic caldron, and the XVIII Tokyo Olympic Games began. The first ever Olympiad set in a non-Western nation, the 1964 Tokyo Olympics served as a symbol of peace, hope, and friendship between nations following the two world wars of the twentieth century. For Japan, Sakai, who was born on the day of the bombing of Hiroshima, as final torchbearer, newly built infrastructure, and the ability to live broadcast the Games exemplified Japan's postwar reconstruction and industrialization capabilities. It was also the first time that judo – or indeed any non-Western sport – was introduced as part of the Olympic competitions. The success of the Tokyo Olympics altered global perception of Japan both politically and culturally, as it proved the country's ability to express national power and adapt to modernity. But, how did Japan get to this point?

This use of international sport competition to build Japan's global reputation was not a new phenomenon and had been in motion for the half century preceding the event. Japanese athletes first participated in the 1912 Stockholm Olympics as a symbol of bridging the gap between the East and the West, with the support of International Olympic Committee (IOC) Founder Pierre de Coubertin. The creator of judo, Dr. Jigoro Kano, became heavily involved with the IOC because he believed in the principles of building international relationships and national strength through bolstering the physical and moral health of the individual. Involvement in the Far Eastern Championship Games and the global spread of judo were two ways through which Kano sought to accomplish these goals. In 1940, Tokyo was set to host the Olympics as a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Robin Kietlinksi, "Japan in the Olympics, the Olympics in Japan," *Education About Asia* 21, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Christian Tagsold, "The 1964 Tokyo Olympics as Political Games," *The Asia-Pacific Journal, Japan Focus* 7, iss. 23, no. 3 (2009): 1-7.

means of showing that Japan was ready to be an active participant in the international circle, and, while these Games were cancelled due to the escalation of the Sino-Japanese War and World War II, it proved that the Olympic movement was willing to support Japan in raising its role on the world stage despite Japan being an Asian country. While the West held a paternalistic attitude towards Japan's introduction to the IOC, Japan viewed the Olympics as a means to integrate into the global stage as an equal power, both culturally and politically. This paper will attempt to understand the early history of Japanese involvement in the Olympics as both participant and host and the ways in which these two points of view clashed. Further, it will trace how Japan's growing Olympic success as well as the promotion of judo as a legitimate sport set the stage for Japan's bid for the 1940 Tokyo Olympics. Using sports diplomacy as a backdrop, the relationship between imperialism of the early twentieth century and international sports competitions will be dissected through the examination of newspaper articles, official International Olympic Committee reports, personal correspondence, and interviews.

In recent years, using post-colonial frameworks, scholars have begun to expand their understanding of the original Olympic philosophy and discern how Western conceptions of race, gender, and identity were pervasive in the establishment of the Olympic Games. Dikaia Chatziefstathiou,<sup>3</sup> Li-Hong Hsu,<sup>4</sup> Sandra Collins,<sup>5</sup> and Stefan Hübner,<sup>6</sup> in their respective works, explore the connection between imperialism, Orientalism, and the Olympic Movement. Within this scholarship, there is a trend towards focusing on a specific Olympiad, particularly the ones

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Dikaia Chatziefstathiou, "Reading Baron Pierre de Coubertin: Issues of Gender and Race," *Aethlon XXV: The Journal of Sport Literature* 25, no. 2 (2008): 95-116.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Li-Hont Hsu, "Olympism and East Asia: A Philosophical Reflection on Olympic Philosophy," in *The Olympics in East Asia: Nationalism, Regionalism, and Globalism on the Center Stage of World Sports*, ed. William W. Kelly and Susan Brownell (New Haven: Yale University press, 2011), 109-118.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Sandra Collins, *The 1940 Tokyo Games: The Missing Olympics: Japan, the Asian Olympics, and the Olympic Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Stefan Hübner, "Muscular Christianity and the Western Civilizing Mission: Elwood S. Brown, the YMCA, and the Idea of the Far Eastern Championship Games," *Diplomatic History* 39, no. 3 (2015): 532-57.

hosted by Japan in Tokyo, to illustrate the connection between imperialism and Olympic history, like in the works of Jessamyn r. Abel<sup>7</sup> and Christine Sell.<sup>8</sup>

However, much of the scholarship looks at Japan's assimilation with the West. Andreas Niehaus is a foundational scholar in understanding Japan's Olympic history from a less Western-focused perspective. His work spans from the evolution of judo and the ways in which Western imperialism influenced Japan's relationship with sport<sup>9</sup> to Japan's involvement in the Olympics to display equal power. In this paper, I seek to explore how Japan also used sports to break free of the "Other" category constructed by Orientalism and establish themselves as equals in the Olympic institution. Not only did Japan seek to gain acceptance into institutional structures created by the West, but the government worked to hold agency and power within them through participation, hosting, and the inclusion of Japanese sports traditions, with the hope that excellence in sports would demonstrate Japanese imperial strength to Western audiences.

## Perceptions of Japanese Athletics as Shaped by Nineteenth Century Interactions

In 1896, the first Summer Olympic Games were held in Athens, Greece as a means of bringing countries together through Western sport and art competitions. Founder and visionary, Baron Pierre de Coubertin intended the Olympic Games to be a platform for countries to express both internationalism and nationalism through nonviolent means. One issue with the first decade of Olympic Games was that the competitors were mainly European and American, which Coubertin perceived as a failing of the international aspect of the competition. Thus, he sent a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Jessamyn R. Abel, "Japan's Sporting Diplomacy: The 1964 Tokyo Olympiad," *The International History Review* 34, no. 2 (2012): 203-20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Christine Sell, "The 1940 Tokyo Games: The Games That Never Were: The Art Contests and the XIIth Olympiad," *Journal of Olympic History* 15, no. 2 (July 2007): 40-49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Andreas Niehaus, "'If you want to cry, cry on the green mats of Kodokan': Expressions of Japanese cultural and national identity in the movement to include Judo into the Olympic programme," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 23, no. 7 (October 2006): 1173-1192.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Andreas Niehaus and Max Seinsch, *Olympic Japan: Ideals and Realities of (inter)nationalism* (Würzburg: Ergon-Verlag, 2007).

