**Kōdōkan Jūdō’s Three Orphaned Forms of Counter Techniques – Part 2: The Nage-waza ura-no-kata — “Forms of Reversing Throwing Techniques”**

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Source of support: private resources

Received: 30 October 2014; Accepted: 26 March 2015; Published online: 30 April 2015

ICID: 1151331

**Abstract**

**Background & Study Aim:** The purpose of the present paper is to provide a comprehensive review of nage-waza ura-no-kata (“Forms of Reversing Throwing Techniques”), a non-officially accepted kata of Kōdōkan jūdō made famous by the late Mifune Kyūzō (1883-1965), of which the date of creation has not been previously established, nor under what circumstances 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:** In 1903 Mifune entered the Kōdōkan and in 1904 he attended Waseda University’s Preparatory School for a year. The inspiration for Nage-waza ura-no-kata may be traced back to Waseda University, where Takahashi Kazuyoshi was Mifune's contemporary. While Mifune, in combination with an intensive competitive career, also spent time researching new individual throwing techniques, it is Takahashi's research that focused on the concept of ura-waza or reverse-throws. On Kanō's invitation Takahashi authored many articles on this topic which appeared in Yūkō-no-Katsudō, the Kōdōkan’s official magazine. It is likely that drawing from Takahashi’s and his own research Mifune completed his nage-waza ura-no-kata probably around 1934-1938. 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:** Nage-waza ura-no-kata is an exercise devised by expert-technician Mifune Kyūzō which similarly to katame-no-kata complements nage-no-kata and of which the practice is intended to contribute to developing the highest levels of jūdō technical ability.

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

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**Introduction**

In the 1980s video playing and recording devices were introduced into family homes and vastly expanded the plethora of film material to which people could gain access. It is around that time that the author of this paper was informed by the technical director of his judo federation of the existence of a 16mm judo film which someone just had converted into a videotape. The film in question, recorded in 1955, featured the legendary Japanese judo master Mifune Kyūzō 三船久藏, a rare Kodōkan judan 十段 (10th degree). Mifune, despite then having been deceased for nearly two decades, continued to appeal to any serious judoka, although, very few European judoka had actually known or personally ever seen the man while he was still alive. The Japanese government, well aware of Mifune’s exceptional skills and accompanying charisma, had arranged for a copy of this film to be available in the cultural departments of its embassies worldwide, from where the film could be borrowed by members of the public. The format the film was made available in was 16 mm film reels which never really was intended as a home use format and which precluded the film becoming a popular judo resource. However, the emergence of video would change all that, and it is in this way, long before commercial versions of the film would be released on VHS and DVD, that this author first learnt of Mifune’s Nage–waza ura–no–kata 投げ技裏の形 [Forms of Counter throws], which was demonstrated in the film.

Watching Mifune displaying his judo skills which far exceeded any judo we had previously witnessed, left a deep impression, and we tried to gain more information about the kata that Mifune was showing in the film. Unfortunately, we were unable to locate anyone in Europe who seemed to have been intimately familiar with this kata, and who could provide instruction in it. However, we found out about the existence of Mifune’s famous Canon of Judo, and after some efforts we were able to locate a copy in the possession of an elderly instructor who kindly lent it to us. 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 [1] that had been presented to him on June 23, 1982, by Satō Shūdōkan Dōjō修道館道場, nephew of the late Kuhara Yoshiyuki 久原義之 (1906–1985), Kodōkan 9th dan, who, similarly to Ito Kazuo, was a direct disciple of Mifune and had learnt the nage–waza ura–no–kata directly from Mifune. After Mifune’s death Kuhara had continued to teach if in his own Shūdōkan Dōjō修道館道場 [Practice Hall for the Study of the Way], which is where Ochiai had learnt it from him. Ochiai continues teaching it today in his own Bunkyō-ku dōjō since Kuhara’s passing back in 1985.

Today, through the Internet, it no longer is difficult to find recordings of practical demonstrations of nage–waza ura–no–kata, although as of yet not a single demonstration of katame–no–ura–waza is available even on the Internet. However, finding proper information about the contents, background and history of nage–waza ura–no–kata, and certainly about katame–waza ura–no–kata, is difficult. The very limited information that is commonly available in terms of resources, as so often is the case, merely focuses on the mechanical choreographic aspects of the kata failing to grasp its essence and making it into a dead copying exercise. Hence, there is a great need to explore the history and essence of both these kata and set these against the background of Kodōkan kata, especially given that both kata are still missing from official lists of existing Kodōkan kata [3].

It is the purpose of the present paper to provide a comprehensive study of nage–waza ura–no–kata and reflect on what extent it has or has not established itself as a common part of judo practice in Japan and abroad. We aim to address this acute shortage of information regarding this kata (This paper will only focus on nage–waza ura–no–kata. A complementary paper [part 3] will similarly consider the katame–waza ura–no–kata.).

Our research questions are as follows:

- Under what circumstances and by whom was nage–waza ura–no–kata created?
- What are the contents and theoretical foundations of nage–waza ura–no–kata?

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Judo – is a Japanese form of pedagogy, created by Kanō Jigoro, 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.

Kaeshi-waza - reverse or counter techniques, also called ura-waza.

Kata – predetermined and choreographed physical exercises, which together with free exercises (randori), lectures (kigoi) and discussions (mondō) form the four critical pillars of Kodōkan judo education.

Kodōkan – the specific name of his school and style of judo as given by its founder Kanō Jigoro (1860–1938).

Mifune Kyūzō – a most celebrated Kodōkan judan 十段-holder, born in 1883, died in 1965.

Ura-waza – reverse or counter techniques, also called kaeshi-waza.
Who practices nage-waza ura-no-kata and where can it be observed and studied?

Why is nage-waza ura-no-kata so rare and why is it 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. This paper offers an important contribution to the existing knowledge base of Kōdōkan jūdō. It has implications for the current jūdō syllabus, and also represents the only critical scholarly study of this kata in both Western languages and Japanese.

**The Official KATA of Kōdōkan Jūdō vs. Non-official Jūdō Kata**

According to the words of Kanō Jigorō-ibihan 師範 [head teacher/principal], the founder of jūdō, the proper study of jūdō must involve both randori and kata [4, 5]. Kata are prearranged and abstract attack/defense choreographic forms, which represent the grammar of jūdō. It is particularly important to realize that some of the more dangerous yet essential techniques in jūdō only exist in the form of kata. During his life Kanō devised five true kata (nage-no-kata 役の形 [Forms of Throwing], katame-no-kata 固の形 [Forms of Controlling], gō-no-kata 剛の形 [Forms of Correct Use of Force], jū-no-kata 柔の形 [Forms of Non-resistance], and kime-no-kata 極の形 [Forms of Decisiveness]) and adopted two prior existing ones (kōbiki-no-kata 古式の形 [The Antique Forms] and itsutsu-no-kata 五の形 [The Five Forms]) from jūdō's two jūjutsu parent schools (Kitō-ryū and Tenjin Shin'yō-ryū). Sei-ryoku zen'yō kokumin taiiku 精力善用国民体 [National Physical Education based on the Principle of Maximal Efficiency], Kanō's last major new jūdō physical education exercise dating from 1924 (finalized in 1927-1928) and originally considered a kihon基本 [fundamentals] exercise just like ukemi 受身 [breakfalls], now, is also traditionally included in the kata of Kōdōkan jūdō [6] hence bringing, by the time of Kanō's death in May 1938, the total number of Kōdōkan kata to eight. Later, in 1943 and 1956 respectively, the Kōdōkan introduced its Self-Defense Methods for Women, called joshi jūdō goshinbō 女子柔道護身 [Women's Judo Self-Defense] and a Modern Self-Defense Method, called Kōdōkan goshinjutsu 講道館護身術, both of which were the result of a concerted effort of two separate committees of Kōdōkan experts. These two post-Kanō exercises are typically categorized as kata, though the term 'kata' itself does not feature in their designated official name, hence bringing the total number of Kōdōkan kata to ten.

Japanese jūdōka have a somewhat ambiguous attitude towards jūdō kata [7]. On the other 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; hence, new 'methods', yes, but new 'kata', no. According to Daigo-sensei, Chief-Instructor Emeritus of the Kōdōkan: "There is no kata after the death of Kanō Jigorō. Sei-ryoku zen'yō kokumin taiiku was never meant to be a kata (solely) for jūdōka but for general physical education (for the general public). Joshi goshinbō is more an application than a set of principles, thus consequently intended to be more practical, which is understandable particularly if we consider the social environment in which it was composed. For the same reason, Kōdōkan goshinjutsu is not given a suffix of '-kata'."(...)

This view coexists with an opposing view which considers that jūdō was neither finished nor had reached its limits upon the death of Kanō, so in order to evolve with its time and adequately address any new challenges it might face, new Kōdōkan kata 'could' be added provided that they receive formal approval by the Kōdōkan. Intriguingly, history shows that attempts to create and seek official approval from the Kōdōkan for such new creations were by no means limited to the period after Kanō’s death. Among these non-official Kōdōkan kata created while Kanō was still alive, genosen-no-kata 後の先の形 [Forms of Post-attack Initiative Counters] is probably the most well-known example (see part 1 of this paper). Genosen-no-kata gained popularity in some Western European countries (France, Germany, Netherlands, UK, etc.) mainly because of Kawaishi Mikinosuke’s 川石酒造之助 (1899-1969) fondness for demonstrating and teaching this kata, although it is not prevalent in Japan. Other examples, include Uchida Ryōhei’s 田田良平's 内田良平 (1914-1978).
Mifune entered the Kōdōkan jūdō school at age 20 on July 26, 1903, and became a jūdōka of the Kōdōkan. Other Go-no-Sen no Kata exist, however, and have sound training value; judoists should make every effort to become familiar with them and thereby add to their Judo knowledge. It is not within the scope of this book, however, to deal technically with them. (…) [9, p. 33].

We note that as with nage-no-kata, where katame-no-kata was created as a sequel so that the pair would essentially form the randori-no-kata, the creation of nage-waza ura-no-kata later was followed up by a katame-waza ura-no-kata (see part 3 of this paper).

NAGE-WAZA URA-NO-KATA

Nage-waza ura-no-kata means "Forms of reversing throwing techniques". Mifune in two of his major books in the original Japanese language writes the name as referring to "nage-ura no kata" or "Forms of reversing the original Japanese language writes the name as throwing techniques". Mifune in two of his major books nage-waza ura-no-kata: this kata distinguishes itself among the historic non-official Kōdōkan kata by its elegance and fluidity, and the solidarity with which jūdō principles are expressed in realistic and practical randori-like movements. Otaki and Draeger commented on the issue of alternative kata as follows:

“Different practices and uses for kata have been established by judoists outside of the Kōdōkan, though the majority of these versions hinge on the unchanged fundamental Principle of Kōdōkan Judo. These kata can be referred to as private variations patterns. Included here are those which have been developed by qualified Judo teachers; some of these teachers are Kōdōkan men. Because these kata have definite qualities and characteristics meaningful within the realm of Judo, they are most certainly worthy of preservation and use. Perhaps the best-known example is the Nage Ura no Kata (known also as the Go-no-Sen no Kata), or "Forms of Countering Throwing," originally designed and developed by the legendary Kyūjutsu Mifune, a late tenth-dan master-teacher of the Kōdōkan. Other Go-no-Sen no Kata exist, however, and have sound training value; judoists should make every effort to become familiar with them and thereby add to their Judo knowledge. It is not within the scope of this book, however, to deal technically with them.” (…) [9, p. 33].

