Contemporary Contemplations on Kata
Llŷr Jones and Martin Savage

Introduction
The Kodokan explains that there are two principal ways of practicing judo – kata and randori. Kata, which literally means “form”, are practiced through a recognised system of prearranged exercises, while randori, which means “free practice”, is practiced spontaneously [1].

The Kanji for Kata as used in Judo

Kawamura and Daigo’s comprehensive “Kodokan New Japanese-English Dictionary of Judo” [2] defines kata as “…formal movement pattern exercises containing idealised model movements illustrating specific combative principles”. This complete definition both complements and builds upon the more rudimentary one prof-fered in 1961 by Gleeson which positions kata as “…a form of training which teaches certain aspects of judo that randori does not” [3].

In their encyclopaedic kata text “Judo Formal Techniques” [4] Otaki and Draeger explain how:

“Kata is an expression of the Japanese spirit intimately connected to the artistic achievements of the Japanese people; it is virtually their “form language”. Kata touches almost everything in the Japanese sphere of daily activities, writing, architecture, bearing and demeanour, etiquette and art included. Art is the form language of humanity without exception, and therefore, on the Japanese scene, art traditionally includes the classical bugei (also called bujutsu), the martial arts or formalized martial disciplines; it also includes the classical budo, the martial ways or spiritual disciplines which stem from martial sources. Within the classical martial arts and ways are found the elements of simplicity, natural efficiency, harmony, intuition, economy of movement, and “softness” of principle that characterize all traditional Japanese art forms. It is important to grasp this significant relationship in order to comprehend the true meaning and fullness of the Japanese martial arts and ways, and, further, to understand their ancestral relationship to Kodokan judo kata.”

Jigoro Kano-shihan himself likened learning kata to the learning of grammar for the purpose of writing, and randori to the actual free flowing writing itself [5]. Similarly, contemporary writers have likened kata to the “algebra” of a budo, on account of the logical framework it provides for learning [6].
Principles

"Form is the guardian of substance" and kata is the perfect exemplification of this saying. It is known that Kano-shihan believed judo’s essence and beauty was contained within its kata. It is of course possible to practice (a de facto incomplete) judo without knowing kata, but it is impossible to practice kata without knowing judo. Irrespective of the particular kata being studied it must at all times be practiced with sincerity and an understanding of the fundamental principles involved. Principles are significantly more important than any specific technique, as they can be applied in an unlimited number of ways, whereas techniques are more specific, and hence limited. Of course, it is essential to adhere throughout to the ultimate goals of judo — namely Seiryoku-zenyo [Maximum efficiency] as reflected by accurate action-reaction, debana [opportunity], kuzushi [unbalancing], zanshin [remaining mind], and Jita-kyoei [Mutual welfare and benefit].

Tadao Inogai Kodokan 8th dan (writing in “Judo Kata” with the senior French budoka Roland Habersetzer) quotes from his chronicles as follows [7]:

“Kata means ‘basic form’. It is the mould from which basic techniques are derived. This is why the progress of these fundamental techniques must continue unaltered through time, fashions or personal tendencies. For the ‘form’ (movement) must ensure the survival of the ‘base’ (spirit of the action). It is necessary to find, again and again, in kata the same principles on which Jigoro Kano-shihan conceived his art.

- Seiryoku-zenyo: ‘Best use of energy’ (for maximum efficiency with a minimum of effort, or the intelligent use of energy).
- Jita-kyoei: ‘Mutual assistance and prosperity’ (through the execution, together, of an educative technique)."

A kata is only caricature if the two practitioners are not imbued with these two aims.

Similarly, Donn Draeger, who spent a significant proportion of his life training in judo at the Kodokan and other Japanese dojo, wrote in 1966 [8]:

“Kata is an intrinsic training method of Kodokan Judo, and it has two distinct developmental stages. The first of these is the ‘doing’ stage — a time when we must study and practice it so that we can gain a mechanical understanding of it. It is a time when we are concerned with each and every technical detail. At this stage, kata is of little training value as a completed training tool; we are simply shaping this tool for later use.

After we have a rather good technical basis for kata and can give a rather polished performance of it, then we can put it to use and find answers to technical problems about the various techniques it embodies. This is what can be referred to as the ‘using’ stage. Then and only then will kata become truly useful.

