

**The Record of 15<sup>th</sup> Lecture**  
**My stay in the UK**  
**- What I experienced abroad through**  
**encounters with various people -**

**Maki Tsukada**

Friday, May 30, 2014 at Josui Kaikan

## Opening Address

**Yasuhiro Yamashita**

(Executive Director, NPO Solidarity of International Judo Education; Trustee and Vice-Chancellor, Tokai University)



Thank you very much for attending the General Assembly of the NPO Solidarity of International Judo Education today despite your busy schedules.

Thanks to your generous support and cooperation, our NPO has entered its ninth year, and our activities are gradually becoming well known and appreciated in society.

Today, I would like to begin by telling you about two events that brought me great joy and pleasure.

Firstly, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan visited three African countries in January 2014, and in Cote d'Ivoire, the first country visited, he went to watch a judo tournament.

In fact, the tournament was named "Abe Cup" because it was held to coincide with his visit. Prior to this event, our NPO had been asked if we could donate 100 used judogi for children in Cote d'Ivoire.

I had been also asked to go there with the prime minister's party, although I had to decline because it was a request on short notice. As for the donation of judogi, we were more than delighted to comply.

During his African trip, the Japanese prime minister pledged his support, in collaboration with local related organizations, for the promotion of football and basketball in the second and third countries visited, respectively. Such initiatives involving sports drew great attention from the local media and were extensively covered on TV and in newspapers.

The people involved with the prime minister's trip told me later with deep feeling that international exchange through sports was very effective in communicating Japan's virtues and the Japanese leader's friendly personality to people in other countries. I was very pleased to hear these words.

The second event that greatly pleased me was another foreign trip of Prime Minister Abe, this time to various European countries in early May.

On May 5, Mr. Abe and Mr. Francois Hollande, French President, had a summit meeting and released a joint statement. It said, among other things, that the Japanese and French governments would cooperate with the All-Japan Judo Federation or the French Judo Federation to support Israeli-Palestinian exchange through judo.

I was told that this happened because the Israeli-Palestinian exchange project that our organization started in 2010 and has continued so far with your precious cooperation had been highly favorably evaluated, and momentum had gathered to prompt Japan and France, two judo superpowers, to work together and support the project further.

I am truly grateful to you all for your support and guidance for our NPO, which have made it possible for our project to be recognized on such an international scale.

From Thursday two weeks ago through last Monday, I was in Saint Petersburg, Russia, where we organized a cherry blossom festival in partnership with Japan Tobacco Inc.

In Russia, I also gave judo instruction as part of a series of programs organized within

the framework of the ongoing “year of Japan-Russia exchange through martial arts,” a project officially recognized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The bilateral exchange through martial arts and my judo instruction were covered by local media including newspapers and radio. My judo lessons were even broadcast on TV.

One radio personality asked me some sensitive questions. For example, I was asked what my intention was of coming to Russia when the country was in a complex situation with regard to Ukraine. Nevertheless, I believe that the Russian side appreciated our initiatives including the cherry blossom festival and the judo instruction and especially the very fact that the events were organized despite Russia’s complex situation.

During the cold war years, the late Dr. Shigeyoshi Matsumae, my mentor, used to question Japan’s position vis-à-vis Russia, expressing concern over Japan’s excessively American-oriented attitude in politics, economy, culture and everything else. He used to ask if Japan would be all right in terms of national interest if it went on having no exchange with Russia, a huge country just across the small Sea of Japan.

Dr. Matsumae deeply loved Japan. It was for his love of Japan that he insisted on promoting the country’s exchange with Russia, even in a very small way, in the areas of scholarship, arts, sports and other cultural pursuits.

I also believe in the great importance of grassroots international exchange, for which both sides are required to continue making efforts to understand each other even when their governments may be in conflict with each other. Therefore, we have various activity plans for this year to continue our exchange with people in many different parts of the world.

In November 2014, the public interest corporation Nippon Budokan will send a delegation of about 80 persons to Russia, with Mr. Masahiko Koumura, Vice President of

Liberal Democratic Party, as leader and myself as sub-leader. Also within the framework of the year of Japan-Russia exchange through martial arts, the delegation is scheduled to stay in Russia for a week.

In December 2014, I am taking a group of Japanese judo coaches to Israel and Palestine. We are joining French judo instructors over there to organize judo matches and practices in which Israeli and Palestinian judoka will meet under French-Japanese cooperation.

