



The Kano Society Bulletin



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In This Edition

This *Bulletin* features a main article by Russ Ebert on *Shiten-ryu jujutsu*, along with pieces on the Matsumae-Kodokan-All Japan Judo Federation conflict, *judo* in physical education, *kata*, a 1929 *Sakko* magazine extract, and two articles on *Seiryozoku-Zenyo*.

Editor's Comments

The *Society* is saddened by the passing of Richard Barraclough OLY, 8th dan, aged 83 – President of the North-West Judo Area and Vice President of the BJA. RIP.

I hope you enjoy this issue of our journal. Thanks to John Bowen for proofreading. Any remaining errors are mine.

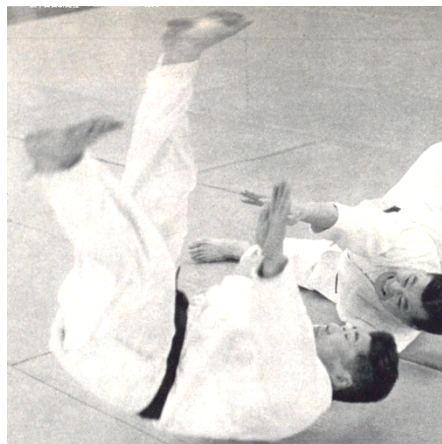
Contributions

The Kano Society's main work is this online publication. We welcome contributions – articles, photos, or other relevant material – to "The *Bulletin*".

Dr Llyr Jones

Strength, Technique, and Tradition – The Enduring Heritage of *Shiten-ryu*

Russ Ebert



Sutemi-waza – Koshigaeshi
(From an article on *Higo-ryu Taijutsu*)

The Founder and the Style

Shiten-ryu is an old style of *jujutsu* known as "*kumiuchi*" that originated in Higo Province, Kyushu (present-day Kumamoto Prefecture) during the late Edo period. It is one of the three most famous *jujutsu* schools in Higo, along with *Takeuchi Santo-ryu* and *Kyushin-ryu*. The founder was Seibei Narita (originally named Uheita Sasaki), who was born in 1638 in Karatsu, Hizen Province (present-day Saga Prefecture).

At the age of 17 in 1653, he left Karatsu and embarked on a warrior's pilgrimage [*musha shugyo*]. In Utsunomiya, Shimotsuke Province, he became a disciple of Genpaku Sasaki, who taught *Chujo-ryu* (later known as *Toda-ryu* after it was revitalized by Seigen Toda). There, he mastered *iaijutsu* [drawing and cutting techniques] and changed his name to Jinbei Shimizu.

As he continued his journey around Japan, he caught the attention of Tsunatoshi Hosokawa, the lord of the Higo domain, when he stopped in Osaka. Tsunatoshi tried to convince him to enter his service, but Seibei declined because his pilgrimage was not yet complete.

Undeterred, Tsunatoshi approached him again in 1661 in Osaka (some accounts say Edo) and offered him a position once more. This time Seibei accepted. In 1662, at the age of 25, he entered the service of the Hosokawa clan in Higo Province. He was granted a stipend of 200 *koku* (a unit of rice used to pay *samuraï*) and appointed as instructor to the Hosokawa pages (*goshō shisho*). At the lord's suggestion, and to mark his new life, he changed his name to Seibei Narita.

While teaching martial arts, he developed a 'hard' or 'powerful' style of grappling suited to wearing a sword and armour, known as *go-no-kumitachi*. The unadorned, practical techniques typically began from a seated position to strengthen the legs, instil proper etiquette, and prepare for sudden attacks.

Core principles included evasion, feints, maintaining mobility, and the continuous application of joint locks and strikes. Large sacrifice throws were often designed to inflict maximum damage, tossing opponents awkwardly and dangerously onto their head or shoulders. He compiled and completed these techniques, and the school was named *Shiten-ryu* after the *Shitenno* [Four Heavenly Kings], the deities who guard the four directions.

Seibei Narita passed away on July 22, 1718. Most details of his life come from local Kumamoto records known as the *Higo Senketsu Iseki*. These records describe him as a heroic and unparalleled *samurai* who frequently appears in Higo folktales and anecdotes that highlight his extraordinary physical strength and mastery of martial arts.

Legend and Reputation

The school's students were also regarded as legendarily strong. Legends say that challengers were often "thrown out of the training hall through the open shoji and into the yard next to it". (*Shoji* are traditional wood-and-paper sliding doors.) Another example of the school's toughness is found in the life of Bunkuro Nogami, a *samurai* from Higo.

