



The Bulletin

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The Kano Society

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The Bulletin - Editor's comment

In this edition we continue with John Cornish's article on Kata. A Question on Judo Kata Gone astray . Do send in comments about these and other articles.

I received a note from James Wyatt who attends John Cornish's Aikido class pointing to an article on Draeger and his involvement in Kata which may be of interest - its on the judo information site at

<http://judoinfo.com/kata.htm>
It mentions Draeger performing the Kata at the 1964 Olympics but fails to mention that John Cornish did it with him.

News - Please look at the web site for details and for information about future events—there will be further film shows, kata courses and other items.

Regards to all and Happy New Year
Diana Birch

A Question on Judo Kata Gone Astray? Part Two - John Cornish

To paraphrase - the question posed to John Cornish in part one was "if you're interested in winning Olympic-level competition ... then is Kata is a waste of time?" Having argued the pros and cons of training - Part Two continues to look at - 'What next?'

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". Better still they could 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.

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, say, about 4th 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 of his Tokui, 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 past top contest "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.

much worse than the quickly over, one throw, in a contest.

'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.

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 here we are talking about Self-defense, so we are. Most of the listed Kata, are Self-defense-Kata. Even Nage-no-kata has blow attacks in it, but the same tactics that apply in Self-defense also apply in Contest Judo.

Applying this principle of studying the opposition, in 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

(Continued on page 2)

Judokan Closes its doors

Sadly the Judokan in Hammer-smith—founded and run by Percy Sekine with the support of his wife Hanna, closed on 31st October 2004—the end of an era.

Congratulations to Percy and Hanna for running such a successful club and thanks for all their hard work for traditional judo.



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. 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 kinds of "cold blooded" throws on someone are

Judo Kata Gone Astray? Part Two - John Cornish (continued)

cannot teach us as much as the physical experience of being attacked 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 every one, 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 of Kata.

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 to start 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. We should not attempt physically dangerous things the young can do our learning, just as with the young, must be in easy stages.

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 done on the move, but so is 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. Even 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. Many students start Judo with the aim of learning Self-defense. Prospective Coaches please note. Any contest this kind of student has will certainly be Kata as it will be a part of Self-defense training for the life and 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, 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.Legget, for his books on Kata, calls it Formal Demonstration. Having been a student of his, and having a great respect for his Judo and Japanese language knowledge, to say nothing about the other things he was a master at, I admit all the words used for Kata, 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 in the West can get lead down the wrong path.

If we take only a little glance at all the Japanese Martial arts, we will see that they all have Kata as the

main method of training, many 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 a 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 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 Kata is the things the attacker, Uke, must learn. In the Kime-no-kata and 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.

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 Ryo-te-tori (Both-hands-held) in Kime-no-kata, Go-shin-jutsu and Ju-no-kata, to name just three, and in each Kata there is a differing response. So we learn at least three defenses against this attack.

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 Go-shin-jutsu. This has grip attacks before blows,

blows before kicks, kicks before knife attacks, knife attacks before stick attacks and after those there are the gun attacks. This thought as to the order of learning is not at all modern, it is even seen in the Ko-shiki-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.

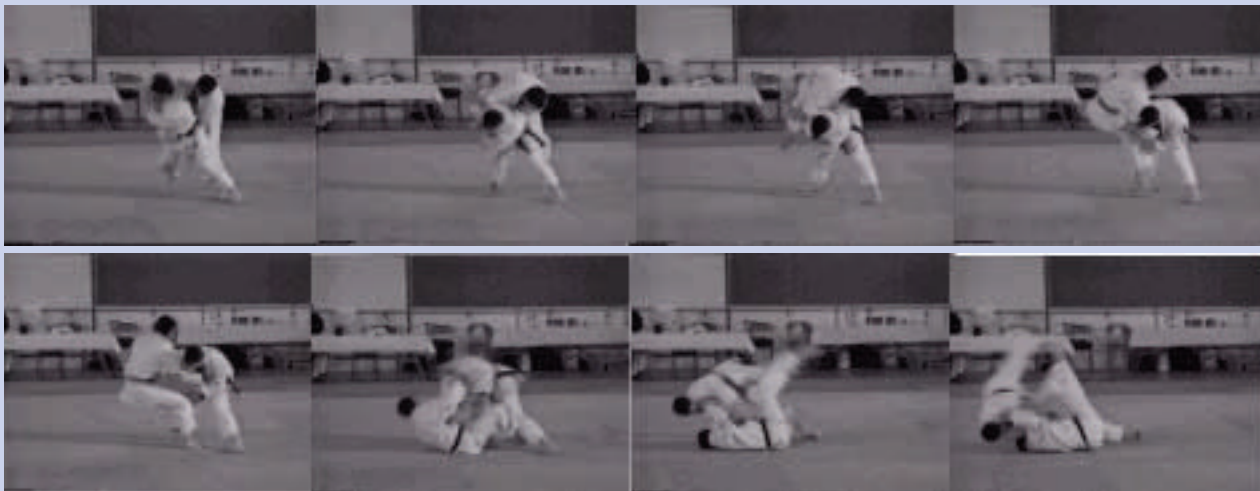
Like Shi-ai, we cannot start at the top with a Kata. We may not agree what is the top in Kata, but if we agree individuals cannot learn every thing at one go, we must approach the learning in stages. The individual techniques in the listed Kata can be learned, as all other Judo techniques are, in the 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 can also be approached in many a differing manner. Why not try the whole Kata in order 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 try to learn a Kata in the strict laid down order. With the five sets of three techniques of the Nage-no-Kata for example. They start with the first set then move on to the second but re-cap on the first. When they think they should move on to the third set, they re-appear on the first and second, and so on. By the time they have a go at the fifth set, the first set has been done five times, and the fifth only once. If the Kata were for an examination