letter to the French ambassador to Japan asking for Japan's participation in the 1912 Stockholm Olympics. The Japanese government turned to their Ministry of Education for logistical support, which included the advice of Dr. Jigoro Kano. Kano was a respected sports educator who spent time in Europe spreading the educational philosophy and methods of judo, a sport of his creation derived from jujutsu. His involvement in the Ministry of Education as a director, position as President of Tokyo Higher Normal Education, and experience in Europe made him the ideal candidate to shepherd Japan into the IOC. In 1909, Kano became the first Asian delegate in the International Olympic Committee, marking the start of Japan's official Olympic journey.<sup>11</sup>

Japan was among the first non-Western countries contacted about participating due to their preexisting relationships with Western countries, specifically France. Prior to 1868, Japan's borders had been closed to outside forces for 265 years; during the *Sakoku* period, the culture of samurai and Japanese art were solidified and allowed to grow with little influence from the West. When Japan opened its borders, Western powers competed to be the voice to influence Japan. France had engaged in mass overseas expansionist policies, primarily in Africa and Eastern Asia, giving them close proximity to Japan. While Japan was "neither dominated nor colonized" by Western powers, the imperialist ideologies of the West were influential during the Meiji Restoration, and this contact with French officials led to widespread interest in Japan's unique art styles. Through incoporation of the aesthetics of uikyo-e and screen printing into Western art practices, Japan came to be seen as "a cultural engine" in its own right.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> "The Founder of Judo Supports the Olympic Movement," JudoInfo, last modified 2009, https://judoinfo.com/kanoiocletter/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Chae Ryng Kim, "East Meets West: Japonisme in the discourse of colonialism in the development of modern art" (PhD diss., State University of New York at Buffalo, 2012), 7.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 2.

However, this fascination with Japanese art did not mean Westerners viewed the Japanese as equals. As the Japonisme movement developed in France, the exoticization and mythologization of Japan grew in popularity. Even while adopting Japanese styles of art, French and Western artists gradually began to Orientalize Japan. <sup>14</sup> Japanese material culture became props representing the exotic "Other" in European paintings, such as *La Japonaise au Bain* and *Japanese Toilette*, according to Chae Ryung Kim. Women in these paintings were eroticized while surrounded by Japanese material culture and architecture, encouraging the feminization of Japan. As outlined by Edward Said in *Orientalism*, Japan's emotions were placed upon her by the artist, who was able to "speak for her and tell his readers in what way she was typically Oriental." <sup>15</sup> By not allowing the subject to speak for herself, European artists effectively gendered Japan as feminine, as opposed to the masculine West. In creating this binary between feminine and masculine, East and West, European artists asserted and justified Western power and superiority over Eastern subjects. Art became a central part of French Orientalism, wherein Europeans asserted dominance over Eastern culture through the guise of objectivity.

Western perceptions of Japanese sports were influenced by this trend, as seen through the feminization and sexualization of jujutsu exhibitions in France. Michel Brousse links "representations of jujutsu at the beginning of the 20th century" to the "nascent sexual revolution" of the Belle Époque. <sup>16</sup> Performers and artists would mock jujutsu by drawing connections between the movements of jujutsu wrestling and sex. A 1907 song "The real jiujitsu" written for performance by a French comedic singer plays with these perceptions: a man sings about sleeping with a married woman, and when her husband confronts him, he responds

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Ibid.,17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Ouoted in ibid., 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Michel Brousse, "Images and cultural transfers. Western representations of Japanese combat art," *Proceedings of the National Congresses of Historical and Scientific Societies* 131-4 (2010): 52.

by "answer[ing] him in Japanese" and explaining the act is "jiu-jitsu. That's what it's called, Evening at the candle, I learn jiu-jitsu."<sup>17</sup> The corresponding promotional caricature plays into these stereotypes by depicting the jujutsu practitioners as naked, as well as having a lack of control, both of which were associated with femininity. Like Said asserted, Western forces began to place conditions and definitions upon jujutsu and reconstruct them into a Western context. The vulgar and mocking nature of these displays for comedic effect in an entertainment setting, as influenced by perceptions of Japan by the Japonisme movement, solidified Western perceptions that jujutsu was a feminine practice and defined as entertainment and art, rather than sport.

## **Proving Japanese Imperial Prowess through Sport**

Despite European perceptions, Japanese culture was incredibly masculine. While the intense discipline and strict routines of samurai relaxed slightly in the nineteenth century, the samurai class was still bound by principles of honor and a duty to serve. One of the principles highlighted by Yamamoto Tsunetomo in the *Hagakure*, a guide for the warrior class, was that death in an act of devotion was a better outcome than living dishonorably. Strength was not just built through the body but primarily through the mind. From the international perspective, this warrior class mentality was instrumental in shaping the imperial efforts of Japan, as Japan began to expand eastward to combat European influence on the eastern coast of Asia.

From a sports perspective, the samurai mentality was paramount in the development of martial exercises. The incorporation of mental strength into sport was a product of samurai culture wherein a warrior must maintain both physical and mental prowess in order to most effectively serve their master. Kano believed judo "must perpetuate the spirit of the martial arts"

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Damon A. Young, "Bowing to Your Enemies: Courtesy, Budo, and Japan," *Philosophy of East & West* 59, no. 2 (April 2009): 189.

in order to "restore today's neglected public morals"<sup>19</sup> that were lost as a result of proximity to Western modernization. With this context, judo was part of the 1882 modernization effort of jujutsu, as Japanese education moved in the direction of physical education as "moral education oriented in an attempt to serve the needs of the state"<sup>20</sup> Imperialist nationalism of Japan could be imbued into the minds of the youth through athletic participation.

Kano not only focused inward but intended for judo to be practiced by an international audience. After seeing the impact of the French Japonisme movement, Kano embarked upon to spread the teachings of Judo.<sup>21</sup> Between 1889 and 1938, Kano traveled around primarily Europe and the United States to both speak about judo as a sport and practice and establish Kodokan academies. He spread the teachings of judo abroad as a means of gradually introducing "a truly... unique aspect of Japanese culture"<sup>22</sup> to Western audiences, wanting to display Japan's ability to create an exercise that combined both the traditional martial arts values with physical education.<sup>23</sup> By 1903, judo had become "a regular method of physical culture employed in all schools"<sup>24</sup> in Japan and practiced in parts of the United States and England.

