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**air judo**

*photo by Vern Borgen*

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# judo forum

## Welcome

*Vernon Borgen*

After a stirring conversation on Steve Cunningham's Judo List and years of complaining about the lack of a judo magazine I decided to start one.

This past summer "The Judo Athlete" was born. All too early it died. Taking this as a bad omen, "that profitable judo magazines are entirely too unique," this magazine will be published for free.

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Our first issue starts with an interview with Steve Cunningham by Linda Yiannakis. Steve shares with us his

tremendous knowledge of the history of the Kodokan prior to 1938. A must read piece about Classical Judo.

Then Nels Erickson tells tales of a dojo outdoors and in an unheated garage - in Minneapolis, Minnesota. **Brrrrrrrrr!**

The third article is by Keo Cavalcanti, Executive Director of Zen Judo in America. Keo shares with us the importance of getting together with our judo friends on a regular basis for practice and fellowship.

And finally Jana Seaborn shares with us the struggle and the courage to fight a river. This is a great story about *Sei Ryoku Zen Yo*.

We are looking for good stories, research, interesting pictures and cartoons. Feel free to contribute.

If you have comments visit our web site at <http://www.gentleways.com>



# What Is Classical Judo?

**An Interview with Steven R. Cunningham**  
**6th Dan, Kodokan Judo**  
**7th Dan, Takagi Ryu Jujutsu**  
**6th Dan, Mugen Ryu Karate**

*by*  
*Linda Yiannakis*  
*3rd Dan, USJA*



photo by Rob Myers

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**Steven R. Cunningham 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 Budenkan Judo & Jujutsu Club at the University of Connecticut and at Ju Nan Shin Martial Arts Academy in Manchester, CT.**

**When people today speak of Judo, they often classify the type of Judo they practice as either sport or traditional (classical) Judo. Yet, a clear definition of classical Judo has proven to be somewhat elusive. How do you define classical Judo and what distinguishes it from today's sport Judo?**

I don't think there's any clear definition that everyone would agree to. The Judo that you call classical Judo would probably depend upon what your experience in Judo has been. That would vary with what traditions you've been exposed to. Most people have been exposed to post World War II Judo and nothing before that. There are a lot of reasons for that.

The first major inflow of Judo to the United States and Europe came after WWII when returning members of the Allied Occupation Forces had received

training there of some kind and brought it back home. The problem was that first of all, the Japanese were not terribly crazy about the American GIs learning their guarded secrets. Also, there is a strong sense among the Japanese about martial art being associated with being Japanese, with being part of what they are. And so to share its innermost parts with foreign servicemen who had been conquerors is not something that would be terribly likely.

Also, during the decade before WWII, during the 1930s, Kano was approached by the militant forces in Japan and they suggested using the Kodokan as a training ground for soldiers. Since Kano was rather cosmopolitan and fond of the West, and fond of people everywhere, and a very open and caring person, and wanted Judo to be of benefit to all of mankind and not used to wage war on others, this did not make sense

to him at all. It hurt him deeply. He was concerned enough about this that he went to the Emperor, and got the Emperor to stop them from using his Kodokan. The Emperor made him a promise, but the nature of the promise was such that Kano was still concerned that things could happen. So Kano immediately set about dismantling a lot of the Kodokan teaching and structure, shipping it out to the different provinces in an effort to protect the innermost teachings. He stopped teaching certain of the kata. He stopped altogether, and it's because he didn't want those to fall into the hands of the military forces bent on world domination. One of them is Ippon Yo Goshin Jutsu No Kata. That's okuden [hidden] now; it's not being taught by anybody else that I know of. Also there were kata such as Go No Kata, and there were several versions of Renkoho No Kata. And also, all the ryu that had joined the Kodokan had all brought in their kata. Those were meant

to be preserved at the Kodokan. That was the rationale for bringing these ryu in. So there were a lot of kata or techniques which were taught. Most of the Goshin Waza, the whole Goshin Waza side of Judo, would not be taught after that. Certain kata were actually created to take the place of them in places where Kano thought something had to be sustained. For example, he thought it was important for the women's division to have some self-defense being taught, so they created some kata so they could practice there. So all that was because of the oncoming war.

**Could you describe what the early practitioners of Judo were actually doing when they practiced Judo? They weren't just doing 40 throws and some kansetsu waza ...**

I asked my instructor what made the old ways so different. He reached over and picked up a samurai sword off of the rack. He said, "This makes it different." So I said, "I don't understand. You mean because you use swords, you practice with swords?" And he pointed out that the sword has a very special meaning to the Japanese. The Sun Goddess, Amaterasu, gave the sword to the first Emperor as a covenant between her and the people of Japan. She actually gave him three things: a mirror, a necklace, and a sword. And the sword was a symbol of the bond that would always be there between Japan and the gods. But what is the significance of that story? The meaning of the sword is that first of all, to the Japanese people, the razor sharp edge of the sword is a way of cutting between right and wrong. And the edge of the sword represents the ability to tell right from wrong, good from bad. And so it represents the high morality of martial art; that it's based on morality and ethics and the sword represents that as the most important aspect. The second thing about the sword, as people came to understand very quickly, is that the Japanese sword is among the best, I could say it is the best, but it's among the best swords ever created in the world. It's a true marvel. And that sword, they discovered, gave the means for some

clear thinking individual of high moral value to make things right. They could see right from wrong. The weak could overcome the strong and make the world right. So the sword is that sense of bond with nature and kami, it's the focus of right and wrong, and the sense that one person, even a small person, can make a difference. They say in Japanese, "Zen, ken, ishoa." "Mind, sword, oneness" - that if the man is true, then the sword is true, and if the sword is true then the man is true. That there's that bond with the sword, and a certain special power that the sword gives us and that carries through to the martial art. The Tokugawa Era ended in 1868, 8 years after Kano was born. With the establishment of the Meiji, the military government fell and the Emperor was restored. So since the Emperor had essentially been held hostage for over 250 years, or his family had been, the first thing he did was take all the samurai swords. Well, it was a little bit more than just emasculating warriors. It was taking away the entire spirit of Japan. It's what they were. To have that taken from them was more than they could bear. Kano was 8 years old. He saw samurai and their swords being taken away. He saw the samurai become just sort of shells of what they were before. They were lost; they were in great pain. There was an uprising where the samurai actually tried to rise up against the Emperor to recover their lost station and regain their swords. He saw samurai become alcoholics and outlaws because they didn't know what else to do with themselves. So he wanted to restore the samurai to their former position because he saw how it related to what the people were. He wanted to go back to that part of Tokugawa. His attitude was that the opening of Japan to the West and all the knowledge - all that was wonderful. He himself took degrees in both Japanese and Western studies. But he also felt that you shouldn't throw out the good with the bad. This wonderful part, this association the Japanese people had

with the samurai shouldn't be lost. So he was trying to find a place where he could archive and bring together all the best of these arts, all the best of the knowledge that was gained through all the years since the feudal era. That was his Kodokan.

