

French jūdō players and their awareness of etiquette—as seen from Kanō Jigorō's studies

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Today, I want to share with you a few thoughts about the following question: how are French jūdō players aware of etiquette (especially bowing, *reigi*), from the perspective of Kanō Jigorō's studies.

I will split this paper into two main parts. In the first part, I will try to share with you what Kanō Jigorō had to tell us about etiquette. In the second part, I will focus on French jūdō players' behavior toward etiquette that we will confront in the first part conclusions.

I The etiquette (*reigi*) through Kanō Jigorō's writings

A. Writings

Among the texts of Kanō Jigorō related to *reigi*, there is, of course, the first presentation about jūdō he made for the Dai Nippon Kyōiku-kai: 『柔道一班並ニ其教育上ノ價值』(明治22年). Then come, 『同窓会雑誌の発刊につきて』(明治26年), 『勝負後の講話(つづき)』(明治32年), 『講道館柔道講義—第八回』(明治33年), 『柔道を学ぶ者の心得について—第二回』(明治42年), 『青年修養訓』(明治43年), 『柔の形』(大正4年), 『柔道家の品格』(大正6年), 『柔道教本上巻』(昭和6年), and, at last, 『乱取の練習および試合の際における注意』(昭和10年). To those texts, written in Japanese, we must add a short chapter on *Jūdō (jujutsu)*, a 70-page small book edited in 1937 by the Board of Tourist Industry for the expected Tokyo Olympic Games of 1940 and written in English by Kanō Jigorō.

So, we can count up to 11 writings mentioning “*reigi*/etiquette” from Meiji 22 (1889) to Shōwa 12 (1937) for a period of 48 years.

B. In the *dōjō*

Let's first concentrate on what Kanō Jigorō tells us about etiquette in the *dōjō*.

When do we have to bow? When entering the *dōjō*, when leaving, and before and after *kata* or *randori*. Furthermore, before or after an exercise, we have to bow toward more experienced players in the *dōjō*.

There are two forms of bowing: on the ground, *zarei*, or standing, *ritsurei*.

Regarding the proper distance for *zarei*, we notice that if it is a bit complicated in 1900 (the average of the partner's sizes), he made it simpler in 1931, giving the distance of 1.5 m.

Regarding the correct way of bowing, there are also some differences between those two dates, especially regarding the position of the toes. While, in 1900, one has to be on the tiptoes, in 1931, toes have to be spread. Kanō Jigorō says that, sometimes, in everyday training, one does not necessarily have to be too formal, but in any case, in 1900, hands have to be placed on the mat, and in 1931, with the hands, the head movement also has to be respected.

Regarding *ritsurei* this time, the proper distance, only mentioned in 1931, is about the same as *zarei*, although Kanō Jigorō says it can be wider. The proper way of executing *ritsurei* is only described once in 1915, speaking about the *jū no kata* and, in 1931, instead of words, he published a photo to illustrate it. .

Of course, there is a proper way of bowing for *zareai* and *ritsurei* but, what should not be missing, the most important, is what you put into the bow: sincerity of heart and care regarding the shape. Regarding Kanô Jigorô, staying at the *dôjô* in the jûdô stage, what is bowing for?

Bowing is necessary in jûdô for two main reasons. First, it is because jûdô is fighting, and you have to make clear, before and after, that the purpose of your throws and submission holds on your partner is to make progress, confrontation being the way to progress.

The second reason is that if you want jûdô to be efficient, you have to respect some conditions like remaining serious and concentrating.

This brings us to the following step: what is jûdô for? Kanô Jigorô says that “Kôdôkan jûdô started composed of three large meshes that were the physical training, moral education, and the practice of fighting” ((講道館柔道は身体の鍛錬、精神の修養、勝負の修行という三大綱目を掲げて [...] 創始せられたのである)). Between 1915 and 1925, a fourth one appeared: the implementation of the principles of jûdô into one’s social life. *Reigi* is about the second one, moral education 精神修養 or 修心法.

In February 1915, Kanô Jigorô gave a temporary definition of the aim of jûdô: “to realize oneself and to contribute to society” » (己を完成し、世を補益する).

