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SMAA JOURNAL

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

2024 SMAA DUES

This is a reminder that SMAA membership fees need to be renewed on or before January 1, 2024. Your prompt attention to this matter is appreciated. Payments can be easily and securely made at www.smaa-hq.com.

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*.

Do you have a new e-mail address? Have you sent it to hedavey@aol.com? If not, we also won't be

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 growthand 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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- Nicklaus Suino Sensei
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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 about special shipping for international orders.)

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

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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

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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

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_XCH8RkIV8IiNZoXl93Wl79BLe1NZ

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 and check out the new SMAA Online Library. We're in the process of gradually adding back issues of the *SMAA Journal* to our website.

HYPERLINKS

Since we live in the age of the Internet, we're trying to make the *SMAA Journal* more interactive. Look for words in blue and underlined. These are hyperlinks.

Click on them, and you'll connect to websites that can give you information about topics mentioned in this and future issues. Have fun surfing the web! Just remember to come back and finish reading the rest of this issue.

SUINO SENSEI RECEIVES JUDO SEVENTH DAN

Recently, Nicklaus Suino Sensei was unanimously approved by the SMAA Board of Directors and Board of Advisors for promotion to seventh dan in our judo division. Promotions to high ranks in any martial art aren't a regular occurrence in our group. There are two main reasons for this.

First, the SMAA is focused on quality more than quantity. In another words, we'd rather have a few

Suino Sensei teaching ashi waza, judo "leg techniques"

people with high ranks, who really deserve such rank, than many people with high ranks, who are essentially mediocre.

Second, promotions are not based simply on time and technical proficiency. While technical skill might be a primary concern for kyu grades, and lower dan ranks, for ranking above fifth dan individuals must be very actively involved in the SMAA. That involvement includes leading a dojo, regularly registering SMAA members, and helping with some

Suino Sensei in action

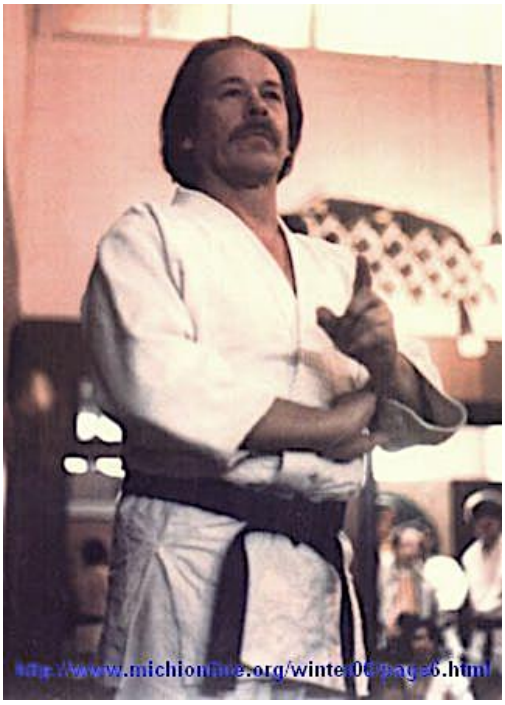
of the work involved in maintaining our nonprofit organization. Not many people meet these criteria for higher ranks, but one person who does is Nicklaus Suino Sensei.

His background in Kodokan judo is remarkable. Suino Sensei is one of the original founding members of our group. Using his skills as a lawyer, he set the SMAA up as a tax-exempt, nonprofit corporation. For many years, he has served as the general manager of our association, handling all correspondence, maintaining our website, taking care of our finances, and much more.

Now in his 60s, he began judo in the United States in 1968. His last SMAA promotion in judo was to sixth dan, and it took place in 2000. Suino Sensei has, in addition, won a number of judo tournaments, including receiving a silver medal at the AAU Midwest Regional Championship.

He eventually moved to Japan for several years and studied judo with notable experts including:

- Yamashita Yasuhiro Sensei (Olympic and world judo champion)
- Sato Nobuyuki Sensei (multi-time world judo champion and co-author of Best Judo)
- Sato Shizuya Sensei (ninth dan and the former leader of the American Embassy Judo Club)
- Eddie Liddie (1984 Olympic judo bronze medalist)
- Walter Todd Sensei (a founding member of the SMAA, a US judo pioneer, eighth dan, and personal student of the legendary Mifune Kyuzo Sensei, tenth dan)
- And Abe Ichiro Sensei (tenth dan)



Walter Todd, judo eighth dan

Suino Sensei succeeded the late Mr. Todd as the Director of the SMAA Judo Division. He was personally appointed by Todd Sensei to this position.

While living in Japan, Suino Sensei trained in traditional judo at the famed Kodokan, Kanagawa Kenritsu Budokan, and the American Embassy Judo Club. He is one of very few people in the world authentically teaching judo in the lineage of Mifune Kyuzo Sensei. He inherited this unique methodology from his teachers, Todd Sensei and Sato Sensei, direct disciples of Mifune Sensei. And he recently returned to Japan with some of his students, where they practiced various budo under famed experts, including training in judo at the Kodokan.

Congratulations to Suino Sensei!

The Extraordinary Professor Kano – His Books, Influence, and Political Legacy

By Nicklaus Suino

Kano Jigoro Sensei was the founder of Kodokan judo. While he's mainly known for his contributions to the world of martial arts and physical education, his abilities and his influence extended far beyond sports and the dojo. He was not just a visionary in the martial arts world, he was also instrumental in the careers of many other famous martial artists, as well as a significant figure in the political landscape of Japan during a crucial period of its history. When we're celebrating this remarkable man, we should not miss the opportunity to showcase his works, his connections, and involvement in education, international diplomacy, and physical fitness as a means of fostering national pride and unity.