He had masters from many, many schools coming to join him. He studied many schools himself, and continued his studies until he died. It's true that not everybody came to the Kodokan, but most of the major ryu did come. So in those days they practiced not only the kind of 40 throws that we practice, and in fact in the early days, before about 1905, they didn't do as much of the kind of matwork grappling as we do now. They did more throwing and striking and kicking. They did a lot of weapons work. Also, from the Tenshin Shinyo Ryu, for example, there were a number of specialized methods by which you can immobilize or kill someone with grasps. So these were very dangerous techniques. But what Kano was able to superimpose on this knowledge was his sense of how all these different ryu fit together and complemented one another. Also, he was able to see the central principles, which underlay all of these arts. But after 1905, Kano recognized that they needed to have more of the grappling arts in the spirit of wrestling. He was also instrumental in bringing Funakoshi to Japan to introduce karate to Japan. I don't know what's happened in the last decade, but when I was there, you could still study karate at the Kodokan. So you studied those things, you studied weapons, you studied jo, and bo, and ken - the sword, and the kama- the sickle, the kusarigama - sickle and chain, and manrikigusari - a weighted chain. All the various weapons were taught at the Kodokan. Kano, as a master of Tenshin Shinyo Ryu, studied 18 battlefield weapons which were also taught.

So Kano was constantly studying and adding more and more to the Kodokan. Sensei said that when he was there, that from day to day, you never knew who was going to walk in the door and join. It was always pretty exciting to see the variety of people and the variety of arts and skills there were. So that's sort of the old Judo. They did kata, they did weapons, they did randori, but there was always a spirit of martial art to it. If you lose the sense of martial art and make it into only a sport, it's really only the shadow of the art; it's only the shadow of what it can be; it has no substance. It has no definition. It's just in its gross features that it resembles somewhat what it once was. Kano wanted to save the art. He wanted to save the martial art.

So when I think of classical Judo, I think of those early years of Judo. And since my teacher came here around 1930-ish, and he had learned during those first 30 years of the century, that's what I associate with classical Judo. I was steeped in that kind of Judo. It was just dumb luck that I, at a very early age, found the man who had been there during that period when the Kodokan sort of took shape and formed its own identity as something more than just the sum of the parts of all the entering ryu. Kano had managed to fuse it all together by about 1920. Around 1920 is when you see the final Go Kyo established. That's when you see a lot of kata being standardized. It helps to see how things took shape to understand what's supposed to be there; why things are the way they are. There are no arbitrary lists of techniques. Nage No Kata is not an arbitrary list assembled in an arbitrary order.

**When Jigoro Kano first offered Judo to the world, it was not yet designated as classical or sport Judo. Could you provide a timeline with important milestones in Judo's history, including the point at which sport Judo became a recognizably distinct entity from classical Judo?**

Right around the turn of the century, the Kodokan people fought the Fusen Ryu people and lost. The Fusen Ryu people

were specialists in a kind of grappling that looked like wrestling. That's a gross oversimplification, but that sort of sums it up. The rules that were set up were agreed to by contract to favor them. Kano didn't take that as an excuse. It pushed everything toward the kind of thing that the Fusen Ryu people liked to do, and Kano liked it that way.

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***It was just dumb luck that I, at a very early age, found the man who had been there during that period when the Kodokan sort of took shape and formed its own identity as something more than just the sum of the parts of all the entering ryu.***

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He was always trying to put his Judo to the test, to always make it better. There was never this resting on laurels and trying for easy wins. It was more of seeing what they could find as weaknesses and working on them. And sure enough, the Kodokan got stomped. So Kano realized the need for this kind of art as part of Judo. He persuaded the Fusen Ryu people to join the Kodokan to help fill in those pieces. So we saw more of that kind of matwork come in. Contests in those days, though - people went to contests and they didn't come home. They went to tournaments and died. They were very serious affairs. Depending on how hostile the situation was, very deadly techniques were often used. And so Kano was trying to find better ways to wage contests so that people wouldn't have to be killed in the process.

**Did the losers always die?**

They didn't always die, but they sometimes got mangled pretty badly. And it was done more like a duel, where you actually got a second, and you signed a note, a contract, essentially, for the match, saying what was allowed and what was not. If the other guy broke the rules, then your second was allowed to take his sword out and go after him. Other than that, nobody was allowed to

interfere, and people would literally kiss their children good-bye before they left their homes because of the real possibility that they might never return.

**Were these contests legal?**

Yes, they were. Duels with swords were not supposed to be legal, but nobody ever pressed charges. It was one of those things where the Meiji was trying to take those swords away from people but the public just would not live with that. Only sumo wrestlers were allowed to wear their swords. This was the one exception made to the rule. Ironically, later on, the Meiji government decided that they couldn't handle this. They could not separate people from martial art and from the sword. So in the 1930s this was one of the things that scared Kano. They started espousing mottoes about seishin [pure heart forged from martial training] and things like that, and they were actually using that feeling of the public toward martial arts and the sword as a piece of propaganda. They tried to convince people that Japan had this holy right to world conquest. That it was something that was in their destiny; that the gods had willed it to them; the gods gave them the sword because it was their mandate to go out there and do this to the world. This scared the heck out of Kano. That's why we saw soldiers going off to WWII who thought they were invincible. So the whole thing was completely perverted.

But Kano set up the first modern type contest rules in the 1920s - more modern than what they had been, at least. Limited techniques would be used in the contest. You had to pin somebody for maybe 2 seconds on their back; you had to throw them down hard - similar things to what we have now. They had referees and they tried to make it more of a test as opposed to a duel. The old fighting was shinken shobu - live blade match to the death - and these new matches were called shiai, with more of the idea of being a test for somebody; a learning experience; but also as a friendly encounter. That was probably a mistake in the long haul, because it really set the

stage for more of a sport orientation. When Kano was faced with trying to demilitarize the Kodokan in the 1930s, he had an opportunity to get Judo in the Olympics, he thought. Part of the problem there was that he was in charge of sports as part of his job in the Ministry of Education. He reported to the Emperor and he was being pushed to reach out to the West in this way. And so he went and discussed the entrance of Judo into the Olympic Games. But he confided in Koizumi that he didn't really think that Judo should be there. He didn't feel comfortable about pushing that initiative. He felt that Judo wasn't just a sport like other sports. It had a much higher meaning. He also thought that western people would have trouble recognizing the special values of Judo. So all those things set the stage, and then we get to WWII. The Kodokan operations were essentially shut down in WWII. Kano and his top two students all die within 3 years. It left the Kodokan without much leadership. Kano's nephew takes over the Kodokan and tries to get them through the war years. They get out on the other side of the war, and they've got the Allied occupation forces who ban all martial activity. So then the Kodokan decides that the direction to go is to try to sell Judo as a sport like wrestling to the occupation forces. So they give exhibitions, and it looks like wrestling, smells like wrestling, feels like wrestling. They have matches between Japanese Judoists and American servicemen, and for some reason they always come out a draw! You wouldn't want to defeat the servicemen, because it would look like this was too strong. But if you lost then you would shame Japan, so the obvious choice was a tie. It wasn't until 1952 and the start of the Korean War that the ban on martial arts activity was lifted. But by then, you had lost at least a generation of the old-timers. And a lot of people in Japan became convinced that the future of martial art was as a sport, that that was probably the way it should take shape in the modern era.