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Judo Kata Gone Astray? Part Two - John Cornish (continued)



GO-NO-SEN-NO-KATA Ippon-seoi-nage to Sumi-gaeshi

Note position of 'uke' in first four frames who becomes 'tori' as he executes a counter

the first set would be far better than the last.

If we look at how show business would do this, they would say it is better to have the most polished performance, not as a curtain raiser but in the finale, and for an examination, or a demonstration we would have to agree with show business for the same reason. Most times we would agree for a different reason.

In Self-defense, or Contest, we do not know techniques we will need so we 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 in Nage-no-Kata Tori could use the same grip for most of the throws. For Uke's sake, 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.

In a self-defense 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 Uke 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, above 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.

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-emphasized such as not turning your back on Jo-zeki.

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 terms 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 is called "Shoulder-wheel", 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 Sugi-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 Kansetsu-waza which we have only in some listed Kata.

A non-Kodokan Kata that may be useful is a 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.

I am not sure I have made a case that can influence the Top Coaches, or any one 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".

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

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 story 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.

John Cornish



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Please contribute to ...
The Bulletin



Judo in Print - A comment from Alan Menzies

The following is a comment from Alan Menzies - Thank you for your contribution Alan which is much appreciated However we are not all men! (Sorry Diana)

Gentlemen - Having read , with great interest, John Cornish writing about Kata and then reading the fascinating letters of Sarah Mayer and her adventures travelling to Japan, I felt that the very least I could do was write and thank you for your effort and time in compiling ' The Bulletin'.

I know something about these matters since I was once the editor of , I believe, the only magazine devoted almost completely, we did include some Kendo , to Judo which had an international readership. In those days when Judo was possibly the fastest growing sport around reading about it , or so we thought , was nearly as good as doing it .

I suspect that the readers of 'The Bulletin' are pretty conversant with the history of Judo in this country and probably elsewhere, we are a well travelled lot , so I'll not bore your subscribers with the rise and fall of Judo in this country, but , if I might take a little of your time I would like to say something about the Sunday classes that Trevor Leggett ran at the Budokwai . Quite a lot has been written about Trevor Leggett and his undoubted influence on Judo in this country but perhaps I could say something about the people who were in their way as important as the teacher

The classes were run for about three years every Sunday from the middle 50's after the Budokwai moved to GK House and Kawamura had been appointed Technical Director of the club . From the start they attracted people from all over the country including Scotland and Wales. It is pertinent to

note the enthusiasm for Judo that was prevalent at the time. Alan Petherbridge used to drive from Swansea on Sunday morning for the afternoon class and then drive back in the evening carrying with him a contingent of ardent Welsh fans who were willing to sit cramped up in a car for hundreds of miles to be able to take part in the class.

Even more arduous was the journey that the Scottish players made down from Glasgow and Edinburgh for three hours instruction. I can remember when George Kerr first arrived on the class . The Marr brothers travelled from the North East , the mainstay of Judo in their area for many years . From nearer at hand came the players from the Midlands, East Anglia and Manchester. Everyone paid their own way , subsidies for sports were unheard of in those days.

The class was restricted to 1st Kyu and above by invitation, and at that time you could have counted the number of Dan grades in the country pretty easily. The class consisted of the very best players we had , John Newman, Sid Hoare , Doug Young , 'Pepper' Steptoe, etc. George Wyman and Alf Grabher and Dennis Bloss were also popular and regular visitors until they departed for Japan. But the mass of the players were young eager men, I cannot remember any woman being present, who made substantial sacrifices of time and money to promote their sport and who eventually carried the word right back to the smallest clubs set in village halls , empty shops, old church buildings and anywhere else they could make a dojo .

It is not my intention to suggest that the members of this class were the only disciples willing to expend their time and effort on promoting

Judo, but these people do deserve a special mention for their persistence and dedication at a time when sport was only just recovering after the war and Judo was very much an unknown quantity .

In closing I might just mention an interesting piece of information that came my way very recently via the North Yorkshire Community publications. Under sports facilities in North Yorkshire there are no Judo clubs men-

tioned at all. I wonder what happened to the plans of all those young people

Alan. R .Menzies.

I can't think of one good reason why you cannot run an e-mail site. Modern computer software would effectively shield you from any unwanted mail. However much success on your venture. A.R.M



A little joke-

Allan Zipeure whose 90th Birthday we celebrated in the last issue - had the experience of fighting Anton Geesink the Dutch giant! So here we have a birthday greeting from him ... it's a computer spoof of course—but is Anton's handwriting!

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