Note for readers: this is only the briefest summary of Kano Sensei's life and achievements. There is so much more to learn, and I highly recommend digging deeper by reading his books, biographies written about him, and the excellent information promulgated by Lance Gatling at https://kanochronicles.com.

Early Life and Education

Kano Sensei was born in 1860 in Mikage, a small town near Kobe, Japan. He grew up during the Meiji Restoration, a period when Japan was undergoing rapid modernization and a transition from a feudal society to an industrialized nation. It was a time of significant political and social change. This historical backdrop had a powerful effect on Kano Sensei's political outlook and ambitions.

His education also played a pivotal role in shaping his political beliefs. At university, he was exposed to Western ideas and the newly evolving approaches to education, governance, and cultural change. He graduated from Tokyo Imperial University with a degree in political science and economics. These two influences proved instrumental in his later political endeavors.

Kano Jigoro (circa 1892)

Kano Sensei's Books

On his way to becoming a renowned Japanese educator, martial artist, and the founder of judo, Kano Sensei made significant contributions to the world of martial arts and physical education. A part of his legacy lives on through the books he authored. Let's summarize each one:

- *Judo Kyohan* (The Kodokan Judo Textbook)

Judo Kyohan is one of Kano Sensei's most influential works and serves as a comprehensive (though somewhat outdated) guide to the art of judo. In it, Kano Sensei outlines the principles and techniques,

providing detailed explanations and illustrations. It covers not only the physical aspects of judo but also its philosophical and ethical foundations. Throughout the book, Kano Sensei emphasized the timeless concept of "maximum efficiency, minimum effort," known as seiryoku zenyo, which is a fundamental principle of judo. *Judo Kyohan* has been instrumental in spreading knowledge of judo around the world and remains a classic for both beginners and advanced judoka.

- *Kodokan Judo: The Essential Guide to Judo by its Founder*

Kodokan Judo is another important work by Professor Kano. It offers a comprehensive overview of judo's history, philosophy, and techniques. This book highlights the evolution of judo from its traditional roots to the modern sport it became under Kano Sensei's guidance. It includes detailed descriptions of Judo techniques and training methods. Kano Sensei's approach to judo as a means of physical and moral education is a central theme, as it was in all his judo work. He explored the concepts of jita kyoei ("mutual benefit") as well as seiryoku zenyo ("maximum efficiency") as the guiding principles of judo and emphasized their relevance in everyday life.

- *Mind Over Muscle: Writings from the Founder of Judo*

Mind Over Muscle is a collection of Kano Sensei's writings, including essays, articles, and speeches that provide valuable insights into his philosophy and his vision for judo. Kano Sensei believed that judo should not be limited to physical combat but should also contribute to personal and societal development. He discussed the importance of mental discipline, character development, and the moral aspects of martial arts, which shed light on his efforts to promote judo as a way to build both physical and moral strength.

Kano Sensei's books are not only important resources for judo practitioners but also valuable contributions to the broader fields of physical education, martial arts philosophy, and personal development. Kano Sensei's emphasis on principles of efficiency and personal development highlights his commitment to the idea that judo is more than a sport; it is a path to physical and moral improvement. His writings continue to inspire martial artists and educators around the world, carrying forward the legacy of one of the most influential figures in the history of martial arts.

Kano Sensei's Influential Relationships

We know that, as the founder of judo, Kano Sensei was a visionary martial artist who played a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of Japanese martial arts in the 20th century. His works not only laid the foundation for judo but also had a profound influence on other martial arts and martial artists of his time. Professor Kano interacted with hundreds of martial arts leaders, including Funakoshi Gichin Sensei, Ueshiba Morihei Sensei, and Tomiki Kenji Sensei. Let's review how these connections contributed to the development and popularization of their respective martial arts.

Funakoshi Gichin: Karate-Do

Funakoshi Sensei, known as the father of modern karate, shared a strong relationship with Kano Sensei, despite the fact that they practiced entirely different martial arts. Funakoshi Sensei, a skilled Okinawan karate practitioner and the founder of Shotokan karate, first met Kano Sensei during one of his trips to Japan. Kano Sensei recognized the potential in his art and encouraged him to introduce karate to the Japanese.

Kano Sensei's influence on him extended beyond the realm of martial techniques. Kano Sensei's consistent emphasis on moral and ethical values resonated with him. Under Kano' Sensei's guidance,

he integrated those values into karate-do, promoting character development and self-improvement alongside physical training. Funakoshi Sensei's teachings aligned with Kano Sensei's vision of martial arts as a means to educate and cultivate individuals and society, which laid the groundwork for Shotokan to become one of the most widely practiced martial arts in the world.

Ueshiba Morihei: Aikido

Ueshiba Morihei Sensei, the founder of aikido, also had a significant connection with Professor Kano. Ueshiba Sensei was initially a student of Daito-ryu aiki-jujutsu, a traditional Japanese martial art that focused on joint locks, throws, and immobilization techniques. However, he admired Kano Sensei's philosophy. Kano Sensei recognized Ueshiba Sensei's talent and dedication and supported his endeavors. As he continued his martial journey, Ueshiba Sensei developed the new, unique martial art of aikido, which emphasized harmonious interaction and non-aggression over confrontation and force. While his aikido diverged from the competitive aspects of judo, Kano Sensei's emphasis on effective techniques, ethical principles, and personal growth was shared by both men, and greatly influenced the development of aikido's core values.

Tomiki Kenji: Tomiki Aikido

Tomiki Kenji Sensei was a direct student of Ueshiba Morihei and a prominent figure in the world of aikido. He also had a unique relationship with Professor Kano. Tomiki Sensei's background in judo and his association with Kano Sensei played a crucial role in the development of Tomiki aikido, a more structured and sport-oriented variant of aikido.

