



# The Bulletin

Volume 1, Issue 2

December 2000

## The Kano Society

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### The Bulletin - Editor's comment

Welcome to the second edition of the 'Bulletin' For those of you who did not see issue number one—This is our on line / off line newsletter about Judo and the Kano Society - If you missed number one and would like to see it — it is still on the web site or you can write in and ask for a printed copy. We aim to produce it at regular intervals - probably quarterly and later monthly - and to publish content on line with hard copy for those who are not yet connected. Feel free to print off and distribute to colleagues and friends who you think may be interested. The 'Bulletin' will be a short piece to begin with and later expand hopefully into a full magazine / Journal format - but this depends on you too ... we need members to help with the expenses and we need articles and contributions. This may be in the form of news, interesting bits and pieces, photographs or reminiscences and historical material. Send in by email or post to Publications Department—7 High Street Penge, London SE20 7HJ England  
Eventually this will grow into an archive of Judo material which will be thus preserved for the future. If you have any material which could be added to this archive please let us know—thank you I do hope you will enjoy the 'Bulletin' and bear with us during early teething stages.

Have a great festive season and join us in the Kagami-biraki and Kangeiko in the new year—Those of you who are nearby in body and others in 'spirit'! - Regards— Diana Birch

### Kano Society Events - Kagami-biraki

You are invited to join us for Kagami-biraki on Sunday 14th January 2001. Kagami-biraki is an ancient ritual with complex historical roots. When I first heard of it I was told that it was a time when in old Samurai households the men of the household would be given new armour which was placed on the mirror table—this was the shrine of the home following the principle that the mirror harbours the soul and hence at certain times the mirror would be covered to prevent spirits from being drawn in. So at the Kagami-biraki the mirror was uncovered, the men got new armour and the Samurai women ate mochi rice cakes which it is rumoured, often choked them! All this seemed hardly fair—further research was required!

The information which follows was provided by John Cornish -

#### KAGAMI-BIRAKI

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 straight-forward. 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 characters used for Kagami-Biraki will show that Kagami is a mirror and Biraki is really



Characters for Kagami-biraki

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 individuals amount and saves the cutting of a larger one.

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

*Samurai curse? Each year fatalities are reported in Japan from people choking on mochi ...*



Takaragawa baths in winter

(Continued on page 2)



Wakanohana wearing the pure white rope

(Continued from page 1)

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.

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, the Top rank Sumo wrestler gets the rank name from this rope as he has to wear one around his waist when the "Dezuiiri" ceremony is carried out

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 every thing above, there may be variations.



*A pure white rope  
the Yokozuna  
hangs above the  
altar and gives  
it's name to the  
top rank of Sumo  
Wrestlers.*

## Too Little Too Much—Trevor Leggett 1997

This article is the first of a series of pieces by Trevor Leggett which first appeared in magazine form in 1997

### TOO MUCH, TOO LITTLE (1)

The principle of Maximum Efficiency — *Saidai Noritus Genri*, was stated in these words by Dr.Jigoro Kano. When I was sixteen, I heard him explain it, in his beautiful English, at the Judo hail in London. He said that it applies in every action in life: do not use too much force, and do not use too Little. Use exactly the amount of force that is necessary. To do this, he said, is Right Use, *Zen- Yo*. He also told us that this is the true meaning of the word *Ju* in *Ju-do*; to use too much force is Wrong Use, what he called Hardness or *Go-do*.

(The next day, he brushed some huge Chinese characters on a long roll of paper; it was framed and hung high on the wall of the judo dojo in London. The words were read and then translated for us: *Ju Sal Sal Go osei-su*: 'the gentle *Ju* indeed controls the forcible *Go*'.)

In the lecture, he said that *Zen- Yo* or Right Use applied not only to the amount of force to be used, but also to the amount of material. He gave the example of a tank of goldfish. If the water is absolutely pure, the fish will die. There must be some green plants in it. But if there is too much green stuff, then too the fish will die. In order to live, the fish must have the right balance; Wrong Use — lack of balance — brings failure. That was the conclusion.

Well, he gave the talk to an audience

of judo enthusiasts, and of course we all listened with respect and even reverence to Dr.Jigoro Kano, the founder of judo. But as I sat there, I began to think: 'Most of it is obvious. Why is he saying all this? It is self-evident. If I want to hammer in a nail, but don't hit with enough force, of course the nail won't go in; and if I hit too hard, the nail will probably bend and the wood will be split. We don't need to be told that sort of thing'. (Like many 16-year-olds, I was full of confidence in my own ideas.)

