

Jodobu News and Update for New Year 2009

Issue 4

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Other Member/Grading Officer – Harry Jones
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Jodo High Grade – Chris Mansfield
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Dear members

A Happy New Year to you all. It was my original intention to publish an end of year update but unfortunately Santa went on strike and his little elves told me to get stuffed and do my own Xmas shopping. 2008 was a seriously active year with the introduction of various functions within the BKA and the Jodobu...

- The trial of an Examiner Mentoring Programme aimed at providing coaching to people who may one day sit on a grading panel.
- Increments to the laido and Jodo coaching structure including new Level 1 course tutors and ongoing developments.
- An unusually positive and progressive AGM which saw the formulation of a Constitution Working Group.
- The re-combining of the BKA website into the one site for all three arts (my thanks to Paul Gray and the various webmasters who have helped make this happen).

Several other things have been looked into and may well start in this New Year so keep your eyes peeled.

In this update there follows important information about gradings and probably a welcome departure from yours truly being the sole author of the articles. I will let you discover these for yourself and I look forward to seeing you all in the coming year.

Andy

High Grade Article by Chris Mansfield

In this issue I have asked the Jodo High Grade, Chris Mansfield, permission to use an article he had originally written for his own students. I originally found the article extremely insightful as it aimed to answer many of the questions around "should one do taikai?"

Given the position of taikai and the various effects it has on those who practice Jodo (and laido of course) I thought it would be very useful for others to read it and draw their own conclusions.

The article will be divided into two or three sections with the subsequent sections being published in the forthcoming Jodo Newsletters.

My thanks to Chris for his kind permission to reprint...

Competition – A Personal Perspective (Part 1)

(Does it have a place within the study of Budo?)

By Chris Mansfield

This paper has been written for the purpose of exploring the historical background and modern day thinking approach to the role of competition in martial arts (Budo) and specifically Japanese sword and stick related arts. It will discuss how the natural development from old to new occurred and developed and how current practitioners may see themselves in light of the origins of Bujutsu. The writer has also added his own personal experience of competitions during an eleven year training period in Japan. Finally it is the intention of this paper to encourage an understanding and appreciation of competition which in turn is hoped will lead to a deepening awareness of the individual's chosen martial art.

Let us begin with a brief description of what generally may be described as the basic difference between Budo and Bujutsu. The following should help clarify the matter;

Bujutsu (military arts) arose out of a necessity to survive in combat and by its very nature emphasized fighting techniques which would bring about an effective result.

Budo on the other hand strove to develop form as a means for gaining an understanding of the self, of being and of nature in the pursuit of gaining self perfection.

Fundamentally the two are diametrically opposed and can only be understood if viewed in terms of the conditions of the prevailing environment in which they came about. Bujutsu's rise was completely associated with times in which social strife, unrest and war were commonplace. However, when peace came about the human spirit which is always striving to satisfy itself needed to substitute what had been taken away with something equally fitting the new times. Therefore when we look at Japanese history the natural path of Bujutsu to Budo is clearly marked by the changing times.

One unique example of this can be found in the ways of the Japanese people and their lives and how the Samurai class reacted to the prohibition of wearing swords in public, a privilege which had long been an iconic open symbol of their power within Japanese society. This tremendous upheaval in an established hierarchical class system arguably could have been the cause for the birth of Budo which was propelled forward into modern times where it began again to change and reinvent itself as it was subjected to the changing needs of the people and their changing institutions and fashions.



Although Budo amongst sports related activities has generally had a minority following of practitioners (exceptions being Judo and Karate) outside of Japan, the influence of sport has taken some time to fully reach its core. Even to this day Kendo (way of the sword) which has a modest number of practitioners around the world in Japanese related martial arts has not yet

been integrated into the Olympics which are generally deemed the pinnacle event for all sporting activities. In the case of lesser known or more traditional Japanese weapons arts, these barely manage to raise their profiles, possibly preferring to remain outside the mainstream.

Yet competition is generally regarded as a fundamental element of sport and in many respects its main driving force. Modern day Budo does incorporate the aspect of competition within its curriculum and as such its existence may be a curiosity in opposition to the objectiveness of its arts. Let us now ask why this is so when traditionally within the field of martial arts there is a very short history of sport philosophy and competition.

The answer may be a little surprising. All manifestations of human activity require a degree of quantification; that is to say there must be some proof in the action of doing. For example, when both the action and the activity occur; a human value can be placed on both thereby realizing a level of objectivity. This is a standard way of human beings measuring value in what they do.

