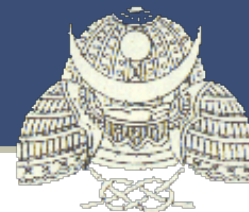


SMAA JOURNAL



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<http://smaa-hq.com/> • shudokan@smaa-hq.com • 1-734-645-6441

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2021 SMAA DUES

Membership fees were due on January 1, 2021. Please be sure to pay your SMAA dues on time. You can either send a check to our headquarters or pay online at <https://www.smaa-hq.com/payments>. We accept Visa, MasterCard, and PayPal. This is a quick and safe way to make your annual SMAA membership payment.

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

DONATIONS & TAX DEDUCTIONS

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

E-MAIL

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

OBJECTIVES OF THE SMAA

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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修道館武道会

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

SMAA PATCHES

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



Our patches were produced using state of the art digitizing and ultra-modern technology to create an accurate and attractive embroidered emblem. They feature tight stitches, sharp detail, clean lettering, and top quality craftsmanship. There's no jagged stitching, but we've still got plenty of stitches so that the background doesn't show through.

The patch should be worn on the left side of your gi jacket near your heart. SMAA policy mandates only one patch per uniform to maintain the sense of dignity associated with traditional budo.

These new patches are a great way to show your respect and enthusiasm for our group; we hope all of our members will order at least one. *And the best part is the patches are only \$5.00 (US) each!* (E-mail shudokan@smaa-hq.com about special shipping for international orders.)

To order, go to the "Payments" section of www.smaa-hq.com or send a check or money order made out to "SMAA" to:

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FACEBOOK PAGE



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

SMAA ONLINE PAYMENTS

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

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_XCH8RkIV8IiNZoXI93WI79BLe1NZ

NEW SMAA ONLINE LIBRARY

We're always trying to offer more benefits to go along with your SMAA membership. So, be sure to drop by www.smaa-hq.com and check out the new SMAA Online Library. We're in the process of gradually adding back issues of the *SMAA Journal* to our website.

OTSUKA SOKE NEWS

In May 2020, Otsuka Yasuyuki Soke lead his annual Meifu Shinkage Ryu Spring Training Camp. Because of the pandemic, attendance was smaller than in the past, and participants needed to wear masks, but a



Otsuka Soke



Suino Sensei

great time was had by all. It was an excellent opportunity for students to learn the use of ancient Japanese weapons from a member of the SMAA Board of Advisors, and the current headmaster of this martial system.

Meifu Shinkage Ryu contains specialized techniques that can be traced to the ancient bushi. Many of the weapon skills taught in Meifu Shinkage Ryu were once secret techniques, which were only taught to advanced students of feudal era schools like Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto Ryu.

Meifu Shinkage ryu teaches the use of bo-shuriken ("stick shuriken"). Such throwing spikes are made of 14 to 15 cm long square bar steel and are six to seven mm wide.

The fundo kusari (a chain weight) is the second major weapon taught in Meifu Shinkage Ryu. A safety fundo kusari, made of a plastic chain and a soft weight, is used to teach novices in a safe manner.

SUINO SENSEI NEWS

2021 marks the 15th anniversary of the Japanese Martial Arts Center in Michigan. Lead by Nicklaus

Suino Sensei, JMAC offers professional instruction in several traditional Japanese martial arts.

With decades of training in Japan and the USA, Suino Sensei is one of the founding members of the SMAA. An acclaimed author of budo books, he is the Director of the SMAA Judo Division and the Co-director of the SMAA Iaido Division.

MARTIN SENSEI NEWS

Paul Martin Sensei, an SMAA Senior Advisor in Japan, has a great website: www.thejapanesesword.com. The website now has an equally awesome monthly newsletter devoted to the art of the Japanese sword.

Martin Sensei is one of the world's foremost experts on the Japanese sword as an art object. He also has decades of training in traditional iaido and kendo, much of which has taken place in Japan under leading experts.