Nogami had trained in *Shiten-ryu kumiuchi* from his youth and was obsessed with grappling. As an adult, he became famous for his strength and his military exploits while serving in the Imperial Guard of the *Meiji* Emperor. It was said that his hands and feet were like iron, and he remained unfazed even when struck in the legs with a bamboo sword. He would have a braided hemp rope tied around his head at ear level; another person would then pull and jerk the rope in an attempt to unbalance him, yet he stayed completely motionless. He was also an excellent swimmer with remarkable lung capacity, allowing him to dive to the seabed to collect conch shells from the dark depths.

During the *Meiji* Restoration, he was drafted into the Imperial Guard. In 1877, he fought in the *Satsuma* Rebellion against disgruntled former *samurai*. During the Battle of Ueki, it is said that he was disarmed, isolated from his unit, and cornered by enemy soldiers. Instead of surrendering, he kicked and threw his opponents until he created enough space to escape. This feat further enhanced his reputation and helped spread the fame of *Shiten-ryu kumiuchi* as the *Meiji* era progressed and the country stabilised.

The tales of Bunkuro Nogami are dramatic and legendary, but a school that exists only in legend eventually disappears. While less romantic, the following developments are what allowed *Shiten-ryu* to survive into the 21st century.

Kumon Hoshino and the Modernisation of the School

The Hosokawa family's *bakufu* domain in Higo maintained a military training school called the *Jishukan*. Records show that it taught several martial arts in different fields, including eight *jujutsu* schools. The *jujutsu* schools were as follows:

- *Shiten-ryu kumiuchi* (3 teachers / 3 schools)
- *Takenouchi-ryu jujutsu* (1 teacher)
- *Kyushin-ryu taijutsu* (1 teacher)
- *Tori-ryu kogusoku* (1 teacher)
- *Tenka Muso-ryu torite* (1 teacher)
- *Yoshin-ryu jujutsu* (1 teacher)

Kumon Hoshino was born in November 1838 in Shinbori, Higo. His birth name was Jitsunori and he was also known as Kumon and Tamai. In 1845, he began training in the martial arts traditions of his family, which consisted of three schools – *Hoki-ryu iai*, *Shiten-ryu kumiuchi*, and *Yoshin-ryu naginata*. His involvement with the *Jishukan* allowed him to study many other schools and develop a well-rounded skill set.

His certifications and licenses were as follows:

- *Hoki-ryu iai* – certified March 1856, licensed October 1864
- *Shiten-ryu kumiuchi* – certified September 1856, licensed March 1866
- *Yoshin-ryu naginata* – certified September 1856, licensed March 1866
- *Shinkage-ryu kenjutsu* – certified May 1858, licensed December 1898
- *Uda Nagato-ryu hojutsu* – certified July 1858
- *Otsubo-ryu bajutsu* – certified February 1857

In 1870 (*Meiji* 3), aged 30, he succeeded his father as head of *Shiten-ryu* and dedicated himself to teaching young people. Tragically, in 1877 (*Meiji* 10), the *Jishukan dojo* was destroyed by fire during the *Satsuma* Rebellion.

In October 1883, Kumon established the *Shinbukai* (*Hoshino Dojo*) for *judo* and *kendo* in Takadahara, located midway up the *Kannonzaka* slope in what is now the *Shinbori* district of Kumamoto City. This marked the beginning of the revival of martial arts, which had declined after the fall of the *samurai* class. He taught a wide range of disciplines there, including *Shiten-ryu*, *Hoki-ryu*, *Yoshin-ryu*, *Yoshin-ryu bojutsu*, and *hanbo-jutsu*. This period laid the real foundation for the school's survival as it entered the era of *judo* and the modernisation of Japanese sports.

In 1896, when the *Dai Nippon Butoku Kai* (DNBK) was founded, he was appointed as a local committee member. In April 1898, he became a standing committee member of the Kumamoto branch, greatly contributing to the promotion of martial arts in the prefecture. That same year, he also became the *judo* instructor at the Kumamoto Regional Junior School.

Fearing the decline and possible extinction of traditional *jujutsu* during the Meiji era, Hoshino sought out others in Kumamoto who wished to preserve the unique martial arts surviving from the Edo period. His efforts succeeded, and in April 1902 (Meiji 35), *Higo-ryu Taijutsu* was established. Six (6) representatives from Kumamoto signed a (10) ten-article agreement that created a common *kata* set and a ranking system. Each participating school could adopt and customize the name to suit its head teacher. These common *kata* formed the basics needed before advancing to the traditional *jujutsu* forms of each individual school. They included break-falling, safety, etiquette, and unified forms. The *kata* combined techniques from all the schools into one standardised set. All beginners were required to master these common forms before studying their school's original *kata*.

The common ranking system was divided into four *kyu* grades. Certification in any rank required passing a joint examination. This was a pioneering system at the time: ranks were awarded through a democratic, collaborative process using shared *kata*. It is considered a precursor to the Dai Nippon *Butokukai*'s (DNBK) later standardisation of *judo kata*. While common today, such collaboration was radical in its time and reflected the progressive spirit of the Meiji Restoration.

