Kōdōkan Jūdō’s Elusive Tenth Kata: The Gō-no-kata – "Forms of Proper Use of Force" – Part 3

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Results: Gō-no-kata is the oldest kata of Kōdōkan, probably predating the two 1885 randori-kata. Gō-no-kata consists of ten forms, which depict a relatively primitive jūdō, still practiced in defensive jūdai position. Its aim was to serve both as an intense fitness exercise as well as to illustrate the basic principle of conquering force with giving way. Despite being popularly thought of as defunct, the gō-no-kata survives today – having initially been preserved in Tōkyō by a small group of senior jūdōka, and now also by a handful of experts abroad.

Conclusions: The preservation of gō-no-kata, a 10-technique prearranged form that teaches principles of optimal use of force, is primarily the merit of the late Yūshīyuki Kūhara-sensei and his nephew Tōshiyasu Ochiai-sensei.

Key words: Gō-no-kata • Jigorō Kanō • jūdō • kata • Kōdōkan

Abstract

Kata (“Prearranged forms”) represent the grammar of Japanese jūdō. The Kōdōkan jūdō syllabus typically contains eight or nine kata. In recent years, Gō-no-kata (“Prearranged forms of correct use of force”), a generally considered obsolete and elusive ‘tenth’ kata, has become the subject of some renewed interest within jūdō circles. Finding accurate information on the gō-no-kata or locating a skilled instructor of this exercise is very difficult. The purpose of the present paper is to provide a comprehensive study of this gō-no-kata which once formed a part of the standard jūdō curriculum. We aim to remove the confusion and mystery which surrounds the gō-no-kata.

Background

Kata: Predetermined and choreographed physical exercises, which together with free exercises (randori) and lectures (kōgi) form the three critical pillars of Kōdōkan jūdō education.


Kōdōkan: The specific name of his school and style of budō as given by his founder Jigorō Kanō (1860–1938).

Background

Kata are intended and recognized as a valuable training drill in most Japanese gendai budō and koryū arts. Kata represent the grammar of jūdō, and without properly mastering them, jūdō is often reduced to a crude conglomerate of isolated throws merely based on power, endurance, and athletic achievement. There are nine kata in Kōdōkan jūdō today, as accepted by the Kōdōkan Jūdō Institute in Tōkyō, Japan [1–3]. Of those nine kata only seven are most commonly performed. Because of this reason one will often find literature incorrectly claiming that there would be only seven or eight Kōdōkan jūdō kata [4,5]. However, other Kōdōkan and non-Kōdōkan kata exist in jūdō. Most of these kata are not well known outside Japan and are rarely taught or practiced [6–8]. One such kata that used to form part of the Kōdōkan curriculum, but no longer features, is the Gō-no-kata 剛の形 (“Prearranged forms of correct use of force”). In recent years, this generally considered obsolete ‘tenth’ kata has become the subject of some renewed interest within jūdō circles. However, much of the information in c-
Gō-no-kata: “Prearranged forms of correct use of force”, a physical exercise created by Jigoro Kanō and presumably the oldest jūdō kata, which until recently was often considered defunct.

culation on gō-no-kata, is contradictory, ambiguous, and even blatantly erroneous. The purpose of the present paper is to provide a comprehensive study of the gō-no-kata; specifically, we aim to remove this confusion and mystery which surrounds the gō-no-kata.

Our research questions are as follows:

- What is the veracity of various claims made by certain publications that what they propose as gō-no-kata truly represents the historic gō-no-kata?
- Does there exist a gō-no-kata in Kōdōkan jūdō?
- If a gō-no-kata exists, then what is its contents and theoretical foundation?
- If gō-no-kata exists, then who practices it and where can it be observed and learnt?

This final part of a series of three papers will mainly focus on the third and fourth of those four main questions. To address these questions and achieve our purpose, we offer a critical evaluation of the available literature and source material on this kata. Rare material drawn from original and reliable sources will also be introduced to support the drawing of definitive conclusions. This paper offers an important contribution to our knowledge of Kōdōkan understanding, as it has implications for the current jūdō syllabus, and also represents the only critical scholarly study of this kata in both Western languages and Japanese.

**RESEARCH INTO NEWLY DISCOVERED SOURCE INFORMATION ON GŌ-NO-KATA**


The most significant and detailed material on the gō-no-kata can be found in one of the rarest jūdō oeuvres in existence, namely an extensive study of katas completed in 1976 [9] by the late Yoshiyuki Kuhara (1906–1985) (Figure 1). It is the only work that has survived, which
Kuhara is one of the most crucial figures in jūdō kata in the second half of the twentieth century, having personally researched the topic for some 60 years. Kuhara mostly specialized in the Koshiki-no-kata for which he was well acclaimed. He was also probably the most important jūdō performer of that particular kata in full armor, regularly demonstrating it during Kagami-Biraki celebrations and All Japan Jūdō Championships, initially as the uke for Kazuzo Kudō, 9th dan (Figure 3). Kuhara also recognized the importance of koryū and actively promoted its return. To that extent, he is known to have studied and practiced the kata of iaidō.

