

SMAA JOURNAL



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

2016 SMAA DUES

Membership fees were 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.

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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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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 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=gq5Nika6Ge0&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 KENTUCKY SEMINAR

We've got a fantastic seminar coming up in Kentucky, which features two hard to find martial traditions: Hontai Yoshin Ryu jujutsu and Chito Ryu karate-do. Here's all you need to know to participate:

WHERE: Takanoko Dojo
999 Brent Street
Louisville, Kentucky 40204-2050
USA

WHEN: August 13, 2016 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.
Contact logician@hyrusa.com for a complete schedule of classes and preregistration information.

HOW MUCH: SMAA members, whose dues are current, will receive a special discount at this event. They will be able to participate in all classes in Hontai Yoshin Ryu and Chito Ryu for only \$20.

WHO: Stephen Fabian Sensei is a Shihan and seventh dan in the SMAA Jujutsu Division and one of two Directors for this division. The Advisor for the U. S. Branch for the Hontai Yoshin Ryu HQ in Japan, he is also a fourth dan in the SMAA Iaido Division. He has studied Hontai Yoshin Ryu jujutsu and related weapons systems in Japan under the past and current headmasters of this ancient martial art.

Cyna Khalily Sensei is a Shihan and sixth dan in the SMAA Karate-do Division. Dr. Khalily has studied Chito Ryu karate-do and related styles of karate-do in Okinawa and the USA.



Fabian Sensei



Barnes Sensei

Brian Barnes Sensei holds a Shido-in certificate and fifth dan in the SMAA Jujutsu Division and a second dan in the SMAA Iaido Division. He has studied these arts in Japan, Europe, and the USA. He is the U. S. Branch Director for the Hontai Yoshin Ryu HQ in Japan.

WHAT: Hontai Yoshin Ryu is an ancient martial art that focuses on jujutsu, but which also includes instruction in iaijutsu swordsmanship, the art of the six-foot staff (bojutsu), and the art of the three-foot stick (hanbojutsu). Hontai Yoshin Ryu is one of the most dynamic forms of jujutsu in Japan, where it has been practiced for many generations. It is infrequently taught in other nations. In fact, there are very few opportunities to study koryu jujutsu anywhere outside of Japan, so don't miss your chance to practice with two of the world's leading Western teachers of authentic Nihon jujutsu.

Chito Ryu karate-do is a rarely taught, unique, and powerful modern martial art. Chitose Tsuyoshi Sensei (1898-1984) founded it, and the name translates as "1,000 year old Chinese style." The

character "to" refers to the Tang Dynasty of China. The style was officially created in 1946. It is generally classified as a Japanese style because Chitose Sensei formulated and established it while living in Japan. However, some modern practitioners feel it is better categorized as an Okinawan system given that its techniques are derived from Okinawan tode, the forerunner of modern karate-do. This belief is warranted since the style's founder received the rank of tenth dan in 1958 from the Zen Okinawa Karate-do Kobudo Rengo Kai (All Okinawa Union of Karate-do and Kobudo).

SMAA members will have a unique opportunity to explore the parallels and differences between Hontai



Khalily Sensei

Yoshin Ryu and Chito Ryu, between classic karate-do and ancient jujutsu. Hontai Yoshin Ryu and Chito Ryu represent two seldom available martial arts, so sign up soon for a truly unique seminar! Attendance is limited and registration will be closed when space runs out.

YOUR GUIDE TO BUDO AND KORYU BUJUTSU—PART ONE

By H. E. Davey

Budo are the modern martial arts of Japan. Examples of budo (武道) are judo, aikido, karate-do, iaido, and kendo. While these disciplines stem from ancient samurai military arts, or koryu bujutsu, they are not of ancient origin, having originated after the demise of the samurai in Japanese society.

Over the last 50 to 75 years, Japanese budo has spread far beyond its island birthplace. In numerous Western nations, it's Japan's most well known export after Japanese food. Yet in many cases, it isn't really known at all. A massive number of myths and misconceptions exist, and the case is even worse for koryu bujutsu (古流 武術).

