

Kōdōkan Jūdō's Elusive Tenth Kata: The Gō-no-kata – "Forms of Proper Use of Force" – Part 2

Authors' Contribution:

- A** Study Design
- B** Data Collection
- C** Statistical Analysis
- D** Manuscript Preparation
- E** Funds Collection

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Source of support: Self financing

Received: 21 January 2009; Accepted: 13 February 2009; Published online: 7 August 2009

Abstract

Background and Study Aim:

In recent years, *gō-no-kata* ("Prearranged forms of correct use of force"), a generally considered obsolete and reclusive 'tenth' *kata* of *Kōdōkan jūdō*, has become the subject of some renewed interest within *jūdō* circles. Most information on *gō-no-kata*, as available in the West, is ambiguous and often even blatantly erroneous. The purpose of the present paper is to remove the confusion and mystery which surrounds the *gō-no-kata*.

Material/Methods:

To achieve this, we offer a careful critical analysis of the available literature and rare source material on this *kata*.

Results:

Gō-no-kata is not, nor in any form has it ever been a *kata* of blows. Its aim was to serve as an intense fitness exercise and to examine and illustrate the basic principle of efficient use of force and resistance. Original comments provided by Kanō-shihan, show beyond any doubt that the *gō-no-kata* was, and is, a special and never completed set of ten exercises for two people. Kanō-shihan's own writings indicate that he was not entirely satisfied with some elements of the *gō-no-kata* and therefore abandoned, or at least, delayed its development. Kanō-shihan passed away before having been able to rework, revise or expand the *gō-no-kata*.

Conclusions:

Gō-no-kata, must be considered an unfinished exercise created by Jigorō Kanō-shihan. Kanō-shihan, however, never rejected the *kata* or its practice; it would be overstating the case to suggest otherwise.

Key words:

Gō-no-kata • Jigorō Kanō • *jūdō* • *kata* • *Kōdōkan*

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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 the his school and style of *budō* as given by its founder Jigorō Kanō (1860–1938).

Jūdō: *Jūdō* is a Japanese form of pedagogy, created by Jigorō Kanō, based *inter alia* on neoconfucianist values, traditional Japanese martial arts, and modern Western principles developed by John Dewey, John Stuart Mill, and Herbert Spencer.

BACKGROUND

In addition to the aforementioned nine *kata*, 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 [1–3].

The purpose of the present paper is to provide a comprehensive study of a *kata* that once formed part of the *Kōdōkan* curriculum, but no longer features, namely 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 circulation on *gō-no-kata*, is contradictory, ambiguous, and even blatantly erroneous; at best, its contents and even its ex-

istence has been the subject of considerable speculation. In the first part of this series of three papers we showed that the origin of the misinformation on *gō-no-kata* can be traced back to modern *jūdō* authors failing to recognize both important mistakes contained in early Western *jūdō* books and the fabrication in recent years of a bogus *gō-no-kata*. In this second part, we aim to further 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*?

Gō-no-kata: “Prearranged forms of correct use of force”, a physical exercise created by Jigorō Kanō and presumably the oldest *jūdō* *kata*, which until recently was often considered defunct.

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?

The second part of this series of three papers will mainly focus on the second and third 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 jūdō*. It has implications for the current *jūdō* syllabus, and also represent the only critical scholarly study of this *kata* in both Western languages and Japanese.

RESEARCH INTO THE ORIGINAL JAPANESE AND SCHOLARLY LITERATURE ON *GŌ-NO-KATA*

Common errors

It should be noted that several writings claimed by some to refer to the *gō-no-kata*, actually refer to the *itsutsu-no-kata*. To understand the root cause of this error it is necessary to explain the way the terms *gō-no-kata* and *itsutsu-no-kata* are written (and read) in Japanese *kanji*. In Japanese *kanji* the term *gō-no-kata* is written as 剛の形 and *itsutsu-no-kata* as 五の形. The error arises when the number five (五) in *itsutsu-no-kata* is misread in its *kun* (= original Japanese) pronunciation, which is ‘go’ instead of its quite different sounding *on* (Chinese-derived) pronunciation, hence incorrectly reading *go-no-kata* instead of *itsutsu-no-kata*.

