

The 12th Lecture

Part I

Support toward Training in Japan of Overseas Judo Instructors and Athletes: Reports from Three Women Judoists

Part II

Lecture “Japan – China Exchange through Judo”

May 31 (Thu), 2012
at JICA Global Plaza

Part I

Support toward Training in Japan of Overseas Judo Instructors and Athletes: Reports from Three Women Judoists

--- I am sincerely grateful that so many of you have taken the time to join us today. I am Mitsumoto from the secretariat, and I will be your MC today.

Before today's lecture, three participants of the Solidarity of International Judo Education's training program for overseas instructors and athletes will give presentations on their experience in Japan.

The three are Ms. Fahima Rezayee, a judo athlete from Afghanistan, and Ms. Flora Mkhitaryan and Ms. Ekaterina Buravtstvenva, who are judo instructors from Russia. They arrived in Japan last year, and from December took part in the six-month program to study Japanese judo.

Ms. Rezayee from Afghanistan was featured in an NHK documentary broadcast in January 2012 about women athletes in Afghanistan looking to compete in the Olympics. I would like to begin by showing you the footage.

Voiceover from NHK Overseas Network “Afghan Women Aspiring to Compete in the Olympics” aired on January 28, 2012

One of the women traveled to Japan in order to become world-class in judo: Fahima Rezayee, aged 24. She came to Japan in November 2011 and is training at Tokai University, renowned for its judo. Instructing her is the Sydney Olympics gold medalist Kosei Inoue. In Afghanistan there are hardly

any practicing facilities, and only a handful of judo athletes. The entire experience is new to Fahima, who had never received formal training before.

“I am training hard not only for myself, but to give hope to fellow Afghan women who are watching over me.”

This is the person who realized her visit: Los Angeles Olympics gold medalist Yasuhiro Yamashita. His ippon victory in the final match, despite a leg injury, is legendary. Since retiring from competitive judo Yamashita has engaged in activities to promote judo internationally. Fahima was invited by Yamashita to study judo in Japan. She received direct advice from Yamashita on how to improve the transition from nage-waza, her favorite technique, to ne-waza. This day she learned the importance of keeping the waki (armpits, or upper arms) close to the body.

Fahima started judo at the age of 16. One of the reasons she developed the intense passion for the sport that brought her all the way to Japan was her elder sister, Shaima. Shaima was a TV presenter hosting programs showcasing Western music and fashion. Seven years ago, Shaima was found murdered at home. At the time her program was being criticized as running counter to the teachings of Islam. Shaima was a strong advocate of the social advancement of women. The loss of the sister she deeply admired prompted Fahima to think what she can do to carry on her sister's aspirations. Fahima believes that the way forward for her is to become a world-class athlete in her beloved sport judo, competing in international matches.

Although Fahima had been competing in the 57 kg weight class, she is lighter than many of the foreign athletes in the same class. To change to a lighter weight class, she is currently following a weight-loss regimen under the supervision of a nutritionist. Phone conversations with her parents in Kabul give her the greatest moral support. “My goal is winning. I look forward to becoming the first female athlete to bring a gold medal to Afghanistan.” Thoughts for her homeland drive Fahima's efforts to become an Olympic athlete. She firmly believes that competing on that big stage will provide hope to fellow Afghan women.

--- Thank you for watching. Now, let me introduce Ms. Fahima Rezayee. Fahima commenced intensive training last December mainly at Tokai University with a view to participating in the London Olympics as a female judo athlete

representing Afghanistan. To our great disappointment she was unable to compete in London for various reasons, but we believe that the achievements and friendship she built in Japan will become a lasting bridge between the Solidarity and Afghanistan. She has endured an extremely demanding training program with the desire of bringing hope and courage to women athletes in Afghanistan, who still face many social challenges.

Fahima, your message please, in Japanese.

Ms. Fahima Rezayee (Afghanistan)

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, I'm Fahima, and I am extremely grateful for this opportunity to convey my appreciation to members of the NPO Solidarity of International Judo Education for the support they have given me.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the NPO for enabling me, an unknown athlete from Afghanistan, to take part in intensive training at the Tokai University Judo Club, which offers world-class training. Especially, I wish to say thank you from the bottom of my heart to Yasuhiro Yamashita sensei, Kenji Mitsumoto sensei, and Hidetoshi Nakanishi sensei.