Finally, I would like to talk about one very important matter. Throughout last year, deplorable affairs tainted the Japanese judo community, causing much trouble in society and worrying many concerned. I must admit that society’s confidence in the Japanese judo community was simply lost. To turn around the situation, we inaugurated the Violence Eradication Project, and I personally have been involved in activities to eradicate violence from the Japanese judo community. In April 2014, we renamed this project “Judo MIND Project,” furthering our efforts.

We are working hard, hand in hand with those who truly love judo, to restore the Japanese judo community once again to a disciplined and dignified state. We are aware that it takes only a moment to lose somebody’s trust but a far longer time and great efforts to regain it. However hard it may be, we are determined to tenaciously keep working together with many who are willing to cooperate with us.

We are all determined to make utmost efforts to redress the judo community so that children practicing judo can proudly say to anyone anywhere that they are judoka; parents want to send their children to judo schools because they know that judo is, first and foremost, about character-building and education; and children long to go to dojo, proudly carrying their uniform over their shoulders because it stands for so many positive values.

With my heartfelt gratitude to your enthusiastic support, I would like to conclude my remarks. Thank you very much.

**MC:** Thank you very much, Mr. Yamashita. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for coming to this lecture meeting, despite your busy schedules and the scorching heat outside. Now I would like to introduce today's lecturer, Ms. Maki Tsukada, or she does not require any introduction for, as you all know, she is a judoka who won a gold medal at the Athens Olympics in 2004. Ms. Tsukada studied for two years until last year in the UK on an overseas training program sponsored by the Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC). Currently, she teaches at Tokyo Women's College of Physical Education. In today's lecture, she is going to share with us her life in the UK, including her encounters with various people and her frank impressions of Japan as viewed from outside. Now, Ms. Tsukada, please.

## My stay in the UK

- What I experienced abroad through encounters with various people -

### Maki Tsukada

(Head coach from Tokyo Women's College of Physical Education Judo club, The training coach for All Japan Women Team, Judo Gold Medalist from Athens Olympics,2004)



Hello, everyone. I am Maki Tsukada. Today, I would like to talk to you frankly about my experiences, impressions, thoughts and feelings that I had during my two-year stay in the UK. I might say something inappropriate because I am not good with words, but I hope that you will kindly take it as my unpretentious attempt to share something with you. First of all, I would like to tell you why I wanted to go abroad

to study.

When I was a competitive judoka, I frequently traveled abroad to take part in competitions. On those occasions, I had many experiences that made me realize that what was natural or taken for granted in Japan was not so once outside Japan.

For example, in Japan I could leave my judogi in my bike basket and park my bike outside a convenience store while I did shopping there without any problem, but when I did the same in other countries, I had my judogi stolen several times.

For another example, I felt in many places outside Japan that people dressed as they liked, or they enjoyed the fashion they loved, regardless of what others might think of them.

Since I was able to feel various such differences directly even during a short period of one or two weeks abroad, I thought that I would have the opportunity to discover more important differences if I lived there for a longer period. So I wanted to live abroad. I was sure that it would be a worthwhile experience. This is how I made up mind to go abroad to study.

Another reason I wanted to study abroad was what many of my professors at Tokai University had told me about the preciousness of experiencing living abroad and the importance of being away from one's country to learn to view it objectively. So I decided to enroll in the JOC program to go abroad to study.

## Life in London, language school and judo



I would like to continue with my talk while showing you some slides. This is the photo of Westminster Abbey that I took upon arriving in

the UK. I had heard that the weather in the UK was generally gloomy, but on this day it was so beautiful and I was moved so much that I took this picture.

My daily life in the UK mainly consisted of joining the British national team for judo training in the morning and attending a language school in the afternoon.

The next photo shows a scene at the Olympic Training Center in Dartford, Kent, a little far from London.



I was told that this center was constructed in the image of France's INSEP (*Institut National du Sport, de l'Expertise et de la Performance*). It was just before the London Olympics and a national training camp was on there. Many judoka had gathered from all over the country, and so the center was quite lively.



These two athletes were from Scotland. They would come to Dartford from Scotland each time national team training was held. I was told that in the afternoon the national team members would go to famous local judo clubs to seek out practice partners.

The next photo shows me in class at the language school that I used to go to in the afternoon.



I suppose you can tell from the photo that it was a very relaxed class. The woman seated at the very end was our teacher. She was British of Malaysian descent. So she had Asian looks but very British accent. At first, I used to get confused by the gap between her looks and accent, but at the same time I felt closer to her for her Asian face, and I learned a great deal from her.

