

**From The Kodokan
Low Dong and Hal Sharp
May 13 to 31, 2010**

We briefed Toshiro Daigo, 10th Dan, on the USJA-USJF Grassroots Development Program, their close working relationship in judo activities and the “Modern Kodokan Throwing Techniques Certification Program, using Toshiro Daigo’s book “Kodokan Judo Throwing Techniques”. He seemed pleased that USJA-USJF are working together.

- He was pleased that we are using his book. Also, that he has written a basic book in judo.
- He emphasized that this is an American Program so that neither he nor the Kodokan can become involved in such or issuing certificates. We also presented a modified shorter certificate program that was well received.
- He explained the book is an advanced judo techniques book. It was first published as a series over 8 years in the “Kodokan Judo Magazine”. Next it was compiled into 3 Japanese books and a single English book.
- Toshiro Daigo also wrote the “Kodokan New Japanese-English Dictionary of Judo” which is an excellent reference guide.
- He recognized his long friendship with Hal Sharp (over 58 years) and was pleased that he was still active.
- He gave us a DVD on Japanese Judo Championships and Champions, some dating before World War II and also material on Kata, especially Koshiki no kata.

Toshikazo Okada, 7th Dan, gave us a pre release copy of “Jigoro Kano and the Kodokan” subtitled “An Innovative Response to Modernization”. This is the best book we have read on the history of judo and Kano Shihan’s philosophy and thoughts about modern judo. It might as well have been written today. Kano Shihan was concerned about “power judo” and the lack of technical development and having enough instructors. Naoki Murata, 7th Dan, curator of the Kodokan Judo Museum, autographed our copies of the book since he was the author.

It was a pleasure to see and practice crushing newaza and learning new techniques with Toshikazo Okada, who still travels 2 hours to get to the Kodokan. One session, Steve Matulac, a Gardena Judo Club member, working in Japan, joined in the newaza practice.

At a meeting with Yoshimi Osawa, 10th Dan, including Nori Bunasawa, Low Dong and Hal Sharp, we discussed the need for instructors’ technical training for education and promotion purposes. He was interested in the “Modern Kodokan Throwing Techniques Program” and general thoughts on judo education. Yoshimi Osawa has been friends with Hal Sharp for about 58 years and stated Hal was very strong, difficult to throw, had classical form and a good heart for judo. He offered to give Hal his silk red belt, for Hal to wear when he becomes Kudan. Hal politely refused and appreciated the kind words and offer.

We visited a special dojo where Tadayuki Satou, 6th Dan, taught Fukko (Renaissance) Judo based on Tomiki Sensei's Aikido System. Tadayuki Satou is a professor at Waseda University. His system is a definite plus for judo. Hal Sharp videoed the class. Most of his techniques are judo legal. This was made possible by Carl Lauria, 5th Dan, originally from Argentina and studied under Forte, 9th Dan.

Just after arriving at the Kodokan, where we stayed, a nice central location, Low Dong met Noguchi, 7th Dan, former President of the World Masters Association, and was invited after practice to a dinner meeting. The meeting was presided by Shimizu, 8th Dan, President of the Japan Masters Judo Federation, and honored guests were Terou Kaise, 8th Dan, Kodokan Director of Education and Low Dong. The next week they were traveling to Budapest, Hungary for the IJF World Veterans Shiai and Kata Championships, where they won 5 gold medals.

In 2003, Ichiro Abe, 10th Dan, was responsible for kata in the World Masters Kata and Shiai Championships at the Kodokan where he first met Low. He invited Hal Sharp and Low Dong to meet in his office. He was glad to see us and enjoyed viewing the Classic Judo Masters DVD that was given to him. He had not seen many of the activities in the film because he was teaching in Europe then.

We met many foreign judokas from other countries: Argentina, Canada, Wales, South Africa and other countries that own and studied from the "Sport of Judo" by Hal Sharp. They asked Hal Sharp for an autograph and stated that the book was one of their first judo books (it was Low Dong's first judo book too).

Met with Mikihiro Mukai, 7th Dan, who is responsible for the Kodokan Children and Youth Program. We gave him 3 DVDs on children's training in other countries. It was a pleasure to watch the children warm ups and practices where they had lots of fun while learning judo. The Kodokan had their Quarterly Kohaku Judo Tournament for the children through the adults the day before we left.

In summary, our two week trip was very productive, an adventure and better than we had expected. Best of all, we were able to meet and discuss judo with all three 10th Dans (Abe, Daigo and Oshawa).

Respectfully in judo,

Low Dong, 6th Dan
Hal Sharp, 8th Dan
Members of USJA, USJF and USA Judo.