Tomiki Sensei began his judo training in the early 1920s under Kano Jigoro. His judo training was rigorous and comprehensive, and he eventually earned his black belt in the art. He became a successful competitor, known for his groundwork and his contributions to the development of new judo techniques. As time went on, he maintained a close relationship with Kano Sensei. He worked closely with him in various capacities, including as an instructor at the Kodokan.

Tomiki Sensei was instrumental in introducing judo into the physical education curriculum of Japanese universities. He recognized the value of judo in fostering physical fitness, discipline, and character development in young students. He is perhaps most famous for his integration of judo principles into aikido. He developed what is now known as "Tomiki aikido" or "Shodokan aikido," which blends elements of judo and aikido. Kano Sensei's emphasis on randori, a form of free practice, and his belief in the importance of competition as a means of testing and refining techniques, strongly influenced Tomiki Sensei's approach to aikido. He integrated judo-style randori and competition into aikido, creating a distinct and more methodical branch of the art.

Professor Kano's relationships with Funakoshi Sensei, Ueshiba Sensei, and Tomiki Sensei had a profound impact on the development of their respective martial arts. His emphasis on moral values, efficient techniques, and personal development influenced not only judo but also karate-do, Ueshiba aikido, and Tomiki aikido. These

The author teaching traditional judo

relationships exemplify how martial artists can inspire and learn from one another, leading to the growth and evolution of their arts while promoting the broader principles of respect, discipline, and character development that underpin martial arts traditions. Kano Sensei's legacy endures through these connections, fostering a rich and interconnected martial arts heritage that continues to shape the world of martial arts to this day.

Promoting Physical Education

Outside the direct propagation and development of judo, one of Kano Sensei's earliest political activities was his involvement in the Japanese physical education system. He believed that physical fitness was an essential element of a nation's strength and unity. This focus led to his role in the Ministry of Education, where he worked on reforming the physical education curriculum in Japanese schools. He advocated the inclusion of martial arts, particularly judo, as a means of instilling discipline, respect, and fitness in Japan's young people.

It's important to remember that judo as an educational tool was not just a physical endeavor; it was also a political one. Kano Sensei promoted judo to contribute to the formation of a disciplined, physically capable, and loyal citizenry, which he believed was vital for Japan to become a global power.

International Diplomacy

Kano Jigoro was also involved in international diplomacy. He used his influence to foster goodwill and cooperation between nations. He traveled extensively and had a significant role in promoting Japanese culture and diplomacy worldwide. His efforts to spread judo and his work with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) reflected his belief in the power of sports as a means of international cooperation and understanding.

The late Richard Yamamoto, SMAA Senior Advisor and Kodokan seventh dan

Kano Sensei's involvement in the IOC was a notable example of his political engagement. He served as a founding member of the committee and played a crucial role in bringing the 1964 Summer Olympics to Tokyo, a significant event in Japan's post-war history that showcased the country's resurgence as a global power.

The Kodokan Institute

In addition to his political involvement in education and diplomacy, Kano Sensei's establishment of the Kodokan Institute in 1882 is another demonstration of his political acumen. This institution not only served as the headquarters for the development and dissemination of judo but also as a place for fostering a sense of Japanese identity and unity. Kano Sensei emphasized moral and ethical values, which he believed were integral to the martial arts.

Through the Kodokan, he aimed to cultivate a sense of pride in Japanese culture and heritage. The institution still exists today, primarily as a place where judo is researched, taught, and preserved. It's

a destination for every serious lifetime judo enthusiast who visits Tokyo.

KANO JIGORO'S LEGACY

Kano Sensei, was a visionary and martial arts pioneer who left behind a legacy that transcends generations, a legacy etched in the annals of time with the indomitable spirit of his art. With a heart ablaze with determination, he forged judo, a martial discipline that fused physical prowess with the unyielding principles of respect and harmony. Through the crucible of relentless discipline, he refined his creation, shaping it into a crucible of transformation, molding not just bodies, but souls. His legacy is one of unwavering dedication to the art of self-improvement, where strength and gentleness intertwine like the delicate threads of a spider's web. In the echoing halls of time, the name of Kano Jigoro resonates as a beacon, illuminating the path of enlightenment and self-discovery for all who tread in his footsteps.

About the Author: Nicklaus Suino Sensei is one of the founding members of the SMAA. The author of *Budo Mind and Body* and other acclaimed works, he has over 50 years of training in budo.

Keiko: Merging the Old and the New in the Present

By H. E. Davey

In an era dominated by technology and rapid change, the practice of genuine and classical Japanese martial arts is a means of preserving tradition and cultural heritage. The meticulous transmission of techniques, forms, and philosophies from one generation to the next ensures that the essence of these martial arts remains intact, serving as a bridge between the past and the present.

The author passing on jujutsu traditions

This is embodied by the Japanese word keiko. As most people authentically studying budo and/or koryu bujutsu know, it means "practice." But what is keiko in a deeper sense, and how does it tie into the uniqueness of traditional Japanese martial disciplines?

A DEEPER MEANING

Keiko (稽古) is derived from two characters: kei (稽) and ko (古). Understanding the etymology of keiko provides insights into its significance in the realm of genuine budo.

The first character, kei, conveys the notion of reflection or contemplation. It implies a thoughtful examination and introspection, suggesting that the practice isn't just about physical repetition but involves a mental engagement with the techniques being learned. In budo and koryu bujutsu, this reflects the idea that training goes beyond the mere execution of movements; it involves a continuous process of self-reflection and improvement.

