

# 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

### 2022 SMAA DUES

Membership fees were due on January 1, 2022. Please be sure to pay your SMAA dues on time. You can either send a check to our headquarters or pay online at <https://www.smaa-hq.com/payments>. 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.

## 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)

## NEW SMAA ONLINE LIBRARY

We're always trying to offer more benefits to go along with your SMAA membership. So, be sure to drop by [www.smaa-hq.com](http://www.smaa-hq.com) and check out the new SMAA Online Library. We're in the process of

## PASSIVE AND AGGRESSIVE UKEMI

*By Daniel Holland*

In the martial arts, the ability to fall is crucial. This practice is known as ukemi in Japanese, and it is really an art in itself.

Ukemi is almost always taught, at least initially, as a method of receiving and managing an opponent's attack. In order to generalize the learning process, ukemi is often demonstrated as a series of shapes that one can assume when falling in a certain direction. Of course, these shapes vary, but quite often the forms consist of a backward breakfall, a side breakfall to the right and left, and a forward rotating fall. The shapes must be practiced exhaustively, so that that the body can form reflexively, and the mind is not perturbed when physical balance is lost. Once the fear or aversion to falling is overcome, the martial artist can focus on deeper aspects of the arts and truly begin to develop.

gradually adding back issues of the *SMAA Journal* to our website.

## WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE SMAA JOURNAL?

We're always looking for articles and news items for our publication. The *SMAA Journal* is written exclusively by and for SMAA members.

Since we're a nonprofit organization, operating on a volunteer basis, we don't offer payment for your submissions, but you will have our thanks. All submissions are edited, and we can't guarantee what you send us will be published. But we do use most of what we receive.

This is an opportunity to let members know more about you, your dojo, and/or your martial art. No writing experience is necessary, and you can send your articles and photos to [hedavey@aol.com](mailto:hedavey@aol.com).

To adopt a stiff and defensive attitude is the best way to restrict development, as Kano Jigoro Sensei, the founder of Judo, points out in his article, *The Importance of Ukemi*. In Kodokan judo, there is no shame in performing a forward roll when thrown toward the floor — it is infinitely more graceful and tactically advantageous to receive the ground with minimum impact in order to swiftly regain the feet, than the alternative, which is to nose-dive in order to prove the opponent didn't score the point. This mindset is very important, and it is appropriate in the dojo as well as the battlefield. By receiving a throw without receiving damage, one can persevere at full capacity. Injury can only hinder one's potential.

Ukemi, however, need not be restricted solely to defense. The mass of the body in conjunction with the acceleration of gravity can yield a significant



*Members of the SMAA Judo Division practicing sutemi waza*

force, and the application of this force in an intelligent direction can yield expedient results. Then ukemi becomes sutemi, which in all practical purposes is ukemi with aggressive intention. Sutemi, literally to “abandon the body,” occurs when one uses an ukemi form offensively, effectively throwing oneself in order to defeat an opponent. It is a sound concept.

In judo’s makikomi throw, one attaches the opponent firmly onto the back and takes a rolling fall, and the opponent, in addition to being tossed, conveniently functions as a cushion from the

## FORM, SPEED, STRENGTH

*By Wayne Muromoto*

One of the ways I break down teaching a movement art, like koryu, is that I progressively work on developing a student’s form first, then speed, and finally strength. These “levels,” if you call them that, are not mutually exclusive. They overlap quite a bit, so a better way of looking at them is that in

ground. In the martial arts, sutemi waza (“sutemi technique”) occurs prominently in judo, for three specific reasons: First, judo free practice encourages participants to attack and defend quite vigorously, so sometimes one must literally throw oneself in order to throw the opponent; second, if one is in the process of being thrown, performing ukemi in a specific manner can allow one to take control of the momentum of the exchange and reciprocate with a counter-throw; and third, judo techniques, when performed properly, are quite safe — so even if a participant is thrown with considerable force onto a matted floor, it is no big deal provided the participant knows how to fall.

The practical use of sutemi waza can be substantially expanded if compassion for the opponent is recklessly abandoned. If the force generated by sutemi waza is applied against, say, a small joint, the technique can easily destroy that anatomy. For example, if a wrist is torqued in such a way that all the slack is out of the arm, and a forward roll is performed in the direction the wrist can no longer bend, that wrist is damaged. Obviously, such methods are rarely practiced in the dojo because the potential for injury is incredibly high, but knowledge of their existence may prove decisive in dire situations.

