



The Kano Society Bulletin



Issue No. 65

July 2025

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In This Edition

This edition of “The *Bulletin*” features English translations of three *judo kata* articles by Brazilian scholars and *judoka* Odair and Rafael Borges. It also celebrates Angelo Parisi’s recent promotion to 9th *dan* and pays tribute to recently deceased *judo* nonagenarians Ivan Zavetchanos and Ray Topple.

Editor’s Comments

As this sixty fifth (65) issue of “The *Bulletin*” is published, we mark nearly 25 years since the first edition in September 2000, and also 25 years since the passing of Kano Society patron Trevor (T.P.) Leggett on 02 August 2000. TPL’s legacy and contributions to the *judo* community continue to inspire and guide us to this day.

I hope you enjoy this issue of “The *Bulletin*”, and my thanks to John Bowen for his careful proofreading. Any remaining errors are, of course, mine alone.

Contributions

The Kano Society’s main work is this online publication. We welcome contributions – articles, photos, or other relevant material – to “The *Bulletin*”.

Dr Llyr Jones

Principles of *Kata* in *Judo* Odair Borges and Rafael Borges



Hinako Akiyama performing a *Ju-no-kata* movement at the *Kodokan Judo Institute*

***Kata* dates back to the earliest days of Japan and continues to shape many aspects of Japanese culture today.**

Kata reflects the Japanese spirit, being deeply intertwined with the country’s artistic traditions. It can be seen as a kind of “language of form,” shaping nearly every aspect of daily life – writing, architecture, behaviour, attitude, etiquette, and of course, art. On closer examination, these pre-established patterns serve as an effective method for transmitting knowledge. By following a well-known path, learners naturally absorb key principles.

In the context of *budo*, *kata* offers a clear bridge to martial instruction, where the goal is to facilitate efficient learning for many individuals at once. However, this also highlights a delicate balance between training and pedagogy. In *kata*, there is no room for adaptation or improvisation – only progression along a set learning curve is permitted.

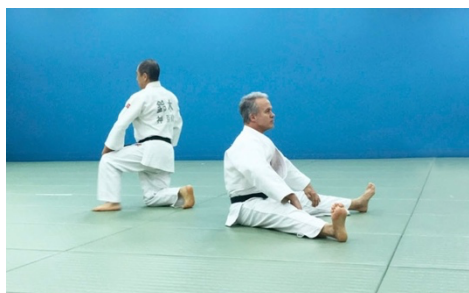
Within the classical martial arts of Japan – *bugei* or *bujutsu* – one finds core elements such as simplicity, efficiency, harmony, intuition, economy of movement, and flexibility. These characteristics are not only central to martial disciplines but also define the broader aesthetic and philosophical foundations of Japanese art. This shared ethos deeply influenced classical *budo*, or the ‘way of the warrior’, which evolved from *bujutsu*. Understanding this connection is essential to grasping the true essence of Japanese martial arts, their etiquette, and their relationship with *kata*, particularly within *Kodokan Judo*.

Throughout history, the Japanese have held weaponry and combat skills in high esteem. As a result, numerous hand-to-hand fighting systems emerged in ancient Japan, giving rise to the *ryu*, or traditional schools of martial training. These skills were preserved and refined by the *samurai*, a noble and privileged warrior class that ruled Japan from the Kamakura period (1192) through the Edo period (ending in 1868). This era concluded with the Meiji Restoration, a transformative time for Japan, during which *judo* was developed.



Motonari Sameshima-sensei of the Kodokan demonstrates judo technique with Hinako Akiyama

In tracing *judo*'s historical roots, the *Koshiki-no-kata* stands out as a key link to the past. Inherited by Professor Jigoro Kano from *koryu* [old school] *jujutsu*, this *kata* was only minimally adapted, preserving the essence of *samurai*-era hand-to-hand combat. Its continued practice reflects a conscious effort to safeguard the cultural and historical legacy of the Japanese warrior tradition. A particularly influential aspect of this heritage was *yoroi-kumiuchi* [grappling in armour] which shaped many of the postures, movements, and tactical principles seen in *Kodokan kata*. These techniques evolved from Japan's earliest methods of armed and unarmed combat, ensuring that modern *judo* retains a direct connection to its historical foundations.



