The Budokwai Centenary Celebratory Dinner
By John Pinnell.  Photographs by David Finch

On Saturday 26 January 1918, as the First World War was gradually drawing to its’ end, The Budokwai – or in full, The Budokwai (The Way of Knighthood Society) was opened by Gunji Koizumi (GK), and by the end of the first year had some 54 members, mostly drawn from the Japanese community in London.  A hundred years on, the time arose to reflect on the role the club and its’ members have played in the history of judo.

To celebrate The Budokwai’s centenary, a dinner was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, situated right between two of London’s most fashionable areas – South Kensington and Knightsbridge, and opposite the Victoria and Albert museum.  The event proved such an attraction that the main room capable of holding 180 people was fully sold out and also the adjoining suite.  A number of eminent Japanese guests were present, several of whom had travelled specifically to the United Kingdom (UK) for the centenary.  Most notable among these was Kisaburo Watanabe, a former Asian Games judo champion, and who placed third in 1959 All Japan Judo Championships.  Watanabe-sensei was resident instructor at the club in the 1960s and was responsible for laying much of the foundation that made British judo successful at that time, and onwards into the 1970s.  Sadly, the links to those early days are few, but one notable connection was the attendance by Hana Sekine, GK’s daughter, who went on to marry Percy Sekine, who ran the successful Judokan at Hammersmith until the expiration of its lease in 2004.

The event also drew a number of distinguished former members, now resident overseas.  These included John Bowen, brother of Dicky (former Budokwai Vice President), and now a Tokyo resident, as well as Olympians such as Brian Jacks (Thailand) and Angelo Parisi (France).  Other Olympians present included Alan Petherbridge, Neil Adams, Ray Stevens, Chris Bowles, and Tony Sweeney.  Also present was Christine Gallie (née Child) who was one of the country’s most successful female international players but was at her peak prior to women’s judo being included in the Olympics or World Championships.
Christine’s achievements should not be forgotten - she was a double European Champion (1974 and 1975) and was truly a trail blazer for women’s competitive judo in the UK.

Whilst the national governing body now see national training centres as the way of producing top competitors, we should remember that this has not always been the case. In the 1960s through to the early 1990s The Budokwai a genuine the centre of national excellence and responsible for producing many of the country’s top players or assisting them in taking that next step up the ladder. This was made possible due to the quality of coaching available, often guest instructors from Japan, or by providing the quality of players for randori [free practice] that they needed to practice with if they were to become world class competitors.

At one stage The Budokwai was synonymous with British judo, as players from the club set up their own affiliated clubs, and also took the lead in administration at a national level. The late Charles Palmer, was one such key individual. A leading competitor and captain of the British team in the 1950s he went on to become an instructor and president of The Budokwai. However, his impact can be more clearly seen on the world stage, for many years he was Chairman of the British Judo Association (BJA), he was also a chairman of the British Olympics Association (BOA), the first non-Japanese president of the International Judo Federation (IJF) and the first British recipient of grade of 10th dan.

The evening proved to be very successful. Many attendees having a long history in judo as players, and later often as coaches and as administrators. Inevitably this meant much catching-up to do and reminiscing on old times. Indeed, whilst the formal dinner ended about 10.30, many people continued to talk either in the dining suite or the bar area, long into the night. Of course, many people had decided to stay either at the hotel or in one nearby and the following morning further discus-
sions continued as people re-established old friendships. This was much in keeping with The Budokwai’s motto – “In Skill Opposed, In Spirit United”.

**Budokwai Kime-no-kata**

By Llyr Jones, John Bowen and David Finch

The Budokwai

Founded on 26 January 1918, by Gunji Koizumi, The Budokwai is a prominent and highly influential institution for the Japanese martial ways located in London, United Kingdom (UK). Originally situated at 15 Lower Grosvenor Place, near Buckingham Palace, it relocated on 19 September 1954 to a new, larger, premises at 4 Gilston Road in South Kensington, where it remains to this day.

Yukio Tani, who had fame as a professional challenge wrestler, was the Society’s first lead instructor. The Budokwai originally provided instruction in jujutsu, but soon switched to judo as the result of a visit by Jigoro Kano in July 1920.

**Budokwai Kime-no-kata**

Budokwai Kime-no-kata, a formal exercise not officially recognised by the Kodokan, consists of defences (throws and locks) against common types of unarmed and armed attacks. The kata has not been seen for over 25 years, though at one time, it regularly featured at martial arts demonstrations organised by The Budokwai.