The study of koryū is consistent with the fundamental aims of jūdō as envisaged by Kanō himself. It is understood that as his life evolved, Kanō realized that jūdō was not a total success, and was heading in a direction (sports competition) that was quite different from what he wanted [6,11]. Towards the end of his life he already anticipated that the increasing emphasis on shiai and dilution of kata would endanger the very concept of jūdō itself. Koryū because of its tradition and because of the impossibility to compete (mortal peril) did not have such a risk, and “cross-training” in koryū would strengthen a jūdōka’s character in areas beyond that covered by a jūdō education only.

After Kuhara died in 1985, his teachings were furthered by his pupil and nephew Toshiyasu Ochiai, now a Kōdōkan 8th dan. Although the Kuhara Shūdōkan dōjō no longer exists today, the tradition is continued, including the teaching of some uncommon kata, including gō-no-kata as well as Mifune’s ura-no-kata. Kuhara’s jūdō Mizu-Nagare [9] had quickly sold out and Kuhara-sensei passed away just a couple of years later. As his dōjō disappeared too, his book was virtually never heard of.

Note that Kuhara is generally referred to as being an 8th dan, however, he did receive the rank of 9th dan in 1984 shortly before his death on April 4th of 1985.

iaidō – the craft, art, or science of the sword, is a Japanese martial art that uses a specific methodology to teach the use of the katana (Japanese sword). Generally, iaidō takes the form of partnered practice exercised through kata, as opposed to competition, solo, or freestyle practice. Yoshiyuki Kuhara was a practitioner and instructor of Ōmori-ryū iaidō.
again, and so no written documentation on gō-no-kata was available any longer. Because of this situation, and to support his continued teaching of gō-no-kata, his nephew Toshiyasu Ochiai-sensei, in 1998 created an instructional booklet [10] (Figure 4) that from Kuhara’s jūdō Mizu-Nagare only retained the gō-no-kata.

The booklet [10] was far easier to reproduce than Kuhara’s complete oeuvre [9], and only preserved from Kuhara’s book information thought to be essential. Kuhara really thus remains its original author. However, Ochiai-sensei did replace the original pictures of Kuhara- and Satō-sensei (Figure 5), by pictures of himself as the tori2, and Yūtaka Taniguchi, 5th dan (at the time, 4th dan), as the uke, presumably because the original pictures were in black and white, and because he no longer had the originals; the new pictures in the booklet are in color3. That being said, even this newer booklet has never been officially published with an ISBN number, and is currently also only available at Ochiai-sensei’s dojo4 to his own students. The reason for this is not to bestow a character of esoterism on gō-no-kata, but simply to avoid an uncomfortable situation for the Kōdōkan, which is where most enthusiasts and foreigners typically address their questions. Since gō-no-kata is no longer part of the actively taught Kōdōkan curriculum, and since the official version claims … would in fact even have been removed from it by Kanō himself, the insistence, particularly of foreigners for information about this obsolete kata, puts Kōdōkan sensei and staff in a somewhat uncomfortable and awkward situation.

Because Kuhara’s original oeuvre and the later booklet compiled or edited by Ochiai, as far as gō-no-kata is concerned, are nearly identical, we will consider their contents together here in the same section. Both Kuhara’s book [9] and Ochiai’s booklet [10] are written in Japanese, and the extracts cited in the present paper are original translations. Contrary to Kuhara’s book, Ochiai’s booklet has no page numbers.

Kuhara [9] and Ochiai [10] present the history of the gō-no-kata and the rationale for its development. Kuhara, unlike Kawamura and Daigo [12], does not list a creation date for the gō-no-kata. However, Kuhara, does opine that gō-no-kata may in fact be the oldest Kōdōkan kata. If Kuhara is correct, and gō-no-kata is indeed the oldest kata of Kōdōkan, then its creation date must in fact be no later than 1885, since this is the year that Kanō-shihan conceived the original nage-, katame-, and shōbu-no-kata [13, p. 1168]. This is a different from what has been suggested by Kawamura and Daigo [12]. Unfortunately, Kawamura and Daigo [12] do not support their 1887 claim with any references.

