



The Kano Society Bulletin



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Contents

- 2017 Kodokan Summer Course I – “Kata, Lecture and Others” by Martin Savage (author) & Llŷr Jones (editor);
- In Memoriam: Michael Woodhead (23 April 1939 – 15 August 2017) by Llŷr Jones (compiler);
- Richard Bowen Collection.

Editor's comment

We hope you enjoy this issue of The Bulletin which again has been produced by guest editor, Llŷr Jones.

In this edition

We present a diary-style article written by Martin Savage, and edited by Llŷr Jones, that recounts Martin's personal experience at the recent Kodokan Summer Course I.

As well as relating the eight-days of the Kodokan Course, the article tells Martin's own story in trying to fulfil his long-held goal of obtaining a kata competency certificate from judo's highest technical authority.

It is with great sadness that we also report the death of Michael (Mick/Mike) Woodhead - a judoka of sublime skill, and one of the last of an ever-diminishing breed of “judomen”, who live out their life “the budo way”. A long-term resident of Japan, Mick died in Tokyo on 15 August 2017. Our condolences go out to all whose life he touched.

Contributions

The backbone of the Kano Society's activities is this on-line publication. We welcome contributions articles or photographs etc. to The Bulletin.

Regards Diana Birch

2017 Kodokan Summer Course I – “Kata, Lecture and Others”

Martin Savage (author) & Llŷr Jones (editor)

Introduction

The 2017 Kodokan Summer Course I – “Kata, Lecture and Others” was held at the Kodokan, Tokyo from 14 to 21 July. Its purpose was to broaden high-dan holders' education and to improve their quality through lessons mainly in kata [forms].

Day 1: Nage-no-kata [Forms of Throwing] – Motonari Sameshima, 8th dan

After the official rei [bow] to Kano-shihan and to each of the sensei [teachers] as they were introduced individually (Figure 1), there was an extensive taiso [warm up]. This was replicated each morning and afternoon, with the content of the warmup depending on the requirements of the kata being studied that day.



Figure 1: Opening – 2017 Kodokan Summer Course I

The introduction also explained how this year's eight-day course was structured differently to previous years, in that it was now divided into two separate parts – A and B, with kata demonstrations for proficiency certificates at the end of each four-day part. Students had elected to attend one or both parts, with participants in both A and B receiving a Completion Certificate for more than 7 days' attendance, and those in either A or B receiving an Attendance Certificate for 4 days' attendance.

Furthermore, Sameshima-sensei emphasised that because of the extreme weather conditions in Tokyo, in terms of heat and humidity, participants were to take the opportunity to rehydrate whenever they wanted, and not to wait for formal breaks. A comprehensive introduction was followed by a superb demonstration of the entire Nage-no-kata by the Japanese Champions, and then Sameshima-sensei proceeded to explaining the finer points.

He began with the rei and mentioned that it takes about 4 seconds to complete the tachi rei and za rei [standing and kneeling bows]. Ukemi [breakfalls] were then taught although because of space limitations most of the kata was practised in uchikomi [repetition] form. The importance of tsurite [collar hand] was emphasised, and how it was more important than hikite [sleeve hand] by showing that with certain throws it was possible to throw with tsurite alone but not with just hikite.

Recall that in controlled judo practice Tori and Uke are the individuals who apply and receive a technique, respectively. In terms of the technical teaching points associated with various waza [techniques] within Nage-no-kata, Sameshima-sensei emphasised the following:

- **Uki-goshi [Floating hip throw]:** The importance of dropping the shoulder in *Uki-goshi* to (i) avoid the *atemi* [blow], (ii) get the arm around *Uke*'s waist and (iii) generate power (Figure 2).



Figure 2: *Nage-no-kata* instruction

- **Harai-goshi [Sweeping hip throw]:** *Tori*'s leg is not swept from front to rear, but more out to the side and away from his body.
- **Uchi-mata [Inner thigh throw]:** *Uke*'s body goes through a horizontal roll as opposed to the vertical one seen in *randori* and *shiai*. This was practised in the *kyoshi* [high kneeling] posture, with *Tori* attacking *Uke*'s upright leg.
- **Tomoe-nage, Sumi-gaeshi, Uki-waza [Circular throw, Corner throw, Floating throw]:** There is no longer a delay/pause in these techniques. Previously, *Tori* would hang onto *Uke* for a while before throwing him.
- **Ura-nage [Back throw]:** The major point was that *Tori* doesn't throw *Uke* through an arc from the ground, but lifts him vertically first, and then projects him through an arc to the ground.
- **Yoko-gake [Side hook]:** *Tori*'s hands work like they do in *Ko-soto-gari* and *Ko-uchi-gari*. This reinforces an important point to always make when teaching *kata* – *i.e.* that the techniques are representative, and contain principles which can be applied to other *waza*, some of which are not in the *kata*. For example, there are no throws to the rear in *Nage-no-kata*, but in *Yoko-gake* the principle of the hand action is applicable to the two rear throws mentioned.

