Kōdōkan Jūdō’s Elusive Tenth Kata: The Gō-no-kata – ”Forms of Proper Use of Force” – Part 1

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Abstract

Background and Study Aim: Kōdōkan Jūdō is a Japanese form of pedagogy created by Jigōrō 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. It was Kanō’s intention to educate both the mind and body. The practical study of jūdō includes randori (free exercise), nine different kata (predetermined and choreographed physical exercises), and kōgi (lectures). In recent years, Gō-no-kata (“Prearranged forms of correct use of force”), a generally considered obsolete and exclusive ‘tenth’ kata of Kōdōkan jūdō, has become the subject of some renewed interest. The purpose of the present paper is to provide a comprehensive study of this kata which once formed a part of the standard jūdō curriculum. We also aim 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: The name gō-no-kata sporadically appeared in some early Western jūdō books. Flawed research methods, as well as the appearance of a true hoax presumably created with commercial intent, have led to widespread confusion and misinformation in the West about the contents of the elusive gō-no-kata.

Conclusions: 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.

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

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BACKGROUND

According to the founder of jūdō’s own words, the proper study of jūdō essentially has to involve both randori and kata [1–5]. This important cohesion between these two building stones of jūdō virtually has been lost in modern times, partly because of the International Judo Federation’s (IJF) and national governing bodies’ emphasis on the sports-competitive aspects of jūdō and winning medals. Kata are intended and recognized as a valuable training drill in most Japanese gendai budō1 and koryū2 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. Finn [6] provides a particularly insightful definition of the subject:

“Kata: Prearranged forms in Japanese martial arts that are like a living text book. They contain all the fundamental

1 Gendai budō 現代武道 are modern Japanese martial arts which were established after the Meiji Restoration (1866–1869). In that way they distinguish themselves from classical or traditional or old martial arts (koryū). Gendai budō often are rooted in koryū.

2 Koryū 古流 is a Japanese term that is used in association with the ancient Japanese martial arts. The word literally translates as old school or old tradition. Koryū is a general term for Japanese schools of martial arts of which the creation predates the Meiji Restoration (1866–1869) which sparked major socio-political changes and led to the modernisation of Japan.
information in animate form, with which to perfect technique and understanding of the particular skill." (…)

There are nine *kata* in Kōdōkan jūdō today, as accepted by the time-honored headquarters of the jūdō world, the Kōdōkan jūdō Institute in Tōkyō, Japan [7–9]. These nine *kata* are named as follows [7–10]:

- Nage-no-kata (Forms of Throwing);
- Katame-no-kata (Forms of Grappling or Holding);
- Kime-no-kata (Forms of Decisiveness);
- Kōdōkan goshinjutsu (Kōdōkan Forms of Self-Defense);
- Jū-no-kata (Forms of Gentleness & Flexibility);
- Itsutsu-no-kata (The Five Forms);
- Koshiki-no-kata (The Antique Forms);
- Sei-ryoku-zen’ī’yo Kokumin-Taiiku (National Physical Education according to [the principle of] best use of energy);
- Joshi goshinbō (Methods of Self-Defense for Women).

Of those nine *kata* only seven are most commonly performed. Because of this reason one will often find more popular literature incorrectly claiming that there would be only seven or eight Kōdōkan jūdō *kata* [11,12]. With the exception of the Kōdōkan goshinjutsu and Joshi goshinbō, all the above *kata* are commonly attributed to the founder of jūdō, Dr. Jigorō Kanō (1860–1938) [12]. The Kōdōkan goshinjutsu was created by a panel of experts in 1956 (see the text Kōdōkan jūdō) [13, pages 145–251] for full details about the first eight of the above *kata*. Joshi goshinbō, the ninth *kata*, though officially recognized by the Kōdōkan, has never gained great popularity, not in Japan and even less so abroad, and it is usually omitted from lists of *kata* or from jūdō textbooks. Goshinbō can be considered as the equivalent of Kōdōkan goshinjutsu, designed specifically for the female and taking into account the types of attacks of which females are usually the victim; the creation of this *kata* was ordered by Jirō Nangō, the second President of the Kōdōkan in the 1940’s, and completed by a technical team of experts within the Kōdōkan. The Itsutsu-no-kata, though also officially attributed to Jigorō Kanō [13,14], according to recent research dealt with elsewhere, was not created by Kanō-shihan either [15,16], and neither was Koshiki-no-kata [7,9,15], the latter which consists of two series of forms directly taken from Kitō-ryū jūjutsu, more particularly, from its Takenakahā-style [15].

Two other Kōdōkan *kata* which are omitted from the above list, namely, kime-shiki and jū-shiki, today are considered part of the sei-ryoku-zen’ī’yo kokumin-taikō. Thus, unlike in the pre-1930 period, kime-shiki and jū-shiki usually are no longer considered separate *kata*, and for this reason, generally no longer appear under their separate names in Kōdōkan *kata* lists [15].

To provide context for some of the material that follows, it is useful to explain how the aforementioned nine *kata* are categorized according to purpose. See Kotani, et al. [17] and Otaki and Draeger [18] for further details.

Together, the *nage-no-kata* and the *katame-no-kata* are known as Randori-no-kata (Forms of Free Exercise). The main purpose of these two *kata* is to facilitate the development of randori (“free practice”) skills. The *kime-no-kata* and the Kōdōkan goshinjutsu, but also the *joshi goshinbō*, are classified as Shōbu-no-kata (Forms of self-defense) – within these *kata* the central objective is to defeat an adversary and survive. The *jū-no-kata* and the sei-ryoku-zen’ī’yo kokumin-taikō are grouped as Rentai-no-kata (Forms of physical education), where the foremost objective is to educate the body to remain healthy. Finally, the *itsutsu-no-kata* and the koshiki-no-kata are grouped together as Ri-no-kata (Forms of theory) – their core purpose is to develop a higher understanding of the fundamental and deeper goku' (極意 “essence”), perhaps even ‘esoteric’ principles (okuden 奥伝 or shinsho 謎義) of jūdō.

Despite this well-structured and generally considered ‘complete’ curriculum, one must acknowledge that 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 [15,18,19].

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* (囲の形 "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 existence has been the subject of considerable speculation. We aim to remove this confusion and mystery which surrounds the gō-no-kata.

Our research questions are as follows:

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1. Although Kanō is presented as author of this book, it is in fact a compilation by the Kōdōkan Institute that dates from long after Kanō had already passed away, in this way honoring jūdō kyōhon, the only book on jūdō which Kanō ever wrote, and of which he was able to complete only the first part (1931) [4] before he passed away in 1938.
2. Abe I. Personal communication, USJF National Judo Conference; 2004, July 5–7th; Honolulu, HI.
3. Note that this categorization is not unique. For example, the *jū-no-kata* could equally be classified as a *Ri-no-kata* since it also illustrates the fundamental principles of attack and defence found in jūdō.
What is the veracity of various claims made by certain publications that 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?

The first part of this series of three papers will mainly focus on the first 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.

**Proper translation of the name “Gō-No-Kata”**

It is very difficult at times to translate words from one language to another without losing the intended usage of the word. Gō 木 traditionally means ‘hard’ in the sense of opposite to yawara 柔, which means “pliable” or ‘soft’; the kanji 柔 is, of course, alternately pronounced ’jū’ in terms like jūdō. Whilst the term ’yawara’ is often also used to describe textiles or in some cases people with gentle personalities, ’gō’ can be used describe a cold, callous feeling towards another or unyielding as a hardened piece of steel that will not dent as a result of a blow of a hammer.

