Here in North Dakota we have had a delightful fall. Winter has come late but has now appeared in full with below 0° highs.

The judo forum has also shown up late. The intention was to have this issue out in the middle of October. An electronics class got in the way and as I finish the layout it is the week before Christmas. Like our North Dakota winter though, late does not mean it is not full force.

Included in this issue is an instructional article by Master Coach Gerald Lafon on non-traditional ukemi. Even if you are not a competitor the skills involved in these drills would be an excellent addition to your movement base.

Linda Yiannakis submitted her second interview with Steve Cunningham, a fascinating article on kata; its history and its relevance.

Jim Haynes sent in a fond remembrance of his first sensei.

Our thanks goes out to everyone who sent articles. It is your articles that keeps this magazine going.

We spotlighted our own dojo for lack of a another dojo article. Don’t be shy. Even the smallest dojo has a story.

Happy Holidays to everyone.

jana

Vern Borgen’s backyard.

Vern Borgen chief editor of the Judo Forum and head sensei for Gentle Ways, inc. foot sweeps Russell Sorenson.

Gentle Ways is this

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WARNING: All human activity involves some risk including death. We advise anyone wishing to study judo to find a good teacher... to attempt to learn judo from a book or magazine, on your own, could invite injury.

Feel free to make copies of the magazine “as-a-whole” for free distribution (you can charge for printing expenses) and for the purpose expressed, i.e. to educate about judo. Any other use is prohibited and subject to written request. The entire contents of this magazine are copyrighted.

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Seasons Greetings

Traditionally the end of the year is a time to take a look back over the past year, to evaluate all that has transpired and make plans for the future.

It has been a great year for me. In May I traveled to England and attended a one week training camp with Zen Judo International. It was great fun, the English were terrific hosts and the camp was one of the best organized camps that I have attended.

In July I attended Camp Bushido in Colorado Springs and got to see old friends, and meet a few new people and learn lots of new techniques. The hospitality there was great too.

By the way - Camps are great fun and very educational. Everyone should plan to attend a camp every few years — if you haven’t been to camp for a few years make plans to attend this year.

We published 3 issues of the Judo Forum Magazine. This has not gone as smoothly as I would have liked, as Jana noted on the front cover, this issue was due out in October! Publishing has been a catch as catch can operation. One of my goals for next year is to improve the delivery of the magazine and make it a quarterly.

While trying to put out a magazine, I am struck with awe at how little time there really is after job, family and judo. I truly admire those of you who can juggle a job, family and judo and still have time, and or energy to do other things.

I want to say a special thanks to all of you who have contributed to the body of judo this past year. First of all, thanks to the coaches, sensei, and assistants in the thousands of clubs worldwide who have dedicated their lives to teaching judo and thereby changing peoples lives. Keep up the good work!

Thanks also to the officers and directors of our national and international organizations and all the people who work in these offices.

Thanks to all referees everywhere! And timers and scorekeepers and everyone else who works to make shiai possible.

And thanks to many others who help out and remain unknown: the parents who help with the fund raisers, the mother who makes sandwiches for the referees at the shiai, etc.

Thanks to all of you for your dedication. We can’t do it without each other.

Wishing you and yours a happy New Year.

Vern Borgen
Www.gentleways.com

Judo trivia

Guess super model Laetitia Casta is a brown belt in judo.

See her bio at http://www.guess.com/shoots/bios/

Judo Puzzler!

What is this?

E-mail us with your guess.
Gentle Ways, Inc. Fargo, North Dakota

"When one is engaged in a favorite pursuit or a subject absorbingly interesting, the normal conception of labor or time and artificial social distinctions disappear from the mind. In fact, life itself is absorbed in the engagement, or it may be said that one's life is tuned in harmony with eternal life."

G. Koizumi

For many years Charlie Robinson of Yuba City California has called the North Dakota Judo Contingent "the Nodakians." As if they might have arrived on a space ship.

Fargo is isolated. Up until a few years ago the nearest judo club was 250 miles away. Today there are half a dozen judo clubs within a 250-mile radius – most of them affiliated with Gentle Ways, inc.

Gentle Ways, Inc., a non-profit organization, was founded in 1984 by Vern Borgen. Originally Gentle Ways, Inc. was created to provide a means of financial and logistical support for a Judo program outside of Vern’s original program at North Dakota State University. It has since grown into a regional entity with six branch dojos in two states.

The mission of Gentle Ways, Inc. is to promote Judo and other Martial Arts.

Vern Borgen’s mental and spiritual training in Budo started while he was stationed in Japan with the U.S. Army during the seventies. The relationships he forged with the people, culture and language were instrumental in his decision to take up Judo and gave him a reference point to view his study of all Budo. Vern’s physical training began in 1978 when he began studying Judo with Leigh English at North Dakota State University. Leigh (a student of Don Draeger) had a good education in traditional Judo with a smattering of Aikido and Jodo.

Gentle Ways, Inc. firmly believes that the purpose of Judo is to make good people. The Tenants of Judo are clear:

- Sei Ryoku Zen Yo – Virtuous Use of Power
- Ji Ta Kyo Ei - You and Me Shining Together
- Jiko No Kansei - Perfect Yourself

The practice of Judo presents the student with life and death situations, simulated through technique, in which the student’s character is refined and perfected. Through ardent practice the student develops a courageous character that is benevolent and respects wisdom.

The practices at North Dakota State University use the Zen Judo International syllabus as a core curriculum. The Zen Judo organization traces its lineage through Dominique Mac Carthy, the Kyu Shin Do Society, Kenshiro Abe and Kyuzo Mifune. This style of judo is very light.

Several years ago the “Nodakians” met Mr. Jose Bueno at Charlie Robinson’s Camp Bushido West. They fell in love with Sensei Bueno’s smooth Arnis and jujitsu style. Sensei Bueno has been in Fargo on 3 occasions. His style of jujitsu fits very well with the Zen Judo movement.

Three years ago, one of Vern’s first instructor’s, Timothy Cruff, returned to the area and merged his organization, Hakkoryu Karate Jutsu Federation of America with Gentle Ways, Inc. Sensei Cruff has a long martial arts career that extends over 30 years. He studied karate and judo in Japan and was an All Marine Corps Judo Competitor. While on active duty in Houston Texas he joined Darrell Craig’s Houston Budokan where he studied jujitsu.
The Dynamic Nature of Kata

An Interview with Steven R. Cunningham by Linda Yiannakis, 3rd Dan, USJA

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Steve Cunningham (6th Dan, Kodokan Judo, 7th Dan, Takagi Ryu Jujutsu, 6th Dan, Mugen Ryu Karate) is a respected authority on martial arts and on Classical Judo in particular. Cunningham began his study of Judo at the age of 6 with Taizo Sone, who was a direct student of Jigoro Kano and uchideshi to Hidekazu Nagaoka (10th dan). Cunningham was trained in all aspects of traditional Judo and was uke and uchideshi to Sone Sensei. He is well versed in Japanese history, philosophy, language and culture, and is an expert with the sword and jo as well as other battlefield weapons. Cunningham Sensei teaches Classical Judo and Takagi-Ryu Jujutsu at Ju Nan Shin Martial Arts Academy in Manchester, Connecticut.

The Kodokan today recognizes a number of official kata. What are the origins of each of these kata and what does each contribute to the complete syllabus of Judo?

How many kata there are depends on how you count. The first two kata that are typically taught and learned are the so-called Randori no Kata. These are Nage no Kata and Katame no Kata. Nage no Kata is the Form of Throwing, and Katame no Kata is the Form of Grappling. The kata are not specifically kata to teach you how to do randori, but rather they are kata made up of techniques that are also used in randori. The old Kodokan used to differentiate between randori waza and goshin waza. Randori waza are techniques that are appropriate for randori and goshin waza are techniques that are not appropriate for randori. Now that is not to say that the randori waza would not also be used in self-defense. It simply means that among all the techniques, those are the ones that one would be allowed to use in randori. So for example, kote gaeshi, throwing with wrist twist, would be a good example of a goshin waza. It is not legal to apply that technique in randori. But certainly we would apply osoto gari in self-defense. So that’s what these two kata are about. Both kata were developed, I think, in 1888, and they were then modified and standardized with two major revisions: one in the summer of 1905 and one in the summer of 1907. This was in response and in preparation for the kata and syllabus committee that Kano put together made up of various masters from the Kodokan and from various ryu that had agreed to help him. It was quite an illustrious group of people that went to work on the kata and syllabus.

The Nage no Kata is attack-based and self-defense oriented. It teaches the principles in the context of strategies of combat. Katame no Kata incorporates techniques which are not directly applicable, in most cases, to self-defense. It has a little bit of a different feel to it. Both kata, though, give a lot of insight into how the various strategies of combat are applied through the randori waza. Sometimes the Gokusho no Kata is included among the Randori no Kata, but it is not on the modern Kodokan ‘approved’ list, and was created by Kyuzo Mifune, tenth dan.

