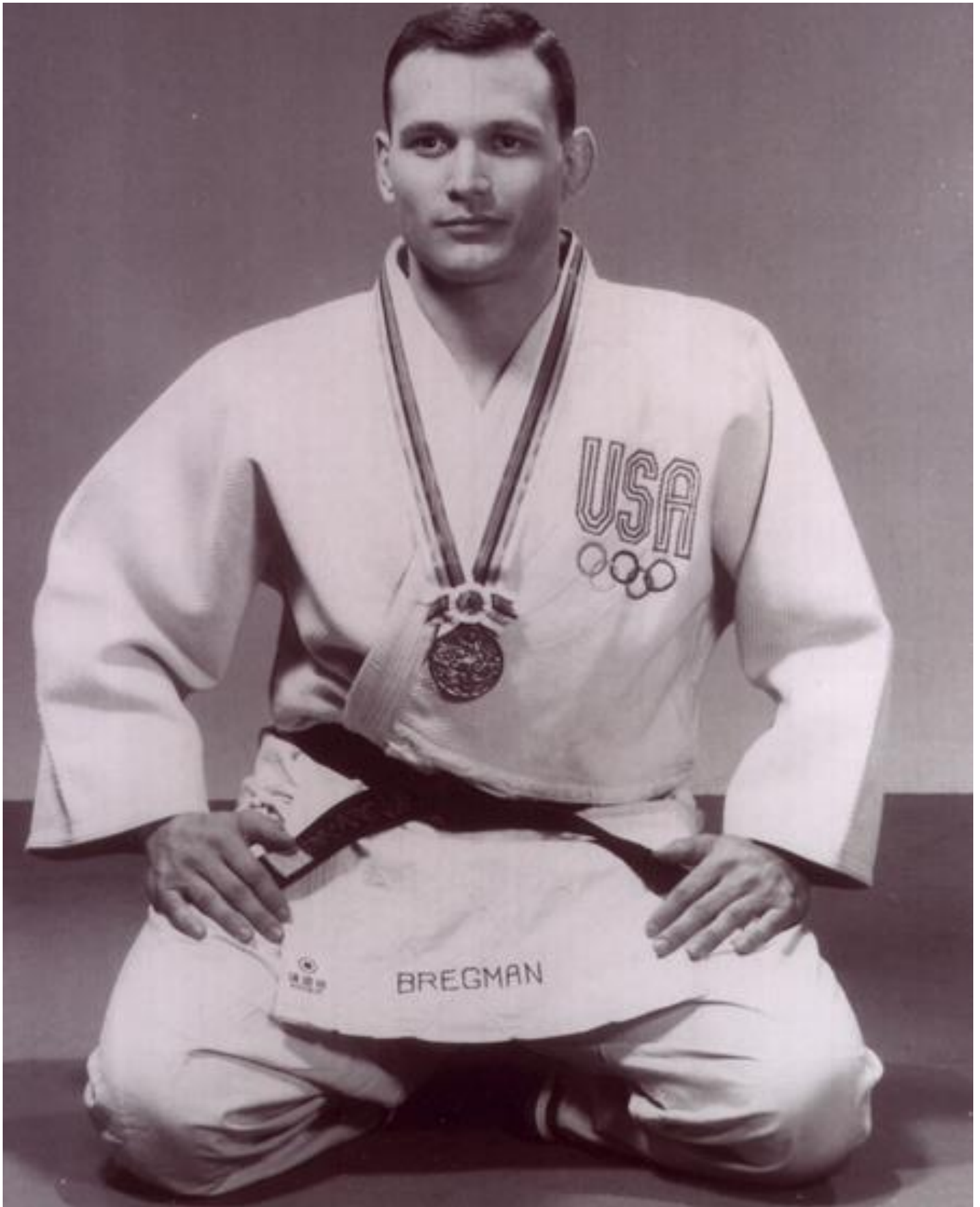




**An interview with Jim Bregman about growing up in the art of judo, being a student of Donn Draeger and winning the bronze medal in the 1964 Olympics held in Tokyo, Japan.**

Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020



**Note to Readers: This is a transcription of an interview I conducted with Jim Bregman via Skype, which we recorded in four parts.**

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**PART I**

**Mike Belzer:** My name is Mike Belzer, and today I'll be speaking with Jim Bregman, who won the bronze medal in *judo* during the 1964 Olympics that were held in Tokyo, Japan. And Jim, I first became aware of you when I was contacted by Ian Rowland of the Wisconsin *Judo* Association. He had read an article I had written about Donn Draeger, and asked if I had any photos of him that I could contribute for a photo collage that was going to be given to you as a gift when you accepted a posthumous award for Donn Draeger, who was going to be inducted into the Wisconsin *Judo* Hall of Fame. And the reason you were asked to receive the award was because of the long term relationship that you had with Donn Draeger, which started with you as a young boy on the *judo* mat at the Pentagon *Judo Dojo* and extended into high school and eventually took you to Japan where you were trained by him at the *Kodokan* and eventually competed in the '64 Olympics. So, why don't we start with the night you accepted the award for Donn? What was that like for you?

**Jim Bregman:** Well, it brought back a flood of memories. It was the *Judo* Association there and in Milwaukee that did a wonderful job. They had a wonderful banquet, and they awarded Donn a trophy, which they wanted me to keep. And he was inducted into the Wisconsin *Judo* Hall of Fame. I gave an extemporaneous speech and paid tribute to a gentleman who impacted my life and in a way, set me on a course for a successful and happy life. He took an interest in me at the age of 12 years old and I was forever grateful throughout my career for everything he taught me.

**Mike Belzer:** That's awesome. So, you were 12 years old when you started *judo*?

**Jim Bregman:** Yes.

**Mike Belzer:** What attracted you to the art and how did you get to the Pentagon *Judo Dojo*, which sounds pretty awesome just in itself?

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**Jim Bregman:** Well, it was an awesome *dojo* and it was in the Officers Athletic Club of the Pentagon. It was on the parking level and in those days, you could drive right up to the back door, which was the entrance to the Officers Athletic Club, get out of your car and walk right into the club, and tell them that you wanted to be in the *judo* class. And there was no security unlike today. What got me there was a very interesting turn of events. I had asthma and bronchitis as a child and when I did things in the wintertime or the spring and fall, I would have asthma attacks. So, at a very young age, my mother took me to the Arlington County Lions Club, where I learned tap dancing and gymnastics and baton twirling.

**Mike Belzer:** Wow.

**Jim Bregman:** So, as time went on, and I got a little older, we lived in Green Valley which was the black neighborhood in those days of South Arlington, where my father owned a grocery store. And we lived over top of the grocery store. So, being a Caucasian kid in a black neighborhood and being of Jewish dissent, obviously the local bully was attracted to me and tried to harm me daily and my brother when we went out to play. And this got pretty brutal, I had come home and I wouldn't tell my parents what happened to me because the bully in the neighborhood was the son of the lady that worked for my father, in the carry out restaurant that we ran.

**Mike Belzer:** Wow.

**Jim Bregman:** So, I didn't want to jeopardize relationships with my parents or create a problem. Even at that young age, I guess I was sensitive to those kind of things. But eventually, my mom and dad sat me down and said, "Okay, now what's going on?" So, I told them that I was being beaten up and my mother had seen an article in The Washington Post for a judo club, where they taught self-defense and it was open to all ages and it was recommended that we call this number. So, she called the number and arranged for me to start *judo* in a beginner's class. So, from that first day, when I walked in the beginner's class, I met the first level instructor who was Jimmy *Takemori*, and he taught the basics. And as I got out of the beginner's class, Donn Draeger was my teacher and certainly Mr. *Ishikawa*, too. Draeger was a captain at the time who was stationed at the Pan American Union, I believe as an attaché, and *Sensei Ishikawa* was brought to the Washington *Judo* Club by Donn Draeger. Apparently, he had connections via the *Kodokan*, and *Ishikawa* said he was interested in leaving Cuba and coming to the United States.

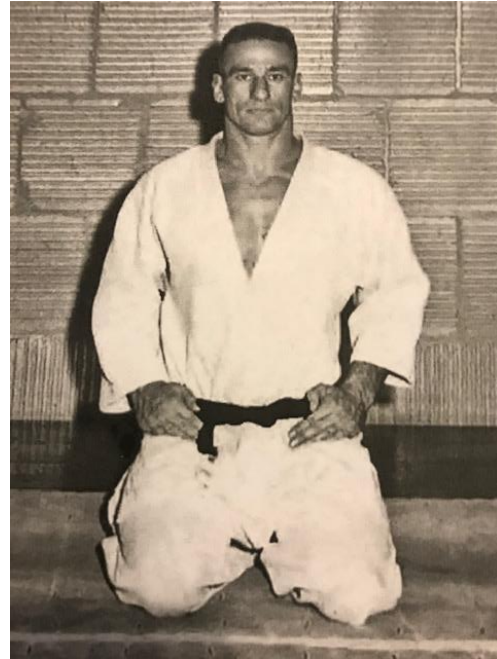
So, I had the tremendous fortune luckily, to have a two-time all Japan champion teach me *judo*, and Donn Draeger who was an intellectual martial arts expert and started *judo* when he was seven, I believe. And these two gentlemen mentored me and taught me all of the basics of *judo* and honed my skills to the point where I became very proficient. I was so enthralled with *judo* as a martial art and a discipline that I attended class actually five to six days a week. So, I was there for after school for almost every class.

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Takahiko Ishikawa – <https://youtu.be/u5oIYfxusP0>

Two-time All Japan Judo Champion



A young Donn Draeger  
Photo courtesy of Ian Rowland &  
The Wisconsin Judo Hall of Fame

**Mike Belzer:** So, that's my next question. Do you remember the very first day on the mat? And, and after that what was a typical training session like?

**Jim Bregman:** The first day on the mat we were taught how to bow, to do a standing bow, I would do a kneeling bow and then we did some stretching exercises, and a few push-ups and sit-ups. Then they started teaching us how to fall and the whole beginner's class, the first number of sessions was concentrated on the art of falling. Learning how to fall, of course is integral to the art of *judo*, also, later in life comes in handy when you stumble on a crack, in a sidewalk and you fall down, you simply do a *judo* break fall and get up and brush yourself off and keep going. So, it's a very important skill to have and in the current situation that we're in, many people in their senior years are being taught how to fall by *judoka* to avoid falling in the house or outside. So, it has saved a lot of people from harm.

And then, as we became proficient at falling, they started teaching basic throwing techniques, starting with foot sweeps, and then moving to hip techniques and shoulder throws and static practice, then would move on to a moving practice with a partner to try and apply these skills in a moving situation. It all started statically by yourself moving in the particular directions that you were being shown. And then you did a series of moves called *uchikomi*, which, I guess roughly translates into fitting where you would with a partner take the grip and try and go in and out with your body movement, tilting your partner off balance. And then after you did that 10, 15, 20 times and became a little more proficient, you were then allowed to throw and you would throw the person and the person would take a fall. And you did that with a number of different techniques. At the end of the class, we had a cooling down period. And then of course, we would sit down and have a little bit of a lecture, and then bow out in a kneeling bow or sometimes a standing bow and that would be the end of the work.

**Mike Belzer:** How long was the class? Was it 90 minutes, two hours?

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**Jim Bregman:** It was about a 90-minute class, initially started out I think, at 30 minutes then, as we became more proficient to an hour and a half.

**Mike Belzer:** How many other kids were in the class? Was it all a junior class or was it juniors and seniors?

**Jim Bregman:** It was a mixed class. There were military personnel from all the services and their children and females participated. So, it was quite a diverse group of people.

**Mike Belzer:** Very good.

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah.

**Mike Belzer:** How about your first competition, your first in *shiai*. How old are you? And what was that?

**Jim Bregman:** I actually don't remember my first *shiai*. What they do is they would line you up basically according to size. So, as an example, they would have five people on one side of the mat, five people on the other, and then you would go out and you would do your little *shiai* in the *dojo*. So, it was a very controlled environment so no one got hurt. And you would in a more competitive fashion, trying to apply your techniques, then gradually as you became proficient and as I got older, we actually entered other *shiai*. And I think by the time I was 15, I was the district champion in my age group regardless of age. So, at 15, I was awarded a black belt.

**Mike Belzer:** Wow. Yeah. So, *Ishikawa-sensei* was on the mat and Donn Draeger-*sensei* was on the mat.

**Jim Bregman:** Right.

**Mike Belzer:** And who was the teacher that did the beginning techniques with you?

**Jim Bregman:** Jimmy *Takemori*.

**Mike Belzer:** *Takemori*?

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah, Jimmy *Takemori*. Jimmy was, I think a third-degree black belt at that time. And he would run *randori* with everybody, with Draeger and *Ishikawa*. And as you're doing, you're practicing, the three of them circulate among all the couples on the mat and give individual attention to each couple explaining how to do things better, how to become more proficient. So, it was quite a one-on-one teaching experience with this gentleman.

**Mike Belzer:** And who would you consider your *judo sensei*? Was it *Ishikawa*? Was it Donn Draeger? I mean, obviously, they were both on the mat. But how did that evolve?

