



The Bulletin

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In this edition - Llyr Jones has sent us a contribution from himself and Carl de Cree on the Go-no-kata.

News - this year we celebrate the Olympics in London and many judoka will be visiting from all over the world—so an ideal time to see some more articles by active judoka! Again we remind you that we have quite a collection of video material now and would be happy to arrange showings for clubs. Remember you can buy copies through the website. Sets of Bulletins may also be purchased on CDs.

The Kano Society

Go-no-kata: The “lost” Kata of Kodokan Judo? By Carl De Créé and Llyr Jones

Background

Kata are formal pattern exercises containing idealised model movements to illustrate specific combative principles. They can be thought of as representing the grammar of *judo*, and Jigoro Kano himself stated that the proper study of *judo* had to involve both *randori* and *kata*.

Over the last five years or so the international *judo* community has witnessed a renaissance in *kata* practice, driven largely by the increasing organisation of international *kata* championships. Notwithstanding this recent upturn in interest, the true educational cohesion between *randori* and *kata* has been largely lost during the progressive ‘sportification’ of *judo*—which is now often reduced to a crude conglomerate of isolated throws merely based on power, endurance, and



The ‘tenth’ kata, Go-no-kata [Figure 1],

athletic achievement.

There are ten Kodokan-recognised *kata* in *judo* today, this is despite most popular sources wrongly claiming that there would be only seven or eight or nine official Kodokan *kata*. They are as follows:

1. *Nage-no-kata* - Forms of Throwing;
2. *Katame-no-kata* - Forms of Controlling;
3. *Kime-no-kata* - Forms of Decisiveness;
4. *Kodokan goshinjutsu* - Kodokan Self-Defense [Forms];
5. *Ju-no-kata* - Forms of Non-resistance;
6. *Itsutsu-no-kata* - The Five Forms;
7. *Koshiki-no-kata* - The Antique Forms;
8. *Sei-ryoku-zenyo Kokumin-Taiiku* - National Physical Education According to the (Principles of) Best Use of Energy;
9. *Joshi (judo) goshinbo* - Methods of Self-Defense for Women;



Toshiyasu Ochiai-sensei, 8th dan
[Figure 2]

10. *Go-no-kata* - Forms of (Proper) Use of Force.

In recent years, the 'tenth' *kata*, *Go-no-kata* [Figure 1], has become the subject of renewed interest within *judo* circles. However, finding accurate information on the *Go-no-kata* or locating a skilled teacher for this form is very difficult with, until recently, enquiries to the *Kodokan* resulting in no response, or a response stating that *Go-no-kata* does not or does no longer exist, would have been discarded by Kano and should not be studied. A further complication is that much of the information in circulation on the *Go-no-kata* is ambiguous or wrong. This is due mainly to modern *judo* authors failing to recognise important mistakes contained in early Western *judo* books, as well as the fabrication in recent years of a hoax *Go-no-kata*

	剛の形 GO-NO-KATA
一	背負投 SEOI-NAGE
二	後懸 USHIRO-GOSHI
三	袖投 SUKUI-NAGE
四	左背負投 HIDARI-SEOI-NAGE
五	浮懸 UKI-GOSHI
六	襟絞懸懸 HADAKA-JIME-KOSHI-KUDAKI
七	飛越浮懸 TOBI-NOSHI-UKI-GOSHI
八	大外懸 O-SOTO-OTOSHI
九	後懸 USHIRO-GOSHI
十	肩車 KATA-GURUMA

Figure 3 - The Techniques of the *Go-no-kata*

containing blows, and allegedly based on a fusion of *judo* and *karate* techniques. *Inter alia* these factors have led many to believe that the *kata* had been lost.