Many old schools did not teach standardised break-falling or safety practices, believing that harsh training would naturally toughen students and eliminate the weak. Skill levels varied wildly between schools, and one school's rank meant little to another. This feudal remnant made it difficult for schools to survive in the modern era.

In November 1903, a system of preferential treatment for pre-DNBK martial artists was created. Hoshino was awarded the title of *judo Kyoshi* [Instructor]. Later that year, he received the title of *judo Hanshi* [Master Instructor].

In 1905, he was selected as a member of the *judo kata* drafting committee and helped establish the *Kodokan*'s official *kata*. In April 1907, he was appointed honorary *judo* instructor at the DNBK's regional *Butokuden* in Kumamoto.

According to records from the early Taisho era, his *dojo* had trained 3,362 students in *Shiten-ryu kumiuchi*, 539 in *iai*, and 218 in *naginata*, making it the largest in Kumamoto. The school produced many talented martial artists during the Meiji and Taisho periods. It was one of the first to actively connect with and promote *Kodokan Judo* while joining the DNBK. Hoshino is regarded as one of the founding fathers of *judo* in Kyushu.

Many graduates of his *dojo* went on to become prominent teachers and politicians. Several well-known martial artists emerged under his guidance, including early high-ranking *Kodokan judoka* such as Shohachi Mitsuishi (9th *dan* in Uto) and Sanzo Maruyama (8th *dan*). Both later helped document and preserve his legacy.

In late February 1916, Hoshino contracted acute pneumonia. He fell critically ill on 3 March and passed away at the

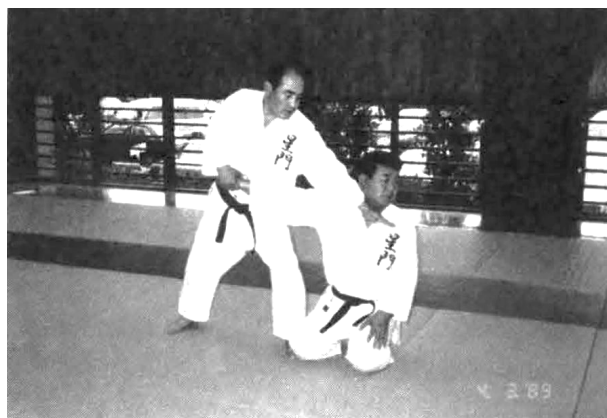
age of 79. He is buried on the grounds of Ojoin Temple in Dekyo, Kumamoto City.

Survival into the Present Day

As the *Kodokan* gained prominence, many old *jujutsu* schools adapted by incorporating *judo*. This *layer of judo* helped attract new students and provided financial support while safely filtering practitioners before they advanced to traditional *jujutsu*. However, as competitive *judo* grew in popularity, interest in classical *kata* declined. Many old schools either dissolved or fully merged into the *Kodokan*. Such was the fate of *Takeuchi Santo-ryu*, a foundational school of *judo* that largely disappeared (though much of it is now being revived by practitioners of *Takeuchi-ryu Bicchuden* in Tokyo). *Higo-ryu Taijutsu* appeared headed in the same direction and was long believed to have faded after the standardization of *judo kata* by the DNBK.

However, Mitsuishi Nobuto, a senior disciple of Kumon Hoshino, preserved *Shiten-ryu Kumiuchi* and *Higo-ryu Taijutsu*. An Army Infantry Captain, he succeeded Kumon as master of the three arts in May 1916. In April 1918, he received licenses in *Hoki-ryu iaido* and *Yoshin-ryu naginata*. In May 1918, he was awarded *Judo* and *Iaido* Refinement Certificates by the President of the DNBK. In 1923, he received the title of *Iaido Kyoshi*. In November 1931, he performed *Shiten-ryu kumiuchi kata* as a representative of the *Hoshino-ryu* school at a martial arts demonstration before the Emperor in Kumamoto. After World War II, he taught what he knew to volunteers at the *Shobukan dojo* in Kumamoto City until his death in 1969 at the age of 75. Many of his students were local *judoka*, including the head instructor of the police department. Today, the *Seimonkai* (successors of the Hoshino Dojo, formerly the *Shobukan*) continue to transmit these two traditions. As of 2026, the school remains active and can be found online.

A copy of the original *Higo-ryu Taijutsu* agreement was reported by the local newspaper at the time and is now preserved in the Kumamoto archives.



Kumamoto Prefecture Old School Martial Arts – *Shiten-ryu*

The Higo-ryu Taijutsu Agreement (1902)

A copy of the original agreement of *Higo-ryu Taijutsu* was reported by the local daily newspaper at the time and is now kept in the Kumamoto archives.