**Jim Bregman:** Well, I think the both of them were my teachers. And *Ishikawa* taught me how to refine my skill levels, and Donn taught me fundamental throwing, grappling techniques and also physical training techniques. So, the combination of these two gentlemen gave me the physicality to do advanced *judo*, the methods of training, exercise and even weight training that was sort of Donn's primary focus, and *Ishikawa* would teach me the skills, and refine the skills. Draeger and *Takemori-sensei* taught me the basics of how to do everything and very intense

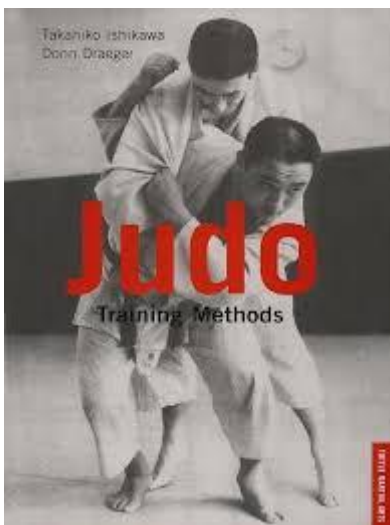
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sessions with *Ishikawa-sensei* would refine my skills based on the way I did things using these fundamental techniques.

So, *judo* is called the “gentle way” and each *judoka* participant literally has to find his own way. And as I advanced, *Ishikawa* showed me how to put these techniques into combinations and series, and then Donn would create a drill training methodology to use these integrated attack systems in practice, so that you could move technique to technique in a very smooth fashion and do them in motion and in a drill situation where you practice three or four groups over and over again. And he developed many different drills for many techniques. So that’s where drill training in *judo* originated. And it was an innovation that Donn created later, I don’t know can you see this? (Jim shows me the book *Judo Training Methods*.)

**Mike Belzer:** Yes, I have that book. Every time you open it, it blows you away.

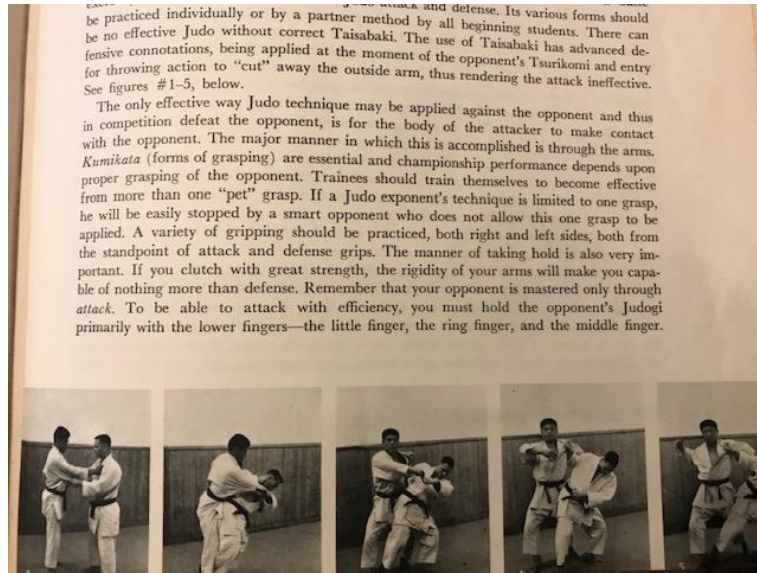
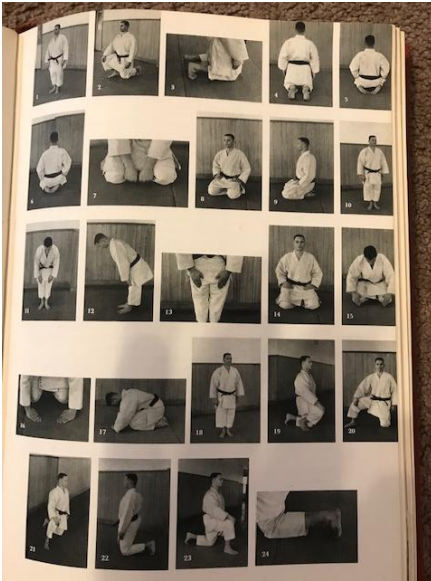
**Mike Belzer:** Yeah. *Judo Training Methods*, it’s a source book by *Ishikawa* and Draeger and is a Bible, if you will.



**Mike Belzer:** Yeah.

**Jim Bregman:** And I had the privilege and offer of participating in the photography. I did most of the demonstrating for the book.

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**Mike Belzer:** Wow.

**Jim Bregman:** So, Donn apparently felt that my techniques were worthy of fundamentally being presented and then he would describe the techniques in detail. Reading the book gave you insight into what was going on with the techniques called *waza*. That was an experience, that book.

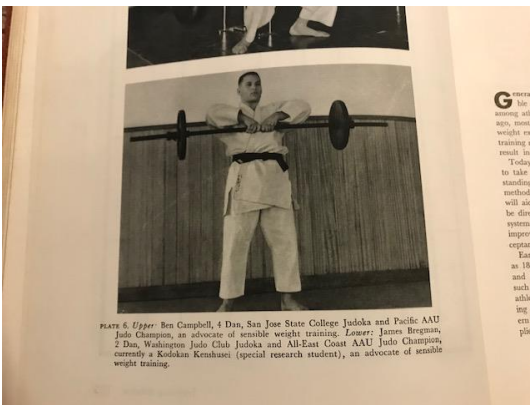


PLATE 6 Upper: Ben Campbell, 4 Dan, San Jose State College Judo and Pacific AAU Judo Champion, an advocate of sensible weight training. Lower: James Bregman, 2 Dan, Washington Judo Club Judo and All-East Coast AAU Judo Champion, currently a Kodokan Kenshu (special research student), an advocate of sensible weight training.

**Mike Belzer:** All right. So, I've got two follow ups for that one, there must have been a time as you were becoming comfortable gaining skill, realizing that, hey, you know, I can do this, that you decided "I want to pursue this, I want to dedicate myself..." I mean, obviously, you're already going there five to six days a week, like out of the box. So, maybe that's when you started to dedicate yourself but I'm talking about a conscious "I'm going for this." Did you have that? Do you remember that?

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah. There were two of these moments actually. My brother and I were playing basketball when the bully decided to steal my brother's bike.

**Mike Belzer:** Okay.



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**Jim Bregman:** And I went after him and took the bike away from him which of course infuriated him, and then a number of nasty words were hurled in my direction which will not be repeated here. And he attacked me which was his mistake because by that time I had been in *judo* for a year. I threw him with *ippon seoi nage* after having blocked his punch.



*Ippon seoi nage*

**Mike Belzer:** That's an over the shoulder throw?

**Jim Bregman:** That's an over the shoulder throw, slammed him into the surface of the basketball court, got him into side hold and proceeded to punch him out. I wasn't very comfortable with that afterwards, but he was reaching for a knife in his back pocket and I just completely obliterated him with punches. Then I got up and a lot of these guys were looking at us. And I said "Okay, who is next, who wants to mess me up now?" Well, obviously nobody wanted to bother with me at that time. So, from that day forward, I was never in another fight. My brother got his bike back and we went home and I didn't have a scratch on me.

**Mike Belzer:** It's funny how that works out.

**Jim Bregman:** Right. So, this young kid whenever he would see me he'd always cross the street. He never told his mother anything and he avoided me like the plague. So, at that point I knew that there were additional benefits to the art of *judo* that can be applied if you need them in bad situations. The next time that I realized that I really wanted to do this was a bit of a horrifying experience. I went to an international tournament in Detroit, Michigan at the Detroit *Judo* Club. And I was a black belt and I expected to be in a black belt division, because the black belt division was predominantly filled by accomplished *judoka* who have many, many skills.

Now, for some inexplicable reason because I was 15 years old they decided that I really wasn't a black belt and then I needed to participate in the – I think it was a green belt division or it was assigned to maybe a brown belt division. And in this brown belt division, all of the participants were really very large men and probably at that time I was maybe 130 to 145 pounds. And I'm sitting there, I was told that this is my division. I took a look, I saw who these guys were and frankly I was terrified. They looked like a bunch of lumberjacks to me.

And I was sitting on the side of the mat kind of into myself brooding a bit and a gentleman named Art Broadbent, he was a very accomplished *Judoka*, came over and started talking to me. And he got me out of myself and he wanted to know what was wrong, why wasn't I warming up. And I explained what had happened. And he said well Jim, don't worry about it - I know all these guys and I'll tell you everything that they do before we go out and I'm sure you'll take care of them. And then he said "Come on, let's warm up. Let's do *sute geiko*". *Sute*

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*geikoi* a free-flowing throw for throw activity where one person applies in technique and throws the other and then the other person applies the number techniques and throws the other person.

Well, Mr. Broadbent was smooth as silk. His motion, his action, his *judo* was superior and I felt very comfortable because my judo was the same way. So, we did this free flow throwing drill, and he got me all warmed up. And then, I got out of myself sitting next to him and just concentrated on what was going to happen. So, they line the mats up and they called this guy's name, whoever, Art would tell me all about him. Then they would call my name and I'd go out and fight. Make a long story short – I'm sure this was 1956. I threw five to six of these guys in that division for a full point and won my first international trophy because there were people there from Canada also. And Art was a real artist who understood my skill movement of *judo* and when we did this flow drill, it just was a natural mindless *mushin* activity that really taught me and prepared myself for competition. So, at that point I knew that I wanted to do this.

**Mike Belzer:** And what were your favorite techniques at that time? Were you doing leg throws, shoulder throws?

**Jim Bregman:** I was doing mostly shoulder throws. *Ippon seoi nage* and *morote-seoi-nage* which is a different family and a lot of *ashi waza* - foot techniques. And the *tachi-waza*, the main technique was a *morote-seoi-nage*. Where you fold your arm under the opponent's arm and throwing like a shoulder throw. So, that worked very well on the lumberjacks. I could get under their center of gravity quite easily. They didn't move as fast as I did and it was kind of like a mosquito chewing up a big elephant.

**Mike Belzer:** So, how tall were you?

**Jim Bregman:** I must have been about five feet maybe at that time.

**Mike Belzer:** Okay. All right. So, I always like to think of on the mat in the *dojo* and outside the *dojo*, you know, where "real life" is happening. And you know, real life is also in the *dojo* and you had that real-life moment - round two - with your bully. You said that Donn and *Ishikawa* some time came over for dinner?

**Jim Bregman:** Oh, yeah. Not infrequently on a Saturday night, they would come over. We got a practice in the afternoon on Saturdays. And they would come over and we had dinner in the kitchen. We had a very small apartment on top of the store. I think it was a two-bedroom apartment. My brother and I were in one bedroom and parents were in another and we had kind of a kitchen dining room thing. And we would bring food from the carryout restaurant and we would all sit there and have a nice dinner together. And from time to time, Donn would bring a girlfriend of his from the Pan-American Union and we just had a wonderful time. Very pleasant, my parents became really supportive of the *Judo Club* in any way they could, so it was a family affair. And also, we would go over to the *Takemori's*, Jimmy and Helen, and their children, Donn and *Ishikawa* and my parents, myself, my brother would frequent their homes and we would have parties and enjoyed a lot of camaraderie.

**Mike Belzer:** That's awesome.

**Jim Bregman:** So, we it was really one big family. The *dojo* was a family.

**Mike Belzer:** Right. So, I believe it was 1956, Donn moves from the United States and relocates in Tokyo.

**Jim Bregman:** Right.

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**Mike Belzer:** And so, that means that he left the Pentagon *Dojo*. How did that affect you personally, how did it affect your training? And then, did you stay in touch with him by letters?

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah. So, there were letters, there was correspondence going back and forth. And basically, *Ishikawa* and *Takemori* continued to be at the *dojo* and continued the instruction. And then when I was 18, Donn wrote a letter to my parents and me suggesting that I'd come to *Tokyo* and go to University, Sophia University in *Tokyo* and continue my study of the art of *judo*.

**Mike Belzer:** Okay. So, that's a big thing. How did that affect – I mean, how did you respond to that when you read that letter and was that letter sent to you or your parents?

**Jim Bregman:** It actually was sent to my parents and I read the letter. And *Ishikawa* and *Takemori-sensei* were very supportive of this. But my father had reservations. He was on Okinawa staging for the invasion of Japan in WWII, and he wasn't too sure how foreigners would be accepted in that post war environment.

**Mike Belzer:** Sure.

**Jim Bregman:** And he had misgivings. My mother was very enthusiastic. So, they were discussing it with me at the table and asked me what I wanted to do. I said I would really like to go to Japan and then they suggested that I leave the room and go to my bedroom while they had a discussion. So, when I came back, I don't know what happened during that discussion, but the decision was made. That if I wanted to go to Japan, I could go to Japan under one condition. And that was I must finish my college education. So, with that being the caveat, I applied to Sophia University, but I had already previously applied to George Washington University in Washington, DC. So, I was waiting to get acceptance into Sophia University, which is called *Jōchi Daigaku* and I kept waiting and waiting and nothing happened.

So reluctantly, I went down to George Washington and registered for all my fall classes. The day I came back was the day that the letter of acceptance came from Sophia University. So, the next day I went back to George Washington University and removed myself from all my classes and had the letter of acceptance to Sophia and went there for the fall semester.

**Mike Belzer:** And Sophia, is it an English-speaking University and they do all their classes in English?

**Jim Bregman:** Not really. They - the daytime classes are all in Japanese. So, it is a Japanese oriented university, which is a Japanese university. It's affiliated with Georgetown, Loyola and Fordham, all Jesuit universities. But they had a big international section. And the international section went at night, so five nights a week. And on Saturday mornings they had classes for all of the international students that were in Tokyo. So, you had all of the young people from the embassies. And actually had a lot of Japanese students there, who wanted to -- who were proficient in English and wanted to learn, you had a lot of martial arts students from all over the world who wanted to get an education and they were there. And all of those courses were taught in English.

