

SMAA JOURNAL



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

DON'T FORGET YOUR 2013 SMAA DUES

Every year the SMAA collects dues on January 1. Please be sure to make your contribution on or before this date. You can send a check or money order directly to our headquarters, or you can pay conveniently with a credit card or PayPal at our website: <http://smaa-hq.com/payments.php>.

A NOTE TO MEMBERS OF THE SMAA

We have recently become aware of at least one other martial arts group that uses the acronym "SMAA." Please note that the Shudokan Martial Arts Association is not affiliated with any other group or organization that uses SMAA to identify itself. Though we do not believe any careful observer would confuse our thoughtful, traditional approach with that of another organization, we suggest that you be sure to type in "Shudokan Martial Arts Association" when seeking information about our association. Our website can be found at <http://www.smaa-hq.com/> and our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/ShudokanMartialArtsAssociation>.

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

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

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 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:

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

FACEBOOK PAGE



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

SMAA ONLINE PAYMENTS

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

THE BEST OF THE SMAA JOURNAL CD-ROM

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

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

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

SMAA KENTUCKY SEMINAR

By Elizabeth Irish

Katsujinken Dojo, a Hontai Yoshin Ryu USA branch school in Louisville, Kentucky, hosted Stephen Fabian Sensei, a Director for the SMAA Jujutsu Division, in July of 2012. The SMAA Kentucky Seminar was held at the Katsujinken Dojo in Louisville's Highlands neighborhood, and at nearby homes, for three full days of training. Every



Fabian Sensei (right) teaching Hontai Yoshin Ryu jujutsu in Kentucky



Fabian Sensei, seventh dan, applies a wrist lock

morning during the seminar the students gathered at the house of Brian Barnes Sensei, SMAA Jujutsu Division fourth dan, to practice Eight Pieces of Brocade under Fabian Sensei's direction. (This is a Chinese method of cultivating "life energy"—ki or chi—that Fabian Sensei practices as a supplement to his traditional jujutsu practice). We started before the sun rose, wobbling in the dark backyard and doing our best to follow along. It centered and reinforced us for the day's training, as did a group breakfast before the first dojo session began.

On Friday, we enjoyed three hours of Hontai Yoshin Ryu jujutsu kata with Fabian Sensei, USA branch director of Hontai Yoshin Ryu, an incredibly valuable opportunity for growth and refinement. It's a great gift to have Fabian Sensei frequently visit our dojo and a pleasure to practice with him.

On Saturday, we started the day with three hours of Hontai Yoshin Ryu rokushaku bo kihon and kata ("basics and forms for the six-foot staff"), but we later opened the practice to include karate-do students that share our dojo space with us. We all practiced together in the afternoon for a seminar on Japanese Hontai Yoshin Ryu jujutsu basics. More than ten Chito Ryu karateka hit the mat with us for more than three hours of traditional Japanese approaches to unbalancing, locking, and throwing. After the action subsided, Cyna Khalily, MD, a



Steve Fabian teaching at the SMAA Kentucky Seminar

senior teacher in the Chito Ryu karate-do system and Barnes Sensei's dojo partner, graciously hosted a party at his home for seminar participants, their spouses, and children that evening.

On Sunday morning, we practiced our iaijutsu and benefited from Fabian Sensei's profound understanding of the Hontai Yoshin Ryu and Toyama Ryu sword systems. At this training, we were joined by several members of a local aikido dojo seeking refinement in their sword practice.

The weekend training was exhilarating and thought-provoking. It's stimulating to practice with old friends and new students, and these connections are sources of immense pleasure for me in my training. We feel deep gratitude whenever we have the chance to receive Fabian Sensei and his students. We're also grateful to the SMAA members in attendance at this seminar.

About the Author: Elizabeth Irish is an SMAA associate member in Kentucky and a student of Brian Barnes Sensei, an SMAA certified jujutsu teacher. She has attended several SMAA seminars. This is her first article for the *SMAA Journal*.

SMAA WORKSHOP FOR CHILDREN

The Sennin Foundation Center for Japanese

Cultural Arts in California hosted the first SMAA Workshop for Children on November 18, 2012. The workshop included children age five through eleven, and instruction was offered in Saigo Ryu aiki-jujutsu, a traditional Japanese martial art.

H. E. Davey, one of the founding members of the SMAA and Shihan/seventh dan in the SMAA Jujutsu Division, presented this event for young people in the SMAA, who were able to participate for just \$15 using their member discount. While many Westerners use "jujutsu, jujitsu, or jiu-jitsu" to describe their art of self-defense, most of these methods bear little resemblance to the original Japanese jujutsu, Japan's oldest martial art. Both



H. E. Davey with Jack Adamson, in front of the class, at the SMAA Workshop for Children



SMAA members Sam Abramov and Mara Benitez practicing a Saigo Ryu wrist joint technique

aikido and judo stem from jujutsu, and Mr. Davey is one of relatively few people outside of Japan to offer instruction in authentic Japanese jujutsu, a martial art that is not always made available to children.

