

# SMAA JOURNAL



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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 2018 SMAA DUES

Membership fees were due on January 1, 2018. 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

- Karl Scott Sensei
- Nicklaus Suino Sensei
- H. E. Davey Sensei

**Editor:** H. E. Davey Sensei

**Assistant Editor:** Troy Swenson Sensei

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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](mailto: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](mailto:shudokan@smaa-hq.com) about special shipping for international orders.)

To order, go to the "Payments" section of [www.smaa-hq.com](http://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 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](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](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcE7zBhv9Hs&list=PLS11_XCH8RkIV8liNZoXI93WI79BLe1NZ)

### IN MEMORIAM: HERBERT WONG SENSEI

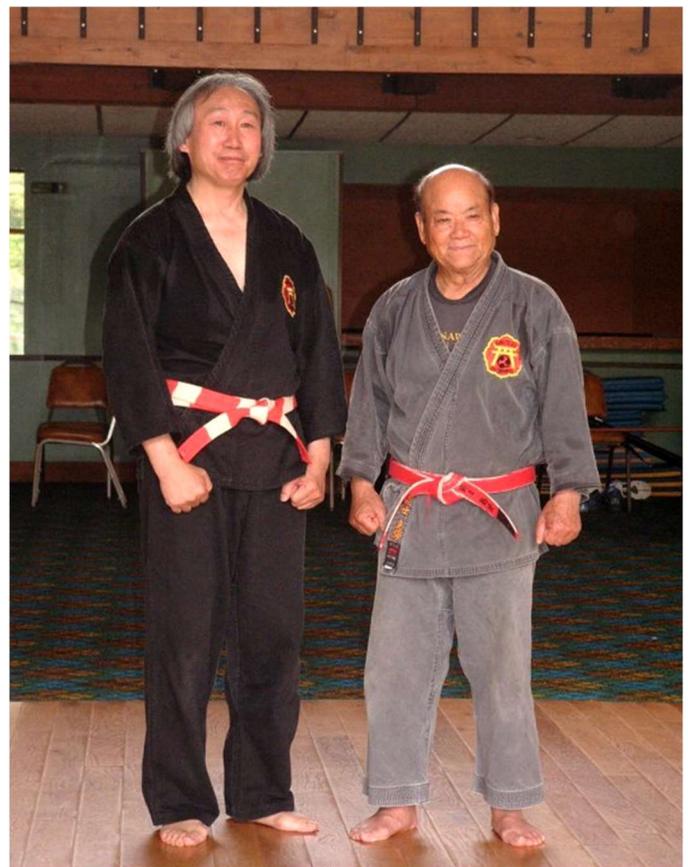
Herbert Wong Sensei, a distinguished member of the SMAA Board of Advisors, passed away on May 23, 2018. He was an eighth dan in the SMAA Karate-do Division and the highest-ranking karateka in our association.

Wong Sensei's first introduction to the martial arts occurred in the Chinese schools he attended as a child in San Francisco's Chinatown. Martial arts were taught as part of the cultural arts curriculum and at



*Wong Sensei*

Chinese community centers. In 1959, Wong Sensei began his formal martial arts training in karate-do with Walter Todd Sensei at the International Judo,



*Herb Wong and Shimabukuro Eizo*

Karate and Aikido School. He was one of the first groups of pupils at the school to earn shodan, which he received in 1961. He continued to train conscientiously and was given his second dan in 1963.

The United States Army drafted Wong Sensei in 1963 and sent him to Okinawa. During that time, he began practicing with Shimabukuro Eizo Sensei (tenth dan) in Shobayashi Shorin Ryu karate-do. Throughout the time he was in Okinawa, Wong Sensei trained nearly every day. Because of this enthusiasm and his earlier experience, Wong Sensei received his first dan in Shorin Ryu near the end of 1964. He was awarded his second dan in August of 1965, which was just before he completed his military service and returned to the United States.

After returning from Okinawa, Wong Sensei restarted his undergraduate studies at San Francisco State University and continued to practice Shorin Ryu. In 1965, he started the Asian Martial Arts School in San Francisco with Andrew Chan Sensei. He also began training in Sil-Lum Hung Gar (Tiger-Crane) kung fu under Y. C. Wong in San Francisco that same year. Wong Sensei was one of Wong's first three pupils in the United States. He continued to practice with Y. C. Wong and teach at the Asian Martial Arts School until he left the San Francisco Bay Area to pursue his graduate studies.

