



## The Kano Society Bulletin



Issue No. 35

June 2017

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### Editor's Comments

This special tribute issue of the "*Kano Society Bulletin*" is centred around the life, contribution and writing of John Cornish who recently sadly died.

As well as a detailed tribute / obituary we reproduce a number of expert and insightful articles written by John on *kata*, but also on elements of Japanese culture. These articles first featured in earlier editions of this *Bulletin*, or elsewhere. We hope you draw inspiration from this content.

We are also privileged to be able to include many historically significant photographs, and other scanned material, from John's own personal archive, that have been kindly shared with us by his family.

Llyr Jones prepared and edited this edition.

### Contributions

The backbone of the Kano Society's activities is this on-line publication. We welcome contributions articles or photographs etc. to "*The Bulletin*".

Thank you.

Regards Diana Birch

## A Special Sensei – John Cornish (1928 - 2018) By Diana Birch, Llyr Jones and John Pinnell



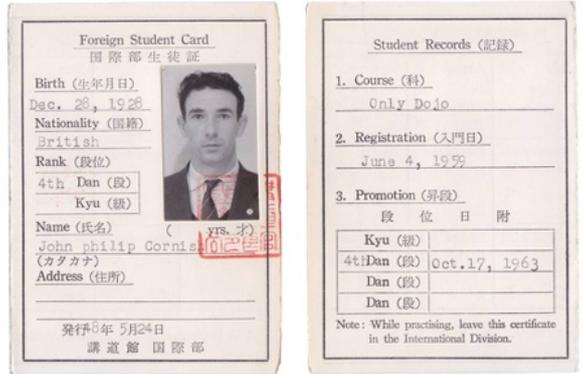
Born on 28 December 1928, *judo* and *aikido kodansha* [high grade holder] John Philip Cornish died on 11 April 2018. Japanese trained in both arts, John was renowned for his immense technical knowledge and expertise. Amongst his many distinctions, he was a titan in *judo kata* [forms], and his sad death at the age of 89 represents the passing of yet another great from the golden age of British *judo*.

Originally starting *judo* around 1950, John became a student of Trevor Pryce (TP) Leggett, one of the leading figures at The *Budokwai* at that time. A trailblazer in post-war *judo*, John followed the essential path to *judo* excellence – making the pilgrimage East for an extended period of traditional training in Japan. Having spent the two prior years accumulating the necessary finances, diligently studying Japanese in readiness, and of course practicing hard, he went to Japan in 1959 as a *judo shodan* (1<sup>st</sup> dan).

John enrolled at the *Kodokan* on 4 June 1959. Skipping *shodan* there, his promotion history at that institute was impressive, with him obtaining 2<sup>nd</sup> dan on 25 June 1959, 3<sup>rd</sup> dan on 29 June 1961 and 4<sup>th</sup> dan on 17 October 1963.



John Cornish's Budokwai Memberships



John Cornish's Kodokan Foreign Student Card



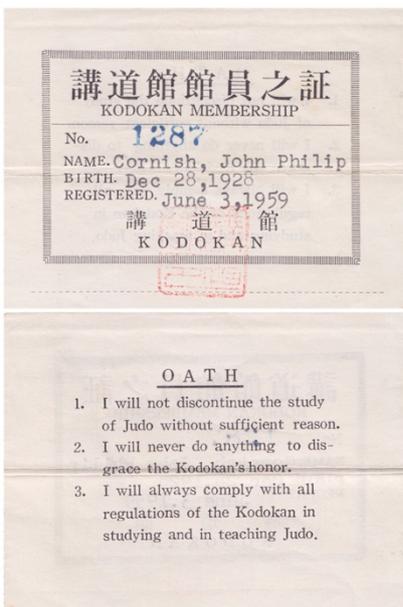
John Cornish throwing at The Budokwai



Kodokan group photograph with John Cornish



John Cornish - Shiai [Contest] at the Kodokan



John Cornish's Kodokan Membership

John always had a keen very keen interest in kata, and many of the highlights of his time in Japan, were in this aspect of judo. He especially focused on *Nage-no-kata* [Forms of Throwing] and *Kodokan Goshin-jutsu* [Kodokan Self-defence].

John's great *kata* skills were quickly recognised by the *Kodokan* and Japanese *judo*, and between 1961 and 1964 he participated in several *kata* demonstrations at prestigious events. These performances were often "firsts" for non-Japanese *judoka* to be involved in such a way. Commonly in *Nage-no-kata* demonstrations he took the role of *Uke*, but sometimes he took the role of *Tori* too.

John was *Uke* the second time *Nage-no-kata* was performed at the Tokyo Olympic Games. This was at the *Nippn Budokan* on 23 October 1964 as a prelude to the final of the Open-weight category, shortly before he returned to the United Kingdom. The celebrated US *budoka* Donn Draeger *Kodokan* 5<sup>th</sup> dan, was *Tori*. Previously John had performed *Nage-no-kata*, as *Uke*, at two All Japan *Judo* Championships, and Donn Draeger was *Tori* on at least one of those occasions. These performances were "firsts" for non-Japanese *judoka* to contribute in such a way.

John was also *Uke* to *Nihon University's* Saburo Matsushita (now *Kodokan* 9<sup>th</sup> dan) at the All Japan Industrial *Judo* Tournament. A notable occasion when John was *Tori*, was when he demonstrated *Nage-no-kata* with the Canadian Bob Geddes at the All Japan Police *Judo* Championships.



Seiichi Shirai (later *Kodokan* 9<sup>th</sup> dan), John Cornish, Donn Draeger

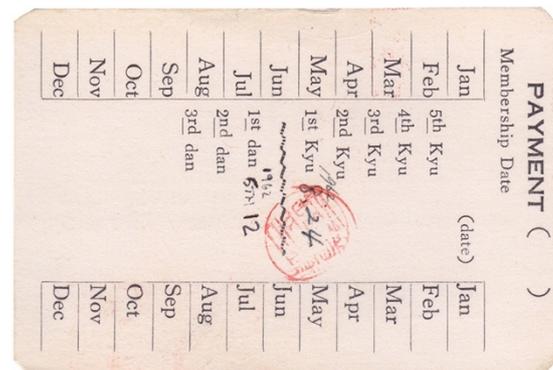
Whilst at the *Kodokan*, John's principle *kata* teacher was Sumiyuki Kotani (eventually *Kodokan* 10<sup>th</sup> dan). John remembered that the legendary Kyuzo Mifune *Kodokan* 10<sup>th</sup> dan once "looked in" when he was training with Draeger, and that he was unsure whether this was accidental or not. John noted that Mifune-sensei did not say anything to him or to Draeger, and thought "well an admiral does not talk to the ordinary seamen". He understood though that Mifune-sensei did pass his thoughts down through the ranks. When John was training with Matsushita, the pair had help from *Kodokan* teachers, and also a *kata* expert from *Nihon University*. He recalled that in one session that particular teacher made them go through *Nage-no-kata* three times at full power, which, as *Uke*, meant 90 hard falls for him. The teacher then made them do one throw he was unhappy with, fifty times, and the next day John had little pin-pricks of blood coming out of his pores where he had impacted with the *tatami* [mat]. John used to tell these stories to his own students, to show just how serious *kata* training was at that time in Japan. Whilst in Japan he also studied *Kodokan*

*Goshin-jutsu* as a direct student of Kenji Tomiki, who himself had played a very instrumental role in that exercise's creation.



Donn Draeger and John Cornish – *Nage-no-kata* demonstration Tokyo Olympic Games

John also studied *aikido* in Japan – specifically at the *Aikido Hombu* [Headquarters] *dojo* as a *soto-deshi* [outside student]. He took daily practice with a cast of celebrated teachers – including Kisaburo Osawa, Koichi Tohei, Kisshomaru Ueshiba, known as *Waka-sensei* [literally, "waka" means "young", however in this case the term of "waka" refers to the "successor" the person that will continue after his father as the international leader of *aikido* under its hereditary succession system], and *O-sensei* [great teacher] Morihei Ueshiba, *aikido's* founder, who graded him.



John Cornish's Membership Card for the *Aikiai Hombu Dojo*



John Cornish – aikido group

Off the *tatami*, John continued his study of Japanese – specifically at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ [Gaimu-sho] Japanese language school for foreigners, the *Gakuyukai*. It was there he met Ministry employee, Setsuko Kuga (born 1934) and they married in 1962. John’s Japanese language skills must have been highly developed, as he told Diana Birch a story of how he was once in a bookstore in Tokyo, and the librarian was at the top of a ladder sorting books on the top shelf. They were chatting to each other, with the librarian having his back to John. At one point the librarian turned, and on seeing a *gaijin* [non-Japanese person] fell off his ladder in shock. (John caught him.) The librarian was so shocked that John spoke such good fluent Japanese – he thought he was speaking to a local. Setsuko Kuga Cornish pre-deceased John in 2017, and he is survived by four daughters Gina, Janne, Millaine and Tanya.