From the viewpoint of Bujutsu the value and measure of the objectivity arose from the practicality of surviving a life threatening situation.

From the perspective of the value and measure of Budo we can demonstrate that by placing an individual in a situation where normal practice conditions have been altered and subjecting them to proving what they have learnt and whether this can actually stand the test, i.e. the stress and pressures of performing in a competition, can be measured the value of the objectivity.

The rigours of the dojo practice environment provide the student with a limited exposure to 'learning stress' which in itself fulfils the requirement of understanding what they are learning. On the other hand the 'learning stress' of the environment of a competition opens up avenues which were unseen before. When I participated in competition in Japan I underwent a long period of not really understanding why I could not achieve a positive result, until it occurred to me what was I trying to prove? Was I just taking part to show willing? Did I really want to win? What could I gain from losing? Why was all this necessary? Plus a host of other questions. I was competent in executing my technique and had fine form, but still lost, there was obviously something missing. Upon asking my teacher his experiences I was informed competition and the pressures of it bring about a change in the individual to the extent that what they are doing and experiencing can be even more refined and adjusted thereby pushing both their ability and understanding to a fuller limit.

He also advised that the individual student's own experiences in competition could be used to deepen their understanding of Budo in both a positive and reflective way and that in turn could be considered a necessary part of their study, in furthering their overall understanding.

What then can be considered the pre-requisites or criteria for enabling this to happen? The most significant are;

- a) a will to succeed (e.g. positive thinking)
- b) striving to improve and deepen your understanding each time you challenge yourself
- c) never expect to win (or lose)
- d) never underestimate yours or your opponents potential
- e) observe the changing circumstances
- f) create effective action by eliminating the superfluous

I can say without doubt that I experienced all of this first hand in both the positive and negative forms and saw others also undergo the same trials. So why was all this necessary for my greater learning and understanding and how could it serve to enhance my study?

To answer this question I have taken a somewhat opposing view of competition by a traditionalist in martial arts the late Donn Draeger Sensei who wrote extensively upon the subject of Bujutsu and Budo in both their major and minor forms.

In his book *Modern Bujutsu & Budo* (Vol 3 - epilogue) Donn Draeger deplored the reality that had become commonplace in modern times regarding the short term or immediate transient benefits (e.g. popularity, fame, financial gain and status, - all traits that are to be found in these times) of sport in Budo mainly arising from the influence of western affluence and which has distorted the more traditional values from which the origins of classical Budo & Bujutsu were derived. In his opinion he argued that traditional (Budo) arts should be kept alive for the sole purpose of reflecting the best in human qualities and the ascetic aims to which the arts aspired.

Yet elsewhere (page 111) in the same book we find comments from a retired president of the International Kendo Federation in which he says; "the purpose of competition is the propagation of the spirit of Budo".

"That is to say any martial art (in this case Kendo) can only endorse sporting activity to the extent that it is a vehicle for conveying the intrinsic spirit of that art. Furthermore; that art (Kendo) "must not be regarded as pure sport. To do so is to dismiss and show disrespect for its tradition which is the very foundation of the discipline on which the art is based". So it appears fairly clear that the Eastern oriental mind viewed its cultural arts which had become sport oriented with a strong degree of spirituality.

To be continued

Calendar 2009

Now that we have some influence over the BKA website and a small team of webmasters who have shown very fast response to requests I won't publish such a formalised calendar as it tends to go out of date as soon as you have received it. Instead I will let you know some key dates and ask that you keep an eye on the BKA website for new events. I will of course email out any new events which go into planning.

- 25th – 26th April: BKA Jodo Spring Seminar and Grading (up to 3rd dan). Venue – John Henry Newman Leisure Centre, Stevenage
- 30th May: BKA AGM
- 21st June: Regional Jodo Coaching Session (Koryu - Introduction and Development) – Jerwood Space, London
- 11th – 12th July: BKA Iaido and Jodo Nationals. Venue – Sussex University

While the dates have not been set yet, you can expect to see this year:

- More Level 1 Coaching courses with a hope that they will be hosted by the Regional Tutors.
- The production and launch of the new Level 2 Coaching course.
- Two koryu Jodo sessions to be held in the spring and the autumn. These may be one day sessions or a weekend.
- The continuation of the Jodo high grade sessions.