Although Saigo Ryu features training in the sword, spear, staff, short stick, iron fan, and other weapons, the SMAA Workshop for Children focused on unarmed jujutsu, with particular emphasis



Ellis Miller practicing a Japanese yoga exercise at the SMAA Workshop for Children

placed on several versions of a throwing technique called aiki nage. While aiki nage is dynamic and effective, the emphasis was on subduing an opponent without unnecessary injury. Workshop participants also learned to improve their health while studying martial arts as meditation, valuable training that can help children to remain calm under pressure, a skill that they can use at home and at school.

SUINO SENSEI PROMOTED TO JUJUTSU GODAN

Nicklaus Suino Sensei, SMAA General Manager, has been promoted to fifth dan in the SMAA Jujutsu Division. Suino Sensei began practicing budo in 1968, and he lived for several years in Japan, where he studied a modern form of jujutsu under Sato Shizuya Sensei, tenth dan.

Sato Sensei was the founder of his own system of Nihon jujutsu, which he taught around the world. It focuses on kata, goshin ho ("self-defense"), and tanbo ("short stick") techniques. Suino Sensei returned to Japan on a regular basis to study with Sato Sensei until Mr. Sato passed away in 2011.



Suino Sensei teaching jujutsu

Suino Sensei is the leading practitioner of this form of jujutsu in North America.

He is also the author of *Practice Drills for Japanese Swordsmanship*, *The Art of Japanese Swordsmanship*, *Strategy in Japanese Swordsmanship*, and *Budo Mind and Body: Training Secrets of the Japanese Martial Arts*. He has taught seminars in Sato Ryu Nihon jujutsu, Kodokan judo, and Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu iaido throughout Canada and the USA for many years, and he is one of the founding members of the SMAA. Congratulations to Suino Sensei!

SAWAI SENSEI'S NEW BOOK

Subete wa Yoku Naru (All will be Well) is the latest book by Sawai Atsuhiro Sensei. Sawai Sensei is a member of the SMAA Board of Advisors and a Shihan in Kobori Ryu, a system of samurai swimming and combat in water. He is also a direct student of Nakamura Tempu Sensei, the founder of the Shin-shin-toitsu-do (Shin-shin-toitsu-ho) system of Japanese yoga. Sawai Sensei is one of the highest ranking teachers of Japanese yoga in the world and the author of several best selling books on this subject, including his latest work *Subete wa Yoku Naru* (published by President).

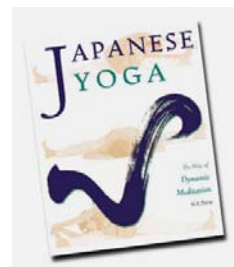


Sawai Sensei sitting in meditation

This book focuses on techniques of autosuggestion for altering the subconscious mind to, in turn, alter one's habits. Sawai Sensei discusses several methods for creating positive habits and overcoming fears, with a particular emphasis on the use and creation of positive affirmations. As one of Japan's highest ranking budoka, Sawai Sensei has written the book in a way that can help other budoka enhance their performance in martial arts, but at this time it is only offered in Japanese. Our Japanese reading members can order a copy at <http://www.amazon.co.jp>.

In the near future, Michi Publishing will release Sawai Sensei's first English language book *The True Paths to Meditation*, which will feature information on meditation and mind-body unification principles that have been beneficially studied by a large number of skilled martial artists and athletes in Japan.

JAPANESE YOGA IS BACK IN PRINT



Several years ago, *SMAA Journal* editor H. E. Davey wrote the first book in English detailing the mind and body unification principles of Nakamura Tempu Sensei. It was called *Japanese Yoga: The Way of Dynamic Meditation*, and it received favorable reviews in the USA, England, Japan, and other nations. It was particularly well-received by martial arts students, who used the book's mind and body coordination training, meditation, and stretching to enhance their budo practice. Eventually the book went out of print, but it's available again with a new edition from Michi Publishing. Michi Publishing is also offering an e-book version of *Japanese Yoga*.

Emphasizing stretching and meditation exercises, the goal of Japanese yoga (Shin-shin-toitsu-do) is mind/body integration, calmness, and willpower for a healthier and fuller life. Developed by Nakamura Sensei in the early 1900s from Indian Raja yoga, Japanese martial arts and meditation practices, as well as Western medicine and psychotherapy, Japanese yoga offers a new approach to experienced yoga students and a methodology that newcomers will find easy to learn.

Nakamura Sensei was skilled in Zuihen Ryu battojutsu, an ancient form of swordsmanship. He had advanced training in judo and kendo as well, and budo principles influenced his Japanese yoga. He, in turn, influenced prominent budo experts in Japan.

He was friends with Ueshiba Morihei Sensei, the founder of aikido, and a large number of top aikido exponents studied with Mr. Nakamura to improve their budo, including Tada Hiroshi Sensei, Aikikai aikido ninth dan. Several aspects of aikido, which are often thought of as "aikido exercises," actually come from Nakamura Sensei. This includes the so-called "unbendable arm" exercise often used in aikido to illustrate the projection of ki, or life energy, and powerful exercises for developing ki can be found in *Japanese Yoga*.

After a history of Shin-shin-toitsu-do, H. E. Davey presents Mr. Nakamura's Four Basic Principles to Unify Mind and Body. These principles relate the meditative experience to the movement of living and make it a "dynamic meditation." Each of the Four Basic Principles is illustrated with step-by-step explanations of practical experiments that can improve your martial arts skills.

