



The Kano Society Bulletin



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In This Edition

This issue of “*The Bulletin*” contains an essay by Jigoro Kano describing the situation regarding sport in Japan both before and after the Meiji restoration of 1868. It also contains a well-considered thought-piece by Dr David Matsumoto concerning high-grade promotions in *judo*. Also included is an inspirational article by Dr Richard Riehle as to why he continues to get on the *tatami* to physically practice *judo* at the age of 85.

We also include two brief reports by Brian Watson regarding the accomplishments of the great *judoka*, Toshihiko Koga, who sadly died of cancer in March, aged just 53, and his second son Genki.

Publisher's Comments

We hope you enjoy this issue of “*The Bulletin*” which has been produced by Llyr Jones. A particular thank you to Brian Watson, Dr Matsumoto and Dr Riehle for their valued contributions.

Contributions

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

Diana Birch

Physical Training – Interest in Foreign Games Jigoro Kano, presented by Brian Watson



Jigoro Kano (1860 - 1938)

In feudal times in Japan there was no physical training in the sense in which these words are now used in the West.

Although our *samurai* class trained their bodies through exercise in the use of the two-handed swords and lances, in archery, horsemanship, *jiu jitsu* and swimming, yet the real object of these accomplishments was to prepare them for their vocation as soldiers and not for physical health. Country people often amused themselves in wrestling contests, boys in flying kites, and girls in playing at battledore and shuttlecock. They also made pilgrimages, now singly and now in companies of varying sizes, to different Buddhist temples or Shinto shrines, walking long distances, often climbing some of the highest or steepest mountains. These excursions also were undertaken either for pleasure or for devotion and not for physical culture.

It was not until 1888 that our Government established a special institution for training teachers of gymnastics, although physical instruction in some form had existed even earlier in large schools, and such outdoor sports as baseball had been enthusiastically played by some of the students of the *Kaisei-Gakko* (the then highest educational institution in Japan, which was afterwards made the Imperial University).

The first teacher of gymnastics was an American of the name of George Leland. His pupils were scattered over different parts of the country, and gymnastics soon began to be universally taught in all the schools of primary and secondary grades. In course of time Japanese teachers became expert in the subject: some came back from abroad having studied the Swedish and other systems. Improvement after improvement has since been made, until what is now taught is quite different from what was originally imparted. Beside gymnastics, military drill is taught in all the schools of the secondary grade and some of the schools of higher grade. But what I propose to deal with here is chiefly physical training apart from gymnastics and drill.



George Leland (1850 – 1924)

Judo and Running

Of all the kinds of physical exercises practiced in this country at present *judo* (known generally as *jiu jitsu* in the Occident, though *jiu jitsu* is a primitive form of *judo*) and fencing appeal to Japanese youth so well is easily understood. Besides being historically associated with noble deeds of great men, their practice gives them something more precious in addition to bodily development. It seems desirable, however, to explain more at length why running has gained such popularity in recent years. Five years ago, a number of men interested in the promotion of physical education in the Imperial capital assembled in the Tokyo Higher Normal School and after exchange of views, established the *Dai Nippon* Physical Association, whose object is to encourage physical culture among the Japanese: it was also decided that this association should represent Japan at the International Olympic Games. They agreed, moreover, that walking, running, jumping, and swimming should be specially encouraged, and in the autumn of 1911 the first athletic meeting of this association was held at Haneda, near Tokyo.

Contests were then held in short and long-distance running, and in both the high and long jump. The most successful competitors in these running contests were selected, one for sprinting and another for the Marathon Race, and they were sent to compete at the Olympic Games held in Stockholm in the year 1912. This was the first time Japan ever sent her champions to any international games. Although they failed to achieve any distinction, the experience and encouragement they brought home were not without value. Since their return these runners, in accordance with the wishes of the association, have been persistently endeavouring to plead for the cause of running. This is the plain reason why running is so widely practiced in Japan now. Another reason is that some of the foremost educationists are of the opinion that gymnastics and military drill have their own merits, but those are not liked and continued after school days, while

some sports are too attractive so that boys indulge in them at the expense of their studies. Running is a good bodily exercise, and it is neither too attractive nor entirely devoid of interest. Furthermore, it requires no apparatus, and can be practiced even when there is no properly fitted running course. It is thus a kind of exercise in which everybody can participate.

Large numbers of teachers share these views and are encouraging running in their schools.