However, when Westerners initially came into contact with Japanese sports, they perceived them as sport entertainment due to the feminization of the Orient and lack of adherence to Western structures of sport. As the popularization of the Japonisme movement grew, Japanese styles of art were viewed as "innovative and noble" but ultimately supplementary to Western styles of art. This can be understood as a representative of how

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Ibid., 105-106.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Niehaus, "If you want to cry," 1178.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Shohei Sato, "The Sportification of Judo: Global Convergence and Evolution," *Journal of Global History* 8, no. 2 (July 2013): 303.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Kano, Mind Over Muscle, 72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Ibid., 74-75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Ernest W. Clement and Galen M. Fisher, *The Christian Movement in Japan: Seventh Annual Edition* (Tokyo: Methodist Publishing House, 1903): 69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Kim, "East Meets West," 11.

Westerners viewed non-Western sport. Coubertin asserted that there were "certain forms of native athletics that should not be discouraged... [but] will never be anything more than amusements, recreation."<sup>26</sup> Like art, these "native" styles of sport were supplementary to Western styles of sport; Coubertin intended for Western sports to be universally seen as *true* athletics and for the "natives" to be taught the rules and skills of Western sport as a measure of civility. Thereby, non-Western countries could prove their ability to adapt to modernity through participation in and adherence to international sporting regulations. Coubertin's colonialist view of sports as a measure of civilization led to the denial of Asian sports practices.

In combination with the approval of Asian arts through Japonisme, Asian sports were diminished to being known as arts – the martial arts – and not eligible to be included in the Olympic agenda. In a 1909 report about the moral education of Japan, despite acknowledgement that "athletic exercises... have always played a large part in the moral training of Japanese youth," judo's importance was attributed to "Kano lay[ing] stress on the moral virtues of the art."<sup>27</sup> This use of the word "art" can be attributed to the Othering and exoticization of Japanese sports, leading to perceptions of Japanese sports as not being as rigorous as Western sports. Rather, they were a creative expression of energy, guided by moral virtues more than physical movements and group rules. Thus, judo was useful as sports education, but ultimately Japanese athletes should still be encouraged to learn "real," or Western, sports etiquette.

It is under these conditions that the IOC invited Japan to join the Olympic Games.

Coubertin and the IOC did not view Japan as an equal to Western countries. For the Western-based IOC, Japan joining the IOC was a means of aiding Japan in a civilizing mission. Coubertin was impressed with Japan's development of cultural identity but also believed their cultural

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Pierre de Coubertin, Olympism: Selected Writings (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 2000), 704.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Clement and Fisher, *The Christian Movement in Japan*, 69.

frameworks could be improved by European influence. The IOC approached Japan's involvement in the organization paternalistically, as guided by Coubertin's colonial perspective, with the understanding that the colonial parent must provide the colony child with "constant attention to incubate them, to understand their needs, to foresee their disappointments, to calm their fears." In this way, Coubertin ascribes both feminine and masculine paternal responsibilities onto the West, with the West teaching sports as a mother and being the epitome of fatherly masculinity while playing. Japan was thus relegated to the feminine, infantilized, and subordinate position of a child, influenced by the Japonisme movement making it so "Japanese art and culture as a whole are marked as feminine by the unmarked European gaze." 29

Understanding the paternalistic, Eurocentric nature of the Olympics, Japanese athletic leaders considered involvement in the Olympic tradition as a necessary step for Japan to be seen as a civilized nation, and eventually a legitimate world power. Thus, when Kano joined the IOC in 1909, he planned to use the Olympic Games as an international stage to prove Japan's cultural and imperial power. In order to do this, Kano and others involved in Japanese sports education believed in first assimilating into Western forms of sport to prove they could beat the West at their own Games while slowly introducing the West to Eastern, primarily Japanese, sports on an international scale. When he accepted the offer to join the IOC in 1909, Kano employed extreme diplomacy as a means of gaining favor with the, mainly European, IOC committee members. His acceptance letter detailed his "genuine pleasure" of being nominated for the position by the French Ambassador to Japan and "unanimously elected" by the Japanese government as the candidate. He also adhered to Western forms of institutionalized sports structures by developing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Quoted in Chatziefstathiou, "Baron Pierre de Coubertin," 109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Kim, "East Meets West," 24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> JudoInfo, "The Founder of Judo Supports the Olympic Movement."

the Japan Amateur Athletic Association (JAAA) in 1911.<sup>31</sup> This was an attempt to prove the legitimacy of Japanese athletics by way of assimilation.

In 1912, two Japanese athletes became among the first Asian participants in the modern Olympics when they participated in the track and field categories at Stockholm. However, at the 1912 Stockholm Games, the Japanese performed poorly. Kano attributed this misfortune as a result of unfamiliarity with Western sports due to the fact that "what are called the Olympic games are not practiced in Japan, or perhaps I had better say, they are not practiced in the way in which they are done in Europe and America."32 In order to become more acquainted with lesspracticed sports, Kano advocated for Japan to become involved with the Far Eastern Championship Games (FECG). While they took place in Asia, these sports games were a form of the European civilizing mission as sanctioned by the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) with oversight from the IOC.<sup>33</sup> Held every two years, the FECG was meant to promote "interest in athletic sports and, at the same time, creating more opportunity for bringing countries into closer association."34 In addition to its goals of creating an international community, the purpose of the FECG was to allow Asian athletes to practice Western sport rules and mechanics. The only sports featured were those originally incorporated into the Olympics, which would be the ultimate display of Asian assimilation into Western masculinity.<sup>35</sup> Kano maintained that Japan's involvement in the FECG was "for the purpose of gaining valuable experience and to absorb the spirit of these international gatherings."36

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Franklin H. Brown, "Growth of Athletics in Japan," *Official Bulletin of the International Olympic Committee* 3 (1926): 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Jigoro Kano, "The Principles of Jujutsu," *The Oriental Economic Review* 3, no. 4 (February 1913): 248.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> "Promoting Sport in Japan," *Japan Times, Weekly Edition* 32, October 1912, 35.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Frederick O. England, "History of the Far Eastern Athletic Association," *Official Bulletin of the International Olympic Committee* 3 (1926): 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Franklin H. Brown, "The Ninth Far Eastern Games," *Official Bulletin of the International Olympic Committee* 17 (1931): 15.