We also have Ju no Kata, which is an old form as well. Ju no Kata is the Form of Ju, the Form of Gentleness or Suppleness. It is designed to give one a feeling for an engagement in which there is an attack, a defense, a counter to the defense, a counter to the counter, and so on, so you get this exchange back and forth, and you get to see how the supple responses to each movement unfold. Because of the nature of the kata, the attacks and defenses are all quite abbreviated and the principle of ju is highlighted. Nage no Kata, Katame no Kata and Ju no Kata were all constructions by Kano. There are a lot of influences on the kata. Ju no Kata was not limited to Tenshin Shinyo (some give this as Tenjin Shinyo) and Kito influences, so it has a lot of techniques which we more associate with other ryu. But Kano had a pretty rich background, so he was able to incorporate those.

We have Kime no Kata as well. Kime is an interesting word. It refers to some sort of decision. One can think of it in terms of like a court decision, an adjudication where something is decided. And so there’s a sense of finality and decisiveness and a hint of a sense of contract, as in the old duels. But it’s a form of life-and-death struggle. It at one time was called Shinken Shobu no Kata, which meant the form of real fighting. And so the form incorporates various weapons and what were real world attacks in the time of Kano. The Kime no Kata was constructed by Kano but it is designed to embody the Tenshin Shinyo Ryu information, so it is a bit of a conglomeration of kata from Tenshin Shinyo Ryu. People who see it who know Tenshin Shinyo Ryu are often struck by the similarity in techniques.

Another kata is the Koshiki no Kata. Koshiki no Kata means the Form of Antiquity, or the Form of Ancient. Koshiki is essentially the central kata of the Kito Ryu school. It’s a very lofty form. It has a lot of ethereal context. Kito Ryu means ‘rise-fall’ and reflects the yin-yang of Chinese philosophy. It’s a very meaningful form. It focuses on very high form art. The participants at this point are thought to be above push-pull, grab here, using leverage, momentum and so on, and they move to a point in which they are expressing themselves through the technique and they are applying the techniques based on concepts of rhythm and motion and feeling and that sort of thing. The Koshiki and Kime no Kata together are designed to bring forward this knowledge from the old ryu that Kano first started with, the Tenshin Shinyo and Kito Ryu. They give a sense of
what the old ryu looked like. They also show us an example of how the old ryu can be preserved in the Kodokan syllabus. So they’re carried forward in the public syllabus to demonstrate how the old ryu are being preserved.

The idea is also that the basic syllabus of the Kodokan—the Go Kyo, and the Nage, Katame, and Ju no Kata—all give you the foundation to understand Kime and Koshiki, but these operate at a higher level. They have more advanced principles and they are designed to teach you things like strategy, ma-ai, riai, all these other kinds of higher concepts. They are designed to elevate you even more beyond these basics. So to do Kime or Koshiki without first having a good grounding in the Go Kyo and the Randori no Kata and so on, would just be meaningless. You’re totally unprepared to take the lessons that these kata are going to provide you.

Also in the Kodokan syllabus is the Kodokan Goshin Jutsu. Notice that it isn’t called Goshin Jutsu no Kata. This is because the Goshin Jutsu is thought to be a plan of study of self-defense techniques (goshin waza), as opposed to being formally a kata, although it’s often demonstrated that way. The Goshin Jutsu is a construction of the 1950s, when 21 masters came together to construct a modernized form of self-defense to be taught in the Kodokan. The most influential and probably the best known to us in the West of those members was Tomiki. Kenji Tomiki had been a student of Kano and had also, by arrangement of Kano, studied under Ueshiba, of the aikido school. Tomiki was also sent around to other of the traditional ryu, by Kano, to people that Kano knew and had made arrangements with, like Aoyagi at Sosuishitsu Ryu (also pronounced Sosuishi Ryu) and others. All of that old knowledge was brought to bear in the construction of the modern Goshin Jutsu. There were earlier Goshin Jutsu which are no longer practiced. They were discarded, hidden away for various reasons, and there was a feeling that there was a need for a Goshin Jutsu but the Kodokan wanted a modernized version. And so that was why they called together these instructors and asked them to construct this art. So this is designed to teach the goshin waza, whereas the Nage and Katame no Kata teach the randori waza.

An old kata that Kano constructed in the 1880s was Seiryoku Zenyo Kottomin Taiiku no Kata. ‘Seiryoku Zenyo’ is what we often refer to as the principle of maximum efficiency. It actually means to use your life energies in the most effective and most just way. ‘Koku’ is ‘country’, and ‘komin’ is ‘national’. ‘Taiiku’ is a system of exercise. Seiryoku Zenyo Kottomin Taiiku is a ‘system of national exercise based on the principle of maximum efficiency’, and it is a kata. It is a solo kata, and it is one of the few solo kata that exist in Judo these days. It is made up of practice of atemi. This is a place to learn the basic principles of atemi, the punching and kicking and all that.

There is also the Joshi Goshinio and the Kime Shiki, which are referred to as kata by some people. I don’t think the Kodokan formally treats them as kata these days. These were the construction of Jiro Nango, who was Kano’s nephew and who took over the directorship of the Kodokan after Kano died. He managed the Kodokan through the wars, World War II. Kano had been concerned about the Kodokan being taken over by the military as a place to train soldiers for combat in WWII. To that end, a lot of the old methods of goshinjutsu were hidden away and weren’t publicly taught any more. And after WWII ended, with the Occupation forces, the Kodokan couldn’t operate at all for a while. When it did operate, it was under some restrictions. And so the goshin waza weren’t taught. Jiro Nango constructed the Kime Shiki and the Joshi Goshinio because he thought there was a need to preserve the self-defense techniques for the women, in the Women’s Division. My understanding is that he was not a Judoist at all, and in fact, had his training in Daito Ryu Jujutsu. But we forget that the Kodokan was a center of martial art activity and not just what we think of today as sport Judo. There were lots of masters of lots of arts at the Kodokan. As late as the 1920s they were teaching wooden staffs (jo) at the Kodokan, so there were lots of people there in different arts. There was a sense of preserving certain concepts by making them into this kata and then teaching it in the Women’s Division. In the highly male-dominated society and unfortunately, even in the Occupation forces, attitudes were very sexist, and so there wasn’t much consideration given to looking to see what they were doing in the Women’s Division. So that sort of thing worked out very well.

The Kodokan was turned over to Rrisei Kano about the time of the Korean War. I believe that Rrisei Kano was an adopted son of Kano, and he also wasn’t a Judoist. So the leadership in the Kodokan changed greatly from the time when Kano was running it to the later directors, and this had some effect on the construction of kata, and so on.

There is also a modern Renkoho, which are arrest methods that they teach to law enforcement officers. They are basically a dozen come-alongs that are taught for controlling somebody who’s being aggressive in some way and hauling them off, and maybe to handcuff them. There were older versions of Renkoho no Kata as well, but they are no longer practiced at the Kodokan.

Also, there is Itsutsu no Kata. Itsutsu is an old way of saying ‘five’. We think of ichi, ni, san, shi; but there’s also hitotsu, and so on, which are an old Japanese set of numbers. Itsutsu no Kata is the Form of Five. It’s five techniques. It was constructed by Kano as his sort of ultimate kata. It is often referred to as the ‘unfinished’ kata because the techniques are apparently unnamed. Kano went to a lot of trouble to try to distill all of martial art into the minimum number of principles that
would be necessary to explain it. He thought there were five governing principles upon which all martial art was based. This number five is not an accident. The number five has a lot of significance in Japanese and Chinese philosophy. They believed that there are five elements in the heaven and earth and that all of creation is made up of five elements. Just as we, in modern science, think there are, whatever there are, 108 elements on the periodic table, and everything is constructed of those. To the Japanese and Chinese there were five fundamental elements from which all else was constructed. So this made a lot of sense to have five principles, from this philosophical point of view. But Kano didn’t come up with this connection. The five principles had also been taught through earlier versions of oshikiiuchi, they’d been taught in Takeuchi Ryu and Takagi Ryu, and other ryu as well. They were the same principles or some variant thereof that Kano thought could still be distilled back to these same principles. So where some ryu would think of their five principles as being different from another ryu, Kano thought that he had found the five principles that subsumed all the others. They are often described by reference to physical phenomena, so that they have at least some tangible expression. And so one technique might be modeled by the idea of an ocean wave that sweeps over the land and overcomes things that way. And then a tornado is another one, and so on. Kano thought that there were five basic components. It isn’t convenient to give them a brief name, like the name of a throw. But they are there, and they are the underpinnings of the ryu, so they are quite important.