In the beginning, my English was so poor that I had to ask a classmate to show me how to spell certain words. The teacher would call on me, but I could not say anything. Then, my friend Carmen would stealthily write an answer on the desk for me. Although I was not able to speak English very well, I managed to make friends with people of various nationalities at the language school.

For the first three months, my life was "hell." After that, it got better, and I learned to go out with friends in central London. Most of the students at the school were from other European countries and went home after two to three weeks. Only a few students stayed for a longer period of, for example, nine months like me. So I became very good friends with Samantha from Columbia and Jay from Korea, who also stayed for a long period.

My weekdays were spent at the language school and the national judo training center. On Sundays, I often went to local judo schools to practice or give technical demonstrations.

This is a photo taken at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge. I was able to go there by the recommendation of Mr. Mike Callan. I was invited as an instructor for a course in coaching attended by European judo coaches.



During this program, I was asked to demonstrate some of the *kumi kata* that I used

in official matches. So I showed how I made *maai* when I fought against bigger opponents, such as Chinese and Polish. I explained, “Apply your hand to the opponent’s shoulder, and push with your body. From there, use the space to shift your shoulder...” To this, a judo coach reacted negatively, saying that judo was not boxing. These words somewhat depressed me.

Then, Danny, who fought in men’s 73 kg competition at the London Olympics, said to me, “Why do you have to feel depressed? We are competitors. Don’t feel bad when people who don’t fight in competitions criticize your techniques in real matches. If you did, that would depress me!” He scolded and encouraged me.



This is Danny. With tattoos, he was a tough-looking guy, but his passion for judo was pure, and he was a very friendly person. I believe that encountering people like him is a major attraction of living abroad.

### What John and Susan taught me



Now, let me change the scenery completely. This photo shows the room in which I used to live in London. The next one shows the street on which the house stood. One day, while I was there, a double-decker came by. So I took this photo, thinking that it would make a typically London scene.

In Japan, people around me often ask me

what my living arrangements were like in London. At first, I did a homestay and later lived on my own. In my second year, I experienced sharing a flat, one of the most widespread living arrangements in London.

My flat mate was a middle-aged Briton. I entered a flat where he used to live alone, and rented two rooms.

He was a musician and was playing saxophone all the time. He would go into the kitchen and cook when he became hungry. So we did not see much of each other, but once in a while we ran into each other. On such occasions, he told me about the recent music scene or his romantic relationships. I listened to him, thinking that it was a good practice for my English. It was a good experience that allowed me to learn the difficulties and interesting aspects of sharing a living space with someone.

I attended the language school I mentioned earlier for nine months. After that, I enrolled in various schools one after the other, including one specializing in pronunciation and another whose program was mainly composed of debates. As I became more eager to better communicate my ideas to others, I began to think about taking private lessons. As a result, a friend of mine introduced me to my teacher, John, who is in the middle in this photo. The woman next to him is his wife, Susan.



John used to work at BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). After his retirement, he underwent training and qualified as a pilates instructor and worked as one from age 65 to 75. He then wanted to take up a new challenge and became an English teacher. He has been to India to teach English to visually impaired children.

John’s wife, Susan, went to France at age 50



to study in a university for two years. She has studied various languages and speaks Japanese a little. Meeting with this couple, who keeps trying new things regardless of age, was truly a major event for me.

I went to the UK while I was hardly able to speak English. Because of this, I experienced many hardships and difficult situations. Sometimes, what I had studied and prepared carefully beforehand was not understood well, and people I had to deal with became angry with me or insulted me.

To my account of such experiences, John replied: "It's only natural. I gave up learning new languages because I was afraid of making mistakes. I really regret it now. Susan was not afraid and kept studying. Now she's a good linguist. I don't want you to have regrets later. Just keep trying, even if you make mistakes on the way." He used to encourage me like this. He is such a kind person.

I usually studied with him in a pub for about two hours in the morning. When I was invited to speak in a judo-related meeting, he would help me prepare my talk, thinking of ways to effectively develop the theme. When I told John that I wanted some kind of "proof" of my hard work in the UK, he advised me to take an examination to objectively measure my growth in English before returning to Japan. I was able to study English in a relaxed manner, surrounded by such good people.

This photo was taken during the sushi party that the friend who had introduced them to me and I gave in honor of John and Susan before my return to Japan.

### European culture and food

I would like to show you more photos because I want you to know that I had many enjoyable moments abroad.

