



AJA NEWSLETTER

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Transitioning from Judo to Jujitsu

by Harold Zeidman

You've been an active judoka and now you want to learn jujitsu. It's easy, right? After all, judo came from jujitsu, so how hard can it be? It turns out that in certain ways it is an easy transition, but in other ways, your sport judo orientation works against you and you need to learn to do things differently.

Jujitsu is a method of defending yourself from an attacker using techniques that developed over centuries and proved effective in combat. When Japan made a conscious decision to become part of the modern world, duels and other forms of personal combat became obsolete. However, the Japanese did not want to lose the martial spirit that was an essential part of jujitsu and other combative arts. Jigoro Kano developed modern judo as a safe practice of jujitsu to retain that martial spirit. Sport judo was then developed. Sport judo remains an excellent method of

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“What have you learned, Dorothy?”: Life Lessons from the Road to Shodan

by Chris Murphy

I'm a child of the '70s — I came of age when Bruce Lee was box office gold and everybody really *was* kung fu fighting. Shurikens and nuchackus were on the top of every kid's Christmas wish list (though, for some unfathomable reason, Santa never delivered) and David Carradine was trying to snatch a pebble from Philip Ahn's hand. It was the era of the Great American Martial Arts Craze.

Those too young to remember those days may have a hard time imagining just how hard the Craze hit. For those of us who were there, well, let's just say it left its mark.

There are many things from high school days that, honestly, I should remember, but don't. The quadratic formula? Nope. The Krebs cycle? Sorry, can't help you. The one thing I do remember is that I wanted to be a black belt...

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Ranks and Titles in Japanese Martial Arts: A Brief History

By Thomas Dineen

“Belts are only good for holding up your pants,” Bruce Lee reportedly said about belt color as an external indication of martial arts skill. For many centuries before him, this was indeed the case, as using belts to indicate rank only began in the late 19th century. In a day when McDojos encourage students to sign “black belt contracts” that guarantee reaching shodan within a given time, it’s worth considering the history of ranks and titles in Japanese arts.

Dating back at least to 8th century Japan was the *menkyo* (“license”) system, which recognized skill in calligraphy, flower arranging, painting, the tea ceremony, or martial arts. Possessing a *menkyo* meant you were a licensed instructor. Generally there were only three to five levels of *menkyo*, far fewer than in the modern dan/kyu belt systems. The lowest *menkyo* was called *okuiri*. *Oku* means “secret” and *iri* is “to enter,” which combine to mean “entrance to secrecy.” This license was roughly equivalent to shodan and required four to eight years of committed training. The next level was *mokuroku*, meaning “register” or “catalogue;” a practitioner’s name was entered in the official registries of the school at this point. After two more levels, the most committed practitioners attained *menkyo kaiden*, meaning a “license of total transmission.” This usually required at least thirty years of consistent training and indicated profound mastery.

The dan ranking system was invented by Hon'inbo Dosaku (1645–1702), a professional player of go, the Japanese board game. According to some sources, dan ranking was based on a courtly hierarchy dating back to the Chinese Northern Wei Dynasty (c. AD 220), when courtiers were ranked on nine levels. As with *menkyo*, dan and kyu ranks pertain to skill levels not only in martial arts, but in calligraphy, chess, and academic testing. Descending kyu numbers reflect the steps remaining before reaching competence in the basics, whereas ascending dan numbers indicate steps into mastery.

In 1883, judo founder Jigoro Kano (1860–1938) began using the dan system in his sport when he awarded the rank of shodan to two of his senior students. Broadly speaking, shodan reflects high competence across a wide range of essential techniques. Around 1907, yudansha were given black belts and mudansha white ones (he also added light blue below white and brown before black). Gichin Funakoshi, father of modern karate, likely adopted the belt ranking system and other concepts from his friend Kano.