As I said, although I was an unknown athlete from Afghanistan, I was granted access to a world-class training environment and was able to advance to the Kodokan shodan rank, becoming the first female judoist from Afghanistan to do so. I was able to take on such a challenge and was able to come to this wonderful country Japan because of the NPO members and the secretariat staff. And I wish to sincerely thank everyone at the university judo club and all the trainers for their tireless support.

Let me talk briefly about the state of judo in Afghanistan. The judo federation of Afghanistan did not nominate me as an Olympic athlete representing Afghanistan. This hurt me very much, because I had believed that by competing in the Olympics as a representative of Afghanistan, I would be able to give courage to the many Afghan women who are enduring an inferior social status and are relegated to the margins of society.

This is solely due to the decision by the Afghan judo federation and national Olympic committee, which I found unfair and deeply disappointing. The news that I missed the London ticket reached me moments before the phone call

alerting me to the death of my dearest mother. The two combined dealt a heavy blow to me. I was able to overcome the shock only because of words of encouragement from Japanese friends and members of the NPO.

Lastly, let me ask you a favor. Female athletes in Afghanistan are training hard every day so as to bring hope and dreams to their home country. Please give these Afghan women athletes your enduring support.

Thank you once again for the opportunity today. I love Japan! Thank you very much!

[The audience gave a generous applause to Ms. Rezayee who broke into tears as she conveyed her thoughts and appreciation.]

--- Next, let me introduce Ms. Flora Mkhitarian from Russia. Flora had been one of Russia's state-sponsored junior athletes since her teens, and ended her competitive career only last year. Flora, please.

Ms. Flora Mkhitarian (Russia)

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the NPO Solidarity of International Judo Education and my judo master Anatoly Rakhlin for giving me access to such a wonderful environment to study judo coaching. Of course, with just six months, it was not possible to learn everything about the judo created by Jigoro Kano sensei and its historical background, but I managed to learn many things nonetheless. I feel extremely honored to have studied judo and the Japanese language at Tokai University Judo Club, a leading club in Japan.

I will never forget the support I received from members of the judo club during practice. We were taught, for instance, practice methods that were entirely new to us. And the three-week international seminar at Kodokan provided an experience I will remember for the rest of my life.

The international seminar introduced us to the world's top ne-waza, katame-waza, the history of judo and Japan's culture and traditions, enabling us to improve our existing skills. I encountered many aspects of Japan's wonderful culture and tradition. I also visited Kyoto to appreciate its historical assets. Kyoto was a wonderful city, with ancient temples and buildings. In May we made a graduation trip to Hiroshima, Fukuoka and Kumamoto, visiting the World

Heritage site Miyajima and pondering peace at the poignant Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. In Fukuoka we watched the match for selecting the London Olympic athletes, our hearts racing as we imagined the Russian and Japanese athletes clashing in the games.

The past six months transformed my view of judo, which was simply a sport to me. I learnt that judo is a way of living and a philosophy, and not just about winning a gold medal. I am determined to apply to my life what I have learned through judo. What I learned in Japan will most certainly play a vital role in my coaching career.

In closing I wish to thank Yasuhiro Yamashita sensei and the NPO secretariat for welcoming us like a family, and creating opportunities for us to learn many, many things. I am convinced that NPO activities are prime examples of where the way of judo can be applied to its full advantage. Thank you very much to all of you.

--- Last but not least, let me introduce Ms. Ekaterina Buravtstenva, also from Russia. Katya is a student of Anatoly Rakhlin sensei, who is also President Putin's judo coach. Like Flora she was a competitive athlete until last autumn. Katya, please.

Ms. Ekaterina Buravtstenva (Russia)

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Thanks to the support of Yasuhiro Yamashita sensei, everyone at the Solidarity of International Judo Education and my Russian judo master Anatoly Rakhlin, I was able to spend a very fruitful six-month training period.

I will talk about the training program we participated in. This is not my first visit to Japan, but I only discovered during my current visit that so many judo competitions for children are held in Japan, which surprised me. Children were taking part in matches very enthusiastically and with winning in mind. Although they were still new to judo, I could see the fighting spirit in their eyes, and they also demonstrated many impressive judo techniques. I was moved.

We started practicing at the Tokai University Judo Club. The coaches and club members, especially the women judoists were very kind to us, always supportive, ready to answer questions and give pertinent advice. During the stay I had opportunities to watch judo by practitioners at many

different levels, and I also visited many private dojos and universities to gain experience of coaching practitioners of various levels and children of varying age. At first I was nervous about standing in front of children to teach, because my Japanese is not fluent, but I was very pleased when the skills I developed in Russia proved perfectly valid.

I was genuinely delighted also when I passed the test for Kodokan shodan.