The Kōdōkan New Japanese-English Dictionary of jūdō in which Kawamura and Daigo make their 1887 claim [12, p. 142] is in fact a more recent, concise and bilingual Japanese/English version of the earlier jūdō Daijiten, which had 670 pages and was published in Japanese only [12]. Both Kawamura and Daigo were already part of the editorial committee of the jūdō Daijiten. The latter, on page 139 has an entry for gō-no-kata, which references two sources [12, p. 139]. The first reference is Oimatsu [15], the second is Kanō [16], neither of which contain any creation date for gō-no-kata. The only source that mentions the year 1887 in the same paragraph in which gō-no-kata is discussed, is indeed Kanō’s biography.

We note though that Maruyama, known for his historical research into jūdō, does not list gō-no-kata as one of Kanō’s achievements in his year overview for 1887 [13].

It is also unlikely that somebody as meticulous and exhaustive as Maruyama [13] would have forgotten to mention ‘gō-no-kata’ as an important creative product of Kanō for the year 1887. In other words, Kuhara’s view (i.e., of gō-no-kata being the oldest original jūdō kata and predating both nage-no-kata and jū-no-kata) is very plausible.

There is no doubt that the gō-no-kata presents an idea of jūdō in a somewhat archaic form that we are no longer used to seeing. Yet, it succeeds in explaining the basic idea of jū in a very straightforward way understandable by both laymen and novices, where, for example, itsutsu-no-kata does so in a more philosophical, almost elitist way, generally incomprehensible, except to the very advanced jūdōka.

Kuhara explains that gō-no-kata is loosely5 derived from the Kūb-ryū6 and Tenjin Shin’jō-ryū7 styles of jūjutsu and was

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1 Tori: the person who applies a throw or other technique… [12, p. 128]. Uke: the person who receives a technique… [Ibid., p. 131].
3 Recall that the Gō-no-kata is Kanō’s creation and did not exist as a complete form in any jūjutsu school.
4 Kūb-ryū: A style of classical jūjutsu from which the throwing methods of modern Kōdōkan Jūdō originated [12, p. 91], and [18].
5 Tenjin Shin’jō-ryū: One of the last schools of classical jūjutsu to be formulated… It featured many choking and jointlock techniques, many of which form the basis of a number of techniques in Kōdōkan Jūdō [12, p. 127], and [18].
created at the turning point from jūdō to jūdō [9]. As such they were based on the principle of self-defense so, in that sense ... not necessarily suited to [modern] jūdō [9].

The motivation for the creation of the gō-no-kata is attributed to the rapid growth in the popularity of jūdō. With an increasing number of students it became impossible for Kanō to personally teach every new enrolled student and so he created a kata to support the correct learning of the art:

"In the beginning, Kanō-ryū personally taught this kata to his students; but as more students came to him for instruction, he found this harder to achieve. It seems that for this reason he had to establish this basic kata so that his students could learn from it, and not necessarily directly from him. In fact he used to say that there was a great need for it." (…) [9]

The essence of the gō-no-kata is described and a list of the techniques that comprise the kata is provided (see Table 1).

"The kata consists of ten techniques, in which the two [participants] confront each other - at first with the utmost power and later [one] makes best use of the other's power." (… ) [9]

Table 1 shows that seven distinct techniques are practiced in the gō-no-kata. Three of these are repeated with different irimi ("entry patterns") bringing the total to ten.

In essence, the gō-no-kata focuses on functional strength and the application of that strength at the correct time to create the maximum amount of kuzushi, "balance-breaking". After hard pushing and pulling, the tori surrenders to uke's attack up to the point where he/she almost loses. However, the tori suddenly regains his position with tai-sabaki (proper body movement & position) and prevails (Figures 5, 6). Accordingly, the gō-no-kata is also useful in developing sensitivity to the tension in uke's grip, thereby learning the correct timing for effectively using uke's own force to either unbalance him/her or move into a position of advantage.

Kuhara [9] and Ochiai [10] explain why the grips and holds of the gō-no-kata are different to the classical sleeve-lapel grip used in jūdō:

“The jūdōgi in those days were unlike those of today and did not cover the elbows or the knees, so the kamaekata (posture) and umikata (ways of holding) were necessarily defensive ones. It often happened that four fingers of one hand were inserted into the sleeve of one's partner with the other hand taking hold of the collar from the rear." (…) [9,10].

It is worthy of note that many of the kata's techniques start with tori and uke clasping each other’s hands in various positions, whilst forcefully pulling or pushing. Additionally, the main body position in the kata is the defensive posture (jigotai) and many of the low hip movements therein are also evocative of sumō. For instance, for suhai-nage, "scooping throw" (the third technique in the kata) the starting position resembles a standing arm-wrestling match.