**Itsutsu** is the highest kata, with only five techniques. Kano thought that the art should culminate. He believed that Judo moves from the specific to the general. I’ve heard some people argue that Judo moves from the general to the specific. People argue that the early techniques like ogoshi, seoinage, and osoto gari are the ones that have the most use, that they’re the most general, and that the advanced techniques are only useful in very bizarre, very unique situations, and therefore aren’t as valuable—they’re very specific. When in fact Kano, I believe, intended for his art to operate in the opposite direction, that you would move from the specific to the general, and that one would eventually learn to abstract entirely from individual techniques and operate wholly on principle. And that is when you’re the most powerful. If when somebody grabs a hold of me, if I think, oh well, if I pull here and push there and turn my body and sweep this way and do that, by the time I’ve figured all this out and analyzed this on a technique basis, I’ve been thrown down. It’s over. But if I understand some overriding principle that tells me that when something like that happens this is what you do and I just do it, based on principle, then I’m much faster, much more effective and there’s much more sense to what I do. Kano was trying to distill to a higher form art so that you could be elevated above technique. That is where you want to be; you want to be operating at that level, responding to the flows, the pressure on your body, and not really thinking about individual techniques. That’s when you become effective; that’s when you become able to defend yourself on the street. We often hear that Kano had people like Yamashita, Yokoyama, Saijo, and others, who came in from other ryu, and then a few years later Kano has them fighting for him. They become legendary because of the victories they won in the big tournaments at the Kodokan. I’m thinking in particular of the big tournament of 1886, when they had a team contest, and the Kodokan beat the other Jujutsu ryu. Some people have argued that means that really Kano built the Kodokan based upon the strengths of these people who had studied in other Jujutsu schools and that he really didn’t teach them much. The realities were that they weren’t the champions they were until they met Kano and studied with him. His unique ability was his insight; his ability to really understand what was going on at the center of things, and how to teach that to other people so that they operated at a higher level, according to higher principles. And so he took what they knew and he made them better at it by showing them the inner principles, the inner workings of what they were doing. And that’s what this program is designed to do. It’s designed to take you to that high-form art.

There are other kata which are not currently recognized by the Kodokan, such as Go no Kata, Ippon Yo Goshin Jutsu no Kata, Gonosen no Kata, and others. What are the origins and nature of these so-called ‘lost kata’ and why do you think they are no longer widely known?

There are various reasons why these kata are ‘lost’. The Go no Kata, for example, was the Kata of Hardness, which is the counterpart of the Ju no Kata, which is the Kata of Softness. Go and Ju are the opposites of one another in the Japanese thinking. Kano was rather insistent that the central principle of Judo was not ju. This is a big misconception. He thought that we tend to characterize the martial art Jujutsu by ju because it is the apparent mode of operation that one gives way to strength. Ju has also the meaning, though, that one is supple, one is agile, and one uses suppleness and agility to win; not just overpowering people. Ju also has the sense that the body is responsive to the will. The body yields to the will, so whatever I want to do I can do. That implies a kind of mental-physical coordination and a very special kind of agility that is probably a better way to identify Jujutsu as a martial art. And so there is strength used in Judo. There is hardness used in Judo as well, and this is why Kano did not make the principle of ju the controlling principle of Judo. Rather, he identified
seiryoku zenyo as the controlling principle because it had the more general application. He said that there are times when it’s appropriate to not yield and there are times when it is appropriate to yield. Kano said,

“By giving away, a contestant may defeat his opponent, and as there are so many instances in Jujutsu (Judo) contests where this principle is applied, the name Jujutsu, the ‘gentle’ or ‘giving away’ art, became the name of the whole art. ... But strictly speaking, real Jujutsu is something more. The way of gaining victory over an opponent by Jujutsu is not confined to gaining victory by only giving away.”

The point of it is that in every occasion you use the most appropriate means, the most efficient means, the most just means, to get the job done. And that is what is expressed in seiryoku zenyo. It’s obvious that he didn’t want that misconception to continue, because in his lectures he often talked about this problem, so he wanted to have a Go no Kata to counterbalance the Ju no Kata. And so he constructed one. The kata was constructed right around the turn of the century. That’s an important thing to recognize, because some people argue that he constructed the Go no Kata with a mind to incorporating Okinawan karate into Japanese Judo and that he got the idea after becoming a close friend of Gichin Funakoshi, the founder of Shotokan karate. It is true that Kano and Funakoshi were good friends. Kano was instrumental in bringing Funakoshi to Japan. He took him under his wing; he showed him the ropes. They talked a lot about the future of martial art. The modern karate-do, as opposed to karate jutsu, is a result of Funakoshi recognizing that Kano’s idea of taking Jujutsu and making it Judo was a good idea. In the modern era, with modern weapons and so on, it might not be as critically important to the military feudal state, which also no longer existed, to continue martial art training. But the value of martial art training had never changed. So karate ought to be continued to be practiced, but with a view to developing the individual. So Kano and Funakoshi were good friends; Shotokan was traditionally taught at the Kodokan, and Kano and Funakoshi discussed techniques and methods together. Kano even learned some of the karate kata. But all of this happened in the late nineteen teens and after. It did not happen before 1900. One has to realize that Funakoshi was quite a bit younger than Kano and that he would not be old enough to be instructing Kano at the time that Kano designed Go no Kata. The fact that there are a lot of atemi, as well as throws and other things in Go no Kata is not an indication that it comes from karate, but rather that there are a lot of karate-like elements in Jujutsu. In fact, when Funakoshi saw an exhibition of Jujutsu by Hironor Otsuka, who was menkyo kaiden of Shin no Shindo Ryu under Nakamura, Funakoshi supposedly ran out on the floor and said to Otsuka, ‘You’ve studied Tode [the old name for karate] in Okinawa, haven’t you!’ And Otsuka said that no, he only practiced the Jujuts. And so Funakoshi discovered that there were a lot of very common elements in the two arts. Otsuka became a student of Funakoshi and ultimately became the founder of Wado Ryu karate. Wado is the harmonizing way, and he was harmonizing or blending Jujutsu with karate. The atemi was very strong in Ju no Kata and in fact Tenshin Shinyo Ryu was one of the pre-eminent atemi schools. Kano had learned this since youth and it was appropriate to put it into the kata. The kata like Go no Kata were hidden away, though, in the pre-WWII years, I’m told, because of the fears that Kano had about the Kodokan being used as a training ground for soldiers. By the 1920s the nationalist fervor had gotten quite strong in Japan. Kano was quite concerned about it all. He began his All-Japan Cultural Movement in the 1920s trying to turn the tide and get people to take a more cosmopolitan view. He did not feel he was successful. He made some inroads, but he was not successful. He also made the mistake of making himself a target of the nationalists. They felt that he was a Western sympathizer and did not recognize the true strength and destiny of Japan. Some argue that that resulted in Kano’s death. So, with all that in mind, Kano and the others sort of tucked away the Go no Kata and essentially ‘obsoleted’ it. They said there were problems with it and they would just no longer teach it. They stopped discussing it publically.

A sidenote is that Kyuzo Mifune, tenth dan, constructed a different Go no Kata during the WWII years. He intended it, I think, to replace the older one. Variants of Mifune’s Go no Kata, probably reflecting different stages in the development of his form, appear periodically, adding to the confusion regarding Go no Kata.

As for the other kata, for example, there were earlier Goshin Jutsu. There was Ippon Yo Goshin Jutsu no Kata and Fujoshi Goshinjutsu no Kata. As for Ippon Yo Goshin Jutsu no Kata, ‘ippon yo’ means ‘general;’ it’s the general self-defense art that was taught to everybody. There had to be some place to learn all the goshin waza, which was the other half of Judo. You have randori waza and goshin waza, and if you’re going to teach the full syllabus, you have to teach both. There was also Fujoshi Goshin Jutsu no Kata, which was the women’s version. What it really meant was that it was the techniques which are special to women’s attacks; it focused on those specifically. These two kata, like the Go no Kata, were sort of ‘lost’ before WWII, quite deliberately I think, and the loss of them gave rise to the Joshi Goshinho and Kime Shiki that appeared in the Women’s Division during WWII, and the new Goshin Jutsu which appeared in the 1950s as a result of the research group that I mentioned earlier.

There were also several Renkoho no Kata. Renkoho are arrest methods.
The old *Renkoho no Kata* (there were several of them) involved torinawa or hojo jutsu, which means rope tying. In the old days, the police didn’t carry handcuffs; they carried a piece of rope, or several pieces of rope in their belt. And so they would take down to the ground the person they wanted to arrest, and in a few quick motions tie them right up and then take them off to jail. The kata did not typically involve doing the actual rope tying. Rather, it took the opponent to the ground and set him up for the tying. But the kata were focused on the concept of rope tying. So they were thought to be kind of out of date in the modern era where people use handcuffs. It also became sort of problematic because the other thing that you would have to learn were the kata involving actual torinawa - rope tying. So if you want to teach the Renkoho the old way, you have to teach the rope tying. That was thought to be less interesting by later Judoists, so they sort of let that go away. Rope tying was originally taught at the Kodokan. In some editions of the book *Kodokan Judo* there are pictures of rope-tying techniques in scrolls held today by the Kodokan.

There’s also *Gonosen no Kata*, which is a good example of a kata created by someone other than Kano. There are others, but this is a good example. *Gonosen* was constructed by Kyuzo Mifune, tenth dan, and it’s practiced at some universities in Japan. At Waseda, I think, they practice *Gonosen*. It’s also popular in Europe. *Gonosen no Kata* is the kata of go no sen. Go no sen is a strategy, one of the three basic strategies, which can be very loosely translated as ‘counter technique’. It’s a little more complicated than that, but it involves counters to throwing attacks, and so it is a kata of counter throws. There were other kata that were brought in by the entering ryu to the Kodokan, and those were preserved there as well. But those are no longer practiced. I think that the intention was that there would be a general syllabus of the kata that we’ve mentioned, and then after one studied and mastered all that, then you might go off and start learning the central kata of the various ryu. So what you would have at the Kodokan was essentially an archive of all the old ryu. To this end, the kata were preserved, and Kano kept a collection of scrolls, books, and artifacts.

