

Shoshin Ryu Yudanshakai Newsletter

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How does a Martial Artist Become an Artist?

By

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When one thinks of art, the natural focus is to think of painters, composers, authors and other creative people following creative pursuits. Artists struggle to control their medium and bend it to their will. They spend years learning and refining the basics to create art.

So do martial artists.

True, the medium of the martial artist cannot be measured with pictures, music, or words; it cannot be measured by any concrete object, other than the color of a belt. So how does a martial artist become an artist?

An artist looks at the material they want to work with and then learns how to shape it into the vision they see. In Danzan there are chokes, throws, hand techniques, and other forms of expression. The art has many different materials to work with. After studying its techniques, Danzan can become the vision of the practitioner.

The ability to synthesize materials and make them your own expression is what makes an artist. "An artist can take the raw materials of a discipline--the paint, canvas, marble, or techniques--and consistently synthesize something more than the sum of the materials." Professor Charlebois takes that stance when he applies it to a martial artist. "A martial artist is a martial practitioner who has moved beyond merely utilizing to synthesizing."

Among the definitions of *synthesis* is "the combining of often diverse conceptions into a coherent whole." In the case of jujitsu that would mean taking techniques and applying them in myriads of situations. The ability to recall and use a technique or its part, seamlessly and fluidly, that would be the epitome of synthesis in jujitsu.

To do that requires years of practice and study, which is the same struggle as any painter, composer, or author.

Professor Bill Fischer sees the path from practitioner to artist as a matter of analysis. "Prof. Tony Muran used to say that 'you have to perform a throw ten thousand times before you make that throw your own.' To a certain point, that is correct. The transition from a martial practitioner to a martial artist occurs when you can take a throw apart, lay it out before you and really understand why it works. When you can do that, you can fashion the throw to anyone you teach. Doesn't matter if they're short, tall, old, or handicapped."

What better way to be able to understand and use the art than to break it down to its smallest parts. The chance to see what makes the art work, like the painter who understands how the brush strokes create a painting.

"The martial artist is as much an artist in the real sense as a painter, a sculptor, or a composer," wrote Hanshi Joe Carslake. "The same kind of dedication and commitment, and the same degree of self-discipline is needed, if they are to develop their art, and bring it forward, in (See **Martial Artist to Artist**, Continued on page four)

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Words of Wisdom

The old man tapped me on the shoulder. I didn't know him. Something about his manner seemed to indicate that he was drunk.

"When I was a young man, about twenty," he said, "I decided I was going to change the world. So I told everyone what to do and how to do it. After a few years I realized that nothing got better, that no one was listening, so I stopped."

I couldn't smell any alcohol on his breath, so I changed my mind about him. He probably just wanted to talk, so I nodded my head and said something about him shooting too high.

"Well," he continued, "when I was in my thirties I decided that I was going to change my country. So I started again, telling everyone how to do everything, but no one would listen." He took a deep breath as though the story was taxing him.

"When I was forty I tried to change my state, but it was the same old thing, no one would listen," He said.

I didn't want to be rude, so I didn't get up and move to another seat. He was at the table next to mine, far enough away to not be an imposition, but close enough to have a conversation with.

"When I was in my fifties, I decided to change my county. I talked and talked, but no one did anything. So a while later I decided to try and change my city. Again no luck. Nobody would listen to me."

My food came. I took a drink and ate a couple of French fries.

The old man shook his head as though he was answering a question during some conversation that ended long ago. He stared at his table for a moment then looked up at me again. "When I was in my sixties I decided to try and change my neighborhood. My neighbors had heard enough from me, they just ignored me, or worse they patronized me." He shook his finger at me. "I was in my early seventies when I decided to try and change my family. By that time my kids were all grown and had families of their own. They weren't going to listen to me."

I didn't quite know what to say, so I nodded my head along with his shaking finger. I took a bite of my hamburger then rubbed a couple of French fries in catsup and ate them.

The old man's food arrived. He glanced up at the server, then made eye contact with me. "But you know what I figured out?" he asked.

I shook my head.

"A little while ago I realized that if I only would have changed myself. If I would have led the sort of life I wanted others to live. If I would have been the example, I would have changed my family," the man said. "Then my family would have changed my neighborhood." He started to wind his finger in the air. "Then my neighborhood would have changed my city, and my city would have changed my county, and my county would have changed my state, and my state would have changed my country, and my country would have changed the world."

I was almost finished with my lunch. I took a drink from my soda and stared at the man.