**About the Author:** Daniel Holland Sensei has been a member of the SMAA for many years, and he’s a past contributor to the *SMAA Journal*. A martial artist with decades of training, he holds a fifth dan in the SMAA Judo Division.

progressively gaining expertise, a student will naturally have to utilize all three facets, but at different degrees at different levels. Many instructors in many arts, be they koryu, shin budo, dance, and so on, consciously or unconsciously use this ladder of physical training, so it’s nothing new.

## FORM

In the first level, that of gaining proper form, the student has to forget about speed or strength development and instead focus on getting the movement right, or at least right enough to build up speed later on. Doing a movement fast but wrong is not going to help much at all in gaining expertise, after all. You're just doing something wrong, only faster. Slowing things down allows the student to figure out placement of the feet, the hands, how the movement works against an opponent, and it lays in the mental pathways for future development and dexterity. You can break things down at this point, focusing on a specific point in the entire movement that needs more work, and then hone it down.

How slow do you go? As slow as you need. Tai chi ch'uan is an extreme example of going REALLLLLLLY slow. Detractors of "internal" Chinese arts only see the slow forms and say it's not really "combatively effective," whatever the heck that means, but they don't see auxiliary exercises that are meant to complement the slow forms. The slow forms build up proper balance and body movement. You move so slowly so that you are aware of every joint, every muscular expression, every angle of your deflection, strike or kick. Moving deliberately also builds up lower limb strength, balance and coordination of breathing and moving. For some people, that's actually quite enough, if they're looking for internal arts to be mainly for health purposes.

The auxiliary exercises, however, take the slow movements and speed them up, showing the practitioner how to use the movements in whip-like attacks and defenses. Together, they form a really interesting training system for building form, speed and strength by starting very, very slowly.

Going slowly when you don't quite know what you're doing is also a safeguard. With a live blade, I suspect that the reason many iai schools teach you to draw a sword out slowly in the first level of kata is that it

is a way to keep you from cutting off your own fingers the first couple of practices. By forcing the student to go slowly and carefully, he/she gains expertise in the actual mechanics of drawing a sword out, as opposed to whipping it out without thinking much about it...until you see your own fingertips rolling on the floor. With other koryu that have partnered training, I suspect it has to do with making sure you don't whack the other person with a wild blow of a bokken or staff, thereby quickly losing the pool of training partners markedly. If you can't control your own weapon, you do things slowly until you can. Even in jujutsu forms, the risk of injury to one's partner is still very great if you don't know what you are doing, so moving slowly until you get the form halfway decent is, by necessity, a safety precaution.

There is a danger to just going slow, of course. Not moving beyond this level limits the actual effectiveness of the movement, and doesn't give the student an honest idea of the disbalancing, distancing, action/reaction that would truly occur. As even my tai chi ch'uan teacher would argue, unless there's some "martial-ness" underpinning the movement, you're not doing martial art. You're just dancing.

The problem is, everybody wants to get to speed and strength, and do it "like sensei" who demonstrated it at full speed, right? It looks impressive and a lot of students want to get to level three before they can even master level one to any degree. That's where a proper teacher is of paramount importance in making students work towards their expertise without injuring other people, adjusting their form, speed and strength.

I once trained in a very large aikido dojo that numbered at least 40 to 50 students of varying expertise on any given night. I had returned to Hawaii after four years of college and had trained in a relatively smaller judo and aikido student club, where my teacher taught us to work in this manner:





*The author (left) demonstrating Takeuchi Ryu*

form, speed and then strength. Since the club was small, he could walk around and engage each pair of trainees quite frequently.

In the large club, one's partner's acumen, skill and consideration of others was all over the map. Sometimes I worked with outstanding sempai ("seniors," and they were all sempai, since out of deference to the club, I put on a white belt even though I had four years of intensive training, including serving as one of two primary uke for my teacher). Sometimes I had full-fledged aikido jackasses: you know the type: smug, self-assured and arrogant to the point of being sadistic. I also found higher ranking aikido students sending off vibes that they were unwilling to train with lower ranked beginners, as if it were beneath them, so oftentimes the lower ranking white belts would be left to stumble around on their own.

One night I happened to end up with a blue belter with a little person complex and way too much ego for his rank. We were working on a shiho nage variation, where I had to pivot and throw him, and I was trying to work the movement the way this dojo's teacher was doing it, which was somewhat different from how I originally learned it. As I slowly turned, trying to get my feet just right, he poked me with his

fingertips in the armpit, to say that I was too slow and he could hit me there. Okay. Yeah. But I'm trying to figure things out, okay?

