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Editor's comment

The editorial team would like to wish all readers of *The Bulletin* a very happy 2019. We hope you enjoy this issue which has been produced by guest editor, Llŷr Jones.

The Society wishes to congratulate Neil Adams on his promotion to IJF 9th dan, on 18 December 2018, aged 60. Neil is a double Olympic Silver medallist, the first British male to win a World title, and the first British male to simultaneously hold World and European titles.

Finally, the Society notes the sad passing of a pioneer of French *judo*, Luc Levannier, who died on 3 December 2018, aged 92. Levannier was a member of the first French *judo* team to participate in an international competition in 1947 – "France v. England" where he was the first contestant and the first winner. Levannier's vision for *judo* fully aligned with this Society's, and his full obituary will appear in the next Bulletin.

In this edition

This edition of *The Bulletin* features a technical article by Llŷr Jones on *Osaekomi-waza* [holding techniques], and also highlights a new book "*Judo & Life*" by Brian Watson.

Contributions

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

Regards Diana Birch

The Principles of *Osaekomi* in *Kodokan Judo* Llŷr Jones

Purpose

This article identifies and discusses five key points that apply to all the individual techniques in *Osaekomi-waza* [holding techniques]. The points discussed are pedagogical/didactic in nature and no attempt is made to cover the physics underpinning *osaekomi-waza* which are relatively simple, as *osaekomi-waza* essentially rely on the application of pressure.

Introduction

Of the three types of *Katame-waza* [Controlling techniques] in *Kodokan Judo (judo)*, *osae-komi-waza* (most often written as *osaekomi-waza*) are arguably the most basic and are among the first techniques a student learns (IJF, n.d.). In *judo*, the terms *osaekomi-waza* and *osae-waza* are interchangeable, and in the original *Kodokan* documents that describe the meaning and background of the term, it is written therein, in Japanese, as "*osae-(komi)-waza*" i.e. with the "*komi*" not being mandatory. However, the full term is generally used in the *Kodokan* and, in 1906 when the *katame waza* were officially codified, it used the full term too.

押込技

Figure 1: *Osaekomi*

The term *osaekomi-waza* is usually translated in the West as "holding techniques", however greater insight into the essential principles germane to all *osaekomi-waza* can be obtained by returning to first-principles and considering the very literal meaning of the word *osaekomi* in Japanese.

What Does *Osaekomi* Literally Mean?

The strict literal translation of the term *osaekomi-waza* is not "holding techniques", but rather "pressuring techniques". Extrapolated, the term "pressuring" or "to exert pressure" also means "to control", so "controlling techniques". Were it to mean "holding" in the conventional sense then it could, for example, be used when holding a glass of beer or a plastic cup of coffee, which it cannot – as this would imply squashing the cup so that the coffee would be come out all over oneself.



Figure 2: *Do-osae* [trunk hold]

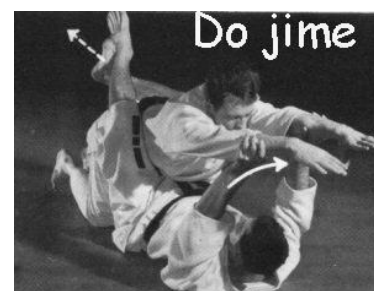


Figure 3: *Do-jime* [trunk constriction]

It is worth noting that the “osae” in *osaekomi* is the same as what features in the Japanese term for what Brazilian *Jujitsu* [sic] (BJJ) players call “the guard” (*i.e.* controlling an opponent’s body between one’s legs) – that is *do-osae* [trunk hold] – see Figure 2. This implies that the opponent is kept there, *i.e.* between the legs, with escape attempts neutralised through pressure; it does not though imply that the opponent is forced to submit through squeezing so hard that a “body *Shime-waza* [Strangling technique]”, *i.e.* a *do-jime* [trunk constriction] – see Figure 3, is applied [1].

The “*komi*” in the combination *osaekomi* essentially means “to be stuck”, “to be jammed” or “to be wrapped up”. It indicates that the technique applied is very “freedom-restricting” and that *Uke* is actually prevented from freely moving as much as possible through *Tori*’s pressure and control. (It is very common in Japanese to indicate the meaning of something with two words where one of the words may, but less absolutely, already indicate the meaning. The two words combined always define the meaning much more unambiguously.)