**Mike Belzer:** Okay.

**Jim Bregman:** And we had teachers from all over the all over the world teaching various courses of all kinds.

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**Mike Belzer:** Okay. So, right now, we're at about the 30 minutes mark of our interview and I think what we should do is take a short break. I want to test this recording and then I'll call you back and then we'll begin again with you in Japan, okay?

**Jim Bregman:** Sounds good.

**Mike Belzer:** All right. See you soon.

**Jim Bregman:** Okay.

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### PART II

**Mike Belzer:** Let's see, there you go. You're back. Okay. So, you were invited to go to Japan. And the idea was on the condition that you had to finish your university schooling there. You apply to Sophia, you were accepted. All right. So you went to Japan. Let's hear about your trip and your first day in Japan.

**Jim Bregman:** Well, it was kind of a blur. Air travel in those days was a bit of a misery I think, as I recall. I got dropped off at National Airport by my parents, walked out onto the tarmac and up a flight of stairs onto a turboprop airplane.

**Mike Belzer:** Okay.

**Jim Bregman:** Which is a really noisy airplane as I remember. So, that plane flew from DC to Anchorage, Alaska where I think we refueled and two centuries later we ended up landing at *Haneda* Airport in *Tokyo*, Japan. Jet lag splitting headache, hungry and confused, I came down out of the plane walked in the airport and Donn Draeger met me there and took me to the *Ichigaya* house. Showed me my room and I think I slept for a long time.

**Mike Belzer:** When you got to Japan, he picked you up and took you to the *Ichigaya* house. So, you knew in advance where you were going to be?

**Jim Bregman:** Yes, all of that was laid out. One of the things about Donn, he was meticulous at planning and he wrote everything down. I had a whole itinerary of what was going to happen. When it came time to register, he showed me where the university was, took me to the registration desk, so I got all registered. And of course, he showed me to the Pentagon, oh, not the Pentagon, the *Kodokan* and introduced me to the subway system, the rail systems, so I could learn my way around town. So, it was an education and how to get around and how to find the *Kodokan*.

Eventually a group of us went to the police *dojo* called the *Keishicho*, which was in the Metropolitan Police Training Center. I also ended up attending *Meiji* University's *dojo*. *Meiji Daigaku* was the premier university for *judo* in Japan at the time. I'm sure they were national champions, and that's really where I did a lot of my *randori* training. *Randori* is free practice and I was there every day. After going there, we go to the *Kodokan* for a little practice. Frequently in the mornings, we'd go to the *Keishicho* for heavy duty practice.

The routine became very normal. A gentleman named Sid Hoare from England and I became fast friends and Jon Bluming from Holland, Bill Backhus from the United States, and a number of other athletes. Donn would get us up in the morning at 6:30, 7 o'clock. We'd go out to the track at Sophia University, do sprints, road work, sit ups, sharp squats, spin around a corner and run up and down stadium steps. So, that was our physical training. In addition to that, Mr. *Inokuma* who won a gold medal in '64 would join us at the old *Kodokan*, which was no longer used as a *dojo*.

But they had a gym, a very crude gym, in the basement. And that's where we did our weight training. We had a limited set of dumbbells, various weights and we had one very good set of Olympic weights, an Olympic bar with various Olympic weights and a couple of different tables and chairs and seats that we could sit on, so that's where we did our weight training. So, weight training three times a week; three to four times a week, we did the morning exercise routine. Whatever the day, we were in the *dojo* most of the day.

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**Mike Belzer:** Okay. I'm tired already.

**Jim Bregman:** I think so.

**Mike Belzer:** So, let's go back to the *Ichigaya* house. Those of us that are interested in this whole period of time in Japan with Donn Draeger and his history, have heard about the *Ichigaya* house. But it's very rare for us to meet anybody that actually lived in it and I doubt it was an "animal house" like experience. But, you know, it's a bunch of martial arts dudes that are young and you know living in the same place and you would have to think that it gets a little rowdy sometimes.



The "infamous" Ichigaya house

**Jim Bregman:** Well, it certainly did from time to time. We also studied *bojutsu* or *jodo*, as it is called. Depending on the mood and how people were feeling, occasionally someone would jump you from behind or pop out in front of you with a jo in your face and/or they, as you're coming down the steps jump in front of you and pick you up, not really throwing you on the steps or anything like that.

So, there was that kind of martial arts mayhem, if you will. Also, John Bluming would come over and visit and he'd walk in and next thing I know I'd have a fist in my face. So yeah, it was all done in fun and nobody got hurt. But a lot of it was just unexpected and I think most of it was tension relief because everyone was training intensely and that was a good time to laugh.

**Mike Belzer:** How old were you when you first got there?

**Jim Bregman:** I was 18.

**Mike Belzer:** Eighteen and what year was this?

**Jim Bregman:** 1960.

**Mike Belzer:** 1960?

**Jim Bregman:** In '60, right. Okay. So, it was full four years before the *Tokyo* Olympics in 64 and five years before I would go to the World Championships in San Paulo, Brazil in 1965.

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**Mike Belzer:** Okay. And then you had mentioned several names. How many people were living there? And did they all have their own room? Is that the idea?

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah. We had about five rooms.

**Mike Belzer:** That's a big house.

**Jim Bregman:** It was a big house and one of the nice things in the room that Donn had, you could open up the *shoji* screens. And there was a beautiful Japanese garden there. And he would sit there at a low table on the *tatami* mat with a thing that I don't know if anybody knows what they are now, but it was a typewriter.

**Mike Belzer:** Oh, yeah. Those things.

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah, those things. And he would get up early in the morning before work to do our training and he started typing. So, then stop typing when everybody's up. And we all got going and many, many times because he was writing these books, articles and notes and various histories. He would sit there for hours at his typewriter, typing away.

**Mike Belzer:** The letters that you received from him, were they written on those blue Aerograms?

**Jim Bregman:** Yes, they were. And they took, I think, two to three weeks to get. And that's how we communicated back and forth. Rather archaic in today's world but we felt that it was very effective. My parents did do something that was a little foolish. They wanted me to have some traditional food. So, they sent over a salami, a whole salami and a bologna and some other stuff and they shipped it. Well, by the time it got to me in Tokyo, I don't know how many days it took on the boat or whatever. But it was sadly rotten. So, I didn't get my salami sandwich that day but it's very hard to find rye bread in *Tokyo*, Japan at that time.

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah. Well, you know, you're living in what would be pretty much "another planet" like experience. Well, what was just daily life like for you? Like a typical day, a typical week for you after you got settled in, you know, what was a typical day or week?

**Jim Bregman:** Well, I had to earn a living. My parents are gracious enough to pay my tuition and my airfare over there one way but I needed money. So, initially I taught English to high school students. The problem with that was that it took up too much time. And I needed to make more money with less hours. So, I put an ad in the paper that an expert English teacher was available to teach corporations and I had an interview with *Dai Nippon Ink, Inc.*

I told them that I was a college graduate and that I was an English language expert. And I would teach them English, which was to their delight, they really liked that. So, they said they would hire me and they wanted me there three I think, two to three times a week. Long story short, those things gave me enough money to live. The interesting thing after they hired me, I had to go to the Maruzen Bookstore. And I searched out a book that taught me how to teach English to them.

**Mike Belzer:** Okay.

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

**Jim Bregman:** So, there I was 18 years old. I got the book, I got the job. This took a little while, a month or two before I arranged all that. So then, I got into pretty much of a routine. The major thing that happens every night at 7 o'clock is you're at the university. The other major thing I think it was, I don't know, 2, 3 o'clock, you're at *Meiji University dojo*. At 10 o'clock on any particular day you're at the *Keishicho*. And in the morning on any particular day, you're out either weight training or doing roadwork around the track. So, it got to be pretty routine treadmill of activity.

And on Saturdays I got selected as a special research student. So on Saturdays, senior instructors at the *Kodokan*, basically taught us *kata*. We learned all of the *kata* and practiced them on Saturdays almost on a routine basis. So on occasion, Sid would show up at some place to train together and we'd look at each other.

And we both realized that we were totally exhausted and completely spent and we just couldn't go into the *dojo* or run around the track or work with the weights. So, we would look at each other, nod our heads and go to look for a coffee shop and sit for a couple hours and have a couple of cups of coffee and just chat and talk. And that happened maybe once a month because at that grind, you really need the rest.

**Mike Belzer:** Of course. All this training was happening before the decision was made to train for the Olympics, right?

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah. All of the guys that were there were there to learn the art of *judo*, the martial art of *judo*. And it was just sad that this *Tokyo* Olympic thing was happening way in the future sometime. So, we basically all trained as we normally would. And then it became clear that this Olympics was going to happen and that we started focusing on maybe we could go to the Olympics.

So, not much really changed in our training routines, we continued to train the way we have been. But we started making plans to go back to our various countries to participate in the national championships of our countries and the Olympic trials in our countries. And the closer we got to '64, we started making those plans to make the Olympic teams.

**Mike Belzer:** So, while this was all happening in Japan, your regular training grind, we'll call it, which sounds pretty intense, very intense.

**Jim Bregman:** It was.

**Mike Belzer:** I would say that is a like a professional level of training, you know, like full time?

**Jim Bregman:** Full-time. Yes.

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah. And everything else, teaching English and going to school is on top of that.

**Jim Bregman:** That is correct. And I got in trouble a lot because I had to study for midterms and finals. So, this gentleman Ken Busch, he was a member of Washington Judo club, when I was there as a kid. And he and I, were not only *judo* players together and training together, we studied together. Ken was about 10 years older than I, had a college degree, but he wanted to study further at Sophia. So, before the midterms and finals, I would not go to practice and he and I would spend two and three days, whatever it took, literally cramming for these exams.



## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

So, then when you got back into the *dojo*, everybody wanted to know where you were. And you were told that you missed practice. And one of the things you would never do is miss a practice. And the sessions that day were particularly intense. We had to graduate from college, so that's what we did.

**Mike Belzer:** Right. And so, you're at the police dojo, you're at *Meiji University dojo*, you're at the Kodokan. You're at the track, you're in the gym. Where is Donn Draeger in all of this? Is he basically with you as this is all happening or are you on your own?

**Jim Bregman:** We're on our own a lot but he's at the *Kodokan* with us. He's at the training sessions in the morning, around the track. He's doing the weight training with us. And he's teaching at the international section of the *Kodokan*. So, we're learning at the *Kodokan*, let's say from four to five or whatnot. On occasion, we would go down and help him teach people from all over the world at the international section the rudiments of *judo* and they would work out with us on a, how can I put this, not a competitive level. The third floor at the *Kodokan* was all free practice, hard practice, very intense practice. At the international section it was more teaching and Donn and *Kotani-sensei* would do most of the teaching. And then, we, myself I'd be the uke or person that got thrown. And I do light *randori* with those people. And I'd show different techniques. So, there were breaks in this intensity.



The *Kodokan* Judo Institute



"Early Images" in the *Kodokan*

A Black Belt Training Session

**Mike Belzer:** And what along the way, you were learning some Japanese?

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

**Jim Bregman:** Well, yeah. I knew all of the Japanese terminology for *judo*. And I took, I don't know, three semesters of Japanese at school. But I was never fluent in Japanese but I could do everything. I could get my train tickets you know, like the everyday situations of – I'd like a cup of coffee, please. I'd like two kinds of *sushi*, this *sushi* that *sushi*. I'd like *sake* or *Sapporo* beer. Those kinds of things I could get done.

**Mike Belzer:** Okay.

**Jim Bregman:** But I unfortunately didn't have the time to concentrate on becoming fluent in Japanese.

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah. So, let's see. The '64 Olympics in *Tokyo*, that was the first time *judo* was offered as an Olympic sport, is that right?

**Jim Bregman:** That is correct because Japan was the host country. They got to select a sport to premiere at that Olympics.

**Mike Belzer:** Okay.

**Jim Bregman:** *Jigorō Kanō* had been trying to get *judo* into the Olympics since the 30s and his wish finally came true.



*Jigorō Kanō – the Founder of Kodokan Judo*

**Mike Belzer:** Okay. So, you arrived in Japan in 1960. You were training at the Kodokan. You were 18 when you arrived there, you're doing this intense training, you're moving closer to the 64 Olympics. Everybody that you're training with they're saying, okay, this looks like this might happen.

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah.

**Mike Belzer:** So, you have to leave Japan and go back to the US to compete to qualify for the American team.

**Jim Bregman:** That is correct. Yes.

**Mike Belzer:** What year did that happen?

**Jim Bregman:** Well, it was '64 sometime before October of '64 when the Olympic Games took place.

**Mike Belzer:** Okay. So pretty close.

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah, it was pretty close, maybe three, four months before that.

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

**Mike Belzer:** Okay. All right.

**Jim Bregman:** Memory fades with time.

**Mike Belzer:** Say that again.

**Jim Bregman:** Memory fades a little bit with times.

**Mike Belzer:** Of course, that's why I'm trying to help you.

**Jim Bregman:** Thank you very much. I need the prompts.

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah. All right. So, you made it back home and I guess there were a series of competitions that you that you competed in to qualify for the Olympic judo team.

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah. I had to go to the districts, and I won the district championships. And then I had to go to a regional tournament in order to qualify for the nationals. So, at the regional tournament, I noticed there were a number of coaches, people from all over watching what was going on. So, I took it easy. I just kind of stumbled around a little bit and let this guy come in, let that guy come in. Walk around a little bit and then finally did some simple throw and won my right to go to the nationals.

**Mike Belzer:** Okay.

**Jim Bregman:** So, in our national championships at the time they allow players from other countries in our nationals, which didn't make sense to me.