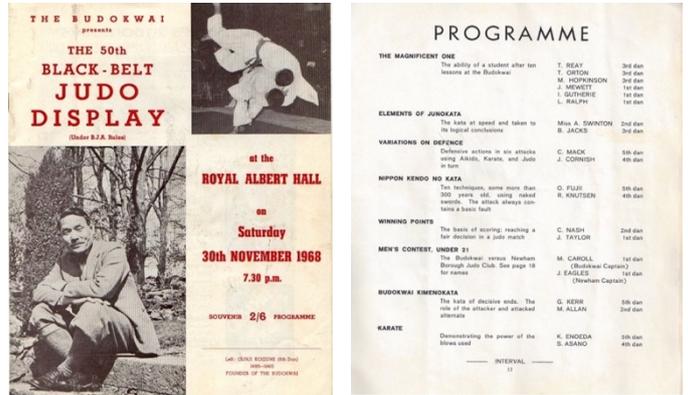


John Cornish and Setsuko Kuga Cornish



Tony Reay and John Cornish at a Language School in Japan in the late 1950s

Returning to the United Kingdom, after the Olympics, in November 1964, John taught *judo kata* and *aikido* at The *Budokwai* for over 40 years, where a countless number of students benefited from his wisdom and humour. He also participated in the special display to mark the fiftieth anniversary of The *Budokwai*’s founding, showing variations on attack and defence with another Japanese-trained *judoka*, Charlie Mack.



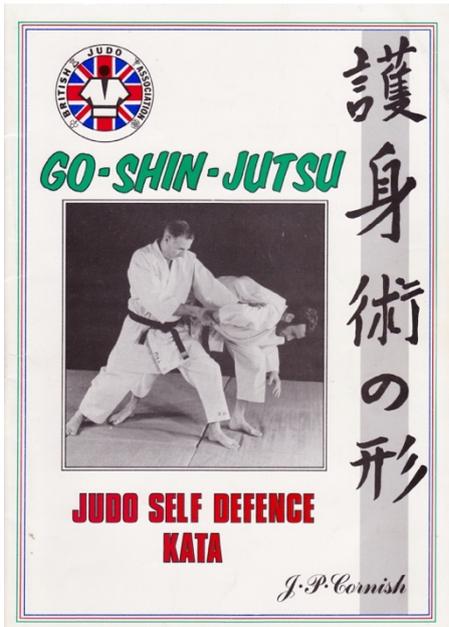
Official Commemorative Booklet for The *Budokwai*’s Fiftieth Anniversary Show held at the Royal Albert Hall on 30 November 1968.

A kindly and considerate *sensei*, John always engendered a positive atmosphere on the *tatami*, however, drawing on his own experiences in Japan, he always expected his students to apply themselves and show real effort. For many years, John was Director of Technical Services and an Honorary National *Kata* Coach for the British *Judo* Association (BJA), and in this latter role he always emphasised that the practical demonstration of *kata* was not important, and that it was the training and what one learnt from that training that counted.



The BJA’s foremost *kata* experts (L-R)  
Bob Thomas 8<sup>th</sup> dan, Mick Leigh 8<sup>th</sup> dan,  
Dennis Penfold 7<sup>th</sup> dan, John Cornish 7<sup>th</sup> dan

In 1984 John published a technical booklet for the BJA entitled “Go-Shin-Jutsu – Judo Self Defence *Kata*” which is still one of the most technically detailed English-language resources on *Kodokan Goshin-jutsu* available.



John Cornish's 1984 booklet "Kodokan Goshin Jutsu"

John Cornish: "Move your left foot forward."  
 Student - moves the right one forward  
 Cornish: "No, the other left foot!"  
 After demonstrating an advanced technique, musing to himself: "How can it possibly go wrong?"

A few of his descriptions of attacks in aikido and Kodokan Goshin-jutsu: "Hold on to his arm with both hands as if you are in the Tube and are holding the rails trying not to fall!" and "Are you a drinking man? Good! Then, grab his wrist as if you are grabbing a pint of lager...I said lager, not wine!"

During technique practise, urging the students to count the moves loudly, in whichever language they feel appropriate, yet shortly after doing that rushing to shut the windows of the dojo commenting that "we should not disturb our millionaire neighbours". The Budokwai being located in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in West London.

When demonstrating a one-handed technique, to keep the other arm out of the way: "Imagine you are holding the Emperor's baby - you wouldn't drop the Emperor's baby!" (making a slit throat gesture).

At the time of his death John held the judo grade of 7<sup>th</sup> dan – having been promoted to that rank by the BJA on 1 December 1992. In his later life was very fond of rearing and caring for the frogs, newts and other wildlife in the garden of his home in Newham, London.



John Cornish's teaching Kodokan Goshin-jutsu at the Kano Society's 2005 Autumn Course

After 60 years in budo, John decided to retire from all teaching in 2010. His last lesson was at The Budokwai on Friday 19 March 2010. On the occasion of his retirement, many of his judo and aikido students took to social media to recall some of his more memorable spontaneous comments during class. These included:

"If a train is coming what do you do? Get out of the way."

"Fingers are for gripping."

If you have two legs, move two legs. If you have three, move three."

"You can never be low enough."



John Cornish with Setsuko Kuga Cornish pictured in 2014



John Cornish pictured in 2014

Rest well John, you will be missed by all.

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## Ko-shiki-no-Kata, By John Cornish

First published in the November 1985 issue of "British Judo"

# KO-SHIKI-NO-KATA

By John Cornish, 6th Dan

Illustration by Millaine Cornish and kanji brush script by Setsuko Cornish.

WHEN I worked as a registered London guide, high on the list of places of interest was the Tower of London. In the busy season we were often forced to wait, or at best, only able to progress at a slow shuffle. This was because of the people up ahead stopping to look at the main attractions. At such times I would keep my group interested by talking about the armour arranged around the rooms and along the corridors which we otherwise might have only given a cursory glance.

Most of the tourists whether Western (mostly Americans) or Eastern (mostly Japanese) were surprised at how little they knew about armour of their own cultures. Those of us who practice Judo might take our thoughts one step further in such a situation. The questions we would probably ask ourselves could well be, "How would armour affect our Judo?" "Would an arm-lock be successful on a man wearing a full set of armour, and could I make it effective if I myself were in full harness also?" "What about my tokui-waza, could I still do it if I were in full armour (armed cap-a-pie)?" "Would shime-waza be of any use?" Questions like these would spring to mind. Unless our powers of imagination were unlimited we would not know all the answers—or even all the questions. In the West, to find information to answer such questions is practically impossible. The knowledge, tested by experience over the ages, has been lost—and we have only the remaining odd artifact to remind us of the fact. In the East the knowledge may also have been lost, but to a far lesser degree thanks to some martial arts schools. In those schools the techniques have been preserved by regular practice up to the present time.

The Kito School of Ju-jutsu was one of those schools and it was at that school the founder of Judo Jigoro Kano adopted Ko-shiki-no-kata as part of Judo. While making judo all the more richer those techniques used by men in armour were preserved.

There are two groups of techniques in this kata. They are called 'Omote' and 'Ura' which would translate as 'front' and 'rear'. They are however best thought of as 'first part' and 'last part' of the kata.

The 14 techniques in Omote are carried out rather slowly and at a pace one would expect a pair of people in armour would move. There is also a short pause between each technique. Executed in this fashion any weakness in stance, balance or technique by either partner become glaringly obvious. This may be the reason this kata is not used until 8th Dan promotion examinations at the Kodokan.

The seven techniques in Ura are carried out a little faster and without pause between them. This set shows us that we need this fashion of technique for the situation when the opponent survives the first throw and hoping to catch us unprepared, rushes for revenge. It shows us that such a situation forces an increase in pace and continuation of technique until a conclusion is reached. If there were more than one opponent such a situation would also demand the same style of application of 'Judo awareness' and 'continuation of technique'.

Most of the names for the techniques in Ko-shiki-no-kata will be unfamiliar to the average judoka and we have to admit they are more poetic than descriptive. To my ears however they are more pleasing than numbers and they are easy to remember. Mizu-guruma in English is water-wheel and we may agree that the outline of the two bodies during the throw resembles a water-wheel. Other throws however, though similar, have names not so easy to reconcile with the movement. One technique is known as Tani-otoshi (valley drop) and we may immediately think we are on familiar ground, but alas not so. The throw we know as Tani-otoshi however is found elsewhere in the kata. The first technique is called Tai (body) as in Tai-otoshi, but here it means the correct body posture as in Shi-zen-tai (natural posture). Shi-zen-tai is one of the fundamentals that we try to develop in the training we call kata and the fundamentals are the things that make kata more than a few techniques strung together.

In most of the Ko-shiki-no-kata Uke attempts an attack and Tori throws as a counter move. Therefore this kata, as with Ju-no-kata, Kime-no-kata and of course Go-shin-jutsu, is a self-defence kata. Fighting in armour is the extreme in self-defence and as it would only be done in battle would more than likely be a case of 'kill or be killed'. Once we have accepted this premise we must abandon tactics and habits we use under the protection of the rules of 'Sport Judo'. We must also be aware of our shortfalls in Judo technique—there are no Koka wins in self-defence!!

6



Judo practised without a judogi would not be recognised by many people, yet we must abandon the hope that an enemy will wear judogi. Similarly, we cannot expect to use our favourite judo grip. As we can see in this kata, the grips vary. There are grips on the arms, around the waist (if the opponent is not wearing a jacket), on the belt (sword-belt), taking advantage of cords, straps and joints in the armour (see illustration).