There exists no known controversy about the authorship of nage-waza ura-no-kata. However, 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. That being said, nage-waza ura-no-kata is generally considered to be the intellectual product of the late Mifune Kyūzō (1883-1965), Kōdōkan 10th dan and one of the all-time most famous jūdō masters. We will now consider if that assumption is correct.

Mifune Kyūzō

Mifune Kyūzō 三船久蔵 is one of the best known jūdōka in history, and his background has been widely detailed in the half a dozen books he authored [12-17] as well as in the numerous publications by others [18-24]. Mifune was born on April 21, 1883 in Kuji City, Iwate Prefecture. At age 13 (1896) Mifune graduated from Kuji-cho Jinjōkō Shōgakkō久慈町尋常高等小學校 [Kuji-cho Higher Elementary School], and was sent by his father to Sendai 仙台 to attend junior high school at the Sendai-shi Ritsu Daini Chūgakkō仙台市立第二中学校 [Sendai City Second Daini Junior High School]. This is where Mifune in 1897, still 13 years old, came in contact with, and took up, jūdō [12, 23]. During that time Mifune participated in several school jūdō tournaments in which he was very successful. After he graduated, Mifune went to Tokyō to attend a year at Waseda University’s Preparatory School at the (Waseda Daijuku Yoka早稲田大学予科), prior to his intent to enter the University’s normal curriculum. Mifune entered the Kōdōkan at age 20 on July 26th, 1903, and became shodan 初段 [first-degree black belt] the year after in October 1904 (see [15], p. 74), which is also when he actually entered the university’s...
preparatory program. Mifune’s entry into the Kōdōkan in itself is the subject of legends. Membership in those days still required a formal shōkai [introduction] and entrance interview. Since Mifune was not personally acquainted with anybody at the Kōdōkan he had to seek the help of a stranger. He decided to directly obtain an introduction from Yokoyama Sakujirō, 6th dan and the Kōdōkan’s senior instructor. So, Mifune went to Yokoyama’s house and literally camped on Yokoyama’s doorstep until the latter finally agreed to meet with him and listen to Mifune’s intentions and desires. After that, Mifune was accepted into the Kōdōkan where he quickly progressed [12, 23, 25].

Apparently Mifune was doing more jūdō than actual academic study and his father ended his allowance, after which Mifune, then aged 22 (1905), decided to look for a job. He started a newspaper which he built out to a successful enterprise. He finally sold his business with considerable profit, and, instead of entering Waseda University, he was accepted into Keio University’s graduate program in economics (Keio Daigaku Rizaika 慶應大学理財科). The same year he was also promoted to nidan [second-degree black belt] after throwing a line-up of eight jūdōka. Mifune did not successfully finish his academic education and halfway through his studies at Keio University, he dropped out so he could focus full-time on jūdō.

By 1910, Mifune was already a godan 五段 [fifth-degree black belt], and he also was appointed as head-jūdō instructor in not less than eleven schools which included Tōkyō Daigaku 東京大学 (University of Tokyo), Nittaidai or Nippon Taiiku Daigaku 日本体育大学 [Nippon Sports Science University], amongst others. His ascent up the ladder of jūdō seniority has been one of the fastest of all times. Mifune became rokudan 六段 [sixth-degree black belt] in 1917 at age 34 yrs, shichidan 七段 [seventh-degree black belt] in 1923 at age 40 yrs while still competing, and bahidan 八段 [eight-degree black belt] in 1931 at the age of 48 yrs. That same year Mifune together with Kanda Kyūtarō 神田久太郎 (1891-1977) (later 9th dan) appeared as Kanō Jigorō’s uke throughout the jūdō book which Kanō published that year. In 1932, then 49 years old, Mifune was appointed as head-instructor of the Metropolitan Police Jūdō Department. On December 12th, 1937, Kanō Jigorō in person, promoted Mifune, then aged 54, to 9th dan [ninth-degree black belt] [12, 23].

Mifune had been a 9th dan holder for just over seven years when on May 25th of 1945, during Nangō Jirō’s 南郷次郎 tenure as second Kōdōkan president, he was promoted to 10th dan. We also note that Mifune was the first jūdōka to be promoted to jūdan by the Kōdōkan under its 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 due to a hospital bronchial infection which complicated the consequences of throat cancer for which he had on December 4, 1964 entered Nichidai University Hospital in Chiyoda-ku 千代田区. Upon his death, he was awarded the Order of the Sacred Treasure, 2nd Class (Zaikōshō 二等瑞宝章). The year before (1964) Mifune had already become a recipient of the Order of the Rising Sun, 3rd Class (Kyukujitsu-shō 三等旭日照章). Mifune is buried at the Reien Cemetery 鎌倉霊園 in Kamakura 鎌倉市 in Kanagawa Prefecture 神奈川県, about 50 km southwest of Tōkyō.

Yokoyama Sakujirō

Only a single person is officially recognized as Mifune’s teacher, and that is Yokoyama Sakujirō 横山作次郎 (Figure 1(17)). Yokoyama is a crucial figure in the history of Kōdōkan jūdō. He is one of the Kōdōkan’s original Shitennō [Four Heavenly Guardians; lit.: “Four Heavenly Kings”]. Yokoyama was born in Saginomiya-mura 嘉宮村 in Tōkyō in 1864, hence being four years Kanō’s junior. As was often the case in those days, Yokoyama was not originally a Kōdōkan jūdōka, but a student of Tenjin Shin’yō-ryū jujutsu 天神真楊流柔術 [The Divine True Willow School] under Inoue Keitarō 井上敬太郎 (1872-1942) in

1 Kamakura’s Reien Cemetery is a gigantic 550,000 m² cemetery with approximately 41,000 graves that was established in 1965, and where in addition to Mifune Kyūzō also the remains of Japan’s first Literature Nobel Prize winner Kawabata Yasunari 川端薫 (1899-1972) were laid to rest. The cemetery is located at Jūniso 512, Kamakura-shi, Kanagawa 神奈川県鎌倉市十二所 512, Japan: 35°19′44″N 139°35′6″E.

2 The Four Heavenly Kings or Guardians of the Four Compass Directions is originally a Buddhist concept, called Shitennō in Japanese, Ssu-T’ien Wang [Pinyin: Si Tian Wang] in Chinese, or Mahurajjā महराजा in Sanskrit. In India they were originally called the Deva or Hindu demi-gods that became absorbed as part of Buddhism. It is a popular image in Japan to refer to a tetralogy of four loyal collaborators or supporters, hence why there previously were the four shitenno of Minamoto Yoshitsune 源義経 (1159-1189), and also the four shitenno of Minamoto Yorimitsu 源義光 (1488-1021). The Kōdōkan Shitennō 源頼光講道館四天王 were: Saisō Shun 三好順 (1866-1922), Tomita Tsunejirō 富田常次 (1865-1937), Yamashita Yoshitsugu 山下義昭 (1865-1935), and Yokoyama Sakujirō 横山作次郎 (1864-1914) [25-27]. However, given Saisō’s expulsion from the Kōdōkan and Yokoyama’s premature death in 1912, the Shitennō were redefined as the “Second-Generation Shitennō” consisting of Yamashita Yoshitsugu 山下義昭 (1865-1935) (again), now supplemented by Nagako Hideichi 河鍋一二郎 (1876-1952), Isogai Hajime 伊萱寛明 (1871-1947), and Mifune Kyuzo 横山拓雄 (1883-1965).

3 Inoue Keitarō was later promoted by Kanō Jigorō to Kōdōkan 8th dan, and was Kanō’s third and final Tenjin Shin’yō-ryu jujutsu

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the Yushima Tenjin Dōjō 湯島天神道場, which was located in the Northeast of Bunkyō Ward in Tōkyō. Later he would also take up Daitō-ryū jūjutsu 大東流柔術. Yokoyama, who became nicknamed "Oni Yokoyama" 鬼横山 [Demon Yokoyama], was a crucial figure in the early battles of the Kōdōkan to establish its reputation [12, 13, 19, 27, 28, 29].

Yokoyama Sakujirō entered the Kōdōkan in April 1886. Just one month later he was promoted by Kanō to shodan, and in September of the same year, merely 4 months later to nidan. Again 4 months later, in January 1887 he was promoted to sandan. So yes, in 22 months or less than 2 years Yokoyama went from no grade to 3rd dan. In January 1898, Yokoyama and Yamashita Yoshitsugu 山下義韶 were promoted by Kanō to the first ever Kōdōkan rokudan-holders, and in October 1904 both became the first two Kōdōkan 8th dan holders. However, on September 23, 1912 Yokoyama solely became the first ever Kōdōkan 8th dan holder after he had suddenly fallen gravely ill. Kanō decided to reward Yokoyama by this exceptional promotion on his deathbed for the services he had rendered to the Kōdōkan. Yokoyama never recovered and at merely 48 years old he passed away the same day he had fallen ill. Hence he never actually wore that rank as it literally was a deathbed promotion [26, 29].

Mifune’s teachers, mentors and sources of learning
Mifune in several of his books details how he had become Yokoyama’s disciple and what the
relationship with his sensei was like [12, p. 39-52]. However, exactly what and the extent to which Mifune had learnt from Yokoyama-sensei is not known. What is known is that Yokoyama's technical specialty was yoko-sutemi-waza 捨身技 [sideways sacrifice throws]. Mifune was just 29 years old and held 5th dan when Yokoyama died in 1912. Surely by that time Mifune was not yet the fully accomplished jūdōka he would become.

Mifune also directly learnt from Kanō as suggested by a number of materials that have survived (Figure 2(18)). In Mifune’s writings, Kanō-shihan appears to be more of a chairman, a thinker and the person who once founded the school, than an actual teacher active on the tatami [12, p. 52-62]; this is an image similar to how the late Fukuda Keiko described her experiences with Kanō [30]. Mifune also talks about Isogai Hajime 磯貝一 (1871-1942), 10th dan, and Nagaoka Hideichi 永岡秀一 (1876-1952), 10th dan, whom he recognizes as clearly senior to him, but his reminiscences of both, appear more anecdotal rather than reflections about either of them acting as jūdō teachers. It certainly does not appear as if Mifune considered them as his teachers [12, p. 69-71]. Rather, one can perceive a definite rivalry with Nagaoka during what appears to have been rather fierce randori sessions.