The second character, ko, means old or ancient. In the context of keiko, it signifies a practice that's

SMAA members engaging in judo keiko

rooted in time-honored traditions. This character emphasizes the historical depth and authenticity of the techniques being studied. In budo, practitioners often engage in keiko to connect with and preserve the ancient wisdom and martial traditions passed down through generations. Therefore, when combined, keiko encapsulates the essence of dedicated and mindful practice in the context of traditional Japanese martial arts.

Understanding Keiko

The emphasis on reflection in the etymology of keiko underscores the importance of mindfulness in the practice of budo. It isn't enough to mechanically repeat movements; practitioners are encouraged to be present and contemplative during their training sessions.

The concept of keiko reinforces the idea that learning in traditional Japanese martial arts is a continuous process, something that's occasionally lost in combat sports and self-defense courses. It goes beyond the acquisition of techniques to encompass personal and spiritual development. Each session becomes an opportunity for improvement and a deeper understanding of oneself and the martial art being practiced.

The character ko in keiko highlights the link to age-old traditions. Budo is not a static discipline; it evolves while maintaining a connection to its historical roots. Correct keiko allows martial artists to honor the legacy of their predecessors and contribute to the preservation of the martial heritage.

That said, engaging in keiko requires discipline and dedication. The commitment to regular, focused practice is essential for progress in budo and koryu bujutsu. The etymology of keiko serves as a reminder that true mastery in Japanese martial arts is achieved through consistent and dedicated training over an extended period.

About the Author: H. E. Davey is one of the founding members of the SMAA. With over 50 years of training, in Japan and the USA, he holds the teaching title of Shihan, and he's ranked eighth dan within the SMAA Jujutsu Division.

AN EXCERPT FROM CLEARING AWAY CLOUDS: NINE LESSONS FOR LIFE FROM THE MARTIAL ARTS

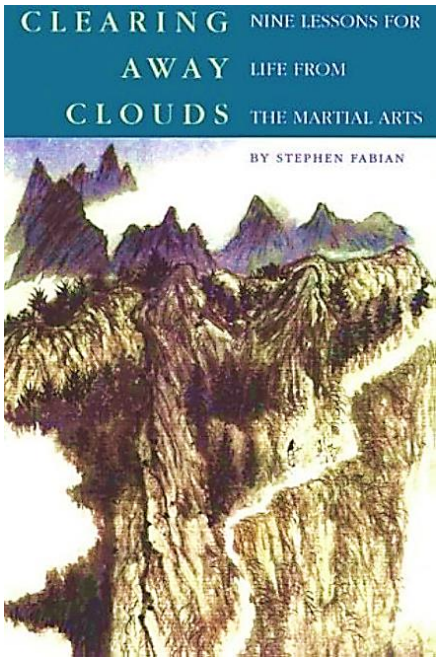
By Stephen Fabian

Chapter 7

BE PATIENT AND FLOW

> Those who are patient in the trivial things in life and control themselves will one day have the same mastery in great and important things.
>
> Bong Soo Han, as quoted by Joe Hyams in *Zen and the Martial Arts*

The more I attempted to learn and apply the physical and philosophical dimensions of Asian martial systems and the Way of Mastery, the more I was drawn to actually experience them in their full



cultural context. My anthropological training was also a major motivation in this regard. In anthropology we learn that cultural components are integrated, which implies that whatever the Asian martial arts are all about is in some fundamental way tied into virtually everything else in their culture of origin. The traditional martial systems of Japan (and other Asian nations) were an integrated part of culture in the past, and contributed greatly to the formation and character of the contemporary nations of Asia. For Japan, Nitobe Inazo's text *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* is explicit on the significance of samurai training and ethos to the development of this globally significant nation.

With this in mind, once my doctoral responsibilities were concluded and with the happy coincidence of a job offer from a Japanese firm in Surabela's hands, we made our logical—and momentous—decision. We stored, sold, gave away, and threw out some of our possessions, packed and shipped the rest, and soon followed them to Japan. There we lived and worked for the next three years, learning about the land and its people, norms and standards, traditions and changes, and ourselves.

UNDERSTANDING JAPAN

While it may be that the brilliance of the Japanese miracle of economic development has dimmed of late, few can doubt the impressiveness of the rise of Japan from defeat in World War II to current world economic dominance, e.g., second only to the U.S. in annual GNP, and touted as the world's leading donor nation. This accomplishment is all the more impressive when we consider how little in the way of natural resources Japan has that would facilitate this level of successful competitiveness.

Historically, the Japanese have developed as an energetic and disciplined people, whose social system and cultural norms emphasize tight-knit groups with a productive work ethic, and to which attention to obligation is paramount. Contributing factors in the development of these characteristics are the natural setting, geography, and distribution of natural resources in Japan, a country comprised of mountainous islands in which the subsistence base necessary for a developing civilization needed to be wrested from land circumscribed by sea and steep slopes. Another contributing factor has been the destructive natural calamities such as earthquakes and typhoons—and their potential side effect, the tsunami, our misnomered "tidal" wave—which have periodically leveled communities, and from which the survivors have repeatedly reconstructed their social and cultural structures.

What is cause and what is effect in the development of Japanese attributes is debatable, but another elemental factor in the development of the Japanese has been a set of characteristics associated with a martial ethos that has pervaded Japanese civilization for centuries. For over 250 years during the Tokugawa era (1600-1868), the bushi or samurai, Japan's warrior class, were essentially at the top of a caste-like social system. But even long before this, at least from the 12th century when fighting between rival Taira and Minamoto clans resulted in military domination of a hitherto nobility-run government, Japan's military leaders

wielded considerable social and political power, facilitated by their actual ability—through force of arms—to control.

