



The Bulletin

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The Kano Society

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The Bulletin - Editor's comment

Welcome to the seventh edition of the 'Bulletin' In this edition we publish part one of an article on origins of Judo and the links with Japanese politics and society—'Making Way' As usual we need members to help with articles and contributions in the form of news, photographs, reminiscences or historical material.

News - The Society has held a number of events in past months including a kata session which we hope will be part of an ongoing series of courses—and we will hold a Kagami Biraki film show on 11th January 2003 at the Budokwai.

The website is now reachable on KanoSociety.com as well as .org so connection should be easier. We look forward to seeing you all in 2003 and wish you all success and happiness in the new year. Diana Birch



Making Way—Kevin Grey Carr

Making Way: War, Philosophy and Sport in Japanese Judo

Kevin Gray Carr Amherst College

In the midst of the battle, the two figures meet. Stained with mud and blood, they cast off their broken swords and collide in a last, desperate effort at survival. Their armored limbs clash violently and snake around each other to get a tight grip. There is a pause, and before he can think, one of the warriors feels the tearing burn of his enemy's dagger under his chest guard. With a yell the larger one hurls the other to the ground with a dull thud. The fallen warrior's eyes quiver shut as his foe rushes on.

The crowd is a dazzling nova of flashbulbs. With their once-clean white uniforms hanging limply about their sweaty bodies, the contestants show clear signs of tiring. The clock ticks past 10 minutes, but it is no time to be faint of heart, for both had scored half points and the championship is on the line. Back and forth they feint until - an opening! In a flash, the match is over with a clean reverse hip throw. Quickly, they bow and leave the mat - one to enjoy a riotous victory party, the other to nurse wounded pride and plan the next encounter.

These two vignettes may seem as far apart as they can get. Though they both depict the melee of two people, each involves substantially different approaches to the same basic techniques. Within less than a century, *jūdō*¹ has gone from being identified with the first of the above pictures in the nineteenth century to being married to the second by the mid-twentieth century.

One might rightly question the importance of studying Judo in a sociological context. Martial arts in general are often ignored as unim-

portant cultural phenomena and they are usually relegated by mainstream researchers to the position of curious esoterica. As William Paul puts it: ... in the larger academic community there seems to be a tendency among some scholars to dismiss Bu Sutsu [martial arts] as a curious antiquity which has had a vague and unsavory relationship to organized violence.

Jūdō (lit. "the way of pliancy") is a difficult term to define, and the following discussion of its development is the best definition I can offer, suffice it to say, it is a native Japanese fighting form that incorporates primarily throws, pins, joint techniques, and sometimes strikes. Thus, there is an unfortunate dearth of good scholarship in the field of martial arts. Even so, it may seem that *Judo* gamers far more attention than it deserves. For Japan is a modern society, and the number of Japanese *Judo* practitioners who are members of an *Judo* organization is less than for baseball, volleyball, basketball, and even ping-pong? Nevertheless, we cannot be too hasty in dismissing the examination of this cultural phenomenon.

Not only is *Jūdō* especially conspicuous in Japan, it is also the only Japanese sport to be practiced internationally on any appreciable scale. In the last century, it has metamorphosed from a relatively small-scale, rather esoteric "martial art" to a large-scale, modern, Westernized, and international sport. The rapidly changing magnitude, orientation, and interpretation of *Jūdō* can provide us with a fascinating topic for historical study and research, for the movement reflects the development of changing cultural attitudes and concerns.

This paper attempts to show that the idealization of *bushi* (warriors) is a recent construct. When the

modern forms of martial arts were developed, the military history of Japan was going through a profound spiritual revision. That is, it was claimed that the *bushi* followed a *do*, or spiritual path, that intimately linked their fighting spirit with Zen Buddhism. This historical revisionism has affected the philosophical development *bushido*, in Japan and, perhaps even more so, in the West.