### What are the purposes and ends of kata as originally intended by Kano?

The idea of kata that Kano would embrace would naturally be the concept of kata which exists in the koryu, the old schools. Kata forms the centerpiece of the old ryu. In fact, many of the old ryu had no randori of any kind. Some did have something that we might loosely call rand ori, that is, something that’s a little more unstructured, but they were very limited in how much of that they allowed. This was largely because the techniques were very dangerous and it was thought that going at that in a wholly unrehearsed fashion could prove to be fatal. So they used kata as a centerpiece. These are prearranged reenactments of battles or prearranged mock exchanges. They also provided a means for sustaining the ryu, for sustaining all the detailed information that needed to be passed on from generation to generation. It’s hard to take something as complex in movement as fighting and make some notation on paper or something which allows you to reconstruct that later. All the ryu depended upon these kata to allow them to carry forward the exact information from generation to generation.

You have to remember that Japan was united under the Tokugawa around 1600 and for roughly 275 years the Tokugawa ran Japan. They didn’t allow much in the way of wars. And so the samurai, the warrior class, had to find some way to preserve their skills in essentially a peaceful society. It’s a problem we have even today with our own military. How do you keep your military prepared in a peacetime era? The kata provided a means for refining and preserving all the information from generation to generation. They never knew when they would have to go fight again. The kata and the kuden, the spoken transmissions, became a vital component of the total package that’s passed down through time.

The kata also provide a system of checks and balances to ensure that the techniques are done correctly. The thing I think of when I think of kata is my grandfather in his blacksmith shop, where he had metal frames which he used to lay over things that he built to measure them to make sure that they matched the correct size and shape. This was from before we had mass production and replaceable parts. So the blacksmith had to have certain forms of measure to ensure that the piece was made correctly according to the right specifications. That particular tool that he used is called a ‘form’ in English, and in fact, it is a picture of that which is written in the Japanese character which reflects the word ‘form’ in Japanese. The kata provides the means of checking the student to ensure that he or she is doing things in the correct way. So obviously just throwing the throw or making the punch isn’t enough. Along with the kata are preserved exactly where the person should fall relative to the thrower, or which direction the punch should move and in which direction uke must respond to that, and so on. There are very careful checks there to see what’s going on in the execution of the technique. Moreover, there’s a system of diagnostics so that where uke ends up as a result of the movement of tori, for example, gives you information about what you’re doing right or wrong. It gives you tests for each movement. It’s all based upon a system of direction called the embusen [kata line].

Kata was recognized as the centerpiece of martial art. It was essentially like a plan of instruction which the founder could use to ensure that everybody got the same lessons down the
line. That’s not to say that the kata could not be modified in some way, but this would be done only with the utmost care and consideration. More likely, other kata would be created rather than the old kata changed; because you want to add to the knowledge, not try to change or pervert what had been developed before. So Kan- no would see the kata as providing the foundations, the structure, for the transmission of the principles, which is what he considered the most important to teach.

**Could you expand upon the significance of the kata line (embusen) which you mentioned? What was Kano’s purpose in designing a linear practice form for what we know as a largely circular movement-based art?**

The ‘bu’ in embusen is the ‘bu’ in budo or bujutsu; it’s ‘martial’. ‘Embu’ is something martial or military; it reflects some sort of military action. ‘Sen’ is literally the line. So this is the line along which warfare is conducted. The embusen is very important. It would run 90 degrees perpendicular to the battle line on the old battlefield. On the battlefield, people were lined up across the field, maybe a dozen warriors deep or so, and they go charging at one another. Or maybe one line stands in defense and the other line comes charging forward. The idea is to move through the opponent’s battle line to get to the military objective behind. So if you’re trying to storm the castle, they’ll have soldiers lined up maybe a dozen or more deep around the castle as you go charging in, and they’re going to fight you off. But you’ve got to get to the castle. That’s what you’re there for. So you’re penetrating their line, moving perpendicular to the battle line. The embusen tells that story of going through that line of soldiers. The way that you work through a battle line is not by just walking straight through it. If you meet with the person right in front of you and kill him, there’s one right behind him, of course. As you move deeper into this line, there are also people on either side of you. It’s likely that as they see you moving through and moving toward the objective that they’re trying to pro-
you’re fighting against people who do favor a side. We’ve all seen that in randori and shiai. We take this as sort of for granted, but for Kano’s day, this was quite a change. So we find that the Go Kyo no Waza is practiced all 40 throws right and left. That was the traditional test for the first black belt - Go Kyo right and left, and also Nage no Kata, which also forced right and left. Not only did you learn the throwing techniques in their basic forms through the Go Kyo, right and left, but you also learned how they were applied in the self-defense setting from a strategic point of view in response to attacks from the right and left sides as well. This made Kano’s people ambidextrous. In fighting against other Jujutsu ryu in tournaments of the 1800s, it made them deadly. Everybody was completely surprised and overwhelmed by these people who came out and could grab and throw right or left with pretty equal ability. So Kano was saying we need to balance things out and we also need to fill out the matrix of possibilities. There shouldn’t be obvious holes in our training. As I mentioned, the swordsman only holds a sword right-handed, and so even in the self-defense application you only have to worry about the attack being from the right hand. But Kano said let’s go ahead and let’s assume the attacker is left-handed. If I do my usual right-handed defense against his right-handed grip, that’s one way; if I do a left-handed defense against his right-handed grip, that’s another way. And then you practice right and left-handed against a left-handed grip as well. And what starts to happen is the individual moves from the idea of a rigid defense against a rigid movement and starts to work through principle and feel. That makes him or her a more devastating fighter. It also has the side effect of balancing out your physical training so that all parts of your body are equally trained. This gives your body balance and it also activates the meridians, the acupuncture channels, equally on both sides, so it has health benefits as well. This was quite a profound change, and formalizing this into the kata was quite a change for the Jujutsu schools.

**It’s been said that kata ‘tells a story’. Could you give an example of a story or lesson from the Kodokan kata?**

The kata that people know most, probably, is the Nage no Kata. In the Nage no Kata, there’s an engagement between two people. It is in a self-defense situation. Uke and tori are both learning as they go. Uke is learning and adapting his or her attacks based upon the experiences of the kata, the experiences of the engagement. That’s why we see uke subtly changing each attack step by step through the kata. In essence, this makes every technique in the kata but the first one a combination technique because uke is always adapting and adjusting to tori based upon what uke learned from the previous techniques. That’s pretty important.

In the second set of Nage no Kata, Kano is telling the story of his experience with Saigo. Saigo was a young, quick-witted, agile student. Kano often used his favorite technique, uki goshi, against Saigo in randori. Kano was devastating with this technique, and Saigo took very hard falls as victim to Kano’s uki goshi. Saigo came up with a defense. When he saw Kano move in the general direction of uki goshi, Saigo would take a flying leap in the direction of the throw, hopefully ‘stepping over’ the attack. At first this worked. Soon, though, Kano adapted another technique into the randori-waza, so that when Saigo jumped over the uki goshi, Kano swept back and around with his thigh, catching Saigo in mid-air. We call this technique harai goshi. Saigo realized he was now falling even harder than before. Those straw mats sting! So Saigo decided to try something else. This time when Kano attacked uki goshi, Saigo arched backward strongly, thrusting his hips into Kano. Kano quickly changed from the waist grip, snatching Saigo’s collar high, while dropping very low with his own hips. Boom! Saigo got buried in the floor once more. We call this technique tsurikomi goshi. The techniques are done in this order in the second set of Nage no Kata for this reason. Originally, the second and third techniques were done in a way that reflected this attack-defense-new attack sequence. It commemorates this exchange between Kano and his early student. Of course, all of this is lost in the modern method.

When teaching kata, you have referred to both ‘kata’ and ‘igata’ as critical concepts in understanding the purpose of kata. Would you explain the significance of these terms?

There are actually two characters in Japanese which can be pronounced ‘kata’ and both are used in reference to what we call kata. One of them can also be pronounced ‘igata’ and I was always taught to differentiate the two as ‘kata’ and ‘igata’. ‘Kata’ is the one we use when we say Nage no Kata. The fact that we do that is important and provides certain information. ‘Igata’ is static; it references a static form. The form doesn’t change. It doesn’t adapt to the individual. It is a rigid measure. ‘Kata’ is dynamic. It’s a much more difficult concept. Some of the old ryu used just the term igata to refer to their forms and it reflects the notion that there can be no deviation from this standard method. The ‘kata’ reflects something much more dynamic going on.