Yet another common error sourced from a misunderstanding of the Japanese language is to confuse the *gō-no-kata* with the *go-no-sen-no-kata* (後の先の形). *Go* in the context of *go-no-sen* is unrelated to *gō* in the *gō-no-kata*. The former *go* (後) means “after” or “reactive” while the latter *gō* (剛) of course means *hardness* or *force* or *resistance* in the context of *gō-no-kata*.

As a final word of caution it is necessary to highlight that much of the available material on the *gō-no-kata* cited so far, contains insufficient detail to actually ‘prove’ the veracity of some of the claims made by others regarding the *kata* and as a consequence much of the published claims about the *kata* amount to little more than hearsay.

¹ Also sometimes misspelled as Yoshiaki Yamashita; Japanese *kanji* indicating names sometimes have multiple pronunciations, and the correct reading often may not be known unless indicated so by the subject himself or someone else who knows for sure.

² Also known as either Shūichi Nagaoka or Hidekazu Nagaoka.

THE QUIRKS OF HEURISTIC *JŪDŌ* LITERATURE RESEARCH

When reviewing the relevant literature in an attempt to learn more about *gō-no-kata*, one is confronted once again with the same issues that have troubled technical and historic research into *jūdō*, and *budō* in general:

- absence of having consulted primary sources;
- absence of detailed references and footnotes;
- authors who are inexperienced in heuristics and research methods, and whose Japanese language ability is deficient, sometimes totally.

Despite some refreshing attempts over the last 20 years, still there are very few truly authoritative and annotated texts on unarmed *būdō* available in the West – notable exceptions being the works of Donn F. Draeger (1922–1982), Trevor P. Leggett (1914–2000) and Serge Mol (°1970), as well as a handful of academic dissertations [4,5]. Specifically for *jūdō*, Draeger, Leggett, and also the translated works of Toshiro Daigo, Isao Okano and Kazuzō Kudō are of importance. Moreover, even most Japanese language *jūdō* books, except the few that were written by rare *jūdō* scholars such as Tamio Kurihara, Sanzō Maruyama [6], Shinichi Oimatsu [7], Takeshi Sakuraba [8], or Raisuke Kudō [9], often merely replicate each other’s content (without referencing, that is) or else have very little to add. It is for this reason that when errors appear in one book, they are often promulgated in subsequent other books, without much heuristic or scientific discourse, and very quickly become accepted as fact. The attribution of *itsutsu-no-kata* as a creation of Jigorō Kanō might be one of the most blatant and commonly maintained ‘artifacts’ [10].

Therefore, for serious research one is forced to work almost exclusively from original Japanese sources and original source books, most of which are very old, very rare and virtually unknown in the West. Such sources, of course, are extremely difficult to obtain, usually absent in libraries, and often, when finally found, are very expensive to acquire. Academic institutions usually have little interest in *jūdō*, and relevant educational support organizations, such as for example, the Japan Foundation, notoriously refuse to sponsor or have anything to do with martial arts, apparently because they consider this area already sufficiently popular with the common public outside of Japan. If one does have a rare chance to lay hands on such reclusive texts, such as for example, the authoritative *jūdō* books by the celebrated 10th *dan* holders Yoshitsugu Yamashita¹ (1865–1935), Hideichi Nagaoka² (1876–1952) and Kyūzō Mifune

Jigorō Kanō: The founder of *Kōdōkan jūdō*, born in 1860, died in 1938.

(1883–1965), even then, one will, for the purpose of the present paper, not make much progress, since neither author reveals anything about or even mentions *gō-no-kata*.

It is not known for certain, precisely why there are no major written sources on the *gō-no-kata*, though the most prevalent speculative explanation assumes that it is because the *kata* already when Kanō-*shihan* was still alive, no longer featured as part of the *Kōdōkan* curriculum. In particular, given Mifune's extensive knowledge of *jūdō* and his life-long work with Kanō-*shihan*, it would not be unreasonable to assume that he would have known the *gō-no-kata*. It is therefore a source of curiosity why Mifune who is also known to have devised and demonstrated various other uncommon *jūdō kata* (such as his own *Nage*- and *Katame-waza-ura-no-kata* [properly called *Nage-no-waza kenkyū*] and his own early form of a very *torite*³-like *Goshinjutsu*) all to the apparent displeasure of Kanō, does neither show, nor even mention the *gō-no-kata* in any of his books.