Readers are then introduced to seated and moving meditation, health exercises, and self-healing arts. All these are linked back to the Four Basic Principles and enhance performance in martial arts and other activities. Readers learn to use Japanese

yoga techniques throughout the day, without having to sit on the floor or seek out a quiet space.

Included at the end of the book are simple but effective stretching exercises, information about ongoing practice, and a glossary and reference section. Amply illustrated and cogently presented, *Japanese Yoga* belongs on every mind/body/spirit reading list.

New, signed copies of this book can be purchased at http://senninfoundation.com/davey_yoga.html. You can order an e-book (Kindle) version of *Japanese Yoga* at <http://www.amazon.com>.

LOOKING BACK ON 2012 SMAA EVENTS

The SMAA had some great events in 2012, and we hope you took advantage of your SMAA member discount by participating. Some of these events were actually free to our members, and they were all reasonably priced. A goal of our nonprofit association is educating the public about the benefits of budo and koryu bujutsu training, and making high quality instruction in traditional Japanese martial arts (and related non-martial disciplines) available to as many people as possible helps us toward this objective. Here's what we offered you in 2012:

The Japanese Sword: Ancient Tradition, Living Culture, Modern Art

February 20, 2012

San Jose, California, USA

SMAA Senior Advisor Paul Martin, a former staff member of the British Museum, author, and acknowledged authority, presented a free lecture on the history and construction of the Japanese sword. Prized as much for its beauty as for its cutting ability, the Japanese sword is one of the symbols of Japan and its warrior class, the samurai. The creation of these works of art has continued to the present through the efforts of a new generation of artisans, many of whom Mr. Martin interviewed

and filmed for his documentary *Art of the Japanese Sword*.

Kentucky SMAA Jujutsu Seminar

August 4, 2012

Louisville, Kentucky, USA

See the article in this issue.

Sato Tadayuki & John B. Gage U. S. Seminar

August 17, 18, and 19, 2012

Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA

On August 17, 18, and 19 Nicklaus Suino Sensei, SMAA Judo Division Director, offered a special seminar at his Michigan dojo featuring budo experts Sato Tadayuki Sensei and John B. Gage Sensei. Both teachers came direct from Tokyo to the U.S., and they taught three important Japanese martial arts:

- The Kodokan judo of Kano Jigoro Sensei
- The Shodokan aikido of Tomiki Kenji Sensei
- The Nihon jujutsu of Sato Shizuya Sensei

Free Japanese Yoga & Martial Arts Training for SMAA Members

August 23, 2012

Albany, California 94706 USA

In August, the Sennin Foundation Center for Japanese Cultural Arts in California offered an introductory class in the Shin-shin-toitsu-do system of Japanese yoga and meditation, along with an introduction to Saigo Ryu martial arts. This event was free to SMAA members. Both classes were taught by Troy Swenson Sensei, assistant editor of the *SMAA Journal*. Swenson Sensei has teaching certification through the SMAA Jujutsu Division.

SMAA Workshop for Children

November 18, 2012

Albany, California, USA

See the article in this issue.

Utah SMAA Iaido Seminar

December 21, 2012

Salt Lake City, Utah, USA

Max Roach Sensei taught Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu iaido in Utah in December. Using their special SMAA discount, members participated for only \$10. This was a great opportunity to study authentic Japanese swordsmanship with Roach Sensei, an SMAA certified teacher. Roach Sensei has studied iaido in Japan and the USA.

Utah SMAA Aikido Seminar

December 22, 2012

Ephraim, Utah, USA

Max Roach Sensei, an SMAA certified teacher of aikido, taught Aikikai aikido in Utah on December 22. SMAA members studied basic aikido, randori, and aiki weapons for just \$20 (using their special discount). Look for some great photos and articles about the Utah SMAA Iaido Seminar and the Utah SMAA Aikido Seminar in the next issue of our journal.

Over the course of 2012, our members had a chance to receive seminar instruction in Shin-shin-toitsu-do (Japanese yoga and meditation), Saigo Ryu aiki-jujutsu, Hontai Yoshin Ryu jujutsu, Sato Ryu Nihon jujutsu, Kodokan judo, Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu iaido, Aikikai aikido, Shodokan aikido, and the history of the Japanese sword. The teachers at these events were all skilled instructors, and in some cases, they are among the world's leading authorities in their specific disciplines. Instruction took place at a variety of locations in the USA, and we tried to offer at least one event reasonably close to all of our members. This is, of course, easier said than done, but it remains one of our goals. And although we have had past

seminars in Europe and Australia, this didn't happen in 2012; but we hope to present events outside of the USA again in 2013.

Information about 2013 events will be available in

the journal as well as on our website, blog, and Facebook page in the coming months. We hope to see you at one of these fun and educational seminars next year.