Swimming

Besides these three exercises, swimming is also very popular. In summer most of the schools send their boys, and sometimes girls even, to the seashore, or to lakes and rivers when the latter are more easily available. Various schools or styles of swimming were elaborated by great masters in feudal times, and these are taught and learned even to this day¹. But, in addition, we are now introducing the Western style as well, and every year swimming centres attract more and more participants. One drawback in Japan, however, in the diffusion of this excellent form of physical training is the want of warm swimming tanks which are found in most of the large cities in Europe and America. This restricts the time of exercise only to the warm season. But it may be reasonably hoped that before long Japan will have the benefit of swimming even in winter.

Baseball

Baseball is also played extensively. A large number of secondary schools for boys have their baseball teams, and they often play one against another. Three of the private universities in Tokyo have teams sufficiently trained to compete with those of American universities. Intercollegiate matches, both national and international, are held from time to time which attract thousands of spectators and have already produced a race of 'fans'. But actual players of baseball are not so numerous as people imagine. This is perhaps owing to the fact that baseball is a fascinating game and is more interesting to watch than most other games, and that as it requires a large space of ground, while only a limited number of persons can play at a time, the majority of boys and young men must be content to remain spectators. Therefore, as a means of improving the physical conditions of the rising generation baseball must be said to play but an insignificant part in Japan.

Boating and Other Games

Boating has had its day; many of the past enthusiasts in boating, having been found poor in their studies or been guilty of misdemeanours the school authorities have rather discouraged it. That most schools are situated far from the available waters, and that it is expensive to build boats and keep them on good condition, prevent rowing from being extensively practiced.

Lawn tennis is played not only in schools but by people out of schools. Matches are often held, but no such excitement

¹ Here Kano is alluding to specialised *samurai* swimming styles. Whereby, for instance, troops would silently cross a river or castle moat at night without losing their weapons prior to an attack.

is seen among spectators as in the case of baseball, although far more people play tennis than baseball.

Football is also played in some of the schools. Notwithstanding that many of the authorities on physical education are in favour of football, this game is not widely taken up. This perhaps is due to the fact that the game was introduced into Japan only recently and therefore there are not any influential individuals to encourage it as yet.

Three years ago, the *Dai Nippon* Physical Education Association added throwing to the list of exercises it had been encouraging. The throwing of javelins, hammers, disc, balls used in baseball, and so on, is now being practiced.

Skating and skiing are going to become popular pastimes in northern provinces.

Such is a brief account of the physical training that has obtained in Japan in the past few years.

Notes

(This article appeared in The Times Japanese Supplement that was published on 3 June 1916 during the First World War. Kano highlights the reception given by the Japanese public at that time with regard to the gradual acceptance of some newly introduced Western sportive activities, an inflow that had begun at the beginning of the Meiji era in 1868. It is also well to remember that because of the former national seclusion period, 1603-1868, most Western sports were totally unknown to the vast majority of Japanese.)

Points to Ponder Compiled by Brian N. Watson

“Violence should never be glorified.”

“We value good health the most after it has gone.”

“The past is the mirror of today.”

Japanese Proverb

“All truth passes through three stages.

First, it is ridiculed.

Second, it is violently opposed,

and third, it is accepted as self-evident.”

Arthur Schopenhauer

(1788 – 1860)

¹ Dr David Matsumoto is an author, psychologist and *judoka*. He is a renowned expert in the field of micro-expressions, gesture, nonverbal behaviour, culture and emotion.

Thoughts about High Rank Promotions in Judo

David Matsumoto¹, edited by Llyr Jones



*Kohaku-obi for 6th dan to 8th dan, and
Aka-obi for 9th dan and 10th dan*

In 2020, I inherited the position of Chairman of the Board of Examiners for the *Daiheigen Yudanshakai* [Big Valley Black Belt Association] after the death of my mentor and friend, Haruo Makimoto-sensei. It is the passing of a mantle I do not take lightly, as I learned so much from Makimoto-sensei over the almost 40-year period that I had the privilege of knowing and learning from him. He taught me so much – humility, grace, harmony, friendship – essentially about the meaning of how to live as a *judoka*. I continue to struggle in my humble ways every day to embody the meaning of *judoka* in his way.