Tensions built within the Japanese athletic community, as other government leaders in Japan sought to outsource training of Japanese athletes to countries with more developed athletic programs. Desires to send Japanese athletes abroad to train were rampant among the JAAA. The consensus was that the Japanese athletes would gain a greater breadth and depth of knowledge about athletics from the West. However, Kano believed in the spirit of the Japanese mindset. In his travels for judo, he noticed "almost all foreign students... seem to have taken up their study and practice of judo rather out of curiosity, without any conviction. On the other hand, all Japanese students who come to me are sincere in their work."<sup>37</sup> For this reason, Kano believed Japanese athletes could learn more by developing their individual skillsets within the Asian context before displaying it, to avoid mockery by the international community. Kano was steadfast in his belief that it only through self-directed assimilation first that Japan could transition out of a junior role in the IOC, become established as an equal voice, and eventually introduce elements of Japanese culture into the Western world.

This tactic was effective in convincing Western audiences of Japan's potential for development. After Japan's display at the 1912 Stockholm Olympiad, Coubertin praised Asian athletics:

The 'yellow men' seem to us to be admirably prepared to benefit from the athletic crusade that is taking shape. They are ready individually and collectively. They are ready individually because endurance, tenacity, patience, racial flexibility, the habit of self-mastery, of keeping silent, and of hiding pain and effort have shaped their bodies most effectively. They are ready collectively, because their young imperialism, which has not yet had its fill of domination, will impel them to taste the fresh joys of athletic victories, as well as the honour this brings to their national flags. For a while still, clearly, athletic Asia will grow and become strong where it is.<sup>38</sup>

Coubertin's assessment of Asian, and particularly Japanese athletics, reflected the mindset of early twentieth century Europe, as encouraged by the Japonisme movement. Even while

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Kano, "The Principles of Jujutsu," 247.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Coubertin, *Olympism*, 695-697.

seemingly praising Japan's athletic promise, the infantilizing and Orientalizing of Japan was pervasive and continued the idea of Japanese athletes gaining from the incorporating Western structures of sport. Japan was seen as not being fully developed but could achieve greatness by developing their athletic programs along Western lines.

Like Coubertin asserted, the increasing success of Japan in the Olympics held throughout the 1920s did give Japan legitimacy within the international community, specifically with Japanese athletes winning medals for swimming competitions.<sup>39</sup> International audiences became more receptive to learning about Japanese forms of sports. During a trip to New York to discuss the Olympic Games on the radio, Kano was asked by the manager of the radio station to "use my lecture material," which "showed to me that my interpretation of the mental aspects of judo was appreciated by the American people." The piqued interest in the techniques of judo by an international audience had two implications. On one hand, it could be considered a continuation of the spiritualization of judo as a foreign and exotic practice. On the other, it solidifies that judo was indeed growing into an internationally recognized form of sport that could be practiced by a non-Western crowd. While Kano remained hesitant about the true spirit of judo being properly practiced internationally, he had confidence that "in the future the spirit of judo will be widely studied and its principles implemented."

## **Judo as Proof of Imperial Power**

Simultaneously to learning Western forms of sports and the seeds of Western interest being planted, there was a movement to incorporate Japanese cultural practices into the Olympic program, which could be done by the acceptance of Japanese sport into the official Olympic

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Collins, *The 1940 Tokyo Olympics*, 32-33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Kano, Mind Over Muscle, 73-74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Ibid.

agenda. Judo served as a paradigm of an Asian sport developed under the conditions of modernity, which sparked the interest of Japanese leaders. In an interview with the *Oriental Economic Review* in 1913, Kano described judo as a "theory [that] can be so evolved as to be fit for the requirements of the most highly developed states of modern society." Using institutions, like the Kodokan, the premiere training institute created in 1882, and incorporating certain Western scientific principle into the rules, Kano "implemented the idea for creating patriots through judo and presented this new martial sport to government institutions as a tool to help revive Japan's national identity." This was a modern expression of Japanese cultural unity stemming from the *Sakoku* period.

Judo came to be seen as a sport as the West began to see the benefits of judo to Japan's military prowess. The Japanese victory of the Russo-Japanese in 1905 was in part attributed to the positive effects of practicing the physicality and mentality of the teachings of judo, as "the Japanese were able to 'compensate for the physical characteristics of their race' by employing jujitsu." An advertisement for the Yabe School of Jiu-Jitsu in Rochester, New York, in a 1905 edition of the *Business and Bookkeeper Magazine*, featured a calm Japanese soldier twisting the arm of an angry Russian soldier, with the implication that following the teachings of Japanese martial arts will translate to military success. The discipline and endurance of jujutsu training allowed "the Japanese, though small of stature, possess almost superhuman strength... [and] repeatedly out-marched the soldiers of every other nation." In this way, the imperial advancement of Japan was seen as being associated with Japanese sport, and thus there was a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Kano, "The Principles of Jujutsu," 246.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Niehaus, "If you want to cry," 1178.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Niehaus, "If you want to cry," 1183.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> "Size Doesn't Count If You Know Jiu-Jitsu," Business and Bookkeeper Magazine, July 1905.

slow shift in acknowledgement by some of judo as a sport rather than an art, giving credence to judo's validity in Western spaces.

