Kōdōkan Jūdō’s Three Orphaned Forms of Counter Techniques – Part 3: The Katame-waza ura-no-kata “Forms of Reversing Controlling Techniques”

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Abstract

Background & study aim: The purpose of the present paper is to provide a comprehensive review of katame-waza ura-no-kata [“Forms of Reversing Throwing Techniques”], a non-officially accepted kata of Kōdōkan jūdō made famous by the late Mifune Kyūzō, of which the date of creation has not been previously established, nor under what circunstances it was created or what its sources of inspiration were.

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

Results: Katame-waza ura-no-kata was finalized by Itō Kazuo (1898-1974) in June 1970 mainly based on techniques Itō had learned from his teacher Mifune Kyūzō. Mifune, in turn, drew his inspiration of the nige-waza [escaping techniques] and kaeshi-waza [countering] included in the kata likely from intellectual ideas of Takahashi Kazuyoshi and newaza [ground fighting] techniques perfected primarily by Oda Jōin, Mifune himself and to a lesser extent possibly by Toku Sanbō, Kawakami Chī, and others. Katame-waza ura-no-kata adheres to the same structure as katame-no-kata hence is divided in three series of five techniques each followed up by a counter-control technique. Katame-waza ura-no-kata is a randori-no-kata form. The objective of the kata is not to copy a supposed gold standard performance that then needs to be evaluated and scored by a jury, but to develop the ability of performing jūdō at the supra-mechanical level of myōwaza [unexplainable sophisticated technique], irrespective of differences in minute technical details.

Conclusions: Katame-waza ura-no-kata is an exercise devised by the late jūdō master Itō Kazuo, which similarly to how kata me-no-kata complements nage-no-kata, serves as a complement to nage-waza ura-no-kata. It is a valuable training exercise of which the practice is intended to contribute to developing the highest levels of jūdō technical ability. Sadly, the kata remains largely unfamiliar to most jūdōka due to a lack of qualified instructors and its current status as a non-officially accepted Kōdōkan kata.

Key words: grappling • history • Jigoro Kano • judo • kaeshi-waza • kata • Kodokan • Kazuo Ito • Kyuzo Mifune • newaza • ura-no-kata • ura-waza

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

**Kaebi-waza** - reverse or counter techniques, also called *ura-waza*.

**Kata** - predetermined and choreographed physical exercises, which together with free exercises (*randori*), lectures (*bōgi*) and discussions (*mendi*) form the four critical pillars of Kodōkan jūdō education.

Kodōkan - the specific name of his school and style of *būtō* as given by its founder Kanō Jigorō (1860–1938)

Mifune Kyūzō - a most celebrated Kodōkan jūdō 10th *dan*-holder, born in 1883, died in 1965.

*Ura-waza* - reverse or counter techniques, also called *kaeabi-waza*.

with these *kata*, and who could provide instruction in it. However, on February 19, 1987 we received from André H.F. Le Capitaine, the General Secretary of the International Martial Arts Federation – Europe (IMAF-Europe), a photocopy of a book in Japanese that had been presented to him on June 23, 1982, by Satō Shizuya 佐藤静弥 (1929–2011), *Kodōkan 6th dan*, at that time the Secretary-General of the worldwide International Martial Arts Federation (IMAF) or Kosukai Budōin – Kosukai Budō Renmei 国際武道院・国際武道聯盟 [1]. The book was authored by Itō Kazuo 伊藤赳男 (1898-1974), *Kodōkan 9th dan* [2]. In addition to containing descriptions of *nage-waza ura-no-kata*, Itō’s book contained a second *kata*, called *katame-waza ura-no-kata* 囲め技裏の形, a *newaza* 着技 [ground fighting techniques] *kata* which we had never heard about. As we were at the time very keen on expanding our knowledge of *newaza*, we were very interested in mastering this *kata*.

We learned that Satō had been a student of the in 1974 deceased Itō, and given that he functioned as Itō’s *uke* in the book, it was likely that he too had learnt these *kata*. Unfortunately for us, Satō during most of his foreign activities was focusing more on Nihon Jujutsu than on *jūdō*, and on public relations and administrative tasks for his organization, the Kosukai Budōin – Kosukai Budō Renmei of IMAF, so that in the end we were never able to learn the *kata* directly from him either. However, we continued our research into the *katame-waza ura-no-kata* over the next 20 years and were struck by how unfamiliar everyone was with it. Whilst we were able to vastly expand our knowledge on the *nage-waza ura-no-kata*, no one seemed to be able to tell us anything about the *katame-waza ura-no-kata*.

Many years later in Japan we were provided with an opportunity to collaborate with Ochiai Toshiyasu 落合俊保, Kodōkan 8th *dan*, nephew and former student of the late Kuhara Yoshiyuki 久原義之 (1906–1985), Kodōkan 9th *dan*. Ochiai enthusiastically shared his knowledge with us on the *nage-waza ura-no-kata*, which he had learnt directly from his uncle Kuhara, who in turn had learnt directly from Mifune Kyūzō 三船久蔵 (1893-1965), the *kata*'s creator. However, despite Ochiai’s extensive knowledge about some of the unusual *kata* of *jūdō* he himself was neither teaching nor practicing *katame-waza ura-no-kata*.

With the development of the Internet, *jūdō* information became accessible to almost everyone, and freely accessible channels such as YouTube brought both common and less common *jūdō* techniques to anybody’s computer screen who cared to log on to a *jūdō* site. That being said, despite this significant development no material new information about the *katame-waza ura-no-kata* emerged, and to this day there is not a single recorded demonstration of this *kata* available on the Internet, despite several practical demonstrations of *nage-waza ura-no-kata* being there. This illustrates the rarity of this *kata* even among the most committed *jūdō* kata enthusiasts.

It is the purpose of the present paper to provide a comprehensive study of *katame-waza ura-no-kata* and reflect on what extent they have or have not established themselves as a common part of *jūdō* practice in Japan and abroad. We aim to address this acute shortage of information regarding both of these *kata*.

Our research questions are as follows:

• Under what circumstances and by whom was *katame-waza ura-no-kata* created?

• What are the contents and theoretical foundations of *katame-waza ura-no-kata*?

• Who practices *katame-waza ura-no-kata* and where can it be observed and studied?

• Why is *katame-waza ura-no-kata* so rare and why are they not included in most *kata* records, *kata* teaching curricula and instructional texts?