Day 2: *Katame-no-kata* [Forms of Grappling or Holding] – Michio Fukushima, 8th dan

This session contained little new technical information. However, the differences between the International Judo Federation, IJF, and *Kodokan*'s attitudes to *kata* were highlighted. Specifically, the IJF want to prescribe and standardise *Tori*'s responses to *Uke*'s escape attempts (to make judging organised *kata* competitions easier), whereas the *Kodokan* are content with any response that is logical and in accordance with the principles of *judo* (so that it is more useful in everyday training).

One episode of interest occurred during the *mondo* [question and answers]¹ when Yoshihiko Iura *Kodokan* 8th dan

¹ Kano-shihan defined four elements to *judo* instruction – (i) *kata*, (ii) *randori* [free practice], (iii) *kogi* [lectures], and (iv) *mondo*.

now resident in Iceland asked Fukushima-sensei about “head direction” during *Kami-shiho-gatame* [Top four-corner hold]. During previous *mondo* the questions had been answered directly by the *sensei* in charge, and with Fukushima-sensei this was no different until this question arose. Immediately there was some debate among the more junior teachers and it was one of them who fielded the question. It was unclear why this was the case, but perhaps it can be speculated that because the question came from another *Kodokan* 8th dan holder, they didn't want to risk too much open challenge and potential embarrassment to two such senior *judoka*.



Figure 3: *Katame-no-kata* instruction

This day was more strenuous than the previous one because whereas *Nage-no-kata* training was mostly done as *uchikomi*, *Katame-no-kata* was very intensive.

Day 3: *Ju-no-kata* [Forms of Gentleness or Flexibility] – Takashi Ogata, 8th dan

The morning's instruction began with an explanation of the history of *Ju-no-kata*, including the reasons why Kano-shihan devised the exercise.

- It can be freely practised anytime and anywhere – even in everyday clothes.
- It fulfils the purpose of physical education.
- It exercises the extensor muscles in the backwards leaning movements.
- It is easy to understand the *riai* [underlying principles / theory] because it is practised slowly and with moderate actions for attack and defence.
- It enables anyone of any age to enjoy learning *judo*.
- It is possible to prevent injury in normal practice if one practices *judo* following the principle in *Ju-no-kata*.

It was also suggested that perhaps *Ju-no-kata* should be the first *kata* taught to instil its principles into students from an early stage.

This was followed by a fabulous demonstration from the two Japanese Champions (Figure 4), and then some general instruction from Ogata-sensei (Figure 5).



Figure 4: Ju-no-kata demonstration



Figure 5: Ju-no-kata instruction (1)

The group was then split into those knowledgeable of the *kata* and those who were not. The author (MS) opted for the latter group where the teaching was led by Sameshima-sensei in his usual efficient, knowledgeable and humorous manner (Figure 6). The group received some basic but precise instruction which provided both detail and clarity.



Figure 6: Ju-no-kata instruction (2)

As to the technical points linked with various *waza* within *Ju-no-kata*, Sameshima-sensei explained the following:

- **Tsuki-dashi [Hand Thrust]:** While *Tori* and *Uke* are escaping they do not return to the upright posture.
- **Ago-oshi [Jaw Push]:** When *Tori* breaks *Uke*'s posture, *Uke* shouldn't lean back too much.

- **Mune-oshi [Chest Push]:** *Tori* doesn't grip *Uke*'s wrist with his fingers closed.
- **Seoinage [Back carry], Makikomi [Wrap around] or Koshi-waza [Hip technique] movements:** For the many sequences ending with these techniques, the angle which *Uke* makes on *Tori*'s hip or back was specified as being between 30° and 60°, and no more. This contrasts to the *de facto* standard in IJF *kata* competitions, where efforts to achieve a near vertical position are made.
- **Katate-dori [One-Hand Hold], Obi-tori [Belt Grab], Ryogan-tsuki [Strike to Both Eyes]:** The *koshi-waza* [hip technique] that concludes these sequences has always been a matter of debate as to whether it is *Uki-goshi* or *O-goshi* [Major hip throw]. It was clarified that the *koshi-waza* starts as *Uki-goshi* but finishes as *O-goshi*, however it was not explained why it was simply not *O-goshi* from the start. It can be speculated perhaps that this is because *Uki-goshi* was Kano-shihan's favourite *waza*.

