



# The Bulletin

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## The Kano Society

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### The Bulletin - Editor's comment

In this edition—We sadly report the tragic loss of our founder Richard Bowen. The Kano Society had four founder members Richard Bowen, Syd Hoare, Stan Brogan and Malcolm Hodgkinson but it was Dickie's inspiration that gave birth to the society.

His loss is a great blow personally and 'professionally'.

Dickie was a great historian and he provided much of the archive material which we have been using in the Bulletin and on our website as well as other sites. He is greatly missed.

**News** - The Kano Society AGM and social event takes place on Sunday 8th May—Please look at the web site for details and for further information. Regards Diana Birch

## Farewell to Richard 'Dickie' Bowen

### Richard Bowen Historian and Budokwai Vice President Died Monday 24th January 2005

**Dickie Bowen  
1926-2005**

It is with deep sadness I have to announce the death of British Judo pioneer Richard (Dickie) Bowen 4<sup>th</sup> Dan and Vice-president of the Budokwai. Dickie started Judo at the Budokwai in 1949 and progressed to 2<sup>nd</sup> Dan. At the age of 30 he was selected to represent Great Britain in the 1956 First World Judo Championships held in Japan.

This was in the days of no weight categories and the championships were fought down to one man with no repechage system. Dickie who was a light middleweight got through the first two rounds which placed him in the last eight and then he lost to Courtine of France.

In the final, Natsui of Japan beat Yoshimatsu also of Japan. Third places went to Courtine and Geesink of the Netherlands.

After these world championships

Dickie stayed on in Japan for two years training hard at the Kodokan as a Kenschusei (special research student). He then returned to the UK as a 4<sup>th</sup> Dan and with his Japanese wife Ayako. He subsequently carried on teaching at the Budokwai and was very active in the BJA where he grew to a massive half a million words for some time.

Dickie wrote quite a lot about judo both in book form and for the Budokwai Bulletin. He was meticulous in his research and both in book form and for the Budokwai Bulletin. He was a frequent visitor to all the government record offices and major libraries. I understand that in the last year he arranged for his huge library of judo books and his history book to be included myself (I forget who the other one was).

Dickie was certainly a traditionalist. At a time when the BJA massively hiked up the grades with its blanket promotions Dickie steadfastly refused to accept his promotion while others soared to dizzy heights. He preferred his Japanese grade.

He was a quiet, generous man but very fierce about his judo. He believed that there was a moral side to judo and would not tolerate dodgy conduct from others in his immediate world. He leaves behind his wife Ayako and his son Sean. British judo has lost another star in its firmament.

Syd Hoare



**Richard Bowen  
Pictured October 2004**

Monday 24th January 2005  
Richard Bowen Judo Historian, Founder of the Kano Society and Vice President of the Budokwai passed away in his sleep early this morning. Words are inadequate to describe how saddened I am to be giving this news to you all.  
Dickie was a man of utmost integrity and an honourable judo man in the mould of Koizumi and Kano.  
His passing is a very deep loss to the Judo World and a personal loss to all his many friends and colleagues. Our sincere condolences go to Ayako and their son Sean.

The last photographs which we took of Dickie were in October 2004 when he was being interviewed for a video about Gunji Koizumi and also for 'Zip' Allan Zipeure's 90th birthday tribute.

This footage is now being put together as a small tribute to Richard 'Dickie' Bowen and will be available in the very near future.

Please email or write in if you would like a copy.

See back page for address for media.

## My First Instructor—John Pinnell

### My First Instructor - John Pinnell

Dickie Bowen was my first instructor at the Budokwai, when I started judo as a junior some 40 years ago. I was impressed by his passion when teaching us youngsters, a topic which he clearly loved. The patience he applied in getting us to use our bodies in the right way, to get the timing and movement right. The way he persevered, especially with the less athletically inclined again reflected his love for the sport and his keenness to help promote his passion to others.

His credentials were similar to the majority of the other instructors at the club, in as much as he had spent a number of years training in Japan. What was less well known was that he had represented Great Britain in the First World Championships in 1956. A fact that I discovered much later and not from Dickie who tended to be very modest about his own achievements. It is interesting to think back to those early days of judo, the dedication needed to achieve selection to repre-

sent your country and then win through to the last eight of an international open weight competition. Not being over awed by others in the competition, who were of a considerably greater stature, including a young Anton Geesink. In addition, he did not have the benefit of the facilities available now for sportsmen and women - the coaching support structure, sponsorship and other funding.