Below is a translation of the agreement:

“Agreement:

Regarding martial arts, we have agreed on the methods for maintaining them in the future.

Article 1: (in *Iroha*) [*iroha* is Japanese alphabetical order] *Yoshin-ryu*, *Takeuchi Santo-ryu*, *Kaishin-ryu*, *Tenka Muso-ryu*, *Shiten-ryu*, “*Do-ryu*” (“*do*” a character meaning the name “*Shiten-ryu*” repeated), and *Shiota-ryu*.

The above seven schools have reached a merger and collectively form *Higo-ryu Taijutsu*, with the selection of modified techniques.

Kata:

Tai-no-Sen [Front body]
Suigetsu [Water moon]
Keagegaeshi [Kick up return]
Oinage [Back throw]
Koshinage [Hip throw]
Koshigaeshi [Over <hand> throw]
Origoshi [Bending hip]
Oritaoshi [Bending down]
Uchigaeshi [Hit return]
Wakizume [Side block]

Article 2 (in *iroha* order):

The unified *Higo-ryu Taijutsu* schools are to be identified as *Hoshino-ha*, the *Jonno-ha*, the *Takaoka-ha*, *Nonoguchi-ha*, *Yano-ha*, *Eguchi-ha*, and the *Santo-ha*.

The forms under the control of each school shall be preserved as they were in the past.

Article 3:

The seven schools themselves shall not be merged, and their foundational *kata* shall be preserved as they have been in the past. The teachers of each school shall, of course, remain teachers of their respective schools.

Article 4:

Depending on the circumstances, the teachers of each school may instruct regardless of whether they are disciples of the same school or not.

Article 5:

Each school shall abandon its private status to adopt the principle of personal collaboration and shall study the truth and principles of the art and shall use this principle to advance all matters.

Article 6:

Disciples of each school shall, of course, strive to sharpen themselves through competition with the other schools, but will avoid competition and problems with external schools.

Article 7:

Disciples of *Higo-ryu Taijutsu* shall be granted ranks 1–4 (*kyu*) after joint examinations by the teachers of each school.

Article 8:

Protective measures and safety shall be transmitted in each school.

Disciples of any school who wish to study at another must first obtain permission from their former teacher.

Article 9:

In the event that the aforementioned agreement becomes inappropriate upon its implementation, amendments, additions, or deletions shall be made by mutual agreement.

Article 10:

Each of the seven schools shall sign and seal this agreement and keep one copy for their records.

Meiji 35 (1902)

Signed:

Kumon Hoshino (*Shiten-ryu Kumiuchi*, *Hoki-ryu Iai*, *Yoshin-ryu Naginata*); Kumao Jonno (*Shiten-ryu Kumiuchi*); Ichitaro Takaoka (*Tenka Muso-ryu Torite*); Tsuneto Nonoguchi (*Shiota-ryu Kogusoku*, *Unko-ryu Kenjutsu*); Hiroji Yano (*Takeuchi Santo-ryu Jujutsu*, *Shinshin Mutekatsu-ryu Iaido*); Yasaburo Eguchi (*Kaishin-ryu Taijutsu*); Kiyotake Santo (*Yoshin-ryu Jujutsu*, *Niten Ichi-ryu Kenjutsu*).

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The Matsumae – Kodokan – All-Japan Judo Federation Conflict

Anon



Dr. Shigeyoshi Matsumae (1901–1991) 7th dan

An Institutional Crisis in Japanese Judo in the 1980s

When Shigeyoshi Matsumae became President of the International Judo Federation (IJF) in 1979, he represented a unique figure in *judo* history. Trained as an engineer and the founder of Tokai University, Matsumae did not limit his vision to sport alone. Instead, he promoted a broader conception of *judo* – as a tool for education, international dialogue, and cultural cooperation – aligned with the philosophy established by Jigoro Kano when he founded *judo* in 1882.

This vision reflected the educational model developed at Tokai University, which combined academic study, moral development, and practical *budo* training. For Matsumae, *judo* was not simply an international competitive sport, but a discipline through which individuals and nations could develop and connect.

However, this expansive vision soon brought him into conflict with the established power structures of Japanese *judo*.

Fragmented Authority in the Power Structure of Japanese Judo

To understand the tensions that emerged in the early 1980s, it is essential to recognize the multi-polar structure of *judo* governance in Japan.

The first key institution is the *Kodokan Judo* Institute (the *Kodokan*), founded in 1882 by Jigoro Kano. It serves as the historical, pedagogical, and philosophical centre of *judo* – guarding its traditions and the spirit of *budo*.

The second is the All Japan Judo Federation (AJJF), established after World War II to organise national competitions, regulate sport *judo*, and oversee Japan's participation in international events.