**Mike Belzer:** Right.

**Jim Bregman:** That's what it was. So, I had to fight a Brazilian gentleman name, *Shinohara*, I think, who's very good and I threw him for a point. I threw another local at the nationals for a point and the nationals were held, I believe, at the World's Fair in New York City. So, I came through and I won my weight class. And then for the overall championship, I lost on a decision to a heavyweight Japanese import, who was a very skilled *judo* guy named *Uemura*. So, he was the grand champion, but I was the national champion in my weight division.

And some of the teachers came up to my mother at that nationals and explained to her that based on what they saw at the regional championships that my mom shouldn't expect that I would do very well. And they were trying to cushion her I believe, for the disappointment of me losing the match. We're up on the stage and it was the competition area. And the audience was out like in an auditorium and I saw my mother crying. So, we were warming up, I left the stage and I came down and sat next to her and I asked her why she was crying.

And she said, "Well, nothing I, it's nothing," and I pressed her. And she said that the teachers had come up and expressed the feeling that since I did such a marginal performance at the regionals that, you know, just don't expect too much. "It's okay, he's going to do all right, but maybe not win the thing". So, I smiled at her and I said, "Mom, just relax - I want you to sit back. I want you to watch the show." Because they have not seen

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

anything that I can do, in general, it is just a game but this is serious”. And I told her “Just relax and everything’s going to be just fine”.

So, by then I was somewhat infuriated. I went back up on the stage and got completely warmed up. And I was even more motivated than normal. And literally tore through the competition and devastated them. And after the competition, a lot of these people came up wanting to spend time with me and congratulate me. And after all that I kind of quickly got out of there, got dressed and took my mom out to a nice restaurant on top of a hotel somewhere and we just spent the evening together talking.

**Mike Belzer:** That’s awesome. That’s great.

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah. She was – when my father was in WWII staging to go to Japan, my mother ran the store and the carry out and took care of the home front. As they ran it, moms and ladies throughout the United States in supporting effort. She was a very tough lady, very well-educated woman and not very prone to tears. So, when I saw that I knew that something was really a miss.

**Mike Belzer:** Right.

**Jim Bregman:** And I took care of that on the mat. And she was quite happy with me after that.

**Mike Belzer:** All right. That’s great. Yeah, moms are our best cheerleading section and support and that’s, that’s awesome. I’m starting to get a little bit of reverb on your audio. How is my audio to you?

**Jim Bregman:** You’re sounding okay.

**Mike Belzer:** Okay. So, let’s do this. Let’s take another short break. We will – let me just stop the recording here. Okay, good.

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

### PART III

**Mike Belzer:** You just kicked butt at the nationals. And you've assured your mom that everything is going to be okay.

**Jim Bregman:** Yes.

**Mike Belzer:** So then, you get to go on the enjoyable flight back to Japan?

**Jim Bregman:** Well, no, I had to stay another month or so for the Olympic trials.

**Mike Belzer:** Oh, okay.

**Jim Bregman:** So then we had the Olympic trials. And the same situation occurred. And I won the trials. Then I made the Olympic team and we had to go out to a training session in California, San Jose State University where our coach had his dojo and he was the coach of the '64 team.

**Mike Belzer:** All right, so then you make it back to Japan. And now you are focused on we're going to the Olympics.

**Jim Bregman:** Yes.

**Mike Belzer:** So, it sounds like your training pretty much resumed to the usual grind just with a little bit more focus on this "is our next competition, the Olympics".

**Jim Bregman:** That is right. And I trained at *Meiji* university with the team as did Ben Campbell. Ben was a member of the team as was Paul Maruyama and George Harris. And the four of us went to various places and trained. We were a little careful on training. We didn't want to become injured.

**Mike Belzer:** Right.

**Jim Bregman:** So, the *randori* sessions were a little lighter. But we were all in good shape.



The 1964 Judo Olympic Team  
(L-R) George Harris, Jim Bregman,  
Coach Yosh Uchida, Paul Maruyama, Ben Campbell

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

**Mike Belzer:** That's awesome. When the Olympics actually started and you began your competitions, do you remember how many days it took and how many competitions you were actually in?

**Jim Bregman:** Yes, there were four group classes and they completed a weight class in one day.

**Mike Belzer:** Okay.

**Jim Bregman:** So, Paul Maruyama was the lightweight, went first. And then the next day I fought. And I think I had four or five matches and lost in the semi-finals. And then I had to come back up through a thing called a repechage, and I had one or two matches there to decide the Olympic bronze medal match.

**Mike Belzer:** And what weight category was this again?

**Jim Bregman:** Middleweight category, 176 pounds.

**Mike Belzer:** A 176 pounds, okay. Do you have a most memorable win?

**Jim Bregman:** Yes, I think it was a *Te Garuma* on an Argentinian player named Perez. It was a counter to his attack.



*Te Garuma*

<https://youtu.be/epNrf1WYzzc>



An *Uchi Mata* throw executed by Jim Bregman against Ranken of Australia.

<https://youtu.be/tcEC1sW1uV0>

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

**Mike Belzer:** Nice.

**Jim Bregman:** It was very well executed. Unfortunately, that is still not on YouTube for that one.

**Mike Belzer:** Right.

**Jim Bregman:** But that was a really perfect execution of a throw. The others were okay, but not that technically correct.

**Mike Belzer:** Right. How about grappling? Did you ever win by pinning?

**Jim Bregman:** No, I didn't. I was not as skilled in grappling techniques as I was in *tachi-waza* standing techniques. So, my philosophy was not to diminish grappling. But if I could get my opponent to the mat, it's just a lot faster and a lot easier.

**Mike Belzer:** Right.

**Jim Bregman:** If I threw someone and I only got a half a point, I would follow up with a hold. But most of my matches never ended in a grappling situation.

**Mike Belzer:** And how about to lose? What was that like in the Olympics?

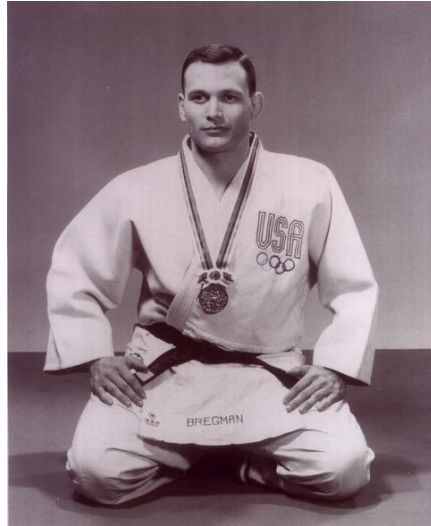
**Jim Bregman:** Well, we were always told to be stoic and to take winning or losing as part of the game. Hofmann of Germany was my opponent, and I threw for half a point with a left shoulder throw. And he put an arm lock on me as we rolled on the ground. And the referee actually called *mate*. And in the film, you can see his hand go out, saying *mate*, which means stop. Hofmann continued the arm bar and I had to pat out because my arm was going to be broken.

So, I patted out and held my arm close to my chest. And we bowed out, I shook hands with him – it was very cordial. Came off of it and that was sort of that. Then as a reassuring gesture, my Japanese teammates from *Meiji* and my teammates and many others would come up to me randomly and say that, you know, they thought that I should have won that match. But that's how it goes, you know, take the good and the bad.

**Mike Belzer:** Yes.

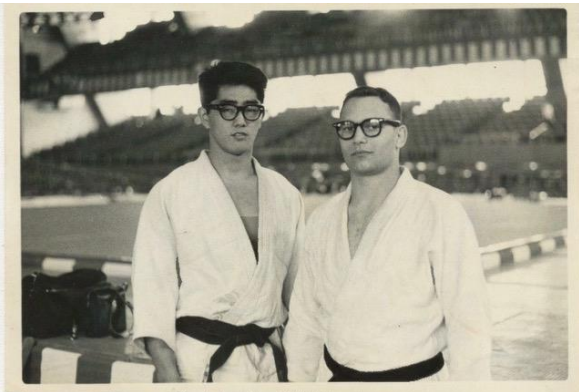
**Jim Bregman:** And I fought a bronze medal. That was quite nice.

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

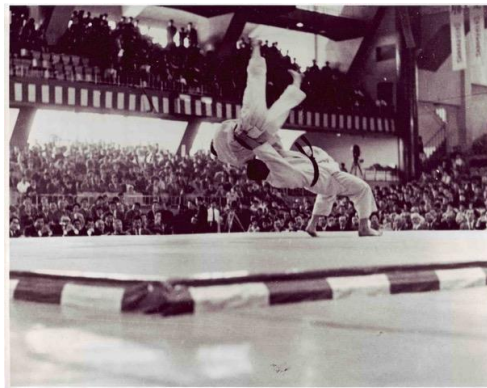


Jim Bregman, age 22, sitting *seiza* with his Olympic Bronze medal

*NOTE: Jim Bregman and Hayward Nishioka also gave a formal demonstration of the Judo throwing methods at the 1963 All Japan Judo Championships. See pictures below.*



Hayward Nishioka (L) Jim Bregman ( R)



*Ura-Nage*

**Mike Belzer:** Yes, I mean, if you could come away with any medal at the Olympics, you know, you are a champion. And that's just how it is. Were your parents able to go?

**Jim Bregman:** No, unfortunately not. They couldn't afford the trip. They were of modest means actually. I came back and they had a party for me and we rejoiced. And they displayed the medals. By that time, it had become a bar or a restaurant and they displayed my trophies and my medals in the back of the bar so that customers could see them. "That's me up there."



## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

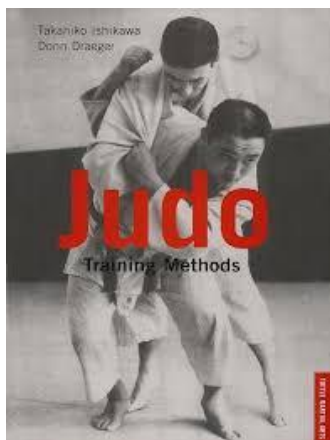
**Mike Belzer:** That's great.

**Jim Bregman:** It was a lot of fun, yes.

**Mike Belzer:** Well, you had mentioned when we were talking before that another interesting thing with Donn Draeger was because of the weight training and the other Judo coaching that he was doing, he actually helped a few different people win, you and the bronze, somebody else the silver and somebody else the gold. Can you talk a little bit about that?

**Jim Bregman:** Yes, one of my roommates at the *Ichigaya* house was a gentleman from Canada named Doug Rogers who was a heavyweight. And he was really a beautifully proficient technician in *judo*. His skill was superb. His training etiquette was fantastic. The other gentleman was *Inokuma*. And *Inokuma* was a gold medalist in 1964. And he attributed publicly his success partially to Donn Draeger's weight training program.

At the time, the Japanese *judo* community and I think other martial arts weren't really into weight training. They thought it was unnecessary. They didn't really understand the benefits of weight training. And they sort of derided those of us who trained with weights. But that being said, *Inokuma* got a gold, Doug got a silver and I got a bronze. So, it wasn't totally the weight training, but I can assure you that that weight training and the other training we did was on the aerobic side was really a key factor in all the physical performance that contributed greatly to our wins.



*Isao Inokuma* – Gold Medal



Doug Rogers – Silver Medal



Jim Bregman – Bronze Medal

Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

More throws from the 1963 demonstration.



*Yoko Gake*



*Kata Garuma*

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

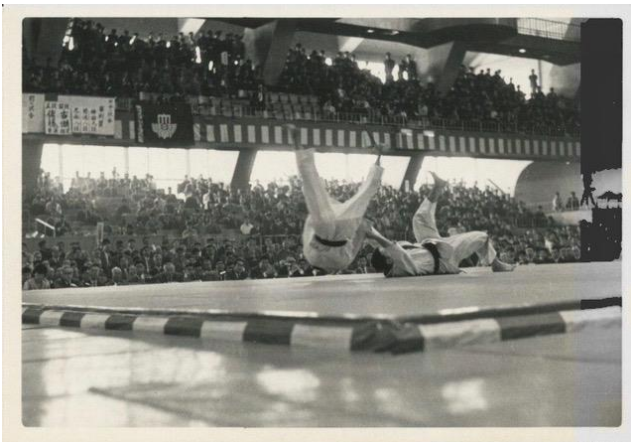
### PART IV

**Mike Belzer:** Okay good. Alright so you have won the bronze. Other people in the *Ichigaya* house have also won medals and how soon after that all happened did you decide “Hey, I have to go home now?”

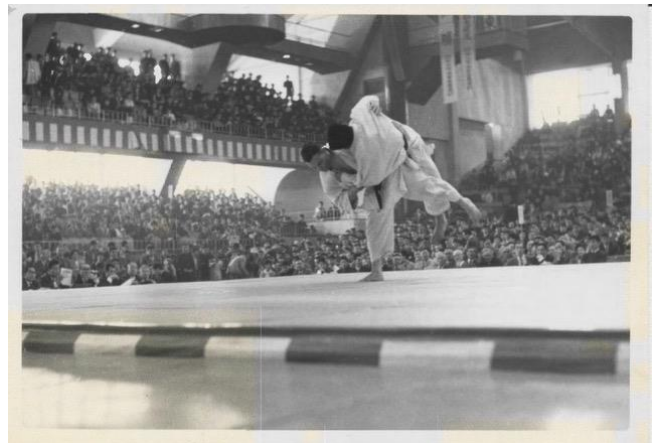
**Jim Bregman:** (chuckle) Well, the good news is that the U.S. Olympic committee put us all on a plane to go-- entire U.S. Olympic committee. Sorry, the entire U.S. team was flown by the Olympic committee to and from Japan.

