

# SMAA JOURNAL



Shudokan Martial Arts Association • PO Box 6022, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-6022  
<http://smaa-hq.com/> • [shudokan@smaa-hq.com](mailto:shudokan@smaa-hq.com) • 1-734-645-6441

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 2017 SMAA DUES

Membership fees were due on January 1, 2017. Please be sure to pay your SMAA dues on time. You can either send a check to our headquarters or pay online at <http://www.smaa-hq.com/payments.php>. We accept Visa, MasterCard, and PayPal. This is a quick and safe way to make your annual SMAA membership payment.

We appreciate our members paying dues promptly. It makes life easier for the SMAA staff of volunteers, and it is representative of the type of self-discipline we are cultivating through the study of traditional Japanese martial arts.

### DONATIONS & TAX DEDUCTIONS

The SMAA is a federally tax-exempt, nonprofit corporation. As such, your donations to our association are tax deductible. Send your donations, in the form of a check or money order (made out to SMAA), to our headquarters in Michigan. We'll send you a letter back acknowledging your contribution, which you can then use for tax purposes. We hope you'll support the SMAA in our goal to preserve and promote traditional budo and koryu bujutsu.

### E-MAIL

Please make sure we have your correct e-mail address. Without this address, we can't e-mail you the *SMAA Journal*.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE SMAA

1. To promote and aid in the growth of Japan's traditional arts and ways.
2. To assist the public in achieving spiritual growth and physical development through budo/bujutsu.
3. To further friendship and understanding between Asian and Western martial artists.
4. To establish goodwill and harmony among martial artists of various systems.
5. To offer Western martial artists access to legitimate budo/bujutsu organizations and teachers in Japan.
6. To give practitioners of authentic budo/bujutsu recognition for their years of devotion to these arts.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Karl Scott Sensei
- Nicklaus Suino Sensei
- H. E. Davey Sensei

**Editor:** H. E. Davey Sensei

**Assistant Editor:** Troy Swenson Sensei

**Webmaster:** Don Prior Sensei

**General Manager:** Nicklaus Suino Sensei

修道館武道会

Do you have a new e-mail address? Have you sent it to [hedavey@aol.com](mailto:hedavey@aol.com)? If not, we also won't be able to send you SMAA publications, so please be sure to let us know if your e-mail address changes.

## SMAA PATCHES

The SMAA HQ is selling official SMAA patches for your gi. They're great looking patches that embody the spirit and honor instilled in members of our group. They won't fade or bleed when you bleach them, and yet we've been able to keep the cost down. Each patch is basically a 3 ½ inch circle featuring our logo below:



Our patches were produced using state of the art digitizing and ultra-modern technology to create an accurate and attractive embroidered emblem. They feature tight stitches, sharp detail, clean lettering, and top quality craftsmanship. There's no jagged stitching, but we've still got plenty of stitches so that the background doesn't show through.

*The patch should be worn on the left side of your gi jacket near your heart. SMAA policy mandates only one patch per uniform to maintain the sense of dignity associated with traditional budo.*

These new patches are a great way to show your respect and enthusiasm for our group; we hope all of our members will order at least one. *And the best part is the patches are only \$5.00 (US) each!* (E-mail [shudokan@smaa-hq.com](mailto:shudokan@smaa-hq.com) about special shipping for international orders.)

To order, go to the "Payments" section of [www.smaa-hq.com](http://www.smaa-hq.com) or send a check or money order made out to "SMAA" to:

**SMAA HQ**  
**PO Box 6022**  
**Ann Arbor, MI 48106-6022**  
**USA**

## FACEBOOK PAGE



Have you been to the SMAA Facebook page? If not, you're missing out on the latest SMAA news, features, videos, photos, and information. It's easy and safe to join Facebook, and all you need to do is click the "Like" button to become a follower of our Facebook page. This is the fastest way to get SMAA news and updates, and we hope you'll drop by <http://www.facebook.com/ShudokanMartialArtsAssociation> and check it out. Once you're on Facebook, we hope you'll share our page with your friends and help us promote the SMAA.

## SMAA ONLINE PAYMENTS

Did you know you can pay for your annual dues at our website using PayPal or a major credit card? You can, and you can also pay for gi patches and promotions in the same way. This is a much faster, and in some ways more secure, means of sending money to our headquarters. We hope more of our members will make use of this feature. Just drop by <http://smaa-hq.com/payments.php> for more information.

## *THE BEST OF THE SMAA JOURNAL CD-ROM*

To celebrate its 15th anniversary in 2009, the SMAA created a special CD-ROM that contained a sampling of some of the best stories and articles to appear in the *SMAA Journal* since 1994. We mailed this free of charge to everyone in the SMAA as a way of showing our appreciation to our members.

Although our anniversary has past, it's still not too late to get a copy of this CD-ROM, which is packed with hard to find information about budo and koryu bujutsu. For \$8.95, plus \$3.00 shipping and handling (\$5.00 outside the USA), we'll send you *The Best of the SMAA Journal*.

Send your check or money order to the SMAA HQ. Supplies are limited to the number of CDs remaining.