Jodo Materials Review




Quite frequently at Jodo events you get to see an impressive variety of jo and bokuto and it is also common to be asked about where to get the best quality weapons from. Far from wishing to direct our members to particular suppliers I thought it would be useful to have a review of the historical roots and present provision of the weapons we use for practice.

Naturally we will look at the jo first. The ZNKR Seitei Jodo manual specifies the following dimensions for the jo:

Length: 128cm
Diameter: 2.4cm

The book also specifies these dimensions in the traditional Japanese measuring system based on the shaku-sun-bu method.

This method comprises the following units:

	1 Shaku = 30.3cm or 11.9 inches
	Equals
	10 Sun (1 Sun = 3cm or 1.2 inches)
	Equals
	100 Bu (1 Bu = .3cm or 0.1 inches)

The length of 4 shaku, 2 sun, 1 bu sounds quite prescriptive and while some Jodo training groups vary the length of their jo depending on the height of the practitioner, the 4-2-1 length traces its routes back to a cultural reference. The Japanese pronunciation of 4-2-1 is “shi-ni-ichi” which in itself sounds merely like a string of numbers. Lopping off the critical 1 bu at the end creates the expression “shi-ni” which is Japanese for dying. Connotations with death are avoided in Japanese conversation and culture for obvious reasons linked to religion and superstition just as the number 13 is avoided in the west and thus the extra 0.3cm is considered to be a vital part of the length (for information, lopping off the 2 sun would also create the length “shi” which is Japanese for death and equally unsuitable as a length). I remember one of my former dojo colleagues in Japan who joked about sanding off one bu to make his Jodo more deadly – my teacher at the time raised an eyebrow in obvious nonplus.

The thickness of the jo has a considerable effect on the weight and handling of the jo. Many stockists advertise that their jo are 2.4cm in thickness but in the mind that “all men are equal but some are more equal than others” certainly there seems to be some variation on what 2.4cm plus or minus a few wood molecules actually is.

This isn't to say that any particular weight and handling is any better or worse than any other. In my own experience, occasional training with a heavier jo helps to improve the reliance on the weight of the jo to generate a technique's own natural momentum and power. The inertia that a heavy jo possesses can further help reduction on reliance of physical strength when performing catching and “blocking” techniques. A hikiotoshi against a chudan tachi using nothing more than the feeling of a telegraph pole falling onto a twig facilitates a good belief in the raw potential of the technique!

Using a lightweight jo helps to improve the awareness of the jo's movement in space as it provides a much sharper feedback of it's resistance against the tachi.

I believe that somewhere between the two extremes of light and heavy there is an ideal weight and it seems to be the one found in nice new jo's which haven't been loaded with hours of hand sweat!

The surface finish of the jo also has a significant effect on technique. Some jo's from stockists come varnished or polished and I would suggest that this is sanded off as a smooth but dry surface which absorbs the moisture from the hands is far easier to reliably adjust the hand position on than one that squeaks when you change grip. Furthermore varnishing may well conceal faults in the jo which could result in a dangerous breakage. Some parties do recommend applying oil to the jo to prevent it from warping although I have found that if the jo is of good quality and stored vertically it tends not to bend.

The material is specified as white oak and for a good reason. White oak has excellent properties of strength and flexibility. Red oak tends to be slightly more brittle and tends to splinter. The courser grain of red oak also seems to invite woodworm and you will probably find on examination of red oak jo's some tiny circular holes in the grain – these are woodworm burrows and will significantly weaken the jo. In thirteen years of practice I have seen several red oak weapons break but I have only seen one white oak weapon break...

...but then there still seems to be differences in advertised 2.4cm white oak jo. The three suppliers I have had most recent experience with are Nine Circles, Budogu and Japan Promotions. This article isn't meant to provide a flawless review of each type of jo but I would like to share my opinions.

Firstly the Nine Circles ones, while advertised at 2.4cm, I suspect that they are somewhat thicker than say 2.41cm and you can feel it in the bulk of the weapon. I think these are probably better for aikijo and karate applications where one might need to actually carry the weight of a person on one during a throw or similar.

The Budogu ones are a wee bit thinner but still feel a little heavy and again come in at about 2.43cm. The Japan Promotions jo are clearly from Japan and are slightly under 2.4cm. The weight and the grain however feel ideal for Jodo practice. The grain is good for absorbing sweat from the hands and so maintains a fairly constant friction during practice. The image below shows the contrasting shininess of the Budogu jo on the right which becomes sticky quite quickly.



