



The Kata of Kodokan Judo

Introduction

Kata is a method of studying the waza of Kodokan Judo via prearranged forms. The founder of Kodokan Judo, Dr Jigoro Kano and other high-ranking judoka of past and present generations have developed the Kodokan Judo kata as a result of long and detailed research and practice.

The study of any Kodokan Judo kata is a challenging activity and a high degree of proficiency cannot be achieved in a day, a week, a month or a year. Achieving true mastery will require many hours of patient and diligent practice under the guidance of an experienced and knowledgeable sensei.

The following elements are essential for the correct execution of Kata.

- Understanding of the basics of the kata being demonstrated
- Composure - proper mental concentration, decorum, and character
- Correct etiquette
- Correct breathing
- Correct posture
- Movement and transition between techniques
- Power and Strength
- Tempo
- Balance and body control
- Focus of technique
- Fluid body movement and gracefulness

In particular, all kata must be seen to *flow*. Any kata performance will break down if there is any hesitation during application. Furthermore it is always necessary to keep in mind the fundamental principles being demonstrated and the reason for the application of any particular technique.

The following pages will give an insight into the main kata currently adopted by the Kodokan, as well as the Go-no-Kata, the so-called, lost kata of Kodokan judo. The main Kodokan kata are as follows: Nage-no Kata, Katame-no Kata, Kime-no Kata (also known as the Shinken-Shobu-No-Kata), Kodokan Goshin Jutsu, Ju-no Kata, Itsutsu-no Kata and Koshiki-no Kata.

Note that this paper does not describe the Seiryoku Zen'yo Kokumin Taiiku – the Maximum-Efficiency National Physical Education Kata, nor non-Kodokan kata such as the Gonosen-no-Kata or the Kaeshi-no-Kata etc.

Nage-no-Kata (Kata of Throws)

The Nage-no-Kata was established to help understanding of the theoretical basis of judo and learn the processes involved in Kuzushi, Tsukuri, Kake - in other words, how to assume the correct position for applying a throwing technique once the opponents balance has been broken, and how to apply and complete a technique. The kata consists of fifteen representative throwing techniques, three from each of the following five categories: Te Waza, Koshi Waza, Ashi Waza, Ma Sutemi Waza and Yoko Sutemi Waza.

Each technique is executed from both sides.

Te Waza (Hand Techniques)

- Uki Otoshi (Floating Drop)
- Seoi Nage (Shoulder Throw)
- Kata-guruma (Shoulder Wheel)

Koshi Waza (Hip Techniques)

- Uki-goshi (Floating Hip Throw)
- Harai-goshi (Hip Sweep)
- Tsurikomi-goshi (Lift-Pull Hip Throw)

Ashi Waza (Leg Techniques)

- Okuri Ashi Harai (Foot Sweep)
- Sasae Tsurikomi Ashi (Support Foot Lift-Pull Throw)
- Uchi Mata (Inner Thigh Reaping Throw)

Ma Sutemi Waza (Supine Sacrifice Techniques)

- Tomoe Nage (Circular Throw)
- Ura Nage (Back Throw)
- Sumi-gaeshi (Corner Throw)

Yoko Sutemi Waza (Side Sacrifice Techniques)

- Yoko Gake (Side Hook)
- Yoko-guruma (Side Wheel)
- Uki Waza (Floating Throw)

Katame-no-Kata (Kata of Control)

The Katame-no-Kata was established during 1884 and 1885. The kata consists of five representative techniques each from the Osae-komi Waza, Shime Waza and Kansetsu Waza, the aim being the mastery of the theoretical basis for executing and evading each technique.

Together, the Nage-no-Kata and the Katame-no-Kata from the Randori-no-Kata. Their practice helps in the understanding and mastery of the theory behind randori techniques.

Osae-komi Waza (Holds)

- Kesa-gatame (Scarf Hold)
- Kata-Gatame (Shoulder Hold)
- Kami Shiho-gatame (Top Four-corner Hold)
- Yoko Shiho-gatame (Side Locking Four-corner Hold)
- Kuzure Kami Shiho-gatame (Broken Top Four-corner Hold)

Shime Waza (Strangles & chokes)

- Kata Juji-jime (Half Cross Lock)
- Hadaka-jime (Naked Lock)
- Okuri Eri-jime (Sliding Collar Lock)
- Kata Ha-jime (Single wing Lock)
- Gyaku Juji-jime (Reverse Cross Lock)

Kansetsu Waza (Locks)

- Ude-garami (Entangled Armlock)
- Ude Hishigi Juji-gatame (Cross Armlock)
- Ude Hishigi Ude-gatame (Straight arm Armlock)
- Ude Hishigi Hiza-gatame (Knee Armlock)
- Ashi-garami (Entangled Leglock)

Kime-no-Kata / Shinken-Shobu-no-Kata (Kata of Decision)

Jigoro Kano, referred to the three purposes of Judo as physical education, learning how to attack and defend, and moral training.