In September of 1970, Wong Sensei started in the doctoral program at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. While concurrently pursuing his doctorate degrees in clinical and organizational psychology, he was also teaching classes in Okinawan karate-do and Chinese kung fu. In 1974, Wong Sensei was made the head of Shorin Ryu for the Midwestern and Southern Divisions of the United States by Shimabukuro Sensei.

After receiving his doctorate degrees, Wong Sensei returned to the San Francisco Bay area in 1975 to run a psychiatric clinic and psychology training center. A few years later he started doing consulting work in addition to running the clinic.

In addition, he continued visiting Okinawa to train with Shimabukuro Sensei. He received a number of promotions over the years and was awarded his eighth dan in 2005. Shimabukuro Sensei also gave him the title of Shihan.

Herbert Wong Sensei was 78 years old when he passed away. He will be missed.

## JMAC TWELFTH ANNIVERSARY

On June 23 and 24, Nicklaus Suino Sensei's Japanese Martial Arts Center celebrated its twelfth year in Ann Arbor, Michigan. JMAC offers instruction for children and adults in traditional Japanese budo, including Kodokan judo, Sato Ryu Nihon jujutsu, and Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu iaido. Suino Sensei has been studying budo in Japan and the USA for over 50 years. He is one of the founding members of the SMAA, the Director of the SMAA Judo Division, and the Co-director of the SMAA Iaido Division.



*JMAC's founder*

## WAYNE MUROMOTO IN JAPAN

Wayne Muromoto, a member of the SMAA Board of Advisors, returned to Japan in June of this year to continue his ongoing study of Takeuchi Ryu



*Wayne Muromoto (left) teaching Takeuchi Ryu*

(Bitchuden) and Urasenke tea ceremony. Mr. Muromoto has been a supporter of our nonprofit organization for years, and he's a frequent contributor to the *SMAA Journal*.

He stayed in the Kyoto area and practiced with his teacher Ono Yotaro Sensei, the current headmaster of Takeuchi Ryu (Bitchuden). Ono Sensei is the 16th generation leader of this martial system, which focuses on jujutsu and a wide variety of weapons; and Mr. Muromoto has been studying with him since 1986.



*Takeuchi Ryu in Kyoto*

The Takeuchi (or Takenouchi) Ryu is one of Japan's oldest, verifiable, extant martial systems still being practiced. It is a sogo bujutsu; training encompasses a variety of weapons utilized by the ancient warriors of Japan, the bushi. The traditional date of the founding of the Takeuchi Ryu is 1532 ACE, some 480-odd years ago.

The founder, Takeuchi Hisamori, was the son of Takeuchi Yukiharu Harima No Kami. The Takeuchi were a noble household residing at Karasumaru Imadegawa in the imperial capitol of Kyoto.

The Takeuchi family carried on this tradition for generations along two lineages, the soke and sodenke lines. Another lineage branched off to become the Bitchuden, Bitchu Takeuchi Ryu, or Bitchuke line. These three lineages continue to this day to be the bearers of the Takeuchi Ryu tradition.



*Ono Sensei (right)*

In reckoning the lineage from Takeuchi Hisamori along the Bitchuden line, Ono Sensei is the 16th headmaster.

Mr. Muromoto is teaching Takeuchi Ryu and Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu iaido in Honolulu. You can learn more about his Seifukan dojo at <http://www.seifukanhawaii.org/index.html>.

## OTSUKA SOKE NEWS



*Otsuka Soke*

In May of this year, Otsuka Yasuyuki Soke taught at a spring training camp in Sasagawa, Chiba, Japan. It was an international event, with students from Japan, Finland, the USA, Ireland, Hong Kong, and Switzerland in attendance.

Otsuka Sensei is the current Soke of Meifu Shinkage Ryu and an SMAA Senior Advisor. Someya Chikatoshi Soke, who was a student of Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto Ryu, founded this system. It concentrates on the use of shuriken throwing darts and the fundo kusari, a weighted chain weapon. The curriculum



*Otsuka Soke and students at the Sasagawa training camp*

also includes shokenjutsu, the art of hand held blades.

In June, Otsuka Soke and his Japanese students taught at a joint workshop with the Juken Raishin Kai in Tokyo, a group that practices koryu martial arts. Participants were able to exchange information and experience different martial systems.