In order to examine this rewriting of history and reality, I shall trace the process by which the killing *art* of *jūjutsu* was modernized in the late nineteenth century by Dr. Jigorō Kanō. Since that time, Judo has gone through a circular development. When the *bushi* used the art in its early forms, it was the quintessence of competition (life and death) and pragmatism (there are no rules in war). After Kano revived the art as Judo, he gave it a distinctly philosophical and moral bent, that was mostly concerned with proper form and execution. Finally, in the present day, *Judo* as the modern sport is again marked by extremely difficult competition and an emphasis on pragmatism (of course the stakes now are much lower - only prestige and money). Yet these are not inviable divisions. *Judo* retains a number of pre-modern elements, like the emphasis on prearranged forms (called *kata*) and its adherence to old Japanese concepts of courtesy and etiquette; and the modern sport Judo person does still make reference to the early philosophy of the martial arts.

It should be noted that this essay concentrates on Japanese Judo from the late Edo period (1603 - 1868) to the mid twentieth century. This has been done so as to focus on the period in which the most profound changes were being

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In the spirit of Trevor Leggett - The Middle Way

THE MIDDLE WAY

The drawing in of the evenings and the shortening of the days remind us that winter approaches. The summer has not been particularly good, and there is a tendency to look forward to the cold dark wet mornings with some dread despite the central heating and modern convenience that make them more than tolerable. Much as we try we find it difficult to accept that life is made up of light and dark, pleasant and unpleasant, joy and unavoidable suffering. Were it not so, the Buddha's message would have no value. It is our reaction to circumstances that causes us problems, not the circumstances in themselves.

This first teaching of the Buddha was to avoid the extremes of self-denial and over-indulgence. This implies self-control, but of what? The longing to have things our own way. Even if this yearning is for our very highest ideal or

even humanity's — enlightenment, world peace, saving the whales or even having congenial weather, friends or work; it ultimately boils down to having things our own way. This might suggest a fundamentalist return to nature or a blind acceptance of things in a passive, fatalistic resignation to human affliction. (The charge of navel-gazing and turning away from the immediacy of life and its demands is often levelled at Buddhism.) This is to miss the point. It is the passion-charged need to have the world fashioned in our own image, to have it live up to our own expectations. The Buddha pointed out that the basis of this one-sided and partial view lay in our lack of awareness or ignorance of our wanting and of our ill-will when it is frustrated.

Intellectually most of us understand this, the problem arises in doing

something about it. Here speculation ends and practice begins, We urgently need to become aware of the blind impulsive forces that drive us. Becoming familiar with the teachings, reflecting on them and then putting them into action are the three stages of following in the Buddha's footsteps. These, if wholeheartedly pursued, will bring us into intimate proximity with the fires of desire, anger and delusion. Once truly seen into and worked with they become a source of warmth, action and clear seeing, untouched, they remain a hazard not only to ourselves but to all,

with the greatest respect: The man was an eagle, now he can stretch his wings.

Have we lost a friend? What would Trevor say? One of his books on the website is based on the Bhagavad Gita, the text that he quoted from through the oxygen mask.

One section called Rebirth has the following passage quoting the Gita itself: As the wearer casts off worn-out clothes and puts on himself others which are new, Even so, casting off worn-out bodies, the body-wearer passes on to new ones. He said a master of meditation remarked that the idea of reincarnation contains hints at wider truths than the bare idea of things wearing out and being replaced, which to many older people has a depressing ring. They find their bodies less and less reliable, and less competent to fulfil most of the purposes of life as they have understood them. The master continued: a personality, if it has been used properly and polished every day by meditation, may become less active in the affairs of the world, but it spreads an atmosphere of quiet peace. It has a sort of subdued radiance. In fact old clothes are generally much more comfortable than new ones; they have come to adapt to the body. When we are wearing new clothes, we generally are not quite at ease. We take care that not a speck of anything drops on them, and we don't care to go out even for a moment into rain. Whereas with old clothes, though it is true that we handle them with care too, it is done with a kind of affection and without any worry. When they are finally laid aside, we give a little thought of gratitude for their faithful service. And it can be the same with the personality when it is time for that too to be laid aside.

"In this way we can bring meaning to the whole of the incarnation in which we find ourselves, instead of thinking of it as just the first part with the later parts as without real meaning."