The 1981 World Champion in the featherweight (-65kg) weight category, Katsuhiko Kashiwazaki (born 1951) *Kodokan* 8th *dan* [Figure 4] of Japan, is widely regarded as one of the greatest exponents of *newaza* in modern times, and secured the majority of his contest-career victories in this way. Writing in the foreword to Kashiwazaki’s seminal book “*Osaekomi*” [Figure 5] in Ippon Books’ “*Judo Masterclass Techniques*” series, the noted classical music and *judo* journalist Nicholas Soames states [2]:

“*Osaekomi* – the holds of judo – is the root of all ground work. With a sound and secure knowledge of the mechanics of getting an opponent on his back and holding him there comes an understanding of judo that is second to none.” (...)



Figure 4: Katsuhiko Kashiwazaki, *Kodokan* 8th *dan*

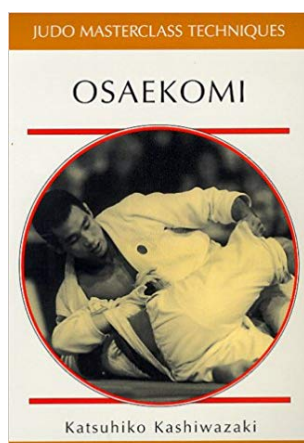


Figure 5: “*Osaekomi*” by Katsuhiko Kashiwazaki

Official Recognised *Osaekomi-waza*

In the past the *Kodokan* officially recognised seven distinct and different *osaekomi-waza* [3] – see Table 1.

Kodokan Recognised <i>Osaekomi-waza</i> (pre-1 April 2017)	
<i>Kuzure-kesa-gatame</i>	Modified scarf hold
<i>Kata-gatame</i>	Shoulder hold
<i>Kami-shiho-gatame</i>	Upper four-corner hold
<i>Kuzure-kami-shiho-gatame</i>	Modified upper four-corner hold
<i>Yoko-shiho-gatame</i>	Side-locking four-corner hold
<i>Tate-shiho-gatame</i>	Straight four-corner hold
<i>Kesa-gatame*</i>	Scarf hold

Table 1: Seven *Kodokan*-recognised *Osaekomi-waza* pre-1 April 2107

* The name *Kesa-gatame* was stipulated on 1 April 1997, and the use of the name *Hon-kesa-gatame* [Regular scarf hold] was discontinued from that date onwards.

At that time the *Kodokan* used the formal name *Kuzure-kesa-gatame* for all variants of *Kesa-gatame* instead of commonly used *Makura-kesa-gatame* [Pillow scarf hold] and *Ushiro-kesa-gatame* [Reverse scarf hold] which, for example, are used by the British *Judo* Association.

It should also be noted that *Kesa-gatame* and *Kami-shiho-gatame* are the only *waza* which have a formal *Kuzure* variant according to *Kodokan* classification. There are no *Kuzure* variants of *Yoko-shiho-gatame*, *Tate-shiho-gatame* nor *Kata-gatame*.

At the time when the *Kodokan* recognised seven official *osaekomi* techniques, the International *Judo* Federation (IJF) recognised nine, with *Uki-gatame* [Floating hold] and *Ushiro-kesa-gatame* [Reverse scarf hold] supplementing the *Kodokan* list [4].

On 1 April 2017, after giving further consideration, the *Kodokan* added three further *osaekomi* techniques – namely *Ushiro-kesa-gatame*, *Uki-gatame* and *Ura-gatame* [Reverse hold] to the list of existing official techniques to give a total of ten acknowledged techniques [5, 6] see Table 2.

Kodokan Recognised <i>Osaekomi-waza</i> (post-1 April 2017)	
<i>Kesa-gatame</i>	Scarf hold
<i>Kuzure-kesa-gatame</i>	Modified scarf hold
<i>Ushiro-kesa-gatame</i>	Reverse scarf hold
<i>Kata-gatame</i>	Shoulder hold
<i>Kami-shiho-gatame</i>	Upper four-corner hold
<i>Kuzure-kami-shiho-gatame</i>	Modified upper four-corner hold
<i>Yoko-shiho-gatame</i>	Side-locking four-corner hold
<i>Tate-shiho-gatame</i>	Straight four-corner hold
<i>Uki-gatame</i>	Floating hold
<i>Ura-gatame</i>	Back hold

Table 2: Ten *Kodokan*-recognised *Osaekomi-waza* post-1 April 2107

Note that the technique called *Ura-gatame* here is due to Kyuzo Mifune (1883-1965) *Kodokan* 10th *dan* [7, 8] and was legitimised for use in sports-competition *judo* by the IJF in October 2013 – see Figure 6.



