

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

2020 SMAA DUES

Membership fees were due on January 1, 2020. 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:

SMAA HQ
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FACEBOOK PAGE



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

SMAA ONLINE PAYMENTS

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

SMAA YOUTUBE CHANNEL

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

MARTIN SENSEI NEWS

Are you interested in Japanese samurai swords? Then you'll love *The Japanese Sword* YouTube channel, now with English and Spanish subtitles, and featuring the SMAA's own Paul Martin Sensei: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNw8a00xAcejgbQuO_awUQ.

Martin Sensei is a member of the elite SMAA Board of Advisors, who has been living in Japan for many years. He is a Japanese sword specialist. A native of England, he's studied kendo, iaido, and several forms of ancient swordsmanship, including Ono Ha Itto Ryu, in Japan. But his main area of specialty is the analysis, history, and appraisal of the Japanese sword as an art object. He's one of the world's foremost scholars of the Japanese sword.

Martin Sensei has studied under top sword appraisal experts, sword smiths, and sword restorers in Japan for years, and this is to say little of his budo background. He maintains a fascinating website www.thejapanesesword.com and he's the author of *The Japanese Sword Guide to Nyusatsu Kantei*. He's been featured on the BBC, BBC Radio 4, the History Channel, Los Angeles JATV, and Japan's NHK TV. Martina Sensei has also been interviewed in *Tokyo Metropolis Magazine*, *The Daily Yomiuri newspaper*, and *Asahi Weekly in Japan*.



Martin Sensei, SMAA Senior Advisor

SUINO SENSEI NEWS

Nicklaus Suino Sensei was recently promoted to rokudan in the SMAA Jujutsu Division. He started studying Kodokan judo in 1968, his first introduction to traditional Japanese martial arts. In



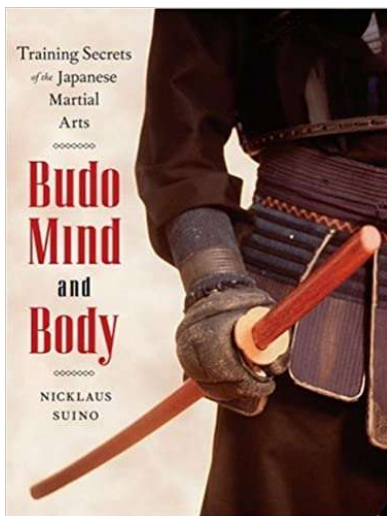
Suino Sensei has practiced Nihon jujutsu over 30 years.

1988, he traveled to Japan where he studied under Sato Shizuya Sensei (judan), the founder of a unique system of modern jujutsu. He studied under Sato Sensei until his death in 2011.

Suino Sensei, SMAA General Manager, is the Director of the Japanese Martial Arts Center in Michigan. His dojo offers instruction in judo, jujutsu, iaido, and karate-do. It regularly brings high-ranking teachers from Japan to offer seminars in a variety of martial arts.

AN EXCERPT FROM BUDO MIND AND BODY: TRAINING SECRETS FROM THE JAPANESE MARTIAL ARTS

By Nicklaus Suino



Training the Mind

Right place, right time, right frame of mind.

Karl W. Scott III, karate and aikido instructor, on the essentials for any important task

MENTAL DISCIPLINE

There is no way to attain mastery of any martial art without using the mind. Mind and body are inseparable, and even if the conscious mind is doing nothing other than thinking, "I really hate doing all these front kicks," the unconscious mind is moving the body through the motions and making adjustments to fit the circumstances. Every action has an effect on every thought and every thought affects every action. This is why it is so important to take active control of the mind in the dojo.

Because budo training can be so repetitious, many students daydream their way through practice. Do not allow yourself to fall into this trap. Daydreaming saps the body of energy and end up making practice even harder. Force yourself to concentrate on the techniques, constantly finding new aspects to work on. When you feel tired during practice, push yourself past the fatigue and train even harder. You will find that the more you commit to hard practice, the more energy you will have available for it.

Negative thoughts perpetuate themselves. Avoid complaining or even allowing the idea of complaint to arise. Do not disagree with your instructor during class. If you feel that something is wrong in your training, reflect on it fully and carefully outside the dojo. Do not bring it through the doors as a complaint, even internally, unless you are absolutely confident about your position. Even then, bring it up in private with your instructor, and tread lightly. If you have put the proper effort into seeking out good instruction in the first place, the chances are good that the teacher has sound reasons for doing things a certain way.

Be very reluctant to criticize anyone or anything in the dojo, except yourself. This approach is good for practical reasons, since it allows things to run smoothly, but there is an even more important reason for it. It helps to turn your critical focus inward, forcing you to accommodate yourself to circumstances. In daily training, you will be thinking about how you can improve, so eventually you will

get better. In a fighting situation, you will adapt to the attack, giving yourself a better chance of avoiding it and countering.