THE MARTIAL ARTS SOCIAL CONTRACT

By Nicklaus Suino

Between the martial arts teachers at the Japanese Martial Arts Center in Ann Arbor and their students, there exists a social contract. The contract—mostly implied, sometimes written down—goes something like this:

As the teacher, I agree to give you, the student, the absolute best training opportunity I can give you, be it in judo, jujutsu, or iaido. I promise to offer you the complete martial art I know, including all its best aspects: physical techniques, theories of physical power, mental strategies, cultural aspects, and any spiritual benefits that are part of the art. I promise not to deceive you with martial arts mumbo-jumbo, and I promise not to try to falsely build up your self-esteem without providing any basis in real martial arts skill. I promise not to ask you to pay absurd dues rates, but will ask you to pay a fair rate in keeping with the expenses of the dojo and my need to earn a modest living. I won't give you a black belt unless you deserve it, but at the same time, I won't unnecessarily prolong your journey to black belt by making the standards impossible. I will try my best to help you develop yourself—mind, body, and spirit—so that you can excel in the dojo and in life.

As the student, you agree to attend classes as often as you can, putting forth all your effort, and practicing with energy and a positive attitude. You promise to consider the teachings I put forth, taking time outside of class to think about the relationship between my words and the techniques of your martial art. You promise to respectfully raise any issues you may have with your training,

and give real consideration for my answers to your questions. You agree to practice safely to help prevent injury to yourself and other students. You agree to pay your dues on time and agree not to take advantage of our policies to help you avoid paying a fair dues rate. You agree to work hard to learn your art and to trust my decisions about when you are ready for promotions. You agree to commit yourself to the learning process and to pass on the positive lessons you learn while at the Japanese Martial Arts Center.

Occasionally, a few students will come along who wish to learn what the teacher is teaching without honoring their side of the social contract. Such students may wish to learn to fight without taking part in the character development aspects of the martial art. They may train selfishly, failing to give due consideration to the needs of other students. They may try to trick the dues system by taking strategic leaves of absence, hoping to save a few dollars but still desiring all that the teacher has to offer.

We are happy to say that the vast majority of the students who have trained at the Japanese Martial Arts Center are diligent, serious, generous, and sincere. They are quick to recognize that their teachers have given a huge portion of their time and treasure to try to master their martial arts, and are supportive in a variety of ways (offering to help with dojo events, helping newer students learn, paying their dues on time, and recommending the dojo to potential new students).

Generally, the closer students adhere to the social contract, the less formal their written contract needs to be. Those who find their dojo implementing strict written policies may consider blaming their dojo-mates who have failed to honor the implied contract.

About the Author: Nicklaus Suino Sensei is the Chief Instructor of the Japanese Martial Arts Center and a founding member of the SMAA. Although the above article was written for his students, it applies

to most sincere teachers and students of budo and koryu bujutsu, and it raises issues every senior practitioner of Japanese martial arts should consider.

Suino Sensei has studied budo since childhood, in Japan and the USA, and he holds a seventh dan in iaido, a sixth dan in judo, and a fifth dan in jujutsu. He is also the author of the excellent *Budo Mind and Body*, which is available at your local bookstore and online at <http://www.amazon.com>.

“REALITY-BASED MARTIAL ARTS” NOT SO REALITY-BASED?

By Wayne Muromoto

“Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the face.”

Mike Tyson

I’ve taken swipes at traditional martial arts systems in the past, but I’ve done it out of concerned love. It’s like an intervention to try to stop someone you care about from further harming himself: “Stop eating that whole chocolate cake, you’re already overweight!”

I think it’s one thing to try to critically assess a martial art system and indicate points of weakness in training or personalities, and another thing to make blanket statements about how it compares to your own particular martial art. Or at least, that’s the difference I make to myself. I try not to denigrate other martial arts on a wholesale basis. I try, instead, as a writer and observer, to make critical observations about how individuals or groups often go astray when they misappropriate the original intent of their systems.

Of course, we all think our OWN martial art system is the best, or we wouldn’t be doing it, right? That said, I always tell my students to have a healthy

respect for other martial arts for what they do, or attempt to do, if within their own context, they are doing it well. I often point out differences in how we execute a throw, for example, or a punch, comparing it to judo, aikido, or karatedo techniques. Different, same, or indifferent. Here’s why and how.

I explain, discuss, and then quantify and qualify. We do it this way because we are concerned with an armored or gear-protected assailant. The other guy may do it this way because it’s primarily a sport done in shorts. The roundness of an aikido throw really is good at teaching disbalancing and force redirection, more so than the shorter, simpler throw we do, which may seem more practical, but it’s basically the same. And so on.

One recent post to my blog, however, felt that I had rightly criticized all of aikido for being “unrealistic.” I reread my blog, and that’s not what I meant. I was criticizing one particular interpretation of aikido that weakened its technical and martial integrity.

But aikido as a whole wasn’t combative, the poster said. It won’t work in “reality.” He’s seen it fail



Wayne Muromoto, SMAA Senior Advisor

miserably in a combative situation. Uh-huh. “Combative situation?” I take the Rory Miller definition of combative, in which you are in imminent danger of losing your life or limb, such as in actual wartime combat or in a violent crime. Did you see someone get all dressed up in a white keiko gi (“practice uniform”) and then try to put a textbook kote-gaeshi (“wrist reversal”) on a terrorist armed with an AK-47? Or against a rioting violent prisoner? I thought not. The person probably didn’t see aikido attempted in the midst of a shootout at a Taliban stronghold, I bet.

