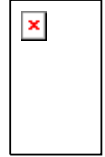


FACULTEIT LETTEREN  
TAAL- EN REGIOSTUDIES



KATHOLIEKE  
UNIVERSITEIT  
LEUVEN

## THE CREATION OF THE MYTH OF 'TRADITIONAL JAPANESE' KARATE UNDER THE PRESSURE OF PREWAR NATIONALISM

Promotor : Dr. Michael Schiltz

Verhandeling aangeboden tot het verkrijgen van de graad  
van licentiaat in de Japanologie door :

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"German sport has only one task: to strengthen the character of the German people, imbuing it with the fighting spirit and steadfast camaraderie necessary in the struggle for its existence."

Joseph Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda, April 23, 1933

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## 「要旨」

空手の歴史についてはこれまであまり研究がない。沖縄の伝統的な唐手と日本現代空手は全く違うものだ。沖縄の唐手が本島に紹介されたのは 1920 年代からだった。その時代の日本には愛国心と軍国主義のイデオロギーが日常生活に大きな影響を与えていた。沖縄の唐手は日本本島に輸入されることになり、いろいろ変化した。その変化はその時代のイデオロギーと関係あるのだろうか。すなわち、空手の発達に明治時代から第二次世界大戦までの愛国心と軍国主義が影響を与えたのだろうか。

本稿の目的は、愛国心と軍国主義と空手の変化の関係を明らかにすることである。社会的および歴史的な点から、日本の軍国主義を見て、空手の変化の理由を考察する。

先、明治時代から第二次世界大戦まで日本がした戦争を明らかにする。さらに、どうして日本は第二次世界大戦の最後までほとんど負け知らずだったのかの理由を探す。すると、理由の中に「愛国心」、「軍国主義」、「武士道」、「武道」と「教育」があげられる。そしてそれらについて調べ、同時に空手の「武道」における立場を分析することによって、軍国主義、武道と空手の関係が明らかにする。以上のことから明治時代から第二次世界大戦までの愛国心と国家主義が武道、とくに空手に大きな影響を与えたことが明らかになった。この時代のムードの影響を受けて、武道が教育制度に取り入れられ、軍国主義のために使われた。明治時代から第二次世界大戦にかけて、日本の原動力は天皇制や教育制度などによって強くなった。そのころ武道が教育制度に取り入れられた。このようにして、武道が戦争にむかっていく力となった。

1920 年ごろ、唐手が沖縄から日本に入って普及した。しかし、その唐手は日本らしくなかった。唐手は日本の武道のようにならなくてはいけなかった。つまり、柔道の胴着と帯のシステムなどを利用しなくてはいけなかった。このように、唐手が日本的になってきた。唐手の記述も空手となった。沖縄の学校のカリキュラムに空手が導入され、このようにして戦争の準備に役立った。結論から言えば、空手が日本の戦争ムードの影響でさまざまに変化したということである。

## 「各章抄訳」

### 空手と愛国主義

#### 序論

この論文は「日本の戦前愛国心と空手はお互いに影響を与えたか？」という問いに答えを探すものだ。

#### 第一章：スポーツと愛国心、文学の研究

多くの国でスポーツは愛国主義のアイデンティティの一部となっている。そのことについてさまざまな研究者が書いている。スポーツと政治、教育、アイデンティティ、愛国主義、軍国主義などの関係についての本が多い。ドイツ第三帝国は愛国主義のおかげで統合し非常に強くなった。スポーツはその愛国主義の一つの要素だ。ベルリンの1936年のナチスオリンピックはその頂点だった。国民はスポーツによって強く統合された。日本も同じように国民を統合し、国の力を世界に見せたいと考えた。日本はその目的のために武道、とくに柔道と剣道を使った。日本も戦前にスポーツを同じように使った可能性があるだろうか？他の国のように、日本は戦前にスポーツ、愛国主義と軍隊主義を連結した。輸入されたスポーツは日本の風習に合うように変化され、日本の武道のような、日本精神が組み入れられた。井上俊によると、「武道的に」されたスポーツは国民に日本精神を教え込み日本の政治に役立った。その日本精神の基本はなんだろうか？それは日本の文化を愛国主義に混ぜ合わせることである。

#### 第二章：日本、強い侵略国

日本の軍隊も、最初の日中戦争から（1894－1895）第二次世界大戦の間まで、どの国も日本の軍隊を止められなかったようだ。明治時代に日本が非常に変化した。国際的に弱い国から強い、軍国主義の国になってきた。それから、日本は日

中戦争のあと、ロシアと戦争を始めて、勝った。大正時代に日本が第一次世界大戦に加担した。昭和時代に満州事変があって、日本が中国と戦争をはじめ、第二次世界大戦に入った。この最後の戦争以外は、日本は全戦争を勝ってきた。日本がそんなに強かったの理由は何だろうか？

### **第三章：愛国主義の基本**

天皇制と武士道は教育に通じて、愛国主義に提供した重要な要素だ。明治憲法で天皇が神様になり、天皇制が日本中に広まった。日本の天皇は神様だと信じられていたため、日本は世界で一番重要な国であると考えられていた。そのことが学校で教えられ、教科書に書かれていた。日本は他の国を助けるのために戦争を始めたという考えがあった。戦争の準備に武道が大事だった。武道は学校で教えられたことを通して、武士道が国民の精神の一部になってきた。大日本武徳会は教育、天皇制と武士道を愛国主義に組み入れている武道機関だ。その考えを広めるため、武道を全部集めるのに従事していた。武道を通して、愛国主義と戦争の準備に役立っていた。柔道や合気道や弓道などが全て大日本武徳会で教えられた。武道は日本精神の象徴だった。第二次世界大戦のあと、大日本武徳会が禁止になり、武道を練習すること禁止された。

### **第四章：沖縄、巨人の間にいる小人**

愛国精神と唐手との関係はなんだろうか？空手は武道の部分になった。以上述べたことから考えると、武道は日本精神の一部だ。しかし、空手は 1920 年代ごろになって初めて沖縄県から日本に輸入された。どうやって唐手が日本の“伝統的な”ものになったのか？

沖縄は昔琉球王国だった。その王国は 1872 年に日本で廃止され、琉球藩になった。1879 年に日本の沖縄県になる。日本の愛国主義の圧力で、その王国が日本らしくなりながら、県になってきた。

## 第五章：空手に愛国心の影響

沖縄では空手は唐手と書かれていた。初めて唐手に興味を持ったのは、戦争の準備をしている軍隊だった。しかし、当時の唐手はシステムがなかったので取り入れられなかった。そのころ教育制度は戦争準備の一部分だった。沖縄の唐手の指導者たちは日本の戦争機構を役に立たせるために唐手を学校に紹介した。そのため糸州安恒は秘伝の唐手を学校の生徒に適応するように変化させた。例えば、「形」はその後教育を目的とし、技も安全に作り直した。沖縄県の教育制度に紹介されてから、大日本武徳会が唐手に興味を持ち始めた。そのため、唐手は武道の一部となるため、日本風に変化した。愛国主義の理由で「唐手」の「唐」は「空」に変えられた。柔道は愛国心と関係があり、武道のプロトタイプだった。それで、空手は柔道のように組織された。空手は 1933 年に日本の武道の一部になった。愛国主義の圧力により、空手は変化させられた。

## 結論

愛国主義が空手を日本のものらしくしたと結論づけられる。空手がこうやって日本の“伝統的な”文化になり、戦前の愛国主義傾向を支えた。

## **Introduction**

When one thinks of Japan, many stereotypes come to mind. One is the image of a strong Japanese man wearing a white uniform with a black belt, most probably breaking bricks. Karate is a sport that has spread over the entire world and yet, its image has remained linked with the country of the ‘rising sun’. Karate, together with *jūdō*, is commonly regarded as a Japanese national sport symbol. However, there are few historical books about karate, a fact that is rather odd when compared to the amount of similar books written about *jūdō* and *aikidō*. Whilst searching for an answer concerning how karate became a symbol of the Japanese nation, it soon became clear that it can not even be considered to be wholly Japanese. Is the idea of “Japanese karate” a myth?

According to *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan* by Stephen Vlastos, many of Japan’s oldest traditions are relatively modern when compared to those of other nations. These modern traditions are often created by those in power to serve their needs, and so it is interesting to analyze how, and for what reasons these traditions are produced. One of these “invented” traditions is *budō*, the martial arts, as a Japanese national symbol.

How did this evolve? In many works of literature, the relationship between sport and nationalism can be found. Alas, this connection can be abused for militaristic causes, as during the Olympics of 1936 in Germany. Japan also developed into a militaristic state from 1868 up to the Second World War, and like other countries, sport would play a strong role in strengthening its nationalism. Sport had become a core activity in Japan’s war machine and the martial arts were used to fulfill that task. The Dai Nippon Butokukai standardized all Japanese martial arts in its nationalistic organization, and *jūdō* became the prototype. Karate later became part of the *budō*, but only in 1933. The origins of karate can be traced to Okinawa, which was formerly an independent kingdom. This nation, with its own culture and language, became absorbed by the mighty Japanese empire in 1879. The newly created province had to quickly adapt under nationalistic pressure to act as a part of Japanese culture. In turn, karate eventually had to adjust and

became “Japanified”. Unfortunately, in the search to “Japanize” the martial art, the roots of karate were partially erased.

And so, it seems that a non-native cultural product such as karate was appropriated and presented as something typically Japanese. The world knows karate as a Japanese sport, but it is far more likely that it is a “Japanified” foreign sport created during a time of strong militaristic nationalism. If this were true, we could speak of the ‘myth of traditional Japanese karate’. Nevertheless, before jumping to a single conclusion, many questions have to be answered. What were the general circumstances in Japan at that time? What spurred the Japanese in their wars? How does the recently created province of Okinawa fit within a wider historical context? And finally - how do all the above factors influence the evolution of karate? Therefore, this work opts to analyze this sport from a cultural and historical perspective. In providing background information on the general history, the education system, the structure of organizations in Japan and related biographies, this thesis attempts to demonstrate and clarify exactly how prewar nationalism influenced karate.

To formulate the key question: “How did the pressure of prewar nationalism create the myth of ‘traditional Japanese’ karate?”



## Chapter 1: Sport and nationalism, a literature study

### 1.1. Sport and politics

The Olympic Games is the biggest international sports event in the world. The best athletes of each nation battle for the Olympic gold. The losers will be forgotten, but the winner is given eternal glory. The athletes symbolize their nation. Victory at the Olympics becomes therefore a matter of national pride.

The Olympics claim to bring all countries together at the sport level but the political and nationalistic aspect of the Games can not be ignored. Christopher R. Hill shows in his book *Olympic Politics*, how sport has grown into big business and that governments show a strong interest in sport for political and economical reasons. He analyses how power and politics are closely entangled in the Olympics.<sup>1</sup> Other important authors analyzing the relationship between sport and politics are Allison Lincoln and Gerald Redmond. *The Politics of Sport* by Lincoln highlights the influence of international relations on sport and vice versa. She describes the politicization of sport in Northern Ireland, South Africa, Black Africa and the Olympic Games.<sup>2</sup> The title of Redmond's book, *Sport and Politics*, explains exactly that. *Sport and Politics*' first part deals with the role of the government in sports in Australia, Canada and the United States. The second part describes how Imperial governments dealt with sport. The propaganda of athleticism in Britain between 1914-1918 and the way German politics dealt with sport and physical culture in the inter-war period of 1925-1933 are thoroughly described. In the third part, the relationship between politics and the Olympics is stressed<sup>3</sup>, like in the other two previous books. Alan Tomlinson and Garry Whannel describe in *Five-ring Circus: Money, Power and Politics at the Olympic Games*, how the Olympics became more and more mixed up with economical and political issues.

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher R. Hill, *Olympic Politics*

<sup>2</sup> Allison Lincoln, *The Politics of Sport*

<sup>3</sup> Gerald Redmond, *Sport and Politics*

## **1.2. Sport and governmental education**

Victory at the Olympics very much symbolizes the strength of a nation. Thus because of its political importance, governments want to do whatever it takes to win. Sports used effectively to strengthen the unity of a nation is the wish of any government. Probably the most effective way to achieve control over sports is through mass media and education. As sports are part of a nation's culture, one should study it if one tries to understand a nation.

Professor Mangan J.A. is the authority on the relationship between sport, culture, education and its importance for a nation. He is the founder of the *International Journal of the History of Sport* and the Director of the International Research Center for Sport, Socialization and Society at the Strathclyde University (United Kingdom). He has published numerous books about sports and its historical and sociological importance. His *Physical Education and Sport: Sociological and Cultural Perspectives* addresses the importance of sports and education for a nation.<sup>4</sup> In *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal*, he examines how sports in public schools are of importance for creating an empire. Ideals, idealism and patriotism are lectured at schools, laying the foundation for the empire, and through these teachings, the young British school boys learn the system of the imperial command. Courage and endurance were part of it but loyalty and obedience were most important.<sup>5</sup> This entanglement of sport and ideology in education is also examined in *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology*. This ideology can be used for creating an identity, patriotism and imperialism as with the boys in the Victorian and the Edwardian schools.<sup>6</sup>

In the works of John Hargreaves, David Kirk, John Evans and Richard Holt, the above theme has been further elaborated. *Sport, Power and Culture: A Social And Historical Analysis of Popular Sports In Britain* by Hargreaves depicts the link of sport, power and culture. In the third chapter, he highlights the relationship between these elements and

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<sup>4</sup> J.A. Mangan, *Physical Education and Sport: Sociological and Cultural Perspectives*

<sup>5</sup> J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal*

<sup>6</sup> J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology*

public schools.<sup>7</sup> The creation of docile citizens through sport is studied by David Kirk, who studies the schools of Britain and Australia between 1880 and 1950 in *Schooling Bodies: School Practice and Public Discourse 1880-1950*.<sup>8</sup> Evans on the other hand, focuses more on the relationship between physical education and society. He states that if society changes, so will physical education and schools.<sup>9</sup> Richard Holt, a lecturer in history at the University of Stirling (United Kingdom), portrays these changes in the case of France from the end of the nineteenth century up till the Second World War in *Sport and Society in Modern France*. France became modernized and so did sport. From local town events it grew into national mass leisure, the Tour de France being a world-known example. This was carefully supervised by the government, and sport brought unity in the country. Sport, together with mass media and compulsory education were important factors in the creation of the state of France.<sup>10</sup>

The creation of a state is accompanied with the idea of identity, which can be well expressed through sport. In what follows we will look at how identity can develop into nationalism and ultimately into militarism.

### **1.3. Sport and identity**

According to the book *The Nordic World: Sport in Society* of Henrik Meinand and J.A. Mangan, sport has always been a device to create group identity. Sport reflects the national self image. It is used in a confrontational way against other countries and is even seen as a way to prepare for war. They analyze this theme for the Nordic countries.<sup>11</sup> Professor Mangan assembled many authors in *Sport, Culture, Society: International Historical and Sociological Perspectives*. In that book, J. Dewar wrote a chapter on how that the inhabitants of Papua New Guinea try to keep their identity through sport. The part of G. von der Lippe describes the suppressed national identity of the Scottish by the English and its link with professional football. G.A. Olafson explains

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<sup>7</sup> John Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture: A Social And Historical Analysis of Popular Sports In Britain*

<sup>8</sup> David Kirk, *Schooling Bodies: School Practice and Public Discourse 1880-1950*

<sup>9</sup> John Evans, *Physical Education, Sport and Schooling: Studies in the Sociology of Physical Education*

<sup>10</sup> Richard Holt, *Sport and Society in Modern France*

<sup>11</sup> Henrik Meinander and J.A. Mangan, *The Nordic World: Sport in Society*

in his chapter the influence of sport of Fascist Italy on Nazi Germany during the period of 1928 till 1936.<sup>12</sup>

Grant Jarvie is an instructor at the University of Stirling and president of the British Society of Sports History. In his *Sport in the Making of Celtic Cultures* he researches the link between Irish sport and nationalism. He also takes a look at the importance of sport for the nationalistic politics of France. He explains why national sports are so important for many European countries. Grant Jarvie makes it very clear that sport can be used to strengthen all kinds of ideologies.<sup>13</sup>

#### **1.4. Sport and nationalism**

As we have seen above, sport and physical education are important factors in creating a state. The rulers of a country have always had an interest in the regulation of sport. These ideas are clearly stated in *Sport and Education in History*. Gigliola Gori and Thierry Terret have assembled many authors in their book. The general message of the contributions is that sport gives a feeling of unity to people. It can therefore easily be used as a form of propaganda. Sport and education have lost their pure ideals and have become tools to strengthen national pride. Jacques Dumont for example examines in his chapter how physical education is something that was dealt with the French state. This national pride can be easily abused. The chapter of Youcef Fates deals with how sport had its function in the war with Algeria in the period between 1954 and 1962. Jean Saint-Martin analyses how sport contributes to the nation unity. He looks at the politics of France in relation to physical education in the inter-war period. For the case of Japan, Fumiaki Shishida researched how *aikidō* modernized itself to the model of judo, a national sport, in the inter-war nationalistic period.<sup>14</sup>

Sport and the ideologies of the state go hand in hand. J.A. Mangan shows us this in his *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society*. Sport was of great importance for Britain, a nation wanting to spread its imperial values. The British sought to introduce along with

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<sup>12</sup> J.A. Mangan and R.B. Small, *Sport, Culture, Society: International Historical and Sociological Perspectives*

<sup>13</sup> Grant Jarvie, *Sport in the Making of Celtic Cultures*

<sup>14</sup> Gigliola Gori and Thierry Terret, *Sport and Education in History*

their civilization their sports too. They attempted through sport to culturally bind the colonies and enforce their imperial superiority. Thus sport was an important element in the creation of an imperial unity and a national identity.<sup>15</sup>

The composed work *Sports: The East and The West* by Gertrud Pfister and Liu Yueye looks at how the East and the West have influenced each other in sport. Gertrud Pfister gives us for example an overview of the evolution of *jūdō* and *jūjitsu* in Germany. In the first part of the book, the authors write mainly about sport and education. Xiong Xiaozheng and Gu Shiquan write about Mao Zedong's ideas on physical culture. "The Study of Physical Education and Exercise" was written by Mao Zedong in 1917. In the 1910s a more pragmatic vision on physical education emerged in China. According to Mao, physical education had to serve the state. Physical exercise would make strong bodies that could fulfill their social functions. Physical exercise is also important to control emotions. In short, a healthy, strong body benefits the nation. After China had suffered due to the western imperialism, it would be able to strengthen its patriotism and nationalism through physical culture.<sup>16</sup>

### **1.5. The Nazi Olympics: sport and militarism**

Nationalism can take many forms. Nations want to show the glory of their country and power to the world. Nationalism can take a positive form, an example being the Olympics. It can also develop into something negative, such as a feeling of superiority, or even support war. The Nazi Olympics of 1936 were a mix of nationalism, militarism, education and sport. Duff Hart-Davis, a British journalist shows in his *Hitler's Games: The 1936 Olympics* how the games were intentionally used for political ends. Hitler succeeded in his propaganda in spite of the persecution of the Jews and the concentration camp of Oranienburg close to the Olympic stadium. The author wants to show how the Nazis successfully used the Olympics as a medium for their nationalistic propaganda. The games and the ceremonies were very nationalistic and militaristic in nature.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> J.A. Mangan, *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society*

<sup>16</sup> Gertrud Pfister and Liu Yueye. *Sports: The East and the West*

<sup>17</sup> Duff Hart-Davis, *Hitler's Games: The 1936 Olympics*

Richard Mandell's *The Nazi Olympics*<sup>18</sup> and *Olympiad 1936: Blaze of Glory for Hilter's Reich* of Judith Holmes<sup>19</sup> handle about the same subject. *Sport and International Politics: The Impact of Fascism and Communism on Sport* by Pierre Arnaud and James Riordan is seen as a key reference for the relationship between sport and ideology. The book examines how sport was shaped under the communist and fascist institutions during the inter-war period in Europe. It details how sport was used by nations as a means of propaganda and psychological pressure. In the fifth chapter they write about the Soviet Union sport policy during 1917-1941 period. Sport was used to strengthen the nation-state of the USSR. The sixth chapter talks about the role of sport for German politics in the inter-war period. The eighth chapter describes how sport is owned by the nation in France between 1919 and 1939 and the ninth chapter deals with fascist Italy, mass media and sport. National strength was created through sport training. Sport became in these nations a matter of prestige and propaganda.<sup>20</sup>

### **1.6. Sport and nationalism in Japan**

Stephen Vlastos writes in his *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*<sup>21</sup> that many old cultural traditions are in fact rather modern. Invented traditions distinguish themselves from genuine ones by the idea of fictitious continuity of a historical past. He states that it is important to find an answer to the following question.