A notable grip used twice in this kata is on the Shikoro which is the protector for the nape of the neck. The Shikoro are firmly attached to the helmet (see illustration) and so are handy for moving the head and thus breaking the balance or getting a reaction for a combination throw. The helmet, being big and heavy, can have a whip-lash effect on the neck of the person being thrown. Even break it we are told. The throws that are said to have the greatest effect are grouped under the name of Ushiro-otoshi. The weight of the armour would create greater effect in that the fall would be heavier and there is less control.

Armour restricts movement for both Uke and Tori and in some ways can be a disadvantage. Even the bowing is carried out differently in this kata compared to Nage-no-kata. Armour is designed to give protection but it also has other advantages, one is the extra weight. In the Yoko-wakare family of throws Tori can use this weight to devastating effect. Against blows Tori can use the Uki-otoshi group of throws taking advantage of directional power, weight and Uke's movement—and so come near to the ideal of judo throws.

Uke of course plays an intrinsic part in kata. Some maintain the most important part and we must add his attempted techniques to the knowledge we gain by doing kata. Even though Uke's attempts never succeed his techniques must be perfectly feasible and truly attempted. Otherwise both Uke's and Tori's training will be impaired.

In this kata we easily recognise Uke's Koshi-nage attacks. Other attacks start with one handed grips or attempted grips. There is even an arms-crossed two-handed grip on the belt. The object of these attacks is open to differing interpretation because from each a variety of techniques can be carried out—maybe even our own tokui-waza.

We do not see any shime-waza in Ko-shiki-no-kata, perhaps because the Shikoro would get in the way. We see Uke attempting kansetsu-waza. As the main part of a throw Tori uses Ude-kansetsu-waza, but this of course is banned in 'Sport-Judo'.

We have only had a glance at the Ko-shiki-no-kata which is very rarely seen outside Japan. Nevertheless we have found one or two answers on what techniques are possible when it comes to close combat in armour. At least they point us in the direction to understand the problems and hopefully find answers to those problems connected with Judo carried out in other kinds of armour.

## Kagami Biraki

By John Cornish

A version of this article was first published in issue 2, December 2000, of the "Kano Society Bulletin"

If you consult a dictionary it will probably say, like mine, *Kagami-Biraki* is "The cutting of New Year's rice cakes". On the face of it this seems simple but like a lot of these things Japanese, the more you delve into it the more complex the subject gets. Even one word leads on to looking up another three or so and you can only give up when you decide you are overwhelmed by the seemingly inexhaustible things connected to the subject. The rice cakes mentioned are not the sweet baked things I originally thought they would be. This was in the days when you could not just go to a shop, buy and try one. These cakes are made from steamed rice pounded until it changes its structure and is then known as *mochi*. When it sets it looks like white hard toffee, and like toffee when it is warmed up it becomes a glutinous mass. If you were to "cut it" I think you would need a hack-saw. It can be broken by hand or can be hit with a mallet.

Even the "New Year" part of the explanation is not straightforward. The 11<sup>th</sup> of January is the date often thought about for *Kagami-Biraki*. A date used in former times was the 20<sup>th</sup> of January.

The purist will remind us that any date would be reckoned under the old lunar calendar, so they should be some time later in the year. These dates in February are still used in the country, by some people. Another time I'll have to look up how the Chinese New Year works in with the Japanese one. I bet that one is not straight-forward either. A reason for a date in February could be the Founding of the Japanese Empire by Jimmu Tenno on the 11<sup>th</sup> February 660 BC, so the date then could simply be an anniversary of this event.

A look at the *Kanji* i.e. adopted Chinese characters used for *Kagami-Biraki*, will show that *Kagami* is a mirror and *Biraki* is really the word *Hiraki* (from the verb *Hiraku* to open). This kind of thing is open to the Japanese play on words where real mirrors can be opened or uncovered. The mirror here is really the round, flattish mirror like rice-cake, *mochi*. There is a normal, non-mirror shape, *mochi* about the size of a scoop of ice-cream, so is an individual's amount and saves the cutting of a larger one.

鏡開き

Kanji for *Kagami-Biraki*

The mirror is one of the Imperial Treasures given to Jimmu Tenno by his great grandmother, the Sun Goddess Ameterasu. Let us not go into how she was enticed from the cave by the mirror. The ceremony, rather than the festival, was carried out by the *Bu-ke*. The West would call *Bu-ke* the *Samurai* Class, Clans, Families, etc. Again, the words can

lead us on a tangent, from what we are looking up. In modern times the folks in town can make *Kagami-biraki* into a merry occasion. The mirror shaped *mochi* is put on the *Kami-dana* for a while. The *Kami-dana* is the family's Altar.

The family Altar or where the *mochi* is placed would be one we can call *Shinto*. Though all sorts of variations can be seen in people's homes. *Shinto* itself can be mixed up with other religions, mostly Buddhist but even Christianity can be seen mixed in with *Shinto*. One of the safe things that can be said about pure *Shinto* Shrines, is they have unpainted wood throughout. So, any box the *mochi* is put on would be a plain wooden one. With the box, there may be the symbols of long life, strength, prosperity, constancy, virtue etc. These symbols are in the form of bamboo, pine, oranges, a lobster etc. Many of these are used because of the pun on the words for these things.



*Kagami mochi* [mirror rice cake] – a traditional Japanese New Year decoration

Above all these things, there may be a pure white rope with zigzag bits of white paper hanging down from it. This is the *Yoko-zuna*. Less expensive is the use of the zigzag papers alone. By the way, *Yokozuna*, the Top rank of *Sumo* wrestler gets its name from this rope, as the wrestler wears one around his waist when performing his individual *dohyo-iri* [ring entering ceremony] at the beginning of each day of a *Sumo* tournament. Similarly, for the New Year *dezu-iri* ritual performed by reigning *yokozuna* in the sanctuary of Meiji shrine.



Dohyo-iri – Chiyonofuji Mitsugu, the 58<sup>th</sup> Yokozuna

When eventually the *Kagami mochi* is eaten it is usually put into a soup named *Zoni* (literally "boiled mixture") and this is often very sweet ... But as with everything above, there may be variations.



Zoni

\* \* \* \*

## Mino – A Straw Cape

By John Cornish

A version of this article was first published in issue 5, March 2001, of the “Kano Society Bulletin”

During the *Tai-so*, *Uchi-komi*, and *Ran-dori* on the Sunday Judo training classes at The *Budokwai*, run by T.P. Leggett he would often quote a saying, or tell us a short story that he used to illustrate a point he wished us to consider.

One story that stuck in my mind was the one about a famous general that was out walking with his *aide-de-camp*. It came on to rain and the pair went into a peasant’s hut to borrow a cape made of straw, called a *mino*. They thought that even the poorest of peasants would have at least one *mino* for the general’s use. There was a young girl in the hut and on hearing the request, without answer, she left the pair for a while and came back and surprised the general by bringing a twig, of a plant called a *Yamabuki*, carried on an open fan.



A Mino Straw Cape

The *general* stormed out of the hut, and all the way back to the castle, railed against the peasant girl that was so lacking in understanding that, even on a rainy day, couldn’t understand the obvious need of a straw cape to keep off the rain. Then when she went on by offering a twig of the *Yamabuki*, “well it beggars belief” said the general.

The *aide-de-camp* waited for the general to cool down and then explained that the peasant girl was using a point from a poem that goes something like, “Isn’t it sad that the *Yamabuki*, that has many petals on each of its flowers, yet has no berries”. (In Japanese the word for berries is “*Mi*”.) The lack of fruit in the poem would be rendered “*Mi-no-nai*”. The lack of a cape would be rendered “*Mino-nai*”.

The general was embarrassed that he knew less about poetry than a poor peasant girl and decided from then on to change his exclusive study of the art of war and make a study of the more gentle and cultured arts as well. The general is now known as a well versed and cultured man who eventually retired from the world of the warrior, and became a monk. With the change of life to that of a monk he had a change of name to Ota Dokan. T.P. also told us that some martial arts schools insist that the students learn to play a musical instrument, and this is to help prevent the martial art students becoming mere wild fighting animals. T.P. left it to us what art would be suitable to keep us in touch with our humanity.

Upon going to Japan, I came across the story of the general and learned more details of the man. His name was Ota no Sukenaga (or Ota Dokan Sukenaga) and he was responsible in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century for building the great castle in Edo. This castle was later taken over by the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603-1868). Then on the Restoration of the Rule of the Emperor (Meiji) (1868) it became the palace of the Emperors, as it is today. Edo at the time of the Restoration (Meiji) had a change of name to Tokyo.



Ota Dokan Sukenaga

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## A Matter of Life and Death

By John Cornish

A version of this article was first published in issue 9, September 2003, of the "*Kano Society Bulletin*")

John Cornish wrote this critique in response to an article by Graham Noble on Yukio Tani that featured in issue 6 of the "*Kano Society Bulletin*". Therein, Diana Birch challenged readers to comment on the article, and over a year later John Cornish replied, objecting to the use of the word 'showman'.

### A Matter of Life and Death, Not Showmanship

The first article in the Bulletin number 6, was on Yukio Tani. The heading was "Traditional *Judo* or Showmanship?". The heading is, in my opinion, in bad taste. It's the sort of thing that someone unthinkingly says about someone else's religion. I was offended and thought if this was said about someone in modern times there would be a case for libel. In another period, instead of a modern trial for libel, we could have had a Trial by Battle, or in a nearer time in history, a duel in Hyde Park.