Worse still is the fact that quite a few reasonably well-respected martial arts teachers in the West have had a hand in perpetuating these misunderstandings and creating a few new ones of their own. Thanks to the efforts of groups like the Shudokan Martial Arts Association (SMAA, 修道館武道会), this situation has improved for perhaps the last 20 years or so. Nevertheless, this improvement has been in relatively small, specialized pockets, and the general public (and perhaps the average martial artist) remains often woefully misinformed. This affects what lots of folks expect to experience when they join a genuinely traditional dojo, and these misunderstandings make it harder for such people to have a positive experience. They end up with something akin to culture shock. Then they drop out of their dojo, often leaving with a bad impression of classic budo.

What's more, some of these misconceptions ultimately compromise our capacity to achieve real ability and personal growth via the timeless martial arts of Japan. They also reduce a multidimensional study to one or two dimensions. Put simply, they dumb down traditional budo and koryu bujutsu.



Ohsaki Jun Sensei, SMAA official and jujutsu expert from Tokyo, has over 50 years of budo experience

BUDO IS JUST ANOTHER FORM OF ASIAN MARTIAL ART.

This misconception ultimately comes from the fact that far too many Western people wrongly assume that all Asians are alike. This simply is not true. Japan, China, Korea, and other Asian nations have notably different cultures. True, Japan and China do historically share similarities in religion (Buddhism) and method of writing (*kanji*), but there's just as much dissimilarity in terms of language, art, aesthetics, food, and countless other elements. The same can be said for other Asian countries and people.

Why does this matter to people interested in budo? Budo is an outgrowth of Japanese culture, and it evolved over a long period of Japanese history. It's uniquely Japanese, and when you participate in it as a Western person, you're actually taking part in a process of cultural exchange. And that's a good thing as long as you make a point of trying to

understand the cultural matrix from which budo evolved.

So . . . let's talk.

I HEARD BUDO CAME FROM THE SAMURAI.

Well, not exactly. This statement is only true indirectly. The samurai did not exist as a social caste when most budo were created, and they did not directly create modern budo.

Surprised? You wouldn't be the first. So let's briefly look at the samurai as a class in Japanese society and learn a bit about Japanese history.

Seemingly from the beginning of time, Japan's history and civilization has been dominated by the influence of its warrior class. From early references to the "warriors of courage" (masurao) in the eighth-century texts the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*, to the ferocious and fanatical fighting spirit displayed by Japanese soldiers and kamikaze in World War II, to the "samurai businessmen" of the 1980s and 90s, the warrior has always been thought to exemplify Yamato-damashii—the "soul of Japan." For this reason, the late martial arts authority Donn F. Draeger Sensei noted that it's unlikely that Japanese people, and the nation as a whole, can be understood or valued by anyone without some knowledge of their martial culture. In fact, compared to numerous other ancient societies, Japan has from antiquity viewed its martial aspects in a unique way, elevating its warriors' military skills to the level of art, and later in history, combining these skills with meditative disciplines. This is different from how Western military disciplines have commonly been viewed, and it's just one reason why trying to establish an equivalency between budo and Western combat sports is doomed to fail. And for much of budo's history outside of Japan too many people have mistakenly assumed that such an equivalency existed, resulting in a distorted way of teaching and practicing budo.

I THINK THE SAMURAI WERE LIKE MEDIEVAL KNIGHTS, BUT MY FRIEND BELIEVES THE SAMURAI WERE ANCIENT JAPANESE EQUIVALENTS TO MODERN SOLDIERS.

Unfortunately, both statements are based on mistaken ideas. For the samurai to be like knights, ancient Japan would have had to be like feudal Europe, because both types of warriors evolved from the culture they existed in. And it's pretty obvious that old Japan and medieval Europe were different from each other in countless ways, including lifestyle, religion, and overall philosophy.

The same can be said about the contemporary military in America, Europe, and Japan. For instance, the classical Japanese warrior was inculcated by a code of behavior that's not fully comparable to that found in present-day Western culture, and he studied tea ceremony, flower arrangement, brush calligraphy, and other traditional arts in parallel with koryu bujutsu. Few soldiers in Europe and America have done this, because the cultures are different.