Around 1930, Kano’s Kodokan produced a new belt to acknowledge the special achievements of high-ranking yudansha. Kano chose to recognize 6th, 7th,

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Recent Yudansha Promotions

Name	Rank	Date	Dojo
David E. Racine	Yodan	July	Nintai Dojo
Vernon E. Garner	Sandan	July	Rising Sun Jujitsu
Tyler D Garner	Sandan	July	Rising Sun Jujitsu
Kelly O'Briant	Shodan	September	Arlington Budoshin Ju-Jitsu Dojo
Adam Kennedy	Sandan	September	Arlington Budoshin Ju-Jitsu Dojo

Recent Mudansha Promotions

Name	Rank	Date	Dojo
Emma Bessent	Rokukyu	June	Nintai Dojo
Elise Fonseca	Sankyu	July	Kaiwan Budokai
Tien Peng Ho	Yonkyu	July	Kaiwan Budokai
Coral Burke	Ikkyu	August	Arlington Budoshin Ju-Jitsu Dojo
Stewart Burke	Ikkyu	August	Arlington Budoshin Ju-Jitsu Dojo
John Valceanu	Ikkyu	August	Arlington Budoshin Ju-Jitsu Dojo
John Bowman	Nikyu	August	Budoshin Jujitsu Yudanshakai
Marissa Trujillo	Rokukyu		Budoshin Jujitsu Dojo

Sensei

To have your students' unregistered promotions featured in the newsletter, please send them to Newsletter@AJA-email.org

Annual Northern Region Shiai and Workshop

by Samantha Finley

On July 22, 2018, Daitobukan Dojo at the Towson YMCA once again hosted its annual clinic and tournament of self-defense kata, Shiai. The all-ages and all-ranks event drew attendees from all around the region. 2018 proved to be a banner year, with 32% more registrants compared to 2017. In a first for this event, lunch was provided and online preregistration was available.

The first half of the day consisted of four seminars, each focusing on a very different aspect of jujitsu. The seminar instructors were Will Harris, Dave Patton, Bill Stockey, and our very own AJA president Dave Boesel.

The second half of the day was devoted to the Waza competition, in which competitors demonstrate their jujitsu skills by defending against a series of varied attacks for a full minute, or ninety seconds at the yudansha level. Videos of every match, as well as matches as far back at 2009, are available on the Daitobukan Dojo YouTube channel, which can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC99TuUoZunVoSL8r6XBZhDQ/featured>.

2018 Northern Region Shiai Results

Click a results table for a link to a playlist for that division

Yudansha

Place	Name
1st	Tyler Garner
2nd	Kendrick Smith
3rd	Mike Parks

Adult Jodan

Place	Name
1st	Matt Clark
2nd	Dominic Calabria
3rd	Thomas Dineen

Adult Chudan

Place	Name
1st	Chase Dews
2nd	Abigail Frank
3rd	Christopher Burke

Adult Gedan

Place	Name
1st	John Tropea

Youth Jodan

Place	Name
1st	Zion Coldiron
2nd	Elliott Morton

Youth Chudan

Place	Name
1st	Trent Hawkins
2nd	Anthony Hickey
3rd	Emma Bessent

Youth Gedan

Place	Name
1st	Vincent Robinson
2nd	Alice Pritchard
3rd	Cadence Pritchard

Transitioning from Judo to Jujitsu

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exhibiting that martial spirit. You know firsthand from your judo matches how essential that martial spirit is to success.

Interestingly, while the martial spirit remains the same, techniques that proved effective in traditional combat required modification to maximize their effectiveness under sport judo conditions, where rules determined how points were scored and were designed to keep participants safe. These modifications, while essential for winning in judo, make the techniques less effective in combat.

You want to learn jujitsu, the combative art, not what I call “judo-jitsu” — sport judo techniques (which were already modified from their original jujitsu techniques) being modified yet again in an attempt to be effective for self-defense.