*How, by whom, under what circumstances, and to what social and political effect are certain practices and ideas formulated, institutionalized, and propagated as tradition?*<sup>22</sup>

These traditions are mostly produced by elites as a tool of power. Japan has produced several national symbols since the nineteenth century and the *budō* (武道), the martial

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<sup>18</sup> Richard D. Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics*

<sup>19</sup> Judith Holmes, *Olympiad 1936: Blaze of Glory for Hilter's Reich*

<sup>20</sup> Pierre Arnaud and James Riordan, *Sport and International Politics: The Impact of Fascism and Communism on Sport*

<sup>21</sup> Stephen Vlastos, *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*

<sup>22</sup> Stephen Vlastos, *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, p.5.

arts, are one of them. The 11<sup>th</sup> chapter deals with *The Invention of the Martial Arts*, written by Inoue Shun.

### 1.6.1. *Budō* and identity

The idea of sport being an important element of national identity can also be found in Japan. The *budō*, martial arts, fulfilled this function from the late Meiji period up to the Second World War. *Jūjutsu*(柔術) had developed into *jūdō*(柔道), a national sport. It would symbolize the national identity of Japan. Among these *budō*, *jūdō* was the first. Under the influence of military and ultra-nationalism, *budō* were reinvented as a tool to promote the “Japanese spirit”.<sup>23</sup>

Although *jūdō* became part of Japan’s national identity, it was only created in 1882. In the 1870s, Japan showed great enthusiasm for anything from the West. At that time, the Japanese in fact despised their own traditional culture to such an extent that even martial arts were on the decline. Kanō Jigorō(嘉納治五郎), the creator of *jūdō*, was able to buy several books on the subject due the declining popularity of martial arts.<sup>24</sup> He followed *jūjutsu* classes in different schools and made an inventory of the techniques in a scientific matter which facilitated the creation of his *jūdō*. Because of the unpopularity of *jūjutsu*, Kanō adopted the name *jūdō*, which sounded fresh. He stressed the idea that this new martial art was based on principles and not only on techniques. Kanō introduced many innovations to make it more attractive to the general public. He adopted the *dan-kyū*(段級) system, which was a system to grade the students according to their level of progress. With this system, the students could be grouped into 16 levels, i.e. 10 *dan* and 6 *kyū*. He also introduced *randori*(乱取り), a free-form of sparring. This stood in great contrast with the traditional martial arts which stressed the training of *kata*(形 or 型), i.e set forms. The other *budō* soon followed *jūdō*’s example in adopting these changes.

Yet, *jūdō* would be depicted as something traditional. This was possible because *jūdō* after all had its roots in the traditional *jūjutsu*. The Kitō school(起倒) of *jūjutsu* was sometimes called *Kitō jūdō*. Also on the certificate that Kanō received from Iikubo

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<sup>23</sup> Shun Inoue, “The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanō Jigorō and Kōdōkan Judo”, p.164.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid. p.165.

Tsunetoshi(飯久保恒年) in 1883 is written “*Nihonden Kitō jūdō*”(日本伝起倒柔道), where *Nihonden* stands for Japanese tradition. Kanō used this idea for his own martial art: the *Nihonden Kōdōkan Jūdō*(日本伝講道館柔道).<sup>25</sup> Hence *jūdō*, a new martial art, became part of Japan’s national identity due to this reference to tradition. It was thus an “invented tradition”.

Once the foundation of the new “tradition” was laid, it had to be spread over the whole nation. Kanō’s personal effort, the school system and the military nation would assist. *Kanō seized every opportunity to expound on the cultural significance of Kōdōkan jūdō.*<sup>26</sup>(講道館) He was an effective spokesman who would use any opportunity to promote and publicize *jūdō*. He published his first magazine *Kanō juku dōsōkai zasshi*(嘉納塾同窓会雑誌) in 1894, and would also publish others like the *Yūkō no katsudō* (有効の活動) and *Jūdō*(柔道). His lectures and essays are assembled in a work of fourteen volumes. Kanō created in 1922 the Kōdōkan Cultural Association to promote *jūdō* as a cultural aspect of the nation. The organization had three principles. The first one states that the most efficient use of energy is the basis of self-perfection. The second principle states that self-perfection can be best achieved by helping others to achieve self-perfection. The last principle deals with mutual self-perfection as the foundation for mutual prosperity of human kind. These principles were abused by the state to fit the idea of the Japanese Co Prosperity sphere. The “self-disciplined” Japan would guide his surrounding nations, just as an older brother would do.

Japan found his pride again and started to create a new nationalistic state and the *budō* would help to develop this new identity. Although *jūdō* had few members in the beginning, its membership grew rapidly. This was thanks to its highly publicized victories and the rise of national pride due to the ongoing war with China.

In 1887, the Naval Academy adopted *jūdō*. *Jūdō*, and therefore *budō*, had set its first step in becoming part of the Japanese war machine. *The connection with the Naval Academy allowed Kōdōkan jūdō to penetrate the military.*<sup>27</sup> The war hero, Hirose Takeo(広瀬武

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<sup>25</sup> Shun Inoue, “The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanō Jigorō and Kōdōkan Judo”, p.169.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. p.168.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p.167.



夫), who died at Port Arthur during the Russo-Japanese War and Takarabe Takeshi(財部虎), who would become secretary of the navy, were initiated in *jūdō* at the Naval Academy.

Kanō used his position as an educator to promote *jūdō*. In 1883 he was a professor at the Gakushūin University(学習院大学) and established there a practice hall for *jūdō*. The Tokyo Imperial University and the Keiō University followed the Naval Academy in instructing *jūdō*. Other institutions followed soon. *Jūdō* would become officially part of the school curriculum and would flourish in the prewar educational system.<sup>28</sup> *Jūdō* created fit bodies but its character-building aspect was most valued. It would create good citizens who would contribute positively to the nation.

As we have seen in other countries, the Olympics are a perfect occasion to show a nation's strength to the world. Japan, becoming more and more nationalistic, wanted to become part of that great event. The man who got the honor to represent the nation was none other than Kanō Jigorō. He was not extreme in nature, but being a master of a "traditional" Japanese martial art put him under the wings of politicians of the conservative-nationalist camp. He was sent as the first Japanese, to join the International Olympic Committee in 1910. Kanō was not only a martial arts teacher but also an advocate of western sports. He created the Japan Amateur Sports Association in 1911 for the selection of athletes for the Games. In 1912 he accompanied a few athletes to the Olympics in Stockholm where Japan would participate for the first time. Kanō's link with the "traditional" *jūdō* made him the ideal representative. Kanō made also great efforts to bring the Olympics to Japan. *At the 1936 International Olympic Committee convention in Berlin, he succeeded in attracting the Twelfth Olympic Games to Tokyo.*<sup>29</sup> Normally Japan would have held the 1940 Olympics at Tokyo. After the decision was officially announced at the Cairo meeting, Kanō returned home but died during that trip due to pneumonia on 4th of May, 1938. A couple of months later, the Japanese government declined the invitation to host the games because of the war with China.

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<sup>28</sup> Shun Inoue, "The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanō Jigorō and Kōdōkan Judo", p.167.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p.170.

### 1.6.2. Ideologizing *budō*

The nationalists would adapt *budō* to suit their cause. The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai (大日本武徳会), the Japan Martial Virtue Association, institutionalized and developed the ideology of *budō*. Education, the Emperor cult and the martial spirit were gathered in this association and these elements were the backbone of the Japanese war machine. The organization was established in the formal capital Kyoto in 1895, and was created in honor of the 1100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Kyoto by Emperor Kanmu(桓武). The association's purpose was to spread the martial spirit of Emperor Kanmu. This martial spirit was seen as the pure Japanese spirit. *Jūdō*, *kendō*(剣道) and *kyūdō*(弓道) stood for the spirit of the Japanese people. The association built a training hall called the Butokuden(武徳殿) in 1899. This “hall of martial value” was located close to the Heian shrine. In 1905 it opened a training center of martial arts teachers and in 1912 it became a college. Any martial arts teacher who wanted official recognition had to be member of this association with its nationalistic spirit.

In the 1920s-1930s *budō* grew strongly and became more and more closely associated with Japanese militarism. From the Manchuria Incident in 1931 up till the Second World War, *budō* became even more strongly associated with nationalism and the Emperor cult.<sup>30</sup> The martial arts became a national sport, *kokugi*(国技). It became an ideological tool for the mobilization for total war. To achieve this, from 1941 the Butoku-kai was put under governmental supervision as state education was a crucial element to spread the ideology that would support the war. Martial arts would become part of the national education system. This shows how much the Japanese government valued the *budō* at that time. The training of *budō* at the schools would foster the spirit of self sacrifice and devotion to the nation.<sup>31</sup>

In the 1930s-1940s the Western sports were discouraged. Western sports would stand for the Western spirit and had to be “Japanized”. This would happen through *budō*. Although *budō* was a creation of the Meiji period, it was redefined as something

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<sup>30</sup> Shun Inoue, “The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanō Jigorō and Kōdōkan Judo”, p.171.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p.172.

traditional. The nationalistic state stressed the “ancient history” of the *budō*. The *budō* were seen as national treasures which would purify the Western sports from its individualistic and selfish spirit, and so the “imported” sports would be “Japanized” through *budō*.<sup>32</sup>

Because of this association of *budō* with Japanese militarism and ultra-nationalism, the martial arts were prohibited by the American occupiers after the defeat in the Second World War. The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai was disbanded in 1946 and the teaching of *jūdō* and *kendō* at the schools was prohibited. During the 1930s, sports were shaped into the spirit of *budō* but after the war, *budō* was “sportified”.<sup>33</sup>

### **1.7. Conclusion**

In the above works we have seen to what extent sport and nationalism can influence each other. With the Olympics we can witness how sport and politics are closely related. Governments will therefore spend attention to sports and incorporate them into their education system. Through education, and thus through sport, national identities are created. This feeling of national identity can develop into nationalism, ultra-nationalism and even into militarism. The Nazi Olympics of 1936 are an infamous example of this blend of sport, ideology and politics. Japan also used sports to support its nationalism and militarism.

In the second chapter we will describe the general history of Japan’s militaristic expansionism from 1868 up until the Second World War. This historical context should give us a deeper understanding about the level of strength Japan’s military had developed. This was only possible by creating a nationalistic state and applying all means necessary to achieve it.

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<sup>32</sup> Shun Inoue, “The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanō Jigorō and Kōdōkan Judo”, p.172.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p.173.

## Chapter 2: Japan, the powerful aggressor

In three to four generations, Japan evolved to a level of development which took Europe about five hundred years. Between the Meiji Restoration of 1868 and Japan's defeat in 1945, the country transformed with an incredible speed. Japan abolished the feudal system, established a democratic and authoritarian form of government, created a modern industrial nation, conquered and finally lost a huge empire.<sup>34</sup> This period is characterized by the many wars Japan instigated.

We need a clear understanding of this period because it coincides with the modern history of *karate*. Therefore we focus here on the general historical context of Japan. We will start with the Meiji Restoration as we can find there the roots of the many succeeding wars, which we will also briefly discuss.

Before we look at the Meiji period, we need to name the different eras. Indeed, Japan has the tradition that each time a new Emperor reigns, a name is given to that era. The period of 1868 till 1945 can be divided into three eras. The first era, from 1868 to 1912 is called the 'Meiji period'. The 'Taishō period' lasted from 1912 to 1926. For the 'Shōwa period' we will only look at the period from 1926 until around the Second World War.

### **2.1. The Meiji period (1868-1912)**

#### **2.1.1. The Meiji Restoration of 1868**

To have a general idea about Japan's modern history, a brief note should be made about the Meiji Restoration as it was an important turning point in Japan's history. Due to the pressure of Commodore Perry and his American black ships, Japan had to alter itself drastically. It ended the 250 years of Tokugawa(徳川) military dictatorship, restored the Emperor to power and transformed the feudal society into an almost unstoppable modern nation.<sup>35</sup> All this happened in just a couple of generations.

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<sup>34</sup> John Benson, Takao Matsumura, *Japan 1868-1945: From Isolation to Occupation*, p.1.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* p.13.

Commodore Perry arrived with his black ships in 1853 in Japan. Shortly there after, he would force the Tokugawa *shōgun* (将軍) to open Japan's borders.<sup>36</sup> Until then, Japan's borders were closed and contact with the outside was forbidden, with the death penalty as punishment. The only contact possible was through Dejima(出島), a small artificially created island in the bay of Nagasaki(長崎).

With the opening of its borders, Japan was forced to accept 'unequal' treaties and in consequence Japan would develop an inferiority complex. In reaction, Japan underwent a fast change to catch up with the West and to get rid of these 'unequal' treaties. Indeed, Japan looked upon itself as a failure and wanted to discard everything that was typically "Japanese". This was a blow to the martial arts.

From then on, Japan's history can be seen as a continual reassurance of itself, attempting to raise itself to an equal level as that of the West, and finally trying to surpass it. The leaders wanted to build a united, prosperous and strong nation. They succeeded in this at remarkable speed<sup>37</sup> and used all means necessary to attain their goal.

*The new leaders exploited and, when suited them, they invented a particular view of Japanese character, culture and history as a way of driving forward the enormously ambitious programme of reform which they considered necessary to equip Japan to compete successfully with the nations of the West.*<sup>38</sup>

Japan would look at the West for inspiration to modernize its country. During the modernization process, the military development was stressed the most. By 1890s more than thirty percent of the governmental spending would go to the military. Almost everything would be inspired on the West. The newly introduced conscription system, Western military experts, the uniforms, were all part of the new Japan. Yet, the samurai code stayed alive. An idealized version was used by the ones in control to spread martial values. This code, together with the Emperor veneration, would be of paramount importance for the unstoppable morale of the Japanese during all the following wars.

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<sup>36</sup> Edward Adriaenssens, Dimitri Vanoverbeke, *Op Zoek naar het Nieuwe Japan*, p.12.

<sup>37</sup> John Benson, Takao Matsumura, *Japan 1868-1945: From Isolation to Occupation*, p.26.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* p.17.

The Tokugawa *bakufu* (幕府) was overthrown, by Chōsu and Satsuma, after they had ruled Japan for about two and a half centuries. The imperial palace was moved to the new capital Edo (江戸), the center of power during the last couple of centuries. The name Edo was changed to Tokyo (東京).

The period between 1868 and 1912 is seen as a period during which the emperor, oligarchs and bureaucrats laid the foundation for a modern Japan.<sup>39</sup> Mutsuhito (睦仁) was born in 1852. He would become the Meiji Emperor from 1867 until his death in 1912. The real power was with the Meiji oligarchy, but Emperor Meiji would be closely involved in many important political events, for example the promulgation of the Charter Oath and the Rescripts for Education and Soldiers. He would also give his people the Meiji constitution. This constitution would strengthen his political position whilst at the same time create space for a representative government. We will look more closely at the constitution and its importance in the second chapter.

During Emperor Meiji's reign, Japan would undergo extreme changes, thereby moving from a semi-colony status to a modern nation capable of defeating two major powers: China and Russia.

Having in mind that Japan wanted to prove itself to the outside world, we can look at Japan's imperial conquests. We will look briefly at the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), the participation of Japan in the First World War and the long run towards the war with China. The latter would result in Japan entering the Second World War.

### 2.1.2. The Sino-Japanese War: 1894-1895

This war started on Korean soil. It started with a Tonghak revolt in 1894. This revolt was aimed against the presence of foreign powers and the poverty in Korea. China and Japan responded to the appeal of the Korean court for help but they became involved in a conflict themselves. The Japanese were stronger because of the modernization

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<sup>39</sup> John Benson, Takao Matsumura, *Japan 1868-1945: From Isolation to Occupation*, p.30.

implemented during the last couple of decades. They marched north to Pyongyang and even into the Liadong Peninsula. By 1895 the war with China was over and the Treaty of Shimonoseki was forced upon the Chinese. China had to recognize the 'independence' of Korea, leaving it vulnerable to Japan. They had to pay a sum of 200 million *taels*. China had to hand over its control over the Liadong Peninsula, the Pescadores and Taiwan to Japan and open more ports. Due to all the above, the imperialism of Japan had a kick-start. However France, Germany and Russia soon intervened and the Liadong Peninsula had to be returned to China. This intervention was the trigger for Japan's next war with Russia in Korea and Manchuria.<sup>40</sup>

### 2.1.3. The Russo-Japanese War: 1904-1905

Russia and Japan's imperial ambitions collided over a conflict about Korea and the Liadong Peninsula. The Liadong Peninsula was taken by Japan from China in the Sino-Japanese War, but due to the intervention of Russia and two other countries Japan lost control over these areas. The area became a wanted zone for the two imperialistic nations. Japan, as previously with China, attacked first. It conquered Port Arthur and the Russians were driven back over land to Mukden. The decisive battle took place in the Tsushima Strait, where the Japanese destroyed the Russian Baltic fleet.<sup>41</sup>

Japan had won but was exhausted and therefore willing to accept the offer of mediation by the United States President Theodore Roosevelt. In 1905 the Treaty of Portsmouth was signed.<sup>42</sup> Russia had to give up several areas, like the southern part of Sakhalin. It had also to accept the influence sphere of Japan on Korea. Japan made Korea a protectorate and annexed it in 1910. Hence Japan was further strengthening its position on the continent.

