

# On Jujutsu and its Modernization

by Kenji Tomiki

There are many kinds of Budo (martial arts) in Japan. In recent history, kendo and judo have been the major ones and, as Gakko Budo--martial arts systems taught as part of the PE curricula--they have been required courses in schools, including primary schools, since the Meiji period (1868-1912). And, as is well known, both kendo and judo incorporate competition and sparring. However, the training in ancient Budo consisted only of kata practice, the practice of forms and pre-arranged movements that one masters through numerous repetitions. Kendo and judo training were not kata alone. In order to make shiai (tournaments) possible, an etiquette and structure for competition was devised. I think that competition developed for two reasons, one philosophical and one practical. First, the saying "tournaments are possible" suits the expansive essence of budo. Second, the educational effect of tournaments is enormous.

Aikido is much the same as judo because the origins of both reside in the ancient schools of jujutsu. If we generally classify the kinds of techniques (waza) in the ancient schools of jujutsu, there are four categories:

1. Nage-waza (throwing techniques)
2. Katame-waza (locking techniques)
3. Atemi-waza (striking techniques)
4. Kansetsu-waza (joint techniques)

Among these, many nage-waza and some katame-waza have been collected into the system of training that is "competition judo" (judo kyogi), and various atemi-waza and kansetsu-waza have been collected into the system of training that is "competition aikido" (aikido kyogi).

Although one group of kansetsu-waza are included among the katame-waza of competition judo, the many varieties of kansetsu-waza (and their implementation) should be combined with the atemi-waza into a system of training so that these two groups of techniques will be sufficiently revitalized. Although the atemi-waza and kansetsu-waza can be viewed as techniques that can inflict a severe injury on an opponent, if we study the principles of the martial arts well, we realize that they are exquisite techniques for toppling (taosu) or controlling (osaeru) an opponent without necessarily harming him. In the same way, the nage-waza and katame-waza of competition judo--in the way they are taught and used by Judo players--are superb techniques that have the same purpose, namely controlling the opponent without injuring him. In this shared sensibility, both competition judo and competition aikido have been derived from the essence of the ancient schools of jujutsu and developed in to modern, competitive sports.

From both an educational and historical point of view, aikido has a meaning and content which is inferior to neither kendo nor judo. Generally speaking, few people understand that. The position of aikido within Japanese budo also is not well understood. This treatise will provide a summary of these points in order to clarify the situation.

## The Distinctive Features of Budo and the System of Jujutsu Training

What are the distinctive features of Japanese Budo? They are surely matters of spirit and philosophy. It has come to be said quite often that if we diligently develop our waza, our minds and spirits (kokoro) will be improved. Since ancient times, this budo shugyo, or martial arts training and apprenticeship, has proceeded from "techniques" (waza) to the "Way" (michi). The aphorism, "The act of perfecting our waza is equal to and achieves that act of perfecting our minds," applies in its

entirety to modern competition, as competition rightly engaged in helps us to perfect our waza, and so our minds. But a more thorough consideration of the distinctive features of budo and its philosophy is necessary here.

It has been handed down to this generation that the secret principle of martial arts techniques in kenjutsu (cf, *The Book of the Five Rings*) or in jujutsu (cf, *The Heavenly Scroll of Kito Ryu Jujutsu*) is to study thoroughly the principles of the arts so that we will ultimately arrive at "no posture" (*mugamae*)--that is, we will develop true natural posture (*shizen hontai*). In the same way that thoroughly mastering the principles of the arts leads the body to *mugamae*, such mastery leads the soul to *mushin*, which is often termed "no heart," or "the quietude of spirit". Although there are various terms for *mushin*, such as the unmoving heart, the non-living heart, the soft and pliable heart, and the every-day heart, they all mean exactly the same thing. And arriving at this state of *mushin* is congruent with the goals of the religious and moral systems that have existed in all eras and in all places.

The deep secret of ancient jujutsu is embodied in the saying, "True natural posture is the manifestation of *mushin*. Control strength through gentleness. These are the principles of jujutsu." Master Jigoro Kano (1860-1938), the founder of Kodokan Judo, well explained the subtleties behind this principle when he formulated his *Principles of Judo*--judo meaning gentleness--so that the original jujutsu principle would be understandable to the people of the current day. He did this by analyzing this single jujutsu principle quoted above, and dividing it into three subsidiary principles.

