

KEY PRINCIPLES OF JUDO

(A lecture given by Syd Hoare 8th Dan to the EJU Foundation degree course at Bath University July 2005)

Most books by Japanese (or other Asian) martial artists usually include quite a lot on 'principles'. Jigoro Kano, the founder of judo, listed a number of them and divided them into technical principles and theoretical ones. As you would expect the technical principles apply directly to technique whereas the theoretical ones tend to be the ones dealing with the psychological, spiritual or moral dimensions of the martial art. These may not be to the taste of the average non-Japanese judoka but they are there and require some understanding for those who wish to know all about judo.

Martial arts theoretical principles depend quite a lot on the beliefs of the founder of the martial art and will differ according to whether they are Buddhists, Taoists, Confucianists or Budo-ka (those who follow the Military Way). Sometimes these various strands will intermingle. Whereas most Westerners are happy to just get on with the mat training the Asians have a belief in the character forming potential of judo and act out the principles which is to say they don't wait for their training to make them virtuous but act virtuously from the start. The Westerner on the other hand may fail to perceive the logic of the principles as stated and ignore them. Things were not always like this. Around the turn of the 19th century most English believed that playing sports such as cricket and soccer were character enhancing activities but not so many believe that now.

In this lecture I start by looking at the traditional Japanese judo principles and then in Part 2 follow up by describing what 'principles' I can discover from modern Western attitudes to judo and my experiences on the mat. Probably most non-Japanese would regard the winning of gold medals in major competitions as the standard by which technical principles are judged although most Japanese sensei would also judge their success by the number students of good character that they have produced whether they have gold medals or not.

Part 1 – The Japanese Model

So what is a principle? My dictionary defines a principle as **a fundamental law which has a universal application**. So armed with a knowledge of judo principles they should be helpful in all judo situations. So let us look at traditional judo from that point of view. Note that the word 'principle' can be used in other ways such as...he is a man of principle or he/she is an unprincipled rogue.

I start by outlining the Kodokan Judo Objectives and its traditional principles that still serve the Japanese well judging by the number of gold medals they won at the last few Olympics. Although Japanese judo divides its principles into theoretical and technical the two occasionally overlap.

The Objectives (Mokuhyo)

Unlike most 'sports' judo tells us *why* we should do it and these reasons are enshrined in the Three Objectives of Judo. They are not technical principles as such but define

the purpose of judo and its context. The Objectives are Combat (*shobu-ho*), Physical education (*taiiku-ho*), Moral education (*shushin-ho*).

Shushin-ho is further divided into :- cultivation of virtue (*toku-iku*), training the intellect (*chi-iku*) and the application of contest principles to everyday life (*shobu no riron no oyo*). Judo is meant to make you a better person and perhaps we can describe *shushin-ho* as the character building side of judo or what the medieval Japanese Confucianists would call *Hito-zukuri* or person building.

The two main theoretical principles of judo are contained in the watchwords **Seiryoku Zenyo** (or **Seiryoku Saizen Katsuyo**) and **Jita-Kyoei** and **Sojo-sojo**. The use of such watchwords (phrase summarizing a guiding principle) is typically oriental and they serve to plant key messages into the minds of the students and teachers.

Seiryoku Zenyo means – Good use of mind and body. The key word in this watchword/slogan is zen which means good as opposed to evil. It has no connection with Zen Buddhism. Seiryoku is a modern Japanese word written with two characters which together means *energy* or *vigour*. In this watchword the two characters Sei (spirit) and ryoku (force) should be regarded as opposites (mind and body) which is how I have translated it. Up to the death of Kano in 1938 the slogan **Seiryoku Saizen Katsuyo** was mainly in use. This translates as - the highest or most moral practical application of mind and body. Here we note a slight deviation in meaning. Moral use of mind and body is not quite the same as the most moral practical application of mind and body. The use of the word ‘practical’ modifies the slogan I think.