### SMAA YOUTUBE CHANNEL

修道館武道会

Shudokan Martial Arts Association

Want to see some great videos of SMAA teachers, officials, and members? Now you can by visiting our YouTube channel. We're Shudokan1994, because 1994 is the year the SMAA was founded.

To see video of SMAA teachers and members, go to:

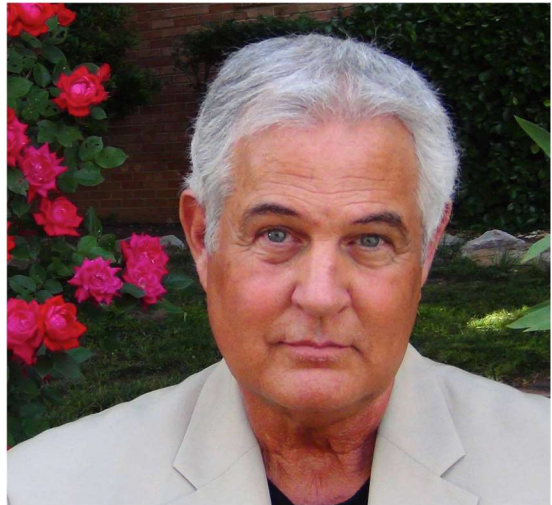
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gg5Nika6Ge0&list=PLS11\\_XCH8RkI868tRKZ0fdJFSeFGyNZ0o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gg5Nika6Ge0&list=PLS11_XCH8RkI868tRKZ0fdJFSeFGyNZ0o)

To see video of the amazing experts that trained leading SMAA officials and teachers, go to:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcE7zBhv9Hs&list=PLS11\\_XCH8RkIV8liNZoXI93WI79BLe1NZ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcE7zBhv9Hs&list=PLS11_XCH8RkIV8liNZoXI93WI79BLe1NZ)

### IN MEMORIAM: JOSEPH RIPPY

The SMAA recently received word that Joseph Rippy Sensei passed away at age 70. Rippy Sensei was a valued member of the SMAA Board of Advisors, a leader in the SMAA Karate-do Division, and a past contributor to the *SMAA Journal*. He will be deeply missed, and the SMAA Directors and Advisors would like to extend their condolences to his family and students.



*Joe Rippy Sensei (1946-2016)*

Rippy Sensei was born in 1946 in San Mateo, California. He, however, lived most of his adult life in Tennessee. Rippy Sensei received a University of Tennessee degree in Asian Studies (Japanese) in 1980. His interests included Chinese metaphysics and the art of Wado Ryu karate-do, which he taught privately to a select group of children and adults.

The name Wado Ryu is composed of three characters: Wa means "harmony," do means "way," and ryu means "system." From one viewpoint, Wado



*Rippy Sensei teaching Wado Ryu karate-do*



Ryu might be considered jujutsu rather than karate-do. When the founder Ohtsuka Hironori Sensei first registered his art with the Dai Nippon Butoku Kai in 1938, it was called Shinshu Wado Ryu Karate-Jujutsu, which reflects its hybrid nature. To the untrained observer, Wado Ryu might look similar to other styles of karate-do; many underlying principles, however, are derived from jujutsu. Wado Ryu is one of the most widely recognized karate-do systems in Japan, and it is known as one of the four major styles of Japanese karate-do (as opposed to original Okinawan systems).



*Rippy Sensei's teacher was the son of the founder of Wado Ryu*

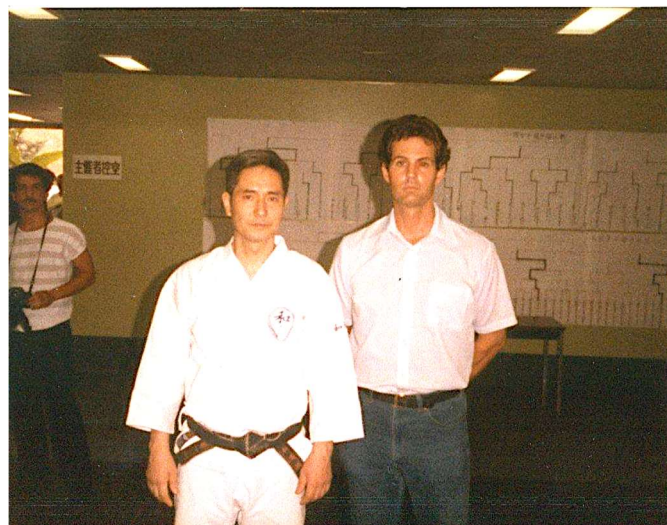
Rippy Sensei began karate-do training in 1964, when he was invited to join the Wado Ryu system by Cecil T. Patterson Sensei (1930–2002). In 1968, Rippy Sensei met and trained under Ohtsuka Hironori Sensei. He later studied directly with Ohtsuka Sensei (1892–1982), who tested Rippy Sensei for his third dan in 1976. Ohtsuka Sensei was a licensed Shindo Yoshin Ryu jujutsu expert when he met the famed Okinawan karate-do exponent Funakoshi Gichin Sensei (1868–1957), founder of Shotokan karate-do. After learning karate-do from