He looked down at his meal and pushed it away from him. "I was such a fool," he said. "Now I'm too old to do anything about it."

It was a good story. I took it to heart. If no one would listen to him when he was young, I would listen to him now. I would share his story and, maybe, he could make a difference.

Coming Events

Saturday, February 9, 2008 – 3rd Annual Sumo Contest – See flyer page six.

Friday and Saturday, February, 15 & 16 – Sport Jujitsu Qualifier – See Flyer page seven.

Friday thru Sunday, June 20 to 23 – Camp Kokua, Knott's Berry Farm

Friday thru Sunday, August 29 to September 1 – Shoshin Ryu Reunion – See flyer page eight.

Ask the Doctor

Dr. Rich,

Is the old saying, "No pain, no gain" really true? Is it really supposed to hurt to get better at something like a martial art?

Mike Easterhurtz

Dear Mike,

Ah, old sayings. My favorite is the often referenced "gut reaction." Having seen and treated many of those gut reactions, I don't recommend using them for much. On the whole, "old sayings" often emphasize a single, fundamental truth at the cost of several truths that the sayer believes are less important. For example, "never judge a book by its cover" properly urges, I suppose, that I not jump to unwarranted conclusions about people, things, or situations based on superficial appearances. In reality, however, I often find my initial impression from a book's cover describes the contents well enough to make a very helpful decision.

So, this "no pain, no gain" proverb is really an exhortation to persevere through minor discomfort for some worthy end-goal. Ask yourself, "exactly how worthy is the expected result?" "Exactly how much pain am I willing to bear for this cause or goal?"

We all do this everyday. We make decisions based on what we believe, what something will cost, and what things will bring us. Sometimes the costs are intangible, like self-respect, or ideas of right and wrong we ascribe.

In the case of the human body, pain is always an indicator of damage. Sometimes that damage is very slight, and sometimes that damage is more severe. Sometimes the damage is small, but when often repeated, adds up to severe damage over time. An excellent example of this comes to us from judo and jujitsu. It turns out that players in these arts are more likely to develop degenerative joint disease in the joints at the tip of the fingers. Students of the arts that practice breaking boards and bricks develop degenerative arthritis of joints in the hands, elbows, feet, knees, and hips more often as those who do not. Just look at the cauliflower ears of some grappling students to see what their sport costs them.

An other adage, "That which does not kill me, makes me stronger," is often quoted on the mat. That is a good example of the logical *fallacy of the false dichotomy*: the fallacy in which the speaker assumes there are only two possible perspectives available. In this case, things that maim you, might not kill, but might *not* make one stronger. A lot of real estate lies between "dead" and "stronger."

If a technique you're doing hurts, you're probably not doing it right. With the exception of a few noteworthy cases from Arizona, most jujitsukas are not masochists. If the pain is mild and brief, stick with it a while and decide if it is something you're going to want to endure in the future. If the pain is severe, or long lasting, I recommend you have sensei take a look at how you're doing that technique.

As an aside, I once encountered a Thai kickboxer on a construction site that practiced kicking telephone poles with his shins. He said that his instructor demanded all his students perform this practice three days each week. Several of his friends left training with chronic pain and fractures. You really have to decide what you want out of your art. I want a sport that makes me grow by challenging my endurance, my ethics, my humanity, and my intellect. If, instead, I was faced with an art that challenged my ability to withstand pain for questionable goals, I would transcend, and move on.

Best wishes,

Dr. Rich Charlebois drrich@3rfp.com

Danzan Ryu Hall of Fame

Inducted in 1996

Sensei Charles Wagner

In 1932 Charles Wagner enrolled in the Kodokan and four years later, on May 29, 1936, Charles Wagner received his instructor's diploma. On June 4, at a dinner at Professor Okazaki's home, Sensei Wagner received instruction from Prof. Kosokabe - Professor Okazaki's instructor - on the history and ethics expected from Judo Instructors.

His first class in Honolulu consisted of six students: his son Hachiro, Kiyoshi Kawashima, Benjamin Marks, George Harbottle, William Simao and Y.S. Kim. Sensei Charles Wagner went on to teach Prof. Bud Estes and Prof. Juan D. Gomez.

Sensei Wagner was the first president of the American Jujitsu Guild, which in 1939 became the American Jujitsu Institute.

Black Belt Profile

Name: Jon Boudreau

Rank: Shodan

Dojo: Shoshin Ryu of Maine

Years practicing the martial arts: seven, almost eight.