Actually, a very real difference exists between the classical Japanese warrior, the conscript soldier of pre-industrial Japan, the modern Japanese soldier, and an individual engaging in martial arts as sports. Many Western, and in some cases Japanese, martial artists also fail to recognize that while Japan's martial history can be said to span two millennia, the classical warrior existed in great numbers, and as a distinct, powerful institution, only from around the ninth to the nineteenth centuries. During this period, Japanese warriors actually came from a variety of social classes, participated in combative activities for many different reasons, utilized various heiho (martial strategies, tactics, and weapons systems), and were granted different privileges as well as ranks within pre-feudal and feudal Japanese society. It's a mistake to lump together all Japanese who engaged in combat operations throughout Japan's long history under the incorrect title of samurai. Japan's aristocratic warriors should

generically, and more properly, be given the appellation bushi (武士).

SO, THEN IT'S THE BUSHI THAT CREATED BUDO, RIGHT?

Uh, no not really. We're getting there, but first you need to understand a bit more about the bushi, the samurai, and feudal Japanese culture.

By the tenth-century, Japan's military class was already solidly established, and the warrior profession was of an inherited nature. Later in the twelfth-century, Japan entered into a period of discord and was led by a semi-corrupt imperial court, which was dominated by the Taira clan. The famed military leader Minamoto Yoritomo (1147–1199) banded together bushi from disparate provinces to form an unstoppable coalition, which eventually crushed the Taira Imperial Court, reigned in the chaos of twelfth-century Japan, and created an all-powerful martial government, or bakufu, in Kamakura. Although the Emperor technically reigned, Yoritomo, Japan's first permanent shogun (absolute military leader), actually ruled Japan. Commanding with an iron fist, he ushered in a more affluent and orderly age.

Minamoto Yoritomo succeeded in unifying warriors scattered throughout Japan, established more deeply a code of honor and loyalty (bushido) that the bushi were to attempt to exemplify, and in essence solidified the valor, martial skills, and vital characteristics that today are commonly associated with Japan's classical warriors. It can be said that the classical warrior of Japan is the sort of combatant that existed under the Minamoto bakufu, the first government in Japanese history to consist predominantly of fully trained, hereditary bushi. It is the classical bushi that ruled Japan through this martial government, and whose heroic deeds and philosophy of living continues to influence Japan to this day.

Contrary to popular opinion, however, the samurai as a group never ruled Japan during its era of martial government. The term samurai actually refers to a kind of rank or social status among bushi, and it was a relatively low one at that. Draeger Sensei, in his martial arts masterpiece *Classical Bujutsu*, indicated that in pre-Kamakura times the word "samurai" signified servants, who waited on the aristocracy. The sole association any of these individuals had with a martial milieu was the fact that they customarily gathered around the guardhouses, where warriors were quartered to await commands from superiors. Even when the word came to be normally extended to a particular type of warrior, probably around the fourteenth century, the implication of service wasn't entirely eliminated. Due to this limiting background, it's a mistake to call all Japanese warriors "samurai."

After the death of Minamoto Yoritomo, the Minamoto clan's domination of military activities weakened, gradually giving rise to a new sort of combined military and civilian authority. These "new bushi" led medieval Japan into a state of corruption and anarchy.

With only a few exceptions, the bushi class existed in a state of disharmony from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries. In a sense, association with military men of lesser character and skill contaminated the classical warrior. Moreover, the structure of Japan's system of administration weakened under the reign of the Tokugawa family bakufu (martial government), from 1603 to 1868. This period was characterized by two hundred years of seclusion from the outside world. Then, inspired by the leadership of Emperor Meiji, a potent combination of civilian leaders and bushi who were unhappy with the stern, ancient traditions of their class, abolished the Tokugawa rule and the bushi caste, at the end of the nineteenth-century. (This was partly accomplished through their use of firearms.) Under the more modern and Westernized administration of Emperor Meiji, the bushi were no longer allowed to wear their long and short swords,

the symbol of their social class, and they ceased to exist, replaced by a conscripted army of citizen-soldiers.

BUT MY MARTIAL ARTS TEACHER IS A REAL SAMURAI. I WISH I WAS A SAMURAI.

Sorry, but he or she is not a bushi or even a samurai. And unless you're rather strange, you probably don't want to be a bushi. Not even most Japanese wish that they could return to feudal era Japan and live as a bushi, and that includes people descended from the bushi. I married into a bushi family, and I'm certain that my wife has no desire to recreate the lifestyle of her ancient Japanese ancestors, nor does she wish to be bound by the harsh codes of behavior that dominated the bushi's life and that of his family. Such codes of conduct, including ritual suicide, have little place in modern societies, and most of my friends in Japan are pretty happy about that. If you still think you want to live as a samurai, please do a little serious research into what that actually meant.