Remember the three parts to every judo technique: kuzushi (off-balancing), tsukuri (entry), and kake

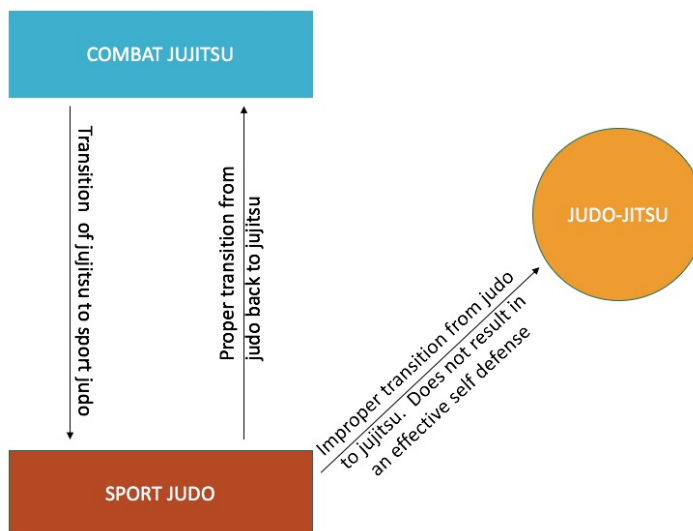
(execution). First, we get our grip and pull (or push) our opponent (or use our grip to extend our opponent’s pull or push). That’s our kuzushi. Then we move ourselves into an advantageous position and hold our opponent tightly. That’s tsukuri, and our opponent now is ready to be thrown. Last, we use all of our energy together with our advantageous position to throw our opponent, or at

least maneuver the opponent onto the ground. That’s our kake. Usually, to win the match we need to extend our advantage in subsequent groundwork.

While these three parts of judo techniques — kuzushi, tsukuri and kake — derived from jujitsu, in jujitsu their expression is quite different. If you don’t understand these differences and rigorously practice them so that they become an essential part of your art, you are practicing judo-jitsu, not jujitsu, and not taking advantage of the centuries of development that went into the original jujitsu techniques.

Let’s see how each of these three parts of the technique were applied in the original jujitsu. Let’s start with kuzushi, or off-balancing. When we are attacked,

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the attacker's momentum provides the kuzushi. (While there are ways to preempt an attack and use that preemption to cause our opponent to provide all the kuzushi necessary, those are advanced techniques that will not be discussed in this article, although the principles are the same.) It is essential to the jujitsu technique that we maintain kuzushi throughout the entire technique. If we seek to grip or otherwise hold our opponent tightly, we disrupt all of that nice kuzushi that our attacker so politely gave us. To paraphrase Princess Leia in *Star Wars: A New Hope* when she was talking with Darth Vader (who had a black heart but lacked a black belt), the tighter we grip our opponent, the more he will slip through our fingers. The major reasons that attempting to get a tight grip on an opponent in a combat situation decreases our effectiveness are as follows:

1- When we grip a moving opponent, we stop the opponent, even if it's just for an instant. Then we have to restart the kuzushi with our own effort, which gives the opponent an opportunity to resist or respond.

2- When we grip the opponent, the opponent feels and instinctively reacts to the grip, which makes our technique more difficult. If the opponent has had any martial arts training, that instinctive reaction may become a trained response, which we definitely don't want!

3- Getting a firm grip on a moving opponent (especially one without a gi or someone in short sleeves or, even worse, shirtless) can be difficult.

To get an idea of how difficult this can be, have a bare-armed friend punch the air at full speed while you stand to the side and in front of your friend (i.e. right next to where the full speed punch is directed) and try to grab your friend's rapidly moving arm at the wrist. You not only will see how difficult it is to grab a full force attack, but if by some chance you are able to grab it, notice how it stops your friend or at least gives your friend's body a big jerk. Your friend definitely will be aware of your grab. After the grab, you will have to use a lot of muscle to get your friend moving again in the direction of the punch, and your friend will have an opportunity to resist. Your friend may choose to do so, though often attackers in the dojo don't resist and just hang in the position that the defender left them in, so that the defender will have a chance to practice. While often helpful during training, this is not representative of an actual combat situation. If, instead of grabbing, you smoothly block at the wrist with minimal deflection while continuing the forward motion of the attacking arm, your opponent's reaction will be much less pronounced.