Inherent in each technique of Kata are ‘lessons’ essential to an understanding of that technique, basic and variation factors which enhance the polished performance of the technique for randori and shiai. However, in order to be able to find those ‘lessons’ in the kata, the judoist must have developed his Kata out of the ‘doing’ stage into the ‘using’ stage. Kata performed as an exhibition or demonstration is largely a “doing” type of kata. Kata, as a demonstration, is but a shallow and limited use of kata; it is not the primary purpose of kata though most tendencies in modern judo restrict it to this role.”

Kata are also the best way to practice attack and defence in different scenarios, as they represent the fundamental foundations of judo that have been standardised for study. At the simplest level all of the kata in the Kodokan repertoire are merely practical and basic demonstrations of judo principles, in which the defence depends on the attack, and vice versa. This concept, for example, is well exemplified by Judo Kata [Forms of Yielding/Non-Resistance].

As well as teaching fundamental judo principles, kata can also be viewed as vehicles to preserve judo’s traditions, and some were placed in Kodokan Judo to serve as a reminder of its koryu [old school] heritage. These kata have remained (largely) unchanged over time, and preserve the principles originally defined in the jujutsu school of origin. In particular, Koshiki-no-kata, from Kito-ryu [School of the Rise and Fall], provides a masterclass into kuzushi, and Itsutsu-no-kata, from Tenjin Shin’yo-ryu [Divine True Willow School], expresses the mechanisms of attack and defence in an elevated way.
The late Shoji Inoue (Tori) with Jun Okajima (Uke) showing an ancestor to Koshiki-no-kata – Kito-ryu Yoroi Kumite-uchi-no-kata – at the Fifth IJF World Kata Judo Championships held in Kyoto, Japan on 19 and 20 October 2013

In the Introduction to her book "Ju-No Kata – A Kodokan Textbook", Keiko Fukuda explained how she found the answer to the question of how to best understand the principles of movement in judo: "I eventually found the possible answer in two Kata that Professor Kano had mastered in his youth: Itsutsu-no-kata (Forms of Five) and Koshiki-no-kata (Forms of Ancient). Herein are contained techniques that manifest the true principles of Judo…" [9].

In the Shu-Ha-Ri concept, Shu is the learning the fundamentals of a system, Ha is internalising a system, and Ri is going beyond the system [10]. Moreover, it is informative to note that instruction in a koryu was delivered almost exclusively through kata under Shu-Ha-Ri – an approach that served them well for generations.

The respected budoka, teacher and author, Patrick McCarthy suggests that there are three general perspectives, or mindsets, regarding kata (Patrick McCarthy, personal communication, 17 February 2014). McCarthy’s original comments were based on his own experiences in karate-do, however they are sufficiently broad that they can be readily extrapolated to judo, which is done here. McCarthy’s three perspectives, generalised (by the authors) for judo are as follows:

- **The traditionalist’s perspective:** Kata must never be changed, least of all by anyone from outside the Kodokan.

- **The revisionist’s perspective:** Here kata are contemporary reinterpretations of classic traditions (e.g. kata developed outside the formal auspices of the Kodokan, by either Japanese, or non-Japanese sensei).

- **The sports competition perspective:** Typically, sports competitors regard kata practice as worthless and dysfunctional.

Next, these points are considered in turn.

**Traditionalist**
Kodokan Judo was founded in 1882 by Kano-shihan at the Eisho-ji temple, Tokyo. However, it is essential to recognise that at that point judo was not yet complete, and its kata had not been fully established. Nonetheless, the journey that led to their creation had been started, and during the life of the shihan the judo kata underwent some significant changes. For example, both Nage-no-kata and Ju-no-kata originally contained ten techniques, but later they were expanded to contain 15 techniques each.

**Contemporary Perspectives**
Today, the zenith of judo practice is viewed by most as participation in elite-level sports competitions such as the Olympic Games and World or Continental Championships, and the culture and practice of kata has been replaced with the culture of sports training. Against this backdrop, kata practice is considered by many as a meaningless and impractical waste of time. Traditionally though, the pinnacle of judo, like any budo, can be regarded as attaining the “Ri” phase of the Shu-Ha-Ri ["Protect” – “Detach” – “Separate"] concept which describes the stages of learning to mastery.
Consider the evolution of *Nage-no-kata* [11]. The original ten-technique *Nage-no-kata* of 1885 is lost, though it is known that in 1895 the expanded 15 technique *kata* was as follows:

**Te-waza:** Uki-otoshi, Seoi-nage, Sumi-otoshi*

**Koshi-waza:** Uki-goshi, Harai-goshi, Tsuri-komi-goshi

**Ashi-waza:** Okuri-ashi-harai, Sasae-tsuirikomi-ashi, Uchi-mata

**Sutemi-waza:** Tomoe-nage, Ura-nage, Tsuri-otoshi*

**Yoko-waza:** Yoko-guruma, Uki-waza, Tani-otoshi*

Between 1902-1904 two further modifications were made to the first and the final sets of the exercise which became:

**Te-waza:** Uki-otoshi, Seoi-nage, Sukui-nage**

**Yoko-waza:** Yoko-gake**, Yoko-guruma, Uki-waza

The final modifications to *Nage-no-kata* were made in 1905 and 1906 to give the form that is known presently:

**Te-waza:** Uki-otoshi, Seoi-nage, Kata-guruma*** (1906)

**Koshi-waza:** Uki-goshi, Harai-goshi, Tsuri-komi-goshi

**Ashi-waza:** Okuri-ashi-harai, Sasae-tsuirikomi-ashi, Uchi-mata

**Sutemi-waza:** Tomoe-nage, Ura-nage, Sumi-gaeshi*** (1905)

**Yoko-waza:** Yoko-gake, Yoko-guruma, Uki-waza

Recall that *kata* are merely “forms”. As such they can be a large number of techniques performed in a sequence, or merely a single technique practiced repeatedly in pre-ordained manner. Moreover, *kata* were originally supposed to be flexible training tools, with no intent that they would only be performed in full, as ceremonial demonstrations. Indeed, the late, great John Cornish used to explain in his years as a British national coach for *kata* that the formal demonstration of *kata* was not important, it was the training and what one learnt from the training that counted.

However, in practice, *kata*’s formal characteristics became significantly more rigid and prescriptive, with, in recent years, all efforts seemingly exerted to ensure the highest degree of standardisation possible – particularly since the advent of organised “*kata* competitions”. Certainly, the current excessive attention to overly ritualised and heavily rule-bound aesthetics has impacted on *kata*’s perceived credibility as a worthwhile training tool.

**Revisionist**

On the issue of *kata* developed outside the auspices of the *Kodokan*, Otaki and Draeger [4] write:

“Different practices and uses for *kata* have been established by judoists outside of the *Kodokan*, though the majority of these versions hinge on the unchanged fundamental Principle of *Kodokan* Judo. These *kata* can be referred to as private variations patterns. Included here are those which have been developed by qualified Judo teachers; some of these teachers are *Kodokan* men…”

It is beyond the scope of this article to explore in detail the repertoire of *judo* *kata* developed outside the formal auspices of the *Kodokan*, by either Japanese, or non-Japanese sensei, but worthy of note are the exercises associated with, or developed by, senior Japanese teachers such as Mikinosuke Kawaishi *Dai Nippon Butokukai / Kodokan 7th dan* and French Judo Federation 10th dan [12]; Kyuzo Miyahara *Kodokan 10th dan* [13]; Kazuzo Ito *Kodokan 9th dan* [14] and Tokio Hirano *Kodokan 8th dan* [15].

The majority of so-called *kata* that are of non-Japanese-teacher-origin (and thus by definition non-*Kodokan*) are little more than sequences of standard combination or counter techniques book-ended with some formal protocol, and do not merit further consideration in this article.
Kata can involve idealised model movement patterns which would not normally be useful in randori or shiai. For example, the movement pattern of the three step tsugi-ashi [shuffle stepping] in Nage-no-kata, among other things, eliminates confusing stepping patterns thereby allowing Tori to concentrate on certain aspects of each throw.

“Idealised model movements” implies that the patterns provide Tori [taker] with a perfect opportunity for making the technique work, thereby enabling the perfection of waza in a very controlled environment. This should be more important to the judoka who is concerned with budo as opposed to merely striving for a winning point by any means even if it is only by securing a penalty. If Tori cannot get his technique to work with a cooperative Uke [receiver] moving in this predetermined manner, then it will probably not work in randori or shiai anyhow. Important to note here is that a “cooperative Uke” does not mean, as commonly believed, one that “jumps” for Tori, but rather one that takes up the specified grips, adopts a predetermined posture and moves in a prescribed manner.

This allows Tori opportunities not afforded in randori or shiai – such as not having to fight for grips or getting Uke to move in the direction and pace that is necessary for the throw to succeed. Instead Tori can concentrate on the fundamental such as kuzushi [balance breaking], tsukuri [preparation] and kake [execution] which can then be brought closer to perfection through the various stages of randori where eventually Tori can bring off the technique with a high success rate and with good style. While being cooperative however Uke must attack or intend to attack when appropriate within the constraints of the kata which means yielding and resisting at the opportune moments.