The sixth technique in the kata (hadaka-jime/koshi-kudaki or "naked choke/hip crush"), for example, starts with tori being held in riōte-dori (two-hand hold) and transitions through both tori and uke using hand pressure grips in a manner similar to sumi-gaeshi ("corner throw") as performed in the nage-no-kata, before concluding with tori applying the choke.

Jigotai: A defensive basic body position, characterized by a wide stance and low point of gravity that is rooted in koryū or traditional martial arts, probably Sekiguchi-ryū, and which was popular in early jūdō practice.

Table 1. Gō-no-kata: "Forms of Proper Use of Force" of Kōdōkan judō, as constructed by Jigorō Kanō in 1887 or earlier. From Kuhara [9], and Ochiai [19,20].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gō-no-kata</th>
<th>Shoulder Throw</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Seoi-nage</td>
<td>Shoulder Throw</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ushiro-goshi</td>
<td>Back Hip Throw</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Sukui-nage</td>
<td>Scooping Throw</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Hidari-seoi-nage</td>
<td>Left Shoulder Throw</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Uki-goshi</td>
<td>Floating Hip Throw</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Hadaka-jime → Koshi-kudaki</td>
<td>Naked Lock → Hip Crush</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Tobi-goshi → Uki-goshi</td>
<td>Jumping Hip Throw → Floating Hip Throw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Ō-soto-otoshi</td>
<td>Large Outer Drop</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Ushiro-goshi</td>
<td>Back Hip Throw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Kata-guruma</td>
<td>Shoulder Wheel</td>
</tr>
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www.archbudo.com
The gō-nō-kata is thought to be the only jūdō kata intended to assist in the development of actual physical strength (see also higher, under Uenishi) with it being written that Nagaoka-sensei recommended its use before practice as a warm-up exercise. Additionally, Nagaoka-sensei wrote that the kata contributes to increased willpower, physical force, and ki, “spiritual energy.” Kuhara writes:

“I often heard Sakamoto-sensei say that the late Nagaoka (10th dan) used to do this kata before keiko (practice). He probably did this not only for the kata practice but also to prepare himself both physically and mentally for the keiko. Actually, if you make an effort in performing this kata, you can keep yourself in good shape, with your waist becoming more stable and more energy flowing to you. I am quite sure that well before you have completed all of this kata, you will begin to sweat even in the coldest season.” (…) [9].

Kuhara [9] and Ochiai [10] then give an indication of the gō-nō-kata’s demise, as well as the instrumental role played by two elderly koryū jūjutsu sensei (Fusatarō Sakamoto 酒本房太郎 and Shōichirō Satō 佐藤昇一郎). Finally, Kuhara [9] reproduces limited relevant writings by Nagaoka-sensei and Samura-sensei, unfortunately through without bibliographic details:

“It is true that these ten techniques were, in those days, among the best known basic forms, but conversely there are [now] relatively few people who know about them, and still fewer who can practice them.

As far as it is known, Fusatarō Sakamoto-sensei of Tenjū Shinjō-ryū, 9th dan (age 88), and Shōichirō Satō-sensei of Suisuishitsu-ryū, 8th dan (age 82), are the ones who can practice them today. It is known that those two elderly masters once exhibited the kata in public at a Butoku Festival in Kōto.” ([1]) (…) [9].

“In the past there were many who tried, in every way, to pass down this kata to subsequent generations as a precious heritage — but they were unsuccessful. Sakamoto-sensei regretted this and he asked me to do this [instructional book] and he was always willing to support me whenever I was in need of help.” (…) [9].

It is not a coincidence that the sensei involved in the preservation of the gō-nō-kata in the past had strong ties to the Kōdōkan. It is equally unknown when exactly the demonstration took place to which Kuhara is referring.
to koryū, as koryū practitioners are much closer to what jūdōka were in the early 1900s than to the sports-oriented ‘grapplers’ of today.

1995 (December) – Yukata Shimizu – Hiden koryū bujutsu [21]

In the December 1995 issue of Hiden koryū bujutsu, an article appeared by Yukata Shimizu, entitled: Kōdōkan jūdō no kata to jissen [The kata and real fighting of Kōdōkan jūdō] [21]. In the article, Shimizu devotes approximately three quarters of a page to gō-no-kata. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first modern day article which also lists all ten techniques and provides valuable background about this kata. The contents of the article as well as the techniques listed as part of gō-no-kata, are entirely in line with Kuhara [9]. Unfortunately, this valuable article is neither referenced, nor annotated, making it impossible to trace its sources. This is a pity, given that Shimizu offers an interesting point of view which seems to suggest a connection between gō-no-kata and Tenjin Shin'yō-ryū jūjutsu. Since no other known document provides much insight into the origins of gō-no-kata, it would have been interesting to explore this link further, in particular, because jūdō is known to have extensively borrowed katumewaza from this school rather than nage-waza. One of the most noticeable characteristics of gō-no-kata is the ubiquitous presence of the jūdō defensive position. However, according to Maruyama [13] and Kudō [22], the jūdō position of Kōdōkan jūdō originates in Shiguchi-ryū, and not in jūdō’s standard parent schools Tenjin Shin'yō-ryū and Kōdō-ryū.