The Seiryoku Zenyo watchword as it stands probably does not convey much to the average Western judoka. Obviously moral use of mind and body is very laudable for judoka or anybody else but if we interpret Zen to mean *best or efficient*, (as Kano occasionally did), then the slogan approaches the catchphrase - maximum efficiency minimum effort - which is obviously applicable to technical judo on the mat. Kano in his explanations of his principles often mixed the concepts of morality and efficiency but I think that Zen for Kano meant primarily good or moral simply because efficiency on its own can be quite immoral. Perhaps what Kano was trying to stress with his most important watchword was that a person who does things for the highest motives will be a better judoka and person (although that may not be immediately apparent on the mat).

The second main theoretical principle is **Jita-kyoei** which translates as *oneself and others - mutual benefit* or just simply as *mutual prosperity*. What Kano seems to be advising here was conduct ones judo and life so that all benefit from it. On the mat of course there is the possibility of injury and the idea of not doing careless or harmful judo makes technical sense both for others and oneself.

Along with Jita-kyoei there is a further watchword and that is **Sōjo-sōjō** which means mutual aid and mutual deference. In Japanese the words sojo-sojo are written with different characters. Kano seems to be saying here do not confront situations with force but seek to help the other party and seek a compromise. Sojo-sojo perhaps approaches the idea of yielding as in the concept of Ju but it may be more understandable in the context of the Confucian values in Japanese society and the dangerous Japanese politics of the 1930s which were heading for war.

Kano formulated the Jita-kyoei and Sojo-sojo principles somewhat later than Seiryoku Zenyo and these theoretical principles were significantly fleshed out in 1922 after he established the Kodokan Cultural Association (Kodokan Bunka Kai) when he stated,

‘We resolve to contribute to the world and achieve the objectives of all humanity by applying the judo principle of Seiryoku Saizen Katsuyo (highest practical application of mind and body). We expect the judoka to make his body healthy and strong, be morally upright and to play an influential role in society. We expect individuals and groups to help and compromise with each other thereby creating a pervasive harmony. In the world at large we expect all to strive for mutual prosperity (Jita Kyoei), to abandon racial discrimination and to share equally in the fruits of cultural improvements. The essential points of these are: (1) Highest practical application of mind and body is the secret of self-perfection. (2) Self-perfection is completed by aiding other perfections. (3) Self-perfection is the basis of mankind’s mutual prosperity.

Whereas Kano’s early theoretical system tied in with his technical judo especially if you regard Seiryoku Zenyo as coming close in meaning to ‘maximum efficiency and minimum effort’ this later excursion into ‘self-perfection’ marks a new departure. There seems to be no apparent gestation of the idea which appears to have come out of nowhere. (Some have claimed that he was influenced by Herbert Spencer who was briefly a popular English philosopher about that time for which see my A History of Judo). Perhaps Kano saw a link between the highest practical application of mind and body and self-perfection or perhaps he regarded the outcome in each case as the same.

Similarly the slogan Jita Kyoei (mutual prosperity) would appear to have little relevance to judo where combatants struggle to overcome each other and where there is little ‘harmony’ or co-operation other than fighting within safety rules. The watchword Sojo-sojo would also appear to have little relevance to actual judo combat. Perhaps the only relevance would be that these concepts describe Confucian ideas of mutuality, harmony and compromise in society.

It may have been the case that whereas Kano’s early principles kept judo within a fairly loose social framework (judo for self-defence, physical training and character training) up to the late 1920s but his later ones had to contend with a growing push for war by the Japanese militarists who saw the greatest virtue in dying for the Emperor or the country. They were not that interested in judo as the compliant art. For them Budo or the Way of the warrior or soldier was their guiding principle. Kano through force of character managed to resist them and keep judo on track at least up to his death in 1938.

In Kodokan judo the next level down of technical principles are **Ju**, **Kuzushi** and **Shisei**. Ju as in Ju-do is used in the ‘yielding’ sense or the opposite of ‘resistant. But ‘compliant’ might be a better translation. In judo we give way in order to let the opponent fall over or in order for us to spring back. In Kodokan judo this is seen as a **defensive** principle. If somebody comes charging forward you move out of the way and trip them up. This is using their movement to defeat them. And not only does one use what they give but you try to invite them or coax them into giving you that. Push when pulled and pull when pushed sums up the idea (*oseba hiku – hikeba osu*).