To put it even more simply, the bushi represented a clearly delineated caste within old Japanese society. This class system hasn't existed since the late 1800's, so nobody today is a samurai or bushi. Japan is a democracy, and its feudal government—of which the bushi were an inseparable part—no longer survives. However, the bushi as a *character type* can be very generally said to continue to this day.

Certainly it would be a mistake to assume that no "bushi-like" individuals existed before or after Yoritomo's time. But today this refers to people that have adapted aspects of what little we accurately know of bushido—"the Way of the bushi"—to their lives in the 21st century. Few have attempted to fully recreate the beliefs and way of living of the bushi as trying to do so can only fail in countless ways. Along the same lines, your martial arts dojo is also not genuinely cultivating a bushi lifestyle among its students. At best, your dojo may present fairly generic bushido concepts like honor, loyalty, and

others in a Japanese martial context. And that's as it should be. Trying to transplant a medieval culture, in its entirety, into the 21st century is very romantic but also a little silly.

What's more, the bushi's notion of honor and loyalty did not strictly match how most Western people view these ideals. Again, for folks that really want to pursue this, quite a bit of research into Japanese feudal history is needed, and not many Western martial arts teachers have genuinely done this research. This is another reason why myths and misconceptions abound among Western budo enthusiasts.

OK. WHO REALLY CREATED BUDO?

Here's an easy answer: Lots of people in Japan, most of whom taught martial arts during the last 150 years or so. See, that was easy.

Except if you're serious about studying budo, this isn't the sort of answer you should be satisfied with. It's true, but it is also overly simplistic. You probably want more information than this. Here you go . . .

Though it's the norm to refer to any Asian combative studies as martial arts, the martial skills of the bushi are correctly termed koryu bujutsu. Despite what's been printed in miscellaneous publications, the classical Japanese warrior didn't practice kendo or iaido (modern forms of swordsmanship), and he had no knowledge of judo or karate-do, which are predominantly unarmed martial sports that didn't exist during Japan's feudal period. Judo, kendo, karate-do, aikido, iaido—none of these represents "the ancient arts of the samurai." Moreover, none of these activities are koryu bujutsu.

These arts are customarily categorized as budo, or "martial Ways," while the ancient military techniques directly practiced by the bushi are normally termed koryu bujutsu, that is, "ancient systems of martial arts." Do refers to a "Way of living," even a particular activity that allows a person to discover the correct

and natural way to live, while jutsu is defined as an “art or technique.” The various forms of koryu bujutsu, such as kenjutsu (the “art of the sword”), sojutsu (the “art of the spear”), bojutsu (the “art of the staff”), and others were designed by the bushi, for the use of the bushi. They were created for classical use, by classical Japanese warriors, and intended to be used under a particular set of circumstances, i.e., ancient Japanese battlefield conditions.

COOL! I WANT TO LEARN HARDCORE KORYU BUJUTSU, SOMETHING THAT REALLY WORKS FOR SELF-DEFENSE.

All right, except the koryu were not designed for self-defense. Seriously, they weren't.

In Japan's feudal society, the bushi pledged their lives to their superiors, the Emperor in general, and in a broad sense, to their country. Their koryu bujutsu was not, strictly speaking, designed for self-protection and personal use, but rather for the protection of the group. Bujutsu was, ideally, not practiced by the bushi as a self-centered activity. Just as few people today join the military to learn self-defense, the bushi didn't engage in the study of bujutsu, a tool of his profession, to learn to effectively handle an individual who'd enjoyed one

too many pints of sake. This isn't too say that the koryu do not contain techniques that can be used for modern self-protection. Some koryu do, but the overall orientation is toward protecting the group via battlefield combat and/or training oriented toward medieval combat scenarios.

On the other hand, budo arts are of more recent origin and were not generally speaking developed by the bushi, having frequently originated well after the demise of the bushi caste. Arising during a more peaceful period in Japan's history, budo embodied the numerous character-building qualities inherent in koryu bujutsu and built upon them to create methods of profound spiritual development, allowing participants to realize the Do or michi (Tao in Chinese). In this sense, Do can be taken to mean “the Way of the universe,” or the right, natural path for all living things, which in turn leads to enlightenment through union with the universe.