Day 4: Morning – Kogi [Lecture] and Kappo [Resuscitation Techniques] – Motonari Sameshima, 8th dan; Afternoon – Part A Kata Demonstrations

Sameshima-sensei's lecture (Figure 7) was entitled "Let's Improve Judo More" and covered:

- The concept of *Shu-Ha-Ri* [Protect-Break-Separate] as the stages of learning to mastery.
- Education as being the essence of *judo*.
- How the purpose of *judo* is the formation of human character.



Figure 7: Lecture

Significant time was also spent discussing *shiai* [contest] rules – including an explanation of some of the ways in which *Kodokan* rules differ from the IJF's. Sameshima-sensei also made a particularly insightful point, which would resonate with most traditionally orientated *judoka* [*judo* practitioners] – "Kodokan rules are designed for the competitors, IJF rules are designed for the audience".

He also stated that when children do *ukemi* in *shiai*, *ippon* [full point] should not be awarded just because they beat the *tatami* [mat] – the technique must merit *ippon* according to all the criteria. The difficulty of evaluating *kata* "by points"

i.e. using mistake-based marking systems was also mentioned. It was opined that loyalty to the underlying principles of the technique was always the most important factor.

Next came a lecture on *ochi* [unconsciousness] from *shime-waza* [choking techniques], its risks and the meaning of *kappo* [resuscitation techniques] with its application and methods. The physiological effects of *shime-waza* and *kappo* were discussed also in detail, before a practical demonstration of *kappo* methods was provided (Figure 8).



Figure 8: *Kappo* instruction

While in Japan, *kappo* is commonly used in response to *ochi* in *shiai*, the question remains where Western *judo* teachers would stand legally, were they to use *kappo* instead of recognised CPR [Cardiopulmonary resuscitation] methods, and it was unsuccessful in resuscitating the unconscious *judoka*.

The afternoon session involved examinations for those candidates seeking certification in the Part A *kata* – namely *Nage-no-kata*, *Katame-no-kata* and *Ju-no-kata*. The session was of interest to the author (MS) and Paul Brady, his *kata* partner, to form a view on the standard required to successfully pass.



Figure 9: Part A *kata* demonstrations

Not everyone entered the examinations, but the technical standard of those that did was high – particularly as each *judoka* was expected to adopt the roles of both *Tori* and *Uke*. The notion that *judo kata* is just a superficial theatrical demonstration was nullified when *Tori* from the Republic of Korea pair in *Katame-no-kata* spiritedly applied the *Ashigarami* [Entangled leglock] at the very end of the *kata* – injuring *Uke*'s leg in the process.

Day 5: *Kime-no-kata* [Forms of Decisive Techniques] – Tadashi Sato, 8th dan

Sato-sensei began the session with a very detailed demonstration on how to carry, place and pick up the weapons. The *kashira* [butt] of the *tanto* [knife] to be in line with guard [*tsuba*] of the *bokken* [wooden training sword]. The *tanto* is positioned on the inside *i.e.* closest to *Uke* because it's a more personal weapon and both weapons should have the edge of the blades facing up. When positioning them there should be one fist width between them.

Another issue which was covered in detail was whether *Tori* and *Uke*'s toes should be up or down in various techniques. Sato-sensei spent quite a bit of time making sure everyone was clear about how this related to each technique.

As to some technical points associated with *Kime-no-kata*, Sato-sensei clarified that in:

- ***Idori* [Kneeling]:** When doing *Ryote-dori* [Two-hand hold] it is permissible for *Tori* to withdraw his left knee a little to create enough space to kick *Uke*.
- ***Tachiai* [Standing]:** During *Ushiro-dori* [Hold from behind], it is now allowable for *Tori* to throw *Uke* with both feet in-line, whereas previously his right leg was back.



Figure 10: *Kime-no-kata* instruction

Day 6: *Kodokan Goshinjutsu* [Kodokan Self-defence] – Shiro Yamamoto, 9th dan

This session was presided over by Yamamoto-sensei (Figure 11) but most of the instruction was done by Shinro Fujita, 8th dan (Figure 12). Once again, the teaching was precluded by a superb demonstration from the Japanese Champions.



Figure 11: *Kodokan Goshinjutsu* instruction (1)



Figure 12: Kodokan Goshinjutsu instruction (2)

As to the technical points linked with various *waza* within *Kodokan Goshinjutsu*, Fujita-sensei explained the following:

- **Weapons Handling:** It was again stressed that when handling the weapons there should be one fist width between them. Note however, in practice this leaves the *kenju* [pistol] quite a distance away from *Tori*. Also, in relation to the *tanto* and *kenju* it is important that when in *Uke*'s jacket they should not be visible.
- **Kuzushi [balance breaking]:** This was emphasised strongly, particularly with the pull on the lapel in *Hidari eri-dori* [Left-lapel hold] and the use of the *Tori*'s left arm in *Ushiro-eri-dori* [Collar hold from behind].
- **General points:** Good posture, genuine *atemi* [blows] and *kiai* [shout] were stressed as well as the rhythm of the exercise, in that some sequences were to be done quickly and others more slowly.
- **Hidari-eri-dori [Left-lapel hold]:** The *atemi* in this sequence is with done with the back of the hand, and directed towards the front of *Uke*'s face.
- **Migi-eri-dori [Right-lapel hold]:** The uppercut to *Uke*'s chin in this technique is not for breaking his balance to the rear (in contradiction the throw *kote-gaeshi* [wrist reversal] which is to the front). It was explained that the *atemi* are only distractions, and not really unbalancing techniques.
- **Tsukkake [Thrust]:** In this sequence *Tori* should push *Uke*'s arm upward towards his (*Uke*'s) ear and twist it to get a reaction before pulling *Uke* down.
- **Choku-tsuki [Straight thrust]:** When *Tori* is evading the knife he takes a step with his left foot forward to his diagonal left.
- **Furi-oroshi [Downswing]:** *Tori* strikes with *uraken* [back fist] and then *te-gatana* [hand sword], before continuing to push *Uke* with the *te-gatana* and gripping the staff (Figure 13).
- **Morote-tsuki [Two-hand thrust]:** *Tori* only takes one step to throw *Uke* once he locks his elbow.



Figure 13: Kodokan Goshinjutsu demonstration – *Furi-oroshi*

After each session volunteers were sought to demonstrate their *kata*, and the author (MS) and Paul Brady took the opportunity to practice in front of the *sensei* and receive feedback. The advice received was that some of the sequences should be speeded up, but others required slowing down. However, no more detail on these points was provided, so a detailed study of the personally-made recording of the Japanese Champions, from earlier, was necessary to try and see exactly what was required in terms of rhythm.



Figure 14: Kodokan Goshinjutsu practice – Martin Savage (*Tori*) and Paul Brady (*Uke*)

Day 7: *Koshiki-no-kata* [Antique Forms] – Toshiro Daigo, 10th dan

Daigo-sensei, now 91 years old, was for many years the Chief Instructor at the *Kodokan*. He is arguably the world's foremost *kata* expert. Given his advanced age Daigo-sensei (Figure 15) remained seated for both the morning and afternoon sessions, and despite looking somewhat physically frail he displayed his still strong spirit and mind by speaking strongly and passionately on his favourite *kata* in detail for five hours.

For those with prior knowledge of *Koshiki-no-kata* it was a superlative masterclass, however the relatively uninitiated,

(like the author, MS) might have struggled to absorb all the information. The depth of the instruction was such that by the end of the morning session only four of the 21 techniques in the *kata* had been covered, and while some might have preferred to have had a less detailed overview, the rare opportunity to listen to, and learn from, a Kodokan 10th dan holder, who has dedicated a significant portion of his life to studying this *kata* was very much appreciated by all.



Figure 15: *Koshiki-no-kata* instruction

The session began with a demonstration by a 78-year-old *Tori* and a 71-year-old *Uke*, testament to the adage of “*Judo* is for life”. An interesting touch was the introduction of a *judoka* in 20 kg *yoroi* [Japanese armour] to show how *Koshiki-no-kata* is based on the throwing techniques executed by armour-clad warriors on the battlefield in feudal times (Figure 16).



Figure 16: *Koshiki-no-kata* in *yoroi*

Koshiki-no-kata is a technically challenging exercise rooted in *Kito-ryu* [School of Rise and Fall] *koryu* [traditional (or old) school] *jujutsu* [flexible art] – one of the two main styles of *jujutsu* studied by *Kano-shihan*, and which inspired his *Kodokan Judo*.

**Day 8: Morning – *Itsutsu-no-kata* [Forms of “Five”]
Saburo Matsushita, 9th dan;
Afternoon – Part B *Kata* Demonstrations**

This *kata* expresses the mechanism of attack and defence in an elevated way, and consists of five sequences of movements that aesthetically reflect the power of nature.



Figure 17: *Itsutsu-no-kata* instruction

Despite its superficially deceptive technical simplicity, and the fact that it only has five sequences (hence the name), *Itsutsu-no-kata* is a high-level *kata* which requires a deep understanding of *judo* to fully absorb its lessons.

Itsutsu-no-kata was placed in *Kodokan Judo* from *Tenjin Shin'yo-ryu* [Divine True Willow School] *koryu jujutsu* – the other main style of *jujutsu* studied by *Kano-shihan*. In the *koryu* it is known as *Gohon Kuden* [Five oral transmissions], and it should be noted that there are slight differences between it and the *Kodokan* version.

The *kata* was demonstrated and the *riai* and the meaning of each of the five sequences were highlighted.