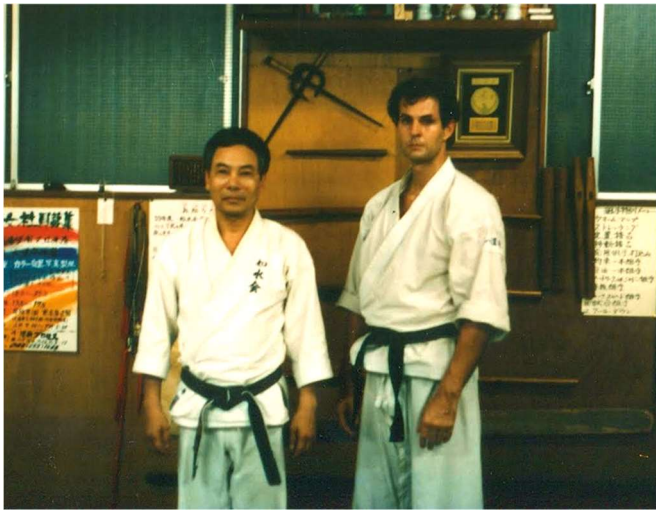
*Another dynamic kick by Rippy Sensei*

Funakoshi Sensei, Ohtsuka Sensei merged Shindo Yoshin Ryu with karate-do to create Wado Ryu.

In 1979, Rippy Sensei began practicing with Suzuki Tatsuo Sensei (Wado Ryu eighth dan). He continued to study with Suzuki Sensei from 1979 to 1988, primarily when this teacher visited Tennessee and Florida each year. In 1984, Rippy Sensei successfully represented the USA at the 50th Anniversary Wado Ryu Invitational Tournament in Tokyo, Japan. While there, he trained at Sakai Kazuo Sensei's dojo in Yokohama. Sakai Sensei (tenth dan) was then Wado Ryu Chief Technical Director, and he further practiced with Sakai Sensei whenever he visited the USA.



*Joe Rippy and Ohtsuka Hironori II*



*Joe Rippy and Sakai Kazuo*

In 1988, Rippy Sensei received his sixth dan certificate from Ohtsuka Hironori II (the hereditary leader of Wado Ryu). In 1989, he also trained with Osaka Toshio Sensei (seventh dan) of Salt Lake City, Utah. For the remainder of his life, Rippy Sensei received direction from Ohtsuka Kazutaka Sensei, the grandson of the art's founder. Rippy Sensei returned to Japan in 2008, where he continued his lifelong study with the Ohtsuka family. He received Shihan and sixth dan from the SMAA Karate-do Division, and he taught at past SMAA events.

William Kelch Sensei, a member of the SMAA Karate-do Division and a longtime student of Rippy Sensei's, is working on a comprehensive biography



*Rippy Sensei's remarkable flexibility*

of this dedicated teacher. Look for it in an upcoming issue of the *SMAA Journal*.

## SMAA MICHIGAN SEMINAR

Great news! The first SMAA Seminar of 2017 will take place at Nicklaus Suino Sensei's Japanese Martial Arts Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan. It will feature special guest instructor Yahagi Kunikazu Sensei, Mr. Suino's friend of many years and an expert in Japanese swordsmanship. *You can use your SMAA membership to receive a special discount.*



*Yahagi Soke*

Space is limited, so reserve your place soon. Here's the basic information:

**What:** Ryushin Shouchi Ryu kenjutsu

**Who:** Yahagi Kunikazu Sensei

**How much:** \$175.000 (SMAA members), \$195.00 (non-members)

**Where:**

Japanese Martial Arts Center

2875 Boardwalk, Suite H

Ann Arbor, MI 48104

USA

(734) 720-0330

[info@japanesemartialartscenter.com](mailto:info@japanesemartialartscenter.com)

<https://japanesemartialartscenter.com/events/kenjutsu/yahagi-kunikazu-sensei>





*Don't miss your chance to study with one of Japan's top swordsmen!*

**When:**

Friday, March 31st

6:00pm – 8:00pm

Saturday, April 1st

9:30am – 11:30am

Mid-day break

1:30pm – 3:30pm

Sunday, April 2nd

9:30am – 11:30am

Mid-day break

1:30pm – 3:30pm

Monday, April 3rd (by invitation only)

**Additional information:**

Yahagi Kunikazu Sensei was born in Tokyo in 1948, and he began studying traditional Japanese martial arts (kendo) in elementary school. He went on to earn the rank of judo nidan as a youth and studied classical Japanese martial arts for more than 30 years under the tutelage of Kawabata Terukata Sensei, first Ryushin Shouchi Ryu Soke (grandmaster). He was appointed the second Soke of Ryushin Shouchi Ryu in 2008. He's also the Director of the Seiseikan Dojo.