It is important to note that this was the first time that a war was won by an Asian nation over a European nation.<sup>43</sup> That in itself is proof that Japan had come a long way since the

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<sup>40</sup> Martin Collcut, Marius Jansen and Isao Kumakura, *Cultural Atlas of Japan*, p.190.

<sup>41</sup> Edward Adriaenssens, Dimitri Vanoverbeke, *Op Zoek naar het Nieuwe Japan*, p.226.

<sup>42</sup> Martin Collcut, Marius Jansen and Isao Kumakura, *Cultural Atlas of Japan*, p.192.

<sup>43</sup> Andrew Wiest, Gregory Louis Mattson, *De Oorlog in de Stille Oceaan*, p.10.

American commodore Perry had subdued the nation with his Black ships about 50 years ago.

## **2.2. The Taishō period (1912-1926)**

The following era would be called the “Taishō Democracy”. This romanticized name was given to the period of 1912 till 1926, in which Emperor Taishō reigned. The new Emperor, politicians and others in power made efforts to widen their policy. This happened under the increasing pressure for democratic reform.<sup>44</sup> This period was characterized by both liberation, with the gradual retreat of oligarchy, and by repression.<sup>45</sup> Hence it should therefore not be idealized too much.

### **2.2.1. World War I**

Japan participated in World War I on the side of the Allies. Japan declared in 1914 war on Germany. Due to the focus of the war being waged in the West, Japan was able to seize the German colonial possessions in the East. It took former colonies of Germany in China and the Pacific and put pressure on China. In the infamous 21 Demands, Japan demanded control over not only Shandong, but also over other parts of China, Manchuria and Mongolia. These demands were strongly disapproved by China and the West and were perceived as a clear statement of Japan’s imperial ambitions.

In 1918, Japan was invited to be one of the ‘big five’ at the conference of Versailles. Its possessions over Shandong and the former German Pacific Islands were ratified. It also received a seat in the League of Nations.

Although the war was over, Japan soon found another reason for action. The fall of the tsar and the Bolshevik revolution in Russia was a good excuse to send troops to Siberia. Japanese forces tripled the amount of those sent by the allies. Once Japan had its forces

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<sup>44</sup> John Benson, Takao Matsumura, *Japan 1868-1945: From Isolation to Occupation*, p.30.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* p.35.



over there, it maintained them up until 1922, ignoring thereby international pressure to withdraw.<sup>46</sup>

### **2.3. The Shōwa period (1926-1989)**

In 1927 there was a severe financial crisis. The leaders looked to the military to deal with the situation. It would become a period in which the military, in the name of the Emperor, would wield the actual power. A photograph of the new Emperor, in military uniform<sup>47</sup>, was placed in the schools. Schools became again the means to create the desired citizens. Ex-army officers served as military instructors at the schools.

It was in 1927 that Tanaka, a retired army general, became Prime Minister. He would send Japan into a militaristic course. The Prime Minister would exploit Japan's sudden attack on China and would bring the whole population under control. Opposition was not tolerated. With the Peace Preservation Act almost any excuse would be valid to suppress certain groups. Everything political 'left' was arrested or forced away from public life. This period is characterized by military supremacy resulting finally in total war.

#### **2.3.1. Manchuria incident**

It was a staged incident near the capital of Manchuria. This would be the first step of the independent actions of a part of the Imperial army. It would conquer the entire province and create the puppet state of Manchukuo. The government could only accept the end result.<sup>48</sup>

In 1931, close to the city of Mukden, the South-Manchuria railway was destroyed. The railway was property of the Japanese. The Chinese were blamed for this incident, and this excuse was used for the Japanese army to undertake actions in that area. Chinese troops were eventually forced to pull back. Some see this event as the initial seeds of the war with China. The Japanese government ordered the army to stop its actions, but it had

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<sup>46</sup> Martin Collcut, Marius Jansen and Isao Kumakura, *Cultural Atlas of Japan*, p.194.

<sup>47</sup> John Benson, Takao Matsumura, *Japan 1868-1945: From Isolation to Occupation*, p.38.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. p.39.

lost control. It wouldn't be the last time that the Kwantung army on the continent would ignore orders from the government. The army was, according to the Meiji constitution, only responsible for its actions towards the Emperor.<sup>49</sup> Informed by the expansionist ideals of secret societies like the Black Dragon Society, its officers were keen to promote national interests by conquest regardless of the orders of party politicians. (Kaiso So Doshin(開祖 宗道臣), the creator of Shorinji Kempo(少林寺拳法) martial art in the postwar period, was an active member of the Black Dragon Society in Manchuria before the Second World War). Therefore it was almost impossible for the government to have control over the army. Without the consent of the government, the Kwantung army in Manchuria asked support from the army located in Korea that responded positively. Hence the government had completely lost control over its army. So they decided to approve the actions against the Chinese, which already had started.<sup>50</sup>

The Kwantung army soon took possession of the entire region of Manchuria. By 1932 the whole Manchuria was under control and changed into a puppet state of Manchukuo.

The Chinese reacted with a boycott on Japanese goods. Again the Japanese faked an incident. This time it was supposed to be an attack of the Chinese on Japanese citizens. In the beginning of 1932, the Japanese started bombing Shanghai in revenge of the so-called incident. Japanese ground troops invaded the city. The Chinese soon ended their boycott. According to the book "*De Oorlog in de Stille Oceaan: Van Pearl Harbour tot Hiroshima: 1941-1945*" the *bushidō* (武士道) code was widespread amongst the soldiers. During the incident in Shanghai for example, the following was reported on how vivid the code lived, and died, with them: During the battle a young officer got wounded. His company retreated and left him behind. He was found and treated for his wounds by the Chinese. The officer felt great shame that his company had not won. He returned to the place where he was found. There he cut open his belly, in the same way as a dishonored samurai would do. This example was seen as a perfect representation of the Japanese warrior.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Edward Adriaensens, Dimitri Vanoverbeke, *Op Zoek naar het Nieuwe Japan*, p.18.

<sup>50</sup> Andrew Wiest, Gregory Louis Mattson, *De Oorlog in de Stille Oceaan*, p.14.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* p.16.

In 1932 a group of young officers killed the Prime Minister Inukai (犬飼). The coup failed but was the starting point of the black pages in Japan's history. The following ten years were called "the dark valley"<sup>52</sup>, and marked a period of extreme nationalism. Everything that did not coincide with the ideas of those in charge was suppressed. No criticism on militarism and the cult of the Emperor was tolerated. Japan was preparing itself for total war.<sup>53</sup>

The invasion of Manchuria was condemned by the West. But they did not undertake any military or economically sanctions. Japan concluded that it had no reason to fear anything from the West and decided to withdraw from the League of Nations in 1933. The Japanese considered their imperial actions similar to those of the Western colonial powers during the past.<sup>54</sup> The passivity of the West in fact encouraged the Japanese that they could get away with their actions.

The Kwantung army, this time officially supported, moved to the Chinese province Jehol. In 1933, the Kwantung army invaded the Hopei province, close to Peking. Again the League of Nations did not respond to Japan's actions in China.

In 1936, there was a coup in Japan by young officers. They almost succeeded in killing Prime Minister Okada (岡田). They demanded a direct rule by the Emperor. Emperor Hirohito (裕仁) disapproved these actions and the rebels had to surrender.<sup>55</sup> The coup failed but left Japan in the hands of the military. With this came a new aggressive policy towards China.<sup>56</sup> In the same year, Japan signed a treaty with Germany against the Soviet Union.

### 2.3.2. War against China

In 1937, a war started between Japan and China, for the second time. This was during the period that the military had taken control in Japan. The trigger was the Marco Polo

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<sup>52</sup> *kurai tanima*, 暗い谷間, the dark valley

<sup>53</sup> Edward Adriaenssens, Dimitri Vanoverbeke, *Op Zoek naar het Nieuwe Japan*, p.32.

<sup>54</sup> Andrew Wiest, Gregory Louis Mattson, *De Oorlog in de Stille Oceaan*, p.17.

<sup>55</sup> John Benson, Takao Matsumura, *Japan 1868-1945: From Isolation to Occupation*, p.41.

<sup>56</sup> Andrew Wiest, Gregory Louis Mattson, *De Oorlog in de Stille Oceaan*, p.21.

Bridge Incident. This incident was in fact preceded with six years of Japanese aggression in China, and would result in total war between the two nations.<sup>57</sup> This war would later become part of that waging in Europe, the Second World War. This incident was not set up like the Mukden incident was. There was a small armed clash between the Chinese and the Japanese of little significance. But it was the perfect excuse for the Japanese nationalists to launch a full war against China. The Kwantung army won, took Peking under control and moved to Shanghai. After seven weeks of intense fighting they captured the city.<sup>58</sup> As the Chinese did not give up easily, the Japanese moved to Nanking, the center of Chinese nationalism and conquered it in 1937. The victory was followed by a blood bath that lasted for about a month. The slaughter was so terrible that even the Nazis complained about its cruelty<sup>59</sup>

The West did not react, again. Japan felt free to handle as it pleased because it didn't fear the West anymore. Japan was satisfied with its conquest and was willing to negotiate about peace. Nazi-Germany would lead the negotiations. During the conversations it was clear that Japan demanded an unconditional surrender of China but the Middle Kingdom refused. Japan was furious and immediately went on the offensive. It took North-China and all the major seaports on the east-coast. The center of the country was left rather alone. The Japanese did not have enough man power to deal with such a large area. Japan could not win the war but wasn't even willing to negotiate.<sup>60</sup>

The expansionistic drift was then aimed at Russia. As history has the tendency to repeat itself, the Kwantung army started the fire. The conflict in Mongolia was decided after more than a month. The Soviet armed vehicles defeated the 23<sup>rd</sup> division of the Japanese army and the Kwantung army decided to negotiate about peace.<sup>61</sup>

### 2.3.3. World War II

The European nations were too busy fighting amongst themselves, so Japan seized the opportunity to take the European properties in the Far East. The conquest of the

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<sup>57</sup> Michael A. Barnhart, *Japan Prepares for Total War: The Search for Economic Security, 1919-1941*, p.91.

<sup>58</sup> Andrew Wiest, Gregory Louis Mattson, *De Oorlog in de Stille Oceaan*, p.22.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. p.23.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. p.24.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. p.25.

Netherland Indies and French-Indo-China made Japan less independent from import from America.

In 1940 Japan became part of the 10 ten-year Triple Alliance with Germany and Italy. Japan hoped this action would scare away the United States but it achieved the opposite effect.

In 1941 the United States ended the oil-exports to Japan. The Japanese considered this as an economical war declaration. This was the first effective step done by the West as a reaction against Japan's actions in the Asian continent. On 7 December 1941 the infamous attack on Pearl Harbour took place.<sup>62</sup> Japan wanted to break the American will with this surprise attack, but accomplished the opposite. They had awoken a giant and the determination of the West would only grow stronger. They wanted nothing less than an unconditional surrender. The battle of Midway would be the turning point of the Pacific War in 1942. This would be followed by many bloody battles on the islands in the Pacific. During this period of island hopping, the Americans were confronted with Japanese bravery. With the words of Winston Churchill: *'The violence, fury, skill and might of Japan far exceeded anything we had been led to expect.'*<sup>63</sup> Japan suffering from a shortage of materials and energy applied the *kamikaze*. These pilots would crash their planes into the enemy, causing serious damage. These pilots were a great homage to the *bushidō* code.<sup>64</sup>

The United States made a decision to use the first atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the Japanese government did not respond to the Potsdam declaration. The Soviets invaded Manchukuo and Korea. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1945 Japan accepted the Potsdam declaration and surrendered.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Martin Collcut, Marius Jansen and Isao Kumakura, *Cultural Atlas of Japan*, p.202.

<sup>63</sup> John Benson, Takao Matsumura, *Japan 1868-1945: From Isolation to Occupation*, p.82.

<sup>64</sup> Raymond Lamont-Brown, *Kamikaze: Japan's Suicide Samurai*, p.22.

<sup>65</sup> Martin Collcut, Marius Jansen and Isao Kumakura, *Cultural Atlas of Japan*, p.205.

## 2.4. Conclusion

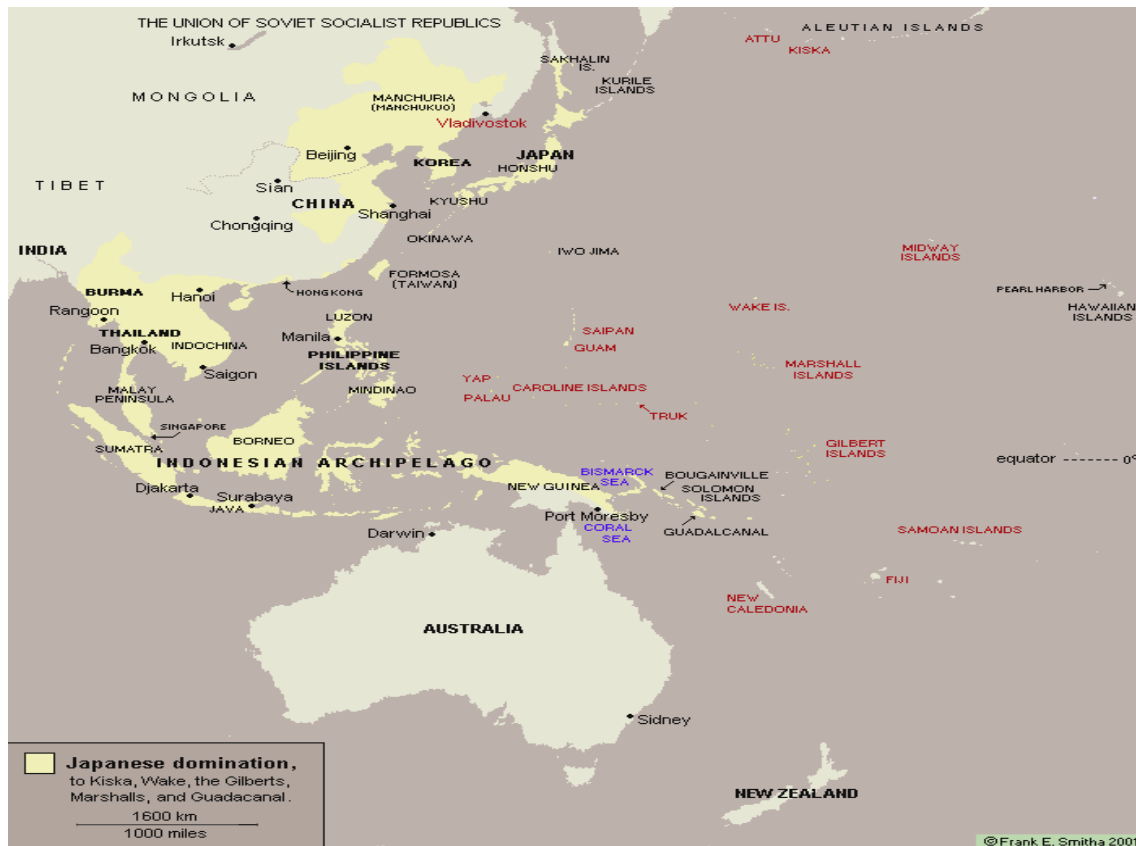


Figure 1: The expansion of the Japanese Empire in 1942

Japan succeeded in creating an enormous empire, reaching its peak in 1942. It had won wars against China, Russia, and again China. It participated on the winning side in the First World War. It conquered an enormous part of south-east Asia, including Korea, Manchuria.<sup>66</sup> Japan had won the previous wars and was victorious in the Second World War up until 1942. It had driven the Americans from the Philippines, the Dutch from the Dutch East Indies and the British from Malaya, Burma, Hong Kong and Singapore.<sup>67</sup> How was Japan able to attain all this? There are so many factors that contributed to Japan's successes that an exhaustive analysis is not possible in this thesis. We will look at a few in the next chapter and focus on those aspects that had an influence on the nationalistic 'spirit' and fanaticism of Japan. Many of them will have a direct link with the *budō*.

<sup>66</sup> John Benson, Takao Matsumura, *Japan 1868-1945: From Isolation to Occupation*, p.84.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* p.81.

### Chapter 3: Some roots of nationalism

This chapter will focus on some reasons for the successes of Japan's military, thereby focusing on how the Japanese "spirit" was shaped. However we will not deal with political decisions, military actions and the international context.

Up to the present day, Japanese are proud about their uniqueness, their homogeneity and the cohesiveness of their society.<sup>68</sup> Yet Japan is not a homogenous society. There are immigrants from China, Korea and Brazil, *burakumin*<sup>69</sup> (部落民), the Ainu<sup>70</sup>, inhabitants from Okinawa (沖縄), all of which are not adequately integrated. Many of these minorities are discriminated in various ways. A noteworthy case is that of the Japanese Airlines which destroyed their own stock of in-flight-magazines because an article mentioned something about *burakumin*.<sup>71</sup> The press does not cover these topics as anything that would harm the idea of 'homogeneity' is avoided. This includes the myths about the racial homogeneity, but also topics on the Imperial family and Japan's military past.<sup>72</sup> As we will see, these concepts of a homogenous society and the sacred image of the Emperor were created by the ones who were leading the country from the Meiji period onwards. This idea would be finally abused during the 1930-1940s by military fanatics to manipulate the masses.<sup>73</sup> This was facilitated by the Japanese people who subdued to unquestioned obedience during the 1920-1930s. Some of these attitudes lingered already in Japan through Confucianism and "historical" facts like the unbroken line of Emperors but for the most part, they were created from the Meiji period onwards, combining facts and fiction.

So then, from where does the idea arise of a homogenous society and the need for obedience? Also, why is there such a taboo on the military historical past of Japan and the Emperor? Almost all taboos in Japan can be linked with the prewar nationalistic

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<sup>68</sup> John Benson, Takao Matsumura, *Japan 1868-1945: From Isolation to Occupation*, p.4.

<sup>69</sup> A group of social outcasts who's occupations were seen in the past as religious unclean as for example, butchers and leather workers.

<sup>70</sup> Edward Adriaenssens, Dimitri Vanoverbeke, *Op Zoek naar het Nieuwe Japan*, p.276.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. p.179.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. p.177.