In addition to the text known in the West as the *Canon of Judo*, Mifune wrote various other *jūdō* books – most notably (together with co-authors Kazuzō Kudō and Yoshizō Matsumoto), his large five-volume opus entitled *Jūdō Kōza* [11]. This rather voluminous work contains extensive information on various technical and other aspects of *jūdō* and also many unique photographs *e.g.* Kyūzō Mifune and Kazuzō Kudō performing the *itsutsu-no-kata*, and Haruko Nihoshi and Keiko Fukuda showing the *jū-no-kata*. It can only be a matter of speculation why such an extensive work by such a great expert does not mention the *gō-no-kata*, but there must be an underlying reason for it as it is unlikely to be an accidental oversight. Perhaps the answer to this is found, at least partially, in the controversy in ideological approach to *jūdō* between Mifune and Kudō, with Mifune being a fervent advocate of the pure *jū*-principle, as clearly shown in his own *kuki-nage*-based *tokui-waza* or favorite techniques, such as, *sumi-otoshi*, *uki-otoshi*, and *tama-guruma*, and Kudō rather arguing that initial use of force is acceptable as long as used efficiently. That being said, Kudō's works, either those in Japanese or English, do not mention *gō-no-kata* either.

Furthermore, we know that there exist no works on any of the original 10-techniques forms of any of *Kōdōkan jūdō's kata*, not about the original *nage-no-kata*, the original *katame-no-kata*, the original 10-techniques *jū-no-kata*, the original *shōbu-no-kata*, so similarly, finding anything about the 10-techniques (never reworked, and thus original) *gō-no-kata*, represents a true challenge.

Two *sensei* who certainly mastered the *gō-no-kata* were the great Yaichibei Kanemitsu and Tamio Kurihara, both 9th and 10th *dan*-holders, respectively. However, examination of their works (which are some of the most informed and documented among all *jūdō* books) similarly will yield not a trace of the *gō-no-kata*.

Moreover, those texts that do make some reference to *gō-no-kata*, such as *Jūdō Kyōhan* by Sakujirō Yokoyama and Eisuke Ōshima first published in Japanese in 1909, and in English in 1915 [12], usually devote only half a sentence to it:

“...there are performed in the *Kōdōkan* some kinds of *kata* which were invented by Mr. Kanō, namely: *itsutsu-no-kata*, *gō-no-kata*, *jū-no-kata*, *shōbū-no-kata*, etc.” (...) [12]

Once more, none of these statements appearing in those works, is referenced. A further issue to be overcome when researching the *gō-no-kata* is that unlike some of the other *jūdō kata*, such as the *koshiki-no-kata* or *itsutsu-no-kata*, and possibly *kime-no-kata*, the *gō-no-kata* appears not to have existed previously in a complete or known partial form in any *koryū jūjutsu* school. This means that for those other *kata*, even if certain details cannot be found in the oldest *jūdō* sources, one still has the opportunity to access much older *jūjutsu* texts for source material. However, since the *gō-no-kata* is almost certainly an original creation of Kanō-*shihan*, that option does not exist.

Precisely under what circumstances *gō-no-kata* was created or formalized is not known. There is no indication that the *gō-no-kata* would have featured during the 24 July 1906 conclave of leading *jūjutsu* and *jūdō* masters held at the *Butokuden* of the *Dai Nippon Butokukai* in Kyōto. This think-tank of respected *jūjutsu* masters presided by Jigorō Kanō had gathered to standardize and codify the official *kata* to be used by the *Kōdōkan*. (obviously, *Kōdōkan goshinjutsu* and *goshinhō* did not feature either, for the simple reason that these two would not be invented for almost another 50 years). Jigorō Kanō writes in his biography that this conclave only dealt really with *nage-no-kata*, *katame-no-kata*, and *kime-no-kata*, originally with the aim to create *kata* which would be nationally unified and possibly be suited for teaching outside of *jūdō*, as part of a national physical education [13]. Kanō had been instructed to do so by Viscount *Ura*, president of the *Butokukai*. Even *jū-no-kata* was not accepted by the *Butokukai* then, according to Kanō, most likely because its nature and contents was too far removed from classical *jūjutsu*, and thus considered too modernistic. Kanō had been far less satisfied with his *gō-no-kata* than with *jū-no-kata*, and had not yet revised it, hence why it still