- ***Ippon-me* [Number One]:** This shows how strength can be used in *judo* where even a small power can easily overcome a huge power by attacking rationally and uninterruptedly. For example, by pushing from a firm base, or like constantly dripping water wearing a hole in a stone.
- ***Nihon-me* [Number Two]:** This represents the reasoning how one can directly take advantage of a mighty attack to overcome it. For example, by taking advantage of an

opponent's attack and overcoming it using his energy with no resistance.

- **Sanbon-me [Number Three]:** This represents two bodies turning. They approach each other loosely but without colliding. It can also represent how an inner circle of whirling current can overcome its outer circle.
- **Yonhon-me [Number Four]:** This represents the use of energy such as by the backwash of a big wave. Small waves become big waves which surge towards the shore and retreat after washing away everything in their path like a "Tsunami".
- **Gohon-me [Number Five]:** This illustrates two masses on collision course, and how they escape out of danger with one avoiding downwards and the other upwards, thereby representing *Jita-Kyoei* [Mutual Prosperity].

Part B Kata Demonstrations – A Personal Perspective by Martin Savage

Being an active participant in all eight days of this course was a personal challenge for me. It had been my ambition for many years, but with an ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) tear causing arthritis which required a total knee replacement, and back problems as well, I thought my chance had long past. Eighteen months on from very successful knee surgery, but still with the back issues, I decided that nothing was going to be any better than it is now, and possibly by next year my mobility could be worse. I therefore talked my training partner, Paul Brady, into spending his summer holiday with me at the Kodokan.

certificate, from the highest possible authority on traditional *Kodokan Judo*, would require demonstrating the selected *kata* as both *Tori* and *Uke* (Figure 18). My *kata* of choice was *Kodokan Goshinjutsu*, and we had done it many times with me as *Tori*, but never with the roles reversed. This presented difficulties in two areas. First, I now live in France and Paul is in Ireland, and secondly, back injuries make *ukemi* awkward for me.

The test is done on one of the four areas in the *Kodokan Dai Dojo* [main training hall], in front of a three-person panel of *kodansha* [high grades]. Our panel was led by Koji Komata, 8th dan, who is *Uke* in the *Kodokan's* own *Kodokan Goshinjutsu* teaching film. We were therefore under expert scrutiny. To create a good initial impression with the judges we decided that we would perform our first demonstration with us in our familiar roles. We took on-board the advice given to us during our practice run, and gave a satisfactory demonstration. Our second demonstration was correct if not polished but we were content that, given everything, we had done our best.

We had quite a wait until all demonstrations were completed, but finally everyone was asked to line up and the names of the successful *judoka* were called out. Halfway through the *Kodokan Goshinjutsu* group we heard our names called – and we had obtained a *Shutoku-sho* [Certificate of Great Technical Progress] (Figures 19 and 20). This really was the icing on an already delicious cake. With the quantity and quality of teaching we had received, we would have been happy with just having completed the course, but to come home with *Kodokan* certification for this *kata* was a dream come true. We also received Completion Certificates for perfect attendance on both Courses A and B (Figure 21).

第4試合場
Mat 4
「講道館護身術」Kodokan Goshin-jutsu

順番	Tori / Uke	番号	段位	氏名	国 County	成績
①	取 Tori	1	三段	アーネスト ワカマツ Ernest WAKAMATSU	AUS	
	受 Uke	2	オーストラリア 弐段	マイケル グリフィス Michael GRIFFITHS	AUS	
②	取 Tori	3	ドイツ 七段	ヴォルフガング ダックスロムスウィンケル Wolfgang DAX-ROMSWINKEL	GER	
	受 Uke	4	ドイツ 四段	セバスタン ベルグマン Sebastian BERGMANN	GER	
③	取 Tori	2	オーストラリア 弐段	マイケル グリフィス Michael GRIFFITHS	AUS	
	受 Uke	1	三段	アーネスト ワカマツ Ernest WAKAMATSU	AUS	
④	取 Tori	4	ドイツ 四段	セバスタン ベルグマン Sebastian BERGMANN	GER	
	受 Uke	3	ドイツ 七段	ヴォルフガング ダックスロムスウィンケル Wolfgang DAX-ROMSWINKEL	GER	
⑤	取 Tori	5	イギリス 四段	マーティン サヴァージ Martin SAVAGE	GBR	
	受 Uke	6	イギリス 四段	ポール ブラディ Paul BRADY	GBR	
⑥	取 Tori	7	フィンランド 弐段	ヨハンナ シヴネン Johanna SIVUNEN	FIN	
	受 Uke	8	フィンランド 弐段	アンティ ヘイネン Antti HEINONEN	FIN	
⑦	取 Tori	9	オランダ 五段	コル ファンデル ハイデン Cornelis HEIJDEN	NED	
	受 Uke	10	オランダ 五段	ヘンリック マークグラフ Henricus MARKGRAAFF	NED	
⑧	取 Tori	6	イギリス 四段	ポール ブラディ Paul BRADY	GBR	
	受 Uke	5	イギリス 四段	マーティン サヴァージ Martin SAVAGE	GBR	
⑨	取 Tori	8	フィンランド 弐段	アンティ ヘイネン Antti HEINONEN	FIN	
	受 Uke	7	フィンランド 弐段	ヨハンナ シヴネン Johanna SIVUNEN	FIN	
⑩	取 Tori	10	オランダ 五段	ヘンリック マークグラフ Henricus MARKGRAAFF	NED	
	受 Uke	9	オランダ 五段	コル ファンデル ハイデン Cornelis HEIJDEN	NED	