(In both frames - Left: Japan Promotions Right: Budogu)

In conclusion I feel it is worth shopping around a bit to find lighter weight jo's for long-term use while not losing one's versatility by using other peoples jo's when appropriate. For me I feel the Japan Promotions jo's (contact Keith Rose for supply) are the current choice of purchase for the right amount of feedback from the weight and the good texture of the grain.

Gohon No Midare Seminar

By Harry Jones

The 14th December saw the Gohon No Midare 1-day seminar hosted by the lovely people at Jimukan dojo Northampton. The seminar was instructed by Jock Hopson Sensei and Chris Mansfield Sensei. Gohon No Midare comprises five forms created by Shimizu Sensei and are composed from existing SMR Koryu kata. The purpose of these kata are to allow the practitioner to relinquish some technical control of the form and focus on flow and the connection point between various sections of the form - and we found out they also provide an energetic workout! The seminar was attended by a wide range of grades from Mudan through our most senior ranks and everyone managed to work through all of the kata.

<u>Gohon no midare - Five forms of chaos</u>	
Tachi otoshi no midare	Chaos of sword drop
Sakan no midare	Chaos of left thrust
Kengome no midare	Chaos of invading space
Kasumi no midare	Chaos of mist
Shamen no midare	Chaos of the slope

I would like to express my thanks to Jim Jones and his dojo for stepping in at short notice to provide not only an excellent dojo space but also making every body feel welcome with tea and Alain's most appreciated hotties.

As a footnote please be aware that a number of squad training sessions this year may be held at Northampton but at a different venue to this one.

European Championships Report

This wouldn't be a complete report without a EC report but I have asked several members of the squad to contribute to this and to these people I would like to express my gratitude...

Hector Marchetti, Kenyukan Suffolk

I began attending open national squad training following the encouragement of my Sensei, something which I was aware that even if I was not selected, would improve my lai substantially.

Upon seeing the amount of people trying for one of two Shodan spots I was sceptical to whether I would earn a place or not, so when I was told I would be representing the United Kingdom in the European Championships I could only feel immense pride and honour.

During the course of a few rounds of Swiss honey beer on our first night we had begun to spend some social time as a team. We all got on confidently well with one another which is impressive as some of us (or was it just me?) did not know everyone's name at the start of the day! This developing team spirit continued all throughout the days we were out there, which says something very strong about every squad member's respect to one another and their good humour.

Because of this team spirit we were able to take advantage of what Magglingen and Biel had to offer, including plenty of snow fights and even building a snowman sitting in Seiza outside the dojo! As a serious, dedicated and committed team, however, we conformed and helped each other with our lai, by practicing or discussing certain aspects together or even simple but effective things such as inspiring confidence in one another.

It was a fantastic experience made possible by the honour of representing the United Kingdom in international competition and by an amazing group of squad members.

David Roe, Kashiwa Ramsgate

I decided that this was going to be my last European Championships so was determined that it was going to be a really good one. On arrival at the airport we met up with some more team members and proceeded to find the bus. There was a man walking around with a card saying FKA so I ignored him because we belong to the BKA. After searching for a long time for the minibus I approached the man and in my pigeon English asked him if he was anything to do with the BKA. We eventually sorted out the languages problem and realised that he was in fact waiting for us. On arrival at the fabulous!!!!!! accommodation I and the other Dave were told we were sharing with two other people. On walking into the room we discovered they were a married couple!!! After much laughing we settled down for the night!!!!!! The competition itself was a very high standard. The Swiss made us feel very welcome. It was a wonderful sports centre with lots of lovely snow all around. Lots of snowball fights were had by all. The micro brewery that was attached to the wonderful hotel!!!! was very enjoyable.