However, if you are caught in a hold where there is virtually no movement what **Ju** is there to use? In this case the superior theoretical principle of *Seiryoku Zenyo* (here understood as the effective use of mind and body) is used – you must work on the weak point of their attack.

Kano who was a classical Chinese scholar was aware of the ancient esoteric Chinese sentence found in the 12th century BC book *Sanryaku* (San-lueh) which runs (**Ju Yoku Go Sei(suru)**) namely ‘The Yielding (Soft) Overcomes the Resistant (Hard)’ but came to the conclusion that all it really meant was that rational use of mind and body would succeed. This was different from ju-jitsu which subscribed to the Chinese slogan without going much further than it. The principle of *ju* has been paraphrased in jujitsu as using the strength of the enemy to defeat him and it has been described as the way a smaller person can beat a larger one. But what does that actually mean? We know from experience that smaller skilful judoka can beat bigger beginners and that one can beat a stronger opponent by using his movement or by attacking his weak points but ‘using his strength’ is somewhat meaningless I think.

The principle of **Ju** in the jujitsu schools was probably more a reliance on an ancient Chinese principle to gain respectability rather than a practical one. *Atemi* which was one of the main branches of jujitsu techniques for example does not follow this *Ju* principle although it does obey the principle of *Seiryoku Zenyo* in that the anatomical weak points are attacked. Here the theoretical principle merges with a technical one.

Kuzushi or breaking of balance and posture is regarded as an offensive principle. Somebody standing firmly and on balance in front of you is more easily thrown if they are pulled or pushed off balance first. This is done by a pull or push as part of the throw not separately from it. Here a necessary amount of force has to be used.

Some Japanese judoka divide the execution of a throw into three stages namely *kuzushi*, *tsukuri*, *kake* but in his book *Judo Kyohon*, Kano divided it into two stages – *tsukuri* and *kake* with *kuzushi* as part of *tsukuri*. This duo-trio (*kuzushi/tsukuri/kake*) appears unique to judo. *Kuzushi* is usually taught in eight directions (*happo*) although in the beginning it was in six directions. *Kuzushi* is very much a Kano devised principle. Japanese jujitsu books use the verb *kuzusu* (*kuzushi*) in its everyday meaning of *break down* or *destroy* but it does not seem to figure as a jujitsu principle.

Shisei means Posture and is usually interpreted to mean the upright standing natural posture or **Shizentai** (or *shizenhontai*) as opposed to the crouching defensive posture or *Jigotai*. The value of *Shizentai* is that by standing up straight one can move more quickly and easily than the crouching player and it places the hips and legs nearer to the opponent from an attacking point of view. There are disadvantages to standing up straight such as being weaker to the rear but overall the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. This too is a Kano principle. Most martial arts place a lot of stress on various stances (*kamae*) especially the weapon martial arts such as Kendo but Kano simply said **natural and upright is the most efficient stance**.

In addition to the general principles above there is also a certain amount of Japanese judo wisdom you will hear in the dojo such as stressing the grasp of the little finger (also in sumo), pulling with the little finger on top, not falling over when making a throw, coming in low and getting the opponent high, pointing the toes in reaps,

making chest contact, keeping the feet shoulder width apart, two circle *kuzushi*, moving from the stomach, suri-ashi sliding etc but it is difficult to describe them as “principles”. They are more like technical extras.