Despite being popularly thought of as defunct, the *Go-no-kata* survives today, having initially been preserved in Tokyo by a small group of senior *judoka*, and now also by a handful of experts abroad. To be particularly credited for the preservation of *Go-no-kata*, are Yoshiyuki Kuhara-sensei, 9th dan (until his death in 1985), and more recently, his nephew Toshiyasu Ochiai-sensei, 8th dan [Figure 2]. Evidence also that the *Kodokan* is now moving slowly to recognise *Go-no-kata* as a legitimate and existing *kata* comes via Toshiro Daigo-sensei, 10th dan's broad multi-part article on *kata* - "*Kodokan Judo Kata*

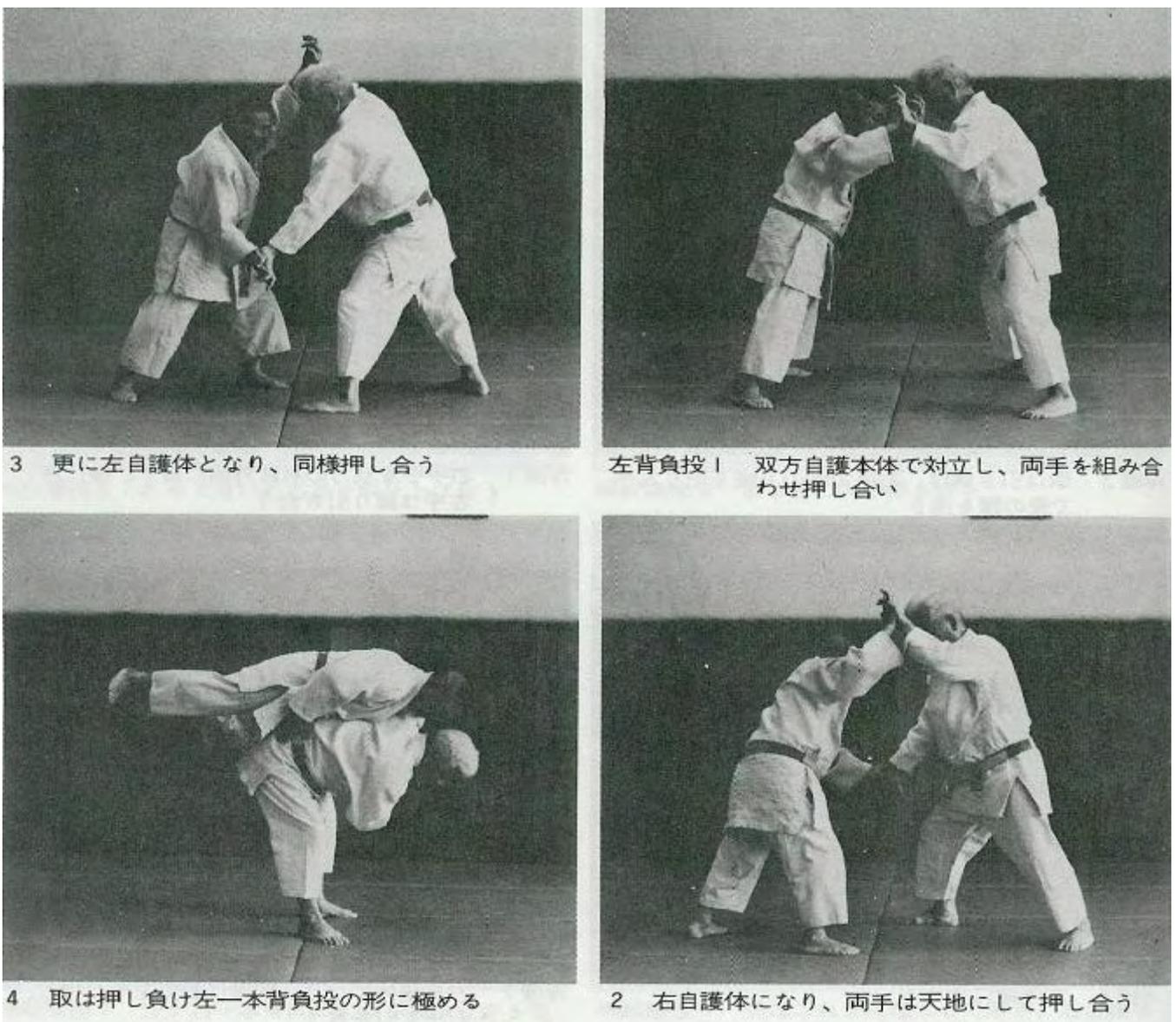


Figure 4 - *Hidari-seoi-nage* (From De Créé & Jones, 2009, page 89, figure 6, with permission of the publisher of the Archives of Budo, International Scientific Literature, Inc., USA)

ni Tsuite” (“About the *Kata* of *Kodokan Judo*”) which was serialized in seven parts in the contemporary *Kodokan* periodical “*Judo*” from the last months of 2008 until the first months of 2009.