The Jodo Seminar and Taikai was something of a different event to before as the ZNKR decided to send three sensei for the laido event and a different three sensei for the Jodo event thus we were no longer overseen by our friend, Ishido Sensei. This time we were skilfully managed by

- TOMINAGA Shozo, Jodo Hanshi 8-Dan, Shimpanchô & Chief of the Jury
- FURUKAWA Shunya, Jodo Kyoshi 8-Dan, Shimpanshunin & Jury member
- YANO Kiyonori, Jodo Kyoshi 8-Dan, Shimpanshunin & Jury member



(L-F) Yano Sensei, Tominaga Sensei, Furukawa Sensei
(Photo courtesy Emanuele Covino, Italy)



The GB Jodo Squad members gird their loins (which I think is posh for putting on their trousers)
 (L-R) Scott Halls, Oliver Jarvis, Daniel Silk, Alex Wengraf-Hewitt, Lucy Earley, Aurelien Nacroux

Representing Great Britain this year in the Jodo squad were:

Mudan

Scott Halls
 Alex Wengraf-Hewitt

Yondan

Billy Smart
 Hugh Darby

Shodan

David Roe
 Oliver Jarvis

Godan

Harry Jones
 Andy Watson

Nidan

Daniel Silk
 Lucy Earley

Team

Lucy Earley
 Aurelien Nacroux
 Andy Watson

Sandan

Dave Fanning
 Aurelien Nacroux

Squad Manager

Alan Nash
 Greg Drewe (relief)

As usual the first day was spent with a Seitei seminar and a referees seminar in the afternoon. A briefing on the mechanics of the 3-man team taikai also took place and this didn't seem to be a problem to most teams during the event.

From the UK our judges included:

- Jock Hopson
- Chris Mansfield
- Chris Buxton

The taikai was very strong there being many players there who had competed time and again and international coaching as well as the increase in open taikai was creating a more level playing field.

Results – JODO (GB shown in **Blue**)

Position	Mudan	Shodan	Nidan	Sandan
1 st Gold	Dariusz Leszczynski PL	B Jonathan Vandenbussche	S Sida Yin	CH B. Lehmann
2 nd Silver	Alexander Egunov RUS	PL Joanna Dyjas	PL Lukasz Machura	CH K. Niklaus
3 rd Bronze	PL Grzegorz Poprawski I Claudio Carlucci	FN Eija Snickeri B Liviu Vlad	F Jean-Batiste Durand D Felix Klein	I Gaetano Dellisanti I Emanuele Covino
Fighting Spirit	RUS Sergey Gorbanev	PL Piotr Urbanek	B Arnaud Lammens	D Robert Völkman

Position	Yondan	Godan	Team
1 st Gold	D Sandra Essig	NL Hans Pegtel	Switzerland
2 nd Silver	GB H. Darby	D Bernhard Merkel	Great Britain
3 rd Bronze	A Jennifer Michou D Henry Schubert	GB Andy Watson F Daniel Champeimont	Italy Germany
Fighting Spirit	I Antonio Ghigini		PL Lukasz Machura



Hugh Darby and Billy Smart in the 4th dan division final.



The GB 3-man team (L-R) Lucy Earley, Andy Watson, Daniel Silk (R), Aurelien Nacrour

At the end of the taikai, an embu was performed by the main three Japanese Sensei of seitei and quite a lot of koryu. Tominaga Sensei showed what it means to be a hanshi with the demonstration of Ichirei from Omote, his head only missing the tachi's cut by a few mere centimetres when doing tai hazushi uchi. There were several gasps from the audience.

While I found the overall experience to be very enjoyable, there were times during the Jodo taikai where I found myself ready to scream. This may initially sound like sour grapes after not winning the taikai (how very dare they!) but I was actually very pleased with the UK teams performance. What made me want to tear my hair out was the growing migration towards doing pretty Jodo. I witnessed a few of the teams doing very well with an absolutely beautifully choreographed and executed demonstration and then winning against other teams who were really fighting each other.

This I believe is not what Jodo is about and I resolved that if taikai was going to start being based on doing pretty dancing then I wouldn't do it anymore. Thankfully those teams that started off with pretty choreography started being knocked out but not before they also knocked out some teams who were bewildered after putting so much spirit into their fight and not doing so well.

I pray that common sense prevails and that this is something picked up and emphasised by our teaching faculty...