The only point where I did not agree was his statement that unnecessary force will bring failure. I thought: 'No, that is not always true. The greater force *contains* the lesser force. So if greater force is used, it may sometimes succeed. If one hits too weakly, the nail will never go in. But if one hits even very strongly, sometimes the nail will go in, though it will make a big Bang! But that is not necessarily a failure'. As to the goldfish, I had never kept any, and it made no real impression on me. I understood what he was saying, but I did not feel it had anything to do with me. Then he gave some examples from judo, which I found really interesting.

So I came away from the lecture a bit dissatisfied. I could not understand why such a great man should waste his time telling us what everyone already knew. But I did not forget the talk. He had a remarkable

presence, which in a way awed even the cheeky 16-year-old who was determined not to be over awed by anyone or anything. I came to know that Dr.Kano had been a big figure in Japanese education. Then from time to time I would find myself thinking: 'What did he do it for? Why did he say these obvious things?' Gradually I got the idea that there must be something which I had failed to grasp.

I came to see that Dr.Kano was not speaking about single incidents like hammering a nail, or keeping goldfish: he was talking about attitudes in life. There are people (was I one?) who always speak louder than needed, who close doors with a bang. In an argument, even when they could convince by reason, they try also to frighten others by using advantages of strength or money or status. In judo or Shogi or in life *generally, they are* always attacking, whether it is sensible or not, and whether there is an opportunity or not. It is always Too Much.

Then there are others who do not want to commit themselves to any complete action; they try a little, and then wait to see how it turns out. It is always Too Little. I slowly realized that we have to control our natural tendency, whether it is Too Much or Too Little, in order to change it into balanced Right Use of our actions and lives.

At first this seemed to be impossi-

ble. It would mean thinking about it all the time. For instance my elder brother was a Too Much man: When he stirred a cup of tea, he moved the spoon strongly, using the whole arm as in his boxing punch (he was a fine amateur boxer). It made a noticeable clink! It was somehow challenging and aggressive. When he was a boy, occasionally my mother would say to him: 'Don't stir like that. Do it quietly'. The next few times, he would take care and make no noise when he stirred, though he still used the whole arm. But that lasted only while he was thinking about it; he soon forgot, and everything was as before. Looking at many similar cases, I concluded that it would be impossible to act against one's Too much or Too little nature for long.

But something about Dr.Kano's words haunted me: such a great man would not be recommending the impossible. I began to observe some things which I had never really noticed before. When my boxer brother did things, he confronted them, almost ready to fight with them. He wanted to establish mastery over the spoon, to conquer it, so to speak. Then I noticed some of my fellow students at London University stirring their own tea in the canteen. Some of them would put only the head of the spoon into the cup, and cautiously stir the surface of the tea by moving just the fingers. It took them some time to dissolve the sugar. They were Too Little men,

## Too Little (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

and it was as though they were a bit apprehensive – of something, it was not clear what.

I began to see this contrast everywhere: the Too Much men were ready to fight things, they almost hated them; whereas the Too Little men distrusted things, and in fact feared them. I applied the analysis to myself, of course; was I a Too Much man or a Too Little man? I came to a conclusion, but why should I tell anyone else?

Well, I had got something deeper from Dr.Kano's remarks, but the problem still remained: how can we bring our Too Much or Too Little to a balance? I know now that I had seen examples of the answer at home in Britain and in other countries where I had been. But I did not recognize it clearly till I went to Japan. I had known it vaguely, but in Japan it stood out clear to see. The Too Much man hates the mater-

nal (or man) he deals with; the Too Little man fears it. What does the Man of Balance do? I saw in Japan not only artists but ordinary people, who *loved* the material they were using. They seemed to become one with it, to enter its very nature. I watched a carpenter take up a piece of wood to shape it. He did not know anyone could see him. Before he began, I saw him stroke the wood with his fingertips, as if it had been the arm of a child: 'I won't hurt you'. It was a surprise to me that when he did begin to plane, he pulled the plane towards him, instead of pushing it away as we do: it was an introduction to Japan as a 'pulling' nation as against the British 'push'. He handled the plane gently but firmly, just in accord with the nature of the wood and Dr.Kano's principle of Maximum Efficiency.

This was the solution to the problem: it is not that the Too Much man deliberately uses less force, or the Too Little man consciously makes

himself use more. That still leaves the question: how much less, or how much more? The answer is to become one with the action and the material. Whoever it may be, there is no difficulty when I am doing something to his own body: for instance, if I clean my finger nails, I know exactly how much force to use. I never wound my fingers by too much force, or leave them dirty by using too little. I instinctively use exactly the right amount. And it should be so in life generally.

It may be a surprise to know that Churchill, the greatest orator in Britain for a century, was at first rather shy when talking to strangers. An experienced friend told him: 'Realize that they are all like you: they are all shy. You must put them at ease'. He soon became fully confident in speaking. Again, a war hero famous for his daring in hand-to-hand fighting, said when he received the Victoria Cross, the highest award for bravery:

As a boy I was terrified of fighting. But I realized that they were just as frightened of me as I was of them. After that, I never hesitated'.