In this writing from 1899, he is not far from this idea and makes it the foundation of his thoughts on etiquette.

C . In the society

But why is bowing so important for Kanô Jigorô?

Here, we have to notice that among those 11 writings, two are not about jûdô and that in seven of them, if he does write about jûdô, he is mainly discussing the behavior in everyday’s life. This should make us remember that before writing his first book about jûdô, Kanô Jigorô had already published a book on ethics 倫理学 (倫理学—歴史、批評 / 倫理学トハ如何ナルモノゾ), so that we understand that one of his first centers of interest was the relationship between one human being to the society around him, to other people, and those interactions. As he wrote, “ ‘I’ cannot live fully being cut off from society” » (「己というものは世を離れては完全に存在することは出来ぬ」).

So, what is the etiquette for?

I will begin with the less obvious reason Kanô Jigorô gave: having a good posture is good for balance and the correct functioning of our organs, for our physical structure, but also, because it makes the beauty of one’s body appear.

However, the social meaning of etiquette is, first, to behave as society expects you to and, second not to embarrass others and give a bad impression.

More precisely, what about *reigi*?

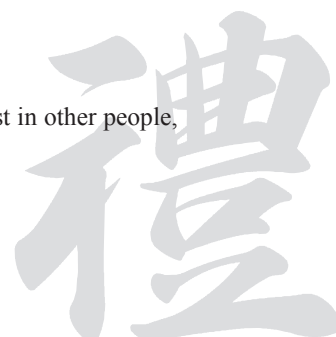
Reigi is about revealing the inner feelings while preserving social order and acting for social harmony.

Through the way we behave, we give to others a lever to understand us, to see through us, without a single word. Thus, the nature of our feelings influences the form while the form influences the heart.

Furthermore, if manners speak, the way a person bows makes the feelings toward the other person receiving the bow very clear.

So, what should be the consequences of a lack of manners?

Not being able to behave properly reveals a person as socially unfit and showing a lack of interest in other people,



so all we can expect in return is contempt.

D . How can jûdô help?

Thus, if someone has good manners, then that person has a better chance of being happy (better health, greater consideration from others). Furthermore, trying to improve in this domain is building toward “realizing oneself” (自己を完成する).

Through daily practice, jûdô makes us watch our behavior in the *dôjô*, be conscious of the way we bow and our position in relation to others, and help us behave correctly regardless of the situation, especially when it is important.

The reason jûdô is so efficient in this domain is that we relate to others on a daily basis where we must show respect, be polite, and refrain from bad, outrageous, or unsuitable behaviors. Inside the *dôjô* which is a reflection of society, the teacher can tell when we are wrong at the very moment we behave improperly so that we can easily and naturally learn and modify our manners or behavior. Finally, controlling our immediate needs for rational ones means we are learning and experimenting (制する) with self-control without any effort. It is a medicine for thoughtless manners (情弱), frivolity (浮薄), lack of manners (礼儀節操を知らず), and the inability to overcome difficult situations.

And, more interestingly, is that it works smoothly, without rushing, without forcing. Kanô Jigorô often used the word “naturally” (自然に), or :

涵養 ,

[名] (スル) 水が自然に染み込むように、無理をしないでゆっくりと養い育てること。(徳性を)

薫陶 ,

[名] (スル) 《香をたいて薫りを染み込ませ、土をこねて形を整えながら陶器を作り上げる意から》徳の力で人を感化し、教育すること。

感化 -> [名] (スル) 考え方や行動に影響を与えて、自然にそれを変えさせること。

These all describe a progressive, a continuous, a gradual and smooth way.

E . In conclusion

We can see that even in Kanô Jigorô writings there are variations in form between different dates depending on the situation. The most important being sincerity of heart in the nicest shape possible.

This shape, because it influences the heart, majûdôkes the beneficial effects of jûdô possible, inside and outside the *dôjô*. Nevertheless, we notice that in his last writings, the way he wants jûdô players to bow is more forced, more restrained than in the first writings. Do we see here an attempt to fight against a loss of heart, of sincerity in manners he could have witnessed?