From April this year I experienced being a teaching assistant for Kosei Inoue sensei's judo class for beginners at Tokai University. This was a great honor to me. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Kenji Mitsumoto sensei for enabling me to have these many experiences, and for instructing me. I was also assisted greatly in day-to-day matters.

During the training program I learned many things through the numerous experiences I had of Japan's wonderful traditional culture, such as the tea ceremony and flower arrangement. In Kyoto I also tried on a kimono. We were able to make our long-awaited trip to Hiroshima, Fukuoka and Kumamoto, where we visited many shrines, temples, and historical buildings. Visiting the birthplace of judo during the training session at Kodokan was a very exciting experience.

These experiences made me want to learn more about judo.

In Russia many coaches and athletes regard judo simply as a sport. Not to say that my most respected first judo teacher Anatoly Rakhlin, who has a deep affection for Japan and Japanese judo, did not teach me, but during the past six months I rediscovered the fact that judo is not simply a sport but is an educational sport. Upon returning to Russia I would like to spread the educational aspects of judo and the way shown through judo to the wider judo population.

As you already know, Rakhlin sensei is the judo coach of President Putin, who commenced his second term recently. The first thing President Putin did on the day after his inauguration ceremony was to visit the Russian national judo team at their newly completed dojo. In the speech he made there, President Putin reiterated how judo was part of his life, and that he is keen to further promote judo, which is his philosophy of life.

In closing I wish to express my sincere thanks to everybody at the NPO secretariat for providing me with such

a wonderful training environment. Thank you very much.

--- The three training program participants had a wonderful experience in Japan, and I am grateful to our corporate sponsors who made this possible through their generous support. Thank you very much.

The three participants practiced very hard after arriving in Japan, and passed the test for Kodokan shodan. The Solidarity would also like to issue each with a certificate of completion of the training program. They are due to leave Japan tomorrow but before that, I would like to ask the Solidarity's executive director Yasuhiro Yamashita to present them with their certificates of completion, and Prof. Kenji Mitsumoto, who took part in their training, to present them with their shodan certificates. Will the three of you come over to this side, please?

--- Solidarity's executive director Yasuhiro Yamashita presented the three participants with certificates of completion and commemorative gifts.



--- Tokai University Professor Kenji Mitsumoto presented them with Kodokan shodan certificates.



Hello, I am Mitsumoto from Tokai University, and I am delighted to present the certificates from Kodokan to Ms. Rezayee, Ms. Mkhitaryan and Ms. Buravtstenva. All three worked extremely hard. They visited private dojos, high-school instructors, and many others to practice coaching. I think they spent a truly wonderful training period, and I wish to take this opportunity to thank everyone who made this possible.

--- As you heard from her just now, Fahima, unfortunately could not make it to the London Olympics. However, she succeeded in an 8-kg weight loss in Japan, and she practiced with outstanding dedication as an athlete, at the university dojo and other venues.

--- Thank you all very much. I would like to move on to today's lecture, given by executive director Yasuhiro Yamashita. Mr. Yamashita, please.

Part II

Japan - China Exchange through Judo

Yasuhiro Yamashita

(President of the NPO Solidarity of International Judo Education;
Board Member and Vice President of Tokai University, Dean of the
Tokai University School of Physical Education)

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen for joining us today for the 12th lecture hosted by the Solidarity of International Judo Education.

Today I would like to talk about Japan-China exchange through Judo. But before that, let me talk a little about the three judoists here.

Report on the Training Program for Overseas Judoists

As mentioned in her introduction, Ms. Rezayee is one of Afghanistan's very few women judo athletes. Actually, she was training in Pakistan, because it wasn't possible in Afghanistan. After Ozawa-san, a staff member of the Solidarity secretariat, learned about her circumstances we started wondering if there was anything we could do to support her, and so we contacted her. Fahima expressed a desire to visit Japan, which she did eventually. That is how she came to take part in the training program. For the past six months she has practiced very hard.

As for Ms. Mkhitarian and Ms. Buravtstenva from Russia, you had probably noticed the frequent mention of the name Anatoly Rakhlin sensei. He is the judo instructor of Russian President Vladimir Putin, and is also a friend of mine. Rakhlin sensei said to me that he wanted to spread Japanese-style judo in Russia, instead of a judo that pursues technique only, and asked if we could accept young, outstanding instructors from Russia for a training program, preferably lasting for about six months, designed to instill the spirit of judo. That is how the two judoists from Russia came to take part in the training program.