Instead of grabbing, we blend with our opponent's kuzushi throughout the entire technique to keep that person moving as we enter and execute our throw. This blending provides a virtual grip that is stronger than a physical grip, since

our opponent cannot resist when we give him nothing to resist. Put more succinctly, our attacker gives and we accept, not force.

Next is the tsukuri, or entry into the technique. Instead of gripping our opponent tightly to allow us to enter into the technique, in jujitsu we maintain the opponent's kuzushi and use that kuzushi to drive us into our entry. In other words, as the opponent attacks, we maintain and assist the opponent in traveling in the direction of the attack and mesh with the speed of that attack to enter into the technique. Just as properly aligned gears mesh perfectly without grabbing, we maintain the opponent's kuzushi so that we may mesh with that force.

Last is kake, or execution of the technique. Instead of using all our muscle and energy, combined with the advantageous position we have entered into during tsukuri to force the person to the ground, we use kuzushi that we have striven our utmost to maintain to drive our entry and smoothly transition from entry to execution. Kake is the natural extension of kuzushi and tsukuri to drive the person to the ground. When properly performed, we do not feel the person's attack. Rather, we are accepting the attack and continuing it to allow that movement (with our help, of course!) to drive the attacker into the ground. Because it is the opponent's kuzushi we are using meshed with our own tsukuri and kake, it takes no muscle or effort on our part, making our opponent's size and strength irrelevant. This makes sense, since actual combat has no weight classes and referees. If we need those, the technique is not an effective self-defense technique. In fact, in jujitsu it is a misnomer to call our attacker an opponent, since we are not opposing anything. Instead, we are assisting the attacker in going in the direction of the attack with all of the energy brought to the attack until the attacker, quite naturally, meets the ground in a collision of their own making!

Obviously, there is much more to this, and in future articles I will seek to further explain how to properly use kuzushi, tsukuri and kake in performing jujitsu techniques.

Remember that judo has developed into a well organized martial art of its own that is separate and distinct from jujitsu, the martial art whence it came. While many judo and jujitsu techniques share the same name, because the arts are different, the techniques often are quite different as well. Consequently, our judo reactions that are effective on the mat in a match may lead us to dangerous defeat in self-defense situations. Judo most definitely is not jujitsu with some concepts removed. Rather, judo is a separate martial art with a distinct purpose, and this critical difference hampers judo's effectiveness in a combat situation. For self-defense, then, do not fall into the trap of using judo-jitsu; instead use jujitsu, which has proven practical in actual combat situations.

Ranks and Titles in Japanese Martial Arts

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and 8th degree holders with a belt made of alternating red and white panels, called *kohaku obi*. The colors red and white are an enduring symbol of Japan, and had been used in judo since Kano started the Red and White Tournament in 1884. The *kohaku obi* is often worn for special occasions, but the solid black belt remains the standard for all yudansha ranks. In 1943, the Kodokan created the optional solid red belt to recognize 9th and 10th degree yudansha.

While teaching in Paris in 1935, judoka Mikinosuke Kawaishi introduced other colors beyond black and white. He felt that Western students would be more inspired to train if they had colored belts to recognize incremental achievement. This system included white, yellow, orange, green, blue, purple, and brown... many of the same colors used today.

There is no universal association of a given belt color with one kyu rank number (for instance, a green belt may represent 4th, 5th, or 6th kyu depending on the school); different martial arts organizations assign colors independently. Generally, darker colors are associated with higher ranks; e.g., brown is often the highest kyu color because it is nearly as dark as black. Despite the persistent urban legend, there is no evidence that the "light to dark" progress of kyu colors derived from beginners darkening their white belts with blood and sweat during hard training until their belts finally turned black. Nor is there any consistent symbolism attached to the colors of kyu belts (such as "yellow is birth...green is growth...brown is ripening"), although some modern dojos employ such meanings to motivate students.