While the paragraphs above attest to Mifune’s exceptional career and skills, they do not reveal many clues regarding the origin of his actual technical expertise. Yokoyama, who had been dead since 1912, does not include kaeshi-waza in his book, nor is he associated with particular expertise in such techniques, which makes it doubtful that he was the source to Mifune’s deeper interest in, and inspiration for, these matters. A major part of Mifune’s skills seems to have come from his own research and his intense practice with his most gifted rivals, such as notably the equally legendary though much physically larger Toku Sanbō 徳三宝 (1887-1945)11 (Figure 3(19)).

By 1943 Mifune had already 40 years of jūdō experience. He had, or would develop, several jūdō techniques, such as notably ō-guruma 大車 [large wheel throw], sumi-otoshi 角落 [corner dropping throw], and tama-guruma 玉車 [ball wheel throw] [14, 19, 24]. He was also well versed and excelled in kata, way beyond a mere technical performance and understanding. Mifune’s creative genius was such that putting him on a par with Kanō, when it came to developing jūdō techniques or applying its technical principles, would be no exaggeration.

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

While Mifune nowhere identifies any external source as to his inspiration for nage-waza ura-no-kata 投げ裏の形 [Forms of reverse throwing techniques], this does not mean that such source does not exist. One cannot ignore the potential existence of another kata of kaeshi-waza, namely genosen-no-kata 後の先の形 [Forms of Post-attack Initiative Counters], the creation of which must have preceded Mifune’s ura-no-kata (see part 1 of this paper). Mifune, to the best of our knowledge, nowhere dates the creation of nage-waza ura-no-kata. On the other hand, since Mifune is known to have demonstrated this kata to Kanō Jigorō, this implies he must have developed it before Kanō’s death in May 1938. It is unlikely though that Mifune would have focused on developing such a kata during the time he was still focusing on jūdō shiai, i.e. before 1925. However, it has been suggested by a number of unsourced publications that genosen-no-kata would have been created between 1910-1917 at Waseda University 早稲田大学 in Tōkyō (see part 1 of this paper series). We know that Mifune was a student in Waseda University’s preparatory course in 1904, but that must have been at least a decade

11 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 [25, 31].
before gonosen-no-kata existed. However, it is likely that Mifune may also later have visited Waseda’s judō department, or, given that his main rival Toku Sanbō became an instructor at Waseda in 1924 [31], Mifune’s exposure to gonosen-no-kata could have occurred in this way, provided that the kata actually ever existed in Japan, for which so far there is no evidence (see Part 1).

There is, however, another compelling reason as to why Mifune’s inspiration for his nage-waza ura-no-kata may be found at Waseda University. The main head-instructor at Waseda University in those days was Takahashi Kazuyoshi (1885-1945) (Figure 4(20)). In 1906 both Takahashi and Mifune were 3rd dan [3rd degree black belt] holders, and both were students of Yokoyama Sakujirō [32]. Mifune’s dan-rank evolution would be steeper than that of Takahashi, but that is hardly a factor since the steepness of that evolution was mainly based on competitive results, and Mifune’s progression was quicker than nearly everyone else’s.

Mifune had become a 5th dan in 1909 whereas Takahashi became a 5th dan in 1916. However, the critical part of information is that Takahashi’s specialty was kaeshi-waza or ura-waza. In fact, Takahashi-sensei would become nationally famous for his kaeshi-waza which had become the focus of his research. Between May 1919 and January 1921 not less than twelve different articles appeared in Yūkō-no-Katsudō, the Kōdōkan’s official magazine, all focusing on ura-waza, and all authored solely by Takahashi-sensei [36-47]. The series dealt with the principles of ura-waza and with specific reverse-throws and his research into ura-waza, hence illustrating Takahashi’s expertise in this matter. Takahashi does not mention other judō masters as his inspiration, but rather he identifies the legendary sword master Yamaoka Tesshū 山岡鉄舟 (1836-1888), who died when Takahashi was 3 years old, and a number of Japanese historic

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14 In addition to Waseda University he was also the judō head-instructor at the Ribunen Hizen Gakko 陸軍兵学校 [School for children of the military] and an instructor at the Keisōko 警視庁 [Tokyo Metropolitan Police] and the Kōdōkan [32]. In 1920 Takahashi received the title of hannya 紳士 [grandmaster] from the Nippon Butokukai, which attested to the recognition of his skills. Takahashi shared part of his time as a judō instructor at Waseda with Miyakawa Ikkan 宮川一貫 (1885-1944) [25, 32-35], later 7th dan, but Miyakawa seems to have been more into newaza 睦技 [groundwork], or at least less directly relevant in the current context; see also part 1 of this paper.

15 Already before 1920 the terms kaeshi-waza [counter techniques] and ura-waza [reversing techniques] are used interchangeably.

16 The specific throws which Takahashi addresses are harai-goshi [36], tsuri-komi-goshi [37], sasae-tsuri-komi-ashi [39], and uchi-mata [40], which coincidentally all appear in nage-waza ura-no-kata albeit that tsuri-komi-goshi is included in Mifune’s kata as an incomplete technique referred to as ban-goshi (see further).
figures, such as notably Ōkubo Hikozaemon 大久保彦左衛門 (1560-1639). It should be noted that while no complete series of ‘forms’ or ‘kata’ is published by Takahashi in Yūkō-no-katsudō 有効の活動 [The Effectiveness of Movement], the Kōdōkan’s official magazine of that time, this is also understandable given that Kanō was still alive and the editor-in-chief, it would be unthinkable then for anyone except the Kōdōkan’s shihan to add new kata to the school he founded. In other words, we hypothesize that Takahashi-sensei 田村渓嗣 was the most important source.

In addition to Toku Sanbō and Takahashi Kazuyoshi, there was a fourth person who was considered part of a group of rivals which contained Mifune, and that person was Nakano Shōzō 中野正三 (1888-1977). Nakano was born on January 6, 1905 in Gosenchō 五泉町, in Gosen 喜多方市, Niigata Prefecture 新潟県. He entered the Kōdōkan in March 1905, and obtained shodan 初段 [first-degree black belt] in March 1907. Nakano became very famous for his uchi-mata 内股投 [inner thigh throw]. He became jūdō head instructor at Nihon University 日本大学 (1910-1920), the Keishichō 警視庁 [Metropolitan Police] (1910-1933), Keio University 京義大学 (1916-1946), and of the Kōgūkeisatsu 皇宮警察 [Imperial Guard] (1926-1944). Nakano obtained the title of Butokukai hanshi 武徳会範士 [Japan Great Martial Virtues Association master] and was in 1948 promoted to kudan 九段 [9th degree black belt]. He died age 89 yrs on December 22, 1977 and was promoted posthumously to Kōdōkan 10th dan. Despite his undeniable technical skills and rivalry to Mifune to complement his own research into establishing his nage-no-kata ura-waza.

The authorship of Nage-waza ura-no-kata

Mifune created the Nage-waza ura-no-kata 役業裏の形 [Forms of reverse throwing techniques]. Examination of all sources available, published and unpublished, leave no doubt about this. He had the skills, knowledge, and dynamism, and there is ample evidence of him creating other kata. Despite having no known koryū 古流 ["old school"] or torite 捕手 [naked hand self-defense] experience he also developed his own Mifune Kudan Sōen Goshinjutsu 三船九段創案護身術 [9th Dan Mifune's personal self-defense], which largely relied on or incorporated koryū techniques. Mifune also was a main collaborator to developing the joshi jūdō goshinjutsu 女子柔道護身法 [Women’s Jūdō Self-defense Methods] on request of Nangō Jirō [30].
The creation of nage-waza ura-no-kata 投業裏の形 at least must date from 1937-1942 or earlier.

In an article from 2000 based on an interview with Satō Shizuya 佐藤静彌, Kōdōkan 6th dan, and to which he was the sole source, Satō makes the following assertion:

“そして三船久蔵と、その高弟である伊藤四男師範との協同研究によって編み出されたのが、投技裏之形である。これは読んで字のごとく 投技に反応する返し技であり。” (...) [19, p.16].

[Trans.: consequently, that what emerged from the joint research of Mifune and his leading disciple Itō Kazuo-shiban was put together to establish the Kata of Reversing Throwing Techniques. The meaning of this reading being that one who initiated the attack is being neutralized because the one who is the object of the throwing technique applies a counter throw.]

There is no doubt that Itō indeed was a senior and long-time disciple of Mifune20. However, the wording by Satō is not without concerns as it seems to attribute a particularly important role to Itō himself in establishing this kata, with little of no foundation.

Also referring to Itō as Mifune’s “leading disciple” requires some scrutiny. Itō Kazuo was Satō’s own teacher, and, particularly, after the death of Mifune, perhaps the most well-known and senior jūdōka in his Kokusai Budō’in 国際武道院 or IMAF.21 A certain exaggeration in Satō’s generous words towards Itō is probably not without reason, and meant to give legitimacy to the jūdō component in his independent (to the Kōdōkan and other Japanese budō national associations) organization which as far as its jūdō component is concerned, was clearly orphaned, after the death of Mifune in 1965. There are certainly a number of facts that are difficult to join with the idea of someone considered the most senior or talented disciple of Mifune. Itō certainly was not most senior in terms of timeline. Mifune’s first uchi-deshi was Kurabayashi Tomoji 倉 林ともじ, who in 1918 was studying at Tōkyō Nōgyō Daigaku 東京農業大学 (Tōkyō Agricultural University), and who was recommended to Mifune by Nakayama Hakudō 中山博道 (1872-1958), kendō hanshi 10th dan 剣道範士十段 (10th degree black belt grandmaster in the way of the sword) [18]. Itō became a disciple of Mifune only in May 1922. Itō neither was the senior disciple of Mifune in terms of age, nor in date when he entered the Kōdōkan (April 1920) (Figure 5(21)).

20 Mifune describes his first meeting with Itō in his Jūdō kaisenku [12, p. 87-88].

21 Both Mifune and Itō were Kokusai Budō’in meijin 名人 [grandmasters] and held the rank of jūdō 10th dan of this organization.
Furthermore, several taped performances of Mifune have survived in which he demonstrates *kata*. Ito appears in none of them as his *uke*. All of Mifune’s filmed demonstrations of *nage-waza ura-no-kata* have Shirai Sei’ichi (1902-1972) as his *uke*. The same applies for all of the filmed demonstrations of Mifune’s own *goshinjutsu* 護身術 [Self-defense techniques]. A number of filmed demonstrations of *itsutsu-no-kata* 五の形 [The Five Forms] with Mifune have also survived. In the oldest one (1952) it is Satō Kinnosuke, 佐藤金之助 (1898-1972) who appears as Mifune’s *uke*. During the contest day of the Open Class of the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, Mifune was scheduled to demonstrate the *itsutsu-no-kata*, but his frail health prevented him from doing so. Again, Shirai Sei’ichi, 9th *dan* by then, was scheduled as his *uke*, not Ito. When Mifune had to be replaced in his role of *tori*, it is likely that his most senior student would replace him, but again Ito, though 9th *dan*, was nowhere in the picture, and Mifune was replaced by Suzuki Kiyoji 鈴木潔治 (1894-1966) (Figure 4(20)). Whilst Suzuki, Satō and Ito were all promoted to 9th *dan* on the same day, Suzuki was definitely more senior than Ito being four years older and having entered the *Kōdōkan* four years earlier (1916). Satō Kinnosuke, though born in the same year as Ito, is consistently listed more senior than Ito in Mifune’s lists and descriptions, and already entered the *Kōdōkan* in 1914, i.e., six years prior to Ito.