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. In this way, this paper offers an important contribution to the existing knowledge base of Kodōkan *jūdō* with implications for the current *jūdō* syllabus. Furthermore, it represents the only critical scholarly study of this *kata* in both Western languages and Japanese.

**THE POSITION OF NON-OFFICIAL JŪDŌ KATA VIS-À-VIS OFFICIAL KODŌKAN JŪDŌ KATA**

We have previously explained that within the official list of the ten *kata* of Kodōkan *jūdō* only two *kata* were conceived after the death of Kanō in May 1938 and thus were never formally approved by him. These two *kata* were added in 1943 and 1956 respectively, when the Kodōkan introduced its Self-Defense Methods for Women, called *jūdō goshinjutsu* 女子柔道護身術 and a modern Kodōkan Self-Defense Method, called *Kodōkan goshinjutsu* 講道館護身術, both of which were the result of a concerted effort of two separate committees of Kodōkan experts [3].

There are only few documented attempts by Japanese *jūdōka* to create additional *jūdō* kata outside of the
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The following nine jūdō kata are known to have been conceived by Japanese jūdōka outside the official set of Kōdōkan kata:

• shōbu-no-kata 投業の形 [Forms of Combat] by Uchida Ryōhei 内田良平 (1873-1937) around 1900 [4]

• shōnen jūdō-no-kata 幼年の形 [Forms of Combat] by Uchida Ryōhei 内田良平 (1873-1937) around 1900 [4]

• gonosen-no-kata 前の先の形 [Forms of Post-Attack Initiative Counter Throws] by Takahashi Kazuyoshi 高橋数良 (1885-1942) around 1920


• banndō-no-kata 反動の形 [Forms of Reactions] by Hirano Tokio 平野時男 (1922-1993) around 1960 [8]

The term ‘modification’ clearly was not intended as a friendly encouraging expression of support …

Kanō’s relative intolerance did not appear to be limited to the kata that already existed and which were the result of his creation, editing or approval, but also towards new kata, as reflected by his apparent rejection of Mifune Kyūzō’s nage-waza ura-no-kata. Mifune was not exactly a dilettante and the techniques he devised reflected a deep understanding of technical jūdō and were characterized by a considerable degree of sophistication.

Because of this specific history Japanese jūdōka and the Kōdōkan in particular have a somewhat ambiguous attitude towards jūdō kata, from one hand since jūdō kata represent the fundamental yet historic grammar of jūdō there exists a narrow view that argues that there can be no new jūdō kata after the death of Kanō as they would lack authenticity and authority in the absence of his personal approval, although, new ‘methods’ have been added to its syllabus, at least in the days that there were still direct students of Kanō involved in such decisions. These have now all passed away leaving little hope of new kata being added to the jūdō syllabus at anytime soon. On the other hand Kanō, was very well aware and made it also clear that, for example, tsitsutsu-no-kata was, not finished and could not really suitable for formal demonstration.

1 See part 1 of this paper. It has been claimed by some that there would exist a kaeshi-no-kata 反の形, a kata supposedly older than gonosen-no-kata and introduced to the UK by Tani Yukio 丹野洋雄 (1881-1950). This is, however, highly unlikely. Tani’s jūdō history is obscure and believed to be in Pucon-ryu 不城流 and Zheng Shên-ye-ru 天神真楊流 [The Divine True Willow School]. jūjutsu 柔術 [the art of giving way]. Tani originally had no Kōdōkan jūdō history and was awarded a black belt in jūdō only in 1920 by Kanō Jigorō during a visit to the UK. Despite his experience in jūjutsu it is highly unlikely that at that point Tani would already have developed a pure jūdō kata. Only in 1919-1920 did Takahashi Kazuyoshi publish his series of waza-no-kenkyū 技の研究 [research on techniques] articles in Yōkō-no-Kataudo 有効の活動 on ura-waza [reversing techniques] or kaeshi-waza [counter techniques], two terms used interchangeably (5, 6). Many throws were proposed, but these were not integrated in an actual kata. We are not aware of any authentic historic documentation whatsoever that there ever existed any such thing as this “kaeshi-no-kata”. Instead, these were likely simply prior described loose techniques which someone at some point in time decided to precede and follow up by bowing procedures. That, however, does not make it a kata. Likely, Tani’s inspiration to integrate kaeshi-waza in his teaching may have come from Ishiguro Keishichi 石黒敏七 (1897-1974) with whom Tani was well acquainted. There exists a famous 1938 picture of Ishiguro, Tani and Koizumi Gunji 小泉軍治 (1885-1965) taken in Frankfurt, Germany. Ishiguro visited many countries in Europe where he taught jūdō. Ishiguro’s origin was Waseda University where he had been captain of the university’s jūdō team and where he must have had Takahashi Kazuyoshi as a teacher. Ishiguro more likely than Kawaishi had visited many countries in which Ishiguro had visited and taught jūdō, such as France, Germany and UK. There is no trace of Tani and any “kaeshi-no-kata” preceding him getting acquainted with Ishiguro.

2 This is a set of preparatory moves intended for study and practice, but not really suitable for formal demonstration.

3 See part 2 of this paper.
in future be expanded to containing more techniques [11, p. 65]. However, he was far less clear about who would be authorized to do so, especially after his death.

In any case, probably the most elaborate and long-existing non-Kōdōkan kata of which we also know that Kanō personally saw it being demonstrated is Mifune’s nage-waza ura-no-kata. This kata was created by Mifune as an additional randori-no-kata hence supplementing nage-no-kata and katame-no-kata. It appears that after Mifune’s death in 1965 his kata was followed up by a katame-waza ura-no-kata to complete the kaeshi-waza component he had wanted to the previously existing randori-no-kata.

**KATAME-WAZA URA-NO-KATA**

Katame-waza ura-no-kata means “Forms of reversals to controlling techniques”. Itō in his book on both the nage-waza ura-no-kata and the katame-waza ura-no-kata, contrary to Mifune, uses the modern kanji for waza: 技 rather than 役. Although very little if any information exists about katame-waza ura-no-kata in the West, there does seem to be some controversy about the authorship of katame-waza ura-no-kata.

Its date of creation has not been accurately established, nor is it well known under what circumstances it was created or what its sources of inspiration were. Previously, one tended to hear that katame-waza ura-no-kata similarly to nage-waza ura-no-kata was the intellectual product of the late Mifune Kyūzō (1883-1965), Kōdōkan 10th dan, such as for example:


[Transl.: Less well known is that Mifune has also developed a kata with counter techniques to katame-waza ('katame-waza ura-no-kata'). It is largely unknown in Europe — but also in Japan.]