Gō-no-kata is, therefore, very difficult to translate precisely, since ’gō’ does not simply mean ’strength’ in the sense of physical strength, or even ’force’ in the sense of physical force. “Unyielding forms” would probably be the most accurate translation; however, this does not fully reflect the nature and purpose of the kata as intended by Kanō-shihan. In the gō-no-kata, ’gō’ is used as the opposite to the ”way-giving pliability” of jū. Thus, it implies some stiffness, but more so a ’resistance’, or ”resistive force”. After all, not all force is ’resistive’. Simultaneously, one could argue that jūdō is not devoid of force, as long as it is applied efficiently and with minimal effort. We will explain later how in the gō-no-kata it is shown that the brute gō of uke fails, but the refined gō of the tori, after first having applied jū, is successful. In other words, assuming that gō-no-kata simply condemns force is wrong. The kata accepts efficient force, but it rejects brute inefficient force. This is very, very hard to cover in a translated title. Taking these restrictions and concerns in mind, we propose the term “Forms of correct use of force” as an acceptable, defining English translation for Kōdōkan jūdō’s exercise known under the name gō-no-kata.

**The Gō-No-Kata in Western and Translated Jūdō Literature Throughout History**

According to the Kōdōkan New Japanese-English Dictionary of jūdō [20, page 142] the gō-no-kata was established in 1887 (also the year that the jū-no-kata was formed and the itsutsu-no-kata is claimed to have been created). Note that this is the only mention made of the gō-no-kata in what is otherwise a fairly comprehensive jūdō glossary. It is not known for sure what source the editors used to support this date, but no mention of this date is made for gō-no-kata by Sanzō Maruyama’s (1893–1984) otherwise exhaustive jūdō historical work [21]. As we will see later, this date is not beyond challenge.

For the rest, one can only find some rare cursory appearances of the name gō-no-kata in a handful of jūdō books that have appeared in Western languages. For this and other associated reasons, the gō-no-kata has become thought of as the ”lost or forgotten kata of jūdō”.

For example, Geoffrey Gleeson (1927–1994), the one-time national coach for the British Judo Association, and one of the Kōdōkan’s former research students (kenshüsei 研究生) back in the 1950’s, and known for his more intellectual and comprehensive approach to jūdō, writes:

“Unfortunately the Gō-No-Kata has been lost”. [22]

Gleeson’s viewpoint is understandable, and reflected the opinion of most Western jūdōka, including that of senior kata specialists, in both the West and Japan. We have already mentioned some of the reasons why, but the situation necessitates further reflection. A brief review of literature leads to the conclusion that no known

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6 The authors most likely interpreted a comment from Kanō that was published in his biography [14] where it reads in the relevant section about kata under the subheading Jū-no-kata, gō-no-kata: “I began studying it in the 20th year of Meiji ...” (…) It is not clear though whether this date should be interpreted as referring to the creation of gō-no-kata. Kanō writes the above section after having introduced jū-no-kata, which more likely is the object of the above date. At the end of the section, Kanō writes: “In the 20th year of Meiji also this kata had 10 hon; that later on became 15”. (…) Only after this sentence to conclude the part on jū-no-kata, Kanō introduces gō-no-kata: “Then there is gō-no-kata, which is totally different from jū-no-kata”. (…) It is our opinion that the syntaxes of these sentences suggest that the year 1887 as date of creation only applies to jū-no-kata, not to gō-no-kata.
work commonly available to the general public by an author of stature, describes this kata.

Three historic authors who fulfilled a leading role in the development of jūdō in the West, and whose texts were published in Western languages, did mention the gō-no-kata in their books. These authors are Moshe Feldenkrais, Gunji Koizumi, and Mikinosuke Kawaishi. However, it must be pointed out that neither Gleeson, nor any of the above three authors are referenced or annotated, and the claims made are either unverifiable (they provide no details of the original primary sources), or else, with a few notable exceptions, are based on uncorroborated oral accounts.

1944 – Moshe Feldenkrais – Judo: The Art of Defence and Attack [23]

Writing in 1944 in his book Judo: The Art of Defense and Attack [23], Dr Moshe Feldenkrais (1904–1984) includes the gō-no-kata in his list of most common kata as follows:

*The most common Katas are: “… (2) Go-No-Kata for developing strength…”* (…)[23, p. 176]

This is a rare reference to the gō-no-kata in a Western text. It is made rarer still in that it provides an accurate, if succinct summary of the gō-no-kata’s purpose. However, how or where precisely Feldenkrais obtained this information is not known, since no further details are given, nor original references provided. It is known though that Feldenkrais sent a copy of the manuscript to Kanō-shihan for approval. It is also known that Kanō had many deep concerns about the contents of the manuscript of which he thought, much was incorrect. Lack of time did not allow Kanō to completely edit the manuscript so he limited himself to providing a number of suggestions and selective corrections. It is thus plausible that the information came from Jigorō Kanō personally.


Writing in 1948 in the Budokwai Quarterly Bulletin, Gunji Koizumi (1883–1963) summarized his understanding of the gō-no-kata as follows:

“Goh-no-kata (kata of forcefulness).

This kata was designed to develop muscular power. The opposite of ju-no-kata, force is used against force. Based on attack and defence, in a contest of strength, the more forceful gains the controlling position over the other.

There are fifteen exercises practiced in the same manner as ju-no-kata.

This kata has not been popular, probably because it is too much like gymnastic exercises. I am not familiar enough with it to give full details.” (…) [24, p. 8]

Koizumi’s position is understandable. Together with Kawaishi he was probably the most senior jūdōka in Europe at that time, yet Koizumi’s own education was not in jūdō, but in jūjutsu. By the time Koizumi … ‘converted’ … to jūdō, Jigorō Kanō had already ceased teaching gō-no-kata, and the gō-no-kata had already been in disuse in Japan for dozens of years. Therefore, Koizumi most likely never learnt it, hence his errors regarding the number of techniques in the gō-no-kata (fifteen, instead of, correctly, ten).


The most commonly known reference for the gō-no-kata is the one found in the seminal book The Complete 7 Katas of Judo [25] by Mikinosuke Kawaishi (1899–1970).

“There are… many other Judo Katas. I shall mention only a few that have fallen into disuse:…

*The Shōbu-no-Kata*, or Kata of Attack (more literally Contest);…

The Go no Kata, or Kata of Force or of blows, more characteristic of Karate-do (the technique of the Atemi).” [25, p. 11]

This extract is the only mention that Kawaishi makes of the gō-no-kata in his entire book. He does not provide any further technical details on the kata, nor any list of the techniques contained therein. To the best of our knowledge, it is in Kawaishi’s book that the first mention of gō-no-kata containing striking techniques is made; it is also therein that the first association of gō-no-kata with karate is made. Accordingly, we opine that all other, later references of the gō-no-kata being a kata of blows, originate with Kawaishi as their original source.
Kawaishi’s book was translated into English, from the original French by the veteran British journalist and jūdōka E.J. Harrison. It is unclear why Kawaishi expressed gō-no-kata in essentially two different ways i.e. “kata of force” and “kata of blows”. One can only conjecture that either Kawaishi was unfamiliar with the kata himself and made a mistake, or else he was misunderstood. One possible explanation would be that at some point the gō-no-kata was confused with the Go-hō-ate (Five-direction Strike) section of the Tandoku-renshū (Individual Exercises) component of Sei-ryoku zen’gō kokumin taiiku. What is certain, is that the error was not made by the English translator Harrison, as the original French language version of the text [26] refers to both “kata de la force” and “kata des atemis”. Most likely, what applied (and what is explained above) to Koizumi, also applies to Kawaishi, that is, that both had their formal training in jūjutsu rather than jūdō, and that by the time they converted to jūdō, gō-no-kata had already disappeared from the Kōdōkan’s curriculum for dozens of years, and was taught only sporadically and kept alive by just a handful of jūdō exponents in Japan.

So, where did Kawaishi get his information about gō-no-kata from? As you will see further, we argue that there is reason to believe that Kawaishi may have obtained this information from no one else but Yves Klein, who had just three years earlier published his book Les fondements du judo [27] – which was entirely devoted to kata – but, who was misread by Kawaishi.