### What happened to the missing or hidden pieces of Judo?

Much of it didn't survive in the public art. Of course Kano had students who survived. They went back to more of a method of the old ryu. These people who had received full license had students and they would essentially find the student, the uchideshi you might call them now, that would be a doshu, or one who would carry on the ryu. The idea was that you find someone to pass it on to. So that's sort of how my teacher falls into that. He studied with Kano, and 10th dans, and he came to this country before the war, and was able to preserve all the pieces.

I heard recently from Sid Kelly that Koizumi, who was certainly knowledgeable of some aspects of Judo beyond the sport, and was probably the person most responsible for bringing Judo to Britain, that he died by committing suicide; that he was a depressed and lost individual, because he couldn't find anyone to study the old Judo with him. He died quite alone and in very sad circumstances. And I think that happened a lot, that the old timers couldn't find people to carry on. So I think there is a real danger of that loss.

### What part did shiai play in old Judo?

Shiai was different; they were real fights to the death. It was decided as part of the contract whether or not weapons would be used. A challenge could be issued by a person from one

Ryu Jujutsu. Totsuka-ha had become recognized as the leading jujutsu school. Before that, about 10 years before, Fukuda, who was known as the best fighter in Japan, was one of Kano's teachers. And so there's a natural challenge already rising if you think about that. And then to make it worse, Kano, in 1880, a young college student had attended an exhibition of Totsuka-ha Yoshin Ryu. He watched the exhibition, and he thought it was kind of neat, and then at the end, they offered anybody from the audience who wanted to come up and try it out. Kano didn't think twice about it. He jumped up on the stage and proceeded to beat everybody there. Not bad for a 20 year old. The problem was that it represented a loss of face for Totsuka-ha, which was not soon forgotten. So that festered. On top of the fact that this was a student of the man who was formerly regarded as the strongest fighter in Japan. So by 1886, with Kano's rising fame, this was too much for them to bear, so they pressed for the match. They had 15 people from each side. Out of the 15 matches, I was told that 13 were won by the Kodokan decisively, which meant that the other guys couldn't go on. The other two matches ended in draws. Thirteen wins, two draws - a complete victory for the Kodokan. In these matches you could submit to end it, or you could be thrown down hard, which meant you wouldn't be getting up easily. They threw pretty hard. In fact, at the old Kodokan, there were a lot of stories about workouts being hard, and after class, Kano and

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***If the other guy broke the rules, then your second was allowed to take his sword out and go after him.***

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school to someone from another school or between schools. We all know that there was a tournament in 1886, where the students of the Kodokan fought what amounts to the Tokyo Metropolitan police department and won this grand tournament. Stories have been written about it; movies have been made about it. But probably what people don't recognize is that the people who were fought ultimately by the Kodokan were the Totsuka-ha Yoshin

some of the seniors would have to crawl around under the floor and rebuild it, because they threw people through the floor. This idea of spinning out of throws, or turning out of throws is kind of silly when you've got people throwing you through the floor! And it was win or lose; there was no half way; there was no time limit and no kokas or yukos! Very decisive. In the 1920's they already had contest rules that Kano created. They had Kodansha shiai. Kodansha is a high-grade person; it's

5th dans and above. Sensei said that those matches would often go on for a half-hour or more. You didn't really think much about the time involved; one should fight until there was a victory. The idea of judges making a decision about who won was kind of silly. Unless one guy got beaten, there really wasn't much to talk about. In those days, Nagaoka and Yamashita often refereed, and they were considered to be too advanced, too completely unbeatable to be in a match.

**What about competition in classical Judo today? People seem to think that there is no competition in classical Judo today.**

That's simply not true. People who study classical Judo can certainly go out and compete in tournaments. Naturally, any state, regional or national tournament will be under IJF rules, and so you have to fight that way. But it doesn't mean your techniques have to look like anybody else's do. In our dojo, the one that I grew up in, our students did very well in competition. Our students and my students won state, regional and national championships. One of my students took second in the World Military Games as a green belt. So it's effective. But the focus is different. The competitive part is supposed to be a way of evaluating your own ability and deciding where you are. It's also a time for introspection. One valuable aspect of martial art is as a means of developing the individual. You never see yourself so clearly as when you face your own death. And if you face your opponent with due seriousness in a match, you sort of have the sense of life and death. I'm sure those who are very strong competitors will recognize that. It's not so much that "I've gotta win", but that "I can't bear to lose". And that's because it's analogous to living or dying on the battlefield. It's not that it's foremost in your mind, it's that "I don't dare die!" Because then it's all over. And it's the same way in a tournament. When you lose, you're out of the tournament, or in the loser pool. There's a certain degree of death there. And when you face your opponent, when you first come to grips,

if you take a second to reflect, you recognize that whether you win or lose, there's nobody you can blame. That it's just you and that other person. It all depends entirely on what you have done, and what you have made of yourself. And it's not so much what you do as it is what you are. You can't usually take a technique and just do it by some mechanical process because in the real world of real fighting, or the real world of tournaments, he's moving with lightning speed. You can only feel, you can only sense what's going on around you and just react. And that depends upon what you have made of yourself. So in some ways it brings some clarity to your own vision of what's going on. It's a very useful process. There's not a problem with going to tournaments. The problem is if that's all you do. In our own state, we see a lot of schools that go to a tournament just about every weekend. They even refrain from practicing certain techniques or certain methods and trying to develop themselves for the long haul. They have an overly strong focus on this weekend's tournament. The tournament is not meant to be the training ground. It's a point at which you come back and re-evaluate yourself and see how you're doing. There has to be a time to learn, to develop yourself.

**What is your reaction to people who describe Kano's Judo as a reduced and safe form of jujutsu?**

I think that's a misinterpretation of a phrase used about Judo early on. The phrase that was misinterpreted was that Kano removed some unsafe techniques, unsafe methods, from jujutsu. These were not necessarily techniques that were dangerous to the person on whom they were applied, but to the person who was trying to apply them! There are certain kinds of attacks, for example, in which you could hurt yourself as you try to throw your partner. And certain training methods were designed to harden your hands. Some of the old methods involved putting your hands into pots of heated metal filings or certain other things like that. Kano looked at all that and questioned the value of some of these

methods. This would be similar to the modern physician who looks at an ancient treatise on medicine. Certainly you'd discard the ideas about bleeding people to make them healthy because you'd let out the evil spirits or something. You'd just ignore those things, and keep those things that made some gross sense. In Judo, things like atemi were always left in, but they weren't allowed in contest when you were competing within your school, because you could kill somebody. If you fought people outside your school in matches, certainly you might use atemi. But we tend to forget today, when we go out to a tournament to fight, we're all in the same school. I may be at the University of Connecticut, and somebody else may be from a dojo in New Hampshire or Montana, but we're all in Kodokan Judo. Just as at the old Kodokan, we don't use atemi against each other in a match. But that doesn't mean you don't practice atemi. Your objective is long-term development; lifetime study; self-actualization. These are the positive things that a martial art can provide.