Practically speaking, colors offer a simple visual key for instructors, making it easier to judge skill levels accurately when matching students for competitions or demonstrations. Providing visible signs of progress can make students more confident and their training more structured. An external ranking system also makes it easier for higher-ranked students to assist lower-ranked ones, and encourages lower-ranked students to show respect to their seniors (as in the military). Critics point out that having colored belts can cause some practitioners to focus on attaining higher belt levels for the sake of status or petty hierarchical distinction, thereby losing sight of the spirit and long-term goals of martial arts training.

In addition to belt ranks, a variety of titles exist in many Japanese arts. For example, *senpai* ("senior colleague") and *kohai* ("junior colleague") describe a hierarchical relationship based on the date of entry to a club, school, business, or martial arts association. Here the *kohai* defers to the *senpai*'s seniority and

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Upcoming Events

Baltimore School of Self Defense is hosting Professor Tony Maynard on October 6. Details at <http://member-site.net/?EV--gMPMM>

If you would like your event featured in the AJA newsletter, please send it to Newsletter@AJA-email.org

experience by showing respect and gratitude, while the *senpai* helps and mentors the *kohai*. Modern martial arts commonly use *senpai* to refer to the highest-ranked non-yudansha member of a dojo.

Though generally translated as “teacher,” the title “sensei” is written with two Japanese characters that together can be understood to mean “person born before another” or “one who comes before.” As with ranks, “sensei” and other titles discussed below are often used in Japan to address any person of authority, including clergy, accountants, lawyers, physicians, and politicians, or to honor master artists, novelists, or musicians.

In addition to dan/kyu ranks, a parallel system grew up in Japan called *shogo*, which loosely means “title.” These are typically awarded only to high-ranking yudansha (at least 4th dan in Budoshin Jujitsu). Their primary purpose is to show that, in addition to being an advanced martial artist, the title-holder is an excellent instructor and exemplary person. Such titles do not come automatically with dan rank, but recognize extensive contribution and commitment to the martial art. The most commonly used *shogo* titles are *renshi*, *kyoshi*, *shihan*, and *hanshi*.

Renshi means “superior teacher.” It is the first, or lowest, of the *shogo* titles. *Kyoshi* means “master teacher,” although it is sometimes translated as “professor” or “assistant professor.” In the AJA, this title may be awarded at 7th dan, in addition to the title of “professor.” Moving up, *shihan* indicates an 8th dan who exhibits integrity, humility, and high moral character while also being a master instructor and “model for the art.” The highest title in many jujitsu systems is *hanshi*. In addition to the qualities of a *shihan*, an AJA *hanshi* is “a model person who leads an exemplary life and is a teacher of teachers.” Beyond *hanshi*, the title of *dai-hanshi* occasionally appears. The adjective *dai* (or *o*) elevates the title by

signifying "great" or "large" (*dai-sensei* and *dai-senpai* are also sometimes seen). Even higher is the exalted title of *meijin*, which means literally "excellent person" or "brilliant man." As with dan rankings, this title was first used during the Edo Period in Japan (1603-1868), and referred to the strongest chess or go player of the day.

For martial artists many years from gaining lofty titles, the inspirational and practical value of visible ranks makes it hard to imagine modern dojos eliminating colored belts any time soon, despite Bruce Lee's skeptical view of them.

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Total Self-Defence, 2018

World Martial Arts Center, 2018

Content

If you would like to contribute content to the AJA newsletter, please send it to

Newsletter@AJA-email.org

We're always looking for

- Articles about jujitsu, your students, or your dojo
- Upcoming events
- Personal interest events

AJA Update

by Dave Boesel

Yudansha Promotions

Ordinarily, yudansha (black belt) promotions are made in the same way as those for mudansha (non black belts); the sensei examines the applicant, and if they meet the dojo's standards (which themselves are AJA-certified), the sensei enters the information into the promotions database on the AJA webpage. This information goes to AJA's Director of Certification, Barry Stebbins, who reviews the information and issues a certificate of rank.

However, there are cases in which this procedure will not work. For example, a sensei may only promote a yudansha to one level below their own rank, while the student may be eligible for a similar or higher level. Or a sensei may not have a sensei of their own who can promote them, due to retirement, death, or other circumstances.

