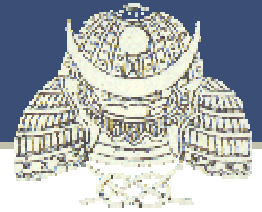


SMAA JOURNAL



Shudokan Martial Arts Association • PO Box 6022, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-6022
<http://smaa-hq.com/> • shudokan@smaa-hq.com • 1-734-645-6441

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2016 SMAA DUES

Membership fees are due on January 1, 2016. Please be sure to pay your SMAA dues on time. You can either send a check to our headquarters or pay online at <http://www.smaa-hq.com/payments.php>. We accept Visa, MasterCard, and PayPal. This is a quick and safe way to make your annual SMAA membership payment.

We appreciate our members paying dues promptly. It makes life easier for the SMAA staff of volunteers, and it is representative of the type of self-discipline we are cultivating through the study of traditional Japanese martial arts.

DONATIONS & TAX DEDUCTIONS

The SMAA is a federally tax-exempt, nonprofit corporation. As such, your donations to our association are tax deductible. Send your donations, in the form of a check or money order (made out to SMAA), to our headquarters in Michigan. We'll send you a letter back acknowledging your contribution, which you can then use for tax purposes. We hope you'll support the SMAA in our goal to preserve and promote traditional budo and koryu bujutsu.

E-MAIL

Please make sure we have your correct e-mail address. Without this address, we can't e-mail you the *SMAA Journal*.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SMAA

1. To promote and aid in the growth of Japan's traditional arts and ways.
2. To assist the public in achieving spiritual growth and physical development through budo/bujutsu.
3. To further friendship and understanding between Asian and Western martial artists.
4. To establish goodwill and harmony among martial artists of various systems.
5. To offer Western martial artists access to legitimate budo/bujutsu organizations and teachers in Japan.
6. To give practitioners of authentic budo/bujutsu recognition for their years of devotion to these arts.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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修道館武道会

Do you have a new e-mail address? Have you sent it to hedavey@aol.com? If not, we also won't be able to send you SMAA publications, so please be sure to let us know if your e-mail address changes.

SMAA PATCHES

The SMAA HQ is selling official SMAA patches for your gi. They're great looking patches that embody the spirit and honor instilled in members of our group. They won't fade or bleed when you bleach them, and yet we've been able to keep the cost down. Each patch is basically a 3 ½ inch circle featuring our logo below:



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.

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.

OTSUKA SOKE NEWS



Otsuka Soke throwing shuriken

In October 2015, Otsuka Yasuyuki Soke participated in Hamono-Matsuri Embukai. This was an important Japanese demonstration of classical martial arts. It took place in Sekishi, Gifu prefecture. He demonstrated Meifu Shinkage Ryu, which focuses on ancient weapons like the shuriken (throwing darts) and the fundo kusari (a weighted chain).

Miyazono Kunio Sensei, a top Japanese swordsman, demonstrated tameshigiri, the cutting of objects. Exhibitions of sojutsu, the “art of the spear,” and other martial arts were also featured.



Takanori Ito Sensei demonstrating fundo kusari techniques

In October, Otsuka Soke also led a successful training camp in Japan for his students from various nations. Also in October, he completed a seminar tour that took him to Osaka, Kyoto, and Nara—the Kansai area in Japan.

Otsuka Yasuyuki Soke is one of several important Japan-based SMAA officials. He serves on the SMAA Board of Advisors, along with Iwasaki Hisashi Soke (Headmaster of Kobori Ryu), Suzuki Kunio Sensei (Hanshi/hachidan Nakamura Ryu), and other top experts in Japanese martial arts.



Otsuka Soke at Fushimi Inari Shrine in Kyoto

EVANS SENSEI NEWS



Evans Sensei and students in Tokyo

In November 2015, John Evans Sensei and some of his students traveled to Tokyo. While in Japan, they participated in the International Battodo Federation Taikai, which featured demonstrations and training in Nakamura Ryu and Toyama Ryu swordsmanship.

An interesting video of one of the kata demonstrations, which includes Evans Sensei, can be seen at <https://www.facebook.com/seiji.sato.1044/videos/733101226821691/>.



Evans Sensei demonstrating Nakamura Ryu

Evans Sensei is a member of the elite SMAA Board of Advisors. He's also one of the highest-ranking teachers of Nakamura Ryu in the world, an art he learned directly from its founder while living in Japan for over 12 years. A seventh dan in Nakamura Ryu, he presently lives in England, where he operates the Fudokan Dojo, and he has been the featured teacher at past SMAA Seminars in the USA, the UK, and Australia.