Regular *kata* classes are held at the Kodokan. The photograph shows David McFall, holder of a Kodokan *Jukutatsu-sho* [Certificate of Mastery] in *Koshiki-no-kata*, practicing in the smallest dojo, reserved for special instruction

When Kano began studying *jujutsu* in 1877, most instructors focused on teaching *kata* [pre-arranged forms]. However, some also practiced *nokori-ai* 残りあい a blend of *kata* and *randori* [free practice]¹. Among Kano's teachers, those from *Tenjin Shin'yo-ryu* [Divine True Willow School – Hachinosuke Fukuda and Matsumoto Iso, and from the *Kito-ryu* [School of the Rise and Fall] – Tsunetoshi Iikubo were particularly known for incorporating both *kata* and *randori* into their instruction. The *Koshiki-no-kata*, a legacy of *Kito-ryu*, is one such example. These influences shaped Kano's belief that both forms of practice were essential to mastering *jujutsu*.

¹ *Nokori-ai* was the precursor of contemporary *randori* in which partners would practice a set of techniques as in *kata*, however, if *Tori* did an ineffective technique, *Uke* would apply a counter throw.

To illustrate the relationship between *kata* and *randori*, Kano often used a literary analogy – *kata* is like grammar, and *randori* is like writing. Each complements the other, which is why Kano emphasised teaching core *kata* even during *randori* sessions.

As *judo*'s popularity grew, it became impractical for Kano-shihan to teach each student individually. Around 1885, he saw the need to formalise instruction and began organising *Nage-no-kata* – a systematised set of throwing techniques. Initially comprising 10 techniques, it was expanded to 15 in 1887, with three techniques selected from each of five categories.



Koji Komata-sensei of the University of Tsukuba instructs Rafael Borges in *Ju-no-kata* during the Japan Sports Agency's 2017 'Sport for Tomorrow' exchange programme

Nage-no-kata was developed to teach practitioners the fundamental principles of *nage-waza* [throwing techniques]. Complementing this, *Katame-no-kata* was introduced to cover the basics of *ne-waza* [grappling techniques]. Together, these two forms are known as *Randori-no-kata*, serving as foundational tools for training in *judo*.

The use of standardised, pre-arranged movements in *kata* provided several advantages. For instructors, it enabled efficient group instruction, often through a 'command' style of teaching. For students, it offered a clear framework for understanding the complete body of knowledge they needed to master – a concept deeply respected in Eastern educational traditions, which emphasise perfection through repetition and discipline.

In 1895, the *Dai Nippon Butokukai* [Greater Japan Martial Virtue Society] was established to unify and regulate the practice of *jujutsu* across Japan. One of its primary goals was to standardise the *kata* of the many existing schools. Professor Jigoro Kano was appointed chairman of the *kata* standardisation committee and worked closely with other prominent *jujutsu* masters, including Hoshino of the *Shiten-ryu* and Totsuka of the *Yoshin-ryu* schools.

In 1895, eight years after the creation of the first forms known as *Randori-no-kata*, Kano introduced the initial version of *Go-kyo-no-waza*. While not a *kata* in the strict

sense, *Go-kyo-no-waza* served as a comprehensive teaching framework encompassing nearly the entire technical repertoire of *judo*'s throwing techniques [*nage-waza*]. At that time, *judo* was primarily practiced by young, healthy men, which favoured a command-style teaching method highly effective for learning technical sequences.

The aim of *judo* during this period was the cultivation of health, personal development, and self-defence. This philosophy was also reflected in the attire of its practitioners. The development of *judo* became increasingly formalised, culminating in its integration into Japanese schools as part of the physical education curriculum. It wasn't until 1930 that Japan hosted its first national *judo* competition.

On a broader level, *judo* cannot be fully understood without an appreciation of *kata*. In fact, it is more accurate to say that *kata* lies at the very heart of *judo*. The recent concept of *kata* competitions are a focus for many and it is promising to see more people embracing *kata* as a regular practice. However, as teachers, we must remain cautious – the pursuit of medals should never come at the expense of the deeper meaning and traditional values embodied in the original *Kodokan kata*, which were designed to contain the true essence of *judo*.



Koshiki-no-kata demonstration at the opening ceremony of the All-Japan Judo Championships

From Kano-shihan's notes, we learn that "to practice *judo* for physical education purposes, it is necessary to select techniques that promote uniform and symmetrical movement throughout the body. What is lacking in *randori* must be supplemented by *kata*". This clear statement highlights the significance Kano placed on the *kata* of *Kodokan Judo*.