Since many founders of the various forms of budo weren't bushi, and because several of these arts were born after the dissolution of bushi culture, they were geared more toward non-military combat in a civilian setting as well as personal growth. As the result, they wouldn't have been effective on the feudal battlefield and didn't have the same emphasis as koryu bujutsu. In time, however, several forms of budo mutated into martial sports and due to their artificially imposed rules, along with a shift in attitude among participants toward that of sport, even their value as civilian methods of self-protection and personal growth has been frequently weakened.

To summarize, the classical warriors' bujutsu emphasized combat techniques directly applicable for use on the feudal battlefield, with an emphasis on the group entity and service to one's superiors, along with a general code of ethics that allowed the bushi to effectively fulfill his obligations to his country and clan. Generally speaking, tournaments didn't exist, or if they did take place, were actually shinken shobu (life and death contests using real



SMAA Senior Advisor John Quinn teaching Masaki Ryu, a form of koryu bujutsu

weapons). In contrast, budo, although stemming from koryu bujutsu, emphasized self-defense in a civilian setting, with an ultimate emphasis on producing spiritual growth, and in several modern budo forms, a heavy emphasis on sports applications. *(To be continued . . .)*

About the Author: H. E. Davey is one of the founding members of the SMAA, a Shihan and hachidan in the SMAA Jujutsu Division, and the author of several books on Japanese culture, spirituality, and traditional art forms. He has studied Japanese yoga, martial arts, healing arts, and fine arts in Japan and the USA for several decades.

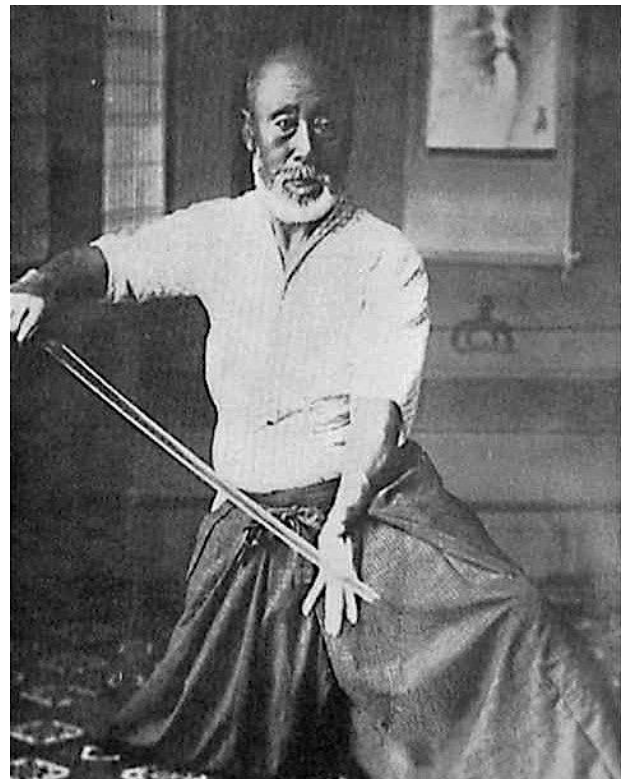
TACHI UCHI NO KURAI AND THE THREE INITIATIVES

By Nicholas J. Miller

While modern iaido consists principally of solo practice, there are a number of paired kata in Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu iaido (founded in the late Muromachi period, circa 1590). These kata take the form of ordered sets of waza (“techniques”) in which the practitioners act out martial scenarios. First among these is Tachi Uchi no Kurai (太刀打之位, “The State of Crossing Swords/The State of Striking Swords”). Tachi Uchi no Kurai is performed by two practitioners each using a single long sword. The techniques are performed standing. There are two forms of this kata, the original set consisting of 10 waza and the revised set consisting of seven waza. Oe Masamichi Sensei, 17th generation soke (“headmaster”) in the orthodox lineage of Eishin Ryu and founder of Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu, created the revised set. Nicklaus Suino Sensei taught this set to the author, and it is the kata discussed in this article. Suino Sensei is one of two Directors for the SMAA iaido Division and direct student of the late Yamaguchi Katsuo Sensei, iaido judan.