**SMAA CALIFORNIA WORKSHOP**

In June, the Sennin Foundation Center for Japanese Cultural Arts will offer an introduction to Japanese

yoga's principles of mind and body unification and Saigo Ryu martial arts. Here's all you need to know to participate:

**What:** Japanese yoga's mind and body unification principles help us realize our full potential and talent in many activities, including budo, and they relate to realizing deeper levels of relaxation, calmness, concentration, and willpower. Nakamura Tempu Sensei was the father of Japanese yoga (Shin-shin-toitsu-do), and you can read more about this art at [www.japanese-yoga.com](http://www.japanese-yoga.com).

Saigo Ryu was founded by Saigo Kenji Sensei, and it is a form of sogo bujutsu that includes jujutsu, kenjutsu, jojutsu, bojutsu, hanbojutsu, tessenjutsu, and other classic martial arts. Emphasis is placed on aiki, implying a state of harmony with the animating energy of nature. Read more at [www.senninfoundation.com](http://www.senninfoundation.com).

**Where:**

Sennin Foundation Center for Japanese Cultural Arts  
1053 San Pablo Avenue

Albany, CA 94706

USA

(510) 526-7518

[hedavey@aol.com](mailto:hedavey@aol.com)



*H. E. Davey teaching Saigo Ryu*

**How much:** Free to SMAA members

**When:** June 13, 2017 from 7:00 PM to 9:30 PM

**Who:** H. E. Davey, one of two Directors for the SMAA Jujutsu Division, will provide instruction. He has received the ranks of Shihan and eighth dan from the SMAA, and he has over 50 years of Saigo Ryu training. He also holds the highest level of teaching certification in Japanese yoga, and he is the Vice President of the International Japanese Yoga Association, which is headquartered in Kyoto.

**Additional information:** The class will start at 7:00 PM, but you will need to arrive a few minutes early to fill out a registration form. Pre-registration is needed, but easily accomplished. Just send e-mail indicating your name, phone number, and how many people will be coming with you.

Since he will be making use of the principles of mind and body unification covered in the Japanese yoga class, Mr. Davey requests that people interested in the martial arts portion of the evening also attend his earlier introduction to Japanese yoga. Don't miss your chance to discover how this rarely taught traditional martial art leads to self-mastery as well as self-protection!

## SWORDSMANSHIP FOR JAPAN AID

John Evans Sensei will be offering a special Japanese swordsmanship seminar in the United Kingdom in support of Aid for Japan. On March 11, 2011, the east coast of Japan was struck by an undersea earthquake and subsequent tsunami. As well as the loss of life that this devastating event resulted in, hundreds of children also lost their parents and families. Akemi Solloway founded Aid For Japan in 2011 to support the orphans of this tragedy. In the short-term, the charity lends help to these children by supporting them as they rebuild their lives. Read more at <http://www.aidforjapan.co.uk/about-us/>.



*Evans Sensei*

Try something new and support a worthwhile cause. Consider participating in an Introduction to the Japanese Swordsmanship of Battodo.

Batto means to “draw and strike with the sword.” Do refers to “a path” of training aimed at the complete development of the practitioner. The closer to the reality of combat one can get, the more this training has to offer.

This two-hour seminar will begin with an introduction to this martial arts system, the goals and method of battodo as a way of cultivation, and then a practical class on the preparatory exercises and basic techniques (kihon). Here's what you need to know:

**When:** Saturday, March 11th, 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM (limited spaces)

**Where:**

London Buddhist Arts, 1st Floor Studio, Eastbourne House, Bullards Place, Bethnal Green, London E2 0PT, UK

**Who:** John Evans Sensei is a member of the SMAA Board of Advisors and a seventh dan in Nakamura Ryu battodo. He has trained directly under the founder of this art in Japan, where he lived for several years.

**How much:** £20 and £15 for students/conc. Please pay by transfer/cheque to book a place. All proceeds go to Aid for Japan to support orphans of the 2011 Japanese tsunami.

**Contact:** Enquiries and bookings to [info@battodo-fudokan.co.uk](mailto:info@battodo-fudokan.co.uk)

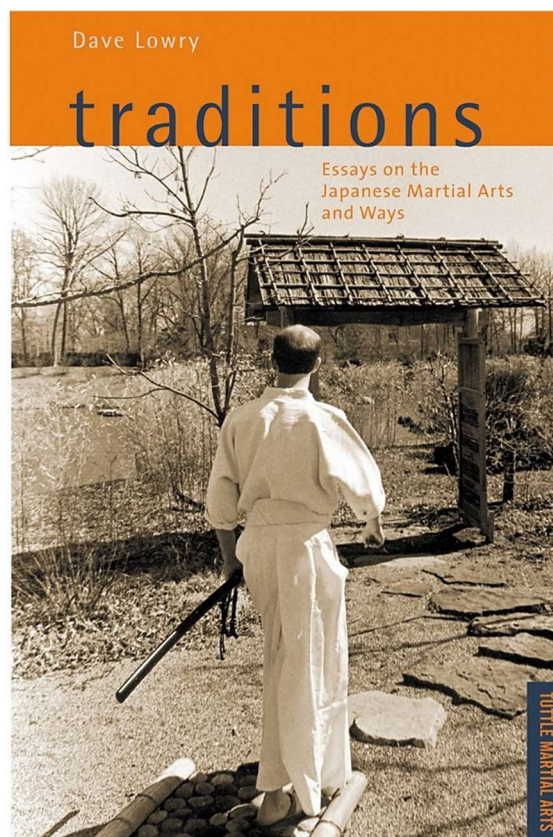
**Additional information:** Wooden swords will be supplied. Wear loose clothing. Students practice barefoot.