Yukio Tani by Marcus Kaye

To me showmanship means actors, (seemingly "actresses" are not talked about now) anyway they all want to be called "Stars". These actors rely on total illusion and look for their Heaven to Hollywood with its "paper moon over a cardboard sea". And can there be showmanship without plastic surgery, drugs, scandals used to enhance ratings, big fat fees, etc. Talking about fat fees, I have never heard how much Yukio Tani and the other Japanese got, but I bet it was nothing like stars get. There may have been money made, but did the lions' share go to the organisers or to the Japanese?

Whatever I think about showbiz folk and their life style, can their training and skill compare to that of Tani? I can't believe what Tani did was anything but a true demonstration of skill and spirit. I am sure we only know a little about the techniques Tani knew, and even less about the spirit that had to go with the techniques. This spirit of the Martial Arts, not only about the *Bu-gei* but the *Bu-shi-do* is real esoteric, so outsiders can't know. As an outsider I am willing to be

told there are esoteric things in Showbusiness that I can't know and wait to be told by someone that does know.

I believe this because of the strict training system people like Tani took part in. Their acceptance of harsh training and discipline imposed by the Master and the school. The acceptance of a duty towards the Master and the Group, to say nothing of that to the Country and the Emperor.

Donn Draeger tells us how hard a time Professor Kano had when he was learning *Ju-jutsu*. It seems he had so many bruises and so had to use so much liniment, when he was on the way to the *Do-jo*, he could be smelt before he could be seen. There are some films, where a young lad, or girl, after only a couple of lessons wins a contest against the reigning champion, I hope nobody is fooled by this kind of rubbish. The individual is modified into a Martial Artist only after an arduous and long period, and I am sure this was reflected in their outlook.

I have never been a Monk, but I think they must have the same acceptance, as the Martial Artist, through training, of attitudes that change them and can never really be lost. Shall we compare Monks also to Showmen?

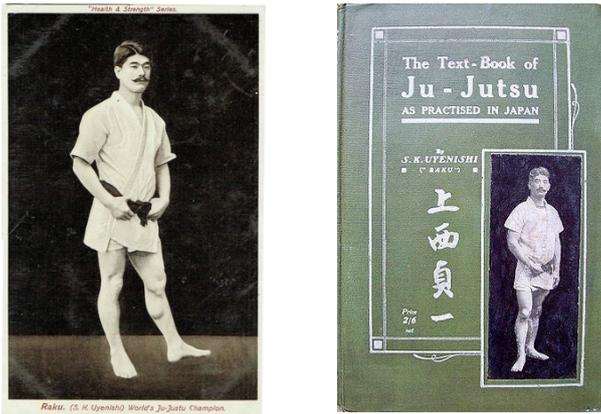
It is fairer to compare the Martial Artist to the Monk, than showmen, as there is an historical event where the Monks of *Sho-rin-ji* temple were trained in Martial Arts. This event has become oversimplified to become the source of all Eastern Martial Arts.

To cover every detail of the training of the Monk or the Martial Artist would take a book or two, maybe we could talk a little about *Ju-jutsu* training that the Japanese experienced in another article, and while we are about it touch on Martial Arts in general too. Maybe someone could try to convince me that the training of actors is more arduous, than that for a Martial Artist, but let me here stick to Showmanship.

A Martial Artist that takes up acting, can be said to have sold his soul, as the business will not allow the pure and unadorned Art to be shown, and they become no better than any other Actor. An actor may play the part of a martial artist or a fighter and if they have had dance-training can, seemingly, emulate what the martial artist can do. Actors have their stand-in stuntmen if there is the slightest chance of discomfort let alone danger, and "special-effects" can handle any shortcoming. If anyone thinks what they see on film, or stage, is in any way connected to any kind of real fighting or Martial Arts they must be at least unthinking. There are schools that teach this "stage combat".

What did people at the time of Tani think? It would be nice to have the space to take a long look at the background both here and in Japan, around the period talked about, and try to see things through their eyes. For example, the older people in England would have seen public hangings, there were "players and gentlemen" in sport. Clubs would be closed, by price and rules, to keep out the hoi polloi. In Japan they were not long out of the feudal period and the Martial Arts teachers would have been "*Samurai*" (see Koizumi's book) and would not accept just anyone. Even with the accepted students there would be some techniques kept secret from the

whole only to be passed on to certain students. Just as the military today, keep their secrets. Taking these things into account did the people then have differing values and outlook to us? There are books we can look at. In "The text-book of *Ju-Jutsu*", by Sadakazu Uyenishi, he mentions The *Budokwai*. He talks about the displays they were giving, and says "the idea of which (the displays) has been to educate the public as to the true nature of *Judo*, not to provide the Western sports "fan" with entertainment". So, The *Budokwai* of those days didn't go in for showmanship. In the same book Percy Longhurst in his "word portrait of Uyenishi" says the English wrestlers and athletes called Uyenishi's art "Japanese wrestling".



Sadakazu Uyenishi and "The Text-book of *Ju-Jutsu*"

The Japanese, Longhurst said, term it a "war exercise" the art of self-defence. He goes on to say the Japanese are utilitarians, and when *Ju-jutsu* was developed they had no conception of it as a sport, an athletic recreation. It was, and to them is, a serious exercise for a serious purpose. He goes on to say about Uyenishi "there was none of the theatrical element, the playing to the gallery, the attempt to "make a fool" of his opponent. I imagine it never entered his mind that he was providing the spectators with an entertainment".

I think we should give Yukio Tani, and the other Japanese at the time the courtesy of saying that they were in no way showmen, but very serious followers of their art. It would be no exaggeration to say that they followed their art religiously, even in a literal sense. I have met many Japanese, and some Westerners, in Martial Arts that today have this approach to their art, and I hope that members of the Kano Society have this same fervour over *Judo*.

#### How about the other part of the heading "Traditional *Judo*"?

Even when I started *Judo*, which was much later than the time of Tani, many books made no difference between *Judo* and *Ju-jutsu*. Some books used the spelling "*Ju-jitsu*" or even "*Jiu-jitsu*". The spelling, in what is called "Romanji", of Japanese words is interesting to the academically inclined, but can't be gone into here. What was taught by some instructors, while interesting, I would not now call *Judo*. The thing is the books were for the Westerner who more than likely knew only one of the names and would not know the difference between them anyway. The Japanese, reading

the characters, would see there were differences. I have never read anything saying that the Japanese in the halls in those days claimed they were doing *Judo* and not *Ju-jutsu*.

There are differences between *Judo* and *Ju-jutsu*, which we could also discuss some other time. *Judo* like *Aikido* did come from *Ju-jutsu* but when there is a change can we say they are still the same? I'll use a religious example again, I could use as an example Hinduism and Buddhism, but I'll stick to religions of the West. Christianity came from Judaism, Christ after all was a Jew, but who would dare say Christianity and Judaism were the same? The Christians and the Jews, both would be angry.

Like these religions the two arts of *Ju-jutsu* and *Judo*, have grown apart even more than they were to begin with. If we were to say Judaism was or is traditional Christianity would everybody be happy?

We are given a date when Professor Jigoro Kano set up his *Kodokan Judo* in Japan (1882). In England it was much later. Gunji Koizumi says the London *Budokwai* was set up in 1918 for *Ju-Jutsu*, *Kenjutsu* (please note not *Kendo*, that is another discussion!) and other Martial Arts of Japan. He says on Kano's visit, in 1920, he and Mr. Tani joined the *Kodokan*. So, they at least became *Judoka* then. The first *Judo* instructor at The *Budokwai* came with Prof. Kano and was Mr Hikoichi Aida, so Koizumi says.

In the body of the Yukio Tani article it said, "One should not commit the error of considering the ancient *Ju-jutsu* as being inferior to modern *Judo*". I expect that the term "*modern Judo*" was a misprint in the "*Kano Society Bulletin*", so I'll ignore the word modern and take it that what was meant was (real) *Judo*.

As with the religions I mentioned, the followers of *Judo* and *Ju-Jutsu* each must think their art, for whatever reason, is better for them than the other. Do not the founders and members of the Kano Society think the *Judo* they want brought back is superior to "Modern *Judo*"? Maybe there should be regular *Bulletin* articles, telling what is wrong with Modern *Judo*" and the kind of *Judo* needed. In the Martial Arts it is said "the mountain does not criticise the river because it is so low, and the river does not criticise the mountain because it cannot move". This does not mean those in one Martial Art don't like their Art better than other Arts, if one is not fully committed the Art cannot be mastered.

In Japan today, there are groups that continue with, more or less, all the Traditional Martial Arts, and they claim that these Arts are carried out in as near as possible the same way they were in the past. Martial Arts were banned for a short time, in Japan, after WWII, because they were thought to be part of the reason for Japan's aggression. The Arts did not go out of business, and very little of their methods changed. Later in the Martial Arts displays I took part in, while I was in Japan, one could see that attitudes were still war-like. One way to backtrack to find what the old attitude must have been, is by the many stories, still handed on, that are used to illustrate how the training should be carried out and also tell the ultimate aims of the Martial Arts. Is this another subject for more articles?

