

## Go-no-Kata: The Kata of the Force by Gianna Giraldi

(Translated: Dr Llyr Jones, 13 April 2007)

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Go-no-Kata

The traditional means of instruction within Budo disciplines is via exercises called Kata. The exception to this practice is Aikido, since its founder did not want to create and define exercises for its study, even if some masters of the art (for example Tomiki Kenji) later created some Kata in order to facilitate learning. All styles of Jujitsu have as their foundation the study of Kata, and every school has in its own traditional formal exercises in order to allow its study and transmission. Judo, being a direct descendant from traditional Jujitsu, has maintained this custom, and in its conception, particular attention was given to the preservation of several practical Kata. In the history of Judo several kata have been created - some of which have remained without modification whilst others have been significantly changed over time. As an example, both the Nage-no- and the Ju-no- Kata were originally composed of ten techniques, to which were five others were successively added. The Koshiki-no-Kata is preserved in Judo as an exercise from Kito Ryu Jujitsu, while the Itsutsu-no-Kata is a direct descendant of the Gokui-no-Kata of Tenshin Shin Yo Ryu. The Kime-no-Kata has been created with contributions from several Jujitsu Masters, whilst the Kodokan Goshin Jutsu was conceived at the beginning of the 1950s. The Katame-no-Kata is also derived from Tenshin Shin Yo Ryu and conserves many of the aesthetic characteristics of this style, it also contains various elements original to Judo, since in old Jujitsu the Osae Waza were radically different. In recent years, several Kodokan commissions have several times worked to modify and improve the exercises. Some teachers have also created their own exercises in order to allow the study of certain elements of Judo. A case example of this is the Nage Ura-no-Kata due Mifune Kyuzo, where the theory of counterattacks is analyzed.

Many teachers have created their own versions of Goshin Jutsu - for example Mifune, Oda and Ito; however these forms, like the Nage-Ura-no-Kata, have not become official Kodokan kata. Beyond the seven Kata currently recognized by the Kodokan, other exercises were, historically, official forms of the institute, but over time their practice has been abandoned and currently they are seldom taught, and few are in a position to practice them. An example of this is the Sei Ryoku Zen Yo Kokumin Taiku-no-Kata. The first Kodokan Kata were generally devised around 1888, and from the birth of Judo, one Kata - the Go-no-Kata - derived from Jujitsu experience was practiced to directly learn the base theories of the Nage Waza and the correct use of force. This Kata has as its base Tenshin Shin Yo Ryu and Kito Ryu Jujitsu, drawn from the personal studies of Jigoro Kano. In the early days of Judo the techniques were taught directly (by Kano) without the use of a newly purposely created Kata. With an increasing number of students it became impossible for Kano to personally teach every new enrolled student, and therefore Kano thought to create an early first Kata that contained the basis of the correct learning of Judo.



Ochiai-sensei  
during a practical  
demonstration of  
the Go-no-Kata  
executing the  
techniques of  
Sukui Nage and  
Uki Goshi



Therefore the Go-no-Kata was an exercise with which the students could use to study the seven Nage Waza techniques that, in the early times of Judo, Kano thought were most suitable for being taught. Moreover some examples of Riai that could be learned thanks to this Kata would have improved their physical shape. Moreover, the Kata contained examples of Renraku Waza and Kaeshi Waza giving it a particular thoroughness. The Go-no-Kata was abandoned after the death of Jigoro Kano, but currently the Kodokan is thinking of

reinstating it as an official Kata and restoring its instruction - an appropriate commission is working for this purpose. Many writings that generally that speak about this exercise are found on the Internet, but since the authors do not know the Go-no-Kata, they are full of inaccuracies that increase the confusion around it. Contrary to much that is found written there are no Atemi in this Kata, in fact some confuse the Go-no-Kata with the Goho Ate, that is the practice of Atemi in five directions. It is not even an early Kata for the particular study of Kaeshi Waza as some have supposed - however the correlation of the kata with the Ju-no-Kata is correct.