During Kano's time, numerous studies and research efforts were dedicated to developing *kata* from various styles of *ju-jutsu*. Even today, historical, cultural, and technical research continues, aiming to closely interpret the traditions and philosophy of Jigoro Kano. A notable example is the insightful article by Professors Toshiro Daigo and Naoki Murata (2011), titled *Principles of Evaluation of Judo Kata Performance – uke's movement in Koshiki-no-kata*.

To truly understand *kata*, it is important to grasp some key elements of Japanese conduct and behaviour, such as *tatemae* [the public face one presents] and *honne* [the true feelings and desires, often shared only with family or

close friends]. Traditional Japanese culture frequently contrasts what is shown outwardly with what remains hidden. In *kata*, this distinction is expressed through *omote* and *ura*. *Omote-no-kata* refers to the visible techniques – the mechanical, memorised movements seen in performance – while *ura* represents the underlying meaning or mental essence that gives true depth to the *kata*.



In December 2016, Russian President and judoka Vladimir Putin attended a Koshiki-no-kata demonstration at the Kodokan, featuring judoka in traditional samurai armour [yoroi]. Also present were then Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe RIP, Yasuhiro Yamashita – then President of the All-Japan Judo Federation and now President of the Japanese Olympic Committee, and Yoshiro Mori – Head of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games Organising Committee, along with other dignitaries

We can say that it refers to what is implied rather than what is openly visible. In practice, this term highlights the need for the practitioner to be fully attentive, internalising the entire context beyond just the mechanical movements seen with the eyes. For example, consider the *ura* during the moment when the postures of *Tori* and *Uke* are observed in *Koshiki-no-Kata* practice. Beyond simply performing the movements, they transcend the basic physical action to subtly express cultural, historical, and philosophical aspects of Japanese tradition.

This does not mean something hidden from common view. The principle of *ma-ai* involves carefully observing and judging the distance and timing between *Tori* and *Uke*. During each technique, maintaining proper *ma-ai* is crucial, since not all techniques require the same spacing. Being too close or too far apart can hinder the execution, weaken the attack, and throw one off balance.

The concept of *ri-ai* [natural principle or logic] is regarded by *Kodokan* teacher as an essential guideline in learning *kata* and is closely linked to *maai*. In *judo* and *kata* practice, it represents the rational control of force – avoiding reliance on brute strength in favour of technical mastery and the ability to unbalance the opponent.

All of these elements come together in what is known as *bunkai* [practical interpretation or application of the movements in a *kata*] covering key techniques, defensive and offensive strategies, variations between attack and defence, and counterattacks.

Jigoro Kano emphasised preserving the artistic nature of *kata*, recognising that without its aesthetic dimension, *kata* would merely be a rigid and uninspiring way to practice *judo* techniques. While *kata* may appear decorative, it plays a crucial role in transforming asymmetry into symmetry and irregularity into regularity, showcasing the highest levels of beauty, safety, and efficiency possible.



Nage-no-kata performance by Ikuo Onodera as *Tori*, and Odair Borges as *Uke*, during the Sao Paulo Championship held in São Bernardo do Campo in 1974

A *judoka* with limited experience in *kata* will likewise have a shallow understanding of *judo*, with less technical depth and diminished ability to fully grasp the art or effectively teach it to others.

The study and practice of *kata* impose a precise technical discipline on *judo*, one that cannot be attained through *randori* or competition alone.

About the *Kata* Ideogram

Odair Borges and Rafael Borges

In *judo*, the term pronounced “*kata*” can have different meanings depending on the *kanji* [logographic character] used to write it. Here, we will clarify the distinct uses of the *kanji* read as “*kata*” and provide examples for each:

片 *Kata*

The *kanji* 片 means ‘one side’ or ‘a part’. In *judo* terminology, it features in techniques such as *Kata-te-jime* 片手絞 [One-hand strangle], *Kata-juji-jime* 片十字絞 [Half-cross-strangle], and *Kata-ha-jime* 片羽絞 [Single-wing strangle].

形 *Kata*

The *kanji* 形 means ‘form’. It is found in the names of the formal *Kodokan kata*, for example, *Nage-no-kata* 投の形 [Forms of throwing]; *Katame-no-kata* 固の形 [Forms of grappling], *Ju-no-kata* 柔の形 [Forms of gentleness and flexibility], *Kime-no-kata* 極の形 [Forms of decisive techniques], *Itsutsu-no-kata* 五の形 [Forms of five], and *Koshiki-no-kata* – 古式の形 [Forms of classics].