Haruo Makimoto 8th dan
(1940 – 2020)



David Matsumoto 8th dan
(Born 1959)

In the new role I have been fulfilling, I have been contemplating the meaning of *judo* promotions in general, and of higher rank promotions in particular. *Judo* has changed and evolved since its inception in 1882, and certainly since I began in 1967. There are new practitioners, new goals, new motives, and most importantly new and different societies and cultures [1].

Despite, or because of, the many changes in our world and in *judo* over the past 140 years, considerations of *judo* pro-

motions ultimately led me back to thinking about the purpose of *judo* originally, and more importantly how it may be applied in the 21st century. While *judo* undoubtedly can and should have many purposes and be many different things to many different people, the ultimate purpose of *judo*, in my belief and in much of Kano Jigoro's writings [2], is the betterment of the individual for **the purpose of the betterment of society** (the latter is in bold because I think this is a forgotten aspect of *judo* and one that I would like to focus on).

Judo was developed during a time of turmoil and change in Japanese society, and one major reason why it flourished then and throughout the 20th century was because it aided in the development of individuals, who then contributed to and helped improve society. *Judo* grew because it addressed something in people and society that both needed. *Judo* was a solution to a problem, not only in Japan but throughout the world, which led to its global spread [3]. Just as that was true then, it can and should be true now.

This thought has permeated how I have understood *judo* techniques – *O-soto-garí*, *Uchi-mata*, *Tomoe-nage*, etc. Techniques are also solutions to problems, a philosophy that can be used as a basis for teaching techniques. (Parenthetically, I think most *judo* teaching consists of teaching techniques without teaching about the problems those techniques solve, which may be putting the cart before the proverbial horse).

Likewise, *judo* was and is a solution to a problem – problems and issues in society. Just as techniques evolve and are adapted to changing situations and problems, *judo* has and should continue to evolve and adapt to changing situations in order to meet its goal of the betterment of individuals and society.

Some *judo* “purists”, of whom I would count myself, may suggest that changes to *judo* are blasphemy. Over the five-plus decades of my personal history with *judo*, I have seen many purists react negatively to change, including changes in *judo* colour, rules, the sportification and monetisation of *judo*, the angle of the bow, the number of steps in a throw in *Nage-no-kata*, etc.

As many people know, I am a stickler for tradition, history, heritage, rituals, customs, and culture, no question. So, any changes must be met with a healthy dab of scepticism. Changes, however, adaptations if you will, are necessary aspects of any successful endeavour, whether it be in individuals applying *judo* techniques in *randori* or in *judo* organisations adapting to survive and flourish in society. Even Kano stated that what was important about the transmission of tradition is not the form but the spirit underlying the tradition (伝統とはその形を継承することを伝統と言わず、その魂、その精神を継承することを伝統という). But we often get bogged down in form (*i.e.*, Form vs. Substance).

How can a view of the purpose of *judo* as a solution to societal problems translate to an evolution in thinking about high rank promotions? Can we use a high *dan* promotion system for the development of *judo* and for the betterment of society? Can we ask high *dan* rank holders to promote

Kano's ideals in the 21st century? This notion may be linked to the idea of *shin-gi-tai* (心技体), the thought that development in *judo* may proceed through stages involving body mastery, skill mastery, and then spirit elevation. Thus, a question may be how a high *dan* promotion system can be a tool that can be adapted in order to facilitate *judo* development by respecting Kano's philosophy. Can we consider an evolution of high *dan* promotion criteria that can achieve this?

心 技 体
Shin Gi Tai

Spirit – Technique – Body

For example, let's first take a look at the USJF (United States Judo Federation) promotion guidelines. Those guidelines have allowed for specification and quantification of all kinds of service to *judo*, and more specifically to *judo* organisations. The “USJF Form 20”, for instance, is multiple pages documenting one's service to *judo* and the organisation in painstaking detail. There is nothing wrong with service to an organisation; the organisation should incentivise its members to give back and support the organisation. But have we lost a bigger meaning to higher rank promotions in these minutiae? Is something lost not seeing the forest from the trees?

Holding many positions in the USJF in the 1990s and 2000s, I remember the times when the necessity for those forms were debated and then added in order to capture, quantify, and recognise the large variety and quality of ways in which individuals contributed to *judo* and their achievements.

When one thinks about it, the addition of those very detailed specifications parallel to some degree the specification of the effects of throws in competition years ago, when almost *wazari* became *yuko*, and almost *yuko* became *koka*, and almost *koka* became *kinsa* (well, *kinsa* were around a long time in the ambiguous, subjective world of the referee). And of course, one of the most important factors in high *dan* promotion is time in grade (TIG).