Figure 6: *Ura-gatame* due to Kyuzo Mifune

A completely different technique to the one with the same name, *Ura-gatame* is after Mikinosuke Kawaishi (1899~1969) *Dai Nippon Butokukai / Kodokan 7th dan*, French *Judo Federation 10th dan* [9] – see Figure 7 and later.

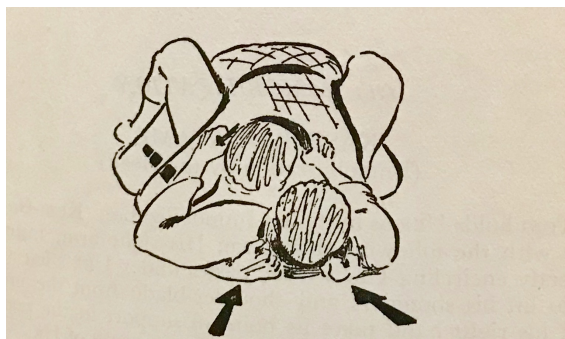


Figure 7: *Ura-gatame* due to Mikinosuke Kawaishi

Note that this *Ura-gatame* is not valid in modern sports-competition *judo*, but is a very effective technique nonetheless.

At the time of writing this article the Kodokan and IJF list [10] of recognised *osaekomi-waza* are identical, with *Ura-gatame* having been added to the IJF list. However, it is of course essential to acknowledge that there are literally hundreds of personal variations of these techniques that can be seen in competition or in everyday practice.

Five Key Pedagogical/Didactic Points Germane to All *Osaekomi-waza*

Based on a review of a selection of the *judo* literature – including books by Neil Adams and Cyril Carter [11], Moshe Feldenkrais [12], Syd Hoare [13], Katsuhiko Kashiwazaki [2], Mikinosuke Kawaishi [9], and Isao Okano [14], as well as the author's own experience in *judo* the following five key points are proposed as being germane to all *osaekomi-waza*:

- Control;
- Body placement;
- Stability;
- Space management;
- Mobility.

The previous points will now be considered in turn.

Control

Tori must control *Uke* so that his back and at least one shoulder is in contact with the *tatami* [mat]. Note that control is not limited to securing *Uke*, but also to make *Tori* safe from *Uke*, for example, by avoiding to provide the opportunity for *Uke* to apply a *shimewaza* [choking or strangling technique]. *Tori* must note in particular his own use of various grips to control certain limbs of *Uke*, as well as his head.

In *osaekomi-waza*, control can be achieved from the side (with *Tori* at an angle or perpendicular to *Uke*), the top, from behind the head, from between the legs or from beneath. Note though, that in the rules of *judo* sports competition, for an *osaekomi* to be valid, *Tori* himself must not have his leg(s) or body controlled by *Uke*'s legs.

Examples of these control positions will now be given by drawing selected techniques from the ten *osaekomi-waza* recognised by the Kodokan and the IJF, and the non-recognised *osaekomi-waza* due to Kawaishi.

- **Side:** For example, *Kesa-gatame* and *Yoko-shiho-gatame* et al;
- **Top:** *Tate-shiho-gatame*;
- **Behind the head:** *Kami-shiho-gatame* and *Kuzure-kami-shiho-gatame*;
- **From underneath:** *Ura-gatame* – after Mifune [7, 8].
- **Between the legs:** *Ura-gatame* – the immobilisation from Underneath – after Kawaishi [9].

Body Placement

Tori needs to maintain close contact with *Uke* – positioning his body relative to *Uke*'s according to the principles of the particular holding technique. *Tori* should note in particular the position of his own legs, feet and head.

Stability

Tori must protect his own balance by keeping his centre of gravity low and *sinking his weight*. He should also use his own body parts (arms, elbows, knees, legs, and feet) as bracing points to stabilise his own position and control *Uke*.

Space Management

Tori must immobilise *Uke* to the greatest possible extent – thereby minimising any relative motion between himself and *Uke* to avoid the creation of a gap that *Uke* could exploit to escape the pin. *Uke* will be continuously attempting to open up a gap in which to rotate, and conversely *Tori* will be striving to close it.