In July, Otsuka Soke traveled to Kyoto to teach Meifu Shinkage Ryu at the Kansai Keiko Kai. Despite high heat, this two-day seminar was a big success. Otsuka Soke's website is <http://www.geocities.jp/meifushinkagetokyo/>.

## NORTHGLENN JUDO CLUB AND WARREN AGENA

Dr. Dennis McGuire and Page Baptist founded Northglenn Judo Club in Northglenn, Colorado in 1965. It is now lead by Warren Agena Sensei, SMAA Senior Advisor and Kodokan sixth dan. Throughout the years it has been the home dojo of numerous national champions at junior and senior levels:

- Craig Agena, (US Army, Retired) represented Northglenn Judo Club and the USA at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles.
- JoAnne Quiring represented Northglenn Judo Club and the USA at the Barcelona Olympics in 1992.
- Lance Nading (President, USA Judo Board of Directors) and JoAnne Quiring were first alternates at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.
- Kenny Hashimoto was a first alternate at the 2004 Olympics in Athens.

In 2002, the United States Olympic Committee selected the teachers at Northglenn Judo Club as Development Coaches of the Year for judo. Agena Sensei, aside from training the judoka at his dojo,



*Northglenn Judo Club teachers and Akena Sensei (right)*

contributes to the wider Colorado Judo League community by regularly conducting coaching certification clinics. Check out Akena Sensei's dojo at <http://northglennjudo.org>.

## **BATTODO FUDOKAN AND JOHN EVANS**

Batto means, "to draw and strike with the sword." Do refers to a "path" of training aimed at the whole development of the practitioner. Battodo Fudokan in London teaches that the closer to the actuality of combat one can get the more battodo has to offer. The dojo is lead by John Evans Sensei, a member of the SMAA Board of Advisors.



*Nakamura Sensei*

Fudokan students study Nakamura Ryu battodo and Kurikara Ryu heiho. Nakamura Ryu battodo is a distillation of old-style Japanese swordsmanship established by one of the most well known swordsmen of the 20th century, Nakamura Taizaburo Sensei. Kurikara Ryu heiho is a complete method of external and internal training that breaks down the impediments in mind and body that impede natural and free wielding of the sword.

Evans Sensei began Shotokan karate-do at Oxford University in his teens. In 1981, he went to Japan and studied Mikkyo (esoteric Buddhism) and Kurikara Ryu heiho near Mount Takao with Fushi Sensei (Murana Masayuki)—an independent gyoja or yamabushi. The yamabushi (mountain ascetics) teach through organized and progressive exercise in the mountains called Shugendo, "the path of training and testing."

After three years of rigorous training, Fushi Sensei introduced him to two of the most senior teachers of swordsmanship in Japan: Nakamura Taizaburo Sensei and Danzaki Tomoaki Sensei. Nakamura Sensei was tenth dan in Toyama Ryu and Nakamura Ryu battodo, and Danzaki Sensei was a ninth dan and leader of the Kenshukan Dojo, where he taught Muso Shinden Ryu iaido and Shindo Muso Ryu jodo. Evans Sensei also trained in Kashima Shinto Ryu under the famed Yoshikawa Koichiro Sensei.

In 1987, his training routine of swordsmanship and Shugendo was profiled in a 30-minute NTV program in Japan entitled *Igisujin no Musha Shugyo* (An Englishman's Warrior Discipline). After his return to England in 1993, he created the Fudokan dojo in London. He received his seventh dan in 2008 from the Japan-based International Battodo Federation. Learn more about Battodo Fudokan here: <http://battodo-fudokan.co.uk>.



*Evans Sensei*

## SUIEIJUTSU

*By H. E. Davey*

The Japanese bushi studied *suijutsu* (水術) or *suieijutsu* (suiei-jutsu) as one of their martial arts. It is essentially combative swimming. These antique and sophisticated forms of martial swimming are presently undergoing a resurgence of sorts in Japan and videos can even be found online.

### ANCIENT ORIGINS

Long ago, a bushi (“warrior”) met many situations where he might need to cross a body of water, attack an adversary from the water, or protect himself while in water and wearing armor. Centered on the needs of combat, the Japanese advanced several different types of swimming over the generations. For instance, *Iwakura Ryu* contained assorted traditional bushi swimming skills, including swimming in armor, eating while swimming, even swimming while bound with rope.

