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## ***Germany and Japan in the Olympic Movement***

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Dear friends and colleagues of Sport history,

I feel deeply honored that I have the opportunity to talk to you about Olympic history during the conference of the Society of Japanese Sport History. Facing the Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo in 2020, it seems to be logic and consequent that you chose the history of modern Olympics your favorite topic. My friend Toshi Ichiba asked me to visit both the Chuo University and the conference to give lectures on doping history and Olympic history. For sure, I agreed gratefully, not least because of the long and deep contacts between sport history scholars of Germany and Japan. However, my research on links between the German and the Japanese Olympic history may be known by some you. Four years ago, when I stayed as a visiting fellow at the Human Life Design Faculty of the Toyo-University, invited by my colleague Matsuo sense, we had already discussed about this topic. Then, Prof. Matsuo documented these contributions in this nice booklet.

Let me start with general remarks on the character of modern Olympics Games. Originally, they were are a European “invention of tradition” – according to the famous British historian Eric Hobsbawm – of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>centuries.<sup>1</sup> More precisely, they were an idea of an anglophone and philhellenistic French nobleman, Pierre de Coubertin. He found a number of wealthy and educated sportsmen in the “civilized” western world,<sup>2</sup> including the United States of America, who supported his concept of international Olympic Games, similar to

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<sup>1</sup> Eric J. Hobsbawm, ed., *The invention of tradition*, REPR, PAST AND PRESENT PUBLICATIONS (CAMBRIDGE [U.A.]: CAMBRIDGE UNIV. PR, 1984)

<sup>2</sup> „Civilised“ is used according to Norbert Elias, *On the process of civilisation: Sociogenetic and psychogenetic investigations*, ed. Stephen Mennell, The collected works of Norbert Elias 3 (Dublin: Univ. College Dublin Pr, 2012) in an empirical sense, and not to a moral or normative understanding of the word.

the Olympians of Greek antiquity. Despite the inevitable conflicts and wars between people and nations there should, he believed, be one opportunity to meet every four years to compete in sports and athletics – just like the ancient Greek warriors of various polities – ready to lay down their weapons and instead fight at the stadium.

During that period of nationalism, colonialism, and imperialism the European powers were fighting for world dominance, or for the “best place in the sun”, as the German chancellor Bernhard von Bülow had stated in a legendary speech at the German parliament in 1897.<sup>3</sup> This period was not only crucial with respect to politics, but simultaneously for the rapid development of industrial production, trade and commerce, as well as cultural exchange, and not least, sports and athletics.

The English or rather British concept of body culture and sporting competitions prevailed worldwide, compared to other concepts of bodily exercises and gymnastics like German Turnen, Swedish and Danish Gymnastic, or Polish and Czech Sokol, which is the specific name for the same concept of national gymnastics in Germany or other countries. The British model of competitive sport also did not include Asian forms of body culture, exercises, play, and games.

However, Pierre de Coubertin was highly interested in including more than only European nations in his concept of international Olympic Games. Therefore, after the successful IV<sup>th</sup> Games of London in 1908, Coubertin asked the French Ambassador in Tokyo, *August Gérard* (1852-1922), to find an eligible Japanese representative to become a member in the International Olympic Committee.<sup>4</sup> At that time, Japan was the one Asian nation-state that was independent from colonial Western powers, and ready to open its culture and economy to the world. This process had begun during the Meiji-era, in Western terms during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. We should keep in mind that at that time, Japan was about to become a modern nation state according to the ideal of Western, European nations like Germany, constituted by a parliamentary system, but headed in this case by an emperor or in Japanese Tenno. Japan was striving for hegemony in

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<sup>3</sup> [https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Deutschlands\\_Platz\\_an\\_der\\_Sonne](https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/Deutschlands_Platz_an_der_Sonne) (access 31/08/2015)

<sup>4</sup> Following Andreas Niehaus, *Leben und Werk Kanō Jigorōs: (1860 - 1938); ein Forschungsbeitrag zur Leibeserziehung und zum Sport in Japan*, 2., überarb. Aufl., Sport, Kultur und Gesellschaft 4 (Würzburg: Ergon-Verl., 2010), Univ., Diss. u.d.T.: Niehaus, Andreas: Kanō Jigorō (1860 - 1938)--Köln, 2002, esp. pp 130-143.