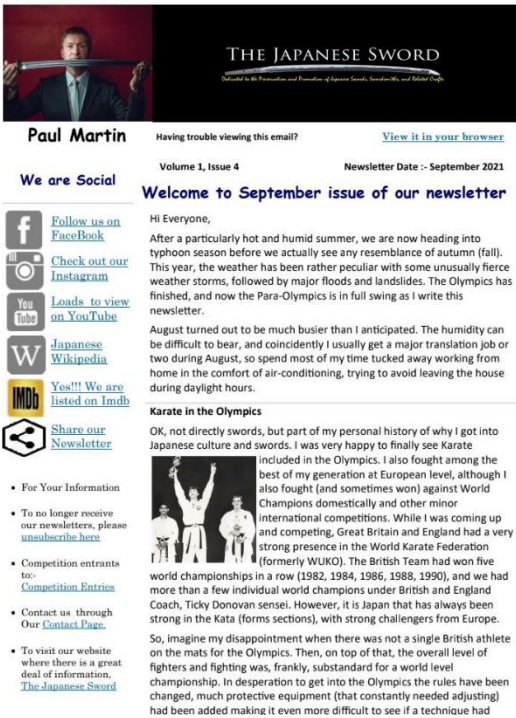
THE OTHER THREE CORNERS

By Wayne Muromoto

"Every truth has four corners. As a teacher I give you one corner, and it is for you to find the other three."

- Confucius

Confucius, or Kung-fu (Master) Tzu (551-479 BCE), has been misunderstood and misappropriated over the centuries, according to one Chinese scholar and Confucianist I met. He noted that one had to take Master Tzu in his proper context: as a philosopher who was trying to bring order out of the chaos of a warring land by promoting good governance, the idea of civil service based on scholasticism and wisdom and not inheritance and accident of birth, and a peaceful society. He was bound by the conventions of his time, but he sought a way forward. Given that he lived about 500 years before



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Welcome to September issue of our newsletter

Hi Everyone,

After a particularly hot and humid summer, we are now heading into typhoon season before we actually see any resemblance of autumn (fall). This year, the weather has been rather peculiar with some unusually fierce weather storms, followed by major floods and landslides. The Olympics has finished, and now the Para-Olympics is in full swing as I write this newsletter.

August turned out to be much busier than I anticipated. The humidity can be difficult to bear, and coincidentally I usually get a major translation job or two during August, so spend most of my time tucked away working from home in the comfort of air-conditioning, trying to avoid leaving the house during daylight hours.

Karate in the Olympics

OK, not directly swords, but part of my personal history of why I got into Japanese culture and swords. I was very happy to finally see Karate included in the Olympics. I also fought among the best of my generation at European level, although I also fought (and sometimes won) against World Champions domestically and other minor international competitions. While I was coming up and competing, Great Britain and England had a very strong presence in the World Karate Federation (formerly WUKO). The British Team had won five world championships in a row (1982, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990), and we had more than a few individual world champions under British and England Coach, Ticky Donovan sensei. However, it is Japan that has always been strong in the Kata (forms sections), with strong challengers from Europe.

So, imagine my disappointment when there was not a single British athlete on the mats for the Olympics. Then, on top of that, the overall level of fighters and fighting was, frankly, substandard for a world level championship. In desperation to get into the Olympics the rules have been changed, much protective equipment (that constantly needed adjusting) had been added making it even more difficult to see if a technique had

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the birth of Christ, a lot of his ideas are, indeed, pretty liberal.

He was later used, of course, as a bulwark in China against cultural progress and women's rights, then vilified by the Communists as a reactionary. He's been many things to many people.

However way you look at him, however, he's been influential in the premodern educational system of many East Asian countries. This is true too of Japan. The Confucian classics were part of the traditional education of the warrior class before Japan's modernization, and Confucian philosophy still exerts great influence over Japanese culture and society. It's easily seen, of course, in the way teachers are supposed to be accorded great respect

by their pupils, although some of the high school students I've seen in Japan are in sore need of a refresher course in respect and piety.

What I find more wanting, however, is the self-motivation espoused by Confucius in the above quote. One would think that this lack of motivation would be expected in Japan, China or Korea, countries that were the bedrock of Confucian societies and whose educational system relied heavily upon rote memorization and repetition. But in many martial arts dojo in America, this lack of self-discovery and personal initiative is also easy to find.

Confucius was saying that a teacher's role is really limited. No matter how much he offers, he is only, as the Buddha would say, a "pointing finger" showing you the path to wisdom. It is up to you, the student, to take that road and find its end. The teacher is a marker, a pathfinder. He's not going to carry you all the way to the end like a baby.