Traditionally judo ability is acquired in four ways. They are:-

1. **Randori & shiai** (free-fighting & competition)
2. **Kata**
3. **Kogi** (lectures)
4. **Mondo** (questions and answers)

Randori or free-fighting is the main method of learning judo. Kano said that *shiai* (competition) is the way to test what you have learned in the dojo and it is the principles of contest which judoka are expected apply to everyday life (*shobu no riron no oyo*). This last principle is part of the *Shushin-ho*(*character-building*) objective of judo although I cannot say that I ever heard many Japanese sensei stressing this aspect. In fact the most complete explanation of this is to be found in a long series of articles by Trevor Leggett 6th Dan in the Budo magazine published by the Tokyo Budokan during, I think the 1970-80s. Leggett described this aspect of judo principles as a training for life.

Kata we know about and perhaps if we define this as pre-arranged movements we can include *Uchikomi/nagekomi* etc in this as well. *Kogi* and *Mondo* does not happen so often but we are here and now demonstrating what that means. Perhaps what Kano meant by Questions and Answers was detailed discussion of judo.

The throws of judo are sub-divided into five types - Hand, Hip, Leg and Sacrifice (front & side) throws and this follows the way they are divided in the Nage no Kata. The basic idea is that each division describes which part of the thrower’s body is most responsible for the throw or where the motive power comes from but I cannot see that it serves any particular purpose (other than that of classification) to subdivide in this way. For example with the first set of the Nage no Kata one could get into quite a long discussion on how much of a hand throw the first three techniques are, why Taiotoshi is not included and why there are no rear throws in the Nage no Kata. There are other quibbles one could raise but it must not be forgotten that the Nage no Kata was a *training method* consisting of workable representatives. The idea was to *do* it not talk about it.

Apart from being training methods the Katas, the Gokyo and the later Kodokan Shitei waza, also served as technical data bases. They represented the distilled technical wisdom of the masters of the Kodokan. They describe the basics (*kihon*) of Kodokan judo which were not to be changed in name or in form without a very good reason. This is a very Confucian principle – which believes that names have to be correct otherwise chaos may ensue. *Kihon* is in fact a word much stressed by Japanese teachers and over the decades Japanese judo technical activity has consisted of redefining and re-affirming all the *individual* techniques.

There is one unspoken and uncodified technical principle of judo and that is *Shugyō* or simply *Gyō* which means austere/ascetic ‘training’. It is very close in pronunciation

to *Shūgyō* meaning 'training in general'. The Japanese do not talk about this as such and is taken for granted by them. The austere training is done to realize some essential truth (many Zen monasteries have graveyards where the many priests who died in training are buried). In fact there is an overlap of both senses in common Japanese usage. In either case training in Japan for most things is meant to be hard and long because hard training is meant to change you mentally and physically for the better - marathons are better for you than casual jogs. *It goes without saying that if you do something intensively for a long time you tend to get rather good at it.* With this *shūgyō* attitude it is not that difficult to find aspects of daily training that could be intensified and the Japanese are very good at finding and doing them.

One thing I noticed during my training days in Japan was that very little instruction was given. After being shown the basics (*kihon*) of a throw you were meant to acquire the finer points by hard training with the occasional help of an old sensei. One idea behind the hard training was that a tired body would have to be an efficient body to survive. With enough *randori* the body (not the mind) would learn the best way to throw etc. So *shūgyō* is an important technical principle which is mentioned in passing in the Illustrated Kodokan Judo book.

Possibly the good contest results of European judo in the 50s, 60s and 70s were the result of the importation of this harsh Japanese attitude to training which was brought back by those men and women who went and trained in Japan for a number of years.

Kata I have briefly mentioned above and temporarily defined it as pre-arranged or choreographed movements. *Kata* plays a peculiar role in judo and many other physical arts in Japan. The word comes from the same root as *katai* = hard/fixed, *katachi* = shape and *kata* itself can mean shape, form, mould, pattern or matrix. In other words something that has hardened into shape. Japan is said to be the nation of *Kata* where most things have a prescribed form and have to be done according to it. When a foreigner first goes to Japan he or she can get very irritated by having to do things always in the prescribed manner even though there appears to be many alternative 'better' ways. But the way things are done now is the way the ancestors did it in the past and in so far as they were successful then that is the way it has to be done now. This is perhaps a survival of Confucian ancestor worship. Although *Kata* is a training method it also serves as a form of ritual which is one of the translations of *Rei* or etiquette. For more on this see my Bath Lecture on Etiquette in Judo.