³ *Torite* 取手 literally means “grabbing the hands” and refers to a type of self-defence, that heavily relies on disarming an armed attacker, much like what is taught to and used by the police.

existed in its old 1887 ten-techniques version. Knowing that *jū-no-kata* would be excessive in terms of acceptance in 1906, the idea of proposing and defending his far less complete and perfected *gō-no-kata* to this conclave, would have been unimaginable. The impact of this is that post-1906 sources for the *gō-no-kata* are likely to be limited, hence complicating research into the *gō-no-kata*.

KŌDŌKAN PERIODICALS

Potential reference sources for the *gō-no-kata* are the various early journals published by the *Kōdōkan*.

The *Kōdōkan* started publishing its own journal in October of 1898 under the name *Kokushi*, 國士, loosely meaning “The Patriot”. In December of 1914 its name was changed into *Jūdō* 柔道, only to change again in January of 1919 to *Yūkō-no-katsudō* 有功乃活動, this title being loosely translated as “The Efficiency of Movement”. Likely this name was too modern, since three years later, in 1922 the name was changed again, now into *Taisei* 大勢. *Taisei* has an intentional double meaning. Literally, it means “Large Crowd” or “The People”, hence suggesting that *jūdō* is meant for and suited to everyone; however, the name *Taisei* also means something else, namely “Current Thoughts”, thus suggesting a process of philosophical reflection on matters. This name must have appealed even less, since the magazine appeared barely a couple of months under that name before changing again, now into *Jūdō Kai* 柔道会 or “The Judo Community”. The *Kai*-part then was dropped in 1929, and it continued to be known under the shortened title *Jūdō* which has been in existence ever since. It is worthwhile mentioning that a second journal, *Sakkō* 作興, loosely translated as “Awakening” or “Promotion” (as in the sense of “to market”) appeared for a couple of years simultaneously with *Jūdō*.

These early journals originated from a time when *jūdō* had not been tainted or damaged by an overemphasis on sports-based competition and winning medals, and thus their content focused on what really mattered to Kanō, that is *jūdō* as an all-round means of education. These periodicals presented a view on *jūdō* entirely different to that promulgated today, and they contained information on how to develop one’s physical, spiritual, pedagogical and philosophical capacities.

The authors of the articles therein were great *jūdō* masters of the past, such as Yoshitsugu Yamashita, Hajime Isogai (1871–1947), Hideichi Nagaoka, and Kaichirō Samura (1880–1964), individuals who all achieved 10th *dan*. These masters were not only educated in tradition-

al *jūjutsu*, but also who laid the foundation and conceptualization of what *jūdō* really is, and was meant to be. Frequent editorials and lengthy philosophical articles by Kanō himself also featured. Moreover, it was in these magazines that certain things such as the *kata* were introduced to the *jūdō* world, often a single technique per issue. The *nage-no-kata*, *kime-no-kata* and *jū-no-kata* were all introduced in this manner.

Accessing information from these early journals, however, is a non-trivial task. Bound reprints in large volumes exist, covering, with a few omissions, the entire period from 1898 to 1938⁴ totaling in excess of 20,000 pages. These volumes themselves are accompanied by two booklets (of about 140 pages total) that have reprinted the original table of contents of each periodical. There exists no further index or glossary to these volumes. Accordingly, it is exceptionally difficult to locate an item of interest, apart from each time reading both booklets and subsequently verifying and reading through an entire article of interest in the actual volume. Realistically, it is almost impossible to locate anything unless it has been already found and its relevance confirmed, or unless one is prepared to undertake the painstaking process described.

De Crée [1] cites two pieces of writing on the *gō-no-kata* attributed to Kanō himself. They are reported as featuring in a 1921 edition of *Yūkō-no-katsudō* [14] and a 1927 edition of *Sakkō* [15]. Kanō’s 1983 biography really reprints some of this information, such as the 1921 article, and thus repeats the information on *gō-no-kata*; so does Masao Koyasu [16]. These two items authored by Kanō-*shihan* himself will be discussed at a later stage. It is also likely that other, hitherto undiscovered, references on the *gō-no-kata* may feature somewhere in the entire oeuvre of *Kōdōkan* magazines or old leaflets.

