

SMAA JOURNAL



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

2023 SMAA DUES

Membership fees were due on January 1, 2023. 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.

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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.

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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.

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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? 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:



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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 about special shipping for international orders.)

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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.

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF TOYAMA RYU

By Guy H. Power

The Heigakko (Officer Academy) was established in 1868 at Kyoto to graduate leaders for the new Meiji Restoration army; it later became the parent school of the Rikugun Toyama Gakko, or "Toyama Military Academy," which was established in 1873. The Toyama Military Academy trained the officers and noncommissioned officers of Japan's modern, western-styled army and was located in the Toyama district of Tokyo.¹ Both academies were the Japanese equivalent of America's West Point, or England's Sandhurst Military Academy.

To ensure the rapid modernization of the army, the Minister of Military Affairs designed the new post-Tokugawa army after the French model; French officers were engaged to staff the academies and oversee the training. After France lost the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, the Vice Minister of Military Affairs, Yamagata Aritomo (later Prime Minister from 1889-91; and 1898-1900) wanted to adopt the Prussian military system; however, because of the

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conservative nature of the Ministry, he was not able to effect the change until 1878, after becoming the Minister of Military Affairs.²



The author (left) in 1994

The mission of the Toyama Academy eventually changed as time progressed. In 1874, the training of officers went to the Rikugun Shikan Gakko, Army Officers Academy; the Toyama Academy became the army's physical training school, as well as the home for the Army School of Music.

In 1925, The Toyama Academy established Toyama Ryu iaido. Five forms employing both left and right kesa giri (downward diagonal cut) were created, adapted from standing techniques of Omori Ryu and Eishin Ryu iaido.³ Although both Omori and Eishin Ryu do not incorporate the kesa giri, research was conducted on sword battle results of the 1877 Satsuma Rebellion which indicated that 90% of the dead and severely wounded were struck by kesa giri.

At about this same period, Nakayama Hakudo Sensei taught at the Academy. I do not know how long his tenure was, but at least one reference lists a notice announcing that Nakayama Sensei would be giving a lecture/class on Omori Ryu iaido.⁴

While attending the Infantry Officers Advanced Course at Fort Benning, Georgia in 1985, I was also researching information for the book *Naked Blade*. I came across a very clear description of the Toyama Academy curriculum in a book written by a British exchange officer. Posted to a Japanese regiment from 1936, he offers a first-hand account of the academy.⁵

Nakamura Taizaburo Sensei, a Toyama Ryu senior master, states that the Toyama Academy implemented a system of army-sword techniques in 1939 because of the Manshu Incident and the Japan-China War. Since earlier references date the birth of Toyama Ryu as 1925, I am presuming that Nakamura Sensei is referring to a probable reevaluation of the then current techniques, and possibly the addition of two more kata and tameshigiri (test-cutting). A circa 1944 copy of *Gunto no Soho* shows a total of seven kata, and a circa 1944 edition of the Shin Budo magazine has a photograph of a helmeted soldier in full field gear cutting through makiwara (straw bundle) with an



Power Sensei and Nakamura Sensei

army sword; the caption states, "At the Toyama Army Academy."⁶

In 1874, the mission of schooling officers was transferred to the Rikugun Shikan Gakko at Ichigaya, in Tokyo, where it remained until 1937. In that year, the Ichigaya location was closed down and moved to a broad plain 37 miles southwest of Tokyo, close to the town of Zama. When the Emperor visited during field maneuvers and looked down from the heights to the field below, he is said to have remarked, "This is truly a plain for the training of the military, I will name this 'Sobudai'." Sobudai translates as "Heights for Observing Warriors."

At the end of World War II, the Army Officers Academy at Sobudai was occupied by the U.S. Army and later became Camp Zama. I was stationed at Camp Zama from 1990 through late 1994. (My office was in a converted kendo dojo: what a waste.) During some coordination meetings, I visited the Academy Museum maintained by the Third Engineer Brigade of the Japan Ground Self Defense Force, co-

located on Camp Zama. Inside one of the display cases were two certificates presented to officer cadets, awarding them third dan in Ryote Gunto Jutsu, or "two-handed army sword techniques."

Although I was not able to get one of the original certificates, the Operations Officer was willing to photocopy them for my research library. I have included this aside to illustrate that fencing was also conducted at other institutions. It would be interesting to discover whether or not the instructors were graduates of the Toyama Academy, and if the manual used was the *Gunto no Soho* manual. I have talked to former graduates of the Rikugun Shikan Gakko, but they didn't remember—although they did remember fencing and bayonet fighting.