<sup>73</sup> John Benson, Takao Matsumura, *Japan 1868-1945: From Isolation to Occupation*, p.5.

period but still many aspects of the prewar nationalism can be found nowadays. We will see that these factors can be linked to the mobilization of the people for the wars in the past.

The prewar Japanese nationalism consists of many factors. We will look more closely at those elements which have a connection with the martial arts, as we will see in third chapter. Here we will deal with three elements: the Emperor, education and *bushidō*.

### **3.1. The Emperor**

#### 3.1.1. The Emperor through history

Nowadays, the Emperor functions purely as a symbol, as has been throughout history. Nevertheless, a symbol can hold great power. Japan however was most of the time run by other forces than the emperor. The *shōgun*<sup>74</sup>, leader of the *bakufu*<sup>75</sup> ruled for a long time the islands of Japan. The *kanpaku*<sup>76</sup>(関白) and the *sesshō*<sup>77</sup>(摂政) also ruled Japan for a while. These latter two positions were under control of the Fujiwara from the 9<sup>th</sup> till the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>78</sup>

Japan's historical names indicate the lack of real power by the Emperor. During the feudal period, the Emperor hardly existed for the common man.<sup>79</sup> During the Kamakura (鎌倉)period (1185-1333), the Muromachi (室町)period (1392-1568), the Momoyama (桃山) (1568-1600) and the Edo period (1600-1868) the Emperor hardly had any power. Indeed from the slick *kanpaku* up till the brutal *shōgun*, the powerlords ruled in the name of the Emperor. The names of these periods refer to those who had the real power in Japan. In short, up until the Meiji period, the emperor was virtually powerless.

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<sup>74</sup> The *shōgun*(将軍) was a military leader in the past.

<sup>75</sup> The *bakufu*(幕府), also called *shōgunate*, was a name given to the organs of the warrior government of the *shōgun*.

<sup>76</sup> *Kanpaku*(関白) was the title given to the regent of the Emperor.

<sup>77</sup> *Sesshō*(摂政) was the title given to the regent of a child Emperor.

<sup>78</sup> Martin Collcutt, Marius Jansen and Isao Kumakura, *Cultural Atlas of Japan*, p.231.

<sup>79</sup> Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p.29.



The question is thus how Japan succeeded in making a hardly-known figure acknowledged by the common people and even making it into the backbone of Japan's war machine.

### 3.1.2. The cult of the Emperor

Ruth Benedict states in her book that the few Japanese prisoners of war were all extreme supporters of the Emperor and his mission.

*The Emperor was to them, however, inseparable from Japan. 'A Japan without the Emperor is not Japan.' 'Japan without the Emperor cannot be imagined.' 'The Japanese Emperor is the symbol of the Japanese people, the center of their religious lives.'*

The Emperor was a religious subject. As we know, religious belief can be very powerful in times of war. There are several historical examples of believers sacrificing their lives for their religion. The Crusades in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and the attack on the World Trade Center in New York on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September are some of the better known examples.

The veneration of the Emperor was not widespread until the Meiji period. The roots of this religion were based on the Meiji Constitution and on a combination of historical and fake facts.

### 3.1.3. The Meiji Constitution: the Emperor became legally a god

The absolute authority which the emperor had came from the Meiji Constitution and lasted until the end of the Second World War. This was supported with propaganda based on historical and created facts. Let us first look more closely at the constitution.

During the Iwakura mission (*Iwakura Shisetsudan*, 岩倉使節団), the government showed interest in the constitutions of the Western countries.<sup>80</sup> In 1882, Itō Hirobumi

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<sup>80</sup> Edward Adriaensens, Dimitri Vanoverbeke, *Op Zoek naar het Nieuwe Japan*, p.14.

(伊藤博文) was sent to Europe to prepare a constitution. During this trip he developed much interest in the German chancellor Bismarck. In 1889, the Meiji Constitution was promulgated and became largely based on the German constitution of 1850. This constitution was supposed to be a gift of the Emperor to his people.<sup>81</sup> At that time the constitution seemed modern but it subordinated completely all subjects to the Emperor. This would explain how there was simultaneously an evolution towards democracy during the twenties and thirties and the rise of the military.<sup>82</sup>

In article one of the constitution it was clearly stated that the Emperor was almighty. The Emperor was given full sovereignty.<sup>83</sup> This was based on the legend that the first Emperor was a descendant of Amaterasu, the sun goddess. The family line of emperors has never been interrupted since then and therefore Emperor Meiji would be a direct descendant of Amaterasu(天照).<sup>84</sup> It was Itō Hirobumi who created the image of the Emperor as being a human god, and this was incorporated into the constitution. This idea was rather new, as the Emperor was hardly known to the public prior to the Meiji period.<sup>85</sup> The next step was to integrate the newly created god into an already existing religion. The Shinto religion would fulfill this function and thus through the Emperor, Shinto would become part of the national idea and a powerful tool.<sup>86</sup> Consequently Buddhism separated itself from Shinto. Finally, both the Emperor and Shinto would be used by the military for their purposes. The basic aim of those making the constitution was thus to give absolute, symbolic power to the Emperor but have the actual political power remain in the hands of the ruling elite.<sup>87</sup>

The constitution stated that the army had to justify its actions only to the Emperor. The Minister of Defense had to be on active duty in the army. Therefore, he could be summoned by the army.<sup>88</sup> This would give the army a tremendous power and a feeling of

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<sup>81</sup> John Benson, Takao Matsumura, *Japan 1868-1945: From Isolation to Occupation*, p.22.

<sup>82</sup> Edward Adriaenssens, Dimitri Vanoverbeke, *Op Zoek naar het Nieuwe Japan*, p.17.

<sup>83</sup> Martin Collcut, Marius Jansen and Isao Kumakura, *Cultural Atlas of Japan*, p.183.

<sup>84</sup> Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*, p.5.

<sup>85</sup> Edward Adriaenssens, Dimitri Vanoverbeke, *Op Zoek naar het Nieuwe Japan*, p.18.

<sup>86</sup> Martin Collcut, Marius Jansen and Isao Kumakura, *Cultural Atlas of Japan*, p.54.

<sup>87</sup> John Benson, Takao Matsumura, *Japan 1868-1945: From Isolation to Occupation*, p.21.

<sup>88</sup> Edward Adriaenssens, Dimitri Vanoverbeke, *Op Zoek naar het Nieuwe Japan*, p.18.

superiority. The army was after all a servant of a god. This feeling of independence towards the government is clearly seen in the actions the Kwantung army in Asia. This left the government with no choice but to accept the accomplished facts, as we have seen in the second chapter.

Basic freedoms were given but could be modified according to law. The individual was always subjected to the bigger group, the state.<sup>89</sup>

*In short, the constitution spelled out the fundamental characteristics of the kokutai, the 'national principle' or 'national essence' of the Japanese state.<sup>90</sup>*

The Meiji Constitution would remain valid up to the end of the Second World War. Then it would be replaced by a constitution drafted by the Americans who controlled Japan after its defeat.

#### 3.1.4. Japan's mission

Like the Emperor being the head of the Japanese people, so was Japan the head of the world's nations. After all, the Japanese were the children of god and their national leader was a god.<sup>91</sup> The Emperor was a direct descendant of an unbroken line of Emperors, and therefore the Emperor was directly linked with Amaterasu, the sun goddess. Japan developed the idea of being a superior race. It would use these racialistic ideas to motivate its imperialistic conquests as they saw themselves as the leading race.<sup>92</sup>

*There was anarchy in the world as long as every nation had absolute sovereignty; it was necessary for her to fight to establish a hierarchy under Japan, of course, since she alone represented a nation truly hierarchal from top to bottom and hence understood the necessity of taking 'one's proper place'.<sup>93</sup>*

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<sup>89</sup> Edward Adriaenssens, Dimitri Vanoverbeke, *Op Zoek naar het Nieuwe Japan*, p.19.

<sup>90</sup> John Benson, Takao Matsumura, *Japan 1868-1945: From Isolation to Occupation*, p.5.

<sup>91</sup> Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*, p.4.

<sup>92</sup> Edward Adriaenssens, Dimitri Vanoverbeke, *Op Zoek naar het Nieuwe Japan*, p.277.

<sup>93</sup> Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p.21.

Japan created a positive image around its imperialism. The ‘New Order in East Asia’ and the ‘Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere’ were names given to these ideas. Prime Minister Konoe (近衛) asked a group of intellectuals to create ideas that would justify Japanese imperialism. Japan was considered as a patriarchal figure, which would free the Asian nations from the West. This would be mutually advantageous but in the ‘Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere’ Japan would be the ‘leading race’, the older brother.<sup>94</sup>

### **3.2. Education**

The spread of patriotism and complete loyalty to the Emperor was the objective of the educational system. Already from the Meiji Reform, education was seen as the means of allowing Japan to compete with the West.<sup>95</sup> By the 1880s, all children underwent four years of elementary schooling and from 1907 this became six years. The ‘Explanation of School Matters’ of 1891 by the Ministry of Education states that priority was given to the spirit of reverence to the Emperor and to patriotism.<sup>96</sup>

#### **3.2.1. Iwakura mission**

Japan needed to modernize and sent its government under the leadership of count Iwakura on a mission. They stayed abroad for 21 months, from 1871 to 1873.<sup>97</sup> Their task was to gather as much information as possible in Europe and America so that Japan could use that information to catch up. The group consisted also of five women who would have to research healthcare, the position of the western women<sup>98</sup> and education<sup>99</sup>. The mission’s interest in education was of great importance as education shapes a country. To quote Kido Takayoshi’s(木戸抗允) admiration for the American public school system:

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<sup>94</sup> John Benson, Takao Matsumura, *Japan 1868-1945: From Isolation to Occupation*, p.80-81.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p.28.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. p.29.

<sup>97</sup> Martin Collcut, Marius Jansen and Isao Kumakura, *Cultural Atlas of Japan*, p.179.

<sup>98</sup> Edward Adriaenssens, Dimitri Vanoverbeke, *Op Zoek naar het Nieuwe Japan*, p.15.

<sup>99</sup> Martin Collcut, Marius Jansen and Isao Kumakura, *Cultural Atlas of Japan*, p.179.

*From now on, unless we pay a great deal of attention to the children, the preservation of order in our country in the future will be impossible... To prevent trouble ten years from now, there is only one thing to do and that is to establish schools worthy of the name.*<sup>100</sup>

He also states that *it is all a matter of education and lack of education.*<sup>101</sup> They concluded that the modernization of the West was something that had happened recently and thus it was possible for Japan to catch up.

Education shapes a country. It is responsible for the way of thinking of future generations. The school system adopted would be of tremendous importance for the spread of nationalism and the cult of the Emperor.<sup>102</sup> *Jūdō* and *kendō* would later be part of the educational system, shaping the whole nation in the etiquette of *bushidō*. So would *karate* in the prefecture of Okinawa. *Budō* would therefore influence the generations that would be involved in the Second World War. It would function as one of the many factors to strengthen the spirit of national feeling. We will later examine this more closely.

### 3.2.2. The school system

The educational system showed increasing trends towards nationalism as the Second World War drew nearer. It would eventually be one of the foundations of Japan's war machine. *Prewar education had been a powerful instrument of political legitimation for the regime in power.*<sup>103</sup> The ideology of a state, with the Emperor having absolute power would be taught from childhood at schools.<sup>104</sup> Nationalism and patriotism were made by the Ministry of Education a part of the school curriculum. Nationalism and militarism, in the name of the Emperor, spread into all parts of life. Anything that could be used to strengthen the unity of Japan would be used such as sports, media, and so on. Education

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<sup>100</sup> Martin Collcut, Marius Jansen and Isao Kumakura, *Cultural Atlas of Japan*, p.180.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. p.181.

<sup>102</sup> Edward Adriaensens, Dimitri Vanoverbeke, *Op Zoek naar het Nieuwe Japan*, p.31.

<sup>103</sup> Ellis S. Kraus, Thomas P. Rohlen and Patricia G. Steinhoff. *Conflict in Japan*. p.137.

<sup>104</sup> Kenneth W. Colegrove, *Militarism in Japan*, p.16.

and physical exercise would therefore be also used for Japan's nationalistic purposes. The use of sports to spur nationalism is not something unique to the case of Japan as we have seen in the first chapter.

From 1919 onwards more attention was given to sciences, Japanese history and geography and a national feeling by the Ministry of Education. In 1920 a bureau was created that had to oversee the publication of schoolbooks. During the middle of the twenties, this bureau made guidelines for books about social education. Movies were censored and the Ministry of Education made its own movies. In 1929 a bureau in charge of social education was created. It was in charge of youth training centers and the approval and recommendation of books. In 1924 a Council of Education and Cultural Policy was established, which remained active up to 1935. The more the Second World War approached, the more this council focused on the nationalistic cause. For example: the attachment of military officers to high schools, the establishment of youth training centers,...<sup>105</sup> Under the Ministry of Education, a Research Institute for Physical Education was set up. Up to 1938 it was an important factor for the training of future leaders and physical education in Japan. In 1925 the Maintenance of Public Order Law was passed and connected with the *Hinomaru*<sup>106</sup> (日の丸) and the *Kimigayo*<sup>107</sup> (君が代). The aim of that law was to protect the national unity of Japan. Several institutes were created to supervise the way of thinking of students and to influence them to follow the national policy. The law of 1925 could be used and abused to suppress any movement or action that was against those in power. It was immediately used to arrest several persons during the Kyoto Case of the Student Federation. From then onwards it was obvious that education was a form of propaganda. From the thirties more and more right winged student organizations were set up. These were tolerated because of their explicit patriotic and nationalistic ideas.

From 1925 the number of hours of physical education was augmented from three to five hours and it became possible to for military drills to be introduced.<sup>108</sup> In the same year a law came into force stating that military officers would be sent to high schools to

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<sup>105</sup> Richard J. Smethurst, *A Social Basis for Prewar Japanese Militarism: The Army and the Rural Community*, p.37.

<sup>106</sup> Hinomaru (日の丸) the Rising Sun flag of prewar Japan

<sup>107</sup> Kimigayo (君が代) the national anthem

<sup>108</sup> Kenneth W. Colegrove, *Militarism in Japan*, p.33.

organize the military drills. To strengthen the national feeling of unity, classes as moral, Japanese, Chinese classic history and geography were revised. In 1926, the course 'Japanese history' was revised to 'Japanese national history'. In secondary schools, the hours of chemistry and physics lectures increased. Also in the curriculum good civil values were stressed constantly. The number of universities increased which reached 19 state universities by 1940. Private schools that wanted to have the statute of universities had to meet strict standards. Waseda (早稲田大学) was such an example. Anything that did not follow the nationalistic course was not accepted.

Japan's light industry leaped forward thanks to the economical profits made during the First World War and much attention was paid to manual labor. Slowly heavy industry became more important.<sup>109</sup> Consequently, the number of schools and students of technical and vocational training increased spectacularly. Class hours were reduced to leave more space for practical training. In the morning there were classes but the afternoon was devoted to practical applications. In 1929 a Social Education Bureau was established under the Ministry of Education. It was in charge of both vocational schools and youth training centers. In these training centers military drills were part of the program.

Although Japan showed at first interest in democratic ideas after the First World War, these ideals were quickly replaced by ideas of nationalism and the feeling of unity under the symbol of the Emperor.

The Ministry of Education worked together with the Ministry of Defense. Therefore mental and physical disciplines were stressed. *Military drill in the public schools is under the joint control of the war office and the education office*<sup>110</sup> to create good citizens which are good soldiers and vice versa. Moral and physical education became an important part of the curriculum. For the boys, the military drill was introduced.

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<sup>109</sup> Makato Aso, Ikuo Amano, *Education and Japan's Modernization*, p.39.

<sup>110</sup> Kenneth W. Colegrove, *Militarism in Japan*, p.33.

*In a nutshell, prewar education is viewed as nationalistic and militaristic... it was accountable for contributing to Japanese militarism and imperialism.* <sup>111</sup>

### 3.2.3. Textbooks: a tool for nationalism

As stated above, textbooks were used to create a feeling of national unity. Hence they were not always truthful because they needed to shape whole generations of citizens who needed to believe in a unified Japan. *Because the Japanese ruling class was using these textbooks to construct a unified national consciousness...*<sup>112</sup>

History was adapted to fit the needs of those in power. We will take the case of Prince Shōtoku Taishi(聖徳太子) as an example. By looking more closely at this case, we want to point out that everything that could be used to support Japan's unity and warfare was used.

Prince Shōtoku was an old symbol who became a new hero. Prince Shōtoku lived from 572 to 622 when he died of sickness. He is one of Japan's greatest heroes.<sup>113</sup> He was revered as a statesman and promulgator of Buddhism. To promote Buddhism at that time in a country with already existing *kami*, the Buddhist priest portrayed the Buddhas as superior *kami*.<sup>114</sup> How could this historical figure who promoted Buddhism be used in a time of upcoming war when Shintō(神道) was venerated?

Prince Shōtoku is credited of writing the constitution of seventeen articles.<sup>115</sup> In 1903 a textbook called the *Shōgaku Nihon rekishi*(小学日本歴史) was published. According to this textbook, the constitution was the basis of Japan's morality. Another textbook, the *Jinjō shōgaku Nihon rekishi*(尋常小学日本歴史) of 1909 stressed even more the idea of Prince Shōtoku being a nationalistic figure. The tendency to emphasize the Prince's nationalism was retained in later textbooks.<sup>116</sup> In the textbook *Jinjō shōgaku kokushi*(尋常小学国史), published in 1920, this idea was repeated and further stressed. Shōtoku

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<sup>111</sup> Ellis S. Kraus, Thomas P. Rohlen en Patricia G. Steinhoff, *Conflict in Japan*, p.155.

<sup>112</sup> Stephen Vlastos, *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, p.38.

<sup>113</sup> Martin Collcut, Marius Jansen and Isao Kumakura, *Cultural Atlas of Japan*, p.56.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid. p.58.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. p.60.

<sup>116</sup> Stephen Vlastos, *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, p.39.



had angered the Chinese Emperor by addressing him in a letter with the greetings “*from the Son of Heaven in the land where the sun rises to the Son of Heaven in the land where the sun sets.*”<sup>117</sup> This has been remembered as the first clear expression of Japan’s national identity. This was commentated in the textbook as: “*What a noble action!*”<sup>118</sup> These books weren’t teaching history anymore, they had become a form of propaganda against the enemy, molding a new generation’s brain little by little. For scholars, the greeting of the Prince was a proof of his nationalistic spirit.<sup>119</sup>

Shōtoku’s nationalism was especially stressed after the occupation of Manchuria in 1931. The *Shōgaku kokushi*(小学国史) of 1940 emphasized even more the Prince’s nationalism. “*He showed how powerful our nation was.*” Through history, the Prince was known as one of the biggest advocates of Buddhism. The *Shotō-ka kokushi*(初等科国史) of 1943 on the contrary followed the tendency of the war period. It stated: “*The prince ardently worshipped the gods [kami], following the example of the emperor...*”<sup>120</sup> History was being used for the cause of the Empire. Its academic neutrality was lost.