When it came to his turn, he blasted through his shiho nage, going as fast as he could to show off, demonstrating very little grace or efficiency of movement. He was trying to use muscle to compensate for bad technique, and speeded it through to show me how good he was. Having taken breakfalls for a high-ranking aikido sensei, his attempt at showing me that he was a badass was easy enough to handle. I took the breakfall, none the worse for the throw, although I encountered some unnecessary pain in places where there shouldn't have been any because his angle of attack was off kilter.

I kept working on moving slowly, getting the technique right, and he kept poking me to show me he could hit me. Okay, okay, I get the point. He kept slamming me improperly, not improving at all, trying to show me that he was a badass blue belt.

Finally, just before that set ended, I started to move faster. I'm not sure if he noticed, since he was pretty oblivious to a lot of other things. But I was getting a handle on how that movement worked. On my last throw, I thought I figured out how to do it in this particular dojo's way, so I went at nearly my full speed. He tried to poke me but out of the corner of my vision, I saw his eyes bulge out in surprise because he couldn't. I was moving so fast that he was too unbalanced to do the poke. He tried, but by then it was too late. The force of the throw threw his left hand back and into the air, away from my armpit. I slammed him into the mat, hard but properly. He got up, a bit shaken from the throw, and we bowed out.

He never came up to me again that night to train with me. A pity. I thought he could take as well as he could give, but apparently not. I ended up training with other white belts for the duration of the

evening, slowing down my throws to accommodate their shaky ukemi.

Here, I think, the fault lay not just in that particular lower-ranking student, but in the attitude of the whole club, beginning with their instructors, who set the atmosphere and attitude. They were used to teaching a “you either get it or you don’t” way, trying to muscle their way into proper form, speed and strength all at once, when actually, it’s a series of steps. So, if you couldn’t “get” it, if you couldn’t handle it right away, you had to struggle on your own to catch up.

To be fair, I’ve not only seen that attitude in aikido dojo, but in some judo dojo, kendo dojo and other martial arts places where a certain competitive streak or misplaced machismo, or a kind of “tough guy” attitude reigns. It’s not a matter of koryu vs. shin budo, or what kind of martial arts it is. It’s more whether or not a particular instructor (and through his setting the standard, his assistants and senior students) understands how to teach body movement in the most optimum way to ALL the students, not just the gifted and talented ones.

The other reasons for emphasizing proper form first is that if you keep doing things the wrong way, over and over again, you’re not helping yourself get any healthier. Misalignment of your body, especially your core muscles and carriage, will lead to future health issues. That is one of the problems I have with a lot of cardio exercises that claim to be derived from martial arts moves.

In one late night infomercial on TV, I saw a bunch of colorful Spandex-clad practitioners of some newfangled exercise craze swinging a bokken, a traditional wooden training sword, while jumping, stepping, kicking and spinning to ear-splitting disco music.

On top of working up a real sweat, “I feel like a real samurai,” claimed one practitioner. While I’m sure

the exercises were great for a cardiovascular workout, my observation was that most of the people, including the teacher, had terrible te no uchi (how to hold the sword) and their off-balanced and misaligned swings were setting themselves up for carpal tunnel syndrome in the wrists, as well as shoulder and back injuries.

And besides that, when talking about martial arts, improper form does not allow you to deliver the optimum attack or defense that would be possible. The whole foundation of Japanese martial arts (and one of Kano Jigoro Sensei’s sayings of seiryoku zen’yo) is that you maximize the efficiency of your movement. You get the most out of it, and that can happen only when you are doing the movement right.

## SPEED

No one should be satisfied with their movement after one or two sessions, or even after a couple of years. I’m still not happy with my basic techniques, and I’ve been doing some form of martial arts for over 45 years now. Yet, at a certain point, you should manage a halfway decent form to your kata, and so you start to build up speed, while maintaining and improving your form.

This, too, is a necessary step in developing mastery. Form without speed often will not work, really. In many of my jujutsu school’s techniques, there is a reliance on a kind of “snappiness,” a sudden, quick movement at the apex of the kata that helps to throw the opponent after the initial unbalancing and redirection. Without this snap, this torquing, you can’t really throw an attacker.

It’s hard to describe this kind of movement, except that it’s like snapping a wet towel at somebody. If you just shake it, it won’t really hurt at all. But if you snap it, like a whip, the end of the towel can truly cause some pain. It’s done through the acceleration of the end of the towel to incredible speeds. It’s the

“secret” to really good judo throws, aikido throws, sword cuts, bo strikes, and effective karate punches.