The teaching and practice of paired kata is meant to communicate, among other things, how swordsmen interact in contest. Moreover, prescribed paired kata provides the context to highlight and practice some combative principles in isolation and makes them accessible to a wider audience. This complements a student’s education in solo practice, where one focuses on more intrapersonal aspects. For example, in solo practice we study body mechanics, such as methods for putting force into

the sword, while in paired practice we study the dynamics of distance between swordsmen and its implication on the outcome of a contest. Aside from what is transmitted through the kata, we can gain additional insight into the aspects of swordsmanship particular to paired practice through the writings of skilled swordsmen, such as Miyamoto Musashi and Yagyu Munenori, and through first hand experience under the appropriate restrictions to maintain safety, e.g. kendo. In order to ensure



Oe Sensei

that paired kata function in the way described above, it is important to practice not only the motions but also the intent in the kata. Towards this end, let's discuss the relationship between Tachi Uchi no Kurai and the principles called the Three Initiatives by Musashi (1) and the Three Rhythms by Munenori (2).

Musashi's Three Initiatives and Munenori's Three Rhythms describe the relationship of intention, decision-making, and action between two swordsmen in contest. Musashi's Three Initiatives are the Initiative of Attack, the Initiative of Waiting, and the Body-Body Initiative. Musashi writes, (1) "The Initiative of Attack is when I attack my opponent. The Initiative of Waiting is when my opponent attacks me. The Body-Body Initiative is when both my opponent and I attack at the same time."

Munenori writes of his Three Rhythms, (2) "One Rhythm is when you and your opponent strike at the same time; another is when he raises his sword and you strike from beneath; and a third is when he lowers his sword and you go over it and strike." It is clear that the first Rhythm is identical to the Body-Body Initiative. As for the others, one may interpret the phrase "he raises his sword" as an aggressive act and "and you strike from beneath" as reactionary, and thus equate the second Rhythm with the Initiative of Waiting. Similarly, "he lowers his sword" can be interpreted as a passive action and "you go over it and strike" as a proactive action, and thus one can equate the third Rhythm with the Initiative of Attack. The ambiguity here is a consequence of Munenori's perspective on the martial arts. He rarely recommends a simple direct attack. Rather, he espouses the principle that one should act with understanding and this understanding comes from gauging the situation and the intent of the opponent. Consequently he often makes statements such as, (2) "obtain the victory by having your opponent make the first move." This sounds quite passive. However, in full context it is apparent that this does not mean that one should always wait

for the opponent to make an aggressive move, but rather that one not act without first understanding the opponent's mind. Then one should act either proactively or reactively as appropriate.

To explain this principle more fully, we turn to Takuan Soho, who writes, (3) "To speak in terms of your own martial art, when you first notice the sword that is moving to strike you, if you think of meeting that sword just as it is, your mind will stop at the sword in just that position, your own movements will be undone, and you will be cut down by your opponent. This is what stopping means." Thus, we understand that in a rapidly changing environment one must constantly absorb information about what is happening and make quick decisions about how to adapt. To draw an analogy to chess or the Japanese board game of go, one must endeavor to play a few moves ahead. If the environment changes too rapidly, one misunderstands, or if he lets his mind dwell on something then he is more likely to make poor decisions or be unable to adapt. Soho calls this dwelling "stopping", "attachment", or "sickness of the mind."

In the context of a contest between swordsmen, each combatant is repeatedly progressing through a decision-making cycle as the contest evolves. Should one fall behind or misjudge the situation he will likely make poor choices and lose. The Three Initiatives or Rhythms describe how these principles are used to win. Attacking can be understood as actively changing the situation in a way that necessitates a response from one's opponent. The attacker is making decisions and executing the associated actions sufficiently fast that the defender must struggle to keep up or cannot keep up at all. In this sense attacking is driving the decision-making cycle. Munenori would point out that while driving one must simultaneously be watching for errors and or sticking points in the opponent's thought processes. It is at these points where victory is found.