### ***TRADITIONS: ESSAYS ON THE JAPANESE MARTIAL ARTS AND WAYS***

Tuttle Publishing will be rereleasing Dave Lowry's excellent book *Traditions: Essays on the Japanese Martial Arts and Ways* on June 6, 2017 in paperback format. Copies can be preordered at Amazon.

What's the book about? Tuttle states, "The goals of the budo—the martial arts and Ways of Japan—lie in refining the body and spirit. The techniques, methods, and rituals of the budo can provide invaluable lessons for today's martial artists—and serve as guides to a well-lived life."

"In *Traditions*, Davy Lowry discusses unique aspects of the budo ranging from *hacho*, or deliberate asymmetry, to *uke-waza*, the art of "receiving" an attack. The spirit of *ryomi*, the process of self-evaluation and improvement, is illustrated through the story of Kaofujita, a master swordsman who never stopped practicing the first movement he learned. You'll also learn the importance of *yuyo*, the distance where an attacker must focus his strike, from the story of Jubei, whose mastery of *yuyo* saved him in a life-and-death encounter, and the



*One of many great books by the SMAA's Dave Lowry*

significance of *shikaku*—, the dead zone, on maintaining balance in combat and in life."

"With its focus on traditional Japanese martial arts, and fascinating stories that illustrate key principles and martial arts philosophy, *Traditions* will be required reading for serious martial artists."

As a boy, Dave Lowry began a lifelong study of Yagyu Shinkage Ryu swordsmanship under a Japanese teacher who was living in Missouri. In 1985, Mr. Lowry's experiences growing up as a Westerner, who was deeply immersed in Japanese cultural and martial arts, formed the basis for *Autumn Lightning*, his first book, which was widely acclaimed.

In addition to Yagyu Shinkage Ryu, Mr. Lowry has trained in Shindo Muso Ryu (an old combative art utilizing a four-foot staff), karate-do, aikido, and a variety of modern martial ways. He is heavily



involved with the Japanese community in the St. Louis area, and he has practiced a wide variety of Japanese arts including go (an ancient Japanese game), shodo (calligraphy), kado (flower arrangement), and chado (tea ceremony). Mr. Lowry is also active in the organization and running of the St. Louis Japanese Festival, the largest such festival in North America. He is on the Executive Board of the St. Louis Japanese Festival as well, and he is the President of the St. Louis–Suwa Sister City Committee.

He has a degree in English, and works as a professional writer. He has authored numerous budo books; his monthly columns appear in several martial arts magazines, and he is the restaurant critic for *St. Louis Magazine*. He's taught at past SMAA events and been a contributor to the *SMAA Journal*.

## JMAC OPEN HOUSE



*Japanese Martial Arts Center in Michigan*



*Suino Sensei teaching judo*

On Thursday, January 19, Nicklaus Suino Sensei's Japanese Martial Arts Center had a successful open house to celebrate the launch of their new dojo space. The special event was from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. It featured demonstrations of judo, jujutsu, and iaido.

Participants enjoyed great food and fun door prizes. Many of Suino Sensei's students helped to remodel their new location prior to the grand opening. JMAC is located in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Suino Sensei teaches Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu iaido, which he learned from Yamaguchi Katsuo Sensei, and Kodokan judo, which he studied with Sato Shizuya Sensei and Walter Todd Sensei. His jujutsu instruction is based on the modern system he studied under Sato Sensei's direction in Japan.

## TEACHING KARATE-DO TO CHILDREN (Parts One and Two)

*By Joseph Rippy (with William J. Kelch)*

*As a way of remembering someone who ardently believed in the mission of the SMAA, we're republishing two articles Joe Rippy Sensei wrote for our publication over five years ago. Although the focus is on children, adult karate-do students can*

*use the same principles and exercises. I hope reading this will give our members a sense of my late friend Rippy Sensei, an articulate and remarkable teacher. — Editor*

You can't teach children karate—do the way you teach adults. This is because children's brains and bodies are not fully developed, and children have had fewer lifetime learning experiences to draw from. Children are not miniature adults, so they must be taught differently. We would like to discuss some ways to teach children. Our ideas are meant for teachers who are not content to be occasional babysitters for small children, i.e., those who really want to teach. (We trust that includes everyone who reads past this point.)

Young people learn through contact with the world using their five senses. They see simply the task at hand. Because of this, the detailed physical movements necessary to perform correct karate—do techniques must be carefully broken into component parts and presented in a logical progression starting with the simplest, most fundamental component, followed by the step-by-step introduction of each subsequent component. Each component must be performed with a reasonable degree of competence before the next component can be introduced. What constitutes a "reasonable degree of competence" will vary with the child's age and physical abilities. A five-year-old simply cannot coordinate physical movements as well as a ten-year-old.