With the newfound respect, the JAAA adopted Western ideas of using sport as a measure of imperial strength by spreading judo to its imperial conquests. Isoo Abe, the Father of Japanese Baseball, believed that in order for other countries to respect Japan in its own right, Japan needed to spread its sports, following the example of the Swiss. Abe encouraged the Japanese government to export the practices of judo and kendo to Korea in the 1920s. 46 While Kano was more focused on judo as a global sport, as seen through his American and European tours, the Japanese government came to see judo as being distinctly Japanese and therefore a product worthy of export to Japan's colonies, which was encouraged by interest from the Prince of Wales. Upon his visit to Japan in 1922, he specifically requested to meet Kano to discuss the role of athletics in Japanese educational programs.<sup>47</sup> This meeting reveals that Japan was receiving international accolades for its involvement in global sports, thereby bolstering Japan's overall reputation. A 1922 issue of the Japan Times applauds the interaction as a "concrete illustration of the fact that his [the Prince of Wales'] interests often lie beyond political and social activities and of his realization that the friendship of peoples is deepened by their mutual interests in the realm of sport."48 From this visit, it can be ascertained that Western countries began to slowly gain respect for Japan's athletic abilities, perhaps in conflict with preexisting Orientalist ideas.

Symbolically, judo as an official Olympic sport would show that Western leaders were willing to acknowledge that Japan was capable of creating, developing, and performing modern sport, thereby proving Japan's advances in modernity. This mindset led to campaigns within the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Svinth, "Fulfulling His Duty."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> "Prince of Wales Favours Local Sport Organization: Gives Consent to Use Crest," *The Japan Times Weekly XLIII*, no. 16, April 1922, 414.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Ibid.

Japanese government to include judo as an official sport in the Olympic Games. Due to Kano's title as the founder of judo, the practice was slowly introduced as a viable option as early as Kano's introduction into the IOC, with it being on the radar of Coubertin.<sup>49</sup> The growth of judo in Europe and the United States throughout the 1930s, particularly with the formation of the European Judo Foundation in 1932, provided the Japanese government with a certain amount of leverage to begin the campaign for inclusion of judo in the Olympic programme for the 1940 Olympics.<sup>50</sup> Not only would the incorporation of judo into the Olympic Games would be a literal gesture of Japan's elevated status on the global stage, but it would also signal that Japan's reputation had moved beyond the feminized art of Japonisme and into the masculinized discipline of sport.

Within Japan, judo was understood not only as an example of Japan adapting to Western standards of sports but how Japan exhibited superiority over Western nations. Japan was a modern nation that even potentially surpassed Western nations in modernity. Kano and other judo leaders spoke frequently of the failure of non-Japanese athletics to elevate mindset along with physicality. In 1912, the *Revue Olympique* published an article wherein they discussed how Western participants ignored the intelligence and "education point of view for to seek only direct success, the decisive advantage taken on the opponent." Western bias encouraged participants to *look* at results, rather than reshaping the mentality to *produce* results, because while "scientific management and the promotion of efficiency are strongly advocated for overseas... they do not seem to have progressed very far." This doubt of Western progress is indicative of Japanese

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Revue Olympique, "Le Judo (I)," 11-13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> "From Martial Art to Olympic Sport – Part 6," From Martial Art to Olympic Sport, International Judo Federation, accessed December 12, 2022, https://www.ijf.org/history/from-martial-art-to-olympic-sport/1219.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Revue Olympique, "Le Judo (I)," 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Kano, Mind Over Muscle, 84.

thinking that Japan could usher in the new age of scientific progress through the introduction of samurai values into the general mindset as a way to make the individual more well-rounded. Kano was also critical of Western sports; he said "Swedish and Danish gymnastics, for example, are of little use for the cultivation of the mind as well as for daily life... The development of muscles like that requires a great deal of effort on a daily basis, therefore it requires the expense of a great deal of wasted energy." In this way, judo was proof of the strength of the Japanese mentality adapting to the modern age and perhaps becoming a superior form of sport.

Therefore, Kano believed that widespread proper training that would come about through the inclusion of judo in the Olympics would be beneficial in shaping Western mindsets regarding both sports and life. Sports, harkening back to Coubertin's sports philosophy, should be to "the benefit of humanity" through "personal cultural attainment." Kano advocated for the acknowledgement of judo's "value beyond educational purposes" and as a "basic principle of human behavior." Judo as an official Olympic sport could be understood as a cultural exchange that would strengthen Western mentality through sport and elevate Japan's status on the global stage. Japan no longer needed the paternalistic, watchful eye of European countries to help them develop athletics. Rather, they had the power to expand the definition of sport to include intellectual ability as a key component, and in a sense turn the tables by "civilizing" the West.

## Hosting as a Show of Imperial Strength: The Lost 1940 Tokyo Olympic Games

Several decades after Japan's initial performance in the Olympics, Tokyo was selected to host the Olympic Games in 1940. They were set to be the first non-Western country to host an

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Kano, Mind Over Muscle, 53.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Michel Brousse and David Matsumoto, *Judo in the US: A Century of Dedication* (Berkeley, California: North Atlantic Books, 2005), 110.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Kano, Mind Over Muscle, 125.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Ibid., 77.

Olympic Games. To Japan, this was a step in securing global respect as an independent country seen as capable of both modernization and contribution to the global stage. While Kano had been petitioning for Japan to host since his induction into the IOC, the imperialist and fascist motivations of Japan laid the foundation for the campaign to accelerate in the 1930s. Initially, Japanese government leaders were indifferent to hosting the Games at Tokyo. However, Japanese athletic leaders framed the bid as a display of nationalist power. In the 1931 bill 'Concerning the Bid for the Olympic Games,' hosting was lauded as an opportunity to "bring prosperity to our imperial capital."<sup>57</sup> The chosen year of 1940 bolstered this propaganda, as "1940 marked the official 2600th anniversary of the establishment of the Japanese Empire." <sup>58</sup> The Olympics were then understood to be a way for Japan to perpetuate the "Meiji idea of risshin shusse ('rising in the world')"59 and allow Japan to control the narrative regarding their imperial expansion. In a sense, Japan was "invit[ing] the entire world to participate" in a celebration of Japan's national excellence."60 International support during an important year for the history of the Japanese empire would signify Western support for and encouragement of Japan's imperialist expansions.