The Initiative of Waiting, on the other hand, can be understood as moving through the decision-making cycle faster than one's opponent without outwardly driving the situation. That is, one reads the situation and the intent of the opponent and formulates an advantageous choice more rapidly than the situation is changing. In this sense one's mind is ahead even while one's body is following. This is in contrast to the Initiative of Attack where both the mind and body lead. In a similar vein as in the Initiative of Attack, victory is found where the opponent's mind gets stuck, or he makes a mistake. It is at this moment that reactive actions change to proactive actions to take advantage of the moment.

Both the Initiative of Attack and the Initiative of Waiting describe ideal situations in which one's mind is sufficiently nimble to lead the evolving situation. The word "initiative" can be thought of as referring to the leading understanding one has in either case. These concepts are much less useful if the word "initiative" is thought to mean that these concepts apply only at the very outset of a contest.

The Body-Body Initiative describes the gray area where neither combatant has obtained the Initiative of Attack or Waiting. Of this Munenori says, (2) "The rhythm of striking at the same time is considered to be undesirable, while a rhythm of striking separately is thought to be good." Musashi, on the other hand, simply recommends resolute and vigorous direct action to deal with this situation.

The first five waza of Tachi Uchi no Kurai begin with a matching of swords. The matching is a near simultaneous action that brings the swords of the two performers in contact. In Deai and Kobushitori, this is done with low matching cuts. In Zetsumyoken and Dokumyoken, this is done with high matching cuts. In Tsubadome, this is done with cuts that come to meet at the tsuba ("sword guard") in the center. The author believes these actions are not representative of the Body-Body Initiative, but rather they can be thought of as establishing an initial point of reference from which the waza proceeds.

One can imagine in a contest that an orientating technique can be a useful tool to peak into the opponent's intentions, get onto the right track, and begin looking a few moves ahead as it were. Indeed, Musashi's technique of "Moving the Shadow" could be understood in this way. The simplest such technique is to place one's sword before himself with a trial attack. This is one of Munenori's Three Intents. The final two waza of Tachi Uchi no Kurai, Ukenagashi and Mappo, do not begin with a matching of swords. In this sense they represent more advanced cases where the initial connection between swordsmen is made naturally and without the need of a bridging technique. When there is a matching of swords at the beginning of a waza, it is important not to let the body relax during the pause that follows. Any settling in that moment is suggestive of the mind stopping with this action. This robs the waza of initiative and dynamic character.

(Deai 出合: "Meeting," Kobushitori 拳取: "Taking the Fist," Zetsumyoken 絶妙剣: "The Exquisite Sword," Dokumyoken 独妙剣: "The Solitary Wondrous Sword," Tsubadome 鋸留: "Sword Guard Stopping," Ukenagashi 請流: "Flowing Parry," and Mappo 真方: "True Method/True Direction"—Editor)



Figure 1: Uchidachi (left) and shidachi (right) matching swords in a low posture cut

In the first waza, Deai, uchidachi (“striking/attacking sword”) takes the Initiative of Attack, after the matching of swords, and executes a single downward cut. (Figures 1 and 2) Shidachi (“doing/receiving sword”) in turn blocks the cut. The waza illustrates the basic driving and following roles in a simple example. This waza truly comes to life when uchidachi’s initiative is strong and shidachi does not allow himself to physically anticipate, despite already knowing what will happen, but instead reacts to uchidachi’s attack. In this sense, we practice the mindset of the Initiatives.

The second waza, Kobushitori, begins like Deai. (Figure 3) However, after the matching of swords, shidachi takes the Initiative of Attack and grasps



Figure 3: Shidachi (left) grasping uchidachi's (right) sword hand at the conclusion of Kobushitori

certainly not stop with this action. Accordingly, his step and grab should be simultaneous, fluid, and quick. Meanwhile uchidachi should let his mind stop with the matching of swords. In this way, uchidachi can clearly experience and understand what Soho admonishes us to avoid, the stopping of the mind on any one thing.