Recently Mr. Putin, one of Rakhlin sensei's pupils, has returned to the office of President. I am sure he has already learned about these two young judo instructors' training in Japan from Rakhlin sensei.

I was therefore greatly moved by the messages conveyed just now by the three participants. Unfortunately, my schedule did not allow me to take part directly in their

training, but their presentations recalled the many events that took place in the past six months.

As mentioned in our activity report, in December 2011 the Solidarity also accepted young instructors from Israel and Palestine simultaneously for one month. Of course, the two met each other for the first time in Japan. They discovered in Japan that they lived only ten minutes from each other in Jerusalem. By the time they finished their one-month training program, they were looking forward to maintaining contact through their dojos once they returned home. Past training programs involving the same nations had never produced such sentiments, and I am grateful that this happened because of the members and other people whose support enable the activities of the Solidarity.

The Solidarity hopes to continue such activities into the future, and looks forward to the continued cooperation of members and many others. Thank you, as always for your understanding.

Activities to Support the Reinforcement of the Chinese Men's Judo Team in Preparation for the Beijing Olympics

From now on I would like to talk about Japan-China exchange, the main topic of today's lecture, showing you photographs along the way.

Japan-China exchange was first mentioned in June 2004. This was before the Solidarity of International Judo Education was established. For four years from 2003 to 2007 I was a board member of the International Judo Federation. In June 2004 I attended the Federation's board meeting in Shanghai. During the post-meeting reception I was consulted by the vice-chairman of the Chinese Judo Association. "Mr. Yamashita, we only have four years until the Beijing Olympics. Women's judo I am not worried about, but thinking about men's judo makes me sleepless at night." He was referring to the fact that the Chinese women's judo team was Japan's most formidable rival and hence very strong, but men's judo had yet to win a gold medal in the Olympics.

The vice-chairman went on, clutching both of my hands, "Because Beijing will be a home-game Olympics, I want the men's judo team to shine as well. Mr. Yamashita, can you help us?" Japan-China relations were fraught at the time. There were incidents such as Chinese supporters attacking the Japanese minister's car after the final match of the football

Asian Cup. I responded to the vice-chairman then and there as follows. “Not just myself but many Japanese citizens too are wishing for the success of the Beijing Olympics. I will cooperate to the best of my ability.”

In 2003 there were talks between President Putin and Prime Minister Koizumi to set up a Japan-Russia Eminent Person's Council. Because President Putin was fond of judo, I was chosen as a council member. At one of the council meetings I met for the first time Mr. Hiroshi Okuda, who was then chairman (currently adviser) of the Toyota Motor Corporation and chairman of the Japan Business Federation.



When I went to have breakfast on the morning of the meeting, Mr. Okuda was there already, and invited me to share his table. He said, “I used to do judo when I was at Hitotsubashi University,” and the conversation rolled on from there. By the time we finished eating we were promising to meet up to talk further once we returned to Japan.

Mr. Okuda and I met again in Japan, and we eventually co-authored a book titled *Bushido to tomoni ikiru* (Live in the Spirit of the Samurai Warrior), published from Kadokawa Shoten. The aforementioned request by the vice-chairman of the Chinese Judo



Association was made at a time when I was meeting Mr. Okuda frequently for the discussions featured in the book. I mentioned to Mr. Okuda the vice-chairman's request, saying, “If judo can help China and Japan understand each other better, I am more than willing to give as much cooperation as I can, though my capacity is limited.” Mr. Okuda totally agreed and gave me encouragement, but at the same time asked how much it will cost. When I mentioned the estimated cost he said, “I see. I will look after that,” agreeing on the spot to look after the expenses.

Mr. Okuda decided that rather than Toyota doing it on its own, it would be better to mobilize help from other companies as well, and called on Nippon Steel Corporation and All Nippon Airways (ANA) to take part as well, creating a

support system involving the three companies for the advancement of the Chinese men's judo team in the Beijing Olympics.

Activities included inviting for the first time Chinese male judo athletes for training in Japan. I took the initiative for this program, which commenced in January 2006.



The welcome reception took place at the ANA Hotel in Tokyo. This was the beginning of my involvement in a Japan-China exchange through judo. To provide accommodation for the Chinese athletes, the program rented for three years an apartment near Tokai University, ensuring that the athletes could concentrate on their judo practice. In addition to providing instructions on practical judo, Japanese language classes were offered at Tokai University to make sure athletes could build friendship and engage in cultural exchange as well. We explained to the athletes in detail why we were accepting Chinese male judo athletes, and to what end.