However, it is not clear if similar deductions were justified and supported by any sources. We will now test if the assumption of Mifune being the author of katame-waza ura-no-kata is correct.

**The authorship of katame-waza ura-no-kata**

One of the first things we did was to consult all books and known writings by Mifune Kyūzō or his biographers about katame-waza ura-no-kata, as well as other authoritative Japanese reference works on jūdō. Much to our surprise Mifune nowhere mentions this kata either as a consolidated exercise or as a project under construction [13-15]. In fact, Mifune writes very little about newaza and seems to have largely focused on tachi-waza [standing techniques]. Mifune was no doubt a leading individual for decades when it came to nage-waza 投技 [throwing techniques], but he is rarely mentioned in the context of newaza 寝技 [ground fighting techniques]. In fact, when Mifune dealt with katame-waza it was often in standing position, as shown in the personal goshinjutsu 護身術 [Self-defense techniques] he developed and in jōshi jūdō goshinjutsu 女子柔道護身法 [ Jūdō female self-defense methods] to which he was a major contributor [16]. On the other hand, newaza in those days really was an area of expertise that in terms of technique was largely dominated by Oda Join 小田常胤 (1892-1955) [17-18] and Kanemitsu Yaichibei 金光弥一兵 (1890-1968) [19] (Figure 1[34]).

That does not mean at all that we are implying that Mifune’s newaza skills would be merely of average standard. In fact, in the 1955 film *The Essence of Jūdō* that was later released on videotape and DVD there is a chapter included where Mifune shows uke-za no-waza 逃技 [escape techniques] in ground fighting [7]. Really, it is more than just escaping techniques and what he shows constitutes katame-no-kaeshi-waza or katame-no-ura-waza because Mifune continues with a control technique. However, he certainly does not show these techniques in kata form. Only one of the techniques he shows is nearly identical to a technique that appears in katame-waza ura-no-kata. Some are very different and several of them end in ashi-kan tachi-waza 足関節技 [leg locking techniques], which in katame-waza ura-no-kata are never used as counter techniques.

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6 *Original title: Shingi Mifune Jūdan [kanzenhan]: Jūdō no Shinzui (神技ミフネ九段[完全版]:柔道の真髄) [Mifune 10th dan [complete edition]: The Essence of Judo], published June 4650-4751.**

5 Mifune Kyūzō 三船久藏 is one of the best known jūdōka in history, and his background has been widely detailed in the half a dozen of books he authored as well as in the numerous publications by others. Mifune was born on April 21st, 1883 in Kaji City 久慈市, Iwate Prefecture 岩手県. Mifune entered the Kōdōkan at age 20 on July 26th, 1903, with the help of Yokoyama Sakūjirō 五城山作次郎 [sixth-degree black belt] he left in October 1904. In 1932, then 49 years old, Mifune was appointed as head-instructor of the Metropolitan Police Jūdō Department. He also became head-instructor to the jūdō department of Meiji University and several other colleges and schools. On December 12th, 1937, Mifune was promoted to 9th dan [ninth-degree black belt] by Kanō Jigorō in person, and on May 25th of 1945 he was promoted by to jūdan by Nango Jirō 南郷次郎, the Kōdōkan’s second kancho [president], and he became one of the youngest (62 yrs) and probably the most famous and longest serving 10th dan ever, until his death at the age of 82 years, on January 27th of 1965.

6 Mifune’s jāmonji-gatame-no-nige (sono ni) 十文字固の逃げ [escape from crossed-control armbar [second option]] at 47°35’ is identical to Itō’s Ude-kujiki-ude-gatame 腕関節固の逃げ and daoshi-kesa-gatame 押し倒し袈裟固め [pushing over scarf hold].
We find it hard to believe that if katame-waza ura-no-kata would indeed be Mifune’s creation that it would have been totally absent from all of his works. Other than the fact that Mifune’s approach to newaza [ground fighting techniques] is similar to his approach to tachi-waza [standing techniques] i.e. also very technical, we could find no direct association whatsoever between Mifune and katame-waza ura-no-kata.

In 2000, Satō Shizuya, Kōdōkan 6th dan, gave a lengthy interview for the Japanese martial arts magazine Hiden Budo & Bujutsu Monthly [20]. Really, Satō features prominently in the only hitherto published book on katame-waza ura-no-kata, and he had personally known both the senior author of the book (Itō Kazuo) and Mifune Kyūzō. In his interview Satō leaves no doubt about it that not Mifune, but Itō Kazuo who was the creator of katame-waza ura-no-kata:

"この他、伊藤師範が創意工夫した固め技裏之形もあつり、抑え込み技、締め技、関節技に対する返し技がそれぞれ五本ずつ制定されている。言わば三船師範の技術研究鏡を伊藤師範が引き継いだ軌跡ということがで、技技が巧みだったという伊藤師範の面目躍如たるものがある。" (…) [20, p. 16-17].

[Transl.: Furthermore, there also exists the Forms of Reversing Controlling Techniques which resulted from master Itō’s creativity, who in this way established countering techniques in response to each of 5 holding techniques, strangulation techniques, and joint techniques. It is, so to speak, master Itō to whom master Mifune handed over the results of his research into the art of technique, and master Itō then continued this trajectory further organizing everything, in doing so living up to his reputation for being skilled in ground fighting techniques.]

Thus, the above statement deals with both the authorship and the inspiration that led to katame-waza ura-no-kata. While Itō Kazuo synthesized the information and created the kata, the actual source of inspiration to Itō was Mifune Kyūzō, at least according to Satō. So far no other well-informed source that is either referenced, or citing from primary sources, has offered a credible contradictory view. Based solely on hearsay, one may, on occasions, hear the erroneous view that Mifune himself might have constructed the kata, for which, as we have shown, there exists no evidence whatsoever.