The Kime-no-Kata was established in 1888 and consists of twenty techniques for attack and defense. Eight are Idori techniques for use while seated, and twelve are Tachiai for use when both people are standing. By studying the kata it is possible to understand and master the theoretical basis for attack and defense, thereby allowing one to move quickly and apply the most appropriate techniques to control the opponent.

The Kime-no-Kata includes Atemi Waza, which are not used in Randori. Regular practice is essential in order to understand the key locations and apply the atemi sharply.

Idori (Kneeling)

- Ryote-dori (Two-Hand Hold)
- Tsukkake (Stomach Punch)
- Suri Age (Forehead Thrust)
- Yoko Uchi (Side Blow)
- Ushiro-dori (Hold from Behind)
- Tsukkomi (Dagger Thrust to Stomach)
- Kirikomi (Downward Slash)
- Yoko Tsuki (Dagger Thrust to Side)

Tachiai (Standing)

- Ryote-dori (Two-Hand Hold)
- Sode Tori (Sleeve Grab)
- Tsukkake (Punch to face)
- Tsukiage (Uppercut)
- Suri Age (Forehead Thrust)
- Yoko Uchi (Side Blow)
- Keage (Groin Kick)
- Ushiro-dori (Hold from Behind)
- Tsukkomi (Dagger Thrust to Stomach)
- Kirikomi (Downward Slash)
- Nuki Kake (Sword Unsheathing)
- Kirioroshi (Downward Cut)

Kodokan Goshin Jutsu (Modern Self Defense Kata)

Recall that the Kime-no-Kata was created around 1888 to study how to attack and defend. However, with the change of lifestyles, it became necessary to come up with a new set of kata more suited to modern times. Therefore, in 1956, the Kodokan established Goshin Jutsu, a set of twenty one self defense techniques, which are divided into two categories: Toshu (or against unarmed attack) and Buki (or against armed attack).

Toshu (Against unarmed attack)

When held

- Ryote-dori (Two-Hand Hold)
- Hidari Eri-dori (Left-lapel hold)
- Migi Eri-dori (Right-lapel hold)
- Kataude-dori (Single-Hand Hold)
- Ushiro Eri-dori (Collar Hold from Behind)
- Ushiro-jime (Choke from Behind)
- Kakaie-dori (Seize and Hold from Behind)

At a distance

- Naname Uchi (Slanting Strike)
- Ago Tsuki (Uppercut)
- Gammen Tsuki (Thrust-Punch to Face)
- Mae-geri (Front Kick)
- Yoko-geri (Side Kick)

Buki (Against armed attack)

Knife

- Tsukkake (Thrust)
- Choku-zuki (Straight Thrust)
- Naname-zuki (Slanting Stab)

Stick

- Furiage (Upswing against Stick)
- Furioroshi (Downswing against Stick)
- Morote-zuki (Two-Hand thrust against Stick)

Pistol

- Shomen-zuki (Pistol at the Abdomen)
- Koshi-gamae (Pistol Held at the Side)
- Haimen-zuki (Pistol against the Back)

Ju-no-Kata (Kata of Suppleness)

The Ju-no-Kata was formulated as one of Kata of Kodokan Judo in 1887. The gentle movements are designed to teach the fundamentals of attack and defense and will make it much easier for one to learn the principals and movements of Kodokan Judo. Since the forms incorporate various movements such as bending, stretching and twisting, they are very effective in conditioning the body and developing it all-round.

Another advantage of the Ju-no-Kata is that it can be practiced by men and women, young and old without having to wear judogi.

Ikkyo (Set 1)

- Tsukidashi (Hand Thrust)
- Kata Oshi (Shoulder Push)
- Ryote-dori (Two-Hand Hold)
- Kata Mawashi (Shoulder Turn)
- Ago Oshi (Jaw Push)

Nikyo (Set 2)

- Kirioroshi (Downward Cut)
- Ryokata Oshi (Two-Shoulder Push)
- Naname Uchi (Slanting Strike)
- Katate-dori (One-Hand Hold)
- Katate Age (One-Hand Lift)

Sankyo (Set 3)

- Obi Tori (Belt Grab)
- Mune Oshi (Chest Push)
- Tsukiage (Uppercut)
- Uchioroshi (Downward Strike)
- Ryogan Tsuki (Strike to Both Eyes)

Itsutsu-no-Kata (Kata of Five Principles)

The Itsutsu-no-Kata was established in 1887 by the founder of Kodokan Judo, Jigoro Kano. The kata forms the basis of Kodokan Judo. Inspired by the forms found in nature, Jigoro Kano strived to come up with a way of expressing those forces through judo. The result is the Itsutsu-no-Kata.