During the two-year period, I did not stay in the UK all the time. I took the Eurostar train to visit France, Italy, and Spain. The main purpose of these trips was to participate in judo

training camps. Wherever I went in Europe, I was impressed by the way Europeans clearly separated the practice time and the fun time.



This photo was taken when I was visiting my friends in France. Since the weather was great, my hosts decided to do a barbecue in the garden. We enjoyed delicious sausages, French cheese, and grilled tomatoes. I had a great time, drinking wine already in the afternoon!



The next photo was also taken in France, when I participated in a judo camp in the Burgundy region in December, three months after I arrived in the UK.

She is Natalie, the wife of Hulpoi sensei, the dojo owner. She looked after me since she spoke some English.

Hulpoi sensei studied judo in Japan for five years at Watanabe Dojo in Yokosuka. I felt a special link with him because my sensei during my high school and university years also studied at the same dojo. Thanks to this, I was able to take part in the camp with a sense of familiarity.

Burgundy is a French region particularly famous for good food. Among all the things I tasted there, salty caramel was excellent. The photo shows the crepe I ate with melted salty caramel. It was simply delicious.

The camp participants and I stayed on in Burgundy and were invited to the New Year's Eve party. We enjoyed to our heart's content

local specialties from starter to main dish to dessert. Everyone except me were speaking in French, and I learned from them simple French words for “right,” “left” and “wonderful.” I had a pleasant time there.



The next photos show the dishes my British friends prepared for me. In Japan, one stereotypical image of the UK is that the local food is not good. However, my friends’ dishes were delicious! These are roasted chicken and grilled potatoes. The chicken was stuffed with fragrant herbs and other ingredients that were good for your health. When we ate, we took out the stuffing and used it like sauce for the chicken. While enjoying these dishes, I felt that the British cuisine was not bad at all.

The varieties of chicken and potato that we had were local ones that are not available in Japan. A Japanese friend of mine tried to make similar dishes in Japan, but they did not turn out exactly like the ones in the UK. Cooking locally available ingredients in local manners and eating them there is also one major pleasure of studying and living abroad.



This photo shows the famous fish and chips. A big fried fish is placed on peas. It is great if you eat it once in a while. I heard that the typically British way is to eat with vinegar, which I found light and delicious.

The photo on the right is a scene from an afternoon tea, which girls love.

There are scones on the upper tray and sandwiches on the lower tray. There are also cakes. You enjoy them while drinking tea of various flavors.



In the left photo, I’m holding what is known as “shortcake” in Japan, which is very hard to find in the UK. However, a friend found a place where they sold shortcakes. So I went there and bought this one. It was very tasty.

The other photo shows a salad. While I enjoyed my food in the UK, my physical condition deteriorated due to high-calorie dishes. At one time, I became literally scared of getting on a scale. When I was thinking that I had to do something about this, I found this salad, called “detox salad,” in a nearby café. It was so effective that you immediately wanted to go to the bathroom after eating it.

So I switched to the daily pattern of eating this salad to fix my physical condition whenever I thought I had eaten too much or felt heavy in the stomach. This salad contains miscellaneous cereals, which are supposed to help elimination. It would be no exaggeration to say that I owe my good physical health during my stay in the UK to this salad.



This photo was taken when I went to the Thames festival with friends. Although the Thames is a river, the tide turns, and a sandy beach appears at low tide. I took this photo because I appreciated the typically British

sense of humor you can find there—someone had made a sofa with sand, not a castle, and put a price tag of one pound as if the sofa was on sale.

In this festival, as in others like this one, hamburgers and other foods and desserts, as well as antique cups and saucers and other objects, are sold. London is famous for its art scene; in this festival, there was a corner where young artists from East London exhibited their works.



In this photo, I am enjoying a drink called Jamaican Beer with a friend. It is a non-alcohol drink despite its name. All in all, it was an easy-going event typical of this type of festivals in London, and I fully enjoyed it.



This photo was taken at a venue of the London Fashion Week. When I expressed my interest in attending such an event, Sandra, a judoka friend from Hungary, obtained tickets for me. We went to a fashion show together and watched and admired beautiful fashion models at close range as they walked on the runway. After the fashion show, my friend and I had coffee, quite contented.

### **Exchange through judo, from town dojo to representative judoka**

Now, let us get back to judo. In May 2013, the Solidarity of International Judo Education sent me to Washington D.C. I gave judo instruction and participated regular judo

practices at Georgetown University and at the Naval Academy. This photo was taken at the Naval Academy.