If Ito’s role in developing *nage-waza ura-no-kata* would have been as significant as Satō claims, one would have expected Ito to act as Mifune’s *uke* in at least some of these *enbu* 演武 [public martial exercise of demonstration] or taped demonstrations. This is even more so considering that Shirai was almost a head taller than Ito, whereas Mifune and Ito were about the same height (Figure 6(22)). When Mifune published his large 5-volume oeuvre *Jūdō Kōza* 柔道講座 [Lectures in *Jūdō*] [17], chapters were assigned to other leading judo masters (Kudō Kazuzo 工藤一四, 9th *dan*, Samurai Kaichirō 佐村嘉一郎, 10th *dan*, etc.) and to his most senior deshi including Satō Kinnosuke and Shirai Sei’ichi. Again there was one notable absentee: Ito Kauzo. It is hard to believe that

23 Suzuki Kiyoji was the *judō* instructor at the Gakushūin 学習院 [Peers School] from November 1920 until December 1945, attesting to his importance. The original Suzuki Dōjō dating from 1925 is still in existence and located at Higashi-cho, Kichijōji 高尾町, 1-4-13, Musashino-shi 武蔵野市 1-4-13, Musashino-shi. Masahiko Ito wrote his foreword to his 1952 *kata* *shinei* 表演 (i.e., *uke*goshi 水元, Figure 3(19)) and Nakano Shōzō, not his own *doji*. Given Mifune’s personality, it is

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*Figure 6(22).* A rare picture of Mifune Kyūzō 三船久藏 (1883-1965), *Kōdōkan* 10th *dan*, and his deshi 弟子 [pupils] Ito Kazuo 伊藤四男 (1898-1974), *Kōdōkan* 9th *dan*, performing *uki-goshi* 浮腰 [floating hip throw], the 4th technique of the 3rd series of *Nage-waza Ura-no-kata* (投業裏の形) [Forms of Counter throws]. Mifune is seen using *tai-sabaki* 体術 (body reactions) and his *hara* 原 [abdominal center] to neutralize Ito’s *uki-goshi* attack, and preparing to pursue with *yoko-wakare* 橫分 [sideways separation] as a counter throw.

Ito’s general absence in any role of significance performed by Mifune is merely coincidental.

As previously indicated, the main expertise in Japan regarding *ura-waza* was Takahashi Kazuyoshi with whom Mifune was clearly acquainted. Indeed Mifune will likely have practiced new ideas and variations with his *doji*, but we have found no evidence to support any claim of a role for Ito in developing *nage-waza ura-no-kata* that would be of more importance than that of any other of Mifune’s students and this irrespective of what Satō Shizuya may have claimed. On the contrary, we note that Ito in the foreword to his book on *Jūdō no nage- to katame-no-ura-waza* 柔道の投げと固めの裏技 [Judo’s throw- an control-reversing techniques] [1] does not claim a role of any importance in the development of *nage-waza ura-no-kata* to the extent of Satō’s assertions. Besides Takahashi Kazuyoshi, the only other people who at the time that Mifune created the *kata* would likely have had enough seniority and technical expertise to inspire Mifune and with whom he closely collaborated, would have been Toku Sanbō (Figure 3(19)) and Nakano Shōzō, not his own *doji*. Given Mifune’s personality, it is
also highly unlikely he would have accepted much input from people he would definitely consider far junior to himself. Sufficient anecdotes have survived of Mifune lashing out at one of his 8th dan deshi telling them to shut up about jūdō as according to him they would have neither a clue, nor the ability to begin to understand it … This is hardly the personality of someone who would consider his students on a peer level allowing them to make suggestions for improvement and the like.

Hence, attribution of the authorship of nage–waza ura-no-kata to Mifune is based on evaluating the following considerations:

- The kata is introduced to the general jūdō public in Mifune’s own books. Whilst he does not literally say that it is his own creation, the context of the accompanying guidance gives some indication as to how he arrived at this kata.
- The oldest known source mentioning nage–waza ura-no-kata is Mifune (see below).
- No other historic jūdō master has disputed the claim of authorship.
- Virtually all leading Japanese proponents of this kata who continued teaching it after Mifune died in 1965 were either deshi or students of Mifune, or students of students of Mifune.
- The specific skills and inventiveness of the choice of counter are reflective of Mifune’s stylistic approach to jūdō.
- Mifune’s creativity towards kata is demonstrated by his authorship or co-authorship of several other kata; joshi jūdō goshinhō, and in both his own as well as the official Kōdōkan goshinjutsu.
- There exist references to Mifune proposing the kata to Kanō for inclusion in the Kōdōkan curriculum.

Creation and first appearance of nage–waza ura-no-kata

To the best of our knowledge Mifune nowhere mentions when exactly he created nage–waza ura-no-kata. Dax-Romswinkel suggests that the kata probably stems from the 1920s–1930s [48], but this suggestion is not underpinned by any direct evidence. The same author also suggested that The Essence of Jūdō filma from 1955 that was later released on videotape and DVD [10] would be the oldest source mentioning and/or demonstrating the nage–waza ura-no-kata.

Die älteste ist wahrscheinlich der berühmte Film von Mifune (engl.: “Essence of Judo”), der Anfang der 1950er Jahre entstanden ist” (...) [48].

[Transl.: The oldest is probably the famous film of Mifune [English: “Essence of Judo”] which was made at the beginning of the 1950s].

This is, however, not correct. Mifune Kyūzō, at the time still 9th dan, also already demonstrated this kata with his uchi deshi [in-living disciple] Shirai Sei’ichi (1902–1972), who was then still 6th dan, in Kyoto in the film Jūdō Higi – Nihon Butoku [柔道秘技 武徳 日本] [Secret techniques of jūdō and the martial virtues of Japan] [49] (Figure 7 (23)), which although it contains no precise date, is estimated to date from between 1937 and 1942b. This earlier date is consis-

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**Figure 7(23).** Mifune Kyūzō (1883–1965), then still Kōdōkan 9th dan (later 10th dan), and his deshi Shirai Sei’ichi (1902–1972), can be seen performing ō-guruma [major wheel throw], as a way to reverse an obi-otoshi [belt-control drop throw] attack in the 5th technique of the 1st series of nage–waza ura-no-kata (投業裏の形) [Forms of counter throws]. Note that Shirai is seen grabbing the Mifune’s belt from below. In the later 1955 recording [10] Shirai would grab Mifune’s belt from the top. Neither is a ‘change’ and both options are acceptable. Picture is a snapshot from the oldest known recording of nage–waza ura-no-kata and likely dating from between 1937–1942 [49].

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[a] Original title: Shingi Mifune Jūdan [kanzenhan]: Jūdō no Shinzui [神技 三船十段 [完全版]: Jūdō no Shinzui] [10].

[b] Mifune holds the rank of 9th dan in the film. He obtained this rank on December 12th of 1937. Therefore, the film that includes nage–waza ura-no-kata at the earliest can have been made in December 1937.
tent with the fact that Mifune introduced his kata to Kanō, the latter who died in 1938, and therefore the existence of a source that may date from before 1938 should not be a surprise. The source mentioned above then also serves to illustrate that Mifune had the time to further refine this kata over three decades. That being said, there are no major changes in techniques in later taped (apart from a different counter to o-uchi-gari and a switch in the order of two techniques [10]) or printed versions and the kata on the old recording clearly appears complete.

Whether the kata already existed in the 1920s, as Dax-Romsinkel suggests, in the absence of any further evidence remains the subject of conjecture [49]. In any case, the date provides a coordinate in time to have a closer look at Mifune’s activities to see if one can detect a particularly fertile bedrock for the development of such a kata. By 1920 Mifune was still a fierce fighter despite his age (37 yrs). It was still common in those days for major competitions to be won by jūdōka of similar age ranges, and even while well in his forties and a 7th or 8th dan-holder, Mifune is described to have still participated in some jūdō competitions.

Nage-waza ura-no-kata contains sumi-otoshi, and we also know that sumi-otoshi was devised by Mifune when he held 7th dan, a rank he obtained in 1917. For that reason, the kata must have been developed later than 1917, and in reality it probably was developed quite a bit later. When Takahashi, between 1919-1921, wrote his series of articles on ura-waza these were about principles and individual ura-waza. If by then an actual ura-no-kata as sophisticated as Mifune’s would have existed, it is unlikely that Takahashi would not have mentioned it. In fact, Takahashi does not mention Mifune, which suggests that Takahashi’s own research in ura-waza preceded Mifune’s interest in and commitment to this concept. Based on these and other factors, we estimate that Mifune completed his nage-waza ura-no-kata somewhere between 1930-1938. Mifune was then between 47-55 years old, an age of sufficient maturity and insight to construct an exercise as sophisticated and accomplished to create a similar kata.

After extensive research we were able to identify one older source by Mifune which provides evidence of him being intellectually occupied with the type of nogare-kata 避れ方 [evasions] to throwing attacks that were so typical for him, and which preceded the application of kaeshi- or ura-waza in his nage-waza ura-no-kata. In fact, this represents the first sign of Mifune being linked to anything with a contextual relationship to kaeshi- or ura-waza. This document was published in the September issue of Jūdō from 1934 when Mifune held the rank of 8th dan, and was entitled: Mifune hachidan waza no setsumei: waza no konpon mondai to hane-goshi no nogare-kata 三船八段技の説明: 技の根本問題と跳腰の遁れ方 [Explanation of technique by 8th dan Mifune: the basic problems of technique and escaping hane-goshi] [50]. This paper is, however, not followed up by any similar articles by Mifune, at least not over the next four years. Eventual later writings by Mifune become somewhat irrelevant since Kanō died in 1938 and he allegedly was shown the kata by Mifune, hence we know it must have existed in 1938. Combining these various facts discussed above, the most precise time estimate we can make is that Mifune’s nage-waza ura-no-kata likely was created between 1934 and 1938. We know presently of no source that would allow us to estimate more precisely the time of this kata’s date of creation.