Asia. Like Western states, Japan pursued colonial politics by invading Korea in 1910.<sup>5</sup>

Supported by the French Foreign Minister and the Japanese diplomatic agent *Motono Ichiro* (1862-1918), Gérard asked the director of the teacher training college in Tokyo, Kano Jigiro (1860-1938), to join the exclusive club of the IOC. This college was a forerunner institution of the present Tsukuba University today. Simultaneously, Kano was director of the *Kodokan*, the Japanese school for Judo, a specific, new martial art which Kano had founded in 1882 as a combination of various traditional Japanese martial arts.<sup>6</sup>

Kano himself reported in the journal *Chuto kyoiku* in 1937 about the request of the French ambassador Gérard. He started this conversation on behalf of “my friend Coubertin”. Nations from Asia did not yet participate at the Games, and there was no Asian representative in the IOC, regretted Gérard. “I have asked around: You should be a man who is able to understand the idea of the Games. Won’t you become a member of the International Olympic Committee?” was the last question of Gérard asked of Kano Jigiro.<sup>7</sup>

Kano accepted and visited the meeting of the IOC 1909 in Berlin where he was appointed a member of the IOC, the first Asian in this principally international board. In Berlin, the doors were now open for both the participation of a Japanese team at the Olympics of Stockholm 1912, and for hosting the next Games of Berlin in 1916. However, these VI. Olympic Games had been cancelled due to the First World War. They were finally held 20 years later in 1936.

Andreas Niehaus (2010) who wrote a unique biography of Kano in German, pointed out the close affinity between Kano and Coubertin. Both were educators, and both felt, worked, and argued as physical educators attempting to reform the traditional systems of physical education in their respecting countries, Coubertin by means of modern, Olympic sport, and Kano by the creation of modern judo. Both intended to strengthen their nation through physical education and sport. Both were convinced that this physical education was by no means just physical, but mental as well. Sport, Judo, and physical education should also be a form of moral education of the youth, in order to build a common and unified nation. Similar to Coubertin, who had developed from a

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<sup>5</sup> For general information about Japanese history see William M. Tsutsui, ed., *A companion to Japanese history*, Blackwell companions to world history (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2007), <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/alltitles/docDetail.action?docID=10232886>

<sup>6</sup> Niehaus, *Leben und Werk Kanô Jigorô*s, pp 130-143.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p 131.

national educator through physical training, to an international educator by means of Olympic sports and sport competitions, Kano was aware of the international or even universal perspectives of modern Olympism. He agreed with Coubertin that the Games were not only “relevant for the development of sport, but also for friendly relationships between nations”, as Kano argued in 1937, one year before he died. The next task to send a Japanese team to the Olympics of Stockholm in 1912. The first time in Olympic history, a Japanese team including two officials and two athletes took part in the Games of Stockholm. The officials were Jigiro Kano and Hyozo Ohmori who later introduced basketball and volleyball in Japan. The athletes were the long-distance runner Shiso Kanaguri and the short-distance runner Yahiko Mishima.

Kano tried to introduce Japanese martial arts like Judo and Kendo into the Olympic program: “I want martial arts and athletics to develop hand in hand. Despite their differences, both have the same aim of strengthening body and mind. Therefore, I support the inclusion of judo and kendo into the Olympic competitions of the west, and I will work for the idea of bringing bushido into the philosophy and practice of Olympic sport.”<sup>8</sup>

No doubt, Kano Jigiro was a crucial person for the development of Japanese and international Olympic Sport. Firstly, he contributed to the opening of Japanese physical culture and education to the West. Secondly, he started building institutions and organizations of Japanese sport and physical education, which were compatible with those of the international Olympic Movement. Thirdly, and not least, he represents the change of the western and European-dominated Olympic Movement to a truly universal Olympic one. This change is by no means limited to the representation of international members in the IOC, and extends more to the influence of different cultural traditions, to the athletic concept and program of the Games. Judo is the most relevant example for this process of opening the Olympic sports program to universal body cultures. The spirit of bushido, mentioned by Kano, now seems established as a means of training and exercise in many disciplines, irrespective of whether athletes know the word bushido and its meaning. Bushido means the “the soul or spirit of Japan”.<sup>9</sup> Our German-Japanese friend Heiko Bittmann, former student in my hometown Tübingen who is living and working in Japan in Kanazawa for more than 30 years, researched intensively in his dissertation on Karatedo, the martial art of the

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p 133.