**Mike Belzer:** Okay.

**Jim Bregman:** So after the Olympics and judo was the last event, probably the last event of the Olympics, or close to it, we literally just all packed up and got on the plane and came home.



*Tomoe Nage*



*Harai Goshi*

**Mike Belzer:** Wow, so what happened to schooling and all that, did you return to Japan to finish school?

**Jim Bregman:** No, I had-- somehow, I had finished because I attended summer schools.

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah.

**Jim Bregman:** Every semester I went to summer school, so I had enough credits to graduate and they mailed me my diploma; there was no graduation ceremony. They mailed me my diploma.

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

**Mike Belzer:** You had mentioned that you had a life changing experience with one of your professors at Sophia University. Can you talk a little bit about that?



**Jim Bregman:** Oh sure. Well, when I first got there, I had enrolled in western civilization course that took place about 9 O'clock on a Saturday morning. So after we finished training, I had to go to this Saturday morning class which was a big mistake because by the end of the week, I was exhausted and this western civilization course was pretty intense. The professor's name was Laney, who was also the dean of the university and I inadvertently dozed off in the back of his class. I sat in the back of the class. There were about 50 people in the lecture hall or so and obviously he saw me nodding or sleeping actually and he asked me "When did the Battle of Hastings occur, Mr. Bregman?" So somehow out of the bleeriness, I responded clearly "1066, Father". So he said, "That's very good Mr. Bregman. I would like to see you in my office after this class." So I figured out I'm in big trouble. I'm 18 years old. I don't know what's going on. I go to the Dean's office. Well, the first thing he asked me was "Did you fall asleep in my class?" and I say "Yes, Father, I did. I fell asleep in your class and I'm very sorry for that." So he said, "Well, why?" So I explained to him about the week that I had and the reason that I was there in Japan and what I was doing and he said, "Okay, I understand. Try not to do that again." I said, "Okay, I will."

I made an effort to never fall asleep in his class again and over time he became a mentor and was very interested in my athletic career and my academic career. So I was a religion and philosophy major for my first three years and then I got a call that the Dean wanted to see me and have a chat with me. Frequently, he spoke to me so I went to his office and the secretary let me in and I sat down and Father then said, "Well, Jim, I see from your transcript that it's highly likely you're going to become a priest when you graduate because you're a religion and philosophy major." I was puzzled by that. I said, "No, Father, as you know, I'm Jewish. I have no intention of becoming a priest." and he kind of smiled at me and said, "Oh okay. Alright. I got it. You're going to become a Rabbi then because of your interest in comparing religion and philosophy." And again I said, "Well, I have no-- I really don't know what I'm going to do when I graduate." And then he said, "Well, okay then I know what you're going to do. You're going to become a college professor. You're going to go home. You're going to get your master's degree in philosophy and religion. Then you're going to go to a nice university and you're going to get your Ph.D. You're going to do a thesis and then you're going to teach religion and philosophy at maybe Georgetown University or something like that. Right close to your home." I said, "No, I don't really think so Father. I haven't thought much about what I'm going to do after graduation." So he said, "Well, I have thought about what you're going to do after graduation. He said, "In and in order to get a decent job I've laid out this curriculum for you for your

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

summer program and your final year and I think you should become an economics major and take all of these courses and the way I've laid it out you will graduate with a degree in economics and a minor in religion and philosophy. How does that sound?" I said, "Well, Father, if that's what you recommend. I'll certainly do it," and that's exactly what I did.

Fortunately, with that degree, I was able to get a job with the federal government after passing the federal service entrance exam and went on to night school, some of which was at government expense and got my MBA from American University. So Laney put me on the right course education wise and gave me some very good advice. A number of years later I got a call from him and he said he was visiting Georgetown University for a conference and he would like to come over and visit my parents. So, I went down to Georgetown and picked him up, and we came back to the apartment, and we had a lovely dinner, and my parents were thrilled to see my professor, and we stayed there for two to three hours chatting about Japan, and his experience in teaching and being a dean, and I drove him back and that was just a really nice experience for me to see him again.

**Mike Belzer:** It is always amazing to see the relationship that can develop between a teacher and a student in terms of a life changing experience.



The Perfect *Uke* – Donn Draeger works with a young Walter Lamb - 1956.



Donn Draeger works with nine year old "Peanut" on a *Jo* technique in Malaysia in 1979.

**Jim Bregman:** Yes, certainly is and you don't realize the impact you have on students until years later they come back to you and thank you for something you did.

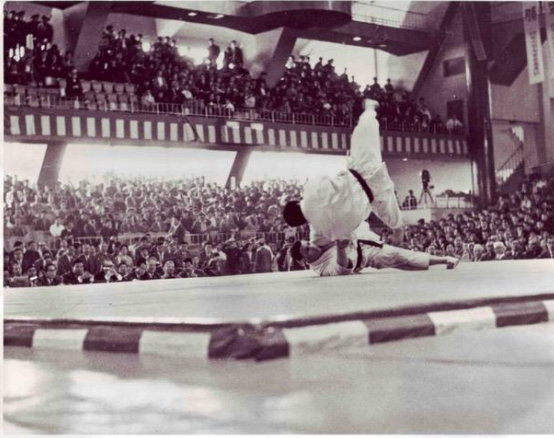
**Mike Belzer:** Yeah.

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

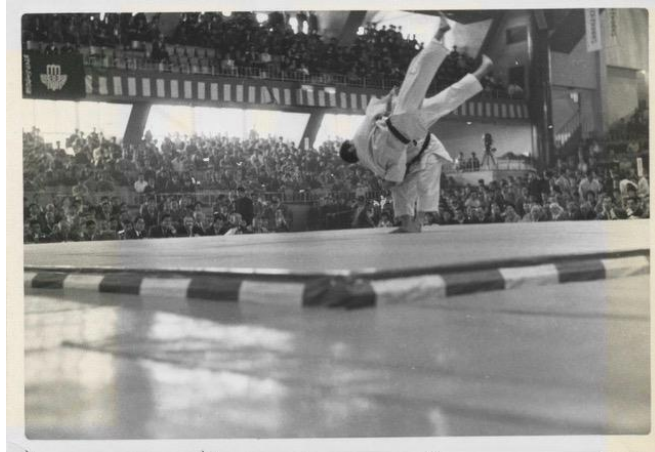
**Jim Bregman:** I've been very fortunate over the years in my teaching judo career many students have come up to me and thanked me for what I taught them in judo and what I recommended they do in their personal lives so it's very gratifying.

**Mike Belzer:** Very rewarding, yeah. So you came back and you were about what? You were 22, 24?

**Jim Bregman:** 22.



*Uki Otoshi*



*Ippon Seoi Nage*

**Mike Belzer:** You made the decision that judo as a profession was probably not going to be the way to go. Open up your own dojo and you know – full steam ahead.

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah that was not going to be lucrative enough. I didn't think I could make a decent living doing that, but before I had to make career decisions, I had one more thing to go to and that was the world championship in Rio de Janeiro. Actually I had two events to go to, now that I think about it. The world championships in Rio and the Maccabiah games in Israel, Tel Aviv so I trained for another nine months or so and we sent a team to São Paulo, Brazil and I won another bronze medal there. And then we went to the Maccabiah games in '65 where I competed and won a gold medal and my friend Anton Geesink, who was Olympic gold medalist in '64, was there and he and I did a demonstration of his techniques at the Mac games.

Then a few years later, I started a judo club in the evenings and I ran summer camps and Anton, I believe, came as a guest instructor to the summer camps at least once or twice. I think it was twice and he taught at the summer camp. Yeah, we also had an international exchange program going. There was a training program I ran, Camp Olympus – Target 76, which had young people training in a summer camp for seven weeks and my friends Bill Montgomery and Larry Thorpe were the main teachers and trainers there and I came up on the weekend and trained them and the ladies that participated in that

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

went to the British Open championships and won gold and silver medals there. And the British Open was the precursor to women being allowed to go into the Olympics and the world championships. It was a pretty strong team.

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah.

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah. In addition to that we took teams and I sponsored teams to South Africa. This was in the mid '70s or '80s and a close friend of mine, Allen Coage, who happened to be black was the captain of that team and the quid pro quo going to South Africa with American team was that it would be a totally integrated team and the African Union agreed to that. I really don't like this, but at the time the U.S. Olympic committee and the IJF (International Judo Federation) and everybody else, ostracized and boycotted South Africa so I had a lot of legal fight with the U.S. State Dept. and the governing body of *judo*, in order to get a group of us to go to South Africa. So, the arrangement was that we-- I mean, go to South Africa. The arrangement was that we weren't going there as a United States team representing the United States. We were going there as individuals.

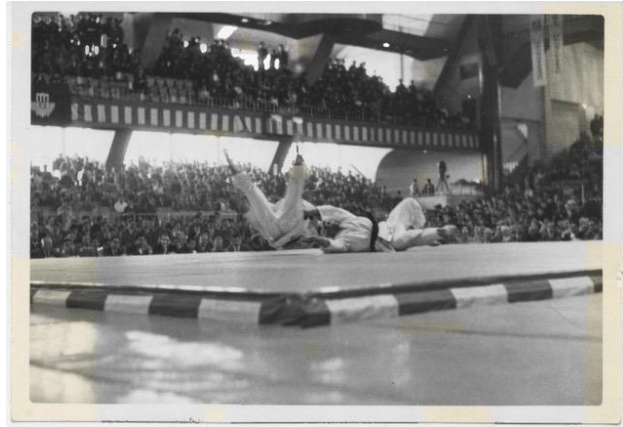
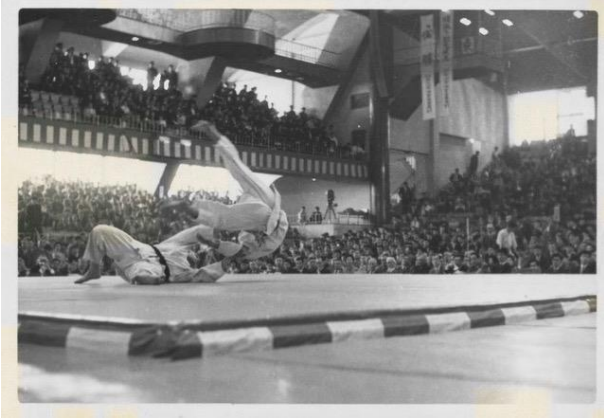
**Mike Belzer:** Right.

**Jim Bregman:** And they couldn't restrict individual travel so we didn't have a full travel permit but we all went together and somehow when we got there, we all had jerseys that said U.S.A. And the South African team fought our teams and it was a good exchange of sports and camaraderie and there were no discrimination or adverse activity and I believe and I still believe that sport should not be interfered with by politicians. And when they were talking about boycotting the Chinese games, I, and a number of other Olympians, along with Senator Patty Murray and several other congressional members, House members and Senate members, held a news conference on the Capitol steps. Basically imploring congress not to allow a boycott of the Chinese games. There was a movement in the Congress to pass legislation that would have implemented the boycott so we kind of squashed that. But sadly, in 1980, they boycotted the Russian games.

**Mike Belzer:** Right - I remember that.

**Jim Bregman:** Which led to Russian boycott of the Los Angeles games. So, the idea of the Olympics going back to ancient Greece was that you set all of the wars aside and you set all the disputes aside and you come together in sport and that's the Olympic pathos if you will. So, I have always fought against any kind of political retributions against nations that affects the competition. The athletes of the 1980 Olympics team were devastated by missing that competition. That was very sad.

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020



Two views of *Yoko Guruma*

**Mike Belzer:** It was, yeah. I knew a guy that was training to be on that team and, yeah, it was totally devastating for him.

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah - you put in 10-15 years of your life and at the last minute you're told, well, sorry, you're not going to go. It's not right.

**Mike Belzer:** Not right. I would like to take you back to Japan for just a moment.

**Jim Bregman:** Okay.

**Mike Belzer:** And talk with you a little bit about training in *Shindo Muso Ryu jojutsu/jodo*.



Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020



*Shimizu Takaji-sensei, 25<sup>th</sup> Head Master of Shindo Muso Ryu Jojutsu*

**Jim Bregman:** Okay.

**Mike Belzer:** I sent you that the NHK episode that we just we saw yesterday which was pretty cool.

**Jim Bregman:** Definitely - yes.

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah. I've been practicing that art myself, and I was introduced to it when I was in Japan when I was 18 and invited to go there through Donn Draeger, but by Howard Alexander.

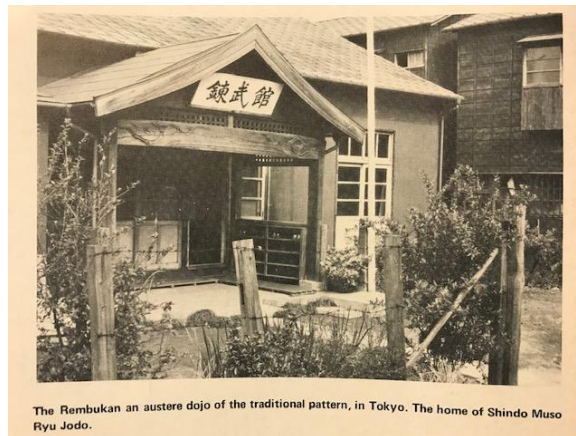
**Jim Bregman:** Right.

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah, and he just said, "Well, if you would want to come and try something different. You might want to try this stick fighting *dojo*." And I really had no context of what I was doing out there, but then I'm invited. "Stick fighting sounds cool; I will go". But I had no idea that it was at the *Rembukan Dojo*. It was under *Shimizu-sensei*, the 25th headmaster, and it turns out that *Shimizu-sensei* and Donn Draeger and *Kaminoda-sensei* - were all on that *Camp Bushido* tour across United States. I think it was in 1970.