In the early Kodokan days Kano mixed his *Kata* and *randori* together when running his sessions but was forced to abandon this method when the numbers got too big. *Kata* he said was the grammar of judo and how can you do proper *randori* (or write) if you do not know it? He also criticised the practice of *kata* in *jujitsu* saying that it was all very well and good to do these set moves but when an opponent attacked in a different way and at a different angle *Uke* could get very confused and go wrong. It would seem to me that Kano's criticism of *jujitsu kata* then could be applied to his judo *kata* nowadays. However his mixing of *kata* and *randori* together shows a different approach to *kata*.

Other martial arts were mostly done in *kata* form because it was safer to do it that way but there was another reason and that was *jujitsu* was done privately and in secret to keep its surprise value so it was therefore passed on orally from master to student and

not recorded or pictured in a book for all and sundry to read. The *katas* were physical technical data bases. Another reason for *kata* may have sprung from the supremacy of the weapon martial arts. When training with a sharp sword for example the moves would have to be done in pre-arranged sequences - it would be too dangerous otherwise. Judo however departed from *kata* quite early on because the *randori* rules that Kano created enabled judoka to practice judo safely and realistically. It is the Kodokan *randori* method that massively distinguishes judo from jujitsu.

As above are the main technical principle of traditional judo and I think it has to be said they work rather well as far as Japan goes considering its most recent gold medal haul in Athens and the many gold medals it has won over the last half-century of international competition. If we in Britain had the same sort of results with our national sport of football we would be feeling pretty good about it I am sure.

However what helps make these principles effective for the Japanese is the distinctive way they approach judo. In my experience the Japanese make quick progress to start with since *they do and believe exactly as they are told*. So a principled approach to judo may work especially if the student believes in 'principles.' Another factor is that by and large the Japanese take up a traditional art such as judo with a lot of commitment and the belief that the secrets of judo are only learned after many years of training. They are mostly in it for the long haul. For example there are the common Japanese expressions *shogai judo* (lifelong judo) and *judo ichidai* which means much the same thing. These phrases describe those who follow judo as a way of life which is to say those who believe that that which can be learned from the practise and study of judo can inform them and guide them in their everyday life.

But if you dealing with students who challenge the principles, as Westerners tend to do, you have to construct your own principles. So now we need to move into the nitty-gritty of how we teach judo to our less obedient students.

Part Two Modern Judo Principles

As I said at the beginning of this talk non-Japanese tend not to go in for 'principles' and probably their main source of wisdom comes from the sports scientists and the like who observe, analyse, test and measure and either confirm or reject old mat wisdom. As Nietzsche once said modern scientists are much better at descriptions but he doubted whether their explanations were any better. So to round off this talk I have tried to work out what principles have guided me in my judo training and teaching.

Get real

Possibly the first technical principle is to get close to the real thing. Whether you are working on a throw or teaching it to a beginner what you do has to be like the real thing done in contest by an expert. Generally speaking *like produces like* -. Do judo - get good at judo. Run fast - get faster. Push or pull heavy weights and you will get stronger. Train hard and you will be able to fight hard. Work on Uchi-mata and you will get good at Uchi-mata (but not on ashi-barai) and so on. This is fairly obvious but so is the opposite - play at judo and your judo will be like play. There is an old martial arts poem (*doka*) which runs: Make your training like a real fight and when the real fight comes along it will be like training.

However judo outside Japan can be done for different reasons other than the traditional Three Objectives so the first question the coach has to ask himself is what *type* of judo am I trying produce. If it is to produce 'recreational' judo in a recreational dojo then that will be at a particular pace and intensity and will effect uchi-komi, kata, and of course the randori. But if our model is competition then we have to reproduce uchikomi and randori etc in competition conditions. The pace and rhythm of that dictates everything. It will be harder, rougher and tighter. Similarly if our objective is shugyō or severe training for character enhancement the sessions will be long, hard and gruelling.