1. The principle of natural body (*shizentai no ri*), which concerns posture. This is a natural, unrestricted posture from which it is possible to attack and defend, adapting to any kind of assault.
2. The principle of gentleness (*ju no ri*), which concerns the position of defense. It says, do not oppose the offensive power of any kind of antagonist with force. Rather, render that force ineffective by moving your body out of the way (*taisabaki*).
3. The principle of breaking balance (*kuzushi no ri*), which concerns the position of attack. This says to go and build a chance of winning by taking advantage of the breaking of your opponent's balance or by adhering to his body.

I have taught both the kata and randori training methods together, as a unified system of practice which can help the student to understand each technique in light of the three principles listed above. I have also pointed out in my teaching that the *nage-waza* and *katame-waza* belong to randori training, while the *atemi-waza* and *kansetsu-waza* for the most part belong to kata training.

Jujutsu, which had techniques for hand to hand combat, studied "true power." In order for each us to experience personally the "core principles of the martial arts," we must not stop at the mere, repetitious practice of kata. Randori and sparing help to lead us closer to both the core principles of the martial arts and the true power that they generate by letting us experience the techniques studied in kata as they were meant to be performed: against a smart, resisting, and aggressive opponent. As an added benefit, randori training leads to an indispensable and highly prized sense of security. We have to admire the foresight of Master Kano for having expounded and promoted the benefits of randori training.

In reflecting on the evolution of Kodokan judo over the past century, one notes that those *atemi-waza* and *kansetsu-waza* that belong to just kata training have lagged behind those *nage-waza* and *katame-waza* that belong to randori as well as kata training. The gap separating them is large. I suggest the following reasons for this differential. First, a systematic classification and arrangement of materials relating to the *atemi-waza* and *kansetsu-waza* has not been made. Second, an analysis of the characteristics of the *atemi-waza* and *kansetsu-waza*, on the basis of the principles of judo,

has not been performed. That is, these techniques are largely thought of only in terms of their original, bloodthirsty jujutsu interpretations. Third, a systematic method of practice for the atemi-waza and the kansetsu-waza has not yet been established. Although there were important categories of atemi-waza and kansetsu-waza in each of the jujutsu schools of the Edo Period (1603-1867), after the Meiji Restoration in 1868 these categories of techniques became formalized and staid, and their vitality wasted away.

It was during this time of general decline that Daito-ryu Aikijujutsu was revived, first by Takeda Sogaku (1860-1943) and then by Morihei Ueshiba, who was Takeda's leading disciple and the man who would succeed Takeda as the head of aikido. Daito-ryu was a school of jujutsu that had been handed down for many generations in the old Aizu prefecture and was justly praised by Master Kano. Kano's praise was natural, as it takes genius to see genius. Indeed, the achievements Kano and Ueshiba are, in the annals of Japanese budo, stupendous. Kano's work as a martial artist is more well known, but Ueshiba, who was an especially pious person, expanded our understanding of the limits of enlightenment and of the unity of god and man. He also changed the name of the art from aikijujutsu to aikido, established a dojo in Tokyo in the first years of the Showa period (1925-1989), and propagated aikido both in Japan and around the world.

It is the case, though, that the method of training used in aikido today is not only based upon the practices of long ago, but is indeed just about unchanged from what was done back then. If we consider the matter from the standpoint of an up-to-date education in budo, however, a system of randori practice ought to be added and should be based upon a method of training that incorporates both kata and randori. When one is young it is important for one's budo training to pass through rigorous bodily and spiritual ordeals in randori and, further, tournaments. And as for the vast array of techniques that cannot be incorporated into randori training, the profound martial arts principles embodied in those techniques can be--must be--mastered thoroughly through the practice of kata. In this way, one may develop one's body to the wonderful state known as mugamae or shizentai, and thence through further exertions reach the ascetic practice of mushin. This is "the Way" for the practitioner of austerities.

When we compare the atemi-waza and kansetsu-waza with the nage-waza and katame-waza, we note that the element of a feat of strength is minimal. That is, the former require less power than the latter. For this reason too, randori is needed to impose rigor. The practice of kata, as a lifelong physical discipline, is, however, an appropriate method of practice for older people.