Challenge matches between different martial arts stylists, any contest in a ring with rules and regulations, fist fights in the back of the high school gym, bitch slapping festivals in the girls’ bathrooms, or barroom brawls are not combative. They are, as Miller says in his books, examples of the “monkey dance.” You know: two or more apes puff out and slap their chests, bang the floor, hoot and holler over who’s the baddest dude in the tribe, and then start shoving and hitting each other for more access to food, booze, mates, and/or status.

The comment did put me on a bizarre Internet search to look up “combative” and “reality-based” martial arts schools though, including that of the poster. What I concluded was that most of them

weren’t worth the effort. They were pretending to be more “realistic” and “combat-tested” than, say, traditional aikido, judo, or karatedo. Yet, for the most part, I saw videos and photos of unathletic teachers huffing and puffing through “kadda” that seemed cribbed from aikido, judo, and/or karatedo, with a hefty splicing of MMA and Brazilian “jijitsu” DNA. The techniques were not quite well executed by themselves, and all made worse when they were tossed together into a mish mash.

Guys, what’s going on here? You’re talking about “reality-based” but you dress up in white or black karate gi, barefoot, and sit in seiza and bow and conduct yourselves in a parody of a traditional Japanese dojo? You should be dressed in street clothes and shoes, which is what you would be dressed up in a “reality-based” martial art that trains you for fighting in the “streets,” shouldn’t you?

The “kadda” themselves looked like the worst pastiche of techniques, done in a robotic, step-by-step rote: attacker steps in and punches like a karatedo gyakuzuki (“reverse punch”). Defender blocks. “Esa!” he hisses through his lips. Defender slaps the face. “Usu!” Throws attacker down with an Osoto-gari (judo’s “major outer reaping” throw). “Hiya!” Does a flurry of slap-punches. “Yata!” Maybe throws in a groin kick or rear naked choke. “Kee-yah!,” all the while moving like Robbie the Robot from the old TV series *Lost in Space*. Barefoot. On a heavily padded mat. Indoors.

Fellahs, where’s the reality in that? Do it in street clothes. Outside. In the parking lot. With shoes on. Have the attacker come in with a “false crack” (as we say in Pidgin English), not a well-advertised step-in punch or kick. If the defender loses a couple of teeth because he doesn’t see it coming—well, that’s reality, son. Be in danger of getting your face scraped on asphalt, of getting Hepatitis if the guy bleeds on you. Wrestle the guy down, but

let other students beat on your head if you're not watching out, like an attacker's gang buddies would if you were tussling on the ground unobservant of your surroundings. That's reality-based.

The posted displays got worse the more I dug. There were displays of odd grappling exercises. They may have made sense in a high school wrestling practice, or in competitive MMA grappling, but really don't add much to one's combative repertoire. There were videos of belt promotions. The so-called "reality-based" modern combatives martial art saw fit to retain its idea of "traditional" martial arts by giving out colored cloth belts, making the students strut up to the instructor in really poorly done shikko ("walking" on the knees) movement, and then sitting in seiza to change belts. Why do it that way if it's a modern combatives program? Just ditch all that mystical, mysterious Far East mumbo jumbo, bro. Wear your overalls with a leather belt from K-Mart, same as you would out there in the "street."

I've critiqued different traditional martial arts before. Here's my critique of many "reality-based" martial arts: they aren't reality based. They're a pastiche of different techniques, thrown together by people fantasizing about being a movie-star type action hero in the mean streets. What you learn in them could get you killed if you were truly in a life-and-death combative situation. And I say this not to denigrate them and to raise up my own system. I say this because if real self-defense is a concern for some people, they're not getting it. At least not from most of the examples I've seen.

Now then, contrary to popular views of the martial arts, they are NOT primarily meant for self-defense. The accusation that traditional budo is not entirely for self-defense is a straw tiger argument. "Self-defense" is a component of most martial arts, but that aspect is only one of many other ingredients that are just as important to the

integrity of the art. In classical, traditional Japanese budo, provenance of the art, the tradition itself, and the stylistic elements are also important. In modern budo, the sportive aspects often supersede all other aspects. All such arts stress the development of a healthy body, mind, and spirit over purely self-defense purposes. This is not good or bad. This is just how it is. For a classical or modern martial artist intent on plumbing the depths of "self-defense," he/she would have to make an effort to dig deeper.

One good way to start would be to be a good student and to have a good teacher. When I mentioned my critique of aikido done by people who had lost the martial "flavor" of aikido, one of my friends told me his own aikido story. He was training at the Aikikai Hombu, the main aikido headquarters in Japan, in an intensive group.

One day, he was asked by his teacher to join a select group of higher ranked students. They assembled in a quiet, small training room. The teacher told them that he was going to show them what some aikido techniques REALLY meant, and they were not to teach or display them without first carefully vetting anyone so the techniques wouldn't be misused and misappropriated.

My friend, who had been exposed to different koryu and modern martial arts, said he was shown some of the meanest, most "effective" uses of aikido for use in a fighting situation. Those were techniques that could maim or kill a person, done at full speed. Aikido as a "la-di-dah" touchy feely, powder puff, feel-good pastime? Nope. Aikido as a martial art? Scary effective. So mean you can't show some of the stuff to the general public.