肩 *Kata*

This *kanji* means ‘shoulder’. It features in *judo* terminology in technique names like *Kata-guruma* 肩車 [Shoulder wheel] and *Kata-gatame* 肩固 [Shoulder hold].

General Aspects of the Eight¹ *Kata*

Recognised by the *Kodokan*

Odair Borges and Rafael Borges

Koshiki-no-kata (17th Century)

Koshiki-no-kata has its origins in *Kito-ryu jujutsu*, a traditional martial art that Professor Jigoro Kano studied prior to founding *Kodokan Judo*. Recognising its technical depth, theoretical value, and means for mental and spiritual development, Kano incorporated it into *judo* as an official *kata* of the *Kodokan*.

This *kata* draws from the *yoroi-kumiuchi* techniques once used by *samurai* in armoured combat with weapons. It includes 14 techniques of *Omote-no-kata* [Front forms] and seven of *Ura-no-kata* [Rear forms]. The *Omote-no-kata* emphasises mental composure, dignified movement, and precision in performing movements of attack and defence. In contrast, the *Ura-no-kata* features swift, bold movements.

¹ Nine *kata* are now officially recognised by the *Kodokan*. The newly introduced *Kodomo-no-kata* [Children’s Forms] is excluded from this article.

Together, they express the underlying principles and strategies of attack and defence in *judo*, exemplifying its deep philosophical and technical foundation.



This depicts the Battle of Ishibashiyama. The strongman Matano Goro Kagehisa is fighting with Sanada Yoichi Yoshitada. He tries to prevent the assassination of his commander. Both are engaged in hand-to-hand combat wearing armour.
(Artist: Utagawa Kuniyoshi, 1798–1861)

Nage-no-kata (1885 – 1887)

Nage-no-kata, a *Randori-no-kata*, was created to help *judo* practitioners understand the foundational principles and master the basic *nage-waza* [throwing techniques] used in *randori* [free practice]. Through systematic practice, students learn the essential elements of throwing techniques – *kuzushi* [balance breaking], *tsukuri* [positioning], *kake* [execution], and proper *ukemi* [receiving the throw].



Non-*judo* students at the University of Tsukuba learn *judo* fundamentals through *Nage-no-kata*. This approach helps preserve the tradition of *judo* in school physical education classes

Originally consisting of *ten* techniques, *Nage-no-kata* was later refined and expanded into a structured set of 15 techniques. These are organised into five groups, each containing three throws. Each technique is executed on both the right and left sides, bringing the total to thirty throws. The five groups are categorized by the type of throw – *te-waza* [hand techniques], *koshi-waza* [hip techniques], *ashi-*

waza [foot techniques], *ma-sutemi-waza* [rear sacrifice techniques], and *yoko-sutemi-waza* [side sacrifice techniques].

Katame-no-kata (1885-1887)

Katame-no-kata, along with *Nage-no-kata*, was established in the early years following the founding of the *Kodokan*. Originally said to consist of ten techniques, it was later expanded to 15.

Katame-no-kata is composed of five representative techniques each from *osaekomi-waza* [holding techniques], *shime-waza* [choking techniques], and *kansetsu-waza* [joint-locking techniques]. Together with *Nage-no-kata*, it makes up the *Randori-no-kata*.

Ju-no-kata (1887)

Ju-no-kata was originally developed under the name *Taisso-no-kata* [gymnastics forms]. The techniques in this *kata* were developed to teach the principle of '*ju-yoku-go-wo-seisu*', which can be interpreted as 'flexibility controls strength' and its practice emphasises the intricacies of body movements. *Ju-no-kata* offers a calm and subtle way to understand the fundamental principles of *judo*. It presents a flowing and expressive sequence of attack and defence movements, performed slowly and moderately, without throws or *kumi-kata* [gripping techniques]. The *kata* consists of 15 techniques, grouped into three sets of five.



Koji Komata-sensei gives specific guidance on *Ju-no-kata* (*Kata-oshi*) to Rafael Borges. The move represents the meaning of *ju* and the principle of technical details that influence the aesthetic harmony of the *kata*

Ju-no-kata has the following features:

1. It can be practiced freely at any time, in any place, and while wearing any type of clothing.
2. It offers both men and women of all ages the opportunity to enjoy learning the principles and logic of *judo*.
3. Since *Ju-no-kata* is performed using slow, controlled movements for attack and defence, it makes the techniques easier to understand and their reasoning clearer.
4. *Ju-no-kata* includes a wide range of muscular exercises, and it can be combined with *randori*, to support healthy and effective physical development.