Besides the discipline inherent in efficient and successful military organizations, numerous attributes have been associated with Japan's bushi. An outgrowth of the philosophical and religious bases of Shinto, Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism, the code of conduct of the samurai certainly evolved over time, as well as in different feudal domains, itself a subject worthy of further detailed study. But the more or less comparable codes within which these warriors trained and developed has come to be known as bushido, the Way of the bushi or warriors.

The earliest treatise on this subject written by a Japanese (in English) for a Western audience is the book *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* by Nitobe Inazo, who based his work, in his own words, on "what I was told and taught in my youthful days, when feudalism was still in force." In it, Nitobe describes the most salient attributes of bushido to be rectitude or justice, courage, benevolence, politeness, veracity/sincerity, honor and personal dignity, loyalty and duty or obligation, and self-control. (Compare these attributes with the "Five Constant Virtues" of Confucian tradition: benevolence, righteousness or rectitude, propriety, wisdom, and trust or faith that Warner and Draeger list in *Japanese Swordsmanship*.) As in the case of most ideals, there are certainly deviations from and excesses in the application of these traits. But Nitobe's main point is that much of what is Japan today, indeed its very "soul" (as indicated in the subtitle of his book), derives from the tenets of bushido.

Although Japan has changed significantly in many respects since Nitobe's era, Nitobe's words are still worth heeding:

> He who would understand twentieth-century Japan must know something of its roots in the soil of the past. Even if now as invisible to the present generation in Nippon as to the alien, the philosophic student reads the results of today in the stored energies of ages gone.

I was curious to see and experience for myself this land of the samurai, to know what it had become, and to learn from what it still has to offer.

In the Land of the Samurai

Surabela was hired by a firm providing instructional services in international communication, which would make use of her administrative, linguistic and multi-cultural skills. Since the firm was a subsidiary of the enormous Sumitomo keiretsu, or "business family," we were able to move into subsidized company housing. This had the advantage of relieving us from the hassles of finding a place on our own, and of reducing our rent. Residence in company housing also came with a ready-made neighborhood: other Sumitomo employees and their families, a sort of work-based extended family.

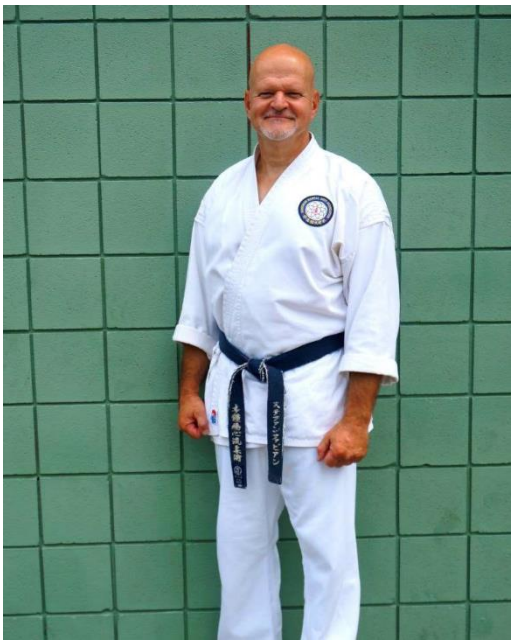
Although Japan is a land where you can see and experience breathtaking natural beauty, as well as inspiring ages-old shrines and temples of hand-hewn timber, most Japanese (and foreigners living in Japan) live in an urban setting characterized by asphalt, glass, and concrete; bustling traffic in the form of cars, commuter trains, bicycles, and swarms of pedestrians; and skyscrapers and sky-high prices. The area in which we lived, Koshien—a district of Nishinomiya which is about half-way between the larger centers of Osaka and Kobe—is typical in this way, and famous in Japan as host to the biannual high school baseball national championships. It is a busy place, full of the inevitable noise, smog, and occasional congestion of the modern city. But it also has its charm, especially in the scattered elements of traditional aesthetics: small neighborhood Shinto shrines with their prominent torii (entry gate), Chinese-inspired

architecture, and green growing things; miniature sculpted gardens; relatively crime-free streets; and a general neat tidiness. And there are also, and most importantly, the Japanese people themselves, who know the value of courtesy, and who helped us feel welcome, if not actually at home.

Our apartment, known as a "2DK" in Japan (that is, two rooms, with a dining-kitchenette area), was a common type and tiny by American standards, at least for a family. Our living area was comprised of two 6-tatami mat rooms (tatami, a rush used extensively for flooring mats, is affixed to frames which measure about three by six feet [or three to six Japanese shaku lengths]), a kitchen with barely room for a card-table, a short hall, toilet and bath rooms (separate and closet-sized), an entry alcove (the ubiquitous genkan where shoes are removed before entering), and a narrow balcony. For storage, closets ran the length of each tatami room, in which the folded bedding (futon) is kept during the day, as well as all clothes and other personal belongings. The inconveniences of this apartment—such as its small size, and the challenge of heating either water or the living space itself without a centralized system for doing so—were somewhat compensated by the tastefully decorated sliding cardboard doors (fusuma) dividing the internal spaces, and the paper window shutters (shoji) that illuminate with a pleasant diffuse light, while nevertheless concealing the inside from the out.

Fortunately for us, my wife had not only begun learning her Japanese intensively while previously living and studying in Japan, but had continued to take courses in it at the University of Illinois, and had become quite fluent. Unfortunately for me, except for a short cram course two weeks before our departure, I had never formally studied the language. Once Surabela began her full-time employment duties, this left me at home with our two-year old daughter, with virtually no Japanese language, and playing house-husband in a land where men are rarely seen at home during day-time hours. On most days, Rebecca and I would join the other company children and their mothers for play in a large sand box and on park equipment, where Rebecca, with her dark hair and the advantage of the pre-pubescent brain for language acquisition, quickly became acculturated and functionally bilingual.