Writing in his comprehensive two-volume work “100 Years of Judo in Great Britain: Reclaiming of Its True Spirit” the eminent judoka and judo historian Richard (Dicky) Bowen suggests that Budokwai Kime-no-kata was the joint creation of Tani and Koizumi.

“... the Self Defence Kata – Kime no Kata – which differs from that normally shown elsewhere as Koizumi had devised it so that it could be visually pleasing, and that which is shown is known as the Budokwai Kime no Kata.”

However, further work, published elsewhere, by this author, writing with others, concluded that most likely it had been developed solely by Koizumi – principally for display purposes:

“... the Self Defence Kata – Kime no Kata – which is in many senses archaic but nonetheless is an extremely valuable training method, and one anybody professing to be a judo teacher should be able to perform and teach, along with nage no kata and katame no kata; the other is the Budokwai kime no kata, which was devised by Tani and Koizumi, and for many years the kata favoured for display work.”

1932 – Oxford University Judo Meet and The Budokwai Annual Display

Perhaps the earliest public demonstrations of Budokwai Kime-no-kata took place between the 29 November and 3 December 1932 when a German team was invited to the United Kingdom. Arranged by The Budokwai, the kata displays supported team matches at five locations with the Germans against Oxford University Judo Club, Ealing Judo Club, the Midlands Judo Club, Cambridge University Judo Club and a British team of five at the Stadium Club in London, formerly known as the Stadium Theatre. The initial Oxford programme mentions a “Kime-no-kata display” by Tani and Koizumi which is described as: “Self-defence against attack with knife, pistol, stick...”.

Since such attacks do not feature in the official Kodokan Kime-no-kata it is quite possible that what they showed was a very early version of Budokwai Kime-no-kata. Unfortunately, there are no programmes of the other events except for a large poster for the “British” team, masquerading as The Budokwai team, at the fifteenth annual Budokwai Display on the 3 December. It was held at the Stadium Club and includes the shortened wording of “Defence Against Knife and Revolver Attacks”. There is little doubt that this would have been a repeat of the Tani and Koizumi displays that took place in the days earlier.
From October 1948 to April 1949, the only known technical work on Budokwai Kime-no-kata was serialised, over three issues, in the journal “Judo, the Quarterly Bulletin of the Budokwai”. This took the form of a nine-page article by Koizumi, which contained simple instructions on how to perform the 13 techniques in the kata. “Stickman” illustrations were provided for the first 11 techniques, and black and white photographs for the final two, with the 13 techniques being:

1. Hold from behind over both arms [Daki-kakae]
2. Pistol in right hand [Shomen-zuke]
3. Downward attack with knife [Kiri-oroshi]
4. Upward stab with knife [Age-tsuki]
5. Both hands hold [Ryote-dori]
6. Belt pull and chin push [Ago-oshi]
7. Blow to side of chin [Ago-tsuki]
8. Uppercut [Tsuki-age]
9. Downward blow with stick [Furi-oroshi]
10. Side blow with stick [Furi-mawashi]
11. Two handed attack on throat [Mae-jime]
12. Dash to the side [Yoko-tosshin]
13. Dash to the front [Shomen-tosshin]

Throughout the kata, apart from the final two techniques, the role of the attacker and attacked alternate, and Koizumi suggests that this feature was only introduced to make demonstrations more interesting:

“…. Generally, the parts of attacker and defender are played by the same persons throughout the whole series, but in order to make the demonstration more interesting, we arranged to act the parts alternately.”

1948 – The ‘Budokwai’ Film
In 1948, “The ‘Budokwai’ Film” was made to mark the thirtieth anniversary of The Budokwai. The black and white 16mm film shows some basic judo throws and holds, as well as combinations, self-defense techniques, and five definite kata – including Budokwai Kime-no-kata, which on the film is done by Gunji Koizumi and Edward (Ted) Mossom. The kata they demonstrate is identical to the one described in Koizumi’s article, however inexplicably, the fifth technique – Ryote-dori is omitted.