Through the short treatise below, I want to elucidate historically and through the principles of the martial arts the indispensability of both kata and randori in any aikido training system.

Budo is not the only art that aims at mastery of the body. Others such as those on land or in the water or those games in which a ball is used all attain proficiency by repetition of trial and error. People who have become masters, experts and champions have spent long months and years practising. They are people who well understand perseverance and who practice diligently. Their practice methods, of which there is an infinite variety, bear the stamp of their respective personalities and characters. The practice methods which excel in any given art clear if we objectify real capabilities by way of competition. Budo is no exception. The historical and developmental circumstances of Budo, however, are different from those in other arts.

It goes without saying that sports using a ball were devised from systems of recreational pastimes. Land and water sports were pragmatically designed as a means of physical exertion in periods of cultural decline. The people who excelled in these skills occupied a superior position in life. In that sense, Budo is the same. Because the technical contents of Budo contains an element of danger, however, problems remained. In order to demonstrate the validity of the occasion when a fight was

held, techniques were esteemed to the extent that they had the power to kill and maim. The saying "necessity is the mother of invention" can be applied to the martial arts.

When we consider the history of the development of Budo, its style and content went through changes according to the times and patterns of life. At the beginning of the 17th century, the establishment of the Tokugawa bakafu completely halted a long period of war. Both kenjutsu and jujutsu aimed at being self defence martial arts during the period of peace. That is to say, research progressed from hand-to-hand combat techniques wearing armour to hand-to-hand combat wearing ordinary clothes. It is said that kenjutsu developed into IAI and jujutsu developed into IDORI, that is into sitting techniques (suwari-waza).

Moreover, the sense of values in bujutsu changed greatly. The martial arts that had formerly embraced the doctrine of supreme victory on the battlefield became KYOIKU BUDO, educational BUDO, in order to promote the refinement of the warriors. That is, the thinking that martial arts training proceeds from waza to the Way had changed. That Way was the Way of the Warrior (Bushido) which was founded on the religious beliefs of Confucianism, Buddhism and Shinto. The influence of this refinement was expressed on the face of the martial arts too. It is reported that in kenjutsu the stated ideal was no sword (the record of Kenjutsu Theory for the Shin-kage School), while in jujutsu the stated ideal was not to kill in the art (The Scroll of Preparedness of the Yoshin School) or avoid being struck, but do not strike; avoid being cut, but do not cut (The Oral Tradition of the Daito School of Aikijujutsu). That is to say, the spirit of killing and wounding were disavowed because the techniques for throwing or restraining, and thereby controlling an opponent developed tremendously.

At any rate, because Budo was in the ultimate position of standing at the cross-roads of life and death, instructors emphasized strength in the conviction that one need not fear death. Because that conviction was treated as a secret technique and secret formulas in the age of closed feudal classes, society was divided into many antagonistic schools. But martial arts as they should be welcomed the Meiji Restoration and made a brand new start.

The pioneer who modernised the feudal era schools of bujutsu and brought them to life in the midst of modern education was Master Kano. When I say that he modernised ancient bujutsu, what I mean is that he categorised and arranged the techniques so that they transcended schools. The main feature of this rearrangement was to organise and competitise the major techniques according to the form of combat so as to make tournaments (shiai) possible. Further, even with regard to the idea of education, Kano philosophically and ethically examined the ancient schools, which were being resisted by their enemies, individual beliefs and creeds. While he regarded the ancient schools as being based on the thoughts of Confucianism, Buddhism and Shintoism, he regarded the individual beliefs and creeds of the ancient schools as the Way to educate all of mankind. Master Kano stated that Jujutsu, because it was a martial art that had long had as its main purpose the simple issue of victory or defeat, does not comport with the spirit of times after the Meiji Restoration. Judo, having examined winning and losing and having discovered the principles behind each, influences the art.

Furthermore, Judo is also a way to refine our spirit by using the Way of those principles. The phrase "the main purpose of jujutsu was the issue of victory or defeat" means that the first goal of jujutsu was nothing more than actual victory. Because jujutsu techniques have a dangerous and bloodthirsty nature, they are inappropriate in modern times. Judo, however, shows the deep significance that is embodied in the principles that are mentioned in the phrase "having examined winning and losing and having discovered the principles of each" and makes those principles into a Way for the evolution of magnanimous human beings. And the way to examine victory and defeat is to apply yourself diligently to both randori and kata without favouring one over the other.