During a one-week period, I was privileged to be a guest lecturer at the Japan Ground Self Defense Force (that means "army") Intelligence School. While there, I obtained a chart listing important events at the Toyama Academy, as well as a map of Camp Zama when it was the Rikugun Shikan Gakko. There were a total of six kendo dojo and one bayonet dojo. The buildings each were about 200 feet long and 40 feet wide, with three separate entrances.

Sobudai was divided into two sections, north for the Japanese, and south for the international students (China, Korea, Indochina, etc.). Three kendo dojo and one small dojo—possibly for instructors—were available on the south side; two kendo dojo and one jukenjutsu (bayonet) dojo were on the north side.

After World War II, Nakamura Sensei kept the spirit of the Toyama Academy alive by organizing Toyama Ryu iaido after the proscription on martial arts was lifted by General Headquarters.

In 1977, Nakamura Sensei founded the All-Japan Toyama Ryu Iaido Federation. The first president was Harada Jitsu Sensei, a former Toyama Academy fencing instructor and All Japan Kendo Federation kendo and iaido Hanshi. The comprehensive senior master was Nakamura Taizaburo Sensei, battodo

Hanshi tenth dan [Editor's note: Renshi, Kyoshi, and Hanshi are traditional ranks/titles that can be said to equate to a Bachelor's degree, a Master's degree, and a Ph.D.]

Nakamura Sensei modified the original seven army forms and added an eighth, itto ryodan. This eighth form is actually a test-cutting technique; its Japanese name means to "cut in two with one stroke." It is extant in other traditional schools, but is taught as a quick draw or surprise attack. It is also known as suemono giri, shin choku giri, nuki uchi, makko, karatake wari, and shomen giri.

Because Toyama Ryu iaido exclusively employs standing sword techniques, as opposed to the kneeling forms of many traditional styles, it is adaptable to one's surrounding environment. The practitioner is not restricted from performing outside the dojo; any place may be used: a gymnasium, racquet ball court, uneven field, or a city park. Likewise, one is not restricted because of uniform requirements.

Although most kenshi (swordsmen) wear the traditional Japanese training wear of hakama (wide skirt-like pants) and keikogi (or uwagi—"jacket"), anything may be worn: sweat suits, jeans, karate gi, slacks, or even the Japanese Self Defense Force white physical training uniform.⁷

If the traditional uniform is too costly, or if time is at a premium, one can just strap on the unique Toyama Ryu sword belt, or any other wide-support belt, and begin training.⁸ Since Toyama Ryu exclusively uses standing forms, you needn't be concerned about dirtying your business clothes on the floor or ground, an impossibility with many of the traditional styles.

Three separate organizations represented Toyama Ryu iaido in the 1970s: in Hokkaido, the late Yamaguchi Yuuki Sensei's Greater Japan Toyama Ryu Iaido Federation⁹; in Kansai (Kyoto-Osaka area), the late Morinaga Kiyoshi Sensei's Greater Japan Toyama Ryu Iaido Association; and, Nakamura Sensei's All

Japan Toyama Ryu Iaido Federation. Each organization was autonomous and retained its own set of forms; the Hokkaido branch even included sword versus bayonet exercises. I do not know whether the first two organizations are still in existence, but Nakamura Sensei at one time felt it was imperative that the three organizations should cooperate and become one body in order to preserve the Toyama Army Academy sword techniques. Unfortunately, he was unsuccessful in this endeavor.

Notes

1. A suburb of western Tokyo which is currently identified as Toyama Heights. According to Nakamura Sensei, none of the original buildings remain, nor are there any historical markers or memorial stones to mark the location.
2. Kodansha Ltd. *Japan, an Illustrated Encyclopedia*. Tokyo, Japan (1933), pp. 53–56.
3. The okuden level of Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu *iaido* contain eight kneeling and ten standing forms.
4. *Ski Journal*, "Kendo Nippon", 1994, vol.--- pp.—
5. Hillis, XYZ. *Japan's Modern Military Masters*. etc., 1946.
6. BAB Publications, "Hiden Koryu Bujutsu", 1993, vol.---, pp.---.
7. It looks like a chef's uniform, with Neru collar, and has been in constant use since the 1930s, if not before. It probably evolved from the European cavalry fatigue duty uniform worn while cleaning out stables; a 3-inch wide "stable belt", buckling to the rear, is also worn.
8. This belt is still worn today by the Japanese Self Defense Forces with the white physical fitness uniform. Toyama Ryu has made one modification: a leather pocket is attached to the left side which will snugly accommodate a sword scabbard; sometimes, a cord retaining strap made of leather is also sewn along the right side of the belt. When properly worn the belt will buckle at the back (just like British regimental "stable belts"). Teaching status is identified by horizontal stripes around the circumference of the belt: two stripes indicate Renshi; three stripes indicate Kyoshi; and four stripes indicate Hanshi.
9. The term "Greater Japan" (Dai Nippon) was often used until the end of WWII; it retains its imperialistic overtone and is seldom used today.