You can see glimpses of Gunji Koizumi and Trevor P Leggett in Dickie's philosophy for life and for whom I know he had great affection. His dedication to the promotion of judo through the sponsorship of events at the Royal Albert Hall, to articles in the Budokwai bulletin and to serving on the technical committee of the British Judo Association. Precisely what impact he had on the British judo scene is hard to predict but it was obviously of considerable significance and he



1997 Budokwai against Tokyo University

Dickie Bowen, Vice-President of the Budokwai and member of the first British team that took part in the 1956 first World Championships in Tokyo where he reached eighth. Here he is present at the 1997 match between the Budokwai and Tokyo University.



Dickie Bowen 1974

Dickie Bowen at the celebratory dinner for Marcus Kaye's fiftieth year of membership of the Budokwai

was a much respected figure, held in high regard, by his many friends in the UK and the international judo community.

Over the last few years we have talked on a regular basis and whilst the focus ended up on judo it covered a wide range of topics. In a typical Dickie fashion it would often start off about a particular nugget of information that he had discovered and which he wished to share.

In looking back over these few words I have written, I wonder whether I can do justice to the man, can I get the balance right, place the right emphasis on what I wish to say and what he achieved in his life time. The more you reflect, the more you are aware of those great areas of his life as a businessman as a husband and father where you have little knowledge. So maybe the simplest way to sum him up was as a mentor and a friend.

John Pinnell

A funeral service was held for Dickie on Thursday 3rd February at 11am at Putney Vale Cemetery, Stag Lane, Putney, which was attended by a large number of friends and colleagues

Dickie we all miss you—and miss our long phone conversations.

## The Relevance of Kata—An Interview with Trevor P Leggett

*Trevor Pryce Leggett was largely responsible for shaping post-war British Judo and coached many of our leading Instructors.*

*Nicholas Soames conducted this interview with TP in 1982 regarding Kata and the place it has in Judo.*

The British Judo world has never really taken to Kata. Though Dr Jigoro Kano regarded Kata as one of the two main ways of learning Judo, emphasis has continued to be placed on Randori, and despite the fact that Kata is a requirement for senior grades, and there are Kata championships, the number of people who practice Kata regularly remains small.

This is probably the result of Judo being regarded primarily as a competitive sport rather than, as Dr Kano envisaged, a more complete training, an education.

However, there is a certain irony in that international opinion accords a series of books on Kata written by an Englishman as one of the best to be written. The books are of course, by Trevor Leggett, and have recently been re-issued by W. Foulsham in one volume (covering Nage-no-Kata, Katame-no-Kata and Ju-no-Kata) called *Kata Judo* (£7.95).

Leggett is now 68 and, since he retired from Judo in 1964, has become one of the leading translators of Japanese Buddhist texts (he



**TP Leggett at the BBC**

was, for many years, head of the Japanese Service of the BBC) and, more recently, translator of abstruse Sanskrit documents. But in the mid-20's, Leggett became the first Western student to be invited to study Judo in Japan at The Kodokan and, during his years there immediately preceding the Second World War, followed a traditional training pattern.

The object was not so much to train for specific competitions but to

regard Judo as a 'Shogyo,' an ascetic practice, pursued for personal development; thus Leggett would spend four or five hours a day, divided into Randori, private lessons under 10th Dans Mifune and Nagaoka and other senior instructors and Kata. After the war, he incorporated the training methods he learnt in Japan in his teaching at The Budokwai and then at The Renshuden Judo Academy which he founded. By the early 1960's he was fairly pleased with the progress of the Randori, but Kata, he felt, was less

well developed – and it was to raise the standard of Kata that he wrote the books on Nage-no-Kata and Katame-no-Kata; and, using unique and historically important photos of Dr Kano himself, Ju-no-Kata. The photographs had been entrusted to him by Jigoro Nango, the then President of The Kodokan following the death of Dr Kano, to be used to further the spread of Judo in the West.

Though Leggett has now been out of the Judo scene for nearly 20 years, he still has clear and definite ideas on the value of Kata and the direction Kata should take.