**Riai and objectives of nage-waza ura-no-kata practice**

The term riai 理合 [harmony of principles] in Japanese when referring to budo in general and the kata of jūdō in particular, implies adherence to and performance of appropriate action in conformance with combat theory of that discipline and that specific exercise. It means that a jūdō kata has to be practiced according to the principles and meaning it aims to convey.

The way the International Judo Federation (IJF) and Kōdōkan currently approach kata potentially 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 an supposed to be a copy-cat demonstration of a alleged “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:

“柔道の技をひととおり覚ええた人にとっては、その上の技、奥の技、あるいはそれ以上の深い技をきわめ、または掘りさげ、自然とその妙味を探究したくなるのは、当然のことでああります。” […] [1, p.3].

[Transl.: “For people who remember jūdō from start to end, there exists the additional dimension to technique, that what is the inexplicable in technique, or possibly the further expertise of timing of technique,
or the hidden core, and one can expect to come across
the search for the exquisite and spontaneous.”

柔道は、あくまでも実践躬行すべきもので、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
ずからの人格の陶治ともなるのです。

[Transl.: “In the end, advancing your technique and
cultivating your own mind and personal character
according to the circumstances should be the prin-
ciples in jūdō that we live according to.”].

“柔道は、あくまでも実践躬行すべきもので、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
ずからの人格の陶治ともなるのです。

[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 men-
tal 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 supposed
mistakes”. In fact, no criteria of a mechanical nature
are provided, nor anything that is to be expressed
in scores. Myōwaza 妙技 [unexplainable sophisti-
cated technique] is the goal, not copying something.
This is not surprising given Mifune’s own famous
maxim “Omyō zai renshin 奥妙在練心 [The unex-
plainable sophisticated technique is the result of
training your heart].

Mifune has described the objectives of practicing
nage-waza ura-no-kata in clear terms: (1) the illustra-
tion that jūdō is limitless and, (2) the practice of this
kata serving to illustrate that cardinal principle [15, p.
230] (Figure 8(24)). These aims are very important to
understand for the practitioner in order to avoid this
kata being approached by the same misunderstandings
that have clouded the understanding of today’s jūdō
kata practice in general. Recall, this is the misplaced
idea that kata are supposed to be something demon-
strated before juries who will then score deviations from

Figure 8(24). Shodō 書道 [calligraphy] by Mifune Kyūzō 三船久藏 (1883-1965), Kōdōkan 10th dan. The text, written in
classical Japanese, reads: "◎業ハ科学的研究, 上ニ樹テル技術的修錬ナリ. 師範三船", which converted into modern
Japanese is “◎技は学的研究、上に樹てる技術的修錬なり。師範三船。” pronounced as “Waza wa gakuteki kenyū, ue ni juteru gijutsu-teki shūren nari. Mifune-shihan”, which means “Technique requires scholarly research, that needs to
supplement technical practice’. This aphorism well reflects Mifune’s approach and contributions to Kōdōkan jūdō, as
he devised several new techniques and kata at which he arrived as a result of his own research which he conducted
after first thoroughly studying and mastering existing techniques. This calligraphy is held at the Mifune Jūdan Kinenkan
a supposed gold-standard with negative marks. As we have explained that has nothing to do with the purpose of kata.

TECHNICAL CONTENTS OF NAGE-WAZA URA-NO-KATA

Names of nage-waza ura-no-kata

The oldest source by Mifune dating from 1937-1942 calls this exercise randori nage-ura-no-kata 乱取投業裏の形 omitting the word waza [technique]. Why Mifune later dropped the word randori is not known, but he certainly considered this kata a randori-no-kata together with nage-no-kata and katame-no-kata. Perhaps Mifune made the change to avoid a clash with Kanō who apparently did not want to revise the original concept of his randori-no-kata. Mifune in all of his publications from the 1950s and later used the name nage-waza ura-no-kata or nage-ura-no-kata. It is, of course, also possible the change is merely an artifact without any further meaning.

After Mifune’s death in 1965, Ito Kazuo often referred to the kata as nage no ura-waza kenkyū [126]. Perhaps Ito’s choice was an update in the light of the kata not before having been accepted by the Kōdōkan and with the death of Mifune becoming even more unlikely. To that extent it is possible that Ito decided to drop the suffix “no-kata” [Forms] in its entirety and settled for simply using “no-kenkyū”. The most correct way of handling this is to stick with the choice of the exercise’s original author and continue to use nage-waza ura-no-kata 投業裏の形 [Forms of Reversing Throwing Techniques] and the kanji chosen by Mifune.

Reihō in nage-waza ura-no-kata

With regard to the reihō 礼法 [etiquette] in nage-waza ura-no-kata, the position of both partners is reversed when, compared to how it is in the more well-known nage- or katame-no-kata, and thus tori having the shōmen 正面 [main front side] to his right, just like in jū-no-kata, joshi jūdō goshinhō, Kōdōkan Goshinjutsu and koshiki-no-kata. In the day Mifune performed his kata the initial distance between both jūdōka was 4m, as it is shown in the 1955 film [10], whilst in Mifune’s oldest known demonstration [49] the distance between both jūdōka is further reduced to only one tatami length. The Kōdōkan’s description of the kata also mentions a distance of 2m between both jūdōka:

“(技の変化の妙を、15本の形にまとめたもので、練習す場合は、約2mの間隔をとり、受、取、互いに自然本体で相対し、心をこめて礼をした後、互いに静かに近寄り、右自然体に組み、まず受から動作を開始する。)” [3, p. 238].

[Transl.: These refined technical variations are arranged in a series of 15 techniques that are practiced after tori and uke take up their position at relative distances of approximately 2m while standing in natural shizen bontai position facing each other, and after they first sincerely bow to each other calmly...]
Firstly, both partners make a quarter turn towards the shōmen and bow to the shōmen. They then turn back and bow to each other. All modern demonstrations of nage-waza ura-no-kata [51-54], as well as those by Mifune in the 1955 film [10] or those by his students Itō [1] and Sugata [55], contrary to randori-no-kata perform zarei 座礼 [bowing in seated position] (Figure 9(25)). This perhaps comes across as an inconsistency considering that this kata was intended by Mifune as a randori-no-kata and both of Kanō’s randori-no-kata make use of zarei 座礼 [bowing in seated position]. Surprisingly, in the oldest known source of nage-waza ura-no-kata which provides a filmed demonstration by Mifune, then still 9th dan, and Shirai, then still 6th dan, and likely dating from between 1937-1942, it is clearly zarei 座礼 at the start and end! The way zarei was then performed in nage-waza ura-no-kata is similar to how it is done today in kōdōkan kata 康道館形 [The Antique Forms], thus with the toes of both feet still in the tatami, buttocks lifted up from the heels and torso being held somewhat stiffer (Figure 10(26)).

It is not known why Mifune, in later publications, elected to no longer perform zarei 座礼 [bowing in seated position], as he nowhere provided any rationale for this amendment. Perhaps this was a conscious choice after him deciding to abandon putting the prefix ‘randori’ before the name of his kata, but it is also possible that it may just have become a habit to make a less formal bow. In our opinion, considering the character and intent of nage-waza ura-no-kata the formal seated bow would be most appropriate during enbu 演武 [public martial arts demonstrations]. However, we also realize the difficulty that accompanies defending that rationale in the light of the publications and recordings familiar to most people, with showing the contrary.

After completing the bowing procedure both jūdōka make one large step forward to each other to signify "opening the kata".

approach one another, grab each other in right ibizen hontai, with uke27 now starting the first movement.

However, it is only logical in accordance with the majority of Kōdōkan kata to adjust this distance to 5.45m (derived from the original Japanese norm of 3 ken 間, the old Japanese measure of surface length commonly used in architecture, in which 1 ken is 1.818m or 5.963 feet)28 which was generally implemented after revisions in the 1970s to conform to the large IJF-size shiai tatami with the broad red borders. Therefore, in modern versions, such as the one by Ochiai [51], the kata performance conforms to the wider distance common in nearly all modern Kōdōkan kata, except for joshi jūdō goshinhō.

27 It seems that the Japanese description refers to the person initially taking the initiative as uke. However, in a kata of counter techniques, it is common for the person who takes the initiative to attack to be referred to as uke, with the person concluding the counter being referred to as tori.

28 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. But, 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’. 
Table 1(2). Structural and functional overview of the techniques contained in nage-waza ura-no-kata. After De Crée [2].

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</table>

† In the oldest recording of Mifune [49] the order of the second and third technique are switched, with kate-guruma hence preceding sei-nage.
‡ On Mifune’s latest recording which was likely completed after the contents for his books that feature this kata were completed, Mifune counters with romae-nage(hidari)巴投(左) rather than o-uchi-gari-gaeshi大内刈返 [10]. Mifune’s filmed demonstration from 1937-1942 corresponds to how it is described in his books. For this reason, and because Mifune is not known to have ever issued a formal statement that the countering technique should be changed to tomo-nage, this later change is not normally retained.

Structure and technical contents of nage-waza

The structure of Mifune’s nage-waza ura-no-kata has obvious parallels with Kano’s nage-no-kata 投の形 [Forms of throwing]. Both contain fifteen techniques, but their organization is somewhat different. Nage-no-kata contains five groups (te-waza 手技 [hand techniques], koshi-waza股技 [hip techniques], ashi-waza足技 [leg techniques], ma-sutemi-waza 真捨身技 [sacifice techniques], yoko-sutemi-waza横捨身技 [sideways-sacifice techniques]) of three techniques, whereas nage-waza ura-no-kata instead contains three groups of five techniques omitting both sutemi-waza 捨身技 [sacifice techniques] series. This change was unavoidable given that, in general, it is not possible to still counter sutemi-waza with another throw since in most cases the attacker will already be lying on the ground meaning that he no longer can be actually thrown. Only in some rare cases (e.g. tomo-nage巴投 [circle throw] + ko-sato-gake小外掛 [minor outer hook]) it is possible to counter sutemi-waza with another throw before the attacker has landed on the ground with his body. Mifune solved this conundrum by expanding the contents of the three original nage-no-kata non-sutemi-waza series from three to five techniques. In this way he was able to maintain the same total number of techniques as contained in nage-no-kata. A schematic overview of the structure of nage-waza ura-no-kata is provided in Table 1(2).

One thing that is very noticeable is that, for unknown reasons, Mifune switched the position of koshi-waza and ashi-waza. In nage-no-kata they represent the second and third group, respectively, but in nage-waza ura-no-kata, ashi-waza comes before koshi-waza.

As to the organization of techniques within Mifune’s nage-waza ura-no-kata, in general the three techniques of the first three sets of nage-no-kata were retained as attacking techniques. However, the position of each original nage-no-kata technique within the nage-waza ura-no-kata is not entirely consistent. Only in nage-waza ura-no-kata’s te-waza, do the first three techniques appear precisely as they do in nage-no-kata. However, even there, at least in the oldest recording available of nage-waza ura-no-kata kate-guruma
In the oldest source available likely dating from 1937-1942 [49] the name of the technique harai-goshi (lifting pulling hip throw) had its name changed to half-goshi 半腰 [semi-hip throw], which is non-standard Kōdōkan terminology. “Han-goshi” indicates that the hip is not fully inserted and that the person performing it only reaches half of the normal position he needs to effect the throw. So far, no document has been retrieved in which Mifune elaborates about his reasoning for these amendments and why he did not simply maintain the nage-no-kata throws as the first three techniques of each group and in the same order.