5. It fosters an appreciation for aesthetic movement through the practice of natural *tai-sabaki* and smooth, alternating motions.

Itsutsu-no-kata (1887)

Itsutsu-no-kata reflects strong influences from *Tenjin Shin'yo-ryu* and was established by Professor Jigoro Kano as a formal *Kodokan kata*. Its purpose is to subtly convey the underlying principles of attack and defence in *judo*. The name *Itsutsu-no-kata*, meaning 'Forms of Five', refers to the five distinct techniques it comprises. The *kata* symbolises the forces of heaven, earth, and nature, presenting an artistic expression of these elements through *judo* techniques. It aims to demonstrate the fundamental forms of *judo* by embodying natural phenomena in harmony with the universe.

The first two techniques also have a connection with *Kito-ryu*, while the final three represent natural forces – such as the flow of water, the motion of celestial bodies, and other universal dynamics – interpreted through the human body.

Each technique in *Itsutsu-no-Kata* is numbered rather than named, reflecting its conceptual and symbolic nature. Arguably, the *kata* is considered incomplete, leaving space for continued interpretation and development.

The five techniques are:

1. *Ippon-me* [The First]: Illustrates how a small force can overcome a much greater one through a rational attack with continuous, unbroken action.
2. *Nihon-me* [The Second]: Demonstrates how one can directly take advantage of a powerful attack to overcome it. This embodies *riai* [synergy or harmonious logic] where the smaller force controls and redirects the larger to its own advantage.
3. *Sanbon-me* [The Third]: Conveys the concept of a whirlpool, where the inner circle overcomes the outer through the dynamics of rotational energy.
4. *Yonhon-me* [The Fourth]: Represents the reasoning of how a large wave surges toward the shore and retreats after washing everything away – a metaphor for overwhelming force followed by withdrawal.
5. *Gohon-me* [The Fifth]: Represents the reasoning of how one can directly face a large wave that surges in front of one and survive by yielding or momentarily sacrificing oneself. An alternative interpretation links it to the phenomena of space and the universe.

Kime-no-kata (1906)

Shortly after founding *Kodokan Judo*, Jigoro Kano established a *kata* focused on real combat, consisting of ten techniques that had the same purpose as the traditional forms found in classical Japanese *jujutsu* schools – namely, to teach *shinken-shobu-no-kata* [decisive combat forms]. Kano-shihan continued to refine and expand these techniques, eventually increasing the total to 14 or 15.

Kime-no-Kata was created to embody the most effective techniques for real-world combat. Its practice is essential for mastering agile body movement [*tai-sabaki*] and learning how to control an opponent with precision and effectiveness.



Motonari Sameshima-sensei showing *Ryote-dori* during a *Kime-no-kata* demonstration at the All-Japan Judo Championships

Seiryoku Zenyo Kokumin Taiiku (1924)

Ideally, a physical education system should embody three key qualities: it should foster a strong and healthy mind and body, be interesting, and offer practical value. The exercise *Seiryoku Zenyo Kokumin Taiiku* [Maximum efficiency physical education] henceforth, for brevity, written as SZKT meets all three requirements admirably and surpasses the boundaries of traditional gymnastics or martial arts.

SZKT was developed around 1924, likely influenced by the establishment of the *Kodokan's* women's and children's department in 1923.

SZKT consists of two sets of exercises – one performed individually and the other with a partner. With the exception of a single movement, all exercises have direct applications in self-defence. The form is particularly well-suited for use as physical training or warm-up in *judo* practice. Each movement should be executed with full power and maximum speed, especially at the moment of impact. When striking with the fist, the arm should meet the target surface at a right angle. Both right- and left-handed versions of each exercise should be practiced at least five times each.

In summary, SZKT consists of two main parts:

- *Tandoku Renshu* [Solo practice] – consisting of eight movements with a total of 28 distinct techniques
- *Sotai-rensushu* (Duo practice) – further sub-divided into:
 - *Kime-shiki* [Decisive style] – a set of 10 combative techniques
 - *Ju-shiki* [Gentle and Flexible style] – 10 movements drawn from the *Ju-no-kata*

Altogether, the complete exercise totals 48 techniques, making it the longest form in *judo*. Despite its comprehensiveness, it remains one of the least practiced and least known among Western *judoka*.