The third influential pillar is university *judo*. Japanese university leagues and championships have a long-standing tradition and exceptionally high technical standards. Within this environment, Matsumae exerted considerable influence through Tokai University, which became one of the most powerful university institutions in world *judo*.

These overlapping structures created a delicate equilibrium – one that would be tested in the 1980s.

The Rise of Matsumae in International Judo

The election of Matsumae as President of the International Judo Federation (IJF) marked an important step in the evolution of world *judo*. His aim was to expand *judo* internationally while preserving its cultural identity in Japanese *budo*.

From this perspective, he encouraged university exchanges, the cultural dissemination of *budo*, and the creation of international frameworks capable of transmitting *judo*'s spirit beyond the purely sporting dimension.



The Matsumae Budo Centre in Vienna

A key example of that vision was the creation of the Matsumae Budo Centre in Vienna, established in the 1980s. Symbolically inspired by the Nippon *Budokan*, the centre was conceived not merely as a training hall or competition venue, but as a European hub for the promotion of *budo*, aimed at:

- Promoting *judo* as a form of Japanese cultural heritage.
- Encouraging exchange between European and Japanese *judoka*.
- Extending the *Kodokan*'s spirit beyond Japan.
- Positioning *judo* as a cultural bridge between Japan and Europe.

Through these initiatives, Matsumae aimed to position *judo* within a wider framework of cultural diplomacy, especially as Europe emerged as a key focus for the sport's development.

Matsumae's Conflict with the Kodokan and the Japanese Judo Federation

It was in this context that institutional tensions intensified.

In the early 1980s, when Matsumae also became President of the Japanese University Judo Federation, the disagreements between the major *judo* institutions became more pronounced.

Key issues included:

- The autonomy of university *judo*.
- The concentration of authority under the *Kodokan* and the national federation.
- The direction of *judo*'s international expansion
- The balance between tradition, sport, and academic influence.

At the heart of these disputes were two contrasting visions of *judo*:

- On one side, stood the *Kodokan* and the AJJF who sought to preserve a centralised structure of technical and sporting authority.
- On the other, stood Matsumae and elements of the university system who advocated for a more open, international model in which universities and cultural institutions played a major role.

A Crisis with Lasting Implications

These tensions escalated into a significant institutional crisis in Japanese *judo* during the 1980s, and although the conflict did not result in a permanent split, it exposed a deep structural divide within modern *judo*:

- The preservation of *budo* tradition under the *Kodokan*.
- The expansion of *judo* as an international sport.
- The growing role of universities in training elite *jūdoka*.

These internal divisions also had international consequences, and they weakened Japan's political influence within the IJF.

Subsequent to Matsumae's Presidency ending in 1987, no Japanese figure has regained that position with the IJF, although Japan continues to exert influence through leaders associated with the *Kodokan* and the AJJF.

A Pivotal Figure in Contemporary Judo

Matsumae's initiatives – including the creation of the Matsumae *Budo* Centre in Vienna – demonstrated that his ambitions extended far beyond administration or competition.

He envisioned *judo* as:

- A global educational system.
- A platform for intercultural dialogue.
- A shared expression of Japanese cultural heritage.

The institutional conflict of the 1980s should therefore not be seen merely as an organisational rivalry – it reflected a deeper and ongoing question – “*Who holds authority over judo - and what should its purpose be?*”

- An Olympic sport, governed by rules of competition and performance?
- A traditional *budo* discipline - defined by its philosophical and cultural origin?
- Or an international educational project inspired by Jigoro Kano?

Matsumae's legacy suggests that these dimensions are not mutually exclusive – but balancing tradition, sport, and cultural mission remains a complex challenge.



Dr. Shigeyoshi Matsumae (1901–1991) 7th dan

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The Founding of the Kodokan Anon

What is the exact date of the founding of the *Kodokan*?

History has decided that this date could be set as 5 June, in the 15th year of Meiji (1882). However, this history was written 30 years later and since the Oath of Allegiance register of admission vows dates from the 17th year of Meiji (1884), it would be more accurate to say that the *Kodokan* was founded in 1884. The original *dojo* had 12 *tatami* mats.

Kano's *judo* was not yet fully developed, since he only inherited the secrets of the *Kito-ryu* school (from which *Koshiki-no-kata* has been extracted, largely unchanged) in 1883. That same year, he opened *Kenjutsu* [sword] and *Ju-jutsu* classes at the end of the year, with the teachings of the *Shibukawa*, *Tenshin-Shinyo*, *Toda*, *Sekiguchi*, and *Kito Ryu* schools.

By the end of 1884, with his theories and practical foundations completed, Kano changed the name from *Ju-jutsu* to *Ju-do*.

Thus, 5 June 1882, and the year 1884 are two dates to be remembered.

Source

Judo Kodokan Review, Volume VIII, No. 3.
(Official translation of the *Kodokan JU-DO journal*), May 15th 1958.