Unlike in *Judo*, where we have the founder's *Dojo* as the fountain of knowledge, *Ju-jutsu* has many schools and no one headquarters that can speak for *Ju-jutsu* as a whole. We should therefore talk about the schools [*Ryu*] of *Ju-jutsu* of Yukio Tani and the others, but I for one don't know what they were, and can only talk about *Ju-jutsu* in general. We have books on techniques, but the more important spirit and training methods is not covered in them, not even in the secret writings of the schools [*Den-sho*].

I was waiting, and hoping that someone in the Kano Society, more eloquent than I, that support the Aims of the Society, would have written to point out the error of one part or the other of the heading of the article. Now I have kicked off maybe others can have a go.

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## What is *Kata*?

By John Cornish

First published in issue 10, Spring 2004, of the "Kano Society Bulletin")

Syd Hoare once asked me "What is *Kata*?" Coming from him I knew it was not a simple question, so I answered, "*Kata is anything that is not the true thing*". There was no need to elaborate, and as I was still wet from the shower, I was glad of this. For those I don't know, and who don't know me, I will try to explain what I meant.

I will call what most people know as *Kata* in *Judo*, that is a set of differing techniques, "Listed *Kata*". To me *Uchi-komi* [Repetition Practice] is *Kata*.

*Uchi-komi*, usually done with *Uke* standing still in a certain stance, the thrower, if that is what he is doing and not training at *Katame-waza*, can move in say nine times just picking the partner up to the point where his feet just start to leave the mat, and where very little more effort would throw the partner. Shall we call this point complete *Kuzushi*, or the point of *Kake*? Then on the tenth time the partner is thrown.

I believe this *Uchi-komi* should also be done with the partners taking one or two steps before the technique is performed. To go on from this system it could be done on the move in a modified form of *Ran-dori*, but where the partners take turns at the technique. So far, I hope you will agree this is *Kata*, as there is complete co-operation.

*Ran-dori* [Free Practice] is a form of *Kata*. In fact, Professor Kano called the *Nage-no-kata* and the *Katame-no-kata* the "*Ran-dori-no-kata*" so he thought there was a connection before I did.

It could be argued that the two *Kata* were to be studied before *Ran-dori* was attempted. Many Martial Arts schools do not allow "Free Practice" under certain grades, and controlled training, like this, that keep trainees safe were of course part of *Judo*. We can't say all the techniques in these two *Kata* are now used in *Ran-dori*.

*Ashi-kan-setsu-waza* was allowed in early *Judo*, but as there were some injuries to legs, they were banned in *Shi-ai* [Contest] and so also in *Ran-dori*.

When I started *Judo*, in Britain there was a restriction place on *Sute-mi* throws for people below *Ikkyu* [First-kyu-grade]. As a nil grade, my first injury came about by someone trying a *Sute-mi-waza* on me that he had seen in a demonstration. I still have trouble with that injury, and agree with caution when it comes to what techniques are suitable for what grades.

Professor Kano also called *Kata* the Grammar of *Judo* and *Ran-dori* the composition.

*Ran-dori* is misused when it is used as *Shi-ai* [Match, contest]. The *Ran-dori* training sessions should be used to hone up certain points of our *Tokui-waza* [favourite technique], to try out our *Tokui-waza* with other techniques in differing combinations. We should also try out techniques we are weak at, especially if the partner is below our standard. A battleship should not use its big guns on a fish-ning smack.

While we are doing these things we will be countered, if the partner is working on *Kaeshi-waza*. We will also leave ourselves open, to the partners techniques, especially if he is using his *Tokui-waza*.

As we are competing, not against the partner, and he should be thought of as a partner not an opponent, we should be competing if anything against our own self, we can lose in *Ran-dori* only by wasting our own time and effort by a bad attitude.

Like in the Olympics, we in *Judo* should always be in pursuance of excellence.

To go from one extreme of *Ran-dori*, that of fighting all out, to the other extreme, of being over cooperative, even jumping for the partner must be avoided, if *Ran-dori* is to be a worthwhile training method.

This kind of *Ran-dori*, which must be carried out correctly, I see as *Kata*. Even training with the Listed *Kata*, there are many pitfalls, but they are the same ones that we have to avoid in all other training in *Judo*.

If the partners are equal in skill and have a little competitive spirit, they could fight for the first *ippon*, then for the rest of the training session, get down to the real learning and training, that is of getting more than the partner out of the session.

In some Traditional Martial Arts, they have a form of training like *Ran-dori*, and it can be called *Ji-Yu-Kei-Ko*, or whatever word the school uses.

*Shi-ai* [Match] I think of as *Kata* as a step in training for higher level *Shi-ai* (say the Olympic Gold). To give another example of my idea why *Shi-ai* could be thought of as *Kata*. Many students start *Judo* with the aim of learning Self-defence. Coaches please note. Any contest this kind of student has will certainly be *Kata*.

With the strict rules of *Shi-ai*, most of the most important parts of Self-defence training, those against blows, kicks and weapons, for the life or death struggle the student had in mind, will be missing.

He will also be restricted to using techniques, and even grips, allowable in *Shi-ai*. Apart from the boundaries put on techniques in contest, the scores used in contest can lead to misunderstanding by the student if he thinks any kind of win is acceptable. There is no *Ko-ka* win in Self-defence, so there should be none in training.

At the inception of *Judo*, contest came in as an important part of training. Later contest was needed to make *Judo* into an international sport, but it was never thought of as a whole method of Self-defence. Having said what I think *Kata* is, it will be seen that I think *Kata* cannot be avoided in *Judo*, and *Kata* is where we can see the application of the principle of *Ji-ta-kyo-ei*. Let me now talk some more on the listed *Kata*.

Listed *Kata* has a bad press in *Judo* in the West. One reason is the difficulty with the translation of the word into English, maybe the reason I was asked the question in the first place. Even T.P. Leggett, for his books on *Kata*, calls it "Formal Demonstration". I have a great respect for him, and I admit all the words used, form, etc. don't fit the bill and a long-winded explanation is no good on the front of a book. The thing is, if we think *Kata* is either formal or a demonstration or even both of those things together, we get led down the wrong path.

When *Kata* is performed as a demonstration of high standard *Kata*, it will be formal, but the demonstration only takes a few minutes, while the training to get to this stage takes hours and hours of hard work most of which is not formal and never a demonstration. If the training is too formal, I think the *Kata* will never get to a decent standard.

We have another problem with the word "formal", or is it the same problem as with "*Kata*"? Formal, in relationship to *Kata*, to me means all the moves to get into the technique, directions and positions on the mat, even the order of the techniques. The bows can be less formal, a *Tachi-rei* [Standing Bow] at the beginning and end of the whole session is sufficient instead of a *Za-rei* (Kneeling

Bow) demanded in some Listed *Kata*. No matter what the session was about, even if I were to go into the *Do-jo* to sweep it out I would carry out one bow on entry and another when leaving, so I don't consider this formal, just ordinary *Judo* politeness.

Each of the Listed *Kata*, have do's and don'ts that apply in particular to that Listed *Kata* and deserve a long study, but let us continue with a general look at what is *Kata*.

I have already mentioned training with *Kata*, and if only we take a glance at the Eastern Martial arts, we will see that this is the true use of *Kata*. The schools all have *Kata* as a main method of training, some have *Kata* as the exclusive training method (see Gunji Koizumi's book). People don't seem to notice that *Kata* is also used in the West. Here again maybe because we don't have a word for it.

In the Royal Navy they had a *Kata*, where a field gun is supposedly taken into the mountains where various problems had to be overcome. One problem was a small opening where the gun and limber had to be dismantled and after being passed through the opening put back together again. There was also a problem where the gun and limber had to go over an obstacle, and there was even a chasm that had to be crossed. The gun of course had to be fired at the end of each journey, which is the whole point of taking a gun on a journey.

This training *Kata*, like all good Listed *Kata*, is about as near the true thing as one can get without putting the trainees at undue risk. In the case of the gun, in the true thing there would of course be problems like snipers shooting at the team, but even in the armed forces you cannot have this kind of danger in training.

*Judo* began as a Martial Art, and to keep this tradition we need the Listed *Kata*. "Tradition" is another word we could spend time on, but let us move on and look some more at the irreplaceable practical use of *Kata*.

We must read up on what Kano said to find all the details of what he thought *Judo* should be, but one

thing is obvious all *Judo* training must be safe to carry out, if it is not safe it is not *Judo*.

For the sake of safety some techniques were banned from *Shi-ai*. This had an influence on the unwritten rules of *Ran-dori*. Those potentially dangerous techniques, leg locks, wrist locks, spine locks and such like were not banned entirely, they are now in the Listed *Kata*, where they can be learned by *Tori* and yet keep *Uke* safe. So, *Judo Kata* and Martial Arts *Kata* are used for the same reason, safety in training.

A thing that is easily overlooked in the Listed *Kata* are the things the attacker, *Uke*, must learn. In the *Kime-no-kata* and *Kodokan Go-shin-jutsu*, for example, *Uke* must learn to use a sword, a knife, a stick and a gun. *Uke* must also learn non-weapon techniques such as kicking, poking, punching and hitting in other ways, to name just a few things that help to broaden the, dare I say it, the *Judo* education that cannot be learned in *Judo* sport training. If the *Judo* education were as broad as it should be, I think we would attract and keep more members.