This last point is one reason why it is so dangerous to practice martial arts using weak, choreographed attacks. Removing too much vigor from the attacker's role trains us to be weak. We may begin to focus on the fact that our partners are not attacking us "right," so we cannot execute our techniques. This is dangerous thinking; after all, it is ridiculous to imagine a real attacker stopping to adjust his grab so that we can easily release our arm and throw him. When someone tries to hurt or kill us, we must use any means available to escape or defend ourselves, whether they fall into the cannon of "correct" technique or not.

None of this means that we ought to give up independent thinking because we are involved in martial arts. Budo training can be a tool to help us become more incisive thinkers, but there is a time and place for the exchange of ideas, whereas the dojo is meant to be a place for practice of ideas disseminated mainly by the teacher. Experience has shown that the best martial artists are those who understand this distinction and put it into practice.

EVERY ACTION BECOMES A HABIT

Whether you practice your kata correctly tomorrow or just go through the motions, you will have spent the same amount of time in the dojo. In the first case, you will have moved one step closer to mastery of the kata, but in the second case, even though you have gotten a little exercise, you will have actually moved your training backwards. This is because, in the dojo, every action becomes a habit.

Building on a good habit is much easier than overcoming a bad one. It is said that if you practice a skill incorrectly one thousand times, you will need two thousand correct repetitions to learn it properly. This may be a slight exaggeration, but experience

shows that most students who do not learn to monitor themselves and focus on practicing correct technique never get very good. If your training is worth doing, then it is worth doing right, and you will get much more satisfaction from it if you can see progress as a result of your hard work. The sooner you decide to make every training session better than the one before it, the sooner you will begin to make real progress.

DEEPEN YOUR UNDERSTANDING

All techniques can be understood in a variety of ways. Kata can be studied from the point of view of physical movement, the principles by which the techniques work, timing, *bunkai* (the fighting application of the technique), history, and so on. A throwing technique may work according to a single specific principle, but you must also learn what differences will result from applying it at different angles or with different timing, how to defend against any variation, and even who invented the technique, and when and why, and the evolution it has undergone over time. The more you know about the technique, the better you will eventually perform it.

There are natural stages in the life of a martial artist, but it takes effort to move from one to the next. Time in practice is only one factor; far more important are intensity of practice and constant striving to know more about your art. If you work hard and are lucky, you will move from beginner to intermediate, and eventually to advanced student. To become a teacher is easy—you just start offering lessons—but to be a good teacher means that you must have a very deep understanding of the art.

Mastery of a martial art means that the technique and person are not separate. The art grows out of the artist, and the artist is a product of a lifetime's immersion in the art. It is popular in some circles to imagine that any person with a pure heart who is relaxed enough will perform perfectly, but this is wishful thinking. Only serious hard work with the body and mind will lead to mastery.

OBSERVATION

Although we are constantly looking at things, most of us do not see clearly. We have ears, but do not always hear correctly. We need to be taught how to observe. This becomes abundantly clear when a new student begins practice in the dojo. Shown a simple stance or hand movement, the new student will almost always leave out an essential part when executing it. After the second or third explanation or demonstration, the student will come much closer to adhering to the desired checkpoints. An advanced student, on the other hand, will do it almost right the first time, even if he or she has not studied the same martial art before. Novice students also have difficulty facing attackers in the dojo. They often focus on the wrong aspects of the attack and end up getting hit or kicked. After a longer period of training, of course, they do much better.

You can greatly improve your ability in both solo practice and in sparring or self-defense by teaching yourself to observe clearly. In budo, this means not only looking and listening carefully, but also making sure your body is following instructions. When an instructor tells you to pull your shoulders down, do more than nod your head. Consciously attempt to pull your shoulders down. If you are not sure how “down” should feel, raise them to see what that is like, then pull them down again. This sounds like common sense, but almost every instructor can tell you about students who listen to instructions, shout, “*Hai!*” (Right!), and then fail to do what has been asked of them.

During regular training, keep your eyes open. If the technique of a student near you seems weak, look carefully to see what he or she is doing wrong. You may feel satisfied if you simply recognize the problem, but to complete the learning process, mentally check yourself to make sure that you are not making the same mistake. Go further and study the stance and movements of your instructor. Rather than waiting for your technique to be corrected, consciously try to duplicate the teacher's

movements, or those of senior students who are executing the technique properly. If you fail, it will then be because you either do not understand fully or are simply not capable of performing at the same level, but at least it will not be because you made no effort.

In time, observation and self-correction will become reflexive, and your learning process will accelerate. Another benefit of this sort of observation is that you will become skilled at judging people's ability simply by looking at them. Many great teachers can make accurate guesses about a student's past training and rank by watching them perform a single technique. There is no great mystery in this—it simply takes a long time to learn to do it. It comes from being aware of many people's strengths and weaknesses and observing how they develop during training.

Strong powers of observation will make you far better in the ring or when defending yourself. Besides knowing the telltale signs that allow you to predict certain attacks, you will also be able to discern the weaknesses of opponents as soon as they make their initial moves. If you learn both to predict the attacks of opponents and to exploit their weaknesses, you will succeed far more often in competition.