Like most other *koryu*, or “ancient schools,” the various systems of *suieijutsu* each have (or had) their own specialties, which were often influenced by geographical location and clan affiliation:

- *Shinden Ryu* focused on long distance swimming

- *Kankai Ryu* concentrated on swimming in the ocean
- *Suifu Ryu* was directed toward swimming in river rapids
- *Kobori Ryu* includes much of the above, and it was what the bushi studied to learn to engage an opponent in the water while wearing armor.

In fact, *Kobori Ryu* students learned to tread water by moving their legs in a manner a bit similar to an eggbeater. Today, you can see people involved in Western water polo and synchronized swimming do something vaguely reminiscent of this *Kobori Ryu* technique. The purpose of this water treading skill was to keep a vertical body position, which allowed the bushi to use a sword or gun and even shoot arrows while in a river.

*Kobori Ryu* still exists today in Japan, where it is taught on a relatively limited basis. Students are no longer concerned with outdoor warfare, as is the case with most *koryu* today, and their focus is on using the training to develop their minds and bodies



*Samurai swimming (www.ndtv.com)*

to live well. Two of the world's leading experts in suiejutsu are SMAA officials in Japan.

### IWASAKI HISASHI SOKE

Iwasaki Sensei, SMAA Senior Advisor, is the Soke (hereditary headmaster) of Kobori Ryu. One of the highest ranking martial artists in Japan, he teaches and preserves a very rare and esteemed form of koryu bujutsu.

Unlike modern budo, such as judo, karate-do, or iaido, the old martial systems were often sogo bujutsu. A sogo bujutsu incorporates a number of martial disciplines that are linked by a set of

unifying principles as espoused by the art's founder. While not all bushi studied every one of them, generally speaking there are 18 classical martial arts that often comprise bujutsu. Although the exact arts that made up the bugei juhappan, or "18 martial arts," varied according to martial system, and sometimes according to historical period as well, suiejutsu is often described as being one of them.

Iwasaki Sensei has been a leader in the SMAA for many years. He lives in Kyoto.

### SAWAI ATSUHIRO SENSEI

Sawai Sensei also lives in Kyoto. An SMAA Senior Advisor, he began practicing martial arts as a young man, studying kendo in college. He later practiced Hakko Ryu jujutsu as well, but his main focus was Kobori Ryu, which he learned in his hometown of Kyoto. He eventually received the rank and title of Shihan in Kobori Ryu, the highest possible level of teaching certification in this koryu marital art.

Sawai Sensei has written about bujutsu for the *SMAA Journal* on several occasions. Aside from his interest in martial arts, Sawai Sensei has studied and taught Nakamura Tempu Sensei's Japanese yoga for over 50 years. He received the highest teaching certificate from Nakamura Sensei, and he leads the International Japanese Yoga Association ([www.japanese-yoga.com](http://www.japanese-yoga.com)).

## An Excerpt from *The Japanese Way of the Artist*

*By H.E. Davey*

### TAKING CLASSES VERSUS JOINING A DOJO

We live in a consumer-oriented world. It seems almost everything—and sometimes everyone—is for sale. When it comes to learning something, we expect to find a school, pay for classes, and get what we paid for. This works if you're taking a course in math. You pay for the finite series of classes, buy the textbook, listen to the teacher

explain the material in the text, take the test, and you complete the course. You got what you paid for. But a dojo isn't a math class. The sensei cannot be bought. The course never ends. And the Way (Do) is not for sale.

I once had someone visit our dojo to observe group practice in one of the Do we study. He wanted to take only private lessons from me; however, the art

he was interested in requires interaction with a variety of people if a person is to learn it well. I explained this and offered to teach him privately as long as he participated in some group instruction. He left promising to think about it.

I got a call from him a week later reiterating his desire for only private lessons. I also repeated my explanation, adding that, although I'd certainly bring in more money by teaching him privately, I'd also be doing both of us a disservice. He offered even more money. I declined. At this juncture he grew incensed, unable to understand that money wasn't the issue. It might have been the first time he had been faced with something he couldn't buy—for any price. Isn't the customer always right? Perhaps. But a dojo isn't a convenience store. The Way is not for sale.

Similarly, I've had people visit who had made long-term commitments to another sensei and another version of one of the Ways I practice. I usually encourage such people to honor their original commitment and continue with what they've started. For most, the additional time commitment alone would make sincere study at our dojo difficult. On more than one occasion, the person has been dumbstruck that I was sending them away: "But you're offering classes, and I'm prepared to sign up and give you my money." The Way is not for sale.

