

# SMAA JOURNAL



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## 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

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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)

### UPCOMING SMAA SEMINAR!

The SMAA and the Japanese Martial Arts Center will be presenting a special SMAA Seminar in Michigan this August. You won't want to miss this rare opportunity to study classical Japanese judo and Tomiki-style aikido!

**Who:** Satoh Tadayuki Sensei is one of the world's leading Shodokan aikido experts. He was taught by Tomiki Kenji Sensei, founder of Shodokan aikido, in



*Satoh Tadayuki Sensei*

the living room of his house every Sunday. He has an in-depth knowledge of Tomiki Sensei's aikido system. He is also an accomplished judoka.



*Satoh Sensei in action with a jo*



*Satoh Sensei teaching Shodokan aikido*

Satoh Sensei, sixth dan, was granted the position of Shihan of Waseda University Aikido club in 2007. This position had been vacant since Professor Tomiki's death in 1979. He is an expert in his field, and in particular, the link between Kodokan judo and Tomiki-style aikido. He also teaches aikido at the Japan Police University.

Shihan, Kisuikan Dojo, Tokyo Japan  
 Shihan, Waseda University Aikido Club, Tokyo Japan  
 Faculty, Waseda University, Department of the Humanities  
 Founder, Renaissance Yawara Kenkyukai  
 Personal student of Tomiki Kenji Sensei  
 Internationally acclaimed instructor and scholar

**What:** Improve your balance, speed, and power. Build more effective self-defense with aikido, judo, and jujutsu techniques. Join us to explore the integration of judo & aikido with Satoh Tadayuki Sensei! Be sure to ask about your special SMAA discount.

**When:** August 18–20, 2017

**Where:** Japanese Martial Arts Center  
 2875 Boardwalk  
 Ann Arbor, MI 48104 USA

**Additional Information:** Please write to Nicklaus Suino Sensei at [shudokan@smaa-hq.com](mailto:shudokan@smaa-hq.com). Phone (734) 720-0330.

<https://japanesemartialartscenter.com/events/budo/satoh-tadayuki-sensei>.

## MARTIN SENSEI NEWS

Paul Martin Sensei, SMAA Senior Advisor, is hard at work on a new book: *National Treasure Swords of Japan*. You can read a fascinating excerpt from this work in Martin Sensei's column for Japan's *Sankei* newspaper:

<http://japan-forward.com/japans-mythology-and-fact-the-sword-is-the-emperors-direct-lineage-from-the-gods/>.

A native of England, he's studied kendo, iaido, and several forms of ancient swordsmanship, including Ono Ha Itto Ryu. But his main area of specialty is the study, history, and appraisal of the Japanese sword as an art object.



*The Japanese sword*

Martin Sensei has studied under top sword appraisal experts, sword smiths, and sword restorers in Japan for numerous years, and this is to say little of his budo background. He maintains a fascinating website [www.thejapanesesword.com](http://www.thejapanesesword.com) and he is the author of *The Japanese Sword Guide to Nyusatsu Kantei*. He has been featured on the BBC, BBC Radio 4, the History Channel, Los Angeles JATV, and Japan's NHK TV. He has been interviewed in *Tokyo Metropolis Magazine*, *The Daily Yomiuri* newspaper, and *Asahi Weekly* in Japan.



*Martin Sensei*

Martin Sensei has also contributed articles for the *SMAA Journal* about the Japanese sword as an art object, its valuation and appraisal, and its history. He provides a unique perspective on the sword and budo as he is both a martial artist and a sword scholar.

Martin Sensei is a former British Museum curator, and a secretary of the Nihonto Bunka Shinko Kyokai (NBSK). He is also an appointed Bunka Meister (Master of Culture: Japanese Swords) by the Japonisme Shinko Kai (HongANJI). He lives in Tokyo, where he has practiced Japanese swordsmanship for many years.

## OTSUKA SOKE NEWS

On May 19, 2017, Otsuka Yasuyuki Sensei conducted a special seminar at the Tokyo



*Otsuka Soke in Tokyo*

headquarters dojo of the Meifu Shinkage Ryu. He is the current soke, or headmaster, of this traditional martial system. Meifu Shinkage Ryu (明府真影流) focuses on the use of shuriken throwing darts and other classical weapons.

Also in May, Otsuka Soke lead a spring gasshuku, or intensive training camp, for Meifu Shinkage Ryu members in Japan. Despite heavy rain, it was well attended and successful. Gasshuku are common events in Japan, especially for martial artists.

