

# SOGOBUJUTSU – Total Martial Sciences

By John Viol – Dai Shihan  
Sogobujutsu Menkyokaiden



*Born on ancient battlegrounds, Sogobujutsu is the authentic original root of all Japanese martial systems. Sogobujutsu is not a style. It is the core logic and scientific principle that has been applied to all genuine martial, military, security, and police training since feudal times in Japan.*

A deep enough search into the true history of every classical and modern martial system and school of Japan will reveal that Sogobujutsu has always been and still is the primary influence for every one of them.

## The Meaning Of Sogobujutsu

Analysis of the characters for the term Sogobujutsu leads to the reason why bona-fide warriors chose it to represent their martial discipline. *Sogo* (総合) means, total, well rounded, complete, integrated, consolidated, and comprehensive. *Bu* (武) means martial, military, warrior, chivalry, and arms. *Jutsu* (術) means technique, skill, science, method, and technology. In simplified form, Sogobujutsu means total martial sciences.

You may also hear the term Sogobudo being used interchangeably with Sogobujutsu. This has become acceptable to some recently but the term Sogobujutsu is still the most appropriate.

## The Founders

Sogobujutsu was developed by seasoned, battleground tested and proven warriors. The most notable of those warriors, and those acknowledged to be the original founders of Sogobujutsu, were members of the Yagyu warrior clan, and the Tsukikagemusha – Moonshadow warriors. These particular warriors were personally chosen by Shogun (commanders) to be advisors in matters of war.

Their contributions to the development of Sogobujutsu forever changed how warriors prepared for war and had a profound impact on the Samurai and their culture.

The Sogobujutsu founders had one primary goal and that was to create the ultimate warrior. Whether the ultimate warrior was to be themselves or fellow warriors, the strategy and approach they devised to achieve that goal was extremely well planned and laid out. It had to be. Countless lives depended on it.

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**Sogo warriors  
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sciences in  
Japan**

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The most important decision the Sogobujutsu founders made was to conduct training in an open-source, collaborative and scientific manner. Being veteran warriors themselves, the founders knew the importance of basing their strategies and training tactics on actual battle encounters and reliable, first-hand accounts. Their battleground experiences compelled them to place equal emphasis on diligently studying what is truly effective in actual combat and what is not. There was and still is too much at stake in the matters of war to be philosophical or artsy. Those early pioneers of Sogobujutsu were the first true professional martial science practitioners of Japan and became known as the Sogo warriors.

### **The Ultimate Warrior Curriculum**

The cornerstone of Sogobujutsu is the specialized and comprehensive curriculum. For hundreds of years, Sogobujutsu instructors, and warriors worldwide have constantly and collectively worked together to further refine and perfect the ultimate warrior curriculum.

The core scientific principles, and concepts used throughout the Sogobujutsu curriculum are the root from which all martial curricula worldwide have stemmed. The

venerable and specialized sogo warrior curriculum cannot be compared to the piecemeal, superficial curricula and amateur ranking programs used in modern martial arts. The traditional Sogobujutsu curriculum produces a much higher caliber warrior and an extraordinary class of individual.

### **Three Fighting Elements**

The unique structure of the Sogobujutsu curriculum is constantly forged by the absolute and total comprehensive consolidation and integration of the three fighting elements – weaponry, percussion, and grappling. This should not be taken to mean that Sogobujutsu simply mixes or combines the three fighting elements in the naive and random way that one typically finds in the so-called “mixed” martial arts.

Sogobujutsu employs a profoundly sophisticated and specialized scientific methodology to seamlessly meld weaponry, percussion, and grappling, into a dynamic singularity. Sogobujutsu is not just about the physical aspects of fighting. A great deal of emphasis is also placed on the mental aspects, some of which are culturally influenced. An example is the three sacred treasures of Japan (Sanshu no Jingi 三種の神器). The three sacred

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treasures represent the three primary virtues: valor (the sword), wisdom (the mirror), and benevolence (the jewel). Sogo warriors have many virtues but all warriors know that virtues alone are not always enough to deter or win a battle. The primary virtues coupled with the highly specialized and total consolidation of the three fighting elements provide Sogo warriors with the ultimate warrior curriculum, which creates the ultimate warrior.

### **Warrior Coding**

Sogo warriors are not just trained, they are skillfully programmed. Their extremely flexible actions and highly appropriate responses are coded into them by a most unique process. This warrior coding process cannot be duplicated by any type of martial arts, sport, or competitive practice. The effectiveness of this process has been repeatedly validated and recorded both in times of war and in times of peace.

### **Instructor Training**

The need for effective warrior programmers sparked the creation of the Sogobujutsu instructor training program (I.T.P). The I.T.P. is a multi-leveled licensure program with the sole purpose of producing professionally trained

instructors, and teachers of Sogo warriors. Together, the sogo instructors and warriors collaborated to develop a truly accurate proficiency validation system for the trainees and the instructors. This became known as the menkyosei.