THE TRUTH ABOUT GŌ-NO-KATA, A KATA OF FOCUSED STRENGTH

To develop a deeper understanding of the conflicting ideas around the *gō-no-kata* the material indicating that it was complementary to the *jū-no-kata* is now evaluated. The oldest source retrieved so far, which contains truthful information about *gō-no-kata* comes from an unexpected author, namely, Sadakazu Uenishi⁵.

1906 – Sadakazu Uenishi – *The Text of Ju-jutsu as Practiced in Japan* [17]

Uenishi in the preface of his book describes how the *samurai* not only preserved their art of self-defense, but

⁴ Volumes since 1938 have not been reprinted since Kanō then passed away; Yamashita had already died in 1935.

⁵ The surname of Sadakazu Uenishi 上西定一 as it appears in the book “*The text of ju-jutsu as practiced in Japan*”, is improperly transcribed into English as ‘Uyenishi’ instead of ‘Uenishi’.

also their physical culture. The importance in combat of possessing superior physical strength had been recognized from the days of the dawn of the human race. Indeed, in era that preceded the *halterophilia* and methods of weightlifting that were introduced and gained some popularity in the early 20th century, 19th and pre-19th century development of physical strength heavily realized on working with heavy objects found in nature, or commonly used in certain handicraft jobs, as well as specific exercises. Such strength-developing exercises also existed in some *jūjutsu* schools:

“Consider, for instance, the various exercises which have been alleged to be essential preliminaries to Ju-jutsu training. Well, I have never seen any Ju-jutsuan who ever practised them. In the old style of Ju-jutsu before my time, there was I believe an exercise called the tai atar⁶ or “toughing” exercise, in which the practitioners rushed at each other, chest to chest, somewhat in the style of the exercise called dzu-dzu-ki, practised by the Sumo wrestlers, who develop their strength and hardness by butting each other. In fact, all these “resistance” movements, concerning which certain pseudo authorities on Ju-jutsu have been so fluent, would, if of any practical value at all, be more suitable as training for the Sumo style of wrestling than for Ju-jutsu. For Sumo is contested by big heavy men, often standing about six feet in height and weighing from eighteen to twenty stone, who rely almost entirely on their strength and avoirdupois to give them the victory, not that they are without various tricks, holds and moves of their own.

Such training as the Ju-jutsu novice does indulge in is taught in the schools in Japan, and is styled the taisō-no-kata, or physical culture exercise for boys and girls, comprising go-no-kata, which means “muscle development for strength”, and ju-no-kata, or “soft exercise, – preparation in suppleness and agility” (...). [17, preface].

Uenishi is correct, and the use of the names *gō-no-kata* and *jū-no-kata* in *jūdō*, unlike what some may think, is hardly original. *Gō-no-kata* in essence existed in a number of classical *budō* schools together with *jū-no-kata* as part of *taisō-no-kata*. *Taisō-no-kata* 体操の形 really means ‘gymnastics’ or ‘calisthenics’ in a broader sense. As all gymnastics, certain exercises focus more on developing greater muscular strength (*gō-no-kata*), whereas others focus more on stretching and increasing flexibility (*jū-no-kata*). Thus, such exercises existed in *budō* schools besides *jūdō*. Most commonly, these were much looser and not as strictly codified as choreographed patterns the way they exist in *jūdō*. They certainly did not exist previously in a ceremonial form like they are most often today performed in *jūdō*. In *jūjutsu*, a *gō-no-kata* or a *jū-*

no-kata might greatly differ from time to time depending on who was teaching, just like warm-up exercises in any *jūdō* club might greatly differ from time to time. In *jūdō* though, Kanō re-created a very specific *gō-no-kata* and a *jū-no-kata*. Moreover, he made these into exercises that represented the fundamentals and philosophy of *jūdō*. Thus both exercises, in addition to developing strength and flexibility, respectively, also represented the grammar of *jūdō* technique, and actively contributed towards better understanding *jūdō*, improving technique, and realizing *jūdō*'s principles.

1921 (November) – Jigoro Kanō – *Yūkō-no-katsudō* [14]

Writing in *Yūkō-no-katsudō* on the progression of learning *kata*, Kanō states that the *gō-no-kata* contains ten techniques. However, contrary to what is implied by Ohlenkamp [18], no listing of the techniques is provided.