While I was there, I was told that an environment (judo hall) where you can practice every day was extremely rare in the United States. As one of such rare places, everyone was very seriously working out at the Naval Academy.

In Washington D.C., I had the opportunity of attending a ceremony, in which Naval Academy students received awards and gave reception speeches. Their manners and speeches were so dignified that I could not believe that they were young people in their early 20s.

I was deeply impressed with the way they expressed their pride of being American and declared their preparedness for what might await them after graduation. It may be all because they were Naval Academy students, but it still gave me a great cultural shock.



This photo was taken when I saw one of my very best friends for the first time in a long while in Washington D.C. We are standing facing the statue of Lincoln, with our backs to the Washington Monument. She was an older student at Tokai University whom I respect enormously. She is also my best friend who has supported my judo life. She now lives in the United States, married to an American. I was very grateful that I was given the opportunity to contact and see such a precious friend for the first time in five years while abroad. Later, when we parted at the airport, we were both



in unstoppable tears. At the same time, seeing a Japanese friend like this outside Japan seemed surreal to me.



Now, let me get back to the subject of judo in London. This photo was taken in a town dojo in London. This dojo's students were excellently disciplined. I visited numerous dojo in the UK and realized that students behaved very differently, depending on their sensei's degree of strictness.

The bald man standing in the back row is the sensei. He was very strict. He had visited Japan, and in the dojo he was making sure that his students said "*hajime* (begin)," "*kiotsuke* (attention)," "*arigato gozaimashita* (thank you)" and "*shitsurei shimasu* (excuse me)" in Japanese.

This dojo was divided into sections for adults, higher middle school students, lower middle school and higher elementary school students, and lower elementary school students. Lower middle school and higher elementary school students were responsible for looking after lower elementary school students. This is another reason I liked this dojo. The two boys next to me in the photo qualified as judges. This dojo was also enthusiastic about getting students to obtain special qualification. I believe that this is why the children were lively and yet steady.

The cute girl just above me in the photo is Rosie. I hope you can see a boy above her. He was slightly shy, but as I observed the practice, I noticed that he was very good at teaching judo to younger children.

So I told him that I found his way of teaching very good and him a good judoka. After that, he became friendly toward me. Shy children gaining self-confidence through teaching

younger children—this is the same in Japan and the UK. It was a heart-warming realization for me.

This photo was taken at a dojo located in Ealing, west of London. The woman on this side is the dojo owner. I visited this dojo several times to give lectures on dojo.



Perhaps because the dojo owner wanted to respond to my enthusiasm, she gathered girls and women from the neighborhood and organized a special judo session. This photo is all girls and women. There is a Japanese woman in the front row. The Japanese School in London is located in Ealing, and many students there were practicing judo.



This photo was taken when I had dinner with Ms. Ayumi Tanimoto, who has been staying in France since March 2013 on the JOC's overseas training program for sports instructors, and Ms. Lucie Décosse, who fought against Ms. Tanimoto at the Beijing Olympics. It was just after Ms. Tanimoto's arrival in France. I contacted her and Lucie, and Lucie made arrangements for our dinner. She booked a beautiful restaurant for the occasion.

When this photo was taken, Lucie was still an active judoka. She retired from competitions after the world championships in Brazil. We had become good friends rather than rivals. Admiring the Eiffel Tower together and speaking in uncertain English to each other, we spent a precious time together over nice champagne and dinner.

The next photo shows Mr. Mike Callan, whom I mentioned earlier, Professor Shera, Dean of the Faculty of Physical Education at

Anglia Ruskin, and a friend of mine, Cat. This photo was taken when I invited Mr. Callan before my return to Japan, to thank him for his assistance with my visa formalities and many other things.



Cat, which is my friend's nickname, and I did research together. When I asked her questions about British judo coaches and athletes, to find out what they considered most important in their communication and so on, she suggested that we do research together on that theme, with me interviewing athletes and coaches at the national camp while she offered me backup.

Thanks to her full cooperation, I was able to conduct a questionnaire survey and interviews all by myself. It was a great experience that allowed me to learn what British judo coaches and judoka respectively expected from each other, and how they were different and similar. Cat told me to do the same survey in Japan and compare the results between the two countries. I am still frequently communicating with her.

### London Olympics and Gemma Gibbons



This photo was taken on the day I served as an Olympic flame runner in London. My role was to receive the flame from the male runner No. 33, run with the flame, and hand it over to the male runner No. 35. We did not know each other, not even each other's name, but as people who were sharing a precious experience, we took this photo together.