TWO-SIDED MIND

Our goal in martial arts training is to learn skills that we can apply to all areas of our lives. Still, the outside world places different demands on us than does the dojo. Life as a martial artist will be much more rewarding if you can learn to separate these two worlds in your mind. In the dojo, you are expected to work hard, obey the teacher, and be respectful to seniors. Your opinion is not particularly valued; only the instructor's opinion counts. When you are offered advice, you do not agree or disagree, you simply say, “*Hai!*” You call your seniors *sempai* and the head teacher *sensei*, yet they call you by your first name. Whatever your economic or social standing outside the school,

where you stand in the dojo depends on how long you have been there and how hard you have worked. If you have a sensitive or artistic nature, you are expected to suppress it during training. Pain, unless caused by serious disease or injury, is supposed to be ignored.

Outside, your opinion counts. There are situations in which it is impolite or improper to express yourself, but in most cases your friends value your ideas. If others express themselves and you disagree, you feel free to explain how and why. Economic status has a large bearing on how you interact with others. At the same time, you are free to express your creative and sensitive side. Pain is something to be sympathized with, talked over, and treated.

Those who insist upon behaving as if they were in the outside world when they are in the dojo are just as foolish and misguided as those who insist that others follow dojo regulations in their outside lives. The correct principle to follow is to behave in a manner appropriate to the circumstances, neither overly familiar and unrestrained in the school nor sanctimonious and rigid at home. New students are most likely to cause awkwardness by failing to modify their conduct to accord with their locations.

Train hard when training, relax fully when taking time off. Jump to follow rules in the dojo, but don't be offended by the casual behavior of your seniors in their time off. Be careful not to treat a love relationship like a training relationship, since the rules are much clearer in the latter. Success in both the dojo and the outside world comes through hard work and clarity of purpose, although many of the rules and methods are different. Be sure to understand each environment and behave accordingly.

NO-MIND

There is a state of being that is the goal of Zen training, called "no-mind." Our goal in martial arts

is similar to this. We strive to become so proficient at our techniques that they happen without our conscious bidding, manifesting themselves at the right time, correctly executed, and achieving proper results. Many students believe that they must consciously suppress their intellect in order to reach this state, but in martial arts our approach is different. We try to reach a state of no-mind by forgetting about trying to attain it. As in every area of budo, the key to understanding no-mind is hard training.

By throwing yourself into your training, you become more and more skilled at your art. Techniques that were difficult at first become easier, then more difficult again as you find new aspects to practice. With time, an upward spiral of learning takes place. Eventually, some techniques become reflexive. If you practice enough, there will be occasions during which you will be attacked when you are not expecting it, and your body will act out its trained response. Your aim in training should be to develop all your techniques to this level, which is a lifetime's work.

Some students misapprehend the idea of no-mind in a way that results in their becoming lazy. They choose to adopt a state of mental passivity, thinking that this is somehow close to the desired condition. As with most excuses to avoid hard work, this takes the student away from good technique and incisive thinking, making it harder to excel rather than easier. Stop yourself from being lazy in training, mentally and physically, as soon as possible. If we assume that you are in the dojo because you want to be good at budo, doesn't it make sense to work for progress rather than to stagnate?

About the Author: Nicklaus Suino Sensei is one of the most active teachers in the SMAA. An author of several budo books, he is also the Director of the SMAA Judo Division and one of the Directors of the SMAA Iaido Division. He has trained extensively in budo, in both the USA and Japan, since childhood.

PANDEMIC BUDO

By H. E. Davey

Since the last issue of this journal, the world has been radically changed by the coronavirus. As I'm writing this, my dojo is closed, along with many businesses and restaurants in the USA. Schools are shut down, and numerous cities have implemented curfews. We're encouraged to "shelter in place," and more Americans have died from COVID-19 in under three months than during the nearly 20 years of the Vietnam war. In California we're essentially in a lockdown situation, resulting in a number of my friends becoming bored, angry, and anxious. And they sometimes wonder why I don't seem similarly worn down, irritated, and fearful. "You appear the same as usual."

I am.

Of course, my wife and I are spending more time at home, we're not meeting with friends or traveling, groceries are delivered, and we're going through a bunch of hand sanitizer. Obviously, my life has changed, and I'm following the advice of medical professionals, who know more about epidemiology than me. But I feel largely the same as usual. Like my friends, you might wonder why.

A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

I grew up studying traditional Japanese martial arts: first jujutsu, then judo, and later aikido. My father had studied in Japan after WWII, and from the age of five, he taught me jujutsu using an old-style Japanese framework. He later encouraged me to study with his friends, many of whom were high-ranking teachers of various budo, including Richard Yamamoto Sensei (Kodokan judo shichidan and SMAA Senior Advisor), Fukuda Keiko Sensei (Kodokan judo judan), Maruyama Koretoshi Sensei (founder of Yuishinkai aikido and kudan), and others.

My dad and my various teachers, most of whom were of Japanese descent, urged me to use martial

arts training as a pathway to developing a positive attitude, something I didn't have much of. Allied with this attitude of optimism was training to develop creativity, adaptability, and self-sufficiency. I really had no choice but to try to cultivate these qualities, because success in the varied budo I studied would have been impossible without them.