Strength is used by Tori in accordance with the Seiyoku Zenyo concept, when it is unlikely that yielding will be successful. This proper use by Tori of Uke’s attacking strength to effect control is called rai. Kawamura and Daigo describe rai as being the underlying principle or theory of an art, which in judo includes avoiding attempting to control an opponent by using power, in favour of throwing them through skilful kuzushi, tai-sabaki [body shifting] and other approaches that use energy and movement in the most efficient, elegant way possible, Seiryoku Zenyo.

As an aside it is interesting to consider the question for formal kata demonstrations, if the two judoka are of unequal grade, who should be the most senior – Tori or Uke? One of the authors (LCJ) explored this issue with the senior judoka Osamu Mouri, Kodokan 7th dan (O. Mouri, personal communication, 8 September 2018) concluding as explained next.

In antique koryu jujutsu teaching scrolls, it says “Tori-kata no Kata” meaning the kata for Tori. Accordingly, Tori is the one who learns, Uke is the one who teaches. This is logical if one thinks of the structure of the kata and it being a tool to learn a technique and its underlying logic behind it. Uke attacks Tori exactly in the way as prescribed because Uke is teaching the way to react in that particular circumstance. Uke then changes the way to attack as Uke wants to teach some other technique and principle. The Nage-no-kata is an excellent example of this, as Uke never attacks Tori the same way.

Sports Competitive

The author has written previously on how many “judo coaches” and sports competitors opine that kata are artificial and impractical exercises, with their practice a meaningless waste of time – at best only necessary to pass the technical skills element of a professional examination. This perspective is today present in many countries, (with a limited number of exceptions), and will now be explored further.

Those judoka who see no purpose in kata training, and even those who are undecided about its worth, use the argument that they have practiced kata, and do not see how it will improve them as competitors. Underpinning their arguments is often a criticism based on the fact that the way specific judo techniques are performed in kata bears very little resemblance to how the same techniques are executed in shiai [contest]. In one sense those judoka are partially correct, but this is only because they are not viewing kata from the perspective of a “total” judo – Kodokan Judo.

Kano-shihan often referred to gedan or kyogi judo [“judo in the narrow sense”] – summed up by the 1889 statement as “a judo focused primarily on physical skills”. This is as opposed to jodan or kogi judo [“judo in the wide sense”] – summed up by the 1924 definition “judo is not a method of making the best use of energy for purposes of attack and defence alone, rather it is a method by which this principle can be assimilated and applied in all spheres of life”.

Mikinosuke Kawaishi
Dal Nippon Butokukai / Kodokan 7th dan and French Judo Federation 10th dan

Kyozo Mifune
Kodokan 10th dan

Kazuo Ito
Kodokan 9th dan

Tokio Hirano
Kodokan 8th dan

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twice. This is the beginning of randori where Uke is no longer the teacher, and of course Nage-no-kata along with Kata-
me-no-kata, collectively, are the Randori-no-kata [Forms of Free Exercise] – kata that illustrate the principles behind tech-
niques used in randori, allowing them to be practiced with maximum efficiency [4]. Returning to the original question, for the purpose of demonstration, it may be better if the sen-
or judoka is Tori rather than Uke, as Tori can show how to correctly react to an attack by Uke, but then Uke must be able to attack in the correct way. However, it may not matter if the roles are clearly understood as above.

Most high-grade Japanese teachers still emphasise the im-
portance of kata for a judoka’s development, with many con-
sidering the study of Nage-no-kata and Katame-no-kata in particular, to be an important part of training for the highest level of contest success [4]:

“Sufficient kata study and practice impose a well-
defined technical discipline on the judoist, one that is unattainable by only randori and contest meth-
ods. This discipline, instead of hampering the judo-
ist, actually frees him from undue restrictions, liber-
ates his bodily expression in movement, and teaches him economy of mental and physical energy. This process can only be understood through experience, and only through kata performance can judoists come to appreciate Judo in its fullest sense.”

The senior Japanese budoka Takayuki Kubota, a former self-
defence instructor for the Keishicho [Tokyo Metropolitan Po-
lice Department] in the 1950s, impress the importance of practicing budo as a whole through both kata and contest. Writing originally about karate-do, Kubota laments that to-
day, many people practice kata and contest as if they were two different things. He goes on to state that contest starts with kata, and kata starts with contest. Of course, the same could be said for judo. A lot of the problem regarding the attitudes around kata in judo is in the instruction – specifically, most teachers themselves have not been taught how to blend kata into their instruction to provide a balanced judo lesson, with goals that go beyond the winning of medals in organised tournaments.