1964 – Royal Albert Hall Demonstration
At the 1964 Budokwai Show, held at the Royal Albert Hall on 31 October 1964, a kata labelled “Goshin-Jitsu-no-kata”, supposedly created by Koizumi was demonstrated by Masami Nishimura and Senta Yamada. Writing in the magazine “Judo”, Alan Menzies described the performance:

“The Goshin-Jitsu-no-kata, performed by Mr. M. Nishimura, 7th Dan and Mr. S. Yamada 6th Dan, was a celebrated first time event for this special kata devised by Mr. Gunji Koizumi, 8th Dan for the Budokwai many years ago. Mr. Koizumi was, of course, there to watch, and no doubt approved of the rendering of his composition. Both of the performers are very experienced and their exposition of this highest form of Judo attainment was exceedingly exciting to watch.”

M. Nishimura was Masami Nishimura who had taught judo in South East Asia, and S. Yamada was Senta Yamada who had come to the UK in 1959 to teach judo and aikido at the London Judo Society (LJS). Yamada had been a live-in student with Morhei Ueshiba the founder of aikido and had also met and studied with Kenji Tomiki – a prominent aikido and judo teacher, who had played a vital role in the panel of Kodokan experts that created Kodokan Goshin-Jitsu.

Despite Alan Menzies’ report in the magazine “Judo” stating that Gunji Koizumi was the originator of the demonstrated exercise – hence making it Budokwai Kime-no-kata, it is more likely that what was shown was in fact Kodokan Goshin-Jitsu, and not Koizumi’s creation – particularly as
the demonstration is described as a “first time event”, and since one of the demonstrators, Yamada, had strong connections to Kenji Tomiki, a key figure in the development of Kodokan Goshin-jutsu. To a degree this confusion is understandable given that the weapons used in both kata are identical – namely a knife, a stick and a gun.

1968 – Royal Albert Hall Demonstration

On 30 November 1968, a martial arts display, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of The Budokwai’s founding, was again held at the Royal Albert Hall. The seventh item during the evening’s display was Budokwai Kime-no-kata, done by George Kerr and his protégé Maurice Allan. In dialogue with the author, Allan stated that he learnt and practiced the kata under the direction of Kerr in their native Edinburgh – adding that, for him, it was a highlight of their kata activity together.

1988 – Royal Albert Hall Demonstration

Twenty years later, on 27 November 1988, a show was yet again held at the Royal Albert Hall – this time to mark the seventieth anniversary of The Budokwai’s founding.

During the evening, a Budokwai Kime-no-kata, containing significant differences to that described and shown by Kojuzumi, was done by George Kerr and Rodger Bornowski.

Maurice Allan (born 1945) and George Kerr (born 1937). Courtesy of Edward Ferrie

George Kerr defending against a Shomen-zuke attack by Rodger Bornowski (born 1958) during a Budokwai Kime-no-kata display at The Budokwai’s Seventieth Anniversary Tournament.
Kerr and Bornowski’s kata contained a total of 15 techniques – including additional attacks and defences, and also different defensive responses to identical attacks. The basis for these additions and differences is not known, and may very well have been personal modifications. This demonstration was the last time Budokwai Kime-no-kata is known to have been shown.

George Kerr attacking with Kiri-oroshi during a Budokwai Kime-no-kata display at The Budokwai’s Seventieth Anniversary Tournament.

Rodger Bornowski defending against Naname-uchi [hit the face from sideways] during a Budokwai Kime-no-kata display at The Budokwai’s Seventieth Anniversary Tournament. Naname-uchi is unique to this most recent version of the exercise.

**Concluding Remarks**

_Budokwai Kime-no-kata_ offers a glimpse into a time when self-defence was still a significant part of _judo_ – which had yet to suffer from the overwhelming emphasis on sports-competition, and winning medals, so prevalent today. As an original creation of The _Budokwai’s_ highly influential founder, Gunji Koizumi, the _kata_ is an important element of British _judo_ history. Every effort should be made to preserve it for future generations of _judoka_.

“Judo in the West” an anthology of articles by Michael A. DeMarco

The Society is pleased to recommend this 197-page, lavishly illustrated, anthology of articles from the “_Journal of Asian Martial Arts_”. Compiled by Michael A. DeMarco and published by Via Media, the book includes several scholarly overviews of how _jujutsu_ and _judo_ took an early foothold in the West. Naturally, there is a strong emphasis on the United Kingdom and the essential role played by The Budokwai in those formative years. As such, it is a must read for all those interested in this aspect of the evolution of _judo_.

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