The thing is, my friend said, if someone who knows the real meanings demonstrates a regular aikido technique, an observer who knows what to look for will SEE the intent and realize that this guy would not be someone you want to tangle with. The

demonstrator knows the intent, hidden beneath a velvet glove.

In a similar way, in our system of martial art, there are a core set of a few kata that are only taught when you attain a particular high rank. They are never taught or shown to beginners or outsiders. They are taught only after years of training, for various pedagogical reasons. Technically, if you have gone through the curriculum, the movements should be very familiar, so they are relatively easy to learn by that time. Mentally, your teacher needs to know you well enough to feel that he can entrust you with techniques that can maim or kill someone. You don't want to give a loaded gun, by way of metaphor, to someone you know is a psycho case and then plead, "I didn't have anything to do with him shooting all those people! I just gave him the gun!"

However, lest I sound down on ALL such combative systems, I will say that I am impressed by modern combative systems like Krav Maga, the modern martial system developed by Imi Lichtenfeld. It was developed as a no-nonsense approach to combative self-defense for the Israeli military, so its effectiveness was of primary importance, due to Israel's frequent skirmishes and battles with its enemies. It HAD to work—not to get more students or fill up a dojo, but to enable basic survival for soldiers in a Middle Eastern battlefield.

There are other people who are investigating and systematizing modern combatives training, including an email acquaintance of mine, Kit LeBlanc. They are smart people doing smart things to enable law enforcement officers and American military personnel to survive combat and violent encounters. They are not doing it to make money off Saturday morning hero-wannabes. They are exploring undiscovered country, trying to dissect the roots of many martial arts and seeing if and how they apply to solutions for modern, truly "realistic" combative applications.

For any practitioner of any martial art, modern or classical, traditional, sportive, or eclectic, who is truly interested in the combative aspect of martial training, I would also recommend a reading list of different authors. My own library has books by the aforementioned Rory Miller. Miller has had actual experience in violent altercations as a prison guard and police officer. Interestingly, his experiences seem to have given him a healthy dose of respect for classical martial training, because a lot of his ideas echo the heiho theories I learned in my own classical systems.

Miller coined the term "monkey dance" for any kind of fight that is by nature social-aggressive. And, he says, you do NOT want to be involved in any kind of monkey dance, because only bad things can happen if you act like an emotion-driven status-seeking primate. Even if you win, you stand a chance of getting sued for hurting the other guy. The only time you should apply physical force, he says, is in truly combative situations: when you are being physically attacked by a predator, in military combat, or in any other unprovoked encounter where you cannot run away or extricate yourself. His books discuss the psychology of violence, avoiding the "monkey dance," and even simple methods of "self-defense."

Other writers on my shelf include Ellis Amdur, who discusses the psychology of aggression and violence. He has also written several books that illuminate interesting aspects of aikido and Japanese martial history. Dave Grossman approaches surviving combat from the point of view of a military officer. What is the "haze of combat?" How do survivors recount what it really felt like to be caught in a violent encounter?

I am sure there are other books and authors worth a look. I also have some books on "survival" psychology. How do people survive not just a violent encounter with a human predator, but what makes human beings survive any kind of disaster,

man-made or natural? What kind of attitude characterizes people who are able to weather and thrive in the storm of natural, eventful daily life with a positive attitude?

By reading widely, I found that there are similar characteristics that a successful dog owner has (as outlined by Cesar Millan, the dog trainer who said he learned a lot about projecting confidence from a judo teacher he studied with as a child) shared by an effective law enforcement officer, shared by a teacher who has good classroom management skills. These characteristics go beyond rote technique but are the core mental skills necessary to survive in those professions. Classical martial arts stylists may call it forms of zanshin, or presence. But books from such diverse fields explain it in different ways and make sense of what can often be thought of as an esoteric topic.

In any case, the true key to “reality-based” combat is to see things as they truly are, in reality. The experience of violence, as Miller says, is like

stepping through Alice in Wonderland’s Looking Glass into a world that is topsy-turvy compared to our usual everyday world. Criminals may live in it all the time, but most of them will find a true violent encounter totally bewildering. None of the rules of everyday life applies. Proper training in a properly conducted martial art will help one’s odds of survival. But it must be engaged in properly, with training in mental, spiritual, and physical aspects. But it’s no cure-all.

Improper training with bad teachers is worse than innocuous; it will give you a false sense of security and lull you into thinking you are “combat-effective.” Given a choice, I’d suggest that “unrealistic” aikido, if taught with emphasis on proper zanshin and technique, executed with an eye to overall physical and mental well-being, is much more “realistic” than any faux “combative” martial art that does not have a handle on an integrated training system, deep philosophy, or coherent pedagogy. But I’m just sayin’...

AGE APPROPRIATE BUDO TRAINING

By Wayne Muromoto

My teacher is at an age when he keeps making rumblings of someday soon “retiring” from martial arts. I don’t know if he brings up the subject only to scare the heck out of me so I visit him more frequently before he makes good his threat or what, but the last time he brought it up, he noted that (thankfully!) he still has a few more miles in his gas tank, so to speak.