For completeness, it is necessary to note that Geoffrey Gleeson presents a modern (self-styled) gō-no-kata in one of his texts – namely The Complete Book of Judo [28, p. 113–126]. However, Gleeson freely acknowledges that this gō-no-kata is his own original creation and makes no claim that it is in any way associated with the original. Accordingly, this variant will not be considered further. Instead, a web-based article that summarizes much of the available material on the gō-no-kata will be evaluated as a starting point to the detailed literature review proper. Also, since this article is featured on what currently (2008) probably is the most popular website on information about jūdō [29], it has some impact on the jūdō community.

**2003/2008 – NEIL OHLENKAMP – GŌ-NO-KATA [29]**

The most complete review of the gō-no-kata available in the West and in the English language, to date, was compiled by Neil Ohlenkamp and published on his Judo Information Site, a to the general public freely accessible Internet web-site. In the article [29] a summary of the available material on the gō-no-kata is presented. Ohlenkamp acknowledges that several versions of the kata are in existence, but despite questioning the pedigree of some of these variants, he stops short of drawing definitive conclusions and presenting an authoritative definition of the gō-no-kata. Furthermore, in a personal communication, Ohlenkamp acknowledges that he simply collated some findings and reprinted claims made by others as well as their references, without him actually critically analyzing those claims or reading many of the references quoted by either those authors or by himself. Consequently, this particularly review article contains various inaccuracies and errors.

Ohlenkamp, for example, writes:

“According to Kodokan Professor Toshiro Daigo, the Yuko no Kata published by the Kodokan in November 1921 …” (…) Ohlenkamp [29].

This claim precedes a detailed list of the techniques in the gō-no-kata. Ohlenkamp admitted not having personally checked this reference (which is very hard to find in the West, and entirely in Japanese). After verification of that particular reference [1], it can be stated here with certainty that a detailed description, such as that implied by Ohlenkamp, is not contained therein. Having inquired directly with Toshirō Daigo-sensei, the Kōdōkan Jūdō Institute’s Chief-Instructor, about this statement during a conversation in August of 200511, Daigo could not recall ever having made such a statement. Daigo also added not knowing (then) himself of any technical references on gō-no-kata in Japanese or other languages12, and also expressed that he was not knowledgeable in this kata himself. However, these errors do not detract significantly from what otherwise is a valuable contribution by Ohlenkamp’s article to the state of knowledge on the gō-no-kata.

**THE ELUSIVE CHARACTER OF GŌ-NO-KATA TODAY**

The scarce, yet conflicting literature data findings demonstrated in the paragraphs above, suffice to establish our case for conducting research into gō-no-kata. Recall that the gō-no-kata does not feature in the contemporary list of Kōdōkan-recognized kata. Furthermore, over the past couple of years, the Kōdōkan Institute itself has somewhat obfuscated the situation by invariably ignoring most requests for any information pertaining to gō-no-kata – on some occasions even having bluntly denied its very existence13. One can only imagine, that if at the world-meat...
ca of jūdō indeed no sensei would supposedly know anything about gō-no-kata, then how and where would one be able to find a sensei that can demonstrate, let alone, actually teach this kata?

Consequently, for those kata enthusiasts, Japanese or other, who have expressed an interest in learning how to practice this kata, efforts to find a sensei competent in gō-no-kata invariably prove futile. None of the three current (as of 2006) Kōdōkan 10th dan holders (Ichirō Abe, Toshirō Daigo and Yoshimi Ōsawa) teach, or have been known to practice gō-no-kata. Having asked Abe-sensei in summer 2004 if he personally knew about the gō-no-kata, he responded that “it did not exist” (‘arimasen’)14. Though the Japanese word ‘arimasen’ is somewhat ambiguous, as in addition to expressing that something “does not exist”, it may also express that a person himself does not have the information or knows anything about it, without necessarily denying its actual (historic) existence. Knowing that Abe-sensei is a direct student of Hideichi Nagaoka-sensei (1887–1952), who in turn was himself a 10th dan and direct student of Kanō-shihan, and knowing (according to reliable documents, see inter alia, Kuhara [30]) that Nagaoka-sensei apparently knew how to perform gō-no-kata, Abe’s response was somewhat disappointing, yet not entirely unexpected. Thus, we probed further and asked Abe-sensei if he ever had seen Nagaoka-sensei perform gō-no-kata. Once more the response was negative15.

So we asked the same question a couple of months later to Keiko Fukuda, another world-renown kata expert and one of the longest active jūdō practitioners [she started jūdō in 1935] who had known Kanō-shihan personally, and who had trained under both Kyūzō Mifune-sensei (1883–1965) and Kaichirō Samura-sensei (1880–1964), both equally 10th dan holders. Fukuda-sensei responded she had never been taught gō-no-kata, and could not remember with certainty if a long time ago (before World war-II) she might have seen it being performed16. Others have claimed having asked similar questions to Naoki Murata-sensei, the present curator of the Kōdōkan museum and library, and having received similar responses.

Alternative options such as conducting a search on the Internet in Japanese on the gō-no-kata, do not yield a single relevant source, other than two or three that have a list with yearly historical events indicating the year of the kata’s creation. For the rest, false positives are returned a couple of times which relate to Okinawan Gōjū-ryu karate, within which a separate gō-no-kata or gōjū-no-kata may be found, that has no relationship to jūdō whatsoever.

Consequently, attempts to research or find out more about gō-no-kata quickly lead to considerable frustration. And yet, the gō-no-kata is not extinct – it is only extremely rare. Indeed, genuine sources are available and, provided one knows where to look, an expert teacher can be found. Unfortunately, instead of trying to locate such a teacher and consulting those genuine resources, the situation has now been complicated by the creation of fake gō-no-kata partly for the marketing purposes and ensuing financial gain, as will become clear from the next chapter.

Two Conflicting Schools of Thought

An examination of the literature and other media will reveal two conflicting schools of thought regarding the gō-no-kata’s development and content. These are as follows:

One, that the gō-no-kata was developed by Kanō as a complement to the jū-no-kata. The aim of the kata was to help the participants learn the basics of jūdō techniques, by first opposing each other with strength and later switching to a skilful yielding movement. As implied by its name, practice of kata also helped develop physical strength.

The other, that the gō-no-kata is a fusion of Kanō’s jūdō and the karate of Gichin Funakoshi (1868–1957), and features primarily a blend of jūdō throwing techniques (nage-waza) and karate striking techniques (atemi-waza).

Gō-no-kata, a Kata of Blows or Atemi-waza?

Under this heading we critically evaluate in detail the literature and media that argue that the gō-no-kata is based on a synthesis of jūdō and karate techniques. All of the sources supporting this thesis are relatively modern. The major proponents responsible for distributing this vision, are Kawaishi [25], Parulski [31,32], Muilwijk [33–35] and Oettlin [36] will be critically evaluated. Particular scrutiny will be applied to the claims of Muilwijk, as his perspective on the gō-no-kata was gaining considerable momentum, especially in Europe.

As pointed previously, it is most likely Mikinosuke Kawaishi (1899–1970), at that time the senior jūdō teacher in France, who is originally responsible for distributing the view of gō-no-kata, as a karate-like exercise. Indeed, in his 1957 opus magnum The Complete 7 Katas of Judo, he literally writes [25, p. 11]: “The Go no Kata,

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14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Fukuda K. Personal communication. Sōkō Joshi Jūdō Club Monthly Kata Clinic; 2006, May 6th; San Francisco, CA.
or Kata of Force or of blows, more characteristic of Karate-do (the technique of the Atemis)."

(…).

Though Kawaishi does not further elaborate on this statement anywhere else in his entire written oeuvre, recent developments in the jūdō world show that this regrettable, erroneous statement has formed the doubtful bedrock of so-called "new discoveries". There is no evidence whatsoever that Kawaishi himself knew or had ever even seen gō-no-kata being performed. At the time when Kawaishi 'converted' to jūdō, gō-no-kata was already relatively elusive, and had officially disappeared from the Kōdōkan curriculum. Moreover, the Butokukai in Kyōto and its formal budō teacher school, the Busen (abbreviation for Budō Senmongakkō 武道専門学校), where most Japanese budō masters who came to Europe in the early 20th century found their origin, never had gō-no-kata in its official curriculum. Kawaishi unaware of the later consequences of his statement, in his book is simply trying to provide background for the various other kata that he does explain and for the concept of kata itself, by saying: "Look, kata is a form of training, and more kata exist and could be created in future". In doing so, Kawaishi, merely communicates the vision of Kanō, completely in line with what Mifune also states in his Jūdō kōza [37].