The most realistic time in judo is when you are competing or doing hard randori (mo-geiko). However apart from that you may spend quite a lot of time doing *uchi-komi*, *nage-komi*, *renraku-waza* and learning new moves etc. When you do this make sure that both yours and the opponent's movements and position are as you would expect to find in contest otherwise you will be wasting your time. For example people in *randori* rarely stand square on to each other so do not stand square on when doing *uchi-komi*. Vary the stance and positions. Also avoid training partners who kill your movements by moving their hips slightly as you turn in. Avoid uchikomi partners who crumble too easily in the direction of the throw as if they are trying to make it easier for you to do it. If you are incorporating movement into your uchikomi make sure you partner does it exactly the way you want it. If your partner cannot give you what you want find somebody else. With a bit of luck you might find a good training partner.

Economy of movement

Judo is physically hard so conserve your energy and give your opponent little in the way of movement or opportunities. Do not make any unnecessary movements. You only need to do as much as is sufficient and as quickly as possible. Somebody who economizes on his movement gives the impression of just walking into position. The throw is not too high, it is not too low, and it does not have a long trajectory. It looks comfortable, it is comfortable and because movement is not wasted, it is faster, less tiring and sudden. In this type of judo all the thrower's footwork and body positions are exactly in place and the opponent goes over like clockwork, rotating precisely round his centre of gravity or motion. Technically speaking a throw should work like clock-work. This is precision judo.

Go all the way

Some judoka have the noticeable habit of tailing off short of the mat. They push and pull, turn around, roll their opponent over some obstruction such as their leg then let the opponent *fall* to the mat. In this slack at the end of the throw there is often a chance for the opponent to twist out of the throw.

Most turn-around throws (eg. Ippon-seoinage) follow a general circle in its execution in which case think of your throw as one in which the bottom of the circle dips just below the mat. Let your effort continue to and go beyond that point. With a rear throw such as o-uchi-gari ensure the opponent goes all the way to the mat by ensuring that both gripping hands or knuckles aim at and hit the mat. This may make the throw quite heavy although a very precise thrower should be able to lean back against the weight of the opponent (somewhat like a hammer thrower) in order to lessen or

increase the impact of the throw. This type of throwing is particularly good for self-defence.

What is stopping me?

The player often has to teach himself. If a throw is not working well there must be a reason for it. The first question the trainee must ask himself is - What precisely is stopping me and then go through a check list (with the help of a video). The thrower needs to check his footwork, angle, height and depth of body entry, whether the arm-work feels comfortable and how the head functions in the throw. With some work he may identify the problem and be able to correct it but must know that even if he has the answer it will usually take a while to make it his.

The perfect throw

One way to evaluate your judo is to have an idea of a perfect throw in your head. The perfect throw should have certain qualities. It should have a fairly concise trajectory to the mat. The longer the opponent is in the air the more scope he has for twisting out of the throw. It should be sudden, so sudden in fact that the opponent did not see it coming. It should be comfortable for the thrower's body and not cause any injuries to him. (I have seen many a morote seoi man with injured back, shoulders, arms and wrists because they did not fold their arms properly when making their throw). If it hurts you to do it you are probably doing it wrong. Finally ask yourself can the power and impetus of the throw be increased if required. In both sumo and judo there are the seldom-voiced concepts of *shini-tai* (dead body) and *iki-tai* (live body). The dead body is like a rotten tree crashing down out of control. The live body is in control and can adapt. Maintaining *ikitai* is of course the important one.

Be impetuous

Opponents can be levered over (slowly) or they can be blasted over. If possible use your body's weight and its *impetus* to make a throw. 'Hit' them with your throw. Give it bite. For example I was taught *okuri-ashi* by a Japanese sensei whose most famous pupil is now a 10th Dan. He first advised taping up the toes and foot of the sweeping leg. "This will now protect and strengthen that foot because from now on you will have to learn to unleash your foot-sweep making it as sharp as you can – like hitting a golf ball," he said.