There were two primary reasons beyond the significant date of 1940 as to why Tokyo decided to cast a bid nine years in the future, one being that Tokyo needed time to industrialize the city and make it properly suited for hosting duties. Using a letter written by the mayor of Tokyo, Kano appealed to the International Olympic Committee during the 1932 Los Angeles Olympic Games that "Tokio will take most seriously its responsibility of making the Olympic

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Quoted in Collins, *The 1940 Tokyo Games*, 29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Torataro Ushizuka, "Citizens' Support Necessary for Success," *The Japan Times & Mail* no. 13421, September 12, 1936.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Collins, The 1940 Tokyo Games, 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Ibid., 35.

Games a great success, and that nothing will be left undone to make the Twelfth Olympiad a great and glorious achievement."<sup>61</sup> This included building new infrastructure and sanitation methods for the city to impress foreign visitors. Using Olympic funds, Japan viewed hosting as a means of modernizing Tokyo to Western standards.

Another reason was that international support for Japan had dramatically decreased in the wake of the invasion of Manchuria. In 1931, Japan invaded the Chinese region of Manchuria and established the puppet state of Manchuko six months later. This display of Japan's imperialist expansion was not received well by the international community, with the League of Nations instructing Japan to return Manchuria to the Chinese state. Japan interpreted this direction as the West exercising paternalistic control over Japan as an empire, which led to Japan withdrawing from the League of Nations in 1933. 62 Japan needed time to regain the support of the West, and Japanese athletic leaders viewed the Olympics as an avenue to do so. Japanese IOC member Seiichi Kishi pointed to international marvel over Japan's excellence at the 1932 Games as an example of how Japan could use the platform of the Olympics to overcome "anti-Japanese feelings [that] are strong in America," just as they had done following the "China and Shanghai incidents."63 Despite political disapproval of Japan, international press coverage of the success of Japanese athletes in the swimming competitions painted Japan in a positive light, which then "cleared up these past misunderstandings about Japan and the anti-Japanese environment disappeared."64 Through sports, Japan could once again "bring about the sympathetic understanding by the world of the essence of the spirit of our race."65 Hosting the Olympics then

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Quoted in Svinth, "Fulfilling His Duty."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Collins, The 1940 Tokyo Games, 57.

<sup>63</sup> Seiichi Kishi, "Orimupikku bajutsu senshu wo okuru," Asurechikkusu 10 (May 1932): 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Tokyo-tô, "1940nen daijûnikai Orinpikku Tokyo taikai: sôchi kara henjô made" (Tokyo: Tokyo-tô, 1952), 2.

<sup>65</sup> Seiichi Kishi, "Orimupikku bajutsu senshu wo okuru," 1.

served as a diplomatic platform to reassert Japan's position as an accepted member of the international community. This framework of combining Japan's nationalist goals with rebuilding international reputation piqued the interest of the Showa Emperor<sup>66</sup> and set into motion aggressive campaigning policies of Japanese athletic leaders for the 1940 hosting position.

Kano spearheaded international campaigns for the 1940 Olympic Games by conducting international tours to increase support overseas. He and other athletic leaders sought to overcome international disapproval of Japan's imperial goals. The 1935 Oslo IOC session was a particularly pivotal event in cementing Japan's role as host. In 1935, the final bid was between Rome, Helsinki, and Tokyo.<sup>67</sup> During the 1933 IOC session, Japanese IOC delegates had individually appealed to each member of the IOC.<sup>68</sup> Concerned over their hosting competition, they increased pressure in 1935 by sending two delegates to meet with Benito Mussolini, the Prime Minister of Italy, to ask for the rescindment of Rome's bid for the 1940 Games.<sup>69</sup> Mussolini admired Japan's persistence and dedication to nationalist principles and, after some negotiation, withdrew the bid in favor of Japan, most likely as a political ploy to secure relations between fascist Japan and fascist Italy. Upon this withdrawal, Tokyo and Helsinki were the only two cities left. The Finnish IOC delegate disapproved of the way in which Japan went about convincing Rome to drop out of the running and perceived these tactics as "actions that encroached on the authority of the IOC."70 The Finnish delegate used this break in tradition as a reason for why Japan was not suited for hosting duties.<sup>71</sup> However, Japan viewed these negotiations "as a logical extension of national policy that did not interfere with the jurisdiction

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<sup>66</sup> Collins, The 1940 Tokyo Games, 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Torsten Weber, "Tokyo's 1940 'Phantom Olympics' in public memory: When Japan chose war over the Olympics" in *Japan Through the lens of the Tokyo Olympics Open Access* (London: Routledge, 2020), 67. <sup>68</sup> Collins, *The 1940 Tokyo Games*, 32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Collins, *The 1940 Tokyo Games*, 59-60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Ibid., 58, 65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Ibid., 70.

of the IOC over the Olympic Games."<sup>72</sup> Appealing directly to a politician was unheard of and a disruption of tradition, illustrating how, even in the campaign for hosting, Western countries attempted to assume the position of parent with a responsibility to teach their child manners.

Despite internal IOC conflict, Tokyo was awarded the bid for the 1940 Games in 1936, right before the Berlin Games, in part due to Mussolini's support behind Japan. A concern of the IOC was the physical distance between Japan and the other competing countries. During the campaigns, Kano refuted this concern by reflecting on the initial reason for Japan's invitation into the Games. He pointed to the lack of Olympics hosted in the East as a sign that the IOC was not fulfilling the true meaning of international competition. Furthermore, he questioned the unfair advantage of European athletes: "Can there be any reason why Japan should always bear the inconvenience, and European countries should go where it is convenient for them?" The assertion that Japanese athletes were equal to European athletes was a departure from previous colonial conceptions of athletes and sports of the early twentieth century.