However, this explanation still does not clarify how Kawaishi came to link jūdō and karate through the gō-no-kata. We assert that Kawaishi did in fact not learn this information from any Japanese source, but from simply reading Yves Klein's 1954 book Les fondements du judo [27], which predates Kawaishi's book by three years, and which, interestingly, too was published in France. Klein1 became fascinated with jūdō in the early 1950s and went to Japan for 15 months to study jūdō. Upon his return in 1954 as a 4th dan holder, he completed his book, entitled, Les fondements du judo [27].

What is very interesting for the purpose of this article is that in the same book, Klein writes:

"… Autrefois on pratiquait le Kata de ‘Go’ (dix techniques), qui était l’étude de la puissance, force physique, violence et contractions. Au Japon, on pratiquait encore aujourd’hui ce Kata assez étrange dans les dojos de ‘Karate’ (sorte de ‘savate’ japonaise)”. (…) [27, 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 practised this rather strange Kata in ‘Karate’ (kind of Japanese ‘French boxing’) dōjō today." (…)].

One has to be careful here. Though Klein does say that gō-no-kata was apparently being practiced also in karate dōjō, Klein does nowhere say or even suggest that gō-no-kata would contain, or originate (partially) from, karate. Our interpretation of Klein’s words is that gō-no-kata was used there as a structured warm-up exercise, and certainly not as a formal ceremonial exercise or as a type of kihon (basics). Any interpretation from Klein’s description that gō-no-kata would even contain actual karate strikes is absolutely preposterous, and solely on account of the person misreading Klein.

The first person to be either misguided … or … "make use" of Kawaishi’s error is George Parulski in his 1985 publication. What is certain, is that the error was not made by the English translator Harrison, as the original French language version of the text [26] refers to both "kata de la force" and "kata des atemis".

1985 – GEORGE PARULSKI – BLACK BELT JUDO [31]

In the book Black Belt Judo [31] published under the auspices of the now defunct American Society of Classical Judoka, George Parulski Jr. presents a description of the gō-no-kata (and the shōbu-no-kata) that paraphrases the one provided previously by Kawaishi:

“…there are Shobu-no-kata, or forms of attack (or contest), and Gō-no-kata, or forms of force. The latter is more like a kata of karate-do than of Judo since it is a prearranged pattern of blocks, strikes and kicks done with power and focus (kime).” (…) [31, p. 72].

No reference to Kawaishi’s work is made in Parulski’s text and, like Kawaishi, Parulski provides no further details of the gō-no-kata. Black Belt Judo has to be viewed carefully, as there are many factual inaccuracies and Parulski’s own interpretations to be found throughout the work. Additionally, the instructional text and photographs that describe how to perform the various kata therein often deviate significantly from the accepted Kōdōkan standard, and reflect considerable dilettantism. Particularly questionable, is the material associated with the more advanced kata.

1998 – GEORGE PARULSKI – ISAO OBAKO’S LOST KATA OF JUDO – VOLUME 1, HOAX #1?

Thirteen years later, in 1998, Parulski goes a step further in a CD-ROM-based film [32], entitled Isao Obato’s Lost Kata of Judo – Volume 1 [38, p. 7]. On this CD-ROM, George Parulski claims that he would have re-discov-
ered and restored various obsolete jūdō kata, which he is now making available to the jūdō community to … prevent them from falling subject to further extinction.

Parulski demonstrates a self-styled gō-no-kata that clearly is a combination of contemporary jūdō nage-waza and karate atemi-waza. His assertion that this kata would be the genuine gō-no-kata will now be evaluated.

Parulski claims that he learnt the kata from his own sensei, Isao Obato, and asserts that Obato had direct lineages to both Mifune and Kanō:

“The founder of the American Society of Classical Judo, Isao Obato held the rank of 8th dan in jūdō with black belt certification in jo-jutsu, sai-do, aikido and jujutsu. Born in Osaka, Japan, Obato was a student of Kyuzō Mifune, a Kodokan 10th dan from whom Obato said to have learned 20 jūdō kata (pre-arranged forms). Many of these kata were not included or completed in the Kodokan syllabus. Still others were once there and are on longer taught.” ([38, p. 3]

When explaining the source ‘his’ kata, Parulski expands upon the description in his book [31] and claims that the gō-no-kata as demonstrated, represents a fusion of Kanō’s jūdō and Funakoshi’s Shōtōkan karate:

“This video teaches Go-no-kata (forms of hardness) showing the link between Funakoshi’s karate-do and Kanō’s Jūdō.” ([38, p. 7].

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first time that an explicit connection between these two great masters of different budō disciplines is claimed that would have resulted in the development of the gō-no-kata. Parulski’s statement is historically incorrect. Whilst Kanō-shihan and Funakoshi-shihan did meet and did have conversations (also, see further), and while Kanō-shihan was open to other budō, and towards the end of his life even opened up the Kōdōkan for the teaching of other budō, such as for example jōjutsu and bōjutsu, there is no evidence of any ongoing cooperation between Kanō and other budō-masters to further formalize jūdō techniques after the 1906...
pertaining to a 1934 text, no such 1934 edition of this book exists. The original edition of this book was indeed written by Kanō-shihan, but published in 1931, not in 1934, and was never reprinted in its original version (Figure 1). In this book, the first volume (hence the suffix ‘-jōkan’ 上巻) of what was clearly supposed to become a two-volume oeuvre, Kanō-shihan does not mention a word about gō-no-kata. Kanō-shihan never completed the manuscript for the subsequent volume (‘gekan’ 下巻). The book was completely reworked by the Kōdōkan after Kanō-shihan passed away in 1938, and was greatly expanded to bridge the virtually entire jūdō curriculum. It was finally published in 1955, first in Japanese [41], and subsequently in English [40] and French.

Parulski’s gō-no-kata, contains twenty techniques. He does not provide a formal listing of the twenty techniques in his kata, although each technique is demonstrated consecutively. An effort to provide such a listing using the most appropriate Shōtōkan karate descriptor for each technique is made in Table 1.

A closer look at Parulski’s exercise, for most jūdō scholars will immediately raise concerns. The number twenty is peculiar, to say the least. All jūdō kata created by Kanō-shihan (nage-no-kata, katame-no-kata, jū-no-kata, and shōbu-no-kata) in their original form contained just ten techniques [39, 21]. It would be somewhat curious, for gō-no-kata, created in 1887 or earlier (pre-1885), thus following the earlier ten-technique nage- and katame-no-kata, and chronologically in the same time period as jū-no-kata, to have a completely different number of techniques than any of the other kata. Note that Nage-, katame-, and jū-no-kata were then reworked over the next twenty years (for jū-no-kata even longer) until they consisted of fifteen techniques [21].