I was not told where I would run until the very day of the event. About two days before, I was summoned to a gathering place. I was then in Scotland, so I booked airplane tickets in a hurry. At the gathering place in London, we flame runners were packed into a bus and transported. We were then placed at intervals of about 300 meters on spots to wait for the flame. It went on like this.



This is a photo of me carrying the Olympic flame. People on the streets waved at me and shouted "Good luck" to me. I was really excited. I felt firsthand the magnitude of the Olympic Games. In the photo, I am handling the flame to the runner No. 35. In the middle, a woman volunteer is guiding me.

In London, there were many volunteers like her who were working with true passion and pride. The woman encouraged me, saying "be proud of being able to carry the flame," "remember that you're joining together the moments of Olympic history," and "experience the flame run with this awareness."



At the London Olympics, Gemma Gibbons, a British judoka, won the silver medal in the women's 78 kg category. I served as her practice partner at the Judo Center in Dartford, which I mentioned in the beginning of my talk.

At that time, she was in the 70 kg category, but since there was nobody of her height, I became her partner. Following the situations set by her coach, I was a completely passive practice partner. Since Gemma had just recovered from her shoulder injury, she

practiced a great deal. For nearly one month, I participated in her very demanding practice, receiving many throws as I had never received before within a similar period.

Gemma was quite outspoken and did not hesitate to ask her coach why she had to practice with me, who was in the 78 kg category, when she was in the 70 kg category. “How cheeky,” I thought, and I decided that I had to do something about her. I came up with the idea of making her help me do my homework from the language school that I had left undone for some time.

When I suggested this, she argued back with a surprised look. However, it turned out that she was very good at explaining the English grammar and vocabulary to me. I felt that strong camaraderie had developed between us as we practiced judo together for many hours every day.

Gradually, I became busy with other engagements and was no longer able to secure much time to go to Dartford. Gemma was the only person who kept sending me messages: “what are you doing now?” and “when are you coming to Dartford next?”

Her words really made me happy. It was about six months after my arrival in the UK, and I was still struggling because of my poor English and the bad local food. When I heard from her, I could at least tell myself that, despite my difficulties elsewhere, I had done something well. During that difficult period, I was saved by Gemma’s messages, which I still have.

I said earlier that Gemma was in the 70 kg category, but at the London Olympics, she competed in the 78 kg category because she learned that there were more judoka stronger than her in the 70 kg category.

Because of this, during the pre-Olympic period, I observed her training by participating in the national camp, maintaining communication with her, and discussing her condition with coaches. Sometimes it was

Gemma who came to me for advice.

Gemma had built up great physical strength, and her movements had animal-like sharpness. So I thought that the kumite techniques that she had done up until then and intermittent uchi komi were not suitable. Gemma went to the Olympics after various types of training, including some of my pointers, that she had with her coach.

This photo shows Gemma when she defeated France’s Audrey Tcheumeo in the semi-final.



At that moment, she looked heavenward and said “I love you Mum” to her mother who died of cancer when Gemma was about 13. I had learned that after her mother’s death, Gemma lived alone and, with much hard work, became a judoka who could earn prize money. I had also learned that she had gone through difficult periods during which she could not participate in competitions due to injuries.

So when I was watching this match at the Olympic venue as a commentator, I became extremely excited, all the more so since I knew all this and the process in which she had changed from the 70 kg to 78 kg category and underwent strenuous training.

In the UK, judo is still a minor sport. Nevertheless, there were many British spectators who were cheering for her at the venue. Gemma did not take it as pressure but turned it into energy. When I saw this, I once again felt the greatness of the Olympics.

At Olympic Games, there are always Cinderella stories of athletes. I think that Gemma was also a Cinderella at the London Olympics. The next Olympics will be in Rio de Janeiro in 2016 and Tokyo in 2020. I hope that athletes like Gemma will emerge from Japan as well.

Needless to say, the best scenario would be that well-known strong athletes win gold medals as expected. Still, the scenario that athletes who have not seen the light of day are shot to fame in a moment of glory seems so typical of Olympic Games.

This photo of Gemma holding the medal was taken at the celebration party. When I was a competitive judoka, I was not much interested in other people's medals, but I was really happy for her and her medal. This experience made me realize that, now that I was not competing any more, my consciousness had changed and I had begun walking on a new path.