The Canadian judoka and kata devotee, Kelly Palmer, re-
called a lesson that was often repeated by the senior Ko-
dokan teachers at the 2018 Kodokan International Kata Course (K. Palmer, personal communication, 29 July 2018)

“There are many judoists who do not study kata – they train hard, fight, do randori. They go to tourna-
ments, and they may even become Olympic or World Champion. Is this the goal we should strive for though?

There is only one Olympic Champion, and most of us will not reach that goal. Nevertheless, we can still be a champion in our own lives.

Be a champion for your family, for what you believe in, for what you are good at. Be a champion for yourself. There is no medal for winning in your own

life, but this is the greatest reward, and what all who train in judo should strive for.

Be a champion in your own life – that is the goal of judo.”

Concluding Remarks
Times change and it is inevitable that judo and its kata will change and develop too. This is a significant and strong in-
dication that judo is vibrant and alive. However, perhaps useful parallel lessons can be drawn again from Patrick McCarthy and again on karate-do.

Specifically, McCarthy explains how the great Okinawan ka-
rateka Motobu Choki had become rather sad about the great changes that had occurred in karate with its rapid growth and popularity. In “Tales of Okinawa’s Great Masters” [Jap-
anese-to-English translation by McCarthy], Nagamine Shoshin described Choki-sensei’s melancholy and how he lamented that kata had been “carelessly changed” and be-
come a “lifeless practice”, with its practitioners “devoid of understanding” [16].

If change is unavoidable, then what is essential is that any changes are slow and indiscernible and fully consistent with the principles of Kodokan judo. Again, from the diaries of Inogai writing with Habersetzer [6]:

“Without tradition there is no ‘do’ [way, path for self-
discovery], and without kata there is no tradition. Judo is the way in which one can use progressive forces within the educational values of a tradition.

Those who just desire promotion, ignoring the ad-
vise of high grades, are only getting themselves more lost daily. However, those who believe they can forgo any personal study, blindly contenting themselves with traditions, go around in circles, constantly unaware of the true purpose of their ef-
forts in the dojo.”

“The ‘way’ is both static (traditional) and dynamic (self-realisation). These complementary ap-
proaches produce true harmony in the practitioner, in his gestures and thoughts, in all that he is, and in relation to all that surrounds him.”

“For all budo, kata is the thread that connects [it] with the past, and the one that leads to discovering freedom of thought and action, whilst respecting universal and eternal values.”

Actually, by progressing methodically and unhur-
rriedly in the study of kata, judoka rediscover the principles that enthused the research of the old ju-
jutsu masters, and which put them on the Path of Universal Harmony.”
Randori
by Rob Casey

Randori at the Main Dojo, Kodokan Judo Institute

Whilst often mistaken as contest training, randori 乱取り translates to “free practice” and is a core element of Kodokan Judo pedagogy. The intent of randori is to allow judoka to practice the application of techniques learnt in training. While this can be performed under contest-style conditions, it can be just as effective when practiced in a cooperative manner where judoka take turns in the roles of Tori and Uke. Such a cooperative approach to learning lies at the heart of Jita-kyoai 自他共栄 [Mutual welfare and benefit] espoused by Jigoro Kano-shihan as a core principle of judo.

Some key points to remember for randori:

• There is no winner or loser in randori. Rather than trying to “win”, you should look at randori as an opportunity to exercise new techniques.
• Relax and move freely. Do not become overly tense or defensive (“stiff-arming”) as this will impede both your opponents’ and your own opportunities for technique.
• Learn to feel your partner’s intentions and anticipate attacks. This sense of feel will become increasingly important as you develop your skills and seek to find opportunities for techniques.
• Focus on the kuzushi, tsukuri and kake for each throw.
• Commit to and follow through with each technique.
• Keep your head up.
• Control your breathing.
• And most importantly, enjoy it!

Randori is an exercise in discovery and application of your judo techniques and should be immensely rewarding. Seek to embrace randori as an opportunity to practice and grow your judo, rather than merely as a fight for dominance.