Techniques taught improperly to children (and adults) will remain with them for years. These incorrect techniques must later be unlearned, a painful, indeed sometimes impossible, task. Teachers must not burden children with poor technique that they must unlearn later. Arguably, it might be better not to teach them at all until they are older. Teaching the technique correctly the first time avoids needless waste of precious training time later. (The old adage "practice makes perfect" is, in our opinion, very misleading. *Practice makes permanent!* Poor technique practiced continuously makes poor technique permanent—not a good idea.)

Step-by-step (component-by-component) progression of achievements as each new component is introduced and learned will motivate youngsters to continue, and help reduce or eliminate the fears of failure and embarrassment that often become self-fulfilling prophecies that can sometimes lead to children quitting karate—do altogether. This component-by-component gradual approach can help alleviate these problems. But this step-by-step process is aided by also using obstacles to force correct movement. Let's use a front kick to illustrate this learning procedure.

We advocate using a cardboard box to teach children the basic front kick from a neutral standing position. An instructor teaching children the front kick must find something to force the youngsters to raise and bend their kicking legs. The box forces the children to not only raise the kicking leg properly and bend the leg properly, but to strengthen the muscles of the hip without which the kick will be incorrect. This is mandatory in a good front kick.

Start with a cardboard box about the height of the student's knee or a little bit lower. Make an easy to see straight black-striped line across the top center of the box in line with the intended path of the front kick. Have the child stand one foot or more from the box. If the child's feet are too close to the box, he will continually strike the box as he tries to lift his bent leg high enough to clear it. Position the child's kicking leg in such a way that the black stripe can be used as a guide to direct the kick. The line should be placed toward the center of the child's body when the child stands behind the box. Ideally, the box will force the child to lift and bend his knee so that the knee will be slightly higher than the hip joint (uplifted knee or chambered position).

Then the calf and foot of the kicking leg will be extended straight forward over the line on the box, in a fairly slow fashion, until it is almost straight. It will then be immediately withdrawn to the uplifted knee position before the leg is allowed to return to

the floor. After a few dozen repetitions, the child is taught to hold the kicking leg in the chambered position for a count of two before returning it to the floor so that the teacher and the child can be sure that balance has been maintained during the entire kick.

When this teaching technique is used, the child will immediately start taking short cuts to complete each kick, mostly by finding an easier route than the prescribed one to complete the kick. This shortcutting results from fatigue and from a weak iliopsoas muscle, a muscle not used a lot in most daily activities resulting in it usually being pretty weak. But strength in the iliopsoas is essential to a good front kick.

Young people typically shortcut proper front kicks by passing the knee on the kicking leg over the stripe on the box, with the lower leg flaring out to the right when kicking with the right leg or to the left when kicking with the left leg. This is poor technique; indeed if the front kick flares out far enough, the kick begins to look like a bad roundhouse kick. A well-executed roundhouse kick can be useful, but it is not a front kick. Therefore the front kick must be practiced properly.

If the box over which the children are practicing is placed in the middle of a floor away from obstacles, it is easy for the children to flare the lower leg and thus practice poor front kicks. There is open space to either side allowing for the tendency to flare the kicking leg. To avoid this, the box should be placed against a wall to the child's right when the child is kicking with the right leg. This prevents the leg from flaring out to the right side because the lower leg cannot flare. The wall is there to block it. Similarly, the left front kick can be practiced with the box against a wall to the left or have the child step to the opposite side of the box.

Please keep in mind that developing a proper front kick takes lots of practice. Many repetitions are necessary over weeks, months, and years, so do not

expect great kicks from children too soon. Also remember that very fatigued children will kick poorly. (General George Smith Patton, Jr. said, "Fatigue makes cowards of us all.")

Children will also not kick well until their iliopsoas muscles are strengthened. We suggest using other innovative ways to accomplish the same goal of correct kicking. Have the children work with a partner. Have one get down on all fours with their backs straight and their heads looking at the floor. Tell the kickers to perform the front kick over the backs of their partners. Tell them not to touch their partner's body in any fashion because it could hurt. They must kick slowly. Remind them that their partners have the memory of an elephant, and, if they get kicked, they won't forget. Retaliation might accidentally result!

Variety in teaching the front kick helps keep children diligently practicing and strengthening their muscles, especially the iliopsoas, thus developing good technique. Teachers must insist on correct technique, but must also be patient.



*Figure 1 – The student has begun his kick over the centerline of the box. Note that his knee is above the level of his hip*



This firm, methodical, but patient approach to teaching young people will result in good front kicks.

## BASIC FRONT KICK

We discussed teaching the basic front kick by having children kick over a box about the height of each child's knee. The box has a straight stripe over the



*Figure 2 - The student has kicked over the centerline of the box. Note that the knee is fully extended, and, though you can't see it in this still picture, the leg has been pushed forward.*

center of the top that serves to guide the path of the child's kick as the leg passes over the box. This stripe shows the correct straight path for the kick, and it also forces the child to raise the knee high enough so that the kick clears the box. The knee is raised from the ground until the knee is at least as high as the hip. The lower leg hangs relaxed from the knee. This can be referred to as the chambered position. The advanced chambering position requires that the lower leg be pulled as far back as possible, the heel touching the buttocks/hamstring.



