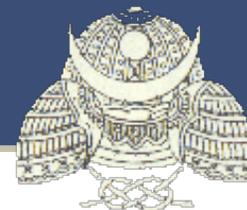


# SMAA JOURNAL



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

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*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.*

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

## WHAT IS JUJUTSU?

*By H. E. Davey*

Although accounts of jujutsu history differ, to a degree, depending on which authority one consults, it is essential to be discriminating about what one chooses to believe. Since few leading jujutsu specialists (recognized as such by any martial arts association in Japan) have written English language books, it comes as no shock that many Westerners have a tremendous number of misconceptions regarding jujutsu's origins. On the other hand, a number of books and magazine articles have been written about the subject and its history by Westerners claiming to be instructors of an art that is only taught in Japan on a comparatively limited basis. (Few of these writers, to my knowledge, have received high ranking from a recognized Japanese jujutsu group. Actually, many cannot even point to membership and authorization from any Japanese koryu bujutsu or budo association.) At present, the majority of accurate research material, available in English, stems from only a handful of Americans and Europeans.

Some of jujutsu's first pioneering historical efforts can be credited to Donn Draeger Sensei and his landmark 1970s books. More recently, Wayne Muromoto, who studied koryu bujutsu ("ancient martial arts") and budo in Japan, and who is one of very few people in the U.S. to be teaching ancient Takeuchi Ryu (Bitchu-den) jujutsu, published vital information in his late, great magazine *Furyu*. Plus, Stephen Fabian Sensei, a Director for the SMAA Jujutsu Division, has written of his experiences practicing Hontai Yoshin Ryu jujutsu in Japan in his

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gg5Nlka6Ge0&list=PLS11\\_XCH8Rki868tRKZ0fdJFSeFGyNZ0o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gg5Nlka6Ge0&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\\_XCH8RkiV8liNZoXI93Wl79BLe1NZ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCE7zBhv9Hs&list=PLS11_XCH8RkiV8liNZoXI93Wl79BLe1NZ)

book *Clearing Away Clouds*. Since, with few exceptions, authentic jujutsu is rarely taught in the U.S. in particular, and Western countries in general, it's not surprising that nearly all legitimate instructors and historians have strong ties to Japan. At this stage in jujutsu's Western history, the public should be suspicious of jujutsu teachers that can't show direct ties to Japan.

## JUJUTSU ORIGINS

To understand jujutsu, as one might expect, it's necessary to grasp the nature and roots of authentic Nihon jujutsu ("Japanese jujutsu"). While many



*Wayne Muromoto (right), SMAA Senior Advisor, teaching Takeuchi Ryu jujutsu*

Americans and Europeans have heard of jujutsu, it is actually one of the most misunderstood martial arts.

Within many forms of classical bujutsu, the study of weaponry (especially the sword) was of primary importance, just as it is for modern-day soldiers. However, a number of ryu ("martial systems") also included the practice of empty-handed grappling techniques, which were never totally divorced from the ryu's weapons techniques. In a 1976 lecture at the University of Hawaii, Draeger Sensei explained:

Jujutsu is a generic name. It only gives you a general idea. The word did not develop prior to the Edo era, that is 1600 plus. There is no evidence of it. Jujutsu [the word—not the art itself] is largely the development of a non-professional, an average person, who doesn't quite know what he sees, and he needs a name to identify it. (1)

In earlier times, the various classical ryu commonly referred to their predominantly unarmed grappling methods as yoroi kumi uchi, kumi uchi, kogusoku, koshi-no-mawari, yawara-gi, yawara-gei, hakuda, shubaku, kempo, taijutsu, wajutsu, and torite. Nevertheless, just as each of the classical ryu represents distinct entities, with often markedly different characteristics, each of these various names delineates a unique and particular form of combat, which Draeger Sensei also noted in Hawaii:

. . . Though it is common for even Japanese writers to say, 'Jujutsu had many older names.' And list them as all the same. The truth is they have very different characteristics. For example, in kogusoku, you work in a minimal type of armor. Very light, almost like a heavy mail shirt, with long sleeves. You use weapons in all of these arts. They are not unarmed. That is another mistake.

Koshi-no-mawari depends on a short sword, a kodachi, and a length of rope. It gets its

name from the fact that the rope goes around the waist to support the blade, like a belt; until you need one or both of them. 'Around the loins' – koshi-no-mawari.