There is another major difference as to how some of the techniques retained from nage-no-kata are performed in nage-waza ura-no-kata. In nage-no-kata four techniques are not started with the jūdoka taking grips in either shibsentai 自然体 [natural stance] or jōgatari 自護体 [defensive stance]. These four techniques are seoi-nage in te-waza [hand-techniques], uki-goshi in koshi-waza [hip-techniques], ura-nage in ma-sutemi-waza [back-lying sacrifice techniques], and yoko-guruma in yoko-sutemi-waza [side-lying sacrifice techniques]. In all four, uke in nage-no-kata attacks with atemi-waza 当身技 [strikes at the body's vital points] directed at tori’s head. These atemi-waza are omitted in nage-waza ura-no-kata likely because it would confound who is the actual attacker (uke, in the kata). Since the last two series of sutemi-waza from nage-no-kata are not retained in nage-waza ura-no-kata the issue only applies to seoi-nage in te-waza (first series) and to uki-goshi in koshi-waza (third series, contrary to nage-no-kata where koshi-waza is the second series). These two techniques in nage-waza ura-no-kata are now performed in a two-step action by uke, before tori counters.

As in nage-no-kata, the last technique of nage-waza ura-no-kata is also performed in jōgatari 自護体 [defensive stance]. Contrary to nage-no-kata where all techniques that start in jōgatari end in sutemi-waza, the one technique in nage-waza ura-no-kata to start out of jōgatari is harai-goshi 大脅 [major hip throw] which is countered by another standing throw (ippen-seoi-nage 一本背負投 [one-point back-carry throw]) [30].

All techniques are performed in go no sen 後の先 [post-attack reversing initiative] or oji-waza 応じ技 [proportional response initiated on what was initiated in fashion]. This contrasts with the other two forms of attack initiatives generally recognized in Kōdōkan jūdō, i.e. sen no sen 先の先 [initial initiative] sometimes also referred to as shihake-waza 仕かけ技 [starting techniques] and sen-ren no sen 先の先 [same-time initiative] or ki no deai 気の出会い [instinctive response] [56].

We note that in Mifune’s published film recording [10] which was likely completed after the contents for his books that feature this kata [11,13,15] were finished, Mifune counters with tomo-nage (hidari) 左投 (left) rather than 6-uchi-gari-gaeshi 大内周返 [10]. Mifune’s first known filmed demonstration, that is almost two decades older [49], corresponds to how it is described in his books, i.e. with the counter being 6-uchi-gari-gaeshi (Figure 11(27)).

These methods transcend the mechanical dimension and are rather a matter of kōshiki no teru こうしきの鼻 [an invisible spirit when facing an opponent will make the enemy's spirit lose focus.]. These methods transcend the mechanical dimension and are rather a matter of kōshiki no teru こうしきの鼻 [an invisible spirit when facing an opponent will make the enemy's spirit lose focus.].
We also note that Ito Kazuo is the only author proposing an extra technique after uchi-nata in the second series, hence increasing the number of techniques of this series to six, and the total number of techniques in this kata to 16. The sequence he proposes, is a counter to ō-soto-gari 大外刈 [major outer reaping throw] with ō-goshi 大腰 [major hip throw] (Figure 12(28)) [1, p. 38]. No other student of Mifune mentions this amendment and there is no trace of any authorization (by Mifune) of such addition in any of Mifune’s known publications and writings. Moreover, such addition would distort the mathematical balance of the kata. For these reasons, we believe that Ito’s suggestion, as valuable and effective as it might be as a technique, should not be retained.

Contrary again to nage-no-kata, all techniques in nage-waza ura-no-kata are performed to only one side although several of the counters must be performed to the left in response to an initial right attacking throw so as to be effective. Tori and uke do not switch positions, and after each technique but take up the same position. Similarly, to nage-no-kata after concluding each series, tori and uke return to their starting position (after opening the kata), and while facing the outside of the tatami, have an opportunity to adjust their clothing, before making half a turn and continuing with the next series, or after the third series, by closing the kata.

Closure of the kata is, as can be expected, the same as the reihō in the beginning but in reverse order.

KEY POINTS REGARDING THE REPOSITIONING OF THE KUMI-KATA IN NAGE-WAZA URA-NO-KATA

Kumi-kata 組方 [hand grip] change by tori

In several techniques of nage-waza ura-no-kata, tori changes his right-hand grip of his right hand from uke’s left lapel to uke’s left sleeve. When considering the various historic film recordings that exist of Mifune and his students performing nage-waza ura-no-kata one might notice different approaches to these changes in kumi-kata [58, 59]. The following paragraphs are intended to clarify the meaning of these kumi-kata changes and how different expert judō instructors approached these instances of repositioning the hands in their own way.

Tori changing the grip of the right hand from uke’s lapel to gripping the sleeve either “from above” or “from below”

We observed two general ways for tori to bring his right hand from uke’s left lapel to uke’s left sleeve:
there is the “short route” route which involves gripping the sleeve from above either at the height of the uke’s left biceps or elbow, and there is the “long route” that requires for tori to drop his right hand all the way under uke’s left arm to grip uke’s left sleeve from underneath [58, 59]. Which one of the above-mentioned two options is to be preferred depends on multiple factors:

• Differences in stature between tori and uke.
• Importance of the pulling and lifting effect when considering the specificity of the intended counter technique.
• Sleeve length of uke’s uwagi 上衣 [jūdōgi jacket].

If tori is significantly taller than uke, then gripping from above is easier to achieve. If, however, tori is significantly smaller than uke, it may be the other way around [58, 59]. If tori elects to grip uke’s arm from the underneath, then this will result in tori’s arm being in exorotation, which may, by some, be perceived as relatively inconvenient. It is not more inconvenient per se, but it requires higher level of motor skills, i.e. having developed excellent ability to use the wrist independently from the arm. In our experience, only the most skilled technical jūdōka have developed such ability. If one does not possess that technical know-how, then this type of gripping is often perceived as more suitable for lifting. Furthermore, if uke is wearing an uwagi with relatively wide sleeves, then tori, when gripping from underneath, by pronating his right hand can create a handle in order to improve control of his grip on uke [58, 59]. This is harder to achieve when gripping from above, which would then require gripping a larger amount of the fabric of the uwagi in one’s hand.

In the light of these concerns many jūdōka might wonder which grip they should choose. This way of thinking, however, is probably not the proper approach, since the purpose of practicing kata is improving one’s technique it is advisable to practice both alternatives.

Tori changing the grip of the right hand to perform counter-techniques from the right.

When tori counters uke’s kata-guruma 肩車 with sumi-gaesbi 隅返, tori switches his grip from uke’s left lapel to uke’s left armpit after completion of the second step and at the moment when uke enters the throw. Furthermore, depending on the difference in height between tori and uke a problem may arise in performing iaue-tsure-koji-ashi 支釣込足 countered by sumi-otoshi 隅落. If tori is considerably smaller than uke, it is challenging to sufficiently lunge forward to generate enough momentum to successfully perform sumi-otoshi [58, 59]. This is particularly so when tori’s skills in performing this technically difficult throw are limited. The problem of distance can, however, be successfully overcome by ensuring tight control on uke’s jūdōgi and optimizing the time of the kake [execution phase].
Tori changing the grip of the right hand to perform counter-techniques from the left.

For tori, repositioning the right hand in left counter-techniques serves two purposes:

• Better control of the pulling action on uke’s left sleeve to achieve throws from the left.
• Control to ensure proper ukemi [breakfalls] for uke.

There are six instances in nage-waza ura-no-kata where tori performs his counter-techniques (→ = countered by) from the left:

• Uki-otoshi 浮落 → tai-otoshi (hidari) 体落 (左)
• Tai-otoshi 体落 → ko-turi-goshi (hidari) 小釣腰 (左)
• Okuri-ashi-barai 送足払 → tsubame-gaeshi (hidari) 燕返 (左)
• Ko-uchi-gari 小内刈 → hiza-guruma (hidari) 膝車 (左)
• Uchi-mata 内股 → tai-otoshi (hidari) 体落 (左)
• Han-goshi 半腰 → utsushi-goshi (hidari) 移腰 (左)

It is, in this context, opportune to examine the importance of repositioning the hands for each of the above-mentioned counter-techniques.

For the first technique (uki-otoshi → tai-otoshi [hidari]) it would easily be possible to perform the counter without tori repositioning his right hand from uke’s left lapel to uke’s left arm (Figure 13(29)). In fact, this is how it often occurs in randori-geiko [free practice fight] if electing to perform a left throw while maintaining right kumi-kata [grip]. Nevertheless, in nage-waza ura-no-kata for the sake of uke’s safety in performing ukemi [breakfalls] and to facilitate this process, tori’s right hand is repositioned to the lapel as indicated [58, 59].

The more important question is “when exactly in these techniques should the repositioning of tori’s right hand occur?” In the case of uki-otoshi → tai-otoshi (hidari) the answer is straightforward. Because the pulling action by tori on uke’s left arm is crucial to break the balance in countering with tai-otoshi, the repositioning must occur before uke’s attack. In other words, the repositioning of tori’s hands must come no later than during the second tsugi-ashi 継ぎ足 [elganted stepping] step.

For the five other techniques to the left, tori has the option to reposition his hands either before uke’s attack (i.e. during the second tsugi-ashi step), during uke’s attack (okuri-ashi-barai, ko-uchi-gari, han-goshi), or even after the first phase of the kake [execution phase] action of counter-technique has already been completed (tai-otoshi → ko-tsuri-goshi [hidari], uchi-mata → tai-otoshi [hidari], han-goshi → utsushi-goshi [hidari])

Figure 13(29). Ochiai Toshiyasu 落合俊保, Kōdōkan 8th dan (tori) and Hoshina Makoto 保科素, then Kōdōkan 7th dan (later 8th dan) (uke) showing how to counter an attack with uchi-mata 内股 [inner thigh throw] by tai-otoshi (hidari) 体落 (左) [body drop] in the 5th technique of the 2nd series of nage-waza ura-no-kata (投業裏の形) [Forms of counter throws] during a demonstration as part of a Jūdō Teachers Clinic held on Saturday, February 2nd, 2008 in Norwalk, CA (USA).
[58, 59]. While this is all possible, nevertheless, as a general rule, it is recommended that tori consistently repositions his hands during the second tsugi-ashi step for these techniques too. This is how Mifune typically performs it in the films that have survived [10, 49]. On the other hand, repositioning the hands only at the very last moment would, perhaps, be more realistic for the purpose of randori, but is more difficult to achieve because of the critical timing [58, 59].