II French jūdō players and *reigi*

A. Any awareness of etiquette in France?

Let's first say a word about the overall situation. Very few players in France enter the *dōjō* without bowing, or doing something that looks like bowing—at least, doing something like a slight nod that demonstrates an awareness of entering the *dōjō*. Likewise, most training sessions start and end with a *zarei* bow. In the case of *randori*, even if it is only a nod, in most *dōjō*, there is something like a bow.

What we notice, because it illustrates how much this idea spread in France even outside the world of jūdō, is that parents, when they first come with their children, are a bit stiff and do not really know how to behave: it reveals that they are aware of entering a special place, an area different from the outside, where they do not know the codes although they know that a code does exist.

Regarding the teaching of etiquette, the French jūdō federation tried almost from the very beginning to spread the idea of a special etiquette not only in the *dōjō*, but also, for the jūdō player, in everyday life. Thus, the board of black belts edited an eight-point moral code, and the first point is politeness (etiquette), which they defined as “politeness is respecting others.” Although it does not encompass the whole problem, this definition is not that far from one of Kanō Jigorō's points of view.

Thus, in France, “politeness” is hung on *dōjō* walls. Furthermore, in France, each jūdō player has what we call a jūdō passport for recording grades and results. The passport also contains some information about jūdō or the French jūdō federation. Although there is a passport for children and another for adults, in both, we find the moral code so we also carry “politeness” in our jūdō bags or in our pockets.

But the real teaching of bowing and good behavior in the *dōjō* is nowhere else but in the *dōjō*, of course. Through words, but mainly through the example older players give to younger ones.

We find both extremes in the French *dōjō*! Some teachers allow their pupils to come from the changing room barefoot and with their belt untied on their shoulder while other teachers will not accept any pupil on the mat if he did not come with *zōri*, if the *jūdōgi* is not correctly worn, the belt properly tied, and the bowing perfect. Some are even sensitive to the way *zōri* are lined up beside the mat.

So, a jūdō player in France going from *dōjō* to *dōjō* would be surprised by the strictness or the lack of etiquette compared to what he knows from his teacher.

There is no unity in France in this domain, and neither in the form of it. Depending on the teacher, bowing is more or less important, but as a general rule, everyone tries to imitate the bow.

The bow, behavior, and attitude of jūdō players are probably the key elements that, in the history of French jūdō, enabled the keen interest of the French population for this discipline. In the 1960s, in France, a jūdō player was someone honest, polite, educated, and self-controlled—restraining the emotions and someone you could count on. This image – which I believe would not seem too bad to Kanō Jigorō – is still in parents' heads and that is why they want their children to learn and practice jūdō. That is why most French children, boys or girls, experiment with jūdō for at least one year.

However, this image is slowly becoming more and more blurred.

B. The show window or high level jūdō

High level jūdō does not represent French jūdō reality as a whole but because it is, for international witnesses or



the media, the show window, let's say a word about it.

Not so long ago—when I began jûdô—our teachers explained that, after bowing at the end of a match in a competition, we should not go and shake the opponent's hand, but move directly off the mat.

Today, you can see this after almost every match. It is a drift, but being optimistic, I would say that it is a positive one.

In fact, I think that through this action, by touching the partner, players want to express what we, as westerners, can seldom express by bowing from a distance. It is certainly a lack of teaching but it is easier for most westerners to express their feelings by shaking hands than by *ritsurei*. But, it may also be, to be less optimistic, because the bowing we do is not properly returned: in order to shake hands, both players must extend a hand toward the other. It is a mutual effort of physical and mental rapprochement. That is what *ritsurei* should be, but insofar as it is not, I think that hand shaking is not a real problem.

I would like to make clear that it is generally limited to competition and that you seldom see it in everyday training.

If we are to be strict about handshaking, what about the following examples?

You probably remember, as I do, the final match at the Atlanta Olympics between Djamel Bouras and Koga Toshihiko. At the end of the match, Bouras stayed on the mat, lay down, and posed for photographs, thumbs up.

This attitude, evoking more soccer than jûdô, is not suitable for many reasons.

First, what about Kanô Jigorô's ideal of self-control? What about respect for the opponent?