In April, Otsuka Soke visited Japan's Kansai area, where he taught a Meifu Shinkage Ryu seminar for



*Otsuka Soke at the Meifu Shinkage Ryu spring camp*

the Kansai Keikokai in Osaka. After the two-day event, he enjoyed sightseeing in Kyoto and Nara.

Someya Chikatoshi Soke, based on his training in Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto Ryu (天真正伝香取神道流), founded Meifu Shinkage Ryu. Aside from practicing with the shuriken, students train with a



*Otsuka Soke is one of Japan's highest ranking martial artists*



*Otsuka Soke using the fundo kusari*

weighted chain known as the fundo kusari, itself a relatively rare weapon even in Japan.

The Meifu Shinkage Ryu has branches in over a dozen different countries at this time. Otsuka Soke is the author of several books on Japanese martial arts, including *Shuriken Jutsu no Susume*. He is also a member of the SMAA Board of Advisors.

## AN EXCERPT FROM *BUDO MIND AND BODY: TRAINING SECRETS FROM THE JAPANESE MARTIAL ARTS*

*By Nicklaus Suino*

### TRAINING THE BODY

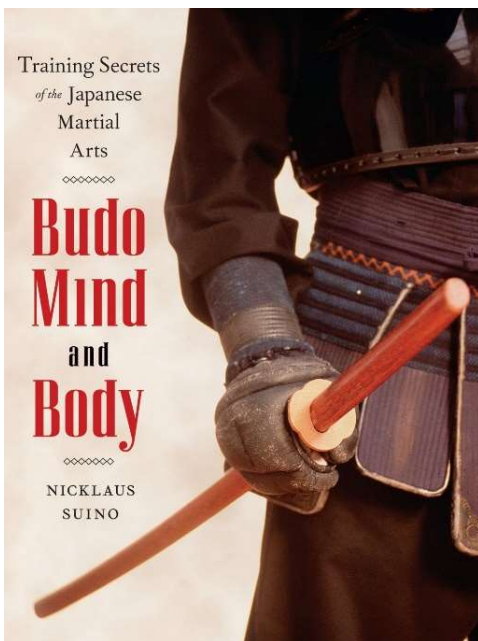
*The Way is in training.* -- Miyamoto Musashi

### PHYSICAL TRAINING

The foundation of martial arts, that which gives them their unique character, is that they are physical arts. In order to be martial artists, we must use our bodies in practice. This may make the arts seem primitive, in the same way we think of ancient dance

rituals as primitive, but it also grounds them in the real world. There is no avoiding the toil and sweat required to learn martial arts skills, and you should be suspicious of anyone who promises results without long, hard work.

The work is, in fact, the very thing that make budo worthwhile, because almost everything good that comes from budo comes from the process of physically training the body over a long period of time. The health benefits, such as improved



circulation, stamina, and strength, come from repetitive motions of the body itself, starting with lighter, less strenuous motions and building up to more taxing drills as we advance. Mental benefits are the result of seeing hard work pay off in the form of improved skill. We learn that our efforts produce results and, if we have good teachers, we learn to generalize the concept of discipline and apply it to all sorts of activities, not just budo. The so called "spiritual" rewards of training, such as a sense of well-being, of place in society, and of purpose in life, come in large part from the feeling of hard work well done that we get at the end of the training day.

Experience tells us that there are better and worse ways to work, however. One lifetime is barely enough to master a single martial art, much less the several arts that many practice these days, and there are always distractions from training. The road to mastery is so long that we must learn to be as efficient as possible as we travel it. Many great people have studied the learning process and have added refinements to the way we practice. Some have made mistakes that we can try to avoid. We can benefit from their experiences by understanding history and the principles of learning, greatly improving our chances of following a smooth path as we progress.

What follows is a discussion of five selected aspects of physical training that almost four decades of martial art study have led me to believe are particularly important.

### PROGRESSIVE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Progressive skill development is a vital key to long-term progress in budo. The Japanese were the first to start granting belt ranks, reflecting the many advancements they made in systematizing the learning process, one of their most important contributions to the development of martial arts.

Instead of randomly presenting material and hoping that students would catch on, the Japanese formalized the process of introducing basic material to beginning students, and gradually increasing the complexity and difficulty of the material as students became more advanced. Principles that were learned at the beginning would become reflexive through long practice. Later, the instructor could concentrate on teaching more advanced concepts, knowing that students would already be able to hold a strong stance, for example, or be able to throw a punch without any glaring weaknesses.