*Figure 3 - The student's kick is withdrawn over the centerline of the box. Note that his knee has returned to exactly the same position as in Figure 1. (No, Figure 1 and Figure 3 are NOT the same photo. Look closely.) This demonstrates that a properly thrown kick must be withdrawn, under control, to the same place where it started.*

The lower leg is then snapped forward with a slight push at the end of its forward motion from the hips. The leg then snaps back to the chambered position. Balance must be maintained so that the person completing the kick can move forward, backward, left, or right - in whichever direction he/she chooses. It is critical that the person kicking remains balanced. Often beginners and children fall



*Figure 4 - The student's foot is shown above the centerline of the box. Note that the box is against a wall to prevent the student from flaring the kick to his right.*



*Figure 5 – The student has begun his kick over the centerline of the box. Again note that his knee is above the level of his hip, and that the wall prevents his leg from flaring to the right.*

forward after kicking. This is not good. If the kick should fail for some reason, the person kicking may fall forward into a well-thrown punch. Definitely not good! Teachers must emphasize balance.

Children will typically allow their kicks to flare out to the right when kicking with the right foot, and to the left when kicking with the left foot. This is very bad technique; indeed, if the kick flares enough, it is not a front kick at all; it is as if the kick were both a bad roundhouse kick and an incorrect front kick. This flaring can be prevented by placing the box against a wall to the right when practicing with the right leg and vice versa with the left.



*Figure 6 – The student has kicked over the centerline of the box. The wall ensures that the kick does not flare to the right.*

Figures 1 through 6 demonstrate the use of the cardboard box to teach the basic front kick. They illustrate that the front kick should go straight out, i.e., it should cross directly over the stripe as it goes out from the chambered position and as it comes back to the chambered position. They also illustrate that the knee should come up to the level of the hip (or above) before the kick is thrown, and that the knee should also return to the same level when it is withdrawn after the kick. The kicking leg should always start and finish at the chambered position. The kick must always be controlled; it should never cause the body to be off balance.

### BASIC FRONT PUNCH

Correct punching is a complex maneuver involving the entire body. A punch is not just a fist and arm movement; indeed, a punch involving just the fist and arm doesn't qualify as a karate-do punch. Beginners, children included, must incorporate the hips into punches even if just standing in a basic shoulder width stance.

With the child standing in a shoulder width stance, one arm is extended forward with the extended fist between the solar plexus and the shoulders, about the level of the mid-sternum, of an imagined opponent standing in front of the child. (The imagined opponent is the same size as the child being taught.) This punch can also be delivered to the face. The other arm is held back in the withdrawn arm (chambered arm) position.

When the fist and arm are chambered, they should be parallel to the floor with a very slight tension felt in the shoulder. When the withdrawn arm punches, the hip on the same side of the punch, not the arm itself, first begins the forward movement. The punching arm is propelled by the slight forward movement of the hip and moves forward while the arm already extended comes back to the withdrawn arm (chambered arm) position. This punching movement is repeated.





*Figure 7 – The basic front punch to the chest. Note the shoulder width stance.*

Figure 7 demonstrates the basic front punch after it is delivered to the mid-sternum. (Note the shoulder width stance.) Figure 8 demonstrates a side view of the same punch, and the withdrawn arm (chambered arm) position. Figure 9 demonstrates the basic front punch delivered to the head.

Here are some other essentials to proper punching. First, the punching arm must be absolutely relaxed until the hand reaches the target. Then the arm is stiffened to deliver the force of the “punching body.” We use the term “punching body” because, though the fist at the end of the arm is the part of the body that actually makes contact with the opponent, the force delivered is not the tiny force delivered only by the fist and arm. The force delivered is the force of the entire body beginning with the forward movement of the hips followed by the recruitment of the entire body in a slight circular (rotational) movement. In other words, an effective punch is thrown with the whole body. While the fist and arm might be the delivery system, the force of the punch comes from the entire body. Though they do deliver

the force, the fist and arm are almost irrelevant to generating the punch’s force.

One of the keys to generating this force, perhaps “the key,” is the relaxation of the arm as it moves forward. The arm should be thought of as a rubber band with a heavy metal ball at the end of it. The metal ball is the fist. The metal ball is slung forward on the end of an extremely relaxed, and hence very fast moving, rubber band. (Think of a rubber band being snapped.) The metal ball flies at great velocity (speed) toward the target, and the energy generated by the high-speed ball is delivered to the individual at whom this missile is aimed. And remember, the punch is delivered with energy coming from an whole body, not just a fist and an arm.