One way I can explain this is to compare it to the old concept of Shu Ha Ri. Shu Ha Ri is the sort of general progression that one goes through in training, where ‘shu’ means to imitate. In the beginning the student is told to do exactly what the teacher does. It has to be exactly the same; there can be no deviation. Any attempt at individualizing is strictly forbidden. If you deliberately try to individualize, even after being corrected, the Jujutsu master will just throw you out of the dojo. There’s just no room for that, not at that point.
You don’t know enough to be deciding how to individualize. But after the basics are mastered, and you really understand what’s going on in the technique, then you move to the ‘ha’ of Shu Ha Ri. Ha means that you start to diverge from the strict form because now you’re understanding the technique and it’s starting to become alive in you. You’re starting to become the technique. You’re starting to make it yours, and you are able, with the careful guidance of your instructor, to shape that appropriately. Not only do you now know the standard form, which you should be able to teach, but you also understand how that standard form is adapted to each individual. To become an instructor, you have to understand how to adapt that to anybody’s body, in any situation, not just your body in the situation that you face. So it’s quite a large task to understand how the technique is modified without losing the strength of the technique. And then ‘ri’ means that you eventually entirely separate from the teaching. There’s a couple of different meanings to this. One is that the student is now ready to go on their own; they’ve become fully functional and the art is them and they are the art, and therefore they aren’t bound any more by what they’re doing. They feel a certain freedom. This is like a painter who masters the strokes and the basics and then can sort of escape from them. Because now having mastered them, they no longer have to think about them. So that form becomes not a confining thing but rather a liberating thing. It allows you to go beyond the confines of rightness and wrongness in the stroke because now all the strokes you make are correct. The same thing is true with the technique, that you are escaping the restrictions of the technique and in fact you are able to make the technique work no matter what.

We start with the kata, and first we were talking about Toshiro Daigo, who was an All Japan champion and is a highly respected, well known Judoist, who is still living and at the Kodokan today, I believe. Daigo-sensei was demonstrating Nage no Kata. His uke, at a certain point in the latter part of the kata, made the wrong attack. They were supposed to start the ma sutemi waza. They were supposed to come back to the center and meet for tomo nage, I guess it was, and uke instead turned and made the striking attack for uranage. And Daigo didn’t miss a beat. He immediately moved perfectly into position to receive the blow, made his uranage, threw uke exactly where he should be. Perfect technique throughout; never batted an eye.

When you teach kata in class, you teach not only the demonstration (omote) form by which most people identify the kata, but
also the hidden components (ura) which make up the underside of the kata. Please describe each of these components of kata, and when or how each is taught in relation to the other.

Omote is the front part; it’s the front side, and ura is the reverse, or the underbelly. So the omote is what you see and the ura is what you don’t see right away. The demonstration kata, the one that we’re used to seeing, is really like the tip of the iceberg. The real meat of it, the real large part of it, is below the surface. It’s in the underbelly; the ura. The ura is what makes the kata into an entire program of study. There have been some books out; for example, one by Otaki and Draeger, in which they talk about the Randori no Kata. The book, as I recall is only about Nage no Kata and Katame no Kata, and they fill a whole textbook with just those two kata. There’s a lot to learn there, but even that doesn’t reveal all of the ura of the kata. The ura includes many things. It includes the bunkai and oyo. These are the analysis of the kata and the applications of the kata. The analysis involves a variety of things. It involves studying the yoten, the key points of the techniques; what makes them work in each case. It involves studying the henka, the variants of the attacks and defenses so you have a wider range of knowledge than you’re limited to within the omote. It also has to do with knowing the defenses and the counters; the fusegi and the kaeshi waza.

The way that I was taught the kata was that first of all, if there was some particular principle to the set or grouping, then we had to understand that, of course. And then as we do the techniques in sequence it’s important to understand enough of the ura to explain what’s really going on, the key points of each technique, how they relate to the attack, to all of uke’s behavior. In Nage no Kata, for example, you practice an active and a passive version. This way you’re forced to understand why the gripping changes the way it does, why the techniques operate the way they do, and you understand the logic of the sequence. It’s not just a random sequence. You have to get enough of this ura to make the kata come alive so that you really understand what’s going on. And then, after the kata is completed, then you go back through it again, and you start to fill out the adaptations, the variants, the other kinds of points. But I want to emphasize that you need a sizeable portion of the ura to learn the kata at any level, just to make sense of what’s going on in the kata. It would be absurd to teach kata without understanding what the movements mean.

Each movement is very logical, and each movement is important. It’s there for a purpose; it teaches you something. You need to understand what those things are. Kata have lots of subtleties in the omote which are designed to tweak your memory about some key point that you need to know from the ura. So they have subtle movements and they have kakushi waza, which are hidden techniques. You have to understand what’s going on. What does this allude to? What is this attack that’s going on that I’m supposed to recognize? This becomes particularly important in some kata, like Ju no Kata, which is an entirely shorthand kata. Every part of it is shorthand. You don’t complete any technique in Ju no Kata. No attack, no defense is completed. They’re all shorthand, so if you don’t know what each of those techniques is, you don’t know what’s going on. They’re all completed in the ura. Quite often in the Ju no Kata you’ll have an attack, a counter, a counter to the counter, and a counter to the counter to the counter. What are the techniques? That means in one ‘technique’ you may have four; so if you don’t know what they are, you’ve missed the whole thing. You need to understand the techniques and how they relate to each other. But if you have a kata in which you have a technique and a counter, the implication is that the first technique failed. Why? That’s what the kata is going to teach you. So that you don’t make that mistake. So you have failures built into the kata to teach you how not to fail. And what else does the kata teach you?

In Ju no Kata you have an attack, you have a failure, you have a defense, and then you have a counter to the defense. So if someone attacks me, and I try to defend, and I fail at my defense, how do I recover? Is it over? No, it better not be, because I die! So you have to have an attack, a defense, a defense to the defense, and a defense to the defense to the defense. You better have several layers deep of these things so that the first time you make an attack or you make a defense and it fails, that you have a way to respond. That’s how you build a complete body art. This is the kind of thing that’s going on in the kata, and without understanding the ura you’ll be lost to all of that. And so you have to teach enough of the substance to get through the kata and understand what’s really going on. Then you have to go back through it and really explore the richness of the kata. The kata typically has got lessons at many, many levels: at strategic and tactical levels; at rhythmic levels; at distancing levels; at levels of balance and motion and all sorts of things. They have to be fully explored in order to draw from them.

The modern omote techniques of Nage no Kata are executed differently from the way Kano originally did them. Do the modern forms reflect lost connections with the ura or does the ura change with the changes to the omote?

The Nage no Kata, for example, had some major revisions in the summer of 1905 and again in 1907. Then there were periodic changes made largely after Kano’s death. The original Nage no Kata, as an example, had some different throws in it. There was no kata guruma in the kata, and the kata included suki nage and osoto gari. Also, the techniques were done in a different way, some of them. At one time some of the
throws were done in different directions, and so on, reflecting the different kihon that were considered for those forms. So the ura also was different because the omote was different. However, these days, I don’t think anybody much practices ura any more. So in that sense it’s kind of moot, if all that’s done is to go through the motions of the demonstration forms. I think kata has become somewhat unpopular, in the long term sense. I think more recently, in the last ten years or so, kata has staged something of a comeback, specifically in terms of kata competition. But the competition is based upon the demonstration form and on nothing else; it would have to be done on the demonstration form. So these other facets of kata haven’t been explored. But who knows; maybe that will come. I’d like to think so.

If you change the omote, the ura would have to change with it, or it wouldn’t fit any more. The question is, how do you change the kata? Are you considering the attack to be different? Because then if it’s a different attack, you would expect a different defense. If the attack is the same, then why would you change the defense? I think that doesn’t always make sense. There have been some subtle changes in kata over the years that seem to be more related to someone, like a judge, being able to watch a technique and being able to tell easily whether or not certain aspects were done correctly.

For example, in the ‘60s we had problems with people doing kata. At that time kata was not popular in the U.S. People often did kata with uke just jumping for tori. So tori really did relatively little on some of the techniques. It became important to really try to tell whether or not the throw was actually being done by tori or whether it was a result of uke jumping. And so some adjustments made to techniques like kata garuma were done so that we could tell that the weight was actually being supported by tori. That doesn’t really have much practical sense in terms of how it would affect the ura. But other major changes have occurred. For example, in *Nage no Kata*, tsuru komi goshi was originally a combination technique. Now it’s not done as a combination. The whole notion of the combination is lost, essentially, so the ura there would be relatively meaningless in that context. I think a lot of information about how the techniques relate to the ongoing story has been lost as well.

In Otaki and Draeger’s *Judo Formal Techniques*, there is a long discussion about what Kano intended to teach regarding combative initiatives (go no sen; sen; sen-sen no sen) and uke’s role as either active or passive in *Nage no Kata*. How was this taught to you and what do you understand to be uke’s role in the kata?

The kata is very rich in that if you perform the kata with uke passive you get one set of lessons, and if you perform the kata with uke active you get another set of lessons, especially on some techniques. I was taught to perform it both ways as a way of drawing out these lessons. If uke is always active, always aggressive, that is, uke always makes attacks and tori only defends, then of course only one kind of strategy can really prevail. You have primarily a defense strategy. But if tori takes the initiative, now you’ve got something else going on to make this more rich.