It goes without saying that Japan-China interactions have a long history, during which many forms of exchange took place. However, Japan-China relations in recent years are not good. Therefore, if the two countries can understand each other better through judo, I am willing to do as much as I can. I also told the athletes that I wanted to convey, through these activities, the fact that the people of Japan are actually wishing for the success of the Beijing Olympics. The Chinese athletes took active part in the All Japan University Judo Federation training camps as well. The camps were attended by Japan's top judo athletes, including Takamasa Anai, who will be competing in the London Olympics, and Satoshi Ishii, who switched to the mixed martial arts after winning a gold medal at the Beijing Olympics. The Chinese athletes engaged in intensive practice alongside these athletes. Time and time again, I reminded them that the Japanese people want the Beijing Olympics to succeed. Responding to our anticipation, the athletes were very courteous, and engaged in practice conscientiously.

The Chinese athletes very favorably impressed residents of Tokai University's neighborhood as well. Often after hard

trainings, they visited the bath house near the university. Once when I was there, a bather said to me, “The Chinese judo athletes practicing at Tokai University are wonderfully polite. I was amazed.”



Japan-China Exchange that Prompted the Establishment of NPO Solidarity of International Judo Education

The NPO Solidarity of International Education was established in April 2006, when we invited the Chinese athletes over to Japan. Behind the birth of the NPO was advice from Mr. Okuda, then chairman of the Japan Business Federation.

“Your activities are wonderful, but you seem to be spending more of your precious time on fundraising for the activities than the activities themselves. If that is the case, you should set up an organization, a small one will do, to enlist cooperation widely from many, so that your limited time can be utilized more effectively and relevantly” was his advice. Furthermore, Mr. Okuda himself helped to set up the organization, which is how this NPO came into existence.

In June of the same year I visited, accompanied by Ms. Mitsumoto, executive secretary of the NPO, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which had contacted me saying it wanted to exchange opinions about Japan-China exchange. The ministry official we met remarked upon my activities to support the Chinese men’s judo team prepare for the Beijing Olympics and proposed, “Would you be interested in making this wonderful project a mid- to long-term undertaking, rather than a one-off project only for the Beijing Olympics? The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is prepared to help.”



The details were as follows: “Expensive ODA projects require inter-governmental negotiations, which are slow and

difficult. However, Grant Assistance for Cultural Grassroots Projects up to 10 million yen can be provided upon approval of the local Japanese embassy only. Would you like to do activities within this framework, using judo as a vehicle?”

Since this proposal was perfectly in keeping with our purpose, we immediately started looking for candidate sites for our judo hall of Japan-China friendship. One of the leading candidates was Qingdao, a location with a large judo population in China, and the city where the annual World Judo Grand Prix was held. Losing no time, Ms. Mitsumoto and I visited Qingdao in November of the same year. We exchanged opinions with local government officials, physical education authorities and officials of the city’s judo association. I also delivered lectures at Qingdao College of Ocean and at local Japanese schools.

During this visit, I learned from one of Qingdao’s judo officials that Grand Master Jigoro Kano, founder of judo, founded a school in Japan named Kobun Gakuin after the Sino-Japanese war, where he admitted students from China, ahead of any other institution. More than 7,000 international students studied at this school over the dozen or so years the school was in existence. Kano Jigoro’s students included a relative of Mao Zedong, the writer Lu Xun and many young people who subsequently served their country as politicians.

I am ashamed to say that although I was dean of the School of Physical Education at the time, I learned this important episode in the life of Jigoro Kano sensei from my hosts in China.

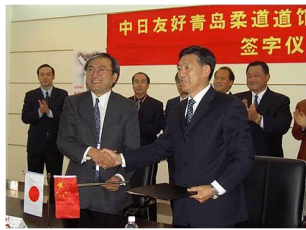
By the way, as we have been reiterating, the exchange we are aspiring to is not limited to supplying judo uniforms or tatami mats, or providing technical guidance on judo. At the bottom of our activities is the desire to convey the spirit of *ju*, the spirit of *wa*, and the spirit of Japan through judo-related exchange. Through judo exchange and cultural exchange we want to build a relationship of mutual understanding. To put it more simply, we want to promote curiosity, interest, understanding and trust toward Japan. It is because of this desire that I make sure I give lectures wherever I go.

Opening the Japan-China Judo Friendship Centers in Qingdao and Nanjing

This photo shows Qingdao’s beautiful beach. Xu Dianping sensei, who is the director of the



Japan-China Judo Friendship Center in Qingdao used to teach judo on this beach some 30 or 40 years ago, so in a sense this was the starting point.