Obviously, you don't want to kill people off. In the old jujutsu schools, they had people engage in these unsafe practices and people were getting mangled. The general public came to the point where they did not want to engage in jujutsu practice, because they felt that it was a very dangerous thing to do. You might not survive training, or might become crippled by it. And so Kano was trying to provide a better training method for a complete art. Not that you want to throw away parts of the art, necessarily, but that you want to be able to train more safely. So he developed a system of graduated training that permitted that. And contests were designed to be periodic tests where you could evaluate yourself as part of that. They shouldn't kill you! They should be ways for you to practice safely and learn. So the atemi was never really removed, but when the focus changed to be more on sport after WWII, then there wasn't any reason for most people to practice it; they just didn't care about it. Now, the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department has their own Taiho Jutsu, which is their

sort of version of classical Judo, and they do atemi. It's not a clear picture of classical Judo, but they do have the atemi part.

### **Are wristlocks considered only jujutsu techniques or are they part of Judo?**

Wristlocks are part of Judo. So are leglocks, kneelocks, ankle locks, spine locks, neck locks, finger locks - a whole variety of things. But Kano decided that for friendly competition, for the same reasons that you didn't want to have atemi, there were certain other kinds of techniques you wouldn't want to have as well. In the heat of a match, at full speed, you could very much hurt somebody and ruin their future prospects for practice, and that would be

counter to the whole objective of Judo.

Certain kinds of locks, like spine locks, knee locks, don't give you enough warning. If I put on a

lock, say a knee lock, for example, you may not feel much in the way of pain until the knee actually breaks; unlike the elbow, which gives you a lot of warning because of the ulnar nerve which goes through the elbow joint. Wristlocks were kind of a gray area, because the wrist is a small joint, and it doesn't take much strength, when a wristlock is applied correctly, to cause a great deal of pain. And if you're moving counter to a large, powerful, fast-moving opponent, you could easily break the wrist without enough warning. So there's a lot there that was meant to be practiced safely, and in other ways. One thing that's confused people is that one of the training methods of Judo is called kaho. Kaho is the conventional way of teaching jujutsu. It means like "kata way". You're taught by kata, by form. Kata can be a long sequence, like Nage No Kata is, but you can also teach for form only those methods that are

prearranged in some fashion, but not necessarily a long sequence. Those are the ways we often teach the atemi and joint locking, attacks and defense, going through a sequence of follow-ups: kick them, hit them, throw them, twist their joints or whatever it is until you come to some conclusion. And that method is the way that jujutsu was taught. One of the reasons that I was sent to study jujutsu was so that I would come to understand and appreciate Judo's training methods.

### **So some of the techniques that we tend to think of as jujutsu are really Judo?**

Probably, yes. It's hard to find techniques that aren't represented in Judo. It's such a complete art. Some of

these are preserved in the old kata, many of which are not largely known or known about these days, but much of it is passed on only by kuden [oral transmission].

That's the way it's always been done.

It's from teacher to student. But if you're not teaching anything but sport techniques, of course, you would not go through that.

Anyway, what happens is, you take some technique like osoto gari, that has been extracted from one of these sequences, and there's been gripping and other kinds of things that have been developed to make it more amenable to practice in randori, so it's in the randori waza. In traditional training, you'd go back and do the whole sequence, and insert the other elements and see how it applies in self-defense applications. So you see the other side of it. I can see the differences between Judo and for example, Takagi Ryu jujutsu, because of the nature of the sequences, the rhythm, the principles that drive it. You have to get to a certain point before it's easy to see that.

### **Practitioners of wrestling, football, basketball, Olympic Judo and other sports often claim that the real value in practicing these sports lies in the development of self-discipline, sportsmanship, self-actualization, and character-building. How do the benefits of practicing a martial art such as classical Judo differ from the benefits of playing a sport?**

There's something very special about the value of facing someone in a life or death situation. There's a certain level of introspection; a certain seriousness about what's going on in the art. Practicing to take people's lives, deciding life and death, all those sort of things, make issues of morality and character building much more important. A different spirit comes into play. The essence of self-actualization is a very large issue that's at the forefront of Judo. It relates to the way that we think of power being generated in martial art theory, and what you have to be to be the best martial artist you can be. It's about how martial art gives you a system.

The physical art is a way by which you can evaluate your own self-actualization. The external and the internal, each one gives you information. It's a very important aspect of Judo.

### **What weapons training is involved in classical Judo and how is this related to its taijutsu (unarmed arts)?**

Certainly, the weapons that we study in Judo teach you how to extend beyond the limits of your own body. It's very important to learn how to focus on something outside yourself. At the same time, it's important to take some foreign object that's outside your body and use it as though it were part of your body. To defend against weapons it's important to know how they are used. On the ancient battlefield, certainly the primary weapon was the sword. It was the basic weapon of the samurai. To envision this in modern terms, if you were out on the street, and were suddenly attacked by a wild-eyed gang of ruffians, and you had a .45 automatic

in your pocket, would it be practical or reasonable to keep the gun in your pocket and see if you could handle them bare-handed? That'd be silly. You should pull out the gun and wave it around and scare them off or you shoot at them. You pick the safest way to get the job done. The same thing was true with the sword. When you went out on the battlefield, you had a sword. Why would you fight with your hands? So the sword was the primary weapon, and the samurai spent 90% of their time learning to use the sword. How to walk with the sword, how to carry it, how to move with the sword, tai sabaki; what to do if people tried to grab at your sword hand, all those kinds of things. But then when they go to practice taijutsu, the sword is not in play, or it's broken - the Japanese sword is very brittle from side to side, so it did break. And also the handles would sometimes rot from moisture. And so you were forced to fight without it. So if what you know mostly is sword, the natural thing would be to apply the same sorts of principles when fighting without your sword. The same ability to dodge your opponent's attack, to get around it and counter, that you would apply with the sword, you could apply in the barehanded art - the taijutsu. If the tai sabaki allows you to avoid the sword, you can avoid the hand. The tendency was to develop empty hand arts that are comparable to sword movements. Okuri ashi harai, for example, is against a side step that's made with the sword. So to fully understand these techniques, you need to understand the sword, because that's at the heart of it. The basic movements that one makes in Dai Ikkyo are all related to sword movements. Also, part of classical Judo, Kano's Judo is that, as always in Japanese martial arts, you learn techniques, but you also learn your history: applications and experiences that masters through the centuries have had with those methods; their successes and failures, whatever those are, and things to look out for. You'll be given a whole history of experience with that technique. It's not just given to you as, this is it, make what you want of it. We do the same thing today, for example, in medicine. When someone is applying a surgical technique, they get all the

medical histories, and they study how it was done before so they know what problems could arise. And then they go into the operating room. It was the same on the battlefield. You don't want to go out there with just some idea that there's this trick that might work; I don't know when it might work, and I don't know when it's failed before, but here it is. You'll get killed that way. So it's important to have that whole background. And if you're going to have techniques that are primarily based on sword and sword movements, then obviously you'll do sword. When you practice the sword as well, it helps to enhance the taijutsu. Quite often, the taijutsu comes to feel as though you're doing the sword movement without the sword in your hand.