<sup>9</sup> Inazo Nitobé and Ella Kaufmann, *Bushido: Die Seele Japans; eine Darstellung des japanischen Geistes* (Tokyo, Japan: Shokwabo, 1903)

empty hand. As he states, bushido includes in a modern, contemporary and eclectic understanding, the Japanese or Asian understanding of fair play, historically rooted in the traditions of Japanese Samurai culture, combined with spiritual religious attitudes from Shintoism, Buddhism, and Konfuzianism.<sup>10</sup> Whereas modern bushido is an eclectic Asian philosophy or spirit of life, Olympism is a European one, combined of various idealistic roots, polymorphic and ambiguous. The modern spirit of bushido is connected to the ideals of modern Olympic education, with its high moral standards and character building, combined with an ascetic life-style, achievement, power and strength, self-control, and striving for a better self.

Kano fought to achieve his aim of hosting the Olympic Games in Japan as soon as possible. He bid for the Olympic Games in Tokyo at the IOC session of 1932 in Los Angeles and was successful. At the IOC session of 1936 in Berlin, the IOC voted for Tokyo to host the XII<sup>th</sup> modern Olympic Games. Judo was to be part of the Olympic program. At the IOC session in Kairo in 1938, Sapporo was elected by the IOC to host the XI<sup>th</sup> Olympic Winter Games. Sadly, on the way home from Kairo, Jigiro Kano passed away, one year after his European mentor and Olympic idol, Pierre de Coubertin. Due to the Second World War, Kano's dream of Olympic Games in Japan could not be realized until 1964 and 1972.

Jigiro Kano may be regarded as "Mister Olympia" of Japan, similar to the German "Mister Olympia", Carl Diem, organizer of the Berlin Olympics 1936, and one of the crucial people for the development of Olympic sports. Compared to Kano, Diem was never a member of the IOC. However, he was without doubt one of the most important supporters, managers, and thinkers of modern Olympic Games and Olympism – for Germany and internationally. Diem had visited Japan twice, the first time in 1929, prospecting the bid of Berlin for the Games of 1936. In fact, Diem was at that time general secretary of the German umbrella organization of sports clubs. He accompanied the German athletics team at international meetings in Asia, together with the national head coach of the German team, Josef Waitzer. Both met various representatives of Japanese sports and body culture, and visited schools, gymnasias, colleges and universities, stadiums and sports facilities in Tokyo, as well as in Kyoto, Osaka, and Kobe. Diem gave a talk on radio, but did not meet Kano Jigiro.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Heiko Bittmann, *Karatedô - der Weg der Leeren Hand: Meister der vier großen Schulrichtungen und ihre Lehre; Biographien - Lehrschriften - Rezeption*, 2., unveränd. Aufl. (Ludwigsburg: Bittmann, 2000)

<sup>11</sup> Carl Diem and Ulrich Müller, eds., *Ausgewählte Schriften*, 1. Aufl. (Sankt Augustin: Richarz, 1982), vol 3, p 51-68.

Diem's second visit in Japan took place in 1955, after the catastrophe of the World War II, and during the period when Germany and Japan had re-joined the Olympic family. For Japan, the bid for the first Olympic Games in Japan and Asia were at stake.<sup>12</sup>