Failure to take this incremental and progressive approach can limit one's potential for long-term



*Troy Swenson, SMAA Journal assistant editor, practicing Saigo Ryu*

growth. Many students who start training in competitive martial arts, or who learn in a casual environment (from a friend, for example), reach a certain level of competence and never progress beyond it. If they are naturally talented, or very dedicated and hard working, they can become fairly skilled, usually reaching their peak in two to three years, but problems can occur that limit their growth after the initial training period.

One problem is that they have no tools for teaching themselves to get better. They learned by being exposed to a technique, practicing it a little, then trying it out in the ring. In this context, techniques are usually not clearly divided into groups of more and less advanced skills, so students learn to think of them in terms of those that work and those that do not. Powerfully effective techniques that may take hours to master are ignored, because they do not yield any benefits when first tried.

Progressive skill development, on the other hand, allows you to practice lesser, simpler skills first, gaining ability and confidence in those skills before going on to others that may be more difficult. The period in which you learn these skills also gives your teacher a chance to closely examine your basic skills, and to make sure that you have no serious weaknesses that might cause you trouble later. You can prosper in your martial arts training by adopting a progressive approach.

Always concentrate on the simpler things first. Everyone learns to crawl before learning to walk, and you cannot expect to perform an advanced karate kata unless you know how to stand in a strong, well-balanced front stance. In karate, iaido, and kyudo, spend time to ensure that your stances are good, because everything else depends on them. In judo, jujutsu, aikido, and kendo, be sure that you understand how to move in a balanced manner. If you do not develop an intuitive understanding of balance, you will never be good at these arts.

The progression of kata taught in arts such as karate is also designed to teach skills in a progressive

manner. You learn certain kata first because they are simpler, and because the connections between one move and the next involve less difficult transitions. Take the time to master the kata you are being taught now before growing impatient to learn a new one. Most of the students I have seen who are constantly requesting new material are not very good at the material they have already been taught. This shows clearly that they do not understand everything about the early forms. Any more kata piled on top of the first will simply reveal the same fundamental weaknesses.



*John Quinn Sensei, SMAA Senior Advisor, teaching Masaki Ryu*

## **BREAK IT DOWN**

When learning a new technique, try it first in its entirety. Chances are that you will have some difficulty performing it with confidence. Instead of repeating the whole technique over and over, determine the parts at which you are weakest, and practice them separately. If there are even smaller parts of those portions that still give you trouble, isolate those and practice them. This is what is meant by "break it down." Once you have achieved a reasonable degree of mastery over each part, you can then put them back together into one complete technique.

Totake a very simple example, consider a two-handed aikido technique such as *tenchi-nage* ("heaven and earth throw"). This throw is a counter



to an attack in which the opponent grabs both your wrists. In it, you step forward, passing the opponent on his right side while leading him down with your left hand (earth) and reaching over him in front with your right (heaven). If the opponent does not fall smoothly to the ground, there must be some weakness in your execution.

Break the movement down by practicing the heaven hand and earth hand separately. While doing so, look carefully at each part of the movement to see that it is doing what it should. If stepping and moving the earth hand at the same time does not give good results, practice the step and the hand movements separately. Keep breaking down and refining the parts of a technique until you can perform the whole strongly and in good balance.