**Could you explain a little bit about the okuden of Judo?**

First of all, I should mention that the old licensing system that predates the modern Judo rank system involved different levels of teaching. Not as many as we have, with all the dan grades, but many levels of teaching. So you would have the shoden, which is literally the first transmission, which is given from generation to generation. It's the first transmission; the beginning stuff. There may be some kihon you practice before that, but normally that's part of shoden. It varies from ryu to ryu. That's the public art. There are no special stipulations or restrictions. In some ways, it would be like remedial training, because on the ancient battlefield, everybody knew how to punch and kick and swing the sword with some basic cuts. There was sort of an assumed base knowledge that you'd have to have to get on. The shoden then is a little bit more advanced than that. It tries to develop that base

knowledge to levels which lead naturally to the higher levels of the art. Then there's often a chuden, or middle transmission. Chuden is usually more involved, more specialized techniques. Usually, to get past the shoden level you had to be more fully accepted into the ryu. This is related sometimes to achieving oku-iri, "entrance to secrets." At this point the student's name is introduced into the mokuroku - the catalogue or membership book. But the way you got into the membership book, the way you got into advanced training, and therefore catalogued, was by signing a blood oath. And that's to ensure that you use the art the right way, that you understand the responsibilities that go with the training, and to make certain promises about who you will reveal this to. Even some simple promises like you won't give an exhibition of this technique to the public unless you are allowed to by the master or until you're further licensed. And that you won't fight in public using it until you're given license. That's partly to keep you out of trouble, but also it helps to keep you from misrepresenting the art. There are also certain things that you won't teach to anybody else below certain levels. And then finally there's the okuden, which is the highest level. "Oku" means "the innermost, most private place," so it's the innermost transmissions. Sometimes you hear terms like "kaiden", which means "all transmitted" which means essentially the same thing as okuden. There is also kuden, which is oral transmission, which is often done at okuden, or just after. Again, with the blood oath, certain obligations are made to pass on the art exactly.

Kano originally hoped that the Kodokan would not have to have those things. He would have liked a public art, and he originally thought he might be able to

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*The essence of self-actualization is a very large issue that's at the forefront of Judo. It relates to the way that we think of power being generated in martial art theory, and what you have to be to be the best martial artist you can be.*

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do that. But it's a very difficult problem that he faced. For one thing, Kano was receiving menkyo kaiden, or ultimate license, in the ryu after he started the Kodokan. So he found himself taking oaths that would not allow him to transmit knowledge without somebody else having taken the blood oath. Certain things could not be made public. In certain ryu, if you were to defy your oath, you could be killed for that. They policed themselves. But the worst that happened was that other ryu came to the Kodokan, and Kano was trying to bring them in order to preserve their arts. But the masters who came in from the other ryu had their own keppan, their own blood oaths that they had signed, which didn't allow them to make their arts public. So Kano was rapidly getting trapped by this whole blood oath business and okuden. He ultimately had to give way to that and allow for there to be some differentiation, and in fact Sone Sensei, my instructor, signed a blood oath. It was a necessity, and it also helps to explain why some of the older published rank requirements for the higher dans look awfully thin. How is it that you can go from 5th dan to 8th dan and you don't have to learn anything? Well, they just don't write it down. A lot of organizations today don't have much in the way of higher dan requirements. Originally, that was not the case. And how do you show the public something that represents the art without showing them what you don't want them to know? So we have in Judo things like Koshiki No Kata, which most people largely don't understand. But it's a way of giving you some insight into what the higher form art looks like, without having to give you all the explanation. In Ju No Kata, people often don't understand all that is there, all that they're seeing - it looks like some weird dance. But there is really a lot there that needs to be understood in its complete form. So you find ways to present the art through kata, that are not fully taught initially. Same with Itsutsu. So that's one way to do it, but then you wind up with a problem that people end up going through the motions, but they don't know what they're doing. Kata have omote and ura. They have the "front"

side and the "back" side. Omote is what you see as the sort of visible, first blush kind of thing. A lot of kata that are done today are done by omote. There's no teaching of the underside of it, of what's really going on. There are things like kakushi waza, hidden things that are meant to be eventually taught. And also, when the kata were taught, they were taught with a large range of variations and combinations and substitutions with other possibilities. So when that fails, then you do this, or you counter with that - there's a whole system that was taught around the kata, not just the kata itself. The kata is the central framework for passing on information. And as I was pointing out earlier, the kaho, kata method, makes not just the long sequences kata, but the little short ones are kata, too. So when you teach the kata, part of the kata is all these other things. They're not subsidiary to it; they're not auxiliary to it, they're part of the kata. What's happened, though, is that it's easy to put the Nage No Kata in some book, just the central form and say "That's it". What happened to the rest of it? So part of the okuden of Judo is essentially bringing together all these other lost components that are meant to be taught in a proper succession. You don't just teach all the techniques at once; there's too much. We were told as children that there's a whole lifetime of study in Judo, and yet we get to shodan and think we've learned it all. I don't mean that it's a personal ego issue; it's because nobody's standing around telling us what the rest of it is! And there is a rest of it and it needs to be taught. But you couldn't teach it all at the beginning. You wait until you get people to the appropriate levels so they can understand what they're doing and how it all works together, and have the skills and the proper frame of mind to be able to go on and do them correctly. And if you learn it out of sequence, you may actually lose something. You have something to gain in your overall long-term development by learning it in the proper sequence.

## What happened to the original scrolls after WWII?

Some scrolls are at the Kodokan. Usually you're given the scrolls or a copy of the scrolls as part of the licensing process. Part of the scrolls would be a long list of sokes who had been headmasters of the school. Your name gets added to the list. You're on the list. It's a sobering experience to look back through the list and see centuries of masters' names. At the Kodokan today, I think they have the Kito and Tenshin Shinyo scrolls. As more ryu entered the old Kodokan, and as Kano became master of them, he received the scrolls. Kano also had notes and writings that he did. He kept a notebook where he wrote down revelations as they came to him. He wrote in English, which was as good as a code in those days, since nobody else really knew English very well. Some of them are at the Kodokan today.