The XI<sup>th</sup> Games of Berlin in 1936 were especially relevant for the Japanese Olympians, because in Berlin, the IOC assigned Tokyo the next Games of 1940, and the Berlin Olympics became an example for Tokyo in various respects. The Japanese IOC member Count Michimasa Soyeshima had studied the Games of Berlin and respected them as a very relevant example for the Games of Tokyo. In an interview, he especially mentioned the Olympic village as "unique" and exemplary. Tokyo intended to build such an Olympic village as well. Due to the high expenses anticipated for athletes travelling to Japan, the costs of accommodation at the Games ought to be kept low. Additionally, the concept of an Olympic village as a meeting place for all athletes around the world corresponded perfectly with the international Olympic idea. The plans for the Olympic village in Tokyo, about 10 kilometers from the center of Tokyo in Tamagawa near the river Tama, were complete. A year later, these plans were changed, and according to the new concept, the Olympic village was expected to be built next the Olympic stadium in Komazawa. Both were to be connected by a tunnel. In Sapporo, the Japanese city expected to host the Winter Games, an Olympic village was planned as well.<sup>13</sup>

Most of the Japanese athletes at the Berlin Games were students of Kano Jigiro. They were familiar to Prof. Hermann Altröck in Leipzig/ Germany who was a former colleague of Carl Diem and sports coach at the Berlin Institute of Physical Exercises. After the Games, the Japanese gymnasts were allowed to take some gymnastics apparatus like parallel bars, bars and horse back to Japan for the next games in Tokyo 1940. Male gymnasts from Japan had first participated at the Games of Los Angeles in 1932. Their performance ended in a fiasco because they did not know the prescribed exercises (Pflicht). Consequently, in Berlin 1936, they tried to learn from the then predominant German gymnasts.

Let me add some short remarks on the Berlin Olympics 1936. They should be considered distinguished and critically. No doubt, for the Japanese, the Games were an idol for their planned first Olympic Games in Tokyo 1940. In the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., vol 3, p 215-236.

<sup>13</sup> Emanuel Hübner, *Das Olympische Dorf von 1936: Planung, Bau und Nutzungsgeschichte* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2015), [http://deposit.d-nb.de/cgi-bin/dokserv?id=5099072&prov=M&dok\\_var=1&dok\\_ext=htm](http://deposit.d-nb.de/cgi-bin/dokserv?id=5099072&prov=M&dok_var=1&dok_ext=htm) researched on the Berlin Olympic village and also mentions the relationship to Japan (esp. pp 250-252).

exhibition of the new Olympic Museum in Tokyo you can find sufficient proves for the relevance of the Berlin Games for the Japanese organizing Committee. Both, the Germans and the Olympic family celebrated the Games as a highlight of the Olympic History, anyhow shortly after the Games. They included impressive events and performances, and, not least, a number of creative innovations of the Olympic festivals. However, facing the bright shine you should not forget that these Games took place on the background of a tyrannical and cruel, racist and antisemitic regime. They used the glittering surface of the Games and the international audience to hide their true targets: Conquering the world and extermination of the Jewish people and race which they propagated openly.

Among the millions of victims of the Nazi terror were also the famous German gymnasts Alfred and Gustav Felix Flatow. Both were Olympic champions of the first Olympic Games in modern times at Athens 1896, and both were murdered as Jews in Nazi concentration camps. Although the German Turner-Bund (DTB) did everything to keep the memory of these German and Jewish gymnasts alive, the Germans will never succeed in overcoming this deep guilt and shame.

In fact, when the Nazis showed their true face after the Berlin Games, all Olympic projects were negated by the Second World War and its precursors. In July 1938, the Japanese Olympic Committee returned the mission to the IOC to host the Olympic Summer and Winter Games of 1940, as a result of the second Japanese-Chinese War which broke out in 1937.<sup>14</sup>

After the Second World War, the path back to the Olympic family was difficult for both Japan and Germany. Both had lost the war, and both were accused of being responsible for the war and for war crimes. The Olympic Movement had hit rock bottom. The Olympic Games had to be cancelled, twice in 1940 and 1944, and both due to the war caused by the two imperialistic powers of Japan and Germany. Both nations had to pay a high price for this blame and aggression. Japan is the only country in the world on which atomic bombs had been dropped. Germany was governed by the Allied Forces, divided, and then re-constructed in two different states, each assigned to different political systems and blocs during the Cold War era, one outside and the other behind the Iron Curtain.