After the London Olympics, the judoka were supposed to start training for the world championships. In Gemma's case, she decided to marry her Scottish boyfriend Euan. So I was invited to her wedding party held in Scotland. This photo was taken with Gemma and her friends during the party.



I actually wanted to show you a photo of her wedding, but I cannot do so since Gemma signed a contract with the Hello magazine giving it the exclusive right to publish her wedding photos. She is really a beautiful person. At the wedding party, I had a great time, drinking and dancing with everyone. I am very glad that I have met her and become friends with her.

### Joy of teaching: Ray sensei's dice



Now let me go back to the topic of my life in

London. After I moved my base from the British national team's dojo to London, this martial arts club in the photo became my base.

It is a historic dojo that even Jigoro Kano sensei once visited. Tokai University's senseis also go there when they go to the UK to study.

The dojo is situated in South Kensington, a prime location in London, and many successful professionals such as lawyers and architects come here to practice. I was also able to meet such people through judo and have conversations with them on various subjects.



These four people in the photo are the club's instructors. The man on the far end is Peter sensei, the club owner, and the man in blue is Ray Stevens sensei, who won a silver medal in the Barcelona Olympic Games. The oldest man on the right is Tony Sweeney sensei, who completed in the Tokyo Olympics. They were all very interesting instructors.



The man who is being strangled in this photo is Mr. Mark Law, a journalist. He became my practice partner, but I did not do very strenuous practice with him. I would say that I was going along at his pace.

About this, Mr. Law said, "That's perfectly fine since you have already retired from competitions. But what about your English? You're still a blue belt in English. I shall teach you. E-mail me, and in exchange teach me judo."



Isn't he kind? So I used to contact him frequently and asked him to correct my compositions.

When I practiced with Mr. Law, the other teachers teased him, saying "Mark has excellent techniques only during uchi komi." Grandpa Tony described our practice as "good cooperation," sarcastically adding "Mark's uchi komi looks better with Maki's cooperation." This type of British jokes was also useful for improving my English.



Here is another photo taken at the same dojo. I am between Ray sensei and my friend Sandra, with whom I went to the fashion show. I said earlier that Sandra was from Hungary, but she currently lives in the UK for family reasons and competes in competitions as Ghanaian since she is married to a Ghanaian.

Sandra is a proactive woman who wrote directly to the International Judo Federation (IJF) to advertise herself. She wrote about her strengths and virtues to raise funds so that she could continue judo competitively. Her enthusiastic effort resulted in her participation in the Grand Slam Tokyo 2013. I had dinner with her while she was in Tokyo.

While Sandra is very proactive, as I have just said, she is also a little difficult as a person, and this has made it difficult for her to find a coach. So I ended up looking after her. However, when I advised her, for example, to practice at least for an hour each day or work out seriously for at least 30 minutes and participate in competitions regardless of levels, she always replied negatively, finding excuses in her busy schedule, university work and examinations. So I became quite lost about how to approach her. In this regard, that is, judo instruction in the UK, Ray sensei gave me a great piece of advice,

which I will discuss later.

This photo shows the memo that I made for Sandra. I explained, with drawings and instructions written in my poor English, how to do training to Sandra, who was always complaining about being busy.



As a general tendency, Hungarian judoka are strong in the upper body and weak in the lower body. So in this memo I recommended exercises to do to lower the center of gravity. I am not sure if this advice was useful for Sandra, although I do hope that it was even a little helpful.



This photo was taken with members of the martial arts club the day before my return to Japan. It may not be clear, but can you see that Ray sensei is holding a dice? I received this strange dice as a farewell gift. On this dice, instead of numbers, various messages are written in English, such as "Do it."

Ray sensei explained: "When you return to Japan, you will struggle over many matters for a while. When you can't decide what to do, throw this dice and find your way, starting from the message from the dice."

He gave me various pieces of useful advice. When I was asked to do a judo workshop, I wanted to convey the basics of judo in the first place. Then, a boy, probably a middle school student, said to me that he found the technique boring and useless and asked me to teach some interesting technique. When I instructed

students to bend and turn knees inward, they would reply without hesitation: “we’re not Japanese; we have long legs.” Sometimes I felt lost and did not know how to teach. There were periods that I struggled particularly hard.

During one of such periods, Ray sensei gave me a great piece of advice, as I mentioned earlier. He explained to me: “In the UK, we have received first-class Japanese judoka as instructors. We have all seen impressive techniques, such as Yamashita sensei’s osoto gari and Kosei Inoue sensei’s uchimata. Your students expect from you something like “magic words” that would teach them how to do those techniques. Of course, complex techniques are difficult to master, and the basics shouldn’t be overlooked. But teaching can be fun when you keep the “magic words” in mind.”