### **Warrior Licensure**

The menkyosei is not a meager ranking system; rather it is a sophisticated licensure system that was designed to gauge and validate the proficiency of Sogobujutsu instructors and warriors throughout several strategic layers of training and programming. The menkyosei also functions as a tool to perpetually validate the effectiveness of the constantly evolving curriculum, principles, and standards of Sogobujutsu. The traditional sogo menkyosei is the authoritative standard by which sogo instructors and warriors are tested, measured, and judged.

The menkyosei predates all other martial ranking systems in Japan. Though the menkyosei was the original inspiration for the popular modern martial arts colored belt kyu and dan rank structure, it is a serious mistake to compare the highly refined menkyosei standards to the relatively new and experimental kyu / dan requirements and rankings that are used in the martial arts today. By virtue of the programming

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and licensing process they undergo within the sogobujutsu curriculum, licensed Sogobujutsu practitioners are naturally much more well rounded than the overly common black belt holders in the martial arts.

### **Warrior Validation**

Sogobujutsu instructors and trainees are subjected to many realistic validation processes to determine their level of fighting effectiveness. This is in stark contrast with the unrealistic and non-standard rank examinations conducted in the martial arts. Sogobujutsu validations are actual engagements conducted under extreme conditions that simulate the highest degree of realism possible. Validations can be brutal and unforgiving. They have to be. Both the instructor and the sogo warrior must know the truth about their fighting proficiency before engaging in battle.

Success and documentation of a validation comes in the form of an actual license, not a mere certificate or a colored belt. The sogo warrior does not seek superficial things. The pride a sogo warrior feels when his achievements are acknowledged by genuine warriors in the form of a bona-fide menkyosei license has no comparison in modern martial arts.

### **21st Century Sogobujutsu**

Even though Sogobujutsu has been born on ancient battlegrounds its ever evolving nature precludes it from ever dying or becoming an obsolete technology. 21st century sogo warriors continue the tradition of collectively monitoring, contributing to, polishing and perfecting what the founders of Sogobujutsu started many centuries ago.

Perpetuating the development of Sogobujutsu is the best way to honor those who paid dearly for the specialized knowledge and training being utilized today. The fact is that Sogobujutsu has matured into an even more effective and lethal system than it ever was during feudal times. The accumulated technologies of Sogobujutsu are still deeply integrated into the daily training and routines of Japan's military, security, and special police forces but Sogobujutsu is available to any individual or organization that requires truly effective no-nonsense martial science applications.

Currently, in Japan, Sogobujutsu is overseen by the All Japan Sogobujutsu Federation (Zen Nihon Sogobujutsu Renmei). Outside of Japan, the authority for Sogobujutsu is the International Sogobujutsu Federation (ISBF) Kokusai Sogobujutsu Renmei). Sogobujutsu is one of the

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world's most influential martial sciences, and Sogobujutsu practitioners worldwide work together with members of the International Martial Sciences Federation (IMSF) to further optimize the martial sciences.


### **Finding Sogobujutsu**

Modern researchers looking for additional legitimate information in English on Sogobujutsu, the Yagyu clan, the Moonshadow warriors, and the menkyosei will find it to be a very challenging task. It is not an easy task even for a native Japanese.

When the question arises regarding why more people have not heard much about or had access to Sogobujutsu, it must be remembered that Sogobujutsu is not a technology to which civilians are often afforded easy access. Most Sogobujutsu information is still reserved for menkyosei practitioners who continue to honor the tradition and responsibility of protecting their special heritage.

It should, by now, be evident that Sogobujutsu is not a commercial enterprise like the vast majority of modern martial arts. Accordingly, finding a Sogobujutsu Dojo will prove to be difficult since traditional Sogobujutsu training is not normally conducted in the artificial and commercial

environments most often encountered when attending most typical martial arts schools.

The truth and a wealth of information on Sogobujutsu does exist and is available, but it cannot be found except by those who already know where it is – and you can find those who know on the Battleground. 

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### **Editor's Note**

Outside of Japan, the highest authority for Sogobujutsu is John Viol Shihan from the United States. John Viol Shihan began his martial career in 1967 and lived in Japan for nearly 20 years where he was trained, tested, and legitimately licensed in several martial disciplines. In 1991 at a special ceremony in Kyoto, John Viol was presented with the highest license one can attain in the martial sciences – the coveted Menkyokaiden.

There is no doubt that with the advent of this article, many in the martial arts will suddenly begin to claim knowledge, rights, and mastery of Sogobujutsu. Beware of such charlatans and remember; a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. For valid information on Sogobujutsu, browse the Internet resources below.

### **Sogobujutsu Web Links**

<a href="http://www.isbf.org">www.isbf.org</a>	<a href="http://www.martialsciences.org">www.martialsciences.org</a>	<a href="http://www.seishinkan.com">www.seishinkan.com</a>
<a href="http://www.shinbukan.com">www.shinbukan.com</a>	<a href="http://www.renbukan.us">www.renbukan.us</a>	

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### **Related Battleground Articles**

Moonshadow Warriors	The Menkyosei
Three Fighting Elements	Instructor Training Program

### **Sogobujutsu Calligraphy**

A high quality 11x17 Sogobujutsu calligraphy poster (like the one at the beginning of this article) printed on thick white card stock is available for a small donation to the ISBF. Posters can be purchased by calling Sakura Martial Arts Supplies at 1-888-725-8720.

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