Kodokan Goshin-jutsu (1956)

Kodokan Goshin-jutsu is a self-defence form designed for modern life. After creating *Kodokan Judo*, Jigoro Kano established *Kime-no-kata* for practical combat. But as life-styles evolved, a new self-defence *kata* was needed. So, in January 1956, *Kodokan Goshin-jutsu* was created, combining techniques from various martial disciplines.

Kodokan Goshin-jutsu teaches empty-handed self-defence against armed and unarmed attackers. It follows the *judo* principle of mutual welfare and minimal harm – “*Stop the halberd, finish with minimum injury.*” *Kodokan Goshin-jutsu* has 21 techniques in two sections – defence against unarmed attacks and defence against armed attacks.

The unarmed section, *Toshu-no-bu*, contains 12 techniques – seven when holding, or grappling, and five dealing with attacks from a distance. The armed section, *Buki-no-bu*, consists of nine techniques – three defences against a dagger, three against a staff, and three against a pistol.

Kodokan Goshin-jutsu is known for its realistic self-defence techniques, showing how *judo* principles apply in practical situations. In each move, the defender (*Tori*) stays in control while responding to the attacker (*Uke*)

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Original Source

The three articles by Borges and Borges were originally published in 2020. They are sourced from the Brazilian Portuguese-language website *Budô – Revista de Judô e Esporte de Combate*, and can be accessed at the following URL: <https://revistabudo.com.br/principios-dos-katas-no-judo/>

Archive Photos and BudoPress, Curitiba

Profiles – Odair and Rafael Borges



Odair Borges and Rafael Borges

Odair Antônio Borges

Odair Antônio Borges is a *judo* and *jiu-jitsu* professor with the *kodansha* rank of 8th *dan* awarded by the Brazilian Judo Confederation and a 7th *dan* from the Kodokan Judo Institute in Japan. He holds a degree in Physical Education and a master's degree in the same field from the University of Sao Paulo (USP). Currently, he serves as a university professor at both USP and the Pontifical Catholic University of Campinas (PUC). He is a former member of the Brazilian national *judo* team, having competed from 1965 to 1975.

Rafael de Camargo Penteado Borges

Rafael de Camargo Penteado Borges is a professor at the Borges Judo Association. He holds a 2nd *dan* in *judo* certified by the Brazilian Judo Confederation, a 1st *dan* in Brazilian *Jiu-Jitsu* from the Brazilian *Jiu-Jitsu* Confederation, and a 3rd *dan* from the International *Jiu-Jitsu* Federation (JJIF). He earned a bachelor's degree in Physical Education, as well as a master's and a doctorate in Medical Physiopathology from the University of Campinas (UNICAMP). Additionally, he is a certified specialist from Gama Filho University and holds a degree in Nutrition from METROCAMP University, Campinas. A former competitor in *judo*, *jiu-jitsu*, *kata*, and wrestling, he can be reached at rafaelcpborges@gmail.com.

Angelo Parisi promoted to 9th dan Llyr Jones



Angelo Parisi

The Kano Society proudly congratulates *Budokwai* alumnus and life member Angelo Parisi on his promotion to 9th dan. The following profile is adapted from an article by Stephanie Leigh in *The Bulletin*, Issue 60, April 2024.

Angelo Parisi was born in Italy and moved to England at age three. A talented athlete, he chose to focus on *judo* at 15 and quickly rose through the ranks, earning his *dan* grade within a year. Initially trained by Albert Jacks (father of Brian), he became a multiple British and European champion in across a range of age categories.

At just 19, Parisi won a bronze medal in the Open category for Great Britain at the 1972 Munich Olympics. Following his marriage to a French national in 1974, he acquired French citizenship and continued his success, securing six European titles and three Paris Tournament victories for France. He missed the 1976 Olympics due to the then restriction of representation/citizenship rules but returned in 1980 to win gold in the heavyweight division and silver in the Open category. In 1984, he was France's Olympic flag bearer and claimed another silver medal, becoming the most decorated male *judoka* in Olympic history at that time.

After retiring from competition, Angelo coached the French national team and helped develop champions like Jamel Bouras and David Douillet. He continues to promote *judo* in France, and in June 2025 was promoted to 9th dan.