Donn Draeger speaks with SMR Headmaster *Shimizu Takaji* inside the *Rembukan*



The *Rembukan Dojo*

**Jim Bregman:** Yes.

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah, and I was 13 when my dad took my brother and I to see this group of guys from Japan to demonstrate and I didn't know what I was looking at. It was just really cool.

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah.

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

**Mike Belzer:** The big guy, Draeger. The little guy. The little Japanese guys - so I didn't put it together until after I was at the *dojo* for a few months. *Draeger-sensei* came back from the jungles of Borneo and we heard he's coming to the *dojo* and when I saw Draeger and *Shimizu* together. It was like "Oh!".

**Jim Bregman:** Wow.

**Mike Belzer:** Wow, now I get it.

**Jim Bregman:** Right.

**Mike Belzer:** So I'm wondering what your experience was like. How did you start training there? How frequently did you do it? How involved did you get into it?

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah, I think we went at least two times a week if not more. It's all kind of a blur because it seems like in retrospect so much was going on all the time if you will. But Draeger was forever interested in martial arts in a broad sense and he suggested that a number of us start *jodo* and we said, "Sure." Well, the way he does things or did things, he would lead and we would follow. So we followed and Jon Bluming, Backhus, Ken Bush, a friend of mine, myself and Draeger would go to *Shimizu-sensei's dojo*. For an hour or two, we would be taught by *Shimizu-sensei*, *bojutsu* and it was a lot of fun and the thing I think that these judoka liked about it was you're not getting slammed down by a man.



Jon Bluming (L) on *Jo* vs. Donn Draeger (R) on *Bokken*.  
*Shimizu-sensei* looks on.



Draeger using the *Kusarigama*

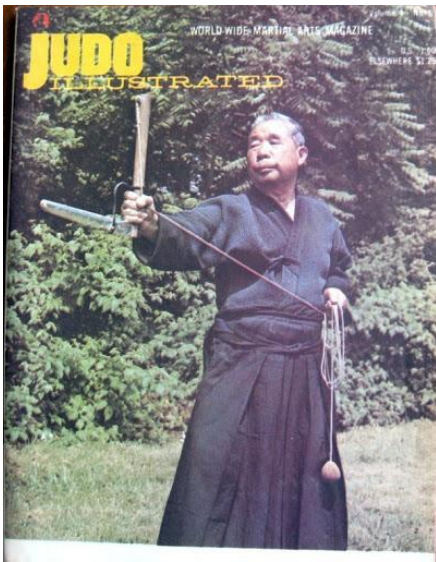
**Mike Belzer:** Right.

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

**Jim Bregman:** And that had a lot of attraction if you will. And the guy didn't have his hands all over you and he wasn't trying to annihilate you. Although we were having a stick in your face and that was a little disconcerting. It's not quite as disruptive as getting *makikomi'd*. *Makikomi* is when you throw somebody and fall right on top of him.

**Mike Belzer:** That's very nice.

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah, that's really pleasant. But it was an honor and a privilege to have trained with *Shimizu-sensei* and he was just absolutely incredible. Of course, he taught us the *bojutsu kata* and we did a lot of that but he also had a device called a *kusarigama*. And this is like a sickle that has a handle on it like you would be chopping weeds or something and then it had a chain with the metal ball on the end of it. But at the *dojo*, he had the sickle and he had a rope with a like a baseball or something like that on the end of it and what he could do with that device against the sword was absolutely incredible. He could take the chain and wheel it around somehow. Put it around your neck. Pull your head down and say goodbye to your head at the blade of *kusarigama*. Do I have the name of that right?



*Shimizu-sensei demonstrating the Kusarigama*

**Mike Belzer:** Yep, it's perfect.

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah.

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

**Mike Belzer:** When you were training, I'm comparing and contrasting this to my own experience there because I spent nine months there. It was the same deal. It was twice a week. It was in the afternoon. It's like from 1-3. It was mainly foreigners there. *Shimizu sensei* was there. There were a couple of other Japanese but you know it was mainly a foreigner thing. I remember of course we learned the 12 *kihon* -solo and then also paired-*tandoku* and *sotai*. And then we got into the *Omote*, the first set of 12 *kata*. Did you do the same thing?



A young Jim Bregman (Left) practicing *Jodo*.  
Jon Bluming looks on in the background.

**Jim Bregman:** Yes, I think we did. There's another gentleman and another *sensei* that was there who was *iaijutsu* master.

**Mike Belzer:** Was that *Kuroda*?

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020



*Kuroda Ichitaro draws his sword.*



*Kuroda demonstrates a Jutte technique against Kaminoda-sensei.*

**Jim Bregman:** Yes.

**Mike Belzer:** *Kuroda* - okay.

**Jim Bregman:** And he would demonstrate for us *iaijutsu* and I was just amazed. I couldn't believe that. That was incredible.

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah.

**Jim Bregman:** *iaijutsu*, for those of you who don't know, is you start I guess in a kneeling position and you bring your sword up doing a number of things and without looking, you re-holster your sword, and I have no idea how you do that. It was just startling to see that done.

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah, and of course it's a live blade.

**Jim Bregman:** Yes, it's extremely sharp. As a matter of fact, I could shave with it. I'm sure I could.

**Mike Belzer:** So, as you're working with the *jo*, you start by using the *jo*. Did you ever get to the point where you were trained how to use the *bokken*, the wooden sword?

**Jim Bregman:** Yes.

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

**Mike Belzer:** The receiving end.

Donn Draeger & *Kaminoda Tsunemori* - *Shindo Muso Ryu* circa 1960

<https://youtu.be/eQ1c5mHr34U>

*Shimizu* and *Kuroda* demonstrate *Shindo Muso Ryu Jojutsu* circa 1960

<https://youtu.be/rPNsTihyHZ0>

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah, we did both sides.

**Mike Belzer:** Okay.

**Jim Bregman:** But I don't have too much of a recollection of all that. I do know we did both sides and I actually found that very relaxing if you will. You know it was very-- you were very focused. Nothing else came into your mind and you were totally again I'm going to say *mushin*, or mindless state, where things just flowed and things happened and the bo went up and you brought it back and it was very natural after a while.

**Mike Belzer:** Do you remember the name of that term that you just did with your arms?

**Jim Bregman:** No, I'm afraid I don't remember any of the terms.

**Mike Belzer:** *Kaeshi Tsuki* .

**Jim Bregman:** *Kaeshi Tsuki* -okay.

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah. That's cool. That's great. It's great that you were there at the *Rembukan* with *Shimizu Sensei* - that is awesome. So now--

**Jim Bregman:** Can you remind me where the *Rembukan* was located?

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

**Mike Belzer:** *Shibuya.*

**Jim Bregman:** Okay, *Shibuya.*

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah, yeah. It was just amazing.

**Jim Bregman:** Is it still there?

**Mike Belzer:** No, it's a parking lot.

**Jim Bregman:** Oh no.

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah. After *Shimizu* died, the dojo was closed and then they erased it and I heard they made it into a parking lot.

**Jim Bregman:** It's very sad.

**Mike Belzer:** Very sad, yeah. But you know what's great - on YouTube they have bunch of video of *Shimizu* and *Kuroda* practicing all of the different kata sets.

**Jim Bregman:** Okay.

**Mike Belzer:** So that's all there and there's a lot of *Draeger-sensei* also doing *jojutsu*.

**Jim Bregman:** Okay I'll go check that out.

**Mike Belzer:** That's pretty amazing. Alright now I have a few bonus questions from some of my friends and these few come from Christopher Sanmugam from Malaysia and he was also a personal student of Donn Draeger. He started *Shindo Muso Ryu* training I think when he was about 16 and every year Draeger would go to Malaysia, he would stay there for



## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

about three to four months and go out on these weapon safaris with different people. While he was there, he was introducing *Shindo Muso Ryu* to Malaysia so Christopher became one of his personal students.

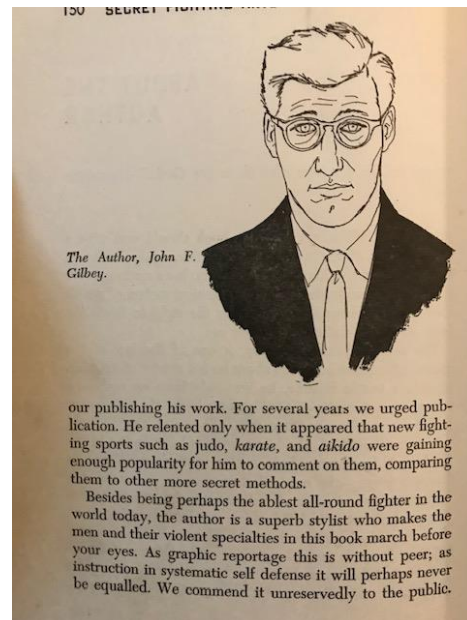
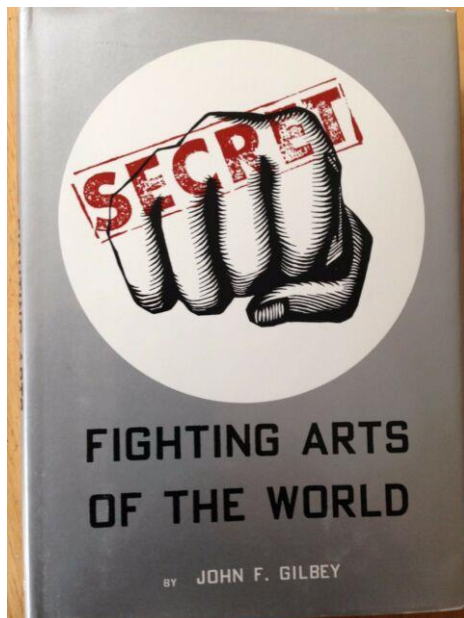


Donn Draeger & Christopher Sanmugam  
Malaysia 1979

**Jim Bregman:** Wow.

**Mike Belzer:** Here are his questions. Do you remember any of the jokes that he told?

**Jim Bregman:** Well, I'm going to divulge a secret that I have only divulged to one or two people and we took an oath not to say anything about the background of this book. The Secret Fighting Arts of the World by John F. Gilbey.

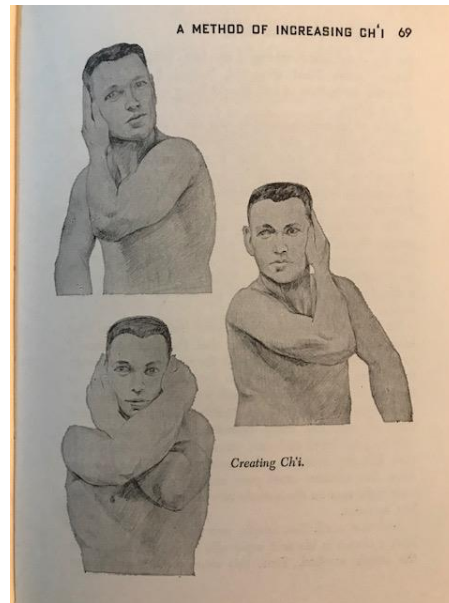


Jon Bluming wore glasses and posed as author John F. Gilbey.

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

**Jim Bregman:** And in this book you will find all of the jokes that Donn Draeger, I, Bluming and the gentleman whose pseudo name is John F. Gilbey. His name was Bob Smith and Bob Smith was the CIA station chief in Taiwan. Frequently, he came to *Tokyo* to train and was active in the Pentagon *judo* club in the early days when *sensei* Draeger and *Ishikawa* and I were there when I was a kid. Now, I don't know if you can see this but it is a method of increasing chi so this is how you do it.

**Mike Belzer:** Raise it up a little bit. Raise it up. Keep going, keep going. Yes, there we go. That's you?



Jim Bregman posed for the "Increasing Chi" section of the book.

**Jim Bregman:** Yes *[laughter]*. Right there's a detailed explanation of how you do this but if you do this daily you will have increased chi. Now, I'm going to show you another picture.

**Mike Belzer:** Yes. Okay. Can you lower it down a little bit? There we go right there, okay.

**Jim Bregman:** Who is that?

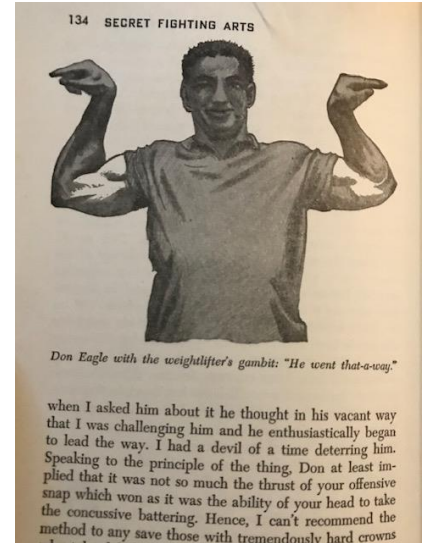
**Mike Belzer:** Who is that?

**Jim Bregman:** That guy is called Don Eagle.

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

**Mike Belzer:** Don Eagle - that's right : "He went that away".

**Jim Bregman:** That's right, Don Eagle. So the answer to the question about whether Draeger told any jokes, this entire book is a joke and it was published in 1963 and it was last published in 1973. Now, over the years Draeger and me and Bob Smith and the other cohorts who used to sit around thinking up these most ridiculous martial art things you could possibly imagine and Bob would-- Draeger would take the pictures. Bob would do the write ups and they send them back and forth to each other and finally got the book published and low and behold it was a smashing hit.