These textbooks are clear marks in the shift of ideology. At the end of the Edo period, Prince Shōtoku was despised by nationalistic intellectuals. They argued that he upset the country by introducing Buddhism in Japan. A half century later he was seen as a national symbol and his image being a part of Shintō and the modern imperial tradition.

The general interest in the Shōtoku came after 1903. It was the 1300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his constitution of seventeen articles. It peaked again in 1921, the 1300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. Previously he had been perceived as the introducer of Buddhism. But from around the time of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) his statesmanship was underlined. This new image fitted better with the rising nationalism in the country.<sup>121</sup> Article three of his constitution became more and more exposed. The article demanded obedience to the throne.<sup>122</sup> During a period of complete obedience to the emperor, this historical fact was stressed. As such, his patriotic image was strengthened. Ōkawa

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<sup>117</sup> Martin Collcut, Marius Jansen and Isao Kumakura, *Cultural Atlas of Japan*, p.60.

<sup>118</sup> Stephen Vlastos, *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, p.39.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.* p.45.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.* p.40.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.* p.42.

<sup>122</sup> Martin Collcut, Marius Jansen and Isao Kumakura, *Cultural Atlas of Japan*, p.60.

Shūmei(大川周明)(1886-1957) was a right-wing politician. He approved the expansionistic cause in Manchuria and the rest of Asia. He wrote a passage in *Nihon nisenroppyaku-nen shi*(日本二千六百年史) of 1941 in which he bends history for his own suiting. The book celebrated the mythical 2006<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the imperial state. Prince Shōtoku's role as introducer of Buddhism was remodeled into a way that he seemed a supporter of Shinto and the worship of the Emperor.<sup>123</sup> Prince Shōtoku became a symbol of the national spirit in a time of national crisis during the 1930s. It was one of the many factors that helped unify the country. Prince Shōtoku's image was revised profoundly in Japan's modern period.<sup>124</sup>

Similarly, *budō* had to adapt to the needs of the moment. *Jūdō* and *kendō* became part of the school curriculum as a way of training the youth. Especially *karate*, with its foreign roots had to undergo adjustments, so it would fit with the thinking of that time, in a similar way as that we have seen with Prince Shōtoku. This will be discussed in the last chapter.

### **3.3. Bushidō and Budō: the heritage of the samurai**

During the Meiji period (1868-1912) the samurai class was abolished and thus their way of living stopped suddenly. The carrying of two swords and the *chongmage* (top-knot hairstyle) became forbidden. Eventually the last samurai died a heroic death against the troops of the emperor during the battle of Kagoshima(鹿児島) in 1877, under the leadership of Saigō Takamori (西郷隆盛).<sup>125</sup>

*Bushidō* is the code of the samurai. The samurai died out, but their spirit of *bushidō*, survived. It is considered to be the finest example of *Yamato damashii* (大和魂), the Japanese spirit.<sup>126</sup> According to this code, the highest honor is to die for your master. This attitude eventually became part of life of the common people during the wars from the Meiji and the following periods. The martial arts of these samurai, called in Japanese

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<sup>123</sup> Stephen Vlastos, *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, p.43.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p.47.

<sup>125</sup> Edward Adriaensens, Dimitri Vanoverbeke, *Op Zoek naar het Nieuwe Japan*, p.15.

<sup>126</sup> Patrick McCarthy, *Ancient Okinawan Martial Arts: Koryu Uchinadi*, p.72.

*bugei*, would become the foundation of the *budō*, martial ways. Henceforth we will in general refer to *budō* as martial arts.<sup>127</sup> These *budō* were made during the Meiji period and the pre-World War II period. So the “ancient” Japanese martial arts date back from the period<sup>128</sup> between 1868 and 1973. During this period the modern *kendō* (fencing), *jūdō*, archery(*kyūdō*, 弓道), halberd fencing (*naginatadō*, 長刀道), bayonet-mounted fencing (*jūkendō*, 銃剣道) and *karate-dō* were created.<sup>129</sup> Through these arts, education and propaganda, the spirit of *bushidō* was transmitted among the common people. The qualities of virtue, value, discipline and glory in sacrificing oneself for the master, became common ground. It was a small step to change “master” into “emperor”. This *bushidō* spirit was thus very important in the wars Japan became involved in, including World War II. The infamous *Kamikaze*(神風) attacks are the most prominent examples of the *bushidō* spirit.<sup>130</sup>

*Budō encouraged shugyō (austerity) and won widespread popularity in Japan during an age of escalating militarism<sup>131</sup>.*

There are many anecdotes from the wars about the Japanese courage based on *bushidō*.<sup>132</sup> Probably the most important factor of the mental strength of the Japanese army was this spirit. Japanese often chose to fight to their death or commit suicide rather than being captured.<sup>133</sup> To support this statement, Ruth Benedict compares the amount of those Japanese captured to the number of those that died. In the North Buruma campaign, this would be 1:120. Thus for each prisoner captured, one hundred and twenty would fight to the death, but in the armies of Occidental nations this ratio was 4:1.<sup>134</sup> This enormous difference is attributed to the belief of the Japanese in their emperor, as seen above, and the warrior code.

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<sup>127</sup> Bugei and budō are both names for martial arts. The first is a term used for martial arts where its aim was to prepare for real combat. The second term was used for martial arts where the objective is to build a strong body and character. These were mostly developed based on bugei.

<sup>128</sup> Shun Inoue, “The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanō Jigorō and Kōdōkan Judo”, p.163.

<sup>129</sup> Patrick McCarthy, *Ancient Okinawan Martial Arts: Koryu Uchinadi*, p.72.

<sup>130</sup> Douglas Brinkley, Michael E. Haskew, *The World War II Desk Reference*, p.287.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. p.73.

<sup>132</sup> David Boyle, *De Tweede Wereldoorlog In Foto's*, p.448.

<sup>133</sup> Douglas Brinkley, Michael E. Haskew, *The World War II Desk Reference*, p.427.

<sup>134</sup> Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p.38.

### **3.4. The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai: the center of Japanese Budō**

The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai was created in Kyoto in 1895, during the Meiji period. From 1895 until 1945, all Japanese martial arts fell under the jurisdiction of the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai. This institute was of tremendous importance to the development of the *budō*. As we have seen above, the ideal of the Emperor, education and *bushidō* were all fundamentals of the Japanese “spirit”. These elements were all integrated in the organization of the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai. The institute was only accountable to the emperor and his administration, and was supported by the bureaucrats, the Ministry of Education and the military. It was built at a time when Japan became involved in a war with China. Like many other organizations at that time, the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai had a strong affiliation with nationalism and the Emperor. With its idealistic vision, it would actively take part in the preparation of Japan’s wars.

#### **3.4.1. The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai’s link with the Emperor**

The organization created a strong connection with the image of the emperor. It had the aim to build strength, a strong spirit, and virtuous characters. These are all qualities that were encouraged by Japan’s fiftieth emperor Kanmu (A.D. 781-805). The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai took Kanmu as its patron. Here already we can see the affiliation between *budō*, the martial arts, and the emperor.

The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai was authorized by the government to promote *budō*. On the fifth of September in 1896, Emperor Meiji selected Komatsumiya Akihito(小松宮彰仁), a member of the Imperial family, as the first general director of the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai. Shortly hereafter the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai held its first *Butoku-sai* (武徳祭), a martial arts festival. The membership grew and the association received financial support from the government and from the emperor.<sup>135</sup> The construction of the Butokuden (武徳殿), the official training hall of the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai, was finished in 1899. It was located close to a Heian Shrine, near to Kyoto’s Imperial Palace grounds. These

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<sup>135</sup> Patrick McCarthy, *Ancient Okinawan Martial Arts: Koryu Uchinadi*, p.74.

three buildings symbolize some of the important factors for the successes of the wars: the belief in the *bushidō* spirit, the Shintō religion and the emperor veneration. In 1906, Fushinomiya(伏見宮), also a member of the imperial family, became the second general manager of the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai. One year later, in 1907, the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai became a Foundation.



Figure 2: Dai Nippon Butoku-kai insignia

The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai insignia is shaped in an eight-point chrysanthemum. This flower is associated with the emperor and is regarded as a national flower. The background is purple, again, a color associated with the emperor. In the lower part we can see a bow and two arrows, symbolizing the first line of defense in feudal times.

#### 3.4.2. Contribution for war

In 1911 the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai, with the cooperation of the Ministry of Education, introduced *kendō* and *jūdō* into secondary schools. *Jūdō*<sup>136</sup> and *kendō*<sup>137</sup> are a heritage of Japan's warrior class. They have evolved from the samurai's *jū-jutsu* and *ken-jutsu*. During a period of rising militarism, from the Meiji period up till World War II, *budō* was a perfect tool for the government. *Kendō* and *jūdō* served to build strong bodies and spirits for Japan's war machine.

*Modern budō flourished in Japan's school system, signifying the value the government was placing upon budō training.*<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> *Jūdō* (柔道) is a Japanese grappling art.

<sup>137</sup> *Kendō*(剣道) is the art of Japanese fencing.

<sup>138</sup> Patrick McCarthy, *Ancient Okinawan Martial Arts: Koryu Uchinadi*, p.74.

In 1911, the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai opened its martial arts college, next to the Butokuden. Its name changed later from ‘*Bujutsu Senmon Gakkō*’ (武術専門学校) to ‘*Budō Senmon Gakkō*’ (武道専門学校). The difference in the name is in the accent on ‘*jutsu*’ meaning ‘skill’ or ‘*dō*’ signifying ‘the way, road’ referring more to character building. Isogai Hajime (磯貝一), who was the greatest follower of Kanō Jigorō, the creator of *jūdō*, was the director of the *jūdō* department. Naito Takaharu (内藤高治), was in charge of *kendō*. Next to *jūdō* and *kendō*, military strategy, history, philosophy and other related subjects were taught. The graduates were seen as the elite of that period. They were forged to become Japan’s new military mind.<sup>139</sup> The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai actively supported the Japanese war machine. They spread the idea of “*Budō is the way common men build uncommon bravery*”. The organization was a grand supporter of the ideas of *shushin* (主審), *kokutai* (国体), and *Nihonjinron* (日本人論) (in general, the idea of support of the nation’s system, emperor worship, lifetime loyalty and things ‘Japanese’).

The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai organized in 1941 a committee to follow the evolution of different *budō* groups. The next year, with the beginning of the war, the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai was put under supervision of the ministries of welfare, education, war, navy and national affairs.<sup>140</sup> Prime Minister Tōjō Hideki served as head of the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai during the war years.

### 3.4.3. After World War II

With the end of the war in 1945, the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai was dissolved. Obviously the abolishment of this organization was one of the first actions taken by the Allied Forces.<sup>141</sup> The occupation forces wanted to ban everything that was considered to be part of militarism.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Patrick McCarthy, *Ancient Okinawan Martial Arts: Koryu Uchinadi*, p.75.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p.77.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> Edward Adriaenssens, Dimitri Vanoverbeke, *Op Zoek Naar Het Nieuw Japan*, p.38.

In 1946, the Education Ministry was put in charge of *budō*, but it could only be used as a means of physical education within schools. The same year, officials who had been part of the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai, succeeded in reinstating the organization. But the Allied Forces ended this resurrection very quickly in fear of a possible rebirth of militarism. The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai hence did not exist during the seven years of American occupation. Its headquarter, the Butokuden, was used from 1945 till 1950 by the Allied Forces. Afterwards it was also used by the Legal Affairs and Finance Ministries. Then it was used by the Kyoto Police Department and finally by the Tokyo Municipal Koto Association<sup>143</sup>. In 1970 it was declared as a national treasure and restored to its original form in 1987.

In 1953 the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai was reorganized and privately funded. The management consisted of prewar members. Again a member of the imperial family served as a patron. Higashifushimi(東伏見)fulfilled this role. Ono Kumao, a skillful swordsman became the leading figure of the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai. It was located close to its original site. The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai received permission to use the Shoren Temple(青蓮院)in Kyoto's Higashi Yama-Ku(京都 東山区), Awahta Guchi (粟田口) , up until today.<sup>144</sup> Nowadays, the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai is no longer in charge of all the *budō*. There are many more commercial associations who share the control of all Japanese *budō*.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

Within a couple of decades since the beginning of the Meiji Period, Japan developed into a strong nation. This thesis does not allow for the space to examine every single aspect that contributed to this evolution. We briefly mentioned in this chapter some important factors that enforced the Japanese nationalistic spirit. In the first part we saw how the figure of the Emperor was transformed into a powerful symbol for Japan's war machine through the Meiji Constitution. These ideas became widespread through the educational

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<sup>143</sup> *Koto* (琴)is a thirteen-stringed traditional Japanese instrument.

<sup>144</sup> Patrick McCarthy, *Ancient Okinawan Martial Arts: Koryu Uchinadi*, p.83.

system. The schools molded the brains of the new generation for its militaristic purposes. The introduction of *budō* at the schools, due to the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai, was not only done for strengthening the bodies of the young generation. Its main objective was to teach through *jūdō* and *kendō* the spirit of *bushidō*, the way of the warrior. This spirit would serve the militaristic nation well. We can see in the adaptation of martial arts at school the importance the national government placed upon them. The martial arts would create good citizens that would do whatever the nation would demand of them.<sup>145</sup>

*It is the spirit of the Japanese race which sustains them in adversity and spurs them on to the attainment of their objectives. This human strength and hard work compensate for the Japanese for their lack of many material resources.*<sup>146</sup>

The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai was an institution that gathered all the *budō*. The organization was very nationalistic in nature and so would all *budō* that would fall under its wings. The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai's link with the Emperor was displayed in many ways: the insignia had royal colors, the patron of the institution was the Emperor Kanmu and a member of the Imperial family served as the first general director. Due to its militaristic support, the organization was abolished by the American occupation forces. The impact of the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai and nationalism on *karate* will be discussed in the last chapter. Before that, we have to look at the historical context of *karate*'s cultural roots: Okinawa.

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<sup>145</sup> Shun Inoue, "The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanō Jigorō and Kōdōkan Judo", p.168.

<sup>146</sup> John Benson, Takao Matsumura, *Japan 1868-1945: From Isolation to Occupation*, p.5.



## Chapter 4: Okinawa, a dwarf between giants

We have to look at the history of Okinawa to demonstrate how different the original *karate* was from its Japanese derivative version. In short, the traditional *karate* was developed under Chinese influence whilst the current version took shape under Japan's reign.

Toudi(唐手), later known as *karate*, was introduced into the Japanese mainland in the 1920s-1930s. However no foreign elements were tolerated during this period of rising militarism and "Japanisation".<sup>147</sup> Hence typical traits of the Okinawan culture had to be modified to become more Japanese. This was not an exception as any other aspect of life was also "purified". The mentality was "If it wasn't Japanese, it wasn't good". This even lasted after the wars as the tendency still exists to "Japanize" facts. For example, the technological improvement of ceramic in Japan of the sixteenth century which is credited to the Koreans, is still ignored in some textbooks.<sup>148</sup>

The Japanese culture is known for its ability to absorb and modify foreign elements and to incorporate it as a part of their own culture. The best known examples are the introduction of Chinese characters together with Buddhism. As such they combined the foreign writing system with their own spoken language, added some extra readings and developed new symbols. Also Buddhism, which was introduced in the late fifth or the early sixth century, was adapted to fit Japan's culture.<sup>149</sup>

*Karate* underwent a very similar story. It was a martial art developed in the small Ryūkyū kingdom(*ryūkyū ōkoku*, 琉球王国). Later on, this kingdom became part of Japan, and the martial art was introduced in the mainland. In the 1960s this Japanese martial art spread all over the world. But the real origin of this martial art can be found in Okinawa. This martial art was forged under influence of the Chinese onto the Ryūkyū kingdom and would later become a part of the Japanese war machine against China.

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<sup>147</sup> John Benson, Takao Matsumura, *Japan 1868-1945: From Isolation to Occupation*, p.83.

<sup>148</sup> Edward Adriaensens, Dimitri Vanoverbeke, *Op Zoek naar het Nieuwe Japan*, p.250.

<sup>149</sup> Martin Collcut, Marius Jansen and Isao Kumakura, *Cultural Atlas of Japan*, p.56.



Figure 3: Okinawa and its neighbors

#### 4.1. The Ryūkyū

To understand the evolution of *karate* we have to look at the history of the small islands of the Ryūkyū archipelago. These small islands are located between two big nations: China and Japan. *Karate* was shaped under the influence of Chinese martial arts. Later many of the Chinese elements were removed before *karate* could be accepted as a Japanese *budō* during a period of rising animosity between the two great nations. *Karate*

was forged in the fire of the Ryūkyū<sup>150</sup> kingdom, between the Japanese hammer and the Chinese anvil.

#### 4.1.1. Common roots with Japan

During the antique migrations, some people travelled through the Ryūkyū to reach their end destination, Japan. Hence it should not be a surprise that the Ryūkyū culture and Japanese culture have some common roots. Even the language has common aspects, according to the linguist, Hattori Shirō (服部四郎).<sup>151</sup>

From the Yayoi period(弥生時代), between the end of the third century B.C. until the third century A.C., communications between the Ryūkyū and Japan diminished to a minimum. Japan became strongly influenced by China and entered the age of iron but the Ryūkyū remained isolated. Japan evolved under Chinese influence. It took over for example the Chinese model of ‘State’ for its own nation. Since that time the cultures of the Japanese and the Ryūkyū became more and more different. The differences between the Ryūkyū and Japan are therefore mainly due to their different speed of cultural evolution. The culture of the Ryūkyū hardly evolved up until the 11<sup>th</sup> century when it introduced iron from Japan.<sup>152</sup> The local lords would use it for the basis of every developed culture: war. The introduction of iron was followed with the introduction of Buddhism and writing.

#### 4.1.2. Contact with China

##### 4.1.2.1 The three kingdoms

Conflicts between the local lords in the Ryūkyū resulted in three small states by the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century: Hokuzan(北山), Chūzan(中山) and Nanzan(南山) (from north to

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<sup>150</sup> Shunten is the first king of the Ryūkyū in 1187. In 1879, the kingdom will be abolished, becoming a province of Japan, Okinawa. Historians not always distinguish the historical connotation given to ‘Ryūkyū’ and ‘Okinawa’. I will in general use the term ‘Okinawa’, as the term is used nowadays to refer to the southern province, unless I want to stress the historical period.