Attribution of the authorship of katame-waza ura-no-kata to Itō is based on evaluating the following considerations:

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1 Satō Shizuya was promoted to rankadan [6th degree black belt] by the Kōdōkan in 1965, but when he parted ways with the Kōdōkan he assumed the rank of IMAF kudan [8th degree black belt] in the organization he cofounded in 1952. At the time of his death he held the judo ranks of 6th dan Kōdōkan and 9th dan IMAF.
Itō Kazuo

Itō Kazuo 伊藤四男 was born in 1898 in Shimo-Kanezawa-machi 下金沢町 in Shinjō 新庄市, Yamagata Prefecture 山形県 in Japan’s Tōhoku region 陸東地方. It has been suggested that as a child he studied a (not further defined) style of jūdō in Nagasaki Prefecture 長崎県 in Japan. He then attended the Nissin Shōgakkō 日新小学校 [Nissin Elementary School] and afterwards went to high school at the Ritsu Sasebo Chigakkō 長崎県立佐世保中学校 in Nagasaki Prefecture. He then studied at the Department of Politics and Economics of Meiji University 明治大学政経科, but similarly to Mifune, dropped out [2]. Itō entered the Kōdōkan in April 1920, and obtained his shodan 初段 [first-degree black belt] that same year. In May 1922 Itō became a disciple of Mifune Kyūzō at the Mifune Juku 三船塾 [Mifune Coaching School] [2], who at the time held 6th dan and was a fierce jūdō competitor and already a leading technician and instructor (Figure 2(35)). Mifune describes his first meeting with Itō in his Jūdō kizokoru [13, p. 87-88].

While studying under Mifune, Itō successfully obtained his secondary school teacher license from the Ministry of Education [2]. He continued studying at the Kōtō Jūdō Kyōin Yosei-jo 高等柔道教員養成所 [Higher Training School for the Formation of Jūdō Instructors] and graduated in 1938, when he was 40 years old. He also became a Kōdōkan instructor and obtained a qualification as university jūdō professor from the 1st postwar Ministry of Education. Several of Itō’s books from the 1960s and later list him with the academic credentials of Doctor of Science (Rigaku Hakase 理学博士) [22-24]. In 1958 the Kōdōkan elevated Itō Kazuo to Kōdōkan 9th dan. 

Professionally, Itō also was a jūdō instructor at Nittaidai or Nippon Tsūitsu Daigaku 日本体育大学 [Nippon Sport Science University] and at Meiji Gakuin Daigaku 明治学院大学 [Meiji Gakuin University], and a kōshi 講師 [university lecturer] at Kōdōkan Daigaku 工学院大学 [Kōgakuin University]. At the Kōdōkan he was a Kōdōkan Shidō Shingi-in 道場編指導審議員 [Kōdōkan Teaching Committee Member] (Figure 3(36)), a jōnin sodan-yaku 常任相談役等 [permanent counselor] to the Tōkyō-Bu Jūdō Renmei 東京都柔道連盟 [Tokyo Division Jūdō Federation], a member of the Zen Nihon Jūdō Kōdanshakai 全日本柔道高段者会 [All Japan Jūdō High-Grade-Holders Association] [2], and an advisor to the American Embassy Jūdō Club in Tokyo. In addition, Itō in 1952 was also a cofounder of the Kōkusi Budōin – Kokusai Budō Renmei 国際武道会 – 国際武道聯盟 [International Martial Arts Federation [IMAF]], of which in April 1963 he was appointed as the organization’s first chief-director. In 1968, Itō (accompanied by his student Satō Shizuya and Kōdōkan secretary Fuji Hiroshi) had made a world tour visiting 12 countries to teach jūdō and introduce some of his pedagogical ideas to enthusiastic jūdōka worldwide [25]. Itō’s large tour was followed up by an invitation from the government of Panama to take a one-month national jūdō tour throughout their country. In 1971, six years after the death of Mifune Kyūzō in 1965, IMAF promoted Itō to 10th degree black belt.

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Dan and also awarded Itō its highest honor in the form of the title of meijin [grandmaster]. In 1973, Itō’s birth town Shinjō 新庄市 awarded him the title of meiyoshimin [honorary citizen]. Itō died in 1974, at the age of 75 yrs. Among Itō Kazuo’s most well known students were the late budo author and historian Donn F. Draeger (1922–1982), Kōdōkan 5th dan, women’s multi-budōka Miyake Tsunao 三宅綱子 (born 1926), Kōdōkan Joshi 5th dan, and former IMAF general secretary Šatō Shizuya 佐藤静弥 (1929–2011), Kōdōkan 6th dan & IMAF 9th dan. Itō also authored three books in Japanese [2, 22, 23], of which two were subsequently translated into English [24].

The intellectual sources of inspiration for Katame-waza ura-no-kata

To what extent Mifune is the original source of these kaeshi-waza which Itō learnt from him is another question. As much as Mifune nowhere identifies any external source to his inspiration for the techniques which Itō assembled and compiled into the Katame-waza ura-no-kata 固技裏の形 [Forms of reverse throwing techniques], this does not mean that such source does not exist. There exists unverified hearsay where it is suggested that Mifune would have dreams or visions of new techniques which he would later try out. This seems, however, an extrapolation of what is sometimes suggested as being the origin of Mifune’s most famous new throw which he developed: kūki-nage 空気 [Throw in a void] [7, 15, 26-29], and Mifune himself does nowhere in any of his many published writings identify such a mechanism as being the origin of his newaza.

As previously indicated, it is far more likely and realistic that much of his research into newaza was inspired by Oda Jōin (1892–1955) who was acquainted with Mifune (Figure 1[34]). The existence of Oda’s voluminous +1,400-pages Jūdō Taikan since it was first published in 1929 [Oda 1929], and which to this day in Japan is regarded as the “Bible of jūdō newaza”, shows that Oda’s research into newaza was already extensive when Mifune was still competing and focusing mostly on tachi-waza [17, 18].

As to the theory of kaeshi–waza, this is pretty much the work of Takahashi Kazuyoshi 高橋数良 (1885–1945) [5, 6]. In 1906 both Takahashi and Mifune were 3rd dan

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15 In addition to Waseda University he was also the jūdō head-instructor at the Rikugun Yonen Gakkō [School for children of the military] and an instructor at the Keishichō 警視庁 [Tokyo Metropolitan Police] and the Kōdōkan. In 1920 Takahashi received the title of hanbi 程士 [master] from the Dai Nippon Butsukai, which attested to the recognition of his skills.
Review article