Tominaga Sensei shows perfect timing during the final embu against Yano Sensei

Eishinkan Taikai Report

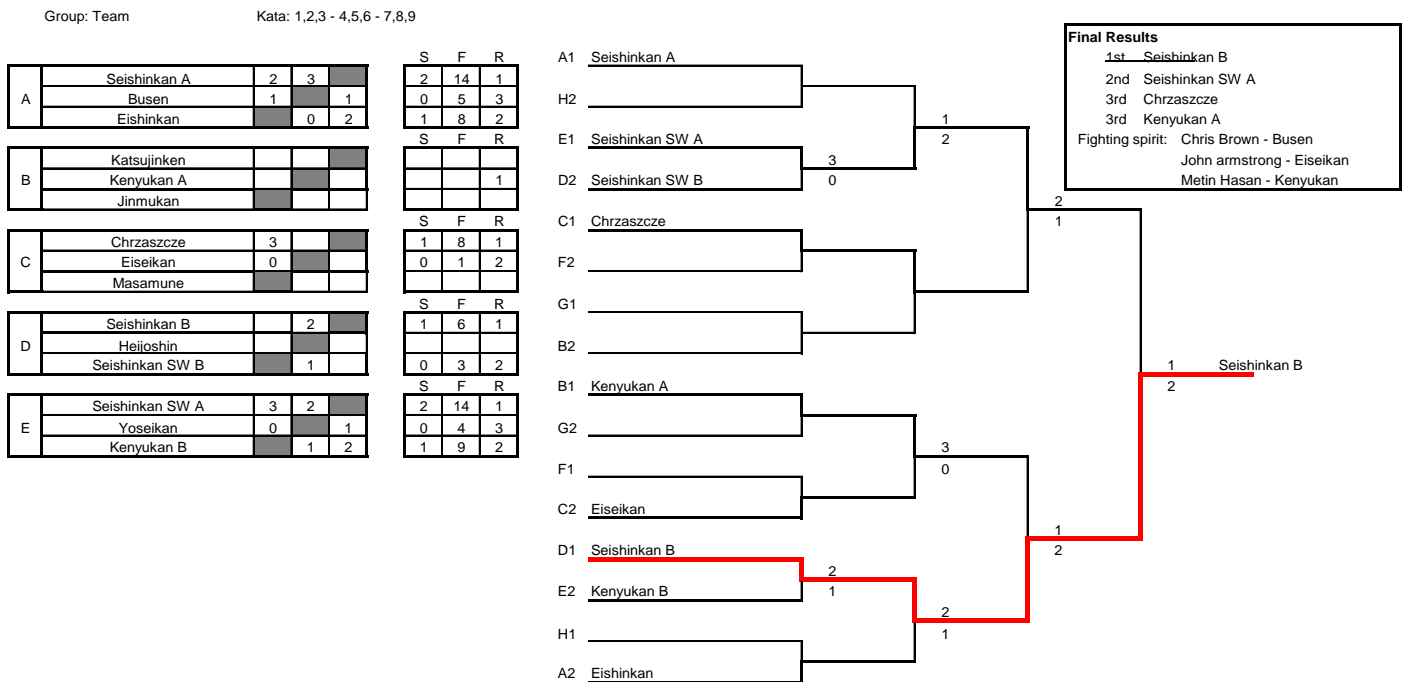
The 20th December saw the Eishinkan Jodo Taikai for 2008 and we once again climbed into the compact dojo known as Eishinkan. The turn out was excellent and once again we were happy to see our friends from Poland taking part as well. Judging was carried out by:

Jock Hopson
Chris Mansfield
Alan Nash
Harry Jones

With Chris Buxton floor managing. At the end of the taikai we all headed back to Chris's house for drinks and Xmas'ey snacks.

I have copied the score table below. Congratulations to all those who took part and hopefully had an enjoyable day. I have also uploaded the pdf file to the following site. Please click on all necessary to get you to the file (it's a bit of a trudge but it will get you there eventually and you don't have to pay anything)...

<http://d01.megashares.com/?d01=4d74239>



Important – Shitei Waza Change

As has been introduced as an idea in the last year, while Japan has been eliminating the testing of koryu at high grade exams (7th and 8th dan) in order to achieve some level of harmonization with laido and to encourage the study of koryu, two significant changes are now incorporated into the Jodo Shitei Waza in the UK, these being:

- For 4th dan, the first kata is an option between Seitei No.7 Kasumi **OR** one koryu kata
- For 5th dan, the first two kata **MUST** be koryu

The summary of the Shitei waza will appear at the end of this section but I would like to provide some advice to those doing a grading with koryu included. In recent years at the European championships some grading candidates chose to demonstrate kata which are included in the Seiteigata but delivered in a koryu style. I was not privy to the grading panellists' notes but suffice to say that those candidates did not pass. The reasons may well have been that their entire embu and level was not sufficient to pass them although I suspect

that to do a koryu version of a seitei form requires *more* definition and contrast to seitei than merely doing a non-seitei koryu form. Personally speaking, given the increased provision of koryu training sessions and opportunities in the UK and Europe, I would not pick a koryu shitei waza if it appeared in the seitei series....