The Oath of Kodokan Judo

Jigoro Kano-*shihan* established in 1882, and later revised in 1884, an oath with five (5) rules that had to be fulfilled by all students. Kano wrote them as follows:

All students admitted to the Kodokan in the early days were required to take an oath of allegiance to the Kodokan. The oath consisted of the following five items:

1. *From this day on, I promise to persevere in judo and will not stop training for any frivolous reason.*
2. *I will not bring dishonour to the Kodokan.*
3. *I promise that I will not disclose to others any of the secret arts of judo by visual or verbal means to any person or persons without the permission of the Kodokan.*
4. *I will not instruct others in the art of judo without the permission of the Kodokan.*
5. *I will abide by all Kodokan dojo rules both before and after receiving a Kodokan Judo master licence.*

'Judo as Physical Education' – introduction to the text *Butoku-shi Kabutoku* magazine, August 1906 Jigoro Kano



Jigoro Kano

Judo essentially combines three elements – spiritual development, competitive training, and physical education. Its great value lies in the fact that it effectively brings these three aspects together. Of course, even when considered solely from the perspective of physical education, its value is in no way inferior to other methods.

There is often a tendency to focus on a single style of *judo*, and although that style may suit certain body types and certain ages, some doubt that it represents the best method of physical education in general. If, like these commentators, we were to base our judgment on only one style, I would share this opinion. *Judo* originally took many forms and variations and is by no means a uniform method.

The common practice of *judo* today involves exercises that are too intense and may therefore not be suitable for the young, the elderly, or those with a fragile constitution who cannot withstand excessive physical exertion. But this line of reasoning arises because the preceding analysis considers only a single type of *judo*.

In Memoriam: Richard Barraclough (06 March 1943 – 29 March 2026)

The *Kano Society* notes with respect the death of Richard Barraclough OLY 8th dan, at the age of 83. The tribute that follows is due to the British *Judo* Association (BJA) and was published on 30 March 2026.

Source: <https://www.britishjudo.org.uk/obituary-richard-barraclough/>

Obituary - Richard Barraclough

British *Judo* is deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Richard Barraclough, President of the North West (NW) *Judo* Area and Vice President of the BJA, who passed away over the weekend.



Richard Barraclough (1943-2026)

Richard's contribution to *judo* and combat sports spanned decades and left an enduring legacy across the United Kingdom. In the NW of England, he played a pivotal role in developing a thriving and highly competitive *judo* environment. Alongside colleagues, he helped establish training sessions that became a true centre of excellence, drawing athletes from across the region and beyond. These sessions provided invaluable opportunities for high-level randori and development, contributing significantly to the strength and success of a generation of British *judoka*.

He was also instrumental in supporting university *judo*, helping to create opportunities for young athletes to gain international experience, including trips to Japan. His commitment to nurturing talent and building strong pathways for athletes was evident throughout his career.

Richard served British *Judo* with distinction over many years, including as a Board Director before becoming Vice President. He remained an active

and valued member of the community, continuing to offer guidance, insight and support even in later years.

Beyond *judo*, Richard was an accomplished athlete in his own right. He represented Great Britain as an Olympic wrestler at the Munich 1972 Games, was a World medallist, and served as the first National *Sambo* coach during the 1960s and 1970s. Despite these significant achievements, he remained a humble and quietly influential figure, never seeking recognition for his own successes.

Those who knew Richard will remember him as calm, thoughtful and quietly authoritative, with a gentle and supportive manner. He was a reliable and intelligent presence within the *judo* community, offering guidance to clubs, coaches and athletes alike, and helping many to achieve their potential.

The outpouring of tributes from across the country reflects the profound impact he had on so many lives, both within and beyond the NW.

Richard Barraclough's legacy will live on through the athletes he inspired, the structures he helped build, and the community he strengthened. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Our thoughts are with his family, friends and the entire *judo* community at this difficult time.



Richard Barraclough (1943-2026)

Note

A profile of Richard was also featured in the article "*Celebrating British Judo Personalities – Part I,*" authored by Stephanie Leigh and published in Issue 69 (July 2026) of this *Bulletin*.

Considering the topic of *Kata*

Patrice Berthoux



Kata

Developing *judo* today means opening our discipline to all practitioners, fostering connections, and transmitting to future generations the technical and cultural richness for which instructors serve as custodians.

For this reason, national *judo* federations regard the teaching of *kata* as an essential component of practice for all participants. It represents a foundation of stability and continuity within the discipline.

On this subject, the late Ichiro Abe, *Kodokan* 10th *dan*, stated:

“Kata and randori must not be neglected – they are grammar and composition.”

Within them are found the fundamental principles of *judo* – balance, posture, and movement.



Ichiro Abe (1922-2022)

The Purpose of *Kata*

Kata enables practitioners to progress in *judo*. Its study may begin at any age and at any level.