Trevor then added, "Spiritual life can and should grow stronger every year!"

May we in our own lives try to follow his example of one-pointedness, despite all the obstacles he encountered, in carrying out what had been asked of him in the real spirit of the Ways.
Henry Curtis

Trevor Leggett — reminiscences

I don't think Trevor would approve of what is going to be said, but it is offered with affection.

Many of us here today are experiencing a sense of deep sadness when, perhaps, we hear in our mind's ear Trevor's voice making an amusing comment, or a memory of him sharing with us an insight or a fruit of his scholarship and practice, or even remember his broad grin when he was being teased.

To each of us Trevor showed friendship. No-one will have the same picture of him but each of us will be reminded of him innumerable times in the future. This may be when we hear again a piece of music that he used to play on the piano; or perhaps if we see a pair of dumb bells being swung from side to side, it will remind some of us of his determined efforts mastering the syntax of complex passages in Sanskrit which he had written on large sheets of paper hung on his wall. But whatever the circumstances of our contact with him, we all will agree that he tried to produce beauty and excellence in whatever he did.

The pictures we have of him are many faceted because his life was rich in interests. We will hear of his judo training both in this country and in Japan, his training of judo teachers, his frequent visits to Japan as Head of the Japanese Section of BBC Radio, and his weekly broadcasts in Japanese with John Newman, a real friend.

But there was also his deep interest in Yoga and Buddhism which brought him into contact with followers of other faiths. It would be too easy to say that Trevor was a Buddhist or a Christian or Trevor was a follower of Yoga, in the tradition of his teacher Dr Han Prasad Shastri. His studies in these faiths were deep and prompted by the wish to make the teachings understandable and available to all, as he understood that his teacher wanted him to do.

He lectured for many years at Yoga groups around the country, at Buddhist and Theosophical groups and always included vivid training stories, helpful cameos of situations that could be applied in daily life, and always his talks were well received. He regularly used to say that there are many in our society who are bewildered, who are crying out for spiritual teachings. They recognise something is wrong but have lost their way among the glittering offerings of a materialistic society. He did his best to show that there are Ways, and that Truth is not the exclusive right of any one Way, but each can offer a particular facet or approach according to the temperament of the seeker.

His love of the traditional teachings of Yoga and Buddhism was deep, and his commitment to carrying out the wishes of his teacher was firm

right up to the end of his life. Two of us visited him in hospital on the Saturday before he passed away. Perhaps this typifies his life of overcoming difficulties - not solely by will but also in a sort of joy. Trevor was lying in bed wearing an oxygen mask. Around him were several monitors and beepers, flashing and peeping in unison with his pulse and so on, three doctors were discussing his progress and two nurses were taking readings from the equipment. A scene of intense activity. We backed off not wishing to intrude, but a nurse told him we were there and he waved us to him.

What were his first words to us? A description of how he felt? A complaint that he found the oxygen mask difficult to breathe in? No, his first words to us were about the text we were going to study. He told us that there were more things waiting to be discovered in it, that there was a particular reference to Knowledge which needed to be followed up and we should look out for one verse in particular. Then despite his fever he started to quote the verse in Sanskrit through his oxygen mask. There was twinkle of delight and love in his eye as he did so, that will not be forgotten by either of us.

No-one can take the memories we have of him away and equally no-one here would have wanted him to continue dealing with the obstacles he was facing each day. This is said

Making Way (continued)

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wrought in the concept of the art. Moreover, the paper glosses over the organizational development of *Judo*, in order to accord more space to its philosophical development.

The term *Judo* (“the Way of pliancy”) is actually a linguistic modification of an earlier term *jūjutsu* (“the technique of pliancy”). The two arts are on the same continuum, with *Jujutsu* being the historical precursor to *Judo*. Yet *jūjutsu* itself is an exceedingly broad appellation, denoting a great range of dissimilar techniques and styles. Draeger and Smith “define” it thus: “*Jujutsu* can, therefore, be defined as various armed and unarmed fighting systems that can be applied against armed or unarmed enemies.” Obviously, this is not a terribly helpful definition, for it seems to include all of the martial arts. Despite this problem of denotation, we can trace the lineage of modern *Judo* with some precision by limiting our definition of *jūjutsu* primarily to empty-hand fighting systems which use a minimum of direct strikes that were developed mostly after 1600.