Grade	JODO Shitei Waza				
1 st kyu	1	2	3	4	5
1 st dan	1	2	3	4	5
2 nd dan	2	3	4	5	6
3 rd dan	5	6	7	8	9
4 th dan	7 or one koryu	8	9	10	11
5 th dan	two koryu		10	11	12
6 th dan	three koryu		10	11	12

Obituary

It is with great sadness to report the sudden passing away of one of our members, Lilly Higgins. Lilly was a member of Shiseikan frequently training with Valerie Hodges and an occasional guest of Eishinkan. Lilly was one of the most frequent participants in the various Jodo events during the year and her enthusiasm and humour she brought to her training was a great influence.

We will miss her immensely.

Squad Funding

I have allocated in this year's Jodobu budget some funds to take some of our budding Jodo squad members abroad for some experience in a European regional taikai. I think the Polish Open taikai is now a bit too close but an event such as Villingen might be worth visiting. I will work with Alan Nash to make that selection from those who attend squad training as transport and accommodation will be paid for by the BKA. Please please please keep your eye on the BKA calendar for squad training dates and encourage your other dojo members to attend.

Dojo Kickstart Fund

Some of you will have made the most of the Dojo Kickstart Fund last year and received subsidies to set up and operate your new Jodo dojos.

Carrying on from last year I have also allocated some funds for emerging new dojos under the Dojo Kickstart Initiative. This provides funding for the following costs:

- 50% subsidy on year 1 coach insurance for 2 coaches at 4 dojos
- 50% subsidy on year 1 dojo registration/insurance at 4 dojos
- 100% coach course tutor expenses for 4 dojos (2 courses)

Plus this year I have also allowed an equipment fund as per:

- **100% subsidy on equipment (2 x jo, 2 x bokuto per dojo) at 4 dojos**

If you would like to make the most of this funding if you are setting up a new dojo in 2009 please let me know and I will make the necessary arrangements with the Membership Secretary.

Technical Digest - An Introduction to Warming Up

While the subject of warming up is emphasised in the BKA coaching programmes it all too often falls upon the student to warm themselves up especially should they arrive early or late for a class. While this may sound like coaches shirking their duties, warm ups are generally for the benefit of the individual just as injuries are only likely suffered by the individual who doesn't warm up adequately thus it is far more sensible for each and every student to consider and be responsible for their own warm-up routine.

A description of a general warm up could be a bit misleading; warm-ups should be specific to:

- a) the individual's particular physical condition
- b) the temperature of the surroundings
- c) the time of day e.g. has the individual already warmed up from a day's activities or is it early in the morning
- d) the main activity about to be undertaken

Few people carry out a warm-up before say, making breakfast or getting in the car, and thus a warm-up should be sensible and relevant.

What are the aims of a Warm-up?

Generally speaking there are three main aims of the warm-up:

1. To prepare mind and body for exercise.
2. Enhance performance.
3. Decrease risk of injury.

Of the three above, it is the final two which substantially determine the nature of the warm-up.

There are many other benefits to warming up:

- To get children out of breath so they don't keep chatting.
- To gradually increase flexibility and fitness.
- To reduce the risk of physical debilitation (slightly different to injury).

Other motives for warm up tend to fall as sub-motives to the first three main aims.

What are we warming up?

The three main areas we are focussing on during warm-up are:

- The cardio-respiratory system; that is the heart, lungs and circulation
- The musculoskeletal system; that is muscles, tendon and other connective tissue
- The neuromuscular system; that is the brain-body link

How should we warm-up:

Warming up consists of two main areas of activity:

- Exercise (dynamic movement)
- Stretching (static or dynamic)

There are some general guidelines about how a warm-up should take place, these may well fly in the face of martial arts traditionalists but it should be emphasised that modern warm-up procedures are the results of research and study on actual subjects and are less to do with machismo and gung-ho approaches to treating the body.

1. Warming up should be done gradually emphasising the need to actually get joints and muscles literally warm through movement before stretching.
2. The pace of the warm-up should start slowly and gradually increase as the body becomes more warm and flexible.