A sensei isn't selling the Way, and so he or she doesn't have customers. A dojo is not an enterprise designed to make money. It certainly can be run in a businesslike, professional manner, and in some cases it may be prosperous. The fundamental intent of a dojo, however, differs from a business or school.

"Dojo" is a term originally used for an area in a Buddhist temple employed for meditation. Do means "the Way," and jo means "place." The original Sanskrit term is *bodhimandala*, meaning "the place of enlightenment." The word for "school" in

Japanese is *gakko*. Although many people assume that a dojo refers to a martial arts training hall, in fact dojos are not limited to budo. Not too far from our dojo, for example, is the world-renowned San Francisco Taiko Dojo. They practice the Way of the taiko drum, which is hardly a martial art.

A dojo, then, is an environment where firsthand experience and experimentation lead to deep understanding. The memorized data or theoretical understanding of a subject associated with a classroom setting are actually of a secondhand nature. What is secondhand is in effect borrowed; it isn't genuinely part of us since we haven't experienced it for ourselves. In the Ways, understanding comes from what we sense for ourselves by means of direct mind and body experience, and the place for this experience and understanding is the dojo.

### TEACHERS VERSUS SENSEI

Sensei is a title of respect that is widely used in Japan. It means "teacher," but it connotes ideas not necessarily suggested by the Western notion of teacher. Because of a lack of knowledge of Japanese culture in general and the Ways in particular, misconceptions regarding the sensei as a concept and as an actual individual have crept into American and European understanding of the Do.

On the one hand, the sensei of the classical Ways are not equivalent to, for example, a high school teacher; the methods and place of instruction, for one thing, differ significantly. On the other hand, "sensei" shouldn't be taken to mean infallible master, cult leader, or Grand Pooh-Bah. Sensei is also not a designation reserved for teachers of ikebana, karate, or a particular Japanese art. In fact, doctors, lawyers, and certain other professionals receive the same designation. It's possible to suggest that a doctor, for example, is teaching the Way of medicine, but this understanding of teaching differs from that in the West.

Likewise, the assumption occasionally encountered in the United States that you can only have one sensei is patently false. Considering the broad usage of the term in Japan, this is obviously a Western myth. It is true that sensei will caution that trying to seriously follow several Do forms is frequently a mistake. Owing to the time needed to seriously study such arts, even practicing more than one is likely to be too much for busy people. Little is gained from studying too many Do; they are all aspects of a single universal Way. The point of practicing one Do is to follow the Do, not to acquire a diversity of technical knowledge or intellectual entertainment. Teachers in Japan also warn that having more than one sensei *for a specific art* can be a problem. Attempting, for example, to practice two systems of flower arrangement simultaneously can lead to confusion, not to mention serious conflicts of interest. In this context, it is true that you can only have one sensei, but there are many sensei. So if you were to visit another teacher of flower arrangement, regardless of the system, and you failed to call him or her Sensei, you would be considered rude by that teacher and also by your own sensei.

Despite this, I've heard people in the United States refuse to call anyone Sensei other than their own teacher. Others sometimes even refuse to call their own teacher Sensei "until I'm sure I respect you enough to offer you that title." Beyond seeming bizarre to anyone who has studied a Way in Japan, these attitudes point to a misconception. Such people take their sensei and the title itself far too seriously. They are looking for a perfected being who will confer on them The Truth. This is fantasy. Skilled sensei of the Do point the way by passing on knowledge and creating an environment where students are able to arrive at a direct understanding through their own efforts and motivation.

At the other extreme, there are people who refuse to address their teacher as Sensei because "It's no big deal," "This is America," or because they simply can't be bothered. This attitude negates the

distinctive relationship that exists in the Do between sensei and student. Although you might have little or no contact with your sensei outside the dojo, your relationship with him or her is not an impersonal one, "just business." Because of the spiritual and life-altering nature of the Ways, sincere study under an equally serious sensei produces a unique and close alliance. I've rarely socialized with some of my sensei, but, owing to the penetrating and long-term characteristics of our relationship, my sensei frequently know me better than some of my close friends do. My teachers might not know my favorite food, owing to a certain distance often needed in such relationships, but they have nonetheless plumbed the depths of my personality in a manner seldom encountered. (As sensei to my students, I have seen the counterpart to this.) If, therefore, I were to address my teachers by their first name, it would serve only to negate the special nature of the connection in the Ways between sensei and pupil. As significant, it would also reveal the superficiality of my intent. (This relationship isn't always paralleled in Japan between, for instance, a lawyer and his client, although the lawyer would be addressed as Sensei.)