The third waza, Zetsumyoken, begins with a high matching of swords after which shidachi cuts at uchidachi twice more while advancing. (Figure 4) Uchidachi falls back while blocking the first cut but



Figure 2: Uchidachi (left) blocking shidachi's (right) cut during Deai

uchidachi’s sword hand while positioning his own sword to thrust into uchidachi’s abdomen. This waza can appear artificial to some because uchidachi makes no movement as shidachi attacks. However, shidachi’s attack is intended to prevent just this from happening, hence the grab. That there is no overt struggle against shidachi’s grab is simply to make the waza clean in demonstration. To express the waza in the most honest and meaningful way, shidachi’s should think of the matching of swords as the preface to his attack. It is the bridge, or the exploratory reaching out, and his mind should



Figure 4: Shidachi (right) cutting uchidachi (left) at the conclusion of Zetsumyoken



Figure 5: Uchidachi (left) and shidachi (right) crossing swords during Tsubadome

is caught by the second. This is another example of the Initiative of Attack. In the previous waza, the attack was singular, or nearly so. In this waza, however, the initiative and attack is continued. Shidachi overwhelms uchidachi, who is unable to keep up. In practice this is best expressed if shidachi's attacks have an accelerating quality to them, and uchidachi feels himself falling behind.

The fourth waza, Dokumyoken, is identical to Zetsumyoken up until the final cut of Zetsumyoken. In Dokumyoken, uchidachi is able to keep up with shidachi's driving attacks and blocks the cut. Afterward there is a change in the drive. Uchidachi attacks with a thrust, but shidachi evades the thrust and cuts uchidachi. Uchidachi picks up the physical drive, but shidachi maintains the initiative, changing from the Initiative of Attack to the Initiative of Waiting. Not only does this waza demonstrate the Initiative of Waiting, but it also demonstrates how the drive can change from one swordsman to another. This often occurs, as in this waza, at a lull in a string of attacks. A lull, in turn, occurs in the moment where the attacker changes intent. When performing this waza shidachi's evasion and cut will be more dynamic and in-tune with uchidachi's attack if shidachi endeavors to maintain the initiative as we have described. Shidachi should not allow his

mind to stop with his last cut preceding uchidachi's thrust.

The fifth waza, Tsubadome, begins with both uchidachi and shidachi cutting simultaneously and crossing swords just above the tsuba. (Figure 5) They subsequently break apart, at which point uchidachi steps in with a downward cut. Shidachi fades back to evade and then steps forward to cut in uchidachi's wake. After the break in distance, shidachi takes the Initiative of Waiting. Perceiving uchidachi's intent, shidachi is able to evade and counter rapidly. The ability to perceive an opponent's intent is supported by experience through which one learns the shapes and rhythms of contest. For example, after a break in distance one might expect, based on experience, the opponent to close again in accordance with his aggressive purpose. Perceiving this to be the case one might set up a trap, so to speak, as demonstrated in this waza. In order to capture this in performance shidachi's actions should be rapid and begin a split second after uchidachi's intent becomes manifest. Should shidachi anticipate or respond too late or slowly the effect is diminished.

In the sixth waza, Ukenagashi, Uchidachi advances to cut at shidachi. Shidachi parries the cuts and returns with a strike of his own in one motion. In



Figure 6: Uchidachi (left) and shidachi (right) in Jodan no Kamae

this waza, shidachi again employs the Initiative of Waiting. However, here shidachi's rhythm is faster. Though we say his rhythm is faster, we don't mean that his speed is faster. The rhythm is faster because shidachi parries and counters in one continuous motion, but the speed is not faster because this motion is big and overt so that it can be clearly seen. Parrying and countering in one motion is like the popular analogies of "The Moon on the Water" or "The Action of Spark and Stone," (3) in that shidachi's counter is engendered by uchidachi's attack.

In the seventh waza, Mappo, uchidachi advances to cut shidachi. (Figure 6) Shidachi, however, strikes at uchidachi before uchidachi can execute his attack, and he has to rapidly change to a block. This waza demonstrates a strike at the opponent's mind or intent. That is, as soon as shidachi perceives uchidachi's intent to attack, he smashes it. The intent is the hidden precursor to a manifest attack. In Munenori's discussion on the "Rhythm of Existence and Non-Existence" (2) he says that which is overt is called existence and that which is hidden is called non-existence. Moreover, he writes, "When there is existence, you should see it and strike it. When there is non-existence, you should see that and strike it." The later is just what is demonstrated in this waza.

Considering the Three Initiatives, and examining Tachi Uchi no Kurai in their light, can sharpen small but important features of the kata. This can add more dynamic character to its performance. Moreover, and most importantly, this study adds interesting layers to the practice of Tachi Uchi no

Kurai, and practice in general, that are fascinating and enjoyable to explore.

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