<sup>151</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia Del Karate: La Via Del La Mano Vuota*, p.17.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

south). This period was called the Period of the three mountains: *Sanzan-jidai*(三山時代).<sup>153</sup> During this period each king established his first official contacts with the Chinese Ming dynasty but King Satto(察度) of Chūzan was the first to have a vassal relationship with China. This was also a first step for the introduction of martial arts from China. During the *Sanzan-jidai*, the society of Okinawa evolved rapidly under the influence of the Chinese culture. This evolvment however started later than in Japan. Between 1372 and 1866 at least 23 Chinese delegations visited the Ryūkyū kingdom. In fact, a delegation came each time there was a new king. Delegations could be as big as five hundred men, consisting of civilian functionaries and military and they would stay between 3 to 10 months. During these visits, martial arts were transferred.<sup>154</sup>

#### 4.1.2.2. Kumemura(久米村): the Chinese village

In 1392, under the reign of king Satto, a group of Chinese immigrants settled in the village of Kume.<sup>155</sup> This group consisted of “the 36 families” and made the relationship stronger between the Ryūkyū and the Ming dynasty. The group lived in a closed society and benefited from many privileges. They practised martial arts in secrecy and thus would play a key role in the development of *karate*.<sup>156</sup>

#### 4.1.2.3. The Ryūkyū kingdom

In 1429 the three kingdoms were unified by Chūzan. Nowadays we can still recognize the three kingdoms in the regions Kunigami(国頭) (Hokuzan), Nakagami(中頭) (Chūzan) and Shimajiri(島尻) (Nanzan).<sup>157</sup> With the unification by Shō Hashi(尚色志), “the first Shō clan” controlled the local lords but soon conflicts rose within the Shō family.

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<sup>153</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia Del Karate: La Via Del La Mano Vuota*, p.18.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid. p.19.

<sup>155</sup> Rosa Caroli, *Il Mito Dell' Omogeneità Giapponese: Storia Di Okinawa*, p.43.

<sup>156</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia Del Karate: La Via Del La Mano Vuota*, p.20.

<sup>157</sup> Rosa Caroli, *Il Mito Dell' Omogeneità Giapponese: Storia Di Okinawa*, p.46.

This ended in 1469 when Kanamaru(金丸) took power under the name Shō En(尚円). This would be the “second Shō clan” which ruled the islands till the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>158</sup>

His son, Shō Shin would succeed in building a strong centralized state. He placed his government at Shuri(首理) and obliged all the local lords to set up their residence in the same location.<sup>159</sup> This was very similar to the *sankin kōtai*(参勤交代)<sup>160</sup> system in Japan.<sup>161</sup>

#### 4.1.2.3.1. An ‘armless’ nation

In 1509 the Shuri castle was built under his reign. At the inside of the central building there is a monument with eleven inscriptions. The fourth inscription states that the king Shō Shin(尚真) had gathered all the weapons to protect the country.<sup>162</sup> Consequently the entire population was disarmed. Thus the first disarmament was not made by a foreign power but by Okinawa’s own king. The disarmament was aimed to weaken the local lords but hardly affected the population.<sup>163</sup> And so, it would be a mistake to interpret the birth of *karate* as a result from a revolt by the population against Shō Shin. This disarmament made it possible to develop a martial art with empty hands. However many books and websites erroneously state that *karate* was developed against the suppression by a foreign invasion.

Later, under the rule of Satsuma, there would be a second abolition of weapons. This could have been the basis of the theory of the foreign invasion being the cause of the development of *karate*. We will look more closely at this in the next paragraph.

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<sup>158</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia Del Karate: La Via Del La Mano Vuota*, p.20.

<sup>159</sup> Rosa Caroli, *Il Mito Dell’ Omogeneità Giapponese: Storia Di Okinawa*, p.47.

<sup>160</sup> *Sankinkōtai* (参勤交代) is the system in which the military government orders the local lords to leave their families in Edo and that the lord himself had to alternate his residence every other year between Edo and their homes. This hostage system would also financially drain the lords, leaving them without the will to resist the military government.

<sup>161</sup> Martin Collcut, Marius Jansen and Isao Kumakura, *Cultural Atlas of Japan*, p.135.

<sup>162</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia Del Karate: La Via Del La Mano Vuota*, p.21.

<sup>163</sup> Rosa Caroli, *Il Mito Dell’ Omogeneità Giapponese: Storia Di Okinawa*, p.47.

The 10<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> inscription inside the main building of the Shuri castle states that Shō Shin had modified the life style of his people and changed his castle and palace according to a Chinese model. This is interesting for a comparison with the *karate* in the prewar period of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the period of the Ryūkyū kingdom, *karate* was developed in a peaceful environment. It was neither a result of war nor of revolution, but the result of a peaceful blending of two cultures. It was also an art of the elite and trained in secrecy. In contrast, the 20<sup>th</sup> century prewar variant was a popular version open to the public. It spread in a period of animosity and xenophobia and it would become part of the Japanese war machine against China.

#### 4.1.2.3.2. Satsuma's invasion

The people of the Ryūkyū are often considered as extremely kind and peaceful. There is an interesting anecdote from the canons of the small Kingdom to illustrate this point. In 1466 some officials of the Ryūkyū kingdom visited the government of the Shōgun at Kyōto(京都). While leaving the palace, they fired a couple of shots as a sign of gratitude. The Japanese were utterly surprised. The use of gunpowder had already reached the Ryūkyū thanks to the relationship with China, but it was never developed as a means for war. The use of gunpowder as a means for war was only introduced in Japan, together with guns, in 1543 by the Portuguese. In 1609 Satsuma(薩摩), a southern province of Japan, invaded the Ryūkyū kingdom, by means of guns.<sup>164</sup> The small kingdom was squashed easily by the superior Japanese warriors. The invasion resulted in 57 deaths at the side of Satsuma and 531 deaths on the part of Ryūkyū as the people and nobles had little or no arms.

We can look again at the claim that *karate* was developed against the invaders. *Karate* was not destined for the peasant inhabitants. Up to 1879 it was a privilege reserved for the nobles, who practiced it in the utmost secrecy.<sup>165</sup> Thus during the confrontation with Satsuma the inhabitants hardly stood a chance.

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<sup>164</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia Del Karate: La Via Del La Mano Vuota*, p.24.

<sup>165</sup> Mark Bisshop, *Karate Di Okinawa: Maestri, Stili e Tecniche Segrete*, p.12.

#### 4.1.2.3.3. Two bosses, China and Japan

The Ryūkyū lived during centuries under a double submission. It was a vassal of China but was invaded by Satsuma. As such, it was also under control of Japan at a period when Japan was closed for all foreign nations. Indeed, the Shōgun was scared that western nations would send in first their missionaries, and later the army to create a colony. However due to the Ryūkyū, Satsuma still had some contacts with foreign nations. It is important to stress that Satsuma did not mingle with the culture of the small islands. On the contrary, they wanted the islands looked as foreign as possible, so that they could display that they had conquered a foreign nation.<sup>166</sup>

Satsuma allowed the small kingdom to continue its mercantile relationship with China but concealed its own presence when the Chinese delegation was present.<sup>167</sup> In this way, Satsuma could benefit from the imported foreign goods, indirectly through the Ryūkyū.<sup>168</sup>

## **4.2. Okinawa**

The Ryūkyū kingdom would undergo enormous changes from 1872 until the Second World War. We have observed before how the kingdom became dependent of Satsuma, and therefore of Japan. At that time, the culture and customs of the kingdom were left almost untouched. This attitude would completely change in the last two centuries. The Meiji government wanted to demolish the unequal treaties and therefore had to present itself as a strong and modernized nation. Japan wanted to make clear borders and the Ryūkyū kingdom would become part of it. However before the kingdom could be called “Japanese” it had to get rid of all its foreign elements so that its people could become loyal subjects of the empire.

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<sup>166</sup> Rosa Caroli, *Il Mito Dell' Omogeneità Giapponese: Storia Di Okinawa*, p.56.

<sup>167</sup> George H. Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People*, p.164.

<sup>168</sup> Rosa Caroli, *Il Mito Dell' Omogeneità Giapponese: Storia Di Okinawa*, p.55.

#### 4.2.1. From a kingdom to a province

##### 4.2.1.1. From kingdom to *han*(藩)

In the Meiji period, Japan was trying to create a strong and unified state. The Ryūkyū had been under control of Satsuma since 1609. Satsuma was part of Japan and therefore the Ryūkyū should be too.<sup>169</sup>

The Japanese government sent a letter in 1872 to Shuri to invite the king Shō Tai (尚泰) to Tokyo to present himself to the new Emperor Meiji. The objective was a public submission by the leader of the Ryūkyū to the Emperor.<sup>170</sup> However the invitation was declined with the excuse that the king was ill. A small delegation was sent instead.<sup>171</sup> Shortly after their arrival, the delegation received an imperial edict. It stated that the people of the Ryūkyū belonged to same race and had the same language and customs as the Japanese. Shō Tai would be given one of the highest ranks of nobility, namely, the leader of the *han* of the Ryūkyū. In this way, Shō Tai was no longer the sovereign of an independent state, but an administrator of a small part of a great nation. Approximately two weeks later, a second edict was presented that subjected the Ryūkyū under the jurisdiction of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thereby, the area was subjected to all the agreements made with foreign nations, like the United States, the Netherlands and France.<sup>172</sup>

In 1873 the *Hinomaru*, the Japanese flag, was introduced. It had a double function. First, to show the world that Okinawa was part of the Japanese territory and second, that inhabitants had to be loyal to the Emperor and the Japanese nation.<sup>173</sup> For Satsuma, this was particularly painful as they had lost all their privileges to the empire. This imperial edict of 1872 was the first step towards the annexation of the Ryūkyū.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Rosa Caroli, *Il Mito Dell' Omogeneità Giapponese: Storia Di Okinawa*, p.81.

<sup>170</sup> George H. Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People*, p.361.

<sup>171</sup> Rosa Caroli, *Il Mito Dell' Omogeneità Giapponese: Storia Di Okinawa*, p.85.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid. p.87.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. p.140-141.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid. p.86.



#### 4.2.1.2. The Taiwan expedition of 1874: scaring away China

The king of Ryūkyū did not obey the letter that was sent to him. This act of disrespect, in the eyes of the Japanese, created a delicate situation.<sup>175</sup> It did not coincide with the idea of Japan's unified race.<sup>176</sup> This was a serious problem for the Meiji government, which was trying to build relationships with the strong West.<sup>177</sup> An incident happened that would forever change the future of the small kingdom.

In 1871 a ship of the Ryūkyū was wrecked at sea. The sailors were stranded in Taiwan and there the locals slaughtered fifty four of them. The wrecking of a ship on the coast of China was a rather common incident, but this time, the Meiji government used it as an excuse to interfere. This interference of Japan would have great consequences on the relationship between China and the Ryūkyū.<sup>178</sup> Around 1873 there was an internal conflict in Japan on the issue whether it should invade Korea (*seikanron*, 征韓論). The Taiwan incident arrived in time to channel the frustration of the ex-samurai. In 1874 the decision was made to send an expedition to Taiwan under the command of Saigō Tsugumichi(西郷従道), the brother of Saigō Takamori(西郷隆盛)<sup>179,180</sup>. The Japanese government sent an expedition to punish the locals of Taiwan who had slaughtered shipwrecked sailors of Okinawa. The expedition had been legitimized by the Meiji leaders claiming that the victims were “Japanese subjects”. During that same year, the Ryūkyū's case was replaced by Japan from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.<sup>181</sup> The sailors of the Taiwan incident of 1871 were viewed as heroes by the Japanese government. They had given their lives in service of the state and the Emperor.<sup>182</sup> This caused confusion in China about the nationality of the victims and resulted in the end of the tribute relationship between China and Okinawa. China objected weakly but Japan had won the dispute. China finally paid a sum to Tokyo

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<sup>175</sup> George H. Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People*, p.365.

<sup>176</sup> Rosa Caroli, *Il Mito Dell' Omogeneità Giapponese: Storia Di Okinawa*, p.87.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.* p.85.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.* p.88-89.

<sup>179</sup> Saigō Takamori was the leader of the rebel army of samurai against the imperial troops in the battle of Kagoshima in 1877. The battle was lost by the rebels, ending forever the age of the samurai.

<sup>180</sup> Rosa Caroli, *Il Mito Dell' Omogeneità Giapponese: Storia Di Okinawa*, p.92.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.* p.95.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.* p.130.

intended for the family of the victims. By paying the sum to Japan, China had in fact admitted that the Ryūkyū belonged to Japan. The expedition of 1874 was one of the first steps Japan took for the expansion of its empire. It opened the way for the complete annexation of the kingdom.<sup>183</sup>

#### 4.2.1.3. From *han* to a province

The Ryūkyū maintained unofficially its relationships with China, even after that China had recognized the sailors as “Japanese subjects” and the Ryūkyū had become a *han*. This was most embarrassing for Japan. This not only brought doubt on the jurisdiction of Japan but also dented the Japanese pride that was linked with the Emperor.<sup>184</sup> Shō Tai was asked to present himself at Tokyo as a sign of gratitude for the actions Japan took for the sailors.<sup>185</sup> The king did not obey.

Matsuda Michiyuki(松田道之) was given the task to go to Ryūkyū and inform them about the new rules that Japan would lay down on the kingdom. They were forbidden to send tributes to China. The Chinese calendar was abolished and from then on they had to use the Japanese system. They had to adopt the Japanese penal system. About ten young students had to be sent to receive education in Tokyo. The office of the Ryūkyū in Fujian, a province of China, had to be abolished. The king of the Ryūkyū *han* had to go to Tokyo to show his sign of gratitude. A Japanese garrison would be located on the island.<sup>186</sup> The Ryūkyū government did not want to break its relationship with China. Resistance followed, especially from Kumemura. This was the village that was established in the 15<sup>th</sup> century where some Chinese had received power and prestige.<sup>187</sup> Matsuda Michiyuki reported in Tokyo how the mission went. Shō Tai refused to give his respects to the Japanese Emperor. This offended the Emperor and the national system he stood for.<sup>188</sup> At the same moment, the Ryūkyū sought foreign aid for their cause. China and Ulysses Grant, the ex-president of the United States, were asked for help.

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<sup>183</sup> Rosa Caroli, *Il Mito Dell' Omogeneità Giapponese: Storia Di Okinawa*, p.93-95.

<sup>184</sup> George H. Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People*, p.366.

<sup>185</sup> Rosa Caroli, *Il Mito Dell' Omogeneità Giapponese: Storia Di Okinawa*, p.96.

<sup>186</sup> George H. Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People*, p.372.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.* p.375.

<sup>188</sup> Rosa Caroli, *Il Mito Dell' Omogeneità Giapponese: Storia Di Okinawa*, p.99.

Japan wanted to quickly abolish the *han* and change it into a province(*ken*, 県). By changing the Ryūkyū *han* into a *ken* they wanted to confront China and Grant with a fait accompli. Namely, that the islands were already a part of the national territory of Japan.<sup>189</sup>

Matsuda would return to the Ryūkyū, accompanied with a vast police force and a document. The document of 11 March 1879 declared the abolishment of the Ryūkyū *han*. From now on it would be known as Okinawa *ken*. Shō Tai had to go to Tokyo where he would receive a rank of high status after he formally submitted himself to the Emperor. He would stay there till his death in 1901. This measure is known as the Ryūkyū *shobun*.<sup>190</sup> This annexation of 1879 was the first step of Japan's expansion towards Asia.<sup>191</sup>

In 1879, the ex-president of the United States Grant, together went to Tokyo to discuss the annexation of the Ryūkyū but in the end, China accepted the fact of the annexation. China's lack of intervention in favor of the Ryūkyū can be explained by its economic interest. The Ryūkyū were neither of great economical nor of strategical importance to China but its other tributary states were of more importance. China, as we have seen in the first chapter, was much more willing to defend its stakes in Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam.<sup>192</sup>

#### 4.2.2. The historical importance of the Ryūkyū *shobun*(琉球処分)

Ryūkyū *shobun* is the term given to the actions that the Meiji government took against the Ryūkyū in the period 1872 to 1879. In 1872 they made Shō Tai the head of the Ryūkyū *han*. From then on the many actions resulted in the creation of the province of

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid. p.100.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid. p.101.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid. p.81.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid. p.104-105.

Okinawa in 1879.<sup>193</sup> The Ryūkyū *shobun* was an act of the Meiji government which wanted to improve the international prestige of Japan.<sup>194</sup>

The period of the Ryūkyū annexation was a period of transformation of Japan. It just had left the feudal society and put its first steps in the modern world.<sup>195</sup> Japan was trying to create a strong nation with its place in the world. To do so, it looked for internal stabilization, uniformization, and prestige from the world.<sup>196</sup> The newly annexed Ryūkyū had to be molded into this ideal of a uniformal nation.

The abolition of the Ryūkyū *han* and the proclamation of Okinawa *ken* would introduce a new period for the islands. The old traditions and habits had to adapt to the imposed Japanese administration. The administration had only one aim: creating a unified, strong and modern country. Everything had to adapt to the national interests.

### **4.3. The "Japanization" of Okinawa**

The "Japanization" of Okinawa after 1879 was part of the unification and strengthening of Japan as seen by the Meiji leaders on the basis of a "homogenous" race. Shintō, nationalistic ideas, the Emperor cult and education all served that purpose.

The Meiji government was trying to create a unified state, limiting the differences between the regions as much as possible. It introduced an educational system, obligatory conscription, Japanese as the official language, the national anthem and the flag and abolished the old customs and habits.<sup>197</sup> All traces of the past had to be eliminated, such as the past relationship between Okinawa and China.

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid. p.101.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid. p.107.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid. p.102.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid. p.108.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid. p.128-129.

#### 4.3.1. Education and the Emperor as tools for cultural assimilation

The ordinance of 1879 made schooling obligatory. This would lay the foundation for a school system that would last until the Second World War. Indeed, education was extremely important for creating a sense of loyalty between the regions and the central government. It served to create a modern centralized nation.

The importance of education as a tool to assimilate the Okinawans in the Japanese culture can not be underestimated. By using education as a tool for indoctrination, the old habits and local cultural aspects could be eliminated. Through this, the Okinawans successfully absorbed the idea of one unified race that was devoted completely to the Emperor.<sup>198</sup>

The “Japanization” of the Okinawan culture clearly shows that the Japanese considered their own culture as superior.<sup>199</sup> According to Ichiki Kitokurō(一木喜徳郎), secretary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs who visited the province in 1894, education was the only way to make the Okinawan culture part of the Japanese civilization. All the memories of the past about an independent kingdom and its own unique culture had to be forgotten. Every mark that was left of China in the Okinawan culture had to be erased.<sup>200</sup> The courses of Chinese were suspended and replaced by those of the Japanese language.<sup>201</sup> The teaching of the Japanese language was not only important for communication, but also an important aspect of the “Japanization” of Okinawa. This uniformity in language had to support the idea of a homogeneous race.<sup>202</sup> The “Japanization” included the abolition of traditional habits and the introduction of those of the Japanese main islands. For example, the traditional clothes had to be abandoned at school. The pupils had to wear the same type of school uniform like the rest of Japan.<sup>203</sup> National sports were also introduced.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Rosa Caroli, *Il Mito Dell’ Omogeneità Giapponese: Storia Di Okinawa*, p.113-114.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid. p.132.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid. p.131.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid. p.114.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid. p.128.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid, p.116.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid. p.131.