For me it was not that easy, although I was able to complement my individual language study from books and audio tapes with daily application in actual life contexts. This resulted in fairly rapid progress in spoken Japanese, especially during the first six months of our stay. My motivation was high, and there are certainly an abundance of learning aids available. But it was difficult and awkward being the only adult male among the daily groups of interacting children and mothers, which limited the extent to which I felt comfortable practicing my Japanese (it is also true that men and women speak slightly different styles of Japanese, which further complicated my learning process). Once we acquired bicycles and an attached seat for Rebecca, she and I were able to take rides, for shopping or sightseeing, or even to the seashore (not very distant, although access to it was restricted by a high sea wall) and other parks. Even



Fabian Sensei, jujutsu seventh dan

though such jaunts relieved some of the monotony and discomfort of my daily schedule, I knew that for the sake of Rebecca's socialization and normal development, she needed regular contact and play with other children, and so as often as not, we played near our apartment.

Besides having primary daytime responsibility to care for our apartment and daughter, and learning the language, I was also seriously attempting to rewrite my doctoral dissertation into a book. The irony of my intense involvement in Asian martial arts while preparing a doctoral thesis on South America in the U.S., and writing a book on Brazilian Indians while in Japan, is not lost on me. There is no doubt that in each instance my ability to totally and exclusively immerse myself in one specific project was affected by these somewhat competing and diverse interests. Perhaps this combination unnecessarily complicated my life, but it seemed the only reasonable course of action, especially once my disparate interests began developing and demanding expression. Besides, I was not sure then, nor am I any more certain now, that exclusive emphasis in only one direction of study is most beneficial, or even desirable. This attitude matches my staunch support of the liberal arts education, which stresses a broad foundation of study in the humanities, arts, and social and natural sciences. Such an orientation not only ensures well-rounded development, but also allows for focused study in a way that should maximize the potential for cross-disciplinary connections. Making these bigger, interdisciplinary connections was part of what I hoped to be achieving by my mix of interests and activities.

To be successful, such a mix does depend on an efficient ability to focus, to concentrate on the matter at hand, especially since you may be changing the subject of your attention dramatically, in relatively short periods of time. It also requires patience, since the acquisition of knowledge—especially on disparate subjects simultaneously—seldom comes quickly or easily. Both the ability to focus and to be patient are enhanced by serious martial training, in which you cannot hope to achieve respectable competence in mental and physical focus in a short period of time. So, I attended to my house-husbanding and parental duties; studied the language, the culture and the people; and worked on my book, focusing on each in turn, and struggling with my impatience to know more, speak better, and be productive in my new and alien environment. This was the everyday context of my entry into Japan. But my personal, primary reason for being in Japan was not forgotten: formal training in a traditional Japanese martial art. And thankfully, this opportunity was not long in coming.

Hontai Yoshin Ryu Jujutsu

Japan is known for a plethora of martial systems, especially such modern sports as judo and kendo, and the Okinawa-derived karate. Since I had no interest in competition, both judo and kendo held little attraction for me in terms of my training, and karate, although of different varieties depending on the specific ryu, or school/style, was also somewhat unattractive due to its at least superficial similarity to tae kwon do in emphasizing kicking and punching techniques. I was hoping to train in a style that could complement these techniques, one that emphasized joint locking and throwing in order to immobilize an attacker, and possibly some traditional weapons use. Being in Japan, I also sought something quintessentially Japanese.

Master Hyong, knowing my philosophical interests in the arts, had suggested perhaps the most obvious choice, aikido. Aikido was established as a new martial style during the middle decades of this century by Ueshiba Morihei, a gifted martial artist and devoutly religious man, who elaborated upon the base of his formal training in traditional styles of jujutsu/aikijujutsu and kenjutsu to devise a system that he felt allowed a person to harmonize with universal energy. My earliest personal contact with aikido had been the club demo at the U of I,

and while the instructor had been impressive, I had doubts about my fit, at least at that time, with such a style, especially as it was practiced there. As it turned out, there simply were no aikido classes anywhere near or moderately convenient to our residence in Koshien, again stymieing my interest in that art.

Another possibility that interested me was jujutsu (also spelled jiujitsu or in other variations). Nitobe lists jujutsu as among the curriculum of studies of bushido, and defines it as "an application of anatomical knowledge . . . to incapacitate one for action for the time being." One of the first actual Japanese instructors of jujutsu to teach in America, Kiyose Nakae, gives more substance to the definition in his 1958 instructional manual, *Jiu Jitsu Complete*: "jiu means 'gentle, pliable, virtuous, to submit' and jitsu means 'art or science'." Its techniques as perceived by Westerners were so unlike fighting that they are labeled "tricks" in this relatively early (English) publication, and are said to "wipe out differences of size, weight, height and reach."

The potential problem in training really traditional jujutsu however, is its lack of accessibility. Several Japanese friends or acquaintances with whom I spoke in the U.S. prior to leaving for Japan were convinced that jujutsu was no longer practiced in Japan, that rather the more modern judo was the only existing form of this art. This sentiment is even expressed by the publisher in his original preface to Nakae's text: "Jiu Jitsu is no longer taught in Japan. It is no longer passed from generation to generation, as it had been for hundreds of years." Assuming that if against these apparent odds I could find a jujutsu school, what would be the likelihood of it being close enough for me to train in, or of my acceptance as a foreigner into its ranks?

Fortunately for me, not only is traditional jujutsu still taught in Japan, but the headquarters of one such style was located only a 15-minute bicycle ride from our apartment! Without prior knowledge of its location or existence, my manner of entry into this system, the Hontai Yoshin Ryu, was so obviously fortuitous as to make me ponder such concepts as destiny, fate, and karma.

