

The Concept of *Ukemi* in the Early Stages of Judo Development: Part 1

—What Does It Mean to Fall? Rolling and Falling Techniques—

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Background

The aging population faces a growing number of fall-related accidents

→ Fall prevention measures in various fields

→ The Judo incorporates *ukemi* techniques in fall prevention training.

Objectives

- To investigate how *ukemi* was perceived and practiced in the early days of judo.
- To examine the potential benefits of applying *ukemi* techniques to the elderly.

Method

1. Literature survey on the early days of Judo

【Major literature used】

Judo Kougi

Monthly “Kokushi” published by Zoshikai, serialized since 1898.

Judo Hongi

Serialized from 1915 in the monthly “Judo” published by the Judo Association Headquarters.

Judo kyouhon First volume

Published in 1931 by Sanseido

2. Interview with Technical Specialist, Kodokan Archives

Result

On the Birth of the *UKEMI*

Sekiguchi Juushinshin Ryu's unyielding study of “Cats and *ukemi*”.

→Inspired by observing a cat fall from a roof and land safely, he theorized that humans could also learn to fall safely with practice. He even experimented by rolling off a roof himself.

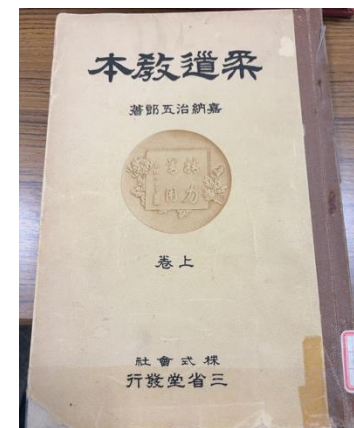
【Judo kougi】

Master Kano explains how to roll and *ukemi* in “Tenjin Shinyo-ryu” and “Kitou-ryu”.

The concepts of “falling,” “rolling,” and “*UKEMI*” have existed since the time of jujutsu.

On the Birth of the *UKEMI*

The term “*ukemi*” was used for the first time in a JudoKyouhon published in 1931.



JudoKyouhon

JudoKougi and JudoHongi published before 1931 describe it as “*falling*” or “*rolling*”.

Did Kano not use the term “*ukemi*” prior to 1931?

On the Birth of the *UKEMI*

In 1898, Ariya Honda, a student of Kano, wrote a beginner's guide in the magazine “Kokushi” , in which he used the term “*ukemi*”

Before 1931, it was mainly expressed as “*falling*” and “*rolling*” so that it could be used in a wide range of venues, not only in judo. Later, the term “*ukemi*” was probably unified into the term “*ukemi*” for introduction into school physical education.

On the concept of “*ukemi*”

—Necessity of training “falling” and “rolling”—

【JudoKougi】

Preparedness required for Randori

= preparedness to lose.

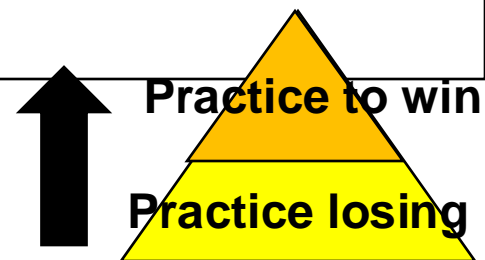
In order to stop fearing “losing” We have to think that losing is neither dangerous nor painful.

To do so, it is necessary to practice losing

= how to fall down and roll over when thrown

On the concept of “ukemi ” —Necessity of training “falling” and “rolling”—

Master Kano describes the need to practice “how to fall” and “how to roll” before training to win.



Even today, many beginners to judo start by learning the ukemi. However, it is not just a matter of learning the ukemi as a procedure, but it is also necessary to reduce the fear of falling and to be able to demonstrate one's full potential.

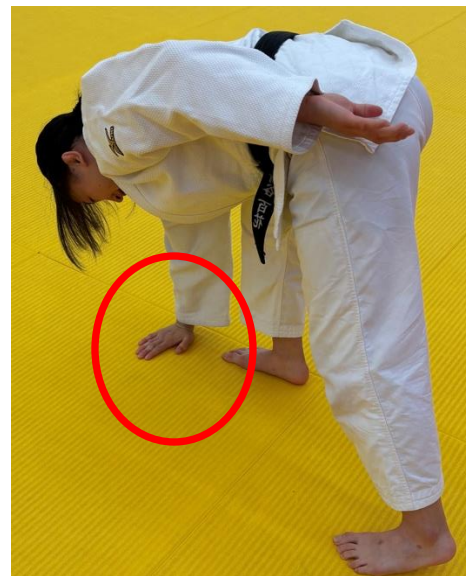
On the concept of “*ukemi*”

—*UKEMI* ingenuity—

【TenjinShinyou-Ryu】



【Kitou-Ryu】



【JudoKougi】

How to come back to the front

「The left hand should be in the TenjinShinyo-ryu style, while the right hand should be in the Kitou-ryu style. 」

On the concept of “*ukemi*”

—*UKEMI* ingenuity—

【JudoHongi】

When a novice judo practitioner sees a person fall with a loud noise after being thrown, he or she may think there is pain and injury to the body. However, **there is a way to fall without pain or danger.**

【Judo Kyouhon】

Ukemi is a **way to fall with ease, without injury, and without pain regardless** of being thrown by someone else or by falling on your own.

【Judo Hongi】

Being thrown is not a terrible thing because no matter how you are thrown, **you can respond with various patterns of Ukemi.**

Summary

- ① Master Kano uses the expressions “rolling” and “falling” to describe *ukemi*, and emphasize the importance of applying one’s own ideas and techniques in order to fall and roll safely and with ease.
- ② Currently, it is often viewed as *ukemi* only for judo competitions. However, since the beginning of judo, it was widely believed that *ukemi* could be used in everyday life as well .
- ③ In the future, it may be useful to teach them to devise their own methods of dealing with falls, not only for judo competitions, but also to teach them how to fall to ensure their own safety.

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Thank you for listening