However, it was clear that paternalistic attitudes of European members of the IOC from the bidding process had been carried into the planning process when concerns were raised regarding Japan's ability to organize an Olympiad. In a *Technical Adviser Report* to the IOC, Werner Klingberg, the IOC envoy to Japan, wrote, "the ignorance of the Olympics is the greatest handicap... I think it necessary to carry through thorough Olympic propaganda amongst the Japanese people." Sell attributes this concern to being "cultural" disconnect, as the "Modern Olympic Games had been developed according to Western notions of scheduling, budgeting and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Quoted in Sato, "The Sportification of Judo," 206.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Werner Klingberg, *Report of the Technical Adviser about the Present Preparations for the XII. Olympic Games Tokyo 1940* (Japan: Isshiki Printing Co., LTD., January 1938).

relationship building."<sup>75</sup> Even when awarded the hosting honor, Western powers were using rhetoric of teaching Japan. The tensions between Japan's quest for equality on the global sport stage and European hesitance reflected broader patterns within international relations of Japan vying for a respected position and Westerners cautiously granting Japan more involvement.

Nonetheless, European attitudes did not stop Japan from attempting to display national power through the construction of the Olympic Village. Within a year of being selected, Tokyo had constructed plans for the Olympic park and industrial additions to the city for the benefit of the foreign visitors. The Tokyo government directly framed hosting the Games as a way to prove Japan's strength to the world. In a 1936 *Japan Times* article, the mayor of Tokyo appealed to the public: "Since the 12 Olimpiad is the first ever to be held in this part of the world, we must do everything in our power to make it a success. And to this end, I request the citizens of Tokyo to cooperate with us in preparation for the 1940 Olympic Games here." It was the responsibility of everyone, not just the athletes, to make the Japanese nation proud, thereby invoking intertwined images of sports and military mobilization. Sandra Collins believed this to be "classic formulas for fascism" and allowed the Japanese government to imbue the people with fascist, nationalistic fervor that would eventually strengthen internal support for future imperialist military expansion. In this way, sports was used as a bolster for international politics as well as nationalist propaganda by using rhetoric of national duty and military expansion.

The intention for Japanese nationalistic displays to the world during the Olympic Games was further exemplified by a planned exhibition of judo. The 1940 Tokyo Games were set to be

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Sell, "The 1940 Tokyo Games," 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> "XIIth Olympiad Tokyo 1940 / Organizing Committee of the XIITH Olympiad Tokyo 1940." *Summer Olympic Games, Organizing Committee* 12 (1940).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Weber, "Tokyo's 1940 'Phantom Olympics' in public memory," 67-68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Ushizuka, "Citizens' Support Necessary for Success."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Collins, *The 1940 Tokyo Games*, 33.

the first to include judo in the schedule. A demonstration was meant to be put on before the Games officially started, alongside a demonstration of baseball.<sup>80</sup> The minutes of the 1937 Warsaw IOC session included a statement that "Judo was chosen for the demonstration of a national sport and Baseball for the demonstration of a foreign sport."81 While they were not considered to be official Olympic sports, even having a display of judo and baseball at the Olympic Games was considered to be an important moment in Olympic history. The inclusion of judo was meant to be a means of bolstering nationalism. Understood to be a purely Japanese sport, as explored earlier, the display would provide basis for Japan to be considered a contributing nation to the Olympic agenda on an international scale. In essence, these two sports exemplified Japanese goals for their inclusion in the Olympic tradition: baseball proved Japan was able to assimilate into Western structures of sport while judo represented Japan's ability to contribute their own structures of sport.

Judo's reputation as a sport had grown throughout the 1930s, particularly in the United States and Germany. Transitioning from an art to a sport, international judo began to incorporate a more competition-based dynamic. German practitioners of judo believed judo was a means of "combining sport and nationalism" and initiated organization of a European Jujutsu Union to act as a "combination of club and national politics." There was a petition for the 1936 Berlin Olympics to include judo as an exhibition sport, but there was limited support during this period. This growing reputation for judo as a sport was indicative of Japan's growing reputation as an imperial power in the 1930s, slowly shedding the infantilized and feminized reputation hammered in through French Japonisme and being seen as a more masculinized power.

<sup>80</sup> International Judo Foundation, "From Martial Art to Olympic Sport – Part 6."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> Quoted in ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Svinth, "Fulfilling His Duty."

However, the new Western respect for judo as a sport also confirmed Kano's suspicion that the West had a lack of mental strength. Nationalism was but one of the aspects of judo and the athletic movements was but another. The judo that would be exhibited would be "Contest Judo as a retrograde form as Jujitsu was before the Kodokan was founded."83 Thus, Kano was "passive" in his attitude about whether or not judo should be included in the Olympics. Rather than sports, Kano believed that, like judo, the Olympic Games should go beyond nationalistic pride and could be used as a means of developing mental and physical strength in order to better the individual, which would then create a better and more advanced global community. Judo was a means of realizing "world peace and the welfare of humankind."84 The German attribution of the status of "sport" to judo had the aspect of nationalism but none of the importance of "the spirit of mutual prosperity"85 that judo also required. In this way, judo being first exhibited in Japan was a way to show the world the mental prowess of Japan, while also teaching its real meaning to them. Judo as an exercise exemplified both the values of masculine sport and art as outlined by Coubertin in his Olympic vision, showing that Japan had been the first nation to truly master the Olympic values.

During the 1940 Games, there was also meant to be a display of art along with the displays of sport. The Concours d'Art was meant to call back to Coubertin's vision of art and sport working simultaneously to foster a sense of nationalistic pride for a country's exhibition as well as create exposure to international forms of art. The JOOC intended for Japan to be "the first nation to present a *Concours d'Art* backed by a sports art federation" and thus serve as a "model for the future organization of the Olympic *Concours d'Art*." This contributed to Japan's

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<sup>83</sup> Brousse and Matsumoto, Judo in the US, 2005.