**Kumi-kata 組方** [hand grip] changes by uke
In principle, uke’s gripping preceding his attacks, remains standard and consistent, as explained before. However, there are four instances that require some further attention:

- When *uke* attacks with harai-goshi 攻上 [sweeping hip throw] in the third series of nage-waza ura-no-kata, he does so with standard grip, thus without placing his right hand on tori’s left shoulder blade as is done in nage-no-kata.
- We have already indicated that when *uke* attacks with uki-goshi 浮上 [floating hip throw] in nage-waza ura-no-kata, this is done without a preceding atemi 当身 [attack to the body’s vital points] as it is in nage-no-kata. However, there is another difference, since *uke* during the second phase will now place his right hand on tori’s left shoulder blade exactly as is done in nage-no-kata when performing harai-goshi there.
- When *uke* attacks with kata-guruma 肩車 [shoulder wheel] we note that, contrary to nage-no-kata, this throw is attempted without repositioning his left hand to the inside of tori’s right arm in the second step.
- We also note that in obi-otoshi 帯落 [belt-control drop] there appear to be two gripping alternatives for *uke*. In Mifune’s oldest recording [49] the attacker grabs the belt from below (see Figure 7(23) earlier), but in the later recording [10] *uke* grabs the belt from above, which is also what we observe in Sugata’s and in Ochiai’s recording [51, 55]. Either option does not significantly alter the essence of technique hence *uke* is at liberty to choose the option he pleases.

**LEARNING TEXTS AND MATERIALS FOR NAGE-WAZA URA-NO-KATA IN THE SPECIALIZED JUJUTSU LITERATURE**


Mifune’s *Canon of Judo* [15] is one of the world’s most famous *jūdō* books. It was published in 1956 and is an English translation of the Japanese text *Jūdō Kyōten — Michi to Jutsu* [13], which had been published two years earlier. *Jūdō no Shinzui — Michi to Jutsu* [11] is a posthumously published revised edition for which the original text was retained but expanded with the news of Mifune’s death, funeral and other memorial items. The description and photographs of nage-waza ura-no-kata (referred to as nage-ura-no-kata in these books) is identical in all three. This text is probably the definitive reference standard for the *kata* given that it represents the words of its creator who is also performing the *kata*.

The role of *uke* is performed by Mifune’s faithful deshi Shirai Se’ichi, who in 1954 when the book was first published, held the rank of 8th dan.

**1970 – Itō Kazuo 伊藤四男**
– *Jūdō no nage- to katame-no-ura-waza* [1]

Itō Kazuo 伊藤四男 was an uchi deshi 家弟子 [live-in apprentice] to Mifune Kyūzō, held the rank of Kodōkan 9th dan, and stated that he held an academic doctorate (a D.Sc. or Rigaku bakase 理学博士) [1]. In 1970 he published a book in Japanese devoted to both the nage-waza ura-no-kata and the katame-no-ura-waza kenkyū. All techniques are demonstrated by Itō-sensei in the role of tori, and Satō Shizuya佐藤静麿, 6th dan as *uke*. The book has been out of print for quite some time. The photographs are not stellar in quality and because the text is in Japanese only, most Westerners will be just examining the pictures ending up with different interpretations of what exactly is shown. Contributing to this concern is the absence of any photographs of the preparatory steps. Instead, Itō has chosen to only provide pictures of the actual attacking and countering throws. Undoubtedly adding to the confusion are alternative countering options which Itō sometimes provides.

**1999 – Kanō Yukimitsu 嘉納行光, et al.**
– *Jūdō Daijiten* [3]

The *Jūdō Daijiten* contains a detailed description of approximately 1.5 pages long of the various steps in performing nage-waza ura-no-kata. The information is largely drawn from the last published version of Mifune’s own text [11]. In addition, there is a concise statement of the Kodōkan’s position regarding this *kata* and the goals of the *kata*. The descriptions are not accompanied by any pictures or drawings.

33This is the very same Satō Shizuya 佐藤静麿 (1929-2011) who later became celebrated because of his role in the creation (1951) and management of the Kodōkan Budōin – Kodōkan Budō Renmei. 国際武道院・国際武道会, internationally better known under its English name International Martial Arts Federation or its acronym I.M.A.F. Satō-sensei used to be a secretary to the Kodōkan’s International Department since 1949.
No date – Virgil J. Bowles
– Nage ura no kata (Forms of Counter-Throwing) –
Guidelines & General Information [60]
This is a 4.5 page freely downloadable set of brief instructions that are not accompanied by pictures or drawings. The explanations, which were likely jotted down by the late Virgil J. Bowles, USJA 8th dan, are basic and there is no historic background or information about the kata’s riai.

2008 – Ochiai Toshiyasu – Nage-waza ura-no-kata [61]
Ochiai Toshiyasu, 8th dan, is the nephew of the late Kuhara Yoshiyuki, 9th dan, who was a student of Mifune. Ochiai learnt the nage-waza ura-no-kata from his uncle who made a commitment to keep a number of rare and obsolete kata in practice, including this kata and gō-no-kata 剛の形 [Forms of proper use of strength]. Ochiai teaches this kata every year for the Dōyūkai [Association of the Friends of the Way] and prepared a 16-page brochure with black line drawings illustrating each technique (Figure 14(30)). There is no text describing the techniques, background or history in the brochure, which is made available at no cost. For those reasons the brochure represents a good practical quick-reference guide on the tatami rather than a resource for serious research.

2009 – Marco Marzagalli
– I Kaeshi-no-Kata nel Judo [62]
This Italian author simply copied all the pictures of nage-ura-no-kata from the Mifune’s Canon of Judo [15] and translated the text from English into Italian. The part that is original is a chapter preceding the kata and a chapter at the end of the book where the author comments on the principles of kaeshi-no-kata and makes some comparisons with gonosen-no-kata. Unfortunately, the comments are all neither referenced nor backed up by literature sources. Additionally, they reflect an absence of knowledge of the Japanese and historic literature. With the sole exception of native Italian speakers who do not understand English, the book is of little interest.

2012 – Norbert Fahrig, et al. – Lehrhilfe zur Prüfungsvorbereitung Nage-waza-ura-no-kata [63]
In 2012 Fahrig, and two colleagues, produced a 16-page brochure on nage-waza ura-no-kata (in German) for the Judoverband Sachsen e.V. of the Deutsche Judo Bund [German Judo Federation] to assist its members with the preparation for their 3rd dan black belt promotion exam. The brochure seems to consist largely of a compilation of drawings taken from Ochiai [61] and text that shows similarities with text that appears in sources such as Dax-Romswinkel [48, 58, 59], unfortunately all
without referencing the original sources … However, the brochure is freely downloadable from the Internet, and is very clear in its structure making it a useful aid for practice on the *tatami*. Nevertheless, its approach focuses entirely on the mechanics of the *kata*, which sadly is not very much in line with the objectives of Mifune and the *riai* of this *kata*.

2014 – Wolfgang Dax–Romswinkel
– *Nage-waza-ura-no-Kata – Teil 1–15* [48]

From February 2013 through May 2014, Wolfgang Dax–Romswinkel published a 15-part article in the German periodical *Der Budoka*. Dax–Romswinkel is a committed *judō* pedagogue and a knowledgeable and successful *kata* competitor who is a threefold European champion[14] and the 2014 World champion in jū-no- kata. Considering that Germany now is the only country where this *kata* is an option on the rank promotion program (for 3rd *dan*), one of the objectives of the text was to provide transparent and to-the-point explanations, with careful attention being paid to a variety of points that otherwise might cause confusion. The text is accompanied by clear, large pictures taken from different angles. Furthermore, Dax–Romswinkel discusses the historic background of some of the throws involved. Particularly valuable is that this text also considers differences which the author observed between the demonstrations by the *kata*’s most knowledgeable performers, *i.e.* Mifune Kyūzō [10], Sugata Setsuo [55], and Ochiai Toshiyasu [51]. For all these reasons, this is one of the recommended resources, particularly for those practitioners who desire to master the *kata* beyond its surface.

2014 – Benjamin Rott et al.
– *Judo-Nage-waza-ura-no-kata* [64]

Rott et al. in 2014 published a 20-page brochure on *nage-waza ura-no-kata* in German which is freely available for downloading from the Internet [64]. The text and information seems to be largely drawn from the series of articles by Dax–Romswinkel [48] although only Mifune’s film [10] and his *Canon of Judo* in English [15] and German appear as references. However, rather than pictures, new line drawings were made which allow techniques to be explained on a limited paper surface, and which are not hampered by shadows and poor lighting conditions. The structure of the brochure is clear and to the point which makes it a useful aid for practice, although it focuses only on the mechanics of the *kata* and in this way it too fundamentally differs from the objectives of Mifune and the *riai* of this *kata*.

**Audiovisual Instructional Materials for Nage-Waza Ura-No-Kata**

The following are the limited audiovisual materials on *nage-waza-ura-no-kata* that are, or at some point in time, were available.

1937/1942 – Mifune Kyūzō
– *Jūdō Higi – Nihon Butoku* [DVD] [49]

This recording is no doubt the best available recording of the *kata*, at that time still called randori-nage-wra-no-kata*. In this rare recording Mifune was at the zenith of his abilities and being between 54 and 59 years old. In the film one notes the more logical seated bow at the beginning and end of the *kata*, which, for reasons not known, did not appear in the later version. The techniques are as described in the *Canon of Judo* hence without the substitution of the *ō-uchi-gari-gaeshi* by *tomoe-nage* as a counter to *ō-uchi-gari*. Mifune then still a 9th *dan* performs all techniques with his faithful *deshi* Shirai Sei’ichi, then still 6th *dan*, acting as his *uke*.

1955 – Mifune Kyūzō – *Shingi Mifune Jūdan [kanzenban]*: *Jūdō no Shinzui* [16mm, VHS or DVD] [10]

This recording is the most famous. As part of a 1955 film project, published on DVD in 2005, Mifune demonstrated *nage-waza ura-no-kata*, his *itsutsu-no-kata*, and his personal *goshinjutsu*. Mifune at this point in time the most famous jūdō 10th *dan* ever, is about 72 years old, but still remarkably energetic. In terms of swiftness, speed and timing the performance is hardly less impressive than the less well-known one, taped almost two decades earlier. Again, his *uke* is his faithful *deshi* Shirai Sei’ichi, then 8th *dan*. In this film the initial and final bow are standing, which is how it has since been performed by others, but it remains unclear if this is perhaps a mistake, or conscious choice and, if so, why? Likely this is because *kata* were never intended to become over-standardized as they often appear today, and the type of bowing hence was chosen proper for the occasion. One also notes the substitution of *ō-uchi-gari-gaeshi* for *tomoe-nage* as a counter to *ō-uchi-gari*, for which no known explanation by Mifune has survived, making it unclear if he was either just improvising due to a lapse in memory or was experimenting with the idea of making an amendment to his *kata*. Therefore, people using this film as a learning tool should be aware of this difference and should probably adhere to the earlier counter as documented in several of Mifune’s books [11, 13, 15] and his earlier recording which has survived [49].