In cases where there is no sensei qualified to promote a jujitsuka eligible for yudansha promotion, the National Standards and Certification Board (NSCB) — chaired by Vice President Jeff Wynn — has the authority to do so.

The yudansha seeking promotion fills out the form found [here](https://americanjujitsuassociation.org/membership/forms/) (or on the website at <https://americanjujitsuassociation.org/membership/forms/> under "NSCB Promotion Form") and sends it to Jeff (vp@aja-email.org) with a video demonstrating his or her skills or the recommendation of two or more AJA senseis who can attest to the applicant's skills. Jeff then consults with the other members of the Board — the three Regional Directors — and together they make a decision.

Change in Board of Directors

Tony Damigo, AJA's Western Regional Director and long-time member of the Board of Directors, resigned in August. Harold Zeidman took on the role; the Board, having been expanded to ten members to bring on Harold and Barry Stebbins, reverted to its previous nine members. Before Tony announced his retirement, the Board had just voted him AJA's first Distinguished Service Award.

Reminder: Free Embroidered Black Belt

More and more senseis are taking advantage of AJA's offer of a free black belt for new shodans. The belt is embroidered with the shodan's name on one end and "American Jujitsu Association" on the other. If you are an AJA sensei and want to order a shodan belt for one of your students, contact Dave Boesel at president@aja-email.org. It takes about two weeks for Golden Tiger Martial Arts in California to produce and deliver a belt.

What have you learned, Dorothy?

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This past summer, some forty years after that notion first occurred to me, I received my shodan degree. It took me a lot longer to get here than I ever imagined it would and, frankly, no one is more surprised that I finally made it than I am. It is, of course, a common enough occurrence; people obtain their black belt rank every day. However, in my own little corner of the universe, it is literally the realization of a lifelong dream — an event that has forced me to pause and reflect not only on the deed itself, but its meaning. So with your indulgence, like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, I'd like share a few notable lessons that I learned along the way.

It Begins with a Vision

Lao-Tzu tells us that even a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. True enough. But this doesn't necessarily mean that the journey to shodan begins the very first time a new student steps onto the mat. The real journey may not begin for months, or even years, after the student takes that first class.

The journey only properly starts when the student passes through a mental and emotional gateway. On one side of that gateway, the idea of obtaining one's shodan is opaque and fuzzy — really, just an idle fancy. On the other, that idea crystalizes; it's clear and sharply defined. For the first time, you truly see it. It is real. The student changes gears, transitioning from a vague "I might" to the concrete "I will."

Commitment

Deciding "I will," however, is still just the first step in the journey. The second is commitment. Commitment is hard, because, more often than not, commitment requires us to make substantive changes in our habits and our attitudes. For the jujitsu student, as a start, this means attending class — regularly — whether you feel like it or not. It also means a significant investment, in terms of both time and effort, in training outside of the formal dojo environment; cardio, flexibility, strength, and agility are all key components in a comprehensive regimen. As you get older, this outside training only becomes more critical, as does diet.

Discernment

There's a problem with commitments, though — we rarely have just one.

School, career, marriage, children, elderly parents. Any combination of the above. In our plugged-in 24/7 world, we are continually pressed on all sides by people and situations that require our undivided attention. In a perfect world, there'd never be a conflict between our commitment to our own personal growth and the needs of those around us. But we don't live in a perfect world. Very often,

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we are forced to choose between our competing commitments. It may not necessarily be fair or pleasant, but, for any responsible adult, it is an unavoidable reality.

Of course, we should strive to make these choices with as much wisdom as we are able to muster. However, there are rarely perfect solutions to our real world dilemmas. Sometimes, something has to give. Because we often have other, very real, commitments, we may have to put that shodan on the back burner for months or even years. The trick is to not give up on that commitment. Take what steps you can, when you can. You know the drill: try to eat right, get some exercise, take care of yourself while you take care of others.