Styles studied: Danzan Ryu and two years of Tae Kwon Do

Favorite book: *Thinning the Predators* by John Grisham

Favorite food: Spaghetti

Favorite movie: *Hero*

Favorite actor: Sean Connery

Favorite actress: Catherine Zeta Jones

Favorite ice cream: Mint chocolate chip

Favorite musical artist: Garth Brooks

Most memorable moment in martial arts: Getting my black belt

Favorite thing about practicing Danzan Ryu: Learning the techniques and meeting people.

Four famous people I'd like to invite to dinner: Professor Okazaki, General MacArthur, Bruce Lee, and General Patton

Biggest inspiration: My dad because we started out pretty poor, and he has worked his entire life to get us where we are today.

(**Martial Artist to Artist**, from page one.)

a fitting manner, to be taught and presented as an ideal to the next generation."

"The difference is, where the painter or composer works with words and canvas and paints, the martial artist is using his/her own person, as the expression of their chosen art or discipline. The progress of their art is measured in the demonstration, both physical and otherwise, of their perception of perfection of certain aspects of their chosen art."

"This cannot be done by training in a gym two hours a day, kicking the pogeers out of fellow hopefuls, or by training in a dojo a couple of hours every week. The term *martial artist* is, to me, best applied to a person who has dedicated a large portion of their life to the study of their art, and when they begin to develop their own personal perspective on the art, they shine."

An artist spends years perfecting painting skills, musical skills, or literary skills, the martial artist does the same. How does a martial artist become an artist? Trial and error, success and failure, grit, determination, and love for what they do.

The common thread that runs through all the professors' answers is practice. In order to become a martial *artist*, one has to practice. One must work with the techniques and figure out what makes them effective. With understanding, one is able to transcend the urbane task of learning technique and gain the insight that is applicable for greater expression.

Finally, artists attempt to make their works perfect, not a brush stroke, a musical note, or a comma is out of place. "Just good enough" is not good enough.

Professor Chubb sees the quest for martial artistic merit much the same way. How does one become a martial *artist*? "His quest for perfection, whether a throw or a handshake," he wrote.

The next time Sensei tells you to work on that list of hand techniques, don't think of it as another dreary trip through the mundane, look at it as the path to greater understanding. The end of which is the realm of artistic merit.



Shoshin Ryu Yudanshakai

Membership form



Please check one: _____ New member _____ Renewal _____ Date _____

Name (Last) _____ (First) _____ (MI) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Birthdate _____ Sex: M / F _____ Phone(s) _____

e-mail address _____ Dojo affiliation _____

Instructor _____ Your current rank _____

Dues/ fees: \$25.00 per year. Membership dues include mandatory liability and supplemental medical insurance. Membership is for the current calendar year from January through December 31.

Signature _____ Date _____

Parental consent if under 18 years _____

Mail to: **Shoshin Ryu Yudanshakai**
C/O Prof. Kevin Dalrymple
5547 E. San Juan Dr.
Orange, CA 92869

Phone: 714 - 538 - 4622

Please enclose your check payable to Shoshin Ryu

For more information, visit us at www.Shoshinryu.com

3rd Annual Winter Classic

Sumo Competition

(Ages 4 to 17)

Hosted by the Orange YMCA Jujitsu Club
Professor Kevin Dalrymple

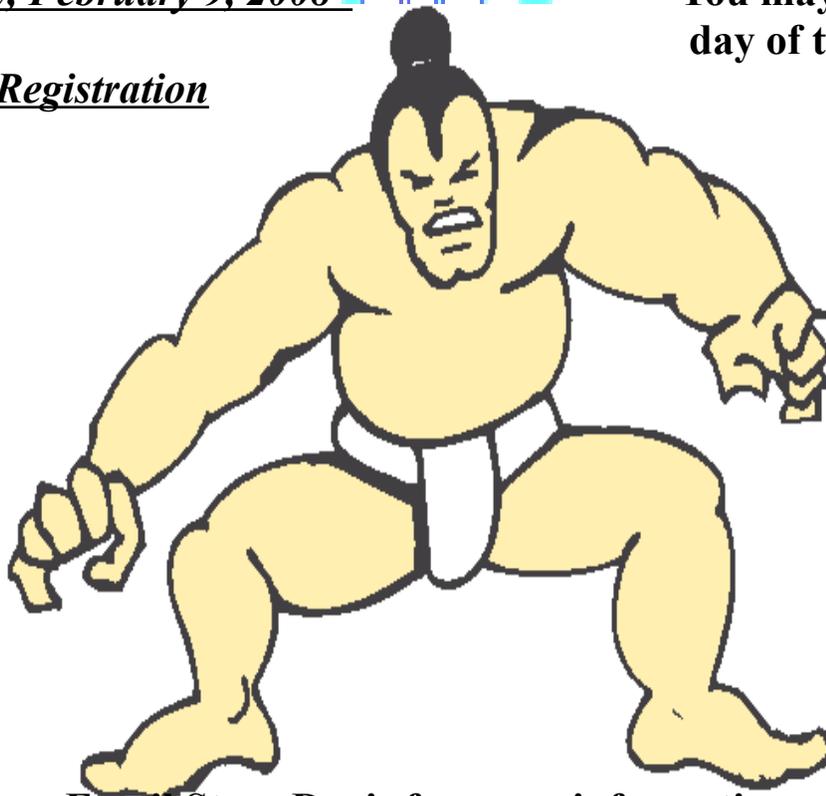
Contest Fee: \$5 for Shoshin Ryu members (includes T-shirt)
\$30 for non members (Fee includes 2008 Shoshin Ryu membership)