And through fairly hard training, I gradually realized that many experiences in the dojo could be viewed in both a positive and negative way. Yes, training was hard, and there was always the possibility of injury. But equally real was the possibility of technical improvement, new discoveries, and personal growth.

Life always displays light and shadow. Each is as real as the other, but some people only focus on the shadow. Partly as the result of over 50 years of budo, I don't.

Without trying to minimize the global loss of life taking place, I'm also aware of how good I have it in many ways right now. I see the sunlight as well as the shadow. You can, too.

I grew up in a small, old house. I'm actually living better than my parents, and my home isn't such a bad place to be quarantined. Yet I read about people living in actual mansions, who are "about to go out of my mind from being stuck in the house." They're failing to see the light in their situation, inaccurately perceiving only shadow, and I'm grateful to have a nice home to spend time in (even if it isn't a mansion).

Gratitude gives birth to positivity. Gratefulness is cultivated by studying classical budo correctly and part of the reason we bow and verbally thank our training partners and teachers in every class.

When I was growing up, I had a radio, turntable, and a small black and white television. That's it. (I had a

library card as well, but that wouldn't do me much good today during lockdown.) The TV got three channels, plus public television, and it went off the air at night.

While I'm inconvenienced by the quarantine like everyone else, I'm also thankful to be in the midst of a global pandemic in the 21st century instead of 40 or 50 years ago. Today, I have high-definition cable TV, with more channels than I can remember, available 24/7. I have movies on-demand, Netflix, and more, accessible from multiple devices. The library may be closed, but I can find free books online and order almost anything I want from Amazon, providing we have enough money available. Yet some folks with much more than me are nevertheless bored and depressed, seeing only the shade.

Sure, I'd like to hang out with friends and see my students at the dojo. But decades ago, I would have been far more isolated than today, when my only means of communication were handwritten letters and a telephone tied to a landline. What's more, the long distance and international rates were prohibitively expensive.

Today, I can cheaply call friends day or night, weekday or weekend. I can actually see them on Facetime, Skype, and a bunch of other ways, too. I've got Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and a ton of free social media to help me stay in touch via smartphone, tablet, and laptop. We don't need to feel completely isolated unless we choose to only concentrate on what's missing instead of what we have.

In studying martial arts in the Japanese tradition, I learned that when we see only problems, creativity is stifled. A positive attitude releases the imagination.

And so, I've been able to find new things to do during quarantine and new ways of doing old things.

I haven't simply given up. And martial arts training is one of the things in my life that helped me to develop perseverance and adaptability.

Consequently, when I saw the direction the pandemic was heading in, with input from my assistant instructors, I shut down classes at my nonprofit dojo even before I was required to by the government. The Sennin Foundation Center for Japanese Cultural Arts offers classes in Japanese yoga, healing arts, martial arts, and fine arts. None of these disciplines could be taught in the conventional way, then or now.

Although I'd never heard of Zoom video conferencing before, I created online classes in Japanese yoga and healing arts for everyone in my dojo. Japanese calligraphy and ink painting instruction is being handled by correspondence course. Martial arts training is more difficult, but not impossible.

Saigo Ryu, like many classical Japanese martial arts, doesn't have much in the way of single person kata. Most kata require another person to act as the opponent, something not everyone can accomplish at home during quarantine. Even if they do, they may not have mats and sufficient room to practice jujutsu throws. We do have a limited number of solo exercises for developing evasive body movement and other skills, but most adult students in my dojo are familiar enough with them that they can practice on their own without Zoom instruction. Since Saigo Ryu is a sogo bujutsu, we also have training with the sword, staff, spear, and other weapons. Some of this can be done alone. Unfortunately, I can't teach the use of these weapons easily using Zoom due to lack of room in my house. Attempting to use Zoom outdoors is easier said than done, in that wind can interfere with microphone quality among other issues. So, martial arts training for my adult students is something they're working on by themselves, although I am offering a combined Japanese yoga and Saigo Ryu class for children using Zoom, mostly focusing on solo movement drills and



The author teaching Saigo Ryu

exercises for evading an attack using body movement (tai sabaki).

Regardless, not one student dropped out, and our group was one of the first in the San Francisco area to offer live yoga classes online after the outbreak of the coronavirus. We've also created two new ways for members to pay from home using PayPal and Venmo.

As the result, I'm able to continue teaching six days per week, while I see and chat with my students after every class. I'm far from isolated nor has our dojo gone out of business (unlike too many small businesses in the USA). And all of this is the outcome of inventiveness and positiveness, qualities that budo training helped me to develop.

Want another example? My friend and I have hosted a monthly car and motorcycle show for over five years. Typically, anywhere from 100 to 250 vehicles show up. It's free for everyone and fun for me, since I like anything with an engine, and I've made a lot of friends through this event. But it can't take place right now due to social distancing requirements.