H. E. DAVEY NEWS



H. E. Davey

H. E. Davey's dojo, the Sennin Foundation Center for Japanese Cultural Arts, celebrated its 34th anniversary in November. The dojo has been offering instruction in traditional Japanese arts under experienced, certified teachers since 1981. Located in California, it presents separate training in Japanese systems of yoga/meditation, healing arts, martial arts, and fine arts. Ongoing classes are available to people of all ages and levels of health, including classes for children, ages five and up.

The dojo website is www.senninfoundation.com. Its Facebook page can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/SenninFoundation/>.



Children practicing meditation at the Sennin Foundation Center

H. E. Davey is one of the founding members of the Shudokan Martial Arts Association, a Director for the SMAA Jujutsu Division, and the editor of the *SMAA Journal* for over 20 years. With several decades of training, in Japan and the USA, he has earned an eighth-degree black belt and the title of Shihan from the SMAA. One of three SMAA Primary Directors, he specializes in a form of Japanese jujutsu that also includes various weapon systems. On several occasions he has presented demonstrations in Tokyo, and he is the author of multiple books on Japanese culture, traditional arts, and forms of meditation.

SMAA YOUTUBE CHANNEL

修道館武道会

Shudokan Martial Arts Association

Want to see some great videos of SMAA teachers, officials, and members? Now you can by visiting our YouTube channel. We're Shudokan1994, because 1994 is the year the SMAA was founded.

To see video of SMAA teachers and members, go to:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gg5Nika6Ge0&list=PLS11_XCH8RkI868tRKZ0fdJFSeFGyNZ0o

To see video of the amazing experts that trained leading SMAA officials and teachers, go to:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcE7zBhv9Hs&list=PLS11_XCH8RkIV8liNZoXI93WI79BLe1NZ

SMAA MICHIGAN SEMINAR

An extraordinary American SMAA Seminar took place in Ann Arbor on Saturday, November 21, 2015. Hosted by the Japanese Martial Arts Center and inspired by Nicklaus Suino Sensei's *Exceptional Martial Artist* series, it was dubbed "The Crucible." It proved to be a very different kind of martial arts experience, and SMAA member discounts made it affordable. Although the main technical focus was on traditional Kodokan judo, Suino Sensei incorporated elements from Chinese martial arts and various meditative practices to communicate his central message.

It was described by Suino Sensei in this way, "A substance, having undergone the intense heat and pressure of a crucible, emerges as a completely different substance. A person, having undergone the intense reflection and training of a crucible, emerges as a completely different person. More focused. More efficient. Mentally stronger. More physically capable and more effective."



Students at the recent SMAA Michigan Seminar

We entered the dojo at 6:00 am and left the dojo at 6:00 pm. 12 hours of reflection, meditation, stretching, striking, throwing and grappling. In my 26 years of training, I have not experienced anything like it and am grateful to have had the opportunity. I would recommend this event without reservation to anyone lucky enough to be invited. Thanks to Suino Sensei for allowing me to participate, assembling such an incredible group of martial artists and leading us through a life-altering day. — Randy D.

The purpose of this 12-hour ordeal of deep work on mind, body and spirit was to help SMAA members get into the proper frame of mind to truly understand what it takes to break through their obstacles—whether physical, mental or spiritual—develop a plan to launch their training forward, and to become accountable for the work they need to do make gains and make those gains a permanent part of their martial arts abilities. The training consisted of three separate four-hour blocks.

The day started with work on striking. In this case, Suino Sensei led the students through the building blocks of San Chuan Dao, an obscure form of Chinese kickboxing based on rotating hip power, percussive, open-handed strikes, and brutal, torso-driven kicks. The art was chosen because it allows



Learning classical Kodokan judo in Ann Arbor

students to feel incredible power with very little effort; what Suino Sensei likes to call “a high return on your martial arts investment.” The close, upright stance allows for relaxed yet powerful horizontal hip movement, a thematic element that was repeated in all three training modalities. Students began with the basics—stance, hip rotation, stepping, and finished at the end of four hours with a complex series of strikes and kicks against an opponent in motion.