Regard each throw as a principle

Let us say that I can do *Tai-otoshi* well does that automatically enable me to do other throws such as *Uchimata* well? I do not think so. Each throw has some essential difference and it has to be worked on in order to master it. There are some throws that are pretty similar but mostly it seems that there is very little transference of skill from one throw to another. If there was we would see a much wider range of techniques in individual competitors. In some respects each throw of judo is a technical principle in its own right. *If you want to master a particular throw find somebody who can do it really well and who can explain why they do it in their particular way.* The key points they raise may not be obvious to you. Also get them to do it on you and see how it feels.

Monotony (tancho)

I have observed that all types of on-mat main and off-mat supplementary training tend to descend into a boring plod-plod. But top contests and contestants are rarely

‘monotonous’. The rhythm of a contest constantly changes and so training needs to mirror that. The monotonous fighter who cannot adapt to changes of pace gets defeated easily. Monotony in training or competition must be guarded against at all costs.

What is your pattern?

When I do or look at judo I unconsciously look for the competitors’ patterns of attack which enables me to make some predictions about a contest. With many competitors their range of techniques becomes obvious within a minute or two and more often than not their weapons are not very many – maybe two or three scoring moves at the most. This is not necessarily a criticism because there are a lot more things you need to be able to do in judo other than scoring moves. But be aware that patterns make you predictable and therefore beatable.

Think out of the box

One of the problems with judo is that the language of judo and its principles etc force you into a fairly tight conceptual box which you can end up using without too much thought about what you do. For that reason it is a good idea to challenge the ‘wisdom’ that you hear. For example I saw the Russians when they first entered judo competitions in the 1960s and I fought a number of them. They were obviously not taught according to the Japanese model yet they were very effective. So work out in your own head the value or otherwise of traditional judo concepts and without being confrontational keep an open mind on them. It also helps to do other similar combat arts such as wrestling.

Principles v. statistics

One alternative to working from ‘principles’ is to work from statistics. As a coach the first early question I asked myself is *what works in competition?* From the available statistics including Japanese ones that went back many years I listed the top scoring throws and spent quite a lot of time constantly going over them and their variations in the class. Going over meant not talking about them but doing them in *nage-komi* style. I wrote the top 10 scoring throws on the dojo blackboard (and rewrote them when they faded) and I also wrote up what individuals should be working on. Use of the blackboard to inform and direct is very important.

One danger about working from statistics is that they can lead into a sort of dumbing-down process. If for whatever reason one technique starts to score more than others then copying it will not necessarily give any advantage since others will be doing the same. Also techniques can work (for a while) because the rules are loosely applied or are not fully understood by the referees, for example leg grabs. One needs to keep the idea of a mechanically clean throw in the back of ones mind when coaching and strive to be an innovator not a copier.

Why?

Having identified the top scoring throws it helps to ask yourself *why* a throw is a top scorer. I came up with reasons such as Uchi-mata was the perfect throw against the deep crouch and that Seoinage and Osotogari were effective because you could use so much power in them. I also reasoned that since a turn-around throw took longer to do than a straight throw top speed was necessary for such throws. Also I noted that the lower a throw was on the scoring list the more it seemed to me to be dependent on

speed, timing and position than power ie Ko-uchigari. Tricks I defined as those one-off moves that may only work once against an opponent such as standing armlocks or chokes. Having asked - why? - you may then come to conclusions such as if you don't have speed, precision and nimbleness then do not bother doing such timing techniques – find something that fits your physical abilities. It was world champion Kashiwazaki who decided he was not fast enough in tachi-waza and so he created his own special slower standing and groundwork style.

Mat movement and useable movement

Next analyse the sort of movement you meet on the mat and form some idea of what techniques could answer that movement. For example an opponent circling to my left could best be dealt with by a spin-turn *uchimata* and for one going the opposite way - standard entry footwork *uchimata* because these entries decreased the possibility of *sukashi*.