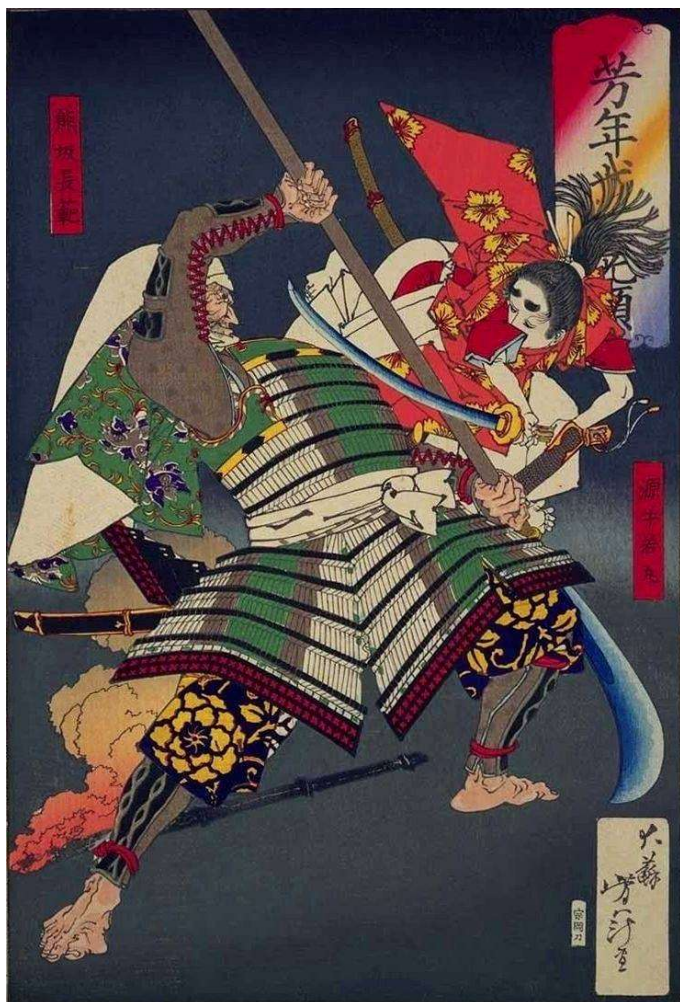
*Budo are modern offshoots of koryu bujutsu, the martial skills of samurai. Art by Utagawa Hiroshige.*

## DETERMINE THE PRINCIPLE

Always look for the principle that makes a technique work. If you can determine what the principle is, then you will be able to learn the technique better and will also eventually discover other techniques that operate on the same principle. Subjecting each new technique to such intense mental scrutiny is more difficult than simply doing what you are told, but undertaking it is what separates the serious martial artist from the hobbyist.

There are no skills in the martial arts that exist without a foundation. Every technique is based on a larger or deeper principle that can be applied to other techniques. Punching relies on using the largest muscle groups in the upper body in a coordinated manner to achieve the strongest extension of the arm. Stances depend on correct bone alignment to direct power from the ground through to the body and the limbs. Many throws are based on the idea of using a figurative lever and fulcrum to upset an opponent's balance. If you understand the notion that putting your hips lower than your opponent's hips gives you an advantage in power when throwing, then you can strive to lower your hips in every forward throw, and thereby overcome one of the major obstacles to performing such techniques well.

As another example, consider the structure of the human hand. When that hand grabs your wrist, its weakest point is the space between the thumb and forefinger. When attempting to escape from that grab, it makes the most sense to apply pressure to the area where there is space, not muscle and bone. In one common escape technique found in jujutsu, we pivot the forearm so that the leverage is applied against the thumb and fingers, and the attacker's hand naturally opens just enough to allow the forearm to slip out. Once you understand and apply this principle, locating the weakest point in the attack and concentrating your energy there, you will find that all your escape techniques work better.



*Samurai, or bushi, acquired ability through ongoing repetition. Art by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi.*

## REPETITION

Many students come into the dojo thinking that there is some magic trick to learning the martial arts. They imagine that if the instructor would simply reveal the secret to them, all their difficulties would vanish. Common sense tells us that this is not so; if it were, there would be far more masters than students. The "magic" in martial arts is simply the teaching power of repetition. It is possible to walk into a dojo as a nervous, clumsy student and walk out as a confident, skilled instructor, but the transformation takes years, and only occurs if the student throws herself into the training body and soul.

Repetition is the magic that makes us both strong and physically capable of performing a technique. This is true in any physical endeavor, and especially true in the martial arts. Repetition is also the magic that gives us our understanding of the principles that underlie the techniques. Constant practice forces us to compare many different types of techniques, physically if not mentally, and to draw conclusions about how and when they work best. This action, done often enough and over a long enough period of time, leads students to the intuitive grasp of principles that is the foundation for real progress in budo. Repetition is the key to the peculiar mental state sought by Zen practitioners and martial artists called "no-mind," which we will discuss in greater detail in a later chapter. Almost nothing in the martial arts is possible without repetition.

## CONDITIONING THE BODY

I am always surprised when I meet someone who claims to be a martial artist or martial arts instructor, but who is obviously out of shape. An instructor



*Wayne Muromoto, SMAA Senior Advisor, teaching Takeuchi Ryu*

who cannot train for an entire class alongside his students is unlikely to be much of an instructor at all. Only extreme old age or recent injury are acceptable excuses for standing on the sidelines barking orders. Nearly all of the master instructors I met in Japan were not only of higher rank than their students, but were clearly better at performing the techniques of their art. Those who could not perform as well were almost all over seventy years of age.