This is a photo of the signing ceremony of the Center. The event was attended by Japanese Minister to China Mr. Keiji Ide. Minister Ide is currently Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Japan in Moscow, so I am hopeful that he will be instrumental in Russia-Japan exchange as well.



This is the completed Qingdao Japan-China Judo Friendship Center. Displayed at the entrance are photos of grand master Jigoro Kano, judo mottos such as “Maximum Efficiency” and “Mutual Prosperity”, as well as words describing the purpose of judo training.

In November 2007 I attended the opening ceremony of the Qingdao Japan-China Judo Friendship Center. This is a picture of the children practicing at this dojo.



This year the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made a very generous offer again by asking us if we wanted to invite to Japan potential key persons of a judo-mediated Japan-China exchange. The Ministry was ready to support. So we took up this proposal and invited three guests from China: Mr. Xu Dianping, director of Qingdao Japan-China Judo Friendship Center, Mr. Xiong Fengshan, head of secretariat of the Chinese Judo Association, and Mr. Liu Junlin, director of Nanjing Japan-China Judo Friendship Center, whom I will

talk about in a minute. The three paid a courtesy visit to Mr. Gotaro Ogawa, former diplomat and ambassador, who is currently a director of the Solidarity of International Judo Education. We also exchanged opinions on future Japan-China exchange.

This picture was taken in December 2007, when we invited former Beijing Foreign Studies University professor Yan Ansheng sensei, who is now professor at Otemae University, to give a lecture.

In 2008 the long-awaited Beijing Olympic Games was held. As you can see in the handout, the *People's Daily*, a newspaper that is an organ of the Communist Party of China, carried a substantial article about me on August 28. I felt delighted and grateful that the article included a detailed account of the founder of judo Jigoro Kano sensei, and about “Maximum Efficiency” and “Mutual Prosperity.”



A surprise awaited me on my return from the Beijing Olympics. On August 15, the anniversary of the end of World War II, The *Yomiuri Shimbun* newspaper carried a large article that read something like, “Yamashita takes action for a judo dojo of Japan-China friendship in Nanjing.” The article was based on a request made by a Nanjing official, who visited me when we had just commenced construction of the aforementioned Qingdao Japan-China Judo Friendship Center, for a similar one in Nanjing.

In contrast to the newspaper account, my initial reaction to this request was rather brusque, which I later regretted. I all but turned the request away at the door, saying, “I am in no position to make promises lightly, because this project is funded by Japanese taxpayers’ money. A second dojo can be put on the table only when the Qingdao dojo has proven successful and conducive to Japan-China friendship.”

Nanjing, however, is a great thorn in the side of Japan-China relations, and a Nanjing official offering such a suggestion was more than the Japanese side could wish for. There were indeed talks about constructing a Nanjing dojo, and movement underneath the surface, but at this stage nothing had yet been mentioned to the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs, who would be sponsoring the project. However, the newspaper article made it appear as if the construction had already been decided. I was concerned that the article will annoy the people at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs whom we had been working with, and consulted Mr. Ogawa, one of the Solidarity's directors. Mr. Ogawa agreed to talk to the Ministry.

Contrary to my worries the Ministry's reply turned out to be very positive: "Mr. Yamashita, this is a chance of a lifetime. Let us go ahead. You do not have to wait for outcomes of the Qingdao project." So as to "make hay while the sun shines," the Solidarity's executive secretary Ms. Mitsumoto and I made a preliminary research trip to Nanjing in November 2008, the first anniversary of the Qingdao dojo. We wanted to ascertain that a judo dojo would really be accepted in Nanjing. During this trip I gave a lecture about Japan-China exchange through judo at Nanjing University. The 200-strong audience was made up of equal parts Japanese nationals, judoists, and Chinese students studying Japanese, many of whom removing the simultaneous interpretation earphones to listen directly to my Japanese.



In the subsequent Q&A session I was asked, "Mr. Yamashita, I fully appreciate your enthusiasm for Japan-China exchange, but why did you choose Nanjing for the dojo?" I replied, "I could not find a more suitable location for considering future Japan-China exchange than Nanjing." To this the audience gave a very generous applause. I remember feeling that perhaps some of our activities have won the understanding of the people of China.

I also attended events commemorating the first anniversary of the Qingdao dojo. Director of the dojo Xu sensei asked if I could do an interview with a Chinese TV newscaster, and I accepted.

The interview was for the national broadcaster China Central Television, and the interviewer was Mr. Cui, a popular newscaster.