[3rd degree black belt] holders, and both were students of Yokoyama Sakujirō 横山作次郎, (1864-1912), with Takahashi becoming the shihan 師範 [head teacher] of Waseda University 早稲田大学 in Tōkyō [19]. We know that Mifune had been a student in Waseda University’s preparatory course in 1904, even though he dropped out of the program [19, 27-30]. Given Mifune’s strong connection with Toku Sanbō 徳三宝 (1887-1945), who too was Waseda University-based and who would become a shihan there in 1924, Mifune would be very well aware of what was happening there in terms of jūdō regarding eventual new techniques or theories. It is Takahashi, not Mifune, who, then, would become nationally famous for his kaeshi-waza (the focus of his research), and who between May 1919 and January 1922 authored not less than twelve different articles that were all published in Yūkō-no-Katsudō 有効の活動, the Kōdōkan’s official magazine [5, 6]. The articles dealt with the principles or ura-waza although the explanations in detail on some techniques were limited to throws rather than ground fighting. Nevertheless, the principles remain the same, and hence, even though Itō may identify Mifune as the source to the majority of the techniques included in katame-waza ura-no-kata, it is likely that Mifune himself may also have benefitted from the inspiration of Takahashi Kazuyoshi, Oda Jōin, Toku Sanbō, and Kawakami Chū 川上忠, rather than from divine inspiration in dreams or visions …

Creation and first appearance of katame-waza ura-no-kata

We have been unable to find any articles, papers or records of public or official demonstrations of katame-waza ura-no-kata preceding the first publication of Itō’s book on this topic in 1970 [2]. There also is no reference to such a kata anywhere in the writings of Mifune currently known. To the best of our knowlegde Itō does not identify anywhere when exactly he created katame-waza ura-no-kata. For that reason we cannot but consider the publication date of Itō’s book as the year katame-waza ura-no-kata was both ‘created’ and ‘established’— in case one attributes a distinctive meaning to either term. According to the data recorded in the book it was published on July 12, 1970, but printed on June 20, 1970. For that reason, the earliest date we have that the completed katame-waza ura-no-kata existed, is: June 20, 1970 (Figure 4(37)).

Riai and objectives of katame-waza ura-no-kata practice

The term riai 理合 [harmony of principles] in Japanese when referring to budō in general and the kata of jūdō in particular. Ōtaki and Draeger [31] offer further insight into the riai of the randori-no-kata, which is further applicable to katame-waza ura-no-kata. Furthermore, according to Ōtaki and Draeger [31]:

‘When Kodokan Judo was to be demonstrated to a distinguished audience, Kano favored kata as the medium. Despite such displays of Judo kata, Kano never meant kata to be exclusively a showpiece or to be exhibitionary

18 Toku Sanbō later upon his premature death on March 10, 1945, due to an air raid in war time Tōkyō, was promoted to 9th dan.
in nature. Ideal as kata is for demonstrating Kodokan Judo in its total scope, Kano emphasized its practical applications to training." ([31, p. 25-26].

Riai implies adherence to and performance of appropriate action in conformance with combat theory of that discipline and that specific exercise. It means that jūdō kata have to be performed according to the principles and meaning it aims to convey. The way the International Judo Federation (IJF) and Kōdōkan currently approach kata also raises similar risks for nage-waza ura-no-kata. These approaches have evolved into kata being expressed in terms of mistakes and points that are subtracted for deviations from some scripted text or taped performance, and where the ideal is supposed to be a copy-cat demonstration of supposed gold standard. Such approach differs considerably from the aims of kata as defined by Kanō Jigorō who considered the objectives of kata practice similar to those of randori [free improvised exercise], i.e. improvement of one's jūdō skills and realizing the goals of jūdō. Itō Kazuo summarizes these goals as follows:

"柔道は、あくまでも実践躬行すべきものので、行を積み重ねることによって技が進み、精神修養ができ、みずからの人格の陶冶ともなるのです。" ([Itō 1970, p. 3].

[Transl.: "In the end, advancing your technique and cultivating your own mind and personal character according to the circumstances should be the principles in judo that we live according to."]

"そのことによって、いわゆる妙技を得、神技に達し、無我の境地における「技」の道を切り開くことができると思います。" ([2, p. 4].

[Transl.: "At its ultimate goal, I think that it is about reaching the level of unexplainable, sophisticated technique, and achieving such divine technique becomes possible only when one is able to open up the path towards technique that occurs during a mental state of no-self."]

As one can promptly notice, these kata objectives are very, very different from "repeating an exercise exactly as done (by another) and without mistakes". In fact, no criteria of a mechanical nature are provided, nor anything that is to be expressed in scores or in right vs. wrong or good vs. bad. Myōwaza [unexplainable sophisticated technique] is the goal, not endlessly and senselessly copying a certain performance or standard. The emphasis of the objective myōwaza is not surprising given Mifune’s own famous maxim “Omyō zai renshin” [The unexplainable sophisticated technique is the result of training your heart]. This objective in essence is not different from one of the major objectives of itsutsu-no-kata, i.e. nyūshin shinmyō 入神神妙 [unexplainable superhuman skill], the only difference being that the ura-kata contrary as a kata is not metaphoric in nature.

TECHNICAL CONTENTS
OF KATAME-WAZA URA-NO-KATA

Names of katame-waza ura-no-kata

In the title of Itō Kazuo’s book — the oldest known source for this kata — the kata is referred to as katame-no-ura-waza 固めの裏技 [Control-reversing techniques] without the word ‘kata’ being mentioned. In addition, Itō Kazuo seems to have often utilized the term katame-no-ura-waza kenkyū [Control-reversal technique research] [2]18. The text in Itō’s book is too convoluted to conclude with certainty whether when using that term he was referring to the research that preceded the formulation of the actually kata, or to the kata itself. To that...
extent it is possible that Itō decided to drop the suffix “no-kata” [Forms] in its entirety and settled for simply using “kenkyū”. That being said, towards the end of the book after detailing the techniques, sometimes offering several options, he formally lists the final techniques under the name katame-waza ura-no-kata 固め技裏の形 [Forms of reversing controlling techniques] [2, p. 94]. This name is consistent with the name given by Mifune to the equivalent forms containing throws, with the only difference that Mifune consistently uses the old kanji for the word waza: nage-waza ura-no-kata 投業裏の形 [Forms of counter throws]. For this reason, we recommend that the kata is referred to as katame-waza ura-no-kata.