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<sup>14</sup> Information about the basics of the Japanese Olympic history at the homepage of the Japanese Olympic Committee. <http://www.joc.or.jp/english/> (access 03/11/2015)

During World War II, sports understandably took a back seat to more existentially pressing matters. After the war, the political conditions for the Olympic sports movement changed fundamentally. It was not possible to celebrate the XII<sup>th</sup> Olympiad in Tokyo and Sapporo in 1940, nor in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Helsinki or Cortina d' Ampezzo, all of which were discussed as alternative sites. The Olympic Movement had to overcome a twelve year-long hiatus with no Games at all until London and Saint Moritz in 1948.

When the IOC-Executive Board met in London, between August 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>, 1945, only three members were present. These were the acting president of the IOC, the Swedish businessman and athletics functionary Sigfrid Edström, Vice president Avery Brundage, and Lord Aberdare of Britain. The three Olympians decided to stage the XIV<sup>th</sup> Olympiad in London. They chose Lord David Burghley (later the Marquess of Exeter) to serve as president of the London organizing committee. The trio also decided that Brundage should take over the presidency of the IOC in 1952, after the London Games.

Of course, the London Olympics of 1948 should have been and were in fact a kind of victory celebration of the Allies against the so-called Achsenmächte (Axis Powers) of Nazi-Germany, Fascist Italy, and distinctly militaristic, if not literally fascist Japan. But for the IOC, the end of the war entailed a dilemma. During the 1930s, the IOC had cooperated closely with – or should that be “collaborated” – with these totalitarian regimes that were now defeated after a long and bloody war leaving millions of dead on all sides. The Soviet Union had suffered by far the greatest number of casualties and was chiefly responsible for the final defeat of Nazi Germany. It was not exactly a happy situation for the strongly anti-Communist IOC. From the point of view of the IOC, the USSR was the protecting power of the international workers' sports movement, the IOC's most serious rival in world sports.

Therefore, Brundage and the IOC looked for a new strategy. The Olympic movement had to be re-invented as a tradition which in fact it had never been, especially not during its “fascist period.” Referring to the visions of Coubertin, the new or re-invented postwar Olympic movement claimed to be the strongest proponent of sports for their own sake, of sports being free of politics, and of sports for all – “all games all nations”, as Coubertin had proclaimed as one of the most common Olympic philosophies. This was the core of Avery Brundage's new *religio athletae*. So precious was this heritage from the past that, at all times, in



all places, under all conditions, Brundage was ready to state: “The Games must go on!”<sup>15</sup>

Lord Burghley, the charismatic athlete and organizer of the London Games of 1948, and his British colleague, Lord Aberdare, were eager to join Brundage in pushing the IOC's new political line. Their strategy was to limit German influence (although not to the extent of purging Karl Ritter von Halt) and to establish the Olympic movement as an international, non-governmental organization dedicated to peace and understanding, by means of Olympic sport.

What were the challenges to this new strategy? The first was the integration of the worker's sport movement. The IOC members had no way of knowing whether or not the Soviet Union would try to revive the international workers' sports movement, which had languished during the war. During several meetings immediately after the war, the question of Soviet participation was discussed by the IOC. Although all leading IOC members were anti-Communists, they invited the USSR to take part in the 1948 Olympic Games in London and Sankt Moritz. They did this despite the IOC charter, which called for participation in the Games after the foundation and recognition by the IOC of a National Olympic Committee. Although the Soviets rejected the invitation, the IOC was able to feel that it had done what it could to demonstrate that the renewed Olympic movement was also open for workers all over the world and that the Olympic family was not an exclusive Western European-North American gentlemen's club. The IOC was so determined to bring the USSR into the fold that Vice-President Avery Brundage was sent to the USSR to determine whether or not Soviet sports were free of government influence, which they obviously were not, and if Soviet athletes were truly amateur, which they also obviously were not. Brundage was so eager to secure the USSR's participation that he pretended to believe Soviet assurances on both counts.<sup>16</sup>

The USSR's National Olympic Committee was officially recognized by the IOC in 1951, on the same occasion that the two German NOCs were accepted. The way was open for Soviet participation in 1952. This was, in fact, a grand opportunity for Avery Brundage to celebrate the victory of a new, re-invented ideology of nonpolitical (amateur-)sports over politics. He had compelled the two

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<sup>15</sup> The last sentence of Brundage's speech at Munich became famous and legendary. The concept of amateurism was Brundage's version or interpretation of Olympism, as indicated in his speech at the meeting of the IOC at Munich 1959. Dieter Klose, ed., *Die Olympischen Spiele: Avery Brundage, Pierre de Coubertin, Ernst Curtius, Carl Diem*, Universal-Bibliothek 9330 (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 1971); Mit einem Vorwort von Rudolf Hagedorn, p 66-74.