Although he did not have judo experience, Mr. Cui arrived, as I did, wearing a judo uniform. He arrived very well

researched as well, and knew many things about judo, including details of founder Jigoro Kano sensei and the purpose of judo.



The conversation was simultaneously interpreted and was recorded by six cameras, three from Beijing and three from Qingdao. The recorded interview was made into a 45-minute program, which was aired in February 2009. Mr. Cui visited Japan this February, and is now one of my very close friends.

We planned to site the new Nanjing Japan-China Judo Friendship Center at the renovated national training center (for women athletes) of Jiangsu Province, the provincial capital of which is Nanjing. The existing judo facility there, with a size of about 500 tatami mats was to be made into the friendship dojo, which will open to the public as well. Negotiations went smoothly, and a signing ceremony was held. Finally, on March 1, 2010 the opening ceremony of the second friendship dojo, the Nanjing Japan-China Judo Friendship Center was held. I attended wearing my judo uniform, and gave practical judo lessons. The event was covered by many Japanese members of the press as well.



After I finished giving judo lessons a Japanese journalist asked, "How do you feel when you see the Chinese and Japanese flags displayed side by side?" I secretly thought that was a silly question, because the two flags are displayed in a similar manner at the Qingdao dojo as well, which I thought was only natural. Slightly questioningly I replied, "This dojo is for Japan-China friendship. Wouldn't it be strange if we only displayed either one of the flags?" I later found out from others that in China, especially in Nanjing, it was extremely unusual to display next to each other the flags of China and Japan.

Various Forms of Japan-China Exchange that are taking off from the Two Japan-China Judo Friendship Centers

I would now like to mention the Solidarity's various Japan-China friendship projects centered on the two dojos in Qingdao and Nanjing. The Nanjing dojo was visited by Mr. Uichiro Niwa, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to China. The Qingdao dojo was visited by the then ambassador to China Mr. Yuji Miyamoto, who delivered on our behalf the second-hand judo uniforms for children collected and donated by the Solidarity in response to a request from the Qingdao dojo.



Many of the Solidarity's instructors have visited the Qingdao and Nanjing dojos, too. Toshiaki Hashimoto sensei, who is assistant executive director of the Solidarity, has been to both dojos, where he has lectured also on the spirit of judo.



Mitsumoto sensei, who has just now presented the certificates to the three women judoists, has been instrumental in the reinforcement of the Chinese national men's judo team. Mitsumoto sensei is of no small build but is dwarfed in this photo by the tall, heavyweight Chinese athletes next to him.



Katsuhiko Kashiwazaki sensei, a world championship

gold medalist, has instructed at the Qingdao dojo. Masao Murata sensei, also a medalist in the world championships, attended the Nanjing dojo's first anniversary event, where he gave judo demonstrations, instructions and lectures.

The Solidarity has also sent student volunteers to China. Messrs. Ryuma Asahina and Kazuhiro Shoji were dispatched to the Nanjing dojo, while Messrs. Ryohei Anai and Ryohei Shiiya were sent to the Qingdao dojo. They went as instructors, but the experience proved instructive and educational for themselves as well. The Solidarity looks forward to continuing its program of dispatching university and graduate-school students during long holidays. Tokai University Graduate School student Mr. Ryohei Anai, who won the gold medal in the 2011 All Japan Judo Championships 90 kg competition, was dispatched to Nanjing as well.

When Mitsumoto sensei was instructing the Chinese national men's judo team, he encountered a young athlete whom he found very promising. Although his judo career was brief, he demonstrated a natural talent for judo and lots of potentiality. Fortunately for us, he too took a liking to Japan and Tokai University through the Solidarity's activities.



He was admitted to Tokai University School of Physical Education in fiscal 2010 and is currently a third-year student. He competed in the team competition of the recently-held Tokyo Students' Judo Competition. He won the first two matches by ippon but struggled in his third match, losing a waza-ari. He will most certainly become one of China's foremost athletes. He is wonderfully gifted and open-minded so we are placing much hope on him.

The Solidarity also provides instructor-training to participants from abroad as part of a Japan Foundation program. From the Qingdao dojo we invited Ms. Wang Hua, and from the Nanjing dojo Mr. Chang Dong for a six-month training program. Since returning to China, both are working as instructors at their respective dojos.