## **Techniques learned through kata can be revitalised by randori**

The method of practise traditionally used to ensure the safety of dangerous techniques was the kata system of practise. In ancient bujutsu, 99% of a practise was completed by kata alone. That is to say, in order to cope with an opponent's unlimited attacks, each response was practised by means of kata. That is the reason for the extreme number of kata in ancient jujutsu. For example in Tenjin Shinyo Ryu jujutsu there were 124 kata techniques, and there were over 10 ranho (literally unstructured captures). To become masterful in the practical applications of the techniques required innumerable months. Then someone would be challenged to go from kata to a violent shiai (literally street fight ) called tsujinage or tsujigiri. This gave life to kata and was the place to try to fit together objectively one's own real ability.

A martial art that has no rules is nothing but violence. Along with the perception of being prepared for death, one must participate in shiai. In the traditional writings there is a prohibition against shiai. Novices entering into shiai unpreparedly were admonished about losing their lives.

Times changed after the middle of the Edo period and shiai that caused injuries costing a life were rigidly proscribed. It was then decided that bujutsu training would be done from first to last only by kata. The bujutsu that lost the opportunity for shiai training showed signs of degeneration because it was impossible to experience personally the true power of the martial arts and the core of the principles of the arts. As a means of correcting this decline the bamboo sword practise in kenjutsu and free sparring practise (randori geiko) in jujutsu were invented.

For example, within kenjutsu in the middle of the Edo era, schools such as kempo-kaho were ridiculed. The ridicule was because these schools were revealed to have kata-only practises that made it easy to develop weak points. It is said that the rigor of bujutsu training was forgotten, that the training sank into easy-going ways, that real power was not sought, and that pretentious bombastic activity increased. In short, history reports that the sword kata of budo degenerated into the sword kata of the stage.

Kata practise is performed to avoid the ultimate power of the techniques. When we study by means of a sword or wooden sword, it is necessary to try to meet the moment of the ultimate clash through use of the bamboo sword practise, even though in nine cases out of ten we will be able to absorb the principles of the art, such as the principle of simultaneous strikes (ai-uchi), i.e. cutting the skin to cut the meat, through kata.

From early on jujutsu also devised midare geiko (unstructured practise) training for the nage-waza and the katame-waza techniques that occur in the final moments of close-in hand to hand fighting. On the basis of this kind of practise, Master Kano completed his randori system of training during and after the Meiji period. This system is modern competition judo.

Randori practise is something that is done to give life to the real power of those techniques that were learned through kata. That is to say, randori provides the power to complete a painted dragon by filling in the eyes. The synthesised martial arts techniques of the old jujutsu schools, however, were quite varied and had numerous styles of hand to hand combat. Thus, it is impossible to incorporate all of these techniques into a system of randori training. Accordingly, I have brought together the important parts of the atemi-waza and kansetsu-waza, and the organisation of another system of randori training is the subject that remains before us.

## **Jujutsu requires two systems of randori training**

To begin with, jujutsu, of whatever kind, is for protecting yourself against the attacks of an opponent. Kenjutsu protects a person by use of a sword, and jitte-jutsu protects a person by use of a jitte, which is a short metal truncheon. Jujutsu protects a person without using anything at all. Moreover, jujutsu must be able to protect a person from an opponent's attack encountered at any time or place. In other words, in order to cope with an opponent's unlimited and unqualified attack without using a weapon, jujutsu made avoiding the brunt of an attack by the use of agile movements the number one priority. As it has been taught from ancient times, The secret principle of jujutsu is moving your body out of the way (taisabaki).

When we analyse the essence of attacks, they fall into two general categories:

1. An opponent from close in tries to topple (taosu) or restrain (osaeru) you by using his legs and hips.
2. An opponent from distance tries to strike, lunge at, or kick you, or with a weapon tries to cut or stab you.