If the purpose of *judo* is to help build people's characters in order not only to help them in their lives but also to solve societal problems, and high ranks in *judo* are supposed to signify something special and unique about the contributions and accomplishments of the individuals to those problems, should consideration be given to how candidates have evolved as individuals and/or served society and not only *judo* organisations? After all, high rank individuals have a unique role to play in transmitting *judo* values. Here are some kinds of service to society that could be considered:

Evolution as a person: As people evolve, mature, and grow as individuals with wisdom, should that be considered? When *judo* originated, *judo* development was associated with development of what may loosely be called gentle personship and chivalry. Such concepts, however, are not found in today's *judo*.

- **Service to others:** Raising children? Volunteering for the needy? Perhaps one of the most important contributions anyone could make to society is to raise children and help the needy. Should there be consideration of that?
- **Service to non-judo organisations:** Should service to non-judo organisations be considered if those organisations serve positive societal functions?
- **Service to society at large:** Should gainful and meaningful employment, supposedly that serves a societal purpose, serve as a basis for promotion? Should a person's educational background be counted? And what about educators themselves?

The list goes on and I think readers can get what my point is. I believe TIG was used in the past as a proxy for all these wonderful evolutions and contributions to have occurred. But today it's not that; it's just passing the time.

Should there be a place for all these in considerations of higher ranks for *judo*? If the purpose of big *Judo* with a capital J (*Jodan* 上段 *judo* – *judo* in a wide sense) is to solve societal problems, while the purpose of little *judo* with lowercase j (*gedan* 下段 *judo* – *judo* in a narrow sense) is to develop people so that they can contribute meaningfully to society, perhaps the *Judo* world may be missing an important component of gauging promotability by only quantifying service to *judo* organisations and TIG and ignoring a person's contributions to society.

This missing component and almost exclusively inward-looking focus may also contribute to difficulties *judo* organisations have in continually attracting new talent over the decades, and to growing in strength and numbers. And regardless of the mechanisms by which individuals evolve as persons and contribute to society, a common link must be a continuous and regular participation in *judo* activities.

Practicing *judo*. Being at the *dojo*. Putting on a *judogi*. Stepping on the mat. Being at and serving tournaments and other functions. The *judo* contributor to society will advertise their participation in *judo* while serving in many social roles. In closing, allow me a word about what I believe is the misuse of the word *judoka*, a word I used at the beginning of this essay. The addition of *ka* (家) at the end of a word, as it is in *judoka* (柔道家) in the Japanese language does not merely signify a person who does *judo*, at least in the original meaning of the word. Rather, it signifies a person who lives with a deeper philosophy, with an underlying spirit and intent, a person who embodies the heart and soul of the values of *judo* and all the good associated.

Perhaps a lack of awareness of this nuance of the word is related to the non-consideration of those aspects of a per-

son in high rank promotions mentioned above. I don't believe all practitioners of *judo* are necessarily *judoka* in the traditional sense of the word. Makimoto-sensei was a *judoka* in the full spirit and meaning of the word.

A similarly misused phrase is *seiryoku zenyo* (精力善用). Originally, this phrase was shortened from 精神の力を善のために用いる, which can be loosely translated as “to use all of one's spiritual energies in service of goodness”. The emphasis in the phrase to me is on the word *zen* (善). Loosely translated, it refers to goodness, virtue, or moral sense. Clearly, “maximum efficiency, minimum effort” is very different. Like “*judoka*”, its early English translation as “maximum efficiency, minimum effort” has done a disservice to the phrase, and like the discussion above, perhaps *judo* leaders can reconsider their use of this central motto of *judo*.

Relatedly, Kano did use the phrase “maximum efficiency” in a speech in English in 1932; but there was no mention of “minimum effort” and the context of his speech was clearly concerning the betterment of the individual and society [4].

In proffering these thoughts, there is no judgment of all who have received high ranks in *judo*. My hat's off to them for having been recognised for their contributions. But perhaps this is a time to consider an evolution of the meaning, and criteria, for high *dan* rank promotions to a powerful and efficient system and tool not only to recognise individuals for their accomplishments but also to disseminate Kano's educational and intellectual values in the 21st century.