<sup>16</sup> See the minutes of the IOC sessions, archived by the IOC at Lausanne.

Germanies to form a common Olympic team, despite the reality of two fundamentally different states and regimes with vastly different sporting systems.

Thus, by 1952 at the latest, the Olympic Movement was on its way to becoming truly international and moving beyond the party-politics of nation-states. During Brundage's presidency from 1952 to 1972, the IOC, without relinquishing European control, recognized dozens of Asian, African, and Latin American NOC's. In doing so, the IOC joined the ranks of other international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), such as the International Red Cross, Amnesty International, Green Peace, and Médecins sans Frontières. Based on this new concept, the IOC became so prominent, that some politicians later looked upon the committee as the de facto world government of sport.<sup>17</sup>

For Germany and Japan, the new IOC strategy had very specific consequences. Both nations wanted to participate in the London Games of 1948, but the IOC refused their bid. Although Italy belonged to the Axis powers until 1943, a large Italian team with more than 200 athletes arrived in London. Not so the Germans and the Japanese. They were not expelled expressly, but could not be invited, because these nations lacked functioning NOC's, and the surviving IOC members from Japan and Germany were unable to obtain visas. After the death of Kano Jigoro in 1938, the only Japanese member in the IOC was Count Michimasa Soyeshima. In 1939, two Japanese members had been appointed additionally, namely Dr. Matsuzo Nagai (1939-1950) and Dr. Shingoro Takaishi (1939-1967).

The Germans had been well represented in the IOC before, but now, after the war and the end of its fascist period, the only remaining German in the IOC was Count Adolf Friedrich von Mecklenburg. Walter von Reichenau, one of Hitler's generals, and IOC-member, had died during the war. Karl Ritter von Halt, the last Reichssportführer and a personal friend of Avery Brundage, had been imprisoned by the Soviets.

In order to fully implement its postwar vision, the IOC had to rewrite its history. The IOC claimed that the Berlin Olympics of 1936 were its own success and not that of Germany, certainly not of Nazi Germany. In the protocols of the IOC meetings, not one word of self-criticism about collaboration with both the Nazi regime and the Japanese regime, can be found, apart from the protests of the Dutch member P. W. Sharroo and the Belgian member R. W. Seeldrayers against

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<sup>17</sup> Volker Rittberger and Henning Boekle, "Das Internationale Olympische Komitee - eine Weltregierung des Sports?," in *Olympischer Sport: Rückblick und Perspektiven*, ed. Ommo Grupe (Schorndorf: Hofmann, 1997)

the readmission, in 1951, of Mecklenburg and von Halt. No one protested against the remaining Japanese IOC members. One example of this revisionist policy is the fact that the Olympic torch relay, which was “invented” by Carl Diem in 1936, was claimed by the IOC as a great propaganda success – not for the Nazi regime, but for the Olympic movement.

The official reason why Germany and Japan were banned from the 1948 London Olympics was that these countries lacked NOC's or an equivalent governing body for sport, but the more probable explanation is that the IOC wanted to fashion a new image. The urgent bid of German and Japanese athletes to return to the “Olympic family” was not answered immediately and unconditionally. Lord Burghley, who was asked to deal with this question, agreed to do so after consulting two outstanding authorities, General Douglas MacArthur and General Brian Hubert Robertson, the former being commander-in-chief of the US troops in Japan, and the latter of the British Army in Germany. Both recommended the re-admission of German and Japanese athletes to the Olympics.