Figure 18: Demonstration schedule for Kodokan Goshinjutsu

However, I was determined to also try and get a *Kodokan* proficiency certificate in an individual *kata*, as recognition of my reaching a certain technical standard. To receive such a



Figure 19: Paul Brady and Martin Savage – Shutoku-sho certificate holders in Kodokan Goshinjutsu

I cannot recommend this course enough for anyone who can get to the *Kodokan*. You can practise at your own level, and are constantly reminded to "take care of yourselves". The *Kodokan* is not the formidable and intimidating place it perhaps once was – this was truly a friendly and educative experience.

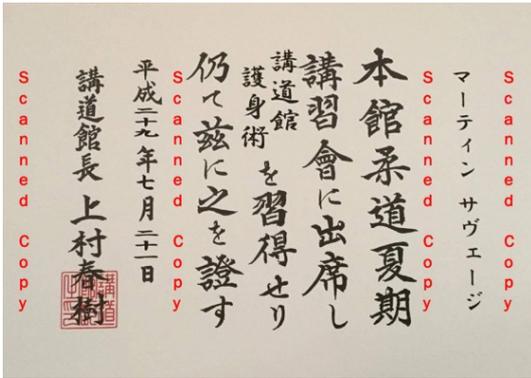


Figure 20: Martin Savage's *Shutoku-sho* [Certificate of Great Technical Progress] in *Kodokan Goshinjutsu*



Figure 21: Martin Savage's Completion Certificate for perfect attendance on both Parts A and B of Summer Course I

Acknowledgements

Figure 1-3, 5, 7-9, 11-12, 15 and 17 are reproduced with the kind permission of the *Kodokan Judo* Institute, a public interest incorporated foundation.

About the Author

Martin Savage has some 50 years of involvement in *judo*. A Senior *Kata* Examiner for the British *Judo* Association, he is a ten-time British Champion in multiple *kata*, and represented Great Britain at World and Continental-level *Kata* Championships from 2005 to 2011. In 2017 Martin was certified proficient in *Kodokan Goshinjutsu* by the *Kodokan*.

Now resident in France, Martin continues to enthusiastically promote *kata* – teaching, examining and attending various master classes to further his own knowledge.

In Memoriam: Michael Woodhead (23 April 1939 – 15 August 2017) Llyŷ Jones (compiler)

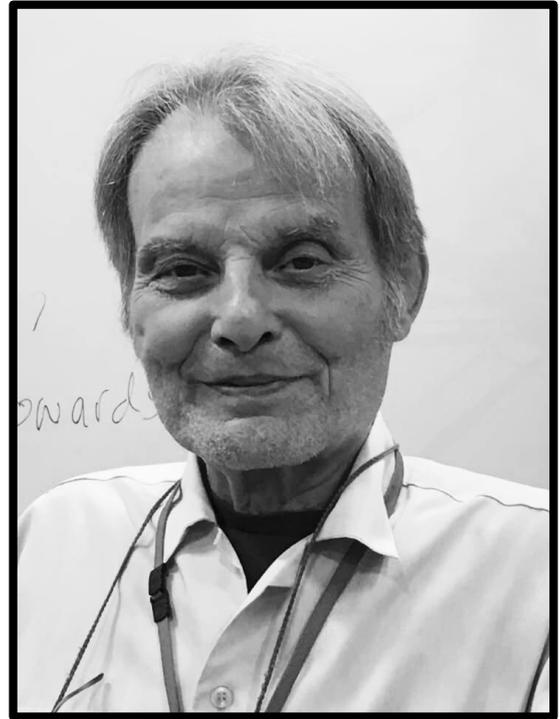


Figure 1: Michael Woodhead (1939-2017)

Sad news from Tokyo has reached The Society – specifically the passing, early on 15 August 2017, of Michael Woodhead (aka Mick/Mike Woodhead and/or Mick/Mike Williams Woodhead). His death, at the age of 78, from prostate cancer, was after a short period of hospitalisation.