Car culture is huge in California, and there are loads of events like ours. They're all shut down, with no certainty as to when they can start up again. Most of the organizers have given up and are waiting for

something to change. But I can see shadow and light, so I created an online car and motorcycle show at our existing Facebook page. It took place at the usual time and on the standard date, except instead of hanging out in a parking lot, we posted photos and videos of our vehicles, while we chatted with each other online. It was a success and another meetup is scheduled to happen soon. Anyone could do something similar but few have, unable thus far to find a new way of doing an old thing.

I might not have either if it weren't for the influence of martial arts training, a key aspect of which is the principle of adaptability. The idea is that the body isn't in a fixed state; if we introduce a new stimulus that requires additional physical strength or flexibility, over time the body will adapt and be positively changed by it. Our minds are also capable of adaptability, and despite what was once believed, the brain can change and adjust even when we're of advanced age. Google "neuroplasticity" and you can learn about this.

Yet adaptability is impossible if we believe we're stuck, we can't change, or that our fate is somehow sealed. Little in life is truly a matter of fate; with a positive attitude and imagination we can shape our destiny in countless ways. But not everyone knows how to realize a positive mind and unleash the power of imagination. Neither did I as a teenager, but my various sensei introduced me to principles and a worldview that helped me do just that, eventually aiding me in finding ways to keep the Sennin Foundation Center for Japanese Cultural Arts afloat during this pandemic.

ENGAGED ENTERTAINMENT

Having read the above, perhaps you can understand why I'm not much different despite being locked down. The power of gratitude, positivity, and imagination is real, but there's still more going on.

Budo is rooted in self-sufficiency. It doesn't matter how nice your house is, how much money you have,

how much cool stuff you own, and if you are famous or not, none of this will help you in facing an opponent in the dojo. And it won't help you to face yourself either.

Each of us has to do that for ourselves. In doing so, we discover self-sufficiency that can be applied in daily life. And that ties into how we entertain ourselves.

Depending on things outside ourselves for happiness is problematic, in that many material things are not dependable. They come and go; they can easily be lost, something this pandemic has clearly shown. It's the reason some of my friends aren't too happy lately.

They are depending on undependable stuff outside themselves to keep them happy. As a result, their "happiness" is fragile. Deprived of fancy restaurants, movie theaters, live concerts, and endless other things, they descend into boredom, anger, and anxiety. Whereas I also enjoy all of that, but I've never believed it would result in any sort of final happiness. I've tried to appreciate it for what it is without becoming fixated on it. Although I don't have access to certain things now due to the pandemic, I don't ultimately need that stuff, and that makes being locked down much easier for me.

Not being overly dependent on materialism for moments of pleasure ties into a sense of self-sufficiency, the idea that we can count on ourselves to entertain ourselves. It encourages simplicity in life, and while exotic vacations would probably be fun, I'm just as happy to go for a drive in the mountains in my vintage sports car. I was doing that before the pandemic and I'm still doing it now. Social distancing works pretty well at high speed in an automobile. So does sitting alone in my home dojo/art studio with a brush and ink. Painting and creating Japanese calligraphic art is something I was doing before the virus hit, and I continue enjoying it now. It goes without saying that I'm also still

practicing at least parts of the martial art I teach. It's especially helpful at this time. (More on that later.)

Living during lockdown is easier for me because, due to the influence of budo, I've always been attracted to activities that weren't passive entertainment. But entertainment is becoming more passive each year, owing in part to advances in technology; in other words, we're relying on other people and technology to take care of us and amuse us. When we're separated from people, airline travel, movie theaters, concerts, restaurants, sporting events, and the like, we may not know what to do with ourselves. In short, we've become victims of an over reliance on passive forms of amusement.

I've spent my life doing things that encourage an active engagement as entertainment. Riding bicycles and motorcycles, working on and driving cars, creating art, practicing traditional Japanese martial arts, writing articles and books, and practicing Japanese yoga are all fun, but they're far from inert. I'm not just sitting back staring at a screen most of the time, and I hope you're not either. Even if you are, now is a perfect time to find things to do that are less passive. Doing so drives home the point that you are part and parcel of creating your own fun, which in turn ties into a sense of self-sufficiency, a central component in studying traditional Japanese martial arts.

Avoiding over reliance on others, technology, and material things for entertainment has made it easier for me to find things to do at home and away from people. Moreover, it has kept me mentally engaged, something that's scientifically proven to be good for brain functionality as I age, and something that more passive hobbies don't accomplish.

And sure, some of what I enjoy does involve material things: cars, brushes, swords, and the like. What I'm explaining isn't a diatribe against material possessions and technology. Even our ancient ancestors rubbed two sticks together to make fire, a

primitive form of technology. The point is that I've avoided the mistaken belief that these things produce happiness and the inherent psychological attachment that goes along with that: the idea that we must rely on something outside ourselves to be happy. Budo helped me to learn self-sufficiency, which enables me to rely on myself for entertainment. It's also decidedly "low-tech," emphasizing that simplicity can be both entertaining and meaningful.