While it is correct that today’s kime-no-kata and Kōdōkan goshinjutsu have twenty or even twenty-one techniques, respectively; their history and the situation is quite different from that of gō-no-kata or the other Kōdōkan-specific kata. Kanō’s original shōbu-no-kata was greatly revamped and converted into a shinken-shōbu-no-kata and expanded to about thirteen or fourteen techniques [43], and it was not until the 1906 meeting of the Butokukai that by input of various masters from different jūjutsu schools, in particular Tenjin shinyō-ryū, Yōshin-ryū, and Sōsuishitsu-ryū, it resulted in the 20-technique kime-no-

<table>
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<th>Table 1: Gō-no-kata: “Forms of Hardness &amp; Strength”. From De Crée [42], by permission; data based on Parulski [32], using Shōtōkan karate terminology.</th>
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kata we know today. However, gō-no-kata never went through such an evolution, and Kanō left it untouched from its original ten-technique form. [15]

It is obvious that there is no commonality between the “gō-no-kata” demonstrated by Parulski and Kōdōkan jūdō’s gō-no-kata form described elsewhere in this paper. The problems with “the Parulski version” do not stop at the unusual number of techniques which Parulski proposes. Parulski’s kata is divided into two sections: eleven Omote (translated by him as “Front Fundamental Techniques”) and nine Tachi-ai ("Continuous Attacks"). It is apt to note that such a division is somewhat curious, and that contrasting a series called Omote with a series called Tachi-ai is highly inconsistent and nonsystematic. While the concept of omote is not typically used in jūdō, except for in kōshiki-no-kata, which is originally a jūjutsu (kumi-uchi) exercise and which has been preserved from Kōtō-ryū, it is typically contrasted with uke. The meaning of omote in Kōtō-ryū also is not “front techniques” as the word is often translated into, for example, in aikidō [7,8]. Tachi-ai in jūdō refers to a standing position, to express contrast with a kneeling position, the latter which was the common formal position which a subject typically assumes when inside a building in the old Japan. Hence, it is in jūdō typically contrasted with idori 居取.

Whilst a detailed critique of Parulski’s actual performance goes beyond the purpose of this paper, it is useful to provide a summary evaluation of his alleged gō-no-kata display.

There is no doubt that what Parulski shows are effective, sometimes even spectacular movements. However, an overall lack of appropriate reaction and efficiency permeates the entire kata. For example, a basic, relatively innocent wrist grab is countered with disproportionate nerve strikes and a throwing technique. Overall, the exercise shown by Parulski more resembles toriite than that it resembles jūdō, which is quite unlike what Kōdōkan’s gō-no-kata does, or was aiming for.

Careful study of the kata performance raises additional questions about Parulski’s overall jūdō education. It is evident that Parulski’s partner is inexperienced in kata and this undoubtedly contributes to the low quality of the performance, overall. However, the consistent errors in elementary formalities such as the reihō (bowing ceremony), order of moving the feet forwards or backwards, sitting down or standing up with the wrong knee, no proper awareness of tsugi-ashi and a lack of coordination between tori and uke, to an expert, suggest that the performer has only a rudimentary knowledge of jūdō kata.

It is also necessary to indicate to the reader that there is considerable controversy about the credentials and even the actual existence of a person by the name of Isao Obato19. The reader interested in these reports can access the debates by performing a simple search at an internet resource for Japanese martial arts and culture – www.e-budo.com. A Google search on the Internet will yield dozens of disqualifying discussions of the many other claims made by Parulski.

Additionally, we note that Parulski himself provides a remarkable disclaimer for ‘his’ gō-no-kata, in which he seems refer to long-established Kōdōkan policies:

“The viewer is warned that with the current state of judo politics making claims to teaching ‘lost katas’ might be met with great resistance and a degree of mistrust and doubtfulness on the part of many judo leaders. Even direct inquiries to the Kodokan are answered with statements such as ‘These Katas Never Existed’, or better still, ‘We have no records of an Isao Obato training with this Institution.’” [(32)]

It has already been explained in this paper how the Kōdōkan views the gō-no-kata. However, the Institution’s genuine reticence to embrace the gō-no-kata should in no way be used to add credence to Parulski’s gō-no-kata as being authentic, as all circumstantial evidence would indicate that it is not. The detailed evaluation of Jan Mulwijk’s gō-no-kata that follows later, will reinforce this point.

We also point out that there exists no such name as ‘Obato’ in Japanese. None of the native Japanese scholars we have consulted, has ever heard of such a name. Authoritative Japanese name reference works such as PG, O’Neil’s [44], do not contain an entry for the name ‘Obato’ as an existing Japanese surname, nor does such a name appear anywhere in their extensive glossaries. It is speculated that the name “Isao Obato” is a fabrication based on the person of “Isao Obata”, a known Shōtōkan karate master from Keio University (慶應義塾大学, Keio Gijuku Daigaku) and first Chairman of the Nihon Karate Kyōkai or Japan Karate Association (JKA).

The roots of the ‘real’ Obata in karate, as well as his links with Funakoshi, most likely fed Parulski’s other

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19 This Isao Obata should not be confused with someone with a known karate-sensei with a similar name, Isao Obata, the latter who is known to have trained under Nakayama-sensei, and Funakoshi-shihan, and who has taught karate in the US Air Force’s martial arts program together with other sensei, such as Tsuyoshi Satō (jūjutsu) and Kenji Tomiki (aikidō). In the US, Walter Todd, jūdōka, karateka and aikidōka, was one of his students.

20 PG. O’Neil’s “Japanese names. A comprehensive index by characters and readings” [44] is a standard reference work for Japanese name research used by Japanese studies scholars containing 13,300 surnames, 11,000 personal names, 6,800 literary, historical and artistic names, 4,400 place names, and 300 Japanese era names.
fabrication, namely that of an exercise that would combine karate and jūdō, and that supposedly would have been the fruit of a collaboration between Kanō-shihan and Funakoshi-shihan, and that would have culminated in gō-no-kata. In the evaluation of Jan Muijlwijk’s gō-no-kata further in this paper, particular attention will be paid to the claim that this kata would have been jointly developed by Kanō-shihan and Funakoshi-shihan.


Steven Cunningham21 in an interview with Linda Yiannakis discusses the content and development of several jūdō kata. The interview is serialized as a two-part article in the journal of the United States Judo Association – American Judo. (45, p. 19–21; 46, p. 20–24). In the interview, Cunningham’s thoughts on the origin and nature of many of the purported ‘lost’ kata of jūdō are presented as well as his theories as to why they are no longer widely known. Additionally, other jūdō kata, which are not currently recognized by the Kōdōkan, are discussed, and Cunningham does devote some attention to the gō-no-kata. Cunningham starts by correctly explaining the complementary relationship between gō- and the jū-no-kata:

“The Go no Kata, for example, was the Kata of Hardness, which is the counterpart of the Ju no Kata, which is the Kata of Softness. Go and ju are the opposites of one another in the Japanese thinking.” (…) [46, p. 20]

Notwithstanding his considerable pedigree, Cunningham then proceeds to err significantly in his discussion of the gō-no-kata. In particular, he wrongly states that this kata contains atemi-waza. This suggests that Cunningham has no first-hand knowledge of the gō-no-kata either, and that he has researched it solely from sources (most likely Kawaishi and Parulski) that have subsequently been shown false.

As part of his flawed analysis, Cunningham does, however, critically evaluate the alleged Kanō-Funakoshi axis. In this analysis he correctly identifies the historical inconsistencies that negate the claims of others that Kanō and Funakoshi collaborated on gō-no-kata:

“The kata was constructed right around the turn of the century. That’s an important thing to recognize, because some people argue that he constructed the Go no Kata with a mind to incorporating Okinawan karate into Japanese Judo and that he got the idea after becoming a close friend of Gichin Funakoshi, the founder of Shotokan karate. It is true that Kano and Funakoshi were good friends. Kano was instrumental in bringing Funakoshi to Japan. He took him under his wing; he showed him the ropes. They talked a lot about the future of martial art. The modern karate-do, as opposed to karate jutsu, is a result of Funakoshi recognizing that Kano’s idea of taking Jujutsu and making it Judo was a good idea. In the modern era, with modern weapons and so on, it might not be as critically important to the military feudal state, which also no longer existed, to continue martial art training. But the value of martial art training had never changed. So karate ought to be continued to be practiced, but with a view to developing the individual. So Kano and Funakoshi were good friends; Shotokan was traditionally taught at the Kōdōkan, and Kano and Funakoshi discussed techniques and methods together. Kano even learned some of the karate kata. But all of this happened in the late nineteen teens and after. It did not happen before 1900. One has to realize that Funakoshi was quite a bit younger than Kano and that he would not be old enough to be instructing Kano at the time that Kano designed Go no Kata. The fact that there are a lot of atemi, as well as throws and other things in Go no Kata is not an indication that it comes from karate, but rather that there are a lot of karate-like elements in Jujutsu. In fact, when Funakoshi saw an exhibition of Jujutsu by Hiromori Otsuka, who was menkyo kaiden of Shin no Shindo Ryu under Nakamura, Funakoshi supposedly ran out on the floor and said to Otsuka, ‘You’ve studied Tode [the old name for karate] in Okinawa, haven’t you?’ And Otsuka said that no, he only practiced the Jujutsu. And so Funakoshi discovered that there were a lot of very common elements in the two arts. Otsuka became a student of Funakoshi and ultimately became the founder of Wado Ryu karate. Wado is the harmonizing way, and he was harmonizing or blending jujutsu with karate. The atemi was very strong in Jujutsu, and in fact Tenshin Shinryo Ryu was one of the pre-eminent atemi schools. Kano had learned this since youth and it was appropriate to put it into the kata.” (…) [46, p. 20–21]

