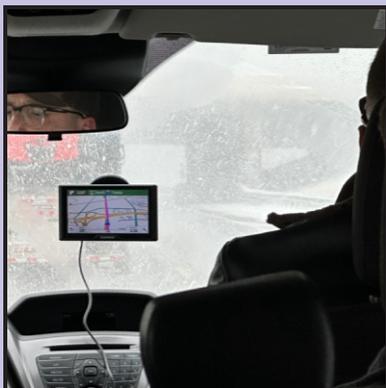


Sword and Spirit

The Journal of Itten Dojo

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— Benefits of Budo —

Regardless of the times in which you live, or the circumstances of your life, success largely depends on things you can control:

- **Building a foundation of strong relationships in a community of mutual support and achievement.**
- **Forging a disciplined and positive mindset.**
- **Enhancing your physical health and capabilities.**

These are exactly the benefits membership in an authentic dojo provides.

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To JMAC in Winter

On one of our trips to train at Suino Sensei's Japanese Martial Arts Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan, we had to deal with a bunch of snow. That was in November 2022. We hit snow early in the trip west, something we weren't anticipating, and then it snowed every day in Ann Arbor. Something we *really* weren't anticipating. We had no way to clear the windshield and windows—I think Charles Hudson ended up scrubbing the windows with his jacket. So, when we scheduled a trip for this month, we were much better prepared. I purchased two van-sized, extendable, ice-scraper/snow-brush tools. For the day we headed to JMAC, the weather service posted winter weather advisories or winter storm warnings for every county on our normal route. Initially, we considered going first due-west to Columbus, Ohio, and then turning north to avoid the weather, but this would have added two hours to the trip. After carefully reading the detailed forecasts prior to leaving, we decided to head direct. Other than about five miles of heavy snow and slow traffic while passing south of Cleveland, we only had to deal with intermittent snow squalls, mist, and fog. It was a slower trip, but nothing especially challenging.

We had scheduled a six-passenger van for this expedition, and then needed to upgrade to a 12-passenger vehicle to accommodate the number of people going—in the end, ten people, and that was enough to pack the van. This was the largest commuting group we've had to date, and most of the contingent had not previously visited JMAC.

The schedule for training was ambitious, with both a jujutsu and iaido session planned for Friday evening, multiple sessions for both arts and jujutsu testing on Saturday, and then a final class in each art prior to heading home on Sunday. Despite an especially early start, our slow travel west caused us to miss the Friday jujutsu class, but we arrived at the dojo in plenty of time for the highlight of the weekend: a promotion ceremony advancing Suino Sensei to 7th-dan in judo, the rank being awarded by the Shudokan Martial Arts Association.

As is always the case when we visit JMAC, training was incredibly productive. Iaido students received a wealth of corrections on forms already



being practiced, answers to questions we've been collecting, and then new waza in the *Tachiwaza no Bu* and *Tatehiza no Bu* sets. There were no exams for iaido this trip.

For the jujutsu students, there were thorough reviews of all the fundamental drills, the *Goshin Ho Dai Ikkyo* and *Kihon Kata I* paired forms, and associated judo-waza. All of those topics were then tested, along with the *Goshin Ho Dai Ni-kyo* form and additional judo-waza for two of us testing for san-kyu in Nihon Jujutsu. We received an introduction to the first few waza in *Kihon Kata II* which, as Suino Sensei noted, are anything but "basic." In fact, the techniques if applied with the intent to do damage are flat-out nasty.

Kihon Kata II is the form Amber Cathey demonstrated when Sensei and some of the JMAC inner-circle first visited our dojo for a get-to-know-you, fun weekend in 2018. Watching Amber fling Dan Holland Sensei around—he was serving as uke—my first thought was, "Oh man, I wish the women were here to see this." Followed quickly by, "Wow. I'm glad they're *not* here to see this." Because the obvious question would have been, "Why aren't we doing this?" As Sensei notes, the JMAC version of female empowerment. Happily, now we are doing this.

On another happy note, everyone that was tested did achieve the ranks they were shooting for. And we never needed to use those big ice-scrapers/snow-brushes... 🌀



Amber Cathey serving as mistress of ceremonies during the 7th-dan promotion for Suino Sensei.



Our first iaido session met in the JMAC Annex.



"Really, Mom? You need to photograph us stretching?"





A full mat for the morning session—a combined judo and jujutsu class, seen here doing part of the ukemi warm-up. The first time we experienced this warm-up set we found ourselves a bit winded. So, we made certain to include these exercises at every practice. This time around, no one had any difficulty staying with the count.



Joseph Bailey executes a rep of Ogoshi under the watchful eye of Suino Sensei. Dan Holland Sensei is uke—we're always struck by the support we get from JMAC seniors.



Suino Sensei teaching Deashi-barai, a technique included in the judo curriculum but not the Nihon Jujutsu syllabus. Nonetheless, this is likely a waza we'll try to retain.





Maia Bailey and Joseph Bailey are uke for this portion of training focused on Seoinage.



Alan Starner is uke for Dylan Carter to practice a waza from Goshin Ho Dai Ikkyo.



Goshin Ho Dai Nikyo includes a yoko-geri (side-kick) to set up an entry to Osotogari.



This "come-along" technique gave me issues, because it is superficially similar to a waza we already knew.



Jon Spengler and Nick Miller demonstrate Osotogari.



Between the morning and afternoon sessions of jujutsu we had two sessions of iaido.





It proved to be a very good idea that we took the group photo prior to testing. The JMAC yudansha (black-belts) went above and beyond to serve as uke for the examinations, on the receiving end of very many techniques—it had to be exhausting.



After the promotion ceremonies: Joseph Bailey and Maia Bailey mugging it up with Sensei; Christopher Migatulski and Roman Villalobos in a more serious shot; Alan Starner and Robert Wolfe happy to have taken another step along the way.

Note — All photos in this issue courtesy of Rie Hashimoto Bailey Sensei.

Robert Wolfe, chief instructor of Itten Dojo, began martial arts training in 1975 while attending Bucknell University, where he earned a degree in Japanese Studies. Mr. Wolfe has taught since 1985, and with his senior student Alan Starner founded Itten Dojo in 1992. His articles on martial arts have been featured in numerous publications, including the *Journal of Asian Martial Arts* and *Bugeisha*.