There are no names for the specific techniques, but the Itsutsu-no-Kata comprises all the fundamental principles of Kodokan Judo, applying the theoretical basis of attack and defense to natural phenomena. In that sense they can also be appreciated from an artistic point of view.

- **Form 1:** Demonstrates the principle that rationalized, continuous attack will bring defeat, even against a strong power. This technique represents the impeccable strength of justice. A small power applied continuously, in a rational manner, can control a huge power.
- **Form 2:** Demonstrates the principle of using the energy of the opponent's attack to defeat them, or victory through yielding.
- **Form 3:** Demonstrates the principle of the whirlpool, wherein the inner circle controls the outer circle. Two objects revolving in giant circles, inevitably they close in on each other, and then part without damage.
- **Form 4:** Demonstrates the power of the ocean's tide. The tide will draw everything on the shore into the ocean, no matter how large, as a giant wave sweeping the beach clean of all debris and impurity.
- **Form 5:** Demonstrates the principle of yielding. When unlimited energies collide with each other, one yields to avoid destroying both. This technique shows that a clash between two strong forces can only result in mutual doom, but if you step aside and give way there will be peace and coexistence.

Koshiki no Kata (Antique Kata)

The Koshiki-no-Kata preserves the kata of the Kito-Ryu of Jujutsu which Jigoro Kano studied before founding Kodokan Judo.

The Koshiki-no-Kata is based on the throwing techniques executed by armour-clad warriors on the battle field. The first set, Omote, comprises fourteen forms and should be executed at a rather slow and staccato pace, with the pauses between each throw well marked. The second set, Ura, comprises seven forms and should be executed more rapidly and without wasted time.

Omote (Front)

- Tai (Ready Posture)
- Yume no Uchi (Dreaming)
- Ryokuhi (Strength Dodging)
- Mizu-guruma (Water Wheel)
- Mizu Nagare (Water Flow)
- Hikiotoshi (Draw Drop)
- Ko-daore (Log Fall)
- Uchikudaki (Smashing)
- Tani Otoshi (Valley Drop)
- Kuruma-daoshi (Wheel Throw)
- Shikoro-dori (Grabbing the Neckplates)
- Shikoro-gaeshi (Twisting the Neckplates)
- Yudachi (Shower)
- Taki Otoshi (Waterfall Drop)

Ura (Rear)

- Mi Kudaki (Body Smashing)
- Kuruma-gaeshi (Wheel Throw)
- Mizu Iri (Water Plunge)
- Ryusetsu (Willow Snow)
- Sakaotoshi (Headlong Fall)
- Yukiore (Snowbreak)
- Iwa Nami (Wave on the Rocks)

Go no Kata (Kata of Hardness)

The Go-no-Kata is believed to be one of the oldest kata in Kodokan Judo and is the complementary kata to the Ju-no-Kata (*go* meaning hardness and *ju* meaning softness).

The original Go-no-kata is now *lost* to some degree in that it was never properly written down and also in that it is seldom taught or practised today – even at the Kodokan. The most noted teacher of the Go-no-Kata is a Japanese sensei (Sensei Toshiyasu Ochiai) who regularly performs and teaches the kata at a machi dojo in Tokyo. Attempts to find teachers for this kata outside Japan is generally a futile exercise.

In recent years other teachers have developed and demonstrated their own *Go-no-Kata* to illustrate the principles of hardness, however generally there is little commonality between these kata and the original Kodokan form.

The Go-no-Kata consists of ten techniques, as follows:

- Seoi Nage (Shoulder Throw)
- Ushiro-goshi (Back Hip Throw)
- Sukuinage (Scooping Throw)
- Hidari Seoi Nage (Left Shoulder Throw)
- Uki-goshi (Floating Hip Throw)
- Hadaka-jime / Koshi-kudaki (Naked Lock / Hip Crush)
- Tobi-goshi / Uki-goshi (Jumping Hip Throw / Floating Hip Throw)
- Osoto-otoshi (Large Outer Drop)
- Ushiro-goshi (Back Hip Throw)
- Kata-guruma (Shoulder Wheel)