The reforms in education did not have the aim to create an adequate educational system for the young generation. Its main objective was to create good subjects for the *kōminka* (皇民化) A good subject would support the nation and would even lay down his life if the Emperor wished so. That educational system would spread the Emperor cult.<sup>205</sup> The children became completely indoctrinated about the Emperor. The students, for example, had to bow to a picture of the Emperor every time they entered or left the school.<sup>206</sup> When the Okinawan kids went to school they entered the Japanese world. These kids would become the future generations who would participate in Japan's wars.<sup>207</sup> Education facilitated the spread of the Shintō religion and the Emperor cult. These elements were the foundation of the “national system”, which supported the militarism and nationalism of the following decades.<sup>208</sup> The Okinawans became part of the war machine through education.<sup>209</sup>

#### 4.3.2. Okinawa as part of the military system

Okinawa was the most southern point of Japan and therefore of strategic importance. In 1887 the Minister of Internal Affairs, Yamagata Aritomo(山県有朋) visited Okinawa. In the next year, Itō Hirobumi(伊藤博文) visited for a military inspection. The defensive function of Okinawa became clear with the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895. It formed the border closest to Taiwan. Many of the inhabitants opposed these reforms and were in favor of China winning the war. For the security of the empire, the reform of the province had to be executed at a fast pace.<sup>210</sup>

Obligatory military conscription was introduced in 1898, after the first war with China was over. The conscription's demands were placed just above the average physical characteristics of the Okinawans. This was seen as discrimination by the Japanese authorities to keep the number of Okinawans in the armed forces limited. Okinawa had always been a country of diplomacy and not of military force. This was in strong

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid. p.130.

<sup>206</sup> George H. Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People*, p.415.

<sup>207</sup> Rosa Caroli, *Il Mito Dell' Omogeneità Giapponese: Storia Di Okinawa*, p.159.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid. p.113.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid. p.112.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid. p.110-111.

contrast with the Japanese militaristic culture. The government wanted to spread its military culture and the national conscience that was closely linked with the figure of the Emperor in the province. The strength of the Japanese nation can be found in the physical and moral discipline of the military. Athletic and gymnastic courses were introduced to improve the physical well-being and the patriotic spirit of the young Okinawans. A higher standard of physical fitness and training was developed at schools.<sup>211</sup> This was an effective policy.

#### **4.4. The years of nationalism**

By the end of the 1920s, especially after the invasion of Manchuria in 1931, nationalistic tendencies increased. This nationalism would influence Okinawa's history strongly. The tendency of "Japanization" that had started from 1879 would only strengthen itself through time. Shintō, the Emperor and nationalism would be promoted through education. These elements served the nation by unifying the Japanese under one spirit. The traditional habits were hardly tolerated at first but would become completely forbidden during the period of extreme nationalism.<sup>212</sup>

The Japanese state went to search for local characters who were an example of good subjects. These people who would believe in the principals of the imperial system *tennōsei*(天皇制) and *kokutai* (system of traditional, national government) would help in spreading the Japanese form of education and stimulate national harmony. They would have to fight against the "bad" old habits and promote the new ones.<sup>213</sup> Already in the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was a Japanese teacher, Nitta Yoshitaka(新田義尊), who promoted the elimination of old customs in a series of articles in a magazine called *Ryūkyū kyōiku*(琉球教育). She criticized people who tried to interpret the history of the Ryūkyū as being something unique. According to her it would influence the youth in a negative way.<sup>214</sup> According to Nitta, the term Ryūkyū referred to the period of the period

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<sup>211</sup> George H. Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People*, p.461.

<sup>212</sup> Rosa Caroli, *Il Mito Dell' Omogeneità Giapponese: Storia Di Okinawa*, p.153-154.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid. p.155.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid. p.157.

of the “double subordination” and should not be used anymore.<sup>215</sup> Ōta Chōfu(大田朝敷) was another person who shared the same thoughts. He wanted to wipe out all habits and local ideas in favor of the *kokutai* doctrine.<sup>216</sup>

Anything particular about Okinawa and its history would be seen as a threat to the national system. Studies of the particular history of Okinawa were disapproved. Everything that stroked against the nationalistic idea of Japan at that time was not tolerated.<sup>217</sup> Even the names of people became “Japanized”. Out of fear of discrimination several Okinawans gave up their name and substituted it for a Japanese one.<sup>218</sup>

This complete negligence of Okinawa’s history explains why few historical books have been written about *karate*<sup>219</sup> at that time compared to the number of works about the Japanese nationalistic sports like *judō* and *kendō*.

This process of ignoring its own culture showed its results after the First World War. From then on, the new generation was strongly attached to the Japanese nation and its objectives. The nationalistic propaganda had thus developed good results for Japan.

All these tendencies finally came together in the Law of General Mobilization (*kokka sōdōinhō*, 国家総動員法) of 1938. Fuchigami Fusatarō(淵上房太郎), the governor of Okinawa, declares in 1940 that all traces of the Okinawan culture should be completely eliminated. If not, it would hamper the realization of the Imperial objectives. His statement expresses the general spirit of that era. Japan would use everything to strengthen its nation and would eliminate everything that would hinder the achievement of that objective.<sup>220</sup>

#### **4.5. Conclusion: karate in the middle of change**

The Ryūkyū kingdom had close relationships with China. The rulers of the Ryūkyū forbade weapons. In 1609, Satsuma invaded the small kingdom, putting it under the

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid. p.159.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid. p.157-158.

<sup>217</sup> George H. Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People*, p.457.

<sup>218</sup> Rosa Caroli, *Il Mito Dell’ Omogeneità Giapponese: Storia Di Okinawa*, p.159.

<sup>219</sup> E.J. Harrison, *The Fighting Spirit of Japan*, p.76.

<sup>220</sup> Rosa Caroli, *Il Mito Dell’ Omogeneità Giapponese: Storia Di Okinawa*, p.158-160.



double submission of Japan and China. For the second time the possession of weapons were forbidden. This lack of arms would stimulate the development of unarmed combat techniques. These were mainly introduced through the tribute relationship with China. With the Taiwan incident of 1874, Japan was able to reshape the kingdom into a new province. In short: the Ryūkyū kingdom became a Ryūkyū feudal in 1872, and in 1879 it became the province Okinawa. Once it had become a part of Japan, all the non-Japanese elements had to be eliminated to make the new province “Japanese”. It is important to note that all these changes took place from the beginning of the Meiji period up until the Second World War, with Japan becoming increasingly militaristic and nationalistic. At the same time, *karate* stepped out of the legends and became part of Japan’s history. This secret martial art, practiced by the nobles, would undergo a huge metamorphosis spanning this time. In a similar way as the country in general, it had to adapt to the situation of that time. Under pressure of the nationalistic spirit of Japan, *karate* changed. The art would abandon its secrecy and nobility. It would transform from a martial art into a form of physical education at school, just like *judō* and *kendō* in the mainland. With the introduction of the esoteric martial art in the lives of common people, many changes also occurred at the technical level. The dangerous techniques were modified to become safer.

In the 1920s, the art would be introduced in the mainland. *Karate* was a product of a different country that had centuries of strong Chinese influence. Japan had won the war with China at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the friction between the two nations was rising again around the time *karate* came to Japan. This foreign martial art had two choices: stay in its current state and disappear, or “Japanize” like anything else during that nationalistic period.<sup>221</sup> The *karate* masters chose to adapt. In the following chapter we will look more closely on how this Japanization of *karate* under nationalistic pressure took place.

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<sup>221</sup> John Benson, Takao Matsumura, *Japan 1868-1945: From Isolation to Occupation*, p.83.

## Chapter 5: The impact of nationalism on karate

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Okinawa inhabitants “became Japanese” with the transition of the Ryūkyū kingdom into the Okinawa province. Yet, they were not treated as equals although many Okinawans strived to become good Japanese citizens. Indeed they wanted to receive appreciation by contributing something to their new nation: the militaristic, nationalistic Japanese empire.<sup>222</sup>

Several *karate* masters wanted to support this in their own way. Schools were perceived as part of military preparation as children would become tomorrow’s soldiers. Therefore they strived to get *karate* adopted into the school system. If *karate* would be part of the school system, and the school system part of the military system, then *karate* would become part of the ideological apparatus for mobilization to war. Thus, a cultural product of Okinawa would support the nation.

By importing *karate* first in the local school system and later into Japan’s mainland, many changes occurred to the martial art. The first changes were done by the masters to introduce *karate* into the school system. Their motivation was nationalistically inspired. The second set of changes came directly from the mainland. Under the supervision of the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai, *karate* had to be “Japanized” to become officially part of the *budō*. *Judō* was the prototype of these *budō* and seen as a symbol of Japan’s modern national identity.<sup>223</sup> In this chapter it will become clear that *karate* followed a similar path of evolution as *jūdō* and would be strongly influenced by it.

A short comparison is given of some similarities between *jūdō* and *karate* in the outline beneath. It is far from complete but gives a brief overview of some aspects that are common in these arts.

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<sup>222</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia del Karate: La Via della Mano Vuota*, p.70.

<sup>223</sup> Shun Inoue, “The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanō Jigorō and Kōdōkan Judo”, p.164.

Table 1: Characteristics of *jūdō* and *karate* compared

	<b>Jūdō</b>	<b>Karate</b>
<i>Origin</i> -weaponless -secrecy -roots	<i>Jūjutsu</i> -trained in case weapon was lost -only the Samurai -Japan	Te, To de, Toudi -weapons outlawed -only the nobles -Okinawa
<i>Innovators</i> -educational link	Kanō Jigorō -professor (Tokyo), principal of Kumamoto Fifth Higher School, Tokyo First Higher School, Tokyo Higher Normal School → <i>judō</i> in education system	Itosu Anko -adapts <i>karate</i> so it can be introduced in the elementary school system in 1901 and in the secondary schools in 1905
-representatives	-represents Japan at the Olympics	Funakoshi Gichin -teacher at elementary school in Naha -introduces <i>karate</i> in the Japanese universities  -Funakoshi Gichin represents Okinawa in Japan in 1922
<i>Innovations</i> -publicizing	- victories - <i>Kanō juku dōsokai zasshi, Kokushi, Jūdō, ūdō, Yūkō no katsudō, Taisei, Sakkō</i> by Kanō Jigorō	- <i>Ten precepts (Tode Jukun) of karate</i> by Anko Itosu - <i>Ryūkyū kenpō karate, Rentan goshin karate jutsu, Ten precepts of the way of karate</i> by Gichin Funakoshi
-character-building and educational purposes	-instead of <i>jūjutsu</i> for close combat	-instead of Toudi for close combat
-for everyone	-at schools, universities, for big groups, also women instead of only the samurai	-at schools, universities, for big groups instead of only the elite
-free form of sparring and competition	- <i>randori</i>	- free from of sparring introduced by Funakoshi Yoshitaka
-dan/kyū belt system	-adopted to motivate the customer/student	-adopted to become part of Japanese <i>budō</i>
-white uniform	-standardization	-adopted to become part of Japanese <i>budō</i>
<i>Military link</i>	-through school, to create good citizens to serve the nation, used for mobilization for war - <i>judō</i> as example of <i>budō</i> under the nationalistic Dai Nippon Butoku-kai ( <i>budō</i> associated with militarism) -adapted by the Naval Academy	-according to Itosu Anko's <i>Ten precepts of karate</i> : introduction of <i>karate</i> to school would benefit Japan's militaristic nation - <i>Karate</i> adapted to become part of the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai → became associated with militarism - <i>karate's</i> possible benefits for the nation were first seen in draftees
<i>Cultural myth, nationalism</i>	-“traditional” Japanese although newly created in 1882 by Kanō Jigorō  - <i>judō</i> was used by the ones in power to support the nationalistic and militaristic cause through education	-represented in Japan in the 1920s as “traditional” Okinawan, although formalized by Itosu Anko around end 19 <sup>th</sup> , beginning 20 <sup>th</sup> century - Funakoshi Gichin “Japanified” <i>karate</i> by adapting the names of techniques to the Japanese language - <i>karate</i> contributed in the same way to the nation by shaping itself to the example of <i>judō</i>

## **5. 1. Education**

### **5.1.1. The Educators**

Kanō Jigorō, the creator of *jūdō*, had an academic background. He started teaching *jūdō* for the first time at the Tokyo Imperial University while he was still a graduate student.<sup>224</sup> The Keiō University and other institutions of higher learning adopted *jūdō* too.<sup>225</sup> Kanō became a professor at the Gakushūin University, the principal of Kumamoto Fifth Higher School, principal of Tokyo First Higher School and the principal of Tokyo Higher Normal School. By 1911, *jūdō* and *kendō* became part of the compulsory courses due to the link of the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai with the Ministry of Education. The basis of *jūdō*'s success is that it became part of the prewar educational system.<sup>226</sup> The government valued *budō* because it would serve the nation in creating strong bodies with fighting spirits for Japan's war machine.<sup>227</sup>

Toudi, the old name for *karate*, was practiced by the elite of Okinawa and stood as a symbol of their rank.<sup>228</sup> There is no historical evidence of the common belief that the martial art had been developed by peasants to defend themselves of foreign invaders.<sup>229</sup> The practitioners of this martial art had therefore all come from a well educated background. Many of them showed interest in educational matters. To name a few: Itosu Anko (糸州安恒) introduced *karate* in the elementary schools<sup>230</sup>, Funakoshi Gichin(船越儀珍) was a teacher at an elementary school in Naha before he introduced *karate* in the Japanese universities<sup>231</sup>, the war hero Yabu Kentsu(屋部憲通)was a professor in physical education and military preparation, Hanashiro Chomo(花城長茂) was a physical education teacher<sup>232</sup>, Tokuda Anbun(徳田安文) was an educator at the middle school of

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<sup>224</sup> Shun Inoue, "The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanō Jigorō and Kōdōkan Judo", p.164.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid. p.167.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid. p.167.

<sup>227</sup> Patrick McCarthy, *Ancient Okinawan Martial Arts: Koryu Uchinadi*, p.74.

<sup>228</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia del Karate: La Via della Mano Vuota*, p.29.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid. p.28.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid. p.53.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid. p.68.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid. p.58.

Shuri<sup>233</sup>, Oshiro Chojo(大城朝恕) was an instructor at the industrial high school of the Okinawa prefecture<sup>234</sup>.

In 1901 Itosu Anko introduced *karate* as a form of physical education in elementary schools. This was three years prior to the first war with China. The nationalistic spirit was strongly felt throughout the whole nation, which inspired Itosu. In 1904 he gave a demonstration to the inspectors and professors of physical education. One year later, in 1905, *karate* became part of the physical education of secondary schools in the whole province of Okinawa.<sup>235</sup> With the introduction of *karate* in the local system, *karate* could contribute to the general war effort, like *kendō* and *jūdō* would do on the mainland from 1911 onwards. Through the school system, Itosu Anko saw a way how *karate* could contribute to the military forces of Japan. His “ten lessons” were written in 1908 to draw the attention of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of War. In the conclusion he explicitly writes what *karate* could contribute for the Japanese and the nation’s military:

*...introduce Toudi at the local levels: namely in the elementary schools. In this way, Toudi could be disseminated throughout the entire nation and not only benefit people in general but also serve as an enormous asset to our military forces.*<sup>236</sup>

### 5.1.2. Karate modified for school

The introduction of a martial art as a form of physical education for school children was not an easy task. In 1901, Itosu Anko introduces into the elementary schools a *karate* that was especially adapted for educational purposes.<sup>237</sup> The traditional ways of training were altered.<sup>238</sup> These new features were not only found in the new type of *karate*. Kanō Jigorō had systemized the techniques of the old schools of *jūjutsu* and had introduced

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<sup>233</sup> Shoshin Nagamine, *I Grandi Maestri di Okinawa*, p.71.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid. p.72.

<sup>235</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia del Karate: La Via della Mano Vuota*, p.57.

<sup>236</sup> Patrick McCarthy, *Ancient Okinawan Martial Arts: Koryu Uchinadi*, p.17.

<sup>237</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia del Karate: La Via della Mano Vuota*, p.53.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid. p.58.

them with new ideas to create his *jūdō*.<sup>239</sup> He had developed from the *jūjutsu* a new type of martial art that could be practiced safely and was suitable for the mass clientele.<sup>240</sup> To spread his martial art, he used every chance to publicize *jūdō*. His first magazine, the *Kanō juku dōsōkai zasshi*(嘉納塾同窓会雑誌) was published in 1894. Soon many others followed, such as the *Yūkō no katsudō*(有効の活動) and *Jūdō*(柔道).<sup>241</sup>

*Karate* used to be a privilege for the elite. The esoteric art's teachings took place in a very secret way<sup>242</sup>, like the hermetic teaching traditions of the *jūjutsu*.<sup>243</sup> On the other hand, the new pedagogy of Itosu was aimed to teach big groups in schools and was inspired on the methods of soldier formation in Japan. *Karate*'s trainings previously consisted of only a few disciples guided by a master. With *karate* as physical education in the schools, one teacher would shout commands to numerous students. Itosu would also modify and create new *kata* specially designed for school. He divides the *kata* Naifanchi (ナイファンチ) into three simplified parts and created the five Pinan (ピンアン) *kata*,<sup>244</sup> which are still taught up till today. These *kata*, developed and modified for school, contained more educative elements than combative elements. Dangerous open hand techniques, like the eye jab, were replaced with simple fist techniques.<sup>245</sup> In the past, the *kata* were used to train combat techniques as a solo exercise. Being adapted for the school system, the *kata* became a form of gymnastics and lost their martial significance.

With Itosu Anko, the wall of silence was breached. He had taken *karate* out from its secrecy into the open. Itosu wrote the *Tode jūkun*(唐手十訓) in 1908. Many masters would follow his lead in publishing their ideas. Under Funakoshi Gichin's name we can find *Ryūkyū Kempō to-te*(琉球拳法唐手), *Karate-dō Kyōhan*(空手道教範),...<sup>246</sup> Mabuni Kenwa(摩文仁賢和) would translate the secret "bible of *karate*", the *Bubishi*(武備誌). He wrote many other works like *Karate-jutsu*(唐手術), *Kōbō Jizai Goshin-jutsu Karate-*

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<sup>239</sup> Shun Inoue, "The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanō Jigorō and Kōdōkan Judo", p.165.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid. p.164.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid. p.169.