But, also because it happened during the Olympic Games, which is the biggest stage for our discipline, the images are broadcast everywhere on Earth and are seen by non-jûdô players, and I would even insist, mainly by non-jûdô players. That means that most people only watch (and see) jûdô once every four years, and they see these kinds of images. In a few seconds, it breaks all of jûdô etiquette. In people's minds, it is possible—it will soon be normal—to behave this way on the jûdô mat. In people's minds, that is what jûdô champions do. And that will open the door for every kind of behavior.

If there are no more rules for jûdô players about attitude and etiquette, why not colored *jûdôgi*? Why not change the rules of competition to please the non-playing spectator to the detriment of the principles?

But, most of all, it is the beginning out of the end. As teachers, it is becoming very difficult to explain to a primary school pupil that he cannot jump in every direction after winning his first round in a neighborhood championship while the champion he admires and who represents France, does. Furthermore, the media like those images: they make money! Then comes the idea that in case of victory, victory itself is not enough and that you must also make a show.

The Atlanta Olympics were 12 years ago. Let's speak about Teddy Riner. A young, nice player, a world champion, media-friendly, and with major media coverage, he behaves pretty well on the mat, bowing correctly (compared to many others...). Furthermore, he has good posture and quite good technical jûdô. At the Beijing Olympics, he won the bronze medal, but it was not enough: he needed to do something more, something that the newspaper could publish, and he jumped on his hand. He is used to this kind of behavior, winking in photographs, dancing on the mat after a victory at the world championships in Brazil, or exhorting the public to make more noise like... a rock star. Being a good jûdô player, winning world championships or the Olympic Games is not enough: you have to make a show, to go from jûdô player to a star.

It is not that awful to watch because Teddy Riner is a nice man who shows respect for his opponent during the match, but what is really frightening, is the future. Riner is young and will have to find something new, something more spectacular each time for photographs, cameramen, and children who will be coming to see a triple spin or something else. And if there is nothing spectacular, they will be disappointed. But what about those that will come after and will also have to find their own way of making a show?

How far will it go? To make an odd comparison, will we see in *Ôsumô*, a *yokozuna*, jumping on the *dohyô*? It is unimaginable... until it is done for the first time. So why is it possible in jûdô?

There is no simple and quick answer, and jûdô is less related to the image of the Japanese spiritual essence. The roles of the *rikishi* and of jûdô players are not the same. Maybe it is because jûdô became an international discipline and through this was influenced by other manners, other self expressions, but mainly because, from the Kanô Jigorô studies point of view, jûdô players forgot the principles and let jûdô become a sport. And in sports, nowadays, people behave this way.

But, we are here speaking about extreme cases even if, unfortunately, it is the visible part of the iceberg and if there are, as I said, repercussions to the foundations.

C . The power of examples

As I said, one of the problems is the teaching effort we must make because of what young jûdô players can see in high level competitions.

My intention is not to condemn it because there are many good points, but unfortunately, it is obvious that, if deviant behaviors are first shocking, they remain in the mind and gradually become the standard.

Now, if we speak about the attitude of jûdô players on the mat, we also speak about their attitude in public life. What about former famous jûdô players criticizing referee's decisions on live TV? How can we then ask children to accept the referee's decisions?

If, as Kanô Jigorô says, the jûdô player has to think of himself as a social being and must, through jûdô, gain and develop skills that will be useful for society, sometimes, society invites itself into the *dôjô*.

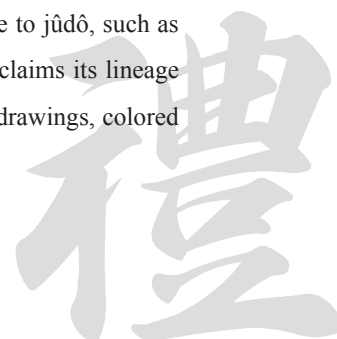
As Kanô Jigorô says, there are manners everywhere in the world, and those manners are different from one culture to another, and every culture does not react in the same way to the etiquette of jûdô.

We can speak about this website, constructed in 2001 ("<http://www.jûdôchampions.com/bowing.html>"), which argues against bowing in jûdô, associating bowing with a religious cult they do not want to be involved in.