1999 – Antony Cundy – HOP-LITE [23]

Hoplology12 was very much the spiritual child of Donn F. Draeger, and today the International Hoplology Society attempts to further his work. It also produces newsletter, called HOP-LITE. In the Fall 1999 issue of this Newsletter [23], Antony Cundy in an article describes a demonstration of the gō-no-kata performed by Toshiyasu Ochiai and Yutaka Taniguchi under the auspices of the Dōjōkai13 (the “Jūdō Friendship Society”):

“In 1998, the 51st annual meeting and tournament of the Dōjōkai (‘Association for Friends of the Way’) was held at the Kodokan in Tokyo, Japan. There, Ochiai Toshiyasu, 7th dan14, and Taniguchi Yutaka, 4th Dan, presented an exhibition of the Gō-no-Kata (Forms of Hardness/Inflexibility/Strength).

It was the first time in 50 years that these kata had been seen in the cradle of modern jūdō. The re-emergence of the Gō-no-Kata is a significant event in the world of modern jūdō, where it represents an important historical link between classical practices of jujutsu and the all-round educational emphasis of Kano Jigoro’s Kodokan Judo.” (…) [23, p. 1].

Cundy is correct. Indeed, the last known public performance of gō-no-kata at the Kōdōkan dates from the birth of the Dōjōkai back in 1948, when it was demonstrated by Fusatari Sakamoto-sensei and Kiyochi Takagi-sensei. In his article, Cundy provides a basic general description of the gō-no-kata, followed by an outline description of the first technique therein:

“The Gō-no-Kata in practice is a complex of prearranged movement patterns, executed by two practitioners who engage in short bursts of strength matching exercises, which are then concluded by the application of a throwing or choking technique.” (…) [23, p. 1].

“…the exponents take a grapplers embrace, and then attempt to push each other backwards; they then reverse their efforts and attempt to pull each other forward. The pushing procedure is then resumed until the predetermined winner breaks from the pushing action, and utilizes his partner’s momentum to execute a shoulder throw.” (…) [23, p.1].

It is clear that the gō-no-kata being described by Cundy [23] relates to the same authentic form and based on similar sources as what was described earlier by Kuhara [9]. This is confirmed by Cundy’s list of techniques that make up the gō-no-kata, which is identical to the one provided in Table 1.

Cundy reports that an amateur video of a demonstration of the gō-no-kata had been created by Ochiaisensei and that he (Ochiai) was apparently deluged with requests for the recording. Cundy also refers to the possible production of a gō-no-kata instructional manual – it is this item that was reviewed in the previous section.

It is our understanding that it was not only Ochiaisensei who became swamped with requests for copies of the gō-no-kata recording. Sources suggest that the Kōdōkan too became overwhelmed by similar requests, whereas they were not involved, nor had they endorsed the film or even the kata, which “officially” for them does not
exist\textsuperscript{11}. Note that it is highly delicate (\textit{i.e.} impossible) for the Kōdōkan to publicly endorse something that did not meet with the full satisfaction of Kanō-shihan (although as shown \textit{supra}, unlike what the Kōdōkan suggests, Kanō-shihan never rejected this \textit{kata} or discouraged aged people from studying it).

Cundy concludes his article by promising that in the near future he would write a detailed follow-up paper on the \textit{gō-no-kata}:

\textit{"In a future in-depth article on the Go no Kata, I intend to examine the kata more closely, introducing important figures involved in its preservation. Further, I will hypothesize on why the kata were developed by Kanō Jigoro, and why then it was almost lost to later generations."\textsuperscript{23}, p.2.}

To date, to the best of our knowledge, Cundy never realized the promise he made nearly ten years ago and no such follow-up article or any other information has been published since his brief \textit{HOP-LITE} article. However, there can be no doubt whatsoever that the \textit{gō-no-kata} described by Cundy is the genuine article, and no doubt that Ochiai-sensei is truly a master of the form. Perhaps the present paper precludes that our hope would remain in vain, and perhaps this paper might serve as a worthy sequel to Cundy’s 1999 text \textit{[23]}. Where precisely Cundy got his information, has remained a source of curiosity. He does not does not identify his sources, and the recessiveness of the \textit{kata} makes one wonder how he found out. Cundy does not confirm in his article that he would have been actually present himself during the demonstration in 1985. Fact is though, that in November of 1999 the \textit{Jūdō Daijiten} was published by the Kōdōkan \textsuperscript{14}. Cundy’s paper \textit{[23]} was published in late fall of that same year (1999).