Perhaps from the dawn of human society, fighting and wrestling have been a significant part of every culture Japan is no exception. From the start, we find mention of this sort of combat in the early chronicles. In the *Kojiki*, an early Japanese history, the commoner Takemina-kata-no-kami fought the divine wrestler Takemikazuchi-no-kami for control of the land. Takemikazuchi won the islands for the sun goddess and her descendants (the people of Japan). Later, the *Nihon Shoki*, another history of Japan, chronicled an epic wrestling bout on a beach during the reign of emperor Sujin (249 - 280 c.e.) The combat concluded when one of the wrestlers, Nominosuke, threw his opponent, Taimano Kehaya, to the ground and kicked him to death. This sort of brutal contest characterized what was to be called *jūjutsu* up until fairly late into the Edo period (1600 - 1868).

Ironically, the time of the “classical warrior” (up to the late sixteenth century) is commonly idealized as a time when the warriors followed a pure *do*—that is, a path of pure and direct spirituality that was said to be an essential part of being a warrior. This *do* was to regulate

every aspect of the warrior’s life and make him a spiritually rich, contributing member of society. Nonetheless, old “war tales” (*Gunki monogatari*) give us the distinct feeling that this “Warrior’s Way” was most often observed in the breach. Numerous stories of disloyalty, treachery, and cowardice have been passed down.⁹ This alone should make us question the bizarre assertion that the early Japanese warrior was some sort of physically, morally, and spiritually superior being because he followed the tenets of the warrior’s *do*.

The precursors of *jūjutsu* in medieval times (c.1 185—c.1600) were many. It was not until the last century that the multitudinous forms of the martial arts were brought together under immense umbrellas like “*karate*” or “*Judo*.” One of the most important of these premodern forms was *sumai* (lit. “to struggle”). The combat techniques that were developed under the rubric of *sumai* were the predecessors of all Japanese empty-hand martial arts. One of these lines evolved into the style today called *yoroi kutni-uchi* (“grappling in armor”). This style involved techniques by which two warriors clad in full armor could do battle if they somehow lost their weapons. As empty-hand strikes would have been ineffective against someone so protected, the system used a variety of throws and holds which would allow one to use a special dagger to kill one’s opponent. Of course, to the *bushi* who never let his sword leave his side, *jūjutsu* was the very last resort; thus, it was relegated to a relatively minor position in the overall canon of techniques.

It is important to answer the question as to whether or not the concept of the Way was present at this early time. In the Kamakura era (1185 - 1333) some warriors spoke of “the way of horse and bow”. This incorporated Shinto and Confucianist thought and stressed bravery in battle and loyalty to one’s lord. However, the awareness and practice of this “Way” was confined to a rather minuscule portion of the nation. It is very important to note that even the most dedicated *bushi* expected to be well-rewarded for their services to their liege. In the following periods, the Muromachi (1392 -1573) and Azuchi-Momoyama (1573 - 1600), loyalty

became a “nominal virtue. As the society became more and more chaotic and unstable self-interest seemed to win far more victories for the warriors than self-abnegating loyalty. While one should recognize that there actually were small pockets of people who honestly pursued the ideal of a frugal and deeply spiritual life, the fact remains that the majority of warriors never thought consciously of the Way. While some may argue that their practice was simply unstated but present (“beyond words” like Zen), it seems far more probable that the vast majority of the *bushi* did not care about *satori* (Zen enlightenment) - they wanted survival.