Taijutsu is a type of 'throw-the-man-down' grappling. You just let him go, and hope he breaks his neck. No guidance. You don't grapple on the ground. What happens to a taijutsu man if he is pulled down? Heaven only knows. He gets up the best way he can, and hopes for a 'standing combat.' (2)

All of these arts were, and in certain cases still are, separate methods with their own flavor. The generic term "jujutsu" developed to give the average civilian an easy way of speaking about a whole variety of related, but still distinct, grappling systems that were perpetuated within the various classical ryu. Predating jujutsu is the word "yawara," which is a less generic term preferred by many bushi, or "warriors." (Ju is the Chinese reading of the character for yawara.)

Certain researchers have claimed that as many as 725 systems have been formally documented as being jujutsu ryu. Over time, as Japan entered a more peaceful era, some ryu began to emphasize jujutsu to a greater extent, while new ryu, which had jujutsu as their main emphasis from the time of their inception, were also developed, in many instances by non-bushi or by bushi of lower rank. This trend increased after the end of Japan's feudal period.

Previously, all grappling systems were subsidiary parts of various classical ryu and were practiced mainly by bushi. However, during the Edo period (after 1600s), both the commoner and the bushi participated in yawara. Of course, the commoner, not being allowed to wear the bushi's long and short swords, concentrated on the more unarmed aspects of jujutsu and was more interested in arts that would relate to self-defense in a civil as opposed to battlefield or castle context. While many of the koryu continued to be unavailable to commoners, the



*Ukiyo-e by Yoshiharu Ikuta*

instructors of certain koryu offshoots were willing to provide civilians with previously unknown knowledge.

## TYPES OF JUJUTSU

In general, jujutsu during the Edo period can be said to consist of four common categories:

- Bushi Yawara (yawara developed within the koryu and used in conjunction with weapons), which took into consideration the fact that the bushi would often be wearing yoroi (“armor”) and facing a similarly clad opponent, both of whom had to be able to fall safely, as well as perform other actions while wearing two swords.
- Ashigaru Yawara (yawara developed by ashigaru, “foot soldiers,” who were often less educated, not as well-armed or armored as the bushi, and lower-ranking), which was, as a result, a form of yawara that, unlike bushi

yawara, was rarely designed to be used in a castle, made greater use of the powerful bodies (particularly legs) of the ashigaru, and allowed a freedom of movement unavailable to the bushi.

- Torikata Yawara (yawara developed by the medieval Japanese police), which permitted a greater freedom of movement because the torikata didn’t need to be concerned with, for example, falling safely while wearing arms and armor, and which emphasized non-lethal (mainly) unarmed techniques as well as arresting methods.
- Civilian Yawara (yawara developed by commoners), which was geared toward empty-handed techniques of personal protection that were designed to be used in civilian life.

Most forms of jujutsu which exist today, and which are not smaller sub-sections of a koryu, stem from the last two categories. A fifth possible category of “jujutsu” is that which has been developed mostly by Westerners who have never studied, and in many cases never even seen, an authentic form of jujutsu. Having read, and concluded erroneously, that jujutsu is some sort of goulash of judo, karate-do, and aikido, these individuals have attempted to reconstruct a Japanese cultural art which they never learned. This imitation jujutsu is found in overwhelming numbers outside of Japan (and in Japan in certain cases), and far outnumbers forms of authentic jujutsu.

Evidence of the many misconceptions surrounding jujutsu is the fact that the art is often incorrectly transliterated into English as “jujitsu” or “jiujitsu.” (In fact, even the spell-checker on my computer suggested changing the spelling of jujutsu to “jujitsu.”) Obviously the only correct way to write a Japanese word in English is the way it is done in Japanese, as Draeger Sensei, a man who did a good deal of translation, also noted:

Jujutsu. You will see this spelled, by the way, like this – jujitsu, jiujitsu, jiujutsu, and so on. This one—jujutsu—is the correct one as far as Romaji, the alphabetical writing [of the Japanese language] . . . This one—jujitsu—is a mistake, . . .