Cunningham then hypothesizes as to why the gō-no-kata became no longer taught. He presents an unreferenced thesis based on a growing Japanese nationalism and its impact on Kanō:

“The kata like Go no kata were hidden away, though, in the pre-WW-II years, I’m told, because of the fears that Kano had about the Kodokan being used as a training ground for soldiers. By the 1920s the nationalist fervor had gotten quite strong in Japan. Kano was quite concerned about it all. He began his All-Japan Cultural Movement in the 1920s trying to turn the tide and get people to take a more cosmopolitan view. He did not feel he was successful. He made some inroads, but he was

21 Cunningham is a respected academic and holder of a legitimate high-dan rank in jūdō. He is among a small group that has written about jūdō with proper referencing of sources, such as Yūkō-no-katsudō and other original material that the majority of Westerners are in total ignorance of. Through such work he has laid the foundations of proper scholarly research in the martial arts, and as such is following in the footsteps of Donn Draeger, work that is now being continued by others such as Diane and Meik Skoss, Serge Mol, and others.
not successful. He also made the mistake of making himself a target of the nationalists. They felt that he was a Western sympathizer and did not recognize the true strength and destiny of Japan. Some argue that that resulted in Kanō’s death. So, with all that in mind, Kanō and the others sort of tucked away the Go no Kata and essentially ‘obsoleted’ it. They said there were problems with it and they would just no longer teach it. They stopped discussing it publicly.” (...) [46, p. 21]

Whilst it is correct that an academic like Kanō was cautious with respect to the issue of Japanese nationalism, the real reason as to why the gō-no-kata stopped being taught, has nothing to do with what Cunningham suggests, as will be explained further down in this paper. What precisely motivated Cunningham to assert that these kata “were hidden away” we do not know. It seems though that he is suggesting that these kata would contain some type of secret, perhaps dangerous or lethal techniques that intentionally needed to be hidden away. Nothing could be further from the truth; there is nothing secret or lethal about gō-no-kata, which in fact is a kata that is suitable for relative novices in jūdō, for example, as a warm-up or resistance training exercise. True, like jū-no-kata, gō-no-kata does not only have physical education properties (meaning, it makes part of the subgroup of Rentai-no-kata), but either kata also is a theoretical kata (subgroup of Ri-no-kata) examining and reflecting on the fundamentals of the art of jūdō. While grasping this aspect, no doubt, is far more challenging than the warm-up component, it still does not make gō-no-kata in any way secretive or dangerous. Consequently, it would be nonsensical for any such reason to keep gō-no-kata in any way hidden or secretive from the general jūdō practitioner. Moreover, Kanō-shihan never intentionally put an okuden 奥伝 or hidden 祖伝 (secret or esoteric teachings) component into jūdō, inter alia precisely to distinguish his jūdō from classical koryū jūjutsu.

Cunningham, who usually is quite well informed, ended his exposé on gō-no-kata with another error:

“A sidenote is that Kyūzō Mifune, tenth dan, constructed a different Go no Kata during the WWII years. He intended it, I think, to replace the older one. Variants of Mifune’s Go no Kata, probably reflecting different stages in the development of his form, appear periodically, adding to the confusion regarding Go no Kata.”(...) [34, p. 7–9]

Truth is that Kyūzō Mifune never constructed a gō-no-kata (Forms of correct use of force) of his own, but a goshinjutsu (no-kata), thus a modern self-defense kata, with the “gō” 順 (meaning ‘protection) of goshinjutsu 護身術 being an entirely different word from the “gō” 剛 (meaning ‘force) in gō-no-kata 剛の形. There are strong suggestions that Parulski, unaware that Cunningham errs, decides to capitalize on this error by coming up with the idea that he would have re-discovered this ‘lost’ kata as a privileged student of the mysterious Isao Ohato, who came and disappeared without leaving a single trail, and who has never been seen or met by any other martial artist. Other direct students of Mifune who are still alive, such as notably Kyōshi Kobayashi, 9th dan (Portugal), Jin Mizumi, 7th dan (USA), and Nobutaka Mizoguchi, 7th dan (Japan) indeed have never heard about either a student of Mifune by the name of Isao Ohato, about any gō-no-kata which Mifune would have developed. Furthermore, while Mifune in the various books he wrote, amply talks about the kata he developed himself, there is no trace about any mythical gō-no-kata which he supposedly would have developed.

However, interestingly, less than a year after Cunningham in 2003 erroneously links gō-no-kata to Mifune, Parulski came up with his ‘re-discovery’ of this (nonexistent) gō-no-kata via a so-called pupil of Mifune … At the end of the day, it is thus Cunningham’s rare mistake that exposes Parulski’s ‘gō-no-kata’ exercise as a complete hoax.


On April 3rd of 2005, the Dutch martial artist Jan Muilwijk performed a self-styled gō-no-kata as part of his promotion examination for the jūdō rank of 6th dan. The examination was conducted under the auspices of Judo Bond Nederland (=the Dutch Judo Federation) whose regulations require that a candidate for such a promotion should produce a piece of original work.

Muilwijk’s demonstration has been heralded as the first performance of the gō-no-kata in the Netherlands [33] and following the enthusiasm with which the demonstration was received, a well-illustrated instruction book was subsequently published – originally in Dutch [34] and subsequently in English [35].

It should be noted that the claim that Muilwijk had reintroduced the ‘lost’ gō-no-kata surprised many, as Muilwijk was not known to be an expert in any historical or heuristic technical aspects of jūdō. In particular the suggestion that he would have been able to present the gō-no-kata reconstructed from original sources that had eluded others was met with considerable disbelief by jūdō and budō scholars; indeed Muilwijk was not known to be either fluent in Japanese, particular Meiji-jūjutsu Japanese, to have privileged access to archival sources, or to have access to an extensive network of relationships or experience in Japan that would be essential to unearth such non-mainstream material.

Nevertheless, to be fair, the rationale that Muilwijk [34,35, p. 7–9] presents to support his gō-no-kata must
first critically evaluated. Muilwijk [34,35, p. 7] does not claim that he constructed his gō-no-kata based on information from Kawaishi – rather, he became intrigued simply because of Kawaishi’s description of the kata. Recall: “The Go no Kata, or Kata of Force or of blows, more characteristic of Karate-do (the technique of the Atemis).” (…) [25, p. 11]

Muilwijk [34,35, p. 7] proceeds to describe how he, like most others, was unable to discover much more about the gō-no-kata. He then provides a good account of his (flawed) research methodology, which rather than being time-consuming library-based work with extensive use of original sources, was instead based on the consultation of a limited number of (Western) books, interviews, technical discussions and Internet searches [34,35, p. 7,63]. In addition to the problem that Internet research is highly error-prone and can lead to the drawing of spurious conclusions, it is noticeable that the majority of Muilwijk’s interviews were not with jūdōka, but rather with karateka with virtually no scholarly background or no jūdō or koryū historical knowledge. Moreover, included amongst Muilwijk’s interviewees was George Parulski, whose contribution to the gō-no-kata question was discussed previously. Given that Parulski is based in the United States and Muilwijk in the Netherlands, and the two did not meet, the depth and extent of their dialogue can only be a matter of conjecture.