The ruling family (the Tokugawa) were able to create a government which lasted unchallenged through 14 generations of their line. It was not until Perry “opened” Japan in 1853 that the nation saw any significant, widespread strife again. The basically civilian government officials tried to completely control the populace and yoke them to the status quo. The social classes were separated more rigidly, and there was a strong emphasis on the past. Additionally, tight legislative and police control mitigated against the sort of fighting that was so common during the time of the “classical warrior.” Therefore, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw a significant rise in the number of schools specializing in empty-hands forms, and a concurrent decline of the older, battle-oriented fighting arts. During this time of relative tranquility, the *bushi* remained as the privileged class, yet they maintained this exalted position through birthright, not through fighting skill:

Some of the *jūjutsu schools* became abstract and exaggerated. In time it was this type of *jūjutsu* that came to be most well known. The warrior class, which had developed and nurtured *combat jūjutsu*, slipped gradually into oblivion.”

As a “class of armed idlers,” the obsolescent soldiers were of profound concern to the government. In the mid-seventeenth century, groups of masterless samurai, called *ronin*, were constantly causing civil disturbances such as brawls and riots. Without the warfare of earlier time to occupy them, even *bushi* who were serving a lord

turned to the dissipation of drink and fighting. To combat this tendency, the government encouraged the men of this class to become bureaucrats, instead of *bushi*. This emasculation of the warrior class was further accomplished by keeping the fighters busy with a lot of pomp and ceremony, which allowed them nonetheless to bask in their forebears’ past martial glory.’ The state’s Neo-Confucianism discouraged excessive martial ardor, and pushed more worship of tradition itself: Tea ceremony, poetry, dancing, and painting came to occupy more time than martial training. Thus, with declining skill in the weapons arts, *jūjutsu*, once a minor martial technique, became the measure of ability for the anachronistic fighting class. Herein, the *bushi* were placed in an “ethical straightjacket” where they were prevented from living up to their martial tradition, yet they were compelled to revel in the glory of this past.

Concomitant with the decline of the *bushi* was the rise of the merchant classes. Though these entrepreneurs were faced with very stiff taxation, they were accorded a lot more freedom to enjoy their wealth and free time (within societal limits).² Thus, many of this group became interested in the martial arts. They intermingled with unemployed *bushi* and developed a great many styles (mostly types of *jūjutsu*) that completely lacked any sort of martial experience. As one nineteenth-century observer noted, “The wealthy farmers have forgotten their rank. They . . . wear swords [and] practice the military arts. This was the start of a group of martial arts significantly divorced from their original, practical, battlefield conception.

The early schools of *jūjutsu*, like Takenouchi ryu were a very eclectic group. There were at least 179 different schools recorded and they went by a multitude of names—*kogusoku*, *koshi-no-mawari*, *tajutsu*, *wajutsu*, *torite*, *kenpō*, *hakuda*, *shubaku*, *yawaro*—and dealt with a great variety of small weapons and empty-hands techniques. The schools of the Edo period made substantial modifications to the earlier, purely pragmatic martial arts traditions. While exclusively empty-hand forms were primarily a product of the subsequent era, these Edo schools tended more and more towards specialization that is, to non-combat-tested, empty-hands techniques. Moreover, most schools only

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Making Way (continued)

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stressed one or two major methods (striking, throwing, choking, joint locks, etc.). The need for technical achievements lessened as the peaceful times wore on, and beauty of motion as achieved by minimum use of strength became more and more prized. This radical aesthetics was developed to absurdity in some schools, which went so far as to claim that physical strength was a detriment jū,jutsu. This is not to say that the matches among the various practitioners were not dangerous. Even at the end of this period, the bouts could still be quite brutal: In those days the contests were extremely rough and not infrequently cost the participants their lives. Whenever I sallied forth to take part in any of those affairs, I invariably bade farewell to my parents, since I had no assurance that I should ever return alive.

Because the *jūjutsu* schools became increasingly the domain of ne'er-do-wells and thugs, they eventually lost popularity with general public in late Edo times "reckless application of *jūjutsu* on innocent people made rowdiness and *jūjutsu* synonymous. Thus, by the time Dr. Jigorō Kanō came on to the scene in the 1860s, he had to overcome great obstacles to the acceptance of his art as a way of moral development. As stated earlier, the Japanese concept of the *do* was important in the development of modern Judo. Influenced by Taoist and Confucian conceptions of the *Tao* or "Way [of Heaven]", the Japanese molded the idea to fit native religious and political requirements. For some later practitioners of the art, *do*, became an all-encompassing concept which made the heart of the martial arts beat. *DO* was seen as a road or path to follow as a means of self-cultivation and perfection in this life.