Part of the concept of the old Kodokan was to bring together all the best of these other schools and take what they had to offer and store it. There was some concern by the entering masters that things would become lost at the Kodokan. So they had the multiple scrolls so they would all have their own identity.

## How significant is the structure of the Go Kyo No Waza in classical Judo?

That's no small thing. The Go Kyo is the centerpiece of the syllabus. Some people say, "If the Go Kyo is the centerpiece of the syllabus, then that must mean that Judo's a throwing art in terms of instruction". But the reason it's the centerpiece of the syllabus is that throwing is the most complex action. It's not a trivial thing to get all your arms and legs moving together in the right direction and launch somebody into the air with a lot of force. We all know it takes a lot of practice to do that. But the way that the Go Kyo is structured also leads you through the

full range of action that one can make. Therefore it can be a training ground for human beings, for the body, for mind/body connections. It's a way of developing all those skills and the coordination and so on that have to happen in combat, including the simpler things, like striking and kicking. So it's central because it's the best place to learn how to manage your body. It's very systematic, organized, and leads you through the full range in an organized fashion. That's the short answer.

**Why is it important that you learn the throws in the order they are presented in the Go Kyo?**

It does have an order. There is a very clear-cut structure to the Go Kyo. It's go kyo - five teachings, five lessons, and it's related to the five elements of Chinese and Japanese philosophy, also called gokyo. The old Chinese thought there were five elements: earth, fire, water, metal, and wood. The Japanese have a slightly reshaped version of that, but it's essentially the same concept. The ancient Chinese also knew of five planets that were visible in the night sky, and thought that this had some aspect of control in their lives. Five itself is a very important number. So Kano was drawing back to that ancient notion. And also, in old Chinese arts that feed into jujutsu lineages, they had Chinese fighting arts that were actually constructed on the principle of five. And some of the old ryu, like Daito Ryu, and Takeuchi Ryu, and others, were based on five principles. And of course that's why Kano would find that there are five representative things that would explain all the forces of nature, in his Itsutsu No Kata. So always five. The Go Kyo is five teachings or lessons. Then there are eight techniques in each kyo. There are eight techniques because in the Chinese system there are eight changes - in Chinese it's Bagua, in Japanese it's Hakke. The eight changes are associated with points on the compass and they're also associated with basic movements of the body. They're also associated with eight

relationships among earth, man and heaven. In the I Ching, the old Chinese book, it shows the Bagua in pairs, stacked on top of each other, in hexagrams - that is what they're usually called. Because they are eight times eight, there are 64 possible changes that can occur, and these represent all the possible relationships between people. That would include all possible interaction between man and man, man and god, man and earth. So five becomes a subset of that, which is limited only by some special parameters which are a little hard to explain in the short run. But all that makes the study of the Go Kyo the study of social interaction and nature. This goes back to whole notion that what we learn on the battlefield is applicable to all aspects of life. So this is part of the bridge that Kano uses to get from individual techniques of the fighting arts to lessons about life, character building and so on.

The eight techniques in each kyo are each based on a fundamental bodily movement. So the practice of eight is a comprehensive analysis of body movement through its entire range. The kyos are in order of difficulty ranging from the simplest to the most complex. In the first kyo, for example, all the throws involve action through a single arc. In the second kyo, each technique moves through two arcs (or planes of action), and so on.

**What is your perception of how classical Judo is practiced today in the US? Are all classical Judoka practicing the same things?**

There isn't much classical Judo being practiced in the United States today. What comes closest is that there are some people who know there ought to be more. They're not quite sure what! They recognize that certain parts of Judo aren't there, so they try to supplement their sport Judo and take it backwards toward martial art. That's a very hard thing to do. Especially without a road map. But given that the sport techniques have been sort of homogenized and pasteurized, it's a

little hard to get back to where they came from. So these people have taken elements from other arts, like karate or aikido or who knows what, and they try to incorporate this into some form of combat which they associate with Judo. I can't say that that's bad; but it does not teach the fully cohesive system that Kano developed. They may come up with an interesting fighting art, but it's not really classical Judo. You'd have to be pretty lucky to reconstruct this from what's widely available today. So I don't think that most people who call themselves classical Judoka are actually practicing the same things. Some of them are well aware that they don't know all they'd like to know, but at least their heart's in the right place. There is some frustration as well on the part of people who'd like to be doing it the old way, but they can't find anyone to show them the old way.

**What do you see for the future of classical Judo in the United States?**

I think it has an enormous future. I think that classical Judo is what a lot of people really want. If we've learned anything from these Ultimate Fighting Challenges and matches like that, we've learned that Judo and jujutsu-related arts have a lot to offer. The kind of specialized training that Judo gives you is something that's very valuable. It's not all available in other arts. I think also that the population has matured. The demographics have changed. As the Baby Boomers get into middle age, they're looking for something more. They're not content with just competing, or don't want to compete. They remember in their youth being told that there was a whole lot to study in Judo and a whole lifetime of things to learn, and now they want it. The Judo organizations haven't satisfied that desire. I think if we can get this to the people, they will want to embrace it. It doesn't conflict with or compete with sport Judo. Actually it enhances and complements it. So there's no reason not to embrace it.

# The Everywhere Dojo

By Nels Erickson

In June of 1993, my wife and I moved from Fargo, ND to Minneapolis, MN some 250 miles away. It was just at this time that my Sensei, Vern Borgen was becoming aware of and starting to practice Zen Judo, a relatively new ryu of Judo based on the movements of Kyuzo Mifune, Judan. This was just my luck, as I was moving, Sensei was starting to study a more "classical" style of Judo, which practiced tournament illegal techniques, atemi, joint-locks and other techniques not usually seen in "sport Judo" clubs. Certainly Minneapolis has many very good Judo clubs, or even other Budo, but I had Zen Judo on my mind, and nothing seemed to measure up.

I got busy with life and it was almost a year and a half later that Sensei once again sparked the Judo fire

within me. I was back in Fargo for Christmas and Sensei and I got together to practice. WOW, what a workout! This had been my first real prolonged exposure to Zen Judo and now I was really hooked. Towards the end of the workout I began to lament the fact that I would not be able to continue to practice Zen Judo.

Over beer that evening Sensei and I discussed the possibility of me starting a modest club in the twin cities -- more of a study group. That would allow myself and other Budo friends of mine in Minneapolis to study this new ryu of Judo. Sensei gave me approval, provided I came back to Fargo frequently to continue my own progress and receive corrections to technique. So began our clubs journey.

Our first dojo was a small corner of the exercise room in our apartment building. We worked out on nothing more than heavily padded carpet over concrete. Boy, were we thankful the first syllabus of Zen Judo was mostly light falls! We had 3-4 people any given night and would frequently have to take turns due to the limits of space. Certainly this wasn't the best dojo, but it did give us a place to start.