1985 – Ochiai Toshiyasu  
_Nage-waza ura-no-kata_ [DVD] [51]
Ochiai Toshiyasu, then still 7th dan, and the nephew of the late Kuhara Yoshiyuki, 9th dan, gave a public demonstration of the _nage-waza ura-no-kata_ at the Kōdōkan at the occasion of one of the Doyūkai tournaments. His _uke_ is Taniguchi Yutaka, then still 4th dan. As in the later Mifune recording [10], the initial and final bow is made in standing position. In general, Ochiai’s demonstration appears more rigid and less fluid than the one by Mifune himself, but this criticism applies to all performances of this _kata_ by people other than Mifune. The demonstration nevertheless remains much better than all of the amateur demonstrations of this _kata_ that are available at this point in time on the Internet via channels such as YouTube. Similarly to the other recorded demonstrations, neither are technical explanations provided about how to perform the _kata_, nor is there slow motion, or multiple-angle camera work.

No date – Sugata Setsuo  
_Nage-waza ura-no-kata_ [non-commercial DVD] [55]
The late Sugata Setsuo (姿節雄) (1916-1999), 9th dan, in 1951, ten years after he had entered Meiji University and had become an _uchi-deshi_ [live-in disciple] to Mifune (Figure 15(31)), became the successor to Mifune as head teacher of the university’s _jūdō_ department [65]. During his life Sugata, similarly to Kuhara Yoshiyuki and Itō Kazuo, kept this _kata_ of his legendary former teacher alive by teaching and demonstrating it. This demonstration is present together with Ochiai’s demonstration on a later edition of Ochiai’s DVD [51]. Technically, the performance by Sugata is similar to the one by Ochiai, and also appears more rigid and less fluid than those by Mifune himself. The _uke_ to Sugata Setsuo is Hara Yoshimi, at the time _Kōdōkan_ 6th dan (Figure 16(32)).

No date – George Parulski  
_The Judo of Isao Obato - Lost Kata of Judo - vol. 2_ [66]
This CD-ROM among a selection of combinations of throws and counters, also includes _gonosen-no-kata_ and _nage-waza ura-no-kata_ which Parulski claims to have learnt from the mysterious “Obato Isao”, of which the existence and relationship to Mifune has been doubted by scholars and _budō_ practitioners [4]. The CD-ROM was on the market long before _YouTube_ was created and when most _jūdō_ visual media only existed on old film reels and VHS tapes. At that time this product...
was the only one on the market that permitted the jūdō public to see some unusual jūdō techniques on one’s home computer. The impact of the CD-ROM quickly declined when much higher-quality kata DVDs were published by the Kōdōkan even though none of these contained Mifune’s nage-waza ura-no-kata. The Kōdōkan kata DVDs nevertheless set the bar of jūdō customers’ expectations much higher and impossible to reach for Parulski’s technically sub-standard nage-waza ura-no-kata rendition. For these reasons it is hard to recommend this product given that there are currently much better demonstrations of nage-waza ura-no-kata available for free on the Internet.

INTERNET SOURCES

Today, it has become possible for almost anyone with a decent Internet connection to access relevant materials. Sometimes, free video clips of specific kata including nage-waza ura-no-kata may be available too [52-54, 67-69], which even though they may not all be of reference standard may still provide an inspiration of which jūdōka who learnt kata in the traditional way decades ago could have only dreamt of.

Nevertheless, taking into account the considerable flaws in several of these video clips, we would like to emphasize the need for guidance from a jūdō instructor who him-/herself was properly instructed in this kata, since many essential points of the kata might otherwise escape the untrained eye.

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

We could not find any evidence in the literature of nage-waza ura-no-kata ever having been a popular kata outside the group of people who as jūdōka are or consider themselves to be to some degree direct or indirect descendents of Mifune (Figure 17(33)). Despite the merits of Mifune’s kata, probably contributing to its lack of popularity is that it currently is not considered an official Kōdōkan kata [3, p. 238] and consequently does not ordinarily appear in dan-rank promotion exam requirements. This is hardly a surprise if one considers that even the kata which were or are official Kōdōkan kata (jūdō joshi goshinhō, sei-ryoku zen'yō kokumin taiiku, gō-no-kata) but are absent from any official dan-rank

Figure 16(32). Sugata Setsuo 姿節雄 (1917-1999), 9th dan, former chief-instructor of the Meiji University Jūdō Department and former deshi of Mifune Kyūzō 三船久藏 here performing the role of tori, and Hara Yoshimi 原吉実, 6th dan in the role of uke, demonstrating the fifteenth and final technique of nage-waza ura-no-kata, i.e. ō-goshi 大腰 [major hip throw] countered by ippon-seoi-nage 一本背負投 [single-point back-carry throw]. Picture is a snapshot from an undated recording of nage-waza ura-no-kata by Sugata Setsuo [55].
promotion program equally lack popularity. In Germany, *nage-waza ura-no-kata* is now part of the rank promotion requirements for 3rd dan, where it replaced *gonosen-no-kata* [48, 70]. Since then, regular *kata* seminars have been held in which *nage-waza ura-no-kata* has been featured [71, 72], which, at least in Germany, has led to an increase in popularity of this *kata*. This is no surprise either, but it raises the question to what extent the objectives of most *jūdōka* are anywhere near Kanō’s objectives for recommending the study of *kata* [5, 73].

*Nage-waza ura-no-kata* has also been the topic of a *kata* seminar in the Netherlands taught by Wolfgang Dax-Romswinkel [74]. In February of 2008, a Teachers Clinic that *inter alia* featured *nage-waza ura-no-kata* taught by Japanese expert Ochiai Toshiyasu, 8th dan, was held in the US in the Los Angeles area (Norwalk, CA), and the author of this paper has taught the *kata* at federal *jūdō* seminars in his home country.

Apart from the concern expressed above, it is likely that interest for the *nage-waza ura-no-kata* would further increase if it would be recognized by the *Kōdōkan* as one of their fundamental *kata*. Why precisely this has not happened has remained the subject of speculation but usually involves making reference to Kanō Jigorō. There are two circulating versions. One version argues that Kanō was displeased with the *kata* when Mifune demonstrated it for him, likely because one could argue that this particular *kata* more serves the purpose of developing pure technique rather than one of Kanō’s primarily pedagogical aims[36]. The second version asserts

[33] There are other reasons why one could imagine Kanō having concerns about Mifune’s *kata*. For example, it remains unresolved to date why Mifune included all techniques of *nage-no-kata* in his *nage-waza ura-no-kata* but changed their order. This would likely be hard for Kanō to justify as it could be considered as questioning the order of techniques in the *Kōdōkan’s* *nage-no-kata*. Mifune’s chosen order of techniques also does not follow either the 1895 or the 1920 *gokyo no waza* 五教の技 [The Five Groups of Techniques], and the rationale that underpins his chosen arrangement of techniques remains unknown. It seems to us that Mifune’s *kata* certainly could be performed with those techniques retained from *nage-no-kata* appearing at the start of each series and in the same order, which makes Mifune’s persistence in keeping the order

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**Figure 17[33].** Historic group picture taken at the *Bunbukan Shimamura Dōjō* 文武館 嶋村道場, located in Tōkyō Kita-ku 東京都北区神谷, in the 1950s. Mifune Kyūzō 三船久蔵 (1883-1965), *Kōdōkan* 10th dan, is seated on a chair in the center of the front row, with the club’s second-generation head-instructor Shimamura Takehisa-sensei 嶋村武久 to his right sight. In the front row, third from the left, seated in *seiza* 正座 [seated position on the knees] is Shirai Sei’ichi 白井清一 (1902-1972), 8th dan (later 9th dan). The nearly bald person, standing, fourth from the left is Ōtaki Tadao 大滝忠夫 (1908-1992), 8th dan (later, in 1981 promoted to 9th dan). Prominently written on the wall to the right, we can see the text written in Japanese: “*Nage-waza ura-no-kata*, tori: Mifune Kyūzō-sensei, *Kōdōkan* jūdan; uke: Shirai Sei’ichi-sensei, *Kōdōkan* hachidan.”
that Kanō was in the process of considering accepting the kata as a new official Kōdōkan kata, but passed away before he could do so. Both arguments remain unsubstantiated as there are no known written or recorded sources either by Kanō or Mifune that specifically attest to this situation, nor by any of their direct students. Rather, both arguments seem to be the result of hearsay and conjecture. Given that the Kōdōkan has not accepted any new kata for over half a century — the last one being Kōdōkan goshinjutsu approved in 1956 — it appears unlikely that the Kōdōkan would anytime soon add Mifune’s kata to the list of the existing ten Kōdōkan kata. This should, however, not be felt as preventing us from welcoming and practicing nage–waza ura-no-kata.

After all, we also do not exclude most newly invented nage–waza [throwing techniques] and katame–waza [controlling techniques], as long as they adhere to jūdō’s principles and, if relevant, the refereeing rules.

CONCLUSIONS

Research into the nage–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. The author of this paper, advocates the practice of nage–waza ura-no-kata, and does so for all of the reasons explained above, as well as because believing that in a time when the message, aims and principles of Kanō’s jūdō under have become increasingly diluted in the light of the ever increasing emphasis on jūdō as a performance sport and popular media circus, nage–waza ura-no-kata helps explaining and restoring what jūdō is and was about. In that context, it cannot be emphasized enough that the object of this kata is not to copy some supposed standard or recommended version, or to simply meet a number of mechanical criteria. Mifune himself has clearly stated that instead, its objective is myōwaza妙技 [unexplainable sophisticated technique], which is a goal of a much more elevated level. One could without much reservation say that in all known taped demonstrations Mifune himself is the only one reaching this level, hence attesting to is difficult. 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 he is fighting his own shadow.

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.

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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are indebted to Mōri Osamu 毛利修, Kōdōkan 7th dan (Satte 幸手市, Saitama Prefecture 埼玉県, Japan), and Ochiai Toshiyasu 落合俊保, Kōdōkan 8th dan for their helpful remarks and information. Wolfgang Dax-Romsikwinkel, Deutscher Judo Bund (DJB) 7th dan, Nordrhein-Westfälisches Dan-Kollegium im Nordrhein-Westfälische Judo-Verein e.V., was available for discussion regarding the technical performance of the kata and kindly shared his self-produced unpublished didactical materials. Llyr C. Jones, PhD, London, proofread the manuscript, and Motohashi Hanako 本橋端奈子 of the Kōdōkan Jūdō Museum provided useful assistance whenever necessary.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author declares having no competing interests.

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