“Gō-no-kata or at times called Gō-jū-no-kata, I remember having taught it some time in the past but my study was not complete; three or four out of the total ten forms in it, I did not like. I had thought of reviewing it but left it as it was. In this kata, at first both [Tori and Uke]⁷ will push, pull or twist each other hard and in the end one [Tori] will win by surrendering himself to the force. I am thinking of completing it in future and teach it in the Kōdōkan. As for now, you may study it or not study it, which is up to you.” (...) [14, p. 1–6].

From this passage it can be concluded that Kanō was not entirely satisfied with a number of points in the *gō-no-kata*. Also, we learnt that the *gō-no-kata* by Kanō-shihan was deemed neither perfect, nor finished.

The key sentence in the passage is the final one, where Kanō states that he leaves it up to the judgment of the individual *jūdōka* whether or not to practice the *gō-no-kata*. Moreover, it confirms that Kanō **did not reject** the *kata* in its entirety **nor did he disapprove** of anyone practicing it. Even prior to Daigo-sensei's recent lecture and paper [20,21], this suggests that the *Kōdōkan*'s traditional position *i.e.* that *gō-no-kata* does not or does no longer exist, or would have been discarded by Kanō and should not be studied, was overstated and open to challenge.

To add to the above conclusion, the late Trevor P. Leggett, for example, to name just one well-respected authority on *jūdō*, recalled having once seen the *gō-no-kata* being performed at the *Kōdōkan* in the 1930's. Any suggestion in the sense that *gō-no-kata* does not exist, is thus nonsensical.

⁶ *Tai-atar* 体当 literally means “hitting the body”, to be understood here as a toughening method.

⁷ *Tori*: the person who applies a throw or other technique... [19], p. 128). *Uke*: the person who receives a technique... (*Ibid.*, p. 131).

It is also informative to note from the source that an original, alternative name for the *gō-no-kata* was *gō-jū-no-kata* (Forms of Hardness & Gentleness). This further reinforces the complementary nature of the *gō-no-kata* and *jū-no-kata*.

1926 – Jigoro Kanō – *Shin Nihonshi* – reproduced in *Mind Over Muscle* [22]

A lecture note by Kanō (which merely mentions the *gō-no-kata*) dates from 1926 and was originally published as *Jūdō no Hattatsu* 柔道の発達 “The Development of Judo” in *Shin Nihonshi* 新日本史 “A New History of Japan”. This lecture was recently reproduced as *From Jujutsu to Judo* in the book *Mind Over Muscle: Writings From the Founder of Judo* compiled by Naoki Murata and translated by Nancy Ross [22, p. 8–35]:

“So few years after I established Kōdōkan jūdō, I created fifteen *kata* for throws and ten *kata* for combat called *kime-no-kata* (forms of self-defense). After that, the *kata* for *yawara* were created, so most of the *kata* were completed by around 1887. During this time, those of us undergoing training were at our most passionate about study. We have of course, made progress since then, but it is safe to say that the technical foundation of the Kōdōkan judo of today was established at that time. Other *kata* that were established around that time included *itsutsu-no-kata* (the five forms), ten *kata* for *katame-no-kata* (forms of grappling), and ten *kata* for *gōjū-no-kata* (also known as *gō-no-kata*; forms of strength).” (...) [22, p. 25].

As an aside, this passage raises more questions than it answers, as it suggests that the *nage-no-kata* and *kime-no-kata* were the first two *jūdō kata* created. The consequence of this is that it suggests that the *kime-no-kata* (meant, most likely, is ... in its original form, that is ... *shōbu-no-kata*) existed before the *katame-no-kata* which is contrary to conventional thinking.

1927 (December) – Jigoro Kanō – *Sakkō* [15]

In December 1927 Kanō wrote in *Sakkō*:

“... in contrast to this *jū-no-kata*, there is a kind of *kata* called *gō-no-kata* or *gōjū-no-kata*. It is a system whereby at first both (Tori and Uke) will fight with force against force, but later Tori changes to Ju (softness) and wins. I used to teach it one time but as there were some points I was not satisfied with, I am not teaching it nowadays. I look forward to further refinement.” [15]

It should be noted that this *Sakkō* extract is also quoted in a recent French language biography of Kanō (*Jigoro Kano: Père du judo – La vie du fondateur du judo*, by Michel Mazac [23, p. 160–161]), where additional contextual material on the *jū-no-kata* is provided.