Each of the Listed *Kata* can be looked-on as a study on its own, but a careful look will show us that the whole list has a balance so that each of the Listed *Kata* compliments the other *Kata*.

For example, we see the attack *Ryote-dori* [Both-hands-held] in *Kime-no-kata*, *Go-shin-jutsu* and *Ju-no-kata*, and in each *Kata*, there is a differing response. So, by the practice of these *Kata*, we learn there is more than one way to react to, at least, this attack. We know how much effort we have put in to learn just one throw.

For our *Tokui-nage-waza* we are traditionally told we need to carry it out in practice a hundred thousand times before we can be said to have anything like a facility for the throw, (See T.P. Leggett's article "*The Cherry Tree*"). We know even then how difficult it is to pull it off in a competitive situation.

Banned in *Shi-ai* but in the Listed *Kata*, are throws that should be easier to execute, those that are done with a *Kan-setsu-waza* [joint-technique]. *Uke's* balance is broken, not only by *Tori*, but by *Uke* trying to ease the danger to his joint.

Sometimes this kind of throw can be continued into a holding position with the *Kan-setsu-waza* still in place, so is very efficient in this way. Also, the *Katame-waza* [control-technique] is sometimes finished with *Uke* held in a face downwards position, which is better in Self-defence.

If I can sum up, I think all *training* in *Judo* is *Kata*. *Judo* I think is a complete system on its own, and if wholly used, is a broad enough "Church" to attract and satisfy new members and keep those already in *Judo* with plenty to learn into old age.

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## A Question of *Kata* Gone Astray By John Cornish

A version of this article was first published as a two-part article in issues 11 and 12, September 2004 and January 2005, of the "*Kano Society Bulletin*")

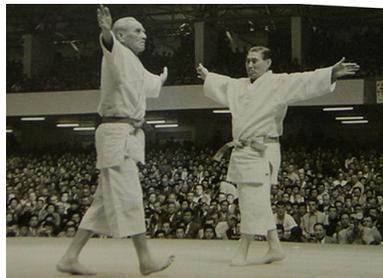
Recently Joseph Svinth, the editor of the "*Journal of Combative Sport*", <http://ejmas.com>, asked me to write a little on *judo kata*, saying that he had been told by internationally ranked *judo* coaches that if you're interested in winning Olympic-level competition, then practicing *kata* is a waste of time. Instead, you'd do better to get the players to lift weights, run, and do *ran-dori* with top-flight people. *Kata*, these coaches maintain, is what you do once you get old, not what you teach Olympic hopefuls. Mr. Svinth said he guessed that I would disagree with this theory.

Wow that is a mouthful, and not just a simple theory either. There are too many subjects included for it to be simple. I think that Mr. Svinth must be drawing me out with a loaded question! That is all right though, as I don't mind a discussion.

A simple answer will not suffice, nor will just talking about *Kata*. I now have to talk about the relationship between many parts of *Judo* and *Judo* training, and also the relationship between *Judo* and society in general. What a set of books I would have to write to cover all that properly, this I do not have time for, and I'm sure you would not have the time or inclination to read anyway, so I'll try to simplify a wide and complex subject

### Winning Competitions

I will start by stating that I also think that if you are only interested in winning Olympic level competition there is no imperative to practice *Kata*. Whether there is a use for *Kata* is another thing. I'll have to come back to the many uses of *Kata* later, and even explain what I think *Kata* is. For the time being when I use the word *Kata*, I will just talk about what I will later call the "listed *Kata*". That is the eight, nine, or however you count them *Kata*, from the older *Itsutsu-no-kata* and *Ko-shiki-no-kata*, through to the more modern *Kata*.



*Itsutsu-no-kata*



*Koshiki-no-kata*

Maybe I should have started by trying to find out what is meant by "*winning Olympic level competitions*". I may be wrong, but as I think there is only one Olympics, the meaning must be

medals at the Olympic Games, but does it also mean just taking part in the Olympics is not good enough or getting medals in World, International or lesser competitions, etc. that bad? What about grading competitions?

Many people I know are proud that they took part in an International contest without even winning a medal. Some even, are proud that they were unofficially allowed to take part in squad training for International matches. Even taking part in other lesser competitions, inter-club etc. can be a matter of pride for some people that had to put in a lot of work to be able to do so.

I'm sure those coaches, no matter how much pressure they are under to get medals, cannot mean that people not getting those medals have no place in *Judo*.

If we are only interested in winning Olympic medals, most of us would give up straight away as we must know what a small percentage of a chance there is of that. It is good that we non-Olympic-medal-winners do not do this, but rather try our best to improve, and get somewhere near our full potential, and stay in *Judo*.

Lazy people, can and do, make the thought that they will probably never get a medal, one of their excuses for not doing the practice the coach suggests, and are all too ready to accept any low target of skill or grade. Our coach would probably tell us it is almost impossible to know, for sure, what we are capable of, and we should simply keep on trying, and enjoy (if that is the word) training while we can.

### If *Kata* Is Not Necessary, What Else Should Go?

Apart from *Kata*, what other things are not needed for the aim of getting a medal? You do not need a grade. I can't see anyone saying another country's competitors should not take part in the competition as they don't have a proper grade! You do not need to know any Japanese terminology. You don't even need to know many techniques. Logically

speaking, if your one throw is good enough there is no need for any *Katame-waza* or even other throws. Contest rules do not state that we must go into *Ne-waza* if the throw does not score *Ippon*.

It would be interesting to hear from the coaches what they think is the minimum number of techniques needed to win those medals.

We must not just consider the *Judo* side of things. Many things in modern life are not necessary for medal winners, reading, writing, music and such like. I'll let you make up your own list of things not needed to win medals.

### What Kind of Medal Winners?

What kind of Olympic medal winners do we in *Judo* and society want then? Is it a mindless fighting machine, that must be sooner or later, when it shows the slightest sign of lack of success at winning medals, be thrown aside for a younger person, never to be seen again? What kind of C.V. would this person have if he or she then tried to get a job?

These questions of qualifications not directly applicable to *Judo* apply to other sports as well. For example, does a runner really need to have a university education?

We can look on the Olympic medal winners as the very top of a great pyramid. I'll have to say something about the rest of the pyramid later, but while we are here at the top, looking down at the support, I would like to ask the coaches another question. What is the minimum number needed in the pyramid, to have a hope of producing one medal winner?

To get back to training the hopefuls. First of all, there is a need to develop a *Tokui-waza*, that is a favourite (the most suitable) technique. The coach should be able to help with the selection of the main throw. It may be that the person joining the National Squad, at say 18 years old, and say second-*dan*, may be advised to drop the throw that got them to the position they are at. Many times, we see

that the student has blindly mimicked the technique of someone they admire, and it may not be the technique they should be working on. This advice may be hard for the coach to give, and it may cause upset for the student, but the student must learn to trust the coach.

The coach giving this advice, hopefully, may have enough experience and insight to be able to make this selection, but if there is a doubt the coach should try to be a little more scientific and have some kind of tests to find out what is best for the student, that is what suits the student's psycho-physical habits, build etc. One way, is to get the student to go through the *Nage-no-kata*.



*Nage-no-kata - Tomoe-nage*

In the listed *Nage-no-kata* the throws are carried out on the right and the left, and the coach may find out, for example, that the student is a natural left-hander and not the right-hander they seemed to be up till then. More likely the coach may find the student has a facility for a throw he would never think of trying in *Ran-dori*, let alone in *Shi-ai*.

To take a step backwards, I have seen contestants put at a great disadvantage because they had not had to contest against left-handers, so I think it is good to have a mix of right and left handers in a training squad. If there doesn't happen to be a mix like this, an alternative would be to

get some of the right-handers in the squad to train as though they were left-handers. Of course, they will have needed prior training to do this. So once again *Nage-no-kata* would be helpful.

Once a *Tokui-waza* is sorted out how does the student carry out the practice of a hundred thousand times that we were traditionally told we need? (See T.P. Leggett's article "*The Cherry Tree*"). Most of us think this training must be carried out in *Uchi-komi*. I note that this is not even mentioned above in the statements by the coaches!

Most people, even after they have done the 100,000, still find at times they sometimes have trouble with their *Tokui-waza* and have to "go back to basics", and this basic can be found in *Kata*. Jigoro Kano said that *Kata* is the "*grammar of Judo*". *Ran-dori* he said was the "*composition*".

### *Ran-dori*

In the initial statement, it was said *Ran-dori* with top-flight people is what is recommended instead of *Kata*. I have never seen any alternative to *Uchi-komi* and *Ran-dori* as the main training methods both for the top competitor and the hopefuls.

I'm not sure if the statement means that this is not so in some places. Anyway, it looks like we are caught on the horns of a dilemma with the statement. If it is good for the student to do *Ran-dori* with top-flight people, it sounds like it is a waste of time for the top-flight person. This I do not believe to be true, in a session of *Ran-dori*, there are many ways of preventing anyone wasting time, and I'm sure the coaches don't need me to remind them of those ways.