TANDOKU RENSHU

Tandoku renshu is solo training. If you practice karate-do, iaido, or kyudo, you were already engaging in tandoku renshu even before the pandemic hit. These martial arts (and some others) place a fair amount of emphasis on solo kata, so you should be able to find plenty to practice on your own. You can probably teach it to your students, to some degree, using online video conferencing as well.

Judo, jujutsu, aikido, sumo, kendo, and other martial arts often require an opponent to train with. Yet, even these arts usually have at least certain aspects that you can practice alone. I hope you'll find new, creative ways of doing this instead of suspending your training.

Judo students can maintain physical conditioning with ukemi (falling) practice. So can people studying jujutsu and aikido. In my opinion, this is more fun than push-ups and sit-ups. If you have no mats, you can do ukemi in your backyard on grass. And if you're studying classical judo like we advocate in the SMAA, you can practice Seiryoku Zen'yo Kokumin Taiiku no Kata (精力善用国民体育の形, "Maximum Efficiency National Physical Education Kata") alone. This kata was created by Kano Jigoro Sensei, and it combines striking and kicking techniques with callisthenic-type exercises for health and self-defense. I practiced this solo kata when I was young with Fukuda Keiko Sensei, who learned it from Kano Sensei, but I realize many judoka have unfortunately

never studied it due to the common contemporary emphasis on sport judo. (You can see this kata here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbAf6vwyE48>.)

Nevertheless, judoka can still run-through numerous techniques with an imaginary opponent, "shadow boxing" style. (The same can be said for people practicing jujutsu and aikido.) As a child and teenager doing judo, I even got one of my dad's old jackets, put it on a coat hanger, and hung it up. I grabbed the sleeve and lapel and did uchikomi practice in that way. (Uchikomi is a kind of repetition training. The term is borrowed from kendo and is used in judo to refer to the repetitive practice of a throwing action up to the point where the throw would be completed. The simulation stops at that stage.) I also wrapped the belt from my gi around a tree in the backyard, grabbed the two ends, and practiced uchikomi that way.

Aikido, in at least some styles, has the Aiki Taiso, or "Aiki Exercises," which are practiced without a partner. There are multiple Aiki Taiso, ranging from exercises for stretching and conditioning your wrists (like Nikyo and Kote Gaeshi) to movements resembling the solo execution of techniques like Shomen Uchi Ikkyo. These are useful forms of at home training, and some versions of aikido contain solo kata for the wooden sword and four-foot staff. You might have to go outside to work on this, but such kata can help you continue to train in aikido.

Kendo is often practiced using shinai, split bamboo swords, directed at another similarly armed opponent wearing armor. But footwork drills can be practiced alone. The same can be said for suburi (like joge-buri), which involves a variety of drills for swinging the sword alone. With a bit of creativity and adaptability, kendo students can also find ways to train and entertain themselves during lockdown.

It's hard to generalize about Nihon jujutsu, since jujutsu is a relatively generic term for predominantly unarmed grappling. It really depends on the system of Nihon jujutsu, and considerable differences can

be seen between ancient forms of jujutsu. Even the degree to which these arts are unarmed varies from school to school, and while some systems might have solo exercises in their curriculum, others do not.

This is perhaps even more true for other forms of koryu bujutsu. The koryu vary widely in terms of what they do and do not practice. That said, with enough motivation and inventiveness, it's almost always possible to train alone in some way.

As for my own practice, Saigo Ryu has some solo exercises for body movement and evasion. More advanced students study the sword, staff, spear, iron fan, and other weapons, some of which have solo kata. And any of the jujutsu kata can be done with an imaginary opponent. I'm trying to work on all of this, to the best of my ability, from home.

None of this requires money or all that much more than yourself. You can do it outside wearing a mask; you can do it quarantining in your apartment. It involves attitude as much as activity, neither of which need be limited by this pandemic.

JIKISHIN KORE DOJO

Article and Japanese Calligraphy

By H. E. Davey

The phrase "jikishin kore dojo (nari)" can often be found on hanging scrolls in the alcoves of rooms used for Japan's ancient tea ceremony. Similar scrolls can be found in various budo dojo in Japan, including the famous Yuhikan dojo dedicated to kendo and Yagyū Shinkage Ryu swordsmanship. And the SMAA's own Dave Lowry devoted a chapter to this saying in his important book *Moving Toward Stillness: Lessons in Daily Life from the Martial Ways of Japan*.

It is also one of the main teachings of Ranseki Shō Juku shodō, the school of Japanese calligraphic art that I inherited from its founder Kobara Ranseki Sensei. It's a valuable philosophy that followers of

Our budo practice is not restricted by circumstances; it isn't limited to being in a group, in a specific building called a dojo (道場), the "place of the Way." The true place of the Way lies within us. With the right mindset, anywhere becomes a dojo for us to practice in.

So yeah, whatever happiness I had before the pandemic I still have now. I'm still engaging in budo training, with a few adjustments. I still teach regularly, but it's currently online.