Kata integrates two essential elements – technique and attitude. Technique encompasses the body of knowledge ac-

quired since the beginning of one's practice and the practitioner's capacity to apply and transmit it according to their abilities. Attitude reflects mastery of the body and precision of movement during technical execution. Without proper attitude, *kata* loses its substance and meaning.

Kata highlights the core values and principles of *judo* – concentration, precision, technical diversity, efficiency, and safety. These elements embody our values and contribute to a deeper appreciation of the discipline.

Which *Kata*?

Nage-no-kata [Forms of throwing] illustrates the structured construction of a throw – off-balancing, positioning, and execution – adapted to various attacking or movement situations. It constitutes the fundamental basis of standing *judo*.

Kata for Whom?

The study of *kata* should correspond to the practitioner's level of development:

- Beginners focus on grips, movement, and the fundamentals of posture.
- Intermediate practitioners examine the construction and continuation of attacks while broadening their technical repertoire.
- Competitors may study principles such as action and reaction to enhance tactical understanding.
- Adult practitioners often seek technical mastery, physical education, and postural development.

Through adapted pedagogy, instructors give each practitioner meaningful progress and purpose in *judo*.

Activities and Development

Organised activities play a central role in guiding and uniting practitioners. They foster social connection and mutual support, strengthening both individual and collective growth.

Such initiatives should occur at multiple levels – locally between clubs, at the departmental level through structured exchanges, regionally through training camps led by qualified instructors, and nationally during summer courses and other events. These opportunities cultivate cohesion, motivation, and shared advancement.

For those who show greater commitment, activities may lead to competitions at various levels, with some progressing to national team selection and ultimately international representation.

Conclusion

Judo is a unified discipline in which *kata* is inseparable from overall practice. The mutual support cultivated through *kata* naturally extends to *randori*. Within this framework, every practitioner can find purpose and fulfilment according to their age, aspirations, and level of commitment.

SEIRYOKU ZEN'YO

ONE OF KODOKAN JUDO'S CORE PRINCIPLES

Efficient effort and minimum effort aren't the same thing.

© by Steve Scott

When I was a young black belt in the early 1970s, I had quite a few conversations with another young black belt, and the most interesting ones were philosophical in nature. These conversations sometimes turned into mini-debates, proving the old adage "You can't argue the stupid out of somebody." But then, my young colleague probably thought the same thing about me.

A common topic we discussed was one of the central philosophies of Kodokan Judo: Seiryoku Zen'yo. Often, the main point of discussion was on the difference between "minimum effort" and "efficient effort."



I believed then, and still do, that I had the upper hand in discussing this topic with my young interlocutor. My first sensei, Jerry Swett, imbued in his students a fundamentally sound basic understanding and appreciation of Kodokan history, terminology and philosophy. I was fortunate in that Jerry actually made learning these things fun. In addition to a strong focus on fundamentally sound technical skills and principles, Jerry always found a way to teach us not only how something worked, but why it worked. I was a curious kid and paid attention to Jerry, but even more important, I was a reader. Starting in my first year of studying judo in 1965, I read anything I could get my hands on about judo. Long before the internet and the screens that bring it to us were invented, there were books and magazines. And those books and magazines opened up a whole new world of judo to an impressionable teenager in Kansas City. I was a judo geek and happy to be one.

But, getting back to what prompted my digression; the philosophy of Seiryoku Zen'yo. My young debate partner was convinced that Seiryoku Zen'yo meant "minimum effort resulted in maximum results." His focus was on the word minimum. He insisted that doing something the easiest way and taking shortcuts was the principal philosophy of judo. My interpretation was different. Quoting Jigoro Kano: "Whatever be the object, the best use of attaining it shall be the best use of energy directed to that purpose or aim." As I often pointed out to him, the "best use of energy" isn't the same as "minimum effort."

As a jujutsu student, Jigoro Kano learned the concept of "Shin-shin no chikara o moto no yuko ni shi o suru." This explained the importance of the most economical and efficient use of mental and physical energy. From this, Jigoro Kano developed the philosophy of Seiryoku Zen'yo as a core foundation of Kodokan Judo. My own study and research has led me to the interpretation of this phrase to mean that efficiency or effectiveness of mind and body is a primary concept of judo. Not minimum effort, but rather efficiency of effort.

As a side note, but one that I think is important. In every translation that I have found of this phrase "Seiryoku Zen'yo," the meaning is "effective, efficient, maximum or good use of mind and body." There's no mention of "minimum effort" in this phrase. Maybe it's something that is implicit, but I'm more inclined to go with what's explicitly written. That keeps the guesswork out of the discussion. It's this notion of "minimum effort" that distorted my young colleague's idea of one of Kodokan Judo's core principles and it may have had a similar effect on others.