Needless to say, I am sore. The amazing 12-hour training day at JMAC, "The Crucible", was an awesome experience. We trained striking, throwing, and grappling in addition to some great practices for meditation and self-reflection and analysis. I am grateful for the wonderful instructors and training partners I trained with. Life is good. — Mike R.

Within each hour of training, students also learned techniques for relaxation, mental focus, energizing, and meditation. Each aspect was carefully selected to help the martial artists not only understand how relaxation leads to more efficiency and a better mindset, but to actually experience it. The second four-hour segment was centered on Kodokan judo throws, which Suino Sensei studied in Japan for several years under leading traditional experts.

Building on the horizontal hip movement theme from the morning session, students were shown how to move their hips forward and backward, side to side and horizontally, and then how each of those movements could be used to apply power in setting up and executing throws. After starting with simple and classic movements such as Seoi Nage (a shoulder throw) and O Uchi Gari (a leg reaping throw), students progressed through more and more complex motions and combinations, ending with realistic, randori-like activities such as moving uchi-komi and nage-komi (methods for practicing throwing).

Achievement unlocked: 12 straight hours of martial arts. Thanks to all my great training partners at



SMAA members practicing ne waza, the ground techniques of traditional judo

JMAC that made it such a valuable learning experience. — Lauren M.

The high energy level was maintained with frequent short breaks for hydration and light snacks, quickly followed by energizing activities like breathing exercises, visualization, and vocalization. After eight hours, many students seemed even more energetic than they had been when the event started.

The third and final segment was based on grappling. Starting with classical and essential judo pins, students were shown how to employ hip movement effectively for both offence and defense. Experienced grapplers worked on bringing the thematic movements to life in their established skills while new grapplers learned the basics of groundwork. All found that their ability to accept new ideas and make them real had skyrocketed because of all the mindset work in the previous segments. Their analytical minds overwhelmed, they were able to grapple without getting in their own way, and even the least experienced members trained far “above their pay grade.”

After The Crucible I felt physically drained, yet energized to become a better martial artist. I will use concepts to create a path to improve my martial

arts. I will use deficiencies as motivation to stay on the path, and become the martial artist I aspire to be. Thank you for developing the crucible and allowing me to be part of it. — Bob H.

Before the final summation and wrap up, there was an hour of free judo grappling. The dojo floor was covered with energetic, tactical activity as the participants put into play the skills of the past four hours and the mindset of the entire 12-hour experience. Everyone marveled at the ease with which grapplers of all levels moved and applied techniques many had not even seen until a few hours before. Exhausted, bruised, and chafed, yet somehow energized, every one of the participants completed the entire 12-hour experience.

Suino Sensei, judo sixth dan, interviewed after the event said, “I’m so grateful for these people—they are willing to make a huge commitment to have their minds blown—and each and every one of them brought their A-game today. You know, I’ve been studying martial arts for 48 years and high achievement for three decades, and I’m delighted at how science is now supporting many of the ideas we’ve talked about for years. Posture, positive affirmation, the state of ‘flow,’ meditation . . . all these things are inherent in the martial arts, but we rarely practice them intentionally, and even more



Japanese-style judo training was offered to seminar students

rarely take deliberate steps to re-apply them to our martial arts after we've practiced them."

"There's nothing out there like this. The Crucible changes the game—by putting together great martial arts with cutting edge mindset techniques in an environment designed to overwhelm our resistance to change, we can experience what the greatest martial artists experience every day. It's incredibly rewarding, and I predict that the students who truly stay accountable to what they've learned

today will undergo amazing improvements. I can't wait to see how they grow!"

I just wanted to say thank you again for the awesome event that was The Crucible. I can't wait for the next one. — Richard M.

For more information, drop by <http://japanesemartialartscenter.com/exceptional>. Thanks to all SMAA members that participated in this special event!

THE BASE: CLOSE TO THE GROUND

By Wayne Muromoto

I've always had a pet theory that the original founders of various koryu ("ancient styles") moved their bodies in a markedly different way from us "moderns." Therefore, part of the problem with us understanding how to properly move in a koryu budo is that we have to deal with different body dynamics, ways of conceptualizing how our body moves, and musculature that are just different due to our own everyday lackadaisical use of our physical form.

That goes, too, for modern Japanese. As one tea ceremony sensei said to me, "Even in Japan, everybody nowadays sit in chairs, so when I invite young Japanese to experience tea ceremony, for most of them that's the first time they've sat in seiza in a tatami mat room!"