Whichever situation it is, you must protect yourself completely by using taisabaki against the strong points of the attack. You must avoid the attack by using the speed of locomotive power. The secret principle of jujutsu, true natural posture (shizen hontai or mugamae), was developed on the base of this taisabaki and applies to all techniques. The system of randori practise that Master Kano formulated is for the situations described in point 1 above. It is the category of nage-waza and katame-waza where from close in you apply a waza at the collar and sleeve of a Japanese style judo jacket. The system of randori practise where you avoid your opponent's attack from a distance (as in point 2 above) and apply a technique is comprised of the atemi-waza and kansetsu-waza. In both categories there is a need to establish a system of randori training.

When we look at the history of budo, it is recorded that there were 718 schools of kenjutsu and 179 schools of jujutsu. Comparing kenjutsu to jujutsu, the former used to have far more schools, but because the form of kenjutsu combat was simply sword against sword it was possible to modernise kenjutsu successfully so as to be able to have competitive shiai simply by collecting the various schools into one form of combat. From a practical point of view, however, it is impossible for jujutsu to receive sufficient training in the practical applications of the techniques through one form of combat. At the very least it is necessary to have two kinds of practise for the two kinds of situations described in points 1 and 2 above.

Once in 1926 Master Kano discussed in a radio broadcast the subject of Judo of old and the Judo of the future, and in the next year in an address to his students he remarked as follows: "I think that there must be a method of randori and shiai that includes the atemi-waza, provided that we devise it gradually and only after thorough investigation. That system, however, is not as easy as the ones in which the relative merits are decided by throwing (nage) or restraining (osae) an opponent." The randori and shiai training that would include the atemi-waza was contemplated by Master Kano, as we have learned from this quotation, but it was not realised during his lifetime.

At that time I entered the dojo of my honoured teacher, Morihei Ueshiba, and there were incentives there for me to advance in my research on the atemi-waza and kansetsu-waza. Since that time I have had 50 years of trial and error experience with the old schools of jujutsu that have survived into the present era. I founded an aikido club at Waseda University in 1958, and it was at that time that aikido was introduced as a kind of proper scientific physical training which recognised on the condition that it be a style of aikido brought to completion in competition. Since that time, the students and I have, as one group, successfully concentrated on the perfection of the system of aiki-randori. This perfection, however, further awaits the cooperation of many people over long years so

as to teach the more than 250 years of history in competition kendo or the 100 years of history in competition jujutsu. Various knotty problems accompany changing bujutsu into a competitive martial art.

This competition, as the way that budo should be, however, is a most appropriate subject of study authorized by the professionals. The reason for this is that through competition we are able to build on the spirit of freedom from danger, objectify ability, progress in our own self-examination through our reflection in others, and expand without limit the circle by way of making friendship into the profound harmony of budo.

Competition alone allows one to master the techniques that are within a fixed category, and it is impossible to study extensively the techniques and forms of combat that cannot be incorporated into that category. When competition lapses into one-sided inversion, however, it will deteriorate? The thing to offset this deleterious tendency is kata practice. The special character of budo is that it is the very training that does not tend to abandon either randori or kata.

### **A training course for Aiki-randori**

In organising a training course for aiki-randori, two points particularly warrant attention. First is the safety of the atemi-waza and the kansetsu-waza. Second is the relationship between kata and randori. To begin with, the atemi-waza and kansetsu-waza have to date been excluded from judo-randori because they can be dangerous. What kind of guarantee of safety is there for practising randori, not to mention shiai, that incorporates these techniques? When we carefully consider the atemi-waza and kansetsu-waza historically and fundamentally, we find two characteristics:

1. The atemi-waza control an opponent by hitting, thrusting into or kicking the physiological weak points of the body (the vital areas), and the kansetsu-waza control an opponent by inflicting a sprain or dislocation on a joint. That is to say, these techniques were devised with the purpose of maiming or killing.
2. The atemi-waza topple an opponent by grasping the mechanical weak points of his body (the principle of kuzushi, breaking balance) and pushing him in one direction, while the kansetsu-waza restrain an opponent with a minimum of force by utilizing the limits of joint movement.

To date only the first characteristics generally has been emphasised while the second has been lost to sight. The techniques of aiki-randori were arranged and developed from physical training basis to regulate the first characteristic and promote the second one. That is, I have selected the forms of hand to hand combat in which an unarmed person defends himself against a person armed with a dagger (rubber) and in which shiai are conducted by way of specially determined refereeing regulations. In this fashion, the important categories of atemi-waza and kansetsu-waza that existed in old style jujutsu can be revived as a new budo within modern physical training.