1954 – Yves Klein – *Les Fondements du Judo* [24]

Yves Klein (1928–1962), the famous avant-garde French artist, became fascinated with *jūdō* in the early 1950s and made the decision to travel to Japan to study *jūdō* in depth. Klein had arrived in Yokohama on September 23rd of 1952 and remained there for 15 months, until he returned to France in 1954, armed with a 4th *dan* degree, issued by the *Kōdōkan* on December 18th of 1953. Klein was unique in that he devoted great attention to *kata*, which was very unusual for a Westerner in those days. For Klein, *kata* had both spiritual and artistic properties. His 1954 oeuvre [24] is entirely devoted to *kata*, of which he details five: *nage-no-kata*, *katame-no-kata*, *jū-no-kata*, *itsutsu-no-kata*, and *koshiki-no-kata*. Klein himself functions as the *tori* of the first three of those *kata*, whereas for the last two *kata* he fulfils the role of the *uke*, with the *tori* part being taken care of by Jōin Oda-sensei and Sempei Asami-sensei, respectively. The presence of *itsutsu-no-kata*, and *koshiki-no-kata* in a Western book and performed by a Westerner as early as 1954 must have been a first. In his book, Klein writes the following:

“... Autrefois on pratiquait le *Kata de ‘Go’* (dix techniques), qui était l’étude de la puissance, force physique, violence et contractions. Au Japon, on pratique encore aujourd’hui ce *Kata* assez étrange dans les dojos de ‘Karate’ (sorte de “savate” japonaise).

On pratiquait aussi le “*Shobu-No-Kata*” (dix techniques) qui était l’étude du combat de guerre.

Le “*Seiryoku-zenyo-kokumintai-iku-no-kata*”, souvent cité comme le 7^e *kata*, n’est plus pratiqué aujourd’hui au Kōdōkan. (...) [24, p. 18]

[“... Formerly they used to practice ‘*Gō-no-kata*’ (ten techniques), which was the study of power, physical force, violence and contractions. In Japan, they still practise this rather strange *Kata* in ‘*Karate*’ (kind of Japanese “French boxing”) *dōjō* today. They also used to practice “*Shōbu-no-kata*” (ten techniques) which was the study of the combat of war. The “*Sei-ryoku zenyō-kokumin taiiku-no-kata*”, often called the 7th *kata*, today is no longer practiced at the Kōdōkan. (...)]

Klein, in addition to Trevor P. Leggett, was likely one of the first Westerners to mention and recognize *gō-no-kata*. The fact that he includes advanced *kata*, such as *koshiki-no-kata* in his book, but not *gō-no-kata*, may suggest that already then this *kata* had become rather elusive. Although, Klein does not identify the individual techniques of *gō-no-kata*, his merit is that he clearly and correctly states that the exercise contains ten individual techniques.

CONCLUSIONS

Serious research into the *gō-no-kata* is a very difficult endeavor. There is a dearth of major written sources on the *kata*, and what is commonly available is often unverifiable, incomplete, ambiguous or factually in error.

While research into this area remains ongoing, there exists 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 principle of efficient use of force and resistance. The literature indicates that the movements within the *kata* focused on the direct resistance of force (with force) right up until the very last moment when the force is overcome by skill, strategy and body movement.

Based on the original comments provided by Kanō-shihan [14,15], it is understood beyond any doubt that the *gō-no-kata* was and is a special and never completed set of exercises (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, without 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 of 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* [a healthy spirit in a healthy body].

If indeed both *kata* were established in 1887, then it is appropriate 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* (hardness) question is first responded to by *gō* and then subsequently by *jū* (softness). Specifically, the *gō-no-kata* starts with *gō* but ends in *jū*. Thus the *gō-no-kata* adheres to a fundamental tenet of *jūdō* namely that softness 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*.

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.

Finally, we applaud Toshiro Daigo-sensei's recent paper [25] in which he included *gō-no-kata* as a legitimate and existing *Kōdōkan kata*. We hope that this exercise 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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