"I think Kata has a value, not only for people who are getting on in years, but also for people who are still contesting," he said in a recent interview following the publication of *Kata Judo*. "One of the perils of going to contests is that gradually you develop your own stuff and you are liable to get narrower and narrower and more and more fixed in your Judo."

"Now, there ought to be something which you exercise which makes you interested in things which you are not particularly good at, and that you do not use in contest. Kata does that. I suppose it corresponds to the scales that a musician does. A musician will do his scales not as a musical expression, but as a training. He will do

*(Continued on page 4)*

### TP Leggett with Kisaburo Watanabe





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## The Relevance of Kata—An Interview with Trevor P Leggett (cont)

*(Continued from page 3)*

scales he is not very good at, and scales like thirds and sixths which don't come very often in the pieces that he plays. But he does them anyway, so that if he does come across them he is not afraid of them.

"So I think there is a value in Kata, but it must have meaning to those who practice them. Part of the trouble is that people don't think about the Katas. It is just like reading a sacred book or doing a sacred ceremony. People don't think. They say: 'I expect it means something,' but that is a big mistake. In that sense, I hope the book will be a stimulus to people."

Mr. Leggett draws a parallel between the way most people read Zen stories and the way they approach Kata. He is known for collecting and using those short stories, which are often used as training mediums in the Eastern spiritual traditions rather than studying cold, philosophical treatises. In his new collection of such stories — *Encounters in Yoga and Zen — Meetings of Cloth and Stone* (Routledge and Kegan Paul £4.95) Leggett remarks that the stories are not merely to charm the reader, but to 'act as flint and steel in making a light.'

The same should apply, remarks Mr. Leggett to the study of Kata. He himself made a special study of Nage-no-Kata, which is why he added a short commentary in which he elaborates briefly on Dr Kano's three aims in devising the Katas — to deepen and perfect the study technique; as a method of physical development and education; and as a means of spiritual training. "There is an inner thread in the Kata," added Mr. Leggett.

Despite his respect for the Katas in general and Nage-no-Kata in particular, Mr. Leggett feels that they would be more meaningful with some modi-

fications. "For instance, the first technique of Nage-no-Kata is an absolute killer. It knocks out 90 per cent of the people who try it after that first terrible experience, and it makes it rather difficult to be done by older people.

"I think somebody with great experience ought to reconstruct the Kata, also introducing throws to the rear, for instance, as well as modifying it in other ways. Some of the forms are very old fashioned - Uchi Mata is never done that way now. Kata must have meaning in modern times!"

"One of the difficulties with the Japanese is that they are not very good at modifying things. They fossilise them and then you get a sudden genius who scraps the whole thing and starts a new one. For instance, the thumb inside the Judogi, Dr Kano discovered that the thumb can be broken in a twisting movement, so it is now not allowed. But when you see the old demonstrations of Ju Jitsu, they still do it—because they won't change the tradition.

"I do not think that the modification of Kata need necessarily come from Japan, but it is no good changing just because you think 'Oh, we will make a British Kata.' It has got to be done by somebody who knows both sides, the Japanese end, and who has great experience — has been a contest man, but who is also a good all-round technician; and someone who has also got the application and the concentration. It is no use just stringing together a few tricks. You want an inner thread. As I said, there is an inner thread in Nage-no-Kata, but a new one can be constructed!"

Though essentially a pragmatic man, Leggett does feel that tradition has a place, even in the modern world, so long as the tradition itself is understood. "Those last two sets of the Nage-no-Kata, for instance, are for people in armour and if you know that, it makes more sense. I can remember the first time I saw Nage-no-Kata, those last six techniques looked all the same to me, just one man falling down and the other man rolling over him."

And as for the Uchi-Mata he re-marked: "I once asked a very senior teacher why we don't use the modern form of Uchi-Mata. He said to me that the basic principles are illustrated just as well in the ancient form as in the modern form of it. So I said: 'Wouldn't it be better to use the modern form as it illustrates the principles equally well!"

and I wondered what he would say to that. He replied: 'Traditionally, the principles have been illustrated by these forms.' So I said: 'Well, if you had an English grammar, you would illustrate it with modern sentences, with modern English.' And he said (and for a Japanese who didn't speak very much English, it was quite a surprise): 'I have seen English grammars with illustrations from Shakespeare.'

"I couldn't think of anything more to say. It was a good point. It is true, they still put Shakespeare in modern grammars.

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