3. The full comfortable range of movement of each joint and muscle should be achieved during early parts of the warm-up.
4. There should be no or minimal impact or ballistic stretching (bouncing on the extreme of joint flexibility to stretch the range of movement – see Karate videos from 1970 - 1990).
5. Focus on particular muscle groups at a time to ensure that muscles and movements don't get missed or get cold or that joints are stressed in uncomfortable ways.
6. Ensure all movements are controlled.
7. Don't injure or exhaust the body during a warm-up.
8. Take care with neck rotations and stretching – this should be restricted to natural sideways looking and gentle, controlled tilting.
9. Keep warm during the training session and consider a gentle and brief warm up when coming from an explanation or demonstration.

In terms of a routine each individual should consider what works best for them given their circumstances but the following describes a standard warm-up for a young to middle-aged person with no particular injuries.

Getting The Body Warm

- Gentle jogging on the spot without lifting the toes off the floor while moving the arms as in a running movement.
- Keeping the arms lowered and rotating the shoulders.
- Gripping and releasing the fingers gently but briskly.

Moving the Body (starting from the top)

- Rotate the head from side to side returning and holding the centre each time.
- Keeping the chin tucked in and tilting the head from side to side.
- Rotating the wrists.
- Rotating the forearms.
- Outstretch the arms and make small circles, reverse the rotation, increase to medium circles, reverse, make full circles ensuring the shoulders are dropped and relaxed at the bottom of the movement.
- Folding the arms across the chest and gently stretching the arms and hands back before returning to the front.
- Hands on hips and rotate the hips allowing the feet to move and flex.
- Gently and in a controlled fashion rotate the trunk by reaching behind you one way then another.
- Lift the knees up to the chest in a marching movement.
- Stand on one foot and rotate the ankle of the other making the toes bend back and forwards; reverse feet.
- Place hands on hips and bend the knees into a semi-squatting position – only go less than halfway down.

Stretching and Flexing

- Hold the arms out straight in front and with one hand gently pull back the fingers of the other hand, palm facing away from you. Reverse the stretch so the fingers are stretched down.
- Keeping the arms stretched rotate the hand so that the fingers point towards the outside (right hand fingers point out to the right) and gently bend the wrist back towards you.
- Interweave the fingers and stretch out in front of you starting with palms facing in then palms facing out.
- Reach the left hand over the left shoulder and bring the right hand behind the small of the back and try to reach both hands together. If they touch then try to get them to gently pull against each other.
- Hold the hands in front of you, palms together as if praying with forearms pushed to horizontal. Rotate the fingers outwards and down and stretch, now gently pulling hands upwards

- Move the feet apart about 3 shoulder widths. Reach both hands down towards the right foot, then over to the left and up to continue the movement rotating the trunk up and back and down again. Reverse the movement.
- Extend the right foot forwards one step keeping the leg straight, bend the left knee placing both hands on it and while bending the toes back of the right foot stretch the back of the leg. Reverse feet and repeat.
- Bring the feet together, take an extended lunge step forwards with the right foot. Try to keep both feet parallel. Gently push the left heel into the floor keeping the front leg bent and the back leg straight. Come up onto the toes of both feet, hold for 3 seconds then lower and continue the stretch. Gently lower the left knee to the floor and slowly and gently stretch the top half of the body forwards endeavouring to get the chest to the floor. Gently come back up and reverse the feet and repeat.
- Gently jump on the spot and shake the body loose.

Improving Flexibility

Martial arts training tends to restrict posture and movement to certain positions and actions as well as shocking the body with rapid high-impact movement. This in itself can lead to:

- Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI)
- Postural problems
- Inflexibility
- Asymmetrical muscle development and lopsidedness

These negative outcomes can both affect your martial arts training as well as your everyday life especially as one ages and injuries take longer to heal. The conditions described above tend to be joint and tendon problems and thus can take a lot longer to recover from than muscle injury.

It is therefore of great benefit to ones martial arts level and quality of life that the student undertakes fitness, flexibility and mobility exercises:

- Before training (warming up)
- After training (warming down)
- Outside of training (other sports or physical activities)

This need not require a complete sports programme to be undertaken only that the student:

- Is aware of their level of fitness and flexibility
- Monitors their fitness/flexibility and any injuries
- Takes precautions in martial arts practice to not exacerbate injuries
- Works outside of the dojo to recover and strengthen injured or affected parts

The subject of chronic physical impediment will be examined later in the year.

Further Reading

- BKA Level 1 Coaching Documents: Section 17