Congratulations Angelo Parisi.

In Memoriam: Ivan Zavetchanos (1928–2025) David Gordge



Ivan Zavetchanos
(9 July 1928 – 13 June 2025)

The Kano Society is saddened to learn of the passing of Australian *judo* pioneer Ivan Zavetchanos, who died on 13 June 2025 at the age of 96. Ivan dedicated much of his life to *judo*, and his commitment to 'the way' closely reflected the values and vision of the Society. The tribute that follows is due to David Gordge.

For over 70 years, Ivan served as a mentor and father figure to countless Australian *judoka*. Softly spoken, he was deeply respected for his unwavering determination and commitment to the development of *judo*. Many Australian *judoka* hold cherished memories of the time they spent with him and the invaluable guidance he offered – particularly in *kata*. His presence and influence will be profoundly missed.

Ivan Zavetchanos played a key role in the development of *judo* both in Australia and on the international stage. Between 1947 and 1948, he established the *Shudokan* Budo Academy in Brunswick, Victoria – a club that, until recent years, was likely the longest continuously operating *judo* club in Australia. In 1952, he went on to found the Victoria Amateur *Judo* Union (VAJU), which later became a founding member of the *Judo* Federation of Australia (JFA).

From 1961 to 1962 Ivan was a *Kensushei*¹ [special research student] at the *Kodokan* in Tokyo. He was *Kodokan*-graded to 2nd *dan* in 1962, 3rd *dan* in 1964, 4th *dan* in 1968 and 5th *dan* in 1975. Among his many other accomplishments, he was a co-founder of the *Judo* Federation of Australia (JFA) in 1951, a member of the Australian Olympic Committee, and one of the 17 founding members of the International *Judo* Federation (IJF) in 1952. He also established the Oceania *Judo* Union (OJU) in 1954 and was the Australian Open Champion in both 1954 and 1955. He served as President of the JFA from 1958 to 1969, President of the OJU from 1958 to 1979, and Vice-President of the IJF during the same period. In 1964, he was the manager and coach of the Australian *Judo* team at the Tokyo Olympics.

From 1965 to 1979, Ivan served as an official jury member at the fourth through tenth World *Judo* Championships. In 1972 he was appointed as the IJF technical delegate to the Munich Olympics Organising Committee, and he later served as a jury member for the *judo* events at the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games. In recognition of his contributions, he was elected a Life Member of the IJF at the 1979 IJF Congress.

A qualified referee at national, continental, and international levels, Ivan travelled extensively – including frequent visits to Japan – to promote *judo*, with a special focus on advancing *judo* back in Australia. Due to dissent within the JFA in 1980/81, the VAJU left the JFA and was then instrumental in forming the Australian *Kodokan Judo* Association (AKJA) along with other State Associations. He was promoted to AKJA 7th *dan* in 1988, and AKJA 8th *dan* in 2001.

In 2010, Zavetchanos was a founding member of the World *Judo* Federation (WJF) and together with the other founding members was crucial in the direction and development of the WJF. He was awarded his WJF 9th *dan* on 4 October 2014 at the opening ceremony of the AKJA National *Judo* Championships in Hobart.

Ivan Zavetchanos is survived by his wife Celie, a distinguished *judoka* in her own right, and their two daughters. His invaluable contributions to *Judo* in Australia have left a lasting impact, and he will be profoundly missed.

For further information – see references [1] and [2]

References

1. Sensei Ivan Zavetchanos – The Spirit of Traditional *Judo* in Australia. URL: <https://maga-zine.fighttimes.com/sensei-ivan-zavetchanos/>
2. The Official Website of the AKJA. URL <https://judo-kodokanaustralia.org/about/>

¹ A *Kodokan* programme for an elite group of (mostly Japanese) *judoka*, who were expected to be future champions and teachers, and who were taught *judo* technique and *kata* by the most senior *Kodokan* instructors.

In Memoriam: Ray Topple (1933–2025) Stephanie Leigh



Ray Topple (29 June 1933 – 20 June 2025)
[Ryecroft Judo Club]

As this issue of “The *Bulletin*” was being finalised, the Kano Society received news of the death of Ray Topple on Friday, 20 June 2025. Ray was a respected and distinguished figure within the British *Judo* Association (BJA) and a retired International *Judo* Federation referee, IJF(A). The following tribute is adapted from a profile by Stephanie Leigh, published in “The *Bulletin*”, Issue 63, January 2025.