\textbf{November 1999 – Yukimitsu Kanō et al. – \textit{Jūdō Daijiten} \textsuperscript{12}}

The \textit{Jūdō Daijiten} or \textit{Judo Encyclopedia} \textsuperscript{12} is a large work (approx. 670 pages) written in Japanese, that contains numerous biographical, historical, and bibliographical entries. Unusual for works on \textit{jūdō}, is that the Encyclopedia is actually referenced. The information it contains in its two entries, is mainly quoting the information contained in the November issue of \textit{Yūkō-no-katsu\dō} \textsuperscript{16}, which we have already considered at length (\textit{vide supra}).

Rare, however, is its detailed list of the techniques contained in \textit{gō-no-kata} \textsuperscript{12}, p. 463. It lists as a source for these techniques, an obscure work entitled \textit{Jūdō Techiō

\textbf{Undated – Gianna Giraldi – \textit{Go no kata} \textsuperscript{24,25}}

In an undated web-based article on the Italian website freeBudo.com, Gianna Giraldi presents an article that heavily draws on the material of Ochiai \textsuperscript{10}. For this reason it serves no purpose to critically evaluate Giraldi’s article.

The interested reader is, however, directed to view Giraldi’s article as it features three-color photographs of Ochiai-sensei performing techniques from the \textit{gō-no-kata}, namely: \textit{sukui-nage} (\textit{scooping throw}), \textit{uki-goshi} (\textit{floating hip throw}), and also a typical opposition of force posture. These photographs also feature in the original Ochiai booklet (\textit{see} [10]).

It is worthy of note that Giraldi’s article has recently been unofficially translated by Lyr C. Jones \textsuperscript{25} and made available on the \textit{Judo Info} Internet website. In doing so, Jones has endeavored to keep his translation as faithful as possible to the Italian original, and has not corrected any factual errors; \textit{Caesar lector – there are some. However, when there is any ambiguity or doubt, precedence should be given to the original source} \textsuperscript{10} as presented in this paper.

Additional content found in Giraldi’s article are a well balanced overview of \textit{kata in jūdō} and a correct statement that the majority of the writings that generally discuss the \textit{gō-no-kata} are full of inaccuracies.

\textbf{2007 – Toshiyasu Ochiai (edited by Klaus Hanelt) – \textit{Gō-no-kata} \textsuperscript{19}}

During a personal conversation with Ochiai-sensei in August of 2006\textsuperscript{34}, he alluded to a new booklet in Japanese on \textit{gō-no-kata} he was thinking of creating, that would be produced more professionally and be made commercially available. Just three months earlier, Ochiai had welcomed a group of \textit{jūdō kata} enthusiasts from Germany in his \textit{dōjō}. The German group expressed the wish to have an accessible study text of \textit{gō-no-kata} to support their practice after their return home, and they were presented with a copy of Ochiai’s 1998 booklet \textit{[10]}. The booklet was reproduced in German under supervision of German \textit{kata} guru, Klaus Hanelt \textsuperscript{19}, and this in a very near way, and presented to Ochiai for approval. Despite this somewhat awkward position (\textit{= being

\textsuperscript{11} Ochiai T. Personal communication. Bunkyō Jūdōkai, Tōkyō-to Jūdō Renmei; 2006, August 3\textsuperscript{rd}; Tōkyō: Kōdōkan Jūdō Institute.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
presented with a book you have supposedly authored, yet never seen before ...). Ochiai considered that at least the advantages for the jūdō community would outweigh the disadvantages, so he did not object.

Thus, since 2007 a new and usable text, and this in a Western language (German) is available to the public [19]. There is little sense in further critically analyzing the text, as it is a mere translation of Ochiai’s 1998 booklet, complete with pictures of the authentic gō-no-kata and helpful comments and notes to study the kata. The translation is done well. Though this 35-page booklet is officially published (Verlag Dieter Born, Bonn) and has a proper ISBN number, it was still printed only in limited numbers and is not commonly available in a bookstore, which makes ordering it, particularly if outside of Germany, and certainly outside of Europe, not an easy thing to do. Awaiting the publication of De Crée [6], which contains detailed descriptions and history of 17 existing jūdō kata, including gō-no-kata, at the time this paper went in print, Ochiai [19] represents the best alternative.