Saturday, February 9, 2008

Anaheim

9:30 AM Registration

You may sign up the
day of the contest



Email Steve Davis for more information at
sdavis@anaheim.net

Sport Jujitsu Qualifiers Tournament

A part of

Disneyland® Martial Arts Festival

Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, California

February 15 & 16, 2008 -- President's Day Weekend

Friday February 15 - Tiger Claw Elite National Championship Qualifier

Saturday February 16 - Competition and Expo in the

Sunday February 17 - Magical Martial Arts Day in **Disney's California Adventure®** Park

PRE-REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN:

Disneyland® Martial Arts Festival pre-registration is now open. Take advantage of the specially-priced registration fee which ends January 8, 2008. You may register by going to www.disneylandmartialartsfestival.com and clicking on the Register link or click on your specific discipline. The registration fee will increase after January 8, 2008.

- Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu/Gi Grappling (*Under Sports Grappling*)
- Bout Fighting - **NEW FOR 2008**
- Classical Japanese and Okinawan Karate and Kobudo
- Combined Sports Martial Arts (*Under Sports Grappling*)
- Contemporary Wushu (*Under Chinese Martial Arts*)
- Ed Parker Sr. Kenpo **NEW FOR 2008**
- Filipino Martial Arts
- Kajukenbo -- *Pays Tribute to Senior Grand Master Joe Halbuna*
- Koshiki - Continuous Contact Karate
- Olympic Style Tae Kwon do
- Open Karate/Martial Arts
- Savate Continuous Sparring
- Sport Grappling/No Gi Grappling
- Sport Jujitsu
- Taiji (*Under Chinese Martial Arts*)
- Traditional Kung Fu (*Under Chinese Martial Arts*)
- The Tiger Claw National Elite Championship Qualifier:

NEW FOR 2008

- • New Venue – Anaheim Convention Center
- • New Disciplines
- • Join us Sunday, February 17th for a Magical Martial Arts Day in **Disney's California Adventure®** Park. Includes a fun day of demonstrations and a pre-parade march of Athletes that participated in the **Disneyland® Martial Arts Festival**. **Disney's California Adventure®** Park ticket is required. GET Travel has specially-priced passes available. Annual **Disneyland®** Resort Passholders ticket is valid to enter.

TRAVEL, THEME PARK TICKETS AND ACCOMMODATIONS: Specially-priced **Disney's California Adventure®** Park Passes, travel and accommodations may be purchased through GET Travel at

Web: <http://www.gettravel.com/sports/MartialArts/> **e-mail:** info@gettravel.com. **Phone:** 1-888-877-4445 (*Monday through Friday, 8:30 am - 5:00 pm PST*)

You may also request a registration packet by e-mailing registration@tournament.info or by visiting www.tournament.info and click on your discipline or call 1-866-706-2900

Coordinators: Willy Cahill & Eric Renner

Phone: 1-650-589-0724

Website: www.jujitsuamerica.org

e-mail: ekr5@mindspring.com

Hosted By GoldenWest Dojo

SHOSHIN RYU



2008

REUNION

AUGUST 29TH - SEPTEMBER 1ST

Conference schedule will include extra time so that you can visit local theme parks and dinner theater attractions.

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(Please mention Shoshin Ryu Reunion for special room rates)

For more information please visit www.shoshinryu.com/events and check out upcoming editions of the Shoshin Ryu newsletter. So mark your calendars for a great time!

www.shoshinryu.com