Go no sen, sen, and sen-sen no sen are three basic forms of strategy that Kano had in mind when he created the *Nage no Kata*. Sen means ‘first’; sensei means ‘first born’. Go no sen means to take away the initiative, to steal the initiative. Your opponent attacks; he comes first, and then you steal his initiative from him and overturn him. It typically involves some sort of counter technique, either as a direct counter, or as some way of sort of re-guiding the attack in some way. And so if uke is always active, always the aggressor, and tori is the defender, then the implication is that all tori can be doing is defending. Now occasionally, tori can respond by just beating uke to the punch. If he does that, then basically he is taking the initiative. But it’s sort of a part initiative. It’s still in response to uke’s attack. This is sen. There’s no way tori can take sen-sen no sen if uke is always the attacker, and always attacks under his or her own initiative. Sen-sen no sen means something like ‘first first of first’, with the implication that if tori applies sen-sen no sen, tori is actually the aggressor, but he’s making uke feel as though uke is the aggressor. That is, he sets the stage in such a way that uke’s attack is really what tori wants him to do. He’s leading him into a trap and in this way is able to guide uke into using his strength to overcome himself. This is considered the highest of the three forms of strategy. To do that, though, would necessitate that tori actually becomes the active one, at least in some of the techniques. So you have to practice the kata with both uke and tori active.

A balance to this is a version of the omote form which we practice as the ultimate form, as the correct, final omote, which is with sometimes uke active and sometimes tori active. The attacks are different, and at times uke gets sort of befuddled, and doesn’t quite know where to go from here. He immediately gets seized by tori, who then extracts the attack that he wants from uke, and then is able to overcome him. And this makes all three of the major strategies taught in the kata and is what Kano, from his notes and from his lectures, intended. To really get this richness from the kata you have to practice both the active and the passive parts. Kano did not intend that Judo would be purely defensive in the sense that somebody attacks and you fall back under the force of their attack and defeat them. That’s the classic ‘ju’ thing that we often hear. But in fact sometimes you give way, sometimes you tai sabaki out to the outside, sometimes you create a binding or a friction against the opponent, sometimes you actually lead the opponent or beat them to the punch. You do all these kinds of things; whatever is most efficient in each case. That is seiryoku zenygo. That is the overriding principle. Sometimes it’s much more efficient to lead uke or to make the first move on uke once the intention of the attack is established.
The modern practice of Nage no Kata is focused on the omote (competitive standard) form. Today's practitioners often state that much of the value of kata practice derives from the development of precision and attention to detail of the techniques and to general movement education involving kuzushi, tsukuri, timing, balance, leverage, and momentum. In the traditional teaching of kata, however, there was an emphasis on other types of principles, such as Shizentai no ri, Ju no ri, and others. What are the differences between the modern perspective on kata principles and the original principles which Kano emphasized?

Some of the elements which I’ve already mentioned, such as strategy, and uke and tori being passive, and what mechanisms tori uses to overcome uke; these are some of the higher levels and are the key points of the kata.

You can practice the individual techniques with precision and detail in the Go Kyo or they can be practiced as kihon for the atemi or whatever. You don’t need to do kata to do techniques with precision and detail. You just need techniques. So obviously that’s not the purpose of kata.

But the principles which one studies in the kata are larger principles, such as Shizentai no ri, the principle of natural posture, and all that that really means, and Ju no Ri, the principle of gentleness. But also, one studies how to control maai (distancing), ri-ai (how one creates synergies with the opponent), use of ikioi and hazumi, (momentum and force); and how one opens to avoid a conflict, or how one spirals in to create a binding action which then overcomes the opponent. All of these kinds of studies are embedded in the kata. The Nage no Kata is created as a kata which is driven by attacks, and which highlights higher principles and strategies. The techniques themselves are just components. They are ways to tell the story. That’s why it was possible for Kano, for example, to take out sukui nage and put in kata guruma, because he was trying to tell something about principles and there were any number of techniques that could be put in there. The specific technique wasn’t the point. But to apply a certain kind of principle against a certain kind of action would create an interaction between uke and tori which would put uke in a certain place and have him overcome in a certain way. And so to tell that larger story, Kano creates the kata. These are higher principles; these are not just simple body mechanics. Those you would learn with the individual kihon, the individual techniques.

Kano designed Nage no Kata to align with the Go Kyo no Waza in order to highlight specific strategies and principles. Can you explain what some of these connections are?

The Go Kyo no Waza has a multidimensional structure which creates an elaborate matrix of principles of various types and dimension. It’s a much more elaborate construct. The Nage no Kata is more of an enumeration of approaches to fighting. It doesn’t have that grid-like structure like the Go Kyo. But of course you can go through each technique and identify the principles which are being taught there. That’s what the kata becomes, is the catalogue of those principles. Those are being played against the various kinds of attacks and responses, whether active or passive, whether sen-sen no sen, and so on; they have to be all played out. In the omote all the dimensions aren’t mapped out but through the ura you would go through and identify all the various combinations. It’s a very rich study.

What is your advice for today’s Judoka regarding the best way to study kata? Do you feel that kata is relevant to modern sport Judo?

The best way for anyone to study kata is get with a good instructor who really knows the kata and don’t be satisfied unless you understand what’s going on. Because there is something going on! It’s not just some rote dance that one performs. There’s a lot to be learned in the kata. If you don’t understand what’s going on in the kata, you’ll never perform it correctly. It takes a lot of practice and a lot of patience. You do need to devote the kind of energy to it that you devote to the rest of your Judo training. This notion of taking kata and doing it a few weeks before promotion because you have to, and just trying to put something presentable together and forgetting really understanding it—you’re never going to learn kata that way. You’re going to miss out on a big chunk of Judo. I think it’s critical that you devote the time to it that it deserves, and that would be a sizeable portion of your time.

Kano argued that something like 15% of your time in Judo should be devoted to kata. And that’s probably about correct if you look at the total time you spend in Judo. So if you practice 2 hours 3 days a week, that’s 6 hours; times 4 weeks is 24 hours a month, or so; say 25 hours a month. Fifteen percent of that would be less than 4 hours a month. The idea is that you should be devoting a sizeable part of your energy to it and not just once in a while trying to walk through Nage no Kata because somebody told you you needed it for promotion. Is it relevant to modern sport Judo? Of course it is. It makes you understand the techniques but also, more importantly, to understand about strategies, distancing, rhythm, tactical information, different methods of overcoming the opponent. There’s an awful lot of information there that you’re not going to get, probably, any other way. That’s why it’s in the kata. That’s what the kata can teach. It is not enough to just walk through the omote, though, and expect that that’s going to do a whole lot for your randori. It isn’t until the kata becomes alive and you start to operate in the kata like you do in ran-
dori that it’s really going to become meaningful to you. That isn’t going to happen by just an occasional pass by the kata.

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Wendy
TURNOUTS: UNORTHODOX UKEMI

By Gerald Lafon, 5th dan
USJA Master Coach

For the last twenty years, I haven’t taught my students how to do ukemi, at least not the traditional ukemi one thinks of when the word is uttered. Modernists call that form of ukemi mat bashing. If you ask many Judo people in Southern California what they think of me, the very first thing out of their mouths is “he doesn’t teach his kids how to fall” as they roll their eyes and imply that I am crazy. Of course, none has ever been to my dojo to see first hand what really goes on. In spite of all the rumors surrounding our program, Judo America San Diego thrives with over 100 members practicing three times a week without the benefit of traditional ukemi training. And for this privilege I might add, Judo America students pay $50 per month. Obviously, we must be doing something right for it would be impossible to maintain a membership such as ours if students were getting hurt because we don’t teach them traditional ukemi.

DEFINITION OF UKEMI

Literally, ukemi means “receiving the body” so as to protect it. There is no mention whatsoever of falling onto the back in order to protect the body. Just how ukemi has come to be strictly understood as falling onto one’s back is anyone’s guess. Perhaps it is because teaching the masses how to fall on the back was easier than developing the skills to land safely on one’s feet or fours. Perhaps landing on one’s feet was deemed the domain of the smaller, more agile man rather than that of the slumbering, big man, or of the few exceptional players instead of the average players? Regardless of why traditional ukemi is what it is today, many modern participants in Judo, especially competitors, resort to all sorts of maneuvers to prevent falling on their back. For the most part, these skills are developed without the benefit of structured class training.

HISTORY DOESN’T LIE

From a historical perspective, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that landing on one’s feet is not as unorthodox as some would like us to believe. Long before Geof Gleeson, the eminent British Judo coach, openly questioned ukemi and kata and uchi komi and everything else associated with traditional post World War II Japanese Judo some Japanese Judo exerts had been doing “unorthodox” things for decades. Unfortunately for us, many of those “unorthodox” skills or methods seem to have been lost or misplaced. Specifically, the story of Shiro Saigo comes to mind. Saigo, one of the legendary four heavenly lords of the early Kodokan years, used to hang like a possum from the beams in the dojo. There he would practice falling onto his feet, not onto his back. Fukuda sensei states in her book Born for the Mat, “As a training partner for the late Professor Kano, he [Saigo] was thrown thousands of times until he trained himself to land on his feet no matter how he was thrown.” In the 20th century, Kyuzo Mifune, 10th dan, also earned a reputation for being nearly impossible to be thrown onto his back. One could elevate him into the air, but throwing him onto his back without his permission was another story. Some of the aerial contortions he went through don’t seem to fit the mold of traditional ukemi or behavior patterns.