“Jujitsu” is often seen. That is a dialectical corruption. Not very good. (3)

If just the name is often incorrectly written in the West, it takes little to imagine what other inaccuracies have come up regarding this little understood martial art. An amusing example is cited by author Michael Finn:

The author recalls seeing one school of martial arts, above the entrance of which was displayed a sign ‘safe self-defence and jujitsu.’ Unfortunately, in larger letters above were the Japanese words ‘Joroya Ryu Jujitsu,’ a loose translation of which is “The Brothel School of Perfection”—a misinterpretation that no doubt gave Japanese passers-by cause for a wry smile. (4)

It’s interesting to note that given the number of martial arts that currently exist in Japan, along with the number of Japanese interested in koryu bujutsu or budo, jujutsu is taught in only a small number of schools, and of this small percentage, only a few are teaching ancient forms of the art. Moreover, many of these schools are not open to the public. Given these facts, I’m constantly amazed by the relatively vast number of “jujutsu” schools advertising their services in the U.S. and Europe. Furthermore, having visited Japan quite a few times, I am convinced as many so-called jujutsu schools exist in California as in the entire country of Japan. Michael Finn has expressed a similar opinion concerning koryu jujutsu:

One aspect worth mentioning concerns the transmission of these traditional styles to the

Western world. At the turn of the century many Japanese traveled to Europe and America. They often had some experience of jujutsu styles but adapted the teachings to please Western audiences, and from that point they ceased to be the true form that existed in Japan. The author has witnessed many styles of jujutsu in the West that can be traced back to that period, but few resemble the original styles with the same names that still exist in Japan. (5)

We’re fortunate to have several people in the SMAA teaching authentic forms of Japanese jujutsu. The SMAA is one of very few groups operating outside of Japan that brings together in its jujutsu division people practicing modern and ancient forms of bona fide jujutsu, along with individuals studying Takeuchi Ryu, Saigo Ryu, Hontai Yoshin Ryu, Hakko Ryu, Tenjin Shin’yo Ryu, and other systems of Nihon jujutsu.

If you’re researching or studying classical Japanese jujutsu, and you have questions, feel free to submit them to [shudokan@smaa-hq.com](mailto:shudokan@smaa-hq.com), and they will be forwarded to leading figures in the SMAA Jujutsu Division.

#### Notes

- (1) Donn F. Draeger, *Donn F. Draeger Monograph Series No. 2*, Kamuela, HI: International Hapology Society, 1992, p. 17.
- (2) Ibid.
- (3) Ibid.
- (4) Michael Finn, *Martial Arts--A Complete Illustrated History*, Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1988, p. 149.
- (5) Ibid.

**About the Author:** H. E. Davey is a eighth dan with the SMAA Jujutsu Division. He’s studied Nihon jujutsu in Japan and the USA. He’s also the editor of the *SMAA Journal*.

# HOW TO STAY RELAXED DURING JUDO AND JUJUTSU

By Nicklaus Suino

Consider your martial arts experience:

- Do you find yourself panicking during falls, joint locks, choke holds, testing, or randori (free practice)?
- Is your movement so tense and rigid that it is difficult to execute techniques?
- Do you ever feel so stressed that your breathing gets shallow, your heart rate increases rapidly, and you get light-headed?

The good news is that your body has developed useful mechanisms to keep you safe. However, the same fight-flight-freeze reactions that might have been beneficial thousands of years ago can be detrimental in modern society. One of the biggest examples is the physiological response of stress.

## THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE-INDUCED STRESS

During intense exercise, there is a release of endogenous stress proteins that prime the body's immune system. In other words, exercise boosts the body's ability to defend itself. One research paper wrote, "If one were a gazelle running across a savanna being chased by a lion, your body would

experience activation of stress hormones... If you were wounded during the escape, the endogenous stress proteins would prime the innate immune response thus improving the efficiency of the immune response" (M. Fleshner, J. Campisi, & J. Johnson, 14).

Good stress releases small amounts of cortisol that improve memory. For example, if you have ever burned yourself, you can vividly remember the sharp pain and smell of singed flesh. Now you probably avoid similar situations to keep from burning yourself.

In another [study](#), heat-induced stress improved athletic performance. Oxygen consumption was more efficient (increased VO2 max), metabolic rates increased, and the cardiovascular system was enhanced. However, although the body's adaptation towards stress is usually beneficial in short lengths, it is dangerous when it is chronic.

## AVOIDING DISTRESS

Chronic stress, also known as distress, is detrimental to the immune and cardiovascular systems, mental functions, and the aging process. According to a Stanford article, it is important to allow the body to return to a resting state for a sufficient amount of time. Most exercise programs have scheduled recovery days. If you are new to martial arts, try to schedule recovery days in your training regime to avoid overtraining.

## BALANCING STRESS AND RELAXATION

In order to balance stress and move with fluidity, here are a few tips to consider trying:

### 1. Monitor Posture

In a TED Talk, Amy Cuddy discusses how posture impacts the way the brain functions. Posture that is



*The author demonstrating traditional judo*

considered high-power increases certain hormones linked to feelings of power and higher risk taking. In a corollary [study](#), researchers found that subjects who felt powerless had impaired executive functions. In other words, the people who lacked power were more likely to make mistakes and less able to plan.

