



ROPPO-NO-KUZUSHI LESSON

Kano Jigoro



These images of Mr Kano can be fully understood only when it is understood the strategy of roppo-no-kuzushi.

Through this point Judo-Kodokan could impose itself on the Jiu-Jutsu. Naturally Mr Kano left some trace of this in his writings. We wonder why the Kodokan of the post-war period has never spoken about this.

From the text: *Judo and life* , autobiography of Kano Jigoro - Drawings from *Judo-kyohon* by Kano Jigoro.

Editor's notes are in cursive.

An episode regarding Randori

Up to 1860 the jiu-jitsu training was only through kata, without randori

Randori's foundations

I would like to speak about the Kodokan. When I build up my first dojo, I was no more following the master of Tenshin-shin'yo-ryu, but Mr Iikubo of Kito-ryu. With him I studied up to the 18 th or 19 th year of the Miji era (1886 – '87), when I was already



teaching to the beginners. At the start up of the dojo the master was 50 years old, though he was so strong that for me he was unbeatable in randori.

The building of the dojo. The first training sessions at the Eisho's temple were run in the room created by moving aside the sliding walls between the leaving room and the sleeping room of Mr Kano. The vibrations caused by the break-falls techniques were disturbing the near temple's room. This was raising the complaints of Asashi Shumpo, the monk and landlord of the premises. Kano , Yamashita and other jujutsuka build up a new structure of 6 x 4 m in the park. Here Mr Iikubo taught to the advanced pupil and Mr Kano to the beginners.

I was teaching to my pupils and in the same time learning randori and kata from the master. I would like to describe how I had a breakthrough in randori.

1882 is the year of the foundation of Kodokan, where Mr Iikubo was teaching Kito-ryu having Mr Kano as an assistant. Judo was configured in 1886 as a consequence of the events we are going to tell.

It should happen in the 18 th year of Meiji's era (1886). Once I was practicing randori with the master and I succeeded in projecting him. Beside few exceptions, he was always winning me. That day he was not able to do it anymore while I was succeeding very well. Coming from Kito-ryu, the master was excellent in nage, therefore he was always able to project me. But that it was a very particular day. The master was wondered and thoughtful. This was the result of my research on breaking the position.

We here translate “Kuzushi” with “breaking the position” as this a notion much more complex than the simple “unbalance” to which the modern Kodokan refers.

Before I did try to unbalance him...

“sen” principle which consists in taking the initiative and is included in what Mr Kano called “saki-no-saki”, be ahead of a step

...or I was trying to adapt myself at the action of the partner.



“omote” principle which takes the opportunity given from the other, what Mr Kano includes in “ato-no-saki”, be delayed of a step.

That time I was only concentrating in breaking his position before attacking with a waza and I was paying close attention to this.

Then I taught to the Kodokan the breaking of positions *roppo* and *happo* , both born from this research.

My study was concentrating on this: pulling or pushing one can surely obtain a break of position.

If somebody stays still in upright position, even if physically strong, when pushed from the front has to go backward and when pulled has to go inward, i.e. the person is unbalanced.

If the partner wants to be inactive, one may obtain an unbalance.

But if a strong person counter-acts when pushed from the front, he will be no more unbalanced backward; he will surely be unbalanced inward if we suddenly pull him.

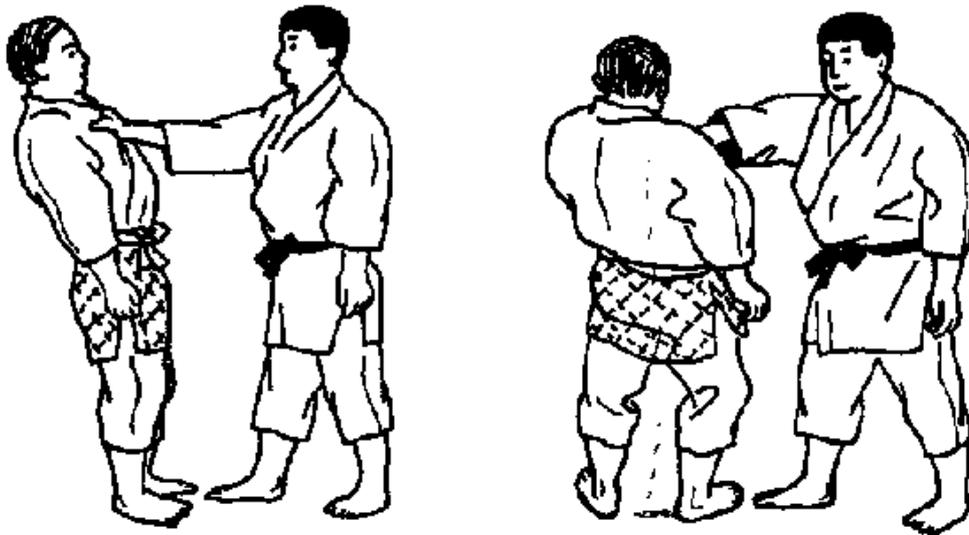
If the partner counteract, it will be enough to invert the strength of 180° to break his position.