In France, for example, we have a large Muslim community. In this religion, you can only bow to God. Nevertheless, in general, there is no problem, but we have to be aware that we might have to explain that there is no religious background to bowing, but that it expresses, for partners, your inner state and that you are sharing the same state of mind.

Thus, the jûdô teacher has to be watchful to the different sensitivities and aware of the different elements of jûdô to be able to explain them as clearly as possible, without ambiguity. It is not about imposing, but about explaining.

There is another phenomenon I have to talk about. It is the impact of disciplines that seem close to jûdô, such as Brazilian jujutsu, which is now popular. Although it is interesting—all the more so because it proclaims its lineage from jûdô—its codes are different from jûdô and closer than ours to what people like: *jûdôgi* with drawings, colored





logos, you do not bow but clap the partner's hand. It is... more fun. Many of the players in France come from jûdô and, when they go back to jûdô's *dôjô*, they apply those new codes, which are also identification codes.

There is also—it is linked but somehow different I think—the free fight phenomenon and, when a great champion like Yoshida Hidehiko enters this world, all the jûdô world shakes, even at the opposite side of the planet because references are disappearing.

I am now coming to the most problematic and worrisome point for French jûdô: teachers. In France, they are becoming younger and less experienced. But the worst is that in a society with a high rate of unemployment, very often young people with difficulties at school choose to become jûdô teachers not because it is their passion, not because they want to, but because they have no other choice.

Not educated enough, not mature enough, they are not necessarily able to make good choices between all of society's influences and can, sometimes, yield to temptations. Their posture is not clear, and they are not able to explain that, if it may have some similitude outwardly with the jûdô Kanô Jigorô offered us, and even some interesting points, the purposes of high level competition, of free fights, or of Brazilian jujutsu, are different from the study of a principle that should allow people to develop their own potential and become someone others can count on.

In view of this situation, in view of this capitalist economy that is teaching us to beat the other, to not bend the head in front of anyone, even older, more experienced, more educated people, how can we still promote something like *jita kyôei*?

Fortunately, the power of examples works also upside down.

On those pictures of a summer training session you can see players of all ages practicing together. Middle school, high school, university students, salarymen, and retired persons all together thanks to jûdô, sharing time and a passion.

We have to understand that everyone on this picture is here voluntarily. Except for a very few persons, nobody here is making a living teaching jûdô. They are passionate people who took holidays to come, without their families, to practice jûdô morning and afternoon for a week.

Furthermore, belts are not well tied, they are not sitting in *seiza*, not even standing in *shizentai*, though they are attentive and careful. And there, even if formal rules are not all respected, there is something precious. Young players are impressed by the presence of elders because they know or can imagine how difficult it is to make the choice to come, and without any word from anybody, they start thinking that there must be something special in jûdô for people to keep practicing after 20, 30, 40, or 50 years of practice and to keep coming to the *dôjô* even if they abandoned a long time ago the hope of glory through competition!

But moreover, they take pleasure.

On those images of children bowing, it is not strict but joyful. And even if it is sometimes very loose, they know the codes. The habit of readjusting the *jûdôgi* before bowing, to watch the posture when meeting or leaving someone, are elements they will transpose in their everyday life.

III Conclusion

In conclusion, I would say that French jûdô players are aware of etiquette even if the shape is not that fixed, not that clear, and even if, sometimes, the border between jûdô as a discipline for the man to construct himself, and jûdô

as a sport is becoming looser, and more in favor of the second one. We can also notice some worrisome behaviors regarding the future.

Nevertheless, there is an element that can save French jūdō: it is the sincerity of thousands of anonymous players that use their free time to practice or teach. They expect nothing: no money, no glory. Their only ambition is to give to the next generation, as a valuable treasure, the jūdō they like and from which they could experience themselves the beneficial effects.