<sup>242</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia del Karate: La Via della Mano Vuota*, p.8.

<sup>243</sup> Stephen Vlastos, *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, p.165.

<sup>244</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia del Karate: La Via della Mano Vuota*, p.58.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid. p.61.

<sup>246</sup> Shoshin Nagamine, *I Grandi Maestri di Okinawa*, p.92.

*dō Kempō*(攻防自在護身術空手道拳法), *Karate-dō Numon*(空手道入門),...<sup>247</sup>

Newspapers, like the *Hokushi Mainichi* and the *Chogoku Mainichi* showed a general interest for these publications. The once secret, orally transmitted art was now accessible for everyone on black and white.

With the introduction of *karate* into the public schools, it became institutionalized. The practitioners started to consider *karate* as a classical and fixed art where respect for tradition was seen as utmost important. This can be seen as a paradox. *Karate* kept on evolving although it was seen as something traditional.<sup>248</sup> Like *jūdō*, it had become an “invented tradition”.<sup>249</sup>

## **5.2. The link with ultra-nationalism**

### **5.2.1. The military’s interest**

The Naval Academy adopted *jūdō* in 1887. A couple of Kanō’s best students were instructors. It was through this connection that *jūdō* could penetrate the military. The hero of the Russo-Japanese war, Hirose Takeo, and the late secretary of the navy, Takarabe Takeshi, were both initiated in *jūdō* at the Naval Academy.<sup>250</sup> *Jūdō*, deriving from the old *jūjutsu*, became associated with “tradition”. Therefore *jūdō* could be interpreted as a useful tool for the conservative-nationalists.<sup>251</sup> *Budō*, of which *jūdō* was the prototype, became propagated by nationalists. The martial arts underwent a strong growth during the 1920s and the 1930s while it became more and more associated with Japan’s nationalism and militarism.<sup>252</sup>

The first interest shown from the Japanese mainland for *karate* was during a draft in Okinawa.<sup>253</sup> During the medical examination in 1891, two Okinawan recruits were found to have outstanding physical conditions: Yabu Kentsu and Hanashiro Chomo. This was the first time that *karate* became known outside Okinawa. The Imperial army was

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<sup>247</sup> Patrick McCarthy, *Ancient Okinawan Martial Arts: Koryu Uchinadi*, p.29.

<sup>248</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia del Karate: La Via della Mano Vuota*, p.62.

<sup>249</sup> Shun Inoue, “The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanō Jigorō and Kōdōkan Judo”, p.165.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.* p.167.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.* p.170.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.* p.171.

<sup>253</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia del Karate: La Via della Mano Vuota*, p.56.

interested in this local martial art because of the possibility that it may enhance the effectiveness of Japan's war machine, like *jūdō* for the Naval Academy. But eventually, the Imperial army considered Toudi not suitable. There were several reasons. The training methods were not standardized and therefore impractical for military preparation, as for example in a boot-camp. In addition, the training took too much time before a decent level was attained. As a reaction to the abandonment of the army's interest, Itsu Anko wanted to modernize *karate* into a physical exercise for schools.<sup>254</sup> With the introduction of *karate* into the schools of Okinawa, strong characters and bodies could be molded to be useful for the Japanese society, hence, military service.<sup>255</sup>

As we have seen above, this would alter the aim and way of teaching. The practice of *karate* had greatly improved from then on, with the emphasis on *kata* training to teach large groups. With this, the interest of the army was slightly rekindled, drawing the attention of the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai.<sup>256</sup>

### 5.2.2. The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai's interest aroused

With the interest of the army and the prefectural Ministry of Education authorizing *karate* to become part of the school curricula in Okinawa, the martial art became of interest to the Butoku-kai. It was especially due to the enthusiasm of a naval officer, Rokuro Yashiro, that interest was raised at the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai. Also in 1912, the Imperial Navy docked in the Okinawa Nakagusuku(中城) Bay for a week of maneuvers. The crew could then experience *karate* first hand. Once returned, the praise about the Okinawan martial art was heard by the Navy. A petition was sent to Okinawa's Prefectural Ministry of Education, requesting a demonstration for the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai. The Prefectural Ministry of Education sent a pupil of Itsu Anko, Funakoshi Gichin with a small group to the mainland. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1917, this small group gave the first official demonstration of *karate* on the mainland at the Butokuden of the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Patrick McCarthy, *Ancient Okinawan Martial Arts: Koryu Uchinadi*, p.78.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.* p.79.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*



Although Itosu Anko modified the martial art for a wider public, it was the next generation of masters that went to the mainland introducing the martial art. They were Funakoshi Gichin, Motobu Choki(本部朝基), Uechi Kanbun(上地完文), Miyagi Chojun(宮城長順), Mabuni Kenwa(摩文仁賢和) and Gima Shinkan(城間真繁).

### **5.3. The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai's impact on karate**

*Karate* had no uniform, competition rules, formal teaching methods nor a system of grading. *In short, it was not Japanese.*<sup>258</sup> As many things that have been absorbed by the Japanese culture through history, it was modified to become more “Japanese”. It would be the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai that would take care of this. Hence the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai wanted a unified teaching method, a uniform, the introduction of Kanō Jigorō's grading system, and competitive rules.

#### **5.3.1. From “Chinese hand” (唐手) to “the way of the empty hand”(空手道)**

Although the first ideas to change the name of *karate* did not come from the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai, they were strongly in favor to change the name into something more Japanese. The period of *karate*'s introduction into the Japanese mainland was characterized by xenophobia and rising militarism.<sup>259</sup> During that time, anything foreign was discriminated, especially of Chinese origin. *Karate* underwent a lot of criticism too, due to its name.

*Karate* used to be referred to as “Te”(手) meaning “hand” or “Tōdi”(唐手), “Chinese hand”.<sup>260</sup> From the beginning of the twentieth century the characters of “Chinese hand” became also pronounced as “*karate*”.<sup>261</sup> If *karate* wanted to become accepted on the mainland it had to cut off all connections with China, like the rest of Okinawa had done. With the rising of nationalism and anti-Chinese sentiments, the character “China” had to

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<sup>258</sup> Patrick McCarthy, *Ancient Okinawan Martial Arts: Koryu Uchinadi*, p.81.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid. p.81.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid. p.59.

<sup>261</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia del Karate: La Via della Mano Vuota*, p.10.

be removed to be able to integrate *karate* in the *budō*.<sup>262</sup> Up to the middle of the 1920s, *karate* could be still found with the characters of “Chinese hand”. In the Japanese language, the Chinese characters can be pronounced in several different ways. The “China” character, pronounced “kara”, became replaced in the 1930s under militaristic pressure by a character with the same pronunciation but having the significance of “empty”(空). Although Hanashiro Chomo used the “Empty hand” characters for the first time in 1905 in his book, *Karate Kumite*,<sup>263</sup> the term became widespread in Japan during the thirties when *karate* was trying to be accepted as a *budō*.

The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai is however directly responsible for adding the suffix “dō”(道), “the way”. The “dō” means that the cultivation of the spirit is stressed.<sup>264</sup> *Jūdō* deriving from *jūjutsu*, was the first to adapt the suffix. Many of the martial arts that were modified from the Meiji period onwards, followed *jūdō*’s example. The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai wanted to promote the “martial spirit” which formed the basis of the pure Japanese spirit. By adapting the name in such a way, the foreign elements were replaced with elements that gave a “Japanese” ring to *karate*. The new term *karate-dō*, “the way of the empty hand”, was not officially accepted in Okinawa until after the historical gathering of the masters in 1936.<sup>265</sup> Under the presence of a representative of the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai, they discussed about the new term that was formally recognized by the organization in 1933.<sup>266</sup> But before the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai could accept *karate* as a *budō* in 1933, it had to be molded to the image of *jūdō*.

### 5.3.2. Karate shaped according to Jūdō

The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai played a crucial role in institutionalizing and developing the *budō*. The prototype of all *budō* was *jūdō*.<sup>267</sup> With its origins coming from *jūjutsu*, it had a strong link with tradition and became associated with the Japanese national identity.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Patrick McCarthy, *Ancient Okinawan Martial Arts: Koryu Uchinadi*, p.26.

<sup>263</sup> Patrick McCarthy, *Ancient Okinawan Martial Arts: Koryu Uchinadi*, p.62.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid. p.61.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid. p.44.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid. p.59-64.

<sup>267</sup> Shun Inoue, “The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanō Jigorō and Kōdōkan Judo”, p.171.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid. p.169.

The Dai Nippon Butoku-kai wanted therefore that all *budō* inspired their organizational structure from *jūdō*. *Karate*, being imported, had to be “Japanized” through *budō*, which symbolized Japanese spiritual values.<sup>269</sup> Hence, *karate* had to adapt several aspects of *jūdō* to become officially part of the Japanese martial arts.

Gichin Funakoshi came to Kyōto in 1922 to represent the Okinawan martial art at a national exhibition of physical education. Kanō Jigorō, who at that moment had an important function at the Ministry of Education, invited Funakoshi to his *dōjō* (道場) in Tokyo for a presentation of *karate*. Funakoshi was planning to return to Okinawa after the demonstration but due to the encouragement of Kanō Jigorō, Funakoshi stayed in the capital to spread *karate*. At that period, the people of Okinawa longed to affirm their Japanese identity.<sup>270</sup> Funakoshi therefore wanted to “Japanify” *karate*. He altered the names of *kata*, which originally were orally transmitted and came from a mix of Chinese and Okinawan dialects. The new names were especially adapted to the Japanese language. To give one example: the *Pinan* was changed into *Heian* (平安), signifying “peace”.<sup>271</sup> To further alter *karate* into a “Japanese” art, he adapted several aspects of *jūdō*.

#### 5.3.2.1. The belt system

Kanō Jigorō was the first to introduce the belt system into a martial art. He divided the students in two big groups: the *yudansha*(有段者) and the *mudansha*(無段者). The first group consisted of the more advanced students who received the black belt. They were of the *dan* level. The second were the students of the beginner level. They received a *kyu* grade. These belts are in fact a clever marketing system that served to motivate the students. This type of ranking system became adopted by other Japanese martial arts.<sup>272</sup> Funakoshi Gichin, given advice from Kanō on how to spread *karate*, would adapt the same grading system of white and black belts.<sup>273</sup> In 1924, Funakoshi would hand out for

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<sup>269</sup> Shun Inoue, “The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanō Jigorō and Kōdōkan Judo”, p.172.

<sup>270</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia del Karate: La Via della Mano Vuota*, p.70.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid. p.80.

<sup>272</sup> Shun Inoue, “The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanō Jigorō and Kōdōkan Judo”, p.167.

<sup>273</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia del Karate: La Via della Mano Vuota*, p.90.

the first time 1<sup>st</sup> *dan* diplomas to Kasuya S. and Gima S. The other masters followed Funakoshi's example and the belt system became generally adopted. The colored belts in *karate* came much later. These were introduced in *jūdō* in the 1950s. *Karate* followed about a decade later.

#### 5.3.2.2. The uniform

An extremely similar story can be told about the *dōgi*(胴着). The white uniform, which nowadays is common in every *karate* school, finds its origins in *jūdō*. *Karate* in Okinawa used to be performed in any convenient cloth. Due to the warm climate, the training was mostly done in a naked torso and short pants. For the demonstration in Kanō's *dōjō*, a white *dōgi* was lent to Funakoshi. For *karate*, he would adapt a lighter version of the *jūdōgi*<sup>274</sup> and soon the other *karate* schools followed. The *dōgi* became introduced as a new form of tradition.<sup>275</sup> A couple of decades earlier, *karate* still was a secret art but the introduction of the new uniform was a statement that it wanted to be seen and recognized.



Figure 4: Training in Okinawa without uniform



Figure 5: Modern *karate dōgi*

#### 5.3.2.3. Competition

An important innovation that Kanō Jigorō introduced was *randori*(乱取り), a free form of sparring. The traditional martial arts emphasised the training of *kata*. *Randori* was introduced to teach students to deal with unexpected situations. It was also more

<sup>274</sup> Patrick McCarthy, *Ancient Okinawan Martial Arts: Koryu Uchinadi*, p.80.

<sup>275</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia del Karate: La Via della Mano Vuota*, p.89.

motivating than the endless repetitive drills of *kata*. This way of sparring was used in competitions. The first interscholastic match took place in 1898 between the First Higher School of Tokyo and the Second Higher School of Sendai.<sup>276</sup> Nowadays, due to the success of competition, *kata* is hardly trained anymore in *jūdō*.

*Karate* masters were of the opinion that the training of *kata* was enough to acquire combat skills. Some of them, like Mabuni Kenwa, experimented a little with protective gear but in general, free sparring was considered to be too dangerous. Funakoshi Gichin was strongly opposed to the exercise of free sparring.<sup>277</sup> Ignoring his father's opinion, Funakoshi Yoshitaka(船越義豪) eventually introduced and popularized it.

Yoshitaka went to Ōsaka (大阪) with other students of his father. There they participated in a match of free fighting which was rather common in the age of militaristic tension. The matches were brutal due the lack of regulations and often ended in real fights. Yoshitaka and the others were disappointed in the results. From then on, Yoshitaka searched ways to introduce a form of free sparring.<sup>278</sup> The innovations introduced by him came during a period just before and even during the Second World War. "To die at the age of twenty" was a common expression of that time. Therefore, when developing his ideas he did not bother considering any long term effects from the new way of training.<sup>279</sup> After the war many rules were changed to make competitions safer, yet the method of training is still based on these prewar innovations often causing health problems at a later age.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

*Karate* drew the military's attention during a draft as it possibly could contribute to the war preparations. The interest however faded away quickly due to a lack of organization. Motivated to contribute their share to the Japanese war machine, the Okinawan masters introduced *karate* under the lead of Itosu Anko into the school system. The adaptation of the previously secret martial art to a large number of students would transform *karate*

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<sup>276</sup> Shun Inoue, "The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanō Jigorō and Kōdōkan Judo", p.167.

<sup>277</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia del Karate: La Via della Mano Vuota*, p.83.

<sup>278</sup> Kenji Tokitsu, *Storia del Karate: La Via della Mano Vuota*, p.75.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid. p.82.

forever. *Kata* was modified and created for educational purposes, and techniques were made safer. *Karate* was noticed by the nationalistic Dai Nippon Butoku-kai when it became part of Okinawa's physical education system. From then on, efforts were done to "Japanize" *karate* to make it part of the *budō* which was under supervision of the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai. The name was changed from "China hand" to "the way of the empty hand" for nationalistic reasons. It was further reshaped according to the image of *jūdō*, which was seen as the prototype of all *budō* and became firmly associated with Japan's national identity. In 1933 it became formally accepted as a *budō* by the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai. Under pressure of strong nationalism, *karate* had to adapt itself to the spirit of that age.

## **General conclusion**

To answer the question of how the pressure of prewar nationalism created the myth of 'traditional Japanese' karate, the following steps were taken.

In the first chapter we saw that sport and nationalism have a close relationship in many nations. Sport is used to strengthen the people's nationalistic sentiments. Militaristic countries often abuse sport for their ultra-nationalistic cause, like Germany did during the Nazi Olympics in 1936. Japan also became more and more militaristic and nationalistic from 1868 on. The "Empire of the rising sun" seemed to be unstoppable up till the end of the Second World War, as we have seen in the second chapter. To study the reasons of Japan's strength at that time would probably take a life time work. The third part limits itself by analyzing a few elements that contributed to Japan's war machine. One of them was the unification of the Japanese under the cult of the Emperor that became spread through the education system. The rightist Dai Nippon Butoku-kai organization, that was in charge of all *budō*, succeeded in introducing *jūdō* and *kendō* in the school system. The spirit of *bushidō* became spread through them. All these elements worked together to forge the unstoppable Japanese spirit.

One of the first victims of the Empire's expansion was the small Ryūkyū kingdom. The kingdom, which already had a tribute relationship with China, was put under the double submission of Japan and China with the invasion by Satsuma in 1609. Up to the Taiwan incident of 1874, the kingdom's culture was left alone. Shipwrecked sailors of the Ryūkyū were killed by inhabitants of Taiwan in 1871. This was used as a perfect excuse for Japan to interfere and send its own troops to take revenge. The claiming of the victims as its own subjects by Japan started a chain of events that would finally result in the abolishment of the kingdom and the establishment of the province of Okinawa in 1879. The kingdom's culture had to adapt completely to that of Japan. Japan itself was looking to stabilize its own identity and anything that not completely confirmed with it had to adjust or disappear.

One of the cultural elements that became subjected to this nationalistic pressure was the secretive martial art that would become known to the whole world as "karate". The interest shown by the army disappeared quickly due the lack of organization. The first set of changes came by the Okinawan masters who were spurred by a nationalistic sense

of duty. They integrated a safer and easier form of karate into the Okinawan school system. Through the school system, karate would contribute in forming the new generation of soldiers. In the process new *kata* were created, old ones were modified and techniques were made safer. Once introduced in the local schools, the Dai Nippon Butoku-kai would further influence the evolution of karate on the mainland. To make karate a part of the *budō*, it became “Japanified” by the nationalistic organization. *Jūdō* was seen as a symbol of Japan’s national identity and therefore many of its characteristics would be transferred onto karate. The white uniform, the belt system and the free-form sparring of modern karate were all inspired on *jūdō*’s organization. But of all the changes that occurred to karate, the most striking one would be the change of name. Under the nationalistic pressure and wars with China the name “China hand” had to go. With some clever word twists “the way of the empty hand” was born and became an official part of the Japanese martial arts legacy in 1933.

Changes happen through history. Some are in favor for the old ways, while others value the importance of the wind of change. The changes that happened with karate are seen by some as an improvement, by others as a loss. A fact is that Japan’s prewar nationalism changed karate so it would become a part of the *budō*. Karate can be only called a truly “Japanese” martial art from the 1930s on. Being less than a century old, the tradition of a “Japanese karate” can be seen as invented, a myth.

For future studies it might be interesting to look at the evolution of the martial arts after the Second World War. Among the *budō*, karate and *jūdō* spread over the whole world. There is no major city imaginable where these two martial arts can not be found. Yet, *jūdō* became an Olympic sport while karate is still not accepted. The many different styles have their own rules and there is no unification. How did these martial arts spread over the entire world? Why did karate not continue its standardization process after the war? What organizational changes have to be made for karate to be accepted as an Olympic discipline? Can unmodified traditional Okinawan *kata* still be found? What is the Japanese government’s attitude today towards *budō*? Trying to find answers for these



and other related questions would definitely be an interesting challenge. Due to lack of time and space these question will be left unanswered, for now.

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