Living so close to the ground (or tatami), like the pre-modern Japanese, or like a lot of tribal cultures, has got to do something to your body morphology. Mind you, I don't think it's anything mystical, like how some people idealize pre-modern cultures as being "better" than our "corrupt" civilized Western culture. That is a romanticized and myopic point of view from the whole "Noble Savage" stereotype that has largely been debunked. Any culture has its own



The author (right) teaching Takeuchi Ryu

problems and issues, and I venture that a superstitious, non-technologically advanced, poorly literate society will have even more social problems than our Western one.

Still, living without modern conveniences, like soft chairs and modern toilets, does do things to one's



Mr. Muromoto sitting in seiza at a tea ceremony

body. Eating potato chips, while lounging in a soft sofa, and exercising only one's fingers playing a video game does something else not at all beneficial to one's body, too.

One of the things squatting does, I think, is that one's lower limbs by necessity generally become stronger and more ductile. In Hawaii, I still see remnants of such tribal lifestyles among recent immigrants from Southeast Asia and other less developed Pacific Islands.

Without extensive chairs or indoor plumbing, squatting is a way of life. As ignorant and crude teenagers we used to make fun of such behavior as being "fresh off the boat," but being able to do a full squat down, on one's haunches, shows that your legs are limber and flexible. Squatting used to be the natural way for all humans to defecate before the modern sit-down toilet. A Hawaiian anthropologist told me it was also the way women used to give birth. Lying on one's back was an unnatural position for childbirth, she said, noting that in recording oral histories of Native Hawaiian women she encountered a story of how one woman gave birth squatting in the fields. She wrapped the baby up in swaddling clothes, and then went back to finishing up planting her row of taro in the fields, sort of as a matter of fact.

When I worked summer jobs in the pineapple and sugar fields, I found that squatting was a good skill to develop, as it kept our rear ends from getting muddy while we ate lunch out in the fields. It also helped if we had to defecate out in the outdoors. Falling over into our own poop was not a good option, so we got good at balancing ourselves as we squatted down, our butts close to the ground.

Squatting, sitting seiza, or even sitting cross-legged, are all body positions that are what I call "close to the ground." The body has, I think, a more concrete knowledge of its relationship to the floor or ground since it is closer to it, and unencumbered by chairs or sofas. We have to feel comfortable through our own body position and alignment. In doing so, we lengthen and strengthen certain muscles that are hardly ever used if we go through life in a "chair culture."

I make note of this because I'm trying to figure out why some of my students have such a hard time with movements that I take for granted, like walking in a standing kata ("formal exercise"), for example. They simply look like they're ready to topple over. They wobble when they walk. There's no sense of grounding, of being balanced, or being "in touch" with the ground under their feet. They just sort of



Ohsaki Jun Sensei, SMAA Senior Advisor, performing Saigo Ryu "close to the ground"



Otsuka Yasuyuki Sensei, SMAA Senior Advisor and Headmaster of Meifu Shinkage Ryu, throwing shuriken in seiza

shamble or lurch forward, no matter how I try to explain about keeping balanced and centered.

My suspicion is that, in our convenient society, we don't need to be acutely aware of our balance and body positions vis-à-vis the ground, because many of us don't do much physical labor anymore. Nor do we play freely as kids outdoors now that we have so many enticing computer games to entertain us. Athletes and those with a gifted physical ability may not be so cursed, but a lot of people who come through my dojo doors have a significantly hard time working from seiza, or walking in the particular way that our ryu calls for. It all goes back to having weak legs, a weak foundation. And any amount of running or jogging won't help all that much. It has more to do with the leg flexibility and body mass/positioning awareness in relationship to the ground than sheer muscle mass.

But if you can't get that solidity of posture, then nothing works. Not from seiza, not from chuugoshi (a sort of half-rising position with one foot planted on the ground, the other knee on the ground), or from full standing. You simply don't have the base from which to execute a technique.

It's nothing mystical. Eddie Wu, the current head of the Wu family Tai Chi Chuan, loves to break down "mysterious" movements of internal Chinese martial

arts, telling me once that "mysterious chi energy" techniques were the only way pre-modern Chinese masters had to explain their amazing martial abilities. A former airplane engineer, Mr. Wu said that it was all about force vectors and subtle body alignment. As he said, to paraphrase, "They didn't have the technical words to explain it, so they said, 'secret chi power,' or something like that. No, it's not esoteric. It's just very subtle manipulation of the body, timing and movement, but they didn't have the vocabulary to talk about it in that way."