Ask yourself what is useable movement. A lot of movement on the mat is not so useable because the opponent can very quickly stop moving. In effect cautious slow movement is not much different from no movement. Usable movement was movement which committed the opponent into a particular direction which he could not immediately stop. If you wanted useable movement you had to make them give it to you.

Footwork

As Budokwai master Koizumi once said good footwork is the secret of judo. So sort out in your own head all the many types of footwork especially with the throws where you have to turn around. It will soon become obvious that correct stepping and positioning of the feet is vital. Try making this test. Get some body to do right *Taiotoshi*, *uchikomi* style, and then instruct them to vary the position of the left foot (ie their degree of turn). In my experience most people only have one position for turning and cannot vary it very much. People I have known who worked specifically on foot movements were Abe Kenshiro and Neil Adams.

Footwork will lead on to a consideration of depth of body entry, height of entry and angle of entry in the turn-around throws and how that is affected by movement or lack of movement and so on. For example with the extremes of stance you cannot simply move straight at the opponent. You have to enter at a different angle especially if you want to achieve the powerful back-to-belly contact. If somebody is moving away you have to step deep and chase them and if they are moving on to you turn on the spot or step back and turn etc etc.

Groundwork Statistics

I had always done a lot of groundwork and taken quite a lot of wins on the floor but realized that you couldn't force *newaza* wins. The opportunities to enter the ground have to be taken skilfully from standing.

Since *Osaekomi* wins far out numbered strangles or arm-locks the general direction to my guys was go for the *osaekomi* wins in the first place and take whatever opportunities are offered for strangles or arm-locks next.

In the current situation where competitors are not allowed much time on the ground I would only spend about 20% of training time doing groundwork and I would never practise groundwork separately from tachiwaza. Obviously one needs to know what is happening on the ground so that one does not get caught out so familiarising oneself with most groundwork moves would be necessary. Major changes of the rules relating to groundwork would need instant study and adaptation.

The common thread was statistics, analysis of movement, asking why and coming up with possible answers which every coach should be doing. The coach has to know an awful lot about judo and he has to study it. It is not good enough to simply say so-and-so does it this way. Every piece of a coach's advice should have a reason.

We had a brilliant doctor in the association for many years called Ken Kingsbury. He was also the British Olympic team doctor. Before the Munich Olympics he worked out some special training methods for the team. I went into the dojo one morning to find the squad stretched out on the mat gasping like stranded whales. Ken was busy working with his team of nurses checking pulses etc. Suddenly he looked up and called out, "Quick Syd come here. Feel his wrist". I grabbed the wrist and found it strangely cold. "He's in clinical shock", said Ken like an excited schoolboy. "We worked them so hard the body drew the blood away from the skin to channel it to the inner central organs." That British team came back from the 1972 Munich Olympics with three medals. The reason I mention this story is because to start with the team were not quite sure what they were doing with the doc and put their heart and soul into doing what he said. As a result he took them to an incredibly high level of fitness. Thereafter as they became more familiar with his methods they put less and less into his training methods and the effect faded. The moral of this story is stay one step ahead of the students and constantly refresh your ideas.

At the end of each club judo session we finished with exercises (100 press-ups etc) regardless of what off-mat training programmes the team were on. This often finished the session with a bang which was good for spirit. Off the mat we regularly went running over Richmond park or pushed weights and of course there was the hectic social life of the Budokwai in Chelsea in the Sixties.

Perhaps the only thing we did not work on in those days was peaking although I think George Kerr and Brian Jacks did. We were aware of course how pro-boxers trained for a title fight but did not really apply that to the judo. *Randori* sessions were long because that was the common wisdom and we trained right up to the event.

Another thing we did not appreciate was the necessity of sufficient rest – we over-trained I think. If I could wind the clock back I would have done less randori but sharper randori, more days off to recover properly, concentrate on getting into top gear more quickly from a standing start, train to a peak from about eight weeks before an event and cross-train regularly in different styles of wrestling etc.

There is no doubt about it. Judo is very complex.

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