Donn Draeger posed for this shot.

**Mike Belzer:** Of course, we want to believe.

**Jim Bregman:** Absolutely, and over the years on numerous occasions, I have had people come up to me and say, " Jim, have you read the Secret Fighting Arts of the World by John Gilbey, and I would say with a straight face, "Of course I have. That is a premier book. What particular item in it would interest you?" The guy would say "The little dinky punch." and I would say, "Oh yeah. That really is very effective. Very effective". He said "Yeah, and I'm going to read the rest of it and I'm going to study it". You know, from time to time, people would come up to me actually believing that this junk book was real and it was hysterical trying to keep a straight face talking to these guys. But yes, this was the joke because we would hang around the *Ichigaya* house trying to figure out these things as a form of distraction and recreation, so there's a lot to learn in that book.

# Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

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## IV. GANGES GROIN GOUGE

*"He was not a sweet-tempered man, nor one of gentle mood."—Homer*

SRIM BABA is a nut-brown colored man, one chin too many, who fears no one and has nothing to fear. He lives along the Ganges not far from Benares.

Baba is a specialist and a real good one. His specialty is to attack in diverse ways that which is called in China "the golden target" and in America, "the family jewels." His art is so secret that he is not famous except among the top boxers of India, but, believe me, this is recommendation enough. He hides his art and has but one student.

It took two years of letters, gifts, influence, and pressure to bring about a meeting between us. But when we finally came together it was an electric four hours and worth all the trouble it took.

In those four hours Srime never once looked directly at me. He made no attempt to hide his dislike of me and his disapproval of the interview. Frankly, he had been forced into it by various means and he wasn't liking it. However.

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Mike Belzer: Yes, the *Parisian Halitotic Attack*.

## VII. PARISIAN HALITOTIC ATTACK

*"Lives there a man with breath so dread..."—A. Smith*

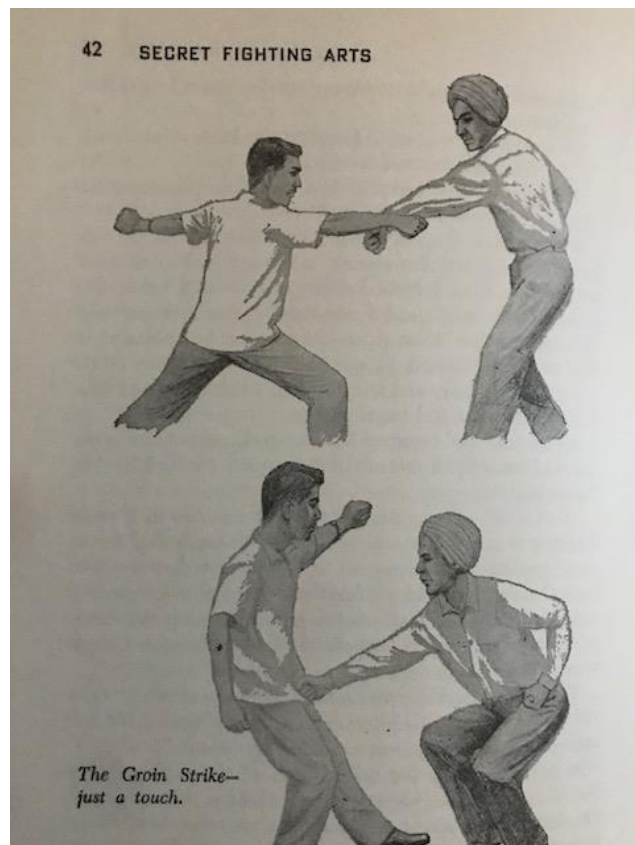
EVERY CHAPTER in this book represents my experience and doing save for the present one. It happened to Donn Draeger, a truthful man certainly, and a man known across the globe for his research in the fighting arts. What follows is culled from a letter Donn wrote me in 1953.

"...Jacques later introduced me to Henri Pougard—a most ordinary looking man with a most unusual specialty. He lived in a small walk-up apartment on Saint Marguerite Street and was a draftsman by trade. He was a graded judo man and full of ideas on the subject of self defense. Henri and I spent many pleasant evenings together.

"Then one evening while we were sipping absinthe in his flat, I asked him the innocuous question which set his eyes to sparkling: how important was specialized breathing to efficient fighting? He responded to the effect that over-stress on the breathing aspect might deter development of the entire art. And then he said, 'But I have a secret art in which breathing is nearly all.'

"I sipped my drink slowly. I had learned the lesson you

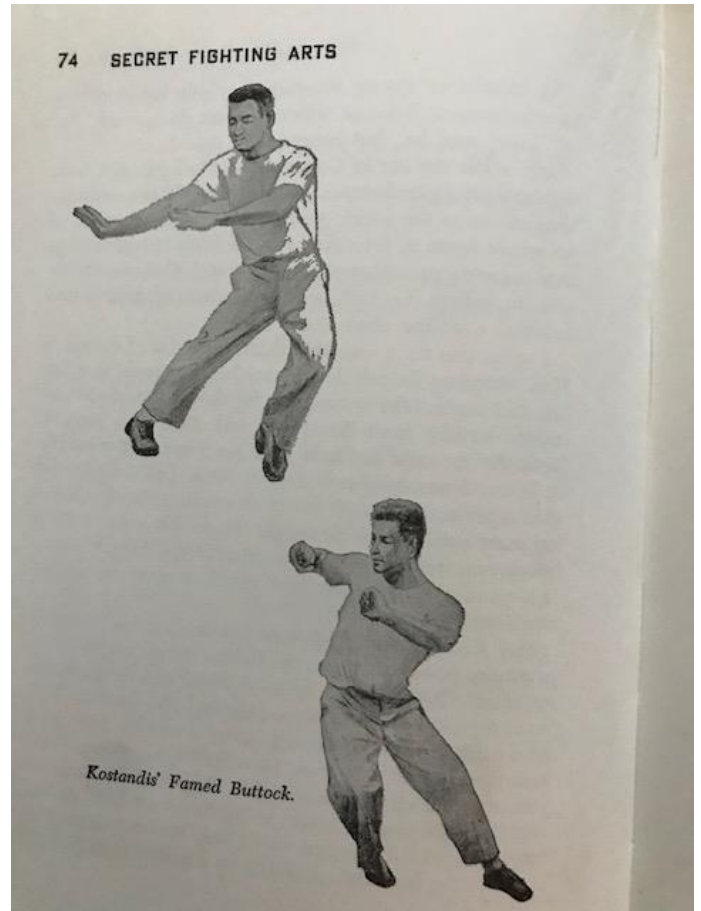
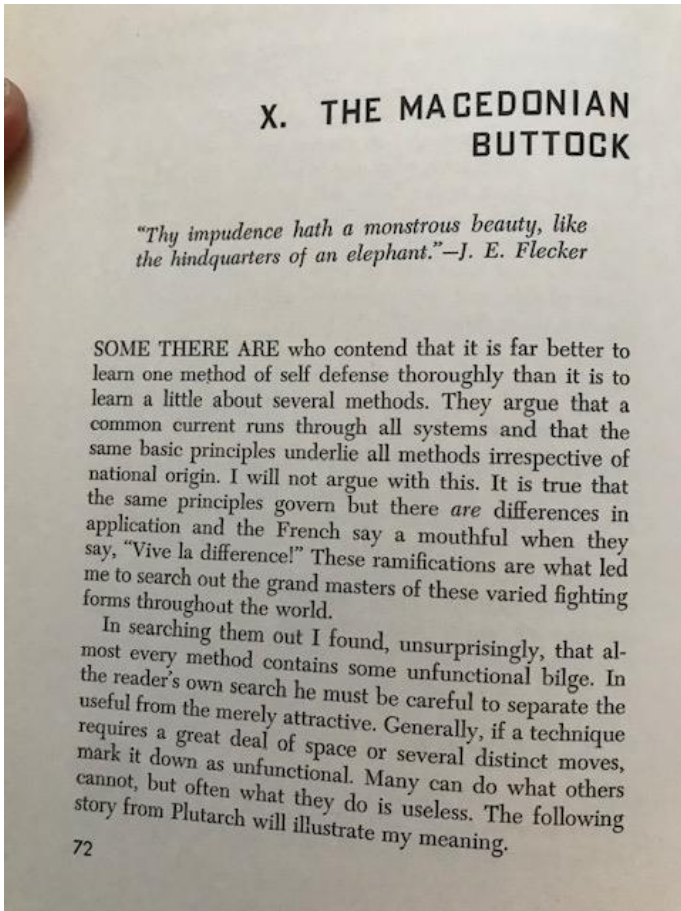
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# Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

**Jim Bregman:** Exactly, exactly.

**Mike Belzer:** The *Macedonian Buttock Attack*.

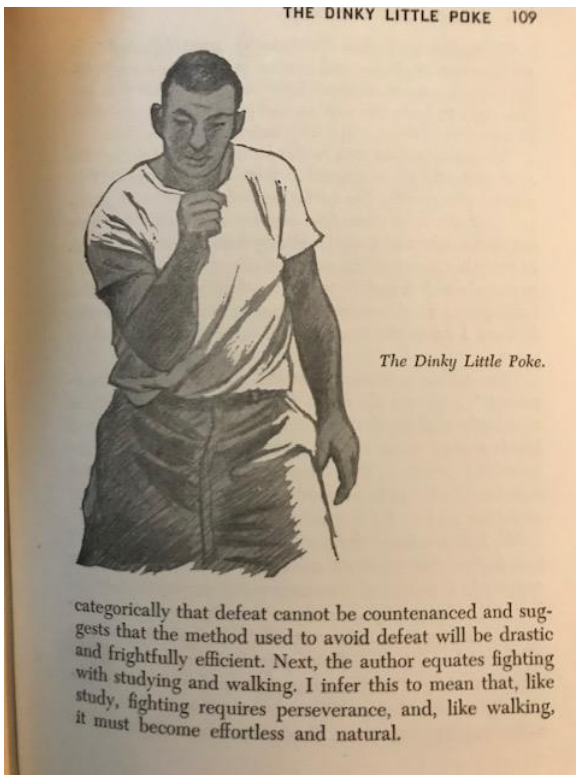


**Jim Bregman:** Yes.

**Mike Belzer:** Now, I'm not looking at the book. How is it that I know these things?

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

**Jim Bregman:** You probably read the book. You might have even practiced that little dinky punch thing.



**Mike Belzer:** I might have increased my chi a little bit.

**Jim Bregman:** Yes, yes. I would do that every morning.

**Mike Belzer:** Very popular exercise.

**Jim Bregman:** Very popular exercise.

**Mike Belzer:** Alright so.

**Jim Bregman:** For people that are into *taiji*.

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

**Mike Belzer:** Yes.

**Jim Bregman:** And Bob Smith was by the way an expert in *taiji*.

**Mike Belzer:** And he was a *judo* man.

**Jim Bregman:** And he was a *judo* man.



Robert W. Smith (right) practicing Chinese boxing.

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah, yeah. Alright. Going on with Christopher's bonus questions. Did Donn Draeger have a favorite drink?

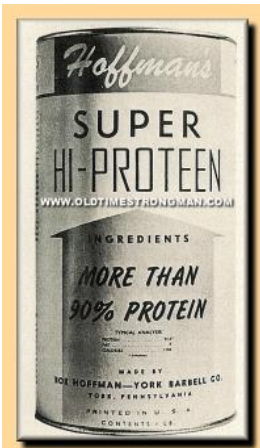
**Jim Bregman:** You know, I think his favorite drink was tea. I don't remember him drinking *sake* or beer very much, but when he was sitting at his typewriter, he always had a cup of tea.

**Mike Belzer:** Was he a milkshake guy? Did he drink milkshakes?

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah, he would have shakes in the morning for breakfast, and a number of us did, following his lead. So that was another thing he did.

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah, that's what Christopher remembers, "Let's go for a milkshake".

**Jim Bregman:** Yeah. We had a blender in the *Ichigaya* house and it was a quick way to get a lot of protein. You know lately, being the last 30 years, they've had a lot of drug problems in athletics of various kinds. Our drug of choice was Bob Hoffman's high protein.



**Mike Belzer:** Okay. Alright.

**Jim Bregman:** So we had high protein shakes.

**Mike Belzer:** Cool. How about his favorite actor? Did he ever share his favorite actor with you?

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

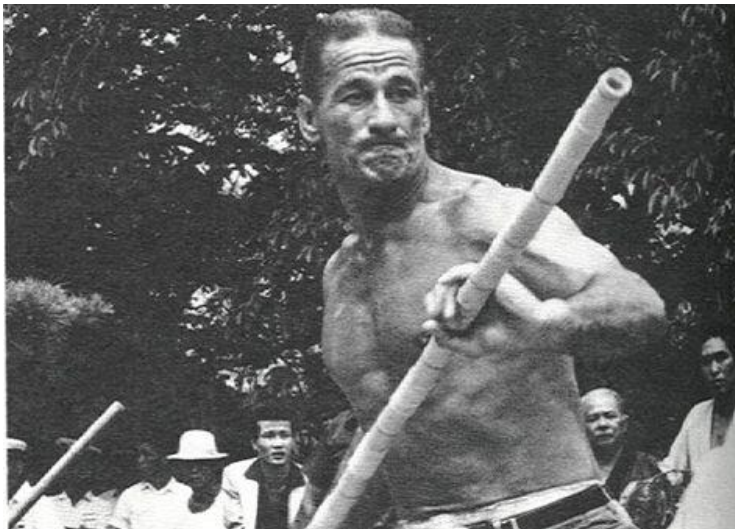
**Jim Bregman:** Could have been Shirley MacLaine. We were all extras in a Shirley MacLaine film and we were navy guys. We all had navy uniforms on and we were kind of in the background, and this is another way we made a few shekels. Unfortunately, right now I can't remember the name of the film, but I do remember Shirley MacLaine was in it, and I think that might have been one of his favorite actors.