Reihō in katame-waza ura-no-kata

With regards to the reiho 礼法 [bowing procedures] in nage-waza ura-no-kata, the position of both partners likely is reversed, thus contrary to how it is in the more well-known nage- or katame-no-kata, and thus with tori having the shōmen 正面 [main front side] to his right, just like in jū-no-kata, joshi jūdō goshinbō, Kōdōkan goshinjutsu and koshiki-no-kata. We wrote ‘likely’ because there is no text in Itō’s book with details of the proper reiho for this kata, which is reflected by just two photographs. In both, tori and uke are depicted taking up the same position and side of the tatami as they do at the start of nage-waza ura-no-kata. While initially this may sound logical, the advantage of doing so is less convincing since it implies that uke performs most of his displacements and initial attacks while having his back pointing to the shōmen. This problem of orientation is not always resolved by tori’s countering action which is sometimes performed to uke’s right side and sometimes to uke’s left side. These relative complex movements may cause the action to be not optimally visible from the side of the shōmen. This does not seem to represent a major concern of Itō and attests to this kata truly being a form of training rather than intended for exhibition for spectators.

At the time that Itō introduced the kata, the initial distance between both jūdōka (tori and uke) was very limited. The pictures in Itō’s book suggest that the initial distance between both jūdōka was not more than one tatami length (1.82m - 2.00m) [2, p. 52]. Later in the 1970s the Kōdōkan revised and standardized distances for nearly all of its kata to conform to the larger IJF-size shiai tatami with the broad red borders. For that reason, we opine that it is reasonable and logical, in accordance with the majority of Kōdōkan kata, to also adjust the starting distance for katame-waza ura-no-kata to 5.45m (derived from the original Japanese norm of 3 ken 間, the old Japanese measure of length of surfaces commonly used in architecture, in which 1 ken is 1.818m or 5.965 feet)\(^1\).

The pictures in Itō’s book include neither a bow to the shōmen, nor any standing bow. The reason for this likely is the correct understanding that kata originally was simply a way for two jūdōka to train together, and not at all intended for public demonstrations. Therefore, a bow to a shōmen where dignitaries may be seated was likely only as rarity for those occasions where jūdō as a new discipline was introduced to a non-jūdōka audience. Today, it is, however, standard to perform a bow to a shōmen even if no dignitaries or audience are present. For that reason, we recommend that similarly to the other kata such a bow is performed prior to both jūdōka bowing to each other. Hence, both partners should make a quarter turn in standing position, heels together, and bow to the shōmen performing ritu-rei 立礼 [bowing in standing position]. They then turn back to each other, heels still together, and assume the seating position first lowering their left knee, then their right knee. They then perform zarei 柄礼 [bowing in seated position] towards each other.

After completing the bowing procedure both jūdōka rise, first with their right knee, then with their left knee, both heels still together, and make one large step forward ending in shizenhontai [natural position] to each other to signify “opening the kata”. They then lower their left knee and assume the half-kneeded position termed by Itō chūgoshi no yoko e 中蹲の横え [half-raised position], and more commonly known as kyoshi-no-kamae 親姿の構 [squat ready-position], usually abbreviated to ko-kyoshi 小親姿 [minor squared position]. To do so, they put their left knees on the spots previously taken by their left heels while keeping their left toes raised. Both jūdōka then slide their right feet to their right sides, maintaining their lower right leg at an angle of approximately 90° with their right thigh, while putting their right palms on their right knees. Their left hands remain down in a natural position.

Then, tori moves his right foot to the inner side, takes one step forward with his right foot following on his

\(^1\) In the West it is generally believed that the starting distance in kata is 6m, but this is actually not quite correct. This error was caused as a consequence of using the number of tatami in-between, because Japanese tatami are typically 1.82m, while Western tatami are 2m in length. When counting 3 tatami this causes a difference of approx. 54cm. However, since practically it is helpful to be able to quickly count tatami when determining distance rather than having to take a tape measure, the error has remained in place and Western publications therefore will usually continue claiming that the starting/ending distance in kata should be 6m.

\(^2\) This position is derived from Kitō-ryū’s kurai-dori 位取り [half-kneeded position of situational awareness], a position that mechanically is similar to ko-kyoshi.
left knee and moves to slide his right foot to his right side again to take the posture of ko-kyoshi or chūgoshi. The movement in katame-no-kata and katame-waza ura-no-kata where you slide forward on one knee is called shibis 腹行. Tori then takes up his position in gyōga-no-shisei 仰臥の姿勢 [lying on his back position], head directed towards the center of the axis of the kara, in the same manner that one goes from ko-kyoshi to lying on the back in katame-no-kata.

Structure and technical contents of katame-waza ura-no-kata

The structure of Itō’s katame-waza ura-no-kata shows obvious similarities to Kano’s katame-no-kata 固めの形 [Forms of control]. Both contain fifteen techniques, and are organized similarly. Thus, like katame-no-kata, katame-waza ura-no-kata instead consists of three groups (osae-komi-waza 押さえ込み技 [pinning techniques], shime-waza 絞め技 [strangulation techniques]) of five techniques each. The attacking techniques in katame-waza ura-no-kata are identical and in the same order as the techniques of katame-no-kata, but are now initiated by uke instead of tori, while tori responds by a countering technique. The reversing action applied by tori is either osae-komi-waza (six times), shime-waza 絞め技 (only once), or kansetsu-waza 関節技 (eight times). A schematic overview of the structure of nage-waza ura-no-kata is provided in (Table 1(3)).

Katame-waza ura-no-kata is not free of inconsistencies. On at least two occasions Itō in his book actually performs a different reversing technique than the one he lists in the overview of the kata authored by him. For example, kuzure-kami-shibé-gatame is supposed to be countered by ude-kujiki-jūji-gatame [2, p. 94], but Itō instead performs what seems to be ude-kujiki-waki-gatame with wrist control, which he calls ude-kujiki-kote-gatame [wrist-control arm overstretched] [2, p. 66-67] (Figure 6(39)).

Similarly to katame-no-kata, all techniques are performed to only one side although several of the counters must be performed left in response to a controlling technique from the right in order to be effective. Tori and uke do not switch positions, and after each technique take up the same starting position as the corresponding technique in katame-no-kata; this implies that during the second through the fourth technique of the second group (shime-waza) tori will be in seated position, during the fourth technique of the third group (kansetsu-waza) tori will be in ko-kyoshi for biza-gatame, and during the final technique of the kata both judoka will be in standing position for ashi-garami.

Similar to nage-no-kata after concluding each series, tori and uke return to their starting position after opening the kata, and while facing the inside of the tatami have an opportunity to adjust their clothing, before making half a turn and continue with the next series, or after the third series follow-up by closing the kata.