There is no dishonor or defeat in deferring the pursuit of that black belt when other obligations take precedence. Remember, “samurai” literally means “to serve,” and one of the highest of the samurai virtues is faithfulness in fulfilling one’s obligations.

Discernment — the ability to recognize, make and act upon difficult choices — guides our steps on our journey.

Perseverance

At some point, the planets align, the fog lifts, the smoke clears. The conditions are right. Now is your time to act!

This is the hardest part of the journey. The initial excitement you felt when you first made the commitment has long since passed. You’ve honored your commitments and, perhaps, only recently returned to the mat after a long absence. You come to class. You practice. And practice. And practice. Aches and pains are your constant companions. The months and years roll by. True, progress comes, but at a glacial pace. The Japanese term is kaizen, continuous incremental improvement.

Many’s the time you question whether all of this is worth it. But, at your core, you know it is and press on.

Humility and Gratitude

At last. You’ve put in your time and you’ve paid your dues in sweat, diligence, and discipline. You’ve traveled the long road and overcome the obstacles in your path. You dared greatly and today you wear the black belt, an honor that fewer than one in a thousand will ever be able to claim. As the Merovingian noted wryly in the Matrix Reloaded: “Okay, you have some skill.” You have every right to take a moment or two to enjoy the sense of fulfillment that comes with hard won achievement.

Among your peers, you’re accepted as a reasonably competent practitioner of

the art. In the eyes of many folks outside the martial arts community, you're a de facto "expert," perhaps even a "master." But before you get too full of yourself, grasshopper, you'd best remember it wasn't always like that.

Yes, you have come a long way, but never lose sight of the fact that you've also had a lot of help to get here. The truth is that nobody — nobody — arrives at shodan entirely through his or her own effort.

If you're honest with yourself, you must admit that, over the years, you've only been able to develop and refine your skills because you've had a virtual army of ready and willing ukes at your disposal. These are your classmates, past and present, the folks who patiently absorbed the (hopefully unintentional) punishment you dished out as you stumbled and bumbled your way up the ranks. The people you dropped. The people you landed on. The people you poked, jabbed, and smacked.

All of these people volunteered not only their bodies to your benefit, but their minds as well. Far from merely filling the role of a handy crash dummy, every single one was, in their own way, your teacher. From sensei to the newest newbie, each has contributed to your having that needed flash of insight, to your getting the timing right, to your finally finding the technique, to your growth and maturity as a martial artist.

When you do the math, by the time you get to tie that black belt around your waist, the list of folks to whom you owe a debt is rather substantial. In my own case, it is staggering.

Even a Journey of a Thousand Miles...

Of course, the most important lesson that one learns on the road to shodan is the realization that obtaining a black belt is not a destination at all, but merely just the first step in a far larger journey. Now's not the time to sit back and unwind. A new generation of students is coming up behind you. Your next challenge is to not only further develop your own skills, but to do your level best to help them develop theirs.

About the American Ju-Jitsu Association

The American Ju-Jitsu Association was founded in 1972 by George Kirby and William Fromm at the request of their sensei, Jack Seki, for the purpose of bringing different ryu of the art together in an atmosphere of mutual cooperation and respect. Since that time it has grown from two dojo to approximately twenty-four, plus international affiliates. The AJA has established itself as a reputable organization within the martial arts community and works closely with other major Ju-Jitsu organizations in the United States and internationally in areas of mutual concern.

The AJA is a non-profit amateur athletic association registered with both the state of California and the United States government [IRS code 501(c)(3)]. It is a non-profit corporation with a charitable foundation status. Although originally recognized by the IRS as a "social club" because there was no other way to recognize the AJA as an amateur athletic association, formal recognition of the AJA as a true amateur athletic association, according to the criteria of the United States government, was secured in 1976 under the Sports Act of that year. To our knowledge, the AJA is the only martial arts organization in the U.S. that is classified by the IRS as an amateur athletic association.

Board of Directors

Position	Name	Email
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Vice President	Jeff Wynn	VP@AJA-email.org
Secretary	Barry Stebbins	Secretary@AJA-email.org
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