Now, one of the hardest things I’ve found is trying to get some of my students to move past a certain slowness to build up speed. After moving slowly for a long time, learning how to do it properly, I’ve found that they have a hard time shifting gears and building up speed. Or, if they try to go faster, all their form goes out the window, so they have to regress again to regain their form. Or, they lose both form and speed, so they rely instead on strength, trying to muscle the technique without any thought to form or speed.

In one practice session, I kept urging my students to go a bit faster on a particular throw in order for it to be more effective. It was a foot sweep like a judo style *ashi barai*, in which you stick out your left foot to trip up the opponent’s right leg, causing him to fall to his right side. One student tried to go too fast. He pulled the opponent to the side with his hand, unbalancing him in the proper direction, then he tried to quickly trip him. However, he was trying to move too fast, so instead of putting his left heel on the side of the opponent’s right ankle, he wrapped his entire shin around his partner’s leg, and tried pushing him backwards. Because he hadn’t been unbalanced to his back, his partner just stood there while the student grunted and heaved and tried to push him backwards with all his strength. Strength don’t work if you’re using it wrong.

So, on this level of execution, speed WITH form should be combined, without the use of too much strength.

## STRENGTH

Finally, the last level is the application of some amount of strength to the form and speed. However, if I were to calculate how much strength should be used in the kata, I would wager that, at least in our training, you don’t go for *baka chikara* (“stupid

strength”). You don’t apply strength needlessly, but only where it is necessary and only enough to make the technique work. If you are working with a 98-pound partner, it is not necessary to slam that person into the mat with all your might, if you are 200 pounds and built like a weightlifter. You use only enough strength to make the technique work, relying instead more on form and speed. The less you need to do in practice, in fact, relying more on form and speed, the better your technique will be, and strength will just be the icing on the cake.

## GAUGING THE LEVEL OF APPLICATION

A corollary to this kind of progressive learning is that if you are in the role of teacher or *sempai*, you should apply it to how you interact with a lower-ranking student, as a kind of teaching methodology. Work slowly at first, using only enough speed and strength to challenge but not injure or overwhelm the student’s capacities. By blunting your own superior speed and strength, you can still gain a good workout by concentrating on improving your own form. To do this, you have to be able, when you are teaching lower ranking students, how to gauge and control your own abilities as well as that of the student.

Here’s a case in point: Someone posted a link to a video of an aikido seminar. I watched it and I think my reaction wasn’t what the poster was expecting. Instead of praising the instructor, I wrote something like, “This guy is a sadist.”

The teacher would demonstrate a technique at full speed on his uke, slam him to the ground, and then immediately turn his back, as if disdainfully, strutting away with his chin stuck out, like some street punk. When the students partnered off to practice, he walked around and demonstrated again, mercilessly pounding whoever he happened to pick as his uke, all at the same speed and strength, getting very, very close to breaking some arms or at the very least, tearing some ligaments and joints



apart. Maybe he thought that was what being a tough budoka was all about. And his students ate it up.

On the other hand, I had the privilege of observing the late Ueshiba Kisshomaru Sensei (the son of the founder of aikido) give a seminar in Hawaii. (I also saw his son, Moriteru, and he, too, was a superb technician and teacher.) I was most impressed by him because he didn't deign himself to be above interacting with children. He even let some of the kids throw him, and if he had to throw them to show something about a technique, he was very careful to do it slowly enough so that the children did not run the risk of any injury. He had nothing to prove. I thought that was true mastery, and true self-confidence. In addition, I believe that by slowing down his techniques, the children actually learned how to do the throw.

Being in a position of some kind of mastery but dialing down your ability in order to work with students to attain a higher level of their own is a delicate balancing act. If all you do (especially in a sport budo) is beat up your junior students, all they are learning is how to get beat up, not how to win. The trick is to challenge their skills without overwhelming them every step of the way. The other trick is to not let your ego get in your way.

I have a funny anecdote regarding gauging the amount you put out, and how it can be perceived by some people who may not be quite perceptive at understanding teaching methodologies. So, permit me this indulgence.

In 1976, I attended a judo summer camp on the East Coast of the United States, after I had just graduated from college and before I returned to Hawaii for work and graduate school. The camp was held in conjunction with the final training camp for the US Judo Olympic Team getting ready for that year's Summer Olympics, and many of us adult black belts

were invited to act as training partners (more like dummies!) for the Olympic judoka.