A teacher, a sensei ("one who has lived more than you", i.e., an elder, someone with more experience), can teach you only a smidgeon of what you need to know as a martial artist. The rest, the majority of the learning, in fact, is up to you. You can be shown one corner of the room by the teacher. Given that one corner, as a student you should have enough wits about you to be able to discern where the other three are. The teacher shouldn't have to show you all the rest of the corners one by one.

My first tea sensei told me that quote, many decades ago. Odd, how it stuck to me. Perhaps it resonated with my own attitude towards my academic life and martial arts. I was always a reader, so when I become involved in martial arts and tea ceremony, I tried to get my hands on as many books about the subjects as I could, to learn and read further. When I found the English language books wanting, I forced myself to better my Japanese reading skills to be able to go through old Japanese texts.

By the same token, during my graduate school days in fine art, I haunted the university's library as much as I hung around the art studio doing my art, going through books on past artists: their lives, their histories, their painting and printing techniques. I learned a trove of knowledge that, even though I teach mostly digital art and photography, I still use constantly in teaching the concepts and theory of visual art.

One of the oft-repeated sayings of the martial arts teachers, who I consider my father and mother teachers, is "kenkyu shinasai." It would often occur when they would say something or demonstrate a technique that would have me in wonder and awe. They would explain just enough so that they think I got the general idea, and then they would smile and say, "Kenkyu shinasai" ("You need to study this on your own more."). I have found that this kind of instruction, given at the proper time and place, proved invaluable for making that knowledge truly internalized, a part of my self.

As one example of the results of this, I recall once when I went back to Japan for more training in jujutsu. Our headmaster was off on his day job, so he asked one of his top students to help us visiting students. The student's own profession was as a chiropractor and massage therapist. He had taken what he learned of the jujutsu arm dislocation methods and, because of his work experience, brought the angles and pressure applications to a fine art by studying on his own. Our three-hour session with him was eye-opening. He took apart the dislocation methods as only someone that works with joints, muscles, and bone structure every day could.

It made me realize that, as gifted a martial artist as my head instructor was, he couldn't teach me all I needed to know. Other people had to show me things a different way for me to grasp everything fully. And I had to spend more time working things out on my own to make the knowledge fit my body morphology and ways of movement.



The author (left) practicing Takeuchi Ryu in Kyoto

If you are true to the Confucian methodology of learning, then you don't just learn by rote or limit yourself only to what you learned from your teacher. Learning becomes a way of life; it fills your entire world with opportunities to increase your knowledge and wisdom.

I keep going back to this because I see too much rote learning going on, not just in Japan, but also in my own country, the United States. Too many students just learn enough to get by, and they think that's enough. Too many students only learn a minimum from their teachers and are not motivated to plow through the library, to get more knowledge from the stored and accumulated intelligence of hundreds and thousands of people before them. Too many martial arts students repeat only what their teachers taught them and leave it at that.

That's especially troubling with some students whose teachers may have passed on, and with that, they lost their connection to their main wellspring of information from Okinawa, Japan, Korea or China.

So, they continue to repeat what they learned from their teacher without questioning, researching, or digging deeper. My opinion is that personal research does not disrespect to one's teacher. By not trying to extend oneself, you are in a downward spiral, debasing your methods and muddying them up further and further.

That doesn't mean that you jazz up your kenjutsu kata practice by introducing Spandex tight-fitting gear in lieu of keikogi and uwagi. I don't mean the wholesale revamping of a koryu to "fit the times." What I mean is serious research into the history of your ryu, or a comparative study of why you do a kata a certain way when another version of it is done another way. Why is that? Is there something you can learn? Is there something the teacher left out, deliberately or inadvertently? Was there more that your teacher didn't want to teach you or didn't know how to teach you that you can attain, to extend and deepen what he passed on to you?

The teacher showed you a corner, and only one corner, after all. I don't think he expected you to be content sitting in that one darkened corner and not exploring the rest of the room. If so, then he was a self-serving egotist interested more in self-aggrandizement than in leaving a growing, maturing legacy that will survive and expand long after he is gone. As a student, then, it is up to you to find the other three corners and to make the entire room yours, not just stay stuck in one little dark corner.

About the Author: Wayne Muromoto has a lifetime of experience in traditional Japanese martial arts. Based in Hawaii, he teaches Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu iaido and Bitchuden Takeuchi Ryu jujutsu. He's a member of the SMAA Board of Advisors and a regular contributor to the *SMAA Journal*.

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