Think a moment about some basic physics. Kinetic energy (KE) is one-half mass (M) multiplied by velocity (V) squared, i.e.,  $KE = \frac{1}{2} MV^2$ . (Given that the  $\frac{1}{2}$  is a constant, we will ignore it.) Please notice that KE varies directly with M. In other words, if you double mass (M), you double kinetic energy (KE). So, punching with the entire body makes a huge difference. Punching with the mass of your entire



*Figure 8 – Side view of basic punch to mid-sternum. Note the position of the chambered arm.*





*Figure 9 – Basic front punch to the head*

body delivers much, much more kinetic energy than just the mass of your arm and fist. Amazing!

Even more amazing is the fact that the kinetic energy delivered varies with the square of the velocity! In other words, if the velocity of the punch doubles, the kinetic energy generated by the punch quadruples! If the velocity of the punch quadruples, the energy of the punch increases 16 times! 16! Yikes! (And a stiff armed slow punch, ostensibly powerful because there is a lot of muscle behind it, is always weak when compared to a high velocity relaxed punch.)

Yes, we've just used a lot of exclamation marks for emphasis, but they are, in our view, justified. It is

clear that the whole body must be thrown into a punch, not just the fist and arm. The metal ball at the end of the rubber band must be as big as possible, and the more body mass in the punch, the bigger the ball.

The punch must be very relaxed as it flies out. The metal ball must get where it's going at the fastest possible velocity. Think again of the rubber band and how fast it flies. Think that twice velocity becomes four times the kinetic energy, and that four times velocity becomes sixteen times the kinetic energy. Always visualize a large, fast flying metal ball at the end of a snapped rubber band.

You are probably thinking now that none of this has anything to do with beginners, especially children. You might believe that five-year olds, even 10-year olds, simply don't do physics and algebra. You're right. But beginners, including children, must be taught that punches are not powered with a fist and arm. They are delivered with the entire body while the body, fist, and arm are all very relaxed until the moment of impact. Relaxation is key, and a teacher who does not say "Relax!" at least a couple dozen times during a one-hour karate-do lesson probably needs to rethink the lesson plan.

**About the Authors:** Joseph Rippy Sensei was a sixth dan, and William Kelch Sensei is a second dan, in the SMAA Karate-do Division. Rippy Sensei studied Wado Ryu karate-do under the art's founder, his son, and his grandson. This training took place in Japan and the USA, and Rippy Sensei was a member of the SMAA Board of Advisors.

## IT'S ABOUT MARTIAL ARTS TRAINING, NOT RANK

*By Nicklaus Suino*

In nearly 50 years of martial arts training, competing, deep study, and teaching, I've seen it over and over. There is a real difference between the exceptional martial artist and the average student. The exceptional martial artist keeps rank in its proper perspective.

They know that the momentary joy of getting a new belt or certificate fades. Don't go for that.

The deep internal joy of learning and doing great martial arts changes you forever. Go for that.

Getting a new rank can be very motivating. It's recognition from your instructor or your system that you've worked hard and learned key aspects of your martial art. It's a Catch-22, however; getting new belts (or sashes, or whatever external emblems of progress your system uses) is nice, but if you only focus on training for the next belt, you'll be a dilettante forever.

### FORGE CHARACTER WITH MARTIAL ARTS TRAINING

You can't hide it. If your primary focus is on the next rank, your ability will top out. Your attendance will spike just before tests but will fall off in between. Your focus and attention will lag during "consolidation" periods—those times when the very purpose of training is to repeat your top-level skills until they are hard-wired into your nervous system. There are ability and character transformations that can only be gotten through real immersive training. Seishin tanren (austere spiritual training) is the method for forging character. That's why it's so important to pick an art and a dojo that you like; there will be some heavy weather on the way to greatness, but starting in the plus column of love for your art will help you get you through.

Getting past that intellectual understanding and into a true emotional understanding of the depth and joy possible in your training has to come from inside you. Commit completely.



*Suino Sensei teaching jujutsu*



*Suino Sensei teaching iaido*

### APPROACHING MARTIAL ARTS WITH RESERVE

The act of approaching your martial art with reserve means you're dooming yourself to miss out on many of its most profound, valuable aspects. Those who completely immerse themselves in their martial art are the ones who enjoy it the most. If you dabble, you're going to have less fun with it and get a lot less of its essence. Similarly, if you don't find ways to immerse yourself in practice during consolidation periods, you're going to fall short of your potential.

But you don't have to fall short. You can change in exceptional ways. You can get that change by reading this article and taking decisive action. Keep in mind this truth: change can come from within, or it can come from what's around you. Sometimes change comes from a combination of the two. Something will affect your thinking or your attitude, and you'll be able to use that push to improve. If you're both lucky and diligent, you'll improve far out of proportion to the size of whatever that push was. At other times, you'll need a whole lot of push even to make small changes.

**Shudokan Martial Arts  
Association**

PO Box 6022  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-6022

**Phone:**

1-734-645-6441

**E-Mail:**

shudokan@smaa-hq.com

**About the Author:** Nicklaus Suino Sensei is one of the founding members of the SMAA. He has decades of training in judo, jujutsu, and iaido, in both Japan and the USA. Be sure to check out his many budo books at Amazon.com.

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Shudokan Martial Arts Association  
PO Box 6022  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-6022