About the Author: Guy Power Sensei is the Co-director of the SMAA Iaido Division. He is a direct disciple of the late Nakamura Taizaburo Sensei. Nakamura Sensei, Hanshi tenth dan Toyama Ryu Iaido, was the founder of Nakamura Ryu Batto-do.

ETIQUETTE AND THE BOW

By Daniel Holland

Traditional martial arts, particularly those of Japanese origin, are structured within a framework of foreign ceremony and intricate formality that is open to the charge of being outdated and upheld by the pedantic. Such modes of conduct are certainly archaic, but they are an inherent characteristic of

martial discipline, and they are as important to the field as body mechanics and tactical know-how.

Why? The easy answer is tradition, but it is not a very good one. To simply mimic the actions of those who came before us without import is perhaps a waste

of time. Were tradition the only reason to adhere to dojo protocol, I'd be arguing on the other side of the fence. Etiquette develops necessarily, not aimlessly. The evolution of culture and ritual is a symbiosis.

The most prolific gesture throughout the Asian martial arts is, of course, the bow. Our Western counterpart is the handshake, but the bow and the handshake engender slightly different connotations. A handshake implies mutual balance and position — both parties stand upright and converge eye-to-eye. A proper bow bends from the waist, displacing the balance forward and lowering the line of vision. This gesture implies deference, which is critical in the martial setting.

The bow cannot be neglected. It must always be sincere. Great care and fastidious effort must be poured into its refinement, because the bare-bones, primordial implementation of physical martial technique is fierce: We hit each other, we choke each other, and we toss each other to the ground; we swing sticks, brandish swords, and exchange a gamut of sophisticated bodily punishment. Without an honest and sincere demonstration of respect before and after an exchange, before and after class, we risk the creation of a contentious environment that promotes brawling and discourages mutual benefit. In a dojo, that

environment makes no sense. In the military, that environment enkindles mutiny.

This concept is not too difficult to grasp, and most martial artists get it. But what about bowing to inanimate objects? Bowing to the shomen or to our weapons seems to suggest a religious or even cultish connotation to those viewing from the outside in, and indeed I have assuaged skeptical newcomers and concerned parents regarding the topic. (The shomen is the front of the dojo, where the founder's picture or a shrine may be present.) Amusingly, the word "heathen" once surfaced during a discussion with an unhappy mother.

The word *dojo* is composed of two Chinese characters: *do*, which means "road," "path," or "way;" and *jo*, which means "place." *Dojo*, then, literally means "the place for finding the way." We do not bow to the shomen and those who came before in order to idolize it or them — our bow is an acknowledgement of the setting we are in, and an expression of thanks for what was left to us. It's like hitting a reset button on the brain that clears our memory banks of excess flotsam: deferential focus at the beginning of the task, deferential thanks at the end.

So why do we bow to our weapons in arts like *iaido*? Why do we bow, for instance, to the sword? I have heard that the sword was considered the soul of the samurai, that his life depended on its maintenance, and therefore it was critical to his profession. This information seems accurate enough, but it is no longer the case today. The likelihood that my fate or your fate is going to be determined by a clash of polished razor blades, three feet in length, is no more than goofy at best. Today we bow to the sword because it is essential to our training. Without the sword, or whatever weapon we practice, we could not study the art. This is true even for art forms wherein one's body mechanics persist regardless of armament — such as *kali* or *arnis* — because the weapon teaches the empty-hand techniques just as



Holland Sensei (right) practicing Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu

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much as the empty-hand techniques teach the weapon. The weapon must therefore be cared for, kept up, and handled with respect, just like those warriors who employed it in the past.

And in every case, the study begins and ends with deference. What better way to engage in the praxis of learning?

About the Author: Daniel Holland Sensei is an SMAA-certified teacher of iaido, judo, and jujutsu. He teaches these arts in the U. S. Midwest. He has been practicing martial arts since 1988.

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