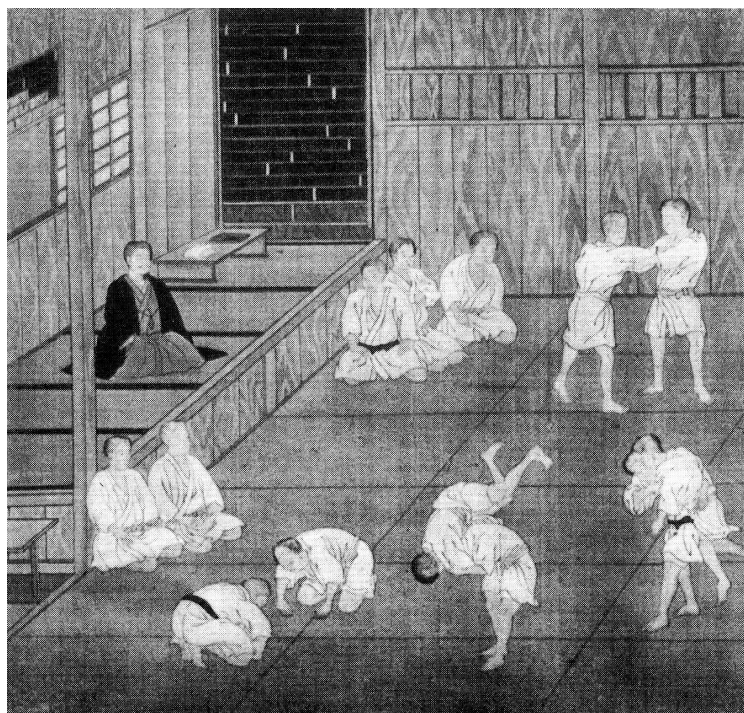
Thus, maybe we can say with Awazu Shōzō, 9th dan, that beyond the shape, “what is important is *kokoro*.”

Even if times have probably come in France to insist, like Kano Jigoro felt he had to in its times, on the form, on the shape again to offer to this “*kokoro*” a vehicle, a – as Mifune Kyūzō, 10th dan, said - a recipient (“*utsuwa*”).

- 1・『柔道一班並ニ其教育上ノ價值』，大日本教育界依頼による講演録小冊子，明治22年5月。
- 2・『同窓会雑誌の発刊につきて』，「嘉納塾同窓会雑誌」第一号，明治26年8月。
- 3・『勝負後の講話（つづき）』，「国士」第二卷十号，明治32年7月。
- 4・『講道館柔道講義－第八回』，「国士」第三卷二十号，明治33年5月。
- 5・『柔道を学ぶ者の心得について－第二回』，「武徳誌」第四篇第十号，明治42年10月。
- 6・『青年修養訓』，同文館，明治43年12月。
- 7・『柔の形』，「柔道」第一卷第二号，大正4年2月。
- 8・『柔道家の品格』，「柔道」第三卷第十号，大正6年11月。
- 9・『柔道教本上巻』，三省堂，昭和6年9月。
- 10・『乱取の練習および試合の際における注意』，「柔道」第六卷第六，昭和10年6月。
- 11・『Jūdō (jūjutsu)』，Board of tourist industry / Japanese government railways, Tourist library 16, Tokyo, 1937, 70 p.
- 12・『講道館柔道概説（第一回）』，「柔道」，大正4年2月，p. 124.
- 13・『講道館柔道概説（第一回）』，「柔道」，大正4年2月。
- 14・『倫理学—歴史，批評』，棚橋一郎，嘉納治五郎，哲学館，明治21年。
- 15・『倫理学トハ如何ナルモノゾ』，日本大家論集，武田書店，明治21年1月。
- 16・『己のためか世のためか』，「柔道」，大正6年1月，p. 250.



フランスの柔道修行者の礼法意識 —嘉納治五郎研究の視点から—



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CODE MORAL DU JUDO

La politesse
c'est le respect d'autrui

Le courage
c'est faire ce qui est juste

La sincérité
c'est s'exprimer sans déguiser sa pensée

L'honneur
c'est être fidèle à la parole donnée

La modestie
c'est parler de soi-même sans orgueil

Le respect
sans respect aucune confiance ne peut naître

Le contrôle de soi
c'est savoir se taire lorsque monte la colère

L'amitié
c'est le plus pur des sentiments humains