My young colleague was adamant. To him, Professor Kano meant minimum effort, not efficiency of effort. As he explained it: "Take it easy and get away with what you can." It was frustrating to me because, in actually practicing and doing judo, he would attempt to be as efficient as possible. He didn't realize it, but (in practice) he contradicted the philosophy he espoused.

I conceded that doing something in the most efficient way, including judo, may seem easier and take less effort to an untrained eye than doing something in a less efficient way. But it's only easier and takes less effort because it is efficiently done, not because it's inherently easy or convenient. Shortcuts don't equate to efficiency or the best use of energy. There's a saying: "Work smarter, not harder." By working smarter, a person works more efficiently and as a result appears to not have to work as hard. The reality is that people don't see the effort someone puts into learning and training how to do something efficiently. That person is actually working hard at working smart. People only see the results, not the planning and effort. Efficiency equals effectiveness.

My young colleague left judo many years ago. He was a good athlete and judo competitor, but never realized that the philosophy of minimum effort that he espoused wasn't what he was actually doing. I haven't seen him in years and I wish him well.

Maximum Efficiency, Minimum Effort Anon

精力善用

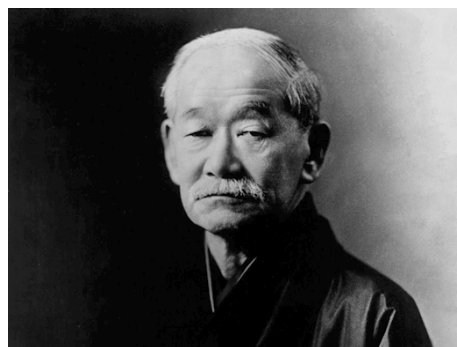
Seiryoku-Zenyo

Jigoro Kano once explained that *judo* was a principle that had nothing to do with medals:

*“Maximum efficiency, minimum effort.”
“Seiryoku-Zenyo”*

Kano-*shihan* was not talking about doing less work.
He was talking about wasting nothing.
No unnecessary force.
No pointless resistance.
No ego fighting against reality.
In *judo*, the best technique appears when timing, balance, and intent align.
Power without direction fails.
Effort without awareness gets exhausted.
That idea shaped how *judo* is taught, how athletes train, and how matches are won.
It also shaped how many *judoka* live their lives outside the *tatami*.
You don't overpower chaos.
You learn to move with it.

Points to Ponder Jigoro Kano



Jigoro Kano

“The same higher power can be wasted or consumed, depending on the purpose for which it is used.”

“Do not think only of yourself but strive to benefit others. Fostering that attitude and that practice provides the greatest opportunities to cultivate the noble spirit of Judo.”

“Getting over the habit of using force against force is one of the most difficult forms of training in judo, and one cannot progress without achieving it.”

“Success or failure is not the end. In either case what one must think about is – what should I do next? What can I learn and how can I improve myself?”

“The greatest enemy in judo is not the opponent, but yourself.”

“Each country must make it a principle to promote mutual prosperity and must conduct itself with the determination to do its utmost for the world.”

“Judo is not what many people believe it to be, that is to say, that judo is more than a fighting art practiced in the dojo. The purpose of judo is to perfect yourself so that you can contribute to society.”

“Randori teaches you how to win, but kata teaches you how to understand.”

“Competition itself is not the goal, it is the principles learnt from competition that you can apply to everyday life.”

“The perfection of oneself is ultimately the best use of one's energies.”

Renjuku Academy

The Kano Society is pleased to endorse the *Judo* Black Belt Association’s “*Renjuku Academy*” as an outstanding *judo* education programme. Its comprehensive 12-month home-study curriculum delivers a rigorous and immersive experience, with a focus on five fundamental domains of *judo* leadership:



1. Biomechanics of *Judo*
2. *Judo* as Physical Education
3. *Kata*
4. *Judo* History and Philosophy
5. *Judo* Terminology



The demanding programme concludes with the submission of a formal dissertation on any aspect of *judo*.

<http://www.judoblackbelt.com>

Judo Collections



The “Bowen Collection” at the University of Bath Library houses an extensive archive on *judo*, compiled by *judoka* and scholar Richard Bowen during the course of his research for numerous books and publications.

Complementing this is the personal book collection of Syd Hoare, which features many rare and valuable *judo* texts – some in Japanese – gifted to him by Trevor Leggett. In addition to the books, the collection includes a bound volume of Syd Hoare’s educational articles and lectures.

Also held at the University is the “Woodard (*Judo*) Collection,” a valuable archive focused on the history of women’s *judo*, assembled by Marion and Graham Woodard.

Together, these collections form a rich resource for current and future *judo* researchers. They are available for reference use only (not for loan) and can be viewed between 09:00 and 17:00 hrs.



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