“I was ready to hang it up,” he said, “But lately I’ve had lots of housewives, children and older people join the dojo. At first, I used to think that budo training was too intense and hard for them. But you know, I got old too. I found that I could still keep up by teaching the older fellows things like bo (staff work) and short staff, weapons kata and the

like. And I also found that they’re really fun to train with. It gave me a new lease on enjoying budo training myself!”

I was relieved that my teacher was newly inspired to keep on teaching. I still had a lot to learn from him, but it also highlighted something I’d been thinking about myself, especially when I turned the half-century mark and knew that my best raw physical strength I could ever possess was probably way behind me in my past.

When I was young, I thought budo was exciting because it tested my physical and mental endurance to the maximum. Although not quite as taxing as the high school football and wrestling

that I participated in as a teenager, organized martial arts training did allow for really grueling workouts in my college years up to my late 20s and early 30s. I threw myself into it. At one point, while in graduate school and working part-time, I also somehow managed to train in karatedo, aikido, and judo at the same time. I took side roads into some yoga classes and other activities, too.

However, as I got older and transitioned from the somewhat unscheduled student life to that of entering the working world, time became more precious. I couldn't spend three or four hours every day training, then working, and then doing graduate studies until the wee hours of the night. My body and mind could no longer do it, and regular employment required that I show up, on time, and put in a full day's worth of work, training injuries or not.

Inevitably, I found that competitive budo was receding away from me. No longer could I train hard enough to give judo players on the national AAU level fits with my newaza (ground grappling), or score occasional points against local, national and All-Japan karate champs in kumite (sparring). I couldn't put in the hours to be in semi-pro athletic shape. And it bugged me because as my wife likes to chide me, I may act like I'm unassuming, but I have a huge competitive streak in me.

So gradually, I pulled out of competitive budo because I knew my glory days were long, long behind me. In addition, I had trained long enough in some budo to become soured on their organizational or personality problems. I found my way to budo that were noncompetitive, more into kata geiko ("kata practice"). I could still put in a full workload during the days, but because kata geiko budo clubs didn't force me to train like crazy, I could still have one foot in budo without sacrificing my professional career or family life. Eventually, I ended up in my comfort zone: I practice a sogo bujutsu (a martial system that includes a variety of

armed and unarmed kata) and an iaido system. It's been good for me all the way from my 30s to my current 50s. I also try to do some tai chi ch'uan when I have spare time, and I'm looking at picking up my childhood hobby of Western archery again soon.

Some people, blessed with more natural physical talent and endurance than me, will be perfectly happy continuing to train in competitive martial arts well into their senior years. It's up to them. But even in their case, they surely will have to admit that injuries sustained over the years, and the weakening that occurs from simple aging has slowed down their training so it's not like when they were 19 or 24 years old.

It's a natural process. If it is a natural process, then there's really no "better" way to train in martial arts. I think there's a need to acknowledge that there's just different ways to train depending on your age and temperament.



Ono Yotaro Sensei, the author's teacher and the world's leading authority on Bitchuden Takeuchi Ryu jujutsu

Young children taking up budo is really great. They can learn how to tumble and not get hurt. Doing randori (sparring) or kumite will drain out a lot of excess energy. Taught properly, budo for children will teach them self-discipline, respect, and mental focus, besides helping to keep them physically healthy.

I'm not a big fan of the late action movie star Bruce Lee, but I was listening to an interview with his daughter on the radio, and I was surprised to hear (because he often cast Japanese martial arts as the "bad guys" in his movies) that he encouraged her to take up judo when she was a child. Lee thought an art that included tumbling and free form throwing and grappling was best for kids. I do, too. Judo or aikido is a great way for kids to learn how to take a tumble and not get hurt. Learning ukemi as a youngster is a skill that will serve anyone well even if they go on to take up other arts, such as karatedo or wrestling, boxing, or football. And since falling and hurting yourself is a major source of injury among seniors, learning ukemi at an early age may help keep you from becoming bedridden as an older person.

For youngsters, I would advise a parent or teacher that the main thing is that a child learns social skills, mental concentration, self-discipline, and respect for others. Tournaments or competition are a plus. They're not necessary, but they do encourage kids who are competitive to strive for competitive goals. Lots of kids like to test themselves. So competition should be used as a way to inculcate moral and physical health in youngsters, not as ends in themselves.

While I was doing karatedo, I saw too many examples of kids pushed too hard by their status-conscious parents or teachers who wanted them to win in tournaments at all costs. There was this one little tyke who was a Tasmanian Devil of a karate kid. He could do jumping-spinning back kicks over and over, slam rapid fire punches at his opponent,

and scream and yell like a psycho case...which I thought he was on the verge of becoming, because he also faced a whole lot of pressure to excel by his father. I could tell that the kid was really wound up tight. That was too much pressure for a kid. It's like parents getting so involved over a soccer game that they will have physical altercations with the referees if they kid's team loses a match. That's not good parenting.