Martial arts are physical. I emphasize this again here because there are so many budoists out there who exercise the muscles of the jaw more regularly than any others. Sincere physical commitment is the key to healthy martial arts training over the long term, and almost no student has ever become really expert without an extended period of intense exercise that approached the limits of his or her physical endurance. Through hard training, physical skills become mental certainties, and mental certainties lead to a calm spirit. The more thoroughly the physical components are practiced and cultivated, the more clearly the other aspects will be revealed.

This physical training can take many forms. The most obvious are the different repetitive conditioning drills. In striking arts, punching hundreds or thousands of times with power is very beneficial. Striking a *makiwara* (a device used for conditioning the hands, arms, feet, and legs, usually a thick board wrapped in leather or rope) for long periods of time is a traditional means of training the body.

In judo, an exercise called *uchi-komi* is used. Two training partners grasp each other in the usual judo fashion, then one executes a throwing technique up to the point just before the actual throw. He or she repeats the drill ten times or so, then the other partner performs an equal number of repetitions. The more sets, the better the results. As long as both partners have built up their bodies through training to be able to endure the high numbers,



*The author teaching Kodokan judo*

there is no reason not to do a few hundred of these *uchi-komi* in each training session.

While I was living in Japan, my training partner and I undertook to complete ten thousand *uchi-komi* of our favorite techniques. We only had time to train together on Saturdays, so it took a few months to reach our goal. During the training, we learned a great deal about these techniques, and though the number itself doesn't mean we reached perfection, I recall that the techniques worked very well in competition, and that we both felt very satisfied on the day we reached ten thousand. I recommend this approach to anybody serious about judo training.

In iaido, train by making many thousands of sword cuts. In kyudo, train by shooting arrows until you are exhausted. In kendo, strike the opponent until

you cannot lift your *shinai* even one more time. In aikido, resolve to throw and be thrown until you cannot get up. Although not many students will have the heart to follow it to the end, this is the way to success.

## PURIFICATION

An important concept in budo is that of self-purification through training. Budo practice is thought by some to be a means of approaching the presence of the sacred. In some ways similar to the ritual of washing the hands and mouth before entering a temple, training is a way of cleansing the body, mind, and spirit in preparation for an encounter with a higher plane of existence.

The physical cleansing that takes place is fairly obvious. Sweat cleans out the pores, and the rush of blood through the veins and arteries is thought to help keep them clear. Comparing the physical condition of a budoman at seventy years of age and that of someone the same age who has not trained will satisfy you that exercise is good for the body. If, in fact, "the body is a temple," then hard physical training is equivalent to sweeping the floors of the temple, painting the walls, and burning incense to welcome the gods.

Mental cleansing comes through concentration. The complex actions performed in budo require our strict attention, distracting us from petty concerns. Paradoxically, deep concentration on the details of technique frees us from the worry over daily issues, allowing us to concentrate on fundamental matters. Thus, we can look clearly at our circumstances and decide if they are what we think they ought to be. In a lesser sense, this can mean something like examining a technique and deciding the best way to perform it. In a larger sense, it can

mean contemplating our whole relationship with the world and perhaps making behavioral changes that bring us more in line with our ideas of how we ought to live.

Through frequent practice, we learn to stay in this state of sharpened perception for longer periods of time. Repeated efforts of this kind eventually sharpen perception permanently. Like the results of regular meditation, daily exposure to a clearer way of viewing the world affects our thinking in fundamental ways. Learning to perceive truth is intrinsically rewarding, and we begin to seek it in experiences outside the dojo. Constant exposure to this kind of thinking can ultimately have a profound effect on our personalities.

"Spiritual" cleansing also comes from hard training. A tired body seems more inclined to operate in unity with the mind, leading to the kind of clarity that often follows intense meditation. At the extreme limit of fatigue, an exhausted body becomes unable to resist the dictates of the spirit. Thinking and then acting becomes, after many repetitions, unified thought and action. According to certain budo philosophers, there eventually arises a "perfect" relationship between mind and body, at which point the whole human being becomes a means of expressing divine intention, and thus is no longer constrained by ordinary physical and mental limitations. It is when students experience this oneness that they find their training most rewarding.

**About the Author:** Nicklaus Suino Sensei is one of the most active teachers in the SMAA. An author of several budo books and a practicing attorney in Michigan, he is also the Director of the SMAA Judo Division and one of the Directors of the SMAA Iaido Division. He has trained extensively in budo, in both the USA and Japan, since childhood.

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