With the exception of Kawaishi, the other sources Muilwijk lists [34,35, p. 63] are totally devoid of any reference to the gō-no-kata. Moreover, Muilwijk only used these sources for writing an occasional sentence. For example, in Ichirō Abe’s book Judo (published both in French and in Dutch), Abe writes that jūdō contains nage-waza, katame-waza, and atemi-waza. For Muilwijk this is a justification that a gō-no-kata in the sense of Paruski’s version might very well have been developed by Kanō and Funakoshi – an entirely fallacious conclusion that will now be shown to lack both logic and credibility. Muilwijk’s deduction is absurd, as Ichirō Abe, when asked about gō-no-kata even denied its existence. For those who know Abe-sensei personally, the idea that he would deviate even a millimeter from official Kōdōkan policy and syllabus, which in essence is what Muilwijk implies, would be entirely unimaginable.

At the outset, Muilwijk [34,35, p. 8] acknowledges the ambiguity pertaining to the gō-no-kata and states that there appear to be two gō-no-kata in circulation. Additionally, he provides a correct listing of the “variant” founded by Kanō in 1887. However, he subsequently gives no further consideration to this kata and proceeds to present an unsubstantiated and unrefereenced thesis for the lineage of the so-called gō-no-kata that features in his book.

Muilwijk [34,35, p. 8] writes: “I managed to lay my hands on some film footage from the United States. From the performance you can see that it concerns a very good mixture of judo and karatedo techniques. According to the performer G.R. Parulski, here we have a performance of Kyuzo Mifune (1883–1965), 10th dan, transferred to his pujił Isao Otsato (8th dan), who, in turn taught Parulski. It is presented as a fusion between the SHOTOKAN karate of Gichin Funakoshi and the judo of Jigoro Kano. I have tried to follow this thread back to its source.” (…)

Muilwijk describes how he ‘discovers’ that Funakoshi gave a demonstration at the Butokukai in 1917. He continues that Kanō would have invited Funakoshi to teach karate at the Kōdōkan, and adds that this “… went on for several years” [34,35, p. 8]. Muilwijk also states “thatKano and Funakoshi were together many times around 1921” and proceeds to speculate that it seems very reasonable to him that the two together “developed a completely new GO NO KATA” [34,35, p. 8].

Muilwijk does not present, and we do not know of, any references or evidence that substantiates the claim of the supposedly many years-long teaching of karate at the Kōdōkan. Atemi-waza, however, was taught at the Kōdōkan, but as part of a balanced jūdō syllabus. As taught by Kanō, the principal atemi-waza were punches to the glabella, elbows to the solar plexus, and front kicks to the testicles. Additional targets described in subsequent Kōdōkan publications include the soft spot on top of the head, mastoid process, temples, philtrum, chin, solar plexus, spleen, liver, and knees. Practical methods of striking these targets, however, do not seem to have been much studied. See, for example the text Kōdōkan Judo [13, p. 136–138].

Furthermore, classical weapons training, particularly bōjutsu and jojutsu were at one point taught at the Kōdōkan and are detailed in Yūkō-no-katsudō and jūdō. Kanō had created in March of 1928 a new research department for kobudō, partly to emphatically counter a worrying evolution of jūdō into a competitive sport, and because towards the end of his life he increasingly started doubting whether jūdō alone would be truly able to realize his noble goals. His research group initially gathered at the Otsuka Kaisunzaka dōjō, next to his own house [47], and nurtured various koryū disciplines. Originally, the new Kōdōkan building was supposed to house multiple martial arts, and the fact that the Kōdōkan never

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22 Since Muilwijk is a karateka (as well as a jūdōka) this is understandable.
23 Famous sensei, such as Takeshi Shimizu were among these guest-instructors.
followed through with this idea after Kanō-shihan had passed away, likely because of Riset Kanō’s lack of understanding and differing vision, caused considerable friction with the main sponsor of the new Kōdōkan building, Matsutarō Shoriki [47]. In effect, this evolution caused such turmoil that Shoriki-sensei would become a main force behind creating an entirely new building, partly out of protest, the later Nippon Budōkan.

As for karate, what is correct, is that about six years earlier (in 1922) Kanō-shihan witnessed Funakoshi giving a display of Shorin-ryū karate in Tōkyō. (Note that it was not yet Shōtōkan karate, since the term Shōtōkan was not to be invented for another decade.) It is also correct that Kanō asked for Funakoshi to give a demonstration at the Kōdōkan (then located at Shimo-Tomisaka):

“When I visited the Kōdōkan three days later, Funakoshi later recalled, I found myself face to face with a select group of around a hundred judoka. I had no students with me, nor even anyone to assist me. Fortunately a young man by the name of Gima Shinkin, who had been a karate instructor in Okinawa, was in Tōkyō at the time… Several kata, notably Kanku, seemed to be especially popular with the spectators, and we were asked to perform them several times. After the demonstration there were question and answer sessions, first with the younger men and then with the senior students. Later on, as we were having a pleasant chat, I was asked by Kano Sensei how long it would take to learn all the kata. When I replied that I thought it would take over a year, he said, ‘Well, I can’t impose on you to stay that long, but I wish you’d teach me at least two or three.’” (…) [48, p. 11, 49, p. 26–27].

For completeness it is recorded that Kanō witnessed more karate in Okinawa in 1927:

“Furthermore, in 1927, Kano attended a conference in Okinawa and while there witnessed more karate, this time performed by Chojun Miyagi and Kenwa Mabuni. The kind words he expressed to these men apparently helped convince these two men to subsequently introduce karate to Japan.” (…) [50, p. 7–8].

Notwithstanding the extremely weak foundations for his conclusions so far, Muilwijk continues to speculate and believes he has more evidence to reinforce his arguments when he discovers that Kyūzō Mifune later was in contact with Hironori Ōtsuka (1892–1982), the creator and first Grandmaster of Wadō-ryū karate. Muilwijk adds:

“Presumably, Mifune used his knowledge to change or adapt the GO NO KATA where necessary.” (…) [35,8].

Muilwijk’s implied conclusion therefore is that the original 1887 (or even older) gō-no-kata was nothing more than an early version. Accordingly, the version he himself has assimilated via Parulski … must then be Kanō’s, Funakoshi’s, Mifune’s and Ōtsuka’s revised version of the kata … [35,9].

Consistent with his entire line of reasoning, Muilwijk’s conclusion here is somewhat implausible. It is known that Kanō was already skeptical about Mifune’s Ura-waza kata, and reacted equally dismissively when Gunji Koizumi during Kanō’s 1933 visit to London showed some of his own ‘innovations’ to jū-no-kata [16]. So it is extremely unlikely that Jigorō Kanō would have cooperated with someone with no knowledge of jūdō like Funakoshi, when even an expert jūdōka such as Mifune appeared philosophically too far out of line with himself.

For the remainder of his book, Muilwijk provides an illustrated set of instructions as to how to perform ‘his’ self-styled gō-no-kata. For completeness, a list of these techniques is provided in Table 2.

Whilst Muilwijk stops short of admitting he merely acquired Parulski’s CD-ROM [32] and wrote out the techniques, comparison of Tables 1 and 2 confirms that Parulski and Muilwijk are indeed describing identical kata, an obvious conclusion, since Parulski’s own fantastic creation was Muilwijk’s only practical source. Indeed, as will become clear later in this paper, only one historical source existed that actually depicted and provided a detailed description of the true gō-no-kata, a source not within reach of virtually anyone.