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This article was first published, in its original form, on the website of the *Daiheigen Yudanshakai*: <https://www.daiheigen.org/2021/05/thoughts-about-high-rank-promotions-in-judo/>

Judo – Why I Still Train

Richard Riehle¹

People are sometimes surprised that, at 85 years old, I am still in my *judogi* in the *dojo*, still enjoying *judo*. Of course, my competition days are in the past. My last tournament was a little over ten years ago, at 74, competing with guys my own age in a World Masters event. I am no longer training to prepare for competition.



The author, Richard Riehle, at a *dojo* in San Jose, California

Even when I was young and competing, I was never a star competitor. Starting my life in *judo* at age 16, I lost far more matches than I ever won, mostly to *newaza*. I was never an athlete, but I loved learning and participating in *judo*.

When I was still a *nidan* [2nd *dan*], during one of my many annual visits to the *Kodokan*, I said to one of the high-*dan* instructors, “I have been in *judo* for many years, but I have never been a champion”. He replied, “I have never been a champion either. That is not the purpose of *judo*”.

And there we have it!

I have learned that *judo*, at its fundamental level, is not about defeating another person. It is not about scoring an *ippon* against an opponent. I also enjoy chess, but have been put in checkmate hundreds of times during my lifetime – just a few weeks ago by one of my three sons.

True, that there is some ego gratification in scoring a win in *judo*, but as we grow older, we achieve fewer and fewer *ippon* scores in competition. With *judo* we eventually learn that our training is not about ego gratification. It is more

about learning about ourselves in a unique way, even as we learn more about *judo*.

Chess is much the same. There is never an end to our learning in either activity. The subtle variations are endless, and the discoveries full of delightful surprises.

Too many of those I knew when I was younger have “retired” from *judo* because they believed they were too old to be good competitors, too old to even have a chance to become champions.

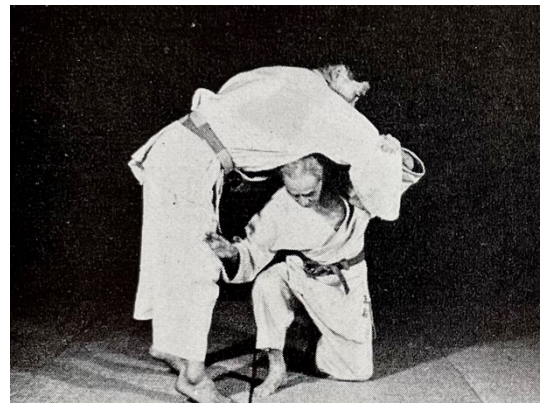
“Why bother to continue now that I can longer have a shot at winning a medal or trophy?” or “My best days are behind me!” or “I’m too out-of-shape”. In reality, it usually about ego: “I will look ridiculous because I can’t do what I used to be able to do!” President Theodore Roosevelt (a *judo* enthusiast himself) once said that “Comparison is the thief of joy”. There is no joy in comparing our older selves to our younger selves. There is no joy in living like saprophytes, on our own dead past. (Saprophytes are plants, fungi, or microorganisms that lives on dead or decaying organic matter.)

And with that, they acknowledge that they never learned the real lessons of *judo*. They have learned only about victory and defeat. There is so much more to learn.

Jigoro Kano once remarked that it was not important that we are better than someone else. He noted that it is more important that to be better today than you were yesterday.

This raises the question, “Better in what way?” We each will have our own answer to that question.

For me, “better” means many things. One of them is good feeling from a good physical workout. Sometimes, better is because I have learned something new. Better might even be because I have been able to help someone else overcome a difficulty of their own. Better will be different for each of us.



Tama-guruma – Sphere/Ball wheel

¹ Dr Richard Riehle is computer and software systems expert-practitioner, educator, and *judoka*.

As an older *judo* practitioner, I can work at improving *waza* that were not my best during my long ago, and brief, competition days. I am working on *Sumi-otoshi* [Corner drop] and some other difficult throwing techniques I could never execute successfully in *shiai*. For example, I have experimented with Kyuzo Mifune's *Tama-guruma* [Sphere/Ball wheel]. I know of no one who has ever attempted *Tama-guruma* in a contest though.

We can all learn deeper lessons from the *kata* [forms]. There are a lot of techniques we would not have attempted in a *shiai* that we can try to learn or improve when we no longer need to be focused on winning.