Mobility

As well as stability it is essential for *Tori* to have a mobile base so that he can move and adjust his position without losing control as *Uke* endeavours to escape. Moreover, this enables the transition to an alternative *waza* should it be necessary, or the opportunity present itself. (Additionally, linking this to “space management” suppose that if *Tori*

feels his *osaekomi-waza* is weak and *Uke* is likely to break it then by offering *Uke* a gap then *Tori* can then anticipate the direction in which *Uke* will rotate and then adjust the *osaekomi-waza* appropriately.

Taken together the points about body movement and repositioning made under “space management” and “mobility” are at the heart of *Tai-sabaki* [Body management] as applied to *osaekomi*. In the modern translation of Mifune’s *Canon of Judo* [8] this is summarised as “....they [katame waza] form the basis of techniques for adapting, which are at the core of judo’s philosophy. It is important to constantly change and adapt your techniques according to the opponent’s movements.” (...)

Concluding Remarks

Following some brief contextual material this short article has identified and discussed five key pedagogical/didactic points germane to all the individual *osaekomi-waza*. One need look no further than the first set of the *Katame-no-kata* [Forms of Control] – *Osaekomi-waza* – to both validate and illustrate the points discussed, – see Otaki & Draeger [15].

The *Katame-no-kata* is concerned with learning control - in particular, how *Tori* can best use his body in an efficient manner to control *Uke* on the ground. *Tori* must work on his versatility and show excellent *tai-sabaki* whilst grappling and *Uke* must strive to escape and exploit any weaknesses in *Tori*’s techniques. Through practicing the *Katame-no-kata* [Figure 7] in a realistic and dynamic manner both *Tori* and *Uke* can assimilate the lessons that the *kata* imparts and leverage them for the benefit of their *randori* [free practice] and *shiai* [contest].



Figure 7: *Katame-no-kata*

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“JUDO & LIFE” by Brian N. Watson

Background

This new book by Brian Watson and produced by Trafford Publishing – Figure 1, contains 48 reflective essays. Specifically, the compositions are on i) Jigoro Kano’s principles of *judo*, ii) personal experiences, iii) life’s challenges, and iv) matters of societal concern in contemporary Japanese and Western culture.

Kano’s Goals

The three body-mind relationship goals that Kano advised his *judo* students to aspire to; namely, to perfect themselves physically, intellectually and morally are all aimed at the same objective - self-improvement.

The first goal is perhaps the easiest and the one that many *judoka* achieve by gaining a *dan* grade, after a few years’ training, and perhaps by winning a few medals along the way. The next two goals are psychological in nature and usually take longer to attain.

The intellectual (second) goal is focused on educating oneself for what one wishes to become in life, whether it be an

engineer, a teacher, an accountant or whatever one's desire. These goals, however, often require much book learning. Because "time and tide wait for no man" one must read, read and read some more in order to expand one's vocabulary and acquire the necessary knowledge.

The third goal is mainly focused on the moral lessons that one should have learnt after completion of the previous two. These teachings should prove useful in helping one to succeed in one's endeavours and enable one to impart proper moral guidance to others, especially the young when teaching *judo*.

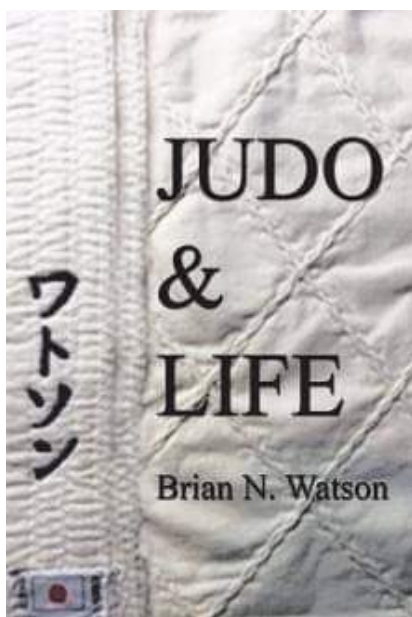


Figure 1: "Judo & Life" by Brian N. Watson

"Judo & Life" is available at [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk) and [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) in both paperback and Kindle format.



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The Richard Bowen Collection



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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.