In ordinary life, at a meeting some people will shout too much, while others are frightened and are not heard. But if a person feels that he is one with the audience, he will know how they feel, and he will find a way to speak effectively. It is true that there are times when it is right to shout; but it will be done not out of hate, but to warn or help in some other way; there are times to be silent, but then he will be silent on a basis of reason, and not out of fear. Dr.Kano's voice was quiet, but his public lecture was firm and clear; we did not miss a word. I remember that he said that judo men should be careful not to misuse their skill, and he added: 'The best security is to be surrounded by friends, and they are not made by swords'.

## A Salute to Trevor Leggett - Robert W. Smith

The grand old man of British judo, Trevor Leggett, changed (as the Daoists say) recently at 85. He was full of years and deeds and his passing thins the ranks. The death of a good man - always alas in short supply - diminishes us all. But there is solace in that it presents we who remain with an occasion on which to salute him for his being, becoming, and doing.

Since the Forties I observed Trevor-my angle of vision always upward-largely in the context of judo, but aware from the start of his multifaceted talents. A champion judoka, he could play' the game, teach it, and write about its antecedents all at the same marvelous time. He would throw you with, say haraigoshi (sweeping loin) and the next month write in Judo, the Budokwai's quarterly, an elegant authoritative essay on Buddhist or Daoist art.

A versatile polymath, he started off wanting to be a concert pianist. His father, a professional violinist, leader of the London Philharmonic, got him the finest teachers, but advised him against such a career, steering him toward Law instead.

After his retirement from BBC's Japanese section, Trevor produced scholarly works on Zen, yoga, martial arts, and Asian culture, utilizing his knowledge of Sanskrit, Japanese, and an engaging English. Along the way, he became excellent at golf and chess (achieving 5-dan Shogi).

I never met him. On a business trip to London in 1964 I visited the Budokwai, but the desk-man, responding to my query, said that he was "under the weather" that night and so we were never destined to meet in the flesh.

But I didn't need the face-to-face. We had already met in his easy, informed books and articles which I still read. He was a beacon for all of

*" ... As the Daoists would say - The grand old man of British Judo 'changed' recently at 85 "*



Trevor Leggett 1952 - Picture Post sent by Ken Knott

us in judo and I doubt that we'll have a gentle man of his gifts ever again. Britain has prior claim on his memory, of course, but world judo and those who love it also bow deeply as we remember him.

**\*Traditional Judo\***  
**The Kano Society**

The Kano Society invite you to join us for Traditional Judo Events

**A week of Winter Training**

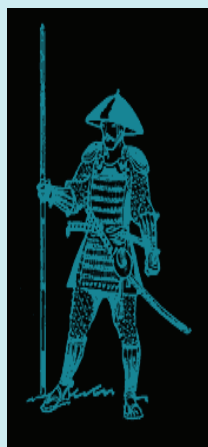
**Monday to Saturday 6.30am**

**Sunday 7.30am**

**5 - 11 February 2001**

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### The Future of Budo? - TP Leggett

Budo has no future as such, because its typical representatives have now become mere games. Like many games, they have dropped away from the ideal of - *training* into the aim of *winning*, often as professionals entertaining a crowd. To win or lose a kendo contest, they say, is the same thing as winning or losing a game of tennis. Now it is true that the kendo man no longer has any expectation of using a sword to defend himself. His special techniques with a sword find no application in life today. Even judo, with its ridiculously narrowed and artificial rules of contest, has lost most of its usefulness in self-defence; few judo men today would know how to meet an angry boxer. But it is, in fact, very easy. You run in on all fours and pull him over by grabbing his ankles. The boxer has no technique for hitting down. I will list the main areas in which I believe the Budo tradition, if kept alive and revived, can still contribute something very valuable to the world.

(1) Physical training: The technique of nearly all popular games consists in managing a ball, which is a situation that never occurs outside the play area. Many lead to one-sided development, whereas the movements in judo concern the whole body. In life, the judo man keeps his balance on slippery ground, when a crowd is pushing, or when he moves furniture. Most people lift a weight by their arms, whereas the judo man understands how to bend the knees and use the strength of the thighs. The kendo posture, too, gives hints about

how to sit at a computer without fatigue, and also gives precision in movement generally.

(2) Space: Ball games require comparatively much more space. In a squash court, twenty judo men can easily practice together. This means that judo is specially good for cities where space is limited.

(3) Both kendo and judo are concerned with instant response to attacks against the body, whereas ball games are mostly concerned with quite an artificial aim.