There is also the fellowship with other “old timers” and the opportunity to share experiences with the youngsters. In the *dojo*, there is no politics, no religion, no ethnic biases — nothing but improving ourselves through our *judo* training.

Even light *randori*, after 40, after 50, or even into the 80s, can be satisfying — even rewarding — when we are no longer worried about earning trinkets for the trophy shelf at home or in the *dojo*.

Randori does not have to include throwing and falling. I used to ask my students to do *kuzushi randori* — no throws, just learn self-control and practice various kinds of *kuzushi* with one's partner. We old guys can learn a lot just from *kuzushi*-only practice.

Why do I still train? A life in *judo* has enriched my life in so many ways, and my continued training continues to enrich my life. I cannot, at my age, defeat anyone, but there is still the chance to be better tomorrow than I am today using my own ideas of what it means to be “better”.

Finally, I still train because I can. There are things I cannot do: no *kata-guruma*, no sitting in *seiza*, no hard falls. Our lifetime of occasional health issues such as weaker bones, injured knees, slower reflexes are all part of that training, but while we can still don a *judogi* and still train, there will still be benefits in that training.

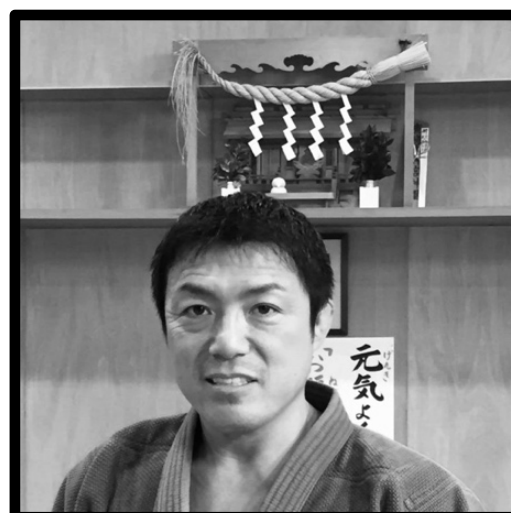


The Kodokan's *Kodansha-shiai* [Contest for High *dan*-Holders] attracts many older *judoka* and has very spirited matches

In Memoriam: Toshihiko Koga (21 November 1967–24 March 2021) Brian Watson

It was announced on 24 March 2021 that Toshihiko Koga, born in Saga Prefecture on November 21, 1967, had died of cancer, a disease for which he underwent surgery the previous year. He was 53 years old.

Koga started *judo* in his first year of elementary school and went on to compete successfully as a university student. He was called “*Heisei Sanshiro*” for his outstanding skill, especially noted for his shoulder throws. Koga won three world championships in 1989, 1991 and 1995, and a long-wished-for gold medal at the Barcelona Olympics in 1992. He also gained the 78-kilogram category silver medal at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. He retired from competition in 2000 and thereafter served as an excellent coach for the women's national *judo* team. Ayumi Tanimoto, under his tutelage, won the 63kg category gold medal at the 2004 Athens Olympics. Koga also coached the women's *judo* team at the International Pacific University in Okayama from 2007 making it one of the strongest clubs in Japan.



Toshihiko Koga (1967 – 2021)

One day before his death, the *Kodokan* promoted Toshihiko Koga to the grade of 9th *dan*.

Genki Koga
Brian Watson



Genki Koga (Born 1998)

Toshihiko Koga's second son, Genki (born 19 December 1998) recently captured his first major *judo* title by winning the 60kg category at the All-Japan Weight Category *Judo* Championships held in Fukuoka on 4th April 2021. This is a feat that his father had achieved seven times in the past. When interviewed, Genki said that he is now focused on seizing a gold medal at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.



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Judo Collections



The “Bowen Collection” at the University of Bath Library, contains the extensive *judo* archive amassed by *judoka* and scholar Richard Bowen during the course of individual research for his many books and publications.

Alongside the “Bowen Collection” is the personal book collection of Syd Hoare which includes many rare texts, some in the Japanese language, given to Syd by Trevor Leggett. As well as the books, there is a bound compendium of the educational articles and lectures written and delivered by Syd.

Also residing at Bath is the “Woodard (*Judo*) Collection” – a compilation of archival material relating to the history of women’s *judo* assembled by Marion and Graham Woodard.

All of these collections represent a wonderful resource for present and future *judo* researchers. They are for reference use only (not available for loan) and can be viewed between 0900 and 1700 hrs.