One way would be to develop techniques that would not be powerful enough to be, at the moment, used against other top competitors, and where do I suggest this person find the "N" other throws that should be tried? Yes, in *Kata*. As mentioned previously, the top competitors could train on the wrong side (left instead of right or visa-versa). If players only use their *Tokui-waza*, no matter how outclassed their training partners are, I think it is like a battleship using

its' big guns to sink a fishing boat. So you can see, I think versatility in throwing techniques is a desirable aim.

### How do we Produce Medal Winners?

Talking about squad training brings us to another question for the coaches, what is the minimum number in the elite squad to produce Olympic medal winners?

Weight training, I think has its' place in *Judo* training. We are still talking about medal winners in the Olympics, and the squad of elite trainees that have some skill and are controlled in their weight training by a good coach. Where I think that weight training is not good, is when it is introduced before the player has enough skill in *Judo* techniques.

Some players, without a good coach to steer them, make what they think is a new discovery, that it is quicker and easier to develop brute strength than it is to develop *Judo* skill. These people do have a little success in the lower grades, and unable to give up their discovery, never get anywhere near their potential in *Judo*.

With the physical-strength we need in *Judo* there is also a need, for specific flexibility that can only really be developed by the movements-with-the-weight-of-a-human-body of *Judo*, the throws etc. that cannot be carried out in the same way with weights. Even the training carried out with ropes and pulleys, which is better than weights on a bar, cannot exactly mimic lifting, pulling or pushing a human body about

It's strange we hear lots of talk about weight training for strength, we don't hear the same amount said about flexibility, do we?

Running as a cardiovascular exercise is good and has its' place in *Judo*, but like the weight training cannot replace doing *Judo*. I have seen students, having discovered running, seems to be less demanding than *Judo*, get carried away with training at running till they can run a marathon distance, yet still get puffed out on the mat. So, it must be that running and *Judo* are different in some way.

The attitude of these people, bad in *Judo* gets carried over to running, and it falls well short of what a real runner would have. It is easy for them to kid themselves they are running where as they don't run they Jog, which is the easy part of running.

Weight training and running, apart from being used as supplements for *Judo*, can be used as a break from the grind of *Uchi-komi*, *Ran-dori* and *Shi-ai*, and this is another use of *Kata*. At least this break is still *Judo* so "keeps their hand in".

### After Competition

Having gone through all the training, having been led through the steps of contest, and having won the Olympic medal, what happens to this person? I have seen them retire from contest, and as contest is the only thing they know, from *judo* in general.

There was a saying in feudal times in Japan that the lives of the Samurai were like the cherry blossom, very beautiful but alas they don't last long. Do we think it should be the same with the top contest person? I hope not. I hope these people have been given some general training in *Judo*, including *Kata*, and a lead into coaching skills, before they get to this water shed, so they can stay in *Judo* without feeling too lost among the ordinary "bods", or better still become a coach.

There are not that many posts coaching the elite National squads, so the coach may have to coach somewhere in the rest of the pyramid. For this the coach should study all parts of *Judo* so as to be able to teach the average person in *Judo*. Again, make up your own list of types of people that start *Judo* and become what I have called the average person, that we want to keep. Every individual deserves a good coach, and hopefully they then may stay in *Judo*, and with the help of the good coach, some may even stand a chance of getting somewhere.

### Kata When You Are Old?

The last part of the statement I must comment on is the bit about doing *Kata* when you are old. If the

coaches were talking about the top contest person, shall we guess at about 25 years old? Having been a medal winner they are now about, say, 4<sup>th</sup> *dan*, still tough, and maybe going on to be a coach, and so find there is a need for a study of *Kata*. This person will now know how much effort that must be put in to claim to have some facility at any *Kata*, let alone all of the listed *Kata*. If he had to do 100,000 repetitions of his *To-kui-waza*, how many for the *Nage-no-kata*? Physical Education experts tell us a left and a right of the same thing (say a throw) should be thought of as two separate things to be learned. So, in the *Nage-no-kata* there are quite a few to be done. This kind of "old person" could make a good job of learning the *Kata* as they will soon find out it is the same as other *Judo* training.

What about other people, what is old for them? Will this old person be willing and able to take the 30 hard falls while doing the *Nage-no-kata*? The average person will not.

### The role of Uke

From my experience, people past their prime in *Judo*, already with ingrained attitudes, such as not wanting to be thrown, even one time. Having only been thrown by such throws as *Tai-otoshi*, do not enjoy being thrown by such throws as *Kata-guruma*. Even from the very first throw in *Nage-no-kata*, *Uki-otoshi*, they find they have a heavy fall, and worse still *Tori* does not seem to be in a position where assistance can be given with the landing.

These are problems the coach must take into consideration, and I'm sure the coach will agree with me and say the sooner the student starts *Kata* or Contest the better. If the coach has to look after a mixed group of people, of a range of ages and *Judo* experience and teach them *Kata*, it can be done if not too high a target is set. The old person, for example, could just take *Tori's* part in *Nage-no-kata*, so no falls are taken. This is not ideal, but what is in this life? If the old person does not study the part of *Uke* I think this person is only carrying out shallow learning, like a cook that can only put the icing on to a cake.



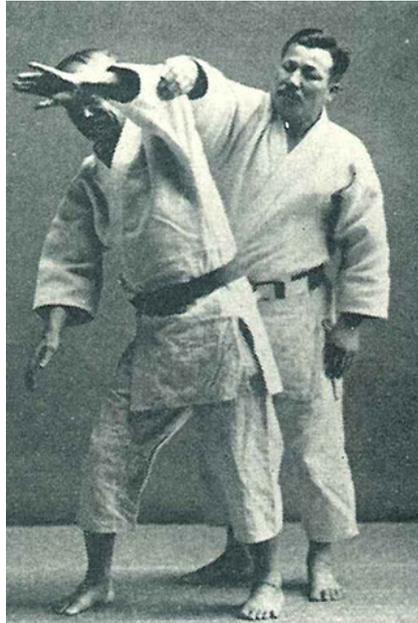
*Nage-no-kata – Kata-guruma*

In Japan I was told that you should be *Uke* for seven years, before becoming *Tori*. This may sound, to some, like another bit of outdated Japanese mysticism. In Western military circles I have heard it said that you should study your enemy in order to overcome him. This lesson has been ignored in modern times, with dire results. Basic strategies for armies often also apply to individuals in fighting situations and this is what we are talking about here. It is best to learn the attacks by *Uke* so as to know their strengths and weaknesses, then it is possible to avoid and counter the attacks. This sounds like we are talking about Self-defence, so we are. Most of the listed *Kata*, are *Self-defence Kata*. Even *Nage-no-kata* has blows as attacks in it, but the same tactics that apply in Self-defence also apply in Contest *Judo*.

Applying this principle of studying the opposition to sport *Judo* situations, we look at all the films and videos to see the *Tokui-waza* of people that may be met in contest, so see what we must be careful of and even see if there is a chance to develop some *Kaeshi-waza*, against it. But this cannot teach us as much as the physical experience can

Having said all that about the importance of being *Uke*, the old person that knows their *Uke-mi* is not up to the standard needed for *Nage-no-kata*, need not shy away, there are

many other *Kata* that can be done, in fact one to suit everyone, depending on what they want to learn. One of the many good points about *Ju-no-kata* is that the throws are not fully carried out. So, you don't need a mat or break-falls. The coach should be knowledgeable enough to be able to give the student this kind of choice.



*Ju-no-kata*

### Starting young?

All Physical Education teachers I have spoken to tell me, that students must start when they are young. Even six or so years old, is not too young an age to start things like gymnastics!

What about learning in general, do the experts tell us not to worry about education until we are at least 25 years old? No, they say something like four or five. Some are even talking about learning in the womb! So it seems it is thought that all learning should be begin at as early an age as possible, as long as it does not harm the young. We will let the experts fight among themselves, over the exact age to begin which learning. We in *Judo* can have our own idea.

I'm not sure what age is right in *Judo*. I have an idea that it is around fourteen years of age for contest *Judo*. Before that play-*Judo* is all right, and even though there does not seem to

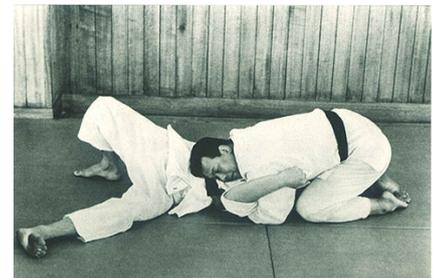
be the follow on into senior *Judo* from this group that there should be, I think it is somewhere in this lower age group that *Kata*, of the right sort, should be introduced. Not when they are old.

What about the real aged? I think we are never too old to learn, though we, exactly like the young, have to be looked after by the coach, so we do not attempt dangerous things, and our learning is in easy stages.

### *Randori-no-kata and Shiai*

Having gone all round the block maybe now I can get onto the subject of *Kata* in more detail, as it may affect the lower part, the middle as well as the top of the *Judo* pyramid. Each of the *Kata* deserve an article, or two, to itself, so I'll try to keep my remarks to *Kata* in general so to make an end to this article.

*Kata* to me is anything that is not the real thing. To me *Uchi-komi* is *Kata*. *Ran-dori* is *Kata*. *Ran-dori* is even done on the move as in the listed *Kata*. In fact, Kano called the *Nage-no-kata* and the *Katame-no-kata* the "*Ran-dori-no-kata*" so he thought there was a connection before I did. *Shi-ai* I think of as *Kata* as most contests are a step in training for higher level contests (the Olympic Gold?). To give another example of my idea why *Shi-ai* could be thought of as *Kata*.