Since the publication of Ochiai’s German booklet on gō-no-kata [19], his privately published new Japanese booklet has appeared too [20]. This booklet [20] is very well taken care of, with the same pictures as printed in Ochiai [19], though they appear in a larger format and somewhat clearer. Unfortunately, this new booklet too, has restricted availability and cannot be purchased in stores.

For those, who desire to have just a brief guideline in English to studying gō-no-kata, Mōri [26] produced a short eleven-page summary of Ochiai’s 2007 booklet [18], which is distributed for free, and contains both brief instructions and reproduced pictures. It has also been noted that during a recent gō-no-kata clinic which Ochiai-sensei taught abroad [18], compact syllabi on gō-no-kata were distributed, which contain black-and-white handdrawings of progressive gō-no-kata movements [27].

The Future of Gō-no-Kata

Through the modern medium of the Internet, knowledge that gō-no-kata truly exists and is not extinct, has already reached many jūdō kata enthusiasts, some well informed, others less well informed. For those who think that practicing gō-no-kata will suddenly make one win contests or that it contains some secret knowledge towards invincibility or spectacular defenses against dangerous arms, disappointment will be the outcome. For those whose commitment it is to further their lifelong learning by improving their understanding of the concepts of jū and gō, gō-no-kata can be a worthwhile enrichment.

“Where can one learn gō-no-kata” is a frequently heard question. Indeed, this is a reasonable question, as not everybody has the financial means and practical opportunity to travel to Japan. At the time this paper went into press, gō-no-kata clinics have already been held abroad, in countries such as Germany. In February of 2008, a Teachers Clinic that inter alia featured gō-no-kata was held in the US in the Los Angeles area (Norwalk, CA) (Figure 6A–K). Others will follow. While Toshiyasu Ochiai (Figure 7) remains the most known proponent of gō-no-kata today, other sensei have mastered and can teach gō-no-kata, such as inter alia: Makoto Hoshina, 7th dan, Yutaka Taniguchi, 5th dan, and Sumiko Akiyama, joshi 7th dan at the Kōdōkan. Others, such as Hiromi Noguchi, 7th dan are also believed to know gō-no-kata. In Germany, Klaus Hanelt, 7th dan, has given a couple of basic gō-no-kata clinics, and Professor De Crée, one of the co-authors of the present paper, has intensively studied gō-no-kata, and currently teaches it.

It has been heard through the grapevine that there is some interest in the Kōdōkan to revisit the issue of gō-
no-kata. Whether that implies that one day it might be
taught again, is not known. As one can imagine, the
Kōdōkan is not exactly the most progressive and liberal
organ in the world, so likely somewhat more water will
flow through the sea before this happens ...

Nevertheless, the fact that gō-no-kata is finally publicly
mentioned, recognized, and given a place again as one
of the existing official Kōdōkan kata in a recent publica-
tion by Toshirō Daigo, the Kōdōkan’s Chief-Instructor
and foremost authority on kata, is encouraging [3, p.
21–22], even if that does not yet equal that it is fea-
tured again as part of the taught syllabus.

**Conclusions**

Serious research into the gō-nokata is a very difficult
deavor. There is a dearth of major written sources on the
kata, and what is commonly available is often un-
verifiable, incomplete, ambiguous or factually in error.

While research into this area remains ongoing, there ex-
ists sufficient and even ample evidence that indicates
that the gō-no-kata is not, nor in any form has ever been
a kata of blows, but an exercise examining the prin-
ципle of efficient use of force and resistance. The litera-
ture indicates that the movements within the kata fo-
cused on the direct resistance of force (with force) right
up until the very last moment when the force is over-
come by skill, strategy and body movement. For this
and other reasons, including methodological as well
as their complete absence of any sources substantiat-
ing their claims, we firmly would dismiss as false any
claim by Parulski [28,29]. Muilwijk [31,32] and oth-
ers that the gō-no-kata is even remotely based on a blend
of jūdō and karate, and that it supposedly would have
been composed jointly by Jigorō Kanō and Gichin
Funakoshi. Moreover the series of exercises as present-
ed by Parulski [28,29] and copied by Muilwijk [30–
32] must be classified as a contemporary hoax lacking
any historic substance or roots in either Jigorō Kanō
or any of the other great jūdō masters of the past, or ...
even in any jūdō-specific principle.

Based on the original comments provided by Kanō-shihan
[16,33], as well as Nagaoa- and Samura-sensei, and the
substantive research and notes by Yoshiyuki Kuhara-
sensei and preserved by Toshiyasu Ochiai [10,19,20],
it is understood beyond any doubt that the gō-no-kata
was and is a special and never completed set of exercis-
es (ten in total) for two people devised by Kanō-shihan,
that combined several aims:

**Jūdō Education:** The gō-no-kata provided a framework
for the correct learning of the basics of jūdō without
throwing. It teaches how to use force effectively, with-
out relying on force as one’s primary means to conquer
an opponent.