As a point of detail it should be noted that a lack of grammatical attention is evident in Muilwijk’s naming of the techniques in the kata. Suspicions about Muilwijk’s Japanese-illiteracy had already been surfacing when in an early section of his book [34,35, p. 10] he confuses go 五 (the number ‘five’) and gō 刚 (meaning ‘force’). In his listing of the techniques Muilwijk has simply thrown together familiar terminology from jūdō and karate often in erroneously grammatical order resulting in rather nonsensical descriptors. In addition, Muilwijk does not provide succinct designations for each of the techniques – rather, he provides a lengthy descriptor for the attack by uke and the corresponding response from tori. Such an approach is contrary to the established highly efficient procedure for naming techniques in a jūdō kata, as described by Cornish [31, p. 3]

“The Japanese names used for the techniques in the kata only describe parts of the attack. To use a comprehensive description of all the attack and the defence would make the name too long-winded and, for the non-Japanese, difficult to remember whereas these short names should prove no difficulty at all. The English…is not meant to be a transcription of the Japanese names, like them it is meant only as a memory aid.”
The reason that Muilwijk’s terminology as mentioned in Table 2 is different from that used by De Crée in Table 1, though both are based on Parulski’s CD-ROM, is because De Crée [42] used (linguistically correct) Shōtōkan terminology, whereas Muilwijk having a Wadō-ryū background, relies on terminology typically used within this style of karatedō, terminology which he combines at random in an erratic and grammatically incorrect order.

### Table 2: Gō-no-kata: “Forms of Hardness & Strength”, according to Jan Muilwijk [34].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Omote (Front)</th>
<th>Komi (Back)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong> Migi chidōn gyaku tsuki*</td>
<td>Right middle reverse thrust/strike*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migi chidōn gyaku uchi uke</td>
<td>Right middle reverse inside block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidari chidōn tsuki</td>
<td>Left middle thrust/strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidari gedan hiza geri</td>
<td>Left low knee kick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidari harai goshi</td>
<td>Left hip sweep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong> Migi chidōn jun tsuki*</td>
<td>Right middle lunging thrust/strike*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migi chidōn gyaku uchi uke</td>
<td>Right middle reverse inside block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiko dachi</td>
<td>Horse stance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidari chidōn empi uchi</td>
<td>Right middle elbow strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migi shiho nage</td>
<td>Right four direction throw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ude garami</td>
<td>Entangled armlock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong> Migi chidōn mae geri*</td>
<td>Right outside front kick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migi soto harai uke</td>
<td>Right outside sweeping block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migi gedan geri</td>
<td>Rearward drop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidari gedan mae uke</td>
<td>Rearward drop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migi shiho harai</td>
<td>Rearward drop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migi gedan tate tsuki</td>
<td>Rearward drop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.</strong> Ushiro kata dori*</td>
<td>Shoulder hold from behind*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidari gedan ushiro geri</td>
<td>Left rear kick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ude garami</td>
<td>Right outside sweeping block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidari harai goshi</td>
<td>Left knee armlock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.</strong> Jun te dori*</td>
<td>Lunging hand hold*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migi gedan harai</td>
<td>Right low sweep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidari chidōn kage tsuki</td>
<td>Left middle short hook strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migi jōdan mawashi empi uchi</td>
<td>Right high round elbow strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ushiro eri dori</td>
<td>Collar hold from behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ushiro otoshi</td>
<td>Rearward drop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migi gedan tate tsuki</td>
<td>Right low straight thrust/strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.</strong> Ushiro ryōte dori*</td>
<td>Two-hand hold from behind*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taisabaki</td>
<td>Body shifting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chudan morote geri</td>
<td>Right two-handed thrust/strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7.</strong> Migi jōdan jun tsuki*</td>
<td>Right high lunging thrust/strike*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidari te nagashi uke</td>
<td>Left sweeping hand block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migi jōdan halto uchi</td>
<td>Right high ridge hand strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ude kanzetsu</td>
<td>Armlock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8.</strong> Ushiro kata dori*</td>
<td>Rear hand hold*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taisabaki</td>
<td>Body shifting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidari gedan ura mawashi geri</td>
<td>Left low reverse round kick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kubi shime</td>
<td>Neck strangle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migi soto garami</td>
<td>Right large outer wheel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migi gedan gama tsuki</td>
<td>Right low reverse thrust/strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9.</strong> Migi jōdan jun tsuki*</td>
<td>Right high lunging thrust/strike*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidari te nagashi uke</td>
<td>Left hand sweeping arm block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidari chidōn teisho uchi</td>
<td>Left middle palm heel strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okuri eri shime</td>
<td>Sliding collar strangle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10.</strong> Morote shime*</td>
<td>Two-hand strangle/choke*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morote uke</td>
<td>Two-hand block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migi chūdan tate tsuki</td>
<td>Right middle straight thrust/strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shuto uchi</td>
<td>Knife hand strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migi gedan hiza geri</td>
<td>Right low knee kick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migi koshji garami</td>
<td>Right hip wheel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migi gedan yaku tsuki</td>
<td>Right low reverse thrust/strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11.</strong> Morote shime*</td>
<td>Two-hand strangle/choke*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morote uke</td>
<td>Two-hand block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morote mawashi tsuki</td>
<td>Two-hand round thrust/strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiko dachi</td>
<td>Straddle leg stance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryō ashi dori</td>
<td>Two-leg hold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gedan morote tsuki</td>
<td>Two-hand low thrust/strike</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 2. Gō-no-kata: “Forms of Hardness & Strength”, according to Jan Muilwijk [34].
Despite the fact that the 'gō-no-kata' as depicted in his book can be easily discredited because of the reasons explained above, we believe that Muilwijk has not set out to be intentionally misleading. An accomplished researcher Muilwijk is not, but he is generally honest though naive in his writing. He does not attempt to conceal how he came to his findings and admits that he simply took his source information from Parulski, unfortunately a doubtful source of many claims. Muilwijk also presents his katas as work in progress [34,35].

The numerous and basic errors within Muilwijk’s book are the natural consequences of flawed research, unsubstantiated contentions and speculation. In short, Muilwijk, in overenthusiastic but innocent ignorance, has become a victim of Parulski’s implausible claims. We suggest that Muilwijk would provide unambiguous clarification accompanying his exercise, which neither historically, nor practically has anything to do with Jigoro Kano’s Kōdōkan jūdō. Muilwijk’s conclusions remain entirely uncorroborated. Instead, what he proposes is nothing but a 1990′s creation from the mind of Parulski, and a form of modern self-defense techniques. Whether such an exercise deserves a place in judo, the future will prove. Much confusion and worse consequences for Muilwijk’s somewhat naive epigonism towards Parulski, could be avoided by designing the exercise by a different name, rather than by the name of an existing, and entirely different Kōdōkan component.

**Undated – Wolfgang Oettl – A lost form: Gō-no-Kata [36]**

In a further web-based article, Wolfgang Oettl [36] outlines the Parulski ‘gō-no-kata’ and presents his own
listing of the techniques contained therein. Remember that Parulski’s CD-ROM depicts and explains the exercise, but does not name the individual techniques. Oettlin writes (originally in German):

“... the operational sequence of the kata is written down by myself on the basis the CD-ROM “Izao Obato’s The Lost Katas of Judo — Go-No-Kata” developed by Dr. George Parulski. Whether that is now actually the original form, or one of the versions brought into circulation by Kyuzo Mifune, is beyond my knowledge...”

The technique list as prepared by Oettlin is presented in Table 3. Naturally, it shows differences with both the lists composed by De Crée [42] in Table 1 and Muijwijk...
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. For this and other reasons, including methodological as well as the complete absence of any sources substantiating their claims, we firmly would dismiss as false any claim by Parulski [31, 32], Mulijwijk [34, 35] and others 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 presented by Parulski [31, 32] and copied by Mulijwijk [33–
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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8. Daigo T: Kōdōkan jūdō no kata [The kata of Kōdōkan jūdō]. Unpublished lecture as part of the Kōdōkan Kata Kaki Kōshūkai (Kōdōkan Summer Kata Course). Tōkyō: Kōdōkan Jūdō Institute; 2008; July 29th; this same article is currently being reprinted in three parts in Judo 2008; 79 (10, 11 & 12) [in Japanese]