Closely connected to this new formulation was Zen Buddhism. A sort of "plastic Zen" developed warriors, in an attempt to justify their obsolescent place in the society took several small parts from the broader Zen concept and applied them to their own art. To these "Zen arts," perfection of self was more important than perfection of technique. As it was said that the "mind" of the martial arts was one in the same with the Zen mind, the "Zen warrior" was to become self-reliant, self-denying, and single-minded. This mythic fighter would have no attachment to life or death (*seishin-o-choetsu* "transcending life and death" he could calmly accept ever-presence of death in his profession. With stoic composure and trust in fate, this warrior would practice the "artless art," which transcended technique.

These ideas caught the fancy of a great many contemporary practitioners who stressed *principles* of the "Way" rather than the *product* of the techniques. Few of the original formulators of this theory would have guessed how very pervasive these ideas would become. A cursory survey of the current literature on the "Way of the martial arts" will provide innumerable examples of this tendency: The mastery of any martial art is extremely difficult to achieve and master status cannot be reached unless the student is trained to the Zen doctrine level of enlightenment.

Concepts of Zen and Bushido [the Way of the Warrior] are at the core of values in both Japanese society and Judo participation." Herein, we can see a very important shift of priorities classical martial arts stressed (in order) combat, discipline, and morals; the new martial ways stressed morals, discipline, and aesthetic form. Though some of the classical forms persist to the present day, they are hardly noticeable next to the

gargantuan edifice of the *do* forms. This assertion that the martial arts are closely connected to inner Zen doctrine cannot go unchallenged. While it is true that the Kamakura government allied itself to the new Zen faith, it was primarily as a way to gain much needed cultural legitimacy. The idea of the Zen-influenced *do* is largely a twentieth-century construct, in fact, the first explicit formulation of these theories did not occur until the mid-eighteenth century. Moreover, many of those who claimed to follow these lofty aspirations were hardly scrupulous in living up to them. As Ratti and Westbrook put it: Whenever the doctrine of *bujutsu* attempts to claim the lofty beliefs of the Oriental doctrines of enlightenment as the inspirational motivations underlying the practice of the martial arts, it must be observed that to proclaim one's adherence to these values in theory and to live up to them in practice are two entirely different things.

Today, this trend continues as the market is glutted with the "Zen and the Art of" books. As a buzzword, advertisers realize that the exotic mysticism of Zen sells, and researchers like Csikszentmihalyi and Maslow find that Zen and the *do* concept are useful paradigms around which to center their psychological discussions. Yet these manifestations have little to do with the actual practice of Zen. Perhaps the most logical statement comes from Tu Wei Ming, a prominent scholar of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism: "without practicing *zazen* or doing *koan* for the sake of *satori*, the practitioner of 'Zen arts' ceases to be a student of Zen." At best, we term martial art "Zen-influenced," but they are clearly not Zen itself.

Despite the contrary historical facts, there has been a definite trend to rewrite the martial past of Japan. This tendency was most marked in the Edo period (when the government welcomed the idealization of the warriors way) and

in the time of the early contact of Japan with the Occident. The *bushi* was not only idealized as the model warrior but as the model person, spiritually and morally. T. Shindachi, in one of the first lectures on *judo*, in the West (at the Japan Society of London in 1892), reflects this tendency: Historically considered, it is quite obvious that *Jūjitsu*, and other military exercises, had wonderful influence in the maintenance of the old chivalric spirit. It is remarkable how well-maintained was social morality through the period of the feudal system in Japan. when there was no established religion fit for the purpose. Whether the good lecturer had simply forgotten completely the long and bloody history of the martial arts in his country we cannot say, but the comment does point up the tendency to rewrite the past, in what may be seen as a defense of Japan's cultural forms to the West.

Making Way—War, Philosophy and Sport in Japanese Judo
Continues in the next issue.

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