I think, too, that having a strong foundation is not all that mystical. But it doesn't make it any easier for many students who ignored the lower half of their body for most of their lives. It's also true, alas, for some young, athletic newbies who walked through the dojo doors. One recent dilettante lingered in my club for a few sessions, claiming he was doing MMA-style jujutsu, karate-do and judo at the same time, and wanted to try his hand at koryu grappling. But from starting in seiza, to locking up close to the ground, to executing his techniques, his grappling was just awful, because he had no lower-body balance, flexibility, or strength. He may have had the



"Close to the ground" in Kyoto with Takeuchi Ryu chain and sickle techniques

upper body musculature of a weightlifter, but he simply ignored training his lower body to move, to position the rest of his body, to flex and stretch. Everything from the waist down seemed disconnected. Hence, his application with his arms just looked weak and ineffective.

What to do then? I'm really at a loss. An individual student with shaky body balance could practice postures on his own, such as sitting in seiza, standing, walking, or doing chuugoshi, and try to fix his own posture. He/she could take up a study that requires sitting in seiza a lot and moving in a particular manner, like tea ceremony, shakuhachi flute, or Noh drama. He could try doing a lot of yard work and squatting to pull weeds, or try squatting to defecate in a hole in the ground in the backyard, to lengthen thigh muscles.

One possible reason why shikko (moving on the knees) is used as an exercise in a lot of aikido classes, I suspect, is that it works on the lower body for strength and flexibility. Shikko is a kind of moving about without rising up. You do it from seiza by raising one knee, moving it forward, then planting it down, and then doing it with the opposite knee, at the same time bringing up the opposing foot close to the other foot. It's hard to explain but easy to demonstrate. It originated actually as a form



Nicklaus Suino Sensei, Co-director of the SMAA Iaido Division, demonstrating Eishin Ryu iaido "close to the ground"

of etiquette among the warrior class. When approaching a higher-ranked individual at the head of a hall, a bushi had to move in such a way so as not to elevate his head higher than the person he was approaching, much like how a courtier in Medieval Europe had to approach a seated lord, with his head bowed and knees slightly flexed so as to abase himself lower than the royalty.

Unfortunately, a cursory review of shikko videos on the Internet came up with really, really awful examples. Maybe I'm too much of a stickler for doing things according to their original intent, but shikko was a very formal, controlled movement. The height of the head should barely move up and down. The hands are not flailing around like windmills. They are kept in place on the thighs. The whole body moves as one, without a foot dragging in the rear. The centerline of the body doesn't sway left to right. It just goes forward, the hip pivoting on the body centerline, with the center of gravity right between the two closely aligned feet. Both feet, when moving, have the weight on the balls of the flat of the foot. For us "moderns," it's hard to do it that way. That's the whole intent. It IS hard if we're not used to squatting and moving our legs in that way. It pained me to see so much bad shikko walking online, even from supposedly high-ranking aikido sensei. So puh-lease . . . if you want to do shikko, do it right! I think you even run the risk of damaging your knees and legs if you keep doing shikko wrong. So Geez Louise, do it right!

More so than that one exercise, however, is the whole concept about it. WHY do you do shikko, especially if you are doing aikido, which seems to love flagellating its students with it?

It's an exercise to develop lower body strength and flexibility. There are other ways to develop strength and flexibility in one's limbs and trunk, but they all start with . . . proper intent and purpose. It's not just to learn "samurai walking" or as a warm-up. Judoka will do "frog jumps" and other exercises. It's the

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

Phone:
1-734-645-6441

E-Mail:
shudokan@smaa-hq.com

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same intent: to strengthen the lower limbs and create a stable base from which to execute the techniques. Sumo wrestlers will do endless squats and stretches, and drills much like how American football linemen hit a partner in the chest, and then try to drive him back by pumping the legs and pushing forward in a straight line, over and over again.

Or you could try squatting while you watch television. Whatever works. Just do it right.

About the Author: Wayne Muromoto has been practicing modern budo and koryu martial arts for decades, starting as a child in Hawaii and later studying Takeuchi Ryu jujutsu and Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu iaido in Kyoto. He is the head of the Seifukan Dojo in Hawaii and the editor of *The Classic Budoka* blog. An early supporter and member of the SMAA, he serves on the SMAA Board of Advisors.

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PO Box 6022
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-6022

