



UNITED STATES JUDO ASSOCIATION

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ITSUTSU NO KATA

(Forms of Five)

GUIDELINES HISTORY & GENERAL INFORMATION

(Forms of Five)

Kano Jigoro, the founder of judo, developed several kata based on the principles of maximum efficiency with minimum effort, mutual benefit and welfare, and the concepts of giving way and mushin. Some kata were designed to preserve ancient concepts and techniques, while others were developed for teaching specific judo techniques and principles. Regardless of why a kata was developed, it was carefully conceived.

In his twenties Kano began to develop Itsutsu no Kata -- the Forms of Five. Many consider this kata, like Schubert's great "unfinished" symphony, to be incomplete, especially when considering Kano's age when he started it. Surely no one so young could conceive and develop a kata that would explain that the microcosmic forces of human combat are essentially the same as the macrocosmic forces of the universe. However, close examination may reveal that the kata is complete while its discussion is incomplete.

To understand how this conclusion may be reached, first consider oriental philosophy, which has played a major role in shaping the martial arts. The philosophy is a composition of four philosophical doctrines that are very much intertwined. Two of the doctrines -- Confucianism and Taoism -- come from China; a third -- Buddhism -- developed in India, while the fourth -- Shintoism -- developed in Japan. Without these philosophies, martial arts would not exist as a way of living.

Central to these philosophies is the concept of positive and negative (Yin and Yang, or In and Yo) forces that control every aspect of living. This concept is further supported by the concept of the five elements: fire, water, wood, metal, and earth (Chinese) or fire, water, wind, earth and void (Japanese). The five elements are thought of as abstract forces and symbols rather than as real substances. For example water's nature is to flow downward and around, yet it has the strength to destroy and at the same time nurture. Fire provides heat that rises fast and has destructive power. Wind moves in cyclic motion and will bend and twist trees. Void is nothingness and everything at once. And earth provides ground from which all things grow. The elements are so intertwined they build or destroy each other. Understanding this

relationship of the elements is complicated by the role the elements play in such areas as seasons of the year, colors, taste, and numbers.

In addition to oriental philosophy the samurai ethical traditions of bushido or "the way of the warrior" were heavily influenced by Zen philosophy. Bushido focuses on the martial artist's commitment to mental and spiritual development through martial arts training. Its goal is for the martial artist to do something of good or value for the community and to help others. This concept also is present in almost all philosophies and major religions. The Bushido Code of Honor is simple yet complex. Its simplicity is that the warrior can easily understand each code and yet through in-depth study, concentration, or meditation on the concept, complexity arises, and nothing is as it may seem. Consequently, because concern is with the totality and not with the parts of whatever is studied, kata exists.

Kano was exposed to these concepts from birth. As he studied various martial arts, he was exposed to the teachings of Sun Tzu and Miyamoto Musashi. The teachings of these two individuals form the basis for most fighting strategies throughout the world. Kano did not limit his study to these strategists. Spencer and Huxley, who believed that all answers came from studying science, and Mill and Spencer, members of the Victorian Utilitarian movement, also influenced him.

As a result of Kano's background, education, and studies into the foundations of martial arts, oriental philosophy, religion, and science, it can easily be argued that this "unfinished" kata is complete in form and technique. For Kano, Itsutsu no Kata represented the heart of judo. It is a synthesis of body movement and a communion of the five basic principles of earth, wind, water, fire, and void that permeate all oriental martial arts.

(Philip Rasmussen provided the preceding background information.)

Dr. Kano Jigoro studied Tenshin Shinyo ryu Jujitsu under Master Fukuda Hachinosuke. Master Fukuda later became the grandfather of Fukuda Keiko Sensei, at 9th dan the judo world's highest-ranked woman. Fukuda Hachinosuke Sensei was himself a student of Iso Masatomo, master of the Tenshin Shinyo ryu Jujitsu School. Fukuda Hachinosuke Sensei died at the age of 52, at which time Kano Sensei, though only 20 years old, succeeded Fukuda Sensei as the Master of the dojo and received the secrets of the Fukuda Dojo. Not content with his present knowledge of the Tenshin Shinyo ryu Jujitsu, Kano Sensei sought out Iso Masatomo and was accepted as a student of his dojo to continue his study of the Tenshin Shinyo ryu Jujitsu style. The Tenshin Shinyo ryu Jujitsu version of Itsutsu no Kata was taught to Kano Sensei personally by the Master of the dojo. The names of the kata techniques in the Tenshin Shinyo ryu Jujitsu style were:

1. Oshikaeshi (Continuous Pushing)
2. Eige (Draw Drop)
3. Tomowakare (Separation)
4. Roin (Pulling Tide)
5. Settsuka no wakare (Instant Separation)

Kano Sensei, using the Tenshin Shinyo ryu Jujitsu Kata as a guideline, attempted to show the movements of the universe through judo. He revised the original kata and included his version of Itsutsu no Kata as part of Kodokan Kata in 1887.

The forms of Itsutsu no Kata compare to the movements of water. Due to its symbolic nature this kata is said to be one of the most difficult to perform.

Ippon me, the first form, demonstrates the principles of concentration of energy and of direct action, showing that rationalized, continuous attack will result in the defeat of an opponent, even one more powerful, and symbolizes the effect of flowing water.

Nihon me, the second form, demonstrates the principles of reaction and of non-resistance, using the energy of an opponent's attack to defeat him. This move symbolizes the effect of an angry wave.

Sanbon me, the third form, demonstrates the principle of the circle or whirlwind, the uncontrollable nature of spiraling centrifugal force wherein the inner circle controls the outer circle. This move symbolizes the effect of a whirlpool.

Yonhon me, the fourth form, demonstrates the alternating flux and reflux of the pendulum or the power of the ocean's tide, whereby the tide will draw everything on the shore into the ocean, no matter how large. This move symbolizes the suction effect of a large wave.

Gohon me, the fifth form, demonstrates the principle of the void or of inertia, that is, when unlimited energies collide, one yields to avoid destroying both. This move symbolizes the effect of a large wave washing over someone

Opening: With Tori on the right side and Uke on the left, as seen from the Kamiza (place of honor), both begin with the following simultaneous movements: At a point outside the mat area danger zone, Uke and Tori perform ritsurei (standing bow) in a closed posture (heels together, toes apart) to the mat area. Starting with the left foot, then the right, they walk using ayumi ashi (normal walking) to the center of the mat area and stop 18 feet apart. Uke and Tori perform ritsurei toward the Kamiza in a closed posture. Uke and Tori turn toward each other and perform ritsurei in a closed posture. Each takes one step forward, starting with the left foot and then the right, and assumes shizen hontai (normal open posture), putting them 12 feet apart. After a brief pause, Uke, starting with the left foot, then the right, walks using ayumi ashi and stations himself at the center of the mat and assumes shizen hontai (normal open posture). Tori starting with the left foot, then the right, walks at a slight left angle, raising his right palm as he moves, and stations himself in a position to the left of Uke, positioning his right foot to the right side of Uke's right foot. Tori places his raised right palm lightly on Uke's chest.

1. Ippon me Form One

- Tori, starting with the little finger side of his right hand and alternately the thumb side of his right hand, as if symbolizing the flow of a moving stream, pushes Uke backward.
- Uke is forced to take small back steps on each alternate push, starting with his left foot.