Some signs of tension during judo are raised shoulders and the "old man" back slump. Aside for the psychological impact, it's more difficult to breathe properly when the rib cage is constricted.

## 2. Positive Thoughts

A Yale study found that participants moved faster when they perceived an event as positive, rather than negative. Attitude influences behavior!

Martial artists often focus on the profound connection between thought and action. Koichi Tohei said, "Be vigorous and full of energy, and make ceaseless efforts. This means that little things do not discourage you and that you approach all things boldly and with an attitude of determination."

## 3. Follow the Rules

According to the Social Self-Preservation Theory, when people believe that they will be negatively perceived, their cortisol levels increase and makes recovery more difficult. In one study, "Individuals who possess qualities that are valued by the group are positively regarded, respected, and esteemed by others and have high social standing. Conversely, those that lack these valued attributes or have undesired characteristics receive signals of rejection or disinterest from group members and are lower on the social hierarchy." One way of doing this quickly

in martial arts is sticking with etiquette: it makes it safer for you and others!

## 4. Pay Attention to Breathing

In a [study](#) that examined people with anxiety and panic disorders, researchers found that shallow breathing made the subjects more anxious. However, simply paying attention to breathing immediately lowered the respiratory rate. This also lowered muscular tension in the body.

During judo randori (free practice), novices hold their breath. Not only does this keep the body from providing oxygen to extremities, but it also sends a signal to the brain that something is wrong. People often experience panic and light-headedness when they forget to breathe. Exhale on the break fall. Tap out if someone puts a good chokehold on you.

## 5. Watch Your Nutrition

Make sure you eat enough! In a [study](#) on dancers, researchers found that dancers with restrictive eating disorders suffered more stress fractures than other dancers. On the flip side, dietary-induced [obesity](#) made recovering from cardiovascular activity more difficult. Don't let your waistline deter you, though. In a [study](#) on weight loss and exercise in middle-aged people, muscular recovery improved within 16-weeks.

**About the Author:** Nicklaus Suino Sensei is the Director of the SMAA Judo Division. He has decades of traditional Kodokan judo training, which has taken place in the USA and Japan. He is also the author of several acclaimed martial arts books, including *Budo Mind and Body*.

## MUGAO, MUSHIN

*By Wayne Muromoto*

“You’re getting a little stressed,” my sempai (“senior”) observed. “Smile, even, when you do the kata. It’s soooo easy!”

Well, actually, it was hard for me to reconfigure and fix what I was doing wrong, but my sempai was trying to get a point across: when you do iaido, it shouldn’t look mechanical or stiff. It should look like your body is flowing, easy and smooth, like it was the most natural thing in the world to be splitting someone’s head in half vertically. And in order to do that, your face had to be relaxed as well. Clenching one’s teeth, grimacing, or glaring would only translate facial tension into whole body tension.

This is a concept widely accepted in koryu circles: the notion of having what we would call a “poker face.” The enemy can’t read your emotions or deduce your intentions. It’s mugao (“no-face”) and mushin (“no spirit” or “empty mind”). But the literal translation doesn’t really mean you have NO face, or no spiritual energy. It means, rather, that the surface of your external appearance, such as your body and facial posture, reflects a relaxed, flexible spirit. Your face isn’t set like a granite stone statue, teeth grinding against each other, and your spirit isn’t dead set on only one way; you’re able to react to the situation at hand quickly without mental blockage. You have a relaxed, natural, everyday expression.

As I was learning a new iaido form, I had inadvertently and unconsciously gotten a bit stressed out, tightening my wrist too much, thinking too hard about getting the movement right. While still focusing on my movement, I had to also relax my tight muscles, including those in my face.

That explains why our own iaido sensei used to almost nearly smile when they did iaido. Their faces were so relaxed, and they reflected a calm, engaged spirit that allowed their bodies to move effortlessly with the sword.

I think many of us in the West, and even modern budo practitioners in Japan, sometimes forget or are unaware of this attitude. Certainly, in modern budo tournaments, the often-seen demeanor is one of aggression, the better to scare the competition and/or the better to appear tough and gutsy, as people think martial artists should be.

You can’t win a modern budo tournament, it seems, unless you strut and puff out your chest and project a manic facial expression in kata competition, or act like a supremely overconfident street punk in tourney fighting. So, you glare bug-eyed, grit your teeth, lock your knees and puff out your chest. You da man! (Or you da woman!)