We weren't there for long. About 3 months later my wife and I took the plunge and bought a house. This brought with it some difficulties with respect to a new dojo. We had pretty much used up all of our extra money for

us tatami style mats. The new mats were a godsend. They were soft, easily transportable and much less moldy. However, they did require a flat surface to lay on. I made arrangements with one of my students to use his two and a half stall garage. By clearing out the garage and moving his cars out when we trained, we were able to produce a mat that was 5 meters by 5 meters. It wasn't huge, but it was big enough to support our now 7-member group. We built a platform to store them on, and got a tarp to lay underneath to protect them from any oil stains. Mike, the owner of the garage was only too happy to have us. He got his garage swept out 2-3 times a week and didn't have to go

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*Eventually temperatures started dipping into the high 40's by class time and we started to see our own breath. We closed up the garage dojo for the winter.*

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the house (and a new transmission for our pickup. It never rains but it pours!) and we didn't own any mats. The temporary solution was our backyard. The house had this lovely seventies cow-pie brown carpeting over the hardwood floors, which we kept for exactly half a day. We closed on the house at noon; it was rolled up in the garage by 7:00 p.m. Luckily there was enough of this now trendy carpet to form new "mats". We ended up laying two layers over our backyard, which became the new dojo. Fortunately the weather was pretty cooperative (only a few rainout/excuses to drink beer), the neighbors understanding (goofy, militant, pajama wearing folks), and the students hardy (tree roots really make a poor falling surface).

To the chagrin of our chiropractors, our next dojo came quickly. Sensei loaned

very far for class.

The only downside to our new arrangement, and I realize there are those who wouldn't consider this a downside, was the proximity of Mike's comfy couch, cable TV and most importantly beer. There was more than one class where good intentions were overruled by weak flesh and cold beer. As the weather got colder and the house more inviting, these days became more prevalent. Eventually temperatures started dipping into the high 40's by class time and we started to see our own breath. We closed up the garage dojo for the winter.

We were not however, without a place to train. Our winter dojo was our living room. We were still too small of a group to realistically think about renting space commercially, and with 8'9"

ceilings we would still be able to do throws. Unfortunately, we could only fit enough mats inside to make a 3-meter by 3 meter mat. This made forward rolls difficult ("don't run into the window!") and forced us to have only one pair on the mats at a time. In many ways the new space was very nice. It was heated, so the mats were always warm and with the hardwood floor instead of concrete underneath, there was some give to the floor for heavy falls.

Everything went along just fine until one day, while I was working in our basement, I noticed a cracked floor joist. As close as we can figure, during one of our more spirited sessions we managed to put enough stress on a weak joist and cracked it. That was the end of our heavy falling for the winter. Without another place to train, we shifted gears and concentrated on matwork, jointlocks and atemi until spring when we could return to the more structurally sound garage.

The spring thaw saw us return to the garage and resume our regular nage practice. However, the continual process of setting up the dojo began to wear thin. Between moving the cars, sweeping the floor, cleaning any large oil spots, spreading out the tarp and setting up the mats, it was almost a full half-hour before we could begin class. This gave us new impetus to attempt to find the next dojo.

A YMCA had recently opened up in our neighborhood and asked if they would be interested in a Judo program. The response we received was great. They already had a Karate class going and thought the Judo would complement it nicely. The only catch was they only had the building open in the evenings on one night. I felt that we needed at least two nights a week to make it worth our while, so we worked out a deal. For a very reasonable rent they would staff the building just for us for a second night. That fall we moved into our

current dojo. The YMCA has been great. The building is air-conditioned and heated, we have our own storage place for the mats and enough space for a 5-meter by 6-meter mat. Having the dojo in a separate location from anyone's home, as well as a comfortable location has improved our dedication to training and I have noticed huge improvements in everyone's ability in Judo. I am sure that we will move again, the next step is our own location that we can access whenever we wish. I am sure that it will come when we are ready.

**The moral of the story is: location is irrelevant. Certainly some dojo are nicer than others, but anywhere can be a dojo. The real dojo is in your mind. When you begin to embody whatever Budo you follow, everywhere is the dojo.**



# Crossing the Pond, Making Connections

by Keo Cavalcanti

Once reading a biography of Dr. Jigoro Kano, I learned that he sponsored two annual trainings at the Kodokan--Asageiko (Summer) and Kangeiko (Winter). His reasons for the all-day events were to provide students with a chance to train with the best and to unify the Kodokan family. E. J. Harrison, one of the first Westerners ever allowed to train at the Kodokan reminisced, as he went back to England, on how important and stimulating those training sessions were to Kodokan Judo in its early days.

So, I decided, when we started American Zen Judo back in 1991, that as soon as possible we would have at least one annual training, where Zen Judoka in America would have a chance to experience some of the same opportunities that Kano students had. Our Asageiko was created to promote the art of Zen Judo and allow American Zen Judoka to practice the art at a level they don't usually enjoy in their regular every day workouts.

Our first Asageiko took place on April 25-27, 1996. There were three high ranking Judoka in charge of the event--myself, Brian Bagot Sensei (5th Dan Zen Judo) from Wareham, England, and Vern Borgen Sensei (4th Dan Zen Judo) from Fargo, North Dakota, USA. We spent three days on the mat, looking at the entire syllabus and enjoying the wisdom that Brian and Vern brought to us.

Our second Asageiko took place this year, on October 18. We were fortunate to have the technical director of the Zen Judo Family international, Andrew Millard Sensei (6th Dan) and two other high ranking Zen Judoka from the UK, David Ross Sensei (4th Dan) and Gordon Lawson (3rd Dan). Their four-day visit was fabulous for American Zen Judo. It proved that Kano Sensei's idea of having annual trainings was right on target!

Millard Sensei opened the Asageiko with lessons and drills on two important aspects of the art--Ma-ai and Tsukuri. Ma-ai, he explained has to do with the awareness of body distance between players and the need to adjust your body to the movements, height, and weight of your partner. A good part of the morning was spent on exercises to increase our awareness of that dynamic. A lot of tai-sabaki (body movement) drills helped students learn the concept with their bodies, not just their minds.

Once students were keen on the importance of Ma-ai, Millard Sensei explained its usefulness for tsukuri, for entering into a technique in a very effective way. Body motion, on entering into a technique, if done appropriately makes muscle unnecessary. It becomes a matter of technical finesse, not brawl. Millard Sensei then showed us a number of drills related to entering into a technique where proper care was given to body posture and motion.

After lunch in an authentic Chinese restaurant, we spent part of the break walking around Westhampton Lake, which gave students a chance to carry on one-on-one conversation with the British Sensei and to ask them questions that they might not have a chance to formulate on the mat.

In the afternoon Ross Sensei expanded on Andrew's lessons by leading the group in drills related to counters. We practiced both counter ones and twos and the students were made more aware of certain options for counters that are used by UK Zen Judoka. Lawson Sensei closed the day with a very spirited, funny, and yet very effective demonstration of ne waza (groundwork). By the end of the day we were all tired and yet quite satisfied with the level of Judo practiced during the day and the valuable lessons we all

incorporated into our development in the art.