(4) Self-control: Sportsmanship taught this: to try very hard, but not to be ruffled by failure, or puffed up by success. It is true that with the development of entertainment games practiced by professionals before yelling crowds, this *training* element, which is sport, has often been replaced by winning at all costs. Sportsmanship has, in some areas, been replaced by gamesmanship. In many sports clubs, the ideal of the sportsman is still honoured and encouraged: a bad loser who makes excuses and gets angry is not respected. Kano believed the Budo ideal is useful for teaching, not merely self-control but good fellowship. Budo situations are those where the animal aggressiveness and perhaps fear, will be roused controlled, and finally turned into friendship, Jita Kyoei. This was the ideal of the sportsman: to shake hands after a fight, but boxing has a disadvantage; one of its purposes is to inflict damage, which is not true of the Budo idea.

(5) Classical Budo texts, such as Heihokadensho, seek to replace the warrior of Yang, who comes forward shouting, glar-

ing, swaggering and making feints, by the warrior of Yin, who is calm outwardly and inwardly (he can imitate the warrior of Yang if necessary). The ideal of the sportsman.

Budo has something far deeper to give to the world: transcendence of win-and- loss, technique and strategy, and manifesting inspiration. This is one of the fractional applications of Zen to a limited field; others are calligraphy, No dancing, and garden design. The special point of Budo is that the inspiration has to manifest, not at leisure, as in these other Ways or *Do*, but at high speed and responding to an opponent.

The *Do* does not depend on excellence in technique, though there has to be some technique in the particular field so that the result can show itself clearly. What does it mean in practice? When going into an important judo or kendo contest, to give up all thoughts of win-or-loss or special technique (Tokui-waza). If the mind can be emptied of such thoughts, a clear and unexpected result comes about. Sometimes this has little to do with any learned technique. The great Shogi grand-master, Yasuharu Oyama, told me that he did this *mokuso* at the beginning of a match. He used to sit perfectly still, sometimes for several minutes, before making his first move. Individuals in other countries discovered this secret of inspiration, but in general we can say that there is no tradition, and so we do not know how to train for it. It takes persistence and courage. What has been learned in Budo art can be applied in life situations. It is typically and uniquely Japanese that the hints at it should be in the form of poetry:

*The moon does not design  
to lodge there,  
Nor does the lake seek  
to catch the moon, of Hiroswawa.*

### \*Traditional Judo\* The Kano Society

Sunday 14th  
January 2001  
2pm - 4pm

At the Judokan  
Hammersmith

The Kano Society  
invite you to join  
us for this Traditional  
Judo Event

- \* Kata
- \* Goningake
- \* Randori
- \* Mochi



The *kagami mochi* in its proper arrangement.



### More Mochi? - Information from Japanese Tourist Office

New Year wouldn't be the same without *mochi*, which is made by steaming and pounding a sticky type of rice (*mochi gome*). In the past, *mochi* was made at home, but most families today buy it ready-made. Over the holidays, a pair of round *mochi* (*kagami mochi*) the size of plates--one a little larger than the other--is stacked on a stand and placed in a household Shinto altar or *tokonoma* (alcove) as an offering to the deities that visit on New Year's. The ornamental *mochi* is removed on January 11 and broken into smaller pieces before being eaten. By this time, the *kagami mochi* is usually quite brittle, and cracks appear on the sur-

face. The *mochi* is not cut with a knife, since cutting has negative connotations (like "cutting off ties"). It's broken with one's hands or a hammer, and thus the ritual is called *kagami biraki*, or cracking open the *kagami mochi*. The smaller pieces are roasted and put in *shiruko* (sweet soup of boiled beans) or *zoni* (vegetable and meat soup). By partaking of this offering to the gods, ancient people believed that they were inviting divine blessings. *Kagami biraki* is not just a household affair. The Kodokan, a famous judo school in Tokyo, performs a mammoth *kagami biraki* ritual after a training session each year--a tradition going back to 1884. The *mochi* is put in *shiruko* and

### Membership News

Our membership continues to grow. Many leading figures in the Judo world are now members of our organisation and overseas members are showing a great deal of interest. After a set back caused by the death of our Patron Trevor Leggett we are planning several events for 2001 beginning with Kagami biraki on Sunday 14th January and continuing with a week of Kangeiko in February.

Later in the year we will hold a celebration of Trevor Leggett's life. Full details will follow in due course.

### AGM 2001

The AGM of the Kano Society will be held on Sunday 1st April 2001 from 2-5pm at the Fleming's Hotel 8-12 Half Moon Street, London WC - That is off Piccadilly (opposite Green Park Tube Station). Tel 020 7499 2964

Would any members who wish to place items on the agenda please send them in to the office at least a month beforehand--Thank you.

NB you can also email or post on feed-back from website.