References

In Memoriam: Luc Levannier (1923 – 2018)
Lŷr Jones (compiler)

Luc Levannier (1923-2018)

Just as Issue 38 of “The Bulletin” was released, the sad news of the passing, on Monday 3 December 2018, of French judo pioneer, Luc Levannier was received. At the time of his death he was 95 years old. Levannier devoted a significant portion of his life to judo, and his vision for “the way” was fully aligned with the Kano Society’s.

Joining the Judo Club de France on rue du Sommerard in June 1942, Levannier gained his dan grade at the first attempt, becoming, in 1945, French Black Belt No. 36. The celebrated judoka, Jean de Herdt, was the examiner.

In September 1946 he opened a judo club in Paris, and along with Albert-Léon Meyer and André Mercier was at the origin of the first National Union of Martial Arts Teachers, then of the European Union of Judo Teachers which he led for several years.

Levannier participated in the first recorded judo international team contest between two countries – Great Britain versus France held on 2 December 1947 at the Seymour Hall. E.J. Harrison’s report [1] on the event states:

“The first bout of the match was between G. Chew for Great Britain and L. Levannier for France. The Frenchman turned out to be a dangerous adversary and scored the first point with an osotgari (major exterior reaping). This was followed shortly afterwards by a hane-goshi (spring hip) from the same quarter, and so to L. Levannier (1st dan) pertains the distinction of gaining France’s sole victory in this international match.”

The next day the London press reported: “Judo: Great Britain crush France who discover a little extra-ordinary judoka – Levannier”.

In 1948 Levannier became Technical Director of the FFJDA, Fédération Française de Judo, (Jujitsu, Kendo, Aikido) et Disciplines Associées – the French Federation of Judo, (Jujitsu, Kendo, Aikido) and Associated Disciplines which is the National Governing Body (NGB) for judo in France. Two years later he was a semi-finalist in the Open weight category of the French Judo Championships.

In 1952, Levannier along with Guy Pelletier (French Black Belt No. 7), Pierre Roussel (French Black Belt No. 45) and Jacques Belaud (French Black Belt No. 42) were part of a group that encountered, in Toulouse, the brilliant young Japanese judoka, Ichiro Abe, at the time a Kodokan 6th dan. Later, Levannier became one of the four founders of a “Kodokan Movement” that recognised and followed the path embodied by Abe-sensei where education, finesse, speed, movement and balance breaking were prioritised over competition and opposing strength with strength. This “beautiful judo” philosophy earned him the nickname of “the French Mifune”. As a natural consequence of this approach, Levannier was opposed to the methods of Kawaishi which had gained some traction in France.

In 1953 he became Technical Director of the Fédération Belge de Judo (FBJ) that is the Belgian Judo Federation.

In October 1985, Luc Levannier, along with a group of enthusiasts and friends founded L’École Française de...
Judo/Jujutsu Traditionnel (EFJJT) – the French School of Judo / Traditional Jujutsu as a center for study, training and practice. His dojo, the Shiseikan, on rue Lecourbe in Paris always defended the values of Jigoro Kano.

Throughout his life, Levannier remained dedicated to the traditional judo of the founder, Kano-shihan. He was known to have opined that “the values of judo have been distorted. The Japanese have lost their discipline to the benefit of wrestlers from the Eastern countries. Traditional judo must be ‘the harmony of flexibility’, but contemporary judo has become the ‘opposition of forces’. “To give way is not natural for the Westerners which we are. And yet, I am convinced by this quote from Lao Tzu ‘He who learns to yield is master of the force’.”

An artist and a poet at heart Levannier devoted a significant portion of his life to judo – shaping the “ju” of judo through the flexibility of body and of mind of his students. Tireless, passionate and always searching for better teaching methods, his creativity, spirit and work live on through his countless pupils, and also through his writings in MonDo – his traditional judo newsletter, and equivalent publication to this Bulletin. Luc Levannier’s death marks the passing of the last judoka from that first French team of 1947, and indeed from the entire event, from both nations. It also represents the passing of the last member from the group of four teachers that committed to the judo philosophy of Ichiro Abe in 1952.

For further information – see references [2], [3] and [4]

References

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The Richard Bowen Collection

In 1949, Richard Bowen began judo training in London at the Budokwai, of which he became Vice-President. He lived in Japan for four years to deepen his studies. A former British International, he fought in the first ever World Judo Championships in Japan in 1956. He was the author of more than eighty articles. Richard Bowen built up an extensive judo Library in the course of research for his articles and books, and he kindly donated it to the University of Bath Library. Items in the collection are for reference use only (not available for loan). Items can be viewed between 9am-5pm.