As in life in general, a correct balance is needed in studying the Ways. Our sensei isn't a god, but we also don't have the kind of relationship with her or him that we have with our buddies or our sixth-grade teacher. This is because we are not classroom students; we are not taking classes or attending school, and we are not trying to simply acquire technical knowledge. We are interested in seeing and embracing the Way.

### STUDENTS VERSUS DESHI

A student who pays for a college or evening class is, in a sense, a consumer. In Japanese, *seito* is the term used to refer to this kind of student. A "student" of a Do form in Japanese is called a deshi, a word that is perhaps closer in meaning to the old Western concept of an apprentice. Since the Way is not for sale, and a dojo isn't merely a business, deshi don't

actually take classes or pay tuition. (This is not to say that dojos don't charge a fee, they usually do, but the fee is more a donation to help sustain the operation of the dojo and support its sensei.)

Students *attend* a class and expect to be taught. Deshi *join* a dojo to discover and embrace a Way. Joining a dojo is closer to being adopted into a family than attending a class. Students seek information. Deshi make a commitment to undergoing transformation and gaining understanding. Students memorize facts; deshi learn through practice. To learn is to grow, and to grow is to change. Are we seeking actual growth, and thus change, or are we more interested in intellectual stimulation and/or the redecoration of what we already are? For the deshi, this is a key consideration.

When I first started to teach the Shin-shin-toitsu-do style of Japanese yoga, I noticed an interesting and ongoing occurrence. The principles of mind and body unification underlying this Way are universal, relating to a variety of people and subjects. Consequently, certain students would invariably enthuse that I was saying things they had always believed or introducing things they had always thought possible. Although such enthusiasm might seem harmless, it isn't always a good thing.

Some of these ardent participants dropped out as quickly as they had started, more quickly than many other people. I began to ask myself what might occur if I said something they haven't heard before, if they were challenged in what they believe or were required to consider real change. I discovered that such students are ardent if they feel I am confirming their beliefs or expectations and much less so when I surprise or challenge them. This phenomenon is not limited to my dojo.

Are we in fact looking for authentic growth, which is change, or just seeking confirmation of what we have already experienced? Do we seek escape from

the prison cell of stagnation or only a redecoration of that cell?

If we have reoccurring problems, these problems repeat because we are carrying previous conditioning, and *what we were*, from the past into the present. This affects *what we are*. To break this cycle requires a break with the past, a break with the known and a leap into the unknown. The dojo, ourselves, the sensei all exist in the present. Clinging to the past in the form of beliefs, biases—conditioning of any kind—transforms the present into another version of our past. Certainly exposure to new, radically different ideas can forever change *what we think*, but the Ways continuously change *what we are*.

The Do or Tao is the Way of the universe, a Way that always exists in the present, changing and not changing, from moment to moment. Embracing the Way, then, invites freedom in continuous change and never-ending growth. Can such a Way be discovered by a mind that is conditioned by its own past and thus locked in a loop, a loop that it can modify but not escape? Freedom lies in adaptability to circumstances, and adaptability exists in a mind that embraces the ever-changing moment, a moment that has never existed before and that is by its very nature unknown, and thus filled with infinite possibilities.

Accumulated knowledge is not understanding. Humankind has accumulated knowledge from the past for generations. Although useful, it has not deeply transformed humanity: war, racism, and poverty still exist. Understanding is realized from moment to moment. The moment is eternal, existing beyond time. The Way is likewise eternal and transcendent.

**About the Author:** *The Japanese Way of the Artist* unearths the ancient shared principles behind traditional Japanese fine arts, martial arts, folk crafts, and more. Written by H. E. Davey, it explains

**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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how these time-honored ideas can transform your life and the way you practice a classical Japanese art form.

H. E. Davey, SMAA Jujutsu Division Shihan and eighth dan, is one of the founding members of the SMAA. The editor of the *SMAA Journal*, he's also the author of several books on Japanese arts and culture, which you can read about at <https://www.senninfoundation.com/books-more>.

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Ann Arbor, MI 48106-6022