The Honbu dojo or headquarters training hall of Hontai Yoshin Ryu is located in a municipal building in Imazu, Nishinomiya. It shares this space with several other martial styles in an elaborate scheme of time-sharing. As it happened, the Japanese wife of an American who was an employee in the same firm as Surabela trained at the dojo. This family kindly invited us shortly after our arrival in Japan to their apartment --one similar to ours in a neighboring Sumitomo building-- and it was during our conversation over lunch that our shared interest in the martial arts arose. Upon my mention of jujutsu, the woman informed us of the presence of the Hontai Yoshin Ryu at her dojo, and suggested I go see a practice session; she even offered to make the requisite introductions, highly significant in Japan. It seemed then—and it still seems—too good to be true. Barely containing my excitement, I thanked her for her information and offer, and made arrangements to go with her that very week to the dojo.

My first practice session in the Hontai Yoshin Ryu occurred on 21 July 1987, less than two weeks from the date of our arrival in Japan (9 July). Since it was a Tuesday night, and since the Hontai Yoshin Ryu is a koryu, or ancient traditional system with both unarmed and weapons components, I began my actual training not in unarmed combat, but rather in the use of the 6-foot staff (cho-bo or roku shaku bo), after which several members of the style took me out for talk and drinks. Although we had difficulty communicating (no one spoke much English, and my Japanese was still embryonic), we achieved and shared kimochi, the "good feeling" that is elemental for group harmony in Japan. From such talks and shared training strong interpersonal bonds were formed, and I was able to piece together some of the history and current state of affairs of my new style, a traditional school that has

nevertheless changed to some extent with the times.

Although I had not known it at the time, the Hontai Yoshin Ryu, with some 350+ years of history, was then in an active state of exporting itself overseas, and had already established several schools in Europe, and during my three-year stay would establish others, including in Australia. No formal contacts had yet been made with Americans, however. That several hundred students practice the style outside of Japan is ironic considering that a "crowded" night at the honbu (headquarters) dojo yields perhaps a dozen participants, and most nights have fewer. In spite of the considerable foreign interest in the style, it remains relatively unknown in mainstream Japan (or in the U.S.); considering this, is it is again ironic, perhaps, that at the time of my training in Japan (1987-1990), my period of consecutive training at the dojo became the longest of any foreigner.

In the Honbu Dojo

The main training schedule of the Hontai Yoshin Ryu during my stay was on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday nights, from about 8:00 PM until 10:00 PM. Tuesday was bo night, emphasizing the long (six foot) and short (three foot) staffs, while Wednesday and Friday emphasized primarily empty-handed jujutsu. The core of the jujutsu is encoded in sets of weaponless forms or kata, including defenses against different types of attacks (for example, a wrist grab, lapel grab, punch to the face or body), and incorporates a variety of deflections, strikes, joint locks, and take-downs or throws. Additional jujutsu kata also include defenses against the tanto (knife) and katana (long sword), while other sets of kata involve the wakizashi (short sword), and the han-bo (three-foot stick), as well as the cho-bo.

Although I was given the generous option of wearing my tae kwon do black belt, I preferred to don (for the third time in my life) the beginner's white belt. The training suit worn in practice is a simple white dogi, with either a white or black belt tied around the waist. I found the pureness and simplicity of the unadorned uniforms and lack of colored belts to produce a rather powerful and positive aesthetic effect. Occasionally in practice and always for demonstration purposes a traditional black or dark blue hakama is also worn, which adds considerable dignity to the outfit, but also requires attention from its wearer when executing movements, particularly falls and rolls, since it is not that difficult to get your feet entangled in the folds of material. Training is generally done barefoot, although for outdoor performances a simple thonged zori, or sandal, with or without tabi (split-toed socks), can be worn.

A practice session in Hontai Yoshin Ryu jujutsu is a curious blend of formal structure and informal relationships. Class is started and ended with students in a line, everyone seated in the seiza posture with feet tucked under (insteps on the floor and heels against the buttocks), facing the front of the dojo and the class leader. All bow to the front (where there is a Shinto shrine), and to the leader, who also bows; there may or may not be a period of meditative calm, mokuso, and some message or philosophical discourse by the leader. Inoue Tsuyoshi Munetoshi, the system's current and 18th

Fabian Sensei teaching bojutsu

Soke or Grandmaster, is particularly fond of sharing his philosophy. A lifelong practitioner of the martial arts, and master of many styles (including two-time Japanese National Champion in jukendo, the fiercely competitive bayonet-derived style, as well as devoted practitioner of shodo, the way of calligraphy), Soke is an embodiment of the samurai ethos: disciplined, physically strong yet aesthetically sophisticated and philosophical, successful in professional matters, and socially prominent as a leading local citizen.

Whereas my first lesson in bojutsu emphasized basic striking movements with this weapon, my first jujutsu session began with ukemi, the all-essential break-falls that minimize risk of injury by helping you take the shock of a throw. We also worked some basic drills with a partner that emphasize body mechanics, such as how a wrist can be extracted without applying aggressive force from a hand that has grasped it.

In general, warm-ups, following the bowing-in, are brief, usually only a series of front rolls back and forth across the dojo, sometimes followed by simple throwing drills. The greater part of a training session is spent training specific kata with a partner. In my experience, the new student is introduced fairly quickly to the first and second kata in the first jujutsu series called gyaku no kata. Unlike most karate kata or tae kwon do poomsae which are performed by individuals and can have twenty or more movements in them, jujutsu kata are practiced between two people and may appear relatively simple: the attacker moves in (for example, grabs a wrist or lapel, or punches to the face or belly), and the defender responds, with a designated technique. Correct technique and attitude, good timing, and proper body position and movement (tai sabaki) are of major importance. The defensive motion may be a locking or throwing maneuver with or without a strike, but is over in a brief moment, after which the two practitioners retreat from each other and take up a prepared stance in a state of heightened mind-body alertness called zanshin.