Next, it has thus far been thought that kata and randori are separated from each other, and it has even been said that to cultivate real power randori alone is fine. Taking a lesson from history of jujutsu, which gathered into a unitary course of training so as to master thoroughly the spirit of atemi-waza and the kansetsu-waza. Kata and randori were made so as not to be divided.

The training course for aiki-randori is divided into 5 levels, aside from the preparatory exercises:

1. Fundamental movements (kihon dosa)
2. Fundamental techniques (kihon waza)

3. The system of breaking away (ridatsu ho)
4. The system of control (seigyō ho)
5. The system of randori (randori ho)

Steps 1 through 4 comprise the so-called kata training. Step 5 alone is randori training. Further, kata training can be distinguished into application practise (kakari geiko) and energetic practise (hikitate geiko).

## **Training course for aiki-randori**

### **I. Preparatory exercises: to tune the body and forestall injuries**

1. Light callisthenics, standing
2. Flexibility and toning callisthenics, sitting
3. Falling (ukemi) practise: back, front, side

### **II. Fundamental movements (kihon dosa): fundamental principles induced from old style jujutsu**

- A. The principle of the natural body (shizentai no ri) (concerning posture): the posture for unrestricted attack and defence, and the method of movement
  1. Mugamae (standing and sitting), migigamae (right posture), hidarigamae (left posture)
  2. The method of unsoku-ho (footwork) and the method of shikko-ho (moving on one's knee)
  3. The practise of moving in 8 directions
- B. The principle of gentleness (ju no ri), which concerns defence: the method of defence that renders the force of an opponent's attack ineffective
  1. Avoiding and accepting a thrust
  2. Flowing gently with a force which you have grasped and with which you cooperate
    - a. Eye contact (metsuke) and proper distance (ma-ai), joining your hand swords (tegatana) together
    - b. Method of avoidance (kawashi-kata), movement in six directions
    - c. Method of accepting (uke-kata) with the hands pressed together as during prayer (gassho no uke)
    - d. Method of flowing (nagashi-kata): the five hand sword movements
- C. The principle of breaking balance (kuzushi no ri) (concerning attacks): a method of building a chance of victory by taking advantage of breaking an opponent's balance or of adhering to his body
  1. Controlling the elbow
    - a. high level (jodan)
    - b. low level (gedan)
  2. Controlling the wrist
    - a. high level (jodan)
    - b. low level (gedan)
  3. Controlling the chin
    - a. Avoiding an opponent's cuts or stabs from a distance
    - b. Flowing with a force which you have grasped and with which you cooperate

### **III. Fundamental techniques (kihon waza): techniques categorised from atemi-waza and kansetsu-waza of the old schools of jujutsu**

- A. The 5 atemi-waza: shomen-ate, aigamae-ate, gyakugamae-ate, gedan-ate and ushiro-ate
- B. The 14 kansetsu-waza
  1. Six elbow techniques (hiji-waza): 2 hip locks (koshi-gatame), 2 side locks (waki-gatame) and 2 arm locks (ude-garami)

2. Eight wrist techniques (tekubi-waza): 4 wrist twists (kote-hineri) and 4 wrist turns (kote-gaeshi)

IV. The method of breaking away (ridatsu ho): breaking away and practically applying the atemi-waza when grasped by an opponent

- A. Breaking away and practically applying the atemi-waza when the wrist, arm, collar or sleeve are grasped, when held bodily, or when grasped from the front, back, left or right.

V. The method of control (seigyo ho): controlling an opponent and practically applying the kansetsu-waza when grasped

- A. Controlling an opponent and practically applying the kansetsu-waza when wrist, arm, collar, or sleeve are grasped, when held bodily or when grasped from the front, back, left or right.

VI. The method of randori (randori ho): avoiding and controlling the cuts and thrusts of a distant opponent

- A. The kata for randori: the 17 techniques (ju-nana hon no kata). This is the basic kata that shows the process for avoiding and controlling a distant opponent who strikes, lunges, or kick, or who cuts and thrusts with a dagger (tanto). This kata alone, passing through the stages of kakari-geiko and hikitate-geiko, is able to progress to randori-geiko.