We aim in the present article to remove the confusion and mystery which surrounds the *Go-no-kata*. The material that follows is a summarised synthesis of our more extensive work on this topic published elsewhere, and which was based on careful critical analysis of the available literature and rare source material on this *kata*, as well as interviews with top-experts.

Go-no-kata

The *Go-no-kata* was created during the period of transition from *jujutsu* to *judo* and is a consolidated set of primitive *judo* forms practised in a defensive *jigotai* position. It is loosely derived from techniques in *Kito-ryu* and *Tenjin Shin'yo-ryu jujutsu* that Jigoro Kano *shihan* had studied and is also among the oldest of the *Kodokan kata*. Initially called the *Go-Ju-no-kata* and designed to complement the *Ju-no-kata*, the *kata* consists of ten techniques [Figure 3] whereby at first both (*Tori* and *Uke*) confront each other with force against force (*go*), but later *Tori* makes best use of *Uke*'s force (*ju*) for a decisive move (*kime*) [Figures 4, 5 and 6].

The *Go-no-kata* provides a framework for the correct learning of the basics of *judo* without throwing. It teaches *Tori* to use force effectively – without ever relying on force as the primary means to overcome *Uke*. Additionally, the *Go-no-Kata* teaches the precision use of one's body – especially how to use both focused strength and yielding at critical timings during *judo* techniques. The *Go-no-kata* also serves as an intense *judo*-based exercise to foster will (*shi*), spirit (*ki*) and strength (*ryoku*).

Original comments provided by Kano-*shihan* in an early *Kodokan* periodical, “*Yuko-no-katsudo*” show beyond any doubt that the *Go-no-kata* was and is a special and never completed set of ten exercises for two people.

“*Go-no-kata* or at times called *Go-Ju-no-kata*, I remember having taught it some time in the past but my study was not complete; three or four out of the total ten forms in it, I did not like. I had thought of reviewing it but left it as it was.”



Figure 5 - Ushiro-goshi



Figure 6 - Preliminary movements to Hidari-seoi-nage



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In this kata, at first both [Tori and Uke] will push, pull or twist each other hard and in the end one [Tori] will win by surrendering himself to the force.

I am thinking of completing it in future and teach it in the Kodokan As for now, you may study it or not study it, which is up to you."

Kano-shihan's own writings therefore indicate that he was not entirely satisfied with some elements of the *Go-no-kata* and so abandoned, or at least, delayed its final revision. Kano-shihan died before having been able to rework, revise or expand the *Go-no-kata* — however, he never rejected the *kata* or its practice and it would be overstating the case to suggest otherwise.

Concluding Remarks

The evidence at hand confirms that *Go-no-kata* is neither lost, nor a *kata* of blows resulting from a fusion of *judo* and *karate* techniques, as has been suggested previously. Rather, *Go-no-kata* was designed by Jigoro Kano-shihan to provide useful insights into the theoretical fundamentals of *Kodokan judo* (the basic principle of conquering force with giving way) as well as a training exercise for improving fitness and core strength.

The reader interested in learning more about the *Go-no-kata* is directed to a trilogy of papers written by Professor De Créé and Dr Jones and published in 2009 in Volume 5 of the "*Archives of Budo*" — an online international peer review journal covering various aspects of education and research in martial arts, combat sports, and related areas — and the references therein.

Reference

De Créé C., Jones L.C.: *Kodokan judo's elusive tenth kata: The Go-no-kata* — "Forms of Proper Use of Force" (Parts 1-3). *Archives of Budo* 5: OF55-95, 2009. (Downloadable from: http://www.archbudo.com/abstracted.php?level=4&id_issue=834879)

Note

Japanese names in this article are listed by given name first and family name second, instead of traditional Japanese usage which places the family name first.

The Richard Bowen Collection



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

A copy of the video 'An Interlude with Richard Bowen' has also been donated to the collection.

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