Itō does not provide guidelines as to the closure of the kata, but it is logical to assume that it is identical to the reibō in the beginning of the kata, but in

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21 The sliding forward movement or shibis 腹行 should not be confused with the movement in sumō where the sumotori at the start of the contest ceremonially raise one leg, then the other, and stamp on the ground, which has the somewhat similar sounding name of shiko 四股.
These techniques are performed to the left. Despite in his overview of the only published resource on the techniques contained in the book authored by Ito instead indicates, demonstrates and explains ude-kujiki-ji-jūji-gatame 押さ込み技 [Pinning techniques] and Satō Shizuya (1929-2011) later became celebrated because of his role in the creation (1951) and management of I.M.A.F., and he also used to be a secretary to the Kōdōkan’s International Department since 1949.

LEARNING TEXTS AND AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS FOR STUDYING KATAME-WAZA URA-NO-KATA

1970 – Ito Kazuo 伊藤四男
– Jūdō no nage– to katame–no–ura–waza [2] Ito Kazuo’s book in Japanese, published in 1970, devoted to both the nage-waza ura-no-kata and the katame-no-ura-waza kenkyu, remains, almost 45 years later, to the best of our knowledge, still the only published resource on katame-waza ura-no-kata. All techniques are demonstrated by Itō-sensei, Kōdōkan 9th dan, in the role of tori, and Satō Shizuya 佐藤静彌, Kōdōkan 6th dan as uke. The book has been out of print for quite some time. The photographs are not of high quality and because the text is in Japanese only, most Westerners will be just examining pictures and possibly ending up with different interpretations of what exactly is being shown. Contributing to this concern is the absence of detailed pictures of the reihō steps. In many cases the pictures are not self-explanatory; essential sequences are missing and Satō Shizuya also implies that after the final technique, remains, almost 45 years later, to the best of our knowledge, still the only published resource on katame-waza ura-no-kata. All techniques are demonstrated by Itō-sensei, Kōdōkan 9th dan, in the role of tori, and Satō Shizuya 佐藤静彌, Kōdōkan 6th dan as uke. The book has been out of print for quite some time. The photographs are not of high quality and because the text is in Japanese only, most Westerners will be just examining pictures and possibly ending up with different interpretations of what exactly is being shown. Contributing to this concern is the absence of detailed pictures of the reihō steps. In many cases the pictures are not self-explanatory; essential sequences are missing and final position may be missing leaving the reader somewhat at loss to how exactly perform the reverse order. Updated with the procedures common today in katame-no-kata (but taking into account that the positions of tori and uke are reversed), this would also imply that after the final technique uke slides two steps backwards in shikō while in ko-kyoshibi position, followed by tori sliding backwards a single step in ko-kyoshibi.

### Table 1(3). Structural and functional overview of the techniques contained in katame-waza ura-no-kata (after [1]).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KATAME-WAZA URA-NO-KATA</th>
<th>[FORMS OF REVERSING CONTROLLING TECHNIQUES]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Dai ikkyō 第一教 [First group]: Osae-komi-waza 押さえ込み技 [Pinning techniques]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Kesa-gatame 被裂固め → Ude-dori-kuzure-gesa 腕取り崩れ袈裟 [Modified scarf hold with arm hold]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Kata-gatame 手縛固め → Kaeshi han-gatame 反し本袈裟 [Reverse basic scarf]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Yokotōshō-gatame 横四方固め → Ude-kujiki-kata-gatame 腕挫ぎ腕固め [Arm overstretching with shoulder control] †</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Kazure-ke-no-shitō-gatame 被崩れ上四方固め → Ude-kujiki-ji-jūji-gatame 腕挫ぎ十字固め [Cross-control arm overstretching] †</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Dai ninkyō 第二教 [Second group]: Shine-waza 絞め技 [Strangulation techniques]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Kata-ji-jūji-gatame 片十字絞め → Ude-garame 腕締め [Arm twisting]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Okari-eri-jime 送り襟絞め → Ude-kujiki-teko-gatame 腕挫ぎテコ固め [Modified scarf hold with arm hold]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Kataha-ji-jūji-gatame 片十字絞め → Ude-dori-ushiro-kesa 腕取り後ろ袈裟 [arm hold reverse scarf] †</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Gyakuji-ji-jūji-gatame 片十字絞め → Ude-garame 腕締め [arm twisting]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Dai sankyō 第三教 [Third group]: Kansetsu-waza 關節技 [Joint techniques]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Ude-garame 腕締め → Ude-garame 腕締め [arm twisting]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Ude-kujiki-ji-jūji-gatame 腕挫ぎ十字固め → Kaeri-oki-osae-komi (kesa-gatame) (h) 返り起き 押さえ込み(袈裟固め) [Sliding backwards a single step overstretching] †</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Ude-kujiki-ji-jūji-gatame 腕挫ぎ十字固め → Ude-kujiki-ude-gatame 腕挫ぎ腕固め [arm overstretching with arm control] †</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Ashi-gatame 足絞め → Kake-shi-hō-gatame 継四方固め [lengthwise 4-point hold]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† Furigana 振り仮名振り仮名 [hana or over beside kanji to indicate pronunciation] that accompany the kanji 拉ぎ in the book authored by the creator of this kata [2], indicate that the pronunciation is to be ‘拉ぎ’ [overstretching, crushing], which is also the normal pronunciation of this kanji. We point out that for hitherto unknown reasons, the same kanji 拉ぎ, in Kōdōkan jūdō, is usually pronounced ‘ちびぎ’ [overstretching], even though the standard kanji for ‘ちびぎ’ is 拉ぎ. It is impossible to conclude whether the grammatically correct, yet from Kodōkan standards deviating pronunciation, really was the wish of the author or is on account of his book’s copy editor.

‡ Despite in his overview of the kata Itō pointing out that the ura-toza to kuzure-kame-shiho-gatame is to be ude-kujiki-ji-jūji-gatame [2, p. 94], in the actual description of the ura-toza Itō instead indicates, demonstrates and explains ude-kujiki-ji-jūji-gatame 腕挫ぎ十字固め [wrist-control arm overstretching] [2, p. 66-67].

§ These techniques are performed to the left.
De Crée C. – Kōdōkan Jūdō’s Katame-waza ura-no-kata

To the best of our knowledge, there are neither any didactic audiovisual materials, nor any recorded public demonstrations of katame-waza ura-no-kata in the public domain, nor have there ever been any. As to any potential private recordings that might exist, this cannot be excluded, but we are certainly not aware of any. Neither are there currently any meaningful Internet resources available on katame-waza ura-no-kata except one or two queries on jūdō discussion forums.