What is more important to me, is that the visit strengthened bonds that went beyond the Asageiko. Andrew, David and Gordon had a chance to see an American Zen Judo workout on October 17 before the Asageiko on Saturday, and the four days we spent together (Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) gave us plenty of time to reflect on our own paths, the lessons we've learned from practicing Zen Judo and from Mac (*Mac refers to Dominick McCarthy, the founder of Zen Judo International – ed.*), to daydream about the future of the art, and to enjoy simply good-nature fellowship with each other. The meals we shared, the conversations, and the fun brought us even closer and made us even more aware of our joint path.

As we said goodbye to Andrew, David and Gordon in Washington, D.C. on Sunday I knew that we had once again crossed the pond and brought UK and American Zen Judo very, very close together. It is a joy to be part of the Zen Judo family and to have a chance to



photo by Vern Borgen

share the path with people who have spent a life time practicing the Gentle Way. Ed Stockwell Sensei and I are looking forward to seeing everybody in May and to renewing our fun on the mat!

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H.B. (Keo) Cavalcanti is the Executive director of Zen Judo in America and teaches Zen Judo and Taoist meditation

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# Fargo Judoka Join Flood Fight

by Jana Seaborn

Members of the judo club in Fargo were reminded of the life benefits of judo training this spring as we joined the volunteers sandbagging the city.

The normally unknown city of Fargo made the national news almost every week this winter as we were pounded with blizzard after blizzard. In April we had received 109.6 inches of snow - over twice the normal snowfall. Then came the April 5-6 blizzard.

I went sandbagging Saturday morning just as the rain began. Already volunteers were driving in from outlying areas to get as much done before the blizzard hit. By Saturday night visibility was nil. We listened to the radio as power went out in the rural areas. Then the small town of Ada was flooded. National Guard troops struggled to move the citizens of Ada to higher ground under conditions that would normally call for no travel.

In the aftermath of the storm power was out to much of the rural areas, we had received an additional 2.6 inches of rain and 7 inches of wet snow. The flood which had been something that was "out there" was now an immediate problem.

Fargo-Moorhead has three universities. The students of North Dakota State,

Moorhead State and Concordia proved that Generation X is not apathetic. NDSU students manned the garbage utility building where students worked shoulder to shoulder filling sandbags. Sandbags had to be filled indoors because it was well below freezing and sand and sandbags could not be laid if they were allowed to freeze.

medical records out of a basement amazed his coworkers by spending most of a morning sitting in seiza. I was asked if I was a body builder because I could manage sandbags with ease.

Vern Borgen always tells the students who take the beginning class at NDSU that, if nothing else, the ukemi will



Back to the benefits of Judo. The members of the judo club found that they could manage a sandbag line better than the average Joe. As Judoka moving a mass from here to there is all in a days practice. As others complained that the only ones that would benefit from the flood were chiropractors and massage therapists the judo club suffered few ill effects. One student who had to sort and move

come in handy when winter comes and the campus ices over. Advanced students learned that all the skills of judo can be integrated into daily life.

**Jana teaches Judo and Jujitsu in Fargo, North Dakota.**

# Atemi-Waza

by Timothy Cruff

While traveling, the urge for fast-food overwhelms your otherwise good diet. The hour is late, you have another hour of driving ahead of you, and the thought of a caffeine fix with a burger sounds refreshing. As a token to your strict training diet, you will not super-size (let's be real, you did consider it). There, just ahead, that famous logo; you pull into an almost deserted parking lot.

You enter, noting a couple of young men that you prefer your daughter not date, and place your order. As you place your tray down, one of the young men walks up and tells you to get out of his way; his friends laugh. You apologize and step aside, however, the ruffian attempts to grab your lapel. Anticipating the attack, you side-step and execute a Judo chop (shuto) to the mound of muscle on the forearm, under which lies the radial nerve. The ruffian winces in pain, but before he regains his initiative, you grab the hand and pivot in a flawless outward wrist turn (kote-gaeshi). The attacker not knowing the fine points of falling (ukemi-waza) makes a face imprint in the tile floor (they really should sweep a bit more often). You maintain a wrist control and yell for the employees to call the police. One of the friends rushes at you. Still holding the wrist, you move slightly forward into the attack, and strike the attacker with your thumb (oyubi-uchi) in the side of the neck, exactly at the vagus nerve. The second ruffian drops unconscious, and you tell the others not to move just as the squad car pulls up. Maybe you should have super-sized after all.

The story is based on an attack that occurred this last winter in North Dakota. Unfortunately, the victim was not trained in martial arts, and suffered a beating at the hands of the young ruffians.

The victim was taken by surprise, and tried to wrestle the initial attacker, but was not prepared for the vicious attack, was knocked to the floor and kicked several times.

Let's analyze the fictional defense. The intended victim in both attacks used body movement; moving out of the way of the first attack, and moving into the second attack. In each case the attacker was not allowed to execute their attack at their intended point of maximum effectiveness.

The defender then struck nerves (radial and vagus) with focused blows that stunned the first attacker, and knocked the second attacker unconscious. Our defender utilized the techniques of atemi-waza to enhance the defense, providing a fast and efficient means of dealing with a multiple attack.

Atemi-waza consists of the techniques of impact upon the human body in the martial arts of Judo, Jujitsu, and Aikido. Based on a thorough knowledge of anatomical pressure points (kyusho-jitsu), atemi-waza utilizes focused blows to distract, stun, disable, or kill an opponent. The amount of damage is determined by the velocity and the force of the blow, as well as the level of penetration on the target. Consider the body to have three targeting levels; surface level, medial level, and core level. There are exceptions, but generally, the level of penetration is directly proportional to the damage that results.

Examples:

- 1. Target:** Cheek, on a line between the corner of the mouth, and the pupil of the eye  
**Strike:** Haishu (Backhand)



photo by Rob Myers

**Result:** Sharp pain in the immediate area, mild disruption of balance

**2. Target:** Under the rib cage on the side of the body

**Strike:** Shuto (Judo Chop)

**Result:** Loss of wind & shoulders moving forward

**3. Target:** Under the jaw in the soft area that would be under the tongue (Not in the mouth)

**Strike:** Oyubi uchi (Thumb strike)

**Result:** Moderate pain, but the head jerks back, setting the balance back

**4. Target:** Solar plexus

**Strike:** Tsuki (Punch)

**Result: Light Blow** = Loss of wind, loss of balance

**Moderate Blow** = Loss of consciousness

**Heavy blow** = Internal tissue damage with often damage to the zyphoid process

Atemi is the key that can open a difficult situation. An attacker that is poised in a good fighting stance may be difficult to unbalance. The application of a blow should result in a reaction of pain and balance, thereby setting the attacker up for a throw or control technique.

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