The most compelling justification for unorthodox ukemi for me was a Japanese documentary on Judo that I remember watching on French television in the mid-60’s. By holding a cat upside down about three feet off the ground and letting go of the cat, a small, white haired man in his 60’s or 70’s demonstrated the concept of landing on one’s feet rather than on one’s back. The slow motion very succinctly demonstrated the cat’s response to being upended and falling, and the French subtitles indicated that landing on one’s feet was a goal in Judo. Since I had only been in Judo for a few months when I saw this documentary, I had no clue who this old timer was. Today, I look back and realize that I had seen none other than Mifune himself.

PURPOSE OF TURNOUTS

Although the primary purpose of turnouts is to minimize or eliminate scores in competitive Judo, turnouts have the added benefit for all students of Judo, competitive and non-competitive alike, of accomplishing the following:

- Turnouts provide another means of falling safely onto a surface.
- Turnouts allow a player to be in a position to counterattack after being airborne.
- Turnout training increases kinesthetic awareness.
- Turnouts help develop an entire category of athletic abilities that traditional methods don’t.

Falling Safely

While falling or rolling onto one’s back certainly has its moments, so do skills that allow you to land on your feet or fours. So whether the environment is a Judo mat or the street in a self-defense situation, being able to land safely is easier if one knows two methods of falling the traditional as well as the unorthodox. At Judo America San Diego, we stress turnouts because the skills required to not land on your back take much longer to develop. Nonetheless, while we don’t focus on traditional ukemi or spend time “bashing the mat,” all our students learn how to fall on their back as early as their first lesson when they are introduced to throws via the crash pad. The big difference in
our modern approach is that falling on the back occurs during practice only as part of drill training. However, unlike turnouts, falling on the back is never consciously practiced as a separate training component.

### Better Transitional Skills

Turnouts, especially the skills that allow you to land on your feet or fours, put you in a position to counterattack immediately during the transitional phase from one throw to the next, or from a throw to a ne waza situation. For the most part, falling onto one’s back limits the transitional skills available to the player who was thrown. An example of this would be the turnout from Tomoe nage or Yoko tomoe nage. The turnout from those throws is a simple, safe round off which sets up a transitional skill into Kami shiho gatame. On the other hand, once you take a traditional fall onto your back with Tomoe nage, transitional skills are minimized. (Note: This sequence of being thrown with Tomoe nage and turning out and pinning the opponent with Kami shiho gatame was pulled off in the final of the 48kg division by Valerie Lafon against Ezaki at the Pacific Rim Championships in 1991. Ezaki was a two time World silver medallist at the time and a ne waza expert.)

### Kinesthetic Awareness

In addition to having good balance while firmly planted on the ground, Judoplayers also need to develop kinesthetic awareness, which is the ability to relate to one’s surroundings while airborne and upended. For the gymnast, this means being able to gyrate through the air and find the ground with a firm foot plant. For the springboard diver, this means doing summersaults, twists and tucks, finding the surface of the water and entering hands first without a splash. And for the Judoplayer, this means being able to control his body in flight without exposing his back, and landing safely on his fours or feet. The practice of turnouts will help improve kinesthetic awareness.

### Athletic Development

Practicing and developing the skills to do turnouts will make you a better athlete. In the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century, gymnastics was the foundation for all physical education programs in the western world. Like gymnastics, Judo is a whole body activity that involves balance, strength and performing many complex skills. So while learning basic gymnastics skills in order to perform turnouts, balance improves, reaction options increase, body management skills develop and explosiveness reaches a new height.

### TYPES OF TURNOUTS

The core of turnout skills is based on the ability to control the body in flight by performing gymnastic-like skills. These skills are simple enough that just about anyone can learn them. This includes the 99lb athlete as well as the 240lb athlete. The fundamental skills required to perform many of the turnout skills from throws are the:

- Round off
- Hand stand
- Elbow roll
- Head roll

Regardless of what behavior is used to perform the turnout, turnout skills can be classified as:

- Under-rotation skills
- Over-rotation skills
- Turn away skills
- Turn in skills
- Scoot-around skills

### Scoot-Around Skills

These skills are the most spectacular in Judo. They almost always have a point of contact with the ground and result in landing on one’s feet or fours. Scoot-around skills typically involve a round off, head roll, elbow roll or hand stand and usually result in eliminating a potential score. They are mostly done after forward throws or sutemi waza.

### BUILDING AN UNORTHODOX UKEMI PROGRAM

The foundation of any turnout program is based on the acquisition of pertinent gymnastics skills and on an improvement in overall kinesthetic awareness. Training should be geared toward learning how to do a basic round off as well as the elbow roll and the head roll, which are nothing more than a round off on the elbows or head. The level of difficulty can be increased by adding height, movement and obsta-
head rolls can be learned first from the knees, then from a standing position before finally being performed over a low obstacle to mimic a body.

Other fun, pertinent drills are the hand or head stand to improve kinesthetic awareness especially when movement is thrown into the equation. Walking on one’s hands or spinning around in a head stand all contribute to developing some meaningful abilities for any Judoplayer. Another valuable skill to learn is turning onto one’s stomach when falling backwards. This mimics rear throw situations in Judo and also the traditional mae uke-mi but adds some relevance to it.

**Examples of Simple Drills**

- **Drill 1:** Player stands on head with two hands on ground for support in a tripod position. On command, player spins to the left or right without falling down. If player loses balance, he lands on fours, side or feet but not on his back.

- **Drill 2:** Player walks on her hands as far as possible, loses balance towards back on purpose and turns onto her stomach, fours or feet before her back hits the ground.

- **Drill 3:** Player A holds player B’s lapels. B pulls A for a few feet by leaning backwards and moving. A releases his grip on B’s lapels. B turns onto stomach instead of falling onto his back.

- **Drill 4:** Player A stands behind player B. A pushes B’s shoulder blades to make B move forward. B resists the push by leaning backwards with both feet out in front of his body. A releases his hold on B. B starts falling backwards and turns onto his stomach before his back touches the ground.

Once players have mastered the rudiments of gymnastic skills, they are ready to move onto more complex skill development using partners in specific Judo situations. At first, grips will be minimized or altered to allow for the success of the drill. Eventually, little by little, turnout skills will be done from full throws with any type of grip.

**Examples of Complex Drills**

- **Drill 5:** Player A throws B with an O goshi or Uki goshi without holding the sleeve. B does a round off and lands on his feet or fours and covers up with Kami shiho gatame. The advanced form of this drill has A throw B with Yoko tomoe nage or perhaps a double sleeve Tomoe nage.

- **Drill 6:** Player A throws B with a dropping Seoi nage. B does an elbow or head roll and lands on his fours ready to transition to a turnover or some other Ne waza skill.

- **Drill 7:** Player A throws B with Tomoe nage. B does a round off, lands on his feet or fours and covers up with Kami shiho gatame. The advanced form of this drill has A throw B with Yoko tomoe nage or perhaps a double sleeve Tomoe nage.

- **Drill 8:** Player A throws B with Morote gari or Kata ashi dori. B turns onto his stomach and A follows up with a Ne waza skill.

- **Drill 9:** Player A throws B with O uchi gari, O soto gari, Ko soto gari or Ko uchi gari. B turns into or away from A while attempting to land face down. A follows up with ne...
waza.
Drill 10: Player A throws B with De ashi barai or Okuri ashi barai. B turns onto fours, A follows into ne waza.
Drill 11: Player A throws B with a forward throw such as Tai otoshi, Harai goshi or Ippon seoi. B takes the fall but under-rotates by using a back leg turnout to prevent landing squarely on his back. A follows into ne waza or B proceeds into ne waza by rolling A over or by climbing onto A’s back.

CONCLUSION
As a competitive coach, I must provide my players with safe training methods on the one hand and with effective training methods on the other hand. I have successfully used an unorthodox approach to ukemi for recreational as well as competitive students for over 20 years. Resulting in fewer injuries than when I taught traditional ukemi for a period of six years. Dennis Mercer, the former USJI insurance agent, once stated to me that the most costly exercise in Judo when it comes to insurance claims is the forward roll or zempo kaiten over several players. Certainly, the most costly exercise in Judo in terms of wins or losses is the yoko ukemi with arm bash, which results in a full point. I admit that traditional Judo dogma is hard to overlook. For many coaches and sensei, I can see where, for physical reasons, the thought of teaching gymnastics skills can make the heart skip a beat or two. And for the die-hard traditionalists, well, the subject just doesn’t get discussed. Nonetheless, history, pedagogy and the rules of the sport of Judo all dictate that turnouts are a valuable skill. So let’s make them an integral part of our curriculum. Without compromising safety, we can give our students more choices on how to fall. We can make our students better athletes and we can help them be more successful as competitors.