Ray Topple began his *judo* journey relatively late, gaining his 1st *dan* at the age of 30. Despite this late start, he enjoyed a relatively long and active competitive career. Notably, he was part of the Midland Area team that won the National Team Championships in 1969. In that event, he moved up a weight class to replace a teammate who declined to face the formidable David Starbrook. Ray recalls their match lasting four minutes before they entered *newaza*, at which point Starbrook asked him, “Do you want to be held down or arm-locked?” Ray replied, “Get on with it, Starbrook”, and duly lost the contest. He was also part of the Midland Area team that earned a bronze medal in the 1971 championships.

In a 1984 issue of *Judo* magazine, Ray recounted a humorous story about a club trip to France with the Boston *Judo* Club. Then a 50-year-old 5th *dan*, he described the trip as four days of feasting followed by matches where “...things did not go too well for our team, and we were sunk without

trace, by five ippons and a draw. We shall now fall back to consolidate, and under our usual banner, blame the refereeing!". A fluent French speaker, Ray led teams on trips to France for many years, often through a town-twinning initiative.

Ray devoted many decades of distinguished and selfless service to British *judo*, fulfilling numerous roles including that of coach, Senior Examiner, and National Technical Official at the London Olympic Games. However, he was most widely known on the international stage as an IJF(A) Referee, regularly accompanying British teams to some of the most prestigious *judo* events worldwide.

Throughout his career, Ray made a significant contribution to the development of future referees. Current British IJF(A) referee Stefan Newbury noted that one of the first refereeing courses he attended, held in Nottingham, was led by Ray. It was during these early encounters that Ray's experience and stories of international competition helped inspire Stefan's own aspirations in the field.

Ray was also a longstanding member and Trustee of Ryecroft *Judo* Club and was regarded as a true ambassador for *judo* who always had very high standards. In a local council newsletter interview conducted when he was 86 years old, Ray remarked that he exercised daily and intended to continue doing so until the age of 100.



Ray Topples having a long chat with Olympic and World champion, Yasuhiro Yamashita who was coaching at The *Budokwai* in London and made the time to visit the Women's British Open at Crystal Palace, London, UK, on 26 September 1986. [David Finch]

At the time of his death, Ray was 91 years old – just 9 days short of his 92nd birthday. He held the high grade of 8th dan.

Points to Ponder

"You never know what you will learn before reading a book. Every book is a doorway to a new world, a fresh perspective, or an unexpected insight."

Brian Watson

"He who fears loss has already been defeated."

Jigoro Kano

"During tumultuous times...we have judo. Our escape from the world when we can't think of anything else."

Judoinspiredlife

"We become proficient at what we do repeatedly. Therefore, uchikomi benefits us in our quest for skill."

Brian Watson

"In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king."

Proverb

"The main object of judo lies in this point. It seeks to augment human strength, morality and intellect by human means and efforts. It tends to train young people in the habits and condition conducive to the accomplishment of great undertakings."

T. Shidachi

"Thoughts are invisible and ethereal, yet they activate the whole of humanity."

Brian Watson

Renjuku Academy

The Kano Society proudly endorses the *Judo* Black Belt Association's "Renjuku Academy" as an outstanding *judo* education programme. Its 12-month home-study curriculum offers a unique, immersive experience focused on five key areas of *judo* leadership:



1. Biomechanics of *Judo*;
2. *Judo* as Physical Education;
3. *Kata*;
4. *Judo* History and Philosophy;
5. *Judo* Terminology.



The demanding programme concludes with the submission of a formal dissertation on any aspect of *judo*.

<http://www.judoblackbelt.com>

Judo Collections



The “Bowen Collection” at the University of Bath Library houses an extensive archive on *judo*, compiled by *judoka* and scholar Richard Bowen during the course of his research for numerous books and publications.

Complementing this is the personal book collection of Syd Hoare, which features many rare and valuable *judo* texts – some in Japanese – gifted to him by Trevor Leggett. In addition to the books, the collection includes a bound volume of Syd Hoare’s educational articles and lectures.

Also held at the University is the “Woodard (*Judo*) Collection,” a valuable archive focused on the history of women’s judo, assembled by Marion and Graham Woodard.

Together, these collections form a rich resource for current and future judo researchers. They are available for reference use only (not for loan) and can be viewed between 09:00 and 1700 hrs.



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