**Mike Belzer:** How about “*You Only Live Twice*”? Were you involved with that at all with James Bond with all the *ninja* and everything?

Donn Draeger & Sean Connery – *You Only Live Twice*

<https://youtu.be/kHKL87Ju11o>

**Jim Bregman:** No, I wasn't involved in that, but he was. Draeger was.



Donn Draeger with Sean Connery on the set of “*You Only Live Twice*”

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah, totally.

**Jim Bregman:** Very able.

**Mike Belzer:** Okay. Did you ever see that he was hurt or in pain?

**Jim Bregman:** Well, none of us ever showed pain but we knew that-- we knew when we were hurt. We knew when one or the other of us were hurt because you would eschew practice - you would put a bandage of some kind, or use bandages cut up in innertubes - so yeah, from time to time, an elbow would be hurt or the knee would be hurt - but it was very stoic. I think that is the way to put it.



## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

**Mike Belzer:** Did you ever see Donn Draeger cry?

**Jim Bregman:** No, I never did.

**Mike Belzer:** The reason that question was asked because Christopher said he did see him cry once. Yeah, it was when he found out that *Shimizu-sensei* had died.

**Jim Bregman:** I can really believe that because I cried also.

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah, and the pain thing - did you know that he had his hand caught in the slamming of a car door in Malaysia?

**Jim Bregman:** No, I didn't know that.

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah, I don't know if it was left or his right hand but somebody slammed the door and his hand was in there and it almost severed the little finger. And so, of course, he went to the emergency room, and the doc said, "We're going to have to take it off", and Draeger said, "No, you can't do that. I need it for the sword."

**Jim Bregman:** Right.

**Mike Belzer:** "You have got to save the finger", and they said, "Okay, we're going to numb you up," and apparently, he was allergic to most pain killers. He said, "You can't do it. I'm allergic." He said, "Just go for it".

**Jim Bregman:** Just do it.

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah.

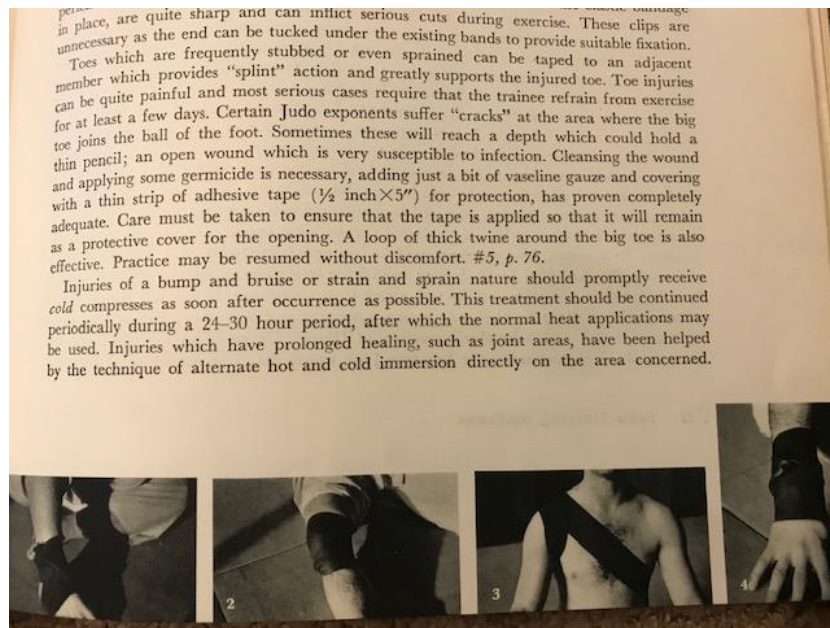
**Jim Bregman:** One thing that is true about the *Ichigaya* house crowd and Draeger and me, apparently we had very high thresholds of pain and before it really gets to bother you, it's really going to be extremely intense and even if it's extremely intense, for some reason, we didn't show it. We just go through it and that's been my experience with a lot of my friends in the martial arts. I have high pain thresholds.

## Jim Bregman Interview with Mike Belzer – May 2, 2020

**Mike Belzer:** Right. I have a young man that I have been corresponding with through email since he was 17 years old and he's I think he's 24 now and he also contacted me interested about Donn Draeger. So we have this established email and now it's Skyping and so he has a couple of questions and we're coming near the end, so be prepared. One of his questions is, "Is it easier for somebody to train the way you did nowadays as compared to when you were doing it back then?"

**Jim Bregman:** I would say that probably the training is similar at an international competitive level, but what's dramatically changed is the physical therapy and the medical advice and attention you could get if you're injured.

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah.



Typical rubber band wraps used for support in the "old" judo days.

**Jim Bregman:** That is a tremendous improvement from when I was competing. My career ended because I had destroyed my knee prior to the world championship, and I fought at world championships with a rubber tube around my right knee. It changed my style. I was in a right grip with left stance, and coincidentally I had one of the best days I've ever had. I threw three European champions with full points, but after that I came back for a knee operation and they had to open up the whole leg and it was very, very crudely done. I've had two full knee replacements since that were with modern science and modern techniques and modern therapy were very mild in comparison. So I would say that with the physical trainers able to rehab you and the medical profession able to fix you and the nutrition experts able to help you, there's a lot of support that a modern athlete has that we didn't have.

**Mike Belzer:** Right. Right.

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**Jim Bregman:** I'll give you just an example, which is kind of sad. I dislocated my right shoulder and went to a doctor in Japan and, inexplicably, to see how bad my shoulder was, he picked up my arm over my head and then he put it in a sling. That's not what you do when you have a dislocated shoulder. So yeah, I think the whole support environment is much, much better.

**Mike Belzer:** Okay and this young man, his name is Abdul Rashid, and his question is “What do you think of the current state of traditional martial arts and maybe what MMA has evolved into - like a compare and contrast?”

**Jim Bregman:** Well, I'm not a fan of MMA. I think it's more like a Roman Gladiator thing going and I don't like it. But on the other hand, it has given Kayla Harris and Ronda Rousey an opportunity to make a very, very good living and you can't do that in *judo*. And the reason that those ladies are successful at it is because they're very good martial artists and judo technicians. With all that being said, people enjoy watching it and I don't. Okay. So that's how I feel about MMA. I think that there has been, in the United States, a decline in *judo*, but throughout the world a resurgence in judo and in many, many countries *judo* is a primary sport- so yeah, I think *judo* and *karate* and *kendo* have all proliferated and gotten many more students involved. I don't know about the other martial arts and what their status is. I think *kendo* is very popular on the west coast, but I don't see a lot of that on the east coast. *Judo* perhaps is practiced in the *kendo* dojos, but I don't see much of that on the east coast.

**Mike Belzer:** Yes, a follow up question from him is “Would you-- what words of advice would you give somebody who wants to dedicate themselves or immerse themselves into training in the martial arts?”

**Jim Bregman:** I think it's a very good—*judo* is the gentle way, and training in the martial arts not only gives you the skills necessary to master the techniques of the art, but it teaches you a mind set and a way of life that has dramatic carryover value to your everyday living, and I would highly recommend it as an activity because it teaches you diligence, perseverance, patience. It teaches you respect. To respect others regardless of race, religion, or racial origin. It teaches you to be a globalist, if you will, and honor all cultures and honor all people equally and it gives you a sense of quiet confidence so that you're not afraid. Sun Tzu, I think, said: If you're-- this is a paraphrase. If you have fear, you have already lost. Well, *judo* teaches you to not have fear. There is no fear. It teaches you calmness and ability to face adversity and to figure out what the adversity is, whether a physical situation or mental situation, and come up with a rational, physical amenable, solution that is indeed mutually beneficial for you and those around you. So that philosophy of the martial arts I think is one of the things that has to be emphasized in modern teaching, and I think that's one of the biggest contributions that all the martial arts have made to humanity.

**Mike Belzer:** Great. If you were going to sum up your explanation of the legacy that Donn Draeger left - what would you say his legacy is?

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**Jim Bregman:** He “paid it forward” to literally thousands and thousands of younger people through his teaching and his example and his memory will live in all of his students forever and their students forever. So paying forward these gifts to the younger generation is his legacy – as are all of the students he taught and the people he inspired and motivated through his books, articles and writing.



**Donn Draeger in Hawaii – 1980**

**Photo courtesy of Michael Belzer**



**Photo courtesy of James Bregman**

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah. Well, it's been amazing speaking with you Jim, and learning about your life in judo and how everything evolved and one thing built on the next, and bullies are bullies, but because of that situation you were directed to deal with that problem and that's how you can make lemonade out of a lemon.

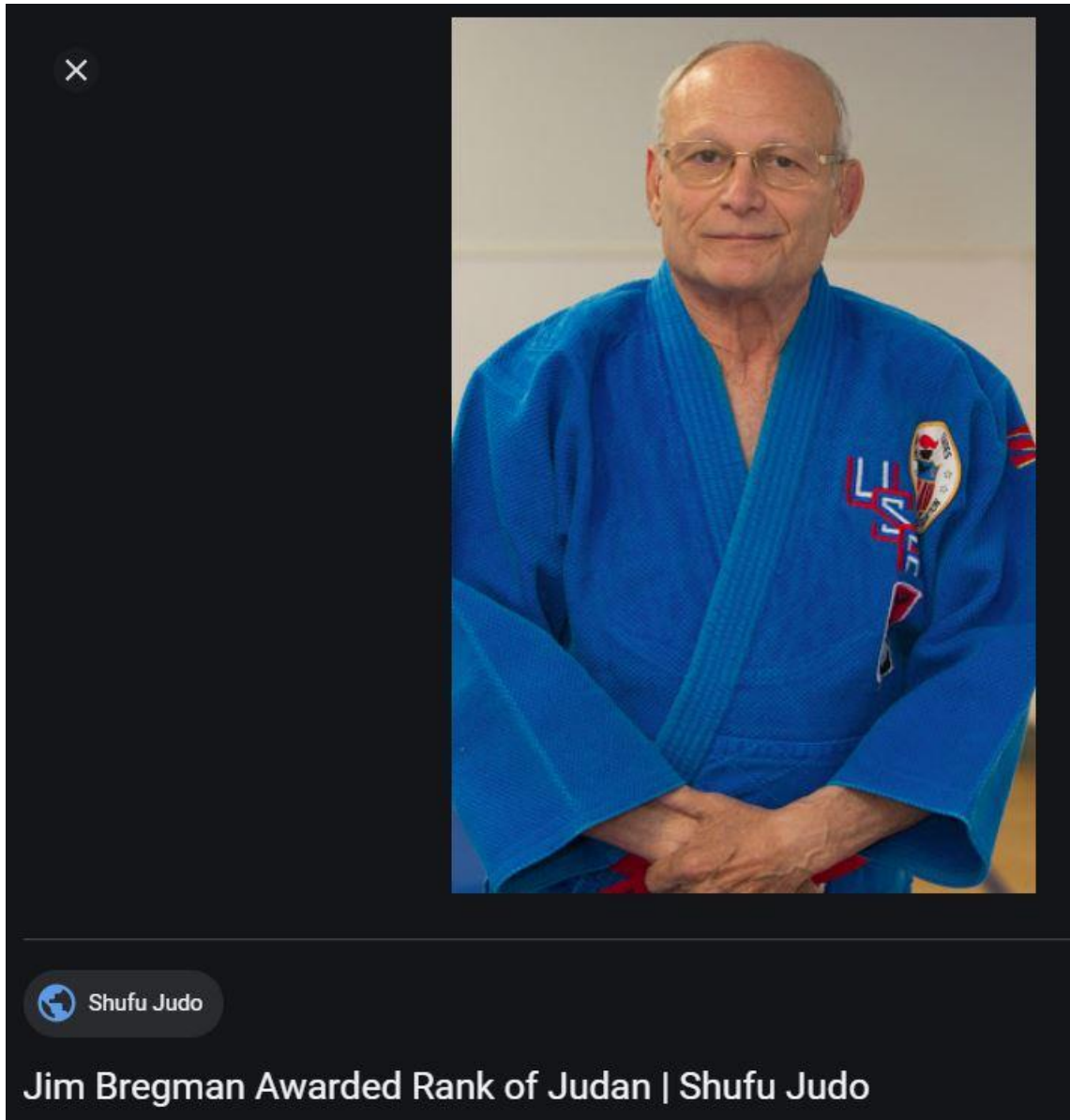
**Jim Bregman:** That's exactly right.

**Mike Belzer:** And you can never know where these things are going to lead you, and it lead you all over the world and you met so many amazing people, and then you have continued to be involved in U.S. Judo, and your rank now is Judan.

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**Jim Bregman:** Yes, that's right. That's quite an honorary rank and I'm humbled to have been awarded that. I don't feel personally I'm a *judan* because a *judan* in my thinking is *Mifune-sensei*.

**Mike Belzer:** Yeah. Well, it's the highest form of respect that you can get in the judo world and so, congratulations.



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**Jim Bregman:** Thank you.

**Mike Belzer:** And it's been great speaking with you and I'm looking forward to having more conversations with you.

**Jim Bregman:** Okay, and thanks for all the tips. You take care.

**Mike Belzer:** You're welcome. Let me zip off here.