Better, however, to be age appropriate and focus on what's best for a child's growth at that point in his/her age. By way of contrast, I also encountered a doctor who had just emigrated from Korea. He decided to enroll his twin daughters, both in elementary school, in our karatedo dojo. I talked with him and mentioned that there were a number of very active taekwondo schools in town. Maybe because he was Korean, he might prefer a Korean martial art? He shook his head. At the time (of course, things have changed!), he told me that in Korea martial arts had a reputation of being just for thugs, for people who wanted to fight and compete for trophies. As a member of the upper class in Korea, he said he wanted his daughters to learn karatedo because he saw that my teacher emphasized proper respect and discipline in the classes.

"I don't care about taekwondo, being Korean, or fighting," he said. "I want my daughters to learn respect and have good health." And, he said, the taekwondo schools he visited didn't emphasize those qualities. They were keener on winning tournaments.

As I got to know him and his daughters, I found out that the girls had a busy schedule: they went to a private academic school. They took piano lessons, ballet, and soccer as well as karatedo. They were smart, respectful, and diligent. They even won a whole bunch of trophies when they entered competition, but the father made sure to keep their winnings in perspective. They had to also ace their

grades at school, and when they got older, they both were accepted to prestigious universities. More than anything, their father stressed that martial arts for his children wasn't about fighting or competition. It was about helping to develop a whole, successful person.

The later teens and early twenties are the apex of one's physical prowess, however, so if a student is so inclined, that's when he/she should strive to test themselves physically, whether in competition and/or in mastering the highest levels of kata geiko. Trust me, you young guys; it doesn't get any better than when you're young. The bones are developed. The muscular structure is mature enough for intense training, and you are at your peak mental abilities. So training long and hard is great at that age, if you can swing it.

Soon enough, however, physical decline begins to set in. Work and family responsibilities also edge into your training time. That's just how life is. Unless you're a professional martial arts instructor, you need time to establish a reputation and start a family.

If you only think martial arts is going full-blast in kumite or randori, of course you will stop doing martial arts, because you simply won't be able to keep up with kids half as young as you, who don't have the responsibilities and worries. You end up like a lot of ex-football players, who suddenly stop sports when they can't continue college or high school athletics, and then their guts balloon out from sitting on a couch watching TV, drinking beer and reliving their glory days.

It doesn't have to be like that. As my teacher discovered, and as I learned, it's okay to slow down. It's okay to accept one's limitations, and then train a bit less aggressively. I can still "roll" in jujutsu techniques, but lately I enjoy weapons work a bit more, where I don't have to tumble as much.

My body thanks me for that, and I'm more able to get up the next morning and go to work without as many aches and pains. Do I miss the grappling and sparring I used to do as a youth during karatedo and judo? Of course. Do I think I could go back to competitive budo? Not on your life. I'm past that age. I would hazard to say that a good 17-year-old competitive judo player could now dump me all over the place in standing randori because I'm simply a bag full of old judo and football injuries that preclude me from going at it like I used to.

But I would venture to say that even if you do karatedo or judo, there are wonderful advantages to aging. You can focus more on techniques, more on the kata, less on training for competition. Maybe you do a bit less sparring, or spar for specific purposes, such as to sharpen your waza ("techniques"), to figure out self-defense tactics, to modify techniques so you don't have to put out as much youthful energy. There are all sorts of ways to make any budo training age appropriate.

My own teacher found that teaching children and older people had rejuvenated his interest in teaching martial arts. In a recent trip to Japan, I had to take a break from training. I sat next to him as he watched his regular class train with some visiting students from other countries. His frontyard dojo was packed to its gills with students; maybe some 40 or so crammed into a dojo only the space of a medium-size American garage. There were young men throwing each other, slamming each other into the mats in jujutsu. There were kids doing bo. There were older people doing weapons kata. It was loud, happy, and boisterous.

I thought back to when I first entered his dojo, almost three decades ago. When I first started I was in my late 20s and there were only two or three other students, in their 20s, on a good night. We trained long and hard, as young, earnest men are

wont to do, but it was pretty somber. Now, with people of all ages doing all sorts of kata, it looked like a lot more fun, even though the level of physical exertion in training was much more uneven.

I asked my teacher, "This looks like so much fun nowadays. Did you ever think you would have this many students training here, of all sorts and nationalities and ages?"

He replied, smiling, "Never in a million years." And he kept on watching and teaching.

I'm hoping that instead of retiring soon, the wide range of students will inspire him to keep on walking down from his home to his dojo to teach. I still have a lot more to learn from him. And while my body may age, I think my mind is still young

and eager to learn more. So budo can be age appropriate, and conversely, it can keep you young, at least mentally, if it continues to bring you enjoyment!

About the Author: Wayne Muromoto is a member of the SMAA Board of Advisors, SMAA Jujutsu Division Shihan/sixth dan, and a teacher of Takeuchi Ryu sogo bujutsu and Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu iaido. (Takeuchi Ryu specializes in jujutsu grappling but also includes a vast array of weapons training.) His official permission to receive students and issue rank was granted by Ono Yotaro Sensei, the current Headmaster of Bitchuden Takeuchi Ryu. Ono Sensei lives in Kyoto, and Mr. Muromoto has studied directly under him for many years. For more of his writing, drop by <http://classicbudoka.wordpress.com/>. If you like the *SMAA Journal*, you'll love *Classic Budoka*.

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