<sup>84</sup> Kano, Mind Over Muscle, 86.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Sell, "The 1940 Tokyo Games," 40.

quest to not only be a participating member of the Olympic tradition but a member that had the power to shape the programme of the Games. The Concours d'Art was also reminiscent of the French Japonisme movement of the nineteenth century. While initially, the West took interest in Japan by way of culture and art, Japan had used sport to build an international reputation. The Concours d'Art provided Japan with the opportunity to judge European art in the same manner Europeans once judged Japanese art. This inversion would show a shift in the power dynamic, with Japan masculinized through both excellence in sports and intelligence in ability to judge art. It was also to serve as a means of elevating Japanese art to the same status of European art, rather than being subordinate, by displaying the styles side-by-side. In line with the theme of not only participating but also contributing, the JOOC proposed the inclusion of photography and industrial art. 87 These additions would provide Japan with the opportunity to internationally display Japan's ability to modernize, not only with the building of infrastructure for the Games themselves but also by adapting new, modern, industrial forms of art. Yet the IOC rejected the suggestion, 88 revealing the hesitance of Western nations to abandon paternalistic attitudes as well as continued caution about Japan's ability to organize an international event.

Despite all of the planning and preparation, the 1940 Tokyo Games were cancelled due to military tensions between Japan and China. In line with duties to the imperialist expansion of the state, in 1938, IOC member Yotaro Soyeshima announced that "no impressive function could be held in Japan at a time when many Japanese were fighting in China and the nation must make many sacrifices." While the Japanese government had approved of hosting the Olympics in Tokyo, they, for obvious reasons, did not consult with the JAAA or other athletic leaders about

87 Ibid., 48.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Quoted in Collins, The 1940 Tokyo Games, 164.

advancing into a war with China. The Second Sino-Japanese War, beginning in 1937, took priority in regard to Japanese foreign policy, and it was determined that Japan was financially unable to support both an Olympiad and deemed as an unsafe location for the Olympic Games. The hosting duties were passed to Helsinki, until World War II began in Europe in 1939, and the 1940 Olympics were officially cancelled. While Japan withdrew from the hosting duties at a late date, Japan remained in good standing with the IOC, as IOC president Avery Brundage continued to look favorably on Japan as a potential future host country and viewed the situation as an unfortunate victim of timing.

After World War II ended in 1945, Western leaders began to reexamine the relationship between Japanese sports and militarization. In an effort to demilitarize Japan, the Potsdam Declaration banned all military teachings in public school curriculum. Declaration banned all military teachings in public school curriculum. Due to the close association between judo, Japan's 1905 military victory in the Russo-Japanese War, and nationalistic fervor in the 1930s, judo was prohibited from being taught in public schools. While judo could be taught in private settings, like the Kodokan, the integral connection between judo and the bushido mindset was believed to be threatening to Western powers if taught in public spaces. No longer viewed as a charming practice that would aid the small Japanese in overcoming their infantile nature, judo came to be seen as a threatening tool that was "one of the vehicles for promoting militarism in schools." In a sense, this shows that Japan did accomplish their goal of being internationally recognized as a global power through the medium of sport.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> "Japan Drops Plans to Play Host to Olympics, Can't Afford Expenses," *The Portsmouth Times*, July 14, 1938.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Collins, The 1940 Tokyo Games, 166.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Ibid 168

<sup>93</sup> International Judo Foundation, "From Martial Art to Olympic Sport – Part 6."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> Sato, "The Sportification of Judo," 29.

Following the ban, the Japanese Ministry of Education successfully campaigned to reinstate judo in public schools by insisting that judo had developed as a sport, rather than as the holistic discipline once championed by Kano. <sup>95</sup> In 1948, the official Japanese magazine reframed judo as a sport: "Judo is born again, and as a sport is back on the path of prosperity." <sup>96</sup> The ban for practicing judo in public schools was officially lifted in 1950 under the conditions that the bushido spirit would not play a role in the instruction. Even with the paradigm shift of universally acknowledging judo as a sport rather than an art, the West continued to exercise control over Japanese forms of sports and mold them to adhere to standards aligned with Western goals. While Kano had formulated judo for Western audiences to understand, post-World War II conceptions of judo stripped the discipline of the Japanese spirit and "civilized" judo as a sport in an attempt to "tame" Japan as a power. In this way, Kano's vision of judo superseding Western modernity was shattered, and the unequal relationship between Japan and the West continued to be perpetuated in sport structures, despite Japanese advancements in the field of sports during the first half of the twentieth century.

### **Concluding Remarks**

With the creation of the modern Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin intended for the participating nations to promote internationalism and nationalism through displays of sports; however, due to its European origins, Western structures of sports were prioritized and lauded as the superior method, creating a Eurocentric programme. Japan's involvement in the Olympic Games as participant and host was motivated by desires to shift Western paternalistic attitudes towards Japan to one of respect and equal standing in the international community. In order to accomplish this, Japanese athletes, through programs pioneered by Dr. Jigoro Kano, assimilated

<sup>95</sup> International Judo Foundation, "From Martial Art to Olympic Sport – Part 6."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Quoted in ibid.

Eastern Competition Games. However, simultaneously, the discipline of Judo was popularized both in Japan and abroad as an example of the validity of Japanese athletics and Japan's ability to develop civilized sports. Kano promoted judo in the context of Western sports, but also believed that the principles of cultivating both the mind and the body simultaneously made the discipline superior to Western sports and transcended nationalism. The 1940 Tokyo Games provided Japan with an opportunity to prove their ability to modernize and display their own sports but were met with resistance as Japan's military power became a threat to Western nations. Further research could dive deeper into the direct consequences of Japanese fascist ideology on Japan-West relations in the 1930s or alternatively explore how Japan used judo and sports to rebuild their global reputation after the events of World War II, during the 1950s and 1960s, leading up to the 1964 Tokyo Olympiad.

The political implications of the Olympics are still prevalent in today's hosting and participation, as countries use this international arena to show their ability to adapt and modernize. Even as recently as 2021, the COVID-19 Pandemic delayed yet another Olympics set to be hosted in Japan. Japan used the XXXII Olympiad to display the economic sufficiency of Japan and their ability to rebuild after a devastating global event. <sup>97</sup> Understanding how and why Japan came to be involved in the Olympic tradition can serve as a case study of the motivations of other non-Western countries to be active participants in sports traditions so based in Western culture. Moreover, Japan's Olympic history helps to unpack the continued imperialist legacy of sports games through analyzing the conceptions of sport through a critical lens.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Boria Majumdar, "How Covid Changed Sport – a case study of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games," *Sports in Society* (2021): 1-7.

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