*Katame-no-kata*

Many students start *Judo* with the aim of learning Self-defence. Prospective Coaches please note. Any contest this kind of student has will certainly be *Kata* as it will be a part of Self-defence training for the life or death struggle they had in mind. This is how contest was thought of at the inception of *Judo*.

Having said what I think *Kata* is, it will be seen that I think that *Kata* cannot be avoided in *Judo*, even by the Coaches mentioned in the introduction.

### The Listed *Kata*

The listed *Kata*, what I believe the Coaches were thinking about, has a bad press in *Judo* in the West. One reason is the difficulty with the translation of the word into English. Even T.P. Leggett, for his books on *Kata*, calls it "Formal Demonstration". In respect for him, I admit all the words used, form etc. don't fill the bill and a long-winded explanation is no good on the front of a book. The thing is, if we think *Kata* is either "formal", or a "demonstration" or even both of those things together, we get lead down the wrong path.

If we take only a glance at the Martial arts, we will see that they all have *Kata* as the main method of training, most have *Kata* as the exclusive training method. *Judo* began as a Martial Art, and to keep this tradition we need the listed *Kata*. For those that have, or at least like to appear to have, no time for tradition, they can look to the irreplaceable practical use of *Kata*.

We must read up on what Kano said to find all the details of what he thought *Judo* should be, but one thing is obvious, all *Judo* training must be safe to carry out. If it is not safe it is not *Judo*.

For the sake of safety some techniques were banned from *Shi-ai*. Those potentially dangerous techniques, leg locks, wrist locks, spine locks and such like were not banned from *Judo* entirely, they are now in the listed *Kata*, where they can be learned by *Tori* while still keeping *Uke* safe. So, *Judo Kata* and Martial Arts *Kata* are used for the same reason, safety in training

A thing that is easily overlooked in *Kata* is the things the attacker, *Uke*, must learn. Taking the *Kime-no-kata* and *Kodokan Go-shin-jutsu* together, for example, *Uke* must learn to use a sword, a knife, a stick and a gun. *Uke* must also learn non-weapon techniques such as kicking, poking,

punching and hitting. Just these few things help to broaden, dare I say it, one's *Judo* education, and cannot be learned in *Judo* sport training.



*Kime-no-kata*



*Kodokan Go-shin-jutsu*

Each of the listed *Kata* can be looked-on as a study on its own, but a careful look will show us that the whole list has a balance so that each *Kata* compliments the other *Kata*. For example, we see the attack *Ryote-tori* [Both-hands-held] in *Kime-no-kata*, *Kodokan Go-shin-jutsu* and *Juno-kata*, to name just three. In each *Kata* there is a differing response, so we learn at least three defences against this attack.

### Levels of Difficulty

In learning situations, I have always been told that we must start with the easily learned or, in physical subjects, safe and easily performed. Each *Kata* has the techniques put in order of difficulty. We may disagree with the exact order in some *Kata*, but we can still see it.

The *Kata* where this order is most easily seen is in the *Kodokan Go-shin-jutsu*. This has grip attacks before blows, blows before kicks, kicks before knife attacks, knife before stick attacks and alter those there is the gun attacks. So, the thought as

to the order of learning is not at all modern, it is even seen in the *Koshiki-no-kata*.

Applying this same principle to the rest of *Judo*, each training method can be modified to be in easy steps. *Uchi-komi* can be carried out in varying ways and, if controlled by the coach or the partners, so can *Ran-dori*.

*Shi-ai* as well as other training should be taken in easy steps. In fact, if we take part in Grading (*Sho-kyu* and *Sho-dan*) contests, this is done anyway. It is only the other contests that the coach will have to look at, and try to put into a list of difficulty.

What about *Kata*-training, is this different to other forms of training? I do not think so, and so also think that even the listed *Kata* are not so sacred that they cannot be modified to suit the skill standard, and the learning capacity of the trainee.

Like *Shi-ai*, we cannot start at the top with a *Kata*. We may not agree what is the top in *Kata*, but if we agree individuals cannot learn everything in one go, we must approach the learning in stages. The techniques can be learned, as all other *Judo* techniques are, in the various steps of *Uchi-komi*, and where suitable in a non-competitive form of *Ran-dori*.

We should bear this in mind when needed, but *Kata* training should be approached in a differing manner. Why not try the whole *Kata* at a time but leave out all the details that cannot be learned in one go?

Even the order of the listed *Kata* can be modified until the full standard *Kata* is used.

Often people that try to learn in order, say the *Nage-no-kata*, by trying first to learn all the details of the first set (in this case, *Te-waza*), which sound logical. Then move on to the logical next set but re-cap on the first. Then set 3 re-cap 1-2, then set 4, plus 1-2-3, and so set 5 added to 1-2-3-4. So, we see that set one has been done five times, set five only once. If this was thought of as for a demonstration, the first set may be not so bad, but the last!?! if they were in show

business, would it not be better to have the most polished performance, not as a curtain raiser but in the finale? We, not in show-biz, cannot sort out the technique we may need for Self-defense, or Contest, so should give equal training to the whole of a *Kata*. The only way we can do this is to start with a very rough outline of the *Kata* then gradually add details so that it starts to look like *Judo*.

Even techniques should be modified into a simplified form. For example, all the heavy throws of *Nage-no-kata* can be done so *Uke* is lightly rolled down. This can be done if *Tori* goes down onto his knees in throws like *Kata-guruma*. Another obvious modification in *Nage-no-kata* would be to do the throws on one side, left or right. The very important changes in grips can be left out for the time being, that is until the trainees needs a little more to think about.

In a self-defence *Kata* all the things not familiar to the trainees can be left out in the early stages. *Uke* must be protected in the wrist locks, until he learns how to react and stay safe when these unfamiliar techniques are applied to his wrists. *Tori* instead of gripping *Uke*'s hand can grip the forearm, near the wrist joint, so that an elbow lock [*Hiji-kan-setsu-waza*] is applied and not the wrist lock [*Te-kubi-kan-setsu-waza*]. *Hiji-kan-setsu-waza* should be familiar to all but the junior players.

If the trainees are young all locks should be avoided and instead a holding [*Osae-waza*] technique should be used.

### Ceremonial and Terminology

Only once the full standard techniques are fully incorporated should the least important things, what I call the ceremonial, be added. For example, the position on the mat, the formal moves to get into the techniques and things that get over-emphasised such as not turning your back on *Jo-seki*.

The Japanese names for techniques in the *Kata* I think should never take up precious mat time, so this is another thing that can be left out until a

more appropriate time. With beginners, I find it better not to even mention the word "*Kata*" until the students find out how interesting what they are doing is.

When the Japanese terms are introduced I try to avoid the use of English names as they can mislead. For example, *Se-oi-nage*, in the UK, is called "Shoulder-throw". In the *Nage-no-kata* this throw comes before *Kata-guruma*, which we all know is "Shoulder-wheel" in English, so confusion sets in. If "Carry-on-the-back-throw" is used for *Se-oi-nage* it is a better translation and it also gives the students more of an idea what to aim for. Unfortunately, it is a bit long-winded, so I don't bother.

I believe Coaches should learn the Japanese for all techniques and training, but they should not force the same learning onto the students. By all means set the students intellectual as well as physical challenges, but don't put them off

One of the things that seem to make *Kata* artificial is the *Tsugi-ashi* feet movements that are used in some *Kata*. When this is introduced, I point out it is the way a boxer or Western fencer moves, and, as most people have seen these sports in action, it helps to keep the movements more natural.

A further thing I want to say about *Kata* in general, I think that coaches should think about forming their own *Kata*. This could be done by the Top Coaches, mentioned above, if they want a set of throws they want the trainees to learn for contest, or as an exercise in movement, flexibility or versatility. The Coach could even have a set of throws that each finish in a holding, arm-lock or strangle, which we don't have in the listed *Kata*.

A non-Kodokan *Kata* that may be useful is *Go-no-sen-no-kata*. This *Kata* of throws and counter throws, can be made up to suit the Coach and the trainees.

One last thing about *Kata* it is the same as *Ran-dori* in that you can learn a lot by a session with a more skilled person.



*Go-no-sen-no-kata*

### Concluding Thoughts

I am not sure I have made a case that can influence the Top Coaches, or anyone else come to that, so I'll close with a thought.

In Far Eastern Philosophy there is a saying (I'll use the Japanese) "*Su-sui-san-sei*". Often the translation is simplified into "The three wine tasters". Like all these things there is more to it than that. The wine can even be thought of as vinegar. The three can be thought of as the three saintly persons (The Buddha, Confucius and Lao-tse). Sometimes instead of those three it is said that the three are teachers (or maybe they are the same). The outline of this thing is that the three all taste the same drink, maybe wine or, for the pure non-drinker, vinegar. One, we are not told which, thinks the drink is sour, one says it is just right, the last says it is too sweet.

This tale and the wine, is like *Judo* training and our *Kata*, a very complex subject so there can be differing opinions about it, but let us at least have a good taste while we consider it.

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## The Richard Bowen Collection



In 1949, Richard Bowen began judo training in London at the Budokwai, of which he 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