The one great lesson I learned, by the way, and I tell my own students, was that I was nowhere near the Olympians' level. Maybe I came close on groundwork (I was as surprised as the Olympic judo player was when I managed to effortlessly pin him, because my own teacher emphasized the ground work he learned from Kawaishi Mikinosuke Sensei and Mifune Kyuzo Sensei, but as far as standing techniques, I was dumped all over the place.) It reinforced my slowly dawning realization that I had better use my brain instead of my brawn if I wanted to make a living.

Anyway, half of the day I would randori with the Olympians, and the other half I would work with the rest of the judo campers, including a whole bunch of kids. With the kids, I often let them throw me if their techniques were half-decent. I had nothing to prove to them, I wanted to reserve my strength for training with the Olympic judoka, and it gave me an opportunity to focus on form and technique, rather than strength.

Pretty soon, kids were pushing each other out of the way to train with me. They loved to throw me around, and I didn't mind taking a fall as long as their efforts were meaningful. There was one especially eager young lad, about 13 or 14 years old, a skinny brown belt who had immigrated from Japan, who must have thought it was pretty cool to throw a collegiate black belt around.

On the last day of the camp, we held a "batsugun tournament." In this kind of tournament, everyone is lined up in a row and the first two (in this case, the shortest and youngest) start. Whoever wins moves on until he or she loses. The winner of the tournament is the person who has the most wins. It's more or less egalitarian, since it pairs those who are more or less equal with each other first, and then

moves up the chain. You only lose when you meet your superior in skill, and then that person has to deal with others who are his own equal.

I managed to squeak through several wins against much bigger adult black belts before I myself was dumped by the highest ranking yudansha. Nevertheless, because I had four or five wins, I narrowly beat out a little girl who was about 10 years old, because she had bested some three or four of her own peers.

After the match, there was still a little bit of time so we segued into a general randori session, the last of the camp. Several of the children came up to me, their mouths open in what I realized was a kind of awe that I had beaten some much bigger black belts, when they themselves had thrown me around the mats. They didn't comprehend that I had "let" them throw me, they said. They thought that I was just some kind of pushover that they could beat up. Even the skinny kid from Japan came up to me and expressed surprise.

"Were you holding back with me?" he asked.

Of course, I replied. I didn't want to hurt you, after all.

The kid insisted we do a round of randori one last time. "Only this time don't hold back!!!!" he said.

"Are you sure?" I asked.

"Yeah! I want you to go all out. I want to see if I can really beat you!"

Okay. I had to give the kid credit for his fighting spirit. So, we bowed in and went at it. He did his best to throw me again and again, but this time I didn't give an iota, even for some halfway decent attempts. He couldn't throw me even one time.

I threw him with my favorite throws: ashi barai, o soto gari, tai otoshi, and my most favorite, seoi nage. Bam, bam, bam, bam. On the last throw, he literally bounced several times on the mat, rolled round, grabbed his head, then jumped up and off the mat, ran in a circle around the room, and finally ran back to the mat.

"Are you OK?" I asked.

"Yeah, yeah. I just never was thrown like that before..." he said, and then he wanted to go some more.

"No," I said. I think that's enough. I bowed, shook his hand, wished him well and hoped that he would keep on training, and said that he had a really good fighting spirit. Then I went with a tiny little kid who I let throw me around, to her great joy.

Do I feel any less a martial artist because the kids didn't realize that I was trying to work at their level? Not at all. I feel, actually, proud that I was able to inspire and motivate children in their judo, and I didn't have a problem letting them "win." That's what I was taught a sempai should let his kohai do: motivate, encourage and challenge them to reach a higher level. For students who are already at a high level, like black belt students, that means going at it without much, if any, reserve, so they can strive towards reaching your own level and, perhaps, exceed you when you grow older and weaker. That's the nature of succession and of generational change. For weaker and/or beginning students, it's setting a bar just beyond their grasp, but not so far that they can't reach it with effort. And for kids, it's having them learn to enjoy the art, and building self-confidence and technical mastery on a basic level. Once they are so inspired, you then work on form, speed, and then strength, again and again. Form, speed, and strength, in that order. But with a heaping dash of joy, of course.

**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:** Wayne Muromoto Sensei is a member of the SMAA Board of Advisors. A frequent contributor to the *SMAA Journal*, he lives in Hawaii, where he teaches Takeuchi Ryu jujutsu and Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu iaido.

---

*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

<http://smaa-hq.com>

---

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