**Physical Education:** The gō-no-kata required using one’s
body with precision, especially in the practice of using
both focused strength and yielding at critical timings
during jūdō techniques.

**Physical Culture:** Practice of the gō-no-kata assisted in
the development of physical strength itself, in a time
that power training devices were nearly nonexistent.

**Psychological Benefits:** It was believed that practice
of the gō-no-kata contributed to increased willpower and
“spiritual energy” in the sense of mens sana in corpore sano
[healthy spirit in a healthy body].

If indeed both kata were established in 1887, as sug-
gested by Kawamura and Daigo [12]63, then it is ap-
propriate to conclude that the gō-no-kata and the jū-no-
kata were created as a complementary pair, as follows:

**Jū-no-kata:** Simplified, in the jū-no-kata, the jū (softness)
question is responded to by jū (softness). Specifically,
the jū-no-kata starts with jū and ends in jū.

**Gō-no-kata:** Likewise, in the gō-no-kata, the gō (hard-
ness) question is first responded to by gō and then sub-
sequently by jū (softness). Specifically, the gō-no-kata
starts with gō but ends in jū. Thus the gō-no-kata ad-
heres to a fundamental tenet of jūdō namely that soft-
ness controls hardness in the end.

Both kata convey the meaning of jū-no-ri, i.e. the core
principle of jūjutsu whereby one avoids opposing an
opponent’s force and power directly in favor of using it
to one’s advantage. They also accord with jū yoku gō
wo sei suru 柔能く剛を制する, a core principle of jūdō
which can be translated in a number of ways – softness
overcomes hardness, flexibility overcomes stiffness, gentleness
controls strength or win by yielding.

Despite being popularly thought of as defunct, the gō-
no-kata survives today having initially been preserved in
Tōkyō by a small group of senior jūdōka under the guida-
tance of Toshiyasu Ochiai, and now also by a handful
of experts abroad. The knowledge of two elderly korai
jūjutsu sensei and the writings of Nagaoa- and Samura-
sensei supported its limited preservation (Figure 8).

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63 This is, however, doubtful. As suggested by Kuhara [9], gō-no-kata is likely the oldest jūdō kata, and must thus predate 1885, the year in
which the old 10-technique nage-no-kata was completed. Jū-no-kata, which is far more refined, was created years later, in 1887, and prob-
ably only then paired up with gō-no-kata, to form what was then known under their common name gōjū-no-kata.
Additionally, having been obscured for many decades the *kata* is now experiencing a minor renaissance in that it is taught and performed on an annual basis at the Kōdōkan Jūdō Institute by Ochiai-sensei under the patronage of the Dōyūkai.

Kanō’s own writings indicate that he was not satisfied with elements of the gō-no-kata and therefore abandoned, or at least, delayed its development. Furthermore, like with Itsutsu-no-kata, Kanō never found the time afterwards to rework, revise or expand the gō-no-kata and accordingly it must be considered as unfinished. However the writings also confirm that Kanō did not reject the *kata* in its entirety or its practice, unlike what some claim; so the Kōdōkan is overstating the case when it suggests otherwise. It is most likely that it is precisely this which devoted jūdō kata practitioners such as, for example, Ochiai-sensei, found out too, and why he continues practicing and teaching gō-no-kata having seriously reflected on what it entails and how it can be properly incorporated into jūdō training. Consequently, we as authors of this paper, advocate the practice of gō-no-kata, and we do so for all of the reasons explained above, as well as because we believe that in a time when the message, aims and principles of Kanō’s jūdō under impulse of the International Jūdō Federation become increasingly diluted in the light of its ever increasing emphasis on jūdō as a performance sport and popular media circus, gō-no-kata helps explaining and restoring what jūdō is and was about.

Finally, we applaud Toshiro Daigo-sensei’s recent paper [3] in which he included gō-no-kata as a legitimate and existing Kōdōkan kata. We hope that it will soon be reintroduced in the Kōdōkan’s formal teaching curriculum of kata.

Notes

Japanese names in this paper are listed by given name first and family name second, instead of traditional Japanese usage which places the family name first.

For absolute rigor, long Japanese vowel sounds have been approximated using macrons (e.g. Kōdōkan) in order to indicate their Japanese pronunciation as closely as possible. However, when referring to or quoting from the literature, the relevant text or author is cited exactly as per the original source, with macrons used or omitted as appropriate.

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