Some of this difference is cultural. If you look at koryu budo, they sprang out of the classical Japanese warrior culture, like Noh drama. Noh uses masks for the main actors, and this form of theater prides itself on subtlety. There is no heaving of the body and torrential sobbing as in the more plebian-class theater of Kabuki. Rather, to denote sadness, the head of the masked performer will tilt downwards only ever so slightly, and a single open palm goes in front of the face gently. The depth of sorrow is contained in that stylized gesture, recognizable instantly by a libretto-carrying observer, who is following the chanting with an annotated text. You don’t need overt, over-the-top wracked sobbing. One tear supposedly going down a stoic face is all you need to convey terrible sadness.

Again, there are cultures where “let it all hang out” is the way to go. That’s fine for those cultures. But for the classical Japanese warriors, it was more like “still waters run deep;” bombastic extroverted expressions are not as truly deep as restrained displays. Think of it like the British upper-class restraint of ages past, the “stiff upper lip” that



*Ukiyo-e by Kuniyoshi Utagawa*

controlled waves of feeling. It's not that they didn't have strong feelings. It's that in that stratified society, before tell-all expose gossip newspapers and reality shows, it wasn't considered in good taste to put it all out in front of the public.

As my sempai remarked, that attitude of restraint is actually hard to do. Based on individual habits and cultural breeding, students of koryu will often carry their emotions on their sleeves because they are, after all, fallible human beings. The bad thing about that, is that in a real fight, if you show all your emotions, the enemy can "read" your mind and beat you. This may not matter much in a battle using longer range weapons, such as rifles, RPGs, cannon, helicopter gunships or ICBMs, but it meant a lot in close quarter combat when you are up and close in sword-fighting distance and you can literally look into the enemy's eyes.

As one example, there is a set of kata in my jujutsu school in which you are using a short sword against a long sword. It's a last-ditch effort because most of the advantage belongs to the swordsman with the longer-reach weapon. You close the gap and deliberately appear small and intimidated in order to lull the swordsman. Some of us students were having a problem stepping into the low, unassuming stance.

My sensei remarked, "You are trying to lure the enemy in. So, you have to deliberately appear weaker than you are. And that's a hard thing for many budoka to do. All their lives they train to appear tough and strong. So, it's not easy for bugeisha to look weak."

He was right. The hardest thing to do, and the most deceptive, is to appear unassuming, especially if you'd been training for decades to NOT be weak or defenseless. And for me, the most vexing opponent would have to be someone whose face and posture I can't decipher. Pugnacity and aggressive attitude, I can see and adjust for. Fear in an opponent is something that dogs can literally smell, and many human predators can somehow innately sense. But a face that remains the same even if you thought you whacked him a good one? Unnerving. Especially when that opponent comes back with a powerful retort, all with that same unwavering (fudoshin, "immovable mind") face.

While I needed a reminder myself to relax my tight jaw, I remember trying to work with a short-term student on relaxing his body. He had previously done some work with a former karate-do teacher, who had cobbled together his own modern iaido system, he said. Okay, fine. But whenever he drew his sword over his head, his left hand would flare open, fingers splayed apart, like a kabuki actor's pose, before theatrically grasping the sword hilt. He would also grit and bare his teeth, and bug his eyes out. I told him that was good for kabuki woodblock prints, and I don't know what he was taught in his modern iaido school, but in koryu, those displays of exaggerated facial expressions and gestures were counterproductive. They also stiffened the rest of his body too much. Sadly, he either never quite seemed to get the concept of relaxing, or he thought I was feeding him a line of bull, and he soon enough dropped out, unable or unwilling to transition to my way of thinking.

Showing focus and eye-strength (metsuke) are different things, of course, from exhibiting false

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bravado. It's not about aggression; it's about concentrating on the job at hand. One teacher of koryu remarked that a classical warrior's expression was much like the dedicated and focused expression of a sushi chef or traditional woodworker. The chef wouldn't glare or grit his teeth at having to cut a slice of raw fish to slap on some rice or plane the surface of a piece of wood. He just concentrated and did it. So too, the classical warrior wouldn't expend precious energy on bombastic expressions. He just did it.

**About the Author:** Wayne Muromoto Sensei is a member of the SMAA Board of Advisors. He teaches Takeuchi Ryu jujutsu and Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu iaido in Hawaii. He is a frequent and valued contributor to the *SMAA Journal*.

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