The efficient study of these two Kata would have given the practitioners the key of how to use their own physical force in a manner consistent with the theory of yielding. In some older texts the Go-no-Kata is called Go Ju-no-Kata, emphasizing the correlation between the use of force and the study of gentleness that is in its exercises. In the Go-no-Kata ten techniques are executed that begin from a situation in which Tori and Uke use their own physical force against each other, until Tori, either yielding in appropriate way or controlling the force of Uke, succeeds to carry out the unbalancing technique. In summary the kata is an optimal exercise to help the participants acquire good body position, to learn balance in the action of lifting Uke, to embrace the basic strategy of the technique and, as suggested in its name, to improve their own physical strength.

This kata is thought to be the only Judo kata intended to assist in the development of actual physical force, but also to use correctly the force of Uke during the action. Tenth Dan Nagaoka recommended practicing this kata before every lesson like a warming up exercise. Nagaoka also wrote that the Go-no-Kata contributes to increased willpower, physical force, and ki. Unfortunately there is no writing of Jigoro Kano on this kata, but thanks to the books of Nagaoka and Samura it is possible to stick to the original shape of the exercise. In Japan, Ochiai-sensei is an expert in Go-no-Kata and he continues to practice this exercise while working to get the Kodokan to accept it as an official kata.



**One typical opposition of force  
in the Go-no-Kata**



**Party at the Hitachi Club in Tokyo: Ochiai-sensei is the third person from left, standing. Also standing are Tanami-sensei and Kobayashi-sensei. Seated from left are Okada-sensei, Yamamoto-sensei, Akiyama-sensei, Alessio Oltremari, Gianna Giraldi and Shiigi-sensei**

In the October 2000 in the Bunkyo-ku dojo in Tokyo, thanks to Shiigi Munenori-sensei, Alessio Oltremari has been admitted to study the Go-no-Kata under the guidance of Ochiai-sensei: a small group from Freebudo (Mark Poles, Maurizio Casu) are also carrying ahead with the study of this exercise. All the Judo Kata are theoretical and render the study of the Riai, that is the synergy between Tori and Uke possible that the resolution of the technique allows. The Nage-no-Kata, though it is required for promotion examinations as early as first Dan, involves a series of techniques with a more difficult and particularly complex Riai. This renders its instruction to the low grades difficult, disincentivising or delaying the study and practice of Kata. Since there are no falls in the Go-no-Kata (the throwing techniques are not completed, as in the Ju-no-Kata) it lends itself to being an optimal exercise to begin Kata practice and equally allows one to delay the study of the Nage-no-Kata, whilst the students become accustomed to formal exercises.

The techniques that comprise the Go-no-Kata are:

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|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Seoi Nage                  | (Shoulder Throw)                         |
| 2. Ushiro-goshi               | (Back Hip Throw)                         |
| 3. Sukuinage                  | (Scooping Throw)                         |
| 4. Hidari Seoi Nage           | (Left Shoulder Throw)                    |
| 5. Uki-goshi                  | (Floating Hip Throw)                     |
| 6. Hadaka-jime / Koshi-kudaki | (Naked Lock / Hip Crush)                 |
| 7. Tobi-goshi / Uki-goshi     | (Jumping Hip Throw / Floating Hip Throw) |
| 8. Osoto-otoshi               | (Large Outer Drop)                       |
| 9. Ushiro-goshi               | (Back Hip Throw)                         |
| 10. Kata-guruma               | (Shoulder Wheel)                         |

#### **Note**

The Italian original of this article can be found on the freeBudoWebsite as follows:

<http://www.freebudo.com/articoli/judo%20tradizionale/kata/1%20go%20no%20kata/1%20go%20no%20kata.htm>

Effort has been made to keep the translation as faithful as possible to the Italian original, and no corrections of any factual errors have been made. Caveat lector, there are some.