I'm not getting to do as much as before, go as many places, or eat in favorite restaurants. However, I can see light as much as shadow, so I'm grateful for where I live and what I have. That other stuff doesn't matter much to me.

I've never needed extravagant forms of passive amusement, so I'm actively entertaining myself largely as I always have. Plus, I've got the motivation and imagination to find new ways to do old things. Understanding the value of self-sufficiency, a positive attitude, and creativity, I've adapted. You can, too. And budo can help you do it.

Japanese calligraphy, tea ceremony, martial arts, and Zen have all found to be significant in their practice and lives.

And it's such a simple phrase. Just five characters. Too bad its meaning isn't always well understood.

JIKI (直)

Jiki can be defined in many ways, ranging from "direct" to "honest" to "straightforward." "Correct," "immediate," "ordinary," and even "cheerful" are also implied by the character jiki, which can also be pronounced choku, nao, sugu na, or tada. A chokuto is a straight sword, a jiki deshi is personal disciple,



Jikishin Kore Dojo

while jikiden is the direct transmission of mysteries and skills. All of these words are not uncommon in budo dojo in Japan. But when the character shin is added, the meaning becomes even more multilayered.

SHIN (心)

Shin or kokoro equals “mind,” “heart,” or “spirit” in Japanese. Jikishin can then be defined as a “direct mind” or a “straightforward spirit.” An “honest mind” would not be an unsuitable definition, and “correctness of mind” makes sense as well. An “ordinary mind” has more meaning that you might

imagine; when the gist of the phrase is fully embodied, we end up with a “cheerful mind.” Why so ambiguous? Well, according to some traditions the phrase is favored in Zen Buddhism, a meditative discipline well known for its various metaphysical questions (koan) and assorted conundrums designed to help its adherents go beyond limiting intellectual entanglements. But more on Buddhism later.

KORE (是)

Kore is the easiest character to work with here. It just means “this.”

DO (道)

Do or michi amounts to “the Way” in a spiritual sense and a “road” or “path” in everyday usage. It is the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese Tao, and I devoted a large portion of my books *Living the Japanese Arts & Ways* and *The Japanese Way of the Artist* to this important concept that lies at the heart of every Japanese art from budo to shodo (calligraphy) to chado (tea ceremony). Using this character in these names indicates that an activity has surpassed its utilitarian purpose and been raised to the level of art, that its students are practicing it as a Way of life. In sum, a Do is an art that allows us to understand the ultimate nature of the whole of life by closely examining ourselves through a singular activity of life: to arrive at the universal through studying the particular.

Many artistic principles and mental states are universal to all Japanese Ways. One of the most meaningful and fundamental is the concept of mind and body coordination. Although few of us are required to use a calligraphy brush, Japanese sword, or tea ceremony utensils in daily life, learning how to use them skillfully can enhance our mental and physical health. Moreover, skill in these arts comes from integrating the mind and body. The important relationship between the mind and body and how to

achieve mind–body harmony is also a principal theme of these Do forms.

In Japanese calligraphy, teachers speak of a “unity of mind and brush” and declare that “if the mind is correct, the brush is correct.” In Japanese swordsmanship (kenjutsu), it’s customary to speak of a unity of mind, body, and sword. Mind and body coordination can be thought of as self–harmony. This integration is necessarily one of the mind and body in action, a central element for mastering any classical Japanese Way.

Jo (場)

Jo simply equals “place,” but the word dojo is something more. Dojo is a term originally used for an area in a Buddhist temple employed for meditation. A dojo is “a place of the Way.” The original Sanskrit term is bodhimandala, meaning “the place of enlightenment.” The word for “school” in Japanese is gakko. Don’t mistake a martial arts dojo for a school, studio, or gym. Not only are there different words for these places in Japan, they have a very different purpose from a dojo. And 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 my 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. Note that this directness

of experience also ties into the word jikishin, which you now realize can be translated as “direct mind.”

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER WITH ENLIGHTENMENT

We now have translations of these individual characters, but their interpretation requires a bit more effort. Maybe looking at the origins of this ancient axiom will be helpful.

According to some teachings, this phrase comes from a Buddhist tale about Yuima Koji, one of the most famous enlightened laymen in the religion’s history. He was named Vimalakirti, but he is known as Yuima or Yuima Koji in Japan. Yuima Koji, a well–heeled Indian sought solace in Buddhism and was regarded in China as a model of virtue. His reputation stemmed from the balance he made between disentanglement with worldly attachments and family responsibility, an attribute esteemed there.

One day a monk in training searching for a worthy teacher entered a town and just happened to come across Yuima Koji by the side of the road. The monk engaged him in conversation and asked where he was coming from. Yuima Koji explained, “I just came from the dojo.” Surprised, the monk exclaimed, “A dojo?! Where is this dojo?” Yuima Koji replied, “Jikishin kore dojo.”

The basic idea is that the dojo is not really a physical location or a building. The Way can be found and practiced anywhere . . . even the busy street where Yuima Koji was standing. It’s real location is the mind, and it is the mind that is the true “place of the Way.” But it seems that not everybody’s mind perceives the Way of the universe, which is ultimately the meaning of the word Do or Tao.