Born on 23 April 1939, Mick is universally remembered as a sublimely skilful *judoka* [practitioner of *judo*], with elegant and correct technique underpinned by highly effective *kuzushi*. His *tai-otoshi* [body drop throw] is recalled by many as being unstoppable, with his *waki-gatame* [armpit lock] also being equally successful. In his prime, he was about 1.78 m tall, and lightly built. He retained a lantern jaw and the physique of a twenty-year old soldier well into his seventies.

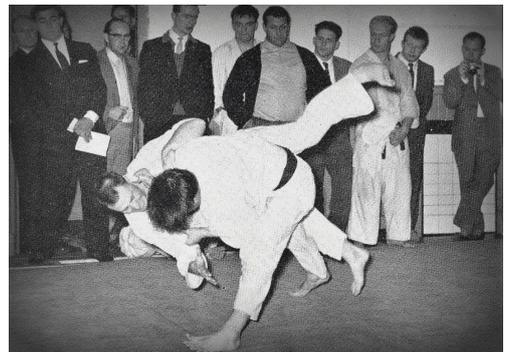


Figure 2: Mick Woodhead throwing Ray Wood during the British Selections held at the *Budokwai* in 1961

Prior to moving to Japan, Mick Woodhead worked his way-up through the *judo* grades around 1955 and 1956. The grading results published in the April 1957 issue of the magazine, "*Judo*", contains the entry "Islington Judo Club, 4 March 1957, by NGP (National Grading Panel) – Woodhead, M. 1st Kyu".

Woodhead subsequently obtained his 1st *dan* in September 1957 at the *Budokwai*, where he featured in the promotion list as M. S. Woodhead. In 1958, his name appeared quite often as the promotions examiner at several clubs. At one time a window dresser at Harrods, it is known that Mick joined the RAF (Royal Air Force) on 15 December 1958, for his National Service – serving at RAF Cardington in Bedfordshire. John Bowen also recalls him wearing his RAF greatcoat in Japan.

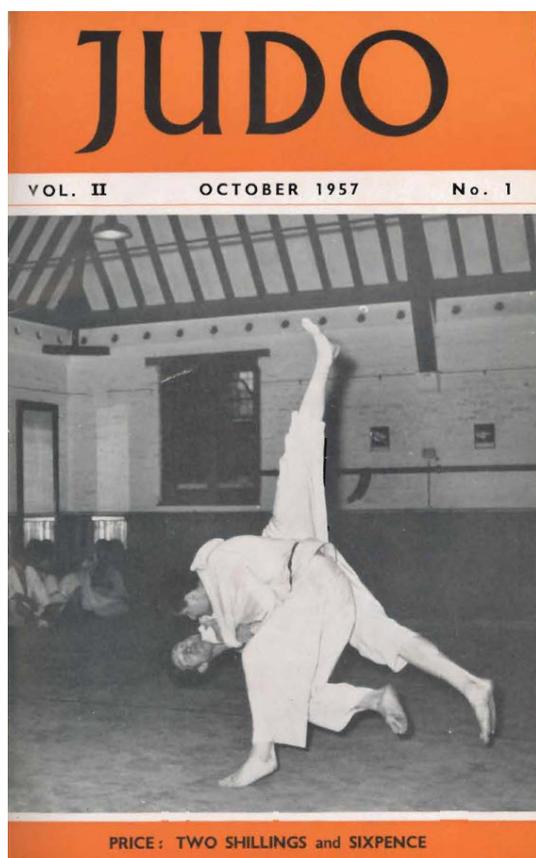


Figure 3: Cover of the October 1957 issue of "*Judo*" magazine – showing Mick Woodhead 1st *dan* scoring with *tai-otoshi* during British team eliminations held at the *Budokwai* in September 1957

Mick, who regarded 1964 Tokyo Olympian, Syd Hoare as his mentor, was a former Great Britain (GB) international, and J. Bowen recalls that in one set of elimination contents, held at the *Budokwai* in the 1960s, there was a contest between Woodhead and the much larger Alan Petherbridge (1962 European Gold Medallist and Tokyo 1964 Olympian). It started, and Mick pulled Petherbridge forwards once, twice, then attacked with *tai-otoshi*. Petherbridge flew up in the air, with his feet describing a huge high arc. *Ippon* [full point]! Bowen recalls that afterwards, Petherbridge said he didn't feel a thing.



The British contingent standing outside the stadium. From left to right: A. Sweeney, R. Ross, M. Woodhead, J. McWade, J. Capes, N. Lewis, V. Maynard, J. Ryan.