Since I believed that Ray sensei gave me this advice thinking that it would be useful for me, I thought about it hard. Then, he further suggested that I talk about how I shift from tachi-waza to ne-waza or what I do when my opponent makes a big move in a kenka yotsu situation. This led me to carefully analyze the way I use techniques.



This photo was taken during the workshop that I attended with a new teaching strategy that I had prepared based on Ray sensei’s advice. The workshop was a training camp held by the British Judo Council, an organization founded by a Japanese in the UK.



To this man in the photo, I taught sasae

tsurikomi ashi. After that, he took a grade promotion examination, and he won the match by using the technique. I was there watching it, thinking that it was a happy coincidence. Then, he came running to me and said, “I was finally able to do sasae tsurikomi ashi by following only one piece of advice from you, and I was struggling to do it for four years since I began judo. Thank you very much!” I was really happy to hear these words. Analyzing my own techniques and expressing them in English was difficult, but I felt really good about having tried very hard.

## Second chapter in life

Finally, I am showing you today’s last photo. This is a pub located in Fulham Road on the way to the martial arts club. The signboard indicates the happy direction to drinks and the other direction for boring people. This is another example of British humor.



I would like to believe that I have studied the English language and culture well enough to understand a joke like this. I have come this far, thanks to various experiences.

Living in the UK has also allowed me to become aware of the environment in Japan in which I have practiced judo.

In this connection, I strongly feel that collaboration between two judoka, one throwing a technique and the other receiving it, is extremely important in the process of improving judo techniques. One reason that the British judo does not progress rapidly is probably the shortage of judoka who are good at receiving techniques. Judoka throwing techniques can further improve their techniques only when they are received by

stronger and better-skilled opponents. Naturally, Japan has many excellent receivers. My stay in the UK has led me to think that the interaction between thrower and receiver could be at the core of technical improvement.

As for what is natural or taken for granted in Japan not being so abroad, as I mentioned in the beginning of my talk, I believe that my experience of living abroad has allowed me to be more open and accepting toward what is natural or taken for granted outside Japan. Also, while I continue to be interested in judo, I am now interested in martial arts and drawn to history and many other subjects.

In April 2014, I started my teaching career in a new environment. I hope to make a full use of what I learned from my experiences and encounters with people abroad in taking up this new challenge in this new chapter in my life. At the moment, I am learning “what education is” from professionals of education whom I have met in my new environment. I hope to further develop what I learned and felt during those two years in my future encounters.

People I met abroad often said “judo, more than a sport.” In the beginning, I did not sincerely agree with this phrase because character-building and discipline are also possible in baseball and other sports as well. For some people, football is ideal for character-building. Practicing judo does not necessarily lead to character-building. So I kept reflecting on the meaning of this phrase.

In such a situation, one professor specializing in martial arts whom I met in my new workplace said something decisive to me. I would like to save this for my next opportunity to talk to you. I hope that by that time I will be able to deepen my reflection on education, enrich my research experience, and tackle new challenges.

I am afraid that my talk was not easy to follow, with many photos and my clumsy way of speaking. I really appreciate your kind attention until the end. Thank you very much.

**MC:** Thank you very much, Ms. Tsukada. The cross-cultural exchange through judo and encounters with many people have led to many precious lessons and many friends that will be put to positive use in the future. Now we would like to have questions from the floor, although the time is limited.

**(Question)** Ms. Tsukada did not mention it, but last year the Japanese judo world was seriously troubled by problems of violence. I wonder how the British judo world and town dojo deal with violence. Do you have any impressive episodes to share with us?

**Maki Tsukada:** At one time, we were talking about nothing else in the UK as well. To be honest, some people who knew the situation in Japan well were wondering why it surfaced as a problem only then.

On the other hand, people who were well versed in issues of education and town dojo owners had a different reaction: they said, “Japan has also entered such an era” and added that “violence is unconceivable here in the UK.” We are in the era that parental corporal punishment can be a criminal offense.

Some teachers in town dojo in the UK said that they instruct students not with violence but by assigning penalties. For example, students who do not listen to instructions or arrive late for the practice are ordered to do push-ups or squats and are told why their behavior is problematic. I hope I have provided a satisfactory reply.

**MC:** This concludes the lecture meeting. Thank you very much.