In June 2011, the director of the Qingdao dojo Xu sensei

and Ms. Wang Hua visited Japan, bringing with them the donation money raised at the Qingdao dojo for the Great East Japan Earthquake victim relief. I accompanied them on a visit to Ishinomaki mediated by Toyoshi Terasawa sensei (Chairman of the Prefectural Section, Judo Renaissance Special Committee of the All Japan Judo Federation), who served as chairperson just now.

Since 2009 we have an ongoing exchange program with the Qingdao dojo in which children from the dojo visit Japan every January or February. They tour places including Tokai University, Bosei Gakujuku and Kodokan, taking part in exchange activities. I believe that these are the kind of activities that constitute true grass-roots or citizen-to-citizen exchange.



Japanese visitors to China included students from the Matsumae Judo Juku, who visited Qingdao in August 2009. The aforementioned Nanjing dojo coach Mr. Chang Dong is currently a senior staff member of the dojo. As mentioned by assistant executive director Mr. Hashimoto earlier, Nanjing is an international city. The judo population of the city includes not only Chinese people but people of many different nationalities and ages, from children to adults.



This photo shows dojo members bowing. According to Mr. Hashimoto's report, Mr. Chang's judo instruction methods are in a sense more traditionally Japanese than those of a Japanese coach. That is, he places great emphasis on greetings and etiquette. Mr. Chang studied the Japanese language intensively during his six month training in Japan, and I have heard that he has been continuing his studies at a Japanese language school after returning to China. I am sure Mr. Hashimoto can tell you more about him during the reception later on.



These photographs are of the various projects involving the Qingdao dojo. You can see the name plaques of the many dojo members, who range from children to adults. Last year the Qingdao dojo hosted a judo competition under the slogan "From the Beach to the World." The dojo's director Xu sensei is a very energetic person and since the Qingdao dojo opened, some middle schools in Qingdao have started to teach judo as part of their regular curriculums.

In December 2011 the Qingdao dojo held its 4th anniversary event, which I attended. During the visit I gave a lecture in front of all the coaches of the Chinese national team, and also toured local middle schools.



This is the Chinese edition of the *Judo Beginners' Manual* compiled by the Solidarity. We intended to present copies of this book to the Nanjing dojo as part of the dojo's 2nd anniversary event. To coincide with the presentation of the book, we were planning to send All Japan University Judo Federation teams to both Qingdao and Nanjing. I was intending to visit Nanjing for the dojo's 2nd anniversary, which was to be celebrated with the book presentation, anniversary ceremony, judo lessons, and lectures at Nanjing University.

Regrettably though, in February this year Nagoya mayor Takashi Kawamura made a remark that denied the Nanjing Massacre. This was about five days before my scheduled departure for China. This incident caused the Nanjing dojo's 2nd anniversary event to be cancelled. This is how it happened: Mayor Kawamura's remarks made newspaper headlines, creating outcries in both China and Japan. In response, Nanjin's municipal officials instructed the Nanjing dojo to cancel the anniversary events because of public security concerns. Director of the Nanjing dojo Liu sensei and

Nanjing's other judo-related people argued that there is nothing to worry about, and that times like this made the event even more relevant. They also asked me to go ahead with my visit.

Subsequently however, it became apparent that the concern was shared by the Chinese state government. Even Liu sensei had to accept that "If that is the view of the national government, we have to concede. We will accept the situation this time, though with great reluctance." So that was how the 2nd anniversary event was cancelled.

Although this particular event was cancelled, exchange with the Nanjing dojo is ongoing. I firmly believe we will have opportunities to revisit Nanjing and Qingdao in the future.

Today I have had the pleasure of sharing with you many topics about our Japan-China exchange from before the Solidarity was established. I am grateful that we are able to conduct these exchange activities because of the generous support extended by members of the Solidarity, corporate supporters, and organizations such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Japan Foundation. Supported by your generosity, I am looking forward to continuing activities for conveying the spirit of *ju*, the spirit of *wa*, and the spirit of Japan to the world, so as to raise overseas interest in Japan and understanding for Japan.

If you have comments, questions or requests, please do not hesitate to tell me during the reception following the lecture. The reception will also be attended by the three women judoists who gave talks just now. They are fluent English speakers and can also understand some Japanese, so please feel free to talk to them.

Thank you very much for your time and for your kind attention. Thank you.

--- Thank you very much. We would now like to move on to the reception. As Mr. Yamashita just said, he will be attending, as well as Ms. Rezayee, Ms. Mkhitarian and Ms. Buravtstenva, so I hope you will enjoy talking with them. Thank you for your time today. Solidarity staff members are looking forward to another energetic year, and look forward to your continued support and understanding. Thank you very much.

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