INSTRUCTION AND AVAILABILITY OF NAGE- WAZA URA-NO-KATA INSTRUCTORS AND POPULARITY OF THE KATA

Since knowledge of even the existence of katame-waza ura-no-kata among jūdōka is very limited, it also prevents the kata from being popular. But even among kata enthusiasts who are aware of the existence of katame-waza ura-no-kata, interest generally has not evolved into actually practicing the kata. There are several likely reasons for this. Firstly, it is almost impossible to find an instructor knowledgeable in the kata irrespective of whether one is in Japan or in the West, and the single printed resource exists in Japanese only and has been out of print for decades. The unavailability of rigid mechanical standards which Western jūdōka tend to believe need to be replicated or stringently adhered to, seem to exert a discouraging effect, in particular because there is no tradition to approach kata as an essential exercise to improve one’s jūdō as Kanō Jigorō envisaged. When Westerners practice kata, their objective is of a comparative nature and usually intended to impress someone, whether a dan-promotion jury or kata judges, instead of simply improving their jūdō. Katame-waza ura-no-kata not being part of any dan-promotion program provides no option to impress juries and promotion boards. This is the same reason why official Kōdōkan kata such as jūdō joshi goshinhō, sei-ryoku zen’yō kokumin taiiku, and gō-no-kata sadly attract little of no interest from most jūdōka. Despite the noble goals of Kanō Jigorō [32, 33], unless there is a material reward, jūdōka tend to show little interest in most kata.

Performances of katame-no-kata in most cases lack spectacle, unless the approach is really from a randori-no-kata angle, as it should be. Katame-waza ura-no-kata is even more at risk for lacking spectacle now that contrary to katame-no-kata where three different escaping attempts are being made, only a single escape is performed. Furthermore, most jūdōka are not well familiar with Kōdōkan jūdō’s structure of newaza寝技 [ground fighting techniques] and oftentimes erroneously substitute the term with katame-waza 固技 [controlling techniques].
Kōdōkan jūdō’s newaza, on the contrary, contains subdivisions such as nige-waza 逃げ技 [escaping techniques] and nogare-kata 逃れ方 [ways of escaping], for which katame-waza ura-no-kata is an excellent learning tool. However, without being aware of the existence and importance of those subdivisions it may be difficult to fully appreciate the contributions to developing skills in these categories by practicing katame-waza ura-no-kata.

As a relative exception to the rarity of katame-waza ura-no-kata among IJF jūdō practitioners or Kōdōkan jūdōka, the Kokusai Budōin – Kokusai Budō Renmei 国際武道院・国際武道聯盟 [International Martial Arts Federation [IMAF]] after Itō’s death made some effort to keep this kata alive by apparently occasionally putting it on the program of its seminars. To that extent, it is said that Itō’s former deshi, the late Satō Shizuya (1929–2011), Kōdōkan 6th dan and IMAF 9th dan, was known to keep katame-waza ura-no-kata as an active subject in his jūdō teaching portfolio [20] (Figure 7(40)). Scrutiny of the programs of IMAF’s yearly international seminars held over the last decade in either Europe or the Americas, however, do not show this kata ever having been on the program; in fact, what these programs showed, is that after 2005 the jūdō component as whole was mostly phased out with the only disciplines remaining being aikidō, iaidō, karatedō, kendō, kobudō, and Nihon jūjutsu. In other words, despite Satō’s obvious familiarity with the kata, it does not seem that in recent years any transfer of Satō’s knowledge regarding this kata took place at any significant scale.

The author of this paper, at the time of writing, was unable to identify any other jūdō instructor besides himself, who currently has the katame-waza ura-no-kata in his teaching portfolio (Figure 8(41)).23 However, the 2015 annual training plan of the Dōyūkai 道友会 [Friends of the Way Society] for the first time ever...
officially listed a katame-waza ura-no-kata training session, which took place on May 7th, 2015, though somewhat conspicuously, no name of a specific instructor was mentioned; instead, under ‘instructor’ it read “kata shidōbu” 形指導部 [kata instructors division] [34]. However, the workshop, attended by approximately 30 senior Japanese instructors (Figure 9(42)), in the end was led by Ochiai Toshiyasu 落合俊保, Kōdōkan 8th dan, nephew and former student of the late Kuhara Yoshiyuki 久原義之 (1906-1985), Kōdōkan 9th dan, who, similarly to Ito Kazuo, was a direct disciple of Mifune. In addition, a number of senior Dōyūkai members admitted their interest in this kata and starting this February have been noticed to have discreetly started practicing some of its movements in the Kōdōkan Grand Dōjō. So far, Kōdōkan instructors have turned a blind eye, but it remains to be seen if this exciting development can and will continue. Given that the Kōdōkan has not accepted any new kata since nearly half a century — the last being Kōdōkan goshinjutsu approved in 1956 — and given that it still has not accepted Mifune’s far more well-known kata to the list of the existing ten Kōdōkan kata, it is unlikely that the Kōdōkan will soon — or even ‘ever’ — officially incorporate Ito’s katame-waza ura-no-kata in its kata syllabus. This should, however, not be felt as restraining us from welcoming and practicing katame-waza ura-no-kata, since jūdō and jūdō kata are foremost a living thing 24.

24 Ikimono 生き物.
CONCLUSIONS

Research into the *katame-waza ura-no-kata* is not a simple endeavor due to the paucity of sources, most of which exist in Japanese only and have long been out of print. We, as authors of this paper, advocate the practice of *katame-waza ura-no-kata*, and we do so for all of the reasons explained above, as well as because we believe that in a time when the message, aims and principles of Kanō’s *jūdō* have become increasingly diluted in the light of the ever increasing emphasis on *jūdō* as a performance sport and popular media circus, *katame-waza ura-no-kata* helps explaining and restoring what *jūdō* is and was about. In that context, it cannot be emphasized enough that the objective of this *kata* is not to copy some supposed standard or recommended version, or to simply meet a number of mechanical criteria. As Itō has stated by iterating the words of Mifune, instead the objective is *myōwaza* [unexplainable sophisticated technique]. It is the level where mechanics are transcended by spiritual principle to the extent that it flows out itself, assumes the rhythm of the opponent who will feel like his is fighting his own shadow.

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 Western literature, the relevant text or author is cited exactly as per the original source, with macrons used or omitted accordingly.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

The author declares having no competing interests.

NOTES

Japanese names in this paper are listed by family name first and given name second, as common in traditional Japanese usage and to maintain consistency with the order of names of Japanese historic figures.