We need to realize jikishin to fully grasp this saying. Jikishin is the mind that has gone beyond lies or delusions, the mind that is “honest” (sugu na) in the sense that it doesn’t lie to itself. It is this “direct mind” that sees life as it actually is via direct

experience, and it is this mind that perceives the Way everywhere and in everything.

It is an “ordinary mind” in the sense that the Way is genuinely found and practiced in daily life. We live in a relative world, a place of impermanence, but this world emerges from an absolute universe that is both infinite and eternal. The absolute nature of things is discovered in our everyday, ordinary world and this realm is both commonplace and sacred.

When the mind senses the Way in everything, it is in touch with a reality that transcends the transient, touching the eternal absolute nature of life. This results in a “cheerful mind.”

WHERE DO YOU PRACTICE BUDO?

Training in any of the Do, or Ways—including budo—should benefit our lives. The lessons we learn in the dojo have little meaning if they don’t translate into real world benefits. By that, I don’t mean something directly related to self-defense.

Of course, being able to protect yourself comes in handy, but most intelligent people don’t have to engage in combat on any regular basis in life. If this is the extent of our “real world benefits,” we are selling budo (and ourselves) short. Real budo training, studied under a real sensei, produces real benefits in the real world. The lessons of calmness in action, concentration, willpower, and perseverance that we discover in the dojo should be carried into everyday existence where they can be practiced and perfected in our home, in business, in sports, and most any other aspect of life. In this context, our true dojo is our lives, and that’s where our most valuable practice will take place. Budoka can—and should—train themselves everywhere.

My late friend, Walter Todd Sensei, judo eighth dan, was one of the founding members of the SMAA. He studied judo in Japan right after World War II, where he met my late father, who was also practicing

martial arts in Japan. Todd Sensei was just starting out in judo at the Kodokan, and he later took up karate-do under Otsuka Hironori Sensei, tenth dan and the founder of Wado Ryu. My dad had already been studying judo and various forms of Nihon jujutsu for a long time, starting back in 1926.

Todd Sensei trained under legendary judo teachers, including Mifune Kyuzo Sensei, who he was particularly close to. Mifune Sensei, tenth dan, related this story to Mr. Todd, who passed it on to me.

It seems that Kano Jigoro Sensei, the founder of judo, once asked a Japanese businessman to deliver a lecture at the Kodokan. He assembled all of the yudansha (people with black belts) in the dojo, and they listened to Kano Sensei’s friend talk. Trouble was, they didn’t seem very interested in what he had to say about how to get ahead in the world. Kano Sensei was less than pleased.

After the man left, the assembled students got another lecture, this time from the founder of judo himself. Kano Sensei asked them why they looked so bored. One man replied that they had come to learn judo not listen to businessmen talk about life. Kano Sensei told him that the man that just left was a master of judo. Incredulous, the student asked why he had never seen him in a gi or in the dojo.

Kano Sensei explained that his daily life was his dojo, and he had never studied any of the throwing or grappling techniques of judo. He had, however, created a very successful business from nothing. He used this business to not only care for his family, but also to help his employees to become more successful in life and care of their families. What’s more, he returned a large percentage of his profits to society, helping those less fortunate than himself. He did all of this in an effective and well-organized manner that left him plenty of time to pursue hobbies and enjoy his life. He didn’t work 24 hours a day, but he accomplished more than most.

This man, Kano Sensei explained, was the perfect embodiment of the two fundamental principles of judo:

- Seiryoku Zen'yo ("Maximum efficiency with minimum effort")
- Jita Kyoei ("Mutual welfare and benefit")

It was through his understanding of maximum efficiency that he was able to effectively build a flourishing business and positively manage his time. He used his company, wealth, and success to help not only himself but also others. This, in turn, helped him even more. And for the creator of judo, *this was judo at its highest level.*

Kano Sensei lectured that budo was for our lives, not merely for combat, and the real dojo has no walls. It is everywhere, and the "correct mind"—jikishin—

perceives this fact. The dojo lies within the mind that we use directly in ordinary life, and this is where the Way is found and practiced. With this direct mind, the Way can be followed far and wide, every place can be our dojo, and our very lives can be used to train the mind. The mind is the place to practice.

Where do you practice budo? Jikishin kore dojo.

About the Author: H. E. Davey, Shihan and hachidan, is a Director for the SMAA Jujutsu Division. He is also one of the founding members of the SMAA. He's practiced budo for over 50 years in Japan and the USA. He also studied Japanese calligraphic art for 35 years, 20 years of which were under the late Kobara Ranseki Sensei. His art has received multiple awards at the International Japanese Calligraphy Exhibition in Tokyo. His latest book is *Secrets of the Brush: Life Lessons from the Art of Japanese Calligraphy.*

**Shudokan Martial Arts
Association**

PO Box 6022
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-6022

Phone:

1-734-645-6441

E-Mail:

shudokan@smaa-hq.com

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

<http://smaa-hq.com>

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