Robertson explained the rationale behind the policy of the British occupying power. “The objective of allied policy towards Germany is that she should become in all senses a member of the community of peace-loving and democratic nations“. Therefore, he strongly supported the will of the IOC and “the German youth” to become a member of the Olympic family. “They are the leaders of the future. Somehow they have to be convinced that the future happiness of their country depends upon cooperation with other nations and that these nations are prepared to extend to them goodwill and encouragement.”

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General MacArthur answered a letter of the American IOC Member Garland. He assured that “The Japanese people, especially those prominent in athletic circles, are extremely interested in being admitted to Olympic competition and are confident in their ability to organize creditable teams”.

MacArthur therefore strongly supported the admission of a Japanese team at the Olympic Games of Helsinki to allow the “Japanese people to join again with other nations in peaceful and cultural pursuits.”<sup>19</sup>

Finally, Germany and Japan were allowed to rejoin the Olympic Movement. Athletes from both nations participated at the Olympic Games of Helsinki in 1952. However, it again took 12 years for the Olympic Games to be celebrated the first

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<sup>18</sup> Minutes of the IOC, session of Copenhagen, May, 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>. Appendix 3, IOC-archives, Lausanne.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

time in history in Japan. The Games of Tokyo in 1964 were not only the fulfillment of Jigiro Kano's dreams of a really international Olympic Games in Japan, including Judo as the first non-European Olympic sport, rooted in the tradition of Asian martial arts. However, the Japanese Judoka had to agree with the demand of the IOC to introduce weight categories, similar to the boxing and wrestling. In addition, volleyball was played the first time at Olympics in Tokyo. The Games were also a symbol of the successful long road of Japan to the West as part of the modern, industrialized and democratic nations. This was similar to West Germany hosting the Games of Munich in 1972.<sup>20</sup>

For me personally, as a former gymnast, an essential contribution of Japanese athletes to the Olympics is not only grounded in their specific field of martial arts, especially judo, but mainly in the way they influenced or even characterized the traditional way of German gymnastics.<sup>21</sup> Germany is regarded as the motherland of gymnastics, but Japanese gymnasts formed the modern sport of artistic gymnastics. German gymnasts had dominated the gymnastic competitions at Berlin 1936 but then, Japanese artistic gymnasts developed this modern artistic sport. The names of some famous Japanese champions include Takashi Ono, Olympic medalist from 1952 until 1960, and Yukio Endo, star of the Tokyo Olympics 1964, and today Kōhei Uchimura, current Olympic champion of all-around artistic gymnastics of London 2012 and world Champion of Glasgow 2015. Unforgettable are the Games of Munich 1972 when the Japanese men's gymnastics team, including legendary stars like Sawao Kato, Eizo Kenmotsu, Akinori Nakayama and Mitsuo Tsukahara, dominated the contests. Their performances and successes were the result of extremely hard work, not only by the gymnasts themselves, but also by the coaches and sports scientists who analyzed gymnastic movements and exercises in detail, and created new, innovative ways to teach gymnastics. Many Japanese gymnasts, coaches, and educators contributed to this success. Professor Akitomo Kaneko represents this collective performance as an outstanding gymnast, coach, teacher and professor at the Tsukuba University of Tokyo, home to numerous Japanese Sport Scientists where Sawao Kato became a professor of sports sciences too.<sup>22</sup>

Their performance was more than just the victory of an important Olympic competition. They performed a new style of modern artistic gymnastics,

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<sup>20</sup> The title of the work of historian Heinrich August Winkler, *Der lange Weg nach Westen* (München: Beck, 2000) is not only true for Germany, but for Japan as well.

<sup>21</sup> See in general with respect to Japanese sports Allen Guttmann and Lee Thompson, *Japanese sports: A history* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001)

<sup>22</sup> Akitomo Kaneko, *Olympic gymnastics* (New York: Sterling Pub. Co, 1976)

combining artistic virtuosity with strength, elegance, and dynamics. In a socio-cultural and philosophical context, the Japanese gymnasts combined European body exercises with Japanese spirit, asceticism, and esthetics. By so doing, they realized the Olympic dream of a melting pot of cultural traditions through performing modern, Olympic sports, athletics, and gymnastics. Citing the gymnastics historian Joseph Göhler, Japanese male and female gymnasts “personify the Olympic spirit”<sup>23</sup>.

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