Kanji Corner

SEI – Spirit, Vitality, Refine, Detail.
seishin -mind soul
seiko – exquisite (workmanship)
shojin - diligence

RYOKU – Strength, Effort
chikaramochi – strong person
kyoryoku – cooperation
doryoku – endeavor
Seiryoku - vitality

ZEN – Good, Virtuous
shinzen amity, friendship
shizen – the best
jizen charity

YO - from verb mochiiru to use
yoi – preparation
yojin – heed, care, caution
yoji – business

SEIRYOKU/ZEN
best use vitality
OKU
YO – the of your
MY FIRST SENSEI

by Jim Haynes

In the mid-1950’s, I was a young man in the US Air Force stationed in Southern California. My best friend was a Japanese-American named Kenny. At the time, Japan had a very poor economy that was growing, but needed all the US dollars it could get to help them out. So a large number of young Japanese men came over to work in the vegetable fields. They were not allowed to roam the streets in town after work, so the camps where they lived had a baseball field and a judo dojo.

Kenny’s cousin had just come over on a 6-month contract to work in the fields. He asked me, since I had an old car, if I would take him down to meet his cousin, who he had never seen. We went to the camp after work, asked for the cousin, but were told that he was down at the dojo. Kenny and I looked at each other and asked, “What is a dojo”? The other Japanese laughed and took us down to this building where we found about 40 men all dressed in white uniform wearing either black or brown belts throwing each other down or wrestling on the floor. We started to walk in, but the Japanese guide stopped us, had us take off our shoes, and told us to wait while the guide went to the door. Then we were led over to the side, made to sit cross-legged, and had some of the history and philosophy of judo explained to us, with Kenny interpreting.

Each night for that week – they worked out 4 or more hours each night, 6 days a week, and about 6 hours on Sunday. On Sunday, after working in the fields for only half of a day – we did the same thing, with a little more of judo history and philosophy thrown in. On Friday, the first week, Sensei Murakami came in. He was the head teacher for our club and the one in San Fernando, and usually spent 3 nights a week with us and 4 nights at the other club. He was the ranking judo teacher, having been authorized by the Kodokan in Japan to help with the judo training in Southern California, especially for the Japanese who were over here on work projects. He immediately spotted me; I was the only non-Japanese in the dojo. He went over to the teacher for the first week, Sensei Murakami came in. He was the head teacher for our club and the one in San Fernando, and usually spent 3 nights a week with us and 4 nights at the other club. He was the ranking judo teacher, having been authorized by the Kodokan in Japan to help with the judo training in Southern California, especially for the Japanese who were over here on work projects. He immediately spotted me; I was the only non-Japanese in the dojo. He went over to the teacher for the night – we had 3 or 4 senior judokas who alternated teaching nights – and talked with him, all the while looking at me. I was a little scared, because I thought he was going to throw me out of the club. So I put a little extra effort in my ukemi, really slamming the mat when I fell, keeping my head tucked, and when we did our exercises, I really worked at them. Finally he came over, and using Kenny to interpret, he welcomed me to the club, and said that he was honored to be my teacher. By this time I had learned in the nightly lectures that respect for the student was just as much a part of the philosophy of judo as respect for the teacher. He said, however, that both Kenny and I would have to work very hard, and that it would take many years of hard work to become like the others in the club. I thought my chest would burst through my gi as I bowed as low as I could. Then Sensei went over to the teacher – coach – and said something to him. It must have been the OK for us to learn more than ukemi, because Kenny and I were then taken over to a couple of the young black belts and taught de ashi barai – foot sweep. For the next two weeks, in addition to more ukemi, both on our own and by being uke for one of the brown or black belts, and in addition to more lectures on philosophy and protocols, we worked on de ashi barai, hiza guruma, and sasae tsurikomi ashi.

Finally, after about 6 weeks, we were taught ippon seoi nage and o goshi. For the next month or so, these – plus the earlier throws – were all we did as Tori during uchikomi and randori. We did, however, act as Uke for the others during uchi komis for different throws, mostly to make us better at our ukemi and to make us familiar with throws we had yet to learn. By the end of the first 6 months, we had been taken through the first principle – daikyu – of the Go Kyo no Waza, and then started on the second.

After about 7 or so months we, Kenny and I, were taken to our first
contest, a small tournament between our club and the Seinan Dojo in Los Angeles. All of the white belts (we had no yellow, orange, green, etc. belts in those days, only white, brown, and black) from each club lined up on opposing sides of the mat. We had a total of four white belts from our club, and they had a dozen or so. They lined us up by height, not weight. Each one of us would fight as many persons from the other side, beginning with the shortest, and if we won, remaining standing for the next contestant until we lost. This was called a Kouhaku Shiai. Our side started, and when it was my turn to go through the line of the other side. I was chosen by an o uchi gari (which I had just started learning) against the first opponent, but lost to the second by an o soto gari. Kenny beat, I believe, 2 opponents before he lost. Afterwards, we went out for beer and pizza. Sensei Murakami came over after a while and told me that I was now promoted to Gokyu. Was I ever proud. He told me, however, that I had a lot more hard work to do; to work harder than I had been doing. That deflated me a bit, because I wondered how much harder COULD I work.

Time went by, I worked harder, went to more and more local tournaments and intra-club meets, and entered the annual Shitimachi (sp?) tournament in Los Angeles, when in 1959 as an ikkyu, I won my division in that tournament (still no weight classes). I was then told by the teacher at my dojo that Sensei Murakami wanted me to enter the periodic shodanshiais that were held. This was a meet where ikkyus would enter and fight each other and lower ranked black belts in the hopes of being promoted to black belt. Well, to make a long story short, at my second shodanshiai, I accomplished “batsugan”, beating 6 players of equal or higher rank. It was one of those rare days when I couldn't do anything wrong, and I was beating judoka who I hadn't beat before. Afterwards, Sensei Murakami came over and said that I would examine in two weeks, and that I had a lot of hard work to do before then. Now I was really scared. Here I had qualified to examine for shodan – first degree black belt – and my Sensei said that I had a lot of hard work to do within 2 weeks! I had been practicing nearly each night the groups for the Gokyo no Waza, both as Tori and Uke – all of us brown belts did. I thought that I had been working exceptionally hard! Back at the dojo I told the teacher what Sensei had said (of course, he already knew). Sensei kept close tabs on each student and gave advice and instructions to the nightly teachers for each of us), so all I did for the next two weeks was the Gokyo no Waza, both as Tori and Uke until I literally dropped. I wanted so much to not let my teacher, and just as importantly, myself down, I would just get back up and go again until I couldn’t move. And then start all over again.

On the night of the examination, I was so nervous that I threw up outside on the ground twice before Sensei and two other senior senseis showed up. My coach made me then drink about a quart of water, which I just knew I was also going to throw up, but he then made me do some very strenuous stretches and exercises. These finally calmed me down. However, there were two or three (I can’t remember) others being examined that night; one was a nidan examining for sandan. I sat on the side with the other students from the dojo, plus the visitors, and watched the examiners. Once in a while one would shake his head and turn to one of the other examiners and whisper something. I got very nervous again and thought I was going to throw up right on the mat. Of course, I couldn't get up to go outside; that would be the ultimate of disrespect. So I took deep breaths, thought of light breezes through the trees and babbling brooks (which now made me want to go to the bathroom - drinking all that water and thinking of running water) until finally it was my turn. Again, to make a long story short, I did well during my demonstration. Afterwards, Sensei Murakami called me up, awarded me my first black belt, and told me, again, that I had a lot more work to do, that I had to work and study harder than I had before.

I then knew what he meant. By working harder, judo became a way of life, a philosophy. My attitude, my character, all my inner self which makes up the real me, was developed for the better by working harder at all of judo. Not just throws or grappling, but to develop my self-discipline, my self-confidence, my respect for both myself and others, and my character. My first sensei, which no others have done, taught and made sure I learned the whole of judo; that the principle of Ji Ta Kyoei – mutual benefit and welfare – was equally as important as Seiryoku Zenyo – maximum effectiveness with minimum effort. My first sensei did not want me to lose that principle; I needed to work harder on the Ji Ta Kyoei in order not to lose it.
Tim has brought Darrell Craig to this area on 3 occasions. Craig Sensei is another of our favorite clinicians.

The Club in Fargo tries to sponsor one or two clinicians each year. Over the years the club has been fortunate to share the mat with many wonderful people. Each person has brought something unique and wonderful: George Colwell, F. Robert Whelan, Moe Oye, Mark Berger, Hal von Lubbert, Charles Robinson of Yuba City, Keo Cavalcanti, Ronald Charles, Ken Hashimoto, Oscar Fernandez, and most recently Steve Cunningham.

While the syllabus is non-competitive, there are a dozen people who like the thrill of competition. The nearest shiai sites are Winnipeg and Minneapolis.

In February, around the Chinese New Year, Gentle Ways, Inc. puts on a Kangeiko or winter training. This closed event is an opportunity for all the members of Gentle Ways to get together for a day of training and an evening of socialization. The training is climaxed with the Annual Outdoor Run, in the snow, barefoot. The path is around the fieldhouse, sidewalk for half the distance and snowdrifts for the remainder.

Gentle Ways dojo in North Dakota:

Russell Sorenson lets Charlie Horning know that he got the technique right.

Fargo (2), Valley City and Bismarck; and in Minnesota: St. Cloud and Minneapolis (2),

Greenbelts David, Dane, Anne, Eric, and Keith at a shiai in Minneapolis. They competed in the advanced division and brought home 3 silver medals.