Figure 4: European Judo Championships 1961, Milan, Italy, from "*Judo*" magazine, July 1961

Woodhead had resided in Japan for over 50 years, and had studied deeply *Ju-no-kata* [Forms of Gentleness or Flexibility] and *Go-no-kata* [Forms of Proper Use of Force] with Toshiyasu Ochiai, *Kodokan* 8th *dan*, at the Bunkyo-ku Sogo Taiikukan. He was also a very staunch follower of Kyuzo Mifune's personal *Gokyo* [Five sets of techniques]. Most recently he lived in Mitaka, Tama, Tokyo, where he had all the old *Kodokan* manuals dating back to the 1950s. Steve Delaney specifically remembers that in one discussion he called *Kime-no-kata* – "*Shinken-shobu-no-kata*" [Form of Real Fighting] and showed him the texts from his youth when he learned it, and it was 真剣勝負の形.

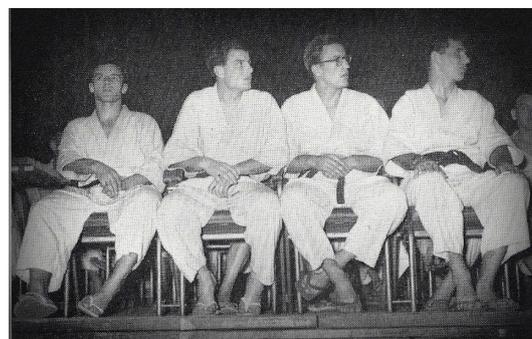


Figure 5: Mick Woodhead, second from the left

Mick Woodhead was a *Kodokan kodansha* [high grade] and went on the mat as a *godan* [5th *dan*] for over 20 years. He joined the *Kodokan* on 8 January 1960, and his promotion record with the Institute was: 1st *dan* - 10 January 1960, 3rd *dan* - 25 January 1962 (he skipped 2nd *dan*), 4th *dan* in 10 January 1965 and 5th *dan*, his final promotion, - 12 August 1992. Tom Hayton recalls that when he was out in Japan (2001-2003), Mick, a well-established 5th *dan*, was gathering contest promotion points for his 6th *dan*. He had already massively overshoot the points requirements for 6th *dan*, but felt he wanted to keep going – as he seemed to feel it necessary to prove (to himself, if nobody else) that he was worthy of 6th *dan*. Hayton recalls seeing him at one of the promotion events, throwing his opponents for massive *ippon* scores.

As well as judo, Mick was involved with *koryu* [traditional (or old) school] *jujutsu* [flexible art, "the old samurai art of fighting without weapons] – studying *Tenjin Shin'yo-*

ryu under the late Toshihiro Kubota-*shihan* where he learned the first 32 techniques of the school – *Te-Hodoki* [Hand releases], *Shodan Idori* [First step kneeling] and *Shodan Tachiai* [First step standing] and received *Shoden Kirigami menjo* [First licence of transmission]. He was a kindly and helpful man, with high standards, who was known to be severe on those who showed a lack of manners or respect in their conduct. Llyr Jones remembers that when he moved to live in Japan in 1992, Woodhead was the first non-Japanese *judoka* he met at the *Kodokan*. He recalls Mick being very supportive in “showing him the ropes”.



Figure 6: December 2001 at the Bunkyo-ku Sogo Taiikukan, where Toshiyasu Ochiai's *judo* group and Toshihiro Kubota's *Tenjin Shin'yo-ryu* group (the *Tenyokai*) shared the *tatami* and trained together. M. Woodhead is in the front row – fifth from the left

A man who travelled very much to the beat of his own drum, Mick nearly always wore *samue* (the work wear of Japanese Zen Buddhist monks), having eschewed Western clothing for the most part – unless it was a formal event or meeting. His *judogi* was of traditional design and natural coloured (*i.e.* not the heavyweight, ungraspable, bleached ultra-white modern variant) and he used to leave it hanging in his locker at the *Kodokan*, and take it to practice in Bunkyo-ku too. Many of the Japanese people around him called him *Williams-san*, as he added Williams as his middle name, after his mother, a few years ago.

Mick Woodhead had an intense dislike for modern power-based *judo* and was a *budoka* [practitioner of a martial way] and *judoka* to his core. He had a great love for *judo*, Japan and their traditions. Larry Ralph remembers him as one of GB's finest ever *judoka*. May he rest well.

Acknowledgements

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The Richard Bowen Collection



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In 1949, Richard Bowen began judo training in London at the Budokwai, of which became Vice-President. He lived in Japan for four years to deepen his studies. A former British International, he fought in the first ever World *Judo* Championships in Japan in 1956. He was the author of more than eighty articles. Richard Bowen built up an extensive judo Library in the course of research for his articles and books, and he kindly donated it to the University of Bath Library. Items in the collection are for reference use only (not available for loan). Items can be viewed between 9am-5pm. If you would like to look at an item from The Richard Bowen Collection, please contact the Subject Librarian, Peter Bradley. +44 1225 384784