Theory of nage-waza: push and counter-push in 180° direction

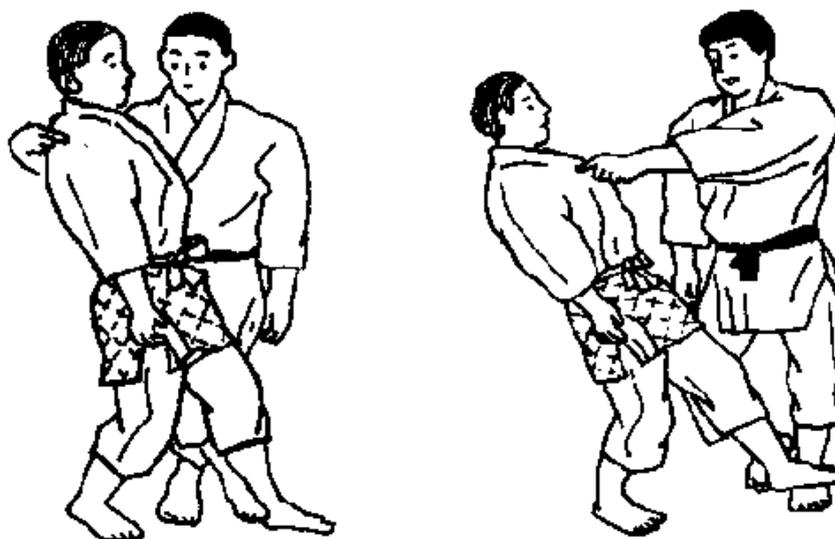


If the partner moves a leg to defend himself, to react to mi push, the attack has to be in 90° direction



Theory of nage-waza: push and new push in 90° direction

If the partner avoids the push moving in a natural position, the attack has to be carried matching his movement or creating an obstacle.



Theory of nage-waza: push and match his movement



Using the theory of pulling and pushing one may break the stability of the partner and let him loose control on the position.

Waza works much better if applied right at the moment of the partner's instability.

Before I was speaking about roppo-no-kuzushi, which is: inward, backward, inward-diagonal (right and left), backward-diagonal (right and left) for a total of 6 directions. Happo-no-kuzushi adds two other directions: to the right and to the left. The break of the position depends from the reaction of the partner and the attack has to be directed consequently.

Naturally, the directions are countless but I classify them in 6 or 8.

I have been practicing this strategy with my younger pupils and some of them were getting very well with it. In that day I could finally practice it with the master, taking advantage of his reactions.

Receiving the authority of the School.

I spoke with the master about this strategy of applying the technique after breaking the position and matching the reaction. I answered that I was in the right way and that he has nothing more to teach me. He invited me to keep on the research and teaching to the young pupils. From that moment he stopped of doing randori with me.

I still received some teaching on the kata and many other things from him.

Soon after this episode the master gave me the diploma of Kito-ryu, the densho and all the hallows belonging to the school. I received in this way the authority of the ryu (school).

Ancient stories are telling of teachings received by saints in the forest or abilities donated by the devil just to justify a mysterious ability.

I don't want to deny this stories. There is no doubt though about the big difference before and after the apprehension of the general theory.

Even other professionals of Jiu-jitsu confirm that in comparison with traditional Jiu-jitsu's ryu (schools), the Kodokan dojo uses much better legs and haunch.

This shows how good we have understood the importance of breaking the position of the partner. Any waza can work when this strategy is properly used.

Nage-no-kata. Mr Kano wanted to represent this strategy in the Form of the Throws. Four hon show the initiative of tori: uchi-mata, tomoe-nage,



sumi-gaeshi e uki-waza. Those are the sen strategy where tori breaks the position of uke obtaining a reaction.

In uchi-mata and sumi-gaeshi tori uses the defensive position that is uke takes as a reaction; in the first case, when uke is about to reach it; in the second case, attacking his stability. In both cases, tori applies his technique unbalancing in 90° from the strength which has provoked the reaction.

In tomoe-nage, when tori pushes, obtains a reaction based on strength and can therefore projecting in a direction of 180° from his initial push.

In uki-waza, tori takes the foot of uke away while this is still moving.