That all of this appears simple is what makes the actual performance of the kata so remarkably difficult. Jujutsu movements are replete with nuances and subtleties, and a type of body motion that must be cultivated over an extended period of time. Responses are typified by circularity and the use of the lever principle, and rely on a thorough knowledge of human anatomy for the application of accurate locks, throws, and even pressure point strikes (atemi). Because true proficiency in this art requires not only refined physical technique, but a certain frame of mind—this relates to the various concepts associated with the term ju—it requires long and diligent training, under masterful instruction.

And so, I began a new stage of my martial journey. In spite of my previous 10+ years of martial training, my initial progress felt agonizingly slow. Donning yet again the beginner's white belt in this different art really required me to "empty my cup" of prior conceptions, and to apply all of the glimmerings of awakening martial awareness in the study of this traditional Japanese system. All of my previously grasped Lessons of Mastery were reiterated, and one utterly fundamental new one was added: the need for patience and the ability to flow.

Jujutsu is an excellent context for learning this Lesson: its subtle movements, timing, angles and positions defy quick or easy learning, and its major philosophical tenet—the Japanese ju—is to flow, to develop and apply the qualities of flexibility and suppleness. Learning to flow with my partner, to not meet aggressive force directly with aggressive force but rather to use the attacker's own force, momentum and position against him or her, has been an extremely important revelation to me. Ideally, once mastered the skills of jujutsu allow you to neutralize an attack with minimal harm to yourself and with minimally expended energy, allows the smaller and weaker to overcome the larger and stronger, and allows you to control to some degree the damage you cause your attacker.

Beyond this, the jujutsu adept can also apply this tactic of ju to interpersonal interactions and relationships of a non-physical nature, reducing aggression and conflict in these contexts. But of course, all of this requires time, training and patience.

Patience and Flow

The Way to Mastery is not a commodity that you can purchase at your local discount or department store, nor is it a refreshment or entertainment that gives immediate gratification. It is rather a series of challenges that comprise an endless process of being and becoming. Because this is so, and in spite of the many frustrations and setbacks you will inevitably experience along your way, it is important that you acquire and practice patience. The development and application of patience is facilitated by an attitude of flowing with the Way. The more compulsively you struggle for achievement, the more you will become mired in the muck of frustration and defeat.

The self-discipline necessary to keep us to the task of mastery despite setbacks, pitfalls, and endless frustrations can harden us to a point where we become physically, mentally, and emotionally stiff and rigid, as I myself was in my earlier "crusty" phase. As one version of Lao Tzu's *Tao Teh Ching (Book of the Tao or The Way of Life*, Witter Bynner translation) puts it,

> Man, born tender and yielding,
>
> Stiffens and hardens in death.
>
> All living growth is pliant,
>
> Until death transfixes it.
>
> Thus men who have hardened are "kin of death"
>
> And men who stay gentle are "kin of life."

Such over-rigidity is not only unattractive to others, but it severely limits our development and abilities, and in a martial context can be deadly. In Eiji Yoshikawa's novel *Musashi*, our hero learns this lesson from Yoshino, a geisha he meets. Following a chance encounter, the highly cultivated geisha finds herself oddly attracted to this youthful and rather uncouth but impressive samurai. As they awkwardly interact, Yoshino reveals her sadness at Musashi's affected alertness and rigidity—which he defends by claiming to be in readiness for potential enemies. Yoshino counters by suggesting that while in such a state, if he were to be attacked in force, he would be killed immediately. The geisha illustrates her message poignantly, by cutting open the valuable stringed instrument upon which she plays so masterfully. She shows Musashi how the instrument's beautiful sound is created by combining its rigid wooden structure with flexible strings. Yoshino comments:

> . . . the tonal richness comes from there being a certain freedom of movement, a certain relaxation, at the ends of the core. It's the same with people. In life, we must have flexibility. Our spirits must be able to move freely. To be too stiff and rigid is to be brittle and lacking in responsiveness.

The geisha's message is that strength, hardness, and perseverance need tempering with gentleness, flow, and patience. This is part of the meaning in the name, Hontai Yoshin Ryu, which has for its imagery the Willow Heart/Mind where the willow, which bends and sways in a strong wind is considered superior to the stiffness of an oak which can be snapped off by the same gusts.

Musashi eventually became the embodiment of flexibility and flow, and shared this wisdom with his students and all of us in his creative works and writing. In the Water Scroll (or Book) of his *Go Rin No Sho (Book of Five Rings)*, for example, he condemns rigidity and praises flexibility: "I dislike rigidity. Rigidity means a dead hand and flexibility means a living hand . . . Always maintain a fluid and flexible, free and open mind."

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Also, by "letting it happen" as Master Hyong would frequently advise us, we are not so much in a rush to get to our objective that we make things harder for ourselves getting there. Habitually "letting it happen" will also facilitate "letting go" in ultimate mastery. Rushing headlong towards mastery will keep you far from it, like grasping for something in water, only to send it further away. Such heedless haste distracts you from the significance of the journey itself. Patience, the capacity of calm endurance, will help you measure your tread when you might otherwise recklessly dash forward, and can also help you tolerate the tribulations and challenges you will surely encounter on your Way.

About the Author: Stephen Fabian Sensei is the Co-director of the SMAA Jujutsu Division. He is also the author of *Clearing Away Clouds*, a biography that details lessons for life that can be learned via the practice of classical Japanese martial arts.

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